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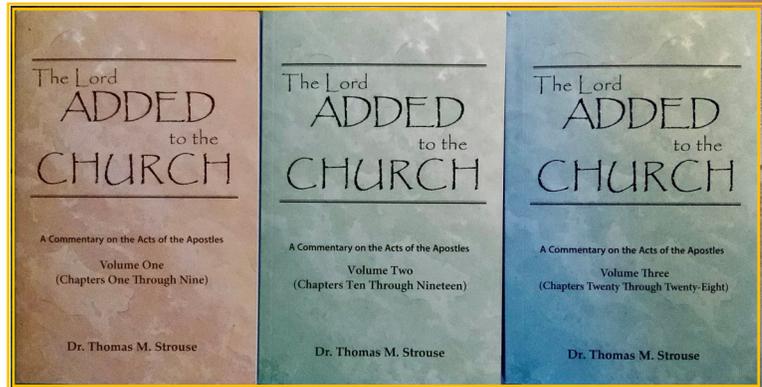
JULY 1, 2022

THE BOOK OF ACTS, VOLUME THREE



Dr. Thomas M. Strouse

Dr. Thomas Strouse is pleased to announce that the Third Volume of his three volume commentary on *The Lord Added to the Church. A Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles* (Chapters Twenty through Twenty-Eight) is now available. This last volume contains 609 pages with three appendices. The three volume set has a total of 1948 pages and 6717 footnotes chocked full of Hebrew and Greek words and grammar with biblical notes and cross references for relevant study. The three volume set contains about one half millions words, and is the product of about three and one half years of daily study of and writing about the second work addressed to Theophilus from the physician Luke, the *Book of Acts*. The commentary is an effort to help pastors and church members to have a better understanding of the *Book of Acts*, including difficult passages and interpretative issues. This work attempts to refute with Scripture Protestant eisegesis and para-church assumptions. The First Volume covered Chapters One through Nine, and the Second Volume dealt with chapters Ten through Nineteen. The Bibliography contains over two hundred and fifty entries of relevant works, old and new, on the *Book of Acts*. All three volumes sell for \$30.00 each or \$70.00 for the set plus postage.



THE CAUSES OF BIBLICAL MADNESS - PART 3



Dr. M. Ryan Strouse

The Curse of Sin – Biblical Expectations in a Fallen World

As a brief review from the previous article, what is normal in a fallen world? Romans 8:22-23 reminds all inhabitants of Earth, “*For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body*” (Cf. Gen.3:7-19). The normal expectations in a fallen world for saved and unsaved include consequence from personal sin (shame), others’ sin (words, abuse, murder, deceit), and creation (disease, death, weather, disasters). Pain, sadness, and hopelessness are normal feelings in this cursed world because of our adamic nature that put Holy God – the Lord Jesus Christ – on the cross (Is.53:4; II Cor.5:21; I Pt.2:24; Heb.9:28). Only those who place their faith in Christ and have peace with the Father can overcome the world and have peace positionally and practically (Rom.5:1; I Jn.5:4). To quote Dr. Thomas M. Strouse, “*Are you a victim of this world or an overcomer?*”

Continued on next page

BIBLICAL MADNESS—PART THREE

The American dream and other alternative routes of false euphoria seek to white wash the wretched reality of mankind and seek to mitigate the sting of the curse. Instead of Christ, the conservative capitalist finds hope in the moral acquisition of good and acceptable things that can steal their hope towards temporal glitter, which is only to be jerked away by the occasional intrusion of sin's curse into their perfect life. Meanwhile, the underbelly of society intimately knows pain and suffering, and sees no hope in a dark world – enter the light of the Gospel.

Despite one's background and societal class - the effects of living in a fallen world drive each individual to respond to the variety of consequences, which if not in the sufficiency of Christ and His Word will propound abnormal spiritual and mental behavior. The differentiating factor in a fallen world is one's perspective, which is either through the myriad of secular constructs or focused on Christ through the Word of God.

Response to the Experiences of a Fallen World

How an individual *chooses* to respond to the painful experiences of the fallen world is based on their perspective – secular or Biblical. Adam and Eve sinned in a perfect environment, which is a pivotal point in upending the deterministic secular view that humans are either victims or victors of their genetics and environment (nature vs. nurture). Adolf Meyer insisted that the determinants of abnormal behavior were from one's cumulative negative events of life history up to the point of abnormality; conversely, positive behavior derived from one's cumulative positive events of life. Essentially, those who grow up in perfect environments will have mental stability and those who grow up in negative environments will have mental abnormalities.¹ Scripture and history reveal this to be untrue as saved and unsaved individuals have risen from lowly backgrounds to temporal achievement because they chose not to be crippled by their circumstances.

