

Brief on Seals, Trumpets, and Vials of the Apocalypse ¹

By Richard Joseph Michael Ibranyi

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The seals, trumpets, and vials do not follow each other in chronological order

The events caused by the opening of the seven seals occur in chronological sequence, just as do the events announced by the blowing of the seven trumpets and the events caused by the pouring out of the seven vials. Hence the event caused by the opening of the first seal occurs before the event caused by the opening of the second seal. And the event announced by the sounding of the first trumpet occurs before the event announced by the sounding of the second trumpet. And the event caused by the pouring out of the first vial occurs before the event caused by the pouring out of the second vial.

The book of the Apocalypse records the seven seals in Chapters 6-8, then the seven trumpets in Chapters 8-10, and then the seven vials in Chapters 15-16. However, the opening of the seals and the sounding of the trumpets and the pouring out of the vials do not follow each other in chronological order. Some happen at the same time or before those that are recorded first. Hence the seven seals are not opened first, and then the seven trumpets sounded, and then the seven vials poured out.

The events mentioned in Apocalypse 6's sixth seal occur after those in Apocalypse 7

For example, Apoc. 6:12-17 records the sixth seal in which the earth is being destroyed:

Sixth seal: "And I saw when he had opened the sixth seal and behold there was a great earthquake, and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair and the whole moon became as blood. And the stars from heaven fell upon the earth, as the fig tree casteth its green figs when it is shaken by a great wind. And the heaven departed as a book folded up; and every mountain and the islands were moved out of their places. And the kings of the earth, and the princes, and tribunes, and the rich, and the strong, and every bondman, and every freeman, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of mountains. And they say to the mountains and the rocks: Fall upon us and hide us from the face of him that sitteth upon the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb. For the great day of their wrath is come, and who shall be able to stand?" (Apoc. 6:12-17)

Yet in Apoc. 7 the earth is not yet destroyed, as the angels are told to wait before they begin to destroy the earth and its heavens:

"After these things, I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that they should not blow upon the earth, nor upon the sea, nor on any tree. And I saw another angel ascending from the rising of the sun, having the sign of the living God; and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea, saying: Hurt not the earth, nor the sea, nor the trees, till we sign the servants of our God in their foreheads." (Apoc. 7:1-3)

Hence the events mentioned in Apoc. 7:1-3 occur before the events mentioned in Apoc. 6:12-17. This is more proof that not all of the chapters and events in the Apocalypse are in chronological order.

The sixth seal is opened sometime after the seventh trumpet and the seventh vial

More proof is that the sixth seal is opened sometime after the seventh trumpet is sounded and the seventh vial is poured out even though the seals are mentioned in Apocalypse (Apoc. 6-8) before the trumpets (Apoc. 8-10) and the vials (Apoc. 15-16). The opening of the sixth seal ushers in the beginning of the destruction of this world after the Two Witnesses are resurrected and the Antichrist's army is defeated at Armagedon and after the death of the Antichrist. However, all the events that happen by the sounding of the trumpets and pouring out of the vials occur before those that take place when the sixth seal is opened.

For example, the heavens and thus the sun, moon, and stars are destroyed when the sixth seal is opened. Isaiah and St. Peter also prophesied that the heavens will pass away just prior to the second coming of Christ. (Isa. 34:2-4; 2 Pt. 3:10) Yet the heavens have not yet passed away and hence the sun, moon, and stars are still in the heavens when the trumpets are sounded and the vials are poured out. For example, the sun is still in the heavens when the fourth trumpet is sounded and the fourth vial is poured out:

Fourth trumpet: “And the fourth angel sounded the trumpet, and the third part of the sun was smitten, and the third part of the moon, and the third part of the stars, so that the third part of them was darkened, and the day did not shine for a third part of it, and the night in like manner.” (Apoc. 8:12)

