

# What is the Church?

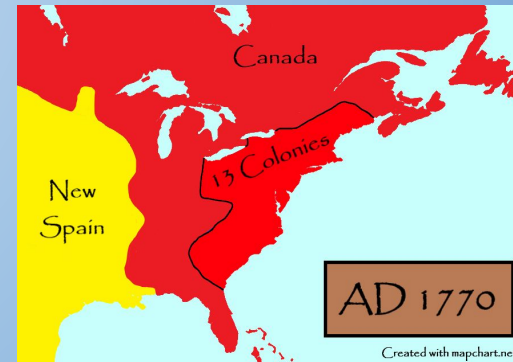
## Part 4

**Babylon. When does it become  
Time to Declare Independence?**

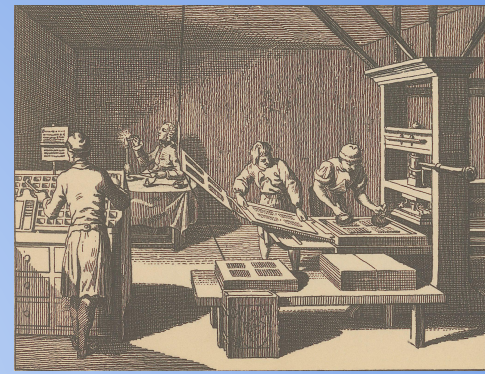


In the 1700s the British had created along the Atlantic coast of North America what became known as the 13 colonies. These 13 colonies were very diverse in their population, rich and poor, English, Scot, Irish, Dutch, German, African, and many other nationalities. Religion was also diverse in these English colonies, with Protestantism being the strongest.

The English, in general, believed in representative government, although they had a king, the people in England were represented in the government's parliament, which was responsible for passing laws and enacting things, like taxes. However this was not the case with those living in the colonies, they weren't represented, and yet, despite not being represented, they were treated like regular citizens, including being taxed, and having to obey any laws passed by parliament, even though they had no say in those laws. In general the colonials, were looked down on. This and other issues, such as sometimes an unfair justice system, and the ability for British soldiers to do almost whatever they wanted to Colonials, created a great rift in the minds of many in the colonies with their mother England.



During this time, a lot of books on government especially the rights of the common person, were beginning to receive wide circulation throughout Europe and Europe's Colonies. The printing press, and an increase in literacy among the common people, allowed for the widespread distribution of thoughts on the subject of how to create honest government.



The Reformation had set the stage for this kind of thinking, during the Reformation people had realized that they had spiritual rights, that were being violated by the church, so declared independence from this spiritual tyranny, and began to understand what a true church should be like. Now, many, were taking it a step further, they were realizing that they had earthly rights as well, and wished to declare independence from physical tyranny too.



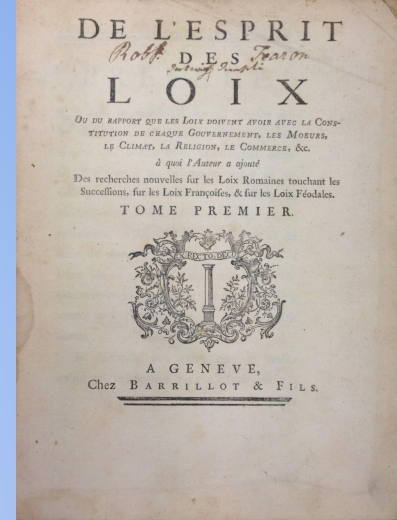
**Luther before the Diet**

In the 1760s and early 1770s England began passing several tax laws on the colonies, which the colonies had no say on, these tax laws, taxed a lot of everyday items, and were very much disliked by the colonists. But what was the worst of it was that they had been passed without their input or permission.



