

HOPE FOR HUMANITY

REVELATION TODAY

PRESENTATION 12 • THE SUBJECT THE DEVIL HATES THE MOST

SLIDE • OLD CAR. Back in 1966, Peter paid just \$300 for a Canadian-built 1933 McLaughlin Buick Series 80 Victoria coupe. He was a shop teacher at a technical college in suburban Vancouver, and his intent was to restore it quickly and drive it across Canada. But his plans changed, and as he started working (**SLIDE • OLD JUNK CAR**) on his 1933 Buick he realized he had stumbled onto something rare. So he decided to take his time on the restoration project and do it right. Now, when I saw he took his time, it took Peter 33 years to finish the restoration. He made many parts by hand, he replaced almost all of the wood in the internal frame, he taught himself how to do upholstery and did it himself, he hand-built a replacement muffler, even components in the brakes - which no one would ever see - were plated with copper or cadmium just like the originals. When he was asked what he was going to do with the car, he said... he didn't really know. And he started working on (**SLIDE • 1919 CAR**) restoring a 1919 Pierce Arrow limousine that he bought years before in New York.

SLIDE • RESTORED CAR. These are labors of love. There are people who love restoring old cars, and they're magnificent. I love seeing classic cars, and you realize (**SLIDE • DUESENBERG**) when you see an old Duesenberg or a (**SLIDE • TWO CARS**) Packard or a Plymouth that a lot of work went into that. And you ask about the process. What did it take to make that old thing new again?

SLIDE • RESTORED HOME. It's similar with homes, of course. It's incredible what people can do with an old home, even a home that you might think would be beyond help. But with the right touch, enough time, enough money, an old home can be turned into a gem. And the whole thing is popular. Today there are tv programs everywhere dealing with home restoration or renovation.

SLIDE • DRESDEN BOMBING. During World War 2, the German City of Dresden was bombed relentlessly by allied forces. It was February of 1945, and 25,000 people were killed when almost 1300 aircraft dropped almost 4000 tons of bombs and incendiary devices on the city. Devastation. Among the many buildings destroyed was the landmark (**SLIDE • CHURCH IN RUINS**) Frauenkirche, which was left in ruins as a war memorial for 50 years after the war. After German reunification, the church was rebuilt, and today, it's stunning.

SLIDE • REBUILT CHURCH It's beautiful.

SLIDE • NOTRE DAME. If you've been to Paris in France then you've more than likely seen the very impressive Notre Dame Cathedral. Notre Dame, "Our Lady," built in honor of Mary the mother of Jesus.

SLIDE • NOTRE DAME FIRE. In 2019, the church caught on fire and suffered an immense amount of damage. Restoration may take many years, but you can expect that once restored, the building will be as magnificent as ever.

SLIDE • RESTORATION. So we restore cars, and houses, and churches, and cathedrals... But what about restoring people?

It's a very important question, because when you get over to the book of Revelation, you see something interesting.

You see people who have been restored. Let me show you.

SLIDE • REVELATION 1:5–6. "And from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth. To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and has made us kings and priests to His God and Father, to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

The letters to the seven churches speak of God's intention to restore people. Each of the seven messages contains an incredible promise. Look at them.

SLIDE • REVELATION 2:7. "To him who overcomes I will give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God." (Ephesus)

SLIDE • REVELATION 2:11. "He who overcomes shall not be hurt by the second death." (Smyrna.)

SLIDE • REVELATION 2:17. "To him who overcomes I will give some of the hidden manna to eat. And I will give him a white stone, and on the stone a new name written which no one knows except him who receives it." (Pergamos)

SLIDE • REVELATION 2:26–28. "He who overcomes, and keeps My works until the end, to him I will give power over the nations—'He shall rule them with a rod of iron; They shall be dashed to pieces like the potter's vessels'—as I also have received from My Father; and I will give him the morning star."

SLIDE • REVELATION 3:5. "He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life; but I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels." (Sardis)

SLIDE • REVELATION 3:12. "He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go out no more. I will write on him the name of My God and the name of the city of My God, the New Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God. And I will write on him My new name."

SLIDE • REVELATION 3:21. "To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne."

SLIDE • REVELATION 7:4. People who are called the servants of God. And it says, "And I heard the number of those who were sealed. One hundred and forty-four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel were sealed."

