



Imperial Academy Bible Lessons



Special Spring Festivals Lesson

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It was almost sunset when the Sanders family pulled to a stop in the driveway and got out. Mr. Sanders was in his dark suit; Mrs. Sanders wore her favorite blue dress; Robert (11 years old) was in his navy sport coat and new tie; and Lou Ann (9 years old) wore her white-and-pink, flowery dress. Mrs. Sanders carried a big crystal bowl filled with a fancy salad; Robert carried two bottles of homemade dressing; Mr. Sanders carried two bottles of wine; and Lou Ann carried a bunch of flowers. Mr. Sanders knocked on the door.

The door opened wide, and there with a big smile on his face was Mr. Abramson, who said, “Welcome to the **Night to Be Much Observed!**”

This was the 40th year Mr. and Mrs. Abramson had kept this observance. The Sanders family had been attending God’s Church for only a few months, so this was the first time they would get to experience what the Night to Be Much Observed was all about.

Mr. Abramson showed the Sanderses to his living room, where the Johnson

family was enjoying appetizers. Mrs. Abramson came out from the kitchen to give the Sanderses a warm welcome; the aroma of a delicious dinner wafted through the house.

“The name of the night is interesting,” Mr. Sanders was telling Mr. Abramson as the children tasted some fancy appetizers with Ethan and Emma Johnson. “The Night to Be Much Observed.”

“That emphasizes how we keep it,” said Mr. Abramson. “It’s not like a public holiday; it’s a night when you really put effort into the quality of the food and the atmosphere and the conversation.”

The Abramsons and their guests sat around the dinner table, and Mr. Abramson led in a prayer thanking God for bringing them together for this special occasion and asking Him to bless their food and their discussions.

“Everything is so fresh and green outside at the start of God’s new year,” Mr. Sanders said, looking out the window.

“Dad, what do you mean?” Robert asked. “Doesn’t the new year begin in January?”

“The calendar year does begin in

January,” Mr. Sanders said. “But that’s the Roman calendar. God is the one who created time, and He has His own sacred

calendar. He begins the year in the spring, and that’s also when He begins the holy day season.”

Were God’s Holy Days Only for Ancient Israel?

Look up the scriptures below to fill in the missing words—each space represents a letter. Then transfer the letters that have numbers under them to the numbered blanks in the mystery verse below. The mystery verse will reveal whether the holy days kept by ancient Israel were meant for us today.

Matthew 26:18 “And he [Jesus Christ] said, _{41,48,57} ₆₅ into the _{25,39} ₆₃ ₃₀ to ₅₁ ₇₄ a man, and say _{55,32} ₄₀ ₁₉ him, The ₁₃ ₄₂ ₄₃ _{24,45} saith, My time is at ₄₄ ₅ ₅₉ ; _{1,71} ₃₅ _{64,73} _{7,68} ₃₇ keep the passover at ₁₆ ₄ ₅₃ house with my disciples.”

Mark 14:1 “After ₇₂ ₅₀ days was the ₆₀ ₁₀ ₇₆ ₁₄ of the ₆₂ ₁₁ ₄₆ ₇₀ ₂₀, and of ₄₇ ₆₆ _{6,28} ₉ ₂₂ ₃₆ ₂₆ ₃₄ ₈ ₅₆ ₂₇ ”

Acts 20:16 “For Paul determined to sail by Ephesus, ... for he ₄₉ ₆₇ ₁₂ ₂₁ , if it were possible ₁₈ ₃₁ ₃₃ him, to be at ₁₇ ₆₁ _{75,15} ₃ _{29,38} ₅₈ the day of ₂₃ ₂ ₆₉ ₅₄ ₅₂.”

