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Frank W. Nelte

OUR TRINITARIAN BAPTISM FORMULA

This article is about Matthew 28:19.

There is a great deal of material that needs to be addressed on this subject of **the words to use in baptizing someone**. There are many questions that need to be addressed.

On the internet you can find considerable controversy over this particular verse, controversy that I had not even been aware of. There are those who believe that the words "baptizing them in (or into) the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" were not a part of the original text of Matthew's Gospel; and there are also those who very vigorously defend this baptism formula. And in examining the material on the internet I have found flaws in both sides of this argument.

I personally have no axe to grind on either side of this question. I myself was baptized in the 1960's by a minister of the Church of God who used the "Father Son Holy Spirit" formula. Likewise, all the people I baptized during the 1970's and 80's and 90's (and less than a handful in the last 15+ years) I baptized with this same formula, based on Matthew 28:19. For my entire time of almost 50 years in God's Church I have always without question accepted the "Father Son Holy Spirit" formula because I could see it in Matthew 28:19. At no point in the past had it ever crossed my mind to even question that formula.

Then in January this year I wrote an article entitled "Ask And It Shall Be Given To You", expounding Matthew 7:7. In that article I said that one key to receiving answers from God is to **ask the right questions**.

I was at that time also already working on several other articles simultaneously. I completed some of those articles and sent them out. Then some time in late April or early May, less than 3 months ago now, I decided to read again the "Ask And It Shall Be Given To You" article.

I was reading the section where I wrote:

"Now asking God the right questions means that we pluck up the courage to ask God questions that are "outside of the box". **As long as we restrict our questions to things "within the box", we are not going to get any direct answers from God.**"

I stopped to think of some examples of this principle, and I happened to look at Matthew 28:19, and I don't remember the reason why I looked at it. But the question "**why** does Jesus Christ want us to be baptized with this formula?" came into my mind. It was **a question that had never before occurred to me**. But **that question opened the flood gates**, and the things I will present in this present article became clear to me. I felt compelled to ask more and more questions, and with each new question the picture became more and more clear.

I researched every aspect I could think of and gathered a pile of information. I forced myself to continue writing the other articles that I had already started, to give myself time to digest everything I was learning about Matthew 28:19. But I couldn't stop thinking about this "baptism formula" information and the ramifications this would have.

Now I didn't really want to see Matthew 28:19 proved to be an unauthorized addition to the text of the

Gospel of Matthew. However, I had to be willing to accept the truth, and **sometimes the truth is painful**, which is typically the case when we find out that we are wrong. And that is what I came to see ... that we had been wrong all along.

The title I have given to this article is obviously not very subtle. It isn't meant to be subtle. But I ask you to hear me out, and I believe that much of the information I will present involves **things that you have never before even considered**. While not trying to deal with this subject exhaustively, I will try at least to be reasonably thorough, by addressing as many questions as have come to mind.

So this will be one of my longer articles.

To give you some kind of overview, some of the things I would like to address in this article include the following things:

1 - Arguments of those who **OPPOSE** Matthew 28:19

2 - Arguments of those who **SUPPORT** Matthew 28:19

3 - The baptism formula used by the Church of God

4 - Greek text of Matthew 28:19-20 examined

5 - Is it "**IN** the name of" or is it "**INTO** the name of"?

6 - The carnal mind cannot imitate the converted mind

7 - The baptism of John the Baptist

8 - Why was Jesus Christ baptized?

9 - The baptisms performed by Christ's disciples

10 - Key Scriptures regarding baptism

11 - What if Matthew 28:19 is **NOT** part of the original text?

12 - What if Matthew 28:19 **IS** a part of the original text?

13 - The Holy Spirit does not have a name

14 - We cannot do anything at all "in the name of the Father"

15 - Historical Evidence regarding NT text preservation

16 - Codex Sinaiticus

17 - Codex Vaticanus

18 - Scribes of the Greek NT manuscripts

19 - Changes in the Hebrew text of the Old Testament

20 - Examining the Didache

21 - All our available evidence comes through the Catholic Church

22 - Comparing God’s Church and the Catholic Church

23 - Requirements for baptism

24 - What is the symbolism of baptism?

25 - The apostles were not sent out "to baptize" people

26 - **Why** is baptism "in the name of Jesus Christ"?

27 - **YOU DO NOT NEED TO BE BAPTIZED AGAIN**

28 - The real difficulties with Matthew 28:19

29 - Some people have unflinching loyalty to Satan

30 - "Men and brethren, what shall we do?"

OUR SITUATION

When we repented and came into God’s Church we committed ourselves to living by God’s laws, as they are revealed in the Bible. The Bible became the most important source of information for how we commit to living our lives. We don’t like someone messing with or trying to discredit the Bible or trying to convince us that "those things are done away", and "those things no longer apply in our world today", and "that’s not really what the Scriptures mean", etc.

I am very skeptical when people try to "explain away" various Scriptures that involve what we do and how we live our lives. In the past three decades we have lived through certain people in leadership positions amongst God’s people introducing numerous heretical ideas. And like the people in the Ephesian era of God’s Church, we "can’t bear them which are evil, and (we) have tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and have found them liars" (Revelation 2:2).

Others amongst us were taken in by some of those heretical ideas, and so at this present time we have many divisions amongst ourselves. We are not that far removed from the situation described by the statement "in those days there was no king in Israel, (and) every man did that which was right in his own eyes" (Judges 21:25).

So when I now come along and explain why Matthew 28:19 is a spurious text, that it is nothing more than an unauthorized addition to the Gospel Matthew wrote, then certainly most of you will be extremely skeptical. And I don’t blame you for reacting that way. In fact, I would encourage you to initially approach what I will explain in this article with skepticism, **but without rejecting evidence and logic that you cannot disprove**. By all means start off being skeptical, but retain a mind that is open to evidence that contradicts your own present personal views. Evaluate the things I will say with an honest mind, **being honest with yourself**.

Satan has deceived "the whole world" (Revelation 12:9), and that unfortunately also includes you and

me. And one of Satan's greatest and most successful major deceptions for the people of God has been the trinitarian baptism formula in Matthew 28:19, as I will show extensively in this article.

I am not the first one to question the validity of the Matthew 28:19 baptismal formula. But **the reasons** why I know that Matthew 28:19 is spurious **are completely different** from anything that I have seen presented anywhere on the internet. Once you have read this whole article, then you can judge this matter for yourself.

Let's start by evaluating the information presented on the internet by those who reject Matthew 28:19 as a valid part of the Scriptures.

THE VIEWS OF THOSE WHO ON THE INTERNET OPPOSE MATT 28:19

There are many people out there who reject Matthew 28:19. And many of those people have **ulterior motives** for doing so. For example, some of the arguments I found are presented by Unitarians, who are seeking to prove their particular beliefs. On my website there are two articles that deal with the problems with Unitarianism; so I am certainly not trying to endorse Unitarianism.

Also, some of the anti-Matthew 28:19 information on the internet is even presented by Muslims, who obviously also reject anything trinitarian. They too have an ulterior motive in rejecting Matthew 28:19. So the point is that numerous people who reject Matthew 28:19 do in fact have ulterior motives for doing so. **That is not a good foundation** for rejecting Matthew 28:19.

I have examined their evidence, and found a few valid points, but also many flaws. For example, in several different places on the internet I came across articles that all had basically the same outline, presenting basically the same information under the heading "Evidence against the traditional wording of Matthew 28:19". Somebody had copied something from somebody else, and then spread that information to other websites. So examining one of those articles takes care of all the others like it.

Here is the approach that is typically used by people on both sides of this issue:

1) **Those who endorse** and defend the wording of Matthew 28:19 primarily appeal to the fact that every known Greek manuscript of the Book of Matthew that includes chapter 28 (and numerically most Greek MSS don't include Matthew 28) includes the "Father Son Holy Spirit" reference of verse 19. There are no known Greek manuscripts which omit verse 19. Based on the fact of this expression's presence in every known Greek manuscript they reason that this simply must have been a part of the original Gospel of Matthew. Secondarily they then also appeal to ancient writings like the Didache (explained later) and to the writings of men who are known in the Catholic Church as "church fathers".

2) **Those who oppose** and reject the wording of Matthew 28:19 primarily try to assert that the text of Matthew 28:19 was added later, but they don't provide any valid reasons for this claim. To support their claims they appeal primarily to other writers who have stated in writing their objections to Matthew 28:19. Such quotations don't really constitute "proof" against Matthew 28:19 being authentic. So with this approach they are not really very logical, and they leave themselves open to many challenges to their assertions.

For example:

1) One website stated that The Catholic Encyclopedia, Volume 2, page 263 states the following:

"**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." (my emphasis)

The problem here is that this statement is a blatant lie! I read every word on page 263 in Volume 2, and that section does indeed discuss the subject of baptism. But the above quoted sentence is simply not on that page. Then I downloaded that entire article (about 40 pages on my computer). I then did repeated searches through the whole baptism article from the 1913 Catholic Encyclopedia. And there is nothing remotely in that article that says that the Catholic Church changed the baptism formula.

Note! I am not saying that the Catholic Church did not change the baptismal formula. What I am saying is that **the claim** that the Catholic Encyclopedia makes such an admission is a blatant lie! It appeals to the bias of all those people who are already prejudiced against the "Father Son Holy Spirit" wording, expecting them to gullibly swallow this type of lie.

Rejection of the "Father Son Holy Spirit" wording should never be based on lies!

2) The same article also quotes from Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger's 1968 book "Einfuehrung in das Christentum" (English Translation is titled "Introduction to Christianity"). Ratzinger became Pope Benedict XVI. The quote is presented without a page reference as follows, including the parenthetical statements:

"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**." (my emphasis)

This is another devious quotation that is presented dishonestly! Ratzinger was making the above statement about **"The Apostles Creed", and not about Matthew 28:19**. The author of the internet article deviously applied Ratzinger's statement to something that Ratzinger was not talking about at all (i.e. he was not talking about Matthew 28:19), by adding the words in parenthesis to the quotation.

These are **two examples of lies** that people present in an effort to get you to believe that Matthew 28:19 is spurious. There are also other lies out there on the internet, intended to persuade people to reject the "Father Son Holy Spirit" formula.

Note that these two specific lies assert that two different Catholic authorities acknowledged that the Catholic Church added these words to the Gospel of Matthew. Now lies tend to destroy credibility, right? So when you find out that those who reject Matthew 28:19 resort to lying, how does that make you feel? Why, such lying is only likely to strengthen your belief that the opposing view must be correct, right? **When the truth is defended with lies, then the credibility of the truth suffers**, even when it is the truth. And that is what Satan, the ultimate author of all lies, has inspired in this situation.

3) The writer of the internet article then appeals to a dozen or so different authors, who all state in one way or another, or at least infer, that "the triune formula" is a later addition to the text of Matthew 28.

That assertion (that it is a later addition) is correct, as I will show later. But **the internet articles don't present any proof at all** with those dozen or so quotations. Statements like "it is often affirmed ...", and "it may be that this formula ... was established later", and "the command to baptize into the threefold name is a late doctrinal expansion", etc. are not really any kind of proof! All those statements from scholars and from reference works are presented without any real evidence that can be verified. Virtually all of **these types of quotations lack credibility**. And none present tangible proof.

4) Another point in the article appeals to a footnote on page 64 of James Moffett's (sic) New Testament

Translation about Matthew 28:19. The problem here is that in my Moffatt NT Translation there is no footnote on page 64, which page deals with Mark chapter 14. In my edition Matthew 28:19 is found on page 42. But there is no footnote on page 42 either. The footnote in question, as quoted in the internet article, says that Matthew 28:19 "may be" something that was established later. Even if there is a footnote in Moffatt's Translation, such quotations obviously don't prove anything at all; they are just assertions from recognized scholars. And "may be" is not real proof, is it?

The valid points presented in some of the arguments against Matthew 28:19 are few, and I may include some of them later.

The point is this:

Most of the arguments against Matthew 28:19 that we can find on the internet are presented by people who have a personal bias against the trinitarian wording. And most of the arguments such biased people present are grossly flawed, and in some cases even outright lies.

Even when people agree with our own personal positions on certain questions, we should still beware of accepting foolish reasoning. A correct conclusion that is presented with foolish reasoning is still foolish, even if it happens to be correct.

Never accept foolish reasoning to support your own position! And I myself will not hesitate to expose the major flaws employed by people who happen to agree with the conclusion I have reached. To state this quite plainly:

If all I had for rejecting Matthew 28:19 was what I have found on the internet amongst those who also reject Matthew 28:19, then my rejection of Matthew 28:19 would have more holes in it than a strainer made for catching tea leaves. The arguments against Matthew 28:19 on the internet are just so full of holes.

Now let's examine the views of those who on the internet support the words in Matthew 28:19.

THOSE WHO ON THE INTERNET ENDORSE MATT 28:19

There are also many people who have posted articles on the internet in support of the trinitarian baptism formula of Matthew 28:19.

By the way: some people may object to me calling the words of Matthew 28:19 "the trinitarian baptism formula". To those who feel that way I will point out a quotation from near the end of the already mentioned article on "Baptism" in Volume 2 of the Catholic Encyclopedia. It states:

"It seems altogether unlikely that immediately **after Christ had solemnly promulgated the trinitarian formula of baptism**, the Apostles themselves would have substituted another." (Catholic Encyclopedia, Baptism Article, my emphasis)

So while it is a lie to claim that the Catholic Encyclopedia admits that the Catholic Church changed the baptism formula, it is true that the Catholic Church very readily refers to Matthew 28:19 as "**the trinitarian formula of baptism**". This is a quotation that you can verify, and it is where where he should have inserted this text. If anything, it should have come after the "teaching them to observe ..." statement.

Now once this is brought to our attention, then anyone with God's Spirit should recognize: that's right, "teaching them to observe all whatsoever I have commanded you" must obviously precede any instruction to baptize people. Why couldn't I see that before?

Now I don't know who inserted these words into the Greek text, and I don't know when those words were first inserted into Matthew 28. I have no documentary proof to support what I will now say. But here is how the Greek text for Matthew 28:19-20 most likely looked originally:

poreuthentes oun matheteusate panta ta ethne didaskontes autous terein panta hosa eneteilamen humin kai idou ego meth humon eimi pasas tas hemeras heos tes sunteleias tou aionas amen

This translates as follows:

Going therefore, make disciples of all the nations, teaching them to observe all whatsoever I have commanded you, and lo, I am with you all the day until the full end of the age. Amen.

At some point the following words were **inserted into this text**:

baptizontes autous eis to onoma tou patros kai tou huiou kai tou hagiou pneumatos

Translated:

baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit

The purpose for this devious insertion was to provide scriptural support for the pagan trinity teaching. No if's, and's or but's about it! This wording supports the trinity teaching. [Comment: The scribe who added these words to the text may have been naive or convinced that those words really should be in the text. But Satan is the one who was devious in how he had those words inserted into the New Testament.]

So the altered text then read as follows (I have bolded the text that was falsely inserted):

poreuthentes oun matheteusate panta ta ethne **baptizontes autous eis to onoma tou patros kai tou huiou kai tou hagiou pneumatos** didaskontes autous terein panta hosa eneteilamen humin kai idou ego meth humon eimi pasas tas hemeras heos tes sunteleias tou aionas amen (Matthew 28:19-20 TR transliterated)

Translated:

Go you therefore, make disciples of all the nations, **baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit**, teaching them to observe all whatsoever I have commanded you, and lo, I am with you all the day until the full end of the age. Amen.

But we are not yet finished with the mistakes made by the scribe who first entered these words into the text.

Consider the following expressions in the Greek text:

1) "eis to onoma" means: into the name

2) "tou patros" means: of the Father

3) "tou huiou" means: of the Son

4) "tou hagiou pneumatos" means: of the Holy Spirit

Since "eis to onoma" is singular, therefore this means that **there is only one name**, **which** one name **is shared** by all three individuals (i.e. the wording clearly implies that the Holy Spirit is also "an individual", part of the trinity teaching). So according to this wording the Father has the same name as the Son and also as the Holy Spirit. It is one name for three distinct individuals (we obviously know that the Holy Spirit is not a person, but that is what the wording implies).

And if those three individuals all have the same one name, then it also blurs the distinction between those individuals, and they sort of "merge" all into one. That is what the trinity teaching is all about. The singular "name" is important for the trinity teaching.

What the forger really should have said is this:

EITHER: "into the names of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit";

OR: "into the name of the Father and into the name of the Son and into the name of the Holy Spirit", using the expression "eis to onoma" three times.

It doesn't really make sense to use the singular form "name" and to then apply that singular form to three distinct individuals (treating the Holy Spirit like an individual).

The forger couldn't see this problem because by his time the expression "in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit" had become an established ritual in the Catholic Church. And therefore it would not be challenged by anyone. The words which our forger added simply endorsed an unbiblical custom that was already well established.

But can you see the problem of using the singular form "name" to refer to more than one individual? It's okay to use one name for three individuals **if you believe in a trinity**; but apart from a trinity such a statement doesn't make sense at all.

To summarize this section: It is not a matter of knowing when the original text was changed and by whom. Those things are really not important. What is of primary importance is the fact that the Greek text as it stands is at odds with what Jesus Christ would have said. As it stands, the Greek text cannot possibly reflect the words of Jesus Christ.

Let's now take a closer look at the Greek preposition for "into".

IS IT "IN THE NAME OF ..." OR IS IT "INTO THE NAME OF ..."?

In biblical Greek prepositions play a very prominent role. Many times they are highly significant in identifying very specific meanings that are intended. At other times they simply fulfill **a grammatical need**.

Now in our English translations of Matthew 28:19, assuming for the moment that text to be correct for argument's sake, it reads "baptizing them **in** the name of ...". But it has been pointed out at various times, as I have also indicated in the previous section, that the Greek preposition in that expression really means "into", and that therefore it should theoretically read "baptizing them **into** the name of ...".

Obviously we can infer some completely different meanings into this expression if it really should read "into", than we can infer if it should only read "in". So what is correct?

Now **with regard to baptism** the English expression "in the name of" is used five times in the New Testament, in addition to the debatable use in Matthew 28:19. Additionally, the expression "in the name of" is used more than 20 times in a context that is not about baptism, and those occurrences are not our concern here.

The five occurrences that speak about baptism involve **three different Greek prepositions**. So leaving out Matthew 28:19 for the moment, let's look at all five of those verses that deal with baptizing.

THE GREEK PREPOSITION "EIS" MEANS "INTO"

(For as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only **they were baptized in (Greek "eis") the name of the Lord Jesus**.) (Acts 8:16)

When they heard *this*, **they were baptized in (Greek "eis") the name of the Lord Jesus**. (Acts 19:5)

Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or **were ye baptized in (Greek "eis") the name of Paul**? (1 Corinthians 1:13)

THE GREEK PREPOSITION "EN" MEANS "IN"

And he commanded them **to be baptized in (Greek "en") the name of the Lord**. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days. (Acts 10:48)

THE GREEK PREPOSITION "EPI" MEANS "ON, UPON"

Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and **be baptized every one of you in (Greek "epi") the name of Jesus Christ** for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. (Acts 2:38)

Sometimes people try to find different meanings in these statements, claiming that the writers were trying to convey different meanings when they used different prepositions. However, **that line of reasoning is not correct** for these particular references that deal with being baptized.

Yes, the prepositions "eis" and "en" and "epi" do have distinct meanings. And that certainly holds good when those prepositions are applied to specific concrete situations.

However, that does not apply in the same way when these prepositions are used to express **abstract concepts**! To be baptized "into" Christ's name is an abstract concept. To be baptized "in" Christ's name is also an abstract concept. And to be baptized "on" or "upon" Christ's name is likewise an abstract concept.

It is a major mistake to attempt to apply the meanings of these prepositions literally, when these prepositions are in fact clearly used to convey abstract concepts!

"Baptize" means "immerse". Now you cannot be literally "immersed **in** the name of Jesus Christ", and you cannot be literally "immersed **into** the name of Jesus Christ", and you cannot be literally "immersed **on** or **upon** the name of Jesus Christ", like you can literally be immersed in a river or a swimming pool.

In all of the above five verses the Greek prepositions simply fill a grammatical need and they lose their literal meanings to some degree.

We have the same thing in the English language. When you say " I am **in** pain" you are using the word "in" to describe an abstract concept. The same is true when you say "he throws himself **into** his work". Again, you are using the word "into" to describe an abstract concept. Likewise, the statement "he's feeling **on** top of the world" expresses an abstract idea where you don't mean "on" literally.

You can no doubt think of hundreds of other examples yourself, where we regularly use a whole range of prepositions to express abstract concepts, without intending to apply the literal meanings of those prepositions to the statements we are making.

The same is true for biblical Greek.

Baptism is a literal physical activity. But the only thing that the prepositions "in" and "into" can literally be applied to is **water**! We can literally be baptized "in" water, or even "into" water. But everything else about baptism is abstract. Sins being washed away is an abstract concept. Being baptized in or into or on a name is likewise an abstract concept.

So here is the point for us:

When we are talking about baptism, then in most cases it frankly doesn't make a difference whether we say "in the name of Jesus Christ" or whether we say "into the name of Jesus Christ". Either way it is nothing more than an attempt to express an abstract concept.

In our context of baptizing someone "in the name of" or "into the name of" a major grammatical consideration is the following:

In biblical Greek grammar, if you wish to express something as **the direct object** in the sentence, then you must use the preposition "**eis**", because "eis" always take the accusative case (i.e. the case of the direct object). On the other hand, if you wish to express something as **the indirect object** in a sentence, then you must use the preposition "**en**", because "en" always takes the dative case (i.e. the case of the indirect object). If you choose to use the preposition "epi", on the other hand, then you have somewhat more latitude, because "**epi**" can take the case of **either the direct object or the indirect object** (in addition to also being able to take the possessive case).

So if you have the option of using either "eis" or "en", then **that decision is made for you grammatically** when you decide to make your statement with a direct object or with an indirect object. It is a matter of grammatical requirements.

In simple terms: when we are speaking about something abstract like baptizing in the name of, then in biblical Greek whether we use "in" or whether we use "into" is **largely a grammatical consideration**, rather than a focus on the literal meanings of "in" and "into".

The translators obviously understood these linguistic technicalities. And so while "eis" technically means "into", it was in most cases more appropriate to render this expression into English as "in the name of", rather than "into the name of". If you were to translate an English expression like "my investments are **IN** the money" into other languages, in many cases it would be totally inappropriate to use the preposition for "in" in those other languages to convey this particular thought correctly. Different languages have different ways to express abstract concepts. And in different languages the same concepts may require different prepositions to be expressed correctly.

Anyway, let's now look at the five Scriptures mentioned above.

Four of those five occurrences are found in the Book of Acts, and one is by Paul in writing to the

Corinthians.

Here are some points to consider:

1) In the key verse about baptism that is quoted more often than any other, **Acts 2:38**, Peter actually said "repent and be baptized every one of you **UPON** (Greek "epi") the name of Jesus Christ ...". However, in this setting "in" rather than "upon" is the appropriate way to translate this into English. But note nonetheless that Peter here did not use "into"!

2) Some time later we are told about a group of people in Samaria, that "they were baptized **INTO** (Greek "eis") the name of the Lord Jesus" (**Acts 8:16**). Here also "in" rather than "into" is the more appropriate way to translate this into English.

3) Later, when Cornelius received God's Spirit even before being baptized (Acts 10:44), then Peter gave a commandment to baptize Cornelius "**IN** (Greek "en") the name of the Lord" (**Acts 10:48**).

