

What We Teach

Spiritual Gifts, Part 1

Miraculous Gifts/Cessationism with Pastor Chris

This is a vast topic that could be an entire semester of study!

Three basic camps:

1. Cessationists; examples include Reformers and their offspring ...
2. Non-cessationists or continuationists; Charismatics, Jack Deere, John Wimber, Sam Storms.
3. Murky middle ground of “open but cautious”; John Piper, Sam Storms (?), Wayne Grudem, C.J. Mahaney.

Be leery of the following popular teachers and authors, esp. when they speak of “listening to God” or “the Lord told me ...” or “the Lord gave me a vision of ...”: Beth Moore, Charles Stanley, Mark Driscoll, John Ortberg, Larry Crabb, Henry Blackaby, Richard Foster, Dallas Willard and Matt Chandler.

Before looking at our DS, here are some working definitions:

Miracle/miraculous – suspension of normal or natural laws of nature or life by the direct, supernatural intervention of God in a way that displays His power and can’t be refuted or explained any other way.

Sign gift – a miracle that points to and authenticates a human messenger as being sent from God and therefore truthful, reliable, trustworthy.

New Testament sign gifts not only authenticated Christ and the Apostles but that they were indicative of their Messianic Kingdom offer to Israel, being a preview of coming attractions when Christ is present. Once the Kingdom offer was permanently postponed (sometime early in the book of Acts) until a future generation of Israel, the sign gifts necessarily disappeared as well.

Outside the gospels, only I Cor. 12-14 mentions sign gifts in the NT. Romans 12, written about four years later, doesn’t mention miraculous sign gifts. Eph. 4 and I Peter 4 (the only other place in the NT that speaks of spiritual gifts), written after Romans, don’t directly mention the sign gifts. In fact, I Peter 4:10-11 sets forth two normative categories of gifts: speaking and serving. Peter gives no third category of sign gifts or the miraculous.

Cessationism: The miraculous sign gifts of divine revelation and healing and works of extraordinary powers were designed to authenticate the teaching of the Apostles – which became the measure of all other teaching – and therefore ceased with the death of the Apostle John, likely even much sooner.

Tongues – the supernatural, miraculous ability to speak an existing foreign language not previously learned by normal means.

Tongue – a more recent phenomenon of a private prayer language/ecstatic speech that is not found in the Bible. The modern tongues movement began in earnest at the Azusa Street revival meetings in Los Angeles in 1906.

Prophecy – this is much debated, even among conservative cessationists, leading to three interpretations:

- a. The edifying, permanent gift of preaching. “Forth-telling” God’s truth like we find with the OT prophets as they applied God’s Law and called Israel to repent and obey.
- b. The revelatory, miraculous gift of divine revelation, found in both the OT and NT era, that was temporary and relatively rare, with standards of 100% accuracy. The NT office of Prophet then would be right behind Apostle (it’s possible every apostle had the gift of prophecy as well) and would include both “fore-telling” and “forth-telling.” Examples of NT prophets include Jesus, Agabus, Paul, Peter and John.
- c. Modern “prophetic utterances” popularized by Wayne Grudem that allows the “prophecy” to be mixed with human imagination and error, calling for “discernment” by those who hear it to separate out what is from man and what is from God. The Bible shows nothing remotely close to this viewpoint. He’s essentially taken hunches, feelings, intuition, wishes and mere human predictions and given them the label of “prophecy.”

SPIRITUAL GIFTS: We teach that gifts of the Holy Spirit were given to the Church and these gifts fell into two categories: temporary, miraculous sign gifts and permanent, edifying gifts.

