

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 14 Part 2²

So far we’ve seen two visuals Christ used in His teaching that I personally feel He got from studying these chapters. One was the visual of the “whitewashed” wall in Ezekiel 13. I still remember how Christ lambasted the Pharisees, and called them “whitewashed” walls. The next was the visual of torrential rains coming upon a structure, and casting it down. That so reminded me of the way Christ ended the sermon on the Mount, encouraging people to build their lives on the Rock. Today, we’ll see Ezekiel talk about a “Vine.” Could this be the place Christ got His John 15 analogy? What is He saying if it is? 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.)

Ezekiel 15 New International Version (NIV)

Jerusalem as a Useless Vine

15 The word of the LORD came to me: ²“Son of man, how is the wood of a vine different from that of a branch from any of the trees in the forest?”

Note: As in Psalm 80, God compares Jerusalem to a vine that yields no grapes and therefore is good for nothing but fuel. Let’s look at the reference in Psalm 80.

Restore us, God Almighty;
make your face shine on us,
that we may be saved.

8 You transplanted a vine from Egypt;
you drove out the nations and planted it.

9 You cleared the ground for it,
and it took root and filled the land.

10 The mountains were covered with its shade,
the mighty cedars with its branches.

11 Its branches reached as far as the Sea,[probably the Mediterranean]
its shoots as far as the River.[probably the Euphrates]



12 Why have you broken down its walls
so that all who pass by pick its grapes?

13 Boars from the forest ravage it,

and insects from the fields feed on it.
14 Return to us, God Almighty!
Look down from heaven and see!
Watch over this vine,
15 the root your right hand has planted,
the son[possibly branch] you have raised up for yourself.

16 Your vine is cut down, it is burned with fire;
at your rebuke your people perish.

Note: Ok, so I stand if not corrected, expanded in my understanding. I did a brief survey of the use of the imagery of the vine, and there are over 40 references in the major prophets alone. Look at a few here.

Isaiah 1:8

Daughter Zion is left like a shelter in a **vineyard**, like a hut in a cucumber field, like a city under siege.

Isaiah 3:14

The Lord enters into judgment against the elders and leaders of his people: “It is you who have ruined my **vineyard**; the plunder from the poor is in your houses.

Isaiah 5:1-7

[*The Song of the Vineyard*] I will sing for the one I love a song about his **vineyard**: My loved one had a **vineyard** on a fertile hillside. He dug it up and cleared it of stones and planted it with the choicest **vines**. He built a watchtower in it and cut out a winepress as well. Then he looked for a crop of good grapes, but it yielded only bad fruit. “Now you dwellers in Jerusalem and people of Judah, judge between me and my **vineyard**. What more could have been done for my **vineyard** than I have done for it? When I looked for good grapes, why did it yield only bad? Now I will tell you what I am going to do to my **vineyard**: I will take away its hedge, and it will be destroyed; I will break down its wall, and it will be trampled. . . 7 - The **vineyard** of the Lord Almighty is the nation of Israel, and the people of Judah are the **vines** he delighted in. And he looked for justice, but saw bloodshed; for righteousness, but heard cries of distress.

Note: God looks for fruit in our lives! And the only way to bear fruit is to let the “sap” of Spirit flow through you, and we, branches, are connected to Jesus, the Vine.

John 15 New International Version (NIV)

The Vine and the Branches

15 “I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. ² He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes (cleans) so that it will be even more fruitful. ³ You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. ⁴ Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me.

⁵“I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. ⁶If you do not remain in me, you are like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned.

Note: I think it’s particularly interesting that in this parable the branches are about to be burned, and the vine itself will be charred. What I think now is fascinating is that Christ not only became the substitute and representative of humanity in general, but in particular He became “the true” Israel, living out redemptive acts on the nation of Israel’s behalf!

Notice how Scripture supports this. Look at how His life parallels the story of Israel.

1. He was called out of Egypt, like Israel was.

Matthew 2:14 New International Version (NIV)

¹⁴So he got up, took the child and his mother during the night and left for Egypt,

Matthew 3 New International Version (NIV)

John the Baptist Prepares the Way

³In those days John the Baptist came, preaching in the wilderness of Judea ²and saying, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.” ³This is he who was spoken of through the prophet Isaiah:

“A voice of one calling in the wilderness,
‘Prepare the way for the Lord,
make straight paths for him.’”

