

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
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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

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Ezekiel 11²

This chapter is fascinating. God is transporting Ezekiel all kinds of places by the Spirit. The Spirit lifts him up and sets him down. The cherubim and their wheels transport God to the mountain to the east of Jerusalem. Then the Spirit takes Ezekiel back to Chaldea. In these days of social distancing and limited travel, it’s fun to realize what God by His Spirit can do and where He can take you. Let’s see what God has to say in this chapter. Enjoy!

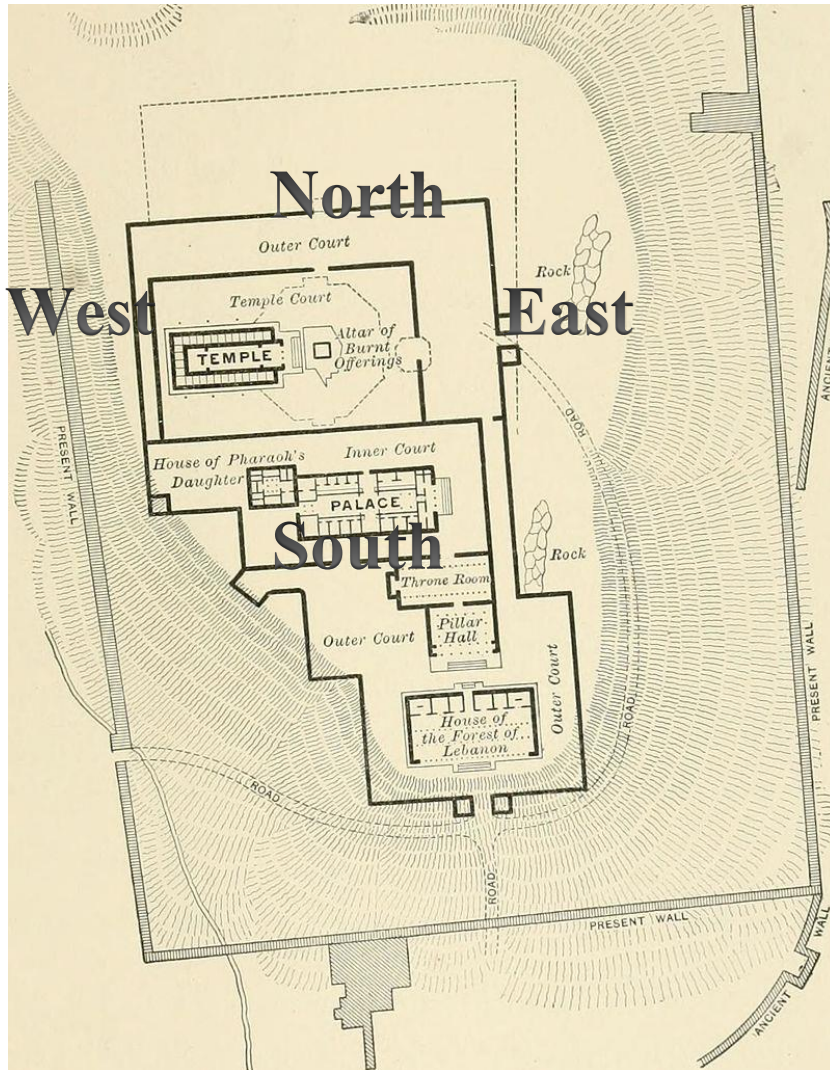
¹ NOT TO BE REPRODUCED OR UPLOADED TO WEB WITHOUT EXPRESS PERMISSION OF AUTHOR.

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.)

God's Sure Judgment on Jerusalem



11 Then the Spirit lifted me up and brought me to the gate of the house of the LORD that faces east. There at the entrance of the gate were twenty-five men, and I saw among them Jaazaniah son of Azzur and Pelatiah son of Benaiah, leaders of the people. ²The LORD said to me, "Son of man, these are the men who are plotting evil and giving wicked advice in this city. ³They say, 'Haven't our houses been recently rebuilt? This city is a pot, and we are the meat in it.' ⁴Therefore prophesy against them; prophesy, son of man."

Note: The people were not listening to the Lord, or

wanting to acknowledge His power in their lives. Instead, they were looking for hopeful signs, and the NIV study bibles says they were somewhat smug about it. "The people that got deported are the cast off bones," is the implication. The city is the cooking pot, and "we", the ones left behind, are "choice" portions of meat. They seem to imply that in verse 15, quoted in the text box.

¹⁵"Son of man, the people of Jerusalem have said of your fellow exiles and all the other Israelites, 'They are far away from the LORD; this land was given to us as our possession.' Ezekiel 11

⁵Then the Spirit of the LORD came on me, and he told me to say: "This is what the LORD says: That is what you are saying, you leaders in Israel, but I know what is going through your mind. ⁶You have killed many people in this city and filled its streets with the dead.

Note: "The Spirit of the Lord came "on" me.' The NIV study bible says the Spirit governs and empowers the prophets entire ministry.

