



STATEMENT OF BELIEF

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

This set of simple questions and answers about the content of our Statement of Belief provides an easy to use "launching pad" for meaningful conversations about who Seventh Day Baptists are and what Seventh Day Baptists believe. Instead of just handing a copy of our Statement of Belief to the individual asking questions about Seventh Day Baptists, we encourage you to hand them the Statement of Belief and set up a time to sit and talk about what they find. You can use this set of questions and answers to ease into that conversation.

Introduction

Seventh Day Baptists consider liberty of thought under the guidance of the Holy Spirit to be essential to Christian belief and practice. Therefore we encourage the unhindered study and open discussion of Scripture. We uphold the individual's freedom of conscience in seeking to determine and obey the will of God.

The following statement is not intended to be exhaustive, but is an expression of our common belief, which is derived from our understanding of Scripture.

2 Corinthians 3:17-18; 2 Timothy 2:15; Romans 12:2; Ephesians 4:3-6, 15; Romans 10:17; 2 Timothy 3:16-17.

Questions & Answers

Why is it important for every Christian to study the Bible?

- ❖ To train our mind to know God's will (Romans 12:2).
- ❖ To be equipped for every good work (2 Timothy 3:16).

Should Christians study the Bible together?

- ❖ Yes. This allows Scripture to be used as God intended: for teaching, rebuke, correction, and training (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

How should we behave when we disagree with other Christians about how a passage should be interpreted or applied?

- ❖ Work for "unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Ephesians 4:3).
- ❖ Speak the truth in love, encouraging others to grow up into Christ (Ephesians 4:15).
- ❖ Learn from the call given to Timothy: Don't just fight over words—focus on the right things and handle His word well (2 Timothy 2:14-15).

Does this Statement of Belief cover everything that Seventh Day Baptists believe?

- ❖ No. It is not supposed to cover everything we believe. It represents many of the things upon which we both agree and consider important.

For Further Discussion

What do "liberty of thought" and "freedom of conscience" mean for Christians?

I. God

We believe in one God, infinite and perfect, the Creator and Sustainer of the universe who exists eternally in three persons—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—and desires to share His love in a personal relationship with everyone.

1 Timothy 1:17; Deuteronomy 6:4; 1 Kings 8:27; 1 John 1:5; Genesis 1:1-2; Acts 17:24-25, 28; Psalm 90:1-2; Matthew 28:19; John 3:16; Isaiah 57:15; 2 Peter 3:9.

Questions & Answers

Is there more than one God?

- ❖ No. There is no other God (Deuteronomy 4:35, 39). Our God is the only one.

What is the relationship between God and the universe?

- ❖ He created everything and He keeps it going (Genesis 1:1; Acts 17:24-28). He has acted to give those in the world an opportunity to respond to His love (John 3:16; 2 Peter 3:9).

Are the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit mentioned together in Bible passages?

- ❖ Yes. They are mentioned together at Jesus' Baptism (Mark 1:10-11), in the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19), and in several New Testament letters (2 Corinthians 13:14; Titus 3:4-7; Jude 20-21).

For Further Discussion

What does it mean to be "in a personal relationship" with God?

—The Father

We believe in God the Father, who is sovereign over all, and is loving and just as He forgives the repentant and condemns the unrepentant.

1 Corinthians 8:6; Ephesians 4:6; Ezekiel 33:11; 2 Thessalonians 1:6-8; John 5:24; John 3:16-18.

Questions & Answers

What does God offer those who repent and believe? ...to those who do not repent?

- ❖ To the repentant: forgiveness and eternal life (John 3:18).
- ❖ To the unrepentant: condemnation (John 3:18).

Does God take pleasure in the death of the wicked?

- ❖ No, as a loving and just God, He takes no pleasure in the death of the wicked. Instead, God calls for repentance and is patient, providing opportunity for repentance (Ezekiel 33:11; 2 Peter 3:9)

For Further Discussion

What does it mean for God the Father to be "sovereign over all?"

—The Son

We believe in God the Son, who became incarnate in Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior. He gave Himself on the cross as the complete and final sacrifice for sin. As our Risen Lord, He is the mediator between God the Father and mankind.

John 1:34; Hebrews 1:3; John 1:14-18; Romans 1:3-4; 1 John 3:16; 1 Peter 2:24; Hebrews 10:10-14; 1 Corinthians 15:20-21; 1 Timothy 2:5; John 14:6; 1 John 2:1-2.

Questions & Answers

What do we mean when we say that Jesus "became incarnate"?

- ❖ We mean that God the Son became human—fully human. It wasn't a mask. It wasn't a trick. He became like us (John 1:9-10, 14; Hebrews 1:3; Philippians 2:5-11).

How is Jesus our mediator?

- ❖ He provided the once-for-all sacrifice (Hebrews 10:10-14) and is the only way for humans to go to the Father (John 14:6).

Does Scripture record Jesus being worshipped?

- ❖ Yes. A healed blind man worshiped Jesus (John 9:38). After the resurrection, several of the 12 worshiped Jesus (Luke 24:52). In John's vision of God's throne room, 4 living creatures, 24 elders, and myriads of angels fall down and worship the lamb (Revelation 5:6-14). In each of these passages, the worship was not discouraged or declared out of place.

When will Jesus Christ return?

- ❖ While we know that Jesus will return and calls us to be always ready for that return, He told his disciples that only the Father knows the day and hour (Mark 13:32-33).

For Further Discussion

We believe that Jesus is "our Lord." How does that become evident in a Christian's life?

—The Holy Spirit

We believe in God the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, who gives spiritual birth to believers lives within them, and empowers them for witnessing and service. We believe the Holy Spirit inspired the Scriptures, convicts of sin and instructs in righteousness.

John 14:16; 3:5-8; 14:17; Romans 5:5; 1 Corinthians 12:4-7; 2 Peter 1:20-21; John 16:7-11.

Questions & Answers

How does the Holy Spirit interact with a believer?

- ❖ The Holy Spirit lives in the believer (Romans 5:5).
- ❖ The Holy Spirit counsels the believer (John 14:26, 15:26).
- ❖ The Holy Spirit directs true prophecy (2 Peter 1:20-21).
- ❖ The Holy Spirit empowers true confession of Jesus as Lord (1 Corinthians 12:3).
- ❖ The Holy Spirit is involved in providing spiritual gifts for the common good of the church (1 Corinthians 12:4-11).

For Further Discussion

How does the Holy Spirit convict of sin and instruct in righteousness?

II. The Bible

We believe that the Bible is the inspired Word of God and is our final authority in matters of faith and practice. We believe that Jesus Christ, in His life and teachings as recorded in the Bible, is the supreme interpreter of God's will for mankind.

2 Peter 1:20-21; Romans 3:2; 2 Peter 3:1-2, 15-16; 2 Timothy 3:14-17; Matthew 5:17-19; Psalm 119:105; John 20:30-31; Hebrews 1:1-2.

Questions & Answers

Who is responsible for the content of the Bible?

- ❖ God is responsible. Through the Holy Spirit, God moved humans to speak His words (2 Peter 1:20-21).

Where do we find the best guidance for choosing what we believe, who we trust, or how we live?

- ❖ The Bible is our best source. It can be used to teach us, to tell us when we are wrong, to show us the right way, and to help us stay on that good path (2 Timothy 3:14-17).

For Further Discussion

How does believing that Jesus is the "supreme interpreter of God's will" influence the way we work with the Bible?

III. Mankind

We believe that mankind was created in the image of God and is therefore the noblest work of creation. We believe that human beings have moral responsibility and are created to enjoy both divine and human fellowship as children of God.

Genesis 1:26-27; Psalm 8:3-9; Micah 6:8; Matthew 5:44-48; 1 John 1:3; John 1:12

Questions & Answers

What are some of the things for which God created human beings?

- ❖ To bring glory to God (Isaiah 43:7; 1 Peter 4:11; 1 Corinthians 10:31).
- ❖ To do what He says is right and to walk humbly with God (Micah 6:8).
- ❖ To take joy in our fellowship with God and His children (1 John 1:3-4).

Why is mankind the noblest work of creation?

- ❖ Humans were created by God in His own image and were told to rule over all the earth (Genesis 1:26).

Does the Bible mention both sexes as it describes the creation of humans?

- ❖ Yes. The Bible says that humans were created in the image and likeness of God as male and female (Genesis 1:27, 5:1-2).

For Further Discussion

What does it mean to "have moral responsibility"?

IV. Sin and Salvation

We believe that sin is disobedience to God and failure to live according to His will. Because of sin all people have separated themselves from God. We believe that because we are sinners, we are in need of a Savior.

We believe that salvation from sin and death is the gift of God by redeeming love accomplished by Christ's death and resurrection, and is received only by repentance and faith in Him. We believe that all who repent of their sin and receive Christ as Savior will not be punished at the final judgment but enjoy eternal life.

1 John 3:4-5; Romans 3:23-25; Isaiah 59:2; 1 John 1:8-10; Romans 5:6-8; Romans 6:23; Hebrews 10:10-14; 1 Peter 1:3; John 3:16-18, 36; Ephesians 2:8-9; John 14:6; Matthew 25:41-46; Romans 5:10

Questions & Answers

Who has sinned? Who is a sinner?

- ❖ Every single person, except Jesus Christ, has sinned and is a sinner (Romans 3:23).

What is the penalty for sin?

- ❖ Sin earns death and judgment (Romans 6:23).

Can we avoid this penalty?

- ❖ We cannot avoid the penalty on our own, but God, through Christ's death and resurrection, will save us from sin and death when we repent of sin and by faith receive Christ as Savior (Ephesians 2:8-9; Romans 3:24-25).

What does it mean to repent of sin?

- ❖ To repent of sin means to stop practicing sin and to do what is right (Acts 26:20; 1 John 3:1-10). For example, a liar who repents will stop telling lies and speak only the truth.

For Further Discussion

How does a person "receive Christ as Savior"?

V. Eternal Life

We believe that Jesus rose from the dead and lives eternally with the Father, and that He will come again with power and great glory. We believe that eternal life begins in knowing God through a commitment to Jesus Christ. We believe that because He died and lives again, resurrection with spiritual and imperishable bodies is the gift of God to believers.

*1 Corinthians 15:3-4, 20-23; John 14:1-3; Matthew 24:30; Titus 2:13; John 17:3; 1 John 5:11-13;
1 Corinthians 15:42-44; John 10:27-28; John 6:40*

Questions & Answers

How is eternal life obtained?

- ❖ Christ purchased eternal life for us through His death and resurrection on our behalf (Romans 6:4).

When does eternal life begin?

- ❖ Eternal life begins when we receive Jesus as Savior and Lord. For those who have received Him, eternal life has already begun (John 3:36).

What promise does God make to believers about their bodies?

- ❖ God promises that our natural bodies which are subject to decay will—at an unspecified time in the future corresponding with the return of Christ—be transformed into spiritual and imperishable bodies (1 Corinthians 15:42-44, 51-53).

For Further Discussion

When we say "a commitment to Jesus Christ," what does that mean?

VI. The Church

We believe that the church of God is all believers gathered by the Holy Spirit and joined into one body, of which Christ is the Head. We believe that the local church is a community of believers organized in covenant relationship for worship, fellowship and service, practicing and proclaiming common convictions, while growing in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

We believe in the priesthood of all believers and practice the autonomy of the local congregation, as we seek to work in association with others for more effective witness.

Acts 20:28; 1 Corinthians 12:13, 14, 27; Romans 12:4-5; Colossians 1:18; Acts 2:42; Ephesians 2:19-22; Romans 15:5-7; Ephesians 4:11-16; 2 Peter 3:18; 1 Peter 2:4-10; Matthew 18:20; Hebrews 10:24-25

Questions & Answers

What is the local church?

- ❖ The local church is a specific group of believers who have agreed together to participate in the purposes of God's church and to help each other grow (1 Corinthians 11:18; Romans 12:4-5; Ephesians 2:19-22).

What are the purposes of the church?

- ❖ 1)Worship, 2)Fellowship, 3)Service, 4)Practicing common convictions, 5)Proclaiming common convictions

What is the priesthood of all believers?

- ❖ At its heart, the priesthood of all believers indicates that every single Christian is appointed by God to serve Him and to bring glory to His name (1 Peter 2:5; Revelation 5:10).
- ❖ While Christians have differing roles in the local church and beyond, all believers share the same status before God (Galatians 3:28).

What does it mean to practice the autonomy of the local congregation?

- ❖ Practicing the autonomy of the local congregation means that no human, group of humans, or organization outside a local church is vested with the authority to make decisions for the congregation. It is a practical extension of *liberty of conscience* and means that each church is responsible to discern and follow the will of God.

Why would a church seek to work in association with others?

- ❖ To recognize that the church of God is larger than the local congregation.
- ❖ To pool resources in ways that make their witness more effective.

For Further Discussion

How does a covenant relationship help the local church function?

VII. Baptism

We believe that baptism of believers in obedience to Christ's command is a witness to the acceptance of Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. We believe in baptism by immersion as a symbol of death to sin, a pledge to a new life in Him.

