

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
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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 17²

Jesus loved to tell parables---simple stories about truths He wanted God’s people to know and live with. The prophets are filled with parables, and a fascinating one is included in this chapter.

It’s Labor Day and I want to spend some time chilling out, so I won’t go as long on this study. But I’m not going to skip studying God’s word. He is my life! Yours too!

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.)

Ezekiel 17 New International Version (NIV)

Two Eagles and a Vine

17 The word of the LORD came to me: ²“Son of man, set forth an allegory and tell it to the Israelites as a parable.



Figure 1 Photo 145532526 © Naropano | Dreamstime.com Figure 2 Photo 28655724 © Andreanita | Dreamstime.com

The Hebrew word for “allegory” is:

H2420 chiydah khee-daw'

from **H2330**;

a puzzle, hence, a trick, conundrum, sententious maxim.

The Hebrew word for parables is:

H4912 mashal maw-shawl'

apparently from **H4910** in some original sense of superiority in mental action;

properly, a pithy maxim, usually of metaphorical nature; hence, a simile (as an adage, poem, discourse).

³ Say to them, ‘This is what the Sovereign LORD says: A great eagle with powerful wings, long feathers and full plumage of varied colors came to Lebanon. Taking hold of the top of a cedar,
⁴ he broke off its topmost shoot and carried it away to a land of merchants, where he planted it in a city of traders.

Even though the word “Lebanon” is used, it refers to Jerusalem, as we’ll see in vs 12. This is speaking of taking some David’s royal dynasty from the “cedar” that David’s dynasty

had become. The top most shoot would be the most king of Jerusalem I believe Zedekiah. In that verse, the King of Babylon (the “land of merchants” and Babylon itself being the “city of traders”) is shown to have made this man kind.

⁵ “He took one of the seedlings of the land and put it in fertile soil. He planted it like a willow by abundant water, ⁶ and it sprouted and became a low, spreading vine. Its branches turned toward him, but its roots remained under it. So it became a vine and produced branches and put out leafy boughs.

2 Kings 24:17 New International Version (NIV)

¹⁷ He made Mattaniah, Jehoiachin’s uncle, king in his place and changed his name to Zedekiah.

Colossians 2:6-7 New International Version (NIV)

Spiritual Fullness in Christ

⁶ So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives **in** him,

⁷ **rooted** and built up **in** him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness.

Note: I’m intrigued with the phrase “its roots remained under it.” Even though the branches were turned toward the might “eagle” who planted it, Nebuchadnezzar, its roots were its own. Our roots, by the way, should be in Christ.

⁷ “But there was another great eagle with powerful wings and full plumage.

Note: This refers to an Egyptian Pharaoh.

The vine now sent out its roots toward him from the plot where it was planted and stretched out its branches to him for water. ⁸ It had been planted in good soil by abundant water so that it would produce branches, bear fruit and become a splendid vine.’



Figure 3 Photo 93038317 © Xiaoma | Dreamstime.com

Note: To me what is interesting is that it had shifted its roots. Do we ever shift our roots from what we’re supposed to be rooted by, and turn away from the God who gives us life?

⁹“Say to them, ‘This is what the Sovereign LORD says: Will it thrive? Will it not be uprooted and stripped of its fruit so that it withers? All its new growth will wither. It will not take a strong arm or many people to pull it up by the roots.

Note: We can take actions that seem to bear fruit for a while, but it goes against the grain of God’s existence. It won’t last. It won’t inherit the “life that is really life.”

God’s Life – The Life that is Really Life	God’s Life – The Eternal Kingdom of God
<p>1 Timothy 6:19 (NRSV)</p> <p>¹⁹ thus storing up for themselves the treasure of a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of the life that really is life.</p>	<p>1 Corinthians 6:9 New International Version (NIV)</p> <p>⁹ Or do you not know that wrongdoers will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor men who have sex with men^[a]</p> <p><i>Footnotes:</i></p> <p>1. 1 Corinthians 6:9 The words <i>men who have sex with men</i> translate two Greek words that refer to the passive and active participants in homosexual acts.</p>

When you go against the grain---you get splinters! And don’t inherit your allotment of life, the Kingdom of God!

¹⁰ It has been planted, but will it thrive? Will it not wither completely when the east wind strikes it—wither away in the plot where it grew?”

¹¹ Then the word of the LORD came to me: ¹²“Say to this **rebellious people,**

Hebrew:

H4805 mriy mer-ee'

from **H4784**;

bitterness, i.e. (figuratively) rebellion; concretely, bitter, or rebellious.

‘Do you not know what these things mean?’ Say to them: ‘The king of Babylon went to Jerusalem and carried off her king and her nobles, bringing them back with him to Babylon.

Note: The parable is about Jerusalem, and members of the royal dynasty.

¹³ Then he took a member of the royal family and made a treaty with him, putting him under oath. He also carried away the leading men of the land, ¹⁴ so that the kingdom would be brought low, unable to rise again, surviving only by keeping his treaty.

Note: Literally, “he is cutting a covenant with him.” In ancient times, parties often solemnized covenants by walking down an aisle of slaughtered animals, and taking a self-maledictory oath (e.g., may it be done so done to me if I don’t keep my covenant).

Also, think about his. Wouldn’t it have been better to be a low vine, than to try to be a big tree when you weren’t supposed to?

¹⁵ But the king rebelled against him by sending his envoys to Egypt to get horses and a large army. Will he succeed? Will he who does such things escape? Will he break the treaty and yet escape?

Note: God wants us to keep our “treaties.” To keep our covenants. To keep our word!

¹⁶ “As surely as I live, declares the Sovereign LORD, he shall die in Babylon, in the land of the king who put him on the throne, whose oath he despised and whose treaty he broke.

Zedekiah did die in Babylon.

¹⁷ Pharaoh with his mighty army and great horde will be of no help to him in war, when ramps are built and siege works erected to destroy many lives. ¹⁸ He despised the oath by breaking the covenant. Because he had given his hand in pledge and yet did all these things, he shall not escape.

¹⁹ “Therefore this is what the Sovereign LORD says: As surely as I live, I will repay him for despising my oath and breaking my covenant. ²⁰ I will spread my net for him, and he will be caught in my snare. I will bring him to Babylon and execute judgment on him there because he was unfaithful to me. ²¹ All his choice troops will fall by the sword, and the survivors will be scattered to the winds. Then you will know that I the LORD have spoken.

We’ll pick up here next time.

New International Version (NIV)

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2 Kings 25:7 (NIV)

⁷ They killed the sons of Zedekiah before his eyes. Then they put out his eyes, bound him with bronze shackles and took him to Babylon.