

## **A Portrait of Jesus Christ**

Sunday, February 11<sup>th</sup>, 1990

### **Revelation 1:9-18**

*I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ. I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet, Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and, what thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea. And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks; And in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle. His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire; And his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters. And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp twoedged sword: and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength. And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last: I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.*

I want you to take your Bible today and open with me to the Book of Revelation (the revelation of Jesus Christ). I'm going to be speaking on this subject: "A Portrait of Jesus Christ." I want you to listen carefully to me and hear me all the way through the message. Stay with me through the entire message and I believe that you will learn something. This should be a profitable time together.

Artists and sculptors have tried for centuries to paint pictures and make statues of the Lord Jesus Christ. There are literally, millions of these paintings, statues, crucifixes and pictures of Jesus Christ. They are in homes, in churches, schools, and stores all over the country. It may be that you have one of these pictures in your home.

I'm going to tell you something. I want you to listen to me; I strongly, strongly, dislike these pictures and these statues of God. I consider them, according to the Word of God, not only to be idols and idolatrous, but they are dishonoring. These pictures and statues are dishonoring to our Lord. I'm going to give you two reasons for that.

I strongly dislike these pictures of God, pictures of Christ, statues and crucifixes. I'll give you two reasons. The first reason is the plain and direct commandment of our God to Israel. Over in the Book of Exodus, Chapter 20: verse 4 and 5, God is speaking to

Israel. He says, *“Thou shalt not make unto Thee, any graven image or any likeness of anything, (pictures or statues) that is in heaven above, on the earth beneath or the water under the earth. Thou shalt not bow down thyself to these images.”* He is talking about these pictures and statues. That is a direct commandment of God.

When our Lord Jesus Christ spoke to the woman at the well, He said this, in John 4:24; *“God is Spirit.”* God is not a statue and God is not a picture. *“God is Spirit and they that worship God, worship Him in Spirit and truth.”* So, I say that these statues and these pictures, crucifixes and all of these things are a direct rebellion against the commandment of God Almighty. He says, *“Thou shalt not do this.” “Thou shalt not bow down to these images.”*

The second reason why I dislike all these pictures and statues of God is because it is utterly and totally impossible to put on canvas or to put on paper or a cold marble statue, anything that remotely resembles the unspeakable, indescribable glory of the person of our God.

I ask you in the name of reason, how can you paint a picture of God whom you have never seen? How can you paint the express image of his Glorious person on a canvas? How can you paint the brightness of His glory? How can you paint the one on canvas upon whom Moses could not even look and still live? He is the one whom the scripture says, *“The heaven cannot contain Him.”* Jesus Christ is God Almighty.

Now, I’m going to assign a task to all would-be revelators of God. I’m talking about those who would paint pictures of God or chisel statues of God. I’m going to assign you a task. Listen to this; draw me a picture or make me a statue of the Spirit of God moving on the face of the waters when He created all things. Jesus Christ is the Creator. *“In the beginning was the Word, the Word was with God and the Word was God. All things were made by Him; without Him was not made anything that was made.”*

Draw me a picture of Melchizedek, the king of peace, the king of Salem and the priest of the most High God who appeared to Abraham and blessed him. What did he look like? Draw me a picture of *“I Am that I Am.”* Do you remember when Moses stood at the burning bush and God spoke to him? He asked, *“Who are you Lord?”* He said, *“I Am that I Am.”* Draw me a picture of Him.

Paint me a picture of the Shechinah glory that dwelt on the mercy seat. That is Christ Jesus. Draw me a picture of the Son of Man, who walked with the Hebrew children in the fiery furnace. That is the Lord Jesus Christ. Draw me a picture of Jacob’s ladder, of

the rock in the wilderness that followed them. Paint me a picture of the pillar of fire or the cloud by day. Draw me a picture of the angel of the Lord that wrestled with Jacob.

Draw me a picture of the glorified Christ. Do you remember when He appeared on the Mount of Transfiguration with His disciples? The scripture says, *“His very clothes glistened with brightness.”* Can you get that on canvas? Draw me a picture of the suffering Lamb of God on the cross of Calvary in His agony, enduring all of our guilt, shame and sin. From whom even the heavenly Father turned away. Can you put that on canvas?

