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**BIBLICAL TOPICS FOR STUDY –
EXPLAINING THE BELIEFS OF SDA**

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**Adventism
Millerism**

Adventism or Millerism began in the 19th century with the Second Great Awakening in the United States (1790-1840), with William Miller (1782-1849), whose followers became known as Millerites.

William Miller (1782-1849) was born in Pittsfield, Massachusetts, of a simple family, he learned to read from his mother, and attended school for only eighteen months. But he read the few books he had at home very voraciously: a Psalter, a Bible and a prayer book. In his youth in rural Low Hampton (New York), as a farmer, he believed in the bible and other books as inspired. He married Lucy P. Smith in 1803 and moved to Poultney (in Vermont), but from their marriage on he rejected his Baptist heritage and adopted deism, a philosophical position that believes in the creation of the universe by a superior intelligence (which may or may not be God), through reason, free thought and from personal experience rather than direct revelation or religious tradition. In other words: a deist is one who accepts the existence of a creative principle, but does not practice any religion and does not deny the reality of a world completely governed by natural and physical laws. In addition to being a farmer, he had several professions and volunteer roles such as the office of Constable, Deputy Sheriff, Justice of the Peace, and military; he received the rank of militia lieutenant in 1810. A constable is a person holding a particular office, most commonly in criminal law enforcement. The office of constable can vary significantly in different jurisdictions. A constable is commonly the rank of an officer within the police. Other people may be granted powers of a constable without holding this title. He served as a volunteer in the War of 1812 (between the United States and the United Kingdom), ending up as a captain in 1815. In 1816, he returned to Low Hampton, at the same time being a deist and a member of a Baptist church. He was asked to read the day's sermon during one of the local minister's frequent absences, and turned with ardor to study the bible, for he had has an encounter with God. His view was that the bible, if it were really the word of God, should by itself explain its apparent contradictions. Between 1816 and 1818 he studied the sacred book intensively. While in Deism, Miller be became a Freemason, occupying the position of

Grand Master; however, he would renounce his affiliation with Freemasonry in 1831, finding it incompatible with his evangelistic ideas.

One day (around 1830), studying the bible, he came across the text that should mark him for the rest of his life: “Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed” (Dan. 8: 14). Using other texts such as Ezek. 4: 6-7 and more others (unfortunately, interpreting them in a distorted way and outside the biblical context), he concluded that the 2,300 afternoons and mornings represented 2,300 literal years that would have started in 457 BC (when Artaxerxes I ordered the 2nd return of captives in Babylon to Jerusalem under the command of Ezra – 458 BC), ending with the end of the world and the literal return of Jesus Christ between the spring of 1843 and the spring of 1844. Miller thought the sanctuary was the Earth and that its cleansing would be done with fire at the coming of Christ. In 1831, at the age of 50, he decided to propagate his interpretations, and began preaching on farms, then in villages, and finally in big cities.

I just want to leave a comment regarding the chronological time of this prophecy of Daniel (Dan. 8: 14). He was referring to the time elapsed from the desecration of the temple by Antiochus IV Epiphanes, Seleucid king (around 168-167 BC) to its purification by Judas Maccabeus. The Maccabean revolt lasted from 167 BC to 160 BC, that is, 2,300 days, more precisely, 6 years, 3 months and 18 days (not 2,300 years, as Miller misinterpreted).

In 1838, studying chapters 8 and 9 of the Apocalypse (The Angels with the Seven Trumpets), he came to the conclusion that in just two years, that is, 1840, the Ottoman Empire, influential and powerful at the time, would disintegrate. The Ottoman-Turkish Empire did indeed go through a crisis, but it did not disintegrate as Miller had predicted. The Tanzimat period (from the Arabic *Tanzîmât*, meaning ‘restructuring’) – 1839-1876 – was a series of constitutional reforms in the Ottoman Empire that led to a very modern army (military conscription), reforms in the banking system, the decriminalization of homosexuality, the replacement of religious law with secular law, and replacement of guilds (craft production units, associations of artisans and merchants who oversee the practice of their craft or trade in a particular area, and that emerged in the Middle Ages) with modern factories.

However, this left an alarming feeling in people's hearts, making them believe in an imminent return of Jesus for those days. He said that the only millennium taught in the Bible was the thousand years that would follow the resurrection of the righteous at the coming of Jesus (Rev. 20: 4; 7).

People from various religious denominations in America joined this religious movement, which was called Adventism or Millerism, for they awaited the return of Jesus very soon, although it did not have a formal ecclesiastical organization, and had people from the most different Protestant strands.

The name refers to belief in the imminent second coming (or ‘second advent’) of Jesus Christ. Throughout the denomination’s history, various groups have left the church and formed their own movements. The Adventist Church family is considered to be conservative Protestants.

After what became known as ‘The Great Disappointment’, the group dispersed into smaller ones. On January 29th, 1845, Miller, his family, and his adherents were expelled from the Baptist Church. In 1848, he built a chapel on his property for Adventist worship. He died in 1849.

Some of these adherents insisted on re-evaluating Miller’s ‘prophecies’, giving a new interpretation to Christ’s return. In 1845, the Albany Conference was organized, and the American Millennial Association was founded, but in subsequent years, due to

doctrinal differences, dissident denominations were formed, such as: The Seventh-day Adventist Church (Sabbatarian church), the Adventist Churches of God (Sabbatarian churches), the Advent Christian Church (a first-day Adventist Church), the Bible Student Movement, from which Jehovah's Witnesses emerged. In the beginning of its development, the Bible Student Movement founded by Charles Taze Russell had close connections with the Millerite movement and supporters of the Adventist faith. Although both Jehovah's Witnesses and the Bible Students do not identify as part of the Millerite Adventist movement (or other denominations, in general), some theologians categorize these groups and related sects as Millerite Adventist because of their teachings regarding an imminent Second Coming and their use of specific dates.

