

HOPE FOR HUMANITY

REVELATION TODAY

PRESENTATION 4 • HOPE FOR HUMANITY: WHEN JUSTICE PREVAILS

SLIDE • GILBERT POOLE. I'd like to tell you about a man who had recently been released from prison after spending 32 years behind bars. He was found guilty of murdering a man in 1988. The man had been at a bar. His body was found a couple of days later in a wooded area not far from where he lived. Five months later, a man named Gilbert Poole was arrested for the murder, he was tried, found guilty, and sentenced to life without the possibility of parole. But 32 years later, it was ruled that he in fact had not committed the crime. There was absolutely no evidence to link him to the crime. He was convicted on the testimony of a medical expert whose "expert testimony" would today not even be admissible in court because it's regarded today as "junk science."

SLIDE • PRISON. 32 years in prison, during which time his family died, his reputation was trashed, and his outlook was bleak. Until lawyers finally intervened, and with help from the Innocence Project and the Attorney General's office in the state in which he lived, our man wasn't only let out of prison, he was exonerated. It was found—32 years later—that he certainly did not commit the crime. He had said so all along he did not, and finally it was agreed that he was right. He's now a free man, figuring out how to navigate a world he hasn't been part of for a third of a century.

Fascinatingly, he says he doesn't really have an axe to grind with the justice system. He told me he thinks that by and large the justice system is pretty good—but that when it doesn't work, it fails spectacularly.

Mr Poole's experience is not unique. There are well-known stories of similar things happening.

SLIDE • RUBIN HURRICANE CARTER. Rubin Carter was a professional boxer who was given the nickname "Hurricane." He won 27 of his 40 professional fights, and at one time in the 1960s was ranked in the top 5 in the world. He was convicted of a crime he never committed and spent 19 years in prison.

That's difficult, isn't it? At times there are bad actors in the legal system, at times mistakes are made, at other times, incompetence.

SLIDE • EXECUTION ROOM. Cameron Todd Willingham was convicted of a terrible crime and executed. Before his execution scientists described the arson investigation that had been carried out as "junk science." He's dead now. Lethal injection. And he didn't commit the crime.

SLIDE • LADY JUSTICE STATUE. You've no doubt seen Lady Justice. She's the representation of justice, often seen outside courthouses. Blindfolded—representing impartiality and objectivity, and that justice should be dispensed without reference to status.

The scales represent weighing the evidence.

The sword represents justice, which can be swift and final.

The intent being that justice is fair, and accurate.

How we do it is you commit a crime, you do the time. Get a parking ticket, pay a fine. Or you may have to perform community service, or be incarcerated. As a society we get it right a lot of the time, occasionally we get it wrong, sometimes the system doesn't work, mostly it does.

SLIDE • COURT. In this country, there are municipal courts, district courts, circuit courts and

SLIDE • SUPREME COURT. The supreme court.

SLIDE • INTERNATIONAL COURT OF JUSTICE. To take it a little further, the United Nations operates the International Court of Justice, located in the city of The Hague, in the Netherlands.

But how does God do justice? What does heaven do about sin? How does God judge? The Bible shows us. What's going on behind the scenes? Significant question.

I want to introduce you to a very important passage in the Bible. Not only is it important, but it's a passage that is full of hope. And that's what we need to understand about the Bible, and the prophecies of the Bible. They're for us, and not against us. First, look with me at the way the book of Revelation opens.

SLIDE • REVELATION 1:1. The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John.

We see the book of Revelation is quite simply the revelation of Jesus. It shows us who Jesus is, what His will is, and the plans that God has for each one of us. Given that the book of Revelation ends with the Earth being made new and the saved in the presence of God for eternity, it's a book with a pretty good ending, isn't it?

SLIDE • REVELATION 1:5. "Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood."

Now here's that passage I said we'd look at.

SLIDE • REVELATION 14:6–7. And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people. Saying with a loud voice, "Fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment is come."

An angel. A messenger. Flying in the midst of heaven, indicating the message is to be "seen" by all, and speaking with a loud voice. This is something everyone in the world is going to hear. And it's good news. Now, you'll notice something in that passage. "The hour of His judgment is come."

Judgment. In the Bible. Think that through. If you're being judged in an earthly court, you might think there are things the judge might never know. Perhaps some evidence will never come to light. But we can't imagine that will happen in heaven's courtroom. God won't make any mistakes. Now, that might not seem like good news! But we'll reconcile all of that before we're done.

Some people might equate God and judgment with wrath. As though this has to be bad news. But let's think about that.

Ezekiel 33:11 "I have no pleasure in the path of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?" The Bible tells us God causes the rain to fall on the just and on the unjust. God doesn't have a vendetta against lost people.

