

Cessationism Refuted

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My good friend, Charles Carrin, as a Baptist pastor for more than twenty-five years, was much like Apollos before Priscilla and Aquila “took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately” (Ac. 18:24-26). Like Apollos, he was “an eloquent man...and he was mighty in the Scriptures,” he “had been instructed in the way of the Lord” in Baptist schools, was “fervent in spirit,” and “was speaking and teaching accurately the things concerning Jesus,” meaning the Gospel of Christ’s sacrifice. However, Charles, like Apollos and myriad other sincere and fervent traditional denominational ministers today, was “acquainted only with the baptism of John,” the original Baptist.

This simply was the way it was for this very eloquent and learned Bible scholar and teacher for nearly three decades of service as a Baptist pastor, until one day when, in the midst of severe trial and spiritual dryness and emptiness, he had a personal encounter with the Holy Spirit, and despite all his refutations, protestations, and contrarian beliefs, was thoroughly IMMERSED or BAPTIZED in both the water and the fire of the Holy Spirit! Himself and his theology were forever changed! From that day forward, cessation theories for Charles Carrin were thoroughly expunged from his theology, but more importantly, from his personal relationship with the God-Head. From that day forward, he had no more questions regarding the reality of the Baptism in the Holy Spirit, no not one!

After nearly eighty years of living and over sixty in the Kingdom, Charles has come to some specific conclusions concerning what the Spirit says in the Word of God about the Baptism in the Holy Spirit as well as the Dunamis-Power of God unto supernatural manifestations of the Spirit throughout the Church Age. This learned and articulate servant of God in this article does a masterful job of refuting the wholly indefensible cessation theories espoused by so many

denominations and so-called “fundamentalists” today, who, unfortunately, continue to “invalidate the Word of God by their traditions.”

KINGDOM FAITH OR KINGDOM FICTION — WHICH IS IT?

By Charles Carrin

The New Testament gospel is powerful, eternal, perpetually true. Two thousand years after its presentation to the world it is still relevant, unabridged, unchallengeable. When Charles Spurgeon was asked how he defended the gospel, he replied, “I don’t defend the gospel any more than I would defend a lion. I just open the cage and let it out.”

Jesus called His message the “gospel of the Kingdom.” That message has never been, nor will ever be changed. Nor will it become a gospel of the church. The Kingdom knows no failure. The Kingdom is triumphant, victorious, all-conquering. The Kingdom is permanent, unchanging. The Kingdom needs no such excuse. To absolve herself of blame.

The church is subject to great failure. The church is schismatic, self-indulging, unreliable. The church is temporal, justifies herself and vindicates her failures. The church has invented an escape-hatch called Cessationist Theology. This pleasant sounding expression declares that God has withdrawn the Holy Spirit’s miraculous power from the church. The church has a book — the Bible — and little more than that. We have no power because God has removed it. The fault is not our’s.

Much of modern, evangelical Christianity is a parallel of the ministry of Apollos. It is sincere, eloquent, accurately teaching Bible truth as far as it allows itself to believe. But its doctrine is measured by its own opinion—it is afraid to measure its doctrine by Scripture.

Dispensationalism — the claim that miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit passed away — dominates traditional Christianity. Jesus said there would be no such change. Hear His words: “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always,

even to the end of the age.” Amen. Matthew 28:20. Jesus fully expected the church “at the end of the age” to believe and teach “all things” that He had commanded the original disciples.

The Apostle Jude did not believe the cessationist claim. Instead, he presented one of the New Testament’s strongest defenses for the gospel’s unalterability. He said, “I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints” (Jude 3). The “once for all” in our English Bibles comes from a valuable little Greek word, “hapax.” In spite of its small size hapax carries significant authority. It means: “one, a single time, conclusively, absolutely all, every one.”

This hapax-expression appears at least eight times in the Greek New Testament. It is translated “once for all” five times in the New King James Version. Three additional times the New International Version translates it as “once.” In every instance hapax establishes the unchangeability of its subject. Six of the references below apply directly to Jesus, one applies to the believer, and the final one to Kingdom faith. In four instances in the Greek text the preposition “epi” (upon) is added to reinforce the “once for all” meaning.

