

Why the Cessationism vs Continuationism is really about the Authority of Scripture

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Host: David Wheaton 00:08

Why the Cessationism vs Continuationism Debate is Really About the Authority of Scripture. That is our topic today right here on The Christian Worldview Radio Program, where the mission is to sharpen the biblical worldview of Christians and to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ. I'm David Wheaton, the host. The Christian Worldview is a listener supported radio ministry. You can connect with us by visiting our website, TheChristianWorldview.org, calling toll free 1-888-646-2233 or by writing to Box 401 Excelsior, Minnesota 55331.

It's a simple question with far reaching ramifications: Do Christians today possess the same miraculous "sign" gifts that God gave first century apostles, such as Peter and Paul, to...

- Perform miracles like bringing a dead person back to life. (Acts 9:36-42);
- Heal instantly and fully making a blind man see or a lame man walk (Acts 3:1-8);
- Speak instantly in a previously unknown foreign language. (Acts 2:1-12);
- Prophecy by foretelling the future with 100% accuracy. (Acts 27:21-26)?

Those are the four sign gifts. Christians today are widely divided on the issue of cessationism, which means that men ceased to have sign gifts after the first century and continuationism which means that men and women continue to have the same sign gifts today. It's more than just a perennial doctrinal debate. It's ultimately about the sufficiency and authority of God's Word. If men and women today receive revelation from God beyond Scripture, we can't trust scripture alone as the final authority.

Scott Aniol, Executive Vice President of G3 Ministries, an organization that is partnered in producing a documentary film called *Cessationist*, joins us on The Christian Worldview to discuss this compelling topic. Scott, thank you for coming on The Christian Worldview Radio Program today. The last time you were on the program was on July 1, 2023, to talk about Christian nationalism.

Today we're going to discuss a different topic on cessationism. I want to start off by playing a soundbite from this documentary film that appeared early on from Nathan Busenitz, who works at

the Masters Seminary where he talked about the distinction between a miracle of God versus a miracle worker. Listen to this.

Audio Sound Bite: Nathan Busenitz 03:00

A miracle is a supernatural act of God in which he interrupts the normal course of life in an extraordinary and remarkable way to accomplish his purposes. If we get a little bit more specific, we might ask, What is the gift of miracles or who was a miracle worker? The gift of miracles was a gift given to a supernaturally endowed person. God worked miracles through that individual confirming that that individual was a spokesman and representative for God.

Host: David Wheaton 03:41

Busenitz makes a distinction there, Scott. Why is that an important distinction to make in defining cessationism versus continuationism as a miracle of God, versus a miracle that God works through a man?

Guest: Scott Aniol 03:58

That's very important. When we use the term cessationism, which is an unfortunate term because it makes it sound like we're negative. What exactly is ceasing? It's important to define exactly what we're talking about. What a cessationist says, is that those particular gifts given to an individual, the gifting to have the ability to perform those particular signs and wonders for the confirmation of their own ministry as a mouthpiece of God, that is what has ceased. What a cessationist is not saying is that God doesn't actively work. That God doesn't do divine works or even that God would never do something extraordinary and miraculous. God certainly can. Certainly does. But what cessationism specifically is referring to is the cessation of the miraculous gifts given to an individual for the purpose of confirming his ministry as a messenger of God.

Host: David Wheaton 05:00

Why even produce a documentary on cessationism? Why is it biblical and really polemic against why continuationism is not, that these miraculous sign gifts are still in continuance today. Because, even people listening today may believe that God still has these gifts enacted in men and women today, it can be an offensive topic. So why such an intent endeavor to make this film on cessationism?

Guest: Scott Aniol 05:41

I think there's two primary reasons. When we think about the continuationist movements, and there are several, you have the main line, mainstream majority continuationists or charismatics who have really infiltrated Christianity throughout the world and with some really dangerous doctrine that

impedes upon the sufficiency of Scripture. Sometimes you'll see forms of that doctrine that include health, wealth and prosperity gospel. So you're even losing the Gospel itself, and that's really mainline charismaticism around the world that's causing a lot of problems in this country, to be sure, but also around the world. It needs to be addressed. It's not like it was addressed 10 years ago, or it's been addressed before. No, it's continuing to be a significant problem around the world. That's a big reason.