4) Paul used the expression "were you baptized **INTO the name of Paul**?" in **1 Corinthians 1:13**. Can you see that here "into" cannot have the literal meaning of "into", because it is literally impossible for anyone to be baptized "into" the name of another person. It would have made no difference at all if Paul had said "in the name of Paul" instead of "into the name of Paul". Both forms express an abstract concept to which the prepositions cannot be applied with their literal meanings.

5) Likewise, it would not have made a difference if in **Acts 19:5** it said: "... they were baptized IN the name of the Lord Jesus" instead of saying "INTO the name of the Lord Jesus", since neither "in" nor "into" are meant literally in this context. And so the translators chose the more appropriate form "in the name of the Lord Jesus" for translating this abstract expression into English.

So here is the point for us:

In the context of baptism it is foolish to try to find different meanings based on reading "into" as opposed to reading "in". Those different meanings simply don't exist, because **the literal meanings of the Greek prepositions were never intended to apply in the context of baptism**.

Thus:

The assertion that we are "**baptized INTO the name or Family of God**" is nonsense! It is a futile attempt to find some kind of literal application for a preposition that was used to express an abstract concept.

Baptism is NOT about being baptized into the Family of God! That is simply not what baptism was meant to picture! That meaning was fabricated in ignorance by us ministers, in order to try to find some kind of non-trinitarian application for the clearly trinitarian formula of Matthew 28:19!

Drawing specific conclusions from the word "into" as opposed to the word "in" is not justified because we are talking about an abstract concept.

Consider again our common English expressions like "getting **on** top of the problem", "being **in** despair", "getting **into** health foods", etc., where our prepositions likewise are not to be taken literally. The same is true in Greek when we are talking about being baptized; we are not supposed to find literal applications for those prepositions.

That is why we find **three different Greek prepositions** (i.e. eis, en, epi) that **all convey the same abstract thought**.

So all the cute conclusions that I myself, and I assume others as well (?), have drawn from the word "into" in this baptism expression over the years are just that ... **cute ideas that have no real merit**. It can sound logical and plausible and it can even be a point that is true ... but it is still not a justified conclusion from the baptism instructions recorded in the New Testament. We can't just attach something that is true to whatever symbolism happens to appeal to us. That's not how it works.

So the bottom line for this section is this:

If Matthew 28:19 is supposed to be a statement from Jesus Christ, then it must make sense irrespective of whether we read "in the name of ..." or whether we read "into the name of". If Matthew 28:19 making sense depends on one of these options (i.e. "into the name of ...") with the rejection of the other option (i.e. "in the name of ..."), then Matthew 28:19 must be a forged addition to the text, since the literal meaning of the Greek preposition doesn't apply to **this abstract statement**.

The three different Greek prepositions that are used with this expression show that the meaning and application **cannot be restricted to one of these three prepositions**, and that none of these three prepositions can be excluded.

So don't attempt to build any kind of argument that totally depends on the preposition "into" as opposed to the preposition "in". Translating from Greek into English involves translating from an inflective language into a syntactic language, and in that process prepositions may sometimes function differently in the other language.

Now let's consider something about the human mind.

THE CARNAL MIND CANNOT IMITATE THE CONVERTED MIND

Since Old Testament times there have been people who have produced forgeries of instructions from God. People have produced books pretending to be Isaiah or Daniel or some other servant of God. Such works are generally known as "apocryphal books" because they are identified as spurious.

The same happened after the Church was started on Pentecost in Acts chapter 2. Numerous works started appearing in the names of some of the apostles or of some other prominent men in the early New Testament Church, like Barnabas, etc.

Now there is always one thing that all such works do:

They invariably claim to present information or instructions either from God directly or from one of God's recognized servants.

But that presents such forgers with an enormous and insurmountable problem. Do you know what that insurmountable problem is?

The forgers are all carnal, unrepentant people, servants of Satan, since Satan is the obvious real author of faked religious teachings and instructions. Satan is the father of all lies (John 8:44).

Now in order to attempt to deceive people into believing that what these people have written is a

message from God or from one of God's servants, such forgers have to **try to imitate** how **a converted mind** (i.e. the mind of a servant of God) would think and reason.

BUT THAT THEY CANNOT DO!

The carnal mind is totally and absolutely incapable of mimicking the converted mind. The carnal mind cannot understand how the converted mind thinks and reasons. The carnal unconverted mind cannot see any difference between God's instructions and God's ways of doing things, and its own interpretations of God's instructions and God's ways.

The carnal mind actually thinks that it understands God's ways! The unconverted mind cannot see the difference between itself and a converted mind. And when the unconverted mind attempts to fabricate an instruction from God or from one of God's servants, even quoting a biblical text, then it will always and without exception present such instructions from a carnal and unconverted point of view! That's all the unconverted mind is capable of doing!

Can you understand that God is never the author of carnally-minded instructions?

I ask this question because this is something the carnal mind itself cannot understand, that God will never give carnally-minded instructions. The carnal mind is hostile towards everything that represents God (Romans 8:7), and that hostility prevents the carnal mind from understanding how God thinks and what God wants from us and expects from us, and what actions are actually pleasing to God.

The result is that **the carnal mind wrongly assumes that certain actions will please God**. Therefore the carnal mind will devise such actions that it assumes will please God. The carnal mind will direct the focus towards "do this" and "do that" in its efforts to please God.

What this all means is this:

Show me an instruction, and I will tell you whether that instruction comes from God, or whether that instruction comes from a carnal mind which is inspired by Satan.

And that is something that you, a converted member of God's Church, should also learn to be able to do, to discern that **certain statements cannot possibly come from God** or have God's approval, irrespective of where they may appear.

The converted mind will simply never give certain instructions, which same instructions the unconverted mind will view as noble and as pleasing to God. There is a huge chasm between the converted mind and the unconverted mind; yet the unconverted mind cannot even perceive that chasm.

As I've said, this is something that the unconverted mind is simply not capable of seeing or understanding. This point is illustrated, for example, by the prophet Micah.

Wherewith shall I come before the LORD, *and* bow myself before the high God? shall I come before him with **burnt offerings**, with calves of a year old? Will the LORD be pleased **with thousands of rams**, *or* with **ten thousands of rivers of oil**? shall I **give my firstborn** *for* my transgression, the fruit of my body *for* the sin of my soul? He hath showed you, O man, what *is* good; and what does the LORD require of you, but **to do justly**, and **to love mercy**, and **to walk humbly** with your God? (Micah 6:6-8)

Micah illustrates the difference between the converted mind and the unconverted mind. The unconverted mind is highly impressed by giving generous gifts or making huge sacrifices **in an attempt to erase guilt**. The unconverted mind is impressed by outward actions and appearances. The converted mind, on

the other hand, understands that God does not look at outward appearances, but at the inner motivations. 1 Samuel 16:7 makes the same point, that God looks at the heart while man looks at the outward appearance.

The carnal mind can read biblical instructions, and not understand at all what those instructions actually mean. As Paul said, the carnal mind cannot understand the things of God (that's the essence of 1 Corinthians 2:11). And so when the carnal mind then attempts to use those biblical instructions, it will always get the wrong end of the stick.

So when we read something that is a carnally-minded instruction, one that consistently focuses on outward appearances, and that tries to micro-manage people's lives with endless do's and don't's, **then we are reading the expression of an unconverted mind**. It is the carnal mind which does not allow subjects to think for themselves.

Can you follow what I am trying to explain?

This is something that we need to keep in mind when we examine any instruction in the Bible, or any instruction claiming to come from any of the apostles or from any other servants of God (e.g. spurious books like the Book of Enoch, the Epistle of Barnabas, the Didache, etc.).

Specifically, we need to query and carefully examine any potentially questionable instruction, and this also applies to Matthew 28:19, to discern whether that instruction represents the thinking of God, or whether it is an expression of the carnal mind.

When we are instructed to "prove all things (and) hold fast that which is good" (1 Thessalonians 5:21), then this implies that we will end up "letting go" of some of the things we tested, because they didn't prove to be "good". We should understand that "proving all things" also includes **putting to the test every instruction we believe comes from God**!

So when an instruction is contained within the text of the Bible, then we assume that the instruction has come from God. However, even those instructions we need to put to the test by evaluating them within the greater context of all of God's teachings revealed throughout the Bible. No instruction from God should go against other instructions from God recorded in other parts of the Bible. Every instruction from God must be compatible with all of the rest of God's teachings and instructions, because God does not contradict Himself.

We must do this because there are hundreds of mistranslations in our Bibles, irrespective of which translation we happen to use. We must be on guard!

So here is the point:

When some instruction in the Bible is at odds with numerous other laws or principles of how God works and deals with us human beings, then that should raise a big red flag in our minds, because that is the clearest indication that the "odd one out" instruction is really the expression of a carnal mind. And yes, most of the significant mistranslations are simply expressions of the carnal mind, which is under the influence of "the spirit of the power of the air" (Ephesians 2:2).

So keep this in mind as we continue our examination of Matthew 28:19. **The carnal mind will always, without fail, make some mistakes when it tries to fake instructions from God.** And we need to have the eyes to see those mistakes.

So let's now look at the baptism of John the Baptist.

JOHN THE BAPTIST'S BAPTISM AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE

Baptism is not an Old Testament custom. It is something that was started by John the Baptist, who was instructed by God to baptize people (John 1:33). So let's examine the baptism of John.

Notice Mark 1:4.

John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach **the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins**. (Mark 1:4)

The word "baptism" means "immersion", referring to being put under water. The word "repentance" means "to change your way of thinking". The expression "for the remission of sins" means that the purpose of people changing their way of thinking was so that their past sins would be forgiven, blotted out, enabling them to make a new start in life.

So the symbolism of baptism was very clear for the people who came to John. The purpose of John's baptism was to make forgiveness of sins possible.

Baptism was to picture in a graphic way that their sins could be washed away if they were prepared to change the way they were using their minds. Baptism represents being made clean by being washed.

Recall that during Old Testament times God frequently had His servants literally act out something to make it easier for people to vividly get the point God was making. The baptism of John was exactly along those same lines ... being fully immersed under water vividly illustrated people having their sins washed away.

Here with John the Baptist there is no hidden esoteric meaning or symbolism attached to the act of baptism. The meaning was plain and self-evident: **baptism pictured the washing away of sins**.

There is no record of what John the Baptist may have said to people when he baptized them. There is no record of any baptism formula that John may have used. Whatever words John may have said to the people he baptized, those words were of secondary importance to the commitment people made to change their way of thinking, and to having their past sins removed.

One thing is certain:

John the Baptist obviously did not baptize anyone "in (or into) the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit". That formula most certainly did not exist at John's time.

Let's look at a statement from Jesus Christ.

The baptism of John, whence was it? from heaven, or of men? And they reasoned with themselves, saying, If we shall say, From heaven; he will say unto us, Why did ye not then believe him? (Matthew 21:25)

The correct answer to Jesus Christ's question clearly is: John's baptism was "**from heaven**". This means that **God had instructed John to baptize people** for the forgiveness of their past sins. The instruction for baptism came from God.

Now God doesn't play games. You understand that, right? God doesn't put people on a treadmill of

having to repeatedly be baptized. So listen:

When God instructed John to stir people up so that they would acknowledge their guilt before God and seek baptism, then it was not God's intention that at a later time those people would have to be baptized again, this time by Jesus Christ's disciples.

Had you understood this before? Good!

God doesn't play games! So when God instructed John to go and baptize people, then ideally that would have been **the only time they needed to be baptized before coming up in the first resurrection**. God did not institute repeated baptisms for anyone.

By now you may be saying: that can't be right because in Acts 19 people who had received the baptism of John were baptized again. Yes, I am aware of that passage, and I will explain it shortly.

But here is the most basic point of all:

Nobody can ever be baptized TWICE "for the remission of sins"!

John's baptism was "for the remission of sins"; that's what Mark 1:4 tells us. That means that after receiving the baptism of John in response to indeed having repented, people cannot again have their sins forgiven by another baptism. That is just not how it works!

While Acts 19 does indeed show some people who had received "the baptism of John" being baptized again, this represents the exception and not the rule. The majority of those who were baptized by John the Baptist himself were not baptized again.

Notice that John the Baptist and Jesus Christ preached exactly the same message that led to baptism.

John preached: And saying, **Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand** (Matthew 3:2).

And Jesus Christ preached: From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, **Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand** (Matthew 4:17).

The message from both Jesus Christ and John the Baptist was the same. Anyone who was responding correctly to John the Baptist was by extension also responding correctly to Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ clearly endorsed John the Baptist's message as coming "from heaven".

Now consider the following:

In addition to telling people to repent and that the kingdom of God is coming, John the Baptist clearly said to the people he baptized that Jesus Christ:

- takes away the sin of the world (John 1:29),

- would make the Holy Spirit available (John 1:33),

- is the Son of God (John 1:34-36),

- that it is essential to believe on Christ (John 3:35-36).

What more would you have expected John to say in order to qualify his baptism as "valid"? Is there

anything missing that John somehow didn't cover?

The point is: the baptism of John the Baptist was certainly a valid baptism, irrespective of whatever baptismal formula John may have used.

Next, a number of Christ's apostles had previously been disciples of John the Baptist.

Again the next day after John stood, and **two of his disciples**; And looking upon Jesus as he walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God! And the two disciples heard him speak, and **they followed Jesus**. (John 1:35-37)

Now what made people "disciples of John" is that they accepted the message and the teachings of John the Baptist. And once they reached that point, then they would also have been baptized by John the Baptist. Baptism didn't make them disciples. **But baptism confirmed their status as disciples of John.**

So we had the following situation:

1) Multitudes came out to see John the Baptist (Matthew 3:5).

2) Some of those people then accepted John's teachings as correct before God. Those are the people who became John the Baptist's disciples.

3) Those who became John's disciples were then baptized by John for the forgiveness of their sins, an act that confirmed their status as disciples.

4) All those who were not baptized by John also did not become his disciples.

5) In practical terms any reference to "the disciples of John" is a reference to people who had also been baptized by John.

The point is that **some of the apostles had in fact already been baptized before they came into contact with Jesus Christ**. They had been baptized for the remission of sins by John the Baptist. And their baptism was valid before God; they were not baptized again at a later point.

Here is a point to consider:

God gave John the Baptist the responsibility to prepare the way for Jesus Christ's ministry (see Matthew 3:3, etc.). The way John prepared people for Christ's ministry was by preaching "repent for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand". A certain number of people actually responded to John's preaching, those who became John's disciples.

What this meant is that **this preaching by John prepared a pool of people** from which Jesus Christ then selected most of His followers. John's preaching in effect narrowed down the group of people from amongst whom Jesus Christ selected His apostles and His disciples in general. Those people could make that transition from John the Baptist to Jesus Christ very easily because first of all Jesus Christ followed on with exactly the same message that John had brought. And secondly John freely pointed his own disciples towards Jesus Christ by his repeated statements about "He that comes after me is mightier than I" (Matthew 3:11).

John the Baptist had prepared a pool of potential candidates for becoming apostles of Jesus Christ. That preparation by John included baptizing some of those who became leaders under Jesus Christ. And

those who had been baptized by John were not re-baptized once they became Christ's disciples.

Let's now look at Acts 18 and 19.

And a certain Jew named **Apollos**, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man, *and* **mighty in the scriptures**, came to Ephesus. **This man was instructed in the way of the Lord**; and being fervent in the spirit, he spake and **taught diligently the things of the Lord**, **knowing only the baptism of John**. (Acts 18:24-25)

The expression "knowing only the baptism of John" means that Apollos understood everything about the baptism of John. It implies that Apollos himself had been baptized with the baptism of John, but had not heard of the ministry of Jesus Christ. Very likely Apollos had been in Jerusalem during the early part of John the Baptist's ministry, been baptized by John, and then returned to his home in Alexandria, Egypt before Jesus Christ's ministry got underway. In that way Apollos missed out on hearing anything at all about Christ, other than what he had heard from John the Baptist.

Since then more than 20 years had passed. Now it was in the early 50's A.D.

Notice that Apollos was already "mighty in the Scriptures", even before meeting Aquila and Priscilla. Note also that Apollos had already been "instructed in the way of the Lord" and that he was "fervent in the spirit" to the point of "speaking diligently the things of the Lord". What this is telling us is that **Apollos already had the Spirit of God**!

This is an example of what someone who had been baptized by John could in fact achieve! This illustrates that the baptism of John, carried out before Christ's crucifixion, was indeed valid.

So then a church member couple named Aquila and Priscilla heard Apollos preach. **They recognized Apollos as a fellow member of God's Church.** So they got together privately with Apollos and explained Jesus Christ's ministry and Christ's part in God's plan of salvation to Apollos. They filled in the gaps in Apollos' understanding.

And he began to speak boldly in the synagogue: whom when Aquila and Priscilla had heard, **they took him unto *them*, and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly**. (Acts 18:26)

Aquila and Priscilla did not baptize Apollos again! They only added a new dimension to Apollos' understanding. Implied is that Apollos was quite open to being taught by Aquila and Priscilla, because after this Apollos used the Old Testament Scriptures to prove "that Jesus was Christ" (Acts 18:28).

When Apollos then decided that he wanted to leave Ephesus and go to Achaia, church members in Ephesus wrote letters to the brethren in Achaia to receive Apollos as a fellow church member (Acts 18:27).

The point is that with Apollos his baptism by John the Baptist was recognized as valid because the man very clearly already had God's Spirit. Aquila and Priscilla did not take it upon themselves to go around and baptize people. That was not their responsibility. But when they recognized a fellow Church of God member who clearly lacked certain understanding, then they did their best to help this fellow Church of God member to come to a more complete understanding of God's truth.

Here is the point:

Apollos was baptized by John probably before Jesus Christ began His ministry. Apollos then left the area of Palestine and did not hear any part of Christ's ministry. His baptism was valid before God because

Apollos had indeed repented just as John the Baptist had explained. A few years later, on the Day of Pentecost in Acts chapter 2, God gave His Holy Spirit to 120 people in Jerusalem without those 120 people needing to have hands laid on them. By then Apollos was in Egypt.

Now if on that Day of Pentecost there were any other people in other parts of the world (e.g. Apollos down in Egypt) who had also genuinely repented when they were baptized, then on that day **those people also received God's Holy Spirit**, not as a visible flame sitting upon their heads (see Acts 2:3), but simply the way you and I received God's Spirit when we repented, were baptized, and had hands laid on us. When we received God's Spirit we didn't physically feel anything. The only noticeable thing for us was that over a period of time our minds were opened to a new dimension of understanding.

And that is precisely what had happened to Apollos! That is why about 20 years later he was "mighty in the Scriptures" and able to "teach the things of the Lord". His mind had been opened to a greater understanding when God had given His Spirit to Apollos.

So here is the point:

1) For anyone who has come to a real repentance **from the Day of Pentecost in Acts chapter 2 onwards**, God requires that person to have hands laid on him after baptism in order to receive the Holy Spirit. God instituted in His Church this practice of the laying on of hands to show that a body of believers had been established by God, and that God was going to work through that body of believers.

2) But for all those people who came to a real repentance and were baptized **at any time before the Day of Pentecost in Acts chapter 2** (e.g. Apollos), God did not require them to have hands laid on in order to receive the Holy Spirit. When those people came to repentance and were baptized prior to Acts chapter 2, then there was not yet an established body of believers through whom God would do His work. And those people would also have received God's Spirit on that Day of Pentecost, just not in a visible way.

With point #1 above I do not mean to imply that the laying on of hands was not used in earlier times. It was used, but not consistently. Thus both Saul and David received God's Spirit when Samuel anointed them (1 Samuel 10:6,10 and 1 Samuel 16:13), but Samuel himself received God's Spirit without anyone else either anointing him or laying hands on him. Likewise, Abraham and Jacob and Moses and Elijah and various other prophets received God's Spirit without someone else laying hands on them. There was no specific fixed procedure by which God would give His Spirit to people in Old Testament times. The standard procedure of the laying on of hands after baptism only took effect from Acts chapter 2 onwards. And certainly, no formula like "Father, Son and Holy Spirit" was ever followed.

So now let's look at Acts 19.

And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts came to Ephesus: and finding **certain disciples**, He said unto them, **Have you received the Holy Spirit** since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Spirit. (Acts 19:1-2)

Verse 7 shows that this group actually consisted of "twelve men". Here Paul himself did not immediately discern whether or not these people had God's Spirit. So he asked them this question. Normally that would be a difficult question to answer. I mean, if I were to ask you "have **you** received the Holy Spirit?", how would you know how to answer that question? Do you just assume: "look, I'm a baptized member of God's Church, and I know that when I was baptized that I then received God's Spirit. End of story."? Or do you look for something in your life to back up your answer?

In their case back in Acts 19 the answer was fairly easy, because they didn't even know what the Holy Spirit is, never mind whether or not they had received it.

Their answer tells me that these people had not actually been baptized by John the Baptist himself, but by someone else who was trying to carry on the work of John the Baptist. This should be clear because **John the Baptist had told people about the Holy Spirit** (see Matthew 3:11, etc.).

Let's continue.

And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, **Unto John's baptism**. 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. **When they heard *this*, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus**. And when Paul had laid *his* hands upon them, the Holy Spirit came on them; and **they spake with tongues, and prophesied**. (Acts 19:3-6)

"Unto John's baptism" is introduced in Greek by the preposition "eis", which preposition we have already discussed.

These people had not been baptized by John the Baptist himself more than 20 years earlier. No, they had been baptized by someone else "into John's baptism", i.e. by someone who tried to follow the precedent that John the Baptist had set. Possibly these were people who had been baptized by Apollos before Apollos met up with Aquila and Priscilla.

Here in verse 3 the preposition "eis" (i.e. into) is not used in the abstract context of a name. In verse 3 the relevant Greek expression is "eis to Ioannou baptisma" which means "**into the baptism of John**". So here the preposition "eis" refers to "baptisma", which is a physical act of immersion under water. So this means that these men were baptized "into the immersion (baptism) of John". In verse 3 this is not a reference to being baptized "into a name", be it the name of John or any other name. That is not at all the case in verse 3.

It is only in verse 5 that these men are baptized "in or into the name" of the Lord Jesus. So in verse 3 "eis" is applied to a physical activity and there it has its literal meaning of "into". Then in verse 5 "eis" is applied to the abstract concept of a name, and there it can mean either "in" or "into", depending on the best way to express that abstract thought in the English language.

These men in Acts 19 had been baptized at some point years after the time of Pentecost in Acts chapter 2. Unlike Apollos, these twelve disciples did not yet have God's Spirit. The terms that applied to all the truly repentant people baptized by John the Baptist himself, well before Jesus Christ was crucified and resurrected, did not apply to these twelve disciples. Instead, because they were baptized years after the time of Acts chapter 2, therefore the conditions that started with Acts chapter 2 also applied to these twelve men. So they were not going to receive God's Spirit without a servant of God laying hands on them. On top of that, it seems that they hadn't really understood real repentance either, something Paul would have discerned in further discussions with these people (the account in Acts is very brief). So Paul then also baptized them.

Can you understand the difference between these twelve men needing to be baptized again and Apollos, on the other hand, not needing to be baptized again?

It is the difference between someone being baptized by John the Baptist, well before Jesus Christ was crucified and resurrected, and someone else being baptized years later "into John's baptism", **at a time when the baptism of John was no longer a valid form of baptism**? It is also likely that these people didn't comprehend real repentance either. And by that time the baptism of John had for a number of

years already been replaced by baptism in the name of Jesus Christ.

To be clear:

Acts chapter 19 presents a case of people who were baptized "into the baptism of John" years after John the Baptist himself had been killed, years after the baptism which John had initiated had fulfilled its mission and then had ceased to exist as a valid form of baptism.

Can you see the distinction between Apollos on the one hand, and these twelve men on the other hand?

