



P.O. Box 66540
Albuquerque, NM 87193
505.890.6806
E-mail: irm@liferesource.org
Website: www.liferesource.org

Presentation Transcript
Trumpets – God’s Action Step
September 8, 2011

We’re here together today to observe a biblical festival – the Feast of Trumpets. Many people think of this day as a Jewish festival. And it is, but it’s also much more than that. In the New Testament we can see the church observing all seven of the biblical festivals. And, perhaps, the most difficult to prove is this one. I say that because the New Testament shows Jesus and/or the New Testament church worshipping on all these festivals by name, except for this one. So, probably, the greatest proof that Trumpets was kept by the New Testament church, and is a Christian holy day, is the fact that all the rest of the festivals were kept by Peter, Paul, John, along with Jesus Christ. But there’s more.

Every first day of every month, in ancient Israel, was a celebration that marked time and a trumpet was blown on that day. It’s called the New Moon. This festival was observed on the first day of the seventh month. Since a trumpet was blown every month, the trumpet associated with this festival was the seventh trumpet. Can you think of anything in the New Testament associated with the symbol of the seventh trumpet? Well, yes. The most outstanding, most clearly delineated, most well-known symbol in all the Bible is the seventh trumpet of Revelation, which signals the imminent return of Jesus Christ to this earth. A lot of people want to ignore that. They’re willing to look at all kinds of other biblical symbols, but that one...they’re not willing to look at. I am. And I think many people who are listening today are also willing.

So that’s why we’re here. We’re here observing the Day that pictures Christ’s return to the earth. God tells us to do this so that we won’t forget what’s going to happen. I want to talk about this day in a slightly different way than I have in the past. I was reading something a friend wrote recently. She pointed out, in a paper that she wrote, that, over the years, most of the preaching in her church had consisted of expounding, pontificating and opining. And she asked, “When are the ministers going to start showing us how to overcome our problems, get closer to God and be happier people? Where,” she asked, “is that all important action step?” You know, opinions are good, but we need to know what to do. That’s the point she was making.

If you read what the Bible tells preachers to do, it says that they’re speaking must include things that we can do to become better people, closer to God and overcome our problems. Ephesians 4 tells us that ministers are to equip the members for acts of service. If you

think about the prophets of old, they pointed out sins, but then they told everybody what to do about it – sometimes, in so much detail, they got in trouble. In the New Testament, Peter preached a powerful sermon on the first New Testament Pentecost, convicting the audience of their sins – you know, that’s the preaching – and then he said, “Repent, that your sins may be washed away.” So he was telling them what to do about the sins that they had committed. It’s pretty plain.

So we read in the Bible, from the first page to the last, of a plan that God is working out here on earth. He is a very ambitious *doer*. Jesus said, “I work and My Father works.” When we look at all that God has created and done – right? – that might be one of the greatest understatements of all time. God is a *worker*.

I went to a conference about resiliency in children – how to foster the ability to bounce back from difficulties. Kids have a lot of difficulties to face today. And one of the biggest things that they’ve found out – examining resilient kids – is that they are children who believe they can change outcomes for themselves. They’re proactive. They’re willing to take action steps – to use the terminology I used today.

So, if you were thinking about an action step that God is going to take, what would you think of? The one I think of immediately is what God is going to do on *this* day in the future. So that’s what I’m calling it. I’m calling it God’s Action Step – the Return of Jesus Christ to this Earth. Now, why would I say that? Well, bear with me while we read through the scriptures today. And while we’re doing that – we’re going to be studying God’s action step – I want you to see if you can think of an action step or two that God wants *us* to take as well. So that would be the action step of this presentation. If we can detect what He wants *us* to do, then that’s what we should do in preparation.

So let’s go to Genesis 3:14, and start at the beginning, and read the verse where it says:

Genesis 3:14 – *So the LORD said to the serpent, “Because you have done this” – and He’s talking about what he did with Eve – “cursed are you above all the livestock and all the wild animals. You will crawl on your belly and you will eat dust all the days of your life. And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers. He will crush your head and you will strike His heel.*

Here God is starting to talk about what He’s going to *do*, eventually, from the very beginning. And it’s a very veiled reference. It’s kind of like the germ of what is going to grow from that, but Satan did strike Christ’s heel and God is going to crush his head. So He’s foretelling that Christ will come, and that the devil is going to make an attempt to ruin the plan, but God’s not going to allow that.

