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Transcript

Establishing God's Kingdom on Earth – Feast of Trumpets

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Have you ever watched a drain empty – like in your sink or your bathtub? You open the drain or pull the plug and the level slowly goes down. Anything floating rests motionless on the surface at first. And at that point – after the plug is pulled – before any real downward motion is detected, we can all know exactly what's going to happen in the end, won't we – even though we can't see much movement. But as the water level lowers, a counter-clockwise current begins to develop and things that are floating begin to revolve ever so slowly in a counter-clockwise direction – that's if we're in the northern hemisphere. And this circling slowly picks up speed as the drain goes toward empty. It hasn't happened yet, but as it speeds up more and more, until at last, almost too fast to see, those things floating, just drop off the edge of the drain and disappear really quickly.

Jesus said several times, “So will it be at the end of the age.” And He likened it to Lot, when everybody was in Sodom just living their lives and partying on, then fire came and destroyed them. Or, He said that His return would be like the days of Noah. People were becoming more and more evil back then. Many people were suffering at the hand of the few rich and powerful. And life continued as always, until Noah and his family, with the animals, entered into the ark. Then it started to rain and the whole world drowned. So, there's that characteristic about end time events that move slowly at first, and then, all of a sudden, it's going really fast, and then pretty soon, it happens.

When I first came into the church in 1964, the plug had been pulled, and events going on in the world revealed a slow, unstopping circle, but it was really slow. By comparison, we're much closer to the drain now than we were back then. Things are really starting to speed up. We have many more terrible weapons. There is much more heartless evil going on in the world. Those of us who know God's Bible and follow Christ wonder how bad it's going to have to get before it all goes down. We don't know the answer to that and we cry out to God in desperation as we see how many horrible things are being done in the world and we say, “Come Lord Jesus!” That's what we want.

By the way, if you're a teenager or a young adult, and you don't want it to come because you have plans, don't feel bad about that – or guilty. That's just how you're supposed to feel at your age. Be careful, though, to make good decisions to prepare for what's ahead, and see how far you can get before it all starts going south. You never know when it might accelerate toward the drain. So, draw close to God. There's a scripture in Matthew 24:20 that says:

Matthew 24:20 – *Pray that your flight may not be in the winter or on a Sabbath.* That means it's going to happen suddenly and you're not going to have time to prepare.

This is a bit of an aside. It's really interesting to me to see Jesus, who, we are told today by modern Christianity, *is* our Sabbath – meaning we don't have to keep it literally – telling those who live at the end of the age the Sabbath is a major part of His thinking and a consideration. And it implies that we should still be observing it *literally* before He returns.

Okay, now so far, everything I have said sounds like the beginning of a traditional Feast of Trumpets message – a biblical holy day that represents the return of Christ to this earth. I wanted to remind us all that we are in that circling phase. If we were in the days of Noah, we could say, "It looks like rain." We could go to many scriptures that describe the specific signs Jesus gave so that we would know when those signs appear, we should say, "Heads up! We're almost there." Seeing how we have over a dozen messages like that on our Website about the Feast of Trumpets and the return of Christ already, let's take a little bit different tact today. Specifically, let's ask the question, "What about the gap between the Feast of Trumpets – Christ's return – and the Day of Atonement, when everybody has a chance to become at one with God?"

What's that gap about? What does it tell us? Well, it tells us that after Christ returns and subdues the rebellious, there is a period of time before the Millennium – His thousand-year-reign – before that gets rolling. So what's going to happen during that time? Well, if you saw the title to the message – *Establishing the Kingdom* – that's the answer. How will it happen? How is the Kingdom going to be established? How that's going to be established, how people are going to be changed from flinty-hearted, disobedient, rebellious people to people who have God's own heart – that's a hard job! None of us could do it. In our world, people tend to stick with what they believe, all facts aside. Yet God says everybody's going to get a new heart – a heart transplant. Everybody will worship the true God.

So how's He going to pull that off? And how would I know the answers to that question? One third of the Bible is prophecy. And the majority of that one third is about what it's going to be like after Christ's return. Did you know that? A lot of us don't read the prophets very much, but if you want to know what it's going to be like, that's where you'd learn it.

When I was in college, the entire Pasadena campus was involved in sort of a fun project. We made up a newsletter. It was about the things that are prophesied to happen after Christ's return. In this newsletter, there were headlines like: *World Peace Breaks Out! Weaponry Repurposed for*

Farm Use, Wave of Good Weather Envelops the Globe, Leaders from Around the World Celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles in Jerusalem, Lion Lives with a Flock of Sheep. I was a freshman then and I learned that there was an incredible amount of detail in prophecy about what happens after Christ's return.

