

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 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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JEREMIAH 41²

Jeremiah 41 is about two things---the murder by Ishmael of the Babylonian-appointed leader of the remnant of Judah, Gedeliah, and the ultimate act of rebellion the people of God committed. They decided to return to Egypt, the land of their slavery. This was something God had specifically prohibited at their outset. It

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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.)

depicts a tendency we'll all have embedded in our "dark side" until we're resurrected by the Lord with new flesh. Our "fallen" flesh will always have the ability to default to life in the land that doesn't live with God at the center, a life of slavery to various things, symbolized in the Bible both by Babylon, and specifically by the land of Egypt, where God shows humanity lives like slaves. It's only in God that we're truly free. Let's study the passage, and apply its lesson to our lives today.

Jeremiah 41 New International Version (NIV)

41 In the seventh month Ishmael son of Nethaniah, the son of Elishama, who was of royal blood and had been one of the king's officers, came with ten men to Gedaliah son of Ahikam at Mizpah.

Note: The NIV study bible brings out an excellent point. It states that Ishmael was of royal blood, and perhaps extremely loyal to Judah's last king, Zedekiah, and that as a result, thought he was the only legitimate heir to the throne. He was living with the people of Ammon, who themselves chafed under Babylonian rule and may have manipulated him to have such designs. The name of the King of Ammon mentioned earlier in the Bible (Balis) has been discovered in archaeological records from the time, thus upholding the legitimacy of the Bible's accounting.

While they were eating together there,

Note: Eating together was an ancient custom of respect and hospitality. It was held in high esteem even in New Testament times.

After deceiving naïve Gedaliah with this act of fraternity, look at what they do.

But now I am writing to you that you must not associate with anyone who claims to be a brother or sister but is sexually immoral or greedy, an idolater or slanderer, a drunkard or swindler. Do not even eat with such people. (1 Cor 5:11)

² Ishmael son of Nethaniah and the ten men who were with him got up and struck down Gedaliah son of Ahikam, the son of Shaphan, with the sword, killing the one whom the king of Babylon had appointed as governor over the land. ³ Ishmael also killed all the men of Judah who were with Gedaliah at Mizpah, as well as the Babylonian^[a] soldiers who were there.

Note: This was a calculated biblical act of destruction.

⁴ The day after Gedaliah's assassination, before anyone knew about it, ⁵ eighty men who had shaved off their beards, torn their clothes and cut themselves came from Shechem, Shiloh and Samaria, bringing grain offerings and incense with them to the house of the LORD.

Note: These actions (shaving off their beards tearing their clothes, cutting themselves) were signs of mourning, perhaps over the destruction of Jerusalem. They were bringing sacrifices to the Lord in the seventh month, which was the time of annual Tabernacles

festival. The three cities mentioned had been former worship centers, so it's not surprising that devoted followers of the Lord would be coming from there.

⁶ Ishmael son of Nethaniah went out from Mizpah to meet them, weeping as he went. When he met them, he said, "Come to Gedaliah son of Ahikam."

Note: Ishmael is lying. He's really a treacherous person. Not only is he pretending Gedaliah is still alive, he's pretending sorrow too. This man was opportunistic and was making a power grab. Have you ever been deceived in order to be "trapped" and caught unawares? It happens, and it's sad when it does. But the Lord delivers! I know this from personal experience.

⁷ When they went into the city, Ishmael son of Nethaniah and the men who were with him slaughtered them and threw them into a cistern.



Ancient cisterns in Tunisia. Critical for water storage in ancient towns.
| Dreamstime.com

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Note: How awful and bloody. The Bible is honest historically, and about the brutality of man.

⁸ But ten of them said to Ishmael, "Don't kill us! We have wheat and barley, olive oil and honey, hidden in a field." So he let them alone and did not kill them with the others. ⁹ Now the cistern where he threw all the bodies of the men he had killed along with Gedaliah was the one King Asa had made as part of his defense against Baasha king of Israel. Ishmael son of Nethaniah filled it with the dead.

¹⁰ Ishmael made captives of all the rest of the people who were in Mizpah—the king’s daughters along with all the others who were left there, over whom Nebuzaradan commander of the imperial guard had appointed Gedaliah son of Ahikam. Ishmael son of Nethaniah took them captive and set out to cross over to the Ammonites.

¹¹ When Johanan son of Kareah and all the army officers who were with him heard about all the crimes Ishmael son of Nethaniah had committed, ¹² they took all their men and went to fight Ishmael son of Nethaniah. They caught up with him near the great pool in Gibeon. ¹³ When all the people Ishmael had with him saw Johanan son of Kareah and the army officers who were with him, they were glad. ¹⁴ All the people Ishmael had taken captive at Mizpah turned and went over to Johanan son of Kareah. ¹⁵ But Ishmael son of Nethaniah and eight of his men escaped from Johanan and fled to the Ammonites.



Genesis 2 (NIV)

2² By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested from all his work. ³ Then God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested. . .

Matthew 11:28 (NIV)

²⁸ “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.

John 10:7,9 (KJV)

⁷ . . . I am the door of the sheep. . .
⁹ I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture.

Note: Political intrigue, rebellion and dissension. So far from the peaceable kingdom the Lord wanted for humanity, when God rested after creation and man and nature and God were all in harmony and peace! What will it take to get us back there? We can all walk through the door of the Lord, who is our shepherd. And we can be there in an instant.

Or, we can try to save ourselves by going back to Egypt.

Like they did!

Flight to Egypt

¹⁶ Then Johanan son of Kareah and all the army officers who were with him led away all the people of Mizpah who had survived, whom Johanan had recovered from Ishmael son of Nethaniah after Ishmael had assassinated Gedaliah son of Ahikam—the soldiers, women, children and court officials he had recovered from Gibeon. ¹⁷ And they went on, stopping at Geruth Kimham near Bethlehem on their way to Egypt ¹⁸ to escape the Babylonians.^[b] They were afraid of them because Ishmael son of Nethaniah had killed Gedaliah son of Ahikam, whom the king of Babylon had appointed as governor over the land.

Footnotes:

1. **Jeremiah 41:3** Or *Chaldean*
2. **Jeremiah 41:18** Or *Chaldeans*

Over and over and over again, we live by the tree of “our” knowledge---our ability to perceive! And over and over and over again, we take matters into our own hands. And it results in disaster.