



BBC UPDATE

IRELAND MODULE



Dr. Thomas M. Strouse

The Ireland Module was a blessed time with many activities. Dr. Derry O’Sullivan collected me at the Dublin Airport and I stayed with him until Saturday evening. From there I went to stay overnight with Pastor and Mrs. Gene McKinley and family. I preached in Good News Baptist Church in two services and then went and sat on the Ordination Council of Mr. Aleksei Jusev. That night I went to the Zemeski house and stayed all week. The gracious Mrs. Kathi Zemeski hosted myself along with several others. During the week of May 22-26, 2023, the Lord blessed the Ireland Module with fifteen students and seminarians who studied the courses on the “Gospel of Luke and Medical Terms” (8 AM-1 PM) and the “Book of Acts 1-9” (5 PM–10 PM). The late Dr. Robert Zemeski initiated the plan in 2004 to have Bible Baptist Theological Seminary modules taught in Ireland to area pastors. During the years, several have graduated from BBTS under the teaching of Dr. Thomas Strouse, Dr. Aaron Strouse, and Dr. Joel Grassi. We are thankful for the prayers of all to make this week a blessing.



ORDINATION COUNCIL



On Sunday May 21, 2023, seven men sat on the ordination council to determine the qualifications of Mr. Aleksie Jusev for recommendation to the office of pastor of the River Valley Baptist Church. Brother Jusev is a member of River Valley Baptist Church and surrendered to the office of pastor in response in part to the prayers of the late Dr. Robert Zemeski, former pastor of the church. Pastor Zemeski and Bible Baptist Theological Seminary trained Brother Jusev. The council recommended him to the church for induction into the office after examining his testimony of salvation, call to the pastorate, and doctrinal knowledge. Brother Jusev is a candidate for the Master of Biblical Studies from Bible Baptist Theological Seminary at the commencement service in May 19, 2024.



THE WILL OF GOD AND PERSONAL HAPPINESS

Part Two: Man of Sorrows



Dr. M. Ryan Strouse

Luke 2:49, *“And he said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my Father’s business?”*

Matthew 16:25, *“For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it.”*

Luke 22:42 *“Saying, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done.”*

The Self-less Suffering Servant

Why should Christians put off the practical reality of the self-esteem movement in their personal life? This is the paradox the Savior calls His disciples to...lose your life to gain it (Mt.16:25; II Cor.4:7-18). The true disciple that takes up his cross and follows the Savior will inherently live a life of self-denial and selflessness, which is a **daily** battle for the old man and contrary to the Gnostic system of self-esteem (Lk. 9:23). Early in His Earthly ministry, Jesus was solely focused on doing His *“Father’s business.”* He was not encumbered with self-will and the temporal pleasures to enhance His self-esteem. The Lord Jesus Christ thought it not robbery being equal with God to take on flesh as a servant to carry the sin of ugly sinners (Phil.2:6-7). It was not about Him, but about accomplishing the will of the Father. Paul told the Hebrews, *“Consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself...”* (Heb.12:3a). Why? The God-man sought to please the Father, *“Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness”* (Mt.3:15). Self-denial and submissive obedience to the Father did not bring a bed of roses, but a life of suffering, resistance, despisal, and rejection; hence, the Lord Jesus Christ was a *“Man of sorrows”* who counted it all joy to endure the cross in submissive obedience to the Father (Is. 53:3; Heb.4:15, 12:2). Ultimately, His obedience would bring the powerful resurrection and exaltation as King (Phil.2:9-10).

The cost of discipleship has not changed in 2023; it still requires putting Christ and others before oneself (Mt.22:37-40; I Pt.2:21-23). The believer can have tremendous internal joy when he is Spirit-filled and resting in the sufficiency of Christ; however, we must accept the various sorrows and suffering that comes with pursuing the will of the Father (i.e., Royal Law, counting the cost, loving Christ more than the world, sharing the Gospel, submission Lord, local church, pastor, others, and seeking the Kingdom of God). The believer whose heart is focused on pleasing and glorifying the Father, because of the great gift of salvation through Christ, can count the things of the world as *“loss for Christ”* (Phil.3:8). Meanwhile, we can *“count it all joy”* as we mature in patient reliance on Christ amid suffering (Jms.1:2).

