



Imperial Academy Bible Lessons



Special Fall Festivals Lesson

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People around the world observe many different religious holidays. Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists, Taoists and hundreds of other religions all observe their own special days.

People who think of themselves as “Christians” also observe holidays: Valentine’s Day, Easter, Halloween, Christmas and others. Christians say they follow what God says in the Bible, but the Bible does not command any of these holidays. In fact, these observances originated in pagan religions!

Some of these “Christians” have studied the origins of Christmas and other holidays, and have discovered historical proof that these are pagan observances. (Pagan religions are ancient beliefs where people worship multiple gods and/or things found in nature. Paganism is about people creating *their own* systems and methods for worshiping their gods.) Even though these holidays are non-Christian, these people say it is acceptable to keep them because they are using them to honor Jesus Christ.

Can we keep whatever holiday we want, as long as we say it is to honor God? Does

God care about the days we observe? Does the Bible say anything about keeping certain days of the year? Does it make any difference what religious days you observe?

This lesson will explain God’s commands on what days His people must keep. It will emphasize four special holy days that take place in the fall. To understand what the Bible reveals about these days, you will need your Bible, paper, a pencil and an attitude that is ready to learn!

PAGAN HOLIDAYS

In the Bible, God strongly condemns pagan religions, pagan sacrifices and pagan observances. In fact, He specifically warns His people that they must never copy the religious practices of people who worship false gods.

Fill in the blanks using Deuteronomy 12:29-32: “When the LORD your God shall cut off the nations from before you, whither you go to possess them, and you succeed them, and dwell in their land; Take heed to yourself that you be not _____ by _____ them, after that they be destroyed from before you; and that you _____ after _____

_____, saying, How did these nations _____ their _____? even so will I do _____. You shall not do so unto the LORD your God: for every _____ to the LORD, which he _____, have they done unto their gods; for even their sons and their daughters they have burnt in the fire to their gods. What thing soever I command you, _____ to _____: you shall not _____ thereto, nor _____ from it.”

God commands us to keep His law and His law only! He forbids us from changing His law in any way. We must not take anything away from God’s law, or add anything new. This means we must not forget to keep the holy days God commands us to keep. It also means we must not observe pagan religious ceremonies, which God has forbidden us from observing!

GOD'S HOLY DAYS

There are seven festivals that God instructs His people to observe each year. None of these festivals has pagan origins—they all originated from the great God who created us! All seven are described for us in the pages of the Bible!

Turn to Leviticus 23 and list God’s seven festivals in order:

(Verse 5) _____

(Verse 6) _____

(Verses 16-21) _____

(Verse 24) _____

(Verse 27) _____

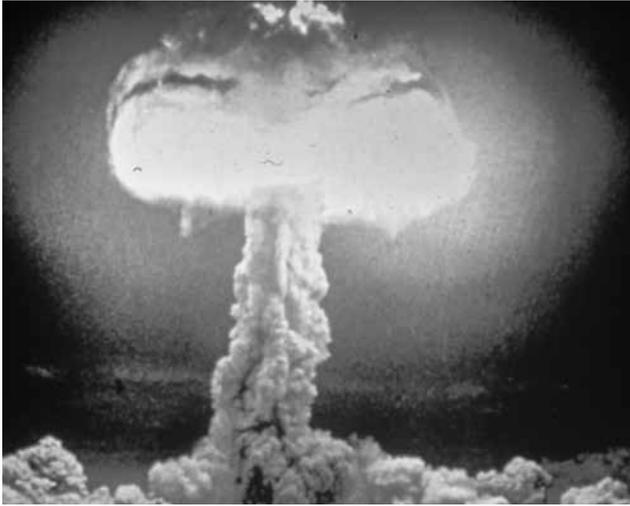
(Verse 34) _____

(Verses 36, 39) _____

God commands us to observe these seven festivals for a very special reason: They teach us the seven steps of His master plan for mankind! By observing



In the World Tomorrow, you will be a teacher.



PUBLIC DOMAIN

If Christ did not come and establish His government, humans would ultimately annihilate all mankind.

God's holy days, we learn how human beings can be born as spirit beings in God's Family! They also show us what we need to do to live happy, truly productive lives today. Be sure to memorize the names and order of these festivals!

THE SPRING FESTIVALS

In the Northern Hemisphere, where God's city of Jerusalem is located, His first three festivals take place in the spring. The last four festivals take place in the fall.

God's spring festivals show the first three steps He is taking to bring the first human beings into His Family. He does this by calling people out of the world, bringing them into His Church, and ultimately transforming them into the Bride of Jesus Christ. Those who are part of God's Family after Christ returns will be spirit beings. They will live forever! The understanding that comes from all seven of God's festivals shows that we

have to *prepare now* to serve others—to expand the Family—and for a great work that is to come.

