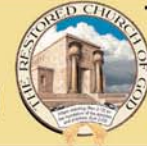


THE RESTORED CHURCH OF GOD

CHILDREN'S BIBLE LESSONS



SPECIAL FEAST LESSON

LEVEL 5



THE SPRING FEASTS

The Spring Festivals

The seasons of summer, fall, winter and spring display wondrous variety. Each season has its own special beauty and appeal, depending on where you live.

Many would say that spring is the prettiest time of year. Leaves begin to appear on the bare limbs of trees. Sprouts of flowers such as crocus and tulips begin pushing up. Grass begins to turn green. The dusty gray skies of winter give way to the brighter blue skies of spring. Days grow longer; the sunshine feels warmer. It feels great to spend more time outside as temperatures rise.

To add to our enjoyment of

springtime, God has given festivals, also called feasts, for His people to observe. God has shown mankind through His seven annual Holy Days how His Master Plan will be accomplished. This Plan leads us, step by step, to understand God's purpose for creating mankind. The three spring festivals of Passover, the Days of Unleavened Bread and Pentecost introduce us to the first three steps.

The Year Begins

God used the two seasons when crops were harvested in the land of



Israel to picture the two spiritual harvests of mankind into the God Family. The first harvest in Israel and the Northern Hemisphere came in the spring, and was the smaller grain harvest. The second came in late summer or early fall and was a much larger harvest of crops.

Many countries around the world use the Roman calendar, which has the new year beginning on January 1—the middle of winter! However, God says that the first month of His calendar year begins in the spring, in the month named Abib in the Hebrew language (Exodus 12:1-8; Exodus 13:4; Exodus 23:15).

Spring Cleaning

When the spring festivals draw near, God's people prepare for them by doing a thorough house cleaning. As we clean our houses and cars, offices and desks, we hunt for crackers, cookies, pretzels and any crumbs that have been left behind from sandwiches. Your mother will remove from the freezer, refrigerator and kitchen cabinets all bread, cake mixes, baking powder, and anything that contains yeast or baking soda. Your father may check his suit pockets for any forgotten package of

crackers, and then vacuum the car to get crumbs from under the seats, floor mats, and out of the trunk. Perhaps you have helped your parents prepare for the spring feast called the Days of Unleavened Bread.

Have you wondered why your parents instruct you to search out and remove all leaven products from your room, and ask you to be sure to check inside your toy chest, your closet, even under your bed? How do the Days of Unleavened Bread fit into the exciting puzzle known as God's Master Plan?

Let's find out the answer to this question and start to put the puzzle pieces together by studying all three of God's spring festivals.

Putting the Puzzle Together

In the 6,000 years of man's history on earth, almost no one has understood God's Master Plan. Out of all the people who have lived during this time, God has chosen only a few faithful servants to reveal His Plan to.

To the majority of mankind, God's Plan appears to be a giant jigsaw puzzle that is impossible to put together. They do not look into their

Bible to find out what the puzzle should look like, so they do not understand how all the pieces fit together. But in this Lesson, you will use your Bible to study what God's Word says. You are going to learn how to put together the individual puzzle pieces so you can be one of those people who does understand how everything fits.

Slaves in Egypt

Open your Bible to Exodus 1 so you can read the story of Israelite slaves in Egypt.

Verse 1 says, "Now these are the names of the children of Israel who came to Egypt; each man and his household came with Jacob." The children of Jacob are listed in the next verses.

The family of Jacob moved to Egypt because a terrible drought and famine came upon the land of Canaan. As a teenager, Joseph had been taken to Egypt. Years later he was given power over all of Egypt's affairs, and he answered only to Pharaoh. Be sure to read the story of Joseph beginning in Genesis 37.

In due time, both Pharaoh and Joseph died. Eventually, the king who sat on Egypt's throne worried

about the millions of Israelites in Egypt. He feared they would become powerful enough to overthrow his throne, so he decided to make them slaves.

While Israel was in slavery in Egypt, their Egyptian masters were not kind to them. They treated them so badly that they finally cried out to God for help. In verse 11, we learn, "Therefore they set taskmasters over them to afflict them with their burdens." Afflict means to make miserable.

