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GRACE**

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## **Mark 7**

(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.

## Mark 7.

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### Topics.

- Washing hands and holiness.
- People honour God with their lips, but their heart is far from him.
- Pharisees reject God's commandments to establish their traditions.
- Nothing going into a person can defile that person.
- What comes out of a person is what defiles them.
- Jesus heals the daughter of a Syrophenician woman.
- Even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters' table.
- Jesus heals a deaf man.

**The previous chapter:** In the previous chapter Jesus went to his hometown Capernaum and sent the twelve out two by two, he fed about five-thousand people and then went to his disciples walking on the Sea of Galilee after arriving in the land of Gennesaret Jesus heals everyone who came to him.

**NOTE:** for information concerning people, places and the meaning of words see Map Locations and People of the Bible, and Bible Dictionary on Website Menu.

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### MARK 7:1-5

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#### Washing Hands and Holiness.

- **Mark 7:1-5:** Now when the Pharisees gathered to him with some of the scribes who had come from Jerusalem, <sup>2</sup>they saw that some of his disciples ate with hands that were defiled, that is, unwashed. <sup>3</sup>(For the Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they wash their hands, holding to the tradition of the elders, <sup>4</sup>and when they come from the marketplace, they do not eat unless they wash. And there are many other traditions that they observe, such as the washing of cups and pots and copper vessels and dining couches.) <sup>5</sup>And the Pharisees and the scribes asked him, "Why do your disciples not walk according to the tradition of the elders, but eat with defiled hands?"

The focus of these verses is not about healthy eating, but being religiously clean. If the Pharisees were saying to Jesus that is a good tradition to wash their hands before eating to prevent disease Jesus would no-doubt have agreed with them, but the focus of the Pharisees is not health, but being spiritually clean and holy before God by washing not only their hands but even dirty dishes.

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### MARK 7:6-8

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#### People Honour God with their Lips, but their Heart is far from Him.

- **Mark 7:6-8:** And he said to them, "Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written," This people honours me with their lips, but their heart is far from me; <sup>7</sup>in vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.' <sup>8</sup>You leave the commandment of God and hold to the tradition of men."

Jesus is citing the following verse:

- The Lord said: "Because this people draw near with their mouth and honour me with their lips, while their hearts are far from me, their fear of me is a commandment taught by men (Isaiah 29:13).

Alluding to Ezekiel's words:

- They come to you as people come, and they sit before you as my people, and they hear what you say but they will not do it; for with lustful talk in their mouths they act; their heart is set on their gain (Ezek. 33:31).

In the book of Matthew Jesus says:

- But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you shut the kingdom of heaven in people's faces. For you neither enter yourselves nor allow those who would enter to go in (Matt. 23:23).

Hypocrite means an actor under an assumed character (a stage-player) it carries the idea of a person deciding to speak or act under a false part (i.e. pretend). The heart of the religious leaders of Israel was coveting, their heart was set on gain they spoke godly language so outwardly they appeared holy, but before God their heart was full of selfish ambition and they used their followers as merchandise to feed their own ego and pride, this is why Jesus said, they honour God with their lips, but their heart is far from Him.

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## MARK 7:9-13

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### **Pharisees reject God's Commandments to establish their Traditions.**

- **Mark 7:9-13:** And he said to them, "You have a fine way of rejecting the commandment of God in order to establish your tradition! <sup>10</sup>For Moses said, 'Honour your father and your mother'; and, 'Whoever reviles father or mother must surely die.' <sup>11</sup>But you say, 'If a man tells his father or his mother, Whatever you would have gained from me is Corban' (that is, given to God)— <sup>12</sup>then you no longer permit him to do anything for his father or mother, <sup>13</sup>thus making void the word of God by your tradition that you have handed down. And many such things you do."

**Corban** (korban) means a votive offering to the temple fund or the treasury itself, (the treasury was the room where the contribution boxes stood). It was the custom in Israel and the word of God for children to financially support their parents in their old age, but the Pharisees were telling the people that if they gave the financial aid to the priesthood treasury instead of financially helping their parents then they were no longer bound to the custom of supporting their aging parents. This clearly shows the selfishness of the religious leaders of Jesus generation, rather than have children financially support their helpless parents in their old age they wanted the money for themselves is it any wonder Jesus called them hypocrites.

