

BBC UPDATE

Excerpt from The Word of Exhortation:

Dr. Thomas M. Strouse



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Excerpt from The Word of Exhortation:

A Commentary on The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Hebrews

Dr. Thomas M. Strouse

Verse 6:4

For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost,

Historically, this passage (6:4-6) has been a theological conundrum for biblical interpreters. For instance, Protestants have attempted to superimpose various soteriological systems upon these verses positing the notions either that Christians may lose their salvation or that the warnings in *Hebrews* are hypothetical. Hermeneutical confusion always abounds when the immediate and greater context of Scripture is misunderstood or ignored or both. Failure to understand the audience, author, purpose, and OT background of *Hebrews* will perpetuate false interpretations.

The Apostle Paul, as a saved member of the last generation of the Covenant Community, warned this generation of Jews in Jerusalem who professed Jesus as the Son of God and their High Priest, about coming judgment from the Lord through the Romans upon those who continued to trust in the shadows and figures of the Levitical sacrifices and priesthood. The wording that the writer used in these three verses came directly from the Tanak, namely from Nehemiah. His *Book* reviewed the apostasy of the first generation of the Covenant Community, saying, "*Yea, when they had made them a molten calf, and said, This is thy God that brought thee up out of Egypt, and had wrought great provocations; Yet thou in thy manifold mercies forsookest them not in the wilderness: the pillar of the cloud departed not from them by day, to lead them in the way; neither **the pillar of fire by night, to shew them light**, and the way wherein they should go. Thou gavest also **thy good spirit** to instruct them, and withheldest not **thy manna** from their mouth, and gavest them water for their thirst. Yea, forty years didst thou sustain them in the wilderness, so that they lacked nothing; their clothes waxed not old, and their feet swelled not"* (Neh. 9:18-21). For forty years the first generation of the Covenant Community experienced many supernatural miracles and yet it hardened its collective heart and rejected the LORD's goodness in salvation. Now this last generation has similar

EXCERPT FROM THE WORD OF EXHORTATION:

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spiritual privileges and yet was apostatizing to the point of no return. Once Paul's "word of exhortation" reached the church in Jerusalem and his warnings perpetuated, those who continued to offer animal sacrifices and trust in the Levitical priesthood were permanently doomed with no hope of salvation!

As well, the Lord Jesus Christ warned the leaders of the last generation of the Covenant Community, the Pharisees and scribes, about attributing His supernatural work to Beelzebul. Those that continued would commit the sin of "the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost" and be doomed in their lifetime and beyond (Mt. 12:31-32). For the greatly enlightened and privileged people of Israel who desired signs came comparable judgment upon those who rejected the truth confirmed by the supernatural miracles. For those that perpetually hardened their hearts against illuminated truth came a permanent end. No additional miracle would change the hardened heart and so the apostate doomed himself as the LORD allowed the fruition of the final and permanent end of apostasy.

In Paul's lengthy sentence (vv. 4-6) he introduced the main verb "to renew" in verse six after negating it and qualifying the audience with a series of four aorist participles. Having thrust the adjective *adunaton*¹ ("impossible") in the grammatically prominent position, the writer began to focus on his severe warning for apostasy. He used the non-descript masculine

plural article *tous* ("those")² with the four masculine plural substantival participles to denote spiritual privileges of those in his audience. The first modifying aorist participle is *photisthentas*³ ("enlightened") qualified with the adverb *hapax*⁴ ("once"). Since the student of Gamaliel seemed to paraphrase Nehemiah's summary statement (Neh. 9:19-21; see comments above) about the privileges that the good LORD bestowed on rebellious Israel in the wilderness, it behooved the audience familiar with this truth to take heed. The first generation and the last generation of the Covenant Community, along with David's generation (Ps. 95:7-11), had the proclivity to harden hearts in the midst of great blessed illumination. The Jews in the wilderness had the great privilege of being led by the presence of Jehovah manifested as "the pillar of the cloud...the pillar of fire...to shew them light" (Neh. 9:19). They were "once enlightened" and yet rebelled against Jehovah at great consequence of judgment. Likewise, the last generation of the Covenant Community had the presence of Jehovah in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ in their midst, claiming "I am the Light of the world" (Jn. 8:12).⁵ The theological motif that the Lord Jesus was "the light" is replete in the NT (e.g., Mt. 4:16; Lk. 2:32; Jn. 1:4, 5, 7, 9; 3:19-20; 9:5; 12:46; Acts 13:47; I Jn. 1:5; 2:8; Rev. 21:23). In spite of having the light of the world in their midst, the first century Jews continuously rejected the Lord and consequently hardened their hearts beyond hope of salvation. What more could the Lord have done to convince this generation which was "once enlightened" by His presence that He must be received as their Saviour?

