



June 2007

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Lurth, David. "The Strangers in the Land: Who They Are and Israel's Responsibility to Them." *Studia Antiqua* 5, no. 1 (2007).
<https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/studiaantiqua/vol5/iss1/12>

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The Strangers in the Land: Who They Are and Israel's Responsibility to Them

David Lurth

ACCORDING to early rabbinic tradition, the Lord revealed 613 written commandments to Moses at Mount Sinai before the children of Israel entered the promised land.¹ With so many commandments, it is almost impossible for the average person to know and live every single one. So, the wise person might ask, "Which commandments of the 613 are the most important to know and would be the most beneficial when followed?" Nowhere in the law of Moses or the entire Old Testament does the Lord plainly say which of his commandments are the most important.²

One way to determine the importance of a commandment is to calculate the gravity of its consequence when disobeyed. In this line of reasoning, it is necessary to know what divine punishment would have

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1. Abraham Hirsch Rabinowitz, "Commandments, The 613," *Encyclopaedia Judaica* 5:760.

2. In the New Testament, Jesus says that the first two great commandments are to love God and your neighbor on which "hang all the law and the prophets" (Matt 22:36–40). Further discussion of the two great commandments taught by Jesus and how they relate to the subject of this paper will be made below.

the most profound impact on the Ancient Israelites and know the commandment upon which that punishment was predicated. In light of the history of the Israelites and the requirements of survival in the ancient world, land and the freedom to live in it was the most valued and sought after blessing of the Lord. Therefore, the most devastating thing that could have happened to the Lord's chosen people was to have the blessing of life in the promised land taken away from them. The question needed to be answered now is: "What was Israel required to do to ensure continued inheritance in the promised land?" The purpose of this paper is to show that Israel's right to continue living in the promised land depended primarily upon their just treatment of the "stranger." I will do this by defining the "stranger," explaining the correct application of some important Old Testament laws pertaining to the stranger, and by examining the teachings of prophets in relation to the stranger.

Definition of the "Stranger"

The word that is commonly translated in the King James Version as "stranger" (גֵר *ger*) comes from the Hebrew root גָּר which means "to sojourn"³ and can equally be translated as "sojourner."⁴ One definition of the stranger is given as:

A man who, either alone or with his family, leaves his village and tribe, because of war (2 Sam 4:3), famine (Ruth 1:1), pestilence,

3. F. Brown, S. R. Driver, and C. A. Briggs. *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1907), 157. F. A. Spina suggests alternate roots for *gur* to be *gara*, "to attack, strive," and *yagor*, "to be afraid, fear" and the social-historical implications of these roots in "Israelites as gerim: Sojourners in Social and Historical Context," in C. L. Meyers and M. O'Connor, eds., *The Word of the Lord Shall Go Forth: Essays in Honor of David Noel Freedman in Celebration of His Sixtieth Birthday* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1983), 325.

4. Christiana van Houten prefers, along with the NRSV, the more modern translation of גֵר as "alien," *The Alien in Israelite Law* (England: JSOT Press, 1991), 8. Spina prefers "immigrant" because it contains the "nuances inherent in 'resident alien' and 'sojourner,' but it also calls attention to the original circumstances of social conflict which are inevitably responsible for large-scale withdrawal of people" (323).

blood-guilt, etc., and seeks shelter and sojourn elsewhere, where his right to own land, to marry, and to participate in the administration of justice, in the cult, and in war is curtailed.⁵

Many other similar definitions are given, but the basic sense understood from Biblical passages in which the stranger is mentioned is someone that needs and is entitled to sustenance and protection.⁶