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## MARK 7:14-23

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### **Nothing going into a Person can Defile that Person.**

- **Mark 7:14-23:** And he called the people to him again and said to them, "Hear me, all of you, and understand: <sup>15</sup>There is nothing outside a person that by going into him can defile him, but the things that come out of a person are what defile him." <sup>16</sup>And when he had entered the house and left the people, his disciples asked him about the parable <sup>17</sup>And when he had entered the house and left the people, his disciples asked him about the parable. <sup>18</sup>And he said to them, "Then are you also without understanding? Do you not see that whatever goes into a person from outside cannot defile him, <sup>19</sup>since it enters not his heart but his stomach, and is expelled?" (Thus he declared all foods clean.) <sup>20</sup>And he

said, "What comes out of a person is what defiles him. <sup>21</sup>For from within, out of the heart of man, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, <sup>22</sup>coveting, wickedness, deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride, foolishness. <sup>23</sup>All these evil things come from within, and they defile a person."

If people ate contaminated food and drank polluted water every day they would soon be very sick so it is obvious the context of these verses is about spiritual cleanness not healthy eating. It is pretty amazing that even the disciples did not understand what Jesus meant. This shows how much the religious leaders of Jesus era had focused on keeping outward traditions and how much it had ingrained the minds and consciousness of the nation. They were so focused on outward ceremonial laws and traditions that they did not understand inward spiritual life and what was really important to the heart of God. The Old Testament was full of ceremonial rites, feasts and keeping holy days (i.e., the outward life), but Jesus came to reveal the sin in the heart. All foods are spiritually clean is not the same as saying all foods are healthy.

**What comes out of a person is what defiles them:** it is interesting to notice that Jesus says evil thoughts, evil actions, theft, murder, sexual immorality, adultery; wickedness, deceit, envy, slander, pride, foolishness and coveting all arise from within, out of the human heart. Coveting underlies almost all sins because coveting is the craving (or passionate desire) for something especially things unlawful. The dominate spirit/attitude underlying coveting is, self-gratification, physically, materially, financially, sexually, emotionally, mentally and even sometimes spiritually.

**Coveting:** means to have a strong desire to possess something that belongs to somebody else or to yearn to have something very much.

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## MARK 7:24-30

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### Jesus Heals the Daughter of a Syrophenician Woman.

- **Mark 7:24-30:** And from there he arose and went away to the region of Tyre and Sidon. And he entered a house and did not want anyone to know, yet he could not be hidden. <sup>25</sup>But immediately a woman whose little daughter was possessed by an unclean spirit heard of him and came and fell down at his feet. <sup>26</sup>Now the woman was a Gentile, a Syrophenician by birth. And she begged him to cast the demon out of her daughter. <sup>27</sup>And he said to her, "Let the children be fed first, for it is not right to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs." <sup>28</sup>But she answered him, "Yes, Lord; yet even the dogs under the table eat the children's crumbs." <sup>29</sup>And he said to her, "For this statement you may go your way; the demon has left your daughter." <sup>30</sup>And she went home and found the child lying in bed and the demon gone.

Jesus entered a house and did not want anyone to know, yet he could not be hidden the Lord was constantly trying to escape the enormous crowds that came to him for healing, because neither he nor the disciples had time to relax, pray, eat or even sleep and Christ's primary ministry was not to heal, but to take the Gospel to different towns and villages and teach the disciples. This story beautifully contrasts the previous verses in which the religious leaders the Pharisees and scribes are presented as hypocrites who are more concerned about themselves and their own gain whereas in this story, we are presented with a Gentile woman without God who has an absolutely beautiful heart attitude toward Christ.