What is all that about? What's the goal of it? Well, the goal is the Day of Atonement when everyone gets a heart transplant – when the whole world turns to God. Now, that's going to take time. It's not going to happen just because Christ comes back. I gave a sermon at the Feast one year. The title was *The First Hundred Days*. It was about what was going to happen after Christ returns. If you want to go listen to it, it was published on our Website, liferesource.org on August 17, 2017.

So, after Christ returns.... It was getting really bad before He returned, but after He returns and after the rebellious are subdued, the earth is going to be a smoking hulk – after the wars between the power blocks and after what Christ does.

There are prophecies that talk about how it's going to be dark at noon day. We live just east of the Sierra Nevada mountains in Nevada and we get a lot of the smoke from the California fires. One day, we could see a big cloud of smoke coming over the mountains. You could see it coming. When all that settled in, it literally looked like it was night time outside. The sun at times could be seen, but it just looked like an orange disc in the sky. It was a pretty interesting situation when we think about what it says the sky is going to look like after all of these terrible things happen.

So, the earth is going to be a smoking hulk. Actually, since God is such a planner, He started getting ready for what's going to happen after trumpets – before Christ actually returns. We can all read the prophecies and see the tub draining, and we can read the terrible things about what's going to happen. There's probably going to be a global nuclear war – or, at least, regional with the imminent thought of one ongoing. I think, if there was a *global* nuclear war, we would have all blown ourselves off the planet – there are so many nukes – but that hasn't happened yet when Christ returns. We know that there's going to be starvation on a global level, and pandemics, and huge dictatorial governmental power blocks. And we're told that there is going to be a persecution of the church unlike anything that has yet happened. But, with all that – right? – we need to remember Jesus' words. We can read them in Mark 13:14 – He's talking to His disciples here in private. They just asked Him, "When are You going to come back?" And He said:

Mark 13:14-20 – *When you see the abomination of desolation standing where he ought not to be (let the reader understand)....* We know that that was an act that was enacted by Antiochus Epiphanes in the temple of God, where he sacrificed a pig, then murdered a lot of the Jews. When you see that.... So, that's going to happen again. So there has to be a temple – or at least, an altar and sacrifices to be going on. And probably not long after they're started is when we see this thing happen. *Let the one who is on the housetop not go down, nor enter into his house, to*

take anything out. So, if you're there – if you're in the area of Jerusalem where it's happening, and you see that happening... *And let the one who is in the field not turn back to get his coat. And alas for the women who are pregnant and for those who are nursing infants in those days! Pray that it may not be winter. For in those days there will be such tribulation as has not been from the beginning of creation that God created until now, and never will be.* So, something is going to happen there – the beginning of a terrible time persecution. It's going to happen so fast that, if you're nearby, and you don't just get out right away, you're going to get caught up in it. *And if the Lord had not cut short the days, no human being would be saved. But for the sake of the elect – that's His people, whom He chose – He will shorten the days.*

So, God has called the people. Some of them will be alive when it all goes south – down the drain – but they're going to be separated out and saved from it. They're going to be protected. Right? So that's one thing. He's going to have some people alive at the end who are going to be servants of His to help Him do what is coming next.

And then you go to Mark 13:24:

V-24 – *But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light – the air is going to be so thick – and the stars will be falling from heaven, and the powers in the heaven will be shaken. And then they will see the Son of Man coming in the clouds with great power and glory. And then He will send out angels and gather His elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven.*

So, all God's people that are alive are going to be gathered. So are those who have died. When that trumpet sounds, they're all going to be resurrected, granted eternal life and forged instantly into a mighty army. The rebellion is going to be subdued. So, God has His army ready – He's going to resurrect some – probably going to be angels and humans – God beings now – in it and the rebellion is going to be subdued.

Okay, so that's what the Day of Trumpets is about. But then, notice what happens next. Let's read some context here before I tell you what actually happens.

Revelation 19:19-21 – *I saw the beast and the kings of the earth with their armies gathered to make war against Him who was sitting on the horse and against His army.* So that would be Christ. Right? And the beast and the kings of the earth, with their armies, are ready to fight Christ. Now, they're there, I think, to fight each other, but when Christ comes, they turn on Him because He's the greater threat. *And the beast was captured, and with it the false prophet who in its presence had done the signs by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who had worshipped its image. These two were thrown alive into the lake of fire that burns with sulfur. And the rest were slain by the sword that came from the mouth of Him who was sitting on the horse, and all the birds were gorged with their flesh.* We're that army that

came from His mouth. We heard what He said, we listened to it, we responded to Him, and we were resurrected to be in His family – the saints, we’re called at that point.

