

**graceWORKS ! GOING DEEPER<sup>1</sup> The Papou Study Bible** is a daily study provided by me to



help folks explore the depth and joy of the “conneXion” life of God. It’s my personal study, and is not intended as a doctrinal statement or statement of any church or denomination or congregation. It’s also my belief that “grace” works, and the servant of God should always want to go deeper. Multi-tasking as usual, I’m also calling this the “Papou Study Bible.” I’m writing it as if I were speaking to my girls who love me and any descendant they have that love their Papou too. And to anyone who wants to consider me a spiritual Dad or “Papou.” I want them to be able to study the Bible with Papou (grandpa in Greek) after I’m gone---and if they don’t, I’ll haunt them. The Scriptures say it’s noble to “search the Scriptures daily” to verify truth like the ancient Bereans did (Acts 17:11). My folks came from Berea. My incredible Dad (and your grandfather and great grandfather, guys), Vasil Charles Valekis taught me to do this like he did---every day until I die. He taught me and everyone I know to go to church no matter what and to put God first. While Mama (Maria Pagona Stratakis Valekis) never really did this, she made sure we listened to Daddy on this one. She would have hit us with a spatula or frying pan or worse if we didn’t. This is a simple sharing my “daily search.” And I’d like to think it is a continuation of God’s life through my Dad through me. Both my “Dads” by the way. And a way to honor him, mama and our loving “Dad”---God. And for all of us to be together, in Spirit, even when we I join them in heaven. I like to use the Blue Letter literal, very “visual,” Greek translation a lot to help “visualize” these truths the beautiful way Greek enables you to view. And I like to share this with folks serving in an elder capacity, or any capacity, to grow them, challenge them, and stretch them. But especially share it with anyone I’ve ever brought to Christ and family members who truly love me. And when you study these, I’ll make sure to connect with you from heaven. *Ever an orthodox Greek, Jim Valekis*

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**Christ IN You Series**

**Colossians 1:27 (King James Version)**

<sup>27</sup>To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is *Christ in you*, the hope of glory

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**Daniel 3 Part 2<sup>2</sup>**



Did you know that one way to interpret Bible stories like this is to think about the good guys (Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego) and identify with them, and to discount the others in the story (Nebuchadnezzar, the other officials) as bad guys. This leads to an interpretation of the Bible and the world that pits a righteous “us” against the unrighteous “them.” And of course, we always identify ourselves as one of the good guys. But what if we are “both”---we’re the good guys, and the bad guys, in every story? What if we need to understand that it’s not about an “us” and a “them,” but our God side and our parasitic fallen side? It opens all kinds of possibilities in our reading of these stories. So depending how focused you are today, let’s see which shoe “fits.” Enjoy!

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**We'll start by simply reading what we covered last time.**

## The Image of Gold and the Blazing Furnace

**3** King Nebuchadnezzar made an image of gold, sixty cubits high and six cubits wide, and set it up on the plain of Dura in the province of Babylon. <sup>2</sup>He then summoned the satraps, prefects, governors, advisers, treasurers, judges, magistrates and all the other provincial officials to come to the dedication of the image he had set up. <sup>3</sup>So the satraps, prefects, governors, advisers, treasurers, judges, magistrates and all the other provincial officials assembled for the dedication of the image that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up, and they stood before it.

<sup>4</sup>Then the herald loudly proclaimed, "Nations and peoples of every language, this is what you are commanded to do: <sup>5</sup>As soon as you hear the sound of the horn, flute, zither, lyre, harp, pipe and all kinds of music, you must fall down and worship the image of gold that King Nebuchadnezzar has set up. <sup>6</sup>Whoever does not fall down and worship will immediately be thrown into a blazing furnace."

<sup>7</sup>Therefore, as soon as they heard the sound of the horn, flute, zither, lyre, harp and all kinds of music, all the nations and peoples of every language fell down and worshiped the image of gold that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up.

**So that's the set up for the story. Now look at what happens.**

<sup>8</sup>At this time some astrologers<sup>(**Chaldeans**)</sup> came forward and denounced the Jews. <sup>9</sup>They said to King Nebuchadnezzar, "May the king live forever! <sup>10</sup>Your Majesty has issued a decree that everyone who hears the sound of the horn, flute, zither, lyre, harp, pipe and all kinds of music must fall down and worship the image of gold, <sup>11</sup>and that whoever does not fall down and worship will be thrown into a blazing furnace.