The response to stress, pain, and trauma begins unseen in one's heart (Prov.3:1, 4:23). The natural man's initial response will be carnal and fleshly if not redeemed, controlled by the Spirit, and hoping in the promises of the Word of God (Ps.119:49, Eph.5:18). Even still, the redeemed individual must be filled with the Spirit, or they will respond in paralyzed fear, doubt, panic, and distress. The internal and carnal response of the heart will harbor and mull over time, which will eventually manifest externally and begin to impair activities of daily living. The external manifestations of spiritual distress are labeled as mental illness (anxiety, depression, bipolar, schizophrenia). Again, secular constructs provide labels that paralyze the Biblical response of self-reflection, repentance, and dependence on the Lord.

The Biblical perspective is that mankind is called to live by faith (Rom.1:17), whereas Satan tempts the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life that promote sight-based living. The life of faith is centered on the Lord Jesus Christ and His Word, who set the perfect example of how to respond to all issues of the fallen world. Hebrews 4:15 reveals His example for the believer's response in all areas, *"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."*

The epistle of *James* was written to persecuted churches and believers that faced a variety of tribulations that included personal sin (Jms.1:13-15), effects of others sin (Jms.3:3-12, 4:1-4), and natural causes (Jms.5:14). These tribulations would encompass a diverse array of responses such as fear of man, panic, trauma, instability, and double mindedness that would result in a vicious downward cycle of sin and chaos if not countered with a Biblical response

¹Ibid, p.5.

(Acts 8:1-4; Jms.3:14-18). James pointed to the “*Perfect*” Lord Jesus Christ who responded perfectly in word and deed to His experiences in the fallen world, which was exacerbated by Satanic opposition each step of the way (Jms.3:2; Mt.4:1-10). In essence, believers need to patiently hope and wait on the Lord Jesus Christ during difficulties of all sizes for an eternal reward (Jms.1:12; II Cor.4:16-18). However, believers that depart from the place of Wisdom (church – pillar and ground of truth) and subsequently lack wisdom from the Word, will become spiritually double-minded and unstable as they follow carnal wisdom by default (Jms.1:8; 3:14-15). *James*, along with other scripture, reveals that the carnal hearts of man that do not patiently wait on the LORD, but follow carnal wisdom that will tend toward double-mindedness, instability, chaos, fighting, and immorality (Jms.3:14-4:5). The manifestations of deep and persistent instability outside Biblical wisdom are commonly diagnosed as anxiety, depression, bipolar, and schizophrenia.

Response to the Sin of Others

Genesis records the harrowing life of Joseph, while being a sinful young man, he was often the recipient of other individual’s sinful deeds. His brothers cast him into a pit and sold him into slavery (Gen.37:28). He was tempted and slandered by Potiphar’s wife (Gen.39:1-10). He was wrongfully imprisoned (Gen.39:20). He was helpful and friendly, but his deeds were forgotten and unappreciated (Gen.40:23). Joseph’s responses were based on his fear of the LORD (Gen.39:9, 42:19). Joseph prefigured the Lord Jesus Christ, who was wrongfully accused, betrayed, slandered, and harmed by others. The sin of others is painful and hurtful; however, believers are to respond as the Lord Jesus Christ and not in the flesh.

The Spiritual Damage inflicted by the Tongue

Proverbs 18:21 reveals the severe damage that can be inflicted on another person by the tongue, “*Death and life are in the power of the tongue: And they that love it shall eat the fruit thereof.*” The verse is a warning for speakers and listeners. Those who speak must ensure they do not use their fiery member as a tool to harm others spiritually, which can lead to physical ramifications (Jms.3:1-10). Those who receive deadly words must choose to respond in a Christ-like manner to mitigate the sting and hurt inflicted by the words. I Peter 2:22-23 highlights the Lord’s response to deadly words, “*Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously.*” The tongue is an “*Unruly evil, full of deadly poison*” that can inflict deadly wounds; however, Christ held his tongue and committed himself to the Righteous Judge.

