

05a REV

This is the 26th of August, 2005. We're in Revelation chapter 6. Let's take a moment as we continue our study to clear our minds and prepare our hearts. Seek the ministry of God's Holy Spirit as we go to the Lord in prayer.

Father, we are grateful for your sustaining grace and the many ways that you have blessed us and provided for us and challenged us in this past week. We thank you for the opportunity to put into practice what we learned from your word and to have it reinforced and imprinted in our souls through experience as well as through study. We pray that as we look at the truth of your word this evening, that God the Holy Spirit will find us ready and able students and that we will learn those things that will best prepare and equip us for the days ahead.

We pray it in Jesus' name. Amen. We have gone relatively rapidly through chapters 4 and 5, and we have looked at the first five seals out of the seven seals that hold closed the scroll that God the Father hands to the Lord Jesus Christ.

And as I continue to work on this section of Revelation, I keep seeing or learning new things. Some are ahead of us and some are a little bit behind us. And so, although this is not a review, I am going to provide just a few additional insights on what we have already covered, things that we have not really talked about.

In chapter 4, you remember John hears the first voice like a trumpet. And of course, the first voice is the voice of the Lord Jesus Christ. And it says, Come up here and I will show you things which must take place after this.

And this is a key because I was not happy with my level of understanding about why when this scroll appears in heaven with the seven seals and they look around and they can't find anyone worthy to open it, why John starts crying. That seems like a pretty radical reaction. But, go back to this verse.

Come up here, I will show you things which must take place after this. There were the things which were, chapter 1, things which are, chapters 2 and 3, the things which shall be, starting chapter 4 and go forward. And so, here is the scroll that has got all of these things which shall be and nobody can open it.

So, John has received this promise that he is going to see things which are yet to come, but nobody can open it. It would be like some long lost relative willing you the contents of their safe. And so, you know, somebody in Chicago ships you this big safe and they say, here you go, and they drive away and you can't get into it.

You say, well, I know there is something wonderful in there, but I can't, I don't know what it is. It has been given to me, it has been promised to me, and I can't see it. And I think

this is at least part of why John is so distressed.

Another suggestion that has been put forward with regard to this is that he really should not be weeping and that this is the alternative to waiting with faith and patience for the provision of God. And that he is sort of premature, he jumps the gun and he says, woe is me, he doesn't stand and wait. I like to think that if I was in these shoes, I would be watching to see how this problem is solved.

John seems to personalize this problem and get very emotional about it because the angel, actually not the angel, the elder in chapter 5, verse 5, one of the elders said to me, do not weep. And this is may, which is the negative, and then you have cleo, which is the word for crying, but it's in the present active, and it means that he's in the process of crying and he's supposed to stop. Basically, you could translate this, stop your sniveling, stop bawling, stop your crying.

And it sounds a little bit like a rebuke. May is a stronger negative than oo, which is the other one, you have oo and may. If you get them both together, that's a super strong.

But when Paul says, God forbid, or may it never be, it's may genoita, may it never come about, may it never come to be. And me, may, the Greek negative, that's the stronger of the two negatives, and this one is may plus the word for crying. He says, stop your crying.

The look, he says, the lion of the tribe of Judah, the root of David has prevailed to open the scroll. And so you get the idea that in, and again, everything that we're looking at is in symbolic terms, and even John's reactions and impressions are for our benefit. And things that initially might make a normal person sad to the point of weeping ought to be met with faith and with expectation that God has an answer for this problem.

So there's a little bit of an object lesson there maybe for us, that if God has made a promise, the promise doesn't seem to be coming true, and we're disappointed and we want to cry about it, stop your crying. Look, here's the answer. And what is the answer? It's Christ, the lion of the tribe of Judah, the root of David.

He's the answer. And it's a good reminder that because all of us get discouraged, all of us, all of us face challenges that seem overwhelming and insurmountable. Our girls have started public school, and it's a big learning curve.