We teach that miraculous sign gifts of divine revelation (defined as various kinds of tongues and interpretation of tongues, prophecy, word of wisdom and word of knowledge) and healing were given temporarily in the Apostolic Era for the purpose of confirming the authenticity of the Apostles’ preaching of Christ ([Acts 2:4, 6-8, 43; 3:1-26; II Corinthians 12:12; Ephesians 2:20-21; Hebrews 2:3-4](#)). With the passing away of the Apostles and Prophets by the end of the first century, New Testament revelation was completed and the canon of Scripture closed with the final book of Revelation ([Revelation 22:18](#)). Thus, Scripture became the sole test of the authenticity of a man’s message ([Acts 17:11; Romans 10:8-17; II Timothy 3:16 – 4:4; II Peter 19-21](#)) and miraculous sign gifts ceased. This position is commonly known as Cessationism. We teach that by the illuminating power of the Holy Spirit, the Scriptures are self-authenticating to the elect, meaning no miracles are necessary to prove their truthfulness ([John 6:44-45, 66-69; 10:1-5, 16, 27; I Corinthians 2:6-16; I Thessalonians 2:13; II Peter 1:19-21](#)). As a result no one possesses the supernatural gift of healing today, but God does hear and answer prayers offered in faith and in accordance with His own perfect will for the sick, suffering, and afflicted ([Luke 18:1-6; John 5:7-9; II Corinthians 12:6-10; Philippians 2:25-27; James 5:13-16; I John 5:14-15](#)).

We teach that the only gifts in operation today are the permanent, edifying gifts ([I Peter 4:10-11](#)). These gifts are non-revelatory, non-miraculous equipping gifts for the common good of all believers ([Romans 12:6-8](#)). Since each gift is given according to God’s sovereign will and discretion, the possession of any gift is of grace and does not constitute spiritual maturity ([Romans 12:1-21; I Corinthians 12:11-13; Ephesians 4:7-16](#)). The proper use of the gifts is for the edification of the church body into Christ-like maturity and to promote united worship of God in the congregation, giving preeminence and glory to the Lord Jesus Christ ([John 16:14; I Peter 4:10-11](#)).

12 Arguments for Cessationism:

1. The Rarity of Miracles in the Bible.

Great majority of Biblical miracles over 1,500 years of redemptive history occurred in three clusters: Moses, Elijah/Elisha and Jesus/Apostles.

The last recorded miracle in NT is around A.D. 58 on the island of Malta (until the Tribulation)!

2. The Purpose of Miracles in the Bible.

From Tim Challies, blogging from the Strange Fire conference in 2013 as Tom Pennington argued for cessationism:

“The primary purpose of miracles has always been to establish the credibility of one who speaks the word of God—not just any teacher, but those who had been given direct words by God. Notice in Exodus 4:15-17 that for Aaron to be Moses’ prophet he could not speak for himself. He could only speak what Moses told him to. This is what it means to be a prophet. But how were the people to know if a man who claimed to be a prophet was in fact speaking God’s own words? Moses brings this dilemma up with God at the beginning of chapter 4, and God answers by giving him signs.

God enabled Moses to perform miracles for one purpose only: to validate his claims to speak for God. This continues to be the purpose of miracles throughout the Old Testament. Only those who spoke authoritatively and infallibly for God were given the power of miracles.

When we come to the New Testament we discover this same pattern. The primary purpose of Jesus’ miracles was to confirm his credentials as God’s final and ultimate messenger (John 5:36; 6:14; 7:31; 10:24-26, 37-38). Jesus’ miracles were not primarily a tool for effective evangelism or about alleviating human suffering. The main reason the Holy Spirit empowered Jesus to perform miracles was to confirm that he was everything he claimed to be and that he spoke the words of God (Acts 2:22). Jesus gave this same power to the apostles, and their miracles served exactly the same purpose (Acts 14:3; cf. Hebrews 2:3-4).”

Consider Acts 3 and the sign gift of healing by Peter and John, leading right into Peter preaching Christ to his Jewish brethren, calling them to repent. The miracle drew a crowd and validated Peter as a messenger of Christ.

Since miracles were sign gifts to authenticate the Apostles’ teaching, they disappeared when the Apostles passed from the scene. See Acts 2:43 and 2 Cor. 12:11-12.

3. The Standard of Miracles Using the Bible.

Instantaneous, complete, permanent and prolific, whether faith existed or not in many cases.

Even a cursory review of Biblical miracles in comparison with miraculous claims today and it’s clear that modern “miracles” rarely if ever measure up to Biblical miracles.

4. The Fading Nature of the Gift of Healing in the Bible.

- Consider the instructions of James in ~ A.D. 55 to “anyone who is sick” – James 5:14-16
- Paul’s thorn in the flesh – 2 Cor. 12:7-10 (A.D. 56)
- Consider the implication of Epaphroditus being sick while in the presence of Paul – Phil. 2:25-27 (written A.D. 60-62)

Resource for further study:

The Healing Promise

Is it Always God’s Will to Heal?

by Richard Mayhue; \$18 on Amazon

5. The Nature of Tongues in the Bible.

SEE Acts 2:4, 6-8, 43

Strong evidence exists that tongues of fire rested upon only the apostles who then spoke in existing foreign languages. It’s not clear and obvious that all 120 persons spoke in tongues.

Plus, the clear and obvious definite of biblical tongues: a known, existing language and dialect, not the ecstatic prayer language of today.

In addition, the NT governed how tongues were to be exercised in the church service with unbelievers present: 2 or 3 at the most with an interpretation given for the rest of the body.

Tim Challies: “Whenever the New Testament gift of tongues was practiced, there were specific rules to be followed. There was to be order and structure, as well as an interpreter. Paul also lays down rules for prophets and prophecy. Tragically most charismatic practice today clearly disregards these commands. The result is not a work of the spirit but of the flesh.”

6. The Purpose of Tongues in the Bible.

Tongues were to glorify God, validate the Apostles’ message, spread the gospel to the Gentiles and be a sign of judgment to unbelieving Israel (I Cor. 14:21-22 and Isaiah 28:11-12) that God had begun a new work by His Spirit that encompassed Gentiles in a new and amazing way. This unique event in redemptive history was something of a reversal of the Tower of Babel, something of both judgment on Israel and blessing to the nations and therefore a unique sign of transition between the Old and New Covenants as the gospel now would go to all the world. Once the transition period was past, there’s no need for the sign to continue.

7. The Nature of Prophecy in the Bible.

Tim Challies: “New Testament prophecy is direct, infallible revelation. Today, however, prophecy is understood differently. Nowhere does the New Testament distinguish Old Testament prophecy from New Testament prophecy. Just as the Old Testament prophets spoke direct, infallible revelation from God, so did the New Testament prophets. And once it was checked against previous revelation and approved, it was added to the church’s revelation. Wayne Grudem ... says modern prophecy should be prefaced with “I think this is what the Spirit is saying.” This is not New Testament prophecy.”

8. The Self-Authenticating Nature of Scripture

This is a key component of cessationism. Scripture is self-authenticating to the elect only. When God opens your eyes to the glory of Christ in the gospel, He also enables a settled conviction in your heart that Scripture is the Word of God, not the word of man. See 1 Tess. 2:13.

In fact, the Gospels show over and over again that many unbelievers witnessed miracles of Jesus and were unmoved. Just like many of the children of Israel experienced the Red Sea deliverance but did not truly believe in the Lord. Just like the prophets of Baal at Mt. Carmel. Just like millions, even billions during the Tribulation who will refuse to repent despite supernatural signs and wonders.

The point is, with Scripture complete, there is no need for validating, authenticating signs to prove the Bible's truthfulness. God does this Himself, by His Spirit, for the elect only.

John Calvin on Self-Authenticating Scripture:

"... the credibility of doctrine is not established until we are persuaded beyond doubt that God is its Author. Thus, the highest proof of Scripture derives in general from the fact that God in person speaks in it. The prophets and apostles do not boast either of their own keenness ... nor do they dwell upon rational proofs ... we ought to seek our conviction in a higher place than human reasons, judgments, or conjectures, that is, in the secret testimony of the Spirit" (p. 78, volume I, Institutes).