We do address many of those mainline majority charismatics, who have some pretty serious theological problems. The second reason is that there are a minority of more thoughtful, evangelical continuationists. They're not by any stretch of the imagination as problematic as the more extreme forms, but they have succeeded in pretty much infiltrating most of evangelicalism with a theology that again, we don't think is quite as seriously problematic as being a false gospel like the health, wealth and prosperity gospel. However, we still believe that it is unbiblical, that it causes problems for the church, that it leads people in an improper belief concerning the nature of divine revelation and many other things. It's in a sense, more subtly impacted, even reformed otherwise conservative evangelical Christians.

Again, we feel like this needs to be addressed. The biblical teaching needs to be perpetuated and taught clearly. For that reason, we were involved in the production of the *Cessationist* film. We published through G3 press a book, *A Biblical Case for Cessationism* by Tom Pennington, which I really believe is now the standard defense of the doctrine. It's an excellent book. We have a conference coming up in Oklahoma in October, The Cessationist Conference, in which we will also address the issue head on. We think that these are important biblical truths that need to be clarified because of the rampant infiltration of various forms of continuation as theology around the world.

Host: David Wheaton 08:10

Second Peter 1:19-20 says, we have the prophetic word made more sure, to which you do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star arises in your hearts. But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation. For no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.

This is talking about the inspiration of Scripture, but also the primacy of Scripture. So how is this debate, Scott, between cessationism and continuationism, more than a debate over whether men still possess these supernatural sign gifts as the apostles did in the first century? Really, it's a debate about the operation of the Holy Spirit today, and ultimately about the authority of Scripture.

Guest: Scott Aniol 09:35

Absolutely. I think that text in 2 Peter is so critical because it contrasts Peter's experience of Jesus's Transfiguration on the Mount, which was God himself speaking from heaven and confirming His Son. Contrast that with the written Word, and Peter's argument in that passage is very clearly that the Word, the written Word, is the certain, sure revelation that we need to rely on rather than longing after even these supernatural experiences like He and the apostles experienced in the first century. That's key because the issue here is really the sufficiency of the Word. Even those more thoughtful continuationists, they say they believe in the sufficiency of the Word, but the minute that we teach that God still speaks outside of His Word, or still gives these miraculous gifts outside of the inspired Word, we really are impeding upon the sufficient work of the Word itself.

You mentioned the operation of the Holy Spirit. I've actually just finished a book on "what does the Holy Spirit do today?" that will be out sometime this year. The question we ought to be asking is, What ought to be our normal expectation for how the Holy Spirit works? The Holy Spirit is active. God does divine works every single day. Cessationism is not teaching that God does not work and the Holy Spirit is not active. He absolutely is active. He does divine extraordinary works, particularly in the regenerating of dead hearts, and the sanctifying of believers, that's divine work from God.

What we find in the pages of Scripture is that our expectation ought to be that the Holy Spirit does those works through the sufficient Word that he has inspired, which is more sure and certain, than even if we had some sort of experience of God's miraculous works. The minute that you talk about those things, God gifting miraculous works, or God, even speaking directly to individuals, well, then you're placing in the equation, some uncertainty regarding that fallible individual's private interpretation of his experience.

What Peter is saying in that text is that the written Word is not reliant upon the private personal interpretation. It's not produced by a private personal interpretation of an individual. We have a written Word, now a complete canon of Scripture, and the fact that we have that complete canon of Scripture now, that is sufficient and is authoritative, means that God no longer speaks directly. He speaks through His Word. He doesn't speak directly in some sort of personal experience. He also doesn't therefore need to gift individuals with the sign gifts. As we've mentioned already, the whole purpose of those gifts was to confirm the messenger when God was delivering that prophecy, while the canon of Scripture during certain stages in His redemptive history, was being added to for the completion of God's revelation.

It's important to emphasize the Holy Spirit is an active worker in the world today. God continues to do divine works both providentially, which is still a divine work, but also in our immediate experience, and especially in the regeneration of sinners, and the sanctification of believers. All of those things, God works through the sufficient Word that He has inspired.

