

Acts 26:7

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Unto which promise our twelve tribes, instantly serving God day and night, hope to come. For which hope's sake, king Agrippa, I am accused of the Jews.

Analysis

Unto which promise our twelve tribes, instantly serving God day and night, hope to come—Paul identifies himself with Israel's messianic hope, using dodekaphylon (δωδεκάφυλον, "twelve tribes") to emphasize the continuity between Israel and the church. The word en ekteneia (ἐν ἐκτενείᾳ, "instantly/earnestly") describes intense, continuous worship—the same root used of Jesus praying in agony (Luke 22:44). Paul's point is devastating: he is accused of believing what faithful Jews have always believed—resurrection and Messiah.

For which hope's sake, king Agrippa, I am accused of the Jews—The Greek peri hēs elpidos (περὶ ἣς ἐλπίδος, "concerning which hope") is emphatic. Paul faces persecution not for abandoning Judaism but for fulfilling it. The irony is sharp: those who claim to serve the God of Abraham now prosecute the one who proclaims Abraham's promises fulfilled in Christ (Galatians 3:16). This echoes Stephen's accusation that the religious establishment always resists the Holy Spirit (Acts 7:51).

Historical Context

Paul spoke these words circa AD 59-60 before Herod Agrippa II (great-grandson of Herod the Great) and the Roman governor Festus in Caesarea. Agrippa was considered an expert in Jewish customs (26:3), making him an ideal audience for Paul's argument. The "twelve tribes" language was still meaningful despite the

northern kingdom's exile—pious Jews maintained tribal identity and awaited national restoration.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. How does Paul's defense challenge the false dichotomy between Christianity and faithful Judaism?
2. What does it mean that the resurrection hope was central to ancient Jewish worship "day and night"—and should it be equally central to yours?

Interlinear Text

εἰς ἥς τὸ δωδεκάφυλον ἡμῶν ἐν ἐκτενείᾳ
Unto which G3588 twelve tribes promise our instantly G1616
G1519 G3739 G1429 G2257 G1722

νύκτα καὶ ἡμέραν λατρεῦον ἐλπίζει καταντῆσαι περὶ¹
night and God day serving hope to come For
G3571 G2532 G2250 G3000 G1679 G2658 G4012

ἥς ἐλπίδος ἐγκαλοῦμαι βασιλεῦ Ἀγρίππα ὑπὸ τῶν
which hope's sake I am accused king Agrippa of G3588
G3739 G1680 G1458 G935 G67 G5259

Ἰουδαίων
the Jews
G2453

Additional Cross-References

James 1:1 (References God): James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad, greeting.

1 Timothy 5:5 (References God): Now she that is a widow indeed, and desolate, trusteth in God, and continueth in supplications and prayers night and day.

1 Thessalonians 3:10 (Kingdom): Night and day praying exceedingly that we might see your face, and might perfect that which is lacking in your faith?

Philippians 3:11 (Parallel theme): If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.

Matthew 19:28 (Parallel theme): And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

Luke 22:30 (Kingdom): That ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

Ezra 6:17 (References God): And offered at the dedication of this house of God an hundred bullocks, two hundred rams, four hundred lambs; and for a sin offering for all Israel, twelve he goats, according to the number of the tribes of Israel.