



M Grace Messenger

GRACE BAPTIST CHURCH

122 Walnut Street
Madison, AL 35758
256-837-8821

GBC HOMEPAGES

<http://www.gracemadison-al.com>
<http://sermonaudio.com/gbcmadisonal>

"Preaching the free grace of God which brings a change of lifestyles, masters and destinies."

DEAN OLIVE, Pastor

— March 2010 Issue —

"But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD." (Joshua 24:15).



NURSERY SCHEDULE

March

07 Vicki Johnson and Amber Solan
14 Linda Olive and Sonja Williams
21 Bob and Faye Williams
28 Jon and Tanya Amis

April

04 Jenny Lovassy and Kristy Hines
11 Kevin and Sarah Smith
18 Jessica and Troy Moseley
25 Jon and Tanya Amis

LAWN CARE

April - The Palazzolos
May - Dean & Linda Olive

CHURCH CLEANING

March - The Moseleys
April - The Moseleys
May - Jonathan & Tonya Amis

FINANCIAL SUMMARY AS OF MARCH 1, 2010

Budgeted expenditures (ytd)	\$ 20,149.66
Actual on-budget expenditures (ytd)	\$ 20,221.39
Actual off-budget expenditures (ytd)	\$ 4,000.00
General Fund offerings (ytd)	\$ 25,506.52
Love offerings (ytd)	\$ 0.00
Total offerings (ytd)	\$ 26,669.02
February Love offerings	\$ 0.00
February General Fund offerings	\$ 13,041.90
February Designated Missions	\$ 70.00
Haiti Relief (ytd)	\$ 5,150.00
Building Fund balance	\$ 83,382.75
Missions Fund balance	\$ 10,584.92
General Fund balance	\$ 72,058.35

GRACE BAPTIST CHURCH IS HOSTING THE SOVEREIGN GRACE BAPTIST PASTORS' FELLOWSHIP

Thursday March 18

Service Schedule

- ▶ 10:00 AM – Darrell Lingerfelt, pastor of Providence Baptist Church, Pulaski, TN
- ▶ 11:00 AM – Don Currin, itinerant preacher from Muscle Shoals, AL
- ▶ 12:00 Noon – Lunch, provided by the church
- ▶ 1:15 PM – Paul Washer, director of HeartCry Missionary Society



This meeting isn't for pastors only. We welcome everyone who is interested in hearing the preaching of God's word and enjoying the fellowship of God's people. Coffee will be ready for those who arrive early.

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

NORMAL SUNDAY SERVICES

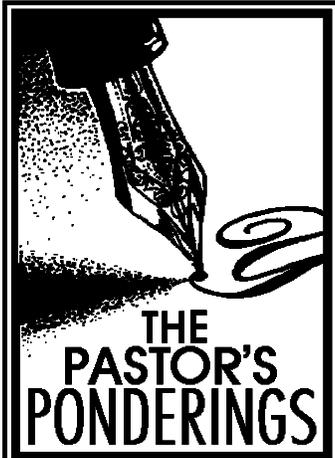
Morning Worship 9:30 AM
Sunday School 11:00 AM
Evening Worship 6:00 PM

WEDNESDAY EVENING

Bible Study and Prayer Meeting
7:00 PM

FIRST SUNDAY SERVICES

Morning Worship 9:30 AM
Sunday School 11:00 AM
Dinner at the Church 12:00 Noon
Afternoon Service 1:30 PM
(No Evening Service)



An Evangelistic Letter

Robert Murray M'Cheyne was a pastor in Dundee, Scotland in the early 19th Century. He never reached 30 years of age but was a most effective preacher of the gospel. Though a pastor, he had the heart of an evangelist. His zeal for the salvation of the lost is evident, not only in his preaching, but in

letter writing. He often wrote letters to people he didn't even know, encouraging them to look to Christ and be saved. The following is such a letter. It was written March 20, 1840.

MY DEAR FRIEND, I do not even know your name, but I think I know something of the state of your soul. Your friend has been with me, and told me a little of your mind; and I write a few lines just to bid you look to Jesus and live.

Look at Num. 21:9, and you will see your disease and your remedy. You have been bitten by the great serpent. The poison of sin is through and through your whole heart, but Christ has been lifted up on the cross that you may look and live. Now, do not look so long and so harassingly at your own heart and feelings. What will you find there but the bite of the serpent? You were shapen in iniquity, and the whole of your natural life has been spent in sin. The more God opens your eyes, the more you will feel that you are *lost in yourself*. This is your disease.

