

# Holy Confusion

## Holy Confusion – Part II

Acts 8:14-17

### Introduction

I will never forget the first time I heard preaching from a pulpit that I not only knew was incorrect, but knew was dangerous. I was seated in a huge auditorium listening to a guest preacher who pastors, to this day, one of the ten largest Protestant churches in America. I was a college student at the time and had already become somewhat disillusioned with the lack of biblical content in most of what I heard.

This visiting pastor was preaching from the book of Jeremiah. Without ever opening his Bible, or instructing us to, he preached from the passage where Jeremiah said, “The prophet that hath a dream, let him tell the dream” (Jeremiah 23). From that phrase, this man mesmerized the audience as he encouraged everyone to ask God for special dreams that would be able to challenge and guide them. He then talked about some of his dreams and how they literally came to pass.

I decided to turn to Jeremiah for myself. I was stunned to discover that Jeremiah was actually condemning the false prophets who simply told their dreams. I read the complete paragraph and God says, “I have heard what the prophets have said who prophesy falsely in My name, saying ‘I had a dream, I had a dream!’ The prophet that hath a dream, let him tell the dream, but he that hath My word, let him speak My word in truth.”

I happen to believe that Christians today, are living in an era much like Jeremiah’s. We are surrounded by people who are sharing their dreams and visions and signs. They are people who cannot be

denied because they convincingly lead the church with the talk of their supernatural encounters. They will not be held accountable to the word of truth, if it disagrees with their experience.

We could easily define our generation as an era of “holy confusion”.

I have heard of everything from miracle coins to pet chickens coming back to life. I have heard preachers talk of out of body trips to heaven and angelic visitations in the night.

Articles in Christian magazines and guests on television talk shows report one dollar bills turning into twenties, washing machines being healed, and demons exorcised from vending machines. Amazing experiences seem to be the order of the day. Some even go so far as to deny the effectiveness of evangelism without such miracles.

Even the Bible is now viewed as some sort of magic wand. I read an article in a *Charisma* magazine, the Charismatic movements flagship periodical, that said,

*Healing, salvation, deliverance reports by the hundreds! In our Word Therapy Tape series, the Word of God is read aloud so that it is not only heard by your conscious ear but penetrates your subconscious mind as tens of thousands of subliminal scriptures are heard in just one hour. The reading of the Word is accompanied by beautifully anointed music that creates an atmosphere of faith. Every*

*day astounding reports acknowledge healing, changed lives, salvation and miracles.*

We are living in a day when people are craving evidences, miracles, and proof. We have forgotten that Jesus Christ said, in Matthew, chapter 12, verse 39,

*. . . An evil and adulterous generation craves for a sign . . .*

In other words, an evidence of weak and shallow faith is seen in a demand for, a hungering for miraculous expressions. People who are enraptured by the latest “miracle” are betraying their shallow faith.

At the same time, many of my friends and colleagues are refusing to raise concerns and take issue with churches and teachers from the “Third Wave Movement”. That is the Charismatic, Neopentecostal, Vineyard, Signs and Wonders organization. Third Wave means that the Holy Spirit is sweeping through America with signs, power, miracles, tongues, visions, etc. And, along with this proliferation of the miraculous is an undercurrent that to question it or speak out in warning or outright condemnation of it is somehow wrong.

The truth is, it is not unkind to analyze teaching in the light of scripture. The Bereans were commended for doing that to Paul himself. Unfortunately, instead of thinking more critically, the evangelical church is becoming increasingly tolerant as doctrine makes more and more concessions to experience.

The best thing that could have happened in the church with the guest preacher who told people to start having dreams, would have been for the pastor of that church to get up after the sermon and tell his flock, “Everything you just heard is unbiblical and will lead you astray. Disregard it all.”

That would have been an embarrassing rebuke! But it would be no more embarrassing than when the apostle Paul rebuked Peter to his face for creating confusion in the church by his inconsistent actions with the Gentiles.

