

Book of Revelation Made Plain

The Book of Revelation
Part 9

Chapters 2 & 3 – Letters to the Seven Churches Module 3 – Bible Myths

ABC Definition: A Bible myth is an erroneous but commonly held belief that a concept or statement is in the Bible (i.e., it is scriptural).

A. Myths concerning revelation knowledge.

1. The Book of Revelation (BOR) is the revelation of the Apostle John (i.e., God gave it to him).
Answer: It is the Revelation of Jesus Christ. (Rev 1:1)
2. Jesus is God and so He knows everything.
Answer. Since it was a revelation to Him that means He did not know it. He also does not know the day nor the hour of His return. (Mar 13:32)
3. Jesus appeared to John and gave him the Revelation.
Answer: Jesus sent His angel with the Revelation to John. (Rev 1:1 and 22:6)
The angel's appearance was like that of the Son of Man. (Rev 1:12)
4. A representative of a person is easily recognizable as a stand-in and not as the person himself.
Answer:
 - a) The angel carried the full weight of the appearance and presence of Jesus. For example, in Rev 1:17, it states, "And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last."
 - b) A letter granting the right of Power of Attorney carries the full weight of the person within the scope of the affairs described in the letter.
 - c) We, as ambassadors of Heaven (2 Cor 5:20), carry the full weight of Jesus. We have the power of attorney to used His name, at which Name, every knee shall bow in three worlds. (Phil 2:10) We also carry the presence of Jesus as we remain under the anointing of the Holy Spirit (e.g., people were healed by coming under the shadow of Peter in Acts 5:15).

B. Myths concerning blessings and titles.

1. There is a special blessing for reading the Book of Revelation.
Answer: The blessing results from obeying the **same** admonition of "hearing and doing" the Word of God, as also described in Deut 28; John 8:31-32; Matt 7 and in many other places.
2. The BOR states that God is going to make us kings and priests.
Answer: He already has done so (Rev 1:6; 5:10). As a result, we need to become more effective in using our priestly authority in prayer and spiritual warfare, and in prospering to use our wealth to affect the physical circumstances of life.
3. The name "Alpha and Omega" refers to Jesus.
Answer: This title is used 9 times in the New Testament. Only once does it clearly refer to Jesus. The other 8 times refers to Our Father as Lord God (the) Almighty. Jesus is His representative so the title does apply to Him through the power of representation (i.e., ambassadorship). But Jesus also said, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." (John 14:9)

C. Myths concerning the order of the churches.

1. The church at Ephesus was first on the list because it was spiritually the most powerful.

Answer: It was not spiritually the best because Ephesus was one of only four churches told to repent and it was in danger of having its candlestick removed.

2. Many believe that the order of the letters shows the importance of the churches.

Answer. It does not. The list of the churches is presented in geographical order. The churches are located in a semi-oval with the first one (Ephesus) approximately 40 miles west of the final one (Laodicea). All the churches were located approximately 40 – 60 miles from each other, along the perimeter of half of an oval. Ephesus, the first in the oval, is also directly inland from the island of Patmos, perhaps 10 -20 miles separating them.

3. Many believe that the order of the church presents the historical spiritual development of the church or, for some, the global church.

Answer:

- a) While there is some validity in every theory concerning the order of the churches, there are some significant issues with these theories, even if one **ignores** the fact that the order is geographical.
- b) Since the members of the early church after Jesus are well known for their zeal and martyrdom, it is difficult to say that they have left their first love, as was with Ephesus the first church.

If we separate the **very** early church from the **later** early church but still prior to the church starting under Nero, maybe one could make a claim that the later early church lost its first love; but then we have two churches before the Smyrna type, which is the second on the list.

- c) Church number 7 is Laodicea which is the lukewarm church. Whereas a case can be made by some that this is the last church on the list i.e., the church of today, this case only holds up if one ignores the church in Africa and in the Middle East where there are many ongoing marvelous miracles & martyrdoms; not to mention the Chinese church of a few decades back.
- d) The really truly important answer is that the growth of the church is defined by the Waves of the Holy Spirit as He releases over time to the churches the revelation knowledge of the Glory of God, of the mystery of God, which is Christ in you, the Hope of Glory. (Col 1:27)

In modern church history, we see the Wave of Grace starting with Martin Luther and resulting in the Lutheran and Presbyterian churches and others. Next came the Wave of Water Baptism producing among others the Anabaptist, Baptist, Mennonite, Amish, and Brethren churches; then the Wave of Missions and Evangelism with the Moravians and the Methodists, et al.

Starting around the turn of the 20th century, there was the Wave of Pentecostalism producing among others the Assemblies of God, Four Square, Church of God, etc. This was followed by the Waves of Healing, of Faith, etc, into the current waves; and in the near future during these ending days, we shall see the Waves which will prepare the way for the return of the King of Kings and for the Rapture.

D. Myths concerning specific Scriptures.

1. The exhortation by Jesus, “Behold, I stand at the door and knock.” is used a lot in ministering to unbelievers, as a call to be saved.

Answer. The Scripture was meant primarily for believers as a call for deeper intimacy with Jesus; and, in fact, in the BOR, it was addressed to the church which was lukewarm.

2. Many think that poverty draws a person closer to God and teaches the person humility; and this may be part of the reason why they think that Smyrna, the poor church, is called rich.

Answer: Some quote that money is the root of all evil, but it is the **love** of money (1 Tim 6:10). A believer is not expected to be poor for God supplies His need. (Phil 4:19)

3. Because of its name, many believe that the church at Philadelphia is the Church of Love.

Answer: The name is based on the word “Philos” meaning brotherly or social love. God wants us to walk in Agape love, which is God’s love, demonstrated not by social works but by obedience to His commandments such as keeping His Word and not denying His Name (Rev 3:8) and keeping the Word of His patience (Rev 3:10) e.g., Jesus said that in your patience, you shall possess your soul (Luke 21:19).