Ultimately, searching for a precise definition of the stranger is meaningless because either Abraham or the Israelites who descended from him are referred to as “strangers” either by the Lord or prophets at least seventeen times in the Old Testament.⁷ The Patriarchs were strangers in Canaan and the Israelites were strangers in Egypt. Moses named his first son Gershom (גֵרְשֹׁם) “for he said, I have been a stranger in a strange land” (Exod 2:22).⁸ When the Lord commands the Israelites to be kind to the stranger (discussed in more detail below), many times it is followed by the phrase “for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt” to remind them of the Lord’s mercy in delivering them and to teach the Israelites that they should extend that same mercy to those that are in need. On seven different occasions the Lord states that there was to be one law for Israel and the stranger (Exod 12:49; Lev

5. William L. Holladay, *A Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1988), 64.

6. Bernhard A. Asen, “From Acceptance to Inclusion: The Stranger (*ger*) in Old Testament Tradition” in Francis W. Nichols, ed., *Christianity and the Stranger* (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1995), 19. Van Houten, in *The Alien*, argues that the identity of the stranger in the Biblical law codes (the pre-monarchic Book of the Covenant and Decalogue, the monarchic Deuteronomy, and the exilic or post-exilic Priestly laws) changed throughout the history of ancient Israel. In the pre-monarchic period, the stranger is an “occasional stranger or family from afar” (59) and are not the conquered Canaanites but are “outsiders, who are vulnerable in a new place . . . [who] must rely on the protection . . . of the Israelite society” (62). During monarchical times, the aliens are the Gibeonites or other non-Israelites who entered into an inferior covenant relationship with the Lord (108). During exilic or post-exilic times, the גֵר “refers to proselytes and not strangers” (131).

7. See Gen 15:13, 17:8, 23:4, 28:4, 36:7, 37:1; Exod 2:22, 6:4, 22:21, 23:9; Lev 19:34, 25:23; Deut 10:19, 23:7; 1 Chr 16:19, 29:15; Ps 39:12.

8. As it is the most common translation used by Latter-day Saints, I will use the King James Translation for all Bible quotes.

18:26, 24:22; Num 9:14, 15:15–16, 29) putting both of them on equal ground. The Lord did not “respect persons in judgment” and neither should the Israelites (Deut 1:17).

The Stranger in the Pentateuch

Laws concerning the stranger in the Pentateuch can be divided into five basic categories: General Treatment, Welfare Laws, Religious/Ritual Obligations, Social Status, and Moral Laws.⁹ The most significant laws from each category will be discussed throughout the remainder of the article. Most of the laws elevate the stranger to the same level as the Israelites, but few deal specifically with how the Israelites were to act towards strangers. Compared to the literature of other ancient Near Eastern cultures, the stranger receives more attention in the Old Testament.¹⁰ Concern for the stranger in specific is given in only one extrabiblical text, a command of a Hittite king to the border guards, “a stranger who resides in the Land provide him fully with seeds, cattle, and sheep.”¹¹ However, concern for the widow, orphan, and the weak in general is well attested in the literature of the ancient Near East.¹² An example from the epilogue in the Code of Hammurabi is typical: “I sheltered them [the peoples of the land] in my wisdom. In order that the strong might not oppress the weak, that justice might be dealt the orphan (and) the widow.”¹³ This is important because in the Old

9. A comprehensive list with scripture references of the laws concerning the stranger is included in the appendix.

10. Donald E. Gowan, “Wealth and Poverty in the Old Testament: The Case of the Widow, the Orphan, and the Sojourner,” *Interpretation* 41.4 (1987): 343. For a discussion on the context of biblical law concerning the stranger in the ancient Near East, see Houten, *The Alien*, 23–42. For the stranger in ancient Greece, see Christoph Auffarth, “Protecting Strangers: Establishing a Fundamental Value in the Religions of the Ancient Near East and Ancient Greece,” *Numen* 39.2 (December, 1992): 193–216.

11. Bruce V. Malchow, *Social Justice in the Hebrew Bible* (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1996), 4–5.

12. For texts concerning the weak, widows, and orphans from the major ancient Near Eastern civilizations, see Malchow, *Social Justice*, 1–5.

