

# Men's Discipleship

## False Religions: Seventh Day Adventist Part 1

The Seventh-day Adventist Church originated in the mid-19th century United States during the **Second Great Awakening**, a Protestant revival movement. Its roots are closely tied to the **Millerite movement**, led by **William Miller**, a Baptist preacher who predicted Christ's return around **1843–1844**.

### Key Origins:

- 1. Millerite Movement (1830s–1844):**
  - William Miller, using biblical prophecy (especially Daniel 8:14), calculated that Jesus would return on **October 22, 1844**.
  - When Christ did not return as expected, it led to the **Great Disappointment**.
  - Many followers left the movement, but a small group remained, believing the date was right but the event was misunderstood.
- 2. Investigative Judgment Doctrine (Post-1844):**
  - A remnant group, including **Hiram Edson**, concluded that Christ had entered the **Most Holy Place** of the heavenly sanctuary on October 22, 1844, to begin the **investigative judgment**, not to return to Earth.
  - This interpretation became a foundational belief of Seventh-day Adventist theology.
- 3. Sabbath Observance:**
  - **Joseph Bates**, a former sea captain and Millerite, introduced the belief in **Saturday as the biblical Sabbath**, based on the Fourth Commandment.
  - His teachings influenced others, including **James and Ellen G. White**.
- 4. Ellen G. White and the Spirit of Prophecy:**
  - Ellen White claimed to receive visions and prophetic guidance.
  - Her writings and leadership shaped Adventist theology and practice.
  - She emphasized health reform, education, and worldwide mission.
- 5. Official Organization (1863):**
  - The **Seventh-day Adventist Church** was formally organized in **Battle Creek, Michigan**, in **1863** with about 3,500 members.
  - The name reflects key beliefs: "**Seventh-day**" for Sabbath observance, and "**Adventist**" for belief in the imminent return (Advent) of Jesus.

### Summary:

The Seventh-day Adventist Church emerged from the disappointed hopes of the Millerite movement, redirected through theological reinterpretation and spiritual leadership, particularly that of Ellen White. Its identity is marked by Sabbath observance, apocalyptic expectation, health reform, and emphasis on biblical prophecy.

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The **Millerite Movement** was a 19th-century American religious revival movement that played a central role in the formation of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. It was based on the teachings of **William Miller**, a lay Baptist preacher who focused on biblical prophecy, particularly concerning the Second Coming of Christ.

## Origins of the Millerite Movement

- **Timeframe:** Early 1830s to 1844
- **Location:** Northeastern United States, particularly New York and New England
- **Religious Climate:** Emerged during the **Second Great Awakening**, a time of widespread evangelical revivalism and prophetic fervor.

### William Miller (1782–1849)

- A deist turned Baptist who became deeply interested in Bible prophecy after his conversion.
- He studied the Bible intensively, especially Daniel and Revelation.
- In **1818**, he concluded that **Jesus Christ would return around 1843** based on **Daniel 8:14** — “Unto 2300 days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed.”

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## Key Doctrinal Beliefs of the Millerites

1. **Imminent Second Coming of Christ:**
  - Belief that Christ would return visibly and literally to Earth in 1843 or 1844.
  - Interpreted the 2300 "days" of Daniel 8:14 as 2300 years, starting in **457 BC**, ending around **1843–1844 AD**.
2. **Historicist Interpretation of Prophecy:**
  - Viewed prophetic timelines (Daniel and Revelation) as spanning actual historical eras, not future events (futurist) or symbolic epochs (idealist).
3. **Sanctuary Theology:**
  - Believed “cleansing of the sanctuary” meant Christ would return to Earth to purify it by fire and resurrect the righteous.
4. **Premillennialism:**
  - Believed Christ’s return would precede a literal 1,000-year reign (Millennium).
5. **Judgment and Resurrection:**
  - Expected the righteous dead would be resurrected at Christ's coming, with the wicked destroyed by fire.

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## Key Leaders

1. **William Miller** – Founder and chief promoter; avoided setting a specific date at first but later endorsed Oct. 22, 1844.
  2. **Joshua V. Himes** – Miller’s publicist and organizer; crucial in spreading the message through print media and camp meetings.
  3. **Samuel S. Snow** – Set the **specific date** for Christ’s return: **October 22, 1844**, based on the “**seventh-month message.**”
  4. **Joseph Bates** – Later became a key Adventist figure; early Sabbath observer influenced by the Millerite movement.
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## Evangelistic Methods

- **Large Camp Meetings**
  - “**Signs of the Times**” Newspaper
  - **Widespread Use of Charts** (e.g., the 1843 prophetic chart)
  - **Traveling Preachers** – Hundreds of licensed "lecturers" preached across the U.S. and abroad.
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## False Prophecies and the Great Disappointment

### First Disappointment:

- **March 21, 1843 – March 21, 1844:** First expected window for Christ’s return passed with no event.