The Hapax Scriptures

1. Romans 6:10. “For the death that Jesus died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God.”
2. Hebrews 7:27. “Who does not need daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for His own sins and then for the people’s, for this Jesus did once for all when He offered up Himself.”
3. Hebrews 9:12. “Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood Jesus entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption.”
4. Hebrews 9:26-27. “He then would have had to suffer often since the foundation of the world; but now, once at the end of the ages, He has appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.”

5. Hebrews 10:2-3. For the worshipers, once purified, would have had no more consciousness of sins.
6. Hebrews 10:10. “By that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.”
7. 1 Peter 3:18. “For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit.”
8. Jude 3. “Beloved ... I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints.”

To which of these hapax—“once for all” — passages are you willing to apply Cessation Theology? Would your theology be complete if any of the “once for all” references were removed from the work of Jesus? Would you like any of these subjects to be vulnerable to change? Are you genuinely glad that they are “hapax” — “once for all” — secure? If so, it is impossible for you to endorse Cessationist Theology. You cannot accept the works of Jesus as hapax and then deny the Holy Spirit the same respect in His maintaining hapax in the permanency of Scripture. You cannot do it and uphold integrity with the Word!

Modern Christianity has convinced itself that Jesus provided two distinct gospels and two distinct faiths — one for the first century church and one for those who followed after. The first was miraculously empowered; the second was not. The first had the baptismal gift of the Holy Spirit; the second was merely given a book telling what the Holy Spirit had achieved in the past. Hear the truth: Jesus provided everyone — past, present, future — with a faith which was hapax-true, hapax-strong, hapax-forever.

The fact is this: Whether you and I accept it or not, the original “faith that was once for all delivered to the saints” is still intact. It is unaltered. In a conclusive, unchangeable way the faith of the Apostolic Era was delivered for “all time” intact to every subsequent generation. There will never be another.

Someone argues, “But I have never seen the miraculous works of the Holy Spirit in my church!” True. But the fault lies with the church, not with God. The

contemporary church is a victim of its own unbelief. It has created its blighted condition.

Observe that the Apostle Jude said he:

1. Found it “necessary”
2. To “exhort you”
3. To “contend earnestly”

This agrees perfectly with Jesus’ instruction in Matthew 28:18-20 that believers to “the end of the age” be taught to “observe all things that I have commanded you” (the original disciples). Then, as if to emphasize the unchangeability of the gospel’s time-span, He said, “Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” Observe the expression “all things”. What did He mean by that expression? Scripture does not leave us to wonder. Matthew 10:7-9 makes it very plain: “As you go, preach, saying, ‘The kingdom of heaven is at hand.’ Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out demons. Freely you have received, freely give.” When He said, “teach them all things...to the end of the age,” this is what He meant.

The obvious message is that the gospel — and the faith arising from it — have been permanently given *one time* and will never be given again. That initial provision is sufficient “once for all” time and “once for all” people. In an emphatic way, this says that New Testament faith, doctrinally and experientially, as it was originally presented by the Holy Spirit, is unchangeable. It cannot be added to or taken from. Any cessationist claim otherwise is a hoax. Such an accusation insults the Cross and the work of the Holy Spirit (cf., 2 Peter 1:21).

Even so, the idea is rampant in modern Christianity that parts of the Covenant-Book which Jesus ratified by the sprinkling of His blood (Hebrews 9:11-15), have lost validity. This supposedly occurred at the death of the Apostle John in 70 a.d., or when the New Testament books were canonized into one volume in a.d. 367.

The truth is, modern Christians have invented that monstrous idea. We have done so because we do not want accountability for our own failures. If we can justify the absence of God’s miraculous presence by claiming He withdrew it

from us, we don't have to accept blame for our having withdrawn ourselves from Him.

The Bible's Example

The Book of Acts gives us a working model of a conscientious, godly pastor who preached a powerless gospel. Like many today, Apollos was pastor of a small, struggling congregation. He was faithful, loved God, served the congregation, but was totally bereft of power. While he was away from his home at Ephesus, Paul came and found his church of 12 male disciples with wives and children. In spite of Apollos having excellent credentials for ministry, Paul immediately recognized powerlessness in the man's flock. Both Paul and Apollos were servants of God, both equally loved the church, and each possessed vast knowledge of Scripture. Even so, a major discrepancy existed between their ministries. Paul had power; Apollos did not. Paul preached the gospel of the Kingdom; Apollos obviously knew nothing about it.

