

**The Distinctives of Countryside Bible Church**  
**A Case for Cessationism, Part 2**  
**Selected Scriptures**  
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This summer, we have been studying the five distinctives of Countryside Bible Church. We call those positions that we've taken on some of the controversial issues of our times, our distinctives. Our desire is not in any way to be divisive. Rather, we simply want to be clear; we want to be definitive. And so we've laid out these issues and what we believe on them.

The fifth and final one is where we find ourselves. We started two weeks ago, and Lord willing we'll finish looking at the fifth of those distinctives today. Our fifth distinctive deals specifically with the gift of tongues. But rather than address that one gift, we've sort of stepped back, and we are considering all of the miraculous gifts together. On this issue we are *cessationists*; that is, we believe that the Spirit has ceased giving believers the miraculous Spiritual gifts that are listed in Scripture that were present in the first-century Church.

Now, why is it important for us to take time on this issue and to invest two weeks studying it? Well, there're really three goals I have in mind. First of all, perhaps you're new to our church. A lot of folks have joined us in recent weeks and months and it's so important for you to know where we as a church stand on this issue and all of these issues. Secondly, I am aware that there're many in our church who grew up in Charismatic homes and Charismatic churches, and maybe you still struggle in your own heart and mind with why do I believe or do I believe that the miraculous gifts ceased. I want to answer that and deal with that issue for your sake. And then thirdly, all of us have family or friends who are in Charismatic Movement, or who have been heavily influenced by it. Let me just ask you: are you prepared to provide a thorough biblical defense of what you believe? Are you prepared to help others understand the biblical reasons that the miraculous gifts have ceased? If not, you should be. And my goal, the last time we met and today, is to equip you as sort of a starting point for your being able to defend what you believe. So those are the reasons it's important for us to spend two weeks sort of laying a biblical foundation on this issue.

And I want to just remind you as we begin that, in the end, this is not so much about what we're against as it's what we're for. We're for an all-sufficient, comprehensively, sanctifying, saving, instructing Word of God that gives us everything we need. And that's why we stand where we

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stand on this issue. So, let me just remind you that we are considering the seven biblical arguments for cessationism. Two weeks ago, we examined the first two of those arguments. Let me just review them briefly. If you weren't here you need to go and catch up. I'm not going to explain them or defend them in detail; I'm just going to overview them.

Reason number one or argument number one is the unique role of miracles. When you look at biblical history, miracles don't happen on every page, and particularly, miracle-working men don't occur on every page. In thousands of years of biblical history, there were only three periods totaling about 200 years together in which God empowered men to work miracles. God often worked miracles directly, but only three periods in which He empowered men to work miracles. In other words, in redemptive history, miracle-working men were very uncommon. Why is that? Well, as we discovered in the Scripture, the primary purpose of miracles given to men had always been to confirm the credentials of a divinely appointed messenger, to confirm the credentials of one who spoke the very words of God. In the early church this was true. So, in the case of the Apostles, the miraculous gifts that accompanied them were intended to confirm that they were God's genuine instruments of revelation, just as had been true in the Old Testament with Moses, with the Old Testament prophets, and even in the New Testament with Jesus Himself. That pattern is consistent throughout the Scripture, as we saw. So that leads us, then, to expect that with the death of the Apostles and the end of God's revelation altogether (and certainly through the Apostles), the human capacity to work miracles would end as well.

The second argument that we looked at two weeks ago was the gift of apostleship, specifically, the end of the gift of apostleship. One of the gifts Christ gave to His church, and it's stated twice in the New Testament, was that of the Apostles, and they were a temporary gift. As we learned, there are three qualifications to be an Apostle, and no one meets those qualifications today. So at least one New Testament gift, the gift of apostleship, ceased. Now that's very important, because it means there is a significant difference between the time of the Apostles and the rest of church history. You see, once you agree there are no Apostles today at the same level with Peter and Paul, you have admitted that there was a major change in the gifting of the Spirit between the Age of the Apostles and the post Apostolic Age. In fact, the one New Testament gift most frequently connected to miracles, the gift of apostleship, ceased.

