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## "Because of the Blood of the Lamb" (1931)

*by T. Austin-Sparks*

*First published in "A Witness and A Testimony" magazine, Sep-Oct 1931, Vol. 9-5.*

*(A Message as Spoken)*

Reading: Zechariah 3:1-10; Revelation 12:1-12.

*"And they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb, and because of the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death."*

One clause of that verse sums up everything else and is sufficient - "because of the blood of the Lamb."

### **The Travail for the Man-Child**

Now first of all, beloved, I want to gather several things together which I believe represent the significance of that statement, that to which that statement belongs. I am one of those who believe (I do not ask you to believe it because I believe it, but I do ask you to go to the Lord with open hearts about it) that this man-child of this chapter represents a company of the Lord's people at the end-time who stand in a peculiar way in the fullness of the virtue and power of the blood of the Lord Jesus; and as we have often said, we believe that it is that people, that company, the man-child, that God is seeking to secure for Himself at this time in a special way; the thing upon which, in the midst of other things, He is peculiarly, particularly concerned to bring into being. It is a company called into a peculiar relationship to the Lord Himself for the fulfilment of a priestly ministry in relation to the universal kingdom of our God and His Christ - and I use the word "universal" there with care - not just an earthly aspect of that kingdom, but also the heavenly aspect. We must understand that there are two sides to the kingdom; there is the earthly side and there is the heavenly side. There will be

those who are in the earthly side who will not be in the heavenly side, but there will not be any in the heavenly side who are not in the earthly side. Get the heavenly side and you get both. This particular company, the man-child company, is, in the purpose of God, to be brought into relation to Him for the fulfilment of a priestly ministry in relation to the universal kingdom of our God and His Christ. A priestly ministry, in relation to the kingdom and the throne, the sovereignty universally of the Lord Jesus; an administrative instrument in heaven, to rule with Him from the heavens; the whole range of His dominion.

Let us call to mind an Old Testament illustration of this in the person of Samuel. You will remember that the birth of Samuel was impossible of realisation along the ordinary line of nature, but his mother Hannah entered into a spiritual travail concerning him. While in that spiritual travail, while before the Lord in strong crying and tears for this man-child the other wives of her husband laughed at her, sneered at her, looked down upon her. They had children she had none, she was despised; and then by a special intervention and act of God that spiritual travail was answered and Samuel was born. Born, on the one hand, out of travail in her soul, on the other hand, born out of a direct act of God in His Divine intervention where man was helpless, and nature was impotent. When Samuel was born and weaned he was presented in the Temple and you read that "Samuel ministered before the Lord, being clothed in a linen ephod," the priest's garment. You see the stages; he - you might say from birth, from infancy, without a lapse of years - immediately came into a priestly office. He was designed for that, brought into being for that. The travail was unto that. We have noticed that it says of Hannah that she weaned the child. Speaking of Sarah and Isaac it says that "when the child was weaned" - taking its course. Hannah did it as quickly as she could, it did not take its course, she did it to get him into this thing - the priestly ministry - as soon as could be got there. So that his very life from its beginning was marked by this priestly ministry and it was in relation to the throne and the kingdom - Samuel was the King-anointer, Samuel brought in the great King. His priestly ministry was in relation to the kingdom. He was the embodiment of that great phrase "kingdom and priests unto God."

Here is your type, a man-child. We have often said that women in the Bible represent spiritual principles, and Hannah represents the spiritual law of travail unto the specific purpose of God, and when you come to Revelation 12, you have a woman and into her there enters a spirit of travail, a spirit of travail comes in, as I believe, unto the bringing forth of this specific company, this remnant company, the man-child born out of that spirit of travail, that crying-out spirit, that anguish. Against that the Adversary is set, deadly set. Zech. 3 which we have read introduces these principles again in another historic setting. Joshua the high-priest is in person the embodiment of the priestly ministry of all Israel, that to be a Kingdom and Priests unto God, and the high-priest simply gathers up the whole priestly nation in his person, and Joshua is there seen as the figure-head of the priesthood in relation to the kingdom. The priesthood, the priestly ministry, the priestly vocation and calling is in a sorry state in Zechariah's day. You see Joshua clothed in filthy garments. That is the condition of things, and Satan - the adversary - standing at his right hand to be his adversary. The right hand is the place of power, and Satan is in the place of power because of the filthy garments, and accusing him before God. We will come on to that again in a few minutes - Satan in the place of power as an accuser of that which is meant to fulfil this priestly ministry in relation to the kingdom. Bringing these things together you are getting the background of spiritual principles, and you are seeing exactly what is in view in this chapter in Revelation. "And they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb."