The second masculine plural, *aorist* participle

² In English translations the editor used various pronouns such as "us," "we," "those," "themselves" and "you," forcing the reader to recognize the contextual subject of such. Even in the Greek the original audience had to determine to whom Paul was addressing any and every statement.

³ Paul used the unique passive form of the verb *photizo* (11x), denoting that God was the One Who enlightened them (cf. also 10:32).

⁴ The adverb *hapax* occurs 15x in the NT, eight of which occur in *Hebrews* (vide also 9:7, 26, 27, 28; 10:2; 12:26, and 27).

⁵ The Lord Jesus identified with Jehovah saying *ego eimi to phos*.

¹ The *alpha*-privative compound adjective from *adunatos* (10x) literally means "no power" and occurs three other times in *Hebrews*. Things that are impossible in Paul's "word of exhortation" are repenting from final apostasy (6:4-6), lying by God (6:18), the taking away of sins by animals sacrifices (10:14), and pleasing God without faith (11:6).

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*geusamenous*⁶ (“have tasted”) is middle rather than passive voice, connoting a deliberate and initial experience but not necessarily denoting complete consummation of the *doreas*⁷ *tes epouraniou*⁸ (“heavenly gift”). With the background of Nehemiah’s summary, the activity to which Paul alluded was the wilderness Israelites tasting the heavenly “manna” or *man*⁹ (Neh. 9:20). Likewise, the last generation of the Covenant Community had also experienced firsthand “the bread of life” as Jesus affirmed, saying, “For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world” (Jn. 6:33), “I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst” (Jn. 6:35), and “This is that bread which came down from heaven: not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead: he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever” (Jn. 6:58; cf. vv. 41, 48, 50, 51). The Lord Jesus Christ was “the bread of life, the manna,” and “the heavenly gift” Whom the Jews actively experienced. Many of the Jews were cognizant of the Gospel yet did not believe it, and many experienced the Lord Jesus personally and yet did not receive Him (cf. Jn. 20:29-31).

The third masculine plural *aorist* passive participle is *genethentas*¹⁰ (“were made”) *metochous*¹¹ (“partakers”) *pneumatou hagiou* (“of the Holy Ghost”).¹² Again, Nehemiah affirmed about Jehovah that “Thou gavest also thy good spirit to instruct them” (Neh. 9:20). David referred to God’s Spirit as good and also as their teacher, saying, “Teach me to do thy will; for thou art my God: thy spirit is good; lead me into the land of uprightness” (Ps. 143:10). The LORD bestowed His Spirit on Moses and on the seventy elders, as the Torah revealed, saying, “Then he remembered the days

of old, Moses, and his people, saying, Where is he that brought them up out of the sea with the shepherd of his flock? where is he that put his **holy Spirit within him?**” (Isa. 63:11) and “And I will come down and talk with thee there: and I will take of **the spirit** which is upon thee, and will put it upon them; and they shall bear the burden of the people with thee, that thou bear it not thyself alone” (Num. 11:17), respectively. Moreover, the Spirit of God came upon the unsaved Balaam¹³ who taught the Israelites messianic prophecy, as Scripture revealed, saying, “And Balaam lifted up his eyes, and he saw Israel abiding in his tents according to their tribes; and the **spirit of God** came upon him” (Num. 24:2; see v. 17).¹⁴

In like manner, the Jews of the last generation of the Covenant Community “were made partakers of the Holy Ghost” as they experienced the Spirit’s working through the ministry of Jesus of Nazareth, as Luke revealed, saying, “How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him” (Acts 10:38). So much so, in fact, that the Pharisees charged that Jesus’ empowerment to cast demons was not attributed to the Holy Ghost but to Beelzebub, and thereby they committed the sin of blaspheming the Holy Ghost (Mt. 12:24-32). Scripture also revealed that multitudes experienced Holy Ghost miracles of healing and demon exorcism although they were not necessarily saved after the divine miracles. For instance, Luke recorded, saying, “Now when the sun was setting, all they that had any sick with divers

¹³ The NT is very clear that Balaam was a wicked unbeliever who was used of God in spite of his treacherous doctrine and practice (cf. II Pet. 2:15; Jude 1:11; and Rev. 2:14).

