



Imperial Academy Bible Lessons



Special Spring Festivals Lesson

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In the Garden of Eden, Adam and Eve rejected God's way of life. Since then, each new generation of human beings has done the same thing. They have chosen to do what *they* think is right rather than what *God* says is right. Because of this, God and His plan for mankind has become a mystery to most people.

But God has called a very small group of people to understand His plan and to prepare to help Him teach it to all mankind!

In this special lesson of the *Imperial Academy Bible Lessons*, you will learn about the *key* that unlocks the mystery of God's master plan. To discover these age-old mysteries, you will need your Bible, a pencil, and a prayerful attitude. Be sure to read each Bible verse in this lesson. In the same way that you talk to God in prayer, He talks to you through these scriptures.

GOD'S ANNUAL HOLY DAYS

God's plan has seven steps. These seven steps are represented by the seven annual festivals. When you understand the real meaning of these days, you understand God's plan for humanity!

To find the names of God's seven annual festivals, turn to Leviticus 23. List the name of each day on the following lines. (A few of these are referred to by more than one name. If you find another name, write it down next to the first one.)

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

The festivals in this list can be divided into two groups. In the Northern Hemisphere, the first three

occur in the spring. These are **Passover**, the **Feast of Unleavened Bread** and **Pentecost**. The last four holy days are in the fall: the Feast of Trumpets, Day of Atonement, Feast of Tabernacles and Last Great Day.

These festivals, when you understand their meaning, the complete God Family plan. The three spring holy days show God's plan to bring a comparatively small group of people into His Church to become the Bride of Jesus Christ. The four fall holy days show God's plan to bring the rest of humanity into His Family as children of God!

This lesson will focus on the meaning of the spring festivals: Passover, the Feast of Unleavened Bread and Pentecost.

SLAVES IN EGYPT

Almost 3,500 years ago, the Pharaoh of Egypt enslaved the people of Israel. After many decades of oppression, the Israelites cried out to God to free them. God called a man named Moses to tell Pharaoh to let the Israelites go. But Pharaoh was stubborn and hard-hearted. He rejected Moses's message from God. As a result, God sent 10 terrible plagues against Egypt.

Turn to Exodus 7-11 and list these 10 plagues:

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____
- 4) _____
- 5) _____
- 6) _____
- 7) _____
- 8) _____
- 9) _____
- 10) _____

God sent Moses and Aaron to warn Pharaoh before each of these plagues came. But Pharaoh always

refused to free the Israelites, so God followed through and sent the catastrophic curses. After each plague devastated Egypt, Pharaoh panicked and promised to free the Israelites. As soon as God stopped the plague, however, Pharaoh changed his mind. Then the process would repeat with a new plague.

After the plague of darkness, Pharaoh became so angry that he threatened to kill Moses and Aaron if they ever spoke to him again. “In the day you see my face again, you shall die,” said Pharaoh. Moses answered, “You have spoken well. I will see your face again no more.” Moses knew that the next plague would finally force Pharaoh to let the Israelites go, so he went and told the people to start preparing to leave Egypt!

THE FIRST PASSOVER

Moses warned the Israelites that the 10th and final plague would be the coming of the death angel to slay every firstborn in Egypt: man, woman, child and even animal. To avoid this terrible plague, the Israelites had to carefully follow some special and specific instructions from God.

The Israelites did exactly as God told them: The lives of their firstborns depended on it! *The principle of following God’s law exactly is outlined in Deuteronomy 12:32. Write out this scripture:* _____

The special instructions God gave the Israelites are recorded in Exodus 12. On the 10th day of Abib (the first month of God’s calendar; Abib is also known as the month of Nisan), each family was to select a male lamb that was less than one year old and had no markings or blemishes. The family was to keep this lamb separate from the other sheep. After sunset on the 14th day of Abib, the Israelites were to kill this lamb and smear its blood above and on the doorposts of their houses. The meat of the lamb had to be roasted and eaten that night, along with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. Any leftover meat was to be burned before the morning. The Israelites had to eat the meal quickly, with their shoes on their feet and their walking sticks in their hands. They had to be ready to leave Egypt in the morning.

