



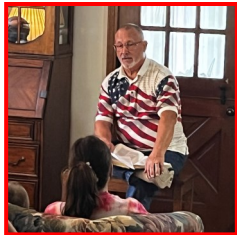
BBC UPDATE

JULY 4TH COOKOUT



Dr. Thomas M. Strouse

JULY Fourth was a day of mixed weather and great showers of blessings. Bible Baptist Church held the national day annual cookout at the Strouse House. While heavy rains came in the early afternoon, Bible Baptist Church had a preaching service in the living room with sister church Pastor David Short. Brother Short expounded and applied the truth of Ps. 33:12, which states, *“Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD; and the people whom he hath chosen for his own inheritance.”* (Ps. 33:12). We met in the same room where twenty-seven baptized believers covenanted and constituted together to charter Bible Baptist Church in December, 2009. After the rains, plenty of fun and fellowship ensued, with a competitive game of croquet.



Pastor Short preaches to the attendees



An indoor picnic



Croquet “Tournament”



Great friends



Bill teaching Croquet 101



Pastor with his grandsons



Christy & Kirsten



The youth enjoyed fun and games also



FROM POWER TO PARALYSIS: ELIJAH'S DISAPPOINTMENT WITH JEHOVAH



Dr. M. Ryan Strouse

*“...and he requested for himself that he might die;
and said, **it is enough**; now, O LORD, take away my life”*
I Kings 19:4

Introduction

Jezebel's threat of death exasperated the already exhausted Elijah. The powerful man of prayer was brought to a point of paralyzing despair – he had enough of the constantly hot spiritual battle and made bold proclamations to the LORD. Jezebel's threat placed Elijah in another refining pot that removed all possibilities of self-reliance and ease; another test that would require total faith in Jehovah. In Elijah's mind, the conclusion of his spiritual walk of faith and physical life were in plain view of Jezebel's real threat. Apparently, Elijah expected a break or blessing for his obedient service for the numerous tests from before (I Kngs.17-19). In disappointment, Elijah tells Jehovah *“it is enough”* because 1) he was brought to the end of himself (a powerless position) through total exhaustion, and 2) he was not getting what he expected from the LORD.

Elijah is known throughout scripture as a powerful man of prayer and a hero of the faith (Jms.5:17-18). However, this account of despair and disappointment emphasizes what James said about Elijah that he was *“a man subject to like passions as we are...”* (Jms.5:17). He, too, was a wretched sinner with a flawed temporal perspective from time to time. How could such a powerful man of faith crumble so quickly to despair? Is such an account possible for esteemed 21st century Christians? Of course! When was the last time you told the LORD *“it is enough?”*

This passage shows that the refining fire of the LORD is a life-long process that intertwines with the life of faith, and the end product of “pure gold” holiness will be manifest at the resurrection of the dead through the power of Christ (I Cor.15:53). The life of faith sifts out obvious sin and further refines to expose the deep-seated sins of pride, self-righteousness, and self-reliance. We must have the biblical expectation that the LORD will continue to refine us by His grace until our resurrected bodies.

Similar to Elijah, Paul would be used tremendously, but the LORD would allow a thorn in the flesh to prevent boasting and self-reliance; subsequently, Paul could only accomplish the LORD's will through the sufficient grace of Christ (II Cor.12:9-11). The life of faith is meant to empty progressively the self-righteous, self-reliant Christian by bringing them to the end of themselves, with the purpose of developing a greater dependence on Christ (Ps.107:27). However, when we exchange biblical truth with temporal expectations, we will find ourselves in disappointment saying, *“it is enough, now, O LORD.”*

FROM POWER TO PARALYSIS: ELIJAH'S DISAPPOINTMENT WITH JEHOVAH

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Vacillation of Faith

It must be noted that Elijah was not a novice in the spiritual battle for the LORD, and Jezebel's real threat was not as immediate as his two confrontations with Ahab face to face (I Kgs.17:1, 18:17). The LORD raised Elijah in the small, obscure town of Tish in Gilead. After his initial test with Ahab, the LORD would prove His faithfulness to Elijah at the Brook Cherith and in Zarephath ("*refining place*"). As well, he would be used to cast down the prophets of Baal in miraculous fashion.

