

THE FATAL FLAWS OF CHARISMANIA – Fatal Flaw #3

Failing to Validate Historical Narrative with Doctrinal Assertion

A significant portion of Biblical text consists of historical narrative. In the New Testament, the factual accounts of the gospels not only record but validate the birth, life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. On the other hand, without the doctrinal teachings of the New Testament epistles, we would be lacking depth in our understanding of the person and work of our Savior. Together, they provide us with a better picture of who Jesus really is and what He accomplished for us all. Therefore, the relationship between historical narrative and doctrinal assertion is that of the latter clarifying and explaining the former. Focusing on one at the expense of the other invariably results in misunderstandings of what God is seeking to teach us about our salvation and how we should live for Christ. This brings us to the historical narrative of Acts 19:1-6 –

“It happened that while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul passed through the upper country and came to Ephesus, and found some disciples. He said to them, ‘Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?’ And they said to him, ‘No, we have not even heard whether there is a Holy Spirit.’ And he said, ‘Into what then were you baptized?’ And they said, ‘Into John’s baptism.’ Paul said, ‘John baptized with the baptism of repentance, telling the people to believe in Him who was coming after him, that is, in Jesus.’ When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they began speaking with tongues and prophesying.”

If this event establishes “the norm” for the Church Age from one generation to the next, then Paul would have provided such instruction in every church to which he wrote. Yet, no such instruction is given other than to the spiritually dysfunctional church in Corinth; and that was NOT for the reason of receiving the baptism of the Holy Spirit as it occurs in Acts 19; but for the express purpose of establishing some sense of order, in light of how the gift of tongues was being used and abused. The same is true of Peter’s two epistles. This is why the failure to govern historical narrative with doctrinal assertion comprises **FATAL FLAW #3** within this movement. It has resulted in two significant doctrinal falsehoods. On the one hand, some claim that in order to grow spiritually and truly become the Christian that God wants you to be, the baptism of the Holy Spirit, where the believer speaks in tongues, must be sought after and experienced. On the other hand, others in this movement have realized from their own failures at Christian living, that a subjective and emotional experience will not provide victory over sin. Nevertheless, they also insist that the experience is necessary, but only for effective service and not daily Christian living.

So, where are the doctrinal assertions for supporting either of these perspectives? When Paul speaks of service in his letter to the church at Rome in 12:1-8, the qualification is stated in Romans 12:1-3. There is also no mention of speaking in tongues in vv4-8; or any of the other sign gifts which were normative during the apostolic era. Why? In both Old and New Testaments, the prerequisite for effective service always has been and always will be: **CLEANSING FROM SIN**, as confirmed by Isaiah 6:5-8, and reaffirmed in 2 Timothy 2:20-21. When the author of Hebrews implores his fellow Jewish believers for a resumption in following their Savior, in order to experience spiritual growth once again (5:11-14), he doesn’t ever bring up the absolute necessity of the baptism of the Holy Spirit and speaking in tongues, so that such growth could occur. Why?

I think you know why. What Pentecostals and Charismatics don’t seem to understand, is that with every turn you take in the wrong direction, you are still headed in the wrong direction!