

# MATTHEW 28:19

## Baptism in the Name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit?

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[The Seed of Abraham](#)

What did the Apostle Matthew–Levi actually write, ‘Baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost,’ or ‘Go ye, and make disciples of all the nations in My Name’? This article is based on a publication which was originally written in 1961 and titled, *A Collection of the Evidence For and Against the Traditional Wording of the Baptismal Phrase in Matthew 28:19*. The author was a minister who lived in Birmingham, England and he signed his work, A. Ploughman.

Questioning the *authenticity* of Matthew 28:19 is not a matter of determining how easily it can or cannot be explained within the context of established doctrinal views. Rather, it is a matter of discovering the very thoughts of our God, remembering that His Truth, and not our traditions, is eternal.

The information presented is extremely relevant to our faith. The amount of information supporting the conclusions presented may seem overwhelming, but for the serious seeker of truth, the reading is well worth the effort. If you discover that you have not been baptized into the name of the true God, and have knowingly accepted a substitute, how would God respond?<sup>1</sup>

We have no known manuscripts that were written in the first, second or even the third centuries. There is a gap of over three hundred years between when Matthew wrote his Gospel and our earliest manuscript copies.<sup>2</sup> No single early manuscript is free from textual error. Some have unique errors; other manuscripts were copied extensively and have the same errors. Our aim is to examine all of the evidence and determine as closely as possible what the original words were. According to biblical historian Dr. C. R. Gregory:

‘The Greek manuscripts of the text of the New Testament were often altered by the scribes, who put into them the readings which were familiar to them, and which they held to be the right readings.’

More on these changes will be addressed later. Another writer said:

‘A great step forward is taken when we propose to give manuscripts weight, not according to their age, but according to the age of the text which they contain. By proving how honest a text is, rather than strictly how old it is, provides us with a text which has con-

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<sup>1</sup> Avram—If that is the case, God the Father sees it as a sin done in ignorance, which is covered by the Blood of Yeshua. Ask Him to forgive you and He will. There is no need to be re-baptized. In the future, though, it will be good to baptize others in the name of Yeshua (Jesus), and of course, the proper way (full immersion). You’ll find out why in the name of Yeshua (Jesus) is the only biblical way to baptize, as you read this paper.

<sup>2</sup> Avram—The earliest *fragment* of Matthew, known as p67 (Papari 67) is dated 200 AD. The fragment has Mt. 3:9, 15; 5:20-22; and (parts of?) chapters 25–28 in it. This, and other [early papari](#) and manuscripts were found after the author wrote what he did There are other manuscripts that are dated even earlier than 200 AD (125 to 150 AD).

tent that is truly ancient (and faithful). When we verify that a text is older than the fourth century, that it was current in the third or better still the second century, we still cannot be sure that it has not been altered. We need to try to verify that the text is pure text. There is reason to believe that the very grossest errors that have ever deformed the text had entered it already in the second century. What we wish to ascertain, then, is not merely an ancient text, but an accurate text.’

Of course, the grossest errors that this writer is referring to are not doctrinal errors, but the errors in the text itself. Not surprisingly though, some of these textual corruptions occurred simultaneously with the respective doctrinal changes as they were being introduced in the early church. This historic falling away will be addressed later.

Just as with the manuscripts, all extant versions containing the end of Matthew also contain the Triune names, but, of course, there is more to be considered than what is present in a document. One must also take into consideration what is absent. Quoting from the *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*:

‘In all extant versions the text is found in the traditional [Trinitarian] form...though it must be remembered that the best manuscripts, both of the African Old Latin and of the Old Syriac Versions are defective at this point. F. C. Conybeare further elaborated:’

‘In the only codices which would be even likely to preserve an older reading, namely the Sinaitic Syriac and the oldest Latin Manuscript, the pages are gone which contained the end of Matthew.’

So, then, though all early versions contain the traditional Triune names in Matthew 28:19, the earliest of these versions do not contain the verse at all—curiously, not due to omission, but due to removal. We cannot be certain of the motives of why these pages were destroyed, but for the sake of our study we are now compelled to consult the early historical writings.

## Excerpts of Early Catholic Writers

Before we make references concerning these early writers, it should be emphatically stated that if the question under consideration were one of doctrine, the written records of these Catholic writers would be totally irrelevant. Doctrine must be obtained from the pure Word of God alone, and not from Catholics or other sources. These ‘Fathers’ lived in an age of unrestrained heresy. Their testimony is valuable only because they provide an incidental and independent verification of scriptural texts much older than our current complete copies:

‘In the course of my reading I have been able to substantiate these doubts of the authenticity of the text of Matthew 28:19 by adducing patristic (Latin *pater* ‘father’) evidence against it, so weighty that in the future the most conservative of divines will shrink from resting on it any dogmatic fabric at all.’<sup>3</sup>

While not a single manuscript from the first three centuries remains in existence, we do have *eye witness observations of at least two men who actually had access to manuscripts* dating much earlier than our earliest. *Others also quoted Matthew 28:19*, whose written works have been preserved, dating to much earlier times than our best manuscript copies. We are about to examine who these men were and what the circumstances were and attempt to determine if these are reliable quotations of the original scriptures. How did they quote Matthew 28:19? Did their comments imply an existing controversy surrounding the

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<sup>3</sup> F. C. Conybeare in the *Hibbert Journal*.

use of the scriptures being quoted? Was a Trinity implied? These are questions that can be answered.