Now let's consider one other question:

WHY WAS JESUS CHRIST BAPTIZED?

Since Jesus Christ was without sin (1 Peter 2:22), and since baptism pictures the washing away of our sins, then **why was Jesus Christ baptized**?

And it came to pass in those days, that **Jesus** came from Nazareth of Galilee, and **was baptized of John** in Jordan. (Mark 1:9)

Matthew provides a few more details for this event.

Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him. But John forbad him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me? And Jesus answering said unto him, **Suffer *it to be so* now: for thus it becomes us to fulfil all righteousness**. Then he suffered him. And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: (Matthew 3:13-16)

For a start notice that John the Baptist recognized that he himself had a need to be baptized. This tells us that John the Baptist himself had not been baptized by anyone, yet God had clearly given John the Baptist His Holy Spirit.

Next, John the Baptist equally clearly recognized that **Jesus Christ did not need to be baptized**, based on the criteria for baptism which John himself had presented.

This established fact, that Jesus Christ did not really need to be baptized, helps to establish **the main reason for baptism**. Baptism represents being washed from our sins, i.e. having our sins forgiven. It follows that in addition to Jesus Christ any individual who is, theoretically speaking, totally sinless is therefore also completely free from any need for baptism.

So note!

If baptism is supposed to have any significance other than the removal of sins, then that "other significance" might perhaps establish a need for Christ to also be baptized. But if the purpose of baptism is to represent the washing away of sins, and thereby the washing away of the death penalty, then Jesus Christ was absolutely free from any need to be baptized.

This is important to understand because there are people who try to find any number of reasons for baptizing "into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" which have nothing whatsoever to do with the washing away of sins! **Those reasons are fabricated** and reasoned out by

misapplying certain things.

The biblical reason for baptism is to represent the washing away of a person's sins. And because John understood that Jesus Christ was sinless, therefore John the Baptist initially refused to baptize Jesus Christ.

That was when Jesus Christ presented a reason to John the Baptist that actually has nothing to do with the symbolism of baptism. Jesus Christ said to John: "**Suffer *it to be so* now: for thus it becomes us to fulfill all righteousness"**.

Do you know what that statement actually means?

Notice that the words "it to be so" are in italics, meaning they are not found in the Greek text. The Greek text for the whole phrase "suffer it to be so now" is "**aphes arti**". Just two Greek words. The verb "aphes" is the imperative form of the verb "aphiemi", making this two-word statement a command from Jesus Christ. The adverb "arti" means "now".

Jesus Christ's statement is in fact stronger than it appears to be in our English translation; it is in the form of a command. It doesn't just mean something like "allow" or "permit", words that are suggested by some translations. It is a short, brisk two-word command.

Now "aphiemi" means: **to send away from**, **to go from**, **to depart**, etc. The word is also used for a husband divorcing his wife, i.e. it refers to separation.

So here is a more appropriate translation for this two-word command that Jesus Christ gave John:

"I want you to now depart (i.e. from the normal reason for baptism)".

Not a single translator has got this right, because none of them understand the real reason for why Jesus Christ insisted on being baptized.

In other words, Jesus Christ told John the Baptist: **I want you to baptize Me for a completely different reason from the reason why all other people need to be baptized**. Can you see that? It is actually quite simple, but carnal minds can't see that because of 1 Corinthians 2:11.

So let's now look at the reason Jesus Christ then stated.

The KJV reads: "for thus it becomes us to fulfill all righteousness" (Matthew 3:15). What this basically means is: it is fitting and appropriate for us to fulfill all righteousness". So the question is: how does Jesus Christ being baptized "fulfill all righteousness"?

Jesus Christ was here saying that **baptism**, something that was new and was just being instituted with John pioneering the way, **was going to be absolutely essential to achieving "righteousness"**. And it was going to fill righteousness to the full. As Psalm 119:172 tells us, "all your commandments are righteousness".

So **the main purpose for Jesus Christ being baptized was to raise baptism to the level of a commandment from God**.

In plain words: Jesus Christ submitting to baptism made baptism a commandment even more forcefully than Jesus Christ saying "a new commandment I give unto you ..." (like John 13:34). **Jesus Christ being baptized established baptism as incumbent upon all Christians.** A new added commandment

made righteousness "fuller"; there was now one more law to righteousness.

Can you understand this? Jesus Christ being baptized made baptism an additional law for Christians to observe. In that way it expanded the things that constitute righteousness.

The last statement in Matthew 3:15 reads "then he suffered Him". This means: then John "sent away" the normal reason for baptism; i.e. John dispensed with the normal reason for baptism, and went ahead and baptized Jesus Christ.

One thing should be very clear though:

Under no circumstances whatsoever did John the Baptist say to Jesus Christ: "I now baptize you into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit"! That I will say dogmatically!

You may say: that's obvious, and I already knew that. Well, did you also already understand **the ramifications of the absence of this formula**, when Jesus Christ so very clearly said that **this particular action is so very essential to achieving righteousness**?

If you say: well, Jesus Christ didn't need that formula spoken over Him, then I will reply: but He didn't need to be baptized either! If Jesus Christ went to the great length of undergoing baptism Himself so that we would have this baptism ordinance clearly established as a law for all Christians, WHY didn't He make sure that the trinity formula was also used at that point? It was an example for us, after all. **Why provide an incomplete example?**

As I've already said, the carnal mind cannot possibly understand this. But Matthew chapter 3 was the appropriate place to introduce the trinity formula, because the whole purpose of Christ being baptized was to set us the correct example to follow as a law from then onwards. And without that trinity formula here in Matthew chapter 3 the example is only incomplete ... **IF THAT TRINITY FORMULA WAS INTENDED BY GOD FOR US TO USE WHEN BAPTIZING SOMEONE**!

The example Jesus Christ set for us to also strive to fulfill all righteousness was the place to introduce any wording that would be essential when following this example from Jesus Christ.

Can you understand that the mind of Christ would have provided any essential wording at the same time as setting the example? And that it is the devious carnal mind that seeks to slip in a totally new instruction in the very closing statement of a whole book (i.e. in the Gospel of Matthew)?

Right, so much for the baptism of John and why Jesus Christ was baptized. So let's move on.

BAPTISMS PERFORMED BY CHRIST'S DISCIPLES

Now that we have examined the baptism performed by John the Baptist, let's also consider the baptisms Jesus Christ's disciples performed before Jesus Christ was crucified and resurrected. These were baptisms that were performed at the instructions of Jesus Christ during Christ's ministry.

Notice:

After the incident where Nicodemus came to see Jesus Christ "by night" it says:

After these things came Jesus and his disciples into the land of Judaea; and **there he tarried with**

them, and baptized. (John 3:22)

Then later the disciples of John the Baptist said the following to John:

And they came unto John, and said unto him, Rabbi, **He that was with you** beyond Jordan, to whom you bare witness, behold, **the same baptizes**, and all *men* come to Him. (John 3:26)

Now stop and think about this.

There was no apparent reason for the Apostle John in the 90's A.D. when he wrote this gospel to record a statement that the disciples of John the Baptist made to John the Baptist. That statement had nothing directly to do with Christ's ministry. Yet John chose to record that statement, something most of us have always glossed over as unimportant. It doesn't add very much to what John had written four verses earlier. Yet John made a point of recording this statement, which the Apostle John himself would not have heard, because he (the Apostle John) was at that time already with Jesus Christ.

So John is recording a seemingly insignificant statement that he himself had not even heard personally. Why did John record this statement?

It seems that the Apostle John felt **a need to highlight the fact that Jesus Christ also performed baptisms**, and this statement that the disciples made to John the Baptist was just another opportunity for the Apostle John to direct the focus towards this fact.

A few verses later the Apostle John wrote:

When therefore the Lord knew how the Pharisees had heard that **Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John**, (**though Jesus himself baptized not, but his disciples**,) (John 4:1-2)

So within the space of less than 20 verses the Apostle John recorded **three statements** from three different perspectives regarding Jesus Christ also baptizing people, in fact, baptizing more people than John the Baptist baptized.

Those three different perspectives are: the Apostle John's own observation in John 3:22; a statement by John the Baptist's disciples to John the Baptist in John 3:26; and then the Pharisees having heard that Jesus Christ baptized people in John 4:1-2. It must have taken some time, a few days or weeks, before news of Jesus Christ also baptizing people got back to the Pharisees, and then Jesus Christ getting a report that the Pharisees had heard this. So the statement in John 4:1-2 is a consequence of the baptizing that is mentioned in John 3:22.

Why this repetition? I believe that **the Apostle John was deliberately providing "three witnesses"** to the fact that Jesus Christ also baptized people: his own witness, the witness of the disciples of John the Baptist, and the Pharisees also knowing that Jesus Christ was baptizing people. John presented this in accordance with the principle of Deuteronomy 19:15, which we'll look at shortly.

When the Apostle John wrote this in the 90's A.D. Jerusalem was no longer a headquarters for the Church. Jerusalem had been destroyed around 20 years earlier, and the Church had been scattered by persecution. The other gospel accounts, all written around 40 years before John wrote his gospel account, had not given any indications that Jesus Christ continued John the Baptist's custom of baptizing people. And without John's Gospel we would not even know that Christ had also baptized people (whether Christ Himself baptized people or whether He instructed His disciples to do the baptizing for Him is not the issue at this point) during His ministry.

What was the Apostle John telling us with these three consecutive statements about Jesus Christ also baptizing people?

We have already seen that Jesus Christ continued preaching the message that John the Baptist had started (i.e. "repent for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand"). Implied is that the significance attached to baptism also remained the same as it had been when John the Baptist introduced this custom. **Baptism continued to represent being washed from our sins.** And baptism had made the transition from John the Baptist to Jesus Christ.

Now the significance of these three references by the Apostle John is as follows:

John undoubtedly wanted to confirm that baptism had the full approval of Jesus Christ, because Christ Himself had also authorized the baptism of certain people. Perhaps by the 90's A.D. there was in some quarters an attempt to dispense with baptism as something that only John the Baptist had done? Or perhaps there was already an attempt to change the manner of baptizing people?

Whatever the situation may have been, the Apostle John felt it necessary to highlight a fact that none of the other gospel writers had thought to mention, the fact that Jesus Christ already started the practice of baptizing people even before His own crucifixion and resurrection.

Note one other point:

The Apostle John made three references to Jesus Christ baptizing people. The first two of these three references say that Jesus Christ "baptized people". I don't believe that this was a slip-up from the Apostle John. It is only with the third reference that the Apostle John said "though Jesus Himself baptized not, but His disciples" (John 4:2). I suspect that John very deliberately only added this "though Jesus Himself baptized not" statement to the third statement, and not to the first statement.

Perhaps Jesus Christ did not actually baptize any person Himself? That is certainly a possibility. But perhaps Jesus Christ Himself actually baptized the very first ones who became His disciples, and then had those disciples continue the process? That would be in line with the principle we see in many other things as well ... that Jesus Christ, the God of the Old Testament, starts some process, and then it becomes a human responsibility to keep that process going. I don't know that this is the case here with the references to Jesus Christ "baptizing". But I believe that this could be a possibility.

Here is why these references to Christ baptizing people have significant ramifications.

Consider the very first person who came to Jesus Christ and said something like "Lord, I believe and I want to be baptized to wash away my sins". Jesus Christ may have replied with something like "right, step into the river here with Me and I'll baptize you". So Jesus Christ and that person both walked into the shallow part of the river. Then **without saying any kind of formula whatsoever** Jesus Christ lowered the person's body under the water, and then raised him up again. Then both men waded out of the river, and another person asked to be baptized. That was not yet the time for the laying on of hands.

This process may have happened a number of times. In all likelihood no verbal formula of any kind was used for these baptisms.

On the next day more people approached Jesus Christ for baptism. Then Jesus Christ said to one of the people He Himself had baptized the day before: "now **I want you to baptize this person for Me**", and to the person being baptized He said: "this man will baptize you in My name, i.e. on My behalf". There wasn't any special routine the person doing the baptizing had to learn. He simply waded into the river and then said "**I baptize you in the name of Jesus Christ**", signifying that with this baptism the

person’s status as "a disciple" of Jesus Christ was being formalized.

In this case the expression "to baptize in the name of Jesus Christ" simply means to baptize someone "on behalf of Jesus Christ", thereby confirming the person’s status as a disciple or follower of Jesus Christ. Here the expression "in the name of Jesus Christ" means "doing something on behalf of Jesus Christ". And someone else doing something on behalf of Jesus Christ does not in any way interfere with the baptized person’s direct relationship with Jesus Christ.

This is one possible explanation for why we need to be baptized "in the name of Jesus Christ". I will mention another even more compelling reason later.

Let’s continue.

Jesus Christ started the practice of baptizing people a few years before the Holy Spirit would be made available to repentant believers, as Jesus Christ obviously knew. Jesus Christ knew that there would be a 2-3 year gap between these people being baptized and the Holy Spirit being made available. And **that 2-3 year gap did not deter Jesus Christ from instructing His disciples to go ahead and baptize some people right then and there**.

The Apostle John himself, the writer of these verses, had undoubtedly been one of those disciples who had done some of the baptizing on Jesus Christ’s instructions. John was undoubtedly writing these things from hands-on experience. And John had a personal interest in preserving this information. John also knew that he was the only one of the original apostles who recorded this information, and so he recorded three separate statements to firmly establish this information.

These three statements must be seen as John’s attempt to preserve information that he felt was in danger of being lost. That’s the perspective we should understand.

It follows that **if Jesus Christ had given His disciples a specific formula to use when baptizing someone, then the Apostle John would surely have recorded that in this section of his gospel account**.

So if the Apostle John was already familiar with the Matthew 28:19 formula from almost 60 years earlier ("baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit") for baptizing people, and John was writing this account in the 90's A.D., then he would surely have said something about the formula Jesus Christ (supposedly) had instructed them to use **when they baptized people during Christ’s ministry**.

This (John chapters 3-4) is the place to explain if there was any change to the formula used before Christ’s crucifixion to any formula that may have been instituted after Christ’s resurrection. Alternatively, this would also have been the place to record if Christ had already instructed them from the beginning to go with this trinitarian formula. John was highly motivated to preserve the information that Jesus Christ had also baptized people during His ministry, and any change in the baptism formula would have been at the forefront of John’s consciousness when he wrote this passage. As I have already said, John was writing this about 40 years after Matthew had written his gospel account.

Try to see this from the Apostle John’s perspective.

Let’s assume that when Jesus Christ had instructed the Apostle John to baptize someone during His ministry (i.e. in accordance with John 4:1-2), then Christ had instructed John to use "formula #1" (whatever that may have been?). Then after His resurrection (assuming Matthew 28:19 to be accurate) Jesus Christ instructed John and the other apostles to start using a different formula, "formula #2", as

per Matthew 28:19.

Don’t you think that John would have recorded this change, when he made the specific effort to preserve information about baptisms performed on Jesus Christ’s own instructions during Christ’s ministry? Or do you think that Christ had already during His ministry instructed His disciples to use the trinitarian formula of Matthew 28:19?

How could John possibly avoid commenting on the transition from "formula #1" to "formula #2", if indeed there had been such a transition?

But John is totally silent about any kind of verbal formula that Jesus Christ might have instructed them to use when baptizing someone. That silence also covers all the other gospel accounts discussing the baptisms performed by John the Baptist.

The greatest significance of John’s three statements about Jesus Christ also baptizing people (or having His disciples do the actual baptizing) is this:

There is absolutely, and I mean "absolutely", no way that Jesus Christ used one specific formula for baptizing people during His human lifetime, and then changed that to a different formula after His resurrection! No way! That would be the same as Jesus Christ keeping the Sabbath during His ministry, but then instructing people to start keeping Sunday after His resurrection.

IF Matthew 28:19 does indeed represent an instruction from Jesus Christ, THEN the only option is that Jesus Christ Himself was also already using the Matthew 28:19 formula during His ministry when He instructed His disciples to baptize people. That is the only option!

Any claim for validity for Matthew 28:19 demands that this formula was also already used by Jesus Christ in John chapters 3 and 4.

THAT IS WHAT I MEAN BY "UNDERSTANDING THE MIND OF CHRIST"!

Understanding the mind of Christ, an impossibility for the carnal mind, means understanding that Jesus Christ did not introduce any new instructions to His disciples after His resurrection! It was **one purpose of His ministry** to introduce some changes from what had been done in Old Testament times (e.g. new format for the Passover, no more sacrificial system, no ritualistic washings, etc.). That was a part of "finishing the work" that God the Father had given Him to do (see John 17:4). That statement in John 17:4 precludes the possibility of introducing any further changes in instructions after His crucifixion.

So it is simply not possible that Jesus Christ introduced any new instructions to His disciples after His resurrection! That just isn’t on! That would imply that Christ didn’t really complete His human ministry before being crucified, and that therefore He had to give them some additional changed instructions after His resurrection.

The only possibility for Matthew 28:19 to be a true record of the words of Jesus Christ is if that Matthew 28:19 baptismal formula was already being used by Jesus Christ Himself in John chapters 3-4.

THAT IS THE REAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE APOSTLE JOHN’S THREE STATEMENTS ABOUT JESUS CHRIST BAPTIZING PEOPLE!

So in order to claim that Matthew 28:19 is an instruction from Jesus Christ, it must also be proved that back in John 4:1-2 Jesus Christ already instructed His disciples to baptize people "into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit", because there was no intention that those people would

later have to be baptized again with a new baptism formula.

On the other hand, **if it is abundantly clear that Jesus Christ most certainly would not have used the Matthew 28:19 formula in John 4:1-2, then Matthew 28:19 stands exposed as a forgery**!

Now only a fool would claim that Jesus Christ already used the Matthew 28:19 formula during His ministry in John 4:1-2, because such a claim begs to be atomized!

Therefore the three references to Jesus Christ baptizing people in John 3:22 - John 4:2 **prove that Matthew 28:19 cannot possibly represent the words of Jesus Christ**.

I am here using the same type of reasoning that Jesus Christ used in Matthew 22:32 in proving the reality of a resurrection by quoting nothing more than God's statement "I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob". **There is no way that Jesus Christ after His resurrection would ever have instructed the use of a completely different baptism formula to the formula He had used during His ministry.**

Now I don't expect the carnal mind to be able to comprehend the logic in Jesus Christ not using two different formulas for baptizing people. But can you, a converted member of God's Church, understand this?

Let's continue.

Nowhere outside of Matthew 28:19 is any kind of verbal formula for baptism even so much as hinted at, other than "in the name of Jesus Christ". Not even a squeak or a peep! Nothing! And yet the Apostle John wanted to preserve information about the practice of baptizing people, something Jesus Christ Himself had set in motion.

This should tell us that during Christ's ministry there simply wasn't any specific formula that the disciples were required to use when baptizing someone. They were doing it "in the name of Christ". But there was no focus whatsoever on the words that were spoken during any baptism ceremony. The words were not really important! What was important is the commitment people were making when they requested baptism. But the actual words that were spoken during such a baptism ceremony, if any, were not even important enough to be recorded, other than the reference to "in the name of Jesus Christ".

Think about that for a moment.

The Apostle John felt it important enough to record something that John the Baptist's disciples said to John the Baptist. But he didn't feel it to be important to record any kind of verbal formula for baptizing people. **What does that tell us?**

Now John not recording any verbal baptism formula is in stark contrast to the very pointed focus that is directed on the trinitarian-worded formula of Matthew 28:19. If the Apostle John had known the Matthew 28:19 formula as having been commanded by Jesus Christ, then John would surely have given some indication of this knowledge here in the context of revealing the baptisms Jesus Christ had performed during His ministry.

But John says nothing at all about any kind of verbal formula for baptism. This silence is a testimony to the Apostle John never having heard Jesus Christ speak the words we find in Matthew 28:19.

Let's now look at some key Scriptures.

SOME KEY SCRIPTURES THAT APPLY TO BAPTISM

The 120 founding members of the New Testament Church of God (Acts 1:15) had all been baptized by either John the Baptist or by Jesus Christ (including other disciples doing the actual baptizing). They all received the Holy Spirit as a visible manifestation, like "cloven tongues like as of fire" (Acts 2:3).

These 120 men had had to wait for about three years after their baptism before they received God's Spirit on the Day of Pentecost. These 120 men had all been around since the time when John the Baptist had baptized Jesus Christ (Acts 1:21-22); they had witnessed Christ's whole ministry.

Regarding these men not receiving the Holy Spirit at the time they were baptized, consider the following principle presented for a different subject.

And Jesus said unto them, Can the children of the bridechamber fast, while the bridegroom is with them? **as long as they have the bridegroom with them**, they cannot fast. But the days will come, **when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them**, and then shall they fast in those days. (Mark 2:19-20)

While these verses specifically address the subject of fasting, can you see that this principle applies to other things as well? "As long as the Bridegroom was with them" the baptized disciples did not yet need to have the Holy Spirit! The reason is simple: God's Spirit gives us an understanding of what is right before God and an understanding of what decisions we should be making. These disciples were getting these benefits, that today are bestowed on us through the Holy Spirit, from Jesus Christ personally on a daily basis. They didn't need the Holy Spirit to guide them as long as Jesus Christ was personally providing that guidance.

It was "when the Bridegroom was taken from them", that then God sent them the Holy Spirit. And so they received the Holy Spirit on Pentecost in Acts chapter 2. But from the time they were baptized they had in fact had the daily guidance of God's Spirit, in the person of Jesus Christ, freely available.

Now from the time of Acts chapter 2 onwards all the people who repent would receive the Holy Spirit immediately after being baptized, when they had hands laid on them. This was going to be a new way in which God would give His Holy Spirit to repentant believers (i.e. repentance ... baptism ... laying on of hands ... receive Holy Spirit).

So Acts chapter 2 is an absolutely vital account in documenting the establishment of the Church of God in New Testament times. In this chapter we have the explanation for how people would become a part of the Church of God. You already know the key Scriptures here.

Peter preached a powerful sermon without pulling any punches. When people were then overcome with feelings of guilt and remorse (i.e. "they were pricked in their heart") and they asked the apostles: so what must we do to get rid of this guilt of being responsible for Christ's crucifixion (see Acts 2:36), Peter answered:

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. (Acts 2:38)

This is the founding of the Church! This is the only time when 3,000 people were baptized on one day (Acts 2:41). If the Apostle Peter was aware of the (supposed) instructions in Matthew 28:19, then Peter was being **insanely negligent** in saying "be baptized ... in the name of Jesus Christ". I say "insanely negligent" because Peter's statement here would have been an enormous insult to God the Father!

If the correct baptism formula is "in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit", then

obviously God the Father is the most important individual in that formula! **And you would have to be insane to omit mentioning God the Father first before anyone else!** And if the evangelist Luke, as a baptized man, was aware of the "Father Son Holy Spirit" formula, then Luke likewise would have had to be insane to omit mentioning God the Father FIRST in this baptism formula in his book (i.e. here in the Book of Acts).

If you have been told once that the correct baptism formula is "in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit", then **you will NEVER, NEVER somehow "forget" to include the Father** any time you make reference to that formula. It is IMPOSSIBLE for you to forget to include the Father when you speak about the baptism formula (i.e. assuming the trinitarian formula), if you have the Holy Spirit influencing your mind. You would know full well that for you to omit mentioning the Father first in that formula would be an insult to God the Father. And if you really had God's Spirit (which was obviously the case for Peter right here!) then there is absolutely no way that you would mention Jesus Christ's name but neglect to mention the Father's name.

Acts 2:38 is not just any old casual reference to baptism! Acts 2:38 is the key verse to show how people could become a part of God's Church!