The Man of Sorrows Suffered in All Points Like Us

Hebrews 4:15 *“For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.”*

Disciples of Christ – Biblicist members of various local churches – are to follow the Savior, which will include *“divers temptations,”* ministering to *“publicans and sinners,”* and being hated by the lost (Jms.1:2; Jn.15:19-20). Jesus, *“God manifest in the flesh,”* perfectly suffered in all points common to man during His Earthly ministry; hence, He knows how we feel. (Phil.2:6-8). Similarly, Isaiah 53:2-3 states, *“For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, And as a root out of a dry ground: He hath no form nor comeliness; And when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him. He is despised and rejected of men; A man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: And we hid as it were our faces from him; He was despised, and we esteemed him not.”*

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MAN OF SORROWS

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The Savior-King did not bask in effortless glory during His Earthly ministry through collaboration with the self-esteem driven world; instead, **He operated perfectly in the will of God** and was completely despised. “*Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant...*” (Phil.2:6-8).

Biblical Christianity is not a great business model because once the Word is proclaimed at the wicked heart of an individual there is possibility that the “customer” will never come back. American Christians especially confuse this concept in a modern context; there is temptation to glorify Christian systems that successfully collaborate with the world. The only way to soft-peddle the Word of God is to hide it, because if it is proclaimed it will pierce, divide, and discern the wicked heart of man (Heb.4:12).

The following list is a brief look at a “day in the life” Christ Jesus’ Earthly ministry:

- The King of Kings arrival was laid in a manger for animals (Lk.2:6)
- His birth was anticipated by a few faithful (Simeon and Anna – Lk.2:15, 36)
- Joseph, Mary, and Jesus were led by the LORD to leave their home to hide from Herod for a season (Mt.2:12-22)
- Physical and Spiritual attack (Mt.4:1-10)
- No place to call “Home” on Earth (Mt.8:20)
- Misunderstood priorities (Mt.8:21-22)
- Accused for not fearing man’s standards (Mt.9:11)
- His disciples were also hated (Mt.10:13-15; Jn.15:15-20)
- Suspected of being demon possessed (Mt.11:18, 12:24)
- His closest disciple was offended by Him (Mt.11:6)
- His family was offended by His strong stand (Mt.13:57; Jn.7:5)
- His mother was slandered as a fornicator (Jn.8:41)
- His disciples were inattentive at times (Lk.22:45)
- His disciples fled at His most trying moment (Mt.26:56)
- He was betrayed by the one He gave the prized sop, Judas (Jn.13:26-30; Mt.27:3-10)
- Falsely accused and crucified (Mt.26:59)
- Ministered to by widows and women while on the cross (Jn.19:25)
- He was mourned by the previously demon-possessed Mary Magdalene (Jn.20:1-11)

Clearly, the Savior did not back in a superstar role who was fawned over by the multitudes during His ministry; certainly, the highlights of His ministry included the small, broken, feeble, and foolish that turned to Him in faith and repentance. The Savior’s life is the benchmark paradox for the disciple that walks by faith (II Cor.4:7-18). He is the King of Kings and Creator; nevertheless, He was ugly, despised, and rejected (Is.53:2-4). Only those who believed the Scriptures in faith saw that He was “*God manifest in the flesh.*” Has this paradoxical form of discipleship changed in 2023?

The Fear of the LORD

But why? Once again, the Savior set the example for His disciples during His Earthly ministry. The Lord Jesus Christ was motivated to “*fulfill all righteousness*” and to glorify the Father while in step with the other members of the Triune Godhead (Mt.3:15-17; Jn.17:1). Isaiah revealed that the Messiah would operate in the “*fear of the LORD*” by the seven-fold Spirit of God (Is.11:2-3). Isaiah 11:2 revealed the seven-fold Spirit of God would rest upon the Messiah, which is fulfilled in Matthew 3:15-17 (cf. seven-fold Spirit in Zech.3:9, 4:10; Rev.1:4). Interestingly, the Spirit and the Son both submit to the position of the Father in the Trinity in this passage (cf. Jn.14:28).

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An aspect of the seven-fold Spirit is the “*Fear of the LORD*,” which “*shall make him of quick understanding*” in the fear of the LORD. The phrase “*shall make him of quick understanding*” is based on a single Hebrew verb (*riach*), which means “smell, scent, or odor” (cf. Gen.8:21, 27:27). As well, it is a pun on the Hebrew word behind “*Spirit*” (*ruach*) in verse two. In essence, the seven-fold Spirit of God would cause the Messiah to smell like the “*Fear of the LORD*.” It is appropriately rendered as “*shall make him of quick understanding*” in the sense that He was quickly recognized as fearing the LORD when He walked into a room. In all that He did, the Lord Jesus Christ always carried the scent of the “*Fear of the LORD*.” Positionally, He submitted Himself at every turn in humble obedience out of majestic reverence for the Father. Likewise, the Spirit-filled believer walks in the fear of the LORD and manifests the fruit of the Spirit. What do you smell like?

