

## God's Not Dead

I've written several articles to refute the claims of the Charismatic movement, both from Scripture, and from the incredible lack of evidence for continuation of the miraculous gifts. I don't believe the continuation of the gifts is especially hard to refute. I see Charismatic popularity has much more to do with its emotionalism, its false alluring claims, and its overwhelming trendiness. Any pastor knows he can do well and just follow the flow of ministry, which in many areas is Charismatic, of one form or another. If you can't beat it, join it, some have surely reasoned, before jumping in. However, despite the ubiquity of claims of possessing miracle gifts today, it remains no less false than it was at its inception.

I want to deal with one major claim of the movement, which gets put forth in varying forms. It's the reason many people wrongly feel convicted to be a part of the movement, and why many others remain deceived. It is the Big Lie of the movement. One so bold and easy to spot that many can't see it. They just love the way it sounds so they swallow the lie. The Big Lie is this: we've got a God who is still living and real in our lives. You do not. Your God is lifeless and downright dull. Your God doesn't act in your life. He doesn't make himself known. We've got a God who works miracles. You've got a God of mere science. We believe God is living. You've got a kind of Deist God, who just winds things up and lets them go, and doesn't interfere at all.

This is the Big Lie, and it's false for really obvious reasons. The biggest is that Cessationists -- Christians who deny that miracle gifts continue to the present -- generally do NOT say that God does not act today. Nor do they claim that God never works a miracle in our age. Cessationism isn't defined by the cessation of God, but by the cessation of the miracle gifts, whereby believers regularly did miraculous healings on the spot, gave accurate prophecies, and spoke in other languages without the need for study. Those are the things which have ceased. God's activity in the world has not ceased. God's miracles have not ceased either, as Cessationists typically affirm God works miracles. He simply does it on a unique occasion according to His will, rather than by previous methods, through gifted believers who did them as a matter of course.

Cessationists affirm God's activity on our lives and work in present human history. They just don't have to make oddball claims of Charismaticism to do so. We affirm God's providence, by which He guides each of our lives, each event, each interaction, as well as the grand and complex workings of nations and empires. He uses His sovereignty over all events to bring about His will. God reigns over all, and is active over all. The claim that Cessationists do not have a "living God" then, is false, and ranks as little more than a cheap insult. It is a ploy to win converts to bad theology. Sadly, those lies deceive millions, and the allure of fake miracles alongside the emotionalism of the movement makes a lot of people not care what is true and what is false anyway. They love the flow of the movement, and they let such a big lie slip, because they really just don't care.

Cessationists deny modern prophecy, at least in the biblical sense of the word, which included both divine authority and accurate predictions. Yet nearly all Cessations I've heard from affirm God's guidance on our mind and God's communication with us on a different level. One does

not need new, inerrant revelation to have God acting in your life and communing with you. God still guides all of us, but that is through giving aid to our mental faculties, and providing wisdom. He can speak through a person we met, or a dream we had. He can surely bring light to our conscience through a meaningful coincidence. Yet this communion is not the speaking of new revelation, which is by nature inerrant, but is the more common form of communion, one that acts through His hand in nature, and through guiding our awareness. If we can say that God truly speaks through the cosmos, yet not in the same way as the Bible, we can also say He truly speaks through events in our lives, and through guiding our mind, without needing to make claims of modern biblical prophecy. It is this form of activity that assures the Holy Spirit in every Christian leads him in holiness, and helps him understand the Scriptures. It is this form of activity that God can use to bring about a cure for cancer, by aiding the researchers doing it, but without needing any of them to be prophets like Elijah. God's speaking into our lives in this fashion is still extraordinary, but not as much so as Holy Scripture, which is perfect, and exists to communicate the truth perfectly. You don't need prophecy in the biblical sense to hear from God. God is present with the believer everywhere and every day.

Charismatics are forced, basically, to acknowledge some of this truth themselves. For if you press them on their claims of having prophecy. They usually will back into a stance that their "prophecy" is not of the same level as Scripture, and often is wrong. However, if this were truly prophecy as Scripture describes, you wouldn't have to say that. Prophecy as Scripture describes it is God speaking through the prophet, and God is never wrong. All God's words are perfect, and His commands binding to us. Charismatics then, deceitfully continue to use the word prophecy, but go on to define it so as to allow their prophets to wrongly state God's words. They admit they give false prophecies. Fallible statements should not be regarded as prophecy, nor those men regarded as prophets.

