

CULTS AND FALSE RELIGIONS

Seventh Day Adventists

REVIEW:

- According to the JW's, divine guidance comes only through the _____ Society. (Watchtower)
- What is the goal of Mormons? (To attain godhood on the basis of good works)
- What did we learn about Allah, the god of the Koran? (he is really Allah, the pagan moon god)
- What is the key belief of Buddhism? (Reincarnation, or the circle of life)
- What is the major problem of the Roman Catholic religion? (Human tradition is elevated above the Bible)
- Hinduism takes the bold step of proclaiming that we are _____. (God)
- Scientology is a voyage of _____. (self-discovery)

READING:

Exodus 31:12-17 “¹²And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, ¹³Speak thou also unto the children of Israel, saying, Verily my sabbaths ye shall keep: **for it is a sign between me and you throughout your generations;** that ye may know that I am the LORD that doth sanctify you. ¹⁴Ye shall keep the sabbath therefore; for it is holy unto you: every one that defileth it shall surely be put to death: for whosoever doeth any work therein, that soul shall be cut off from among his people. ¹⁵Six days may work be done; but in the seventh is the sabbath of rest, holy to the LORD: whosoever doeth any work in the sabbath day, he shall surely be put to death. ¹⁶Wherefore the children of Israel shall keep the sabbath, to observe the sabbath throughout their generations, for a perpetual covenant. ¹⁷**It is a sign between me and the children of Israel for ever:** for in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested, and was refreshed.”

INTRODUCTION:

A debate continues to rage in Christian circles as to whether the Seventh Day Adventist (SDA) movement is a cult, or is a Christian denomination that entertains some false doctrines. The truth is that much of official SDA doctrine agrees with fundamental Christianity. Many SDA's are saved people. However, when one examines the teachings of their “prophet” Ellen White, and when one speaks with individual SDA's, one gets a **different** and **confusing** picture.

What are the six key doctrines that we mentioned earlier in reference to cults and false religions?

1. **The inspiration of Scripture.** In agreement.
2. **Biblical authority.** SDA's hold this to be true, yet attach too much importance to the writings of Ellen White.
3. **The virgin birth, sinless life and substitutionary death of Christ.** The atoning work of Christ is questioned.
4. **The deity of Christ.** In agreement.
5. **Salvation by grace through faith.** SDA's strongly claim to teach this, yet many believe that they will be lost if they do not keep the Law, especially the Sabbath.
6. **The nature of God.** In agreement.

Thus we see that the SDA's are in danger of being termed a cult. Let us look at the Seventh Day Adventist movement:

I. FOUNDER: Ellen White (1825-1915).

- 1) SDA'S regard Ellen White (1825-1915) as a **prophet** and a **teacher**.
- 2) **Claims of inerrancy:**

- i) “The Bible and the writings of Ellen White are **inerrant**.”
 - ii) “Her writings should be received the same as were the messages of the prophets of old. As Samuel was a prophet of Israel for his day; as Jeremiah was a prophet of Israel for the days of captivity; as John the Baptist came as a special messenger of the Lord to prepare the way for Christ’s Coming, so we believe that Mrs White was a prophet to the Church of Christ today.”
 - iii) “The quality of inspiration of Ellen White is equal to that of Bible writers.”
 - iv) “The writings of Ellen White are inspired in the same sense as the Bible is inspired.”
- 3) Ellen White claimed to have received more than 2,000 “inspired counsels from the Lord” (visions).
- 4) SDA’s are wrong and unscriptural in allowing a woman teacher to lead and instruct them:
- i) “I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence.” **1 Timothy 2:12**. Also, **1 Corinthians 14:34, 35**.
- 5) **False prophecies of Ellen White (C.f. Deuteronomy 18:20-22):**
- i) White falsely predicted that some living in 1856 would live to see Christ return.
 - ii) White falsely prophesied that England would declare war on the USA at the time of the Civil War.
 - iii) White falsely prophesied in 1850 that Old Jerusalem would never be built up.
 - iv) White prophesied the world would end in 1843, 1844, 1845 and 1851.
- 6) **False statements of Ellen White:**
- i) White falsely taught that we should never say we are saved: “Those who accept the Saviour, however sincere their conversion, should never be taught to say or to feel that they are saved.” **C.f. 1 John 5:12, 13**.
 - ii) White falsely taught that the seal of God is the Sabbath: “The sign, or seal of God is revealed in the observance of the seventh-day Sabbath.” **C.f. Ephesians 4:30**.
 - iii) White falsely taught that Satan will bear our sins:
 - (a) “...the scapegoat typified Satan, the author of sin, upon whom the sins of the truly penitent will finally be placed.”
 - (b) “As the priest, in removing the sins from the sanctuary, confessed them upon the head of the scapegoat, so Christ will place all these sins upon Satan, the originator and instigator of sin.”
 - (c) **C.f. Isaiah 53:6 and 1 Peter 2:24**.
 - iv) White falsely taught that Christ’s Atonement was not finished at the cross: “...instead of coming to the earth at the termination of the 2,300 days in 1844, Christ then entered the most holy place of the heavenly sanctuary to perform the closing work of the atonement preparatory to His coming.” **C.f. Hebrews 9:26, Romans 5:11 and John 19:30** (“It is finished”).
 - v) White falsely taught that we can be sinless: “Those only who through faith in Christ, obey all of God’s commandments, will reach the condition of sinlessness in which Adam lived before his transgression.” **C.f. 1 John 1:7-10**.
- 7) **Luke 6:43** “For a good tree bringeth not forth corrupt fruit; neither doth a **corrupt tree** bring forth **good fruit**.” If the SDA movement has sprung out of the **heretical** teachings of Ellen White, which it has, then it **cannot** be trusted or endorsed by those who love the truth.

