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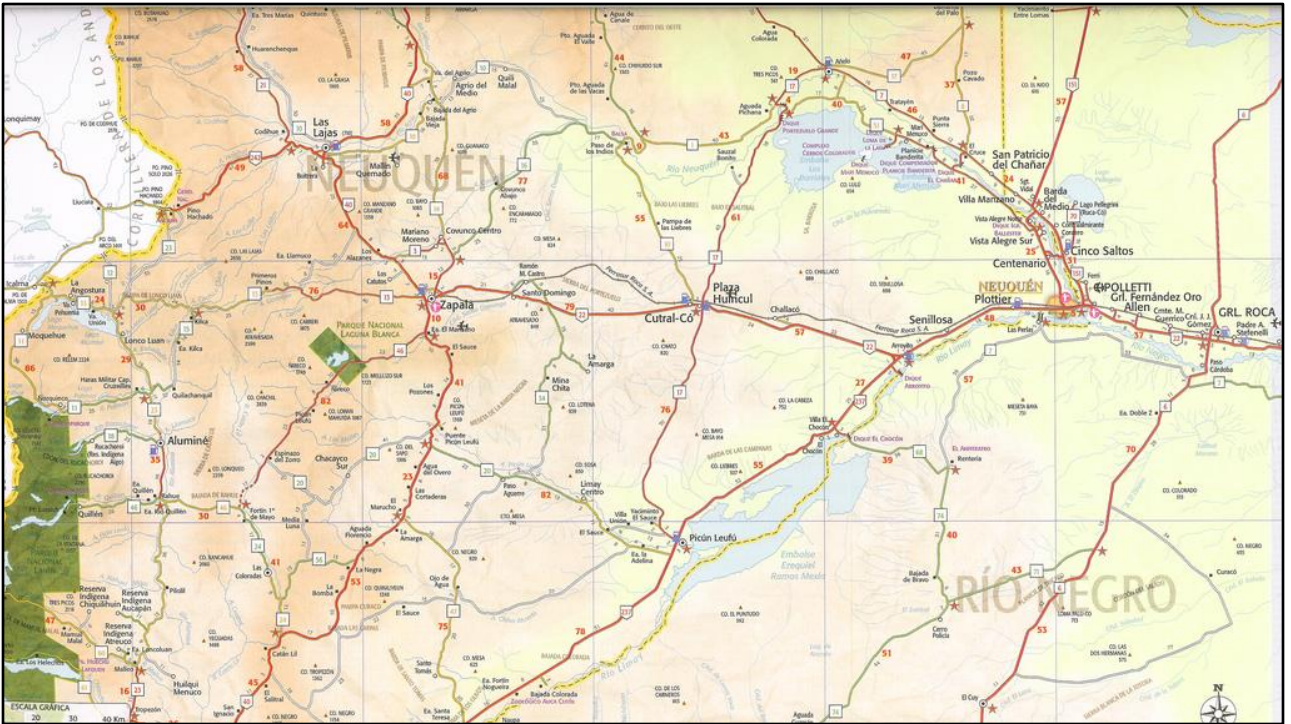
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### Revelation Intro 5: The Structure of Revelation

This is one of five units introducing the book of Revelation. You are free to pass this PDF on to others, but please don't change any of its content when you do.

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When we are travelling, it is helpful to have a roadmap. This enables us to figure out where we are and how to get from A to B. Similarly, when we are studying a book of the Bible, it is helpful to know and understand the structure of that book. This is especially true for the book of Revelation because understanding the structure will give us some important keys to understanding the book correctly. For this reason, this whole unit will be about the structure of the book of Revelation.

