

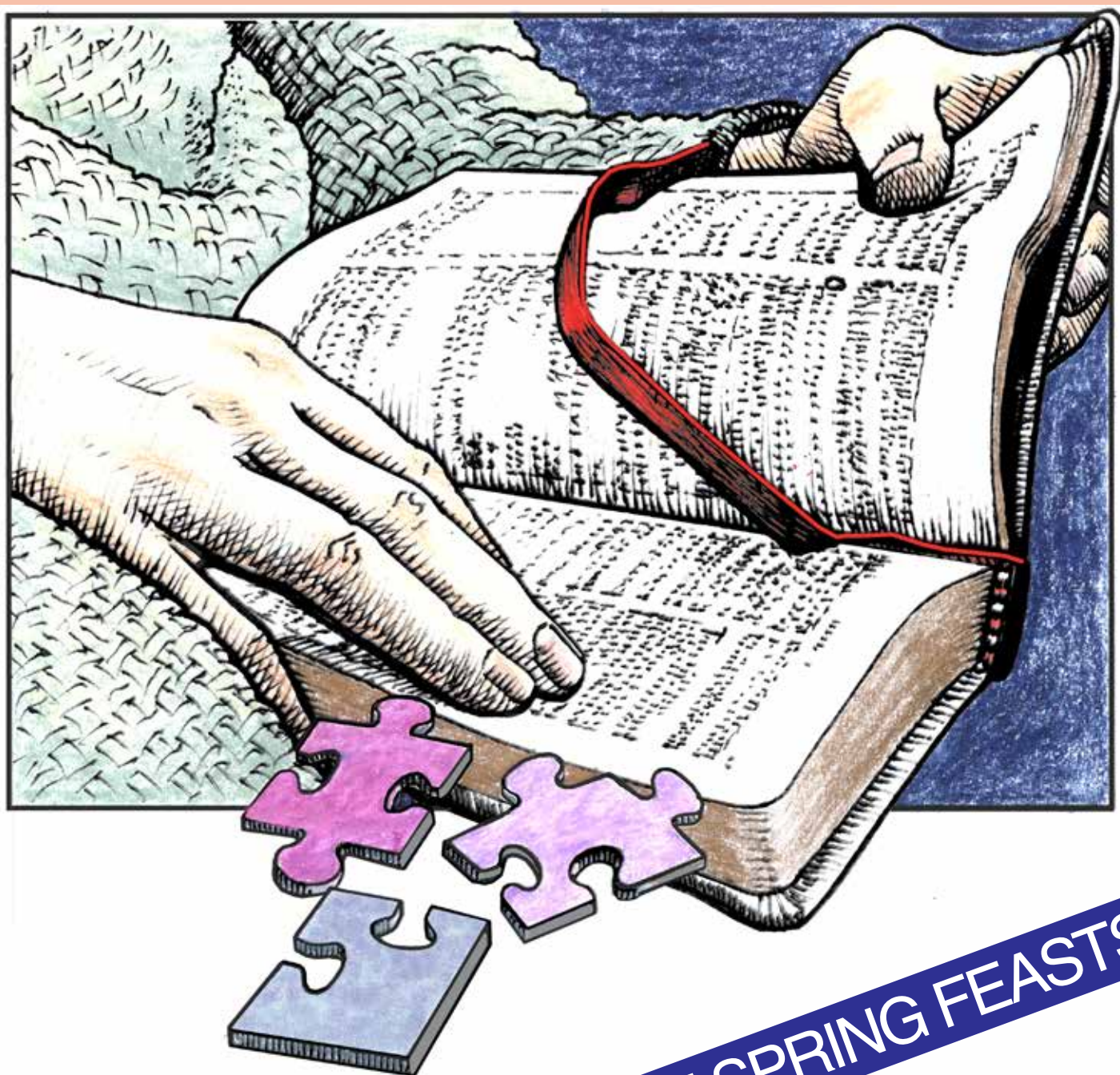
THE RESTORED CHURCH OF GOD®

CHILDREN'S BIBLE LESSONS



SPECIAL FEAST LESSON

LEVEL 6



THE SPRING FEASTS

The Spring Festivals

How would you like to know perhaps the greatest mystery of all time?

Of the more than seven billion people alive on Earth today, only a *very few* know it. And out of all the countless billions of people who have ever lived, only a small number of individuals have been privileged to understand what you will study in this lesson.

