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Gehenna.

(2019)

Bible House of Grace contains an easy to read New and Old Testament commentary full of spiritual treasures and pearls, complete with an insightful resource guide illuminating God's love and grace.



Although I believe my aim is pure and God's will perfect this document is still the product of a human man, as to such I neither claim perfect knowledge or perfect understanding.

Gehenna in the New Testament.

Topics.

- Whoever says, 'you fool!' shall be in danger of hell (gehenna) fire.
- The whole body cast into gehenna.
- Fear him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell (gehenna).
- To be cast into hell (gehenna) fire.
- False teaches make their students twice the sons of hell (gehenna).
- Hypocrites won't escape the condemnation of hell (gehenna).
- How are you to escape being sentenced to hell (gehenna)?
- Fear God who has power to cast into hell (gehenna).
- The tongue is set on fire by hell (gehenna).

NOTE: the purpose of this document is not to do an in-depth study on each topic, but simply to discover if any verse using the word Gehenna teaches or links it with eternal torment.

GEHENNA (OR GE-HINNOM) (GEENNA)

Gehenna from Strong's Concordance (New Testament) means gehenna of fire it is of Hebrew origin. Gehenna was originally the valley of Hinnom, south of Jerusalem. The following verses shows that it had previously been the site of child sacrifice to an Ammonite god called Molech.

- Manasseh (v1) burned his sons as an offering in the valley of the son of Hinnom and used fortune-telling and omens and sorcery, and dealt with mediums and with wizards. He did much evil in the sight of the LORD, provoking him to anger (2 Chron. 33:6).

Gehenna later became the place where the filth and dead animals of the city of Jerusalem were cast out and burned thus the reason it is used as a symbol of the wicked and their future destruction in the Lake of Fire a symbol of eternal death (i.e., total extinction).

Hell: in the Old Testament is the English translation of the Hebrew word sheol and means the grave and in the New Testament hell is the English translation of the Greek word hades which also means the grave.

WHOEVER SAYS, "YOU FOOL!" SHALL BE IN DANGER OF HELL FIRE."

- **Matthew 5:22:** I say to you that whoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment. And whoever says to his brother, 'Raca!' (insults in ESV) shall be in danger of the council. But whoever says, 'You fool!' shall be in danger of hell (gehenna) fire.

Angry: means to provoke, enrage so that one becomes exasperated and full of wrath (passively or in action). It is an excitement of the mind expressed in violent passion indignation or vengeance.

Raca: means "O empty one" or, "thou worthless one" it is a term of utter slander deliberately spoken to demean and smear a person. It carries the idea of telling lies about a person for the purpose of degrading them to others.

Fool: means stupid, ignorant, a dunce, nincompoop, goon or an absurd fool.

Hell: in this verse is the English translation of the Hebrew word gehenna. Fire is a perfect symbol of something being utterly destroyed since it destroys whatever it burns until it is completely gone so gehenna fire in this context is a perfect symbol of the Lake of Fire a symbol of eternal death (i.e., total extinction). Jesus is saying, anyone who deliberately says something to demean or degrade a person, spreads false rumours that make others think bad of someone else or acts violently in speech or action against another human in anger is in extreme danger of God's judgment to the Lake of Fire.

THE WHOLE BODY CAST INTO HELL (GEHENNA)

- **Matthew 5:29-30:** If your right eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and cast it from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell (gehenna) ³⁰“And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and cast it from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell (gehenna).

Hell: in this context is the Greek word geenna (Gehenna) it applies to the Hinnom valley named after the son of Hinnom and was a valley of Jerusalem.

Eyes: in this context speak of the internal sinful desire going on in the mind while the hand can be seen as the outward action of the internal wrongful desire being carried out. The words “If your right eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and cast it from you” follows on from lusting on a married woman and committing adultery, Jesus is saying, if your lusting and craving after a married woman is going to cause you to commit adultery do everything in your power to stop. The Lord is using extreme language to depict the horror of adultery. This is because it not only breaks the marriage covenant, but is full of deceit, lies, cheating it destroys families and brings enormous hurt to everyone involved including children.

