

**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 “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 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

**graceWORKS! GOING DEEPER**  
**Ezekiel 4<sup>2</sup>**

God now has a new mission for Ezekiel, which will involve him to be in a sort of “lock-down” mode for over a year! He’d already told him this:

<sup>24</sup>Then the Spirit came into me and raised me to my feet. He spoke to me and said: “Go, shut yourself inside your house. <sup>25</sup>And you, son of man, they will tie with ropes; you will be bound so that you cannot go out among the people. (Ezekiel 3)

And we’re crying because we have to wear masks and be careful so we won’t get sick. In chapter 4, God is going to give Ezekiel even more stringent instructions. Enjoy!

<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 4 New International Version (NIV)

### Siege of Jerusalem Symbolized

4 “Now, son of man, take a block of clay, put it in front of you and draw the city of Jerusalem on it. <sup>2</sup> Then lay siege to it: Erect siege works against it, build a ramp up to it, set up camps against it and put battering rams around it. <sup>3</sup> Then take an iron pan, place it as an iron wall between you and the city and turn your face toward it. It will be under siege, and you shall besiege it. This will be a sign to the people of Israel.

**Note: We live in such a different age. In church these days, you can barely ask people to turn to a Scripture without doing in some ways that go overboard to ensure you’re not being “authoritarian.” But here, Ezekiel has not only been told to not leave his house and that God would have his tongue stick to the roof of his mouth (Ezekiel 3:26). He’s got depict the fall of Jerusalem graphically.**



Figure 1 Ancient cookware Pompeii. Ezekiel’s Pan may have looked something like one of the items depicted here. Image available for free use. <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/2.0/>

**Imagine if you were a prophet today, and God had you on lockdown and made you build a Lego version of Washington, and use a frying pan to depict His anger against it.**

**Imagine how many “likes” (or “you’re crazy”) posts you’d get on Facebook.**

**We live in such a different world, and have such a different mindset than Ezekiel’s people. They really believed God was real, and responded like he was. So much so a prophet would go on lockdown for over a year and lie on one side with a frying pan between him and brick!**

**Look at what happens next!**

<sup>4</sup> “Then lie on your left side and put the sin of the people of Israel upon yourself. <sup>[a]</sup> You are to bear their sin for the number of days you lie on your side. <sup>5</sup> I have assigned you the same number of days as the years of their sin. So for 390 days you will bear the sin of the people of Israel.

<sup>6</sup> “After you have finished this, lie down again, this time on your right side, and bear the sin of the people of Judah. I have assigned you 40 days, a day for each year. <sup>7</sup> Turn your face toward the siege of Jerusalem and with bared arm prophesy against her. <sup>8</sup> I will tie you up with ropes so that you cannot turn from one side to the other until you have finished the days of your siege.

**Note: Some think that the ropes may have been symbolic. Could it have happened by some type of “illness” that befell the prophet? Interesting. I wonder if someone turned him over so he wouldn’t get bedsores.**

## Peter's Vision

9 About noon the following day as they were on their journey and approaching the city, Peter went up on the roof to pray. 10 He became hungry and wanted something to eat, and while the meal was being prepared, he fell into a trance. 11 He saw heaven opened and something like a large sheet being let down to earth by its four corners. 12 It contained all kinds of four-footed animals, as well as reptiles and birds. 13 Then a voice told him, "Get up, Peter. Kill and eat."

14 "Surely not, Lord!" Peter replied. "I have never eaten anything impure or unclean."

15 The voice spoke to him a second time, "Do not call anything impure that God has made clean."

16 This happened three times, and immediately the sheet was taken back to heaven.

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<sup>9</sup> "Take wheat and barley, beans and lentils, millet and spelt; put them in a storage jar and use them to make bread for yourself.

**Note: NIV study bible says this is a scant vegetarian diet, perhaps representing the meager provisions of a besieged city.**

You are to eat it during the 390 days you lie on your side. <sup>10</sup> Weigh out twenty shekels<sup>[b]</sup> of food

**Note: About 8 ounces. Wow. Imagine the nutritional deficiencies he would go through. Starvation is obviously not pretty.**

to eat each day and eat it at set times. <sup>11</sup> Also measure out a sixth of a hin<sup>[c]</sup> of water and drink it at set times. <sup>12</sup> Eat the food as you would a loaf of barley bread; bake it in the sight of the people, using human excrement for fuel." <sup>13</sup> The LORD said, "In this way the people of Israel will eat defiled food among the nations where I will drive them."

**Note: God doesn't command anything that is a sin. So perhaps God wasn't as wound up about food laws as some cultures have thought. But Ezekiel was, and notice how God will accommodate him.**

<sup>14</sup> Then I said, "Not so, Sovereign LORD! I have never defiled myself. From my youth until now I have never eaten anything found dead or torn by wild animals. No impure meat has ever entered my mouth."

