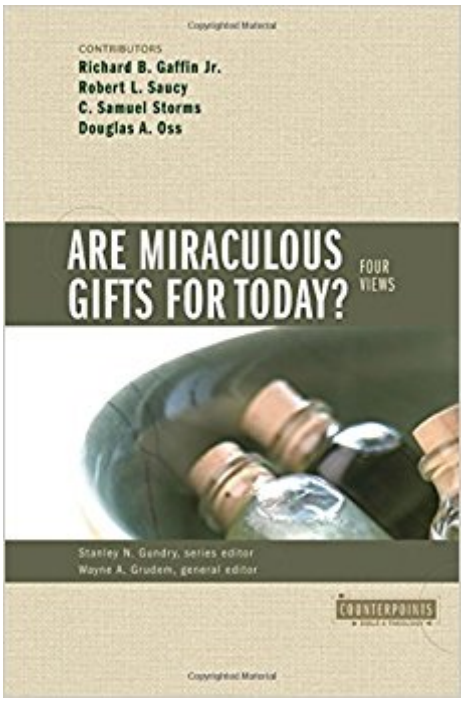
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Are Miraculous Gifts For Today?



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Synopsis

Are the gifts of tongues, prophecy, and healing for today? No, say cessationists. Yes, say Pentecostal and Third Wave Christians. Maybe, say a large sector of open-but-cautious evangelicals. WhatÃ¢â ¬â„¢s the answer? Is there an answer? Are Miraculous Gifts for Today? takes you to the heart of the charismatic controversy. It provides an impartial format for comparing the four main lines of thinking: cessationist, open but cautious, third wave, and Pentecostal/charismatic. The authors present their positions in an interactive setting that allows for critique, clarification, and defense. This thought-provoking book will help Christians on every side of the miraculous gifts debate to better understand their own position and the positions of others. Wayne Grudem has brought online the four major views on miraculous gifts today. Downloading them into your own understanding takes effort, but the worldwide network that you join is the fellowship of the Spirit! The Counterpoints series provides a forum for comparison and critique of different views on issues important to Christians. Counterpoints books address two categories: Church Life and Bible and Theology. Complete your library with other books in the Counterpoints series.

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Customer Reviews

Wayne Grudem is professor of biblical and systematic theology at Trinitiy Evangelical Divinity School in Deerfield, Illinois. He holds degrees from Harvard (B.A.), Westminster Seminary (M.Div.), and Cambridge (Ph.D.). He is the co-editor of Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood

Are the gifts of tongues, prophecy, and healing for today? No, say cessationists. Yes, say Pentecostal and Third Wave Christians. Maybe, say a large sector of open-but-cautious evangelicals. What's the answer? Is there an answer? Are Miraculous Gifts for Today? takes you to the heart of the charismatic controversy. It provides an impartial format for comparing the four main lines of thinking: cessationist, open but cautious, third wave, and Pentecostal/charismatic. The authors present their positions in an interactive setting that allows for critique, clarification, and defense. This thought-provoking book will help Christians on every side of the miraculous gifts debate to better understand their own position and the positions of others. Wayne Grudem has brought online the four major views on miraculous gifts today. Downloading them into your own understanding takes effort, but the worldwide network that you join is the fellowship of the Spirit! The Counterpoints series provides a forum for comparison and critique of different views on issues important to Christians. Counterpoints books address two categories: Church Life and Bible and Theology. Complete your library with other books in the Counterpoints series.

I found this book to be a helpful explanation of the four views on Spiritual gifts. The topic is not just miracles but all of the spiritual gifts such as speaking in tongues and prophecy. I think the four views contain the substantial arguments for each view; however, each author also responds to the other authors' essays. I think this lends to a disjointed format. The introduction provides the method for the writing of this book. There were discussions and a meeting between the authors and the editor to share viewpoints with each other in person. I have provided summaries of each view below.Cessationist ViewGaffin argues for the cessationist view; however, he does claim not to argue merely negatively against the gifts of the Holy Spirit. He claims that he is for the truth of Jn 3.8. Gaffin describes this truth, "in his activity the Spirit is like the blowing wind, sovereign and ultimately incalculable." (25) He asserts that in any analysis of the Holy Spirit's work there will be the element of unaccounted for mystery.His main thrust is to define Pentecost and its related experiences as a single event in salvation history that is not normative or repeatable in Christians' lives today. In this sense, it is akin to Jesus' resurrection, ascension and reception of the Spirit. These are one-time events. Pentecost serves as the completing activity for Christ's work of salvation. He further claims that Acts intends to document not a normative pattern of the Holy Spirit's or the church's work but a unique, completed epoch in the history of redemption characterized by the work and presence of the original apostles. (37-38) Therefore, the implication is that the spiritual gifts we see in Acts are not transferable to later eras of Christianity. Gaffin admits