It is simply time for Christians to start asking questions! It is time to stop believing every voice you hear on TV or see in printed form, just because they are a preacher, televangelist, or miracle worker. The challenge for believers today, is not to avoid truth that is controversial, but to, according to II Timothy, chapter 2, verse 15,

***Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth.***

The biggest problem comes at this very point of accurately handling or interpreting the word of truth – especially the word of truth found in the book of Acts.

## **Holy Confusion Over the Baptism of the Holy Spirit**

The most controversial portions of Acts relate to the baptism of the Holy Spirit. There are differing interpretations of scripture related to the baptism and ministry of the Holy Spirit. These interpretations create differing expectations on the “normal Christian life”.

Please note that I am not questioning the salvation of the Charismatic! I am not doubting the sincerity of the Charismatic! Part of the problem is that although the Charismatic world is filled with very committed, sincere believers, sincerity is not the litmus test.

As an illustration, my older brother Dan, who is in ministry, travels to Romania a couple of times a year to train pastors in doctrine. These pastors then go back to their own churches to teach what they have learned. Dan told me that before he goes to Romania, he must remove his wedding band and watch. The reason for that is because these things are a sign of materialism to the Romanian believer. The women in Romanian churches do not wear make-up because they believe that is a sign of Laodicean-type living. They are sincere, but sincerity does not prove accuracy.

What I am concerned about is the nature of the Charismatic understanding concerning:

- the Holy Spirit’s role;
- the nature of evangelism;
- the necessity of visible signs and wonders;
- the acceptance of “additional revelation”;
- the elevation of experience over doctrine;
- finding “unity with other faiths” through experiences rather than truth.

While your belief about the post redemptive work of the Holy Spirit in a believer’s life may not be a heaven or hell issue, your belief about the ministry of the Holy Spirit will affect nearly every area of your Christian life.

Who is the Holy Spirit? What does He do? Well, if you have made up your mind that He does “A, B, C,” you may never discover that He is also “X, Y, Z”.

I got married to Marsha fifteen brief years ago. Marsha has a deep love for music and can recall songs that go back to her teenage years. She will be in the kitchen and suddenly begin singing a song. It might be a southern gospel number or an old Elvis Presley number (which she learned before I met her!). She evidently sang a phrase or two recently and the older kids picked it up and helped our little three year old sing it. I know because when I came home, she ran up to me and moved her leg and said, “U ain’t nufun but a hound dog.”

I did not know Marsha knew a little Elvis. I did not know that she would one day paint beautiful oil paintings. I did not know she would one day be an avid sports fan for our children.

What do you know about your spouse? Your close friend? Your parents? What do you know about the Bible? Just who is the Holy Spirit???!?!?

Your view of the Holy Spirit will affect:

- how you pray;
- what you expect God to do;
- your view of suffering;
- your eternal security;
- your spiritual wish list;
- the measuring rod for your spiritual growth.

What the Bible teaches about the Holy Spirit is not an insignificant issue, even though many of the issues related to Him are not heaven or hell issues.

Now, the first thing to discover and understand is the role of Acts in the New Testament. We need to understand that Acts is the bridge between the Old Covenant and the New Covenant; between Judaism and Christianity; between the life of Christ and the life of the church; between the introduction of the church and the instruction that the church receives. It describes many of the transitions that took place in the life of the new believers.

For instance, in the Old Covenant, God’s people did not wear, practice, say, or eat certain things. And I must tell you that I have just discovered a new deli. This past Thursday, I had their regular sized turkey club on sour dough bread. It comes warm, with the cheese melted on the thin layers of turkey. There is some sprout looking stuff that I scrape off, and near

the top are a few strips of bacon. I ate most of that bacon without ever doubting my place in heaven. I might get there quicker, but I did not lose my security.

Why? Because in this transitional book of Acts (chapter 10), Peter receives a vision from God related to all the unclean foods in the Old Testament – they were now considered clean. So pork rinds are okay. It might clog the arteries, but it will not condemn your soul.