In the pages ahead we will consider evidence from the following men, either via quotations from their writings or as commented upon through the writings of their contemporaries:

1. Eusebius of Caesurae (270-340 AD),
2. The unknown author of *De Rebaptismate* (third century AD),
3. Origen (185-254 AD),
4. Clement of Alexandria (150-215),
5. Justin Martyr (103-165),
6. Macedonius (died after 360 AD),
7. Eunomius (died about 393 AD), and
8. Aphraates (about 270 to 345 AD).

Our search through their writings is not to establish doctrine, but to find early witnesses to Mt. 28:19.

## *Eusebius of Caesurae*

Eusebius of Caesurae, also known as Eusebius Pamphili, was born around 270 AD and died about 340 AD. He was a Trinitarian and in later life assisted in the formation of the Nicene Creed. Regarding our inquiry into Matthew 28:19, *Eusebius is our key witness*. Therefore, to establish his veracity as a credible witness, let us consider the following quotes:

‘Eusebius of Caesurae, to whom we are indebted for the preservation of so many contemporary works of antiquity, many of which would have perished had he not collected and edited them.’<sup>4</sup>

‘Eusebius, the greatest Greek teacher of the Church and most learned theologian of his time...worked untiringly for the acceptance of the pure Word of the New Testament as it came from the Apostles...Eusebius...relies throughout only upon ancient manuscripts and always openly confesses the truth when he cannot find sufficient testimony.’<sup>5</sup>

‘Eusebius Pamphili, Bishop of Caesurae in Palestine, a man of vast reading and erudition and one who has acquired immortal fame by his labors in ecclesiastical history, and in other branches of theological learning...Till about 40 years of age he lived in great intimacy with the martyr Pamphilus, a learned and devout man of Caesurae and founder of an extensive library there from which Eusebius derived his vast store of learning.’<sup>6</sup>

‘Eusebius, to whose zeal we owe most of what is known of the history of the New Testament.’<sup>7</sup>

‘The most important writer in the first quarter of the fourth century was Eusebius of Caesurae...Eusebius was a man of little originality or independent judgment, but he was

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<sup>4</sup> Robert Roberts, in *Good Company*, vol. III, p. 10.

<sup>5</sup> E. K. in the *Christadelphian Monatshefte*, Aug, 1923 from Mosheim, in an editorial footnote.

<sup>6</sup> Dr. Wescott, in *General Survey*, page 108 (chapter 2, 9).

<sup>7</sup> *Peake Bible Commentary*, page 596.

widely read in the Greek Christian literature of the second and third centuries, the bulk of which has now irretrievably perished, and subsequent ages owe a deep debt to his honest, if somewhat confused, and at times not a little prejudiced, erudition.’<sup>8</sup>

Some hundred works, several of them very lengthy, are either directly cited or referred to as having been read by Eusebius. In many instances he would read an entire treatise for the sake of one or two historical notices, and must have searched many others without finding anything to serve his purpose. The most vital question is the sincerity of Eusebius. Did he tamper with the materials? The sarcasm of Gibbon (*Decline and Fall*, c. xvi) is well known...The passages to which Gibbon refers to do not bear out his imputation...Eusebius contents himself with condemning these sins...in general terms, without entering into details...but it leaves no imputation on his honesty. Mosheim, in an editorial note, writes:

‘Eusebius was an impartial historian and had access to the best helps for composing a correct history, which his age afforded.’<sup>9</sup>

‘Of the patristic witnesses to the text of the New Testament as it stood in the Greek Manuscripts from about 300-340 AD, none is so important as Eusebius of Caesurae, for he lived in the greatest Christian library of that age, that namely which Origen and Pamphilus had collected. It is no exaggeration to say from this single collection of manuscripts at Caesurae derives the larger part of the surviving ante-Nicene literature. In his library Eusebius must have habitually handled codices of the Gospels older by two hundred years than the earliest of the great uncials that we have now in our libraries.’<sup>10</sup>

Considering the honesty, ability and opportunity of Eusebius as a witness to the New Testament text, let us now move on to his evidence concerning Matthew 28:19.

## *The Evidence of Eusebius*

According to Ludwig Knapfer, the editor of the *Christadelphian Monatshefte*, Eusebius, among his many other writings, compiled a file of corrupted variations of the Holy Scriptures and,

‘the most serious of all the falsifications denounced by him, is without doubt the traditional reading of Matthew 28:19.’

His source material has been lost, as he later wrote; ‘through events of war I have lost all of my files and other materials connected with the magazine,’ but various authorities mention a work entitled *Discrepancies in the Gospels*, and another work, *The Concluding Sections of the Gospels*.

### **According to Conybeare:**

‘Eusebius cites this text (Matt. 28:19) again and again in works written between 300 and 336, namely in his long commentaries on the Psalms, on Isaiah, his *Demonstratio Evangelica*, his *Theophany*...in his famous history of the Church, and in his panegyric of the Emperor Constantine. I have, after a moderate search in these works of Eusebius, found *eighteen* citations of Matthew 28:19, *and always in the following form:*’

<sup>19</sup>‘**Go and make disciples of all the nations, in my name,**’ <sup>20</sup>teaching them to observe all things, whatsoever I commanded you.’ (Mt. 28:19-20)<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> *Dictionary of Christian Biography and Literature.*

<sup>9</sup> Mosheim.

<sup>10</sup> F. C. Conybeare, in the *Hibbert Journal*, October 1902.

Ploughman's research uncovered all of these quotations except for one, which is in a catena published by Mai in a German magazine, the *Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft*, edited by Dr. Erwin Preuschen in Darmstadt in 1901. Eusebius was not content merely to cite the verse in this form, but he more than once commented on it in such a way as to show how much he confirmed the wording 'in my name.' Thus, in his *Demonstratio Evangelica* he wrote the following:

‘For he did not enjoin them to make disciples of all the nations simply and without qualification, but with the essential addition, in his name. For so great was the virtue attaching to his appellation that the Apostle says,’

‘God bestowed on him the name above every name, that in the name of Yeshua every knee shall bow, of things in heaven and on earth and under the earth.’

