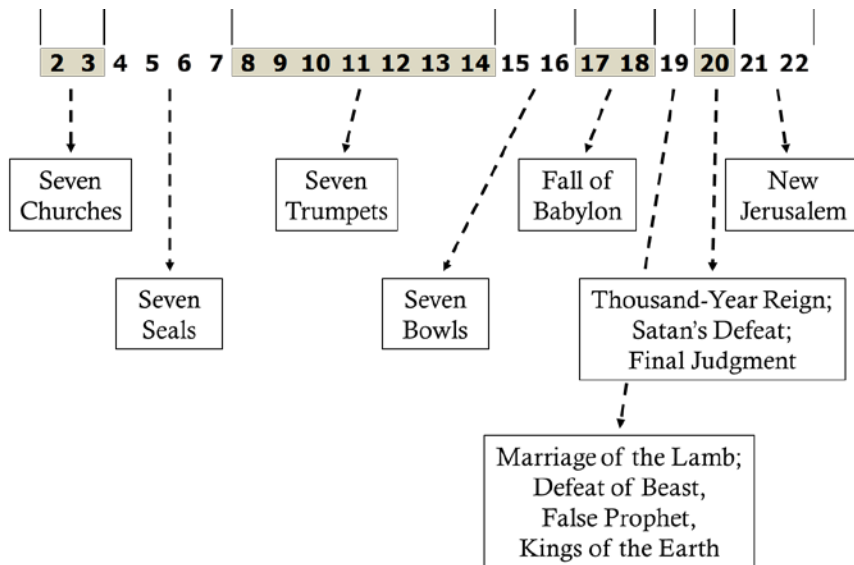


The Battle of Armageddon & The Chronology of Revelation

Introduction [Ron]

A Model of the Concurrency of the Seals, Trumpets, and Bowls [Greg]

Following the opening vision of chapter 1, the book of Revelation covers the **major topics** such as seven churches, seven seals, seven trumpets, seven bowls, etc. If one assumes that the space devoted to discussion of a particular event or period correlates with its duration, one ends up with a timeline like what appears below. However, it would be a mistake to take this as an accurate timeline of end-time events.



The **three series** of seven that make up the core of Revelation—seals, trumpets, and bowls—are presented in sequence. On the surface this arrangement suggests that all of the events associated with the seals are completed before the blowing of the trumpets, while the latter occur before the outpouring of the bowls. However, there are at least two reasons to believe that there is at least a **partial overlap** in the timing of the three series of events.

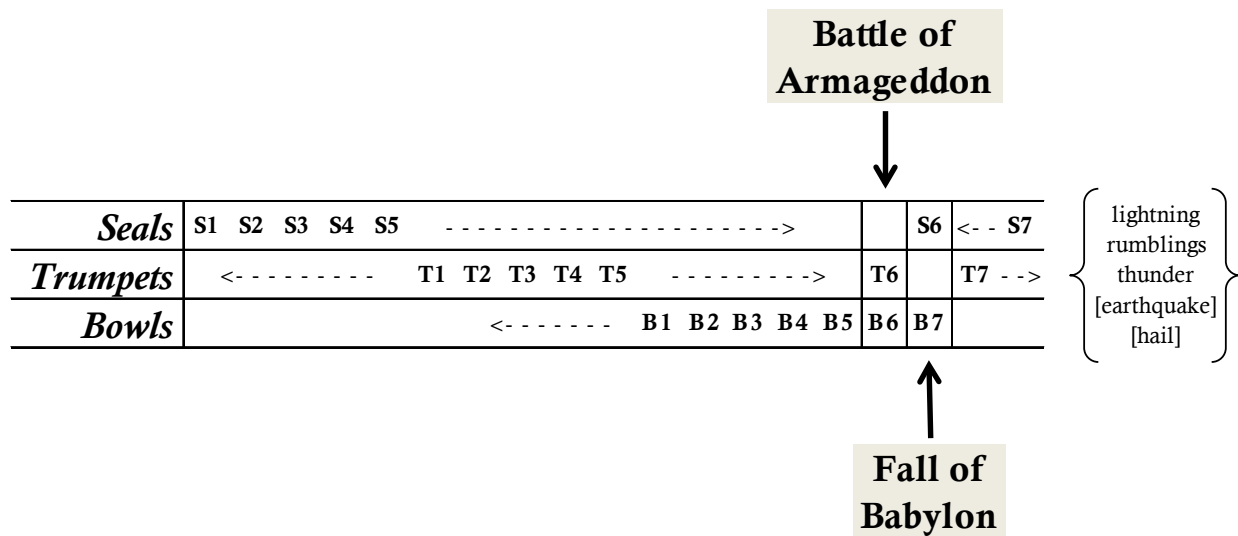
First, there is **evidence** to believe that the three series conclude at around the same time. Both the **sixth trumpet (9:13-21)** and the **sixth bowl (16:12-16)** refer to a massive battle with a connection to the River Euphrates. Presumably, this is a single event (the battle of Armageddon) reported in two places. Additionally, the outcome of the sixth seal (“every mountain and island was removed from its place”