The book of Acts reveals numerous events, miracles, and experiences that were part of God’s plan for His people, as they moved into a brand new era.

### **Charismatic response to the book of Acts as a bridge**

Now, the charismatic world would immediately respond to that statement with one or two statements.

#### **Don’t put God in a box; don’t limit God**

1. One statement is, “Don’t put God in a box; don’t limit God.”

Does that mean not to limit God in everything or just in areas they think I may be restricting Him?

I am frankly thrilled that God has some divinely self-imposed limitations. He has chosen to limit the fury of His wrath against me to a space in time of about seven feet high and five feet wide – namely, the cross of Jesus Christ, and upon the Savior hanging there.

I am forever grateful that He has chosen to limit His memory so as to forget all my iniquities.

I am grateful that God chooses to divinely restrict the revelation of His brilliant glory at this moment, lest this auditorium explode with such incredible light that we would be immediately blinded, if not reduced to little piles of smoldering ashes.

So when you say, “Look, I don’t like you limiting God,” let us be honest enough to admit that you are talking of God’s unlimited actions in areas that you want.

#### **Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever**

2. Another thought is, “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.”

That happens to be a verse of scripture, from Hebrews, chapter 13, verse 8. This passage defines the immutability of Jesus Christ. In essence and by His eternal existence, He was God in eternity past, He is God, and He will be God throughout eternity future. Jesus Christ is the visible, physical incarnation of God, “For in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form” (Colossians 2:9).

The charismatic community and I would all heartily sign our names to that confession. However, the charismatic community take that verse as a proof text for the continued ministry of Jesus through signs and wonders and miracles. In other words, what Jesus did in Acts through the church is exactly what He is doing today, for “[He] is the same yesterday and today and forever.”

Now, we are no longer talking about His essence; His deity, we are really talking about His function.

## Changes Concerning Christ’s Function

There are at least four significant changes related to the function of Christ.

### There is a change in Jesus’ position

1. There is a change in Jesus’ position (sphere or location).

John, chapter 16, verse 28, tells us,

*I came forth from the Father and have come into the world; I am leaving the world again, and going to the Father.*

Look back at verse 7 of John, chapter 16, which says,

*But I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper shall not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you.*

Then, look at Ephesians, chapter 2, verses 4 through 6,

*But God . . . made us alive together with Christ . . . and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places, in Christ Jesus*

Furthermore, there is a variety in the appearances and focus of Christ’s person and ministry. In:

- the Old Testament – He is the angel of the Lord;

- the Gospels – He is the teaching, dying Messiah;
- Acts – He is the commissioning, ascending Son;
- the Epistles – He is the interceding chief Shepherd;
- Revelation – He is the conquering, reigning King.

### There is a change in Jesus’ commission

2. Secondly, there is a change in Jesus’ commission.

Look at Matthew, chapter 10, verses 5 and 6.

*These twelve Jesus sent out after instructing them: “Do not go into the way of the Gentiles, and do not enter any city of the Samaritans”*

Then, look at Acts, chapter 1, verse 8.

*. . . and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria . . .*

Did Jesus change? Did He finally feel sorry enough for the poor Samaritans that He finally said, “All right, I guess you can go to the Samaritans now!”?

No! We simply understand the changing nature of His plan for the evangelization of the world, “first for the Jew, then for the Gentile.”

### There is a change in Jesus’ revelation and influence

3. Thirdly, there is a change in Jesus’ revelation and influence.

In:

- the Gospels – His life is revealed;
- Acts – His power is revealed;
- the Epistles – His leadership is revealed;
- Revelation – His judgment is revealed.

### There is a change in Jesus’ activity

4. Fourthly, there is a change in Jesus’ activity.

In:

- the Gospels – He is crucified and resurrected;
- Acts – He ascends;

- the Epistles – He is interceding;
- Revelation – He is returning.

