

## ***Church of God in Mobile, Sabbath Day***

# ***Statement of Beliefs***

### ***The God Family***

We believe in God—the Hebrew word is *Elohyim*, a plural noun inherently meaning more than one. God is a holy Family of intelligent Beings composed of holy spirit. The God Family is eternal and all-powerful. The God Family is perfect in love, mercy, righteousness, purpose and character. The God Family is lawgiver, creator, giver and sustainer of all life.

The Scriptures reveal that the God Family created mankind “after *Our* image and after *Our* likeness.” Man was created in Their image and likeness (Genesis 1:26-27). However, man is not composed of holy spirit—the essence and power of God (Luke 4:1-14). Man was formed from the dust of the ground, and became a flesh and blood living creature (Genesis 2:7).

We refer to Christians as “heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ” (Romans 8:17). Yet as Hebrews 1 through Hebrews 2 explains, mankind has not yet achieved its destiny of inheriting all things, but Jesus has, and God is in the process of “bringing many sons to glory” (Hebrews 2:10). In this process, people become God’s children through receiving His holy spirit, which joins with each individual’s human spirit (Romans 8:16).

We are therefore “begotten again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible” (1 Peter 1:23, *American Standard Version*). And we become “partakers of the divine nature” (2 Peter 1:4)—just as any child takes on the genetic traits of its parents.

### ***God the Father***

We believe in God the Father, of Whom are all things, and we in Him and the Lord Jesus Christ, by Whom are all things, and we by Him (Matthew 4:10; Acts 10:36; Romans 6:23; Ephesians 1:2-3; 1 Corinthians 8:6). God the Father accomplishes His will through the power of His holy spirit.

God the Father, Who has all power and all authority, is eternally existing Who is a spirit. God is love (1 John 4:8). He has perfect, holy character and is full of grace and mercy. God the Father is greater than His Son Jesus Christ (John 10:29; John 14:28) but shares all that He has with His Son.

The Father, through Jesus Christ, is the Creator of all things in heaven and on earth (John 1:1-3). He is a just, loving, personal, kind, merciful Being of supreme intelligence and knowledge. God the Father wants to share His spiritual existence and vast creation with human beings who will be born again as spirit beings by the resurrection from death into the family of God.

## **Jesus Christ**

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ of Nazareth, Who is the Word and Who has eternally existed (John 1:1-4). We believe that He is the Anointed (*Hebrew: Messiah, (Greek: Christ)* One, the divine Son of the living God, conceived of the holy spirit, born in human flesh of the virgin Mary (Isaiah 7:14). The Word was made flesh (John 1:14), being born of Mary and begotten by God the Father, becoming Jesus Christ, the Son of God (Luke 1:35).

We believe that it is by Jesus Christ that God created all things (Colossians 1:16), and that without Him was not anything made that was made.

The relationship between the Word and the Father is more clearly defined in the New Testament, where Jesus came in the flesh as the Son of God, acted as the Father's Spokesman (John 8:28; 12:49-50; 14:10) and revealed the Father to His disciples (Matthew 11:25-27). Jesus Christ, besides being God the Son is also the living, active Head of the Church of God (Ephesians 5:23; Colossians 1:18), its Chief Apostle (Hebrews 3:1) and its Chief Shepherd, or Pastor (1 Peter 5:4).

We believe God the Father resurrected Jesus after He lay dead in the tomb three days and three nights (Matthew 12:40) and that He afterwards ascended to heaven to be at the right hand of God the Father to be our King, Apostle and High Priest (Hebrews 1:3; Hebrews 3:1).

## **The Holy Spirit**

We believe that the holy spirit is the power of God given through Jesus Christ (2 Timothy 1:7). We believe in the holy spirit as the spirit of God and of Christ. The holy spirit is the power of God and the spirit of life eternal. The holy spirit is not referred by name in the Scriptures. Some of the functions of the holy spirit are helper, comforter, counselor and advocate (Isaiah 11:2; John 14:16; John 15:26; John 16:7).