Then, let’s go to Acts 3, verse 22.

Acts 3:22 – *Moses said, “The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me, from among your own people. You must listen to everything He tells you. And anyone who does not listen to Him will be completely cut off from among his people.”*

And then in verse 24, listen to this:

V-24 – *Indeed, all the prophets from Samuel on, as many as have spoken – does that leave any prophet out? No, it does not – have foretold these days.*

So that's pretty clear – that from Genesis 3 until the time of this writing, which was in the first century, all the prophets of God have spoken about Christ's return. Now, the disciples, in that same time, were looking, weren't they? Every time Israel went into captivity or occupation, the people were always looking for the promised Savior, because they knew there was one promised.

So in John 1, and verse 40, Andrew – Simon Peter's brother – was one of the two who heard what John had said and who had followed Jesus. The first thing Andrew did was to find his brother Simon and tell him, "We've found the Messiah – that is, the Christ – and he brought him to Jesus." So he knew that Jesus was prophesied, and he was following the current "group think" – that He was coming to save them from the Romans.

We, sometimes, fault the disciples for not picking up on the fact that they were with the Son of God for three-and-a-half years, and that they couldn't understand that He'd been resurrected, but they did learn some important things. Let's kind of view in on some of the things they were learning in Matthew 24.

Matthew 24:1 – *Jesus left the temple – it says – this was not long before He died – and was walking away when His disciples came up to Him to call His attention to its buildings. "Do you not see all these things?" He asked. "I tell you the truth. Not one stone here will be left on another. Every one will be thrown down." As Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, and they said, "Tell us, when will this happen and what will be the sign of Your coming and of the end of the age?"*

So they knew that He was going to come back at that time, didn't they – that He was going to leave and then come back, and that when He came back, it would be the end of the age. So they also knew, then, that He wasn't going to save them from the Romans right then, and that He would come to usher in a new age – and that means that He would have to conquer all who resisted – and that the Kingdom of God would be on earth. So that's a big change in understanding from when Andrew told Peter that he'd found the Christ three-and-a-half earlier. That's a total change from the way they were thinking. So now, instead of looking for an immediate savior from the Romans, they understood about the return of Christ.

Let's go back to that scripture in Acts 3:19, that I referenced earlier, where Peter said:

Acts 3:19 – *Repent then and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that the times of refreshing may come from the Lord, and that He may send the Christ, who has been appointed for you, even Jesus. So there's evidence that Peter, also, had a growth in understanding. He must remain in heaven – verse 21 – until the time comes for God to restore everything, as He promised long ago through His holy prophets. So he knew, at that time, that Jesus' coming was for a future time – a second coming.*

Okay, that's kind of from a human perspective – from the perspective of the disciples. The people of God have always wanted Christ to come back, but they are in the minority, aren't they? Everybody else wants to just keep on doing what they're doing and not be bothered. Let's look at God's perspective. In Matthew 23:37, Jesus made this statement. He said:

Matthew 23:37 – *O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing. Look, your house has left you desolate. For I tell you, "You will not see Me again until you say, 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.'"*

So, from God's perspective, since the Garden of Eden, He has been longing to restore relationship with humankind, and we have been resistant. And all the while we've been resisting – as the humankind that we are – we have done unspeakable things to each other – the suffering, the agony, the pain – unimaginable and unnecessary. And yet, God has a plan. He has a plan and He is patiently, carefully, step-by-step, brick-by-brick laying His plan in place. And all the while, many of us have been asking, "When? When is that going to happen?" We've been begging God to send Jesus back to stop the mayhem and the misery. Some of us have grown bitter, because bad things have happened to us along the way. Some of us have grown tired of waiting. Some of us have broken faith, because He hasn't come back when we thought He should. Some are discouraged. And some have fallen asleep at the switch. God sees it all. He knows it's all happening. He agonizes at the misery and He keeps working His plan, just like He said He was going to do.

But He's not going to wait forever. There is going to come a time when He's going to take that action step, when He sends Christ back. And when He does, most people are not going to like it.

There was a guest speaker at the Lexington Winter Weekend this past year. He was a Jewish man who survived a death camp in Poland, I think it was. He mentioned in his talk that the Germans killed 2,000,000 children in the camps. Out of the 6,000,000 they killed, a third of them were children. And he said something at the end of his talk that really helped me understand what that means. I can't imagine 2,000,000 children. He said, "The Nazis did not kill 2,000,000 children once. They killed a child 2,000,000 times." That kind of brought it home to me. He understands the term 2,000,000. Anybody that can make the universe...2,000,000 is not out of reach for Him. He hasn't forgotten that.

