



Who are the Seventh-day Adventists?



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John Howard

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So tell me, what exactly is a Seventh-day Adventist anyway?

Answer: Seventh-day Adventists aren't those guys who shave their heads and do funny dances in the airports or refuse blood transfusions. They are not a small group on the fringe of Christianity. The Adventist church is a major worldwide Protestant denomination—a movement. They have global missions aiding in disaster and famine relief worldwide, such as ADRA. Their radio and television programs, like *'It Is Written,'* air in most major cities, while their television stations, like *Hope Channel* and *3ABN*, continue to teach clear Bible truths straight from God's word. They have famous hospitals and medical centers, like Loma Linda, as well as colleges, like Kettering, training young people in the field of medicine across the globe. They also have self-supporting natural health institutes associated with the denomination, like Weimar, helping people find natural methods of healing. Did you know that some early Seventh-day Adventists founded Little Debbie snack foods, and Kellogg's Cereal came from Adventists? Some famous Adventists you may have heard of are neurosurgeon Ben Carson, original *Little Rascal*, Darwood Kaye, and star of the reality court show, Judge Mathis. But what does the Adventist church teach and believe? Why don't you spend a few minutes to see for yourself?

Do Adventists believe that Jesus was really God, like the Father and the Holy Spirit?

Answer: Absolutely. Some say that Jesus was just a good man or perhaps a prophet, but the Bible plainly teaches that Jesus was God, which He showed the world “by many infallible proofs” (Acts 1:3). Jesus has given sufficient evidence for His divinity, and yet while He came to earth and performed miracles, giving infallible proof of His divinity, many people still refused to believe! Some churches even teach that Jesus was created by the Father, but the Bible says Jesus was “before all things” and “by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth” (Col. 1:17, 16). How could Jesus be created if nothing was created without Him? No, Adventists believe what other Protestants believe: that Jesus is fully and completely God. Why else was Jesus called “Immanuel,” “God with us” (Matt. 1:23)? And why would Isaiah 9:6 refer to Him as the “Mighty God”? Paul called Him “the eternally blessed God” (Rom. 9:5). Even God the Father referred to Jesus as “God” (Heb. 1:8), while Jesus called Himself, “I AM,” (John 8:58) a direct reference to the time God spoke to Moses on Mount Sinai (See Ex. 3:14). That’s why the Jews tried to stone Him (See John 8:59). Clearly, Jesus is God, and like other Protestants, Adventists believe that Jesus, the Father, and the Holy Spirit are One God.

Do Adventists accept the Trinity, and how can God be three Persons if He is One God?

Answer: Yes, Adventists believe that God is three individual Beings, but One God. Those who believe the Bible can't really deny this since each individual Entity is referred to as "God" (Titus 2:13; Eph. 4:6; Acts 5:3, 4). At Jesus' baptism, all three are seen working together (See Matt. 3:16, 17). They are recognized as individual Beings but referred to as "One" (Deut. 6:4)! This confuses many, but this concept is really easy to understand. In Genesis 2:24, man and woman are united and "become one flesh." If we understand how two people become one, why is it hard to understand when Jesus says, "I and My Father are one" (John 10:30)? And why is it so hard to understand how a triune God can be One? The point is, they are one in purpose, like a family. The father, mother, and child all make decisions as a family unit, working together towards the same cause. Similarly, God the Father, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit each play individual roles but are one in purpose (See 1 John 5:7). Jesus is not called the Son of God because He is a lesser god, but because He was put in the position of a son under submission to a father when He came to earth. The Spirit works in harmony with the Father and Son but in a different capacity. While they are one in purpose and are entirely equal, they are three individual Beings.

Do Seventh-day Adventists have their own version of the Bible?

Answer: No, Adventists use the same Bible that all other Protestants use. Like other Protestants, we believe that the “Bible and the Bible only” should be our rule of faith. While some claim you can only trust parts of the Bible, since it was written by men, the Bible says, “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God” (2 Tim. 3:16). While men wrote the Bible, God inspired these men with the words to write. 2 Peter 1:21 says the Bible did not come “by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.” This should not be hard to understand. If a king dictated a book to his secretary, we would not say the secretary was the author, but the king. In the same way, the men who wrote the Bible were like pencils in the hand of God, moved by His Spirit to write the words found in the Bible. That’s why the Bible is not called the word of man, but the word of God. The fact is, God wrote the Bible, and while some claim that it has been altered over the years, the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls revealed that God had preserved His book with incredible accuracy. While these scrolls showed some minor discrepancies in the writings, none of the changes were significant enough to alter the meaning of the text. Adventists still believe the Bible is a trustworthy guide for us today.