Host: David Wheaton 14:29

Our topic today is, Why the Cessationism vs Continuationism Debate is Really About the Authority of Scripture. I'm going to play another soundbite from the film here, Scott. This is from Tom Pennington of Countryside Bible Church in Texas. Here's what he had to say about miracles:

Audio Sound Bite: Todd Pennington 17:18

There were times, three of them in Scripture, when God gave to men the power to work miracles. There is first of all the time of Moses and Joshua, 1400 years before Christ, a period of about 65 years. Then you fast forward to the time of Elijah and Elisha, about 800 years before Christ, and there again, you have a period of about 65 years, when God was giving men the power to work miracles. The next period of time like that comes in the time of Jesus and the apostles. And that stems from the beginning of His ministry, to at the very latest, the death of John. There you have another period of 65, 70 years. Those were the three epics. In each case, it was to confirm those men as his messengers.

Host: David Wheaton 18:11

Sometimes we as Christians think that God doing miracles was just something that was constant throughout all the 2,000 years of history, but it really wasn't. Tom Pennington makes the point that there were really three times in history when miracles were taking place via men, and that there is no significant mention of miraculous gifts after the book of Corinthians. Explain that more, why there were these particular specific periods that weren't that long, and is God doing miracles, not by the means of men, but is God actually doing miracles today in some way?

Guest: Scott Aniol 18:47

We need to remember what this thing is we're talking about. We use the word miracle, but actually the word sometimes translated miracle, although in more modern translations, that word is actually very infrequently used. It's really more of the older translations that use that word. Really, that word is a translation of a word that literally means, sign. That's what we're talking about. When we say miracle, what we mean is a sign. Then the question needs to be, if that's what the biblical authors used to describe these things, these gifts, well, what is it a sign of, and what purpose did it serve? This is where we need to step back and say, Okay, what is God doing in the world? God is working

His plan for His own glory of redemption and He is unfolding that plan or He has unfolded that plan in a progressive way through the history of humanity. We have a glimpse of the gospel in Genesis chapter 3, but then over the period of the Old Testament, and then into the New Testament, God in really three significant stages unpacks and unfolds that plan of redemption.

We talk about progressive revelation in respect to that purposefully, because that is how God makes that plan known. He does so through His revelation. Because it's progressive, what that means then, is that at each of those stages in the unfolding of God's plan, He had to reveal new revelation, in order that God's people might know what is expected of them, and ultimately, of course, that they might know the way of salvation. At each of those stages in which He is unfolding progressive revelation, the first stage being with the Exodus from Egypt, and the meeting of God's people with God at Mount Sinai, the delivery of His law, that's a significant transitional stage in the progressive unfolding of God's plan.

Then the next big transitional stage is the period of the prophets, Elijah and Elisha in particular, when God is now unfolding things to come and revelation for His people. Then, of course that third big transitional stage is with Christ and the apostles, and the unfolding of the perfect fulfillment of all things in the person of Jesus Christ and the founding of His body, the church, in those early years of the New Testament period. At each of those stages, when God is now revealing new revelation, how are the people going to know that they can trust these divinely endowed individuals who are delivering that revelation, whether it be Moses, or whether it be the prophets, or whether it be Jesus Christ Himself and His apostles? In order to confirm in the sight of the people that these individuals indeed are messengers from God, who are delivering divine revelation, God gifts them with the ability to perform signs. We see this clearly with Moses. Moses himself asks God in the burning bush, How will I be able to convince the people that I'm a messenger? That's where He gives him the ability to change the staff into a snake, and all that happens, and the crossing of the Red Sea, and all of that.