God had promised Jacob, whom He renamed Israel, that He would bring the Israelites out of Egypt into their own land. In Genesis 46:4 we read of God's promise to Jacob, "I will go down with you to Egypt, and I will also surely bring you up again."

So God raised up Moses to be His servant and to lead the Israelites out of Egypt to freedom. The series of ten plagues that God used to free His people from slavery are given in the book of Exodus, chapters 7 through 11. As you read through these chapters, make a list of the plagues.

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____
- 4) _____

- 5) _____
- 6) _____
- 7) _____
- 8) _____
- 9) _____
- 10) _____

God Reveals His Plan

Through Moses, God gave Israel His laws, among which were His commands to observe His annual festivals. In this way, God gave ancient Israel a large part of the puzzle. However, one of the reasons they did not understand how these festivals fit into God’s Master Plan is because they did not always obey God’s laws.

Since that time, God has used other servants, such as Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong, to show His people how the jigsaw puzzle of God’s Master Plan fits together. Only by obeying God and keeping His commandments can God’s people more completely understand His Plan. The more God’s people study and obey what is written in their Bibles, the more understanding they will have.

We can start to put the puzzle together by studying the first annual festival, Passover.

The First Piece of the Puzzle: Passover

The first festival of the year is Passover.

In Exodus 12:2-5, God gave Moses instructions for what He wanted the children of Israel to do. “This month shall be your beginning of months; it shall be the first month of the year to you. Speak to all the congregation of Israel, saying: ‘On the tenth of this month every man shall take for himself a lamb, according to the house of his father, a lamb for a household. And if the household is too small for the lamb, let him and his neighbor next to his house take it according to the number of the persons; according to each man’s need you shall make your count for the lamb. Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year. You may take it from the sheep or from the goats.’”

The Israelites were to keep the lamb until the fourteenth day of the same month. “Then the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it at twilight” (verse 6).

In verse 7, God gave additional important instructions, “And they shall take some of the blood and put

it on the two doorposts and on the lintel of the houses where they eat it.”

Because Pharaoh would not free the Israelites from slavery, God warned him through Moses that all the firstborn of Egypt were going to die in a final plague. However, God also promised He would spare the Israelite families who obeyed His instruction to put the lamb’s blood on their doorposts. The death angel would *pass over* those houses. After this tenth plague, when every Egyptian had a family member die, Pharaoh finally stopped being so stubborn and agreed to let the Israelites go.

Second Piece of the Puzzle: The Days of Unleavened Bread

The very next day, while the Egyptians mourned for their dead relatives and began the process of burying them, the Israelites gathered their belongings and prepared to leave Egypt. On the night of the fifteenth of Abib, the children of Israel marched out of Egypt to freedom.

Imagine how happy the Israelites must have felt. God commanded His people to always remember this joyful event year after year with a feast

called the Night to Be Much Observed (Exodus 12:42). This celebration begins the second spring festival, the Days of Unleavened Bread, which lasts for seven days. Two Holy Day assemblies are commanded during this feast. God’s people meet on the first day, then again on the seventh day. For seven days, the Israelites were commanded to eat unleavened bread, as well as remove all leaven from their houses (Exodus 12:14-20).

Exodus 13:6-10 also gives instructions about keeping the Days of Unleavened Bread. Notice that verses 8 and 9 instruct God’s people to explain to their children why this feast is observed:

“This is done because of what the Lord did for me when I came up from Egypt. It shall be as a sign to you on your hand and as a memorial between your eyes, that the LORD’s law may be in your mouth; for with a strong hand the LORD has brought you out of Egypt.”

Exodus 13:10 instructs how often this memorial is to be kept, “You shall therefore keep this ordinance in its season from year to year.” The dictionary defines a memorial as something designed or established to bring to mind a certain event.

On the Last Day of Unleavened Bread, God performed another mighty miracle for His people. Pharaoh had changed his mind about allowing the Israelites to leave Egypt, so he gathered his army and chased after them, intending to bring them back into slavery. The Israelites were camped beside the Red Sea. When they saw Pharaoh's army coming after them, they became very afraid. God instructed Moses to hold out his staff over the waters of the sea. When the waters parted, all of the Israelites walked through on dry ground to the other side. However, when Pharaoh's army followed them, the waters came crashing down, drowning the Egyptian soldiers.

