

INTO whom are we BAPTIZED? (audio)

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This sermon will surprise **many** of you. **Most** of you reading this were probably baptized (meaning “immersed”) as **Matthew 28:19** says – “**in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.**”

But is that the wording as it should be? Is that wording in Matthew 28 the original wording of the original Greek? ***Is that wording the one used by the apostles from that time onward, or was it something quite different?*** And if so, **WHY** would they baptize anyone into the Name that they did?

This is Philip Shields, your brother in Christ, and host of Light on the Rock. Let’s see what the apostles were told to do and say at water “baptisms,” which means “immersion,” not sprinkling.

Part of the problem is that we don’t have a single original of any of the New Testament books. We have copies. Some very old copies, but no originals, but particularly good copies. Sometimes - - especially when being translated into English or other languages, some liberties were taken. KJV for example, used the word “Easter” in Acts 12:4 instead of “Passover”, as the original Greek has it.

So what were the disciples and apostles told to do and say when baptizing?

First, we have the command that is part of what many call “the Great Commission.”

Matthew 28:19

“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit...”

Or the KJV says, “of the Holy Ghost” – but God’s spirit is his spirit; it’s not a ghost. When the disciples saw Yeshua walking on water, they thought that was a ghost. That’s a different Greek word from “spirit” in Holy spirit.

I recently, on Pentecost 2022, baptized a young woman in Florida. I thought you might be interested in what we did and how we did it. We did not baptize her into any organization of men or corporate church. And you should not have been either.

Her father helped me with the baptism part of it. Maybe 20 others showed up to joyously witness her confession and baptism, which we did in a flowing creek. Some others, not of our group, were there playing in the water already, so we just politely asked them if we could use the area for a baptism for 4-5 minutes and they were agreeable.

So we first asked a general blessing on the proceedings on a deck at the side of the water beforehand, then climbed down a ladder into the water.

I asked to the young woman: ‘(Her name), have you repented of your sins, which is the breaking of God’s commandments? (answer). As we’re told in Romans 10:8-10, do you openly confess with your mouth that Jesus Christ/Yeshua is your Savior and Lord, and believe in your heart that he died for your sins and that God our father resurrected him from the dead, and that now Yeshua works as your Advocate and will live inside you by God’s spirit?’ (Her “yes” answer.)

“So (her name), because you’ve repented of your sins and accept Yeshua as your king, Savior, Lord, Master for the forgiveness of your sins, **we now immerse you into the name of Yeshua/Jesus Christ** for the washing away of your sins by his blood, by the authority of God our Father and Yeshua/Jesus by God’s spirit. You are not being baptized into any denomination of man but into the body of Christ BY and into the name of Yeshua/Jesus. You will now be immersed and buried into Christ and raised in his new life as Romans 6:3-6 says to us.”

(Her father still wanted to have the Matthew 28 verbiage, so I included it the way I mention above.)

Then her father and I baptized her into the running waters. Having her dad help in her baptism made it special. Her grandfather had also been baptized on Pentecost so that is why she asked for baptism on Pentecost.

I then welcomed her with a big, wet, soggy hug in the waters, as my newest sister in Christ. It was a beautiful moment and glorious day.

Then I did the laying on of hands and asked for God our Father to send His indwelling of the Holy Spirit to come upon her and into her.

So mostly I baptized her into the name of Jesus Christ. Was that the right thing to do? Or should I have baptized her into the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit?

The historian Eusebius, who lived between AD 260-339, says the original wording in **the original Greek of Matthew 28:19** was different from what we read today. He says *Jesus' original words should say* – as it **originally said**, “**baptizing them into MY name.**” Into the name of Jesus Christ, or Yeshua the Messiah.

So how would we know what is truth on this? *WHAT DID the 12 apostles do and say, what did Paul do, when baptizing? Let's see.* Did they repeat the present-day wording we have in **Matthew 28:19? Did they baptize “into the name of the Father, of the Son and of the holy spirit”?** Or did they do what I did and baptize them into the name of Jesus/Yeshua, full stop?

I'll show you this: **let's examine EVERY single instance of baptism being recorded after this**, to see into whose name they were being baptized. I'll show you *every* single instance *of what the apostles actually DID and said*, when they baptized others.

