

BAPTISM
in
JESUS' NAME

by
Michael Pearl

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Michael Pearl

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There are those who insist that New Testament water baptism is not valid unless the one doing the baptism vocally utters the words “in Jesus’ name.” Their reasoning goes like this: The command in Matthew 28:19 to “*baptize them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost*” is a list of various titles of the one person whose name is Jesus. There is no trinity. The One God has manifested himself at different times in three different ways. He who was the Father in heaven became the Son on earth and returned to earth as the Holy Ghost. If you were not baptized in Jesus’ name alone, you were not properly baptized, and are therefore not saved.

The proponents of this belief are called *Oneness* or *Jesus’ name only*. The United Pentecostal Holiness are the main advocates, but there is a growing number of nondenominational factions adopting this belief. It is primary to them because they teach that one is not saved until he has been thus baptized. Baptism becomes a ritual that must be performed in a certain way, by the proper authority, with the right words spoken, in order to prompt God to dispense his saving grace.

When we come to the book of Acts, we do

not find the terminology "***Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.***" They baptize *in the name of Jesus Christ*, or, *in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth*, or, *in the name of the Lord Jesus*, or, *in the name of the Lord*. The *Jesus' Name Only* crowd think this is proof that the formulary utterance was changed after Pentecost. There is absolutely no consistent use of terminology in Scripture, except that the one phrase they insist upon, "***in the name of Jesus,***" is **never** used in connection with baptism.

It is a wonder that something so absurd could find enough acceptance to become an issue worth addressing. But lest others be deceived and waste their time on such trifles, we will look at all pertinent Scripture on the subject.

Added Confusion

Their argument is that all other names, like *Christ* and *Lord*, are not names but titles, and that *Jesus* is the only name of God. They therefore assert that when the text says, "***they were baptized in the name of the Lord***" that the name of the Lord is *Jesus*, so the minister was uttering the name *Jesus* when he performed the baptism.

Those who teach this *Jesus' name only* doctrine are adamantly against using the vocalization, "***in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.***" The two sides end up arguing over which terminology is correct. Neither side is correct. They are equally in error. Both sides accept a false supposition—that the utterance of words is part of baptism and thus validates it. It is the conclusion of this study that the verbal utterance, be it one or the other, is never an issue in Scripture. It is erroneous and silly to insist on any certain phrase being pronounced over the baptized.

In the Bible we read of many things other than baptism that are done “*in the name of*” God or Jesus, as well as things done “*in the name of*” other persons. By searching the Scripture in the many references to someone doing something in the name of another, we will come to see that the Bible is not making an attempt to establish the type of utterance. There are more references than we have recorded here, but we have printed a fair representation. You may want to search your concordance and read them all.

“In the Name of” Applied to Men

In reading these verses you will observe that speaking or acting “*in the name of*” is not something unique to baptism, nor is it limited to references to divine things. The concept of doing something in the name of another person is found in the Bible many times before it is used in reference to baptism. By discovering the Scripture’s use of the terminology, in both a secular and religious context, we will be able to define the terminology and thereby accurately understand the passages in question. You will see that to do something “*in the name*” of another has nothing to do with vocalizing a certain name.

1 Samuel 25:5 - 6 - *“And David sent out ten young men, and David said unto the young men, Get you up to Carmel, and go to Nabal, and greet him in my name: And thus shall ye say to him that liveth in prosperity, ...And when David’s young men came, they spake to Nabal according to all those words **in the name of David**, and ceased.”* Do you think this is telling us that they concluded their remarks with the appendage, “*in the name of David*”? By going and speaking *in David’s name* they were to cause Nabal, by

whatever words or means, to understand they were acting on David's behalf, they represented him, and they were his mouthpiece, thus speaking *in his name*.

1 Kings 21:8 - "*So she wrote letters in Ahab's name, and sealed them with his seal, and sent the letters unto the elders and to the nobles that were in his city, dwelling with Naboth.*" To have sealed the document with the king's ring, which was the accepted and legal method of validation, would have made it carry all the authority of the king. It would have been sent in his name. See also: Esther 3:12; 8:8, 10.

Esther 2:21 - 22 - "*In those days, while Mordecai sat in the king's gate, two of the king's chamberlains, Bigthan and Teresh, of those which kept the door, were wroth, and sought to lay hand on the king Ahasuerus. And the thing was known to Mordecai, who told it unto Esther the queen; and Esther certified the king thereof in Mordecai's name.*" She had access to the king, and Mordecai did not, so he contacted her with his warning, and she notified the king on Mordecai's behalf. She spoke in Mordecai's name.

Matthew 10:41 - 42 - "*He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward; and he that receiveth a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's reward. And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward.*" What prophet's name will you speak when receiving a prophet? In the name of Elijah, welcome into this house. I know this sounds absurd, but we are dealing with an absurd issue. To receive a righteous man in the name of

a righteous man is to utter nothing but “*Welcome, my brother.*” When you receive a prophet into your house on the basis of his being a prophet, you have received him *in the name of a prophet.*

John 5:43 - “*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.*” To come in your own name would not necessarily be to come speaking your name. It would be to come with no authority higher than yourself. It would be to go with a message that is your own, not having been sent by God.

In the “**Name of the LORD**”

1 Kings 8:17, 19 - “*And it was in the heart of David my father to build an house for the name of the LORD God of Israel...That thine eyes may be open toward this house night and day, even toward the place of which thou hast said, My name shall be there: that thou mayest hearken unto the prayer which thy servant shall make toward this place.*” Is this a reference to an utterance or an inscription? None of the one-hundred-plus names of God were written on the *house unto his name.*

Exodus 5:23 - “*For since I came to Pharaoh to speak in thy name....*” The conversation said to be in his name is recorded in Exodus 5:3. “*The God of the Hebrews hath met with us....*” There was no name spoken, just the **God of the Hebrews.**

Deuteronomy 5:11 - “*Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain: for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.*” Which of the over one hundred names and titles is the one that should not be taken in vain?