



BBC UPDATE

13TH ANNUAL BBTS SPRING LECTURE SERIES



Dr. Thomas M. Strouse

The Lord gave the Bible Baptist Theological Seminary a Good Friday, on April 15, 2022, with about 95 church members from eight NT assemblies in attendance. Pastor and Mrs. Stephen Hinebaugh hosted the event at Galilean Baptist Church, in Stafford Springs, CT. The Lecture Series focused on the significant Ephesian Baptist Church concerning her History, Theology and Longevity (the electronic copy of the syllabus is online). Dr. Thomas M. Strouse, Pastor of Bible Baptist Church and Dean of Bible Baptist Theological Seminary in Cromwell, CT, presented the message of encouragement on how to avoid the pride of Fundamentalism and maintain the humility of the New Testament churches. Independent Baptist Churches from CT, MA, ME, NH, and NY attended on the beautiful day that the Lord had given. We are thankful for these churches which are striving to serve in godliness and meekness.



Pastors who attended the Lecture Series

GARDEN GNOSTICISM AND BIBLICAL CHURCHES

What is the relevance of Garden Gnosticism to NT churches in the first century or to American churches in the twenty-first century? What church would allow a full-blown Gnostic teacher promote this heresy? That is the whole point! Full-blown Gnosticism starts in the heart of pride of the church member and eventually blossoms into advanced spiritual pride! How does *apostasy* (literally “to stand from truth”) begin in one of the Lord’s assemblies? Apostasy did occur and still occurs because the NT did address apostasy specifically in the Jerusalem church, in the scattered churches, to which both James and Peter wrote, in the Corinthian and Ephesian churches, in the church that Jude addressed, and in the churches to which the Apostle John wrote his *Three Epistles* and the *Revelation of Jesus Christ*. James gave the formula to the biblically educated saints, saying to his church audience, “*Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? let him shew out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom. But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth.*”

GARDEN GNOSTICISM

This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work” (Jam. 3:13-16). It starts in the hearts of pastors and people in the Lord’s assemblies. Both James and Peter wrote to the scattered Jerusalem Baptist Church members, saying, “God resisteth the proud” (Jam. 4:6 and I Pet. 5:5). Paul warned the Ephesian elders about pride (I Tim. 3:6) and predicted the some of the elders at Ephesus would apostatize, saying, “For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them” (Acts 20:29-30). Just as the Gnostics had their pride in the externals of teachers and in the “do’s and don’ts” as they advanced, so Christians are tempted and do manifest pride in their superiority over others.

It is striking that the Apostle Paul employed the social caste system of master/slave to challenge slaves about those over them socially (I Tim. 6:1-2), whereas elsewhere Paul challenged the masters (Eph. 6:9). The social caste system of the first century was ripe for Christians to manifest their pride of superiority as both the masters and slaves. For instance cautioned his audience, saying, *“My brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect of persons. For if there come unto your assembly a man with a gold ring, in goodly apparel, and there come in also a poor man in vile raiment; And ye have respect to him that weareth the gay clothing, and say unto him, Sit thou here in a good place; and say to the poor, Stand thou there, or sit here under my footstool: Are ye not then partial in yourselves, and are become judges of evil thoughts?” (Jam. 2:1-4). In the context of I Tim. 6:1-2, the apostle challenged the Ephesian Church members about those in the assembly whose pride would manifest in this caste system and therefore must be refused. He said, “If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness; He is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, Perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself. But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out” (I Tim. 6:3-7).*

Having pride in the heart leads the Christian to the devious and dangerous development of the carnal walk in the flesh. Those that do not walk in the Spirit are puffed up in pride, focus on externalism, and walk by sight and not by faith. Pride comes from the ego that has no self-reflection and therefore promotes the “better than thou” attitude in person, possessions, and places. The proud Christian, church member, and church, all tend towards separation over manmade Western standards and opinions concerning music, dress, facial hair, etc., rather than biblical truth, which tendency manifests profoundly in the American, Protestant, and Caucasian Fundamentalism of the twentieth century.

AND BIBLICAL CHURCHES

The pride of person manifests in the pastor, in the officer, or in the church member (at whatever level of sanctification) who projects the attitude of having arrived spiritually in the upper tier of this two tiered spirituality and is at the plateau of being incapable of sinning “really bad sins” like idolatry, fornication, malfeasance, sodomy, child pornography, murder (suicide, abortion), etc. Of course, how many pastors have been involved in these sins in fundamental and independent Baptist churches? The easy and unbiblical reaction is to declare that “*they were not saved.*” The pride of person also evinces with regard to gender, ethnicity, or occupation, and manifests either passively or actively. However, Paul revealed his struggle in the flesh and hence warned the churches in Rome. He averred, saying, “*For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I. If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good. Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not*” (Rom. 7:15-18). The pride of possession manifests in the wealthy American Christian who touts his possessions of house and personal property, of vehicles such as the multiple cars and big trucks, of real estate, of bank accounts, of church buildings, and of equipment, etc. The pride of places manifests in those of various geographical locations which claim with pride “we are not in the hood,” or “we are not in the city,” or “we are not in the country.” The pre-packaged American church model has high human standards which protect the good, moral people of the “perfect families,” and yet seldom deals with the proud heart of these within this model.