A new belief on government was becoming widespread at this time, that Government was not for the purpose of having one person be on top to wield absolute power for his benefit, the people were not for the government, they did not exist to serve the the government, but that it should be the opposite, the government should exist to serve the people, and that it should be designed to achieve this goal. The whole idea was that the sole purpose for Government was to serve the common people, and make society better then it would be if there was no government. Just had Christ had said:

“But Jesus called them *unto him*, and said, Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.” **Matthew 20:25-28**



The Spirit of the Law  
By Montesquieu, 1748



At this time several papers were established in the colonies, with large mailing lists all across the colonies, these papers wrote articles on government, and on the injustices that the English Government were committing against them. They showed how it was an injustice for the colonies to not be represented in Parliament, and at the same for Parliament to pass laws on them. For the government was suppose to serve the people, and in order to serve the people, the people needed to have a say in these laws, in order for proper justice. These papers spread all across America, bringing many from every background, rich, poor, black and white, together into a common unity, understanding and belief, the government of England must serve the people, and if they refused, then drastic measures must be taken by the people. With all these tensions, liberty groups were created, and militia units were trained by colonies for self-defence. In order to try to stop all the trouble, the British would, in 1775, send a military unit of 700 men to secure colonial gunpowder that the militis used, and arrest two the leaders of these new liberty groups.



**Parliament**



**Paul Revere's night ride to warn of the militia units of the advancing English**

A confrontation would occur in the town of Lexington, between 80 Militia and the British troops, no one to this day knows who fired the first shot, but someone fired a musket and the British quickly fired a volley into the Militia, the Americans, outnumbered, fled the field. At this point the two leaders who had been staying at Lexington, that the the British were coming to arrest had already fled, but there was still the gunpowder at Concord. So the British continued on to Concord to collect the gunpowder they had come for. But at Concord they were attacked by a much largest American force, the British would end up in a fighting retreat all the way back to Boston, and within just a few days Boston was besieged by 16,000 Militia. The War was now on. Soon an experienced commander, George Washington was put in command of the Colonial army, and after almost a year of siege the British were forced to withdraw from Boston. However the the British army regrouped in Canada, received reinforcements from England, and prepared for further fighting.

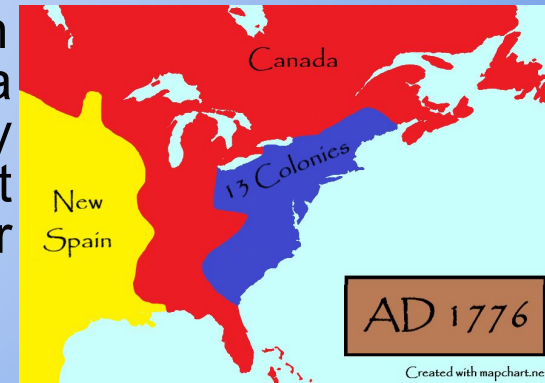
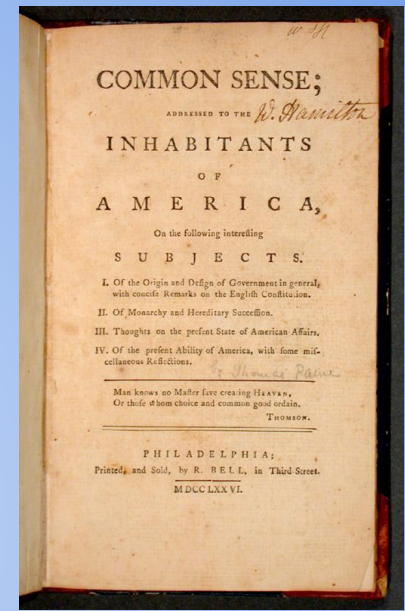


