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Presentation Transcript
Jesus' Return Date – A Festival of Trumpets
August 28, 2020

Before Jesus ascended to heaven, and was still in the flesh with His disciples, they asked Him a question. We can read it in Mark 13:3

Mark 13:3 – *And as he sat on the Mount of Olives, opposite the temple, Peter and James and John and Andrew asked him privately, "Tell us, when will these things be, and what will be the sign when all these things are about to be accomplished?"*

So, it was a specific question – a question, “When are You coming back?” This question has been asked by every generation of Christians from that time to this, except perhaps most recently, because many Christians today have let go of the idea that Jesus will return. They may think it’s just too far fetched to believe. That what happens when we don’t have faith to believe the clear truth of scripture. The Bible show us that Jesus talked many times about His return. In other words, He believed He would return to the earth after He died. So God was very clear about this with His disciples and we can be too. Notice in Acts 1, and verse 6:

Acts 1:6-11 – *So when they had come together, they asked Him, "Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" Now the timing of this is after He’s been resurrected from the dead, but before He ascended to heaven. So He’s still has been with them for some time – nearly fifty days. So there’s the question in a different form: Is it going to be now? And to answer them, He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by His own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." And when He had said these things, as they were looking on – so there they are, gathered around Him – He was lifted up, and a cloud took Him out of their sight. And while they were gazing into heaven as He went, behold, two men stood by them in white robes, and said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven."*

So yes, He *is* coming back down, just like He went up. So I guess we could say that the answer to them, at that point – a few days before Pentecost – was, “Not yet.”

Now since this day – the Feast of Trumpets can be viewed as the holy day that pictures His return – it might be timely to consider this issue today. I mean, meat in due season. Right?

In the book of Revelation, God revealed to John that there would be seven events in the end days, each heralded by an angel sounding a trumpet. In Revelation 8:2, John says:

Revelation 8:2 – *Then I saw the seven angels who stand before God, and seven trumpets were given to them. And another angel came and stood at the altar with a golden censer, and he was given much incense to offer with the prayers of all the saints on the golden altar before the throne, and the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, rose before God from the hand of the angel. Then the angel took the censer and filled it with fire from the altar and threw it on the earth, and there were peals of thunder, rumblings, flashes of lightning, and an earthquake. Now the seven angels who had the seven trumpets prepared to blow them.*

So the things we read in the book of Revelation are global and terrifying. But God inserts this little detail for us so that we can, if we focus on it, have faith and not be afraid. You know, it says in the Bible, three hundred and sixty-some times, “Be not afraid!” So God’s very well aware that happening, in heaven, an angel gathers all the prayers of God’s people and offers them with incense on the altar – like an offering – and they rise up to God as precious. So that’s His way of telling us that He’s listening. And more than that, He’s working.

But on to why the Feast of Trumpets is relevant to Christ’s return. Let’s read Revelation 11:15:

Revelation 11:15 – *Then the seventh angel – out of those seven he’d just seen – blew his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven saying “The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign for ever and ever. So this seventh trumpet heralds the return of Christ to the earth – you know, “you men of Galilee....”*

So how does that connect to the Feast of Trumpets. Well, it’s simple, really. In ancient Israel, when they observed the holy days, they observed them according to the sacred calendar that God gave them – to keep track of all the holy days of God, and also time. Every month, on it’s first day, a priest would blow a trumpet to signify the beginning of the month. It was a public way of marking time. They didn’t have G-shock watches and all those things we have today to keep time so accurately. So they needed that. And when did the Feast of Trumpets fall?

Leviticus 23:23-24 – *And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, “Speak to the people of Israel, saying, ‘In the seventh month, on the first day of the month, you shall observe a day of solemn rest, a memorial proclaimed with blast of trumpets, a holy convocation. You shall not do any ordinary work, and you shall present a food offering to the LORD.’”*

Since Trumpets was kept on the first day of the month, and since it was the seventh month, it was the seventh trumpet of the year. So that's how we can make a connection between that holy day and what happened in Revelation. Not only that way, because a lot has to do with where these dates fall on the calendar – we might not get to be able to talk about that, for lack of time today – it's also important to realize that all the holy days picture a part of God's plan. I guess I am going to talk about this a little bit – I just can't not do it. See, they all follow in a chronological order of events: First, the Passover – Christ's sacrifice – then Unleavened Bread with the Holy Spirit – you know, living sin-free by Christ's sacrifice and the Spirit – then Pentecost – the founding of the church, which is the harvest festival – then a long gap between spring and fall to Trumpets, the seventh month. Also, the next two festivals fall right behind Trumpets on the calendar: Atonement, which pictures becoming one with God, which the whole world will begin to do after Christ returns, and the Feast of Tabernacles – a seven day festival – picturing the thousand year reign of Christ, when He's going to return and when everyone will learn about God and have a chance to follow Him, as He reigns as King of the World. So that, also, is how the ancient harvest festival of Tabernacles is also a reminder Jesus' return for us today.

