



GOD'S PLAN & PURPOSE FOR HUMANITY

Illustrated in the Seven Annual Festivals

OBJECTIVE

To teach the seven annual festivals and how they reveal God's promise of reconciliation with His whole creation through Jesus Christ.

Note to parents

We encourage you to read through this material with your children to provide an overview of the meaning of the annual festivals and what they picture. Then go through each festival in detail along with supplemental pages you feel would be helpful in teaching and reinforcing the meaning of each festival.

OVERVIEW

God's divine plan and purpose for humanity is proclaimed through seven annual festivals and holy days. Outlining how mortals—formed in the image of God—will become perfect, spiritual creations, these days are far more than physical celebrations for God's people. Intimately linked together, these commanded observances reveal and rehearse, step-by-step, the good news of the coming Kingdom of God.

In the first chapter of Genesis, God not only established a weekly cycle

“Let there be lights in the firmament of the heavens to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs and seasons, and for days and years.”

for the seventh-day Sabbath, but also a yearly cycle for His annual festivals and holy days: “Then God said, ‘Let there be lights in the firmament of the heavens to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs and seasons, and for days and years’” (Genesis 1:14). The “seasons” refer to the appointed





times in which the commanded festivals are to be observed. The “days” refer to the weekly Sabbath along with the annual Sabbaths or holy days. Faithfully fulfilling their purpose, the “signs”—the sun, moon and stars—govern the seasons and days. From the beginning of humanity’s existence, knowledge of God’s redeeming plan is verified within His creation.

In seven steps, God masterfully communicates His perfect plan of salvation—the process by which sons and daughters will be placed into His eternal, spiritual family.

Under His absolute authority, God designated holy times for His people to gather together to honor, worship and learn about His love, grace and mercy for all of humanity. These holy convocations are to be proclaimed within their seasons: early spring, late spring and early fall ([Leviticus 23:4, 37](#); [Exodus 23:14-17](#); [Deuteronomy 16:16](#)). Although recorded throughout the Scriptures, the “feasts of the LORD” ([Leviticus 23:4](#)) are listed in entirety in [Leviticus 23](#). In seven steps, God masterfully communicates His perfect plan of salvation—the process by which sons and daughters will be placed into His eternal, spiritual family. The keeping of these commanded Sabbaths (both weekly and annual) remains an everlasting sign between God and His chosen people ([Exodus 31:13](#); [Ezekiel 20:12, 20](#)).

As faithful followers of Jesus Christ, who was God manifested in the flesh, we strive to imitate His instructive example ([1 Corinthians 11:1](#); [1 Peter 2:21](#); [1 John 2:6](#)). The Scriptures record that Jesus, along with His family, observed the yearly festivals ([Luke 2:41](#); [John 2:23](#); [4:45](#); [7:1-39](#)). Likewise, the book of Acts plainly records that the apostles and the early Church continued in Christ’s example by keeping the annual Sabbaths ([Acts 2:1](#); [18:21](#); [20:6, 16](#); [27:9](#)).

Nowhere in Scripture is there any instruction to turn from these God-ordained observances. Even today, the knowledge and keeping of these seven annual festivals continues to impart understanding to Christ’s disciples concerning God’s plan of salvation for all of humanity.

Passover ([Leviticus 23:5](#))

Laying the foundation for all the holy days, the Festival of Passover powerfully proclaims Jesus Christ the Savior of all humanity ([1 John 2:2](#)). This yearly memorial commemorates Jesus Christ taking the full penalty of sin upon Himself so salvation could be made available to all of humanity ([Romans 6:23](#)).

Feast of Unleavened Bread ([Leviticus 23:6-8](#))

This festival begins with the celebration of our deliverance from and triumph over sin through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Partaking of unleavened bread for seven days, we are reminded of our personal responsibility to forsake our sinful nature and to replace it with the righteous character of Christ ([Colossians 3:1-17](#)).





Feast of Pentecost (Leviticus 23:15-22)

Commemorating the establishment of the Church of God, this festival celebrates God dwelling within repentant people through the Holy Spirit. We learn that God is only working directly with a small group of people today, not attempting to save the whole of humanity at this point in time. Those spiritual firstfruits with whom God is working directly now—those led by the Spirit of God—worship the Father in spirit and truth, allowing Him to write His laws and commandments in their hearts and minds ([John 4:24](#); [Hebrews 8:10](#)).

