



# *Imperial Academy* *Bible Lessons*



**Special Spring Festivals Lesson**

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**D**o you know why human beings exist? Most people have no idea why they were born, and they admit it—or they ignore this basic but mysterious question. Very few people truly understand the purpose for human life—the *mystery of the ages*.

## **CLUES IN A JIGSAW PUZZLE**

The very first human beings were Adam and Eve. God explained the purpose of their lives to them. But they rejected His master plan; they chose to decide for themselves what was good and evil. Their children, and their children's children, have made the same choice ever since. Because human beings rejected God's way of life, God cut them off from Him, and the most important thing you could know, *why you exist*, became a mystery!

God is not teaching most people why they exist. He isn't even trying to. He is allowing them to see what their choices lead to. And one look down a middle school hallway or at a world news report shows you the kinds of problems that rejecting God leads to: ugly attitudes, terrible actions and horrible suffering. This is what life is like in a world that is closer to Satan than to God.

But God has not cut off everyone. He is

working with a small group of people. When Jesus Christ returns, He will turn this world to God, and this small group of people will help Him do that.

The mystery of why humans exist is revealed in the Bible. So is God's plan for revealing and proving that mystery. But if you try to read the Bible like you read a textbook or a novel, you will be frustrated. It's like reading a book with the pages out of order, or like an unsolved jigsaw puzzle. The Bible has many authors. Over the centuries, God showed parts of the mystery to some of these authors, and other parts to others. So to discover the mystery, you have to piece together many different parts of the Bible.

## **SPRING HOLY DAY SEASON**

God has called a small group of people—His Church—and given them the understanding of the mystery of life. To reveal how the pieces of the puzzle fit together, God established seven annual festivals. He revealed these festivals to the ancient Israelites. They kept them for hundreds of years. Yet the Israelites did not have all the pieces of the puzzle: They did not understand what the holy days they were observing represented. Today, however, *you* can understand what they represent. You have the opportunity to



God's Church today keeps God's sacred festivals and understands their beautiful meaning.

put the pieces together and understand the mystery of why you exist!

In the Northern Hemisphere, the first month of God's sacred calendar begins in spring. God's first three festivals also occur in spring. Just as the spring months bring new physical life in plants and animals, the spring holy days show God's plan to bring new spiritual life into His Family.

In this lesson of the *Imperial Academy Bible Lessons*, you will put together the pieces and see how these spring festivals reveal the mystery of why you were born. All you need is your Bible, a pencil and a teachable attitude!

### **SLAVES IN EGYPT**

Abraham's son was Isaac; Isaac's son was Jacob (whose name was changed to Israel). More than 3,500 years ago, the children of \_\_\_\_\_ left the land of Canaan to live in Egypt (Exodus 1:1).

Jacob (Israel) had 12 sons, one of whom was Joseph. Joseph became the prime

minister of the Egyptian empire. Under his administration, Egypt stored up a large quantity of food. When a massive famine struck, Jacob and the rest of his large family reunited with Joseph in Egypt.

As decades passed, the family of Jacob (Israel) multiplied in Egypt until it grew to several million Israelites. After Joseph died, a new Pharaoh came to the throne. He feared that if these foreign Israelites allied with one of Egypt's enemies, they could destroy his empire from the inside out. His solution was to enslave them. For about a century, the Egyptians oppressed the Israelites, turning them into property that they could buy, sell, abuse and even murder.

Under this slavery, the Israelites lost much of their heritage linking them back to Abraham and to God. They absorbed the behaviors and the beliefs of the Egyptians, and labored under harsh taskmasters, with no rest on the Sabbath.

God saw the Israelites suffering. In fact, many years beforehand, He had promised to deliver them from Egypt. *Turn to Genesis 46:4 and fill in the blanks to find out about God's promise to Jacob: "I will go down with you into Egypt; and I will also surely \_\_\_\_\_ you up \_\_\_\_\_: and Joseph shall put his hand upon your eyes."*

God chose a man named Moses and prepared him for a special mission. When Moses was 80 years old, God sent him and his older brother, Aaron, to deliver His message to Pharaoh: *The Israelites are my firstborn; let them go.* Pharaoh rejected the command. Instead of freeing the Israelites, he forced them into even worse labor.

God sent 10 catastrophic plagues against Egypt. *Read Exodus 7-11 to find out what these plagues were and list them on the following lines in the order they occurred:*

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

### **THE FIRST PASSOVER**

The first month of the year on God’s calendar is Abib. During this month, God gave the Israelites the first large piece of the puzzle. This is the first piece for understanding God’s master plan, His purpose for human beings. This piece is the Passover, the first annual observance.