Light Affliction for the Eternal Weight of Glory

Hebrews 11:25, “*Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season.*”

Does the Christian have any hope or joy amid the temporal suffering? Yes, it is focusing on the spiritual Kingdom of God *in faith* by becoming “*rich toward God*” and making “*bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not*” (Lk.12:21, 33). Simply, it is eternal reward through a life of faith and obedience. Paul masterfully highlights the paradox of true discipleship in II Corinthians 4:7-18, which is anchored in the riches of Christ: treasure in earthen vessels; excellent power of God through weak man; troubled, but not distressed; perplexed, but not in despair. While the outward man is persecuted and suffers natural decay, the inner man is renewed by the Spirit in deeper reliance on Christ. In our greatest physical losses, we will never be disappointed with or forsake by the indwelling Godhead within. II Corinthians 4:18 sums up Biblical discipleship succinctly, “*While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.*”

Psalms 31:19, “*Oh how great is thy goodness, which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee; Which thou hast wrought for them that trust in thee Before the sons of men!*”

The LORD lays up treasures of goodness for those who live a life fearing the LORD and obeying Him in front of the lost world and carnal Christians that collaborate with the world. Yes, it costs and goes through deep waters, but the eternal weight of glory far outweighs the current “*light affliction.*” The greatest exchange (Christ for the wretched man) should manifest reasonable sacrifice...our surrendered lives (Rom.12:1-2).

What About You?

- What aspect of self-will and self-esteem dominates your heart?
- Are you trying to serve God, money, and self-will at the same time?
- Matthew 6:24 says it's impossible.
- Are you hesitant to submit to the Father's will because of suffering and sorrow?
- All creation suffers. You can choose to suffer for Christ or suffer chasing vanity.
- Do you have a Biblical fear of the LORD in your life? Or is God small, distant, and aloof to you?
- Is your eye focused on the spiritual and eternal through faith? Or on the temporal and physical in sight?
- Does the world need another lukewarm, carnal disciple?

Part one (“The Self-Esteem Movement and Christianity”) can be found in the May 15, 2023 BBC Update.

THE ORDINANCE OF BAPTISM

On Sunday May 28, 2023 the Lord blessed BBC with a beautiful day to observe the ordinance of baptism. The afternoon service was conducted outside at the home of church members Mr. and Mrs. Bill Gagnon. Afterwards we gathered around the pool to witness Francisco Melendez follow Christ in obedience in baptism, (which followed his repentance and faith of salvation), and placed him into membership of Bible Baptist Church.



BBC/BBTS 2023/2024 SCHEDULE

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

November 3
BBTS Fall Lecture Series
 Galilean Baptist Church
 Stafford Springs, CT
TBA

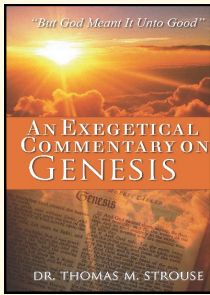
December 10
Commencement Service
 Seoul, Korea

2024
January 1-5, 2024
Ireland Module
TBA

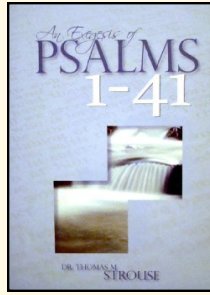
January 15-19, 2024
Fairhaven Baptist College
 Chesterton, IN
Module TBA

