

Seventh-Day Adventism in Light of History and the Bible – Kenya

Dir. Joel B Groat

Introduction

- ▣ Need for Discernment
- ▣ SDA facts and statistics
- ▣ History of the SDA church
- ▣ Who is this Ellen G. White?
- ▣ SDA teaching: What is biblical, what is not
- ▣ Engaging SDA members

Biblical Discernment

“At that time many will turn away from the faith and will betray and hate each other, and many false prophets will appear and deceive many people.” (Matthew 24:10-11)

“And this is my prayer, that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, so that you may be able to discern what is best” (Philippians 1:9-10)

Biblical Discernment

- ▣ “See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy” (Colossians 2:8)
- ▣ “Test everything. Hold on to the good.” (1 Thessalonians 5:21)
- ▣ “Do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, for many false prophets have gone out into the world.” (1 John 4:1)

SDA Facts & Stats

Worldwide

- ▣ 17,200,000 members (2011)
- ▣ 71,000 churches
- ▣ 1,050,000 new members in 2010 | 3000/day

Kenya

- ▣ In Kenya for ?? years (since ?)
- ▣ (2010)
- ▣ ??? baptisms in 2018
- ▣ ??? churches

Source: <http://www.adventistarchives.org/>
<http://www.adventiststatistics.org/>

SDA Historical Development

- ▣ William Miller's failed prophecies of Christ's return (March 1843 and then Oct 22, 1844)
- ▣ Attempts to justify and reinterpret "The great disappointment" rather than accept it as false
- ▣ Two groups emerge: Open Door and Shut Door Adventists
- ▣ 17 year old Ellen Harmon (Shut door group) claimed God showed her in a vision that Oct 22 marked the end of man's probation period and the return of Christ would be in the near future
- ▣ When this didn't happen Hiram Edson, a leader of the Shut-Door group, got an impression that Oct 22 marked a change in Christ's Mission
 - Jesus moved from the outer sanctuary in heaven to the "inner sanctuary"
 - From there he will make final atonement for sinners
 - Adopted as a true teaching by the young group

Key Doctrinal Deviation

The Investigative Judgment

- ▣ Ellen White went along with this "impression" and developed it into the "investigative judgment"
- ▣ She rejected the teaching that the atonement was completed on the cross
- ▣ She taught instead that in 1844 Christ entered the "heavenly sanctuary" and has yet to make final atonement
- ▣ Now is a time of investigating all who are professing to be believers
- ▣ According to Ellen G. White this will be done on the basis of works and confessed or unconfessed sin

Ellen White – Works Salvation

As the books of record are opened in the judgment, the lives of all who have believed on Jesus come in review before God. ... every name is mentioned, every case closely investigated. Names are accepted, names rejected. When any have sins remaining upon the books of record, unrepented of and unforgiven, their names will be blotted out of the book of life, and the record of their good deeds will be erased from the book of God's remembrance.

... Our acts, our words, even our most secret motives, all have their weight in deciding our destiny for weal or woe."

Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, 1950 ed., p. 483, 486-487).

Ellen G White – "the Spirit of Prophecy"?

Claimed for herself the title of "the Spirit of Prophecy"

Identified by the SDA church as the "Spirit of Prophecy"

Leaders repeatedly encouraged to use her distinctive teachings

She left no doubt as to how others should view her writings – they came from God.

SDA Prophetess

Ellen G. White

"How many have read carefully *Patriarchs and Prophets*, *The Great Controversy*, and *The Desire of Ages*? ... In my books, the truth is stated, barricaded by a 'Thus saith the Lord.' The Holy Spirit traced these truths upon my heart and mind as indelibly as the law was traced by the finger of God, upon the tables of stone..."

