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## **Psalm 118**

(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.



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Bible  
at Home**

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.

## Psalm 118.

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### Topics.

- Give thanks to God, for His love and mercy endures forever.
- The LORD is on my side; I will not fear. What can man do to me?
- It is better to take refuge in the LORD than to trust in man and princes.
- Enemies surrounded me like bees; like a fire among thorns.
- The right hand of the LORD: does valiantly and saves from death.
- The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone.
- This is the day that the LORD has made; let us be glad in it.
- Blessed is he who comes in the name of the LORD.
- God has made his light to shine upon us.

**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

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Psalms are songs and prayers offered to God by the nation Israel, they cover the range of human emotion, expressing praise, faith, victory, sorrow, despair, depression, frustration and the troubled heart of a mourner. They contrast the righteous with the wicked, and include the wisdom and the treasure of God's word. Psalms were written at the beginning of the 15th century BC and probably collected in their final form in the 3rd century.

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### BOOK FIVE (PSALM 107-150)

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#### PSALM 118:1-3

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#### Give thanks to God, for His Love and Mercy Endures Forever.

- **Psalm 118:1-3:** Oh give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; for his steadfast love (mercy in KJV) endures forever! <sup>2</sup>Let Israel say, "His steadfast love endures forever." <sup>3</sup>Let the house of Aaron say, "His steadfast love endures forever."

After reading this Psalm it becomes clear that the Psalmist was in great distress (v5) people who hated him (v7) and enemies of all nations surrounded him (v10), but with God favouring him he overcame them and got the victory over them (v11). After such a triumphant victory he calls all Israel to praise the LORD.

The English Standard Bible says:

- God's steadfast love endures forever.

The King James Bible says:

- God's mercy endures forever.

The word mercy comes from the Hebrew word (*cheched*) and means to show, kind favour, to show merciful kindness, to be kind, to show oneself merciful and to pity which embraces such things as showing compassion, sympathy, empathy, comfort and forgiveness. The apostle Paul wrote,

- Love does no wrong to a neighbour; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law. (Romans. 13:10).
- Love is patient and kind. (1 Cor. 13:4).

And John wrote:

- God, because God is love. (1 John 4:8).
- God is love, and whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him. (1 John 4:16).

The word mercy embraces all of the following, compassion, pity, kindness, sympathy, grace and forgiveness which means love and mercy cannot be separated, love without mercy is not love and mercy without love is not mercy, which also means that Bibles that state, "God's mercy endures for ever," and Bibles that say, "God's love endures for ever," are both correct in their interpretations.

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## PSALM 118:4

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**Let all who Fear the LORD say, His Love Endures Forever.**

- **Psalm 118:4:** Let those who fear the LORD say, "His steadfast love endures forever."

**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. 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 Lord's global family.

**NOTE:** love is not a part of God's character; God is love wherever love is God is present by His Spirit. This does not mean that wherever love is the people are saved to eternal life, it simply means God by His love is in that love.

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## PSALM 118:5-7

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**The LORD is on My Side; I will Not Fear. What can Man do to Me?**

- **Psalm 118:5-7:** Out of my distress I called on the LORD; the LORD answered me and set me free. <sup>6</sup>The LORD is on my side; I will not fear. What can man do to me? <sup>7</sup>The LORD is on my side as my helper; I shall look in triumph on those who hate me.

Out of great mental anguish and emotional fear because of the fearsome surrounding nations that hated the Psalmist on every side he called upon the LORD and God answered his prayer showing him and Israel that the LORD was on their side.

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## PSALM 118:8-9

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### **It is Better to Take Refuge in the LORD than Trust in Princes.**

- **Psalm 118:8-9:** It is better to take refuge in the LORD than to trust in man. <sup>9</sup>It is better to take refuge in the LORD than to trust in princes.