“
 ₁ ₂ ₃ ₄ ₅ ₆ ₇ ₈ ₉ ₁₀ ₁₁ ₁₂ ₁₃ ₁₄ ₁₅ ₁₆ ₁₇ ₁₈ ₁₉ ₂₀
 ₂₁ ₂₂ ₂₃ ₂₄ ₂₅ ₂₆ ₂₇ ₂₈ ₂₉ ₃₀ ₃₁ ₃₂ ₃₃ ₃₄ ₃₅ ₃₆ ₃₇ ₃₈ ₃₉ ₄₀ ₄₁ ₄₂
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 (₆₈ ₆₉ ₇₀ ₇₁ ₇₂ ₇₃ ₇₄ ₇₅ ₇₆ 23:21)

“The seven holy days teach us about the seven steps of God’s plan,” Mr. Abramson told Robert. “Most people don’t keep God’s calendar or God’s holy days. That’s why they don’t understand God’s plan for human beings.”

THE MEANING OF THE HOLY DAYS

God originally recorded His holy days in the time of the ancient Israelites. Today, most people ignore His commands to keep these days. The activity on page 3 of this lesson gives you three New



ILLUSTRATIONS MELISSA BARREIRO

Testament scriptures that show God still wants us to keep these same holy days today.

Why does God want you to keep His holy days? Because He wants you, and every human being who has ever lived, to become part of His Family. Each of the seven holy days represents a stage in God's plan to accomplish this. Put all these festivals together *with their meanings*, and you will learn how you can be born into God's Family!

Most people who say they are Christians celebrate holidays like Easter, Halloween and Christmas. But did you know that these holidays actually come from ancient celebrations of false gods? Jesus Christ did not keep these days, and God forbids us from keeping them. Instead, He commands us to keep **Passover**, the **Days of Unleavened Bread**, **Pentecost**, the **Feast of Trumpets**, the **Day of Atonement**, the **Feast of Tabernacles** and the **Last Great Day!**

The first three festivals are in the spring, and they show how God plans to transform His Church into a group of God beings who will help Jesus Christ. This group is called the Bride of Christ. The four fall holy days show God's plan to bring the rest of humanity into His Family as children of Christ and His Bride. In this lesson, along with Robert and Lou Ann Sanders, you will learn about the three spring festivals: Passover, the Feast of Unleavened Bread and Pentecost!

SLAVES IN EGYPT

As everyone started eating, Lou Ann asked, "Mr. Abramson, why is tonight called the Night to Be *Much Observed*?"

"Well Lou Ann, thousands of years ago, your ancestors were known as the children of Israel," Mr. Abramson said. "They were slaves to the Egyptians. God chose a man to help free the Israelites; his name was Moses. God sent him to the king of Egypt many times to tell him to let the Israelites go. But the king refused."

"Was the king called pharaoh?" Lou Ann asked.

"Yes," Mr. Abramson said. "He was an evil king, and God punished him and his country with 10 plagues."

(To learn the 10 plagues, complete the word puzzle on the next page.)

"The 10th plague was the death of the firstborn, wasn't it?" Robert asked.

"That's right," said Mr. Abramson. "The death of the firstborn in Egypt is important for understanding the Passover and this Night to Be Much Observed."

THE FIRST PASSOVER

"What happened to the firstborn?" Lou Ann asked.

"Well, Pharaoh refused to let the Israelites go, even after God struck Egypt with nine plagues," her father said. "God told Pharaoh that the Israelites were like His firstborn child, and if he didn't free them, God would kill all the firstborn in Egypt, both the people and the animals."

Plagues Scramble

Unscramble the letters below to name the 10 plagues on Egypt. Then write them in the order in which they occurred in the spaces at the right. If you need help, review Exodus 7-11.

KASDERNS	1) _____
SOANSHITEL	2) _____
ECLI	3) _____
AEDIDSSE (livestock)	4) _____
SRFGO	5) _____
Death of: NFIBRROST	6) _____
IBLOS	7) _____
TCSLOSU	8) _____
Water turned into:	
LDOBO	9) _____
IFESL	10) _____

Lou Ann looked at Robert, wide-eyed.

“The only way to be saved from this plague was to follow special instructions from God,” Mrs. Sanders said.

“They had to pick out a sheep, didn’t they?” Robert asked.

