

Prayers That Shake the World

Revelation 8:1–13 · Pastor Raul Granillo · August 16, 2026

Today's Text

“When the Lamb broke the seventh seal, **there was silence in heaven for about half an hour**. ...Another angel with a golden censer came and stood at the altar; he was given a great quantity of incense to offer **with the prayers of all the saints** on the golden altar that is before the throne. ...Then the angel took the censer and filled it with fire from the altar and threw it on the earth, and there were peals of thunder, rumblings, flashes of lightning, and an earthquake.”

— Revelation 8:1, 3, 5

Big Idea

The seventh seal opens not with thunder but with **silence** — the hush before the applause, all of heaven holding its breath — and then the prayers of ordinary saints are what set the next act in motion. Your prayers matter. They are a major catalyst in God's work of redeeming the world.

Key Truth

The seals, the trumpets, and the bowls are not a timeline — they are **nesting eggs**. Each set circles back to the same reality, digging deeper, so we can see more clearly what sin costs and how far grace still reaches. **God's fire is purging, not destroying**. And He always holds back the full weight of judgment so a remnant may repent and be sealed by the Blood of the Lamb.

What John Wants Us to Hear, Smell, and See

SCENE	WHAT JOHN SEES	WHAT IT MEANS FOR US
THE SILENCE (v.1)	When the seventh seal is broken, all of heaven — angels, elders, the living creatures — falls silent for about half an hour.	The silence before the applause. Every voice pauses to take in what the Lamb has done. Worship is not always loud. Sometimes reverence looks like a room holding its breath.
THE CENSER (v.3–4)	An angel stands at the golden altar with a censer, offering incense with the prayers of ALL the saints — the smoke rising before God.	In Scripture every believer washed in Jesus' blood is a saint. That means your prayers — Tuesday morning, folded hands, unglamorous — are on that altar. They rise as incense before the throne.
FIRE ON THE EARTH (v.5)	The same angel fills the censer with fire from the altar and hurls it to the earth — thunder, rumblings, lightning, an earthquake follow.	The prayers of God's people are what kick off the next act. Heaven answers earth's cry with fire that purges, not destroys. Prayer is not passive; it moves the hand of God.
TRUMPETS 1–4 (v.7–12)	Hail and fire mixed with blood, a burning mountain in the sea, a fallen star named Wormwood, a third of the sun darkened. Echoes of Egypt's plagues and Jeremiah's Babylon.	Only a third is struck. God is being merciful even while judging — leaving room for a remnant to repent. Every empire that rises above God will crumble. Rome, Babylon, and every empire since.
THE EAGLE'S WOE (v.13)	An eagle flies overhead crying, “Woe, woe, woe to the inhabitants of the earth” at the sound of the remaining trumpets.	God is warning us. Not because He wants to destroy, but because He does not want anyone to perish. The eagle's cry is mercy dressed as warning.

Define This

Nesting Eggs — The seven seals, seven trumpets, and seven bowls are not three separate events in sequence. They are **the same story told three times**, each time deeper and more intense. When the seventh seal opens, the trumpets are inside it. When the seventh trumpet sounds, the bowls are inside it. John forces us to revisit what sin costs — again and again — until we cannot look away.

Quote To Remember

“John has taken some of his contemporaries' worst experiences and worst fears of wars and natural disasters, blown them up to apocalyptic proportions, and cast them in biblically allusive terms. The point is not to predict a sequence of events. The point is to evoke and to explore the meaning of the divine judgment which is impending on the sinful world.” — Richard Bauckham

Take It Home — Reflection

- Heaven fell silent for half an hour when the Lamb broke the seventh seal. Where in my life have I been afraid of silence — filling it with noise, notifications, or opinions — instead of letting reverence settle over me?
- The angel offered the prayers of ALL the saints on the golden altar — mine included. Do I actually believe that my ordinary prayers move the hand of God? What would change this week if I did?
- God's fire is not about destroying; it is about purging. What in me needs to be burned away rather than defended? Am I willing to be purified — or am I still trying to protect the very things God is trying to save me from?

My Notes