

# God Hasn't Shut Off His Pentecost Power

I was raised a Southern Baptist, but at age 18 I had a Pentecostal experience while still a Baptist. People jokingly refer to me now as a "Bapticostal" because they consider this a strange combination of doctrines. That's because many Baptists are cessationists who believe the gifts of the Holy Spirit ceased operating after the New Testament apostles died.

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As a teenager I didn't see any inconsistency in being both Baptist and Pentecostal. Baptist pastors always told me, "If it's in the Bible, you should believe it." I valued God's Word, and it taught me about the Holy Spirit and His gifts. I wanted everything God promised in His Word!

When I learned that I could be baptized in the Holy Spirit and experience the gifts of the Spirit mentioned in 1 Corinthians 12, that's what I wanted. Since that day I've regularly experienced the Spirit's gifts in my life, resulting in many changed lives. My Pentecostal experience eventually propelled me into itinerant ministry, and I've now preached in 39 countries because of the miraculous empowerment I received in 1976.

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Today I still encounter cessationists who insist that God no longer works miracles. They believe that since the Bible has been canonized, we don't need visions, healing, prophecy, speaking in tongues or deliverance from demons. They insist that God flipped a switch and turned off the power Jesus

promised His first disciples. Some cessationists go so far as to say that God doesn't speak to His people in a personal way anymore—except through the pages of the Bible.

I consider my cessationist brothers and sisters a part of my spiritual family because they believe Jesus is the Son of God. I love them dearly, and we will spend eternity together in heaven. But I can't agree with their position, and I think it has hindered the cause of Christ by dampening people's faith in what God can do. Here are three reasons the cessationist doctrine is harmful:

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