

The Seal Judgments

Revelation 6:1-17

Intro: Chapter 6 introduces us to an extended section, 6–19, that records God’s wrath being released upon this Christ-rejecting world during the future Tribulation period. This extended section is usually divided into three series of sevenfold judgments: the 7 seal judgments (6:1-14); the 7 trumpet judgments (8:1–9:21); and the 7 bowl/vial judgments (15:1–16:21).

Interspersed between these three narrative sections depicting God’s judgment on a world filled with Christ-rejecters are *four literary parenthesis* (). **For example:** look at chapter 7, verses 1-17. These parenthesis do not advance the prophetic narrative, and in fact they can either look forward or backward. They can at times speak of results that have not as yet taken place in the narrative section as though it had already taken place.

The sequential ordering of these judgments (back of handout).

QuickTime™ and a decompressor are needed to see this picture.

The First Seal: *The White Horse Rider, Antichrist* (6:1-2)

The Second Seal: *The Red Horse Rider, All Out War* (6:3-4)

The Third Seal: *Famine* (6:5-6)

The Fourth Seal: *The Pale Horse Rider, Mass Death* (6:7-8)

The Fifth Seal: *Martyrdom of Tribulation Saints* (6:9-11)

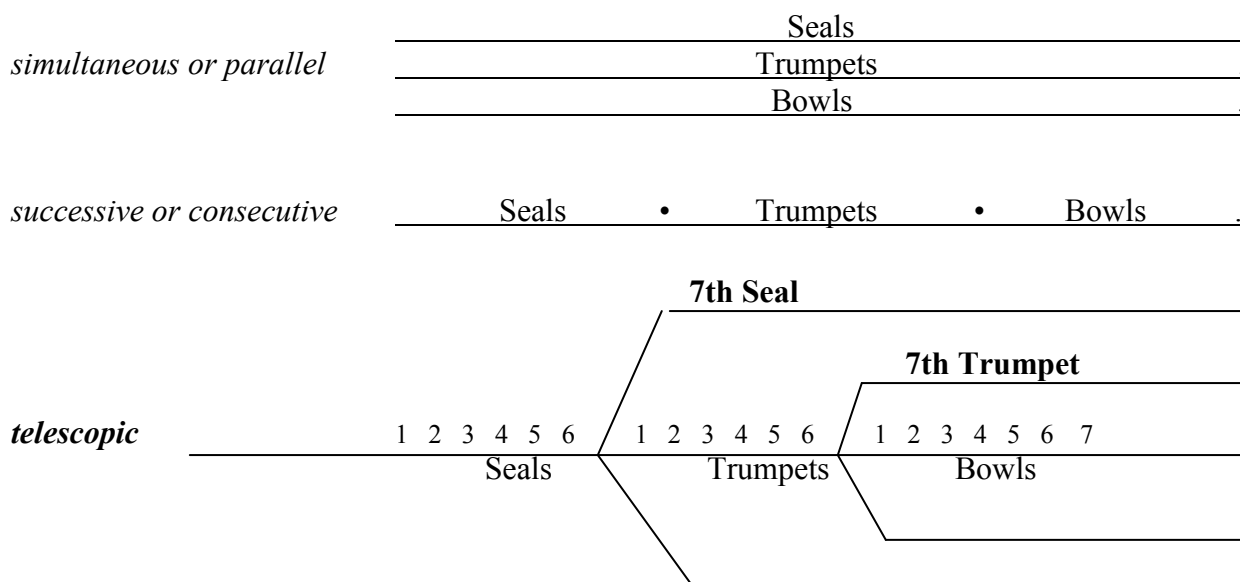
The Sixth Seal: *Physical Disturbances* (6:12-17)

Conclusion:

Introduction to the Judgments of Revelation

The bulk of the Book of Revelation, chapters 4:1–19:21, deals with events that will occur during a future period commonly known as the Tribulation (Dan. 9; Matt. 24-25; Luke 21). Following an Introductory Prologue in Chapters 4 and 5, John details the future tribulation period by dividing it into three sequences of seven divine judgments that God will release upon this Christ rejecting world: **7 seal judgments**, **7 trumpet judgments**, and **7 bowl judgments**.¹ Interspersed between these narrative sections depicting the eschatological judgments of God are *four literary parenthesis* (). The same phenomenon is witnessed in the Book of Hebrews. These parenthesis do not advance the prophetic narrative, and in fact they can either look forward or backward. They can at times speak of results that have not as yet taken place in the narrative section as though it had already taken place. The *parenthesis* provide the reader with additional information.

There are three possible sequential arrangements for the order of these judgments:



Note: A correlation of concepts and passages seems to support the *telescopic arrangement* as the best development of the three series of seven judgments. As can be seen in the above chart, the seventh seal introduces the seven trumpet judgments and is explained by them; and the seventh trumpet judgment introduces the final seven bowl/vial judgments and is explained by them.

¹For a full development of the various literary features associated with the threefold series of the sevenfold divine judgments that God will pour out on the world during the Tribulation period see Robert Gromacki, *New Testament Survey*, 395-97.