

Revelation – Ch 1 v 10-18

By Dr. Jeff Meyers

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Greenwell Springs Baptist Church

19421 Greenwell Springs Road
Greenwell Springs, LA. 70739

Website: <http://www.greenwellsprings.com>

Online Sermons: <http://www.sermonaudio.com/jeffmeyers>

Alright, let us assemble. Let us assemble. Let us assemble. I enjoy the fact that y'all enjoy being with each other. Obviously you'll have the opportunity to do that after our Bible study tonight but I want to welcome you to part 2 of our study through the book of Revelation as we continue in chapter 1 tonight, verses 10-18 and we see a picture of Jesus very differently than we see in the Gospels. What we see in Revelation 1 is we see a resurrected Jesus. We see a Jesus that is no longer confined by the dust and the dirt of earth, but we have a Jesus that's not only lived and died and raised from the dead, but has ascended on high. And as we're going to see in just a moment, the picture that is given to the Apostle John of Jesus in Revelation 1, it is more than just a physical description, in fact, we're going to see that it is a prophetic description. It is rich with Old Testament illustrations and illusions.

You remember what I shared with you last week of what I believe is the great, I guess, evidence for the confusion of the book of Revelation is that there are so many references to the Old Testament in Revelation and yet that seems to be the part of the Bible that most Christians are ignorant of, and so tonight as we go through our study, you're going to see all kinds of illustrations from the Old Testament in this description of Jesus. But we're going to pick it up in Revelation 1, beginning in verse 10. It says,

10 I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet, 11 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. 12 And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks; 13 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. 14 His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire; 15 And his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters. 16 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. 17 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: 18 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.

As I mentioned, we have a picture of Jesus here very different than anything that Matthew, Mark, Luke and John would present even in the resurrection appearances of Jesus in those Gospels. Here we have a description that is literally unprecedented. There is no other description of Jesus quite like this anywhere else in the Bible.

On the outline that I gave you, I mentioned kind of that first one, I mentioned what the word I used, the precedent for this. I'm going to define two words for you tonight that are very important to understand about what's happening in Revelation 1. The first word is "theophany." I know that's a big fancy theological term but a theophany is when God himself either through physical or visible appearance or audible communication makes himself absolutely clearly seen or heard to men. Now, there are theophanies all throughout the Scriptures, probably the most commonly known one is what we know in Exodus 3. Remember when Moses is at the burning bush and God actually audibly speaks to him and says, "I Am who I Am." And there's all kinds of references there, but what I want to focus on tonight is more of what we all the Christophanies. Now, a theophany is when God himself either audibly or physically presents himself to humanity, a Christophany is when you have an appearance of somebody in Scripture prior to the Incarnation of Jesus Christ that just has too much evidence not to be Jesus.

Now, understand Jesus has always been. There has never been a time where Jesus was not. In fact, the Bible makes it clear in John 1 and in Colossians 1 when what we know as creation was spoke into existence, it was Jesus who spoke those words. So there's never been a time he was not, however, about 2,000 years ago, there was a very specific time in history where he was Incarnated whereas John 1:14 says, "The Word became flesh." Now, there are passages all throughout the Old Testament, there are figures that arise themselves that just somewhat look like and I hate to use this term, it sounds so causal, but it almost passes the smell test. It just smells like Jesus in the scene.

Now, I've listed for you some of the most well-known and famous, I guess, demonstrations of Christophanies in the Old Testament. Why? Because what we're going to see in Revelation 1 is a Christophany if I will use that term literally on steroids. Now let's go back to the Old Testament. Now, remember the book of Joshua 5, this is the chapter right before what we know as at Jericho. Remember that Joshua was concerned. They were about to walk around that great city once a day for six days and seven times on the seventh. Remember that as he's looking over the fields, there's an individual who comes to him called the Captain of the Lord of Hosts. Remember he is the one that was able to see the army of spiritual warriors that Joshua was unable to see. He was the one that reassured Joshua, "Don't worry, we've got this. It's okay." What's interesting about Joshua 5, there's not a lot of dialogue with this individual; there's not a whole lot of description of who he is, but in Joshua 5:13, Joshua bows down to him and the Captain of the Lord of Hosts does not rebuke him for doing so. Why is that important? The only one worthy of worship is the Lord himself. In fact, the Ten Commandments begin by telling us, "Do not have any other gods before us." We get into Revelation, later the Apostle

John is going to bow down to an angel and the angel says, "Get up. I am not worthy. I'm not God." So it's interesting that here is the Captain of the Lord of Hosts in Joshua 5, Joshua bows down to him, he does not rebuke him. There is pretty good evidence that that individual could have been what we call a Christophany.

