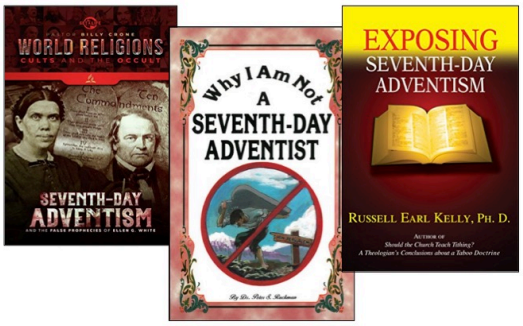
Facts And False Teachings Of The Seventh Day Adventist Church



Brief History Of 7th Day Adventism:

The Seventh-day Adventists (SDA) started in the 1800's as a denomination. This was during a time of religious revival in the northeastern United States. The world was predicted to end on October 22, 1844, with the second coming of Christ, by William Miller, a New England Baptist itinerant preacher and self-proclaimed [false] prophet. He later admitted and apologized for his false prophecy. However, Miller's followers condemned all the churches of the day as apostate and "Babylon," and warned Christians to come out of them. A great many did, and the "Adventist" movement was born and grew rapidly. After Christ did not appear in 1844 (this came to be known as the Great Disappointment, one "little flock" still insisted the date of their original predictions had been correct. They decided the event marked by 1844 was not the Second Coming, but the entrance of Christ into the Holy of Holies in the Heavenly Sanctuary. There, they said, He began the Investigative Judgement (see below). This doctrine was received and endorsed by Ellen G. White.

From 1844 to 1851, the group taught the "shut door" doctrine, based on Jesus' parable of the ten virgins. Anyone who had not accepted the Adventist message by the time Jesus entered the Holy of Holies was to be shut out permanently, as the five foolish virgins had been. Cut off from the Bridegroom, they could not join the Adventists or have any hope of eternal life. Ellen White not only approved and taught this doctrine, but her first vision experience was largely responsible for its being received by the Adventist group (Brinsmead, Robert, D., Judged by the Gospel: A Review of Adventism, pp. 130-33).

By 1846, the group had adopted the Seventh-day Baptists' view that the Saturday Sabbath must be observed by Christians. A highly elevated form of this doctrine, together with the doctrine of the Investigative Judgment, became the hallmarks of Seventh-day Adventism. In 1850, James and Ellen White began publishing a magazine, The Review & Herald, to disseminate Adventist and Sabbatarian doctrines. This helped many of the remaining "Millerites" to coalesce into a distinctive body which adopted the name of Seventh-day Adventist Church in 1860, and formally incorporated in 1863, with approximately 3,500 members in 125 congregations (Encyclopedia of

American Religion, Vol. 2, p. 681).

Ellen White never held official title as the head of the church but was one of its founders and acknowledged spiritual leader. She rather disingenuously declined to claim the title of “prophet,” calling herself a “messenger” instead. But she did claim to have the “spirit of prophecy,” and said that her messages were direct from God for the guidance and instruction of the church. With her knowledge and consent, others called her a prophet, and even “the Spirit of Prophecy.” Having only a third-grade education, Ellen White said for years she was unable to read, bolstering the claim that her beautiful prose was inspired by God. However, it has been discovered that she not only read, but plagiarized other Christian authors throughout virtually all her writings. The sad facts of this matter have been thoroughly and indisputably established in several books. (e.g., see; Rea, Walter, The White Lie; and Judged by the Gospel, pp. 361-83). Ellen White died in 1915, at age eighty-eight.

The Seventh-day Adventist church now has over 19 million members and 82,000 churches. The oversight of this group is given to the General Conference. They also are responsible for the spiritual development of the church. It is headquartered in Silver Spring, Maryland.

Synopsis:

The Seventh-day Adventist Church is NOT a cult in the truest definition of the term. This comes as a surprise to many. The dividing factor between a cult and true Christianity is the deity of Christ. Cultists like Jehovah Witnesses and Mormons rob Jesus of His deity and teach that He is not God. The JW’s teach that Jesus is a creation of God but not the same as Jehovah. The Mormons teach that Jesus is only one god among many and a spiritual brother of Lucifer.

Seventh-day Adventists believe some of what would be considered orthodox Christian doctrine. This would include belief in the Trinity, the divinity of Jesus, the death and resurrection of Jesus and salvation by faith. Many evangelicals refer to the group as being a “minor cult.” They do have many strange and false teachings as you will see in the information contained in this document. Scripturally, their biggest issue is their emphasis on keeping a part of the law of Moses (Fourth commandment) which creates a serious problem because it obscures Christ as the only and sufficient means of salvation (Acts 4:12) and their rejection of the doctrine of eternal punishment for the wicked places them in a spiritually precarious position.

