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## Job 13

(2019)

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## Job 13.

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### Topics.

- Job desires to speak to the Almighty, and argue his case with God.
- Though God slay me, I will hope in Him; yet I will argue to His face.
- Man wastes away like a rotten thing, like a garment that is moth-eaten.
- Who will contend with me? For then I would be silent and die.
- Will you frighten a driven leaf and make me inherit my iniquities?

**FOR INFORMATION:** concerning people, places and the meaning of words see the title: "Map Locations and People of the Bible," and the title: "Bible Dictionary" on Website Menu.

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**INTRODUCTION:** the book of Job is considered both a theological and a literary masterpiece it is an honest discussion of why God allows good people to suffer. The test of Job's faith, allowed by God in response to a challenge from Satan, reveals God's sovereignty and the supremacy of divine wisdom over human wisdom (personified by Job's four friends). Believing that God is good despite the apparent evidence to the contrary, Job rested in faith alone. In the depths of agony, he could still proclaim, "I know that my Redeemer lives" (Job 19:25). In the end God silenced all discussion against the truth that He alone is wise (Job chpts. 38-41). Yet he vindicated Job's trust in him (chpt. 42), proving that genuine faith cannot be destroyed. The unknown author was probably an Israelite writing sometime between 2000 and 500 B.C.

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**HELPFUL FACTS:** before reading Job, it is helpful to understand when Job, Eliphaz, Bildad, Zophar and Elihu are speaking they are not speaking, "thus sayeth the LORD", they are simply giving their opinions on how they personally perceive things to be. Amongst their conversations there is truth and wisdom, but it must be kept in mind not everything they are saying is true or even wise, in fact God rebukes Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar and tells them they have spoken foolishness, but Job has spoken what is right (Job 42:7-9). The book of Job is not about doctrinal truth, but human suffering and the questions regarding God that arise during a person's calamity and pain.

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### JOB SPEAKS

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#### JOB 13:1-4

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#### Job Desires to Speak to the Almighty, and Argue His Case with God.

- **Job 13:1-4:** "Behold, my (Jobs) eye has seen all this, my ear has heard and understood it. <sup>2</sup>What you know, I also know; I am not inferior to you. <sup>3</sup>But I would speak to the Almighty, and I desire to argue my case with God. <sup>4</sup>As for you, you whitewash with lies; worthless physicians are you all.

Job's three worthless physicians that he accuses of being full of lies refer to Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar. These three instead of showing Job grace, mercy and comfort turn everything he says into a theological debate. They considered it more important to be theologically correct than to show a man who had not only lost his family and had everything he had established brought to ruin, but was also suffering horrific sickness and deep despair and depression. It is certain these three men all had a good intellectual knowledge of God's word, but the way they treated Job shines

a brilliant spotlight upon the truth that just because someone has a brilliant knowledge of the Bible does not always mean they know what is important to the heart of God. God Himself said Job was His servant a blameless and upright man who feared God and turned away from evil and that there was not a man like him on the earth who holds fast his integrity even though Satan had incited Him against Job to destroy him without reason. (Job 1:1) (Job 1:8) (Job 2:3). There is no doubt God's desire would have been for Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar to speak words of grace, mercy and comfort to Job rather than turn his words into a legalistic debate. Though these three men verbally attacked Job and put him on the defensive he was not intimidated by them nor did he allow them to make him feel inferior to them. The foolishness of Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar confronting Job with their knowledge and reasoning is that they could not tell him anything that he didn't already know or that could help him in anyway, their sole focus was simply to prove him wrong and themselves right and since they did not have any interest in comforting Job he tells them that he is not interested in contending with them, but would rather go straight to the source and argue his case with God. Should anyone doubt Job's faith this attitude shines a brilliant spotlight upon how strong his faith was.

**Ponder for a moment:** he loathes his life and is in such misery he wishes he had not been born, yet his faith is not in the least bit dented by the arguments of Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar and even though he has bitterness and resentment despair and depression dwelling within his inner most being he knows he can express his thoughts and feelings honestly before God and come what may he will still set his hope in Him (v15). Job was not a man of weak faith, but of great faith, many would have forsaken their faith and turned from God by now, but Job holds fast his faith and endures to the end knowing that his redeemer lives, and that he will stand at the latter day upon the earth and even after worms have destroyed Job's skin and his body, he knows in his flesh he will see God. (Job 19:25-26).