So, the ring leaders are rounded up, judged and executed. That takes care of that. But then – this is the big one! – Revelation 20, verse 1:

Revelation 20:1 – *Then – you know, after that – I saw an angel coming down from heaven holding in his hand the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain. I’m thinking this might be Gabriel. Have you ever looked on the Internet for pictures of what Gabriel might look like? There are some artists’ renderings there. They’ve studied every word of the Bible about Gabriel and some of those pictures are pretty impressive. And I’m not saying he actually looks like that, but I think, at least, they might have captured the essence of the being. It says: He seized the dragon, that ancient serpent who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years, and threw him in the pit, and shut it and sealed it over him, so that he might not deceive the nations any longer, until the thousand years were ended. Did I say Gabriel? I meant Michael. Sorry. It was Michael, I think, that might have done that – threw him in the pit and shut it up and sealed it over him, so that he might not deceive the nations any longer, until the thousand years were ended.*

This is probably the most important, heart-changing event that takes place between Trumpets and Atonement – between Christ’s return and when people begin to become at one with God. Why do I say that? Well, the devil... Jesus calls him the father of all lies, the deceiver, the accuser of the brothers and sisters is now out of action. The scales are going to fall from people’s eyes – not a few of them, but the whole world – everybody that’s left. Now, that doesn’t mean, though, that everybody is going to be for God. It just means that they are going to be *undeceived* any longer. So, if you’re not for God, but not deceived by the devil, what would we call that? Well, we’d call that neutral, perhaps – or, at least, having a way to become neutral.

So, how do I know that? Well, it’s right there, if you just read it. God still has to fill in that gap. Between neutral and on board with Him. So, He has to show people who He is. At that point, he’s in charge now. The mountain of God, Zion, is the center of the universe. That’s Jerusalem. How did it get to be that? Well, we know that God told David to build the temple in that area. And that’s what Solomon, his son, did. So, He’s in charge. There’s a temple in Jerusalem, and worship comes from there. But God still has to answer the question, “What are You going to be like? Will You be another beast, or another false prophet? Or, will You give us freedom and bless us, instead of stealing from us? So, what’s He going to do to send that message?

We know that there will be a temple set up in Jerusalem in those days. Just think about this: If you were a survivor of the chaos, what would that mean to you? Would it mean anything at all? Well, probably not. Everything’s dead. There’s nothing to eat. People have been sick. Millions have died. So, here’s what God is going to do – some of that one-third of the Bible – Ezekiel 47:2. He had this vision – Ezekiel did – and he said an angel came to him:

Ezekiel 47:2 – *Then he brought me out of way of the north gate – that’s the north gate of the new temple after Christ’s return – and he led me around to the outside to the outer gate that faces toward the east. And behold, the water was trickling out on the south side.* So, water is trickling out from the temple in every direction. And watch what happens next. This river, like all rivers, starts small at its source – from the temple – but each branch of it becomes huge. In Ezekiel 47:3, you can read that. It’s actually...I added up the cubits. If you allow 18 inches for a cubit, that river that comes out from under the throne of God is a mile wide. Continuing on with the vision:

V-6-12 – *He said to me, “Son of man, have you seen this? Then he led me back to the bank of the river – see, they were out in the water. They couldn’t cross it. As I went back I saw on the bank of the river very many trees on the one side and on the other. And he said to me, “This water flows toward the eastern region and goes down into the Arabah, and enters the sea; when the water flows into the sea, the water will become fresh. I don’t think that means it’s going to become fresh water, like without salt, but it says the sea is blood. So, it’s going to start to clean up the environment. And wherever the river goes, every living creature that swarms will live, and there will be very many fish. For this water goes there, that the waters of the sea may become fresh. So, everything will live where the river goes. So, get that picture. What’s that going to prove to people? It’s going to be a miracle that takes place. And they’re going to watch it. Everywhere that water goes, everything that water touches becomes pure and whole again. Fishermen will stand beside the sea. From Engedi to Eneglaim it will be a place for the spreading of nets. Its fish will be of very many kinds, like the fish of the Great Sea. But its swamps and marshes will not become fresh; they are to be left for salt. And on the banks, on both sides of the river, there will grow all kinds of trees for food. Their leaves will not wither – so, there’s not going to be a winter – nor their fruit fail, but they will bear fresh fruit every month, because the water for them flows from the sanctuary. Their fruit will be for food, and their leaves for healing.”*

So, even in the Millennium, people are going to need healing from diseases and sickness and stuff like that, I guess. They’re still human. God’s going to do that. He’s going to send them a global cleansing with food in abundance – animals, and fish, and fresh water, and salt, and a tree that produces fruit year round. A tree that produces fruit year round has to have good weather, doesn’t it? So, there’s a lot to be read into that. Something miraculous is going to take place. And that’s going to come from Jerusalem, right out from under the temple of the God that people used to think was a monster, because He didn’t stop all of the evil in the world.