### **The Power of the Blood is Primarily in its Incorruptibility**

What is the ground of victory? What is the basis of that ultimate triumph? By what means will God get His end? It says here "Because of the blood of the Lamb." That first of all, and I believe more than anything else, relates to the nature of the blood of the Lord Jesus. I mean the absolute sinlessness of the Lord Jesus in His essential life, in His essential nature. His absolute sinlessness. That His nature was altogether devoid of the slightest suspicion of corruption of sin, of defilement, of corruptibility. That is its strength, that is its power, that is its victory. Before you can understand the working of the blood of the Lord Jesus you have got to understand the absolute immunity from any suggestion of sin in the nature of the Lord Jesus. Sin was not found in Him. He was the "Lamb without spot or wrinkle or any such thing," and although He was born of a virgin, of a woman who was a member of Adam's race, by the direct activity and operation of the Holy Spirit there was a complete cutting in between Mary as a member of Adam's race and the Lord Jesus as the Son of God, so that He inherited none of the sin of Adam's race by His birth. It is important to see that. He was born of a member of Adam's race and yet inheriting none of its sin in His nature, by a cutting in of the Holy Ghost, so that it could be said of Him as of no other being ever in this universe, "That Holy thing." Essentially in very substance, holy, and His blood representing His nature, His life is without corruption, without sin, without taint of any kind, absolutely sinless and, therefore, Satan had no power over Him. "The prince of this world cometh to Me and hath nothing in Me." Therefore He can cast out the prince of this world, and can make a show of him openly triumphing over him in His Cross. He can vanquish Satan, He can meet sin and deal with it in the mastery of it because it has no ground in Him of crippling and weakening. See Joshua in his place of weakness, a place of impotence, a place where he is not functioning in his holy calling, in a place of defeat, and the Adversary in the place of power, at his right hand to be his adversary. He cannot help himself because of his filthy garments, and before Joshua can ever be established in the place of power, and given ascendancy and Satan as the accuser is cast down, these filthy garments have to be removed. In principle and effect the blood has to take effect. The blood, the precious sinless blood, has to come in and deal with sin, the power and ground of satanic activity - the means of accusation on the part of the adversary. Before that can be destroyed the blood has to be operative.

### **The "Overcomer" Stands on the Ground of the Perfections of Christ, and Meets the "Accuser" by Faith's Appropriation Thereof**

What is the meaning of the blood being applied? It is that which is the absolute sinlessness of the Lord Jesus being the ground upon which we stand. That gives us authority, gives us power. The essential perfection of Christ as being the ground of our confidence, our faith, our trust and our testimony. If we stand in ourselves we are defeated. There are no perfections in us, there is nothing in us whatever that can bring Satan to naught and deliver us from his accusations and from his position of power over us. But when we stand in Christ, in all the perfection of His nature, of His being, in the absolute sinlessness of Christ represented in that incorruptible blood, there is deliverance. And so that Blood poured out becomes active, operative, in motion, and it is a great thing to have the perfections of the Lord in motion on our behalf, flowing, active to meet all the accusations of the enemy. The accuser of the brethren is cast down, which accused them day and night before God? Why? Because they are not standing now on the ground of their own imperfection and sinfulness and weakness and faultiness, but they are now standing on the ground of His absolute perfection, and bearing testimony thereto. "The word of their testimony." "They overcame because of the blood." It is a question of a ground of absolute holiness, absolute holiness not in ourselves but in Him, and our appropriating by faith and apprehending by faith all that the Lord Jesus is in His essential being as the spotless Lamb of God for us to God, from God to us. We can never reiterate that note too often. That is the ground of victory. Give the enemy one little bit of old Adam, the flesh, the self, of sin, and he immediately takes the place of power and immediately brings under accusation and begins to weaken both life and ministry. You know this is true; if you do

not you will find it out. But stand continuously in the efficacy of that blood, stand continuously in your receiving by faith of all that the Lord Jesus is made unto you from God, clear up everything concerning which the Holy Spirit speaks in conviction, clear it up in virtue of that blood, and the enemy is ruled out, he is not in the place of power.

