

**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)**

<sup>27</sup>To 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 31<sup>2</sup>**

Ok. So we’re going to the mountains. And we’re going to enjoy real forests in the vicinity of Asheville, North Carolina. This Scripture says a lot about a lofty tree, used as a metaphor for a nation that had gotten too arrogant. It seems God thoroughly enjoys giving us blessings. But He really jumps on arrogance. And will see that it’s cut down. Why? God is not a petulant narcissistic ruler who just wants everyone to orbit around Him. It must be because it simply is bad for us, and keeps us from blessings. Let’s be blessed by enjoying the Scripture and learning from God today. Enjoy!

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<sup>2</sup> New International Version (NIV) Holy Bible, New International Version®, NIV® Copyright ©1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.® Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide. (Author’s note: This translation, and the source for many of the study notes that accompany it, are taken from The NIV Study Bible, Copyright 1985,1995, 2002, 2008, 2011 . These notes re referenced throughout and paraphrased frequently in the notes.)

## Ezekiel 31 (NIV)



1 – In the eleventh year, on the third month, on the first day of the month, the word of the Lord came to me:

**June 21, 587 B.C. according to NIV study Bible. The 9<sup>th</sup> date in Ezekiel.**

“Son of man, say to Pharaoh king of Egypt, and to his hordes:

“Who can be compared to you in your majesty”

**The pictures above are just a few depictions of this ancient nation’s majesty. It was even far greater than these pictures depict. I can’t**

**help but think of the Scripture that speaks of “all the kingdoms of the world” and their “authority” and “splendor” in Luke when Satan was tempting Jesus, and how he related to Jesus that these things had been given to him. He also said he could give it to whoever he wanted. That included people like Hitler. “Thy Kingdom come.”**

### **Back to Ezekiel.**

“Consider Assyria, once a cedar in Lebanon, with beautiful branches overshadowing the forest: it towered on high, its top above the thick foliage.”

“The deep waters nourished it, deep springs made it grow tall; their streams flowed all around its base and sent their channels to all the trees of the field.”

**There is a Scripture in Acts that reads this way: “From one man He made all the nations, that they should inhabit the whole earth. And He marked out their appointed times in history and the boundaries of their lands.” (Acts 17:26) So for a period of time, I read the Scripture in Ezekiel to say God nurtured and nourished Assyria, and its streams fed other streams (and hence other trees, or peoples, as well). Acts 17:27 God appointed “their times” and the “boundaries of their lands” so they might seek Him and perhaps reach out and find Him.” Egypt is having its attention directed to another mighty nation, Assyria. It, like Egypt, was an “empire” inspiring nation.**

**I’m going to switch to the CLV version so I don’t have to keyboard every verse of the Scripture. Becky is driving and letting me do Bible study, and I don’t have internet to access.**

[CLV Ezk 31:5 - Ezk 31:18](#)

5 Therefore, its stature was loftier<sup>f</sup> than all the trees of the field, And its forking branches<sup>l</sup> increased, And its foliage grew<sup>l</sup> long from the<sup>mn</sup> abundant water, in its sending<sup>r</sup> forth.

**This translation is closer to the literal, and it's quite poetic. "Forking branches" increasing. Foilage. Abundant water. Its "sending forth."**

6 In its forked branches nested every flyer of the heavens, And every animal of the field gave birth under its foliage, <sup>+</sup>While all the <sup>mn</sup>great nations <sup>l</sup>dwelt in its shade.

**I like the concept of "Flyers" rather than birds. They were what they did in that language. Nations dwelt "in its shade." Again, God provided shade for the other nations through Assyria.**

7 <sup>+</sup> It was <sup>l</sup>lovely in its greatness, In the length of its branches, For its roots <sup>b</sup>reached to many waters.

**No roots, no fruits. The Bible tells us to be deeply rooted in Jesus.**

8 Even the cedars in the garden of Elohim, they could not match it, Firs were not like it <sup>ʻ</sup>in its forked branches, And plane trees <sup>b</sup>were not like it in foliage; Of all the trees in the garden of Elohim none was like <sup>ʻ</sup> it in its loveliness.

**So cool. The garden of Eden is referenced. The garden of Elohim. And God takes credit for Assyria.**

9 I <sup>d</sup>made it lovely <sup>i</sup>with the multitude of its branches. And all the trees of Eden were <sup>l</sup>jealous of it <sup>w</sup> in the garden of Elohim.

