

Drama of Revelation's Sixths and Sevenths

Introduction

The saga of earth's last few weeks is summarized within the messages of the sixth and seventh Seals, Trumpets and Vial Plagues in Revelation. Each of these three prophetic series of sevens are segmented into:



This narrative focuses on the last two "events" depicted in John's apocalypse. Each surrounds the era of Christ's Second Advent.

The Sixth Seal

"Then I looked when the Lamb opened the sixth seal, and a huge earthquake took place; the sun became as black as sackcloth made of hair, and the full moon became blood red" (Revelation 6:12 – NET).

Christ, the Lamb, is sequentially breaking each Seal of a seven-sealed scroll that originated with God the Father, seated on His throne (Revelation 4:2-3, 5:6-7). When each Seal is broken, a **sequenced event** occurs, moving history closer to the Advent, which does occur during the sixth Seal.

- Revelation 4 and 5 introduces the "heavenly players" who will be seen throughout this apocalyptic book. During this characterization, that **seven-sealed scroll is completed and sealed**.
- Revelation 6, in turn, introduces the key "earthly players" who will be seen throughout this apocalyptic book as **those Seals are broken**.

The wicked quickly perceive the meaning of the sixth Seal events as the "*wrath of God and Christ*" (vss 16-17). It begins with a desolating earthquake.

This same earthquake is also noted during the seventh Vial Plague (Revelation 16:18, 20).

- "*And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places*" (Revelation 6:14).
- "*Every island fled away and no mountains could be found*" (Revelation 16:20).

This will be a time of terror and hopelessness that staggers the imagination. It will surpass any horror yet experienced by humanity.¹

¹ Brighton, Louis A; *Revelation, Concordance Commentary* (Concordance Publishing House, Saint Louis), 1999, p. 173.

- This is when God will finally and fully vindicate the reputation of His name and display His justice against evil.
- Persecution of Christians will have finally run its course. God’s neutralizing justice steps into history.² His intentional purpose of exonerating holiness reaches its zenith.
- This vast earthquake is a signal that divinity has taken **full control** of earth’s last segment of time.
- When God descended onto Mt. Sinai in **His major debut as Israel’s sovereign Leader**, the whole mountain shook violently (Exodus 19:18). Here, God’s power upsets **all of earth’s foundations, signaling that He will shortly return as King of Kings and Lord of Lords**. The wicked are adversely affected. The saints will know this as a sign that their deliverance is at hand.

“and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood” (vs 12)

- This imagery is similar to that given in the Olivet discourse, when Christ said: **“Immediately after** the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened and the moon shall not give her light” (Matthew 24:29a).
- This occurs between the end of the great tribulation and the Second Advent (vss 30-33).

“and the stars in the sky fell to earth, as figs drop from a fig tree when shaken by a strong wind. The heavens receded like a scroll being rolled up, and every mountain and island was removed from its place” (Revelation 6:13-14 – NIV).

The falling of the stars does not imply destruction of the heavens. It is to be considered an omen that occurs in anticipation of Christ’s imminent arrival, introducing the *“Day of the great Lord”* (Ezekiel 32:7; Joel 2:10, 3:15).³ This will be a time of terror for the wicked and a wonderful sign of hope to the saints.

- How the sky is rolled up in this Greek expression is not clear. Some divine, supernatural display occurs⁴ – like the parting of the curtains on a theater stage. As these unparalleled events unfold, every person will know that a power beyond planet earth has taken control.
- Interestingly, at Jesus’ baptism the heavens were *“split apart”* (Mark 1:10).⁵

This Seal narrative also states that the *“heavens will be shaken”* (Mark 12:25, Matthew 24:29) – first the global earthquake, then the sky shudders, and the *“stars fall.”*

Regarding those islands and mountains, the word *ekinethesan* (G) can mean “moved” or “removed.” In light of the parallel verse in 16:20 (*“And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found.”*), it is likely that they are “removed.”

² Beale, Gregory K.; *The New International Greek Testament Commentary; The Book of Revelation* (William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, Michigan – 1999), p. 396.

