The Revelation of St. John

While exiled on the isle of Patmos (Rev. 1:9), John received a revelation from God concerning the Church in his day and the future of the Church in the last days. John used a number of Old Testament symbols in writing up this revelation. These were symbols the Church’s to whom he was writing would understand as the Old Testament was the scripture of early Christianity.

John used the tabernacle—a tent temple—constructed in the days of Moses as a kind of stage and backdrop for his writing. John’s written revelation can be viewed as a seven-act play performed on the stage of the tabernacle. The tabernacle was a two roomed tent with a door—actually a curtain—entering into the first room, the holy place in which there were three furnishings: a seven-branched candelabra located next to the left wall, a table upon which there were 12 loaves of bread next to the right wall. The third furnishing—an altar of incense or the prayer altar—was located directly in front of a veil, a kind of door, separating the holy place from the most holy place, or holy of holies. Upon the veil were embroidered cherubims (symbol of guardianship). In the holy of holies was one item of furnishing, the ark of the covenant, or the throne of Jehovah.

The tent was surrounded by a rectangular courtyard on an east to west orientation, enclosed by a wall made of curtains. On the east wall was an embroidered gate made of white, red, blue and purple threading. This was the only entrance into the courtyard. Between the courtyard door and the door to the tent were two furnishings, a sacrificial altar and a laver of water.

John begins each act by orienting the reader to certain aspects of the tabernacle that play an important role in that act. Following this orientation, are the seven scenes of the acts. The following is a brief description of each the seven acts making up John’s revelation.

**Introduction and salutation to the seven churches, 1:1-8**

**ACT 1: The Church in John’s Day, 1:9 - 3:22**

Setting: The high-priest standing in the midst of the seven-branched candelabra (menorah) 1:9-20. (The candelabra represents the seven churches in John’s day and the high priest represents Christ.)

Scene 1: The faithful but passionless church (Ephesus), 2:1-7.
Scene 2: The persecuted church (Smyrna), 2:8-11.
Scene 3: The tolerant-of-pagan worship church (Pergamos), 2:12-17.
Scene 5: The spiritually dead church (Sardis), 3:1-6.
Scene 7: The lukewarm church (Laodicea), 3:14-22.

**ACT 2: Earth During Its Seven Thousand Years of Existence, 4:1 - 8:1**

Setting: The throne of God (Ark of the Covenant)—D&C 77:1-7 add to our understanding of the setting—4:1-8; the twenty four elders (D& C 77:5—faithful elders from the seven churches who were now in their celestial state—the elders sit on their thrones on the ark with God); 4:4,10,11; the sea of glass or laver (the earth in its future sanctified and immortal state—the celestial world), 4:6; the four beasts (cherubim), 4:6-9; the book with seven seals (the book that answers how both man and earth became celestialized), 5:1; a Lamb as it had been slain (Christ), 5:6; the altar of sacrifice, 6:9; the altar of incense (prayer), 5:8. (The setting of this act is the earth’s future celestial state. Act 1 revealed a church and world in trouble. The setting of Act 2 raises the question of how the world was saved and celestialized when it had been in so much trouble? Remember Abr. 2:8.)

Scene 1: The white horse (the first thousand years), 6:1-2.
Scene 2: The red horse (the second thousand years), 6:3-4.
Scene 3: The black horse (the third thousand years), 6:5-6.
Scene 4: The yellow horse (the fourth thousand years), 6:7-8.
Scene 5: The prayers of the early Christian martyrs (the fifth thousand years), 6:9-11.
Scene 6: Catastrophic events associated with last days before Christ’s second coming (the wicked are being destroyed), 6:12-17. A brief intermission of hope (the restoration of the gospel with its power to save the righteous from a world doomed to destruction), 7:1-17.
Scene 7: Silence in heaven at the beginning of the seventh thousand years (the silence before the final storm), 8:1.

**ACT 3: Judgments Against the Wicked in the Beginning of the 7th Seal, 8:2 - 11:18**

Setting: The altar of incense before the veil of the Tabernacle; seven angels sound seven trumpets that bring destructive judgments of God upon the world, 8 2-6. These judgments are designed to humble mankind and cause them to return to God—the world’s final chance! Note: the first four judgments are directed towards nature (but nature also effects man!), destroying only a third part—meaning the judgments are partial and incomplete! The last three are against man himself.

Scene 1: Hail and fire burn a third of the grass, 8:7.
Scene 2: A burning mountain falls into the sea and a third becomes blood, 8:8-9.
Scene 3: A star fall on rivers and springs causing them to become bitter, 8:10-11.
Scene 4: Heavenly bodies become darkened and an angel announces three woes against mankind, 8:12-13.
Scene 5: (Woe 1) Locusts crawl out of the pit of the abyss and destroy only the wicked (the great and abominable church begins to destroy itself - cf. 1 Nephi 22:13-14), 9:1-12.
Scene 6: (Woe 2) The four angels (cf. Rev. 7:1) are released and destroy a third part of men; however, even after all these destructions, mankind does not repent and turn to God, 9:13-21. John is told of his commission, 10:1-11. Jerusalem sieged and two prophets are slain, 11:1-14.
Scene 7: (Woe 3) The 24 elders announce that the kingdoms of the world are now to become the kingdoms of the Lord - the end is near! - 11:15-18.

