

Bible History and Archeology

The Oldest Church with the Largest Membership

How Seventh-day Adventism began in Eden.

“Thus said the Lord, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way. And walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls but they said, We will not walk therein.” Jeremiah 6:16.

The Bible tells us here that we ought to seek the old paths, and the old path is the good way. That was the tragedy of Israel, God said to seek the old paths because the old path is the good way, but they didn't want to seek the old path. God uses the illustration of Israel to be a lesson to us today.

“Hear, O earth: behold, I will bring evil upon this people, even the fruit of their thoughts, because they have not hearkened unto My words, nor to My law, but rejected it.” Jeremiah 6:1.

God gave them the law, but they rejected it. Jeremiah is holding up the illustration of Israel and using it to show what will happen to any people who reject God's law. The history of the Jews is the tragic history of a people who rejected Christ, and the law of God, and as a result they have reaped the whirlwind. That will be true of us to if we reject the old paths. It is important for us to find the old paths, and when we find the old paths, what must we do? Walk therein.

When people ask what church you belong to and you reply, “Seventh-day Adventist.” Often they say something like, “What made you join that new religion? Why did you become a Seventh-day Adventist?” Now a person has a perfect right to ask that question; the Bible says that we ought to always be able to give an answer for the hope that's within us. [1 Peter 3:15] But is it true that Seventh-day Adventism is some new offshoot religion, just a cult?

When it came to choosing a name for the church, we could have chosen many different names. We could have called ourselves the Christian Church because I don't know of any church that's more entitled to that name than Seventh-day Adventists. But if we adopted the name Christian Church as our official name, that would imply everyone else who wasn't a member weren't Christians, and that wouldn't be right or true.

We could have called ourselves the Church of Christ. We have a perfect right to. In fact, probably we have more right to that name than any other church on the earth because if there were a people on this earth that believe in Jesus, it is Seventh-day Adventists. They believe that Christ was the Creator. Christ was the one that inspired the Bible. Christ is our mediator. He was born of a virgin. He lived a sinless life. He died an atoning death. He was raised in a literal resurrection and He had a literal ascension and will literally come again. So if any people who have the right to call themselves Church of Christ, then Seventh-day Adventists do. In fact, they even keep the same Sabbath that He kept.

We could have called ourselves Baptists because we are Baptists. We could have called ourselves Methodists because we are Methodists. That name was given in derision. George Whitfield and John and Charles Wesley believed in a systematic Bible study. They believed in

systematic giving to missions. They believed in a system for everything, a method. And their opponents said, "You've got a method for this and a method for that. You're a bunch of Methodists." And that name has stuck. We believe in a methodical Bible study, a methodical giving to missions, we are very entitled to the name Methodists.

We could have called ourselves Presbyterians because we are Presbyterian in church government. "Presbyterian" means that there is at least one elder in every church, and in every Seventh-day Adventist Church there is at least one elder. So we're Presbyterian in church government. In fact, in some church lists we are listed under the name "Presbyterian."

We could have called ourselves Congregationalists, because we are Congregationalists in the sense that the congregation runs the church. We could have called ourselves the Salvation Army because we are an army believing in salvation, marching to heaven.

We could have called ourselves Brethren because we are Brethren, one and all, together in the church. We could have called ourselves Catholics because the word "Catholic" means universal, and if there's one church on the earth that's very entitled to that name, "Catholic", it is Seventh-day Adventists. You can go to any place under God's heaven, and will find this message there before you; but because we may have been linked with Roman Catholics, we didn't want to take that name.

Why not choose a Bible name? There are so many, Church of God, Church of Ephesus, Church of Thessalonica, the Household of God, Israel, all different Bible names, nothing wrong with any of them. In fact, there's nothing wrong in all the names that we have mentioned. Revelation 3 says, "Thou has a name, that thou livest, and art dead." God is far more interested in how we live, than the name.

There are two great doctrines that we wish to emphasize to the Christian world, doctrines that have been largely neglected. One is the Second Coming of Jesus, hence the name Adventist. Also we wish to call attention to the down-trodden Ten Commandments; particularly the seventh-day Sabbath, hence the name, Seventh-day Adventist.

"Why are we Seventh-day Adventists?"

The first reason is because Jesus Himself was an Adventist. In John 14:1-3, He said, "I will come again." All the way through, the Bible teaches that Jesus is coming again, and Jesus Himself believed and taught His coming. He's going to return to this earth.

Some years ago, one of our Preachers stepped on board a train. It was in the days when they use to sit in a little dog box compartment. He got in there and there was already a man inside. He sat down, the train started off, and they began to talk. They found they were old school mates and hadn't seen each other for years. One had become the judge of the Supreme Court. The other was the Seventh-day Adventist preacher.