SLIDE • JOHN 3:16. “God so loved the world that He gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”

In a world that is coming apart at the seams, God is doing all He can to draw people to Himself. That’s His wish. That people be saved. If the gospel is good news—and it is—then the news about the judgment in Revelation has to be good news as it comes in the context of the Everlasting Gospel.

So this leads us to the question of judgment.

SLIDE • REVELATION 14:7 says, “Fear God and give glory to Him”, because “the hour of His judgment is come”. This is a message that has something to do with preparing people for judgment, and seeing them through it victoriously.

So where in the Bible can we learn about judgment? One of the interesting things

SLIDE • REVELATION. About the book of Revelation is that roughly 3/4 of the verses in it are taken from or contain allusions to the Old Testament. John wrote much of it in a sort of code.

During World War 2, the British and others worked to crack German codes so they could understand what Germans communications really meant.

SLIDE • ENIGMA MACHINE. Alan Turning led a team which used the Enigma Machine to crack the German codes. The Old Testament is the enigma machine that enables you to crack the code of the book of Revelation, and we find the Old Testament talking about judgment in Daniel 7.

SLIDE (2) • DANIEL 7:9–10. A picture of the judgment in process.

“I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool: his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire. A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him: thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened.”

Indeed, the Bible says that **SLIDE • 2 CORINTHIANS 5:10 KJV**. We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ.

That’s quite a thought, isn’t it? Especially if you’re not living with reference to God, if you’re a little careless about God and the things of heaven, you recognize that there’s coming a time when God will judge.

SLIDE • ECCLESIASTES 12:13–14. “Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.”

So how much confidence can a person have in this judgment? Consider this.

SLIDE • ROMANS 3:23 says, “For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.”

And what else do we know?

SLIDE • ROMANS 6:23. “The wages of sin is death.”

So what that means is if you’ve sinned, you’re facing the death penalty.

Let's ask ourselves about that. Is that entirely fair? Is it fair for God to say to people, "Because you're sinned you cannot come to heaven?" Well, God doesn't actually say that. I've told you we have good news for you tonight.

What sin does is that it separates people from God. The prophet Isaiah said so. And that's a big problem because God is the source of life.

SLIDE • 1 JOHN 5:12 NKJV says, "He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life."

The reason I'm a Christian isn't because I'm better than anyone, and it isn't because others are not worthy. One reason is that life is found in Jesus. He called Himself "the way, the truth and the life." Jesus is the life giver.

Way back at the beginning, God created the world. It was perfect. After Adam and Eve were created God proclaimed that the world was "very good." But it didn't take long for things to go bad.

Back to Genesis 3.

SLIDE • GENESIS 3:1–6. "Now the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said to the woman, "Has God indeed said, 'You shall not eat of every tree of the garden?'" And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat the fruit of the trees of the garden; but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God has said, 'You shall not eat it, nor shall you touch it, lest you die.'" Then the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die. For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate."

And that was that. They had sinned, and as a result, death came into the world. And why was that? They had participated in sin. They didn't have to. But they fell into sin. And sin has grown in the world. It has developed until it's the default course of action for people everywhere, as though it isn't harmful.

SLIDE • JOHN 5:40. In fact, Jesus spells out the situation in the world today, when He says, "But you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life" (John 5:40).

Let me share something with you. If you want hope, if you want life, if you want to face the future knowing you've got something to look forward to beyond this life, God offers you the way to a security that money can't buy, that fame can't buy, that success in your work can't buy, that popularity can't buy.

Look how easy God makes this. No money, no pilgrimage... Easy.

SLIDE • JOHN 3:16. "For God so loved the world that He gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

SLIDE • CROSS. Jesus died for you. He died for you so that you wouldn't need to die. He died for you so that the penalty of your sins could be paid. Yes, He died for you! He died for your meanness, He died for your dishonesty, He died for your immorality, He died for your addictions, He died for your bad temper—He died so that you could be forgiven for all of your sins, forgiven and cleaned up and assured of new life—now and forever.

Here are four simple steps to receiving everlasting life from God.

SLIDE • BELIEVE 1. You can BELIEVE that God loves you and that He wants to save you through Jesus Christ. When Jesus called Himself “the Way, the Truth and the Life,” he was saying that if you’ll believe in Him and accept Him He will save you and give you a new life. We’ve seen the Bible says that we’re sinners, and that sin ultimately leads to death, but it says in Romans 5:8 that “while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”

SLIDE • REPENT. You believe? Now you REPENT.

SLIDE • ACTS 3:19. “Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out.”

How do we get rid of sin? By asking God to forgive us. And when He forgives us, we turn away from sin. If poison was making you sick, you’d stop drinking poison! Repentance is turning away from sin, choosing to leave it behind. That’s the violent man turning away from violence, the immoral person choosing purity, the thief choosing to be honest, the drunk choosing to stop drinking. You give God your will, and His power starts to reign in your life.

