



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

— January 2013 Issue —



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

NURSERY SCHEDULE

January

06 Vickie Johnson and Amber Solan
13 Pat and Kristy Hines
19 Kevin and Sara Smith
25 Kristin Scarbrough and Lori Hewlett

February

03 Linda Olive and Melanie Myatt
10 Jenny and Peter Lovassy
17 Troy and Jessi Moseley
24 Jon and Tanya Amis

CHURCH CLEANING

January - Amises
February - Hines
March - Moseleys
April - Lovassys

FINANCIAL SUMMARY AS OF JANUARY 1, 2013

Budgeted expenditures (ytd)	\$215,538.63
Actual on-budget expenditures (ytd)	\$220,826.32
Actual off-budget expenditures (ytd)	\$ 4,867.25
General Fund offerings (ytd)	\$172,269.34
Designated Missions (ytd)	\$ 31,601.00
Love offerings (ytd)	\$ 6,595.00
Total offerings (ytd)	\$210,465.34
December Love offerings	\$ 3,800.00
December General Fund offerings	\$ 21,084.50
December Designated Missions	\$ 17,500.00
Building Fund balance	\$ 92,870.11
Missions Fund balance	\$ 19,373.11
General Fund balance	\$ 70,439.78

The Unwavering Resolve of Jonathan Edwards

These are some of the 70 resolutions Edwards made when he was young and sought to live by throughout the course of his life.

Assurance of Grace: Resolved, to examine carefully, and constantly, what that one thing in me is, which causes me in the least to doubt of the love of God; and to direct all my forces against it (25).

Study of Scripture: Resolved, to study the Scriptures so steadily, constantly and frequently, as that I may find, and plainly perceive myself to grow in the knowledge of the same (28).

Life of Righteousness: Resolved, to strive to my utmost every week to be brought higher in religion, and to a higher exercise of grace, than I was the week before (30).

Mortification of Sin: Resolved, never to give over, nor in the least to slacken my fight with my corruptions, however unsuccessful I may be (56).

Communion with God: Resolved, very much to exercise myself in this all my life long, viz. with the greatest openness I am capable of, to declare my ways to God, and lay open my soul to him: all my sins, temptations, difficulties, sorrows, fears, hopes, desires, and everything, and every circumstance... (65).

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

NORMAL SUNDAY SERVICES

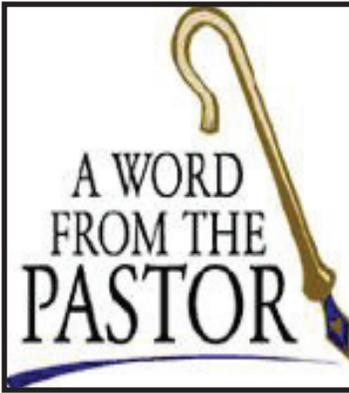
Morning Worship 9:30 AM
Sunday School 11:00 AM
Evening Worship 6:00 PM

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)



Coming to Christ

There is more to the gospel than Christ coming into the world to die for our sins. It is of equal importance to understand how the benefits of Christ's death can be applied to our lives. Just because Christ came into the world to save sinners

doesn't mean that every sinner will be saved. Christ saves sinners that come to him.

A faithful presentation of the gospel has two prongs. The first concerns the person and work of Christ – who he is and what he came to do. The second concerns the invitation to sinners to come to Christ and be saved.

We must come to Jesus in order to be saved. Coming to him is believing in him (Jn 6:35). Coming to him isn't something we do with our body; it is something we do with our hearts. It is coming to him, not with our feet, but coming to him by faith.

Jesus invites sinners to himself. He says, "Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Mt 11:28). Only Jesus has the right to say these words! No mortal man can rightly issue an invitation for salvation-rest in himself except Jesus!

The word *come* on the lips of Jesus is such a precious word. The very nature of the word indicates that it is an invitation. Jesus invites sinners to himself. He invites them to himself because rest for the soul is found in him and in him alone.

