

# A New Day Foreshadowed

by T. Austin-Sparks

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*The Gospel of John reveals the importance of faith in Christ's death and the exclusive way to life, while also emphasizing the significance of the Spirit as life and light in the new day.*

**Scripture:** John 6:53

**Topics:** "Life in Christ", "The New Day of the Spirit"

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## Description

T. Austin-Sparks emphasizes the inseparable relationship between life and Christ in his sermon 'A New Day Foreshadowed,' highlighting that true life comes only through the death of Christ, which many reject. He discusses the transition from the Passover to the Feast of Tabernacles, symbolizing a new spiritual order where believers are called to live in faith and separation from worldly influences. The sermon underscores the importance of knowing the Father and the Son, asserting that life leads to light and true understanding of God. Sparks points out that the new day, represented by the eighth day of the Feast, signifies the Church under grace and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. He concludes by stressing the necessity of a hidden life in God, where believers must prioritize their inner communion with Him over external religious systems.

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## Transcript

With chapter six the first section of the Gospel is concluded. This section is bound up with the word "Life." It has been made clear, and emphatic, that life is inseparably related to Christ. This declaration, with what was involved as to the death of Christ, caused much offense, and many went away. It is ever so! Jesus the Teacher, Worker, or Good Man may be accepted, but make His death the exclusive way to life, the feeding upon the Broken Bread the only ground of union with Him, and of fellowship with God, then that way is rejected. From the days of the apostolic fathers up till now there has been strong deviation of opinion as to whether the words "the passover," in verse 4 of chapter six, should be there, and are original. Whatever the arguments against may be, we submit that the whole spiritual teaching of the Gospel by John justifies their being there. The very words: "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood, ye have not life in yourselves" carry back to the Passover. As we have seen, the Passover was the life of Israel when death was abroad, and it is fitting that with John six the whole question of life should be headed up in the Passover, or the Cross of Christ. Chapter six marks a transition from life to light, but combines them both. The same declaration, emphasis, and conclusion will be made in relation to light, as in the case of life, and the same result will follow; offense and rejection through unbelief. The light will sift, as it ever does. We have observed that chapter one comprehends, by its words, the whole

Gospel. This second section is, therefore, foreshadowed in such words from that chapter as: "In him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in the darkness..." "The same came... that he might bear witness of the light..." "There was the true light... which lighteth every man, coming into the world."

Then the discrimination between those who see, and those who do not, is marked by Nathanael (1:45): "...ye shall see..." (verse 51). Over against those who were in darkness, even when the light was present, was one, truly, of their number, but different. This was an Israelite indeed and without guile; an Israelite, in whom was no Jacob. The self-seeking, self-sufficient, time-serving Jacob was subjected to the spiritual, transparent, God-seeking Israel. This difference will determine who will come to the light, and who will have their darkness doubly darkened.

### Christ Fulfills the Feast of Tabernacles

Returning to chapter seven, we find that another feast is in view, and is the occasion of what comes out. It is interesting that in "John" the narrative moves swiftly from the Passover to the Feast of Tabernacles. In Exodus and Leviticus the order is the Passover, on the 14th day of the first month; then the Feast of Unleavened Bread, Firstfruits, Feast of Weeks, Feast of Trumpets, Day of Atonement, and, lastly, Feast of Tabernacles. Thus the Feast of the Passover is on the 14th day of the first month, and the Feast of Tabernacles on the 15th day of the 7th month. All that lies between is missed out in "John," and in one step we are from Passover to Tabernacles. This is significant, and is in keeping with what we said earlier about spiritual history (see chapter 4). Let us note that the Feast of Tabernacles is the last of the Mosaic Feasts (the Feast of Purim was something which came in much later in Israel's history). Thus the Feast of Tabernacles looks back over all to the beginning, and commemorates detachment and separation from the world (Egypt), and speaks of a life of faith. The security (?) of Egypt has been forsaken, and the tents of the wilderness have been accepted. The stone houses have been exchanged for booths, but this new order is not so flimsy as may appear, for there will be the infallible government of the pillar of cloud and fire. There will also be the "...rock that followed them; and the rock was Christ" (1 Cor. 10:4). This separation is from the light and life of nature, which is shown to be darkness and death, unto life and light in union with Christ. At the Feast of Tabernacles, as celebrated in the Temple, a great candelabrum was lighted, and great vessels of water from the Pool of Bethesda were poured out in the Temple. These, as we well know, are symbols of light and life for those who believe. Christ takes hold of this custom, and puts Himself in the place of both, uniting in Himself the two-fold symbolism of the light and the life.