‘It was right, therefore, that he should emphasize the virtue of the power residing in his name, but hidden from the many, and therefore, say to his Apostles,’

‘Go and make disciples of all the nations in my name.’<sup>12</sup>

Conybeare wrote in *Hibbert Journal*, 1902:

‘It is evident that this was the text found by Eusebius in the very ancient codices collected fifty to a hundred and fifty years before his birth by his great predecessors. Of any other form of text *he had never heard and knew nothing until he had visited Constantinople* and attended the Council of Nice. Then, in two controversial works, written in his extreme old age and entitled...*Against Marcellus of Ancyra*, and...*About the Theology of the Church*, he used the common reading. One other writing of his also contains it, namely a letter written after the Council of Nice was over, to his seer of Caesurae.’<sup>13</sup>

In his *Textual Criticism of the New Testament*, Conybeare wrote:

‘It is clear, therefore, that of the manuscripts which Eusebius inherited from his predecessor, Pamphilus at Caesurae in Palestine, some at least preserved the original reading in which ***there was no mention either of baptism, or of Father, Son and Holy Ghost***. It has been conjectured by Dr. Davidson, Dr. Martineau, by the Dean of Westminster, and by Prof. Harnack (to mention but a few names of the many) that here the received text could not contain the very words of Jesus—this long before anyone except Dr. Burgon, who kept the discovery to himself, had noticed the Eusebian form of the reading.’

‘Naturally an objection was raised by Dr. Chase, Bishop of Ely, who argued that Eusebius indeed found the traditional text in his manuscripts, but substituted the briefer wording in his works for fear of vulgarizing the sacred Trinitarian wording.’<sup>14</sup>

According to Porson (in a preface to his Letters):

‘Bengel...allowed that the words (The Three Witnesses) were in no genuine manuscripts...Surely then, the verse is spurious! No! This learned man finds a way of escape. The passage was of so sublime and mysterious a nature that the secret discipline of the Church withdrew it from the public books, until it was gradually lost.’<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Conybeare (no cite given), but most likely, the note above.

<sup>12</sup> *Demonstratio Evangelica*, col. 240, p. 136.

<sup>13</sup> *Hibbert Journal*, 1902, Conybeare.

<sup>14</sup> F. C. Conybeare, *Textual Criticism of the New Testament* (no page given).

Such is the rational of those who resort to such an argument! Conybeare continued, refuting the argument of the Bishop of Ely:

“It is sufficient answer to point out that Eusebius’ argument, when he cites the text, involves the text ‘in my name.’ For, he asks, in whose name? and answers that it was the name spoken of by Paul in his Epistle to the Philippians 2:10.”<sup>16</sup>

Finally, the *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics* states:

“The facts are, in summary, that Eusebius quotes Matthew 28:19 twenty-one times, either omitting everything between ‘nations and teaching,’ or in the form, ‘make disciples of all the nations in my name,’ the latter form being the more frequent.”<sup>17</sup>

## *Other Early Writings*

‘The anonymous author of *De Rebaptismate* in the third century so understood them, and dwells at length on the power of the name of Jesus invoked upon a man by Baptism.’<sup>18</sup>

“In Origen’s works, as preserved in the Greek, the first part of the verse is cited three times, but his citation always stops short at the words ‘the nations,’ and that in itself suggests that his text has been censored, and the words which followed, ‘in my name,’ struck out.”<sup>19</sup>

‘In Justin Martyr, who wrote between AD 130 and 140, there is a passage which has been regarded as a citation or echo of Matthew 28:19 by various scholars, e.g. Resch in his *Ausser canonische Parallelstellen*, who sees in it an abridgement of the ordinary text:

‘God hath not afflicted nor inflicts the judgment, as knowing of some that 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 illuminated by the name of this Christ.’<sup>20</sup>

‘The objection hitherto to these words being recognized as a citation of our text was that they ignored the formula baptizing them ‘in the name of the Father and Son and Holy Spirit,’ but the discovery of the Eusebian form of text removes the difficulty, and Justin is seen to have had the same text as early as the year 140, which Eusebius regularly found in his manuscripts from 300 to 340.’<sup>21</sup>

‘We may infer that the text was not quite fixed when Tertullian was writing, early in the third century. In the middle of that century Cyprian could insist on the use of the triple formula as essential in the baptism of even the orthodox. Pope Stephen answered him that the baptisms even of the heretics were valid, if the

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<sup>15</sup> Porson, *Letters* (Preface).

<sup>16</sup> F. C. Conybeare, *Textual Criticism of the New Testament* (no page given).

<sup>17</sup> *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics* (no page given).

<sup>18</sup> The Author of *De Rebaptismate*, from *Smiths Dictionary of the Bible*, vol. I, p. 352.

<sup>19</sup> F. C. Conybeare, *Textual Criticism of the New Testament* (no page given).

<sup>20</sup> Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho* 39, p. 258.