Fernandes, Douglas. "Mapa rutas argentinas; Argentina road map"  
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	In the Spirit I: The Revelation of Jesus	In the Spirit II: In Heaven				In the Spirit III: Into a Wilderness Judgement on the Forces of Evil		In the Spirit IV: To a Great High Mountain	22:6-21 Epilogue: Trustworthy and true
	Act I: 7 churches	Act II: 7 seals	Act III: 7 trumpets	Act IV: 77 signs	Act V: 7 bowls	The harlot Babylon 7 Statements	Act VI: 7 'I saw' acts of judgement	Act VII: The bride Jerusalem	
Setting	1:9-20 Seven golden lampstands	4:1-5:14 The throne [central center of universe]	8:2-6 The golden altar	11:19 Temple opened, ark seen	15:5-16:1 Tent of witness opened	17:1-18 Whose on scarlet beast	19:1-16 Heaven opened, white horse	21:9-22:5 Bride of the Lamb	
Scene 1	2:1-7 Ephesus	6:1-2 White horse, [conquest]	8:7 1/3 of earth burned	12:1-17 Woman, child and dragon	16:2 Foul and painful sore	18:1-3 Fallen, fallen is Babylon! [angel]	19:17-18 Great supper of God		
Scene 2	2:8-11 Smyrna	6:3-4 Red horse [to slay one another]	8:8-9 1/3 of sea blood	13:1-10 Beast out of sea	16:3 Rivers became blood	18:4-20 Come out of her! [voice from heaven]	19:19-21 Beast, prophet into lake		
Scene 3	2:12-17 Pergamum	6:5-6 Black horse [scarcity]	8:10-11 1/3 of waters wormwood	13:11-18 Beast out of earth	16:4-7 Fresh water became blood	18:21-24 Thrown down with violence! [angel]	20:1-3 Satan bound 1000 years		
Scene 4	2:18-29 Thyatira	6:7-8 Pale horse [Death and Hades]	8:12 1/3 of sun struck 8:13 3 woes	14:1-5 The Lamb with 144,000	16:8-9 Sun scorched them	19:1-3 Hallelujah! He has judged [multitude]	20:4-10 Thrones, souls, devil →lake		
Scene 5	3:1-6 Sardis	6:9-11 Souls under the altar	9:1-12 1 <sup>st</sup> woe: Locusts	14:6-13 Eternal gospel, Babylon, wrath [3 angels]	16:10-11 Kingdom beast into darkness	19:4 Amen, hallelujah! [24 elders, 4 creatures]	20:11 Great white throne		
Scene 6	3:7-13 Philadelphia	6:12-17 The great day of their wrath	9:15-21 2 <sup>nd</sup> woe: Cavalry	14:14-20 Harvest, wine press [15:1 7 angels, 7 plagues]	16:12-16 Euphrates dried, Armageddon	19:5 Praise our God! [voice from the throne]	20:12-15 The dead were judged		
Church Interlude		7:1-8 144,000 7:9-17 Great multitude	10:1-11 The scroll 11:1-14 My two witnesses						
Scene 7	3:14-22 Laodicea	8:1 Silence for half an hour	11:15-18 He will reign forever	15:2-4 Song of Moses/Lamb	16:17-21 It is done!	19:6-10 Hallelujah! The Lord reigns! [multitude]	21:1-8 New heaven/earth/Jerusalem		

This is the roadmap or the horizontal chart for the book of Revelation, a structural diagram. Now, don't worry about the fact you can't read this. This is just to give you the overall picture. You can tell that this looks a bit more complicated than the structure of the average book and therefore I will take quite a bit of time to explain this chart.

Prologue	In the Spirit	In the Spirit				In the Spirit		In the Spirit	Epilogue
	Letters	Seals	Trumpets	Signs	Bowls	Babylon	Judgment	Jerusalem	
Setting									
Scene 1									
Scene 2									
Scene 3									
Scene 4									
Scene 5									
Scene 6									
Church Interlude									
Scene 7									

The first thing to notice: in the upper left and upper right corner we have the beginning and the end of the book in the form of a prologue or foreword in the first eight verses and then an epilogue or afterword starting in chapter 22:6. Now, the rest of the book, everything in between, is arranged in columns.

