

Last week: we looked at 30 gifts that Scripture teaches are essential for the Church to fulfill her mission.

1 Pet 4:11 talks about “Speaking” and “Serving” gifts. No categories are given in Scripture.

Common distinctions made: “Speaking, revelatory, or sign gifts” vs. “serving gifts”

Cessationists: Doubt the speaking or sign gifts. Which include prophecy, words of knowledge and wisdom, tongues, interpretation of tongues, discerning of spirits, miracles, gifts of healing, and the apostolic function.

Did you know: there is not a single verse that says God no longer speaks or that these gifts have ceased?

Throughout the remainder of this series. We are going to focus specifically on the controversial ones to ensure we are standing on the bedrock of Scripture in our beliefs and practices.

The God who SPEAKS:

- **Genesis: God spoke, and the heavens and the earth were created!**
- **Jesus is called the “Word of God” (John 1)**
- **Conversations with God: Habakkuk – conversation; Ezekiel – conversation: In fact, 64 of 66 books explicitly state or imply that God speaks and does so with human beings. (Esther & Song of Solomon being the exceptions.)**
- **Why would God cease to speak?** Some argue this is because they did not have the completed Canon of Scripture. Once we had that, we no longer needed to hear God speak in other ways!

1. Can you show me that in Scripture?

Justin Peters: *"If you want to hear God speak, read the Bible. If you want to hear Him speak audibly, read it out loud."*

Spurgeon expressed the same idea over a century ago: *"If you want to hear the voice of God, you must listen to the word of God as it is recorded in the Scriptures."*

They are 100% right that anyone who desires to hear God can turn to Scripture and see what God has said... (The Berean Method – YES!!!)

A. Scripture Can't Be Understood Apart from the Spirit

Scripture is indeed the primary way for us to hear God speak. It is infallible and inerrant. But Scripture cannot be understood apart from the Spirit speaking to us!

- 1. The Natural Mind is incapable: 1 Corinthians 2:14 (NIV) ¹⁴ *The person without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God but considers them foolishness, and cannot understand them because they are discerned only through the Spirit.***

- **The Teaching:** Paul directly states that human intellect, logic, and education are completely insufficient on their own to comprehend God's truth. Scripture can be read as literature by anyone, but its spiritual truth remains locked until the Holy Spirit provides the discernment necessary to understand it.
2. **The Spirit Reveals God: 1 Corinthians 2:10–12 (NIV)** ¹⁰ *these are the things God has revealed to us by his Spirit. The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God.* ¹¹ *For who knows a person's thoughts except their own spirit within them? In the same way no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God.* ¹² *What we have received is not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may understand what God has freely given us.*
- **The Teaching:** No one knows a person's thoughts, except that person. No one knows God's thoughts, except God. You can only tell so much from the outside!
3. **The Spirit Opens Our Minds: 2 Corinthians 3:16–17 (NIV)** ¹⁶ *But whenever anyone turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away.* ¹⁷ *Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.* **Luke 24:45 (NIV)** ⁴⁵ *Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures.*
- **The Teaching:** Luke and Paul speak of our minds being unable to understand without the Spirits help!
4. **The Spirit Guides Us Into Truth: John 16:13 (NIV)** ¹³ *But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come.*
- **IMPORTANT NOTE: The phrase "all the truth"** → Most scholars rightly interpret this as referring to the revelation given to the apostles to write Scripture. We no longer receive Scripture-level revelation. We don't see "all the truth"; this was a special kind of revelation given to those who would write the New Testament.
 - **Illumination (Universal):** The Spirit does not give new truth; rather, He shines a light on the existing truth (the Bible) to help us understand, apply, and believe it.
 - **The Teaching:** While the canonical application belongs to the Apostles, the relational application belongs to all.

The SPIRIT HELPS US UNDERSTAND AND APPLY GOD'S WORD TO OUR LIVES

These are ALL examples of the Holy Spirit SPEAKING to us. He opens our minds and reveals truth to us as we read the Word. A verse will suddenly jump off the page; we are convicted of sin; we break out into worship, etc. ALL of this is the Spirit's ministry of speaking to our hearts and minds.

B. Scripture Teaches that God Speaks Outside of Scripture

Cessationists argue that God no longer speaks outside of Scripture, and IF God speaks outside of Scripture, it would undermine the Bible by adding to it.

