

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

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Ezekiel 20 Part 4 Final²

So . . .we are having crazy fires in the Northwest. It has been devastating to the communities there, and the families who have lost loved ones and years of memories. We must keep them in prayer.

God talks about a “fire” in this final passage of Ezekiel. Is it a literal fire? An analogy? Or both! Does God take credit for at least some destruction that has taken place on the earth in history? It looks to me like He does. Let’s see!

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.)

20 Prophecy Against the South

Note: According to the NIV study bible, Hebrew texts list this section as chapter 21, verses 1-5. And in their study notes, they link this together with Chapter 21:1-27 as if 20:45 – 21:27 make a complete unit. It says this:

“Babylon will be God’s sword to bring a ruinous destruction as total as that of a forest fire---primarily on Judah and Jerusalem. . .”

It notes also that the Ammonites and then Babylon will feel God’s wrath.

21:28-29	21:30-32
<p>²⁸ “And you, son of man, prophesy and say, ‘This is what the Sovereign LORD says about the Ammonites and their insults:</p> <p>“‘A sword, a sword, drawn for the slaughter, polished to consume and to flash like lightning!</p> <p>²⁹ Despite false visions concerning you and lying divinations about you, it will be laid on the necks of the wicked who are to be slain, whose day has come, whose time of punishment has reached its climax.</p>	<p>30 “Let the sword return to its sheath. In the place where you were created,</p> <p>This is seen as referring to Babylon.</p> <p>in the land of your ancestry, I will judge you.</p> <p>31 I will pour out my wrath on you and breathe out my fiery anger against you; I will deliver you into the hands of brutal men, men skilled in destruction.</p> <p>32 You will be fuel for the fire, your blood will be shed in your land, you will be remembered no more; for I the LORD have spoken.”</p> <p><i>Footnotes:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Ezekiel 21:1 In Hebrew texts 21:1-32 is numbered 21:6-37.2. Ezekiel 21:15 Septuagint; the meaning of the Hebrew for this word is uncertain.

This is interesting. Neither the Ammonites or Babylon were technically God’s chosen people. But God was involved in their punishment. After we review this section, I’m going to review other places where God intervened in history because of sin He wanted to stop. It’s not a politically correct concept. And

furthermore, it makes me give pause to some of the destruction that is taking place in our nation and other places in the world.

But let’s review this section.

45 The word of the LORD came to me: 46 “Son of man, set your face toward the south;

Two things to note here:

1. The posture of “set your face” required of the prophet by the LORD. What does that mean? It’s required eight times of the prophet in this book.

13:17	21:2	25:2	28:21	29:2	35:2	38:2
¹⁷ “Now, son of man, set your face against the daughters of your people who prophesy out of their own imagination. Prophecy against them	2 “Son of man, set your face against Jerusalem and preach against the sanctuary. Prophecy against the land of Israel	2 “Son of man, set your face against the Ammonites and prophesy against them.	²¹ “Son of man, set your face against Sidon; prophesy against her	2 “Son of man, set your face against Pharaoh king of Egypt and prophesy against him and against all Egypt.	2 “Son of man, set your face against Mount Seir; prophesy against it	2 “Son of man, set your face against Gog, of the land of Magog, the chief prince of ^a] Meshek and Tubal; prophesy against him <i>Footnotes:</i> 1. Ezekiel 38:2 Or the prince of Rosh,

Notice who is being prophesied against: women who prophesy out of their own imagination; Jerusalem and the sanctuary; the Ammonites; Sidon, Pharaoh, Mout Seir, and God and Magog. God gets involved all over the world!

preach against the south and prophesy against the forest of the southland.

This is toward Judah and Jerusalem.

47 Say to the southern forest: ‘Hear the word of the LORD. This is what the Sovereign LORD says: I am about to set fire to you, and it will consume all your trees, both green and dry.

The study Bible does not take this literally as a “forest fire.” It says it is common language for God’s devastating judgments, which often took the form of invasion by some world power. Here are two reference Scriptures listed.

Isaiah 10:16-19	Amos 1:4
<p>16 Therefore, the Lord, the LORD Almighty, will send a wasting disease upon his sturdy warriors; under his pomp a fire will be kindled like a blazing flame.</p> <p>17 The Light of Israel will become a fire, their Holy One a flame; in a single day it will burn and consume his thorns and his briers.</p> <p>18 The splendor of his forests and fertile fields it will completely destroy, as when a sick person wastes away.</p> <p>19 And the remaining trees of his forests will be so few that a child could write them down.</p>	<p>4 I will send fire on the house of Hazael that will consume the fortresses of Ben-Hadad.</p>

It also adds that “all trees” will be consumed, both green and dry. NIV notes these two scriptures as reference Scriptures.

Ezekiel 17:24	Luke 23:31
<p>²⁴ All the trees of the forest will know that I the LORD bring down the tall tree and make the low tree grow tall. I dry up the green tree and make the dry tree flourish.</p> <p>“I the LORD have spoken, and I will do it.”</p> <p>This was speaking metaphorically of the nation of Israel and its leadership.</p>	<p>³¹ For if people do these things when the tree is green, what will happen when it is dry?”</p> <p>Christ was speaking to the daughters of Jerusalem at His crucifixion, and warning them of what was to come. Again, He did it by way of a metaphor or parable, basically meaning if people do these things when times are good, what is it going to be like when times are bad?</p>

The blazing flame will not be quenched, and every face from south to north will be scorched by it.

48 Everyone will see that I the LORD have kindled it; it will not be quenched.”

49 Then I said, “Sovereign LORD, they are saying of me, ‘Isn’t he just telling parables?’”^[a]

Footnotes:

1. **Ezekiel 20:49** In Hebrew texts 20:45-49 is numbered 21:1-5.

The people hearing these prophecies accused the prophet of just telling parables---they didn’t take him seriously. As I thought about this “fire,” I at first thought about the fires in our northwest that are burning all kinds of trees. And I pondered whether they are like

Acts 12:20-24

Herod's Death

Then Herod went from Judea to Caesarea and stayed there.²⁰ He had been quarreling with the people of Tyre and Sidon; they now joined together and sought an audience with him. After securing the support of Blastus, a trusted personal servant of the king, they asked for peace, because they depended on the king's country for their food supply.

²¹ On the appointed day Herod, wearing his royal robes, sat on his throne and delivered a public address to the people.²² They shouted, "This is the voice of a god, not of a man."

²³ **Immediately, because Herod did not give praise to God, an angel of the Lord struck him down, and he was eaten by worms and died.**

²⁴ But the word of God continued to spread and flourish.

"destructions" God historically has rendered before, from the flood to the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah.

But as I studied the chapter, I determined that in this case, it is indeed a parable of the complete destruction that was to come to Judah. And I noted that God did get involved with all the nations peripherally involved with His people.

Does God get involved today? As we pray and say "where are you in all this," is there a possibility that at least some of the things that happen definitely have God's involvement in ways that may no longer be politically correct to mention?

The same God that smote Herod for taking glory in a speech for himself and not giving glory to God and possibly for nearly killing Peter and arresting Christians (Acts 12, see sidebar) is still around today.

I do know this. God did definitely get involved in joining this world in its suffering in Christ. And He's suffering with us until we reach the fullness of His desires for us today.

And I like the way the Acts 12 story ends:

"the word of God continued to spread . . . and flourish."