“A lamb, yes,” said Mr. Sanders. “God said that on the 10th day of the first month in His calendar, each family must pick a healthy male lamb and put it in a separate pen. On the evening of the 14th day, the family killed the lamb, roasted it and ate it with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. Most importantly, they had

to take the blood of the lamb and smear it around the door to their house.”

“God has commanded us to keep the Passover differently today, so those commands seem unusual,” Mr. Abramson said. “But it had a crucial meaning to the Israelites—and for us.”

“Yes, it did!” Robert exclaimed. “It saved the firstborn.”

“That’s right,” Mr. Abramson said. “When God sent the death angel through Egypt, it *passed over* every house that had lamb’s blood over the door.”

THE MEANING OF THE PASSOVER

“Why did God command the Israelites to kill a lamb?” Lou Ann asked.

“The lamb represented someone,” Mr. Abramson said.

“Who?”

“Jesus Christ. The Bible calls Him ‘the Lamb of God.’”

“God the Father sent Jesus Christ to do something very important,” said Mr. Sanders. “All human beings have sinned. We have broken God’s commandments and His laws. So when we die, we will never live again.”

“That’s so sad,” said Lou Ann.

“Yes, it is,” Mr. Sanders answered, “but God wants us to *live!* He wants us to live forever in His Family—even though we have sinned. So, one of the two God Beings came to Earth and became a man: Jesus Christ. His life was worth more than all human beings put together.”

“Why?” Robert asked.

“Because He is our Creator. So, if He lived His human life without sinning, His death could replace all our deaths and we could live forever in His Family!”

“Did He do it?” asked Emma Johnson.

“Yes, He did!” said Mr. Abramson. “He never sinned, so He did not deserve to die. But He willingly gave up His life and let Himself be killed to pay for our sins. He was tortured and murdered on the day of Passover, A.D. 31. Then He was resurrected. So if we repent and believe and obey, His death can take the place of your death and my death” (John 1:1-3, 14; 1Corinthians 5:7).

Robert, Lou Ann and the other children were now even more wide-eyed.

“Human beings in God’s Church still die,” Mr. Johnson said. “But if we have a believing, obedient, repentant attitude, God will bring us back to life when Jesus Christ returns. Then we will be transformed into spirit beings and live forever with Him and the Father!”

“Why did God use a lamb to represent Jesus Christ?” Robert asked.

“That’s a good question,” Mr. Abramson said. “It’s because the lamb is a clean animal. The one they picked had to be without any bruises, cuts or defects. That represented Jesus Christ living a life without any sin. The lamb was killed and eaten by each person, which showed that each of us is responsible for Christ’s death. The blood on the door also shows that. When we take the Passover, we admit that we are responsible for Christ’s

death, that we need the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, the Lamb.”

THE PASSOVER TODAY

“Did Mom and Dad kill a lamb when they went to the Passover service last night?” Lou Ann asked.

