

**The so-called "*Great Commission*" to be "baptizing them in the name of the *Father*, and of the *Son*, and of the *Holy Ghost*" is NOT Scriptural!**

---

## **A Colossal Collection of Evidence Against the Traditional Wording of [Matthew 28:19](#)**

### **The Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics:**

As to [Matthew 28:19](#), it says: It is the central piece of evidence for the traditional (Trinitarian) view. If it were undisputed, this would, of course, be decisive, but its trustworthiness is impugned on grounds of textual criticism, literary criticism and historical criticism. The same Encyclopedia further states that: "The obvious explanation of the silence of the New Testament on the triune name, and the use of another (JESUS NAME) formula in Acts and Paul, is that this other formula was the earlier, and the triune formula is a later addition."

### **Edmund Schlink, *The Doctrine of Baptism*, page 28:**

"The baptismal command in its [Matthew 28:19](#) form can not be the historical origin of Christian baptism. At the very least, it must be assumed that the text has been transmitted in a form expanded by the [Catholic] church."

### **The Tyndale New Testament Commentaries, I, page 275:**

"It is often affirmed that the words in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost are not the ipsissima verba [exact words] of Jesus, but...a later liturgical addition."

### **Wilhelm Bousset, *Kyrios Christianity*, page 295:**

"The testimony for the wide distribution of the simple baptismal formula [in the Name of Jesus] down into the second century is so overwhelming that even in [Matthew 28:19](#), the Trinitarian formula was later inserted."

### **The Catholic Encyclopedia, II, page 263:**

"The baptismal formula was changed from the name of Jesus Christ to the words Father, Son, and Holy Spirit by the Catholic Church in the second century."

### **Hastings Dictionary of the Bible 1963, page 1015:**

"The Trinity.-...is not demonstrable by logic or by Scriptural proofs,...The term Trias was first used by Theophilus of Antioch (c AD 180),...(The term Trinity) not found in Scripture..." "The chief Trinitarian text in the NT is the baptismal formula in [Mt 28:19](#)...This late post-resurrection saying, not found in any other Gospel or anywhere else in the NT, has been viewed by some scholars as an interpolation into Matthew. It has also been pointed out that the idea of making disciples is continued in teaching them, so that the intervening reference to baptism with its Trinitarian formula was perhaps a later insertion into the saying. Finally, Eusebius's form of the (ancient) text ("in my name" rather than in the name of the Trinity) has had certain advocates. (Although the Trinitarian formula is now found in the modern-day book of Matthew), this does not guarantee its source in the historical teaching of Jesus. It is doubtless better to view the (Trinitarian) formula as derived from early (Catholic) Christian, perhaps Syrian or Palestinian, baptismal usage (cf

Didache 7:1-4), and as a brief summary of the (Catholic) Church's teaching about God, Christ, and the Spirit:..."

### **The Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge:**

"Jesus, however, cannot have given His disciples this Trinitarian order of baptism after His resurrection; for the New Testament knows only one baptism in the name of Jesus ([Acts 2:38](#); [8:16](#); [10:43](#); [19:5](#); [Gal. 3:27](#); [Rom. 6:3](#); [1 Cor. 1:13-15](#)), which still occurs even in the second and third centuries, while the Trinitarian formula occurs only in [Matt. 28:19](#), and then only again (in the) Didache 7:1 and Justin, Apol. 1:61...Finally, the distinctly liturgical character of the formula...is strange; it was not the way of Jesus to make such formulas... the formal authenticity of [Matt. 28:19](#) must be disputed..." page 435.

### **The Jerusalem Bible, a scholarly Catholic work, states:**

"It may be that this formula, (Triune [Matthew 28:19](#)) so far as the fullness of its expression is concerned, is a reflection of the (Man-made) liturgical usage established later in the primitive (Catholic) community. It will be remembered that Acts speaks of baptizing "in the name of Jesus,"..."

### **The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, Vol. 4, page 2637, Under "Baptism," says:**

"[Matthew 28:19](#) in particular only canonizes a later ecclesiastical situation, that its universalism is contrary to the facts of early Christian history, and its Trinitarian formula (is) foreign to the mouth of Jesus."

### **New Revised Standard Version says this about [Matthew 28:19](#):**

"Modern critics claim this formula is falsely ascribed to Jesus and that it represents later (Catholic) church tradition, for nowhere in the book of Acts (or any other book of the Bible) is baptism performed with the name of the Trinity..."

### **James Moffett's New Testament Translation:**

In a footnote on page 64 about [Matthew 28:19](#) he makes this statement: "It may be that this (Trinitarian) formula, so far as the fullness of its expression is concerned, is a reflection of the (Catholic) liturgical usage established later in the primitive (Catholic) community, It will be remembered that Acts speaks of baptizing "in the name of Jesus, cf. [Acts 1:5](#) +."

