

The Advent of the Spirit

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(New Series-Part One)



Introduction:

The Acts of the Apostles forms a fifth Gospel, and can be properly understood only in its relation, not alone to the narrative previously written by Luke, but to the whole fourfold Gospel which precedes it.

We have our Lord Jesus Christ thus presented to us in five aspects of his blessed person and work, which remind us of his fivefold "name," as [**Isaiah 9:6**](#).given in prophecy. Matthew exhibits him as the "Wonderful" Messianic King; Luke as the gracious human "Counsellor"; Mark as the "Mighty God," the miracle-worker; John as the "Everlasting Father," in his essential nature; and in the Acts we have him as the "Prince of Peace," ascended to his throne and sending the Paraclete, the Holy Spirit, as his ascension gift to believers, to conduct, in his name and behalf, the great work and warfare of this dispensation, the age of our gathering from all nations.

The Book of the Acts, however closely linked with the Gospel according to Luke, as being from the same human author, is therefore a proper sequel to all the four books which precede it; and may be compared to the mercy-seat, which

both rested upon and held united the four sides of the sacred ark of the testimony. We may even carry the comparison further; for, as it was this mercy-seat, the cover of the ark, where the Shechinah fire burned and glowed, it is in the Acts of the Apostles that the Holy Spirit's fire is first seen to burn and shine in latter-day glory.

The Acts of the Apostles should therefore be studied mainly for this double purpose: **first**, to trace our Lord's unseen but actual *continuance of his divine teaching and working*; and, **secondly**, to trace the *active ministry of the Holy Spirit* as the abiding presence in the church. For it must be observed that Luke's former treatise of "all that Jesus *began* both to do and teach" implies that this latter treatise has to do with what he *continues* to do and teach, in the person of the Paraclete (Holy Spirit).

The Advent:

It is highly important we should closely observe how each of the Eternal Three has been at marked pains to provide for the honour of the other Divine Persons, and we must be as particular to give it to Them accordingly. How careful was the Father to duly guard the ineffable glory of the Darling of His bosom when He laid aside the visible insignia of His Deity and took upon Him the form of a servant: His voice was then heard more than once proclaiming, "This is my beloved Son." How constantly did the incarnate Son divert attention from Himself and direct it unto the One who had sent Him. In like manner, the Holy Spirit is not here to glorify Himself, but rather Him whose vicar and Advocate He is ([John 16:14](#)). Blessed is it then to mark how jealous both the Father and the Son have been to safeguard the glory and provide for the honour of the Holy Spirit.

"'If I go not away, the Comforter will not come' ([John 16:7](#)); He will not do these works while I am here, and I have committed all to Him. As My Father hath visibly 'committed all judgment unto the Son: that all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father' ([John 5:22-23](#)), so I and my Father will send Him having committed all these things to Him, that all men might honour the Holy Spirit, even as they honour the Father and the Son. Thus wary and careful are everyone of the Persons to provide for the honour of each other in our hearts" (T. Goodwin, 1670).

The public advent of the Spirit, for the purpose of ushering in and administering the new covenant, was second in importance only unto the incarnation of our Lord, which was in order to the winding up of the old economy and laying the foundations of the new. When God designed the salvation of His elect, He appointed two great means: the gift of His Son for them, and the gift of His

Spirit to them; thereby each of the Persons in the Trinity being glorified. Hence, from the first entrance of sin, there were two great heads to the promises which God gave His people: the sending of His Son to obey and die, the sending of His Spirit to make effectual the fruits of the former. Each of these Divine gifts was bestowed in a manner suited both to the august Giver Himself and the eminent nature of the gifts. Many and marked are the parallels of correspondence between the advent of Christ and the advent of the Spirit.

1. God appointed that there should be a signal coming accorded unto the descent of Each from Heaven to earth for the performance of the work assigned Them. Just as the Son was present with the redeemed Israelites long before His incarnation ([Acts 7:37, 38](#); [1 Corinthians 10:4](#)), yet God decreed for Him a visible and more formal advent, which all of His people knew of—so though the Holy Spirit was given to work regeneration in men all through the Old Testament era ([Nehemiah 9:20](#), etc.), and moved the Prophets to deliver their messages ([2 Peter 1:21](#)), nevertheless God ordained that He should have a coming in state, in a solemn manner, accompanied by visible tokens and glorious effects.
2. Both the advents of Christ and of the Spirit were the subjects of Old Testament prediction. During the past century much has been written upon the Messianic prophecies, but the promises which God gave concerning the coming of the Holy Spirit constitute a theme which is generally neglected. The following are among the principal pledges which God made that the Spirit should be given unto and poured out upon His saints: [Psalm 68:18](#); [Proverbs 1:23](#); [Isaiah 32:15](#); [Ezekiel 36:26](#), [39:29](#); [Joel 2:28](#); [Haggai 2:9](#): in them the descent of the Holy Spirit was as definitely announced as was the incarnation of the Savior in [Isaiah 7:14](#).
3. Just as Christ had John the Baptist to announce His incarnation and to prepare His way, so the Holy Spirit had Christ Himself to foretell His coming, and to make ready the hearts of His own for His advent.
4. Just as it was not until "the fullness of time had come" that God sent forth His Son ([Galatians 4:4](#)), so it was not until "the day of Pentecost was fully come" that God sent forth His Spirit ([Acts 2:1](#)).
5. As the Son became incarnate in the holy land, Palestine, so the Spirit descended in Jerusalem.
6. Just as the coming of the Son of God into this world was auspiciously signalized by mighty wonders and signs, so the descent of God the Spirit was attended and attested by stirring displays of Divine power. The advent of Each was marked by supernatural phenomena: the angel choir

([Luke 2:13](#)) found its counterpart in the "sound from Heaven" ([Acts 2:1](#)), and the Shekinah "glory" ([Luke 2:9](#)) in the "tongues of fire" ([Acts 2:3](#)).

