

HOPE FOR HUMANITY

REVELATION TODAY

PRESENTATION 18 • FINDING LIGHT IN THE DARKNESS

SLIDE • SAN JOSE MINE. The mine itself was a copper and gold mine, about an 8 and 1/2 hour drive north of Santiago, Chile's capital. Chile is an odd shape for a country. More than 2600 miles long, and yet only an average of 110 miles wide.

SLIDE • ANDES. The Andes Mountains really prevented Chile from expanding east, so north or south was the only direction to go. That mine had had several accidents over the years, although accidents and mines are not strangers to each other. However, reports say little was done to improve the mine after an explosion which killed three men in 2007. On an August day in 2010, a collapse trapped 33 miners. They were 2300 feet underground, and it was two and a half weeks before anyone knew they were still alive. A probe sent down into the mine collected a note from the **(SLIDE • NOTE FROM MEN)** men which read, "Estamos bien en el refugio los 33." Then followed the complex drama of rescuing the miners.

SLIDE • MINERS EMERGING. After 69 days underground, each of the men was brought to the surface in a specially designed capsule, the rescue taking almost an entire day to complete.

The group's leader, Mario Sepulveda, said later, "On the way out, it was terrible, terrible. "I screamed. I just wanted to get out, to see the light."

SLIDE • DARKNESS. Imagine being in the dark all that time. The constant 90 percent humidity was a big challenge, as were hunger and thirst, and maintaining the presence of mind to assist with their own rescue. But constant darkness was a danger. And that's because, as Newsweek reported, "decades of research has shown the human body is built to function on the rhythm of the rising and setting sun." If sunlight isn't telling your brain when we should sleep, you can develop a wide range of health problems, you can become irritable or depressed, and your fine motor skills suffer. A number of health problems can occur if you don't have enough light. The Chilean miners did have battery-powered lamps, but they weren't thought to be bright enough to stave off those health challenges.

The Bible tells us that light was created on the first day of creation week. And it's fascinating that light existed even before the sun, moon and stars had been created. And that's because God is light, and there's light in His presence.

Near the very beginning of the gospel we read this.

SLIDE • JOHN 1:4-5. In him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.

SLIDE • IN JOHN 8:12, John wrote, "Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, "I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life."

SLIDE • IN JOHN 3:19, just after Jesus had told Nicodemus that God so loved the world, Jesus said, “And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.”

SLIDE • JOHN 12:46. Jesus said in John 12:46, “I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness.”

Now, you don’t want to look for light in the wrong place. Darkness isn’t light, and it cannot be. And Jesus has done all He can to guide us in light.

SLIDE • MATTHEW 16:18 KJV. “And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.” The word Jesus used there that translates to “Peter” is the Greek word (**SLIDE • PETROS**) “Petros”, meaning “a stone.” It could mean a rock, but not a large rock. Like something you might dig out of your lawn so the mower doesn’t tangle with it. But when Jesus said, “Upon this rock,” he used the (**SLIDE • PETRA**) Greek word, “petra”, which means, “rock”, a MASS of rock. (**SLIDE • PETRA PICS**) There’s a reason that ancient city in Jordan is called “Petra,” and that’s because it’s carved out of rock. A lot of rock. Jesus told Peter that He would establish a church. “On this rock I will build my church.” Of course that Rock wasn’t Peter. In fact, the claim that the church was built on Peter wasn’t even made for another four centuries. And it’s well known that when an important church council was held—the Jerusalem Council, you read about it in Acts 15—the chair of that meeting, the spokesperson, was James. Not Peter. The Rock upon which the church is founded is Jesus! Upon this Rock? Jesus is saying, “I will establish the church upon myself.”

David wrote that God’s word is a

SLIDE • PSALM 119:105. “Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.”

And Paul wrote that the church is to be

SLIDE • 1 TIMOTHY 3:15. “the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.”

SLIDE • VIDEO, EMPTY CHURCH. But in this country, the percentage of adults who belong to a church or to another religious institution has plummeted by 20 percentage points over the past two decades. The Gallup organization says that in 1999, 70 percent of US adults claimed church membership, but that number has been steadily dropping, while the number of unaffiliated people rose from 8 percent to 19 percent. Less than one in ten, to one in five. Church membership among Catholics dropped sharply, from 76 percent to 63 percent. The number of Hispanic Americans who claim church membership dropped from 68 percent to 45 percent. Protestants dropped from 73 percent to 67 percent. And my expectation is that if you looked at actual engagement rather than simply church membership, those numbers might be vastly different. Going to church at Easter and Christmas does not make one a Christian. Other research states 49 percent of people attend church once a month. And of course, Covid has had a dramatic effect on people and church attendance, with many people even quitting digital attendance.