Test Your Memory:

- 1) True or False: The Egyptians were very kind and generous to their Israelite slaves.
- 2) God instructed Israel that the first month of the year was the month of _____.
- 3) Who did God raise up to lead His people out of Egypt? _____
- 4) The Israelites were told to put the _____ of the lamb on their _____.
- 5) When the death angel saw the

blood on the doorposts of the Israelite's houses, it would _____ those houses.

6) The children of Israel walked through on dry ground, but the army of Pharaoh was drowned in what sea?

7) The Days of Unleavened Bread are to be kept year after year as a _____.

Important Puzzle Piece Discovered

So far you have been studying the Days of Unleavened Bread in the Old Testament. Now it is time to tie in scriptures in the New Testament to search out a very important piece of the puzzle to further understand the great Master Plan of God.

First, read Genesis 1:26, "Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness." Notice the words "us" and "our."

Next, in John 1:1-3, we are told, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made."

The God Being called the Word came to earth over 1,900 years ago as

Jesus Christ. We also find that the Word, who became Christ, is the God Being who said, "Let there be light" (Genesis 1:3).

Now we know that there are two Beings in the God family, the Father and Jesus Christ. The name of the family is God, just as your family name might be Jones or Brown. However, God does not intend that His family remain small. One day, God will offer every person who has ever lived the opportunity to become part of His Family.

This means you! You will have the opportunity to receive eternal life, which means you will live forever and will have the power to create. How is that made possible?

The Lamb of God

Again, more than 1,900 years ago, the God Being named the Word was born as a human being named Jesus Christ. His parents' names were Joseph and Mary. When an angel of God named Gabriel appeared to Mary, she was told, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name Jesus" (Luke 1:31-32). The name

Jesus in Greek means "Savior," and the name Christ means "Anointed" or, in Hebrew, "Messiah."

In verse 35, Mary was told, "That Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God."

Jesus is also called the Lamb of God in John 1:29, and is called our Passover lamb in I Corinthians 5:7.

Jesus lived His entire life without sinning. In I John 3:4, we learn that sin is breaking God's laws. This means that Jesus never told a lie and never refused to obey His parents. He never broke God's laws.

God the Father sent Jesus to earth as a human being so that He could pay the penalty for mankind's sins. In Romans 3:23, the Bible tells us that everyone has sinned. Romans 6:23 says that the penalty for sin is death. This is confirmed in Ezekiel 18:4, which states, "The soul who sins shall die."

You will recall that ancient Israel took the blood of a lamb and put it on the doorposts of their houses so that the death angel would pass over them, thus saving the lives of their first born. Just as Egypt had made slaves of the people of Israel, which made their lives very hard, sin makes slaves of us and fills our lives with trouble and sadness.

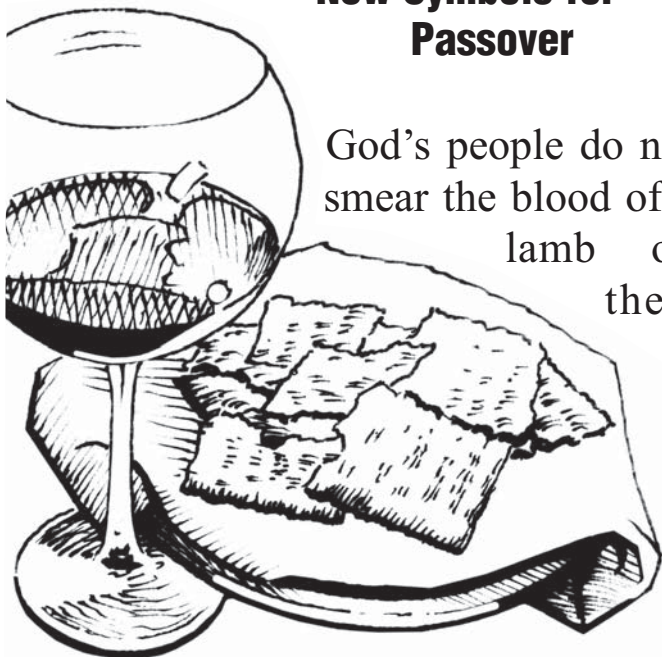
Jesus lived a perfect, sinless life; therefore, He did not have to die. However, He voluntarily gave His life as a sacrifice, and became our Savior. Because He is the Son of God, His life was more valuable than all other human beings combined. This is why He was able to pay the death penalty for mankind. “For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life” (Romans 5:10). This means God accepts the death of His Son in our place after we repent and are baptized, a decision we can make when we become adults. Jesus is the key piece to the puzzle of God’s Master Plan.

doorposts at Passover. Instead, Jesus gave the new symbols of unleavened bread and wine that were to be used from that time forward in place of the lamb.