It is absolutely inconceivable, if Peter had been told ten days earlier by the resurrected Jesus Christ to baptize people "into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit", that a mere ten days later Peter would brazenly omit the Father's name from the baptism instructions!

If Acts 2:38 is an accurate record of what Peter said at that time, then the only possibility is that **Peter had never heard the words in Matthew 28:19**. There is no other possibility!

Peter had great respect for Jesus Christ. But he had an even greater respect for God the Father, because that is what Jesus Christ had instilled in Peter's mind throughout His entire ministry (John 14:28, etc.).

Regarding Matthew 28:19 and Acts 2:38, once these things have been pointed out, a converted mind will understand that only one of these two verses, separated by a mere two weeks in time, can be true! And the other one must therefore be a forgery! So which one is true?

You simply cannot have both of these verses!

Let's continue our examination of the Bible and see which of these two verses is endorsed in other passages. And if we find that some Scriptures endorse Acts 2:38 while other Scriptures endorse Matthew 28:19, then we have a major problem on our hands! But if the rest of the New Testament endorses only one of these two Scriptures, then the answer becomes pretty obvious.

So let's continue.

(For as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only **they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus**.) (Acts 8:16)

Right, so now the score is **1-0** in favor of Acts 2:38. Here is the next Scripture.

And he commanded them **to be baptized in the name of the Lord**. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days. (Acts 10:48)

Now the score is **2-0** in favor of Acts 2:38. Let's continue.

When they heard *this*, **they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus**. (Acts 19:5)

The score has just increased to **3-0** in favor of Acts 2:38. Let's continue.

And now why tarriest thou? arise, and **be baptized**, and wash away thy sins, **calling on the name of the Lord**. (Acts 22:16)

They didn't call on the name of God the Father or the supposed name of the Holy Spirit; they only called on the name of Jesus Christ. So now the score is **4-0** in favor of Acts 2:38. Acts 2:38 is building up a pretty impressive lead, don't you think? But the key still is to restrict the other side to zero! Let's continue.

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 8:12)

I didn't mention this verse earlier because the wording is not as clear as in the other cases. But this verse is another endorsement of Acts 2:38. So with the Book of Acts consistently linking baptism to the name of Jesus Christ (or the Lord), it should be quite clear that Acts 2:38 wins hands-down against Matthew 28:19.

There is in fact not a single Scripture that supports the words of Matthew 28:19. Not one!

Consider the principle of Deuteronomy 19:15, which I briefly mentioned earlier.

One witness shall not rise up against a man for any iniquity, or for any sin, in any sin that he sins: **at the mouth of two witnesses, or at the mouth of three witnesses, shall the matter be established**. (Deuteronomy 19:15)

A matter is established by at least two, and preferably three, witnesses. This is to safeguard against one witness alone being unreliable. The Apostle Paul recognized that **God also follows this principle**. And so Paul wrote in Hebrews:

Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed *it* by an oath: That **by two immutable things**, in which *it was* impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us: (Hebrews 6:17-18)

This principle is also the reason why the Apostle John made a point of mentioning the fact that Jesus Christ baptized people three times.

Now consider the whole Bible. Is there anything at all that you do in your Christian life that is based on one short brief statement in the Bible, a statement that is not ever repeated again anywhere else, and neither is that statement supported anywhere else?

How about Sabbath-keeping or feast and Holy Day observances or tithing or keeping all of the ten commandments or not eating unclean foods or being baptized or fasting or studying the Bible, etc.? Can you think of anything you do or that you submit to having done to you based on one single biblical statement?

Isn't there for all of these things at least a second witness somewhere?

We've seen that the practice of baptism itself is endorsed repeatedly by the Bible. However, **the**

baptism formula of Matthew 28:19 is not in any way whatsoever endorsed anywhere else in the Bible. That formula is not compatible with any other Scripture! Be honest and just admit that!

Those who defend Matthew 28:19 know this. That is why, in order to support the trinitarian formula, they would need to combine a bunch of Scriptures ... some to justify including the Father's name in the formula, others to justify including Jesus Christ's name in the formula, and still other Scriptures to justify including "the Holy Spirit" in the formula. In other words, they would need **a bouquet of Scriptures** to attempt to justify the Matthew 28:19 formula.

But Matthew 28:19 is one simple compact statement, and therefore **they also need to find one compact statement that justifies the use of all three names in that one formula**. Requiring three or more different Scriptures to each justify one third part of that formula is not acceptable before God. **One third of a witness for something we are supposed to do is not a reliable witness**. And three thirds that are not connected together in one context are also not a reliable witness.

We need to face the fact that nowhere, from Genesis to Revelation, does the Bible support the Matthew 28:19 formula. But for everything that we are required to do it is essential that there are at least "two witnesses". The witness of Matthew 28:19 is the witness of one, and that makes the witness of Matthew 28:19 questionable.

Information in general might well just appear in one place. But that is not what we are talking about. We are talking about something that claims to be a direct instruction to us from Jesus Christ, and that type of instruction always requires a second witness.

Let's now very briefly consider two different situations. First let's consider the whole Bible from the premise that Matthew 28:19 is **NOT** a part of the original text. Then let's consider the whole Bible from the premise that Matthew 28:19 **IS** a part of the original text. This will enable us to highlight the effect Matthew 28:19 has overall. So let's start.

WHAT IF MATTHEW 28:19 IS NOT A PART OF THE ORIGINAL TEXT?

Without Matthew 28:19 every reference to baptism is 100% compatible with every other reference to baptism. No reference to baptism anywhere in the New Testament requires any kind of justification. And no Scriptures that speak about other subjects are incompatible with the Scriptures that speak about baptism.

The only formula that is consistently presented is baptism "in the name of Jesus Christ". This formula is readily understandable because Jesus Christ is the One who established baptism as a law for repentant believers, as a way of filling righteousness to the full.

This formula also has a very clear focus. The symbolism expressed by this formula is easy to follow. No hidden meanings need to be inferred with this formula, and no complicated explanations are required to understand this formula.

By contrast:

WHAT IF MATTHEW 28:19 IS A VALID PART OF THE ORIGINAL TEXT?

With Matthew 28:19 as a valid part of the original text of the Gospel of Matthew there are **numerous clashes** with other parts of the New Testament that will require complicated explanations to overcome those clashes.

For a start, Matthew 28:19 requires **a less-than-honest explanation** as to why every other reference to a baptism formula represents a slap in the face to God the Father Himself, by blatantly ignoring the Father's preeminent position within the Matthew 28:19 formula. It requires an explanation as to why all those other references are **so consistent** in ignoring the Father's name. Why is God the Father's name not mentioned even once in a baptism context anywhere else?

Next, Matthew 28:19 also requires **a convoluted explanation** as to **WHY** the Father's name is supposed to be included in the baptism formula in the first place. Shortly I'll deal with this point in more detail.

Next, Matthew 28:19 also requires **an enormous amount of rationalizing** to justify why a clearly trinitarian formula is somehow not supposed to be trinitarian. On the one hand we reject the trinity as a pagan idea, and on the other hand we ourselves freely start our membership of God's Church with a trinitarian formula.

Next, Matthew 28:19 requires **a highly questionable explanation** for why the Holy Spirit has a name, but at the same time is not a person or an individual. Shortly I'll also deal with this point in more detail.

In other words, if Matthew 28:19 is supposed to be a part of the original text, then it creates numerous conflicts with other parts of the Bible. Simply because we in God's Church have in the past always chosen to ignore those conflicts, i.e. our mind-set caused us to be oblivious to the conflicts that were created by our baptismal formula, doesn't mean that those conflicts don't exist. We have to stop willingly putting our heads in the sand.

So let's examine the "in the name of ... the Holy Spirit" part of the Matthew 28:19 baptism formula.

THE HOLY SPIRIT DOES NOT HAVE A NAME!

Here is another point to consider regarding the formula "into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit".

This formula **assumes** that the Holy Spirit has "a name"! But that is not correct. The Holy Spirit does not have a name at all. And the Holy Spirit most certainly does not share a name with either God the Father or with Jesus Christ.

Electricity doesn't have a name. Magnetism doesn't have a name. Gravity doesn't have a name. Heat doesn't have a name. Light doesn't have a name. Water doesn't have a name. Air doesn't have a name. And none of these things have their own unique identity.

And the Holy Spirit doesn't have a name!

A name is a distinctive designation for an individual with a unique identity. A name distinguishes the name holder from other individuals. The word electricity, on the other hand, is a label but it is not a name. Likewise, magnetism is an identifying label for a very specific physical phenomenon, but it is not a name.

The Holy Spirit is a manifestation of God's endless power, but it doesn't have a name to distinguish it from other individuals because the Holy Spirit is not an individual. So it doesn't make sense to attempt to baptize someone "into the name of ... the Holy Spirit", when the Holy Spirit actually doesn't have a name.

The whole expression "baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" is based on the assumption that the Holy Spirit is an individual, and as such that it has a name. Face the facts!

For anyone in the Church of God who understands quite clearly that the Holy Spirit is not an individual, that it is not a member of some imagined "trinity", any reference to "**the name** of the Holy Spirit" should raise a warning flag.

Some people may argue: well, Jesus Christ called the Holy Spirit "Comforter", and that proves that the Holy Spirit can have a name.

But that is not correct.

The Greek word "**parakletos**", translated as "**Comforter**", is used only five times in the whole New Testament, and in all five instances it appears in the writings of the Apostle John. None of the other New Testament writers ever used the word in their writings. None of them ever referred to the Holy Spirit as "parakletos".

Here are the five places where "parakletos" is used:

And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another **Comforter** (Greek "parakletos"), that he may abide with you for ever; (John 14:16)

But **the Comforter** (Greek "parakletos"), *which is* the **Holy Spirit**, 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. (John 14:26)

But when **the Comforter** (Greek "parakletos") is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, *even* the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me: (John 15:26)

Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, **the Comforter** (Greek "parakletos") will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. (John 16:7)

My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have **an Advocate** (Greek "parakletos") with the Father, **Jesus Christ** the righteous: (1 John 2:1)

For a start, the Greek word "**parakletos**" does not really mean "comforter" at all. The word is formed from the preposition "para" which means "besides, by the side of", and the verb "kaleo" which means "to call". So the noun "parakletos" refers to someone or something "called to one's side", meaning "**called to give assistance**". Thus "advocate" is a suitable translation.

The word was used in Greek society to refer to a legal assistant in court cases, like a lawyer who helps you fight your legal battles, and who sees to it that your legal rights are upheld. That's a "parakletos". But it has nothing to do with "comforting". That is just one more blatant mistranslation.

A brief background to this mistranslation of "parakletos" as "comforter".

Around 1380 A.D. John Wycliffe translated a Latin text of the New Testament into English. Wycliffe translated John 14:16 as follows:

"And Y schal preye the fadir, and he schal zyue to zou **another coumfortour**, the spirit of treuthe ..." (spelling as presented in the 1879 Clarendon Press, Oxford edition of the 1380 Wycliffe New Testament, revised by John Purvey in 1388, where "fadir" = father, "schal" = shall, "coumfortour" = comforter, "treuthe" = truth, "Y" = I, "zou" = thee, etc.)

Now the Latin Vulgate text, which Wycliffe used for most of his translation, has the Latin word "paracletus", which means "advocate, defender". This word was clearly derived from the Greek word "parakletos". But there were also some alternate Latin versions in existence at Wycliffe's time, which had a different and incorrect word instead of "paracletus".

Erasmus produced his simultaneous Greek and Latin versions of the New Testament in 1522, roughly 140 years after John Wycliffe. In his Greek text for John 14:16 Erasmus uses the Greek word "parakletos", but in his Latin text for this verse Erasmus uses the Latin word "**consolarorem**", which means "**a comforter**" or "a consoler". It seems that Wycliffe must have had access to a Latin text which also used the Latin word "consolarorem", rather than the Latin "paracletus" in John's Gospel.

At any rate, after John Wycliffe in the 1380's had incorrectly used the word "comforter" for the Greek "parakletos" in the Gospel of John, **all subsequent early English translations followed Wycliffe's wrong lead** and also mistranslated "parakletos" in John's Gospel as "comforter". So from Wycliffe, a firm believer in the trinity, the word "comforter" found its way into the Tyndale Translation, Coverdale, Geneva Bible, Bishops Bible, and the King James Version, etc. A few modern translations have corrected this by replacing "comforter" with more appropriate words like "advocate" or "helper".

But "comforter" is clearly a mistranslation!

Getting back to our five Scriptures: Notice that Jesus Christ is quoted four times as using "parakletos" to refer to the Holy Spirit. The other time **John himself used the word to refer to Jesus Christ**. So Christ referred to the Holy Spirit as "parakletos", and the Apostle John referred to Jesus Christ as "parakletos". The word is clearly not a name reserved for one specific individual.

The mistranslation as "Comforter" in the Gospel of John is due to the religious bias of the translators, starting with Wycliffe, who assumed that the Holy Spirit is an individual and as such is the third member of the "trinity".

The Apostle John was undoubtedly aware of the meaning "parakletos" had in the secular Greek society, referring to someone who came to your side to help you, an advocate. So John used the word "parakletos" to refer to "**a help or a power that comes to our side to help us**". This left it open for John to further define that power, whether he was referring to the power of the Holy Spirit strengthening our minds, or whether he was speaking about the power of Jesus Christ strengthening our minds.

So the five verses that use the word "parakletos" would be better translated something like this:

And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another **help by your side** (Greek "parakletos"), that it may abide with you for ever; (John 14:16)

But **the help by your side** (Greek "parakletos"), *which is* the Holy Spirit, which the Father will send in my name, it shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you. (John 14:26)

But when **the help by your side** (Greek "parakletos") is come, which I will send unto you from the Father, *even* the Spirit of truth, which proceeds from the Father, it shall testify of me: (John 15:26)

Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, **the help by your side** (Greek "parakletos") will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send it unto you. (John 16:7)

Up to that point in time Jesus Christ Himself had been that "help by their sides". So in the above verses Jesus Christ was saying that when He would leave them, that the Holy Spirit would do for them what until then Jesus Christ had done for them ... provide help to understand the truth of God.

My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have **a help by our side** (Greek "parakletos") with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: (1 John 2:1)

So Jesus Christ is with God the Father; but at the same time Christ is also "the help by our side" by intervening on our behalf before God the Father.

The word "parakletos" is not a name! It is a term that describes a function someone or something will carry out, the function of a helper.

It should be quite clear to anyone who is not prejudiced by a belief in a trinity that the word "parakletos" in the above five verses was not in any way intended to be a name for either the Holy Spirit or for Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit simply does not have a name!

The expression "baptizing them into the name ... of the Holy Spirit" doesn't really make sense.

An indication of how deeply this wrong perception of the Holy Spirit is ingrained in us is something that I myself have deliberately done up to this point in time in this article. And that is this: we are in the habit that we automatically write "Holy Spirit" and "the Spirit of God" with initial capital letters. Writing "Holy Spirit" with initial capital letters implies that this is a name, because **that is how we write names**, with initial capital letters.

That practice is like a passive statement that the Holy Spirit may not be a person but **it nevertheless deserves some respect**, and therefore we show that respect by writing "Holy Spirit" with initial capitals. That practice subconsciously enforces the "Father Son Holy Spirit" idea by implying that "Holy Spirit" is a name.

That is a part of how we have been brainwashed!

Before changing this to correctly writing "holy spirit" and "spirit of God" I wanted to first explain this matter. But **from now onwards** in this article, as well as in all future articles, I intend to always write "holy spirit" or "God's spirit" or "the spirit of Jesus Christ", etc., where the word "spirit" is written with a small initial letter like every other word because **it is not a name for some specific individual**. This doesn't apply if I am quoting a statement from somewhere else. Also, I realize that I may slip up and through sheer force of habit revert to using initial capital letters. If that happens in any of my future articles, then that will be unintentional.

The respect due in the way we write names is reserved for God the Father and for Jesus Christ. And writing "holy spirit" with small letters is a reminder that these two words are not a personal name.

Now let's look at another part of Matthew 28:19.

CAN WE DO ANYTHING "IN THE NAME OF GOD THE FATHER"?

Consider the expression "I now baptize you **in or into the name of the Father** ...". (It makes no difference whether you say "in" or "into" here.)

We do not have the right or the power or the authority to do ANYTHING at all "in or into the name of God the Father"!

We don't understand what a presumptuous statement that actually is ... to want to do anything "in or into the name of God the Father"! Just who do we think we are?

Look, Jesus Christ came to reveal God the Father to us human beings.

All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knows the Son, but the Father; **neither knows any man the Father, save the Son, and *he* to whomsoever the Son will reveal *him***. (Matthew 11:27)

And to all those people to whom Jesus Christ has revealed the Father, **and to no one else (!)**, Jesus Christ has also given the privilege to approach God the Father directly in prayer, but always "in Christ's name" !

At that day **you shall ask in my name**: and I say not unto you, that I will pray the Father for you: For **the Father himself loves you**, because you have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God. (John 16:26-27)

[Comment: All of the people in this world to whom Jesus Christ has not revealed the Father are incapable of praying to God the Father. They can't pray to someone whom they don't know.]

It is one thing for us to be given the incredible privilege of being allowed to approach God the Father directly in our prayers, by appealing to the name of Jesus Christ. But it is something altogether different to take the next step up and to assume that we have been given the authority to somehow put other human beings (i.e. the people we baptize) "into the name of God the Father".

THINK ABOUT THIS!!

If we actually have the power to put another human being "**into** the name of God the Father", then we have taken over Jesus Christ's role as High Priest in heaven! And if we dare to think that we can do anything at all "**in** the name of God the Father", then likewise we are bypassing our High Priest in heaven (i.e. Jesus Christ) by attempting to place **ANOTHER HUMAN BEING** into a direct relationship with God the Father!

So note!

It is one thing for us to pray to God the Father **for** other people. Such prayers do not presume to attempt to put those "other people" into some kind of relationship with God the Father. But it is an altogether different thing for us to attempt to put any other human beings into some kind of direct relationship with God the Father. We simply can't do that!

It is presumptuous for us to attempt to baptize somebody "**into** the name of God the Father", and it is equally presumptuous to attempt to baptize somebody "**in** the name of God the Father"! Both forms are presumptuous. Both forms attempt to do something that only Jesus Christ, our High Priest in heaven, is capable of potentially doing.

The carnal mind is totally incapable of grasping just how offensive to God that Matthew 28:19 formula actually is! It is blasphemy to attempt to usurp Jesus Christ's position of High Priest!

So I personally am guilty of having spoken blasphemy in the past, when I baptized people. And all of us who have ever sung #120 in the old Church Hymnal are guilty of blasphemy. But I, just like all of you, and even like the Apostle Paul (see 1 Timothy 1:13), did it ignorantly! And I have repented of that; i.e. I have firmly and resolutely put behind me ever using that phrase again when I baptize someone! And I will not sing that blasphemy again; **I will not again sing #120 in the old Church Hymnal, which number is titled "GO YE THEREFORE INTO ALL THE WORLD"**, at least not without some completely different words put to that catchy melody. I have firmly and resolutely changed my mind on this matter of using the phrase of Matthew 28:19. I have repented!

Can you understand that it is blasphemy to attempt to do anything in the name of God the Father? That power is reserved exclusively at this time to Jesus Christ. Can you see how devious Satan is in tricking us into engaging in blasphemy?

Can you now see why in an examination of Matthew 28:19 any appeals to Eusebius and to Polycarp and to any Greek language scholars and to semi-Arian beliefs, etc. are a strawman, a distraction from the real issue. I couldn't care less what any old Catholic "church fathers" did or didn't do, or did or didn't believe. I don't really care when or by whom that forgery was added to the text of the Gospel of Matthew.

I don't want to be guilty of blasphemy! That is a major issue for me! I will no longer presume that I have the authority to put anybody "into the name of God the Father", thereby bypassing Jesus Christ's role as High Priest.

Can you see that Satan has deceived us into saying and singing something that is in fact blasphemy?

My comments here regarding Eusebius, etc. are not intended to imply that I will not consider the evidence of history. I will certainly examine the facts regarding the preservation of the New Testament. However, that is something I had already done before writing the above section, and my comments in the above section take into account the information I had already assembled regarding the Catholic "church fathers" and the preservation of the New Testament.

And most assuredly I was not looking for an excuse to somehow avoid facing evidence that would challenge my conclusions. That is something that I don't do!

So let's now look at some facts regarding the preservation of the New Testament.

HISTORICAL EVIDENCE REGARDING N.T. MANUSCRIPTS

The Apostle John wrote the last book of the New Testament, the Book of Revelation, in the 90's A.D. By 100 A.D. all eight authors of the books of the New Testament (i.e. Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Paul, James, Peter and Jude) were dead.

So from about 100 A.D. onwards all of the books of the New Testament were in need of being preserved by someone. Here is a fact that we should keep in mind.

ALL 27 of the books of the New Testament had been written **by** members of the Church of God **for** the members of the Church of God. None of these 27 books had been written for anyone outside of the

Church of God. Yet these 27 books that make up the New Testament were not preserved by members of the Church of God. **The books of the New Testament were preserved by the enemies of God's Church!** Can you understand this?

The first era of God's Church had to contend with "**the Nicolaitanes**" (see Revelation 2:6). Then God's people had to contend with "**the synagogue of Satan**" (Revelation 2:9) and with those who dwell **at "Satan's seat"** (Revelation 2:13) and with those who hold "**the doctrine of Balaam**" (Revelation 2:14) and with "**Jezebel**" (Revelation 2:20).

What we need to face up to is this:

The New Testament was preserved by the Nicolaitanes and by the synagogue of Satan and by those who dwell at Satan's seat and by those who accepted the doctrine of Balaam and by Jezebel!

In fact, the New Testament was preserved **primarily by Jezebel**!

Those are the people who preserved the New Testament, whether we like it or not. All of them are identified in Revelation as the enemies of God's people. And they are the ones who preserved the New Testament as we have it today. We, the people of God, did not ourselves preserve the New Testament, which was written by us and for us.

It is a mistake to go around and impute some religiously noble motives to these enemies of God's people who preserved the books of the New Testament. They didn't preserve the New Testament to do God's people a favor. They preserved the books of the New Testament because to them these books represented the religion of **THEIR god**, the one mentioned in 2 Corinthians 4:4. You know who that is, right?

And it goes without question that "their god" wasn't going to be a stickler about accuracy of preservation. You need to get rid of this idea that somehow "God commissioned the Greeks to preserve the New Testament", because that just ain't so!

The writers of the original New Testament books were **not Greeks**. And the most significant and influential manuscripts used in determining the text for the New Testament as we have it today weren't produced by Greeks either; **most of the influential manuscripts were produced by Egyptians and by Romans**. Were they also commissioned by God to faithfully preserve the New Testament, or were they hook, line and sinker on the payroll of their god?

It was the Greek language that was used to preserve the New Testament; but it wasn't the Greeks who preserved the New Testament. **The Greek language was used by non-Greeks to preserve the New Testament.**

Notice especially a huge problem in that God's people actually **allowed Jezebel "TO TEACH ... MY SERVANTS"** (Revelation 2:20). How did Jezebel do that ... "teach God's servants"? Jezebel managed to teach God's servants **by controlling the content of the books that Jezebel preserved for the New Testament**. This has been an ongoing problem right up to the present!

Most of our misunderstandings are due to the mistranslations, as well as some changes in the text, that Jezebel managed to introduce into the text of the New Testament.

Revelation chapters 2-3 isn't just window dressing! These chapters were given by Jesus Christ to help us at the end of this age to put the whole picture together.

So let’s look at the facts regarding the preservation of New Testament manuscripts.

