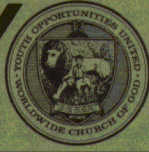


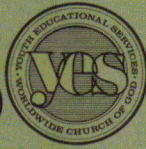
YOUTH



LEVEL 7

BIBLE

LESSONS



SPECIAL FEAST
LESSON



The Spring Feasts

SPRING FESTIVAL
EDITION

THE SPRING FEASTS

Do you like secrets? This special Spring Feast Lesson is all about the *best kept* secret of all time. Very few in history, and only a small number of people today, have had the opportunity to know and understand this secret.

To learn what this secret is, you must have the proper tools. You will need your Bible, a pencil or pen and this special lesson. Once you have all the necessary tools, you can begin. Be sure to read all the scriptures given in this lesson. This is very important because the Bible is the key which unlocks the secret.

The first thing you need to know is that the secret is revealed in seven steps. These steps are all found in Leviticus 23, where God's festivals are listed. You may be able to list these seven steps or festivals, but do you know what they mean? The key to the secret lies in understanding their *meaning*. These festivals reveal the steps in God's great plan for accomplishing His purpose for mankind!

GOD'S ANNUAL FEASTS

Turn to Leviticus 23, read the names of God's festivals and then list them on the following lines. A few of these festivals have more than one name. If you find another name, write it down beside the first one. All of God's yearly feasts are discussed in this chapter, but

ABOUT OUR COVER . . .

Members of God's Church clean their houses of all leavening before the Days of Unleavened Bread. This pictures putting sin out of our lives.

Y.E.S. Photo

not all of them are clearly named here. If you are not sure of a name, ask your father or mother to help you.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____

These seven festivals can be divided into two groups. The first three—Passover, the Days of Unleavened Bread, and Pentecost—come in the spring and early summer of each year. The second group comes in the fall. The Feast of Trumpets, the Day of Atonement, the Feast of Tabernacles and the Last Great Day make up this group.

When all the feasts of God are put together, *with their meanings*, they give a complete picture of the best kept secret in the history of the world! In this lesson you will learn about the first three feasts. They picture the first three steps in God's plan for mankind!

ISRAEL IN EGYPT

Thousands of years ago, the Israelite people were slaves in Egypt. After many years of suffering and hard work, God chose a man named Moses to free them. God sent Moses and his brother Aaron to Pharaoh, king of Egypt, on several occasions with instructions to tell him, "Let my people go."

But Pharaoh was stubborn and hardhearted. He would not listen to God's servants. As a result, God sent ten terrible plagues upon the

mighty nation of Egypt. Turn to Exodus, chapters 7-11, and find the ten plagues sent by God. Then list them on the following lines.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

Before each of the first nine plagues, Moses and Aaron went to Pharaoh with a warning from God that terrible troubles were ahead for the Egyptians if Pharaoh did not free the Israelites.

But each time, Pharaoh refused to free the children of Israel. One by one the plagues afflicted Egypt. Each plague brought greater destruction than the one before. Egypt was quickly becoming a ruined nation.



H. Armstrong Roberts

The Israelites were to slay a young lamb and smear its blood on the doorposts of their houses.

Pharaoh promised *during* the plagues to free the Israelites. But when a plague ended, he changed his mind! After the ninth plague of darkness, Pharaoh became very hostile, demanding that Moses and Aaron leave. “If I see your faces again, I will have you put to death!” he said. “We will not see you, nor plead with you again,” Moses replied.

Moses then went to the Israelites and told them to prepare to leave Egypt. Only one more plague remained. Moses knew this final plague would cause Pharaoh to free the Israelites.

THE FIRST PASSOVER

Moses instructed the Israelites about the tenth and final plague—death of the firstborn of both people and animals in the land of Egypt. It must have been exciting for the Israelites to realize they would soon be free! The instructions they received had to be followed very carefully because the lives of their firstborn depended upon it!

Had the Israelites decided that God’s instructions were not very important, the tenth plague would have meant certain death for their firstborn also. They did exactly as they were told. The principle of doing exactly as you have been told is found in Deuteronomy 12:32. Write out this scripture. _____

The instructions God had Moses relate to the children of Israel are found in Exodus 12. The Israelites were to pen up a male lamb not over a year old, which had no marks or blemishes on it. This they were to do on the tenth day in the month Abib. (Abib is the Hebrew name for the first month of God’s calendar.) A death angel would pass through the land of Egypt during the night of the fourteenth of Abib and kill all the firstborn.

To escape the death of their firstborn, each Israelite family had to kill the lamb and smear its blood on the doorposts of their houses. This they were to do after sunset on the fourteenth of Abib.

The lamb was to be roasted, and then eaten with bitter herbs and unleavened bread. If any meat was not eaten, it was to be burned before morning. The Israelites were to eat the meal in haste, dressed ready to leave, with their shoes on and with their walking sticks in their hands. But they were to remain in their homes all night long.

