

THE RESTORED CHURCH OF GOD®

CHILDREN'S BIBLE LESSONS



SPECIAL FEAST LESSON

LEVEL 3



THE SPRING FEASTS

The Spring Festival Season

Many would say their favorite time of the year is spring. While taking a walk outside on a spring day, everything smells fresh and new. As colorful flowers begin to bloom and trees come alive after a long winter, something about this season fills us with wonder and excitement.

Spring and the privilege of enjoying it are gifts from God. Yet God has an even greater and more precious gift for us than this—the gift of eternal life and the opportunity to be part of His Family as one of His spiritually-begotten children. This is God’s great purpose for mankind. This Plan is depicted in God’s seven annual Holy Days. Those who faithfully observe these days will never lose sight of God’s Great Plan for humanity.

In this lesson, you will learn about the first three events in God’s Plan, pictured by the spring festi-

vals of the Passover, the Days of Unleavened Bread, and Pentecost.

A New Year

In Israel and the Northern Hemisphere, God’s feast season starts in the spring. This is a time when plants and animals spring forth and life begins anew.

God’s first three festivals take place in the spring months of God’s calendar. Yet the Roman calendar, which most countries use, has the new year beginning in the middle of winter. God’s calendar is much more sensible, with the new year beginning in the spring! The first month is called Abib in the Hebrew language.

Spring Cleaning

Many of you remember helping your parents clean the house to



prepare for the Days of Unleavened Bread. This is one of the festivals in God's spring Holy Day season.

You clean closets. You dust rooms, vacuum and search pockets and couch cushions. Do you remember what you were looking for? With careful searching through every room in the house you and your family hunt for leaven and all foods containing it. No cookie, cake or crumb is safe! Everything with leavening in it must be thrown out. Then, for seven days everyone eats unleavened bread.

Have you ever asked yourself why we must be diligent in removing leaven and leavened products? Why is it so important to get rid of leavening during this season? What does it have to do with God's Plan? Why must we eat unleavened bread during the seven days?

A Giant Puzzle

For 6,000 years, almost no one has understood God's Plan. Down through the years God has shown bits and pieces of His Plan to a very small number of people.

You could think of God's Plan as a beautiful picture that God cut into a gigantic "jigsaw puzzle" with many different pieces.

God revealed a part of His Plan when He brought ancient Israel out of slavery in Egypt. Even though the Israelites were given a large piece of the puzzle, they did not see how it fit into the "big picture" of God's purpose.

Ancient Israel did not have the Bible as we do today. Jesus Christ uses the Bible to show His Church the various "pieces of the puzzle." Down through the years God used His servants, such as Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong and Mr. David C. Pack, to show how these pieces fit together. After the apostasy, many of the pieces (truths of God's Plan) were scattered and lost. God had to raise up a man to restore the truths that were being watered down.

The more someone obeys God and keeps His laws, the more God will reveal to him and the more he will understand His Plan.

Now use your Bible to help put the pieces of the puzzle together as you go through this Spring Festival Lesson.

Israelites in Captivity

For hundreds of years Jacob's descendants, the children of _____ (Exodus 1:1), lived in Egypt. Jacob and his family had moved to Egypt because of a horrible famine in the land. Jacob and his children were welcomed into Egypt by Pharaoh, the king of Egypt. Joseph, one of Jacob's sons, had been made second-in-command under Pharaoh.

As the years went by, Jacob's family grew until there were millions of Israelites living in Egypt. During this time, many Pharaohs came to power then died. Eventually, a Pharaoh who was not familiar with Joseph and his family made the Israelites into slaves. The Egyptians treated the Israelites very cruelly and harshly. The Israelites suffered terribly as slaves in Egypt.

Because of their affliction, God chose to save them from bondage. God remembered the promise He made to Israel (Jacob) that He would someday bring the Israelites out of captivity. "I will go down

with you into _____;
and I will also surely bring
_____ again" (Genesis 46:4).

In order to fulfill this promise, and lead Israel out of Egypt, God raised up His servant Moses. God sent 10 horrible plagues on the land of Egypt until Pharaoh finally released His people from slavery. List the 10 plagues contained in Exodus chapters 7 through 11 on the following lines in the correct order in which they occurred.