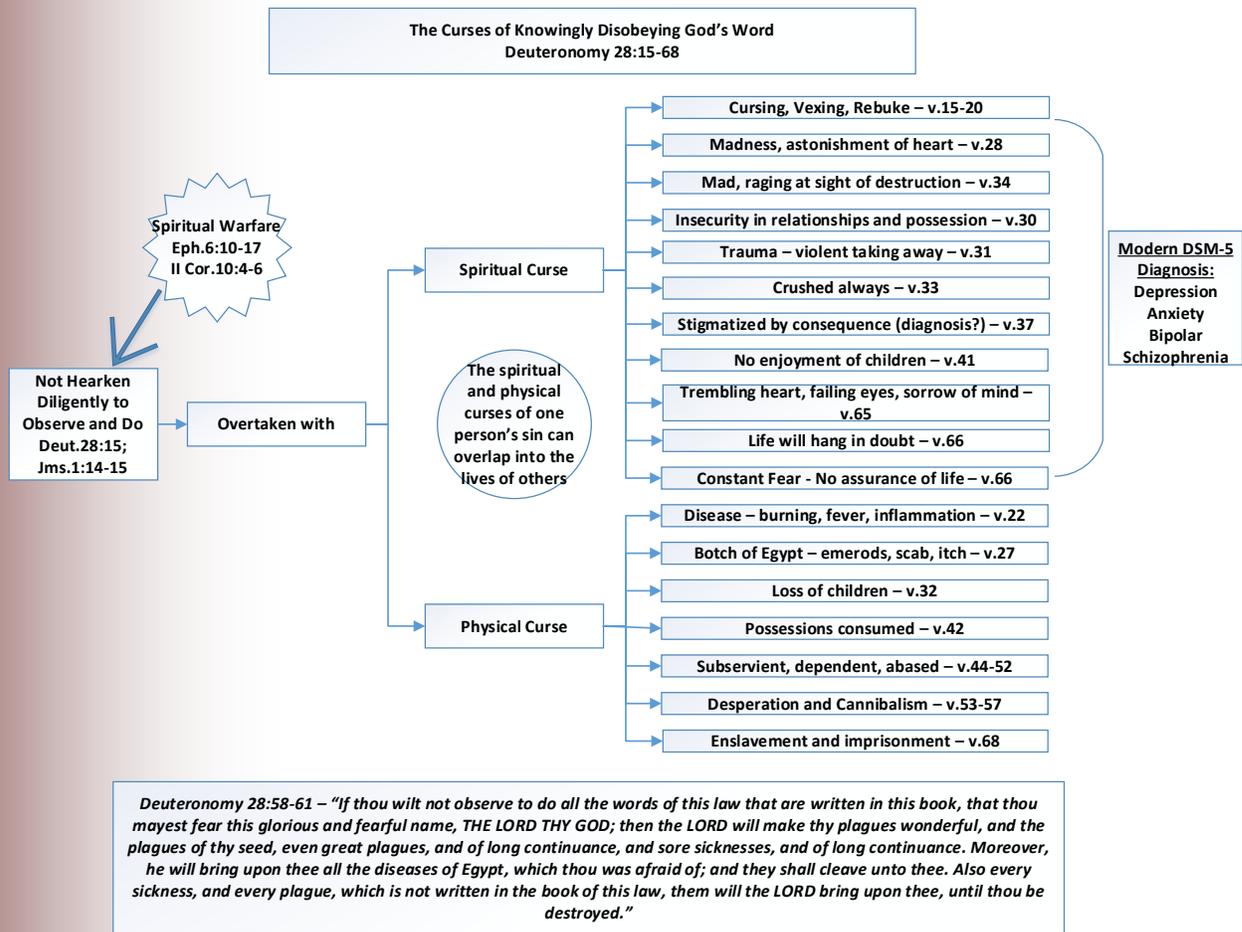
Response to Natural Causes

Tragedy, disease, and death are to be expected in a fallen world. Luke 13:1-5 provides the Lord Jesus Christ’s response to the woeful circumstances that cause unexpected death. The first event was the slaying of certain Galileans by Pilate, whose blood was mingled with pagan idols. The second event was the tragic toppling of the tower of Siloam that killed eighteen individuals. The Lord’s response to both events dealt with the eternal and spiritual realm instead of the temporal realm of distress; twice He declared, “*Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish*” (Lk.13:3, 5). In their temporal distress and mourning, the Lord pointed them to the eternal ramifications of dying without tasting the water of everlasting life through faith and repentance. The eternal state with its rewards or consequences must be preeminent in dealing with temporal issues of living in a fallen world (II Cor.4:16-18; Jms.1:12).