Read over God's instructions very carefully. Do not overlook any part of them. Imagine for a moment that you are back in ancient Egypt and God is talking expressly to you. Not following even one small part of these instructions could have meant death of the firstborn in your family.

Returning to the story, the families that followed God's instructions had their firstborn spared from the death angel who went through the land of Egypt. He *passed over* the houses which had the blood on the doorposts. This is how the very first Passover was kept.

Do You Remember?

1. On the tenth of Abib, the Israelites were to _____.
2. On the fourteenth of Abib, they _____.
3. The blood of a _____ was to be smeared on the _____ of their houses.
4. If the Israelites followed God's instructions, their _____ would be spared from death.
5. Deuteronomy 12:32 shows us that we should _____.

MEANING OF THE PASSOVER TODAY

What did the lamb without blemish, that the Israelites were commanded to kill, represent? In John 1:29, we find that when John the Baptist saw Jesus, he said, "Behold the _____ of God." Jesus Christ, the "Lamb of God," was without spot or blemish (I Peter 1:19-20).

A blemish is a flaw or fault. The "Lamb of God" was perfect—without sin or fault. The



Unleavened bread, symbolic of the broken body of Christ. It is because of His brutal death that we can be healed.

lamb the Israelites were commanded to kill represented the sinless Savior, Jesus Christ, who came and died for the sins of the world.

All who have ever lived on earth, except for Jesus Christ, have sinned (Romans 3:23). We have all broken God's commandments and earned the wages of sin, which is death (Romans 6:23). Without His sacrifice, all who have ever lived would suffer eternal death. But Christ, through His sacrifice as the "Lamb of God," takes away the sin of the world! (John 1:29.) He voluntarily died in our stead.

Christ did not have to die to pay the penalty of sin because He was perfect—He never sinned! And since He was the very Son of God, His one life was more valuable than all other human lives combined! Christ was therefore able to pay the death penalty for all mankind. Thus when we repent of our sins and are baptized (when we are older), God in essence "buys us back" from the death penalty by the death of His Son, Jesus Christ (Romans 5:10).

In observing the Passover, members of God's Church today do not kill a lamb and smear its blood on the doorposts of their houses. This is

because during the Passover just before His crucifixion, Christ changed the way the Passover was to be kept in the future.

The first thing Jesus did was to wash His disciples' feet. He explained the lesson He wanted them to learn from this—that we should love and serve one another.

Jesus then took unleavened bread and broke it into small pieces. He told His disciples to each take a piece and eat it. In Luke 22:19 Jesus said, "This is my _____ which is given for you. . . ." The unleavened bread *symbolizes* Christ's body which was beaten before His crucifixion so that our physical sins—the breaking of health laws which result in sickness and disease—could be forgiven (I Peter 2:24). It is for this reason that God will heal us when we are sick, provided we follow God's instruction in James 5:14-15.

After they had eaten the bread, Christ then gave the disciples a cup of wine to drink. The wine *symbolizes* Christ's blood which was shed for the remission, or forgiveness of sins (Matthew 26:27-28).

Exodus 12:14 tells us how often God's people are to observe the Passover. "And this day shall be unto you for a _____; and ye shall keep it a feast to the Lord throughout your generations; ye shall keep it a feast by an ordinance _____."

The Passover, now kept with the New Testament symbols, reminds us that Jesus Christ paid a tremendous price for our sins. He voluntarily offered His life—something far more valuable than anything we could offer. The Passover then, is an annual *memorial* reminding God's people of the first step in God's plan of salvation. Understanding the meaning of the Passover helps us to know more about the best kept "secret" we are in the process of discovering.

THE DAYS OF UNLEAVENED BREAD

Now that you know the meaning of part one of the best kept secret, let's go on to part two.

In Exodus 12:15 we find the next step. "Seven days shall ye eat _____ bread." God commanded the Israelites to put leaven out of their houses and not to eat any bread with leavening.

For seven days the Israelites kept what is known as the Days of Unleavened Bread. On both the first and seventh days are commanded assemblies just as the weekly Sabbath is. Exodus 12:16-17 shows that these holy convocations, or commanded assemblies, are to be held every year, forever.

Have you ever wondered why your parents ask you to clean your room much better than usual each year just before the Days of Unleavened Bread? Why they want you to make sure that each and every bread or cookie crumb is thrown away? The reason is that God wants us to keep the Days of Unleavened Bread each year. We must make sure that all bread with leavening is removed from our homes, cars and all properties we may own or rent.