"For those who demand "rational proof" that Moses spoke from God, Calvin replies: "the testimony of the Spirit is more excellent than all reason. For as God alone is a fit witness of himself in his Word, so also the Word will not find acceptance in men's hearts before it is sealed by the inward testimony of the Spirit ... those whom the Holy Spirit has inwardly taught truly rest upon Scripture, and that Scripture indeed is self-authenticated; hence, it is not right to subject it to proof and reasoning ... Therefore, illumined by his power, we believe neither by our own nor by anyone else's judgment that Scripture is from God; but above human judgment we affirm with utter certainty (just as if we were gazing upon the majesty of God himself) that it has flowed to us from the very mouth of God by the ministry of men ... I speak of nothing other than what each believer experiences within himself ..." (pp. 79-81, volume I, Institutes).

9. The Sufficiency of Scripture.

In fact, the Bible is more sure and more impactful on souls than witnessing miracles or the greatest spiritual experiences! See 2 Peter 1:19-21.

Tim Challies from Strange Fire conference: "The Spirit speaks only in and through the inspired Word. He doesn't call and direct his people through subjective messages and modern day bestsellers. His word is external to us and objective."

Consider the sufficiency of Scripture in light of the rarity of God speaking to individual believers in the Bible. You can only find 8 men in the entire OT to whom God spoke in an audible voice more than twice. In the book of Acts, over thirty years of beginning church history, we find only five individuals or groups to whom God spoke directly, outside of Peter and Paul.

The Westminster Confession on the sufficiency of Scripture:

"The whole counsel of God concerning all things necessary for His own glory, man's salvation, faith and life is either expressly set down in Scripture, or by good and necessary consequence may be deduced from Scripture: unto which nothing at any time is to be added, whether by new revelations of the Spirit, or traditions of men."

Contrast that with this quote from popular Charismatic author Tommy Tenney in his book *God Chasers*: “God chasers ... are not interested in camping out on some dusty truth known to everyone. They are after the fresh presence of the Almighty ... A true God chaser is not happy with just past truth; he must have present truth. God chasers don’t want to just study the moldy pages of what God has done; they are anxious to see what God is doing.”

So, how do we know if someone speaks for God?

- We must “search the Scriptures daily”; Acts 17:11
- Faith comes from hearing the Word of Christ thru sent messengers; Romans 10:8-17
- We go back to inspired and profitable Scripture that’s able to equip us for every good work; 2 Tim. 3:16 – 4:5

10. The Foundational, Temporary Nature of the Gift and Office of Apostle and Prophet (See Eph. 2:20-22; 4:11; I Cor. 12:28)

“extraordinary offices, for the foundation-laying era”; as a result, their inspired writings then added to the canon and become the sound doctrine of the church.

Michael Horton continues: “Although the NT establishes the offices of pastors/teachers, elders and deacons, it does not establish perpetual prophetic or apostolic offices with their attendant sign-gifts.” See Heb. 2:1-4.

11. The Testimony of Church History.

- Neither Timothy nor Titus show any indication of having sign gifts.
- Tongues are only mentioned in Acts and I Cor. Paul wrote 12 epistles after I Cor. and never mentions tongues again. Peter, James, Jude nor John ever mention tongues in their letters.
- None of the church fathers mentioned tongues in the post-apostolic age.
- Both Chrysostom and Augustine considered tongues obsolete.
- During the first 500 years of the church, only Montanus’ followers spoke in tongues. Considered a heretic.
- Reformers and offspring all embraced cessationism: Luther, Calvin, Edwards, Spurgeon, B.B. Warfield ...
- Tongues didn’t show up again until the late 17th century w/ a militant Protestant group in France who prophesied, saw visions and spoke in tongues. Another group of anti-Reformers among the RCC claimed to speak in tongues.
- Shakers, a sect of the Quakers, flourished in the mid-1700s. Their founder claimed to be a female version of Jesus and boasted fluency in 72 languages. Shakers spoke in tongues while dancing and singing in a trance-like state.
- The spiritual legacy of these various tongue speaking sects among Protestants and Catholics is one of contradictions, wild excesses and outright lies; all of them somewhere on the spectrum of heretical to fanatical to unorthodox.
- Origins of Pentecostalism