I want you to read with me in Romans 1:18....

Romans 1:18 – *The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men, who suppress the truth by their wickedness, since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. For since the creation of the world, God's invisible qualities – His eternal power and divine nature – have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made – it's out there to look at – so that men are without excuse, for although they knew God, they*

neither glorified Him as God, nor gave thanks to Him. But their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like mortal man, and birds, and animals, and reptiles.

V-28 - Furthermore – I’m skipping down now to verse 28 – *since they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, He gave them over to a depraved mind, to do what ought not to be done. And they became filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed and depravity. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit and malice. They are gossips, slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant and boastful. They invent ways of doing evil and they disobey their parents. They are senseless, faithless, heartless, ruthless. Although they know God’s righteous decree, that those who do such things deserve death, they not only continue to do these very things, but also approve of those who practice them.*

So there is a picture of what *God* thinks about what is going on in the world today. Now let’s look at another scripture about the return of Christ that is very important – very important. In Revelation 15:16, there is a warning. It says:

Revelation 15:16 – *Behold I come like a thief. Blessed is he who stays awake and keeps his clothes with him, so that he may not go naked and be shamefully exposed.*

How does a thief come? I had a client who ran a home-based business and he had a lot of very expensive computer equipment in his home. And one night, while he and his family were sound asleep upstairs, a thief broke into their home and stole *all* of his electronics. After a good night’s sleep, they woke up in the morning, and went downstairs, and were traumatized to realize that a thief had violated the boundaries of their safe home. He told me, “If I’d only known, I would have been ready for him.” But he didn’t know, because that’s what thieves do. They break in when we don’t know. And because we don’t know when they’re coming, they catch us off guard. That’s the way it’s going to be when Christ returns.

So we’ve been warned from the beginning – from Genesis 3 – over and over by every prophet to every human generation – from the Garden of Eden until this very moment – and Jesus said, “But you would not.” What’s it going to be like? Let’s go to Matthew 24, when the thief comes. Jesus is talking to His disciples after they asked Him that question, “When is all this going to happen and what’s it going to be like?” He said:

Matthew 24:15 – *So when you see, standing in the holy place, the abomination that causes desolation, spoken of by Daniel, the prophet, (let the reader understand) – and we kind of have a picture of what that is, because we know about Antiochus Epiphanes sacrificing a pig on the altar of God – some kind of religious desecration – then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, and let no one on the roof of his house – you know, they used to have their patios up on top of their house – go down to take anything out of it, let no one in the field go back to get his cloak. It’s going to happen that fast in some places. If you’re in Jerusalem, that’s how it’s going to happen. It’s going to happen so fast that you better just get down and walk away, or you’re going to miss out. How*

dreadful it will be in those days for pregnant women and nursing mothers! Pray that your flight will not take place in winter or on the Sabbath. For then there will be great distress, unequalled from the beginning of the world until now, and never to be equaled again. Never to be equaled again. If those days should not be cut short, no one would survive, but for the sake of the elect, those days will be shortened.

There are many things that have to happen that lead up to the return of Christ. But once those things start into motion, even though that is going to take some time, it will be too late for some people in some places. Some people, I think, it's because there is going to be no time – like in this situation – but for other people, I think, it's like... what do they call it – a whirlpool in a river? Where the leaf gets caught out on the outer part of it, and it rotates around a few times? It's already trapped, but it's still going slow. But then, as it goes in toward the middle, it goes faster and faster, until it just goes down. So there will be some people, I think, that are going to get trapped in the cycle of it. It's going to take some time, but for a lot of folks in the wrong place, it's going to be too late.

Now reading all these scriptures about how God feels about us, and about how He's been warning us from the very beginning, and how even many of us, who are Christians, have grown weary and are fallen asleep, or have grown discouraged, or have grown bitter, God is still very patient. And a lot of times, people have confused His patience with inaction, or maybe, even weakness. But there will come a time when He will have had enough. And when that time comes, it's all going to get straightened out very quickly.

Let's start reading some of the scriptures about that. Let's begin in Revelation 11, and verse 15.