Draw me a picture of the risen Lord, our great Priest, as he appeared in heaven to make atonement for His people. He ministered not in the earthly tabernacle made with hands, but in heaven itself, there to make an atonement for our souls. Can you catch that on canvas?

Draw me a picture of the interceding Advocate. John said, *“If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father who is seated on the right hand of the Majesty on High, whoever liveth to make intercession for us.”* Can you catch that on canvas?

Draw me a picture of the glorious Christ whom Paul met on the road to Damascus. When he looked into that awesome light and was blinded; he was stricken stone-blind when he spoke to and observed the Lord of Glory.

My friends, until you can capture on canvas or a painting, picture or a statue that Lord and that glorious Redeemer, you better lay down your brush. Put up your canvas and do what all have done, who have some revelation of His majesty. You need to fall on your face and worship Him. Like Moses of old; hide in the Rock when He passes by. Or, like Job of old, he said, *“I’ve heard of you God by the hearing of the ear and now mine eyes seeth Thee. Wherefore, I put my hand on my mouth and I will not speak again.”*

Do you remember when Isaiah saw the Lord? This is the Lord Jesus Christ. *“When he saw the Lord “high and lifted up; His train and glory filled the temple. He was seated on His throne and the seraphims around the throne of God, each with six wings; with two (wings) they covered their eyes and their faces; they covered their feet and with two they did fly. They cried, ‘Holy, Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty.’”* Can you put that on a piece of paper?

Can you fall at His feet like Thomas, when He identified himself with Thomas? Thomas cried, *“My Lord and my God.”* Admit the impossibility of reporting what you have seen.

Just like Paul who was taken to the third heaven. He came back and he said, *“I heard things that are not possible for me to even tell you.”*

We don't have the language to express the glory of God. We don't have the picture, we don't have the painting, and we don't have the statues. We don't have anything that these human hands and minds can bring together to picture the glory of Christ Jesus and the glory of God Almighty.

In Revelation Chapter 1, John on the Isle of Patmos said when he saw the Lord; *“I fell at His feet as a dead man.”* So, I'm telling you this, my friends; first of all, these pictures, crucifixes and statues violate a direct commandment of God Almighty. *“Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image.”* I'm talking about any graven image or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above. *“Thou shalt not bow down to them.”*

God is a Spirit and they that worship the living God, *“Worship Him in Spirit and in truth.”* These things are dishonoring to Christ. There is no way that you can confine to a painting, a picture or a statue, or portrayal on paper, the glory, the indescribable, and unspeakable glory of God Almighty.

Take your Bible and let me show you a portrait of Christ. That is what this is. In Revelation 1:9, John is writing here under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. He says, *“I John, who am also your brother.”* What he is saying is that he is a man like you are; “I am a person, I am a man. I'm your companion in tribulation. I've suffered like you have suffered. I've gone through trials and suffering just like you have. I was on the Isle of Patmos for preaching the Word of God, for preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ.” It was because he preached the truth of God and the testimony of God. He was exiled to the Isle of Patmos. There he lived to be an old man and died. Someone said that he was over 90 years of age.

In verse 10, he says this; *“Now, I was in the Spirit of God on the Lord's Day.”* In other words, John was in exile and he was alone. But, on the Lord's Day, the day our Lord arose from the grave, he knew that the other believers would be meeting together to preach and to praise God. They were to break bread and He was worshipping God also. He said, *“I was in the Spirit of God on the Lord's Day.”* He was worshipping and meditating upon the things of his God. The scripture says, *“I heard a great voice.”*

You know; when our God speaks, He speaks of great things. He speaks of great things in a great way. John said, *“I heard a great voice.”* I think Satan whispers. He whispers sedulity and craftiness. When our God declares the truth, He declares it in a great voice and in a great way. John said, *“I heard a voice, a great voice.”*

What did that voice say? In verse 11, the voice said; *“I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last.”* Alpha is the first letter of the Greek Alphabet. Omega is the last letter of the Greek Alphabet. Our Lord is speaking here and He is saying, *“I’m the first and I’m the last.”* He is all in between. *“He is the author and finisher of Faith.”* Christ is all from Alpha to Omega in the whole alphabet. He is the whole alphabet of the revelation of God.

