

# REFLECTIONS

Grace OPC

## ON THE INCARNATION

*By Pastor Brian De Jong*

Among the inherent problems of this season of the year is the distinct impression that Jesus is a mere baby lying in a manger – to all intents and purposes helpless and dependent. Cute and cuddly, no doubt! But is such a child to be feared? Obeyed? Worshiped? It is not surprising that our Christ-hating culture can tolerate Jesus as a baby in a manger – such an image threatens no one and hardly challenges man’s autonomy.

Although it is true that Jesus once was a baby lying in a manger, He is so no more. Neither is He still the sufferer hanging on the cross. That, too, is long over. Where is He now? Ascended to heaven, He sits at the right hand of God, waiting till all His enemies are made a footstool under His feet. Right now He is the risen, victorious, ascended King of Glory – the Ruler of the kings of the earth.

But even back in Bethlehem, Jesus was far from a helpless little baby child. This point is powerfully brought out by a very old writer. St. Athanasius, writing some 1700 years ago, penned an excellent book entitled “On the Incarnation of the Son of God.” In this eminently readable piece of theology, Athanasius argues thus:

*“The Word was not hedged in by His body, nor did His presence in the body prevent His being present elsewhere as well. When He moved His body He did not cease also to direct the universe by His Mind and might. No. The marvelous*

*truth is, that being the Word, so far from being Himself contained by anything, He actually contained all things Himself. In creation He is present everywhere, yet is distinct in being from it; ordering, directing, giving life to all, containing all, yet is He Himself the Uncontained, existing solely in His Father. As with the whole, so also is it with the part. Existing in a human body, to which He Himself gives life, He is still Source of life to all the universe, present in every part of it, yet outside the whole; and He is revealed both through the works of His body and through His activity in the world...”(Chapter 3, Par.17)*



What Athanasius recognized is that when God the Son took on human flesh to dwell among us, He did not cease for a second to be truly and fully God. As fully God, He retained His divine attributes while He set aside His heavenly glory to be clothed in our flesh. So while He was a little baby, He was also directing the entire universe by His mind and might.

Athanasius continues, *“His body was for Him not a limitation, but an instrument, so that He was both in it and in all things, and outside all things, resting in the Father alone. At one and the same time—this is the wonder—as Man He was living a human life, and as Word He was sustaining the life of the universe, and as Son He was in constant union with the Father. Not even His birth from a virgin, therefore, changed Him in any way, nor...*

*...continued on last page*

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December 2011

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### Mnemonics...

- Session Meeting, 13th
- Pastor’s Bowling & Pizza Party, 28th

# The Scriptures

by Thomas Watson

**Q 2: What rule has God given to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy him?**

**A: The Word of God, which is contained in the scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, is the only rule to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy him.**

2 Tim. 3:16. 'All Scripture is given by inspiration of God,' By Scripture is understood the sacred Book of God. It is given by divine inspiration; that is, the Scripture is not the contrivance of man's brain, but is divine in its origin...Acts 19:95. The holy Scripture is to be highly revered and esteemed, because we are sure it came from heaven. 2 Pet 1:11. The two Testaments are the two lips by which God has spoken to us...

Read the Bible with reverence. Think in every line you read that God is speaking to you. The ark wherein the law was put was overlaid with pure gold, and was carried on bars, that the Levites might not touch it. Exodus 25:14. Why was this, but to give reverence to the law? Read with seriousness. It is matter of life and death; by this Word you must be tried; conscience and Scripture are the jury God will proceed by, in judging you. Read the Word with affection. Get your hearts quickened with the Word; go to it to fetch fire. Luke 24:42. 'Did not our hearts burn within us?' Labour that the Word may not only be a lamp to direct, but a fire to warm... Pray that the same Spirit that wrote the Word may assist you in reading it; that God's Spirit would show you the wonderful things of his law...

