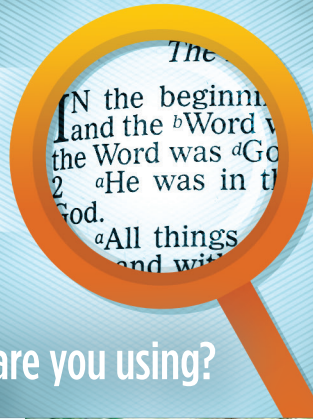


BIBLE



OPTICS

What lens are you using?

The WORD or the world?

This issue:

What Day Should I Worship On?

A Masterpiece for Eternity

Q&A – Isn't Sunday the Lord's Day?

Q&A – Doesn't Acts 20...?

A Sacred Sign



Candice and Tony Scarpino with their three children.

From the Pastor

The Sabbath.

The seventh-day of the week.

A day for worship, rest and family.

A gift for all our relationships.

Prophetically and theologically important.

The Lord's day.

God's signature on Creation. And us.

According to the Bible, the Sabbath is all this and more.

What is it to you? Have you chosen to follow God and make the Sabbath the highlight of every week? If not, I invite you to choose today to make Sabbath observance a part of each week. Find your local Seventh-day Adventist church and join in the fellowship and learning that happens at church each Sabbath. I know you'll be blessed.



Nelson Mercado | Pastor
Nashville First Seventh-day Adventist Church

What Day Should I Worship On?

Saturday was simply a day for doing chores around the house and mowing the lawn. On Sundays, Candice and her husband would often take their three children to church, then out for lunch before rushing home to finish homework, make school lunches and try to get to bed early. "I was always exhausted," she says, "There was never any time to rest."

Going to church on Sunday had always been part of Candice's life. But for some reason, in 2004, Sunday attendance was getting tiring.

"What if there was another day we could go to church?" she wondered. At that moment a thought popped into her head, "What about going to church on Saturday?" "What a great idea!" she exclaimed.

Her husband Tony was a traveling salesman at the time. Their marriage of 16 years had reached yet another patch of rough waters. He was hardly home; and they seldom attended church anymore. But Candice never gave up her faith. As the weekends came and went, she started noticing that attending church on Sunday was impractical.



Thus began her search through the phonebook. Starting at A, Candice called every church listed and asked, “Do you have Saturday services?” Their reply, “Sorry ma’am only Saturday evening.” She gave up around the letter M.

Besides this new idea, she had questions regarding Bible prophecy—especially Daniel and Revelation. She had a feeling the two were connected but didn’t know why.

Around six months after looking through the phone book, a flyer from a local Seventh-day Adventist church arrived in her mailbox. It pictured beasts from Daniel and Revelation and immediately caught her attention.

When the week of the series arrived, Candice suddenly came down with a low fever and cold. “I fought with myself whether or not to go...” she remembers, “but something inside me was pressing that I needed to go. So, despite my aching head, I went—completely unaware the church worshiped on Saturdays.”

The church was presenting the Most Amazing Prophecies series by Amazing Facts. “The information shocked me!” Candice says. “I had never heard the Bible explained so simply in my entire life. Daniel and Revelation were connected, and God led me to the right people who could explain it for me!”

Unable to keep attending due to her sickness, Candice continued watching the series online. Finally, on the seventh episode, she learned about the seventh-day Sabbath.

“The wonderful idea I had about Saturday church attendance—it was the Holy Spirit!” Candice smiles. “Sabbath wasn’t Sunday, it was Saturday. Plus, people from around the world have already been keeping it—for centuries! This was the Lord’s true day of rest, and He had led me to it! I knelt in my bedroom and re-committed my life to Jesus at that very moment. I felt so seen by Him—so loved! He had led me to His truth.”

Candice and her three children began to keep Sabbath on their own. Tony, however, wasn’t very accepting about this “Sabbath” idea and their marriage worsened. But her renewed love and fire for Jesus motivated Candice to pray for Tony to see the truth.