³ Aune, David E.; *52B World Biblical Commentary; Revelation 6–16* (World Books; Dallas, Texas), 1997, p. 415.

⁴ Beale, *op. cit.*, p. 398.

⁵ Osborne, Grant R.; *Revelation* (Baker Book House; Grand Rapids, MI), p. 293.

Some of the most stable features of the world are shaken or destroyed (cf. Judges 5:5; Psalm 18:7; Isaiah 5:25, 54:10; Jeremiah 4:24; Habakkuk 1:6; Zechariah 14:4). Removal of mountains is deemed impossible except by an act of God.⁶

“Never since man was created had there been witnessed such a manifestation of divine power as when the law was proclaimed from Sinai. ‘The earth shook, the heavens also dropped at the presence of God: even Sinai itself was moved at the presence of God, the God of Israel.’ Psalm 68:8. **Amid the most terrific convulsions of nature the voice of God**, like a trumpet, was heard from the cloud. The mountain was shaken from base to summit, and the hosts of Israel, pale and trembling with terror, lay upon their faces upon the earth. He whose voice then shook the earth has declared, **‘Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven.’ Hebrews 12:26** [this sixth Seal] Says the Scripture, ‘The Lord shall roar from on high, and utter His voice from His holy habitation;’ ‘and the **heavens and the earth shall shake.**’ Jeremiah 25:30; Joel 3:16.”⁷

This is that “once more.” The end is in sight!

“And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains” (Revelation 6:15).

- By now the “*earth dwellers*” are terrorized by the massive earthquakes followed by supernatural celestial events, plus that inexplicable “*opening*” in the heavens!
- A natural conclusion: The fearful *Day of the Lord* has arrived.

All levels of evil humanity in this verse are here represented.

- The imagery figuratively emphasizes the certainty of their end.⁸
- Provocative – these are the same groups that God ordered John (symbolizing His witnesses) to prophesy to (some expositors say, “*prophesy against*”) (Revelation 10:11) and are later destroyed (Revelation 19:18).

“They called to the mountains and the rocks, ‘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 withstand it?’” (Revelation 6:16-17 – NIV).

The first reaction of the wicked is to hide among the rocks and in the caves. Their terror intensifies to an irrational level. They plead for an avalanche to bury them.⁹ They rejected the Creator – now they want His creation to kill them.

- This is an echo of an ancient prophecy regarding apostate Israel.
- *“The high places of the ‘House of Wickedness’ will be destroyed; it is the place where Israel sins. Thorns and thistles will grow up over its altars. Then they will say to the*

⁶ Aune, *op. cit.*, p. 416.

⁷ *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 340.

⁸ Beale, *op. cit.*, p. 965.

⁹ Osborne, *op. cit.*, p. 295.

“mountains, ‘Cover us!’ and to the hills, ‘Fall on us!’” (Hosea 10:8 – NET; cf. Jeremiah 4:23-30, 5:7).

A unique tie with Revelation 1:7 reveals that at Christ’s return *“all kindreds of the earth shall wail **because of him,**”* as every eye sees Him! The wicked mourn with utter grief as they see Jesus, realizing then that they are lost. The above verses (16-17) contextually reveal, however, that it is ***the face of God the Father*** on the throne from which they want to escape! Seeing Jesus brings judicial rejection.

The Sixth Trumpet

The fifth Seal identifies martyrs who fell into wicked hands of the *“pale horse”* people (the antichrist and his followers), represented by the fourth Seal. These martyrs cry out, “How long?” It is not a cry for vengeance, but they are asking ***God when He will vindicate His holiness and character.***

- God advised that there would be a delay (Revelation 6:10-11).
- When the ***Trumpet Plagues*** begin, it becomes ***God’s initial response to that cry!***
- Trumpets five to seven are called “woes.” They bring divine terror and fear to the wicked. The sixth Trumpet:

“Then the sixth angel blew his trumpet, and I heard a single voice coming from the horns on the golden altar that is before God,” saying to the sixth angel, the one holding the trumpet, ‘Set free the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates!’” (Revelation 9:13-14 – NET).