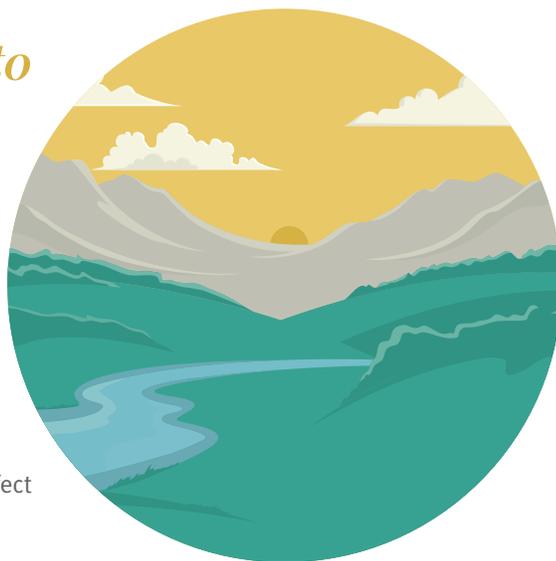
Feast of Trumpets (Leviticus 23:23-25)

Prophesying the second coming of Jesus Christ, this festival pictures the initial events that will usher in the Kingdom of God the Almighty! This holy day reveals that the firstfruits will receive the gift of eternal life at the first resurrection at Christ's return to earth. Receiving the promise of hope, the faithful saints will join with Jesus Christ at the blast of the seventh trump, returning to earth to establish the holy government of God ([Zechariah 14:5, 9](#); [Revelation 11:15](#)).

A repentant humanity will begin to live a life of perfect agreement with its Creator.

Day of Atonement (Leviticus 23:26-32)

This day, a day of fasting, pictures the complete removal of Satan and his sinful influence from the earth. This festival celebrates all of humanity's future reconciliation to the Father, made possible through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, the High Priest ([Hebrews 4:14-16](#); [9:11-15](#)). The removal of Satan will provide the foundation for full access to God and His way of life ([Revelation 20:10](#)). A repentant humanity will begin to live a life of perfect agreement with its Creator.



Feast of Tabernacles (Leviticus 23:33-43)

Representing a time of restoration, this seven-day festival celebrates the glorious 1,000-year reign of Jesus Christ on this earth. Significant physical and spiritual changes will be experienced by all creation ([Isaiah 11:7-9](#); [35:1-2, 5-7](#); [Ezekiel 36:26-27](#)). During this millennial period, salvation will be universally available as humanity is restored to a proper relationship with God.

Last Great Day (Eighth Day) (Leviticus 23:36)

Continuing the restoration from the millennial period, this festival celebrates the time when God will resurrect “the rest of the dead” in the second resurrection ([Revelation 20:5](#)). At that time He will abundantly “pour out [His] Spirit upon all flesh” ([Joel 2:28](#)). For the first time, the majority of humanity—from the least to the greatest—will have the opportunity to actively pursue God's way of life, humbly seek repentance, and liberally receive the gift of salvation ([1 Corinthians 15:21-22](#); [Revelation 20:12](#)).



God is creating a family—a family of eternal, spirit beings who have been shaped into the character-image of their supreme Creator. Upon the fulfillment of the final step of God the Father's plan, all whose names are recorded in the Book of Life will look forward to “new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells” (2 Peter 3:13). At last, God the Father will personally dwell with His spiritual family in New Jerusalem, the holy city (Revelation 21:2-3) and the one “who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son” (verse 7).

SCRIPTURE DISCUSSION POINTS

You can use the following guided discussion topics to stimulate dialogue about God's holy days.

Annual holy days listed (Leviticus 23:4-44)

Explain that this is the most thorough listing of God's holy days in the Bible.

Discuss that there are many scriptures throughout the Bible that verify God's people have always kept these days.

Emphasize that these are *God's* holy days—not humanity's creations..

Explain that the annual holy days are annual Sabbaths.

Compare and contrast the weekly Sabbath to the annual Sabbaths. What annual Sabbaths have special requirements? What do we bring to God on His holy days?

Explain that keeping the weekly Sabbath and the annual Sabbaths is a sign of God's holy people (Exodus 31:13).

Three seasons in the year (Exodus 23:14-17; Deuteronomy 16:16-17)

Explain that God has separated His holy days into three distinct seasons (or times) within the year: early spring, late spring, and fall.

Explain that these seasons mirror the agricultural harvest cycles of ancient Israel to provide a spiritual parallel of God's plan for humanity.

Show that God instructed His people to give Him an offering.

Discuss that giving God an offering is one way of worshipping and honoring Him.

Discuss the attitude in which we are to bring an offering (2 Corinthians 9:7).