

Lord of the New Testament, and to his amazement the one Lord was Jesus.

When Philip preached the gospel in Samaria, those who believed “were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus” (Acts 8:16).

When a group of Gentiles received the Holy Spirit, Peter asked, “Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord” (Acts 10:47-48). As we have just seen, the name of the Lord is Jesus. Moreover, as translations such as the Amplified Bible and the New International Version indicate, the oldest Greek manuscripts we now have actually state here, “In the name of Jesus Christ.”

Paul rebaptized the disciples of John at Ephesus in the name of Jesus. “He said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John’s baptism. Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is on Christ Jesus. When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus” (Acts 19:3-5).

The Command of Matthew 28:19

Clearly the early church baptized everyone—Jews, Samaritans, and Gentiles—in the name of Jesus. How does this practice harmonize with Matthew 28:19? First,

Matthew 28:19 says “in the name” not “in the names” or “in the titles or offices of God.” The name that Matthew 28:19 describes is Jesus. So the apostles correctly understood and obeyed Christ’s command by baptizing all converts in the name of Jesus.

The Bible does not tell us that we have life through the titles of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, but it tells us we have life through the name of Jesus. “But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through His name” (John 20:31).

The Bible does not say that we are baptized into three different persons, but it says we are “baptized into Jesus Christ” (Romans 6:3-4). Specifically, we are “buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead” (Colossians 2:12).

The name of Jesus encompasses all the fullness of God, including His redemptive roles as Father (God in parental relationship), Son (God in flesh), and Holy Spirit (God in spiritual action). “For in him [Jesus] dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily” (Colossians 2:9).

Conclusion

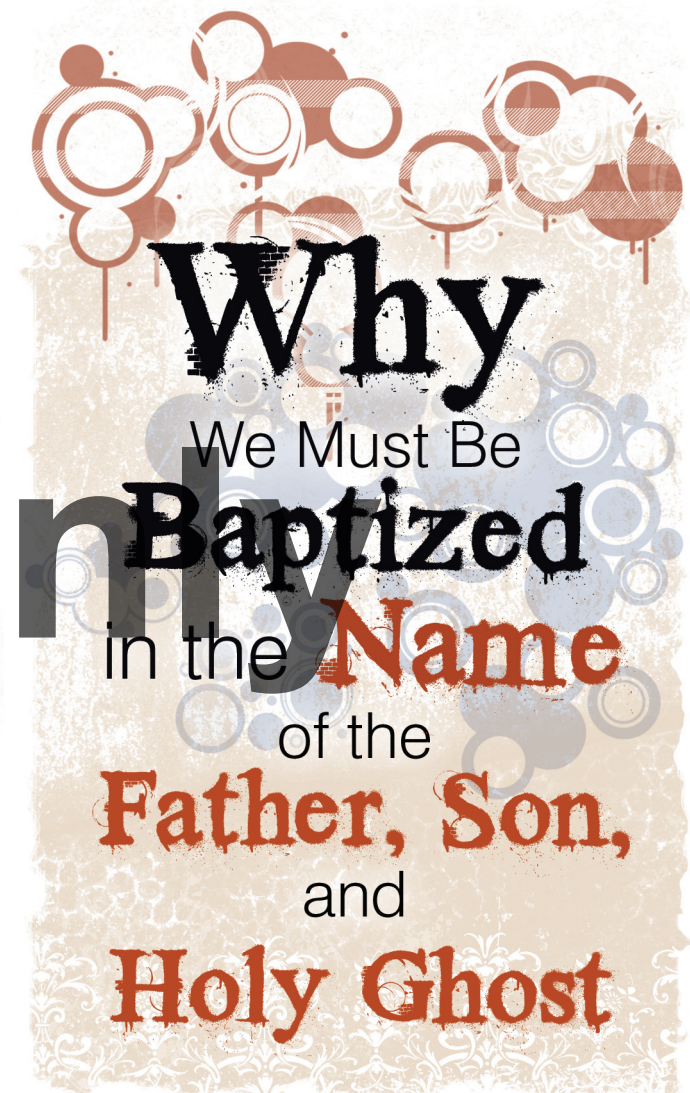
Shortly before His ascension Jesus gave the baptismal command found in Matthew 28:19 to the apostles. According to Luke 24:45, He also opened their understanding. A few days after His ascension, He baptized 120 waiting dis-

ciples with His Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost. On this occasion, the apostles proclaimed to the multitude that everyone should be baptized in the name of Jesus (Acts 2:38).

