

Short Answer Series #5

Does a Christian need to keep the Sabbath?

‘And on the seventh day God ended His work which He had made; and He rested on the seventh day.’ Genesis 2v2. In Exodus 20v8-10 the sixth Commandment tells us to ‘Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy. Six days thou shalt labour and do all thy work: But the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God.’ The word Sabbath means rest, and the seventh day is the last day of the week, our Saturday.

In Colossians 2v16-17 Paul says ‘Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the Sabbath days: which are a shadow of things to come,...’ Hebrews 10v1 says ‘For the Law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things...’ A shadow in the Bible represents something which is coming in the future. And the Sabbath day of rest represented the true rest which was to come. Just as the Passover Lamb represented the true Lamb of God, Jesus Christ. Now that the true Lamb has come, we don’t need the shadow any longer. And now that the true rest is here for the Believer, we don’t need the shadow rest (Sabbath keeping), any longer.

In Hebrews 4v9-10 we are told ‘There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God. For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from His.’ The Lord created everything in six days, then He rested the seventh day. Did He begin again the next day?

No! Because He had already finished everything. So He ceased working, and He is still resting. Because the Sabbath was kept in the Law every week, again and again, that shows us that it was merely a shadow. Because, as Paul told us in Hebrews 4 ‘If we had entered into our rest we would have ceased from our own works as God did from His.’ Why did He cease from His works? Because He had finished. It was all over. There was nothing more to do. And we enter into our rest, because we have ceased from our own works. They are finished. It’s all over. There’s nothing more to do. So we rest....Eternally.

In John 5v24 the Lord Jesus said ‘He that heareth My Words, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life.’ He said we ‘have everlasting life’ (now), and we ‘shall not (never) come into condemnation’

(because our sins were judged in Christ at Calvary), and we ‘have passed from death unto life,’ (can never die because we have eternal life now). There is nothing more for us to do. And nothing more for us to gain. No wonder we cease from our own works. Praise God!

In the book of Galatians, Paul was lamenting the Galatians return to keeping the Law after they were made free in Christ. Galatians 4v9-10 ‘But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage? Ye observe days (Sabbaths), and months, and times, and years.’ Galatians 5v1 ‘Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.’

As Paul says in Galatians 2v16 ‘By the works of the Law shall no flesh be justified.’ The Law enslaved those who tried to keep it. Paul admitted that himself in Romans 7v10 ‘And the Commandment which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death.’ The Lord knew that from the start. The Law failed. But, when the Lord Jesus cried ‘It is finished’, on the Cross, everything was done to secure our forgiveness, and righteousness, and salvation, by the grace of God. Romans 10v4 assures us ‘For Christ is the end of the Law for righteousness to everyone that believeth.’ What is our rest? Ephesians 4v30 exhorts us to ‘Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.’ A seal is always put on a finished work. And when you are sealed with the Holy Spirit, it’s over. It’s finished. We enter into His perfect rest for Eternity.