**Battle of Lexington**

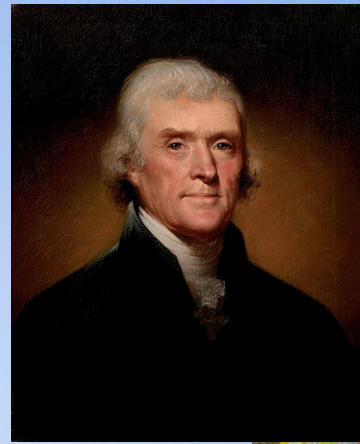


**Battle of Concord**

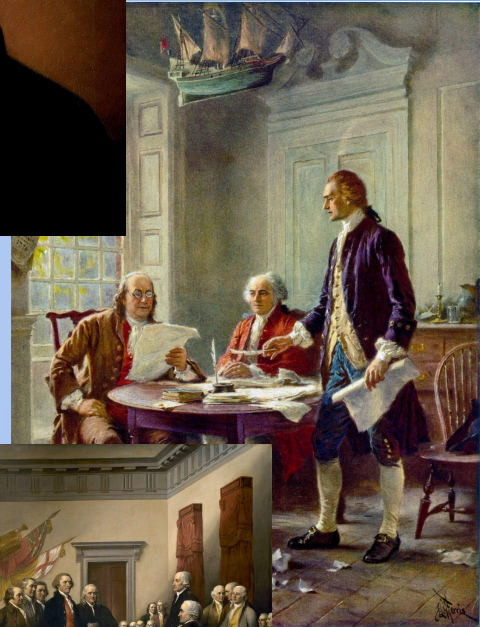
During this first year of fighting the Colonial Continental Congress that they had created, tried to negotiate with England, they plead for the injustices they had suffered to be fixed, and to get the rights from the English Government that it was their right to have. Soon after the capture of Boston, the colonies decided there was no way to rejoin Britain, they had tried to send letters, but those had failed, they had tried everything for a peaceful solution, where both countries could stay united. But they could not unite with tyranny. It was at this time that a new paper appeared, called Common Sense, advocating complete separation from England. The paper spread all across the colonies. Many, even when the fighting had broken out, had not considered a full separation with England, they had hoped that by fighting for their rights, England might grant them. But now they began to realize, that the time had come for complete independence and separation.



The Continental Congress, as it was called, selected the young lawyer Thomas Jefferson to write their Declaration of Independence. He did his best to surmise in as concise and powerful a manner as possible, not only their separation, but why they were separating, and the reasons for why it was their right to do this. After a little over two weeks of work he finished his draft and it was soon presented to the Congress, who after making several changes, ratified it, and finally published it on July 4, 1776.



**Thomas Jefferson**



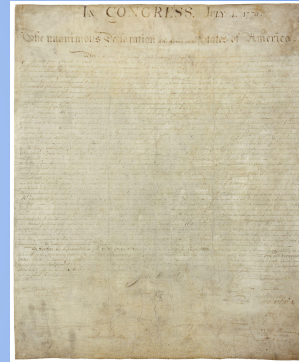
**Signing of the Declaration of Independence**

**In Congress, July 4, 1776**

**The unanimous Declaration of the thirteen united States of America,**

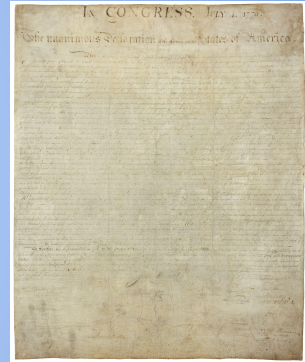
“When in the Course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.

“We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.--That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed,

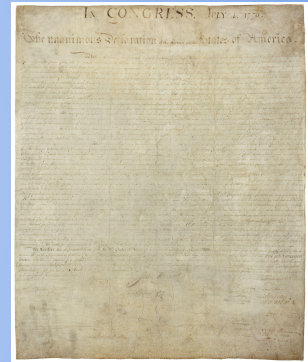


--That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness.

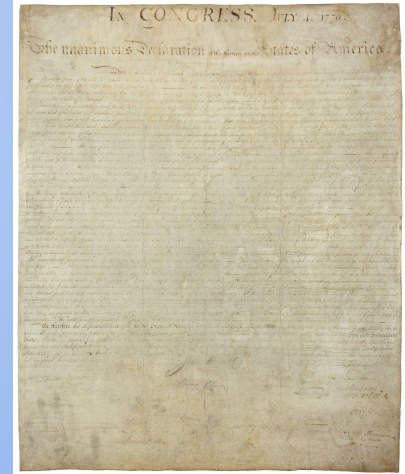
“Prudence, indeed, will dictate that Governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and accordingly all experience hath shewn, that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed. But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same Object evinces a design to reduce them under absolute Despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such Government, and to provide new Guards for their future security. Such has been the patient sufferance of these Colonies; and such is now the necessity which constrains them to alter their former Systems of Government.”



