

SABBATH SCHOOL

Level 4 • Unit 8 • Week 1

GOD'S FESTIVALS STARTED WITH PASSOVER

OBJECTIVE:

To give an overview of the spring Holy Days and the seven steps of the plan of salvation. Also, the story of Moses and the 10 plagues, including Passover, will be reviewed.

ATTENTION GETTER:

God gave us many special days throughout the year. These days are called Holy Days, or festivals, or annual Sabbaths. God has commanded us (Leviticus 23:4) to observe these festivals each year to keep us constantly reminded of His great master plan for the salvation of mankind.

The seven festivals created by God for all mankind are listed in the 23rd chapter of Leviticus in your Bible. Open your Bible and try to list the seven festivals below.

Leviticus 23

1. _____ (verse 5)
2. _____ (verse 6)
3. _____ (verse 16, 21)
4. _____ (verse 24)
5. _____ (verse 27)
6. _____ (verse 34)
7. _____ (verse 36)

These seven festivals of God are divided into three seasons—the spring, late spring/early summer and the fall. The first group in the spring is made up of the Passover, the Days of Unleavened Bread Pentecost is in late spring or early summer. The fall group consists of the Feast of Trumpets, the Day of Atonement, the Feast of Tabernacles and the Last Great Day.

BIBLE LESSON:

GOD'S MASTER PLAN OF SALVATION

God wants everyone to be in His Family! God commands us to keep His festivals each year. But why? God's festivals remind us of His wonderful plan of salvation for all mankind. When searching for a treasure, you need a map. God's festivals are like a map to His kingdom. God's festivals are in a certain order. The events of each festival must take place in that order—just like following a treasure map.

- Step 1—Passover

Passover pictures the death of Jesus Christ as our Passover lamb. Without His death and resurrection, we could not be in God's Kingdom. Jesus never sinned while He was on earth. God's law, or the Ten Commandments, defines sin. Sometimes we make mistakes and break God's law. Without the sacrifice that Jesus made, our sins would keep us out of God's Kingdom. Jesus died on our behalf so that we can stop sinning and have our sins blotted out. Because of this great sacrifice of God's only Son, we have the opportunity to be in God's Kingdom!

Each year baptized members of the United Church of God observe Passover in the evening on the same day that Jesus observed it. The Passover service includes two symbols—unleavened bread and wine. Jesus gave us these two symbols—unleavened bread to picture His body and wine to picture His blood. The Passover is kept each year as a memorial of Jesus' death.

- Step 2—Days of Unleavened Bread

The Days of Unleavened Bread picture living as Jesus Christ lived, in sincerity and in truth (1 Corinthians 5:7-8). During these days we eat unleavened bread, which pictures a sin-free life. At the same time, we keep leavened bread out, picturing our struggle with getting sin out of our lives. Leaven, such as yeast, pictures how sin works. Yeast spreads throughout bread dough to make the dough rise or puff up. Sin can spread quickly. We must always be on our guard to get rid of sin. Each year we remove the physical leaven, such as bread, cookies and cakes, out of our houses. This reminds us to get the spiritual leaven, or sin, out of our lives.

- Step 3—Pentecost

Keeping sin out of our lives is difficult. We need God's help to do it. God's third step in His plan of salvation provides that help. The Feast of Pentecost pictures God giving His Holy Spirit to people, thus establishing His Church. The Holy Spirit is the power that God uses to teach and also to create. The Holy Spirit works with a baptized member's mind. These baptized members are often called "firstfruits" in the Bible. With the help of the Holy Spirit, we can be successful in overcoming sin.

- Step 4—Feast of Trumpets

In order to be in God's Kingdom, we must be changed from flesh-and-blood humans to spirit beings. This change is called the resurrection. We might be alive or dead when the resurrection takes place, but the resurrection won't happen until Jesus Christ returns to the earth. God's fourth step pictures the return of Jesus Christ. Jesus will return with a trumpet blast that the whole earth will hear. When Jesus returns, He will start His one-thousand-year reign on earth.

