

BBC UPDATE

BBTS Modules held in New Hampshire and Indiana

Dr. Thomas M. Strouse, Pastor

New Hampshire Module

During the week of July 18-22, 2011, I taught the Book of Hebrews to 24 students in Calvary Independent Baptist Church at Plymouth, NH. Dr. Chet Kulus is the pastor of this church as well as two other NT churches in Enfield and Tilton, NH. He has received the DMin and ThD degrees under my tutelage, for which I am thankful and privileged. My wife Jan accompanied me in mid week and we stayed with our friends, the Jim Whyte family, on a beautiful estate on New Found Lake in NH.



Above: Some of the 24 students that attend the module class on Hebrews at Calvary Independent Baptist Church in Plymouth, NH

Fairhaven Baptist College Module

The Lord blessed the module at Fairhaven Baptist College in Chesterton, IN with seven seminarians, including recent MDiv graduate of BBTS Dan Armacost and BBTS doctoral candidate Jeremy Mitchell. FBC operates under the aegis of Fairhaven Baptist Church, and Pastor Roger Voegtlin, who founded the church in 1970. FBC has a beautiful campus and matriculates about 100 students every year. The college just received a large library from David Cloud. They have men and women dormitories overlooking a scenic lake. I had the privilege of staying in the newly refurbished prophet's chamber in the men's dorm. Remember to pray for his ministry.



Left: Dr. Strouse taking a well deserved break!



Beautiful Fairhaven Baptist Church, Chesterton, IN

BBC/BBTS Coming Events

Baptismal Service at Galilean Baptist Church, Stafford Springs, CT on Aug. 28, 2011 PM service.

BBTS begins Aug. 29, 2011

BBTS Labor Day Picnic Sept. 5, 2011 (past and present seminarians and all BBC membership) 3-7 PM.

BBTS MODULES

Plymouth, NH

VBS

2

VBS - Bible Time



Above/Right: Dr. and Mrs. Strouse stayed with friends, the Jim Whyte family, on a beautiful estate on New Found Lake in NH.

Chesterton, IN



Above: Inside the men's dormitory lobby at Fairhaven Baptist College



Above: The outside view of the men's dorm.



Right: The beautiful view from the balcony of the Men's dormitory!

BBTS MODULES

Chesterton, IN

Photos

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BBTS Schedule



Attendees at the Fairhaven Module on
The Book of Hebrews



Fireplace in the prophet's chamber at
Fairhaven Baptist College.



We are anticipating our recent BBTS graduate Jared Yokoyama
visiting again from Hawaii to take a Module class in August.

BBTS Spring Schedule

Monday	
Advanced Hebrew VII	6:00 - 7:00 PM
Hebrew I	7:00 - 10:00 PM
Wednesday	
Book of Hebrews	8:00 - 10:30 AM
Greek I	5:00 - 7:00 PM
Thursday	
Book of Ezekiel	6:00 - 9:00 PM
TBA	
OT Introduction	



DEVOTIONAL CORNER

Habakkuk and Prayer

by Pastor Cas Reeves

"I will stand upon my watch, and set me upon the tower, and will watch to see what he will say unto me, and what I shall answer when I am reproved"

Habakkuk 2:1



Habakkuk knew the importance of prayer. He knew how to pray. And he prayed with great insight: "Art thou not from everlasting, O LORD my God, mine Holy One? We shall not die" (Habakkuk 1:12).

Pastor Cas Reeves When he prayed, he shared his concerns about the wicked and their actions toward the righteous. He shared his misunderstanding and wonder about how a holy God could tolerate the suffering of the righteous at the hand of the wicked. "Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity: wherefore lookest thou upon them that deal treacherously, and holdest thy tongue when the wicked devoureth the man that is more righteous than he?" (Habakkuk 1:13).

Habbakuk presents himself praying, as a watchman who goes up to the tower on the wall to watch for the enemy from without and to guard over those who are within. Likewise, Jesus said, "Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man" (Luke 21:36).

Several things, we should take note of in Habakkuk's prayer life. 1) He purposed to pray, "I will stand upon my watch." He considered it his duty. 2) He had a place to pray, "and set me upon the tower." Part of any good pray warrior's prayer life is a purposed place to pray, sometimes called a prayer closet. This is a place different from where

we might pray spontaneously, which might be anywhere as we are going through the day. It is a place which we have made holy, separating it unto the Lord. It is a place where we can give our undivided prayer-watch unto the Lord. 3) He prayed believing in God and expecting an

"...Many times we concentrate on how God is going to answer our prayer, whether positive or negative. But we forget to consider how we will respond to a positive or negative answer from God."

answer from God, "and [I] will watch to see what he will say unto me." Habakkuk had no doubts about God answering him, and neither should we doubt, when we pray. "And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive" (Matthew 21:22). 4) He prayed with a consideration toward how he would respond to God, when He answered his prayer. "And what I shall answer when I am reproved." We need to learn from Habakkuk. Many times we concentrate on how God is going to answer our prayer, whether positive or negative. But we forget to consider how we will respond to a positive or negative answer from God.