The church member who denies the potential and even the reality of the pride of a puffed up heart, “better than thou” attitude, is self-deceived and is in serious trouble. In Paul’s challenge to Timothy he listed nineteen sins of the heart of which he needed to preach against and from those which he needed to shun in the Ephesian Baptist Church, including the examples of Hymenaeus and Philetus (II Tim. 2:17) and possibly Phygellus and Hermogenes (II Tim. 1:15). This extensive list is for church members to self-reflect upon concerning the following: “*For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away. For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts*” (II Tim. 3:2-6). The Apostle Paul gave the biblical perspective about himself and his position, saying, “*I am become a fool in glorying; ye have compelled me: for I ought to have been commended of you: for in nothing am I behind the very chiefest apostles, though I be nothing*” (II Cor. 12:11).

ARTICLE CONCLUSION

Garden Gnosticism appeals to the pride of the heart of man to desire to advance in the *pleroma*. Pride in the Christian tends to give the desire to develop the smug “better than thou” attitude in the assembly. Again Paul challenged the Corinthian Baptist Church saying, “*For we commend not ourselves again unto you, but give you occasion to glory on our behalf, that ye may have somewhat to answer them which glory in appearance, and not in heart*” (II Cor. 5:12). The Lord’s assemblies are made up of saved no-bodies as the apostle averred, saying, “*For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: That no flesh should glory in his presence*” (I Cor. 1:26-29). How do we measure up to the LORD’s perspective, Who said, “*Thus saith the LORD, The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool: where is the house that ye build unto me? and where is the place of my rest? For all those things hath mine hand made, and all those things have been, saith the LORD: but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word*” (Isa. 66:1-2)? At the foot of the Cross we are all saved sinners who positionally have surrendered pride. “*There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus*” (Gal. 3:28). Have we practically surrendered pride?

BBC/BBTS 2022 SCHEDULE

May 15, 2022

Thirteenth Annual BBTS
Commencement Service
Cromwell, CT

June 6-10

Community Baptist Church
Coopersburg, PA
"The Johannine Epistles"

July 25-29

Calvary Ind. Baptist Church
Plymouth, NH
"Biblical Geography"

August 22-26

Fairhaven Baptist College
Chesterton, IN
Acts, Vol. 1 (Chapters 1-9)

LECTURE SERIES PHOTOS



The Lord provided a beautiful day to take a group photo.



Above: Dr. Strouse presents the lecture.

Left: Professor Skorupski enjoys fellowship with seminarian Shawn Myers and his wife Elisabeth.

Below: A delicious ham buffet lunch was provided during which many could fellowship both inside and outside.





Pastor Cas Reeves

THE BLESSED MAN

Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. Psalm 1:1-3

The word phrase, blessed man, is an umbrella like phrase that reflects a person who is happy, joyous, content, and prosperous. What makes this man a blessed man is described by the Psalmist. Notice first, the blessed man is careful in his social life with others. He does not take heed, nor does he walk in the counsel of the ungodly; he is careful not to associate by standing with them in their ungodly ideas and efforts; and he does not compromise his godly principles by sitting in the seat of the ungodly scorners of truth (v.1).

Second, the blessed man is blessed because he delights in the law of the LORD. Any man who takes pleasure in the truths of God's words will be a happy man. His delight is noticed in that he meditates upon the scriptures day and night. The idea of meditate is to speak the words and ideas of truth over and over to one's self and to think upon them continually (v.2). The reason for this diligence to the word of God can be found in Psalm 119:11, "Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee."

For this behavior and love of God's truth, the blessed man is rewarded in pleasantness and strength as like a tree planted by the rivers of water. He is also fruitful, like as a fruitful tree in his season. And he is a prosperous man in all that he endeavors to accomplish (v.3).

Finally, the LORD identifies the blessed man as a righteous man, one who is saved. A man of whom the LORD declares, I know his ways (v.6). Are you a blessed man who is saved, sanctified in your social life, and in love with God's words of truth? -CAR

QUOTES FROM THE PAST



"Never rise to speak till you have something to say; and when you have said it, cease."