Ellen G. White, Letter 90, 1906

Ellen G White – Claims 1

"God was speaking through clay. You might say that this communication was only a letter. Yes, it was a letter, but prompted by the Spirit of God, to bring before your minds things that had been shown me. In these letters which I write, in the testimonies I bear, I am presenting to you that which the Lord has presented to me. I do not write one article in the paper, expressing merely my own ideas. They are what God has opened before me in vision --the precious rays of light shining from the throne..."

(letter to Dr. Paulson; St. Helena, California, June 14, 1906, *Selected Messages* pp 24—37)

Ellen G White – Claims 2

- ☐ "You have thereby insulted the Spirit of God. You know how the Lord has manifested himself through the Spirit of prophecy. Past, present, and future have passed before me. . . if you seek to turn aside the counsel of God to suit yourselves, if you lessen the confidence of God's people in the testimonies he has sent them, you are rebelling against God as certainly as were Korah, Dathan and Abiram. . . God was speaking through clay. You might say that this communication was only a letter. Yes, it was a letter but prompted by the Spirit of God. To bring before your minds things that had been shown me. In these letters which I write, in the testimonies I bear, I am presenting to you that which the Lord has presented to me. I do not write one article in the paper, expressing merely my own ideas. They are what God has opened before me in vision.-The precious rays of light shining from the throne . . ."
- (The Testimonies Slighted; Healdsburg, California June 20, 1882, *Testimony for the Church* vol. 5: pp 62—70)

Ellen White – False Prophecies

- ☐ "I also saw that Old Jerusalem would never be built up." (*Early Writings* p. 75.)
- ☐ "Soon our eyes were drawn to the East, for a small black cloud had appeared, about half as large as a man's hand, which we all knew was the sign of the Son of Man...we were changed and caught up together with them to meet the Lord in the air."
(*Early Writings*, pp. 15-16.)
- ☐ "I was shown the company present at the Conference. Said the angel: Some food for worms, some subject to the last plagues, some will be alive and remain upon the earth to be translated at the coming of Jesus" (Testimonies for the Church, Vol. 1, p. 131).
- ☐ NOTE: This last statement was made in 1856 and every one present in that meeting is now dead.

Plagiarism – How Extensive? - 1

Because others within the Church had from the earliest beginnings of Adventism discovered that Mrs. White had plagiarized and had said so, the fact of her doing so was never seriously challenged by the Church authorities.

How much was plagiarized?

The defense for her actions that was used up until our time was that the amount was the important issue and that that amount varied from 8% to 10%, depending upon which apologist one read or wanted to believe. It was not until the Church hired Dr. Fred Veltman to study the book *Desire of Ages* that the figure was raised to 30% or more depending upon the chapters chosen in the book one was using.

(How the Seventh-day Adventist 'Spirit of Prophecy' was Born: Proof the "I was shown..." statements were copied! By [Walter T. Rea](http://www.ellenwhiteexposed.com/rea/sop.htm) --

<http://www.ellenwhiteexposed.com/rea/sop.htm>)

Plagiarism – How Extensive? - 2

After great expense and almost eight years, Veltman confirmed what other studies showed, that depending upon the material used from Ellen White's writing, the copy work could be as much as 90%. In fact, Dr. Don McAdams, an Adventist scholar, had stated in the 1980 Glendale meeting that "If every paragraph in the book *Great Controversy*, written by Ellen White, was properly footnoted, then every paragraph would have to be footnoted." That statement has never been seriously challenged by any member of the Church.

(How the Seventh-day Adventist 'Spirit of Prophecy' was Born: Proof the "I was shown..." statements were copied! By [Walter T. Rea](http://www.ellenwhiteexposed.com/rea/sop.htm) --

<http://www.ellenwhiteexposed.com/rea/sop.htm>)

Ellen White - Plagiarism

Testimony for the Church,
vol. 3; p. 258, 1872—5

If you refuse to believe until every shadow of uncertainty and every possibility of doubt is removed you will never believe. The doubt that demands perfect knowledge will never yield to faith. Faith rests upon evidence, not demonstration. The Lord requires us to obey the voice of duty, when there are other voices all around us urging us to pursue an opposite course. It requires earnest attention from us to distinguish the voice which speaks for God. We must resist and conquer inclination, and obey the voice of conscience without parleying or compromise, lest its prompting cease and will and impulse control.

