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Presentation Transcript
FOT7 – Baby Land
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How do you, as a speaker, engage everybody? It's really fun to try to do that. I have a few things going for me, though. God has commanded us to come here and rehearse the meaning of this festival every year. That's because we're weak. We forget stuff. So, we're to present ourselves here before God and to be taught, once again, things that we *think* we already know. However, on the first day, we all admitted that we didn't know everything about the Feast and the plan of God. So, maybe, He might have something for us here today. You can check that out as we go along.

I'm going to start with a family story. This is the seventh day of the Feast. And it's really hard to explain what that means unless you have some context – especially if it is your first time. So we're going to do one of Tom's thirty-thousand-foot fly-bys on the plan up to now, and then we'll get more detailed about this part of it. So I'm going to start with a family story.

Five years ago, my first two grandchildren were born prematurely. They were a bit over two pounds each. It was very tenuous for quite awhile there. They hung in the balance for many days. Elaine rushed to them immediately. And when I finally made it to California to see them, they were home and in a crib sleeping – side by side in the crib. The crib was like this, and they were in it that way. They were so little they could sleep the short way and there was still plenty of room. They were both there, sound asleep. I leaned over the crib that they were in and I studied them. They were so small. They were so frail. All those baby smells just wofted up into my heart. I hadn't smelled those smells for a long time. As I looked at them, I realized how precious they were – and also how *weak* and how *vulnerable* and how much they needed taking care of. And I thought, "Would I be able to tolerate it if they died?" I mean, I just met them and, in a second, I was instantly in love with them.

So that question – if they died, what would happen to them? They hadn't had a chance to get to know Jesus Christ. They hadn't been baptized and committed to him. Yet they had breathed the breath of life. They were human beings. Would they go to hell because they never accepted Christ? If you're a mainstream Christian today, that's the position you have to take! That thought is repugnant to me! I do *not* worship a God like that. My God

is *fair!* And He is *loving!* And if He is fair, then there has to be a way for us to understand *how* He's fair. And that is the story of the holy days – how God is fair.

Let's go to the first holy day – the Passover. I'm going to leave a lot out here. I'm just flying by, right? We're just going to touch the parts that pertain to the seventh day. There once was a literal Kingdom of God on the earth. Do you know when that was? Yeah, it was in the Garden of Eden. It has not always been like it is now. But we surrendered it to the devil before it even got going very well. And the rest of the Bible – from Genesis 3 is an amazing story of how God is going to take it back. That's what the Bible is about. It's a big, long story about what God has been doing to take it back.

Let's go to Acts 3, and verse 18. This is how God fulfilled what He had foretold through all the prophets, saying that His Christ would suffer.

Acts 3:18 – *Repent, then, and turn to God so that your sins may be wiped out and that times of refreshing may come from the Lord.* Do we need refreshing today? We do! We need a refreshed economy. We need a refreshed government – as in “clean sweep.” We need a lot of things refreshed. ...*and that He may send the Christ, who has been appointed for you – even Jesus. But He must remain in heaven until the time comes for God to restore everything.* And then He is going to come back. That's the message as He promised long ago through His holy prophets.

So that kingdom – that was there for a short time and then lost – is going to be restored to this earth once again. And the first step in that restoration was the direct intervention of Jesus Christ to give His life for our sins and the sins of all mankind. We lost the kingdom because we broke the laws. And Jesus came to cover our violations, pay the penalty and heal the breach between us and God. So that first step is pictured in the Passover.

Now I want you to go with me to a curious place in the Bible – 1 Corinthians 11:23 – where Paul says:

1 Cor. 11:23 – *For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you. The Lord Jesus, on the night He was betrayed, took bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, “This is My body, which is for you. Do this in remembrance of Me.” In the same way after supper, He took the cup saying, “This cup is the new covenant in My blood. Do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of Me. For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes.”*

That happened on the eve of Passover. Now we could have looked into the Gospels to read these words that Paul was quoting, but I wanted to show you that Paul was teaching a *Gentile* church – twenty some years after Christ died – how to keep the Passover. Very important.