I just verbally gave you the summary, but where can we find talk in the Bible about that question, "When?" Well, the place to start would be with Jesus' words and answer to the question. Think about it. God never changes. His plan stays the same. What Jesus told His disciples 2,000 years ago is just as relevant today as it was then. If we could have Him come here and let us ask that question, we would get the same answer, and so would everyone who has asked that question down through the ages. His answer is true for every generation. So let's look at more of what He said. In Matthew 24 – another account, other than Mark's, of what was said:

Matthew 24:4-14 – *And Jesus answered them, "See that no one leads you astray. For many will come in my name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and they will lead many astray. Not that they were saying they were the Christ, but that He was the Christ. And because of very important information that they were missing and improper motives, they were not dependable – couldn't count on them. And He said: And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not alarmed, for this must take place, but the end is not yet. So wars and rumors of wars...well, how long's that been going on? Well, it was going on while Jesus said that and it's still going on now. Increasingly, as there become more and more people, and more and more sophisticated weaponry and communications, and a general deterioration of human kind, it's more, but there are other things that factor into it. He's just saying, See that you are not alarmed, for this must take place, but the end is not yet. So "wars and rumors of wars" doesn't mean that it's right away. For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and there will be famines and earthquakes in various places. All these are but the beginning of the birth pains. So that's going to increase, but that's just the beginning – so, a warning to avoid gullibility and to be calm. What is it that keeps a person from becoming spiritually gullible? A thorough understanding of the Bible, the guidance of the Holy Spirit – hard sought after in prayer. If we think about it, we see that there have been wars and famines and earthquakes in every age, right up to the present.*

Every Christian has been able to see the things Jesus talked about around them on the world scene, so there has to be something more. Well, let's read on: *"Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and put you to death, and you will be hated by all nations for my name's sake. And then many will fall away and betray one another, and hate one another. And many false prophets will arise and lead many astray. And because lawlessness will be increased, the love of many will grow cold. But the one who endures to the end will be saved. And this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.*

So here again, there have been so many persecutions of Christians down through the ages. And many times, Christians have forsaken the law of God, lost their love, caved in to the demands of persecutors, but Jesus tells us that just before He returns, something noteworthy will happen that has never happened before – a unique effort – to preach the gospel to all nations – that will be successful will occur. And *then* shall the end come. Has that happened yet? Well, some think they're doing it now, but we will read something that will let us know *our* efforts are *not* what God had in mind. So keeping looking for it. It's not going to be some mainstream Christian church group doing it, or even a ring, or group, of Christians. It's going to be done so obviously by God, that no Christian will have any doubt about what's going on. More later about that.

What else did He say? Matthew 24:15:

V-15 – *"So when you see the abomination of desolation spoken of by the prophet Daniel, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand). So let's understand. What is the abomination of desolation?"*

Well, interestingly, that event most modern scholars have seen as something that happened nearly 200 years before Jesus was born. He was talking about something that already happened as though it would happen again. What was He talking about that happened before? Well, before, there was a Greek ruler, Antiochus IV, who added the name Epiphanes to the end of his name. And that means *holy one* or *enlightened one*. So that tells us a bit about his character and his outlook. We call it narcissism today. Let me read you a bit from history. I got this from the Website gotquestions.org.

“In an act of brazen disrespect, Antiochus raided the temple of Jerusalem, stealing its treasures, setting up an altar to Zeus and sacrificing a swine on the altar. When the Jews expressed their outrage over profaning the temple, Antiochus responded by slaughtering a great number of the Jews and selling others into slavery. He issued even more Draconian decrees. Performing the right of circumcision was now punishable by death. And Jews everywhere were ordered to sacrifice to pagan gods and eat pigs' flesh.”

