Much of the confusion in Christianity today comes from a desire to get holy in a hurry. People would rather have a short-lived experience than a long-lived obedience. But there is no shortcut to sanctification.

Dive into the second part of the "Holy Confusion" sermon series, exploring the challenges and misconceptions surrounding the ministry of the Holy Spirit. Gain insights into the transitional nature of the Book of Acts and the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Discover how God speaks to us today through His Word and the inner peace of Christ. Uncover the significance of different baptisms mentioned in Scripture and the eternal consequences they entail. Join us as we seek clarity in an era of confusion and pursue a deeper understanding of God's plan for our lives.

**Transcript**

**Holy Confusion, Part II**

I have been overwhelmed by the number of comments based on our discussion last Lord’s day.  The two things just about everybody told me was  1) I didn’t give out enough information. 2)  There was just too much space for writing in in the study notes and, 3) I just talked too slowly.

So I’ll try to do better this morning.  I’m actually going to several of the basic principles and elaborate a little more than last Sunday.

As I opened our discussion last time, I made the statement, and even entitled our series with my firm belief that we are living in an era of the evangelical church that could easily be called, The Era of Holy Confusion.

The treatment and interpretation of scripture by third wave movements (that is, tongues speaking, charismatic, holiness, vineyard, etc.) is a treatment that I believe leads to such confusion.

First of all, I want to re-iterate as we study together that I am not questioning a charismatics salvation.  I have no doubt from what I’ve researched and the conversations I’ve had and the pastors and individuals that I know from such movements, that they hold to a correct doctrine of soteriology - or the doctrine of salvation.

I am, somewhat concerned with the way speaking in tongues seemed to be tacked on as a proof of conversion.

Secondly, I am not doubting the charismatics sincerity either.  I know many people involved with third wave organizations and churches and they are among the most sincere believers you will find anywhere.

However, as I stated in our last discussion, sincerity is never the litmus test for accuracy.

Furthermore, miraculous or otherwise unexplainable experiences are also not  litmus tests for true Biblical faith.

One of the most shocking revelations of the final judgment is found in

[***Matthew 7:15-23***](https://www.esv.org/verses/Matthew%207%3A15-23/)

***“Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves. . . Not everyone who says to Me, “Lord, Lord,” will enter the kingdom of heaven . . . many will say to Me on that day, “Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?”  And then I will declare to them, “I never knew you, depart from Me . . .”***

If anything, what this passage ought to do is raise within every believer a warning signal, not a welcome embrace of all who claim the name of Jesus.

Even those who claim to prophecy, perform miracles and excercise control over demons.  And I find it interesting that in this passage, the Lord never denies the validity of their experience!  He simply suggests that their expereinces were not empowered by Him, but instead, these false prophets, miracle workers were indeed empowered by the underworld.

So, while we ought to be thinking critically, and even engage an air of suspicion, we have instead become sentimental - “Well, I know that person means well - surely it can’t be all bad - just think of the people that he or she is telling about Christ - what’s the harm in it?

When it comes to articulating and defending Biblcial truth, the writers of the New Testament are not sentimental - they are scorching with their call to discernment.

[I John 4:1](https://www.esv.org/verses/I%20John%204%3A1/)

***Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God; becuase many false prophets have gone out into the world.***

Listen to Paul exhort the elders in Ephesus:

***28 “Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. 29 “I know that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; 30 and from among your own selves men will arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them. 31 “Therefore be on the alert, remembering that night and day for a period of three years I did not cease to admonish each one with tears.***

Notice v. 29. “I KNOW!”  Not think - hope not!  But KNOW!

And did you notice where the false teachers come from???  From among your own selves!  From within the church, the false prophets will arise.

You say, how do you know who they are:

            The only way is to measure them against the Word.

How does a bank teller learn to spot a counterfeit bill - from what I’ve read, after they spend so much time handling true currency, the counterfeit stands out clearly.

You will not know how to spot them if you are not handling the scritpures regularly and testing them against this.

Read the Book of Jude sometime: he provides some of the telltale signs

**Characteristics of False Prophets:**

-indulging in gross immorality

-rejecting authority          -commanding demons                  -following after their own lusts

-flattering people for the sake of gain

-speaking arrogantly

By the way, church history tells us that it didn’t take very long before that very thing came true.