But while the night lasted, they could not leave their houses. The reason was that on that night, the



The Israelites slew a young lamb and smeared its blood on the doorposts of their houses.

death angel came to Egypt and killed every firstborn who wasn’t protected inside a house whose door bore the blood of a lamb!

Read over God’s instructions one more time. Imagine you were an Israelite in ancient Egypt. If you did not follow these instructions *exactly*, animals would die, a child in the house would die, perhaps one or both of the parents would die and, if you are the first child born to your parents, *you* would die! This is how serious it is to follow God’s instructions closely.

The people who followed God’s commands demonstrated their obedience by applying the blood. The death angel saw this symbol and **passed over** their houses. When you hear the name of this first observance of the year, remember what it refers to: this incredible event of Passover!

MEMORY TEST

God commanded the Israelites to do this on the 10th day of the month of Abib: _____

God commanded the Israelites to do this on the 14th of Abib: _____

God commanded the Israelites to take the blood of a



BRODIE DAVIS/ISTOCK

Unleavened bread is used at the Passover to symbolize the broken body of Christ.

_____ and smear it on the _____ of their houses.

If the Israelites followed God's instructions, their _____ were spared from death.

Deuteronomy 12:32 shows us that we should: _____

THE TRUE MEANING OF PASSOVER

The lamb the Israelites killed on Passover had to be without spot or blemish. What did this lamb represent? Many centuries later, John the Baptist saw someone and said: "Behold the _____ of God, which takes away the _____ of the world." (Turn to John 1:29 to find out whom he was referring to and to fill in the blanks.)

The Apostle Peter also wrote that _____ was the Lamb of God, without spot or blemish. (Fill in the blank using 1 Peter 1:19-20). A blemish is a flaw or a fault. A spiritual blemish is a sin. As the Lamb of God, **Jesus Christ** was perfect. He had no sin or fault. The lamb the Israelites killed on Passover represented Jesus Christ, the God Being who would become a

human being, live a sinless life, and die for the sins of all mankind!

Sin is the breaking of God's law. The penalty for sin is death (Romans 6:23). Everyone who has ever lived, except for Jesus Christ, has sinned and rejected God's way of life (Romans 3:23). Because of this, without Christ's sacrifice, everyone who has ever lived would have to die forever to pay the penalty for his or her own sins.

But Jesus Christ is the Word of God who created all humanity. His life is more valuable than all human lives put together. He didn't have to die to pay the penalty of His own sins, because He never sinned. By voluntarily dying on our behalf, Christ paid the penalty of sin for all humanity!

Through His sacrifice as the *Lamb of God*, Christ was able to take away the sins of the world (John 1:29). When you are old enough, God will allow you to choose to repent of your sins, to accept the sacrifice of Jesus Christ and to be baptized. God will then take the blood of *the Lamb* and apply it to you (Romans 5:10), and the penalty of eternal death will then *pass over you*, just as the death angel passed over the obedient firstborn Israelites in Egypt! (This process of repentance and being reconciled to God happens not just at baptism, but throughout a Christian's lifetime.)

The purpose of those lambs being sacrificed in ancient Israel was to symbolize the ultimate Passover Lamb: Jesus Christ. Since He fulfilled the purpose of those sacrifices when He died 2,000 years ago, Jesus Christ gave His disciples new symbols for keeping the Passover. Baptized adults in God's Church today keep the same symbols. They do not kill a lamb on Passover. Instead, they attend a special church service and partake of the symbols Jesus Christ instituted the night before He sacrificed Himself to be tortured and killed.

The first thing Christ taught His disciples to do at the Passover service was to wash one another's feet. In ancient Judea, people wore open-toed footwear, so their feet got quite dirty. The task of washing a visitor's feet was assigned to the lowest servant in a household. The fact that Jesus Christ did this for His disciples showed His humble and serving attitude!