When the judge heard that my friend had become a Seventh-day Adventist preacher, he said, "Listen! I've always wanted to find one of you fellows because there are certain questions that I want to ask you. First of all, tell me, Why do you keep the Sabbath?"

The preacher said, "I could give many reasons as to why I keep the Sabbath. First of all, the Ten Commandments, written by the hand of God Himself, the only part of the Bible that God

personally wrote, and it says that the seventh day is the Sabbath. All of us believe in the Ten Commandments. That is the first reason that I would give. Now the second reason. . .”

The judge said, “Hold on; if that’s the law of God on the subject, that settles it for me because I know that when the law is given it cannot be abrogated or cancelled unless by the person who gives it. I know that Jesus never cancelled or abrogated the Ten Commandments. That will settle it for me. You have quoted the supreme law on the subject and that settles it. It reminds me of a case I had a few months ago.

“I called for a certain witness and his lawyer stepped up. He said, “Your honor, there are many reasons why the witness that you have called upon today is not here. The first reason is because he’s dead. The second reason. . .” And the judge said, “Hang on. If the man’s dead that will be sufficient reason as to why he’s not here. You don’t have to give any other reason.”

“I believe that the law of God settles this whole question. Listen: If there is no other verse in all the Bible except the Ten Commandments, that would be good enough for me because that’s the law of God on the subject.”

“My covenant will I not break nor alter the thing that is gone out of My lips.” Psalm 89:34.

Here the Bible says that God will never alter or change the thing that is gone out of His lips. God spoke the Ten Commandments and He’ll never change it. It never has been revoked, and the Sabbath commandment, the fourth commandment, is just as binding as any of the other nine. It’s especially important because it is the only one that gives the name and credentials of the Law Giver! It is sort of the signature, or seal, of the Law.

Next, I’m a Seventh-day Adventist because I want to belong to the last church on this earth.

“And the dragon (verse 9, the devil) was wroth (angry) with the woman (church), and went to make war with the remnant of her seed. Which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.” Revelation 12:17.

There is something very interesting about a remnant; a remnant of cloth will have the same pattern that ran through the whole bolt of material. The remnant church has the very same pattern of doctrine that God’s church has had down through the ages. It will not be a different church with new doctrines, for God never changes.

The Bible says that the devil is angry with the woman, the church, and particularly the remnant church or the last church on the earth, the last people. God’s people in the last days are identified by the fact that they keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ. That’s God’s identification of His saints in the last days. Many say that God’s people are identified by this or by that or by the other thing. But God identifies His people by two characteristics; One is they keep the commandments of God, and the other is they have the testimony of Jesus.

I want to belong to that church, the remnant church, the last church, who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus.

Here is a parallel text:

“Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.” Revelation 14:12.

Catholics are very emphatic about the ‘first Christian church’, which they claim is theirs. However, the last church is just as important as the first church. God identifies the last church as those who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony, faith, and teachings of Jesus.

“Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And on the seventh day God ended His work which He had made: and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had made. And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it He had rested from all His work which God created and made.” Genesis 2:1-3.

It’s a wonderful thing to have the Creator as our example, and here it says that back in the beginning, after God created the earth, He rested on the seventh day, then blessed that day and sanctified it. The word “sanctify” means, to set aside for a holy use.

So after Jesus had blessed that day, after He had rested on that day, He set it aside, sanctified it for a holy use. He set it aside so that you and I every Sabbath, would keep it as He had kept it there at the end of creation week.

That’s why Jesus said in Mark 2:27, “The Sabbath was made for man”; it was created for man, sanctified, and set aside for man. Thousands of years before there was ever a Jew on the earth, the Bible says that the Sabbath was created or made for man, not the Jew. Now it’s true that the Jews kept the Sabbath because they belonged to the race called man, but it was never made for the Jew. It was made for man. In fact, even after man sinned the Sabbath was still kept.

”And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the Lord.” Genesis 4:1.

Bibles which have a margin, say “at the end of days,” or as Dr. Young in his concordance translated it, “at the end of the week.” Dr. Adam Clark of the Methodist Church Says, “This means the Sabbath.” So here at the end of the week on the Sabbath, they brought their offerings on the day of worship.

Did you ever think that Creation week is the only explanation for a seven day week? This is the only place where the seven day week comes from. If you deny the creation record of seven literal twenty-four hour days, you are at a loss to explain where the seven-day week comes from. I have never met anyone who denies the seven-day literal creation record who can give me a satisfactory answer as to where the seven-day week comes from. There is no explanation, except here.