Prologue	In the Spirit	In the Spirit				In the Spirit		In the Spirit	Epilogue
	<u>Letters</u>	<u>Seals</u>	<u>Trumpets</u>	Signs	Bowls	Babylon	Judgment	Jerusalem	
Setting									
Scene 1									
Scene 2									
Scene 3									
Scene 4									
Scene 5									
Scene 6									
Church Interlude									
Scene 7									

1-7 ↓

These columns begin with the letters and go all the way through the book down to the Jerusalem from heaven. Notice on the very left a column that is not part of the text but that divides these other columns into seven scenes.

Prologue	In the Spirit	In the Spirit				In the Spirit		In the Spirit	Epilogue
	Letters	Seals	Trumpets	Signs	Bowls	Babylon	Judgment	Jerusalem	
Setting									
Scene 1									
Scene 2									
Scene 3									
Scene 4									
Scene 5									
Scene 6									
Church Interlude									
Scene 7									

More about those seven scenes in a moment. First, notice that each column also has a setting and some of them have a church interlude, an intermezzo, a break, or an interruption in the flow. Now, the setting sets the stage for the series of scenes that then follows. And in most cases, it shows us an element of the heavenly throne room or the heavenly temple, which is the same place.

## Setting

- Lampstands (ch. 1)
- Heavenly throne room / temple (ch. 4-5)
- Altar of incense (ch. 8)
- Ark of the covenant (ch. 11)
- Temple filled with smoke (ch. 15)
- Rider on white horse (ch. 19)



This is an overview of the settings in the book. First, in chapter 1 we have Jesus in the midst of the seven lampstands. This prepares for the seven letters. Then we have a description of the heavenly throne room, which is all of chapters 4 and 5. This is a very long setting. It leads to the seven seals. Then comes the altar of incense in chapter 8, which leads to the seven trumpets. At the end of chapter 11, we see the ark of the covenant, which prepares for a special series of signs. In chapter 15 the temple is filled with smoke. And chapter 19, this one is a little different because it is not so much an element of the temple; we get to see Jesus as the rider on the white horse.

The final section of the book, the description of the new Jerusalem, is not introduced with such a setting, but instead, its introduction parallels exactly the introduction of Babylon in chapter 17.

Now, these settings have a lot to do with the content of the section that then follows. For instance, Jesus in the midst of the seven lampstands: the lampstands are the seven churches. It is to these churches that the letters are then written and sent. So setting and content of the following section are connected in each case.

## Church Interludes

- 144,000 (Rev. 7)
- Two witnesses (Rev. 10:1-11:13)
- (Angels with last plagues, Rev. 15:1)



Interludes are not so many. We have the 144,000 in chapter 7 and, after an encounter with a mighty angel and the measuring of the temple, we have the two witnesses in Revelation 10 and 11. Revelation 15:1 is also an interruption, but it is more a foretaste, a look ahead at what is still to come. John sees the angels with the seven last plagues.



Prologue	In the Spirit	In the Spirit				In the Spirit		In the Spirit	Epilogue
	Letters	Seals	Trumpets	Signs	Bowls	Babylon	Judgment	Jerusalem	
Setting									
Scene 1	1	1	1		1				
Scene 2	2	2	2		2				
Scene 3	3	3	3		3				
Scene 4	4	4	4		4				
Scene 5	5	5	5		5				
Scene 6	6	6	6		6				
Church Interlude									
Scene 7	7	7	7		7				

Back to the horizontal chart. How did I come up with seven scenes? Well, in some cases this is quite obvious: there are seven letters; there is a scroll with seven seals, and with each seal, there is a scene, something happens; there are seven trumpets; there are seven bowls. These are numbered in the text. This makes one wonder if perhaps the other columns are divided into seven units as well. It turns out that they are.

