

Ministudy Gods Great Master Plan

The Good News, in conjunction with the Correspondence Course Department present brief monthly excursions into the study of the Bible, delving into topics relevant to the development of future members of the God Family. Bible study is one means by which Christians are renewed daily (11 Cor. 4:18). so let's refresh ourselves with more of the precious truths of God's Word!

The format of these ministudies is similar to that of the Ambassador College Bible Correspondence Course. Look up and read' irr your Bible the scripture references given in answer to ths,questions- Comments following the questions elaborate on the scriptures just read. That's all there is to itt (These studies are based op the King James Version of the Bible, unless otherwise stated.) " ' "

- Prepare by Richard H Setuaciir

God has a master plan by which Hi is bringing about the fruition. of W e awesome. purpose for. manki1 d. And His Son, Jesus Christ. plays the central role in God's little-understood plan tgr. - nfan. God's plan is outlined in. the form of seven. annual festivals. which Christians are to observe for a vital purpose.

Just'as the weekly Sabbath pictures the Christian 's goal of entering' igt"ternsl "rest" as_ a glorified, Spirit-born ember_ of God's. Family._ these annual obsevva as givb the step-by-step overview of hoe God %ill work out His master . . plan for man. Each' festival' vividly poriiays a - great event in Gods plan. and the yearly, obsee-. . vance of those special days further -impresses

delivered from Egypt that God revealI. His annual festivals. Through 'Moses. God formally. - introduced these festivals to His nation israit_ =.

..Nit! "chw'gh ig tl!4.WA d_sf n'. (Ac to-7'38) - -

Since throughout most of human. history man has been ctosq,to the -soil in providing hi l l' austitnace, God originally-.uses the yearly agricultural.'

harvests of Palestine as symbolic typos df His 4. What, new way of observing the Passover spirilui l "harvests" *f mankind did _Jeius institute shortly before His-death and,

ht the "promised :aid v which carne to be

known as Palestirte. there was a spr:rg harvest x

followed by a much larger fall harvest. Today. we 1-t

can ynderatand from the teachings of Christ and ~' the apostles that God intVrtds the spring festivals to illustrate to His Church yearly the fact that all . of those He has coiled to become Hid; Spiritbegotten.. children since Christ* first coming are only the "firstfruits" - only the relatively small beginning of, His-great spiritual harvest of human•t beings into His immortal Family. . Later. as pictured, by file festivals of the. much larger autumn harvest season. God will call the rest of the billions of humanity to 'salvation and sonship in His glorious Family!

A summary of these annual festivals is found: in Leviticus the 23rd chapter. Let'ss commene4dhis throp-part introductory study of God's annual festivals'and learn exctly'what they signify for us today.

Ii. Who'doea the Bible say originatsd'these annual'testRats? Lev. 23:1:-2.i4.

Notice that these okra nor 'the " teists" of the Sews"or ' tess!fi of Moses;" as 'some l) ve

- erroneously. assutmioid: They are (cod's own !pasts.: which:' He originated and gave- to His people to keep year by year:

G d . ally lei f Hia {tnsatd' feasts were to .be observed [in-addition. to](#) thi weekly' Sabbath? tev. 23:37.311

3 - Whit 'is. the first, feativat td be observedeach year? Lev 23:5. When did Godans4tute. the

very filet-Paasovbr? Ex. 12:1-14,

:Tha'Festival of.. the. Patsove begins' G We

the knowledge of His plan on God's people, • , greet master plan lot mankind:

Although the 19reminding them of their-'part in it lust Passover was to be a memorial to remind

It was not until just after the-Israelites were Is of Gods intervention. :in diliverin0 .them. from slavery m'Egypt. it ~Isapretuvsd' in advance, the great. #acrilice •- the druci*xion and death - of Jesus Christ ("oui Passover lama" .1 Cor 51i t P.M. L t) for. t e alma sifbiskied -Aher His death. this Passover became:a nOmprial of that sacrifice. for J*sva became the reality thalaha Passover Is" -nod toreshedwed.

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a 14e ste.the.Passovet iaTb ss: ' is dsc=pies?;, Pole eti:ven "eaveneth tie w!o""e ;;sip" (verse.6). ... ,xe 22 8,: 4:2O, Permitti-g s'.ii totail r,-,rs)i

Wails ina~tulirg the new symbo_a of the wxna W before at1 t~ coftgregat:an wo and bread -- the wine paaiur rig tjs.ahed brood S - others t\$'gradually let down a for The forgiveross of ow spiritua~ sons.: aid the j back into former sirs.

breadC sy nbiiC of Mss body, w~Tah was t rosier for ; We sa~, that the Passover is to remind us that car ,hywca* heaf:ng (f.P.1. 2:24) - Jesus gave, a i Jesus paid a tremendous price for our past. sins. cc.r'rana.. "This do to renrembra.4 C -of, nre' s . He offered something more vetuable. than any

. (i...ke 22: t8). The Passavef. Was now't3 become thug we could* even co:'.ectiveiy offer - the, a roe. oirial of Christ's sacrifice to: our stns And. n He wittiled Chr stians'ta especa? y...ifrrze nber"

1-1 arts every.year p!' their :,ores

S.: What aomp:etety new ceremony did .Jesus

464- institute ir, connection wth this New ' este. mint Passover observance? J5hn t3 2-17. espe:daisy eras 14-16.

Notice rlbt"thin ceresr4ny c .me.washmg-of .the_ disciples' feet had .noLm.g whatsoever to do with the Old Testament observance of the Pass, gser:'tt was then being irstituted for the very first.._

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r ..Hii.dlacipls\$ wsreto keep annuaf, from that time taritrd. tltt why?,

foot wasa+qe

depicts (his attitude ; his humility and service to others. that Christ always exhibit 4. and which He desires that every Christian should strive to imitate (verses 16- 17)

fi. What observance follows immediately after the Passover? Lev. 23:6-8, Ex 12:15, 20.

7. Were the first and seventh days of the Feast of Unleavened Bread "holy days on which the people were to assemble themselves. Much the same as they: would on a weekly Sabbath

...day? Ex. Lev. 23:3. Were the people to remain holy high days of unleavened bread? Lev. 23:7-8. it x 12:16

S. Did the New Testament Christians "Serve this Festival? I think not. 1 Cor. 5:7-8. What is the obvious meaning of the "rise of unleavened bread" (1 Cor. 5:7)?

A study of these passages in 1 Corinthians 5 shows that the Festival of Unleavened Bread, which the Corinthian Christians were observing... is the putting away of the Leavening, therefore, is a biblical type or symbol of sin. (verse 8). because 'sin' is physical leavening - used in bread to make it rise. not only cause & amon to eat with vain. Y and 'become' m'c e. puffed up in God's sight (verses 2, 6). It is also spread throughout a group of people

Paul warned the Church of God that they should put out of the fellowship the person whose name was known to them; (verse 4) Paul urged decisive action because - as he reminded them - "

abated and openly 'd. in time, cause did begin slipping

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Oral. Pertinent Testament "Chapter
God made the Holy till.

It was on this fast Pentecost that the "firstfruits" of God's smelt.. spiritual "spring harvest" began to be . "planted" These 'new Christian's were begotten by the power that was to help them grow spiritually. thus preparing them to be born into God's Family of Christ's coming. ..God knows - that for unto overcome our human weaknesses.. to be throughty and successfully

'...: our lives; our human-witipOut

our abilities are not enough. We need the supernatural strength of His Holy Spirit to help us overcome This is the third step in God's plan to help us fulfill His glorious purpose.

of h9 5: b 8 f t0 be continued !

sacrifice His perfect. sinless life.

Then are ways, unleavened Bread, which.

meddately. Passover remind us that we must strive to put our sins out of our lives, This Festival pictures putting the "leaven of sin away from us and our renewed resolve to live in harmony with God's laws henceforth.

9: What is the next annual Festival that God ordained? Lev. 23:9, 16- Was this another Holy

Qsy'of rest on..which the people wore to. ;ssem
We the~setves? -terse 21.

10. What new name was given in the New
Testament to this Old Testament Festival of
"Firsttr:trts"4 Acts 2:1.

Pentecost i a Grille word which an& 50.

ly 'annual Sabbath whose exact

is determined by counting. The first nw0enteco!(occurred on. the 50th isa s resins

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iy after His reswreclios. did J.esils promise. s disciples they-would soon receive, the ~
ly Spirt? Acts 1:4 5. -Are Spirit-begotten Cfinsftans therefore the' " Oretfruits" of
God's West master plan? Jas. 1:16, Rom. 8:23. .

The New. Testament "Festival of Pentecost is observed in 'Mpmory of that
momentous "a"

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arrival of the Hoy Spirit_ train God (Acts 2) to boget"repe ant. delievers-'in Christ-
Thus this marks

egirtning of the New

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' - PrwXfbrud by Nit hwrđ H. Sudtiucik

12. What Is the next festival, or, annual Sabbath, of the seven described in It.evlticus
231 Verses 23-28.

The Day of Trumpets ~depldts primarily the triumphant-return of the powerful living
Christ to set up the government of God on earth and to rule

-ee-King-of ~kinge--(Acv-1-i:-f6 remember that the Ntst resurrection glso occurs
at the4econd Coming of-Jesus Christ, which Is announced 'by the "bloat of a. mighty,
trumpet (I There. 4:18-17; 1 Got. 16:62). Yet the overall -meaning-of-the Feast of
Trumpets encompasses. even mgrp.' ..

Notice that It. Is the Flsbet of 'Trumpets, plural (Lev.' 23:24), not the "Feast of the Last Trump." When and nt Israel was wandering In the wilderness, they became accustomed to the blowing•of . trumpets forimany porpoise: the calling' of assemblles, the, signal to march 'or Ault, officer's -or-Or-ae•a-warning;-Msoh-like-the-use-o(bnplee In modern military history, Israel recognized varlpue souflds ae having speclsc meanings.

13. What'do Revelation 8:1.2, 8 and 10:7 Have to say regarding the.blowlHg of trumpets shortly before the return of Chrltitl .

There Is a piiraitel between trumpets-sounding plarme of warning In ancient Israel and the warn

(lea. 68:1). There is also a eimllar rotoltonahip between the angelic trumpet blasts of Revolution signaling the Imminent return of Jesus GhWq

t and return of .Jesus Chrls4. The successive pngollo "

trumpet bleats and pricem pinying catastrophic.

I events an a worldwide scale just prior to Christ's return wlli~serve a& fInal warnlnps~ heedless,"

sin-ravaged world[.

1,4. What annual Sabbath fellows only nine

days after the Feast of Trumpets? Lev. 28:28.32;

16:2.34, especially verses 29-31 of ghepter 10.

Also notice Revelation 20:1.3 In connection with

LgvitlouA 16:21.21. ' The ritut Is required of the Old' Testament Le ' .

vitloal ministry on the Day of Atonement are described in great detail .In the 8th chapter of Leviticus. Suffice it to say here that the live goat, upon whom all the sins of Israel were to be confessed and which was led Into the desolate wilderness, represents the devil, upon whorti the guilt of all.the, sins of mankind will b..c laid by' Jesus 'Christ after He returns.

Satan who-is carted the-"gad•otthhrwOrld -(h Cor. 4:4), end is described as the "prince of the power of the air, the spirit tbst now worketh In the children of dlsobedienpe" (Pphr 2:2), being the. father of sin (John 6:42.44),'wIp be restrained by Christ from further leading mankind Into stn. No ' longer will he be able to "broadcapt'." his attitudes of inanity, lust-and greed.