**This is interesting actually. Because while I believe this happened literally in history, I believe it happens spiritually a lot. Notice what**

**Peter, who had many trials, said about trials and their association with "fire."**

### **1 Peter 1**

<sup>3</sup>Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, <sup>4</sup>and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade. This inheritance is kept in heaven for you, <sup>5</sup>who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time. <sup>6</sup>In all this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. <sup>7</sup>These have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes **even though refined by fire**—may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed. <sup>8</sup>Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, <sup>9</sup>for you are receiving the end result of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

**So here is what I contend. When you chose to serve God only, regardless of what the world throws at you, you suffer from fiery trials in the furnace and caldron of life. Stand firm, like these young men did, and watch Jesus join you in the fire and also watch you grow in your freedom.**

**Also realize---there are "bad guys" out there--- people, who in the spirit of Cain, get "jealous" of your "Abel" lifestyle! These guys were trying to destroy these three highly successful Jews, out of envy no less.**

Genesis 4 New International Version (NIV)

### **Cain and Abel**

**4** Adam made love to his wife Eve, and she became pregnant and gave birth to Cain.<sup>[b]</sup> She said, "With the help of the LORD I have brought forth a man." <sup>2</sup>Later she gave birth to his brother Abel.

Now Abel kept flocks, and Cain worked the soil. <sup>3</sup>In the course of time Cain brought some of the fruits of the soil as an offering to the LORD. <sup>4</sup>And Abel also brought an offering—fat portions from some of the firstborn of his flock. The LORD looked with favor on Abel and his offering, <sup>5</sup>but on Cain and his offering he did not look with favor. So Cain was very angry, and his face was downcast.

**Religious envy is a toxic emotion. . . it led to the first murder.**

<sup>8</sup>Now Cain said to his brother Abel, "Let's go out to the field." While they were in the field, Cain attacked his brother Abel and killed him.

<sup>12</sup>But there are some Jews whom you have set over the affairs of the province of Babylon—Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego—who pay no attention to you, Your Majesty. They neither serve your gods nor worship the image of gold you have set up.”

<sup>13</sup>Furious with rage, Nebuchadnezzar summoned Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego.

**So now let's focus on Nebuchadnezzar a bit, and focus on him from a personal perspective. Are you always a "servant king" in Jesus Christ, or are their times you want to rule your little empire and well, get very torqued if anyone gets in your way. I think we all have moments like that, and again, we're all afflicted and conflicted with our "fleshly" human nature, our parasitic dark side that is frankly not just partially evil, but completely evil. Paul was! Note his words in the text box. So just as we all have our "Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego" sides, we all have our Nebuchadnezzar sides too!**

So these men were brought before the king, <sup>14</sup>and Nebuchadnezzar said to them, "Is it true, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, that you do not serve my gods or worship the image of gold I have set up? <sup>15</sup>Now when you hear the sound of the horn, flute, zither, lyre, harp, pipe and all kinds of music, if you are ready to fall down and worship the image I made, very good. But if you do not worship it, you will be thrown immediately into a blazing furnace. Then what god will be able to rescue you from my hand?"

**What "god"? Nebuchadnezzar was about to see!**

<sup>14</sup>We know that the law is spiritual; but I am unspiritual, sold as a slave to sin. <sup>15</sup>I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do. <sup>16</sup>And if I do what I do not want to do, I agree that the law is good. <sup>17</sup>As it is, it is no longer I myself who do it, but it is sin living in me. <sup>18</sup>For I know that good itself does not dwell in me, that is, in my fallen

flesh. [Author's transliteration] For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. <sup>19</sup>For I do not do the good I want to do, but the evil I do not want to do—this I keep on doing. <sup>20</sup>Now if I do what I do not want to do, it is no longer I who do it, but it is sin living in me that does it.

**The Apostle Paul in the Book of Romans, Chapter 7**

<sup>16</sup>Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego replied to him, "King Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to defend ourselves before you in this matter. <sup>17</sup>If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to deliver us from it, and he will deliver us<sup>[c]</sup> from Your Majesty's hand. <sup>18</sup>But even if he does not, we want you to know, Your Majesty, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up."

**Notice that. They accepted God's "sovereignty" and also the subjugation of this world to world evil. Evil is a part of this world.**

**Satan is "the god of this age."**

<b>2 Corinthians 4:4</b>	<b>John 12:31; 16:11</b>	<b>Luke 4:6</b>	<b>1 John 3:8;</b>	<b>Revelation 12:9</b>
<p><sup>4</sup>The <b>god of this age</b> has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel that displays the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.</p>	<p><sup>31</sup>Now is the time for judgment on this world; now the prince of this world will be driven out.</p> <p><sup>11</sup>and about judgment, because the prince of this world now stands condemned.</p> <p><b>Greek word for prince: "archon" - "first"</b></p>	<p><sup>6</sup>And he said to him, "I will give you all their authority and splendor; it has been given to me, and I can give it to anyone I want to.</p>	<p><sup>8</sup>The one who does what is sinful is of the devil, because the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work.</p> <p><b>The devil's work is the world evil we see.</b></p>	<p><sup>9</sup>The great dragon was hurled down—that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, <b>who leads the whole world astray.</b> He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him.</p> <p><b>It says the "whole world."</b></p>

**This accounts in my mind for world evil. Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego realized this, and accepted the fact that the bad might happen and that God might not chose to deliver them. What must they have been thinking? Maybe the same thing the people Hebrews 11 were thinking.**

**Hebrews 11**

<sup>35</sup>Women received back their dead, raised to life again. There were others who were tortured, refusing to be released so that they might gain an even better resurrection.