Now again, that's just a broad brushstroke review, but that brings us today to a third argument for cessationism: the foundational nature of the New Testament Apostles and prophets. Turn to Ephesians 2. The New Testament identifies the Apostles and prophets as the foundation on which the Church is built. In Ephesians 2:11, Paul unfolds this mystery that has been revealed to him, the mystery which is the Church. In fact, notice down in verse 15, he describes God making the two, Jew and Gentile, "into one new man." That's the Church. This is a new thing God has done, and he expands on that mystery in chapter 3. But at the end of chapter 2, Paul illustrates the Church in three word pictures. The first word picture comes in the first part of

verse 19. It is that of a kingdom of which we are members: “So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints.” The second picture is at the end of verse 19. It's the picture of a family in which we are members, and we “are of God's household.” The Church is like a kingdom to which we belong as citizens; it's like a family to which we belong as members. And then the third illustration that he uses in verses 20 to 22 is of the Church as a temple built for God's own presence. Notice how he begins in verse 20: “having been built.” He's talking about the Church now; this is that third illustration. “Having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, [Jesus Christ] Himself being the corner stone.” Notice, the Church is built on the foundation, and he lists two groups: the Apostles and the prophets.

We know who the Apostles are. Who are these prophets? Well, because of the far reaching implications of this verse, some Charismatics have argued that Paul meant the Church was built on the foundation of the New Testament Apostles and the Old Testament prophets. But in the context, it's clear that Paul was referring to New Testament prophets. Look down at chapter 3, verse 5. He says (verse 4: I've been given) "insight into the mystery of Christ, [verse 5]which in other generations was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed to His holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit.” “Now.” He's talking about not Old Testament prophets, but Apostles and New Testament prophets. Other Charismatics argue that chapter 2:20 could be reworded this way: having been built on the foundation of the Apostles, which are the prophets. In other words, instead of two groups, they would say, no, there's really only one group, and the prophets is another description of the Apostles. But again, the context makes it clear that there are two separate groups. Look at chapter 4:11. “...He gave some as apostles... [there's the first group], ...some as prophets... [there's the second group],...some as evangelists [third group], and some as..." pastor-teachers, the fourth group.

So understand, then, what Paul is saying. Go back to chapter 2:20. He is saying the Church has been built on the foundation of the New Testament Apostles and the New Testament prophets, Christ Himself being the corner stone. Now what does he mean by that? He doesn't mean like their bodies are buried somewhere in the foundation of the Church substructure, like sometimes happens with human buildings. He's talking about their teaching. He's talking about the revelation which came through these two groups. So, we could read it this way: but the Church is built on the foundation of the teaching of the New Testament Apostles and the New Testament prophets. Do you get the picture he's laying down here? The image is clearly of a foundation of a building. And the foundation has been completely finished, and the superstructure is now being erected on that already complete foundation. The Church, as it's built today—we're not laying a new foundation, the foundation has been laid in the revelation of the Apostles and prophets, and now it's being erected on that. Once the revelation God gave through the Apostles and the New Testament prophets was complete, the foundation had been finished. Their work was completed; their role was done. That is clearly true of the Apostles, as we saw two weeks

ago. There are no Apostles today. And here in Ephesians 2, Paul says the role of the prophets was foundational. The New Testament prophets, their role was foundational, and it is complete as well. The foundation has been laid. We should expect no more prophets, no more Apostles, no more revelation. It is the foundation, and it is finished.

