

## Hebrews 4: Questions

### Review of Chapter 3

1. God promised a *rest* for His people who came out of Egypt. Who entered that rest?
2. Who did not enter that rest? Why? Chapter 3:
  - a. Vs. 12 \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. Vs. 13 \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. Vs. 17 \_\_\_\_\_
  - d. Vs. 18 \_\_\_\_\_
  - e. Vs. 19 \_\_\_\_\_

(3:16 – 19)

1. What purpose is served by this series of questions?
  - a. Forces the reader to use his mind and take heed.
2. What is the plain fact (we see) before our eyes? (19)
  - a. They were not able to enter because of \_\_\_\_\_.

### Call for Diligence to Enter the Promised Rest (4:1 – 13)

1. *Historical and Contextual Background with Regard to the Promise of Rest Remaining:*
  - a. In the wilderness after the escape from Egyptian bondage Israel had been promised rest in the land of Canaan (Ex. 33:14; Deut. 3:20; 12:9f.; 25:19; Josh. 1:12 – 15).
  - b. The promise was fulfilled when Israel conquered Canaan under Joshua and received rest in the land (**Josh. 21:44**; 22:4; 23:1)
  - c. But many had fallen in the wilderness and a long time afterward a later generation was warned not be like them (Psa. 95:7 – 11; cf. Num. 14:20 – 23, 28 – 33).
  - d. Now we find the author of Hebrews drawing a warning from Psalm 95 for his readers in Chapter 3 – a warning not to imitate the example of Israel in the wilderness.
  - e. Chapter 3 closes with an assertion of the plain fact that the wilderness generation had not been “able to enter in because of unbelief” (19).
2. *The Rest Remaining for the People of God (4:1 – 13).* Observe two points intertwined in the reasoning of this section:
  - (1) A demonstration of the fact that **a rest remains.**
  - (2) The **conditional** nature of **entrance** into that rest.
    - a. Verse (1) is the connecting link with Chapter 3.
      - b. What is the warning that is drawn from Israel’s experience in the wilderness?**
      - c. What explanation of this warning is given in verse 2?**
      - d. How does the writer support his point that God’s rest was only for believers? (3 a and b, v. 6; Psalm 95 with Heb. 3:16 –19).**

- e. Yet Israel's failure to enter God's rest was not due to the lack of availability (3c). How does the writer prove that point? (4)
  - f. It is becoming clear that the writer's understanding of "rest" involves more than rest in Canaan following the conquest of Israel's enemies. He defines what God meant by his "rest" in Psalm 95 by reference to Genesis 2:2. How is God's rest defined by the coupling of these two passages?
  - g. **Is Rest in Canaan the ultimate "rest" God has in mind for His children?**
  - h. **Since the wilderness generation had failed to enter God's rest, what did God then do a long time afterward? (6 – 7).**
    - i. In other words, what does the writer understand God to be doing in Psalm 95?
  - i. **How does the writer show (in v.8) that God's promise of rest was not exhausted by the entrance into Canaan under Joshua?**
    - i. Note: Follow the author's reasoning on Psalm 95! The psalm warns a later generation not to be like the wilderness Israelites. The threat is that they may fail to enter into rest just as the wilderness generation failed. Hence Psalm 95 is taken to be an urgent call to enter God's rest. Yet Israel was already in Canaan. Therefore the rest spoken of in Psalm 95 is more than Canaan.
  - j. **What conclusion is drawn (in v.9) from the reasoning up to this point?**
  - k. What further explanation of rest is given in verse 10 (cf. **Rev. 14:13**)?
3. *Application: The Call for Diligence (11 – 13).*
- a. **Two points have been established:**
    - i. **(1) A rest remains for whom? \_\_\_\_\_ (v. 9) and**
    - ii. **(2) It is only for the \_\_\_\_\_.**
    - iii. **What is called for, then, in the way of application? (11).**
  - b. **What reason is given for diligence? (12)**
    - i. Observe the relevance of this reference to the word of God. The word of God is being heard today just as Israel heard a word from God (1:1; 2:1-4:4;2), calling upon people to enter into rest (4:1,2,7). And this word is no "dead letter" unable to accomplish anything; never coming to pass; not to be taken seriously (cf. Isa. 55:10f). God's word is living and energetic. When God said the wilderness generation would not enter his rest, they did not enter! His word is not to be taken lightly by unbelief and disobedience.
    - ii. Furthermore, God's word is compared to a sword. It pierces to the inmost nature and being of a person, testing or judging (Grk. *kritikos*) the thoughts and purposes of the heart. Israel's reaction to God's word, for example, had exposed "an evil heart of unbelief" (3:12).
  - c. Further reason for diligence is added in verse 13. What points are made about God?