... ¹³Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptized by John. ¹⁴But John tried to deter him, saying, “I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?”

¹⁵Jesus replied, “Let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this to fulfill all righteousness.” Then John consented.

¹⁶As soon as Jesus was baptized, **he went up out of the water.** At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him. ¹⁷And a voice from heaven said, “This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased.”

Jesus was baptized and emerged from water. So did ancient Israel too.

1 Corinthians 10 New International Version (NIV)

10 For I do not want you to be ignorant of the fact, brothers and sisters, that our ancestors were all under the cloud and that they all passed through the sea. ² They were all baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea.

Israel was baptized in the cloud and in the sea.

Then notice this parallel. He ends up in the wilderness for 40 days of testing, just like Israel ended up with 40 years of testing in the wilderness.

Matthew 4 New International Version (NIV)

Jesus Is Tested in the Wilderness

4 Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted^[a] by the devil.

Note: The NIV study bible says, referring to the quotation of Hosea 11:1 (“Out of Egypt I have called my son”): . . . Matthew, under the inspiration of the Spirit, applies it [the quotation] also to Jesus. He sees the history of Israel (God’s “son”) recapitulated in the life of Jesus (God’s unique Son). Just as Israel as an infant nation went down to Egypt, so the child Jesus went there. And as Israel was led by God out of Egypt, so also was Jesus.”

And again, it ends up with 40 days of testing in the wilderness, just as Israel was tempted forty years. (See Ezekiel 4 where a prophet is asked to do something for a “day” to symbolize a “year” in the history of Israel.)

⁴“Then lie on your left side and put the sin of the people of Israel upon yourself.^[or upon your side] You are to bear their sin for the number of days you lie on your side. ⁵ I have assigned you the same number of days as the years of their sin. So for 390 days you will bear the sin of the people of Israel.

⁶“After you have finished this, lie down again, this time on your right side, and bear the sin of the people of Judah. I have assigned you 40 days, a day for each year.

Ezekiel 4

So here’s a thought I’m trying to wrap my mind around. Jesus used the parable to refer to Israel in this prophecy. He also spoke about being the Vine and spoke of the “Branches” that bore no fruit, how they would be burned. In this prophecy, the whole vine is burned (not just the branches). Did Jesus take upon Himself the whole punishment of Israel, and in allowing Himself to be killed on the cross, even endured it’s burning? Jesus died for and with Israel. Yet in Jesus, Israel came back to life! And so do we!

Read the rest of the prophecy, and note: Israel gets burned completely. But at the end, she still “knows” that God is the Lord. She dies, but still knows! Her death doesn’t kill her. It just refines her and clarifies her thinking. And that’s what Jesus did for all of us!



³ Is wood ever taken from it to make anything useful? Do they make pegs from it to hang things on? ⁴ And after it is thrown on the fire as fuel and the fire burns both ends and chars the middle, is it then useful for anything? ⁵ If it was not useful for anything when it was whole, how much less can it be made into something useful when the fire has burned it and it is charred?

⁶ “Therefore this is what the Sovereign LORD says: As I have given the wood of the vine among the trees of the forest as fuel for the fire, so will I treat the people living in Jerusalem. ⁷ I will set my face against them. Although they have come out of the fire, the fire will yet consume them. And when I set my face against them, you will know that I am the LORD. ⁸ I will make the land desolate because they have been unfaithful, declares the Sovereign LORD.”

Cross references:

1. **Ezekiel 15:2 : Ps 80:8-16; Isa 5:1-7; 27:2-6; Jer 2:21; Hos 10:1; S Jn 15:2**
2. **Ezekiel 15:3 : Jer 13:10**
3. **Ezekiel 15:3 : S Isa 22:23**
4. **Ezekiel 15:4 : Eze 17:3-10; 19:14; Jn 15:6**
5. **Ezekiel 15:7 : S Lev 26:17; Ps 34:16; Eze 14:8**
6. **Ezekiel 15:7 : S Eze 5:2; S Eze 5:4**
7. **Ezekiel 15:7 : Isa 24:18; Am 9:1-4**
8. **Ezekiel 15:8 : S Eze 14:13**
9. **Ezekiel 15:8 : Eze 17:20; 18:24**

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