

The Evidence Board



Are Christians bound to keep the seventh-day Sabbath — or did that obligation end at the cross?

Both guests received this board a week before the study and filled in their own column. Cells marked † carry that side's standard answer where it was not raised at the table on 3 October 2026. Rows 11 is history, not Scripture, and is marked as such by both sides.

	THE EVIDENCE	THE SEVENTH DAY — POSITION AND SOURCE	THE FIRST DAY — POSITION AND SOURCE
1	Genesis 2:1-3 — before Sinai, before Israel	God rested, blessed and sanctified the seventh day in a world with no Israel, no Moses, no Sinai and no sin. Whatever the seventh day is, the record puts it twenty-five centuries before the Jewish nation. A blessing stands until the verse where God removes it is produced. Genesis 2:1-3	Agreed that God rested, blessed and sanctified the day. But the text contains no command — it records what God did, not what Adam was told to do. From Genesis 3 to Exodus 15 there is no Sabbath command, rebuke or observance through Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob or Joseph. Nehemiah says God made the Sabbath known at Sinai. Genesis 2:1-3; Nehemiah 9:13-14
2	Exodus 20:8-11 — inside the Ten Commandments	Written by the finger of God on stone and placed inside the ark. The only commandment that opens with 'Remember'. The only one that names the Lawgiver, His territory and His title to rule — remove it and the law has no signature. It sits between the third and the fifth; if it is ceremonial, show why its neighbours are not. Exodus 20:8-11; Exodus 31:18; Deuteronomy 10:1-5	The seventh day is the Sabbath of the LORD; no games with the text. But when Moses repeats the commandment he grounds it in the Exodus from Egypt, not in creation. And Paul calls the ministration written and engraven in stones glorious — and done away. Deuteronomy 5:15; 2 Corinthians 3:7-11

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3	Exodus 31:13, 17 — 'a sign between me and Israel'	Ezekiel tells us what the sign signifies: 'that they might know that I am the LORD that sanctify them.' It is a sign of sanctification. If Christ still sanctifies His people, the sign stands. Ezekiel 20:12, 20	The text says 'a sign between me and the children of Israel for ever.' It does not say a sign between God and mankind. A sign God restricted to one nation cannot be extended to all nations without an authority the study has not produced. Exodus 31:13, 17
4	What Jesus did — Luke 4:16; Mark 2:27-28; Matthew 24:20	His custom was the synagogue on the Sabbath. The Sabbath was made for man — the race, not the Jew — and He is Lord of it; a man does not become lord of a thing he means to abolish. Forty years after Calvary He has His disciples praying about the Sabbath. And on the one weekend when everything changed, the women rested 'according to the commandment'. Luke 4:16; Mark 2:27-28; Matthew 24:20; Luke 23:54-56	He kept it because He was made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, and He came to fulfil it. His obedience under that covenant is our salvation, not our schedule. Luke 23:56 is before the resurrection; the new covenant is ratified by the resurrection and Pentecost, not by Friday afternoon. The women's practice that Saturday tells us what they had not yet understood. Galatians 4:4-5; Matthew 5:17; Hebrews 8:13
5	What the apostles did — Acts 13, 16, 17, 18	Antioch: the Gentiles beg to hear more 'the next sabbath' and the record contains no 'come tomorrow instead'. Philippi: Sabbath by a riverside where there was no synagogue at all. Thessalonica: 'as his manner was'. Corinth: every Sabbath for a year and six months — seventy-eight consecutive Sabbaths. Acts 13:14, 42, 44; 16:13; 17:2; 18:4, 11	Paul reasoned with Jews on the Sabbath because that is where the Jews were. 'As his manner was' describes evangelistic method, not a doctrine of obligation. To the Jews he became as a Jew. Acts 17:2; 1 Corinthians 9:20

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6	The eight first-day texts	Five are resurrection reports that record a fact and give no command. John 20:19 is the disciples behind shut doors 'for fear of the Jews'. Acts 20:7 is Saturday night by the Book's own sunset clock, Paul walks out at daybreak, and Acts 2:46 says they broke bread daily. 1 Corinthians 16:2 is 'lay by him in store' — at home, privately, so no collections are needed when Paul arrives. No command, no blessing, no transfer in any of the eight. Matthew 28:1; Mark 16:2, 9; Luke 24:1; John 20:1, 19; Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 16:2	Conceded, and conceded first: no text in the Bible commands Christians to keep Sunday. The first-day position does not claim one. Acts 20:7 and 1 Corinthians 16:2 record first-day gatherings as practice, not precept. We gather on the first day freely, by choice, never by commandment. Concession — no text claimed
7	Colossians 2:16-17	The 'sabbath days' in Paul's list are the ceremonial sabbaths of the feast calendar — Leviticus names seven of them and then says they are 'beside the sabbaths of the LORD'. Those were shadows of things to come, because they were given after sin and pointed to Christ. The weekly Sabbath was given before sin and shadows nothing. † Leviticus 23:24, 32, 37-39; Colossians 2:16-17	Read the structure Paul chose: holyday, new moon, sabbath — year, month, week. He has covered the whole calendar and the weekly Sabbath is the final term. All of it is 'a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ.' And the instruction is 'let no man judge you' — Paul is not assigning a day, he is forbidding a trial over one. Colossians 2:16-17

