

Lucan: It's time to begin. Bro. David, will you please offer the opening prayer?

Zahakiel: Dear Father in Heaven, We come before your Throne with thanksgiving, rejoicing in the time of peace you have provided for us in the midst of our labors. We thank you for these sacred hours, in which we remember your Creative power in the world and in our lives. May each receive the blessing prepared for your people from the foundation of the world, as we ask it with unwavering expectation in the name of your Son, Yahshua. Amen.

Pastor Chick: Amen.

Barb: Amen

Adriel7777: Amen

Naraiel: Amen

Lucan: Amen

Elyna: Amen.

Ruthline: Amen

daphna: Amen

Peter_Jr_18: Amen.

Marie: Amen

Lucan: Some time ago we held a meeting in which a simple question was posed:

"What are the differences in belief and practice between the SDA denomination and the CSDA Church?"

We had a good discussion during that meeting, as it is a subject each one of us is an expert in. There is not a single CSDA who may not be expected to "give an answer" of the hope that is within us. Having reached out to Seventh-day Adventist individuals for decades, with many of us having been members of the denomination, we may speak both from experience with darkness and from the outpouring of Yahshua's light from within. While our evangelistic approach generally ought to focus on those things we have in common with other individuals rather than our disagreements, when it comes to the Body as a whole, we are to answer clearly why and how we are a distinct people.

Tonight I would like to present a similar question in light of our increasing interactions with both independent SDA believers, and various SDA independent ministries, that have also separated from the denomination. We will encounter many individuals who have heard the call to "come out of her, my people," yet do not clearly understand why, or where to go afterwards. It is with these in mind that I am posing the following question for discussion, with a similar list to be compiled afterwards:

What are the differences in activities and beliefs between the CSDA Church and SDA Independent Ministries? Please go ahead when ready. 😊

Ruthline: C

Lucan: Go ahead, Ruthie

Ruthline: They believe in the Trinity...

Adriel7777: A

Naraiel: A.

Ruthline: While we are non-Trinitarian. The government is technically the head of their church while God is the head of our church. End.

Lucan: Thank you for sharing that. 😊 I am wondering, are you thinking of independent ministries, or the denomination with your last comment?

Ruthline: (I was thinking of the denomination.)

Lucan: Okay, thank you. Well, I would like to focus primarily on the independent groups tonight, and I think your comment on the Trinity is a good start for our comparisons. The majority of independents do teach the Trinity, although there are a few that are very strongly anti-Trinitarian. I wonder how our own activities and beliefs would compare with those?

Please proceed when ready, Sis. Jody.

Adriel7777: They remain independent, while we press close together in unity and invite others to join us. End.

Lucan: That is another good one, and one of the main points of difference I have on my own list as well.

Sis. Giselle, please go ahead.

Naraiel: Knowledge and truths are used without wisdom and mercy, more focused on the letter of the law.

Zahakiel: A

Naraiel: In independent ministries, they tend to focus on sanctification for other people first, not themselves. Self is manifested in fear, intimidation, and arrogance when dealing with other people, and have a commercial attitude toward the promotion of their doctrines and products. End for now. The CSDA church does not have that approach. End.

Elyna: A

Lucan: Okay, and that may be quite a few differences, if we were to break it down. It sounds like "legalism" is one of the main themes I see being presented; how would that contrast specifically with CSDA?

Lucan: Please go ahead, Bro. David

Zahakiel: I was thinking about your question earlier today, and I think that Ruthie's answer at the very beginning, regarding the Trinity, sort of underscores one of the biggest issues with regard to independent ministries, and that is... by their nature they are inconsistent... They all claim to be Adventist Churches, but they are not following a single guiding Angel that leads the people of Yah into unity. So, a lack of unity, as Sis. Jody just said while I was considering this, would be a comparison between ourselves and the overall group of ministries of this nature.