You may have heard that "close to 6,000 Greek manuscripts of the New Testament have survived". **That sounds pretty impressive.** So you picture most of those 6,000 manuscripts supporting the text as it appears in your Bible.

Unfortunately that is an extremely distorted view of the facts!

You may not know that some of those almost 6,000 manuscripts are no bigger than a credit card. Did you know that? In fact, **the huge overwhelming majority of manuscripts consists of mere fragments**. The number of complete texts of the whole New Testament are very few indeed.

So I did a check-up, century by century.

For a start, all these "manuscripts" are divided into two groups: group #1 = New Testament manuscripts, and group #2 = Lectionaries.

A "Lectionary" is a handwritten book of selected New Testament Bible readings. In most cases they are not complete copies of the books of the New Testament. They combine passages from different sections of the New Testament for inspirational reading. And they are not on the same level as actual New Testament manuscripts.

Anyway, of the almost 6,000 fragments and complete NT books, close to three-and-a-half thousand are "New Testament manuscripts" and close to two-and-a-half thousand are only "Lectionaries".

Furthermore, **about 95%** of these 6,000 Greek fragments and books of the NT are dated **after the year 800 A.D.** Did you know that? In round numbers that’s about 5,700 out of 6,000 manuscripts which are from after the year 800 A.D. So now we have only 300 manuscripts and lectionaries, some of which are only small fragments, from before the year 800 A.D. Of these **less than 100 Greek manuscripts are from before the year 500 A.D.** Just to remind you, 500 A.D. is **400 years after John** wrote the Book of Revelation.

Now if we are looking at manuscripts **before the year 400 A.D.**, then there are **exactly 2 manuscripts that contain the text of the gospels**. There is no other documentary evidence for the full text of the gospels that precedes the year 400 A.D. By 400 A.D. "Jezebel" was well-established and very influential.

Those two Greek manuscripts that contain the gospels are known as **Codex Sinaiticus** and as **Codex Vaticanus**. Both of these manuscripts are dated well after 300 A.D. Both of these manuscripts are in the form of uncials, i.e. they are written in Greek capital letters, with a fixed number of letters per line and a fixed number of lines per page, and no spaces between words. Each line looks like one long word.

I have scanned copies of both Sinaiticus and Vaticanus (and a bunch of other old versions as well) on my computer, and I have checked Matthew 28:19 in both of those codices. And yes, both of them do include the "baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the holy spirit" expression.

Yes, there is additional manuscript evidence for the gospels, but for that you have to go to dates after 800 A.D. They are not very useful in establishing an original text. So for the earliest witness for the inclusion of Matthew 28:19 we are dependent on exactly two manuscripts: Sinaiticus and Vaticanus.

So let’s first consider Sinaiticus.

CODEX SINAITICUS

You can easily find detailed information about this codex on the internet. I will just mention a few points of interest from our perspective.

Originally Codex Sinaiticus contained the whole Old Testament plus the apocryphal books of: 2 Esdras, Tobit, Judith, 1 Maccabees, 4 Maccabees, Wisdom, and Sirach. Those seven books should never be associated with any part of the Old Testament. But Sinaiticus included them. The New Testament also includes two spurious books: the Epistle of Barnabas and The Shepherd of Hermas. Those two books should likewise never be associated with any part of the New Testament. But Sinaiticus includes them.

So the first thing this tells us about Codex Sinaiticus is that **it is something that was produced by the false church**. Including non-biblical books within the same covers as the books of the Bible is not something that any Church of God scribe would ever have done. The inclusion of these spurious books is in fact a dead giveaway that we are dealing with a manuscript that was produced by the false church.

Next, Codex Sinaiticus contains **about 23,000 corrections**. To put this into some perspective: the whole codex contains about four million characters. It is probably the manuscript with more corrections entered into the text by numerous different people than any other manuscript in existence. After all, Tischendorf found it in a rubbish bin of St. Catherine's Monastery in Sinai, where it was being kept for burning at a later time (though the monks **after realizing the value of the manuscript** later vigorously denied Tischendorf's claim).

Next, scholars have identified Codex **Sinaiticus** and Codex **Vaticanus** as belonging to **the same text-type**, both having been produced in **Egypt**. What this means is that scholars believe, based on textual comparisons, that Sinaiticus and Vaticanus were **derived from a common source document** in Egypt. This is significant.

Before 400 A.D. there are only these two manuscripts that include Matthew chapter 28, and both of them are derived from the same source document in Egypt.

As far as the content is concerned: Codex Sinaiticus has numerous **passages missing**, **verses missing**, **phrases missing**, **words missing**, **and variants** not supported by any other manuscript. That is not good!

Furthermore, even though Sinaiticus and Vaticanus are of the same text-type, yet there are, according to a scholar named Hoskier, **3036 differences between Sinaiticus and Vaticanus in the gospels alone**! That is 656 differences in Matthew, 567 differences in Mark, 791 differences in Luke and 1022 differences in John. That is just for the four gospels.

Now what does that tell us about **the credibility of both these codices**, when they disagree over 3,000 times in the four gospels? It means that **neither one of them can really be trusted** as a faithful copy from some faithful copy of the original. Yes, many of those 3,036 differences are simple things like spelling mistakes. But many of those differences also involve whole verses and missing phrases and significant textual differences.

These two codices apparently come from the same source document, and yet they can't agree time and time and time again. The disagreements between these two codices for the full text of the whole Bible are staggering, and have never been fully catalogued.

Modern analysis of Sinaiticus has identified at least three different scribes, plus another at least seven different correctors of the text. Scholars have stated that two of those scribes were **poor spellers**, with

one of them making some unusually serious mistakes. One of the scribes is called **careless and illiterate** by some modern scholars. It is also known that in the 6th or 7th centuries **many alterations** were made to this text. That doesn't sound very good, does it?

The point is this: it should be fairly clear that **Codex Sinaiticus is hardly a faithful copy of the New Testament**, not when it has been fiddled with by at least ten different people. Numerous flaws and problems are freely acknowledged by scholars who have examined the text. Yet you are going to find that the people who defend Matthew 28:19 will also vigorously defend the supposed credibility of Sinaiticus. Why would they do that?

[**COMMENT:** Regarding correctors: Correctors would write in the margin and also in the actual text and between the lines of text. In some cases they also wrote over the existing letters in order to change them. This was somewhat like what all of us have done at some time or another: we meant to write "back" but we unintentionally wrote "bach", and then we forcefully wrote a "k" over the "h" three or four times, so that the reader would know we mean "back" and not "bach". We've also done that to change other letters, like a "d" to a "t", etc. Scribes back then did the same thing.

This overwriting of existing text is found most prominently in Codex Vaticanus. In Codex Vaticanus some later scribe in the 10th or 11th century wrote over all of the original letters, more or less tracing them. In practice this caused considerable smudging of the original high quality of the text. But it begs the question: WHY did a later scribe do this? Was it to restore faded letters or was it to entrench and hide some changes and alterations? If a text has faded a lot then this overwriting could very readily be used to introduce major changes into the faded text.

The Wikipedia article on Codex Vaticanus states this situation as follows, including the parenthetical statement: "The original writing was retraced by a later scribe (usually dated to the 10th or 11th century), and the beauty of the original script was spoiled."]

So let's now have a look at Codex Vaticanus.

CODEX VATICANUS

Information about this codex is also freely available on the internet. We'll just consider a few points.

Originally Codex Vaticanus contained a complete copy of the LXX Greek language Old Testament, **including all but three books of the Apocrypha**. Several large sections had been lost and were then later written by someone else from a different source document. The New Testament of Codex Vaticanus lacks First and Second Timothy, Titus, Philemon and the Book of Revelation. So the New Testament is rather incomplete, to put it mildly.

Like Sinaiticus, Vaticanus also lacks numerous passages and phrases and words in the New Testament. In the Old Testament Vaticanus has a completely different and **totally unacceptable** version for the Book of Isaiah, as well as many other things that diverge significantly from the Hebrew text of the Old Testament. After all, the Greek LXX version of the Old Testament, which is what the Old Testament in both Sinaiticus and Vaticanus is, does not represent a faithful copy of the Hebrew Old Testament Scriptures at all.

The codex was written by two or three different scribes and then later corrected by at least two additional correctors. Scholars have determined that the second corrector **altered the text** in the 10th or 11th century.

So this text was also fiddled with as late as the 10th century. But the text as a whole is still viewed as a 4th century work.

So here is the point for both Codex Sinaiticus and Codex Vaticanus:

While both these works come from the 300's A.D., both were corrected and altered in numerous places several centuries later. When we today see a copy of these texts for the gospels from these two codices, we have no way of determining which words are from the 4th century, and which words were inserted into the text later anywhere from the 6th to the 11th centuries. That is a problem!

The fact that there are so many discrepancies between these two texts, even though they apparently come from a common source document further tarnishes the credibility of these texts in crucial passages. It is clear that both texts have been tampered with repeatedly.

But apart from these two texts we do not have any manuscripts that contain Matthew 28 until well after 500 A.D.

This is something that those who defend Matthew 28:19 don't seem to realize. Now let's consider something about the scribes who produced the New Testament manuscripts that have survived.

SCRIBES OF THE GREEK NEW TESTAMENT MANUSCRIPTS

Most of us in the Church of God have heard about how meticulously the Hebrew scribes worked during Old Testament times in producing scrolls of the books of the Old Testament. And most of us probably assume that those who made copies of the books of the New Testament used the same level of care in their work.

So it can be a shock when Church of God members find out that some of the copies of books of the New Testament were actually made by people who were **illiterate or only semi-literate**. True, this applied to a minority of scribes, and the great majority of scribes appear to have been fully qualified to make such copies. But we should be aware of the fact that some of the surviving manuscripts were produced by semi-literate scribes.

You may wonder how that is even possible.

Well, the production of books was a very expensive undertaking. The vellum parchments on which the 4 million characters of the Codex Sinaiticus were written were made mostly from calf skins and secondly from sheep skins. All of the parchment required for **the Codex Sinaiticus required at least 360 animals to be slaughtered**! That was for just one copy of the Old and New Testaments with a bunch of apocryphal books thrown in.

Can you see how expensive it was to produce a whole Bible if you had to slaughter 360 animals just to have enough parchment available? And that didn't include the expenses you had to pay the scribe for making the copy for you. A long project like producing the Codex Sinaiticus could earn the scribe the equivalent of a lifetime of salaries. Working as a scribe could provide a reasonable income for people.

Earlier I mentioned that 95% of all surviving Greek manuscripts of biblical books were produced after 800 A.D. By that time many scribes in Western Europe mostly no longer understood Greek. They had just practiced forming all of the letters of the Greek alphabet. [Comment: The number of scholars of Greek increased greatly in Western Europe after the fall of Constantinople in 1453, when large numbers

of scholars fled into Western Europe. That event started a revival of interest in the study of classical Greek.]

Let me give you an analogy. I can correctly recognize every letter of our alphabet. And so I can write my articles. However, I am illiterate as far as the Swedish language is concerned. But that doesn't stop me from correctly identifying every letter from a to z in a Swedish text, including the three extra characters after the letter "z" in the Swedish alphabet. So if we were living 1,000 years ago, and someone offered me a good income to make copies of certain books in the Swedish language, then I could do that. **I could produce hand-written copies of Swedish texts without ever understanding a single word of Swedish.** I could do that because I can correctly identify every letter in every Swedish word.

That is basically what happened in a number of cases with the 95% of manuscripts that were produced after 800 A.D. Some copies were made by scribes who didn't really understand Greek. As it was, every line had a more or less fixed number of letters without any spaces between the words. Each line looked like one long word. Many words started in one line and ended in the next line. That made the text difficult to read even for those scribes that did understand some Greek.

For example, the only way I can read the uncial text of Vaticanus and Sinaiticus (since I have scanned copies of both on my computer) is to have the text I am searching for (I did this for Matthew 28:19) lying next to me in modern Greek writing. And then I have to search for where the first word I am looking for starts in the middle of some line on some unidentified page, which can take quite a while. And then I have to check letter by letter, comparing the letters in the modern Greek text with the letters in the uncial text, which happens to also contain mistakes and abbreviations, looking for the letters that should be present in the uncial text. (As you will recognize, I am certainly not a Greek scholar. For Greek scholars this process is undoubtedly much faster.)

I am not qualified to make any copies of any Greek manuscripts, and I would be liable to make very many mistakes. But I mention my example because some of the manuscripts that have survived were produced by people who had my level of qualifications, or more accurately, my level of being unqualified to make such copies. But **for them it was a way to make a living**. They simply tried to copy one Greek letter after another. They were only writing capital letters.

In analogy: some scribes may have had the equivalent of a "Harvard PhD" degree, while other scribes had the equivalent of a "guaranteed high school diploma" because they had spent their time playing on the school's football team. Now if you wanted to commission a hand-written copy (i.e. a manuscript) of the whole Bible you might have to pay the "Harvard PhD" scribe five times or even ten times as much as you would have to pay the scribe with the "guaranteed high school diploma", who would copy Greek uncial letters without understanding a word of Greek. Add to that the price of 360 animals that needed to be slaughtered and then the price of turning all those hides into parchment, and you get an idea of the huge expense involved in producing one copy of the whole Bible. You could drastically lower your overall costs if you hired the less qualified scribe to make the copy for you. And that is what happened with some of the manuscripts that have survived.

Consider the following quote from Desiderius Erasmus, the scholar who collated the first copy of the Greek New Testament text. This quotation is recorded in the "Collected Works of Erasmus", Volume 3, Letters 298-445, covering the years 1514 - 1516 A.D. The quotation is from Letter 337. Erasmus was speaking about the quality of Greek manuscripts.

"But one thing the facts cry out, and it can be clear, as they say, even to a blind man, that often through the translator's clumsiness or inattention the Greek has been wrongly rendered; **often the true and genuine reading has been corrupted by ignorant scribes, which we see happen every day, or altered by scribes who are half-taught and half-asleep**."

When they made these manuscripts, those scribes that lacked the linguistic qualifications needed would simply copy every letter in a line, 16-18 letters per line (for Vaticanus). Then they would copy every letter for the next line, and so on. In this process for these particular scribes it was immaterial whether or not they understood what they were copying. In the words of Erasmus, these scribes were "half-taught and half-asleep".

This led to many mistakes being introduced into the Greek text. At times the scribes would repeat a line of text. Sometimes they repeated a group of letters or they left out a group of letters. Sometimes they skipped several lines. Sometimes they mistook a letter in the text for a different letter. That is why some modern scholars have likewise referred to at least one of the scribes who produced the Codex Sinaiticus as careless and illiterate ... and that's going back all the way into the 300's A.D.

The majority of scribes were no doubt fluent in Greek and well-qualified for the job of making copies of earlier manuscripts. But that also raised another problem.

In Western Europe the Catholic Church had what was almost a monopoly during the Middle Ages. Their religious services were dominated by rituals. Religious customs and traditions and explanations for biblical events became well-established, without people ever needing to actually read the Bible. The Catholic Church's interpretations and applications of the Scriptures became entrenched in people's minds. And that included the minds of those who worked as scribes for the books of the New Testament.

So here is another fact about the Greek New Testament manuscripts that were produced.

When well-qualified scribes, fluent in both Greek and Latin, were producing a copy of an older manuscript, they could sometimes see a difference between what the Greek text they were copying actually said, and what they were hearing in church services. For some passages the custom in the church was one thing, but the Greek text from which they were copying said something else.

In some cases some scribes then simply provided the text they were familiar with, assuming that the text they were copying from was in error. Let me give you one example:

Consider Matthew 20:16 and Matthew 22:14.

Matthew 20:16 reads in most translations:

"So the last shall be first, and the first last: **for many be called, but few chosen**."

And Matthew 22:14 reads:

"**For many are called, but few *are* chosen.**"

The point is that the expression **"for many are called but few are chosen" was emphatically NOT a part of the original text of Matthew 20:16**. But because of Matthew 22:14 it was a well-known expression amongst "Christian" people as early as the 200's A.D., and people had started to associate the two expressions (i.e. one = the first shall be last and the last shall be first; and the second = many are called but few are chosen) as if they belonged together. This association was not justified, but that's how people understood it.

It is easy for the carnal mind to just tie these two catchy expressions together. That may make sense to the carnal mind, but a converted mind should immediately recognize the problem here, once that problem has been explained. We'll come to that explanation shortly.

So somewhere along the line, very likely still in the 200's A.D., one particular scribe added to Matthew 20:16 the Greek expression that he was convinced **should** be there, because that's how he had always heard it in popular usage.

Now that particular scribe wasn't necessarily trying to deceive anyone. He was simply adding some Greek text that he believed rightly belonged in Matthew 20:16. Yet this addition of the expression "for many are called but few are chosen" by that one scribe was so readily accepted as being correct, that **today that text is found in every manuscript** that includes Matthew 20 **except for two Greek manuscripts**, both of which are less well known. (The added expression in Matthew 20:16 is also missing in the Coptic text and in the Sahidic text, though these non-Greek language texts need not concern us here.)

So **all but two Greek manuscripts contain text that is wrong**, text that was added after Matthew had written this gospel. Yet it should be very clear that Matthew 20:16 simply cannot contain the words "many are called but few are chosen".

Translations that have left out these words in Matthew 20:16 include the ASV, the 1881 English Revised Version, the 1869 Noyes Translation, the 1912 Weymouth New Testament, the Lexham English Bible, the RSV and the NRSV. These translations were willing to accept that the two minor Greek manuscripts were right, and that all of the other Greek manuscripts with Matthew chapter 20, including the two oldest manuscripts of the (more or less) whole New Testament (i.e. Sinaiticus and Vaticanus) were wrong.

Now here is the reason why this expression was obviously not a part of Matthew's original text.

1) Matthew 20 is a parable about God calling people at different times, some very early (i.e. "early in the morning", Matthew 20:1), and some as late as 5:00 p.m. (i.e. "about the eleventh hour", Matthew 20:6). The point of the parable is that those last workers received the same basic pay as the first workers. And therefore the concluding statement "so the last shall be first and the first last" is a logical expression of the lesson that Jesus Christ was explaining with this parable of the laborers in the vineyard.

2) However, this Matthew 20 parable has nothing at all to do with "many are called but few are chosen". In this Matthew 20 parable **all of the laborers accepted the work that was offered to them. All of them were in effect "chosen".** The expression "for many are called but few are chosen" expresses a contrast in responses from the people that are called. But that has nothing to do with the timing of their calling. And the Matthew 20 parable does not indicate any contrast in the responses between different people. All of them received "a penny".

3) Now Matthew 22 is the parable about people being called to the first resurrection, i.e. to the marriage supper. In this parable we see that those who were invited (i.e. "called") chose not to accept that calling; **they chose to reject God's offer to be in the first resurrection**. So this parable presents a contrast: on the one hand God extends an invitation to people, and on the other hand those people make **invalid excuses** to refuse that invitation. This is the contrast that is expressed in the statement "many are called but few are chosen".

4) Now without the marriage supper parable the statement "many are called but few are chosen" simply does not make any sense. It requires an explanation for "what do you mean ... many are called?".

THERE IS ABSOLUTELY NO WAY THAT JESUS CHRIST WOULD HAVE SAID "many are called but few are chosen" AT THE END OF THE PARABLE OF THE LABORERS IN THE VINEYARD IN MATTHEW 20!

Now again, I don't expect a carnal mind to be able to understand that. But a converted mind should now

be able to grasp that "many are called but few are chosen" conveys a totally different and unrelated lesson from the statement "the last shall be first and the first last". Those two statements have nothing in common. But in many cases the carnal mind cannot see that these two statements represent concluding statements for two completely different parables.

This article here is not about "many are called but few are chosen". My point here is that this clearly unauthorized addition to the text of Matthew 20:16 very, very nearly escaped detection. If it wasn't for two lesser known Greek manuscripts this addition would have gone unchallenged from those people that rely exclusively on manuscripts. **People would have been able to reason: this expression must be a part of the original text because it is present in every known manuscript of Matthew 20.** And their reasoning would have been wrong, not because of some manuscript evidence, but because a converted mind recognizes that there is absolutely no way that Jesus Christ could possibly have said "many are called but few are chosen" at the end of the parable about the laborers in the vineyard. That statement has nothing to do with that parable.

Can you understand this?

This example illustrates **one huge, gigantic problem amongst the people who attend God's Church**. And that problem is this: when we know that the conclusion someone is presenting is correct before God, then often people will put up with the dumbest and most ridiculous and illogical and at times even devious reasoning that is presented in support of the conclusion we have already accepted as true and correct. The feeling seems to be: **if the answer is right, then we don't care how you have reached that answer**. That approach is wrong!

I know that Jesus Christ did not say the trinity formula in Matthew 28:19! But that doesn't mean that I will accept stupid, illogical and biased reasoning that is presented to support my position. And **I hate it when lies are presented in an attempt to support my position**! And I will not hesitate to rebuke those people who present lies to support my position.

But many people will not take that approach. Rather, if someone supports their views, then they will also overlook the stupidity of the reasons such people present in their endorsements.

Foolish reasoning by my friend is no better than foolish reasoning by my enemy!

So please beware of accepting something simply because the conclusion happens to agree with what you already believe to be true. The statement "many are called but few are chosen" is a correct and valid and important statement. But it has nothing whatsoever to do with the parable of the laborers in the vineyard. And it was wrongly added to the text of Matthew 20:16.

Now please consider the following:

Many of us (and that included me for my first decade or so in God's Church!) have quite comfortably and willingly accepted the added statement in Matthew 20:16. Hey, it's in the Bible, so what's the problem? Furthermore, it is a true statement. It is not as if it's some kind of hidden pagan teaching. No, we rightly accept "many are called but few are chosen" as an important lesson that Jesus Christ was teaching His Church. The fact that it is presented in an inappropriate context in Matthew 20 didn't make a difference to us. When this has been pointed out to us in the past, we may have said: okay, but so what? And it does appear correctly in Matthew 22:14, right? So why even make an issue out of it?

The point is this:

From at least the late 200's A.D. onwards the Catholic Church was baptizing people "in the name of the

Father and of the Son and of the holy spirit", though that was not the case for every baptism that was performed. But everybody in this world's "Christian" environment at that time was exposed to that formula from early childhood onwards, and most of those people never saw the inside of a Bible in their whole lives. Those who later became competent scribes of New Testament manuscripts had also known this formula from early childhood. They knew in their hearts (so they believed) that God is (supposedly) a trinity, and that baptism therefore had to include the trinitarian formula.

And at some point during the late 200's A.D. some scribe in Alexandria, Egypt inserted the words "baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the holy spirit" into the last statement of the Gospel of Matthew in one particular manuscript. That scribe may not have been trying to mislead anyone; in his own mind he may have felt that he was simply providing a statement that he believed really should be contained somewhere in the gospels. It was a statement he was already very familiar with in his community.

Now anyone who then read this altered text readily agreed with it, because it said nothing more than express something that the reader had known and believed since early childhood ... that Jesus Christ (supposedly) commanded us to be baptized "in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the holy spirit". That's about the same as you and I not having a problem with the added statement in Matthew 20:16.

Then along comes the next scribe. He may have had access to two or three different manuscripts with the Gospel of Matthew in it. In one manuscript it had the added expression in Matthew 20:16 and in the other manuscript it did not have the added expression in that verse. So this scribe is forced to make a decision regarding whether or not to include the added expression in this verse.

Scribes were used to making such decisions all the time, because of the thousands of changes, corrections and alterations that confronted them in the various manuscripts they were copying.

Two factors now influence the decision the scribe has to make. First of all, he personally is already familiar with "many are called but few are chosen" being quoted with the parable of the laborers in the vineyard. And secondly, if anything he would prefer to err on the safe side, which to him means giving his future readers the benefit of also hearing this statement here. So in his evaluation of the manuscripts at his disposal, he decides to include the "many are called ..." statement, just to be on the safe side.

