

Why are Charismatics wrong?

Such a big subject can only be dealt with briefly here.

The first problem is that Charismatics have an unbiblical view of the baptism in the Spirit. The only apostolic didactic (teaching) mention of this phrase is in 1 Cor 12:13 where Paul expressly explains that it refers to the work of the Spirit in unifying the elect in Christ, 'For by one Spirit we were all baptised into one body'. The Greek tense shows that this is a once-for-all event in the past. This is why there is no command for believers to seek an emotional baptism in the Spirit experience.

The Gospel references to this are looking forward to the Pentecost event when the church was unified with the heavenly Christ, as explained by Paul. The references in Acts describe the outworking of this event in new people groups as the church expanded. Contrary to contemporary Jewish expectations, the church of the Messiah expanded beyond Israel, and even the apostles required some convincing (see Acts 10), which is why there were dramatic outpourings of the Spirit. Many of these are not called a 'baptism' in Acts, but rather a 'receiving', or an 'outpouring'; neither did all of the recipients speak in tongues. In fact, it should be noted that Jesus, John the Baptist and many other Spirit-filled people never spoke in tongues or told people to expect it.

A second problem is that Charismatic expressions of spiritual gifts bear no resemblance to the scriptural teaching on them. For instance, tongues were always speaking in unlearned human languages to glorify God in the NT. Charismatics are so-called from the Greek word for spiritual gifts, *charismata*, but the expressions of their gifts can be demonstrated to be much more similar to occult manifestations in false religions and cultic groups. The transmission of gifts, power and exotic experiences from an adept to a devotee by the laying on of hands, is also fundamental to occult sects. Further, the extreme phenomena associated with Charismatics, as evidenced in the Toronto Experience, Brownsville Pensacola, Azusa Street and Latter Rain Pentecostals, have been manifest in the occult for thousands of years and are seen today in kundalini yoga, Chinese Qigong and shamanism (medicine-men & witchcraft).

We could say much more about the evils of Charismatic churches, such as the overbearing leading of authoritarian officers (often called apostles or prophets, which deny NT teaching); or the focus on money and large buildings; or the many documented abuses of people; the unbiblical, emotional, music-led worship; or unbiblical ministries (such as deliverance from evil spirits); or many heretical doctrines - but there is no further space here.

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