

A SUMMARY OF THE SEALS, TRUMPETS, AND BOWLS (CHAPTERS 6-9,16)

Are They Coincident, or Sequential? There are several possible interpretations when it comes to the Seal, Trumpet, and Bowl Judgements. Are these overlapping, or are they sequential? Is there any way to find out? First, let's review what occurs at each Judgment, then we can see if there are any clues that would help to place them on a timeline. I won't quote the scripture passages here as that will make this article long, but I will give the references.

The 7 Seals (Revelation 6)

The Lamb (Jesus) opens the seals. The four living creatures (the cherubim) announce each of the horses and riders of Seals 1-4 by saying "Come!" There are no announcements for Seals 5-

- **Seal 1** – White Horse with a Rider holding a Bow and wearing a Crown
- **Seal 2** – Red Horse with a Rider Granted to Take Peace from the Earth
- **Seal 3** – Black Horse with a Rider Holding a Pair of Scales or a Yoke
- **Seal 4** – Ashen (Pale/Green/Dappled) Horse ridden by Death, Given Authority to Kill a Fourth of the Earth
- **Seal 5** – Martyrs Under the Altar cry out for Vengeance; Given White Robes and Told to Rest for a Little While
- **Seal 6** – Great Earthquake, Sun turns Black, Full Moon turns Blood Red, Stars fall from the Sky, Sky vanishes like a Scroll, Every Mountain and Island Moved, Earth Dwellers all Hide in Fear and Declare that the Great Day of the Wrath of God and the Lamb has Come.
- **Seal 7** – Silence in Heaven for About Half an Hour, an Angel Offers the Prayers of the Saints Before God's Throne, The Angel Fills the Censer with Fire from the Altar and Throws it on the Earth, Followed by Thunder, Lightning, and an Earthquake.

The Seventh Seal brings forth 7 Angels with 7 Trumpets - The 7 Trumpets (Revelation 8:6-9:21, 11:15,19) - 7 angels each have a trumpet, and when they sound it, the judgment occurs.

- **Trumpet 1** – Hail and fire mingled with blood, 1/3 of trees burned, all green grass burned
- **Trumpet 2** – Great Mountain burning with fire cast into sea, 1/3 sea becomes blood
- **Trumpet 3** – Great star falls from heaven, 1/3 of fresh water made bitter
- **Trumpet 4** – 1/3 of light from the sun, moon, and stars is dimmed
- **Trumpet 5** – Woe 1 – Demonic army is unleashed from the abyss and tortures men for 5 months. They are not allowed to touch the sealed 144,000.
- **Trumpet 6** – Woe 2 – Demonic army of 200,000,000 is unleashed from the region of the Euphrates, where they have been bound, and kills 1/3 of humanity.
- **Trumpet 7** – Woe 3 – Lightnings, voices, thunderings, earthquake, great hail. Announces that the kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord.

The angel with the little scroll announced “but 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.” Revelation 10:7 ESV. Thus we know Trumpet 7 is carried out over a time period.

The 7 Bowls (Revelation 16:1-21) - 7 angels are given 7 bowls containing *the final 7 plagues of God's wrath*. A loud voice tells them to begin pouring out their bowls upon the earth.

- **Bowl 1** – Harmful and painful sores occur on people who have taken the mark of the beast.
- **Bowl 2** – Entire sea turns to blood, all sea creatures die.
- **Bowl 3** – All rivers and springs become blood.
- **Bowl 4** – Sun scorches people with fierce heat.
- **Bowl 5** – Kingdom of the beast is plunged into darkness. People in anguish over their pain and sores (continuing from Bowl 1).
- **Bowl 6** – The Euphrates river is dried up to allow humanity to assemble for the battle at “Armageddon” (Jerusalem?). The antichrist and false prophet send three deceiving frog-like spirits go out into all the world to collect the people.
- **Bowl 7** – Lightning, rumblings, thunder, greatest earthquake ever, 100 pound hailstones.

Examining the Similarities and Differences Between the Seals, Trumpets, and Bowls:

- From a quick comparison, we see that the 7 Seals are opened by Christ Himself, whereas the Trumpets and Bowls are carried out by angels. This is a major difference. **We note that Seal 7, Trumpet 7, and Bowl 7 all contain lightning, rumblings, thunder, and earthquakes.** These are major similarities.
- **The effects of Seals 1-6** have no similarities to any of the trumpets or bowls. In Seal 6, 144,000 people are supernaturally sealed with the seal of God, and this seal protects them from Trumpet 5's judgment specifically. Thus, we know that Seal 6 comes before Trumpet 5.
- **Trumpet 1 & Bowl 1** have no similarities. Trumpet 2 & Bowl 2 are similar in that in Trumpet 2, 1/3 of the sea turns to blood and in Bowl 2 the entire sea is turned to blood. There is a vast difference in scale between 33% and 100%. **If this were the same event it couldn't be both “1/3” and “all” at the same time.**
- **Trumpet 3 & Bowl 3** are similar in that in Trumpet 3, 1/3 of the fresh water is turned bitter or poisonous. In Bowl 3 all the fresh water is turned to blood. Again, there is a vast difference in scale between 33% and 100%, and it can't be both at the same time. Also, there is a difference between “bitter” and “blood”.
- **Trumpet 4 & Bowl 4** are not similar. Trumpet 4 has 1/3 of the light from the sun, moon, and stars being dimmed. Bowl 4 has the opposite – the sun is scorching people with great heat.

- **Trumpet 5 & Bowl 5** are not similar. Trumpet 5 has a demonic army torturing people for 5 months. Bowl 5 has the Beast's kingdom literally plunged into darkness, and no timeframe is given.
- **Trumpet 6 & Bowl 6** are not similar. Trumpet 6 has a demonic army killing 1/3 of humanity. Bowl 6 has 3 deceiving spirits sent out into the world to gather people for the Battle of Armageddon.

Conclusion

The opening of the Seals, Trumpets, and Bowls are sequential. The effects of previous judgments continue in a snowball effect, as new judgments unleash. The world is going to be a mess. While there are some minor similarities between several of the trumpet and bowl judgments, there are marked differences in severity between these judgments. That the 7th Seal, Trumpet, and Bowl all contain lightning, thunder, and earthquake signals the "completion" of each of these sets. Seven is the number of completion.

Seal 7 heralds the start of the Trumpets, and Trumpet 7 heralds the start of the Bowls. With Bowl 7, the wrath of God is complete. Regardless of whether the seals, trumpets, and bowls are the same judgments or one string of consecutive judgments, we can draw the same lessons out of these passages.

Like the martyrs in Revelation 6, we long for justice over the injustices that we see in the world. The judgments let us know that:

- God is just and has justice already planned out. He has seen.
- He is also patient waiting for repentance and calling people to turn to Him. I believe this is why there is a series and progression rather than a once and done judgment.
- The judgment can be used to turn people's hearts toward Him.

But most of all, what a relief it is to see God on his powerful throne in glory and majesty and the Lamb who was slain at the end of the scenes of the seals, trumpets, and bowls. Evil and turmoil and judgment happen. But they are not forever. Christ and His church are together forever in God's holy presence.