- Step 5—Day of Atonement

Satan the devil is responsible for sin on the earth. Jesus does not want sin around during the Millennium, so Satan must be locked away. When Jesus returns, one of the first actions He will take is to chain Satan in a pit. Once Satan is gone, people can truly begin to have unity and peace with God.

During the Day of Atonement we fast, go without food and water, for 24 hours. This helps us keep a humble attitude toward God. We know that we need God for our very survival! Without the food and water that God provides, we would quickly die. Fasting reminds us how much we truly depend on God!

- Step 6—Feast of Tabernacles

The Feast of Tabernacles pictures the Millennium, or one-thousand-year period, under the rulership of Jesus Christ. There will be peace and safety on the earth. People living during the Millennium will be truly happy by following God's law and His way of life. The resurrected spirit beings, or firstfruits, will help Jesus in teaching the people how to live.

During the Feast of Tabernacles, we go as a family to feast sites all over the world. Worshiping God each day, having great meals and enjoying fun activities with our family and friends pictures life in the Millennium. That's one reason we pray for "God's Kingdom to come!"

- Step 7—The Last Great Day

Following Jesus is the only way to God's Kingdom. What about those people who lived before Jesus was born? What about those who live now, but don't have a chance to hear about Jesus and His way of life? God's plan doesn't leave them out. The Last Great Day pictures a resurrection of the dead back to physical life! Those who have never had a true opportunity to hear about Jesus will get their chance! After the Millennium, they will be resurrected and be taught God's way of life. Jesus and the firstfruits will have a big job to do! Teaching these resurrected humans won't be easy, but it will be worth the work. Those that choose God's way of life can then also be in His kingdom.

HOW THE FESTIVALS BEGAN

The festivals began with the nation of Israel. The story that leads up to God giving the festivals to Israel is a magnificent one indeed! The story starts in the book of Exodus in your Bible. The rest of this lesson will tell us this amazing story and we will learn about how the first festival began.

ANCIENT ISRAEL

God chose ancient Israel as His special people. The Israelites were descendants of Jacob and his family. God chose to change Jacob's name to Israel and that's where the name for the twelve tribes of Israel comes from.

Jacob and his family had moved to Egypt during a great famine. Jacob's son Joseph, through a series of miraculous events, was second in command in Egypt. Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, respected Joseph and his family and gave them land to live on. The family grew as the years went by, until there were several million Israelites living in Egypt. This took many years, so there were also many different kings or pharaohs who lived and died. In time, none of the pharaohs remembered Joseph. The Egyptians then made slaves of the Israelites and made them work hard. The Israelites suffered and cried out to God.

MOSES IS RESCUED

Pharaoh became afraid of the growing number of Israelites. He decided that all the male Israelite babies should be thrown in the river and drowned. An Israelite woman had a baby boy and hid him for three months. He soon became too big to hide, so she made a basket and put him in it. She took the basket and hid it in the bulrushes in the river. His sister stood by and waited to see what would happen.

The daughter of Pharaoh came down to the river to take a bath. She found the basket and felt sorry for the baby. The baby's sister came to Pharaoh's daughter and asked if she wanted an Israelite woman to take care of the baby. Pharaoh's daughter said yes and named the baby Moses.

GOD CALLS MOSES

Many years later, God heard the continued cries of the Israelite people. Moses was a grown man and living in a land called Midian. God decided to use Moses to help set the Israelite people free. God appeared to Moses in a burning bush. Moses knew it was the true God, because the bush was on fire, but it didn't burn up! God told Moses that He wanted Moses to go to Egypt to help free the Israelite people from the Egyptians.

MOSES ARRIVES IN EGYPT

When Moses arrived in Egypt, the Israelite people had been slaves for many years. They were forced to work for cruel men called taskmasters. The Israelites had to work seven days a week, so they had forgotten about God's laws, including the Sabbath. God saw that the people were unhappy and wanted them to return to His way of life.

