

# Men Whose Eyes Have Seen the King - Part 5

by T. Austin-Sparks

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*The new birth is a divine intervention in human life that fundamentally changes our nature and gives us a holy character, with an inherent power to overcome the world.*

**Duration:** 54:18

**Scripture:** Luke 1:35, John 1:12, John 3:6, John 16:33, 1 John 3:1-2, 1 John 5:4

**Topics:** "Seeing Jesus"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the significance of being a child of God and highlights the divine intervention that occurs in the process of new birth. The common misconception of placing the responsibility of the new birth on man is addressed, with the speaker emphasizing that it is a result of God's intervention from heaven. The speaker also mentions the suffering that Mary, the mother of Jesus, experienced as a result of her obedience to God's word. The sermon concludes with the idea that the cross reveals the true thoughts and intentions of people's hearts.

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## Transcript

Will you come with me into the Word of God, while we gather together several fragments therefrom. The chapter which has just been read, gospel by Luke, chapter 1, adverse 35, power of the Most High shall overshadow thee. Wherefore also that which is to be born shall be called holy, the Son of God.

To the gospel by John, chapter 1, adverse 12, as many as received him, to them gave he the right to become children of God. Even to them that believe on his name, which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. Chapter 3, verse 6, that which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

Chapter 16, verse 33, these things have I spoken unto you, that in me ye may have peace. In the world ye have tribulation, but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world. To the letter of John, the first letter of John, chapter 3, behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called children of God, and such we are.

For this cause the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. Beloved, now are we children of God, and it is not yet made manifest what we shall be. We know that if he shall be manifested, we shall be like him, for we shall see him even as he is.

Chapter 5, verse 4, for whatsoever is begotten of God overcometh the world. Fragment from that statement is to occupy us for this time this evening. That which is born of God.

Now I want at once with all necessary emphasis to make it perfectly clear that in bringing these scriptures together, that about the birth of the Lord Jesus and those about the birth of believers, I am not failing to discriminate, to recognize and acknowledge a great difference. One always has to safeguard this matter of the person of the Lord Jesus, and I am not falling into any trap in that matter this evening. He was very God, our very God.

God manifests in the flesh, Emmanuel, God with us, in that he stands alone, unique, not another like him. His birth was different, even from the birth, the new birth of every child of God. It was different in kind, it was different in degree, but having said that, there are factors in his birth, factors in his own birth which constitute the nature of the birth of every believer.

Deity apart, Godhead left with him. Nevertheless, there is something in these passages about the believer's new birth which corresponds to him. It is to some of those features and factors that we are going to give attention this evening.

You will not confuse the two, I trust at any point on that matter, that matter of his uniqueness. But at the same time, I do trust that you will be able to recognize on the other side what John said, that what is true in him is true in us. In its own realm and after its own time.

And in this matter of the birth and the new life of the children of God, we shall be able to understand better if we recognize some of these features in the birth of the Lord Jesus. For his birth does, as I have said, hold all the factors which go to make up a true child of God. And the first thing, which is Christ's Eden, is that the birth of the Lord Jesus was a divine intervention in human life.

And that is true of the new birth of every believer. It is nothing other and nothing less than a divine intervention in human life. Do not stay with all the minute details of Christ's birth, but it is perfectly clear in this way that out from heaven there came a heavenly visit.

Heaven opened and one came out making the announcement. And from the same heaven the Holy Spirit came into human life and intervened and did something. That is something we shall see, I trust, in a minute.

The point is that here is a breaking in of heaven. A breaking in of heaven into human life. Now for most of you who are here this evening, there is no difficulty about that.

And you wonder why it should be stressed and given such emphasis. But be it understood, probably you do understand it, that is not what is very largely conceived and thought about the new birth. Even with the best of intentions the new birth is so often placed to man's side, what man does.