that Luke did not intend to document the cessation of miraculous gifts and power; however, Gaffin concludes that the miraculous gifts and power illustrated in Acts cease at that time. If others demonstrated apostolic-like power and gifts, they did it due to an "apostolic umbrella," a dynamic created by the proximity of an apostle.Gaffin argues that "word gifts" have ceased. These include the prophetic gifts: gifts of prophecy, tongues, interpretation of tongues, the word of wisdom and the word of knowledge. Based on inferences from Scripture, Gaffin concludes that these gifts were limited to the "foundational" era of the church. Once their foundational usefulness had passed, these gifts too passed from the life of the church. (44) He claims that these gifts would produce revelatory words on par with Scripture, and since the Canon of Scripture is closed, these gifts cannot continue to exist.Open but Cautious ViewSaucy affirms that all evangelicals worship a God of supernatural power. He admits that God works miraculously in spiritual gifts exercised by God's people. Because he does not see explicit teaching on spiritual gifts within Scripture, he identifies the use of spiritual gifts as being problematic. He argues that Scripture teaches that all believers receive the fullness of the Holy Spirit upon coming to faith. For Saucy, Paul's commands to "live by the Spirit" (Gal 5.16,25) and to "be filled with the Spirit" (Eph 5.18) indicate an ongoing growing relationship with the Holy Spirit.His believes that the New Testament does not teach the cessation of the spiritual gifts; however, he asserts that "several lines of evidence" demonstrate that the miraculous phenomena experienced in the early church are not intended by God to be standard for the church today. (100) He claims that miraculous activity has been concentrated in three historical episodes in salvation history: 1. Moses and the Exodus, 2. ministries of Elijah and Elisha, and 3. ministries of Christ and the apostles. (103) He considers these to be crucial turning points in salvation history. He believes that the miraculous signs and wonders during Christ's and the apostles' times were to bear witness to the verity of their message. He concludes that the spiritual gifts are not normative for the Christian church at all times. He also concludes that the workings of miracles have nothing to do with individual faith but relies solely on God's sovereignty.For Saucy, Scripture offers no explicit teaching for or against the cessation of Spiritual gifts. Any emphasis on spiritual gifts by the church is something Saucy sees as foreign to New Testament teaching. Saucy recommends approaching spiritual gifts cautiously and avoiding mandates and doctrines that alienate Christians from one another.A Third Wave ViewStorms contends that Christians should pray for the Holy Spirit to come and minister to and through God's people by means of the full range of spiritual gifts listed in the New Testament. Storms affirms that believers receive the Holy Spirit upon salvation and may subsequently be filled, empowered, endued and overwhelmed by the Holy Spirit throughout their lives. He calls this being "filled with the Spirit" and not Spirit-baptism. (179) The Spirit is continually

given to empower our ministry through Christ. He calls these events "fresh impartations" of the Spirit. (185)For Storms and the Third Wave movement, miracles and spiritual gifts serve several purposes such as doxological, evangelistic, expressing the Lord's compassion and love and to edify and build up the body of Christ. He asserts that the gifts of the Holy Spirit were given for reasons that continue to exist today. He also argues from church history that evidence of the charismatic gifts continuing across the centuries is substantial enough to disprove the theory of cessationism or suggestions that spiritual gifts are all demonic, psychological or spurious. He argues that the absence of spiritual gifts during ages of the church does not indicate God's intending their cessation. Saucy argues as one who had once held to the doctrine of cessationism. He claims that his stance was based on fear and ignorance more than Scripture.He concludes that all the gifts of the Holy Spirit are valid for the contemporary church. For Saucy, there is no Scriptural evidence indicating otherwise; he argues Scripture provides guidelines for the gifts of the Spirit like the prophetic gifts that show they are compatible with the Canon and with God's plan for the church today. He shows how praying in tongues is a Scriptural method for edifying oneself, praying according to the Spirit and engaging in spiritual warfare. He cites the dangers associated with Spiritual gifts, mainly emotionalism, judging others and focusing on gifts rather than God.A Pentecostal/Charismatic ViewThis view is similar to the Third Wave view except it emphasizes two distinguishable workings of the Holy Spirit. One work is the inner-transforming work, and the other is the empowering/charismatic work of the Spirit. Oss states that this view believes all Christians receive the Holy Spirit. Oss argues that being baptized in the Holy Spirit is not considered a once-for-all experience. His view emphasizes the need of being "refilled," a traditional Pentecostal expression to indicate that the empowering work of the Spirit is something that happens, or should happen, repeatedly in the life of a believer. Pentecostals have defined "baptism in the Holy Spirit" as the first experience of the Spirit's empowering work. This inaugurates a life of continual "anointings" by the Spirit. (243)Oss begins with the Old Testament examples of the empowering/transforming work of the Holy Spirit that show workings of inner regeneration and outward empowering. This presages the distinct workings of the Holy Spirit demonstrated in Acts that anoints believers for witness and service. This empowerment continues for the church to this day. Oss argues that any doctrine of cessation is based not on Scripture but on experience. He also argues against dividing history since Christ's time into ages characterized by different workings of the Holy Spirit. For Oss and those sharing his view, the Holy Spirit is always a power-anointing, charismatic and transforming being who inhabits and works through his church. He interprets the New Testament teachings on gifts as indicating a continual experience for the church. Like Saucy, Oss cautions

against the misuse of the gifts in manipulative, innovative, ego-centric or gift-centric environments.

A quite thorough "discussion" of the question by four Christian leaders.

This book is like being able to attend a symposium with some of the finest minds concerning the continuation of the spiritual gifts. It’s easy to read and the back-and-forth between the different authors not only makes for great reading but gives the book a wide angle from which to view the possible solutions.

Superb product

It was too academic for me.

Very informative discussion of the biblical evidence supporting four of the major views on whether or not miraculous gifts (the gifts of the Spirit) are still available to believers and the church today

This debate was really good! This lead me to investigate more and I finally changed my views. Glad that all these views were represented and well-defended by the various writers.

This is a well written and thorough review of the four primary positions regarding the gifts of the Spirit. Just be aware that the kindle edition does not have page numbers making it impossible to create proper citations for your research papers.

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