

## Colossians 2:14-17 and Romans 14:5, 6 Explained

### Does Colossians 2:14-17 say that the seventh-day Sabbath was nailed to the Cross?

Because the Bible speaks of two laws—the Ten Commandments and the ceremonial sacrificial law—some misunderstand which law was nailed to the cross according to Colossians 2:14-17. The Bible says:

- This law was, “the handwriting of requirements that was against us” (Colossians 2:14). This can’t be the Ten Commandments because they were written by God’s finger and not a man’s hand.
- “The handwriting of requirements that was against us” was the ceremonial laws written by Moses and put “beside the ark of the covenant ... as a witness against” Israel (Deuteronomy 31:24-26). The Ten Commandments were written on stone and were in the ark. The ceremonial laws are against us because they “cannot make him who performed the service perfect” (Hebrews 9:9).
- The laws that were a “shadow of things to come” and that included “food ... drink ... festival ... new moon or sabbaths” were the ceremonial laws written by Moses and not the Ten Commandments. “For the law, having a shadow of the good things to come ... can never with these same sacrifices ... make those who approach perfect” (Hebrews 10:1). This law “concerned only with foods and drinks, various washings, and fleshly ordinances imposed until the time of reformation” when Jesus became the sacrifice (Hebrews 9:10).
- The “sabbaths” (plural) were annual sabbaths that fell on the same DATE each year (similar to Christmas is on December 25 every year no matter which day of the week it is), and were not the weekly Sabbath of the fourth commandment (which always is on the seventh day, Saturday). Passover was an annual Sabbath that was a “shadow of things to come,” which was “Christ, our Passover” (1 Corinthians 5:7). Jesus’ death fulfilled the Passover and we no longer observe its annual sabbath.
- Some early Jewish Christians required Gentile converts to keep the ceremonial laws and circumcision for salvation (Acts 15:5). While circumcision and the ceremonial laws are unnecessary, we do need to obey God’s law. “Circumcision is nothing and uncircumcision is nothing, but keeping the commandments of God is what matters” (1 Corinthians 7:19).

### Does Paul say it doesn’t matter which day we keep as the Sabbath? Romans 14:5, 6.

Paul never mentions the Sabbath in Romans 14. The Bible would contradict itself if Paul told the Romans they didn’t need to keep the Sabbath, and then he kept it and taught other Gentiles to keep it (read Acts 13:42-44; 16:13; 17:2; 18:4). Obviously, the Bible is not contradictory. So what is Paul talking about?

- In the early church, Jewish and Gentile Christians debated whether Gentile converts must observe the Jewish festivals and be circumcised or eat the meat of animals sacrificed to idols (Acts 15:1; 1 Corinthians 8:7–13; Romans 14:1-5).
- Because these issues did not involve the Ten Commandments, Paul said the church’s first responsibility is to maintain unity.
- Paul clearly taught we need to keep the Ten Commandments and not the ceremonial law. “Circumcision is nothing and uncircumcision is nothing, but keeping the commandments of God is what matters” (1 Corinthians 7:19).