Revelation 11:15 – *The seventh angel sounded his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, which said, "The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdom of our Lord, and of His Christ, and He will reign forever and ever."*

Now, this is a strange thing, because, at this point, the only thing that has happened is the sounding of the angel. The seventh trumpet has sounded and nothing has really happened yet, except for the voices saying, "The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdom of our God." So what does that mean? Well, it means that, even though it hasn't happened yet, nothing is going to stop it. It's as good as done. Once the angel sounds, it is way too late for repenting, or turning over a new leaf, or saying, "I'm sorry," or begging God for mercy. And He says that the nations will be like chaff, or like dry stalks in the field after a harvest.

We're not agrarian, so the statement is lost on us. So I thought of a real-life story, to help us understand what that's like. It has to do with my friend, Bob, and how one day he walked out of his house – he lives in what we call the *bosque* here in Albuquerque, which is the land on either side of the Rio Grande River, which has huge cottonwood trees.... He has several of those in his yard. And he walked out, not long after he moved into his home there, and he said his entire yard was covered with this white cotton out of the cottonwood trees. So he thought he'd get rid of it quickly by lighting it on fire. And it went *whooffff* through the neighborhood. He said that twenty years later, his neighbors

still get nervous when he walks outside in the morning. That's what it's going to be like. God is going to go through the world like a lawnmower through dry grass, like fire through the dry stalks in a field after harvest.

V-16 – *The twenty-four elders, who were seated on their thrones before God, fell on their faces and worshipped God saying, “We give you thanks, Lord God Almighty, the One who is, and who was, because You have taken Your great power and have begun to reign.”*

Well, He's taken His great power and He's beginning to *do* something. He's *about* to do something. And that something is what God's people have been waiting and praying for six thousand years.

V-18 – *“The nations were angry and Your wrath is come. The time for judging the dead and for rewarding Your servants, the prophets, and Your saints, and those who reverence Your name, both small and great, and for destroying those who destroy the earth.”*

Let's just look at another little snippet of the action. There's too much of this to read all at one time, so I'm selectively picking parts – you might pick different ones, but these are the ones that come to my mind. It says, in Revelation 16:4:

Revelation 16:4 – *The third angel poured out his bowl on the rivers and springs of water, and they become blood. And then I heard the angel in charge of the waters say, “You are just in these judgments, You who are and were the Holy One, because You have so judged.”*

And then we go down to verse 8:

V-8 – *The fourth angel poured out his bowl on the sun. And the sun was given power to scorch people by fire. They were seared by the intense heat and they cursed the name of God, who had control over these plagues, but they refused to repent and glorify Him. And then the fifth angel poured out his bowl on the throne of the beast, and his kingdom was plunged into darkness, and men gnawed their tongues in agony and cursed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, but they refused to repent of what they had done. So humanity is stubborn and God is pouring out the punishment, but they keep begging for more.*

Verse 15 of Revelation 16, skipping down:

V-15 – *He says, “Behold, I come like a thief. Blessed is he who stays awake” – we read this before, didn't we? – “so that he may not go naked and be shamefully exposed.” And then they gathered the kings together into the place that, in Hebrew, is called Armageddon. And the seventh angel poured out his bowl into air, and out of the temple came a loud voice from the throne, saying, “It is done!” And then there were flashes of lightning, rumblings, peals of thunder and a severe earthquake. No earthquake like it has ever occurred since man has been on earth – so tremendous was the quake. The great city split into three parts. And the cities of the nations collapsed. God remembered*

Babylon the Great, and gave her the cup filled with the wine of the fury of His wrath. Every island fled away and the mountains could not be found. From the sky, huge hailstones – about a hundred pounds each – fell upon men. And they cursed God on account of the plague of hail, because the plague was so terrible.

So we're building to a crescendo, aren't we?

