

## **Seventh-day Adventism**

Seventh-day Adventism (SDA) grew out of the failed prophecies of William Miller (followers called the Millerites), who said that the return of Jesus Christ would occur around 1843, and when that prophecy did not come out to be true, he predicted Jesus would come in 1844. That prophecy also failed. Avowed Adventists, including James and Ellen White, Joseph Bates, and others, interpreted Miller's errant eschatology and, in 1863, formally organized the SDA church in Battle Creek, Michigan.

### **Ellen G. White**

Mrs. White claimed to have many visions (about 2,000) from God.

The spoken and written versions of her visions played a significant part in establishing and shaping the organizational structure of the emerging Adventist Church. Church leaders continue to use her visions and writings to develop the church's policies and for devotional reading.

The Seventh Day Adventists considered Mrs. White a true prophetess of God. Modern Adventists still praise her for having the gift of prophecy. Seventh-Day Adventists interpret “the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy” in Revelation 19:10 as a reference to Ellen G.

### **The Word of God**

The Bible says in 2 Timothy 3:16, “All scripture is given by inspiration of God...” (NKJV).

The Holy Spirit guided the scriptures, from Genesis to Revelation.

This means nothing written in the Bible was written without the guidance of the Holy Spirit. We are told, “Men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.” (2 Peter 1:20,21, NASB).

It was the Holy Spirit who led in the writing of the scriptures. And it is the Spirit who leads in the interpretation of the scriptures(John 16:13, 1 Corinthians 2:14).

## **Difference**

All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness. The words of Scripture are "God-breathed" This implies that God is the source or origin of what is recorded in Scripture. Through the Holy Spirit, God used human authors to write what He revealed in the Bible. They were not mere copyists or transcribers.

Basic Beliefs:

## **Sabbath**

Seventh-day Adventist beliefs include worship on Saturday, in accordance with the Jewish custom of keeping the seventh day holy, based on the Fourth Commandment. They believe that the later Christian custom of moving to celebrate the day of Christ's resurrection is unbiblical.

## **Difference**

The church is under the New Covenant, established by the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The Bible nowhere describes Christians setting aside the Sabbath day as the day of worship. The only Scriptures that describe Christians in any sense meeting on the Sabbath are in fact pointing to evangelistic efforts at Jewish synagogues, which met on the Sabbath day. Acts 2:46 records the early Christians meeting every day. The Bereans studied the Scriptures every day (Acts 17:11). Acts 20:7 and 1 Corinthians 16:2 both mention Christians meeting on the first day of the week. There is no evidence in the New Testament that the apostles or the early Christians, in any sense, observed the Sabbath day as the prescribed day of worship.

Paul said in Galatians 4:8-11: Formerly when you did not know God, you were slaves to those who by nature are not gods. <sup>9</sup> But now that you know God—or rather are known by God—how is it that you are turning back to those weak and miserable forces<sup>[a]</sup>? Do you wish to be enslaved by them all over again?<sup>10</sup> You are observing special days and months and seasons and years! <sup>11</sup> I fear for you that somehow, I have wasted my efforts on you.

## **Jesus Christ**

Let us keep in mind that Jesus is the Son not in the sense of having been created but because He partakes of the same divine nature as God the Father. Adventists embrace the belief that Jesus is the eternal Son of God and is also fully God Himself and part of the Godhead. He was sent to earth to minister to us, live as our example, and ultimately bear the eternal punishment of our sins. He is now our advocate, our High Priest, the relatable link between us and God the Father.

The Clear Word Bible (A paraphrase of the bible) by Jack Blanco an Adventist states in John 1:1 the following:

Before the beginning of everything, going further back in time than can be imagined, the Word of God was there. And the Word of God stood by the side of God. And the Word was fully God.

The SDA By the way of Ellen White believes that the incarnating Jesus Christ chose to limit His Omnipresence and chose to be present through the ministry of the Holy Spirit. She claims that the Holy Spirit is Christ's representative and that Jesus is present.

## **Difference**

John 1:1 NIV:

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.  
Colossians 2:9 For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form,

## **Gospel of Health**

Ellen G. White continued to have visions that she attributed to divine inspiration. Some of these visions dealt with the need for healthy eating habits, which Mrs. White called “the gospel of health.” Her health requirements included placing restrictions on consuming meat, or “flesh food,” as Adventists call it. “Flesh food is injurious to health, and whatever affects the body has a corresponding effect on the mind and the soul.” It is not surprising that, having required Sabbath-keeping, Adventist theology began to allow other elements of Law-keeping to creep in as well. Interestingly, cornflakes were the creation of John Harvey Kellogg, a Seventh-Day Adventist doctor in Battle Creek who sought to provide a “healthy” vegetarian alternative to meat-laden breakfasts.