A fourth argument for cessationism is the nature of the miraculous gifts. Now think about this with me. If the Spirit were still gifting believers today with the miraculous gifts, they would be the same gifts we find in the New Testament. However, the Charismatic gifts claimed today bear almost no resemblance to their New Testament counterparts. Let me illustrate this for you. Let's take first of all the gift of tongues. In the New Testament, what was the miraculous gift of tongues? Turn to Acts 2. In Acts 2 at Pentecost is the first occurrence, and Luke could not be any clearer. According to Luke in Acts 2, the New Testament gift was the capacity to speak in known, human languages which had never been studied. That was the miracle. Look at Acts 2:5. This is Pentecost.

Now there were Jews living in Jerusalem, devout men from every nation under heaven [so all sorts of nationalities and languages]. And when this sound [that is, the sound in the upper room] occurred, the crowd came together, and [they] were bewildered because each one of them was hearing them [that is, the Apostles] speak in his own language [his own *dialektos*. his own dialect]. [And] they were amazed and astonished, saying, "Why, are not all these who are speaking Galileans? And how is it that we each hear them in our own language to which we were born?"

And then in verses 9 and 10, you have a list of the various ethnicities and language groups that were represented there. This couldn't be any clearer. The miracle at Pentecost was that uneducated Galileans were able to speak languages they had never studied, and the people were hearing them speak the wonderful things of God in his own language, in his own *dialektos*.

Now, the second time tongues occurs in Acts, it's the same thing. Turn over to chapter 11. It's in chapter 10 that the event itself occurs. It's at the salvation of Cornelius and his household when they also speak in tongues. (And if I had time, I would explain to you why that's true, why at these events this happens. That's a different message for a different time.) But look at Peter's explanation in Acts 11:15. Here, Peter explains what happened when the gift of tongues was given to Cornelius. Acts 11:15: "As I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell upon them [note this] just as He did upon us at the beginning." Here Peter says their speaking in tongues was exactly what happened to us in Acts 2. And we already saw what that was. When Luke reports on a third episode of tongue speaking in Acts 19, there is nothing to indicate that it was any different than what had happened in Acts 2 and Acts 10. So understand then, Luke couldn't be any clearer as to what the nature of speaking in tongues is all about.

Now the first question that comes to people's mind when I say that is, well, what about 1 Corinthians 14? Well, it's important to remember that when Luke wrote Acts, he knew what Paul had written in 1 Corinthians 14 six or seven years earlier. Moreover, Luke was Paul's traveling companion. He knew what was actually happening in Corinth. And yet how does Luke define speaking in tongues? He defines it as we "hear them in our own language," or our own dialect. Folks, that was the New Testament gift. Compare that with today's so-called gift of tongues, which is ecstatic speech or a private prayer language. They're totally different. In addition, the New Testament gift of tongues, including in 1 Corinthians 14 was a public gift meant for the benefit of others; so much so, that he said if there's nobody there to interpret, keep your mouth shut, because it's not going to benefit other people. Today's tongues, on the other hand, are primarily a private prayer language, private praise. So understand that today's speaking in tongues has nothing in common with the New Testament gift.

What about prophecy? Consider the gift of prophecy. Contrary to Charismatic doctrine, the New Testament does not distinguish between Old Testament prophets and New Testament prophets. Now why is that important? Because most Charismatics don't say that today's prophecy is equal to infallible revelation prophecy. They wouldn't say that's true. They would say instead there's kind of a second tier, a second level of prophecy, that isn't infallible. And so they say the New Testament prophets, they weren't the same as the Old Testament prophets. But in fact, the New Testament equates Old Testament prophecy and New Testament prophecy. First of all, there's no difference in the terms that are used, no difference whatsoever. And read the Book of Acts. In the Book of Acts, references are made to Old Testament prophets. Again and again you'll hear or read, you know, so and so prophet wrote, or such and such a prophet said. And then you will read about a New Testament prophet speaking, and they're all interspersed with not even a hint of difference between them. That means that just as the Old Testament prophet spoke direct, infallible revelation from God, so did the New Testament prophets. Just like the Old Testament prophets, their words were to be evaluated against previous revelation. That's why, by the way, Paul says in 1 Thessalonians 5 that we are not to "despise prophetic utterances" (that is, in the New Testament Church), but rather, he says, I want you to examine them, check them out against the Scripture. But once they were approved (as we saw in Ephesians 2), those prophecies were added to the teaching of the Apostles to form the foundation of the Church.