**Note: This sounds like what Peter said when he was told to "rise and kill and eat" all manner of animals in the vision right before he went to visit the Gentile Cornelius (Acts 15).**

<sup>15</sup> "Very well," he said, "I will let you bake your bread over cow dung instead of human excrement."

**Note: Well, that's better ☺. Actually, apparently when thoroughly dried it was commonly used in the Near East as fuel for baking. NIV says it's still used for fuel today.**

<sup>16</sup> He then said to me: "Son of man, I am about to cut off the food supply in Jerusalem. The people will eat rationed food in anxiety and drink rationed water in despair, <sup>17</sup> for food and water will be scarce. They will be appalled at the sight of each other and will waste away because of<sup>[d]</sup> their sin.

**Note: Starvation causes horrible things. Rationing has been used in the past to mitigate famines. Apparently it was used in these times**

as well.

**Conclusion: So consider what this prophet went through. Lockdown. Lying on his side. Creating visible parables. Tongue stuck to the roof of his mouth. God will even ask more of him later.**

**Here's a list of other crazy things God has asked his prophets to do.<sup>3</sup>**

1. **Elijah ate from a bird (1 Kings 17:1-5).**  
When God sent a drought to the nation of Israel as punishment, he sent Elijah to hide in a cave. There, Elijah ate food provided to him by ravens until it was time for him to come out and share God's message.
2. **Elisha made an ax head float (2 Kings 6:1-7).**  
Elisha was building a new settlement with a group of other prophets, when one of them accidentally dropped an ax head—an expensive, treasured possession at that time—in the river. To make matters worse, the ax head was borrowed. So Elisha threw a stick into the water, which made the ax head float. This miracle communicated to the people that God cares about people's small worries—even returning an ax head to its owners.
3. **Ezekiel laid on his left side for 390 days (Ezekiel 4:1-5).**  
Ezekiel wrote in the time of the exile. The temple had been destroyed, and the people had been banished from their land. God told Ezekiel to communicate this punishment by acting out the wrongdoings of the people. Part of this included lying on his left side for 390 days, which symbolized that 390 years that Israel sinned.
4. **Daniel stopped eating delicious food (Daniel 1).**  
During the exile, the best and brightest young men of Judah were brought to the king's court in Babylon. The king ordered that they be served the most delicious food from his kitchens. But Daniel resisted, most likely because he knew a portion of the food had been sacrificed to idols. Instead of wine and rich meats, Daniel asked to eat vegetables and drink water.
5. **Hosea named his children “Unloved” and “Not-My-People” (Hosea 1).**  
The book of Hosea communicates that God loves Israel—even when they disown him. Hosea communicated this message to the people of Israel by giving his children the names “Not Loved” and “Not My People.” Later in the book, he delivers God's message that, "I will show love to those who were called 'Unloved,' and to those who were called 'Not-My-People' I will say, 'You are my people,' and they will answer, 'You are our God.'" (Hosea 2:23)

**Look at what he asked Isaiah to do.**

Isaiah 20:1-4 New International Version (NIV)

## A Prophecy Against Egypt and Cush

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<sup>3</sup> <https://blog.bible/bible-blog/entry/5-crazy-things-prophets-did-in-the-old-testament#:~:text=Yet%20throughout%20the%20Old%20Testament%2C%20God%20repeatedly%20calls,Elijah%20ate%20from%20a%20bird%20%281%20Kings%2017%3A1-5%29.>

**20** In the year that the supreme commander, sent by Sargon king of Assyria, came to Ashdod and attacked and captured it— <sup>2</sup>at that time the LORD spoke through Isaiah son of Amoz. He said to him, “Take off the sackcloth from your body and the sandals from your feet.” And he did so, going around stripped and barefoot.

<sup>3</sup>Then the LORD said, “Just as my servant Isaiah has gone stripped and barefoot for three years, as a sign and portent against Egypt and Cush,<sup>[a]</sup>

(CLV) Isa 20:3

<sup>4</sup>Then Yahweh <sup>1</sup>said: Just as My servant Isaiah has gone about naked and barefoot, a three year sign and portent <sup>on</sup>against Egypt and <sup>on</sup> Cush

<sup>4</sup>so the king of Assyria will lead away stripped and barefoot the Egyptian captives and Cushite exiles, young and old, with buttocks bared—to Egypt’s shame.

**Note: The life of a prophet is not easy. We’ll move in Ezekiel 5 next time, and find out a new requirement the prophet was given.**

**Footnotes:**

- a. **Isaiah 20:3** That is, the upper Nile region; also in verse 5

**Footnotes:**

1. **Ezekiel 4:4** Or *upon your side*
2. **Ezekiel 4:10** That is, about 8 ounces or about 230 grams
3. **Ezekiel 4:11** That is, about 2/3 quart or about 0.6 liter
4. **Ezekiel 4:17** Or *away in*