3. If the Scripture is of divine inspiration, believe it. The Romans, that they might gain credit to their laws, reported they were inspired by the gods of Rome. Oh give credence to the Word! It is breathed from God's own mouth. Hence arises the profaneness of men, that they do not believe the Scripture. Isaiah 53:3: 'Who has believed our report?' Did you believe the glorious rewards the Scripture speaks of, would you not give diligence to make your election sure? Did you believe the infernal torments the Scripture speaks of, would it not put you into a cold sweat, and cause a

trembling at heart for sin? But people are in part atheists, they give but little credit to the Word, therefore they are so impious, and draw such dark shadows in their lives. Learn to realize Scripture, get your hearts wrought to a firm belief of it. Some think, if God should send an angel from heaven, and declare his mind, they would believe him; or, if he should send one from the damned, and preach the torments of hell all in flames, they would believe. But, 'If they believe not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one arose from the dead.' Luke 16:61. God is wise, and he thinks the fittest way to make his mind known to us is by writing; and such as shall not be convinced by the Word, shall be judged by the Word. The belief of Scripture is of high importance. It will enable us to resist temptation. I John 2:14. 'The Word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one.' It conduceth much to our sanctification; therefore sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth, are put together. 2 Thess. 2:13. If the word written be not believed, it is like writing on water, which makes no impression.

4. Love the Word written. Psalm 119:97. 'Oh how love I thy law!' 'Lord,' said Augustine, 'let the holy Scriptures be my chaste delight.' Chrysostom compares the Scripture to a garden, every truth is a fragrant flower, which we should wear, not on our bosom, but in our heart. David counted the Word 'sweeter than honey and the honeycomb.' Psalm 19:10. There is that in Scripture which may breed delight. It shows us the way to riches: Deut 28:8, Prov. 3:30; to long life, Psalm 34:42; to a kingdom, Heb. 12:28. Well then may we count those the sweetest hours which are spent in reading the holy Scriptures; well may we say with the prophet, Jer. 15:16, 'Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and they were the joy and rejoicing of my heart.'

5. Conform to Scripture. Let us lead Scripture lives. Oh that the Bible might be seen printed in our lives! Do what the Word commands. Obedience is an excellent way of commenting upon the Bible. Psalm 86:6: 'I will walk in thy truth.' Let the Word be the sun-dial by which you set your life.

## Watson Concluded...

What are we the better for having the Scripture, if we do not direct all our speeches and actions according to it? What is a carpenter the better for his rule about him, if he sticks it at his back, and never makes use of it for measuring and squaring his work? So, what are we the better for the rule of the Word, if we do not make use of it, and regulate our lives by it? How many swerve and deviate from the rule! The Word teaches to be sober and temperate, but they are drunk; to be chaste and holy, but they are profane; they go quite from the rule! What a dishonour is it to religion, for men to live in contradiction to Scripture! The Word is called a 'light to our feet.' Psalm 119:105. It is not only a light to our eyes to mend our sight, but to our feet to mend our walk. Oh let us lead Bible conversations!

### 6. Contend for Scripture.

Though we should not be of contentious spirits, yet we ought to contend for the Word of God. This jewel is too precious to be parted with. Prov. 4:13. 'Keep her, for she is thy life.' The Scripture is beset with enemies; heretics fight against it, we must therefore 'contend for the faith once delivered to the saints.' Jude 3. The Scripture is our book of evidences for heaven; shall we part with our evidences? The saints of old were both advocates and martyrs for truth; they would hold fast Scripture, though it were with the loss of their lives.

### 7. Be thankful to God for the Scriptures.

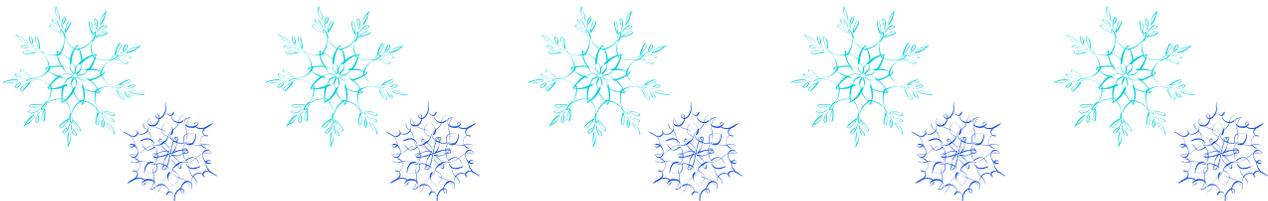
What a mercy is it that God has not only acquainted

us what his will is, but that he has made it known by writing! In the old times God revealed his mind by visions, but the Word written is a surer way of knowing God's mind. 2 Pet 1:18. 'This voice which came from heaven we heard, we have also a more sure word of prophecy.' ... therefore we are to be thankful to God for revealing his mind to us by writing. We are not left in doubtful suspense that we should not know what to believe, but we have an infallible rule to go by. The Scripture is our pole-star to direct us to heaven, it shows us every step we are to take; when we go wrong, it instructs us; when we go right, it comforts us; and it is matter of thankfulness, that the Scriptures are made intelligible, by being translated.