II. HISTORY / ORGANISATION:

- 1) **William Miller and the Great Disappointment of 1844.** William Miler predicted that Christ would return in 1844, and gathered a great following. After his prediction failed (**C.f. Matthew 24:36, 42, 44; 25:13**), his many followers were greatly disappointed and disillusioned.
- 2) **Two Millerite teachers, Hiram Edson and Ellen White, then propagated the false idea of “investigative judgment”.** This idea became the basis for the existence of the SDA movement:
 - i) According to SDA’s, beginning on October 22, 1844, Christ entered upon the “judgment phase” of His ministry, whereby He blots out sin.

ii) The SDA “Investigative Judgement” doctrine rests on the “revelation” that Christ entered the Holy of Holies not at His ascension, but in 1844.

iii) SDA’s teach that Christ transferred the record of believers’ sins to the heavenly sanctuary, which will be finally cleansed at the conclusion of the Investigative Judgment, their Day of Atonement.

iv) White: “The blood of Christ, while it was to release the repentant sinner from the condemnation of the law, was not to cancel the sin. It would stand on record in the sanctuary until the final atonement.”

v) Hence SDA’s sins are not truly cancelled or forgiven yet.

vi) This heresy is refuted by many Scriptures, including:

(a) **Hebrews 9:12, 25, 26**

(b) **2 Timothy 2:19**

(c) **John 10:14**

(d) **1 John 1:9**

(e) **Colossians 1:21**

3) **Many of the disillusioned Millerites joined to form the Seventh Day Adventist denomination in the early 1850’s.** They believed theirs to be the **remnant true church** of the last days (see later).

4) **The group focussed on three key doctrines:**

i) Investigative judgment.

ii) The keeping of the Sabbath.

iii) “The spirit of prophecy” (**Revelation 19:10**), whereby Ellen White was recognised as the possessor of the spiritual gift of prophecy.

5) The SDA church has grown into a worldwide organization active in more than **200** countries with approximately **13 million members**.

III. **PURPOSE:**

1) To preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ, as interpreted by the SDA’s.

2) To bring Christians back to worship on Saturday.

3) To build the True Remnant (SDA church).

IV. **SOURCE OF AUTHORITY:**

1) The Bible.

2) The “inspired” writings of Ellen White.

i) Some claim that these are not authoritative, but the SDA’s have at least had their interpretation of Scripture dominated by White’s writings.

ii) “One of the gifts of the Holy Spirit is prophecy. This gift is an identifying mark of the remnant church and was manifested in the ministry of Ellen. G. White. As the Lord’s messenger, her writings are a **continuing** and **authoritative source of truth** which provide for the church comfort, guidance, instruction, and correction.” (Official SDA web site)

V. **CLAIM: To be the true remnant church.**

1) “The universal church is composed of all who truly believe in Christ, but in the last days, a time of widespread apostasy, a remnant has been called out to keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus. This remnant announces the arrival of the judgment hour.”

2) **SEE Revelation 12:17.** SDA’s apply this to themselves (how humble!). But, this actually refers to Satan’s persecution of the remaining believing Jews during the second half of the Tribulation.

VI. **KEY LITERATURE:** The Bible and the writings of Ellen White.

VII. **ATTITUDE TOWARDS CHRISTIANITY:**

1) SDA’s accept that many non-SDA’s are saved, but they also believe that such Christians are wrong to worship on Saturday, neglect the Law, and reject SDA doctrine.

- 2) SDA's are generally kind, humble and tolerant toward other religions and Christian groups.