There's a culture shock. There's a different type of schedule, different type of presentation of the material, and a pretty fast pace, and a lot of their classes are the kind that generate extra homework and expect you to be a little more intuitive and so on. And so it's a challenge.

And when they sit down in the evening and they look over the vista of their homework and all the classes that are coming up, it just looks like this rock that is about to roll over

them and leave them flat. And it reminds me, I was talking to my mom about this the other night, and she said, well, you remember when you were in your first year at Navy what your dad used to always tell you. And it had been a long time because I have taken his advice so to heart that I sort of forgot where it came from.

But I had that same impression when I was being faced with a lot of things I'd never seen before. And my father, when I would call home on the weekends, he would say, well, essentially, break this down into smaller pieces. Because I would say, well, you know, I've got a test tomorrow, and then there's midterms, and then there's this, and then there's that, and all these things are off on the horizon.

He said, well, just deal with the ones that are close at hand. See, just concentrate on this. See if you can get through this.

Break it into smaller chunks. Take it one thing at a time. Don't let yourself dwell on stuff that's down the road.

Just deal with the stuff that's right at hand. And it reminds me of what we learned in Leviticus about the Sabbath and about the six days thou shalt labor and do all thy work. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.

Just concentrate. You know, I can't work on my tomorrow work that I have to do tomorrow. I can't take my tomorrow test today.

There's no point worrying about it. All I can do is the stuff that I can do today. So there is a coping strategy that says don't put everything on your plate and then try to carry it.

Put your current meal on your plate and deal with that. And take your helpings one at a time. Don't try to eat the entire Thanksgiving turkey in one sitting.

If you're single and by yourself and you've cooked an entire turkey, don't eat the whole thing. Just take a leg now, and you can eat another one tomorrow. You know, space it out.

And it's really good advice, and you see that here with John. What does the elder tell him? Now, this is interesting to me because the 24 elders, we figure these are people who are overcomers out of the church age, and they're sitting there, they've got their crown, their robe, their throne, and so on. And here's somebody telling the Apostle John, Hey, straighten up and fly right there, buddy.

You're falling apart. Don't unravel on me. We brought you up here to show you some stuff.

Don't go all gooey on me here. You're not going to be able to see for all the moisture in your eyes. Dry up a little bit and pay attention.

Here's the Lord. Look, the Lord's going to stand up and take care of this. And so there's a pretty good little object lesson there.

Secondly, when John looks at the throne, he sees the one who sat there, and he's like a jasper and a sardius stone. And I mentioned that these are stones that were included on the breastplate of the high priest, and we've pretty well left it at that. Well, this just in.

Those two stones are associated on the breastplate of the high priest with two particular tribes. The sardius stone is the stone associated with the tribe of Reuben. The jasper is the stone associated with the tribe of Benjamin.

So let's think about this a little bit. Because there are just two stones, the first and the last, right? Reuben is the firstborn. Benjamin is the lastborn.

And so I was thinking about this, and I thought I should have memorized all the names of the sons of Jacob, and if given enough time, I could drag them all out of my long-term storage. I remember the first four real easy, because it's Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah. Then you've got Issachar and Zebulun and a bunch of other guys.

And then you get down to Joseph and Benjamin. And of course, Joseph's two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, become tribes. And the guys in the middle there, Naphtali and Gad and Asher, I don't really remember their order.

And it's not pertinent tonight, thank goodness. But you think about it, Reuben. But one thing I did think about, in thinking about the names, I was looking for a particular element of the name.

What's common to Reuben and Benjamin that you don't find in any of the other names? Ben. Reuben, Ryu, is from Ra-a, which means to see or to look. And if you go back to the etymology, when Leah had her first son, she named him Look, a son.

I know you love my sister, but Look, a son. I know you like Rachel better, but Look, a son. And ever after, Hey, Look, a son.

I gave you your firstborn, you ought to pay attention to me. I'm Leah, I'm your first wife. Look, a son.

Reuben. The last one is Benjamin, son of the right hand. But that's not his original name.

