

Seventh-day Adventist

Official Beliefs

Adventist theology is distinctly Protestant, and holds much in common with Evangelicalism however like many restorationist groups, Adventists have typically taught that the majority of Protestant churches have failed to "complete" the Reformation by "restoring" the beliefs and practices of the [primitive church](#)—including Sabbath keeping, [adult baptism](#) and conditional immortality. [Captain Joseph Bates](#) described the seventh-day Sabbath as one of things that needed to be restored to the church before Christ would return.

They sought to get back towards New Testament church ideals, rather than stick to where Luther, Calvin or Zwingli did theologically, moving away from church traditions and creedal formulas. Anabaptism influence permeated the evangelical denominations of the 19th century.

The theology of the Seventh-day Adventist Church resembles that of Protestant Christianity, combining elements from Lutheran, Wesleyan-Arminian, and Anabaptist branches of Protestantism. Adventists believe in the infallibility of the Scripture and teach that salvation comes from grace through faith in Jesus Christ. The 28 fundamental beliefs constitute the church's official doctrinal position.

Baptism

Seventh-day Adventists practice believer's baptism by full immersion in a similar manner to the Baptists. They argue that baptism requires knowing consent and moral responsibility. Hence, they do not baptize infants or children who do not demonstrate knowing consent and moral responsibility, but instead dedicate them, which is symbolic of the parents', the community's, and the church's gratefulness to God for the child, and their commitment to raising the child to love Jesus.

Holy Communion

Seventh-day Adventists believe that the bread and wine (grape juice) of the Holy Communion are "symbols" of the body and blood of Jesus; however, Christ is also "present to meet and strengthen His people" in the experience of communion.[46] Adventists practice "the ordinance of foot washing" prior to each celebration of the Lord's Supper, on account of the gospel account of John 13:1-16.

Spiritual gifts

Adventists generally believe the legitimate gift of tongues is of speaking unlearned human languages only, and are generally critical of the gift as practiced by charismatic and Pentecostal Christians today.

Ordination of women

The Adventist Church world church does not officially, at this time, support the ordination of women to ministry within its standard procedures. Instead, women pastors in the denomination hold the title of "commissioned" rather than "ordained," which allows them to perform almost all of the pastoral functions their male colleagues perform but with a lesser title. This compromise was reached during the 1990s, with disagreement primarily occurring along cultural lines.

Historical background

During a time of religious revival in the northeastern United States, many religious movements began, including early Seventh Day Adventists. It was during the Second Great Awakening that preacher William Miller predicted Christ's return on October 22, 1844. When he was wrong (called the Great Disappointment), his following of Millerites split into several groups, including what would become modern Seventh Day Adventists, who said the date was correct, but that on that date, Jesus had begun the last phase of his atoning ministry in the "sanctuary in heaven."

In the late 1840s, the Adventist church was mostly made up of scattered groups where many disagreed on certain issues. Later, co-founder James White helped push forward a constitution for the many churches to unify under and named the denomination Seventh Day Adventist.

The few hundreds of Seventh Day Adventists grew to about 3,000 by 1863, *which is considered the official establishment of the church.*

William Miller's teachings formed the theological foundation of Seventh-day Adventism. Four topics were especially important in understanding that substructure: Miller's use of the Bible, his eschatology (*"the part of theology concerned with death, judgment, and the final destiny of the soul and of humankind"*); his perspective on the 1st and 2nd angel's messages of Revelation 14 (a prophesy that was fulfilled based on the three angels messages found in the bible <https://sdarm.org/about-us/beliefs/the-three-angels-messages>), and the seventh-month movement that ended with the "Great Disappointment".

Shared Protestant doctrine

Seventh-day Adventists uphold the central doctrines of Protestant Christianity. In the early days of the movement, it was assumed that most people to whom the church witnessed were already Christian, and that they already understood the gospel. So, they focused on the doctrines that made them distinct from other Christians.