<sup>21</sup> Conybeare, *Hibbert Journal* (no page given).

name of Jesus alone was invoked. (This decision did not prevent the Popes of the seventh century from excommunicating the entire Celtic Church for its remaining faithful to the old use of invoking in the name of Jesus). In the last half of the fourth century, the text, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, was used as a battle cry by the orthodox against the adherents of Macedonius, who were called *pneumato-machi* or fighters against the Holy Spirit, because they declined to include the Spirit in a Trinity of persons as co-equal, consubstantial and co-eternal with the Father and Son. They also stoutly denied that any text in the New Testament authorized such a coordination of the Spirit with the Father and Son. Whence, we infer, that their texts agreed with that of Eusebius.<sup>22</sup>

‘Exceptions are found, which perhaps point to an old practice dying out. Cyprian (*Ep.* 73) and the *Apostolic Canons* (no. 50) combat the shorter formula, thereby attesting to its use in certain quarters. The ordinance of the *Apostolic Canon* therefore runs:’

‘If any bishop or presbyter fulfill not three baptisms of one initiation, but one baptism, which is given (as) into the death of the Lord, let him be deposed.’

‘This was the formula of the followers of Eunomius (*Socr.* 5:24), for they baptized not into the Trinity, but into the death of Christ. They accordingly used single immersion only.’<sup>23</sup>

‘There is one other witness whose testimony we must consider. He is Aphraates. He who wrote between 337 and 345. He cites our text in a formal manner, as follows:’

‘Make disciples of all the nations, and they shall believe in me.’

‘The last words appear to be a gloss on the Eusebian reading, ‘in my name,’ but in any case, they preclude the *textus receptus* with its injunction to baptize in the triune name. Were the writing of Aphraates an isolated fact, we might regard it as a loose citation, but in the presence of the Eusebian and Justinian texts this is impossible.’<sup>24</sup>

## *How the Manuscripts were Changed*

The following quotations demonstrate how freely the scribes altered the manuscripts of the New Testament, in stark contrast to the scribes of the Old Testament Scriptures who copied the holy writings with reverence and strict accuracy. These quotations also show the early heretical beginning of Triune immersion at a time when the doctrine of the Trinity was being formulated and how the New Testament writings were changed to conform to the syncretized practice. In the case just examined (Matt. 28:19) it is to be noticed that not a single manuscript or ancient version has preserved to us the true reading, but that is not surprising, for as Dr. Gregory, one of the greatest textual critics, as well as others, reminds us:

‘The Greek Manuscripts of the text of the New Testament were often altered by scribes, who put into them the readings which were familiar to them, and which they held to be the right readings.’<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> *Encyclopedia Biblia*, article on *Baptism*.

<sup>24</sup> Conybeare.

Peter Watkins writes:

‘These facts speak for themselves. Our Greek texts, not only of the Gospels, but of the Epistles as well, have been revised and interpolated by orthodox copyists. We can trace their perversions of the text in a few cases, with the aid of patristic citations and ancient versions, but there must remain many passages which have been so corrected, but where we cannot today expose the fraud. It was necessary to emphasize this point, because Drs. Wescott and Hort used to aver that there is no evidence of merely doctrinal changes having been made in the text of the New Testament. This is just the opposite of the truth and such distinguished scholars as Alfred Loisy, J. Wellhausen, Eberhard Nestle, Adolf Harnack, to mention only four, do not scruple to recognize the fact. While this is perfectly true, nevertheless, there are a number of reasons why we can feel confident about the general reliability of our translations.’<sup>26</sup>

The *Fraternal Visitor* says that,

‘Codex B (Vaticanus) would be the best of all existing manuscripts...if it were completely preserved, less damaged, (less) corrected, more easily legible, and not altered by a later hand in more than two thousand places. Eusebius therefore, is not without ground for accusing the adherents of Athanasius...of falsifying the Bible more than once.’<sup>27</sup>

Under *Baptism* in Smith’s *Dictionary of Christian Antiquities* it states:

‘While triune immersion was thus an all but universal practice, Eunomius (circa 360) appears to have been the first to introduce (again) simple immersion unto the death of Christ. This practice was condemned on pain of degradation by the *Canon Apostolic* 46 (al 50), but it comes before us again about a century later in Spain, but then, curiously enough, we find it regarded as a badge of orthodoxy in opposition to the practice of the Arians.’<sup>28</sup>

The *Catholic Encyclopedia* says,

‘The threefold immersion is unquestionably very ancient in the Church...Its object, of course, to honor the three Persons of the Holy Trinity in whose name it is conferred.’<sup>29</sup>

Conybeare writes,

‘The exclusive survival (of the traditional text of Matt. 28:19) in all manuscripts, both Greek and Latin, need not cause surprise...but in any case, the conversion of Eusebius to the longer text after the Council of Nice indicates that it was at that time being introduced as a *Shibboleth* of orthodoxy into all codices...The question of the inclusion of the Holy Spirit on equal terms in the Trinity had been threshed out, and a text so invaluable to the dominant party could not but make its way into every codex, irrespective of its textual affinities.’<sup>30</sup>

Considering the evidence of the manuscripts, the versions the early writings, some copies of *Matthew* in

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<sup>25</sup> Dr. C. R. Gregory, *Canon and Text of the N.T.* (1907), p. 424.

<sup>26</sup> Peter Watkins, in an excellent article *Bridging the Gap* in *The Christadelphian*, January, 1962, pp. 4-8.

<sup>27</sup> *Fraternal Visitor* 1924, p. 148, translation from *Christadelphian Monatshefte*.

<sup>28</sup> *Smiths Dictionary of Christian Antiquities*, article on *Baptism*.

<sup>29</sup> *Catholic Encyclopedia*, p. 262.

<sup>30</sup> Conybeare, *Hibbert Journal*.



the early centuries didn't contain the modern Trinitarian wording. In legal practice, where copies of an original lost document vary, the internal evidence is used to resolve the discrepancy. That is, a comparison of the undisputed text with the text in question, in order to determine which of the variant wordings is more likely to have been the original. With both variants in mind, we will now turn to the scriptures themselves for the internal evidence.