SLIDE • REVELATION 14:1. The 144,000 are seen again in Revelation 14. "Then I looked, and behold, a Lamb standing on Mount Zion, and with Him one hundred and forty-four thousand, having His Father's name written on their foreheads."

The saved in Revelation 14:12.

SLIDE • REVELATION 14:12. "Here is the patience of the saints; here are those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus."

In Revelation 15, John sees (**SLIDE • REVELATION 15:2–3**) “Those who have the victory over the beast, over his image and over his mark and over the number of his name, standing on the sea of glass, having harps of God. They sing the song of Moses, the servant of God.”

In Revelation 18, the earth is illuminated with the glory of God.

SLIDE • REVELATION 18:1. “After these things I saw another angel coming down from heaven, having great authority, and the earth was illuminated with his glory.”

SLIDE • SECOND COMING. In Revelation 19, the second coming of Jesus. Jesus is coming back for a saved people.

Revelation 20, the saints live and reign with Christ in heaven for 1000 years.

SLIDE • REVELATION 20: 4. “And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.”

And of course in Revelation 21:22, we see the New Heaven and the New Earth, the saved are with Jesus and

SLIDE • REVELATION 22:3. “And there shall be no more curse, but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and His servants shall serve Him.”

The object of the prophecies of the Bible is to show us Jesus as Savior and Lord, to convince us that this Earth isn't our home, that there's more to life, that God is a forgiving God who wants to make you into a new you.

SLIDE • MEDITATION. Okay, so what sort of new you? When you talk about a person changing, we tend to get into self-improvement. Meditation. Controlling your emotions. Confronting your fears.

SLIDE • MEDICATION. More people are medicated than ever before, and if that's necessary then it is. But it's hard to believe that Americans really need as much medication as we consume. Two out of three adults in the US use prescription drugs.

SLIDE • THERAPY. More Americans than ever are in therapy for mental health issues. Now, you know I'm not criticizing a person for getting help. In fact, we'd commend a person who needs help and gets it. But what's going on that at ever-increasing rates we're finding ourselves having to resort to these treatment modalities?

SLIDE • BOOKS. Self-help books are everywhere, and it seems we need more help than ever before. And that's because the best people can do with people is provide a temporary fix. And by the way—even if the best humans can do is wonderful, if there's truly effective treatments, what can it do? It's limited to helping in this world alone, and it can't prepare you for the world to come. A doctor gives you something that works. You're still going to die. You recover from an injury. Give it long enough and one day you won't be able to walk! A psychotherapist helps you return to the height of your powers, and what would that be, exactly? There's a world to come. How do you get ready for that?

I'll show you what God did in the experience of one individual. Saul wasn't a bad man as far as we would judge. He was law abiding, very strict, very dedicated to his religion. But Saul was off track. He was a persecutor of God's people. His heart wasn't right. Aren't you glad God doesn't cut off people who don't have their act together? Instead of rejecting Saul, God appealed to Saul. And when Saul yielded to God's invitation, a man named Ananias spoke to Saul—who became Paul—and said to him, (**SLIDE • ACTS 22:14**) The God of our fathers has chosen you that you should know His will, and see the Just One, and hear the voice of His mouth.

SLIDE • ACTS 22:15. “For you will be His witness to all men of what you have seen and heard.”

SLIDE • ACTS 22:16. “Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord.”

And that’s not the first time something like that had been said. Jesus spoke directly to this.

SLIDES • MATTHEW 28:19–20. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” Amen.

Why would God tell Saul to be baptized? Why would Jesus tell the disciples to make disciples of people and to baptize them? The answer is found in a discussion Jesus had one night with an important man, a man who came to Jesus by night so no one would see that it was this home-schooled rabbi he was talking to. He says to Jesus,

SLIDE • JOHN 3:2. “Rabbi, we know that You are a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him.” But Jesus could see the state of this man’s heart. And so He said to him, (**SLIDE • JOHN 3:3**) “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” The man was flummoxed. What could this carpenter’s son be talking about? And so (**SLIDE • JOHN 3:4**) “Nicodemus said to Him, “How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother’s womb and be born?” Of course that was an absurd question, but Jesus answered it with an answer that went straight to the point He was trying to make. (**SLIDE • JOHN 3:5**) Jesus answered, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.”