Moving to the book of Job 42. Now, a few chapters earlier in chapter 38, it says that out of the whirlwind out of the north the Lord appears unto Job. In chapter 38 of Job there are 35 questions that are asked of him. There is a dialogue that happens between the Lord and Job and that dialogue goes all the way into chapter 42. When you get to chapter 42, verse 5, Job makes this very emphatic statement, he says, "I have seen God face to face." That's a pretty profound, very clear statement.

We get to the book of Ezekiel. We mentioned Ezekiel last Wednesday night, I mean, it's a difficult book even at best. But Ezekiel 1, that chapter alone is one of the most mysterious chapters in all of the Bible where there is this picture of the throne of God and there's a wheel within a wheel with eyes all around it; there are cherubim; there are all kinds of crazy incidences. But when you get to the end of chapter 1 of the book of Ezekiel in verse 28, it says that this individual, that this person who Ezekiel is dialoguing with, breathes on Ezekiel and Ezekiel, it says, the Spirit of God fills him. It's very close to what we see in Genesis where it says that God took that dirt and formed what we know as Adam. He breathed into him and he became a living soul. Do you see some of the characteristics that are coming here in these Old Testament characters? They just look, they sound and almost smell like Jesus.

Then we get to the book of Daniel. In the book of Daniel we have a description of one who almost identically matches here in Revelation 1 so we won't deal that much with that one.

In Isaiah 6:1-6, we know that Isaiah sees the Lord high and lifted up. It says that the train of his robe fills the temple. It talks about them taking the coals and putting it upon his lips. There is a scene where he sees the heavens; he sees an image of God that at least has a robe being worn in a figure of sorts.

Then there's Zechariah 3. In my personal opinion, my humble opinion, and I hope it's an accurate opinion, this is the most definitive of what I would call the Christophanies in the Old Testament. In all the other ones, there is evidence like bowing down without rebuke; there is imagery of the Spirit of God being poured into one who he is dialoguing with. But in Zechariah 3, it says there that Joshua, the high priest, is standing and the phrase that is used is "angel of the Lord." He's standing before the angel of the Lord and it says that Satan is there to accuse him and in the course of the dialogue, the one who is called the angel of the Lord turns to Joshua and tells him that he has absolved him of his sins. Now, only one person can absolve anybody of their sins and that is God himself. In addition to that, why else would Satan be there as the accuser because the Bible makes it very clear that he is the one that accuses us before the Lord?

Now, the reason I shared all of those with you is there is precedent. When we get to Revelation 1, this is not the first time that somebody in the Bible, a normal character, a normal human being like you and I, this is not the first time that somebody has run into a character that looks a whole lot like Jesus before his Incarnation. What's interesting about Revelation 1 is the Apostle John who's on the island of Patmos, spent years with Jesus. He knew Jesus. He was actually called the beloved of Jesus, and this picture of Jesus is so different. He doesn't just worship him, he doesn't just bow down, as we see in a moment he literally falls as if dead. If there was anybody who should not be surprised of how Jesus shows up, it should have been the Apostle John, yet here in this portion of Revelation 1, even John sees Jesus dramatically different than he's ever seen him before.

Now, in kind of this precedent, we have to ask ourselves a very important question that we have to ask ourselves all the time throughout Scripture when we're studying it. When we're studying a description of somebody or something, we have to ask ourselves: is this prescriptive or is this descriptive? Let me tell you what that means. Prescriptive means just like you would get a prescription, that it is exactly as it is written for the purpose therein it is written. Descriptive means it's more allegorical. In other words, it's kind of sharing with you a principle or a point. Don't get so caught up in the imagery, so to speak.

