



# BBC UPDATE

## GAGNON-REEVES WEDDING



Dr. Thomas M. Strouse

On Saturday May 30, 2020, the Lord blessed as Mr. Mark Reeves and Miss Amanda Gagnon exchanged wedding vows and were joined together in holy matrimony, with her pastor officiating, Dr. Thomas M. Strouse, Pastor of Bible Baptist Church, Cromwell, CT. They are the children of Mr. and Mrs. Paul Reeves of Endicott, NY, and of Mr. and Mrs. William Gagnon of Newington, CT, respectively. Mark is a member of Heritage Baptist Church, pastored by Dr. Cas Reeves, whose church Amanda will be joining soon. The day was beautiful as was the bride, and the ceremony was held in Long Hill Baptist Church of Trumbull, CT, pastored by Pastor Robert Hammond. A wonderful meal followed and then the newly-wed couple hasted away to an undisclosed location. Pray for this young couple as they desire to live for the Lord Jesus Christ.



*The couple with their parents*



*Mr. & Mrs. Mark Reeves*



*The Bride with her father*



*The Bridal Party*



**Matron of Honor:** Charity Reeves, **Best Man:** Aaron Reeves  
**Bridesmaids:** Haley Blair, Sophia Gagnon & Sabrina Gagnon  
**Groomsmen:** Matthew Reeves & August Gagnon

# THE SIMPLE, AGILE CHURCH THE LORD BUILT - PART 1

## M. RYAN STROUSE



Mr. Ryan Strouse

### Introduction

The church the Lord Jesus Christ built was a simple model that could easily be replicated by believers of any generation, location, socio-economic status, or government type. A small candlestick of two or three saved and baptized believers can assemble together in any location with the presence of the Lord in the midst of them to worship “*The Father in spirit and in truth*” (Mt.18:20, Jn. 4:23)<sup>1</sup>. The Lord’s perfect model has continued through a sometimes peaceful, but mostly violent and turbulent two thousand year history. During this time, many aberrant versions of church have come, gone, and even been recycled. The Lord’s first church in Jerusalem, which Peter then James would pastor, is often labeled as primitive, early, or immature. Some would contest that is only a label related to date and time, while others truly see the churches in 2020 as having matured from that “beginner” church over two thousand years ago. The first assembly the Lord pastored and built in Jerusalem is a perfect example preserved in the Everlasting Word of God for believers to follow obediently.

Technology and advancements were occurring in the Roman Empire as the Lord’s churches spread throughout the land and then was followed by an uninventive period of one thousand years known as the Dark Ages where life was truly primitive. The Dark Ages was an especially bloody time for Baptists, who were under constant persecution from the Catholic and Protestant Churches. The Renaissance period brought a great awakening to the arts, travel, discovery, and innovation, which was followed by settlements in the “New World” that would allow varying degrees of religious freedom for Baptists. Ultimately, the industrial revolution launched our world into another level of technological advancements, and most recently the technological age has brought a level of convenience and ability the world has never seen. The Lord’s candlesticks have continued in full capacity through these eras by the Lord’s grace and promise “*Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world*” (Mt.28:20). The freedoms, cultural contexts, climates, and meeting places were widely diverse, most believers met in houses, rooms, caves, or open-air sites; the simplicity of the Lord’s model allows for any meeting place since the focus is on believers assembling around the Word of God with the Lord in their midst. The agility of the Lord’s church model has allowed believers to meet the biblical requirements to be an assembly without compromise while navigating harsh external forces such as heresy and persecution.