Within those mentioned above, many other denominations emerged. The Davidians or 'the Shepherd's Rod' or 'the Rod' is an American offshoot of the Seventh-day Adventist Church worldwide. It was founded in 1929 by Victor Houteff, its president and prophet. Houteff joined the Seventh-day Adventist Church in 1919 but was expelled from it in 1930 for promoting heretical doctrines. The organization's official name was changed in 1942 to Davidian Seventh-day Adventist, but it was still referred to as 'The Rod' by both members and critics. The various groups that claim Houteff's theology continue to be known as the Shepherd's Rod and Davidians.

All these denominations held in common a sense of the imminence of Jesus Christ's return.

Although Adventist churches have much in common, their theologies differ on whether the state of the dead is unconscious sleep (Eccl 9: 10) or conscious, whether the ultimate punishment of the wicked is annihilation or eternal torment; the nature of immortality, if the wicked are resurrected or not after the millennium; and if the sanctuary described in Daniel (Dan 8: 11; 13) refers to that in heaven or on earth. Others include Sabbath keeping, dietary regulation, and investigative judgment (an eschatological process in which God's judgment began in 1844, as interpreted by Ellen White).

Ellen White

For Seventh-day Adventists, Ellen White considered the 1844 event to be the 'investigative judgment,' an eschatological process that began that year when Jesus entered the heavenly sanctuary and each person would be judged to see if was an elect to salvation, and the righteousness of God would be confirmed before the universe (It would be a Pre-Advent judgment, that is, the Second Advent is still coming).

Ellen Gould White (1827-1915) was one of the founders of the Seventh-day Adventist Church and a famous American Christian writer. For Adventists, the 'testimony of Jesus' (which is the prophecy, according to Rev. 19: 10) is also present in Ellen White's messages, because her message is in agreement with the bible, recognizes the deity and incarnation of Jesus Christ and it was fulfilled, in accordance with the Scriptures. Therefore, they consider her a contemporary prophetess, who falls into the line of prophets who were called by God to give encouragement, counsel, and admonition to God's people, but whose writings do not enter into the sacred Canon. They quote some prophets from the Bible and compare them to her: Nathan, Gad, Shemaiah, Azariah, Eliezer, Ahiah, Ido and Obed in the OT, and Simeon, John the Baptist, Agabus and Silas in the NT. They also include women like Miriam, Deborah and Huldah, who were called prophetesses in ancient times, as well as Anna at the time of Christ, and the four daughters of Philip, who prophesied, according to Acts 21: 9.

Ellen White speaks in her works on theology, evangelism, Christian living, education and health (advocates vegetarianism). Her writings seek to show the hand of God guiding Christians throughout history. It also makes evident the existence of a cosmic conflict being waged on earth between good (God) and evil (Satan). This conflict is known as 'The Great Controversy' and was instrumental in the development of Adventist theology.

In the year 1840, at the age of 12, during a camp meeting of the Methodist Church, Ellen gave herself to Jesus. And in 1842 she was baptized in water and was accepted as a member of the Methodist Church. In December 1844, at age 17, she had her first vision, not long after the 'Great Disappointment' of October 22nd, 1844. Her aim was to encourage her Adventist brethren, discouraged and fragmented in so many denominations because of that year's event. She saw the Adventist people traveling on a high and straight path towards the New Jerusalem and there was a bright light at the beginning of the path behind them. Jesus encouraged travelers who were tired; others didn't care about the light that guided them and 'fell from the way down into the dark and ungodly world.' In the vision, they enjoy scenes of Christ's second coming and the Advent people entering the New Jerusalem. When the vision ended, upon 'returning to Earth', she felt lonely, desolate, longing for a better world. The vision was an encouragement to Adventists, a triumph despite the despair in which they had plunged into.

She had two more visions in 1845, one after the other, where she saw the new earth, which for her gave meaning to her first vision and supported the development of rational thinking about the sanctuary of Daniel 8, fighting the visions of fanatical Adventists, portraying God and Jesus as literal beings and Heaven as a physical place. Only after some time she shared her views with the Millerite community. At a prayer meeting in her home, a very bright light, like a fireball (she describes), came towards her and she felt like she was in the presence of Jesus and the angels. The voice of the Lord came to her, asking her to make known the revelations she received to the other brothers. At that time, she still attended regular meetings of the Methodist Church held in private homes.

In that same year, 1845, she met a Millerite, James Springer White, whom she officially married in 1846 by justice of the peace, in Portland, Maine. They had four children: Henry Nichols (1847), James Edson (1849), William Clarence (1854) and John Hebert (1860). But her youngest son died of erysipelas at the age of three months, and the oldest died of pneumonia at age of 16.

Ellen White described that in her visions she was always enveloped in bright light, feeling in the presence of Jesus or His angels, and being shown historical and future events, as well as places (on earth, heaven, or other planets); or else she received information. Upon returning from these visions, she felt enveloped again by the darkness of Earth. Scholars write that people witnessed moments when she had her visions, and on one of those occasions, a doctor was present and said that when she was in vision she did not breathe, she kept her eyes open and her gaze serene, as if she looked into the distance, and she could stay in this state for minutes or hours. Upon leaving the vision, the Lord directed her to write immediately.

In 1858, White received a vision where he claimed to have received practical instructions for church members (how to keep the Sabbath, for example) and had a cosmic glimpse of the conflict 'between Christ and His angels, and Satan and His angels,' which was exposed in a book later. Some of her supporters say that she received visions of the American Civil War (1861-1865), the rise of modern

spiritualism, the supremacy of the USA in the world and other prophecies with full fulfillment. Ellen G. White died in 1915 at age 87.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church

The Seventh-day Adventist Church was officially founded in 1863, with the participation of Ellen White and her husband, James White; Joseph Bates (also a Millerite; was a minister and, in secular life, a sailor) and John Nevins Andrews (also a Millerite; minister, missionary, writer, editor, and scholar).