### Second Disappointment:

- **October 22, 1844:** Date fixed by **Samuel S. Snow** based on the Jewish Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur on the Karaite calendar).
- Result: No Second Coming occurred. This became known as the **Great Disappointment.**

### Aftermath:

- Many followers were devastated; some abandoned Christianity altogether.
  - Others splintered into:
    - **Spiritualizers:** Claimed Christ had come "spiritually."
    - **Shakers/Perfectionists:** Merged with other radical sects.
    - **Advent Christian Church (1860):** Denied immortality of the soul.
    - **Seventh-day Adventist Church (1863):** Retained 1844 as a key date but reinterpreted the event.
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## Legacy

- **Biblical Prophecy Study** became central to American evangelicalism.
  - Influenced **Apocalyptic Movements** like Jehovah's Witnesses and Christadelphians.
  - **Seventh-day Adventists** preserved the prophetic framework but adjusted doctrine (e.g., Investigative Judgment).
  - Demonstrated the dangers of **date-setting**, which is now rejected by most Adventist denominations.
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## Summary Table

Aspect	Details
<b>Founder</b>	William Miller
<b>Date Focus</b>	1843–1844, especially October 22, 1844
<b>Key Beliefs</b>	Literal Second Coming, 2300-day prophecy, historicism
<b>Collapse</b>	Great Disappointment of 1844
<b>Survivors</b>	Advent Christians, Seventh-day Adventists, others
<b>Key Text</b>	Daniel 8:14
<b>Legacy</b>	End-times focus, birth of SDA Church, caution against date-setting

The **Millerite movement** directly shaped the **theology, mission, and identity** of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Though the Millerites were ultimately proven wrong about the **1844 return of Christ**, their beliefs, methods, and prophetic framework laid the foundation upon which Adventism was built.

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## 1. Prophetic Interpretation and the 1844 Date

### Millerite Contribution:

- William Miller interpreted **Daniel 8:14** ("Unto 2300 days, then shall the sanctuary be cleansed") to mean that **Christ would return around 1843–1844**.
- Samuel Snow refined this to **October 22, 1844**.

### Adventist Adaptation:

- After the **Great Disappointment**, a small group reinterpreted the 1844 event, concluding that the date was correct, but the **event misunderstood**.
- They taught that Christ **did not return to Earth**, but instead entered the **Most Holy Place in the heavenly sanctuary** to begin the **Investigative Judgment**.

- This belief became **core SDA doctrine**—a distinctive teaching among Christian denominations.
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## 2. Historicist Prophetic Framework

### Millerite Contribution:

- Used the **historicist** method of interpreting prophecy: prophetic symbols represent a timeline of world history from biblical times to the end.

### Adventist Adaptation:

- Adventists retained this method, using it to interpret **Daniel, Revelation**, and to identify prophetic fulfillment in global events.
  - This led to:
    - Viewing the **papacy** as the little horn of Daniel 7.
    - Seeing the **United States** in Revelation 13 as the “beast from the earth.”
    - Believing in a future **time of trouble** and **Sunday law crisis**.
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## 3. Emphasis on the Second Coming

### Millerite Contribution:

- Central belief: the **imminent, visible, literal return** of Jesus Christ.

### Adventist Adaptation:

- Kept this as a defining doctrine: Christ's return is literal, global, and imminent.
  - The word "**Adventist**" reflects this ongoing expectation.
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## 4. Mission and Evangelism

### Millerite Contribution:

- Used newspapers, charts, and itinerant preachers to spread their message.
- Had a strong sense of **urgency**, expecting Christ's return any day.

### Adventist Adaptation:

- Built a global mission structure, inspired by Millerite outreach.
  - Still publishes papers like the *Adventist Review* and uses prophecy seminars, media, and publishing houses.
  - Founded schools, hospitals, and missionary institutions.
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## 5. Sabbath Doctrine (A Post-Millerite Inheritance)

- **Note:** Millerites **did not teach Sabbath observance**.
  - After the Great Disappointment, **Joseph Bates** (a former Millerite) introduced the **Saturday Sabbath**, based on the Fourth Commandment.
  - Bates influenced **James and Ellen White**, who adopted and spread the teaching.
  - Sabbath observance became a **mark of Adventist identity**, hence the name “**Seventh-day**”.
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## 6. Role of Ellen G. White and the Spirit of Prophecy

### Millerite Influence:

- Many Millerites were open to visions, dreams, and charismatic manifestations.
- A few claimed prophetic insight during and after the disappointment.

### Adventist Development:

- **Ellen G. White**, a young Millerite, claimed visions starting in late 1844.
  - Her writings became authoritative in shaping SDA theology, health reform, education, and eschatology.
  - Adventists believe her prophetic ministry **vindicated** the Millerite experience as providential, not mistaken.
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## 7. The Remnant Concept

- After 1844, the remaining faithful Millerites considered themselves a **remnant**, misunderstood but loyal to God.
  - Adventists absorbed this view, applying it to themselves as **the prophetic remnant church** of Revelation 12:17 and 14:12.
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## Summary Table

Millerite Influence	Adventist Development
2300-day prophecy, 1844	Doctrine of Investigative Judgment
Historicist interpretation	Prophetic timeline theology
Literal Second Coming	Core doctrine of SDA
Revivalism, evangelism	Global mission church
Prophetic openness	Ellen White's leadership
Remnant identity post-1844	Remnant church teaching
Camp meetings, charts, literature	Prophecy seminars, publishing ministry
Emphasis on holiness	Health reform and lifestyle standards

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## Conclusion:

The Millerite movement was the **spiritual, prophetic, and theological womb** from which Seventh-day Adventism was born. Though the Millerite prediction failed, Adventists reinterpreted its meaning and built an enduring denomination—one of the largest and most organized Protestant churches globally—on its remains.