Now think in terms of the first advent and the second advent. In the first advent, behold, there is born to you this day in the city of David, Savior which is Christ the Lord, a son. He should be called the Son of the Most High.

Reuben, Look, a son. It's the first advent. He's the firstborn, the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

Second advent, Benjamin, son from my right hand, son at my right hand. This is where the root of David, the son of Jesse, is going to stand up and take the scroll. He's been seated at the right hand of the Father.

He's the son of the right hand. That's where he is when all these happenings start to take place. The Sardius stone that's associated with Reuben is blood red.

Sardius, sarde, it's kind of like sangre. That S-A-R prefix has to do with blood and red and that kind of thing. The jasper associated with Benjamin is crystal.

It's a light reflecting, refracting type of stone. First advent, the cross. Second advent, glory.

Isn't it interesting that when John looks at the throne, he sees one sitting there like a jasper and like a Sardius stone in appearance. Rainbow around the throne in appearance like an emerald. These two stones are stones that hark back to Israel and hark back to the high priest's breastplate and sort of encompass or bracket all the twelve tribes of Israel from Reuben, the first Ben, to Benjamin, the last Ben, first son and the last son.

Not only that, but what else does John see? Around the throne are the twenty-four elders, crowns of gold we've talked about then, seven lamps of fire, seven spirits of God, sea of glass like crystal. And in the midst of the throne, around the throne, four living creatures full of eyes in front and in back. And it's still been just gnawing at my mind about these four living creatures.

We talked about them, the first living creature like a lion, second like a calf, the third face like a man, and the fourth like a flying eagle. Well, I finally remembered something that Debbie did for us back when we were studying Exodus and when we were looking at the camp of Israel. Remember the encampment and how when you add up the numbers, you wind up, if you look at it from the east, you've got Judah and the more numerous tribes and then you've got the others distributed around.

And if you went through the Exodus study, you remember what we learned. Actually, it was even before Exodus. It was in the end of Genesis when we were studying the twelve tribes and we went and looked at their place in the camp.

It was in the last few chapters of Genesis when Jacob is blessing his sons. We went forward and we looked at that and we talked about how the twelve signs of the zodiac, the twelve constellations were originally associated with each of the twelve tribes of Israel. Three tribes on a side and there is a leader tribe on each side of the camp, east, north, west, and south.

Right? Who is the leader tribe on the east? It's Judah. What is on the banner of the tribe of Judah? Lion. What is the face of the first living creature? A lion.

Who is the leader tribe to the north? Reuben. Reuben is the tribe to the north. What is on the standard of Reuben? Face of a man.

Who is the leader tribe on the other two sides? You have Dan on the south. And you know what's on his banner? Eagle. You've got Ephraim to the west, if my memory serves.

And you know what's on Ephraim's banner? The ox. Lion, face of a man, ox, and eagle are the four leadership banners on the four sides of the camp of Israel that surround the tabernacle in which is the Holy of Holies, in which is the mercy seat between the cherubim dwelling the presence of God. Now that makes sense to me, that you've got those same cherubim in the vision of Ezekiel, you've got those same cherubim in the vision of John.

What does this speak of? First stone and last stone? Twelve tribes of Israel. Four living creatures. By the way, the only time we see the cherubim and the four living creatures is in an Israel context, Old Testament prophet context, and here in heaven where you're about to commence the 70th week of Daniel that is the last seven years decreed upon your people and upon the house of Israel that God tells Daniel about.

And so these are all pretty Israelitish things. I'm just saying. They're Israelitish things.

This is what the camp pictured. These are the symbolic values that pertain to those. Four living creatures.

When we did our study of biblical numbers, you remember what four stands for? Four is the number of God's earthly creation. Going all the way back to the Garden of Eden, the River of Eden had four heads. Remember that? You've got the four cardinal directions, north, east, south, and west.

You've got the four winds associated with those directions. You have four phases of the moon that are universally recognized. In the ancient days, they believed in four basic divisions of the elements of the universe.