You say, well, where does this idea of a second level, a lower level, of prophecy come from? Primarily it comes from Acts 21 and Agabus. Because they will argue that Agabus wasn't right in all the details, and therefore this was fallible prophecy. So it's theology by narrative. But even there, ironically, in Acts 21: 11, one of the texts that Charismatics use to defend the idea that New Testament prophecy is sort of a second-tier prophecy different from Old Testament prophecy, the prophet Agabus used the Old Testament prophetic formula. When an Old

Testament prophet was going to speak, how did he begin? “Thus saith the Lord.” Well, listen to Agabus in Acts 21:11: “This is what the ...Spirit says.” It's the same formula; it's the same thing. So, New Testament prophecy is direct, infallible revelation, just like Old Testament prophecy. There's no distinction.

But that's not what's called prophecy today. The most capable defender of today's charismatic prophecies, Wayne Grudem, admits that prophecy, as it is practiced in the Charismatic Movement, should never be begun “Thus says the Lord.” Instead, Grudem says, it should begin like this: “I think this is what the Spirit might be saying.” Now, we appreciate Wayne Grudem. We use some of his materials; they're helpful. But this is not what Agabus said. He said, “This is what the ...Spirit says.” Thus says the Lord. Not, this is what I think the Spirit might be saying. That is not the New Testament gift of prophecy.

Or consider another example, the gift of healing. In the New Testament, when someone with the New Testament gift of healing used his gifts, the results were complete, they were immediate, they were permanent, and they were undeniable. Read the Book of Acts. Read the miracles that Paul and Peter and others were responsible for. But the purported healings of today's faith healers are the antithesis of biblical miracles. They are incomplete, they are at best temporary, and they are unverifiable. So the displays that are called the miraculous gifts today are not the same as the New Testament gifts.

Even a number of Charismatics agree with that, by the way. For example, Wayne Grudem, on the issue of prophecy, wrote that “No responsible Charismatic believes that today's prophecy is infallible and inherent revelation from God.” Here's how Grudem writes: “There is almost uniform testimony from all sections of the Charismatic Movement that today's prophecy is impure and will contain elements which are not to be obeyed or trusted.” The standard Moses laid down for a prophet means that prophet should be stoned. Charismatic theologian, Jack Deere, admitted in his book, *Surprised by the Power of the Spirit*, that modern Charismatics do not claim to have miraculous powers at the level of the Apostles. And when Charismatics do claim that their miracles are on the same level with the New Testament gifts, such as the wild claims that are out there of limbs restored, of resurrections, for example, they are either hearsay (well, somebody I know heard from somebody who was present in Africa when there was a resurrection.) or they are not able to be legitimately verified. By the way, this is the case with the German Charismatic teacher that has been in Africa most of his life but has just decided to do a series of crusades in the U.S., started in Miami this last week, Reinhard Bonnke. He claims that there was a time when he took part in a resurrection, but, of course, it's unverifiable. So the nature of the gifts practiced by today's Charismatics is not the same as that of the New Testament gifts, because they are not the New Testament gifts.