Christian History Magazine, a subsidiary of Christianity Today, published this article recently, entitled, **“Testing the Prophets”**

Around the year 157, in the Roman province of Asia Minor, a professing christian named Montanus began to prophesy ecstatically.  Claiming the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, he was soon joined by two prophetesses, Maximilla and Priscilla who claimed to be the last in a succession of prophets.   Maximilla was the leading prophet spokesman.  She said they were called to summon all believers to righteous preparation for the heavenly descent of the New Jerusalem.  By 170 A.D. this “New Prophecy” movement as it was known, spread.  One convert to Montanism wrote of Maximilla, “We have now amongst us a sister whose lot it has been to be favored with gifts of revelation, which she experiences in the Spirit by ecstatic visions.  She converses with angels and sometimes even with the Lord.”   Eventually church leaders began to speak out.  They were troubled by the word of God being seen as less important as the Montanists revelations.  They were personally embarrased by the prophetesses “died hair, painted eyelids and love of adornment.”  Some things never change.  They were also troubled by the Montanists lack of financial accountability. Eventually, Montanists came to be referred to as that “lying organization, even though their churches rang with the noises of the New Prophecy.”  While Montanists claimed direct revelations from God and teaching from God’s Spirit that was “fresh truth, for these last days,”  eventually the movement died out.  However, it took 300 years before the movement died out - the primary reason?  The prophecies of Maximilla didn’t come true.

Holy Confusion has always been a threat to the New Testament believer.

We are living in a day when people are craving evidences, miracles and proof and fresh revelation from God.

Much of the defense for such a pursuit comes directly from the Book of Acts.

And I’m grateful for that becuase that gives us the opportunity to go to the scriptures for ourselves to see if those things are so.

By the way:  Our challenge today is not to avoid truth that is controversial, but to study to show thyself approved unto God a workman that needs never be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

And most of the problem comes right there- in dividing or interpreting the word of truth.  Especially the word of truth found in the Book of Acts.

The most controversial portions of Acts relate to the Baptism of the Holy Spirit.   Differing interpretations of Scripture related to the “baptism” and ministry of the Holy Spirit create differing expectations as to the Christian life as well as an incredible host of public and personal experiences.

Since the Book of Acts introduces us to the Person of the Holy Spirit; we began last Lord’s day

with an overview of the Book of Acts.     **SHOW THE BRIDGE**

We need to understand the wonderful transition that Acts played between two vast era’s.  Judaism and Christianity; between the Old Covenant and the New - between the synagogue and the church.  Even the transition in the things a believer could eat and wear and become involved in.

Oh, by the way, I had someone come up to me after the third hour and ask directions to Slotchky’s Deli - come to find out the place was packed with Colonial people - one of our elders was at Slotchky’s and he told me that the place was filled with Colonial people.  He even told the manager that the reason business was booming was becuase I mentioned in my sermon that I liked Slotchky’s turkey clubs - the manager told him to tell me I can have one on the house.  It makes me feel so good to see you immediately applying the heart of my message - all I did was say I liked it - we were joking about it in the office this past week and Pastor Brian, our Student Pastor said, “Hey, next time I preach, I’m going to say I like Pontiacs.”  Good luck!

This is a good time to review many of the changes about the ministry of Christ as well:

For those in third wave movements love to quote, “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever.”

That verse from [Hebrews 13](https://www.esv.org/verses/Hebrews%2013/) 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 - For in Him all the fullness of deity dwells in bodily form. ([Colossians 2:9](https://www.esv.org/verses/Colossians%202%3A9/))

The Charismatic community and I would all heartily sign our names to that confession.

However, the charismatic community (third wave movements, the vineyard, neopentecostals, etc) 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, today and forever.

**Well, there are at least 4 significant changes related to the function of Christ**

**1)  There is a change in Jesus’ position (sphere/location)**

            I also mentioned some of the changes in the appearances of Christ:

            -In the O.T.        -           He was the angel of the Lord

            -In the Gospels    -           He was the teaching, dying Messiah

            -In Acts             -           He was the commissioning, ascending Son

            -In the Epistels    -           He is the interceding Chief Shepherd

            -In Revelation     -           He will be the conquering, reigning King

**2)  There is a change in Jesus’ commission**

***“These 12 Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, “Do not go into the way of the***

***Gentiles, and do not enter into any city of the Samaritans...”***              [Matthew 10:5-6](https://www.esv.org/verses/Matthew%2010%3A5-6/)

yet Christ changes His commision in [Acts 1](https://www.esv.org/verses/Acts%201/) as He commands

***“...and you shall be my witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria...”***

**3.  There is a change in Jesus’ revelation and instruction**

            Again, the transitioning of Christ’s revelation produces the following:

            In the Gospels the church is given a model of authentic Christianity

            In the Book of Acts, the church observes an example of Christianity

            In the Epistles, the church recieves an explanation of Christianity

            In Revelation, the church experiences the fulfillment of Christianity

**4.  There is a change in Jesus’ Activity:**

Is Jesus Christ the same yesterday, today and forever.  As to His deity and decree, YES!  That’s 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.