All of those miracles, those signs, were meant to confirm Moses and later Joshua in those early years of crossing over into the Promised Land, that these are messengers of God who are here to present God's revelation at that transitional stage. Same thing during the period of the prophets, Elijah and Elisha. The same thing is the case in the lifetime of Christ Himself. Then those early years of founding the church, particularly the apostles were confirmed as messengers of God, who then went on to pen the very revelation of the New Testament. The way that they were confirmed was through the performing of signs. That's why we don't see a lot of reference to signs later in the book of Acts, or past to the early couple of epistles that are written in the New Testament. Is God doing signs,

miracles in that sense today? I would say no, He's not, because He's no longer needing to confirm new messengers of His revelation because we have the complete canon of Scripture. Is God again, doing divine supernatural work today? Absolutely. Again, He's regenerating dead hearts and sanctifying His people. Can God heal people instantaneously, supernaturally today? Absolutely, He can, but is He gifting individuals with signs anymore? Again, if we understand the purpose of a sign, to confirm somebody who is a mouthpiece of God during stages in which God is unfolding new revelation, then, no. He doesn't have any necessity of gifting people with those signs anymore, because we have the sure, certain, sufficient, authoritative, complete Word.

Host: David Wheaton 23:54

Amen to that, Scott. As a follow up to what you just said, Scott, it seems like one very obvious, right there in front of your eyes arguments, evidence, you could say, against continuationism, that men and women still possess these miraculous sign gifts today, is that men and women aren't able to perform these miraculous sign gifts today. I don't see anyone raising people from the dead as the apostles were able to do or healing people who were blind and lame from birth. I don't see any of that. You have to set aside all the chicanery and false things going on, the healing crusades. I don't see men and women able to foretell accurately the future as back in these days when they had the sign gifts, or for men and women to speak in a previously unknown language. If you look at the evidence of what's taking place, that this isn't taking place, Why is there such a growing movement of continuationism? I've heard it's the fastest growing within the broad definition of Christianity. Who are the names and the churches and the organizations that are making this so prominent?

Guest: Scott Aniol 25:28

Just in our own fallibility, and certainly sinfulness, we want experiences, we want tangible experiences that we can point to and say that's God at work. And again, I mean, some of that's our sinfulness and not trusting the sufficiency of God, but some of that is just natural as human beings. We want to have definable experiences that are tangible, that are visceral, that we can sense, but the New Testament speaks directly to this. This is exactly the problem that the book of Hebrews is addressing where Hebrew converts to Christianity are being tempted to leave their Christian faith. They want the more tangible, visceral experiences of the Jewish practices of worship, and they've given those up in favor of merely trusting the sufficiency of God's Word, spiritual experiences, which are real experiences, but don't have that same visceral, tangible evidence. We want evidence, we want proof that God is working.

The author of Hebrews, his message is just as critical for what we're seeing in the influence of the charismatic movement continuationism today, and that is, we need not long for and trust and look

for physical evidence that God is working, we simply need to trust it by faith. Faith is assurance of things hoped for, it is conviction of things not seen. It is trust in the sufficient Word. It is confidence that what God has promised is true. It is confidence that God is still at work in regenerating hearts and sanctifying believers through His Word, and not longing after or expecting these visible signs that appears to be what people are really longing for.

This has been on the rise since at least the early 20th century, with various movements. It's gone through sometimes what is described as several waves of the charismatic movement. But today, again, you kind of see it in two forms. You see it in the more mainstream majority extreme forms, prominent in groups like The New Apostolic Reformation, Bethel, out in California, is a large influence, particularly through their worship music that has spread worldwide. People like Todd Bentley and others who are perpetuating this theology.

But like you said, you don't see the gifts that we see in the New Testament, you don't see those being perpetuated by these individuals. A lot of these men are really frauds. They're pretending to be performing those sorts of things, even raising people from the dead, but you don't actually see them happening. So you do see that influence, but as I mentioned earlier, you do have a minority of more thoughtful, theological, evangelical continuationists. They're not frauds, they're not deceptive, they're not preaching another gospel. What they actually have to do is they have to redefine things like prophecy, tongues and healing. They have to argue that the forms in which those gifts take place today are different from what we saw in the Old Testament, or what we saw during the lifetime of the apostles.

Prophecy is not infallible like it was in the Bible. Prophecy today is fallible. Tongues are not speaking in known languages that the person speaking has never before learned anymore, like it clearly was in the book of Acts. No, tongues now is the tongues of angels or something. Healings are not immediate reversals of somebody being lame, or somebody having a withered hand, or somebody rising from the dead like they were in the scriptures.