SLIDE • CHURCH/SIGN. It was reported earlier this year that as many as 100,000 of the country’s almost 400,000 churches could close in the next few years. That sounds a lot like exaggeration, with another study saying that in 2019, 4,500 Protestant congregations closed, while 3000 new ones started. The Barna research people suggest 20 percent of churches could close before very long.

SLIDE • TOWN/CHURCHES. There are well over 200 different denominations in the United States, but certainly more different groups that might not consider themselves as denominations.

SLIDE • EMPTY CHURCH. Among the reasons you'll find listed as to why people stop going to church, is

- They got out of the habit.
- They stopped going after high school.
- They don't like institutional churches. (Which is interesting, because the same people DO like institutional banking, institutional insurance companies, and they're glad we have an institutional military!)
- Some people are hurt at church.
- Others can't find a church to meet their needs. A consumer mentality.

Just over 50 percent of Canadians identify as Christian, and it's reported that just 1 Canadian in 10 attend religious services weekly. After World War 2, that number was 67 percent, so there's been a massive slide in Canada over the years.

Nevertheless, the idea of church is very Biblical, the church was established by Jesus, and Jesus said He would have a church. Paul greeted the church in Caesarea, you read in the book of Acts. **(SLIDE • ACTS 20:17)** "And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called the elders of the church." He called for the elders of the church in Ephesus.

He wrote of **(SLIDE • ROMANS 16:1)** "the church which is at Cenchrea," in Romans 16.

He wrote **(SLIDE • 1 CORINTHIANS 1:2)** "To the church of God which is at Corinth," and you find references like this all through the New Testament. It's Biblical to be part of a church. There's no question about that.

And when you get to the book of Revelation—the middle chapter of the book, the hinge of the book, you see a strong focus on God's church.

SLIDE • REVELATION 12:1. "And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars."

This is a picture of the church down through time. And you get the idea reading this chapter that the church is more than just a denomination, more than a building. You see the church is a movement, which down through the years has grown in its understanding. And if we look at the end of this chapter, we see one of the reasons why the church has been challenged in recent years.

SLIDE • REVELATION 12:17. "And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed."

Notice that? The dragon—the devil—was angry with the church, and went to make war against it. And that's why we see moral falls among some church leaders, and infighting in church, and dissatisfaction here and there. The devil is angry with the church. And why? Because of what we read earlier. It's the pillar and the ground of the truth! It shares the gospel of Jesus. It carries the message of the cross. It proclaims that God is good and God is love—and the devil does NOT want you to know that. So he attacks the church. Of course, the church needs to do all it can to ward off those attacks, and we know God is greater **(SLIDE • 1 JOHN 4:4)** than the enemy. So undoubtedly, the church as an institution is under attack, and before Jesus returns, the attack will intensify.

Back to Revelation 12. Verse 4.

SLIDE • REVELATION 12:4. “Drew a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth.” It says that “the dragon stood before the woman who was ready to give birth, to devour her Child as soon as it was born.” This is the devil, seeking to destroy Jesus. Verse 6 says,

SLIDE • REVELATION 12:6. “Then the woman fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God, that they should feed her there one thousand two hundred and sixty days.” That’s the 1260 years when the Bible was trampled on, when a fallen church was in charge, when it was difficult to access truth, when people died for their faith in huge numbers, when the true church was persecuted.

SLIDE • PERSECUTION. You see, there was a time when the church was intensely persecuted. Not only were millions killed for their faith in God, but the ruling church became darkened with teachings that had no basis in the Bible, while the pure teachings of the Bible were crowded out by tradition and apostasy.

SLIDE • FALSE TEACHINGS. Infant baptism replaced baptism by immersion.

- Transubstantiation replaced the Lord’s Supper.
- The immortality of the soul replaced the Biblical teaching of death being a sleep.
- Confession to God was replaced with confession to a priest.
- And the Bible Sabbath was replaced by the day of the sun—Sunday.

The church was in the wilderness. It is true that there were some who clung to the truths of God’s word. And God would not allow His church to stay in the wilderness forever.

The chapter then recaps the fall of Satan, his eviction from heaven, and then verse 12 says, (**SLIDE • REVELATION 12:12**) “Therefore rejoice, O heavens, and you who dwell in them! Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and the sea! For the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, because he knows that he has a short time.” Which reiterates that this spiritual battle we’re in is not a game. If you’ve not been taking your faith seriously, you know that you really need to. If it seems life if kicking you around, it MIGHT be that you’ve never really placed yourself in the arms of God, you’ve never read your Bible like you were serious about it, you’ve never recognized that this is a life and death battle we’re in.