A week later this scribe has progressed to writing chapter 28 of Matthew. Once again the manuscripts at his disposal back in the late 200's A.D. show a disagreement for verses 19-20. He has access to a manuscript without the baptizing instructions, and another manuscript with the baptizing instructions. So he again must make a decision as to which text to copy into the manuscript he is producing.

Here our scribe is already very familiar with the trinitarian formula, which formula he firmly believes is a required instruction from Jesus Christ. Further, in his work as a qualified scribe he has already encountered hundreds of incidents where he had to correct obvious mistakes from the manuscripts at his disposal. He already knew that frequently a whole series of words were dropped by some scribe in a previous age. So when he now sees one account of Matthew 28 with the trinity formula, and another account without the trinity formula, then he is convinced that the manuscript without the trinity formula is nothing more than a careless omission by some earlier scribe. And so he has no difficulty in deciding to include the trinity formula in the manuscript he is producing.

The unauthorized addition in Matthew 28:19 could be made just as easily as the unauthorized addition in Matthew 20:16 was in fact made!

Does what I have written here prove that this is exactly how it happened? No, it doesn't. The above

statements are not intended to be viewed as proof. To be clear: the above statements that compare Matthew 28:19-20 to what happened in Matthew 20:16 do not at all "prove" that Matthew 28:19 was added to the text.

But those statements do clearly demolish the argument that **it was supposedly extremely difficult** for some forger to sneak this trinity formula into the text of Matthew 28:19, and that the forger would have had to sneak this trinitarian formula into a whole host of manuscripts. **It would not have been difficult at all.** And one single source document produced in Egypt in the late 200's to the early 300's would have been sufficient to get this statement into both Sinaiticus and Vaticanus.

Yes, not every Catholic in the 200's A.D. accepted the trinity teaching. There were still various other additional heresies doing the rounds at that time. But the point is that the trinity formula was well known. The fact that certain Catholic "church fathers" stated their opposition to the trinity teaching illustrates that the trinity idea was clearly well known. What is important is not what Catholic "church father" A or B or C may have believed; what is important is what **the scribe** who made a new copy of the Book of Matthew believed. He had the power to insert or not insert the trinity formula into the closing text of the Gospel of Matthew. And his beliefs had a major influence in what he would write.

There is repeated evidence in the manuscripts that **scribes would freely add text that they felt was missing**. All it needed was for some scribe making a new copy of the Gospel of Matthew to believe that the baptism formula had been accidently dropped from Matthew 28 for that scribe to feel free to add it to his manuscript. That type of thing happened thousands of times, as the surviving manuscripts clearly show. It follows that it must also have happened thousands of times while the scribes were making new manuscripts, and **where they left no tell-tale evidence behind** for the changes they had made from their source documents.

So to summarize this section:

In this section I have not attempted to prove when and where and how the baptism formula was added to Matthew 28. I don’t know when that happened. But the purpose of this section is to illustrate that additions to the text of the New Testament, and changes to the text were in fact made repeatedly. The two oldest copies of the Gospel of Matthew (Sinaiticus and Vaticanus) are clearly a product of Jezebel (see Revelation 2:20). With both of those codices coming from a common source document, all that was needed to get the ball rolling (regarding Matthew 28:19) was for that one specific source document to contain the text of Matthew 28:19. From that point forwards the rest would take care of itself.

What I have shown in this section is that theoretically it would not have been any more difficult to get the text of Matthew 28:19 into the Gospel of Matthew, than it was to get the expression "many are called but few are chosen" into the text of Matthew 20:16. In other words, by no means would it have been so very difficult to get the baptism formula into the text of Matthew 28 for the actually quite small number of surviving manuscripts of Matthew chapter 28 from before 800 A.D.

Appeals to "almost 6,000 manuscripts" in reference to Matthew 28:19 are seriously flawed! Manuscripts with the text of Matthew 28 from before 800 A.D. are very few. For example, "Papyrus 105" from the 5th or 6th century A.D. is listed as containing "Matthew 27-28". However, when you examine this fragment more closely, you find that it actually only contains "Matthew 27:62-64 and Matthew 28:2-5". The key verses of Matthew 28:19-20 are not on this fragment. Most early manuscripts don’t come as close to our key verses as "Papyrus 105". Thus "Papyrus 45" only contains "Matthew 20-21 and Matthew 25-26". Again no luck for us.

And manuscripts from after 800 A.D. aren’t necessarily reliable in passages that are essential to endorsing a false teaching (i.e. the trinity teaching).

Consider 1 John 5:7-8:

The false text entered into 1 John 5:7-8 in an attempt to support the trinity teaching has been exposed as a fraud! But the fact that such a fraudulent text was entered into a book of the New Testament (i.e. into 1 John), **based on one single manuscript**, demonstrates that **similar attempts to insert other false teachings** into the text of the New Testament **were also made**. There is no guarantee that we have correctly identified every passage that was tampered with. And the chances are that, even though 1 John 5:7-8 is a fraudulent text, **it is still in the Bible that you are using right now**! But 1 John 5:7-8 shouldn't even be there. You and I know that it shouldn't be there, but millions of people out in the world don't know that. So why is 1 John 5:7-8 still in your Bible? It is there because of Erasmus and the Catholic Church.

The point is that we have examples of the text of the New Testament being changed for the explicit purpose of trying to provide some "scriptural support" for false doctrines. And in this regard even the Old Testament has not been immune. Let's briefly consider the Old Testament.

CHANGES IN THE HEBREW TEXT OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

In 2004 I wrote two articles under the general heading of "Scriptures Where Some Jewish Scribe Changed the Text to Justify Unbiblical Jewish Traditions". The article that deals with **Deuteronomy 16:1** is **14 pages** long. In that article I prove that the word "Passover" was fraudulently entered into the text of Deuteronomy 16:1-6.

The article that deals with **Exodus 34:25** is **8 pages** long. Exodus 34:25 is another changed text, where some scribe fraudulently entered the expression "the feast of the Passover" into the text.

Both of these passages in the Old Testament were changed to support the Jewish custom of referring to the Feast of Unleavened Bread as "the Feast of the Passover". The evidence for these changes is found in these passages themselves. They contain statements that are simply not compatible with the rest of God's statements regarding the Passover. Yet these changes are found in every Hebrew manuscript in existence.

These two articles are available on my website under "MAIN ARTICLE DIRECTORY" and then the sub-directory "WORDS WITH CHANGED MEANINGS". Another example is found in 2 Samuel 15:7, where the Hebrew manuscripts read "40", i.e. the Hebrew letter "Mem", an impossible number which should probably read "4", i.e. the Hebrew letter "Daleth". But there is no manuscript evidence to contradict the impossible number "40".

These Scriptures illustrate changes in the Hebrew text for which no documentary proof is available, and where where he edits the Greek text to reflect his Latin version. For instance, since the last six verses of Revelation were missing from his Greek manuscript, Erasmus translated the Vulgate's text back into Greek. **Erasmus also translated the Latin text into Greek wherever he found that the Greek text and the accompanying commentaries were mixed up, or** where he simply preferred the Vulgate's reading to the Greek text." (my emphasis)

To be clear: the above quotation is about the Greek text which Erasmus produced, and which we accept as the correct Greek text for the New Testament. In plain language: **Erasmus freely fiddled with the Greek text** where he didn't like it, and he acknowledged that it had also been fiddled with before his time. And Erasmus was a good Catholic to the day of his death. At no stage did he ever leave the Catholic Church.

We in the Church of God have no way to go back and check out whatever words or passages or verses Erasmus didn't like in the Greek text, for which words and passages Erasmus then simply altered the Greek text. It was Erasmus who decided where the Greek text was "mixed up". **For Erasmus "mixed up" meant anything that was not compatible with accepted Catholic practices.**

Note one other point:

Back in the 1500's Erasmus had access to three or four different Greek manuscripts which did not always agree with each other. It is just that we have no way of knowing what were the textual differences that Erasmus, a lifelong Catholic priest, decided to reject. And it was Erasmus who decided what should be included in the Greek text, and what should not be included in the Greek text.

In fact the article on the "Complutensian Bible" on the website www.biblemanuscriptsociety.com states the following:

"In a race to be the first to publish a Greek New Testament, Erasmus managed to obtain **an exclusive four-year publishing privilege from Emperor Maximilian and Pope Leo X in 1516**, allowing him to be the first to formally publish a printed edition of the Greek New Testament, which he did in 1516. Erasmus' 1516 Greek New Testament was, however, somewhat hastily edited. Corrections were made in later editions of **his Greek New Testament**, culminating in his 1527 edition, which forms **the basis of the Textus Receptus**, in which **a strong influence of the Complutensian Polyglot Bible** is generally recognized." (my emphasis)

In plain language, both the Catholic Emperor Maximilian and Pope Leo X granted Erasmus a publishing privilege, which prevented any other Catholics (i.e. Cardinal Francisco Ximenes de Cisneros in Spain who was ready to publish the New Testament part of the Complutensian Bible) from publishing the Greek New Testament before Erasmus. Note that **a Catholic Pope sided with Erasmus against a Catholic Cardinal**! Erasmus' Greek New Testament had the full backing of the Catholic Church.

So once again it is the Catholic Church that is in control, even for the Greek text that was embraced by the Protestants.

By the way, the Wikipedia article about Erasmus also mentions a little earlier that Erasmus "fell in love" with another priest in his early life. Here is the quote:

While at Stein, **Erasmus fell in love with a fellow canon**, Servatius Rogerus, and wrote a series of **passionate letters** in which he called Rogerus "half my soul". He wrote, "**I have wooed you both unhappily and relentlessly**".

Had Erasmus lived today, then he would undoubtedly have been a zealous activist for "gay marriage"! That is the man on whom we depend virtually 100% for what the Greek text of the New Testament should be. We simply have no other options.

Can you see how completely we are dependent on the Catholic Church for everything that pertains to the text of the New Testament? That is kind of like dwelling "where Satan's seat is" (see Revelation 2:13). Can you see that?

And that is why, wherever and whenever possible, we need to look for **evidence within the Bible** itself for the things we accept as true and correct. And among other things that is why the evidence in the Bible itself which contradicts the validity of Matthew 28:19 must be given priority over any supposed evidence that relies on Catholic "church fathers" and on the text of Catholic-preserved and Catholic-dictated manuscripts.

Here is something to keep in mind, which I have already mentioned earlier.

It is because the carnal mind cannot understand the things of God and cannot mimic the things of God, that therefore evidence that exposes changes and alterations is not removed by those who have introduced those unauthorized changes into the text. They can't see the problems their unauthorized changes have created. **The carnal mind cannot grasp how one Scripture affects other Scriptures**, and how the Scriptures are bonded to all the other Scriptures. The carnal mind cannot understand that an inappropriate change in one place triggers **a cascade of consequences** for other Scriptures. The carnal mind views any changes it wants to make in isolation, as if the rest of the Bible is somehow not affected by that one unauthorized change.

God has given us His spirit, which empowers our minds to discern God's way of thinking. God has given us the means to understand why changes that have been made to the text of the Bible cannot be correct. The holy spirit helps us to understand the consequences which statements in one part of the Bible have on various statements in other parts of the Bible ... like the effect the statement "I am the God of Abraham and of Isaac and of Jacob" has on a subject like the resurrection.

The converted mind searches the Scriptures to establish the truth of every teaching. The converted mind will understand, once the connection has been pointed out to us, what Scriptures are affected, involved or activated by specific instructions recorded in other parts of the Bible. **No biblical instruction stands in isolation.** And when it seems like there is an instruction that stands in isolation, then that instruction needs to be subjected to very close scrutiny.

And we should never lose track of just how much control the Catholic Church has exerted over all the information available to us. Internal evidence against an unauthorized change is the last means available to us to expose that change for what it is, because internal evidence is something the carnal mind has great difficulty in recognizing.

Now let's look at another question.

COMPARING GOD'S CHURCH AND THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

Let's ask ourselves the question: from a religious point of view, just how much does God's Church have in common with the Catholic Church? How much of what they believe and do in the Catholic Church is also believed and practiced in God's Church?

Consider the following things about the Catholic Church:

1) The Catholics keep Sunday.

2) The Catholic Church keeps Xmas, Easter and a whole bunch of other days.

3) The Catholic Church rejects God's Feasts and Holy Days.

4) The Catholic Church believes in an immortal soul.

5) The Catholic Church believes in heaven as the reward for the saved.

6) The Catholic Church believes in heaven, hell and purgatory.

7) The Catholic Church believes in an ever-burning hell.

8) The Catholic Church believes in doing penance to pay for sins.

9) The Catholic Church believes in indulgences.

10) The Catholic Church believes in eating pork and all unclean animals.

11) The Catholic Church "baptizes" babies.

12) The Catholic Church believes in sprinkling as a form of baptism.

13) The Catholic Church believes in saying memorized prayers.

14) The Catholic Church teaches people to make the sign of the cross numerous times a day for various things and activities.

15) The Catholic Church teaches people to **mumble the words of Matthew 28:19** whenever they make the sign of the cross.

16) The Catholic Church teaches people to use a rosary when they pray.

17) The Catholic Church prays to and appeals to a multitude of saints.

18) The Catholic Church has priests as its religious leaders.

19) The Catholic Church teaches the resurrection of the body and the soul.

20) The Catholic Church requires its priests to wear a religious uniform like robes.

21) The Catholic Church has ritualistic "mass".

22) The Catholic Church has communion as often as people want.

23) The Catholic Church believes in people confessing their sins to a priest.

24) The Catholic Church teaches that a priest can absolve people of guilt.

25) The Catholic Church uses lots of candles for religious purposes.

26) The Catholic Church collects relics with supposed religious significance.

27) The Catholic Church prays to Mary.

28) The Catholic Church believes in the immaculate conception of Mary.

29) The Catholic Church believes in original sin.

30) The Catholic Church believes Mary had no more children after the birth of Jesus Christ. etc., etc., etc.

All of these things are in opposition to what the Church of God believes! The list could be continued, but

this should suffice to make the point.

The point is this:

RELIGIOUSLY THE CHURCH OF GOD HAS NOTHING AT ALL IN COMMON WITH THE CATHOLIC CHURCH! WE HAVE NO COMMON BELIEFS OR PRACTICES WITH THE CATHOLIC CHURCH!

... except one!

For some reason we use exactly the same baptism formula that the Catholic Church uses to initiate people into its fold, and which formula devout Catholics will mumble a number of times every day in various situations.

How is it, when we reject every single custom and belief and practice of the Catholic Church, that somehow we end up with **the identical baptism formula** that the Catholic Church uses and endorses?

How did that happen?

The fact that this "Father Son holy spirit" formula is used in the Catholic Church not only when sprinkling babies and new converts, but also on a daily basis by devout adherents should tell us that **this formula has Satan's unqualified approval**. "The synagogue of Satan" (Revelation 2:9) is not a literary invention from the Apostle John; it is a real and powerful religious organization for "the god of this age" (2 Corinthians 4:4).

It should raise a huge warning flag when we see that the Catholic Church uses the identical verbal formula, which it freely calls "a trinitarian formula", that the Church of God uses in baptizing people.

You may say: the Catholics use it because it is in the Bible. Then I will reply: then **why do they get everything else wrong**, when all those other things are also recorded equally clearly in the Bible?

The fact is this: the Catholic Church does not use the "Father Son holy spirit" formula because it is recorded in the Bible! **The Catholic Church uses the "Father Son holy spirit" formula because that formula has been sanctioned by the god of the Catholic Church.** The god of the Catholic Church didn't want his church keeping the Sabbath and the annual feasts and the dietary laws and the correct teachings about all of the things in the above list of 30 points, and therefore his church rejects the truth about all of those things. Whether or not those things are also in the Bible **has never been an issue for Satan's church**.

So it should be a major concern for us to find that the one and only thing we have in common with the Catholic Church happens to be the "Father Son holy spirit" formula. For everything else the god of this age has seen to it that his church has replaced the truth with counterfeit teachings, practices and beliefs. But for the baptism formula Satan somehow allows his church to retain the truth. I'm being sarcastic!

Let's move on and now consider the requirements for baptism.

THE REQUIREMENTS FOR BAPTISM

We've already seen the relevant Scriptures in this regard. Both Jesus Christ and John the Baptist came with the message "repent", with the clear understanding that those who did repent are the ones who were then baptized.

When people in Acts chapter 2 "were pricked in their heart" and asked Peter "what shall we do?", then Peter spelled out **the most basic statement about baptism** in the Bible.

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 Spirit**. (Acts 2:38)

The key requirement for baptism is repentance, something that must take place in the mind of a person. This brings us to another mistake we have made in the past.

We understood the word "repent" to mean "admit that you have sinned and stop sinning". So a lot of baptism counseling revolved around getting people to see and to acknowledge that they were sinners. And so we would ask people "have you repented **of your sins**?"

Yes, repentance does include that we stop breaking God's laws. But that approach also missed the main point about repentance. The reason is that **our approach was focused on actions**, on what people have done or not done. And the goal was to get people to not do what is wrong in the future.

The correct focus for repentance is to **change the way we use our minds**, to change from having a mind that is "enmity against God" (Romans 8:7) to a mind that willingly submits itself to God (see James 4:7), a mind that "delights in the law of God" (Romans 7:22).

When the mind is changed first, then the right actions will follow as a consequence of that changed mind. A changed way of thinking provides the motivation to stop sinning, etc. In other words: repentance happens in the mind, and a changed way of living is an outward consequence of a changed way of using the mind.

So the **first requirement** for baptism is **repentance**. Let's look at the second requirement.

It is helpful to view the following expression as one entity:

"... **in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins** ...".

To have our past sins forgiven **we have to appeal to the name of Jesus Christ**. Jesus Christ willingly paid for the sins of all those people who will repent and who will retain that repentant attitude for the rest of their lives.

In our baptism formula we have the expression "have you ... **accepted Jesus Christ** as your personal Savior ?"

"Accepted" is the wrong word to use in this statement! The word "accepted" describes how religious people in this world view salvation ... they just have to "accept" what Jesus Christ is offering them. It creates the picture of Jesus Christ begging them to give Him their hearts. And that is a disgusting picture!

We do so many things without thinking, don't we? Some misguided Protestant uses the expression "have you accepted Jesus Christ?" and we then copy that expression right into our baptism formula without thinking it through.

The facts are that God is not looking for anyone "to accept" the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. "Accepting Christ's sacrifice" makes it sound like God is desperate. If God were to say to

humanity: do you "accept" a full pardon of your sins, then repentant Christians will say "yes". But unrepentant murderers and adulterers will also say "yes" to the offer of a full pardon. Nobody in their right mind refuses "to accept" a full pardon for past guilt!

It is **the Protestant idea of salvation** that is the real source for our statement "do you **accept** Jesus Christ as your personal Savior?" Yes, we have softened the Protestant flavor ever so slightly by preceding this question with the question "have you repented?" (and the words "of your sins" should really be left out, because those three words direct the focus towards the outward manifestations of the wrong carnal way of thinking, instead of focusing on the wrong way of thinking itself). The "have you repented" question allows us to infer that this offer of "accepting" forgiveness is conditioned on us repenting first. But this statement still exudes the syrupy, emotional Protestant way of thinking.

It is not at all a matter of us "accepting" the sacrifice of Christ to pay for our sins! It is really a case of us **seeing a need** to have Christ pay for our sins, and **asking God** for that sacrifice to be applied to our sins. And then **it is God who "accepts"** our request for Christ's sacrifice to apply to our personal sins because we have repented. And for those people who have not repented God does not "accept" their requests for forgiveness.

The difference between these two approaches was highlighted by Jesus Christ in the parable of the Pharisee and the Publican. Notice the Publican's approach towards God:

And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as *his* eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, **God be merciful to me a sinner**. (Luke 18:13)

Instead of saying "yes, I have **accepted** the sacrifice of Jesus Christ to pay for my sins" when we approach God at baptism, we really have to have the attitude of "God **be merciful** to me, a sinner" when we approach God at baptism! There is a big difference in these two attitudes. As Jesus Christ then said:

I tell you, **this man went down to his house justified** *rather* than the other: for every one that exalts himself shall be abased; and he that humbles himself shall be exalted. (Luke 18:14)

At baptism we want to be "justified", i.e. we want God to blot out all our past guilt. And in these verses Jesus Christ has spelled out the way to achieve justification. That way is to approach God with a "God be merciful to me a sinner" attitude. And **we need to cut out this sanctimonious Protestant "accepting" mentality**!

In any transaction it is the person that has the power "to accept or not to accept" that is in the driver's seat.

And at baptism we are anything but "in the driver's seat"!

When Jesus Christ instructed His disciples to baptize people in His name, Jesus Christ did not tell His disciples to ask those people "**to accept**" anything! Baptism is not about "accepting" anything, unless you mean "accepting that we are guilty before God". And that kind of "accepting" should trigger a "be merciful to me a sinner" attitude on our part. Baptism is about submitting our minds unconditionally to the will of God.

Can you see the sentimental flavor of this world's false religions in the "have you accepted Jesus Christ" statement? We all need to open our eyes and recognize just how much Satan has managed to deceive us into "accepting" this world's religious ideas. We got the formula from the Catholics, and the sentimental "accepting" attitude and the confusion about the real meaning of "repent" from the Protestants.

Here is how I suggest we handle this statement in the baptism formula in the future:

After establishing the full legal name, the minister asks:

1) Have you repented? Answer = yes.

2) Do you want God to be merciful to you and to apply the sacrifice of Jesus Christ to your past sins? ... or words to this effect. Answer = yes.

3) Then the minister baptizes the individual.

4) Then follows the laying on of hands, where we ask God to give the baptized person His spirit.

Next, let's be sure that we **leave out the "congratulations, your sins are now forgiven" bit**, which is **just another Protestant influence**! Do we really think Jesus Christ or the apostles actually "congratulated" the people they baptized? How about John the Baptist ... would he have "congratulated" every person whom he baptized?

When people are told before baptism that baptism is for the remission of their sins, then we really don't need any fancy statements after baptism to pronounce the forgiveness of sins. But even more importantly, it is completely inappropriate for us to make that statement "congratulations, your sins are now forgiven". Here is why.

In the past 50 years **tens of thousands of people** were told after baptism "your sins are now forgiven", when in fact **their sins had not been forgiven at all**! What if Philip after baptizing **Simon Magus** in Acts 8:13 had told Simon Magus "congratulations, your sins are now forgiven"? The point is that Simon Magus was totally unrepentant, even though Philip had baptized him. And his sins had assuredly not been forgiven.

The point for us is this:

More than half of all the people who have been baptized not only during the past 50 years, but all the way back to Simon Magus in Acts chapter 8, were never really repentant! And all those people who never repented when they were baptized also never had their sins forgiven.

The lesson for us is this:

In counseling people for baptism we point out that upon genuine repentance God will forgive all their sins when they are baptized. We explain it, but we don't make any routine pronouncements about sins having been forgiven, because we cannot really look into a person's mind to confirm that they did indeed change away from their carnal way of using their minds (i.e. repent). And I believe that all of us who have ever baptized someone, have baptized at least one unconverted person each (i.e. like Philip baptizing Simon Magus). And if we say "congratulations, your sins have been forgiven" to an unrepentant person, then we are saying something that is simply not true!

So let's stop congratulating baptized people, especially here in the United States, where every product manufacturer "congratulates" you for buying their product, where their congratulations are nothing more than an expression of praising themselves. We don't need congratulations for anything, as far as our relationship with God is concerned. Instead of us telling people right after baptism "congratulations, your sins are forgiven", **let's just wait a bit longer** until God in the resurrection tells them and us "well done, you good and faithful servant" (Matthew 25:21).