Now it's more like somebody who has depression is helped or somebody who has an ailment that is not necessarily visible is healed. So they end up having to redefine those things which, again, I would argue there's no biblical warrant to redefine those gifts. Let's define the gifts as the Bible does. Let's understand their purpose. Let's understand that their purpose has ceased, and then this is exactly why we don't see people performing these sorts of gifts today.

Host: David Wheaton 29:44

That's an excellent lead in to my next question for you. You've referred to some of the more well known, we could call them reformed continuationists. By reformed we mean, they believe in the soteriology or the doctrines of grace of salvation that came out of the Reformation. Names like John Piper, Wayne Grudem, DA Carson. I think another one featured in the film, who I wasn't very familiar with was named, Sam Storms. Correct me if I'm wrong. But let me play a short soundbite from the film of an interview with John Piper, as he talks about his position on the miraculous sign gifts.

Audio Sound Bite 30:22

To turn to the miraculous gifts. Tongues, healing, prophecy. Where would you say the place for those gifts would be in the life of the church?

Audio Sound Bite: John Piper 30:31

I would want my people to know I believe in those things. I want them to flourish in those things. Got a word of knowledge for us? Got a word of prophecy? If you're scared of that kind of language, you can say, has God impressed upon you in some way, something that you think somebody in this room or all of us need to hear from your walk with God? And open yourself up to that.

Host: David Wheaton 30:54

That was John Piper talking about his continuationist position. The film also brought out not only these men, but also the term that's often used among evangelicals. They'll say, Well, I don't want to consider myself a cessationist because I don't want to, "put God in a box." So I'm "open, but cautious". Why is the "open but cautious" position that I think Piper, Grudem, Carson and others who are reformed continuationists would hold to, Why is that not a tenable or helpful position?

Guest: Scott Aniol 31:31

First of all, it is very important to distinguish these men from, again, the more majority mainstream charismatics, because I've benefited a lot from the writings of these men like John Piper, Wayne Grudem, DA Carson. They believe the gospel, and in the unique authority and sufficiency of Scripture, which is not true of the majority charismatics. These men are brothers, and believers. They do write things that are helpful that have contributed to sound theology, but on this issue, I think that they're biblically mistaken. Particularly to address the open, but cautious moniker, which I don't believe is a tenable position, I would actually site Sam Storms himself.

Interestingly, Sam Storms, who is another one of these really influential reformed continuationists, he actually did a multi part blog review of the *Cessationist* film. I respect him for doing that. I'm thankful

that he did that. But one of the points that he makes, he says "in the film, I'm called open, but cautious, but I'm not open, but cautious." He even himself says, that's not a tenable position, because here's the thing. If we believe that those gifts are still being given today, well, then the Bible clearly says that we ought to pursue them, not be cautious.

First Corinthians 14 says, if they are continuing, we need to actively pursue them. That's what Storm says. Storms argues that you are in sin, if you don't actively pursue these things. You heard Piper not say it's sinful, but to say we ought to actively pursue these sorts of things. So really, they're not open, but cautious, and those who might use that terminology need to realize that the dominant defenders of the more reformed version of continuationism, don't really believe that and they don't advocate that phrase, either.

You either believe the gifts continue, or you don't believe the gifts continue. If they continue, then you ought to actively pursue them. Again, if we understand the purpose of these gifts as confirming, new messengers of divine revelation, and if we believe like Piper, Grudem, Carson and Storms do, that the canon of Scripture is complete, we must not and I think they all would agree with this, we must not expect any new divine revelation. If we believe that, then we ought to also affirm that the confirmatory signs of messengers of new divine revelation also are ceased, and we should not expect those as well.

Host: David Wheaton 34:08

Scott, let's talk more about the effect of continuationism on evangelicalism. I'd like to play a soundbite from Francis Chan from the film. He talks about an experience that he had when he went over to Myanmar which is formerly known as Burma, and how he experienced being able to heal people, everyone he touched was being healed. This I believe was given at Moody Bible Institute's Founder's week, if I'm not mistaken. Here's Francis Chan, a very well known evangelical author of many books that many evangelicals have read. Here's the soundbite.