### **Tom Harpur:**

Tom Harpur, former Religion Editor of the Toronto Star in his "For Christ's sake," page 103 informs us of these facts: "All but the most conservative scholars agree that at least the latter part of this command [Triune part of [Matthew 28:19](#)] was inserted later. The [Trinitarian] formula occurs nowhere else in the New Testament, and we know from the only evidence available [the rest of the New Testament] that the earliest Church did not baptize people using these words ("in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost") baptism was "into" or "in" the name of Jesus alone. Thus it is argued that the verse originally read "baptizing them in My Name" and then was expanded [changed] to work in the [later Catholic Trinitarian] dogma. In fact, the first view put forward by German critical scholars as well as the Unitarians in the nineteenth century, was stated as the accepted position of mainline scholarship as long ago as 1919, when Peake's commentary was first published: "The Church of the first days (AD 33) did not observe this world-wide (Trinitarian) commandment, even if they knew it. The command to baptize into the threefold [Trinity] name is a late doctrinal expansion."

### **The Bible Commentary 1919 page 723:**

Dr. Peake makes it clear that: "The command to baptize into the threefold name is a late doctrinal expansion. Instead of the words baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost we should probably read simply-"into My Name."

## **Theology of the New Testament:**

By R. Bultmann, 1951, page 133 under Kerygma of the Hellenistic Church and the Sacraments. The historical fact that the verse [Matthew 28:19](#) was altered is openly confessed very plainly. "As to the rite of baptism, it was normally consummated as a bath in which the one receiving baptism completely submerged, and if possible in flowing water as the allusions of [Acts 8:36](#), [Heb. 10:22](#), Barn. 11:11 permit us to gather, and as Did. 7:1-3 specifically says. According to the last passage, [the apocryphal Catholic Didache] suffices in case of the need if water is three times poured [false Catholic sprinkling doctrine] on the head. The one baptizing names over the one being baptized the name of the Lord Jesus Christ," later expanded [changed] to the name of the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit."

## **Doctrine and Practice in the Early Church:**

By Dr. Stuart G. Hall 1992, pages 20 and 21. Professor Stuart G. Hall was the former Chair of Ecclesiastical History at King's College, London England. Dr. Hall makes the factual statement that Catholic Trinitarian Baptism was not the original form of Christian Baptism, rather the original was Jesus name baptism. "In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit," although those words were not used, as they later are, as a formula. Not all baptisms fitted this rule." Dr Hall further, states: "More common and perhaps more ancient was the simple, "In the name of the Lord Jesus or, Jesus Christ." This practice was known among Marcionites and Orthodox; it is certainly the subject of controversy in Rome and Africa about 254, as the anonymous tract De rebaptismate ("On rebaptism") shows."

## **The Beginnings of Christianity: The Acts of the Apostles Volume 1, Prolegomena 1:**

The Jewish Gentile, and Christian Backgrounds by F. J. Foakes Jackson and Kirsopp Lake 1979 version pages 335-337. "There is little doubt as to the sacramental nature of baptism by the middle of the first century in the circles represented by the Pauline Epistles, and it is indisputable in the second century. The problem is whether it can in this (Trinitarian) form be traced back to Jesus, and if not what light is thrown upon its history by the analysis of the synoptic Gospels and Acts.

According to Catholic teaching, (traditional Trinitarian) baptism was instituted by Jesus. It is easy to see how necessary this was for the belief in sacramental regeneration. Mysteries, or sacraments, were always the institution of the Lord of the cult; by them, and by them only, were its supernatural benefits obtained by the faithful. Nevertheless, if evidence counts for anything, few points in the problem of the Gospels are so clear as the improbability of this teaching.

The reason for this assertion is the absence of any mention of Christian baptism in Mark, Q, or the third Gospel, and the suspicious nature of the account of its institution in [Matthew 28:19](#): "Go ye into all the world, and make disciples of all Gentiles (nations), baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit." It is not even certain whether this verse ought to be regarded as part of the genuine text of Matthew. No other text, indeed, is found in any extant manuscripts, in any language, but it is arguable that Justin Martyr, though he used the trine formula, did not find it in his text of the Gospels; Hermas seems to be unacquainted with it; the evidence of the Didache is ambiguous, and Eusebius habitually, though not invariably, quotes it in another form, "Go ye into all the world and make disciples of all the Gentiles in My Name."

No one acquainted with the facts of textual history and patristic evidence can doubt the tendency would have been to replace the Eusebian text (In My Name) by the ecclesiastical (Catholic Trinitarian) formula of baptism, so that transcriptional evidence" is certainly on the side of the text omitting baptism.

But it is unnecessary to discuss this point at length, because even if the ordinary (modern Trinity) text of [Matthew 28:19](#) be sound it can not represent historical fact.

Would they have baptized, as Acts says that they did, and Paul seem to confirm the statement, in the name of the Lord Jesus if the Lord himself had commanded them to use the (Catholic Trinitarian) formula of the Church? On every point the evidence of Acts is convincing proof that the (Catholic) tradition embodied in [Matthew 28:19](#) is a late (non-Scriptural Creed) and unhistorical.

Neither in the third gospel nor in Acts is there any reference to the (Catholic Trinitarian) Matthaean tradition, nor any mention of the institution of (Catholic Trinitarian) Christian baptism. Nevertheless, a little later in the narrative we find several references to baptism in water in the name of the Lord Jesus as part of recognized (Early) Christian practice. Thus we are faced by the problem of a Christian rite, not directly ascribed to Jesus, but assumed to be a universal (and original) practice. That it was so is confirmed by the Epistles, but the facts of importance are all contained in Acts."