So let’s cut out that syrupy and sanctimonious statement at the end of our baptism formula! We don’t realize how much we have been influenced by the god of this age!

And **that covers the two requirements for baptism**. Before getting to the point of baptizing someone, the minister should obviously have made certain that the person understands what repentance really is, and how and why the sacrifice of Jesus Christ will apply to him.

The actual baptism ceremony is not the time to provide a definition for repentance or to present an explanation of Jesus Christ’s role in our lives. Those things just turn baptism into too much of a ritual. And I don’t think either Jesus Christ or John the Baptist or the apostles who baptized 3,000 people on Pentecost used much of a ritualistic formula when they performed those baptisms. **It is the world’s religions that crave the whistles and bells of rituals.**

We need to be sure that we don’t try to find some whistles and bells to unnecessarily embellish the baptism "ceremony".

These two requirements for baptism can be summarized in the statement that baptism requires **an unconditional commitment to God**! And people who make that unconditional commitment to God should be baptized.

Now let’s consider the symbolism of baptism.

THE SYMBOLISM OF BAPTISM

When John the Baptist baptized people, the symbolism of baptism was unambiguous. Baptism pictured **the washing away of sins**. This washing was achieved by **"burying" the person** under water. "Burying" the person under water in turn implies that the person symbolically "**died**", and then emerged from the water "**in newness of life**", having the opportunity to now avoid living based on the wrong way of using the human mind.

Different Scriptures will focus on different aspects of this symbolism. For example:

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

This is a clear reference to baptism. Here Paul focused on the symbolism of our sins being washed away, with the result that we are now justified and set apart (i.e. "sanctified"). Note also that this process is **NOT** "in the name of the Father and the Son and the holy spirit"! This process was achieved "**in the name of the Lord Jesus**".

In plain words: according to this Scripture being washed and sanctified and justified has nothing at all to do with "the name of God the Father". And it is achieved "**by**" the spirit of God, but **not** "**in the name of** the spirit of God"!

Look, instead of saying "you are washed and sanctified and justified", **Paul could just as well have said "you are baptized"**, baptism picturing the process by which the washing and sanctification and justification are achieved.

If baptism was really supposed to be "in the name of the Father and ...", then 1 Corinthians 6:11 is one more offensive statement, because it ignores the Father’s supposed preeminent role in the baptism

formula, and it mentions only the name of Jesus Christ.

Next:

That he might sanctify and cleanse it **with the washing of water** by the word, (Ephesians 5:26)

This verse also uses the symbolism of baptism representing being washed and cleansed.

Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, **by the washing of regeneration**, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; (Titus 3:5)

This is another appeal to our need for having our sins washed away, which is what baptism pictures.

And from Jesus Christ, *who is* the faithful witness, *and* the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and **washed us from our sins** in his own blood, (Revelation 1:5)

This is another reference to baptism representing being washed from our sins.

Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with *him* through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead. (Colossians 2:12)

Here Paul was showing that baptism symbolizes being buried.

Now let's consider the passage that combines a number of these things that are represented by baptism.

Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ **were baptized into his death**? Therefore we are **buried with him by baptism** into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so **we also should walk in newness of life**. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also *in the likeness* of *his* resurrection: (Romans 6:3-5)

So here we see the whole picture for what baptism represents. Can you see that? Here we have the symbolism of death, burial and newness of life all in one context. Elsewhere Paul also represented the symbolism of being washed from our sins.

So here is the point:

THESE THINGS HERE ARE THE ONLY VALID SYMBOLISMS THAT CAN BE ATTACHED TO BAPTISM!

There are plenty of other symbolisms scattered throughout the Bible, but none of them are intended to apply to baptism. They are intended for other things.

As far as the ancient Israelites are concerned, they weren't really "baptized" when they walked through the Red Sea, even though that analogy is drawn by Paul in 1 Corinthians 10:1-2. Those Israelites were not even remotely repentant, griping against God both before and after going through the Red Sea. The symbolism of baptism is simply not valid when the people involved are not really repentant, since repentance is the very first requirement for baptism. Baptism is not for carnal people. And the ancient Israelites were most certainly not baptized.

So there are no other valid symbolisms for baptism, other than the ones I have mentioned above.

But that creates a huge and enormous problem for Church of God people who want to defend the trinitarian baptism formula. Do you know what that problem is?

None of the valid symbolisms for baptism can be applied to the "baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the holy spirit" formula! The Father isn't "buried in death"! The Father isn't the One whose sacrifice enabled us to be washed from our sins. The holy spirit didn't die for us and wasn't buried in death so that it could walk in newness of life (as Jesus Christ did after His resurrection). The symbolisms of baptism can only relate to Jesus Christ, and not to God the Father or to the holy spirit.

Can you see that none of the valid baptism symbolism applies to the trinitarian baptism formula?

It is for this reason that those who seek to uphold the trinitarian baptism formula **must find some new, additional symbolism to apply to baptism**! They must find some symbolism **for why three names are linked together** in the baptism formula!

It is because of this need that we ministers many years ago came up with the explanation of "I baptize you into the name **OR THE FAMILY** of the Father and the Son and the holy spirit". That was our way of trying to get around the clear trinitarian nature of that formula. **BUT THAT WAS WRONG!**

Nowhere in the Bible is the Family of God ever referred to as "the Family of the Father and the Son and the holy spirit". That is just a formula we made up to justify Matthew 28:19! But that line of reasoning is not supported anywhere in the Bible for a very good reason.

Let's assume for argument's sake that the Family of God can also be referred to as "the Family of the Father and the Son and the holy spirit", even though that is wrong. Here is the point:

IT IS IMPOSSIBLE FOR BAPTISM TO "IMMERSE" ANYONE INTO THE FAMILY OF GOD!

"To baptize" simply means "to immerse". Now once an individual has in fact been "immersed" in or into the Family of God, then **that individual can never again be removed from the Family of God**! It is impossible for anyone who is "immersed" into the Family of God to ever again commit sins.

You understand the difference between the expressions "begotten of God" and "born of God", right? At this point in time converted members of God's Church are "begotten of God", but not yet "born of God". The expression "to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ" enables us to then be "begotten of God". But the expression "to be baptized (immersed) into the Family of God" would amount to being "born of God". It is at the resurrection that we will then be "immersed (i.e. baptized) into the Family of God".

After baptism we can still sin, and at times we do still sin. We surely understand that, right? So here is a very basic fact:

Nobody who is still capable of sinning can possibly be "immersed" into the Family of God. And anyone who attempts to tell you otherwise is lying!

It is one thing to consider ourselves as "potential" members of the "household of God" (see Ephesians 2:19). But Paul also stated quite plainly that we haven't really "attained" that status yet. As Paul wrote:

Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. (Philippians 3:12)

The statement in Ephesians 2:19 is along the lines of Romans 4:17. The same principle applies.

(As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations,) before him whom he believed, *even* God, who quickens the dead, and **calls those things which be not as though they were**. (Romans 4:17)

What Paul is pointing out is that when God called Abraham "a father of many nations", Abraham was **not yet** a father of many nations. God was simply making a prediction which was certain.

And that is what Paul was doing in Ephesians 2:19, making a prediction of what will happen in the future. While for Abraham that prediction was certain after Abraham had passed the tests to which God had exposed Abraham, for us the prediction Paul made is not yet guaranteed, because we have not yet completed our period of testing.

Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and **of the household of God**; (Ephesians 2:19)

With the statement "of the household of God" Paul was also "calling those things which be not as though they were". But there is one other significant point here.

Within the same letter Paul used **two different terms**.

1) In connection with members of God's Church Paul talked about "**the household** of God" in Ephesians 2:19. The relevant Greek word is "**oikeios**".

2) A mere 17-18 verses later, in reference to God, Paul talked about "the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole **family** in heaven and earth **is named**" in Ephesians 3:14-15. The relevant Greek word here is "**patria**".

So while converted members of God's Church can be considered to be a part of God's "oikeios", that is not the same as saying that they are a part of God's "patria". There is a difference between these two Greek words "oikeios" and "patria". And the term "Family of God" applies to the Greek word "patria" according to Ephesians 3:15, and not to the Greek word "oikeios" used by Paul 18 verses earlier.

The point is this:

When we baptize people, **we cannot possibly "immerse" them into the Family (patria) of God**, because those people we baptize could perhaps still leave God's way of life and end up in the lake of fire. But nobody who has been "immersed" in the Family (patria) of God can possibly end up in the lake of fire. That's the difference between being begotten of God and being born of God.

So the attempt to compare baptism with the trinitarian formula to being "immersed" into the Family of God is totally unjustified. It is nothing more than a drowning man grasping at straws. That comparison is simply not supported anywhere in the Bible. It was drawn out of thin air, just like the false claim that "the Jewish calendar is a part of the oracles that were preserved by the Jews" was drawn out of thin air (see Romans 3:1-2). Neither claim has any merit or support.

The result is that there is no plausible explanation for using the trinitarian baptism formula that can be backed up by any other Scriptures. There is no biblical symbolism for that formula, apart from the claim that God is supposedly a trinity. **That is the only symbolism that applies to that trinitarian baptism formula!**

Let's consider the next point.

THE APOSTLES WERE NOT SENT OUT TO BAPTIZE PEOPLE

Earlier when we examined the Greek text for Matthew 28:19-20 I said:

Matthew 28:19-20 does not contain a command to baptize anyone! The only command in these two verses is "to make disciples". There is no other command in these two verses in the Greek text!

Let's now elaborate on this point.

The Apostle Paul was chosen by Jesus Christ to bear Christ's name before the non-Israelite nations of the Roman Empire, as well as before"the children of Israel" (see Acts 9:15). Paul wrote the following to the Galatians:

But contrariwise, when they saw that **the gospel of the uncircumcision** was committed unto me, as ***the gospel* of the circumcision** *was* unto Peter ... (Galatians 2:7)

Paul is saying that Jesus Christ gave him, Paul, the same type of responsibility as Christ gave to Peter, just directed at different people. Peter was given the job of going to the "circumcision", i.e. to the Jews. Paul was given the job of going to the "uncircumcision", i.e. to all of the non-Jewish people in that part of the world, numerically a far greater number of people than just the Jews.

However, the instructions regarding **how they were to fulfill these responsibilities** in their respective areas were **identical**. Peter and Paul were to do the same things, just amongst different people.

It should be clear that whatever instructions Jesus Christ had given to the eleven apostles also applied to the Apostle Paul. So the point is this:

If Jesus Christ had actually said the words of Matthew 28:19 to the original apostles, then those instructions certainly highlighted the matter of baptizing people, even if baptizing was not the actual command. And the instructions in Matthew 28:19 would then have applied equally much to Paul as they would have applied to the other apostles.

However, Paul made a very blunt and direct statement:

For **Christ sent me not to baptize**, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect. (1 Corinthians 1:17)

Now it is not a matter of arguing about this, or trying to score points. It is really a case of: **THERE IS NO WAY THAT THE APOSTLE PAUL WOULD HAVE MADE THE STATEMENT "CHRIST SENT ME NOT TO BAPTIZE" IF MATTHEW 28:19 WAS A COMMISSION FROM JESUS CHRIST TO HIS APOSTLES!**

As I have already pointed out, in the Greek text "baptizing them into the name of ..." is not really a command. However, that statement is presented as an explanation for **HOW to fulfill the command to make disciples**. So that statement about "baptizing them" does carry some weight, if it is indeed a genuine record of the words of Jesus Christ, and in that case it cannot just be ignored.

It is a reference to baptizing people, with the implication that this is a part of the process of making disciples; and it was (supposedly) spoken by Jesus Christ. Paul's fairly assertive statement "Christ sent me not to baptize" would simply be **disrespectful towards Jesus Christ** ... IF Christ had given His apostles the instruction in Matthew 28:19.

If Jesus Christ had given you personally the instruction in Matthew 28:19, and you would be prepared to make the bold statement "Christ sent me not to baptize", then you would most certainly lack respect for Jesus Christ!

Recall what I said earlier about the carnal mind always getting the wrong end of the stick when it comes to understanding the mind of Christ. This is one more example of that type of situation. The carnal mind cannot see the conflict between 1 Corinthians 1:17 and the statement in Matthew 28:19. If necessary, the carnal mind will in fact argue to discredit the statement in 1 Corinthians 1:17, just to hold on to its position on Matthew 28:19.

I would expect nothing less from a carnal mind!

As you might gather, I don't have very much good to say about the carnal mind and its ridiculous arguments. Let's continue.

Leading up to this statement of "Christ sent me not to baptize" Paul had already made the statement:

"**I THANK GOD THAT I BAPTIZED NONE OF YOU**, but Crispus and Gaius (1 Corinthians 1:14).

That is also a pretty rough statement to make!

How could Paul dare to make this statement "**I thank God** that I baptized none of you", when God, in the person of Jesus Christ, had supposedly instructed Paul to make disciples of all nations and then to baptize them? Is Paul glorying in bearing very, very little fruit?

Can you see the conflict, which the carnal mind can't see and will undoubtedly argue against?

The point is this: a converted mind should be able to recognize, once this has been pointed out, that Matthew 28:19 is simply not compatible with Paul's statements in 1 Corinthians chapter 1. It is the carnal mind that will try to reconcile the two incompatible statements, by attempting to find specific circumstances or specific applications where both statements are supposedly acceptable.

You can find literally thousands of examples of trying to reconcile irreconcilable statements in the Jewish Talmud ... and almost invariably it involves finding very specific and very limited areas of application for each. For example, the Talmud attempts to reconcile the claim that Isaac was born in the spring with another claim that Isaac was born in the fall (the autumn).

That's about what Matthew 28:19 compared with 1 Corinthians 1:14-17 is like ... claiming that Isaac was born in both the spring and the fall. The converted mind should be able to see that statements like this cannot possibly be reconciled.

This is one more point against Matthew 28:19 being a genuine statement from Jesus Christ.

Let's move on to an important point.

WHY ARE WE TO BE BAPTIZED "IN THE NAME OF JESUS CHRIST"?

We have just seen that the symbolism attached to baptism doesn't apply to the trinitarian formula. But that raises the question: how does the symbolism apply to baptism with the formula "in the name of Jesus Christ"?

Let’s recall that in Acts 8:16 and in Acts 19:5 the preposition "**eis**" meaning "**into**" is used in the expression "in the name of the Lord Jesus". In Acts 10:48 the preposition "**en**" meaning "**in**" is used in the expression "in the name of the Lord". And in Acts 2:38 the preposition "**epi**" meaning "**on**, **upon**" is used in the expression "in the name of Jesus Christ". Sometimes the choice of which Greek preposition to use is a matter of grammatical requirements, rather than the strict literal meaning of the preposition.

So now: **why** are we to be baptized "in or into the name of Jesus Christ"?

We have all sinned (Romans 3:23). Therefore all of us human beings deserve the death penalty (Romans 6:23). But Jesus Christ has taken the death penalty for all human beings (i.e. ultimately only those who really repent) upon Himself and paid that penalty for us (Romans 5:8; 1 Thessalonians 5:9-10).

So far that’s all clear, right?

What is now needed is **a way for the penalty Jesus Christ has paid for all human beings to now be credited to our account** before God the Father. In that situation it is not a matter of us "accepting anything", as the Protestant churches try to convince us, as if God was going to shove salvation down our throats, if only we will "accept it". No, what is really needed now is for us to appeal to God the Father, that we beseech God the Father to somehow apply the price Christ has paid to the guilt we have incurred, rather than us "accepting" that sacrifice.

It is almost as if, when we ask God for forgiveness, **God says to us**: okay, tell me **why** I should apply the sacrifice of My Son Jesus Christ to what you have done? **Who** are you anyway? **What** does the sacrifice My Son brought have to do with you?

That is where and why "in the name of Jesus Christ" enters the picture!

Recall Romans 6:3-4.

Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were **baptized into his death**? Therefore **we are buried with him** by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

So it is at that point that we can respectfully answer God the Father:

"I was baptized **in** (or into) **the name of Your Son Jesus Christ**, thereby symbolically dying with Him, so that I would be enabled to claim His death to pay for my sins and transgressions."

We must be baptized "in the name of Jesus Christ" so that we can receive access to forgiveness of our sins. **Without baptism "in the name of Jesus Christ"** (or words to that effect) **we simply don’t have access to forgiveness**. Unless we are baptized "in the name of Christ" we don’t have access to God the Father. As Jesus Christ said very plainly:

Jesus says unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: **no man comes unto the Father, but by me**. (John 14:6)

THAT IS WHY WE MUST BE BAPTIZED "IN THE NAME OF CHRIST"!

Put another way, our sins have earned the death penalty for us. Now in order for us to avoid having to pay that penalty literally, the process is more or less as follows:

1) In baptism we die symbolically by being immersed under water (that's how people died literally at the time of the flood).

2) But our own death is barely enough to pay for our sins, with no credit of any kind left over. Therefore on our own we have no chance of living again.

3) But the sacrifice of Jesus Christ is great enough to pay for all human sins. And since Jesus Christ was sinless, therefore God the Father resurrected Christ, without anything having to be paid by Christ for Himself. That is a consequence of having lived a sinless life. And so the totality of Christ's sacrifice is available to pay for all human sins.

4) Therefore in order for us to have the opportunity for immortal life, we must appeal to the sacrifice of Jesus Christ and to the penalty He has already paid for us.

5) The way we can appeal to Christ's sacrifice as payment for our sins is by us symbolically dying with Jesus Christ in baptism. As Paul said, "we are buried with Him by baptism" (Romans 6:4).

6) Now the only way our symbolical death (in baptism) can be linked to the sacrifice Jesus Christ has already brought is for us to be baptized (immersed) "in or into His name". Note! **We must find a way to link our symbolical death with Jesus Christ's literal death.** That linkage is what baptism "in His name" achieves.

7) **Without baptism "in the name of Jesus Christ" there is no way for us to link up to the death of Jesus Christ, which death paid for our sins. Baptism "in the name of Jesus Christ" is the only way to credit Christ's sacrifice to our personal account before God the Father.**

That is why we must be baptized "in the name of Jesus Christ"!

Now here is the point we need to understand:

The trinitarian formula "baptized into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the holy spirit" does not make it possible for us to link our symbolical death to the literal death of Jesus Christ! The link to Jesus Christ's sacrifice is only achieved by a one-on-one relationship. What this means is that the trinitarian baptism formula does not provide access to forgiveness!

I'll repeat that:

The trinitarian baptism formula does not provide access to forgiveness of sins because there is no one-on-one linkage of the baptized person's symbolical death with the literal death of Jesus Christ. The trinitarian baptism formula only provides a phony and totally theoretical three-on-one link to an imaginary trinity who didn't die for our sins.

Note!

A link to anyone who did not actually die for our sins does not provide us with access to forgiveness. But the baptism formula must provide us with access to forgiveness. The Apostle Peter said:

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

That is why we must be baptized "in the name of Jesus Christ" and "none other name"! Acts 4:12 is a very plain statement that baptism must be in one name only, the name of Jesus Christ. The trinitarian

baptism formula is contrary to Peter's statement here in Acts 4:12. But those who support the trinitarian formula are certain to argue against Acts 4:12.

As far as forgiveness is concerned, none of this applies to either God the Father or to the holy spirit. What we need to understand is that **baptism shows how we can receive access to forgiveness**, a prerequisite for salvation. But baptism doesn't in any way represent or symbolize being put into some kind of "Family relationship" with God the Father. It visually depicts **the way we receive access** to Christ's sacrifice, how we can link up with that sacrifice.

It is baptism that gives a human being access to a direct relationship with God the Father. But such a relationship is only possible through Jesus Christ (John 14:6). Christ's name is the only name that makes such a relationship possible (Acts 4:12). And therefore we must be baptized in or into the name of Jesus Christ.

Once again the trinitarian baptism formula stands exposed as a fraud!

By now some of you may be quite worried and concerned about the validity of your own baptism? So let's look at that question.

YOU SHOULD NOT BE BAPTIZED AGAIN!

If you understand the things I have explained thus far, then you now realize that when you were baptized the minister used a trinitarian formula. That was also the case when I myself was baptized, and that is also true for all the people that I myself have baptized up to this point in time.

So a natural question is: does this mean that all of us now have to be baptized again, this time "in the name of Jesus Christ"? The answer is: **no**, we should not be baptized again!

For lack of a better word I have in this article sometimes spoken about baptism as if it is a ritual, as if baptism is some kind of ceremony. However, in reality baptism is not so much a ritual or a ceremony as it is **the expression of a commitment we make to God**. The commitment is the most important thing in this activity.

The questions all of us need to answer for ourselves are these:

When I was baptized, did I make an unconditional commitment to God, to seek to live by all of God's laws? Have I upheld that commitment since then up to this present point in time? And am I determined to continue to uphold that commitment for the rest of my life?

[Comment: By "have I upheld that commitment" I do not mean that we have not sinned since we were baptized, because all of us have indeed sinned since then. My statement asks the question: have I held fast to that way of life and that commitment, even if I have at times fallen short?]

If you and I can answer "yes" to these questions, then our baptism was valid. And we assuredly should not be rebaptized.

One problem with rebaptizing someone is that this action can easily **reduce baptism to the level of a ritual**. In other words, because you didn't perform this ritual the correct way, therefore you must (supposedly) go through this ritual again, but this time with the correct words being spoken by the minister. But **that is not what baptism is all about**; it doesn't depend on the minister saying the right

words!

I don’t believe that those of Christ’s apostles who had been baptized by John the Baptist, who clearly did not baptize anyone either "in the name of Jesus Christ" or "into the name of the Father and the Son and the holy spirit", were baptized again once they switched from following John the Baptist to following Jesus Christ. **The commitment** they had made when they were baptized by John the Baptist was perfectly acceptable for also following Jesus Christ. Recall that John the Baptist had started preaching the identical message that Jesus Christ then continued after John the Baptist. Switching from John the Baptist to following Jesus Christ did not involve accepting a different set of beliefs or teachings.

When we understand that Matthew 28:19 is a forgery that needs to be removed from the text of the Gospel of Matthew, then there is a very stark fact that confronts us about baptism: **nowhere do we have a record of the words that were actually spoken when a person was baptized**, or even the words that should be spoken when we baptize someone. We only have explanatory comments recorded, but not the actual words said at a baptism.

And that is exactly what we should expect!

For nothing that is commanded by God do we have a very specific verbal formula that needs to be spoken by someone, short of some very basic words. For example:

In the instructions for Aaron to place the nation’s sins on the head of the Azazel goat in Leviticus 16, the instruction is: "and Aaron shall ... confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel and all their transgressions in all their sins ..." (Leviticus 16: 21). But this didn’t give Aaron a specific verbal formula to follow.

Similarly, the Bible does not provide us with a verbal formula for conducting weddings and funerals and Passover services and baptisms. It was the Church that established specific verbal formulas for all of these things (as recorded in my "little black book"), but the Bible didn’t do that.

When you think about it, there is in fact nothing in our whole religious way of life of applying the laws of God to everything we do where God has given us some kind of verbal formula to say or sing or chant at any time. That’s what human religions do, but **God has never done that**!

Now the motivation for human religions laying down specific verbal formulas for various religiously required or sanctioned activities is **to gain some measure of control over that activity**. A fixed verbal formula is a way of saying:

"I’m in charge around here and I believe that this is the correct way to carry out this particular activity, and therefore I want all of you, whenever you carry out this particular activity, to use the following verbal formula. I believe that these are the essential words that must be included in this particular activity."