### Even the Dogs eat the Crumbs that fall from their Masters' Table.

**Dogs:** (kunarion) is translated from is the Greek word puppy, it is used in the sense of a pet or friend figuratively it carries the idea of the lessor. The Jews considered themselves full grown concerning the things of God they saw themselves as the superior and righteous race and the Gentiles as the unclean or lessor class of people. To the Jews the Canaanite (non-Jews) Gentile women would be seen as unclean and inferior concerning

the things of God. Jesus is contrasting the Jewish nation who had known God for over four-thousand years with the Gentiles who had been without God, he is stating the fact that concerning the things of God the Gentiles are lessor (at this stage) than the Jews who God had chosen from the Exodus. Jesus came firstly to the lost sheep of Israel (i.e. the Jews that were humble and desired the truth but could not find it because of the religious leaders of that era). The Pharisees and scribes who were serving God for their own selfish gain had made it almost impossible for the average person to find God, thus Jesus first priority was to this group of people (the lost sheep), nevertheless because Jesus was full of compassion and mercy (unlike the Pharisees and scribes) he responded to this Gentile woman's great faith and humble attitude and healed her daughter.

**NOTICE:** the woman's great faith was not that she believed Jesus would heal her daughter, but that she believed he could heal her daughter and knowing this she humbly asks him to heal her.

**Have mercy O Lord, my daughter is oppressed by a demon** (v22). In this context the term unclean spirits and demons are interchangeable they both mean the same thing which is that the woman's little girl had a sickness they did not understand. During Jesus era the people believed that sickness they could not understand were caused by inferior evil gods called demons possessing them. For further information see the title:

- Demons, Devils and Sickness (at the end of his chapter).

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## MARK 7:31-37

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### Jesus Heals a Deaf Man.

- **Mark 7:31-37:** Then he returned from the region of Tyre and went through Sidon to the Sea of Galilee, in the region of the Decapolis. <sup>32</sup>And they brought to him a man who was deaf and had a speech impediment, and they begged him to lay his hand on him. <sup>33</sup>And taking him aside from the crowd privately, he put his fingers into his ears, and after spitting touched his tongue. <sup>34</sup>And looking up to heaven, he sighed and said to him, "Ephphatha," that is, "Be opened." <sup>35</sup>And his ears were opened, his tongue was released, and he spoke plainly. <sup>36</sup>And Jesus charged them to tell no one. But the more he charged them, the more zealously they proclaimed it. <sup>37</sup>And they were astonished beyond measure, saying, "He has done all things well. He even makes the deaf hear and the mute speak."

**Ephphatha:** means open or to be opened.

A man, who suffered with a speech impediment and was deaf, had friends who cared about him so much they took him to Jesus and begged the Lord to heal him. Jesus took the deaf man away from the crowd and put his finger into the man's ears, then after spitting touched the man's tongue and said to him, "Ephphatha" be opened and the man immediately spoke.

**NOTICE:** it was not the deaf man's faith that healed him, but the faith of his friends. They believed Jesus could heal him and their faith was manifested in their actions of doing whatever it took to get their sick friend to the Lord and even though they knew Jesus could heal their friend they did not demand or claim it but humbly asked Jesus to heal him.

**Tell no-one of the miracle:** once again Jesus told those who knew of the healing not to tell anyone, but what parent or friend could restrain themselves from proclaiming such a fabulous miracle so his fame continued to spread.

The English word demon and demons are not found in the entire King James Bible. In the New Testament of the King James Bible the translators have unfortunately translated both (diabolos) and (daimion) as devil or devils which gives a completely wrong understanding of the Greek words diabolos (devil) and daimion (demon). This has over the years led to a misunderstanding of the difference between devils and demons. Most well recognized and globally accepted modern Bibles have translated demons (daimion) and devils (diabolos) correctly. The word demons (daimion) was believed to be an inferior deity or god and primarily relates to sickness whereas devils (diabolos) means a false accuser or slander and primarily relates to people's behavior and not sickness.

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## **THE JEWS AND DEMONS**

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The Jews believed demons to be an inferior evil god or deity that held possession of those with severe sickness either bodily or mentally those that were mentally sick were believed to be possessed by an evil inferior god called daimon. They believed that the demons (daimonions) so held possession of them as not only to afflict them with ills, but also to dethrone the reason and take its place themselves and that people possessed with demons were forced by the demons to express the mind and consciousness of the demons dwelling in them, and the only cure was by the expulsion of the demons. The fact that the Pharisees and scribes and certain Jews believed John the Baptist and Jesus were possessed by demons (John 7:20) (John 8:48-49) (John 10:19-20) (Matthew 11:18) clearly shows us that just because the religious leaders of Jesus era believed mental illness, deafness, blindness and sickness they didn't understand were a result of demons does not mean it is a true fact.

