

**graceWORKS ! GOING DEEPER!** **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 Paige, Stephanie, and Ashley, and any descendant they have (particularly Nicole, Joey, Matthew, Dylan, Julianne, and Lizzie, who know me as “Papou”). 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 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 my girls. 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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**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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**Ezekiel 3 Part 1<sup>2</sup>**

Ezekiel (2:9-10) is given a message of “lament and mourning and woe.”

9 Then I looked, and I saw a hand stretched out to me. In it was a scroll, 10 which he unrolled before me. On both sides of it were written words of lament and mourning and woe.

God is going to command Him to “eat it”---and he does. What are the emotional reactions of the prophet---both at the outset, and the acceptance of his task?

We’ll see in Chapter 3, they range from a sense of sweetness to anger and bitterness.

<sup>1</sup> NOT TO BE REPRODUCED OR UPLOADED TO WEB WITHOUT EXPRESS PERMISSION OF AUTHOR.

<sup>2</sup> New International Version (NIV)

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(Author’s note: This translation, and the study notes that accompany it in The NIV Study Bible, Copyright 1985,1995, 2002, 2008, 2011 are also referenced throughout and paraphrased frequently in the notes.)

## Ezekiel 3 New International Version (NIV)

**3** And he said to me, "Son of man, eat what is before you, eat this scroll; then go and speak to the people of Israel."

**Note: I like what the NIV study bible brings out. It says the prophet "must ingest" the Lord's message, so that it becomes as it were a "very part of his being."**

<sup>2</sup>So I opened my mouth, and he gave me the scroll to eat.

**Note: A couple of translations say "he fed me the scroll." I think of feeding an infant. I think of 1 Peter 2 where he tells the Christians to "crave pure spiritual milk" like "newborn babies." Christ commands us to "eat my flesh and drink my blood" (John 6:53) so that Christ becomes a very part of our being. Perhaps we're to eat His written word that way as well! I know I crave it. And I like the vision of God "feeding" me with it, personally, like a father does a child.**

**I chose this visual because of the tenderness of the father with his**

**son, and frankly for the fact that the child is a disabled child being tenderly loved by his father. Who knows what we look like spiritually to God! But He still loves us and will nurture us to full spiritual health**



<sup>3</sup>Then he said to me, "Son of man, eat this scroll I am giving you and fill your stomach with it." So I ate it, and it tasted as sweet as honey in my mouth.

**Note: Jeremiah experienced something like this, but it was more of an emotional experience. For Jeremiah, it was a sensory experience. Interesting how different people receive different reactions to God's words. Words from God are "sweet" to the taste, even when their content is bitter. So says the trusty NIV study bible notes, and they make sense to me. I don't "feel" right until I'm fed a good feeding of God's words every day.**

Jeremiah 15:16	Psalms 19:9-10	Psalms 119:103	Rev 10:9-10
<p><sup>16</sup>When your words came, I ate them;  <b>they were my joy and my heart's delight,</b>            for I bear your name, LORD God Almighty.</p>	<p>The decrees of the LORD are firm, and all of them are righteous.  <sup>10</sup>They are more precious than gold, than much pure gold; they are sweeter than honey, than honey from the honeycomb.</p>	<p><sup>103</sup>How sweet are your words to my taste,            sweeter than honey to my mouth!</p>	<p><sup>9</sup>So I went to the angel and asked him to give me the little scroll. He said to me, "Take it and eat it. It will turn your stomach sour, but 'in your mouth it will be as sweet as honey.'<sup>[a]</sup>" <sup>10</sup>I took the little scroll from the angel's hand and ate it. It tasted as sweet as honey in my mouth, but when I had eaten it, my stomach turned sour.</p>



**Note: The words did sour John’s stomach in Revelation. Ezekiel will have a different reaction to these words as he begins to live out his life mission too.**

<sup>4</sup>He then said to me: “Son of man, go now to the people of Israel and speak my words to them. <sup>5</sup>You are not being sent to a people of obscure speech and strange language, but to the people of Israel— <sup>6</sup>not to many peoples of obscure speech and strange language, whose words you cannot understand. Surely if I had sent you to them, they would have listened to you.

**Note: A consistent biblical theme is how that “other peoples” have a greater readiness for the Word of God.**

<b>Jonah 3:5</b>	<b>Malachi 1:10-11</b>	<b>Mt 11:20-21</b>	<b>Rom 10:20-21</b>
<p><sup>5</sup>The Ninevites believed God. A fast was proclaimed, and all of them, from the greatest to the least, put on sackcloth.</p>	<p><sup>10</sup>“Oh, that one of you would shut the temple doors, so that you would not light useless fires on my altar! I am not pleased with you,” says the LORD Almighty, “and I will accept no offering from your hands. <sup>11</sup>My name will be great among the nations, from where the sun rises to where it sets. In every place incense and pure offerings will be brought to me, because my name will be great among the nations,” says the LORD Almighty.</p>	<p><sup>20</sup>Then Jesus began to denounce the towns in which most of his miracles had been performed, because they did not repent. <sup>21</sup>“Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the miracles that were performed in you had been performed in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes.</p>	<p><sup>20</sup>And Isaiah boldly says, “I was found by those who did not seek me; I revealed myself to those who did not ask for me.”<sup>[Isaiah 65:1]</sup> <sup>21</sup>But concerning Israel he says, “All day long I have held out my hands to a disobedient and obstinate people.”</p>

**Why is that so? Could it be that God is demonstrating to us our demand for a “Tree of Knowledge” relationship with Him actually produces more rebellion than good?**

Romans 7:9  
9 Once I was alive apart from the law; but when the commandment came, sin sprang to life and I died.

**I contend that we chose the “Tree of knowledge,” even when it came to our relationship with God. It produced “religion” rather than relationship, and the result was the conflicted relationship with God, church, word we see today.**

**Look at how it played out in the Israelites---not because they worse than any other nation, but because they were like the “older brother” in the parable---unable to live in the “joy” of God because they were always “slaving” for God.**

<sup>7</sup>But the people of Israel are not willing to listen to you because they are not willing to listen to me, for all the Israelites are hardened and obstinate.

**Note: “Unyielding of forehead” and “obstinate of heart.”**

**We tend to value what we call stubborn determination in people. There is a place for it. But when it comes to God, we’re supposed to “yielding” of forehead and tender-hearted. Here’s how God told the prophet he would enable him in this mission.**



<sup>8</sup>But I will make you as unyielding and hardened as they are. <sup>9</sup>I will make your forehead like the hardest stone, harder than flint. Do not be afraid of them or terrified by them, though they are a rebellious people.”

Luke 15:29-31

<sup>29</sup>But he answered his father, ‘Look! All these years I’ve been slaving for you and never disobeyed your orders. Yet you never gave me even a young goat so I could celebrate with my friends. <sup>30</sup>But when this son of yours who has squandered your property with prostitutes comes home, you kill the fattened calf for him!’

<sup>31</sup>“‘My son,’ the father said, ‘you are always with me, and everything I have is yours.’

**Did he not have the calf simply because he refused to take what was freely his?**

**Note: The literal translation says “like corundum” which is either a thorn or probably a diamond, which is multi-faceted, by the way. A tough mission. Sweet to the taste. But hard. Sound familiar?**