



BBC UPDATE

75TH BIRTHDAY REFLECTIONS



Dr. Thomas M. Strouse I am thankful that the Lord Jesus Christ has given me seventy-five years of life, as of March 31, 2020. Longevity is a blessing from God, as Moses recorded, saying, *“The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away”* (Ps. 90:10). By the grace of God I became a born-again Christian (Jn. 3:7) in 1969 and surrendered to the Lord’s will for Christian service in 1970. After receiving my seminary training I have been active in seminary teaching, and since 2009, in shepherding Bible Baptist Church of Cromwell, CT. I am thankful for the divine privilege to have trained hundreds of men for Baptist church ministries (II Tim. 2:2) and now to oversee one of the Lord’s candlesticks (Rev. 1:12, 20). Through the years I have had my share of theological battles, especially in the areas of bibliology and ecclesiology. My desire has been to attempt to teach and practice the clear teachings of Scripture. I have defended publically and in writing the doctrine and practice of the visible ekklesia. At this stage of my Christian journey I want to finish strong in the Lord as did the Apostle Paul, who said, *“I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith”* (II Tim. 4:7). In a time of tremendous public challenge and severe personal testing, aged Caleb should be the model for every saint, even as he averred, saying, *“Now therefore give me this mountain, whereof the LORD spake in that day; for thou heardest in that day how the Anakims were there, and that the cities were great and fenced: if so be the LORD will be with me, then I shall be able to drive them out, as the LORD said”* (Josh. 14:12).

The current global panic has caused great spiritual challenges to biblical pastors and New Testament churches concerning public worship. Although it may seem commendable to protect society from COVID-19, the minister of Christ has a greater calling to oversee his flock (Acts 20:28) and encourage his people to meet with the Lord in His ekklesia (Mt. 18:20) on His appointed day (Acts 2:1). I for one do not want to shepherd the invisible, universal church by preaching into a microphone to an unseen audience. I have preached, taught, and written against the heresy of “the universal, invisible church/mystical Body of Christ” doctrine throughout my whole life of Christian ministry. Bible Baptist Church has prayed that the government would not ban meeting in the ekklesia (Eph. 6:18), and the Governor of CT has currently allowed churches to assemble as long as the number is less than fifty in attendance. *“The King’s heart is in the hand of the LORD, as the rivers of water: he turneth it whithersoever he will”* (Prov. 21:1). By God’s grace we will take advantage of this provision and continue to meet as scheduled, of course practicing hygiene and social distancing. *“For a great door and effectual is opened unto me, and there are many adversaries”* (I Cor. 16:9).

As I reflected upon the current situation, I thought of what happened after the Lord Jesus Christ announced, saying, *“And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it”* (Mt. 16:18). The Lord told His Apostles that He was going to Jerusalem to die and the Apostle Peter rebuked Him, saying, *“Be it far from thee, Lord:*

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this shall not be unto thee" (Mt. 16:22). In effect, Peter was saying "no Lord, we will guard your health and safety so that this will not happen." Of course, the Lord saw behind the physical realm the Sinister Personage of the spiritual realm and said, *"Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men"* (Mt. 16:23). I think that we as Christians need to see behind the mantra of the world about "health and safety," and recognize that the real goal of Satan is to undermine the biblical worship of the Lord Jesus Christ in the ekklesia. It is true that the government has not forbidden the preaching of the Gospel, but biblical worship is far more than preaching. Although I may be criticized for being uncaring or unloving about the physical health of children, the elderly, and the weak, one should consider the Lord's perspective toward Israel, saying, *"But your little ones, which ye said should be a prey, them will I bring in, and they shall know the land which ye have despised"* (Num. 14:31).

