

# SHOULD NATIONS CONTROL THEIR BORDERS? WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY?



It is the plain teaching of the Bible that all men are equal in the sight of God, and that the kingdom of God, the community of true believers in Christ, is made up of people of every tribe and tongue. Both as an obligation and as a delight the Christian loves his neighbour, whoever he is and wherever he comes from. These are primary truths, which we resolutely uphold. Does this mean, however, that Britain is under a moral obligation to accept ever-increasing and continual levels of immigration into the country, as well as the enormous scale (and daily increasing) of illegal immigration?

If anyone dares to question the society-transforming levels of inward migration into the UK in recent decades, the usual response has been to level the insulting accusation of being a nasty, far-right, racist xenophobe. That has been the crude level of reaction towards those who desire to have a rational discussion, and who dispute the mainstream narrative of the cultural Marxist establishment which now prevails in modern Britain, especially in much of the media, amongst the politicians and throughout the education system.

The gross figure for total long-term immigration into the UK in 2022 was 1.2 million. Net migration for the same period reached 660,000, or seven times the population of Birmingham (1). How can this small and already densely populated island possibly sustain such levels? This can only have a seriously detrimental effect upon the nation's infrastructure, resources and general physical environment. Should we not be seeking to house those people who already live here, without constantly adding to the housing shortage crisis? (2).

Sadly, the churches have tended to emulate the cultural Marxists in outright condemnation of those who dare to question the liberal, leftist narrative on immigration, but what should be the right Christian response on this issue?

First of all we need to consider Biblically the issue of nationhood itself, because large-scale migration effects the very concept of nationhood. In Deuteronomy 32:8 Moses tells us that, just as the Lord once separated out the nation of Israel from the rest of mankind, so He also ordained the independent existence of all the other nations. We read, "*The most High divided to the nations their inheritance ... he set the bounds of the people*". So here is God's own stamp upon the legitimacy of nationhood and of controlled national borders.

In Numbers 20 and 21 we read of the Israelites travelling from the wilderness to the Promised Land. They needed to pass through the territory belonging to the Edomites and the Amorites. So they asked the kings of these two nations for permission. Moses, led by the Holy Spirit, told the kings that his people would not stray from the main highway, nor touch any crops. He even offered to pay for any water that Israel's cattle consumed in transit. He thus carefully observed the Edomites' and Amorites' boundaries as being ordained of God, and worthy of all respect. There was no assumption by Moses that the Israelites - as 'asylum seekers' from Egypt - had an automatic right of entry into any country which they chose.

With regards to the illegal immigration into the UK across the English Channel, the Christian is under an obligation to view this for what it really is - criminal activity which is sinful in God's sight. France is a safe country, and so those crossing the Channel have no necessity to do so. Furthermore, the migrants have already crossed through other safe countries to reach northern France. The Bible plainly teaches the obligation before God upon all people to uphold the laws of the land :

*“Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme; Or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him” (1 Peter 2:13–14).* So it cannot be righteous behaviour for migrants to cross the Channel in rubber dinghies without any formal permission to come into the country. Many migrants also deliberately destroy their identity documents before they reach the southern coast of England to make it more difficult for the authorities to reject their applications for asylum (3). This is premeditated deception which Christians should not be condoning.

Sadly, many in the churches refer to our Lord's flight into Egypt as an infant as a justification for the unquestioning acceptance of migrants claiming asylum, even amounting to hundreds of thousands of people. We have to disagree. Mary and Joseph stayed in Egypt only until the immediate danger was over, and then returned to their homeland. Their flight to Egypt was a move from one part of the Roman Empire to another. Though the provinces of the empire had different governors, the journey into Egypt did not constitute a move to an unconnected foreign jurisdiction.

Mary and Joseph did not presume upon a right to take up permanent residence in Egypt, nor to receive financial assistance from the authorities there. Indeed, there is every likelihood that their stay there was no more than a few weeks (4). Therefore, this Biblical event is not remotely a precedent to justify the willing reception in our own time of enormous flows of economic migrants coming into Europe from the Middle East and North Africa (and then on to the UK in many cases) in order to claim asylum.

Nor can the Bible's passages about treating the stranger well be used in such a manner. The point of these Biblical injunctions is that the strangers are seen as vulnerable individuals, often being listed alongside the fatherless and widows. This in itself proves that these texts are not speaking of mass movements of whole communities numbering hundreds of thousands. Any nation in any age will always find smallish numbers of foreign people in its midst, and such should be afforded respect and equal treatment under the law, but the stranger passages refer to foreigners already in Israel, not to the abandonment of border controls so as to facilitate future migration.

On a broader level, as Christians we of course endeavour to help those in great need. This does not mean, however, that it is wrong for nations to rigorously control their borders. Indeed, we assert that it is righteous conduct in the sight of God to do so. Furthermore, if nations do not control their borders, they cease to be nations, and if they cease to be nations, that is contrary to God's ordained purpose for this fallen world ever since the time of the Tower of Babel.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.migrationwatchuk.org/press-release/705>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.centreforcities.org/publication/the-housebuilding-crisis/>

#:~:text=Compared%20to%20the%20average%20European,homes%20a%20year%20is%20reached.

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.migrationwatchuk.org/news/2021/12/20/deliberate-destruction-of-identity-documents>

<sup>4</sup> The MacArthur Bible Commentary, Nelson Reference and Electronic, p1123