All four words above are translations of the Greek "*parakletos*." When Jesus Christ went away, He promised to send the spirit to comfort, console and guide those who belong to Christ. The spirit also "bears witness" with our spirits that we belong to Him and thereby assures us of salvation (1 John 1:2).

God's holy spirit is not identified as a third person in a trinity, but is presented in Scripture as the *power of God*, the *mind of God* and the very essence and *life force of God* through which the Father begets human beings as His spiritual children.

The holy spirit is given to individuals when they genuinely repent and are baptized (Acts 2:38). Therefore, God is *not* a trinity. In the Middle Ages a verse—1 John 5:7—was added to the Bible to provide scriptural support for this false doctrine.

## ***The Bible and the Scriptures***

The Bible—both Old and New Covenants—was given by inspiration of God, providing wisdom for salvation through faith in Jesus Christ (2 Timothy 3:15-16). The doctrines of men must agree with the word of God (Matthew 15:8-9, Acts 17:10-11).

We believe that Scripture—both the Old and the New Testament—is God’s revelation and His complete expressed will to humanity. Scripture is inspired in thought and word, infallible in the original writings in the original languages. The Bible is the supreme and final authority in faith and in life and is the foundation of all truth (2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:20-21; John 10:35; 17:17).

## ***The Ten Commandments***

The Ten Commandments constitute the basic law of God for His people. These concepts were understood and obeyed by the godly before the giving of the Law at Mt. Sinai (Exodus 19-20; Genesis 26:5).

Jesus Christ taught that, in order to attain Eternal life, we must keep the Ten Commandments. (Matthew 19:16-19) as did His Apostles (1 John 3:4; 1 John 5:2-3; James 2:10-12). Jesus said, “If you love Me, keep My commandments” (John 14:15).

Moses wrote down all the Words of God (Exodus 24:4). Moses was not given any oral law by God, thus there is no “oral law” binding on Jesus Christ’s disciples (Matthew 15:3-6). Jesus, the Messiah did not nail God’s Law to the cross or stake (Matthew 5:17-19). John the apostle wrote, “By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and keep His commandments” (1 John 5:2).

## ***The Kingdom of God***

We believe that Jesus Christ will return to earth to rule all nations as King of kings and Lord of lords (1 Timothy 6:15; Revelation 17:14; Revelation 19:16) to establish the everlasting, spiritual Kingdom of God (Revelation 11:15).

We believe that the ultimate purpose of men and women, accomplished at their resurrection to immortal life (Hebrews 2:9), is to reign forever with Christ as sons and daughters of God (spirit beings) in the Kingdom (or family) of God (Colossians 1:13; Hebrews 1:8; Revelation 14:1-3).

Heaven is not the reward of the saved (Proverbs 30:3; John 3:13; Acts 2:34). Our hope of Eternal Life lies in the resurrection of the dead at Christ’s return (1 Corinthians 15:12-23,51-53; 1 Thessalonians 4:14-17).

## **Repentance**

Following the repentance of sins, (Sin is the transgression of the Law—1 John 3:4), at baptism—burying our past sinful life (Romans 6:1-6), a portion of God's holy spirit is given to us freely (Acts 2:38; Luke 11:13; Ephesians 1:13-14; Psalm 51:11-12). God gives His spirit to those who obey Him (Acts 5:32).

We believe that when a person is called, is led to repentance by God, places his faith in God, repents of sin, is baptized (by immersion) and has hands laid on him, he, or she receives the holy spirit as an earnest of eternal life (Acts 2:38). A person in whom God's spirit dwells can look forward to either his change, or resurrection, at the time of Christ's return to establish His Kingdom on earth (Acts 19:6; Romans 1:4-6; Romans 8:9-10).

## **Salvation**

We also believe that salvation comes through the sacrifice and life of the Son of God, Jesus Christ, Who was the Word made flesh (John 1:14), Who was conceived by the holy spirit and born of the virgin Mary (Matthew 1:20); Who lived a sinless life (Hebrews 4:15) and demonstrated His love by suffering and dying for the sins of the world (John 3:16).