The transitional factor in chapter seven is seen to be this: the question of knowing the Father and the Son is quite definitely in view, and it will be noted how through this chapter, and those subsequent, the matter of ignorance in both these directions is strongly emphasized and reiterated. The whole question of spiritual light, knowledge, understanding, truth, turns upon this final emphasis upon life (7:37-39), and this by reason of the indwelling Holy Spirit. Before there can be a knowledge of the Lord which means fellowship, there must be the life. Life leads on to light. This is a crucial test, and shows how crucial chapter seven really is. Reject the life, which comes alone by way of the Passover, the death of Christ, and whatever the traditions may be, the historic light, yet the intelligent apprehension of God, the real spiritual understanding and fellowship with Him is impossible.

### Christ in Glory, and the New Day

Now a further great mark of chapter seven is that it presupposes Christ in glory, and that represents the new day. That new day is typified by the eighth day, which, according to Leviticus 23:36, is the last great day of the Feast of John 7:37. That eighth day, as we know, sees concluded the history of Israel under the Law, and brings in the Church under grace. It is the day when, all God's works having been perfected in Christ, Christ is seated at His right hand in glory, and the Spirit is poured forth, just as the waters from Bethesda were poured out in the Temple. The eighth day has become the first day for the Church, and with it all things begin anew on resurrection ground. The new day is that of the Spirit as life and light.

Looking again at this seventh chapter we find the antagonism to Christ is coming out with increasing severity. What has been latent is now becoming manifest, and the hostility is well-nigh universal. Even the members of His own family are said not to believe in Him. There is suspicion, prejudice, and even danger to life itself. Realizing this we cannot but be impressed with the calm, undisturbed dignity; the strong, steady moral ascendancy in which Christ continues to move. His confidence is not for one moment upset. He goes on as One Who is perfectly assured that nothing can befall Him or overtake Him until His work is done. What is the secret of this spiritual and moral elevation? To answer that is to disclose the law which governs the new day of the Spirit, and all that that day brings in for the believer.

#### The Law of the Life Hidden in God

That law, as represented in the Lord Jesus, is the law of a hidden life in God. From that secret fellowship He refuses to be drawn out. Note how even His brethren would argue with Him. Note how they seek to impose upon Him the accepted religious order, the recognized ordinances, the things which are done by the religious people. Note how He is advised to be politic in these matters; and then note how He puts it all back, refusing its domination. There is something for Him which takes pre-eminence over all religious systems and accepted forms; something which is more than policy or diplomacy. It is the witness of the Father in His heart. If you have gone through this Gospel, and put your pencil under every occurrence of the name "Father," you have been astounded with the result. This gives you the background of everything in the life of the Lord Jesus. It is His filial devotion to His Father, and it is in that secret communion that everything is determined for Him. Things, methods, times, means, all have to be decided back of the clamoring, shouting, coercing, arguing elements of men - even religious men and commonly accepted orders. It is never a question for Him as to whether the thing is what is done by others, or what it may involve, or even what the advantage may be in doing it. Everything for Him is: Does My Father will it? If so, how does He will it? And, when does He will it? Thus you see there seems to be some contradiction at the commencement of this chapter, when He says that He goes not up to this Feast, and then when the others have gone up He does go. The explanation is that for Him it is not government by what exists outwardly, but He waits to receive the inward government of the Father's witness.

How many of the Lord's people have come to failure, defeat and even disaster by becoming a part of an accepted order, and surrendering themselves to the government of an organized system, and have sacrificed thereto the inner walk with God. Thus their ascendancy, spiritual power, and effectiveness have become severely limited, and they have not been able to help others as they might have done, because they have not learned to know the Lord by an inward, secret fellowship and walk with Him. This may raise difficulties for many, but all those difficulties would be solved if the Lord's work were so constituted that, even where the matter of government obtains, all things were done by prayer, and, as far as possible, in fellowship.

Surely that is what is characteristic of the new day, the day of the Holy Spirit, the day of life and light, in individual and collective union with Christ.

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Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/t-austin-sparks/a-new-day-foreshadowed/>

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