*What a  
mercy is it  
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8. Adore God's distinguishing grace, if you have felt the power and authority of the Word upon your conscience; if you can say as David, Psalm 119:90, 'Thy word has quickened me.' Christian, bless God that he has not only given thee his Word to be a rule of holiness, but his grace to be a principle of holiness. Bless God that he has not only written his Word, but sealed it upon thy heart, and made it effectual. Canst thou say it is of divine inspiration, because thou hast felt it to be of lively operation? Oh free grace! that God should send out his Word, and heal thee; that he should heal thee, and not others! That the same Scripture which to them is a dead letter, should be to thee a savour of life!

*Taken from the Body of Divinity, 2. The Scriptures by  
Thomas Watson.*



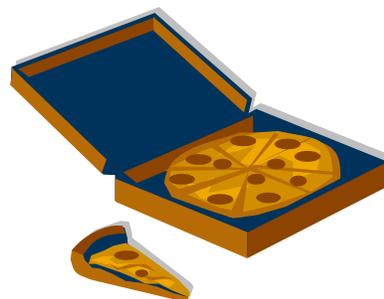
# December Birthdays



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## Pastor's Bowling & Pizza Party

The Pastor's Bowling & Pizza Party will be held on Wednesday, December 28<sup>th</sup>. We will bowl at the Odyssey Fun Center in Sheboygan Falls from 3-5 p.m. Cost is \$5 per person for bowling, with shoes included. The pizza and game time will be from 5:20 til ??? at the church. Cost for pizza will be \$3 per person. A sign-up sheet will be posted on the bulletin board.

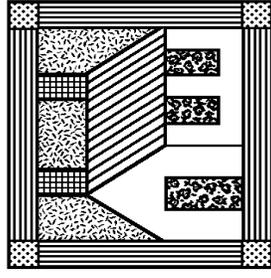




Grace OPC

# December 2011

*Showing forth the excellencies of Jesus Christ*



**As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord. -Joshua 24:15**

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Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3
4	5 Women's Bible Study, 6:30 a.m.	6	7 Prayer Meeting, 7:00 p.m.	8	9	10 Cookies & Caroling, 10 a.m.
11 Missions Sunday	12 Women's Bible Study, 6:30 a.m. <i>Pine Haven Study, 1:30 p.m.</i>	13 Session Meeting, 6:30 p.m.	14 Prayer Meeting, 7:00 p.m.	15	16	17
18	19 Women's Bible Study, 6:30 a.m.	20	21	22	23	24
25 Lord's Supper, (p.m.)	26 Women's Bible Study, 6:30 a.m. <i>Pine Haven Study, 1:30 p.m.</i>	27	28 Pastor's Bowling & Pizza Party	29	30	31

