

BBC UPDATE

BBTS Module Classes Held in Ireland

Dr. Thomas Strouse



The Lord blessed the BBTS modules in Ireland this past week (May 27-31, 2013) held in the River Valley Baptist Church under the leadership of Dr. Robert Zemeski, pastor. There were 18 seminarians in attendance to take one or both of the Modules on Baptist History I and Petrine Epistles. Several

Dr. Thomas Strouse new seminarians were in attendance including Severus Astancai from Romania and Tom Hall from Oregon via Afghanistan. Recent 2013 graduates from BBTS also attended to continue their biblical education, including Mark Pereira (MBS), Jeff Skorupski (MDiv), Derry O'Sullivan (DD), and David Ellsmore (DD). Pray for these men as they study Scriptures with precision. The men received the free textbook entitled *Christ Also Suffered for Us: The Theology of the Petrine Epistles*.



Some of the men taking the Baptist History Class at the BBTS Module in Ireland.



Right: Petrine Module class consisting of 18 men from several different countries.



Dr. and Mrs. Davidson's Departure

It was with mixed feelings to have the Davidsons leave Connecticut and go back to their home in Wyoming. The sorrow was because they are gracious warriors in the fight for ecclesiological and bibliological truth and will be missed. The blessing was of course that they left to plant a NT assembly in their house while in their senior years. They made the arduous journey last week and had services in their home on June 2, 2013. We thank the Lord for this godly couple who have impacted spiritually many lives for Christ, including the members of BBC and her pastor. The former was privileged to stand shoulder to shoulder with them in some heated battles and come through the deep waters for the better, by God's grace. Pray for Dr. and Mrs. Harold Davidson as they start a NT assembly in Cody, WY.



Left: Dr. Harold and Edith Davidson are moving back home and planting a new church in Cody, WY. Please pray for this Godly couple as they begin this new endeavor. They will be greatly missed by the BBC Family.

HBTS GRADUATION



Above: Heritage Baptist Theological Seminary celebrated its 4th Annual Graduation. Pastor Strouse and Brother Jeff Skorupski are both adjunct professors.

Right: The three graduates.



Above: Dr. & Mrs. Strouse are pictured with Dr. & Mrs. Henry Lee. Dr. Lee preached the graduation sermon.



BBTS Graduate

BBTS Graduate Mark Pereira receiving diploma for Master of Biblical Studies. Mark was unable to attend the BBTS graduation service last month. He received his diploma from Dr. Strouse at the Ireland module last week.



New BBTS Student



Tom Hall from Oregon via Afghanistan met Pastor O'Sullivan. He invited Tom to the module classes that were held in Ireland last week.



Pastor Stephen Finley and his family with their new ministry vehicle!

A Missionary's Need is Met!

Bible Baptist Church contributed financially to a need of the Finley Family, missionaries to Ireland. The Finley's expressed their thanks and gratitude in their recent prayer letter:

On June 1, we finally drove home in our own car—a 2006 Peugeot 807! It is a seven-seater, with a very decent amount of room for transporting things; and it has very low mileage, and a sound engine...We cannot adequately express how grateful we are to the many churches and individuals who have given toward the purchase of this van. To say that we are overwhelmed at the graciousness of God's people would be an understatement.

Christ also Suffered for Us:

The Theology of the Petrine Epistles

An Excerpt (pp. 37-42)

Dr. Thomas M. Strouse

Many commentators call I Peter 3:18-20 the *Descensus ad Inferos*. Whatever the title for this passage should be, there are many interpretations for these most complex and controversial verses. One of the main considerations to be determined for this passage is whether it is teaching the pre-existence of Christ in His pre-incarnate activity. To determine the Scriptural interpretation of I Peter 3:18-20, one must consider the various main interpretations with their strengths and weaknesses. There are five basic positions: a. the intermediate-second chance, b. the intermediate-victory, c. the figurative, d. the descent of Enoch, e. the pre-existent work of Christ.