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### **JOB 13:5-15**

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#### **Though God Slay Me, I will Hope in Him; I will argue to His Face.**

- **Job 13:5-15:** Oh that you would keep silent, and it would be your wisdom! <sup>6</sup>Hear now my argument and listen to the pleadings of my lips. <sup>7</sup>Will you speak falsely for God and speak deceitfully for him? <sup>8</sup>Will you show partiality toward him? Will you plead the case for God? <sup>9</sup>Will it be well with you when he searches you out? Or can you deceive him, as one deceives a man? <sup>10</sup>He will surely rebuke you if in secret you show partiality. <sup>11</sup>Will not his majesty terrify you, and the dread of him fall upon you? <sup>12</sup>Your maxims (remembrance in KJV) are proverbs of ashes; your defenses are defenses of clay. <sup>13</sup>"Let me have silence, and I will speak, and let come on me what may. <sup>14</sup>Why should I take my flesh in my teeth and put my life in my hand? <sup>15</sup>Though he slay me, I will hope in him; yet I will argue my ways to his face.

There are times when people avoid visiting those who are suffering extreme grief because they fear they have nothing to say that can comfort them, but Job's words, "Oh that you would keep silent, it would be your wisdom," highlights the truth that when a person is suffering great depression grief and sorrow there are times when a silent hug with arms of love will speak words of comfort far louder than any religious clichés or quoted Scriptures ever can. Sometime just being with the suffering person is the comfort.

**Will you speak falsely for God and speak deceitfully for him? (v7)** Job says this because Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar accuse him of being a gross sinner based on the theory that only the wicked suffer while the righteous are blessed. Without any evidence to support their argument that Job has committed some gross sin or has some secret and hidden sin within and is being punished by God because of it they continue to debate

their case against him. This is why Job accuses them of speaking falsely for God they do not know what dwells within Job's heart and have no outward evidence to support what they are saying concerning him. Though it is true that the Scriptures teach that God will bless the righteous and judge the wicked it is not right to apply it to life in this fallen corrupted world since one only has to read the story of Job and many of the Psalms and look with open eyes at the world to see that many who deny God prosper and live a life of ease while there are many faithful men and women who suffer all kinds of sicknesses, financial burdens, oppressions, hardships and troubles.

**Will it be well with you when he searches you out?** (v9) this question applies to all who judge others as Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar are judging Job. It is a question we should all ask ourselves before passing judgment upon others, especially when there is no outward evidence to support such a judgment. Job's question, "Can you deceive God, as one deceives a man?" should always be held uppermost in our minds before making any rash accusation against another. We may be clever enough to deceive others and keep our secret sins hidden, but it matters not how good the righteous front we present to others appears to those who know us God's eyes see straight into the heart and not only discerns the motives and intents, but also sees all the secret and sinful thoughts of the mind.

**He will surely rebuke you if in secret you show partiality:** (v10) the word partiality means to show favouritism. Those who dispute, debate and argue are not only tempted to magnify themselves above those they argue against, but also tempted to look down upon them as lessor so in this sense they are showing partiality to self, but by extension all forms of partiality toward anyone is a sin before God. If there is no proof to judge according to truth and evidence, God will frown upon all forms of partiality:

- No matter who the parties might be.
- No matter what their rank.
- No matter what friendship there might be.
- No matter whether one is a Christian or not.
- No matter what good a person has done or not done.

All judgment must be based upon evidence and truth it is never to be assumed that one is right and the other is wrong without evidence. The exact truth is always to be sought after, and the judgement made accordingly. Secretly showing partiality to others in judgment is prohibited by God, even favouring those who belong to His own family in judgment against the character of an innocent man or woman is a gross offence before God. Whoever does secretly show favouritism in judgment will be judged themselves accordingly.

**Will not his majesty terrify you, and the dread of him fall upon you?** (v11) this statement carries the following idea, does not God's excellency fill you (Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar) with awe and reverence and His infinite wisdom, which sees your secret falsehood and your speaking impetuously and brashly of His ways and counsels and of His justice and power, by which He can and will punish you for making such assumptions concerning me make you three ill-advised counsellors afraid and restrain you from speaking such presumptuous words. The idea here is that a sense of the majesty, glory and greatness of God should fill the mind with and earnestness and reverence that makes us consider seriously what we say so that we are not speaking words of misconception from presumption and our own reasoning that is unfounded and has no solid evidence or proof to support such reasoning's.

**Stand in God's dread and the fear of Him:** implies that the fear and dread of God should produce awesome adoration within and the knowledge that He sees all our secret falsehoods and according to His

justice and power will punish us for them should not only influence what we say, but also motivate us to speak what is true regardless of consequences.