For instance: God commanded Adam, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth.”  Is that a command for us today as well?  I heard several years ago a well known Bible teacher who teaches literally thousands of people every year in his seminar saying, “Yes!”  It is God’s will for every believing couple to have children and every couple ought to strive to match the example of Jacob and have 12.   Certainly, I agree with the fact that barreness in the Old Testament was tantamount to God’s judgment.  A sign of obedience to God for the O.T. believer was a full quiver - however, in the New Testament, while children are seen as a blessing from the Lord - and we’ll continue to expand the nursery facilities to try and keep up with the blessing.  But a command?  In the N.T. we are never commanded to reproduce physically - however we are commanded to reproduce spiritually.  “Go therefore and make disciples” is the New Testament command.

You say, but Stephen, I agree with you about Adam and Jacob, but the Apostles lived in the New Testament; why can’t I do everything they did?  Well, I invite you to go ahead and try - and you will soon see that you can’t raise the dead as Peter and Paul did; and your handkerchiefs don’t do anything.

The question related to Adam and Abraham and the Apostles, is not, “Why can’t I do what they did,”  but  “Why did they do what they did.”

There needs to be an understanding of several basic principles.  Without them you will be like a rowboat in a stormy sea without a rudder or oars - tossed about with every fads and whims of the 3rd wave.

**PRINCIPLE:  In the absence of the written Word of God, supernatural signs confirmed the message of God.**[***Hebrews 2:3***](https://www.esv.org/verses/Hebrews%202%3A3/)***sais, "How shall 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 bearing witness with them, both by signs and wonders and by various miracles***

***and by gifts of the Holy Spirit.”***

Does that mean that God doesn’t miraculously heal people today?  He sure does!  Does that mean that God doesn’t release people from the demonizing bondage of the underworld at the moment of salvation?  He sure does.

But to apply the experiences of the Apostles to the expereinces of all believers is as wrong as any Israelite going out to the Red Sea and commanding it to open wide.

**PRINCIPLE: As the written Word came to it’s completion, the miraculous witness of the Apostles diminished.**

It's interesting that we can even piece together from later passages show that even the Apostles changed in their use of signs and wonders.

Paul healed extensively in his early minstry; in fact, [Acts 19](https://www.esv.org/verses/Acts%2019/) informs us that handkerchief’s that had touched Paul’s body could heal a sick person.  However, later in Paul’s sunset ministry, he seemed unable to offer his healing touch - to Timothy; Epaphroditus and Trophimus.

To apply these miraculous powers and signs such as healing to the permanent ministry of the Apostles is not even born out by scripture.

**PRINCIPLE:  We are to follow the teaching of the Apostles, not teach the experiences of the Apostles’.**

Last time we looked at five of the powerful signs of an Apostolic witness; [Mark 16:17](https://www.esv.org/verses/Mark%2016%3A17/) - "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.

FIVE SIGNS/GIFTS/WONDERS - to be used during this period of transition to confirm the message these apostles preached.

You can't pick and choose - they were past tense confirming signs - oh and by the way, there isn’t anything in the text to indicate that you can choose a few of them for the 20th century and leave the rest alone . . . either they all are operative today or none are.

**Transition:  Now, we looked briefly at**[**Acts 8, 10**](https://www.esv.org/verses/Acts%208%2C%2010/)**and 19.**

These are three instances of the Holy Spirit entering the scene at the hands’ of the Apostles.  Four passages, including Acts chapter 2,  that refer to an outpouring or manifestation of the Holy Spirit in the Book of Acts.

These passages are also the primary proof texts used  by the third wave to teach that the baptism of the  Holy Spirit is an experience that takes place after salvation.

What’s going on.  First of all, we need to understand 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 becuase Acts does not provide a formula.

To say that Acts provides a model for the believer is create deep confusion.  (By  comparing each instance as we did last Sunday, we came up with the following questions, not clarifications:

            **In order to be baptized by means of the Spirit;**

            Do we need an apostle present - as they did? (in all four)

            Do we need the laying on of hands as they did?  ([Acts 8](https://www.esv.org/verses/Acts%208/) but not ch. 10)

            Are we to expect the new convert who has been baptized by the Spirit to speak in                                    tongues or not (in chapters 2, 10 and 19 they did but not in ch. 8).

