

WHY WE BAPTIZE IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, SON AND HOLY SPIRIT

One of the last things Jesus said to his apostles before he left this earth was regarding water baptism. *“And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost”* (Matt. 28:18-20).

This passage is referred to as the “Great Commission.” The command of Jesus is to teach all people the Gospel. Those who believe (accept) the Gospel are to be baptized after they repent (Acts 2:38) and confess Jesus (Matt. 10:32-33). They are to be baptized “in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.” To be baptized “in the name of” simply refers to the authority by which the command was given and by whose authority it is done. Authority to baptize is directly from heaven, not from men.

Concerning the phrase “in the name of,” Thayer’s Greek English Lexicon says (p.447), “...to bind any one to recognize and publicly acknowledge the dignity and authority of one, Matt. 28:19; Acts 8:16; 19:5; I Cor. 1:13,15, *to do a thing, i.e. by one’s command and authority, acting on his behalf, promoting his*

cause.” On page 448 we read, “*by the command and authority of Christ.*”

Some denominations teach that the words “in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost” are an exact “formula” that must be repeated when one is baptized. But, there is no scripture that can be given to support it. Passages like Matthew 28:19, Acts 2:38, 8:16, 19:5 tell what is to be “done,” not what is to be “said.” All who are baptized according to the scriptures are baptized in the name of, by the authority of God (deity) — the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Scriptural baptism is not in the name of, by the authority of, Paul or Peter, or any other man. They did not baptize in their own name (1 Cor. 1:13,15). They baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus (Acts 8:16).

When penitent believers are baptized for the forgiveness of their sins (Acts 2:38) today, we always repeat these words in order to instruct and reinforce, to all who are present, that baptism is being performed by the authority of heaven, not our own.

Baptism cannot be performed in any other name and be acceptable to God. Neither is there any other name by which men are saved, than in the name of Jesus (Acts 4:12).

—Garland M. Robinson