Compared with:

Night Scenes in the Bible
Daniel Marsh 1868—1870

We must not defer our obedience till every shadow of uncertainty and every possibility of mistake is removed. The doubt that demands perfect knowledge will never yield to faith, for faith rests upon probability, not demonstration . . . we must obey the voice of duty when there are many other voices crying against it, and it requires earnest heed to distinguish the one which speaks for God. We must cherish the impulse of conscience in the moment when it urges us to action, lest it cease from its promptings and we be left to the blind guidance of appetite and passion.

SDA Teaching – Satan the Sin-bearer

- ▣ “The full accountability for sin will be rolled back upon Satan” (*Seventh-day Adventists Believe*, p. 354, 2005 ed.)
- ▣ “It was seen, also, that while the sin offering pointed to Christ as a sacrifice, and the high priest represented Christ as a mediator, the scapegoat typified Satan, the author of sin, upon whom the sins of the truly penitent will finally be placed. When the high priest, by virtue of the blood of the sin offering, removed the sins from the sanctuary, he placed them upon the scapegoat. When Christ, by virtue of His own blood, removes the sins of His people from the heavenly sanctuary at the close of his ministration, he will place them upon Satan, who, in the execution of the judgment, must bear the final penalty. “ (Ellen White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 422)

Atonement in the Bible

- ▣ Jesus alone had our iniquity placed upon Him (Isaiah 53:6)
- ▣ He who knew no sin became sin on our behalf (2 Corinthians 5:21)
- ▣ Jesus Christ–God in the flesh–who bore our sins in his body on the cross (1 Peter 2:24).

Sabbath Worship

- ▣ Joseph Bates convinced the group of Saturday worship
- ▣ The doctrine was later confirmed in a vision by Ellen Harmon White (now married to James White) and as a result became official doctrine
- ▣ Sunday worship will become the “Mark of the Beast”

Sunday – Mark of the Beast

“... those who reject God’s memorial of creatorship – the Bible Sabbath – choosing to worship and honor Sunday in the full knowledge that it is not God’s appointed day of worship, will receive the ‘mark of the beast.’”

(*Seventh-day Adventists Believe ...*, 2005, p. 196)

Answer to Saturday Sabbath

- Old Covenant / Mosaic Law required certain actions be performed for right relationship with God.
 - Sacrifices
 - Circumcision
 - Festivals
 - Foods
 - Tithes
 - Sabbaths

The Old Testament and Old Covenant was focused on a political, physical nation as God’s people, and had rules and regulations to govern it. The purpose was to show forth God’s character and values.

- Jesus ushers in a New Covenant and a New Kingdom and He is the fulfillment of everything the Old Testament laws pointed to:
 - Jesus is the final sacrifice for sin
 - Baptism of believers is the sign of entry into the New Covenant
 - Jesus’ resurrection is the focus of early church worship

- All foods are clean and should not be forbidden (Mark 7:19; 1 Cor. 10:30; 1 Tim 4:1-5)
- Giving is done out of gratitude with whatever one purposes and not out of obligation (2 Cor 9:7)
- Sabbaths along with other law requirements are shadows and were nailed to the cross so no one can judge us on this. (Col 2:14-16; 2 Cor. 3:7 – “ministry of death engraved on stones”; Eph 2:14-15 – Christ ended the system of law with its commandments and regulations). Romans 14:1-6 – Christian freedom and diversity.

The Kingdom of God is a spiritual kingdom and needs different kinds of “laws” to govern its citizens. Outward OT law expressions of faithfulness (tithing, Sabbaths, circumcision, sacrifices) were changed in the New Testament to focus on the heart and spirit. The purpose is still the same to show God’s character and values – but now raised to even a higher level of fulfillment that transcends, race, culture, tribe or religion.

