

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)

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 12 Part 2²

So God wants us to understand! Somehow, even though we live and move and have our being in Him, we’re still “persons.” We’re not individuals, in the sense that we’re somehow independent of God and separate from Him. But we’re “persons.” Like the Father is a person and the Son is a person and the Spirit is a “person.”

And God wants us to understand! Let’s continue in Ezekiel chapter 12

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 12 New International Version (NIV)

¹⁶And the LORD God commanded the man, "You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; ¹⁷but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat from it you will certainly die." (Genesis 2)

12 ¹⁴I will scatter to the winds all those around him—his staff and all his troops—and I will pursue them with drawn sword.

Note: As we noted yesterday, Zedekiah came to a horrific end. He saw

his sons slaughtered, and he was then blinded! That was the last thing he saw.

Sin hurts God's people, so much so that God does discipline and hold accountable. Israel was a special case, because of all the nations, she was chosen to be in a covenant relationship with God. My thought is this. Mankind had chosen to live by the tree of Knowledge rather than by reliance on God.

The result? Even when God gave mankind the knowledge of good versus evil, when God gave mankind His holy and righteous and "good" law, mankind was not only not able to live by it, He became increasingly rebellious. Paul showed how that worked in his individual life. Israel demonstrated it as a nation.

God demonstrated to the world through the Israelites how that approach to life was doomed to utter failure. Peter said the law was a burden that could not be born.

Acts 15:10 New International Version (NIV)

¹⁰Now then, why do you try to test God by putting on the necks of Gentiles a yoke that neither we nor our ancestors have been able to bear?

⁷What shall we say, then? Is the law sinful? Certainly not! Nevertheless, I (Paul) would not have known what sin was had it not been for the law. For I would not have known what coveting really was if the law had not said, "You shall not covet." ⁸But sin, seizing the opportunity afforded by the

commandment, produced in me every kind of coveting. For apart from the law, sin was dead. ⁹Once I was alive apart from the law; but when the commandment came, sin sprang to life and I died. ¹⁰I found that the very commandment that was intended to bring life actually brought death. ¹¹For sin, seizing the opportunity afforded by the commandment, deceived me, and through the commandment put me to death. ¹²So then, the law is holy, and the commandment is holy, righteous and good.

¹³Did that which is good, then, become death to me? By no means! Nevertheless, in order that sin might be recognized as sin, it used what is good to bring about my death, so that through the commandment sin might become utterly sinful.

All the “knowledge” of good and evil can’t save us. Relying on our love with trust and simplicity does! Thank God for the simplicity we have in Christ. However, I do believe God needed to demonstrate His wrath against sin.

²²What if God, although choosing to show his wrath and make his power known, bore with great patience the objects of his wrath—prepared for destruction? ²³What if he did this to make the riches of his glory known to the objects of his mercy, whom he prepared in advance for glory— ²⁴even us, whom he also called, not only from the Jews but also from the Gentiles? (Romans 9)

I think the wrath God wanted to show was against sin! And to prove the way of the Tree of Knowledge just doesn’t work!

So we owe the Israelites a lot for being the ones who bore this burden for us all, to demonstrate God’s correct approach to life--- Jesus Christ, and the simplicity of life in the Garden with Him and the Tree of Life!

Back to Ezekiel

¹⁵“They will know that I am the LORD, when I disperse them among the nations and scatter them through the countries. ¹⁶But I will spare a few of them from the sword, famine and plague, so that in the nations where they go they may acknowledge all their detestable practices. Then they will know that I am the LORD.”

This is an important theme to God as revealed in this book. That people will “know” He is the Lord.

Ezekiel 6:7	Ezekiel 17:21	Ezekiel 36:36	Ezekiel 37:14
⁷ Your people will fall slain among you, and you will know that I am the LORD.	²¹ All his choice troops will fall by the sword, and the survivors will be scattered to the winds. Then you will know	³⁶ Then the nations around you that remain will know that I the LORD have rebuilt what was destroyed and	¹⁴ I will put my Spirit in you and you will live, and I will settle you in your own land. Then you will know that I

	that I the LORD have spoken.	have replanted what was desolate. I the LORD have spoken, and I will do it.'	the LORD have spoken, and I have done it, declares the LORD.'"
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Our "knowing" is important to God. We are real "persons" to Him. He cares about what we know, so much so He gave us the capacity to choose so we could learn what true freedom was---freedom to live freely in His Son, the truth, who sets us free.

³²Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." John 8:32

¹⁷The word of the LORD came to me: ¹⁸"Son of man, tremble as you eat your food, and shudder in fear as you drink your water. ¹⁹Say to the people of the land: 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says about those living in Jerusalem and in the land of Israel: They will eat their food in anxiety and drink their water in despair, for their land will be stripped of everything in it because of the violence of all who live there. ²⁰The inhabited towns will be laid waste and the land will be desolate. Then you will know that I am the LORD.'"

How blessed we are in America, to eat our food with peace and tranquility, under our vine and fig trees---or at least, in front of our TV's.

There Will Be No Delay

²¹The word of the LORD came to me: ²²"Son of man, what is this proverb you have in the land of Israel: 'The days go by and every vision comes to nothing'? ²³Say to them, 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: I am going to put an end to this proverb, and they will no longer quote it in Israel.' Say to them, 'The days are near when every vision will be fulfilled. ²⁴For there will be no more false visions or flattering divinations among the people of Israel. ²⁵But I the LORD will speak what I will, and it shall be fulfilled without delay. For in your days, you rebellious people, I will fulfill whatever I say, declares the Sovereign LORD.'"

⁸But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day. ⁹The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.

¹⁰But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything done in it will be laid bare.^[a]

¹¹Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives ¹²as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming. That day will bring about the destruction of the heavens by fire, and the elements will melt in the heat. ¹³But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, where righteousness dwells. (2 Peter 3)

Note: That kind of cynicism was still prevalent in Peter's day. Notice this Scripture.

³Above all, you must understand that in the last days scoffers will come, scoffing and following their own evil desires. ⁴They will say, "Where is this 'coming' he promised? Ever since our ancestors died, everything goes on as it has since the beginning of creation." ⁵But they deliberately forget that long ago by God's word . . . (2 Peter 3)

²⁶The word of the LORD came to me: ²⁷"Son of man, the Israelites are saying, 'The vision he sees is for many years from now, and he prophesies about the distant future.'

²⁸"Therefore say to them, 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: None of my words will be delayed any longer; whatever I say will be fulfilled, declares the Sovereign LORD.'"

Note: The time is coming when all prophecy will be fulfilled. God's timing on things is different than ours. Enjoy the words of St. Peter in the side bar! He ends with one more phrase I didn't



have room to fit but is worth repeating. "Bear in mind that our Lord's patience means

salvation! But be assured---a new heaven and earth is coming. So be it, Lord!