

graceWORKS ! GOING DEEPER¹ 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)

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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Micah 1 Part 6²



Bad roots mean bad fruits. So now we’re going to get to the part where Micah, through God of course, identifies what the roots of each nation’s problems were.

“Samaria” (the city) was the root for Samaria’s sin. And the “high place” that Jerusalem had become was at the root of Judah’s sin. I’ve always been struck at how passionately God was against “high place” religion. Why?

I’m going to scope that out. Enjoy the study.

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

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Micah 1 New International Version

After the prophet heralded God’s “coming” down from His dwelling place, and disrupting the created order, he tells the reason God is coming down.

⁵ All this is because of Jacob’s transgression,
because of the sins of the people of Israel.

I want to press the word “transgression” here.

The word used is:

H6588 pasha` peh'-shah

from **H6586** - to break away (from just authority), i.e. trespass, apostatize, quarrel.

a revolt (national, moral or religious).

It is translated “rebellion” in the NASB and CSB. In my mind, and in my way of thinking, a sin is something that “misses the mark” of God’s life (and is not always intentional). A trespass or transgression implies an intentionality to me. The New Testament speaks of them almost interchangeably. I just want to share the three places where the word “intentional” is used or referred to in contrast.

Exodus 21	Numbers 15	Numbers 35
<p>¹² “Anyone who strikes a person with a fatal blow is to be put to death. ¹³ However, if it is not done intentionally, but God lets it happen, they are to flee to a place I will designate. ¹⁴ But if anyone schemes and kills someone deliberately, that person is to be taken from my altar and put to death.</p>	<p>³⁰ “But anyone who sins defiantly, whether native-born or foreigner, blasphemes the LORD and must be cut off from the people of Israel.</p> <p>(CLV) Num 15:30</p> <p>⁺Yet the soul who is doing anything ^íwith a high hand, from the native and from the sojourner, he is taunting [»]Yahweh; ⁺ [*]that [*]soul will be cut off from among his people,</p>	<p>¹⁹ The avenger of blood shall put the murderer to death; when the avenger comes upon the murderer, the avenger shall put the murderer to death. ²⁰ If anyone with malice aforethought shoves another or throws something at them intentionally so that they die ²¹ or if out of enmity one person hits another with their fist so that the other dies, that person is to be put to death; that</p>

		person is a murderer. The avenger of blood shall put the murderer to death when they meet.
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Interesting.

Then he asks:

What is Jacob's transgression?

Is it not Samaria?

What is Judah's high place?

Is it not Jerusalem?

We studied Samaria in the last several studies. But note how he calls Jerusalem Judah's "high place." What does that mean, and why is it so bad?

A "high place" was a pagan center of idolatry. One is referenced in 1 Kings.

1 King 3	NIV Study Note: Upon entering Canaan, the Israelites often followed the Canaanite custom of locating their altars on high hills, probably old Baal sites. The question of the legitimacy of Israelite worship at these high places has long been a matter of debate. See extensive discussion continuing this study note's comments below.
2 The people, however, were still sacrificing at the high places, because a temple had not yet been built for the Name of the Lord.	

It is clear that Israel was forbidden to take over pagan altars and high places and use them for worship.

Numbers 33:52	Dt 7:5	Dt 12:3
⁵² drive out all the inhabitants of the land before you. Destroy all their carved images and their cast idols, and demolish all their high places.	⁵ This is what you are to do to them: Break down their altars, smash their sacred stones, cut down their Asherah poles and burn their idols in the fire.	³ Break down their altars, smash their sacred stones and burn their Asherah poles in the fire; cut down the idols of their gods and wipe out their names from those places.

It is also clear altars were only supposed to be built on divinely sanctioned sites.

Ex 20:24	Dt 12:5	Dt 12:8	Dt 12:13-14
²⁴ "Make an altar of earth for me and sacrifice on it your burnt offerings and fellowship offerings, your sheep and goats and your cattle. Wherever I cause my name to be honored, I will come to you and bless you.	⁵ But you are to seek the place the LORD your God will choose from among all your tribes to put his Name there for his dwelling. To that place you must go;	⁸ You are not to do as we do here today, everyone doing as they see fit,	13 Be careful not to sacrifice your burnt offerings anywhere you please. 14 Offer them only at the place the Lord will choose in one of your tribes, and there observe everything I command you.

It is not so clear whether multiplicity of altars was totally forbidden, providing the above conditions were met.

1 Sa 19:10-12

¹⁰ "Good," Saul said to his servant. "Come, let's go." So they set out for the town where the man of God was.

¹¹ As they were going up the hill to the town, they met some young women coming out to draw water, and they asked them, "Is the seer here?"

¹² "He is," they answered. "He's ahead of you. Hurry now; he has just come to our town today, for the people have a sacrifice at the high place.

It's obvious Samuel worshipped at a high place and was accepted.

Worship at high places were considered apparently normal because the Temple had not been built yet. But religious apostasy and syncretism was strongly condemned.

Judges 6:24NIV
24 So Gideon built an altar to the Lord there and called it The Lord Is Peace. To this day it stands in Ophrah of the Abiezrites.

2 Kings 17	2 Kings 21	2 Kings 23
<p>⁹ The Israelites secretly did things against the LORD their God that were not right. From watchtower to fortified city they built themselves high places in all their towns. ¹⁰ They set up sacred stones and Asherah poles on every high hill and under every spreading tree. ¹¹ At every high place they burned incense, as the nations whom the LORD had driven out before them had done. They did wicked things that aroused the LORD's anger. ¹² They</p>	<p>Manasseh was twelve years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem fifty-five years. His mother's name was Hephzibah. ² He did evil in the eyes of the LORD, following the detestable practices of the nations the LORD had driven out before the Israelites. ³ He rebuilt the high places his father Hezekiah had destroyed; he also erected altars to Baal and made an Asherah pole, as Ahab king of Israel had done. He bowed down to all the starry hosts and</p>	<p>⁴ The king ordered Hilkiah the high priest, the priests next in rank and the doorkeepers to remove from the temple of the LORD all the articles made for Baal and Asherah and all the starry hosts. He burned them outside Jerusalem in the fields of the Kidron Valley and took the ashes to Bethel. ⁵ He did away with the idolatrous priests appointed by the kings of Judah to burn incense on the high places of the towns of Judah and on those around Jerusalem—those who</p>

<p>worshipped idols,</p>	<p>worshipped them.⁴ He built altars in the temple of the LORD,</p>	<p>burned incense to Baal, to the sun and moon, to the constellations and to all the starry hosts.⁶ He took the Asherah pole from the temple of the LORD to the Kidron Valley outside Jerusalem and burned it there. He ground it to powder and scattered the dust over the graves of the common people.⁷ He also tore down the quarters of the male shrine prostitutes that were in the temple of the LORD, the quarters where women did weaving for Asherah.</p> <p>⁸ Josiah brought all the priests from the towns of Judah and desecrated the high places, from Geba to Beersheba, where the priests had burned incense.</p>
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So Jerusalem had become just another “high place” in God’s eyes, where people worshipped as they saw fit as opposed to how God prescribed worship.

How do we worship? As we see fit? Or the way the LORD prescribes us to--through Jesus.

We’ll continue in Micah next time.