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Email: info@austin-sparks.net

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## Sovereign Intercession

*by T. Austin-Sparks*

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**Prayer in the Holy Ghost comes spontaneously out of the work and power of the cross.**  
*(Abbreviated Notes of an address.)*

Luke 3:21: "...having been baptised and praying the heaven was opened and the Holy Spirit descended." Here is the cross because the baptism was significant of death and resurrection. The Lord having in the Spirit in faith established at the commencement of everything His death, burial and resurrection, His first recorded action is praying, prayer arising out of the cross in all its meaning. It was out of that fellowship with God that He went out to battle in the wilderness, meeting and vanquishing the prince of this world.

1 Pet. 2:9: "Ye are a royal priesthood." This is mediation linked with sovereignty, a sovereign intercession. Priesthood applies to all who are members of the body of Christ, all who are in Christ in this age, a priesthood of all born again believers.

Priesthood is representative (1) before God for man, (2) before man for God. Your business in Christ is to stand before man in behalf of God to make known the mind and will of God to man, and to lay before God the needs of man. The classic illustration of this in all scripture is John 17, which is full of "Father, these, these, these," revealing the thoughts and intentions of God concerning them. "Royal priesthood" suggests the cross and mediation, and links with John 17.

The effectiveness of the cross is in a threefold realm.

(1) It deals with the *world*, Gal. 6:14, which has to be ruled out before you can pray in that way or dominate world situations.

(2) It deals with the *flesh*, which is the life principle of the entire nature of man as he is joined to his first parent Adam. When God said, "He has become flesh" it was to say that he was no longer pre-eminently spirit. God being spirit, only spirit can get in to worship God, "in *me* - my natural life - dwelleth no good thing." The cross deals with all that natural life. There is no effective prayer until we get clear through and operate in the spirit.

(3) It deals with the *devil*. Prayer that is based on the cross has its application there.

All this was anticipated in the Old Testament. God's principles are the same in all ages, e.g., the truth of the body of Christ underlies the whole Word of God. Paul only gives full illumination and explanation of what lies in the earlier scriptures - the tabernacle, the temple building, the truth set forth in John 6 and 15 - Paul brings these types and parables with their *hidden* meaning, before us as now spiritual realities.

Job sets the drama of the ages for the rest of the dispensations, and gives the spiritual background of what is going on through all the ages. It is up to date with the prison epistles and at home in Romans. Its scene is the sphere of the principalities and powers. The instrument through which God is to meet Satan's challenge is a Man here on earth. The earth is the centre of the universe in the battle of God with the hierarchy of Satan. "Through the church," Eph. 3:10, is to be found there in Job. It is the story of the transition of a man from natural fulness to all things out from God, *through death* - which is a sphere the devil cannot touch. He is put beyond Satan's power or reach *through death*. His natural *faith* gives out. "Though He slay me yet will I trust Him," was not *Job's* saying. It was the cry of victory of the faith of God wrought in Job, a spiritual faith, not natural. So he becomes the instrument by which God deals with the forces of the devil and breaks his lie. We in our praying are in so small a circle of things, personal interests, blessings, good things, deliverances. But here we get back behind into super-cosmic conditions.

But this has to be practical, so see Daniel. *Why* the lions' den, and all the rest? Because he threw up his windows three times a day and prayed. Through prayer he was given to see all down the ages. When a man like Daniel prays, he sets the principalities and powers in motion. The cross was in his life working, as in Job's.

The three Hebrew friends of Daniel held a prayer meeting in Babylon effective far beyond Babylon. As a result they go down into hell, so to speak. Because these have prayed, because they are joined to the God of heaven to bring about His purposes, the devil does his worst. This was reality to them, but for us historical illustration of what prayer on the ground of the cross does and where it reaches.

Abraham in Gen. 15 was so in touch with the cross in the presence of God in the spirit that Satan became exceedingly active to try to frustrate the divine purpose of the coming up out of Egypt as there revealed. Note that Satan seeks to frustrate revelation to keep you from lighting on the *truth*. "Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall set you free." If you get the key to the situation, Satan has no chance further. By keeping you uncertain he has you in his power. He is out to stop revelation as well as transaction. This "horror of great darkness" was to keep Abraham from

knowing the future revelation.

Jacob, at Peniel ceased to be, and Israel began, the flesh had an end and the spirit had birth. Israel is always the spiritual type of the people of God, Jacob the carnal type. The central factor was a scar upon his frame, the flesh put out of action, forever crippled by God. If he was to be a prince with God, his flesh must be slain forever. In Gethsemane the disciples did not find through the flesh the triumph of their spirit.

You know how the world, the flesh and the devil continue to prevent prayer in the Holy Spirit, and the fight we have to put up. Does the word, "Shall not God avenge His own elect who cry unto Him day and night?" enunciate a law of God? It means either spiritual ascendancy and triumph or going under.

We are fulfilling the greatest ministry when we get together in prayer in the Holy Spirit. How are our brethren on the field going to deal with the appalling situations they find if they can't deal with them behind first? Then the other will come spontaneously. It has got to be ruled from the throne before it can be ruled on the earth.

The principle is - victorious prayer that reaches out and touches God is the prayer which on the ground of His cross and our union with Him has settled the matters of the world, the flesh and the devil, and ruled them out.