



BBC UPDATE

WAS THE APOSTLE PAUL A VICTIM OF HIS TRAUMAS?



Dr. Thomas M. Strouse

The Trauma of Paul

If anyone in human history had received trauma, the Apostle Paul would be one of the premiere exhibits. The Lord Jesus Christ foretold of the great trauma he would receive, saying, *“For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake”* (Acts 9:16). Obviously, the Lord's prediction came upon Paul as the Apostle revealed in defending his apostolic calling. He averred, saying, *“Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as a fool) I am more; in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft. Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches”* (II. Cor. 11:23-28). How many Christians or even heathen could say with Paul that they have received many, or some, or any of the physical assaults?

Moreover, the Lord gave the Apostle Paul *“a thorn in flesh”* that neither the physician Luke nor the apostle's three-fold prayer could alleviate (II Cor. 12:7-8). The account of living through *Euroclydon* (Acts 27:14 ff.) occurred after he wrote this inspired account. Furthermore, very few if any had survived a stoning as Paul did at Lystra. Scripture revealed this traumatic event, saying, *“And there came thither certain Jews from Antioch and Iconium, who persuaded the people, and, having stoned Paul, drew him out of the city, supposing he had been dead. Howbeit, as the disciples stood round about him, he rose up, and came into the city: and the next day he departed with Barnabas to Derbe”* (Acts 14:19-20). The intent of stoning was to cast stones at the victim's upper body and head, breaking bones and the skull and bringing soon death. As the apostle spoke to the Galatian churches, he seemed to hint at his grotesque facial features he received because of the stoning. For instance, he declared, *“Ye know how through infirmity of the flesh I preached the gospel unto you at the first. And my temptation which was in my flesh ye despised not, nor rejected; but received me as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus. Where is then the blessedness ye spake of? for I bear you record, that, if it had been*

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possible, ye would have plucked out your own eyes, and have given them to me” (Gal. 4:13-15). It seems that his face had been smashed and perhaps the eye sockets crushed, causing near blindness. A victim of fatal stoning would look mangled, to say the least.

The Response of Paul

The Lord humbled privileged Paul and the apostle recognized this truth. He averred, saying, *“And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong” (II Cor. 12:9-10).* The pride of position, privilege, and personal appearance was in subjection to Paul’s calling as a Christian. He did not re-live the past traumas in victimhood, saying, *“Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus” (Phil 3:13-14).* After all of the aforementioned physical, emotional, and spiritual traumas that he received, he wrote from the Roman prison the *Epistle to the Philippians*, and declared, saying, *“Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice. Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand. Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus” (Phil. 4:4-7).* Some may say, “yes, but the apostle Paul was a ‘Christian on steroids’ and surely the Lord does not expect the same from me.” Did not the Lord Jesus Christ speak through the Apostle Paul, who said thrice, saying, *“Wherefore I beseech you, be ye followers of me” (I Cor. 4:16), “Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ” (I Cor. 11:1) and “Brethren, be followers together of me” (Phil. 3:17)?*

The Christian Remedy for Trauma

The Lord’s example for Christians, the Apostle Paul, experienced incredible traumas regularly including near *“deaths oft” (II Cor. 11:23).* How did he overcome the life of being a victim of trauma? The apostle knew that he was in a fallen world with an old nature and expected that traumatic events would occur. He employed several truths to help him overcome being a victim of his trauma.

1. He realized that the Lord gave the traumas to humble him.
2. He realized that the Lord gave the traumas to cause him to pray.
3. He realized that the Lord gave the traumas to be an example of God’s grace.
4. He realized that the Lord gave the traumas to force him not look back but to look forward to reward.
5. He realized that the Lord gave the traumas for His soldier to endure hardness the in battle.
6. He realized that the Lord gave the traumas so that Paul would find joy and peace in Christ, the ever-sufficient One.
7. He realized that the Lord gave the traumas so that Paul would be the Christian victor and not the Christian victim!

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Conclusion

Scripture never revealed that the Apostle Paul relied on various crutches such as medications, drugs, alcohol, therapy, psychologists, psychiatrists, counselors, or “comfort dogs,” to help him with his traumas. He did not become a victim of his traumas because the Lord and His Word did not allow him to become a victim. Rather, Paul was the quintessential victor, not victim, saying, “*Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord*” (Rom. 8:37-39). Paul used the traumas to energize him in the work of the Lord. After all, he declared, “*But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me*” (I Cor. 15:10). The Apostle Paul was the victor of his traumas!