Also in the same book on page 336 in the footnote number one, Professor Lake makes an astonishing discovery in the so-called Teaching or Didache. The Didache has an astonishing contradiction that is found in it. One passage refers to the necessity of baptism in the name of the Lord, which is Jesus the other famous passage teaches a Trinitarian Baptism. Lake raises the probability that the apocryphal Didache or the early Catholic Church Manual may have also been edited or changed to promote the later Trinitarian doctrine. It is a historical fact that the Catholic Church at one time baptized its converts in the name of Jesus but later changed to Trinity baptism.

"1. In the actual description of baptism in the Didache the trine (Trinity) formula is used; in the instructions for the Eucharist (communion) the condition for admission is baptism in the name of the Lord. It is obvious that in the case of an eleventh-century manuscript \*the trine formula was almost certain to be inserted in the description of baptism, while the less usual formula had a chance of escaping notice when it was only used incidentally."

### **The Catholic University of America in Washington, D. C. 1923, New Testament Studies Number 5:**

The Lord's Command To Baptize An Historical Critical Investigation. By Bernard Henry Cuneo page 27. "The passages in Acts and the Letters of St. Paul. These passages seem to point to the earliest form as baptism in the name of the Lord." Also we find. "Is it possible to reconcile these facts with the belief that Christ commanded his disciples to baptize in the trine form? Had Christ given such a command, it is urged, the Apostolic Church would have followed him, and we should have some trace of this obedience in the New Testament. No such trace can be found. The only explanation of this silence, according to the anti-traditional view, is this the short christological (Jesus Name) formula was (the) original, and the longer trine formula was a later development."

### **A History of The Christian Church:**

1953 by Williston Walker former Professor of Ecclesiastical History at Yale University. On page 95 we see the historical facts again declared. "With the early disciples generally baptism was "in the name of Jesus Christ." There is no mention of baptism in the name of the Trinity in the New Testament, except in the command attributed to Christ in [Matthew 28:19](#). That text is early, (but not the original) however. It underlies the Apostles' Creed, and the practice recorded (\*or interpolated) in the Teaching, (or the Didache) and by Justin. The Christian leaders of the third century retained the recognition of the earlier form, and, in Rome at least, baptism in the name of Christ was deemed valid, if irregular, certainly from the time of Bishop Stephen (254-257)."

On page 61 Professor and Church historian Walker, reviles the true origin and purpose of [Matthew 28:19](#). This Text is the first man-made Roman Catholic Creed that was the prototype for the later Apocryphal Apostles' Creed. [Matthew 28:19](#) was invented along with the Apocryphal Apostles' Creed to counter so-called heretics and Gnostics that baptized in the name of Jesus Christ! Marcion although somewhat mixed up in some of his doctrine still baptized his converts the Biblical way in the name of Jesus Christ. [Matthew 28:19](#) is the first non-Biblical Roman Catholic Creed! The spurious Catholic text of [Matthew 28:19](#) was invented to support the newer triune, Trinity doctrine. Therefore, [Matthew 28:19](#) is not the "Great Commission of Jesus Christ." [Matthew 28:19](#) is the great Catholic hoax! [Acts 2:38](#), [Luke 24:47](#), and [1 Corinthians 6:11](#) give us the ancient original words and teaching of Yeshua/Jesus! Is it not also strange that [Matthew 28:19](#) is missing from the old manuscripts of Sinaiticus, Curetonianus and Bobiensis?

"While the power of the episcopate and the significance of churches of apostolical (Catholic) foundation was thus greatly enhanced, the Gnostic crisis saw a corresponding development of (man-made non-inspired

spurious) creed, at least in the West. Some form of instruction before baptism was common by the middle of the second century. At Rome this developed, apparently, between 150 and 175, and probably in opposition to Marcionite Gnosticism, into an explication of the baptismal formula of [Matthew 28:19](#) the earliest known form of the so-called Apostles Creed."

### **Catholic Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger:**

He makes this confession as to the origin of the chief Trinity text of [Matthew 28:19](#). "The basic form of our ([Matthew 28:19](#) Trinitarian) profession of faith took shape during the course of the second and third centuries in connection with the ceremony of baptism. So far as its place of origin is concerned, the text ([Matthew 28:19](#)) came from the city of Rome." The Trinity baptism and text of [Matthew 28:19](#) therefore did not originate from the original Church that started in Jerusalem around AD 33. It was rather as the evidence proves a later invention of Roman Catholicism completely fabricated. Very few know about these historical facts.

### **"The Demonstratio Evangelica" by Eusebius:**

Eusebius was the Church historian and Bishop of Caesarea. On page 152 Eusebius quotes the early book of Matthew that he had in his library in Caesarea. According to this eyewitness of an unaltered Book of Matthew that could have been the original book or the first copy of the original of Matthew. Eusebius informs us of Jesus' actual words to his disciples in the original text of [Matthew 28:19](#): "With one word and voice He said to His disciples: "Go, and make disciples of all nations in My Name, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." That "Name" is Jesus.