Revelation 19:4 – *The twenty-four elders and the four living creatures, who are at God's throne, fell down and worshipped God, who was seated on the throne. And they cried, "Amen, hallelujah." Then a voice came from the throne, saying, "Praise our God, all you servants, you who fear Him, both small and great." And then I heard what sounded like a great multitude – like the roar of rushing waters and like loud peals of thunder – shouting, "Hallelujah, for our Lord God Almighty reigns! Let us rejoice and be glad, and give Him glory, for the wedding of the Lamb has come. His bride has made herself ready. Fine linen, bright and clean, was given her to wear. Fine linen stands for the righteous acts of the saints. So we're getting a little...remember, I asked you to think about your own action steps? We're getting a clue here. And then the angel said to me, "Write, 'Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb.'" And then he added, "These are the true words of God." At this I fell at his feet to worship him, but he said to me, "Do not do it! I am a fellow servant with you and with your brothers who hold to the testimony of Jesus. Worship God, for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." I saw heaven standing open, and there before me was a white horse, whose rider is called Faithful and True. With justice He judges and makes war. So there He is! 6,000 years and now we're looking at Him. 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. And out of His mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations. He will rule them with an iron scepter. And He treads the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God Almighty. And on His robe and on His side, He has this name written: King of Kings and Lord of Lords. And I saw an angel standing in the sun, who cried in a loud voice to all the birds flying in mid-air, "Come, gather together for the great supper of God, so that you may eat the flesh of kings, generals and mighty men, of horses and their riders, and the flesh of all people, free and slave, small and great."*

I used to wonder, years ago, about why the interest in the birds of the air feeding on the bodies. And I realized that in the Middle East, there are lots of buzzards – there are lots of carrion birds. And in the olden days, when there were battles, people afar off could tell that there had been a battle, because the sky would be full of these birds circling. Verse 21 – it says:

V-21 – *The rest of them were filled with the sword that came out of the mouth of the Rider on the horse. And all the birds gorged themselves on their flesh.*

So that's it. After all the doubting, after all the faithlessness, after all the disbelief, after all the ridiculing, after all the rebellion, God does what He said He was going to do from

the very beginning. He's going to send Jesus Christ back, and He is going to take a corrective action step. Right?

So what did you learn? That's God's action step. What action steps should we take, given that these things are going to happen?

Well, I'm going to read one more, somewhat lengthy section out of the book of Revelation. I want you to go to Revelation 2 with me. Verse 6:

Revelation 22:6 – *The angel said to me, “These words are trustworthy and true.” You can bank on this. This isn't something that is the figment of somebody's imagination. This is going to happen. The Lord – the God of the spirits of prophets – sent His angel to show His servants things that must soon take place.*

V-7 – *Behold, I am coming soon! Blessed is he who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book.*

Then in verse 8, it says:

V-8 – *I, John, am the one who heard and saw these things. When I heard and saw them, I fell down to worship at the feet of the angel who had been showing them to me. But he said, “Do not do it. I am a fellow servant with you, and with your brothers, the prophets, and of all who keep the words of this book. Worship God.” And then he told me, “Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book” – that's why it's called the Book of Revelation, right? – “because the time is near. Let him who does wrong, continue to do wrong. Let him who is vile, continue to be vile. Let him who does right, continue to do right. And let him who is holy, continue to be holy.”*

V-12 – *Behold, I am coming soon! Is there a message here for us? My reward is with me and I will give to everyone according to what he has done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End. Blessed are those who wash their robes, that they may have the right to the Tree of Life and may go through the gates into the city. Outside are the dogs – those who practice magic arts, the sexually immoral, murderers, idolaters and everyone who loves and practices falsehood. He who testifies to these things says, “Yes, I am coming soon! Amen!” And then John says, “Come Lord Jesus. And the grace of the Lord Jesus be with God's people. Amen.”*

So what do you think the message is here for us? What action step should we take? Wasn't it Paul that said, “The Lord does not delay His coming?” What should we do? Well, you know, I read, “I am coming soon!” or “I come quickly,” three times in a few verses there. I read twice that Jesus said He was coming as a thief. I read in 1 Thessalonians 5, and verse 5, Paul said:

1 Thessalonians 5:5 – *Now brothers, about times and dates, we do not need to write you, for you know very well that the Day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. So don't bother to try to figure out when it's happening. So what should we do then? Well, we should be ready at all times, shouldn't we? That's the only other option you have. If you can't figure out when the thief is coming, the only thing you can do to protect*

yourself is to be ready at all times. *While people are saying, "Peace and safety," destruction will come on them suddenly, as labor pains on a pregnant woman. And they will not escape. But you brothers are not in darkness, so that this day should surprise you like a thief. You are all sons of the light and sons of the day. We do not belong to the night or to the darkness. So then, let us not be like others who are asleep, but let us be alert and self-controlled. For those who sleep, sleep at night. And those who get drunk, get drunk at night. But since we belong to the day, let us be self-controlled, putting on faith and love as a breastplate, and the hope of salvation as a helmet.*

So there's four things there, right? We should be *self-controlled*. What does that mean? I'll get back to that after I explain these other things. Why is self-control important? *Putting on faith* – that's trust in God, right? – *and love* – that's the *motive* that we do these things – because we love God and He loves us. And *the hope of salvation* – we have a very real hope this reward is going to be ours. So what's with the self-control? Well, it has to do with the waiting. It's hard to wait. It's hard to be on guard.