Alas, the accoutrements a church acquires above and beyond the Lord’s basic model for a church can become cumbersome to the point the assembly loses its agility to respond in a biblical manner to external forces; in particular, buildings, property, programs, and capital-heavy ministries can be cumbersome and cause a slow response. In no way does this author seek to condemn those blessings that churches can pursue and have; the point to be made is that those blessings can hamper a churches agility to continue in a biblical model during times of heresy and persecution. For example, church property and buildings are a blessing that mostly Baptists in America have been privileged to own; however, is that particular assembly agile enough to assemble “underground” in a home or in a private setting when direct or indirect persecution imposes limits on assembling or carrying out the commission of the Lord? This essay seeks to encourage churches of every size to understand the biblical and historical context of the agile nature

<sup>1</sup> The newly converted Samaritan woman inquired of the Lord whether she should meet in Mt. Gerizim or in Jerusalem. The Lord would indicate that emphasis on permanent places of worship was coming to an end; instead, worship would take place “In spirit and in truth”, and focus on sincerity of heart towards obeying God and the Truth of God’s Word. This genuine worship would occur in the Lord’s golden candlestick assemblies.

the Lord built into His Church model, and to prompt pastors to have a plan to scale down to the base requirements of an assembly if and when those freedoms are at risk.

### **The Lord's Church Model**

The Lord's model for a church is at least two or three saved (Mt.16:18, 18:20), baptized believers (Acts 2:41, Rom.6:2-4) assembling around the Word of God with Christ as its Cornerstone (Mt.16:18, Eph.2:20) and Head (Col.1:18) that continues in the doctrine of Christ and His apostles (Acts 2:42, Eph.2:20). The Lord would give further inspired doctrine and truth for His churches through the "*Apostles' doctrine*" in the form of inspired letters to churches that would share those truths with another. The Lord's blueprints for His assembly are spiritual, straightforward, and do not demand capital investments; hence, "*True worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth*". The Lord's assembly was authorized to be the new place of worship in place of the ornately designed Temple of God in Jerusalem; the Lord's New Covenant allowed for the Holy Spirit to dwell within believers to worship. Unfortunately, the Catholic and then Protestant churches began to build temple-like buildings using mixed funds from state religion; meanwhile, true examples of the "*Golden candlestick*" were meeting in secret coves to worship "*in Spirit and in truth.*"

The Lord provided a model that is economically feasible for the poorest of saints (II Cor.8:1-2) to maintain. The Lord's model is built to primarily sustain the pastor and "*Widows indeed*" financially through tithes and offerings, but not necessarily for a property mortgage, church van, etc. (I Tim.5:16-17). The Lord provided a model that can allow for large assemblies to meet without purchasing a building (Acts 2:41, 4:4); Acts 5:12-14 indicates the Jerusalem church of at least eight thousand church members, "*Were all with one accord in Solomon's porch...and believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women.*" The Lord provided a church model that allows the smallest groups of believers meeting in their homes to impact the world in a mighty way such as the believers in Rome (Rom.16:3-16). The Lord provided a model that allows for continuity and internal succession planning of the pastor through training faithful men (II Tim.2:2). The Lord provided a model that collectively unites around truth, demands reconciliation around truth, and purges the unrepentant offender of truth through a just series of witnesses (Mt.18:15-35).

Finally, but not exhaustively, one can see through the previous examples that the Lord built simplicity and agility into the model of His assembly. The agility the Lord built into His model allows for believers to easily separate from false teachers, drifting doctrine, and to privately assemble during times of persecution. All that is required are believers that desire to obey and follow the Lord Jesus Christ, His Word, and His structure for assembling; anything beyond the Lord's spiritual structure is extra weight that may have to be forsaken or surrendered when doctrinal divisions arise or persecution comes. The era of Fundamentalism has highlighted man's structure and priorities taking precedent over the Lord's biblical blueprints; in particular, the need for capital investments such as buildings and expensive programs that can potentially ensnare believers to a property instead of truth.

### **The Agility of the Churches in the New Testament**

The New Testament gives many examples of faithful men planting churches and the logistical realities involved around assembling, traveling from church to church, and preaching the Word of God; however, the focus is on churches meeting the necessary spiritual blueprints given by the Lord to "*Worship*

*the Father in spirit and in truth*" (Jn.4:23). The following example exhibits the agility of the Jerusalem church that altered in size and meeting place, but continued to meet the spiritual requirements to be a "Golden candlestick" (Rev. 1:20).