Doctrine

The document that Seventh Day Adventists ascribe to is the 28 Fundamental Beliefs, which discuss the teachings of "Holy Scriptures." They are categorized as doctrines of God, man, salvation, church, Christian life and end day events.

The beliefs about God are:

- The Bible as the Word of God
- The Trinity as a unity of God, the Father and the Son; the Father as the creator; the Son as the God incarnate; The Holy Spirit as an inspiration for the scriptures.
That God created the world in six days
- Humans are fallen
- The conflict between Christ and Satan is a "great controversy."

On Salvation, the church says that the resurrection of Christ is atonement for human sin and that Jesus saves man. To keep this article brief the entire list is not found here. To read the details of the 28 beliefs follow the link provided here:

https://szu.adventist.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/28_Beliefs.pdf

The 28 beliefs are a more detailed outline of the items listed below.

In *Seventh-day Adventists Answer Questions on Doctrine* (1957), the authors outlined the core doctrines that they share with Protestant Christianity.

"In Common With Conservative Christians and the Historic Protestant Creeds, We Believe—

1. That God is the Sovereign Creator, upholder, and ruler of the universe, and that He is eternal, omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent.
2. That the Godhead, the Trinity, comprises God the Father, Christ the Son, and the Holy Spirit.
3. That the Scriptures are the inspired revelation of God to men; and that the Bible is the sole rule of faith and practice.
4. That Jesus Christ is very God, and that He has existed with the Father from all eternity.
5. That the Holy Spirit is a personal being, sharing the attributes of deity with the Father and the Son.
6. That Christ, the Word of God, became incarnate through the miraculous conception and the virgin birth; and that He lived an absolutely sinless life here on earth.
7. That the vicarious, atoning death of Jesus Christ, once for all, is all-sufficient for the redemption of a lost race.
8. That Jesus Christ arose literally and bodily from the grave.

9. That He ascended literally and bodily into heaven.
10. That He now serves as our advocate in priestly ministry and mediation before the Father.
11. That He will return in a premillennial, personal, imminent second advent.
12. That man was created sinless, but by his subsequent fall entered a state of alienation and depravity.
13. That salvation through Christ is by grace alone, through faith in His blood.
14. That entrance upon the new life in Christ is by regeneration, or the new birth.
15. That man is justified by faith.
16. That man is sanctified by the indwelling Christ through the Holy Spirit.
17. That man will be glorified at the resurrection or translation of the saints, when the Lord returns.
18. That there will be a judgment of all men.
19. That the gospel is to be preached as a witness to all the world."

There are many beliefs that set SDA apart from other Protestant Christians. Below is a list of five of those beliefs:

1. Ellen White Theories: Ellen White is recognized by the Seventh-day Adventist church as having received the gift of prophecy as outlined in Ephesians 4 and 1 Corinthians 12. SDA sees the written works by Ellen White as "a continuing and authoritative source of truth which provide for the church comfort, guidance, instruction, and correction,"

2. Resurrection: SDA believes when a person dies, they remain unconscious until they are resurrected. Eternal life is a gift which God only grants to those who have accepted the sacrifice of Christ on their behalf. By an act of mercy on the part of God, the wicked will be destroyed by fire. Thus, Seventh-day Adventists do not believe that a person goes to heaven for an eternal reward or to hell for never-ending torture immediately upon death.

3. Investigative judgment: SDA believe in salvation by faith in Christ alone. Good works are seen as evidence of that faith. The investigative or pre-advent judgment, which takes place in heaven before the return of Jesus, reveals to heavenly intelligences who among the dead are asleep in Jesus and will have a part in the first resurrection and who among the living are abiding in Christ and are ready for translation. This judgment vindicates the justice of God in saving those who believe in Jesus.

4. The Second Coming: SDA believes that the second coming of Christ is near and believers should be ready for it at all times. When Christ does come, the righteous Christians who had previously died will be resurrected at that time and taken to heaven. For the following 1,000 years, only Satan and his fallen angels will be living on earth. A second resurrection will occur at the end of that period. At that time Satan and his evil angels, as well as the wicked, will be destroyed. The righteous will then return to a cleansed earth, and establish the New Jerusalem.