Adventist scholars credit Ellen G. White for bringing the Seventh-day Adventist Church to a broader awareness of Godhead during the 1890s, influencing the church's shift from Semi-Arian roots to Trinitarianism (Although her husband stated categorically that her visions did not support the Trinitarian creed). Other scholars argued that early Adventism had neither an Arian, Semi-Arian, nor Trinitarian theology, but rather a materialist one. Arianism is a heretical view of Christ created by Arius (c. 250-336 AD), a Christian presbyter of Alexandria, in the early days of the Early Church and denied the Trinity and the divinity of Jesus, that is, He was accepted as the Son of God, but was not equal to God the Father, therefore, was not God. He was subordinate to God, but was not God. Thus, the Arian thesis says that the Son of God, Jesus of Nazareth, and God the Father would be of different substances (Greek: *ousia*). The Adventist Church only adopted the Trinitarian theology in the beginning of the 20th century and from then on began to dialogue with other Protestant groups, finally gaining recognition as a Protestant church (before it was considered a sect, for denying the Trinity).

The Church is distinguished by its strong belief in the imminent second coming (Advent) of Jesus Christ before the millennium (doctrine called premillennialism); the observance of the Sabbath, which is the seventh day of the week in the Christian and Jewish calendars; emphasizes diet and health, adhering to Kosher food laws, defending vegetarianism and its holistic understanding of the person (the human being is composed of body, soul and spirit, which are inseparable). It supports religious freedom, but her principles and lifestyle are conservative.

Adventist doctrine also supports the Arminian theory, namely, salvation depends on man's free will to respond positively to God's unconditional grace; it believes in the infallibility of Scripture, in justification by faith alone, in Jesus' death on the cross as a means of atoning for our sins, and believes in the resurrection of the dead. They perform baptism by immersion. As for Creation, they believe in a time of six literal days.

Other teachings include eternal life for those who believe in Christ ('conditional immortality'), the unconscious state of the dead (the dead sleep unconscious until the resurrection of the dead when there will be a Last Judgment before the world to come) and the doctrine of an 'investigative judgment.'

Some Seventh-day Adventist Church guidelines

Diet

The Adventist Church places a high value on the believer's integrity and health. Adventists advocate the consumption of vegetables and kosher foods (kosher means: 'allowed, proper, good, correct food, correct food'). Kosher is not only about meat from animals, but the preparation of many other types of food, including vegetables. The animals permitted and forbidden by God to man are described in Lev. 11: 1-47, which means that of all four-footed animals, those prohibited in food were: the camel, the rock

badger (similar to an alpine marmot; it is vegetarian and lives on the rocks), the hare and the pig. Among the birds, birds of prey were prohibited, which usually feed on carrion (corpse). Among the aquatic animals, only those with fins and scales (fish) were allowed, but the animals that we now call seafood were prohibited, such as all edible invertebrates such as crustaceans: lobsters, crayfish, shrimp, crabs, etc., for example, and all that have a shell and are soft as the slug; therefore, we only eat their contents, such as mollusks (mussels, snails, slugs, octopuses, squids, clams etc.). Of the winged insects, only the locust, the katydid, the cricket and the grasshopper were allowed).

The Church also prohibits the consumption of alcoholic beverages, tobacco, or illegal drugs. Also, some Adventists avoid coffee, tea, cola, and other beverages containing caffeine. Among pioneer church members, breakfast cereals were widely accepted, such as Kellogg's brand cereal, a company founded by William Kellogg at the encouragement of his brother John Harvey Kellogg, one of the early founders of the Adventist health work. John Harvey considered breakfast cereals a healthy food and advertised bland corn flakes as a way to curb sexual desire and avoid the evils of masturbation. The church now has in Australia and New Zealand a famous manufacturer of health-related products and vegetarian foods.

Marriage and sexuality

For Adventists, marriage is a lifetime legal commitment of one man and one woman, being a divine institution established by God Himself before the fall. Wives must submit to their husbands, according to OT and NT texts. Adventists believe in and encourage sexual abstinence for both men and women before marriage. The church disapproves extramarital cohabitation.

They do not perform same-sex marriages, and individuals who are practicing homosexuals cannot be ordained, but they can hold religious offices and be members of the Church if they are not actively seeking same-sex relationships. They are welcome in the services and treated with love and kindness, as any human being is. Adventists believe that Scripture does not condone homosexual relationships, and their official position opposes this.

Ethics

For the Seventh-day Adventist Church abortion is out of harmony with God's plan for human life, including abortion as birth control and sex before marriage in any case.

The Church has officially stated its position on other ethical issues:

It is against active euthanasia (a substance is administered with the purpose of causing death), but it allows the removal of medical resources that kept the person alive – passive euthanasia.

It is in favor of birth control for couples, if used correctly.

It is against human cloning as the technology is unsafe and would result in defective births or miscarriages.

Dress and entertainment

Adventists oppose practices such as body piercing and tattoos and avoid wearing jewelry, including items such as earrings and bracelets. They traditionally maintain socially conservative attitudes toward clothing and entertainment. Conservative Adventists shun certain recreational activities that are considered a negative spiritual influence, including dancing, secular theater, rock music and popular music, reading novels, playing cards, bowling, snooker, or even being fascinated by professional sports. The Adventist Church officially opposes the practice of gambling.