### **OTHERS:**

"The historical riddle is not solved by [Matthew 28:19](#), since, according to a wide scholarly consensus, it is not an authentic saying of Jesus, not even an elaboration of a Jesus-saying on baptism" (The Anchor Bible Dictionary, Vol. 1, 1992, page 585).

"It has been customary to trace the institution of the practice (of baptism) to the words of Christ recorded in [Matthew 28:19](#). But the authenticity of this passage has been challenged on historical as well as on textual grounds. It must be acknowledged that the formula of the threefold name, which is here enjoined, does not appear to have been employed by the primitive Church, which, so far as our information goes, baptized 'in' or 'into the name of Jesus' (or 'Jesus Christ' or Lord Jesus': [Acts 2:38](#), [8:16](#), [10:48](#), [19:5](#), [1 Cor. 1:13](#), [15](#)) (The Dictionary of the Bible, 1947, page 83).

[Matthew 28:19](#), "the Church of the first days did not observe this world-wide command, even if they knew it. The command to baptize into the threefold name is a late doctrinal expansion. In place of the words "baptizing... Spirit" we should probably read simply "into my name," i.e. (turn the nations) to Christianity, "in my name," i.e. (teach the nations) in my spirit" (Peake's Commentary on the Bible, 1929, page 723).

"On the text, see Conybeare, Zeitsch. Fur die Neutest. Wissensch. 1901, 275 ff.; Hibbert Journal, October 1902; Lake, Inaugural Lecture; Riggenbach, Der Trinitarische Taufbefehl; Chase, Journal Theo. Stud. Vi. 481 ff. The evidence of Eusebius must be regarded as indecisive, in view of the fact that all Greek MSS. and all extant VSS., contain the clause (S1 and S2 are unhappily wanting). The Eusebian quotation: "Go disciple ye all the nations in my name," can not be taken as decisive proof that the clause "Baptizing...Spirit" was lacking in copies known to Eusebius, because "in my name" may be Eusebius' way of abbreviating, for whatever reason, the following clause. On the other hand, Eusebius cites in this short form so often that it is easier to suppose that he is definitely quoting the words of the Gospel, than to invent possible reasons which may have caused him so frequently to have paraphrased it. And if we once suppose his short form to have been current in MSS. of the Gospel, there is much probability in the conjecture that it is the original text of the Gospel, and that in the later centuries the clause "baptizing...Spirit" supplanted the shorter "in my name." And insertion of this kind derived from liturgical use would very rapidly be adopted by copyists and translators. The Didache has ch. 7: "Baptizing in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit": but the passage need not be dependent on our canonical Gospel, and the Didache elsewhere has a



liturgical addition to the text of the Gospels in the doxology attached to the Lord's Prayer. But Irenaeus and Tertullian already have the longer clause" (The International Critical Commentary on the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament; S. Driver, A. Plummer, C. Briggs; A Critical & Exegetical Commentary of St. Matthew Third Edition, 1912, pages 307-308).

"The disciples are further told to "baptize" (the second of the participles functioning as supplementary imperatives) new disciples. The command to baptize comes as somewhat of a surprise since baptism is referred to earlier only in chap. 3 (and 21:25) where only John's baptism is described (among the Gospels only in [John 3:22](#); [4:1-2](#) do we read of Jesus' or his disciples' baptizing others). Matthew tells us nothing concerning his view of Christian baptism. Only Matthew records this command of Jesus, but the practice of the early church suggest its historicity. (cf. Acts 2:38, 41; 8:12, 38; 9:18; 10:48; 19:5; 22:16; etc.). The threefold name (at most only an incipient Trinitarianism) in which the baptism was to be performed, on the other hand, seems clearly to be a liturgical expansion of the evangelist consonant with the practice of his day (thus Hubbard; cf. Did. 7.1). There is a good possibility that in its original form, as witnessed by the ante-Nicene Eusebian form, the text read "make disciples in my name" (see Conybeare). This shorter reading preserves the symmetrical rhythm of the passage, whereas the triadic formula fits awkwardly into the structure as one might expect if it were an interpolation (see H. B. Green; cf. Howard; Hill [IBS 8 (1986) 54-63], on the other hand, argues for a concentric design with the triadic formula at its center). It is Kosmala, however, who has argued most effectively for the shorter reading, pointing to the central importance of "name of Jesus" in early Christian preaching, the practice of baptism in the name of Jesus, and the singular "in his name" with reference to the hope of the Gentiles in [Isa. 42:4b](#), quoted by Matthew in 12:18-21. As Carson rightly notes of our passage: "There is no evidence we have Jesus' ipsissima verba here" (598). The narrative of Acts notes the use of the name only of "Jesus Christ" in baptism ([Acts 2:38](#); [8:16](#); [10:48](#); [19:5](#); cf. [Rom. 6:3](#); [Gal. 3:27](#)) or simply "the Lord Jesus" ([Acts 8:16](#); [19:5](#))" (Word Biblical Commentary, Vol 33B, Matthew 14-28; Donald A. Hagner, 1975, page887-888).