God told Moses to go to Pharaoh and demand that Pharaoh let the Israelites go. God had a plan. God wanted to show the whole world His power. So His plan included 10 plagues against Egypt.

THE 10 PLAGUES

A plague is another term for a disease or a disaster. God brought these plagues on Egypt to force Pharaoh and the Egyptians to free the Israelites. God wanted the Israelites free so that they could go into the wilderness to worship Him. Before each plague, God sent Moses to warn Pharaoh to let the people go, but Pharaoh was very stubborn. After each warning God sent a plague on Egypt to let Pharaoh know that He was serious.

- Plague #1—Waters Become Blood

God's first plague was to turn all the drinking water in Egypt to blood. This included the rivers, ponds and even the water in jars that were in their homes! The fish died and the Egyptians could not drink the

water. Pharaoh's magicians were able to turn the water into blood as well, so Pharaoh turned and went home.

- Plague #2—Frogs

Frogs everywhere! God caused frogs to come up out of the water and cover everything! They were in people's houses, their beds, their ovens, and even their mixing bowls. Pharaoh didn't like the frogs, so he pleaded with Moses to make the frogs go away. Moses made them go away, but Pharaoh's heart was hardened against the Israelites.

- Plague #3—Lice

God then sent lice over the land of Egypt. Lice are small wingless insects that get into everything, including your hair! They itch and cause all kinds of problems. The Egyptians really hated the lice. Their cattle hated them too. The lice attacked both man and beast. Pharaoh wanted the lice gone, but he still would not let the Israelites go free.

- Plague #4—Flies

Swarms of flies then covered the land. The Egyptians houses were full of them! Imagine trying to eat dinner with a house full of flies. The flies covered the land of Egypt. But in the land of Goshen, where the Israelites lived, the swarms of flies did not appear. God showed His power by protecting the Israelites. Pharaoh saw this protection, but was stubborn and kept the Israelites as slaves.

- Plague #5—Disease

God sent a disease on all the livestock in the land of Egypt. The cattle, donkeys, horses, camels, oxen and sheep were all affected. All the livestock in Egypt died, but again none of the livestock in the land of the Israelites died. Pharaoh was a very stubborn man. He knew that God was protecting the Israelites. The Egyptian people were suffering under the plagues, but still Pharaoh would not let the Israelites go free.

- Plague #6—Boils

God told Moses to take some ashes and throw them into the air in front of Pharaoh. The ashes became fine dust and caused boils to break out on both man and beast. Boils are puffy and very painful sores on a person's skin. The boils caused great pain throughout Egypt, even Pharaoh suffered. The magicians could not stand before Moses because of the pain. Again Moses told Pharaoh to let the people go so that they could worship the Lord. But God hardened Pharaoh's heart against the Israelites and he would not free them.

- Plague #7—Hail

Moses told Pharaoh and the Egyptians that the next plague would be hail. Moses told them that if they feared God, they would bring their servants and cattle in from the fields. God then sent thunder and hail, and fire darted on the ground. There was more hail than ever before and anyone or any beast outside died. The plants and trees were also smashed. Pharaoh told Moses that he had sinned and that he wanted Moses to stop the hail. As soon as Moses asked God to stop the hail, Pharaoh stopped worrying and would not let the Israelite people go free.

- Plague #8—Locusts

Pharaoh would not fear God. So God then sent locusts on the land of Egypt. Locusts are a type of grasshoppers and when millions of them come on the land they eat every plant in sight. The hail had destroyed most of the plants, but the locusts ate anything that was left. Pharaoh cried out to Moses that he had sinned. He asked Moses to call on God to remove all of the locusts. So God sent a strong wind to get rid of the locusts. When the locusts were gone, Pharaoh became stubborn again and would not let the Israelite people go free.