This argument may sound convincing, but we must ask, **WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY?**

1. **The "Gifts" remain until Jesus returns: 1 Corinthians 13:8–10 (ESV)** ⁸ *Love never ends. As for prophecies, they will pass away; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will pass away.* ⁹ *For we know in part and we prophesy in part, ¹⁰ but when the perfect comes, the partial will pass away...* ¹² *For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known.*
 - **The Teaching:** Although some suggest "the perfect" refers to the completion of the New Testament canon. The context makes it clear. The Gifts remain until we see Jesus face to face and know Him fully! 2nd coming! MARANATHA!
2. **Understanding (revelation) from God: Ephesians 1:17 (ESV)** ¹⁷ *that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him,*
3. **Message (revelation) from God: 1 Corinthians 14:26 (ESV)** ²⁶ *...When you come together, each one has a hymn, a lesson, a revelation, a tongue, or an interpretation. Let all things be done for building up.*
4. **Direction (revelation) from God: Galatians 2:2 (ESV)** ² *I went up because of a revelation and set before them (though privately before those who seemed influential) the gospel that I proclaim among the Gentiles, in order to make sure I was not running or had not run in vain.*
5. **Correction & Encouragement (revelation) for Churches: Revelation 2:7 (NIV)** ⁷ *Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches.*
 - **The Spirit was speaking to those Churches! Is there no longer any specific instruction for the Churches today?**
6. **Prophecy, visions, & dreams (revelation) on ALL believers: Acts 2:17–18 (NIV)** ¹⁷ *"In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams. ¹⁸ Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy.*

The Bible explicitly says that the Spirit will be poured out in the last days (today) and the result will be people HEARING THE SPIRIT SPEAK.

These additional revelations do not compromise Scripture, for they're a very different type of revelation!

The Bible reliably fixes the boundaries of what God will ever say to humankind.

E.g., if a young man asks about marrying a non-Christian girlfriend, his feelings may be telling him this is right. However, it contradicts what the written Word says. The feelings must be rejected.

P. Ray, "Nothing further will be said by God to extend or contradict biblical principles."

Paul thought the Spirit speaking was a normative practice of the Church, including people receiving words of revelation, knowledge, wisdom and prophecy!

He did not see this as a threat to Scripture – no! He saw this as simply another way in which the Spirit was leading His Church.

Common Objection to the Sign/Speaking Gifts: You only build ONE foundation: Ephesians 2:19–20

(NIV) ¹⁹ *Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God's people and also members of his household,* ²⁰ *built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone.*

- **The Argument:** uses this Passage to state that because the Prophets and Apostles were used to build the foundation, they are no longer needed and thus, God no longer speaks outside of Scripture. Any further revelation would be akin to building a NEW foundation (***which would be heretical!!***)
- **Answer 1: Scripture doesn't claim that to be the only function of the apostolic or prophetic,** merely a function: 1 Cor 14 gives three other reasons for prophecy: encouragement, upbuilding, comfort!
- **Answer 2:** This same issue would have existed when Scripture was being written. There were TWO different types of revelation being given. (1) Scripture level & (2) Non-Scripture level (1 Cor 13 "see but dimly")

C. Scripture Teaches Us to DESIRE Hearing the Spirit Speak!

1 Cor. 12:31 *"But earnestly desire the higher gifts. And I will show you a still more excellent way."*

1 Cor. 14:1 *Pursue love, and earnestly desire the spiritual gifts, especially that you may prophesy.*

1 Cor. 14:12 *...since you are eager for manifestations of the Spirit, strive to excel in building up the church.*

1 Cor. 14:39 *...earnestly desire to prophesy, and do not forbid speaking in tongues."*

WHAT ABOUT ABUSES? Or MISTAKES? Or GETTING IT WRONG? (Follow Paul's advice – correct the error! Hold fast to what is good, reject the bad! DO NOT REJECT THE SPIRIT!

Does God still speak? YES!!!! And NO verse or passage even IMPLIES they are no longer present.

Scripture is the Foundation: The Holy Spirit will *never* speak a personal word, direction, or prophecy that contradicts the written Word of God. Scripture is the final, infallible boundary line.

The Spirit helps us build lives on that Foundation: Scripture tells you *how* to live (e.g., be a faithful witness, love your neighbour, walk in purity, etc.). The Holy Spirit tells you *where* and *when* to execute it (e.g., "Go talk to the person at that specific table," "Move your family to this city," or "Set apart these two specific leaders for a new mission").

These are ALL Biblical reasons for the Spirit speaking to us today!

QUESTION: Do you need comfort? Direction? Encouragement? Power to change? YOU NEED TO HEAR GOD SPEAK TO YOU!