- Do you not fear me? declares the LORD; Do you not tremble before me? I placed the sand as the boundary for the sea, a perpetual barrier that it cannot pass; though the waves toss, they cannot prevail; though they roar, they cannot pass over it. (Jer. 5:22).
- There is none like you, O LORD; you are great, and your name is great in might. Who would not fear you, O King of the nations? For this is your due; for among all the wise ones of the nations and in all their kingdoms there is none like you. (Jer. 10:6-7).
- The LORD is the true God; he is the living God and the everlasting King. At his wrath the earth quakes, and the nations cannot endure his indignation. (Jer. 10:10).
- He was afraid and said, "How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven." (Gen. 28:17).

The perfections power, justice, and Holiness of the Most High God should cause all the inhabitants of the earth to stand in awe of Him, and deter them from sinning against Him. He will not only judge the whole earth according to righteousness, but will also maintain the cause of the innocent, and punish those who mock and injure them and because of this the dread of His wrath and vengeance which is to be revealed from heaven should motivate all dwelling on earth to do what is right and good.

**The fear of God:** the reason a person is told to fear the LORD is because all humans have sinned and will one-day be judged by God. This fear should motivate all of us to seek God's forgiveness and eternal life. This is why the Bible says the fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom it motivates a person to seek after God and His forgiveness.

The apostle John in his letter wrote:

- If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. <sup>9</sup>If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. <sup>10</sup>If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us. (1 John 1:8-10).

The fear of the LORD has the following two aspects:

- 1 An eternal aspect: wisdom teaches that mankind is separated from God because of sin and without God a person has no hope of eternal life and will be judged accordingly. The fear of the LORD in this context is wisdom because it motivates a person to seek God and eternal life.
- 2 An aspect for the present moment: the fear of the LORD in the present moment motivates mankind to obey God's Ten Commandments which are all designed to protect the innocent from harm, physically, financially, sexually, verbally, emotionally and spiritually (i.e., do-good and not harm). The fear of the LORD in this context is also wisdom because if everyone feared the LORD humanity would live in harmony with each other. Sadly, there is very little fear of the LORD in the world today and so we see rampant rebellion, violence, crime and wars in most countries.

**The fear of God and Christians:** those in Christ look to the bloodstained cross of Calvary and understand and experience Christ's great love and God's grace in their hearts and minds and no longer act from fear, but from love in the same way that a man in love with a woman does not do things to please her from fear, but from the love dwelling in his heart. Likewise, it is with the faithful who belong to the Lords global family.

- The fear of the LORD is hatred of evil. Pride and arrogance and the way of evil and perverted speech I hate. (Prov. 8:13).

**The fear of the LORD is hatred toward evil:** it is having a hatred of everything that harms another human physically, financially, sexually, emotionally, or spiritually and having a strong dislike of anything that destroys the planet and of whoever treats animals cruelly. God loves

humans He gave his only Son to die for them. The fear of the LORD is about protecting and preventing harm to other humans. It is about knowing we are all going to stand before Him one day and give an account of our actions. The fear of this judgment should motivate a person to do the right and good thing and treat others with respect.

**Your maxims (remembrance in KJV) are proverbs of ashes:** (v12) the word maxims come from the Hebrew word (*zikrown*) it means a memento and carries the idea of a memorable thing, or memorable record of writing to be remembered. The expression can refer to either of the following two things:

1. The memorable (at least to Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar) arguments, sayings, objections and reasoning's that they repeatedly accused Job off are in actual fact valueless.
2. The things that Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar considered memorable and thought would perpetuate their memory after their passing such as their houses and lands, their wealth and riches, their honour and glory, their learning, wisdom, and knowledge

All the prideful and all dwellers upon the earth should remember that even in their best estate, in comparison to the Excellency of God and eternal life they are but as dust and ashes and will fade, and come to nothing. Blessed, are those who have everlasting righteousness only they will have everlasting remembrance in the eternal mind of God. In contrast to this glory anything of this world that may be held in great value and remembrance is but as ashes of little worth since they will be brought to nothing and easily blown away like ashes in the wind.

**Your defences are defences of clay:** (v12) carries the following idea, all that is most excellent and memorable to Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar such as their wealth, their boasting, their knowledge, all that they had uttered the things they valued and their dignity, their reputation and whatever else they expected to be remembered for and by is all but dust because their bodies are bodies of clay. Job is saying that though the bodies of Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar are not full of sores and boils as his was they are but dust as he is, and as certain as it is that Job will return to dust they likewise will not escape the same end as his. This truth concerning our mortality should make all the inhabitants of the earth afraid of offending God since we all dwell in frail and brittle bodies of clay that are destined to return to dust.