5. Lifestyle: When it comes to lifestyle, Seventh-day Adventists hold the belief that the human body is the temple of God and thus should be cared for properly. Because of this, Adventists abstain from harmful substances like alcohol and tobacco, and maintain a vegetarian diet. Abortion is acceptable only when a woman's life is in danger, and in cases where a pregnancy poses a serious moral dilemma.

6. Their Sabbath is on Saturday

Seventh Day Adventists believe that the Sabbath begins at the end of the sixth day, which is considered Friday and lasts one day, which is Saturday. For that reason, on the Sabbath, there can be no secular labor, including any household tasks. Worship services are held on the Sabbath for the church for both worship and fellowship. Other rules for the Sabbath include avoiding weddings and funerals.

7. Adventists believe in what's called Heavenly Sanctuary.

Seventh Day Adventists believe that there is a sanctuary in heaven set up by God. There, Christ ministers on our behalf. In the first phase of this, called the ascension, Jesus became High Priest of this sanctuary. In 1844 at the end of a prophetic period of 2,300 days, Jesus entered the second phase of his atoning ministry. During this phase, Jesus' work at the heavenly sanctuary is on eradicating all sin. The Heavenly Sanctuary is considered the heavenly model for the Old Testament sanctuaries. What Israelite priests did in those sanctuaries is what Christ is now doing for us.

8. They don't believe hell is infinite torture.

Adventists believe that hell is not an eternity of suffering and torture. They believe God is just but also merciful and it's not in the nature of God to torture the unrighteous for eternity. Instead, sinners and unbelievers will ultimately die for eternity

Structure and Governance

With some 19 million members and 82,000 churches, Seventh Day Adventists follow a hierarchal network. The General Conference oversees the global ministry of the church. The General Conference is also responsible for the spiritual development of the church. It is headquartered in Silver Spring, Maryland.

The entire structure reflects a democratic process of election and formation. Each church elects their own church boards and officers, as do the other divisions. Worldwide, there are 13 divisions of the Seventh Day Adventist Church (<https://www.nadadventist.org/about-our-church/organizational-structure>).

An Interesting Detail

Christ and the Archangel Michael

Seventh-day Adventists believe that Michael is another name for the Heavenly Christ, and another name for the Word-of-God (as in John 1) before he became incarnate as Jesus. "Archangel" (meaning "Chief of the Angels") was the leadership position held by the Word-of-God as Michael while among the angels. ***According to Adventist theology, Michael was considered the "eternal Word", and not a created being or created angel, and the one by whom all things were created. The Word was then born incarnate as Jesus.***

Seventh-day Adventists believe the name "Michael" is significant in showing who it is, just as "Immanuel" (which means "God with us") is about who Jesus is. They believe that name "Michael" signifies "one who is God" and that as the "Archangel" or "chief or head of the angels" he led the angels and thus the statement in Revelation 12:7-9 identifies Jesus as Michael.

Seventh-day Adventists believe that "Michael" is but one of the many titles applied to the Son of God, the second person of the Godhead. According to Adventists, such a view does not in any way conflict with the belief in his full deity and eternal preexistence, nor does it in the least disparage his person and work.[90] They believe that Michael is also the commander of God's army which helped Joshua, son of Nun, to lead Israel in conquering Jericho.

In the Seventh-day Adventist view, the statement in some translations of 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18: "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven, with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God" identifies Jesus as Archangel, which is Michael.[92] Other translations have "For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God."1 Thessalonians 4:16 And the Seventh-day Adventists believe that John 5:25-29 also confirms that Jesus and Michael are the same.[92]

Seventh-day Adventists believe there is and can only be one archangel and that one Archangel is named Michael and yet in Scripture is shown as doing what also applies to Christ even from the beginning, so is Christ preincarnate. There was a perception that Adventists were relegating Jesus to something less than divine or less than God but that is not valid since Seventh-day Adventism theology teaching is expressly Trinitarian.