Fourth vial: “And the fourth angel poured out his vial upon the sun, and it was given unto him to afflict men with heat and fire: And men were scorched with great heat, and they blasphemed the name of God, who hath power over these plagues, neither did they repent to give him glory.” (Apoc. 16:8-9)

This is more proof that not all of the seals, trumpets, and vials follow each other in chronological order. Another proof is that the Antichrist is still in power when the fifth vial is poured out and thus the earth has not yet been destroyed and the heavens have not yet passed away:

“And the fifth angel poured out his vial upon the seat of the beast; and his kingdom became dark, and they gnawed their tongues for pain. And they blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and wounds, and did not repent from their works.” (Apoc. 16:10-11)

Yet when the sixth seal is opened, the Antichrist is dead and Jesus begins to destroy the earth and the heavens:

“And I saw, when he had opened the sixth seal, and behold there was a great earthquake, and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair: and the whole moon became as blood: And the stars from heaven fell upon the earth, as the fig tree casteth its green figs when it is shaken by a great wind: And the heaven departed as a book folded up; and every mountain, and the islands were moved out of their places.” (Apoc. 6:12-14)

Hence the fifth vial is poured out before the opening of the sixth seal.

Another proof is that the sixth trumpet and the sixth vial usher in Armagedon and thus the heavens still exist and the earth has not yet begun to be destroyed as mentioned when the sixth seal is opened. Again, this is more proof that not all of the seals, trumpets, and vials follow each other in chronological order.

The events of the seven seals begin at different times from the seven trumpets and seven vials

The seven seals are opened at different times from the sounding of the seven trumpets and pouring out of the seven vials and hence are separate events.

- First to fourth seal: The first four seals are opened before any trumpet is sounded and any vial is poured out.
- Fifth seal: The fifth seal is opened during the time when the trumpets are being sounded and the vials are being poured out.
- Sixth seal: The sixth seal is not opened until sometime after the seventh trumpet is sounded and the seventh vial is poured out.
- Seventh seal: The seventh seal marks the end of time of this world and thus its opening ushers in the everlasting earthly kingdom.

Each sounding of the trumpet begins at the same time as the same numbered vial is poured out

The events that occur after the sounding of each trumpet and upon the pouring out of each vial begin at the same time and are either the same event or different events that begin at the same time. For example,

- The first trumpet is sounded and the first vial is poured out at the same time even though each is a separate event.
- The second trumpet is sounded and the second vial is poured out at the same time and are the same event.

However, it is a viable opinion (one I do not hold) that one or more of the events mentioned for the same numbered trumpet and vial may occur at different times.