We used to have a singing group that was three out of the four. Was Lionel Ritchie with earth, wind, and fire? He wasn't. What was he with? Commodores.

So Lionel wasn't in there just as well. But the earth, wind, and fire, that's three of the four ancient elements. Which one is missing? Water.

Don't rain on my parade. Earth, wind, and fire. You don't want water in there.

I guess if Lionel Ritchie had been with them, then they could have put in the water. But those were the four substances of which everything was made. Now this is, I will tell you ahead of time, this is a little mental rabbit trail.

But think about this. When Jesus is talking to Nicodemus, and he's talking about you

must be born again, and he says, you must be born again. Nicodemus says, I've got to go inside my mother and come out again.

He says, no. And then in most English translations, he says, look at the wind. No one knows where it comes from.

No one knows where it goes. But you hear it and you feel it. And this is why in the ancient world, so many times words that refer to immaterial spiritual things use air-related words.

Pneuma, P-N-E-U-M-A. We talk about pneumatic tires that you blow up with air. But pneuma originally had the idea of wind or air and came to mean spirit.

And the pneuma hagiū is the Holy Spirit. And in the ancient Hebrew, you had nephesh. And sometimes it's hard to tell if it means spirit or wind.

In the Jonah story, it says God hurled a nephesh into the water. Well, did he hurl a demon in there or an angel or a great hurricane wind? Yes. Whatever it was, it created a storm.

But anyway, this idea of air, you could see water, you could see fire, you could see earth, but the air was the invisible motive force. You could feel it, you could hear it, but it wasn't discernible. And so they used that as a vocabulary for unseen things.

Well, so you have four of those. So four is the number of the earth. Four is the number of what God is doing on earth.

Israel is the earthly people of God. They were in the Old Testament days. They're going to be again in the Millennial Kingdom.

They're going to live on the earth. They're going to have vines and fig trees. They're going to have dwellings.

They're going to have a heart of flesh. God has promised them in the New Covenant that they will have a heart of flesh. He's going to take out their heart of stone and give them a heart of flesh.

They are the manifestation of God's plan and program in the earth. And so you have these four things. An ancient city had four walls.

There were four great empires in Nebuchadnezzar's dream that were going to define the rest of human history. Head of gold, shoulders and arms of silver, belly and thighs of brass, legs of iron. And that was going to be all the rest of history until you get to the 70th week.

And then you've got the feet of iron mixed with clay. But there were those four great

empires. The Babylonians, the Medo-Persians, then the Greeks, then the Romans.

And then the revived Roman Empire, which is like Rome, only not as strong. It's got the clay mixed in. So if you look at the scope of human history, we start out in Eden.

And we've got the River of Eden with its four heads. The garden is planted eastward in Eden. You have this suggestion of the four directions and so on.

You begin human history looking at this number four. Throughout human history, you basically have the parable of the sower and the seed, don't you? Because the word of God comes out and people either accept it or reject it. How many kinds of soil were there in the parable of the sower? Four.

You get the hard-packed soil. You've got the rocky soil. You've got the soil that's choked with weeds and thorns.

And you've got the good soil. And so that pretty well defines all of human history. And then at the end, what's going to wrap up the first 6,000 years of human history? The four horsemen of the apocalypse that we just studied last week.

So four is the number of God's earthly creation. What's going on on the earth? Four is also, if you think about it mathematically, four is the first number that is divisible by something other than itself and one. One, two, and three aren't divisible by anything but themselves.

But four, you can divide and get twice two. And so it's the first number that you can break into smaller pieces, so to speak. And so four also suggests the idea of weakness or vulnerability or the ability to be divided.

And it comes to mean trial or weakness or testing. Now we think that this is kind of reaching and stretching. But in the ancient world where people didn't have TV and radio, they sat and thought about stuff like this.

And they would read meaning into the properties of things. And we have kind of gotten away from that. But this is why Numbers is the fourth book in the Pentateuch.

Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers. Where is all of the trial in the wilderness detailed? It's pretty much all in Numbers. You have a little bit of it in Exodus, but most of it is in the book of Numbers.

And that's the record of their trial. How long is Israel in the wilderness? Ten times four. Forty years.

It's a tenfold trial. You will have tribulation ten days. Well, if tribulation is represented by four, then you get that testing number of forty.

Same thing with the rain that fell upon the earth in the days of Noah. It rained forty days and forty nights. Jesus goes into the wilderness to be tested by Satan.

Forty days and forty nights. How long did Jonah preach to Nineveh? Forty days. So, how long was Moses up on Mount Sinai when they had the golden calf incident? Forty days and forty nights.

It's the number of testing and trial, and it derives from the number four. We have these four living creatures surrounding the throne. And what this tells us is this is the presence of God presented in terms of His plan, program, decree, consummation of all things related to the earth.

We should not expect to learn a lot about God's dealing with the angels from this symbolic vision because these four living creatures surrounding the throne, just like Ezekiel saw, tell us this is God manifested for the purpose of dealing with His earthly creation. Specifically, with each one having those four faces, and those four faces representing each side of the camp of Israel, His dealing with His earthly people Israel, first and foremost. And His attention on the earth, ever since He made the promise to Adam and Eve in the garden, has been those who live by faith.

Seth rather than Cain. Abraham rather than Terah or Nahor. Isaac rather than Ishmael.

Jacob rather than Esau. And on down through history it goes. In Isaac shall thy seed be called.

So you have those cherubim surrounding the throne and then you have the 24 elders. 24 elders we've covered in enough detail. I don't think we need to review much about that except to remind ourselves that this is almost universally understood to be 12 from Israel and 12 from the church.

And it's understandable. But I think if God is dealing with His earthly people down on the earth, you wouldn't expect to see their representatives in heaven. Or if they were in heaven, you'd expect to see them segregated out and marked out with some sort of here are the 12 disciples or here are the 12 tribes.

These are 24 identical elders. Unlike the living creatures where John says the first spoke, then the second spoke, the third spoke. He doesn't say, well, elder number 17 came up to me and said, stop your bawling.

All of the elders are identical. They seem to be of a piece. And this speaks of the 24 priestly courses.

24 kings. Now, mindful of the possibility that there may be some criteria other than simply being saved for going up in the rapture, I think we've pretty well satisfied ourselves that somebody leaves before the seven years begin. But these 24 individuals

are sitting clothed in white robes with crowns of gold on their heads.

Now, if you're sitting down and you have on a crown, what do we call your chair? It's a throne, right? Generally speaking, if you're crowned and you're sitting on a chair, your chair is called a throne. Well, if you keep your finger in Revelation chapter 4 here and turn back to Daniel chapter 7, I'm going to point something out and I'm not going to necessarily try to resolve it tonight, but I'll put it before you for grist for your mill. Daniel's vision of four beasts or four living creatures, the old King James says beasts, but *zoe* in Greek and same thing in Hebrew, just means they are living creatures.

Daniel says in verse 2 of chapter 7, I saw in my vision by night, behold, the four winds of heaven were stirring up the great sea. Four winds of heaven, this is going to be a vision dealing with the earth. Four great beasts came up from the sea, each different from the other.

The first was like a lion and had eagle's wings. I watched till its wings were plucked off and it was lifted up from the earth and made to stand on two feet like a man and a man's heart was given to it. Suddenly another beast, a second like a bear.

It was raised up on one side and had three ribs in its mouth between its teeth. They said, arise, devour much flesh. Another like a leopard, which had on its back four wings of a bird.

The beast also had four heads and dominion was given to it. I saw in the night vision, behold, a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, exceedingly strong. It had huge iron teeth.

It was devouring, breaking in pieces and trampling the residue with its feet. It was different from all the beasts that were before it and it had ten horns. Now, these are all dealing with Antichrist.