"It cannot be directly proved that Jesus instituted baptism, for [Matthew 28:19](#) is not a saying of the Lord. The reason for this assertion are: (1) It is only a later stage of the tradition that represents the risen Christ as delivering speeches and giving commandments. Paul knows nothing of it. (2) The Trinitarian formula is foreign to the mouth of Jesus and has not the authority of the Apostolic age which it must have had if it had descended from Jesus himself. On the other hand, Paul knows of no other way of receiving the Gentiles into the Christian communities than by baptism, and it is highly probable that in the time of Paul all Jewish Christians were also baptized. We may perhaps assume that the practice of baptism was continued in consequence of Jesus' recognition of John the Baptist and his baptism, even after John himself had been removed. According to [John 4:2](#), Jesus himself baptized not, but his disciples under his superintendence. It is possible only with the help of tradition to trace back to Jesus a "Sacrament of Baptism," or an obligation to it ex necessitate salutis, through it is credible that tradition is correct here. Baptism in the Apostolic age was in the name of the Lord Jesus ([1 Cor. 1:13](#); [Acts 19:5](#)). We cannot make out when the formula in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit emerged" (History of Dogma, Vol. 1, Adolph Harnack, 1958, page 79).

"The very account which tells us that at the last, after his resurrection, he commissioned his apostles to go and baptize among all nations ([Mt 28:19](#)) betrayed 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. No historical trace appears of this baptismal formula earlier than the "Teaching of the Twelve Apostles" (ch. 7:1,3 The Oldest Church Manual, ed. Philip Schaff, 1887), and the first Apology of Justin (Apol. i. 61.) about the middle of the second century: and more than a century later, Cyprian found it necessary to insist upon the use of it instead of the older phrase baptized "into Christ Jesus," or into the "name of the Lord Jesus." ([Gal. 3:27](#); [Acts 19:5](#); [10:48](#). Cyprian [Ep. 73, 16-18](#), has to convert those who still use the shorter form.) Paul alone, of the apostles, was baptized, ere he was "filled with the Holy Ghost;" and he certainly was baptized simply "into Christ Jesus." ([Rom. 6:3](#)) Yet the tri-personal form, unhistorical as it is, is actually insisted on as essential by almost every Church in Christendom, and, if you have not had it pronounced over you, the ecclesiastical authorities cast you out as a heathen man, and will accord to you neither Christian recognition in your life, nor Christian burial in your death. It is a rule which would condemn as invalid every recorded baptism performed by an apostle; for if the book of Acts may be trusted, the invariable usage was baptism "in the name of Christ Jesus," ([Acts 2:38](#)) and not "in the name of the

father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." And doubtless the author (Luke) is as good a witness for the usage of his own time (about 115 A.D.) as for that of the period whereof he treats" (The Seat of Authority in Religion, James Martineau, 1905, page 568).

"It is clear, therefore, that of the MSS which Eusebius inherited from his predecessor, Pamphilus, at Caesarea 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 had been conjectured by Dr. Davidson, Dr. Martineau, by the present Dean of Westminster, and by Prof. Harnack (to mention but a few names out of many), that here the received text, could not contain the very words of Jesus? This long before any one except Dr. Burgon, who kept the discovery to himself, had noticed the Eusebian form of the reading." "It is satisfactory to notice that Dr. Eberhard Nestle, in his new edition of the New Testament in Latin and Greek, furnishes the Eusebian reading in his critical apparatus, and that Dr. Sanday seems to lean to its acceptance" (History of New Testament Criticism, Conybeare, 1910, pages, 98-102, 111-112).

It is doubted whether the explicit injunction of [Matt. 28:19](#) can be accepted as uttered by Jesus. ...But the Trinitarian formula in the mouth of Jesus is certainly unexpected" (A Dictionary of Christ and the Gospels, J. Hastings, 1906, page 170).

"Feine (PER3, XIX, 396 f) and Kattenbusch (Sch-Herz, I, 435 f. argue that the Trinitarian formula in [Matthew 28:19](#) is spurious. No record of the use of the Trinitarian formula can be discovered in the Acts of the epistles of the apostles" (The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, James Orr, 1946, page 398).

Footnote to [Matthew 28:19](#), It may be that this formula, so far as the fullness of its expression is concerned, is a reflection of the liturgical usage established later in the primitive community. It will be remembered that the Acts speak of baptizing "in the name of Jesus", [Acts 1:5](#) +. But whatever the variation on formula the underlying reality remains the same" (The Jerusalem Bible, 1966, Page 64).

[Matthew 28:19](#) "... has been disputed on textual grounds, but in the opinion of many scholars the words may still be regarded as part of the true text of Matthew. There is, however, grave doubt whether thy may be the ipsissima verba of Jesus. The evidence of [Acts 2:38](#); [10:48](#) (cf. 8:16; 19:5), supported by [Gal. 3:27](#); [Rom 6:3](#), suggest that baptism in early Christianity was administered, not in the threefold name, but "in the name of Jesus Christ" or "in the name of the Lord Jesus." This is difficult to reconcile with the specific instructions of the verse at the end of Matthew" (The Interpreters Dictionary of the Bible, 1962, page 351).

Critical scholarship, on the whole, rejects the traditional attribution of the tripartite baptismal formula to Jesus and regards it as of later origin. Undoubtedly then the baptismal formula originally consisted of one part and it gradually developed into its tripartite form (The Philosophy of the Church Fathers, Vol. 1, Harry Austryn Wolfson, 1964, pg 143).