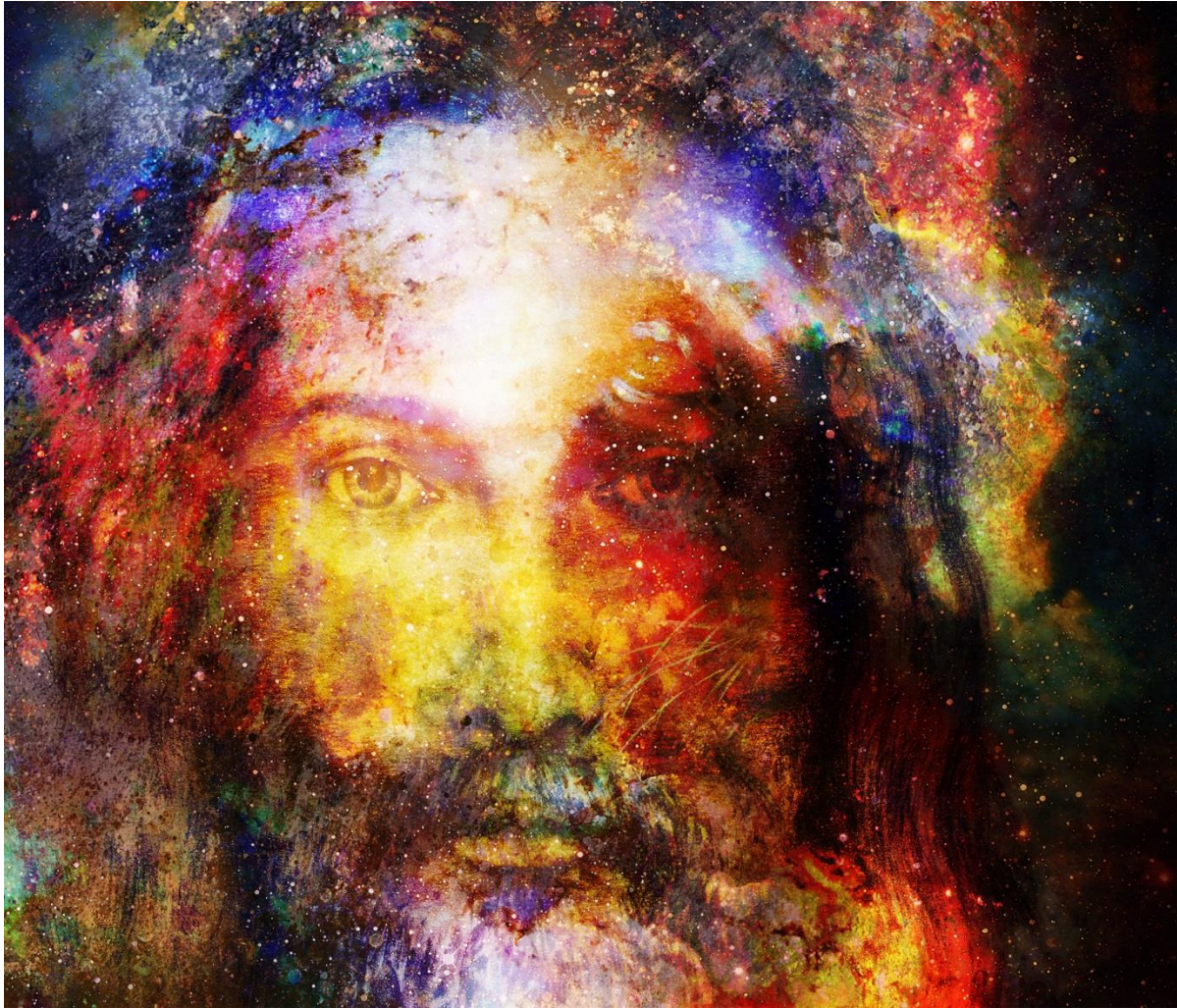
**I love the way the Bible, rather God, ascribes to trees "personifications." The ability to be "personal," to express emotion. What if they really do have that**

(CLV) Col 2:7

having been rooted <sup>~</sup> and being built <sup>~</sup> up in Him, and being confirmed <sup>~</sup> in the faith according as you were taught, superabounding in it <sup>i</sup>with thanksgiving.



ability, because they are extensions of the cosmic Christ? How cool.



Cosmic Christ Vivid dreamstime\_m\_77894733 (1).jpg

10 Therefore, thus says my Lord Yahweh: Because <sup>w</sup> <sup>Sy</sup>it<sup>~c</sup> became lofty in stature, and is <sup>g</sup>lifting up its wooly foliage <sup>›</sup> <sup>bt</sup>among the leafy trees, and its heart is raised high in its loftiness,

**Aha! It's nemesis. "Its heart is raised high in its loftiness." Heart in Hebrew is the most "internal" of the organs, and considered the center of the will and feelings.**

11 <sup>+</sup> I shall give it into the hand of the subjector of nations to do what he shall do <sup>›</sup>with it; according to its wickedness I will drive it out.