And we might as well start getting sensitized to the difference between Christ and Antichrist at the beginning of our study. We just talked about the four living creatures that surround God's throne, the cherubim and how their faces reflect different aspects of Christ and, of course, also He is the Messiah to Israel and they reflect God's chosen people, Israel. He is the answer to all Israel's problems.

He is the fulfillment of all of their types. He is the completion of all of their shadow rituals and sacrifices. All things are filled up in Christ.

I've not come to destroy the law but to fulfill it. So all of these speak of Christ. And we've talked about how those four faces surrounding the camp, that's the humanity around God's throne, right? What's the humanity around God's throne in real terms? It's the Lord Jesus Christ seated at the right hand, right? And so the lion and the face of a man and the ox and the eagle, these also reflect different aspects of Christ.

All things are summed up in Him. So for Antichrist you would expect to find some similarity. So look at these four.

He's got four. Satan knows you need four of something if you're going to act like it's God's plan for the human race. So the first beast is like a lion in verse 4. And it has eagle's wings.

Now, what did we discern when we looked at these specific faces of the cherubim? The lion, that's the kingly. He's the king of beasts. He dominates the wild animals, right? He's the strongest and most dominant of the wild animals, where the ox is the strongest and most dominant of the tame animals.

The eagle is the strongest and most dominant of the flying animals. And man, of course, dominates all the animals. So you have this idea of domination in all four, but in different areas.

And the face of the eagle speaks of divinity. It flies in the air. It's in the spiritual realm.

It's up high where you can't reach it. So you have a lion, someone who seems to be the king, and who seems to have divinity associated with him. He's a pseudo-Christ.

He seems to be the Messiah. And he seems to be the God-man. But, as Daniel watches, his wings are plucked off.

And it becomes evident that he's not divine. He's not Christ, because he is not divine. His wings come unglued.

He glued them on. I probably shouldn't even tell you that, but the Outer Space series have these different species, and one of them have blue skin and they have these little antennas, like my favorite Martian. And somebody was impersonating one of those guys, and at the end, his little antenna fell off, and they knew he wasn't really a whatever those people are.

And it was just hanging down because it had just been stuck on. Well, this guy's wings are stuck on. He looks like he's divine Son of God, but he's not.

His wings fall off. So that's the first aspect. And he's made to stand on two feet like a man.

They should sing Jesus Christ... What they ought to sing is Antichrist Superstar. Have you ever heard that song? I don't know how to love him. He's a man.

He's just a man. Well, they can sing that song to the Antichrist. It doesn't apply to Jesus Christ.

And they ought to resurrect that and bring it back on Broadway when the Antichrist is on

board. He's a man. He's just a man.

So he stands on his feet like a man, and a man's heart is given to him. He doesn't have a heart for God. He's got a man's heart.

That's one aspect. That's one snapshot. Now we're going to... It's like looking at a thing in drafting where you had to give three views, so you can see all three sides of a... If you took drafting, remember they made you draw a flange? You get the left view, you get the top view, and you get the front view.

Well, this is the same thing, except you get the fourth dimension because it's God looking at it. So, secondly, another beast, like a bear, raised up on one side, three ribs in its mouth, between its teeth, and they said thus to it, Arise, devour much flesh. We'll look at this in more detail, what the three ribs are, but this is the going forth, conquering, and to conquer aspect that we saw when we were looking at the horseman.

He's going to consume and conquer everything around. He's like a bear. But the bear destroys, but the bear can't be the king after he destroys.

Bears tear stuff up, but you don't have the kingly bear. You don't have the... People don't... I mean, this is the problem with the Russians. They subjugated everybody, but then they couldn't come up with a plan, and their whole thing kind of fell from within.

So, the bear is good at destroying things, but he's not good at ruling. He's not the lion. He's not the dominant animal, and he doesn't know what to do once he conquers, except just keep chewing on the ribs.

Then, in verse 6, there was another, like a leopard, which had on his back four wings of a bird. Now, this starts to sound more like a griffin. Have you ever seen the griffin mythological creature that's got kind of a fanged head and all of these bat wings and things? So, this is supposed to be the divine sign of the throne.