¹⁴ King Saul is another example of an unbeliever who partook of the Holy Ghost and prophesied (I Sam. 10:6-12; but consider I Sam. 16:23).

⁶ See note on Heb. 2:9.

⁷ The noun *dorea* occurs 11x in the NT and only here in *Hebrews*.

⁸ See note on Heb. 3:1.

⁹ The noun *man* (= Greek *μάννα* *manna* [5x]) occurs 14x in the OT and transliterates the Hebrew expression “what is it.” The Jews tasted it for forty years (Ex. 16:35) as it came from heaven, the psalmist attested, saying, “And had rained down manna upon them to eat, and had given them of the corn of heaven” (Ps. 78:24).

¹⁰ See Heb. 1:4.

¹¹ Cf. Heb. 3:1.

¹² See note on Heb. 2:4.

diseases brought them unto him; and he laid his hands on every one of them, and healed them” (Lk. 4:40).

Later, unsaved Caiaphas prophesied messianic truth as did unsaved Balaam many centuries earlier (Num. 24:17), as John’s commentary states, saying, *“And one of them, named Caiaphas, being the high priest that same year, said unto them, Ye know nothing at all, Nor consider that it is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not. And this spake he not of himself: but being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation; And not for that nation only, but that also he should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad.”* (Jn. 11:49-52). These men had experienced partaking of the Holy Ghost Who gave them prophecy to reveal even though they were unsaved men and associated with either the first and last generations of the Covenant Community. For fifteen hundred years *“the commonwealth of Israel”* (Eph. 2:12), the Covenant Community, had the great privilege of revelatory truth accompanied with divine wonders, and yet many rebelled against Jehovah and hardened their hearts to the impossibility of salvation.

SPECIAL INDIAN MEAL AT BIBLE BAPTIST CHURCH



Mrs. Bobbie Chakraborty

On April 30, 2017, Mrs. Bobbie Chakraborty provided a special meal of Indian cuisine to honor her late husband Mr. Tapon Chakraborty. The special meal contained chicken, vegetables, rice, and Indian desserts. Bobbie has been a member of Bible Baptist Church for some time and wanted to bless her church family by having a special meal of remembrance honoring the home going of Brother Tapon.



Naan bread, Indian style vegetables and chicken.



Pastor Strouse helping himself to Indian style desserts prepared by Mrs. Chakraborty.



VASSAR FUNERAL



On April 29, 2017, Pastor Thomas Strouse officiated with the funeral service and at the grave site for Mr. William Vassar, deceased member of Bible Baptist Church. Brother Vassar died on April 8, 2017 and was interred at the Veteran's Memorial Cemetery in Middletown, CT. Born on Sept. 14, 1918, Brother Vassar was in the military for many years and retired with the rank of Lieutenant Colonel. He had been married to Dorothy for seventy-six years and both were very faithful church members of BBC since 2009. We miss both of them but rejoice that they are together again with the Lord.



Mr. and Mrs. Bill Vassar attend the first day of BBC.



Mr. Bill Vassar donating to the Filipino bank.



Mr. and Mrs. Bill Vassar attend BBC service held at their residence after they could no longer travel to the church building.

Mr. and Mrs. Bill Vassar were very faithful church members of BBC since 2009.



Mr. and Mrs. Bill Vassar with Bro. Firman.



WHO IS OG? A RE-TEST:

DEVOTIONAL CORNER

WHO IS OG? A RE-TEST:

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Devotional Corner



Dr. Caswell A. Reeves

WHO IS OG? A RE-TEST:

"For only Og king of Bashan remained of the remnant of giants; behold, his bedstead was a bedstead of iron; is it not in

Rabbath of the children of Ammon? nine cubits was the length thereof, and four cubits the breadth of it, after the cubit of a man" (Deuteronomy 3:11).