**Ohh. I wonder what the "subjector" of the nations means! It could be one of the kings of Babylon. But what if its Satan? Or both? Interesting.**

12 <sup>+</sup> Aliens<sup>l</sup>, the terrifying nations, shall cut it down, and they shall abandon it <sup>›</sup>on the mountains. <sup>+</sup> Its branches will fall into every ravine, and its foliage shall be

broken in all the channels of the earth. <sup>+</sup>Then all the peoples of the earth shall go down from its shade and abandon it.

**God destroyed Babel for man's pride. Now this nation, rooted in the system that sprang from Babel (was rooted in it) will go down too. It's a story that repeats itself over and over.**

13 On its fallen trunk every flyer of the heavens shall roost, and every animal of the field will <sup>b</sup>stay <sup>ʿ</sup>upon its foliage,

14 that <sup>w</sup> none of all the trees by the waters may be <sup>l</sup>lofty in their stature, nor <sup>l</sup>g<sup>l</sup>lift up <sup>»</sup>their wooly foliage <sup>»</sup><sup>bt</sup>among the leafy trees, nor shall all that drink <sup>l</sup>of the waters stand up <sup>7</sup>by them <sup>~</sup>in their loftiness. For all of them will be given up to death, to the nether parts of the earth in the midst of sons of humanity, to descenders <sup>l</sup>to the crypt.

**Apparently the other "trees" (nations) were to learn something from this. Other translations say that other trees might not reach their tops to the "heavens," which is apparently what the builder of Babel wanted to do, and actually Adam and Eve in taking the "tree of knowledge," attempting to become "like" God knowing good and evil.**

15 Thus says my Lord Yahweh: In the day it descends <sup>-</sup>to <sup>d</sup>the unseen I will <sup>c</sup>inflict mourning:

**So this is cool too. Above they are "descenders" to the Crypt. In this verse they descend to the unseen.**

### **Crypt**

**H953** bowr bore

from **H952** (in the sense of **H877**);

a pit hole (especially one used as a cistern or a prison).

### **The Unseen.**

**H7585** sh'owl sheh-ole'

or shol {sheh-ole'};

from **H7592**; Hades or the world of the dead (as if a subterranean retreat), including its accessories and inmates.

On its account I will cover <sup>»</sup>the abyss,

**What is the abyss?**

**H8415** thowm teh-home'

or thom {teh-home'};

(usually feminine) from **H1949**; an abyss (as a surging mass of water), especially the deep (the main sea or the subterranean water-supply).

**The people of those days visualized the earth as arising out of, or maybe on top of, the primeval chaos of surging water and endless depths. Maybe that does describe “pre-existence” and the “chaos” that rose to destroy creation at the outset, where God said “let there be light” to counter it.**

and I shall withhold its streams, and the vast waters shall be shut up; <sup>+</sup> on its account I shall <sup>c</sup>make Lebanon somber, and on its account all the trees of the field <sup>7</sup>will swoon <sup>~</sup>.

16 <sup>f</sup>At the sound of its fall I will <sup>c</sup>make the nations quake <sup>i</sup>when I <sup>c</sup>bring <sup>»</sup>it down <sup>~</sup> to <sup>d</sup>the unseen <sup>»</sup>with descenders <sup>l</sup>to the crypt; and in the nether parts of the earth all the trees of Eden, the choicest and best of Lebanon, all that drink <sup>l</sup>of the waters shall be comforted.

**They won't be jealous anymore.**

17 They <sup>/mr</sup>also will descend <sup>»</sup>with it to <sup>d</sup>the unseen, to those <sup>wd</sup>slain by the sword and its armed force; they will dwell in its shade in the midst of the nations.

18 To <sup>a</sup>whom are you like, thus in glory and in greatness <sup>i</sup>among the trees of Eden? You <sup>+</sup>also will be <sup>c</sup>brought down <sup>»</sup>with the trees of Eden to the nether parts of the earth; In the midst of the uncircumcised shall you lie <sup>»</sup>with those <sup>wd</sup>slain by the sword. This is Pharaoh and all his throng, averring is my Lord Yahweh.

**In the midst of the “uncircumcised,” probably here meaning “uncouth, barbarians.”**

**What does “averring” mean?**

**“An oracle,” the literal translation tool I use says. It comes from a root word meaning “to whisper.” That makes sense. A “secret” told you by God!**

**God bless!**