Now for the remedy. Look to Christ; for the glorious Son of God so loved lost souls, that He took on Him a body and died for us—bore our curse, and obeyed the law in our place. Look to Him and live. You need no preparation, you need no endeavours, you need no duties, you need no strivings, you only need to look and live.

Look at John 17:3. The way to be saved is to know God's heart and the heart of Jesus. *To be awakened*, you need to know your own heart. Look in at your own heart, if you wish to know your lost condition. See the pollution that is there—forgetfulness of God, deadness, insensibility to His love. If you are judged as you are in yourself, you will be lost. *To be saved*, you need to know the heart of God and of Christ. The four Gospels are a narrative of the heart of Christ. They show His compassion to sinners, and His glorious work in their stead. If you only knew that heart as it is, you would lay your weary head with John on His bosom. Do not take up your time so much with studying your own heart as with studying *Christ's heart*. "For one look at yourself, take ten looks at Christ!"

Look at Rom. 15:13. That is my prayer for you. You are looking for peace in *striving*, or peace in *duties*, or peace

in *reforming* your mind; but ah! look at His word. "The God of hope fill you with all joy and *peace in believing*." All your peace is to be found in believing *God's word* about his Son. If for a moment you forget your own case altogether, and meditate on the glorious way of salvation by *Christ for us*, does your bosom never glow with a ray of peace? Keep that peace; it is joy in believing. Look as straight to Christ as you sometimes do at the rising or setting sun. Look direct to Christ.

You fear that your convictions of sin have not been deep enough. This is no reason for keeping away from Christ. You will never get a truly broken heart till you are really *in Christ* (see Ezek. 36:25-31). Observe the order: *First*, God sprinkles clean water on the soul. This represents our being washed in the blood of Christ. *Then* He gives "a new heart also." *Thirdly*, He gives a piercing remembrance of past sins. Now, may the Lord give you all these! May you be brought as you are to the blood of the Lamb! Washed and justified, may He change your heart—give you a tender heart, and His Holy Spirit within your heart; and thus may He give you a broken heart for your past sins.



Look at Rom. 5:19. By the sin of Adam, many were made sinners. We had no hand in Adam's sin, and yet the guilt of it comes upon us. We did not put out our hand to the apple, and yet the sin and misery have been laid at our door. In the same way, "by the obedience of Christ, many are made righteous." Christ is the glorious One who stood for many. His perfect garment is sufficient to cover you. You had no hand in His obedience. You were not alive when He came into the world and lived and died; and yet, in the perfect obedience, you may stand before God righteous. This is

all my covering in the sight of a holy God. I feel infinitely ungodly *in myself*: in God's eye, like a serpent or a toad; and yet, when I stand *in Christ alone*, I feel that God sees no sin in me, and loves me freely. The same righteousness is free to you. It will be as white and clean on your soul as on mine. Oh, do not sleep another night without it! Only consent to stand in Christ, not in your poor self.

I must not weary you. One word more. Look at Rev. 22:17. Sweet, sweet words! "Whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely." The last invitation in the Bible, and the freest,—Christ's parting word to a world of sinners! Any one that pleases may take this glorious way of salvation. Can you refuse it? I am sure you cannot. Dear friend, be persuaded by a fellow worm not to put off another moment. Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sins of the world.

You are sitting, like Hagar, within reach of the well. May the Lord open your eyes, and show you all that is in Christ! I pray for you, that you may spiritually see Jesus and be glad—that you may go to Him and find rest. Farewell.—Yours in the Lord.

BOOK REVIEW



CONTENDING FOR OUR ALL

by John Piper

What could a fourth-century bishop, a seventeenth-century politically-active academic and a wealthy bachelor professor in the twentieth century have in common? Many things, actually. But John Piper's book highlights one thing in particular: Each stood firmly for truth in days of controversy. Their stands were not always popular. But each was right. And we are the beneficiaries.

The men were Athanasius, John Owen, and J. Gresham Machen. For Athanasius, the dispute was over the full deity and eternal existence of Christ; Owen fought Arminianism and unbiblical notions of sanctification; and Machen contended against a Presbyterian establishment steeped in anti-supernatural modernism.

Piper spends some time at the beginning of each chapter filling in the historical background. He describes the time in which each man lived, gives relevant biographical details, and then dives into the controversies themselves. These chapters are not intended to be rigorous historical portraits of either the men or their times; rather, they are brief sketches, with practical application for the contemporary reader stressed throughout...