The next thing Christ taught the disciples to do was to take a piece of unleavened bread, break it into small pieces, and then eat one of the pieces. In Luke 22:19, Christ told the disciples what this bread represents. Fill

in the blanks: “This is my _____ which is given for you: this do in _____ of me.” This broken piece of unleavened bread represents Jesus Christ’s body, which was severely beaten before His crucifixion. He sacrificed His body so that physical sins can be forgiven for those who accept and believe in that sacrifice (1 Peter 2:24). Physical sins are the breaking of health laws that lead to sickness, disease and injury. Because Christ paid the penalty for our physical sins, God will heal us when we are sick or injured as long as we follow the instructions in James 5:14-15.

After eating this piece of unleavened bread, Christ taught His disciples to drink a small glass of wine. This wine represents Christ’s blood, which was shed for the forgiveness of our spiritual sins (Matthew 26:27-28). The new Passover symbols that Christ instituted remind us of the tremendous price of sin. Jesus Christ, the Son of God, voluntarily gave His own life for us. Because Christ paid the penalty for our sins, it is possible for us to become part of the God Family if we repent of our sins and seek after God’s way of life! Without this sacrifice, we would simply live out our lives, die and be gone forever!

To find out how often God’s people are to keep the Passover, turn to Exodus 12:14 and fill in the blanks: “And this day shall be unto you for a _____; and you shall keep it a feast to the LORD throughout your generations; you shall keep it a feast by an ordinance _____.”

The Passover is an annual memorial of Christ’s death; we are to keep it every year from now until forever!

FEAST OF UNLEAVENED BREAD

The second step in the God Family plan is represented by the Feast of Unleavened Bread. To see God’s special instruction for these days, turn to Exodus 12:15 and fill in the blanks: “_____ days shall you eat _____ bread.”

For the Feast of Unleavened Bread, God commanded the Israelites to put all leavening out of their homes. For seven days they were not to eat any bread with leavening. Instead, they were to eat unleavened bread. The first day of this festival is the first holy day in God’s calendar year. On the first and seventh days of this festival, God commanded the people to assemble together for a religious service,

just like they did every week on the Sabbath. These days were to be observed by God’s people from then until forever! (Exodus 12:16-17).

To this very day, members of God’s Church clean their kitchens, homes and vehicles much better than usual in preparation for the Days of Unleavened Bread. We need to make sure every crust, cracker and crumb we can find is thrown away and removed from the premises. Think about some of the unusual places you might find crumbs or leavening in your home. *Make a list of some of the places below:*

Leavening causes bread dough to rise as it becomes puffed up with air, just like sin causes people to puff up with pride and vanity. Leaven itself isn’t evil, but during the Days of Unleavened Bread, God uses it to symbolize sin. Removing all leavened foods from our homes, lockers, vehicles and places of work during these days pictures putting sin out of our lives. Eating unleavened bread during this time pictures putting righteousness *into* our lives. Like breadcrumbs, sin can get into many deep, hard-to-reach places in our lives. We have to learn that it takes hard work and God’s help to get sin out of our lives!

SLAVES TO SIN

After the Israelite slaves in Egypt finished eating the Passover lamb, they remained in their homes all night as the death angel carried out the final plague against Egypt. When the sun finally rose, the Egyptians were mourning the loss of their firstborn. God instructed the Israelites to receive silver, gold and clothing from the Egyptians and then start traveling eastward out of Egypt. So that night, the 15th of Abib, the Israelites started their journey to freedom!

As many as 3 million Israelites headed out of slavery on this joyful **Night to Be Much Observed**. They took with them the unleavened bread dough they had prepared the night before so they could eat bread on their journey to the Promised Land. God led

the Israelites out of Egypt with a pillar cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night. They traveled for six days, keeping the Feast of Unleavened Bread, until they came to the shores of the Red Sea.