Notice too, in Ezekiel 47:13:

V-13 – *Thus says the Lord GOD: “This is the boundary by which you shall divide the land for inheritance among the twelve tribes of Israel. Joseph shall have two portions – one for Ephraim and one for Manasseh. And you shall divide equally what I swore to give to your fathers. This land shall fall to you as your inheritance.*

Now, there are several ways to think about this. God starts with Israel to give them an eternal inheritance. But that's just the beginning of it. It's going to go out from there apparently. Another way to think about it is: anyone whose heart trusts God will now be an Israelite. That's the way it is today. Right? God calls you an Israelite – the Israel of God, if you become a part of His church. So, we can say that this is about global eternal property rights. Everybody is going to get some and nobody is going to be able to take it away from you. There are some people in our world today that are more selfish and smarter and more motivated to get everything everybody else owns around them. It's not going to be like that then. You can only eat so much. You can only put on so many clothes. And you can only live in such a nice house. So, it's going to be just like it said in more of the prophecies. Everybody is going to be able to sit under his own fig tree.

That doesn't really mean too much in the United States, but I just want to ask you, "Have you ever seen a TV series *Chernobyl*?" I think it was done by HBO. But, if you're a young person, you should watch that. It's about the Chernobyl nuclear plant that melted down – I think it was in the Ukraine. It was when it was part of the Soviet Union. There was a room in the hospital where they threw all the clothes of the people that were contaminated in that disaster. And that room is still too radioactive to go in, even after all these years. But what I wanted you to notice wasn't anything about that. In that show, there were huge, huge concrete high rises – very plain looking. And that's where all the people lived. Nobody owned any land any more. When the Communists took over, they took the land away from the people. And a few people became exceedingly rich from that and there became many, many more poor people – just like it says in the Bible. So, what?

I had a friend who went to Russia some years ago. And he went into one of those apartments. It was not in Chernobyl, but I think it was in Moscow. He remembered that in each room there was one electrical outlet about four feet high in the center of the wall in each room. That's what they had for electricity. Most of the people in the Soviet Union were forced into that kind of housing – and their land stolen from them. So, those of you who are younger, you need to pay attention to how people talk about government, and what kind of government works and what kind doesn't.

So, how would you like to live in a place like that. It looks to me like, unless God does something, that's headed our way. When I was a kid, a man with no college degree could get a job in a factory that allowed him to support a family and his wife didn't need to work. She could raise kids. Right now, where I live – and not in the most expensive big city or anything like that – a young couple, both working, can't afford to buy a house even. I digress.

So, all these things that God's going to do to change everything for the better, what's that about? Well, when you have enough to eat and wear, when you have your own place to live in and then grow food, when the weather's a blessing instead of a curse, when there are no more dictators, when there's no more human trafficking, there's no more drug abuse, when there's only one God to worship and He's a God that showers you with blessings, what do you call that? Well, you call it peace.

God is going to remove from people the motive for fighting amongst themselves. I think Joel says that just before Christ returns, people are going to be forging their farm implements into weapons. And we're told that *after* He comes, people are going to forge their weapons into farm implements. How do you think that's going to affect everybody's attitude toward God? Well, I think that's going to make a whole lot of people believers, who were skeptical and embittered and discouraged. When you start to see that kind of a change of heart, get ready, because here comes the Millennium.

When is that going to really start happening? Well, it's going to start between the return of Christ and the Day of Atonement. And that sets the stage for a thousand years of peaceful reign of Jesus Christ on the earth.

Now, we didn't read it today, but there is in Ezekiel 48 – at the end of the chapter, right after the description of the river and property rights – there's the description of the temple of God. People get caught up in the fact that this temple is huge – it's *gigantic* – but there's something that, to me, is even more important. Do you know what all the people that are around that come to it – people that used to be skeptics and non-believers and all that – do you know what their going to call that temple? They're going to name that temple *The Lord Is There*. And that is something surpassingly good! Surpassingly good! The Lord is There. They'll *know* that. And that's the ground on which the Millennium is going to begin.

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