**Why should I take my flesh in my teeth and put my life in my hand?** (v14) carries the following idea, I am so conscious of my innocence and that I am not a wicked man that at all risks, come what come may, I will say what I think and put my life in my hand. This idea is in harmony with the previous verse in which Job said, "Let me have silence, and I will speak, and let come on me what may." (v13). The word flesh is synonymous with life the expression denotes Jobs bold courage in which he was willing to exposes his life to imminent peril by speaking honestly from his heart whatever he would regardless of what might be the result. His statement, "I take my flesh in my teeth and put my life in my hand," is an expression that highlights Job's firm and determined purpose to express his sentiments, no matter what might occur even if it involved the taking of his life. Teeth have a great strength to hold onto something so the symbolism maybe of the following two things:

1. Jobs desire to hold onto his life.
2. Since Job is prepared to honestly say what he will regardless of what God might do to him the expression may stem from the image of a lion carrying its prey in its devouring teeth with God being the lion and Job being the prey. In this light the expression, "Why should I take my flesh in my teeth and put my life in my hand?" Would mean, "Why should I hold my tongue for fear of being struck dead, why should I try to save my own life by being silent before God?"

**Though he slay me, I will hope in him; yet I will argue my ways to his face:** (v15) this is an interesting insight into Job's amazing and enduring faith. Even though the LORD is slaying Job, he says he will argue his case with God to His Face, but at the same time his hope will remain in God. Job was not afraid to argue with God, it did not affect his faith in God or the fact that God loved him. Job was willing to accept the consequences of what he would say regarding the LORD. He did not fear to speak his honest thoughts before God, this is because his faith was not dependent upon his emotions, his circumstances or his feelings, his faith was in the reality of God regardless of what was happening to him personally he knew that whatever was happening to him made no difference to the fact that God is still God and that there is no other (Job 13:14-15). Job's great and amazing faith is a vast contrast to the faith that is being taught today in some circles of modern Christianity. Today, in some churches (obviously not all) God is presented as a personal benefactor sitting in heaven with a bag full of blessings to enrich a person's life. When life is good God is good, but when circumstances take a turn for the worse the believer is left in confusion because the underlying message they have been taught is that God is much like a big Santa Claus in heaven with a bag full of gifts to give out, therefore they do not understand the kind of faith that Job and many of the prophets and the faithful of old had and the expression, "Though He slay me, I will hope in Him." (Job 13:15).

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## **JOB 13:16-24**

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### **Man Wastes Away Like a Moth-Eaten Garment and Rotten Thing.**

- **Job 13:16-24:** This will be my (Job's) salvation, that the godless shall not come before him. <sup>17</sup>Keep listening to my words, and let my declaration be in your ears. <sup>18</sup>Behold, I have prepared my case; I know that I shall be in the right. <sup>19</sup>Who is there who will contend with me? For then I would be silent and die. <sup>20</sup>Only grant me two things, then I will not hide myself from your face: <sup>21</sup>withdraw your hand far from me, and let not dread of you terrify me. <sup>22</sup>Then call, and I will answer; or let me speak, and you reply to me. <sup>23</sup>How many are my iniquities and my sins? Make me know my transgression and my sin. <sup>24</sup>Why do you hide your face and count me as your enemy?

Job knows that the godless and the wicked will not be accepted by God, this is why he is able to say, "This is my salvation," he knows that he is not a godless and wicked man and will therefore be accepted by God. To support this truth even further in chapter nineteen Job said: -

- I know that my redeemer lives, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God. (Job 19:25-26).

God Himself said Job was His servant a blameless and upright man who feared God and turned away from evil and that there was not a man like him on the earth who holds fast his integrity even though Satan had incited Him against Job to destroy him without reason. (Job 1:1) (Job 1:8) (Job 2:3). Despite this great testimony and the fact that Job knew he had not committed any outward sin worthy of God's rejection he was aware that should God examine him inwardly he would not be counted as a man that was blameless or righteous. He knew that sin dwelt within his fallen corrupt body. We know this because his trust for salvation was in his Redeemer which clearly shows that his faith was not set upon his own righteousness but upon the righteousness of his Redeemer and Saviour the Messiah the Christ. (Job 19:25-26)

**Who is there who will contend with me? For then I would be silent and die** (v19) means who can prove him to be an ungodly man and one who has acted corruptly and wickedly? Job knows he is innocent this is why he is able to say, "I have prepared my case; I know that I shall be in the right" (v18). Before Job does present the argument, he has prepared he asks the LORD to grant him the following two things:

- To withdraw His hand far from him (referring to his afflictions).
- To not to let the dread of Him terrify him (i.e., God's awesome power).