Church government structure

The Seventh-day Adventist Church is governed similarly to the Presbyterian system of church organization. The basic level is the local church, where members have voting power within it. On the level above the local church is the 'Local Conference', an organization of churches within a state, province or territory that appoints (ordains) ministers, owns church lands, and organizes the distribution of tithes and payments to ministers. She usually manages about 50-150 local congregations. The higher level of it is the 'Union Conference', which incorporates a series of local conferences within a larger territory (they are responsible for 6-12 local conferences). The highest level of leadership is the 'General Conference', which consists of 13 'divisions' corresponding to various geographic locations. It is the ultimate authority of the church and decides the most important matters and the administrative ones.

The ordained clergy of the Adventist Church are ministers (pastors). Ministers are appointed by Local Conferences, which assign them responsibilities over a single church or group of churches. Elders (or Presbyters) and deacons are appointed by vote of a local church business meeting or elected committees. Elders play a primarily administrative and pastoral role. The role of deacons is to assist in the smooth running of a local church and maintain church property.

Although the church does not have a written policy prohibiting the ordination of women, it traditionally ordains only men.

Health

Adventists sponsor a large number of hospitals and nonprofit health-related institutions.

Religious liberty

The Seventh-day Adventist Church seeks protection under legislation not to affect its religious practices, such as protecting Adventist employees who wish to keep the Sabbath. The church advocates the separation of church and state.

Civil duties

Their manual says, Even though we must stand apart from political and social strife, we should always, quietly and firmly, maintain an uncompromising stand for justice and right in civic affairs, along with full adherence to our religious convictions. It is our sacred responsibility to be loyal citizens of the nations to which we belong, rendering "to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's" (Matt. 22: 21).

Fundamental Beliefs of Seventh-day Adventists

The General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists in 1980 compiled the basic beliefs of this church into the 28 Fundamental Beliefs. All of these doctrines, with the exception of item concerning the premillennial return of Christ, are widely held among conservative or evangelical Protestants (different groups of Protestants have different views on the millennium). Beliefs can be divided into groups:

I) Doctrines of God

1. Holy Scriptures

The Holy Scriptures are the infallible revelation of God's will. Adventist theologians believe that God inspired the thoughts of the biblical authors ('thought

inspiration’) and that they expressed those thoughts in their own words, but not that God dictated His words (‘verbal inspiration’) to them, as other denominations of conservative evangelicals believe. Adventists generally reject highly critical approaches to Scripture, that is, they avoid believing in the presuppositions and inferences of the historical-critical method.

2. Trinity

The Godhead consists of the Father, the Lord Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. The three are one.

3. God the Father is a personal and spiritual being, immortal, omnipotent, omnipresent and omniscient. He is infinite in wisdom, love and faithfulness. He is the Creator of all things.

4. Jesus Christ, the Son, is God; therefore, of the same nature and essence as the father. He assumed human nature, living as a righteous man on earth, dying for the sins of mankind, rose from the dead, and ascended to heaven, where He intercedes for mankind. He will come again for the final deliverance of His people and the restoration of all things.

5. The Holy Spirit is God, is eternal. He was active with the Father and the Son in Creation, incarnation and redemption. He inspired the writers of Scripture. He filled the life of Christ with power and attracted human beings; those who respond, He renews and transforms in the image of God. Sent by the Father and the Son to always be with His children, He extends spiritual gifts to the church, empowers it to bear witness to Christ, and leads it into all truth in harmony with the Scriptures. However, among the Seventh-day Adventists a minority today is charismatic (manifesting gifts of the Holy Spirit such as divine healing and speaking in tongues or ‘tongues of angels’). The gifts are strongly associated with those who hold more ‘progressive’ Adventist beliefs.

II) Doctrines of Humanity

6. Creation

The doctrine of Creationism of the Seventh-day Adventists’ point, based on the opening chapters of Genesis, is that they are to be interpreted literally, that is, all earthly life was originated in a six-day period, some 6,000 years ago, and a global Flood destroyed all land animals and humans except those saved in Noah’s Ark. They do not believe in a symbolic interpretation for the days of Creation. Although they maintain that Creation week was a recent event (6,000 years), they believe the bible speaks of other worlds populated by intelligent beings in other parts of the universe that existed before Earth’s Creation week – I have not been able to find any Adventist text with irrefutable biblical evidence regarding this (they are based on from Ellen White’s visions about God having revealed to her other places on earth, in heaven, and on other planets – Other inhabited planets are located in the vastness of space, well beyond the reach of space probes of our solar system ‘contaminated by sin, and placed in quarantine due to this infection’). The ‘sons of God’ of Job 1: 6-12 (the NIV clearly writes, ‘angels’) are the ‘Adams’ of ‘unfallen worlds’ who find themselves in the presence of God somewhere in the universe. But if we wrote above what they themselves say: “Adventists generally... avoid believing in the presuppositions and inferences of the historical-critical method”, that is, if they reject presuppositions and inferences, and what we’ve read above is a presupposition, since there is not one verse

in the bible that speaks clearly of it, then this is an incongruity. Furthermore, the hypothesis of worlds more spiritually evolved than our miserable planet is a spiritualist doctrine that other non-Christian religions share, and are not part of God's salvation project for us. None of this matters to us as Christians. Remember that Adventism was originally Millerite, and Miller knew far more about the occult sciences than any other Christian, such as Deism and Freemasonry.

Adventists believe in inorganic matter that was created before Creation week and then changed to its current form at the time of God's creative process. Therefore, computed dates from standard geology by Carbon-14 are irrelevant to dating the Creation of life on Earth, since it is an interpretive science.