## **Difference**

In Christ, these food laws are obsolete, and the New Testament gives no blanket instruction for the church concerning food (Romans 14:14; 1 Timothy 4:3). Romans 14:1-4 teaches, “Accept the one whose faith is weak, without quarreling over disputable matters. One person’s faith allows them to eat anything, but another, whose faith is weak, eats only vegetables. The one who eats everything must not treat with contempt the one who does not, and the one who does not eat everything must not judge the one who does, for God has accepted them. Who are you to judge someone else’s servant?” Scripture allows the Christian to have individual freedom regarding the consumption of meat and how it’s cooked.

## **Soul sleep**

"Soul sleep" means that after death, believers are not conscious of anything, and their souls become completely inert until the final resurrection of the dead. During this period of soul sleep, the soul resides in the memory of God.

Seventh-day Adventists are well known for promoting the idea of soul sleep. From their perspective, a man's soul is indistinguishable from the whole of a man. Thus, the soul of man cannot continue to exist consciously apart from the body.<sup>2</sup> In making their case, they lean heavily upon the book of Ecclesiastes—especially the words, “The living know that they will die, but the dead know nothing” (9:5<sup>3</sup>).

## **Difference**

Such passages, however, must be interpreted in light of the whole of Scripture, especially the New Testament. The magnifying glass through which we read the Law and the Prophets must remain in the hands of the New Testament writers.

First, as the Bible makes clear, the soul is not the whole of a human being. The New Testament unambiguously communicates that the soul continues to have awareness though the body has died. As previously noted, in Luke 16, Jesus tells the parable of a rich man and a beggar who die physically yet experience conscious awareness in the intermediate state—a fact difficult to deny in that the rich man’s brothers are living and

final judgment has not yet occurred. Not only so, but the Bible's use of the word *hades*, without exception, refers to the transitional rather than the eternal state. Likewise, while being stoned in Acts 7, "Stephen prayed, 'Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.' Then he fell on his knees and cried out, 'Lord, do not hold this sin against them.' When he had said this, he fell asleep. And Saul was there giving approval to his death" (Acts 7:59–8:1). It is clear that while the body of Stephen died, the nonphysical aspect of his humanity continued to exist.

Furthermore, as is obvious from the account of Stephen, sleep is a common biblical metaphor for death of the body—in distinction from the soul. John 11 provides the clearest of examples. Here, Jesus tells his disciples, "Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I am going there to wake him up.' His disciples replied, 'Lord, if he sleeps, he will get better.' Jesus had been speaking of his death, but his disciples thought he meant natural sleep. So then he told them plainly, 'Lazarus is dead'" (vv. 11–14). Similarly, in 1 Corinthians 15, the apostle Paul says, "Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed—in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable and the mortal with immortality. When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: 'Death has been swallowed up in victory'" (vv. 51–54). Here, as in myriad other examples,<sup>4</sup> the Bible speaks of the body asleep in death. Conversely, the Bible never speaks of the soul asleep in death.

## **Annihilationism**

Annihilationism is the belief that unbelievers will not experience an eternity of suffering in hell, but will instead be "extinguished" after death. For many, annihilationism is an attractive belief because of the awfulness of the idea of people spending eternity in hell.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church's official beliefs support annihilation. They hold that the doctrine of Hell, as defined by mainstream Christianity, is incompatible with the concept that God is love. They believe that God loves humans unconditionally and has no destructive intentions for human beings.

## **Difference**

Hell is perhaps a primary reason why God sent Jesus Christ to pay the penalty for our sins. Being “extinguished” after death is no fate to dread, but an eternity in hell most definitely is. Jesus’ death was an infinite death, paying our infinite sin debt so that we would not have to pay it in hell for eternity (2 Corinthians 5:21). When we place our faith in Him, we are saved, forgiven, cleansed, and promised an eternal home in heaven. But if we reject God’s gift of eternal life, we will face the eternal consequences of that decision.

