Should Christians Keep the Sabbath?
Scripture: Hebrews 4
Code: BQ021512

For if Joshua had given them rest, He would not have spoken of another day after that. There remains therefore a Sabbath rest for the people of God. For the one who has entered His rest has himself also rested from his works, as God did from His. (Hebrews 4:8–10)

The rest spoken of here is not the physical rest of Canaan. That was only a picture. “For if Joshua had given them rest, He would not have spoken of another day after that.” God’s true rest comes not through a Moses or a Joshua or a David. It comes through Jesus Christ.

God’s rest is not essentially physical at all. Certainly, resting in God and trusting in His promises can relieve us of nervousness, tenseness, and other physical problems. But these are by-products of His rest. Many cults promise their followers happiness, wealth, and health in this life. The Bible does not. The rest God promises is spiritual, not physical. Whatever physical or earthly benefits the Lord may give us, His basic promise is to give us spiritual rest, spiritual blessing. Some of God’s most faithful believers are the busiest, the hardest working, and sometimes even the most afflicted people imaginable. Yet they are in God’s salvation rest.

The term **people of God** may refer generally to anyone who knows God; but here it specifically refers to Israel. Salvation is first of all for Israel. The gospel “is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek” (Rom. 1:16). There is a rest remaining for the people of God, and in the Old Testament Israel is designated the people of God. His spiritual rest is promised first to Israel, and He will not be through with her until she comes into His rest.

God’s **rest** is also future. In his vision on Patmos the apostle John heard these beautiful words from heaven: “ ‘Write, “Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on!”’ ‘Yes,’ says the Spirit, ‘that they may rest from their labors, for their deeds follow with them’ ” (Rev. 14:13). I believe Hebrews 4:10 anticipates that final day when we cease from all effort and all work and enter into the presence of Jesus Christ. It includes the promised rest to Israel, the ultimate rest when she and all of God’s other people will cease from work and rest as God did when He finished His creation. That is the reality of Sabbath rest.

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