

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 16 Part 2²

So we’ve seen how God cared for his wife, Israel, her pictured by Jerusalem herself. Now let’s see what her response is to all God’s love.

If you carry this all the way to the picture of what it ultimately represents, consider this. God married Israel. Divorces her. Remarries her. Comes to her in the flesh. And in the end she ends up murdering Him. And at the end of it all, He forgives her, saves her, sanctifies her, says “Father Forgive” her, and comes back to her and gives her forgiveness and life, to freely receive! Enjoy!

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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.)



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Ezekiel 16 New International Version (NIV)

¹³So 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.

Look at how all God's love impacted His wife. She became very beautiful. She rose to be a queen.

¹⁴And your fame spread among the nations on account of your beauty, because the splendor I had given you made your beauty perfect, declares the Sovereign LORD.

God's splendor made her beautiful. His love makes us beautiful.

¹⁵“But you trusted in your beauty and used your fame to become a prostitute. You lavished your favors on anyone who passed by and your beauty became his.

⁹ That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. **John 1**

God is the True Light. He lights us all up. His love makes us beautiful

¹⁷ Your heart became proud on account of your beauty, and you corrupted your wisdom because of your splendor.

Ezekiel 28

The cherub that became Satan became proud because of his beauty and splendor, given him by God---and also became corrupt.

This seems to be a weakness of created beings---to forget that they were created, and to want to be "stand alone" and independent from God.

¹⁶You took some of your garments to make gaudy high places, where you carried on your prostitution. You went to him, and he possessed your beauty.

The Hebrew in this phrase is uncertain, but another possible translation is "you became his." When you give yourself over to someone sexually, you become "theirs" in some way. For good, or for bad!

¹⁷You also took the fine jewelry I gave you, the jewelry made of my gold and silver, and you made for yourself male idols and engaged in prostitution with them.

Here is an interesting commentary on idolatry in ancient Israel. The source is footnoted below.³

"LIVING IDOLS" IN PAGAN RELIGIONS

An idol, in the pagan mind, was a living and feeling being. The idol was not necessarily equivalent to the god; the god had a separate (though not independent) existence from the idol. The god's spirit dwelt within the idol and was identified with it. The god was not confined to a single idol or a single shape; rather his spirit dwelt within many idols of varied shapes. The god perceived and sensed whatever happened to its idol (see Oppenheim, 48–49, 54; van Buren, 75ff.). The prayers, ceremonies, and cult offered to the idol were fully sensed by the god. Since the god identified fully with its idol, the images were "living idols" (see van Buren, 81; Blackman (1924), 55, 57). In Egypt and Mesopotamia the ceremony of washing and dressing the idol was practiced (see Erman, 273ff.; Moret; Oppenheim, 188–92). The idol also ate, drawing from the food offered to it the energy needed for its subsistence and the execution of its numerous activities (see Blackman and Fairman, 84; Oppenheim, 191–2). The idol felt, saw, heard, and spoke (Blackman and Fairman, *ibid.*; Maspéro). The cult opened the mouth, eyes, and ears of the idol (see van Buren, 81; Blackman (1924), 55, 57; Berlejung). At night the idol slept and in the morning the sunlight would awaken it and it would speak (see Blackman and Fairman, 84). The idol made its will known by influencing the lots that were cast in its presence, through prophecy, and through a variety of signs. The will of the idol was a divine imperative not only in religious matters but also in the political affairs of the state and the private affairs of the

³ <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/idolatry>

individual (see Blackman (1925), 249–258; (1926), 83–95; (1941), 136–190). Since the god fully identified with its idol, whoever controlled the idol also controlled the god.

It's interesting that the first two commands in the 10 commandments given in Exodus 20 dealt with idolatry.

"I" am the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery."

God rescues us from "the land of slavery." In God you are truly free. When you live in a spiritual Egypt, you are in the land of slavery.

"You shall have NO other gods before me."

"You shall not yourself an image in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. You shall not bow down to worship them; for I, the Lord your God am a jealous God. . .

But notice how the Israelites did just what the article above described.

¹⁸And you took your embroidered clothes to put on them, and you offered my oil and incense before them. ¹⁹Also the food I provided for you—the flour, olive oil and honey I gave you to eat—you offered as fragrant incense before them. That is what happened, declares the Sovereign LORD.

²⁰"And you took your sons and daughters whom you bore to me and sacrificed them as food to the idols. Was your prostitution not enough? ²¹You slaughtered my children and sacrificed them to the idols.

I take this allegorically, too. In addition to the horrific problem of child sacrifice, in our age, when we worship something other than the real God, and idolize anything, the children suffer the most!

²²In all your detestable practices and your prostitution you did not remember the days of your youth, when you were naked and bare, kicking about in your blood.

God's message. Remember where you come from. Always, remember where you come from, and where I've brought you.

²³"Woe! Woe to you, declares the Sovereign LORD. In addition to all your other wickedness, ²⁴you built a mound for yourself and made a lofty shrine in

every public square. ²⁵At every street corner you built your lofty shrines and degraded your beauty, spreading your legs with increasing promiscuity to anyone who passed by.

Pretty graphic. Two things I take from this. God can frankly talk about sex and sexuality and “normalize” it in a healthy way. And secondly, the love we have for God can be pictured by true and pure godly sexuality, and putting something before God is like cheating on Him, the way a mate might cheat on a partner sexually. It’s an abhorrent thing, not because sexuality is abhorrent, but actually because it’s holy and meant to be used in a holy way!

²⁶You engaged in prostitution with the Egyptians, your neighbors with large genitals, and aroused my anger with your increasing promiscuity.

Wow. Graphic. The literal version I study here says they were “great of flesh.”

So Israel’s sins are graphically discussed. And in graphic, sexual terms. This doesn’t mean sexuality is bad. It just means that God loves us passionately, and is jealous for our love in return.

So what does He do about it? We’ll see next time.

¹⁵ Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ himself? Shall I then take the members of Christ and unite them with a prostitute? Never! ¹⁶ Do you not know that he who unites himself with a prostitute is one with her in body? For it is said, “The two will become one flesh.” ¹⁷ But whoever is united with the Lord is one with him in spirit.
1 Corinthians 6

Healthy human sexuality pictures the “one Spirit” relationship we have with the Lord! It pictures our spiritual union with the Lord. Sexuality is a wonderful gift. It’s misuse is what is “bad.”