"The old prophet Habakkak, he teaches us to pray."

The cry of Christians throughout the ages has been the same. "And it came to pass, that, as he [Jesus] was praying in a certain place, when he ceased, one of his disciples said unto him, Lord, teach us to pray" (Luke 11:1). The old prophet Habakkak, he teaches us to pray. - CAR



1) "I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well" (Ps. 139:14).

2) "Moreover as for me, God forbid that I should sin against the LORD in ceasing to pray for you: but I will teach you the good and the right way" (I Sam. 12:23).

3) "Let thine ear now be attentive, and thine eyes open, that thou mayest hear the prayer of thy servant" (Neh. 1:6).

4) "Thou shalt make thy prayer unto him, and he shall hear thee, and thou shalt pay thy vows" (Job 22:27).

5) "Let my prayer be set forth before thee as incense; and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice" (Ps. 141:2).

6) "He...continued all night in prayer to God" (Lk. 6:12).

PRAYER PROMISES

7) "Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer" (Rom. 12:12).

8) "I will call on the LORD, who is worthy to be praised: so shall I be saved from mine enemies" (II Sam. 22:4).

9) "Give thanks unto the LORD, call upon his name, make known his deeds among the people" (I Chr. 16:8).

10) "As for me, I will call upon God; and the LORD shall save me" (Ps. 55:16).

11) "In the day of my trouble I will call upon thee: for thou wilt answer me" (Ps. 86:7).

12) "Because he hath inclined his ear unto me, therefore will I call upon him as long as I live" (Ps. 116:2).

Quotes From the Past:



Charles Spurgeon

Charles H. Spurgeon, 1834-1892

19th Century Baptist Preacher

What is needed is thought, truth, and sound doctrine, and the Spirit of God. Young men are apt to think less of what to say than of how to say it; but our advice is, think of both in due proportion. Set the matter before the manner; get the horse first, and get a good one, and then harness him. Give the people the grand old Gospel, and plenty of it, and they will not much mind the way in which you bring it forth.

Introduction and Survey to the *Book of Hebrews*

By Dr. Thomas M. Strouse

Introduction

The early title to the *Book*, “to the Hebrews” (πρὸς Ἑβραίους) suggests a whole realm of possibilities about purpose, audience, authorship and date. The content of the *Epistle*, along with other biblical *data*, helps fashion answers to its purpose, audience, authorship and date. The Greek behind *Hebrews* has several features which play into ascertaining answers to the aforementioned issues. 1) The Greek style is very polished suggesting a professional rhetorician behind its writing. 2) The vocabulary and use of figures and argumentation points to an educated writer. 3) The employment of Old Testament (OT) citations hints at a writer well versed in the precise study of the Hebrew Scriptures.¹ Since the *Book* has no declared audience or author, it demands a thorough study of and knowledge about *Hebrews* for the exegete to understand the *Epistle*. Answers to its purpose, audience, authorship, and date will unfold as one progresses through *Hebrews*, while allowing the Spirit of God to illuminate truth from within it and as well as from New Testament (NT) Scriptures. The *Book of Hebrews* does indeed exalt Jesus of Nazareth as the divine Son of God and High Priest, and consequently making Him the Mediator between God and sinners. The Lord Jesus Christ is far better than all of the shadows and figures of the OT Scriptures to Whom they pointed.

Purpose

Πρὸς Ἑβραίους emphatically declares the superiority of the Lord Jesus Christ over the OT prefigurements. Whereas, the first-century Jews had lived within the theological, spiritual and ethnical lineage of Judaism for fifteen centuries, their collective and personal effort of abandoning this for Christianity was difficult, to say the least. Both Peter (Acts 10:9-16; Gal. 2:11-16) and Paul (cf. Acts 16:3 with Gal. 2:3; Acts 21:26-29) struggled with the question

¹There are at least eighty-six direct references to the Hebrew Scriptures in *Hebrews*.