SLIDE • LIGHT. God would have a church that would shine His light in the world. He would have a church that would uphold His word and show people in the last days how they could know God and know His truth. He would have a church that would prepare people to be ready for the return of Jesus.

SLIDE • REVELATION 12:17. Now notice what it says. The church in the last days is a remnant. That means, something that remains. And you’ll see something—they keep the commandments of God.

So God’s church in earth’s last days will be characterized as keeping the commandments of God. That’s significant, because most denominational groups, as you and I both know, make no claim to keep the commandments of God. They’ll say they keep 9, but not 10, not the fourth commandment. That one, they’ll say, was nailed to the cross. That one, they’ll say, was changed owing to the resurrection. I want you to be more careful than that. God wants you to be more honest than that. Of course the commandments of God were not changed. Jesus said, (**SLIDE • MATTHEW 5:17–18 KJV**) “Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.”

SLIDE • REVELATION 14:12. “Here is the patience of the saints. Here are they that keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus.”

SLIDE • REVELATION 22:14. “Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.”

SLIDE • 1 JOHN 5:2–3. “By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous.”

SLIDE • 1 JOHN 2:4. In fact, John takes this further by saying, “He who says, “I know Him,” and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.”

But God will have a people on Earth before Jesus returns who will keep His commandments.

What else do we see?

SLIDE • GOSPEL/PEOPLE. In Revelation 14:6 we read that God’s last-day message is the “everlasting gospel.” Saved by grace/faith Jesus. Salvation is free in Jesus, and God’s church will proclaim that!

And what is contained in that? The message of the judgment hour, the warning against receiving the mark of the beast, the call by God to keep the 7th-day Sabbath... The Everlasting Gospel!

Where will God’s church proclaim the everlasting gospel?

SLIDE • REVELATION 14:6. To “every nation, kindred, tongue and people...”

SLIDE • PLANET. God’s message will go to the world.

SLIDE • REVELATION 12:17 KJV. “And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.”

Now what is the “testimony of Jesus Christ.” The Bible says in Revelation 19:10

SLIDE • REVELATION 19:10. “The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.” That’s just the same as saying the gift of prophecy.

Interesting how some people relate to this. No, Nostradamus was not a prophet, nor was Jeanne Dixon. There wasn’t a Holy spirit gift at work there.

SLIDE • CHURCH/BINOCULARS. So how do you find the genuine gift of prophecy? The Bible tells us.

SLIDE • 1 CORINTHIANS 12:28. “And God has appointed these in the church: first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, varieties of tongues.”

Just as He gives other gifts, He gives the gift of prophecy. Jesus warned us to watch for false prophets, so we can expect the genuine gift of prophecy would exist too.

SLIDE • ACCURATE (Jeremiah 28:9)

SLIDE • IN HARMONY WITH THE BIBLE (Deuteronomy 13:1–3)

SLIDE • EXALT JESUS (1 John 4:2)

SLIDE • UPHOLD GOD'S LAW (Isaiah 8:20)

Notice what this verse says.

SLIDE • ISAIAH 8:20. "To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, it is because there is no light in them" Isaiah 8:20.

SLIDE • IN THE CHURCH. Found in the church (1 Corinthians 12:28)

God gives spiritual gifts to benefit and strengthen the church. Noah was given the gift of prophecy to warn people the flood was coming. John the Baptist was given the gift of prophecy to prepare them for the first coming of Jesus. It would make sense for God to give the gift of prophecy to prepare people for the second coming of Jesus.

To urge people to be faithful. To call people to the word of God. To encourage people to surrender to God fully. The gift of prophecy.

SLIDE • AMOS 3:7. "Surely the Lord would do nothing except He reveals His secrets to His servants the prophets."

And God said His remnant in the last days would see this gift in action. How did God place this gift in the Remnant, those who keep His commandments?

In the 1800s, when people across American and around the world were talking about the return of Jesus, God did something remarkable.

A Baptist preacher named William Miller made a prediction that Jesus would return in 1843. He misunderstood the prophecy about the judgment hour. This man was an honest-hearted man and he loved God, but he was wrong about this. This Baptist preacher said Jesus would return, but Jesus didn't return.

SLIDE • SECOND COMING. People were now starting to think about the Second Coming of Jesus, and so in the midst of this God called a 17 year old young woman and blessed her with a special endowment of the Holy Spirit. For over 70 years she shared with others the wisdom God shared with her. (**SLIDE • BOOKS**) Today there are more than 100 books bearing her name available in the English language. In fact, she is the most translated female author in the history of modern literature—more than 135 languages.