The Son of God "learned obedience by the things which He suffered" (Hebrews 5:8). We are saved from the second death (Revelation 20:6) when we receive eternal life.

## **Baptism**

Baptizing or "Christening" babies and young children, who are unable to understand the meaning of spiritual repentance by sprinkling them with water, is a meaningless ritual. The Greek word 'baptizo' means to immerse, or submerge (Acts 2:38). The believer must be totally immersed in water.

## **Examples For Us**

Jesus and the apostles set us an example, as recorded in the Bible, that includes, among many other practices, obedience to God's law (Exodus 23:22;), the observance of the seventh-day Sabbath (Exodus 31:16; Deuteronomy 5:12) and the feasts of the Lord (including footwashing and the partaking of symbols of the New Covenant in remembrance of Christ's sacrifice—Luke 22:19; 1 Corinthians 11:24-25), the practice of "pure and undefiled religion before God" (James 1:27) and the avoidance of unclean meats (Leviticus 11:43-47).

Although sacrifices are not required of us (Hebrews 10:4-6; 1 Samuel 15:22; Psalm 40:6, Psalm 51:16-17; Matthew 9:13), we are still to observe "the appointed times of God, which you shall proclaim, holy gatherings" (Leviticus 23:2), such as:

- The Seventh-day Sabbath (Leviticus 23:3);
- Passover (Leviticus 23:5);
- Feast of Unleavened Bread [*Foods*] for seven days (Leviticus 23:6-8);
- Feast of Weeks, Firstfruits, or Pentecost (Leviticus 23:15-16,21);
- Day of Trumpets (Leviticus 23:24);
- Day of Atonement (Leviticus 23:27-32);
- Feast of Tabernacles for seven days (Leviticus 23:34-36); and
- The Last Great Day [*Eighth day*] (Leviticus 23:36, 39; Numbers 29:35).

These “appointed times” picture God’s plan for salvation of mankind. They were observed by the Anointed One, Christ, Messiah (Luke 2:41-43, 22:7-20; John 4:45; John 7:2-10 and by the first-century Church (Acts 2:1; Acts 18:21; Acts 20:16; 1 Corinthians 5:8; 1 Corinthians 16:8).

### ***The Sabbath Day***

The Seventh-Day Sabbath was instituted at Creation (Genesis 2:2-30), and reaffirmed at Mt. Sinai (Exodus 20:8-11). The seventh day of the week is the Sabbath of the Lord our God.

Jesus Christ kept the Seventh-Day Sabbath (Luke 4:16,31; Mark 6:2), and is Lord and Master of the Sabbath (Mark 2:27-28). The Apostles followed Christ’s custom, teaching both Jews and Gentiles on the Sabbath day (Acts 13:14,16; Acts 13:42-44; Acts 17:2; Acts 18:4).

On this day we are commanded to rest from our labors and worship God, following the teachings and example of Jesus, the apostles and the New Testament Church (Genesis 2:2-3; Exodus 20:8-11; Exodus 31:13-17; Leviticus 23:3; Isaiah 58:13; Hebrews 4:4-10; Mark 1:21; Mark 6:2; Acts 13:42-44; Acts 17:2; Acts 18:4; Luke 4:31).

### ***The Church***

The Church of God is a spiritual organism—the *ekklesia*—composed of those people, Christians or saints of God, called by the Father and led by, and in whom dwells, the spirit of God. Its biblical name is “the Church of God.” The mission of the Church is to preach the gospel [*the good news*] of the coming Kingdom of God to all nations as a witness, and to help reconcile to God such people as are now being called to repentance.

The Church of God also has the mission to teach the truth, strengthen, nurture and edify the children of God in the love and admonition of our Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 2:38-39, 47; Acts 20:28; Romans 8:14; 14:19; Ephesians 1:22-23; 3:14; 4:11-16; 1 Corinthians 1:2; 1 Corinthians 10:32; 1 Corinthians 11:16, 22; 1 Corinthians 12:27; 1 Corinthians 14:26; 1 Corinthians 15:9; 2 Corinthians 1:1-2; 5:18-20; Galatians 1:13; 1 Thessalonians 2:14; 2 Thessalonians 1:4; 1 Timothy 3:5, 15; Mark 16:15; Matthew 24:14; 28:18-20;

John 6:44, 65; John 17:11, 16).