Man has got to do something. Either raise his hand, or make some statement, or sign some document, or make a decision, make a profession, accept certain things that have been stated, and many more things like that. Perhaps such things are meant to pave the way or open the way, for God.

But if we allow that, so often people are left with this idea that it's something they've done. They've accepted Christ, they've accepted Christianity, they have made a gesture, they have done something, they have become Christians by what they have done, by their own way. Now being fully generous, and not

critical at all, it is very important dear friends to recognize that it is not.

The new birth never, never necessarily takes place by anything that we do. It never really is consummated by some act of our own will, or of our own desire, or our own mind. Not at all.

Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor the will of man. The man being the case in point, or any other man who would take to bring it about. But not, not, not, but of God.

If God does not intervene in human life, and in human history, break right in, as it were from heaven. If the Holy Spirit does not overshadow, and himself produce, that new life. That's not new birth.

Something lacking. You're wondering perhaps why this tonight. Well, I tell you why.

With a growing, a growing concern. Concern is a weak word. As one moves about, about the world, touching Christians and Christianity, the one thing that is borne upon one's heart, overwhelmingly, almost to the point of despair sometimes, is the need that those who bear the name of Christian should know the real nature of what it means to be a child of God.

They seem, so many of them, to have taken on something from the outside, by their own volition, choice, and act. And they, speaking of so many, so many, haven't the faintest idea of what it means to be born out from heaven. Really.

And in all the needed work of recovery, in every department of divine purpose, at this time, this is one of the a recovery of the real meaning of new birth. Of what it is to be born from above. To be a child of God.

I have sometimes wondered, maybe all round, but I have sometimes wondered if the enemy is not very pleased with making multitudes and multitudes and countless multitudes of people in a false Christian position. Because he knows the day is coming when the wind will carry them away. And for a Christian to fall away is a greater approach perhaps than anything.

Oh how we do need our roots down. How we need to be grounded in the truth. And the truth of our very nature as children of God.

That is why we come to this, this evening. The day is coming when our standing as Christians will be deeply and terribly tested. A great shaking.

Prophet Isaiah is very up to date. I believe, Ezekiel rather, I believe these words will have a very large, perhaps a larger fulfillment, not in a very distant future than they had when Ezekiel uttered them, I will overturn, overturn, overturn until he comes. Whose right it is.

There's going to be a great overturning of what is not true, what is false. This judgment must begin at the house of God. So forgive me if I must be forgiven for this emphasis this evening.

We begin here. As with Christ so it must be with every child of God. They must at the very beginning of their Christian life be the result of a divine intervention in human history.

In their human history. In their human life. But that is the great basic fact.

Thank God there are many of us here tonight who understand that and know what that means. God intervened in my life. God broke into my life.

God came out even as it were from heaven into my life. Well it's not so difficult for many to understand but we must know. If we have the experience, we know the truth, but it's sometimes helpful to have it defined.

This, this is it. God broke out of heaven when you and I were saved. Nothing less than that happened.

As though God himself came out of his heaven into another human life and interrupted its course of history. Broke in to its world. Things should never be the same after that.

Which leads to the next thing. That is perfectly clear in the case of the Lord Jesus isn't it? An angel, the Holy Spirit indicated this intervention from heaven. No less than that in principle and fact with each new birth.

But the next thing that is perfectly clear in the case of the Lord Jesus is that this was something different. It was not only something new that had not happened before, but this was something different. We dare not dwell too much upon the details of the account which we've read, but what it all amounts to is this.

That this birth is different from all other births. The angel made that perfectly clear and Mary knew that. It was her problem, her perplexion, her bewilderment, her wonder.

How? How? It was the perplexity of mega-demons. How? She's a great Christian. How? This contains a profound mystery which constitutes a deep mighty difference.

This is not the common thing. This is not the usual thing. This you cannot find only here.

It's different. And that which results from this intervention contains in its constitution this fundamental difference. Oh that all who bear the name of Christian who claim to be child of God was fully alive to this.