During this time, Pharaoh once again changed his mind. He sent an army to pursue and recapture the Israelites. When the Israelites saw the Red Sea in front of them and Pharaoh's army behind them, they became terrified. They forgot the supernatural plagues and mighty miracles God had performed and continued to perform in order to deliver them from slavery. They began to accuse Moses of bringing them into the wilderness to die, claiming that they preferred being enslaved to the Egyptians.

Moses told the Israelites to take courage and to have faith in the power of God. At God's instruction, Moses lifted up his staff, and perhaps the greatest miracle in their lifetimes happened right in front of their eyes: The waters of the Red Sea *divided*. The sea split in half, creating two giant walls of water; in between, a pathway of dry ground appeared!

The mass of Israelites stepped onto the path, walking across the seabed. For many hours they made their way through the sea while the guiding cloud of God formed a protective wall that prevented the Egyptian army from following after them. At some point, however, Pharaoh's soldiers pursued the escaping Israelites into the pathway. But once the Israelites had safely reached the bank on the other side of the Red Sea, God instructed Moses to stretch out his staff once again. When Moses did so, the walls of water crashed back together, drowning the Egyptian army! This event happened on the last day of Unleavened Bread. God had completely delivered Israel from the bondage of Egypt!

Moses and the Israelites sang a great hymn praising God for His deliverance. This hymn is recorded in Exodus 15:

*"I will sing unto the LORD,
for he hath triumphed gloriously:
the horse and his rider hath he thrown
into the sea.
The LORD is my strength and song,
and he is become my salvation:
he is my God ... and I will exalt him."*

Just like leaven represents sin, the ancient land of Egypt also represents the sinful ways of this

world. Pharaoh is a type of Satan the devil, who holds everyone who has ever sinned as his slaves. We are all slaves to Satan unless God delivers us from slavery.

In the first step of God's plan, Jesus Christ died to pay the penalty for our past sins. In the second step of God's plan, we have to let God help us put sin completely out of our lives. This is the true meaning of the Days of Unleavened Bread!

REAL MEANING OF SIN

Before we can put sin out of our lives and keep God's commandments, we have to know exactly what sin is. There is a lot of confusion in the world about the meaning of sin, but God gives us an exact definition in the Bible. *Fill in the blanks using 1 John 3:4: "Whosoever commits sin transgresses also the law: for sin is the _____ of the _____."*

God's way is a way of love, so love is the keeping of God's law. Anytime we break God's law, we are sinning. In Romans 3:23, God tells us that all people ever born have broken His law except Jesus Christ.

To find out why we break God's law, turn to Romans 8:7 and write out the verse on the following lines:

It isn't natural for the carnal, human mind to obey God's laws. Adam and Eve rejected the tree of life and God's Holy Spirit. They chose to let Satan's selfish nature into their minds instead of God's loving nature. With the exception of Jesus Christ, every human ever born has made this same choice. Usually, we embrace carnal human nature (which is really Satan's nature) before we even turn a year old. Once we've accepted it, it becomes impossible to obey God's law without His miraculous help!

No matter how hard we try to live God's way of life, we will always fall short without God's help. But how does God give us this help?

After Jesus Christ died for our sins, He remained dead for three days and three nights. Then He was resurrected to the same power and glory He had with God for eternity as the Word of God. Now He sits at the right hand of God the Father, helping His people. Before His death, He promised the disciples that He would send them special help after His resurrection.



The grain harvest pictures the future spiritual harvest of human beings to be born into the God Family.

Write out this important promise God made in John 14:16: _____

Jesus Christ promised to send His disciples a Comforter after He returned to His Father’s throne in Heaven. *To find out more about this Comforter, fill in the blanks using John 14:26: “But the Comforter, which is the _____ [Spirit], [which] the _____ will send in my _____, [it] shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.”*

The Comforter is God’s Holy Spirit, which is the very power of God. Kind of like electricity is the power of a lightbulb, so the Holy Spirit is the power of a God Being. After a person repents of his past sins and becomes baptized, God gives him a small portion of His Holy Spirit. This Spirit allows the newly baptized person to understand spiritual things. It gives him strength to resist the temptations of Satan and overcome his own human weaknesses. It enables him to obey God’s laws and live God’s way of life, as long as he strives as hard as he can to stay close to God in prayer, study and good works.

