

Study Hints for Thinking Further

International Bible Lessons

Exodus 14:21-31

Sunday, November 17, 2013

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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 did the Israelites need faith in God in order to follow Moses?

They had been enslaved for 400 years and had a slave mentality. They had been enslaved by Pharaoh (who claimed to be a god) and by the false gods of Egypt, so they believed in these rulers or powers as mighty powers. They were powerless to fight for themselves, and had no experience as soldiers. They repeatedly showed lack of faith when their troubles increased or when it appeared Pharaoh’s army would crush them for fleeing Egypt. For Moses to lead these people anywhere, God needed to build their faith one step at a time, with a plague or miracle after miracle (ten plagues, plus other miracles), and then by finally defeating Pharaoh’s army in the Red Sea. Their faith remained small even though their faith increased step by step. Only faith in God could have moved them to follow Moses, and even then only one step at a time. These former slaves did develop enough faith to follow Moses step by step, but their faith did not seem to last long when they later complained about lack of good food and water or when God wanted them to go into the Promised Land, which they were too fearful to do God’s way.

2. What did God do through Moses to give the Israelites a reasonable faith in Him?

God worked some miracles using Moses’ staff; God worked ten plagues against Pharaoh and distinguished between the Egyptians and the Israelites; God parted the Red Sea and saved the Israelites from Pharaoh’s army by fighting for them. Any Israelite could reason that God was all powerful, more powerful than Pharaoh and all the idols of Egypt, and God cared enough about them to free them from slavery and save them from their enemies. Any Israelite could tell someone that for these reasons they had faith in God; therefore, they had a reasonable faith instead of their faith being just a leap in the dark.

3. How did the LORD demonstrate that He was greater than Pharaoh and all of the gods of Egypt?

God worked plagues that showed He was more powerful than Pharaoh (who claimed to be a god) and the false gods of created things that the Egyptians claimed to worship.

4. Why do you think it was important for God to prove that He was greater than all the idols of Egypt?

The Egyptians needed to learn this in order to learn about the true God. The Israelites needed to learn this so they would not have any reason to worship or fear the false gods in the Promised Land when they entered it. However, the Israelites never seemed to learn this lesson for long. Even in the Promised Land they began to worship and serve the false gods of their neighbors.

5. How might you use this account of the Red Sea crossing to give an unbeliever a reason for why you believe in the true God?

I might tell the person that one reason I believe in the true God is because God can and does sometimes work miracles to save those who follow Him, just as He saved the Israelites when they entered the parted Red Sea with faith in God and walked across on dry ground. The fact that former Egyptian slaves became the Kingdom of Israel and that Israel exists today as a nation is a good reason to believe in God, believe in God's promises in the Bible, and believe in God's character and power as our all-faithful God.

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