

***Study Hints for Thinking Further***  
***International Bible Lessons***  
**Jeremiah 23:1-6; 33:14-18**  
**Sunday, August 19, 2012**  
**L.G. Parkhurst, Jr.**

Some Bible study groups or classes can further discussion by asking some or all of the **Five 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 Thinking Further* below are not actually intended to be answers to the discussion questions, but hints a teacher may use to help students think through and discuss the questions in class.

**Five Questions for Discussion  
and Thinking Further**

**1. In what ways can failure or refusal to do your duty lead to harming others materially and spiritually.**

There are many ways people can be harmed by those who fail or refuse to do their duty. For example, people can starve physically and spiritually. People can be unjustly punished, when someone fails or refuses to do their duty toward those accused. If spiritual leaders and teachers fail, people can be misled or not taught how to follow the Bible's teachings. If failure is by accident or mistake, some may still suffer from the failure, but those who suffer may be more understanding, and God (and possibly others) will

open ways to teach the person who made the mistake how to avoid similar mistakes in the future. If failure is by intention or neglect of duty, then failure to do your duty is a refusal that God will justly punish and others may justly punish too. In some cases, God may still open ways to teach the negligent person, who refused to do their duty, how to change their behavior and act more responsibly in the future.

## **2. How can spending time in exile sometimes help God's people?**

People who disobey God and who find themselves in exile as a consequence can reflect upon the actions and beliefs they maintained that led them into the situation in which they find themselves. Exile can be experienced in a variety of ways; such as, being separated from family and friends through imprisonment or living where you do not want to live. Some people may live in exile their entire lives, but come to know God and believe in the teachings of the Bible and find the way of eternal life through faith in Jesus the Messiah as their Lord and Savior.

## **3. Why was God's promise through Jeremiah, that their exile would not last forever, important for God to make to His people?**

God gave His people hope when He said that their time in exile would be a specific length of time. Furthermore, people, such as Daniel, could pray to God based on the promises of God with the faith that God would keep His promises. People also learned that their time in exile was a time of discipline to teach them to follow God, and many

chose to learn this lesson from God rather than remain unrepentant.

**4. Read Jeremiah 23:4 again. What three results will God's people experience when they are led by good shepherds? How did Jesus fulfill this promise?**

When people are shepherded the way God wants shepherds to behave, people no longer live in fear; they are not dismayed when the unexpected happens that may seem unfortunate; they will not worry that someone will become a missing person, for the shepherd will take care of them and find the one who strays and bring them back to the sheepfold. During His earthly ministry, Jesus cast out people's fears; for example, He quieted a storm and cast out the fear in His disciples. His disciples were no doubt dismayed when they met the man filled with demons and the demons entered the pigs and rushed into the sea and drowned at Jesus' command, but they ceased to be dismayed with they saw the man healed and in his right mind. In an extreme case, Lazarus became a "missing person" when he died and was buried. Until Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, his death brought great sorrow to his sisters because they missed him. Peter became a "missing person" when he denied Jesus three times and fled weeping when Jesus was on trial, but the resurrected Jesus restored him as a disciple and made Peter a great leader in the church. No doubt there are many other examples that show Jesus was a good shepherd according to the prophecy of Jeremiah.

## **5. Why can we trust God to keep all of His promises and prophecies?**

We can trust God to keep all of His promises and prophecies, because we have seen how God has kept many of His promises and prophecies in the past; because God is almighty over all, so His plans cannot be thwarted; because God is all-knowing and wise, He can solve any problem; because God is faithful, just, merciful, and loving, He can be trusted to always do the right thing and never be stopped from doing the right thing no matter what happens or who or what may oppose Him.

*— © Copyright 2012 L.G. Parkhurst, Jr. You may reprint or reproduce Study Hints for Thinking Further for not-for-profit use.*