All that God has to say to men is said in Christ. All that God has to give to men is given in Christ. All that God has purposed to perform in this world, in this universe, the new heaven and the new earth, is in Christ. *“He hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in the heavenly places in Christ.”* He chose us in Christ, loved us in Christ, redeemed us in Christ and accepted us in Christ. One day, We’ll gather together, all things in Christ. *“To the praise and glory of His grace.”* So, this voice said, *“I’m the beginning and the end.”* There is nothing to be added there. He is *“Alpha and Omega”* and all in between.

So, in verse 12, the scripture says; *“I turned to see the voice that spake.”* Now, wouldn’t you? Here John is on the Lord’s Day alone and is exiled on the Isle of Patmos. He heard this great voice which said, *“I’m Alpha and Omega; I’m the beginning and the end, the first and the last.”* John said, *“I turned to see the voice that spake.”* When John turned he saw the risen and glorified Lord Jesus Christ.

Do you want to see a real portrait of Christ? You just throw away those canvas idols and those poor attempts at portraying Almighty God. It is just taken from some man’s imagination. Throw them away and listen to the Word of God. Here, Christ reveals Himself. Here it is, look to John’s portrait. Here is what Christ revealed to John that day on the Isle of Patmos. In verse 13, John said, *“I turned and I saw seven golden candlesticks. In the middle of all those candlesticks was one likened unto the Son of Man.”*

Now remember, John was one of the disciples who walked with Christ the man on the earth. He leaned on His breast at the Lord’s Table. He was very familiar with the Christ of the flesh when He was here, on this earth. Here, John is seeing the risen and glorified Christ as He now appears and as He speaks to him. John said, *“I saw one like unto the Son of Man standing in the midst of seven golden candlesticks.”*

What are these seven candlesticks? In verse 20, it tells us what these candlesticks are. They are His churches, the seven churches. He is in the midst of His church. Where is Christ? He is in the midst of His church and in the midst of His people. *“Where two or*

*three are met together in My name; I'll be in the midst of them.*" So, here, the Son of Man, the Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ is in the midst of His churches.

In verse 13, it says; *"He was clothed with a garment down to His feet. He was girt about the paps with a golden girdle."* What is this robe of which He is clothed, down to the feet? This is the glorious robe of our Great High Priest. If you will take the Old Testament and study the dress of the high priest who wore that robe and who wore that breast plate, you will find that they had the names of the tribes of Israel on it when he went into the presence of God.

Here, our Lord Jesus Christ wears the priestly robe. He is our Great High Priest. We have a High Priest and it is Christ the Lord. He has the golden girdle because he is a King Priest. He is the awesome King Priest. Watch this, in verse 14; *"His head and His hair was white like wool and white as snow."*

Now, the church in the Song of Solomon described the Lord Jesus Christ as having His head and His hair, *"Bushy and black as a raven."* You see, there, the church is the bride and she was rejoicing in the perpetual youth, strength, love and care of her Redeemer. He is perpetually young; *"He's the same yesterday, today and forever."*

To John, *"He is revealed as the Ancient of Days whose goings forth has been from old, from everlasting. He is the wisdom of God."* White hair speaks of wisdom. White hair speaks of the Ancient of Days. That is the way it appears to John. Christ has the Kingly robe, that golden girdle, and His hair is as white as wool and as white as snow. *"He is the wisdom of God. He is the Ancient of Days."*

*"His eyes were as a flame of fire."* Over in Song of Solomon chapter five, again, the church and the bride are describing her lover. She says, *"His eyes were like a dove's eyes, washed with milk, gentle and loving."* That is the way she saw Him. He is compassionate, kind and loving to all of His people.

Here, John sees the omniscience of our God. *"His eyes are as a flame of fire."* He sees things as they are and not as they claim to be. His eyes as a flame of fire, burns away all the darkness. The fire burns away the hypocrisy, and burns away the sham. These eyes penetrate the soul and reveal the truth, the omniscience of our God. Just like Peter said, *"Lord, you know all things."* Have you ever seen a picture like this?