As mentioned previously, the Jerusalem church was started and pastored by the Lord Jesus Christ; Peter would pastor that assembly until after his second imprisonment when James, the Lord's half-brother, would assume the role of Pastor (Acts 1:15, 2:14, 12:17). The size of the Jerusalem church would ebb and flow tremendously from the multitudes that would repent and be baptized in Matthew 3 to the five thousand that were miraculously fed on the shore of Galilee in Matthew 14. John 6 reveals that Jesus claimed to be the "Bread of Life" and God who came down from heaven; this "Hard saying" offended many who "Walked no more with him". The large assembly of the Lord shrunk down to a "Little flock" of saved sinners that would falter at the death of Christ, but would continue on to "Feed my sheep" by the grace of the Lord (Luke 12:32, John 21:17). The Lord's church was agile enough to handle a vast expansion of followers to shrinking to a small assembly overnight.

After the resurrection and ascension of Christ, the restored disciples and the one hundred and twenty church members would meet in the upper room (Acts 1:13). Shortly after, the Jerusalem church would rapidly grow by three thousand saved, baptized church members (Acts 2:41). Acts 4:4 reveals, "Many of them which heard the word believed; and the number of the men was about five thousand"; the size of this assembly grew to at least eight thousand and one hundred and twenty. This enormous assembly of saved, baptized believers apparently had to meet in the courtyard of the temple in Jerusalem as Peter preached from "Solomon's Porch" (Acts 5:12). We see the size of the assembly scale up and down; nevertheless, the assembly meets wherever it can to accomplish the Lord's will of preaching the Word, baptizing converts, and meeting with the Lord.

Acts 5:12-14 highlights the agility of a church meeting the Lord's blueprints of assembly. The context of this passage reveals the account when Ananias and Sapphira lied to the Holy Ghost about their gift of land; the Lord struck both of them dead and "Great fear came upon all the church" (Acts 5:11). Acts 5:12 states, "And by the hands of the apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people; and they were all with one accord in Solomon's porch". The first key point, the large assembly of over eight thousand believers was meeting in the same location, "Solomon's Porch," which was the eastern portico of the Jerusalem Temple. They could no longer fit in the upper room, so they boldly met on the turf of the religious leaders. The spiritual momentum of the Jerusalem church allowed them to meet in a location that would certainly draw negative attention from the religious leaders. The next key point, the large assembly of baptized believers meeting in the same location was "With one accord"; they were united around truth. The Greek word *homothumadon* literally means with one mind or the same mind; the large assembly had one mind regarding the Fear of the Lord and the truths being taught by the Apostles. The focus here is on the spiritual matter of an assembly having unity around truth; the location of where the assembly would meet changed multiple times, but that did not matter as long as they met the Lord's blueprints and had the same mind of unity around the Word of God.

The Jerusalem church would undergo persecution by Saul of Tarsus, and the large assembly would be "Scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the Apostles" (Acts 8:1). Acts 9:31 reveals that the members of the scattered Jerusalem church would start smaller churches in Judea, Galilee, and Samaria. The large assembly no doubt trained qualified men, and when persecution came they

had the agility to flee and start autonomous churches in other locations. Peter addressed the elders of the scattered churches in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia in I Peter 5:1, which further reveals that qualified men were trained in the Jerusalem church and ready to start a church when persecution arose. The agile nature of the Jerusalem church is seen in the ability to train men within and to send to other locations to plant a church; in doing so, the size of the Jerusalem church was greatly reduced.

Persecution of the Jerusalem church continued, James the brother of John was beheaded by Herod Agrippa I, and Peter was cast into prison to be executed (Acts 12:1). The remaining believers in Jerusalem knew the dire situation for Peter, and Acts 12:5 reveals, "But prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him". The Lord answered the corporate prayer of the Jerusalem church that was privately meeting together. Acts 12:12 reveals that Peter, who was just miraculously released from prison, went to where the remnant of the persecuted Jerusalem church was meet, "He came to the house of Mary the mother of John, whose surname was Mark; where many were gathered together praying". Once again, the Jerusalem church scaled down in size, situation, and location; nevertheless, the Lord's agile model for His church allowed them to find a private, safe place to assemble with the Lord and intercede corporately for the Apostle Peter's release. Ultimately, the Jerusalem church exhibited its agility to expand, shrink, and move locations so that true worshippers can "Worship the Father in spirit and in truth" (Jn.4:23).