13. Malchow, *Social Justice*, 2.

Testament the stranger is often included in a formula with the widow and the fatherless.¹⁴

Interestingly, the Old Testament and the ancient Near Eastern law codes do not contain case law for the widow, orphan, or the stranger; there is only “concern.”¹⁵ Immediate punishments for not doing justice to the weak are not clearly defined. In the Old Testament, there is no mention of sacrifices, offerings, punishments, or restitutions required for those found guilty of “oppressing” the stranger as there exists for other biblical laws. One needs to examine the teachings of the prophets to discover the ultimate consequence for not doing justice to the stranger (discussed below).

How Israel Should Treat the Stranger

I will now proceed to discuss the commandments which state specifically how Israel should treat the stranger. Exodus 22:21 states “Thou shalt neither vex a stranger, nor oppress him: for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt.” The word that is translated “vex” is from נָהַג which means “to oppress” or “be violent” and “is often used in the context of the rich and powerful ill-treating the poor and weak”¹⁶ (see Lev 25:14; Deut 23:16). “Oppress” comes from לָחַץ which means “press” in a physical sense, or “oppress” and is “consistently used to refer to foreigners oppressing Israel”¹⁷ (see Judg 2:18; 1 Sam 10:18; Amos 6:14). The motivation clause “for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt” is given to remind the Israelites of the harsh treatment they received at the hands of the Egyptians and as an example of what not to do to the stranger. The Israelites were not supposed to take advantage of their favorable economic and social status above the stranger.

Immediately following the command not to vex or oppress the stranger in Exodus 22, the Lord commands Israel not to afflict

14. See Deut 10:18, 14:29, 16:11, 14, 24:17, 19–21, 26:12–13, 27:19; Ps 94:6, 146:9; Jer 7:6, 22:3; Ezek 22:7; Zech 7:10; Mal 3:5.

15. Houten, *The Alien*, 34.

16. Houten, *The Alien*, 52.

17. Houten, *The Alien*, 52.

widows or the fatherless (v. 22) and declares the consequence for the maltreatment of this section of Israelite society:

If thou afflict them in any wise, and they cry at all unto me, I will surely hear their cry; And my wrath shall wax hot, and I will kill you with the sword; and your wives shall be widows, and your children fatherless. (Exod 22:23–24)

The just treatment of strangers, widows, and the fatherless was so important to the Lord that he would personally see to it (“I will kill”) that offenders were severely punished.

The Lord commands “judge righteously between every man and his brother, and the stranger that is with him,” (Deut 1:16) and “thou shalt not pervert the judgment of the stranger” (Deut 24:17). In the context of these two passages it is clear that the Lord required Israel to give fair and equal treatment when judging strangers in court trials. Israel was also required to “do no unrighteousness in judgment” with the stranger when measuring goods for payment (see Lev 19:34–37).

Israel was also supposed to celebrate many of their required festivals with the stranger. This is important for the objective of this paper because these celebrations have direct ties to Israel’s inheritance and subsequent activities in the promised land. The Feast of Weeks marked the beginning of the wheat harvest (Deut 16:10–11).¹⁸ The Feast of Tabernacles was to celebrate the harvest and to remember the time Israel lived in booths in the wilderness after the exodus (Deut 16:13–14). “As the main feast of the year, Tabernacles was the occasion for the consecration of Solomon’s Temple (1 Kings 8).”¹⁹ Upon entering the promised land, Israel was to offer up the firstfruits to the Lord (Deut 26:11). During all these festivals, Israel was commanded to “rejoice with the stranger” to remind them of their former status as strangers in Egypt and to extend the same blessings to the strangers among them just as the Lord had blessed them to become established in the promised land (see Deut 16:10–15, 26:10–11).