The eyes can lead one into hell means: sin is breaking the law so sin is an outward act of breaking the law, but it starts in the mind, lusting after a married woman with intent to commit adultery with her is how sin begins in the mind. If the lust is strong enough the man acts on his craving for the woman so even though it is the act of adultery that is the sin, it was the man's eyes that caused him to act unlawfully. This is why Jesus said, “If looking is going to cause a man to act sinfully by committing adultery it is better for him to cut his eyes out” (meaning do everything in his power to stop (i.e. don't look and lust), because the end result is pain, hurt and anguish for everyone involved.

SIN AND ITS CONCEPTION, BIRTH AND GROWTH

Sinful temptations come from lustful passions for sex and cravings for money, fame, power etc.,) that appeal to human desire, the temptation entices, seduces and lures its victim and the mind is overtaken by it. If the sinful desire is strong enough it begins to outwardly act on its wrongful passion and sin is conceived. What was a desire in the mind is given birth and becomes an outward action which grows until it is full blown sin. When the sinful outward action is fully-grown it leads to death because a lifestyle of sin leads away from God, it is impossible to live a lifestyle of wrongful outward behaviour and abide in Christ at the same time (James 1:13-5).

NOTE: this does not mean that every time a person has an sinful thought or desire it is going to lead to outward sin and death, if that were the case we would all be doomed for destruction, everyone including Christians

have lustful and sinful thoughts at various times and at some level are controlled by self, ego and, pride etc., but that does not mean they will sinfully act on them. The apostle James wrote:

- If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us (1 John 1:8-10).

Jesus in saying, "Tear out your eyes and cut off your hand" is using deliberate and obvious exaggeration for effect to show how serious adultery and wrongful outward acts of sin are to God. The Lord uses the place called gehenna which continually burned with fire because the inhabitants of the city of Jerusalem threw all their filth, rubbish and dead animals there. In the context of these verses Jesus is using gehenna as a graphic picture to depict how low and worthless a man would be considered by God who lusted after a married woman and committed adultery with her.

FEAR HIM WHO IS ABLE TO DESTROY BOTH SOUL AND BODY IN HELL (GEHENNA)

- **Matthew 10:27-28:** Whatever I tell you in the dark, speak in the light; and what you hear in the ear, preach on the housetops. ²⁸"And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell (gehenna).

Destroy: means to perish, to ruin and render it useless, to kill or declare that one must be put to death and to entirely abolish and put an end to a thing.

Hell: in these verses is from the Greek word gehenna which was the Hinnom valley of the son of Hinnom it was a valley of Jerusalem that had continual fires burning because it was used as a refuse tip for the city of Jerusalem at the time of the New Testament. In this context Jesus is using it figuratively as a symbol of eternal death (i.e. total extinction) because fire consumes everything thrown into it until it is utterly destroyed so that it is entirely abolished and eliminated.

The utter destruction of the soul will take place when God judges a person unworthy and they are cast into of the Lake of Fire (the Second Death) (Rev. 2:11) (Rev. 20:6) (Rev. 20:14) (Rev. 21:8).

The Lake of Fire: symbolizes utter destruction because fire burns everything until it is utterly gone thus it not only perfectly fits Jesus words:

- God is able to destroy both soul and body in gehenna.

But also, perfectly depicts those who are judged to eternal death (i.e., total extinction) and also perfectly fits the meaning of the word destroy (i.e., to perish, kill, entirely abolish and put an end to). Soul in this context carries the idea of eternal life contrasted to mortal life. Man can destroy the body, but it is God who determines eternal life this is the life we should be concerned about. Knowing that God has the power over eternal life overcomes the fear of man who only has power over mortal life. To overcome the fear of death, God and eternal life must be the treasured desire and the most valued possession of the heart and the mind. Jesus is saying to those who are being persecuted for proclaiming the Gospel, "Do not worry if they kill you because God has the power of eternal life and will resurrect them to everlasting glory.

TO BE CAST INTO HELL (GEHENNA) FIRE

- Matthew 18:8-9: If your hand or foot causes you to sin, cut it off and cast it from you. It is better for you to enter into life lame or maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet, to be cast into the *everlasting fire*.⁹“And if your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and cast it from you. It is better for you to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes, to be cast into *hell (gehenna) fire*.”