7. Nature of Humanity

Holistic human nature

Humans are an indivisible unity of body, mind, and spirit in corporeal form. But according to Adventists beliefs (posted in Adventist magazine) they do not possess an immortal soul and there is no consciousness after death (commonly referred to as 'soul sleep'). This concept that humans do not possess an immortal soul is the same as that held by Jehovah's Witnesses: the soul does not survive death. Adventists believe that the Bible does not teach the inherent immortality of the soul and that it is an eschatological gift of God inseparable from the resurrection of the body (1 Cor. 15: 50-55), that is, the soul is not released when the body dies; it remains in the body unconsciously until the day of resurrection – "Adventist Magazine" – Apr. 15, 2024.

Now I ask, "If the soul does not separate from the body after death, why would Jesus have said to the evildoer at His side, "Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise" (Lk. 23: 43)? How would that man be with Jesus in paradise if the soul were dead and attached to the body?"

Following: Man and woman were created in the image of God with individuality and freedom to think and act. When they disobeyed God, they fell from their exalted position. The image of God in them was distorted and they became subject to death. Their descendants share in this fallen nature and its consequences.

III) Doctrines of salvation

8. The Great Controversy

In the common Christian view, mankind has been involved in a struggle between Jesus Christ and Satan since evil began in heaven, when Lucifer (an angelic being) rebelled against the Law of God. The Seventh-day Adventist Church believes that 'The Great Controversy', as they call this, refers to the cosmic battle between Jesus Christ and Satan, also waged on Earth, as Ellen White wrote in her book 'The Great Controversy', published in 1858 and where she recounts the visions he received, along with biblical references. For Adventists, this is an important concept, for it makes us understand the origin of evil and its destruction, as well as the restoration of God's original purpose for this world.

All mankind is now involved in a great controversy between Christ and Satan concerning the character of God, His law and His sovereignty over the universe because of the rebellion of a spiritual being, which led Adam and Eve into sin. This brought to humanity the distortion of the image of God, the disorder of the created world and its devastation at the time of the Flood. In the end, God's love will prevail. To help His people overcome this conflict, Christ sends the Holy Spirit and His angels to guide and protect His own, protect and sustain them in the way of salvation (Heb. 1: 4-14).

9. The Life, Death and Resurrection of Christ

In short, it was an attitude of reconciliation on the part of God to man, providing the atonement for human sin. Those who believe in Jesus have eternal life ('Conditional immortality').

10. The Experience of Salvation

The Holy Spirit makes us recognize our sins and prompts us to repent. By faith, we can see Jesus as Lord and Savior, our Substitute. And that faith is a gift from God (Eph. 2: 8-9 – my note). Salvation comes to us by His grace (His undeserved favor upon us). Through His blood we are justified, freed from the dominion of sin, and we born again.

11. Growing in Christ

By His death on the cross Jesus triumphed over the forces of evil. Now the Holy Spirit dwells within us and empowers us, perfects our character so that we reach perfection (Eph. 4: 13), keeping us in communion with Him in prayer, reading and meditating on His Word, singing praises, gathering together for worship, and participating in the mission of the Church. The Spirit transforms us every moment and every task we perform, such as ministering to the physical, mental, social, emotional, and spiritual needs of humanity.

IV) Church doctrines

12. The Church

The main weekly worship service takes place on Saturday, usually starting with Sabbath School, a bible study in the church, performed in small groups. The so-called 'Sabbath School Lesson' is officially produced, and it is a biblical text or particular doctrine each quarter. Parallel to adult worship, there are meetings for children and youth (similar to Sunday school in other churches). After a short break, the religious service begins, following the evangelical custom, with songs, prayers, an offering, including tithing (or money collection), reading of the Scriptures and the sermon. The instruments and forms of worship music vary greatly depending on the country. Some churches in North America have a contemporary Christian music style, while other churches sing more traditional hymns, including those from the Adventist Hymnal. Worship is restricted in terms of time and bodily manifestations.

13. The Remnant and its mission

The universal church is made up of all who believe in Christ, but there will be a remnant in the end-time who will keep the commandments of God and will have 'the testimony of Jesus' ("the remnant...which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ" (KJV) – Rev 12: 17). The gift of prophecy is the sign that identifies the Remnant Church. One of the questions asked by an elder to a candidate for membership in the church and baptism therein is (2022-Seventh-day-Adventist-Church-Manual.pdf – Chapter 7, Baptism, Baptismal Vow and Commitment, Vow, item 13, page 52): "Do you accept and believe that the Seventh-day Adventist Church is the remnant church of Bible prophecy and that people of every nation, race, and language are invited and accepted into its fellowship? Do you desire to be a member of this local congregation of the world Church?" (<https://gc.adventist.org/church-manual/>)

The Remnant announces the hour of judgment, proclaims salvation through Christ, and foretells that His coming is at hand. For them, this proclamation is symbolized by the three angels of Revelation 14 and coincides with the work of judgment in heaven and results in a work of repentance and reformation on earth.

14. Unity in the Body of Christ

The Church is a body with many members, called from every nation, tribe, tongue, and people (1Cor. 12: 12-31; Eph. 1: 22-23; Eph. 4: 4-6; 16; Rom. 12: 5).

15. Baptism

In the Seventh-day Adventist Church, after the candidate responds to public examination by the pastor before the congregation or by the Council of Elders, confirming the 28 fundamental beliefs of the Church ('Baptismal Covenant') and takes a Commitment vow ('Baptismal Vow'), the Church casts its vote and he is accepted as a member of the church and baptized. He receives a written copy of the Covenant, the Certificate of Baptism and the Commitment, duly signed. Baptism is by immersion. In the Seventh-day Adventist Church, re-baptism by immersion is not required again for those who are already an Adventist; only for those who feel they have received new information about the teachings of Jesus or have gone through a 'new conversion', a new religious experience with Jesus. Members from other churches who accept the church's beliefs and who have previously been baptized by immersion may request for re-baptism. Members who have turned away from the faith and presence of God and come back to congregate are re-baptized. Members of other churches in the Adventist Church who have not been able to obtain a transfer letter from their home church or members whose 'membership record' has gone astray are also accepted into the Church and re-baptized. Generally, they are very cautious about receiving a person who has come from another Christian denomination.