Can you think of some places in your room or house you might have to clean extra hard before this festival? Many of you have kept the Days of Unleavened Bread in previous years. Make a list of some of the unusual places you and your family have had to clean to make sure all the leavening was out of your home. _____

God wants us to learn a lesson by all this cleaning. Leaven, which causes bread dough to rise or puff up, is used in the Bible as a type or symbol of sin. Leavened bread itself is not sin, but it contains leavening which is symbolic of sin! Removing leavened products from our homes pictures putting sin out of our lives and keeping God's commandments.

Like bread, sin can get in many hard-to-reach places in our lives and must be put out when discovered. It takes effort—and God's help—to remove sin from our lives!

DAYS OF UNLEAVENED BREAD BEGIN EXODUS FROM EGYPT

Recall earlier the story of the Israelite families putting blood on the doorposts of their houses. They remained inside their houses all night long. The next morning, Egyptians everywhere were mourning for their dead firstborn. God told the Israelites to borrow gold, silver and clothing from the Egyptians. They were given much wealth by the Egyptians that day.

That night, the night of the fifteenth of Abib, the children of Israel began their Exodus from Egypt. They were on their way out of slavery! It was a joyous time. As many as three million people may have left Egypt that night. They took with them the dough of the unleavened bread prepared during the night of the Passover.

The Israelites headed into the desert wilderness. God went before them by day in a cloud, and by night in a pillar of fire. They traveled for the next seven days, observing the Days of Unleavened Bread. During this time, Pharaoh and the Egyptians buried their dead. Then Pharaoh changed his mind and decided not to let the slaves go in peace.

As the Israelites neared the Red Sea, they suddenly realized that Egyptian soldiers and chariots were coming up behind them! The rapidly approaching Egyptian army *terrified* the Israelites. They forgot the mighty acts God performed to deliver them from bondage. They turned to His servant Moses and complained. "We should have stayed in Egypt and remained slaves; it would have been better to live as slaves than to die in the wilderness," they said.

Moses told the Israelites not to be afraid but to stand and watch God deliver them once and for all from the Egyptians! God told Moses to lift up his rod. Moses obeyed and the waters of the Red Sea parted so that the Israelites could pass through on dry ground.

The Egyptians, seeing the Israelites walking

across the dry sea bed, foolishly began to chase them through the Red Sea. Once the Israelites were safely on the other side, God told Moses to stretch out his rod over the sea. The waters rushed back together with a tremendous roar, smashing the chariots and drowning the Egyptian army!

The Israelites saw the bodies of the soldiers of the Egyptian army lying along the seashore. It was on this last day of Unleavened Bread that God delivered Israel completely from the bondage of Egypt.

Moses and the Israelites sang a great hymn of praise to God for His deliverance. Their song 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 . . ." (verses 1-2).

The last day of Unleavened Bread pictured for ancient Israel their coming all the way out of sinful Egypt. For God's Church today, it pictures coming completely out of spiritual sin.

WHAT SIN IS AND WHY IT MUST BE PUT AWAY

Since we are to come out of sin and keep God's commandments, let's find out what sin is. In I John 3:4 we find the definition of sin. "Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is _____
_____."

In Romans 3:23, we find that *all* have sinned. None of us have ever lived our lives perfectly without breaking any of God's laws. Only Jesus Christ lived a perfect life on earth without ever sinning.

Why does man sin? For the answer, turn to Romans 8:7 and write the verse on the following lines. _____

It is not natural for the carnal mind (without

God's Holy Spirit) to obey God's laws. Most people live their lives entirely the way *they* think is right.

What does all this mean to you as an individual? It means if you want to please God you must be living your life the way *He* wants you to live. But none of us can do this all by ourselves without *help* from God!

Have you ever tried to do a job and no matter how hard you tried, it seemed you were just unable to accomplish it? What did you do? Chances are you got help from someone else. Many jobs are like this. They are too big for only one person without outside help.

In like manner, those who are trying to overcome sin and live God's way of life find that they cannot do it all by themselves! Where then does the needed help come from?

We have already seen that Jesus Christ came to the earth and died for our sins. He paid the death penalty for us. After three days and three nights in the grave, He was resurrected and given the same power and glory He had before his human existence. Christ is now at the right hand of God and helps His people today.

Before His death, Jesus told the disciples He

would give them the help they needed. Write out this important verse found in John 14:16.

Jesus promised that after He returned to heaven, He would send the Comforter. What is the Comforter? John 14:26 gives us the answer. "But the Comforter, which is the _____ [Spirit] . . ."

The Comforter is God's Holy Spirit. It is power from God that helps those in whom it dwells to overcome their own human weaknesses and faults and to obey God. It enables God's people to understand and follow His spiritual way of life. It also gives them the strength to resist the temptations of Satan the devil and to develop Godly character.

PENTECOST

Pentecost is the third step in God's plan for mankind. Understanding what this festival pictures will help us to know more about the secret.

