

Study Hints for Thinking Further
International Bible Lessons
Nehemiah 9:1-3, 6-10, 29-36
Sunday, August 11, 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. What kind of foreigner were the Israelites forbidden to marry?

Those who did not turn to God and to obeying the Law of God as Ruth had done before she married Boaz. Ruth had proven her faithfulness to God for many years prior to her marriage to Boaz by the way she treated her husband before his death and by the way she treated her widowed mother-in-law.

2. Why did God forbid them from marrying unbelievers?

God forbid the Israelites from marrying unbelievers because these unbelievers would mislead their husbands and children away from God, as happened to King Solomon as wise as he was and to his children. In turn, King Solomon misled his entire kingdom away from faith in the true God, which led to the kingdom's destruction. Ezra knew these facts and taught them to God's people when he taught and enforced the Law of God.

3. What did the Israelites do for a fourth part of the day followed by another fourth part of a day? What example might that give believers today?

They give the example of spending more time in the study of God's word, the Bible, and in worship. They give the example of confessing our sins and turning from our sins when we learn more about the way God wants us to behave from our Bible study and worship.

4. What did Ezra pray about the heart of Abraham? What did he mean?

Abraham's heart was faithful before God, which meant that he had chosen more than anything else to obey God, even if he failed sometimes and even if that meant he needed to sacrifice his own son (which pointed to the death of God's Son) in order to obey God. Ezra wanted his heart and the heart of everyone to be faithful before God.

5. What reason did Ezra give for God fulfilling His promises to Abraham and his descendants?

From Ezra's prayer we learn that God is righteous, faithful, good, just, merciful, and gracious.

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