I also have a few others regarding some specifics, but I would prefer to intersperse those throughout other people's comments so I don't monologue 😊

The other one for now is this... The CSDA Church has a living Spirit of Prophecy. The mainstream Church has the writings of EGW that they reference with this title, and independent ministries will follow this example to one degree or another, sometimes even exceeding the Conference Church in their veneration of these works, but these works are the RESULT of the Spirit of Prophecy. They are not the Spirit itself which, as the name itself tells you, is the prophetic spirit, not a static document. Yah is always leading people into greater and brighter light, and so there is no stopping point at which the revealed truth is "good enough" for the saints. End.

Lucan: Thank you for sharing; I also note that Independents generally reject any spiritual gifts after Mrs. White, and are often closed off to new messages as a result. I think it is the source of the term "historic," which a great number claim.

I notice unity has come up a couple of times, and that is one of the "core" differences I see. Now, I would expect independents would claim some degree of unity, knowing the Scriptures and writings. So, how would we explain the difference in what our "unity" is, from their "unity?"

Please go ahead, Sis. Guerline

Elyna: I think Bro David and even Sis. Giselle touched to an extent what I was going to say, let me see if there is anything else... but thinking of the question you are asking right now. I think that they rather unite in their differences and celebrate them while we unite in the Spirit. And here is what I was posting earlier:

They follow one or a list of doctrines, ignoring the Spirit's leading. Some are very pro. E.G. White almost making a god of what she says. The majority if not all are waiting adamantly for the Sunday Law.

Naraiel: A.

Elyna: ...

Peter: A

Elyna: So all this rigidity in their belief system crowds and stumps their growth in the Spirit. Of course the opposite of all that is what CSDAs are and believe and stand for. End.

Lucan: Sis. Guerline raises an important point here... There is "unity" in doctrine, and "unity" in the Spirit, which leads to unity of doctrine naturally. When one is focused on the doctrine as the test of unity, then we may see some characteristics that Sis. Giselle described earlier; fear, intimidation, etc. This often leads to discouraging, forbidding, or controlling discussion of controversial subjects. This is as opposed to CSDA, which encourages open discussion of potential new light among our membership.

Please go ahead, Sis. Giselle.

Adriel7777: A

Naraiel: According to the Bible, freedom from sin, or victory over sin, is accomplished when the Holy Spirit of Christ is dwelling and remaining in the believer... then, how can unity exist in the Spirit? It reminds me of a passage in Romans 8, but I don't have it at hand. About walking after the flesh, vs. walking after the Spirit. End. (Ref. Rom. 8:4)

Lucan: Right, and here we are getting into some of the "substance" of the differences... In both belief AND activity, there are no Independents who give a testimony of complete victory over known sin. This is the core message of the CSDA Church, and the experience that unites us in the Spirit.

Now, I would like to give a comment before proceeding to Peter's answer...

One of the differences I have on my list is, Independent ministries generally have a "bad church" message, while CSDAs have a "true church" message. While we will necessarily be addressing some errors in independent ministries in the course of this, hearts are won by truth, not pointing out error. So, it is imperative that we offer something more than "they do all of these wrong things, and we don't..." We must offer life, not merely a lack of death. 😊

Please go ahead when ready, Peter.

Peter 1: While we retain the name Yah has given us they on the other hand give up the name because they are afraid of imprisonment. So there is no love among them. Perfect love remove ALL fears. End. (Ref. 1 John 4:18)

Lucan: Ah, thank you - that is a very important one. The majority of independents have either surrendered the name Seventh-day Adventist, or sought legal loopholes to avoid persecution. And, it is the revelation of LOVE that identifies us, along with our obedience.

Lucan: Please proceed, Sis. Jody.

Adriel7777: I see an example of our pressing together in unity in our "heart work" sessions. End.

Lucan: Ah, that is a good and specific example. 😊 Thank you for bringing that forward.

Zahakiel: A

Lucan: Please go ahead, Bro. David.

Zahakiel: First, I also appreciate Sis. Jody's answer. I've never heard of any other Church, or any other group of any kind, that does anything approaching heart work. The next difference I had in my notes is that the CSDA Church has a focus on the Gospel in every aspect of its teachings. Of course just about every Church will claim this, but when you look at the doctrines they discuss, they often seem really disconnected, without the central theme of Yahshua and His redemptive work on our behalf. Part of it is because of what Sis. Giselle pointed out... this external focus, and I have something further about that as well...