Audio Sound Bite: Francis Chan 37:54

So for the last few years, I have believed in miracles and I have believed for healing. I'm so shocked because every time I would pray, nothing would happen. Sometimes I'd even go overseas to where I'd hear about all these miracles happening. Okay, let me at least see it, and I'd get there, Africa, India or whatever, and nothing. We were in Myanmar, Burma. I can't even tell you how intense, how amazing the experiences we had were. People started coming forward for healing. Every person I touched was healed. You guys, okay. This is craziness to me. I have never experienced this in 52 years.

Host: David Wheaton 38:51

Again, just an unbelievable story, and even consider the environment there at Moody Bible Institute. I think it was Founder's week. People were clapping, the audience was clapping at his recounting of this experience of purported healing over in Myanmar. As the person who was commenting from the film, I can't remember his name, but he was saying this is a racket that they have going on over there, where they set these preachers up. But I'd like to ask you, What has been the effect of continuationism on the evangelical church, whether in the preaching, the messaging of the church, or the worship methodology?

Guest: Scott Aniol 39:32

That very example of the audience response to that description of an experience is an example of the effect. Because my guess is a lot of people in that audience would not describe themselves as Pentecostal, charismatic or even continuationists. They probably would describe themselves, on paper, as cessationists, but many evangelicals have been conditioned to the point where we're not going to argue with someone's experience. If somebody says something happened, even if it contradicts what we believe, even if it contradicts what Scripture says, we've been conditioned to trust experience over doctrine, experience over scripture.

Where instead, we need to be emphasizing the fact that I don't care what somebody says their experience is, we need to always interpret experience through the lens of Scripture. Scripture is what is sufficient. This is exactly what Peter is saying in 2 Peter chapter 1. That Scripture is more sure, more certain, more trustworthy than an experience, because Scripture comes directly from the Holy Spirit. It is not produced by a man, it is not produced by a man's interpretation, whereas experiences are. Like you pointed out there, experiences can be manufactured, can be faked, and be misinterpreted. I might have a legitimate experience, a true experience of something that God does, but I could misinterpret what's happening. That happens all the time.

We can never trust experience, we must always trust Scripture. We've been conditioned because of the gradual, subtle influence of continuationist theology. Most evangelicals have been conditioned to trust experience over Scripture, and we see that in a number of different ways practically. That's one example, that response to someone's experience. We see this a lot of times in how people talk about their experiences, or the way in which God is working in their lives. People might say, Well, God moved me to do such and such, or God impressed upon me this sort of message, or God spoke to me. That kind of language. Again, a lot of people who use that would never describe themselves as charismatic or continuationists, but nevertheless, they've been conditioned in that

way. The largest influence, I would say, is in the area of worship. Contemporary evangelical worship today is thoroughly charismatic. It's where it comes from. I would highly recommend a book called, *Lovin' on Jesus: A Concise History of Contemporary Worship* by Swee Hong Lim and Lester Ruth. These are two historians who are tracing the sources of contemporary praise and worship today. They show definitively how the way that most evangelicals worship today comes directly out of charismatic theology and actually embodies that theology, such that charismatic worship has subtly infiltrated again, otherwise secessionist movements and churches, so that we have been conditioned in essence, to be continuationists, and not trust in the sufficiency of Scripture, even though we would never admit it.

They point out that even the desire to be outwardly physical and expressive in worship is a fairly new phenomenon that comes directly out of charismatic theology, highlighting intensity as a virtue in worship, like if you really want to know that God is working, it's got to be something intense. That comes directly out of charismatic theology, and largely stress on what they themselves describe as a sacramental power of music, that music is that which ushers us into an experiential awareness of God's presence. Again, that comes directly out of charismatic theology. But all of those things have influenced otherwise cessationist individuals to really embrace charismatic theology, even though they might not even admit it, or state that they're charismatic on paper.

Host: David Wheaton 43:41

I'm going to read a passage from 1 Corinthians chapter 12, because these are the chapters of Scripture, 12 through 14 in 1 Corinthians and a few other places that deal directly with these sign gifts or really gifts of the Spirit.