The next festival that comes the very next day after Passover is Unleavened Bread. We believe that if you read 1 Corinthians 5:8 you'll see that Paul is explaining that the unleavened bread means something differently than it meant to the ancient Israelites. He's talking about leaven as sin.

I was always taught – when I first started in church – that the leavening was picturing the putting out of sin. But, by the time we get to the festival, it is supposed to be already put out, isn't it? So it's actually a picture of living in a sin-free state. And that's an impossibility for us – is it not? So how does that happen? Well, it happens because of what Jesus did on the Passover, doesn't it? We're living in a state of grace. He loves us so much that He died for us, and we love Him so much that we strive to live as He lived and copy His life in our own, and any short-fall is covered by the grace of Jesus Christ.

Grace is one of the most profoundly spiritual and profoundly New Testament teachings, and yet, there it is in the festival of Unleavened Bread.

Pentecost. If you read the first couple of chapters of Acts, you'll see that the New Testament Church was founded on a holy day – on Pentecost. If that was nailed to the cross, why in the world would God do that? I mean, people that give us a hard time about this need to answer those questions. And the answer is that Pentecost has a New Testament application. It has to do with the coming of the Holy Spirit.

When I was a little boy, I used to attend an Episcopal church. And they made a stab at keeping Pentecost, because they knew that. They knew that that was the day the church was founded on.

The next one is Trumpets – the only holy day that starts on the first day of the month. Israel's month always started with the new moon. Each month was marked by a ceremony in which a trumpet was blown. Trumpets comes on the seventh month, so it was the seventh trumpet. It's right there! Like I said, "It's right there under our noses!" The symbolism is pretty hard to miss if you're looking for it. How much plainer does God have to make it?

We're starting to get closer now to the seventh day of the Feast, so I'm going to kind of go in a little bit more here. Let's go to Revelation 11:15. It says:

Rev. 11:15 - *The seventh angel sounded his trumpet and there were loud voices in heaven, which said, "The kingdom of the world is become the kingdom of our Lord and Christ, and He will reign forever and ever." And the twenty-four elders who were seated on that throne before God fell on their faces and worshipped God, saying, "We give thanks to you, Lord God Almighty – the One who is, and who was – because you have taken your great power and have begun to reign."* So there's the connection.

Now, at this point in the story, He hasn't actually *taken* control yet, but the message is that when that trumpet sounds, His return is imminent, and it is going to begin at that point, and there isn't anything anybody can do to stop it. It's as good as done!

So right after that sounding of the trumpet, there is an announcement that just essentially says, "You're mine. I'm coming." And that announcement begins the event that prophets, the patriarchs, the people of God have prayed for and cried for for six thousand years – the restoration of the Kingdom of God.

You know, it's so hard for some people to believe that there ever was a kingdom here and that it is going to be reestablished by Christ coming literally – personally – to take it. They think all these symbols that are in the book of Revelation – like the one with Christ on a white horse – that's a metaphor for Christ's work in the church to change the world into the Kingdom of God. That's how a lot of them think about it. Give people two thousand years to sit around in theological seminaries and just go hog wild, and that's the kind of stuff they come up with. If you really look at that, it seems pretty clear to me that the image of Christ on a white horse *is* a symbol, but it's a symbol of His return to take back what is His – and to take it by force.

Even John – the one who wrote down the vision – ended his writing with a prayer for that kingdom to come. His prayer was not, “Let this vision serve as a metaphor for the church's work to change the world.” His prayer was, “Come Lord Jesus!” That's pretty clear, isn't it?

There's something else associated with the Feast of Trumpets, too. It's in 1 Corinthians 15:51. Paul says:

1 Cor. 15:51 – *Listen, I tell you a mystery. We will not all sleep – that is, die – but some of us will be changed – in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye – when? – at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable.... So you have people who lived as human beings, died, resurrected imperishable – spirit, immortal. ...and we will be changed, where the perishable must clothe itself with imperishable, and mortal with immortality. And when the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true – “Death has been swallowed up in victory.” So, the resurrection of the church – all who have died in relationship with Christ....*

Let's go back to Revelation again – to Revelation 19:6. As we start boring in on the meaning of this seventh day of the Feast of Tabernacles, let's get more details.