of how much Judaism they could retain as a faithful Christian. Therefore, the writer of *Hebrews* gave the biblical perspective which focused on the Person and Work of the Lord Jesus Christ. The perfect God-Man in Person is superior over the prophets, angels, Moses, and unbelief. His divine Melchisedecian Priesthood is superior over the Aaronic priesthood. The author constantly employed terms to Christ, such as the adjective “better” (κρείττων [13x])² and the verb “[to be] perfect” (τελειώω [9x]).³ In addition, the writer designated his *Epistle* as “the word of exhortation” (τοῦ λόγου τῆς παρακλήσεως⁴ [Heb. 13:22]). This *dis legomena* occurs also in Acts 13:15 referring to a Pauline sermon based on the OT and encouraging the listeners to recognize and realize that the Hebrew Scriptures all point toward Jesus of Nazareth as the fulfillment (cf. Lk. 24:44). Several salient points give the nature of “any word of exhortation” (Acts 13:15, 17-41). Paul started his synagogue preaching with 1) God choosing Israel and then delivering them from Egypt, 2) So that they would be ruled by judges and kings, 3) Concluding with King David, 4) Whose seed was the raised Jesus, 5) About Whom John the Baptist confessed, 6) Whom Pilate allowed to be slain on a tree, and 7) Whom God raised from the dead. Two significant Hebrew Scriptures predicted the resurrection of God’s Son Who saw no corruption (Pss. 2:7 and 16:10, respectively). This “word of exhortation” must be received by faith for forgiveness of sins and justification of life to avoid the awful consequences of despising revelatory truth. No doubt the Apostle to the Gentiles preached this message each time he was privileged to give “any word of exhortation” to the mixed multitude (believing and unbelieving Jews and Gentiles) of the various synagogue audiences. *Hebrews* is the finished, literary, inscripturated form of Paul’s preached synagogue sermons.

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² Cf. Heb. 1:4; 6:9; 7:7, 14, 22; 8:6[2x]; 9:23; 10:34; 11:16, 35, 40; and 12:24.

³ *Vide* Heb. 2:10; 5:9; 7:19; 9:9, 11; 10:1; 11:40; 12:23; and 13:21.

⁴ The Greek of Acts 13:15 reads λόγος ἐν ὑμῖν παρακλήσεως.

Audience

The issue of the audience of Hebrews invokes several questions which must be answered. 1) What was their ethnicity? 2) Where did they dwell? 3) What was their spiritual condition? The Christian, who studies the Word of God, indwelt with its author the Spirit of God, serving in the Church of God, and abides under the authority of the Man of God, has full assurance of knowing all revealed truth as John promised, saying, “*ye know all things*” (1 Jn. 2:20). The Lord has recorded in the very *Epistle* data which establish parameters for knowing possible answers to these queries. Concerning the audience’s ethnicity, the numerous references to OT institutions, people, and practices would exclude Gentiles, unless they were God-fearers attending synagogue services. Only those with a full acquaintance of Jewish heritage would appreciate the message of the *Epistle*, traditionally known as “*to the Hebrews*.” The dwelling place of the audience was not in Rome, as the writer was indeed in Rome, as he declared, saying, “*they of Italy salute you*” (Heb. 13:24). Since the author cited the Hebrew OT, and not the LXX,⁵ he must certainly have directed the *Epistle* to Jerusalem Jews (cf. Acts 15:21). Furthermore, animal sacrifices continued in Jerusalem, which the author condemned (cf. Heb. 8:4; 10:11). The center of all Judaism, including the Temple, the Aaronic priesthood, and the animal sacrifices, was at this time the city of David, Mount Zion, Jerusalem. The spiritual condition of the audience was the same as the mixed multitude of the first generation of “the covenant community”—those with a great deal of light of which some received by faith and others rejected (*vide* Heb. 3:7-19; 6:4-6). With several warnings about apostasy signaled by the expression “*lest*,”⁶ the Apostle challenged the mixed multitude about responding to the light that they had received or experience dire consequences (Heb. 2:1; 3:12, 13; 4:11; 12:3, 13, 15). Further, he coupled with the warnings thirteen hortatory subjunctives expressed as “*let us*.” For instance, he said “*let us hold fast our profession*” (Heb. 4:14; cf. also Heb. 4:1, 11, 14, 16; 6:1; 10:22, 23, 24; 12:1[2x], 28; 13:13, 15). The author addressed the *Epistle to the Hebrews* to Jerusalem Jews, exhorting them to give up the Jewish practices (i.e., animal sacrifices) that would keep them from receiving Jesus

ARTICLE

of Nazareth as their only Messiah, because sudden destruction was coming upon them in the form of Titus’ decimation of the Jews and desolation of the city and temple.⁷ Therefore, the audience consisted of Jews and God-fearing Gentiles who professed faith in Christ and were baptized church members. Apparently, some were either practicing animal sacrifices, or were sympathetic with this sinful practice and needed to obey this “*word of exhortation*” or suffer damnation.