- Plague #9—Darkness

Have you ever been in a really dark room? A room so dark that you could not see your hand in front of your face? That is how dark it was when God sent darkness over the land of Egypt. For three days no one could move. The people of Israel living only a few miles away had plenty of light. That was indeed a miracle by God. Pharaoh was mad at Moses and his demands to go and worship the Lord. This time Pharaoh told Moses to never come back to him, or Moses would be killed. Pharaoh would not let the Israelite people go free, so God was forced to send one final plague.

- Plague #10—The First Passover

God told Moses about the 10th plague. God was going to kill the firstborn of both man and beast in each household in the land of Egypt. God had a plan to protect the Israelites. The Israelites had to do just what God said, or they too would suffer under this plague.

God told the Israelite people to take a young lamb without blemish on the 10th day of the first month (Abib) and pen it up until the 14th day of the month. The family was to then kill the lamb and roast it. They were to eat the lamb with bitter herbs and unleavened bread. Whatever part of the lamb that was uneaten, was burned. That night, all the Israelite people were dressed as though they were leaving on a long journey.

When they killed the lamb, they were to take some of the lamb's blood and smear it on the top and sides of their house's front doorposts. God was going to send His death angel throughout the land. The houses with the blood on the doorposts would be protected. When the death angel saw the blood, the angel would PASS OVER the house. This is where the term "Passover" comes from. All others would suffer the 10th plague, the death of the firstborn of both man and beast.

The Israelites put the blood of the lamb on their doorposts. About midnight, the death angel came through the land. Indeed, the firstborn inside houses without the lamb's blood were killed. There was a mighty cry throughout the land of Egypt. Finally, Pharaoh let the people go.

Pharaoh later changed his mind and chased after the Israelites. Again, God protected the Israelites with a great miracle—the parting of the Red Sea. We will learn more about this great event in future lessons.

The Passover is the first festival in God's master plan. It occurs in the spring, at the beginning of God's calendar. In future lessons we will see how Jesus Christ became the true Passover Lamb. Jesus shed His blood for us so that we may have eternal life!

LESSON APPLICATION:

Have students complete the "Unscramble the Plagues" activity.

MUSIC:

Sing the following to the tune of "Mary Had a Little Lamb."

We all want to know the truth,
know the truth,
know the truth.

We all want to know the truth,
The truth will set us free.

Jesus is the Lamb of God.
Lamb of God,
Lamb of God.

Jesus is the Lamb of God,
He died for you and me.

God, He has a master plan,
master plan,
master plan.

God, He has a master plan,
His Kingdom we will see.

Jesus is the Lamb of God,
Lamb of God,
Lamb of God.

Jesus is the Lamb of God,
He LIVES for you and me.

MEMORY VERSE:

Exodus 12:13 "Now the blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you are. And when I see the blood, I will pass over you; and the plague shall not be on you to destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt."

UNSCRAMBLE THE PLAGUES

Unscramble the letters to name the 10 plagues. Then list them in order. If you need help, read Exodus 7:14 through Exodus 10:23.

tewar ot obold

celi

lah

liefs

iobls

rogfs

sediaes

eadht fo irtfsonrb

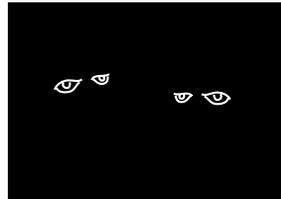
nasdsker

ssoltuc

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

GUESS THE PLAGUES

Write the number and name of each plague under its picture.



family activity

THE POINT:

To give an overview of the spring Holy Days and the seven steps of the plan of salvation. Also, the story of Moses and the 10 plagues, including Passover, were reviewed.

ASK ME...

Name and briefly describe the seven festivals.

FAMILY TOGETHER TIME:

Play Bible charades and act out the different plagues God sent on Egypt.

MEMORY VERSE:

Exodus 12:13 "Now the blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you are. And when I see the blood, I will pass over you; and the plague shall not be on you to destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt."