

22 January 1993, Shabbat, Evening Sacrifice Brazil

### The Sufferings of Paul

[After our brothers encountered many circumstances in Sao Paulo, after picking up Chanowk from the airport, three days later they were finally on their way back and were due to arrive home at sundown on the Shabbat. Instead we received a telephone call from them saying that they were almost home, but one and a half hours away they got stopped by the police who would not let them go any further in the 'gazella' (the vehicle they were driving).] Yoneq spoke about the sufferings of Paul.

2 Cor 1:3-4 — "Praise be the God and Father of our Master YAHSHUA the Messiah, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort; who comforts us in all of our affliction so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God." So Paul knew what discomfort was. Our troubles, our momentary afflictions, are producing a far greater weight of glory. 2 Cor 4:7-12 — "We have this treasure, this light that is within us, in jars of clay (speaks of our bodies)..." It goes on about Paul's hardships in 2 Cor 6:3-10. And then in 2 Cor 11:23 it talks about impostors. So that is some of the suffering that Paul went through. What is it that we go through in our daily life that we can hardly endure. We may go through trouble but, compared to Paul, it's nothing. When our Master YAHSHUA called Paul into the ministry, He told him that he (Paul) would have to suffer greatly, so that the people in the church who remembered the hard time that Paul gave to them before, would never be a hindrance to them. Paul suffered, in his physical life, more than any other disciple. (He suffered more, even, than YAHSHUA did on earth. But YAHSHUA, alone, suffered the untold agonies of death for all men.)

So the light momentary affliction that we go through is hardly anything (2 Cor 4:16-18). So if you have been going through any kind of suffering, compare yourself with Paul. We have not yet come to the place of being able to take suffering to that extent.

We are going to see hardships like this [harassment by the police], but it produces a great weight of eternal glory for us if we receive it in the right frame of mind — if we won't lose heart because we know it is producing a great weight of glory for us. Then we will be identifying in the suffering of Messiah. Paul was making up for the lack. Our Master suffered, paying for our sins. Col 1:24 — We, collectively, correspond to His suffering. Some of us suffer more than others. Some make up for the lack in others who don't suffer but give in to sin. Paul says he makes up in his flesh what is lacking in Messiah's affliction. He doesn't mean that there is a deficiency in the atoning sacrifice of Messiah, but Paul suffered because of his ministry. Every last soul in Messiah suffers to some extent for Him. We could never suffer as much as Messiah. Even Paul could not, though he suffered greatly and Messiah told him that He would show him how much he had to suffer for His Name's sake. Acts 9:16, "...afflicted and endure and suffer for my names sake."

No one person can make up for the suffering of Messiah. That is why there is a fellowship of suffering for Him. There is a fellowship. That is why we love Him and one another.

Phil 3:8-10 — Paul is talking about the return of Messiah. In order to know Him when He returns, we have to fellowship in suffering. Our brothers' suffering hurts me — and you. When one suffers, we all suffer — if we have the same Spirit, if we belong to Messiah. We belong to a people who are a Body. When one part hurts, we all hurt. We hurt, we identify, we empathize, we sympathize — we belong to a fellowship, an eternal fellowship.

We are here to worship God who created the universe, who made everything in six days and rested on the seventh day. We gathered here tonight to rejoice, no matter what we went through

this week, as if we were already finished with our sufferings. We want Him to be King tonight in our lives. He is enthroned on the praises of Israel. And we are people who will go through anything, no matter what kind of hardship it is, for His sake and the sake of our brothers and sisters.

Let's give thanks for this marvelous day, looking forward to the future and forgetting the past. If we have been sharing in His suffering, we can count it all joy. Have you counted it joy when you suffer? When we say no, there is a shame that comes over us because we love our own life more than the fellowship of His suffering. When we count it as joy, we know we are maturing. When we come to a hard time and we start complaining, where are we? We are in the same place as the children of Israel were in the desert. We can see where we are at. (Phil 2:14,15) What if we don't get around to counting it all joy? (1 Pet 4:1-13) Are we happy when we are going through it? We have to learn to be happy while we are going through it. That is a discipline. That means we are coming to a place of maturity, being (2 Thess 1:5) worthy of the kingdom. We have to suffer hardship.

Are you suffering for the kingdom of God? Only disciples can suffer for it, and then, only mature disciples who are gaining the glory of Messiah. We gain, we progress. Later on we will experience greater and more suffering. We can look forward. We talked about Paul's suffering, but we don't know what suffering is. Our Savior was beaten beyond human recognition (Isa 52:14). If you see a nice picture of a man all neat and clean on the cross, that's not our savior. We don't know him. That's another Yahshua. We don't serve him. We serve the One who was beaten beyond recognition for our sins. We fellowship in His suffering. He took our affliction that we should have born. And not only that, He spent 72 hours in the center of the earth in agony. (Acts 2:24) That is what He went through. And we — all together — all the disciples in the 12 tribes can only equal His suffering.

If you are not suffering for Him, you don't have eternal life. I have eternal life. The eternal Spirit dwells in me and in you.

Phil 3:7-8 No matter what 'good' thing you have done, the pride of life is an evil thing. We have become new creatures.

If we are not in perfect unity when we lift our hands, we are hypocrites even if we don't say a word. It is impossible to remain in unity and perfect peace with your brother if you have not crucified your flesh, your self, the self you were before. We are going to obey the word and we are not going to be hypocrites, by His grace.

Our heart belongs to the commandments and we keep the Sabbath as a sign of the covenant that God made with His people and it is written in our hearts. It is the sign of the covenant. (Ex 31:12-18; 2 Cor 3:3; Dt 4:13; Ex 34:28).

When His Spirit came into our heart, He brought His wonderful law — His wonderful commandments. And the fourth of those commandments is keeping the Sabbath. If you know Messiah, you are going to obey Him and keep His commandment. Anyone who says (1 Jn 2:4) he knows Him, but is not keeping His commandments is a liar. Are you a liar? We are liars if we don't keep His commandments. We keep the Sabbath as a sign of who His people are and who are not. We welcome that seventh day of rest.