<sup>19</sup>Then Nebuchadnezzar was furious with Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, and his attitude toward them changed.

**Like other biblical figures (Moses comes to mind), this man had anger issues. His emotions could change on a dime! He could become “furious” and do impulsive things. By the way, the words associated with anger are also in some sense associated with poison.**

H2528 chema' khem-aw' (Aramaic) or chamah (Aramaic) {kham-aw'};	H2534 chemah khay-maw' or (Dan. 11:44) chemaC {khay-maw'};	H3179 yacham yaw-kham' a primitive root;
corresponding to H2534; anger.	from H3179; heat; figuratively, anger, poison (from its fever).	probably to be hot; figuratively, to conceive

He ordered the furnace heated seven times hotter than usual <sup>20</sup>and commanded some of the strongest soldiers in his army to tie up Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego and throw them into the blazing furnace.

**I wonder if that is also a parable for what Satan does to us when we stand up for God and God only. He has his angels (demons) make things really “hot” for us!**

<sup>21</sup>So these men, wearing their robes, trousers, turbans and other clothes, were bound and thrown into the blazing furnace. <sup>22</sup>The king’s command was so urgent and the furnace so hot that the flames of the fire killed the soldiers

who took up Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, <sup>23</sup>and these three men, firmly tied, fell into the blazing furnace.

**This in one sense describes life for us all in the Spirit.**

Matthew 3:11	Luke 3:16
"I baptize you with water for repentance. But after me comes one who is more powerful than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the <b>Holy Spirit</b> and <b>fire</b> ."	John answered them all, "I baptize you with water. But one who is more powerful than I will come, the straps of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie. He will baptize you with the <b>Holy Spirit</b> and <b>fire</b> ."

<sup>24</sup>Then King Nebuchadnezzar leaped to his feet in amazement and asked his advisers, "Weren't there three men that we tied up and threw into the fire?"

They replied, "Certainly, Your Majesty."

<sup>25</sup>He said, "Look! I see four men walking around in the fire, unbound and unharmed, and the fourth looks like a son of the gods."

**Ooooo . . . ! I like that. Wouldn't that make a great book title:**

**"Unbound and Unharmed." No matter what Satan tries to do to us, he can't win. And in God, we can be too things:**

**1. Unbound**

**2. Unharmed.**

**It makes me think of the woman who Christ healed who was "bound" by Satan for 18 years, until Christ unbound her!**

<sup>15</sup>The Lord answered him, "You hypocrites! . . .<sup>16</sup>Then should not this woman, a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan has kept bound for eighteen long years, be set free on the Sabbath day from what bound her?" **Luke 13**

**And notice who joins when you enter that fiery trial that instead of burning you up, sets you free and glows you up!**

<sup>26</sup>Nebuchadnezzar then approached the opening of the blazing furnace and shouted, "Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, servants of the Most High God, come out! Come here!" So Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego came

out of the fire, <sup>27</sup>and the satraps, prefects, governors and royal advisers crowded around them. They saw that the fire had not harmed their bodies, nor was a hair of their heads singed; their robes were not scorched, and there was no smell of fire on them.

**How amazingly cool! When you're tried by fire, you come out smelling like a rose. And stronger. And you witness to God!**

<sup>28</sup>Then Nebuchadnezzar said, "Praise be to the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, who has sent his angel and rescued his servants! They trusted in him and defied the king's command and **were willing to give up their lives rather than serve or worship any god except their own God.** <sup>29</sup>Therefore I decree that the people of any nation or language who say anything against the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego be cut into pieces and their houses be turned into piles of rubble, for no other god can save in this way."

**So . . . at least tolerance for their worship was won! And they got a promotion!**

<sup>30</sup>Then the king promoted Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego in the province of Babylon.

**Footnotes:**

- a. **Daniel 3:1** That is, about 90 feet high and 9 feet wide or about 27 meters high and 2.7 meters wide
- b. **Daniel 3:8** Or *Chaldeans*
- c. **Daniel 3:17** Or *If the God we serve is able to deliver us, then he will deliver us from the blazing furnace and*