



M G 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

— December 2011 Issue —

*"Do not be slothful in zeal,
be fervent in spirit,
serve the Lord."
(Romans 12:11).*



NURSERY SCHEDULE

December

04 Vicki Johnson and Amber Solan
11 Kevin and Sara Smith
18 Kristin Scarbrough and Lori Hewlett
25 Melanie Myatt and Hannah McFadden

January

01 Linda Olive and Sonja Williams
08 Jon and Tanya Amis
15 Jenny and Peter Lovassy
22 Troy and Jessica Moseley
29 Vicki Johnson and Amber Solan

CHURCH CLEANING

December - Moseleys

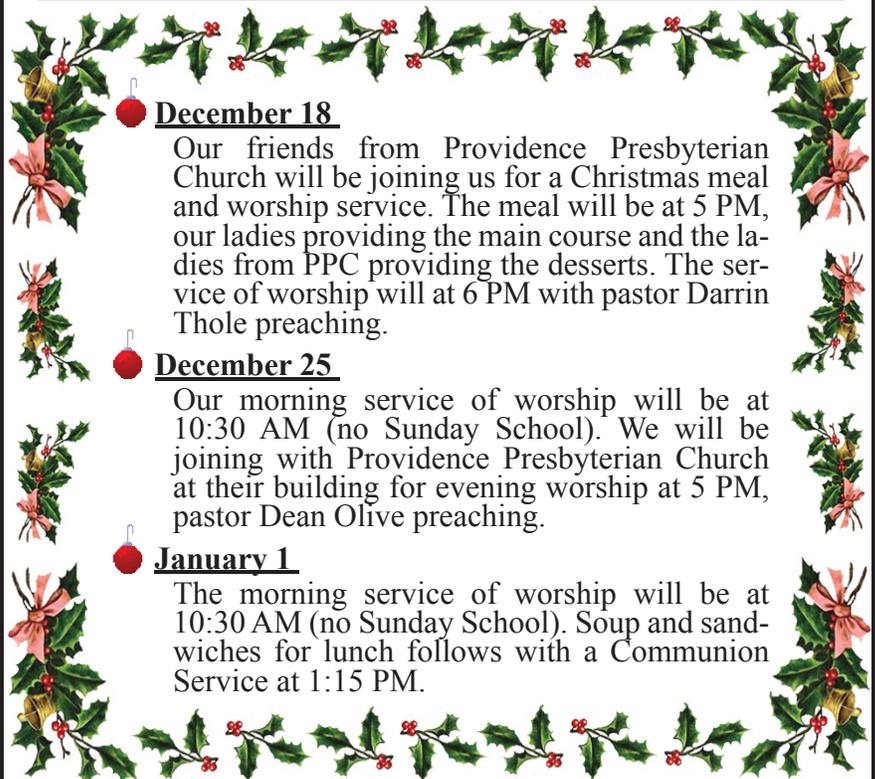
Thank you everyone who helped us clean the church building this year. God bless you. More volunteers will be needed in 2012 to clean the church building. Please look for a sign-up sheet on the table at the rear of the sanctuary or see Jon Amis for more information.

FINANCIAL SUMMARY AS OF DECEMBER 1, 2011

Budgeted expenditures (ytd)	\$123,899.71
Actual on-budget expenditures (ytd)	\$122,119.90
Actual off-budget expenditures (ytd)	\$ 2,611.00
General Fund offerings (ytd)	\$107,219.26
Designated Missions (ytd)	\$ 3,730.00
Disaster Relief Offerings (ytd)	\$ 389.36
Love offerings (ytd)	\$ 1,566.00
Total offerings (ytd)	\$155,194.35
November Love offerings	\$ 0.00
November General Fund offerings	\$ 9,275.17
November Designated Missions	\$ 1,000.00
November Disaster Relief Offerings	\$ 0.00
Building Fund balance	\$ 88,550.02
Missions Fund balance	\$ 12,224.81
General Fund balance	\$ 85,345.34

HOLIDAY SCHEDULE FOR 2011 AND 2012

GRACE BAPTIST CHURCH



December 18

Our friends from Providence Presbyterian Church will be joining us for a Christmas meal and worship service. The meal will be at 5 PM, our ladies providing the main course and the ladies from PPC providing the desserts. The service of worship will at 6 PM with pastor Darrin Thole preaching.

December 25

Our morning service of worship will be at 10:30 AM (no Sunday School). We will be joining with Providence Presbyterian Church at their building for evening worship at 5 PM, pastor Dean Olive preaching.

January 1

The morning service of worship will be at 10:30 AM (no Sunday School). Soup and sandwiches for lunch follows with a Communion Service at 1:15 PM.

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

NORMAL SUNDAY SERVICES

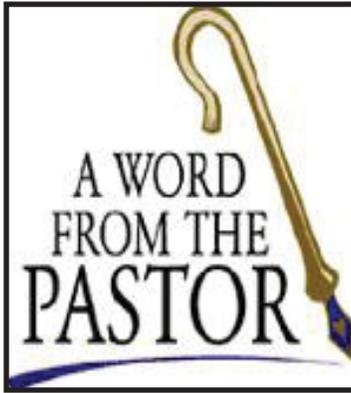
Morning Worship	9:30 AM
Sunday School	11:00 AM
Evening Worship	6:00 PM

WEDNESDAY EVENING

Bible Study and Prayer Meeting	7:00 PM
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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)	



O Little Town of Bethlehem

Isaiah's prophecies about the coming of the Messiah are among the most important in the Old Testament. It was Isaiah that wrote 800 years before the event, "Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call

his name Immanuel" (7:14). It was Isaiah whom God directed to write, "For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace" (9:6).

But there is another OT prophecy of the coming Messiah that is equally important. I refer to Micah 5:2. This prophecy declares that Messiah is to be born in the little town of Bethlehem, that he will come forth from God, and that he comes forth to be a ruler.

"But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, who are too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel, whose coming forth is from of old, from ancient days."

This text plays an important part in Matthew's Gospel of the wise men coming from the East in search of the One who had been born king of the Jews (Mt 2:1-12). A special star appeared in the sky, which they followed, and it brought them at first to Jerusalem. Herod was troubled when he learned that they had come in search of a new king. But where was this king? In what town or city had he been born?

Herod called on the chief priests and scribes of Israel to find out where the Messiah was to be born. They told him he would be born in Bethlehem of Judea, and they quoted Micah 5:2. With this news, the wise men began the short journey from Jerusalem to Bethlehem in order to give him gifts and to worship him.

Micah 5:2 then is one of the most important, as well as famous, messianic prophecies in the Old Testament. It contains some amazing information about the Messiah, the One whose promise to come was the hope of every Israelite.

We learn that the place he would be born was Bethlehem, a very insignificant town, a lowly town. By worldly standards it was nothing. It has significance today because it is the place that was graced with the birth of Christ. But the most insignificant place brought forth the most significant person. The lowliness of Bethlehem made it a suitable place for the birth of him, who though he was

rich, became poor for our sake (2 Cor. 8:9).

Micah's prophecy speaks of Christ coming from Bethlehem but also as coming forth from "of old, from ancient days." The puritan, Stephen Charnock, said, "There are two goings forth of Christ described, one from Bethlehem, in the days of his incarnation, and another from eternity." He then said, "The Holy Ghost adds, after his prediction of his incarnation, his going out from everlasting, that none should doubt of his deity."

That he came from Bethlehem is an indication of his humanity but that he came forth from of old, and in the familiar language of the KJV, "from everlasting," is an indication of his deity. In other words, while Jesus was a man, he was also God who became a man!

Micah's prophecy also speaks of the purpose of Messiah coming. The one who will come forth from Bethlehem and from everlasting is "one who is to be ruler in Israel." This prophecy provides the setting of the wise men's journey from the east. They came saying, "Where is he who has been born king of the Jews?" (Matt. 2:2). The Messiah was born a king and what kings do is rule!

Christ was born in Bethlehem because it was uniquely connected to the Davidic dynasty. Jesus was born king of the Jews! His kingdom, which commenced in a spiritual form at his first coming, will be unveiled in all its outward splendor and majesty at his second coming. However, he was ruler and king the moment he was born.

Royal children that are heirs to a throne, are not kings (or queens) at their births. They are born a prince or a princess, but not born king or queen. But Jesus was a king the moment he was born! He didn't have to wait to become king; he was born king! *Born thy people to deliver/Born a child, and yet a king.*

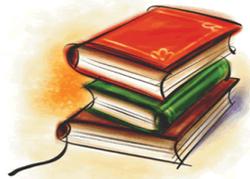
What might we learn from our study of Micah 5:2? Let me suggest two lessons.

First, let us render thanks for this One who came from heaven to earth. What condescension that he would stoop so low. What love that he would give up so much. Surely we must proclaim with gratitude, "Worthy are you, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power" (Rev. 4:11).

Second, let us bow to this One who came to rule over us. He is both Lord and Redeemer. "Him God has exalted to his right hand to be Prince and Savior, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins" (Acts 5:31). Bow your knee to the Prince of Peace and find in him pardon of sin and a home eternal in the heavens.

Let us go up to Bethlehem in our minds and hearts this year and "see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us" (Lk 2:15). "For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord" (Lk 2:11).

BOOK REVIEW

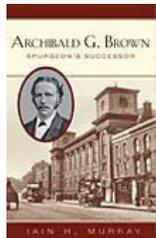


Archibald G. Brown:

Spurgeon's Successor

Iain H. Murray

Banner of Truth Trust, 432 pages



Archibald G. Brown (1844-1922), instead of following his father to wealth in commerce and banking, built a church to hold 3,000 in the East End of London while still in his twenties. Five thousand eight hundred were to join in 30 years. Almost simultaneously he led mission work among the poor, being described by The Daily Telegraph newspaper as possessing 'a larger practical acquaintance with the homes, and the social horrors of the foulest corners of the East

of London than anyone who could well be cited.'

When his health demanded a change, AGB (as he was popularly known) served other churches, including the Metropolitan Tabernacle, London, before a last decade of extensive travel with a temporary home in South Africa. After Spurgeon died (1892), Brown was a foremost leader among those for whom Christian preaching still meant 'love, blood, and power.' It was written of him in 1913: 'No man of modern times, of his school of thought, can command larger audiences.'

Few spoke with more sympathy and tenderness, characteristics deepened by bereavements and the heart-felt realization that, 'We have to perform our service in the same Spirit in which our Lord worked, and our measure of power will be according to the measure of Christ's Spirit which we possess.'

After days of revival, AGB lived to see adverse changes in the churches. What a majority accepted as progress, he saw as apostasy, and as the Christian faith waned in Britain, his life came to be remembered by few. But truth that comes from Scripture cannot die.

Those who read him today will find him alive, and his life opens a window on New Testament Christianity. Iain Murray has done us a great service in bringing back the memory of this remarkable preacher.



DECEMBER 18 – Joint Christmas service with Providence Presbyterian Church. We are hosting the meeting this year. A meal will be at 5 PM and Pastor Darren Thole will preach at the 6 PM service of worship.

DECEMBER 25 – Service of worship at 10:30 AM (no Sunday School). We will be joining with Providence Presbyterian Church for evening worship at 5 PM.

JANUARY 1 – Service of worship at 10:30 AM (no Sunday School). Soup and sandwiches for lunch afterwards and Communion Service in the afternoon at 1:15 PM.

FEBRUARY 4 – Annual Church Business meeting in the afternoon. All church members should be in attendance.

FEBRUARY 19 – Barry King, pastor of Grace Baptist Church, Wood Green, London, England, will be preaching in both worship services and will take the Sunday School hour to tell us about his ministry of helping to plant churches in England and parts of Europe.

We Believe

The 1689 Confession of Faith

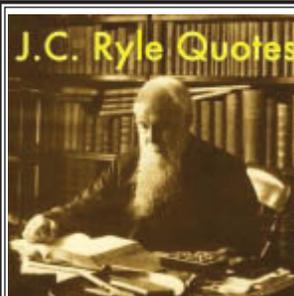
CHAPTER 13

SANCTIFICATION

(PARAGRAPH ONE, TWO, AND THREE)



1. Those who are united to Christ, effectually called, and regenerated, have a new heart and a new spirit created in them; and by His Word and Spirit dwelling within them, this personal work of sanctification is indeed carried further. All these blessings accrue to them by reason of the merits of Christ's death and resurrection. Sin's mastery over them is completely broken; the evil desires to which it gives birth are increasingly weakened and dealt their death-blow; and saving graces in them are increasingly enlivened and strengthened. The practice of all true holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord, is thus promoted. John 17:17; Acts 20:32; Rom. 6:5, 6, 14; 2 Cor. 7:1; Gal. 5:24; Eph. 3:16-19; Col. 1:11; 1 Thess. 5:21-23; Heb. 12:14
2. Sanctification, as defined in this way, extends to every part of man, yet remains incomplete in this life. Sin's corrupt remnants continue to defile all parts of man, causing within him a continual warfare that does not admit of reconciliation; the flesh rises up against the Spirit and the Spirit against the flesh. Rom. 7:18, 23; Gal. 5:17; 1 Thess. 5:23; 1 Pet. 2:11
3. In the war of flesh versus Spirit, sin's corrupt remnants may for a time gain the upper hand, yet the continual supply of strength from the sanctifying Spirit of Christ enables man as a new creature to gain the victory. And so the saints grow in grace, moving on towards a fullness of holiness in the fear of God. They earnestly endeavor to live according to heaven's laws, and to render gospel obedience to all the commands which Christ, as their head and king, has laid down for them in His Word. Rom. 6:14; 7:23; 2 Cor. 3:18; 7:1; Eph. 4:15, 16



J.C. Ryle Quotes

WATCH OVER YOUR HEART

"Is your heart right? Then be humble and watchful. You are not yet in heaven, but in the world. You are in the body. The devil is near you, and never sleeps. Oh, keep your heart with all diligence!

Watch and pray lest you fall into temptation. Ask Christ Himself to keep your heart for you. Ask Him to dwell in it, and reign in it, and garrison it, and to put down every enemy under His feet."

In the Danger Zone Raising Our Children in the Age of the Screen

by Al Mohler

We are now the people of the screen. We are surrounded by screens, monitors, and other flickering devices, and each demands our attention. What began with the television has now spread to a host of other technologies. Our minds are increasingly shaped, entertained, informed, stimulated, and perhaps even altered by the Age of the Screen — and so are the minds of our children.

The American Academy of Pediatrics, meeting this week in Boston [Oct 17-21, 2011], expressed concern about the effects of exposure to screens on children. Over a decade ago, the academy proposed that pediatricians should ask questions about screen exposure when conducting routine medical exams and evaluations. Just this week, the groups adopted a new set of guidelines, calling upon parents to put severe limits on the exposure of young children to television.

Parents should pay close attention to the group's statement, released as "Media Use by Children Younger than Two Years." According to the AAP, 90 percent of parents reported that their children under the age of two "watch some form of electronic media." These children watch, parents reported, an average of one to two hours of television a day. A considerable number of parents indicated their belief that television is "very important for healthy development," and leave the television on virtually all waking hours.

The pediatric group's statement took direct aim at the idea that television can be educational for young children. The doctors straightforwardly rejected the value of "educational" programming for young children, arguing that unstructured play and face time with parents produce far greater educational outcomes. As Benedict Carey of The New York Times reported, the AAP statement "makes clear that there is no such thing as an educational program for such young children."

The physicians called for "unstructured, unplugged play" for toddlers, warning specifically that television exposure around bedtime is associated with "poor sleep habits and irregular sleep schedules, which can adversely affect mood, behavior, and learning."

One statistic cited by the group is truly shocking — by age three, almost one third of all children have a television in their bedroom.

Of course, the American Academy of Pediatrics was not addressing this new statement to toddlers, but to their parents. Toddlers do not put televisions in their bedrooms; their parents do. Furthermore, the AAP warned parents that their own television viewing was exposing their young children to second-hand adverse effects. It turns out that second-hand television, like second-hand smoke, is a real danger to children.

The very fact that the AAP considers media exposure to be such a serious medical issue should tell us all something. And the research undertaken by the academy is both serious and sobering.

Consider this: An AAP report released just over a year ago found that children and adolescents "spend more time engaged in various media than they do in any other activity except for sleeping."

Citing the 2010 Kaiser Family Foundation study, the pediatricians estimated that children and teenagers spend more than seven hours a day engaged with various media.

When these children and young people reach age 70, "they will have spent the equivalent of 7 to 10 years of their lives watching television."

The number of American homes with television outnumbers the number of homes with indoor plumbing. The average American home with children has four televisions, one DVR, up to three DVD players, two CD players, two radios, two computers, and two video game units.

If almost one third of three-year-olds have a television in their bedrooms, 70 percent of American teenagers do.

At least one third of the nation's teenagers have a computer with internet access in their bedroom.

The pediatricians warned that the presence of a television in a teenager's room is associated with higher rates of substance abuse and sexual activity.

It should tell us something that the nation's pediatricians are alarmed about the media exposure of our children and teenagers. We should know that "there is no such thing as an educational program" for very young children and that what children really need is face time with parents and the experience of hands-on play.

Christian parents must consider this research carefully and candidly. We know that every technology comes with its own dangers, and the technologies of the screen offer subtle dangers as well as more obvious problems. We must prepare our children and teenagers for life in a world filled with screens, and this will be no easy task. But it starts with parents exercising control and preventing the alarming levels of screen exposure this research reveals.

This means that Christian parents must be concerned, not just with what content children are watching, but how much exposure they really experience. Something has gone wrong when the default position of the television is on, rather than off. There is something even more wrong when children and teenagers have televisions and Internet access in their bedrooms.

We, along with our children, live in a new danger zone. We will need deep Christian conviction — and keen Christian judgment — if we are to remain faithful in the Age of the Screen.

Christian parents must be concerned, not just with what content children are watching, but how much exposure they really experience. Something has gone wrong when the default position of the television is on, rather than off.