ACT 4: Judgments Pronounced Against the Church of the Devil and Salvation for the Church of the Lamb, 11:19 - 15:4

Setting: The ark of the covenant (throne of God) is exposed and lightnings, thunderings, and earthquakes (judgments of God) are heard, 11:19. (The Lord is about to pronounce judgment upon the Church of the Devil and save the Church of the Lamb. This act sees the foundation of the Church of the Devil--as shown Nephi in 1 Nephi 13--which continues to plague the world until the time right prior to the second coming of the Lord--as shown to Nephi in 1 Nephi 14 and discussed by him in 1 Nephi 22; also see the Savior's parable of the wheat and tares in Matthew 13:24-30, 35-43 and D&C 86 and D&C 88:87-94.)

Scene 1: The woman (church of the Lamb) and the Dragon (the devil) at war, ch. 12.
Scene 2: The beast rising from the sea (an earthly political power used by the devil), 13:1-10.
Scene 3: The beast rising from the land (an anti-Christ influence used by the devil), 13:11-18.
Scene 4: The Lamb with his 144,000 (an immense priesthood influence), 14:1-5.
Scene 5: Salvation is preached to all those who will not worship the beasts destruction is pronounced upon Babylon (the church of the devil), 14:6-13.
Scene 6: The son of man reaps the harvest of his gospel and destruction of the wicked, 14:14-20.
Scene 7: Those saved from the beast praise God, 15:1-4.

ACT 5: Judgments of God Rendered Against the Wicked, 15:5 - 16:21

Setting: The Tabernacle is opened and out come seven angels having seven plagues. One of the four beasts gives the seven angels seven golden vials full of the wrath of God, 15:5-8. (The judgments rendered in Act Three upon the world at the beginning of the seventh seal were designed to compel the world to be humble and repent--cf. Al 32:14. But those judgments failed to humble the world. In this act the Lord sends his final judgments upon the world to destroy the wicked in preparation for the second coming of Jesus Christ. Also, unlike the judgments rendered in Act Three, which only hurt a "third" of the world, these judgments destroy all that is wicked.)

Scene 1: Plague of grievous sores upon those which worshiped the beast, 16:2.
Scene 2: Plague which turns sea into blood killing everything therein, 16:3.
Scene 3: Plague which turns rivers into blood, 16:4-7.
Scene 4: Plague which causes the sun to scorch the earth with great heat, 16:8-9.
Scene 5: Plague of darkness and sore pain upon the throne of the beast, 16:10-11.
Scene 6: Plague upon the Euphrates drying it up and thus opening the way for the armies to descend upon Jerusalem in the battle that is called Armageddon - a battle in which many of the wicked are killed, 16:12-16.
Scene 7: Plague upon the air - unlike the other plagues which were upon the earth, the final plague is upon the air effecting the whole earth through the all-encompassing atmosphere, 16:17-21. The time for God's final triumph over the wicked has finally arrived!

ACT 6: Judgment of God Rendered Against the Church of the Devil; the Second Coming and Millennial Reign of Jesus Christ, 17:1 - 20:3

Setting: Angel comes from the Tabernacle and talks to John and peaks to John and to show him the destruction of the mother of harlots and the second coming and the Millennial reign of Jesus Christ, 17:1-2.

Scene 1: The woman on the scarlet beast (a portrayal of the church of the devil), 17:3-5.
Scene 2: The woman and beast (church of the devil) established throughout the world; fight against the Lamb; John is promised that she shall be overcome, 17:6-18.
Scene 4: A heavenly oratorio of victory and praise, 19:1-10.
Scene 6: The beasts (great and abominable church) is destroyed, 19:19-21.
Scene 7: The Millennial reign of Jesus Christ and Satan bound a thousand years; the faithful from Adam to Second Coming rule and reign with Christ as priests (and priestesses) and kings (and queens); after the Millennium, Satan is loosed and he and his followers are cast into perdition where they will suffer the consequences of their wickedness, 20:1-10 (cf. D&C 29:10-27; 88:110-115). The earth is now ready for its transformation into a globe that can abide the presence of Heavenly Father and His exalted children as the dwell in a celestial kingdom (cf. D&C 88:17-20, 25-29).
Setting: The throne of God (ark of the covenant), 20:11. The final act centers on the completion of God's work and glory, where He and His children will "reign for ever and ever."

Scene 1: The final judgment of all mankind, 20:12-15.
Scene 2: The earth is renewed (resurrected) with a new heaven and the new earth (the earth in its celestial state) and the New Jerusalem (or Zion) is brought to the earth to dwell with God and "inherit all things" and are the "sons of God" (or gods, cf. D&C 76:56-59), 21:1-8.
Scene 3: The New Jerusalem (Zion) becomes the celestial kingdom ruling over the celestial globe or world, 21:9-21.
Scene 4: Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ are the temple of the New Jerusalem (Zion), 21:22.
Scene 5: They are the illumination of New Jerusalem (Zion), 21:23-27.
Scene 6: The throne of God and Christ are in the New Jerusalem (Zion) from which living water flows over all the earth; the righteous are now invited to sit on God's throne as was promised (Rev. 3:12, 21) to rule and reign with God and Christ "for ever and ever"), 22:1-5.
Scene 7: The closing scene: A testimony of the truth of the things portrayed in this vision is given to John, 22:6-21.