12. The Indecision and Inconsistency of the “Open But Cautious” Crowd

Even Wayne Grudem recognizes that the office of apostle has ceased.

Piper’s stack of books story. None of these well-known “open but cautious” practice continuationism.

Remaining questions to consider:

1. What is happening at all of these Faith Healing Crusades? SEE Justinpeters.org
2. What is happening when people today speak in a tongue or claim to hear from God or have a word of prophecy for the church or individual believers, or claim to have seen visions or been given revelatory dreams from God? Possibilities include human imagination, subjective impressions or hunches, learned behavior, possibly demonic deception, cunning fraud of desperate people lacking discernment and knowledge of the Bible.
3. What about Philip, Stephen and maybe Barnabus? Didn't they perform miracles? Each of these men were extraordinary in their own way; each was closely associated with one or more apostles, meaning their activity would serve to validate the apostle. They are rare exceptions to the rule; they don't overturn the rule. Nothing about their extraordinary deeds presents itself as normative for the body of Christ, then or later.

Closing comments from Michael Horton in his blog:
Reformed and Charismatic? Dated August, 22, 2011

“We have had enough “Apostles,” “Prophets,” and “Moses-model” leaders who build ministries around their own gifts. We need to recover the beauty of Christ alone upon His throne as the Priest-King of His church, exercising his ministry by His Spirit through preaching, sacrament, and discipline in mutually accountable communion with the wider body of Christ ... Just as the church cannot extend the incarnation or complete Christ's atoning work, it cannot repeat Pentecost or prolong the extraordinary ministry of the apostles, but must instead receive this same word and Spirit for its ordinary ministry in this time between the times.”

More Resources for additional study:**#1 Strange Fire****The Danger of Offending the Holy Spirit with Counterfeit Worship**

By John MacArthur; \$22 on Amazon

#2 Understanding Spiritual Gifts

by Robert Thomas; \$17 on Amazon

#3 Why I Am a Cessationist

by Thomas Schreiner; Written January 22, 2014

I am not writing on this topic because I have the final answer on spiritual gifts, for the matter is difficult and Christians who love God and the Bible disagree. Readers should know that Sam Storms and I are friends. We love one another, even though we differ on a secondary or tertiary issue, while at the same time upholding the importance of truth. Over the years I've become convinced that some of the so-called charismatic gifts are no longer given and that they aren't a regular feature of life in the church. I am thinking particularly of the gifts of apostleship, prophecy, tongues, healing, and miracles (and perhaps discernment of spirits).

Why would anyone think that some of the gifts have been withdrawn? I will argue that such a reading fits best with Scripture and experience. Scripture takes priority over experience, for it is

the final authority, but Scripture must also correlate with life, and our experiences should provoke us to re-examine afresh whether we've read the Bible rightly. None of us reads the Bible in a vacuum, and hence we must return to the Scriptures repeatedly to ensure we've read them faithfully.

Foundation of the Apostles and Prophets

Paul says the church is "built on the foundation of the apostles and the prophets" ([Eph. 2:20](#)). I conclude that all we need to know for salvation and sanctification has been given to us through the teaching of the apostles and prophets, and that this teaching is now found in the Scriptures. Now that God has spoken in the last days through his Son ([Heb. 1:2](#)), we don't need further words from him to explain what Jesus Christ has accomplished in his ministry, death, and resurrection. Instead, we are "to contend for the faith that was delivered to the saints once for all" through the apostles and prophets ([Jude 3](#)).