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Disobeying God's Word

Ultimately, responding to personal sin, others sin, or natural causes of the fallen world must be according to scripture; responding in adherence to secular wisdom not in line with scripture is sin and will exacerbate the problem. Disobedience to God's Word begins in one's heart and then manifests externally. Our nature is to deceive and be hypocritical by masking our true heart; hence, the seemingly "innocent" person can manifest behavioral issues "Out of the blue." Whereas, others will openly rebel against God, His Word, parents, and follow sinners (Prov.1:1-10). Deuteronomy 28 details that spiritual decisions to obey God's Word in all areas will result in spiritual and physical blessings or spiritual and physical curses. The focal point of the passage is that the spiritual drives the physical, and not the other way around. Deuteronomy 28:28 reveals a few of the spiritual curses of disobedience as "Madness," "Blindness," and "Astonishment of heart." These spiritual curses entail furious and fanatic thinking full of darkness and confusion (cf. Jms.1:8). See the below figure "The Curses of Knowingly Disobeying God's Word" for a visual breakdown of the passage.



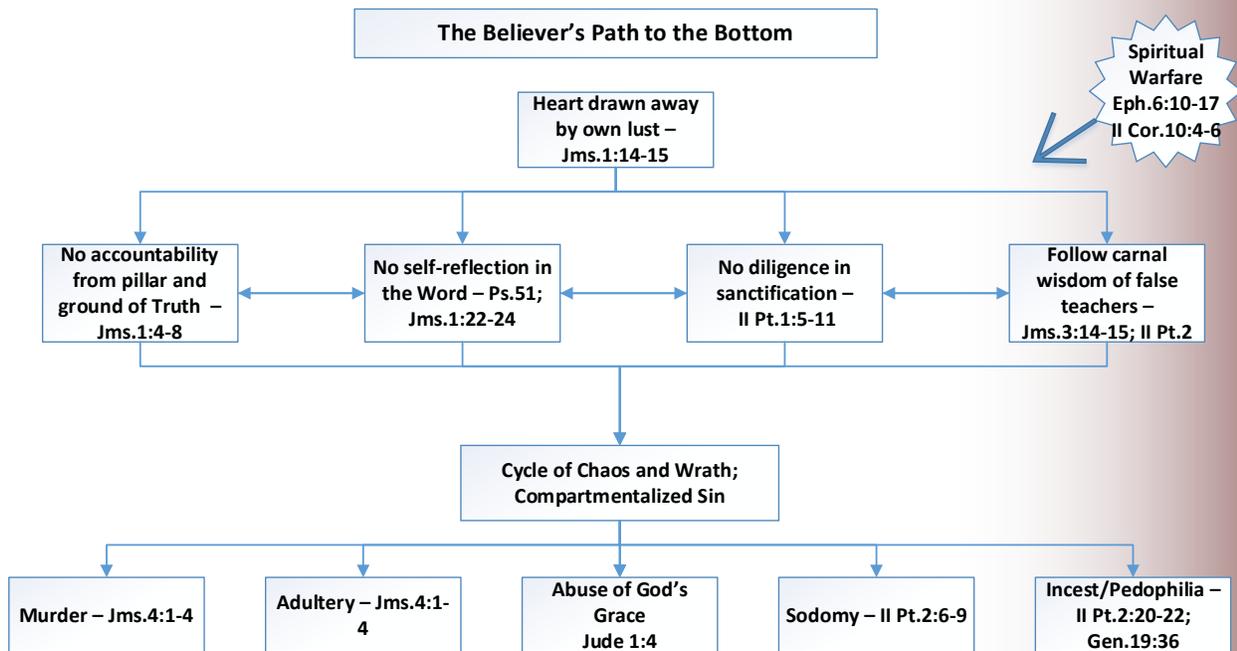
Spiritual Warfare

Living in a fallen world with a wicked heart is miserable enough; however, on top of those elements lies the persistent attacks of Satan and demons. Ephesians 6:12 reveals that believers "wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." Paul revealed the demonic hierarchy that provides constant attack on the believer. Matthew 4:1-10 reveals that the Lord Jesus Christ was tempted by Satan, but the Lord rebutted each temptation with the all-powerful Word of God! Christ warned Peter of Satan's attack in Luke 22:31, "And

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the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat.” Acts 5:3 reveals the Satanic attack on two saved church members, Ananias and Sapphira, “Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost.” As demonstrated in Matthew 4, spiritual warfare ensues when the flesh is weakened; hence, spiritual attacks must be considered when looking at the full paradigm of one’s spiritual/mental condition.