After around three months, Candice and the kids began attending the local Seventh Day Adventist church. When she shared her story with one of the church members, the Holy Spirit impressed them to ask Candice if she’d like to be baptized. Overjoyed, she couldn’t refuse.

Tony attended Candice’s baptism, but “I stood at the front with my arms folded the whole time—I wanted to show my disdain,” he says, “It wasn’t just my wife who had bought into this, but all three of my kids too.”

Not long after, however, Candice’s prayers were answered. “After I returned home from one of my business trips, my eight-year-old daughter Sara, came to me carrying a bowl with warm water and a towel saying, ‘Daddy, I want to wash your feet’”.

“I had fallen away from the Lord, schmoozing clients on the road,” Tony remembers. “This was not a moment I wanted to be a part of, especially since I hate having my feet touched. She was so sincere... as I let her wash my feet, the Lord began to work on my heart.”

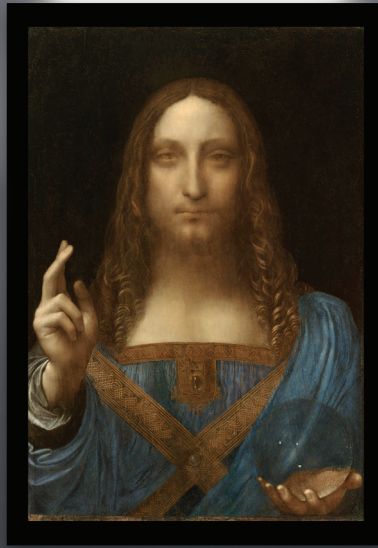
Flying home from yet another trip, Tony finally met the truth. He says, “I was reading in Luke 23, when the women who had followed Jesus were hurrying to prepare His body for burial before the Sabbath hours. It finally hit me. Saturday was Sabbath. On top of that, I realized that even when I worshiped on Sunday, I never honored the Lord. Going to church was just a part of my activities... not an act of worship itself.”

When Candice picked Tony up from the airport, he told her the news. Overjoyed, she almost couldn’t believe it! His heart and his eyes had been opened. God had used His true Sabbath to redeem them. Their marriage didn’t become perfect overnight, but it was the beginning of healing for them, and a whole new life for their family.

This is my family’s testimony on how the Lord led us to His true Sabbath. I’m Sara, the daughter who washed my dad’s feet. If you are still wondering if the Sabbath is for real, let me assure you that it is. Even if it doesn’t make sense now, at the right time, it will. Keep trusting His Word!

By: Sara Scarpino

A Masterpiece for Eternity



Leonardo Da Vinci's greatest work, *Salvator Mundi* (Savior of the World) is thought to be worth \$475 million USD. However, the artwork is considered priceless because no one has plans to sell it. It's so magnificent that there cannot be a price tag on it.

This Renaissance painting dates to 1499-1510. Leonardo Da Vinci tried his best to capture the priestly and royal attributes of Christ. He is robed in blue, His right hand is seen making the priestly gesture of benediction: a right hand raised with the ring finger and little finger turned down against the palm, and the thumb, index and middle fingers elevated. The left hand holds a crystal orb, to represent Christ's creative power and omniscience.

The painting's great value comes from the name of the artist who painted it, as well as its rarity, longevity, and beauty. Yet reproductions of *Salvator Mundi* can be found on the internet for less than \$20; you might even find one at the gift shop in a museum. Why are they so cheap? Because they are copies of the original work. Their worth is small because they do not have the authenticity of the original painting.

God's Original Masterpiece: The Sabbath

God created a masterpiece when He created the world in six days. The signature of that masterpiece was the seventh-day Sabbath. The Sabbath tells the world that the creation is a priceless piece of art from the original Artist. But instead of cherishing the seventh-day Sabbath as the authenticator of God's creation, most of Christendom has settled for a cheap reproduction.