Necessity of the Group for Eternal Life

"I saw that God has honest children among the nominal Adventists and the fallen churches, and before the plagues shall be poured out, ministers and people will be called out from these churches and will gladly receive the truth....But the light will shine, and all who are honest will leave the fallen churches, and take their stand with the remnant".

Early Writings, Ellen G. White p.261

Need the Group for Eternal Life- Mormons, JW's and Seventh-day Adventists

- ☐ “There is no salvation outside The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.” Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, 2nd ed. 1979, p. 670
- ☐ “Sacred [Mormon] ordinances are ordained of God. They are essential to our salvation and exaltation.” (<https://www.lds.org/liahona/2001/11/ordinances-and-covenants?lang=eng>)
- ☐ “Those who desire life in the New Order must come into right relationship with the organization. ... come to Jehovah’s organization for salvation ...” *The Watchtower*, November 15, 1981, pp. 16-17, 21
- ☐ “...we believe that being Seventh-day Adventists has direct bearing on our salvation; ...I would risk my whole spiritual life and salvation were I to leave what I am now and join any other community.” SDA Pres. Jan Paulsen’s keynote address, *Adventist Review*, 6-13-02. <http://archives.adventistreview.org/2002-1524/story3.html>

Evaluating SDA Teaching

Biblical beliefs:

- ☐ One triune God - Father, Son and Holy Spirit
- ☐ Deity of Christ

Non-biblical beliefs:

- ☐ Other churches are false
- ☐ Interpretation of the Bible according to the Ellen G. White
- ☐ Atonement of Christ is not complete
- ☐ Salvation by works

- ☐ Absolutely observe the Sabbath
- ☐ Annihilation of the wicked and Satan - no eternal punishment

Engaging Seventh-day Adventists SDA Who Know the Truth

- ☐ They know SDA doctrine but camouflage it, hide it, deny it
- ☐ Desire to appear more orthodox
- ☐ More about what is *not* said or explained clearly, than what is said
- ☐ Can be intentionally deceitful - Choose their words carefully
- ☐ When confronted with the truth of the official teachings begin defending the very things they were either covering up or denying.
- ☐ Best response: Challenge the dishonesty and lack of integrity and question why one should believe anything they say about the SDA church

Engaging Seventh-day Adventists SDA Who *Do Not* Know the Truth.

- ☐ They do not know the distinctive SDA doctrines
- ☐ Have accepted a sanitized version of SDA beliefs.
- ☐ Are truly unaware of some of Ellen White's plagiarism, teachings and the unbiblical doctrines of the SDA church
- ☐ When they are confronted with actual quotes and official documentation they will truly be surprised and at first disbelieving that it could be true.

SDA – Who Don't Know the Truth

Best response:

- ☐ Challenge them to investigate true SDA history
 - official doctrines
 - Ellen G. White's personal life
 - Plagiarism and false prophecies.
- ☐ Do they really want to be part of an organization with unbiblical beliefs that is characterized by a lack of integrity that started with the founding leader and continues to this day?

Christian Response to Counterfeits

- ☐ It's our duty to defend the Gospel –
Ezek. 33:6; Gal. 1:6-9; Jude 3
- ☐ But “speak the truth in love” – *Eph. 4:15*
- ☐ Seeing others as people first and their religion second
- ☐ Our attitude is as important as our theology – *2 Tim. 2:24-26*

Christian Response

- Informed
- Compassionate
- Intentional

2 Timothy 2:24-26

“And the Lord's servant must not quarrel; instead, he must be kind to everyone, able to teach, not resentful. *Those who oppose him* he must gently instruct, in the hope that God will grant them repentance leading them to a knowledge of the truth, and that they will

come to their senses and escape from the trap of the devil, who has taken them captive to do his will.”