BBTS 2023 SPRING LECTURE SERIES

WHEN: APRIL 21, 2023

TIME: 9AM—3PM

WHAT: “SPECIAL STUDIES IN THE
JOHANNINE EPISTLES”

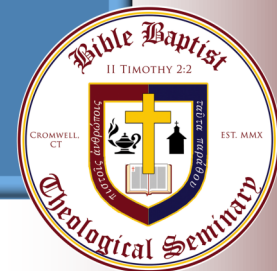
WHERE: GALILEAN BAPTIST CHURCH
STAFFORD SPRINGS, CT

RSVP: MARCH 31, 2023

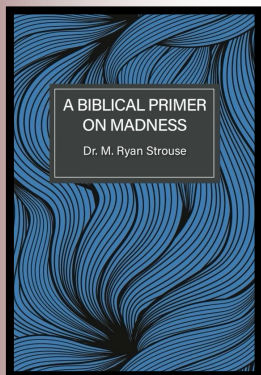
**LUNCHEON AND BOOK TABLE
AVAILABLE**

**Some topics that will be addressed in the Special Studies in
the Johannine Epistles:**

- *“The Gnostic Attack upon the Lord Jesus Christ”
 - *The Johannine Comma (I Jn. 5:7-8)
- *“When should corporate prayer not be offered?”
 - *“Gnostic Missionaries”
 - *“How to deal with an Unsaved Pastor”
 - *“How much Gnosticism is in Your Church?”



NEW BOOKS

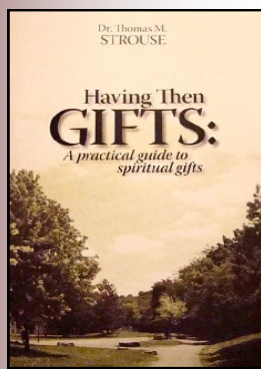


Dr. M. Ryan Strouse's book "*A Biblical Primer on Madness*" is now at the publisher! This book is expanded material from the Fall 2022 Lecture Series. The purpose of this work seeks to reveal the Biblical precedent for physical nourishment and care of those suffering the various forms of madness; however, the remedy and cure for madness is primarily spiritual.

We are looking forward to the distribution of this excellent book to help pastors and Christian counselors navigate the realm of mental illness. The 403 page book can be purchased for \$20.00.

In addition, Dr. Thomas M. Strouse's book "*Having then Gifts: A Practical Guide to Spiritual Gifts*" is out for a reprint.

Both of these books will be available for purchase at the upcoming lecture series.



