

GLAD TIDINGS

“And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers...” (Acts 13:32)

Vol. XI

September 1, 2002

No. 34

NON-MIRACULOUS HOLY SPIRIT BAPTISM?

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John the Baptist pointed out Jesus as the one who would baptize in the Holy Spirit (Matthew 3:11). Two times in Scripture we observe Jesus baptizing in the Holy Spirit: Acts 2 - the Apostles; and Acts 10—Cornelius and his household.

We know this because Matthew 3:11 is applied by inspired men to these two occurrences. Jesus had charged his apostles to not depart from Jerusalem for “...ye shall be baptized in the Holy Spirit not many days hence” (Acts 1:5). In Acts 2, we read of the promise being fulfilled when the apostles are “filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance” (Acts 2:4). Next, the Holy Spirit falls in like manner upon Cornelius and his household (Acts 10:44). The Jews present heard these Gentiles “speak with tongues and magnify God” (Acts 10:46). Rehearsing this occurrence, Peter reports, “And as I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell on them even as on us at the beginning. And I remembered the word of the Lord, how he said, John indeed baptized with water;

but ye shall be baptized in the Holy Spirit” (Acts 11:15-16).

We do not have to assume when Holy Spirit baptism occurred. Both times it occurs, the passage which promised that it will occur is given. Both times, the miraculous speaking in tongues came upon those baptized in the Holy Spirit.

With these scriptural facts in mind, it is puzzling to see some brethren who profess to be members of the Lord’s church to now advocate a non-miraculous Holy Spirit baptism taking place when we are baptized into Christ for the remission of our sins. Bob Berard writes, “A man (one administrator) lowers someone into the waters of baptism and Jesus (another administrator) baptizes a person under the water with the Holy Spirit” (*Contending for the faith—August/2002, p.15*). This doctrine is a way of explaining how the non-miraculous indwelling of the Holy Spirit takes place apart from the word: to some, it now occurs in a non-miraculous Holy Spirit baptism.

One problem with this is that the times when Holy Spirit

baptism occurs in the New Testament, it occurs separate from, and before water baptism, not during water baptism.

When the Apostles were baptized in the Holy Spirit, Joel’s prophesy of the pouring forth of the Holy Spirit was fulfilled. Peter says, “This is that which hath been spoken through the prophet Joel... (Acts 2:12-17). Jesus had “poured forth this, which ye see and hear” (Acts 2:33). After these miraculous signs confirmed Peter’s sermon, Peter commands a convicted people to be baptized for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38). Again, Cornelius and his household were baptized in the Holy Spirit (Acts 10:44) Then after this miraculous sign from Heaven showed that the Gentiles could now be saved just as the Jews in Acts 2, Peter says, “Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, who have received the Holy Spirit as we?” (Acts 10:47).

Holy Spirit baptism is always miraculous in Scripture, and occurs in the New Testament before water baptism, not during. They are two baptism’s not one.