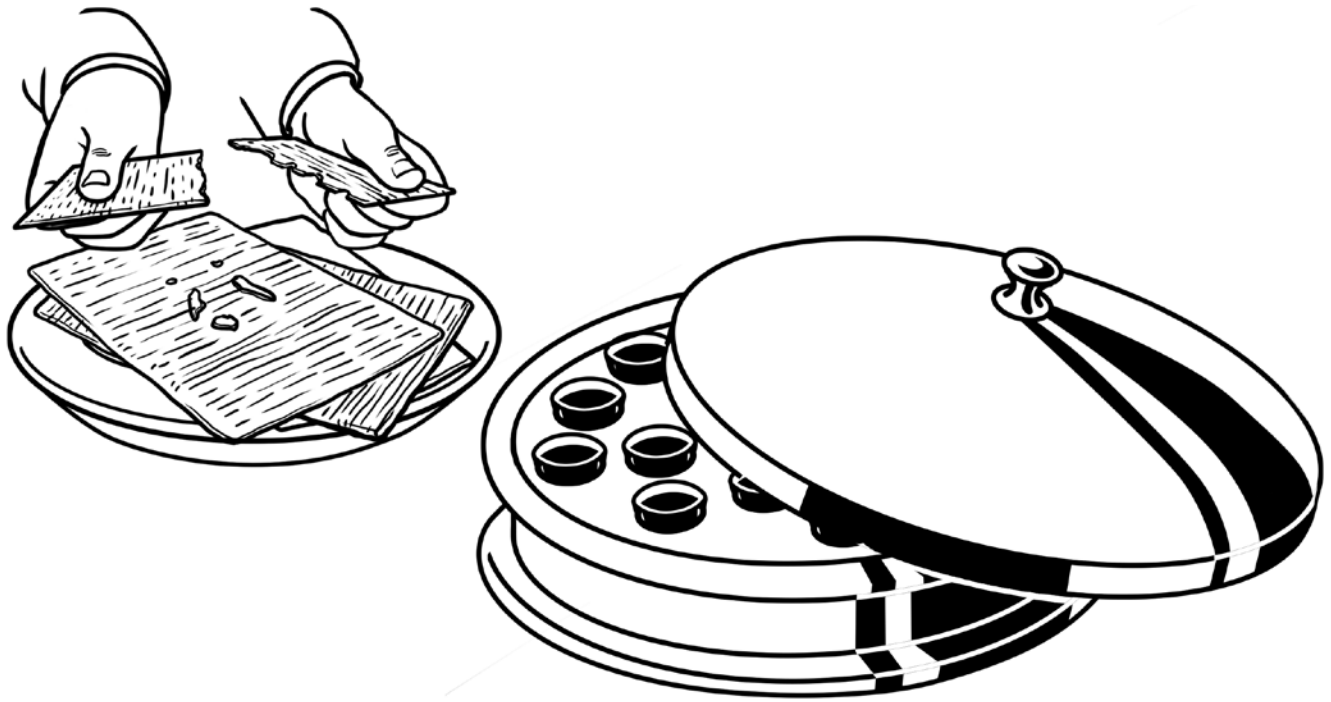
“No,” said her mother. “We don’t kill a lamb like the ancient Israelites did. They killed and ate a lamb to represent the fact that Jesus Christ would come and die for their sins. But Jesus Christ *did* come, about 2,000 years ago now.”

“Did He kill a lamb?” Ethan Johnson asked.

“No, not on the evening before He died,” said Mr. Johnson. “His sacrifice was the one that all those lambs represented: He *was* the Lamb. When He kept the Passover with His disciples, He changed its symbols to unleavened bread and wine.”

“All the baptized adults in our congregation went to the special Passover service last night,” Mr. Sanders told Lou Ann. “Instead of eating a lamb, we did what Christ and His disciples did. We listened to a special sermon; we washed each other’s feet as a symbol of humility; we ate a small piece of unleavened bread; and we drank a small glass of wine” (Luke 22:13-20).

Mrs. Abramson said, “When I made the unleavened bread we used for Passover this year, I had to be careful to make a perfect piece with no cracks. The unleavened bread represents the



body of Christ. The minister breaks it during the Passover service to show how Christ's body was beaten" (James 5:14; 1Peter 2:24.)

"Christ gave Himself to be beaten to forgive our physical sins. We break God's health laws when we break an arm or catch a cold," said Mr. Abramson. "Christ gave Himself to be killed to pay for our spiritual sins. Spiritual sins are committed when we break God's spiritual law, like the Ten Commandments. When the baptized adults eat a small piece of unleavened bread, it represents Christ's broken body; and when we drink a small glass of wine, it represents His spilled blood."

THE DAYS OF UNLEAVENED BREAD

"What about tonight?" asked Lou Ann. "What does the Night to be Much Observed represent?"

"Well, after the firstborn were killed, Pharaoh finally let the Israelites leave Egypt," said her father.

Ethan Johnson piped up: "The Egyptians even gave them gold!"

"That's right. The Israelites left with a 'high hand,'" Mr. Abramson said. "Like when you celebrate something, you often raise your hands up high. Not only were the Israelites set free from the Egyptians, the Egyptians gave them wealth on their way out—which is fitting, since they never gave the Israelites any payment for all the work they did."

