

20 September 1994, Evening Sacrifice

Lodge, S

Strenuous Devotion

We were reading the other day concerning how we are to love our Master. It has to do with our heart, soul, mind, and strength.

ha-emeq — I said that when our Master gave us the commandment which He said was the greatest of the commandments, it was that you should love the Lord your God with all of your heart and soul and mind, and if He had just said that much, we could have all sat around and meditated all day long and just relaxed and thought about things and been real "spiritual." But then He added, "with all your strength" — love Him with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength. *Strength* means that feeling that just floods through your body when you wake up in the morning, that is pulsating through your whole body and you're supposed to use every bit of strength that you have to love Him with. So that means what you do all day long. Every time you use some strength to do anything, that strength belongs to our Father. All of our strength belongs to Him. So we need to use all of our strength in order to obey the commandment to love Him. So it takes it out of the mystical, airy realm and into the physical realm of doing something all day long, six days a week, working by the sweat of your brow and then using all your strength on the seventh day to rest.

In Acts 26 Paul was speaking to the king and first he says, "And now it is because of my hope that God will keep the promise He made to our fathers that I am on trial here today." That's what happened when he was doing what he was doing, speaking the way he was speaking — he got in trouble for it and they brought him before the king and he had to go even to Rome. So he was hoping for something — a resurrection. (Why do you think it's such an incredible thing that God raises someone from the dead?) We can look at that as an individual resurrection, but I'd rather look at it as the hope that the twelve tribes being established in this age would bring about the next age. And when we put all of our Master's enemies under His feet then He will return, because that is what He is waiting for. That is the only thing. He is seated, waiting for the time when His people will fervently worship him night and day — with all their strength. Here it says *strenuous devotion*; another translation is *fervently worshipping Him night and day*, giving Him everything a person has in serving. Some say *servicing*; some say *worship* — it is the same thing. Service has to do with your strength and the strength that He supplies for us to worship Him by.

In 1 Pet 4:11 it speaks about strength that He supplies in order to serve Him, to worship Him. And if it's not by His strength, there is no way that we can keep that greatest commandment to love him with all of our heart and all of our souls and all of our mind and all of our strength. It has to do with serving him and how we serve him — the work that He created for us to do, the deeds he foreordained for us. Even before the foundation of the world he decided, in council (Eph 1:11) who He was going to choose and who not. Because he saw us willing to do His will, He chose us. Most people in the world don't want to do His will. There are only a few, a remnant of people left today who are willing to do His will. Whether or not they do it, I don't know, but at least a few are willing. Then we need His grace to do His will. We have to serve by His strength so that in all things He may be glorified.

So Paul was talking to the king here: "...and now it is because of my hope — my hope is that God will keep the promise that He made to our fathers — that I stand before you today on trial. It is the very hope that the twelve tribes of Israel are striving to attain to by worshipping God with strenuous devotion night and day." And we know from Mal 1:11 that from the rising of the sun to the setting His name will be great through a people who worship Him with all their heart and soul and strength. There is no other way to love Him but with our heart and soul. You can't love Him by just praying all day. You can if you're praying for His purpose to be done and His will. We have to also be devoted to prayer, and serving. That is one of the highest forms of serving — prayer.

"So it is for cherishing this hope, your majesty, that I am accused. And my accusers are Jews." Certainly he cannot be talking about the Jewish nation worshipping God night and day, for this is the *present tense* worshipping Him. In verse 7 it's certainly not the Jews worshipping Him; they were not twelve tribes and hadn't been for 500 years or more. They weren't worshipping Him night and day because their nation had been taken away from them. They'd been scattered to Assyria and Babylon — because they weren't worshipping God night and day, fervently with their heart and soul and mind and strength. Paul was talking about something else, for the Jews were those who were persecuting him.

He was talking about the church in the early days of the first century, who obviously were worshipping God in twelve tribes. Even James 1:1 speaks about twelve tribes. Eph 2:12 talks about the common-wealth, the nation of Israel, the new nation, the spiritual Israel, and we know that our Master spoke of this in Mt 21:43 when He told the Jews, "I'm going to take the kingdom away from you and give it to a nation who will worship Me night and day, who will render Me the service that I'm worthy of, who will produce the fruit that the kingdom is supposed to produce, the kingdom of people worshipping night and day, fervently, strenuously, using their strength."