At 'thd' devil's "6halning" (Rev.' 20:1 3), the symbolism oj.,Levitlcus 16 will ,become reality. The minds of men, formerly kept tlghtlycl aid by. • Satan and his darned cohorte, will now t eat'be opened by the Spirit Of God. -For the t time eywjt-be-sbtelo-understand-t3od's rite. uptatnof salvation for mankind, and humanity will readily accept and receive forgiveness of . their. sine through, Christ. Thg2 and only then, will. men become at one with C rist and the • Fslher, as symbolized by the D of At-one-ment.

16. How era we to specifically 'observe the Day of Atonement? ev. 23:32.

'Ing'witness ft:osasgo -of the Work of God 'today

the continual warning and work of God's Work today as It prepares the way for the New Era conducted by

The Day 4 Atonement, Is perhaps the most unusual Holy day as far as what God expects us to do during this 24-hour period. For it is the one day which God has commanded us to fast - to "fillet your souls" or bodies. (For biblical proof that afflicting one's soul means fasting, compare the following passages: Gen. 36:13; 89:1-3; Ezra 8:21.) For the Day of Atonement means denying oneself food and water for 24 hours - from sunset to sunset ("even unto even") (Lev. 23:32). Fasting is not penance --- not a hunger strike to try to get one's way with God. Whenever a Christian fasts, it should be for the purpose of humbling his or her fleshly mind with its carnal will, and to draw close to God on His righteous way (Lea., 88:6.1 i):

That fasting, on the day of Atonement is a reminder of the state of mind necessary for atonement - of the humility, the godly sorrow, the earnest seeking for God's way - a condition to which this world will have been brought by catastrophic events culminating in Christ's return.

16. What important seven-day festival and integral annual Sabbath day occurs soon after the Day of Atonement? (Lev. 23:33-35; Deut. 10:13, 16, 17)

The Feast of Tabernacles was also called the "Feast of Mothering". (Ex. 23:16; 34:22) because this seven-day festival began just after the autumn harvest season. The whole nation observed this Feast after the final, main, harvest was in (Lev. 23:39), and

17. Did Jesus observe the Feast of Tabernacles? (John 7:2, 8, 11, 14). Did anyone know

if He did? (John 7:26)

Why was He in Jerusalem for its observance? (John 7:11)

Because of continually mounting persecution, Jesus wisely chose not to travel openly in Judea (verse 1). However, verses 1-10 show that He did risk His life to keep the Feast of Tabernacles. Even though He went secretly; He openly taught in the temple, during the middle of the Feast.

18. What is the divinely set theme for the annual observance of the Feast of Tabernacles? (Lev. 23:42-43). (Notice the words surely rejoice. Other translations render this "be altogether joyful.") Does God reward for everyone - regardless of age, social status or economic level - to rejoice in this Feast? (Lev. 23:42)

19. Does God intend for a man to take his wife and children to rejoice with him at the Feast of Tabernacles? (Lev. 23:42; Deut. 16:14; 12:6, 7, 12). Are they to live in "booths" --- temporary dwellings (roughly corresponding to motel rooms, hotel rooms and, indeed, today) - at the place designated for the observance of this Feast? (Lev. 23:42). The Feast of Tabernacles is full of spiritual meaning for Christians today. Simply put, the Feast of Tabernacles portrays the wonderful world tomorrow under the righteous rule of Jesus Christ. -- 1,000 years of peace, prosperity and joy for the billions of mankind who will live in this "Olympic age". It is during the Millennium that the great "autumn harvest" of human lives will begin to be gathered into the Kingdom of God. - born again as divine members of the Family of God.

Just think of- itt Satan will have been immediately deposed at Christ's .return. Then 1;000 . ydats of peace and prosperity will folldw. Those who are the "flrstfruits" of God's spiritual harvest

first born Into God's Family dinheritors wit ,Jests Christ -- will join_ Him In Ilng the earth. They will be given th ,privilege of bringing saving knowledge to every human then alive and.

"those born during the ensuing Millennium) .