“We, therefore, the Representatives of the united States of America, in General Congress, Assembled, appealing to the Supreme Judge of the world for the rectitude of our intentions, do, in the Name, and by Authority of the good People of these Colonies, solemnly publish and declare, That these United Colonies are, and of Right ought to be Free and Independent States; that they are Absolved from all Allegiance to the British Crown, and that all political connection between them and the State of Great Britain, is and ought to be totally dissolved... And for the support of this Declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes and our sacred Honor.”



The Colonies, in their declaration of independence, took the position as their justification for their actions, that every human being, had fundamental, God given rights, such as, the right to life, the right of free will, the right to freedom of religion, the right to free speech. True law was a right, rather than an arbitrary rule, they were either rights, such as thou shalt not kill, which is really the right to life, or for protecting the rights of the people, such as necessary taxes in order to have money to use to protect the rights of the people. Any law outside of this was an abuse of power by the government. They said that government solely existed to protect these rights, and should be designed accordingly, and that if a government became corrupt, and instead of protecting, began to abuse and violate the rights of the people, it was not only the right, but the duty of the people, to correct that abuse.



If the government would refuse to change, it was their duty to separate from it, and create new government that would better secure their rights. For if they did not, they would be guilty of all the abuse committed by that government, that they could have stopped, by standing up for the rights of the people.

Soon after declaring Independence, the British army would return, and the new United States would soon be called to defend this independence first in the battle for New York, and then all across their new country. It was a long 7 years after the after their decision to separate, but eventually they would win, and would create, the best government that they could to protect the rights they had fought for, for future generations.



Just as in the national world, there also comes a time in the course of Christian events, where it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the church bands which have connected them with another, and to declare independence from the church in which they may have been born and raised

This is brought out very forcibly in Revelation: “Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen... Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.” Revelation 18:2 and 5.

This Bible verse very clearly points, that there does come a time in the history of the church, where separation and independence from an organized church that used to be part of God’s people but has turned against the truth, becomes not just necessary, but the sacred duty of all those still loyal to Christ and to the present truth for their day.

In our previous three studies in this series we have seen that God's true church is not a denomination or organization, it is invisible and spiritual and is made up all those who sincerely love the Lord and are living up to all the light they have.

We have also seen that God does have a denominated people, but that they are not denominated in the sense of what the world calls a denomination, with a name and specific structure, but that they are denominated by the truth they teach. It is present truth that denominates us, not a name. An organization with a name can fall, truth will always stand, it will never fall, and will forever denominate the true people of God, even if they have to leave the denominations of the world who once advocated that truth. We saw that being a member of the Seventh-day Adventist does not mean we are true seventh-day Adventists, we must be a Seventh-day Adventist in the heart, which means we must be one with the present truth that the name represents. The Seventh-day Adventist organized Church can fall and become Babylon, but Seventh-day Adventism, the truth taught behind that name, can never fall.

And in our last presentation, we saw what the true purpose of having an organization is. Organization is for the effective spreading of the truth, and to help and serve God's people, helping them to help each other and come together in unity. Only unitedly working together in perfect order, can we accomplish the goal of preaching the gospel to every creature.

We know that the true church is spiritual, and that a denomination is not specifically God's people, it is only a part of God's people as long as it is loyal to Christ. We know from Revelation and from the entire history of the Bible that an organization can fall spiritually, the Bible calls those fallings of a church from being God's people, Babylon. But What makes an organized Church Babylon, how do we know when it has become time to separate? When is it time to declare independence in a spiritual sense, and start over again?

A Church Becomes Babylon in the same way as an earthly government becomes tyrannical. And just as people in a national sense have rights, that it is the purpose of the government to protect, God's people, and God himself, has rights in an organized church. The sole purpose of earthly Government is to serve the people and protect the rights of the people. The sole purpose of a church government, is to serve God's people and to serve the present truth, it is to be designed to protect the spiritual rights of God's people, and protect and spread the truth. True Law is the protection of a right, not for the sake of just making rules, this also applies to the church, organization is not for the sake of making rules, it's about order and organization that will help spread the message, how about build up each other spiritually.