So, a grizzly picture of brutal control. After drawing their attention back to the ghastly event, Jesus continues as though this event is yet to happen. In other words, “What I’m talking about is a lot like what Antiochus did a long time ago.” That’s the essence of it. So He says:

V-16-20 – *Then* – when you see that happen – when the daily sacrifice is taken away – *let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. Let the one who is on the housetop not go down to take what is in his house, and let the one who is in the field not turn back to take his cloak. And alas for women who are pregnant and for those who are nursing infants in those days!* Really hard to be mobile under those conditions. *Pray that your flight may not be in winter or on a Sabbath.* That would slow you down.

So what is Jesus telling us here? Well, it’s about timing. When this thing happens, it’s going to happen so fast that, if you’re in Jerusalem at that time, you won’t even have time to do much of anything before the beginning of sorrows begins. Continuing on, He said:

V-21-27 – *“For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been from the beginning of the world until now, no, and never will be.”* So you think about that. Think about all the pogroms that have occurred, persecutions, butchery that’s occurred in the world in the past – what the Nazis did to the Jews, what the Turks did to the Armenians, what’s going on in Africa right now. This is going to be worse than anything like that – worse than anything that’s ever happened. *“And if those days had not been cut short, no human being would be saved.”* We would blow ourselves off the planet. *“But for the sake of the elect those days will be cut short. Then if anyone says to you, ‘Look, here is the Christ!’”* – then means after the daily sacrifices have been taken away and this persecution begins.... *“If anyone says to you, ‘Look, here is the Christ!’ or ‘There he is!’ do not believe it. For false christs and false prophets will arise and perform great signs and wonders, so as to lead astray, if possible, even the elect.”* So another call not to be gullible. And then He says: *“See, I have told you beforehand. So, if they say to you, ‘Look, he is in the wilderness,’ do not go out. If they say, ‘Look, he is in the inner rooms,’ do not believe it. For as the lightning comes from the east and shines as far as the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man.* So how does lightning move from one side of the planet to the other? Rapidly! That fast. That’s how fast it’s going to be.

So don’t believe any of the manipulative, self-centered, crazy people you may know, in the present, who have asserted that Jesus was coming on this or that date. Don’t believe it! But be looking for some terrible event in which the daily sacrifices in Jerusalem will be taken away.

Now there’s more. After most of the disciples were martyred, Jesus gave more details to the apostle John, who was then an old man, exiled by Rome to the isle of Patmos, which is interestingly now a playground for the very rich. So, he was kind of thrown in the briar patch to one of the nicest places around. He took John in vision, while he was there, to the end time. And I think he was shown events realtime in the end. As he tries to describe in his notes what he saw, he struggles to find words for things that did not yet exist in his world. Though he could not

describe some of the things that he saw, he did not fail to capture the sequencing, and the timing, and the significance of these events about the future, which God showed him.

So what was that that God showed him? Well, he saw a fierce beast arise out of sea. And this beast was a symbol for a government that behaved like a predatory beast voraciously coveting control of the whole world and all the people in it. He saw a religious power that aligned itself with this beastly government. He saw the people of the earth in subjection to this unholy alliance. He saw the saints of God hounded and chased by the devil, who drove these two. He saw a worldwide preaching of the gospel by just two men, who did great miracles and were murdered for their commitment to God. He saw the entire earth rejoice when they died.

Let's take a look at that – Revelation 11:1:

Revelation 11:1 – *Then I was given a measuring rod like a staff, and I was told, "Rise and measure the temple of God and the altar and those who worship there, but do not measure the court outside the temple. Leave that out, for it is given over to the nations, and they will trample the holy city for forty-two months."* So, forty-two divided by twelve is three and a half. Right? So this period equates to the time when Jerusalem is taken and the sacrifice stopped. What happens? Well, verse 3:

