



The Online Library of T. Austin-Sparks

Published as a PDF by Austin-Sparks.net
Email: info@austin-sparks.net

In keeping with T. Austin-Sparks' wishes that what was freely received should be freely given and not sold for profit, and that his messages be reproduced word for word, we ask if you choose to share these messages with others, to please respect his wishes and offer them freely - free of any changes, free of any charge (except necessary distribution costs) and with this statement included.

Sharing the Testimony in the House (Notes on 2 Chron. 35)

by T. Austin-Sparks

Edited and supplied by the Golden Candlestick Trust.

2 Chron. 35:1-2: "And Josiah kept a passover unto Jehovah in Jerusalem: and they killed the passover on the fourteenth day of the first month. And he set the priests in their offices, and encouraged them to the service of the house of Jehovah." Whatever He says, do not begin to struggle after it, remember that the first thing is apprehension by faith. If you begin to struggle, you deny the finality of Christ's work; you are saying in effect, "There is something to be done still to complete that work..." and there is nothing to be done except that faith should take it. You will know by now the elementary truth that the Holy Spirit only works to make things real where faith appropriates. You have got to give the due value to what God has done in Christ. We will come to that in a moment.

2 Chron. 35:3: "And he said unto the Levites that taught all Israel, that were holy unto Jehovah, Put the holy ark in the house which Solomon the son of David king of Israel did build; there shall no more be a burden upon your shoulders: now serve Jehovah your God, and his people Israel." Put it in the House and get it off your shoulders. Perhaps you do not recognise the value of that. Oh, you were trying to carry the full weight of the responsibility of the testimony upon your own shoulders when God has provided a place of *corporate* responsibility, and the carrying of the testimony is the business of the whole House. The full weight must never come upon the shoulders of individuals. Now you are labouring under the burden of the testimony - share it with others.

Most of us have very great cause for thanksgiving that the Lord ever opened our eyes and hearts to the reality of the House of God. Some of us were going along bearing a terrific burden of the testimony alone, carrying it about on our own shoulders and then the Lord brought about very blessed spiritual fellowship with those who were also seeing the testimony of Jesus. What we owe to that fellowship, that prayer cooperation; what we owe to that mutual upholding!

Most of us know something of the blessed relief that comes in having the House of God around you sharing the testimony. It is a great blessing to have the Lord's people sharing the responsibility of the testimony. So Josiah said, "Put it in the house and it will no longer be a burden upon your (personal) shoulders". You have come here with your individual spiritual burden, and it may be almost a crushing weight though it may be a true burden. You will find your relief as you cease to maintain an attitude or position of exclusive individualism. You will find your deliverance as you cease to be out in the cold, on your own spiritually, and come into the warmth of the House of God. God has provided the House to share the responsibility of your spiritual burden concerning Himself. Only as you let go to the Lord's people in fellowship, as you come into that mutual fellowship with other saints, will you find your relief from that crushing weight. The Lord does not want us to carry a weight like that, though it be the burden of the Lord. He wants us to share it in the House; so shall our shoulders be relieved from undue pressure.

If you are inclined to be a detached, separate one, apart from the rest, and you are very conscious of your burden and perhaps of your loneliness; perhaps you feel that no one else can understand exactly your case, your position, and you think it is no use trying to tell them; well, try fellowship. Try, by the grace of God, to get above your own reserve, to get over your spirit of detachment. Ask the Lord to help you to open your heart, rightly, in the right direction, and come into fellowship.

We do not want to be so many units gathered together, we want to be one; thus shall we come into the richness this chapter represents, and thus find the burden on our shoulders lightened by the Lord's people. The Lord must not see any of us going through this conference as individuals. We have got to come in for our own sakes and for the sake of others. When travelling a while ago, I saw an advertisement, "We want to carry your burdens"! You must not remain on the fringe of things. Maybe you are not sure what these people are, whether they are safe or sound. Ask the Lord to open your heart in love. You will never get anywhere if you put your head into things.