# Comments on Finance

by Joel Moody

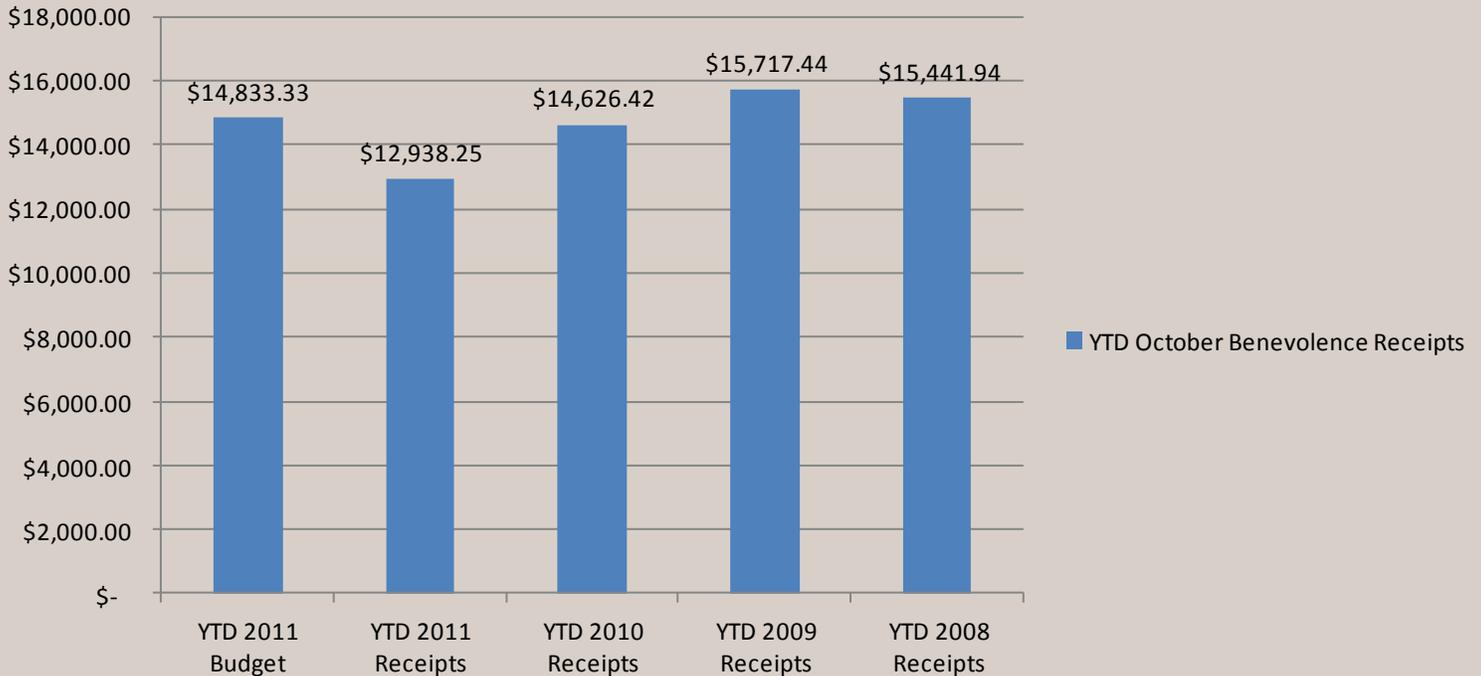
General Fund receipts for October totaled \$13,856.88 as compared to the budget of \$14,637.03, while General Fund disbursements for October totaled \$11,211.44. October year to date General Fund receipts totaled \$128,687.68 as compared to the budget of \$128,805.78 (a shortfall of \$118.10), while October year to date disbursements of \$118,146.47 were \$10,659.31 below budget. Through the end of October, the General Fund has increased by \$10,791.34. The increase in the General Fund was due to a shortfall in disbursements as compared to the budget. General Fund receipts through October were 2.6% above last year's total while disbursements were 1.5% below the prior year.

Benevolence Fund Receipts for October totaled \$1,442.00 as compared to the budget of \$1,483.33. Year to date benevolence receipts through October totaled \$12,938.25, while the budget amount was \$14,833.33 (a shortfall of \$1,895.08). Please refer to the graph that shows the shortfall from budget through October as well as the declining receipts for

Benevolence Funds over the last few years. Each month, \$475.00 is sent to Worldwide Outreach for the General Missions outreach of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. In addition, \$200.00 is sent each month to the Midwest Presbytery's Church Extension Committee. During October, \$250.00 was disbursed to AMG to be used in Peru for Bundles of Love, \$900.00 was disbursed to Sheboygan Co. Christian High School, and \$600.00 was disbursed to Pine Haven Christian Home.

Giving for the Capital Expansion Project through October has reached \$55,675.41 for the year. The outstanding Mortgage and Promissory Notes balance was \$77,214.58 as of the end of October 2011. Assuming that mortgage payments continue to be made as scheduled, the mortgage will be paid off near the middle of 2012. The promissory notes have specific terms of repayment for each particular note and we plan to pay those back accordingly.