V-3-11 – *"And I will grant authority to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy for 1,260 days, clothed in sackcloth."* So how long is that? 1,260 divided by 360 – three and a half years. *These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands that stand before the Lord of the earth.* So, when the Bible's talking about two olive trees and two lampstands, chances are good, they're talking about those two witnesses. *And if anyone would harm them, fire pours from their mouth and consumes their foes. If anyone would harm them, this is how he is doomed to be killed. They have the power to shut the sky, that no rain may fall during the days of their prophesying.* How long are they going to prophesy? 1,260 days. Is there anybody else in the Bible that we know of that did something like that? Well, yeah. It was Elijah, the prophet. He called on God to stop the rain for three and a half years. And that's what happened. So Elijah – when his name is mentioned - he's a picture of something that's going to happen at the end time as well. *And they have power over the waters to turn them into blood and to strike the earth with every kind of plague, as often as they desire. And when they have finished their testimony, the beast that rises from the bottomless pit will make war on them and conquer them and kill them, and their dead bodies will lie in the street of the great city that symbolically is called Sodom and Egypt, where their Lord was crucified.* So that was Jerusalem. So they're going to lie dead in Jerusalem. And this is *after* this terrible power takes over Jerusalem, and stops the sacrifice, and kills a lot of Christian people there, and many others as well. *For three and a half days some from the peoples and tribes and languages and nations will gaze at their dead bodies and refuse to let them be placed in a tomb, and those who dwell on the earth will rejoice over them and make merry and exchange presents, because these two prophets had been a torment to those who dwell on the earth.* Three and a half years, then three and a half days dead. They are then resurrected. *But after the three and a half days a breath of life from God entered them, and they stood up on their*

feet, and great fear fell on those who saw them. How did everybody on the earth know about this? Well, you know, we have the capability – the technology – to do that right now. At least, in the beginning that was all still working – beginning of this period of time. So there you could see it on TV, just like you can...the thing I remember is the big tsunami and earthquake in Japan, where the reactor ruptured, and we were able to see what was going on over there – in some cases, just like we were there ourselves. We could see people running around on the ground. So I think that's a pretty good clue to how much people are going to see that, and how intense their hatred is going to be for what's been done to them.

V-12-13 – *Then they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, "Come up here!" And they went up to heaven in a cloud, and their enemies watched them. And at that hour there was a great earthquake, and a tenth of the city fell.* So all this happened just before John saw Jesus come back to earth on a white charger, accompanied by a fearsome spirit army that included the Church of God.

Now, I'm not going to quote a scripture for all of these statements, but, if you want it bad enough, you can find them, because they are in there.

What else, in the Bible, can we learn about Jesus' return – besides Jesus' words Himself and John's words in the New Testament and prophecy, and some few things that Paul said about the resurrection? One third of the Bible is prophecy. A large part of the Old Testament is also about God's plan. It's in prophecy and we can read it all. We will not know the answer to the question of when, because God's already said He's not going to tell us that. But we can understand more about what things lead up to it and what things are going to happen after Christ returns. The Bible is a pretty big book. So if you take a third of it, that's still a pretty big book, too. And all of that is filled with a lot of detail about how the return of Christ comes about – who's going to fight against Him and what's it going to be like after He takes over. That really is the bulk of it.

So, as we read it, we will see that most of what the prophets of old wrote already has come true once. But just as when Jesus talked about the abomination of desolation – the historical event that would happen again – so also these prophecies picture something that's going to be repeated – out of history and into the future. They're not to let us know when, but so that when it happens, we will know what we're looking at. What was it Jesus said? "When you see these things, know that the end is near." That's why.

Let me ask you this: Is there a daily sacrifice in Jerusalem now? No. There hasn't been one since the Romans stopped it in 60 AD. But there are – as we speak – people who have bent their will toward that end. They're working feverishly politically and also tactically to see that happen again. They're selecting strains of animals. They're identifying people from the priestly line. They're preparing garments that meet biblical criteria. It's all happening right now. Of course, it's only fair to mention that the effort has been repeated down through the ages as well – ever since the Romans destroyed the temple and stopped the offerings – not long after Jesus died. But

it hasn't happened yet. So be looking for it. And because people are trying to make it happen, it's not the same thing as it actually happening. It hasn't happened yet. So be looking for it, because once it starts, it will, at some time, be stopped, and *then* we start the countdown – 1260, 42 months, 3½ years – which brings us to what Jesus said next – going back to Matthew 24.

Matthew 24:36 – *"But concerning that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son – see, He didn't even know – but the Father only.*

I used to know some guys that were really good guys, and once a week they'd get together with their Bibles and spread their charts and their maps out, and they would try to figure when Christ was going to return. They asked me what I thought of it, and I said, "Well, it's always good to be interested in the Bible, but do you think you're going to figure it out if Jesus Himself doesn't even know yet?" So we had a laugh about that.

