

# ARE YOU A MIGRANT? ARE YOU A FOREIGNER?

## INTRODUCTION

Europe is now facing high levels of migration and we can react in a number of ways:

- listen to the political party of our choice;
- listen to signals we receive from the media;
- listen to our sense of reason;
- listen to our heart.

**But there is an automatic reaction that we all should have: that of listening to what the Word of God says, what the Bible tells me.** Have we done this?

For sure we can listen to the speeches of political parties, we can watch the reports, we can consider the statistics, and weigh everything up. We need to be challenged by situations, by people, to 'put ourselves in their shoes'.

What does the Bible tell us? If you count, there are about 300 passages in the Bible which mention the foreigner, wandering about in exile ... By consulting these passages, we see that the Bible talks a lot about economic displacement (Jacob arriving in Egypt), because of climate change (Noah and the flood), for political reasons (flight from King David (among the Philistines), because of war (the people of Israel are exiled or deported), to the family of Jesus who flee to Egypt to escape persecution. The Bible is full of accounts on this theme of migration, from foreign lands.

Here are three great migrations in the Bible from which we can draw some conclusions.

**Hebrews 3: 15-4: 11:** "... as long as it is said, Today, if you hear the voice of God, do not harden yourself, as your ancestors did when they revolted. Indeed, who are those who rebelled against God after hearing his voice? Is it not all those who came out of Egypt under the guidance of Moses? And against whom God was full of wrath for forty years? Is it not against those who have sinned and whose bodies have fallen into the wilderness? Finally, to whom did he take this oath: they will not enter my rest? Was it not for those who had refused to obey him? We see, therefore, that they could not enter the rest of God because they did not trust Him. "

**Hebrews 4: 7-11:** "For this reason God again fixed a day, which he calls today, when he says much later, in the psalms of David, these words already quoted: Today , If you hear the voice of God, do not harden yourself. For if Joshua had restored the Israelites, God would not speak after that about another day. It is therefore a rest for the people of God, a rest like that of God on the seventh day. For he that entereth into the rest of God rests from his works, as God rested from his own. Let us therefore hasten to enter this rest, that no man should fall into disobedience after the example of the Israelites. "

## I - FROM EDEN TO THE WORLD OF SORROWS

All migrants are intelligent in that they move from a terrible world to a better world. Yet for the first migration of the world it was the opposite! **The first migrants in the world left a magnificent place for a terrible place.** We're talking about Adam and Eve:

**Genesis 3: 23-24:** "God drove man out of the garden of Eden to cultivate the land from which he was taken, so he drove him out."

God repeats twice 'he drove out man', as if it was for good, without any possibility of return. Paradise is lost. This migration of Adam and Eve from paradise to the world we know will continue and end with this strange, new and terrible phenomenon: death 'If you touch this fruit you will die'.

We, too, have all undertaken this migration, whether you are a migrant, a foreigner, a Frenchman, from an ethnic minority. We have all undertaken one and **we have all gone from the Garden of Eden to the world of sorrows**, Isn't it hard to believe that we should do such a thing!!

Some would call the time before our birth 'Paradise Lost' because in the womb of our mother we lack nothing. Even if we can't remember it, we are in a real sense seeking this 'lost paradise'. When we are children, we still have the innocence of childhood and we gradually lose the last blessed trace of this paradise. We start learning to lie, deceive, manipulate people and even worse.