The mysterious voice is not identified. However, Christ, as High Priest, was recently standing before the golden altar of incense in 8:3-5.¹⁰ This altar had four horns and was positioned before the Most Holy Place, where God’s presence resides.

- Though identified as an *“angel”* there, the description is that of our High Priest in heaven.
- The voice must be His.¹¹ There, He threw down a golden censer with coals to the earth which began judicial actions against the wicked – the onset of the seven Trumpet Plagues.

Each Trumpet has a unique answer to the prayers of the saints’ *“How Long?”* question.¹²

That voice commands the sixth Trumpet angel ***to not only blow*** the instrument but, in a dual imperative, to also ***release four angels*** who have been bound at the Euphrates River, apparently “imprisoned” against their will.

- This river is also depicted in the sixth Vial Plague – discussed shortly.

¹⁰ Kistemaker, Simon J.; *Revelation* (Baker Academic; Grand Rapids, MI), p. 295.

¹¹ Beale, *op. cit.*, p. 105.

¹² Osborne, *op. cit.*, p. 378.

- The Euphrates River represents apostate people who support Babylon (cf. Revelation 17:15).
- Four angels (evil¹³) are the same as the four winds of strife noted in 7:1, where good angels are holding back their global destructive forces.
- These wicked forces are now to be released against the unsealed.¹⁴ One concludes that the sealing of God's people has been completed (suggested in the fifth Trumpet – 9:4).

“And the four angels were loosed, that had been prepared for the hour and day and month and year, that they should kill the third part of men. And the number of the armies of the horsemen was twice ten thousand times ten thousand: I heard the number of them” (Revelation 9:15-16 – ASV).

“Then the four angels who had been prepared for this hour, day, month, and year were set free to kill a third of humanity. The number of soldiers on horseback was 200,000,000; I heard their number” (Revelation 9:15-16 – NET).

This is the divinely chosen moment (a point in time) when God permits these prepared wicked beings to flood the earth with death and destruction. It appears that this “*third*” might be literal, suggesting that millions of those who have rejected God will perish.¹⁵

- As a point of reference, beginning with the fifth Trumpet, God instructed Satan not to harm those who were sealed (9:4).

This suggests a global war. The number of soldiers is likely symbolic, meaning “too great to count.”¹⁶ However, these destructive forces reduce earth's inhabitants by a third.¹⁷

- “The Spirit of God is gradually withdrawing from the world. Satan is also mustering his forces of evil, going forth ‘unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world,’ to gather them under his banner, to be trained for ‘the battle of that great day of God Almighty.’ Satan is to make most powerful efforts for the mastery in the last great conflict.”¹⁸
- In the previous Trumpet (fifth), Satan's minions (locust-like) were not permitted to lethally harm anyone. The wicked, however, were mentally anguished, craving death. The “point in time” came to change the narrative. God now gives the imperative to set loose the violence of those evil “leaders.”

“And thus I saw the horses in the vision, and them that sat on them, having breastplates of fire, and of jacinth, and brimstone: and the heads of the horses were as the heads of lions; and out of their mouths issued fire and smoke and brimstone. By these three was the third part of men killed, by the fire, and by the smoke, and by the brimstone, which issued out of their mouths” (Revelation 9:17-18).

¹³ Thomas, Robert L.; *Revelation 8–22 – An Exegetical Commentary*, vol. II (Moody Press, Chicago – 1992), p. 43.

¹⁴ Beale, *op. cit.*, p.507.

¹⁵ Osborne, *op. cit.*, p. 380.

¹⁶ Beale, *op. cit.*, p. 509.

¹⁷ Kistemaker, *op. cit.*, p. 297.

¹⁸ *SDA Bible Commentary*, p. 983.

These highly symbolic verses inform us of how this death mission is to be carried out (using ancient representations). This is the only place in Revelation where John specifically says “*in my vision.*”

- The death and destruction do not come from the horsemen but from the horses.
- Their lethal instruments: fire, smoke, and sulfur (reminiscent of Sodom and Gomorrah’s demise (Genesis 19:24; cf. Jude 7).¹⁹ These are ever linked in prophecy with destruction of the wicked (Isaiah 30:33; Luke 17:29; Ezekiel 38:22; Revelation 14:10, 19:20, 21:8).²⁰

“And the rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues yet repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship devils, and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood: which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk: Neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts” (Revelation 9:20-21).