In light of the Apostle Jude's exhortation to "contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints," we see how Apollos — though innocent of any evil intent — had accepted a partial gospel and experienced partial results. The ministries of Paul and Apollos are a parallel of pastors and churches today. I emphasize the fact that Apollos was ignorant because he had never been taught — not because he had knowingly rejected the truth. In our day pastors fall into two groups: Those who have never been taught and are innocently ignorant of spiritual gifts and those who willfully reject spiritual gifts. Carefully observe these seven facts which Scripture records about Apollos:

1. He was a Jew.
2. An eloquent man.
3. Mighty in Scripture.
4. Instructed in the way of the Lord.
5. Fervent in spirit.
6. Taught accurately the things of the Lord.
7. But: He knew only the "baptism of John" — that is, he knew nothing about the Baptism in the Spirit. He had a partial gospel and a partial faith.

When Paul recognized spiritual-powerlessness in the Ephesians, he asked the all-revealing question, “Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?” They responded, “We have not so much as heard whether there is a Holy Spirit.” This tragic ignorance existed because Apollos knew only the “baptism of John.” He knew nothing about the baptism in the Holy Spirit and had left his congregation in that same condition. Paul immediately instructed the Ephesians about the Holy Spirit’s empowering and when he “laid hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke with tongues and prophesied.” That event proved to be a cataclysmic change not only for Ephesus but for the rest of the Roman world.

Under Apollos’ ministry, the church at Ephesus accomplished absolutely nothing to awaken the city. It demonstrated no Kingdom power, remained spiritually paralyzed, and except for the local Synagogue, its presence was virtually unknown. In that state, the congregation had no effective witness, made no impact on the people, was no threat to “powers, principalities, rulers of the darkness of this world,” etc. Instead, the dark cloud of paganism gripped the land with unchallenged control. The Temple of Diana — or Artemas — already famous as the greatest of all Seven Wonders of the Ancient World, dominated the area. It was in the shadow of this formidable enemy that this minuscule church, ineffective and unknown, lay dormant.

That changed when Paul arrived. When he came on the scene, Ephesus experienced a “Kingdom of God” earthquake. Paul was not the power but he was the instrument for the truth that produced the shaking. He merely provided the window through whom the power roared; Apollos and twelve other windows were already present in Ephesus but they had never been opened.

Jesus Said “The Scripture Cannot Be Broken”

“Jesus answered them, ‘Is it not written in your law*, ‘I said, “You are gods’? If He called them gods, to whom the word of God came (and the Scripture cannot be broken), do you say of Him whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world, ‘You are blaspheming,’ because I said, ‘I am the Son of God’? If I do not do the works of My Father, do not believe Me; but if I do, though you do not believe Me, believe the works, that you may know and believe that the Father is

in Me, and I in Him. Therefore they sought again to seize Him, but He escaped out of their hand.” (John 10:34-40) [*Psalm 82:6]

Jesus reminded the Jews that it was David — not Himself — who first wrote about God miraculously empowering the saints. Those fortunate ones to whom “the word of God comes” are so changed and endowed that in the eyes of the demonic-world — in a comparative sense — they become gods (with a little “g”). Simply stated, Jesus intended the saints to exercise power over the demonic realm (cf., Luke 10:19).

It was Jesus who said “The Scripture **CANNOT** be broken.” That means that the New Testament is still intact. No part is out-dated and it cannot be victimized by cessationist teaching. In believing it we open ourselves to receive a miraculous imparting of its “word”. Those to whom the word of God comes are changed from ordinary humanity into extraordinary humanity. The “word of the Lord came” to Abraham, Samuel, Nathan, Gad, Solomon, Elijah, Elisha, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Haggai, Zechariah, John the Baptist, the first disciples, others. All of these experienced transformation when the “word of God” came to them. This is the only sensible explanation for the explosive growth of Christianity in the Roman world.

What Happens Today When The True “Word of God” Comes With Power?