Israelites Keep the First Passover

Almost 3,500 years ago, in the month of Abib, God revealed to the Israelites the first part of His Plan. This "piece of the puzzle"

was the Passover, the very first festival of the year. This event pictures the first step in God's Master Plan.

Each household in Israel was commanded by God to take a young _____ "without blemish, a _____ of the first _____" (Exodus 12:2-5) on the _____ day of the month. The Israelites were to keep this lamb until the fourteenth day and were told to "_____ it at _____ (verse 6)."

God told them to cook the lamb and eat it. After eating it, the Israelites were to smear its _____ on the doorposts of their houses (verse 7).

That night, an angel of death went through all the houses of the Egyptians and killed their first-born children. This was the tenth and last plague that God sent before Pharaoh freed the Israelites from the land.

Those who obeyed God and put the blood on their doorposts were spared from this final plague. The death angel *passed over* any house that had blood marked on the doorposts.

Days of Unleavened Bread

The following day, the Israelites packed their things and prepared to leave Egypt. God would guide them by a pillar of fire by night and a cloud by day.

God commanded the people to remember this event by calling it "a night _____ unto the LORD" (Exodus 12:42).

Yet it was not until seven days later, after the last day of the Days of Unleavened Bread, that the Israelites crossed the Red Sea and were fully free from the Egyptians.

Write out Exodus 13:6 to find out more about this piece of the puzzle. _____

Why did the Israelites have to eat unleavened bread for seven days (Exodus 13:6-10)? _____

Notice the word *memorial*. Look up this word in the dictionary and write out its meaning. _____

A Special Puzzle Piece

Searching through the New Testament, we can find many other pieces of the puzzle. It is in these pages that a *key* piece is found.

More than 1,900 years ago, God sent someone very important into the world. This person was Jesus Christ. He is important for a number of reasons.

First, Christ was a God Being. Jesus has many names found throughout the Old Testament. He was used by God the Father to create the entire universe. He is one of the two Beings who said, “Let *Us* make man in *Our* image” (Genesis 1:26). He is

called the Word in John 1:1-3, which can also be translated “spokesman.”

Putting together Genesis 1:26 and John 1:1-3 shows us that there are two Beings currently in the God Family. The word *God* is a family name, like Smith or Thompson. What is your family name? _____

This understanding is one of the greatest secrets of all time. It is the knowledge that one day you will have the opportunity to enter into God’s Family—to actually be like these two Beings! As a member of this family, you will have eternal life and have the same power to create.

The Lamb of God

Jesus Christ was unique for another reason. During the time Jesus was on the Earth He never told a lie. He also never stole or dishonored His parents. Do you know anyone who has never told a lie or never stole anything? Jesus never cursed, and He always obeyed the Sabbath. He never sinned—not even once!

John 1:29 records another name for Jesus Christ. John the Baptist, a true servant of God, called Jesus the Lamb of God. God the Father sent Christ to the Earth to take away the sins of the world. The name *Jesus* actually means Savior. Jesus was the Lamb of God who had to be sacrificed for the sins of the world.

What happens to the person who sins? Write out the answer from Ezekiel 18:20. _____

Yet Jesus Christ paid this penalty for you. Because of His sacrifice, you do not have to die for your sins.

God symbolically uses the blood of Christ to cover our sins so we do not have to pay the death penalty. Christ did not have to die for *His* sins—He never sinned. He died for *our* sins, so that we could receive eternal life.

Christ is our Passover lamb. When the death angel went through the houses in Egypt, he passed over the houses with blood on them. In a similar way, if we allow

Christ's blood to cover our sins, God passes over us and spares us from the death penalty.

Sin is a horrible thing. It is similar to the affliction and slavery in Egypt. It is God's will for us to be free from our bondage to sin. Christ's sacrifice allows this to happen.

The Passover Service

Members of God's Church today are not required to kill a lamb and wipe its blood on the doorposts of their homes like the ancient Israelites were commanded to do.

Every year on the evening of the fourteenth of Abib, God's Church meets for the Passover service. This is a very solemn and special occasion. First, members wash one another's feet. Then they eat a small piece of unleavened bread and drink a little wine.