Prologue	In the Spirit	In the Spirit				In the Spirit		In the Spirit	Epilogue
		Letters	Seals	Trumpets	Signs	Bowls	Babylon		
Setting									
Scene 1	1	1	1	and I saw 7x	1		and I saw 7x		
Scene 2	2	2	2		2				
Scene 3	3	3	3		3				
Scene 4	4	4	4		4				
Scene 5	5	5	5		5				
Scene 6	6	6	6		6				
Church Interlude									
Scene 7	7	7	7	7					

In the column marked “signs”, there are seven scenes that are introduced in Greek – this is often lost in translation – with the exact same words, “and I saw”. The same is true for the column marked “judgement” in chapter 19 and 20. Here, too, there are seven scenes introduced with the exact same words in Greek, “and I saw”.

Prologue	In the Spirit	In the Spirit				In the Spirit		In the Spirit	Epilogue
	Letters	Seals	Trumpets	Signs	Bowls	Babylon	Judgment	Jerusalem	
Setting									
Scene 1	1	1	1		1				
Scene 2	2	2	2		2				
Scene 3	3	3	3		3				
Scene 4	4	4	4		4				
Scene 5	5	5	5		5				
Scene 6	6	6	6		6				
Church Interlude									
Scene 7	7	7	7		7				

This leaves us with the columns “Babylon” and “Jerusalem”, two cities that make a strong contrast toward the end of this book. The description of Jerusalem is not divided. This is the consummation, the eternal state; structure has evaporated. It does contain the number seven. There are seven things, so we are told, that are not, and seven other things that are no more, but this doesn’t lead to seven scenes or seven units in the text. It is different with Babylon; here we have seven statements, seven voices that speak out and make a statement. So there too we find the number seven in the structure.

# SEVEN

7 7 7 7 7 7 7

This means that the structure of Revelation is dominated by the number seven, because not only are there seven scenes in each column but, if we take the judgement on Babylon and the other judgements together, there are also seven columns. In other words, the structure of Revelation is 7×7.

Prologue	In the Spirit	In the Spirit				In the Spirit		In the Spirit	Epilogue
	Letters	Seals	Trumpets	Signs	Bowls	Babylon	Judgment	Jerusalem	
Setting								21:9-22:5	22:6-21
Scene 1	1	1	1		1				
Scene 2	2	2	2		2				
Scene 3	3	3	3		3				
Scene 4	4	4	4		4				
Scene 5	5	5	5		5				
Scene 6	6	6	6		6				
Church Interlude									
Scene 7	7	7	7		7				

The next thing we need to notice about the structure is its parallelism. First, look at what is yellow. Some of the trumpets and some of the bowls are quite similar to each other. With the trumpets, one-third of something is hit or impacted; with the bowls, it is the whole, but otherwise, it is quite similar; there is a parallel between several trumpets and the bowls.

Then, more important, is the pattern we see with the numbers six and seven, here in red and in blue. The number six tends to be bad in the book of Revelation, and scene number six is particularly bad. It confronts us with the end; it shows us the last judgement, or the day of the Lord, or something related. Then, scene number seven shows us what comes after the end. Nevertheless, the book doesn't stop there; with scene 7, we haven't reached the end of the book. It continues, or rather, it goes back to an earlier stage and starts to cover the same ground again, but this time from a different angle. The one exception here is the column of the seven letters; they do not show this pattern. The sixth letter is to Philadelphia, which is a good church, and letter number seven goes to Laodicea, which is a particularly bad church, but otherwise, the pattern holds, also horizontally. Notice that column six, Babylon and the series of judgements combined, gives us the last judgement once again; column

seven gives us the description of the Jerusalem from above and describes the eternal state.

## Revelation 6:12-17 (Sixth Seal)

When he opened the sixth seal, I looked, and behold, there was a great earthquake, and the sun became black as sackcloth, the full moon became like blood, and the stars of the sky fell to the earth as the fig tree sheds its winter fruit when shaken by a gale. The sky vanished like a scroll that is being rolled up, and every mountain and island was removed from its place ... “the great day of their wrath has come, and who can stand?”