In verse 15, *"His feet were like fine brass as if they had been burned in a furnace."* You know; our feet have to do with one walk. His walk, the walk of Christ is three-fold. He walked through the furnace of wrath, bearing the sins of His people. Then He walks

through the furnace of fire with us, just like the children of Israel. You don't go through a trial that Christ is not there. They looked into the furnace and they saw four. They saw four, the three children and the one like the Son of Man, walking in the flames.

He'll trample upon His enemies. *"His feet are as fine brass burned in a furnace."* This is the judgment of our God. Listen, *"His voice was as the sound of many waters."* I hear about preachers saying that God speaks to them. Is this what He sounded like? *"His voice was the sound of many waters."*

Have you ever stood by the mighty Niagara Falls? What a great force and what a great power. The sound fills the whole area. When our Lord spoke to Paul, everyone around Him heard it but they didn't know what He said. *"It was the voice of many waters."* What a great force this is. This force cannot be stopped and cannot be arrested. His voice in His gospel will accomplish that whereto He sends it. That which He pleases is that which He's purposed. His voice will call out His people. *"It was the voice of many waters."*

Then, in verse 16, *"He had in His right hand, seven stars."* You might know what the seven candlesticks are. In verse 20, it says that they are His church. Who and what are the seven stars? Those are His pastors. Read verse 20 of Revelation 1. There were seven candlesticks where he saw the Lord, the Son of God in the midst of them. There were seven stars in His right hand. These are His true, called, ordained and sent Pastors.

This shows us several things. First: They are in His hand. Like stars, they are in His hand. Like stars, they are where He puts them. His hand put them there. Like stars, they only reflect light. They have no light of their own. Stars reflect the light, the light of the Sun. Even so, these true preachers don't have any opinion of their own or revelation of their own. They just reflect the message, the love, and the grace of the gospel that their Lord gives them. They are in His hand.

Which hand? They are in His right hand. What is the right hand? The right hand is His authority and approval. When *"Our Lord sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on High,"* He sat down in the place of authority and approval. There was acceptance. *"His stars are in His right hand."*

*"Out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword."* Try to paint that for me! What is that? That is His Word that cuts away our sin and our righteousness. His Word circumcises our heart and slays His enemy. His Word is His power. The power of God is the Word of God. God spake and everything was created. God will speak and

everything will be destroyed. *“His Word is a sharp two-edged sword”* that cuts both ways.

I believe that if any single verse of scripture would cause you to see what I am saying, this one will do it. In the first place, these portraits and these pictures are idols and they are dishonoring to Christ and they do not reveal His true character and glory. They are dishonoring to Him. There is no way you can put on canvas, paper or a statue, the glory of our God.

In Revelation 1:16, it says; *“His countenance.”* What is His countenance? You’re looking at my face on the television; and you are looking at my countenance and seeing it aren’t you? Of course you are. John says, *“When I looked into His face, His countenance was as the Sun, in its full strength, it was so glorious and so magnificent.”* Think of this, *“His countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength.”*

You can’t look upon the sun, let alone paint it. There is no way you can look upon the sun in its full strength, let alone put it on a piece of paper to show to others. The sun is blinding. It is so magnificent as the brightness of His glory. What happened to you then John? John said, *“I turned and I saw the voice that spake to me.”* He described Him. He said, *“When I looked into His face, His countenance was like looking at the sun in its full strength. I fell at His feet as a dead man.”* Now, if anybody could ever make a statue or a picture with the likeness of the risen, glorified Christ, he would look at it and would fall as a dead man.

Thank God something else happened. The scripture says, *“He laid His hand on me.”* Here is the tender, compassionate, merciful Lord, our Redeemer. He lay His hand on John and He said, *“Don’t be afraid; I am the first and I am the last. I am He that liveth and was dead. Behold, I am alive forever more and I have the keys of hell and death.”*

My friends; this is our Lord. This is a portrait of Christ Jesus. This is a revelation of the Son of God, directly from His Word as He appeared unto John on the Isle of Patmos. This is the portrait of Christ.