



# 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**

— December 2013 Issue —



*"Now therefore fear the LORD and serve him in sincerity and in faithfulness."  
Joshua 24:14a*

### NURSERY SCHEDULE

#### December

01 Linda Olive and Vicki Johnson  
08 Kevin and Sara Smith  
15 Jenny and Peter Lovassy  
22 Melanie Myatt and Amber Solan  
29 Troy and Jessi Moseley

#### January

05 Kristin Scarbrough and Lori Hewlett  
12 Linda Olive and Vicki Johnson  
19 Kevin and Sara Smith  
26 Jenny and Peter Lovassy

### CHURCH CLEANING

**December** - Dean & Linda Olive

A church cleaning sign-up sheet is located in the church auditorium near the door.

### FINANCIAL SUMMARY AS OF DECEMBER 1, 2013

Budgeted expenditures (ytd)	\$137,459.50
Actual on-budget expenditures (ytd)	\$143,795.10
Actual off-budget expenditures (ytd)	\$ 3,839.66
General Fund offerings (ytd)	\$135,039.57
Designated Missions (ytd)	\$ 9,048.00
Love offerings (ytd)	\$ 8,366.40
Disaster Relief (ytd)	\$ 1,175.00
Total offerings (ytd)	\$153,950.90
November Love offerings	\$ 1,000.00
November General Fund offerings	\$ 12,707.69
November Designated Missions	\$ 475.00
Building Fund balance	\$113,380.73
Missions Fund balance	\$ 6,392.33
General Fund balance	\$ 58,121.73

## A Christmas Celebration December 15, 2013

Our friends at Providence Presbyterian Church will be joining us for a Christmas Celebration on Sunday Evening, December 15. We will eat a meal together and have a joint worship service.

- o The Christmas Dinner will be served at 5 PM. We will provide the main course and the ladies of Providence Presbyterian will bring desserts.
- o The Christmas Service will follow the meal at approximately 6 PM. The service will consist of Christmas hymns, Scripture reading, and a message by Pastor Darren Thole.

Everyone is encouraged to attend and join in the time of fellowship and worship.



### SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

#### NORMAL SUNDAY SERVICES

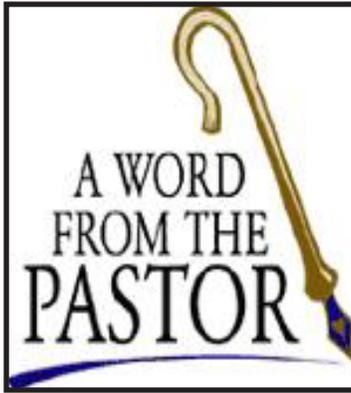
Morning Worship 9:30 AM  
Sunday School 11:00 AM  
Evening Worship 6:00 PM

#### 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)



## The Coming One

The author of Hebrews refers to Jesus as “the coming One.” Hebrews 10:37 says, “Yet a little while and **the coming One** will come and will not delay.” This verse is a promise of Christ’s second coming. The writer exhorts his readers to persevere in

faith and to wait patiently for the return of Christ.

However, the expression, “the coming One,” is also appropriate for his first coming. The Old Testament declared that the Christ, the Messiah, was coming. Micah 5:2 declares, “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 prophecy of Micah states that Messiah would come forth from God and that he would come forth to be a ruler.

Our focus each December is on the first coming of Christ. Nothing is more important than the coming of Christ into the world. Matthew quoted Micah 5:2 and declared that the prophecy was fulfilled in the birth of Jesus (Matthew 2:6). He tells about the coming of the wise men from the East in search of the One who had been born king of the Jews. A special star appeared in the sky, which they followed, which first brought them to Jerusalem and then to Bethlehem. Jews lived every day in expectation of the fulfillment of this promise. And Matthew was able to record its fulfillment. The babe born in Bethlehem was the promised coming One.

Micah 5:2 then is one of the most important, as well as one of the most well-known Messianic prophecies in the Old Testament. It speaks of the One whose promise to come was the hope of every Israelite. God had promised to send his people Israel a Deliverer. Isaiah said that “a Redeemer will come to Zion” (59:20). Paul spoke of him as “the Deliverer” who came to Zion to remove ungodliness from Jacob (Rom. 11:26).

This text in Micah says that the Messiah was to come as the ruler and shepherd of his people. That he would be born in Bethlehem connects him uniquely to the Davidic dynasty. He was of the seed of David. Thus, Jesus was born king of the Jews.

The wise men came to Jerusalem with the question, “Where is he who has been born king of the Jews?” (Matthew 2:2). Jesus was ruler and king the moment he was born. He didn’t have to wait to become king;

he was born king. As the song writer says, *Born a child, and yet a king*. A kingdom commenced in a spiritual form at his first coming and will be unveiled in great splendor and majesty at his second coming.

What kind of king is Jesus? He is a Shepherd-King. And the most important act this Shepherd-King did was to lay down his life for the sheep (John 10:11). This was the purpose of his coming. He came to save his people by offering himself as a sacrifice for their sins. This is how King Jesus brought peace to his flock; he purchased them by his own blood.

