

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

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Ezekiel 21 Part 1²

As I was pondering this chapter, I thought about the “mess” God chose to be a part of when He decided to give being to us! He knew, from the outset, that to truly give us true freedom to “be” as He is, our capacity to choose evil had to be part of the equation. And boy, have we! And boy, what awful things He’s had to endure on our behalf. No wonder, when God revealed Himself in Christ, He revealed Himself as a baby, a zealous fully human human, and bloody pulp on the cross. God has had to endure so much on our behalf!

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.)

Genesis 4 NIV

4 Now Abel kept flocks, and Cain worked the soil.
3 In the course of time Cain brought some of the fruits of the soil as an offering to the LORD. 4 And Abel also brought an offering—fat portions from some of the firstborn of his flock. The LORD looked with favor on Abel and his offering, 5 but on Cain and his offering he did not look with favor. So Cain was very angry, and his face was downcast.

6 Then the LORD said to Cain, **“Why are you angry? Why is your face downcast?”** 7 If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must rule over it.”

8 Now Cain said to his brother Abel, “Let’s go out to the field.”^[d] While they were in the field, Cain attacked his brother Abel and killed him.

9 Then the LORD said to Cain, “Where is your brother Abel?” “I don’t know,” he replied. “Am I my brother’s keeper?”

10 The LORD said, “What have you done? Listen! **Your brother’s blood cries out to me from the ground.**”

Ezekiel 21 New International Version (NIV)

Babylon as God’s Sword of Judgment

21 ^[a]The word of the LORD came to me: 2 “Son of man, set your face against Jerusalem and preach against the sanctuary.

The Hebrew actually says preach against “their” sanctuaries. It could also mean places set apart for idols. Judah had a boat load of them at this point. We do too!

Prophesy against the land of Israel 3 and say to her: ‘This is what the LORD says: I am against you. I will draw my sword from its sheath and cut off from you both the righteous and the wicked. 4 Because I am going to cut off the righteous and the wicked, my sword will be unsheathed against everyone from south to north. 5 Then all people will know that I the LORD have drawn my sword from its sheath; it will not return again.’

This is what I referred to in the introduction. Did God want to be “killing” people! No! He hates bloodshed. Look at the sidebar, at the way He reacted to Cain murdering his brother. God said “Your brother’s blood cries out to me from the ground!” God hates this stuff. Yet He was willing to endure death, participate in its facilitation, and most of all yield to it for us all in His Son! The things we’ve made God go through!

6 “Therefore groan, son of man! Groan before them with broken heart and bitter grief. 7 And when they ask you, ‘Why are you groaning?’ you shall say, ‘Because of the news that is coming. Every heart will melt with fear and every hand go limp; every spirit will become faint and every leg will be wet with urine.’

When I think of the parable of life that this could represent, I think of being a senior citizen. I don’t want to because I don’t want to believe I am one, but I am. And when the “enemy” of death begins attacking at the gate, well, incontinence is part of the package. Thank God for Depends.

It is coming! It will surely take place, declares the Sovereign LORD.”

8 The word of the LORD came to me: 9 “Son of man, prophesy and say, ‘This is what the Lord says:

“A sword, a sword,
sharpened and polished—
¹⁰ sharpened for the slaughter,
polished to flash like lightning!

Ok, this is a cool factoid. The NIV study bible says this is a sword song---possibly accompanied by dancing or symbolic actions. Such songs may have been sung by warriors about to go into battle.

“Shall we rejoice in the scepter of my royal son?

Apparently this refers to the reigning king in Jerusalem, considered God’s “royal son.”

The sword despises every such stick.

I’m guessing the “stick” refers to the scepter. And the “sword” of Nebuchadnezzar, and it’s power, is apparently contemptuous of this royal “stick.” It has no regard for it!

¹¹ “The sword is appointed to be polished,
to be grasped with the hand;
it is sharpened and polished,
made ready for the hand of the slayer.

That would be Nebuchadnezzar.

¹² Cry out and wail, son of man,
for it is against my people;
it is against all the princes of Israel.
They are thrown to the sword
along with my people.
Therefore beat your breast.

I have never beaten my breast. I’ve wanted to pound my temples sometimes. Maybe that’s the closest I’ve come to a physically dramatic emotional expression of grief. I did try to rip my t-shirt apart one time with my hands (like they used to rend their garments). But the seams were sewn so strong (or, I’m such a weakling) I couldn’t rip them. A futile gesture. But funny.

¹³ “Testing will surely come. And what if even the scepter, which the sword despises, does not continue? declares the Sovereign LORD.’

Ha. I was right. The sword did despise the scepter. Or the stick, should I say.

**2 Samuel 1:18 New
International Version (NIV)**

¹⁸ and he ordered that the people of Judah be taught this lament of the bow (it is written in the Book of Jashar):

The Hebrew says David is “dirging,” which basically means to mourn to music.