A fifth argument for cessationism is the testimony of church history. Let's start with New

Testament history, the era of the New Testament. The practice of the miraculous gifts declines even during the times of the New Testament. Let me give you a little time line. Pentecost and the events of Acts 2 happen within 10 days of our Lord's ascension. The second mention of tongues, the salvation of Cornelius in Acts 10, occurs sometime in the next 14 years—before the death of James, mentioned in Acts 12, which happened in 44 AD. The third mention, in Acts 19:6, occurs early in Paul's ministry in Ephesus, in the early 50's AD. First Corinthians, the only book outside of Acts that mentions anything about tongues, was written in the mid 50s, about 55, 56 AD. Now listen carefully: if you align Paul's New Testament letters based on when they were written, 1 Corinthians, the last mention, was only his fourth letter, behind Galatians and 1 and 2 Thessalonians. Paul wrote nine other inspired letters after 1 Corinthians to six different churches, and there is never a mention of the gift of tongues again. Nine letters, six churches, never mentioned. In the pastoral epistles, 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus, those books written near the end of Paul's ministry as permanent directives for ministry after the time of the Apostles in the Church, there is no mention of the miraculous gifts, whatsoever.

But I want you to turn with me to the Book of Hebrews, now, Hebrews 1. As you're turning there, let me just mention to you that scholars are agreed that this book was written sometime just before 70 AD. It's because it talks about the end of the sacrificial system, which took a while for that to happen in Christian's thinking even, that Christ was the complete fulfillment of that, and they should no longer be making sacrifices. But, he doesn't mention the destruction of the temple which happened in 70 AD, which would be a great object lesson if that'd happened already. So most are agreed, this happened close to 70 AD.

Notice what he writes: Hebrews 1:1, “God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, in these last days has spoken to us in His Son.” He's given us His final word in His Son. And he goes on to describe in the rest of chapter 1 that His Son is superior to everything and everyone, especially to angels. Chapter 2:1: “For this reason [because of this super-elevated person that is Jesus Christ] we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard....” He uses the illustration of the Law in verse 2: “If the [Law] spoken through angels [was] unalterable, and every transgression and disobedience received a just penalty, how will we escape if we neglect...” this message brought to us by such a far more superior person. Notice the middle of verse 3. I want you to see the generations in this verse. This message “...was at ...first spoken through the Lord....” Generation one, the source was our Lord Jesus Christ. Then there were “...those who heard...” the Lord. That's the disciples, the Apostles, generation number two. And he says this message that was first spoken through the Lord “...was confirmed to us....” That's the writer of Hebrews and his audience to whom he wrote. There's the third generation. And the message “...was confirmed to us by those who heard, God also testifying [Notice] with them [with generation number two, with the Apostles], both by signs and wonders and by various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit according to His own will.” The writer of Hebrews says, I'm not doing any of that stuff, we're not doing any of that stuff, it was

our Lord and His Apostles; and the Apostle's message was confirmed to us by the miracles they worked.

As you approach close to 70 AD, already we see a decline. Even in the chronological flow of inspired New Testament history, we find that before the Scripture was complete; the miraculous gifts had already begun their decline. The miracles that confirmed the Apostles and their message had already begun to die out. That is the reality of the New Testament historical record.

But let's move beyond the New Testament. Let's look at post New Testament history. When we leave New Testament history, we discover that the testimony of the Church after the New Testament Era, in both what was taught and what was practiced, was that the miraculous gifts had ceased with the Apostles. Now in the interest of time, I'm just going to give you a couple of illustrations from each time period. Let's start with the early Church after the Apostles, the early Church fathers. The leading expositor in the period of the Church fathers was a man named John Chrysostom. John Chrysostom ministered in the 300's AD. Listen to what he wrote: "This whole place [speaking about the gifts in 1 Corinthians 12] is very obscure: but the obscurity is produced by our ignorance of the facts referred to, and by their cessation, being such as then used to occur, but now no longer take place." That's the 300's AD.

Let's talk about Augustine, the great Church father, ministering in the early 400's. He writes: "In the earliest times, the Holy Spirit fell upon them that believe, and they spoke with tongues which they had not learned, as the Spirit gave them utterance." There again, he identifies speaking in tongues as speaking known languages that they had not studied. "That thing was done for a sign, and it passed away."