I think this is where the weakness lies with so many and it will not hurt us here tonight who know it so well to be reminded of it to face it again. It's a thing dear friends that we need to keep with us in our consciousness continually by new birth we are fundamentally and constitutionally different from all other births and beings. You know it perhaps in some measure of experience but there it is.

Birth of the Lord Jesus. Different kind of birth. It wasn't.

So patently so. Not in the usual natural way. Nature, nature had nothing to do with it.

Man's will, choice, decision had nothing to do with this. It is different. It comes about in a different way.

It is of a different kind and a different order of being. Wherefore that which is born shall be holy. Can you find that in nature? Anywhere? That which is in its very essence holy.

Holy. That's the contrast with every other creature and every other birth. Psalmist cries I was born in sin, shapen in iniquity.

That's true of us all. That which is born shall be holy. It's different in constitution, in nature.

Now when I say that that principle holds good in every new birth it needs this explanation. We know quite well that it is not our bodies that are born again. Therefore they are not holy.

We know that it is not our souls that are born again. If our souls are our minds, our reasoning powers and our emotions and our power of choice. Well that's that's not different.

It's the trouble of our whole Christian life that we we still have so much of that which is not holy with us in mind and heart and will. It's the realm of our conflicts, our battles, our sorrow. Something somewhere nevertheless has happened, has come in that is not of that kingdom at all.

It's of another heavenly kingdom and that which is born of God is holy. Do you know that? Do you know that? Well probably most of you do. If it has not been explained, defined to you, you know it in experience.

You know that there is that in you which revolts against sin and unholiness. You know that one of the great blessings of your life is an inward power of reaction when things are not right. Not good.

As we go on, truly we do know that we become more and more sensitive to evil, to the sin of this world. Our peril may be sometimes to accept it. You have to take it because it's there.

I remember some years ago I was traveling, it is quite a few years ago as you will realize, I tell you I was traveling up north with Mrs. Penn Lewis and we were in the dining car and a dear girl came into the dining car and sat down at the next table and took out a cigarette and lighted it. Now of course it's accepted now. Mrs. Penn Lewis, it was new then, a look of consternation came in her face.

Her eyes almost came out of her head. She looked at me and you know I had the utmost difficulty holding her from going to that dear girl and begging her to put out that cigarette, give up smoking. You perhaps think I was wrong in restraining her.

I perhaps was a little more a man of the word. I knew this common thing, but for her it was a deepest shock. Now we're in a world like that, perhaps much of the shock has gone, but nevertheless it is true of every child of God that there is a feeling about it, a horror of it, the dislike for it.

Something of a tremendous inward revolt and reaction to sin, to evil, to unholiness. What a safeguard that is. What a gift of God that is to have that.

Oh God forbid that ever we should lose our sensitiveness in that realm. Cease to sense and to be moved by the simpleness of sin. It's different, you see, with the child of God.

There's a difference inside. His birth was different, our birth is different, and by that new birth we have constituted a different kind of creature. And this is the main feature in that difference.

Whereas once this world, its behavior, its conduct, its ways, its talk was our world. We felt no shock, only if something very, very extreme and gross perhaps touched some better sensibility in us, but nevertheless that was our world. Whereas it was so today, we find it difficult, at least difficult, some things happen.

There's a difference. That which is born of God is holy. Beware young people that you do not blunt the edge of your new birth by accommodating yourself to this world's forms and ways, customs and acceptances, and taking it all as well inevitable.

Ask the Holy Spirit to keep you very sensitive to sin, very sensitive to evil. Keep alive this. This which is your birthright, a part of your very birth.

A difference. Well I could of course speak much about this, but I should only be telling you what you know. If you are a true child of God, you know something about the difference as you go out into the world, not only in the matter of sin, but in all kinds of ways.

