REVELATION 1

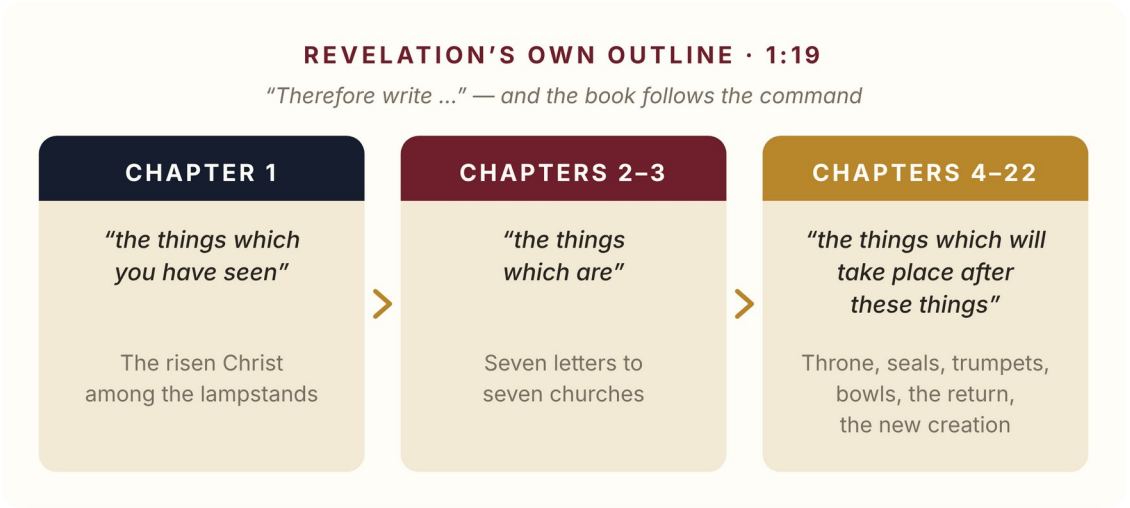
The Risen Christ: Do Not Be Afraid

“Do not be afraid; I am the first and the last, and the living One; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of death and of Hades.”
REVELATION 1:17–18

Where John has brought us

1. Revelation 1 is the front door of the book.

2. Verse 19 gives the book its own outline, and this study follows it the way Guzik does: “the things which you have seen” (chapter 1), “the things which are” (the seven churches of chapters 2–3), and…



Whose Book Is This?

A revelation from Jesus, about Jesus — and a blessing for the one who heeds it.

REVELATION 1:1

The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show to His bond-servants, the things which must soon take place; and He sent and communicated it by His angel to His bond-servant John,

DAVID GUZIK

Guzik puts the first verse plainly: the revelation comes from Jesus and it is about Jesus. 'If we catch everything else, but miss Jesus in the book, we miss the Book of Revelation.'

WHAT IT MEANS

Whose book is this? It is the Revelation of Jesus Christ — from Him and about Him. If I come away from Revelation with a chart of the end times and miss Jesus, I've missed the book.

ἀποκάλυψις

APOKALYPSIS · "UNVEILING"

Revelation's first word is apokalypsis, an uncovering or unveiling. God is pulling back the curtain, not hiding things in code.

Grace from the Triune God

Faithful Witness, Firstborn of the dead, Ruler of kings — and He is coming.

REVELATION 1:7

BEHOLD, HE IS COMING WITH THE CLOUDS, and every eye will see Him, even those who pierced Him; and all the tribes of the earth will mourn over Him. So it is to be. Amen.

DAVID GUZIK

Guzik reads the greeting as coming from the whole Godhead. The Father is the One "who is and who was and who is to come," echoing the divine name of Exodus 3:14.

WHAT IT MEANS

Jesus gets three titles here, and each answers a fear the churches carried. He is the faithful witness — He stayed true under trial.

λύω

LYŌ · "RELEASED"

Verse 5 says Jesus "released us from our sins by His blood." The word is lyō: to loose, to set free — the word for untying what was bound.

A Brother on Patmos

A prisoner on a rock, in the Spirit on the Lord's day.

REVELATION 1:9

I, John, your brother and fellow partaker in the tribulation and kingdom and perseverance which are in Jesus, was on the island called Patmos because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus.

DAVID GUZIK

Guzik notices that John never pulls rank as an apostle; he is simply "your brother."