Born of the Spirit is conversion. That’s the change that the Holy Spirit brings into a person’s life when they come to faith. That’s the radical remaking God does in someone’s experience. God’s Word says, (**SLIDE • 2 CORINTHIANS 5:17**) “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.” See how God describes this? When you come to Jesus, God remakes you. You might have been a failure before, but now you’re remade. You might have got things terribly wrong before, but now you’re remade. This is what God does. Now, let me say this to you. Part of the problem that we face is that we equate performance with acceptance with God. And I can see how we would do that. You come to Jesus, you ask Him to take your heart, and you go right out and yell at your neighbor. You come to the correct conclusion that something went terribly wrong. You might also come to the mistaken conclusion that you’re not a real Christian and that Jesus didn’t take your heart and that it was all a lie and why should you waste your time anyway as all you are is a big hypocrite. Well I’m going to suggest to you that maybe your failure might have nothing to do with you being a hypocrite, and everything to do with something else. Do you remember that little Bible story where Jesus talks about the work of God in a person’s life, and He says it’s like seed growing, and it (**SLIDE • WHEAT GROWING**) grows first the blade, then the ear, and then the full corn in the ear, and then the harvest? Your life as a believer in Jesus is a life of growth. That doesn’t make it okay to yell at your neighbor or your family. What I am saying is that everything else in the world GROWS. Growth takes time. If you put a seed in good soil and then give it water and sunlight, it’s going to grow, but not instantaneously.

God makes you new. This is what it is to be born of the Holy Spirit. It’s conversion. It’s being born again. That’s born of the Spirit. Born of water?

SLIDE • BAPTISM. That's water baptism. A sign of having your sins washed away. In fact, it's like an enactment of the experience of salvation. Romans 6:3 says, (**SLIDE • ROMANS 6:3**) "Do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death?"

SLIDE • ROMANS 6:4. Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." The old you DIES, is BURIED in the water of baptism, and a new you comes out of that water to "walk in newness of life" as Paul wrote.

Baptism is a symbol of the old you dying, and the new you being raised up from the dead to live the new life. It's hard to know why the subject of baptism gets confused. The Bible says clearly, (**SLIDE • EPHESIANS 4:5**) "One Lord, one faith, one baptism." Jesus' example couldn't have been clearer.

SLIDES (3) • MATTHEW 3:13–17. Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan to be baptized by him. And John tried to prevent Him, saying, "I need to be baptized by You, and are You coming to me?" But Jesus answered and said to him, "Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness." Then he allowed Him. When He had been baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him. And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

Jesus came "up out of the water." And maybe what's most important is that God was well pleased.

SLIDE • JORDAN RIVER. John wrote that John the Baptist baptized at the River Jordan because there was "much water there" (John 3:23). Phillip met a man from Ethiopia riding along in a chariot. The story says, (**SLIDES (2) • ACTS 8:36–38**) Now as they went down the road, they came to some water. And the eunuch said, "See, here is water. What hinders me from being baptized?" Then Philip said, "If you believe with all your heart, you may." And he answered and said, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." So he commanded the chariot to stand still. And both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and he baptized him." In a RIVER, because there needed to be enough water to baptize the man by immersion. And you need to see verse 39. (**SLIDE • ACTS 8:39**) "Now when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught Philip away, so that the eunuch saw him no more; and he went on his way rejoicing." And that's very important. There was rejoicing when this took place.

SLIDE • BAPTISM. The word "baptize" means to "immerse." So if it isn't immersion, it isn't baptism. And Jesus said, (**SLIDE • MARK 16:16**) "He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned."

What baptism does is it brings together TWO important things. There's the belief—which you do inwardly—and then the demonstration of that belief. The outward sign. Baptism. You can say you love someone, but the wedding ceremony is what makes that official, it's your witness to the love you're experiencing.

SLIDE • JESUS. Baptism functions like a grave—a grave between the old life of sin, and the new life of faith in Jesus. It's there that you experience renewal. You've experienced that by faith, but now your sins are washed away, you've been made new and clean, and you're able to say what Paul said when he wrote to the Galatian church. (**SLIDE • GALATIANS 2:20**) "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me."

If you've wondered how it came to be that there are so many different kinds of baptism around today, you're not alone. But it went like this, basically.

