

*Kryzys migracyjny – destrukcja czy szansa?
Społeczne i pastoralne aspekty*

Red. ks. Maciej Ostrowski i Józef Partyka
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George Gobronidze

Immigration in Holy Bible. A few examples Introduction – What is migration?

Individuals or groups to change their place of residence irrespective of the reasons and purposes of resettlement. Causes of migration may be as ecological disasters or political motives, as well as better economic perspectives or political safeguards in the place of resettlement. A small portion of border crossings are asylum seekers. This is one of the migration forms.

Such an explanation of the migration can be found in a variety of interpretative dictionary. But the purpose of my work is not to explain the direct or indirect meaning of the word; The purpose of this modest work is to understand the „migration” as a phenomenon in the centuries. Over the past decades due to different colonial wars, due to unemployment, for other political reasons people started traveling to the country. Also in the global world, the borders are opened, and the mass movement of the people between the countries. The unintended person thinks that migrations are the result of the latest above events. But this is not the case, to prove this, and to show some of the most well-known examples from the Old and New Testament.

1. Genesis

Therefore, the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken. So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life (Gen 3:23-24¹). This was the first migration that we meet in the Bible, but it does not fulfill the wandering of the fallen human nature on earth.

2. Tower of Babel

Now the whole earth had one language and the same words. Then they said: “Come, let us build ourselves a city and a tower with its top in the heavens, and let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be dispersed over the face of the whole earth”. And the

¹ Bible - Old Testament, Tbilisi 1989, Patriarchate of Georgia.

Lord said: “Behold, they are one people, and they have all one language, and this is only the beginning of what they will do. And nothing that they propose to do will now be impossible for them. Come, let us go down and there confuse their language, so that they may not understand one another’s speech.” So the Lord dispersed them from there over the face of all the earth, and they left off building the city. Therefore its name was called Babel, because there the Lord confused the language of all the earth. And from there the Lord dispersed them over the face of all the earth (Gen 11:1; 4:6-9;).

For Christians, this text appears on the light of fifty (Pentecost). The man wanted to be equal to God, or forget that he is the creation himself, and this desire is a source of personal and collective sin (Gen 3:5; 11:4) God does not allow people to grow into collective haughtiness. „The Lord has reconciled the tongues or (languages)” (Gen 11:9), and from now on, let every person talk in their language in order To keep the personalities alive.

3. Abraham the patriarch, was a refugee

“And there was a famine in the land. And Abram went down to Egypt to dwell as an alien there, for the famine was severe in the land” (Gen 12:10).

But Abraham is not the only one who is a refugee in the Old Testament. Abraham and his wife Sarah cause Hagar, Sarah’s servant and the mother of Ishmael, to become a refugee, when Sarah exiled Hagar out of anger (Gen 16). Those once in need create injustice—as so often is the case with power.

Then came a time of great need in the land, like that which had been before in the days of Abraham. And Isaac went to Abimelech, king of the Philistines, at Gerar (Gen 26:1).

And the Lord came to him in a vision and said, do not go down to Egypt; keep in the land of which I will give you knowledge: Keep in this land, and I will be with you and give you my blessing; for to you and to your seed will I give all these lands, giving effect to the oath which I made to your father Abraham (Gen 26:2-3).

So Isaac went on living in Gerar; (Gen 26:6). Now Isaac, planting seed in that land, got in the same year fruit a hundred times as much, for the blessing of the Lord was on him (Gen 26:12).

Later in Genesis, ten of Abraham’s great-grandsons go to Egypt as refugees during a famine: “When Jacob realized that there was grain in Egypt, Jacob said to his sons, ‘Why do you look at one another?’ Then he said, ‘Look, I have heard that there is grain in Egypt. Go down there and buy grain for us there that we may live and not die’” (Genesis 42:1–2).

This moment leads to Jacob (Abraham’s grandson), and his entire family, moving to Egypt as immigrants. They are accepted into Egypt by Pharaoh himself (see Gen 46:26–27; 47:1–12).

The Hebrew people eventually become slaves in the land of Egypt. This is the case when Moses comes on the scene. Moses himself becomes an outlaw and refugee in the land of Midian, after he murders an Egyptian who was beating a Hebrew slave (southeast of Israel; Exod 2:11–22).

And, as we all know, Moses and his brother Aaron – by the power of Yahweh – lead the Hebrew people out of slavery in Egypt. Effectively, the entire people group become refugees with nowhere to go (Exod 2:23–25; 15:22–27).

This leads Yahweh himself to provide for them (Exodus 16). And one of the first things God does upon their rescue is to recognize that they must have laws to protect the immigrant, refugee, and powerless (Exod 22:21–27).

Later in Israel's history, once the Hebrew people are a nation with their own land, king David himself lives as an asylum-seeker on multiple occasions (e.g., 1 Sam 21:10).

Trekking forward in Israel's history, we find the prophet Elijah living as a refugee because he spoke truth to the king and was persecuted for it (1 Kgs 17:3, 8–10).

And these are simply the stories of major Old Testament figures who were outcasts, asylum-seekers, immigrants, and refugees. There are also many stories of immigrants who needed protection and help – such as the mother of king David, Ruth, who was a Moabite who immigrated to Israel (see Ru 1).

4. Jesus the refugee

The most famous biblical example of a refugee is Jesus himself. “Now after [the wise men] had gone away, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph, saying, “Get up, take the child and his mother and flee to Egypt, and stay there until I tell you. For Herod is about to seek the child to destroy him.’ So he got up and took the child and his mother during the night and went away to Egypt. And he was there until the death of Herod, in order that what was said by the Lord through the prophet would be fulfilled, saying, ‘Out of Egypt I called my son’” (Matt 2:13–15 LEB).

After Jesus' birth, king Herod sought to kill Jesus (Matt 2). As a result, Jesus, Joseph, and Mary had to flee to Egypt as refugees. To clarify an error I have seen recently: Joseph, Mary, and Jesus travel to Bethlehem for Caesar's census before going to Egypt (Luke 2:1–7). Jesus did not travel to Egypt to register for the census; he went there as a refugee (compare Matt 1:25–2:1).²

5. Conclusion

Starting from the first family, with other examples of the Old Testament, and ending with the New Testament, I tried to show that migration is not a new event. More: In the ancient period of human development, people changed their habitats to migrate from one part of the earth to another and this process was continuous endless.

What have we got today? We live in an active migration and one day we may arise in the morning and find a neighboring with Foreign tribe neighbor. This is the reality today. Therefore, as we should never be as tolerant as we are, we have to accept human beings, no matter their nationality or we will never be able to establish peace, otherwise we can't be called neither a human being neither a Christians.

“The things that hath been, it is that which shall be; and that which is done is that which shall be done: and there is no new thing under the sun. Is there any thing whereof it may be said, see this is new? It hath been already of old time, which before us (Qoh 1:9-10).

² Bible - New Testament, Matthew, p. 959-960, Tbilisi 1989 Patriarchate of Georgia