Just as good government is designed to serve the people, and not the people to serve the government, a true church organization is designed to serve the truth and God's people, and not for the truth and God's people to serve the denomination. Thus when any denomination begins to work against God's people, and against the truth, whether openly, or simply in the principles it advocates, if it does not repent, the time has come for separation.

A church may keep up all the forms of the truths it use to teach, the Jews still kept the Sabbath after rejecting Christ, yet they were Babylon. For Christ looks on the heart, what is the spirit of the church? Are they for him in heart or are they against him in heart, even in outwardly they may still appear to be for him?



“The Jewish people cherished the idea that they were the favorites of heaven, and that they were always to be exalted as the church of God. They were the children of Abraham, they declared, and so firm did the foundation of their prosperity seem to them that they defied earth and heaven to dispossess them of their rights. But by lives of unfaithfulness they were preparing for the condemnation of heaven and for separation from God.” **Christ Object Lessons, page 294.**

The Jews thought it was impossible for their organization, for their church to fall, they thought that since God led them in the past, they would forever be his people. And they went on believing this, even as they rejected Christ, even after they become Babylon fallen. They kept all the outwards forms of the Law of Moses, and yet were completely violating it in spirit.

There is one fundamental test as to whether a church is Babylon or not, and that is does the church have Christ living in its midst? It is Christ's righteousness by faith, that makes an organization part of his True church. But on the other hand, if Christ has left a church, then it is Babylon, even if many of the members are still sincerely following Christ, the church as a whole has fallen and must be separated from by those loyal to Christ. A Church may keep up all the forms of the truth they once taught, but if they have lost Christ, then in their spirit will work against that same truth they may still advocate.

This is why the Babylon Message of Revelation 18, is Righteousness by faith, for it is Christ's righteousness by faith that makes a church part his true people, and it is the lack of this that makes a church Babylon. This is what it means to be antichrist, Babylon is antichrist, to reject righteousness by faith means to be antichrist, for to be antichrist means to be fighting against the plan of salvation founded in Christ, in whatever form that may be. Whether by actively rejecting Christ, or by simply the rejection of Christ as a personal Saviour, even if they profess to believe in Christ and the truth. Charles Fitch makes this point very clear in his sermon: "Come out of her my people." Given during the 1844 movement. He says: "WHAT IS BABYLON? It is Antichrist:"

God, His people, and the truth, have rights in the organized church, and the church must not go against these rights. Fundamentally the rights of God's people, of God, and of the truth in the church, is the preservation of the relationship with God of each member, the ability to worship God in spirit and in truth.

God's people have a right to a relationship with Christ, and God has a right to have relationship with his people individually, if the church steps in between this, and Christ is removed from the church, then the church as become Babylon. If the rights of of God's people, the truth or his people are violated, it is the sacred duty of his people to stand up for these rights and separate.

Like the declaration of independence says, when the church becomes destructive to its three purposes, the rights God, His people, and of the truth, then it becomes our sacred duty to separate from such government, and institute new government that will protect those rights. This idea of rights is important to understand. God has rights, the truth has rights, his people have rights. When people come together into an organized fashion, then all must have their rights taken into account. Only then will the organization be recognized by God, and can be used by the Holy Spirit.

“I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars: and hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted. Nevertheless I have *somewhat* against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.”

### **Revelation 2:2-5.**

The first love was the love of Christ, it was knowing him, this church, that Christ is speaking to here had lost this, even though, as Christ says, they were still advocating the truth. He says to them, that if they do not repent, he will remove their candlestick from them. The Candlestick, is being a part of his church, being his light in the world. It meant that if they did not regain that first love they had lost, despite all their preaching of the truth, they would become part of Babylon.