If you're in the army and you go to sleep on your post, you get shot in wartime – you could. I used to hunt deer. And I never would see any deer when I was hunting until I stopped walking around and I sat down. Of course, to do that I had to be prepared. You have to have warm clothes to sit still in cold weather.

I had a friend once, who went out hunting. I think I lived in Arkansas when this occurred. In fact, I know I did. He came in one afternoon and confessed to us that he had fallen asleep while he was out deer hunting. After he woke up there was a huge set of deer prints walking right up to him and then turning and walking away – where the big buck had come up and sniffed him and then left! He knew that he was asleep, probably. So you have to have self-control, if you're going to be alert and ready.

Now, in Matthew, the 25th chapter, we're talking about action steps that we can take. Right after He explains all about what's going to happen, Jesus presents three parables that explain to us what we need to do. The first one is in verse 1. He said:

Matthew 25:1 – *At that time, the kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins, who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. Five were wise and five were foolish. The foolish ones took their lamps, but not oil along with their lamps. The bridegroom was a long time coming, and they all became drowsy and fell asleep – kind of like my friend, the deer hunter. It says they all fell asleep, right? At midnight, the cry rang out, "Here's the bridegroom! Come out to meet him!" Then all the virgins awoke and trimmed their lamps, but the foolish ones said to the wise, "Give us some of your oil. Our lamps are going out." And they replied, "No, there may not be enough for us and you. Instead, go to those who sell oil and buy some for yourselves." So some people are going to be caught off guard, not prepared. They didn't have the self-discipline that they needed. And while they were out to buy the oil, the bridegroom arrived. The virgins who were ready went in with Him to the banquet, and the door was shut. Later, the others came and said, "Sir, sir, open the door for us." See, there's that time when all the repenting and the being sorry doesn't cut it anymore. And He replied, "I tell you the truth. I don't know you. Therefore, keep watch, because you do not know the day or the hour."*

Then the next one, in verse 14, is the talents – about a man going on a journey, who calls his servants and entrusts his property to them. He expects these people to turn a profit – to take what he gives them and to use that to benefit him. And there was that one fellow who took the one talent that he was given, and he was afraid that he would lose it, so he went and buried it. And at the end, he was cast out. He was called lazy and wicked. So the lesson that we can take from this is that God has given us work to do. Some of us don't even know what that is. But we're supposed to be about our Father's business, not our own. And that's how we prepare.

And then the last one is the sheep and goats in verse 31, where, at the judgment, He's going to divide people into two categories. He calls them sheep and goats. One category He commends because they took care of people who couldn't take care of themselves. We had a discussion today about how, in our country, we give money to people who *could* take care of themselves. And that's not right. But for those who *can't* take care of themselves, we, individually, need to take care of them. It's not a government job. It's *ours*. So there is something very specific here for us about taking care of people – God's people – because that's what we're going to be doing in the Kingdom of God.

All three of these parables are about something different, but they're also about the same things, aren't they? They're all about our spiritual condition and how we need to be working on our spiritual condition at all times, because we don't know when Christ is going to come back.

Today, in the churches, people are told all the time that all they have to do is accept Christ and they'll be saved. Well, that isn't what we read today, is it? That *isn't* what we read today. There are responsibilities that come along with surrendering ourselves to Jesus Christ and asking His blood be applied to us. And that is, we have to be bondslaves for Him. We have to do His work. And we have to be ready.

So God is going to take His action step in His own time. He predicted it for 6,000 years. He detailed, in the Bible, one day it's going to happen. And when it does, those who are alive better be ready.

But what about the rest of us? What about the rest of us that are getting kind of old and gray, and we might not make until He returns? Well, we're all going to face that day, aren't we? Everybody is going to face that day – in one or another, at one time or another. Those of us who are going to be resurrected with Christ will be there on that day, won't we? So *our* time of preparation is now. That's for us. So we have to be ready. And everyone of us has action steps that we need to take. And each action step, for each one of us, might be different than from everyone else. So what action steps do you need to take to be ready for the Day of Trumpets?