The apostles understood that Jesus was the redemptive name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. They did not merely repeat those three titles, but they invoked the name to which those titles referred. The other preachers in the New Testament church, such as Philip, Ananias, and Paul, adhered to the same baptismal formula.

There are no contradictions in the Word of God. The New Testament teaches that we must be baptized “in the name” of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and that name we are to invoke at baptism is Jesus.

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Why
We Must Be
Baptized
in the **Name**
of the
Father, Son,
and
Holy Ghost

The Necessity of Water Baptism

Is water baptism a necessary part of the salvation experience of the New Testament? People have various ideas about water baptism, but we cannot always trust what others think. The sure way to know the truth and to please God is to depend upon the Bible as our source of instruction.

Jesus gave us some insight as to the importance of water baptism in John 3:5: “Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.” Both the context of that statement and the subsequent practice of the New Testament church indicate that He was speaking of water baptism and the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

In Matthew 28:19, Jesus gave the apostles and us a direct command to go, teach, and baptize converts. Since He gave this command, baptism is important and necessary.

The Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost

Jesus instructed us to baptize “in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.” In other words, He told us to baptize in the name (singular) that fully reveals God in His redemptive manifestations and work. What is this name?

The name given to the Son of God was Jesus. “And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins” (Matthew 1:21).

Jesus was a genuine human being, born by the miraculous work of God’s Spirit in the womb of a virgin, and thus He was literally the Son of God (Luke 1:35). He was more than a man, however; He was actually the one God manifested in the flesh (Colossians 2:9; 1 Timothy 3:16). He was the visible image of the invisible God (Colossians 1:15).

As such Jesus declared, “I am come in my Father’s name, and ye receive me not: if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive” (John 5:43). In other words, the Father is made known to us by the name of Jesus. The Father, the one true invisible God, gave His name to the Son (the manifestation of God in flesh); thus the Son received His name by inheritance (Hebrews 1:4).

The name Jesus literally means “Jehovah-Savior.” Jehovah was the unique name by which the one true God identified Himself to Israel in the Old Testament. The name Jesus describes the one God of the Old Testament coming in flesh to be our Savior. Thus the name of Jesus reveals both the Father and the Son.

What about the Holy Ghost? What name reveals God in His spiritual essence and action? Jesus said, “But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you” (John 14:26). In other words, the Holy Spirit comes to us in the name of Jesus. The Holy Spirit does not come to us with a separate identity but is the Spirit of Jesus—Jesus Himself coming to dwell within us spiritually (John 14:16-18; Colossians 1:27).

In short, the supreme name that reveals God—the name by which we know the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost—is Jesus. By invoking the name of Jesus, then, we fulfill the command of Matthew 28:19.

The Importance of the Name of Jesus

Many passages of Scripture emphasize the importance and supremacy of the name of Jesus.

- “Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved” (Acts 4:12).
- “Repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem” (Luke 24:47).
- “To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins” (Acts 10:43).
- “Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they” (Hebrews 1:4).
- “Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (Philippians 2:9-11).

- “And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him” (Colossians 3:17).

The Practice of the Early Church

How did the apostles obey the command Jesus gave to them in Matthew 28:19? On the Day of Pentecost, sinners asked the question, “Men and brethren, what shall we do?” (Acts 2:37). The apostle Peter gave them the answer: “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” (Acts 2:38). This verse reveals that the apostles baptized in the name of Jesus Christ and that baptism is for the remission of sins.

When Saul, later known as Paul, repented, Ananias instructed him, “And now why tarriest thou? arise and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.” What is the name of the Lord?

Just a few days earlier, Paul had asked the same question: “Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest” (Acts 9:5). Paul later wrote, “No man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost” (1 Corinthians 12:3).

Jesus revealed Himself to Paul as the Lord. Paul knew about the Lord God of the Old Testament, but at that time he did not serve the Jesus of the New Testament. But he learned that the Lord of the Old Testament was the same