If the traditional verbiage of Matthew 28:19 – the triune God formula – is correct, then surely the apostles would have obeyed Jesus' own words. But did they do what we read in Matthew 28:19?

Are you ready to be surprised?

On the day of Pentecost, at the end of his sermon, the people wanted to know what they could do.

Acts 2:38

Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you **be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ** for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Acts 8:12, 14-17

“But when they believed Philip as he preached the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, both men and women were baptized. [Notice: babies, infants and children are not mentioned]

Now verses 14-17

14 Now when the apostles who were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them, 15 who, when they had come down, prayed for them that they might receive the

Holy Spirit. 16 For as yet He had fallen upon none of them. **They had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.** 17 Then they laid hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit.

Next, we come to the story of the calling and conversion of **Cornelius, the Gentile Roman centurion**, and his family. You can read the whole story in Acts 10. It's at the end of the story when we read how they all were baptized.

Acts 10:46-48

Then Peter answered, 47 "Can anyone forbid water, that these should not be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?" 48 And he commanded them to **be baptized in the name of the Lord.** Then they asked him to stay a few days.

This next case in Acts 19 involves some who had been previously baptized by John the Baptizer – and let's see what happens...

Acts 19:1-7

And it happened, while Apollos was at Corinth, that Paul, having passed through the upper regions, came to Ephesus. And finding some disciples 2 he said to them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" So they said to him, "We have not so much as heard whether there is a Holy Spirit."

3 And he said to them, "Into what then were you baptized?"

So they said, "Into John's baptism."

4 Then Paul said, "John indeed baptized with a baptism of repentance, saying to the people that they should believe on Him who would come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus."

5 **When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.**

6 And when Paul had laid hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke with tongues and prophesied. 7 Now the men were about twelve in all.

Romans 6:3

"Or do you not know that as **many of us as were baptized INTO Christ Jesus** were baptized into His death?"

Galatians 3:26-27

"For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. 27 For as many of **you as were baptized into Christ** have put on Christ."

I don't know of any other verses that speak of baptism and what was done and said after Christ's resurrection. ALL of the ones we have show us they baptized believers into Christ; NOT into the Father, the Son, and Holy Spirit.

So it's clear that the apostles understood Jesus' commands to be to baptize new believers into his name. So the early historians say the correct verbiage given by Jesus/Yeshua was this: "baptizing them into MY name." Short and simple. And that's what the apostles did. Every single time. No exceptions. They obeyed Yeshua's words. They did not disobey.

There's no record of anyone being baptized into the name of the Father or of the Holy Spirit – just into the name of Yeshua/Jesus.

WHY? God Most High calls you. Gives you to Yeshua/Jesus to work with and he also then reveals the Father to us. I've talked about all that many times before. **So we're baptized into the name of Jesus Christ because at baptism we are being immersed into the death and resurrection of the Son of God (Romans 6:3-4).**

The Holy Spirit then immerses us into the one body of Christ – not multiple churches or denominations.

1 Corinthians 12:13

"For *by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body* – whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free – and have all been made to drink into one Spirit."

The "body" is Christ, shown by the church, the body of called-out ones – read Ephesians 1:22-23; Colossians 1:18.

Romans 12:4-5

"For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function, **5 so we, being many, are one body IN CHRIST**, and individually members of one another.

We sometimes hardly act like one body. Shame on those doing that. We are to be one body in Christ and members of one another. We should be brothers and sisters who are working together and enjoy one another.

It is because of now being "IN Christ" – we should learn that phrase well ("In Christ")—that so many of the privileges and rights that Jesus has now also become ours, as part of his body. In him we have redemption through his blood, and an inheritance as co-heirs with Christ (Ephesians 1:7, 11). We

become the very righteousness *of God in him, in Christ* (2 Cor. 5:21) – one of my favorite scriptures. Sometime read Romans 5, especially verse 17 and the surrounding verses. We are even raised to the heavenlies with Christ (Ephesians 2:4-6), for example.

You should take the time to read those verses to understand better what a glorious thing it is to be “in Christ.” Yes, that includes being a part of his church, but it also means we’re actually in Christ himself (Col 3:3-4).

(Note: my friends in the Church of God groups like me saying “Jesus” but my friends in Hebrew Roots groups or Messianic groups prefer the Hebrew name Yeshua. So I use both! That’s why I do that.)

