



Youth Bible Lesson – Lesson 12

God's Festivals

How do you feel each year when your friends at school observe Christmas and you don't? There are parties, school is let out, and your friends receive gifts. Everyone seems to be having good, harmless fun. But what does God think about observing Christmas and other religious holidays, such as Easter? Are these days He wants us to keep, or are there other days we should know about and observe every year?

Many people know that these holidays began in pagan idolatry long ago, but they feel this connection with the past is harmless since the customs observed today supposedly honor Christ, not pagan gods. But in His Word, the Bible, God condemns copying religious customs from the pagans who worshipped false gods!

Read Deuteronomy 12:29-32 in your Bible, and complete the verses below beginning with verse 30.

“Take heed to thyself that thou be not snared by following them, after that they be destroyed from before thee, and that thou _____

_____ saying, _____

_____?

Thou shalt not do so unto the Lord thy God: for every abomination to the Lord, which he hates, have they done _____; for even their sons and their daughters _____

_____.”

God commands us to keep His law and only His law. He forbids us from changing it in any way, either by taking away anything He said to do, or by adding anything to His commands!

God Himself has set apart certain days for us to observe. And there is real meaning and purpose in keeping His days! The festivals that God has given us in His Word teach us His great master plan for mankind.

All seven of God's festivals are listed for us in the book of Leviticus, chapter 23. Turn there and list these festivals on the following lines. You may want to ask your parents to help you find the names of some of the festivals listed there.

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

It is important to know these festivals, so take the time to memorize them. Test yourself by reciting them to your father or mother.

The Feast of Tabernacles, which comes in the fall, is certainly a very exciting time of the year. But before we take a closer look at the autumn festival season, let's quickly review the three spring festivals.

Each of God's festivals pictures a part of His great plan and purpose for mankind. The first annual festival is the Passover. This festival pictures Jesus Christ's death for us so that our sins can be forgiven.

The second festival pictures our putting sin out of our lives, and keeping the law of God. During the seven Days of Unleavened Bread God reminds us that a tiny amount of sin can spread through one's whole mind just like a tiny amount of leaven will spread through a whole loaf of bread and cause it to rise. So God commands us to put leaven out of our homes and to eat unleavened (flat) bread during these days to help us remember this lesson.

The third spring festival is the Day of Pentecost. It shows us how God is calling only a few people to understand His truth now. The vast majority of mankind will be called to understand later!

That brings us to the last four festivals. They picture breathtakingly exciting events that are yet to happen!

Look at the world around you. What do you see? A safe world? A happy world? A fair world? No! Everywhere you look you can see the results of mankind going its own way – the way of “get.” There is constant crime. People killing, hurting and taking from others. There is starvation, famine and disease throughout much of the world. You hear about these things every day on radio and television or read about them in the newspapers. And these conditions are getting worse, not better!

How will all these problems be solved? Who has the power and authority to stop wars and teach mankind God’s way of peace and cooperation – of helping one another instead of hurting one another?

You already know the answer. Jesus Christ is coming to put an end to all the world’s problems. This is what the Feast of Trumpets is all about! Turn to I Thessalonians 4:16 and fill in the blanks as you read this verse.

“For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and _____, and the dead in Christ shall rise first.”

Think back to when you heard the sound of a trumpet. Perhaps you have heard several trumpets blown together at a concert. Remember how loud and piercing the sound was? When the event that the Feast of Trumpets pictures takes place, the whole earth will be filled with the sound of a loud trumpet!

Look now at Revelation 11:15. Fill in the blanks as you read it. “And the _____ sounded; and there were _____, saying the kingdoms _____ are become _____: and He shall _____.” At the sound of the seventh trumpet, Christ will return as “King of kings and Lord of lords” (Rev. 19:16) to rule all nations on earth.

The great trumpet blast that announces Jesus Christ’s return will also signal the time of the resurrection of those in God’s Church who have died through the ages. They, together with your parents who are in God’s Church as well as other faithful Church members, are the “firstfruits” pictured by the Day of Pentecost. They will be changed to spirit beings when Christ comes and will join Him in ruling the world God’s way.

Turn to I Corinthians 15:52 and fill in the blanks below as you read it. This verse talks about the coming resurrection at Christ’s return.

“In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the _____: for the _____ . And the _____ incorruptible, and we shall be change.”

When Christ comes, Satan’s rulership on this earth (II Cor. 4:4) will finally come to an end. Christ will set up the government and laws of God to rule over the entire earth. This day is coming soon – in your lifetime! But before this event takes place, the world will be at war. Many people will suffer and die. Suffering is the result of living the way of this world, which is Satan’s way of get as opposed to God’s way of give. If you are obedient to your parents and trying your best to do what is right, God will protect you with your parents.

The Feast of Trumpets is a joyful day because it pictures a happy new beginning under God’s government. But before God’s government can make this world a happy, peaceful place, God must first remove Satan’s influence. That brings us to the next festival.