BBC/BBTS 2023 SCHEDULE

April 21

BBTS Spring Lecture Series

Special Studies in the Johannine Epistles

Galilean Baptist Church
Stafford Springs, CT

May 22-26

Ireland Module

Gospel of Luke and Medical Language
Acts 1-9

June 5-9

Community Baptist Church

Coopersburg, PA
Book of Hebrews

July 24-28

Calvary Independent Baptist Church

Plymouth, NH
The Johannine Epistles

September 25-29

Bible Baptist Church
Nashua, NH
Book of Hebrews

October 22-25

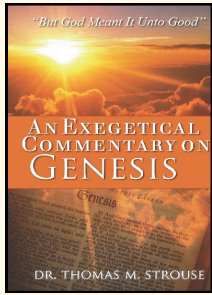
Willow Grove Baptist Church

Waynesburg, PA
Timeless Truths Bible Conference

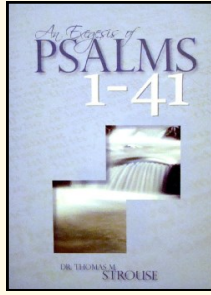
October 28-29

Calvary Baptist Church
Mannington, WV
TBA

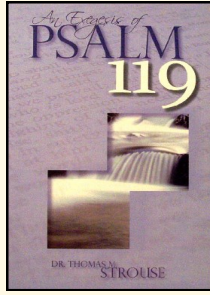
The Publication Page



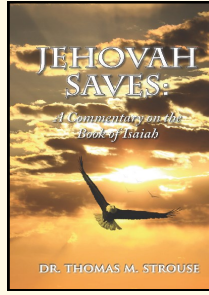
Genesis
\$20.00



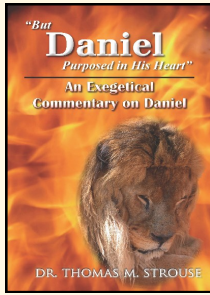
Psalms 1-41
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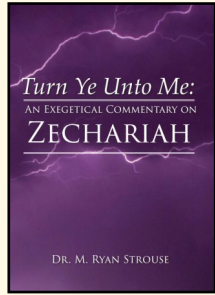
Psalm 119
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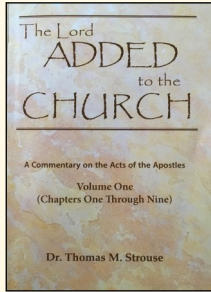
Isaiah
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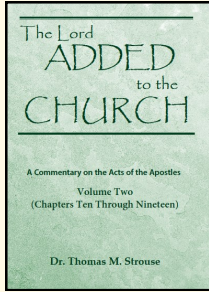
Daniel
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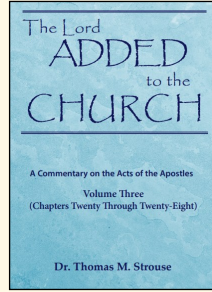
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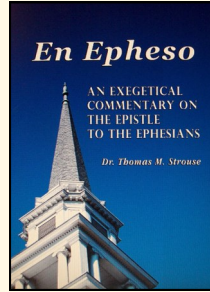
Acts 1-9
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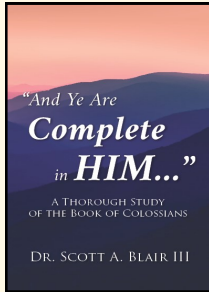
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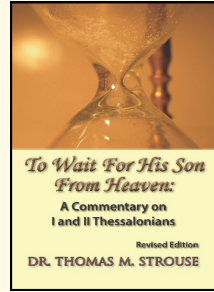
Acts 20-28
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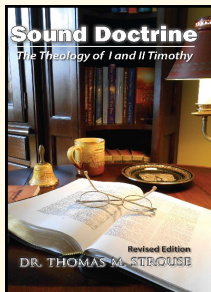
Ephesians
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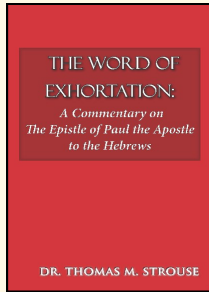
Colossians
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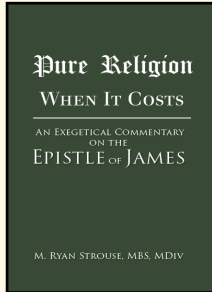
1 & 2 Thessalonians
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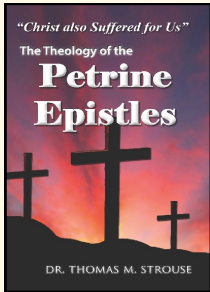
1 & 2 Timothy
\$20.00



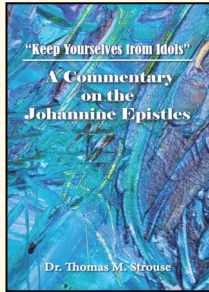
Hebrews
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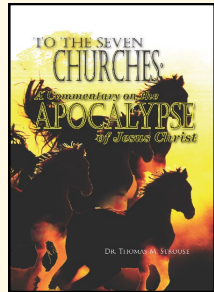
James
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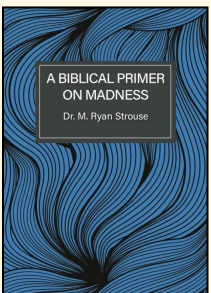
1 & 2 Peter
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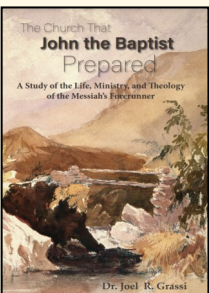
Johannine Epistles
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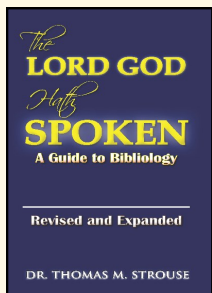
Revelation
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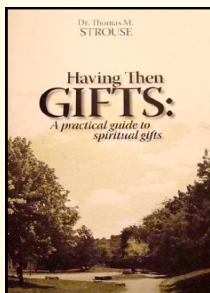
Biblical Madness
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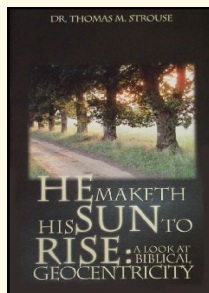
John the Baptist
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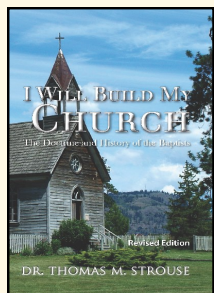
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Spiritual Gifts
\$8.00



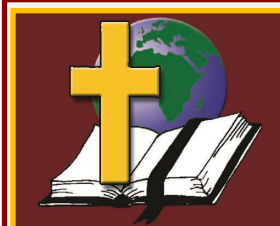
Geocentricity
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Baptist Doctrine & History
\$15.00

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Bible Baptist Church 860-229-5387 drtms_bbts@juno.com

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