*Come back for Part 2 of this article in the June 15, 2020 edition of the BBC Update.*



It was great to have the Blairs visit again for the wedding.



The couple "tied the knot" to symbolize that they are bound to each other with Christ. Ecclesiastes 4:12



Ryan and Bernadette rejoice as Mark and Amanda cut the cake.



The ceremony was livestreamed on YouTube from Long Hill Baptist Church. If you would like to view this blessed event, the link is:

<https://youtu.be/lwMk8NEkY-w>

**THE LORD IS GOOD UNTO THEM THAT WAIT FOR HIM.  
LAMENTATIONS 3:25**

# DEVOTIONAL CORNER

Devotional Corner

6

How Men Can Displease God



Pastor Cas Reeves

## HOW MEN CAN DISPLEASE THE LORD

2 SAMUEL 11

In 2 Samuel chapter eleven, God records David's affair with Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah the Hittite. Most Christians are familiar with the account. It is a testimony revealing the sordid nature of man. For you and I, the LORD sums up David's behavior in verse 27: *"But the thing that David had done displeased the LORD."*

If we wish to avoid displeasing the LORD, there are several things we can learn which can lead us to displeasing the our God. **First**, by not being where you should be. At a time when kings went out to do battle (v.1), David stayed home. He wasn't where he should have been.

**Second:** You can be led to displease the Lord when you look at things you shouldn't be looking at. In David's idleness, walking upon his roof, he spied out Bathsheda taking a bath and *"the woman was very beautiful"* (v.2). It is almost impossible today not to see the flaunting of the flesh, whether it is on the television or while you are out and about; nevertheless, purity of mind and heart before the LORD demands that Christian men turn their eyes and minds from a misappropriate glance that can lead to displeasing the LORD.

**Third:** You can be led to displease the LORD when you dabble in things you should not. David should have turned from looking, asking the LORD to keep it from his thoughts, but David enquired after the woman, learning about her and dabbling in things should have forgotten (v.3).

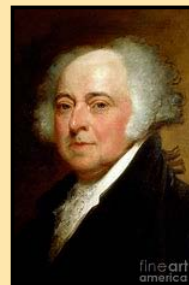
**Four:** You can be led to displease the LORD when you embrace the nature of the flesh in an ungodly manner. Intimacy in a marriage is acceptable to God, but not outside the marriage relationship. This affair was adulteress for both David and Bathsheba, leading to an unwanted pregnancy.

**Fifth:** You can be led to displease the LORD when you try to coverup your sin (vss.5-17). Although sin is alluring it is not attractive and carries with it many times unwanted circumstances that sinners wish to coverup. It was likewise for David which led him to premeditate the killing of Uriah, the husband of Bathsheba and a valiant soldier in David's army. All this David did to coverup his sin. *"But the thing that David had done displeased the LORD."* -CAR



*It was a special day for Bunny, too!*

## Quotes From the Past:



John Adams  
1735-1826

2nd President of the United States

*"Old minds are like old horses; you must exercise them if you wish to keep them in working order."*

# THE BOOK CORNER

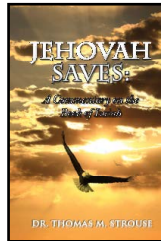
The Book Corner

7

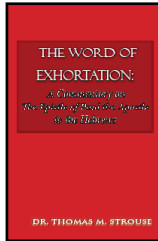
BBC 2020 Schedule

These Books may be purchased through Bible Baptist Church: 40 Country Squire Rd. Cromwell, CT 06416 860-229-5387

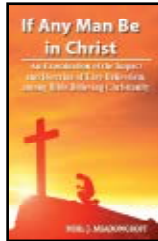
[drtms\\_bbts@juno.com](mailto:drtms_bbts@juno.com)