NOTICE: it is the fire of gehenna that is everlasting and not the torment of the people thrown into it. The picture painted is that the fire of gehenna is always burning it is always looking for more fuel. The flames never die because they are always being feed with the wicked. This is the reason it is called everlasting fire. Jesus says temptations that entice a person to sin come from people and things of the world. Pride self and ego’s desire for the things of this world is often the motivation for stealing, cheating, lying and even killing etc. The world will always be full of temptations, but the people who produce or bring worldly temptations will be judged accordingly.

IF YOUR HAND OR YOUR FOOT CAUSES YOU TO SIN, CUT IT OFF

Hell, in this verse comes from the Creek word (gehenna) it is a valley (also called the Hinnom valley of the son of Hinnom) in Jerusalem were Ahaz and Manasseh sacrificed their sons to Molech. Jeremiah the prophet prophesied a great slaughter of people at (gehenna) (Hinnom) during the siege of Jerusalem. After the Old Testament period, Jewish apocalyptic writers began to call the valley of Hinnom (gehenna) the entrance to hell which in the Old Testament is the English translation of the Hebrew word Sheol meaning the grave.

Hell, in the New Testament is the English translation of the Greek word hades which means the grave. Later the name gehenna became to be used for the grave itself since it perfectly pictured the disdain God felt toward those who were corrupt and acted wickedly since gehenna was a valley constantly burning with flames of fire and the place where the inhabitants of God’s Holy city Jerusalem threw all their filth and dead animals so that they would be utterly destroyed, before they could cause harm to the population of the city (i.e., through disease, sickness and plaques), showing that gehenna perfectly symbolized God’s disdain toward those who committed abominable sin.

(Jer. 19:1-13) (Jer. 32:35) (2 Chron. 28:32) (2 Chron. 33:62) (Kings 16:3) (Kings 21:6).

Hell fire (gehenna fire): fire is link with hell (hades which is the grave) because gehenna was a place of enormous grief, sorrow and pagan human and child sacrifices. The valley later became the place the people of the city of Jerusalem used to dispose of all their rubbish and dead and decaying bodies so it had fires continually burning. This is why the grave is likened to fire because both fire and the grave consume and destroy everything forever, thus the expression to be thrown into the everlasting fire (the gehenna fire) is a perfect picture to symbolize eternal death (i.e., total extinction) since fire never stops burning until it has consumed everything and it is utterly destroyed. For further information on hell see the title:

- Gehenna and Hell in, Death (ON WEBSITE MENU).

If your hand, foot or eye causes you to sin cut them off: Jesus is not telling sinners to literally cut off their hand, their foot or pluck out their eyes. Jesus is simply using graphic language to show how we should value eternal life. He is saying if anything has the potential to lead us away from salvation and eternal life forsake it, because it is of far more value to inherit eternal life than enjoy the temptations of this world for a moment. The reason it is better to enter eternal life blind or lame rather than not enter it at all is because we are given new bodies, immortal bodies so whatever damage has been done to this body will matter not since we will be clothed with an eternal body.

NOTE: almost all Christians know that when Jesus said, pluck your eye out and cut your hand and foot off he was speaking figuratively and not literally to highlight the seriousness of sin, so why is it that they do not treat the words gehenna fire in the same light? Why should one part of a verse be accepted as figuratively and the other part not?

FALSE TEACHES MAKE THEIR STUDENTS TWICE THE SONS OF HELL (GEHENNA)

- **Matthew 23:15:** Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you travel land and sea to win one proselyte, and when he is won, you make him twice as much a son of hell (gehenna) as yourselves.

Proselyte means a convert to Judaism, the converts of the Scribes and Pharisees were called children of hell (gehenna) not because they had doctrinal error but because they were full of pride, they had no mercy, grace and love toward the people. Their legalistic rules, traditions and regulations made it almost impossible for a person to find God; this is why Jesus is so fiercely against them. Children of gehenna is a perfect description of the disdain the Lord had toward these converts of the hypocritical Scribes and Pharisees and how unworthy they were for God's Kingdom since gehenna was the valley in which the inhabitants of God's Holy city Jerusalem threw all their filth, animals and dead bodies to be consumed by the fires constantly burning there.

