

The Key to
Living By
Faith

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GOD HAS SPOKEN TO US IN JESUS



God began speaking to Israel through the prophets more than 3000 years ago. He used many different prophets—some who spoke verbally, like Nathan, some who wrote their message, like Malachi, and some who performed miracles, like Elijah. Some combined these methods of giving God’s message. They spoke “in many portions and in many ways.” But “in these last days, God has spoken to us in His Son” (Hebrews 1:1-2).



DAY ONE

If you’ve studied any other letters in the New Inductive Study Series, you probably remember that we start by marking references to the author and recipients to see what we can learn about them, their situation, their motivations, their problems, and the like. Then we try to determine what is going on that caused the author to write the letter, and that leads us to the theme or bottom-line message of the letter.

But Hebrews is different. The author doesn’t identify himself the way a classic Greek letter writer would, nor does he specifically identify his audience. Only by making note of the

key ideas in the letter do you learn that the recipients were steeped in the Old Testament. And the way we note key ideas is by marking key words. So that's how we'll start. Key words repeatedly show us the key ideas and themes as well as the author's emphasis—what is most important or central to his message.

As we read and mark the text, the idea is to investigate the text. So each time you mark something key, ask the 5 W's and an H—who, what, when, where, why, and how. Read with a purpose—to discover what you can from the text. Ask questions like these: How does this sentence relate to the rest of the paragraph? Does this passage include a sequence, a comparison or contrast, or a cause and effect? To whom is the author referring?

Many of the key words and phrases occur throughout Hebrews, so list those on a three-by-five card and mark them the same way you plan to mark them in your Bible. (You can use this card as a bookmark.) Doing this as you go from chapter to chapter will help you mark consistently and save time. Remember, the point is not to fill your Bible with beautiful marks, but to unlock the author's message. Focus on what you learn, not on the way you mark. Your bookmark will not only save you time but also help you think about and process what you've read.

Read Hebrews 1 today, and mark references to *God the Father*, *Jesus*, and *angels*, as well as the word *better*. Put these on your bookmark. Many of us mark *God* with a purple triangle. The triangle reminds us of the Trinity, and purple is often a royal color, so it reminds us that God is the supreme ruler. Some people also shade the inside of the triangle with yellow because God is light. You can decide how you'll mark *God the Father*. Some use a similar symbol when marking *Son*, with the same colors and similar shape, but adding a

cross. Others draw a simple cross in red to remind them of the blood Jesus shed on the cross. Choose your own symbol and/or color you want to use to mark *angels*.

Ask the 5 W's and an H as you go so you can absorb the import of what the writer is communicating.

Another way to increase your understanding of the passage is to mark time phrases. Some people mark them with a clock, and some highlight them with a color. These phrases reveal sequences and show when events occur. Mark time references in Hebrews 1. As we progress through this study, mark them in each chapter.

DAY TWO

Don't forget to begin your study time with prayer. Remember that God is the ultimate Author of the book of Hebrews and that He wants you to understand and live by every word it contains.

Make lists today of what you learn from chapter 1 about God, about the Son, and about angels. Just go through the text one key word at a time, and each time you see a marked word, write what you learn about the person or character. Keep asking the 5 W's and an H. Each item on your lists will answer one of these questions. These lists form the basis of the message about that character. Who is God? What do we learn about His character and His ways? What is the relationship between God and the Son? Between the Son and angels? The lists will show you.