Rev. 19:6 – *When I heard what sounded like a great multitude, like the roar of rushing waters, and like loud peels of thunder, shouting, “Hallelujah!” We know what that word means now, don't we? Right! Praise God! “For our Lord God Almighty reigns! Let us rejoice, and be glad and give Him glory, for the wedding of the Lamb has come, and His bride has made herself ready.” The bride of Christ is the church – the saints. Right? So we have another scripture telling us who the people are that Paul was talking about, and it's connected to Christ's return in Revelation. *Fine linen was given her to wear* – in verse 8 – fine linen stands for the righteous acts of the saints – *and then the angel said to me, “Write, ‘Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb.’” And he said, “These are the true words of God.”**

Then in verse 11, it says:

V-11 – *I saw heaven standing open, and there before me was a white horse, whose rider is faithful and true. With justice He judges and makes war. His eyes are like blazing fire and on His head are many crowns. He has a name written on Him that no one knows but*

He Himself. He is dressed in a robe dipped in blood and His name is The Word of God. The armies of heaven were following Him, riding on white horses, dressed in fine linen – white and clean.

So it looks to me like the first task those saints get to do: issued a white charger and to help Christ subdue the earth. That white charger – that is a symbol, isn't it? That's symbolic. So all the people who were Christians, and who were dead when Christ returns, were resurrected immortal, invited to the marriage of the Lamb – which is symbolic, I think, for that close relationship with Him – and then their first duty is to ride with Him as He subdues the earth. And that great battle, called the Battle of Armageddon in the Bible – we can read more about that if we wish – but after that, something else happens.

In the ninth chapter of Hebrews – I'm not going to turn there, but you may, if you want to – it's interesting that we find the apostle Paul – in the ninth chapter of Hebrews – teaching us the New Testament meaning of the Day of Atonement. It's right there. It's right there under our noses. I'm not going to take time for that, but we do have a LifeResource presentation ready for publication, if you want to know more about that.

When we read what Paul says, it reminds us a lot of Passover. It's about the sacrificing of a lamb to cover the sins of the people so they can be at one with God. So why would there be a repeat? Well, my own personal take on this is that after the Kingdom of God is established, Christ's sacrifice is going to be accepted not just by the church, but by *everyone* who is alive at that time. And that picture of Atonement is when *everybody* – when the Kingdom has been re-established on the earth – and everyone will be at one with God. And that also is going to happen through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. It's going to be so pervasive that we're told that we won't have to evangelize anymore and say, "Know the Lord," for everybody will know Him – from the least to the greatest. So that's what the Day of Atonement is about. No more war. No more corporate bailout. No more corrupt government. Peace in our time. Of course, since we're going to be immortal at that time, that's a long time, isn't it? And everybody will know Him – from the least to the greatest.

So there's going to be a picture of that occurring – we studied that on the first day of the Feast – the whole Festival of Tabernacles is about that thousand-year reign of Jesus Christ on the earth.

Well then what? What happens after that? Well, let's go to Revelation 20, and verse 4.

Rev. 20:4 – *I saw a throne, on which were seated those who have been given authority to judge. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony for Jesus and because of the Word of God. They had not worshipped the beast, nor his image, and had not received his mark in their foreheads, nor on their hands. And they came to life and reigned with Christ a thousand years.* So there's the resurrection that Paul talked about in Revelation and it's happening at exactly the same time that Paul said it would – when Christ returns. So that's the picture of the church. Then, from then on, for a thousand years, this festival pictures that great time when God is going to reign on the earth. He tells us to save money, and to come here, and to have a good time, and have

plenty, and not worry about what's happening back home. And in that, we're picturing what that time is going to be like. God's really big on pictures, isn't He? Did you know a baby thinks in pictures before it thinks in words? He is communicating with us at our fundamental level of understanding and communication when He does that.

Then it says, in parenthesis, in verse 5:

V-5 – *The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were ended.* Oh! So God has in mind something to do with all the people who lived and died and didn't have a relationship with Him – never got to be saved. *The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were ended.* Now, end of the thousand years – pictured by the Feast of Tabernacles – would be the end of the Feast of Tabernacles, wouldn't it? *This is the first resurrection.* So you have to understand, the *rest of the dead* – that's a parenthetical statement – and *this is the first resurrection* goes back and clarifies what happens in verse 4.

