

# **Voices: The Bible is the book by and for immigrants**

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The Bible is a book for immigrants and was written by immigrants inspired by God.

The people who penned the Bible initially were called “Hebrews,” a name first given to Abraham. He was called a “Hebrew” because he crossed the Euphrates River to go from Mesopotamia to Palestine.

The word “Hebrew” was used to refer to the nation of Israel during the time of the Old Testament. It was derived from a word meaning “cross over or pass over” and was used to mean “a wanderer, a nomad or a person on the move.”

“Hebrew” also has been used in modern times to refer to “a refugee, an exile, the one who lost a home.” In other words, a Hebrew is an immigrant in the sense that he or she has crossed a border.

## **Immigrants then and now**

In the Bible, there are various types of immigrants, and they share similar characteristics with today’s immigrants. Abraham became a first-generation immigrant to pursue his vision and overcame many adversities to fulfill it.

Isaac was a second-generation immigrant who honored his parents and loved his wife. He was faithful to his role, but he also was timid and passive.

Jacob, a third-generation immigrant, was an aggressive individual and

established a nation on the foundation of the first and second generations.

In addition, there were Joseph, who experienced forced immigration; Moses, who grew up an adoptee and liberated his nation from slavery; Ruth, who immigrated through interracial marriage; Naomi, who went back to her own country by reverse-immigration; Ezra, who was a second-generation immigrant committed to the recovery of national identity; Nehemiah, who gave up on personal well-being for the restoration of his country; Ezekiel, who lived as a voice of conscience among immigrants; and Daniel, who was an international student and later became a government official.

Studying all these people and their characteristics and lifestyles, we see ourselves living as immigrants in America today.

## **God and immigrants**

God loves and uses immigrants. The immigrant of immigrants is Jesus himself. He left his home in heaven and came to this world. He became the lowest among immigrants, lived for those who have no power and no one to protect them, and died for them. He ascended to heaven to give an everlasting dream to the immigrants striving to grasp an ephemeral dream.

It is clear evidence of God's love for immigrants that he sent his only Son as an immigrant. Through persecution, he sent believers—emigrants—throughout Asia Minor and Europe, and the gospel was spread to the ends of the Earth.

## **The Bible for immigrants**

The Bible teaches immigrants the reasons and methods for the practice and propagation of God's love.

The Bible teaches how to live a successful life as immigrants. All the immigrants in the Bible shared the same nature and experienced the same vicissitudes of life. They experienced hurt and healing, disappointment and encouragement.

The immigrants of the Bible experienced failures from time to time, but eventually they lived a life that fulfilled God's plans. Following God's guidance, they lived to fulfill his will, which means their immigrant life was a success.

Through Bible study, we also learn how to participate in bringing God's kingdom on Earth.

The Bible is not a boring book of history. It is not a tedious book of doctrines. It is not an irrelevant book to the immigrant life. The Bible is the word of God and a manual for the life of immigrants.

In the Bible is the visa we must have to enter heaven, which is the promise of God. The Bible is a passport we must possess as we travel on this earth. The Bible is the book by and for immigrants.

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