

A Collection of Evidence Against the Traditional Wording of Matthew 28:19

by
Clinton D. Willis
CWillis@ipa.net

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, 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 confesses to 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.



[Email IBS](#) | [Statement of Faith](#) | [Home](#) | [Browse by Author](#) | [Q & A](#)
[Links](#) | [Virtual Classroom](#) | [Copyright](#) | [Submitting Articles](#) | [Search](#)