Though the great purpose of the Trumpets is to act as plagues and punishment, it would seem from these texts that they were designed to bring repentance. However, from the Exodus plague story (Exodus 7–10), there was never a doubt that the pharaoh in Egypt would ever consider that a possibility.²¹

- The imagery seems to represent the resistance and hardness of their hearts.
- They were never intended to have a redeeming effect but a damning outcome.²²

The Sixth Vial Plague

The third angel’s message (Revelation 14:9-11) contains a dire warning regarding the intensity of God’s final judicial wrath! White insightfully notes:

“The most fearful threatening ever addressed to mortals is contained in the third angel’s message [Revelation 14:9-11]. That must be a terrible sin which calls down the wrath of God unmingled with mercy. Men are not to be left in darkness concerning this important matter; the warning against this sin is to be given to the world before the visitation of God’s judgments, that all may know why they are to be inflicted, and have opportunity to escape them. Prophecy declares that the first angel would make his announcement to ‘every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people.’ The warning of the third angel, which forms a part of the same threefold message, is to be no less widespread. It is represented in the prophecy as being proclaimed with a loud voice, by an angel flying in the midst of heaven; and it will command the attention of the world.”²³

- What timing announcement is made by the first angel? **“Fear God for *the hour of His judgment has come*”! (Revelation 14:6-7).**

¹⁹ Mounce, Robert H.; *The Book of Revelation* (Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.; Grand Rapids, Michigan; 1977), pp. 196-197.

²⁰ Ford, Desmond; *Crisis!*, vol. II (Desmond Ford Publications, 1982), p. 457.

²¹ Aune, *op. cit.*, p. 541.

²² Beale, *op. cit.*, p. 517.

²³ White, Ellen G.; *The Great Controversy* (Pacific Press Publishing Association; Mountain View, CA; 1911), p. 449 (emphasis added).

- God's wrath is initially seen in the seven Trumpets. But – that is still with mercy.²⁴ Here, after probation closes, it is without mercy – the Seven Vial Plagues.

In the “fourth angel’s” message the cry is heard: “*Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and **that ye receive not of her plagues***” (Revelation 18:4). This is God’s expected wrath without mercy (described in the third angel’s message – Revelation 14:9-11). The wicked are to be warned.

The Angelic Vial Preparation

“... 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 in pure and white linen, and having their breasts girded with golden girdles” (Revelation 15:5-6).

The angels’ “*linen*” means that they are functioning as **priests**. The *golden girdles* mean that they are functioning as **kings**. This attire resembles that of Christ, described in 1:13, suggesting that they fully and uniquely represent Him in this mission!

- Could they be saints already in heaven (priests and kings) (Revelation 4:4, 5:9)?
- A possibility.

“And one of the four beasts [living creatures, cf. 4:6-8] gave unto the seven angels seven golden vials full of the wrath of God, who liveth for ever and ever” (Revelation 15:7).

Sixth Vial

“And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared” (Revelation 16:12).

- At the sixth Trumpet four evil powers that were bound at this river were released.
- Again, this river represents the apostate people who support Babylon (cf. Revelation 17:15) – the giant end-time antichrist network.

King Belshazzar, Babylon’s last king, became a symbol of defiance against God (Daniel 5:30). His Babylon rulership became a symbol of the apostasy noted in Revelation. ***The “people” of the Euphrates initially supported that Babylon and, in turn, its rebellion.***

What then does the *drying up* of the Euphrates mean?

Historically, Babylon was the glory of the world kingdoms (Isaiah 13:19). God used Nebuchadnezzar, second king of that great empire, as his weapon against many of earth’s nations, including apostate Judah (Jeremiah 51:20-24).

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 628.