Authorship and Date

The authorship and date are obviously connected. The *Book* is anonymous and thus evidence must be sifted with biblical discernment by NT church members. From external evidence, Eusebius affirmed that “who wrote this Epistle, God knows this truth (i. e., that Paul wrote it).” The conservative Eastern patristics accepted Pauline authorship (e.g., Clement of Alexander, Origen). The Western fathers rejected Pauline authorship (Hippolytus and Irenaeus).

Theologians have posited several other candidates for authorship, namely Apollos, Barnabas, Luke, Priscilla, Silas, etc., with very little recent consensus.

The clearest biblical statement on authorship is that which critical scholars so readily ignore or dismiss. Peter stated, saying, “*And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own de-*

Continued on Page 8

⁷In AD 66, the Jews revolted against the Roman Empire causing Titus to sweep across Judea towards Jerusalem. Galilee was sacked in AD 67 and the entire Judean coast and north was subjugated to Titus by AD 68. After Nero committed suicide in AD 68, the attack upon Judaea intensified. Within the next year (AD 69) there were four Roman emperors concluding with Vespasian, who summoned Titus to Jerusalem. There, Jerusalem was sacked, the Temple destroyed, and 1,100,000 Jews killed by AD 70.

⁵Thomas M. Strouse, “Scholarly Myths Perpetuated on Rejecting the Masoretic Text of the Old Testament,” *Emmanuel Baptist Theological Journal* 1 (Spring 2005): 37-61.

⁶“*Lest*” occurs 11x in Hebrews.

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Continued from Page 7

struction" (II Pet. 3:15-16). Peter made the following affirmations: 1) Paul wrote Scripture, 2) he wrote it to Peter's audience, and 3) Peter's audience was the Jewish διασπορά (vide II Pet. 3:1; I Pet. 1:1; Jam. 1:1). Therefore, Paul wrote one *Epistle to the Hebrews* in his total corpus of fourteen NT Books (thirteen were written to Gentile Christians or churches).⁸ Arguments against this biblical testimony are the following:

1. The absence of Paul's name as required by II Thess. 3:17 indicates that he did not write this anonymous *Letter*. *Contra*: Paul made his promise to Gentile churches that he would put his name on his literature to Gentiles, affirming Pauline apostolic authority to the Gentiles. The Jews would not accept the "authority" of an apostle to the Gentiles to replace their OT system.

2. The literary style and vocabulary is "non-Pauline." *Contra*: This is a very subjective and hence weak argument since style and vocabulary change with the author's audience, purpose, etc.

3. The so-called dependence of the author on the first generation believers eliminates Paul (cf. Heb. 2:3). *Contra*: This passage teaches that the author's revelation **was confirmed** (ἐβεβαιώθη [8x])⁹ by first generation believers, not "**handed over**" (παράδωκε [cf. I Cor. 11:23]) by them; revelation can only be confirmed by revelation.

4. The author does not deal with the same doctrines that Paul did in his Gentile Epistles. *Contra*: a different audience with different subjects requires different theological emphases.

⁸After all, Paul was trained in the Hebrew Scriptures under the leading Jewish scholar Gamaliel (Acts 22:3), he had a tremendous burden to testify to Jews like himself that Jesus was the Messiah (Rom. 10:1), and although the Apostle to the uncircumcised (Gal. 2:7), he was a Hebrew of the Hebrews (Phil. 3:5).

⁹Paul confirmed the promises made to the patriarchs about Gentile salvation, saying, "Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers" (Rom. 15:8). He was not dependent upon the patriarchs passing on these promises to him, but his ministry, given by God, confirmed the OT promises.

5. The chronology does not fit Paul's life. *Contra*: It may have been written while Paul was in his second Roman imprisonment while Peter was still alive, after Timothy's release, and before AD 70, or about AD 64-67 (II Tim. 4:7-17; Heb. 13:23). Nero became emperor in AD 54 and committed suicide in AD 68. Late in his reign he increasingly persecuted followers of Christ (64 ff.). Following Nero's short-lived replacements such as Galba, Otho, and Vitellius, Vespasian reigned (AD 69) and used his son Titus to destroy Jerusalem, the Jews, and the Temple (AD 70).¹⁰

The ongoing assault upon the Pauline authorship is demonically leveled at the divine Author to cause confusion in interpretation and its subsequent application. The real issue revolves around any arguments that can refute the Pauline authorship. The author of *Hebrews* was a spiritual giant of the first century who was a Christian with vast knowledge of the OT Scriptures. Peter said Paul wrote Scripture to the Jews—the *Epistle to the Hebrews*!