### ***Satan the Devil***

Satan is a spirit being who is the adversary of God and the children of God. Satan has been given dominion over the world for a specific time (2 Corinthians 4:4). Satan has deceived humanity into rejecting God and His law (Revelation 12:9). Satan has ruled by deception with the aid of a host of demons who are rebellious angels, spirit beings who followed Satan in his rebellion (Matthew 4:1-11; Luke 8:12; 2 Timothy 2:26; John 12:31; 16:11; Revelation 12:4, 9; Revelation 20:1-3, 7, 10; Leviticus 16:21-22; 2 Corinthians 11:14; Ephesians 2:2).

### ***Clean and Unclean Meats***

We believe that those meats that are designated "unclean" by God in Leviticus 11 and Deuteronomy 14 are not to be eaten. We are instructed as follows:

"For I am the Eternal your God . . . you shall be holy; for **I am holy**. Neither shall you defile yourselves with any creeping thing that creeps on the earth. For **I am the Eternal** Who brings you up out of the land of Egypt, to be your God. You shall therefore be holy, for **I am holy** . . . to distinguish between the unclean and the clean, and between the animal that may be eaten and the animal that may not be eaten" (Leviticus 11:44-47).

### ***The Resurrections of the Dead***

We believe that the only hope of eternal life for mortal humans lies in the resurrection through the indwelling of the holy spirit (Romans 6:23; Romans 8:10-11). At the return of Jesus Christ a resurrection to spirit life will take place for all who have been God's faithful servants (Revelation 14:1-5). Jesus Christ will be the King of Kings and Lord of Lords (Revelation 19:6 and Revelation 19:16).

After Jesus Christ has ruled on earth for 1,000 years there will be a resurrection to physical life of the vast majority of all people who have ever lived (Ezekiel 37:1-14). We believe that, after these people have had an opportunity to live a physical life if they become converted, they also will receive eternal life. Sadly, those who reject God's offer of salvation will reap eternal death (1 Corinthians 15:19, 42-52; Acts 23:6; John 5:21-29; 1 Thessalonians 4:16; Revelation 20:4-5, 11-15; John 3:16; Matthew 25:46).



# ***The Names of God***

The Names of God are an important topic in the Bible. In the original languages of the scriptures the names of God are translated into English either from the Hebrew or the Greek language.

“God,” as used in the Bible, can be a reference to either the Father (e.g., Acts 13:33; Galatians 4:6), Jesus Christ the Son (e.g., Isaiah 9:6; John 1:1, 14) or both (e.g., Romans 8:9, Genesis 1:26-27), depending on the context of the scriptures.

God wants us to come to know Him so we can have confidence in Him and love Him. He has disclosed much about Himself through the *names, titles* and *descriptions* He revealed to those with whom He worked in past ages. These reveal that God possesses supreme intelligence, power, glory and wisdom (Genesis 14:19, 22; Genesis 16:13; Psalms 29:3; Psalms 47:2; Isaiah 55:8-9; 1 Timothy 1:17; Jude 25); that He embodies all righteousness, perfection and truth (Deuteronomy 32:4; 2 Corinthians 13:11); that He possesses heaven and earth (Genesis 14:19, 22; Acts 17:24); that He is immortal (Genesis 21:33; 1 Timothy 1:17) and worthy of all praise (Psalm 18:3; Revelation 4:11).

Jesus Christ, besides being God the Son, is also:

- The living, *active head* of the Church of God (Ephesians 5:23; Colossians 1:18),
- The *Chief Apostle* (Hebrews 3:1) and
- The *Chief Shepherd, Overseer, or Pastor* (1 Peter 5:4).

