

6. The Plot and Characters

Revelation as Plot (non-linear)

- Prologue: Setting the Cosmic Stage
 - God created humankind to worship Him and live in a relationship with Him, though the sin of mankind separated them from this relationship and fractured the worship. (Gen 1-3)
 - God sent Jesus as the Messiah.
 - Satan pursued Jesus, but Jesus remained faithful even to death (Rev 12, Luke 4:1-13)
 - Satan has seduced vital individuals to create a culture of death (Babylon) through idolatry, evil, and chaos.
- Act One: Satan is on the Move
 - Satan is directing the powerful, idolatrous culture of death and has seduced individuals and nations (including some in Asia Minor) (Rev 2-3, 12)
 - Satan promotes an unholy trinity of which he is a part, and two beasts join him; one of the land and one of the sea (Rev 13).
 - Followers of Jesus are being seduced by the work of Satan.
- Act Two: The Prophet Speaks
 - John calls the churches back to faithfulness (Rev 1-3)
 - John reminds the churches of the faithful Lamb, who is Jesus, and of His death and resurrection. (Rev 4-5)
 - The faithful who resist the seduction of Satan will receive blessing and honor from Jesus. (Rev 1-3)
- Act Three: God Judges
 - Babylon (the unholy culture of death) is under divine judgment and doomed to fall (Rev 17-18).
 - This is the longest narrative in Revelation (6-20) but can be summarized by Rev 18:2 – “Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great.”
 - God defeats the unholy trinity and death itself (Rev 20:14).
- Act Four: God Renews
 - Babylon, the city of death and oppression of the faithful, is replaced by Jerusalem, the new heaven and earth, and a new culture of wholeness and life (Rev 21-22).
 - Pain and sorrow are absent.

- There is healing for humanity and restoration to a place of worship and relationship.
- God and the Lamb dwell with a renewed humanity.
- 1. The Trinity in Revelation**
- God the Father
 - The Alpha and Omega (Rev 1:8, Rev 21:6, Isa 44:6).
 - The One on the Throne (Rev 1:4, 4, 22:3)
 - The One who was and is and is to come (Rev 1:4, 4:8, Heb 13:8)
 - The Almighty (Rev 1-22 appears nine times)
 - God is the judge (Rev 16:7)
 - The creator (Rev 21:5, Gen 1-2)
- The Son – Jesus
 - Jesus's Titles in Revelation:
 - The faithful and true witness (Rev 1:5; 3:14)
 - Firstborn of the dead (Rev 1:5; Col 1:18)
 - Ruler of the kings of the earth (Rev 1:4-5; Dan 2:21, Mat 28:28)
 - Son of Man (Rev 1:9; 14:14; Mark 2:10-11; Mat 9:6)
 - First and last (Rev 1:8, Rev 21:6, Isa 44:6).
 - Alpha and Omega (Rev 1:8, Rev 21:6, Isa 44:6).
 - Living one (Rev 1:18)
 - Son of God (Rev 2:18; Mat 17:5; John 3:16)
 - Holy one (Rev 3:7; Isa 47:4)
 - True one (Rev 3:7)
 - Amen (Rev 3:14)
 - Lion of the Tribe of Judah (Rev 5:5; Gen 49:10; Isa 11:1-3; Hos 5:14)
 - Root of David (Rev 5:5, 22:16; Isa 11:1-2)
 - Lamb (Rev 5-22; Isa 53:7; John 1:29, 1 Pet 1:19)
 - Lord (Rev 11:3-4, 9:16; Rom 10:9-13; 1 Cor 15:3-7)
 - Word of God (Rev 19:13; John 1:14)
 - Kind of Kings and Lord of lords (Rev 9:16, 17:14; 19:16 Dan 2:21, Mat 28:28)
 - Bright and morning star (Rev 22:16)
 - Essential depictions of Jesus in the narrative are the faithful and true witness, the slain Lamb, and the divine warrior.

- Jesus is depicted as the co-equal to the father, sharing names and the throne (Rev 1:8, Rev 5)
- The Holy Spirit
 - Seen in the Prophetic Voice of God and the Lamb speaking to the churches and bringing them into the presence of God. (Rev 1:10, 4:2, 17:3, 21:10).
 - The seven spirits of God (the perfect Spirit of God).
 - Jesus instructs the churches to listen to what the Spirit is saying to them (Rev 2:7, 11, 17, 29, 3:6, 13, 22).
 - The Spirit (and the Bride) call people to experience the life that only God gives (Rev 22:17).