But that is not something that God has established, that every religious activity has a specific set of words that must be spoken for that particular activity.

That’s the premise why this world’s churches believe in rattling off memorized prayers, words that were composed by someone else. It follows that those memorized words, the product of some other person’s mind, cannot really express your own mind in approaching God. Using words composed by someone else to pray to God is somewhat like trying to insert our own personality into another person’s identity. But that doesn’t really work.

Anyway, the point is this:

God is not looking for some standard formula that covers all the key issues for when a person is baptized! If God was really looking for a standard verbal formula, then God would have seen to it that such a formula was preserved somewhere in the Bible. But that is not the case.

When one of the disciples asked Jesus Christ "teach us to pray as John also taught his disciples" (Luke 11:1), Jesus Christ gave them an outline of various subjects to consider for approaching God in prayer. But Matthew records Christ prefacing His comments with "**don't use vain repetitions**" (Matthew 6:7). Christ certainly did not intend for us to repeat those specific words whenever we pray.

Anyway, the point is that Jesus Christ neither provided nor required a specific verbal formula to be used when people are baptized.

The things that the person being baptized needs to understand must all be discussed before it gets to the point of going into the water of baptism. Fifteen seconds before someone is baptized is not the time to explain anything that the person does not already understand. It is assumed that the person being baptized already understands repentance and faith before he enters the water.

What is required is that the person being baptized has already made a firm commitment to God. And if for some reason some of the words spoken during baptism are not correct, then **those incorrect words do not affect the person's commitment to God**.

God obviously knows that someone deviously entered the trinitarian formula into the text of Matthew 28:19, and that we today have no manuscript evidence to expose this forgery. And therefore many people are likely to be deceived by that forged text. So during Mr. Armstrong's time God saw to it that Mr. Armstrong clearly understood and taught that **God is not a trinity**, and that **the holy spirit is not a person**. This understanding removed the immediate urgency away from also cleaning up various forgeries and common mistranslations in the text of the Bible. Those things could be dealt with later.

So now at this time God has shown us that the trinitarian formula of Matthew 28:19 must also be rejected for the reasons laid out in this article. The past is past. Before God it is always a case of "to him that knows to do good and does it not, **to him it is sin**" (James 4:17). God will "wink at the times of our ignorance" (see Acts 17:30), but **now commands all men every** where to repent, i.e. to change their way of thinking and reasoning.

In plain terms:

When you made that firm commitment to God and were baptized with the trinitarian formula, then you were still ignorant of the facts regarding that formula, as was I myself also in the past. But that ignorance had nothing to do with **the commitment you were making to God**. Now that time of ignorance God is prepared to overlook, **provided that we now change** and permanently reject that trinitarian formula from any future use.

Can you think of times in the past when God has **helped** you and given you favor? Have you ever been **healed** by God? Can you see that God has **opened your mind** to understand things that other people look upon as foolishness? All of these things are **evidence that God did accept your repentance and baptism**, and therefore started to work with you. This should tell you that there is no reason to doubt the validity of your baptism, irrespective of what words were spoken at your baptism. It was valid because God accepted the commitment you made.

Let me put this another way.

The purpose of baptism is to make it possible for us to have a relationship with God. It was our

sins that had cut us off from God (see Isaiah 59:2). So when our sins are washed away at baptism, then that enables us to establish contact with God and then establish a relationship with God, where where or by whom the trinity formula was appended to the end of the Gospel of Matthew, we do have something that is of a far higher significance, and that is the evidence contained in the Bible itself. Let's put together some of the points we have considered. Here is what we have:

1) The formula "baptizing them in or into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the holy spirit" is obviously trinitarian in nature! It is a formula that many devout Catholics will mumble several times every day.

2) The Greek text of Matthew 28:19-20 is highly suspicious for a number of reasons. For a start, the expression "baptizing them into the name of ..." should **follow** the expression "teaching them to observe all things". It is plain wrong to have the baptizing expression precede the teaching expression, and Jesus Christ would never have said these expressions in the sequence in which they are presented in the text.

3) Next, the expression "baptizing them into ..." does **not** fulfill the command to make disciples of all nations. The "baptizing them into ..." expression is the product of a mind that did not really understand exactly how disciples are made.

4) Next, the "baptizing them into ..." expression comes from a mind that assumed that the Father and the Son and the holy spirit all share one name. That is the reason why the singular form "into the name" is used. Without these three forming a trinity, **the singular form** "**into the name**" doesn't make sense. The singular case word "name" reveals that the real author of these words was a believer in the trinity. No way do three individuals somehow share one name!

5) The argument that builds a case on the preposition "into" in the expression "into the name of ..." is flawed. In 1 Corinthians 1:13 Paul also used the Greek preposition for "into" in the expression "were you baptized in (i.e. into) the name of Paul?" And there Paul didn't ask if they had somehow been immersed "into the name of Paul". The use of "in" or "into" or "on", when used to refer to abstract concepts in biblical Greek, is not intended with the literal meanings of these prepositions. It is a matter of grammatical requirements. We have the same thing in English.

6) The claim that we are baptized "into the Family of God" is nonsense! There is no biblical support of any kind for the assertion that baptism somehow pictures "being immersed" in God's Family. And without somehow changing the meaning of "name" in this formula, the formula stands exposed as a trinitarian formula, which is mumbled by millions of trinity-believing people every single day.

7) Forgers do not understand the converted mind. They don't realize that they cannot imitate the converted mind. Therefore it is inevitable that the people who attempt to add some fraudulent text to the Bible will always make some mistakes. They do not understand that a change in one passage will unleash a cascade of consequences for statements in other places in the Bible, creating conflicts and cases of incompatibility. Such forgers cannot foresee that the change they wish to make requires them to also change numerous statements in other passages.

8) The baptism of John the Baptist was for the remission of sins. Nobody can be baptized twice "for the forgiveness of sins". The baptisms John himself performed during his lifetime were valid baptisms, provided that the people who were baptized by him had also repented. But John didn't use a "Father Son holy spirit" formula for baptizing anyone.

9) John the Baptist most certainly did not baptize Jesus Christ with the "Father Son holy spirit" formula. Since Jesus Christ was establishing an example for baptism, the absence of this formula when Christ was baptized has some very profound ramifications. If Jesus Christ was going to ever instruct His

apostles to baptize people with the trinity formula, then Matthew 3 was the place for that formula to be introduced, in the perfect example that Jesus Christ Himself was setting for us by being baptized. But that is something a carnal mind intent on surreptitiously adding some words to the end of the Gospel of Matthew would not understand.

10) The biblical reason for baptism is to wash away sins. The "Father Son holy spirit" formula has nothing at all to do with washing away sins. It doesn't fit.

11) A carnal mind cannot understand that Jesus Christ would most certainly **not** have introduced this formula to His apostles **after His resurrection**! Christ had finished His ministry before He was crucified. At His last Passover He had given them all the instructions that He had still intended to give them. There is no way that after His resurrection, just as He was about to leave this Earth, Christ somehow and totally out of the blue dumped this "into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the holy spirit" formula for baptism on His apostles! It is a devious mind that inserted this formula after Jesus Christ had clearly completed His ministry.

12) There are **no verbal formulas for anything** at all in the Bible! Nowhere did Jesus Christ instruct us to use very specific words when we carry out some specific activity. It is the word's religions that try to turn everything into a ritualistic routine. So the Matthew 28:19 formula added after Jesus Christ had already completed His ministry is out of step with the rest of the Bible. But a carnal mind can't see that.

13) The most basic instructions in the whole Bible regarding baptism are recorded in Acts 2:38. If about 10 days earlier Jesus Christ had really given Peter the instruction in Matthew 28:19, then it would have been **insanely negligent** of Peter to omit mentioning the Father's name first in this baptism instruction. If Acts 2:38 is a true record of what Peter said, then there is absolutely no excuse whatsoever for Peter to not have said:

"Repent and be baptized every one of you **in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the holy spirit for the remission of sins**, and you shall receive the gift of the holy spirit." (Acts 2:38)

However, that is not what Peter said!

14) We're talking about a two week gap between Matthew 28:19 and Acts 2:38. There is no way that Peter would have forgotten an instruction he had received two weeks earlier. Therefore we need to realize that only one of these two verses can be true! Either the baptism formula is "baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins", or the baptism formula is "baptized in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the holy spirit". **Both cannot be right!**

15) At least four other Scriptures clearly and unequivocally support Acts 2:38! And **not a single other Scripture supports Matthew 28:19**. Now with every other subject a four to nothing biblical support would settle the matter! But somehow that's different when we find ourselves on the side of "zero support", isn't it? In that case **we all too often try to rationalize away all the support against our own position**.

16) A biblical principle is that every matter is established in the mouth of two or three witnesses. And that is what we have for everything we believe ... except for the trinitarian baptism formula of Matthew 28:19. That formula depends on its own witness and on its own witness alone. It is because of this fact that we have tried to fabricate support for this trinitarian statement, by expanding the word "name" to somehow mean "family". Appeals to "the Family of God" are an expression of desperation to somehow find some way to justify using this trinitarian formula.

17) When we assume that Matthew 28:19 is an unauthorized addition to the text of Matthew 28, then **no**

further explanations of any kind are needed! Every reference to people being baptized is acceptable and easy to understand. No convoluted explanations of any kind are needed. Nothing in the rest of the Bible needs to be changed or explained away.

18) On the other hand, if we assume that Matthew 28:19 is a part of the original text of the Gospel of Matthew, then we have a huge amount of explaining to do. We have to rationalize and explain away conflicts with other statements, and we have to rationalize why this verse has the statements in the wrong order. In other words, if Matthew 28:19 is a part of the text, then **we have a lot of explaining to do**.

19) The **holy spirit does not have a name**, any more than water and air have a name. Therefore the trinity formula simply doesn't make sense. It would only make sense if the holy spirit was a person and therefore also had a name.

20) Instructing us to use the formula "baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the holy spirit" is extremely **offensive to God the Father**! It assumes that we mortal human beings somehow have the power to put other people into a direct relationship with God the Father. But that is blasphemy!

21) It is specifically Jesus Christ's role to introduce human beings to direct access to God the Father. But we ourselves cannot give other human beings that direct access to God the Father. It is enough that such direct access to God the Father has been granted to us by Christ's sacrifice on our behalf. But we cannot grant that access to other people; we cannot put anyone "into the Father's name".

22) As far as the preservation of Greek manuscripts of the New Testament is concerned: the most basic fact here is that the New Testament as we have it today has been preserved by the enemies of God's true Church; it has been preserved by Jezebel.

23) That is one of the things that is meant by God's people having **allowed Jezebel to teach God's servants** (see Revelation 2:20), allowing Jezebel to get away with inserting her own doctrines into the text of the New Testament.

24) It seems fairly clear that the statement in Matthew 28:19 had already been slipped into one manuscript copy of Matthew before the year 300 A.D. The earliest copies of the Gospel of Matthew that we today have access to are Codex Sinaiticus and Codex Vaticanus, both of which are later than 330 A.D., and both of which are believed to have derived from a common source document.

25) Yes, I know that this doesn't prove anything. But it does show that it was not difficult at all to get unauthorized additions to the text copied into every subsequent manuscript. Since everything goes back to these two codices, and since they came from a common source document, all that was needed for the unauthorized addition of Matthew 28:19 was for that addition to be inserted into the one manuscript in Egypt which then became the source document for Sinaiticus and Vaticanus. And Satan would have known exactly which manuscript to use. **It is completely misleading to make this out as some kind of insurmountable problem.**

26) To say that both Sinaiticus and Vaticanus are atrocious as far as integrity is concerned is probably too kind a statement! They are much worse than just atrocious. Yet carnal scholars will drool over these manuscripts, as if they were somehow God-given.

27) Most church members don't realize that 95% of all existing Greek New Testament manuscripts are dated later than 800 A.D., and that less than a handful from before 500 A.D. actually contain the full text of Matthew chapter 28.

28) Nor would most church members realize that many scribes of Greek manuscripts were only semi-literate or worse. That's clear from the huge number of obvious mistakes in those manuscripts.

29) The one ancient Greek non-biblical manuscript that is repeatedly appealed to for support of the trinitarian baptism formula is **the Didache**. In my 42-page article about the Didache I have utterly smashed and demolished the supposed credibility of that document. You ought to read that article as well. The Didache is very clearly **a document of the pagan church** that sprang up in opposition to God's Church. And as such, it gives us some insight into the teachings of that pagan church. The Didache proves that the pagan church was baptizing "in the name of the Father and the Son and the holy spirit", one more strong indication that God's Church didn't use that formula at all.

30) The Catholic Church has controlled not only the text of the New Testament, but also all secular ancient history pertaining to the early New Testament period. And they didn't preserve anything about God's true Church; they only preserved their own history, the history of the false church.

31) The Greek text for the New Testament that we accept as valid was put together by **Erasmus**, a lifelong Catholic priest. It is well known that Erasmus fiddled with the Greek text and changed it where he felt it should be changed. But that is all we have available; we have no other choice. So when evidence from within the Bible itself (which evidence is invisible to the carnal mind!) contradicts a questionable statement or instruction, then the so-called integrity of the old manuscripts should not be given veto power. **Internal evidence can expose fraudulent changes** or additions to the text, where otherwise there is no documentary evidence for those unauthorized changes.

32) The symbolism of baptism does not at all apply to the trinitarian formula. Neither God the Father nor the holy spirit fit into the correct symbolism for baptism. So Matthew 28:19 doesn't really make sense!

33) But the symbolism of baptism fits perfectly into the formula of "baptized in the name of Jesus Christ". The main reason for baptizing "in the name of Jesus Christ" is to **make it possible for us to receive access to forgiveness**, by linking our symbolical death in baptism to the literal death of Jesus Christ. That linkage is achieved by the baptism being "in the name of Jesus Christ". Without baptism "in the name of Jesus Christ" there is no access to Christ's sacrifice.

34) Paul was an apostle just like Peter. So Paul's categoric statement that he was not sent to baptize people means that Paul had never heard the formula of Matthew 28:19 ... or Paul would not have dared to make this bold statement.

Well, these are some of the real difficulties with the trinity formula in Matthew 28:19. This one unauthorized addition in Matthew 28:19 has indeed triggered a whole flood of unforeseen consequences (i.e. unforseen by the forger).

Let's move on.

SOME PEOPLE HAVE UNFLINCHING LOYALTY TO SATAN

I am reminded of when more than 15 years ago now I explained that Satan does not have the name "Lucifer". I explained that the Hebrew noun "heylel" comes from a root word that also means "to brag, to boast", and that in Isaiah 14:12 the Hebrew word "heylel" really means something like "arrogant boaster". I pointed out the incredible boast Satan made when he said "I will ascend into heaven , I will exalt my throne above the stars of God ... I will be like the Most High".

At that time I actually had a minister from one of the larger CoG groups write back and say: "**Oh no, Satan wasn't boasting at all when he said that. Satan was very sincere when he said those words about intending to sit on God's throne**." I could hardly believe my eyes.

Satan, the father of all lies, is the most insincere and hypocritical being that has ever existed. He doesn't have a sincere bone in his body (that's a figure of speech, just in case you are wondering)! That minister was actually defending Satan's supposed "right" to the name "Lucifer", to the point of **ascribing sincerity to Satan's frame of mind**.

There are other times when I have seen people in the Church of God actually defend Satan. And I have since realized that there are indeed some people who have an unflinching loyalty to Satan. By "unflinching loyalty" I mean that **they will fight to uphold Satan's deceptions**. They are loyal soldiers for Satan. And when you challenge Satan's deceptions, then they get upset.

One of the clearest identifying marks of such people is their refusal to recognize the **evidence that exposes Satan's deceptions**. They simply don't want those deceptions exposed. So they point-blank refuse to face up to the evidence that exposes Satan's deceptions.

So much for such people. Now I don't know where you stand. You have now read about 100 pages about this subject of Matthew 28:19. And I have explained why this verse should not be in the Gospel of Matthew.

But there is a major point about all the evidence I have presented. You see, almost all of the evidence I have presented in this article requires the spirit of God to be understood and comprehended. It really is true that no one understands "the things of God" without the understanding to which God's spirit will open a person's mind (1 Corinthians 2:11).

Thus I cannot somehow make anyone understand that Jesus Christ would never have said "baptizing them ..." **before** saying "teaching them ...". I cannot somehow make anyone understand that Jesus Christ simply would not have dropped some totally new instruction on His apostles **after** He had completed His ministry. I cannot get anyone to see that Matthew 28:19 is contrary to every other reference to baptism in the New Testament. I cannot make anyone understand that the singular form "into the (one) name of ..." is a major flaw in that trinitarian formula. I cannot really make anyone understand how offensive that trinitarian formula is towards God the Father.

Only God's spirit can give that kind of understanding to someone.

Some people will understand and some people will not understand. And those who don't understand will argue against any and all evidence that contradicts their position. And there is nothing I can do to make such people understand. Such people will continue to defend the trinitarian formula with unflinching loyalty for the real author of that trinitarian formula. With such people it does not achieve anything to present more and more and more evidence against their endorsement of this formula. Theirs is an unflinching loyalty.

Time will tell how many people will be in that situation.

"MEN AND BRETHREN, WHAT SHALL WE DO?"

After reading this article this far, many of you will be in the same position as were the people in Acts 2:37. So what do we do now?

For almost 50 years I myself have been deceived by Matthew 28:19. That's also true for the vast majority of all members and ministers alike. I say "vast majority" because there have been individuals here and there who already a long time ago understood that Matthew 28:19 cannot possibly be correct. For me it was a case of ignorance. I had never before until quite recently asked the right questions when looking at this verse.

All of us were somewhat like the Israelites in the days of Joshua, **who "asked not counsel at the mouth of the LORD"** (Joshua 9:14) in a matter that seemed obvious to them ... the Gibeonites deceived the Israelites into believing that they, the Gibeonites, were "from a very far country" (Joshua 9:9). The way we ask counsel from God is by asking the right questions. As long as we don't ask the right questions we are not going to get answers from God.

The trinitarian formula also seemed "obviously correct" to us because every manuscript of the Gospel of Matthew contained this statement, and therefore we seemingly had no reason to even question it. It didn't occur to most of us to ask the right questions. So Matthew 28:19 went unchallenged.

The Apostle Paul explained a principle to the men of Athens, which principle applies equally to all of us today. And that principle is this;

And **the times of this ignorance God winked at**; but now commands all men every where to repent: (Acts 17:30)

We were all ignorant about the devious way we had been deceived into using a trinitarian formula for baptism, even though we understood that God is not a trinity. And whenever we do something in ignorance, then God will forgive us and extend mercy to us when we repent of what we did in ignorance. This point was explained by Paul to Timothy.

Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but **I obtained mercy, because I did *it* ignorantly in unbelief**. (1 Timothy 1:13)

Recall also that in the Church's official baptism wording we did say: "I baptize you ... by and through the authority of Jesus Christ for the remission of all your sins", where the expression "by and through the authority of Jesus Christ" is just another way of saying "in the name of Jesus Christ". **That part of our baptism formula was and is correct**.

The problem is that we also included the words of the trinity formula. That part was not right and that needs to be removed.

Now baptism is primarily an agreement between God and us. **Baptism is the equivalent of a handshake** between two parties upon reaching an agreement. The most important aspects of the whole baptism procedure are the following factors:

1) We must clearly understand **our part** in what we are agreeing to. We are agreeing to change the way we use our minds, so that in future we strive to willingly live by all of God's laws, and that we will strive to please God in everything we do.

2) We need to also understand **God's part** in this baptism agreement. God's part is that God will forgive all our past guilt by applying the sacrifice which Jesus Christ has already brought to our personal sins. In addition to that God will give us His holy spirit to make it possible for us to change the way our minds think and reason. And if we hold fast to this agreement for the rest of our lives, then God has committed Himself to resurrecting us into His own Family. Note! It is the resurrection and not baptism that immerses us into God's Family.

3) And thirdly we need to be **totally committed** to always fulfilling our obligations in this agreement. This is the most important component in baptism from our side of the agreement. Our commitment must be total and resolute.

So if we understand our obligations in this agreement, and if we are unconditionally committed to fulfilling our part, then the actual words that were spoken by the person who baptized us become secondary to that commitment. This is because the purpose of any verbal formula at baptism is to focus on that commitment. Real commitment towards God always counts, even when the words that are spoken are less than perfect.

So here is your situation:

If you were really committed to God, and determined to do your utmost to live by God's laws from then onwards, with the help of God's spirit, then your baptism was valid and God forgave your sins at that point in time, and you should not be baptized again. God will wink at the times of our ignorance.

But at the same time we must also comply with the second part of Acts 17:30. As Paul said: "... but **now (God) commands all men every** where to repent". This means that now we have to change our thinking regarding the baptism formula we will accept in the future.

Now it becomes a matter of James 4:17.

Therefore to him that knows to do good, and does *it* not, **to him it is sin**. (James 4:17)

The principle inherent in this verse can also be paraphrased as follows:

"To him that knows what is right, **but doesn't accept it**, to him it is sin."

Once we know what is right, we can no longer claim ignorance. Once we know what is right, **that knowledge makes us accountable** for how we deal with that knowledge. Once we know what is right, conduct that ignores that knowledge will no longer be overlooked by God.

By reading this whole article you have now been given knowledge. In your heart you understand that what I have said about the trinitarian baptism formula is right. And because you have been given knowledge, therefore **God will judge you regarding what you do with this knowledge**. That's pretty clear from Hosea 4:6.

My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: **because you have rejected knowledge, I will also reject you**, that you shall be no priest to me: seeing you have forgotten the law of your God, I will also forget your children. (Hosea 4:6)

For those who are ministers and who, after reading this article, continue to use the trinitarian baptism formula, you can replace the expression "you shall be no priest to Me" with the expression "**you shall be no minister to Me**"! That is a very obvious application of Hosea 4:6.

Blasphemy is a very serious sin. And the trinitarian baptism formula is assuredly blasphemous. We saw in 1 Timothy 1:13 that the Apostle Paul acknowledged that he himself had been "a blasphemer". What had Paul done? Paul had misused the name of Jesus Christ prior to having his eyes opened to the truth. That was blasphemy. With that baptism formula we have misused the name of God the Father. That makes all of us just as guilty of blasphemy as was the Apostle Paul before he repented. So we also need to repent, i.e. change the way we think about that formula. And we need to stop using this formula.

Now I have done my part! I have spent a good two months going over all these points, and then putting this article together. And I have made this information available to you. I realize that you may not like the following point, but I need to spell it out to you nonetheless: **now the ball is in your court**! Now you have this information.

If you know of anyone who is considering seeking baptism, then **you have a responsibility before God** to make that individual understand that under no circumstances should he or she be baptized with this trinitarian formula! That's right! Reading and understanding this information has made you responsible for this information. Likewise, if you know a minister who is planning to baptize someone, then you now also have a responsibility before God to bring to that minister's attention that the trinitarian baptism formula is a form of blasphemy!

Whether or not the ministers or the persons seeking baptism heed your warning is not your problem, any more than it is my problem whether or not you understand or accept the information I have presented in this article. But if in such situations you do not warn the people involved about the major blasphemy inherent in that trinitarian formula, then the principle of Ezekiel 33:1-9 will apply to you, and God will hold you accountable.

Well, as you can see Polycarp and Eusebius and all those other Catholic "church fathers" have nothing to do with exposing the real problems with Matthew 28:19. It doesn't matter what the manuscripts which have survived to our time may say about this verse. All those things have always been under the control of the Catholic Church anyway. **The Bible itself shows that Matthew 28:19 simply does not belong in the text of the Gospel of Matthew.**

May all heresies be exposed and expunged!

Frank W Nelte