1 Corinthians 12:27 says, Now you are Christ's body and individually members of it. And God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles and gifts of healing, helps, administrations, various kinds of tongues. All are not apostles, are they? All are not prophets, are they? All are not teachers, are they? All are not workers of miracles, are they? All do not have gifts of healings, do they? All do not speak with tongues, do they? All do not interpret, do they? Lots of questions there of the various gifts. Paul concludes the chapter by saying, But earnestly desire the greater gifts.

This is often used by those in the continuationist movement, that we need to desire and we should seek to have these same gifts that these apostles had back in the first century. Explain how we're to properly understand that particular passage, especially in light of what comes right away next in 1 Corinthians 13.

Guest: Scott Aniol 45:06

I think first of all that passage clearly teaches that these gifts were given for the foundation of the church. That is their purpose. Again, they're meant to form the new body of Christ in those early centuries of the church. That's why He equipped the church, gifted the church with apostles and prophets and teachers and signs and these sorts of things. That was their function. That was their purpose. Of course, Paul is even in context here. He's condemning the believers at Corinth for being divisive over these gifts, thinking that certain people with certain gifts are better than others with different gifts because they're more showy, they're greater. In fact, that last verse, verse 31, you're right, many used to argue that we ought to desire the gifts in the same way. There are some like John MacArthur, who actually argues that what that verse is actually saying is that it is a condemnation of what the Corinthian believers were doing.

The Corinthian believers were earnestly desiring the more showy kinds of gifts, and he's actually condemning them for it. Instead, he's urging them, now moving into chapter 13, he's moving them toward the more excellent way, which is love and unity and the building up of the body. Then that's exactly where he goes in chapter 14, which is another chapter that talks about tongues and prophecy. A lot of people point to that chapter. But what's Paul's point in chapter 13 and 14? His point is that our goal in all things is to be love, unity, and the building up of the body. That's the purpose for all of these things. God still providentially gifts His people with certain abilities to be able to serve the church. That's still happening today. Again, Why? It's for the unity and the building up of the body. That's its purpose. We need to understand all of that in the context, both of the abuses that were taking place in the church of Corinth, and then the way that Paul is urging them to pursue love and unity and the building up of the body.

Host: David Wheaton 47:06

One more soundbite here with Jonathan Master, and then Phil Johnson, from Grace to You, talking about how there's harm done in telling people that they can be healed, these promises of these sign gifts being enacted by men upon them. Let's listen to that. Then I'll follow up with a question.

Audio Sound Bite: Jonathan Master 47:45

What I'm struck with is not just this doesn't fit with the Bible, although it doesn't fit in any way with biblical teaching, but the human cost, the spiritual cost of this kind of false teaching at a moment when individuals are at their most desperate and have the most openness to hearing genuine truth from God and know they need something from God, know that they're insufficient in themselves to

do what needs to be done, and they're looking to the Lord in some way. And yet, someone steps in and gives them this false self aggrandizing teaching.

Sound bite: Phil Johnson 48:22

I've seen many other lives be destroyed when they finally woke up and realized, these things aren't even real. They think nothing is real. They question whether Christ is real. And it's hard to get anyone who's gone through that to come back and take a serious look at faith in Christ focused on the gospel rather than focused on these phony miracles.

Host: David Wheaton 48:47

Explain more, Scott, why men and women promising these supernatural sign gifts, that they have them, if they're going to help people with them. Why is this especially pernicious for someone and even their ability to believe in God after being falsely promised something that they didn't receive?

Guest: Scott Aniol 49:07

This really is the central concern and why we've taken up this topic and invested in these resources and conference and so forth. We really end up removing from people the very thing that has the power to transform them, that is the sufficient Word. When you start emphasizing that people ought to be seeking after a divine word personally given to them, or they're promised that they're going to be healed in a supernatural way, or they're promised some other sort of miraculous sign gift, inevitably, they then leave their trust in the Word of God itself and they're seeking after these experiences. Again, we're removing that very God given gift that we have been given, and that is the Word of God.

