

Seventh Day Adventists *“Soul sleep and Saturday Sabbath”*

The Adventist movement began in the 1840s under the leadership of William Miller (Millerites), who proselytized members from many Protestant churches with a prediction that Christ would return to earth some time in 1843-1844 (stressing the *doctrine of imminent return*). When the time passed with no return (called the First Disappointment), many left the movement. However, a new date was set for later in 1844, that too passed with no return [advent] of Christ (Deuteronomy 18:20-22), and many more left and went back to their former churches. Those that remained split into four groups, with the Seventh-day Adventists becoming the largest and most prolific with currently 1 million members in the U.S. and 5 million members worldwide.

The Seventh-day Adventists were formed by 3 of the former Adventist Millerites – Joseph Bates, James White and his wife, Ellen. Ellen White would go into trances and come out of them with visions and revelations that she claimed to have received from God, Christ and angels (Galatians 1:6-9). She claimed to have had “revelations” concerning the Jewish Sabbath, foot washing, soul sleep, tithing, the annihilation of the wicked and many religious (Pharisaical like) practices. Concerning Miller’s false prophecy, the SDAs claimed that the prophecy concerning Christ’s return was not false, but mistaken, and that Christ had actually entered a new compartment of heaven – a holy sanctuary – from which he could continually observe and investigate the world on behalf of the Father and begin to evaluate Christians’ deeds in order to judge whether they would inherit eternal life. Ellen White became the primary personality and prophetess of the SDAs and her writings were [are] considered sacred and authoritative.

So What’s the Difference- what do they believe?

1. **God** – Belief in God as almighty and the Creator. Believes in the Trinity.
2. **Jesus Christ** – Jesus is the Son of God. Born of a virgin. Died for our sins and bodily rose from the grave.
2. **Man and sin** – Man is sinful and in need of salvation. They firmly believe that the body is the temple of the Holy Spirit (*I Corinthians 6:19-20*) and, as such, put great emphasis on health and maintain more than 360 hospitals and clinics around the world.
 1. **Salvation** – is attained through grace, faith and Christ’s atonement **and** His investigative judgment (the heavenly sanctuary theory) **and secured by** the observance of the Saturday Sabbath. These two “additions” to Christ’s work on the cross diminish the completeness of His atonement and add a works/legalism element (*Ephesians 2:8-9*). In fact, Saturday Sabbath was added to their doctrine by a layman, confirmed by one of Ms. White’s visions and became the lynchpin of their belief with no verifiable Biblical basis. *Colossians 2:16-17*
 2. **Heaven and hell** – Believe in heaven, but that the wicked will be annihilated and not punished eternally (same belief as the Jehovah’s Witnesses). *Matthew 25:46, Revelation 20:13-15*. Soul-sleep – belief that believers do not go into Christ’s presence at death, but sleep until resurrection. *2 Corinthians 5:5-9*

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3. **The Bible** – They believe that the Bible is the Word of God. However, they also believe in the writings and teachings of Ellen White and give them nearly equal, if not fully equal status with the Bible. It is heresy to question the teachings of Ms. White. In 1981, Walter Rea, a former SDA pastor, published a book, *The White Lie*, exposing Ms. White’s writings and visions as lies and plagiarism.

Additional notes: The Adventist church has endeavored to be accepted as an orthodox Christian church. At the surface, many people do not see any differences. However, given the authority attributed to Ms. White’s teaching, their insistence that the Saturday Sabbath observation and Christ’s investigative role is required for salvation puts them on the outside fringe of mainstream orthodox Christian teachings.

Apparently there are a number of SDA churches and pastors who practice and preach an orthodox, evangelical Christian doctrine. However, the corporate SDA church leadership needs to renounce the teachings of Ellen White, confirm the completeness of Christ’s atonement and relinquish the mandatory stature of the Saturday Sabbath [and affirm grace and faith alone] before consideration will be given toward recognizing them as an orthodox Christian religion/denomination and not a cult or fringe Christian-like denomination.

In addition, the SDA have embarked on an end times evangelical movement whose primary aim is to expose the Catholic Church as the Antichrist. Much of their eschatological teachings are biblically sound, but some historical events and scripture passages have been distorted to validate their claims.