Ezekiel 2:2	Ezekiel 3:12	Ezekiel 36:27	Ezekiel 37:14	Ezekiel 39:29
the Spirit came into me and raised me to my feet, and I heard him speaking to me.	Then the Spirit lifted me up, and I heard behind me a loud rumbling sound as the glory of the LORD rose from the place where it was standing.	I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws	I will put my Spirit in you and you will live	I will no longer hide my face from them, for I will pour out my Spirit on the people of Israel

This seems to make sense. While Jesus was always "One" with the Father and the Spirit, when the Spirit came on Him at baptism it came on Him in a special way and ministry was "activated" inside of Him. Let's just take a sampling from various verses in the Luke.

the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form like a dove. (3:22)	Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit . . . was led by the Spirit into the wilderness (4:1)	Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit (4:14)	Jesus, full of joy through the Holy Spirit , said, "I praise you . . . (10:21)	the Holy Spirit will teach you . . . what you should say (12:12)
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Back to Ezekiel

⁷“Therefore this is what the Sovereign LORD says: The bodies you have thrown there are the meat and this city is the pot, but I will drive you out of it.

Note: The meat is not those in power (who will be driven out), the NIV bible study says, but the innocent people you have killed.

⁸You fear the sword, and the sword is what I will bring against you, declares the Sovereign LORD. ⁹I will drive you out of the city and deliver you into the hands of foreigners and inflict punishment on you. ¹⁰You will fall by the sword, and I will execute judgment on you at the borders of Israel. Then you will know that I am the LORD. ¹¹This city will not be a pot for you, nor will you be the meat in it; I will execute judgment on you at the borders of Israel.

Note: This happened, as recorded in 2 Kings 25:20-21.

¹²And you will know that I am the LORD, for you have not followed my decrees or kept my laws but have conformed to the standards of the nations around you.”

²⁰ Nebuzaradan the commander took them all and brought them to the king of Babylon at Riblah. ²¹There at Riblah, in the land of Hamath, the king had them executed.

So Judah went into captivity, away from her land. (2 Kings 25)

Romans 12 (NIV)

12 Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. ²**Do not conform** to the pattern of this world, but **be transformed** by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

Note: It’s interesting to read Romans 12. You can be either “conformed” to this world or “transformed” by God.

Greek for conformed:

G4964 suschematizo soos-khay-mat-id'-zo
to fashion alike, i.e. conform to the same pattern (figuratively).

Greek for transformed:

G3339 metamorphoo met-am-or-fo'-o
to transform (literally or figuratively, "metamorphose").

Greek for renewing: literally means up-newing. So we're not supposed to conform, but transform!

¹³Now as I was prophesying, Pelatiah son of Benaiah died. Then I fell facedown and cried out in a loud voice, "Alas, Sovereign LORD! Will you completely destroy the remnant of Israel?"

Note: So literally, while he was prophesying, Benaiah died. That happened in the book of Acts once, when two people died in the presence of the apostle Peter for lying!

Acts 5 New International Version (NIV)

Ananias and Sapphira

5 Now a man named Ananias, together with his wife Sapphira, also sold a piece of property. ²With 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.

³Then 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? ⁴Didn't it belong to you before it was sold? And after it was sold, wasn't the money at your disposal? What made you think of doing such a thing? You have not lied just to human beings but to God."

⁵When Ananias heard this, he fell down and died. And great fear seized all who heard what had happened. ⁶Then some young men came forward, wrapped up his body, and carried him out and buried him.

⁷About three hours later his wife came in, not knowing what had happened. ⁸Peter asked her, "Tell me, is this the price you and Ananias got for the land?"

"Yes," she said, "that is the price."

⁹Peter 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."

¹⁰At that moment she fell down at his feet and died. Then the young men came in and, finding her dead, carried her out and buried her beside her husband. ¹¹Great fear seized the whole church and all who heard about these events.

God acts consistently, in the Old and New Testament. Sin still is sin, and has powerful ramifications.

This God of the Bible isn't as politically correct as we'd like Him to be, or as tame as we'd like Him to be.

But He is what He is. Like He told Moses:

"I Am What I Am."

For all their sin, God still was going to bless Israel

The Promise of Israel's Return

¹⁴The word of the LORD came to me: ¹⁵"Son of man, the people of Jerusalem have said of your fellow exiles and all the other Israelites, 'They are far away from the LORD; this land was given to us as our possession.'

¹⁶"Therefore say: 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: Although I sent them far away among the nations and scattered them among the countries, yet for a little while I have been a sanctuary for them in the countries where they have gone.'

God can be your sanctuary wherever you go!

¹⁷"Therefore say: 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: I will gather you from the nations and bring you back from the countries where you have been scattered, and I will give you back the land of Israel again.'

¹⁸"They will return to it and remove all its vile images and detestable idols. ¹⁹I will give them an undivided heart and put a new spirit in them; I will remove from them their heart of stone and give them a heart of flesh. ²⁰Then they will follow my decrees and be careful to keep my

Exodus 3:14 New International Version (NIV)

¹⁴God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM."^[a] This is what you are to say to the Israelites: 'I AM has sent me to you.'"