So we’re baptized into the name of Jesus Christ/Yeshua. Now once we’re in Christ, that also puts us into the Father, as Colossians 3:3 says, another favorite of mine. My life is now hidden. Hidden in Christ, in God. Christ now becomes my life (v 4) and because of that, when he appears, we will appear with him in glory -Col. 3:4.

So based on what the apostles did and said at baptisms, I have come to believe that Matthew 28:19 is one of those “doctored” scriptures to try to help prove the trinity, the triune God. Based on what the apostles did, I believe we were told by Jesus to baptize in HIS name. Going forward, that’s what I’m doing. I’m sure though, that many of us – including me – were baptized into the father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

HISTORICALLY

Even **historian Eusebius** and early believers in the first 3 centuries after Christ, state that Matthew 28:19 – about baptizing in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit” -- originally said “baptizing them into MY name...” - with Jesus speaking.

But *nowhere* else, other than Matthew 28:19, are we commanded to be baptized “into the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit”, but “into the name of Christ Jesus.”

If you study into this more, you’ll actually find out that **many scholars through the years have doubted the accuracy of the present quotation** we have in Matthew 28:19 – including Encyclopedia Britannica, 1987 Edition, Vol 1, p 877. Ditto for the Interpreter’s Dictionary of the Bible, 1980 Edition, vol. 1, p 35.

The original manuscripts are simply gone – either lost or destroyed. Our oldest manuscript is from around the year 400 AD. *All existing manuscripts we have, including oldest ones, the traditional Father-son-holy spirit form is what is found in all of them.* I’m just being up front and honest.

But I personally feel the best confidence we can have of what Yeshua **actually originally said, and what was originally written, is what ALL the apostles apparently understood – and practiced** – by saying “into the name of Jesus” or “in the name of Jesus” every single recorded time we have, when baptizing.

Again, the noted Greek historian and scholar **Eusebius of Caesarea (AD 270-340)**, had much better access to much older manuscripts than we have. He used to work out of the greatest Christian library of his time. Every time Eusebius quoted Matthew 28:19-20 in his writings, he always wrote it this way: “Go ye and make disciples of all nations IN MY NAME, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you” ((Demonstratio Evangelica, by Eusebius, A.D. 300-336, col. 240, p. 136:English The Proof Of The Gospel, Translated by W. J. Ferrar, 1981 Edition, p. 152, 159, 179).

Eusebius the historian was unfamiliar with any other way of saying Matthew 28:19 UNTIL he visited Constantinople and attended the Council of Nicaea, convened by emperor Constantine in 325 AD to bring all Christendom into unity and speaking the same thing.

It was only after that where we find Eusebius – now very old – using the more common reading we have today. That would indicate to me that he must have been “persuaded” to change his understanding of what was originally the words of Jesus. **Constantine wanted to emphasize the Trinity – and so I personally believe Matthew 28:19** was changed to accommodate that wish. It was scary to go against Constantine, who thought nothing of killing members of his own family.

So again, I base my personal belief on Matthew 28 mostly on what I showed you the 12 apostles, early baptizers and Paul did when they baptized.

Justin, early church teacher, was a well-known writer and defender of the faith (apologist), wrote sometime between 130-140 AD and died 165 AD as a martyr. So he’s known to us today as Justin Martyr. He spoke of “Some still even today are being made **disciples in the Name of His Christ**, and are abandoning the path of error, who also do receive gifts each as they be worthy,

being illumined by the Name of this Christ” (*Justin Martyr’s Dialogue with Trypho 39, p. 258*).

This seems to tell me that Justin was not familiar with the current wording we have at the end of Matthew 28:19. He knew Matthew 28:19 to say to baptize them “in MY name.”

I believe the apostles obeyed Jesus’ command.

So yes, many ministers – even those who don’t believe in the Trinity doctrine – might say the oldest manuscripts have the wording the way we read it today, but I think the evidence is that there was some serious tampering going on with Matthew 28:19.

There is great power in the Name of Jesus when we invoke his name upon a person being baptized. And what an honor it is to come under and into HIS name!

Going forward, any baptisms I do will always be, from now on, “into the name of Jesus Christ, your Lord and Savior. Amen.”

Closing prayer.

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