18. Louis Jacobs, “Shavuot,” *Encyclopædia Judaica* 14:1319.

19. Ernst Kutsch, “Sukkot,” *Encyclopædia Judaica* 15:496–97.

In the Law of Moses, the Lord commands “And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might,” (Deut 6:5) and “thou shalt love thy neighbour (עֲרֵב) as thyself” (Lev 19:18). In the same chapter that the Lord commands Israel to love their neighbor, He also commands, “the stranger that dwelleth with you shall be unto you as one born among you, and thou shalt love him as thyself; for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt” (Lev 19:34; see also Deut 10:19). Therefore, “neighbour” and “stranger” can be used interchangeably as Israel was commanded to love both of them “as thyself.” This fact is significant for a deeper understanding of the Savior’s answer to a question posed by a Pharisee concerning the law of Moses:

Master, which is the great commandment of the law? Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets. (Matt 22:36–40)

Jesus could have just as easily said “stranger” instead of “neighbour” and according to his answer, the commandment to love the neighbour (or stranger) is the second greatest besides the one to love God.

But what does it mean to love the stranger? The teachings of the Savior in the New Testament give insight to this question. Jesus was asked a related question to the one above and he responded with a similar answer. The encounter is recorded as follows:

And, behold, a certain lawyer stood up, and tempted him, saying, Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? He said unto him, What is written in the law? how readest thou? And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself. And he said unto him, Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live. (Luke 10:25–28)

There seems to have been some confusion or disagreement as to the definition of “neighbour” and the lawyer “said unto Jesus, And who is my neighbour?” (Luke 10:29). Jesus’ answer, the parable of the Good Samaritan, gives an all-inclusive definition of “neighbour” as anyone who

is in need of assistance, the same as the definition of a stranger given above. In addition, the parable teaches that help should be given regardless of the social standing of the giver or receiver. The lawyer's identification of the Samaritan as the neighbor of the man who was robbed shows that he had a correct understanding of what it meant to "love thy neighbor (or stranger) as thyself." Loving the neighbor and stranger consists of providing medical attention, food, clothing, or shelter to those in need (see Luke 10:33–35) and was taught by the Savior as an essential requirement to inherit eternal life.

The Prophets Establish the Primacy of Just Treatment of the Stranger

The prophets of the Old Testament emphasize the just treatment of the stranger in connection with Israel's right to remain in the promised land. The first one to do so was Moses. Just before Moses was to lead the children of Israel to the promised land, he taught them:

And the Lord said unto me, Arise, take thy journey before the people, that they may go in and possess the land, which I swear unto their fathers to give unto them. And now, Israel, what doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to fear the Lord thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul. . . . For the Lord your God is God of gods, and Lord of lords, a great God, a mighty, and a terrible, which regardeth not persons, nor taketh reward: He doth execute the judgment of the fatherless and widow, and loveth the stranger, in giving him food and raiment. Love ye therefore the stranger: for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt. (Deut 10:11–12, 17–19)

The importance of the occasion in which Moses is speaking can not be underestimated. After many years of hard bondage in Egypt, the Lord had finally called a prophet to free his people. And what did Moses say right before Israel was about to possess the promised land? "Love God and love the stranger."

Deuteronomy 28 is a list of the blessings and curses that will come upon Israel if they do or do not keep all the Lord's commandments. If they are faithful, they will prosper in the land (vv. 1–14). If they are not, destruction will come upon them (vv. 15–68),

and they will eventually be driven out of the promised land and scattered over the whole earth (vv. 63–64). The section on curses is organized into a chiasmus. This is significant because ancient Hebrew poetry often utilizes chiastic structure where important ideas or themes are listed in succession and then repeated in reverse order. The most important message that the author wants to convey is put at the turning point of chiasm. The chiastic structure of the curses is as follows:²⁰