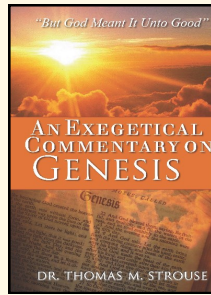
John Witherspoon

1723-1796

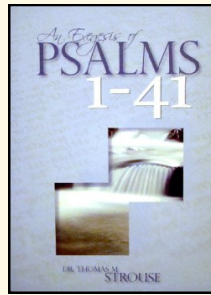
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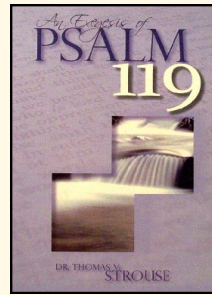
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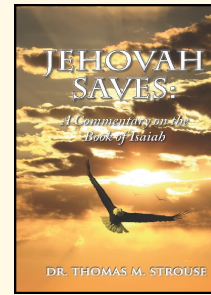
Genesis \$20.00



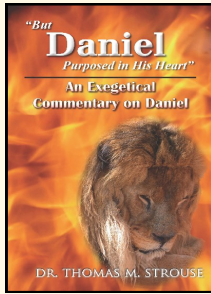
Psalms 1-41 \$20.00



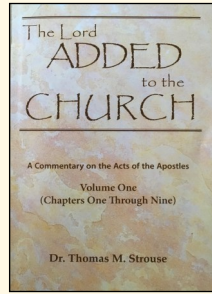
Psalm 119 \$20.00



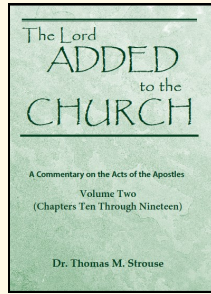
Isaiah \$20.00



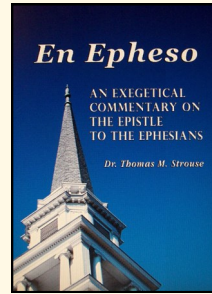
Daniel \$20.00



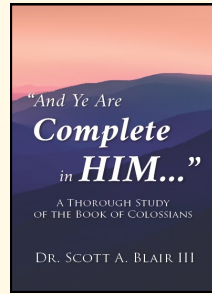
Acts 1-9 \$30.00



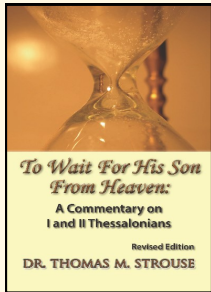
Acts 10-19 \$40.00



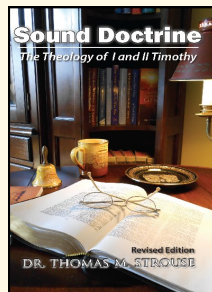
Ephesians \$20.00



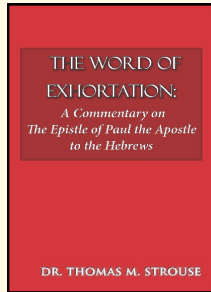
Colossians \$20.00



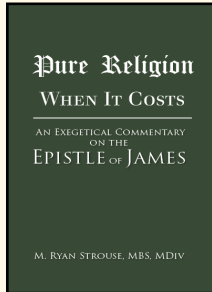
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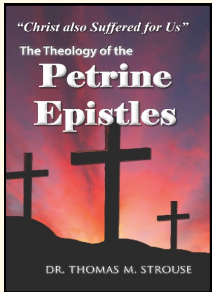
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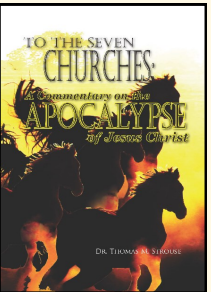
Hebrews \$30.00



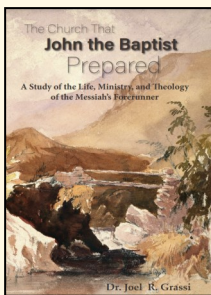
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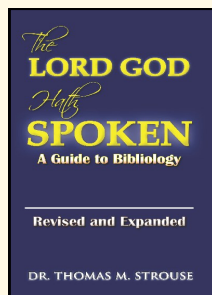
1 & 2 Peter \$20.00



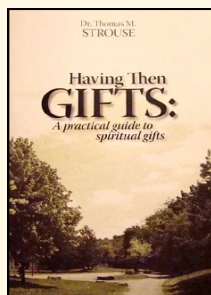
Revelation \$30.00



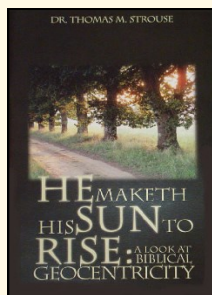
John the Baptist \$35.00



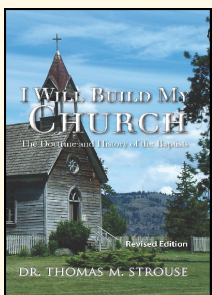
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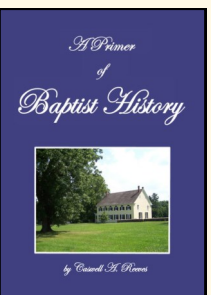
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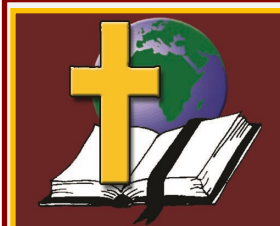


Baptist Doctrine & History \$15.00



Baptist History \$20.00

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Bible Baptist Theological Seminary
 A Ministry of Bible Baptist Church
 40 Country Squire Drive
 Cromwell, CT 06416
 860-613-2096
 www.bbc-cromwell.org