Our text tells us that Og was the "king of Bashan." Bashan was a land east of the Jordan river and extended northward to Mt. Hermon. It is the Plain eastward of the Golon Heights. Today, it is the land of south western Syria. In the days of our text, it was called "the land of giants" (Deut.3:13).

King Og, himself, was a giant. His bed was made out of iron and measured thirteen and a half feet long by six feet wide, "nine cubits was the length thereof, and four cubits the breadth of it" (v.11). He wasn't the only giant, but lived in a region where several tribes of giants dwelt: "the Emims" (Dt.2:10) the "Anakims" (Dt.2:11) and the "Zamummins" (Dt.2:20). These nation-tribes were part of the great Amorite civilization (Deut 4:47).

The importance of King Og and his giant people, was that God used them to test the next generation of Israelites. Thirty eight years earlier, God had told Israel (the earlier generation) to go up and possess the land, which He had promised unto them. "Behold, the LORD thy God hath set the land before thee: go up and possess it, as the LORD God of thy fathers hath said unto thee; fear not, neither be discouraged" (Dt.1:21). However, the people made excuses not to go up and take the land. One of those excuses was the giants.

"The people is greater and taller than we...and moreover we have seen the sons of the Anakims there" (Dt.1:28). For their unbelief and for their disobedience, God caused them to wander in the wilderness till that generation was all dead (Dt.1:32-35).

What is interesting to take note of is the repeat of the same test. It was a test which focused their faith upon the LORD and his promises and not upon the size of the obstacles in their way. Note, if we fail a test (trial), which God gives us, we can expect a re-test. Examples in the Bible: Abraham, Jacob, Sampson, Saul, David, Peter, John Mark and more. We should remember Solomon's godly advice. "Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths" (Proverbs 3:5,6). -CAR

Quotes From the Past:

Isaac Backus

Colonial Baptist Preacher from New England

1724-1806



Isaac Backus

"And it appears to us that the true difference and exact limits between ecclesiastical and civil government is this, That the church is armed with light and truth, to pull down the strong holds of iniquity, and to gain souls to Christ, and into his church, to be governed by his rules therein; and again to exclude such from their communion, who will not be so governed; while the state is armed with the sword to guard the peace, and the civil rights of all persons and societies, and to punish those who violate the same. And where these two kinds of government, and the weapons which belong to them, are well distinguished, and improved according to the true nature and end of their institution, the effects are happy."

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Jul 24-28, 2017

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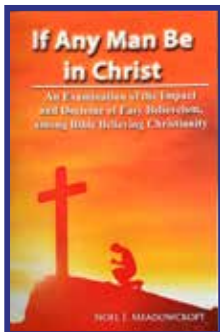
“ Module TBA “

Aug 21-25, 2017

Fairhaven Baptist College

“ Module TBA “

NEW BOOK!



The recent book, *If Any Man Be In Christ: An Examination and the Impact of the Doctrine of Superficial Easy Believe-ism among Bible Believing Christianity*, by Dr. Noel Meadowcroft, has put forth the biblical case for the teaching of the need for repentance in conversion, as well as for elucidating the biblical perspective of so-called “Lordship Salvation.” Dr. Meadowcroft has been a student of the trends and movements in conservative Christianity for many decades, observing the faulty doctrine of easy believe-ism and its fruitless “conversions.” Because of his heartbreak over the empty lives of many “unrepentant Christians” and because of his passion for truth, he has written *If Any Man Be In Christ*. It is my privilege to recommend this book as a defense of biblical soteriology, readable for both the babe in Christ as well the seasoned saint of the Lord. (\$8.00 each).

Dr. Thomas M. Strouse, Bible Baptist Church, Pastor

Bible Version Matters

1 John 5:7 For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one.

Reflection: The Trinity is a Bible doctrine that is vitally important. 1 John 5:7 is one verse that clearly speaks to the Trinity, One God in three Persons. Without the Trinity there would be no salvation.

Salvation is initiated by the Father, secured through the Son, and is activated by the Holy Spirit. Do you see the Trinity in the verses below?