To discover this mystery, we will look carefully at God's seven annual feasts. As you discover the meaning of these special festivals, you will also discover how they reveal information that almost no one knows. You will learn about God's Master Plan for all mankind and that it is outlined in seven steps. As each of the seven steps is studied, you will see that, together, they form a complete picture. When put together like a jigsaw puzzle, they explain the purpose for God's creation of mankind. You will learn about the incredible opportunity God is offering to those who choose to obey Him and live His Way.

Seven Annual Festivals

Let's begin by learning to whom these special feasts belong: "The *feasts of the LORD*, which you shall proclaim to be holy convocations, these are *My feasts*" (Leviticus 23:2). The following verses list each feast in order as they occur throughout the year:

Verse 5: **Passover**

Verse 6: **Days of Unleavened Bread**

Verses 16, 21: **Day of Pentecost**

Verse 24: **Feast of Trumpets**

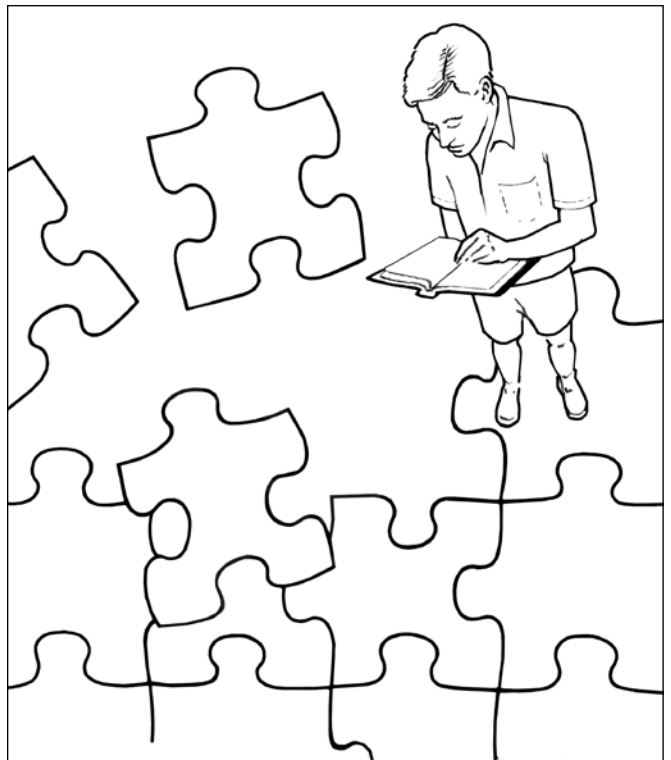
Verse 27: **Day of Atonement**

Verse 34: **Feast of Tabernacles**

Verse 36: **Last Great Day**

These festivals are observed during two seasons of the year. The first three steps are Passover, the Days of Unleavened Bread, and Pentecost, which come in the spring. The last four steps are the Feast of Trumpets, the Day of Atonement, the Feast of Tabernacles, and the Last Great Day, which come in the fall.

In this lesson, we will study the first three steps of God's Master Plan.



Let My People Go!

Several thousand years ago, during a time when Pharaohs ruled Egypt, the people of Israel were slaves to the Egyptians. The Israelites suffered greatly under the heavy burden of backbreaking labor. Finally, when their suffering grew unbearable, they cried out to God for help—and He heard them.

God chose and trained a man named Moses to lead God's people out of slavery. Moses had been raised as the adopted son of Pharaoh's daughter, so he was familiar with the self-important, stubborn attitude of Pharaoh. Even though Moses was considered royalty and lived in all the wealth and splendor of Pharaoh's palace, he left his adopted home and returned to his Hebrew roots with the people of Israel. Moses' brother, Aaron, accompanied Moses as his spokesman to deliver a message from God to Pharaoh, "Let My people go."

Pharaoh was the most powerful man in all of Egypt, which was the most powerful nation in the world at that time. No man dared to disobey him. Moses knew that Pharaoh would not believe him or listen to the message God ordered him to deliver, so God gave him signs to show Pharaoh (Exodus 4:1-9).

Pharaoh knew the cheap labor of using the Israelite slaves would not be easily replaced, so he set himself to defy God's command. He stubbornly refused to give the Israelites their freedom. Moses warned Pharaoh that his refusal to do as God commanded would result in terrible punishment for all the land. Pharaoh refused to change his mind, so God sent a total of ten plagues upon Egypt.

Between each plague, and before another plague would come, Moses reminded Pharaoh that all he needed to do to stop the plagues was set the Israelites free.