The first of God's festivals is Passover. It memorializes the price of sin. All human beings, except one, have sinned. That means we have all earned the penalty of death. Jesus Christ voluntarily chose to become a human being, live a sinless life and die on your behalf so that, if you repent and follow God, your sins can be *forgiven* and you can be saved from the death penalty. Passover is a solemn memorial of Jesus Christ's death.

The second of God's festivals is the feast of Unleavened Bread. This is a seven-day festival that begins and ends with a high holy day. God commands His people to put all leavening out of their homes before this feast begins. During this festival, God commands His people not to eat leaven and to remove all leaven from their homes and other property. (Leaven puffs up bread the same way that sin puffs up people with pride.) Instead, they are to eat unleavened bread, an action that represents living God's sincere, truthful, humble way of life. Removing all leavening from our homes during the Days of Unleavened Bread symbolizes removing all sin from our lives.

The third of God's festivals is Pentecost. This festival shows us that God's people need the power of God's Holy Spirit to help them overcome sin and to live God's way of life. Even with Christ's sacrifice, and even with our best efforts to put sin

out of our lives, we will always fall short of living God’s way—unless God helps us through His Spirit! Pentecost shows us that, *with* God’s Holy Spirit, God’s people can overcome sin and live His way of life!

THE FALL FESTIVALS

When the three spring holy days are completely fulfilled, the members in God’s Church will have accepted Jesus Christ’s sacrifice, will have worked to put sin out of their lives, and will have succeeded in living God’s way of life by using His Holy Spirit. God will be living in them to the point where He can bring them into His Family!

But what about everyone else? There are billions of people living on Earth who are *not* in God’s Church. In fact, there are billions and billions and billions of people who have lived *and died*, who had heard God’s master plan and never been a member in His Church. What will happen to them?

This brings us to the four fall holy days. These festivals show us God’s four-step plan to expand His Family further by offering salvation to every human being who was never part of God’s Church before!

MEMORY TEST

Why is it wrong to observe holidays with pagan origins, like Easter or Christmas?

Why does God command us to observe the seven festivals listed in Leviticus 23?

FEAST OF TRUMPETS

The fourth festival in God’s plan is the Feast of Trumpets. This festival is a high holy day. It pictures the most important event in history: the Second Coming of Jesus Christ!

Four is the biblical number for new beginnings. The day of Trumpets sounds the beginning of a new age when Christ and His wife will govern the Earth. At this time, all will learn to keep these festivals!

God commanded the ancient Israelites to keep His seven festivals. When this fourth festival, the Feast of Trumpets, arrived, they blew a trumpet made from a ram’s horn. This trumpet is called a *shofar*, and the sound it makes is a piercing blast. They also blew two long silver trumpets, which produced a variety of musical notes.

Just as with the spring holy days, the Israelites were commanded to do no work on the Feast of Trumpets. Instead, they gathered together for a special meeting, and the priest offered a sacrifice to God (Leviticus 23:23-25). God’s people today keep the Feast of Trumpets by not working, by attending a Church service, and by giving an offering to God. At the service, we learn more about the meaning of the Feast of Trumpets.

Remember these festivals are not pagan traditions of men. These are days that God commands us to observe yearly so we are reminded of the deep meaning of what God has in store for all of mankind!

The Feast of Trumpets points to the return of Jesus Christ. The Bible tells us that when He returns, a trumpet blast will sound. This blast will be so loud, everyone on Earth will hear it!

Fill in the blanks using 1 Thessalonians 4:16: “For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the _____ of _____: and the dead in Christ shall rise first.”

At this moment, everyone in God’s Church who had remained faithful until death will be brought back to life and transformed into a God being! In the next moment, everyone who is still alive and is part of God’s Church will also be transformed into a God being! This will all happen in an instant!

Turn to 1 Corinthians 15:52 and fill in the blanks below: “In a moment, in the _____ of an _____, at the _____: for the _____ shall _____, and the _____ shall be _____, and we shall be changed.”

What about everyone else on Earth? Well, when Jesus Christ returns, many of them will actually want to fight Him! They will try to destroy Him so that He cannot rule over them.

Fill in the blanks using Revelation 11:15: “And the _____ sounded; and there were _____ in _____, saying, The _____ of this _____ are become the _____ of our _____, and of his _____; and he shall _____ for _____ and _____.”

The trumpet blast means an alarm of war!