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8	Romans 14:5-6 and Galatians 4:9-11	Romans 14 is about the weak brother and what he eats; the days in dispute are the fast and feast days of the same chapter, not the law Paul calls holy, just and good and says faith establishes. Galatians 4 is Gentiles taking up 'weak and beggarly elements' as a condition of standing with God — the yoke of Acts 15, not the fourth commandment. † Romans 14:1-3, 14-23; Romans 3:31; 7:12; Galatians 4:9-10	'Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind.' Paul could not write that sentence about murder, theft or adultery. He writes it about days because days are no longer in that category. In Galatians he is not neutral — he is alarmed, and what alarms him is calendar observance taken up as obligation. Romans 14:5-6; Galatians 4:9-11
9	Acts 15 — what the Council required of Gentiles	The answer is in the chapter. James closes his ruling with verse 21: Moses is read in the synagogues every Sabbath day. The four items concern table fellowship and fornication; they were never a catalogue of Christian duty, or the apostles also felt no need to mention idolatry, theft or murder. Nobody argues Gentiles were free to steal because theft is not on the list. Acts 15:20-21, 28-29	The one place in the New Testament where the apostles sit down and list what Gentile Christians are obligated to do. Four items. The Sabbath is not among them. If it was assumed, the study must say why the fourth commandment was assumed and things strangled were spelled out. Acts 15:19-20, 28-29

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10	Hebrews 4 — what 'rest' means	Christ is our rest; agreed. Then explain verse 9. The Spirit chose a word used nowhere else in the New Testament — sabbatismos, a sabbath-keeping — and said it 'remaineth' to the people of God, writing to Christians thirty years after the cross. Why that word, why there, and why 'remains' if it does not? Hebrews 4:9	Read the chapter the verse sits in. Verse 3: we which have believed do enter into rest — present tense, by believing. Verse 7: God limits a certain day, saying 'Today'. Verse 10: he that is entered into his rest hath ceased from his own works. The rest is not a square on a calendar; it is ceasing from your own works in the finished work of Christ, entered today. 'Come unto me... and I will give you rest' — not a day; rest. Hebrews 4:1-10; Matthew 11:28
11	The early church, AD 70-400	Justin Martyr, about AD 155, describes Christians assembling on Sunday. That is real and early, and it is conceded. But the Council of Laodicea, about AD 363, canon 29, forbids Christians to rest on the Sabbath and orders them to work on it. Nobody forbids a thing nobody is doing: three centuries after Calvary, Christians were still resting on the seventh day and had to be legislated out of it. And one religious body claims the change as its own doing, in its own catechism. Justin Martyr, First Apology 67; Council of Laodicea, canon 29; Convert's Catechism of Catholic Doctrine, p. 50 — history, not Scripture	The church gathered on the first day from the beginning, long before any emperor or pope. The Didache: gather on the Lord's day. Ignatius, about AD 110: no longer sabbatizing but living according to the Lord's day. Barnabas: the eighth day kept with gladness. Pliny to Trajan, about AD 112: Christians meeting on a fixed day before dawn. Justin, about AD 155: on the day called Sunday all assemble. Every one earlier than Constantine (321) and Laodicea (c. 363), some by two centuries. And the most cited seventh-day scholar on this question dated Sunday worship to about AD 135, differing from his own community's prophet. Didache 14; Ignatius, Magnesians 9; Epistle of Barnabas 15; Pliny, Letters 10.96; Justin Martyr, First Apology 67 — history, not Scripture

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12	Isaiah 66:22-23 — the new earth	In the new heavens and the new earth, 'from one sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the LORD.' The Sabbath begins in a sinless world and runs through the new earth. The only part in dispute is the middle. Isaiah 66:22-23	The same verse says 'from one new moon to another'. If the Sabbath is binding on Christians because it appears in this verse, so is the new moon. Isaiah describes perpetual worship in the calendar language of Israel, which is what a Hebrew prophet would use; the verse is about the constancy of worship, not the obligation of a day. [†] Isaiah 66:23