

***Study Hints for Thinking Further***  
***International Bible Lessons***

***Ezra 8:1-3, 13-18***

**Sunday, August 4, 2013**

**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 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.

**Five Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further**

**1. Why do you think it is important to know that the Law of Moses was given to him by the LORD rather than being a set of laws written by Moses or others with legal training?**

God’s law is a moral law that tells those He created how they need to think, believe, and act if they want to get the very most out of the way He created people in His image. God’s moral law applies to all people and all nations everywhere. Because God’s law is a moral law, there are consequences for those who obey and for those who disobey God’s laws no matter who they are or where they live. Some of these consequences God reserves for administration at the last judgment. For example, moral laws against murder and theft, which God revealed to Moses in the Ten Commandments, violate God’s law for people to love their neighbors, but violators may not experience all of the consequences of breaking these laws in this life. The ceremonial laws that God revealed through Moses pointed to the coming of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Jesus perfectly obeyed the moral law of God and He perfectly fulfilled the ceremonial laws of God when He died and rose from the dead. Laws made by people (by parents, judges, kings, legislators, regulators, and others) can be easily changed, can be easily manipulated to show favoritism, and can be easily unjust. God’s moral laws cannot be changed, cannot be manipulated, and cannot be unjust. Human laws can be consistent with or inconsistent with the moral laws of God. Human laws can be right or wrong. God’s law is higher than man’s law, and God’s law is always just and right.

**2. Why do you think Nehemiah 8:2-3 emphasizes understanding?**

God’s law can be understood and teachers need to explain God’s law and why God made His laws and how to obey God’s laws and how God will help people obey His laws. The choice to study and obey the Law of God can help both teachers and students understand the law of God and happily obey the moral laws of God with an understanding of why they should trust and obey God.

### **3. Why do you think all of the people were attentive as Ezra read and explained the Law of God?**

They knew they were the people of God, and they were drawn to learn more about God and God's ways because they wanted to please God, who had freed them to return home and rebuild Jerusalem. The truth of God's word had an effect upon their minds and understanding, and the truth brought them mental and spiritual satisfaction. The Holy Spirit endorsed the truth of God and spiritually touched their minds and hearts, giving them a greater desire and strength of will to understand and obey God. Ezra's years of study and obedience enabled him to understand and teach the Bible effectively. He taught in ways far better than the scribes and Pharisees in Jesus' day; for, as Jesus declared, with their rules and regulations many who taught in His day tried to find ways to avoid obeying the more important or weightier laws of God.

### **4. Why do you think Nehemiah 8:13 emphasizes that they studied "the words of the law"?**

Every word in the word of God, in the Bible, is important and can be studied—especially every word related to the Law of God and Jesus Christ. Of course, some words are more important than others words; however, for example, in their context there may be a significant difference between two three letter words, "and" or "but." We do need to study, understand, and obey the Bible at the level of words, and Jesus was revealed as the Word of God, the most important word of all.

### **5. How might the nations of the world be different if all political and religious leaders and everyone in every nation studied the words of God's law or the Bible?**

Leaders might become more inclined to obey the moral law of God and enact laws that are consistent with (and not contrary to) the moral law of God. People would understand the moral law and why they should obey the moral law and their government's laws rather than disobey the law. Peace and happiness would be more prevalent in these nations. People would not be torn between obeying God's moral law and obeying or disobeying their nation's immoral laws.

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