Not only is the seventh day Sabbath the signature of God's creation, but it is His signature on His people. In Exodus 31:13 it says, "speak also to the children of Israel, saying: Surely My Sabbaths you shall keep for it is a sign between Me and you throughout your generations, that you may know that I am the LORD who sanctifies you".

The day on which we worship matters. Yet, most believe that we can settle for the museum reproduction of the seventh-day Sabbath. How do we know that Sunday is not the authentic Sabbath? Its inauthenticity is evident both historically and theologically.

Verifying the Masterpiece's Authenticity

In the art world, examiners closely examine a piece of art to verify its authenticity. The Bible has provided us with tools to verify the authenticity of the seventh-day Sabbath.

- Sabbath was hallowed by God at the end of creation (Genesis 2:2,3) as a memorial of God's handiwork.
- God wrote the Sabbath commandment in stone at Mount Sinai (Exodus 20:8-11)
- Jesus, the Son of God, kept the Sabbath and often taught about how to keep it (Mark 2:27,28, Mark 2:24-28, Luke 14:1-6, Matthew 12:9-14). Art examiners would not need to exist if the artist walked into a room, pointed at the painting, and said, "this is my work". This is exactly what Jesus did in Mark 2:28. The Artist acknowledged His own work.
- The early church observed the Sabbath (Acts 17:2; 13:4).

The Sabbath's Significance Today

The Sabbath is God's signature on both His creation and His people. This sign, or seal as it is sometimes called in the Bible, will play a crucial role in the end times. Those who follow God completely will be sealed through the indwelling Holy Spirit (2 Corinthians 2:1:21-21; Ephesians 1:13-14). They will give evidence of their loyalty to God by keeping all His commandments, especially the Sabbath commandment. Why especially the Sabbath commandment? Because it contains God's seal – it is the only commandment that tells who the laws are given by ("the Lord your God"); the reason for His authority (He is the Creator); and His jurisdiction ("the heavens and the earth, the sea and all that is in them").



God's mark and authority has been placed on the Sabbath. Yet it has been changed throughout history. The Sabbath is the only part of the Ten Commandments that is not currently widely accepted. And it will be the point of contention in the last days. This crisis will rise when symbolic Babylon prevails at enforcing Sunday observance by civil law and seeks to punish those that oppose it (Revelation 13:12-17).

The devil hates the fact that there are those who wish to keep the entirety of the law. In Revelation 12:17 it says, "And the dragon was enraged with the woman and he went to make war with the rest of her offspring, who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ". The saints in the last days will keep the full law of God, and it will seal us for God (Revelation 7:3).

God's Signature on You

The Sabbath is a priceless and beautiful masterpiece, with the signature of God on it. But did you know that God considers you His masterpiece as well? Ephesians 2:10 says, "For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago" (NLT). If you are God's masterpiece, then you also need His signature.

Isaiah 58:1,13,14 says, "Cry aloud, spare not; lift up your voice like a trumpet; tell My people their transgression. ... If you turn away your foot from the Sabbath, from doing your pleasure on My holy day, and call the Sabbath a delight ... then you shall delight yourself in the Lord". Today, God is calling us to remember the importance and sanctity of the Sabbath.

**THE DEVIL HATES THE
FACT THAT THERE
ARE THOSE WHO
WISH TO KEEP THE
ENTIRETY OF
THE LAW.**

When we do, He will place His last-day seal upon us. He will write His signature in our lives. Then, when the time comes to separate the authentic masterpieces from the photocopied versions, it will be clear who has God's signature.

Won't you allow the truth of God to reveal to you the beauty of His masterpiece? Invite the Holy Spirit to live in you and keep all His commandments, not out of begrudging necessity, but because you love Him and want to be His masterpiece.

Note: For an in-depth study on the Sabbath as God's last day seal upon His people, please see this excellent article by [Dr. Erwin Gane "The Sabbath ~ and Salvation"](#).

By: Elijah Ramjattan

Bible Q&A

Isn't Sunday the Lord's Day?