To put it another way, we don't have apostles like Paul and Peter and John anymore. They gave us the authoritative teaching by which the church continues to live to this day, and that is the only teaching we will need until Jesus returns. We know that new apostles won't appear since Paul specifically says he was the last apostle ([1 Cor. 15:8](#)). And when James the brother of John died ([Acts 12:2](#)), he wasn't replaced. Apostles, in the technical sense, are restricted to those who have seen the risen Lord and have been commissioned by him, and no one since apostolic times fits such criteria. The apostles were uniquely appointed for the early days of the church to establish orthodox doctrine. There is no warrant, then, for saying there are still apostles today. Indeed, if anyone claims to be an apostle today we should be concerned, for such a claim opens the door to false teaching and to abuse of authority.

If the gift of apostleship has ended, then other gifts may have ceased as well, since the foundation has been laid by the apostles and prophets ([Eph. 2:20](#)). I conclude from this point that the gift of prophecy has ended also, for the prophets identified here are the same sort mentioned elsewhere (cf. [1 Cor. 12:28](#); [Eph. 3:5](#); [4:11](#)). The early churches didn't have the complete canon of Scripture for some time, and hence an authoritative and infallible prophetic ministry was needed to lay the foundation for the church in those early days.

The most significant biblical argument against what I'm saying is the claim that New Testament (NT) prophecy differs from Old Testament (OT) prophecy, for some say OT prophecy is flawless but NT prophecy is mixed with error. But the idea that NT prophets could make mistakes isn't persuasive for several reasons. 1.) The burden of proof is on those who say prophecy in the NT is of a different nature than prophecy in the OT. Prophets in the OT were only considered prophets of God if they were infallible ([Deut. 18:15-22](#)), and the same is almost certainly true in the NT. 2.) The admonition to judge prophecies instead of prophets ([1 Cor. 14:29-32](#); [1 Thess. 5:19-20](#)) is often adduced to show that the gift is different in the NT. But this argument is not convincing, for the only way to judge prophets in both Testaments is by their prophecies. We only know prophets aren't from God if their prophecies are false or if their words contradict scriptural teaching. 3.) We have no example of a NT prophet who erred. Agabus didn't make a mistake in prophesying that Paul would be bound by the Jews and handed over to the Romans ([Acts 21:10-11](#)). To say he erred demands more precision than prophecies

warrant. Furthermore, after Paul was arrested he appealed to the words of Agabus, saying he was handed over to the Romans by the Jews ([Acts 28:17](#)), so it's clear he didn't think Agabus made a mistake. Agabus spoke the words of the Holy Spirit ([Acts 11:28; 21:11](#)), so we have no example in the NT of prophets whose prophecies were mixed with error.

Some object that my view of prophecy is off target since there were hundreds and thousands of prophecies in NT times that never made it into the canon. That objection doesn't convince, however, for the same was true in the OT. Most of the prophecies of Elijah and Elisha were never written down or inscripturated. Or we can think of the 100 prophets spared by Obadiah ([1 Kings 18:4](#)). Apparently none of their prophecies was inscripturated. Nevertheless, the prophecies were all completely true and unmixed with error, for otherwise they wouldn't have been prophets ([Deut. 18:15-22](#)). The same principle applies to the prophecies of NT prophets. Their words aren't recorded for us, but if they were truly prophets then their words were infallible.

What some people today call "prophecies" are actually impressions from God. He can use impressions to guide and lead us, but they aren't infallible and must always be tested by Scripture. We should also consult with wise counselors before acting on such impressions. I love my charismatic brothers and sisters, but what they call "prophecy" today isn't actually the biblical gift of prophecy. God-given impressions aren't the same thing as prophecies.

What About Tongues?