Let me give you some good examples before we go specifically to the picture of Jesus in Revelation 1. Jesus said of himself that he is a door. Now, does that mean Jesus is an 8x4 piece of wood or metal? No. He was describing the fact that he is the entry point to salvation. He is the entry point to forgiveness. Now, when Jesus said he was the Son of God, that was prescriptive, was it not? He was declaring who he was, not just trying to give us or share with us a specific point about him. The reason that this is significant is typically when we study Scripture something is either prescriptive or it is descriptive. Here in Revelation 1, I believe it's absolutely both. I believe that when John saw Jesus in Revelation 1, he saw him exactly as we have him pictured here. He saw the feet as of brass; he saw the two-edged sword coming out of his mouth; he saw his eyes as a flame of fire. I believe it's prescriptive: he actually saw him as it is described, but what we see is that his picture or the image, there is more to it than just what he saw with his eyes. For every single one of these descriptions, every one of them has an Old Testament prophecy that absolutely positively declares that this is who Jesus is, was and will be.

So without further ado, what is the picture that is given to us here in Revelation 1? I have given for you on your sheet, I have given for you just a breakdown of every one of the things that Jesus is described as or how John sees him, and then the Old Testament references, the prophecies that declare this truth about Jesus. It begins with saying, "one like unto the Son of man." Now, in Daniel 3, a very familiar story of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, you know the story that those three men refused to bow down to Nebuchadnezzar's statue. They refused to worship a false idol and god. Nebuchadnezzar got so upset, it says he heated the furnace seven times worse than he normally would. In fact, when they threw the three men in, it was so hot that the handlers actually burned up and died in the process. You remember the story, right? When Nebuchadnezzar looks into that furnace, how many people does he see? He sees four and he declares in Daniel

3, "one like unto the Son of God." That's the word of Nebuchadnezzar as recorded by Daniel in chapter 3.

Why is that important? Because Jesus is described both as the Son of God, he's also described as the Son of man. In particular, the Gospel of Luke does the best description as the Son of man describing his humanity, but here in Revelation 1, versus just the humanity and the deity of Jesus, when he says, "I saw one like unto the Son of man," in Daniel 3, Nebuchadnezzar calls this one he sees as the Son of God because God had come down, but what happens here in Revelation 1:10? He was in the Spirit and John was caught up. What I think is important to begin this description of Jesus is Jesus as we see him in Revelation 1 is not on the island of Patmos with John during his daily devotional. What does it say there? It says in verse 10 he was caught up and so what we're seeing here is John has a front row seat into the heavenlies. He has a front row seat into what we might call the third heaven, the throne room of God. He says, "I see him as the Son of man." It says that a robe is down to his feet.

Now, there are two very important aspects about this robe. The first one is this, that that robe represented three very specific offices: the office of a prophet, the office of a priest, and the office of a king. Nobody but Jesus has held all three simultaneously. Nobody. In fact, in the Old Testament, you'll find individuals that were both kings and prophets. David was one of those, for example, he was both the king and he was a prophet. There is an interesting character that some oftentimes call a Christophany, a man by the name of Melchizedec who shows up in Genesis 14 who is called the king and the priest of Salem. We know that Samuel was both a prophet and a priest. Do you see how various people held various positions but only Jesus holds all three. It's like we saw in verse 5 last week, he is the faithful witness, he is the first begotten of the dead, he is the prince of the kings of the earth. He is both prophet, he is priest, he is king and I've listed for you the verses in the Old Testament that showed what this, I guess the wearing of the robes of these individual offices appeared like.

Now, that's not only the offices of Jesus but I think what's also important that the robe is all the way down to the ground. Why is that significant? It's a picture of majesty or a magisterial presentation. When we get to Revelation 19, when Jesus physically comes back, when the heavens are split open, when he comes as described on a white horse with the armies of heaven behind him, it says there that the loins or his garment is actually pulled up and you can see his thigh and it says that written on his thigh is, "King of kings of Lord of lords." Why is this so critical? Because our culture doesn't quite get this, okay? This is something that I'm very grateful that is not a part of our culture. Why? Because guys in our culture don't wear clothing that at some distance can look like a dress, but that's kind of what a robe looks like, does it not? Have you ever seen and, ladies, I'm not trying to pick here. Have you ever seen a woman in a dress try to run to her car in the rain? It doesn't work real well, does it? Why? Because your legs are constricted. There is no way that you can move them freely. You see, when you pull the robe up, it means you're ready to fight. When the robe is down, you are established in your majesty and in your power.