The three men shared at least two characteristics, both of which are lacking today: clarity and courage. Clarity, in that they saw what was at stake in the errors they faced and spoke against them with honesty and precision. And courage, in that the clarity was joined with absolute confidence that the truths they were fighting for were correct and vital. We are the beneficiaries of these twin fruits of God's Spirit. We would do well to remember these men, follow their example and imitate their faith in our own day.

-Jonathan Master



MARCH 7 – Observance of the ordinance of the Lord's Supper in the afternoon service.

MARCH 14 – Time change occurs. We will be springing forward one hour, so be sure to set your clocks Saturday night.

MARCH 18 – We will be hosting the meeting of the Sovereign Grace Baptist Pastors' Fellowship. The first service begins

at 10 AM. Preachers are Darrell Lingerfelt, Don Currin, and Paul Washer. We will provide lunch for the pastors and all who attend.

MAY 1-2 – 2010 Spring Bible Conference with Dr. Michael Haykin. Dr. Haykin will be teaching sessions on Saturday afternoon our Baptist heritage and will be preaching on the Lord's Day on the importance of the doctrine of the Trinity.

SEPTEMBER 17-19 – Fall Bible Conference with Scott Aniol. The theme is, "God-Glorifying Music." On Friday evening and Sunday morning we will hear what God's Word says about music; on Saturday there will be sessions about what constitutes good music; and on Sunday evening there will be a sacred music concert. Scott's books and music are available through Amazon and iTunes.

We Believe

The 1689 Confession of Faith

CHAPTER 3 - GOD'S DECREES

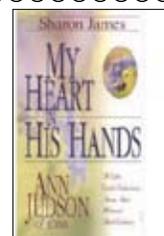
(paragraphs 2-5)



- God's decree is not based upon His foreknowledge that, under certain conditions, certain happenings will take place, but is independent of all such foreknowledge (Acts 15:18; Rom 9:11, 13, 16, 18).
- By His decree, and for the manifestation of His glory, God has predestinated (or foreordained) certain men and angels to eternal life through Jesus Christ, thus revealing His grace. Others, whom He has left to perish in their sins, show the terrors of His justice (Mat. 25:34; Rom. 9:22, 23; Eph. 1:5, 6; 1 Tim. 5:21; Jude 4).
- The angels and men who are the subjects of God's predestination are clearly and irreversibly designated, and their number is unalterably fixed (John 13:18; 2 Tim. 2:19).
- Before the world was made, God's eternal, immutable purpose, which originated in the secret counsel and good pleasure of His will, moved Him to choose (or to elect), in Christ, certain of mankind to everlasting glory. Out of His mere free grace and love He predestinated these chosen ones to life, although there was nothing in them to cause Him to choose them (Rom. 8:30; 9:13, 16; Eph. 1:4, 9, 11; 2:5, 12; 1 Thess. 5:9; 2 Tim. 1:9).

Ladies of Grace

This month the Ladies of Grace will be discussing the book, *My Heart in His Hands*, the biography of Ann Judson of Burma. The meeting will be at Grace Baptist at 6:30 PM on Friday, March 26.



— PROVIDENCE —

"It is most important for us to learn that the smallest trifles are as much arranged by the God of Providence, as the most startling events. He who counts the stars has also numbered the hairs of our heads. Our lives and deaths are predestined, but so, also, are our sitting down and our rising up!"

Cremation

Allen M. Baker

From time to time I am asked what the Bible says about cremation. First I realize this can be a very sensitive subject and I want to tread lightly here because the Bible nowhere directly says cremation is sin. We are never commanded not to cremate. I am going to make a case against cremation, and I am sure some of you have disposed of the remains of some of your loved ones in this manner. I do not, therefore, want to heap guilt on you. What is done is done. However, perhaps being a bit better informed, you may wish to reconsider it in the future.

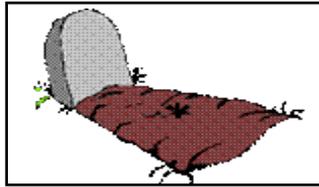
While the Bible does not directly command against the practice of cremation it does indirectly speak against it. I say this for two reasons.

One, Achan and his family were first stoned to death and then burned. Why? Achan deliberately took the spoil at the battle of Jericho, something which was directly forbidden by God. See Jos. 6:17-19. Also we know God directed his covenant people to burn with fire the man who married a woman and her mother since this is immorality and no immorality was to be tolerated in their midst (Lev. 20:14). And the daughter of a priest who gave herself to prostitution profaned her father and was also to be burned with fire (Lev. 21:9). During the reforms under King Josiah of Judah, all the priests of the high places were slaughtered on the altars of their false gods and their bones were burned on them (2 Kgs. 23:20). The prophet Amos, during the reign of Jeroboam II of Israel, prophesied judgment on Moab because they burned the bones of the king of Edom to lime (Amos 2:1).