These two requests shine a spotlight upon Job's trepidation and nervousness in saying what he is about to say, because he knows that his boldness may bring the wrath of God upon him. After asking God to withdraw His hand of affliction he then asks Him the following three things:

1. To reveal to him his iniquities, his transgression and his sins.
2. Why He pursues after him with such great afflictions?
3. Why does He hide His face from him (i.e., His steadfast love) and treat him as an enemy to be brought to ruin and waste away?

Job then tells God when He answers these three questions he will reply to God. When we get to chapter thirty-eight God does answers Job out of a whirlwind (Job 38:1) and challenges him to answer a number of questions to see if he can prove Him wrong, and condemn Him and show that he is in the right. (Job 40:6-9). Since Job had no hope of answering the questions or proving God wrong he of course was utterly humbled and says to God, "I have uttered what I did not understand, things too wonderful for me, which I did not know, I had heard of you by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees you; therefore I despise myself, and repent in dust and ashes." (Job 42:1-6).

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## JOB 13:25-28

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### Will You Frighten a Driven Leaf and Make Me Inherit My Iniquities?

- **Job 13:25-28:** Will you frighten a driven leaf and pursue dry chaff? (Break a leaf driven to and fro in KJV) <sup>26</sup>For you write bitter things against me and make me inherit the iniquities of my youth. <sup>27</sup>You put my feet in the stocks and watch all my paths; you set a limit for the soles of my feet. <sup>28</sup>Man wastes away like a rotten thing, like a garment that is moth-eaten.

The answer to the question: "Will you frighten a driven leaf and pursue dry chaff?" (v25) is, yes if it serves His sovereign plans and purposes. The dry leaf driven to and fro refers to Job who feels that God is treating him like a withered autumn leaf that has fallen from its tree and is rolled up and being driven about by a stormy wind that it cannot resist. This is not to be taken as referring to Job's spiritual condition for even though he is outwardly ruined and frail, weak and feeble (especially now under the afflicting hand of God) his following words show that he is still spiritually strong:

- You have granted me life and steadfast love, and your care has preserved my spirit. Yet these things you hid in your heart; I know that this was your purpose. (Job 10:12-13).
- I know that my redeemer lives, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God. (Job 19:25-26).

Even though Job feels that God has hidden His steadfast love from him and is in bewilderment and confusion spiritually he can be likened to the man spoken of in the following verses:

- He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. In all that he does, he prospers (Psalm 1:3) (which he does at the end of the story).

**As a rotten thing:** refers to anything that is going to decay and rot it embraces the idea that all the inhabitants of the earth are constantly decaying and in a brief moment of time (compared to eternity) are covered with clods of dirt and clothed with worms to rot away. The

immediate allusion is to Job himself as being feeble and decaying and to which his words, "I am afflicted and tried in various ways, my feet are in the stocks; my way is hedged up, I am weak, frail, and dying," leads him into the first verses of the following chapter in which he beautifully describes mankind in general:

- Man who is born of a woman is few of days and full of trouble. <sup>2</sup>He comes out like a flower and withers; he flees like a shadow and continues not. (Job 14:1-2).

**As a garment that is moth eaten:** a garment is slowly and gradually eaten and consumed by moths in such a manner that it decays, falls to pieces, becomes useless, and cannot be recovered. This is how Job's body felt to him as he laboured more and more under his afflictions and diseases every day with his body decaying and crumbling into dust and ready to be given over to the grave. Job resolved to cleave to the good testimony his own conscience gave of his uprightness. He depended upon God for justification and salvation and was very confident that God would not only be his Saviour to make him happy, but his salvation. He knew that he was not a hypocrite or wicked man as he had been accused and was therefore confident, he would not be rejected. There is a great lesson in this that we all should learn and that lesson is this: when we have done all we can to do what is right and things still fall apart so that it appears that God is against us we must believe that all will work for good even though everything around us seems to be saying something quite contrary. We must cleave to our faith and to the love of God even though we maybe at that present time bewildered and in confusion and say as Job did "Even though He slay me I will hope in Him."

**NOTE:** it is interesting to notice that Job does not mention Satan at all in every communication he has it is with God. Job's faith was such that he saw God as the source of everything that came to him good or bad. This is why he has a certain amount of awesome respect and fear, he knows God has to power to slay him or bless him

The vanity of human life:

- Man wastes away like a rotten thing like a garment that is moth-eaten. (Job 13:28).

Without God and eternal life man is but a breath that passes away.

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**FOOTNOTE:** always keep in mind that Job is not speaking, "thus saith the LORD," but giving his own personal opinion concerning suffering and because it is his own viewpoint it should be remembered that even though much of what he says maybe true it does not always mean that his reasoning and suppositions are always according to the word of the LORD.

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*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.*

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