You aren’t old enough to be baptized yet and do not yet have the Holy Spirit dwelling *in* you. But if your parents have God’s Holy Spirit and if you understand the biblical truths in this lesson, these are good signs that God is using the Holy Spirit to work *with* you!

PENTECOST

The third holy day in God’s plan is **Pentecost**. Unlike other holy days, Pentecost doesn’t fall on a specific

date on God’s calendar. Pentecost means “count 50.” To find out when Pentecost falls, count 50 days from the day after the weekly Sabbath during the Days of Unleavened Bread (Leviticus 23:15-16). Counting Sunday as day one, Pentecost always ends up on another Sunday, 50 days later.

In Old Testament times, God gave His Ten Commandments to Moses on Pentecost. To commemorate this event, God commanded the Israelites to offer up two loaves of bread (baked with leaven) on Pentecost. These loaves were waved in the air before God. One loaf represented those called out of the world in Old Testament times, and the other loaf represented the New Testament Church. Both loaves were baked with leaven to symbolize that those in God’s Church will still have some sin in their lives up until the time Christ returns.

After Jesus Christ returned to His Father, Pentecost became the anniversary of the beginning of God’s Church. In A.D. 31, 50 days after Christ was resurrected, His disciples assembled for a Pentecost church service as He had instructed them. In an awesome display of power, God sent His Holy Spirit to His disciples. This is when God’s New Testament Church officially started! *You can read this spectacular miracle of the Holy Spirit in Acts 2.*

The Middle East, where the Bible was written, has two harvest seasons each year. The first is a small spring grain harvest. The second is a large fall harvest. These two harvests represent God’s plan to bring as many people as possible into His Family. First, there is a small spring harvest where God brings members of His Church into His Family. These members are called **firstfruits**. When they

come into God's Family, they become the **Bride of Christ**.

When these firstfruits are born into God's Family and marry Jesus Christ, they will help Him teach His way of life to the rest of the world: millions and even billions of people all over the planet. In fact, the firstfruits will help Jesus Christ teach billions of *resurrected* human beings: everyone who has ever lived and never had the opportunity to receive God's Holy Spirit. This overwhelmingly huge majority of human beings who have ever lived will be brought into God's Family. This is a type of the great fall harvest.

The firstfruit harvest is what makes this possible, and the firstfruit harvest is what Pentecost is all about!

PREVIEW OF THE FALL HOLY DAYS

The three spring holy days are all about God's plan to bring His Church into His Family. Christ died on Passover to pay for the sins of all mankind. The first two holy days (the first and last days of the Feast of Unleavened Bread) symbolize that members of the Church of God have to repent of their past sins and leave the evil ways of this world behind them. This is the meaning of the Days of Unleavened Bread. Then, God has to give members of His Church the power of His Holy Spirit so they can overcome sin and qualify to be teachers in the World Tomorrow!

The four fall holy days communicate God's plan to bring the billions of people who were never part of God's Church into His Family as His children. Seven is God's number of completion: All four fall holy days come in the seventh month of God's calendar. These days picture the completion of the God Family plan. We will learn more about them in a future lesson of the *Imperial Academy Bible Lessons*.

MEMORY TEST

John the Baptist called Jesus Christ the _____ of _____ .

In the New Testament Passover Service, what do the bread and the wine symbolize?

What does the Feast of Unleavened Bread teach us?