“Oh, why do we have to fast today?” Maybe you have asked your parents this question before on the Day of Atonement. It’s a good question. Why do we go without food and water for 24 hours on the Day of Atonement?

Fasting is a way of humbling ourselves and bringing us closer to God. When we become weak from not eating, we realize how frail and delicate our human lives are. We realize how much we need God – not just to provide the food we eat, but to enable us to overcome Satan and his way of get.

Satan likes to tempt God’s people to sin and then accuse them to God. Notice this in Revelation 12:10 as you fill in the blanks.

“And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of God, and the power of his Christ: for the _____
_____ which _____ day and night.”

Satan has influenced mankind to sin ever since Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden. The Day of Atonement pictures the time when all our sins will be placed back where they belong – on Satan, after they have already been removed from us (forgiven) by God through the sacrifice of Christ. Then Satan can no longer accuses us!

God will place the blame on Satan for being the author of man’s sins and then imprison him so he cannot influence anyone. The world will then be able to draw close to God and be at one with Him!

Notice Revelation 20:1-3 to see how God will put Satan away. Remember to fill in the blanks as you read these verses.

“And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold of the dragon, _____ which is _____, _____, and bound him _____. And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should _____. Till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season.”

After Christ has returned to the earth and Satan has been put away, everything will be ready for the next wonderful step in God’s plan.

Now read Revelation 20:6. What does it say about those who will be in the first resurrection? Rewrite this verse on the lines below using your own words.

Those who understand God’s truth look forward to the Feast of Tabernacles with great anticipation. This feast is a time of great rejoicing. That is because it pictures the time of the Millennium – the 1,000-year period when Christ and resurrected Christians will rule on earth, bring peace, happiness and great joy to all peoples! But this Feast pictures much more.

The Millennium begins another important step in God’s great master plan. After the resurrection of the “firstfruits” at the Second Coming of Jesus Christ, and after God has placed the sins of mankind on the head of Satan and separated him from humanity, then the wonderful government of God will be established and the great spiritual harvest will begin!

In the land of Palestine (Israel today) there are two agricultural harvest seasons – the smaller spring harvest and the larger fall harvest. As we shall learn shortly, God is going to give everyone who has ever lived a chance to be born into His Family and live forever. But until the time pictured by the Feast of Tabernacles, He will have given that chance to only a few people – the “firstfruits” of God’s plan. This small harvest of people into His Family is pictured by the Day of Pentecost which comes in late spring – the time of the smaller spring harvest.

The Feast of Tabernacles, which comes during the great fall harvest season, pictures the Millennium and the beginning of the great harvest of people into God's Family. All the many millions who will have survived the terrible events of the Great Tribulation and world war III will be taught to live God's way. They will be given their opportunity to receive eternal life in God's Family.

Isaiah 11:4-9 tells us what life will be like in the Millennium under the rule of Jesus Christ. There will be honesty and justice in all the earth. There will be no prejudice or unfairness, only righteous judgment. Write Isaiah 11:4 below in your own words.

Even the nature of animals will be changed. They will no longer kill and eat one another, nor will they hurt people. Notice Isaiah 11:6-9: "The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the _____
_____ and a _____
_____. And the _____ and the _____ shall feed: their young ones shall _____ and the lion shall eat _____. And the sucking child shall paly on the hole of the _____, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the _____. They shall not _____ nor _____ in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of _____, as the waters cover the sea."

The knowledge of God and His wonderful way of life will spread around the world through teaching and instruction from Jesus Christ and the now spirit-born kings and priests ruling with Him.

This is where you can have a big part in God's master plan. You can have a part in rebuilding the world and teaching the millions of repentant people God's way of give. As you grow and learn to live God's way as taught by your parents and God's Church, you are preparing to, at first be a human leader in the Millennium, and then become a member of God's Family.

But up to this point in God's plan, still only a small fraction of the total number of human beings who have ever lived have had an opportunity to become a part of the God Family by being born into it as spirit beings. The great majority of humans are still

dead at this time, never having known the truth of God. That brings us to the “Last Great Day” – the final step in God’s master plan for mankind.

The day that immediately follows the Feast of Tabernacles the “eighth day,” is actually a separate feast! In the book of John, it is called “the last day, that great day of the feast” (John 7:37).

God’s seventh festival pictures the resurrection to physical life of all those who ever lived and died without knowing God’s way of life. These many billions of people will be brought into a beautiful and happy world to learn the way of peace under God’s perfect government!

This period of time, which will last 100 years (Isa. 65:20), is also called the Great White Throne Judgment. Read Revelation 20:11-12 and see if you can tell why. All who are brought back to life at this time will be given their chance to live God’s way and receive eternal life in God’s Family. Many of your relatives and friends will be made alive at this time. You will then have the opportunity to help teach them to obey God’s law so they, too, will learn to be happy and enjoy life to the full!

List again below the seven yearly festivals God commands His people to keep. But this time, after each one explain its meaning in just a few words.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____