### **Satanic Tyranny Through Self-Occupation Broken by a Right Apprehension of the Blood**

Oh! If the Lord's people could get this in their hearts. There are so many of the Lord's people today over whom Satan is lording it; lording it along the line of accusation, bringing them under a sense of condemnation and judgment, robbing them of their peace, of their assurance, rest, hope; and you will find these people are everlastingly talking about their own short-comings, their sinfulness; for ever circling round themselves, all that they are that they would not be, all that they are not that they would be. Their deliverance from Satan is that they should have a fresh apprehension of the absolute satisfaction of the Father in His Son on their behalf, and that they find their standing before the Father in acceptance. That is the way of deliverance, the way of the Adversary's casting out. This is the way of overcoming him as the Accuser. Yes, the ground of the blood is sufficient for this full-orbed, many-sided, all-round victory. "They overcame because of the blood of the Lamb," and the first and supreme factor in the virtue of that blood in all these directions, is its untainted sinlessness, the nature of the Lord Jesus. There has never been another who was such. Oh, I am so glad that it was God that came in Christ, God that came in Christ. Can you charge God with sin? Can you lay sin to God's charge, to God's account? It was God in Christ, the absolutely and altogether holy One in whom there was no sin, came in in incarnation, and in virtue of that Divine nature in its perfection, Satan in his authority is defeated - on that ground. Blessed be God, we can receive by faith the virtue of that precious Blood. That is, the perfection of the Lord Jesus can be put to our account. That is grace - the wonder of the Gospel. If we were to begin to analyse ourselves and take stock of ourselves, that would be a terrible business, a wretched business, and it would be endless - think of it, beloved, with all that we know of ourselves, all that God knows about us - "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it? I the Lord search the heart. I try the reins..."

When all that is a fact, you and I can stand tonight in the presence of God as sinlessly perfect, not in ourselves, but in Christ, as having absolute sinless perfection put to our account for God. Understand I am not confusing things, I am not saying that any of us ever becomes sinlessly perfect in ourselves here, but those perfections of the Lord Jesus are put to our account before God to satisfy His requirements, to provide the ground where Satan has no longer authority. The defeat of Satan and the victory of the saints is not their effort, their straining, their groaning, or anything they can do; it is the measure of their faith's appropriation of the absolute perfection of Christ for them as a living, working thing of God on their behalf. It is a great thing to be in Christ Jesus.

### **The Blood Represents Total Separation to God**

The second thing, bound up with the first as to the meaning of the blood, is absolute separation unto God. A voluntary thing. Wholly, utterly separated and abandoned to God. There was not at any point in His Being a deviation. He was whole. He was one. You cannot find mixture. You never find wool and cotton in His spiritual garments. You never find those things forbidden in the Old Testament as typical of contradictions and deviations and things which did not harmonise. He was one, mind and heart and will, without the slightest reservation, and wholly for God. That was His nature, that has its very seat in His blood. His blood represents that. A life which is sinless, and wholly and utterly given over to God without the slightest deviation in thought or desire, inclination, will. The Blood speaks of that, beloved, absolute separation unto God. Go back to the Old Testament

for illustration. Get into the book of Joshua, chapter 5, you have the people coming to Gilgal where the Lord ordered through Joshua the complete circumcising of Israel. All the males that had come out of Egypt were circumcised at Gilgal and the Lord's word was this: "This day (when it was done) hath the Lord rolled away the reproach of Egypt, therefore the name of that place was called Gilgal, which is rolling." "The Lord hath rolled away the reproach of Egypt" - on the day of the circumcising, in the day of that symbolic act in the shedding and encircling of the precious blood - the whole body of the flesh cut off - so Paul explains it in Col. 2. "The circumcision of Christ which is the putting off of the body of the flesh." The reproach of Egypt rolled away when that happens. What is "the reproach of Egypt"? What is the meaning of that? I wonder if you have noticed the persistent following of Egypt on the heels of Israel all the days of the wilderness. I do not mean literally, I mean spiritually. They were constantly looking back to Egypt. "Wherefore hast thou brought us up out of Egypt that we should perish in the wilderness?" Even when they came to the Mount and Moses went up into the Mount and Aaron made that calf and they danced to the calf and worshipped it, it was Egypt brought out in representation. What is it that Stephen tells us about it - I think he sums it all up in one word in Acts 7:39: "... and in their hearts turned back again into Egypt." They turned back in their hearts to Egypt.