1. Psalm 107:19-20. “Then they cried unto the LORD in their trouble, and he saved them out of their distresses. He sent his word, and healed them, and delivered them from their destructions.”

2. Matthew 8:16-17. “When evening had come, they brought unto him many who were demon-possessed. And He cast out the spirits with His word, and healed all who were sick: That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying, He Himself took our infirmities, and bore our sicknesses.”

3. Luke 4:31-36. “Then He went down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee, and taught them on the sabbath days. And they were astonished at his doctrine: for his word was with power. And in the synagogue there was a man, who had a spirit of an unclean demon, and he cried out with a loud voice, Saying, Let us

alone; what have we to do with you, Jesus of Nazareth? Did you come to destroy us? I know you who you are — the Holy One of God. But Jesus rebuked him, saying, Be quiet and come out of him. And when the demon had thrown him in their midst, it came out of him, and did not hurt him. Then they were all amazed, and spoke among themselves, saying, What a word is this! For with authority and power he commands the unclean spirits, and they come out.”

4. Acts 2:40-41. “And with many other words he testified and exhorted them, saying, Be saved from this perverse generation. Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that about three thousand souls were added unto them.”

5. Titus 1:1-3. “Paul, a servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God’s elect, and the acknowledgment of the truth which accords with godliness; In hope of eternal life, which God, who cannot lie, promised before time began; But has in due times manifested his word through preaching, which was committed to me according to the commandment of God our Savior.”

6. I John 2:4-6. “He who says, I know him, and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him: By this know we that we are in him. He who says he abides in Him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked.” (The “Word” is already perfected, so what is being perfected? The one who receives the word.)

7. Luke 1:38. Mary was impregnated when she told the angel, “Be it unto me according to your word.”

8. Matthew 4:4. Jesus said: “But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.”

9. Matthew 24:35. Jesus said: “Heaven and earth shall pass a way but My words will by no means pass away.”

10. God the Father said: “My Covenant I will not break nor alter the Word that is gone out of my lips.” Psalm 89:34.

11. John 17:8. Jesus said to the Father: “For I have given to them (the disciples) the words which You have given Me, and they have received them....”

12. I Peter 1:25. Peter said: “But the word of the Lord endures forever. Now this is the word which by the gospel was preached to you.”

13. II Peter 1:21. Peter said again: “Knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.”

14. II Timothy 3:16. Paul said: “Be diligent...rightly dividing the word of truth.”
II Timothy 2:1. Paul said again: “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable.”

15. Galatians 1:8. Paul said once more: “But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed.”

16. Psalm 119:89. David said: “Forever, O Lord, Your Word is settled in Heaven.”

If you are one of those believers whose Cessationist Theology denies the integrity of Scripture or the Holy Spirit’s miraculous gifts, stop it! You are on the losing team! You are on God’s opposing team!

Kingdom faith is **fact**, not fiction! Hapax — “once for all.”###

Charles Carrin
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CHARLES CARRIN’S ministry spans the final half of the twentieth century. He was ordained in 1949 and in his youth traveled with men who preached in the 1800’s. For the first twenty-seven years of his ministry, Charles was a hyper-Calvinist Baptist pastor and Presbyterian seminarian who denied the miraculous works of the Holy Spirit. Mid-way in his ministry that abruptly

changed. Personal crisis forced him to acknowledge Scriptures he had previously ignored. It was a time of intense pain and testing. The truths he saw were frightening; they had power to destroy his denominational ministry and at that point he had no hope that another, more wonderful ministry awaited him. As a result of his submitting to God in that crisis, Charles emerged with an amazing anointing of the Holy Spirit. Today, his ministry centers upon the visible demonstration of the Spirit and imparting of His gifts. This new ministry has taken him to London's Westminster Chapel, the Toronto Airport Christian Fellowship, and other significant places. He, R.T. Kendall, the former, 25 year pastor at Westminster Chapel, and Jack Taylor, former Vice President of the Southern Baptist Convention, travel together holding "Word, Spirit, Power, Conferences." As an evangelist/writer, Charles' articles have appeared in major Christian magazines in the United States and abroad. He travels extensively, teaching believers how to operate in the power of the Holy Spirit.

[Link to Carrin Ministries](#)