

Outline of Revelation

Chapter 1 verse 19 indicates the high-level outline of the book. It says that John is told to write about three things:

1. The things which you have seen, including chapter 1;
2. The things which are, including the letters to the seven churches in chapters 2 and 3;
3. And the things which will take place after this, including chapters 4 through 22.

I. Letters to the Seven Churches	1:1-3:19	
A. Introduction	1:1-20	(things seen)
B. Ephesus.....	2:1-7	(things which are)
C. Smyrna	2:8-11	
D. Pergamos	2:12-17	
E. Thyatira	2:18-29	
F. Sardis.....	3:1-6	
G. Philadelphia.....	3:7-13	
H. Laodicea	3:14-19	
II. Heavenly Worship of the Lamb of God	4:1-5:14	(things future)
III. The Seven-Year Tribulation	6:1-19:21	
A. The Seven Seal Judgments	6:1-17	
B. Interlude: Multitudes Saved in Tribulation	7:1-17	
C. The Seven Trumpet Judgments	8:1-9:21	
D. Interlude: The Angel and the Book	10:1-11	
E. Interlude: Two Witnesses.....	11:1-14	
F. Conclusion of the Trumpet Judgments.....	11:15-19	
G. Interlude: Important Characters.....	12:1-13:18	
H. Interlude: Visions of 144,000; Angels; and Final Judgment ...	14:1-20	
I. The Seven Bowl Judgments	15:1-16:21	
J. Interlude: Babylon.....	17:1-19:5	
K. The Second Coming of Christ Detailed.....	19:6-21	
IV. The Millennial Kingdom and Final Judgment.....	20:1-10	
V. The New Heaven and New Earth	21:1-22:21	

Interpretive Issues

- Timing of fulfillment of the prophecies in the book.
- The blessing pronounced on the one who reads, hears, and keeps the words of the prophecy.
- 2 Peter 3:11-12 gives us some motivation from another Bible passage as to why we should have at least a rudimentary idea of what is going to happen in the *future*. That which is coming in the future demands us to live holy lives *now*.
- The interpretation of the series of seven letters.
- The significance of the number seven.
- In terms of the chronology of Revelation, several sections are parenthetical but the book's overall outline is sequential; the judgments are numbered and seem to be sequential with one series unfolding into the next one.
- The general chronology of the book and thus of the future is helpful to us, but an absolute understanding of every detail of chronology is not necessary, nor probably realistically achievable for most of us. Some revelation was not given to us—Rev. 10:4, for instance—and so we do not have all information that could be relevant to the whole end-times. That is not to say we are missing things that we need.
- Signs are signs, not to be taken literally.
- Fads in interpretation, e.g. the Soviet Union in Revelation and Daniel.
- The literality and length of the millennial kingdom.
- The reality of “heaven and hell” are plainly taught.
- Notice the phrases “Then I saw” (42 uses) and “Then I heard” as introductory to the various visions.