            Do we expect them to prophecy as well?  (In chapter 19 they did but not in ch. 8 or 10)

            What if they prophecy but don’t speak in tongues, was it real.

The reason for so much confusion is that the Bible did not intend to provide an ongoing model.  These were unique experiences during the transitional period of the people of God.

So just what can we understand to be the reason for this dependancy upon the Apostles and the delay of the Holy Spirit, and the outward manifestation of tongues on at least 3 occasions by the new converts.

These unique instances provided an illustration for the new church - an illustration of unity:

**-by means of Apostolic authority**

            [Acts 2](https://www.esv.org/verses/Acts%202/) - the twelve Apostles were present     [Acts 8](https://www.esv.org/verses/Acts%208/) - Peter and John were  involved

            [Acts 10](https://www.esv.org/verses/Acts%2010/) - Peter was directly involved          [Acts 19](https://www.esv.org/verses/Acts%2019/) - Paul is involved

By the way: for those who seek the subsequent baptism of the Spirit, as an experience after conversion,  who claim that [Acts 8, 10](https://www.esv.org/verses/Acts%208%2C%2010/) and 19 are the model for the believer’s experience today, they seem to overlook the fact that there aren’t any Apostles living in Jerusalem who can come do that for them.

**The authority of Paul (**[**Acts 19**](https://www.esv.org/verses/Acts%2019/)**) is seen as equal to that of Peter (**[**Acts 10**](https://www.esv.org/verses/Acts%2010/)**).**  Therefore what Paul had to say to the church was confirmed by his power and authority just as Peter was confirmed.

**-The sign gift of tongues was expressed by both Jew (**[**Acts 2**](https://www.esv.org/verses/Acts%202/)**) and Gentile (**[**Acts 10, 19**](https://www.esv.org/verses/Acts%2010%2C%2019/)**)**

We are not to view these four instances as additional Pentecosts.  The Spirit did not descend then ascend and then descend to Samaria, then descend to Ceasarea, then to Ephesus.

You could underscore it best with the following diagram:

            **SHOW DIAGRAM**

Diagram explained:

The Spirit descended once - Pentecost was an historical even, never to be repeated, just as Christ was crucified once, for all.  He is not re-crucified every time a person places their faith in Him.  So also, the Spirit doesn’t descend each time someone trusts Christ.

The Spirit descended once.  He is extended many times over.

Now - let me summarize - Why all the holy confusion today?

**Most of the confusion related to the ministry of the Holy Spirit is a result of this:**

1)The third wave movement has misunderstood the transitional nature of the Book of Acts.

            (frustrated while trying to duplicate the miraculous nature of a foundational era)

2) Secondly, the third wave (charismatics; neo-pentecostals; vineyard and assemblies) consistently confuse the baptism of the Spirit and the filling of the Spirit.  And what you believe about those two activities have far reaching implications.

Let me diagram the differences.

**Baptism of the Sprit                    Domination/Filling of the Spirit**

**a past act                                   a present, ongoing experience**

[I Cor. 12:13](https://www.esv.org/verses/I%20Cor.%2012%3A13/)                                 [Eph. 5:18](https://www.esv.org/verses/Eph.%205%3A18/)

For by one Spirit we were all          And be not drunk with wine (under it’s

baptized into one body, whether      influence) but be filled with the Spirit

Jews or Greeks, whether slaves       (under His influence).  a command;

or free, and we were all made to      present tense - continuous action.

drink of one Spirit.

**Immersion into the Body of Christ**

[Romans 6:4](https://www.esv.org/verses/Romans%206%3A4/)

The Baptism of the Holy Spirit into the body of Christ at conversion is a fact, not a feeling.

One author writes “This spiritual baptism is what connects us with all other believers in Christ and makes us part of Christ's own body.”

By the way, [Romans 8](https://www.esv.org/verses/Romans%208/) tells us that it is impossible to be saved without the work of the Holy Spirit -***9.  But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him.***

(However to be dominated by the Spirit means to be **In Cooperation with the will of Christ**

[***I Cor. 6:19***](https://www.esv.org/verses/I%20Cor.%206%3A19/)***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?  20.  For you have been bought with a***

***price; therefore glorify God in your body.***

Much of the Holy confusion has been fed by a desire to get holy in a hurry.  There is a quick approach to spirituality offered by the third wave - to have a short lived experience rather than a long lived obedience.