Two examples, to help you see this pattern in the text. First, from chapter 6. John writes:

When he opened the sixth seal, I looked, and behold, [and now comes highly apocalyptic language:] there was a great earthquake, and the sun became black as sackcloth, the full moon became like blood, and the stars of the sky fell to the earth as the fig tree sheds its winter fruit when shaken by a gale. The sky vanished like a scroll that is being rolled up, and every mountain and island was removed from its place ... [and people responded:] “the great day of their wrath has come, and who can stand?” (Rev. 6:12-14, 17 ESV)

So this is the end. It is the day of the Lord, the day of his return, the day of judgement, and yet, we are only in chapter 6. This does not happen before the seven trumpets or before the signs, even though these are described later in the book.

The Holy Bible: New Revised Standard Version, 1989 (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers)

## Revelation 10:7 & 11:15 (Seventh Trumpet)

... in the days of the trumpet call to be sounded by the seventh angel, the mystery of God would be fulfilled, just as he announced to his servants the prophets.

Then the seventh angel blew his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever."

Second example: the seventh trumpet. When John encounters the mighty angel in chapter 10, he is promised "that in the days of the trumpet call to be sounded by the seventh angel, the mystery of God would be fulfilled, just as he announced to his servants the prophets". Or in other words, at that point, it will be all finished and completed. In Chapter 11, we read what happens: "The seventh angel blew his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, 'The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever'" (Rev. 11:15 ESV). Now, this clearly is the completion; it's what follows the end. But we are only halfway through the book, and in chapter 12 John goes back to a much earlier stage in the story. In fact, it starts with something that was already in the past when he was writing: the birth of Christ.

The Holy Bible: New Revised Standard Version, 1989 (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers)





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## PARALLELISM AND RECAPITULATION

We have, then, in this book parallelism and as a result recapitulation or repetition. At the end of each column, we come to the end of salvation history and then in the next column, the book goes back to an earlier stage and covers some of the same ground from a different perspective. The book of Revelation is not chronological.

Krawcowicz, Barbara. "Parallelism"

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Prologue	In the Spirit	In the Spirit				In the Spirit		In the Spirit	Epilogue
	Letters	Seals	Trumpets	Signs	Bowls	Babylon	Judgment	Jerusalem	
Setting								21:9-22:5	22:6-21
Scene 1	1	1	1		1				
Scene 2	2	2	2		2				
Scene 3	3	3	3		3				
Scene 4	4	4	4		4				
Scene 5	5	5	5		5				
Scene 6	6	6	6		6				
Church Interlude									
Scene 7	7	7	7		7				

One more thing to notice about this chart is the repetition of the phrase “in the Spirit”, although unfortunately this, too, is sometimes lost in translation. This phrase appears in the book four times and marks places where an important transition takes place. The first occurrence is 1:10 and there it initiates John’s visionary experience. In 4:2, it follows the call to come up into heaven, and then John is “in the Spirit”, that is how he gets there. And in chapter 17:3, John is carried in the Spirit to a place from where he can see the great prostitute, and in 21:10 he is carried in the Spirit to a place where he gets to see the new Jerusalem. So this phrase breaks the book into several larger blocks of material.

IT IS NOT  
CHRONOLOGICAL!

時間	目的地	狀態	時間	目的地	狀態
23:22	台南	已經發車	00:45	台中 台南	尚有座位
23:30	台南	已經發車	00:45	下新營轉高雄	尚有座位
23:45	台中 台南	已經發車	01:00	台南	尚有座位
23:45	下新營轉高雄	已經發車	01:15	下新營轉高雄	尚有座位
00:00	台南	已經發車	01:30	台南	尚有座位
00:15	下新營轉高雄	已經發車	01:45	下新營轉高雄	尚有座位
00:30	台南	已經發車	02:00	台南	尚有座位
00:35	下新營轉高雄	已經發車	02:13	下新營轉高雄	尚有座位

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In closing, this is a crucial point to keep in mind: the book is not chronological. It does not cover events from beginning to end in chronological order and therefore we cannot construct a timetable, timeline, or calendar of end time events based on the book of Revelation. It doesn't work.

Hao, Tze Chiang. "Panasonic Viera timetable monitor of Ho-Hsin Bus platform in Taipei Bus Station"

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