- Historians Herodotus and Xenophon of the 559–425 B.C. era wrote of Babylon’s literal military fall in 539 B.C.
- At that time, Babylon was apparently surrounded by a 56-mile wall.

When Cyrus saw the city and walls, he initially told his troops it couldn’t be conquered. Then one of his men suggested diverting the Euphrates River so they could traverse the riverbed into the city for an attack.²⁵ That was a success.

- ***That drying up of the Euphrates gave the king of the east (Cyrus of Persia) a path to conquer Babylon.*** For that empire and its defiant King Belshazzar the end had come.

That success led to the freeing or deliverance of God’s people by **Cyrus from the east!** He was promised as a Messianic symbol (Isaiah 44:27-28, 45:13-14).

The drying up of the Euphrates in this sixth Plague additionally *means* that **the people who had supported Babylon cease their loyalties to this antichrist power.** It will be a 180-degree change! Many, as already seen, have been destroyed.

- This is graphically prophesied in Revelation 17’s interlude, where a harlot named Babylon is discussed:
 - ***Initially, the world supports her:*** “These [ten horns – world kingdoms] *have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast,*” which a harlot named Babylon was riding (Revelation 17:12).
 - ***At the end, they reject her:*** “And the ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast, *these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire*” (Revelation 17:16). The Euphrates has dried up.

The beast with ten horns represents the New World Order (ten world regions already in place, led by the Holy See – Vatican City State).

- At the end, the world turns against that leader of Babylon – Rome²⁶ – that “*harlot*” of Revelation 17.

As the waters of the Euphrates were dried up for Cyrus to bring deliverance to God’s people (Isaiah 44:28; Jeremiah 50:38, 51:36), so the support that the world has given apostate Christianity, through Rome, comes to an end.

- That will make it possible for God to bring end-time deliverance to His people.
- This is an allusion to the Red Sea drying up so the Israelites **could pass over** to safety (Exodus 14:21-22).
- Similar is the drying up of the Jordan River so that people **could pass over** to Canaan, the promised land (Joshua 3:13-17, 4:23).

²⁵ <https://www.irishtimes.com/news/fall-of-ancient-babylon-to-persians-could-hold-clues-for-western-forces-1.354657>

²⁶ Aune, David E.; *52C World Biblical Commentary; Revelation 17–22* (World Books; Dallas, Texas), 1997, p. 900.

There is also a deeper association with Cyrus in prophecy that invites contemplation:

<u>Cyrus</u>	<u>Jesus</u>
My shepherd (Isa. 44:28)	Good shepherd (John 10:11, Heb. 13:20)
His anointed (Isa. 45:1)	God anointed Him (Acts 10:38)
Came from the east (Isa. 46:11)	Comes as lightning from the east (Matt. 24:27)
Set captives free (Isa. 45:13)	Deliverance of captives (Luke 4:16)
Called righteous (Isa. 45:13)	The Righteous (I John 2:1) ²⁷

“the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared”
(vs 12).

The **ultimate purpose** for the drying up of the Euphrates is for the coming of the “*kings of the east.*” Since there is a **commentary insert** in verses 13, 14 and 16 regarding the false trinity and its role in gathering the kings of the earth to the battle of Armageddon (another study), many expositors assume that those eastern kings are from the Islamic world and are preparing for a war against the global group (represented by the ten horns and the beast).

- However, the wicked world has already symbolically stopped supporting Babylon (Rome).
- **And** – in the **middle** of that interlude is a powerful reminder of what time this is: *“Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame”* (Revelation 16;15). This verse acts as an urgent commentary insert, a parenthetical statement, “Oh, by the way. He’s about to come.”
- It is at the very end of time!

Final events now move quickly toward that Second Coming.

