

THE PROBLEM WITH MATTHEW 28:19

Matthew 28:19 is at the root of baptismal theology. There Jesus says, “Go and make disciples of all the nations and baptise them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit”. Notice that the Christian Church simply assumes that for baptism to work that it is needed to say, “I baptise you in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit”. The verse doesn’t say that at all. Jesus said that good works must be done in his name which doesn’t mean you have to mention him all the time.

However, here alone in the Bible is it apparently said that baptism should be given in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. The vast majority of Churches regard baptism as invalid without this formula which has to be vocally expressed as we have seen. The fact that the Law of Moses forbids dependence on one witness and we have the anonymous writer of Matthew alone tells us that there is something badly amiss. The verse cannot have any divine authority.

[Justin Martyr early in the next century explained the meaning of the words of baptism when he said people are baptised in the name of God the Father and Lord of all the universe and of Jesus Christ who saves us and of the Holy Spirit. He would see Matthew as summarising that doctrine. The baptism words are actually a brief creed and a resolution to accept Jesus has saved you. It is a covenant as well.]

Another problem is that it is questioned that this verse is really part of the original gospel. Many believe it is a forgery and they baptise in the name of Jesus only. They observe that the Acts of the Apostles has baptisms being done in the name of Jesus only. A good argument in favour of the forgery suspicion can be found in the Jesus Messiah Fellowship Website. The webpage says that the syntax and grammar of the verse is faulty indicating it was faked. Even more important is the fact that many early witnesses did not regard the verse as authentic and many ancient manuscripts left it out. Early Church Father, Eusebius who would not have lied about the verse was the one main person who proved that it was not part of the original gospel. He was a Trinitarian, a believer in the three persons in one God, and would have cherished the verse very much but he refused to accept it which is very significant. Any time he cites Matthew 28:19 he leaves the Trinitarian formula out. And it was not the once he cited it but eighteen times. Also it was stated by Jerome that a very accurate version of Matthew was kept in the library at Caesarea where Eusebius was based. But later in life he did accept the verse to keep in with the Church. The Bible itself may indicate that baptism was done only in the name of Jesus (Acts 8:16; 19:5).

Jesus tells the apostles in the Matthew verse to make disciples and to baptise them in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. But these three are not names or a name at all. They are titles. Name means authority not names. Jesus is not saying “Baptise them in these names of Father, Son and Holy Spirit” at all. He just means that you must baptise with the authority of the Father and Son and Holy Spirit. Even if the verse is real the Church still doesn’t have a leg to stand on.

Heretics or fake Christians cannot have this authority to baptise so their baptisms then would have to be concluded to be worthless. The Book of Mormon advises the formula when giving baptism, "Having authority, I baptise you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit". The Book makes the point that you need to be ordained by God or those he has ordained to perform baptism. This has been denied by the Roman Catholic Church where anybody can baptise validly. Even a Jew can do it if he intends to do what the Church does. But Jesus plainly did say that only those who were validly commissioned to baptise could do it. You would need to be baptised yourself before you could baptise.

It is easy to believe that the later Church began tampering with the New Testament text where it could to make a better case for the new doctrines it was inventing.

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Doctrinal Summary by Br Thomas Mary MICM. This page informs us that Catholic teaching is that if you hear of the Catholic Church and don't join it or study it your damnation is guaranteed. It affirms that babies that die without baptism will be banned from Heaven forever.

BIBLE QUOTATIONS FROM:
The Amplified Bible