

Lesson 14

Water Baptism in Jesus Name

Opening Verse: **Matthew 28:19**

*Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the **name** of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:*

Introduction:

As the body of Christ, it is our responsibility to be a witness of His Truth and to bear fruit for His kingdom. The goal of this lesson is to equip us to respond to a common challenge that we currently face in our religious community, with those who have not correctly obeyed the command to be baptized.

This lesson was written in “conversational style” to give us a more realistic view on (1) what type of comments or questions that we need to be ready to respond to, and (2) how we can provide them with a biblical response.

The written questions and answers were based on an actual experience of the writer in witnessing to a particular person. The text in blue font are the questions/comments that propose a response. This lesson serves as a preliminary study guide so that we can become more familiar with the scope of this subject.

Initial Encounter:

You start a conversation with someone and then God leads you to ask the question, how were you baptized?

Then the person tells you that he/she was baptized “in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,” and uses Matthew 28:19 as their reference.

Well, I was baptized in the name of Jesus because that’s what I believe the Bible teaches. And I would like to propose something to you, if that’s okay?

What if you’re basing your salvation or water baptism on ONE verse that was incorrectly applied?

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In all of our responses – it is important for us to always keep the tone as conversational and never to get into a heated argument. It’s not a debate but a discussion. You want to be sincere and confident in your response but never to sound condemning or disrespectful. And be careful not to take for granted - the person’s past experiences with God and the level of faith that brought him/her to God.

If you believe in what the Word of God says that **ALL** scripture is necessary to establish a biblical doctrine (2 *Timothy 3:16*) then what are we going to do about the **Book of Acts**?

You see, the actions of the apostles were recorded in the Book of Acts and that's exactly where you can read how they baptized all souls in the name of JESUS. You will NOT find any record of them baptizing by reciting the titles, Father, Son and Holy Ghost. But I can provide you with a list of verses that prove that the **Apostles' manner of baptism was EXCLUSIVELY in the name of Jesus:**

1. Jews

Acts 2:38

³⁸ Then Peter said unto them, 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.

2. Samaritans

Acts 8:16

¹⁶ (For as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.)

3. Gentiles/Cornelius

Acts 10:48

⁴⁸ And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days.

4. Ephesians

Acts 19:4–5

⁴ 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. ⁵ When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.

And please take note of the verse after Matthew 28:19, since **verse 20 will tell you why the Book of Acts is so important:**

Matthew 28:20

²⁰ *Teaching them to **observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you**: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.*

The Book of Acts covers the recorded actions of the Apostles and will therefore, show us HOW the disciples obeyed ALL that the Lord commanded them to do. In fact, *Ephesians 2:20* confirms to us that the teachings of the Apostles are for our foundation.

Ephesians 2:19–20

¹⁹ *Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God;* ²⁰ *And are built upon the **foundation of the apostles and prophets**, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone;*

What About the Majority?

What about all these many Christian churches that baptize by reciting Matt. 28:19? You can't tell me they're not going to be saved!

I believe in how I was baptized but I am not to judge any man because it's the Word of God that will judge us in the last days (*John 12:48*). But my responsibility is two-fold, to obey His Word AND to be a witness of His Word to others. And it's interesting that you mentioned that - since His Word declares that only FEW will find eternal life in Christ.

Matthew 7:13–14 ¹³ *Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat:* ¹⁴ *Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and **few there be that find it.***

How Are We Supposed to Know These Things?

But I am not responsible to know all these things. How can God expect us to know everything because it's just too much for us to know and figure out?

I understand how you feel but the Word of God will reveal to us what God actually expects from us.

Ignorance will not excuse us from omitting or disobeying the Word of God. We will not have an excuse because He commanded us to study His Word and He promised us that His Spirit will lead us into all Truth. But God intentionally hides His Word because He reveals His Truth only to those who will diligently seek for it.

Hosea 4:6 *My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge:*

2 Timothy 2:15 *Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.*

Matthew 7:21–23 ²¹ *Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.*
²² *Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?*
²³ *And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.*

Matthew 5:6 *Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.*

Jeremiah 29:13 *And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart.*

John 16:13 *Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth:*

Matthew 11:25 ²⁵ *At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because **thou hast hid these things** from the wise and prudent (those who are seeking Him INTELLECTUALLY), and hast revealed them unto babes (UNTAUGHT, UNSKILLED).*

AMPC ²⁵ *At that time Jesus began to say, I thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth [and ^[a]] acknowledge openly and joyfully to Your honor], that You have hidden these things from the wise and clever and learned, and revealed them to babies [to the untaught, and unskilled].*

Is Baptism only for Public Declaration?

But isn't water baptism just for a public declaration or confession of our faith?

I would not agree with that because scripture will prove that water baptism is a requirement for our salvation and was commanded in the Word of God.

John 3:3, 5, 7

³Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. ⁵Jesus 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.** ⁷Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.

Mark 16:16

¹⁶He that believeth **and is baptized shall be saved**; but he that believeth not shall be damned.

Acts 2:38

³⁷Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, **what shall we do?** ³⁸Then Peter said unto them, 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.**

Are We Being Legalistic?

Aren't you sounding too legalistic about all of this?

Well, if the Word is going to judge us, then I don't know about you but I would really want to make sure that I am obeying every detail that is commanded for me to do, especially if it's a matter of eternal salvation. And this is not about following rules as much as it is about following biblical principles that have spiritual consequences. And the bottom line is that we **need to follow the Lord's will**, and not our own will (sin of iniquity) or what we think is right (*Matt. 7: 21-23*). Thus, studying the Word is a serious responsibility (*2 Timothy 2:15*).