## ***Internal Evidence***

‘Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.’ (1st Thessalonians 5:21)

In this verse the Greek word translated as *prove* is *dokimazo* and means to test, examine, prove, scrutinize (to see whether a thing is genuine or not), to recognize as genuine after examination, to approve, deem worthy. In our efforts to determine which reading of Matthew 28:19 is original we will submit both renderings to ten tests. In doing so we will be able to recognize the genuine and expose the spurious.

### **1. The Test of Context**

When examining the context we find that today's Trinitarian wording lacks logical syntax, that is the true understanding of the verse is obscured by a failure of the varying concepts to harmonize. If however, we read it as follows, the whole context fits together and the progression of the instructions is comprehensible:

‘All power is given unto me...go therefore...make disciples in my name, teaching them...whatsoever I have commanded ...I am with you...’ (Matthew 28:18-20)

### **2. The Test of Frequency**

Is the phrase in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit used elsewhere in Scripture? No.

Did Yeshua use the phrase, ‘in my name,’ on other occasions? Yes, 17 times.<sup>31</sup>

### **3. The Test of Doctrine**

Is any doctrine or concept of Scripture based on an understanding of a threefold name, or of baptism in the threefold name? No.

Is any statement in Scripture based on the fact of baptism in the name of Yeshua? Yes. This is clarified in 1st Corinthians 1:13:

‘Is Messiah divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?!’

These words strongly imply that believers should to be baptized in the name of the One who was crucified for them. The Father, in His unfathomable love, gave us His only begotten Son to die in our stead. He being later raised Him to incorruptibility by the Spirit of God, and it is the Lord Yeshua Himself who was crucified, and therefore, in His name believers must be baptized in water. Dr. Thomas, in *Revealed Mys-*

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<sup>31</sup> Examples are found in Matthew 18:20; Mark 9:37, 39, 41; 16:17; John 14:14, 26; 15:16; 16:23.

tery, states,

‘There is but one way for a believer of the things concerning the Kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, to put Him on, or to be invested with His name, and that is, by immersion into His name. Baptism is for this specific purpose.’<sup>32</sup>

‘As for its significance, baptism is linked inseparably with the death of Christ. It is the means of the believers identification with the Lords death.’<sup>33</sup>

*The Father did not die, nor the Holy Spirit.* As the Scripture says, *buried with Him* (Yeshua) in baptism, not with the Father or the Holy Spirit. (Romans 6:3-5) R. Roberts used this explanation in *The Nature of Baptism*:

‘According to trine immersion, it is not sufficient to be baptized into the Son. Thus Christ is displaced from His position as the connecting link, the door of entrance, the new and living way. And thus there are three names under heaven whereby we must be saved, in opposition to the apostolic declaration, that there is none other name (than the name of Yeshua the Messiah of Nazareth) under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved (Acts 4:12).’<sup>34</sup>

Based on the above understanding, we have ascertained the genuine text of Matthew 28:19 confirming the use of the phrase, ‘in my name.’

## 4. The Test of Analogy

Does any other Scripture make reference to baptism in the Triune name? No. Does any other Scripture reference baptism in the name of Yeshua? Yes. The Father baptized the disciples with the gift of the Holy Spirit, a promise that came, according to Yeshua, in His name. (John 14:26)<sup>35</sup> This is because Yeshua is the common denominator (literally Name) in both water baptism and baptism of the Holy Spirit, as made apparent by the following Scriptures:

John 16:7: ‘Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is expedient for you that I go away, for if I go not away the Comforter will not come unto you, but if I depart I will send him unto you.’

John 14:26: ‘But the Comforter, which is the Holy Spirit, 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.’ (See also John 7:39)

Acts 8:12: ‘But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Yeshua the Messiah, they were baptized, both men and women.’

Notice that they were baptized as a result of the preaching of the name of Yeshua the Messiah, not the titles Father, Son and Holy Ghost. By analogy, we should, therefore, be baptized in the name of Yeshua because the invoking of His Name is the catalyst of understanding that prepares us for the baptism of the Spirit, which is also given in His name.

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<sup>32</sup> Dr. Thomas, *Revealed Mystery*, article XLIV.

<sup>33</sup> *God's Way*, p. 190.

<sup>34</sup> R. Roberts, *The Nature of Baptism*, p. 13.

<sup>35</sup> Avram—See Ezekiel 36:24-27 for where the Father promises Israel His Spirit in order to keep His statutes.

## 5. The Test of Consequence

When we are baptized, do we put on the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost? No. Do we put on the name of Yeshua? Yes. When we are baptized in the name of Yeshua the Messiah, according to all baptismal accounts recorded in Scripture, we are quite literally being baptized into the name (person) of Yeshua the Messiah. Gal. 3:27: 'For as many of you as have been baptized into Messiah have put on Messiah.'

No mention is made in Scripture of any baptism being related to the titles of Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Every actual account mentions a clear connection with the person of Messiah and His atoning sacrifice.