Table of the seals, trumpets, and vials

Introduction

Intro. Seals	Intro. Trumpets	Intro. Vials
<p><i>No one can open the seals but Christ</i></p> <p>“And I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne, a book written within and without, sealed with seven seals. And I saw a strong angel, proclaiming with a loud voice: Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof? And no man was able, neither in heaven, nor on earth, nor under the earth, to open the book, nor to look on it. And I wept much, because no man was found worthy to open the book, nor to see it. And one of the ancients said to me: Weep not; behold the lion of the tribe of Juda, the root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof. And I saw: and behold in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the ancients, a Lamb standing as it were slain, having seven horns and seven eyes: which are the seven Spirits of God, sent forth into all the earth. And he came and took the book out of the right hand of him that sat on the throne. And when he had opened the book, the four living creatures, and the four and twenty ancients fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints: And they sung a new canticle, saying: Thou art worthy, O Lord, to take the book, and to open the seals thereof; because thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God, in thy blood, out of every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation. And hast made us to our God a kingdom and priests, and we shall reign on the earth. And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne, and the living creatures, and the ancients; and the number of them was thousands of thousands, saying with a loud voice: The Lamb that was slain is worthy to receive power, and divinity, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and benediction. And every creature, which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them: I heard all saying: To him that sitteth on the throne, and to the Lamb, benediction, and honour, and glory, and power, for ever and ever. And the four living creatures said: Amen. And the four and twenty ancients fell down on their faces, and adored him that liveth for ever and ever.” (Apoc. 5:1-14)</p>	<p><i>The trumpets are sounded from the reign of the Antichrist onward</i></p> <p>“And when he had opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven, as it were for half an hour. And I saw seven angels standing in the presence of God; and there were given to them seven trumpets. And another angel came, and stood before the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given to him much incense, that he should offer of the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar, which is before the throne of God. And the smoke of the incense of the prayers of the saints ascended up before God from the hand of the angel. And the angel took the censer, and filled it with the fire of the altar, and cast it on the earth, and there were thunders and voices and lightning, and a great earthquake. And the seven angels, who had the seven trumpets, prepared themselves to sound the trumpet.” (Apoc. 8:1-6)</p>	<p><i>The vials are poured out from the reign of the Antichrist onward</i></p> <p>“And I saw another sign in heaven, great and wonderful: seven angels having the seven last plagues. For in them is filled up the wrath of God. And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire, and them that had overcome the beast, and his image, and the number of his name, standing on the sea of glass, having the harps of God: And singing the canticle of Moses, the servant of God, and the canticle of the Lamb, saying: Great and wonderful are thy works, O Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, O King of ages. Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and magnify thy name? For thou only art holy: for all nations shall come, and shall adore in thy sight, because thy judgments are manifest. And after these things I looked; and behold, the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened: And the seven angels came out of the temple, having the seven plagues, clothed with clean and white linen, and girt about the breasts with golden girdles. And one of the four living creatures gave to the seven angels seven golden vials, full of the wrath of God, who liveth for ever and ever. And the temple was filled with smoke from the majesty of God, and from his power; and no man was able to enter into the temple, till the seven plagues of the seven angels were fulfilled.” (Apoc. 15:1-8)</p> <p>“And I heard a great voice out of the temple, saying to the seven angels: Go, and pour out the seven vials of the wrath of God upon the earth.” (Apoc. 16:1)</p>

First

1st Seal	1st Trumpet	1st Vial
<p><i>The first seal is opened on Pentecost Day when Christ, who conquered death, now conquers the world by the gospel</i></p> <p>“And I saw that the Lamb had opened one of the seven seals, and I heard one of the four living creatures, as it were the voice of thunder, saying: Come, and see. And I saw: and behold a white horse, and he that sat on him had a bow, and there was a crown given him, and he went forth conquering that he might conquer.” (Apoc. 6:1-2)</p>	<p><i>Hail mingled with fire and blood burns up a third part of the earth, along with trees and green grass</i></p> <p>“And the first angel sounded the trumpet, and there followed hail and fire, mingled with blood, and it was cast on the earth, and the third part of the earth was burnt up, and the third part of the trees was burnt up, and all green grass was burnt up.” (Apoc. 8:7)</p>	<p><i>Sores and greivous wounds fall upon those who have the mark of the beast</i></p> <p>“And the first went, and poured out his vial upon the earth, and there fell a sore and grievous wound upon men, who had the character of the beast; and upon them that adored the image thereof.” (Apoc. 16:2)</p>

Second

2nd Seal	2nd Trumpet	2nd Vial
<p><i>Great wars upon the earth, World Wars I and II</i></p> <p>“And when he had opened the second seal, I heard the second living creature, saying: Come, and see. And there went out another horse that was red: and to him that sat thereon, it was given that he should take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another, and a great sword was given to him.” (Apoc. 6:3-4)</p>	<p><i>A great burning mountain (probably a meteor) is cast into the sea and turns a third part of the sea to blood and kills all the sea creatures and ships in it</i></p> <p>“And the second angel sounded the trumpet; and as it were a great mountain, burning with fire, was cast into the sea, and the third part of the sea became blood. And the third part of those creatures died which had life in the sea and the third part of the ships was destroyed.” (Apoc. 8:8-9)</p>	<p><i>The sea turns to blood</i></p> <p>“And the second angel poured out his vial upon the sea, and there came blood as it were of a dead man; and every living soul died in the sea.” (Apoc. 16:3)</p>