On His last Passover on earth, Jesus showed His disciples that they, like Him, should willingly humble themselves and serve their fellow-man. Each year at the Passover service, God’s people follow Christ’s example and wash one another’s feet (John 13:14-15).

Throughout the New Testament Church, God’s people have kept the Passover with the new symbols. We see in I Corinthians 11:23-26 that Paul reminded the Church to keep the Passover with bread and wine as Christ had done.

New Symbols for Passover



God’s people do not smear the blood of a lamb on their

Why Remove All Leavened Products?

Even though only baptized members of God’s Church can observe the Passover, you can learn to obey God by keeping the remainder of His festivals. By observing the Days of Unleavened Bread, you will come to better understand the importance of keeping them and pleasing God. Preparing in advance for these days by removing all leaven, and eating

unleavened bread everyday, reminds us of the lessons we can learn through observing these days.

Remember that the question asked earlier in this lesson was “Have you wondered why your parents instruct you to search out and remove all leaven products from your room, and ask you to be sure to check inside your toy chest, your closet, even under your bed?” The lesson this teaches us and helps us to remember is that we must work very hard to put sin out of our lives just as we have worked hard to put leaven out of our houses.

We have also seen that God’s people do not eat anything with leaven in it for seven days. Beginning with the Night to Be Much Observed, then throughout the next seven days we are to eat unleavened bread each day. This lesson reminds us that we are to obey God’s laws and study to learn more about them through Bible study everyday.

Third Piece of the Puzzle: Pentecost

Pentecost is the third annual festival. Pentecost is a Greek word meaning “count fifty” (Leviticus 23:15-16). The counting for Pentecost begins on the first day after the weekly Sabbath

during the Days of Unleavened Bread, and ends on the first day of the week 50 days later. It always falls on a Sunday, the first day of the week.

In the Old Testament, the ancient Israelites called Pentecost the “Feast of Firstfruits” or “Feast of Weeks” (Numbers 28:26). This was when Israel gave God thanks for the bounty of the early grain harvest of spring. Just as ancient Israel did not understand the true meaning of Passover and the Days of Unleavened Bread, they did not understand why they observed Pentecost. However, God’s people today have been given understanding of the deeper meaning of these days.

In James 1:18, God calls His people “firstfruits.” Those who obey God and remove sin from their lives will be the *first* to become members of God’s Family when Christ returns to earth. The number of people in God’s Church is few in comparison to the billions of people who have ever lived. However, you will remember that God desires that all mankind be given the opportunity to be born into His Family. God is calling a few individuals now to train others later to obey His laws after Christ’s Return.

To help His people be able to do this, God gives them His Holy Spirit once they have repented of their sins and have been baptized. When God's people receive the Holy Spirit, it helps them to learn God's Way, understand and obey His laws, respect His government, and build the character of God in them. It helps them live God's way of GIVE rather than the world's way of GET. Then at Christ's return to this earth, God's people will be born as Spirit beings into God's Family, with the perfect character and nature of God. They will become the firstfruits pictured by the Day of Pentecost, the early spiritual harvest.

The Rest of the Puzzle Pieces

We have learned about the first three annual festivals in God's Master Plan. They are observed in spring. But there are a total of seven festivals. The remaining four are observed in the fall. All of God's annual festivals can be found in Leviticus 23. List them below.

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____
- 4) _____
- 5) _____

- 6) _____
- 7) _____

You will study about the last four festivals in the special Fall Feasts Lesson. Then you will have all the pieces of the puzzle.

By keeping all of God's Feast Days, you will gain more and more understanding about what they mean, and the exciting future God has in store for all those who obey Him.