HYPOCRITES WON'T ESCAPE THE CONDEMNATION OF HELL (GEHENNA)

- **Matthew 23:33-34:** Serpents, brood of vipers! How can you escape the condemnation of hell? (Gehenna). ³⁴Wherefore, behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes: and some of them ye shall kill and crucify; and some of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city.

The scribes and Pharisees were hypocrites, they said one thing, but did another, all their outward deeds were done to appear holy, but inwardly they had the same murderous spirit as their fathers did. We know this because they plotted to have Jesus killed, and then aggressively pursued all those who belonged to Christ to have them put to death or cast into prison, showing that the scribes and Pharisees would say one thing, but their actions told a totally different story. The scribes and Pharisees believed they were right before God, because they descend from Abraham, but Jesus points out to them that by saying they would not have taken part in killing the Old Testament prophets they are acknowledging that they are descendants of murders and even worse they are following in the same spirit as their murderous fathers did. They say that they would not have killed the prophets yet in their aggressive pursuit to kill Jesus the Son of God they are actually committing a more horrendous crime added to this horror they aggressively set out to persecute, flog, kill and crucify the New Testament prophets and anyone confessing the name of Jesus not only in the Jewish towns, but in their own synagogues is it any wonder Jesus calls them serpents and vipers.

How are you to escape being sentenced to hell? Hell in this context comes from the Greek word gehenna (or Ge-Hinnom) which is often translated into the English word Hell. Gehenna was the Hinnom valley near the city of Jerusalem which was named after the son of Hinnom. Both Ahaz and Manasseh kings of Israel sacrificed their sons to Molech in gehenna. (2 Kings 16:3) (2 Kings 21:6) (2 Chronicles 28:32) (Jeremiah 32:35) (2 Chronicles 33:62).

Jeremiah prophesied a great slaughter of the people in gehenna during the siege of Jerusalem (Jer. 19:1-13). After the Old Testament period Jewish apocalyptic writers began to call the valley of Hinnom (gehenna)

the entrance to the grave. The English translators of the King James Bible translated the word gehenna to hell. The word hell in the Old Testament is from the Hebrew word Sheol which means the grave and the word hell in the New Testament is translated from the Greek word hades which also means the grave. The word gehenna was later used figuratively as a name for the place (or state) of the everlasting dead since it was a valley where the inhabitants of God's Holy city threw their filth, dead animals and dead bodies to be utterly consumed by the fires that were constantly burning there.

Fire is linked with Gehenna for two reasons:

1. During the time of pagan sacrifice, the arms of Molech were heated by fire and sacrificed children were placed in them as an offering to the god, thus it was a place of fire and enormous horror grief and sorrow.
2. Gehenna became the place the people of Jerusalem used to discard the cities rubbish and the bodies of the dead etc., so like any refuse place it had continual fires burning.

THEIR WORM SHALL NOT DIE

The prophet Isaiah says:

- They shall go out and look on the dead bodies of the men who have rebelled against me. For their worm shall not die, their fire shall not be quenched, and they shall be an abhorrence to all flesh (Isaiah 66:24).

This statement applies to those who have chosen their own way, delight in their abominations, did what was evil in God's eyes and chose to do what God does not delight in. Isaiah in this chapter is saying that the LORD will come in fire and fury and show judgement and indignation to his enemies and those slain by Him will be put to shame, but the nation of Jerusalem will be brought forth in one moment. The LORD will make a New Heaven and a New Earth and all flesh shall come to worship before the Him. Isaiah presents a beautiful picture of the surviving nations being carried by Jerusalem (personified as a mother) like a baby on a nurse's hip and in the final verse of the chapter he says: -

- They shall go out and look on the dead bodies of those who have rebelled against me, for their worm shall not die, their fire shall not be quenched, and they shall be an abhorrence to all flesh (Isaiah 66:1-24).

