

**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*

**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

**graceWORKS! GOING DEEPER**

**Amos 4 Part 2**



I’m consistently struck with how so much of this book deals with social justice issues, and I’m amazed at how much Christ himself speaks of us being way more active in these areas than I personally have been. Oh, I’ve done my bit to visit folks in prison, to visit the sick, etc. But they’ve often been folks I pastored or was a chaplain to, hence was “supposed” to do for others. What am I doing to better society? And will I really be answerable to God for that? I’m beginning to think the answer may be more a yes than I realize, and I’m going to begin to ask God what I should consider doing.

At any rate, I want to mainline on God’s word some more this morning. So thanks, my Father, that I have a life in which I’m able to be so nourished by you!

Enjoy

---

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

Amos 4 New International Version (NIV)

<sup>4</sup>“Go to Bethel and sin;  
go to Gilgal and sin yet more.  
Bring your sacrifices every morning,  
your tithes every three years.

**We left off here last time. Apparently they prayed and paid, but their compartmentalization of doing good for others just wasn't good enough.**

<sup>5</sup>Burn leavened bread as a thank offering  
and brag about your freewill offerings—  
boast about them, you Israelites,  
for this is what you love to do,”  
declares the Sovereign LORD.

**Christ hated this approach of the Pharisees.**

Matthew 23 New International Version (NIV)

**23** Then Jesus said to the crowds and to his disciples: <sup>2</sup>“The teachers of the law and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat. <sup>3</sup>So you must be careful to do everything they tell you. But do not do what they do, for they do not practice what they preach. <sup>4</sup>They tie up heavy, cumbersome loads and put them on other people's shoulders, but they themselves are not willing to lift a finger to move them.

<sup>5</sup>“Everything they do is done for people to see: They make their phylacteries<sup>[boxes containing Scriptures]</sup> wide and the tassels on their garments long;

**In Numbers 15:38 they were commanded to make tassels on the corner of their garments, with a blue cord on each tassel. They were supposed to be reminders of God's commands, “that you may obey them and not prostitute yourselves by chasing after the lusts of your own hearts and eyes.” (verse 39). But apparently, the Pharisees did them for show.**

<sup>6</sup>they love the place of honor at banquets and the most important seats in the synagogues; <sup>7</sup>they love to be greeted with respect in the marketplaces and to be called 'Rabbi' by others.

**At any rate, look at what God said He did to get their attention, but they did not respond. The NIV Study Bible says that in the past God had used natural disasters to discipline and warn his people, but those lessons were soon forgotten.**

<b>Dt 28:22-24</b>	<b>Dt 28:39-40</b>	<b>Dt 28:42</b>	<b>Dt 28:48</b>	<b>Dt 28:56-57</b>
<p><sup>22</sup>The LORD will strike you with wasting disease, with fever and inflammation, with scorching heat and drought, with blight and mildew, which will plague you until you perish. <sup>23</sup>The sky over your head will be bronze, the ground beneath you iron. <sup>24</sup>The LORD will turn the rain of your country into dust and powder; it will come down from the skies until you are destroyed.</p>	<p><sup>39</sup>You will plant vineyards and cultivate them but you will not drink the wine or gather the grapes, because worms will eat them. <sup>40</sup>You will have olive trees throughout your country but you will not use the oil, because the olives will drop off.</p>	<p><sup>42</sup>Swarms of locusts will take over all your trees and the crops of your land.</p>	<p><sup>48</sup>therefore in hunger and thirst, in nakedness and dire poverty, you will serve the enemies the LORD sends against you. He will put an iron yoke on your neck until he has destroyed you.</p>	<p><sup>56</sup>The most gentle and sensitive woman among you—so sensitive and gentle that she would not venture to touch the ground with the sole of her foot—will begrudge the husband she loves and her own son or daughter <sup>57</sup>the afterbirth from her womb and the children she bears. For in her dire need she intends to eat them secretly because of the suffering your enemy will inflict on you</p>

				during the siege of your cities.
--	--	--	--	----------------------------------

**Does God use natural disasters today in the same way? I don't know if I can say a dogmatic yes to that. Sometimes I wonder. I know that He did punish certain individuals pretty severely in the early New Testament church. Three specifically come to mind:**