After the archangel announces Christ’s return, a great army will gather north of Jerusalem in a plain called Megiddo. Jesus Christ and the God beings who have just been born from God’s Church into God’s Family will have to fight this army. If they did not fight it, it would destroy everything—everyone on Earth would keep fighting and killing each other until no one was left!

Once Christ defeats this army, something new will happen. He will establish God’s government over the whole Earth! He will teach *everyone* living on Earth how to give up hatred, selfishness, perversion, lying, coveting, violence and murder. He will begin to teach everyone how to live God’s give way of life, which will bring them peace and joy. The members of God’s Church will be God beings who assist Christ. This is the central meaning of the Feast of Trumpets!

DAY OF ATONEMENT

The fifth festival in God’s plan is the Day of Atonement. It is a high holy day. God commands His people to fast on this day.

Fasting means not eating food and not drinking water.

Why does God command us to fast on this day? When we fast, we have less energy and we feel weaker. In fact, if we went more than a few days without food or water, we would die! This reminds us that we are weak, physical, temporary human beings. It also shows us that we need to be fed spiritually. It reminds us that *we need God* to have any sort of future! God is our Creator: He made us; He gives us food and water; He is our only hope for eternal life.

Keeping the Day of Atonement teaches us that we need humble, teachable attitudes to follow God. During this day, we should spend extra time praying and studying the Bible. Only by praying and studying with a humble attitude can we start to draw closer to God.

This festival also pictures a major event that will happen soon. It has to do with the angel who was once called Lucifer, which means. God had created Lucifer and given him the important job of ruling the Earth and making it more beautiful. Lucifer was in harmony with God, but then he began to focus on himself. He became selfish and evil, and he rebelled against God!

God changed Lucifer's name to Satan, which means "enemy." Ever since Adam and Eve, Satan has been convincing human beings to rebel against God like he did. He broadcasts a constant attitude of get: to put yourself first above all else. He

causes people to have his selfish, hateful, evil attitude and to hurt themselves and others.

Fill in the blanks using Revelation 12:9: "And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which _____ the whole world: he was cast out into the earth...."

Satan has deceived the whole world! His wicked way of life is what causes everyone's suffering!

Five is the biblical number for judgment. Satan's time of judgment is coming quickly!

The Day of Atonement pictures God locking up Satan! At Jesus Christ's return, God will put Satan in a bottomless pit. In the pit, Satan will not be able to interfere as Christ teaches everyone God's way of life.

Turn to Revelation 20:1-3 and fill in the blanks below: "And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the _____ and a _____ in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that _____, which is the _____, and _____, and bound him a _____, And cast him into the _____, and _____, and set a seal upon him, that he should _____ the _____, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season."

With Jesus Christ and His wife ruling them, and without Satan influencing them, everyone on Earth will finally

have a chance to become *at one* with God. That is why this day is called the Day of *At-one-ment*!

To preview the next step of God's plan, read verse 6 and summarize it in your own words: _____

FEAST OF TABERNACLES

The sixth festival in God's plan is the Feast of Tabernacles, which lasts seven days. The first day is a high holy day, and it occurs on the 15th day of the seventh month of God's calendar, when there is a full moon in the sky.

The Feast of Tabernacles represents a time period of 1,000 years. It begins when Jesus Christ returns, when the first people are born into God's Family as Christ's Bride, when Christ and His Bride begin to rule the whole Earth, and when they begin to bring everyone into at-one-ment with God. We call this period the Millennium.

God calls the relationship between Jesus Christ and the Church members who are born into God's Family a marriage. That is why this festival is seven days long. In ancient Israel, wedding feasts lasted seven days. So the festival picturing Christ's marriage is seven days long!

Read Revelation 19:7-8 to fill in the blanks: "Let us be _____ and

_____, and give honour to him: for the _____ of the _____ is come, and his _____ has made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in _____, _____ and _____: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints."

During the Feast of Tabernacles, God tells His people to leave their homes and live in temporary dwellings at a special Feast site. In ancient Israel, people lived in huts or tents, called booths, during this time. Today, people in God's Church stay in a hotel, tent or other temporary accommodation.

Living in temporary dwellings during the Feast of Tabernacles reminds us that our lives are temporary. We cannot live forever, unless we are born as spirit beings in God's Family. Only members of God's Church understand this truth today. But in the Millennium, everyone on Earth will understand that physical life is temporary and that its purpose is to prepare us to be born as productive members of God's Family. Those people who believe and obey Jesus Christ will enter God's Family as Spirit-born children!

Many children in God's Church will not yet be baptized when Jesus Christ returns. Perhaps you will not yet be baptized. If so, you will still be a human being during the Millennium—and God will use you to assist in leading people! You will help Jesus Christ and other God beings, like your parents. Together, you



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After the Millennium, you will help teach everyone who has ever lived. You might even teach your own family.

will teach people to obey and to love God.

