

GRACE COMMUNITY BIBLE FELLOWSHIP

REVELATION 15 - 16: 7 BOWLS OF WRATH

April 25, 2016

Seals, Trumpets and Bowls of Wrath. 4 interpretive approaches.

1) Sequential: according to this view, the Seals, Trumpets and Bowls follow one another in strict sequential order, with no overlap or repetition. Most futurists hold this view. They claim that these are 21 judgments of God which will come in the precise order they are described in Revelation and will all occur within a 7 year period of tribulation immediately prior to the return of Christ. These believe that all the events of Rev 4-19 are fulfilled in the 7 years immediately preceding Christ's return.

2) Strict parallelism: the 7 Seals are repeated in the 7 Trumpets and again in the 7 Bowls; they are numerically and historically parallel. Since all 3 come to the same final conclusion [judgment, return of Christ, final consummation of the kingdom], they should be viewed as parallel, giving differing aspects of the same process, rather than temporally successive stages of it. WH holds this view. Some premill's hold this view and condense all these events into a 7 year tribulation. SS: this view recognizes the similarities between the 3, but does not adequately address their dissimilarities.

3) Sequential/Parallel: posits that the series are sequential, with each growing in intensity. This would help explain the difference between the Seals and the Trumpets/Bowls. Says the 6th Seal brings us to the threshold of Christ's return; the contents of the 7th Seal are the 7 Trumpets, and the contents of the 7th Trumpet are the 7 Bowls of Wrath. But this fails to take account of the fact that the 7th Seal has no other content of its own, which it does [see 8:1-5]. And there is no reason to believe that the contents of the 7th Trumpet are the 7 Bowls. The 7th Trumpet also has its own content in 11:15-19 Christ in victory and Judgment. And this scheme fails to recognize the similarities and parallels between the Trumpets and Bowls.

A better version of this approach says the first 5 of the 7 Seal judgments describe what will transpire throughout the entire course of the present earth age, that will operate between the first and second comings of Christ. The 7th Seal brings us to the return of Christ. The 7 Trumpets and the 7 Bowls are clustered together at the close of human history, though they overlap somewhat with the last 2 or 3 Seals. The 6th Seal brings us to the end of the church age, and the 7th Seal to Christ's return itself. When the 7th Seal is opened, its contents [the judgments depicted in the 7 Trumpets and 7 Bowls] are poured out. The end is seen, not as a single event, but as a whole complex series of events: the resurrection of all, the outpouring of God's wrath, judgment on Satan and all the wicked, and establishment of the kingdom.

4) Progressive Parallelism/Recapitulation. Very similar to 3 above, but says that the events depicted in the Trumpets and the Bowls are, like those of the Seals, descriptive of events throughout the course of history between the two advents of Jesus.

This view is also similar to 2 above, but recognizes that the Trumpets and Bowls bear a greater similarity to one another than to the Seals. Under this view [#4] the Trumpets and Bowls are seen as essentially 2 sides of the same coin. The Trumpet judgments are the initial, perhaps less severe, outpouring of God's wrath, while the Bowls are the final outpouring of His wrath. This would explain the rising intensity as John moves from Trumpets to the Bowls.

The Scroll with 7 Seals: God's Plan of Redemption opened by Christ:

- 1st Seal: *Satan went out conquering and to conquer.* The Fall.
- 2nd Seal: *peace taken from the earth... granted that men would slay one another.*
- 3rd Seal: *injustice and inequality in the world*
- 4th Seal: *Death on the earth, by sword, famine, pestilence, and wild beasts.*
- 5th Seal: *Persecution of the church, and the martyrdom of some; prayers of the martyrs.*
- 6th Seal: *Judgment, affecting the air, skies, the earth, the wicked on the earth; the great day of their wrath has come.*
- 7th Seal: *an angel before the altar throws fire to the earth, and there followed peals of thunder, lightning, and an earthquake; the 7 Trumpets then sound. Judgment:*

7 Trumpets

- 1st Trumpet: *Hail and fire mixed with blood thrown to the earth. 1/3 of earth and trees, and all the green grass burned up.*
- 2nd Trumpet: *something like a great mountain burning with fire was thrown into the sea, and a third of the sea became blood. 1/3 of the sea creatures died, 1/3 of the ships were destroyed .*
- 3rd Trumpet: *a great star fell from heaven, burning like a torch. It fell on a third of the rivers and springs. They became bitter. Many men died from the waters.*
- 4th Trumpet: *1/3 of the sun, moon and stars were struck. Judgment on pagan gods.*

-- and eagle flying in mid-heaven, warning of the judgments to come -- 14:6

- 5th Trumpet: Demon *locusts* let out of the *bottomless pit* to torment the wicked for 5 mos.
- 6th Trumpet: 4 angels bound at the Euphrates released to kill 1/3 of mankind. 200,000,000 *horsemen [the locusts?]* kill by fire, smoke and brimstone. Those not killed did not repent.
- 7th Trumpet: Victory. *The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord.*

7 Bowls of Wrath

- 1st Bowl: On the earth. It became a malignant sore on those who had the beast's mark.
- 2nd Bowl: Into the sea. It became blood, Everything in the sea died.
- 3rd Bowl: Into the rivers and springs. They became blood. Angel praises God's justice.
- 4th Bowl: On the sun. It was given to it to scorch men with fire. Men blasphemed, and did not repent.
- 5th Bowl: On the beast's throne. The world's kingdom darkened. They blasphemed, and did not repent.
- 6th Bowl: On the great river, the Euphrates. Its water was dried up, so the way would be prepared for the kings of the east.
- 7th Bowl. *It is done.* Flashes of lightning, peals of thunder, a great earthquake.

7 Trumpets

- 1 earth - 8:7
2 sea - 8:8-9
3 rivers, springs - 8:10-11
4 sun, moon, stars - 8:12
5 pit of the abyss - 9:1
6 river Euphrates - 9:13-14
7 lightning, hail - 11:15,19

7 Bowls

- 1 earth - 16:2
2 sea - 16:3
3 rivers, springs - 16:4-5
4 sun - 16:8
5 beast's throne - 16:10
6 river Euphrates - 16:12
7 lightning, hail - 16:17, 21