The first plague turned all the rivers and water to blood. Next came plagues of frogs, lice, flies, dying livestock, boils, hail, locusts and darkness over the whole land. In the midst

of each plague, Pharaoh would call for Moses and Aaron and promise to let the Israelites go. But as soon as the plague stopped, Pharaoh would change his mind and refuse to release the people of Israel. In spite of the increasing damage and suffering of his people, Pharaoh remained hardhearted and would not obey God's command. You can read about these plagues in Exodus, chapters 7 through 11.

After the ninth plague, when darkness covered the land of Egypt for three days, Moses repeated God's command to Pharaoh, "Let My people go." But Pharaoh was furious, and warned, "Get away from me! Take heed to yourself and see my face no more! For in the day you see my face you shall die!"

Moses replied, "You have spoken well. I will never see your face again."

Then God spoke to Moses: "I will bring yet one more plague on Pharaoh and on Egypt. Afterward, he will let you go from here. When he lets you go, he will surely drive you out of here altogether." Then God instructed Moses to tell all the Israelites to prepare to leave Egypt.

God's First Annual Festival: Passover

In Exodus 11:4-8, we read, "Then Moses said, 'Thus says the LORD: About midnight I will go out into the midst of Egypt; and all the firstborn in the land of Egypt shall die, from the firstborn of Pharaoh who sits on his throne, even to the firstborn of the female servant who is behind the handmill, and all the firstborn of the animals. Then there shall be a great cry throughout all the land of Egypt, such as was not like it before, nor shall be like it again. But against none of the children of Israel shall a dog move its tongue, against man or beast that you may know that the LORD does make a difference between the Egyptians and Israel. And all these your servants shall come down to me and bow down to me, saying, Get out, and all the people who follow you! After that I will go out.' Then he went out from Pharaoh in great anger."

God protected the people of Israel from the plagues of boils, hail, locusts and darkness; but in order to avoid the tragedy of the tenth plague, they were instructed by Moses to make *specific* preparations. All over the land of Egypt, the firstborn of both man and animal would die in this final, awful plague. However, if the firstborn of the Israelites were to be spared, they needed to do *exactly* as God commanded.

Deuteronomy 12:32 reveals how carefully God expects us to follow what He says, “Whatever I command you, be careful to observe it: you shall not add to it nor take away from it.”

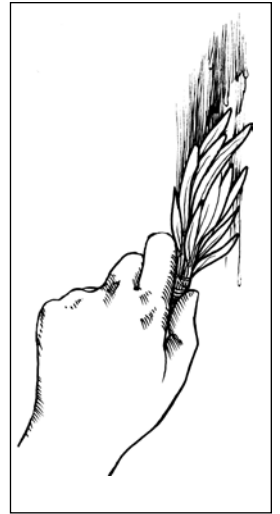
The first month of God’s calendar is named Abib in the Hebrew language. In Exodus 12:3-11, God, through Moses, gave specific instructions to the people of Israel for keeping the very first Passover so that their firstborn would not die.

“On the tenth day 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.

“ N o w you shall keep it until the fourteenth day of the same m o n t h . Then the w h o l e assembly of the congregation of Israel shall



kill it at twilight. 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. Do not eat it raw, nor boiled at all with water, but roasted in fire—its head with its legs and its entrails. You shall let none of it remain until morning, and what remains of it until morning you shall burn with fire. And thus you shall eat it: with a belt on your waist, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand. So you shall eat it in haste. It is the LORD’s Passover.”



The Israelites were to eat this meal while prepared to leave Egypt. Also, no one was to leave his house during the night for any reason. At midnight, the death angel of God went through the land of Egypt; but wherever it saw the sign of blood on the doorposts, it *passed over* that house, and the firstborn were spared. That is where the term Passover is derived.

What Passover Means

What did the lamb that was killed at Passover represent? John the Baptist referred to Jesus as the Lamb of God in John 1:29. The young, unblemished lamb represented Christ. The male lamb had to be without blemishes, flaws or faults to represent Christ’s sinless life. And the Israelites were to kill the lamb to represent Christ who gave His life to pay the death penalty for the sins of the world.

Every person who has ever lived has sinned, with one exception: Jesus Christ. “For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23). Sin means to disobey God and break His commandments. Then, in Romans 6:23, we read, “For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Therefore, every per-

son is worthy to face the death penalty for his sins. Because Christ lived a perfect, sinless life, He did not have to die. However, He voluntarily gave His life as a sacrifice so that the death penalty for all the sins of mankind would be paid.

Because He is the Son of God, Jesus' life was more valuable than all other human beings combined. Therefore, He was able to pay the death penalty for humanity. "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 that God has bought us back from the death penalty by accepting the death of His Son in our place. The death penalty we deserve for sin is removed after repentance and baptism—a decision you can make when you become an adult.