You see, here when John sees Jesus, he doesn't see the coming back, ready to fight at Armageddon Jesus, he sees the sitting on the throne making intercession for us Jesus in majesty and in power. By the way, we mentioned Job earlier, you remember in chapter 38 when God shows up out of that whirlwind of the north, anybody remember what God told Job to do? He said, "Gird up your loins like a man." What he was saying is, "There is a time to sit in authority and there is a time to fight." And what we see with Jesus here in Revelation 1, at the end of Revelation, he comes and, boy, as the bumper sticker says, he is mad. He is fighting at the battle of Armageddon, but when John sees him here in chapter 1, it is magisterial, it is royal, it is authority, it is power without the necessity of actual physical enforcement. He is prophet. He is priest. He is king.

It says he has a sash that is around his chest. Mark 10:44-45 says Jesus came not to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many. I think we're all familiar with that passage in John 13 where Jesus, the night before his crucifixion, he washed the disciples' feet. Do you remember what he did? Remember he took the garment that was upon him and he laid it to the side before he went to wash their feet. If you were with us last Wednesday night, we talked about this, this picture of not only servitude but it's also a bigger picture of salvation; that before his Incarnation, before he came in the flesh, Jesus was quite possibly robed and appeared just like Revelation 1 says. But what did he do at his Incarnation? What did he do when he was born of the virgin? He laid aside his heavenly garments. He got into the dust. He got into the dirt of humanity to seek and to save us. But you know, Jesus went to the cross and Jesus rose from the dead and according to the Bible, Jesus ascended on high. Does it not just make sense that he would have taken that heavenly garment and placed it back on himself?

So we have this picture here in Revelation 1 of 1. John being taken up to see literally a physical representation in the person of Jesus. We see that he has a robe all the way down to his feet, a sash around his chest. Now, here's an interesting one: his head and his hair are white. Do not read your humanity into this. I tease people all the time the gray hair on my head is from my kids but from the beard is from y'all. That's where these two come from. We all know, in fact, anybody ever familiar with the financial guy by the name of Dave Ramsey? Dave Ramsey, one of the things that I love that he said throughout the years is he said that he told his children that every time you do something dumb you lose your hair, every time you do something stupid it turns gray. Now, Dave Ramsey is bald with a little bit of gray hair and he says, "Kids, don't be like me. I was dumb and stupid." Don't read your humanity; don't read your aging into this; don't read stress; don't read what we always joke about gray hair into this. This isn't an aging process for according to 1 Timothy 6, Jesus Christ alone is the only immortal one. Jesus doesn't age.

Now, did he physically grow for those 33 ½ years on earth? Absolutely. But Jesus as he always was, is and will be, there is no aging process to Jesus so don't think, "Oh, it's been a long time. He's getting old." Don't think about "Father Time." What we need to see this in light of is Daniel 7:9 and 22, one of the great prophecies of old where the Messiah, Jesus, is called the Ancient of Days. He is the one, listen church, who has always been and always will be. This is a very important fact. Jesus didn't just show up on the scene 2,000 years ago; Jesus didn't just show up on the scene of what we know as Genesis 1.

Jesus has always been and so when we see Jesus in Revelation, particularly at the end where we see him coming out of the clouds, where we see him speaking the new heaven and the new earth and the new Jerusalem, you understand that this is the same one who spoke it the first time who speaks it the second time. This is the one who had been for who knows how long before the Bible ever declared "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." Daniel described him as the Ancient of Days, not some prophet of the latter years; not someone like Methuselah who had 969 years on him, but one who had always been. He was the Ancient of Days.