So you mean there's more than one resurrection? Some people are resurrected, and then the rest of the dead don't come to life until the thousand years are ended. That means there is going to be another one later. I mean, it's right there.

So verse 6:

V-6 – *Blessed and holy are those who have part in the first resurrection. The second death has no power over them* – because they're immortal – *but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with Him for a thousand years.* So that would be all those who lived from Adam who had worshipped God and then one thousand years of human kind under that loving, wise rule of God.

Verse 7:

V-7 – *When the thousand years are over, Satan will be released from his prison and will go out to deceive the nations in the four corners of the earth – Gog and Magog – to gather them for battle. In number they are like the sand on the seashore. They march across the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of God's people – the city He loves – but fire comes down from heaven and devours them.* Major rebellion at the end of the thousand years. No problem. God is God. He takes things – things that are impossible for us and things that we can hardly stand to think about – and to Him, it's no problem.

So what do we make of this? Well, clearly, some people will not accept Jesus Christ in the end. God says that it's His will that everybody would be saved and none should perish, but apparently, some few aren't going to make it. The thing I learn from this is, as long as there are humans, there will be problems. It's just how we are. We have that dual functionality that God built into us to keep us alive – that want to breathe really bad, and want to eat, and want all the things we have to do to live – that desire for self-preservation. Turned a little bit the wrong way, that becomes carnality. And that's just built into us. Satan turned that the wrong way and we can become self-centered in other things besides needing air and all of that.

V-11 – *Then I saw a great white throne and Him who was seated on it. The earth and the sky fled from His presence and there was no more place for them. And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and the books were opened. Now, when the dead stand before God – that second one he was talking about, right? – that happens at the end. The rest of the dead do not come to life until the thousand years were ended. So, right at the end of the thousand years.... We have seven days here, and then after Trumpets, after Atonement comes the Feast – a week-long festival. We follow a timeline that fits right in with a thousand years when Christ rules. And at the end, then, there’s another resurrection. And who would that be? Well, we’ve already been told, haven’t we? It’s everybody else – everybody that wasn’t resurrected in the first one. So that’s the larger resurrection – all the people who lived and died from Adam to the present moment who have not accepted Jesus Christ for whatever reason – who never had a chance. It says, *Another book was opened, which was the book of life, and the dead were judged according to what they had done, as recorded in the books.**

So how can somebody be judged, according to the book of life, if they didn’t even know about it? Suppose my two grandchildren there – at two pounds – died and they were resurrected to life and judged out of a Bible they couldn’t even read yet. Not fair. So, I’m thinking – and I think all of us have thought for a long time – that there is a least some period of judgment – just like with us. We have a human lifetime to prove to God that we’re going to be “with the program.” So I’m thinking that that’s going to go on there – not a problem for God. God’s fair.

So, it’s obvious with each of these judgments that it’s going to take some time. So people will come up to life, grow up, learn to love God. God’s got all the time in the world. It’s not a problem. We are talking God here, right?

Let’s think about what is going to happen in that resurrection. It kind of reminds me of the movie, *Field of Dreams*. Have you ever seen that movie? People are going to be pretty disoriented when they come up, I think. They’re not going to know what’s happening to them. I watched that movie, *Field of Dreams*, and there’s this guy, who is a farmer in Iowa, and hears a voice, “If you build it, they will come.” So he finally figures out that he is supposed to build a baseball field. So he plows down some of his prime corn acreage and builds this beautiful baseball diamond. And after awhile, some dead baseball players come to play there. It’s kind of a mystical kind of movie. And after awhile, one of the baseball players asks the guy, “Is this heaven?” He says, “No, it’s Iowa.” We may be having to answer some questions like that at some time in the future.

So we already know the sermon that Jesus is going to preach to those people, I believe. It’s recorded in the Bible. It looks to me like it is the perfect re-entry speech that He’s already put on the books. Let’s read that. It’s in John 7 and verse 37.