[6:14]) is remarkably similar to that of the seventh bowl (“every island fled away, and no mountains were to be found” [16:20]). Once again, a single time frame—the fall of Babylon—is likely in view.

Second, after each series of seven is complete, **impressive physical phenomena** are said to take place. Lightning, rumblings, thunder, and an earthquake occur in all three cases (8:5; 11:19; 16:18), and violent hail is mentioned in or around the latter two (11:19; 16:21).

Granting that the **three series** are likely coterminous, it is fitting to ask how much they overlap in their earlier stages, and whether they concur in their starting-points. Given that several of the trumpets and bowls seem to target the same domains (e.g., fresh water, seas, and heavenly lights), some are inclined to regard the bowls as a recapitulation of the trumpets. However, these two series, while impacting many of the same things, appear to differ in the extent of their impact. Repeatedly, the trumpets are said to affect a third of the realms that they strike, whereas the bowls are more intense. Thus the various bowl judgments must occur at least somewhat later than their corresponding trumpets.

The exact sequence of the seals, trumpets, and bowls cannot be determined with precision. However, if the chronological references in chapters 11-13 are literal, they occur in a brief span of time. The graphic below seeks to balance the concurrency observed toward the end of the series with the lack of clarity about the sequencing of the earlier stages. It is assumed that the events within each series of seven occur in numerical order.



The “Campaign” of Armageddon [Ron]

The Brevity of the Tribulation Period [Greg]

Buried deep in the middle of Revelation are five time references that arguably convey the brevity of the period in which God will pour out His judgments on earth, leading up to the Second Coming of Christ.

The verses where the time references appear are displayed with a bright blue background in the graphic below.

Chapter	Verses
4	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11
5	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14
6	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17
7	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17
8	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13
9	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21
10	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11
11	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19
12	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17
13	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18
14	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20
15	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8
16	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21



These time references appear in three forms:

- forty-two months (11:2; 13:5)
- 1,260 days (11:3; 12:6)
- a time, and times, and half a time (12:14)

Of course, a period of 42 months, when calculated at 30 days per month, yields 1,260 days. Furthermore, 42 months is equivalent to a period of three-and-a-half years, which could reasonably be construed as the meaning of “a time, and times, and half a time.”

Examination of the text shows that these three time designations are indeed interchangeable. The prophetic ministry of the two witnesses is said to occur during a period of 1,260 days (11:3). Immediately before this is an indication that the holy city will be trampled for 42 months (11:2). In chapter 12 the woman who is assailed by the dragon flees into the wilderness and is nourished there. Two temporal references describe this period: 1,260 days (12:6) and “a time, and times, and half a time” (12:14). Therefore, John uses three literary forms to denote the same thing.

The events that occur during these three-and-a-half years include the following:

- the nations’ trampling of the holy city (11:2)
- the ministry of the two witnesses (11:3ff)
- the refuge of the woman in the wilderness (12:6; 12:14)
- the beast’s rule, during which it speaks blasphemies and attacks the saints (13:5ff)

All of these temporal references occur in chapters 11-13 and are thus in textual proximity to the trumpets and bowls. This suggests that the events represented by the trumpets and the bowls occur overlap with the three-and-a-half years. Also supporting this conclusion is the fact that the beast, which is in power during the 42 months (13:5), is targeted, along with its followers, by the first and fifth bowls. **The blue triangles** in the graphic below indicate the chapters where the beast's rule is mentioned. (Chapter 17, which is not included in the graphic, could also be included.)