SLIDE • CATHEDRAL. Until the 13th century, baptism was almost entirely by immersion. You can visit old cathedrals and see that they have baptistry where they used to baptize people by immersion. In churches where they gave up on Bible baptism years ago.

If you visit the (**SLIDE • LEANING TOWER OF PISA**) Leaning Tower of Pisa, you'll see that at the (**SLIDE • BAPTISTRY BUILDING**) cathedral complex is a (**SLIDE • BAPTISTRY**) baptistry. People were baptized by immersion there at one stage. In the fourteenth century, sprinkling was accepted by the church as just as valid as immersion.

SLIDE • QUOTE. "For several centuries after the establishment of Christianity, baptism was usually conferred by immersion, but since the twelfth century the practice of baptizing by infusion has prevailed in the Catholic Church, as this manner is attended with less inconvenience than baptism by immersion." Faith of Our Fathers, p. 275.

SLIDE • BABY. And due to the false teaching that a person is born with something called 'original sin', which Augustine said would lead to an unbaptized baby going to hell if he or she died without that original sin having been remitted by baptism. Rather than immerse a baby, it was thought to be just as valid to just sprinkle a little water on the infant's head. Of course, that's not the least bit Biblical.

SLIDE • BIBLE. So what should a person do before baptism? I can suggest three things.

SLIDE • REPENT. That means to be sorry for and to turn away from your sins.

SLIDE • ACTS 2:38 says, "Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."

SLIDE • BELIEVE. As Paul told the jail keeper in Philippi, (**SLIDE • ACTS 16:31**) "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household" (Acts 16:31).

SLIDE • FOLLOW. Remember Matthew 28:19?

SLIDE • MATTHEW 28:19. "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." Jesus said, Baptize people after they have become disciples. A disciple is a follower. You choose to follow Jesus, you signify that in baptism.

SLIDE • BABY. This isn't something babies would participate in. Baptism follows a personal decision, made by someone who could repent, believe or follow. As a baby, Jesus was dedicated, and that's what is appropriate today.

When a person is baptized, that person has the assurance that his or her sins are forgiven. You receive the Holy Spirit into your life, and you become part of the family of God by adoption.

SLIDE • WEDDING. Baptism is a new beginning with God. Just like a marriage ceremony unites two people in marriage, baptism unites a person with Jesus and His church.

You come to Jesus, He takes your heart, then the old you is buried, and a new you is raised up to live a completely new life. Your sin is washed away, just like Naaman's leprosy was washed away in the River Jordan.

This is what's important about this. Baptism is outward. It's something you do, you go through. And why? Because you will always know you've had that starting point, that rebirth. You know how it can be hard to start again.

What happens when you make mistakes in life? It happens. In relationships. In marriages. Colossal damage can be done. People can get into financial trouble. Financial ruin. Bankruptcy. If you've tarnished your reputation, how do you get it back?

I read recently about an executive who killed a young man when he was 16. Senseless. Did it out of anger. Went to jail. Carried it with him for many years. Difficult to get over that. But God has a solution.

SLIDE • 2 CORINTHIANS 5:17. "If any man be in Christ he is a new creature. Old things are passed away. Behold, all things become new."

I love how God says through the prophecy Isaiah (43:19), "I will do a new thing." That's what He does. Paul wrote that God makes a new person out of you and Jesus. When He connects your life with the life of Jesus, you're new.

SLIDE • ROMANS 8:1. "Therefore, if any man be in Christ, He is a new creature. Old things are passed away, behold all things are become new."

SLIDE • JESUS. God says, "Believe in the name of Jesus and you can be saved," and that's not enough for some people. "You are saved by grace through faith!" That's not enough for some people. It's too easy. "You can have eternal life simply by accepting what I've done for you. No pilgrimages, no penance, no price—just believe and you can know I've given you a new heart and a new life." Too simple for some people. They want to make it harder, they want to work, they want to make it difficult, instead of accepting the gift. Jesus has already done the difficult part for you. He died on a cross.

Can you exercise saving faith in Jesus now? He invites you to be baptized. The easiest thing ever. If you've not been baptized, or if you've been baptized but you feel that you should be baptized again, I want to give you the opportunity to follow Jesus by faith tonight.

SLIDE • DECISION CARD POINT BY POINT.



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