## 6. The Test of Practice

Did the disciples, as they were implementing the Great Commission, ever once baptize into the Trinity? No. Did they baptize in the name of Yeshua? Always.<sup>36</sup> The argument has been made, when defending Triune immersion, 'I would rather obey Yeshua, than to imitate the Apostles.' This kind of reasoning because it places the Apostles in opposition to Yeshua and makes all apostolic baptisms contrary to the Word of God. Yeshua saying to baptize one way, and the Apostles allegedly doing it another way, is also contrary to the Lord being with the Apostles for 40 days *after* the resurrection, on and off, and Him speaking to them of Kingdom things' (Acts 1:2-4):

"The former account I made, Oh Theophilus, of all that Yeshua began both to do and teach, until the day in which He was taken up, after He through the Holy Spirit *had given commandments* to the Apostles whom He had chosen, to whom He also presented Himself alive after His suffering by many infallible proofs, being seen by them during forty days *and speaking of the things pertaining to the Kingdom of God.*' (Acts 1:1-3)

It's highly unlikely that the Lord would have failed to speak of baptism, and we see that this is what Peter enjoined every Jew who believed in Yeshua to do on that Pentecost ten days after Yeshua was taken up into Heaven (Acts 1:9f.):

"Then Peter said to them, 'Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Yeshua the Messiah for the remission of sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.'" (Acts 2:38)

Also, if all of God's Word is inspired, and it is, then we should not try to pit one verse against another, but rather seek to reconcile all of God's Word in proper context and rightly apply it to our lives. It is easier to believe that the disciples followed the final instructions of Messiah than to believe that they immediately disobeyed His command, especially as there's nothing in Scripture to suggest or even hint that they had disobeyed the Lord.

## 7. The Test of Significance

What significance is mentioned in Scripture for baptizing believers in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost? None. What significance is conveyed toward being baptized in the name of Yeshua?

1. First, Scripture teaches that baptism in the name of Yeshua is an act of repentance leading to the forgiveness of sins (Acts 2:38).

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<sup>36</sup> Acts 2:38-39; 8:12, 16; 10:47-48 (inferred); 19:1-5; see also John 14:26; Acts 4:12; 22:16.

2. Second, baptism in His name is associated with the promise of God’s Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38, 19:1-5).
3. Third, baptism in the name of Yeshua is compared to our personal willingness to be living sacrifices and to even die with Messiah, if He calls us to that. (Rom. 6:1-4; Col. 2:12).
4. Fourth, being baptized into Messiah is how we put on Messiah (Gal. 3:27).
5. Fifth, baptism in the name of Yeshua is called the circumcision of Messiah, and reflects our putting off of the man of sin, and becoming a new creature in Messiah Yeshua. (Col. 2:11-12; 2nd Cor. 5:17).

Baptism in the name of Yeshua expresses faith in the physical life of Yeshua, the crucifixion of the Son of God for our sins, and the remission of sins through His name. Trinitarian baptism can only express faith in Catholic theology.

## **8. The Test of Parallel Accounts**

Matthew 28 is not the sole record in the Gospels of the Great Commission of the Church. Luke also recorded this event in great detail. In Luke 24:46-47 he wrote of Yeshua speaking in the third person:

‘And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations.’

This passage helps to further establish that the correct wording of Matthew 28:19, where Yeshua spoke in the first person, should be ‘in my name.’

## **9. The Test of Complimentary Citation**

While there is no text that offers a complimentary citation of Trinitarian baptism, there is a striking resemblance between the actual wording of Matthew 28:18-20 and Romans 1:4-5. Matthew contains the Commission of Messiah to His Apostles, while the Romans’ account is Paul’s acceptance of his own commission as an Apostle. Consider the following similarities:

Matthew 28:18-20 .....all power is given unto Me .....Go

Romans 1:4-5 .....the Son of God with power.....received/apostleship

Matthew 28:18-20 .....teaching them to observe .....all nations .....in My name

Romans 1:4-5 .....for obedience to the faith .....all nations .....for His name

## **10. The Test of Principle**

“It is written: ‘whatsoever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Yeshua’” (Col. 3:17). In this principle laid down by Paul the implication is clear. The word *whatsoever* would certainly include baptism, which is a command involving both word and deed.

The traditional wording of Matthew containing the Trinitarian wording is clearly not in accordance with the above principle. The shorter wording (in my name), without the falsified insertion, follows this principle. This also helps to establish which of the two wordings is the contradictory one. God’s Word does not

contradict itself; rather it complements and completes itself. Paul not only expressed this principle, but he applied it specifically to the topic of baptism.

In Acts 19:1-6 there is an account concerning the disciples of John who had been baptized under his ministry. Like baptism in Yeshua's name, John's baptism was one of repentance for the remission of sins (Mark 1:4; Acts 2:38). John's message, which accompanied his baptism, was that One would come after him who would take away the sins of the world and baptize with the Holy Spirit. Paul introduced these disciples to that One and applied the above principle, and baptized them:

‘When they heard this, they were baptized into the name of the Lord Yeshua. And when Paul laid his hands upon them, the Holy Spirit came upon them.’

Applying the test of principle to our two readings in Matthew 28:19, we find that the phrase ‘in My name’ is the correct understanding for the Mt. 28:19.

## *Other Sources*

The following quotations also confirm that the Trinitarian wording in Matthew 28:19 is not genuine:

‘The cumulative evidence of these three lines of criticism (Textual Criticism, Literary Criticism and Historical Criticism) is thus distinctly against the view that Matt. 28:19 (in the traditional form) represents the exact words of Christ.’<sup>37</sup>

‘There is the triune baptismal formula, which may prove a very broken reed when thoroughly investigated, but...The thoughtful may well ponder, meantime, why one cannot find one single instance in Acts or Epistles of the words ever being used at any of the main baptisms recorded.’<sup>38</sup>

‘The striking contrast and the illogical internal incoherence of the passage...lead to a presumption of an intentional corruption in the interests of the Trinity.’<sup>39</sup>

‘The very account which tells us that at last, after His resurrection, He commissioned His disciples to go and baptize among all nations, betrays itself by speaking in the Trinitarian language of the next century, and compels us to see in it the ecclesiastical editor, and not the evangelist, much less the Founder Himself.’<sup>40</sup>

‘The obvious explanation of the silence of the New Testament on the triune name, and the use of another formula in Acts and Paul, is that this other formula was the earlier, and that the triune formula is a later addition.’<sup>41</sup>

Professor Harnack dismissed the text as being no word of the Lord.<sup>42</sup> The current text of Matthew 28:19 found in most English Bibles should be corrected by the translators.