Let's fast-forward in the interest of time to the Reformation, Martin Luther. Martin Luther, in the 1400's, well actually, early 1500's, writes, "This visible outpouring of the Holy Spirit was necessary to the establishment of the early Church, as were also the miracles that accompanied the gift of the Holy Spirit. Once the Church had been established and properly advertised by these miracles, the visible appearance of the Holy Spirit ceased." In other words, the visible displays, the miraculous gifts, ceased. John Calvin, also in the 1500s: "The gift of healing, like the rest of the miracles, which the Lord willed to be brought forth for a time, have vanished away in order to make the preaching of the gospel marvelous forever." Jonathan Edwards, the great American theologian, the 1700's, writes, "Of the extraordinary gifts, they were given in order to the founding and establishing of the Church in the world. But since the canon of Scriptures has been completed, and the Christian Church fully founded and established, these extraordinary gifts have ceased." The 1800's and the great British pastor and preacher and Baptist theologian, Charles Spurgeon: "Those earlier miraculous gifts have departed from us."

B.B. Warfield, the Princeton theologian, writes:



These gifts were distinctly the authentication of the Apostles. They were part of the credentials of the Apostles as the authoritative agents of God in founding the Church. Their function thus confined them to distinctively the Apostolic church, and they necessarily passed away with it. The miraculous working, which is but the sign of God's revealing power, cannot be expected to continue, and in point of fact did not continue after the revelation of which it is the accompaniment had been completed.

Now that's just a sampling. You can find other similar quotes, different quotes, in an appendix in John MacArthur's book, *Strange Fire*, as well as in other resources on this issue. So what I want you to see, folks, is that although it is true that throughout Church history there have been scattered reports of the miraculous, there is a consistent testimony of the Church's key leaders that the miraculous and revelatory Spiritual gifts ended with the age of the Apostles. Now, just practically, this creates a real problem for Charismatic theologians. As Sinclair Ferguson puts it, "How do they reconcile church history and the long cessation of those gifts, with what they teach, the disappearance of those gifts during most of church history?"

A sixth argument for cessationism is the sufficiency of Scripture. Now, I addressed this point under the distinctive *the sufficiency of Scripture in sanctification*, so I'm just going to mention it here briefly. The canon of Scripture closed with the writing of the Apostles and their authorized companions. Most people would agree with that. And the New Testament teaches that the result of that completed revelation is an all-sufficient Scripture. 2 Timothy 3:16-17: "All Scripture...[has been breathed out]...by God..." It's been spoken by God. "...and [it is] profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for [child] training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate..." The word means "capable, able to meet every demand." [And]"...equipped for every good work." That means fully supplied, completely outfitted. The Scripture makes you capable to deal with every spiritual issue. It completely outfits you. It fully supplies you. You need nothing else. You need no other revelation from God. 2 Peter 1:3: {[God's]} "...divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness..." God has given you everything you need to sustain your spiritual life and to promote your godliness. Where? The rest of 2 Peter 1 says right here in this book. You don't need anything else. You don't need any additional revelation. You don't need a word from God, you have a word from God. You hold it in your hands. You don't need fresh revelation. You have the finished, authoritative, verifiable Word of God there in your hand. The Spirit speaks, but He speaks only in and through the inspired Word. John Calvin, on Hebrews 1, says, "There is no longer any reason to expect any new revelation. For it was not a word in part that Christ brought, but the final conclusion. God then has spoken in Christ for the last time." Luther wrote [I love this], "Let the man who would hear God speak, read holy Scripture." "Let the man who would hear God speak, read holy Scripture." The sufficiency of Scripture argues for the end of revelation.

There's a seventh and final argument for cessationism, and that's the New Testament rules for the miraculous gifts. Turn with me to 1 Corinthians 14. Paul lays out specific guidelines for how two of the miraculous, biblical gifts were to be practiced in the Church. They just happen to be the two that are most commonly, supposedly practiced in the Charismatic church: tongues and prophecy. So let's see how the biblical gifts were to be ordered and structured in the Church.