**YTD October Benevolence Receipts**



## Peanut Butter Apple Cookie Bars

- ★ 1/2 cup butter, melted
- ★ 1 1/2 cups brown sugar
- ★ 1/2 cup peanut butter
- ★ 2 eggs
- ★ 1 tsp. vanilla extract
- ★ 1 tsp. baking powder
- ★ 1/4 tsp. baking soda
- ★ 1/2 tsp. salt
- ★ 2 cups whole wheat flour
- ★ 1 1/2 cups peeled and diced apples

In a large mixing bowl, stir together melted butter, peanut butter and brown sugar until creamy. Add eggs, vanilla, baking powder, baking soda and salt, stirring until well combined. Mix in flour thoroughly. Fold in diced apples. Spread dough into a 9×13 inch baking dish. Bake at 350° for 25-30 minutes or until golden. Allow bars to cool before adding the glaze.

### Peanut Butter Glaze

- ★ 2 cups powdered sugar
- ★ 1/4 cup milk
- ★ 1/4 cup peanut butter
- ★ 1/2 tsp. vanilla extract

Combine all ingredients and beat until smooth. Drizzle or spread over the cooled bars. *(Note: this recipe divides in half very well!)*

Megan Boss



“The eyes  
of all look  
to You,  
And You  
give them  
their food in  
due time.  
You open  
Your hand  
And satisfy  
the desire of  
every living  
thing.”

## Cookies & Caroling

All kids are invited to come to the church on Saturday, Dec. 11th at 10 a.m. to decorate cookies and then deliver them & spend some time caroling at several member's houses. Mothers are asked to pack a bag lunch for their children. Contact Deborah Arndt with any questions.





Showing forth the excellencies of Jesus Christ

Grace OPC

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## Spurgeon Corner

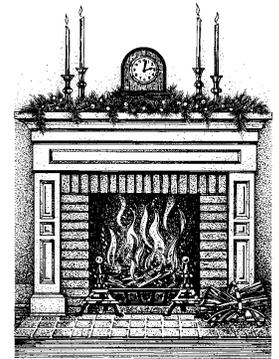
*“Thou hast made  
winter and summer.”  
(Psalm 74:17)*

My soul begin this wintry month with thy God. The cold snows and the piercing winds all remind thee that he keeps his covenant with day and night, and tend to assure thee that he will also keep that glorious covenant which he has made with thee in the person of Christ Jesus. He who is true to his Word in the revolutions of the seasons of this poor sin-polluted world, will not prove unfaithful in his dealings with his own well-beloved Son.

Winter in the soul is by no means a comfortable season, and if it be upon thee just now it will be very painful to thee: but there is this comfort, namely, that *the Lord* makes it. He sends the sharp blasts of adversity to nip the buds of expectation: he scattereth the hoarfrost like ashes over the once verdant meadows of our joy: he casteth forth his ice like morsels freezing the streams of our delight. He does it all, he is the great Winter King, and rules in the realms of frost, and therefore thou canst not murmur. Losses, crosses, heaviness, sickness, poverty, and a thousand other ills, are of the Lord's sending, and come to us with wise design. Frosts kill noxious insects, and put a bound to raging diseases; they break up the clods, and sweeten the soil. O that such good results would always follow our winters of affliction!

How we prize the fire just now! how pleasant is its cheerful glow! Let us in the same manner prize our Lord, who is the constant source of warmth and comfort in every time of trouble. Let us draw nigh to him, and in him find joy and peace in believing. Let us wrap ourselves in the warm garments of his promises, and go forth to labours which befit the season, for it were ill to be as the sluggard who will not plough by reason of the cold; for he shall beg in summer and have nothing.

*Morning, December 1 Morning & Evening, by C. H. SPURGEON*



## Front Article Concluded

*... was He defiled by being in the body. Rather, He sanctified the body by being in it. For His being in everything does not mean that He shares the nature of everything, only that He gives all things their being and sustains them in it.”*

This is a far different Jesus from that of the popular seasonal imagination. This is a Divine Being to be revered and adored. This is One before

whom angels hide their faces and cry out, “Holy, Holy, Holy.” This is the God who gives life to whom He pleases! This is the Jesus of the Bible, who controlled winds and waves, and who raised the dead to life. Blessed be His glorious name!