During the Millennium, everyone will be living God’s way. Because of this, the entire world will be peaceful! People will not hate, steal, lie or kill. God will heal people who are blind, deaf and crippled. He will even change the nature of wild animals, and they will become tame!

Fill in the blanks using Isaiah 11:6-9:

“The _____ also shall dwell with the _____, and the _____ shall lie down with the _____; and the _____ and the _____ and the _____ together; and a _____ shall lead them. And the _____ and the _____ shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the _____ shall _____ like the _____. And the sucking _____ shall play on the hole of the _____ [poisonous snake], and the weaned _____ shall put his hand on the cockatrice’ [another snake] den. They shall not _____ nor _____ in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the _____ of the _____, as the waters cover the sea.”

During the Feast of Tabernacles, God’s people go to Church services every day to learn more about what the Millennium will be like and to learn the things we will need to teach everyone when that time comes. This is at the heart of the special meaning of the Feast of Tabernacles!

LAST GREAT DAY

We have seen how the people who are in God’s Church will be born into His Family. We have seen how everyone living on Earth at Christ’s return will live God’s way during the Millennium and receive the same opportunity to live forever in the God Family as children of Jesus Christ and His Bride. But what about all those who have *died never knowing God*? God’s plan for them is pictured by the Last Great Day!

The Last Great Day is the last of God’s seven festivals, and it pictures the seventh step in His master plan (John 7:37). It is a high holy day. It pictures a time after the Millennium when all the people who have died without knowing God’s way of life will be brought back to life!

This means that probably close to 100 billion people will be resurrected. Some of these people will be Adam’s children. Some will be from Noah’s lifetime. Some will be from ancient Egypt. Some will be from King David’s lifetime. Some will be from Christ’s lifetime. Some will be from medieval times. Some will be your relatives!

Jesus Christ, the other God beings and the billions of human beings living on Earth during the Millennium will spend

1,000 years *getting ready* for this huge resurrection! Then, when it occurs, Jesus Christ and the rest of the God Family will begin teaching these billions of people God's way of life. God will then give these resurrected people 100 years to live, and He will give them the choice to embrace God's way or to reject it.

Fill in the blanks using Isaiah 65:20: "There shall be no more thence an _____ of _____, nor an _____ that has not _____ his _____: for the _____ shall _____ an _____ years old; but the sinner being an _____ years old shall be accursed."

How to Have an Awesome Fall Holy Day Season

LISTEN TO YOUR PARENTS

God sets the young people in His Church apart as special. Because you have a baptized parent or guardian, God's Holy Spirit is working with you, even though it is not yet inside you. To have the best fall holy day season ever, obey the Fifth Commandment: Show your parents respect and honor.

OBEY ALL THE FEAST SITE RULES

God selects special Feast sites each year where He wants His people to keep the Feast of Tabernacles. He guides His ministry to organize these sites in a way

At the end of the 100 years, God will judge these billions of people. This event is called the Great White Throne Judgment (Revelation 20:11-13). All the people who refuse to obey God and who instead live Satan's selfish way will die in a lake of fire. They will not live forever as selfish, hateful, miserable beings like Satan. All those people who believe and obey God's unselfish give way will be born into His Family as spirit beings!

After the Last Great Day, God the Father will come to Earth. Together with their new family, God the Father and Jesus Christ will rule the universe for

that is pleasing to Him. At the Feast (as well as at Trumpets and Atonement), make sure to follow directions. For instance, refrain from running in the hall and making noise during services.

MAKE A NEW FRIEND EACH DAY

The Feast of Tabernacles is perhaps the best time of year to make new friends in the Church! Introduce yourself to new people. Ask for your new friends' contact information so you can write or call them after the holy days are over.

TAKE GOOD NOTES AT SERVICES

The fall holy day season is a special time of year when God prepares His people to become teachers in the Millennium. Make sure to learn as much as you can at Church services. Focus on taking detailed

Festival Unscramble

Unscramble the names of God's festivals below and place them in the correct order by writing the correct number beside their name. Finally, unscramble the circled letters to reveal the answer to the question below.

__ STFAE FO PRESTUTM

__ SALT ATERG ADY
○ -----

__ ATFSE FO EDNALEUENV AERDB
----- ○ -----

__ YAD FO OTANNETME
----- ○ -----

__ OVEASPSR

__ SEFAT FO BTCERESLANA
○ ----- ○ -----

__ EOSNCETPT
----- ○ -----

Who is God's plan of salvation for?