The gift of tongues is a more difficult issue. In Acts (2:1-4; 10:44-48; 19:1-7) this gift signifies that the age of fulfillment has arrived where God's covenant promises are being realized. [First Corinthians 14:1-5](#) and [Acts 2:17-18](#) also suggest that interpreted (or understood) tongues are equivalent to prophecy. It seems, then, that prophecy and tongues are closely related. If prophecy has passed away, then tongues have likely ended as well. Further, it's clear from Acts that the gift involves speaking in foreign languages ([Acts 2](#)), and Peter emphasizes in the case of Cornelius and his friends that the Gentiles received the same gift as the Jews ([Acts 11:16-17](#)).

Nor is it persuasive to say the gift in [1 Corinthians 12-14](#) is of a different nature (i.e., ecstatic utterances). The word *tongues* (*glōssa*) denotes a linguistic code, a structured language, not random and free vocalization. When Paul says no one understands those speaking in tongues because they utter mysteries ([1 Cor. 14:2](#)), he isn't suggesting that the gift is different from what we find in Acts. Those hearing the tongues in Acts understood what was being said because they knew the languages the apostles were speaking. If no one knows the language, then the tongue speaker utters mysteries. Nor does [1 Corinthians 13:1](#) (tongues of angels) support the notion that the gift of tongues consists of ecstatic utterances. Paul engages in hyperbole in [1 Corinthians 13:1-3](#). He's clearly exaggerating when referring to the gift of prophecy ([1 Cor. 13:2](#)), for no one who prophesies knows "all mysteries and all knowledge."

I believe what's happening in charismatic circles today regarding tongues is similar to what we saw with prophecy. The gift is redefined to include free vocalization, and then people claim to have the gift described in Scripture. In doing so they redefine the gift to accommodate contemporary experience. So are contemporary tongues demonic, then? I don't think so. I agree with J. I. Packer that the experience is more a form of psychological relaxation.

Miracles and Healings

What about miracles and healings? First, I believe God still heals and does miraculous things today, and we should pray for such. Scripture isn't as clear on this matter, and thus these gifts could exist today. Still, the primary function of these gifts was to accredit the gospel message, confirming that Jesus was both Lord and Christ. I doubt the gift of miracles and healings exists today, for it isn't evident that men and women in our churches have such gifts. Certainly God can and does heal at times, but where are the people with these gifts? Claims for miracles and healings must be verified, just as the people verified the blind man's healing in [John 9](#). There is a kind of biblically warranted skepticism.

Now, could God in cutting-edge missionary situations grant miracles and signs and wonders to accredit the gospel as he did in apostolic times? Yes. But that's not the same thing as having these gifts as a regular feature in the ongoing life of the church. If the signs and wonders of the apostles have returned, we should see the blind receiving their sight, the lame walking, and the dead being raised. God heals today (sometimes dramatically), but the healing of colds, the flu, TMJ, stomach, and back problems, and so forth aren't in the same category as the healings found in the Scriptures. If people truly have the gift of healing and miracles today, they need to demonstrate such by performing the kinds of healings and miracles found in the Bible.

Doesn't 1 Corinthians 13:8-12 Contradict Your View?

Let's consider an objection to the notion that some of the gifts have ceased. Doesn't [1 Corinthians 13:8-12](#) teach that the gifts last until Jesus comes again? Certainly this text teaches that the gifts could last until Jesus returns. There's no definitive teaching in the Bible that they've ceased. We might even expect them to last until the second coming. But we see hints from [Ephesians 2:20](#) and other texts that the gifts played a foundational role. I conclude, then, that [1 Corinthians 13:8-12](#) permits but doesn't require the gifts to continue until the second coming. And the gifts as they are practiced today don't fit with the biblical description of these gifts.

For reasons like these the Reformers and most of the Protestant tradition until the 20th century believed the gifts had ceased. I conclude that both Scripture and experience verify their judgment on the matter.

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