New Symbols Given

God's people today do not observe the Passover by killing a lamb and putting its blood on doorposts. During the last Passover that Christ observed before He was crucified, He taught His disciples new symbols that were to be kept in the future. These new symbols were to be a memorial of His sacrifice.

On His last Passover evening, Jesus knew the time had come for Him to give His life as payment for mankind's sins. During the Passover meal, He took a basin and towel, then knelt down before each one of His disciples and washed their feet. Footwashing was a way of honoring a houseguest in Jesus' time.

It was a duty performed by the lowliest house servant.

"If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you" (John 13:14-15).

By His example, Christ was showing His disciples that they should humble themselves to serve each other and their fellow man. Today, God's people continue to follow Christ's example and wash one another's feet as part of the Passover service. This represents their willingness to humble themselves in service to others.

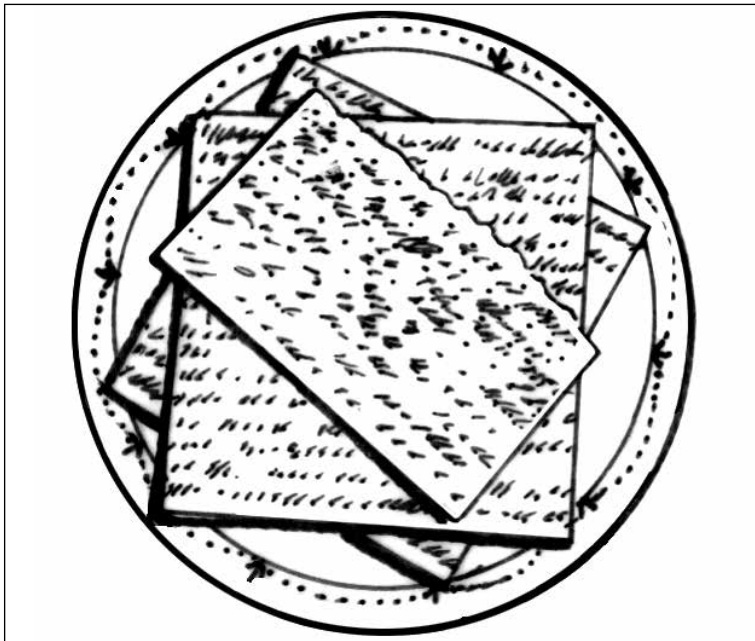
Next, Jesus broke unleavened bread into small pieces to represent the terrible beating He would receive before His crucifixion. Luke 22:19 says, "And He took bread, gave thanks, and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, This is My body which is given for you, do this in

remembrance of Me." This symbol of Christ's beaten body was for the forgiveness of our sins and of broken health laws that lead to sickness or disease.

We can ask God to heal us when we are sick, because of Christ's beaten body. "Who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died

to sins might live for righteousness—by whose stripes you were healed" (I Peter 2:24).

God gives us instructions in James 5:14-15 on how to request His healing of our sicknesses. "Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the





Lord. And the prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven.”

After the bread was broken and eaten, Jesus introduced the symbol of wine to be used in the Passover observance from that time forward. “Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink from it, all of you. For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins” (Matthew 26:27-28). The wine was a symbol of Christ’s shed blood for the forgiveness of our sins.

God also tells us how often we are to observe the Passover in Exodus 12:14. “So this day shall be to you a memorial; and you shall keep it as a feast to the LORD throughout your generations. You shall keep it as a feast by an everlasting ordinance.” A memorial is

kept once a year to remind us of a significant event.

Passover is the first annual festival kept by God’s people. The New Testament symbols of bread and wine remind us of Christ’s willingness to sacrifice His life to pay the death penalty in our place.

The Passover reveals the first step in understanding the mystery of God’s Master Plan.

Test Your Memory:

- 1) God brought a total of _____ plagues on the land of Egypt because Pharaoh would not free the Israelites from slavery.
- 2) When blood was smeared on the doorposts of the Israelites’ houses, the death angel _____ over them, sparing their firstborn.
- 3) The young unblemished male lamb represented _____, also called the _____ of God in John 1:29.
- 4) During the meal, Christ arose from dinner and took a _____ and _____, then knelt down and _____ the disciples’ _____.
- 5) What two new symbols did Christ introduce at His last Passover before His crucifixion? _____
- 6) Which symbol represented Christ’s body, beaten for our healing? _____
- 7) Which symbol represented Christ’s blood, shed for the forgiveness of sin? _____

God's Second Annual Festival: The Days of Unleavened Bread

What is the second step in understanding the greatest mystery of all time?