God warned Pharaoh in advance about the 10th plague. If the Egyptian king did not free the Israelites, God’s firstborn, God would kill every firstborn man, woman, child and even animal in Egypt. But God would protect the firstborn among the Israelites if they followed His special Passover instructions.

God instructed the Israelites to take a young \_\_\_\_\_ without blemish on the 10th of Abib and pen it up until the \_\_\_\_\_ day. Then, after sunset, they had to \_\_\_\_\_ the lamb, roast it, eat it and smear its blood over the \_\_\_\_\_ of their homes (Exodus 12:2-7).

That night, God sent the death angel to kill all the firstborn in Egypt. Only those who

were inside a house marked with the blood of a lamb were spared. Since the death angel *passed over* the houses marked with blood, the night was called Passover. The blood of the lamb was a symbol that those inside the house had obeyed God and accepted His protection—and it saved their lives.

### **FEAST OF UNLEAVENED BREAD**

The death of the firstborn unleashed sorrow and fear in the Egyptians, who hadn’t obeyed God’s instructions. After this terrible night, Pharaoh sent a messenger to Moses agreeing to comply with God’s command to free all Israelites from Egypt.

The Israelites quickly packed their belongings and got ready to leave that very night, the 15th of Abib. Under the light of a full moon, the Israelites began their exodus (mass departure) from Egypt. God showed them the way to travel using a dark cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night.

The Israelites left Egypt celebrating with hands in the air as God freed them from slavery. God commanded the Israelites to remember their first night of freedom. *Turn to Exodus 12:42 and fill in the blanks to see this special command from God: “It is a \_\_\_\_\_ to be much \_\_\_\_\_ unto the LORD for bringing them out from the land of Egypt ....”*

But the Israelites did not completely leave Egyptian territory until they passed through the Red Sea seven days later. God commanded the Israelites to observe the seven-day period from the 15th to 21st of Abib as a memorial of their miraculous delivery from Egypt. This is the second annual festival, and it is called the Feast of Unleavened Bread.



<b>13</b>	<b>14</b> PASSOVER	<b>15</b> ANNUAL SABBATH	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b> ANNUAL SABBATH
■	●	●	■	●	■	■	●	●
Israelites kill and eat the Pass-over lamb.	Israelites receive gold and jewels from the Egyptians; gather at Rameses.	Israelites leave Egypt from Rameses by night.	Israelites arrive at Succoth.	Israelites enter the wilderness.	Israelites camp by Pi-hahiroth, where Pharaoh's army catches up with them.	God leads Israel through the Red Sea.	Celebration on final day of Unleavened Bread.	

To find out more about this festival, turn to Exodus 13:6 and fill in the blanks: “\_\_\_\_\_ days you shall eat \_\_\_\_\_ bread....”

Read verses 7-10 and summarize why God commanded the Israelites to eat unleavened bread for seven days: \_\_\_\_\_

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Like Passover, the Days of Unleavened Bread are a memorial. Look up the word memorial in a dictionary and write out the definition: \_\_\_\_\_

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**THE KEY PUZZLE PIECE**

Most of the ancient Israelites did not understand the deep meaning of the Passover lamb. This is because they were missing another key puzzle piece.

When the Old Testament uses the word *God*, it is referring to one or both of the two God Beings. The Bible refers to these two Beings as *God* and *the Word*. The Word

is the God who said, “Let there be light,” (recorded in Genesis 1). He is one of the two Beings referred to in the same chapter when God said, “Let us create man in our image.” About 2,000 years ago, this God Being came to Earth and became known as Jesus Christ (John 1:1-3, 14).

Scriptures like Genesis 1:26 and John 1:1-3 show us that there are currently two beings in the God Family. The word *God* is a family name. Both God the Father and Jesus Christ are God, because they are part of the God Family, much like you are part of the \_\_\_\_\_ family (write your last name).

And here is the mystery, the purpose of human life: God the Father and Jesus Christ are expanding their Family to include human beings! They want every person who has ever lived to be born into their Family, including *YOU*. That is why you exist!

**THE LAMB OF GOD**

That is also the reason that Jesus Christ came to Earth. He lived as a human being for 33 years. During that time, He never told a lie, never dishonored His parents, never became envious or selfish. He always kept

the Sabbath and all of God's commandments. Jesus never sinned once!

Like that Passover lamb the Israelites selected, Jesus Christ did not have a single blemish (1 Peter 1:19-20). A blemish is a flaw or a fault. A spiritual blemish is a sin.