SDA has many false teachings. Ellen G. White, who claimed to have “the spirit of prophecy,” was an important early leader of the movement and taught a number of distinctive Seventh Day Adventist (SDA) doctrines, including the Investigative Judgment and Sabbatarianism. While the church’s official theology now appears to be generally in the tradition of evangelical Christianity, certain SDA claims and unique doctrines continue to raise questions. These doctrines include the Seventh Day Adventist belief that Sunday worship will result in the “Mark of the Beast,” imbalanced teachings

on keeping the commandments (baptism, Sabbath observance) that often implies a kind of salvation by works, the “Remnant Church” doctrine that implies that the SDA is or will be God’s only true church, and the doctrine of the Investigative Judgment. Other teachings include soul sleep, hell not eternal, loss of salvation (must keep Sabbath to stay saved), no continued assurance of salvation, the nature of Christ’s redemption, plus much more.

The Seventh-Day Adventist Church is full of confusion on Biblical prophecy, heretical teaching of Ellen G. White, false teaching on the doctrines of salvation and water baptism and many beliefs that cannot be supported by Scripture. Current attenders should leave the Seventh-day Adventist church and find a solid, Bible-believing church.

False Teachings of the Seventh-day Adventist Church

Sabbatarianism:

The SDA teaches that the Sabbath is the “Seal of God” upon true believers. This group focuses more on this topic than any other. It even eclipses our hope in Christ for salvation. Sabbath-keeping is a prominent and well-known teaching of this organization. What is not so well known is that they teach that it is the “Seal of God” and that those who worship on Sunday before the Rapture will receive the “Mark of the Beast.” Ultimately, according to Adventist theology, salvation in the last days boils down to the day you worship on! The Seventh day Adventist Sabbath generally takes the view that the Old Testament Sabbath commandment is to be observed unchanged by the church. As used in this presentation, sabbatarianism refers to an extreme form of the belief in which membership in the true church, or even salvation, is conditional upon keeping the Sabbath law. As such, Sabbatarianism is at the least a form of legalism and at most a denial of salvation by grace. In most cases, the Jewish Sabbath (Saturday) must be observed by refraining from work, sports, and travel from sundown Friday evening to sundown Saturday evening. The belief is often accompanied by the observance of Jewish dietary laws and/or other Old Testament feasts.

Note: Charles Beach and I co-authored a book in 1980 titled the Lay Coordinators Manual. I have photocopied Chapter Ten-Seventh-day Sabbatarianism” of the book and attached it electronically with this document. We show how to respond to this topic when approached by anyone from the SDA.

A Worldwide Restoration of the Sabbath:

The SDA teach that the divine institution of the Sabbath is to be restored. They believe that the delivering of this message will precipitate a conflict that will involve the whole world. The central issue will be obedience to God’s law

and the observance of the Sabbath. Further, they believe that those who reject it will eventually receive the mark of the beast. In one of her most revered works, Ellen White wrote that Sabbath observance would be the “line of distinction” in the “final test” that will separate God’s end-time people who “receive the seal of God” and are saved, from those who “receive the mark of the beast” (The Great Controversy Between Christ and Satan, p. 605). Describing a supposed vision direct from God, Ellen White wrote, “I saw that the Holy Sabbath is, and will be, the separating wall between the true Israel of God and unbelievers.”

Baptism:

SDA teachings most clearly contrary to the gospel and unorthodox in nature are its insistence on water baptism as an essential prerequisite to salvation, its teaching about the end-time significance of sabbath observance to identification of true believers, and its doctrine of the Investigative Judgement.

Investigative Judgment:

This is one of the unique false doctrines of the Seventh-day Adventist Church that make the place of that church within evangelical Christianity questionable. First taught in Adventism by Hiram Edson, F.B. Hahn, and O.R.L. Crosier, it was accepted as “present truth” by those who would later become known as Seventh-day Adventists (SDAs) after it was confirmed and taught in visions received by Ellen G. White. The doctrine teaches that in the Holy of Holies in the Heavenly Sanctuary, Christ is now conducting an investigation into the lives of all who have ever professed belief in Christ. He is judging all their works, by the standard of God’s Law. All those whose lives fail to measure up to the standard of the Law are rejected and condemned as not having true faith. Those whose lives meet that standard and thus manifest the perfect character and righteousness of Christ are recognized as having true faith, and so their sins are “blotted out.” SDAs say, “This judgment vindicates the justice of God in saving those who believe in Jesus. It declares that those who have remained loyal to God shall receive the kingdom.” Evangelicals believe, and the Bible teaches (Rom. 3:21-26), that God’s justice in saving sinners who trust Jesus to save them is vindicated by the blood of Jesus. His death in their place, on their behalf.

