



7 | 5 Things about the Seventh Day Adventist



Some of the more noticeable traits in this group. See Section II.

And he said unto them, Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition. Mark 7:9

The Seventh-Day Adventist Church was formally organized on May 21, 1863 and now numbers around 20 million worldwide. Sadly, there simply is no other system which has taught salvation by works while, at the same time, enjoying recognition as being evangelical than Adventism. It is evangelicalism's Trojan Horse. Our hearts mourn for its dear followers who are in the grip of the writings of Ellen White.

1.) Understand the History of Seventh Day Adventism (SDA)

a. Adventism's millennial backdrop. To understand Adventism one must understand the era out of which it arose. As with Mormonism, Watchtower, Christian Science, and other American sects, Adventism arose in the middle of the 19th century in an era of rampant millennial speculation. It is an apocalyptic movement which was initially rooted in the miscalculations of one William Miller, a Baptist minister who loved the Lord and later recanted his prophetic view. Using allegorical interpretation, Miller misunderstood the prophecy of Daniel 8:11-19, a literal 2,300 day prophecy that related to the coming of Antiochus Epiphanies and the cleansing of the temple in Jerusalem. Miller understood each day as one thousand years, and, counting forward, mistakenly dated the return of Christ at October 22, 1844. After the failure of Christ to return a new date was set, and it too failed. The sixteen year old Ellen White went through this disappointment along with Miller's followers.

On the morning of October 23, Hiram Edson, a Methodist Millerite was walking with friends through the cornfield (to avoid ridicule over the disappointment) and there claimed to have a vision from God. In Edson's words:

“We started, and while passing through a large field I was stopped about midway of the field. Heaven seemed opened to my view, and I saw distinctly and clearly that instead of our High Priest coming out of the Most Holy of the heavenly sanctuary to come to this earth on the tenth day of the seventh month, at the end of the 2300 days, He for the first time entered on that day the second apartment of that sanctuary; and that He had a work to perform in the Most Holy Place before coming to the earth.”¹

Christ had, indeed returned as scheduled, to the *heavenly sanctuary* where He began the work of Investigative Judgment. (See #3).

b. Adventism’s eclectic roots. Understand that during this era of millennial fascination there were many small Bible study groups that were mixing literal and allegorical interpretation in a variety of ways. The small Millerite group soon found itself in a *mix* of other “Bible students” who were importing some other views as well. There is no way to predict what Adventism might have emerged into were it not for the influence of young Ellen White. The Methodist George Storrs (along with Charles Taze Russell) would introduce soul sleep and annihilation of the wicked while Joseph Bates would infuse sabbatarianism into the movement². This list of contributing personalities goes on. Ellen White, however, emerged as the movement’s prophetic light, and through her teachings, melded Adventism into what it is today - a unique blend of doctrines which arose out of the early eclectic years along with a very heavy dose of her own views. Because Adventism has so many eclectic roots, it is more fragmented

Note: Though not treated here, a great deal of recent research has gone into examining the prolific writings of Ellen White and, in this writer’s mind, there is little room to dispute the multiple charges of blatant plagiarism (called “borrowing” by Adventists) which have been laid at her feet. Students of SDA should do a serious investigation in this area.

**Understand
the Process:**

1.) *When one gives up literal interpretation and mixes it with allegorical interpretation there are no limits or controls that can be placed on one's conclusions. Fleshly wisdom is now exalted.*

2.) *As Augustine learned, once this leaven is introduced, we must set artificial fences around what we believe. For Augustine, it was the "rule of faith," or tradition. For other groups, additional writings are required to buttress the original interpreter's belief.*

3.) *Adventism's mix of literal and allegorical interpretation is fenced in by the beliefs and revelations of Ellen White, their lesser light. Sadly, the lesser revelations from White have contradicted the only true revelation, the Bible.*

4.) *As with other allegorical interpreters, Adventism has adopted replacement theology and sees itself as the Remnant Church into which one must be baptized. Though this belief is couched, Adventists believe they are spiritual Israel and Christ's church on earth.*

than cohesive and therefore, more difficult to confront³. All Adventists however, *must* believe in the doctrine of Investigative Judgment to be Adventist and must attest to the spiritual authority of Ellen White.