*Turn to John 1:29 and fill in the blanks to find out what John the Baptist said when he saw Jesus Christ: "Behold the \_\_\_\_\_ of God, which takes away the \_\_\_\_\_ of the world."*

Sins are deadly serious. *To find out what happens to anyone who sins even once, turn to Ezekiel 18:4 and fill in the blanks: "[T]he soul that \_\_\_\_\_, it shall \_\_\_\_\_."*

Like that Passover lamb, Jesus Christ was killed. The blood the Israelites smeared on their doorposts actually represented the blood of Christ. He died because of sin.

But He never sinned. This means that He didn't die for His *own* sins—He died for

your sins and the sins of everyone else in the world! Remember, the blood of a lamb saved lives at Passover; that foreshadowed the fact that the blood of Jesus Christ saves those who accept His sacrifice and who believe and obey Him. When they receive His Holy Spirit, they can be born into His Family!

Everyone who sins will die (Romans 3:23; 6:23). They cannot be changed into a God being because God does not sin. But Jesus Christ (whose name means *Savior*) is the same Being who created mankind (Genesis 1:26). Therefore His life was greater than all human lives put together—and His sacrifice pays the death penalty for all mankind!

When we repent and are baptized, God symbolically takes the blood of Christ and covers our sins. We are saved from the penalty of eternal death by the blood of Jesus Christ, like the ancient Israelites were saved from the death angel by the blood of the Passover lamb!

### **NEW PASSOVER SYMBOLS**

Why do baptized adults in God's Church today not kill a lamb on Passover? The reason is that those lambs were symbols of "*the Lamb*," Jesus Christ. Christ fulfilled that symbol when He was crucified and killed. The night before His death, He taught His disciples to observe the Passover with new symbols.

The first thing Christ taught His disciples to do at this service was to wash one another's feet. This servant-like act demonstrates a humble and serving attitude.

The next thing Christ taught the disciples to do was to take and eat a small piece of unleavened bread. This broken piece of bread



The wine at Passover is a symbol of Christ's shed blood.

represents Christ's body, which was severely beaten before His crucifixion. This beating of Christ's perfect body enables God to miraculously forgive our physical sins (1 Peter 2:24).

After eating unleavened bread, Christ taught His disciples to drink a small vial of wine. The wine represents Christ's blood, which was spilled so God can forgive us of our spiritual sins (Matthew 26:27-28).

These Passover symbols remind us of the tremendous price of sin because they point to the death of the Son of God. He voluntarily gave His own life for us, something far more precious than a lamb or anything else we could offer!

### MEANING OF UNLEAVENED BREAD

The ancient land of Egypt is a symbol of sin in the Bible. Pharaoh is a type of the devil. The Israelites exited Egypt during the Feast of Unleavened Bread, and we must exit from sin!

God uses another symbol for sin: *leaven* (1 Corinthians 5:8). Leaven causes dough to rise and become puffed up with air, just like sin causes people to become puffed up with vanity. A little leaven also spreads through a whole loaf of bread, just like one sin tends to lead to other sins in your life.

God commands us to remove leavening from our houses before the first day of Unleavened Bread in order to remind us how important it is to put sin out of our lives. It is important to help your parents clean the house before the Days of Unleavened Bread. When you vacuum your room and search for crumbs under the seats of the car, you are obeying God's command and learning to diligently observe this symbol of laboring to get sin out.



God's people remove leavened products from their homes, thus picturing the removal of sin from their lives.

Before and during the Days of Unleavened Bread, you will also want to examine yourself for sins that you need to put out of your life. Your parents may want you to make a list of these. *On the lines below, list some of the places in your room, locker or workspace that might have leavening. Then, if you choose, write out some of the sins in your life that you know you need to remove.*

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We praise God by singing hymns during His annual festivals.

## **PENTECOST**

The third festival of the spring holy day season is Pentecost. Unlike other holy days, Pentecost doesn't fall on a specific day of God's calendar. The word *Pentecost* means *count 50*.

During the Days of Unleavened Bread, there is a weekly Sabbath. From the day after the Sabbath, count 50 days to get to Pentecost, seven weeks later, and always on a Sunday.

The Pentecost piece of the puzzle has to do with harvesting. The Middle East has two harvest seasons. The spring holy days occur ahead of the small, spring grain harvest. This is called the *firstfruit* harvest. Pentecost is sometimes called the feast of firstfruits because it occurs at the end of the firstfruit harvest.

In the Old Testament, God commanded the Israelites to offer two loaves of bread on Pentecost. These loaves were waved in the air before God. One loaf represented those called out of the world in the Old Testament period. The other loaf represented those called out after Jesus Christ came: the New

Testament Church. Both loaves were baked with leaven. This shows that those in God's Church still struggle to remove sin right up until the time Jesus Christ returns.