A brief look at his faith in the Power of God:

- Confront Ahab about famine – prayed for no rain (I Kgs.17:1ff)
- Brook Cherith (I Kgs.17:3-7)
- Zarephath = refinery – melting down metal for refinement (Job 23:10, Prov.17:3, Is.48:10, I Pt.1:7)
- Healed the widow's son (I Kgs.17:21-24)
- Prayed down fire upon false prophets (I Kgs.18:17-40)
- Approached Ahab after 3.5 years of famine – prayed for rain (I Kgs.18:17)

Uncharacteristically, Elijah would literally leave the mountain top (Mt. Carmel) experience of praying for rain to cripple at the cruel message of Jezebel. Furthermore, we see the subtle irony of Elijah's previous message to Israel, "*How long halt ye between two opinions?*" (I Kgs.18:21). Israel vacillated between Baal and Jehovah, whereas Elijah vacillated between self-will and Jehovah. The point is not that Elijah was an overt hypocrite, but that he too vacillated between two opinions in the life of faith. When was the last time your faith vacillated? Did you repent and reorient to Truth? Did you wallow in disappointment?

The believer's dilemma with double mindedness is seen throughout scripture.

The Trouble with Double: Faith vs. Sight		
Word	Meaning	Verse
"Vain thoughts" (רָעָה, se-eph)	split mind	Ps.119:113
"Doubt" (δισταζω, distazo)	to stand in two ways	Mt.14:31
"Doubleminded" (δίψυχος, dipsychos)	two minds, spirits	Jms.1:8

Disappointment with Jehovah

"*It is enough*" resounds the message that Elijah was done with the LORD's way. He pivoted from faith to disappointment/anger, which placed him in a proud, self-reliant position. Per usual, exhausted self-reliant attempts to fix one's problems descends the path of his indignant request to have his life ended. This passage should jolt believers to understand the *rapid sequence of the downward spiral of unbelief*.

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FROM POWER TO PARALYSIS: ELIJAH'S DISAPPOINTMENT WITH JEHOVAH

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Faithful Christian, have you ever been disappointed with God? Has affliction, persecution, or suffering come into your life despite faithfully serving the Savior? Are you unable to manipulate God and His blessings with your righteous checklist? You probably do not come out and utter the statement, but in your heart, you slowly stop trusting the LORD with your life. Maybe you did not get life on your terms. (persecution, betrayal, sickness, death of loved one...).

Has the following question crossed your mind, *“where’s my blessing for all my obedience?”* Maybe like John the Baptist, we ask in our own way *“Art thou He that should come, or do we look for another?”* (Mt.11:3). Your prayer life diminishes because what is the point if you do not get life on your terms. You go through the motion, but you keep the LORD at arm’s length? The danger with disappointment toward Jehovah is that it leads to a heart of unbelief, which can inevitably harden one’s heart that rapidly descends into madness.

Consider your understanding of Sovereign God over the most righteous of believers - Job (Job 1:13-22), John the Baptist (Mt.11:2-6), and those included in Hebrews 11 (*“being destitute, afflicted, tormented; of whom the world was not worthy”*). Furthermore, consider the Father’s dealing with His obedient Son, Jesus Christ; *“Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin...”* (Is.53:10).

God is holy, good, and sovereign; yet His way is often offensive toward sinful mankind in the sense that His sovereign plan does not align with our plan. Christ stated, *“And blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me”* (Mt.11:6; cf. other verses on Christ offending - Mt.13:21, 15:12, 26:31, Mk.6:3, Jn.6:61). Subsequently, faithful believers can fall into the trap of expecting their plans to play out from God in return for obedience. However, God’s definition for “good” is in line with His Word and sovereign plan that uses all evil for good (Gen.50:20, Rom.8:28), whereas man’s definition of “good” is easily influenced by the surrounding culture.

Elijah’s disappointment led to a steep drop off in faith, which caused him to despair. He was done, he had nothing left. Escapism and requesting the LORD to take His life were the result. Is Elijah an “extreme” example or is this a normative test in the narrow way of faith?

