

Study Hints for Discussion and Thinking Further
International Bible Lessons

Genesis 15:1-6 & 17-21

Sunday, October 1, 2017

L.G. Parkhurst, Jr.

Some Bible study groups or classes can further discussion by asking some or all of the **Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further** below. Others may want to send the bulletin size *International Bible Lesson* home with their students for further study in the coming week to encourage continuing Bible study. The *Study Hints for Discussion and Thinking Further* below are not actually intended to be *the answers* to the discussion questions. These indeed are “hints” a teacher may use to help students think through and discuss the questions in class. The *Class Preparation Guide* includes the questions below, and it can be given to students at the end of the previous class so they can pray, read, and think ahead to prepare for the next week’s Bible class.

Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further

1. What did Abram do to show that he believed God?

Abram moved when and where God told him to move, to a land that God had promised to give to him and to his descendants. Abram did what God said. Abram trusted in and obeyed God.

2. What is the difference between God being your shield and God providing you with a shield? Which would you prefer? Why?

Having God surround you and cover you with His almighty power and comforting love and mercy seems better than any other object, person, or group assigned to protect you apart from God’s presence. If God is your shield, when you die He will guide you safely to heaven and the place Jesus went to prepare a place for you.

3. What shield are believers supposed to take? Why do believers need this shield in addition to the protection God provides?

The New Testament tells us to take up the shield of faith, “With all of these, take the shield of faith, with which you will be able to quench all the flaming arrows of the evil one” (Ephesians 6:16). We need to keep the shield of faith firmly in our grasp. Through faith, we maintain trust in and obedience to God. Through faith, we can know and do what God wants us to do for our protection. Through faith, we do our part in our

relationship with God; then, God does not need to do His part in spite of our lack of faith (as when God had to save Abraham and Sarah from Abimelech after Abraham's lack of faith in God serving as his shield, see Genesis 20). Through his failure, Abraham had to learn the lesson of what God meant when God said He was his shield. God probably does this countless times in our lives, and we need to thank Him.

4. What reward did God promise Abram? Compare different translations of Genesis 15:1 (see especially the King James Version) for your answer.

God promised Abram His presence and that he would have descendants and they would inherit the Promised Land. The saving presence of the LORD is the greatest reward anyone can receive as the fruit of their faith. "After these things the word of the LORD came unto Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward" (Genesis 15:1).

5. Why do you think God made a covenant or contract with Abram the way He did?

God used a method of making a contract or covenant similar to what Abram knew from his cultural experience, but far more elaborate and terrifying; therefore, Abram knew that God had made a binding contract with him. God gave the covenant in a way that Abram would never forget or ask for again in order for Abram to know that God would do what He said. God made the contract or covenant in a way that Abram could tell his descendants about, so they too could believe in God and the covenant promise to them.