### **There are changes in Jesus' form of instruction**

5. There are also, for the believer, changes in Jesus' form of instruction.

In:

- the Gospels – Christ is a model of authentic, pure religion;
- Acts – the church receives an example of Christianity;
- the Epistles – the church receives an explanation of Christianity;
- Revelation – believers receive the fulfillment of Christianity.

Is Jesus Christ the same yesterday and today and forever? As to His deity and decree, *yes!* That is what we call the immutability of Christ. But as to His program for mankind; as to His own function, location, and ministry, there are vast changes revealed in the progression of His own written revelation.

Now there are movements that want to put the church back into the Old Testament.

I am confident the church is not found in the book of Leviticus, therefore I enjoyed, this past week, a delicious ham sandwich. That is also the reason I am worshiping the Lord on Sunday instead of Saturday. Let us face it, when was the last time you sacrificed a turtle dove?

Prosperity preachers constantly take Old Testament commands and covenant promises that were given to the Jew, and apply them to the New Testament Christian. That will do nothing but lead to despair, however.

Abraham was promised prosperity as a result of obedience. In the New Testament, we are promised maturity as a result of suffering.

God said that Adam would, “. . . rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky . . .”, as recorded in Genesis, chapter 1, verse 26. Adam indeed, had perfect control over the newly created animal kingdom. I have a bird – a little parakeet. I certainly do not rule over that rebellious creature. She is not even impressed that I am a pastor. When I walk by, she usually hisses at me and pecks at her little swing. I am convinced she is an apostate bird! I have

no more control over that bird than I do the weather. Adam had perfect control over creation.

There are movements that want to place the church in the book of Revelation, in chapters 4 through 18, when God's wrath is revealed from heaven on the world. If that is the case, then I would be a fool to not be preparing an underground cellar and have it stocked with dry foods to feed my family during the time of the tribulation.

There are movements that want to place the experiences of the church inside the pages of Acts. They then live with the frustration of not being able to fully experience the power of the apostles and the early church.

## **Three Basic Principles**

There needs to be an understanding of some basic principles. Without them, you will be like a rowboat that is in a stormy sea without oars or a rudder and is tossed about with every wind of doctrine.

### **We are to follow the teaching of the apostles, not teach the experiences of the apostles**

1. The first principle is that we are to follow the teaching of the apostles, not teach the experiences of the apostles.

Perhaps you are thinking, “That’s just because you don’t believe in miracle workers and tongue speakers.”

Well, let us look at the list of some of the signs and experiences of the apostles. Mark’s gospel spells it out. Look at chapter 16, verse 20, which refers to the apostolic community.

*And they went out and preached everywhere, while the Lord worked with them, and confirmed the word by the signs that followed.*

Look back at verses 17b and 18.

*. . . in My name they will cast out demons, they will speak with new tongues; they will pick up serpents, and if they drink any deadly poison, it shall not hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover.*

These verses include five signs, gifts, or wonders to be used during this period of transition to confirm the message that the apostles preached. You cannot pick and choose these, either they all are operative

today, or none are. They were past tense confirming signs.

### **In the absence of the written word of God, supernatural signs confirmed the message of God**

2. A second principle is that in the absence of the written word of God, supernatural signs confirmed the message of God.

Look at Hebrews, chapter 2, verses 3 and 4.

*how will we escape if we neglect so great a salvation? After it was at the first spoken through the Lord, it was confirmed to us by those who heard [apostles], God also testifying with them, both by signs and wonders and by various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit . . .*

I believe that the five signs and miracles listed in Mark, chapter 16, verses 17 and 18, are among those in the implication of Hebrews, chapter 2.

Does that mean that God does not miraculously heal people today? No, He still does! Does that mean that God does not release people from the demonizing bondage of the underworld at the moment of salvation? No, He still does!

It is interesting that we can piece together from later passages, that even the apostles changed in their use of signs and wonders. For example, Paul healed extensively in his early ministry. In fact, Acts, chapter 19, verse 11, informs us that handkerchiefs that had touched Paul's body could heal a sick person. However, later in Paul's ministry, he offers medical advice to Timothy who is sick (I Timothy 5:23). Why didn't Paul just touch and heal him? Paul's co-worker Epaphroditus nearly died of some sickness (Philippians 2). Why didn't Paul give him a handkerchief? In the last book that Paul wrote, he says (II Timothy 4:20), ". . . Trophimus I left sick at Miletus."

### **As the written word came to its completion, the miraculous witness of the apostles diminished**

3. The third principle is that as the written word came to its completion, the miraculous witness of the apostles diminished.

To apply miraculous powers and signs, such as healing and tongues, to the permanent ministry of the apostles is not born out by scripture. And certainly it cannot be applied to the Charismatic community

either. Several years ago, Pentecostals held a world conference in Jerusalem to celebrate the "ongoing miracle of Pentecost." It was ironic that all the delegates had to have interpreters and headphones in order to hear and understand in their own language, which is exactly the opposite of what occurred in the first and final Pentecost.

I want to take this a step further. To apply the experiences of the apostles to the experiences of all believers is not only impossible, but dangerous! Why?! A child died a year ago because the parents refused medical help and instead, relied upon their prayer of faith for healing alone. Two years ago, I read about three church leaders who died from venom after handling snakes in their worship service. There have even been deaths by those who drank poison to prove their baptism of the Holy Spirit and their power.

I will at least grant them a measure of consistency not known by the Charismatic world at large, who have selectively chosen a few of the signs and miracles for today, while leaving the more dramatic signs alone.

## **Four Instances of Spirit Baptism**

Now, let us address the question of Acts, chapters 8, 10, and 19. These chapters include three instances of the Holy Spirit entering the scene at the hands of the apostles. There are four passages, including Acts, chapter 2, that refer to an outpouring or manifestation of the Holy Spirit in the book of Acts. What is going on?

We need to understand first, that each of these four instances are different. In fact, the reason why there is so much division, even in the Charismatic or Third Wave Movement, concerning the formula for Holy Spirit power, is because Acts does not provide a formula. Let us look at these four instances.

### **Pentecost (Acts 2:1-4)**

1. The first manifestation of the Holy Spirit was on the day of Pentecost, as we are told in Acts, chapter 2, verses 1 through 4.

Look at these verses.

*When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly there came from heaven a noise like a violent rushing wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. And there appeared to them tongues as of fire distributing*

*themselves, and they rested on each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit was giving them utterance.*

Skip to verse 38.

*Peter said to them, “Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”*

The order of events includes: preaching in tongues by the apostles, repentance, water baptism, reception of the Holy Spirit.

### **Samaria (Acts 8:14-17)**

2. The second outpouring of the Holy Spirit is recorded in Acts, chapter 8, verses 14 through 17.

Turn to these verses.

*Now when the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent them Peter and John, who came down and prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit. For He had not yet fallen upon any of them; they had simply been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then they began laying their hands on them, and they were receiving the Holy Spirit.*

The order of events includes: preaching, repentance, water baptism, prayer by the apostles, laying on of hands, reception of the Holy Spirit. There was no speaking in tongues; there was water baptism; a delay of the Holy Spirit after conversion, until Peter and John arrive.

### **Caesarea (Acts 10:44-48)**

3. The third manifestation of the Holy Spirit is recorded in Acts, chapter 10, verses 44 through 48.

Look at these verses.

*While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who were listening to the message. All the circumcised believers who came with Peter were amazed, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also. For they were hearing them speaking with tongues and exalting God. Then Peter answered,*

*“Surely no one can refuse the water for these to be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we did, can he?” And he ordered them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked him to stay on for a few days.*

The order of events includes: preaching, reception of the Holy Spirit, speaking in tongues, water baptism. There is no laying on of hands; no delay; no prayer to receive the Holy Spirit; no water baptism after tongues.

### **Ephesus (Acts 19:1-6)**

4. The fourth outpouring of the Holy Spirit is found in Acts, chapter 19, verse 1 through 6.

Let us read these verses.