We can learn about this step by studying the feast that comes immediately after the Passover. God's second annual festival is the Days of Unleavened Bread.

Exodus 12:15 tells us, "Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread. On the first day you shall remove leaven from your houses. For whosoever eats leavened bread from the first day until the seventh day that person shall be cut off from Israel."

"On the first day there shall be an holy convocation [commanded assembly], and on the seventh day there shall be a holy convocation for you. No manner of work shall be done on them; but that which everyone must eat—that only may be prepared by you. So you shall observe the Feast of Unleavened Bread, for on this same day I will have brought your armies out of the land of Egypt. Therefore you shall observe this day throughout your generations as an everlasting ordinance" (Exodus 12:16-17).

In preparation for the Days of Unleavened Bread God's people pay special attention to cleaning their homes, cars and office spaces. Perhaps your parents have asked you to be extra careful in cleaning your room and not to take cookies, snacks or sandwiches into your

room in the days leading up to Unleavened Bread. In obedience to God, His people check everywhere for products that contain leaven. They completely remove it out of their house, car or office, and off all property they own or rent. Yeast, baking soda, and baking powder are the most common kinds of leaven.

Leaven causes bread dough or cake batter to rise. A little bit of leaven placed in dough spreads throughout it until all the dough is leavened (Galatians 5:9).

God uses leaven as a type of sin, to show us that a little bit of sin can spread throughout our whole life until it affects every part, causing problems, suffering, trouble and unhappiness.

By cleaning their homes to remove leaven, God's people show their willingness to make every effort to remove sin from every corner of their lives.

With God's help, we can obey His commandments—and we can remove sin from our lives wherever we may find it.

Exodus from Egypt

The Egyptians wanted to get rid of the Israelites so they would not suffer any more terrible plagues. They gave the Israelites jewelry, clothing, gold and silver to send them on their way out of Egypt.

During the morning of the fifteenth of Abib, millions of Israelites prepared to leave. That day, the people of Israel began their journey out of Egypt.

The Israelites had so much to be happy about. They were free from slavery to the Egyptians. Their firstborn had been protected from death. They had received valuable goods from the Egyptians who wanted them gone.



God commanded His people to always remember this joyful event year after year with a celebration called the Night to Be Much Observed. "It is a night to be much observed unto the LORD for bringing them out from the land of Egypt: this is that night of the LORD to be observed of all the children of Israel in their generations" (Exodus 12:42, KJV).

The Night to Be Much Observed is kept at the beginning of the first day of Unleavened Bread, the same time when God delivered the people of Israel from slavery to Egypt, which is used as a symbol of sin. Today the seven-day festival of Unleavened Bread pictures God's people coming completely out of spiritual sin (Exodus 12:14-15).

The Israelites took unleavened bread dough with them as God led them into the wilderness. He set a cloud to lead them by day, and a pillar of fire by night.

Back in Egypt, the Egyptians mourned and buried the dead.

Pharaoh began to seriously think about his decision to let the approximately three million slaves have their freedom. He decided to gather his army to go after them and bring them back.

Meanwhile, the Israelites had reached the shore of the Red Sea. When they looked back and saw the Egyptian soldiers and chariots bearing down on them, they became very afraid. Instead of remembering all the mighty miracles God had shown them in Egypt, they

complained to Moses. "Because there were no graves in Egypt, have you taken us away to die in the wilderness? Why have you so dealt with us, to bring us up out of Egypt? Is this not the word that we told you in Egypt, saying, 'Let us alone that we may serve the Egyptians?' For it would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than that we should die in the wilderness" (Exodus 14:11-12).

Moses calmed the people. "Do not be afraid. Stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD, which He will accomplish for you today. For the Egyptians whom you see today, you shall see again no more forever. The LORD will

fight for you, and you shall hold your peace" (verses 13-14).

God instructed Moses to raise his rod and stretch it out over the waters of the Red Sea to divide it. So Moses did as God commanded, and the children of Israel moved forward, walking through the Red Sea on dry ground.

When the Egyptian army saw the Israelites were escaping, they chased after them into the dry ground of the seabed. But once the people of Israel had come out on the other side, God instructed Moses to stretch out his rod over the sea once again. When Moses did as God commanded, the walls of water came crashing down, drown-

ing horses and riders, footmen and charioteers. The entire Egyptian army was wiped out!