One healing evangelist out of Odlahoma plays a reading of the entire New Testament at a rapic speed on a 60 minute cassette.  her brochures promise that “positive suggestions are being stored in your belief system at the rate of 100,000 suggestions per hour.

How easy - now you can absorb scripture without even paying attention to it.  Disciplined prayer; fervent devotion, commitment to holiness and purity, confession and all of that is replaced by cassette tapes that you can hook up to your headphones - you can now become more holy even while you asleep.

There is no such thing to a shortcut to sanctification - it’s a life time of pursuit and persistence.

**The fruit of baptism                                The fruit of filling (control)**

anointing ([I John 2:20, 27](https://www.esv.org/verses/I%20John%202%3A20%2C%2027/))                         love

instruction ([I Cor. 2:14](https://www.esv.org/verses/I%20Cor.%202%3A14/))                             joy

sealing ([Ephesians 1:13](https://www.esv.org/verses/Ephesians%201%3A13/))                            peace

indwelling ([I Cor. 3:16](https://www.esv.org/verses/I%20Cor.%203%3A16/))                             patience; kindness; goodness; faithfulness

                                                            gentleness; self-control

Look at this quote:  given to me by a staff member just this past week:  **When the Divine owner takes possession of a property, he has a two-fold objective; intense cultivation and abounding fruitfulness.**

Since we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit!  (How do you know if you’re walking by the Spirit - you will evidence the fruit of the Spirit. - He’s been at work, cultivating working!)

Remember, your body is the field of the Holy Spirit - He’s planting a spritual orchard!

But there’s more - May I remind you - **The Holy Spirit was not given to us to provide an unusual experience; but to enable consistent obedience:**

            [***Acts 1:8***](https://www.esv.org/verses/Acts%201%3A8/)***“But you shall receive power, when the Holy Spirit has come upon you and you shall be my witnesses.***  (not only will we be changed, but the Spirit through us will change the world.)

Let me get a little more practical this morning . . .**Just How does God Speak to Us Today?**

**First,**[**Col 3:15**](https://www.esv.org/verses/Col%203%3A15/)**tells us, God communicates through the inworking peace of Christ.**

***“Let the peace of  Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed yo were called in one body.”***

***Now note - the word “rule” means literally, “to umpire” to “call the shots”***

Now we might confuse our peace of mind about something with the peace of Christ, so the next half of this picture is vitally important:

**Secondly, God speakes to us through the word of Christ**

[***Col. 3:16***](https://www.esv.org/verses/Col.%203%3A16/)***.  Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you. . .***

***“Dwell” means to take up residency - to make a home inside you!***

God speaks through that inward peace, controlled and manipulated and govorned by His inspired Word.

Let me mention two other baptisms - this is free

**There are two additional baptisms mentioned . . .1) the baptism of sin upon Christ at Calvary**

[***Luke 12:50***](https://www.esv.org/verses/Luke%2012%3A50/)***- Jesus referring to the cross says, "But I have a baptism to undergo, and how distressed***

***I am until it is accomplished!"***

**2) the baptism of God's wrath upon unbelievers**

            [***Matthew 3:11-12***](https://www.esv.org/verses/Matthew%203%3A11-12/)***read together clearly explains this:***

***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 third wave movement applies the first baptism literally (the baptism of the Holy Spirit) and the second metaphorically.  They say the baptism of fire is a reference to the tongues of fire at Pentecost.

I believe that both baptisms are to be understood literally.

In fact, all you have to do is read the very next phrase to come to the correct interpretation . . .

***12.  And 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."***

Clear isn't it.

Compare this with[***Revelation 20:14-15***](https://www.esv.org/verses/Revelation%2020%3A14-15/)***And death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire.  This is the second death, the lake of fire.  15.  And if anyones 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 happened at Pentecost and it happens to everyone who believes in His name.  He has also promised a coming baptism with fire - judgement for those who've rejected him.

So the age of grace/the church age is clearly divided into two groups of people:

            Those who've been baptized with the Holy Spirit

            And those who will be baptized with eternal fire.

In which category are you?!

For those of us who have experienced the first baptism, may we take our eyes of our own selfish desires for fulfillment and comfort and spiritual ease and tune our hearts to the desperate need of those who have never experienced the Spirit’s baptism, and who, without the gospel message, will one day experience the final baptism - the baptism of everlasting fire.