What is at biblical stake when the Lord's scriptural churches are denied assembling? First and foremost, the assembly (*ekklesia*) is the designated place (location of assembling) on the designated day (Sunday) where and when the God of Creation and Redemption wants to meet with His people: *"For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them"* (Mt. 18:20), *"And in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle"* (Rev. 1:13), and *"when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place"* (Acts 2:1). Second, the pastor is the bishop or overseer who must oversee the visible flock: *"Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood"* (Acts 20:28), and *"he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ"* (Eph. 4:11-13). Overseeing the flock cannot realistically be done via Face Book, live streaming, or Skype. Corporate accountability is quickly diminished. Thirdly, the assembly must come together for fellowship and for the practice of the ordinances, even the Lord's Table: *"Wherefore, my brethren, when ye come together to eat, tarry one for another"* (I Cor. 11:33; see also vv. 17-18, 20, 34; 14:23, 26). Although other biblical arguments could be put forth, the Christian and the pastor must recognize the ultimate goal of Satan behind social health concerns is the attack upon the Lord's institution of the *ekklesia*. One's spiritual health is far more important than one's physical or financial health: *"Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth"* (III Jn. 1:2). My desire is to be *"valiant for the truth"* (Jer. 9:3)!



Left: Pastor
preaching on
March 29

Right: the
ekklesia.





Pastor Cas Reeves

ONE WORD: "SAVED"

Jesus said, "...these things I say, that ye might be saved" (John 5:3-4)

This is a personal testimony. I give thanks for one word. It was the word "saved." Out of all the words in the Bible, it was that one word, "saved," that the Holy Spirit of God used in my life to convict me of my unsaved or lost state, as a sinful man before a holy God. I first heard the word "saved" when a Baptist preacher and his wife, while visiting in my home sharing the Gospel, asked me if I was "saved." After that, others who went to his church, continually asked me if I was "saved."

Those, who spoke with me, all spoke with a confidence, that they were "saved" and knew it, because the Bible told them so. I did not have such confidence. I did not know if I was "saved" and going to heaven. The LORD continued to convict me. He worked in my heart. Eventually, I went to see that Baptist Preacher. I asked him to show me from the Bible, how

I could be "saved" and know it. Two of many verses he showed me were: "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." And then, "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. (Romans 10:9,13).

I saw the word "saved" in both of those verses. And then, believing with all of my heart in Jesus Christ, I called upon him in prayer to "save" me. You know, He promised me He would, and He did, save me. And today, I can say confidently, based upon God's Word and promise, "I am saved." The Apostle John said, "These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know (present tense - right now) that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God. (1 John 5:13). -CAR

~ CANCELLED ~

**BIBLE BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
LECTURE SERIES HAS BEEN CANCELLED!**

The Marriott Courtyard has closed her facility through April and obviously the April 17, 2020 Bible Baptist Theological Seminary Spring Lecture Series has been cancelled. The essay "**I will Joy in the God of My Salvation—Biblical Soteriology**" will be posted on www.bbc-cromwell.org. The Lord willing, the Bible Baptist Theological Seminary Fall Lecture Series will be held on November 13, 2020. The location and topic will be forthcoming.

Quotes From the Past:



**John Bunyan
1628-1688**

Baptist Preacher
and Author

*"One leak will sink a ship:
and one sin will destroy a sinner."*

GROW IN GRACE

DEVOTIONAL FOR WOMEN

TURN

When I send pestilence...

2 Chronicles 7:13 If I shut up heaven that there be no rain, or if I command the locusts to devour the land, or if I send pestilence among my people;

If my people turn from sin...

7:14a If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways;

Then I will forgive and heal...

7:14b then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.

They forsake the LORD God...

7:22 And it shall be answered, Because they forsook the Lord God of their fathers, which brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, and laid hold on other gods, and worshipped them, and served them: therefore hath he brought all this evil upon them.

Reflection: Here is a passage of Scripture that is known of many. It is quoted often by preachers of our day. These verses were directed to the Nation of Israel, reflecting the LORD's blessings or cursings based on the obedience or rebellion by His people.

When we read these verses we can see that the God of creation is the same God over the

environment, weather, pestilence, etc... It all belongs to Him and He can do as He pleases. Within these verses we read about His grace to His people. He longs to hear them, forgive them, bless them, and their land but leaves the choice with them.

We have the same choice today: Love the Lord Jesus Christ with all our hearts or love the world and the things of this world; obey the Lord and His Word or reject Him and His Word.

Challenge: As we can see, today the world is reaping the consequences of these choices. Mankind is powerless to stop this virus advancement through the nations.

Psalms 108:12 Give us help from trouble: for vain is the help of man.