2. The Unholy Trinity

- One dragon
 - The dragon is “the ancient serpent, who is called the Devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world” – Rev 12:9 (Gen 3, John 8:44; 1 Tim 4:1).
 - Satan is the orchestrator and forces moving against God, the Lamb, and humanity through persecution, deception, and idolatry.
 - The dragon is red, symbolizing his dealing in death, and has seven heads with diadems and ten horns, symbols of power (Rev 12:3).
- Two Beasts
 - The beast from the sea
 - Reflects Satan’s power of persecution, deception, and idolatry.
 - It also has seven heads and ten horns (later identified as hills, rulers, and client kings (Rev 17:9, 12).
 - It makes blasphemous claims about its own power but, in truth, receives power from the dragon (Rev 13:2, 4)
 - The beast has a resurrection like healing from a mortal wound (mimicking Christ) which results in people worshiping the beast and the dragon (Rev 13:3-4)
 - The beast’s reign is short, but the church undergoes persecution during his rule.
 - The beast’s number is 666 (Rev 13:18)

- For many interpreters, “Antichrist” is synonymous with the beast, but the term does not appear in Revelation.
- The beast from the land
 - The function of the second beast is to promote worship of the first beast (Rev 13:2).
 - It uses deception and tricks to convince people to worship the first beast (Rev 13:13-15).
 - The beast appears like a lamb but speaks like a dragon, showing its mimicking of Jesus while revealing its true nature as a creature of Satan (Rev 13:1).

Babylon the Harlot

- A feminine figure identified as a prostitute and reminiscent of Jezebel and the Roman goddesses Roma Aeterna and Dea Roma (Eternal Rome and Goddess Rome).
- She is seated on many waters (people?) and on the blasphemous first beast (Rev 17:2-3,15).
- The prostitute has fornicated with the inhabitants of the earth and become drunk with the blood of the saints (Rev 17:2-6)
- She is the all-powerful city to rule all others and has ten kings who serve her in war against the Lamb (Rev 17:2-6, 12-18).
- Babylon is the antithesis of the people/city of God: the woman in Rev 12, the Lamb’s Bride in Rev 19-22, and the New Jerusalem in Rev 21-22.

3. The Church/the People of God

- The people of God are imperfect both as the Church and as individuals (Rev 2-3).
- The people of God have been liberated and freed by the blood of the Lamb (Rev 1:5, 5:9); 9); that it produces faithful and “victorious” servants who have affirmed their identification with the Lamb’s blood by shedding their own blood (Rev 6:10; 7:14). Their sacrifice is for ultimate victory and glory, symbolized especially by white robes (Rev 3:4–5; 4:4; 6:11; 7:9, 13–14; 19:14; 22:14).
- The people of God are presented as “a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars” (Rev 12:1-4).
 - The woman flees the wilderness, where she is protected and nourished by God.

- The Faithful Witnesses
 - The Church receives a calling to be a faithful witness (Rev 2:10, 12:14)
 - The faithfulness is rooted in Jesus as the faithful witness (Rev 1:5, 3:14, 19:11).
 - The martyrs share the attributes of faithful witnesses (Rev 6:9-11, 7:13-17, 12:11, 17:6).
 - Two Witnesses (Rev 11:1-13)
 - They present a faithful testimony to and among the nations, which results in their death.
 - They also reflect Jesus as the faithful and true witness through their resurrection.
 - The witnesses call people to worship the Lamb and courageously testify to the truth of God and prophesy against falsehood and the distortion of truth
 - The two witnesses are called lampstands (Rev 1:20, 11:4).
- The Multitude
 - Depicted as 144,000 sealed people from the tribes of Israel (7:4).
 - The 144,000 have been sealed and marked on the forehead identifying them as God's people.
 - There is also a depiction of a great multitude from many nations before the throne and robed in white (Rev 7:9)

4. The Nations and their Inhabitants

- The term “nations” appears nineteen times in the book and refers to collaborators with evil powers and victims (Rev 18:3, 13).
- Even though messengers tell them to repent, there is little sign of repentance in the book.
- Some belong to the nations that think they are of the faithful (Rev 2:5, 16, 12, 3:3, 5, 16).
- The ultimate goal for humanity is salvation and for the nations to be healed (Rev 21:22-27).