

## Q. Should we baptize in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, or should we baptize in the name of Jesus only?

A. There is a question over the proper baptismal formula. Most say we should baptize in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. But there are some people who advocate baptizing in the name of Jesus.

I believe in following Jesus' very clear instructions in Matthew 28:19: "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." It is sometimes argued that "Father," "Son," and "Holy Ghost" are not names. But an actual name is not necessary. When we do something "in the name of" someone or something, we do it by the authority of the person or thing. Thus, a policeman may call to a fleeing criminal, "Stop in the name of the law!" Time was when in the British Empire, a policeman would arrest someone by saying, "In the name of the Crown, I arrest you." No actual person was named. The word "name" in these instances meant "authority." Thus, Jesus has told us to baptize "in the name of" or in the authority of the Triune God.

Some people, misunderstanding Scripture, reject the Trinity. Consequently, they baptize in the name of Jesus only. If you have questions about the Trinity, please read, "Why Christians Believe in the Trinity" (<http://www.wordofhisgrace.org/trinity.html>).

But what about Scriptures that appear to be saying that we are to be baptized in the name of Jesus? Acts 2:38 is an example: "Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." Other Scriptures that might seem to support the idea of being baptized in the name of Jesus only are Acts 8:16; 10:48; 19:5; and 22:16.

As I have already pointed out, "name" in these type verses means "authority." Let me give some examples to support my assertion. In Acts 4:7-10, we read,

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And when they had set them in the midst, they asked, By what power, or by what name, have ye done this? Then Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost, said unto them, Ye rulers of the people, and elders of Israel, If we this day be examined of the good deed done to the impotent man, by what means he is made whole; Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole.

It should be quite obvious that when the Jewish rulers asked by what power or name Peter and John healed the lame man, they were asking by what power or authority. Peter answered that it was by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, meaning that it was by Jesus' authority (as we find in Acts 3:6).

Acts 16:16-18 says, "And it came to pass, as we went to prayer, a certain damsel possessed with a spirit of divination met us, which brought her masters much gain by soothsaying: The same followed Paul and us, and cried, saying, These men are the servants of the most high God, which shew unto us the way of salvation. And this did she many days. But Paul, being grieved, turned and said to the spirit, I command thee in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her. And he came out the same hour." In other words, the command Paul gave to the spirit was by the authority of Jesus Christ. Other Scriptures that show that Jesus' name is His authority are Acts 4:17-18, 5:28, 40; 8:12 (the good news was about the kingdom of God and the authority of Jesus Christ—the only authority "under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved"—Acts 4:12); and 9:27-28.

So, if there are several Scriptures that seem to say that we are to baptize in the name of—by the authority of—Jesus, why should we follow Matthew 28:19, which says to baptize in the name of—by the authority of—the three Persons of the Trinity? The answer is because that's what Jesus authorized. In other words, to baptize in the name of or by the authority of Jesus Christ involves baptizing the way Jesus commanded. And the way Jesus commanded to baptize is found in Matthew 28:19: "...baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." When we do this, we are following Jesus' command and are, thus, baptizing in His name or by His authority. In order to baptize in the name of Jesus, we are to use the

words Jesus commanded and baptize in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

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