The unsaved world walks “According to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience.” The Bible, history, and present practitioners of darkness reveal that all mankind can access the demonic realm through occultic instruments such as immorality, drugs, alcohol, piercings/tattoos, bloodletting, murder/abortion, etc. (Lev.19:28; Deut.14:1, 18:10; Zech.13:6; Mk.5:2-5). Modernized procedures of the occult realm are more sanitized and less macabre as previous generations; however, they are broadly accepted by society as was child sacrifice in most cultures for millennia.² Demonic possession is clearly seen in the unregenerate world that is replete with the instruments of the occult; however, demonic oppression can be seen in the realm of the believer that has regarded spiritual sin in their heart and is physically weak.



²British Anthropologist, Nigel Davies, provides a comprehensive look at the willful and mostly voluntary practice of human sacrifice that has touched every civilization of every millennia. Davies, N. *Human Sacrifice in history and today*. New York. William Morrow and Co. 1981.

Part One of this article can be found in the May 1st, and Part Two is in the June 1st, 2022 edition of the BBC Update.

BBC/BBTS 2022 SCHEDULE

<p style="text-align: center;">July 25-29 Calvary Ind. Baptist Church Plymouth, NH <i>"Biblical Geography"</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">August 22-26 Fairhaven Baptist College Chesterton, IN <i>Acts, Vol. 1 (Chapters 1-9)</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">September 5 Labor Day Cookout (2-7pm) Strouse House</p> <p style="text-align: center;">October 2-5 Willow Grove Baptist Church Waynesburg, PA <i>Bible Conference</i></p>
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GOD RECEIVES YOUR PRAYER

Psalm 6

¹ O LORD, rebuke me not in thine anger, neither chasten me in thy hot displeasure.

² Have mercy upon me, O LORD; for I am weak: O LORD, heal me; for my bones are vexed.

³ My soul is also sore vexed: but thou, O LORD, how long?

⁴ Return, O LORD, deliver my soul: oh save me for thy mercies' sake.

⁵ For in death there is no remembrance of thee: in the grave who shall give thee thanks?

⁶ I am weary with my groaning; all the night make I my bed to swim; I water my couch with my tears.

⁷ Mine eye is consumed because of grief; it waxeth old because of all mine enemies.

⁸ Depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity; for the LORD hath heard the voice of my weeping.

⁹ The LORD hath heard my supplication; the LORD will receive my prayer.

¹⁰ Let all mine enemies be ashamed and sore vexed: let them return and be ashamed suddenly.



Pastor Cas Reeves

Are you at a low point in your life? It seems in this life there are many things that happen that can bring us to a low moment in our life. Did you know that God has a remedy for that low moment? That's right, God can fix any problem that we have. It's very much like going to the doctor when you have a physical ailment that needs a doctor's attention. Usually the doctor asks, "What may I do to help you?" And you begin to tell him your problem and how you feel.

When you are at your lowest moment in life you can go to the Great Physician, which is almighty God. He really wants you to come to Him with your problems. It seems from our text that David, the psalmist, was truly at a low point and sorely vexed, unable to sleep, unquenchable tears, consumed with grief and surrounded by enemies, who were the workers of iniquity. David needed help; he recognized it; he turned to the Lord; and he reveals this glowing testimony: "The LORD hath heard my supplication; the LORD will receive my prayer." So, the next time you are at that low point in your life, try taking it to the Lord. He is the Great Helper, who receives our prayers and gives help. -CAR

QUOTES FROM THE PAST



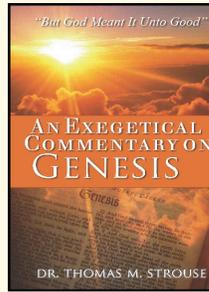
"...that no person within the said colony, at any time hereafter shall be any wise molested [harassed], punished, disquieted, or called in question, for any differences in opinion in matters of religion, and do not actually disturb the civil peace of our said colony;"

John Clarke (1609-1676)