First of all, speaking in tongues. Whenever the biblical gift of tongues was practiced, there were specific rules that it had to follow. Let me show you the rules. Rule number one: two or at the most three were to speak in tongues in a given service. 1 Corinthians 14:27: "If anyone speaks in a tongue, it should be by two or at the most three..." Rule number two: they were to speak one at a time. Verse 27 says, "...and each in turn..." There had to be order and structure.

Rule number three: there had to be someone to interpret. Verse 27 says, "...and one must interpret; but if there is no interpreter, he must keep silent in the church; and let him speak to himself and to God." In other words, keep your mouth shut if there's no one who can interpret the language you're speaking. Now why was that? Well let's say I stood up here and said I'm going to speak to you in a language, but nobody here knows that language. And I speak to you in that language, supposedly, and I say here's what I said, and I translate it for you. How do you know? But, if I say OK, I'm going to speak to you in a language that nobody but one person over here knows, and I speak in that language. And then that person gets up and says, yes, he did speak in that language, and here's what he said. Now there are two witnesses confirming the reality of that report. In "...the mouth of two or three witnesses..." a matter is established.

The fourth rule was that women were not allowed to speak in tongues in the corporate worship. Look at verse 34: "The women are to keep silent in the churches; for they are not permitted to speak, but are to subject themselves, just as the Law also says." So there are the rules for speaking in tongues.

In verses 29 to 34, Paul regulates the practice of the gift of prophecy. Notice rule number one with prophecy: two or at the most three prophets were to prophecy at a church service. Verse 29: "Let two or three prophets speak..." Rule number two: other prophets and the congregation were to evaluate the prophecy against previous revelation. Notice verse 29: "...let the others pass judgment." Is it what the Bible says? Is it consistent with the Bible teaches?

Rule number three: they're to speak one at a time. Verses 30 to 33:

But if a revelation is made to another who is seated, the first one must keep silent. For you can all prophecy one by one, so that all may learn and all may be exhorted; and the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets... [You can control yourself]; for God is not a God of confusion but of peace, as in all the

churches of the saints.

Rule number four: women were not allowed to prophecy in the corporate worship. Again verse 34: “The women are to keep silent in the churches....”

Now, look at those guidelines. If the supposed gifts, the Charismatic gifts that are being practiced today, were in fact the New Testament gifts, they would have to be ordered according to these directives. Tragically, most Charismatic practice completely disregards these clear biblical commands. When there is such a flagrant disregard of the clear directions of the Holy Spirit, you cannot have a genuine work of the Spirit. In most contemporary Charismatic practice, the Holy Spirit is not honored. Instead, He is routinely dishonored and grieved. He is disobeyed. This couldn't be any clearer. The result is not a work of the Spirit, but it's a work of the flesh, because there is wholesale disregard for how the Spirit says these gifts are to be administered.

Now, those are the seven biblical arguments for cessationism. How should we respond to that? Very briefly, let me talk to you first if you're a cessationist, if you already agree with what I just said. Don't overreact and downplay the crucial role of the Spirit in your life. Don't, in reacting to the Charismatic Movement, throw out the importance of the Spirit in your life. Listen, nothing for eternal value happens in your life apart from the work of the Spirit. The difference is, He works in and through this book in your heart, but don't discount His role.

Number two, hold on to your confidence in an all-sufficient Word. It's true that today we stand in the minority, but we stand in the historic position of the Christian church and in the light of Scripture, so don't give up what you believe.

Number three, know what you believe and know why. Don't be uninformed on this issue. Know what you believe and be able to defend it, kindly, gently, but to defend it.