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## **THE BIBLICAL DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SICKNESS AND DEMONS**

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In most instances when people had an illness that does not control the person, it is referred to in biblical writings as a sickness, but when a sickness (mental illness) controls a person to do things they do not want to do (have fits etc.), they are referred to as having demons or an unclean spirit. Sickness commonly related to illnesses the people understood, while demons primarily relate to severe illnesses and diseases, either bodily or mentally the people did not understand. Just because people believe something does not mean it is true if the Bible were being written today it would contain words like bi-polar disorder, schizophrenia epilepsy, melancholy, loss of speech etc., which in the New Testament are referred to as unclean spirits, demons or caused by demons as are paralysis, blindness and deafness and any other sickness the people did not understand.

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## **ONE SUPER EVIL GOD IN CONTROL OF MILLIONS OF LESSER EVIL GODS**

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Any force in a human that controls a person to do things they cannot control themselves, things that affects their behavior and mental well-being, voices or words in the mind and severe diseases, either bodily or mentally, (such as schizophrenia paralysis, blindness, deafness, loss of speech, epilepsy, melancholy, insanity and seizures etc., plus speeches that entice people against the things of God and God Himself are all commonly called demons in the New Testament. But the Bible does not present a picture of one super evil god (slightly less in power than God) being in control of millions of lesser evil gods. This is a modern-day misunderstanding of the language of the Bible. Demons are not evil people as Hollywood portrays demon possessed people in their movies. People in the Bible that had demons were morally good people and, in some cases,

only children who were sadly afflicted with severe diseases, either bodily or mentally such as paralysis, blindness, deafness and loss of speech, epilepsy, melancholy and insanity, etc. In the opinion of the Jews demons had entered their bodies, and so held possession of them as not only to afflict them with ills, but also to dethrone the reason and take its place themselves. The people of Jesus age believed the possessed were driven to express the mind and consciousness of the demons dwelling in them; and their only cure was thought to require the expulsion of the demon.

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## THE ORIGIN OF DEMONS

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A demon is believed to be a supernatural being, spirit, or force capable of influencing human lives, usually by evil means. Demons have played a role in the traditions of most religions. The practice of expelling demons (exorcism) that possess people or places has been carried out by many religions. The belief in evil spirits and their ability to influence the lives of people dates from prehistoric times. Many early people believed that spirits occupied all elements of nature. Evil spirits or demons were spirits that brought harm to living people. Societies that believed in demons sought to influence the actions of both good and bad spirits through worship and sacrifices. Some ancient societies, including those in Egypt and Babylonia (now Iraq), believed that such spirits were responsible for the functions of the body and that demons caused specific illnesses. The word demon originated from an ancient Greek term, daimon, which referred to beings whose special powers placed them between people and the gods. These beings had the ability either to improve people's lives or carry out the punishment of the gods. Basic Christian ideas about demons originated from references to evil beings or unclean spirits in the Old Testament. By the middle ages, Christian theology had developed an elaborate hierarchy of angels, who were associated with God, and fallen angels, or demons, who were led by Satan. Satan himself was considered the original fallen angel. Islam also developed a complex system of demons. Muslim writings describe a group of evil beings, called jinn, who cause destruction and preside over places where evil activities take place. The original jinn were called Iblis, who was cast out by Allah for refusing to worship Adam, the first man.

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## MODERN DAY MISUNDERSTANDING OF DEMONS

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Demons can be seen as any controlling power or force in people that is destructive to their well-being, science says, anorexia and such like are mental problems and not physical, doctors call anorexia a destructive mental power or force whereas the Bible calls it, demons meaning, something that is destructive to a humans well-being. Today's generations primary understanding of demons comes from Hollywood and not New Testament or spiritual thinking because of this to think of someone having a demon is highly offensive as it implies, they are either extremely evil or extremely morally bankrupt which not one of the persons who are said to have demons in the Bible were. It is not the Bible that is wrong, but the modern-day misunderstanding of the terminology and language of the Bible because modern generations have been influenced by a wrong understanding of the language used during the time of Jesus and the apostles.