The Word of God has the power to save. The Word of God has the power to heal what is actually the more desperate need of every soul and that is a sinful rebellion against God. The Word of God has the power to sanctify human hearts. If we set that aside and long for these experiences, then we're losing the very power of God. Like you alluded to, if someone's promised healing, if someone's promised a particular sign gift, or if someone's told that, if you're really baptized by the Spirit, then you're going to speak in tongues, and it doesn't happen, well, then it actually in many, many cases, causes them to leave the faith, to actually evidence that they never were really trusting in Christ alone for their salvation, but were rather trusting in these external signs and experiences. When they don't get these signs and experiences, then they prove that they've actually believed a false gospel. So this is what we fear, even with these teachers who again, say a lot of good things and they themselves believe the gospel, and they believe in the sufficiency of Scripture, there is a danger that they are leading others to believe a false gospel, and they're leading others to not trust in the

sufficiency of the Scripture. So we're removing the power of the gospel, and removing the power of the Word to actually transform people's lives.

Host: David Wheaton 51:17

That really sums up the problem with continuationism. It's why we want to highlight this topic and this film, *Cessationist*. Thanks to Scott Aniol from G3 Ministries for coming on the program. We have him linked at our website if you want to find out more about him. Again, there are two options for you to see this film. You can order the DVD and book. Deluxe Edition, it's called. It has all sorts of content, and we have that available for purchase.

Or the second option is you can stream this film for a donation of any amount to The Christian Worldview. We will send you a code for the first month free of a subscription to what's called G3 + where they have a treasure trove of resources like this *Cessationist* film and others on their website. You can get in contact with us the usual ways, whatever option you choose, by our website, by calling us or by writing to us. All that information is given immediately following today's program.

UPCOMING TCW EVENTS:

Speaker Series with Alex Newman - April 12, 2024 at Beacon of Hope Church

The speaker series event with Alex Newman on Globalism is now 50% reserved. The heart of God rejecting man yearns to get back to Babel, creating a world where man rules apart from God. Evidence for this is all around us. Revelation says this is where the world will end up. On Friday, April 12, Christian journalist, Alex Newman, will join us for a Christian Worldview Speaker Series Event at Beacon of Hope church in St. Paul, Minnesota, to speak on the topic of, "How the Push for Global Governance Utilizes Environmentalism, the Educational System, Economic Policy, and More."

You can come for a donation of any amount, but seating is limited, so you need to register in advance at TheChristianWorldview.org or by calling 1-888-646-2233. Doors open at 6pm. Alex Newman speaks at 7:00 pm with Q&A to follow. Be informed to think biblically and live accordingly. Hope to see you Friday, April 12th at Beacon of Hope church in St. Paul, Minnesota.

The Overcomer Course - June 21-21, 2024 at Stone House Farm

The Overcomer Course for young adults, June 21st and 22nd at beautiful Stone House Farm in Jordan, Minnesota. Aged 18 to 25 is a highly transitional time. The convictions developed and the decisions made during this crucial stage sets ones course for years to come.

In eight sessions over two days, addressing life's most important issues, such as God and the gospel, right thinking and living, relationships and marriage, vocation, the local church and more, the Overcomer Course is designed to help young adults gain clarity and conviction on God's plan and their purpose in it.

There will be plenty of time for interaction and discussion as well. You can find out more and register by calling 1-888-646-2233 or by visiting TheChristianWorldview.org. It is 20% reserved. Please get in touch if you want to attend one or both of these events.

Host: David Wheaton

The mission of The Christian Worldview is to sharpen the biblical worldview of Christians and to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ. We hope today's broadcast encouraged you toward that end. To hear a replay of today's program, order a transcript or find out, "What must I do to be saved?" Go to TheChristianWorldview.org or call toll free 1-888-646-2233. The Christian Worldview is a listener supported nonprofit radio ministry furnished by the Overcomer Foundation. To make a donation, become a Christian Worldview Partner, order resources, subscribe to our free newsletter or contact us, visit TheChristianWorldview.org, call 1-888-646-2233 or write to Box 401 Excelsior, Minnesota 55331. That's Box 401 Excelsior, Minnesota 55331.

Thank you for joining us today on The Christian Worldview and for your support of this nonprofit radio ministry. Let's remember we have the prophetic Word, the Bible, made more sure, to which you do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place.

Until next time, Think biblically, live accordingly, and stand firm!