

Baptists and Adventists

The Adventist movement was the result of William Miller (1782-1849) and his efforts to study the symbolic numbers in Daniel to determine the time for the Second Coming (The Second Advent) of Christ. Through meticulous calculations Miller concluded first that Christ would return between March 21, 1843 and March 21, 1844. When that did not occur he recalculated the date to be October 22, 1844. This later date became known as “*The Great Disappointment*” when it became evident that his prediction was not fulfilled. Many left the movement at that time, yet three primary expressions of the Adventist movement are still present in the world: The Advent Christian Church, the Church of God (General Conference), and the Seventh Day Adventists. **For the purpose of this article we will focus ONLY on the largest of the three groups, the Seventh Day Adventists.**

The Scripture: Baptists and Seventh Day Adventist both express belief in the authoritative nature of God’s revelation in the Bible. However, Baptists and Seventh Day Adventists often come to very different interpretations of certain passages, most notably the fourth commandment (the Sabbath Day).

The Seventh Day Adventists were formed as a result of the efforts of some searching the scriptures to deal with “*The Great Disappointment*” of 1844. They concluded something significant had happened in 1844 in Christ’s ministry in Heaven, which they tied to what they called the “*Third Angel Message*” in Revelation 14. From that point on they sought to show a clear tie between the 10 Commandments of God and the faith of Jesus relating the Law and the Gospel. As early as 1844 they began to observe the Sabbath on the seventh day of the week – Saturday – rather than Sunday.

Jesus Christ: Seventh Day Adventists believe in God revealed in the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit each equal, unique, and divine. This belief would be very similar to Baptists or other evangelicals.

Salvation: Seventh Day Adventists believe in the fall of man from relationship with God because of sin and thus the need for salvation. However, they believe only in an adult age of accountability and therefore no children are reported as members. They believe that man is by nature mortal and thus his life only become eternal by salvation. Those who die without faith in Christ are annihilated (cease to exist). There is no literal or eternal Hell. They believe all the dead are awaiting final judgment (believers and non-believers) in an unconscious state (soul sleep) until the day of Christ’s return.

Unique Emphases: The two dominant teachings of Seventh Day Adventists are revealed in their name. They strongly emphasize the necessity of adhering to a pattern of worship on Saturday because of God’s resting on the seventh day in creation. They also emphasize the imminent (soon) but unknown date of Christ’s return. Because of their focus on the commandments of God, they also emphasize works that obey the commandments and reflect the life of Christ.

Next Week: Though it was our intention to write on Baptists and Adventists this week, this topic will be dealt with next week.