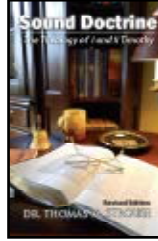
Isaiah \$20.00



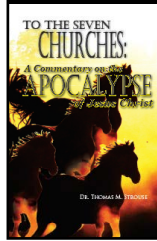
Hebrews \$30.00



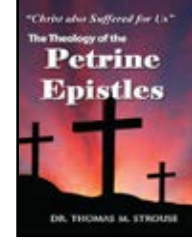
If Any Man Be ... \$10.00



I & II Timothy \$20.00



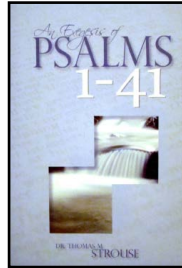
Revelation \$30.00



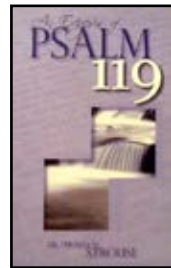
Peter \$20.00



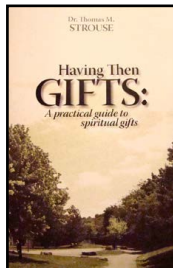
I & II Thessalonians \$20.00



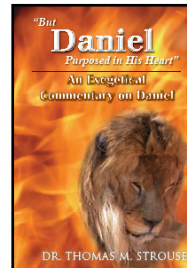
Psalms 1 - 41 \$20.00



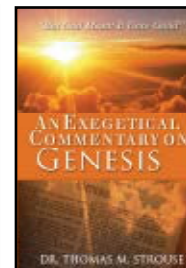
Psalm 119 \$20.00



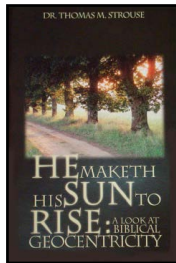
Spiritual Gifts \$8.00



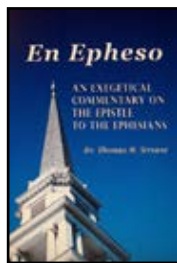
Daniel \$20.00



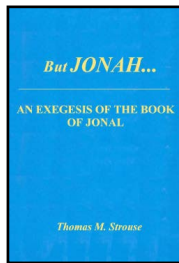
Genesis \$20.00



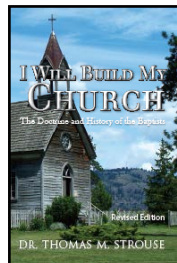
Geocentricity \$10.00



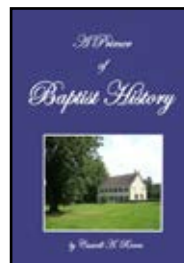
En Epheso \$20.00



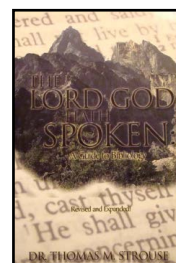
Jonah \$10.00



I Will Build My Church \$15.00



A Primer of Baptist History \$20.00



The Lord God Hath Spoken \$15.00

## BBC 2020 SCHEDULE

**June 8-12**  
Cooperstown, PA  
"Eschatology"

**August 24-28**  
Fairhaven Baptist Church  
"Minor Prophets"

**September 7**  
Labor Day Cookout  
Strouse House

**July 20-24**  
Plymouth, NH  
"The History of the English Bible"

**September 14-18**  
BBC of Nashua, NH  
"Bibliology"

**October 6-17**  
Israel Tour  
**October 25-28**  
Willow Grove Baptist Church  
"Timeless Truths Bible Conference"

**November 13**  
BBTS Fall Lecture Series

## COMING THIS SUMMER VACATION BIBLE TIME

Look in the next BBC Update for more information



If you have any news for the next issue of the BBC Update, please send email to:

[drtms\\_bbts@juno.com](mailto:drtms_bbts@juno.com)



**Bible Baptist Theological Seminary**

*A ministry of Bible Baptist Church*

40 Country Squire Road

Cromwell, CT 06416

860-613-2096

[www.bbc-cromwell.org](http://www.bbc-cromwell.org)