

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*



**ChristIN
YouSeries**

Colossians 1:27 (King James Version)

²⁷To 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 7²

In Chapter 6, God pronounced “doom” for the mountains of Israel. That’s hard for us to understand sometimes. Why doom? One thing I’ve learned is that “sin” leads to consequences. “Doom” and “gloom” result. Since all life is “in” God, whatever is out of harmony with His life produces bad results. God is not “retributive”---He doesn’t just “get even” because we’ve dared to affront Him. His punishment is restorative---designed to restore us to ways of harmony, ways of life, and ways of love. We’re now shifting to chapter 7. In the NIV bible, it’s got the heading “The End Has Come.”

Let’s see what happens.

¹ **NOT TO BE REPRODUCED OR UPLOADED TO WEB WITHOUT EXPRESS PERMISSION OF AUTHOR.**

² 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.)

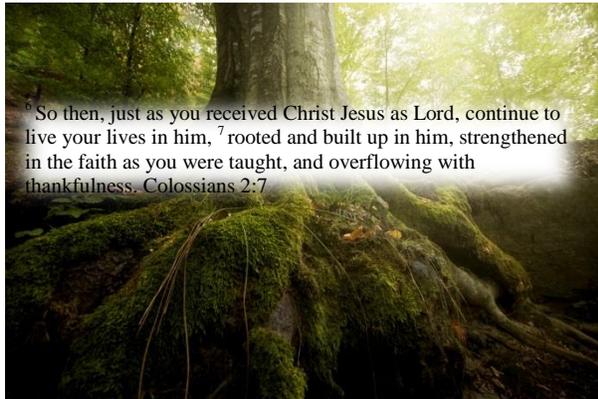
Ezekiel 7 New International Version (NIV)

The End Has Come

7 The word of the LORD came to me: ²“Son of man, this is what the Sovereign LORD says to the land of Israel:

“The end! The end has come
upon the four corners of the land!

Note: This is a simple etymological factoid, but the Hebrew for the “four corners” is actually the four “wings” of the land. I believe they visualized a world surrounded by waters that could be deluged at any moment were it not for the Hand of God. The earth was flat, and had “wings”----extensions, extremities, corners. While it’s not scientifically accurate, it is poetic and actually conveys the frailty of a creation that is saved from chaos and nonexistence by the One Who is The I Am, the self-existent one! We really went overboard with the “Tree” of Knowledge approach to life. We want to know so much, that it’s taken away our “faith.” Sad. But I for one am ready to go back to the Garden and pick the tree of life. And my self to be a tree that is deeply rooted in Christ, and still bears fruit in old age.



⁶ So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in him, ⁷rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness. Colossians 2:7

³ The end is now upon you,
and I will unleash my anger against you.
I will judge you according to your conduct
and repay you for all your detestable
practices.
⁴ I will not look on you with pity;
I will not spare you.
I will surely repay you for your conduct
and for the detestable practices among you.

“Then you will know that I am the LORD.”

“at the Name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of the Father.” (Ph 2:10-11)

⁵“This is what the Sovereign LORD says:

“Disaster! Unheard-of^[a] disaster! (a variant version: “Disaster after disaster . . .”

See, it comes!

⁶The end has come!

The end has come!

It has roused itself against you.

See, it comes!

⁷Doom has come upon you,

upon you who dwell in the land.
 The time has come! The day is near!
 There is panic, not joy, on the mountains.

Note: In verse 19 the day is called “the day of the Lord’s wrath.” NIV study bible says this may be a deliberate echo of the “day of the Lord” spoken of by many of the Lord’s prophets. I’ll canvas a few.

<p>Amos 5:18 18 Woe to you who long for the day of the LORD! Why do you long for the day of the LORD? That day will be darkness, not light.</p>	<p>1 Cor 1:8 ⁸ He will also keep you firm to the end, so that you will be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ</p>	<p>1 Cor 3:12-15 ¹² If anyone builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay or straw, ¹³ their work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each person’s work. ¹⁴ If what has been built survives, the builder will receive a reward. ¹⁵ If it is burned up, the builder will suffer loss but yet will be saved—even though only as one escaping through the flames.</p>	<p>1 Cor 5:5 5 hand this man over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, so that his spirit may be saved on the day of the Lord.</p>
<p>Phil 1:6 ⁶ being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.</p>	<p>Phil 1:10 ¹⁰ so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ,</p>	<p>Phil 2:16 ¹⁶ as you hold firmly to the word of life. And then I will be able to boast on the day of Christ that I did not run or labor in vain.</p>	<p>2 Tim 4:7-8 ⁷ I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. ⁸ Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day—and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing.</p>

Wow. A lot will be happening on that day. My friend Jeff say it’s what he (under Karl Barth’s teaching via the Torrances) called the “second heaven.” I’m still trying to figure that one out, but it sounds intriguing. The first heaven is our dimension, where the Kingdom of heaven has drawn near in Christ, but we still live with sin overtly evident. The third heaven is the unadulterated sphere where God lives (2 Cor 12), and the 2nd heaven is the place of the Judgment, where what needs to be “fixed” in the lives of men will be “fixed” by God the Judge himself. Not a Judge of Condemnation, but a Judge restoring righteousness to our lives and to the created order.