G.R. Beasley-Murray in his book, "Baptism in the New Testament" and a believer of the trinity doctrine, gives us some new insight on how the original text of [Matthew 28:19](#) was structured:

"A whole group of exegetes and critics have recognized that the opening declaration of [Matt. 28:18](#) demands a Christological statement to follow it: "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me" leads us to expect as a consequence, "Go and make disciples unto Me among all the nations, baptising them in My name, teaching them to observe all things I commanded you." In fact, the first and third clauses have that significance: it looks as though the second clause has been modified from a Christological to a Trinitarian formula in the interests of the liturgical tradition" (G.R. Beasley-Murray, Baptism in the New Testament, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1962, pg. 83).

"We now have absolute proof the Catholic Church fathers perverted the text in [Matthew 28:19](#). We now have the Hebrew Matthew Gospel, a manuscript that was preserved by the Jews from the first century [Shem Tov's Hebrew Matthew Gospel]. In this Shem Tov MSS, the text at [Matthew 28:19](#) does not contain the trinitarian statement."

## Eusebius As A Witness

There were several men of this name. The one with whom we are concerned is known as Eusebius Pamphili, or Eusebius of Caesarea. He was born about 270 A.D. and died about 340 A.D. He lived in times of gross spiritual darkness, he was a Trinitarian, and later in life he assisted in the preparation of the Nicene Creed. Here follows the opinion of historians and others concerning him.

"Eusebius of Caesarea, to whom we are indebted for the preservation of so many contemporary works of antiquity, many of which must have perished had he not collected and edited them" (*Robert Roberts, Good Company, vol. III, page 10*).

"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" (*E. K. in the Christadelphian Monatshefte, Aug 1923; Fraternal Visitor, June 1924*).

"Eusebius Pamphilius, Bishop of Caesarea 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." Ch. ii, 9... till about 40 years of age he lived in great intimacy with the martyr Pamphilius, a learned and devout man of Caesarea, and founder of an extensive library there, from which Eusebius derived his vast store of learning. Eusebius was an impartial historian, and had access to the best helps for composing a correct history which his age afforded" (*J. L. Mosheim, editorial footnote*).

"Eusebius, to whose zeal we owe most of what is known of the history of the New Testament" (*Dr. Westcott, General Survey of the History of the Canon of the New Testament, page 108*).

"The most important writer in the first quarter of the fourth century was Eusebius of Caesarea. Eusebius was a man of little originality or independent judgement. But he was 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 time not a little prejudice, erudition" (*Peake's Bible Commentary, 1929, page 596*).

"Some hundred works, several of them very lengthy, are either directly cited or referred to as 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... Under the second head the most vital question is the *sincerity* of Eusebius. Did he tamper with his material or not? The sarcasm of GIBBON (*Decline and Fall, c. xvi*) is well known... the passages to which Gibbon refers 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" (*Dictionary of Christian Biography and Literature*).

"Eusebius was an impartial historian, and had access to the best helps for composing a correct history which his age afforded." (*J. L. Mosheim: an editorial note*).

"Of the patristic witnesses to the text of the New Testament as it stood in the Greek MSS, from about 300-340, none is so important as Eusebius of Caesarea, 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 that from this single collection of manuscripts at Caesarea 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" (*The Hibbert Journal, October., 1902*).

So much for the honesty, ability, and opportunity of Eusebius as a witness to the text of the New Testament. Now we are ready to consider his evidence on the text of [Matthew 28:19](#).

## The Evidence Of Eusebius

Having introduced the first witness, it is time to ascertain what he wrote concerning the text of [Matthew 28:19](#).



According to the editor of the Christadelphian Monatshefte, Eusebius among his many other writings compiled a collection of the corrupted texts of the Holy Scriptures, and "the most serious of all the falsifications denounce by him, is without doubt the traditional reading of [Matthew 28:19](#)."

Persistent inquiry has failed to trace the compilation referred to, and Knupfer, the Editor, has left his last Canadian address without a trace. But various authorities mention "a work entitled DISCREPANCIES IN THE GOSPELS or QUESTIONS AND SOLUTIONS ON SOME POINTS IN THE GOSPEL HISTORY" and another work on THE CONCLUDING SECTIONS OF THE GOSPELS.

According to F.C. Conybeare, "Eusebius cites this text again and again in his 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 xxviii. 19, and always in the following form: "

**"Go ye and make disciples of all the nations *in my name*, teaching them to observe all things, whatsoever I commanded you."**

I have collected all these passages except one which is in a catena published by Mai in a German magazine, the *Zeitschrift fur die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft*, edited by Erwin Preuschen in Darmstadt in 1901. And Eusebius is not content merely to cite the verse in this form, but he more than once comments on it in such a way as to show how much he set store by the words "*in my name*." Thus in his *Demonstratio Evangelica* he writes thus (col. 240, p. 136):

"For he did not enjoin them 'to make disciples of all nations' simply and without qualification, but with the essential addition 'in his name.' For so great was the virtue attached to his appellation that the Apostle says, God bestowed on him the name above every name, that in the name of Jesus 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 ye and make disciples of all nations in my name."

