

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

graceWORKS! GOING DEEPER
Ezekiel 16 Part 1²

This is an interesting chapter. Definitely PG-13, at the very least. In quite graphic terms, God speaks of his adulterous “wife,” Jerusalem. He uses sexual metaphors, and calls her things we’d blush at if we read them out loud in church with children present. But it’s a fascinating chapter, and actually shows how comfortable God is with sex and sexuality, and normalizes it rather than makes it a non-mentionable mystery. Ok, I’ve set you up. Let’s see what we learn.

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 5:5 New
International Version (NIV)

⁵ “This is what the Sovereign LORD says: This is Jerusalem, which I have set in the center of the nations, with countries all around her.

2 Samuel 5:6-9 New
International Version (NIV)

David Conquers Jerusalem

⁶ The king and his men marched to Jerusalem to attack the Jebusites, who lived there. The Jebusites said to David, “You will not get in here; even the blind and the lame can ward you off.” They thought, “David cannot get in here.”

⁷ Nevertheless, David captured the fortress of Zion—which is the City of David.

⁸ On that day David had said, “Anyone who conquers the Jebusites will have to use the water shaft to reach those ‘lame and blind’ who are David’s enemies.^[a]” That is why they say, “The ‘blind and lame’ will not enter the palace.”

⁹ David then took up residence in the fortress and called it the City of David. He built up the area around it, from the terraces^[b] inward.

Footnotes:

1. **2 Samuel 5:8** Or *are hated by David*
2. **2 Samuel 5:9** Or *the Millo*

Ezekiel 16 New International Version (NIV)

Jerusalem as an Adulterous Wife

16 The word of the LORD came to me: ² “Son of man, confront Jerusalem with her detestable practices

Note: The word for abhorrences:

H8441 tow`ebah to-ay-baw'

or tonebah {to-ay-baw'};

feminine active participle of **H8581**; properly, something disgusting (morally), i.e. (as noun) an abhorrence; especially idolatry or (concretely) an idol.

NIV says Jerusalem is pictured as a royal city among other cities in this chapter, and serves as an analogy and representative of all Israel. She is the city God had chosen to be the site of His temple, and He had elevated her to be “the city of the Great King.” She was to be the earthly center of His kingly rule in human affairs. He had married her and provided for her richly. But she turned to false gods. In other words, I’ll add, she “cheated” on her Husband. Here’s what her Husband has to say.

³ and say, ‘This is what the Sovereign LORD says to Jerusalem: Your ancestry and birth were in the land of the Canaanites; your father was an Amorite and your mother a Hittite.

Note: This was a way of referring to Jerusalem’s non-Israelite origin. She actually existed before King David made her his city.

⁴ On the day you were born your cord was not cut, nor were you washed with water to make you clean, nor were you rubbed with salt or wrapped in cloths.

Psalm 48:2 New
International Version (NIV)

² Beautiful in its loftiness,
the joy of the whole earth,
like the heights of Zaphon (this
was the most sacred mountain of
the Canaanites) is Mount Zion,
the city of the Great King.

It was the custom of the day to wash, salt, and then swaddle a baby and all were part of the same procedure. In many places in the Middle East this custom is still practiced. As a matter of fact, this is so important in some Bedouin tribes that even today if there is no salt available to salt a newborn, camel urine is used because of its salt content.

No one knows for sure why babies were salted or exactly how it was done. Some say salt was mixed with olive oil and the baby rubbed with it, others say the baby was washed with salted water, still others say a small amount of salt was rubbed onto the baby's skin. Too much salt will kill an infant so only a pinch of salt would have been used. The baby was then swaddled or wrapped with a long two to three inch band of cloth from head to foot in such a way that it held the joints straight. This was a symbolic gesture suggesting that the child would be raised to be upright before the Lord and would never be crooked or wayward. The babies were not left swaddled for long, but during the short time they were swaddled the parents would meditate and give thanks for the child entrusted to their care. The reason for the salting of infants is just as debated as the practice, but from studying the significance of salt in the Law of Moses it is obvious that salt is a symbol of an everlasting covenant and of the honesty and integrity that should accompany any covenant with the Lord. Under the Law of Moses, every sacrificial offering was offered with salt. Therefore I side with those who think that the salting of babies had something to do with dedicating this new member of the House of Israel to the Lord. . . we are to be "the salt of the earth" (Matthew 5:13 and 3 Nephi 12:13).

or less correspond to the onset of puberty. While those ages might seem too young to us, they are not unusual ages for getting married, historically. It has only been within the last century or so that the average age of getting married has drifted into the late twenties and early thirties.³

Some say even Mary was much younger than we'd find acceptable in our day and age. Let's continue with Ezekiel.