The picture here is of men and women laden down with sin. Jesus isn't speaking about people who are exhausted by the toils and troubles of work; rather, he has in mind men and women under the burden of sin. That is how John Bunyan pictured his primary character in *Pilgrim's Progress*. He had a burden on his back that weighed him down. The burden was sin. That is the picture of every sinner. We all have the heavy burden of sin that weighs us down.

Do you feel the weight of sin? Are you heavy laden, even though you have taken every religious pill prescribed by legalistic doctors to lift the load? If so, then listen to the voice of Jesus. He calls you to come to him for rest. In him you will find rest for your guilty conscience. In him you will find rest for your troubled heart.

Rest equals forgiveness of sins. Our misery is the result of estrangement from God on account of sin. Rest is the result of our reconciliation with God through the Lord Jesus Christ.

We cannot save ourselves. We cannot be saved by promises to be good and do good. We can only be saved by Jesus Christ and the only thing that prevents us from being saved by Christ is our obstinacy, our refusal to come to him. Have you rejected his kind invitation to come to him?

*O welcome voice of Jesus
Which drives away our doubt;
And whosoever cometh
He will not cast him out!*

If you come to Christ as a poor lost sinner, seeking forgiveness, he will receive you, save you, and impart rest for your soul, for that is the very reason he came into the world. Jesus Christ came into the world on rescue mission. He came to save sinners! So said Paul in 1 Tim. 1:15. "The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the foremost."

Jesus came to save sinners. He didn't come to save good people, for there are none. He didn't come to save law-keepers, for there are none. He came to save sinners. The Bible tells us that we have all sinned and are therefore in need of a Savior. The Bible also tells us that we cannot save ourselves and that the only way to be saved from sin and its consequences is through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

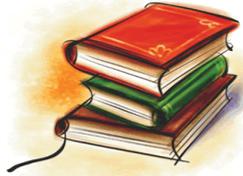
Jesus Christ was born of a Virgin, lived a life without sin, and then died on a cross as a sacrifice for our sins. He then rose again from the grave and is now at God's right hand, saving all who come to him by faith.

Paul said in 2 Cor. 5:20, "We are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God." It is our voice but it is Christ's invitation. Christ himself pleads with sinners to come to him and we stand in his stead, beseeching them to come to the water of life.

Christ's invitation is to you. He bids you to come. His invitation shuts no one out. The poor man has the same access as the rich man; the weak man has the same invitation as the strong man; the young and the old, black and white, learned and ignorant, are all called to come!

He came into the world on a mission of salvation. Will you now come to him today and be saved? I plead with you, *Come, wanderers, to my Father's home/Come, all you weary ones, and rest.* And I hope that you will say, *Yes! gracious Savior; we will come/trust you, love you, and be blest.*

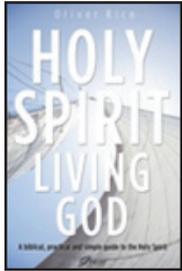
BOOK REVIEW



Holy Spirit—Living God

by Oliver Rice

Grace Publications, 2012, pp. 93



Good teaching on the Holy Spirit has been available for many years, but perhaps it has been too formidable for many, and so he is very poorly understood across the church. A book that covers the main things briefly and biblically will be a valuable asset.

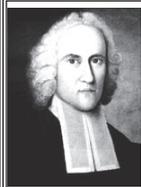
That is what we have here: framed in good language for the average churchgoer, and far from daunting—the main section is only 76 pages. The Appendix (17 pages) provides annotated quotations from John Calvin’s writings on the Holy Spirit. Rice makes no claim to offer anything ‘new’, but he gives a succinct and faithful account of the doctrines taught by such as Calvin and Owen, in ten chapters from ‘The Person’ of the Holy Spirit, to the Spirit as ‘The Lord God’, ‘The Author’, through to ‘The Guarantee.’

On each point, Rice provides clear and appropriate biblical support, which should equip readers well. That is clearly a leading object of the book, as each chapter also closes with ‘Action Points,’ providing excellent leads for expansion and application.