⁵ Jonah had gone out and sat down at a place east of the city. There he made himself a shelter, sat in its shade and waited to see what would happen to the city. ⁶ Then the LORD God provided a leafy plant and made it grow up over Jonah to give shade for his head to ease his discomfort, and Jonah was very happy about the plant. ⁷ But at dawn the next day God provided a worm, which chewed the plant so that it withered. ⁸ When the sun rose, God provided a scorching east wind, and the sun blazed on Jonah's head so that he grew faint. He wanted to die, and said, "It would be better for me to die than to live."⁹ But God said to Jonah, "Is it right for you to be angry about the plant?"

"It is," he said. "And **I'm so angry I wish I were dead.**"

God used this prophet even in spite of his stubborn attitude. And I read one source that said God used this anger to arouse Jonah back to healthy emotions, including compassion for people.

¹⁴ "So then, son of man, prophesy and strike your hands together.

Let the sword strike twice, even three times.

It is a sword for slaughter— a sword for great slaughter, closing in on them from every side.

¹⁵ So that hearts may melt with fear and the fallen be many,

You know, sometimes we become so emotionally calloused, maybe it takes something like this to get our attention and warm us back up again. Start with fear, go to contrition, etc. Maybe that's why God let Jonah get mad at the death of a plant---to bring the burned out and reluctant prophet back to life.

I have stationed the sword for slaughter^[b] at all their gates.

Look! It is forged to strike like lightning, it is grasped for slaughter.

¹⁶ Slash to the right, you sword, then to the left, wherever your blade is turned.

¹⁷ I too will strike my hands together, and my wrath will subside.

I the LORD have spoken."

God can and does get mad. And His wrath, when He chooses to exercise it, must subside.
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Ok. So now let's look at life from the perspective of King Nebuchadnezzar.

¹⁸ The word of the LORD came to me: ¹⁹ "Son of man, mark out two roads for the sword of the king of Babylon to take, both starting from the same country. Make a signpost where the road branches off to the city. ²⁰ Mark out one road for the sword to come against Rabbah of the Ammonites and another against Judah and fortified Jerusalem. ²¹ For the king of Babylon will stop at the fork in the road, at the junction of the two roads, to seek an omen: He will cast lots with arrows, he will consult his idols, he will examine the liver.

Apparently that's what they used to do back in the day. NIV study Bible says this:

"Divination with arrows, for the purpose of seeking good omens for the campaign---a practice not elsewhere mentioned in the Bible. Apparently arrows were labeled (e.g., "Rabbah," "Jerusalem"), placed in a quiver, and drawn out, one with hand. Right-hand

selection was seen as a good omen. . . household idols were small enough to fit into a saddle . . . Looking at the color and configurations of sheep livers to foretell the future was common in ancient Babylonia and Rome, but the practice is not mentioned elsewhere in the Bible.

²² Into his right hand will come the lot for Jerusalem, where he is to set up battering rams, to give the command to slaughter, to sound the battle cry, to set battering rams against the gates, to build a ramp and to erect siege works. ²³ It will seem like a false omen to those who have sworn allegiance to him, but he will remind them of their guilt and take them captive.

The people in Jerusalem who have sworn allegiance will see this as a false omen.

²⁴ “Therefore this is what the Sovereign LORD says: ‘Because you people have brought to mind your guilt by your open rebellion, revealing your sins in all that you do—because you have done this, you will be taken captive.

God talks about “revealing” your sins by an action. In other words, the sin is there in the heart, but it’s revealed by an action. Does that apply to taking the forbidden fruit?

²⁵ “‘You profane and wicked prince of Israel, whose day has come, whose time of punishment has reached its climax, ²⁶ this is what the Sovereign LORD says: Take off the turban, remove the crown. It will not be as it was: The lowly will be exalted and the exalted will be brought low.

²⁷ A ruin! A ruin! I will make it a ruin! The crown will not be restored until he to whom it rightfully belongs shall come; to him I will give it.’

That, by the way, would be Jesus. God has enough with human attempts to save themselves by their Tree of Knowledge approach!

²⁸ “And you, son of man, prophesy and say, ‘This is what the Sovereign LORD says about the Ammonites and their insults:

“‘A sword, a sword,
drawn for the slaughter,
polished to consume
and to flash like lightning!

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.

³⁰ “‘Let the sword return to its sheath.
In the place where you were created,
in the land of your ancestry,
I will judge you.

Another Messianic prophecy.

Genesis 49:10 (NIV)

¹⁰ The scepter will not depart from Judah,
nor the ruler’s staff from
between his feet,^[a]
until he to whom it belongs^[b] shall
come
and the obedience of the nations
shall be his.

Footnotes:

1. **Genesis 49:10** Or *from his descendants*
2. **Genesis 49:10** Or *to whom tribute belongs*; the meaning of the Hebrew for this phrase is uncertain.

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.

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.”

Footnotes:

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.

Wow. God was going to punish the whole lot of them. And He did! Blessed be the name of the Lord. I don't think He enjoyed this either. He has no pleasure in the death of the wicked. (See chapter 18). But sometimes it's apparently necessary.