Now beginning with the next description, it gets a little interesting. It says that his eyes, it says they are a flame of fire. You know, fire all throughout Scripture is a picture of judgment. 1 Corinthians 3, it says there is no foundation whereby we must build our lives than the foundation of Christ Jesus. When we're saved, we can build on that foundation several different things. We can build wood, hay and stubble or gold, silver and precious jewels. The Bible says there in 1 Corinthians 3 that one day, this is written to Christians by the way, that a judgment, what we call the judgment seat of Christ, will ensue and our work will be tried but listen to verse 15, "yet we shall be saved from fire." In other words, I don't have to ever worry about going to hell but I do have to worry about what I have done or not done being tried.

Now here's what's significant about this: it's not the mouth of Jesus that does the judging, it's the eyes. Now, I know as parents and hopefully as grandparents there have been times where you've discovered that maybe someone isn't quite speaking the truth or maybe someone's not quite being up front with you. Have you ever said this statement to them, "Look at me in the eyes"? I know a football coach years ago, any time that he would call a play and we didn't do it right, he'd say, "What happened?" Well, you know, we'd make an excuse, right? He'd always grab our face mask and say, "Look me in the eye." The eyes are the window to your soul. Do you ever remember being a kid or maybe even an adult and getting caught doing something you shouldn't have? What's the worst part about getting caught? Whoever the authority figure is, looking them in the eye.

Notice here it says his eyes are a flame of fire. Hebrews 4:12-13, it says not only should we go before the throne of God with boldness but there in verse 13 it says that every single one of us, listen and let's be mature about this, is naked before God. That means we can't hide anything. Everything is exposed to him: every thought, every idea, every concept, every word, every action that has been taking place. We stand before him completely exposed. You know, the Apostle John was the beloved, if I can say this, one of the greatest Christians this world has probably ever seen; one of the most dedicated believers as he went to the island of Patmos for the testimony of Jesus and for the word of God, and if he feels as if dead when he saw Jesus in the eyes, how are we going to respond, church? You see, what we see here is the judgment didn't even have to be spoken. By the way, I don't want to fast-forward too fast but when you get to Revelation 20, there is this famous white throne judgment where we see the lost and the condemned coming before God for their final eternal declaration of punishment and you get the idea that nobody says a word. You don't have to say a word when you're looking in the eyes of God himself and who you are is completely exposed. You know, John 5:22, I love this

statement, it says that all judgment is left up to Jesus. All judgment. You know, I've heard people say to me, "Don't judge me, pastor." I don't have to, Jesus will take care of that. It says all judgment is left up to Jesus.

When he sees him here when John sees Jesus, he sees his eyes as a flame of fire, then his feet as brass that is burning. It's a picture of judgment. Now, later in Revelation 19, Jesus comes back in what we know as the famous battle of Armageddon. He treads the winepress and it says that the blood is as if the bridle of the horse, but this idea of this brass that is burning, this idea of judgment. You know, back in Genesis 3, this is the famous chapter where humanity got off track; this is where we believed the lies of the devil rather than the truth of God; this is where we traded our freedom for bondage; this is where we decided we knew how best how to do this thing called life. In verse 15 of Genesis 3, God begins, for lack of better terms, to hand out the punishments. Remember he begins with Adam. One of the dumbest things ever said by humanity, remember what Adam said? "The woman you gave me." You understand, Adam didn't blame Eve, he blamed God. That's a dangerous position to find yourself in when you want to say that God is the author of your sin; God is the originator of your rebellion. He didn't get so much in trouble because he blamed Eve, he blamed God, but in verse 15 God begins to hand out the judgments: the judgment to the serpent saying he would be upon his belly; that the seed of the woman would crush his head. In other words, we call this is the protoevangelium or the very first Gospel back there in Genesis 3. Immediately after sin enters the realm of humanity, God makes a declaration that sin will be judged, the devil will be judged, and even this old world will be judged, so why should we be surprised that in the very first chapter of the book of Revelation that describes all these end time events that when John sees Jesus he not only sees the magisterial robe, he not only sees his hair as if white, the Ancient of Days, but he sees his feet as if burning brass that judgment is his rightful decision and rightful place.

Then it says his voice as the sound of many waters. Now, when we get to Revelation 5 we're going to meet what the Bible calls a strong angel. That's going to be a fun discussion. There are only three angels in the Bible that actually have names assigned to them. There are angels that have this job and that job but this is called a strong angel that when he speaks, that when he does so, that above heaven, in heaven, in earth and below earth, everybody is able to hear. Now that's a voice.

Now, here it says that the voice is the sound of many waters. You get the idea that even Jesus' voice in Revelation 1 is of greater volume than that angel. Now, I'm going to go ahead and confess. You know they say confession is good for the soul. I want you to know: I absolutely love, I love being a pastor. In fact, one of my jokes about being a pastor is this, this is why I love it: I have no idea when I wake up every day what I'm going to deal with. You have no idea what's going to walk in. You have no idea what communication you're going to get. That's one of the great mysteries of it is you just don't know until you know. But I will admit there is another job that I'd like. I really would, and I think that I could have this job at the same time as being the pastor. I think I could do both because my other job would not require me to be gone much and when I was called to be gone, I would not be gone for long. Do you know what I want to be? I want

to be the crier. You say, "The crier?" I want to be the guy who walks into Congress and declares, "Ladies and gentleman, the President of the United States of America." No microphone, just a voice that booms. I don't know how you get the job, but if you know anybody who might know how you get the job, I want that job. I think it would just be fun to walk in the hall of Congress with all those dignitaries and all that power and when I speak they have to listen, and when I speak, the most powerful man in the known world comes in. He doesn't come in before I talk, he comes in when I talk. I doubt I'll ever have the job but, hey, you've got to dream, right?

But here the picture of Jesus, the voice is the sound of many waters. You know, we can laugh about that picture and we can even talk about the strong angel in Revelation 5, but have you ever been in the presence of someone whose voice just sent chills down your spine? On a personal level and this may not mean a lot to our young people but I know it will our non-young people, several years ago I go to share, I guess, a seat, a bench, whatever word you want to use, for about 15 or 20 minutes with George Beverly Shea. George Beverly Shea, you talk about a voice, and when he spoke, I thought God was talking. I really did. He had one of those voices and, folks, that was of low volume and imagine this picture that John sees.

It says he has in his right hand, he has seven stars. Now, we only read up through verse 18 but this right now is a very important time to give us a very important lesson, not just about the book of Revelation but about the Bible in totality. The best interpretation of the Bible is the Bible itself, okay? It says here that Jesus has in his hand seven stars. You can speculate, you can guess, you can surmise what would those seven stars be. I want you to fast-forward down to verse 20 of chapter 1; I want you to see how plain God makes it. It says, "The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches." We don't have to wonder. We don't have to debate. You don't even have to write a commentary or a sermon on this. When it says he holds the seven stars, it literally says that these angels, as we'll meet in chapter 2 and 3 of Revelation, are in his hand. The candlesticks are in the midst of him, or he's in the midst of the candlesticks. Why is that important? Those candlesticks are the churches, those stars are the angels.

You remember a passage back in John 10 where there's a great discussion is Jesus the real shepherd, the good shepherd or is he a hireling? Remember what he said? He said those who are his sheep are in his hand and nobody and no thing can remove them from him. Interesting, even in his resurrection, even in this picture, that imagery of us being secure in his hand is still present. Now I want to go another step further and clarify that illustration. I think there is a great misconception that when you got saved, you jumped up "into heaven and you grabbed God's hands." You didn't jump up and grab his hand, he reached down and he scooped you up in his hand. The picture is not of a holding on, the picture is of one holding in as I'm showing you right here, and it says that the angels are in his hand.

Then it says his mouth has a two-edged sword coming out. Now, we know that Hebrews 4 is very clear that the word of God is sharper than any two-edged sword. I want you to think about this imagery that John gives. We know that the judgment was in the eyes, but all God has to do is speak it and it is. I mean, think about what we know as creation, when you look at it in light of John 1, that it was just simply spoken and it was. When you get to the end of the book of Revelation, chapter 21 and 22 with the new heaven and the new earth, the new Jerusalem, you get the same idea that he just speaks it and it is. Hebrews 1:3 says that all of the universe is held by the word of God. All he did was speak it and it is. Guess what happens in Revelation 20? He unspeaks it. It says with a ball of fire, what we know as known matter and universe is dissolved and then the new heaven and new earth and the new Jerusalem take place.