- A 25 – Removed to all kingdoms of the earth
- B 26 – Your carcasses will be eaten by animals
- C 21–24, 27 – Cursed with plagues, botch of Egypt
 - D 28 – Madness, and blindness, and astonishment of heart
 - E 29 – Grope at noonday, as the blind gropeth in darkness
 - F 32, 34 – Eyes look towards sons and daughters, will be mad at what your eyes will see
 - G 35 – Smitten in knees, legs and from foot to head
 - H 33, 36 – Lord will bring you to unknown nation
 - I 38–40, 42 – No food, crops consumed by locusts, all trees consumed
 - J 43–44 – Stranger will rule over Israel
 - K 44 – Sign of Israel’s disobedience: Israel will be the tail (stranger is head)
- X 45 – Curses because Israel did not hearken unto the voice of the Lord and keep his commandments
 - K’ 46 – Curses will be for “a sign and a wonder” upon Israel
 - J’ 47 – Because Israel did not serve the Lord for the abundance of all things
 - I’ 48, 51 – Serve enemies in hunger, thirst, and want of all things, enemies will eat crops/flocks
 - H’ 49 – Lord will bring nation with unknown tongue against you
 - G’ 52 – Besieged in gates, walls, and throughout all the land
- B’ 53, 55, 57 – Will eat the flesh of your own children
 - F’ 54, 56 – Eye evil toward brother, wife, and children
- C’ 59–61 – Cursed with plagues, diseases of Egypt
- A’ 63–64 – Scattered among all people
 - D’ 65 – Trembling heart, and failing of eyes, and sorrow of mind:
 - E’ 66–67 – Fear day and night

20. Duane L. Christensen has identified a rather complex chiastic structure of Deuteronomy 28 in *Word Biblical Commentary*, vol. 6B (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2002), 664–706. In his commentary, he gives no special attention to the place of the stranger in the chiasmus or the significance of the stranger in the chapter.

It is not a perfect chiasmus but specific vocabulary and themes are reflected on either side of the center where Moses prophetically accuses Israel of not keeping the Lords' commandments (v. 45).²¹ The reference to the stranger is located very close to the center and is in chiastic form itself (vv. 43–44):

The stranger that is within thee shall get up above thee very high; and thou shalt come down very low
 He shall lend to thee, and thou shalt not lend to him:
 He shall be the head, and thou shalt be the tail.

About the stranger ruling over Israel as stated in the above verses, “It should be noted that this is a reversal of the final blessing in the original expansion of the covenant blessings in vv 12–13”²² which promised Israel with prosperity in the promised land. The reason that the stranger would rule over Israel is given in its reflection across the center of the chiasmus in verse 47, “Because thou servedst not the Lord thy God with joyfulness, and with gladness of heart, for the abundance of all things.” As explained above, Israel was required to “rejoice with the stranger” in the various feasts, sharing with him the abundance of the Lord’s blessings given in the promised land.

In the Book of Mormon, King Benjamin taught that serving God also means serving “your fellow being” (Mosiah 2:17). So, when Moses says that Israel “servedst not the Lord [their] God” (Deut 38:47), we can understand it to mean that Israel neglected serving the strangers among them by not sharing the blessings of the promised land with them. The consequence of this negligence is in line with the talionic nature of God’s justice in the law of Moses and as taught by the prophets:²³ Israel’s favored status in the promised land would be

21. For factors to consider when determining the strength of a proposed chiasmus, see John W. Welch, “Criteria for Identifying and Evaluating the Presence of Chiasmus,” in *Chiasmus Bibliography*, ed. John W. Welch and Daniel B. McKinlay (Provo, UT: Research Press, 1999), 157–74.

22. Christensen, *Word*, 683.

23. See Exod 21:23–25; Lev 24:17–21; Deut 19:19, 21; Obad 1:15; Jer 17:10.

taken away and given to the stranger. That this role reversal between Israel and the stranger is found within the context of a chiasmus has even added significance because “No literary device could better convey the ‘measure for measure’ balancing concept of talionic justice than does the literary equilibrium of chiasmus.”²⁴ In Deuteronomy 28, Moses taught that Israel’s treatment of the stranger would be the determining factor in whether or not Israel would remain in the promised land.