V-37-42 – *For as were the days of Noah – so here's another way to think about what's happening – so will be the coming of the Son of Man. For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day when Noah entered the ark, and they were unaware until the flood came and swept them all away. So will be the coming of the Son of Man. He keeps emphasizing how fast it's going to happen, and how, if you don't know what to look for, you're going to be caught up in it. Then two men will be in the field; one will be taken and one left. Two women will be grinding at the mill; one will be taken and one left. Therefore, stay awake, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming.*

V-44 – *Therefore you also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.*

A lot of people have the idea it's going to economic chaos and all that. It doesn't seem to me that that's really how it's going to be. I mean, if there's still worldwide satellite – instantaneous television – transmission going on, and if people are combining into globalist governments – and it talks in Revelation about Babylon the Great and all the great economic things that were done – it sounds like things might actually be pretty good when things start turning south.

So Jesus didn't just say this to His disciples, or to you and me. It was spoken to every Christian of every age between His disciples and you and me. All of us, from then to now, are supposed to be ready, living like today is our last day – ready at any time to pick up and leave – to be nomads, to give up physical possessions, and just get out – to walk away from them. Being a better person tomorrow isn't going to cut it. We have to be ready at all times. There are so many parables and warnings about readiness.

Okay, so that's only the briefest summary of what Jesus told His disciples about His return. Nor has there occurred the terrible persecution that comes along with the abomination of desolation that makes desolate. Jesus said that, if you happen to be the region, it's going to happen so fast...

if you're out working in the yard, don't go back to get anything. Just leave! So this event spirals down to a sequence of terrible things that would lead to annihilation of life on the planet, except that Jesus would intervene. I'm not going to go into all of those things. Revelation is a pretty long book and it goes into a lot of detail that I don't have time to talk to you about right now. So this event spirals down to that sequence, and except that Jesus comes and stops it all, everybody would die.

Let's notice something that Daniel wrote. Jesus referenced Daniel, the prophet, so now we're going to read what he said – what he was talking about. It says in 12:11:

Daniel 12:11 – *And from the time that the regular burnt offering is taken away and the abomination that makes desolate is set up, there shall be 1,290 days. Blessed is he who waits and arrives at the 1,335 days. The big number is 1,260, and then 1,290, and then 1,335. So those three numbers are all fairly close together. But go your way till the end. And you shall rest and shall stand in your allotted place at the end of the days.* So that's what he was telling them. And it's in the Bible, so he's telling us too. "Go your way until all this stuff starts to happen, and you shall rest and shall stand in your allotted place at the end of days."

So what is your *allotted place*? Well, if you know all of this, the chances are high that your place will be in the Church of God, resurrected to spirit life when Jesus returns.

Thinking about these numbers now, we have something really specific to look at. A 3½ year period. And then another 30 days is added on. 1,290 from 1,335 is another 45 days. So when that sacrifice is stopped, then the armies gather around Jerusalem, and we can know it's close.

Listen to this.

Matthew 24:32-35 – *From the fig tree, learn its lesson. I don't think you just have to have a fig tree. I did have a fig tree in my yard once. But anybody that grows anything can learn this lesson. As soon as its branch becomes tender and puts out leaves, you know that summer is near. So also, when you see all these things, you know that He is near – at the very gates. Truly I say to you, "This generation will not pass away until all these things take place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will not pass away."*

So let's look at this phrase *this generation*. Who's He talking about? Is He talking about the generation of the disciples? Well, did He come back in their generation? Well, no! So God never lies. So how can we understand what He said? Well, *this generation* most likely means the generation that He's talking about, who will see the abomination set up. So, once that happens, it's on it's way. He's coming back. And those who *know* Him will know 3½ years ahead of time what's about to happen.

Now, we know from what we've read and more, it's going to be a rough 3½ years. But we are

told many times to brace up, because after the rough times, He's coming. And because of all these things, we come to this in Revelation 11:15.

Revelation 11:15 – *Then the seventh angel blew his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever." And the twenty-four elders who sit on their thrones before God fell on their faces and worshiped God, saying, "We give thanks to you, Lord God Almighty, who is and who was, for you have taken your great power and begun to reign. The nations raged, but your wrath came, and the time for the dead to be judged, and for rewarding your servants, the prophets and saints, and those who fear your name, both small and great, and for destroying the destroyers of the earth."*

So the seventh trumpet – that's when Christ returns. And this day is a reminder of that future day. Every year our attention is drawn to it, so we never forget why we're here and what Jesus is preparing to do. The church will be resurrected to eternal life – a new age of grace and truth will be ushered in for all people. Every promise He ever made will be fulfilled. And on that day, looking forward, we can pray as John did, "Come Lord Jesus!"

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Until next time, this Bill Jacobs for LifeResource Ministries, serving children, families and the Church of God.