Over and over God tells us that the roast of Tabernacles to a time of exceedinglygrest rejoiciqg. For ancient Israel It was a time of rejoicing• because the abundant winter's store was [taken. in](#)

..,just before the Feast. But in the Millennium, the :hagpineas, joy, and prosperity pictured- by the Feast of Tabernacles will exist. worldwide under the enlightened rule of Jesus Christ. Obedience to the spiritual- principles of God's laws and God's revealet way 'of life will make 'the world .tomorrow a literal utopia. _ -

. Today,,,. God's great .Rail-Festllfal gives His Spirit-begotten children .a special Time afld settling in whlch-to think about His-purpose-for-llfeand the way to attain ff. The Fsabt of Tabernacles is Intended to change their routise and separate and tree them from the world. Dwelling in temporary habitations fpr'an entire week away rom their everyday surroundings, away fr m t eir Jobs,their customarythoughte, and most ne tive Influences, they picture by their observant, of these seven days the universal freedom and peace,tha,1 Will eist In the Millennium.

The Feast of Tabernaclew so observed today Is actually a tiny, but happy, fgreteste of the Joyful world tomorrow when the Spirit of God will

,lead numanlty l'h.esQre-dagsot-concentrated--! teaching by God's ministers days of contin, uous, genuine Christian feilow"%hlp and just plain good fun) Christians at the Feast demonstrate now, by the way they live tgpether In harmony,. whit 'this -entire sin-sick, unhappy world could 1 and will be like)

(This subject to be continued.)

God's Great Master Plan

We have seen how those called of God through the ages - especially since the first coming of Christ to the end of the Millennium - fit into God's great master plan.

But what about the billions of people from the time of Adam to our time (including perhaps most of your loved ones) who were not called of God - who never had a chance to know the spiritual truth of God? How are they to learn of salvation and God's purpose for mankind?

The answer is revealed in the final step in God's great master plan.

20. Does the seven-day Feast of Tabernacles end God's plan for humanity? Or is it God's will that all who have ever lived come to the knowledge of salvation? II Pet. 3:9; I Tim. 2:4.

God has, in His loving concern for all mankind, planned for everyone who has ever lived to receive the very same opportunity for salvation and sonship in God's Family

that all spiritually called and begotten children of God have been given. And so just as the week is not complete without the Sabbath day, God's master plan is not complete without His seventh and final annual Holy Day.

The number seven in the Bible signifies completion and perfection. Without the knowledge of this seventh annual Holy Day, you can't understand

21. Was there an eighth day of worship held immediately following the seven days of the Feast of Tabernacles? Lev. 23:34-36. Is it the final festival - the final annual Sabbath of rest? Verse 39.

The last annual high Sabbath is observed immediately after the Feast of Tabernacles. But because of its close proximity to this feast, it was associated with the Feast of Tabernacles and was called the "eighth day." In the New Testament it is referred to as "the last day, that great day of the feast" (John 7:37).

22. Revelation 20 holds the key to the meaning of the Last Great Day. As we already know, verses 4-6 essentially speak of the resurrected saints ruling with Jesus Christ on earth for 1,000 years. But exactly what is said in the first sentence of verse 5?

These are not the dead in Christ, but simply the dead - those billions who were not Christ's, those who have never been begotten and converted - who may have never even heard the name of Jesus Christ.

The first part of verse 5 in the King James Version is in reality a parenthetical comment. The verse should read: "(But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished.) This is the first resurrection."

The sentence, "This is the first resurrection," pertains to the context of verses 4 and 6 and refers to the spiritual resurrection of the righteous dead at Christ's return and just before the 1,000-year period begins. "But the rest of the dead [those who never had a chance to understand God's truth and participate in God's great master plan] lived not again (would not come up in a physical resurrection) until the thousand years were finished." This resurrection, which occurs after the 1,000 years have elapsed, is the second resurrection in time order.

23. How does John further elaborate on the second resurrection? Rev. 20:11-13. How are these people judged? Verse 12.

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The Greek word translated "books" in Revelation 20:12 is *biblia*. It is from this word that we derive our English word bible.