"No more a burden upon your shoulders..." look right on to verse 6: "According to the word of the Lord by Moses". Put these three together, gather them up and notice how that in this thing everything is to be according to the word of the Lord. It is the Word of God that governs the assembly of the Lord's people. We speak of revelation, having things revealed by the Spirit, that is perfectly right, but by that we never mean anything extra to the Word of God. We mean that the Word of God, in its inner content and deeper meaning which is not opened generally to us, is revealed to us by the Spirit. There are no prophets according to God on the earth today, truly so, who get revelation straight from God for the church, outside the Word of God. Any such claim is a false claim. But there is much sealed up in the Book that has not yet been revealed.

We must be governed by the Word: "To the law and to the testimony". Bring everything to the Word. Join the aristocracy of those who were more noble than those in Thessalonica, who searched the Scriptures to see if these things were so. Search the Scriptures, keep to the Word, but do go to the Word and ask the Lord to show you. You would be surprised sometimes how the Word is hidden until the Lord suddenly reminds us of it. On one occasion I quoted to a dear man a certain chapter

and verse. He read the chapter and he said, "It is not there" and three times he questioned me until I looked in his Bible and put my finger upon the verse. The man was prejudiced against the thing I was pointing out, and prejudice blinded him and made it impossible for him to see the Word when he read it. Confirm everything by the Word.

2 Chron. 35:4-7: "And prepare yourselves after your fathers' houses by your courses, according to the writing of David king of Israel, and according to the writing of Solomon his son. And stand in the holy place according to the divisions of the fathers' houses of your brethren the children of the people, and let there be for each a portion of a fathers' house of the Levites. And kill the passover, and sanctify yourselves, and prepare for your brethren, to do according to the word of Jehovah by Moses. And Josiah gave to the children of the people, of the flock, lambs and kids, all of them for the passover-offerings, unto all that were present, to the number of thirty thousand, and three thousand bullocks: these were of the king's substance." That is real bounty! May we come into the measure of the king's bounty, the king's riches, the king's measure of the appreciation of the Lord Jesus. That is what it is. That is where you begin. The king begins from his throne and gives his expression of his appreciation of the Lord Jesus. Now we want to come up to His measure of the appreciation.

2 Chron. 35:8,9: "And his princes gave for a freewill-offering unto the people, to the priests, and to the Levites. Hilkiyah and Zechariah and Jehiel, the rulers of the house of God, gave unto the priests for the passover-offerings two thousand and six hundred small cattle, and three hundred oxen. Conaniah also, and Shemaiah and Nethanel, his brethren, and Hashabiah and Jeiel and Jozabad, the chiefs of the Levites, gave unto the Levites for the passover-offerings five thousand small cattle, and five hundred oxen."

Now here is just a word by typology, symbolism that should be of profit and guidance to us.

These were princes and leaders, people in high positions who were making provision for the sacrifices for the people, and they represent those who have, shall we say, an advanced, a more mature, a more highly developed appreciation of the Lord Jesus. Therefore it is in their power (by reason of their spiritual wealth, their spiritual development and maturity) to bring for all the others a rich appreciation of the Lord Jesus. If you have larger wealth spiritually, than another or than others, if you have a more advanced spiritual life and knowledge of the Lord, then you must bring your spiritual riches, your spiritual goods, your larger apprehension and enjoyment and knowledge of the Lord to help others into your fulness. That is what is happening here.

And you who think you may have a very little to give or to bring, a very little knowledge of the Lord, very small riches, very meagre spiritual development, that you have not grown very much, well, remember the Lord has provided among you those to whom He has committed His riches, and that they are there for your enrichment, for your good, for your enlargement. Draw upon them and take advantage, come into their appreciation of the Lord Jesus and do not shrivel up and say, "Well I am the least among the Lord's people and I do not count very much; they are all so much ahead of me, I am out of it." Well, they know for *your* sake, for *your* good, for *your* enrichment. Do not be jealously inclined and go off and say, "If I can't win I shall not play"! Come and take advantage of the spiritual enrichment.

Anybody who may think they are a prince, do not keep your spiritual goods to yourselves. Remember the Lord has entrusted to you for others. Let them have it. This is maturity and this is what makes for such a day as this in Josiah's time, a very blessed day indeed.