WHAT IT MEANS

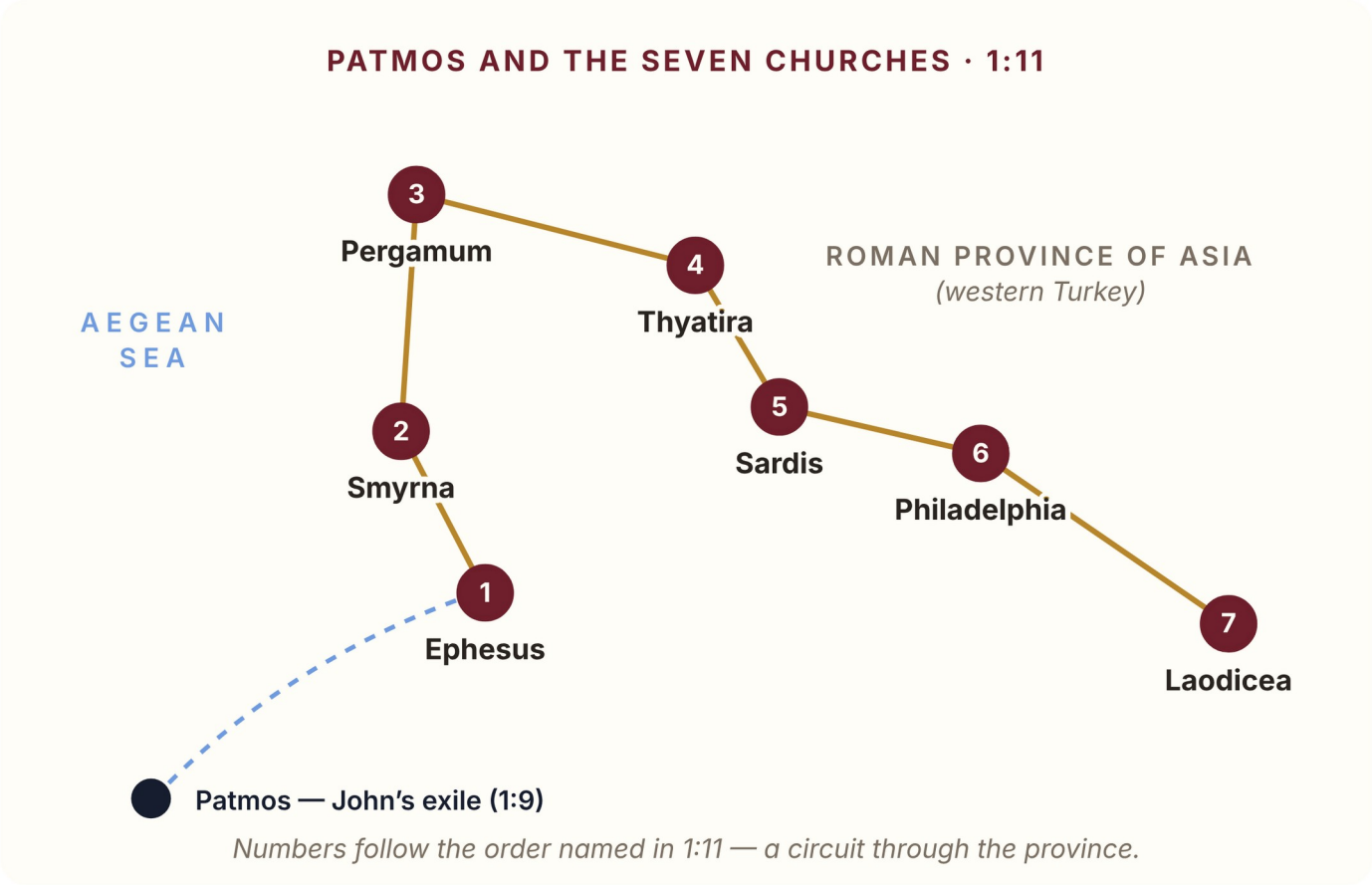
John was a prisoner, cut off from the churches he loved, and that is exactly where he saw Jesus most clearly.

θλῖψις

THLIPSIS · "TRIBULATION"

John calls himself a "fellow partaker in the tribulation." Thlipsis is pressure, affliction, crushing trouble — the weight of a load pressing down.