*. . . Paul passed through the upper country and came to Ephesus, and found some disciples. He said to them, “Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?” And they said to him, “No, we have not heard whether there is a Holy Spirit.” And he said, “Into what then were you baptized?” And they said, “Into John’s baptism.” Paul said, “John baptized with the baptism of repentance, telling the people to believe in Him who was coming after him, that is, in Jesus.” When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they began speaking with tongues and prophesying.*

The order of events includes: preaching, repentance, water baptism, baptism of the Holy Spirit, speaking in tongues and prophesying. There was no influence by Peter and John; there was a delay of the Holy Spirit dependant upon Paul’s laying on of hands; tongues came after water baptism.

To say that these manifestations of the Holy Spirit provide a model for the believer is to be in deep trouble. Let me list a few questions we would have:

- Do we need the laying on of hands?
- Do we baptize new converts by water first, telling them the Spirit will baptize them later?
- Do we wait until new converts have been baptized by the Spirit before we baptize them with water?

- Do we expect new converts who have been baptized by the Spirit to speak in tongues or not?
- Do we expect new converts who have been baptized by the Spirit to prophesy in addition to tongues?
- If new converts who have been baptized by the Spirit express prophecy and not tongues, was it real?
- Is the baptism of the Spirit to be prayed for by others or should it simply follow the preaching of repentance?

The reason for so much confusion is that the book of Acts did not intend to provide an ongoing model for us. These were unique experiences during the transitional period when the people of God moved from the Old to the New Covenant; from Sabbath to Sunday; from law to grace; from animal sacrifice to Christ's sacrifice; from Judaism to Christianity.

What do the epistles teach and explain? Let me give several points:

- Repentance and conversion!
- Simultaneous baptism by means of the Spirit into the Body!
- Water baptism, which identifies (not saves) the believer with Christ!

Romans, chapter 8, verse 9, in fact, tells us that it is impossible to be saved without the work of the Holy Spirit. Look at that verse.

*However, you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him.*

### **Three Illustrations of Spiritual Unity**

So, just what can we understand to be the reason for the dependency upon the apostles, and the delay of the Holy Spirit, and the outward manifestation of tongues on at least three occasions, upon the new converts.

#### **The unity of the new church is revealed to be by means of apostolic authority**

1. First, the passages we have read reveal and illustrate the unity of the new church by means of apostolic authority.

In:

- Acts 2 – the twelve apostles spoke in languages previously unlearned;
- Acts 8 – Peter and John came and presided over the Samaritan revival;
- Acts 10 – Peter presides over the Spirit “baptism” of the first Gentile;
- Acts 19 – Paul is seen with equal authority in presiding over Spirit “baptism” in Ephesus.

The apostles bestowed the Spirit in both Jew and Samaritan and Gentile converts. This reveals the unity of this new organism, called the church.

#### **The authority of Paul is seen as equal to that of Peter**

2. Secondly, the authority of Paul (Acts 19) is seen as equal to that of Peter (Acts 10).

Paul's words to the church were confirmed by his power and authority, in the same way Peter's were confirmed. Those who seek the subsequent baptism of the Spirit, as an act of emotion, or seek the gift of speaking in tongues, and claim that Acts, chapters 10 and 19 are for the believer's experience today, have seemingly overlooked the fact that there are no apostles living in Jerusalem who can do that for them.

We have unity in the church today, by our confession and belief in the apostles teaching, which is the New Testament. We have the inspired letters of the apostles, while the early church had the living apostles. Unity comes from our adherence and obedience and commitment to infallible scripture.

#### **The sign gift of tongues was expressed by both Jew and Gentile**

3. Thirdly, the sign gift of tongues was expressed by both Jew (Acts 2) and Gentile (Acts 10, 19).

Now, we are not to view these three instances as additional Pentecosts. The Spirit did not descend then ascend and then descend to Samaria, then descend to Caesarea, then to Ephesus. The Spirit descended once on the day of Pentecost. Pentecost was an historical event, never to be repeated, just as Christ was crucified once, for all. Christ is not re-crucified every time a person places their faith in Him. So also, the Spirit does not descend each time someone trusts Christ.



