

Hebrews 4:3 – 16

New American Standard Bible 1995

1 ³ For we who have believed enter that rest, just as He has
2 said,
3 “As I swore in My wrath,
4 They shall not enter My rest” [*Psalm 95:11*],
5 although His works were finished from the foundation of
6 the world. ⁴ For He has said somewhere concerning the
7 seventh day: “And God rested on the seventh day from all
8 His works” [*Genesis 2:2*]; ⁵ and again in this passage,
9 “They shall not enter My rest.” [*Psalm 95:11b*] ⁶ Therefore,
10 since it remains for some to enter it, and those who
11 formerly had good news preached to them failed to enter
12 because of disobedience, ⁷ He again fixes a certain day,
13 “Today,” saying through David after so long a time just as
14 has been said before,

15 “Today if you hear His voice,
16 Do not harden your hearts.” [*Psalm 95:7b-8a*]

17 ⁸ For if Joshua had given them rest, He would not have
18 spoken of another day after that. ⁹ So there remains a
19 Sabbath rest for the people of God. ¹⁰ For the one who has
20 entered His rest has himself also rested from his works, as
21 God did from His. ¹¹ Therefore let us be diligent to enter
22 that rest, so that no one will fall, through *following* the
23 same example of disobedience. ¹² For the word of God is
24 living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword,
25 and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of
26 both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and
27 intentions of the heart. ¹³ And there is no creature hidden
28 from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare to the
29 eyes of Him with whom we have to do.

30 ¹⁴ Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has
31 passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us
32 hold fast our confession. ¹⁵ For we do not have a high
33 priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but
34 One who has been tempted in all things as *we are*, yet
35 without sin. ¹⁶ Therefore let us draw near with confidence
36 to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and
37 find grace to help in time of need.

**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?

- Circle repeated words or ideas.
- Put a star by “familiar” verses, verses you have heard often quoted.
- Underline direct commands or exhortations.
- What else do you observe in this passage?

Interpretation (What does it mean?):

After observing the passage:

- How does this passage emphasize the idea of rest from Psalm 95 (Hebrews 3)?
- How does this passage expand on the idea of rest? What does the reference to Genesis add to our understanding?
- How do you understand “rest” from this passage? Present? Future?
- What does Jesus as a high priest (who is “merciful and faithful” - Hebrews 2:17) have to do with believers’ rest?
- How does the context of “rest” affect your understanding of verses that are usually quoted without the context (e.g., v. 12, 15)?
- What other questions does the passage raise?

Application (What does it mean for me?):

- How much do words like “rest” or “tranquility” describe your life?
- What from this passage might help you to “enter that rest”?
- How do you reconcile the ideas of “diligence” and “rest” (v. 11)?
- How might this passage affect your understanding of who God is and what He is doing?

For additional thought and discussion:

- Consider the word “disobedience” (v. 6, 11; also in 3:18; and 11:31 a different context). Each of the references uses the word *apeitheia* (ἀπειθεία) or a related verb form. Past efforts to translate “disobedience” more specifically led to creative new terms, such as “non-persuasive” (Kenneth Wuest) or “unpersuadableness” (John Owen). How would those meanings of the “disobedience” of the Israelites help define the obstacle to their rest?

[cf. Matthew D. Jensen, *Some Unpersuasive Glosses: The Meaning of ἀπειθεία, ἀπειθέω, and ἀπειθής in the New Testament.* *Journal of Biblical Literature* 138, no. 2 (2019), 400-401.]

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)

Observation (What does it say?)

What facts do you **observe** about the passage that help bring out the writer’s thought process?

- 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?

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 impact 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?

**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.