The only slight lack I felt was in ‘8: The Power Source.’ The focus is almost entirely on the Spirit being the source of power for evangelism and mission. Not to take away from that, little was mentioned here of the indwelling Spirit’s complete work of enabling us to honor Christ in every part of life. Also, on finding a ‘title’ of this kind at page 57, some reference back to chapter 1 (The Person) may have been useful, to avoid the persistent trap of treating the Spirit as just a ‘power’ and not a person.

In our day, such work as this is very good to have to hand on this important theme, simply to read or for group study.

David D. Miller



The Wisdom of Jonathan Edwards

“Of all the knowledge that we can ever obtain, the knowledge of God, and the knowledge of ourselves, are the most important.”



JANUARY 16 – Missionary Scott Kemp, from Grace Community Church in Huntsville, going to South Africa as a missionary, will tell us about his proposed work.

JANUARY 13 – Sunday School classes resume. A new class for children will begin. Primaries (grades 1-3) and Juniors (grades 4-6) have been together for many years and will now be separated. Jessica Moseley will be teaching the Primaries and Nellie McFadden will be teaching the Juniors. The Juniors will be moving to the

library.

FEBRUARY 3 – Annual Church Business Meeting in the afternoon at 1:30 PM. All members should be in attendance and non-members are welcome to attend.

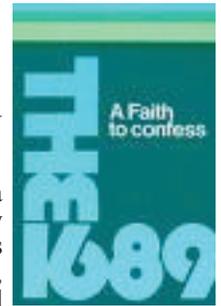
MARCH 21 – We will be hosting the Sovereign Grace Baptist Pastor’s Fellowship.

We Believe

The 1689 Confession of Faith

CHAPTER 22

RELIGIOUS WORSHIP AND THE LORD’S DAY
(PARAGRAPHS ONE THROUGH SIX)



1. The light of nature shows that there is a God who has dominion and sovereignty over all. He is just and good, and He does good to all. He is therefore to be feared, loved, praised, invoked, trusted and served by men with all their heart and soul and strength. But the only acceptable way of worshipping the true God is appointed by Himself, in accordance with His own will. Consequently He may not be worshipped in ways of mere human contrivance, or proceeding from Satan’s suggestions. Visible symbols of God, and all other forms of worship not prescribed in the Holy Scripture, are expressly forbidden.

Exod. 20:4-6; Deut. 12:32; Jer. 10:7; Mark 12:33

2. Religious worship is to be given to God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and to Him alone. It is not to be given to angels, saints, or any other creatures. Since man’s fall into sin, worship cannot be rendered to God without a mediator; and the only accepted mediation is that of Christ.

Matt. 4:9,10; 28:19; John 5:23; 14:6; Rom. 1:25; Col. 2:18; 1 Tim. 2:5; Rev. 19:10

3. God requires all men to pray to Him, and to give thanks, this being one part of natural worship. But to render such prayer acceptable, several things are requisite: it must be made in the name of God’s Son, it must be Spirit-aided, and it must accord with the will of God. It must also be reverent, humble, fervent and persevering, and linked with faith, love and understanding. United prayer, when offered, must always be in a known language.

Ps. 65:2; 95:1-7; John 14:13, 14; Rom. 8:26; 1 Cor. 14:16, 17; 1 John 5:14

4. Prayer is to be made for things lawful, and for men of all sorts now living or as yet unborn. But prayer is not to be made for the dead, nor for those who are known to be guilty of ‘the sin unto death’.

2 Sam. 7:29; 12:21-23; 1 Tim. 2:1, 2; 1 John 5:16

5. The reading of the Scripture, the preaching and hearing of the Word of God, the instructing and admonishing of one another by means of psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with heartfelt thankfulness to the Lord, the observance of baptism and the Lord’s supper—these are all parts of divine worship to be performed obediently, intelligently, faithfully, reverently, and with godly fear. Moreover, on special occasions, solemn humiliation, fastings, and thanksgivings ought to be observed in a holy and reverential manner.