Romans 6:3-4; Matthew 28:19-20; Acts 2:41; Colossians 2:12; Romans 6:11; Galatians 3:26-27

Questions & Answers

Why would a Christian be baptized?

- ❖ To follow the example of Jesus (Matthew 3:13-15).
- ❖ To obey Christ's command (Matthew 28:19).
- ❖ To give a public witness about their salvation (Romans 10:9-10).

Why is baptism by immersion (being pushed under water)?

- ❖ We baptize by immersion because that is what the word translated as *baptize* means.
- ❖ We baptize by immersion because it is a symbol of being dead and buried, *pushed under*, and then raised to new life, *pulled back up* (Romans 6:3-5).

For Further Discussion

How does baptism work in the life of a Christian as a symbol and pledge?

VIII. The Lord's Supper

We believe that the Lord's Supper commemorates the suffering and death of our Redeemer until He comes, and is a symbol of union in Christ and a pledge of renewed allegiance to our risen Lord.

Mark 14:22-25; Matthew 26:26-29; 1 Corinthians 10:16-17, 11:23-30

Questions & Answers

What does it say to others when I eat and drink the Lord's Supper?

- ❖ I have received Christ as Savior and Lord (1 Corinthians 11:26).
- ❖ I am remembering the broken body, spilt blood, and suffering of Jesus for me (1 Corinthians 11:24-25).
- ❖ I am re-affirming my allegiance to my risen Lord (1 Corinthians 10:16-18, 21).

Why is this symbol important? Doesn't scripture give a warning about the manner in which I eat the bread and drink the cup?

- ❖ Yes. Paul's first letter to the Corinthian church calls Christians to self-examination before eating and drinking (1 Corinthians 11:27-32).

For Further Discussion

How can the Lord's Supper serve as a pledge of renewed allegiance to Christ?

IX. Sabbath

We believe that the Sabbath of the Bible, the seventh day of the week, is sacred time, a gift of God to all people, instituted at creation, affirmed in the Ten Commandments and reaffirmed in the teaching and example of Jesus and the apostles.

We believe that the gift of Sabbath rest is an experience of God's eternal presence with His people.

We believe that in obedience to God and in loving response to His grace in Christ, the Sabbath should be faithfully observed as a day of rest, worship, and celebration.

Genesis 2:2-3; Exodus 16:23-30; Exodus 20:8-11; Matthew 5:17-19; Mark 2:27-28; Luke 4:16; Acts 13:14, 42-44; 16:11-13; 17:2-3; 18:4-11; Ezekiel 20:19-20; Hebrews 4:9-10; John 14:15; Isaiah 58:13-14; Luke 23:56

Questions & Answers

When is the Sabbath?

- ❖ The Sabbath is the seventh day of the week (Exodus 20:10), commonly called Saturday.
- ❖ A pattern established in Scripture (a creation day is evening and then morning, Genesis 1:5) indicates that the Sabbath is from sundown on Friday to sundown on Saturday.

Do we keep the Sabbath to be saved?

- ❖ No.

Why do we keep the Sabbath?

- ❖ It was given by God to all people at creation (Genesis 2:2-3).
- ❖ It was affirmed by God in the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:8-11).
- ❖ It was re-affirmed by the teaching and example of Jesus and His disciples (Luke 4:16, 6:6-9).
- ❖ God made the Sabbath for mankind (Mark 2:27).

For Further Discussion

How does Sabbath rest give us an experience of God's eternal presence with His people?

X. Evangelism

We believe that Jesus Christ commissions us to proclaim the Gospel, to make disciples, to baptize and to teach observance of all that He has commanded. We are called to be witnesses for Christ throughout the world and in all human relationships.

Matthew 24:14; Acts 1:8; Matthew 28:18-20; 2 Corinthians 4:1-2, 5-6; 1 Peter 3:15; 2 Corinthians 5:17-20; Ephesians 6:14-20

Questions & Answers

What is evangelism?

- ❖ Evangelism is telling other people about God's Gospel with words. It is being a witness for Christ.

Who is supposed to engage in evangelism?

- ❖ God provides some people with specific spiritual gifts for the task of evangelism (Ephesians 4:11).
- ❖ Everyone is supposed to be ready to be a witness for those moments when others provide the opportunity by asking specific questions (1 Peter 3:15).

For Further Discussion

Why does this statement on evangelism talk about making disciples and teaching obedience?