Observation – What does it say?

Hebrews 1:1-4

New American Standard Bible 1995

- God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets
- 2 in many portions and in many ways, ² in these last days has
- 3 spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all
- 4 things, through whom also He made the world. ³ And He is
- 5 the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of
- 6 His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His
- 7 power. When He had made purification of sins, He sat
- 8 down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, ⁴ having
- 9 become as much better than the angels, as He has inherited
- a more excellent name than they.

Read the passage through completely before looking at these questions.

Observation (What does it say?):

Consider the observation questions on the back of this page. What do you notice in this passage?

- Mark **G** or **S** for each of the pronouns (He, His, Him, who, whom) or other words that indicate God or the Son
- <u>Underline</u> unusual or symbolic language
- What else do you observe in this passage?

Interpretation (What does it mean?):

After observing the passage:

- What do you see as relationships and roles of God and the Son?
- Why does the writer contrast "long ago" and "these last days"?
- List the actions of God and of the Son?

 <u>God</u>
 <u>Son</u>
- What is the overall impression the passage leaves you with? What do you think the goal of the writer was?
- What questions come to mind as you read?

Application (What does it mean for me?):

- How would you respond if you received a correspondence that began like this (no greeting, no introductory comments)? What would you expect from the next fifteen pages?
- How might this passage affect your understanding of God, of Jesus, of anything else about the Faith?

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For additional thought and discussion:

- How might phrases such as "appointed heir" (v. 2), "having become better" (v. 4), or "has inherited" (v. 4) be interpreted as indicating changes in the status of the Son?
- What parts of the passage (if any) suggest the eternal unchangeableness of the Son?
- How do you fit these together for a coherent picture of the Son?

For more suggested methods of study: http://www.goodnotsafe.com/methodical-bible-study/ For examples of inductive studies: http://www.goodnotsafe.com/inductive-bible-study-examples-2/

Inductive Bible Study

(A few general ideas)

Interpretation (What does it mean?)

What questions come to mind about the facts that would help you **interpret** the meaning?

- How would the original readers have understood the passage?
- What is the main emphasis?
- Why does the writer use repetition, or contrast, or unusual words?
- What does the grammar or structure of the passage reveal about the writer's thought pattern?
- Is there a logical sequence in the passage?
- How are different ideas in the passage connected?
- Are there any new ideas or concepts presented?
- Are there difficulties in the passage?

Application (What does it mean for me?)

What is the <u>impact</u> on your life? What **application** does the Holy Spirit want to show you?

- Is there a command to obey?
- Is there a promise to be thankful for?
- Is there an attribute of God to worship?
- Is there an example to follow?

the passage that help bring out the writer's thought process?

Observation

(What does it say?) What facts do you observe about

- Who are the people involved?
- What action takes place?
- What type of literature is it (poetry, history, didactic, etc.)?
- What details are included or left out?
- Are any unusual words used?
- Is there symbolic language? What is the grammar of the
 - passage (pronouns, prepositions, verb tenses)?
- Are words or ideas repeated?
- Any comparisons or contrasts?
- Any cause and effect?
- Are there indications of purpose ("in order that...")?
- Are there conclusions ("Therefore...")?
- Are there explanations?
- Does the passage logically break into sections?
- How would you summarize the passage?
- What would be a good "headline" for the passage?

Read nothing into the Scriptures, but draw everything from them, and suffer nothing to remain hidden that is really in them. J.A. Bengel (1687-1752)

For a much more detailed description of the methodology, see Robert A. Traina, Methodical Bible Study. Wilmore, Kentucky: Asbury Theological Seminary, 1952.

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