Jeremiah also taught the importance of dealing righteously with the stranger. The Lord commanded him to stand at the gate of the temple and say to the people of Israel:

Amend your ways and your doings, and I will cause you to dwell in this place. For if ye thoroughly amend your ways and your doings; if ye thoroughly execute judgment between a man and his neighbour; If ye oppress not the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, and shed not innocent blood in this place, neither walk after other gods to your hurt: Then will I cause you to dwell in this place, in the land that I gave to your fathers, for ever and ever. (Jer 7:3, 5–7)

Shortly before Jerusalem was destroyed, Jeremiah told the Israelites that they needed to amend their ways and stop oppressing the stranger. If they did so, they had the promise to dwell in the land “for ever and ever.” Jeremiah also went to the house of the king of Judah and said the same thing, promising desolation upon the throne of David if they did not repent (Jer 22:1–5). Of all the commandments the Lord could have urged Israel to obey when destruction was imminent, he chooses to tell them not to oppress the stranger. At the same time, Jeremiah deemphasizes other commandments such as temple ritual observances (Jer 6:20, 7:4).

The importance of this commandment in the eyes of the Lord is also seen in the locations in which Jeremiah was ordered to call for its obedience. He is first commanded to proclaim it at the temple, the center of Israelite worship (Jer 7:2). Then he is commanded to speak it

24. John W. Welch, “Chiasmus in Biblical Law: an Approach to the Structure of Legal Texts in the Hebrew Bible,” *Jewish Law Association Studies* 4 (1990): 10.

at the house of the king of Judah, the center of Israelite government (Jer 22:1). This was done to ensure that every Israelite would hear Jeremiah's call for obedience and to teach that the just treatment of the stranger was required of all classes of society, whether the person is a farmer or the king of Israel.

Malachi prophesied concerning the Second Coming of the Savior and those who oppress the stranger. He says the Lord will be a "swift witness" against those that "turn aside the stranger" (Mal 3:5). Malachi continues in the often quoted passage:

Even from the days of your fathers ye are gone away from mine ordinances, and have not kept them. Return unto me, and I will return unto you, saith the Lord of hosts. But ye said, Wherein shall we return? Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings. Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation. Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it. And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground; neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field, saith the Lord of hosts. And all nations shall call you blessed: for ye shall be a delightsome land, saith the Lord of hosts. (Mal 3:7–12)

According to the law of Moses, every third year Israel was required to give a tithe of that year's increase to the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow (Deut 14:28–29, 26:12–13). So when Malachi says that future Israel would rob God of tithes and offerings, he is predicting their harsh treatment of the stranger and those who cannot provide for themselves. It is interesting to note that he does not mention any other commandments that need be obeyed. The blessing for paying tithes and offerings and therefore caring for the stranger is prosperity in the land.

Conclusion

It is true that the unjust treatment of the stranger is not the only action against which the Israelites were warned. The prophets

frequently accused Israel of serious crimes such as idolatry, adultery, and murder.²⁵ But, the association of Israel's treatment of the stranger and their right to remain in the promised land is undeniable. We Latter-day Saints who claim to be of the House of Israel need to be watchful of how we treat the strangers, outcasts, and down-trodden among us. We need to love them as is commanded in the Bible or our inheritance on this earth will be in jeopardy. Let us hope that at the final judgment Christ can say the following to us:

Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a *stranger*, and ye took me in: Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. (Matt 25:34–36, emphasis added)

25. For idolatry, see Isa 2:8; Jer 5:19; Ezek 6:13; for adultery, see Isa 57:3; Jer 29:23; for murder, see Jer 7:9; Hos 6:9.

APPENDIX

General Treatment of the Stranger

- Do not vex or oppress the stranger (Exod 22:21, 23:9; Lev 19:33).
- Love the stranger (Lev 19:34; Deut 10:19).
- Judge righteously with the stranger (Deut 1:16).
- The Lord loves the stranger (Deut 10:18).
- Do not oppress the hired servant who is a stranger (Deut 24:14).
- Do not pervert the judgment of the stranger (Deut 24:17, 27:19).