16. The Lord's Supper

Adventist Churches generally practice open fellowship ('all who have dedicated their lives to the Lord') four times a year. It begins with a foot-washing ceremony, known as the 'Ordinance of Humility', based on the Gospel account of John chapter 13. The 'Ordinance of Humility' is intended to imitate Jesus' act at the Last Supper, when He washed the feet of His disciples, and remind the participants of the need to humbly serve one another. According their manual, in the Fundamental Beliefs of Seventh-day Adventists – item 16 – page 173 – The Lord's Supper, it is written, "The Master ordained the service of foot-washing to signify renewed cleansing, to express a willingness to serve one another in Christlike humility, and to unite our hearts in love". Then, they consider the foot-washing ceremony as an ordinance from Jesus, and which is part of the Lord's Supper.

Participants separate: women in one room and men in another, although some congregations allow couples to perform the ordinance on one another and families are often encouraged to participate together. Upon completion, participants return to the sanctuary for the Lord's Supper, which consists of unleavened bread and unfermented grape juice. For Seventh-day Adventists, the Supper has a memorial character, that is, it reminds us of Jesus' sacrifice on the cross.

17. Spiritual gifts and ministries – 1 Cor. 12: 1-11; Eph. 4: 7-16; Rom. 12: 3-8. God bestows spiritual gifts on all members of His Church, in all ages. However, a minority of Seventh-day Adventists today are charismatic (manifesting gifts of the Holy Spirit such as divine healing and speaking in tongues or 'tongues of angels'). The gifts are strongly associated with those who hold more 'progressive' Adventist beliefs.

18. The Gift of Prophecy – Rom. 12: 6; 1 Cor. 12: 10; Eph. 4: 11; Rev. 19: 10. Ellen G. White's ministry is commonly referred to as the 'Spirit of Prophecy' and

messages from her speak with prophetic authority, providing comfort, guidance, instruction and correction to the church according to the Bible. In other words: unlike Calvinists, who believe that the gift of prophecy ended with the apostle John, Adventists believe that the prophetic gift was given by the Holy Spirit to the Christian church, and not just to the apostles (Rom. 12: 6; 1 Cor. 12: 10, 28; Eph. 4: 11-14), and they believe that this gift was manifested in the ministry of Ellen G. White. But as for other servants of God from other denominations today who call themselves prophets, I can't tell you whether they believe it or not.

V) The doctrines of Christian living

19. The Law of God

God's Law is embodied in the Ten Commandments, which remain binding upon Christians.

20. The Sabbath

The Sabbath should be observed on the seventh day of the week, specifically, from sunset Friday to sunset Saturday. Part of Friday can be spent in preparation for the Sabbath: meals, housekeeping, etc. Adventists can gather for Friday night service to welcome Saturday. They abstain from secular work on Saturday as well as purely secular forms of recreation such as watching non-religious television programs and competitive sports. But they encourage nature walks, family-oriented activities, charity work and other activities of a compassionate nature. On Saturday afternoons, activities vary widely depending on cultural, ethnic, and social background, such as a fellowship lunch for members and visitors, and activities with Adventist Youth.

21. Stewardship

Regardless of the church, we are all God's stewards, responsible for the proper use of time and opportunities, abilities and possessions, and the blessings of the earth and its resources, which He has placed in our care, but He is the legal owner of all of these. Therefore, we serve Him and our fellowmen, and give the tithes and offerings for the proclamation of His Gospel and for His support and church growth. If, for some reason, a member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church is unable to tithe a certain amount, he should consult with the officials.

22. Christian behavior

Christians are called to be godly people who think, feel, and act in accordance with God's principles. Therefore, for the Spirit to recreate in us the character of Jesus, it is necessary to be involved with things that will produce in our lives the fruits of purity, health and joy similar to those of Christ.

23. Marriage and the Family

Marriage was divinely established by God as a lifelong union between a man and a woman, in loving companionship. For the Christian, the marital commitment is to God, as well as to the spouse, and should only be made between partners who share the same faith. God left in the Law the release for divorce in cases of adultery. As for raising children, parents should educate them to love and obey the Lord. As for a second marriage, they are quite strict, hardly allowing a second union.

VI) The doctrines of the restoration

24. Christ's Ministry in the Heavenly Sanctuary

- 25. The Second Coming of Christ
- 26. Death and Resurrection
- 27. The Millennium and the end of sin
- 28. The New Earth

In the Seventh-day Adventists Church Manual (2022), corresponding to the Fundamental Beliefs (VI – The doctrines of the restoration), there are topics that deserve comment:

- 24. Christ’s Ministry in the Heavenly Sanctuary (‘the investigative judgment’)
- 26. Death and Resurrection
- 25. The Second Coming of Christ
- 27. The Millennium and the End of Sin

24. Christ’s Ministry in the Heavenly Sanctuary (‘the investigative judgment’)

For Seventh-day Adventists, “there is a sanctuary in heaven where Christ, as our great High Priest, ministers on our behalf (interceding for us with the Father since His ascension), making available to believers the benefits of His atoning sacrifice offered once for all on the cross”.

In 1844, at the end of the prophetic period of 2300 days (Dan. 8: 14), according to the Millerite interpretation and later interpreted by Ellen White, Jesus began to clean the heavenly sanctuary, that is, Jesus began the second and last stage of His expiatory ministry, through what they called the ‘investigative judgment.’ According to this view, the ‘investigative judgment’ (also called ‘the pre-Advent judgment’ or, more precisely, ‘the pre-second Advent judgment’ – it would be a Pre-Advent judgment, before the second coming of Christ, so to speak) is part of the elimination of all sin, and was prefigured in the cleansing of the Hebrew sanctuary (Heb. 9: 7), on the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur, Lev. 23: 27-28; Lev. 16: 29-30), with the blood of animals, but heavenly things are purified by the blood of Jesus.