SLIDE • CONFESS. Then we CONFESS our sins to God.

SLIDE • 1 JOHN 1:9. “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

How is that? If you’ll confess, He’ll forgive. And He’ll not only forgive, but He’ll cleanse you! Your former life? Gone! Just gone! Forgiven!! Your old ways? Forgiven! And cleansed. The sin is gone, the stains are gone, and God considers you to be a new creature altogether. Amen!

SLIDE • RECEIVE. And then you RECEIVE Jesus. Look at Revelation 3:20.

SLIDE • REVELATION 3:20 NKJV it says: “Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me.”

If you receive Jesus, He will come into your life and live His life in you. I have to share one of my favorite verses in all the Bible (Philippians 2:13).

SLIDE • PHILIPPIANS 2:13. “It is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure.”

God pledges to work in your life. To actually LIVE in your life. That’s an incredible promise.

You have people who see that God is on the warpath with people. He’s not. HE’s doing all He can to turn people to Himself. But remember this great battle going on behind the scenes. This is where we are today.

We’re being told—The Bible is all fairytales. Now, do you recall how I discussed with you how rapidly things are changing in this world? We’ve gone from shouting to our next-door neighbors to making video calls to people on another continent. Well, skepticism and doubt and criticism of the Bible has grown quickly, too. It wasn’t long ago that we printed “In God We Trust,” on our currency in this country. And now the Bible is disregarded and evolution is taught as fact. There’s a real spiritual battle going on in the world.

SLIDE • EPHESIANS 6:10–12. Writing to the Ephesians, Paul wrote, “Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.”

There's a real battle raging around us. That's why there's sin and natural disasters and illness. An angry devil causes misery and pain in this world, and then wants you to think it's all God's fault. But that's not what God is about at all.

SLIDE • 1 JOHN 4:8. "God is love." Remember the Bible says that God is love.

SLIDE • JOHN 6:37 NKJV. "All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out."

SLIDE • MATTHEW 11:28. "Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light."

Not willing that any should perish.

SLIDE • JESUS WITH CHILDREN. Who is this? This is a loving God, a good God. The Bible stories tell us again and again what God is like. The story of

- The woman at the well
- The thief on the cross
- A woman taken in adultery
- Peter, denied Jesus in a catastrophic way. Jesus was on the way to the cross to die for Peter, and Peter declared he didn't even know who Jesus was, and Jesus response was to forgive Peter. Peter went on to write two books of the New Testament.
- The Prodigal Son was welcomed home by a loving Father
- The lost sheep was found and carried home by the Good Shepherd

You see, this is what's so remarkable about the plan of salvation. Not a single one of us are innocent.

SLIDE • ATLANTA. Do you remember the story of a man named Richard Jewell? When a bomb went off in Atlanta during the 1996 Olympic Games, Richard Jewell, who was working as a security guard at the site of the bombing, became a suspect. His life was essentially ruined, as over-zealous law enforcement officials decided Mr Jewell was responsible for the bombing, which killed a woman and injured over 100 other people. In time, it would be revealed the Jewell wasn't involved in the bombing in any way. He really was a hero who saved many people from injury and perhaps even death. In the rush to judgment, an innocent man was presumed to be guilty.

But in God's judgment, every single person is guilty, even though God chooses to treat them as though they were innocent. And that's because Jesus has died in the place of you and me, so we could receive everlasting life.

SLIDE • GILBERT POOLE. The difference between someone like Gilbert Poole and you & me, is that Mr Poole was innocent. When he was exonerated, he wasn't being forgiven for something he had never done, but he was released from prison because he had never committed a crime. In heaven's judgment, we're released from prison even though we've committed the crime. Remember, the wages of sin is death.

We spoke earlier about the humanity's fall into sin. Adam and Eve sinned, and God then did something quite remarkable.

SLIDE • GENESIS 3:8. “And they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God amongst the trees of the garden.”

SLIDE • GENESIS 3:9. “And the Lord God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou?”

SLIDE • GENESIS 3:21. “Unto Adam also and to his wife did the Lord God make coats of skins, and clothed them.”

Back to the fall. Death came, but then, God made coats. Skins. Animals had **SLIDE • THE CROSS DIED**. This represented the death of Jesus.

Before we go too much further in this series of presentations - before we dig deeper into prophecy, before we talk about the final events of this Earth's history, I want to invite you to make sure

Appeal

Decision Card point by point. Wes has the decision card.

SLIDE • I accept Jesus Christ as my Lord and personal Savior.

SLIDE • I repent of my sins, and believe that God forgives me and gives me salvation as a free gift.

SLIDE • I choose to surrender my life to Jesus, and desire to live my life according to His Word.

SLIDE • I am rededicating my life to Jesus today.

SLIDE • I have a request for prayer.

SLIDE • Second Coming



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