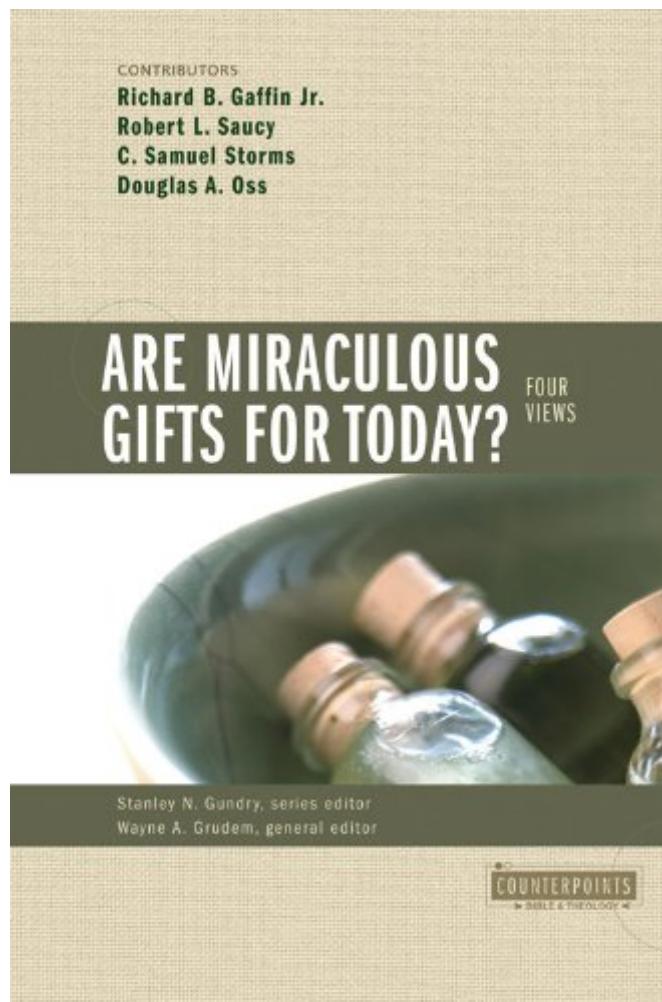


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Are Miraculous Gifts For Today?: 4 Views (Counterpoints: Bible And Theology)



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. 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.

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Customer Reviews

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 View

Gaffin 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.

This will be one of the longest book reviews I've ever written. I'm writing it as much for me (to sort through what I read) as anyone else. I want to give an overview of the positions in the book, their presenters, and the pros and cons of each position as represented by the presenters. Then I would like to close this review with the strengths and weaknesses of the arguments that were presented and whether or not there was any resolution. The essential issues addressed in this book by four presenters and one facilitator is related to these important questions: "How is the Holy Spirit working in churches today? Is he really giving miraculous healings and prophecies in tongues? Is he giving Christians new power for ministry when they experience a 'baptism in the Holy Spirit' after conversion? Is he driving out demons when Christians command them? Or are these events confined to a distant past, to the time when the New Testament was being written and living apostles taught and governed--and worked miracles--in the churches? There are many

Pentecostals who say that Christians should seek to be baptized in the Holy Spirit after conversion, and that this experience will result in a new spiritual power for ministry. But other evangelicals respond that they already have been baptized in the Holy Spirit, because it happened the moment they became Christians. Who is right? What are the arguments on each side?"In addition to these questions there are many differences over what spiritual gifts are currently in operation today. "Can people have a gift of prophecy today, so that God actually reveals things to them and they can tell these revelations to others? Or was that gift confined to the time when the New Testament was still unfinished, in the first century A.D.?

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