The Atonement:

The SDA teaches that the atonement is not complete. This is their quote: “The blood of Christ, while it was to release the repentant sinner from the condemnation of the law, was not to cancel sin. . . . It will stand in the sanctuary until the final atonement” (Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 357). “Now while our great High Priest is making the atonement for us, we should seek to become perfect in Christ” (The Great Controversy, p. 623).

". . . Instead of coming to the earth at the termination of the 2300 days in 1844, Christ then entered the most holy place of the heavenly sanctuary to perform the closing work of atonement preparatory to His coming" (The Great Controversy, p. 422).

Salvation Includes Works:

The SDA teach that believers enter into a judgement of works which determines their salvation. "At the time appointed for the judgment. . . . All who have ever taken upon themselves the name of Christ must pass its searching scrutiny. Both the living and the dead are to be judged 'out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works'" (The Great Controversy, p. 486). "Every case had been decided for life or death. While Jesus had been ministering in the sanctuary, the judgment had been going on for the righteous dead, and then for the righteous living" (Early Writings, p. 280).

"So, in the great day of final atonement and investigative judgment the only cases considered are those of the professed people of God" (The Great Controversy, p. 480).

". . . As the books of record are opened in the judgment, the lives of all who have believed on Jesus come in review before God. Beginning with those who first lived upon the earth. . . . Every name is mentioned, every case closely investigated. Names are accepted, names rejected. When any have sins remaining upon the books of record, unrepented of and unforgiven, their names will be blotted out of the book of life, and the record of their good deeds will be erased from the book of God's remembrance" (The Great Controversy, p. 483). (See John 5:24; Rom. 8:1).

Satan Bears Our Sins:

"It was seen, also, that while the sin offering pointed to Christ as a sacrifice, and the high priest represented Christ as a mediator, the scapegoat typified Satan, the author of sin, upon whom the sins of the truly penitent will finally be placed" (The Great Controversy, p. 422). "Their sins are transferred to the originator of sin" (Testimonies for the Church, vol. 5, p. 475).

Christ Not Our Mediator:

One of the more surprising false teachings of the SDA says that Christians will stand before God with Christ's intercession. "Those who are living upon the earth when the intercession of Christ shall cease in the sanctuary above are to stand in the sight of a holy God without a mediator" (The Great Controversy, p.
425).

"When Jesus ceases to plead for man, the cases of all are forever decided. This

is the time of reckoning with His servants" (Testimonies for the Church, vol. 2, p. 19).

Soul Sleep:

Soul sleep is the teaching that when a person dies, his soul "sleeps" until the time of the future resurrection. In this condition, the person is not aware or conscious. The Jehovah's Witnesses and the Seventh-day Adventists hold to this doctrine as do most conditionalists (those who say that the wicked are judged and don't exist anymore). But the Jehovah's Witnesses teach annihilation. This means that after death a person ceases to exist. At the future resurrection, they maintain that the soul is made again. Basically, it is a recreation of the individual. The Seventh-day Adventists teach at the soul is simply inert and resides in the memory of God.

No Eternal Hell:

Seventh-day Adventists do not teach the biblical doctrine of hell. They, like Jehovah's Witnesses, teach that unbelievers will be annihilated and that hell is temporary. Ellen G. White, in a writing titled, "The Heresy of Eternal Torment" says, "Untold evil has come from the heresy of eternal torment. It takes the religion of the Bible, so full of love and goodness, darkens it by superstition and clothes it with terror. Satan has painted the character of God in false colors, making people fear, dread, and even hate our merciful Creator. The repulsive views of God that have spread over the world from the teachings of the pulpit have made millions of people skeptics and unbelievers. Eternal torment is one of the false doctrines, the wine of abomination (revelation 14:8, 17:2), which Babylon makes all nations drink. Ministers of Christ accepted this heresy from Rome, just as they received the false sabbath. . ." The Great Hope, Ellen G. White, page 28).

Remnant People:

Adventists believe they are God's "remnant" people. They believe they are the only true church on earth. At their worldwide General Conference in 2000, they passed a resolution affirming this belief. This is very important for them to believe. They refer to other Christians as either "apostate Protestant," "Babylon," "Sunday keepers," or as sheep that have not yet come into the fold. They believe everyone who will be saved in the final days before Jesus returns will be a Seventh-day Adventist.