2.) Understand Adventism's Low View of Scriptures and of God

A. Extra Biblical Revelations. There can be no SDA without Ellen G. White (1827-1915) their founder, prophetess, and spiritual leader. As with all organizations under the influence of multiple authorities, the writings and prophecies of Ellen White serve to interpret and supplant the Word of God. While no Adventist would openly challenge the authority of the Bible, Adventists insist that:

"Little heed is given to the Bible, and the Lord has given a lesser light to lead men and women to the greater light (RH January 20, 1903, 3SM, 30)⁴." In the words of Adventism:

"Sister White is not the originator of these books. They contain the instruction that during her life-work God has been giving her. They contain the precious, comforting light that God has graciously given his servant to be given to the world. From their pages this light is to shine into the hearts of men and women, leading them to the Saviour. The Lord has declared that these books are to be scattered throughout the world. There is in them truth which to the receiver is a savor of life unto life. They are silent witnesses for God. In the past they have been the means in his hands of convicting and converting many souls. Many have read them with eager expectation, and, by reading them, have been led to see the efficacy of Christ's atonement, and to trust in its power. They have been led to commit the keeping

of their souls to their Creator, waiting and hoping for the coming of the Saviour to take his loved ones to their eternal home. In the future, these books are to make the gospel plain to many others, revealing to them the way of salvation.⁴”

This clearly puts Ellen White’s teachings on the same level as the Word of God and places her and her followers under the dire warnings of the Bible concerning any who would add to or take away from the scriptures.

The SDA claim that the Bible is their final authority, but in addition they cling tightly to the visions of Ellen White, which are believed to be divine revelations from God which must be obeyed. Ellen White wrote a book called The Great Controversy which holds her many beliefs and is referred to by her followers as “one of our standard books.” Both the Scriptures and Ellen White’s publications are believed to be inspired by God. Consequently, Seventh-day Adventist claim to adhere to Ellen White’s writings just as carefully as they hold to the teachings of God’s Word. In practice, however, they do not.

B. The highly perverted Clear Word Bible. When originally published, this work was called a Bible. It has since been proclaimed as Adventism’s “beloved paraphrase.” This Bible is full of additions and deletions from God’s Word for which there is no other justification than that SDA’s believe what they have added is true. Conveniently these alterations typically relate to unique Adventist doctrines (see a classic example in Daniel 8:14). The Clear Word Bible is singularly,

As an aside, note the progressive fruits of allegorical interpretation.

1.) *Allegorical Interpretation, followed consistently, always ends with Replacement Theology.*

2.) *Replacement Theology inevitably leads to group claims of temporal authority.*

3.) *Claims of temporal authority result in establishing a temporal priesthood unique to that group.*

4.) *Claims to a temporal priesthood close off the way of salvation to any who do not submit to it. (Matthew 23:13).*

the most perverse effort to intentionally manipulate the scriptures since Watchtower's New World Translation. This utter disrespect for the Word of God should be sufficient to turn any Adventist away from this sect. Thankfully, Adventism is tacitly, but officially warning about the need for Bible students to rely on the Greek and Hebrew, though they have not rejected the CWB by any stretch⁵.

C. The Adventist View of God. Adventists have begun using the term trinity in recent years, though White avoided its use entirely and early Adventists were absolutely anti-trinitarian. Contemporary Adventists still do *not* believe in the Orthodox view of the trinity, though their terminology clearly shows they do not want to make it an issue⁶. Ellen clearly taught that Christ was not the Almighty God (in spite of Revelation 1:8). Further, Adventism (like Watchtower) teaches that Jesus Christ is Michael the Archangel⁷. They also believe He gave up His omnipresence when He became a man (an impossibility). All of these claims erode the doctrine of the trinity. Because Adventist views are not solidified on this issue one must deal with each Adventist on his own terms. Keep in mind that any departure from the true knowledge of God cascades into additional errors! For example, in this case, Adventist history has been plagued with pantheists and other heretical views as a result of this departure⁸. Some claim that the SDA has modified its anti-trinitarian view, but such an acknowledgment is tantamount to denying Ellen White, James White, Bates, and other founding Adventists.