If something's happened to you, if it hasn't, it's time for you to begin to look into this matter of whether you're a child of God. If this difference has not at some point become quite clear to you, quite clear to you and you know it, not because you're told, not because of teaching, not because your parents are Christians and don't like you doing certain things and you've got a sort of conscience, which is your parents really, not your own, not because of any of these things, but in your own heart, in your own self. You've got this consciousness of being different.

Different. Fundamentally different from those who are not the Lord's. If that is not true, add a crisis in your life and if that is not progressively true, progressively true, because it is not just one thing at a certain point, more or less clearly defined as a point, a crisis, or all don't have a violent breaking in as the case of Paul, nevertheless there has to arise at some point this sense, I'm a child of God.

I'm different. Something's happened. A great difference has been made deep down somewhere.

I'm not the same and I'm not the same as those who are not the children of God. But not only so, dear friends, that is the very nature of spiritual growth, that more and more that difference becomes accentuated. It is the thing that is making this world more and more a foreign land to us.

Not our home, not our place, but shall I put it the other way, making our native land more and more so to us, making heaven to truly be our home. Now where heaven is I can't tell you, but I do know this, somehow or other, whatever heaven means as a word or designation, I belong somewhere else. I belong, if heaven is the place, that's where I belong, if that's the name you give.

And more and more I'm discovering that I belong there and I don't belong here, and it will be, it must be like that. I speak to young Christians particularly, that this is the very nature of your new birth. More and more it must be like that, and don't be afraid of it.

Don't rebel against it. Accept it. It's a proof of something, of the greatest thing God is doing in human history, breaking in to make this tremendous difference.

Now it's on that ground that the greater size is going to be set up. We get our mental pictures of the judgment. Well, we won't argue as to the material side of that, but I do know this, that this judgment has already begun, it's going on, and the finality of it will be here, that there are those who belong there and there are those who belong here, and there's no mistaking it.

There's no mistaking to which realm these people belong. It's full now, it's complete now. The divide, the great divide has been made.

The Lord is seeking to bring that about now, and oh the tragedy of many Christians, and many young Christians trying to bridge that gap, to hold those two things together, and not allow the gap to widen, and they be on the side where they're moving farther and farther away from the judged world. A difference, we leave that there. The next thing that comes out in this matter, Christ's birth, the birth of believers, of children of God, is that by this, this birth, this birth, there comes into us an inherent potency, an inherent power.

Now, the Lord Jesus said, be of good cheer, I have overcome the world, and John says, that which is born of God overcometh the world. That which is born of God overcometh the world. In Christ, in the born anew child of God, there is an inherent power, and virtue, which is going to overcome, overcome the world.

It's there in the very nature of things, in the very constitution, the new life, it's going to overcome. There may be failure, there may be frequent failure, there may be a falling into battle, there may be some casualties, there may be some dark patches, there may be even some going away, but this is a most remarkable thing, and a most heart-ravaging thing, to see how this, this persists. I sometimes have to smile, there may be even some going away, but this is a most remarkable thing, and a most heart-ravaging thing, to see how this, this persists.

I sometimes have to smile, people tell me they're going, going to give it all up, can't go on any longer, and off they go, and you don't see them for a little while, but they're back again, and that happens a hundred and one times. Oh, how many people have said to me, quite recently, I'm giving it all up, I'm finished, I'm going, and as far as they knew themselves, they meant it, can't do it, they're just like moths around the lamp, can't keep away, back they come, back they come, and yes, crestfallen and ashamed, you know, if it were natural, they wouldn't do it, I wouldn't do it, or very face savage, I wouldn't come back again, show my face there again after that, not at all, but there's something else, something more, stronger than our shame, stronger than our self-reproach, stronger than our self-despair, stronger than our constant delinquency that brings us up, and brings us back, the history of most children of God, that which is born of God overcometh the world, told Jesus, how did he overcome? Not by physical force, not by resolve of will, not by power of brain, mind and argument, he never did bring the world under his feet in those ways, by sheer force of divine character, kind of man he was, the divine nature in him, he overcame, so with every child of God, so much lesser degree than in his case perhaps, and so much slower in expression and manifestation, nevertheless it's there, and every true child of God knows it, knows quite well that had it not been for that inward grip of something or someone, not themselves, they'd not be where they are tonight, still seeking the things of God, it's inherent in that which is born of God, to overcome, to overcome. And then the next thing of course comes perfectly clear, the inevitable antagonism, not very long after the birth of the Lord Jesus, before he broke out, kingdom of Satan knew who he was and what he was, and that kingdom had many a powerful instrument and means at hand, and Herod was such, the antagonism broke out, we are not to know what happened during his thirty years of childhood and boyhood, that's passed over, it would be surprising if there were many narrow escapes even then, but we do know that from the moment of his stepping out under the anointing from Jordan, take up this work of bringing the other sheep, bringing other sons to glory, all hell was on his track, the atmosphere as we said before became charged with antagonism whenever he came into a place, we know something of that atmospherics that our Lord must have known in his very sensitive spirit, terrible hatred, animosity of the evil power towards him, and working through men, oh the constant almost monotonous repetition, they sought to destroy him, they sought to destroy him, they sought how they might destroy him, that's the atmosphere in which he lived.

Why? Why? Well it might be put down to many reasons, many causes, but the fundamental cause was this, he belonged to heaven, and the destiny of the heavenly one and the heavenly ones is to possess this world and to govern it by the final abolishing of its prince and his whole kingdom, and they know, said they I know thee whom thou art, the holy one, and make no mistake, they know everyone who is holy, in that sense, there is an inevitable antagonism in spiritual realm, so often it cannot be traced to any physical, material or temporal cause, people, it's just there in the air, it's just there, but how true it is in this world, the antagonisms, the antagonisms of the spiritual kind, that the Christ without provoking deliberately or knowingly or really, by word of being, somehow or other, the consciousness comes alive when you're born again, that you're a speckled bird, you're a marked man or a marked woman, isn't it true? Here's the antagonism, and so John says about these that are born of God, wherefore the world knoweth us not,

because it knew him not, knoweth us not, deeper meaning in that word knoweth than just being aware of us, knowing who we are, it's being able to place us, being able to explain us, being able to trace us, what we are, where we came from, the world knoweth us not, we are inscrutable to the world, as that about us which is inscrutable, it's very true, and that constitutes an antagonism, and we appeal to young Christians again tonight, don't try and cut out that kind of antagonism, be careful not to give unnecessary offense, try to commend yourself to every man's conscience in the sight of the Lord, do things honorably before all men, give them no occasion for accusing you rightly as a Christian, but when you have done all, don't think that you're not going to meet this antagonism, you are, you're a child of God, you can't avoid it, you just cannot avoid it, and don't try to eliminate it, recognize that this is a part of the very fact, and this is an evidence, a wonderful evidence of the fact, that you are in the company of Jesus Christ, the world knew him not, therefore it knows us not, it knows us not, because it knew him not. May I spend a minute or two with Mary herself, because she is characteristic in some ways of the vessel, the vessel of the new birth, that is, to whom, to what, upon what ground will the new birth take place? Here there is a correspondence between that of the Lord Jesus and every child of God. We have, of course, to recognize the divine sovereignty of eternal election, chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world, that accepted, but left for the moment, we come into time, we come into the operation, the activity of God in time, and on what ground in time, in our own lives, will this thing come to us? Are there some grounds, are there some occasions, are there some things which will always be found where God comes in, in this way? Yes, always, always.

One of the beautiful things about Mary as characteristic of a vessel, of new birth, was that which the angel said to her, Hail, our translation is unfortunate again, thou that art highly favored of God, margin helps us, gets us nearer, hail, thou who art endued with grace, that's the beginning of every new birth, endued with grace. If there was one person in that little country in those days who was aware, and this comes out so clearly, of the wonder of this, the condescension of this, and her own unworthiness of it, how should this be to me? It was Mary. He never comes to the proud and self-sufficient, the self-confident, he never comes to those who are unaware that his coming would be an expression of infinite grace.