These actions have great meaning and represent important aspects of God's Plan.

Those who understand what these elements symbolize know how Jesus Christ, a "special puz-

zle piece,” fits into God’s Plan for mankind. God will help you understand how this piece fits in as you become older and continue trying to please Him.

Never forget that the more you obey God, the more He will reveal to you.

Keeping the Days of Unleavened Bread

It pleases God when we hold fast to the understanding of His Plan and keep all of His Holy Days.

Only baptized members of the Church can take part in the Passover service. Yet you can obey God by observing the Days of Unleavened Bread.

Part of pleasing God, and keeping this festival, is getting rid of all the sin in our life.

When we remove leaven from our houses, it pictures removing sin from our lives. Although the actual leaven is not sin, God uses it as a symbol during the seven Days of Unleavened Bread. Another part of this feast involves eating unleavened bread *every* day of the seven days of this fes-

tival. This shows God that we want to obey Him and stop sinning.

Make a list of all the things around your house that contain leaven. You will find it is not an easy task to get *all* of the leaven out of the house. But it is the effort you put forth that matters to God.

Pentecost Sunday

The festival called Pentecost is the third step in God’s Plan. It follows the Days of Unleavened Bread.

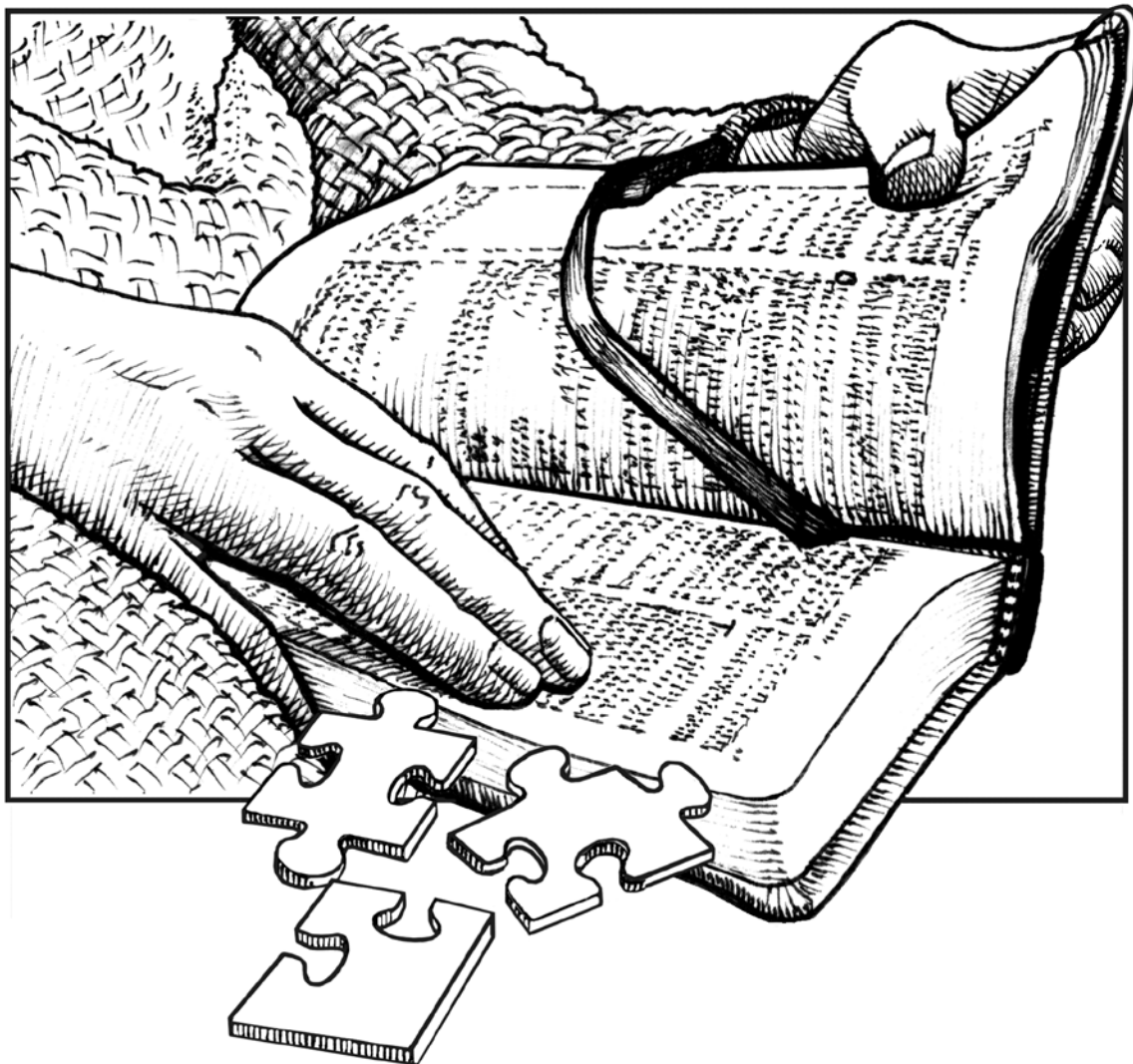
Pentecost means “fiftieth.” It refers to counting fifty days starting with the Sunday after the weekly Sabbath during the Days of Unleavened Bread. Because Sunday is the first day to start counting, Pentecost always lands on a Sunday fifty days later.