But when we teach about the Victory over sin, it is because this is the gift that Christ has given us. When we teach about the Godhead, or the Feasts, or the SDA Trademark, these are never used in isolation, as if there were many different truths. There are three angels' messages, but there is only one truth, that Yah is love, and everything else comes naturally out of that understanding, that genuinely "good" news... Independent ministries tend to fixate on one pet doctrine or another, as several have already mentioned, rather than the gift of Christ's everlasting life as our own. End.

Naraiel: A.

Lucan: Thank you for sharing; you mentioned "pet doctrines," and this relates to something I have on my list as well... That is, CSDA teaches the SDA denomination has fallen beyond repair, and Yahweh's people have been called out into a new body. Independents vary between reforming the denomination and rejecting all organization, with almost none calling the denomination "fallen." The result is that most see the SDA church as "mostly correct," and in need of correcting one or two doctrines in order to be "right" again. And so they fixate on these pet doctrines as the solution, rather than the three angel's messages applied consistently.

Please go ahead, Sis. Giselle

Naraiel: Also, self doesn't like to hear things like conditional prophecy. End.

Lucan: Yes, that is a very large difference - I do not know of anyone outside of CSDAs who teach or apply conditional prophecy, although most accept the idea implicitly without realizing it.

Here is one from my list:

Zahakiel: A

Lucan: CSDAs teach the judgment of the living is ongoing, and began in 1988; Independents have little or no light on this subject, and generally consider us to be in the judgment of the dead by default.

Lucan: Please go ahead, Bro. David.

Peter 1: A.

Zahakiel: Yes, the Judgment of the Living is a big difference. I haven't heard the idea that this has begun elsewhere. The other difference I have in my notes... and this is sort of a follow-up to the comments made by Sis. Giselle and Bro. Luke along with a recent example. As I posted on Facebook recently, I had an appointment to speak to a member of an independent SDA Church earlier this week. He showed up almost an hour late, citing heavy traffic, and by that time I'd already left, but in the meantime I looked at the Facebook pages of both him and the member who had set up the meeting and the things they had posted were really contrary to the Spirit of Christ, which is fairly typical from the interactions we have had with others in their membership. It is also indicative of a larger issue in many independent ministries who, despite what they say, are really focused on works.

Beyond the "pet doctrine" issue... They will say, "The Bible says homosexuality is wrong," for example... or certain kinds of music, or some worldly practice, and so they post a lot of messages condemning it, thinking they are advancing a Biblical understanding of the issue. All they are doing is casting the potentially correct doctrine in the wrong light.

The CSDA Church is a fellowship of healers; this is the spiritual identity that our Savior has given us. We are the Elijah People, whose work is to turn the hearts of the people to the Father in Heaven.

Even if someone adopts the right position on a matter, if he or she does not present it as good news, as the Creator's invitation to the fallen creature - that there is health, wholeness, healing, for those who come to Christ - then all they do is preach a message of rejection of sin, rather than the acceptance of precious souls... As Giselle said, the focus is on what other people, people in the world, are doing, rather than preparing themselves for a judgment that looks at the deepest motives of the heart. Even with regard to others, healing is only possible after one has come to the Savior, and in matters where they are doctrinally correct,

Pastor Chick: A

Zahakiel: Independent Ministries tend to act like Moses striking the rock. They are loud and condemning where the Father intends to be gracious and because of this, just like Moses, they will not be permitted to enter into the Promised Land. If any have been saved out of their movements, it must be through the grave, because they have not come up to

the stature of the fullness of Christ. In short, and largely for this reason, the CSDA Church is the Church of the 144,000 who shall not see death. That is a fairly stark line of distinction. End.

Lucan: Thank you for sharing; that is some very powerful imagery, and certainly ought to encourage us to reach out to the deceived souls being caught up in such movements.

Please go ahead, Pastor.

