

MOUNT SINAI MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH

BIBLE STUDY

THE CORE BELIEFS OF OTHER RELIGIONS

Seventh Day Adventists

The Seventh-day Adventist Church is a global Protestant denomination known for observing Saturday as the biblical Sabbath, emphasizing a healthy lifestyle, and anticipating the imminent second coming of Jesus Christ. Founded in the 19th century, it operates a vast network of schools and hospitals, with a strong focus on holistic health and community service.

History

The church emerged from the Millerite movement in the United States in the 1840s. Following the “Great Disappointment” when Christ did not return in 1844 as predicted by William Miller, a group of believers formed the core of what became the Seventh-Day Adventist Church in 1863, emphasizing the significance of that date in heavenly, not earthly events.

Ellen White, a co-founder of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, held beliefs centered on the supreme authority of the Bible, the imminent literal second coming of Jesus, and the importance of healthy living. She advocated for seventh-day Sabbath observance, conditional immortality (soul sleep), and viewed her prophetic writings as guidance to lead people back to Scripture.

Core Theological Beliefs

- **The Bible as Sole Rule of Faith:** White believed the Bible is the ultimate authority, with her own writings designed to lead people back to it.
- **The Second Coming of Jesus:** She emphasized the urgent, literal, and visible return of Jesus Christ as the climax of salvation

- **Seventh-Day Sabbath:** She taught that the seventh day (Saturday) is the biblical Sabbath, meant to be observed as a day of rest and worship.
- **The Sanctuary Doctrine:** White held that Jesus is currently conducting a special ministry in the heavenly sanctuary, which began in 1844, involving a review of human lives.
- **Conditional Immortality/Annihilationism:** She taught that souls are not inherently immortal and that the wicked are utterly destroyed by fire rather than suffering in an eternal hell.
- **Justification by Faith:** She emphasized salvation through the merits of Christ's sacrifice, coupled with a life of obedience to God's law.

Lifestyle and Prophetic Beliefs

- **Health Reform:** White promoted a healthy lifestyle, including vegetarianism, as a spiritual duty to maintain the body as a "temple of the Holy Spirit".
- **Education:** She stressed education focusing on the development of the whole person—physical, mental, and spiritual.
- **Spirit of Prophecy:** As a co-founder of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, she believed her prophetic dreams and visions were gifts to guide the church.
- **Advocacy for Equality:** She taught that the gospel transcends color and race, advocating for the equality of all people.

Key differences between Seventh-day Adventists and many mainstream Christian denominations include:

- **Sabbath Observance:** SDAs keep the seventh day (Saturday) as the Sabbath, rather than Sunday, based on a literal interpretation of the Fourth Commandment.
- **The Investigative Judgment/Sanctuary Doctrine:** A unique belief that Christ began a special investigative work in the heavenly sanctuary in 1844, acting as a final phase of atonement

- **Prophetic Role of Ellen G. White:** While not considered equal to the Bible, the writings of co-founder Ellen G. White are viewed as inspired and a "lesser light" to guide interpretation of Scripture.
- **Dietary Laws and Health:** SDAs adhere to Old Testament dietary laws (clean/unclean meats, no alcohol, no smoking), often advocating for vegetarianism, regarding the body as a temple.
- **Annihilationism (State of the Dead):** Adventists teach that the dead are "sleeping" until the resurrection and that the wicked are completely destroyed in hell (annihilation), rather than suffering eternal torment.
- **Interpretation of Revelation:** They use a "historicist" approach to prophecy, believing the "mark of the beast" will involve forced Sunday worship in the end times.

While they have a strong focus on obedience to the Ten Commandments as an expression of love, they emphasize that salvation is by grace.