

“In the Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit”

By Paul R. Blake

Last week, a brother was asked this question when he was teaching the adult Bible class at his home congregation. He passed it on to me, and I thought you might be interested in this study as well. Question: “Should we be baptized in Jesus' name (Acts 2:38), or in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Matt. 28:19)?

Answer: Acts 2:38 records the Peter's words on the day of Pentecost, “Then Peter said to them, Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.” This was a strong affirmation by Peter that “there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved” (Acts 4:12). Being baptized in the name of Jesus indicates an understanding by the person being baptized that Christ is the Savior and that it is through Him that salvation in baptism is validated, that is, by means of Jesus' authority and sacrifice.

Baptism is also in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Matt. 28:19). Being baptized in this manner simply means we are identifying ourselves with Deity in recognition of Their authority and work in validating baptism. We belong to the Father Who loves us, we are saved by the Son Who died for us, and we are guided by the Holy Spirit through His revelation of the Gospel. This is similar to praying in Jesus' name (John 14:13). When one prays in the name of Jesus, he is praying by Christ's authority and asking God the Father to act upon our prayers because we come in the name of His Son (at His bidding and instruction). Being baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is being baptized in acknowledgement of Their authority over and in our lives and Their work and power in our salvation. Jesus said that baptism is in the name of (by the authority of, with the approval of -- Col. 3:16) “the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” (Matt. 28:19).

In the Book of Acts, new believers were baptized in the name of Jesus (Acts 2:38; 8:12; 8:16; 10:48; 19:5). It is, however, the same thing; Jesus, the Father and the Holy Spirit are One (John 10:30; Acts 16:7). Something done by the authority of One is also by the authority of All. As Jesus instructed, believers are to be baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, but as the Divinely approved examples in the book of Acts reveal, baptizing in the name of Jesus alone was also done. While some advocate that they must have baptized in the name of all Three, it is an assumption; the text does not state this. The bottom line is that the name or names in which we are baptized is not the focus of the instruction; instead, it is critical to recognize that baptism identifies us with the death, burial and resurrection of Christ, our Savior, and that baptism is by the authority of Deity. We are buried with Him and risen to walk with Him in newness of life (Rom. 6:4).

I do not believe that that Jesus was establishing a formula to be repeated upon the occasion of an individual's baptism, but rather that He was commissioning His disciples to baptize by the authority and approval of all of the Godhead, Who were united in Their work to bring about the salvation of humankind. The fact that the apostles baptized in the name of Jesus in the book of Acts implies that they understood it this way, too. However, when I baptize a penitent believer, I say that it is in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, because that draws attention to all of their roles in salvation. The Father's grace in sending Jesus to save us, Jesus obedience to the Father in offering Himself for sin on the cross, and the Holy Spirit as the Communicator of the Gospel which He revealed to the inspired New Testament writers. At the same time, it would be scriptural to baptize in the name of Jesus, as is evidenced by the apostles Divinely approved examples in the book of Acts.

What I find unacceptable are brethren who divide over this question. If anyone is dogmatic, insisting it be only one way, he is ignorant of the truth and taking a stand without the authority of scripture. But, if a penitent believer with a tender conscience asks to be baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit or in the name of Jesus alone, I am happy to

accommodate their tender conscience in this matter. (prb) (acknowledgements: <http://www.gotquestions.org/baptism-Jesus-name.html>)

A Life Story By Kent Heaton

“Here is the patience of the saints; here are those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus. Then I heard a voice from heaven saying to me, "Write: 'Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on. Yes, says the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors, and their works follow them.'" (Rev. 14:12-13).

This morning has been busy preparing for a funeral of a dear saint who passed into glory last week. She was a kind example of a Christian woman who lived a full life of 85 years. There is much that I do not know about her life as I have only known her for a year but in the body of Christ, it seems like we have known one another for many years. This has always been remarkable to me. The depth of fellowship with fellow disciples is not measured by years but the joy of sharing in Christ a common faith. Our communion in the bond of Christ is so dear and endearing because we share the Father of glory that calls us all His children. She was my sister in Christ. We were also neighbors.

Reflecting on the activities of the day I could not help but think the greatest stories told are the lives of the unknown faithful children of God who leave a lasting impression on the hearts of God's family. She will never have her name inscribed on a monument of significance in the eyes of men but her name is indelibly marked upon our hearts. She lived in a modest home in a modest neighborhood in a quiet town in central Florida. No reporters, no fan mail, no news flash about her life; nothing spectacular will flash across the newsreel or internet about her life or death. A simple gathering this morning will mark her memorial followed by the interment of her mortal body to the earth. The family will gather for a meal and everyone will begin to go their own ways back to the lives they live. But the story remains. We will remark tomorrow how we miss our dear sister. What that says is a great story.

What makes this a great story is the epitaph of her life. Her epitaph will be her legacy of faithfulness to Christ. The marble headstone will bear her name and life beginning to end. It is her story that will live on. She will not be forgotten. She will not be looked upon with sadness because of her eternal state. It will be the hope of Heaven that helps us all strive to live each day in the knowledge that a crown of life awaits all those who eagerly await the coming of the Lord. Life is not about here. Life is about the joy we share in the oldest story of man's history: redemption. Thank you sister Nellie for your life and for your sweet example. Now that is a great story.

A Moments Wisdom

--I have lived, sir, a long time, and the longer I live, the more convincing proof I see of this truth: that God governs in the affairs of men. (Benjamin Franklin, During the Constitutional Convention, 1787)

--Hope is one of the ways in which what is merely future and potential is made vividly present and actual to us. Hope is the positive, as anxiety is the negative, mode of awaiting the future. (Emil Brunner, *Eternal Hope*, 1954)

--The highest knowledge we can have of God in this life is to know that He is above all we can think concerning Him. (Thomas Aquinas, *De Veritate*, 1259)