Every symbolic action required by God is associated with actual cause and effect. Consider the following

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<sup>37</sup> *Hastings Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, article: *Baptism: Early Christian*.

<sup>38</sup> F. Whiteley, *The Testimony*, Oct. 1959, p. 351, *Back to Babylon*.

<sup>39</sup> E. K., *Fraternal Visitor*, article: *The Question of the Trinity and Matt. 28:19*, 1924, p. 147-151, *Christadelphian Monatshefte*.

<sup>40</sup> Dr. Robert Young, *Literal Translation of the Bible*.

<sup>41</sup> *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*.

<sup>42</sup> Professor Harnack, *History of Dogma* (German edition).

cause-and-effect examples. When Joshua pointed his spear there was victory (Joshua 8:18) Only three victories were given to Joash when he struck the ground only three times (2 Kings 13:19-25) The Passover Lamb had to be without blemish (even as was Messiah), if a household was to be protected from death (Exodus 12:5). *None of God's rituals are without true meaning and consequences.* When God speaks, it is done. Messiah called Lazarus, and Lazarus rose from the dead! In matters of ritual, such as Baptism and the Passover, we are dealing with God's rituals, not man's.

All man-made rituals, no matter how well intentioned, when they deviate from the Word of God, are nothing more than unprofitable traditions that make the Word of God of no effect (Mark 7:13). *Obedience to God's commands, however, will always cause a desirable effect.*

In the matter of establishing the original text of Matthew 28:19, it is indeed important to determine what is genuine, and what is spurious, in order to properly obey God's command:

“You must not add to the word which I command you, nor take from it, that you may keep the commandments of Yahveh your God, which I command you.” (Dt. 4:2)

When we are obedient to the true commandments of our Lord, we can expect an eternal effect. Believers were taught to anoint the sick with oil in the name of the Lord (James 5:14). The result would be healing. When two or three gather together in His name, the result is that He is there in the midst of them. As our evidence reveals, Yeshua commanded us to go *and make disciples in His name.* As a result, He would be with them always, even to the end of the age. Anything we do in His name directly involves Him. It is no wonder that Paul so clearly charged those believers in Colosse:

‘Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Yeshua, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him!’<sup>43</sup>

## ***Addendum***

### **1. The Light is Dawning**

In 1960, The British and Foreign Bible Society published a Greek Testament and the alternative rendering for Matthew 28:19 was phrased *en to onomati mou* (in my name). Eusebius was cited as the authority.

The Jerusalem Bible, of 1966, an official Roman Catholic Bible, has this footnote for Matthew 28:19:

‘It may be that this formula...is a reflection of the liturgical usage established later in the primitive community. It will be remembered that Acts speaks of baptizing in the name of Jesus.’

### **2. Matthew 28:19 and Luke 24:47 say nothing of baptism:**

This is true. They refer only to making disciples of all nations, repentance and remission of sins. However, once it has been established that the original text of Matthew 28:19 simply says ‘in my name,’ we have eliminated all support for baptizing in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Though baptism is not specifically mentioned in Mt. 28:19 or Luke 24:47, it is inferred by the following two points:

1. In Matthew the command is to make disciples in my name. To make a disciple includes baptism in

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<sup>43</sup> Avram—If you, or another, have already been baptized in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, I believe that the Lord Yeshua saw this sin of ignorance and has covered it over with His Life-forgiving Blood. In other words, there is no need to be re-baptized in the Name of Yeshua. The point is that from now on we should baptize, and advise others to be baptized, in the Name of Yeshua in full immersion.

the conversion process (Mark 16:15-16; John 3:3-5), and the entire process is under the umbrella of the specification to do so in His name.

2. In Luke, repentance and remission of sins would be preached in His name. By the testimony of other Scriptures (Luke 3:3; Acts 2:38) it is clear that remission of sins comes through baptism, preceded by repentance. Both of these are to be preached in His name.

### 3. The Evidence of Eusebius

Jerome was born in 331 AD and died in 420. He wrote many exegetical and controversial treatises and letters, as well as the renowned Latin translation of the Scriptures, the Vulgate. He also made an interesting statement about the Gospel of Matthew originally being written in Hebrew:<sup>44</sup>

‘Matthew, who is also Levi...composed a Gospel...in the Hebrew language and characters...Furthermore, the Hebrew itself is preserved to this day in the library at Caesurae, which the martyr Pamphilus so diligently collected.’<sup>45</sup>

Now, Eusebius of Caesurae (270-340 AD) inherited from Pamphilus (who died in 310 AD) that famous library, a library that was commenced by Origen (185-254 AD). The wording of that statement by Jerome apparently meant that the original Hebrew manuscript of Matthew was still to be seen in the Library at Caesurae. It could have meant that an early copy of Matthew’s Hebrew writing was there, but the phraseology of Jerome appears to indicate that it was the actual manuscript written by Matthew.