Some Biblical Responses for Consideration.

Baptism:

Romans. 3:21-26, 28; 4:4-6, 23-24; 5:1; Gal. 2:16; 3:26; 5:1-6; Eph. 2:4-10; Col. 1:13-14; 2:13-14. These passages make it clear that salvation is entirely by God's grace alone, apart from any works, and laid hold of by faith alone. Baptism is mentioned in close proximity to some of these passages, but the New Testament uses the word, baptism, in various ways. Clearly, the "one baptism" (Eph. 4:4-5) that is essential is the baptism of the Spirit. If a passage makes baptism essential to salvation it can only refer to the baptism of the Spirit, or it would conflict with other Scriptures which plainly teach salvation is apart from any human work.

The Sabbath:

The quoted statements above, particularly Ellen White's, are crystal clear. Sabbath observance, not trust in Christ alone for complete forgiveness of sins and eternal life, is to be the dividing line between the saved and the lost in the end time. This is certainly antithetical to the gospel defined by the passages above. (See also, Rom. 14:5-6; Col. 2:16-17). The Old Testament Sabbath was never anything more than a shadow of the substance. The reality of the New Testament Sabbath rest of God, which Paul and the writer of Hebrews make clear, is Christ Himself, and the rest one experiences from one's own works when one enters into Christ (Heb. 4:1-10). Note: we deal extensively with this topic in our included chapter from the Lay Coordinator's Manual.

The Investigative Judgement:

The whole concept of the investigative judgement is antithetical to the Gospel. Jesus did not wait until 1844 to enter the Holy of Holies in heaven (Heb. 1:3; 6:19-20; 8:1; 9:6-12, 24; 12:2). Neither is He still making an atonement in heaven (Heb. 9:25-26; 10:11-14). The investigative judgement proposes to "vindicate the justice of God in saving those who believe in Jesus," by showing they were "loyal," "penitent," and "faithful" commandment keepers. This is an outrage. God's justice in saving sinners is vindicated by Christ's death on the cross, period (Rom. 3:24-26).

Even when speaking of being saved by the righteousness of Christ, Adventist writers refer to imparted righteousness, seldom to the biblical concept of imputed righteousness. Calling it "Christ's righteousness," while insisting on the believer's perfection of character as a prerequisite to salvation, is at worst a thinlyveiled works salvation, or at best an attempt to mix grace and works, something the Bible says is impossible to do (Rom. 11:6). Mrs. White's words are crystal clear: one will not be forgiven until all sins are eradicated from one's life and one's character is perfected. Precisely the same heresy is found (besides many others) in Mormonism. It is not the salvation by grace alone through faith alone offered in the Bible. The error is compounded by the teaching that this latter-day 1844 event must be believed in to exercise the proper faith necessary to be saved. When Jesus said on the cross, "It is

finished," (i.e., completed, paid in full) it cannot be that there is yet another salvation event more than 1,800 years later, just as essential to salvation as Christ's death on the cross, in which one must believe in order to be saved. This is clearly "another gospel" (Gal. 1:6-9).

Other Doctrines:

Some of the SDA health message may actually be helpful, and it does not conflict with the gospel except when, as is often the case, spiritual stigma is attached to non-observance of its asceticism (Gal. 2:11-16). The soul-sleep doctrine conflicts with the gospel because, closely examined and fully understood, it actually constitutes a denial of the resurrection (though it is doubtful any SDA understands it to be so). Notwithstanding a smattering of "proof-texts," the annihilation doctrine is definitely aberrant from the teaching of the Bible. It leaves the sinner facing no eternal consequences for his sin; angst over annihilation will not survive annihilation. Indeed, many people today think annihilation preferable to even this life. They live on only because they cannot shake the conviction that there is "hell to pay." God has set eternity in their hearts (Eccl. 3:11). — *author unknown*

Resources:

Ratzlaff, Dale, The Sabbath in Crisis. Excellent book by a former SDA pastor, covers virtually every aspect of the Sabbath question. 345 pages, includes scripture index.

Ratzlaff, Dale, The Cultic Doctrine of Seventh-day Adventists. Probably the best popular, overall, treatment of Seventh-day Adventism, and especially the 1844/Investigative Judgment/Sanctuary doctrine, ever penned. Leaves no doubt. 384 pages, four appendices, incl. bibliography.

Tardo, Dr. Russell, K., Sunday Facts and Sabbath. Presents "25 Reasons Why the Christian Church Worships on Sunday." 144 pages.