"That's why this is the Night to Be Much Observed," said Mrs. Abramson. "It's a time to celebrate the Israelites being freed from slavery!"

"It's easy to celebrate with so much good food and good company," Mrs. Sanders said, "and good conversation."

“The Bible also says the Israelites went out with their bread unleavened,” said Mr. Abramson. “The Night to Be Much Observed is also the beginning of the seven days of Unleavened Bread. Passover is the first festival in God’s plan, and the Feast of Unleavened Bread is the second festival; it started at sunset tonight. In Exodus, God commands His people to put all leaven out of our homes during these days” (Exodus 12:15-16).

“That’s why we had to clean the house and the car so carefully last week,” said Lou Ann.

“We had to get all the crumbs out,” said Mrs. Sanders. “Yeast and other types of leaven puff up bread with air. The Bible says that the way leaven puffs up bread is the same way that sin puffs up people with pride. We get the leaven out of our homes to represent getting sin out of our lives.”

“The Bible also says we must eat unleavened bread during these days,” said Mr. Abramson. “We have to get pride and sin out of our lives, and we have to put humility and righteousness in.”

“The land of Egypt is a symbol of sin,” said Mr. Sanders, “and Pharaoh is a type of Satan. We have to work to come out of sin just like the Israelites came out of Egypt. During this week, you and Robert need to think of ways in which you disobey what the Bible says. Think of ways you commit sins and become puffed up. Your mother and I will talk and pray with you about getting these sins out. Putting sin out of

our lives is hard work, just like getting leaven out of a house is hard work.”

PENTECOST

The conversation turned to the food and its high quality for a few minutes, then Mr. Abramson spoke up again:

“We’ve talked about Passover, the Night to Be Much Observed and the Feast of Unleavened Bread. There’s one more spring holy day we can talk about. We were discussing the Israelites escaping from slavery in Egypt. They were free! But after a few days, they began to complain.”

“Why?” asked Robert.

“They were uncomfortable, and they liked the food in Egypt better than the bread they had.”

“That’s backward!” Robert said. “Isn’t it better to be *free* than to be a *slave*, no matter what the food is?”

PUT OUT SIN!

Like Mr. Sanders told Robert and Lou Ann, your parents may want to discuss and perhaps list sins that you need to find and remove during the Feast of Unleavened Bread. Look for laziness, lying, disrespecting your parents and other sins. Ask your parents and ask God to help you *get that spiritual leaven out* and replace it with a humble attitude like Jesus Christ’s.

“You’re exactly right,” said his father. “The really important thing to realize is that we naturally have that same type of attitude. Ever since Adam and Eve ate from the wrong tree, every human being except Jesus Christ has chosen to have an ungrateful, sinful attitude. The Israelites had it, and so do we.

“In fact, it’s *impossible* to overcome our selfish and sinful attitudes without something very special, and the last spring holy day points us to what that is.”

“What is it called again?” Lou Ann asked.

“Pentecost!” said her father. “It’s the next big step in God’s plan to bring us into His Family.

“After they left Egypt and God saved them at the Red Sea, the ancient Israelites walked through the wilderness for several weeks. Then they came to a mountain. Do you remember what it’s called?”

“Sinai!” said Lou Ann.

“That’s right. What happened there?”

“The Ten Commandments!”

“Good!” Mr. Sanders smiled. “Mr. Abramson, wasn’t that on Pentecost?”

“The Bible doesn’t say specifically, but the timing it records does indicate that the day God gave Israel the Ten Commandments at Mount Sinai was the day of Pentecost.”

“The Ten Commandments help us overcome our evil human nature because they show us what God’s nature is,” Mr. Sanders said. “God summarized

His entire way of life into these 10 laws. To become like God, we have to put out idols, lust, lying and other sins and put in honesty, sharing and things like that.”

“Did the Israelites do that after God gave them the Ten Commandments?” Lou Ann asked.

“No they didn’t,” Mr. Abramson said. “That is a sad story: For hundreds and hundreds of years they failed to keep God’s commandments. Almost none of them built the character to enter God’s Family—yet.”

“Why not?” Robert asked.