Third

3rd Seal	3rd Trumpet	3rd Vial
<p><i>A great famine comes upon the earth. It occurs just previous to the reign of the Antichrist and may be caused by him in which he then ends the famine and plays the hero.</i></p> <p>“And when he had opened the third seal, I heard the third living creature saying: Come, and see. And behold a black horse, and he that sat on him had a pair of scales in his hand. And I heard as it were a voice in the midst of the four living creatures, saying: Two pounds of wheat for a penny, and thrice two pounds of barley for a penny, and see thou hurt not the wine and the oil.” (Apoc. 6:5-6)</p>	<p><i>A burning great star called Wormwood falls from heaven upon a third part of the rivers and fountains of waters and makes the water bitter and poison and kills many men</i></p> <p>“And the third angel sounded the trumpet, and a great star fell from heaven, burning as it were a torch, and it fell on the third part of the rivers and upon the fountains of waters. And the name of the star is called Wormwood. And the third part of the waters became wormwood; and many men died of the waters because they were made bitter.” (Apoc. 8:10-11)</p>	<p><i>Rivers and fountains of waters turn to blood</i></p> <p>“And the third poured out his vial upon the rivers and the fountains of waters and there was made blood. And I heard the angel of the waters saying: Thou art just, O Lord, who art, and who wast, the Holy One, because thou hast judged these things. For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets and thou hast given them blood to drink; for they are worthy. And I heard another, from the altar, saying: Yea, O Lord God Almighty, true and just are thy judgments.” (Apoc. 16:4-7)</p>

Fourth

4th Seal	4th Trumpet	4th Vial
<p><i>The one who sits upon the pale horse is the Antichrist, who is given power over the whole earth, the four parts of the earth. (See Apoc. 20:7; Apoc. 13:4-8.) Upon the opening of the fourth seal, he begins a world war and sets about conquering the world and subjugating it to himself. His winning the war begins his 3½ year reign.</i></p> <p>“And when he had opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature, saying: Come, and see. And behold a pale horse, and he that sat upon him, his name was Death, and hell followed him. And power was given to him over the four parts of the earth, to kill with sword, with famine, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth.” (Apoc. 6:7-8)</p>	<p><i>A third part of the sun, moon, and stars are darkened and thus a third part of the day that should have been light was dark</i></p> <p>“And the fourth angel sounded the trumpet, and the third part of the sun was smitten, and the third part of the moon, and the third part of the stars, so that the third part of them was darkened, and the day did not shine for a third part of it, and the night in like manner.” (Apoc. 8:12)</p> <p><i>The next three trumpets are three woes.</i></p> <p>And I beheld, and heard the voice of one eagle flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice: Woe, woe, woe to the inhabitants of the earth by reason of the rest of the voices of the three angels, who are yet to sound the trumpet.” (Apoc. 8:13)</p>	<p><i>The sun afflicts men with heat and fire in the places where the sun shines</i></p> <p>“And the fourth angel poured out his vial upon the sun, and it was given unto him to afflict men with heat and fire: And men were scorched with great heat, and they blasphemed the name of God, who hath power over these plagues, neither did they repent to give him glory.” (Apoc. 16:8-9)</p>