The reason he was given the name Jesus was in order to signify the bringing of salvation. Joseph was instructed to name Mary’s son Jesus, “For he shall save his people from their sins” (Matthew 1:21). The very name Jesus indicates what his mission was. Marvel of marvel that he would stoop so low in coming into this sin cursed world. He who knew no sin entered a world saturated in sin. The Word became flesh and dwelt among us.

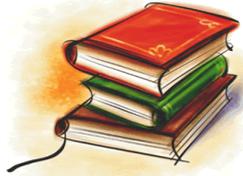
Jesus came, of course, as a baby born of a virgin mother. However, he existed before he came into the world. He is the Second Person of the Trinity who became man at Bethlehem. He is the Christ of God. The goal of his mission necessitated that he come into the world. He came to live among sinners in order to save them. He could not save them by remaining in heaven. He must come down to earth. He must become a man in order to save man. Thus he came into the world. He “came down from heaven” (John 6:41, 51, 58) into this world of sin and woe.

One of the clearest expressions stating the purpose of Christ’s coming was written by Paul in his first letter to Timothy. He said, “Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief” (1:15). To save means to deliver, to rescue.

Jesus came to deliver us from sin, death, and hell. The angels rightly proclaimed from heaven, “For unto you is born this day in the city of David a **Savior**, who is Christ the Lord” (Luke 2:11). The woman at the well rightly told her friends that he is “the Savior of the world” (Jn 4:42).

Jesus came to save sinners. The good news of the gospel is not “that God had sent a soldier or a judge or a reformer, but that He had sent a Savior to meet man’s greatest need” (Wiersbe). And he came, not “to half save them; nor to make them savable; nor [to] help them save themselves” (Spurgeon). He came to save sinners. And this he did by dying in their stead. “While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us” (Rom. 5:8).

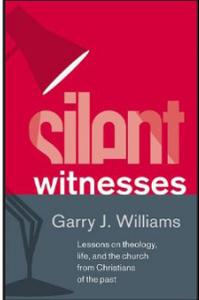
# BOOK REVIEW



## Silent Witnesses: Lessons on Theology, Life, and the Church from Christians of the Past

Garry J. Williams,

Banner of Truth, 2013, 264 pages



In this book Garry Williams writes about Christians of the past for Christians of the present. He describes both famous and less well-known figures and movements from church history, from the fourth century through to the twentieth: Augustine of Hippo, the Council of Chalcedon, Martin Luther, William Tyndale, Nicholas Ridley, John Calvin, Anne Bradstreet, John

Owen, Jonathan Edwards, and John Laing.

As their lives are sketched and their writings expounded, they serve as silent witnesses to the essentials of the Christian Faith, to the challenges of Christian living, to the work of the pastor, and to the life of the church. At the end of the book, after their stories have been told, a final chapter makes the case for a Christian view of history itself.



**DECEMBER 1** – We welcome Chris Bolt, associate pastor of 1st Baptist Church, Ardmore, to our afternoon service.

**DECEMBER 15** – Our friends from Providence Presbyterian Church will be joining us for a Christmas service and meal. The meal is scheduled for 5 PM and the service of worship will follow. Pastor Thole will be preaching God’s Word in the worship hour.

**DECEMBER 25 AND JANUARY 1** – No prayer meeting on Christmas and New Year’s Day.

**DECEMBER 29** – Worship service at 9:30 AM and 6:00 PM as usual, but no Sunday School.

**JANUARY 5** – Worship service at 9:30 AM and 1:00 PM with Brunch between the services. No Sunday School. We will be observing the Lord’s Supper in the afternoon service (dv).

**FEBRUARY 2** – The annual church business meeting will be conducted at 1:30 PM.

**APRIL 4-6** – Spring Bible Conference with Dr. Brandon Meeks.

**OCTOBER 5-7** – Fall Bible Conference in conjunction with our hosting the regional FIRE conference. Geoff Thomas from Wales is the preacher.

# We Believe

The 1689 Confession of Faith

## CHAPTER 27

### BAPTISM AND THE LORD’S SUPPER

1. BAPTISM and the Lord’s supper are ordinances which have been explicitly and sovereignly instituted by the Lord Jesus, the only lawgiver, who has appointed that they are to be continued in his church to the end of the world.

Matt. 28:19-20; 1 Cor. 11:26

2. These holy ordinances are to be administered by those alone who are qualified and called to do so, according to the commission of Christ.

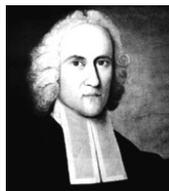
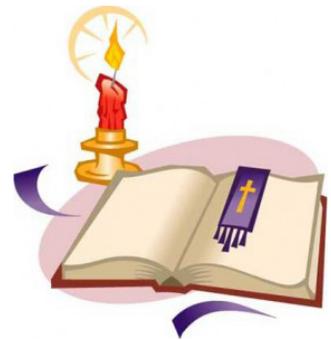
Matt. 28:19; 1 Cor. 4:1



# READ THROUGH THE BIBLE IN 2014

Back to the Bible offers several Bible reading plans at [www.backtothebible.org/index.php/Bible-Reading-Guides.html](http://www.backtothebible.org/index.php/Bible-Reading-Guides.html). Chapel Library offers Mcheyne’s Bible Reading Plan that you can print off at [www.chapellibrary.org/literature/mccheynes-daily-bible-readings](http://www.chapellibrary.org/literature/mccheynes-daily-bible-readings).