We often think of Babylon as false doctrine, and this true, false doctrines, large or small, are the fruit of the loss of Christ in the church, but the loss of Christ is the fundamental problem, and many times it takes many years for any very obvious false doctrines to appear. Satan knows people, he knows that if he immediately started teaching these things, those in the church would realize that it had become Babylon, and so he only removes the essential point, Christ, and then slowly, introduces errors, that are almost unnoticeable, but that will ultimately destroy the truth. The Jews still kept the Sabbath after their rejection of Christ, even though they were Babylon, they did not believe in the immortality of the soul, nor did they support Sunday Sacredness. Many Churches Protestant Babylonian Churches today, also do not support all of these false doctrines. Almost all Protestant churches reject the idea that Christ did not exist before his birth in Bethlehem. The Seventh-day Baptists believe in the Sabbath. And Jehovah's Witnesses reject Sunday Sacredness, the immortality of the soul, and the eternal torment of the wicked. And yet they are all Babylon.

Separation from a corrupt church that is now working against Christ and the truth, is a critical issue. It is a crisis point in the history of the Church. Just as the founding fathers of the United States viewed it as their duty and the duty of the people to separate from a corrupt Government. It is our duty to separate from a corrupt church. As Christ says: "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues." This called corporate responsibility. When we are part of an organization, we become responsible for its actions, even if we ourselves don't do them. By do nothing we are still responsible for the wrongs, this is why it is our duty to stand up, and to leave the corrupt churches, not only saving ourselves, but many others. Their comes a time when we must stand up for our rights, and really, we are standing up for God's truth. But if we stay, God will judge as being guilty of the sins that organization that we are a part of, is committing.

Separation is always hard, there will always be those who will say we don't need to separate yet, there is not a justification to separate yet, soon, but not yet. But soon does never come. The time is now. If we put off for tomorrow our duty for today, tomorrow we will become more blind to the errors. It is called the wine of Babylon for a reason, it is like wine, when we stay in it, we see less and less of its problems, we will become and more accustomed to the errors, and they will appear less and less like serious problems. Do not put off tomorrow, remember what Felix said to Paul, when I have convenient season, I will call for thee, he put it off, and ultimately never did accept it.

It is true that we don't leave a denomination and consider it Babylon "for light and transient causes;" we do not leave it because of tares among the wheat, but, as the founding fathers of America said, "when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same Object" show that a church, whether openly or secretly, is working against the truth and not serving God's people but breaking their connection with Christ, "it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such Government..." It becomes necessary to come out, to declare independence.

But now this is the critical point for us as Seventh-day Adventists. What we have said here today about Babylon is all true of the Protestant Churches that we have left already in the past, but what about the Seventh-day Adventist Church today? This is the critical question for us, that we must ask ourselves, have we become Babylon and do we need to separate? Ellen White clearly warned that this time could come:



“The world must not be introduced into the church, and married to the church, forming a bond of unity. Through this means the church will become indeed corrupt, and as stated in Revelation, ‘A cage of every unclean and hateful bird’ [Revelation 18:2].” **Testimonies to Ministers, page 265.**

Speaking of a vision of the Seventh-day Adventist church she had been given: “Then He said to me: ‘Can you not see how they have pretentiously covered up their defilement and rottenness of character? ‘How is the faithful city become an harlot!’” **Testimonies, Vol 8, page 250, (1903).**

“I was confirmed in all I had stated in Minneapolis, that a reformation must go through the churches. Reforms must be made, for spiritual weakness and blindness were upon the people who had been blessed with great light and precious opportunities and privileges. As reformers they had come out of the denominational churches, but they now act a part similar to that which the churches acted. **We hoped that there would not be the necessity for another coming out.** . . Many will close their ears to the message God sends them, and open their ears to deception and delusion.” **Manuscript 30, 1889.**



“There is a little hope in one direction: Take the young men and women, and place them where they will come as little in contact with our churches as possible, that the low grade of piety which is current in this day shall not leaven their ideas of what it means to be a Christian.” **Letter 16f, May 9, 1892, Manuscript Releases, vol 12, p 332-33.**

In this quote Ellen White says that many Seventh-day Adventists churches were becoming so dangerous to spirituality in her day, that people should stop attending them.