Number four, and here I'm going to step on a few toes, reject all forms of continuing revelation, including subjective impressions of God's will. Listen, don't say, “God told me; God spoke to me.” God didn't tell you anything. God didn't speak to you in any way except what's between the covers of this book. This is how God has spoken. He's not going to give you impressions; He's not going to give you peace; He's not going to give you subjective things at all. He's given you what Luther calls “the external Word,” a Word that you can read and study and learn and know this is what God said. That feeling in the pit of your stomach, you know, you have no way of knowing if that's God or the piece of pizza you ate last night.

Number five, respond wisely to the different kinds of continuationists. In other words, there're

different kinds of Charismatics, and respond appropriately to each one. To the false teachers, those who along with their Charismatic practices deny the cardinal doctrines of the Christian faith, the biblical Jesus, the biblical gospel, the nature of God as Trinity, don't be afraid to say they're false teachers. Don't be afraid to say with Jesus, "When you make a proselyte, you turn him into twice the son of hell you are." Don't be afraid to use the language of Jude and 2 Peter and talk about them as false teachers. And don't be afraid to say with Paul, if they have embraced a false gospel and refuse to renounce it, that they must be damned.

But then there's another group when it comes to our Charismatic brothers, that is, those who profess faith in the biblical Jesus, in the biblical gospel. How do you respond to them? Well, let me just urge you to gently, graciously, kindly make the biblical argument for cessationism. Clarify the nature of the true biblical gifts versus what they're involved in practicing. Remind them, if they're going to continue to practice some sort of supposed, miraculous gift, it needs to be in accordance with what Paul dictated in 1 Corinthians 14. And here's the key: treat them as brothers, but, don't downplay the serious and significant difference between you. You know, I love The Gospel Coalition and Together for the Gospel. And all those things are great, but it seems to make everything else unimportant. Folks, this is not unimportant. What's at stake is the authority and the sufficiency of God's Word. We're holding on to *sola fide*, but we're giving up *sola Scriptura*.

And can I just say to you who are parents: I know we live in an inclusive age, but don't you imagine that you can have your children spend all of their time interacting with Charismatic families and Charismatic churches, and think that they're going to grow up believing what you believe. You better make it clear that, yes, they're brothers, but there are huge and significant differences. The Word of God is at stake.

Now, let me speak to you if you're here and you're unconvinced; you're still struggling on this issue. Let me plead with you: don't refuse to come to a convinced position. It's kind of cool right now to say "I'm cautious but open." Don't stay cautious but open; study the Scripture. Be a Berean and arrive at a position of what you think the Scripture teaches on this issue, as most Christians have through the history of the Church. Let me recommend a couple of resources to help you do that. John MacArthur's book, *Strange Fire*, is a great book. If you haven't read it, you ought to. There's a smaller book for those of you who are a little daunted and intimidated by long books. There's a smaller book that's a great lay defense of this issue by a man named Sam Waldron. It's called *To Be Continued?*. And if you're really unclear on what's being taught in 1 Corinthians 12 to 14, let me recommend a book for you by Robert Thomas called, *Understanding Spiritual Gifts*. It's essentially an exposition of 1 Corinthians 12 to 14. But study this issue.

Can I just plead with you again? This isn't about what we're against, it's about what we're for.

We believe God has spoken to us in a book. I don't need a word from God beyond the Word He's given me. I don't need any more revelation. He's given me everything here that pertains to life and godliness. I need to love this Book; I need to study this Book. God has spoken to me, not subjectively, where I don't know if it's God or not, He has spoken to me in what Luther called the "external Word." And we ought to thank Him for it; we ought to love it; we ought to study it, and we ought to turn against anything that undermines our confidence in this Book. Let's pray together.

Father, I pray that You would use our time together this morning in our hearts. Lord, give us a love for Your Word. You have exalted Your Word to the level of Your very name, Your character. May we love Your Word; may we study it; may we defend it. Father, I pray that You would make us men and women of the Word. Thank You for what You've given us in it. Father, I pray as a church, You would help us to be faithful to that Word, both in what we teach and in how we live. We pray in Jesus name, Amen.