How Should Matthew 28:19 Be Applied?

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Shouldn't we obey Matthew 28:19 exactly the same way as it was written?

Please allow me to explain this to you as it really makes sense. In **Matthew 28:19**, the disciples were commanded to baptize in the NAME of, and not in the TITLE of. **And here's the difference between the NAME and the TITLES** of Father, Son and Holy Ghost:

Matthew 1:21

²¹ And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.

In this verse, it says that the name of the son shall be called JESUS. It did not say that his name shall be called SON. So, can we agree that JESUS is a name and SON is a title? And therefore, we can conclude that the name of the Son is Jesus.

Name of the Son = Jesus (Matt. 1:21)

Furthermore, the disciples were not confused about Matt. 28:19 because they already KNEW what the **name** of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost was:

Name of the Father = Jesus (John 5:43)

***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.*

Name of the Holy Ghost = Jesus (John 14:26)

***John 14:26** 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.*

And this will make even more sense when I tell you that only ONE name is necessary because the name of Jesus is our family name.

***Ephesians 3:14–15** ¹⁴For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, ¹⁵Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named,*

Family Name of Heaven and Earth = Jesus (Ephes. 3:14-15)

Significance of the NAME of JESUS

And I'm sure you've read it in your Bible how significant the name of Jesus is. And if water baptism is part of our salvation then **WHY wouldn't we do it in His NAME?**

Acts 4:12 *Neither is there salvation in any other: for **there is none other name** under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.*

Col 3:17 *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.*

1 Cor 6:11 *And such were some of you: but ye are **washed**, but are sanctified, but ye are justified **in the name of the Lord Jesus**, and by the Spirit of our God.*

Acts 2:38 *Then Peter said unto them, 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."*

Finally, if they are interested, you can provide them with references on how the Church originally baptized:

Historical Evidence that the Formula of Baptism In "Jesus' Name" Had been Changed

Britannica Encyclopedia, 11th Edition, Vol. 3, pages 365-366 – Baptism was changed from the **name of Jesus** to words Father, Son and Holy Ghost in the second century.

Canney Encyclopedia of Religion, page 53 – The early church baptized in the **name of the Lord Jesus** until the second century.

Hastings Encyclopedia of Religion, Vol. 2 – Christian baptism was administered using the words, "**in the name of Jesus**" page 377. Baptism was always **in the name of Jesus** until time of Justin Martyr, page 389.

Catholic Encyclopedia, Vol. 2, page 263 – Here the authors acknowledged that the baptismal formula was changed by their church.

**This change has been a predominant influence in the Christian community of our world today.*

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ADDITIONAL TEACHING ON WATER BAPTISM

Immersion versus Sprinkling:

The word “*baptism*” comes from the Greek word “*bapto*” which means to **immerse**, dip or to cover wholly with fluid. This word has lost its true meaning of immersion because the method of sprinkling was substituted for convenience.

Scriptural references for Immersion:

John 3:23, Matt. 3:16, Acts 8:38-39, Romans 6:4-5.

Prerequisites to Baptism:

1. **BELIEVING** in the gospel – is believing that salvation is through the Lord Jesus Christ, that by the atonement of His blood our sins are washed away.

Mark 16:16 *He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved...*

Acts 8:12 *But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.*

Acts 16:31,33 *And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house...And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway.”*

2. **REPENTANCE** - is acknowledging our past sins, seeking His forgiveness and desiring a change of direction in our life towards Christ.

Acts 2:38 *Then Peter said unto them, 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.*

The practice of **infant baptism** can not be found or substantiated by the Word of God. As we have seen, a child should be old enough to receive teaching, to believe and to repent of sin before being baptized. Dedicating children to God and asking Him to bless them does not contradict the Word of God. (*Matthew 19:13-15*)

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Old Testament Typology

Noah – During the great flood, Noah and his family were saved by water. So also we are saved by water baptism. (1 Peter 3:20-21)

Moses and the children of Israel – Just as the Hebrew children were saved from Pharaoh’s armies while passing through the waters of the Red Sea, we also are saved by water baptism. (I Cor. 10:1-4)

The Brazen Laver of Water in the Tabernacle – The laver was a place of washing and cleansing as baptism is a washing and cleansing from sin. (Ex. 30:20, Acts 22:16)

New Testament Typology: Baptism as a BURIAL.

Through baptism we identify with the burial of Christ, so that we can be resurrected. (Rom. 6:3-5, Col. 2:12).

At repentance, our old man dies and at baptism, our old man is buried.

Conclusion:

- It is our responsibility to **STUDY** the Word of God so that we can be a prepared conduit of Christ.
- Our preparation time involves us studying His Word **ENOUGH** so that we can have it hidden in our hearts and sown into our spirit.
- This allows God's **Rhema to flow freely** through us. And this process is very different from following a Bible Study guide.
- **Memorizing** the address of verses (or the book and chapter) is recommended but even if you just know the book and the key words of the verse – is a good start in providing biblical references.
- The more you witness to souls – the more you become fluent with scriptures.
- The scripture says that he that wins souls is wise (*Proverbs 11:30*) and we strive to be wise so that we can bear fruit for His kingdom.
- However, we need to also be ready in our spirit to be a witness regardless of how they choose to respond to it. For we will either be a witness for their salvation or a witness for their eternal judgment.
- Therefore our goal, as the body of Christ, is to be **READY AT ANY TIME** to be a witness to a soul about their salvation in Christ!

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