You see their hearts were in Egypt, and it was because their hearts were more than half in Egypt all the time that you have that story of the forty years, and it is a sorry story. Up and down; one day for the Lord and the next day against Him. One day brighter, and the next day murmuring and complaining again. What a story it is. Whenever you read the account of it, it seems that the bright patches are almost overlooked and the dark thing is kept in view. It comes into the New Testament. Paul writes to the Hebrews about it - their "carcasses fell in the wilderness," reminding them of the day of provocation in the wilderness when "your fathers tempted me..."; always coming back to this wretched failure. Why? Because their hearts were not wholly out of Egypt; because they had not recognised sufficiently and apprehended adequately the meaning of that precious blood of the Lamb that was slain. It was not until they came into the land, through the Jordan - which is what Christ has done for them in His Cross - to Gilgal, the place of circumcision where the thing is made real in them - that which was "for" is now made "in" - not until they reach the place of cutting - that Cross entering into their flesh, "the cutting off of the whole body of the flesh" symbolically, that the reproach of Egypt is rolled away. What is the reproach of Egypt? I think it is the prophet Zephaniah who says, "I have heard the reproach of Moab, and of Ammon..." - what are they doing? They are looking down upon the Lord's people, despising them because of their weakness, because they are not getting through to where they set out to get, because from their standpoint, as they judge things, the whole thing is a fiasco - "You left Egypt to get to Canaan and you have been forty years at it." Weakness, failure of realisation, helplessness and the enemy in the place of strength! Reproach because they had not recognised that the blood in all its meaning meant fundamentally an utter cutting off from Egypt, whole-hearted and complete abandonment to God, standing over on God's side with God, not standing over on this side questioning God, but on God's side with Him. When you get there, in the full meaning of the Cross, a total cutting off from Egypt, a total cutting off from the fleshly will, the fleshly mind, the fleshly heart, and you are with God wholly - then there is victory, but until you get there Satan is in the place of power, but when you get there the reproach of Egypt is rolled away, you come into the land in the place of authority and go from strength to strength - ascendancy. It is so clear in the Old Testament illustration. That is Revelation 12:11 in principle. "They overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb, and because of the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death: wherefore rejoice, ye heavens..."

### **The Paralysis of a Divided Heart**

Now beloved, the trouble with a good many of us has been this divided heart. We are not sure, absolutely sure about the Lord, about our own position, about the testimony that we are perhaps standing for and talking about; not sure about it, we have secret questionings. It does not matter what we say in public and to others about it, God knows the secret of our hearts, how absolutely we are true in secret with Him over this matter; and there is no way of victory, ascendancy, no way ultimately through to the realisation of the Divine end; a people to fulfil a priestly ministry in the universal sovereignty and kingdom of our God and His Christ, until on the ground of an absolute undividedness of heart for God in the matter of His testimony. The challenge to our hearts is, Are we utterly in or are we only a bit in half in, three-quarters in? Is there some lurking fascination of Egypt? How had Egypt fascinated and held part of their hearts in the wilderness? Out here everything is uncertain; we never know one day from another whether we are going to have our food. At least in Egypt there was certainty; we did know what our programme was; we did have certain knowledge that things would be pretty substantial, we were sure while we had our work we got our food. Out here you have got to depend upon God, that is a precarious business. Is it? God is more certain than Egypt. There are Christians who feel that this walk of faith is such an uncertain thing. You do not know what the Lord is going to bring you into next, what is going to happen to you. In the world at least you have solid ground under your feet. This flesh wants a basis of evidence for itself; solid earth. This heavenly life - you never know - ah! but do you know the Heavenly ONE?

Let me ask you - do you believe, beloved, that when you get to the glory having committed yourself to God, having been consecrated to the Lord, having an understanding with the Lord, and being obedient to Him up to all the light He has given you, do you believe that when you get to the Glory you will be able to say to the Lord: "You let me be deceived, my life has been a mess. I have gone wrong" - is that possible? I do not believe it. I believe that whatever the accuser may try to bring upon us, and whatever others may say about us, if before God in the secret we are honest with Him, cut off by the precious blood from our own will, our own way, our own schemes, our life interests, putting our trust in Him and following the light that He gives, I believe that when we get there, beloved, we will not have been deceived, but we shall have to say: "Lord, You were good to our trust and You led us by a right way that we might come to a city of habitation." The Lord will accept a charge on His honour when we are cut off from ourselves and all personal and worldly interests, and wholly for Him.