Fifth

5th Seal	5th Trumpet	5th Vial
<p><i>Martyrs under the altar of God cry out to him to avenge their blood. God tells them to wait till the blood of the last prophets is shed, which occurs when the Two Witnesses are killed</i></p> <p>“And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God and for the testimony which they held. And they cried with a loud voice, saying: How long, O Lord (holy and true), dost thou not judge and revenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? And white robes were given to every one of them one; and it was said to them, that they should rest for a little time, till their fellow servants and their brethren who are to be slain, even as they, should be filled up.” (Apoc. 6:9-11)</p>	<p><i>An angel of God is given the key to the bottomless pit to open it. Out of the pit comes black smoke that darkens the earth and sun and locusts, which are symbolic of devils and possibly damned humans with Satan as their king. And for five months they go about the earth to torment but not kill men who do not have the character of God on their forehead; that is, non-Catholics, which includes nominal Catholics because they are Catholic in name only. Satan does this to keep his followers in fear of him and mostly because he hates them, as he hates everything and thus even those who serve him. (See commentary on Apoc. 9:1-11)</i></p> <p>(1 Woe) “And the fifth angel sounded the trumpet, and I saw a star fall from heaven upon the earth. And there was given to him [the angel who sounded the fifth trumpet] the key of the bottomless pit. And he opened the bottomless pit; and the smoke of the pit arose, as the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened with the smoke of the pit. And from the smoke of the pit there came out locusts upon the earth. And power was given to them, as the scorpions of the earth have power. And it was commanded them that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, nor any green thing, nor any tree, <u>but only the men who have not the sign of God on their foreheads</u>. And it was given unto them that they should not kill them, but that they should torment them five months; and their torment was as the torment of a scorpion when he striketh a man. And in those days men shall seek death, and shall not find it: and they shall desire to die, and death shall fly from them. And the shapes of the locusts were like unto horses prepared unto battle: and on their heads were, as it were, crowns like gold: and their faces were as the faces of men. And they had hair as the hair of women; and their teeth were as lions. And they had breastplates as breastplates of iron, and the noise of their wings was as the noise of chariots and many horses running to battle. And they had tails like to scorpions, and there were stings in their tails; and their power was to hurt men five months. And they had over them a king, the angel of the bottomless pit; whose name in Hebrew is Abaddon, and in Greek Apollyon; in Latin Exterminans...” (Apoc. 9:1-11)</p>	<p><i>Plagues of darkness and torments fall upon the seat of the Antichrist in Jerusalem and his kingdom</i></p> <p>“And the fifth angel poured out his vial upon the seat of the beast; and his kingdom became dark, and they gnawed their tongues for pain. And they blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and wounds, and did not repent from their works.” (Apoc. 16:10-11)</p>

Sixth

6th Seal	6th Trumpet	6th Vial
<p><i>It is opened at the death of the Antichrist, who is killed thirty days after the Two Witnesses are resurrected. It causes a great earthquake and darkness over the earth by the darkening of the sun. Christ then comes the second time with his heavenly army by appearing in the heavens and lighting up the earth. He then proceeds to destroy the earth and its heaven. And all the evildoers hide from the wrath of God.</i></p> <p>“And I saw when he had opened the sixth seal and behold there was a great earthquake, and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the whole moon became as blood. And the stars from heaven fell upon the earth, as the fig tree casteth its green figs when it is shaken by a great wind. And the heaven departed as a book folded up; and every mountain and the islands were moved out of their places. And the kings of the earth, and the princes, and tribunes, and the rich, and the strong, and every bondman, and every freeman, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of mountains. And they say to the mountains and the rocks: Fall upon us and hide us from the face of him that sitteth upon the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb. For the great day of their wrath is come, and who shall be able to stand?” (Apoc. 6:12-17)</p>	<p><i>The final battle of this world at Armagedon in which the army of Christ defeats the army of the Antichrist</i></p> <p>(2 Woe) “Saying to the sixth angel, who had the trumpet: Loose the four angels who are bound in the great river Euphrates. And the four angels were loosed, who were prepared for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year, for to kill the third part of men. And the number of the army of horsemen was twenty thousand times ten thousand. And I heard the number of them. And thus I saw the horses in the vision: and they that sat on them had breastplates of fire and of hyacinth and of brimstone and the heads of the horses were as the heads of lions; and from their mouths proceeded fire, and smoke, and brimstone. And by these three plagues was slain the third part of men, by the fire and by the smoke and by the brimstone, which issued out of their mouths. For the power of the horses is in their mouths and in their tails. For their tails are like to serpents and have heads, and with them they hurt. And the rest of the men who were not slain by these plagues did not repent from the works of their hands, that they should not adore devils, and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and wood, which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk. Neither did they repent from their murders, nor from their sorceries, nor from their fornication, nor from their thefts.” (Apoc. 9:14-21)</p>	<p><i>The final battle of this world at Armagedon in which the army of Christ defeats the army of the Antichrist</i></p> <p>“And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon that great river Euphrates and dried up the water thereof, that a way might be prepared for the kings from the rising of the sun. And I saw from the mouth of the dragon, and from the mouth of the beast, and from the mouth of the false prophet, three unclean spirits like frogs. For they are the spirits of devils working signs, and they go forth unto the kings of the whole earth, to gather them to battle against the great day of the Almighty God. Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked and they see his shame. And he shall gather them together into a place, which in Hebrew is called Armagedon.” (Apoc. 16:12-16)</p>