Footnotes:

- a. **Exodus 3:14** Or I WILL BE WHAT I WILL BE

laws. They will be my people, and I will be their God. ²¹ But as for those whose hearts are devoted to their vile images and detestable idols, I will bring down on their own heads what they have done, declares the Sovereign LORD.”

Note: God begins to talk in language that echoes the New Covenant promises of Ezekiel 36. He talks of giving them a new heart, responsive to God’s will. And their seems to be a pattern here. They first remove the vile images and detestable idols. Then He gives them the obedient heart. That follows the pattern:

Repent, and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. (Acts 2:38)

But my bet is they couldn’t have removed the idols without the Spirit’s help either.

²²Then the cherubim, with the wheels beside them, spread their wings, and the glory of the God of Israel was above them. ²³The glory of the LORD went up from within the city and stopped above the mountain east of it.

Note: Like He’s leaving town. At the Mount of Olives. Then the Spirit takes him back to Babylonia.

²⁴The Spirit lifted me up and brought me to the exiles in Babylonia^[a] in the vision given by the Spirit of God.

Then the vision I had seen went up from me, ²⁵and I told the exiles everything the LORD had shown me.

Footnotes:

- a. **Ezekiel 11:24** Or *Chaldea*

CONCLUSION: Here’s an excellent summarization by a fellow bible student of mine and old college buddy, John Wright in Texas.

God transported Ezekiel from Babylon to Jerusalem where he saw leaders of the people plotting and devising evil things, giving wicked advice to others. Their leadership, up to

this point, had caused misery and death, with bodies lying in the streets!

These leaders were self-confident, and felt safe and secure in the environment they had created. The metaphor was they were meat in a pot. The pot being the walls of Jerusalem. What is more satisfying than to know you have plenty of food for dinner? (Sorry for mixing metaphor). What is more secure than a solid iron pot to protect you from outside attack?

God was saying to them that they were WRONG. They were not the meat, the dead bodies that they had slain were the meat! And God would punish these leaders through warfare. They would be slain by the sword! This wicked environment they had created would soon end.

Think of some circles of influence we have in our world today. Many of them are doing good and wonderful things. However, increasingly there are those that are tainted with greed and ill will: some in the business world; some obviously gangs; some in good old boy systems of directing the way a city might spend its resources, hurting the needy and helping the wealthy.

In a circle of influence, men can lean on their fellow man for support. For advice. For friendship, even! The proverbs talk about evil ones, lying in wait for blood; but even they love each other in their crimes!

The leaders in Jerusalem were only looking onto themselves. The law of love given by God through Moses had fled the city! They were not loving their neighbors as themselves, nor the God who gives them life. All the law and prophets hang on those two principles. The leaders of Jerusalem's seemingly secure circle of influence would not last! Their "pot" would be broken. Then, as God repeats over and over...and over: they will know that he is the Lord.

Then! Then, the Cherubim carry the throne of God out to the mountain east of Jerusalem! Here God says that he will have mercy upon a remnant of Israel! He will bring them back after they had been scattered through the Nations. God would protect the remnants in foreign countries, until they could return to Jerusalem. With patience, looking to the long-term plan that God has, we can see his mercy, his graciousness, yes even sometimes through His tough love; but in the end we will see Him gathering all people, wiping all the tears away from their eyes, in a different kind of Jerusalem! Death will be swallowed up in victory.

Consider the heart God has for all of us. The mountain east of Jerusalem mentioned in

Ezekiel, is the mount of olives! Six centuries after Ezekiel's time, Jesus was there. On the mount of olives. Looking west at the city of Jerusalem. It is here

That we see another vision. Jesus, kneeling and praying, his heart going out to the City. Saying he would have gathered all of Jerusalem into his arms, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings to protect them! What was Jesus seeing? All the people of Jerusalem. He had special powers!! Superman may have had X-ray vision, but Jesus could see through time! He saw the seven men with whom the unmarried woman at the well had lived, before she drew water for Him. Here, on the Mount, He could comprehend all the people in that city: little boys and girls in the streets. The merchants. The mothers and fathers. The business people. All of them, most of whom did not know God truly. Most of whom did not have a relationship with the God of Abraham, of Moses, of David and Solomon...the God of all people, really. The God of the universe! The God who wanted love and goodness and mercy to exist in that city!

He could see the Sadducees, who did not believe in angels or spirit or any such thing, whose security was the Roman system of governance, and offices they could fill. He saw the circle of scribes and Pharisees, the religious leaders, most of whom lived lives of hypocrisy. They did believe in angels and spirit, and the God of Abraham (their father, don't you forget!) but who clung to the twigs and minutia of the law of Moses, looking to each other and to the common people for adulation and respect.

Think of the heart of compassion Jesus was displaying on the Mount. We say that the Grinch finally learned his lesson, and saw what love meant in Whoville: his heart grew many times over! God's heart, God's love, fills the universe. And yet we don't see it. We don't feel it as we ought to! In time, God will heal this world. But we have the chance now to be healed, every day. To overcome ourselves. To not look to our fellow humans so much, but to look more and more to God.

Finally, God transported Ezekiel back to Babylon, where he told his vision to the Israelites. I don't know if they listened.