Whatever plan you follow, read through the Bible in 2014!



## The Wisdom of Jonathan Edwards

“A truly Christian love, either to God or men, is a humble broken-hearted love. The desires of the saints, however earnest, are humble desires. Their hope is a humble hope; and their joy, even when it is unspeakable and full of glory, is a humble broken-hearted joy, and leaves the Christian more poor in spirit, and more like a little child, and more disposed to a universal lowliness of behavior.”

# Eight Profitable Ways to Read the Bible

by J.C. Ryle

1. Begin reading your Bible this very day. The way to do a thing is to do it; and the way to read the Bible is actually to read it! It is not merely meaning, or wishing, or resolving, or intending, or thinking about it, which will advance you one step. You must positively read. There is no royal road in this matter, any more than in the matter of prayer. If you cannot read yourself, you must persuade somebody else to read it to you. But one way or another, through eyes or ears, the words of Scripture must actually pass before your mind.
  2. Read the Bible with an earnest desire to understand it. Do not think for a moment, that the great object is to turn over a certain quantity of printed paper, and that it matters nothing whether you understand it or not. Some ignorant people seem to imagine, that all is done if they advance so many chapters every day, though they may not have a notion what they are all about, and only know that they have pushed on their bookmark ahead so many pages. This is turning Bible reading into a mere ritual form. Settle it down in your mind as a general principle, that a Bible not understood is a Bible that does no good! Say to yourself often as you read, "*What is this all about?*" Dig for the meaning like a man digging for gold.
  3. Read the Bible with child-like faith and humility. Open your heart as you open God's book, and say, "*Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening!*" Resolve to believe implicitly whatever you find there, however much it may run counter to your own desires and prejudices. Resolve to receive heartily every statement of truth, whether you like it or not. Beware of that miserable habit into which some readers of the Bible fall, they receive some doctrines because they like them; and they reject others because they are condemning to themselves, or to some relation, or friend. At this rate, the Bible is useless! Are we to be judges of what ought to be in God's Word? Do we know better than God? Settle it down in your mind that you will receive all and believe all, and that what you cannot understand, you will take on trust. Remember, when you pray that you are speaking to God, and God hears you. But, remember, when you read Scripture that God is speaking to you, and you are not to "dictate," but to listen!
  4. Read the Bible in a spirit of obedience and self-application. Sit down to the study of it with a daily determination that you will live by its rules, rest on its statements, and act on its commands. Consider, as you travel through every chapter, "*How does this affect my thinking and daily conduct? What does this teach me?*" It is poor work to read the Bible from mere curiosity, and for speculative purposes in order to fill your head and store your mind with mere opinions; while you do not allow the book to influence your heart and life. That Bible is read best which is practiced most!
  5. Read the Bible daily. Make it a part of every day's business to read and meditate on some portion of God's Word. Private means of grace are just as needful every day for our souls as food and clothing are for our bodies. Yesterday's food will not feed the laborer today; and today's food will not feed the laborer tomorrow. Do as the Israelites did in the wilderness. Gather your manna fresh every morning. Choose your own seasons and hours. Do not scramble over and hurry your reading. Give your Bible the best, and not the worst part of your time! But whatever plan you pursue, let it be a rule of your life to visit the throne of grace and God's Word every day.
  6. Read all of the Bible and read it in an orderly way. I fear there are many parts of the Word which some people never read at all. This is to say at the least, a very presumptuous habit. "*All Scripture is profitable.*" To this habit may be traced that lack of well-proportioned views of truth, which is so common in this day. Some people's Bible-reading is a system of perpetual 'dipping and picking'. They do not seem to have an idea of regularly going through the whole book.
  7. Read the Bible fairly and honestly. Determine to take everything in its plain, obvious meaning and regard all forced interpretations with great suspicion. As a general rule, whatever a verse of the Bible seems to mean it does mean! Cecil's rule is a very valuable one, "*The right way of interpreting Scripture is to take it as we find it, without any attempt to force it into any particular theological system.*"
  8. Read the Bible with Christ continually in view. The grand primary object of all Scripture, is to testify of Jesus! Old Testament ceremonies are shadows of Christ. Old Testament judges are types of Christ. Old Testament prophecies are full of Christ's sufferings, and of Christ's glory yet to come. The first coming and the second; the Lord's humiliation and His glorious kingdom; His cross and the crown shine forth everywhere in the Bible. Keep fast hold on this clue, if you would read the Bible aright!
- I might easily add to these hints, if space permitted. Few and short as they are you will find them most profitable when implemented.
- (Taken from *Practical Religion*, "Bible Reading", republished by Banner of Truth, 1998, pp. 131-134)