Where in your heart are you prideful? Are you haughty? More spiritual than others? Self-righteous? Are you praying? Seeking Him? Humbling yourself and lifting up your voice to the Lord asking Him to search your heart, then turning from your sinful ways. Let this repentance begin with us, His people...

Psalms 139:23-24 Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.

If you would like to receive Grow in Grace morning devotions emailed to you Monday through Friday, please send an email to: Elenas6259@gmail.com

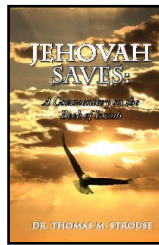


Fellowship in between services, enjoying delicious coffee cake.

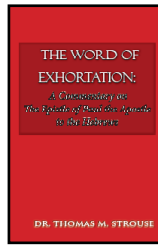
THE BOOK CORNER

These Books may be purchased through
Bible Baptist Church:
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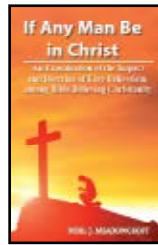
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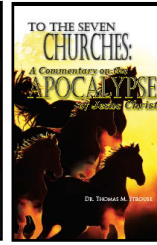
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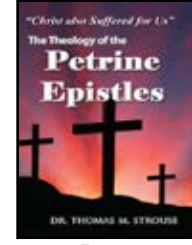
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If Any Man Be ... I & II Timothy
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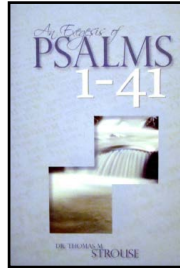
Revelation
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Peter
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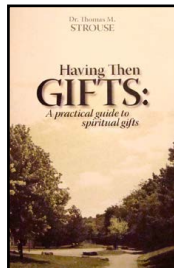
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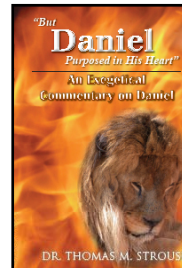
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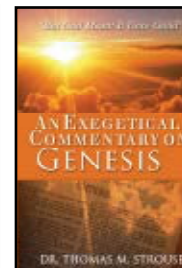
Psalm 119
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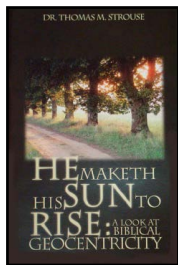
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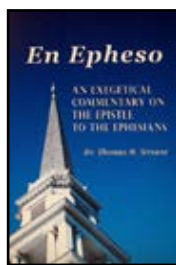
Daniel
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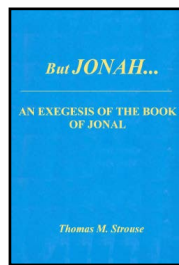
Genesis
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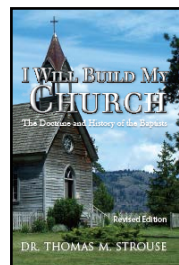
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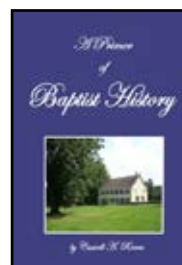
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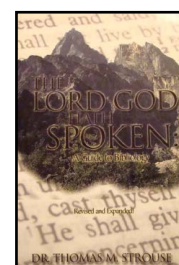
Jonah
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I Will Build My Church
\$15.00



A Primer of Baptist History
\$20.00



The Lord God Hath Spoken
\$15.00

BBC 2020 SCHEDULE

April 17
BRTN Spring Lecture Series
CANCELLED

May 17
BBTS Graduation

May 30
Gagnon-Reeves Wedding

June 8-12
Quakertown, PA
"Eschatology"

June 22-26
Quezon City
"Ecclesiastes"

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

August 24-28
Fairhaven Baptist Church
"Minor Prophets"
September 7
Labor Day Cookout
Strouse House

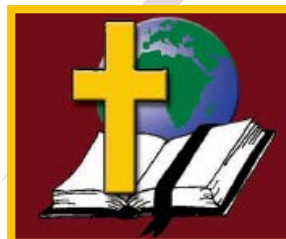
September 14-18
BBC of Nashua, NH
"Bibliology"

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

November 13
BBTS Fall Lecture Series

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

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