<b>Acts 12</b>	<b>Acts 5</b>	<b>1 Corinthians 11</b>
<p><sup>21</sup>On the appointed day Herod, wearing his royal robes, sat on his throne and delivered a public address to the people. <sup>22</sup>They shouted, "This is the voice of a god, not of a man." <sup>23</sup>Immediately, because Herod did not give praise to God, an angel of the Lord struck him down, and he was eaten by worms and died.</p> <p><b>Note: This was possibly not only because he did not negate claims of divinity, but possibly because he did persecute the church.</b></p> <p><b>12</b> It was about this time that King Herod arrested some who belonged to the church, intending to</p>	<p>Now a man named Ananias, together with his wife Sapphira, also sold a piece of property. <sup>2</sup>With his wife's full knowledge he kept back part of the money for himself, but brought the rest and put it at the apostles' feet. . . <sup>3</sup>Then Peter said, "Ananias, how is it that Satan has so filled your heart that you have lied to the Holy Spirit and have kept for yourself some of the money you received for the land?. . . <sup>5</sup>When Ananias heard this, he fell down and died. . . <sup>7</sup>About three hours later his wife came in, not knowing what had happened. <sup>8</sup>Peter asked her, "Tell me, is this the price you and Ananias</p>	<p><sup>29</sup>For those who eat and drink without discerning the body of Christ eat and drink judgment on themselves. <sup>30</sup>That is why many among you are weak and sick, and a number of you have fallen asleep.</p>

<p>persecute them. <sup>2</sup>He had James, the brother of John, put to death with the sword.</p>	<p>got for the land?"</p> <p>"Yes," she said, "that is the price."</p> <p><sup>9</sup>Peter said to her, "How could you conspire to test the Spirit of the Lord? Listen! The feet of the men who buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out also."</p> <p><sup>10</sup>At that moment she fell down at his feet and died.</p>	
--	---	--

**But since no nation is under the same covenant as the Old Covenant with Israel (which, in my opinion, is something reflective of man's desire to live by the knowledge of good and evil, which God commanded Adam and Eve not to choose for humanity), I'm not sure I can say our current day natural disasters are directly from the Lord. But we sure don't have people going to the Lord in prayer when they happen!**

**At any rate, the NIV says these disasters listed next were not just natural disasters, but direct acts of God. And notice the repeat phrase: "yet you have not returned to me."**

<sup>6</sup>"I gave you empty stomachs in every city and lack of bread in every town,  
**yet you have not returned to me,"**  
declares the LORD.

<sup>7</sup>"I also withheld rain from you when the harvest was still three months away. I sent rain on one town,

but withheld it from another.

One field had rain;

another had none and dried up.

<sup>8</sup>People staggered from town to town for water

but did not get enough to drink,

**yet you have not returned to me,"**

declares the LORD.

<sup>9</sup>"Many times I struck your gardens and vineyards,

destroying them with blight and mildew.

Locusts devoured your fig and olive trees,

**yet you have not returned to me,"**

declares the LORD.

<sup>10</sup>"I sent plagues among you

as I did to Egypt.

I killed your young men with the sword,

along with your captured horses.

I filled your nostrils with the stench of your camps,

**yet you have not returned to me,"**

declares the LORD.

<sup>11</sup>"I overthrew some of you

as I overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah.

You were like a burning stick snatched from the fire,

**yet you have not returned to me,"**

declares the LORD.

<sup>12</sup>"Therefore this is what I will do to you, Israel,

and because I will do this to you, Israel,

**prepare to meet your God."**

**The Old Covenant was not God's preferred way of dealing with His people.**

<sup>13</sup>He who forms the mountains,  
who creates the wind,

**and who reveals his thoughts to mankind,**

**That is a key phrase for sure! God reveals His thoughts to mankind. I might press that a bit next time, and the Old Covenant vs the New Covenant approach.**

who turns dawn to darkness,  
and treads on the heights of the earth—  
the LORD God Almighty is his name.

**Footnotes:**

- a. **Amos 4:2** Or *away in baskets, / the last of you in fish baskets*
- b. **Amos 4:3** Masoretic Text; with a different word division of the Hebrew (see Septuagint) *out, you mountain of oppression*
- c. **Amos 4:4** Or *days*