Our Redeemer sits at the right hand of God the Father in heaven as our High Priest (Hebrews 3:1; 4:14-15; 6:20), Intercessor (Romans 8:34) and Advocate (1 John 2:1). And we await His return as King of Kings and Lord of Lords to rule over all nations and serve as supreme Judge under the Father (Revelation 11:15; Revelation 17:14; Revelation 19:15-16; John 5:22, 27; 2 Corinthians 5:10).

Scripture further reveals God as two distinct divine Beings—God the “Father” and Jesus Christ His “Son.” The Hebraic form of Jesus Christ is *Yeshua Ha Messiah*. The title Messiah, or Christ—literally means “Anointed”—is that of the ruler, of the lineage of King David, Who is prophesied to serve as the chief divine representative in restoring Israel’s glory and reigning in righteousness over the whole world. We refer to the future kingdom of God as the world to come (Hebrews 2:5) or, more commonly *the World Tomorrow*.

As Father and Son, the one God is thus the one God family. The distinction between these two Beings existing together as God is implicit from the very beginning of Scripture (Genesis 1:1), where the Hebrew word *Elohyim* is

used. (*Elohyim* is the plural form of the Hebrew word for God, *Eloah*.) There has been communication and fellowship between these two Beings from the beginning, as seen in the example of Genesis 1:26, where the pronouns *Us* and *Our* refer to *Elohyim* [*the Mighty Ones*].

The Old Testament focuses on the God of Israel, Who identifies Himself as “**I AM**” [Hebrew: *hayah*] and “the LORD [Hebrew: **YHVH, YHWH**] God [Hebrew: *Elohyim*]. . . of Abraham, . . . of Isaac, and . . . of Jacob” (Exodus 3:14-15). (The capitalized word LORD here is used in place of the Hebrew word spelled **YHWH** (sometimes transliterated as *Jehovah* or *Yahweh*, which, like “**I AM**,” apparently denotes eternal and self-inherent existence.) The Hebrew literally means, *One Who was, Who is and Who is to come*, an eternal being. (Acts 7:38; Revelation 1:4; Revelation 1:8; Revelation 4:8; Revelation 11:17; Revelation 16:5).

Jesus Christ is called the “Word” [Greek: *logos*], Who “was with God” in the beginning and is also identified as “God” [Greek: *theos*; John 1:1-2]. All things were created through Him (John 1:3, John 1:10; Ephesians 3:9; Colossians 1:16; Hebrews 1:1-3), and He later became flesh and dwelled among human beings (John 1:14).

Sometimes the names are just **names**. *I.e.*, “Jesus or Theos or Immanuel.”

Sometimes the names describe **attributes**, such as “Anointed or Eternal or Almighty.”

Sometimes the names describe **offices**, or **titles**: “Shepherd, Apostle, King, Redeemer.”

Sometimes the names describe the **destiny** of the person: “Abraham, Sarah, Israel.”

We have the same usages today, a *name*: *i.e.*, “Charles or Robert or Susan.”

*Attributes*: “Perky Susan, Skinny Robert, or Fat Albert.”

*Offices or Titles*: “Doctor, Deaconess, Senator, Pastor, Elder.”

*Webster’s Dictionary* tells us that “a name” is “A Word Constituting the Distinctive Designation of a Person or Thing.” Our “names” identify us and distinguish us from other people. Most names are common to many different people, and so we today commonly employ a combination of two or three names, perhaps even with additional designations (*e.g.*, “Sr.,” “Jr.,” “Dr.,” etc.), to distinguish one person from anybody else.

In many cases that still does not guarantee a unique identity; thus there have been many people named “John Smith,” and even “John B. Smith” and even “John B. Smith Jr.” Nevertheless, such combinations of names are generally still fairly effective in correctly identifying most people in their particular environments.

Now it is true that long ago all names had real meanings. Thus, the name



"John" is derived from the Hebrew name transliterated as "Yohanan," which meant "*God has graced*"; the name "Smith" meant "*a worker in metals*"; etc. However, today most names are not chosen for a certain meaning they may have, though that is still a consideration with some parents when they must choose names for their children.