Welfare Laws for the Stranger

- Leave the gleanings for the stranger (Lev 19:9–10, 23:22).
- Leave grapes in the vineyard for the stranger (Lev 19:10; Deut 24:21).
- Israel is to be fair with the stranger in economic transactions (Lev 19:34–37).
- Poor strangers are to be taken care of and live with Israel (Lev 25:35).
- Give carrion to the stranger (Deut 14:21).
- Leave the sheaf in the field when it is forgotten for the stranger (Deut 24:19).
- Leave olives on the tree for the stranger (Deut 24:20).

Religious/Ritual Obligations toward the Stranger

- Like Israel, the stranger will be cut off if he eats leavened bread during Passover (Exod 12:19).
- Male strangers must be circumcised to keep the Passover (Exod 12:48).²⁶
- Let the stranger rest on the seventh/Sabbath day (Exod 20:10, 23:12; Deut 5:14).
- The stranger is to observe Day of Atonement with Israel (Lev 16:29).

26. Exod 12:43 KJV says no stranger (בן נכר) “son of a foreigner”; *ger* is not used) is to eat the Passover. Ze’ev Falk identifies all foreigners as *ger* not recognizing the different vocabulary that is present in the Hebrew, *Hebrew Law in Biblical Times* (Provo, UT: Brigham Young University Press, 2001), 112–14. For a good discussion on the “foreigner” (נכר), see Michael Guttman, “The Term ‘Foreigner’ Historically Considered,” *Hebrew Union College Annual* 3 (1926): 1–20.

- Strangers, like Israel, are to bring burnt offerings to the door of the tabernacle (Lev 17:8–9).
- The stranger, like Israel, is not to eat blood (Lev 17:10–14).
- The stranger, like Israel, is unclean upon eating carrion (Lev 17:15).
- Same Passover observance for the stranger and Israel (Num 9:14).
- Same “offering by fire” observance for the stranger and Israel (Num 15:14).
- The stranger is forgiven, like Israel, of sins of ignorance (Num 15:26, 29).
- The stranger is cut off, like Israel, for sinning knowingly (Num 15:30).
- The stranger is unclean, like Israel, after gathering ashes of a heifer (Num 19:10).
- The stranger, like Israel, can flee to the cities of refuge for protection (Num 35:15).
- The three year tithe is to be given to the stranger (Deut 14:28–29, 26:12–13).
- Israel is to rejoice with the stranger at the Feast of Weeks (Deut 16:10–11).
- Israel is to rejoice with the stranger at the Feast of Tabernacles (Deut 16:13–14).
- Israel is to rejoice with the stranger when offering up the firstfruits after entering the promised land (Deut 26:11).

Social Status of the Stranger

- Circumcised male strangers are “as one that is born in the land” (Exod 12:48).
- One law/ordinance for Israel and the stranger (Exod 12:49; Lev 18:26, 24:22; Num 9:14; 15:15–16, 29).
- The stranger is to be “as one born among Israel” (Lev 19:34).
- Israel and the stranger are to offer the same sacrifices (Lev 22:18–31).²⁷
- An Israelite servant of a stranger may be redeemed by a close relative (Lev 25:47–48).

Inclusion of the Stranger in Israelite Moral Laws

- Strangers shall not “uncover the nakedness” of close relatives or unclean women (Lev 18:6–19, see v. 26).
- Strangers shall not lay with the neighbor’s wife (Lev 18:20, see v. 26).
- Strangers are not to let their seed pass through the fire to Molech (Lev 18:21 [see v. 26], 20:2).
- Strangers shall not profane/blaspheme the name of God (Lev 18:21 [see v. 26], 24:16).
- Strangers shall not have homosexual relations (Lev 18:22, see v. 26).
- Strangers shall not do bestiality (Lev 18:23, see v. 26).

27. Lev 22:25 KJV says that the sacrifices should not be offered “from a stranger’s hand” but this is the נכר and not the *ger*. See note 26.