Titus 3:4 But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared,

Titus 3:5 Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;

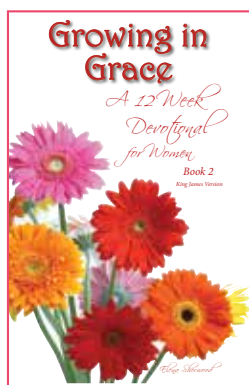
Titus 3:6 Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour;

Titus 3:7 That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

Challenge: What happens when the Word of God is tampered with? How does removing "and these three are one" in many Bible versions change the meaning? **Is 1 John 5:7** in your Bible?

If you would like to receive Gowing in Grace daily emails, contact Elena at Elenas6259@gmail.com

"Growing in Grace: A 12 Week Devotional for Women" Book 2



This 12 Week Devotional is a ministry of Bible Baptist Church in Cromwell, CT. It is designed for women, and is meant as a support for victory in daily Christian living. Spiritual victory comes by having the Genuine Christ, Accurate Biblical Teaching, Applying the Infallible Word of God, and a Humble Heart.

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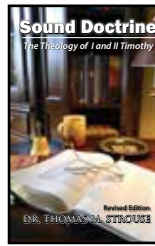
Psalm 119:2 "Blessed are they that keep his testimonies, and that seek him with the whole heart."

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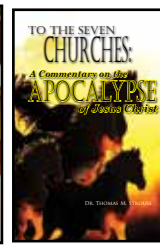
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The Book Corner

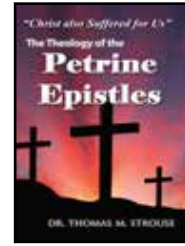
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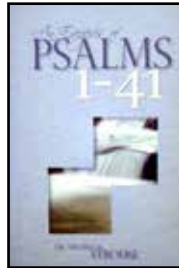
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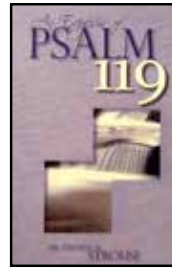
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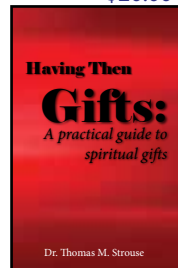
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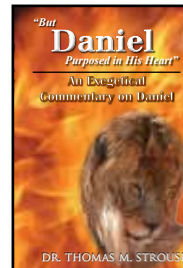
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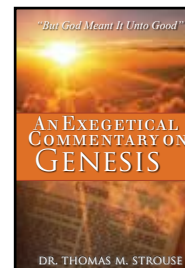
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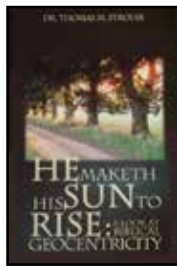
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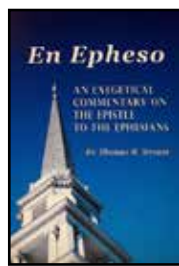
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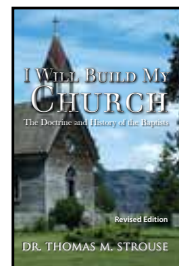
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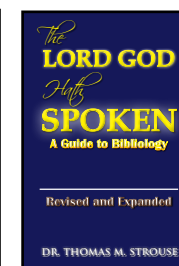
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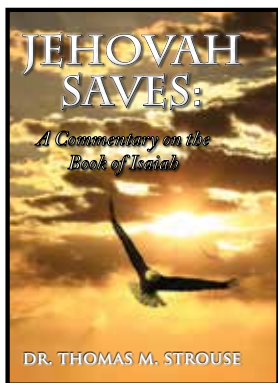
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NEW BOOK: JEHOVAH SAVES: A COMMENTARY ON THE BOOK OF ISAIAH

The new book by Dr. Thomas M. Strouse entitled *Jehovah Saves: A Commentary on the Book of Isaiah* is available for purchase. The book is an effort to exegete the contents of all sixty-six chapters of Isaiah, resulting in 508 pages of commentary with 746 footnotes chocked full of word studies, grammatical explanations, and theological teachings. It reflects over forty years of study, research, and reflection from the author. Available now! \$30.00

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