The Holy Spirit descended once. He is extended many times over. In fact:

- The Holy Spirit came in Acts, chapter 2, to the Jew!
- The Holy Spirit moved onto the scene in Acts, chapter 8, to the mixed race of Jew and Gentile!
- The Holy Spirit moved onto the scene in Acts, chapters 10 and 19, to the pure Gentile!

These events in Acts signaled that the church was neither Jew nor Gentile.

## The Present Ministry of the Spirit

So for us today, what does the Holy Spirit do? Approximately thirty-five different ministries have been identified as the work of the Holy Spirit in the New Testament. I will give you six of them today, along with a reference for you to study.

The first two things the Holy Spirit does need to be contrasted in order to be understood. The Charismatic, Third Wave, Vineyard movements have consistently confused the baptism of the Spirit and the filling of the Spirit. What you believe about these two activities has far reaching implications. Let me diagram the differences.

Baptism of the Spirit	Domination/Filling of the Spirit
<p><b>A past act</b></p> <p>I Corinthians 12:13 – “For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.”</p> <p>(This is a fact, not a feeling.)</p>	<p><b>A present, ongoing experience</b></p> <p>Ephesians 5:18 – “And do not get drunk with wine (under its influence), for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit (under His influence)”</p>
<p><b>Immersion into the Body of Christ</b></p> <p>Romans 6:4 – “Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in</p>	<p><b>Cooperation with the will of Christ</b></p> <p>I Corinthians 6:19-20 – “Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? For you have been</p>

newness of life.”	bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body.”
<p><b>The fruit of baptism</b></p> <p>I John 2:20,27 – anointing</p> <p>I Corinthians 2:14 – instruction</p> <p>Ephesians 1:13 – sealing</p> <p>I Corinthians 3:16 – indwelling</p>	<p><b>The fruit of filling (control)</b></p> <p>Galatians 5:22-23 – “. . . love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control . . .”</p>

## Two Other Baptisms in the New Testament

Now, the New Testament talks about two other baptisms. Let me give them to you.

### The baptism of sin upon Christ at Calvary

1. There is the baptism of sin upon Christ at Calvary.

Look at Luke, chapter 12, verse 50, when Jesus, referring to the cross, says,

*But I have a baptism to undergo, and how distressed I am until it is accomplished!*

John said that Jesus would baptize us with the Holy Spirit and with fire.

### The baptism of God’s wrath upon unbelievers

2. Secondly, there is the baptism of God’s wrath upon unbelievers.

Look at Matthew, chapter 3, verses 11 and 12, which clearly explain this. Begin with verse 11.

*As for me, I baptize you with water for repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, and I am not fit to remove His sandals; He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.*

The Charismatic movement applies the first baptism literally and the second metaphorically. I believe that both baptisms are to be understood literally.

Matthew answers any questions about this second baptism, the baptism of fire, that is not related to the

tongues of fire at Pentecost, but a fire that never ends – the eternal fire of hell. In fact, all you have to do is read the very next phrase, in verse 12, to come to the correct interpretation.

***His winnowing fork is in His hand, and He will thoroughly clear His threshing floor; and He will gather His wheat into the barn, but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.***

That is quite clear, isn't it?

Turn to the book of Revelation. Chapter 20, verses 14 and 15, spell out the future horror of that baptismal place.

***Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. And if anyone's name was not***

***found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.***

Ladies and gentlemen, Jesus Christ promised that He would baptize with the Holy Spirit – that happens to everyone who believes in His name. He has also promised a coming baptism with fire, which is judgement for those who have rejected Him.

So, all who are hearing this are clearly divided into two groups of people:

- those who have been baptized with the Holy Spirit;
- those who will be baptized with eternal fire.

In which category are you?!

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