

Study Hints for Thinking Further

International Bible Lessons

Exodus 40:16-31, 34, 38

Sunday, November 24, 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 would it be important to these Israelites that “Moses did everything just as the LORD commanded”?

Moses needed to set them and others a good example regarding what a true follower and prophet of God would do. Moses was beginning a new period of time in the lives of the Israelites, because the 12 tribes of Israel would eventually become a kingdom, and Moses needed to leave a right moral foundation and laws for them to follow as a mighty kingdom. Moses gave them the moral law of God, and he needed to teach them God’s moral law correctly and obey it himself. When Moses disobeyed God’s command, God needed to demonstrate that He was both just and merciful and that nobody (especially a prophet of God) was above the law or did not need to obey God’s law because God gave him special privileges. It was important that Moses not mislead the people into idolatry, as Aaron did later.

2. Why would it be important to all of those who entered into and lived in the Promised Land that “Moses did everything just as the LORD commanded”?

These people needed to be properly prepared to enter the Promised Land during their forty years of wandering in the wilderness. They needed to learn to obey God and God’s laws and follow God’s true leaders. They needed to learn the right laws to govern themselves and to guide their judges in making decisions. This good foundation and training would prepare them to follow God faithfully in the Promised Land, though some of the people still sinned against God in the land that He gave them.

3. Why should it be important to us that “Moses did everything just as the LORD commanded”?

It should be important to us to learn the moral law of God, because God will not change His 10 Commandments or the consequences of breaking His commandments. The ways of those who disobey God are far more difficult than the ways of those who obey God.

Because Moses did everything just as the LORD commanded him, we know that what Moses taught about God and His law was right and true and God should be obeyed, just as Moses obeyed God's moral law and taught that God's law should be obeyed, and just as Moses suffered when He disobeyed God's command.

4. Why do you think God appeared to the Israelites in the cloud and in the pillar of fire, and then visibly entered the tabernacle?

These people had been enslaved for so long and they knew so little about God that they needed God to demonstrate His presence to them daily. They had worshiped idols that they could see that were carved in wood or fashioned by people and overlaid with silver and gold. They could see that the true God was easily greater than the gods they had learned about in Egypt and had probably worshiped in Egypt. They needed to see that God approved of the tabernacle the way Moses had designed and built it, so God showed His approval to them in a way they could see with their eyes when He descended over it.

5. Why do you think it was important for God to remain in the cloud and in the pillar of fire above the tabernacle instead of just disappearing inside the tabernacle and talking to Moses inside the tabernacle so Moses could then tell the people when God wanted them to move and where God wanted them to move?

The people complained so much against both Moses and God that they probably would have rebelled much worse than they did if they had not seen the mighty and holy God watching over them constantly in the cloud and in the pillar of fire. They might not have believed Moses and followed him if they had not seen the cloud and the pillar move; they might have wanted to just stay where they were or go back to Egypt.

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