"Conybeare proceeds: (in *Hibbert Journal*, 1902, p 105): "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, the one, "Against Marcellus of Ancyra," the other "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 Nicea was over to his see of Caesarea."

In his *Textual Criticism of the New Testament* Conybeare writes: "It is clear, therefore, that the MSS which Eusebius inherited from his predecessor, Pamphilus, at Caesarea in Palestine, some at least preserved the original reading, in which there was no mention either of Baptism or of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. It had been conjectured by Dr. Davidson, Dr. Martineau, by the Dean of Westminster, and by Prof. Harnack (to mention but a few names out of 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 reading."

An objection was raised by Dr. Chase, Bishop of Ely, "who argues that Eusebius found the *Textus Receptus* (traditional text) in his manuscripts, but substituted the shorter formula in his works for fear of vulgarising and divulging the sacred Trinitarian formula." It is interesting to find a modern Bishop reviving the very argument used 150 years before, in support of the forged text of [1 John 5:7](#)--

"Bengel ...allowed that the words (the Three Witnesses) were in no genuine MSS... 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, till it was gradually lost. Under

what a want of evidence must a critic labor who resorts to such an argument" --Porson (Preface to his letters)!

Conybeare continues, refuting the arguments of the Bishop of Ely. "It is sufficient answer to point out that Eusebius's argument, when he cites the text, involves the text 'in my name.' For, he ask, 'in whose name?' and answers that it was the name spoken of by Paul in his Epistle to the [Philippians 2:10](#)."

The Ency. Rel. and Ethics states:

"The facts are, in summary, that Eusebius quotes [Matthew 28:19, 21](#) times, either omitting everything between 'nations' and 'teaching,' or in the form 'make disciples of all nations in my name,' the latter form being the more frequent."

Now let us look at the other early writers who quote [Matthew 28:19](#).

## EVIDENCE OF OTHER WRITERS

### AUTHOR OF DE REBAPTISMATE

"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' (De Rebaptismate 6.7 Smith's Dictionary of the Bible, Vol. i, p. 352).

### ORIGEN

"In Origie's works as preserved in Greek, the first part of the verse is thrice adduced, but his citation always stops short at the words 'the nations;' and that in itself suggests that his text has been censured, and words which followed, 'in my name,' struck out" (Conybeare)

### CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA

"In the pages of Clement of Alexandria a text somewhat similar to Matthew xxviii. 19 is once cited; but from a gnostic heretic named Theodotus, and not as from the canonical text, as follows: 'And to the apostles he gives the command. Going around preaching ye and baptize those who believe in the name of father and son and holy spirit' (Excerpta, cap. 76, ed. Sylb. p. 987; --Conybeare).

### JUSTIN MARTYR

"Justin Martyr quotes a saying of Christ as a proof of the necessity of regeneration, but falls back upon the use of Isaiah and apostolic tradition to justify the practice of baptism and the use of the triune formula. This certainly suggest that Justin did not know the traditional text of [Matthew 28:19](#)" (Ency. Rel. and Ethics, p 380)

"In Justin Martyr, who wrote between A.D. 130 and 140, there is a passage which has been regarded as a citation or echo of Matthew xxviii. 19 by various scholars, *e.g.* Resch in his *Ausser canonische Parallelstellen*, who sees in it an abridgment of the ordinary text. The passage is in Justin's dialogue with Trypho 39, p. 258: 'God hath not yet inflicted no inflicts the judgment, as knowing of some that still even to-day *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 illumined by the name of this Christ.' The objection hitherto to these words being recognized as a citation of our text was that they ignored the formula 'baptising them in the name of the Father and Son and holy Spirit.' But the discovery of the Eusebian form of text removes this 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 300-340" (--Conybeare (Hibbert Journal p 106).

### MACEDONIUS

"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 even of the orthodox. The pope Stephen answered him that the baptisms even of heretics were valid, if the name of Jesus alone was invoked" (However, this decision did not prevent the popes of the seventh century from excommunicating the entire Celtic Church for its adhesion to the old use of invoking the one name). 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 *pneumao-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 of the N.T. authorized such a co-ordination of the Spirit with the Father and Son. Whence we infer that their texts agreed with that of Eusebius" --F.C. Conybeare (Hibbert Journal, page 107).

#### EUNOMIUS

"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 its use in certain quarters. The ordinance of Canon Apostolic 50 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" Ency. Biblica (Art. Baptism).

#### APHRAATES

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

'Make disciples of all nations, and they shall believe in me.'

"The last words appear to be a gloss on the Eusebius reading 'in my name.' But in any case they preclude the textus receptus with its injunction to baptize in the triune name. Were the reading of Aphraates an isolated fact, we might regard it as a loose citation, but in presence of the Eusebian and Justinian text this is impossible." --Conybeare (THJ) page 107

#### **How Biblical MSS Were Altered**

The following quotations will show the ease with which scribes freely altered the MSS of the New Testament, so unlike the scribes and custodians of the Old Testament Scriptures who copied the holy Writings with reverence and strict accuracy.

These quotations will also show the early start of the practice of triune immersion at the time when the doctrine of the Trinity was being formulated.