“Kings of the east” – This immediately brings to mind:

1. Historical echo of the history of Cyrus’ campaign to bring down Babylon. As a symbol of the Messiah (Isaiah 44 to 46), he came from the east (Persia) to liberate God’s people. When Cyrus previously conquered the Median Empire, it became the Medo-Persian Empire (Medes to the north and Persia to the east) (Isaiah 41:2, 46:11). Isaiah also prophesied of this: *“I have stirred up one out of the north and he advances, one **from the eastern horizon** who prays in my name. He steps on rulers as if they were clay, like a potter treading the clay”* (Isaiah 41:25 – NET). He later brought Babylon to its knees. Then Cyrus issued a decree for the deliverance God’s people! (Ezra 1:1-4).
2. Of Jesus’ return, it is said: *“For as the lightning cometh **out of the east**, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be”* (Matthew 24:27). His people are then delivered (Daniel 12:1).

It is important to note that this sixth Plague **does not discuss the actual arrival** of the kings of the east. The Euphrates was dried up to **prepare the way** for the arrival of the kings of the east. Thus, **it is a prophecy of full and final readiness!**

²⁷ Robertson, Patricia; personal communiqué, 2006.

Why is the word “*kings*” plural?

This is a crucial question. All translations and ancient Greek writings have this as plural.

When the **sixth Seal** is broken, one of the messages related to the Second Coming is:

- “*And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the **face of him** that sitteth on the throne, and from the **wrath of the Lamb**” (Revelation 6:16).*
- Two divine Beings are noted. Contextually, God is the one on the throne (Revelation 4:1-2, 5:1). However, the Lamb is recognized as present, active and judicially recognized.

When Jesus confronted Caiaphas the High Priest:

- “*Jesus held his peace. And the high priest answered and said unto him, I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God. Jesus saith unto him, Thou hast said: nevertheless I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye see the **Son of man sitting on the right hand of power**, and coming in the clouds of heaven” (Matthew 26:63-64).*
- Who is Jesus going to sit to the right of? Who does that “*power*” represent?

Conclusion? The Euphrates was dried up to prepare the way for the “*kings*” of the east – God the Father and Jesus.

Seventh Vial Plague

“And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air; and there came a great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, It is done” (Revelation 16:17).

This is the third time John records “*the seventh angel.*”

When the seventh Vial angel pours out its contents, immediately, God’s voice “*out of the throne*” is heard, “*It is done.*”

- This finalizes what was begun on the Cross when Jesus said, “*It is finished*” (John 19:30). It means that earth’s “redemptive time has now passed.”²⁸
- All elements of salvation history for mankind have come to a close.
- **Once more** that cry will again peal throughout the universe. In Revelation 21:6, it finally occurs when sin and sinners are forever no more.

Associated with that “*It is done*” cry:

“And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great” (Revelation 16:18).

²⁸ Osborne, *op. cit.*, p. 597.

- This is some of the same timing imagery that occurred during that sixth Seal.
- “*And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, ... and every mountain and island were moved out of their places*” (Revelation 6:12a, 14b).

“*And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found*” (Revelation 16:20).

“*And there fell upon men a great hail out of heaven, every stone about the weight of a talent: and men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail; for the plague thereof was exceeding great*” (Revelation 16:21).

The earthquake and the hailstorm bring the final desolation that Christ prophesied in Matthew 24:15, paralleling Daniel 11:31 and 12:11.

“The whole earth appears like a desolate wilderness. The ruins of cities and villages destroyed by the earthquake, uprooted trees, ragged rocks thrown out by the sea or torn out of the earth itself, are scattered over its surface, while vast caverns mark the spot where the mountains have been rent from their foundations.”²⁹

Seventh Trumpet

“*And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever*” (Revelation 11:15).

These “great voices” ring throughout the universe when the cry “*It is done*” occurs.

- Alluding to this prophecy, the great voices from heaven announce that transition in history.
- In fulfillment of that prophecy: “*And the **seventh angel** sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever*” (Revelation 11:15).
- Christ assumes His role as **king** of the “*kingdoms of our Lord.*” Satan’s dominion has ceased.

This Trumpet sound covers a period of time (see graph – next page).

