



STATEMENT OF BELIEFS OF THE SABBATH CHURCH OF GOD

November 25, 2023

THE GOSPEL

The gospel is the good news of the coming kingdom of God (Matthew 24:14). The gospel message was brought by Jesus Christ, and it is not a message solely *about* Jesus Christ. This gospel tells us that Jesus Christ will come again to rule the earth and bring peace (Revelation 11:15). The Sabbath Church of God teaches a hopeful interpretation of prophetic scripture consistent with God's character rather than one of worldwide destruction. We look forward to the day that an innumerable multitude will accept Christ (Revelation 7:9-10).

GOD THE FATHER AND JESUS CHRIST

The Father and Jesus Christ have always existed (John 1:1-3, 14). They are both fully God. The God family consists of two Beings: the Father and Jesus Christ (I Corinthians 8:6). God's defining characteristic is love (I John 4:8). The Holy Spirit is the power of the Father and of Christ (John 14:26), rather than the third being in a Trinity. In the first century, the Word was born of a virgin, made possible by the Holy Spirit. Being fully God and man, He walked the earth, thereby becoming Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father in heaven. We look for His second coming in the future (Matthew 24:42).

THE PURPOSE OF LIFE

God's plan includes making us part of His family (Hebrews 2:9-11). We endeavor to grow more like God in character (Ephesians 4:22-24). Humanity has the opportunity to become children of God and to inherit the universe (Revelation 21:7). We believe in the resurrection of the dead rather than an immediate departure of the soul to heaven or hell (John 5:29). Eternal life is a gift of God (Romans 6:23), not something we inherently possess. Those who reject Christ after His coming are subject to the second death, not to everlasting torment in hell (Revelation 20:13-15).

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

The Ten Commandments in Exodus 20 are the spiritual laws by which we ought to live. Christ taught that we must keep the commandments in the letter and spiritual intent (Matthew 5:17-19; Matthew 5:43-44). Sin is defined as transgressing that law (I John 3:4). We must repent of breaking God's law; this repentance means to seriously change the direction of our lives. With Jesus Christ's first coming, He has done His part by wiping away the penalty of sin in each individual who recognizes Him as their Savior (Colossians 2:13-14). He did not do away with the law. But we must do our part by repenting of our sinful ways and keeping the law in order to receive His promises of eternal reward (Revelation 21:7). Christians are keenly aware that we do not worship any other being ahead of Jesus Christ and our Heavenly Father, as stated in the First Commandment. It is our responsibility to obey God rather than men when there is a conflict (Acts 5:29).

THE SABBATH AND FESTIVALS



The Sabbath was created by God to be a sanctified (set apart) 24-hour period of time from Friday sunset to Saturday sunset (Genesis 2:3). It is a God-ordained day of rest and worship to be kept perpetually by all people (Exodus 31:13, 16-17). Christ observed the Sabbath (Luke 4:15-16, Mark 2:27-28), as did the apostle Paul (Acts 13:14-15, 42-44). The festivals are commanded in Leviticus 23. Christ observed the Passover, replacing the lamb with bread and wine, which represented His body and blood (Matthew 26:17-28). The apostles observed Pentecost (Feast of Firstfruits) after Christ's resurrection (Acts 2:1-4). We are to emulate Christ, which would include the Sabbath and holy days (I Corinthians 11:1). The Passover is attended generally by baptized persons only, because baptism shows our faith in Christ's death on Passover (Romans 6:3-6). If an unbaptized guest attends, they should refrain from partaking of the bread and wine, but they are welcome to participate in the foot-washing ceremony.