What does leaven represent? _____

What is the Comforter? _____

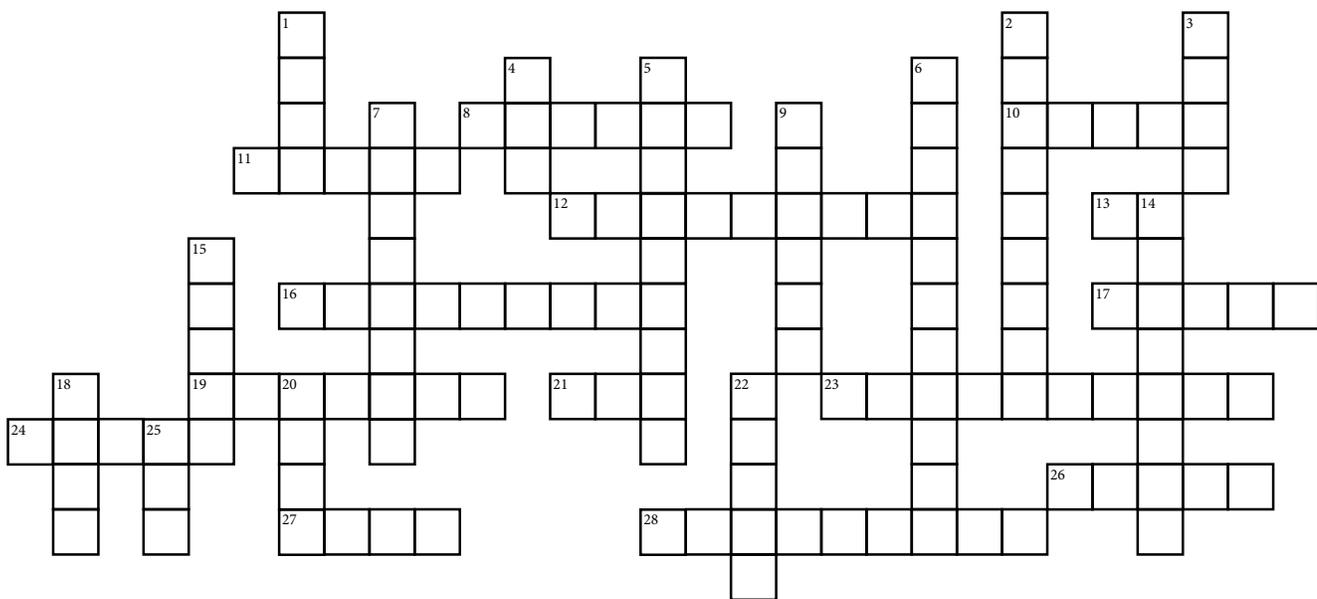
What does God's Holy Spirit enable His people to do?

On what day did God establish His Church?

How do you determine when the day of Pentecost falls? _____

What does Pentecost represent in God's plan?

Spring Holy Days



ACROSS

- 8 Israel's occupation in Egypt
- 10 First month on the Hebrew calendar
- 11 Number of days during the Feast of Unleavened Bread
- 12 Where God's holy days are listed, chapter 23
- 13 Christ's sacrifice occurred in the year __.__. 31.
- 16 Those killed by the death angel
- 17 Christ spent three days and three nights here
- 19 King of Egypt
- 21 Number of plagues on Egypt
- 23 Day on which Passover is kept
- 24 Leavening agent
- 26 Told to raise his rod over the Red Sea
- 27 Unleavened bread represents the ____ of Christ.
- 28 Israelites were to spread blood on their _____.

DOWN

- 1 Israel was led by night by a pillar of _____.
- 2 Day the New Testament Church was founded
- 3 Symbolizes Christ's blood
- 4 Who have sinned
- 5 Symbolic of sin
- 6 Those called today
- 7 Passover is a _____.
- 9 The Holy _____ makes it possible to obey God.
- 14 Ninth plague
- 15 Location of Israel during the first Passover
- 18 Christ washed the disciples' _____.
- 20 Another name for the first month on the Hebrew calendar
- 22 Assisted Moses
- 25 The penalty for _____ was paid by Christ.