The "books" that are opened are the books of the Bible. They will be opened to the understanding of the billions of people who have never yet heard the name of Christ or been able to understand God's Word because the Father had not yet called them (John 6:44, 65).

This vast resurrection to mortal life begins their period of judgment. I Peter 4:17 shows that Christians today are now being judged (not sentenced) by how well they live by the Word of God

- the Bible. Those resurrected after the Millennium will be "judged" the same way. These individuals will be given enough time to live a life of overcoming and obedience to God, just as Spirit

begotten Christians do today. Those who continue to live God's way of life will then be changed from mortality to immortality at the end of this period of judgment.

24. How did Jesus refer to this special "day," or period of judgment for people who have yet to hear the wonderful message of salvation? Matt. 10:15; 11:20-24; 12:41-42.

25. Where else in the Bible is this second resurrection described? Ezek. 37:1-14. Are these dead clearly raised to mortal, physical life requiring the breath of life to sustain their physical existence? Verses 5-10.

26. What is God's promise to these resurrected peoples? Verses 13-14. Isn't this obviously the same outpouring of God's Holy Spirit that Jesus Christ spoke about in His enigmatic statement on the "last great day"? John 7:37-39.

Recall in chapters 10, 11 and 12 of Matthew that Christ first mentioned the people of Sodom and Gomorrah. Then in order: Tyre and Sidon, Sodom again, Nineveh in Jonah's time and finally the Queen of Sheba. All of these examples (people who lived in different generations) are compared to the citizens living in the cities and towns of Jesus' generation (the vast majority of whom did not understand or believe Christ's message). Jesus tells us that they all are to be resurrected with the generation that lived during His time.

Jesus gave enough examples of generations of people living at widespread and different times in human history to substantiate the fact that most of humanity will be alive at the same time on this earth. There will be pre-Flood men and women, all 12 tribes of Israel, those who lived during the Middle or Dark Ages and the vast majority living now. They will all rise in the second

resurrection simply because they had not been called during their previous lifetimes.

This group includes all people of all times everywhere on this earth, except, of course, those who will be in the first resurrection, or those relatively few incorrigibly wicked who will be resurrected in the third and final resurrection to have their part in the lake of fire (Rev. 20:14-15) and become ashes under the soles of those already born into God's Family (Mal. 4:1-3). This incorrigible group understood God's truth and had the opportunity to receive eternal life, but deliberately rejected it.

In this brief three-part Ministudy we learned that God's annual Sabbaths and their related festivals not only teach us and remind us of His plan of salvation, they point us directly to our Savior, Jesus Christ. He is "our passover" (I Cor. 5:7). It is by "putting on" Christ (Rom. 13:14) and His law that we put sin out of our lives, as pictured by the Days of Unleavened Bread.

Christ is the first of the "firstfruits," and it was after His resurrection that He sent the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost. The Holy Spirit was sent to spiritually beget those whom the Father would call, thus enabling them to fulfill His law, grow spiritually and finally become born of God's Spirit at Christ's return.

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Christ who is Queen to intervene in world affairs, as pictured by the Feast of Trumpets, As King of kings and Lord of lords, Christ will put down the despotic influence of Satan, the archdeceiver, as portrayed by the Day of Atonement. With the influence of

the devil now gone, all mankind will have the opportunity to become "at one" with Christ and the Father through baptism and the receipt of the Holy Spirit.

Christ is coming to set up His government and to rule the earth for a thousand years, making this world a veritable utopia, as pictured by the Feast of Tabernacles. Millions will be born into the Family of God during this golden age. Spiritbegotten Christians, whom the Bible calls "saints," are now preparing the way for and are representatives of that Kingdom.

Finally, Christ will make salvation available to everyone who ever lived but never heard or really understood the truth. The Last Great Day pictures this last judgment period.

God's Church today has retained the precious truth concerning God's great master plan and purpose here on earth for you! Around the world God's true Church, composed of converted, holy, Spirit-begotten children of God, is faithfully observing all of God's festivals every year. o