The only passage I can find in the Bible which, at first glance, seems to speak well of cremation is 1 Sam. 31:12 where, after the Philistines have desecrated the body of Saul after he committed suicide, the people of Jabesh-gilead gallantly went across the Jordan River and retrieved his body, and those of his three sons, bringing them back to Jabesh-gilead and burning them there. It appears that this was a mere burning of incense over them, afterward burying the bodies. I say this because in 2 Chron. 16:14 good King Asa of Judah dies and is buried in his own tomb, and it is filled with spices blended by the perfumers' art, and they

then made a great fire for him. He himself is not burned but instead a fire is burned in honour of him. Even more proof that Saul's body was not burned is found in 2 Sam. 2:4ff when David is told that the men of Jabesh-gilead buried Saul; and David blesses them for doing so. And in 2 Sam. 21:12-14 we are told that David took the bones of Saul and Jonathan and his other brothers, which had been buried in Jabesh-gilead and brought them to Zela and buried them in the grave of Saul's father, Kish. So, even the only possible pro-cremation statement in Scripture turns out not to be a cremation at all. Thus, the first deduction we can make about cremation is that it is a form of judgment on evil doers.

The second deduction is much more positive. It is clear that the body was held in high esteem among the Jews of the Old Testament. All of Gen. 23 is dedicated to Sarah's death and the great pains to which her husband Abraham went to secure a tomb



for her at Machpelah. And before Joseph died in Egypt he prophesied that Yahweh would surely bring his descendants back into the land promised to his father Abraham. He made his sons swear that when they returned to Israel they would carry his bones with them. Several hundred years later, after their mighty exodus and deliverance by Yahweh, they did just that. See Gen. 50:25, Exo. 13:19. Obviously many people had taken great care with Joseph's remains for all those years. Deut. 34:5, 6 says that God buried Moses in Moab, opposite Beth Peor but no one knows where his grave is. God took great care with the remains of his faithful servant. And then, of course, there is the burial of our Lord Jesus where Joseph of Arimathea gained permission from Pilate to bury Jesus in a new tomb (Mat. 27:57-59). John reports that Joseph and Nicodemus brought one hundred pounds of myrrh and aloes to the tomb of Jesus to prepare his body for burial. Obviously they were taking great care of the body, showing it respect. So it is clear that the Judeo-Christian view of death requires respect for the body by burial.

Then perhaps it is helpful to contrast the Judeo-Christian burial with practices in the

Greek and Roman world of that time. Due to the influence of Platonism which honored the spiritual and degraded the physical, both the Greeks and Romans of antiquity favored cremation. And Hindus have long practiced cremation, believing that the body is insignificant, that due to reincarnation the annihilation of the body prepares the way for the next life. I once asked Christians in India if they disposed of the bodies of their Christian loved ones by cremation and I was told very quickly, 'No, never.' I wonder if our modern movement toward cremation is more influenced by eastern mysticism and neo-paganism than we might realize.

Finally, the Apostle Paul taught a very high view of the body. He said that those who die in the Lord are asleep (1 Cor. 11:30; 15:6, 18, 20, 51), and he does not mean soul sleep, as though they are not conscious of where they are. See 2 Cor. 5:8. He is referring to the body being asleep, awaiting that great day when the risen Lord Jesus will descend from heaven with a shout, and the voice of the archangel, and the trumpet call of God, and those who have died in Christ will rise and meet him in the clouds (1 Thes. 4:13-16). He says in 1 Cor. 15:51ff that though all will not sleep, all shall be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet, for the trumpet will sound and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall all be changed, for the perishable must put on the imperishable, and this mortal must put on immortality.

I know that eventually the body in the grave also decays and little remains of it; and I also know cremation is much less expensive than burial and some see this as merely an economic measure, being good stewards of God's money. I suggest, however, that we reconsider our plans to use cremation for the disposal of the bodies of our loved ones. Burning bodies with fire in Scripture is portrayed as a terrible end, a judgment on the wicked. The burial of loved ones portrays respect for the body. They deserve far better than cremation. Again, I cannot say that cremation is sin, but the evidence in Scripture seems to militate against the use of it for those who honor Christ.

Allen M Baker is Pastor of Christ Community Presbyterian Church in West Hartford, Connecticut.