Back to Ezekiel.

⁸ I am about to pour out my wrath on you
and spend my anger against you.
I will judge you according to your conduct
and repay you for all your detestable practices.
⁹ I will not look on you with pity;
I will not spare you.
I will repay you for your conduct
and for the detestable practices among you.

Note: The Hebrew word for detestable is:

H8441 tow`ebah to-ay-baw'

or tonebah {to-ay-baw'};

feminine active participle of **H8581**; properly, something disgusting (morally), i.e. (as noun) an abhorrence; especially idolatry or (concretely) an idol.

It stems from this word:

H8581 ta`ab taw-ab'

a primitive root;

to loathe, i.e. (morally) detest.

Back to the text.

“Then you will know that it is I the LORD who strikes you.

¹⁰ “See, the day!
See, it comes!

Doom has burst forth,
the rod has budded,
arrogance has blossomed!

¹¹ Violence has arisen,^[b] **(or the violent one has become a rod to punish the wicked)**
a rod to punish the wicked.

None of the people will be left,
none of that crowd—
none of their wealth,
nothing of value.

¹² The time has come!
The day has arrived!

Let not the buyer rejoice
nor the seller grieve, for my wrath is on the whole crowd.

**Sounds like the economy in this
time of COVID virus lockdowns.
And boy, how people are
“howling.”**

¹³ The seller will not recover
the property that was sold—
as long as both buyer and seller live.
For the vision concerning the whole crowd
will not be reversed.
Because of their sins, not one of them
will preserve their life.

¹⁴ “They have blown the trumpet,
they have made all things ready,
but no one will go into battle,
for my wrath is on the whole crowd.

¹⁵ Outside is the sword;
inside are plague and famine.
Those in the country
will die by the sword;
those in the city
will be devoured by famine and plague.

¹⁶ The fugitives who escape
will flee to the mountains.

Like doves of the valleys,
they will all moan,
each for their own sins.

¹⁷ Every hand will go limp;
every leg will be wet with urine.

Note: The physical reactions to the punishment will be incredible. And embarrassing. Too despondent to move, losing control of bodily functions. Wow.

¹⁸ They will put on sackcloth
and be clothed with terror.
Every face will be covered with shame,
and every head will be shaved.

Sackcloth is an intensive display of mourning.

Question: "What is the meaning of sackcloth and ashes?"³

Answer: Sackcloth and ashes were used in Old Testament times as a symbol of debasement, mourning, and/or **repentance**. Someone wanting to show his repentant heart would often wear sackcloth, sit in ashes, and put ashes on top of his head. Sackcloth was a coarse material usually made of black goat's hair, making it quite uncomfortable to wear. The ashes signified desolation and ruin.

New York (CNN Business) The US economy contracted at a 32.9% annual rate from April through June, its worst drop on record, the **Bureau of Economic Analysis** said Thursday.

Business ground to a halt during the pandemic lockdown in the spring of this year, and **America plunged into its first recession** in 11 years, putting an end to the longest economic expansion in US history and wiping out five years of economic gains in just a few months.

A recession is commonly defined as two consecutive quarters of declining gross domestic product — the broadest measure of the economy. Between January and March, **GDP declined by an annualized rate of 5%**.

<https://www.cnn.com/2020/07/30/economy/us-economy-2020-second-quarter/index.html>

³ <https://www.gotquestions.org/sackcloth-and-ashes.html>

19 “They will throw their silver into the streets,
and their gold will be treated as a thing unclean.
Their silver and gold
will not be able to deliver them
in the day of the LORD’s wrath.
It will not satisfy their hunger
or fill their stomachs,
for it has caused them to stumble into sin.
20 They took pride in their beautiful jewelry
and used it to make their detestable idols.
They made it into vile images;
therefore I will make it a thing unclean for them.
21 I will give their wealth as plunder to foreigners
and as loot to the wicked of the earth,
who will defile it.
22 I will turn my face away from the people,
and robbers will desecrate the place I treasure.
They will enter it
and will defile it.

23 “Prepare chains!
For the land is full of bloodshed,
and the city is full of violence.
24 I will bring the most wicked of nations
to take possession of their houses.
I will put an end to the pride of the mighty,
and their sanctuaries will be desecrated.
25 When terror comes,
they will seek peace in vain.
26 Calamity upon calamity will come,
and rumor upon rumor.
They will go searching for a vision from the prophet,
priestly instruction in the law will cease,
the counsel of the elders will come to an end.
27 The king will mourn,
the prince will be clothed with despair,
and the hands of the people of the land will tremble.
I will deal with them according to their conduct,
and by their own standards I will judge them.

“Then they will know that I am the LORD.”



Figure 2Photo 53980161 © Angelo Cordeschi | Dreamstime.com

Wow. I know it’s unfashionable to think that God might punish a nation for its sins. And who are we to think we’re “Israel” anyway? But that being said, our nation has sinned. We kill babies. We’re sexually immoral in so many ways. We worship personal freedoms as an idol more than God.

All we’ve gotten is a virus and economic slowdown---a comparative slap on the wrist, if indeed this is “of” the Lord.

Are we responding in love, unity, soul searching and care for others?

Do we know God is the LORD?