

The Assignment of the Apostle

Chapter 17

New Testament Audio Lesson #89



Objective: To understand the outline and chronology of the book of Revelation



When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead. Then he placed his right hand on me and said: “Do not be afraid. I am the First and the Last. I am the Living One; I was dead, and behold I am alive for ever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and Hades. Write, therefore, what you have seen, what is now and what will take place later.”

—Revelation 1:17-19

(Jesus said) “Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me”

—Revelation 3:20

An important key to unlocking the Revelation of Jesus Christ that John received on the isle of Patmos is the outline of the book. Jesus told John to record what he had seen and to address it to the seven churches. John would also write “the things which are,” such as what was happening in the churches, as well as the things that would happen in the future. These three points—the past, the present, and the future—make up the outline of the book.

In chapters two and three, Jesus addresses the seven churches that existed in Asia Minor at the time: Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea. His comments to the churches end with the phrase, “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches,” and He urges most of them to repent.

For example, the first church addressed is Ephesus, which has forsaken its first love, Jesus. If they do not repent, Jesus says He will remove their candlestick— their ministry.

Some scholars believe that these churches represent an outline of church history. If so, Laodicea, the last church addressed, represents the church today. Because they are lukewarm in their faith, Jesus is about to spit them out of His mouth. They think they are rich, but He calls them “wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked.” He reminds them that He disciplines those He loves and tells them to repent and open the door to fellowship with Him.

The fourth key to unlocking the Revelation is to understand the chronology of chapters 6-19, which make up the third part of the book’s outline and focus on the future. Chapters 4 and 5 examine worship in heaven, but chapter 6 begins the passages that are difficult to interpret. John describes the series of events that make up the Second Coming of Jesus Christ, the Great Tribulation.

In the next section, the Judgments of the Seven Seals, the Seven Trumpets and the Seven Bowls are difficult and awesome to read, and the added commentary is not in chronological order. Ask the Holy Spirit to guide you as you read these passages.



1. True or False: The church at Sardis was neither hot nor cold.
2. True or False: What Jesus said to the churches does not apply to us today.
3. True or False: It is possible to outline the book of Revelation.
4. True or False: The commentary between the Judgments is not easy to understand.

Choose all answers that apply.

5. What is John's assignment?
 - a. To visit the churches
 - b. To escape from exile
 - c. To meet with the other apostles
 - d. To write what he sees
6. What are the three divisions of the outline of the Revelation?
 - a. Earth, heaven, hell
 - b. Seals, trumpets, bowls
 - c. Past, present, future
 - d. Jesus, God, Holy Spirit

7. Christ is in the midst of the seven lampstands, which represent the churches. What does he do?
- He commands everyone to listen to what the Spirit has to say to the churches.
 - He turns his back on the lampstands.
 - He gives all the churches the crown of life.
 - He says He is pleased with all of them.
8. Revelation 3:20 is a famous verse. What does it mean?
- Jesus will have fellowship with us again if we invite Him in.
 - Do not be lukewarm spiritually.
 - In heaven, we will have our own houses.
 - Nonbelievers should invite Him into their lives.
9. What is the series of events that John records in the Revelation?
- How he would be released from exile
 - The churches' creation
 - The churches' destruction
 - The last days and the Second Coming of Christ
10. Why will God shorten the Great Tribulation to seven years?
- He will stop the process of the Second Coming so people can be saved.
 - He will no longer want to pass judgment on the unredeemed.
 - Jesus will beg Him to stop it.
 - Nothing will survive otherwise.
11. What do the seals, trumpets, and bowls signify?
- The perfect spirits of God
 - Gifts from God to the angels
 - Gifts from the elders to God
 - Terrible judgments
12. What are the new keys mentioned in this study that will help decode the Revelation?
- Instructions to the churches
 - Language
 - Outline of book
 - Chronology



Why is it important that John notes he was “caught up in the Spirit” when he received the revelation from Christ?

Do you identify with the church of Ephesus or the church of Laodicea? Do you need to repent of anything today? If so, confess and repent of that right now.



Thank God that He has given us this message so that we will know the things to come. Ask Him to help you as you understand and apply what you learn in the book of Revelation. Pray that He will help you be ready when He comes. Thank Him for this glimpse of His awesome majesty and power. Thank Him that He will one day make things right and receive all the glory due Him. Thank Him, also, for His love and protection over you.

NOTES



Going Deeper

1. Explain how the assignment given to John in 1: 19 presents an outline of the book of Revelation. _____

2. Why were judgments introduced as things which **MUST** be hereafter? _____

3. How do you personally apply and explain to others the way the sealed scroll in chapter 5 relates to redemption and the Old Testament book of Ruth? _____

4. In what ways have the keys that break the code of the Revelation I have shared with you helped you to understand, apply and teach to others the book of Revelation? _____

5. How do you personally apply and explain to others the way the key I have shared with you regarding chapters 6-19 has helped you understand the most difficult part of this book?

6. How do you personally apply and teach others the way the book of Acts (see 1: 6-8), along with statements made by Jesus in Matthew 24: 36, teach us to be humble about our interpretation of the chronological order of the events that we refer to as the Second Coming of Jesus Christ?

7. What is your personal application and your perspective as you teach others regarding the reality that all the Scriptures that teach about the last things have a very practical application about the kind of people we should be, and the kind of lives we should live in this world?