Patmos and the Seven Churches



From the prison island, John's letter went to seven churches on a circuit through the province of Asia.

The Son of Man Among the Lampstands

Priest, Judge and King — the only physical description of Jesus in the Bible.

REVELATION 1:12

Then I turned to see the voice that was speaking with me. And having turned I saw seven golden lampstands;

DAVID GUZIK

Guzik reads the vision feature by feature. "One like a son of man" is Daniel 7:13, and the white hair is Daniel 7:9's Ancient of Days — Jesus bears the marks of deity.

WHAT IT MEANS

I tend to carry around a Jesus I'm comfortable with — gentle, quiet, a little distant. John's Jesus has eyes like fire and a voice like a waterfall.

ῥομφαία

RHOMPHAIA · "SWORD"

Out of His mouth comes a rhomphaia — not a short dagger but the large, broad sword. The sword is His word (Heb 4:12; Eph 6:17).

The Son of Man (1:13–16)

THE SON OF MAN AMONG THE LAMPSTANDS · 1:13–16

	WHAT JOHN SAW	WHAT IT SHOWS
1	*"a robe reaching to the feet"*	High Priest tending His lamps
2	*"white like white wool, like snow"*	Ancient of Days (Dan 7:9) — deity
3	*"eyes were like a flame of fire"*	Sees through everything
4	*"feet were like burnished bronze"*	Judgment and strength
5	*"like the sound of many waters"*	Drowns every other sound
6	*"a sharp two-edged sword"*	His word (Heb 4:12)
7	*"like the sun shining in its strength"*	As at the Transfiguration (Matt 17:2)

Each feature John saw tells us who Jesus is — Priest, Ancient of Days, Judge and King.

Do Not Be Afraid

The hand that holds the stars rests on a fallen man.

REVELATION 1:17

When I saw Him, I fell at His feet like a dead man. And He placed His right hand on me, saying, "Do not be afraid; I am the first and the last,

DAVID GUZIK

Guzik reminds us that John had leaned on this same Jesus at the Last Supper (John 13:23); now he falls like a dead man. He quotes Spurgeon: 'We are never so much alive as when we are dead at his feet.'

WHAT IT MEANS

The men I sit with in recovery and behind prison walls know what it is to be locked in. The jailer has keys; the addiction seems to have keys.

κλείς
KLEIS · "KEYS"

Jesus says, "I have the keys of death and of Hades." Kleis is a key — and with it the authority to open and shut.

What to carry from this chapter

1

Whose book it is.

The Revelation of Jesus Christ comes from Jesus and is about Jesus — miss Him and you miss the book.

2

An unveiling, not a code.

Apokalypsis means an uncovering: God is pulling back the curtain, not hiding things.

3

The blessing is for doers.

Verse 3 blesses the one who reads, hears and heeds — the first of seven beatitudes in the book.

4

Sudden, not necessarily soon.

Walvoord, quoted by Guzik: when it does happen, it will be sudden.

More to carry

5

Released — and washed.

Lyō means to set free; the KJV's "washed" is one letter away, and Guzik says both are true.

6

Three titles for three fears.

Faithful witness, firstborn of the dead, ruler of the kings of the earth — Domitian is not in charge.

7

No soft, pale figure.

Guzik notes this is the only physical description of Jesus in the Bible: eyes of fire, a voice like many waters.

8

Keys in the right hand.

Jesus holds "the keys of death and of Hades" — the devil never did.

Talk it through

1. Verse 3 blesses the one who heeds, not the one who decodes. What is one thing in this chapter Jesus wants you to keep this week?

2. Which of Jesus' three titles in verse 5 answers a fear you are carrying right now?

3. John calls himself "your brother and fellow partaker in the tribulation." What would it look like to be that kind of brother to another man this week?

4. Which detail of the Son of Man in verses 13–16 most challenges the Jesus you usually picture?

5. Jesus laid His right hand on John before He gave him a task. Where do you need to hear "Do not be afraid" before you can obey?

CLOSING

The man on the prison island was not forgotten, and neither are you. The One who was dead and is alive forevermore holds the keys, holds His churches in His right hand, and says to every fallen man, "Do not be afraid." Next, He speaks to those churches — and every letter begins with "I know."

Teaching the Word. Watching the Times. — Smith For Christ

O·I·A study, slides, reflection journal and film: see the Revelation study page.