So understand, that is what Paul was on trial for because that is what he was doing. He was wanting to offer to God the twelve tribes, the servant that was chosen to raise up, to bring back, scattered Israelites who had been scattered all over the world. Only a remnant will return. We are part of that remnant, that beginning.

Paul was talking about raising the dead of national Israel in order to fulfill the promise that God made to Abraham back in Gen 15:18 that He would give the Israelites all the land that He had promised them. But He has not yet been able to keep it. Israel has only a tiny portion of the land they were promised. They were to route out the enemies, but did not. Isa 49:6 — you see what they will do in order to bring about the hope of national resurrection to Israel in the next age — the promised land. Isa 49:6-8 tells the whole story of the desolate inheritances that will be restored to Israel through the work of the twelve tribes, the holy nation of God, the nation that takes the place of old Israel, the new nation, the spiritual Israel that our Father has raised up in His time, a special kind of people.

We claim to be Israel, which we are, but we are doing a work for Israel that they can't do because they won't allow the Holy Spirit to come into their hearts. They are not willing to do God's will. But we are willing to do God's will so we're called Israel today in order that Israel in the next age would exist on the very land promised to Abraham, Gen 15:18. If we raise our children right, if we command our household as it says in Gen 18:19, if we keep the way of the Sovereign YAHSHUA, then He'll give to Abraham what He promised Him — finally, at the

sound of the yobel. And then the land goes back to Israel, the physical descendants of Abraham, the national Israel, and we will reign with Messiah for a thousand years over the nations.

So what are we doing? Well, we are doing the work that natural Israel cannot do. We're doing the spiritual work, putting all of our Master's enemies under His feet. He's had them for 6000 years, those enemies. You know those enemies. You brought them in, didn't you? That's what we have to put under His feet. You were faced with them today, weren't you? What were they? Pride — you name it; we've got them all. That's what's got to be put under His feet, Heb 10:13. That's why we have circumcised hearts. That's why we circumcise our children after eight days, as a sign of the hope. We are breathing for that hope. Put Gen 15:18 with Gen 17:7-8 and 18:19 and Isa 49:8 and Acts 26:7 — it has to be restored. That's why we pray night and day, for the twelve tribes to come forth so that we can all perfectly serve Him from the rising of the sun to the setting. That's why we're living. That's why our Father has gathered us, so the day will come when our Master will come back and establish the twelve tribes of Israel in the land that He promised Abraham. That is why we are standing here today — for the hope.

Paul went ahead and died, got killed, never got to fulfill that. But we know that he is a part of the cloud of witnesses today, watching. He is witness to what goes on here every day. He's a witness of our zeal, of our strenuous devotion. He wasn't able to do it, but he gave us the word to help us do it. This is what our Master desires. Our Father would have to be cut in two (Jer 34:18; Gen 15:18) if this promise wasn't fulfilled. But he believed that sooner or later there would be a people that He would raise up that would love Him enough to give Him the strenuous devotion night and day that would fulfill the promise. Gen 17:7-8 — We raise them up to have a pure, sensitive heart so that our Father could keep His promise to Abraham. It has to be twelve tribes. It cannot be eleven or six. He chose twelve. When Judas fell, they had to get someone else.

[Someone asked if Mattias was going to sit on a throne ruling over the twelve tribes of Israel and Paul wouldn't.]

Mk 10:38 — "Can you pass through the bitter experience which I must pass through? Can you be submerged in the sea of troubles in which I must be submerged?" This is reserved for those it has been reserved for, who have been through the bitter experience that our Master had to go through. Paul had to go through more than anyone else, so it seems there is some place reserved for him, maybe even on our Master's right or left. Also Paul had a messenger of Satan who buffeted his body night and day (2 Cor 12:4-6). Our Father wouldn't take it away. He said, "My grace is sufficient for you. You're going to keep on having it." He wouldn't take it away.

So we go through little things, don't we? How hard it is. We go through small things.

You can see that what he wanted to do is restore the twelve tribes. The kingdom is twelve tribes. That was the nation that Paul was raising up (Mt 21:43). But you can't find it today. So now they have to be restored to what was in Paul's day. That's the restoration of all things. That is why we are fervently praying for Spain, Germany, and England. It is our Father's will for us to go to those three places.