# Comparing Seventh-day Adventism With Historic Christian Faith

	Adventism	Christianity
<b>Writings</b>	The Bible, including Adventist paraphrase <i>The Clear Word</i> . Over 600 published titles with divine revelations and counsel by prophetess Ellen G. White (1827–1915), including <i>The Desire of Ages</i> and <i>The Great Controversy</i> .	The Bible, both Old and New Testaments
<b>God</b>	God is comprised of a unity of three co-eternal Persons—Father, Son and Holy Spirit—who are one in motive and purpose but not substance. God the Father is generally understood to possess a physical body. Adventism’s prophetess describes God as “the heavenly trio.”	The triune God: one God in three Persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. God is Spirit.
<b>Jesus</b>	Not omnipresent. Ellen G. White says God the Father exalted Jesus to be His Son, thus provoking Lucifer’s jealousy and a war in heaven. Jesus is our example to prove we can live sinlessly. His sacrifice on the cross did not complete the atonement; since 1844 He has been applying His blood in heaven in an ongoing “investigative judgment” after which He will return. Also identified as Michael the Archangel; most Adventist founders denied His deity.	The second Person of the Trinity. As God the Son, He has always existed and was never created. He is co-equal with the Father and the Holy Spirit and is fully God and man. He died on a cross as full sacrifice and atonement for our sin and rose from death on the third day. He is our Substitute in taking the guilt, punishment, and death for our sin.
<b>Holy Spirit</b>	Although called the third Person of the Godhead, church members often refer to Him as “it.” Many think of Him as a force or power.	The third Person of the Trinity.
<b>Salvation</b>	Salvation by grace through faith, but maintained by commandment-keeping and repentance. Seventh-day (Saturday) Sabbath observance is the sign of the seal of God; Sunday worship is the mark of the beast.	Salvation is by God’s grace, not by an individual’s good works. It must be received by faith. Salvation is maintained by God’s grace and by His life which He grants when believers are born again by His Spirit.
<b>Judgment</b>	<p>The “investigative judgment” doctrine is unique to Adventism. Also called the “pre-Advent judgment” (or “sanctuary doctrine”), it is patterned after the details of the Israelite Day of Atonement described in Leviticus. It began in October 1844 when Jesus moved from the Holy Place to the Most Holy Place in the heavenly sanctuary, where he is investigating the records of professing believers. All sins which have been specifically confessed are finally pardoned; all which have been forgotten or otherwise unconfessed are placed back on the persons who committed them.</p> <p>Jesus’ blood carries these sins of the saved into the Most Holy Place where they are held until the end of the investigative judgment. All confessed sins will be removed from heaven when Jesus completes His investigation and places them on Satan the scapegoat.</p> <p>The years between 1844 and the end of the judgment, culminating in the Time of Trouble, are the “anti-typical Day of Atonement” in which we are currently living. Salvation is not determined until the end of the judgment.</p>	Those who believe in Jesus’ death for their sin and in His resurrection from death do not come into judgment but pass from death to life (John 5:24). Those who believe in Jesus are not judged, because He took God’s judgment for sin in their place. Those who do not believe are judged already (John 3:18).

	<b>Adventism</b> CONTINUED	<b>Christianity</b> CONTINUED
<b>The Nature of Man</b>	Humans are an indivisible unity of body plus breath or life force. The “soul” is the living body and ceases to exist when the breath leaves the body. Sin is a physical problem transmitted genetically. Spiritual things are perceived cognitively, and the Holy Spirit gives one the power needed to obey.	Humans are physical bodies plus immaterial spirits which are made in the image of God who is Spirit. The spirit survives the physical body at death: those unregenerated by the Holy Spirit spend eternity in hell; those born again are eternally with the Lord Jesus.
<b>Scapegoat</b>	Satan, who will carry the sins of the saved out of heaven, thus cleansing the sanctuary. He will be punished for being the party responsible for causing the sins of those who are saved.	The Lord Jesus.
<b>Death</b>	Like the incarnate Christ, humans have no immaterial spirit, so at death the body goes into the ground and the breath goes to God. Nothing remains except in God’s memory. At judgment the lake of fire annihilates the wicked. The resurrection is essentially a re-creation of the person out of God’s memory.	The immaterial spirit of believers goes to be with Jesus. Both saved and lost people will be resurrected. Those who are saved will live with Jesus in Heaven. Those who are lost will suffer the torment of eternal separation from God (hell). Jesus’ resurrection is the promise that believers will receive glorified, resurrection bodies.
<b>Eschatology</b>	The Time of Trouble will occur at the end of the investigative judgment. God’s Spirit will be withdrawn from the earth, and God’s people will have to have attained perfection so they can withstand the Time of Trouble without a Mediator or Intercessor. Those who worship on Sunday will hunt and kill Sabbath-keepers, God’s true believers. The millennium will be spent in heaven; Satan will be “bound” by being restricted to an unpopulated earth. God will spend the millennium explaining His justice so all human questions will be answered. Those who are saved vindicate the character of God before sinless, created beings who live throughout the universe and observe the cosmic drama unfolding.	While specific details about the timing of the second coming and the rapture of believers varies, Christianity is united in believing that the issue of faith in Jesus will be the final test between those who are saved and those who are not. God is sovereign, and He owes no creation explanations for His justice and mercy. Jesus lives forever as the intercessor for believers; they never have to live without Him on the basis of their own perfection. Humans never vindicate God’s character to the universe; rather, the cross demonstrated God’s justice for all eternity (Romans 3:26).
<b>Other Beliefs</b>	The Adventist Church is God’s one, special, end-time remnant church. Old Testament clean/unclean meat laws observed. Adventist “health message” includes abstinence from alcohol, tobacco, and caffeine and advocates veganism. Traditionalist Adventists believe wearing jewelry is sinful. Massive missionary programs, which target nonbelievers as well as professing evangelicals, include “Revelation seminars,” health outreach. Ellen G. White found to have committed extensive plagiarism throughout her prophetic writings.	Other beliefs: There is only one church, and it is composed of all who have been born of the Spirit from the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2) onward. Diet and health do not play a role in holiness or salvation. Jesus is God’s final word to mankind (Hebrews 1:1-3).