But he has out of his mouth this two-edged sword. Why is that critical for us? Because the things that we see in Revelation, Jesus doesn't have to go to a UN Council to get approval. Jesus doesn't even have to go and petition before the Supreme Court. All Jesus does and speak it, angels are loosed. Jesus speaks it, judgment comes. We're going to see all kinds of things. We're going to see fire and brimstone coming out of heaven. We're going to see earthquakes. We're going to see blood. We're going to see famine. We're going to see disease when we get to chapter 6 through 19. And do you know what happens? All the Lord has to do is he just speaks it and it happens.

So when it says he has a two-edged sword coming out of his mouth, it's that instantaneous creative ability just with his spoken word, and then this is my favorite part: his countenance is as the sun. S-u-n. Not s-o-n. This countenance is as the sun. There are two verses that I've given for you on your outline tonight that best describe this. The first one is in Malachi 4. This is the last chapter of your Old Testament. This is the last words that God is going to give his people, God's going to give the Israelites, God is going to give humanity before going silent for 400 years. In chapter 4 of Malachi, Moses is mentioned, Elijah is mentioned, but the Messiah is mentioned and he is called the Sun, S-u-n, of righteousness. Then we get to Matthew 17, it's that passage that we know as the great transfiguration passage where Peter, James and John are taken up on that mount, that Jesus is transfigured before them. Now remember in that passage it says that his raiment, Jesus' clothing, became as bright as the sun, s-u-n. He's the Sun of righteousness in Malachi 4; he transfigures himself as bright as the sun in Matthew 17; and here in Revelation 1, his countenance is as the sun.

Not only did John have the privilege of seeing Jesus with the robe and the white hair, the feet of brass, the eyes of fire, he got to see the glorified Jesus. You know, this is a Jesus he had never seen. I want you to think about the beloved, John the apostle. He saw Jesus the teacher. He saw Jesus the healer. He saw Jesus walk on water. He saw Jesus break bread and feed thousands. According to John 19:35, John and four other women were the only ones at the foot of the cross. We have pretty good evidence biblically speaking that John saw them put the nails in his hands and feet. John saw the sword go in the side and the Roman soldier says, "Truly this must be the Son of God." There is the possibility that John saw Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus as recorded in chapter 19, take the body down and place it in the tomb. You remember that when they got word that Jesus rose

from the dead, who were the first two to show up as far as the male persuasion? Peter and John. Do you remember who got there first? John did. John was the first one as far as the disciples are concerned, to enter in that empty tomb. John saw him as teacher. John saw him as preacher. John saw him as healer. John saw him as crucified. John saw him as raised from the dead. And John was there in Acts 1 when he ascended into heaven, but he had never seen Jesus like this and he saw Jesus, his countenance as the sun. He saw the glorified Jesus.

Now, this explains the position that John places himself in in verse 17. He says, "And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead." Now, he didn't literally die, he fell as if dead in such an awe of who he was with. You know that word "awesome"? We use it a lot in our culture. It literally means "so enamored you cannot even speak words." You know, in Psalm 111:10 it says, "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom." The disposition that he had as he fell as if dead.

Something different happens in the book of Revelation. I know on Sunday mornings we're going through the Minor Prophets. I know Hosea is one of what we call the lifestyle prophets. Jonah is kind of one as well. But it doesn't matter whether you're reading the majors or the minors, it can be Jeremiah; it can be Isaiah; it can be Habakkuk; it can be any of those guys who we classify as a prophet; you could even go back to the prophecies of the other guys that are not officially labeled as one, such as Samuel and Moses and David and all those individuals. Do you know what they're famous for saying? "Thus saith the Lord." In other words, "This is what God has told me to say to you." As you study the book of Revelation, you're not going to find, "Thus saith the Lord." Do you know what you're going to find? "The Lord said to me." Woo, that's a different perspective. That's not one just getting a message through however God so chose through prayer and such to give it to him. This is one who sees him face-to-face; one as we'll see in chapter 4, is taken up into the heavens; one who sees with his eyes all that is happening; hears with his ears all the surroundings. It's not going to be, "Thus saith the Lord," it's going to be, "The Lord showed me."