We have to be brought there so often, before it can happen, brought to the place where the only word that suits the situation in our consciousnesses, it's grace, it's God's grace, it's all of grace, thou art endued with grace. Simple, I know, but that's the beginning of everything for the Christian life, this wonderful miracle of God, that we must see and be deeply impressed as she was with, on the one side, our own utter worthlessness. This could never be to us if we and ourselves and our own state were to be taken as a governing matter.

It's God in infinite mercy, infinite grace, that's a humble and a contrite spirit, and God is with that. Is that too simple? Well, it's like that you see, because the new birth is but the beginning. This, this which is of God in heaven has got to grow and grow, more and more there's to be an increase of him, it's all on the same basis, the emptying of ourselves, pouring out of all that is selfhood to make way for the grace of God.

Now that is a statement of fact and necessity, but it's very, very helpful, isn't it? You feel like that? If ever anything's to happen to me, it's to be of the grace of God. Well, that's just what God means it to be. That's why you come there, he's brought you there.

Thou art endued with grace. To be a child of God is to be one highly favored, if you like that. Endued with grace.

The next thing about Mary is her simple or her simplicity and submissiveness. Something very beautiful about her simplicity, isn't there? You know, we're far too complicated about all these things. We've made Christian life a far too complicated thing.

And we're standing in our own life as we do so, with projecting our mentalities and our arguments, our contentions, and our demands for explanations, whatnot. It's all there. The Lord can't get on.

That's all rubbish in the way. He finds a heart like Mary, and I am not setting Mary up to be worshipped, but you find a heart like Mary, simple. Simple in this sense.

Nothing sheer, argumentative, querulous, awkward, nothing like that. It's a simple heart. An open heart.

Perplexed, true, not understanding, wondering how it can be, saying so, nevertheless, because of simplicity, honesty, purity of heart. It's your right at this. Be it unto me.

Be it unto me according to thy word. Absolute submission. Complete acceptance, even to the mystery and of what it would involve.

The trouble with so many of us is we're so slow in our submission, our surrender, our giving way, our letting go. We will argue. We will demand something.

Explanations. Go round and round this eternal circle, getting nowhere, because we won't let go. So we come back to the point from which we started a thousand times.

She put her whole life into this. Be it unto me according to thy word. And the angel departed.

That's what he was working towards. I'll not detain you longer with this. Remind you that it involved Mary in suffering.

It involved her in suffering immediately, and then Simeon eight days afterward, after the birth, told her, a sword shall pierce thine own soul, that the thoughts of many hearts shall be revealed. I would like time to explain that, because I think there's something there that's tremendously helpful. See, when the cross, when the cross is at work in a life, people begin to betray themselves.

Their thoughts accuse, charge, say this is because of so-and-so you know, and so on, and so on, and so on. Thoughts come out when somebody is having a bad time. Everybody divulges what they're thinking and feeling about them.

Some sympathetic, some antagonistic, sword shall pierce thine own soul, the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed. It's necessary that men should show themselves where they stood in the day of the cross, and Mary's suffering was a part of that. Well, that may be a mystery, you can forget that if it doesn't help, but the point is that this kind of thing that happened to her, and which happens to us, involves us in suffering.

It involves in the offense of the cross. It involves in much misunderstanding, and much ostracism. The angel left her.

She knew what it meant then, which we cannot speak of, but Simeon told her what was coming later on, along this line of this child. It's true, and very true in principle. Now dear friends, ask the Lord to just lift out of all this that which will help you, but when we've said all that we can say, one thing that it amounts to is

this is something unusual, something different, something that is of God.

To be a child of God is no ordinary thing. It's the result of an intervention of God from heaven.

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