Exod. 15:1-19; Esther 4:16; Ps. 107; Joel 2:12; Matt. 28:19, 20; Luke 8:18; 1 Cor. 11:26; Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16; 1 Tim. 4:13; 2 Tim. 4:2

6. In present gospel days neither prayer nor any other aspect of religious worship depends for its efficacy on the place where it is performed or towards which it is directed, for God is everywhere to be worshipped in spirit and in truth; as, for instance, in the daily worship carried on in private families, in the worship in which individual Christians engage in secret, and in the worship of the public assemblies. Such assemblies are convened in accordance with God’s Word and providence, and believers must neither carelessly neglect them nor willfully forsake them.

Ps. 55:17; Mal. 1:11; Matt. 6:6; John 4:21; Acts 2:42; 10:2; 1 Tim. 2:8; Heb. 10:25

For Such a Time as This

Dr. Gerald Bilkes

“For if thou altogether holdest thy peace at this time, then shall there enlargement and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place; but thou and thy father’s house shall be destroyed: and who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?” (Esther 4:14).

Not every time period in history is the same. Scripture speaks of perilous times, times of ignorance, times of refreshment, times of apostasy, times of restitution, etc. It is good to ask ourselves about our times.

We should ask ourselves both what our times are and what our times require. Mordecai had obviously asked both these questions. In his challenge to Esther, Mordecai uses the words “such a time as this.” He had come to have a sense of what his time was anrid what his time required.

WHAT MORDECAI’S TIME WAS LIKE.

What was his time like? First of all, it was a time of fierce persecution. The age-old struggle between the seed of the serpent and the seed of the woman had intensified. Haman, the Agagite, the enemy of the Jews, had plotted the destruction of all the seed of the Jews. He had even managed to achieve legal sanction for this plot.

Consequently, it was a time of profound mourning for the people of God. Mordecai “went out into the midst of the city, and cried with a loud and a bitter cry” (4:1). “There was great mourning among the

Jews, and fasting, and weeping, and wailing; and many lay in sackcloth and ashes” (4:3).

WHAT DID SUCH A TIME REQUIRE?

What did such a time as this require? Mordecai shows tremendous spiritual insight into his time.

1. It was a time for complete honesty. Mordecai told Esther, in no uncertain terms what Haman had done and what was at stake: he has paid the king to destroy the Jews (4:7).
2. It was a time for personal urgency. Mordecai brought the danger home to Esther: “Think not with thyself that thou shalt escape in the king’s house,

We should ask ourselves both what our times are and what our times require.

more than all the Jews” (4:13).

3. It was a time for vibrant faith. Mordecai was convinced that “deliverance [would] arise to the Jews” (4:14). He repeated this promise to Esther. She too needed to fix in faith upon the God of the promise. He would deliver His people from distress.
4. It was a time for visionary discernment. Mordecai understood that Esther’s presence at the court was not a

coincidence. Rather, God’s providence had brought a representative of the seed of the Jews right into the household of the Persian king. Mordecai stated it carefully, yet expectantly: “Who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?”

5. It was a time for persistent prayer. Esther called for fasting on her behalf. “Go, gather together all the Jews... and fast ye for me... I also and my maidens will fast” (4:16). This fasting was, of course, not simply the deprivation of food. Instead, it gave place to self-humiliation and prayer.

6. It was a time for courageous obedience. Esther was not to hold her peace, but join with the people of God, and risk her life for the sake of the promised seed.

It is as if Mordecai is saying: “If there ever was a good time to be about the Lord’s work, it is now.” So too today. The dark times can sometimes be the best times.

It may be a time of immorality. Then it should be a time for holiness. It may be a time of apostasy. Then it should be a time for prayer. It may be a time of intolerance of Christianity. Then it should be a time for Christian witness.

During the day Christians, like the firefly, can be invisible in the light. At midnight, they have no choice but to shine. “Who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?”