How do Seventh-day Adventists explain the dilemma of human suffering?

Answer: Jesus said, “An enemy has done this” (Matt. 13:28). God had created a “perfect” angel named Lucifer, but He gave His angels freedom to make their own choices, and Lucifer chose to rebel against God (Ezek. 28:15). As a result, his name was changed to Satan, and he “was cast out” of heaven (Rev. 12:9). Since he could no longer hurt God, he made humans his next target and set up his base of command right here on earth. Planet earth is now Satan’s new home, and the Bible says he is “walking back and forth” across the earth, wreaking havoc (Job 1:7). While many blame God for the problems in the world, the devil is the one behind all the pain and suffering. Still, God gives us the same freedom of choice that he gave the devil. As a result, we often have to suffer because of our foolish choices (See John 5:14). Others suffer because they get caught in the crossfire of other people’s choices. While all suffer, the good news is that God can bring good out of suffering, using it to build our character (See Rom. 8:28; 5:3, 4). Hebrews 12:11 says that suffering “yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.” Those who trust God through suffering will find that “the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed” (Rom. 8:18).

Do Seventh-day Adventists believe that we are saved by works or keeping the law?

Answer: Adventists believe that “by grace you have been saved through faith” (Eph. 2:8). While many expect to get to heaven on the basis of their good works, they don’t realize that God’s standard of goodness is much higher than ours. According to God’s standard, “all our righteousnesses are like filthy rags” (Isa. 64:6). That means even our best works are not good enough for God. That’s why Paul says, “There is none righteous.... for all have sinned” (Rom. 3:10, 23). This sin problem goes to the root of our nature. David says, “in sin my mother conceived me” (Psalm 51:5). Since we are born with a sinful nature, all of us have a natural desire for sin in our hearts. That’s why Jeremiah 17:9 says, “The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked.” Because of this condition, God says to “get yourselves a new heart” (Ezek. 18:31). Of course, we cannot do this on our own. “Can the Ethiopian change his skin or the leopard its spots? Then may you also do good who are accustomed to do evil” (Jer. 13:23). Of course not! On our own, we can do nothing. The only hope of salvation is if Christ gives us a new heart, we become “partakers of the divine nature,” and we are “born again” (2 Pet. 1:4; John 3:3). We do this by surrendering our life to Christ and accepting Him into the heart by faith.

Do Adventists believe that once we're saved, we cannot be lost?

Answer: That would be like saying that once you're saved, you lose your freedom to choose. Just because God won't let the devil pluck us out of His hand if we remain faithful, that doesn't mean we cannot choose to turn back to a life of sin and be lost. We are not chained to heaven once we are saved. Jesus says that some will "believe for a while and in time of temptation fall away" (Luke 8:13). Paul speaks of those "having condemnation because they have cast off their first faith" (1 Tim. 5:12). We are also told that "when a righteous man turns away from his righteousness and commits iniquity... he shall die in his sin" (Ezek. 3:20). There are many other verses that confirm this. Of course, this does not mean that we fall into a lost condition the moment we sin. We don't bounce from lost to saved every time we sin and repent. When we sin, God gives us "time to repent" (Rev. 2:21). However, if we continue in rebellion and refuse to repent, we may fall into a lost condition. Still, even those who have fallen back into a life of sin need not lose hope. The Bible assures us that while we can lose our salvation, we can also regain our salvation. God says that we can return back to Him, appealing, "Return to Me... and I will return to you," "and I will heal your backslidings" (Zech. 1:3; Jer. 3:22).

Do Adventists believe we still have to keep the commandments after we're saved by grace?

Answer: Of course. "Sin" is defined as breaking the Ten Commandments, and Paul says, "Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? Certainly not" (1 John 3:4; Rom. 6:15)! After God saves us by grace, He says that "grace is sufficient" to help us live a holy life (2 Cor. 12:9). Grace does not simply forgive our past sins, but it also gives us power to overcome the sin in our lives. Salvation is a process of extracting sin from the life and enabling us to keep the law. That's why Jesus said He did not come to do away with the law but to "fulfill" it (Matt. 5:17). Before we are born again, we don't have power to keep the law, but once we turn to Jesus, He gives us strength to obey so that the law may be "fulfilled in us" (Rom. 8:4). While this is impossible without God, "with God all things are possible" (Matt. 19:26). Those who keep the law show by their works that they are saved. That's why the Bible says, "by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments" (1 John 2:3). Since it is impossible to keep the law without God, when we obey God's law, it shows that God is working in us. While we are not saved by keeping the law, we will be "judged by the law" (Jas. 2:12). That's why only those who "do His commandments" will "have the right to the tree of life" (Rev. 22:14).

Do Seventh-day Adventists believe that the earth was created in six literal days?

Answer: Adventists, like other Protestants, believe the Bible when it says that the earth was created “in six days” (Ex. 20:11). The Bible nowhere implies that these days were not literal. It says plainly, “the evening and the morning were the first day” (Gen. 1:5), yet ironically some Christians are starting to believe in the big bang and evolutionary theories. While some are turning from the foundational teachings of the Bible to accept “falsely” created theories (1 Tim. 6:20), the Adventist church does not support the big bang or evolutionary theories. As Christians are beginning to accept these theories more and more, many scientists are starting to reject them, turning away from these theories due to a lack of evidence. The tremendous odds of a universe exploding into existence from nothing, and life evolving from non-life, require a greater leap of faith than many scientists are willing to take. There are too many unresolved questions and loose variables to accept these as scientific. As a result, “scientists who utterly reject evolution may be one of our fastest-growing controversial minorities” (*Science Digest Special*, Winter, 1979, p. 94). Adventists also reject these theories but instead believe that “in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth... and rested the seventh day” (Ex. 20:11).

Why do Adventists go to church on Saturday instead of Sunday?

Answer: Adventists go to church on Saturday because God said to. Sunday was never endorsed in the Bible. In the beginning of time, God “blessed the seventh day,” which is Saturday, “and sanctified it” (Gen. 2:3). To ‘sanctify’ means to set it aside as a holy day, for “a holy convocation” (Lev. 23:3). While some say the Sabbath is only for the Jews, the Sabbath was instituted at the beginning of time, long before the Jewish nation existed. God then put it in the heart of the law, tagged with the word ‘remember.’ God said, “Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy” (Ex. 20:8). Every time the Bible speaks of the Sabbath, it is talking about Saturday, the seventh day of the week. Saturday is the day God commanded His people to worship on, and Saturday worship has continued all through the Bible. Jesus and His followers went to church on Saturday (See Luke 4:16, 23:56). After the resurrection, Paul and the apostles kept the Sabbath all through the New Testament (See Acts 17:2, 18:4). While some may try to deny it, historical records confirm that it wasn’t until after the apostles died off that the Catholic Church, by their own admission, changed the Sabbath from Saturday to Sunday without any support from the Bible. Adventists are simply trying to remain consistent with the Bible.

Did Jesus change the Sabbath from Saturday to Sunday in honor of the resurrection?

Answer: Nowhere in the Bible does it suggest that the Sabbath was changed to Sunday to honor the resurrection. On the contrary! The fact that Jesus rose on Sunday is the greatest evidence that the Sabbath was still intact after the cross. Just as God rested on the Sabbath after creation, Jesus rested on the Sabbath after the work of redemption. Jesus did not wait to rise in order to make Sunday a new Sabbath, but to honor the Sabbath He already made! While some try to twist a few verses that reference the first day of the week to suggest that God changed the Sabbath to Sunday, there is no evidence in the Bible to support this theory. If God was going to change one of the commandments, don't you think He would have made it clear? And yet, while there is a clear command to observe Saturday, the seventh day, there is no command to observe Sunday, the first day, or to change the day of worship after the resurrection. Instead, we find that after Jesus died, instead of embalming His body, the disciples "rested on the Sabbath according to the commandment" (Luke 23:56). Paul, who wasn't even converted until after the resurrection, continued to keep the Sabbath, "as his custom was" (Acts 17:2). And we consistently see the followers of Jesus honoring the Sabbath after the resurrection (Acts 13:42, 16:13, 18:4).

Do Adventists really think that God cares about what day we worship on?

Answer: Isn't it strange that most Christians speak very openly against how bad it is to break one of the other nine commandments, but many have gotten the idea that we don't have to keep the fourth commandment, which begins with the word "Remember" (Ex. 20:8). Some act like the Sabbath is a less important commandment, but James 2:10 says, "whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all." In God's eyes, there is no such thing as a less important commandment. All through history, the observance of the Sabbath has been very important to God, and He has been frustrated by people violating His holy day. God has always considered this a serious offense. It is no different today. He laments that His people "have not distinguished between the holy and the unholy... and they have hidden their eyes from My Sabbaths," treating it like any other day (Ezek. 22:26). While many know what the Bible says, they take God's word lightly, acting like He no longer cares about obedience, but He does. Jesus said, "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father" (Matt. 7:21). Adventists simply believe God means what He says, and if we love Him, we will strive to obey Him in all things.

Don't the Seventh-day Adventists set dates for the second coming of Jesus?

Answer: Adventists don't believe in date-setting. The Bible says that no one knows the "day and hour" Jesus will return (Matt. 24:36), but Paul adds that "you, brethren, are not in darkness, so that this Day [the second coming of Jesus] should overtake you as a thief" (1 Thess. 5:4). While we will not know the exact day or hour Jesus comes, signs of the end are all around us. Threats of war, economic collapse, changing weather patterns, increasing technological advances, and declining morality are only a few of the signs that the world is quickly nearing its end. While some "scoffers" would like to think that "all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation" (2 Pet. 3:3, 4), it doesn't take a rocket scientist to see that the world is rapidly changing, and yet instead of looking to the Bible as a fulfillment of the signs, many look to science for the answers. As a result, they are lulled into a false assurance that God is nowhere to be seen while His coming is imminent. The words of Jesus are still relevant today. "You know how to discern the face of the sky, but you cannot discern the signs of the times," in spite of the fact that the signs are all around us (Matt. 16:3). No, Adventists don't believe in date-setting, but like many other Protestants, we do believe that Jesus is coming back very soon.

What do Adventists teach regarding what happens to a person when they die?

Answer: According to the Bible, when we die, we go to the “grave” and wait “in the dust” for the resurrection, for the “dead do not praise the Lord, nor any who go down into silence” (Job 17:13, 16; Ps. 115:17). We are told that when a man dies, “his sons come to honor, and he does not know it” (Job 14:21). That is because “the dead know nothing” (Eccl. 9:5). They have no memory, thoughts, or emotions. That’s why Solomon says, “Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with your might; for there is no work or device or knowledge or wisdom in the grave” (Eccl. 9:10). When a man dies, “in that very day his thoughts perish” (Ps. 146:4 KJV). While many believe that the soul goes straight to heaven when we die, the Bible says otherwise. We are told that even David is not in heaven, but he is “both dead and buried,” still in his tomb, waiting for the resurrection, for “David did not ascend into the heavens” (Acts 2:29, 34). If David is not in heaven, then the saints don’t go straight to heaven at death. This is why the Bible speaks so hopefully of the resurrection of believers (See 1 Thess. 4:15-17). Think about it. Why would there be a resurrection if our spirit went straight to heaven at death? No, the Bible says the dead rest in the grave until they are raised to receive their reward of “immortality” (1 Cor. 15:53).

Don't Adventists believe that man was created with an inherently immortal soul?

Answer: No. While many Christians believe the soul is immortal, the doctrine of the immortal soul is a pagan doctrine that was carried into Christianity when the early church mingled with the pagans. In spite of its wide acceptance in the churches of our day, you will find no verse in the Bible that refers to man as inherently immortal. Instead, the Bible only refers to man as “mortal,” while it refers to the “Lord of lords, who alone has immortality” (Job 4:17; 1 Tim. 6:15, 16). The Bible says that only God is inherently immortal but adds that believers may receive the gift of immortality if they are faithful. That’s why John 3:16 says, “whoever believes in Him [Jesus] should not perish but have everlasting life.” Notice the contrast. Those who don’t believe will perish, while those who believe will receive everlasting life, or immortality. That’s why Paul says that at the resurrection, “the dead will be raised,” then “this mortal” must “put on immortality” (1 Cor. 15:52, 54). God has “abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel,” but God will only grant “eternal life to those who by patient continuance in doing good seek for glory, honor, and immortality” (2 Tim. 1:10; Rom. 2:7). Immortality is only a gift that is given to the righteous at the resurrection.

Do Adventists, like many other churches, believe the wicked will burn in hell forever?

Answer: According to the Bible, the wicked are “reserved for judgment” (2 Pet. 2:4). If they are reserved for judgment, they are not burning now. Also, while a few verses may seem to say that hell burns forever, the majority of Bible verses reveal the opposite. David says, “For a little while and the wicked shall be no more; Indeed, you will look diligently for his place, but it shall be no more” (Psalm 37:10). Obadiah says the same thing, stating that the wicked “shall be as though they had never been” (Ob. 1:16). While the symbolic book of Revelation says that “the smoke of their torment ascends forever” (Rev. 14:11), this is symbolically saying that the wicked are “destroyed forever” (Ps. 92:7). That is, they are destroyed and will never live again. The fire will “burn them up,” leave “neither root nor branch,” and all that will be left of them will be “ashes under the souls of your feet” (Mal. 4:1, 3). Isaiah 47:14 says that after the fire burns them up, there “shall not be a coal to be warmed by, nor a fire to sit before.” In the end, “Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death” (Rev. 20:14). The lake of fire is called the second death because everyone dies once, then when the wicked are raised at “the judgment,” they die a second and final time in the fires of “hell” (Heb. 9:27; Matt. 10:28).

What do the Adventists teach about the period that Christians refer to as the millennium?

Answer: The time period that many Christians refer to as the millennium is a thousand-year period that will take place at the end of the world. The Bible speaks of two resurrections in which all will be raised, “those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation” (John 5:29). The first resurrection occurs at the second coming of Jesus. At that time, the wicked are destroyed by “the brightness of His coming,” and the saints are raised from the dead and taken to heaven to reign “with Christ for a thousand years” (2 Thess. 2:8; Rev. 20:4). During this time, Satan and his angels are chained to the earth to contemplate their crimes, while God’s people are in heaven, looking over the books of judgment, “and judgment was committed to them” (Rev. 20:4). God allows His followers to review the judgment books to see why their loved ones did not make it to heaven before He returns to earth to destroy the wicked. After “the thousand years have expired,” once God’s people have reviewed the books and seen that God’s judgment is fair, God will return for the second resurrection (Rev. 20:7). At that time, the wicked will be raised, and God will destroy the wicked, making an end of sin and sinners once and for all (See Rev. 20:5, 9, 10).

Do Seventh-day Adventists believe that heaven is a real place?

Answer: Absolutely. Jesus Himself made this clear when He said, “I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also” (John 14:3). According to the Bible, when Jesus returns at the end of the millennium, this earth will pass away, and the holy city will be brought “down out of heaven from God” to this earth (Rev. 21:2). At that time, the meek “shall inherit the earth,” for God “has prepared a city for them” (Matt. 5:5; Hebrews 11:16). This heavenly city is described as a beautiful city where God’s people will live forever. The Bible says, “Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him” (1 Cor. 2:9). Heaven will be better than anything you could possibly imagine. In heaven, there will be “pleasures forevermore,” and God will “give you the desires of your heart” (Ps. 16:11; 37:4). We are also told that in heaven, “there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying; and there shall be no more pain” (Rev. 21:4). Our heavenly bodies will never die, and we will not grow “weary” because we will be given an amazing new “glorious body” (Isa. 40:31; Phil. 3:21). No more pain, suffering, or death. Yes, rest assured, heaven is real and better than you could possibly imagine. You don’t want to miss out.

Don't Seventh-day Adventists put a big emphasis on healthy living?

Answer: Yes. Because the Bible has much to say about health, Adventists believe it is important. Jesus spent much of His time healing because He knew that when the physical health is poor, it affects other areas of life. 3 John 1:2 says to “be in health, just as your soul prospers,” showing a connection between physical health and spiritual health. Solomon adds, “a merry heart does good, like medicine,” showing a connection between physical health and mental health (Prov. 17:22). The Bible shows a connection between physical, mental, and spiritual health because when we are physically or mentally burdened, it puts more strain on our faith. That’s why the Bible says, “whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God” (1 Cor. 10:31). We should not be like the world, “whose god is their belly,” but Christians should be “temperate in all things,” trying to follow God’s optimal diet (Phil. 3:19; 1 Cor. 9:25). Since meat was not part of God’s original diet and we won’t eat animals in heaven (See Gen. 1:29; Isa. 65:25), Adventists encourage a vegetarian diet as a healthier alternative. While a vegetarian diet is not a command, God does give health laws and guidelines in the Bible, promising that if we obey, He will “put none of the diseases on you” that are so common today (Ex. 15:26).

Do Adventists follow the health laws given in the Old Testament?

Answer: While Adventists do not follow Jewish sanctuary laws regarding eating animal sacrifices, which ended at the cross, the basic health laws given by God did not change after the cross. Think about it. If a certain kind of meat was harmful to eat, would the cross change the nature of the meat? Of course not! While God allowed man to eat meat, there were certain meats that were so bad for people that God forbade His followers to eat them. The animals were divided into clean, which were okay to eat, and unclean, which were not to be eaten. God said you shall not eat “those that chew the cud or those that have cloven hooves” (Lev. 11:4), which includes pork. Among the birds, we are to basically avoid birds of prey, and of the fish, we are told, “Whatever in the water does not have fins or scales,” like catfish and shrimp, “shall be an abomination to you” (Lev. 11:12). These unclean meats were harmful in the past, and they are still just as harmful today. In spite of this, some Christians have twisted a few Bible verses to support the eating of unclean meats, and these twisted scriptures are wreaking havoc among the health of Christians across the globe. If God said some meat should be avoided, it is still in our best interest to obey the command of God and avoid them (See Leviticus 11).

Do Seventh-day Adventists believe a person has to be baptized to go to heaven?

Answer: Like most Protestants, Adventists teach the necessity of baptism. Jesus said, “unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God” (John 3:5). The “water” birth is a reference to baptism. That’s why Jesus said, “He who believes and is baptized will be saved,” implying that those who are not baptized will not be saved (Mark 16:16). Of course, there are exceptions. Some don’t realize the importance of baptism, others may not have the opportunity (See Luke 23:42, 43), and children may die before they are old enough to get baptized. In such cases, God overlooks neglect or “ignorance” (Acts 17:30), but once someone is old enough, has the ability, and understands their responsibility, it is important to stand for Christ and be baptized. Since salvation must be a personal decision, the Adventist church does not support baby baptism. According to the Bible, we must be able to “reason” (Isa. 1:18). Since babies cannot “repent” or “confess” their sins (Acts 2:38; 1 John 1:9), children should wait until they are old enough to make a personal decision for Christ. Until then, they are under grace. Once old enough, they should get baptized, by being fully immersed under the water, and then rise “up from the water,” as seen in the example of Jesus and the apostles (Mark 1:10; See Acts 8:38).

Doesn't the Adventist church have really high standards?

Answer: Sure. Shouldn't all Christians? It's such a shame that so many people who claim to be Christians today make little or no effort to obey the teachings of Jesus. Many professed believers get drunk, tell lies, engage in premarital sex, and do other things that God warns against, while the Bible clearly says that "those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God" (Gal. 5:21). Of course, no one is perfect, but that doesn't mean that we should not strive against sin. The Bible says, "Whoever has been born of God does not sin" (1 John 3:9). That doesn't mean that we never slip, but it means that when we are born again, we don't go on living the same way we used to live before we accepted Christ. We start to change. God calls His people to holiness, urging us to "be holy, for I am holy" (1 Pet. 1:16). This theme is found all through the Bible, from the beginning to the end. In Genesis 4:7, God tells us that "sin lies at the door... but you should rule over it." In the end, Jesus says we must overcome sin, "as I also overcame" (Rev. 3:21). No, the Adventist church certainly isn't full of perfect people, but that doesn't mean that we should lower the standard. The fact that sin is so prevalent today is all the more reason that Christians should hold up the standard, striving to live more like Jesus.

What is the Seventh-day Adventist view on the marriage relationship?

Answer: The Adventist church still believes in the sanctity of the marriage covenant, as given in the beginning and confirmed by Christ when He said, “Have you not read that He who made them at the beginning ‘made them male and female,’ and said, ‘For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh’?” (Matt. 19:4, 5). The Bible says that marriage is a sacred covenant between a man and a woman. Because the marriage covenant is a sacred institution that was ordained by God at the beginning of creation, the Adventist church strongly discourages divorce. We believe, as most churches teach, or once taught, that divorce is sin, as affirmed in Malachi 2:16, where we are told that God “hates divorce.” Clearly, if God hates divorce, it must be considered sinful, so believers are encouraged to remain faithful to their vows, if possible. While some occasions are acceptable for separation, the Bible gives only two valid reasons for divorce. From a biblical viewpoint, divorce is permitted if the partner commits adultery or if an unbelieving spouse refuses to remain in the relationship (See Matt. 5:32; 1 Cor. 7:15). Still, while getting divorced is considered a sin, it is not unforgivable. Those who repent can still receive God’s forgiveness and grace (See John 4:16-42).

What is the view of the Seventh-day Adventist on the issue of stewardship?

Answer: Adventists believe, as the Bible teaches, that we are to be good stewards of all our resources, including time, energy, and finances. According to the Bible, our lives and all that we own come from God. Psalm 24:1 says, “The earth is the Lord’s, and all its fullness,” and yet, from our financial gains, God only asks for a ten percent tithe in return (See Gen. 28:22). This is to be a freewill offering done out of appreciation to God. Paul says, “let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver” (2 Cor. 9:7). Each is to give tithes and offerings according to how the Lord has blessed them, then the church distributes the money evenly among pastors (See 1 Cor. 9:14), so pastors of large churches do not get overpaid to the neglect of those with smaller churches. While God doesn’t need our money, obedience in paying tithe shows that we love Him more than money and trust Him to take care of our needs. Those who withhold tithe “rob God,” showing that they have no faith in Him. On the other hand, when we pay tithe, putting faith in God to provide for us, He says that He will take care of our needs, promising to “open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you such a blessing that there will not be room enough to receive it” (Mal. 3:8, 10).

Do Adventists believe the rapture will come before the literal second coming of Christ?

Answer: One of the most common verses used to support the rapture says Jesus will return “with the trumpet of God. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air” (1 Thess. 4:16, 17). Jesus comes on clouds with the sound of a trumpet, and the saints are taken to heaven. While some suggest that this is speaking of a pre-tribulation rapture, a parallel picture of the literal second coming shows the Lord “coming on the clouds... with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect” (Matt. 24:30, 31). While both events show Jesus coming on the clouds, with the sound of a trumpet, to gather the saints, Matthew says this takes place immediately “after the tribulation” (Matt. 24:29). Clearly, both are talking about the same event, but Jesus says this takes place right “after the tribulation.” After this, Jesus goes on to say that “one will be taken and the other left” (Matt. 24:41). While some claim the ones “taken” are raptured, the Bible compares them to those “destroyed” in “the flood” (Luke 17:36, 27; Matt. 24:39). Those taken are destroyed by “the brightness of His coming” (2 Thess. 2:8). While the idea of a pre-tribulation rapture makes a great movie, those who study the issue will find that it is more fiction than fact.

Do Adventists think they have a special message to give to the world?

Answer: All Christians should feel that they have a special message to give. Jesus said that the “gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come” (Matt. 24:14). Notice three points. First, the gospel is to be preached. Second, it is preached to the whole world. Third, the end comes after the gospel is preached. This prophecy is fulfilled in Revelation 14:6-15, where we once again see all three points. We see “the everlasting gospel” being preached “to every nation,” and after this, Jesus returns to reap “the harvest of the earth” (Rev. 14:6, 15). If you study the prophecy, you will notice that, couched inside the call to preach the gospel are three warning messages that Christians are called to give to the world before Jesus returns. The first warning is to prepare for the judgment. The second warning is to come out of the false churches of Babylon. The third warning is to avoid the mark of the beast. While the gospel must go to the world, it is couched in the middle of these three urgent messages to prepare the world for the imminent return of Christ. Just as Noah’s appeal to get on the ark was a warning to prepare for the end of the world as they knew it, Christians today are called to give the world a warning to prepare for the soon return of Christ.

Do Adventists keep the feast days that were kept in the Old Testament sanctuary service?

Answer: No. The sanctuary feasts ended at “the cross” when “Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us” (Col. 2:14; 1 Cor. 5:7). Under the New Covenant, Jesus brought “an end to sacrifice and offering” (Dan. 9:27). That is why we no longer kill lambs when we sin, as they did under the Old Covenant. Still, Adventists believe the sanctuary service has much to offer Christians. We know this is true because an entire book in the New Testament is devoted to the sanctuary service. Hebrews explains how the old earthly sanctuary service was a model of the heavenly sanctuary. As a model car is just a visual representation to show what the real car is like, the earthly sanctuary was a visual representation of the real sanctuary in heaven, where Christ is working as our heavenly High Priest. While many wonder what Jesus has been doing since He returned to heaven, the sanctuary is the key that unlocks this mystery. The Bible says, “Christ came as High Priest of the good things to come,” “For Christ has not entered the holy places made with hands, which are copies of the true, but into heaven itself” (Heb. 9:11, 24). According to Hebrews, the sanctuary on earth was a copy pointing ahead to the real thing, which is going on now, where Christ is ministering on our behalf “with His own blood” (Heb. 9:12).

Doesn't the Seventh-day Adventist church believe in modern prophets?

Answer: Certainly. While some churches claim to have lots of prophets and others say there are no more prophets, Adventists hold a very balanced view on this subject. We believe that the gift of prophecy is not common, but it is still available today. The New Testament affirms this, naming “prophets” among the gifts of the church (Eph. 4:11; 1 Cor. 12:28). Even after Jesus returned to heaven, the church continued to have men and women prophets (Acts 11:27; 15:32; 21:9). While Jesus said we should “beware of false prophets,” the fact that Christ warned against false prophets in the last days implies that there will also be true prophets (Matt. 7:15). In fact, the Bible predicts the revival of the gift of prophecy as a sign of the end times (See Joel 2:28), even foretelling an end-time movement that will “keep the commandments of God [including the Sabbath] and have the testimony of Jesus,” which “is the spirit of prophecy” (Rev. 12:17; 19:10). So while we are not to believe anyone who claims to be a prophet, we should not immediately discard them as a false prophet on the word of others. Remember, many prophets in the Bible were accused of being false prophets, so take Paul’s advice. “Do not despise prophecies. Test all things” (1 Thess. 5:20, 21). Consider the issue and keep an open mind.

If doctrines cause divisions, do the different doctrines of a church really matter to God?

Answer: Certainly. Doctrines are simply teachings on certain subjects. Even pagans establish their lives by doctrines. Do you believe Satan is real? Do you believe you were created or evolved? What do you believe happens after a person dies? Our beliefs are doctrines, and they are important because what a person believes influences how they live and how they relate to God. Let me illustrate. Imagine that you have a puzzle of Jesus. The doctrines are kind of like puzzle pieces. Each piece of the puzzle helps you get a clearer picture of who Jesus is, but if you put a puzzle piece in the wrong place, it distorts the picture of Jesus, so a correct understanding of doctrines is extremely important to your relationship with Jesus. Those who say doctrines don't matter or claim we should set aside doctrines that are "less important" are saying that some aspects of God are not important enough to defend. On the contrary! While we should strive for "unity," unity should not be established "contrary to the doctrine" of the church (Eph. 4:3; Rom. 16:17)! That is, we should not lay aside doctrinal differences for the sake of unity, nor should we unite in spite of fundamental differences. Doctrine must be the foundation of our unity as Christians. That's why Jude tells us to "contend earnestly for the faith" (Jude 3).

If we all worship the same God, does it matter what denomination a person belongs to?

Answer: When Jesus was asked where one ought to worship, Jesus said, “salvation is of the Jews” (John 4:22). While other groups had splintered off from Israel, Jesus didn’t say, “We all worship the same God.” Instead, He said, “salvation is of the Jews,” because the Jews had more truth. While many today wonder if God has a church with more truth than others, Revelation gives the answer. It shows parallel prophecies of two women (Rev. 12, 17). Since women are symbols of the church, these are prophecies of two very different churches (See Eph. 5:23; 2 Cor. 11:2). One woman is a harlot, depicting the fallen churches in the last days that have mingled with the world and compromised their values (See Ezek. 23:4, 5; Rev. 17:1-2). God says these churches as “fallen,” appealing, “Come out of her, my people, lest you share in her sins” (Rev. 18:4). Of course, God would not call people out of the fallen churches without having a faithful church for them to go into, as seen in Revelation 12:17, where God’s followers are distinguished by the fact that they “keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus,” “the spirit of prophecy” (Rev. 12:17; 19:10). While God has faithful followers in every church, Revelation reveals that God has a faithful church that keeps the commandments, and it is our job to find it.

What can I do to get more information about or become a member of the Adventist church?

Answer: Perhaps your beliefs vary a little from the things presented here, or maybe they don't. Either way, if you like what you read and would like to learn more about the Seventh-day Adventist church, you have several options. If you want to check into Seventh-day Adventist beliefs and find out about the origins of the movement on your own, go to our official website at adventist.org, or you can look at other Adventist related websites stocked with free audio sermons, videos, and reading materials, such as itiswritten.com, or amazingfacts.org. Or check out audioverse.org. If you would like to purchase Adventist books, go to adventistbookcenter.com, the official Adventist book store, and pick up our best-seller, *Steps to Christ*, or discover the origins of the movement in the classic, *The Great Controversy*, by Ellen G. White. If you want to be more proactive, we invite you to stop by for a visit! You can find a Seventh-day Adventist church near you at adventist.org, under the 'find a church' link. We worship every Saturday, and many churches have Wednesday evening Bible study. When you stop by, tell the pastor that you would like someone to study the Adventist doctrines with you, and they will be happy to help you. God bless you, and we look forward to seeing you soon!

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