Pastor Chuck Smith always taught that Revelation isn't a book of fear or confusion, but a book of hope. Its very title, *apokalupsis* in Greek, means "a revelation" or "unveiling." It's an unveiling of Jesus Christ, His glory, His power, and His ultimate victory. Our goal is to understand what God wants to reveal to us about His Son.

We should approach the book of Revelation not as a sealed mystery, but as the **unveiling** of Jesus Christ. It is a promise of blessing for those who **read**, **hear**, and **obey** its words. The key to understanding Revelation is found in this first chapter, where we get a clear picture of the glorified Christ, who is sovereign over all of history and every church.

**Read 1:1-3.**

**First discussion:** Why is it so important that this is "The Revelation of Jesus Christ" and not "The Revelation of the End Times"? How does centering our view on Jesus change our approach to this book? (Read Hebrews 12:2). How can we be a faithful witness to others, revealing who Jesus is through our lives and words?

**Second discussion: 1:3 -** What is the three-part condition for receiving the blessing promised in this verse? Why do you think reading, hearing, and **keeping** the words are all necessary? (see James 1:22).

John writes “for the time is near.” This phrase is repeated 4 times in Revelation. Discuss what you think is God’s take away for us.

**Practical Application:** The blessing is not just for scholars, but for any person who engages with this book. What are some practical ways we can be "doers of the word"

**Notes:**

**Read 1:4-6**

**First discussion:** What do you see in verse 4? Jesus is the total focus in the book of Revelation. With that in mind what is John giving us in verse 5 about Jesus? Discuss what it means that Jesus is the "faithful witness," the "firstborn from the dead," and the "ruler over the kings of the earth." (see Daniel 4:17) Do these titles give you assurance? If not, why not?

**Second discussion 5b-6 (also read 1 Peter 2:9:** How does Jesus's love, expressed through His shed blood, lead to His making us "kings and priests"? What is the practical meaning of being a king and priest in your daily life?

**Practical Application:** What are some of the practical ways you can live out your identity as a "king and priest" this week?

**Notes:**

**Read 1:12-16 John sees a vision of Jesus in His glorified state. His voice is like many waters, His hair is white as wool, His eyes are like a flame of fire, His feet like fine brass, and His face is like the sun.**

**Discussion:** What do each of these powerful images reveal about the character and nature of Jesus? (e.g., eyes like a flame of fire, feet like fine brass). How does this vision differ from the way we typically think of Jesus as a meek and gentle Lamb? (see Daniel 7:9)

Jesus is holding seven stars and has a two-edged sword coming from His mouth. What do these symbols represent? (Hint: The stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the sword is the Word of God). Discuss why is it significant that He is holding the stars in His hand.

Note: the word for sword here is describing a heavy sword. The word of God. This sword here is a weapon against the enemies of God. The word of God that comes from His mouth to destroy His enemies. This is a different sword than found in Hebrews 4:12 (the smaller sword).

Charles Spurgeon says: “there is no handling this weapon without cutting yourself, for it has no back to it, it is all edge. The word of Christ, somehow or other, is all edge.”

**Bonus discussion:** talk about the differences in the 2 swords.

**Practical Application:** This vision should give us both comfort and reverence. The same Jesus who tenderly loved us is also the sovereign, all-powerful judge. How can knowing both of these aspects of His nature impact how you pray, worship, and share your faith?

**Notes:**

**Read 1:17-20.**

**Discussion:** What was John's reaction to seeing the glorified Christ? What would your reaction be? Why do you think Jesus's first words were "Do not be afraid"? Would those words be enough to hear for you? How does the fact that Jesus holds the "keys of Hades and of Death" bring you comfort in a world that fears death? (see John 11:25-26).

The book of Revelation is a revelation of "things which are, and the things which will take place after this." (v. 19). Discuss how the vision of Jesus in the first chapter prepares us to understand the rest of the book.

**Practical Application:** The central message of this chapter is that Jesus is in control. He has conquered death, and He is holding the keys. What fears are you facing today? How can the truth that Jesus holds the keys to death and hell give you the courage to face them?

**Notes:**