3.) Understand the Adventist Doctrine of Investigative Judgment

The heart and soul of all Adventist error may be found in their sanctuary theory as noted earlier. Adventists may claim to believe in the doctrine of justification by faith, but their belief in this doctrine clearly contradicts it. The late cult expert Walter Martin was, for a time, deceived by Adventists in this respect, but upon further investigation, rejected this destructive heresy⁹.

The following is a good summary of Investigative Judgment from Lavonne Labrier-Kinsley, a former student:

“This unbiblical doctrine originated on Oct. 22, 1844 when Christ had failed to return for the believers as Adventists had predicted. The investigative judgment is explained by Ellen White to be an act in which God opens the book of life and looks at the lives of every believer at death. He blots out the name of any person that has unrepented and unforgiven sin and erases every good deed that person performed from the records. Only those who have sincerely repented of their sin, believed on Christ’s atonement, and followed God’s law will be pardoned and worthy of everlasting life.

This view places conditions upon salvation, making salvation a “faith plus works” based system which is contrary to the Scriptures (Eph. 2:8-9, Titus 3:5). SDA claim that a believer’s sins are forgiven, yet his sin record is not blotted out until the Judgment. According to God’s Word, believers will be judged to determine their rewards, but not judged with respect to their salvation as the Seventh-Day Adventist believes (2 Cor. 5:10). Seventh-Day Adventists do not believe that they can be eternally certain of their salvation, since they can lose their salvation through sinning. God’s Word assures us that if we believe in Jesus Christ as Savior we will have everlasting life and will not come into judgment (Jn. 5:24, Jn. 10:28).”¹⁰

4.) Understand Sabbath-Keeping and Soul Sleep

Sabbath keeping. Sabbath keeping is Adventism's most well known doctrine and the means by which it distinguishes itself. While no serious Bible student believes the Pope changed the sabbath (a Adventists claim) it is also true that our issue with Adventism is not over this *practice* per se (Colossians 2:16). The problem is that Adventists see this as a mark of one's salvation and condemn all who *knowingly* reject this as being under the mark of the beast and slated for irrevocable annihilation.

It is important to understand that sabbath keeping is merely the tip of the Adventist legalistic iceberg. The entire doctrine is based on the idea that salvation comes to those who keep the commandments of God - with the fourth commandment being the most important to "remember." This leads, in turn, to a cascade of other errors and places Adventists squarely in a dilemma. The very verses which are relied upon to support sabbath keeping, must be used consistently to apply to any and all of God's laws. Yet, the Bible tells us that to offend in any one of God's laws is to be guilty of all (James 2:10). To be consistent Adventists reasoning must conclude that no man can be saved because no man has kept the whole law. The purpose of the law was to bring men to repentance and show them the very fact that they cannot keep it (1 Timothy 1:9). The works of the law must never be added to salvation. Romans 3:20 says "Therefore by

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the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.” See also Galatians 3:1-3. While Adventists claim to be out from under the law, they pick and choose which Old Testament commandments must be obeyed. None of them keep the Sabbath in the manner required in the Old Testament. In SDA thought, if the law of God was perfect in the Old Testament, it is perfect and binding now.

The above legalistic issue obscures the underlying Adventist tragedy. No consistent adventist can know that he has eternal life, because like the Arminian, he does not know if he has done enough and like the Calvinist, he does not know if he will persevere until the end.

Soul Sleep. Sleep is a euphemism for death in the Bible. As a result of the doctrine of investigative judgment Adventists were forced to rethink their idea of the soul¹¹. In Adventist thinking, the soul is *not* eternal and dies with the body. Adventists use Numbers 19:18 and Ecclesiastes 9:5 to support the view that the soul does not exist apart from the human body. They teach the soul will be recreated at the resurrection.