Some take this verse and the many others like them to mean that no man or woman should ever be trusted, but this is reading into the verse far more than the Psalmist intended for the following seven reasons:

1. If husbands and wives could never trust each other no marriage would survive.
2. If romantic partners never trusted each other there would be no marriages.
3. If friends never trusted each other there would be no heartfelt bonded friendships.
4. Bosses and companies never trusted their managers they would have no chance of success.
5. Patients would experience enormous fear if they knew they could never trust their doctor or their surgeon.
6. Parents would suffer great anxiety and overwhelming stress if they could never trust their children's teachers.
7. The church would have no hope of growth if those seeking God and faithful followers of the Lord Jesus Christ could never trust the ministers and pastors of the global body of Christ.

Obviously there are those who cannot be trusted amongst all these groups, there are husbands and wives who cheat on each other, those who betray their friends, managers who do steal from their bosses, doctors who lack integrity and compassion, school teachers who sexually abuse their students, ministers and pastors who twist and pervert the Scriptures for their own gain and to enhance their fame, worldly riches and global religious empire, but these are the exceptions to the general rule of things. Now having highlighted these truths, what does the statement, "It is better to take refuge in the LORD than to trust in man," actually mean? The answer to this question is: should any husband, wife, romantic partner, boss, manager, doctor, surgeon, teacher or anyone else say anything that is contrary to the word of God and the nature and character of the Lord Jesus Christ it is better to trust in God and His word than to trust in whatever it is that they are saying.

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## PSALM 118:10-13

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### **Enemies Surrounded Me like Bees; like a Fire among Thorns.**

- **Psalm 118:10-13:** All nations surrounded me; in the name of the LORD I cut them off! <sup>11</sup>They surrounded me, surrounded me on every side; in the name of the LORD I cut them off! <sup>12</sup>They surrounded me like bees; they went out like a fire among thorns; in the name of the LORD I cut them off! <sup>13</sup>I was pushed hard, so that I was falling, but the LORD helped me.

**They surrounded me like bees:** (v12) many years ago the building company I was with was contracted to build a golf club house. Sometimes we would have a crack at hitting a couple of balls at lunch time. One particular day we heard this enormously loud humming noise, naturally we turned to see what it was, from a distance it appeared as a single and massive black cloud approaching, as it got closer it became obvious it was a swarm of bees, someone in the group yelled out, "Hit the dirt lay down," everyone immediately did and the potentially life threatening cloud continued on the path flying only a couple of feet above us. The expression, "they surrounded us like bees," is a most appropriate expression to depict the fierce armies of an enemy since bees move all together as one body and have the power to cause extremely severe pain and even death.

**They went out like a fire:** (v12) fire burns everything in its path, very little stops it and should it touch any living thing it not only causes the most extreme pain, but will kill every living creature that cannot escape it. The two expressions, "they surrounded me like bees," and "they went out like a fire," shine a brilliant spotlight upon the fierceness and power of the enemies that had come up against the Psalmist and the nation of Israel. It is very likely this Psalm could refer to King David since he not only faced such fearful enemies, but also had amazing triumphant victories because God went before him, but it could also apply to any King of Israel that had such fierce enemies and triumphant victories.

**NOTICE:** the words, "All nations surrounded me; in the name of the LORD I cut them off," (v10) the Psalmist credits both himself and the LORD for the victory over his enemies. This is most likely because he led the armies of Israel into battle against the surrounding armies of their enemies and by Israel's skilful and fearless warriors, they defeated their enemy. Many times, in the Old Testament God said He would give Israel the victory and go before them, but they still had to go and fight the battle. It was Israel and God working together. It could be likened to God calling a minister to establish a church and saying that He will go by His Spirit before him. So the minister trusts God to build his church and sits home praying and reading the Scriptures, but does nothing practical to actually establish a church congregation. Obviously, this church will never become a reality even though God has said He will go before him. God does not bless laziness. Though there are times when God has miraculously intervened in Israel's history (i.e., the plaques, the Red Sea and the River Jordan parting, food from heaven in the wilderness etc.), most of the time it is God working with the people of Israel, it is them doing their part and God doing His.