We get our day by the earth’s rotation on the axis. We get our year by the earth’s revolution around the sun. We get our month by the moon. But where does the seven-day week comes from? You see, if you deny the creation record, you have no explanation for that. Anyone who denies creation, any evolutionist or Christian who doesn’t accept the creation record, have no logical explanation for the week. So the Sabbath was set aside to mark the end of every week.

Not only did they believe in the Sabbath back in those days at the creation, they also believed in the Second Coming.

“And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed, it shall bruise thy head, and thou shall bruise his heel.” Genesis 3:15.

This is the first Messianic prophecy in the Bible, and it points to Jesus. This verse is the great prophecy that points to the time when Satan’s head is going to be bruised which will happen at the Second Coming! Even in Romans 16:20, Paul said that the bruising of Satan was still in the future.

Jesus’ heel was bruised when He died on the cross. When your heel is bruised you can recover, but Satan is going to have his head bruised. His bruising was going to be fatal. This is still future at the Second Coming of Christ.

So right here at the beginning, not only did they have the seventh day Sabbath, but they also believed in the Second Coming of Jesus. So in belief and practice those people would have been Seventh-day Adventists. They believed in the Sabbath and they believed in the soon coming of Jesus.

“And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of His saints.” Jude 1:14.

Enoch, seven generations away from Adam, believed and taught the Second Coming of Jesus. He says that Jesus is coming back with ten thousands of His saints, which means the angels. The Bible says in Genesis 5:22, that Enoch walked with God.

Amos says, “Can two walk together except they be agreed?” Amos 3:3. The answer is obviously, No. Enoch agreed with everything that God said. When God said, “Today is My Sabbath, Enoch,” Enoch didn’t object like a lot of professed Christians. He says, “If it is the Sabbath today, I’ll keep it.” And Enoch kept the Sabbath. Enoch was an Adventist and he was a seventh-day keeper. Enoch was a Seventh-day Adventist. Where is Enoch today? The Bible says he is in heaven.

If I were asked, “How old are the doctrines of your church?”

“I would say, “They began about 4,000 years BC.” The teachings of the Adventist Church have been held by every good man and woman in the Bible. Adam, Enoch, and all the other good men were Seventh-day Adventists, because they believed in the seventh-day Sabbath and in the Second Coming of Jesus. You can trace these truths all the way down through the Bible from Genesis to Revelation. That’s why I joined the oldest church, because the oldest church has the largest membership. It began right back at creation and will continue all the way down until Jesus returns.

“Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward.” Hebrews 11:26.

This is speaking of Moses and it says he looked forward to the reward. The rewards will be given, when Jesus returns. He said, “Behold I come quickly and My reward is with Me to give every man according as his works shall be.” So Moses, looked forward to the time when the

rewards would be given. That's what caused him to turn his back upon the riches of Egypt. So Moses was an Adventist. Did Moses keep the Sabbath? Some people try to suggest it all began with Moses. I haven't met anyone who would deny that Moses was a Sabbath-keeper. So you see Moses was a Seventh-day Adventist. Where is Moses today? Well, he's home in heaven, too, because he was resurrected soon after his death and taken home to heaven.

You can't name a single good man or woman that lived in Bible times and whose history is recorded in the Bible, that wasn't a Seventh-day Adventist. Every last one of them was a Seventh-day Adventist.

"By faith, Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed and he went out, not knowing whither he went. "By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise: "For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God." Hebrews 11:8-10.

Did Abraham believe that Jesus was going to come? Sure; he looked for a city which hath foundations whose builder and maker is God. So Abraham was an Adventist. Was Abraham a commandment-keeper?

"Because that Abraham obeyed My voice, and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes, and My laws." Genesis 26:5.

The Bible says that Abraham was a commandment-keeper. So Abraham believed in the Second Coming of Jesus, and Abraham was a Sabbath-keeper. Abraham was a Seventh-day Adventist.

A little further down in time to the book of Luke, we read that Jesus kept the Sabbath. He commanded men to keep the Sabbath. You would expect that when Jesus came to the earth that He would keep it Himself. And what do we find in Luke 4:16, "As His custom was" Jesus attended the place of worship on the Sabbath. It was Jesus' custom. It was His habit to go to church on the Sabbath.

Then at the crucifixion of Jesus in Luke 23:56, the holy women and the disciples rested on the Sabbath day, according to the commandments. When Jesus died and He was asleep in the grave, those holy women and the disciples kept the Sabbath according to the Ten Commandments.