### **Losing the Crown**

Egypt for some is the ground of our bondage, our defeat, even though we may be the Lord's children, may be blood-bought, may have come out on redemption ground, yet we may be defeated because of an inadequate apprehension of the meaning of that precious blood. I believe that there will be many who will lose that thing that God has in view as a special vocation in His heavenly kingdom, because they are not wholly devoted to God now. I do not believe that we will be brought into that willy-nilly. If you want the world, even as a believer, want a little bit of it - well have it at this cost - the thing for which God has preeminently called you, the heavenly kingdom in a marvellous vocation - lose that. Paul was after *that*. Paul strained every nerve, spiritually, for that; left the things which were behind for that, to be preserved unto His heavenly kingdom. There are many Christians who will lose that because they do not go all the way with the Lord. Not lose their salvation, but that specific vocation in glory and honour; they will lose it because they did not recognise and honour the full virtue of the blood in the totality of their consecration and abandonment to the Lord. Yes, in that sense they will be left behind. But those who go through, overcome in trial, are they that overcome because of the blood of the Lamb in this second meaning, the absolute abandonment of the Lord Jesus to the will of His Father even unto death; standing in the virtue of His consecration, and making our consecration, by His grace, as utter as was His. We shall never have to let go what He let

go in His obedience to the will of God. We have not got it to let go, but beloved, what the Lord is looking for is a people who are with Him completely, with undivided heart, and that is the ground of our victory and of Satan's defeat.

Now I think I must close there for the present. Oh, let it be seen that the blood of the Lamb in its absolute perfection of holiness and sinlessness is representing His being, His substance, His essence, His nature and His complete surrender, capitulation to the will of His Father, is a ground to stand on. Something to be appropriated by faith and held on to. More, it is something to be taken up as a weapon against the enemy.

### **The Blood is a Weapon to be Wielded**

The dragon is the adversary. We are up against the devourer. All truly spiritual people know that today; some more than others, perhaps. If he can swallow us up, he will. I believe he is out to strike us with death if he can, to strike our bodies with death, to strike our souls with death. Let me say this word to those who are more intimately associated with things, that the more you come to stand in relation to the Lord concerning the heavenly kingdom and that priestly ministry in the heavenly kingdom in relation to the throne, the more you will be aware of the immediate proximity of the dragon and him who would strike with death, strike your mind with death, strike these bodies with death. That will explain a lot for some of you. The nearer you get to the vocation of the man-child, the closer we come to the dragon, the more you will be conscious of the encompassing and encircling of death, and you will cry to get out of it, and say, "this is not life, it is death." Are you going to accept it? It *is* death; but where is the virtue of the Blood? Do you refuse it on the ground of that mighty shed blood? "They overcame because of the blood..." and we are not going to accept death, because of that Blood. Perhaps some might misunderstand that. We are not saying that we are not going to the grave if the Lord tarries long enough; but that is not accepting death. We can die, and go to the grave in the physical sense, but that can be victory; not defeat, but triumph! We do not accept death. There it is. You may know it spiritually, you know it mentally, you know it round you and playing upon you when you come into close touch with that ultimate end of God in the testimony of Jesus Christ. Look after that explanation; hold on to it. It calls for standing up beloved against the adversary, the engulfer, the swallower-up. Blessed be God, there is going to be a greater swallower-up than that. Death is going to be swallowed up. There is one who want to swallow-up if he can. Against the dragon, against the adversary, against the accuser, against the deceiver, the blood is adequate, sufficient, but it is a positive, active appropriation of that blood and standing on it. Taking it up as an active instrument. Oh! to get a company like that here and now who know and appropriate the power of the blood. Not in the flesh, but as emptied of self, and in all humility, nothingness, weakness, standing in HIS virtue, the power of His blood, and standing up and using that mighty weapon against the operation of death now, all round, to get through to that end which God has. That is what is needed now, a people like that.

May the Lord bring this home to our heart, that this may not be an address but an appeal, an urge of the Spirit of Christ - bringing you into that thing actively by prayer. Remember your ground, remember your weapon, remember that all the emptying of self, the weakening, the bringing down, the chastening, the discipline, is to bring us to an effective place. Pride has no standing here. Self-sufficiency has no standing here. Self-strength comes not into this; but the precious blood.

Weakness is not helplessness. Helplessness on our part is not despair. No, it is the open way for the mighty efficacy of the blood to come into operation.