2 Chron. 35:10-13: "So the service was prepared, and the priests stood in their place, and the Levites by their courses, according to the king's commandment. And they killed the passover, and the priests sprinkled the blood which they received of their hand, and the Levites flayed them. And they removed the burnt-offerings, that they might give them according to the divisions of the fathers' houses of the children of the people, to offer unto Jehovah, as it is written in the book of Moses. And so did they with the oxen. And they roasted the passover with fire according to the ordinance: and the holy offerings boiled they in pots, and in caldrons, and in pans, and carried them quickly to all the children of the people."

You know the meaning of that by now, the threefold method of the fire's activity: the pots, the caldrons and the pans. There are secret testings of fire which are not seen in the closed pot, which are only seen in the caldron when you take the trouble to look in and examine and understand. But there are those testings of fire in the open pan, open to all eyes. Those are the testings of the Lord Jesus: in secret where no one saw, in that other life where only a few understood, and in that other life where all could see the action of the fire upon Him. So this threefold apprehension of the suffering of the Lord Jesus is set forth here in this Passover. May we have an appreciation of Him from all these standpoints, an inner understanding of what the fire meant in His life.

2 Chron. 35:14: "And afterward they prepared for themselves, and for the priests, because the priests the sons of Aaron were busied in offering the burnt-offerings and the fat until night: therefore the Levites prepared for themselves, and for the priests the sons of Aaron." In this work, in looking after the greater need of the Lord's people their own need was met.

2 Chron. 35:15-27: "And the singers the sons of Asaph were in their place, according to the commandment of David, and Asaph, and Heman, and Jeduthun the king's seer; and the porters were at every gate: they needed not to depart from their service; for their brethren the Levites prepared for them. So all the service of Jehovah was prepared the same day, to keep the passover, and to offer burnt-offerings upon the altar of Jehovah, according to the commandment of king Josiah. And the children of Israel that were present kept the passover at that time, and the feast of unleavened bread seven days. And there was no passover like to that kept in Israel from the days of Samuel the prophet; neither did any of the kings of Israel keep such a passover as Josiah kept, and the priests, and the Levites, and all Judah and Israel that were present, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem. In the eighteenth year of the reign of Josiah was this passover kept. After all this, when Josiah had prepared the temple, Neco king of Egypt went up to fight against Carchemish by the Euphrates: and Josiah went out against him. But he sent ambassadors to him, saying, What have I to do with thee, thou king of Judah? I come not against thee this day, but against the house wherewith I have war; and God hath commanded me to make haste: forbear thee from meddling with God, who is with me, that he destroy thee not. Nevertheless Josiah would not turn his face from him, but disguised himself, that he might fight with him, and hearkened not unto the words of Neco from the mouth of God, and came to fight in the valley of Megiddo. And the archers shot at king Josiah; and the king said to his servants, Have me away; for I am sore wounded. So his servants took him out of the chariot, and put him in the second chariot that he had, and brought him to Jerusalem; and he died, and was buried in the sepulchres of his fathers. And all Judah and Jerusalem mourned for Josiah. And Jeremiah lamented for Josiah: and all the singing men and singing women spake of Josiah in

their lamentations unto this day; and they made them an ordinance in Israel: and, behold, they are written in the lamentations. Now the rest of the acts of Josiah, and his good deeds, according to that which is written in the law of Jehovah, and his acts, first and last, behold, they are written in the book of the kings of Israel and Judah."

You always get a reaction from the enemy especially at the end of a conference, for example. Do not forget that comes at the end of every conference. We should be prepared and know what to expect. A glorious time, glorying in the Lord, exulting in Him, honouring Him, giving Him His place and then you would be surprised how often something like this occurs.

Look earlier in this book to the reforms of Hezekiah, and you find the very same thing happen. Whenever there has been some special honouring of God, setting the rights of God in their place, there is a tremendous reaction of the enemy. Let us know what to expect. He will not like it, we shall have to meet him, but blessed be God, this celebration is the way to victory, this precious testimony is triumphant, and we shall never have to meet the enemy except in the power of an already accomplished victory.

May we stand our ground in the day when the enemy reacts. And may the Lord bring us to gather round Him and to have real fellowship around the Lord Jesus and to have Him as our one Object - everything unto the Lord, for His Name's sake.