You might ask, what's the harm then, if they are willing to say it's a "lesser" kind of revelation, similarly as we do? Don't we kind of meet in the middle? It would be nice to say it's harmless, but it's not. The problem is firstly, that they misrepresent the Bible when they do so, since Scripture says if a prophet is wrong, we should not listen to him. Scripture says God's word is truth, and that it is not fallible. Following through on that would mean we do not listen to any of the false prophets among Charismatics, because they regularly are wrong. That's reason number one. Reason number two is just as serious: even though Charismatics admit that their "revelation" is of lesser accuracy, countless people in the movement still take it as true, and still base life decisions on it. Countless people feel bound to rely on it, even when it points them in the wrong way, and feel bound to staying with bad decisions made in the past, because they were based on alleged prophecy. Charismatic churches still base major decisions on it, even hiring and getting rid of ministers based on the words of an alleged prophet. In a sense they try too hard to have it both ways, in large part because they continue to call it prophecy, and teach it is the words of God. If they just called it their spiritual perception, or personal judgment there'd be little problem, but they claim they have God's words instead. So I don't see the qualifications they add about it being lesser prophecy justifies their practice. It's still invalid as prophecy according to Scripture and it gets misused all the time.

I'd point out here, as I do elsewhere, that the observable evidence also supports Cessationism. What we don't see, and what we do see, make a convincing case for it, and it certainly doesn't require believing that God is dead. It just requires knowing that certain miraculous gifts, given to the early disciples to confirm the faith, are no longer present. As far as observation, the utter lack of comparable healing miracles today alone shows that the Charismatic and Pentecostal movement is false. In fact, many who make such claims are nothing more than liars, and they know they are lying. If people were doing what Jesus and the apostles did, it would be on the evening news. Believers, quite regularly, would be cleansing lepers, making the lame walk, making the blind see, making the deaf hear, with a prayer or a touch. They'd be healed in an instant, or a very short time, just like in the Bible. It would be very easy to confirm. Yet it is ridiculous to claim that is going on today, and no evidence has ever been presented that shows it, despite countless chances to offer such evidence.

However, what we DO see, are still miracles. What we do see is the occasional miracle, occurring here or there on the earth, which bring glory to God. We do see incredible wonders on occasion, such as a severe illness disappearing overnight. Those occasional wonders are well documented, unlike the Charismatic claims to having the miracle gifts. That evidence lines up perfectly with Cessationism, which of course typically affirms that God works miracles here and there according to his will. It does not line up well with Charismatic claims, which demand we would be seeing such miracles regularly, done as a matter of course through the hands of specially gifted Christians. Ironically, while Charismatics like to point to miracles as evidence their theology is true, just the opposite is true. The occasional miracle here and there across the globe refutes their theology, and confirms Cessationist belief. God is not dead. God still works miracles. He just doesn't do it through alleged modern healers.

The "living God" that Charismatics and Pentecostals claim is not only a deceptive lure to get people into their movement. That living God is just another word for their own thoughts and feelings. Just as their gifts are false, their present active God is false as well, a product of their mind and at times a good bit of trickery. That is why their so-called prophecies fail. That is why their languages don't actually mean anything, and people don't understand them. That's why their healings don't work, or at best, help someone with their knee pain. They deify their thoughts and feelings, and make it sound as exciting as they can. But it is not actually God. Moreover, if their living God were truly the God of the Bible, the movement would be filled with sound biblical doctrine, not insane heresy, and goofy antics like it is. The movement has been plagued by immoral leaders and bold heretics since its inception. Some of the founders and most influential figures from the start up to the present have been the last people who should be serving as ministers. The immorality, the heresy, and the absurd emotionalism are not limited to rare, fringe churches either. This is the mainstream and it has been the mainstream since the beginning. Their God is not more "alive" than yours, brother. Their God is THEM.

By replacing cessation of the first century gifts with cessation of God's activity, Charismatic ministers literally deceive millions. They have willing ears who love to hear it, and are ready to be excited by the next false wonder, or false prophecy that they hear. Yet their attractive claim to have a living God, while everyone else has kind of a sleepy God who does not act, is easily

disproven, as it has been here. It simply replaces real Cessationism with a straw man more to their liking and easily destroyed. To those who are in the Charismatic movement, or who find it attractive, you should know you don't need to attend a Charismatic church to believe in a God of wonder, and a God who acts today. Cessationsim affirms God's power and activity in our present world and into the future. It does not teach a God who merely sits back and lets things work according to the mechanical gears of nature. You can have God through Christ living in your soul, and leading you personally, ruling over every event in your life, without the out-of-control antics, or false miracle healers. They are duping people, and make Christians look like we're all charlatans. Find a true and living God, outside of their movement. Trust in the Bible for your revelation. It is perfect, and its prophecies do not fail.

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