Spiritual Gifts
Resources

Helpful Resources On Spiritual Gifts

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Tweet

In the last few blog posts, Why I Changed My Mind About Miraculous Spiritual Gifts, and Three Arguments for Cessation in the Cessation Camp, I've briefly explained why after having a life-long commitment to cessationism, I am now a convinced continuationist. That is, I explained why I once held the view that miraculous gifts like healing, tongues, and prophecy ceased with the apostles, but now I hold the view that all the gifts continue today (if you haven't read those posts, I'll give you a hint at the end of this post). In this post, I want to give a few of the more helpful resources on the work of the Spirit, spiritual gifts, and arguments for and against cessation.

Some Helpful Resources

For my reasons on expert on this area Nor would I claim to have a good grasp of all of the literature. But I thought I might share some resources that I have found especially helpful that I commend to others trying to work their own way through such questions. As D. A. Carson rights notes,

> In the entire range of contemporary Christian theology and personal experience, few topics are more controversial than the gifts of the Spirit and perhaps what is now commonly called the charismatic movement.[1]. Whatever their theological commitments, most groups will wrestle with questions raised by the charismatic movement as frequently and in some instances as painfully as anything else claimed by some (ibid, xiv, 1)

I would be unwise to stake out a firm claim on such controversial issues without listening closely, and previously, to the best representatives from both sides.

Books Arguing For Cessationism

Cessationism is the view that the miraculous gifts, tongues, has been considered by some to be the standard case for cessation. A few years ago, MacArthur hosted a conference on the issue again, and wrote a second book on the topic. Strange Fire: The Danger of Offending the Holy Spirit with Counterfeit Worship. I've read both the first one several times. I remain grateful for MacArthur, and his long and honorable ministry. I have enjoyed his other books and remember all three resources, because they simply aren't written in a charitable spirit, and have what I think is a parochial viewpoint concerning the issue. Nonetheless, they do provide a lot.

Strange Fire is the shorter of the two, and MacArthur's conference. The authors take up what they perceive to be the most egregious abuses of Strange Fire, and they do a good job at being charitable. There are great chapters by Craig Keener, Sam Storms, Wayne Grudem, J. P. Moreland, Robert Gromacki, Robert Morgan, Burgess, and others.

A more specific rebuttal of Strange Fire that takes up the demonstrably false claims of much of MacArthur claims about the charismatic movement is Michael Brown's Authentic Fire: A Response to John MacArthur's Strange Fire. It has an appendix by Sam Storms and another one by Jack Keener. Brown is extremely kind, gracious, and well-informed. He shows that many of the prevalent accusations against the charismatic is simply a highly respected and godly response. He whose ministry was cited for deep prophetic sin has a demonstrably parochial view, and an evident blind spot, when it comes to this issue in particular.

Anyone who has read Christians Cessationist in Strange Fire (which I think should, in the interest of fairness, read at least a few of these resources) should read

J. P. Moreland's argument for continuationism and plea for a more urgent seeking of the miraculous is found in his Kingdom Triangle: Recovering the Supernatural Dimension of Our Relationship with God. Moreland's book is a great read, and I think it's the most well-rounded book on the topic. He was a cessationist, then a continuationist, and now a cessationist again. But he speaks with a Christian tone about those he disagrees with.

A brief back-and-forth between him and Sam Storms can be found here and here.

Robert Thomas surveys the gifts and mounts a case for hard cessationism in Understanding Spiritual Gifts: A Verse-by-Verse Study of 1 Corinthians 12-14 He defends the claim that what Paul refers to the "instance/perfect" in 1 Co. 13:10. Paul has in view both the second coming and the completion of the canon of Scripture. Virtually no cessationists believe this anymore.

Richard Gaffin mounts one of the most widely respected cases for cessation at length in Perspectives on Pentecost. Gaffin is a very gracious and gracious scholar. In many minds, it is probably the standard academic work making the cessationist case.

A helpful work from a softly cessationist perspective is Who's Afraid Of the Holy Spirit? by Don Wallace. Wallace is a former charismatic who has been hurt by charismatic abuses, and has a great deal of respect for the Spirit today, and they call the church to pursue spiritual maturity in a cessationist theology.

Michael Horton, president of Westminster Seminary, has also written a great deal arguing for cessationism. I count him a friend, respect him, have learned from him, and consider him a cessationist, and he is a cessationist. Horton has written a great deal on the issue, and the issues occurs on the Westminster Seminary website. From Credo House, "Why I Anchor Not a Charismatic" here.

Sam Pipkins has written a short discussion on his views here. Sam is a friend, and he is a cessationist. Pipkins's discussion is very gracious and shows a deep appreciation for the genuine working of the Holy Spirit behind the most charismatic movements. He also discusses tongues more specifically from this framework here, and spiritual gifts in general in his little book on gifts here.