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## PSALM 118:14-17

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### **The Right Hand of the LORD does Valiantly and Saves from Death.**

- **Psalm 118:14-17:** The LORD is my strength and my song; he has become my salvation.  
<sup>15</sup>Glad songs of salvation are in the tents of the righteous: "The right hand of the LORD does valiantly, <sup>16</sup>the right hand of the LORD exalts, the right hand of the LORD does valiantly!" <sup>17</sup>I shall not die, but I shall live, and recount the deeds of the LORD.

The expression, "the right hand of the LORD," in the immediate context refers to the power of God favouring the nation of Israel and their armies in battle, but it also echoes the Lord Jesus Christ who has become everyone's salvation and righteousness and has by his resurrection and death done valiantly on the bloodstained cross of Calvary so that all who come to him will not be given over to death, but be raised to eternal life.

**Glad songs of salvation are in the tents of the righteous:** (v15) this expression shines a light upon one of the keys to having and underlying joy dwelling in the heart and mind regardless of circumstances. This key is to have righteousness dwelling in the heart which means to have love, integrity, honesty, compassion, mercy, grace and to always be willing to

forgive. Those who treasure these attitudes in their heart and mind will have songs of joy dwelling within. In contrast to this those who harbour bitterness, hatred, resentment and use deceit and lies in their dealings will lack the inner joy that comes from God's Spirit dwelling in the heart.

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## PSALM 118:18

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### **The LORD has Disciplined Me. (v18)**

- **Psalm 118:18:** The LORD has disciplined me severely, but he has not given me over to death.

For those who deny the existence of God the Psalmist triumphant victories would simply be seen as the natural outworking's of one army waring against another and the more skilful army conquering the less skilled. But those who have faith in God understand that no matter how skilful or well-equipped they maybe if God's favour is not toward them, they will not win the battle.

**The LORD has severely disciplined me:** as one travels through the Old Testament Scriptures it become clear that every faithful man and woman who believed in the God of creation and of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob lived with the faith that God was in control of every aspect of their life good or bad. It mattered not whether their life was blessed or troubled it never dented their faith that God did not exist or that He was not working for their benefit and favour. When the faithful amongst the population of Israel were aware that their nation had grossly sinned before the LORD, they knew that hardships, grief's troubles and sorrows that came upon them were a result of God removing His hand of favour and blessing from them and as a result troubles and sorrows came. It should be highlighted here that this does not mean that the reason a Christian is suffering hardships, grief's and troubles is because they have some hidden sin as some teach.

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No Christian no matter how faithful and devoted is free from sinful dysfunctions and aberrations dwelling within. If any of us could attain to that glorious state of living a life free of sin Christ died for no reason. But it does shine a spotlight on the truth, that if anyone deliberately and consciously lives a life that brings dishonour to God and shame to the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and the Christian faith instead of God's favour being toward them it will be against them, especially at the judgment seat of Christ. When standing at the judgment seat of Christ those who confess to believe in him, but have taken no care for how their life and behaviour reflects on the good name of Jesus will most likely find themselves standing with the group that hears their Master say: -

- Truly, I say to you, I do not know you or where you come from. Depart from me, all you workers of evil (Matt. 25:1-46) (Luke 13:27).

And not in the group that hears the words of their Master saying:

- Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master. (Matt. 25:21) (Matt. 25:23).

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## PSALM 118:19-21

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### **Open to me the Gates of Righteousness, that I May Enter Them.**

- **Psalm 118:19-21:** Open to me the gates of righteousness, that I may enter through them and give thanks to the LORD. <sup>20</sup>This is the gate of the LORD; the righteous shall enter through it. <sup>21</sup>I thank you that you have answered me and have become my salvation.

The gate that leads to the LORD firstly embraces God's plan of salvation and secondly behaviour:



1. In regards to God's plan of salvation it embraces those who have faith in Israel's Messiah the promised King and Christ to come the Lord Jesus Christ the Saviour of the world and who trust that they are saved by his righteousness and not their own self-righteousness and trust in God's grace as Abraham the father of faith did.
2. In regards to behaviour it refers to righteousness (i.e., right behaviour) it embraces those who do all they can to live a lifestyle that honours God and brings a good testimony to the name of Jesus and the Christian faith and have a heart filled with thankfulness and gratitude toward the Lord.