Jehovah’s Care: Get up and take the next step

I Thessalonians 5:24 *“Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it.”*

Psalm 77:13, 19 *“Thy way, O God, is in the sanctuary... Thy way is in the sea, and thy path in the great waters, and thy footsteps are not known”*

Conclusion on page 5

FROM POWER TO PARALYSIS: ELIJAH'S DISAPPOINTMENT WITH JEHOVAH

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Thankfully, the LORD in His mercy and grace lovingly picks up and gently restores the downcast believer with physical nourishment, spiritual rebuke, and continued service. Most importantly, He uses the evil response for good to the repentant believer through growing dependence on Him. The LORD responded by tending to Elijah's physical needs (I Kgs.19:5-7 - sleep, food, water). Then He called him away to Mt. Horeb for forty days and nights for an intensive discipleship lesson.

The LORD inquired of Elijah, who responded with self-pity "*I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away*" (I Kgs.19:10). The LORD then revealed His almighty power over the mountains, wind, earthquake, and fire; seemingly, a gesture to reorient Elijah to His authority as God and Creator. Nevertheless, the LORD inquired a second time, and received the same response (I Kgs.19:13-14). Nevertheless, the LORD instructed him to take the next step in serving Him. The LORD's parting message gently swiped at Elijah's pity as a reminder that seven-thousand others in Israel faithfully served the LORD – he was not alone in this battle (I Kgs.19:18).

Conclusion

Psalm 119:71 "*It is good for me that I have been afflicted; That I might learn thy statutes.*"

The LORD was not finished refining Elijah. The Sovereign LORD uses all evil, including our sinful responses, to bring about opportunities for repentance and refinement in dependence on Him and His Word. However, we should not use this as license to abuse the grace of God, but to tread carefully in our walk of faith. It is possible that disappointment leads to a hard heart of unbelief that can rapidly descend into madness.

Gauge your heart for disappointment toward God:

- Despite your faithful service, have your plans and dreams not come to fruition?
- Are you trusting the LORD or internally distancing yourself?
- Are you growing in self-reliance?
 - * Anger – mad things did not go your way
 - * Fear – afraid evil will happen again
 - * Regret – looking back and second guessing obedience
- Are you at the point of despair?
 - * Remember the goodness of God
 - * Are you willing to reach out to a pastor or believer for help?



PHOTOS

PHOTOS



Above: The BBC Choir practices for an upcoming special.

Below: Some church members enjoy sparklers after the Wednesday evening service.



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SCHEDULE

BBC/BBTS 2023/2024 SCHEDULE

July 24-28
Calvary Independent Baptist Church
 Plymouth, NH
The Johannine Epistles

September 4
Labor Day Cookout
 Strouse House
 2-7PM

September 10-12
Community Baptist Church
 Coopersburg, PA
Conference on the Blessed Hope

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

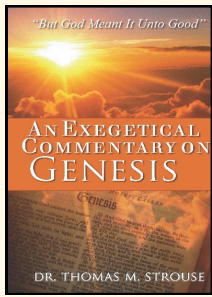
December 10
Commencement Service
 Seoul, Korea

2024
January 1-5, 2024
Ireland Module
 TBA

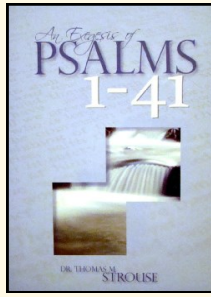
January 15-19, 2024
Fairhaven Baptist College
 Chesterton, IN
 Module TBA