Jn. 7:37 – *On the last and greatest day of the feast, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, “If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink. Whoever believes in Me, as the scripture has said, ‘streams of living water will flow from within him.’ (And by this, He*

meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in Him were later to receive. Up to that time, the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified.)

So on that great day – the day of the resurrection for all – they’re going to come up out of the ground – somewhat befuddled – not having known God, not believing in a resurrection from the dead. There’s a prophecy in the book of Ezekiel. We’ve heard it mentioned in the song in the days of Elijah. The entire house of Israel is to be resurrected. You can read about it in Ezekiel. We sang that song. There’s also another song about it – that we *didn’t* sing here this year – *the knee bone connected to the thigh bone...dem bones, dem dones, dem dry bones*. Right? So I’m thinking they’re going to be pretty thirsty when they come up. Right? Not fully hydrated yet – and if not naturally so, I’m sure that can be arranged.

Jesus spoke on the day of the feast that they had a water ceremony. So it was really hot in Jerusalem at the time of the Feast. And there were these guys going around selling water and they had a water ceremony. They are going to hear Jesus give that sermon. “Is anybody thirsty?” And the answer to that is going to be, “Yes!” “Well, let him come to Me and drink, because I have something for you.” And that’s going to be the *beginning* of their life-saving relationship with their Lord and King, Jesus Christ. See, it is. That’s what it’s all about. It’s all about the relationship. It’s all about gathering everybody in.

Which day was that? All my life in the church, since I’ve been eighteen, I believed that He gave that sermon on the eighth day. But some things have come to light that caused me to think that I’ve been wrong. The water ceremony was on the last day of the Feast of Tabernacles – this day – not the eighth day. And His sermon fit right in to what was going on on the seventh day of the Feast.

There’s something else that we want to look at, too, in John 7:53 – the last verse of that...where He gave that sermon. It says that after that festival day was over, each went to his own home. Then it says in verse 2 of chapter 8:

Jn. 8:2 – *At dawn He appeared in the temple courts where all the people gathered around Him and He sat down to teach.* So if that was the last day of the Feast, nobody went home after it. Now what are you going to do after the eighth day? You’re going home. So am I. We won’t be here. But those people were all there in the temple courts the day after He gave that sermon. So it looks to me like there could possibly be one more day to go.

The other thing that I think about is that in Revelation, after we get to that point, there are still two more chapters. And what are you going to do with that? Not talk about it at the Feast? That’s when New Jerusalem comes down out of heaven. So why would He leave that out of the holy day plan? Well, maybe He didn’t. And by the way, I think there are probably people here that don’t think about this the same way I do, and I hope we can still be friends. Because when Christ returns, if He says, “No, you were wrong.” I’ll say, “Okay, and you can be right.” Why should we fight about stuff that all we need to do is wait? But we also have an obligation to apply our brains and try to understand things as

best we can so that they make sense. So that's how I see this day – as the day when the great resurrection is going to take place.

There's something else that we need to talk about, though. It's in Matthew 22:23.

Mt. 22:23 – *The same day the Sadducees – who say there is no resurrection – came to Him – that's Jesus – with a question. They said, "Teacher, Moses told us...." Now the Sadducees did not believe in a resurrection, right? So this is hypothetical. "...Moses told us that if a man dies without having children, his brother shall marry the widow and have children for him. Right? Yeah. Okay. So there were seven brothers among us. The first one married and died and since he had no children, he left his wife to his brother. The same thing happened to the second, the third, right on down to the seventh. Finally, the woman died. Now then, in the resurrection, whose wife will she be of the seven, since all of them were married to her?" So you see what they're trying to do? They're trying to create a situation that sounds so stupid that there couldn't be a resurrection. That's what is in their mind. They're trying to show Jesus how dumb the idea of a resurrection is. And Jesus said, "You are in error because you do not know the scriptures or the power of God." So He, in just one short sentence, just totally blows away their hypothetical. And He does it by saying, "in the kingdom, there aren't going to be any marriages," and God is so powerful He can cause a resurrection to take place.*

Then in verse 33:

V-33 – *When the crowds heard this, they were astonished at His teaching.*

"You don't know the scriptures or the power of God." They didn't believe in a resurrection. They made up a hypothetical. And they wound up the ones looking stupid, because they didn't know the scriptures and have faith to believe that God can do anything He wants. And the same thing is going to happen at the return of Christ, when the Kingdom of God is established here on this earth.