According to the **Intermediate-Second Chance** view, Christ descended into Hades in His intermediate state between His death and resurrection to preach the Gospel to wicked men, allowing a second chance for their salvation. Thus, "the scope of redemption is not limited to this life."¹ This view is often considered with the passage in I Peter 4:6, equating the verbs "preach" in both passages. The basic difficulty with this view is that it is not supported by the Analogy of Scripture. It is often advocated by liberal theologians who deny eternal reprobation.

The **Intermediate-Victory** view, with several variations, holds basically to the idea that Christ descended into Hades after His death² and before His resurrection to proclaim His victory over death and the

BOOK EXCERPT

Devil to wicked angels,³ or to spirits of wicked men.⁴ The Romish doctrine teaches that He proclaimed victory to the saints on "the edge of the fathers" or those in *limbus patrum*.⁵ One argument against this view is that if Christ descended into Hades in His Spirit, then only His divine nature participated in this humiliation (exaltation) because His body was in the grave. Thus, the victory would only seem to be a partial victory over the *spirits in prison* since His humanity was not yet victorious over death.⁶ Berkhof adds an additional argument that Christ was passive at His crucifixion in that He offered up His spirit to God.⁷ The verb *went* (πορευθεῖς) poses another objection to this view. This verb is nowhere used in the New Testament to denote descending, but καταβαίνω, (Ephesians 4:9) would be more suitable. In the context πορευθεῖς means ascension (v. 22).⁸

The fact that Christ preached to beings who were disobedient eliminates the Romish position. The Old Testament saints could hardly be called disobedient spirits in prison. Furthermore, this passage does not include the phrase "descent into hades," but this doctrine is built on tradition looking back to the Apostolic

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³Rees, p. 91; Stibbs, p. 142 ff.; J. H. A. Hart, *I Peter* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1907), p. 68; Kelly, pp. 154-156; and Bo Reicke, p. 109.

⁴Alford, p. 368; R. C. H. Lenski, *The Interpretations of the Epistles of St. Peter, St. John, and St. Jude* (Columbus, OH: Wartburg Press, 1954), pp. 161-163; F. B. Meyer, *Tried By Fire* (Ft. Washington, PA: Christian Literature Crusade, 1973), pp. 123-124; and Weidner, p. 146.

⁵Addison Leitch, "Decent Into Hades," *Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*, ed. Merrill C. Tenney (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing Co., 1975), II, 104-105.

⁶To harmonize with this inconsistency, Lenski advances the argument that "the human spirit which went to heaven returned to the body that was lying in the tomb. Spirit and body, which had been separated in death, were reunited in the vivification . . . In that instant, after body and spirit had been united, Christ left the closed tomb . . . in his human body and spirit descended to hell and did what Peter relates" pp. 159-161. Cf. Francis Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics*, trans. J. T. Mueller (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1951), II, 317. Nevertheless, even with this ingenious position, he does not overcome the other theological and grammatical problems stated above.

⁷Berkhof, p. 342

⁸Kelly, pp. 155-156.

¹Hunter, p. 116. See also other Protestant liberals: J. W. C. Wand, *The General Epistles of St. Peter and St. Jude* (London: Methuen and Co., 1934), p. 100.

²"Immediately after vivification" according to many Lutherans. Erwin L. Lueker, "Descent into Hell," *Lutheran Cyclopedia*, ed. Erwin L. Lueker (St. Louis: Concordia, 1954), p. 297.

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Continued from Page 3

Confession. With this in mind, the burden of proof falls on this view to demonstrate that Peter is even referring to any such thing as the “descent into hades.” Other passages often used to prove or corroborate this doctrine are eliminated under careful exegetical scrutiny.⁹ Finally, the charge that Christ taunted the “spirits in prison” has been leveled at this position.¹⁰ The heralding forth of victory to imprisoned spirits seems to be out of line with the character of Christ. Most of the above objections apply equally well to all variations of Christ’s *descensus ad inferos*.

The **Figurative** view maintains that this passage should be interpreted in a metaphorical manner, as referring to the sufferings of Christ at Gethsemane, on the cross, and in hell.¹¹ A variation of this position is that Christ preaches to spirits in prison whenever the gospel is preached.¹² The main problem with figurative interpretations is that they are highly subjective and are not grounded on solid exegesis of the text or the analogy of Scripture.

A fourth view is the highly interesting yet radical position advocated by J. Rendel Harris. This view suggests that the word “Enoch” was omitted from verse 19, although it was the subject of the sentence, because it is similar in sound to ἐν ᾧ καὶ. The advocates maintain that “Enoch” was omitted due to haplography, even though they believe that Enoch preached to fallen angels.¹³ This colorful view suffers from one main drawback; it lacks textual support from any manuscript. Although this position eliminates some of the problems of the previous views, it cannot be sustained on the basis of conjectural emendations.

The last view to be considered is the **Pre-existent Work of Christ** position. This view holds that Christ preached in the Spirit through Noah to Noah’s contemporaries who were then imprisoned in sin¹⁴ or who were imprisoned at the time Peter wrote.¹⁵ Both variations of this view maintain the pre-existent work of Christ through Noah to his extremely wicked generation that persecuted believers similar to Peter’s generation.

The ἐν ᾧ evidently refers to the Divine nature of Christ in pre-existent form, rather than His soul in contrast to His body, or the Holy Spirit. This view eliminates the problem that His nature only in part would participate in the *descensus ad inferos*. The *spirits in prison* refer not to antediluvian sinners who were bound in the prison of sin, a highly figurative interpretation, but to Noah’s sinful contemporaries who were bound in prison at the time of Peter’s writing because of their disobedience prior to the flood. The *spirits* were men (cf. Hebrews 12:23) rather than angels because the latter position is based on teachings from the apocryphal book I Enoch rather than Scripture.¹⁶ What Christ preached (ἐκήρυξεν) was the announcement of the coming flood to the disobedient antediluvians. Peter makes a distinction between this neutral word for preaching and the evangelistic preaching of the Gospel (εὐηγγελίσθη) in I Peter 4:6. To superimpose the one passage on the other creates false teaching resulting from improper exegetical techniques.

Peter is teaching about the vicarious suffering of Christ as He preached through Noah in His pre-incarnate ministry (cf. I Peter 1:10-12). This view is the Scriptural teaching of Christ’s pre-existent ministry based on proper exegesis. It avoids figurative interpretations, heretical universalism, and a partial victory for Christ to proclaim, not to mention an unscriptural descent to hades by Christ or Enoch.

⁹ See Berkhof’s discussion of Ephesians 4:9; I Peter 4:6; and, Psalm 16:8-10, pp. 341-342.

¹⁰Ryrie, p. 274

¹¹ John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, trans. Henry Beveridge (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1975), I, 444.

¹² Ryrie, pp. 274-275

¹³Francis W. Beare, *The First Epistle of Peter* (New York: The MacMillan Co., 1947), p. 145.

¹⁴S. S. Smalley, “Descent into Hades,” *New Bible Dictionary* ed. J. D. Douglas (Grand Rapids. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1977), p. 307

¹⁵Ryrie, p. 275

¹⁶ Kelly, pp. 154 ff.

THE DAVIDSON'S LAST DAY AT BBC



Many of the BBC Church family are pictured with the Davidson's in honor of the Davidson's last day as members of BBC.



August expounding on some of his views!

Fellowship time between services on the Davidson's last day.



One BBC youth enjoys his lunch outside on the step!

DEVOTIONAL CORNER

Just For Pleasure

Pastor Cas Reeves

*"Thy testimonies also are my delight
and my counsellors"*

Psalm 119:24



We read our Bibles often as Christians. We turn to God's Word for help and for comfort. We are strengthened and refreshed early as we find him. *"I love them that love me; and those that seek me early shall find me"* (Proverbs 8:17). We usually

Pastor Cas Reeves have a purpose for turning to the Scriptures for they also are counsellors. But note what else the Psalmist says, *"Thy testimonies also are my delight"* (vs.24). The word *"delight"* in Hebrew means *"enjoyment."* The word's prime root is *"shaw-ah"* meaning: *"to look"* the idea is to stare or to amuse upon with delight, just as we might gaze upon a brilliant sunrise or a magnificent sunset for our personal enjoyment.