"Then Moses and the children of Israel sang this song to the LORD, and spoke, saying: I will



sing to the LORD for He has triumphed gloriously! The horse and its rider He has thrown into the sea! The LORD is my strength and song, and He has become my salvation; He is my God, and I will praise Him; my father's God, and I will exalt Him" (Exodus 15:1-2).

This event happened on the last day of Unleavened Bread, when Israel left the country of Egypt and were finally free.

Putting Sin Out

God wants us to keep His commandments and not to sin. I John 3:4 provides the Bible definition of sin: "Whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness."

You will remember from studying about the Passover earlier in this lesson that no person who has ever lived, except Jesus Christ, has kept all of God's commandments perfectly. Remember what we read in Romans 3:23: "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."

What causes mankind to sin? "Because the carnal [fleshly] mind is enmity against [the enemy of] God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be" (Romans 8:7). A human being's first choice is to live the way of GET, rather than God's way of GIVE. His whole life centers on getting whatever he wants, even if getting it hurts other people.

Without help from God, we cannot naturally live God's way of give. Before He died, Jesus told His disciples He was going to send the help they needed to overcome sin and obey God's laws. "And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever" (John 14:16).

The Bible defines what this Helper is in John 14:26, "But the Helper, *the Holy Spirit*, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you."

Upon repentance and baptism, God gives the power of His Holy Spirit to a person to help him or her obey His laws, overcome sin,

understand the Bible, and learn to live His way of give. With the help of the Holy Spirit, God's people can develop God's own character within themselves.

God's character displays outgoing concern for other people, not just concern for self. Through the help of the Holy Spirit, they can resist Satan when he tempts them to break God's laws or pressures them to focus most of their attention on getting what they want in life.

The Days of Unleavened Bread reveals the second step in understanding the great mystery of God's Master Plan.

The next annual feast pictures receiving God's Holy Spirit and the wonderful opportunity for those individuals called to live God's Way.

God's Third Annual Festival: Pentecost

We have seen that before His death, Christ promised to send the Holy Spirit to help His disciples live God's Way. This event occurred on the Day of Pentecost in 31 AD, and reveals the third step in God's Plan.

The word Pentecost in the Greek means "fiftieth" day. Instead of falling on a specific day on God's calendar, the Day of Pentecost must be counted to determine on which day it should be observed. Beginning with the Sabbath that comes during the Days of Unleavened Bread, counting starts from the day after that Sabbath, on Sunday.

"And you shall count for yourselves from the day after the Sabbath, from the day that you brought the sheaf of the wave offering: seven Sabbaths shall be completed. Count fifty days to the day after the seventh Sabbath; then you shall offer a new grain offering to the LORD" (Leviticus 23:15-16).

Pentecost always falls on a Sunday.

"When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from

heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit” (Acts 2:1-4). At that moment, God gave His Holy Spirit to the disciples—the New Testament Church began.

Two annual harvests occurred in the land where the Israelites lived. The first smaller harvest came in the spring when the early crop of grain was ready to be gathered. But the Israelites could not eat that grain harvest until the wave-sheaf offering was made.

A weekly Sabbath took place during the seven days of Unleavened Bread. On the Sunday following that weekly Sabbath, a bundle of grain called a sheaf was cut from the early spring crop. As the *first* of the firstfruits, it was taken to the priest in God’s temple, where he waved that sheaf of grain before the altar in the temple as an offering to God (Leviticus 23:10-11). This was the wave-sheaf offering, the first of the firstfruits of the smaller spring harvest.

The first of the firstfruits pictured by this wave-sheaf represented Christ after His resurrection. The morning after His resurrection, Christ ascended to heaven to be accepted by His Father and become the very first human being to be born of God—the very *first* of the

firstfruits born into the God Family. Because Christ carried out what was pictured by the ancient wave-sheaf offering, it is not practiced today.

The Day of Pentecost pictures the first smaller spiritual harvest of the few individuals God has been calling out of all the billions who have lived.



These firstfruits will be born as Spirit beings into God’s Family when the Kingdom of God arrives on Earth. Then everyone alive on Earth will be taught how to obey God’s laws and they, too, will be given the opportunity to become a member in God’s Family.

The early spiritual harvest of firstfruits is being prepared to be rulers and teachers in God’s soon-coming world government.

The rest of mankind will also be given the opportunity to learn God’s Way in the Kingdom of God. This is pictured by the larger fall harvest, and by God’s four annual fall festivals.

The Day of Pentecost reveals the third step in understanding the great mystery of God’s Master Plan.

Now you understand the first three steps, but there are four more steps remaining, which are represented by the four fall festivals.

