

Seventh-Day Adventism

Walter Martin's, *Kingdom of the Cults* (1997 ed., ISBN: 1556617143) is the source of most of this information, and page numbers refer to it.

The SDA Church is a sect (Christian, with distinctive beliefs), rather than a cult (teaching Christian heresy). In its 1997 doctrinal compilation, *Questions on Doctrine*, their theology, according to someone who does think that they are a cult (Dr. Anthony Hoekema), affirms the infallibility of the Bible, the Trinity, the "full deity" of Jesus Christ, including his incarnation, resurrection, and Second Coming, and the need for regeneration and godliness by the Holy Spirit (p. 535).

They have 3 distinctive doctrines: the seventh Day, the Sanctuary and Investigative Judgment, and the Spirit of Prophecy, expressed through Ellen G. White.

Hiram Miller, using Bishop Usher's chronology, predicted Christ's Second Advent to have been in 1843 (see Matt. 24:36). When it didn't occur, he recalculated it to be in 1844. When that didn't occur, he confessed his error. A follower of Miller, Hiram Edson, however, believed that Christ's return date was correct, but that it wasn't physical on earth, but that Christ passed from the Holy Place into the Holy of Holies on that date, to begin judging the lives of people, called the "Investigative Judgment." Christ, he taught, needed many years to make a proper determination of those worthy of eternal life. "It seems to us abundantly clear that the acceptance of Christ at conversion does not seal a person's destiny. His life record after conversion is also important." (Martin, p. 539). But see John 5:24—"shall not come under judgment" (p. 584)-- and "the Lord knoweth them that are his (2 Tim. 2:19 p. 585).

Sabbatarianism (keeping the 7th day holy), which Miller never embraced, came after Miller. Miller himself repudiated belief in the 7th Day, and the Investigative Judgment. His contribution was the Adventist (return of Christ) emphasis of the SDA movement.

7th Day

They believe that keeping the 4th Commandment, regarding the Sabbath, is taught in Rev. 14:9-12, although it is difficult to find any such reference there (p. 540). Eventually, if a person is taught the "truth" and still rejects Sabbath worship, they will receive the Mark of the Beast.

However, in I Cor. 16:1-2, the church met on the first day of the week. Let no one judge you with regard to Sabbath days, Col. 2:16-17. SDA's may claim that these Sabbaths do not include the 7th day, but the text does not exclude them. See also Gal. 4:9-11; Rom. 14:4-6, 10-13 (p. 576, 578).

Spirit of Prophecy

They believe that Ellen G. White had the "spirit of prophecy" mentioned in Rev. 19:10, and that the SDA church as a whole has this same spirit, through her, while not adding to Scripture (p. 548). They don't officially consider her writings infallible (p. 557) or on a par with the Bible.

Soul sleep and annihilation

They believe in, that is, that when a Christian dies, s/he does not go immediately to be with the Lord. Since they believe that the soul and body are inseparable, they teach that both stay in the grave until the resurrection. However, see 2 Cor. 5:8; 1 John 5:11-13; Phil. 1:21-24; 1 Thess. 4:13-18 (pp. 557-561). On annihilation: see Matt. 5:22; 10:28; 2 Thess. 1:8-9; John 3:36; Rev. 20:10

Old Testament Law keeping

They believe that Christians "must keep the whole law (James 2:10), and that we shall be judged by this law (James 2:12)". They distinguish between the "moral" and "ceremonial" Old Testament (OT) law (p. 593). This is a "juxtaposition" not found in the Bible (p. 593). SDA's deny that they keep dietary laws due to the Old Testament (p. 541). Christ is "the end of the Law for righteousness to everyone who believes" (Rom. 10:4). When SDA's willingly submit to the OT law, they risk putting themselves under a curse, since not even one Jew kept the whole law in 1500 years. Yet they think that they can. While the Law was perfect, it taught us how sinful we are, not how righteous we can be. It showed us the need for a covenant based not upon our performance, but upon the finished performance of Christ. See Galatians 3:10 (under a curse), 13, 25; James 2:10 (break one=all); Hebrews 8:8-13 (Old Covenant is obsolete). As Martin points out, love fulfills all obligations of the Law—Matt. 7:12; 22:37-40. Yet "According to Seventh-day Adventist belief, there is, and can be, no salvation through the law or by human works of the law, but only through the saving grace of God." (p. 607).
Jim Sutherland, rev. 9/24/10