

# Born From Above

by Art Katz

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*Art Katz emphasizes the necessity of being spiritually born from above, highlighting the importance of humility and divine initiation in the Christian faith.*

**Scripture:** John 1:12-13, John 3:3, John 14:17, Romans 8:9, 2 Corinthians 5:17, Galatians 4:19, Ephesians 2:8-9, James 1:18, 1 Peter 1:23, 1 John 3:9

**Topics:** "New Birth", "Divine Nature"

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## Description

Art Katz emphasizes the necessity of being 'born from above,' highlighting that Jesus Christ's birth was a divine advent, entering the world from outside rather than evolving from it. He stresses that Christ can only enter into the lowliest places of our hearts, and that true spiritual birth is not initiated by human decision but is a divine act of God. Katz draws on Oswald Chambers' insights, urging believers to reflect on whether they have truly allowed their lives to become a 'Bethlehem' for the Son of God, and to seek evidence of the divine nature within them. He warns against a mere decisional Christianity that lacks the transformative power of a genuine new birth. Ultimately, Katz calls for a deeper understanding of the new birth as a continuous process of yielding to God, allowing Christ to be formed in us.

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## Transcript

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I am reading an entry by Oswald Chambers about the birth of Christ: His birth in history. "Therefore also that holy thing that shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." [That is the angel's announcement to Mary.] Jesus Christ was born into this world, not from it. He did not evolve out of history; He came into history from the outside. Jesus Christ is not the best human being; He is a Being who cannot be accounted for by the human race at all. He is not man becoming God, but God Incarnate, God coming into human flesh, coming into it from outside.

His life is the Highest and Holiest entering in at the lowliest door. Our Lord's birth was an advent. He was born in a stable, and it is a debatable question to ask if He will come and have an advent in any person, except in that same way. He will not enter through any other door but the lowliest door, coming in as the

Highest. So if we try to open a door to Him from the level of our own superiority or self-esteem, as if we deserve a visitation, He simply will not come. He will only come into a stable, the lowliest place.

His advent is a paradigm and a pattern. It is a statement, not just once but always. For every advent of Christ, every birthing, the Highest has got to come into the lowliest, and not just at the commencement of our spiritual life, but at every event and occasion of our spiritual life. If He is to be a participant and bring the Highest, we have got to open to Him the lowliest. I love the way Chambers writes; leave it to him to strike that great note: "His life is the Highest and the Holiest entering in at the lowliest door."

He will never enter into a proud place. His birth was remarkable—there was no room for Him at the inn, so they had to employ the expediency of a stable. Then He was laid in a manger. I do not know how many years I went on hearing that as a kid, and then even as a believer, not knowing what a manger was. A manger is a feeding trough for animals. The place where the animals slobbered over their food is where He was laid. It is exquisite if you can see it from the point of view of God's design and the expression, not only of His wisdom, but necessarily of His nature.

This is not expediency for the lack of something better; this was God's divine intention from eternity, that His advent would come in such a way, in such lowliness, or it could not come at all. We need to continually be reminded that if we are not experiencing the Highest, then we are not providing the lowliest. Chambers goes on to ask, "Have I allowed my personal human life to become a 'Bethlehem' for the Son of God? I cannot enter into the realm of the Kingdom of God unless I am born from above by a birth totally unlike natural birth.

'Ye must be born again.' This is not a command; it is a foundation fact. The characteristic of the new birth is that I yield myself so completely to God that Christ is formed in me. Immediately when Christ is formed in me, His nature begins to work through me. God manifest in the flesh: that is what is made profoundly possible for you and me by the Redemption." Compare this to the more mainline evangelism, which is more a decisional Christianity. The preacher makes an altar call, the person comes forward, makes a confession, recites a prayer, and he commences his Christian life.

It is a good question whether an actual birth has taken place if it is initiated by man, however well-meaning his intention, however moved he is by the message, however much he now desires to be a Christian or to forsake sin. Can man initiate that birth that has got to be wholly given of God? It is clear that there are untold numbers, maybe millions of people, who have entered Christianity decisionally; it was their decision, but it was not His birthing. It is good to be reminded that this birthing is from above, and we cannot commence this life and obtain this nature, except that it is actually birthed in us.

We need to insist upon this divine prerogative, and look for that, and believe for that, and wait for that, and trust in that, and not religiously process people into a kind of evangelical Christianity by virtue of their decision. I am taking note of Chambers' conclusion here. If that birthing has taken place and is the birthing of the nature of God, the divine nature into an earthly vessel, the incarnation again, then there should be evidence. Such a phenomenon cannot take place without there being some expression, some outworking of that new nature, that divine thing.

If one of these decisional Christians has gone on now for 10, 15, 20 or more years and is not showing evidence of the divine nature, notwithstanding the ongoing struggle between flesh and spirit, we need to ask if indeed the new nature has been imparted. If there is no evidence of a new nature, then it is not too extreme to raise the question of whether there has been a new birth. We should even encourage the one

who is not evidencing that nature, and is acting contrary to it, to put that question to the Lord: Have I really ever been born from above? If not, Lord, I implore You that that birth might come.

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