Pastor Chick: There is a difference in how financial matters are handled. The Independents who support the Conference will direct tithes to that Church, while soliciting offerings. Other Independents will accept tithes without soliciting, and still others will solicit both tithes and offerings. END.

Zahakiel: A

Lucan: Ah, thank you for bringing that up. 😊 I had a brief discussion with an independent recently regarding the matter of organization, and while it did not bear discernible fruit, I had hoped to get into that type of practical difference as well. Often independent ministries are operated by one minister, who personally receives whatever it is he solicits (be it tithe, or offering, or both...) CSDA ministers are self-supporting, or receive a set stipend from the storehouse with Church approval.

Please go ahead, Bro. David.

Zahakiel: When Pastor mentioned financial issues, this reminded me of a couple other specific things, like not dealing with tithes and offerings on Sabbaths, a greater respect for the sacredness of the day, and an aspect of the "Sabbath more fully."

Also, this brings to my mind our voting method, built upon Biblical principles. We have a unique system in which two "Nay" votes can block a motion... we are not a "majority rules" society, but a Spirit-led one. We also have safeguards to prevent familial connections from unduly influencing a voting session, so that Yah can truly speak clearly through His people. End.

Peter 1: A

Elyna: A

Lucan: Thank you for bringing those to the front; the way in which Yah has established our voting procedures is rather important, especially when dealing with those who have come out of Papal arrangements, either in the denomination or among independents.

Lucan: Please go ahead, Peter.

Peter 1: While we by the Spirit of Yah live by every word that comes out of the mouth of God as did Yahshua while he was on earth they on the other hand compromise in the world in order to please others in the flesh. Christ is our center not self. End.

Lucan: Okay, thank you for sharing that. Do you have some specific examples of this? I think that would be necessary if we are to persuade any of the differences being substantial. 😊

Please proceed, Sis. Guerline.

Elyna: They also have a default character: while they have an intellectual knowledge of the truth, for example: Victory over sin. They may speak them and proclaim that it is their beliefs. And yet the next moment, they fall into the trap- "I hope I will hold on till the end" or something of the sort. And that attitude makes me think and say to them as Yahshua said to the rich young ruler. "Thou art not far from the kingdom, go and sell all that thou hast, give alms to the poor, and come and follow me." If they were to sell ALL that THEY (know, have, understand) doctrinally, then they could be as little children and be led by the Good Shepherd. End.

Pastor Chick: C
Adriel7777: Amen

Lucan: Please go ahead, Pastor.
Zahakiel: A

Peter 1: Our dependence is upon Yah in all that we do from the moment we are awake we lay our request before him and he may guide us to consult the body of Christ for more enlightened. Our lives are not (our own) (Sorry).

Pastor Chick: Many years ago, Yah showed me those who teach victory over sin without living it and testifying to it... are farther from the kingdom than those who do not believe the doctrine. It is not intuitive, but I see the truth in it. END.

Lucan: I am reminded of the "Hospital Church" article on our site... It talks about the most dangerous spiritual infections being those acquired in a place where the promises of Yahweh are taught regularly, because a resistance is acquired to conviction. I see something of that in what Pastor is saying here.

Bro. David, please go ahead.

Zahakiel: To react to what Pastor just said, I have long thought that to be quite true... Someone who teaches the truth is easily convinced that because he "knows" it, he is living it, and therefore likely finds it much harder to adopt a spirit of humility when presented with the true faith. There are other reasons as well... because the conscience becomes "seared" by knowing on some level that the truth is not being completely accepted.

Barb: A

Zahakiel: ... but my original answer was this... Some independent ministries keep Feast days and some do not. We have a very particular way in which we are blessed by these appointed times... understanding their significance in the context of the Plan of Salvation and an obvious difference that I'm sort of surprised hasn't come up yet is our observance of the Ordinance of Humility, the New Moon. It's in the Bible as well as the writings of Mrs. White, sometimes right alongside the weekly Sabbath, but there is a veil over the eyes of those who would misuse this powerful, practical aspect of the faith. End.

Lucan: Right, thank you for bringing that up. 😊 I do not know of any, even among the feast keeping SDAs, who observe the New Moon in such a manner.