BAPTISM

Peter instructed followers of Christ to repent, be baptized, and receive the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38). Baptism represents our faith in the death of Christ to pay the penalty for our sins, in His burial, and in His resurrection. Baptism also represents the "death and burial" of our old self and walking in newness of life (Romans 6:1-6). Baptism is done by total water immersion at the discretion of the leading minister. The Sabbath Church of God conducts and also recognizes baptisms from other churches that meet the following criteria: (1) is the individual old enough to understand the true meaning of repentance, (2) have they counted the cost (Luke 14: 27-33) sufficiently to understand the gravity of what baptism means, and (3) was it done by total immersion. Jesus Christ's baptism gives us the example of baptism by total immersion (Matthew 3:16).

THE CHURCH

Christ established His Church (Matthew 16:18). The Church is not a building, nor a particular organization. The Church is a group of people who have received the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 2:18-22, Romans 8:8-9), and the Church lives by the truth of God (John 8:30-32). Only God knows the heart, and therefore only He knows who is in this body of people. The Church's duties include preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God to the world, baptizing those who repent, and helping them grow by teaching them (Matthew 28:19-20). The Church should be known by the love that its members have for one another (John 13:35). The Church shows love for all people by helping them with their needs (Matthew 25:34-36), and we are created for good works (Ephesians 2:10). Every person must be treated with love and respect (Mark 12:31). Hateful, harassing, or discriminatory behavior or attitude directed toward any individual are not permitted (James 2:1-4).

The Sabbath Church of God is a congregation of the willing, who support the leading minister by respectfully listening while he is speaking on the Sabbath. All are welcome to attend who are willing to listen, learn, and share in courteous dialogue during fellowship time. The congregation does not support the ministry financially in any way. Tithes and offerings are freely contributed by individuals. These funds are first used for the payment of hall rentals for services and office supplies. The Sabbath Church of God preaches the gospel in part by assisting people with their physical needs. The balance of all donations goes to various properly vetted charities that are helping those who are needy in our society.



MARRIAGE AND GENDER

Marriage is a union between one man and one woman (Genesis 2:18-24), both of their biological sexes being determined at the time of their conception (Genesis 1:27). Therein is a God-given opportunity to be fruitful and multiply and to develop the earth in a Godly manner (Genesis 1:28). Marriage is a God-plane relationship that represents the relationship between Christ and the Church (Ephesians 5:22-33). Scripture forbids any departures from this beautiful spiritually based institution (Leviticus 18:22; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11), but a person can repent of such departures.

SANCTITY OF HUMAN LIFE

We believe that all human life is sacred and created by God in His image. Human life is of inestimable worth in all its dimensions, including pre-born babies (Luke 1:41, Exodus 21:22-23), the aged, the physically or mentally challenged, and every other stage or condition from conception to natural death. We are therefore called to defend, protect, and value all human life.

CHURCH GOVERNMENT

God has set in place qualifications for individuals for the purpose of church government, so that the work of the Church, both spiritually and physically, can be carried out decently and in order (1 Corinthians 14:40). These individuals will have demonstrated servant leadership toward the goal of the whole, that is, the spreading of the gospel and spiritually feeding the Church members.

Specific offices described in 1 Timothy 3:2-13 shall be filled when the need arises. Ordinations will occur if Biblical qualifications are met and if the individual is a member of the Sabbath Church of God. The leading minister will have the ability to determine the readiness of individuals for ordinations, baptisms, and marriages, after privately seeking counsel from the congregation (Proverbs 11:14). Ordinations to the offices of deacon and deaconess are men and women who have demonstrated a pattern of assisting with the physical duties required in a church. It is not the responsibility of women to teach spiritual matters to the congregation, and they are encouraged to share in fellowship, meetings, and discussions (Biblical or otherwise) at any time (1 Timothy 2:12).

FINAL AUTHORITY

This statement of beliefs is not exhaustive. The Bible itself, as the inspired and infallible Word of God that speaks with final authority concerning truth, morality, and the proper conduct of mankind, is the final source of all that we believe. For purposes of the Sabbath Church of God's faith, doctrine, practice, and policy, our leading minister is the final interpretive authority on the Bible's application. Advice and input from the congregation is welcome.