The word *"delight"* also has the idea of *"fondle."* As when we were children and we lovingly and tenderly played with our toys. Remember how we played by the hours with our toy cars and trucks and

dolls and dollhouses, our erector sets and jump ropes, our hoola-hoops and pogo sticks, our baby carriages and bicycles. We played and fondled with these toys, which brought wonderful times of enjoyment to our lives as children.

The Psalmist says, *"Thy testimonies also are my delight"* (vs.24). The *"testimonies"* refer to God's Word. In fact they are God's Word. They are the accounts of God's great work with men. These *"testimonies"* build our faith, enrich our service and bring enjoyment to our personal life. Yes, the Bible should become a regular form of enjoyment in our lives.

The Apostle Paul testified in a supporting statement, *"For I delight in the law of God after the inward man"* (Romans 7:22). The Greek word for delight means: *"to rejoice within oneself, to feel satisfaction concerning."* Paul states, he rejoiced within himself and was completely satisfied by the *"law of God"* or the Word of God. He even notes: *"...after the inward man"* (vs.22). Because of the enjoyment and satisfaction God's Word can bring to our spirits, just as the Scripture verifies, we should make Bible reading for pleasure a regular part of our lives - Just for Pleasure. -CAR

Quotes From the Past:



John Adams

John Adams, , 1735-1826
2nd President of the USA

*"Let the pulpit resound with doctrine
and sentiments of religious liberty."*

New Bible Study

BBC started a new Bible study in an assisted living facility in Middletown, CT. Four residents attended as they heard a Gospel message and participated in discussion following. Pray for this new endeavor.



*The Gagnon Family ministered
in song during the Sunday
morning service.*

Homeschool International Day!

The BBC Homeschoolers will be involved in the First Annual International Day Celebration hosted by BBC! Over the next six months the students will have the opportunity to research a foreign country where a current BBC/BTS missionary resides. Each student selected a unique and will learn as much as they can about the country and about our missionaries serving in that country. The First Annual BBC International Day will take place on October 26, 2013 p.m. at BBC.



HOMESCHOOL NEWS



Each student holds a card with the name of the country they have selected!



On country selection day, the students carefully chose the country they were interested in researching.



Left: A young BBC Home-schooler takes advantage of our visiting missionaries during the BBTS Graduation weekend and interviews Pastor Derry O'Sullivan from Ireland

BBTS Summer Module Classes

June 17-21, 2013

BBTS Module
"The Book of Job"

Quakertown, PA

July 22-26, 2013

BBTS Module
"Angelology"

Plymouth, NH

August 19-23, 2013

BBTS Module
"1 Corinthians"

Chesterton, IN

Fall Module Classes

September 23-27, 2013

BBTS Philippine Module

Quezon City,
Philippines

"The Lukan Parables" - Pastor E. Tanierla

"Biblical Economics" - Dr. Caswell Reeves

September 23-27, 2013

BBTS Europe Module

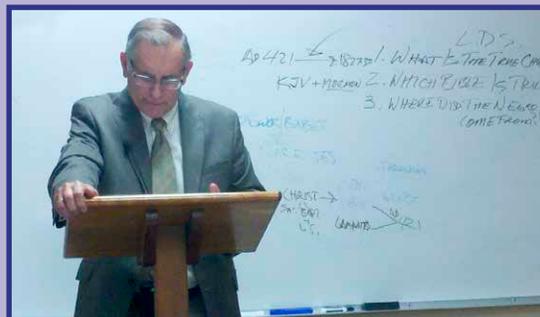
Prague,
Czech Republic

"Bibliology"

"Ecclesiology"

BBTS Online

BBTS is attempting to open opportunities for seminarians interested in studying the Bible and Theology and receiving seminary degrees. Plans are being made to offer BBTS Online this Fall Semester so that pastors and others can "go to seminary" remotely and potentially receive degrees. Please pray for this endeavor.