VIII. DOCTRINAL SUMMARY:

1) THE LAW:

i) "The great principles of God's law are embodied in the Ten Commandments and exemplified in the life of Christ. They express God's love, will, and purposes concerning human conduct and relationships **and are binding upon all people in every age.**" (Official SDA web site)

ii) **SDA's teach that we are still under the Law of Moses.** This is very clearly and often refuted in Scripture. Here are a few examples:

- (a) **Romans 6:14, 15.**
- (b) **Galatians 5:18.**
- (c) **Romans 7:1-6.**
- (d) **Romans 8:2.**
- (e) **Galatians 3:23-25.**

2) THE SABBATH:

i) "The fourth commandment of **God's unchangeable law** requires the observance of this **seventh-day Sabbath** as the day of rest, worship, and ministry in harmony with the teaching and practice of Jesus, the Lord of the Sabbath. The Sabbath is a day of delightful communion with God and one another... The Sabbath is God's perpetual sign of His eternal covenant between Him and His people. Joyful observance of this holy time from evening to evening, sunset to sunset, is a celebration of God's creative and redemptive acts." (Official SDA web site)

ii) SDA's meet on Saturday and attempt to keep the Sabbath. This wrong because:

- (a) Keeping the Saturday Sabbath was the sign of the Mosaic Covenant between God and Jews only (**Exodus 31:12-17**).
- (b) Early church writers before 300 AD observed Sunday.
- (c) Early Christians met on the first day of the week, Sunday (**Acts 20:7, 1 Cor. 16:2**).
- (d) At least sixteen times we are told that the Mosaic Law is finished for believers.

iii) "Ye shall kindle no fire throughout your habitations upon the Sabbath day." **Exodus 35:3**. SDA's break the Old Testament sabbath by cooking food, burning a gas fire, driving a car with internal combustion, etc, on Saturday.

3) THE CHURCH: SDA's claim to be the **true remnant church** in these last days of apostasy.

4) DEATH: The SDA church teaches the false doctrine of **soul sleep**:

i) "The wages of sin is death. But God, who alone is immortal, will grant eternal life to His redeemed. Until that day **death is an unconscious state for all people.**" (Official SDA web site)

ii) Much of this confusion arises from the KJV word "sleep" which was a term figuratively used for death (such as in **1 Thessalonians 4:14**).

iii) Some Scriptures disproving this are:

- (a) **Philippians 1:23** "I am in a straight betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ".
- (b) **2 Corinthians 5:8** "To be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord."
- (c) **Hebrews 12:1** "We are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses". (The departed believers discussed in Hebrews 11, who now watch us from heaven.)
- (d) **Luke 16:19-31**. The dead rich man and dead Abraham spoke to each other.

5) SALVATION:

i) Officially, the SDA church claims that salvation is by **grace** through **faith**. "Salvation is all of grace and not of works, but its fruitage is obedience to the Commandments." (Official SDA web site)

ii) However, many SDA's believe that they will be lost if they do not keep the Law, especially the Sabbath.

iii) White: "All who have truly repented of sin, and by faith claimed the blood of Christ as their atoning sacrifice, have had pardon entered against their names in the books of heaven as they have become partakers of the righteousness of Christ, **and their characters are found to be in harmony with the law of God**, their sins will be blotted out, and they themselves will be accounted worthy of eternal life." **C.f. John 5:24.**

6) **HELL:** SDA's **reject** the doctrine of eternal torment. **C.f. Revelation 14:9-11; Matthew 25:46.**

IX. OTHER ERRORS OF THE SDA MOVEMENT:

- 1) A belief in loss of salvation.
- 2) Satan as the scapegoat for our sins.
- 3) SDA's believe that Sunday keeping will be the mark of the Beast of **Revelation 13:16-18**. White says: "In the last days, the Sabbath test will be made plain. When this time comes, anyone who does not keep the Sabbath will receive the mark of the Beast and will be kept from heaven."
- 4) SDA'S are very confused on prophecy:
 - i) SDA's think that God has finished with Israel. **C.f. Romans 11.**
 - ii) They believe that most of the events of revelation have already occurred.

X. TALKING WITH MEMBERS: There are two types of people involved in the SDA church:

- 1) **Those who are saved but confused about SDA teachings.** We should seek to help these sincere people to leave the SDA movement and join a good fundamental Baptist church.
- 2) **Those who are depending upon keeping the Law for salvation and security:**
 - i) Ascertain whether they are open, or whether they just want to argue. **Titus 3:9-11; Prov. 23:9.**
 - ii) Focus on proving that they are sinners. **Rom 3:10, 19-24; Isaiah 64:6; Eccl 7:20.**
 - iii) Refute salvation by works. **Eph 2:8-10; Titus 3:5; Romans 4:5.**
 - iv) Show how we are not under the Law, and certainly are not saved by keeping the Law. **Romans 6:14, 15; Galatians 5:18; Romans 7:1-6; Galatians 3:23-25.**
 - v) Eternal security. **John 10:27-30; John 5:24.**

CONCLUSION:

Colossians 2:16, 17 "Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ."

REVIEW / QUESTIONS: