

THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST

SPREADING THE SOUL-SAVING MESSAGE OF JESUS

ANSWERING DENOMINATIONAL DOCTRINES “Seventh Day Adventists”

Introduction by narrator accompanied by a cappella singing:

THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST. Spreading the soul-saving message of Jesus. And now, Ben Bailey.

“In that He says, ‘a new covenant,’ He has made the first obsolete. Now what is becoming obsolete is growing old and is ready to vanish away” (Heb. 8:13). Welcome to our study on Answering Denominational Doctrines. In this lesson we will be examining Seventh Day Adventist doctrine. We will take the Bible, which is our only authority, and to which we must not add or subtract, and we are going to examine the doctrines of Seventh Day Adventists in view of Scripture. Remember that these lessons are designed to reach out to those who are caught up in religious error, who are seeking after God’s Word, and who want to go to Heaven, yet perhaps have gotten caught up in some of the error that these people teach. Is Seventh Day Adventist doctrine compatible with Christianity? Must we keep the seventh day Sabbath, and must we keep the teaching of Christ? Can we be under part of the Old Law and the New Law at the same time? Are those ideas compatible? Let’s see today what the Bible says.

First and foremost we want to begin by noting that the founders of the Seventh Day Adventist religion can be clearly identified from their own writings and from history as false prophets. Let me give you an example. William Miller, who was one of the founders of the Seventh Day Adventist movement, said, “I was thus brought in 1818, at the close of my two-year study of Scripture, to the solemn conclusion that in about twenty-five years from this time, 1818, all the affairs of our present state would be wound up.” What happened twenty-five years after 1818? Was the world “wound up”? Was everything done away with? Did that prophecy come to fulfillment? Absolutely not! We are still here, and those predictions did not come true. What can we learn from this? William Miller was not a spokesman of God. He was not a prophet of God. He was a deceiver and a liar. And we must not listen to his words.

Let me give you another example. Coinciding with Miller’s first prophecy, he further stated that at some point during the Jewish year—running from March 21, 1843, through March 21, 1844—Christ would return. Did that happen? Between March 21, 1843, and March 21, 1844, did Jesus come back? Absolutely not! The world is still here. The text of 2 Peter 3: 10-12 teaches that when Christ returns, the heavens and the Earth will be dissolved. Jesus has not come back. So we learn again that Miller made prophecies that were untrue. He claimed to be a spokesman for God, and laid out much doctrine. But that doctrine is not the doctrine of God. Let’s be reminded of Deuteronomy 18:22. Notice how the Scripture teaches us to deal with a false prophet. The Bible says in Deuteronomy 18:22, “When a prophet speaks in the name of the Lord, if the thing does not happen or come to pass, that is the thing which the Lord has not spoken; the prophet has spoken it presumptuously; you shall not be afraid of him.” How should we feel about William Miller and his prophecies? He is not a spokesman of God. He did not tell the truth. He has deceived multiplied millions. And we need to very leery of anything he said of taught.

But what about Ellen G. White, who often is viewed as one of the founders of the Seventh Day Adventist movement? Was she a prophet of God? Let's examine the evidence and see. Concerning the statement that Miller made about the end of the world, Ellen White said, "I have seen that the 1843 chart of William Miller was directed by the hand of the Lord, and should not be altered. The figures were as He wanted them to be." What is she saying? She is saying, "I agree. In 1843 everything will come to an end. Miller's chart was 'by the hand of God,' and I have seen that." But Jesus did not come back, and the world did not end during that period in 1843-1844. White claimed that "the hand of God" was behind Miller's work, so she, too, is seen as a false prophet. In fact, she did not make just one or two false prophecies; she made multiplied false prophecies. For example, Ellen White prophesied that the world would end in 1843. It did not happen then. She prophesied that the world would end in 1844. But it still didn't end. What did she do? She prophesied that it would end in 1845. It still didn't happen. She prophesied that it would end in 1851, but it still didn't happen. Eventually she wrote, "Now in 1851, time is almost finished. And what we have been six years in learning, they will have to learn in months." Time still wasn't going to come to an end after 1851 because she was not a prophet of God. Over and over and over again these founders of these manmade religious groups claim something is "of God," yet every time it fails. I am pleading with you today: If you have been listening to William Miller or Ellen G. White, and have gotten caught up in their doctrine, you need to realize that they were false prophets. They were not spokesmen for God, but spoke presumptuously. We do not have to be fearful of what they said.

What are some of the main doctrines that they promoted? What is Seventh Day Adventism all about? One of the main doctrines is that Christians must keep the Sabbath, which was commanded under the Old Law. Seventh Day Adventists say that the beneficent Creator, after the six days of creation, rested on the seventh day and instituted the Sabbath for all people as a memorial of creation. In essence they say that when God rested on the seventh day, He sanctified it, and it was for all people for all time. Realize today that Sabbath keeping was not a command based on creation for all people. What happened in Genesis 1 and 2? Yes, God rested on the Sabbath. But here is what you do not see. You do not see in Genesis a command for God to keep the Sabbath. There are not accounts of any such actions. There are no examples of people being condemned for not keeping the Sabbath. The Sabbath was not used to give a law until God began to lead Israel out of the land of Egypt. Keeping the Sabbath was not for the original people in Genesis. God rested, but He never made that a command for man until He began to lead His people out of Egyptian bondage. But that is really not the point. Even if we gave up the argument and said, "Yes, God commanded it" (for which there is no evidence), what would that prove for us today? It's a big smokescreen. **So what** if someone in Genesis 2 and 3 (in Old Testament times) kept the Sabbath law? Are Christians to keep the Sabbath law today? The answer is clearly "No!" Such a command began with the Law of Moses, was for the Jews only, and ultimately was nailed to the cross, which makes it not binding on us today. In Jeremiah 31:31-32 we learn in what time frame God began to reveal His law, including the Sabbath, to people. Jeremiah 31:31-32 says,

"Behold, the days are coming," says the Lord, "when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah—not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, though I was a husband to them," says the Lord."

When did God begin to reveal His first covenant? It was on the day that He began to take the Israelites out of the land of Egypt. In Exodus 16:23 and Exodus 20:8 we see God commanding people to keep the Sabbath. From that point on, it was a law for Israel. Is it a law for us today? Notice Nehemiah 9:14, which teaches us that keeping the Sabbath was not

a law intended for people prior to God leading the people out of Egypt, and that it is not a law for us today. This text tells us that the Sabbath has not always been kept. "You made known to them Your holy Sabbath, and commanded them precepts, statutes and laws, by the hand of Moses Your servant." If people had always been keeping the Sabbath, why did God, when He led the Israelites out of Egypt by the hand of Moses, have to tell them about it? He had to tell them because they had not been keeping the Sabbath before. It was something that God began at that point in time. Someone might say, "You mean to tell me that the Sabbath law was not given to people prior to the Exodus from Egypt?" Notice the words of Psalm 147:19-20, which makes it abundantly clear that it was not given prior to that time: "He declares His word to Jacob, His statutes and His judgments to Israel. He has not dealt thus with any nation; and as for His judgments, they have not known them. Praise the Lord." Here is what is being said in this context. God is talking of the people of Israel, and He said, "They have not known them because I did not give them My judgments." What does that mean? Some people say, "The Gentiles have always had God's Sabbath law." No, they have not. God said, "They have not known them." The Gentiles did know the Sabbath law because they did not have the Sabbath law. It has not always been a command for everyone. In fact, Deuteronomy 5:3 makes that clear: "The Lord did not make this covenant with our fathers, but with us, those who are here today, all of us who are alive." What "covenant" is under discussion in that passage? It was the covenant of the Ten Commandments, including the Sabbath law. Thus, the Sabbath law is not a "law of creation" given to all people that must be kept today. In fact, the Ten Commandments (including the Sabbath law) were done away with and were nailed to the cross (Col. 2:14). Romans 7:1 tells us that we are dead to the law so that we can be married to Christ. Thus, observing the Sabbath is not a law for us today. Let me make this crystal clear. Notice Ephesians 2:14-15, and see what the Bible says about the Old Law of the Ten Commandments.

"He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation, having abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man from the two, thus making peace."

What does Ephesians 2:14-15 teach? Jesus abolished in His flesh the law of commandments. What "law of commandments"? The Ten Commandment law, which was representative of the Old Testament law. If Jesus abolished it in His flesh, and if the Sabbath law was one of those laws, then we can know that it was done away with at the cross, and that we are not under that law today. In fact, the Scriptures teach that Jews cannot condemn Christians for not keeping the Sabbath. Colossians 2:16 says, "Let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or Sabbaths." We cannot be condemned for not observing the Sabbath since it is not a law for Christians today. The Christian day of worship, as seen in Scripture, is the first day of the week. In Acts 20:7 we see that Christians came together on the first day of the week "to break bread." We know that there was a regularity to their coming together on the first day of every week (1 Cor. 16:1-2). So yes, God did give a specific day for Christians' worship. The day that Jesus was raised from the dead, and the day that Christians came together to worship, is a day of great significance for Christians today. It is not the seventh day (the Sabbath), but the first day of the week.

Someone might say, "I've heard some arguments that Seventh Day Adventists give, saying that we need to keep the Sabbath today." Let's deal with those arguments for just a minute. One of the arguments is that Jesus kept the Sabbath, which means that we must keep it, too. In Mark 2 Jesus said that He was "Lord of the Sabbath." The argument is that you want Jesus to be Lord of your life, and if He is Lord of the Sabbath, you must keep the Sabbath. However, let's keep Mark 2 in its context. Jesus was a Jew talking to Jews about the Jew-

ish Law. I am not a Jew. And you likely are not a Jew. That law was not given to us (Ps. 147:19-20). Jesus lived and died under the Jewish Law. But remember that that Law was nailed to the cross. And from that time on we have not kept the Sabbath.

Someone might ask, "What about Paul? In the Book of Acts Paul went into synagogues and observed the Sabbath." Wait a minute. That is a complete misrepresentation of what the Scripture says. Did Paul, on the Sabbath, go into the synagogues to teach the Gospel? Absolutely! But you will never find a time in the Book of Acts when Paul observed the Sabbath. Paul went to the synagogues seeking an opportunity to teach religious people about Christ and Christianity, and to urge them to come out of the Old Law.

Someone might ask, "What about Hebrews 4:9? The word 'Sabbath' is used there." Hebrews 4:9 says, "There remains therefore a rest for the people of God." The word "rest" is akin to the word for "Sabbath." So what's under discussion here? Is God saying that Christians still have to remember the Sabbath today? Think about what happened on the Sabbath. You can clearly understand from the context that this is not what is being said. A Jew worked for six days, had a day of rest on the seventh day, and then began the work cycle all over again. That is not the Sabbath that is under discussion in Hebrews 4:9. Notice that verse 10 teaches that. "For he who has entered His rest has himself also ceased from his works as God did from His." What does this verse teach us? When we enter "this rest," we cease from work. When a person entered the Sabbath, did he or she "cease from works, as God did from His," never to do any more work again? Absolutely not! The person who rested on the Sabbath would start the cycle all over again. Hebrews 4:9 is speaking of "eternal rest." Revelation 14:13 says, "'Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.' 'Yes,' says the Spirit, 'that they may rest from their labors, and their works follow them.'"

Someone might say, "But the Sabbath was blessed by God." There are many things in the Old Testament that were blessed by God. The tassels on the priests' garments were blessed. Animal sacrifices were blessed. The Levitical priesthood was blessed. The Sabbath was blessed. But does that mean that such things are still binding? We do not offer animal sacrifices today. We do not have a Levitical priesthood. We do not wear tassels on our garments. All those things that were blessed also have been done away with at the cross of Jesus Christ.

So should we be remembering the Sabbath Day? Absolutely not! We are not under the Sabbath law—which leads right into our next point. We are not under the Ten Commandment Law at all. Sometimes those who believe in Seventh Day Adventist doctrine will say, "There are two laws at work here. The first is the ceremonial Law of Moses, and there is the Law of God or the moral law. The ceremonial law has been done away with, but the moral law has not. The seventh day is part of the moral law." Seventh Day Adventists make a distinction that God did not make in Scripture. In fact, if you read Ezra 7:6,12, the words "Law of Moses" and "Law of the Lord" are used interchangeably because they are one and the same. But let's hear that from the lips of Jesus. Jesus and His inspired New Testament writers noted that there are not two different laws. The Law of Moses and the Law of the Lord are one and the same. Look in Luke 2:22-24, which says,

"Now when the days of her purification according to the law of Moses were completed, they brought Him [Jesus] to Jerusalem to present Him to the Lord (as it is written in the law of the Lord, 'Every male who opens the womb shall be called holy to the Lord'), and to offer a sacrifice according to what is said in the law of the Lord, 'A pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons.'"

Notice that in verse 22 we see "the law of Moses," while in verse 23 we see "the law of the Lord." The Bible does not make a distinction between the Law of Moses (the ceremonial

law) and the Law of the Lord (the moral law). They are one and the same. If the Law of Moses has been abolished at the cross (and it has), then we no longer are under Ten Commandment Law. In fact, the Law itself prophesied that it would be replaced. If I wanted to convince you today that we are not under the Old Law, and that we do not follow the Ten Commandments, how would be the best way for me to do that? I would need to show you from the Old Law itself that it clearly said that it was going to pass away, and that something better was coming. Let's do exactly that. Look in Jeremiah 31:31-34,

“Behold, the days are coming,’ says the Lord, ‘when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah—not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, though I was a husband to them,’ says the Lord. ‘But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days,’ says the Lord: ‘I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. No more shall every man teach his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, “Know the Lord,” for they all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them,’ says the Lord. ‘For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more.’”

Look at what the Old Covenant says. It clearly says that a New Covenant will be coming. There will be a day coming when people will no longer be under the Old Covenant—which God started as He was leading the Israelites by the hand out of the land of Egypt (the Covenant that contained the command about the seventh day).

We also can know that we are dead to the Law, which included the Ten Commandments. In Romans 7:1-4 Paul, by inspiration, made the point that we have become “dead to the law that we may be married to another”—to Christ. What “law” was Paul discussing? Whatever law he was discussing, to which we are dead, cannot be in effect for us today. So what law is it? Look in verse 7, and you will see that Paul was discussing the law that said, “You shall not covet.” What law said, “You shall not covet”? It was the Ten Commandment Law, which included the law about keeping the Sabbath. So what law is it to which we become dead so that we can be married to Christ? People in the New Testament age are dead to the Law of Moses (Ten Commandment Law).

Someone might ask, “Are you saying, then, that it's OK to murder, to commit adultery, or to worship idols?” No! We do what we do, not because of Moses' commandments, but because Christ said to. We are under the Law of Christ. Christ brought nine of the Ten Commandments into His Law. But He told us that instead of remembering the Sabbath, we are to worship on the first day of the week.

Another doctrine taught by Seventh Day Adventists is that Hell is a myth. They suggest that Hell is not true, and that there is no place of eternal torment. When we die, everything is over. It's kind of the idea of annihilation. Here's the problem. These people believe in the Holy Spirit. But they do not believe in Hell. How do those two ideas tie together? In Hebrews 9:14 the Bible teaches us that there is an eternal Spirit. The same word used for “eternal” when speaking of the Spirit is used in Matthew 25:46 to speak of eternal life and eternal condemnation. If we are going to believe that the Holy Spirit is eternal, we also must believe that Heaven and Hell are both eternal because the same word is used to speak of each. People who die today do continue to exist beyond this life. Mark 12 clearly teaches that. Jesus taught in Mark 12:26,

“But concerning the dead, that they rise, have you not read in the book of Moses, in the burning bush passage, how God spoke to him, saying, ‘I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob’? He is not the God of the dead, but the God of the living. You are therefore greatly mistaken.”

How does that teach on “life after death”? It tells us that when Moses wrote those things, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob had long been dead. Yet God said, “I **am** the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.” This clearly teaches that these men were not dead, and had not been annihilated. Rather, they still existed on the other side. Hell is a real place, not a myth. It is a false doctrine of Seventh Day Adventists which teaches that Hell is a myth.

Another area we must consider is the plan of salvation offered by Seventh Day Adventists. What does an Adventist teach that people must do to be saved? They say that we must be led by the Holy Spirit. We sense our needs. We acknowledge our sinfulness. We repent of our transgressions. We exercise faith in Jesus as Lord and Savior. And our faith allows us to receive salvation through the divine power of the Word, and is the gift of God’s grace. So what are Seventh Day Adventists teaching that we must do to be saved? There are several things, but “faith” is pretty much the key to it all. If you have faith, you will be saved.