The word Pentecost means "fiftieth (day)." All other festivals come on definite days or



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

months. But the day on which Pentecost falls must be determined by counting. But how? We must count fifty days from (beginning with) the Sunday following the weekly Sabbath which usually falls during the Days of Unleavened Bread (Leviticus 23:15-16). With Sunday as day number one, Pentecost will always end up on a Sunday fifty days later.

It was on the Day of Pentecost in A.D. 31 that Christ founded the New Testament Church. In an awesome display of power, God gave His Holy Spirit to the disciples on that day.

THE MEANING OF PENTECOST

The ancient Israelites, to whom God originally gave His festivals, once lived in the land of Palestine. God uses the two yearly agricultural harvests of that area as a type or picture of the future *spiritual harvests* of human beings into the God Family. The first harvest is of the spring grain, which is the early or small harvest. The second is the much greater fall harvest.

The Day of Pentecost, which comes at the time of the spring harvest, pictures the "firstfruits," or the first spiritual harvest of people who will be born into the God Family. Just as the spring harvest is smaller, those God is calling now are small in number compared to the billions who will be born into His Family later.

When Christ returns to earth, the whole world will then be taught God's way of life and will be given the opportunity to become part of His Family. The firstfruits are now being trained to become teachers in the World Tomorrow. When the great fall harvest of billions of people begins to be reaped after Christ's second coming, the firstfruits will teach these people God's laws and way of life so they in turn can be born of God.

FOUR REMAINING FESTIVALS

You have now been given the first three steps to understanding the best kept secret of

all time. But there are four more steps yet to come. These steps are pictured by the festivals that occur during the fall.

Observed during the fall harvest season, these festivals picture the completion of God's plan for mankind. They all come in the seventh month—and their complete fulfillment will be the latter great harvest of the billions of people who have lived and died, but who have never heard or understood God's truth. Each of the fall festivals will be covered in the special Fall Festival Lesson that you will receive later in the year.

The first three festivals help you to understand the best kept secret of all time. When you put all seven steps together with their meanings, they form a complete picture that shows why God created human beings and put them on the earth!

Do You Remember?

1. Jesus was called the _____ of God.
2. What do the bread and wine partaken of during the Passover service symbolize? _____

3. What does leavening represent? _____
4. What do the Days of Unleavened Bread show that we must do? _____

5. What is the Comforter? _____
6. What does God's Holy Spirit enable His people to do? _____

7. On what day did God's Church begin? _____
8. How is the day on which Pentecost falls determined? _____

9. What does the Day of Pentecost picture in God's plan? _____

SPRING FESTIVAL CROSSWORD

ACROSS

1. After one is baptized and has hands laid upon him, he receives God's Holy ____.
4. God told the Israelites to smear some of the lamb's ____ on the doorposts of their houses.
9. When God created Eve, he took a ____ from Adam.
11. One of the things the Egyptians gave the Israelites.
12. The Israelites were to roast the lamb and eat it with bitt__ herbs.
14. God's first month.
15. Third step in God's plan.
17. God divided the Red ____ so the Israelites could cross over.
18. Abbreviation for "identification."
19. Another name for God's first month.
20. The Israelites had been ____ to the Egyptians for many years.
21. Just as the spring harvest is small, those people God is calling now are small in ____.
22. The land where the Israelites were slaves.
24. Pharaoh told a ____ when he said he would let the Israelites go.
27. The Israelite firstborn were in ____ of losing their lives, unless they stayed inside houses with blood smeared on the doorposts.
28. God ____ the Israelites from captivity.
30. Place for burial.
32. On the first Passover, the death

ang__ killed all the Egyptian firstborn.

33. Israelites were to kill an ____ lamb.
34. We are not to eat a__ leavening during the Days of Unleavened Bread.

DOWN

1. The Day of Pentecost is a ____.
2. As Moses lifted up his ____, God caused the waters of the Red Sea to divide.
3. Brother of Moses.
5. Christ is called the ____ of God.
6. A preposition.
7. At approximately midnight, all the firstborn of Egypt would ____.
8. Leader of Israelites.
10. The Passover symbol of the unleavened ____ today, represents Christ's broken body.
13. The Days of ____ Bread is the only one of God's festivals which has two Holy Days.
14. The day of Pentecost comes ____ the time of the spring harvest.
15. ____ today, pictures Christ's sacrifice for us.
16. We have all been ____ and come short of the glory of God.
17. Unleavened bread and wine are two ____ used at Passover services today.
23. God sent ten terrible ____ upon the nation of Egypt.
25. ____ was told to eat the cooked lamb while standing, and to be dressed and ready to leave.
26. It was on the Day of Pentecost in A.D. 31 that the ____ Spirit was given to the disciples.
29. Pharaoh was horrified to see his firstborn son ____.
30. Number of plagues God sent on Egypt.
31. An early spring leaf.