In Revelation 1:10 John says, "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day." Due to the manmade tradition of attending church on the day of Christ's resurrection, many believe this to be a reference to Sunday. This poses a problem because the Bible does not even hint at Sunday sacredness anywhere.

The only day that God claims as His is the seventh-day Sabbath, calling it "My holy day" (Isa. 58:13). Jesus stated plainly, "The Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath" (Matt. 12:8).

So, no. Sunday is not the Lord's day. Sabbath, also known as Saturday, is His day.

Question 2: Doesn't Acts 20:7-12 Prove that We Should Worship on Sunday Instead of Saturday?

This passage describes a special meeting held "on the first day of the week" in which the "disciples came together to break bread" (v. 7). Because Paul planned to depart the next day, He spoke to them until daybreak (vv. 7, 11). At midnight, a young man named Eutychus drifted off to sleep and fell to his death from a third-story window (vv. 7, 9). It's probable that the only reason this meeting was recorded is that Eutychus was miraculously resurrected by Paul (v. 10).

Some believe that "break bread" here refers to celebrating the Lord's Supper (1 Cor. 10:16). They claim that because this was done on the first day of the week it proves that the seventh-day Sabbath was no longer in effect at this point. The problem with that logic is that the Bible nowhere restricts holding religious assemblies or celebrating the Lord's Supper to Sabbath alone. These gatherings could take place on other days if there was a need. Therefore, this Sunday meeting is not an indication that the Sabbath was changed to Sunday.



TELL US WHAT YOU THINK!

Loving Bible Optics? Or not so sure? We'd love to hear your thoughts about it. Please stop by www.godled.org/bible-optics-survey and take our five minute survey today. Thank you!

A Sacred Sign *Part 2*

With blood and sweat trickling down His face and His life draining out of Him, Jesus cried, “It is finished!” (John 19:30). He had lived a perfect life, never wavering once from His Father’s will. His sacrifice was flawless, He was the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world (John 1:29). Just like “in the beginning,” (Gen. 1:1; 2:2) Jesus finished His work on the sixth day. Again, He “rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done” (Gen. 2:2), this time in a stone tomb. The Creator Himself honored the sign of creation in His death.

The weekly Sabbath is God’s divinely ordained sign that keeps fresh in our minds what Jesus has done for us. It also points to our beautiful future with Him. This month we continue to explore the history of God’s sacred sign from the cross to the present day.

Sabbath After Christ’s Death

Jesus’ death did not alter the Sabbath commandment. The disciples even halted burial preparations of the Savior’s body to rest on the Sabbath day (Luke 23:56). Christ, and Paul after Him, recognized the seventh-day Sabbath as a special day of worship by attending the synagogue each week (Luke 4:16; Acts 17:2).

Paul later made it clear that Christians were not required to keep the ceremonial sabbaths of the Jews, yet it was his custom to worship and teach on the weekly Sabbath (Col. 2:16, 7; Gal. 4:10, 11; Acts 17:2). At one point, the Gentiles requested that Paul preach to them on the Sabbath (Acts 13:42, 44). On another occasion, Paul and those traveling with him gathered to worship by a river on the Sabbath

(Acts 16:13). We can safely assume that all early Christians honored the Sabbath just as they did the other nine commandments (Rom. 3:31). Nowhere does Scripture indicate that the Sabbath, or how it is observed, has ever been changed. Jesus was clear about the permanence of God’s commandments (Matt. 5:17–19).

Compromise

Though the apostolic church started strong, it wasn’t long before compromise began creeping in. During Paul’s day, “the mystery of lawlessness” (2 Thess. 2:7) was already at work. Over time Christians began observing Sunday as a day of worship in addition to the Sabbath. Due to strong anti-Jewish sentiment in Rome, the Christians desired to distance themselves from the Jews. Without biblical evidence, some eventually began to teach that Christ had changed the Sabbath to Sunday in honor of His resurrection.