Seventh Seal

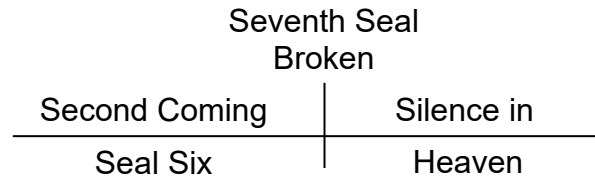
There is a unique interlude in Revelation 7 related to the sealing of the 144,000, a great multitude, and the vast numbers around the throne who were translated. That was an informative “break” in the prophecy of the Seals. In 8:1 the last Seal of that mysterious scroll is broken.

“*And when he had opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour*” (Revelation 8:1 – KJV).

²⁹The Great Controversy, p. 657.

John’s use of the word **“when”** (*hote* – G) brings a distinct sequenced message:
 (1) What follows could not have happened **until** this Seal was broken. It suggests that there was a distinct period and series of events between the opening of the sixth and seventh Seals (duration not given). (2) It indicates that the first six Seals have been removed.³⁰ (3) Something is either being terminated or inaugurated, or both. Again, **transition in redemptive history** is occurring.

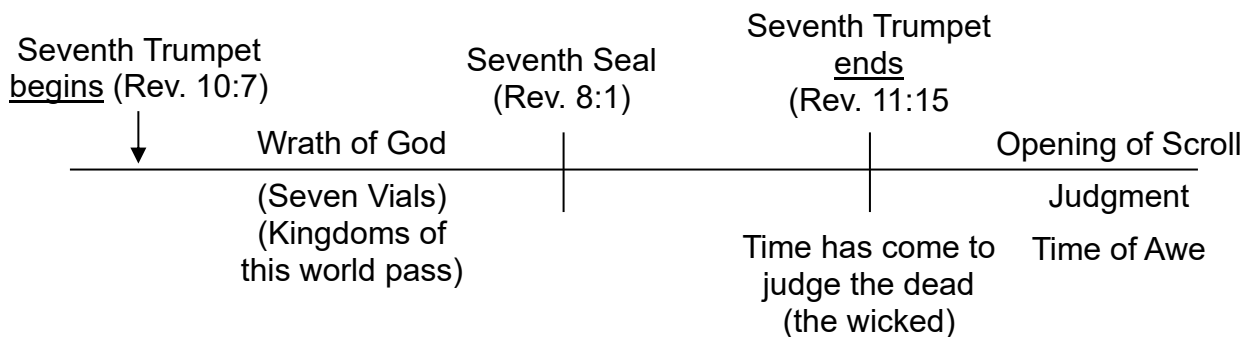
From likely a noisy first six Seals to now total silence reflects a tension, truly some dramatic transition. The silence does not exhaust the prophetic meaning of the Seals! In some way, it completes the breaking of the Seal messages!



What happens then? Revelation 11:18 appears to give us a clue: *“The nations raged, but your wrath has come, and the time for [1] judging the dead, for [2] rewarding your servants, the prophets and saints and all who fear your name, both small and great, and for [3] destroying those who destroy the earth”* (Revelation 11:18 – NRS).

- Nations enraged → God’s wrath → Time to judge the dead – their destruction
- A judicial phase of all the wicked who have died is suggested.

Listening to the “Silence”



At this juncture, only one key redemption question remains: **“Were God’s judicial decisions against the wicked fair?”** They are now dead – but that query lingers and must be answered.

We are invited to grasp that the *silence of a final judicial scene* is part of the expectant eagerness as to what now is in that scroll. From the death of the wicked at Christ’s coming to the stunning evaluation of God’s fairness from a now-opened book, all elevate the vulnerable position God the Father has placed Himself in. That scroll/book holds the key.

³⁰ Beale, *op. cit.*, p. 446.

- Will those who were found worthy to surround that throne, along with the “experienced” Lamb, agree with God’s reasoning to eternally eradicate sin and each unrepentant sinner?
- This anticipated phase is a judicial requirement. It is a divine legal issue! If Christ and the saints concur with the conclusion of the Father, no excuse for sin and rebellion can exist. They must be destroyed forever. It would eternally prove that it was a universal intruder that was totally at variance with God’s kingdom of love.
- The scroll must now be opened to review God’s decisions. That brings “bated breath,” which brings deep silence, as the scroll is opened.

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