Seventh

7th Seal	7th Trumpet	7th Vial
<p><i>The silence in heaven indicates that all prophecies and events regarding this fallen world are fulfilled and hence ushers in the everlasting earthly paradise with the New Jerusalem. The silence, then, indicates the everlasting peace of the everlasting earthly paradise.</i></p> <p>“And when he had opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven, as it were for half an hour.” (Apoc. 8:1)</p>	<p><i>Sounded within one hour after the Two Witnesses are resurrected, in which God punishes Jerusalem</i></p> <p>“In the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound the trumpet, the mystery of God shall be finished, as he hath declared by his servants the prophets.” (Apoc. 10:7)</p> <p><i>After the Two Witnesses are resurrected and taken to the heavens, there will be no more prophets on earth and thus prophecy will end. Hence there will be no more new prophecies. However, some prophecies are yet to be fulfilled, such as the killing of the Antichrist, the destruction of this world, the General Judgment, and the creation of the everlasting paradise.</i></p> <p>“And the seventh angel sounded the trumpet: and there were great voices in heaven, saying: The kingdom of this world is become our Lord’s and his Christ’s, and he shall reign for ever and ever. Amen. And the four and twenty ancients, who sit on their seats in the sight of God, fell on their faces and adored God, saying: We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, who art, and who wast, and who art to come: because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and thou hast reigned. And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldest render reward to thy servants the prophets and the saints, and to them that fear thy name, little and great, and shouldest destroy them who have corrupted the earth. And the temple of God was opened in heaven: and the ark of his testament was seen in his temple, and there were lightning, and voices, and an earthquake, and great hail.” (Apoc. 11:15-19)</p>	<p><i>Poured out within one hour after the Two Witnesses are resurrected and taken into the heavens. First, a great earthquake divides Jerusalem, the home of the Antichrist, into three parts and causes the cities of the Gentiles to fall (Verses 17-19). Shortly after, the islands and mountains of the worldwide kingdom of the Antichrist (called the Great Babylon) are destroyed and a great hail torments the members of his kingdom (Verses 19-21).</i></p> <p>“And the seventh angel poured out his vial upon the air, and there came a great voice out of the temple from the throne, saying: It is done. And there were lightning, and voices, and thunders, and there was a great earthquake, such an one as never had been since men were upon the earth, such an earthquake, so great. And the great city was divided into three parts; and the cities of the Gentiles fell. And great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give her the cup of the wine of the indignation of his wrath. And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found. And great hail, like a talent, came down from heaven upon men: and men blasphemed God for the plague of the hail because it was exceeding great.” (Apoc. 16:17-21)</p>

For the glory of God; in honor of the Blessed Virgin Mary, St. Michael, St. Joseph, Ss. Joachim and Anne, St. John the Baptist, the other angels and saints; and for the salvation of men

Original version: 7/2021; Current version: 7/2021

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