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## SOME SIMILAR BIBLICAL STORIES

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### A WOMAN AND HER DAUGHTER

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A Greek Syrophenician woman asked Jesus to cast forth the demon (daimon) (meaning an inferior deity or god) out of her daughter, Jesus said the demon is gone out of her daughter and when she went to her

house, she found her daughter healed. This is a woman's young daughter, a child. The child would not be evil or morally bankrupt, this was not an inferior evil god or deity possessing the child as the Jews believed but a mental disorder or disease (Mark 7:23-30).

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### **A MAN AND HIS CHILD**

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A man tells Jesus that a spirit takes his child, and the son cries out during his epileptic fits and the boy suffers bodily harm. This is a man loved his son, the child would certainly not be evil or morally bankrupt, the spirit, is not an evil god possessing the child as the Jews believed, but a mental disorder, illness or disease (Luke 9:37-41).

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### **A LUNATIC**

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A man came to Jesus and asked him to have mercy on his son telling Jesus that his son is lunatic (meaning affected by the moon), and often has very bad fits that sometimes seriously harm the boy (Matt. 17:14-18). The Jews believed evil inferior gods caused mental disorders and the Greeks believed the moon could cause bodily seizures or fits. Today we know the moon does not cause illness, but understand that the child had epilepsy or a similar disease and was having a fit, the Greeks and the Jews knew nothing of epilepsy or the like so they simply referred to illnesses and sicknesses they did not understand as being the result of the moon or the sick person being possessed by inferior evil gods. The Jews mistaken understanding of demons was the same as the Greeks wrong belief about the moon.

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### **THERE ARE MANY SO-CALLED GODS IN HEAVEN AND ON EARTH**

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The Bible teaches that there is only one real God and creator of all that exists and His name is I AM the God of Abraham Isaac and Jacob, yet the apostle Paul says there are many so-called gods in heaven and on earth (1 Cor. 8:5). Immediately after making this statement Paul says, nevertheless not everyone possesses this knowledge. Meaning the knowledge that there are many gods, neither do they understand how and why (1 Cor. 8:7). Pagans believed in various gods, often referred to as "the god." These false but very real illusionary gods are created by a very strong belief in "the god" in the imagination of the mind. The New Testament calls these gods demons (daimonion), but that does not mean real inferior false gods actually exist, they are an entity created by a false belief of the mind, but to the person believing in false gods and demons they are very real entities this is most likely why Jesus did not try to explain the medical terms as we know them today. Jesus rather than go into lengthy detail to explain in detail the medical causes of sickness simply used the common language of his era and manifested God's power over all other gods people believed in by supernaturally healing people. Once a person saw and experience the healing power of God why would they continue to believe in their false inferior gods who had no power? When Jesus gave this same healing power to his apostles to heal physical sickness and spiritual or mental disorders of the mind it was not solely so they could deliver people from their sickness, but to prove to the people that they were teaching the words of the only true God and the only way to eternal salvation. Thus, the apostles and Jesus ministry were not to teach medical science, but to connect people separated from God to God.

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### **DEMONS (ILLUSIONARY GODS AND THE MIND)**

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Demons as evil spiritual gods only exist in the mind of those who believe in them, they are an image of the mind created by imagination through a false belief in them. This false image in the mind will affect a person's emotions and feelings accordingly because the human nervous system cannot tell the difference between a real image of the mind and a false one. The imaginary but real images of the mind create real emotions and feelings of fear through the human nervous system and these feelings in turn reinforce and convince those that believe in demons or monsters that real evil gods do exist.

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## NOT EVERYTHING IS BLACK AND WHITE

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Perhaps everything regarding demons is not quite as black and white as I have explained, even the best doctors and scientist in the world today still don't fully understand the cause of many of these illness, but one thing that is very clear and is black and white is that those in the Bible who were said to be possessed by demons were not evil wicked people in fact some were children and others humbly fell at the Lords feet and wanted to follow him added to this God through the Lord Jesus Christ showed them great compassion and mercy.

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### **For further information see the titles:**

- Devils.
- Demons.
- Unclean spirits.

Both titles are in, Satan and his Family (ON WEBSITE MENU).

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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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