BBTS is in the planning stages of offering seminary classes online starting Fall 2013!

THE BOOK CORNER

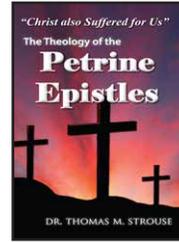
The Book Corner

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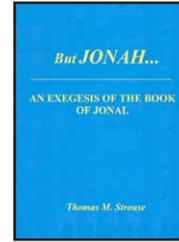
BBC Photos

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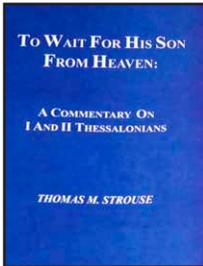
These Books may be purchased through **Bible Baptist Church**:
40 Country Squire Rd.
Cromwell, CT 06416
860-229-5387



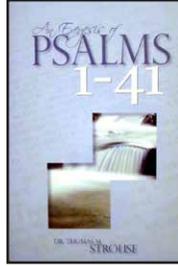
Peter
\$20.00



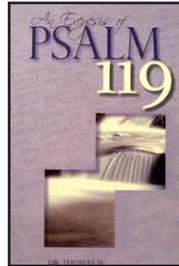
Jonah
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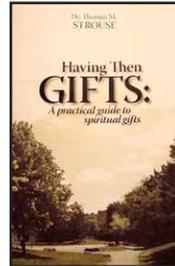
I & II Thessalonians
\$10.00



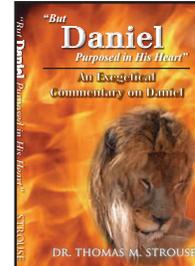
Psalms 1 - 41
\$20.00



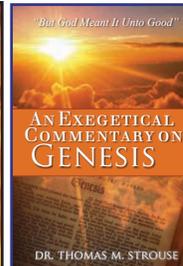
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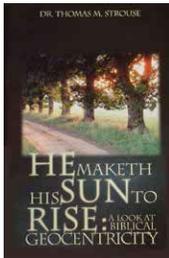
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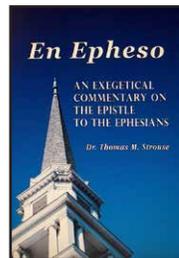
Daniel
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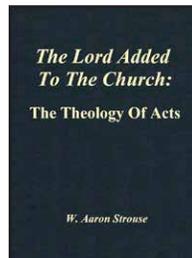
Genesis
\$20



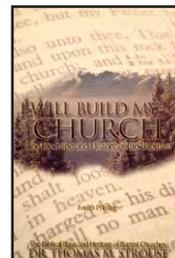
Geocentricity
\$10.00



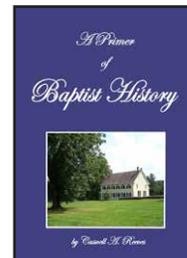
En Epheso
\$20.00



The Theology of Acts
\$20.00



I Will Build My Church
\$15.00

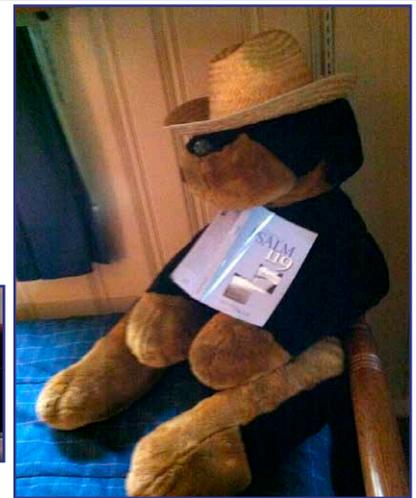


A Primer of Baptist History
\$20.00



The Lord God Hath Spoken
\$15.00

Faces of BBC!



If you have any news for the next issue of the BBC Update, please send to the Editor, Cas Reeves, at either

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