The Bible states that the soul exists apart from the body (Matthew 10:28, Luke 16:19-31, 2 Corinthians 5:1-8, and Philippians 1:23). Understand that, according to SDA thinking, a believer does not have eternal life *until* His body is raised from the dead. The Bible says we can know that we have eternal life, right here and now and

**As with all systems which rely on multiple authorities, Adventism rests in the wisdom of its leaders instead of the scriptures. An example of this may be found in the doctrine of the annihilation of the wicked, (the conclusion of their existence) at the final judgment. According to Adventists, it is unreasonable to think that a God of love would send men to eternal torment.*

This rational assumption then leads Adventists to deny the literal-ity of such passages as Luke 16.

The Bible says “And these will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life,” Matt. 25:46, and it clearly reminds us God is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance (2 Peter 3:9, Romans 3:23, 5:8, and 6:23.).

that we can have full assurance of our salvation (John 5:24, Romans 10:9-10, 1 John 5:11-13). The SDA doctrine of soul sleep then leads to the error of the annihilation of the wicked*. Remember, errors cascade¹².

5.) Understand What The Adventist Need to Hear

1. He must not take the witness of men over God’s witness. Our own religious feelings must be second place to what the Bible teaches (2 Peter 1:18-20). If the SDA prophecies were true revelations from God they would agree with the Bible. The scriptures cannot be broken.

2. He, (along with the whole human race) has enslaved himself to sin and cannot remedy this through works. (Romans 3:10, 23). We cannot mix grace with works in order to secure *or* maintain our salvation. It is one or the other (Romans 11:6.) To do so only adds to our debt (Rom 4:4-9). See [Five Things Our Works Based Friends Need to Understand](#).

3. An Adventist can *know* he has eternal life by believing on the Son (John 3:16-18,35). To have the Son is to have life and that life is eternal, period! To deny this truth is to make God a liar (1 John 5:10-12).

4. Adventist can become a new creation in Christ, with new life (2 Corinthians 5:17). This life does not die with his body!

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1. The SDA Encyclopedia as cited by Wikipedia: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hiram_Edson
2. See Adventist documentation: <http://sogentlybroken.blogspot.com/2008/09/adventist-teaching-on-soul-sleep.html>
3. Once expanded beyond core SDA beliefs, Adventist views expand in a variety of expressions resulting from their eclectic origins. Adventists see themselves as the spiritual 144,000, they see the millennium occurring in heaven, they love ethnic Israel for her Judaistic views but do not support Zionism. Their treatment of Revelation is piece meal and non sequitur. In contrast to Dispensationalism, there is no unifying thread (literal interpretation) to bind their system together. Adventism has birthed a wide range of apocalyptic cults.
4. Note: This is an *Adventist* source: <http://amazingdiscoveries.org/ad-newsletter-archive-fall-2010-Lesser-Light-Ellen-White>
5. Adventist position on the *Clear Word Bible*: <http://www.adventist.org/spirituality/bible-study/article/go/0/choosing-a-bible-translation/>
6. For further discussion Adventism and the trinity see: <http://www.cultorchristian.com>
7. For documentation on Christ as Michael see: <http://www.jesus-is-savior.com/False%20Religions/Seventh-Day%20Adventist/michael.htm>
8. See an Adventist article which cites the pantheist struggle: <http://www.cultorchristian.com>
9. Martin's journey into the discussion of Adventism is best chronicled by his last debates with them as recorded by John Ankerberger. See a typical video here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qqVCGCOhlsM>.
10. An unpublished white paper by Lavonne Labrier-Kinsley.
11. See Adventist documentation: "It was the Investigative Judgment doctrine that necessitated this belief in soul sleep for the newly-minted Adventist group. One could not have deceased going to Heaven before the Investigative Judgment was completed. It was in the Investigative Judgment (beginning in 1844) that people's fates were determined - and not until then. It wouldn't do to go to Heaven at death and then have the verdict changed. One could picture an angel going to the doomed person standing beside the sea of glass saying, "Excuse me, John. I'm so very sorry, but a mistake has been made and you are going to be transferred. The climate in your new location is quite warm but you will still have a waterfront view - of the Lake of Fire." - <http://sogentlybroken.blogspot.com/2008/09/adventist-teaching-on-soul-sleep.html>
12. For a good treatment of Adventism's three most important errors see: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5De3ZPPhrKc>

Additional Resources: Dale Ratzlaff is the leading expert on Adventism. We highly recommend any of his works on the subject.