Note: This custom of rubbing babies with salt was observed by Arab peasants as late as 1918. See sidebar for some interesting thoughts about this.

⁵ No one looked on you with pity or had compassion enough to do any of these things for you. Rather, you were thrown out into the open field, for on the day you were born you were despised.

Many pagan societies abandoned infants to die, a practice abhorrent to God and the Israelites.

⁶ "Then I passed by and saw you kicking about in your blood, and as you lay there in your blood I said to you, "Live!"^[a]

Many manuscripts repeat the phrase, giving it a more dramatic effect. "and as you lay there, kicking in your blood, I said to you "Live!"

⁷ I made you grow like a plant of the field. You grew and developed and entered puberty. Your breasts had formed and your hair had grown, yet you were stark naked.

Again, this is talking about puberty, when body hair begins to grow. It was a sign that the once child was now ready for love. Here's an interesting thing we may find shocking:

It is reasonable to look at the practices of ancient Judaism for cultural considerations on the proper age for marriage. According to tradition, boys were not considered "men," and therefore not marriageable, until the age of 13. Girls were not considered "women" until age 12. These ages more

³ <https://www.gotquestions.org/marriage-age.html>

⁸“Later I passed by, and when I looked at you and saw that you were old enough for love, I spread the corner of my garment over you and covered your naked body.

This was symbolic of entering into the marriage covenant.

I gave you my solemn oath and entered into a covenant with you, declares the Sovereign LORD, and you became mine.

“You became mine.” That sounds so beautiful. But I wonder how women of today, intensely aware of their individualism and independence, would feel about that?

⁹“I bathed you with water and washed the blood from you and put ointments on you. ¹⁰ I clothed you with an embroidered dress and put sandals of fine leather on you. I dressed you in fine linen and covered you with costly garments. ¹¹ I adorned you with jewelry: I put bracelets on your arms and a necklace around your neck, ¹² and I put a ring on your nose, earrings on your ears and a beautiful crown on your head. ¹³ So you were adorned with gold and silver; your clothes were of fine linen and costly fabric and embroidered cloth. Your food was honey, olive oil and the finest flour. You became very beautiful and rose to be a queen.

This is a beautiful example of the kind of husband God was, and a model for the kind of husbands we should be. Look at what a “good husband” does according to this chapter. I’ll compare it with what Christ does for us as the Husband of His Bride, the Church.

God as a Husband in Ezekiel 16	Christ as a Husband in Ephesians 5
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I bathed you with water and washed the blood from you • I put ointments on you. • I clothed you with an embroidered dress • put sandals of fine leather on you. • I dressed you in fine linen • covered you with costly garments. • I adorned you with jewelry • I put bracelets on your arms • and a necklace around your neck • and I put a ring on your nose • earrings on your ears • and a beautiful crown on your head. • So you were adorned with gold and silver • your clothes were of fine linen and costly fabric and embroidered cloth • Your food was honey, olive oil and the finest flour. • You became very beautiful and rose to 	<p>²⁵ Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • loved the church • gave himself up for her • to make her holy • cleansing^[or having cleansed] her • by the washing with water • through the word • to present her to himself • as a radiant church • without stain • without wrinkle • without any other blemish • but holy and blameless. <p>²⁸ In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • as their own bodies. • He who loves his wife loves himself. • no one ever hated their own body

<p>be a queen.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ but they feed ○ and care for their body ○ just as Christ does the church— <p>³⁰ for we are members of his body.</p> <p>³¹ “For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.”</p> <p>³² This is a profound mystery—but I am talking about Christ and the church.</p> <p>³³ However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.</p>
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Can you see some parallels? How lovingly a husband “washes” his beloved bride, cleanses her, clothes her like Christ did us? He has clothed us with His righteousness!

Galatians 3:27

for all of you who were baptized into **Christ** have **clothed** yourselves with **Christ**.

He clothes us with Himself!

He “washes” us from our blood stained guilt of sin!

He washes us with the “blood” of Christ and makes our robes white!

Revelation 7:14

I answered, “Sir, you know.” And he said, “These are they who have come out of the great tribulation; they have **washed** their robes and made them white in the **blood** of the Lamb.

And His love makes us beautiful. We’ll pick up in Ezekiel 16 more tomorrow.