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

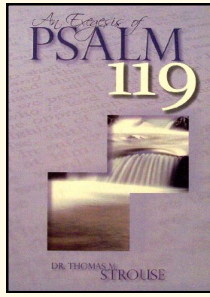
The Publication Page



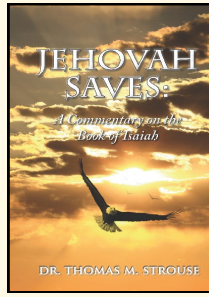
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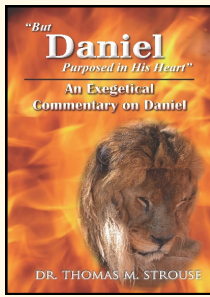
Psalms 1-41
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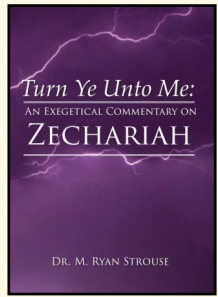
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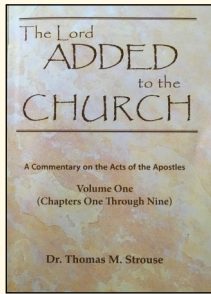
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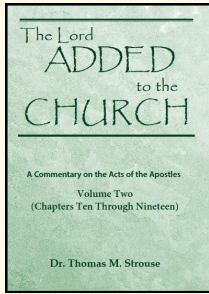
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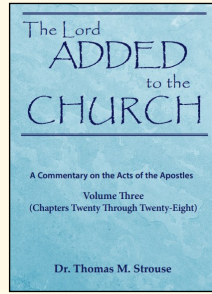
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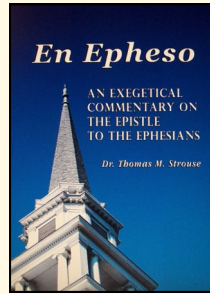
Acts 1-9
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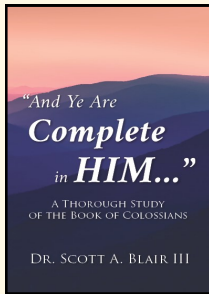
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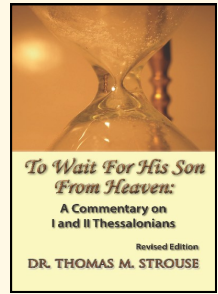
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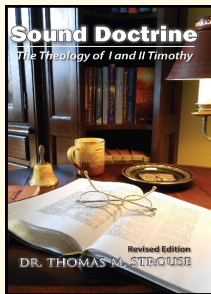
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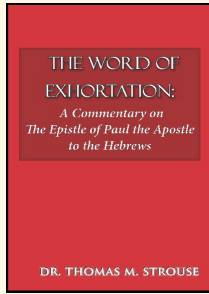
Colossians
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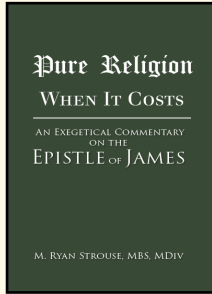
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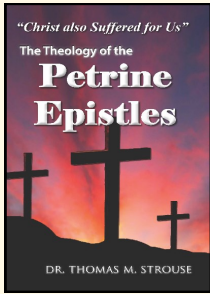
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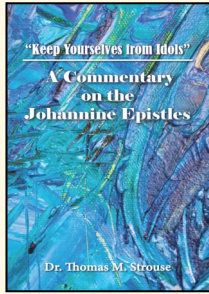
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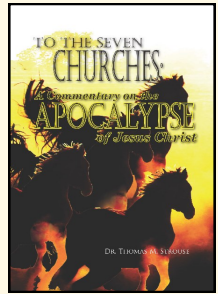
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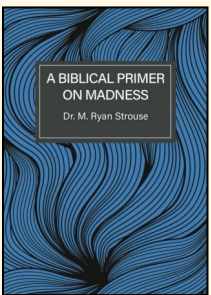
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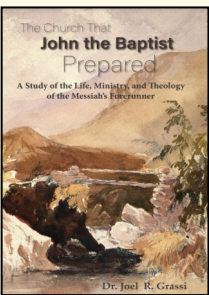
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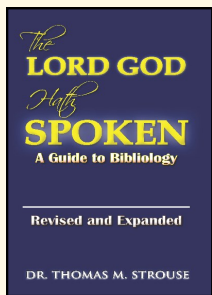
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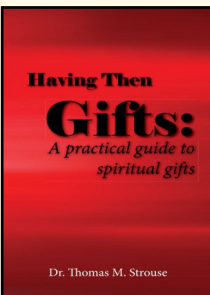
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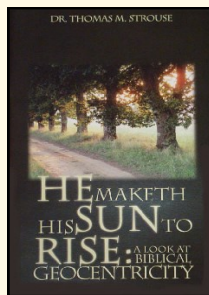
John the Baptist
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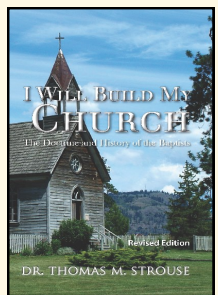
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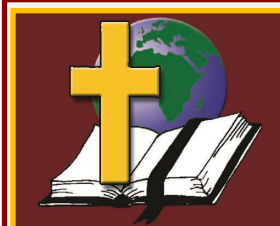
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Baptist Doctrine & History
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