In this chapter Isaiah is not picturing an unseen place of torment for the dead, because he says, people will look at these dead and decaying bodies being eaten by worms. The prophets' statement, "Their worm dies not" is a picture of the battle of Armageddon, when Christ returns and destroys the armies that comes against him, there will be dead and decaying bodies lying everywhere, with no one to bury them. It is graphic prophetic language to depict the horror and enormity of the masses that will be killed. To the Jew it was an absolute insult and abomination to leave a body to be eaten by wild animals and birds or left to decay and rot on the surface of the earth. For this reason, gehenna is a symbol of the horror of sin, with its end result of a shameful and horrible death. Gehenna is graphic prophetic language for the death of the wicked that rebel against God. For further information see the title:

- Worm in, Death (ON WEBSITE MENU).

THESE THINGS WILL COME UPON THIS GENERATION

- **Matthew 23:35-36:** so that on you may come all the righteous blood shed on earth, from the blood of innocent Abel to the blood of Zechariah the son of Barachiah, whom you murdered between the sanctuary and the altar. ³⁶Truly, I say to you, all these things will come upon this generation.

Abel was an innocent and godly man murdered by his brother and Zechariah was a prophet as well as a priest who God raised up to encourage Israel to rebuild the temple when they returned to Jerusalem after their seventy years captivity in Babylon. All the righteous blood shed from the time of Abel to Zechariah will come upon the generation of the Pharisees and scribes can refer to the death and resurrection of Christ which totally abolished the need for the Pharisees, chief priests, scribes and the Levitical priesthood as Christ became the eternal High Priest for everyone seeking God and eternal life and to the armies of Rome attacking the city of Jerusalem slaughtering the Jewish people and bringing the city of Jerusalem to ruin and to Rome destroying the Jewish temple in 70 AD and taking all the scared vessels into Babylon.

But since Isaiah's prophecy climax's with the return of the Lord his prophetic words can only rest at Christ's resurrection and Rome's slaughter of the people of Jerusalem and the destruction of the city and the temple of God for a short moment and then majestically take up wings and soar through time until these prophetic words of Isaiah reach their ultimate end and true fulfillment when the Lord Jesus Christ returns not as the Lamb to be slaughtered, but as King of kings and Lord of lords and the kingdoms of men (Rev. 19:11-16) come to battle against him and all their armies are destroyed and Christ rules and reigns as God's King on earth establishing His Kingdom of righteousness, justice, joy and peace. For further information see the title:

- Future Kingdom of God in the New Testament.

In Kingdom of God (ON WEBSITE MENU).

FEAR GOD WHO HAS POWER TO CAST INTO HELL (GEHENNA)

- **Luke 12:5-7:** But I will show you whom you should fear: Fear him who, after he has killed, has power to cast into hell; (gehenna) yes, I say to you, fear Him! ⁶“Are not five sparrows sold for two copper coins? And not one of them is forgotten before God. ⁷“But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Do not fear therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows

Hell is the English translation of the Greek word, gehenna (or Ge-Hinnom) which refers to the valley of the son of Hinnom; a valley of Jerusalem used for burning the rubbish and dead bodies from the city of Jerusalem (i.e., everything that was worthless to the city of God). It is God who has the power to judge and condemn a person to Gehenna which is perfectly used to depict the extreme unworthiness of those judged unworthy and cast into the Lake of Fire a symbol of eternal death (i.e., total extinction). Jesus and God have a different view to mortal life than what humanity does because mortal life compared to eternal life is but a fraction in time. The apostle Paul lived with the mindset that everything in this world was as rubbish compared to the:

- Surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus his Lord and the glory to be revealed in those who belong to Christ at the resurrection (Philip. 3:7-9) (Rom. 8:18).

Mortal and eternal life is the focus of these verses, Jesus is saying do not pretend to be religious or holy to gain the favour of man, live honestly and be your true authentic self before others knowing that God knows exactly who you are. We may fool people, but we cannot fool God so fear God and not people. It is pointless to live a life of pretence on earth because no-matter how good an actor we maybe none of us can fool God.