They will also show how the New Testament writings were made to conform to traditional practice.

#### CONYBEARE

"In the case just examined ([Matthew 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. C. R. Gregory, one of the greatest of our textual critics, reminds us, 'the Greek MSS 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. Canon and Text of the N T, 1907, page 424."

"These facts speak for themselves. Our Greek texts, not only of the Gospels, but of the Epistles as well, have been revised and interpolate by orthodox copyist. 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 not been so corrected, but where we cannot today expose the fraud. It was necessary to emphasize this point, because Drs. Westcott and Hort used to say 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, Adolph Harnack, to mention only four names, 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." Peter Watkins, 'Bridging the Gap' in *The Christadelphian*, January 1962, pp. 4-8.]

FRATERNAL VISITOR (1924, p. 148)

"Codex B. (Vaticanus) would be the best of all existing MSS 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 grounds for accusing the adherents of Athanasius and of the newly-arisen doctrine of the Trinity of falsifying the Bible more than once." Fraternal Visitor, in *The Christadelphian Monatshefte*, 1924, page 148.

WHISTON

"We certainly know of a greater number of interpolations and corruption's brought into the Scriptures... by Athanasius, and relating to the Doctrine of the Trinity, than in any other case whatsoever. While we have not, that I know of, any such interpolations and corruption, made in any one of them by either the Eusebians or Arians" Second letter to the Bishop of London, 1719, page 15.

SMITH'S DICTIONARY OF CHRISTIAN ANTIQUITIES [Art. Baptism Sec. 50]

"While trine immersion was thus an all but universal practice, Eunomius (circ. 360) appears to have been the first to introduce simple immersion 'unto the death of Christ' ...This practice was condemned on pain of degradation, by the Canon Apost. 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. These last kept to the use of the Trine immersion, but in such a way as to set forth their own doctrine of a gradation in the three Persons."

OXFORD DICTIONARY OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH

"In the 'Two Ways' of the Didache, the principal duties of the candidates for Baptism and the method of administering it by triple immersion of infusion on the head are outlined. This triple immersion is also attested by Tertullian (*Adversus Prax* 26). ...The most elaborate form of the rite in modern Western usage is in the Roman Catholic Church" [pp. 125-126].

HASTINGS DICTIONARY OF THE BIBLE

"In the Eastern Churches, triune immersion is regarded as the only valid form of baptism" [Vol. 1. p. 243 fn].

CATHOLIC ENCYCLOPEDIA

"The threefold immersion is unquestionably very ancient in the Church. ...Its object is, of course, to honor the Three Persons of the Holy Trinity in whose name it is conferred" [p. 262].

ENCY. RELIGION AND ETHICS

"If it be thought as many critics think, that no MS represents more than comparatively late recessions of the text, it is necessary to set against the mass of manuscript evidence the influence of baptismal practice. It seems easier to believe that the traditional text was brought about by this influence working on the 'Eusebian' text, than that the latter arose out of the former in spite of it" [Art. Baptism].

CONYBEARE

"The exclusive survival of (3) in all MSS., both Greek and Latin, need not cause surprise. In the only codices which would be even likely to preserve an older reading, namely the Sinaitic Syriac and the oldest Latin MS., the pages are gone which contained the end of Matthew. 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. We have no codex older than the year 400, if so old; and long before that time 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 dominate party could not but make its way into every codex, irrespectively of its textual affinities" [Hibbert Journal].

ROBERT ROBERTS

"Athanasius... met Flavian, the author of the Doxology, which has since been universal in Christendom: 'Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, etc.' This was composed in opposition to the Arian Doxology: 'Glory to the Father, by the Son, in the Holy Spirit'" [Robert Roberts, *Good Company*, Vol. iii, p. 49].



## WHISTON

"The Eusebians... sometimes named the very time when, the place where, and the person whom they (i.e. forms of doxology) were first introduced... thus Philoflogius, a writer of that very age, assures us in PHOTIUS'S EXTRACTS that A.D. 348 or thereabouts, Flavianus, Patriarche of Antioch, got a multitude of monks together, and did there first use this public doxology, 'Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.'" [*Second Letter concerning the Primitive Doxologies*, 1719, p.17].

## HAMMOND

"There are two or three insertions in the NT which have been supposed to have their origin in the ecclesiastical usage. The words in question, being familiarly known in a particular connection, were perhaps noted in the margin of some copy, and thence became incorporated by the next transcriber; or a transcriber's own familiarity with the words might have led to his inserting them. This is the source to which Dr. Tregelles assigns the Doxology at the close of the Lord's Prayer in [Matt. 6](#), which is wanting most of the best authorities. Perhaps also [Acts 8:37](#), containing the baptismal profession of faith, which is entirely wanting in the best authorities, found its way into the Latin text in this manner" [Hammond, *Textual Criticism Applied to the NT*, (1890) p 23.]

Documentation sources compiled by Brian Hoeck

---

To be placed on our mailing list to receive our studies in booklet format, write to:

The Pathfinder  
Elwin & Margit Roach  
PO Box 4004  
Alamogordo, NM 88311-4004

[Home](#) | [Preston Eby](#) | [Elwin Roach](#) | [Margit Roach](#) | [Links](#)