Now tonight as we study this great portion of Scripture, I can go ahead and guarantee you you're probably not going to have this experience in your life. You're not going to be on the island of Patmos; you're not going to be caught up in the Spirit; you're not going to see Jesus as the sun in his countenance and the brass of his feet of judgment. But did you know there is a way for you and I to get pretty close? How can we get in the same position as John? How can we place our lives into such a position where we fall at his feet as almost as if dead? Notice what Jesus says to him, "Fear not." What a statement. "For I am the first and the last. I am him that lives and was dead; and, behold, I'm alive for evermore, Amen; I have the keys of hell and death."

What's the best way to allow the same position in your life? I put on your outline Isaiah 6:1. It's that famous call of Isaiah. I'm sure most of us are very familiar with it because in verse 8 God says, "Who will go for me?" and Isaiah says, "Here, send me." Before even getting the details and the description he says, "I'll go." But I think the whole key to verse 8 in Isaiah 6 is verse 1. It says, "In the year that king Uzziah died I saw the Lord." You

say, "What is so significant about King Uzziah dying? Just because he was a good guy, just because he was a godly man?" Well, evidence shows that there's a pretty good possibility that the prophet Isaiah was actually related to King Uzziah. You say, "Well, why is that so significant?" Well, if he's related to King Uzziah, that means he's on the payroll, right? He is the prophet that's being paid by the king. When Uzziah died, he lost his job; he lost his income; he lost all of his financial resources. But I think it's even more important than that. Do you remember what they used to do to the relatives of the kings who died? They eliminated them. Why? Because they didn't want anybody to possibly be able to connect themselves to the now vacant throne.

Now, I want you to think about Isaiah for just a moment. Here is a man who his income, his livelihood and his very life were at a loss and what's the next statement? "The year that king Uzziah died," listen, "I saw the Lord." When we put our finances above God, don't expect to see him. When we put our physical health above God, don't expect to see him. When we put our physical well-being and life above the Lord, don't expect to see him. The same could be said of the Apostle John. Why was he on the island? Because they told him to quit talking about Jesus and he wouldn't quit. They told him, "You've got to keep quiet about this Jesus guy," and he said, "I'm not going to stop." He was literally exiled. He lost his income. He lost his family. And if he had stayed on that island long enough, he would have lost his life. He was able to see the Lord as he saw him. Isaiah was able to see the Lord as Isaiah saw him which tells me something: the only person keeping us from seeing God as we should is us. We're the problem. There is nobody on planet earth who's keeping you from seeing the Lord as you should be able to see him. The only problem is the person who you wake up to every day and you look in the mirror. I can't promise you that it will look exactly like what we saw in Revelation 1, but if we will place the Lord above everything in our life, even our own physical existence, then we will see him as we've never seen him before. It's not just a great picture of Jesus, it's a challenge for us to put ourselves in the same position that John was in to see him.

Let's pray.

Lord, as we finish this study of this great book of your word, oh what a picture. Lord, I've never seen the flaming eyes. God, I've never actually seen the two-edged sword. I've never seen the feet of brass or the countenance as the sun. But, Lord, I think I speak on behalf of all of us tonight, we do down deep, we want to see you. We want to see you greater than we've ever seen you, more vividly than we've ever seen you. And so, God, tonight I know I'm the one voicing but on behalf of all of us, God, we need to confess it's our fault. We're the ones that have messed up, and we're the ones that have allowed the cares of this world to creep in; we're the ones who have allowed the things of this world to put themselves in a greater position than you should be in our lives. Lord, you taught us in Matthew 6:33 if we would see you, the Lord, and your kingdom and your righteousness first, you would add everything else that we needed. God, tonight we admit we struggle with that. We struggle because there's so much that competes against you but, God, we've been challenged tonight to see what we could experience and what we could see. So, God, I pray tonight that even if our physical well-being and our fiscal well-being is not in the destitute position of Isaiah or even John, God, I pray that our

spiritual disposition would be such that we would place you in your rightful position. God, we celebrate you tonight, not just as an Incarnated Savior, not just as a crucified Savior and a resurrected Savior and an ascended Savior but, God, we celebrate tonight that you are a coming in your glory Savior. Help us, O God, even before that moment to see you as you really are. It is in the name of Jesus Christ we pray. Amen.