**We are migrants from a wonderful country and we wander round in this sad world. How bizarre we are not to make our way in the opposite direction? Jesus saw this and said that we were 'like sheep wandering and without a shepherd', without rhyme or reason.**

## II - FROM EGYPT TO THE PROMISED LAND

**Deuteronomy 26: 1, 5-9:** "When you have come into the land which the LORD your God gives you, when you have taken possession of it and you settle there ... ", "Then you will speak and you will say before the Lord your God: My ancestor was a wandering Aramaean. He went to Egypt and emigrated there with a handful of men, and there they became a great and powerful people. But the Egyptians abused and oppressed us by imposing painful labours on us. Then we cried unto the LORD the God of our ancestors, and he heard our complaints; he saw our misery, our sorrow and our distress, and brought us out of Egypt by displaying his power; He plunged the Egyptians into terror by doing miraculous signs and wonders. Then he brought us here and gave us a gift of this country flowing with milk and honey. "

**Hebrews 11:13:** "It is in faith that all these people died without receiving what was promised them. But they saw him and greeted from afar, and they recognized that they were themselves strangers and travellers on earth. "

**We are well aware of the importance of this migration of the Hebrews from Egypt to the promised land. So much so that one of the most important books of the Old Testament is called the Exodus. This journey was the foundation of the Hebrew people.** They left the country where they were slaves, passed through the sea, were nomads in the desert for 40 years and finally arrived in the promised land flowing with milk and honey, that is to say a place of abundance. Like a paradise after the desert. It is as if after the slavery, after the desert, they finally found paradise, they had at last reached their goal.

It is true that what they experienced was extraordinary. What's more, this example of the deliverance from slavery was a powerful encouragement and inspiration of God for many battles, against slavery (in particular, for the abolition of slavery in the world in the 19th century) Against segregation (in the United States, in the 20th century, especially with Martin Luther King).

**In short, the Hebrews had found their paradise lost and yet they were told that this was not the end of the journey**, it was not the end of the exodus, the change wasn't complete. In **Leviticus 25:23**, God tells them that 'the land is mine, **you are in my land as strangers, passing through**', and in **Hebrews 4** it is confirmed to us that 'if Joshua had given them total rest then there would be no question of another day when one can say Today. Strive to enter the rest of God.

### III - FROM THE WORLD TO THE KINGDOM OF GOD

**The third example of migration is the most important. This migration takes us from the world to the kingdom of God.** The entry into the promised land of the Hebrews is an image, a prefigure, if only a pale prefigure.

After the slavery, and desert, of sin we too can enter the kingdom of God right now. Jesus did everything in order for us to enter his rest. **John 3** speaks of 'being born again to enter the kingdom of God'. Jesus is 'the kingdom of God who has come near to us', for 'he who trusteth in Jesus Christ has eternal life' (John 3:16, 36: 6:40, 47, 5:24). ). **Ephesians 2:19** says that 'we are no longer strangers or outsiders, but fellow-citizens of the holy people of the house of God'. We are part of the kingdom of God.

So while we are here on this earth, we are all immigrants and foreigners.

**1 Peter 2:11:** "I exhort you as strangers and travellers on earth to abstain from immorality."

**Hebrews 13:14:** "We do not have a permanent city here, but we seek the one that is to come."

If we believe we can find paradise here, we are deluded. Even if we do everything we can to make it look that way, it will never be! Our final destination is the kingdom of God, where there is no Greek, Jew, circumcised, uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free or Syrian, as **Colossians 3:11** says. , Neither German, nor French, nor Congolese, nor black nor white, but Christ is all and in all.

### CONCLUSION

- "Let us go, driven from the lost paradise, we wander like nomads in search of it. People try to build something so that it looks that way but it will never be. And everything will end at death.
- On the other hand, today you can enter the rest of God by becoming a citizen of his kingdom, believing in what Jesus did and receiving eternal life ... even death is defeated, as Jesus showed us so completely in his resurrection.
- (Hebrews 11:13) You are here in this world, but not of this world, that you are a stranger here, a traveller, and that your country is the kingdom of God as Jesus Himself said 'My kingdom is not of this world'.

Do you recognize that you are a stranger ... or do you feel at home in this world ? Does this world attract you ... or do you reject some of its values and prefer those of the kingdom of God? If you are a Christian, you are a stranger in this world even if you are in this world, even if you are a citizen of the country in which you are.

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