Test Your Memory:

- 1) The God Being called the Word came to earth over 1,900 years ago as _____.
- 2) Another name for Jesus is _____.
- 3) Jesus died to pay the penalty for mankind's _____.
- 4) The new Passover symbols that Jesus Christ gave are _____ and _____.
- 5) For how many days do God's people eat unleavened bread? _____
- 6) Pictured by the Day of Pentecost, God's people are called the "_____ " because they will be _____ to become members of God's Family when Christ returns to earth.
- 7) In total, there are how many of God's annual festivals? _____

BIBLE MEMORY: Deuteronomy 16:1-15

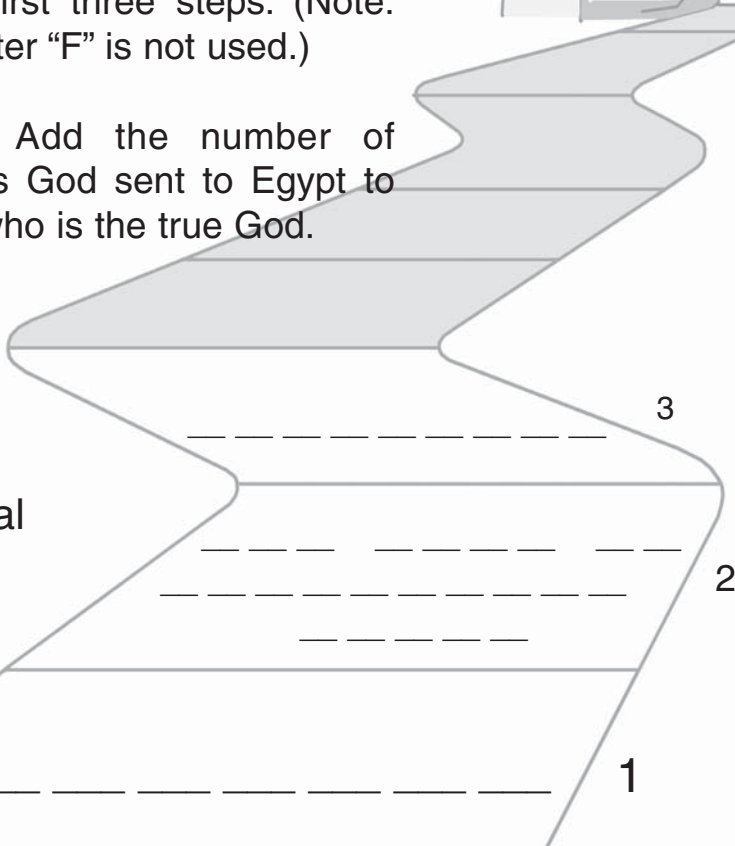
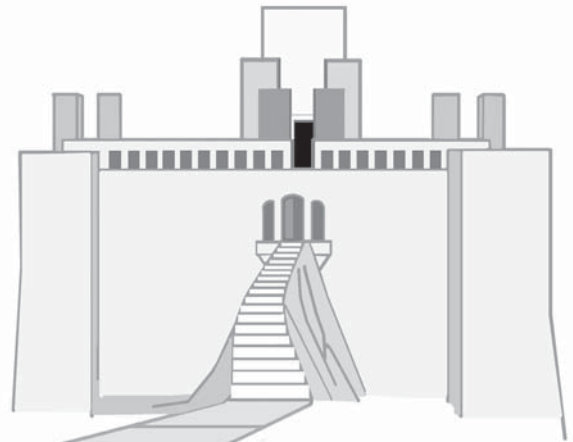
The Way to the Kingdom of God

- A _____
- B _____
- C _____
- D _____
- E _____
- H _____
- L _____
- N _____
- O _____
- P _____
- R _____
- S _____
- T _____
- U _____
- V _____
- Y _____

First: Fill in the blanks on the path to the kingdom that show the first three steps to God's Plan for mankind to be in His Kingdom.

Next: Count how many there are of each of the letters in those first three steps. (Note: The letter "F" is not used.)

Then: Add the number of plagues God sent to Egypt to show who is the true God.



_____ Subtotal
 + _____
 _____ Total

Total: The number of days to count from the day of the wave sheaf offering to find which day is Pentecost.