What she has shared with others about Christ and His word has changed lives around the world, and the church she helped found is in more countries than any other Protestant church on the planet.

Her book Steps to Christ is the best I know outside the Bible on the subject of successful Christian living. She wrote about the life of Christ, and the parables of Christ, and on many other topics to help a person grow in Jesus.

The Ministry of Healing—which deals with being physically and spiritually healthy—has been praised as being 100 years ahead of its time.

She said of tobacco...

SLIDE • SMOKER. "Tobacco is a slow, insidious, but most malignant poison."

SLIDES (2) • QUOTE. *Clive McKay, former professor, Cornell University* "Whatever may be the religious belief of a reader, he or she cannot help but gain much guidance in a better and healthier way of life

from reading the major works of Ellen G White. Every modern specialist in nutrition whose life is dedicated to human welfare must be impressed... by the writings and leadership of Ellen G White.”

SLIDE • BIBLE.

Her ministry has helped countless thousands begin a relationship with Jesus Christ, and grow their faith in the Bible. Exactly what the gift of prophecy is supposed to do.

Does God give the Gift of Prophecy to take the place of the Bible? Is it meant to make the Bible less important? Is it meant to be like having another Bible? Absolutely not. She was clear that her role was to point people to the Bible.

I want to encourage you to become familiar with what she wrote. You’ll be blessed!

Let’s look again at God’s last-day remnant. Here’s what we’ve seen so far.

SLIDE • LIST.

- Everlasting Gospel.
- Keep God’s commandments.
- Worldwide.
- Gift of Prophecy.

The Bible portrays an increasing amount of light shining through the church. We saw in Revelation 12 a church clothed in light. But it wasn’t long until apostasy entered the church.

Paul spoke of this in Acts 20:29.

SLIDE • ACTS 20:29. “For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock.”

He wrote about perilous times coming in earth’s last days, and about the rise of the “man of sin,” which would plunge the church and to a great extent the world into abject darkness. But God had a plan.

SLIDE • WALDENSIAINS. The motto of the Waldensian Christians was, Lux Lucet in Tenebris. Light Shines in Darkness.

SLIDE • COAT OF ARMS. The words appeared on their coat of arms. These were remarkable believers, forbidden by the pope of explaining Scripture without authorization from the local clergy. They disobeyed and began to preach according to their own understanding of the Scriptures, and were ruthlessly persecuted. And their cry was, “Light shines in darkness.” God’s will is that the light would shine.

SLIDE • LIGHT. There’s something interesting about light. Light is actually electromagnetic radiation, and the human eye can’t discern all the light that there is. The illumination we can see is a small portion of the light spectrum.

SLIDE • LIGHT SPECTRUM. We don’t see infrared light, ultraviolet light, gamma rays, x-rays. They’re light, but we don’t detect it with the naked eye. But with help we can see these light forms.

Now, that’s true for the word of God. You see light.

SLIDE • JESUS.

SLIDE • THE CROSS.

SLIDE • STARS CREATION and you see that readily.

SLIDE • BIBLE. But there's more light, and God has been leading you into greater light. It can be a challenge sometimes. You know what it's like when you're in a dark place and you emerge into the light? That can be trying. But what you don't want to do is retreat to where there's less light. You want all the light of the word of God you can gather.

Peter wrote, (**SLIDE • 1 PETER 2:9**) "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light."

And John urged us to walk in the light.

SLIDE • 1 JOHN 1:7 says, "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin."

Incredibly, three of history's greatest artists lived at the same time.

SLIDE • MONA LISA. Leonardo DaVinci

SLIDE • THE PIETA. Michelangelo, and...

SLIDE • ARTWORK. Raphael, the one you've likely heard the least about. Raphael was truly great in his own right, but it's said he was influenced by Michelangelo to the point that when he saw some of Michelangelo's artworks he then went and refined his own.

SLIDE • JESUS. And that's what we do in faith. We see Jesus, we look into the Bible, and then we refine our experience—or we ask God to do so.

SLIDE • IN 2 CORINTHIANS 3:18, Paul wrote, "But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." What he's saying is that as we see Jesus, as we look to Jesus, we're changed and we become more like Jesus. If you see areas in your life that need to be changed, look to Jesus, and He'll do that work in you.

SLIDE • SECOND COMING. Are you doing that? I want to encourage you to do so, and I want to encourage you to tell God that's your desire.

Appeal Card.

SLIDES • DECISION CARD X 3.

SLIDE • SECOND COMING OF JESUS.



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