You are of more value than many sparrows: (v7) are words of tremendous comfort for those facing death. Christ is saying to his disciples if God knows exactly what is happening to a sparrow when it dies and you are worth more to God than a sparrow then he will know exactly when you die. Jesus is pointing out that nothing goes unnoticed before God even

the hairs on our head are numbered, meaning God knows every detail of our lives. Jesus reasons that since it is God not man who has the power to judge to eternal life or eternal death why live to please man who only has the power to take our mortal life. Jesus is saying, don't worry or stress about our life or fear if someone is going to take it because God sees the exact moment we die and if we have lived to honour God and not man He will raise us to eternal life at the resurrection.

THE TONGUE IS SET ON FIRE BY HELL (GEHENNA)

- James 3:6-7: the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity. The tongue is so set among our members that it defiles the whole body, and sets on fire the course of nature; and it is set on *fire by hell* (Gehenna fire). ⁷For every kind of beast and bird, of reptile and creature of the sea, is tamed and has been tamed by mankind

The tongue gives utterance to the most inappropriate, unfitting, ill-chosen, insensitive, improper, tasteless, unseemly and tactless thoughts it boasts of what we can do of our gifts and successes simply to puff up our own pride and ego. It causes arguments, strife, contention divisions and wars. Just as a very little spark is sufficient to set alight large forests, stately buildings and populous towns and cities and in a short time bring them to total ruing likewise the tongue is able to set a relationship, neighbourhood, a village or nations aflame in discord, division and even war.

No human can tame the tongue: this does not mean that the tongue is never brought under control, but that even though it is possible to subdue and domesticate any kind of beasts, it is impossible to effectually and certainly subdue and restrain the tongue from its unruly power. One only has to look at the condition of the world to see the truth of this statement.

The tongue is a restless evil, full of deadly poison: (v8) seems to be an allusion to the bite of a venomous serpent.

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David prayed that:

- The LORD would deliver him from violent men who planned evil in their heart and stirred up wars with *tongues* as sharp as *serpent's* and lips full of the venom of *asps* (Psalm 140:1-3).

Paul said:

- The throat and *tongues* of those whose mouth is full of curses and bitterness are swift to shed blood and cause misery and deceive as the *venom of asps* (Rom 3:13-16).

Nothing better describe the destructive power of the tongue than the bite of a serpent since there is no poison more deadly to our body than the poison of an asp nor is there any power that can so quickly bring a relationship, town, church, or nation to ruin and destroy the happiness and unity of mankind as the tongue. This is the reason gehenna fire, is a perfect depiction of the human tongue since both Gehenna fire and the tongue have the power to destroy to the uttermost.

SUMMARY

That is the end of all the Scriptures using hell (gehenna) in the New Testament. Jesus used gehenna as a symbol of complete destruction. In this study there is only one verse that speaks of everlasting fire and worms and it is the fire and the worms (maggots) that are spoken of as everlasting, not the life of the people. Gehenna, sheol and tartaros in the King James Bible are all translated into the English word hell which in the Old Testament comes from the Hebrew word Sheol and means the grave and in the New Testament hell is the English translation of the Greek word

hades which also means grave. Though in the above verses there is mention of everlasting fire there is no mention of everlasting punishment of people. The word gehenna is not teaching that the wicked and those outside of Christ's Kingdom are in a place of fiery flames suffering extreme agony, torture and pain for all eternity, rather gehenna is used as a symbol that teaches utter destruction meaning those who are judged unworthy perish forever. Gehenna when used figuratively perfectly expresses God's distain toward those who are judge unworthy and perfectly contrasts the exalted glory of eternal life thus the reason gehenna is used to symbolize eternal death (i.e., total extinction).

For further information see the title:

- Molech in, Various Topics (ON WEBSITE MENU).
- Worm in, Death (ON WEBSITE MENU).
- The Second Resurrection or Great White Throne Judgment.

In, Resurrection (ON WEBSITE MENU).

As the founder of Bible House of Grace, I would like to thank the many Christian scholars, commentators and theologians who have gone before me, and the many today, who have freely made available their works to enhance the knowledge of the Bible to all people worldwide. It is only with the help of these faithful writers that much of Bible House of Grace exists as it does today.

Bible House of Grace