According to the Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual (2022) page 176, “the ‘investigative judgment’ asserts that the divine judgment of Christians has been underway since 1844 and reveals to heavenly intelligences who among the dead are asleep in Christ and therefore, in Him, are deemed worthy to have part in the first resurrection. It also makes manifest who among the living are abiding in Christ, keeping the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus, and in Him, therefore, are ready for translation into His everlasting kingdom. This judgment vindicates the justice of God in saving those who believe in Jesus. It declares that those who have remained loyal to God shall receive the kingdom. The completion of this ministry of Christ will mark the close of human probation before the Second Advent (Lv 16; Nm 14: 34; Ez 4: 6; Dn 7: 9-27; Dn 8: 13-14; Dn 9: 24-27; Hb 1: 3; Hb 2: 16, 17; Hb 4: 14-16; Hb 8: 1-5; Hb 9: 11-28; Hb 10: 19-22; Ap 8: 3-5; Ap 11: 19; Ap 14: 6-7; 12; Ap 20: 12; Ap 22: 11-12).”

Let’s explain better:

In fact, the bible says that the Lord is sitting at the right hand of God (Mk. 14: 62; Mk. 16: 19; Rom. 8: 34; Col. 3: 1; Heb. 12: 2; 1 Pet. 3: 22) and intercedes for us. Upon dying on the cross, the curtain of the temple was torn (that is, the curtain of the Jewish Temple, which separated the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies), symbolizing that we have free entry to His throne, direct passage to Him to ask Him for what we need. Jesus was God’s sanctuary with us on earth. When He referred to the ‘sanctuary’ He was talking about His own body, as today we are God’s sanctuary, where His Spirit dwells (Ezek. 37: 25b-27 – Jesus the ‘Prince’, the Messiah, would be the sanctuary of God as men; Ezekiel was speaking of the spiritual tabernacle (‘the dwelling place’) brought by

the Messiah, as it was at His first coming. In the New Jerusalem, He will continue to be this spiritual sanctuary of God with us. Therefore, there is no sanctuary in heaven, where Christ ministers; He is the sanctuary: Matt. 26: 61; Matt. 27: 40; Matt. 27: 51; Mk. 14: 58; Mk. 15: 29; Jn. 2: 19; Act. 7: 56; Rom. 8: 34; 1 Cor. 3: 16-17; 1 Cor. 6: 19; 2 Cor. 6: 16; Heb. 4: 14-16; Heb. 10: 19-22; Rev. 21: 3 – reminding us of His incarnation).

As for ‘investigative judgment’, they think that in 1844, when Miller announced the second coming of Christ, which did not occur, Jesus began a ‘second part’ of the dispensation of grace (God’s second dispensation for mankind; the second Covenant), making it clear to His angels who from the dead will rise at His second coming, and beginning to purify those who are His, showing also who is prepared to be caught up. Repeating the comment regarding the chronological time of this prophecy of Daniel, he was referring to the time elapsed from the desecration of the temple by Antiochus IV Epiphanes, Seleucid king (around 168-167 BC) to its purification by Judas Maccabeus. The Maccabean revolt lasted from 167 BC to 160 BC, that is, 2300 days, more precisely, 6 years, 3 months and 18 days.

Let’s clear up the doubts:

In the first place, Jesus did not begin the second and last stage of His atoning ministry, for He has already spiritually fulfilled all that He had to do on the cross. He doesn’t need to complete what He has already completed. All deliverance and righteousness to us, and all judgment on sin and all evil, was done: “It is finished!” (Jn. 19: 30). When He returns the second time, it is to judge those who have not let themselves be sanctified by His Spirit here, in their lifetimes; and to pass judgment on those already destined for eternal damnation (Rev. 22: 11).

In second place, He has always done and always will make His judgment here on earth in all ages over any kind of wickedness, perversity, and injustice whenever He chooses, not just from 1844 onwards.

In the third place, the spiritual beings (angels and demons) see those who are sealed with His blood on their foreheads, at the moment of their conversion to Him, and those who are not. It doesn’t matter whether they are alive or dead, they already have the guarantee of their eternal salvation. They have already gone through the 1st resurrection and will receive the 2nd as a reward for their faithfulness to Christ.

The 1st resurrection [the ‘resurrection of the righteous’ (Lk. 14: 14) or ‘resurrection of life’ (Jn. 5: 24)] means the spiritual resurrection now, of those who accept Jesus, are born again in the spirit, dies to the old self and resurrects to a new life with Christ.

The 2nd resurrection (the ‘resurrection to the judgment’ or ‘the resurrection to condemnation’) occurs on the Day of Judgment, with the bodily resurrection of the dead: the dead of the wicked will receive condemnation, while those who received Jesus in life as Lord and Savior, those who have gone through the experience of the 1st resurrection (the spiritual one), will not go through death, will not enter into condemnation.

In short:

When the Father and Jesus (today in His full spiritual strength and totally aware of God’s times) decide that ‘it’s enough’, the Time of Grace ends and all is accomplished [‘the close of human probation’ as it is written in their manual]. Jesus Himself made it clear in the gospels that everything will happen quickly, in the blink of an eye, and that our part is to sanctify ourselves, prepare ourselves for His coming and clean our garments.

Why complicate things with such difficult words and concepts and with reasoning that looks like spiritualism? Wouldn’t it be easier to acknowledge that Miller made a

mistake, rather than clinging to the wrong thing and trying to fix or explain something that most likely didn't come from God, but from the flesh? I am not judging God or His servants, but analyzing doctrines that may confuse many.