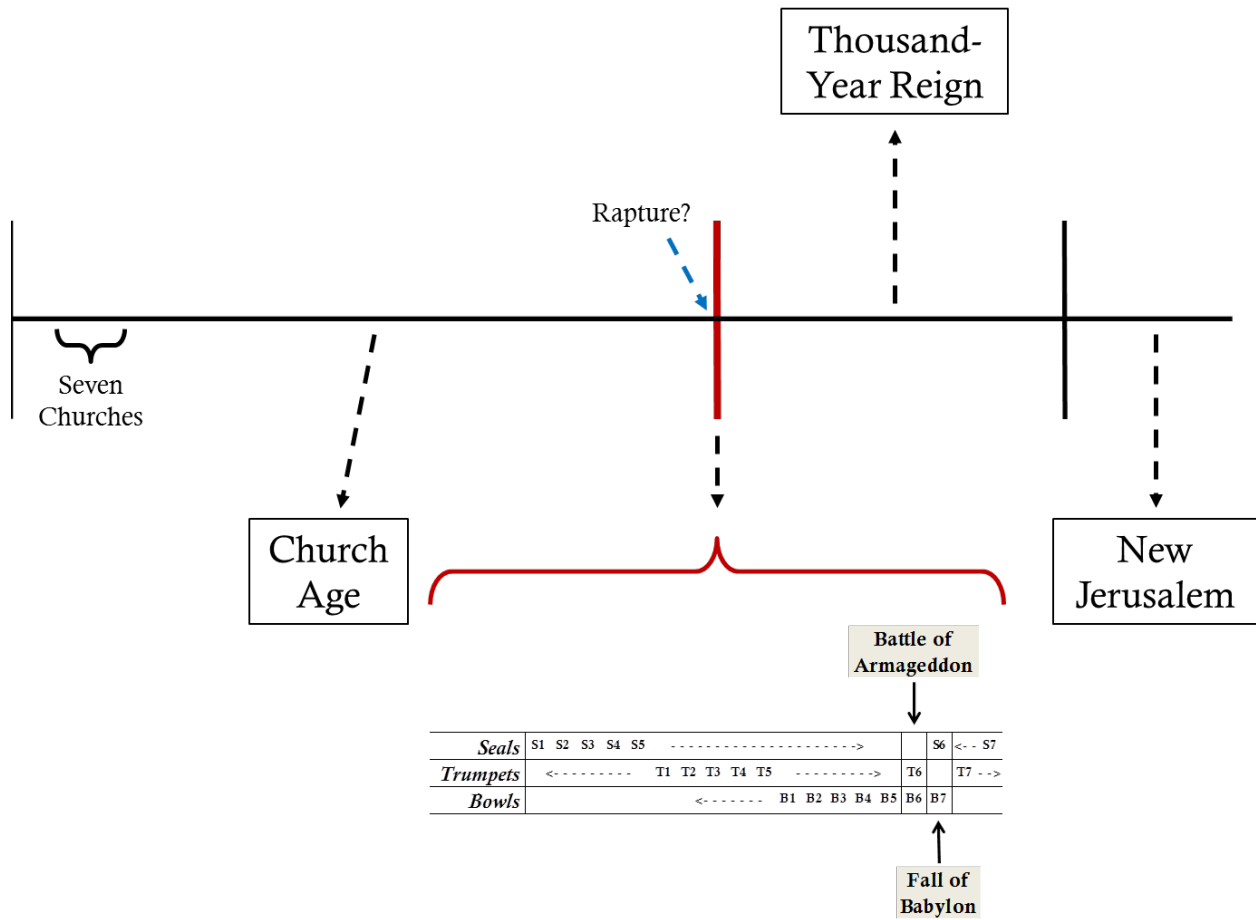
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4	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11
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6	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17
7	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17
8	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13
9	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21
10	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11
▶ 11	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19
▶ 12	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17
▶ 13	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18
▶ 14	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20
▶ 15	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8
▶ 16	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21



The seals, trumpets, and bowls appear to overlap significantly and conclude at approximately the same time. Therefore, if the three-and-a-half years can be taken as a literal time period, the events entailed in the seals, trumpets, and bowls occur in rapid succession.

Below is a timeline that reflects the temporal references in Revelation: the three-and-a-half years of intense judgment and the thousand-year reign of Christ. It is clear to see that the Tribulation, while tumultuous, constitutes a brief period in the grand scheme of things. The Rapture refers to the catching away of church-age saints to meet the Lord in the air (see 1 Thess. 4:13-17). The book of Revelation does not appear to mention the Rapture—at least not overtly. Theologians take three positions regarding the timing of this event:

- Pre-tribulationism: The Rapture is to occur *before* the Tribulation. This position is favored here at Seminole Baptist Temple. In this model, church-age believers do not undergo the hardships of the Tribulation.
- Post-tribulationism: The Rapture is to occur *after* the Tribulation as a part of the Second Coming of Christ.
- Mid-tribulationism: The Rapture occurs somewhere *in the middle of* the Tribulation, likely sparing church-age believers the worst of that time period.



Conclusion [Ron]

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