Christology

Πρός Ἑβραίους focuses on the high priesthood of the Lord Jesus Christ, entitling Him at least seventeen times as "*high priest*" (Heb. 2:17; 3:1; 4:14, 15; 5:5, 10; 6:20; 7:26; 8:1; 9:11), "*priest*" (Heb. 5:6; 7:3, 11, 15, 17, 21), or "*great priest*" (Heb. 10:21). Paul referred to Him as "*Jesus*" some fourteen times (Heb. 2:9; 3:1; 4:4, 14; 6:20; 7:22; 10:10, 19; 12:2, 24; 13:8, 12, 20, 21), emphasizing the "dreaded" name associated with the man from Nazareth as the Jews' Messiah. Other titles such as "*Son*" (12x), "*Lord*" (5x), "*Mediator*" (3x) and "*God*" (Heb. 1:8) are applied to the Saviour. Special titles such as "*forerunner*" (Heb. 6:20), "*that Great Shepherd of the sheep*" (Heb. 13:20), "*firstborn*" (Heb. 1:6), and "*apostle*" (Heb. 3:1) occur also in the *Epistle*. Christ is the God-Man Mediator while at the same time the eternal and immutable deity of the Triune Godhead (Heb. 13:8). The whole OT was Christological in nature pointing to the fulfillment of the everlasting Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ (cf. Rev. 14:6; Lk. 24:44). Abel pointed to His shed blood, Enoch pointed to His resurrection, and Abraham pointed to His death, burial, and resurrection in a figure (Heb. 11:4-19 ff.).

Continued Next Issue!

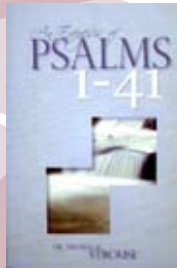
¹⁰Titus' brother Domitian began to reign in AD 81, and increased persecution against Christians including the Apostle John, who was banished to the isle of Patmos by AD 95 (cf. Rev. 1:9).

THE BOOK CORNER

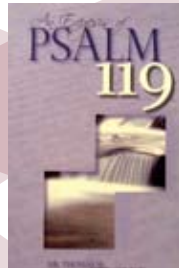
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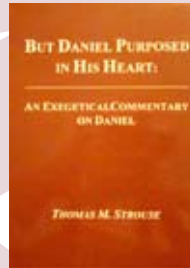
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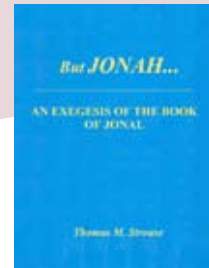
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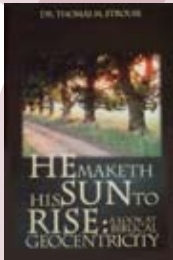
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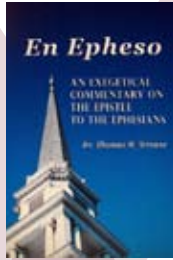
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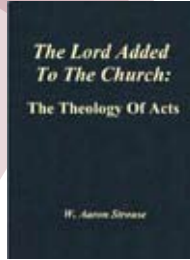
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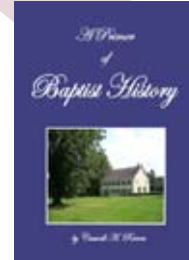
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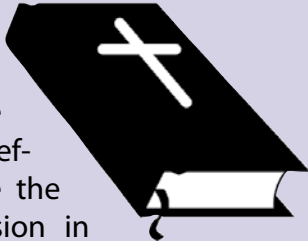
A Primer of Baptist History
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The Lord God Hath Spoken
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Manchester Bible Study

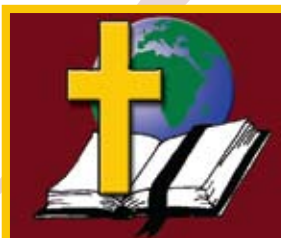
Continue to pray for the Manchester Bible Study as Mark Schabert teaches the *Gospel of John* to several families who live in the area. This is an effort to practice the Great Commission in Manchester, CT, evangelizing and edifying folks who come to the study. The Bible study is every Friday night at 7 PM. Please contact the pastor for directions.



Two BBC members trying out the kiddie furniture!

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

bbts@stny.rr.com
hbc5923@stny.rr.com



Bible Baptist Theological Seminary
A ministry of Bible Baptist Church

40 Country Squire Road
Cromwell, CT 06416

860-613-2096

www.bbc-cromwell.org