### 4. The Mental Reservations of Eusebius

After the Council of Nicaea, Eusebius three times used the triune name-phrase in writing (as mentioned above). The following three extracts shed light on this strange affair:

1. At the Council of Nicaea (325 AD) Eusebius took a leading part...He occupied the first seat to the Emperor’s right, and delivered the opening address to Constantine, when he took his seat in the council chamber...Eusebius left us an account of his doings...in a letter of explanation to his church at Caesurae...This letter...is written to the Caesareans to explain that he would resist to the last any vital change in the traditional creed of his church, but had subscribed to these alterations, when assured of their innocence, to avoid appearing contentious.<sup>46</sup>
2. Our concern here is only with Nicaea as it affected Eusebius...his own account of the matter is transmitted to us...in the letter he addressed to his diocese an explanation of his actions at the Council, for with some misgiving he had signed the document bearing the revised text of the creed he had presented...but being satisfied that the creed did not imply the opposite Sabellian pitfall...he signed the document.<sup>47</sup>
3. The Nicene Council was in the summer of 325 AD. Eusebius was profoundly impressed by the sight of that majestic gathering...He occupied a distinguished position in the Council; he was its spokesman in welcoming the Emperor...On the next day, as if yielding to those representations, and moved by the express opinion of Constantine, he signed the Creed, and even accepted the

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<sup>44</sup> This understanding, of Matthew originally being written in Hebrew, is first seen with Papias of Hierapolis (70-163 AD) when he wrote, “Matthew set in order the *logia* (divine words) in a Hebrew language, and each interpreted them as he was able.” (Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 3.39.15-16)

<sup>45</sup> Jerome, *Catalogue of Ecclesiastical Writers*.

<sup>46</sup> *Dictionary of Christian Biography and Literature*: Eusebius.

<sup>47</sup> Wallace Hadrill, *Eusebius of Caesurae* (1960).

Sabellianism is the heretical belief that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are not truly distinct Persons, but merely aspects of one divine being. It’s also known as modalism.

anathematism appended to it, but did so, as we gather from his own statement, by dint of evasive glosses, which he certainly could not have announced at that time. While then he verbally capitulated in the doctrinal decisions of the Nicene Council...he did so reluctantly and under pressure...He knew that he would be thought to have compromised his convictions, and therefore, wrote his account of the transaction to the people of his diocese, and as Athanasius expresses it, excluded himself in his own way.<sup>48</sup>

## 5. Second Century Mutilations of the Sacred Text

Textual critics have been able to reproduce the Sacred Text substantially correct as it existed in the second or third century:

1. 'It may be accepted with confidence that we have at command the New Testament substantially as the writings contained in it would be read within a century of their composition.'<sup>49</sup>
2. The S.P.E.C. commenting on Matthew 28:19 states:  
'One would expect this name to be that of Jesus and it is surprising to find the text continuing with the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost, which are no names at all. The suspicion that this is not what Matthew originally wrote naturally arises. In Father, Son and Holy Ghost we have the Trinitarian formula...which was associated with Christian Baptism in the second century, as evidenced in the *Didache*, chapter seven.'<sup>50</sup>
3. F. C. Kenyon, in *The Text of the Greek Bible*, said:  
'At the first, each book had its single original text, which it is now the object of criticism to recover, but in the first two centuries this original Greek text disappeared under a mass of variants, created by errors, by conscious alterations, and by attempts to remedy the uncertainties thus created.'<sup>51</sup>

## 6. The Source of the Error

The earliest reference to the Trinitarian doctrinal insertion is found in the *Didache*. The *Didache* is a collection of fragments of writings from five or more documents. They were originally written, it is thought, between 80 and 160 AD. Although we now have only 99 verses, *those verses contain the seeds of many false teachings that developed into the Papal doctrine*. The seeds of Indulgences, the Mass, the Confessional, the substitution of sprinkling for immersion, and other gross errors are to be found in that *disreputable pseudo-Christian document*.<sup>52</sup>

In the *Didache*, among all the above mentioned apostate beliefs, is found the Trinitarian phrase that later found its way into the text of Matthew 28:19, displacing the authentic words of Messiah Yeshua. Here, then, is the source of the erroneous written teaching reflecting the practice of Christians in the second century. In summary, using the name of Jesus in the baptismal formula expresses faith in:

1. The Person of Messiah (who He is);
2. The Work of Messiah (His death, burial and resurrection for us); and
3. The Power and Authority of Messiah (His ability to save us by Himself).

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<sup>48</sup> William Bright in his Preface to Burtons *Text of Eusebius Ecclesiastical History*.

<sup>49</sup> Dr. Hugh J. Schonfield, *The Authentic New Testament* (1962).

<sup>50</sup> The S.P.C.K. published in 1964, Volume One of the Clarified New Testament.

<sup>51</sup> F. C. Kenyon, *The Text of the Greek Bible*, pp. 241-242.

<sup>52</sup> Refs: IV1, IX2-4, X2-6, XIII3, XIV1 and IV6.



For these very reasons, baptism was then, and should continue now to be, administered in the name of the Lord Yeshua the Messiah. His Word, not the tradition and fabrications of men, should be the standard which we teach, believe and obey. I am indebted to Ploughman, now deceased, for his scholarly effort. He made a life long study of Matthew 28:19.

**Lon Martin**

**September 15, 2001**

Additional insights: If Matthew 29:19 originally contained the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, it's difficult to imagine why none of the Apostles ever followed that. In other words, neither Acts nor Paul speak of baptizing in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. On the contrary, every Scripture reference to an actual baptism, or even to its theology (Paul; Romans 6:1f.), speak of [water baptism in the name of Yeshua](#).

Also, Matthew was the first Gospel (or New Testament letter, etc.) to be written. Many say it was written in 44 AD, before everything in the New Testament. It's especially strange then, that no other author of the New Testament used the formula for the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, that is, if it was in the original.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> Revised on Monday, May 20, 2024.