Today many names are chosen because they are currently "fashionable"; or they are the names of people who are for one reason or another famous; or because they "sound good" to the parents.

Biblically speaking, after God had been working with the man "Abram" for a number of years, God changed his name to "ABRAHAM" to indicate his *destiny* of becoming "a father of many nations" (see Genesis 17:5).

At the same occasion God changed the name of Abraham's wife from "Sarai" to "SARAH," which means "princess," to indicate her destiny of becoming a mother of kings (see Genesis 17:15-16).

When the man Jacob had passed a crucial test before God, God changed his name to "ISRAEL," to indicate his changed destiny of being "a prince with God" (see Genesis 32:27-28).

Everyone who will be in the first resurrection will be given "a new name" (Revelation 2:17) to indicate the new *destiny* that will be introduced to all those in the first resurrection. Similarly, Jesus Christ Himself will at that very point in time receive "A NEW NAME" (Revelation 3:12) because Jesus Christ Himself will be embarking on a totally new phase of His existence. That particular "new name" will also be conferred on all those in the first resurrection. (Revelation 2:17; Revelation 3:12).

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# God's Plan for All Mankind

God's plan for all mankind can be derived and understood from these few scriptures below, among others. The Eternal God wants *many glorious sons* to rule with Him in His Kingdom:

**Exodus 6:7**— I will take you as *My people*, and I will be your God. Then you shall know that **I AM** *the Eternal* your God who brings you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians.

**Leviticus 26:12**— I will walk among you and be your God, and *you shall be My people*.

**Romans 10:21**— But to Israel he says: "All day long I have stretched out *My hands* to a disobedient and contrary *people*."

**Hebrews 2:10-13**— For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things and by whom are all things, in bringing *many sons to glory*, to make the *captain of their salvation* perfect through sufferings.

For both He who sanctifies and those who are being sanctified are all of one, for which reason He is not ashamed to call them brethren, saying: "I will declare Your name to My brethren; in the midst of the assembly I will sing praise to You." And again: "I will put My trust in Him." And again: "Here am I and the children whom *God has given Me*."

God the Father desires to bring *many sons [and daughters, of course]* unto glory and to *perfect* the captain of the salvation of His sons. In glory, God will be their God and the many sons will be His people. Jesus Christ became the captain of the salvation, leader and guide of His future brethren, by paying the penalty of their sins.

As the firstborn of many brethren, Jesus Christ has the preeminence (Colossians 1:18). He is the one who is going to lead the new song to be sung by the 144,000 resurrected firstfruits of Revelation 14. Jesus Christ will present the firstfruits [*the children, whom God has given Him*] to the Father as our High Priest.

The resurrected Jesus Christ presented Himself to the Father as represented by the *wave sheaf offering* during the Feast of Unleavened Bread [*Foods*] nearly 2,000 years ago.

**Leviticus 23:10-11**— Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: "When you come into the land which I give to you, and reap its harvest, then you shall bring a *sheaf of the firstfruits* of your harvest to the priest. He shall *wave the sheaf* before the Eternal, to be accepted on your behalf; on the day after the Sabbath the priest shall wave it."

Jesus Christ will present *the firstfruits* to the Father as represented by the two loaves of the *wave loaf offering* presented to God by the priest on the Feast of Weeks, or Firstfruits.

**Leviticus 23:16-20**— Count fifty days to the day after the seventh Sabbath; then you shall offer a *new grain offering* to the Eternal. You shall bring from your dwellings *two wave loaves* of two-tenths of an ephah. They shall be of fine flour; they shall be baked with leaven. They are *the firstfruits to the Eternal*.

And you shall offer with the bread seven lambs of the first year, without blemish, one young bull, and two rams. They shall be as a burnt offering to the Eternal, with their grain offering and their drink offerings, an offering made by fire for a sweet aroma to the Eternal. Then you shall sacrifice one kid of the goats as a sin offering, and two male lambs of the first year as a sacrifice of a peace offering.

The priest shall wave them with *the bread of the firstfruits as a wave offering* before the Eternal, with the two lambs. They shall be holy to the Eternal for the priest.