You have the living creatures with their pairs of wings, and they've got their four faces and all that. And so, the Antichrist, he wants to have his cherubim, but his cherubim are leopards with four wings of a bird, and it has four heads, but they're not the right four heads. It's like a pseudo.

It's a pale, cheap, tin knockoff of the real thing. When I was a little boy, we used to get toys that were imitations of nice toys that only rich people could afford. The cheap toys were made in Japan.

Made in Japan used to be a bad thing. It's not anymore. But when you would take it apart, I'll never forget, Matt and I got some little Jeeps at the cheap stuff store, and once they got torn up a little bit and the wheels started coming off, you could bend it apart, and they had not even taken the labeling off of the beer cans that those were made out

of.

You could read the tin can labeling. They just turned it inside out and painted the inside. It was a made in Japan thing.

It looked like a nice toy until you started taking it apart and you said, wait a minute, this is a beer can. The Japanese were the first to get into recycling of aluminum in a big way, and it was very clever of them. But this is a recycled cherubim.

This is a beer can cherub. He's a leopard with four wings and four heads, and he's got dominion, but it's fake. It's not the real thing.

Then the fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, exceedingly strong. This is your revived Roman Empire. This is the Antichrist using these iron teeth.

Iron is always associated with Rome. Breaking things in pieces, devouring and trampling the residue, breaking things up with its huge iron teeth, different than all the beasts that came before it. You can bet there has never been an empire like there's going to be when the revived Roman Empire takes over with technology and controls by technology.

It's going to be chips, and it's going to be networking, and it's going to be satellite links, and it's going to be databases, and it's going to be who is in and who is out, and who can pass the scanner and who can't. You want to talk about controlling buying and selling? Have you seen the reports just in this past week? They've had another round of reports on identity theft. They have now passed a law where you are allowed to access your credit report for free a certain number of times a year.

You get at least one free credit report from each of the four major credit bureaus free once a year. You get that report. Why? Identity theft.

You've got to check and see what's going on in your credit, and it's a huge problem. How are they going to solve the identity theft problem? Stick a chip in your head, stick a chip in your hand. It will only be active when you're alive, so they don't go sawing your head.

You know, you've seen these movies where they chop off the hand and stick it on the scanner, chop off your head, put it at the ATM. They'll put technology in there to where it will only work if you're alive, and so they'll just knock you unconscious and then stick your hand up there, I guess, or, you know, keep it in a... It'll be pizza delivery guys who use those keep-the-pizza-warm things to take it over there so it'll pass the temperature test. But trust me, the way the new empire is going to control and rule is different than any other empire.

No beast like it has ever been seen. And this is how the Antichrist is going to pull off his false charm, his false peace, his false messiah role. He's going to have fake cherubim.

He's going to be the fake lamb who was slain and is alive. He's going to seem to have suffered a fatal wound, and he hasn't. He's going to do all of these things, and he's going to fool everybody.

And he's going to control everything. And everybody's going to say, this is great. Peace and safety.

Eat, drink, and be merry. Well, that's another set of fours, and that's the dark side of four. That's the non-authentic side.

The authentic side is what we're looking at over in Revelation. Well, we get a chance to see more of this in Daniel when we start that book here week after next. So, that's a revisiting of some of these elements in John's vision, and it's important because this is the backdrop.

This is the stage that is set, and John is going to see everything in chapter 6-19 on this stage. So, I think it's worth it for us to fully understand the significance of the four living creatures, to fully understand the significance of the 24 elders, the seven flames of fire, which are the same as the seven eyes of the lamb. When we come back, we're going to talk about that idea of the lion and lamb.

Why is he introduced as the lion and looks like a lamb? What are the seven eyes? We need to straighten that out, and then we'll zip on down to the sixth and seventh seals. But this is a good place to pause and take our break. We'll refresh ourselves and come back and take a look at the most interesting thing in the throne room, which is the lamb.