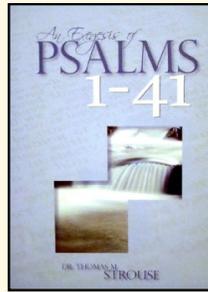
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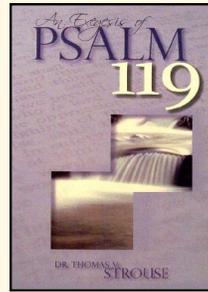
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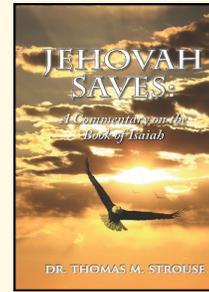
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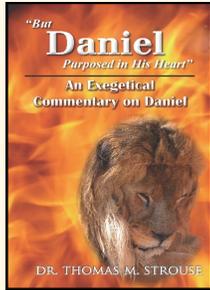
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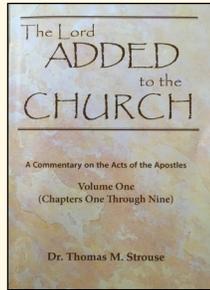
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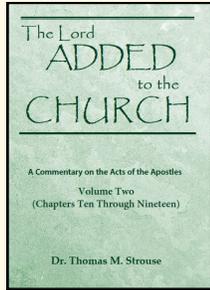
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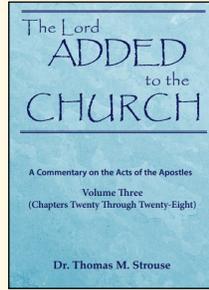
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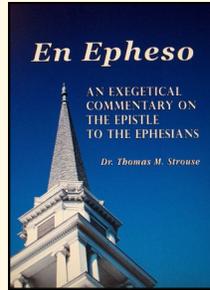
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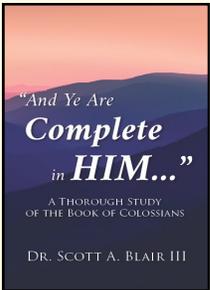
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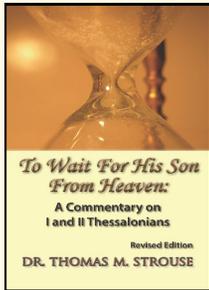
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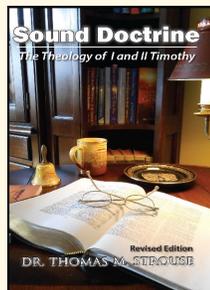
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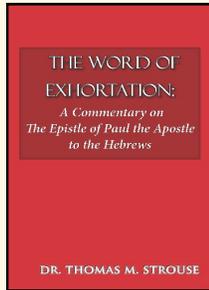
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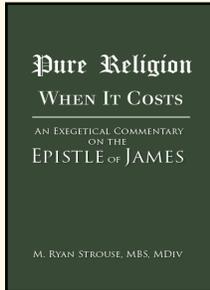
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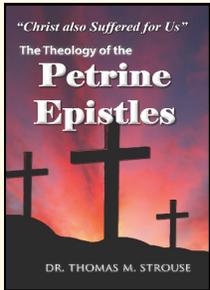
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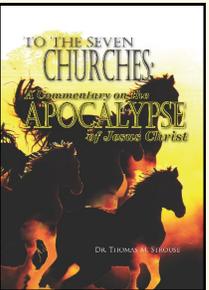
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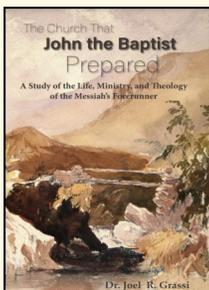
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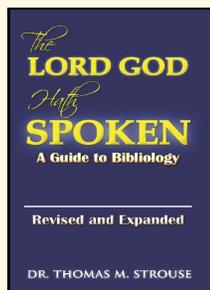
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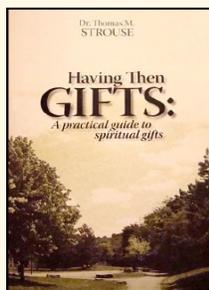
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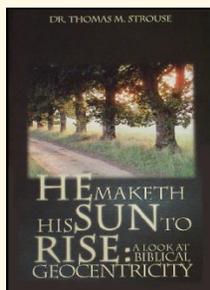
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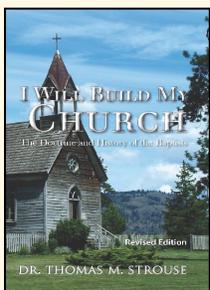
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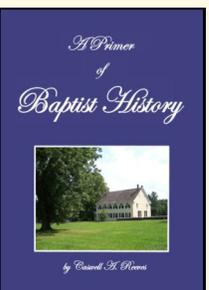
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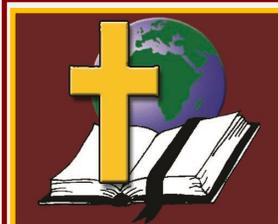


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