Feb 26-March 1, 2024
Philippines Module
 Quezon City
Module TBA

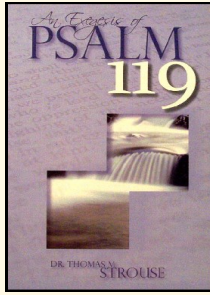
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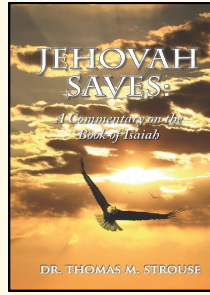
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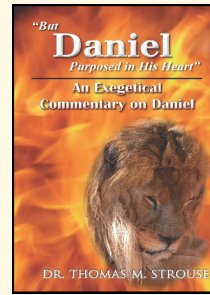
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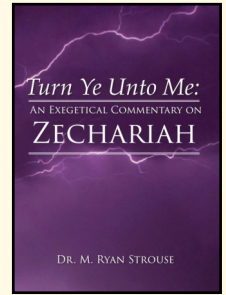
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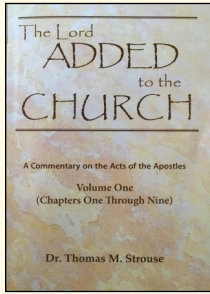
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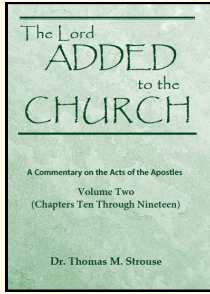
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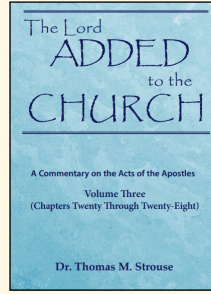
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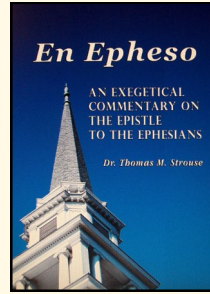
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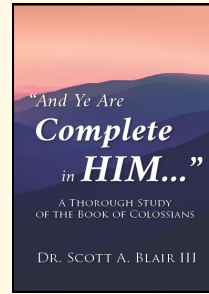
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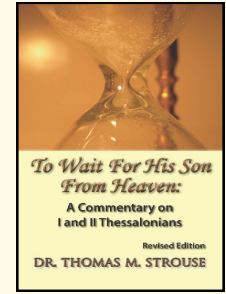
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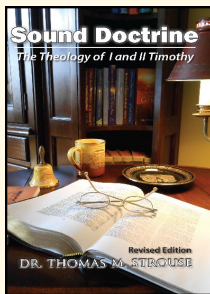
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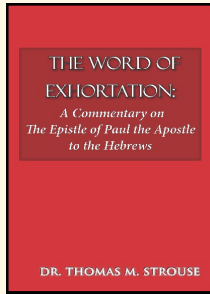
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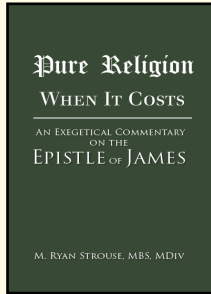
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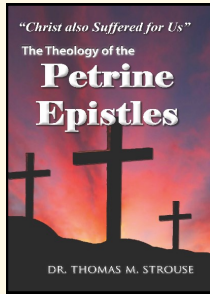
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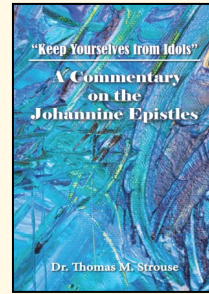
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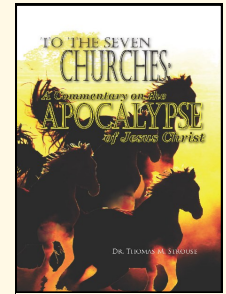
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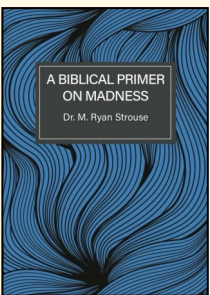
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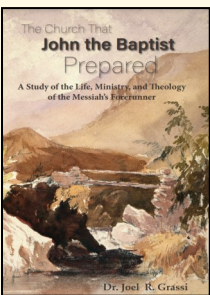
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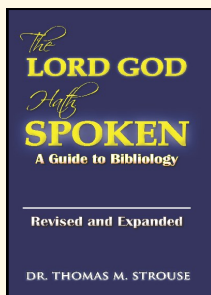
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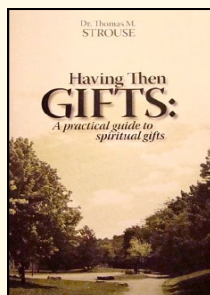
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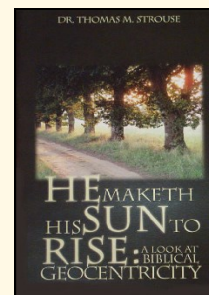
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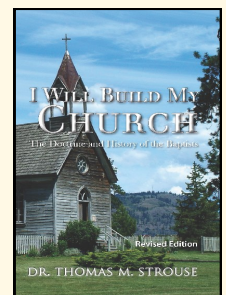
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