Those who trust in God's plan of salvation and live in this manner will enter the LORD'S gates of righteousness that open to eternal life and everlasting happiness.

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## PSALM 118:22-23

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### **The Stone that the Builders Rejected has Become the Cornerstone.**

- **Psalm 118:22-23:** The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone.  
<sup>23</sup>This is the LORD'S doing; it is marvelous in our eyes.

The stone the builder rejected in its immediate historic context refers to the Psalmist and the faithful fighting with him. This entire Psalm could easily refer to David being rejected by king Saul and the king's armies seeking to destroy David and the faithful with him, but instead of David being destroyed he is exalted as the king. Should this be the case the builders would refer to Saul the king of Israel who was called to build up the kingdom of Israel and the stone that was rejected would of course refer to David, but since we are not told who the Psalmist is this is simply a speculation. But what we do know for certain is that it is a most profound prophecy concerning the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus when speaking of himself cites this verse:

- Jesus said to them (the chief priests, the Pharisees and the elders of the people), "Have you never read in the Scriptures?" "The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone; this was the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes?" (Matt. 21:42) (Mark 12:10) (Luke 20:17).
- Peter wrote: so the honour is for you who believe, but for those who do not believe, "The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone." (1 Peter 2:7).

In Jesus generation the builders refer to the chief priests, the Pharisees and the elders of the people of Israel. They were appointed to build up the nation of Israel to be a kingdom of priests to God and a testimony to the world, but instead they plotted the murder of their promised Messiah the Christ that all the prophets proclaimed was to come and that all the Scriptures speak of. Clearly the words of the Psalmist, "the stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone, it is the LORD'S doing and marvellous in our eyes," is a stunning prophecy of the rejection of the Lord Jesus Christ by the religious leaders of his generation. These religious heads of Israel should of had great joy and rejoicing at the coming of their Messiah, but instead not only stumbled at his appearance, but aggressively sought to have him put to death and destroy anyone who followed him.

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## PSALM 118:24-25

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### **This is the Day that the LORD has made; Let us be Glad in It.**

- **Psalm 118:24-25:** This is the day that the LORD has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it. <sup>25</sup>Save us, we pray, O LORD! O LORD, we pray, give us success!

Again, the immediate fulfilment of these verses is to the great victory the LORD has given the Psalmist over the surrounding enemies who hated him, but it is also a very clear prophecy calling all to praise the day the Lord Jesus Christ came to his people.

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## PSALM 118:26

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### **Blessed is He who Comes in the Name of the LORD.**

- **Psalm 118:26:** Blessed is he who comes in the name of the LORD! We bless you from the house of the LORD.

The immediate fulfilment of the words, "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the LORD," immediately refers to anyone that joined with the Psalmist and the faithful with him and to the nation of Israel in the name of the LORD the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God of Israel. But it is also an amazing prophecy of the Lord Jesus Christ coming into the world in the name of God his heavenly Father.

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## PSALM 118:27

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### **God has Made His Light to Shine upon Us.**

- **Psalm 118:27-29:** The LORD is God, and he has made his light to shine upon us. Bind the festal sacrifice with cords, up to the horns of the altar! <sup>28</sup>You are my God, and I will give thanks to you; you are my God; I will extol you. <sup>29</sup>Oh give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; for his steadfast love endures forever!

The words, "God has made His light to shine upon us," refers to the great victory the LORD have given the Psalmist, but of course it is also a most wonderful prophecy of the Lord Jesus Christ coming with God's salvation and favour toward Jews and Gentiles. Prior to Jesus coming, the Jews view of the Gentiles was that they were an unholy race without God while they were the holy race with God. Certainly, it was true that they were God's chosen people, but Jesus changed all this by bringing God's salvation to both Jews and Gentiles. God at this present time is building a new nation in Christ made up of Jews and Gentiles. This new nation is called a new creature in Christ, a new man in Christ, the church, the global body of Christ and the Kingdom of Christ. For further information concerning this new nation, see the title: "The Commonwealth of Israel," at the end of this study.