“They did not have God’s Holy Spirit,” Mr. Abramson said. “So they will have to be resurrected and given the opportunity to receive it.”

“The Holy Spirit is a major theme of Pentecost,” said Robert’s father. “When you are older and more mature and you understand what you are doing, you will want to repent of your sins and to personally accept the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Then you can be baptized by one of God’s ministers. Going completely under the water symbolizes drowning the old person, and coming up symbolizes living a new life for God. Then the minister prays for you and lays his hands on your head, and God gives you a miracle: a small part of His power, His Holy Spirit.”

Robert sat back, thinking about baptism and the Holy Spirit.

“The Holy Spirit helps us understand spiritual things, and it gives us the strength to overcome sin,” said Mrs. Sanders.

“The ancient Israelites had a small grain harvest in the spring and a big one in the fall,” Mr. Abramson said. “On Pentecost, the Israelites offered God a grain offering from their spring harvest. The grain represents the people in God’s Church. Most people in the world are like Adam and Eve: They have rejected God. But God has a small group of people He has called to be in His Church. So the small grain harvest represents them. The large fall harvest represents the rest of the world.”

“Christ and His Church are called the firstfruits,” Mr. Sanders said. “And Pentecost is sometimes called the **feast of firstfruits**.”

THE CHURCH OF GOD

“To find when Pentecost is, you start after the Sabbath that falls during the Feast of Unleavened Bread,” said Mrs. Johnson. “From there, you count 50 days. *Pentecost* means *count 50*.”

“The day that ties Pentecost most directly to the Holy Spirit was the first Pentecost after Jesus Christ was crucified and resurrected,” Mr. Abramson said. “Fifty days after Christ’s resurrection, God sent His Holy Spirit to all the disciples as they gathered to keep Pentecost.”

“Before then, only a very few people like Noah, Abraham and King David had God’s Holy Spirit,” said Mr. Sanders. “But on the day of Pentecost in A.D. 31, God established His New Testament Church

and gave the Holy Spirit to 120 people at once. Now anyone God calls into His Church can receive the Holy Spirit if he or she repents and is baptized.”

“So, God gave people in His Church the Holy Spirit so they could learn to be teachers,” Robert said.

“That’s right,” said Mr. Abramson. “This is the third step in God’s plan. First, Jesus had to live a perfect life and die on Passover so our sins could be forgiven. Then, we have to repent of our sins and come out of the ways of this world. That’s what the Feast of Unleavened Bread is about. Third, God gives us His Spirit so we can defeat Satan, be born into God’s Family, and become the Bride of Jesus Christ.”

“What are the next four steps?” asked Robert and Lou Ann.

“They are about how Christ and the Church will bring the rest of the world into God’s Family,” Mr. Abramson said. “When the fall holy days come, you will learn all about that! Until then, let’s enjoy this spectacular Night to be Much Observed dinner and think about our exciting future!”

God's Master Plan

Fill in the blanks of the statements below with the correct words. Then transfer the words to the puzzle on the right to find out what God's holy days reveal to us.

1. The Egyptians refused to let the Israelites go, so God punished them with 10 _____.
2. The Israelites were _____ in Egypt.
3. The _____ that the ancient Israelites killed on Passover represented Jesus Christ.
4. Jesus Christ had to die for mankind because all have _____.
5. God chose _____ to deliver Israel from Egypt.
6. The Egyptians lost their _____ in the 10th plague.
7. The Israelites left Egypt on the Night to Be Much _____.
8. We keep this night (mentioned above) to _____ the Israelites being freed from slavery.
9. We eat _____ bread for one week during the second of God's festivals.
10. During the Days of Unleavened Bread, we focus on removing sin from our _____.
11. The Israelites began to _____ only a few days after being freed from Egypt.
12. God delivered the Ten Commandments to the Israelites at _____.
13. God gave His Church the _____ on the day of Pentecost.
14. We _____ 50 days from the Sabbath during the Days of Unleavened Bread to get to Pentecost.
15. The seven holy days teach us about the seven steps of God's _____.