All through time – even in the church – humans have had a hard time with the plan of God – believing it. How is He going to convert all those Buddhists? And how is He going to convert all those Hindus? And worst of all, how is He going to convert all those Muslims? With God, no problem. He can do anything. Not only can He do all these things, He can do anything in *our* lives as well. He can bring people to church that have been flat sick for six days. He can heal us. He can change our minds and heal our minds of hurts from the past, which seems mainly like what we've been talking about here this Feast.

He is drawing all of us into an eternal relationship with Him, And even more astounding than that, He is going to draw all of us into an eternal relationship with each other – all us Christians, all us Buddhists, all us Muslims. We're *all* going to be God's children. And if we have faith in His power, we can observe these days and know more about how He's going to do that.

I mentioned it a little earlier that the thought of the theological institution says that it's all just a metaphor for the church's work in the world, and that that's how the Kingdom of God is going to be established. In fact, maybe you didn't know it, but it's already here in people's hearts. Well, the beginning of it is, but let's just talk about some things here for a minute.

Do you know that the United States – the richest nation on the face of the earth – has the highest incident of infant death in the world? Millions of girls, who are nowhere near old enough to be married and have a baby, are getting pregnant and having babies – many of them so premature that the babies don't survive. The city in the United States that has the highest incident of infant death is Memphis, Tennessee. In that city there is a cemetery where the city buries those too poor to afford a family funeral. They used to call it Potters' Field, but now they call it Babyland. They dig a regular-size grave and they place five or six little boxes side-by-side in the hole. Then they cover them over. And each one of those boxes contains the body of a precious human infant – an infant that breathes into its lungs the first breath of life, just as did Adam and then all of us. And then they cover them over and they drive a metal stake in the ground over each little box. That stake has a ring in it and they tie a tag on that box with the name of the child. There are so many of them each year no one can absorb the number. It's in the millions. And that's been happening for a very long time in this country.

How much longer is that going to go on. None of those innocents ever had a chance to know Jesus Christ. Are they going to go to hell? What can the church do about that? Nothing has been done so far. We've watched it. We know about it.

Elaine goes once a week to a women's hospital in Albuquerque and she cuddles babies. And most of these babies are babies that don't have anybody coming to see them. Most of them are premature. One week she told me she held a crack baby. Here was this innocent little baby in torment, going through drug withdrawal! And it's quite likely that that infant has suffered irreparable damage to its little nervous system, and all its life it's not going to be right. What's the church going to do about that?

There's an idea commonly accepted – I deal with this everyday among my colleagues – the idea that humankind is getting more civilized and things are getting better. We read in the history books about the brutality of the past kingdoms – the Assyrians, the Persians, the Romans – but now people don't treat each other that way anymore. We know better. We're getting better. Before World War II Germany had the best universities, the best scientists, the highest ratio of educated people in the world at every level. They had music, art, literature that rivaled the best in the world. I'm not going to give them the best – I'm just going to say *rivaled* the best. With all of that, look what happened. The most murderous, brutal regime in all history was supported by the most educated population on earth.

Speaking about us, from the very beginning, God says, "*The way of peace they know not.*" And that's the way it is.

So the good thing is, that all of these good things that are going to happen, isn't going to be any of our doing. We can't do it. It's going to be done by divine, direct intervention. And you and I can have a part in that intervention and in that restorative work. And this festival pictures that time. We get to use *this* life to prepare for the next – for our job in the next.

Let's think about that for a minute. After all that – after Christ returns, after the resurrection of the saints, after a thousand years of Christ's rule on the earth, after the resurrection of everybody else and a time of judgment for them, so they can join the family of God – what's going to happen after that? Well, as it happens, this is the seventh day, and we're here at an eight day festival. We have one more sermon and we have two more chapters in the Bible. So tomorrow we're going to talk about that.