**NOTE:** following is a principal that we can all learn from this Psalm. Just because God is on our side does not always mean it will be easy, nevertheless just as the LORD gave this author of this Psalm victory over his fierce and surrounding enemies and delivered him from death so God will deliver all the faithful from the law of sin and death through the Lord Jesus Christ and raise them from their sleep in Christ to eternal life and everlasting happiness.

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## THE COMMONWEALTH OF ISRAEL

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It is important to understand that the promised seed of Abraham and David is Christ, all the promises to Israel are now fulfilled in Christ therefore they are not limited to Israel only, but extend and embrace all those who belong to Christ. This is because God is now creating one new nation in Christ made up of both Jew and Gentiles. (Gentiles are everyone who is not a Hebrew or Jew). This means that Jews and Gentiles become one new nation in Christ (also called a new man, a new creation, the church, the body of Christ and the Kingdom of God).

The Apostle Paul said:



- Remember that at one time you Gentiles in the flesh, called "the uncircumcision" by what is called the circumcision (Jews), which is made in the flesh by hands—<sup>12</sup>remember that you (Gentiles) were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the *COMMONWEALTH OF ISRAEL* and *STRANGERS* to the *COVENANTS* of *PROMISE*, having no hope and without God in the world.<sup>13</sup> But now in Christ Jesus you (Gentiles) who once were far off (from God) have been brought near by the blood of Christ.<sup>14</sup> For he himself is our (Jews and Gentiles) peace, who has made us both *ONE* and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility<sup>15</sup> by abolishing the law of commandments and ordinances, that he (Jesus) might create in himself *ONE NEW MAN* (or Nation) in place of the two (Jews and Gentiles), so making peace,<sup>16</sup> and might reconcile us (Jews and Gentiles) both to God in *ONE BODY* through the cross, thereby killing the hostility (between the Jews and Gentiles).<sup>17</sup> And he (Jesus) came and preached peace to you (Gentiles) who were far off (from God) and peace to those who were near (Jews).<sup>18</sup> For through him (Jesus) we both (Jews and Gentiles) have access in *ONE SPIRIT* to the Father.<sup>19</sup> So then you (Gentiles) are *NO LONGER* strangers and aliens, but you are *FELLOW CITIZENS* with the *SAINTS* (the Jews) and members of the *HOUSEHOLD* of God,<sup>20</sup> built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone<sup>21</sup> in whom the *WHOLE STRUCTURE* being joined together (Jews and Gentiles) grows into a holy temple in the Lord.<sup>22</sup> In him you (Jews and Gentiles) also are being built together into a *DWELLING PLACE* for *GOD* by the Spirit (Ephes. 2:11-22).

Gentiles were separated from Christ, alienated from the, Commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus they have been brought to God by the blood of Christ. Jesus has made Jews and Gentiles both one by abolishing the law of commandments and ordinances so that Jesus might create in himself one new man (nation) in place of the two (Jews and Gentiles). In Jesus both Jews and Gentiles are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit. Christ is the head of this new nation and its Jewish and Gentile citizens are now equal in status before God since in Christ we are all brothers and sisters in the same eternal family that God is now establishing in the Lord Jesus Christ throughout all nations of the world. The practical application of what this means to those who belong to Christ is that all the future and eternal promises God made to Israel also apply to them. The book of Revelation states:

- When Christ returns in glory every eye will see him, even those who pierced him and all the tribes of the earth (Rev. 1:7).

And in Revelation chapter five we are told that:

- Christ was slain, and by his blood he ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation (i.e., Jews and Gentiles) and he has made them a kingdom and priests to God and they shall reign on the earth (Rev. 5:9-10).

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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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