Lucan: Please go ahead, Sis. Barb.

Barb: What we have experienced here in Uganda is that independent SDA groups agree to meet with us to learn from us, then they turn the tables and attempt to teach us. CSDA don't evangelize in that way. End.

Lucan: Ah, yes...

Zahakiel: A (for Sis. Barb)

Lucan: Go ahead, Bro. David.

Zahakiel: Well... sometimes I will invite Jehovah's Witnesses and Latter Day Saints in to listen to them... and then I attempt to teach them something 😊 End.

Adriel7777: 😊

Pastor Chick: (but that's not SDA groups)

Elyna: Q

Lucan: Go ahead, Sis. Guerline.

Zahakiel: (Right, and no deception involved.)

Barb: 😊

Elyna: Seeing that resisting spirit, I wonder how best some time, to break a door or a window open. I truly pray and agonize on their behalf. I have lost quite a few friends and acquaintances to that spirit. So what and how to break those great walls? End.

Pastor Chick: C

Lucan: Go ahead, Pastor.

Pastor Chick: I recall a meeting at a popular independent ministry when Brother Luke and I met with their staff. We agreed on the way forward. We formulated our views on the FREE SDA option and submitted those in writing, but we never received any answer, either in writing or by voice. Independent ministries are usually truce-breakers, and we are vow-keepers. END.

Zahakiel: A

Lucan: Ah, thank you. 😊

Please go ahead, Bro. David.

Zahakiel: I absolutely agree with that re: truce-breakers... And in a tightly related matter, CSDAs are really committed to courtesy. We understand it to be a spiritual obligation to keep commitments even outside of a "Church setting," to see agreements as covenants, and to guard those around us from unnecessary disappointments in even the most minor matters.

And I think that this may be a part of the answer to Sis. Guerline's question... Our example, the testimony we bear to others in the apparently trivial matters, can weaken walls that are hard to break; we do not know how the Spirit is working on those who see us merely living the resurrected life, but we do know it will have an effect. End.

Elyna: 😊

Adriel7777: Amen 😊

Lucan: Thank you for that; you mentioned "covenants," and this ties into another difference I have... As mentioned, independents frequently do not regard covenants or agreements; and, as a rule, they generally do not have a covenant of membership or accountability with one another. Rather, people "attend" or "don't attend," but there is no commitment to be one another's keeper. CSDAs have a membership covenant to Yahweh and to one another... And, within that covenant, all are equal - every member, from the minister to the newest member, has accountability to all of their brethren. Independent minsters generally are accountable to no one, thus maintaining their "independence."

I am noticing that we have been discussing for almost two hours. And, we might still compile quite a few more differences. I am blessed that this subject is generating discussion among us, and expect it will be of benefit in generating discussion with those who are misled in various movements.

Are there any further comments for the meeting tonight? And, if further differences come to mind, they can be posted on the FB thread for inclusion.

Zahakiel: Q

Lucan: Go ahead.

Zahakiel: Actually, you just answered a part of it. 😊

Zahakiel: So we can post additional ones to Facebook. You also mentioned something about compiling this into an article... what is the timeframe before you begin to do that? End.

Lucan: I would likely begin that next Sabbath. So, that should allow a week for further inclusions.

Zahakiel: (Ok, thanks)

Lucan: Are there any others? If not, I'll ask Pastor to offer the closing prayer.

Elyna: C

Lucan: Go ahead, Sis. Guerline.

Elyna: I would like to also synthesize my last comment, which I abbreviated. I will work on it and post it on FB. End.

Pastor Chick: Dear Father in heaven. We thank You for reviewing the various differences between the Church and Independent ministries as we keep in mind our divine mandate... keeping the commandments of Yah by the faith of Yahshua. Thank You for the Sabbath blessing that is always ours without failure. In Yahshua's holy name, Amen.

Peter 1: Amen

Adriel7777: Amen

Zahakiel: Amen.

Barb: Amen

Elyna: Amen.

Naraiel: Amen

Ruthline: Amen

Peter_Jr_18: Amen.

Lucan: Amen