During the time of ancient Israel, recorded in the Old Testament, God commanded they keep the Feast of Firstfruits. Pentecost and the Feast of Firstfruits are different names for the *same* festival.

Israel kept Pentecost by giving special sacrifices. This Holy Day represents another piece of the

puzzle. However, just like the ancient Israelites did not understand the meaning of Passover and the Days of Unleavened Bread, they also did not understand how Pentecost fits into God's Plan.

Ancient Israel kept Pentecost as a day to give thanks to God for providing the first grain harvest in the spring.



This feast is a type of this early harvest, but also pictures something much greater.

The Feast of Firstfruits symbolizes what God is doing with His Church today. He is like a farmer. God is gathering fruit from among mankind. Those in God's Church are called "first-fruits" (James 1:18). They will be the very *first* to become spirit-born members of the Family of God when the Kingdom of God arrives. God is working only with a few right now compared to the vast billions He will work with eventually.

God is training us and helping us grow for a special purpose.

God's Law teaches us how to grow. He gives us His Holy Spirit once we repent of our sins and are baptized. It is this Spirit that makes it possible for us to keep God's laws.

Pieces of the Puzzle

In this lesson, you have learned about three of God's festivals that picture the first three steps in His Master Plan for humanity. Yet

there are a total of seven annual festivals. The remaining four are in the fall. List the seven yearly festivals below from Leviticus 23.

You now have a few pieces of God's giant "jigsaw puzzle." Be sure to study the Fall Festival Lesson to understand the final pieces of God's Plan.

God wants us to understand His will for us, and He wants us to see the whole picture. If you obey God and keep all of His commandments, He will show you the wonderful Plan He is working out. As each year passes, and another spring Holy Day season comes to an end, you will learn more and more about His Plan through the feast days.

It is truly a joy and a privilege to understand God's will and keep these special spring Holy Days!

BIBLE MEMORY: Leviticus 23:6-8

RECIPE FOR UNLEAVENED BREAD

Ask your parents to help you make this simple unleavened bread recipe.

- 1) Preheat the oven to 475 degrees Fahrenheit and place a baking sheet in the oven so it becomes hot.
- 2) Sprinkle flour on a clean work surface or counter top.
- 3) Measure 1 cup of flour into a small bowl. Slowly pour in 1/3 cup of water while using the other hand to quickly stir the flour with a fork.
- 4) Form the dough into a ball and place it on the floured surface.
- 5) Knead it for less than a minute, adding flour if needed.
- 6) Now divide it into 4 balls and flatten them with your hands on the floured surface. Each piece should be about 5 inches across. Now use a rolling pin to roll each piece to about 8 inches.
- 7) With a sharp fork pierce the dough about 25 times all over. Take the hot baking sheet out of the oven and place the bread on it to bake. Bake it in the oven until it is lightly browned, turning it over carefully (about 2 minutes per side). You may brush it with olive oil and sprinkle it with salt (like a Saltine cracker).