Most Israelites didn't understand that Pentecost is about more than harvesting grain. God is like a farmer. He is harvesting people into His Family. The people in God's Church are called His firstfruits (James 1:18). Jesus Christ is the *first* of the firstfruits. He is the only human who has become a spirit being so far. When He returns, the people in God's Church will also be transformed into spirit beings. They will then marry Jesus Christ and help Him teach God's way to everyone who was never part of the Church. Even those who have already died will be resurrected and given a chance to learn God's way!

In order to be transformed into a spirit being, a person needs God's Holy Spirit dwelling in him or her. Fifty days after Christ was resurrected, on the day of Pentecost in A.D. 31, God gave Christ's disciples the Holy Spirit. This is when God's New Testament Church officially started.



God gives His Spirit as a special gift to those adults who have repented of their sins, been baptized and have had hands laid on them by one of God's ministers. It helps them overcome their carnal human nature and to live God's way of life!

**THE REMAINING PUZZLE PIECES**

Passover, the Days of Unleavened Bread and Pentecost represent the first three steps in God's plan. First, Christ had to die to pay for the sins of mankind. Second, members of the Church have to repent of their sins and leave behind the sinful ways of the world around them. Third, God has to give His Church the power of His Holy Spirit so His called-out people can overcome sin and qualify to be teachers after the Second Coming of Jesus Christ!

In the fall holy days lesson of the *Imperial Academy Bible Lessons*, we will learn about the next four steps in God's plan. These holy days reveal God's plan to bring the vast majority of mankind into His Family. *Read Leviticus 23 and list all seven of God's festivals on the lines below:*

- 1) \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) \_\_\_\_\_
- 3) \_\_\_\_\_
- 4) \_\_\_\_\_
- 5) \_\_\_\_\_
- 6) \_\_\_\_\_
- 7) \_\_\_\_\_

Once you understand all seven pieces of the holy day jigsaw puzzle, you will be able to see the rough outline of God's Family plan. You will come to understand this awe-inspiring plan in more detail as you joyfully obey God and keep His holy days each and every year!

# How Much Do You Remember?

Fill in the top half of the puzzle first. Then write the numbered letters in the correct spaces at the bottom of the page to reveal a message.

1. What is the first month of God's calendar?

5      19

2. What kind of bread symbolizes Christ's body?

11   17   25      6      3

3. What man did God use to deliver the Israelites from Egypt?

23   13   8

4. What did the Israelites smear on their doorposts on Passover?

14      2   10

5. Crossing this led to Israel's complete freedom:

20      22

6. Where the Israelites worked as slaves:

15   1   9      7

_____			<b>W</b>	_____			_____			
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
<b>I</b>		_____		<b>I</b>		<b>H</b>		_____		
12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20		
<b>F</b>		<b>I</b>		<b>Y</b>		_____				
21	22	23	24	25	26					





## Lesson From the Holy Days

Follow the directions carefully to find the answer to the question, "What do God's holy days reveal to us?" Once you have found the answer, write a few paragraphs on a separate sheet of paper to explain how this is true.

E W X A D S Y W A E N D M U R B G F C C A S F E A  
S P R A Y T I F I R S T L S N I S P O R E A T S I  
N L I O M L H R M B G S F U T L A Y I Q R V I T M  
M A W S R A R U R H B A E D E M R E N A L A W W R  
P G H R E D P I H C D E G O H T N B G M Y H B Q H  
O U S D P Q O T V R T F U X Y B Y O R U T O C Q V  
E E V R E S M S E S O M A E M I T L S L A M B L E  
R O D M L A U F T D O S U R B N V U U T C B A V T  
P T R U E T B S A W R V R P S E A G M Z M A N F A  
M I P W F Z C E O G I D T D C A L B I E U E M L O  
S R I S E O P A P L S T P A N G E L R V G S A I P  
V I S X G A L S W P E O A E I R B O L A I Y R G W  
O P A R H N V O X T S P M R D P S O G L P U P H X  
B S W U S M E N I G H T V B S T C D A S M R S T B  
D T P V W E N X F C Y E X Y A L Y S R W G H Y S F

First, color all Q's blue and Z's green. Then, as you find the words listed below in the puzzle above, color them using the color indicated above the list of words.

<b>BLUE</b>			<b>GREEN</b>		
EAT	LAMB	PRAY	ANGEL	NIGHT	SPIRIT
EXODUS	LAW	RED	BLOOD	RISE	TRUE
FEAST	MOSES	SERVE	BREAD	SEA	
FIRST	OBEY	SINS	EGYPT	SEASON	
FRUITS	PLAGUE	TIME	FLIGHT	SLAVE	