

The Seven Seals, Seven Trumpets, and Seven Bowls in the Book of Revelation

The seven seals (Revelation 6:1-17, 8:1-5), seven trumpets (Revelation 8:6-13; 11:15-19), and seven bowls/vials (Revelation 16:1-21) are three succeeding series of end-times judgments from God. The judgments get progressively worse and more devastating as the end times progress. The seven seals, trumpets, and bowls are connected to one another. The seventh seal introduces the seven trumpets (Revelation 8:1-5), and the seventh trumpet introduces the seven bowls (Revelation 11:15-19, 15:1-8).

The first four of the seven seals are known as the four horsemen of the Apocalypse. The first seal introduces the Antichrist (Revelation 6:1-2). The second seal causes great warfare (Revelation 6:3-4). The third of the seven seals causes famine (Revelation 6:5-6). The fourth seal brings about plague, further famine, and further warfare (Revelation 6:7-8).

The fifth seal tells us of those who will be martyred for their faith in Christ during the end times (Revelation 6:9-11). God hears their cries for justice and will deliver it in His timing—in the form of the sixth seal, along with the trumpet and bowl judgments. When the sixth of the seven seals is broken, a devastating earthquake occurs, causing massive upheaval and terrible devastation—along with unusual astronomical phenomena (Revelation 6:12-14). Those who survive are right to cry out, “Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! For the great day of their wrath has come, and who can stand?” (Revelation 6:16-17).

The seven trumpets are described in Revelation 8:6-13. The seven trumpets are the “contents” of the seventh seal (Revelation 8:1-5). The first trumpet causes hail and fire that destroys much of the plant life in the world (Revelation 8:7). The second trumpet brings about what seems to be a meteor hitting the oceans and causing the death of much of the world’s sea life (Revelation 8:8-9). The third trumpet is similar to the second, except it affects the world’s lakes and rivers instead of the oceans (Revelation 8:10-11).

The fourth of the seven trumpets causes the sun and moon to be darkened (Revelation 8:12). The fifth trumpet results in a plague of “demonic locusts” that attack and torture humanity (Revelation 9:1-11). The sixth trumpet releases a demonic army that kills a third of humanity (Revelation 9:12-21). The seventh trumpet calls forth the seven angels with the seven bowls of God’s wrath (Revelation 11:15-19, 15:1-8).

The seven bowl/vial judgments are described in Revelation 16:1-21. The seven bowl judgments are called forth by the seventh trumpet. The first bowl causes painful sores to

break out on humanity (Revelation 16:2). The second bowl results in the death of every living thing in the sea (Revelation 16:3). The third bowl causes the rivers to turn into blood (Revelation 16:4-7). The fourth of the seven bowls results in the sun's heat being intensified and causing great pain (Revelation 16:8-9). The fifth bowl causes great darkness and an intensification of the sores from the first bowl (Revelation 16:10-11). The sixth bowl results in the Euphrates River being dried up and the armies of the Antichrist being gathered together to wage the battle of Armageddon (Revelation 16:12-14). The seventh bowl results in a devastating earthquake followed by giant hailstones (Revelation 16:15-21).

Revelation 16:5-7 declares of God, "You are just in these judgments, you who are and who were, the Holy One, because you have so judged; for they have shed the blood of your saints and prophets, and you have given them blood to drink as they deserve. ... Yes, Lord God Almighty, true and just are your judgments."

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