The biblical plan of salvation, however, is much more than that. The Bible teaches that in order to be saved, a person must believe in Jesus and then repent of his sins. First a person must believe that Jesus is the Son of God. Jesus said in John 8:24, “Unless you believe that I am He, you will surely die in your sins.” A person must believe. In Acts 8 Philip and the Ethiopian eunuch were traveling down a road. They came to a certain body of water. The eunuch said, “Here is water. What hinders me?” Philip said, “If you believe with all your heart, you may.” A person must believe in Jesus as God’s Son. A person also must be willing to repent of things in his life that are not right. In Luke 13:3 Jesus said, “Unless you repent, you will all likewise perish.” In Acts 3:19 Peter proclaimed that we must “repent and turn again, that our sins may be blotted out so that seasons of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord.” We must change our way of thinking and our actions based upon the Gospel. A person also must confess Jesus in order to be saved. Romans 10:10 says, “With the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.” Jesus already had stated this during His ministry. In Matthew 10:32-33 Jesus said, in essence, “If you will not confess Me before men, I will not confess you before the Father. If you confess Me before men, I will confess you before the Father who is in heaven.” So we hear God’s Word. We believe in Jesus. We repent. We do what God says for us to do regarding confessing Christ. And then we also must be baptized in water for the forgiveness of sins. Seventh Day Adventists don’t mention anything about being baptized. But in Mark 16:16 Jesus said, “He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned.” Did Jesus say there that “belief and baptism” are both essential to salvation? He certainly did. In John 3:5 Jesus said, “Unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.” How does a person get “into Christ” where salvation is located (2 Tim. 2:10-12)? Galatians 3:27 tells us: “As many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.” The Scriptures clearly teach that a person must be baptized in order to be a child of God.

Are you sure today that you are right? Have you gotten caught up in following some of these false prophets and their false teachings? Remember that the people who founded the Seventh Day Adventist movement can clearly be seen to be false prophets. Their doctrines do not line up with the teaching of the New Testament. The Old Law has been nailed to the cross (Eph. 2:14-15). It is obsolete for Christians today (Heb. 8:13). And it was not even given to us (as Gentiles) to begin with. If you have gotten caught up in Seventh Day Adventism, I plead with you to come out of that religious error and be just a Christian. Wouldn’t it be great to be called exactly what they were called in the first century? Acts 11:26 says that “the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch.” If you want to be a child of God, you can become one today by obeying God’s plan of salvation, and by becoming a member of the Lord’s church (the church of which you read in the Bible). Then you can know,

as you study your Bible and live according to the will of God, that you are right with the Father. I plead with you to do what's right before it's too late. God loves you, and so do we. If we can help you in any way, please don't hesitate to contact us.

Narrator accompanied by a cappella singing:

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STUDY QUESTIONS FOR “SEVENTH DAY ADVENTISTS”

1. In Jeremiah 31:31, what was prophesied to come about at some point in the future?
2. According to Hebrews 8:13, what was it that “became obsolete, grew old, and vanished away”?
3. According to the material presented in this lesson, who were two of the founders of the Seventh Day Adventist religion?
4. What did one of the founders of the Seventh Day Adventist religion predict would happen twenty-five years after 1818; did that prediction come true?
5. According to one of the founders of the Seventh Day Adventist religion, what was predicted to happen sometime between March 21, 1843 and March 21, 1844; did his prediction come true?
6. According to one of the founders of the Seventh Day Adventist religion, what was predicted to happen in 1843, and then in 1844, and then in 1845, and then in 1851; did any of those predictions come true?
8. What does Deuteronomy 18:22 have to say about a prophet who makes false predictions?
9. One of the fundamental tenets of Seventh Day Adventism is that God rested on the seventh day of the Creation week, and then instituted remembering the Sabbath for all people as a memorial of His work in Creation. Is that claim true?
10. According to Jeremiah 31:32 and Exodus 20:8, when did God institute a law regarding remembering the Sabbath Day?
11. According to Colossians 2:14 and Ephesians 2:14-15, what did Christ do in regard to the Old Law (the Law of Moses)?
12. According to Psalm 147:19-20, the Old Law (the Law of Moses) was for only one specific group of people. Who composed that group of people?
13. According to passages such as Acts 20:7 and 1 Corinthians 16:1-2, when are Christians today supposed to assemble to worship God?
14. In Luke 2:22-24 what two phrases are used interchangeably to indicate that there is no proper distinction between the “ceremonial law” and the “moral law” given by God to the Jews, thus indicating that both were done away with at Jesus’ death?
15. What view do Seventh Day Adventists take regarding the existence of Hell?
16. According to passages such as Matthew 25:46 and Mark 9:43-44, what view did Jesus Christ take regarding the existence of Hell?