

# Question About Ellen White Statement in a Signs of the Times Article June 1911

By Pastor Ed Anderson

Does the SDA Church teach this?

In the one of the SDA Church's official organs, *The Signs of the Times*, we read that: "The eternal Word gave Himself. He did not aspire to be equal with God, "did not meditate a usurpation" of the throne of the universe (see Phil. 2:5-7 ARV), but He emptied Himself, gave Himself, then and there, for sinners. He took the form of a servant, becoming an angel among the angels that He might redeem angels; but they would not. And when they rejected the righteousness and life so freely offered, He descended lower still to those duped by Satan—fallen man—stooping even to death, that He might redeem of the fallen all who desired to be redeemed, and vindicate to the universe to all eternity the character of God. That was the work of the Word of God, the eternal Logos, when He became Michael the Archangel, when He became Jesus the Man of Nazareth, when He was anointed the Christ, when He died our Sacrifice on Calvary. Yet during all this time the hosts of evil, with all the baleful, deceptive, cruel devices of sin, were hurled against Him, that God's character might be marred, that the great Vindicator—Redeemer might fall."

*Signs of the Times*, June 6, 1911

## Answer:

The excerpt you quoted from *Signs of the Times* (June 6, 1911) indeed reflects some of the theological themes taught within **historic Seventh-day Adventism**, especially from the early 20th century. Let's break it down for clarity and assess what the **SDA Church officially teaches today**, and how your quote fits (or not) within that framework.

### Key Themes in the Quote

#### 1. Christ's Eternal Divinity

The "eternal Word," or **Logos**, is identified as preexistent and divine—consistent with John 1:1 and mainstream SDA belief.

#### 2. Christ's Voluntary Humbling

The quote reflects **Philippians 2:5–7**, teaching that Jesus “emptied Himself” and took on the form of a servant—a fundamental Adventist and Christian teaching.

### 3. Christ as Michael the Archangel

It refers to Christ as becoming **Michael the Archangel**, a **historic SDA belief** that **Michael is another title for the pre-incarnate Christ**, not a created angel, but a divine commander of the heavenly host.

### 4. Christ’s Role in Heaven and Earth

It suggests that Christ offered redemption to both angels and humans. While the idea of angels being offered redemption is not a mainstream SDA doctrine today, it reflects early Adventist speculation based on a cosmic view of the Great Controversy.

### 5. Vindication of God’s Character

This is classic SDA theology rooted in **The Great Controversy theme**—that Christ’s life and death served not only to save humanity but also to **vindicate the justice and love of God before the universe** (see Revelation 12 and Romans 3:4).

## Does the SDA Church Teach This Today?

- Yes to most of it, with clarification:

Element	Current SDA Position
Christ’s pre-existence as divine	✅ Fully affirmed.
Voluntary humiliation and incarnation	✅ Essential doctrine.
Michael the Archangel as a title for Christ	✅ Taught in SDA doctrine; Michael is not a created being, but a pre-incarnate title for Christ (Daniel 10, Revelation 12).
Angels being offered redemption	❌ Not part of official doctrine today. It appears in speculative early writings but has no biblical basis and is not taught now.
Vindication of God’s character	✅ Central to SDA understanding of the Great Controversy.
Christ’s death as substitutionary atonement	✅ Strongly affirmed.

## Supporting References

- **Fundamental Belief #4 (God the Son)** affirms Christ's preexistence, incarnation, substitutionary atonement, and resurrection.
- **Fundamental Belief #8 (Great Controversy)** affirms the cosmic nature of the conflict between Christ and Satan and the vindication of God's character.

"In Christ's life of perfect obedience to God's will, His suffering, death, and resurrection, God provided the only means of atonement... to demonstrate God's justice and love." — *SDA 28 Fundamental Beliefs*

### A Note on the Quote's Language

The phrase "**when He became Michael the Archangel**" may be confusing. It is better understood theologically as:

"Christ was always divine, but in His **role as heavenly commander**, He was called Michael."

It does **not** imply that Jesus *became* Michael in essence or lost divinity.

### Summary: Is This Official SDA Teaching?

- **Mostly yes**, though some wording (such as redemption offered to angels) reflects older Adventist speculative theology rather than current doctrine.
- **The SDA Church does not teach** that Jesus aspired to the throne or "became" Michael in an ontological sense.
- **Michael the Archangel = Pre-incarnate Christ** remains part of official SDA doctrine, clarified in context.