God’s Four Fall Festivals

During the fall harvest season, the last four of God’s annual festivals—the Feast of Trumpets, the Day of Atonement, the Feast of Tabernacles, and the Last Great Day—reveal steps four through seven in God’s Master Plan.

All of the people who have ever lived, who have never known God’s laws, will be taught to understand God’s Way in the

future. This greater spiritual harvest is pictured by the larger fall harvest. You will study the meaning of these in the special Fall Festival Lesson.

When you put all seven of God's annual festivals together, you will understand the greatest mystery of all time—and that it reveals the awesome purpose for which God created all mankind.

Brief Review: The Spring Festivals

Step One: Passover—pictures Christ's sacrifice for the forgiveness of sin.

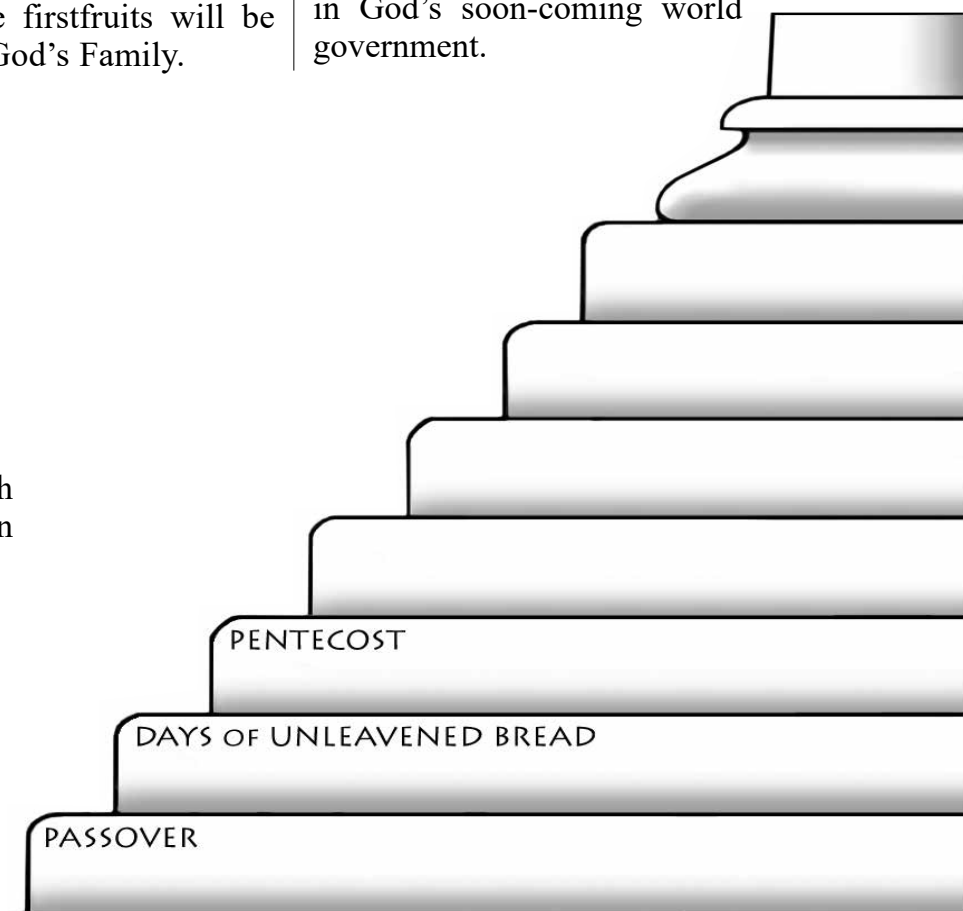
Step Two: Days of Unleavened Bread—pictures putting sin completely out of our lives and living God's Way every day.

Step Three: Day of Pentecost—pictures receiving God's Holy Spirit and the early spiritual harvest when the firstfruits will be born as Spirit beings into God's Family.

Write the meaning of each of the three spring feasts on the steps.

Test Your Memory:

- 1) God's people remember and celebrate the night the people of Israel joyfully left Egypt on what occasion? _____
- 2) God led the multitude of Israel by a _____ by day, and a _____ by night.
- 3) Leaven is a type of _____.
- 4) God sent His _____ to the disciples on the Day of Pentecost in 31 AD.
- 5) The smaller spring harvest pictures the first smaller spiritual harvest of _____, who are the few individuals God has been calling out of all the billions who have lived on Earth.
- 6) The firstfruits will be born as Spirit beings into God's Family when _____ on Earth.
- 7) Firstfruits are being prepared to be _____ and _____ in God's soon-coming world government.