The veneration of Sunday by Rome also influenced the church. Emperor Constantine decreed the first Sunday law in AD 321 commanding people to rest on the first day of the week. In AD 364, the Roman Catholic church issued a Sunday law instructing Christians to work on Saturday. The true Sabbath was forgotten by the masses as Christianity became popular and was flooded with pagan “converts.”

Sabbath in the Dark Ages

God knew that an attempt would be made to change the Sabbath commandment and laid out the details in Scripture. Daniel prophesied that the little horn

NEXT ISSUE: THE THREE ANGELS’ MESSAGES!

REVELATION 14 DEPICTS THREE ANGELS WHO CARRY THE EVERLASTING GOSPEL TO ALL THE WORLD AND GIVE WARNINGS OF TERRIBLE DOOM AT THE END OF TIME. WHAT DO THEIR MESSAGES MEAN? AND ARE THEY IMPORTANT FOR US? FIND OUT IN THE OCTOBER ISSUE OF BIBLE OPTICS.

would “think to change times and laws” (Dan. 7:25 KJV). Only one power fits the identifiers of the little horn from the seventh chapter of Daniel. The Roman Catholic church came to power in AD 538 with the backing of Emperor Justinian and attempted to force its corrupt religion upon the world. Despite awful persecution during the 1260 years of papal supremacy, there was always a remnant that kept the true Sabbath.

Among the faithful Sabbath-keepers were the Waldenses of the Alps. “Through ages of darkness and apostasy there were Waldenses who denied the supremacy of Rome, who rejected image worship as idolatry, and who kept the true Sabbath (Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 65).

Many Roman Catholic authorities have admitted to the church’s change of the Sabbath from the seventh to the first day of the week. Here is one example from a series of questions on page 50 in the 1977 edition of *The Convert’s Catechism of Catholic Doctrine*:

Q. Which is the Sabbath day?

A. Saturday is the Sabbath day.

Q. Why do we observe Sunday instead of Saturday?

A. We observe Sunday instead of Saturday because the Catholic Church transferred the solemnity from Saturday to Sunday.

The Advent Movement

After the Great Disappointment of 1844, many Advent believers became convinced that the fourth commandment was still binding. They had been ignorantly breaking the law of God and now desired to correct their mistake. In obedience to the light received, they began keeping the seventh-day Sabbath.

“Christ had opened the door, or ministration, of the most holy place, light was shining from that open door of the sanctuary in heaven, and the fourth commandment was shown to be included in the law which is there enshrined; what God had established, no man could overthrow” (Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 435). While facing fierce opposition, the pioneers of the Seventh-day Adventist church stood their ground in defending the Sabbath truth. Their “educated” opponents could not controvert straightforward reasoning from the Scriptures.

Repairers of the Breach

God has entrusted the Seventh-day Adventist church with a special message for our Christian brothers and sisters of other denominations (Isa. 58:1, 2). We are told that “those from among you shall build the old waste places; you shall raise up the foundations of many generations; and you shall be called the Repairer of the Breach, The Restorer of Streets to Dwell In. If you turn away your foot from the Sabbath, from doing your pleasure on My holy day, and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy day of the LORD honorable, and shall honor Him, not doing your own ways, nor finding your own pleasure, nor speaking your own words, then you shall delight yourself in the LORD” (Isa. 58:12–14).

The breach made in God’s law by the little-horn power is to be repaired. We are to preach the everlasting gospel, directing all to worship the Creator, “Him who made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water” (Rev. 14:6, 7). Just as Jesus did, this message magnifies God’s law and brings the Sabbath commandment into sharp focus. All the world will soon have to decide whether they will keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus or receive the mark of the beast (Rev. 14:9, 12). Are you prepared to honor the Creator and His sacred sign?

By: John Cloud



Nelson Mercado
Pastor

Our goal is to help you grow in your understanding of key Bible teachings, gain a Biblical perspective on what is happening in our world today, and find tools to share your faith more effectively.

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