A Good Entry Point

If readers want one resource to have each side well, I'd recommend Are Miraculous Gifts For Today? Four Views, edited by Wayne Grudem. It's a great resource, but if someone wants to meet up for coffee, I'd give them a copy first. I'd say, you can read Grudem's book and see some of the best representations from each side making their case.

Richard Gaffin takes up the cessationist view. Robert Saucy takes up the "open but cautious" view which, the editor notes, is likely now the position of the vast majority of evangelicals. Sam Storms takes up what they call the "open and even seeking" view. Wayne Grudem, Pentecostal/Charismatic scholar, takes the difference between the viewpoints of Storms and Saucy to be that Saucy is cessationist in practice.

"It Baptizes in the Holy Spirit is an empowering experience subsequent to conversion and should be sought after by all believers."
2) Whom baptizes in the Holy Spirit some people, people will speak in tongues as a "sign" that they have received this experience.

Storms rejects both of those claims, identifying the baptism in the Spirit with conversion, and arguing that tongues is a gift given to some believers and not to others, and that it is not normative for everyone to be baptized in the Spirit. But they both agree that all the gifts of the Holy Spirit mentioned in the NT are for today.

The conclusion, reminding readers of spiritual gifts are not an smaller. They need to remember full days after writing to all of a room together, with Greek New Testaments open, and discuss the issues freely, gently, and with a gracious tone, as they sought to understand each other and represent each other well. In fact, the editors only agreed to edit the chapters if the editors would make this face-to-face meeting a reality, so that people and coffee times in highlighted more than the difference on this issue that congealed.

Books On The Miraculous Gifts

Each of these next works are by continuationists (not cessationists). I think they generally have the better understanding of the Holy Spirit and the gifts and how they function, so recommend you to their works.

Nothing is more through than this detailed exegesis of every Spirit-text in Paul by Gordon Fee, God's Empowering Presence. His exceptional exegesis of 1 Corinthians in particular is hard to be consulted commentary in the NICNT are here.

The single best treatment of 1 Cor. 12-14 that I've read is D. A. Carson's, Showing the Spirit: A Theological Exposition of 1 Corinthians 12-14. Carson's book is a great combination of charismatic by reading his work and coming to understand that more clearly under the guiding gem of this widely respected another scholar. These chapters first are original Scripture, and central to the life of the church as a whole, and this discussion in particular. You owe it to yourself to understand these chapters well.

Buy this book.

Read it.

The helpful volume by Craig Keener, Gift And Gifted: The Holy Spirit Today contains a great deal of material with the same spirit as Carson's book, but is detailed and helpful in the study. He also surveys the Spirit texts in the Gospels and Acts more briefly here, in The Spirit in the Gospels and Acts: Divine

Purity and Power.

Max Turner's, The Holy Spirit And Spiritual Gifts In New Testament Church and Today summarizes the biblical data, and shows how a biblically-informed charismatic view of tongues is not the same as Pentecostalism. His Power from on High: The Spirit in Israel's Restoration and Witness in Luke-Acts is a detailed exegesis of every Spirit text in Luke-Acts.

R. T. Kendall, Holy Fire is a helpful brief introduction generally to the Spirit and his work.

Jeff Ohlen's helpful 3 volume pop-level history, Pentecost To Present, treats miraculous gifts throughout the church's history.

The late Michael Green's, I Believe in the Holy Spirit is a brief, readable, and robust treatment that will stir the heart with worship to the Triune God.

Wayne Grudem's detailed study of the gift of the prophecy in the NT. Based on his doctoral work at the Cambridge University, his work on the gift of Prophecy in the New Testament and Today, is both an examination of that gift in particular and an argument for the continuation of it. He also takes up the issues briefly in his Systematic Theology.

Gerald Hawthorne, author of the NICNT commentary on Philippians, has written a great book on the Holy Spirit in the life and ministry of Jesus as recorded in the gospels, in his work, The Presence and The Power: The Influence of the Holy Spirit in the Life and Ministry of Jesus. He carefully but challenging suggests that the truly and fully divine Jesus operated in total dependence upon the Holy Spirit in his life and ministry, and that our own ministry is thus a pattern and example for us, and how we should operate in the Spirit's power.

Jeremy Duerts work, Jesus and the Spirit: A Study of the Religious and Christian Experience of Jesus and the First Disciples as Reflected in the New Testament Gospels, is a detailed study of the Spirit in Jesus life and ministry, and how it is a pattern for us. Jesus's prayer life and the Spirit's leading schedule of early Christianity.

Sam Storms covers the issues and texts throughout his pastoral ministry and an eminent practicality in his The Beginner's Guide To Spiritual Gifts.