In Matthew 24:20 it says that Jesus told the disciples, "Pray that your flight be not on the Sabbath day." It is a very curious thing, if the Sabbath was going to be abolished like many Christians suggest when Jesus died on the cross, why did Jesus advocate that Christians pray that their flight be not on the Sabbath?

Jesus knew this prayer would need to be prayed for 40 long years after He died, because Jerusalem wasn't destroyed until 70 A.D. So He advocated that Christians pray for 40 long years that the Sabbath be kept and that their flight be not on the Sabbath. Strange, if it was to be done away with that Jesus would ask them to pray that way.

Then in 54 A.D. in Acts 17:2, it says, Paul as his manner was, went and three Sabbath days reasoned with them out of the Scriptures. It's interesting, that it was Paul's manner or his

custom or his habit to go to church on the Sabbath. It was the very same habit that Jesus had, to go to church on the Sabbath. In the book of Hebrews, the fourth chapter, verse 9, it says;

“There remains therefore a rest to the people of God.” Hebrews 4:9.

The marginal reading for “there remains a rest,” says, “the keeping of the Sabbath.” For the word rest there is the word Sabbath, keeping of the Sabbath. Paul says here it remains, it hasn’t been done away with. There remains therefore a Sabbath for the people of God.

Verse 10. “For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from His.”

How did God cease from His own works? Verse 4. “For He spoke in a certain place of the seventh day on this wise, And God did rest the seventh day from all His works.”

Paul says the Sabbath remains. We’re to enter into that Sabbath as God did. Those three verses way down in 64 AD, showed the Sabbath remained. It hadn’t passed away, 30 years after the cross.

Did Paul believe in the Second Coming of Jesus? “For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.” 1 Thessalonians 4:16, 17.

Paul was an Adventist. He was a Seventh-day Adventist. It’s a very good company to belong to.

Here in these last days, God points out His saints; “Here are they that keep the commandments of God and have the faith of Jesus.” Revelation 14:12. So in the last days these two things are still being emphasized, the commandments and the teachings of Jesus. One of those great teachings is the Second Coming of Christ.

“He which testifies these things said, Surely I come quickly, Amen, Even so, come, Lord Jesus.” Revelation 22:20.

The last promise in the Bible is regarding the Second Coming of Jesus. The first promise in the Bible is regarding the Second Coming of Christ. There are over 1,000 references to the Second Coming of Christ, from both the Old and New Testaments. All Bible writers were Adventists.

Verse 14. “Blessed are they that do His commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.”

The last page of Scripture has the commandments and the Sabbath together with the coming of Jesus. Seventh-day Adventists are in the last page of Scripture. Here in the last days God points out His people as those who keep the commandments of God and have the faith, the teachings of Jesus.

A minister once said; “The trouble is you think the Bible was written for you Seventh-day Adventists.” We agree with him, because every one of the Bible writers was a Seventh-day Adventist. That’s why it’s very easy to establish these truths because it doesn’t matter whether

you go to the Old or New Testament, no matter what book you pick, it's the same wonderful story, because every one of them in belief and practice was a Seventh-day Adventist.

That's why I joined the oldest church because I want to be ready when Jesus returns, and I want to belong to the same group that all God's faithful men and women down through the ages have belonged to. But I'm going to take you one step further, to the new earth.

"For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before Me, said the Lord, so shall your seed and your name remain. And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and from one Sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before Me, said the Lord." Isaiah 66:22, 23.

In the earth made new, what day are we going to keep? The Sabbath. Every person, "all flesh are going to come to worship before Me," Sabbath by Sabbath in the earth made new. No matter what day we keep on this earth, when we get home to heaven, all flesh is going to worship before God Sabbath by Sabbath.

Marco Polo, when he returned from his world travels, told the people of all the wonders that he had seen in the Far East. Very few people believed him. When he was on his death bed, the church leaders, the priests, came along to him and said, "Marco Polo, won't you recant of all the lies that you have been telling us, about what you've seen over there in China and in the Far East? Won't you recant and confess that you've been lying?"

Why you know what he said? "No sir, for I have told the truth. I have nothing to recant, for I have only told you half of what I saw."

In the new earth with its joys and privileges, the Bible has only told us a fraction of what is going to be enjoyed by God's people throughout the ceaseless ages of eternity. Sabbath by Sabbath we'll have the privilege of listening and sitting at the feet of Jesus as He tells us the things that we have never been able to understand on this earth, and more of the wonders of the science of salvation. Won't that be wonderful?

That's why all through the Bible from Genesis right through to Revelation and beyond, and in the earth made new, God's people in belief and practice are Seventh-day Adventists. That's why I link my life up with the oldest church, which naturally has the largest membership.