26. Death and Resurrection

For them, until the Lord returns, death is an unconscious state. Then, the resurrected righteous and the living righteous will be glorified and caught up to meet the Lord. The second resurrection, the resurrection of the wicked, will take place a thousand years later. This is reinforced by item 7 of their manual, which speaks of the nature of humanity, as we saw earlier. Let us repeat: Humans are an indivisible unity of body, mind, and spirit in corporeal form (Holistic human nature). But according to Adventists beliefs (posted in Adventist magazine) human beings do not possess an immortal soul and there is no consciousness after death (commonly referred to as 'soul sleep'). This concept that humans do not possess an immortal soul is the same as that held by Jehovah's Witnesses: the soul does not survive death. Adventists believe that the Bible does not teach the inherent immortality of the soul and that it is an eschatological gift of God inseparable from the resurrection of the body (1 Cor. 15: 50-55), that is, the soul is not released when the body dies; it remains in the body unconsciously until the day of resurrection – "Adventist Magazine" – Apr. 15, 2024.

First point: the dead are not actually unconscious; this was a misinterpretation of the apostle Paul's words in 1 Cor. 15: 20; 1 Thess. 4: 13 ('those who have fallen asleep'). The situation Paul was referring here is that the Greeks actually believed in the immortality of the soul but doubted the resurrection of the body (as they were doubting the resurrection of Jesus), so they quarreled with him at the Areopagus at Athens (Acts 17: 31-34). Jesus said to the repentant evildoer crucified beside Him that he would be with Him in Paradise that very day (Lk. 23: 43: "Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in Paradise"). How would that man be with Jesus in Paradise if the soul were dead and attached to the body?" If Jesus said that and John reports in Rev 6: 9-10 that the souls of the martyrs cried out for justice, it is because they were conscious in heaven with the Lord. And in Rev 20: 4 he writes that the souls of those beheaded because of their testimony for Jesus lived and reigned with Christ in heaven. The number 1000 is the symbolic number of the age of the church, fullness, wholeness, of a spiritual condition of the redeemed (the souls of the dead – conscious – in heaven with Jesus, and the living doing His work on earth, preaching His word of salvation and repentance).

Second point: the 2nd resurrection is not the resurrection of the wicked, which will take place a thousand years later. The 2nd resurrection (the 'resurrection to the judgment' or 'the resurrection to condemnation'), as it was explained above, is the bodily resurrection of the dead for the Day of Judgment, before the white throne: the dead of the wicked will receive condemnation, while those who received Jesus in life as Lord and Savior, those who have gone through the experience of the 1st resurrection (the spiritual one), will not go through death, will not enter into condemnation.

25. The Second Coming of Christ / 27. The Millennium and the End of Sin

According to the Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual (2022) page 178, it is written: "The millennium is the thousand-year reign of Christ with His saints in heaven between the first and second resurrections. During this time the wicked dead will be judged; the earth will be utterly desolate, without living human inhabitants, but occupied by Satan and his angels. At its close Christ with His saints and the Holy City will descend from heaven to earth. The unrighteous dead will then be resurrected, and with Satan and his angels will surround the city; but fire from God will consume them

and cleanse the earth. The universe will thus be freed of sin and sinners forever (Jer. 4: 23-26; Ezek. 28: 18, 19; Mal. 4: 1; 1 Cor. 6: 2, 3; Rev. 20; 21: 1-5).” The wicked will not suffer eternal torment in hell, but will be destroyed forever (theory of Annihilationism) and there will be eternal life for those who believe in Christ (‘Conditional Immortality’).

For Seventh-day Adventists, Jesus Christ will visibly return to earth after a time of trouble, during which the Sabbath will become a worldwide judgment (in other words, the seven-year period of the Great Tribulation, the seven-year week of Daniel 9: 27). The Second Coming will be followed by a millennial reign of the saints in heaven. (In this they differ from Dispensationalists who believe that Christ’s millennial reign, a literal golden age of a thousand years of peace, will be on earth).

The millennium is still a very controversial issue among the several branches of Christianity (Deut. 29: 29a; Dan. 12: 4b; 10), but we can think in a simpler way about the end times when we read the prophecies that Jesus Himself did (Matt. 24: 15-31; Mk. 13: 1-27; Lk. 21: 5-28); in 1 Cor. 15: 28, by Paul and in Daniel 12: 1-3, by Daniel.

In other words, the second coming will immediately inaugurate the consummation, the final judgment, and the new heavens and new earth (Rev. 21: 1; Isa. 65: 17; Isa. 66: 22; 2 Pet. 3: 13; 1 Cor. 15: 24 -28). The Gospels, Paul’s letters and the general letters do not speak of a millennium.

More explanation on the theme of Revelation (Panoramic view) and Revelation chapter 20:

https://www.searaagape.com.br/livrodeapocalipse_visaogeral.html

https://www.searaagape.com.br/livrodeapocalipse_capitulo20.html#mil-anos-omilenio

As for the theory of Annihilationism, the bible doesn’t agree with this theory, for in Rev. 20: 10 it’s written: “And the devil who had deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur, where the beast and the false prophet were, and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.” This means that they will not be exactly annihilated, as the words of the manual make us understand, but ‘they will be tormented day and night forever and ever,’ that is, they will suffer eternal penalty, they will be tormented for the rest of eternity; an everlasting separation from God (death = eternal separation from God).

The ‘New Earth’ is not physical, it is spiritual (actually another kind of matter, like the glorified body of Jesus); not exactly a physical planet like the one we live on today). (https://www.searaagape.com.br/livrodeapocalipse_capitulo21.html).