"I am now authorized to say that the time has come to take decided action. The development seen in the cause of God is similar to the development seen when Balaam caused Israel to sin just before they entered the promised land...

"Few can see the meaning of the present apostasy. But the Lord has lifted the curtain, and has shown me its meaning, and the results that it will have if allowed to continue....

"The enemy of souls has sought to bring in the supposition that a great reformation was to take place among Seventh-day Adventists, and that this reformation would consist in giving up the doctrines which stand as the pillars of our faith, and engaging in a process of reorganization. Were this reformation to take place, what would result?—The principles of truth that God in His wisdom has given to the remnant church would be discarded.



“Our religion would be changed. The fundamental principles that have sustained the work for the last fifty years would be accounted as error. A new organization would be established. Books of a new order would be written. A system of intellectual philosophy would be introduced. The founders of this system would go into the cities and do a wonderful work. The Sabbath, of course, would be lightly regarded, as also the God who created it. Nothing would be allowed to stand in the way of the new movement. The leaders would teach that virtue is better than vice, but God being removed, they would place their dependence on human power, which, without God, is worthless. Their foundation would be built on the sand, and storm and tempest would sweep away the structure.” **Special Testimonies Series B, #7, 39-40 (1903)**

All the things Ellen White mentions here has happened in the Seventh-day Adventist church over the past 100 years. Notice she does not say they will abandon the Sabbath, just put it in the background, and make it of little importance.



“Those who know the truth are to be worked by the Holy Spirit, and not themselves to try to work the Spirit. If the cords are drawn much tighter, if the rules are made much finer, if men continue to bind their fellow-laborers closer and closer to the commandments of men, **many will be stirred by the Spirit of God to break every shackle, and assert their liberty in Christ Jesus...** If men will not come to the terms made by the leading workers, they will not entertain them, they do not care what results may follow their injustice. With them it is rule or ruin. God has not appointed any man to do such work. And no human being shall be permitted to prescribe my liberty or intrench upon the perfect freedom of my brethren, without hearing my voice lifted in protest against it.” **July 23, 1895 Review and Herald.**

Ellen White made it clear that the Seventh-day Adventist Church was not Babylon in her day, but she also made it very clear, that if it continued down the course it was starting to go in her day, that it could and would become Babylon, and it would be necessary for God's people to declare Independence. There would be a necessity for another coming out.

We must remember that Ellen White did not say these things today, she said these things 100 years ago, are things any better today, or are they worse? Is the SDA church any better today than it was in Ellen White's day, have they repented, or have they only gotten worse? Sadly they have only gotten worse.

We believe that that time has come. Everything Ellen White said would occur, has occurred, she warned that if the church did not repent, they would become a cage of every unclean and hateful bird, and that they would become part of the Harlot of Babylon. Today we can all see the corruptions that have entered the church, the church has had decades to repent, but has refused. The church is violating the rights of God, the truth, and of us, by what they are doing.

The time has very sadly come to separate from the Seventh-day Adventist Church. We can't keep looking to the future for some future hope of repentance, it has been too long. If everyone in the Protestant Babylonian Churches did this, they would never come out of Babylon. If we wait, we will be fighting against the truth, and God will hold us corporately responsible for the sins of the Church. A decisive time comes. There comes a time when it has become time to do something. We can't keep putting it off into the future, if we do we will never do something. We must stand up for our rights. The Church has had 100 years for repentance, and Ellen White said 100 years ago if they continued they would be Babylon. God bears long, but the Holy Spirit will abandon a church, just as an individual, if it will not repent. If we delay to act, and separate, we will hinder the message that God wants us to give.

In every age there comes a critical moment, in the American Revolution they reached a critical moment, and realized they had to separate. Today We have reached our critical moment in the work of God, the time has come for us to separate, to declare independence.

# The End

1 More Slide

I have not gone into very much why we believe it is time to Separate from the Seventh-day Adventist Church, but highly recommend these books on the subject:

[www.lightministries.com](http://www.lightministries.com) Has a lot of books on this subject, here are a few I recommend:

The Abomination of Desolation Stands by Robert Sessler

The Abomination of Desolation and Church History by Robert Sessler