7. As an extraordinary star marked the "house" where the Christ-child was ([Matthew 2:9](#)), so a Divine shaking marked the "house" to which the Spirit had come ([Acts 2:2](#)).
8. In connection with the advent of Christ there was both a private and a public aspect to it: in like manner, too, was it in the giving of the Spirit. The birth of the Savior was made known unto a few, but when He was to "be made manifest to Israel" ([John 1:31](#)), He was publicly identified, for at His baptism the heavens were opened, the Spirit descended upon Him in the form of a dove, and the voice of the Father audibly owned Him as His Son. Correspondingly, the Spirit was communicated to the Apostles privately, when the risen Savior "breathed on, and said unto them, Receive ye the Holy Spirit" ([John 20:22](#)); and later He came publicly on the day of Pentecost when all the great throng then in Jerusalem were made aware of His descent ([Acts 2:32-36](#)).
9. The advent of the Son was in order to His becoming incarnate, when the eternal Word was made flesh ([John 1:14](#)); so, too, the advent of the Spirit was in order to His becoming incarnate in Christ's redeemed: as the Savior had declared to them, the Spirit of truth "shall be *in* you" ([John 14:17](#)). This is a truly marvelous parallel. As the Son of God became man, dwelling in a *human* "temple" ([John 2:19](#)), so the Third Person of the Trinity took up His abode in *men*, to whom it is said, "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" ([1 Corinthians 3:16](#)). As the Lord Jesus said to the Father, "A body hast Thou prepared Me" ([Hebrews 10:5](#)), so the Spirit could say to Christ, "A body hast Thou prepared Me" (see [Ephesians 2:22](#)).
10. When Christ was born into this world, we are told that Herod "was *troubled* and all Jerusalem with him" ([Matthew 2:3](#)); in like manner, when the Holy Spirit was given we read, "And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men out of every nation under heaven. Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were *troubled* in mind" ([Acts 2:5, 6](#)).
11. It had been predicted that when Christ should appear He would be unrecognized and unappreciated ([Isaiah 53](#)), and so it came to pass. In like manner, the Lord Jesus declared, "The Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him" ([John 14:17](#)).

12. As the Messianic claims of Christ were called into question, so the advent of the Spirit was at once challenged: "They were all amazed and *were in doubt*, saying one to another, What meaneth this?" ([Acts 2:12](#)).
13. The analogy is yet closer: as Christ was termed "a winebibber" ([Matthew 11:19](#)), so of those filled with the Spirit it was said, "These men are full of new wine" ([Acts 2:13](#))!
14. As the public advent of Christ was heralded by John the Baptist ([John 1:29](#)), so the meaning of the public descent of the Spirit was interpreted by Peter ([Acts 2:15-36](#)).
15. God appointed unto Christ the executing of a stupendous work, even that of purchasing the redemption of His people; even so to the Spirit has been assigned the momentous task of effectually applying to His elect the virtues and benefits of the atonement.
16. As in the discharge of His work the Son honoured the Father ([John 14:10](#)), so in the fulfilment of His mission the Spirit glorifies the Son ([John 16:13, 14](#)).
17. As the Father paid holy deference unto the Son by bidding the disciples, "hear ye him" ([Matthew 17:5](#)), in like manner the Son shows respect for His Paraclete by saying, "He that hath an ear, let him *hear what the Spirit saith* unto the churches" ([Revelation 2:7](#)).
18. As Christ committed His saints into the safe-keeping of the Holy Spirit ([John 16:7](#); [14:16](#)), so the Spirit will yet deliver up those saints unto Christ, as the word "receive" in [John 14:3](#) plainly implies. We trust that the reader will find the same spiritual delight in perusing this chapter as the writer had in preparing it.

At Pentecost the Holy Spirit came as He had never come before. Something then transpired which inaugurated a new era for the world, a new power for righteousness, a new basis for fellowship. On that day the fearing Peter was transformed into the intrepid evangelist. On that day the new wine of Christianity burst the old bottles of Judaism, and the Word went forth in a multiplicity of Gentile tongues. On that day more souls seem to have been truly regenerated, than during all the three and one half years of Christ's public ministry. What had happened? It is not enough to say that the Spirit of God was given, for He had been given long before, both to individuals and the nation of Israel ([Nehemiah 9:20](#); [Haggai 2:5](#)); no, the pressing question is, *In what sense* was He then given? This leads us to carefully consider the *meaning* of the Spirit's advent.