BIBLE MEMORY: Leviticus 23:1-2, 5-6, 15-16

CROSSWORD PUZZLE

DOWN

1 Whose feasts did God say they are? _____

2 What did God use to punish Pharaoh for not letting the Israelites go?

5 Israelites wiped the _____ on their doorposts.

6 They killed a _____.

7 Christ paid the _____ for us.

8 We count 50 days to find which _____ Pentecost falls on.

9 "You shall let none of _____ remain until morning."

10 Christ said to "do this in _____ of Me."

11 "So you shall eat it _____ haste."

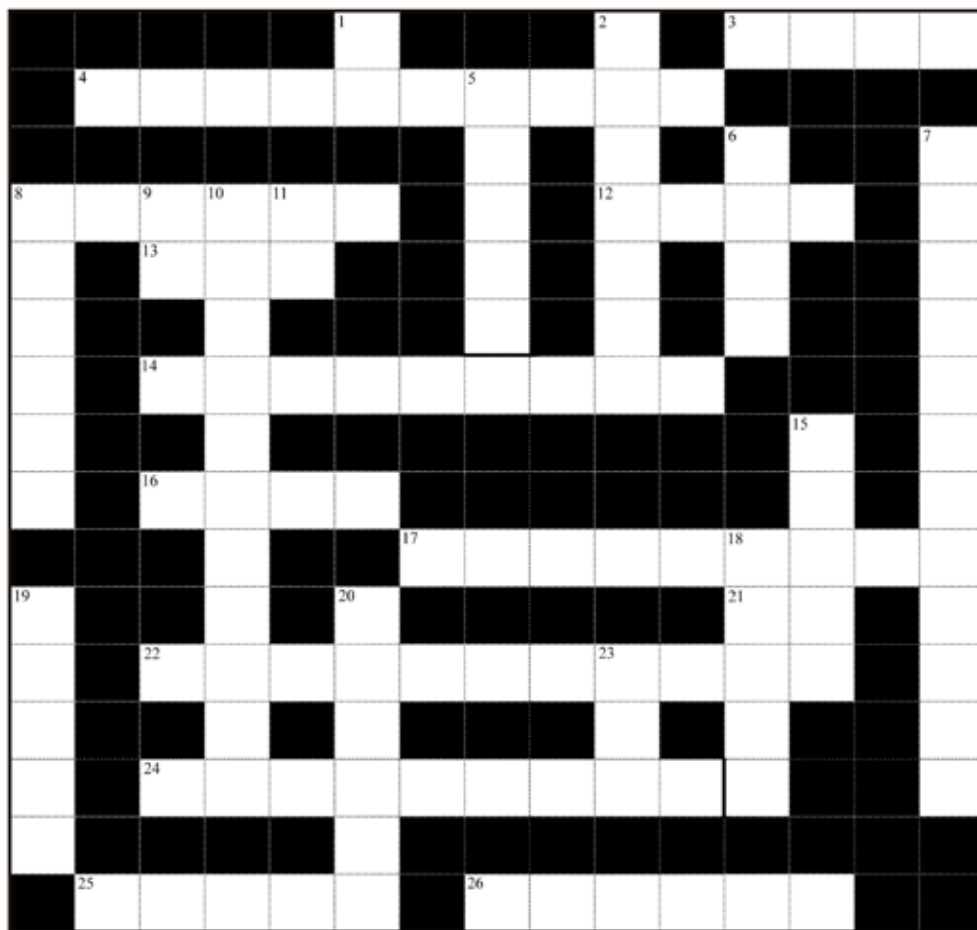
15 At Passover service, the wine represents Christ's _____.

18 Every day for seven days we are to eat unleavened _____.

19 When we follow God, we _____ our old life and sins behind us.

20 Pharaoh knew _____ were cheap labor.

23 Leaven is a type of _____.



ACROSS:

3 When we _____ our brother's feet, we show humble service.

4 On Passover night, Christ instituted _____.

8 The Holy _____ was given on Pentecost.

12 Israel could use a yearling sheep or _____.

13 How many plagues were sent? _____

14 What is the third step in God's Plan? _____

16 The first month of God's calendar is _____.

17 In Egypt, all the _____ of both man and beast died.

21 The lamb was not to be boiled but _____ asted.

22 They were to choose an _____ lamb.

24 Any agent that puffs up the bread dough is called _____

25 God gave Moses _____ to show Pharaoh he came with the authority of God.

26 All the Holy Days are pieces of the _____ that show God's great Plan.