For those who have come to accept the Bible doesn't state cessationism, and think, "What now? How do I begin to study?" I would say that I don't want to get into all sorts of unbiblical arguments for a practical work, Practicing the Power: Welcoming the Gifts of the Holy Spirit in Your Life is both personally challenging and practically helpful.

Audio/Video

Gordon Fee's lectures through 1 Corinthians (and other related passages and issues) are available for purchase here.

Wayne Grudem's lectures following his Systematic Theology are free here.

- Baptism In And Filling With The Spirit
- Gifts of the Spirit 1
- Gifts of the Spirit 2
- Gifts of the Spirit 3
- Prophecy
- Tongues

D. A. Carson's densely packed lectures through 1 Cor. 12-14, a brief summary of his book linked to above, can be found here.

- The Unity of the Body and the Diversity of Gifts (121-30)
- The Most Excellent Way: or, When Does Perfection Come? (12:31-13:13)
- Prophecy and Tongues: Pursuing What Is Better (14:1-19)
- Tongues, Prophecy, Unbelievers, and Worship (14:20-40)
- Unscripted Prose and the Continuation of Scripture, Toward a Theology of Spiritual Gifts

Sam Storms' sermon series on Talk to The Spirit (Thursday mostly on 1 Cor. 12-14) can be found here.

- Experiencing the Grace and the Gifts of the Holy Spirit
- Revelation Gifts All For the Common Good
- Why Tongues Are Not Evidence of Spiritual Condescend Gifts
- What is Baptism in the Spirit and When Does It Happen?
- Spiritual Medicines for what Ails the Body
- Love as a Way of Life - Putting Spiritual Gifts in Perspective
- When the Perfect Comes - The Eyes Increasing Joy of Heaven
- Worship in Spirit and Truth
- Renewing in Power and the Healing Power of God
- Spiritual Gifts and Spiritual Prophecy
- Prophecy in Real Life
- Tongues Praying and Praising in the Spirit, Part 1
- Tongues Praying and Praising in the Spirit, Part 2
- Interpretation of Tongues, Judging Prophets, Words, and Women

The Cessationism Conference website hosts a number of helpful resources, including loads of video sessions with Sam Storms, Jack Deere, Mark Chanville, Andrew Wilson, Francis Chan, and others.

Private Video
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Resources On Specific Gifts

Tongues

I have found the recent work by Sam Storms helpful. Tongues Speaking: The History and Meaning of Charismatic Experience, comes highly recommended to me.

Prophecy

An in-depth look at the simple prophecy in Corinthians and its implications for NT development, is David Garland's work, The Language of Heaven: A Contextual Study of Prophecy in 1 Corinthians 14 and Apocalypticism, Prophecy, and Music in Early Christianity (Collected Essays).

Wayne Grudem's work based on his PhD work, Prophecy and Prophecy, The Gift of Prophecy in the New Testament and Today (Revised Edition) has become a (their) standard work on the phenomenon in the NT and today.

Jack Deere's narrative treatment of prophecy, including a brief historical and biblical treatment, Surprised by the Voice of God is well known and helpful many. His The Beginner's Guide to the Gift of Prophecy, is a theological treatment of the gift aimed at its practical use today.

Dallas Willard's Hearing God: Developing a Conversational Relationship with God is a more devotional treatment.

Healing/Miracles

Lee Strobel brings his journalistic flair to a well-written interview with various scholars who examine miracles from a range of angles in The Case for Miracles: A Journalist Investigates Evidence for the Supernatural.

Profs of Jesus now gives the reasons treatment by charismatic and easily respected scholar Craig Keener, Miracles: The Credibility of the New Testament Accounts, which looks again against Hume's skepticism, and documents a wealth of miracles in recent and the modern eras. What begun as a footnote to his massive Acts commentary has become the standard treatment in our day.

Respected pious scholar Gordon H. Fee's Testimony brings his erudition to a thorough treatment of the NT data for Jesus as a miracle worker in the new standard work, Jesus the Miracle Worker in Historical and Theological Study. He brings the same depth of study to the miracles in Paul in Paul and the Miracles: A Historical-Hermeneutical Inquiry, arguing that cessation by some commentators, Paul mixed in the miraculous in narrative.

A recent thorough treatment of the nature miracles in the NT from a variety of Jesus scholars can be found in The Nature Miracles of Jesus: Problems, Perspectives and Prospects.

Andrew Wilson's two lectures here are a great starting point.

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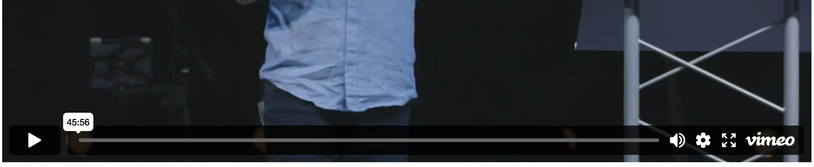

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