

THE BAPTISMAL FORMULA

This was a journey that took us over four hundred years. We came through the Reformation, The Great Awakenings, The Holiness Movement, and finally: the Great Revivals of Wales; Topeka, Kansas; and Azusa, California; before we came to another great defining moment in church history. Those who adhered to the Reformation principles of justification by faith alone, the priesthood of all believers, and the primacy of the Bible as the only source of revealed truth were labeled as Protestants. However, did these groups really liberate themselves totally from Rome? Do we not still celebrate Christmas, Easter and maintained some of the Roman church's doctrinal teachings?

The early 20th Century brought to us the Azusa Street Revival (1906 -1909). From the Azusa Street Revivals, we have the birth of the Pentecostal Movement. This is a movement that was "noised abroad," and attended not only by members of the Holiness Movement but also Baptists, Mennonites, Quakers, and Presbyterians. New denominations were formed, and never before had there been a movement that brought together such a diverse group of believers. The Jim Crow law however, hindered further cooperative fellowship of the early movement by excluding many African-American Pentecostal leaders such as C.H. Mason.

In 1914, the Assemblies of God were formed in the United States and through foreign missionary work and establishing relationships with other Pentecostal churches, the Assemblies of God expanded into a worldwide movement. It was in 1913 at a camp meeting in Arroyo Seco, California that Robert McAlister, a Canadian evangelist, spoke that the apostles of Christ all baptized in Jesus Name.

This would lead to a schism in the movement that as by 1915, many were adhering to the new found truth and were re-baptized in Jesus Name. In 1916 at the 4th General Council meeting of the Assemblies of God the issue was discussed and doctrinal statements were issued called the Statement of Fundamental Truths. The Assemblies of God would maintain their tradition by endorsing Trinitarianism. and a third of the fellowship's ministers left to form Oneness fellowships.¹

It was not the Oneness baptismal formula which proved the divisive issue between Oneness advocates and other Pentecostals, but rather their rejection of the Trinity. The word "Trinity" is not a biblical term. I believe that this was merely man's fleshly way to comprehend a spiritual mystery. Jesus declared to Peter in Matthew 16:17, ... "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed *this* to you, but My Father who is in heaven. It took a spiritual revelation for Peter to know who Christ was. The apostle Paul states; ^{1st Timothy 3:16} And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifested in the flesh, Justified in the Spirit, Seen by angels, Preached among the Gentiles, Believed on in the world, Received up in glory.

Who is God? Is He one or three? Some vary when they say that He is three in one, and they find different ways of explaining this. From Paul's statement, it was GOD that was manifested in the flesh. Until we can understand who Jesus is, we are lost. Jesus is the image of the invisible God. Isaiah (9:6) bears record that :For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. The child that would be born is the EVERLASTING FATHER and the MIGHTY GOD. In Him dwells all the Fullness of the Godhead bodily (Colossians 2:9).

Matthew 28:18 And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. ¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,²⁰ teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen

A key statement in this two verses, says "**TEACHING THEM TO OBSERVE ALL THINGS.**" As one called of God to be a Bible teacher, I find that the biggest problem is the lack of diligence that we exhibit. Most biblical questions are quickly answered, if we just take the time to **observe**. We do not need the opinion of man, because the Bible interprets itself. All we have to do is search the scriptures(John 5:39).

Can we observe from Matthew 28:18 that **all authority is given to Jesus in Heaven!** If all means all then that authority is absolute. It is not split with a "Father " or "Holy Spirit." Can we not understand these? **John 10:30 I and My Father are one.**" ⁷ "If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; and from now on you know Him and have seen Him." ⁸ Philip said to Him, "Lord, show us the Father, and it is sufficient for us." ⁹ Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? **He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, 'Show us the Father'?**" ¹⁰ Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? The words that I speak to you I do not speak on My own *authority*; but the Father who dwells in Me does the works. ¹¹ Believe Me that I *am* in the Father and the Father in Me, or else believe Me for the sake of the works themselves.

Why do we continue to tempt God after He has given us such clarity in the Word? In the **Shema Deut.6:4 "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one."** ^{John 4:24} God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth." Many would ask the question, who was Jesus speaking to, and whose voice spoke from heaven on several occasions? We need to understand that God is omniscient and fills heaven and earth.

Since Jesus and His Father are ONE and sends the Spirit in His Name, there is no need for three names. ^{John 5:43} **I have come in My Father's name**, and you do not receive Me; if another comes in his own name, him you will receive. The disciple clearly understood the commission and baptized in the Name of the Father, in the Name of the Son, and in the Name of the Holy Ghost. **His Name is singular, It s Jesus!**

All early adherents to the Faith were baptized in Jesus Name or variations, in the Name of the Lord Jesus or Jesus Christ. It is very important that we know where the Trinitarian Doctrine came from. This was given to us by the Roman Church who claims a continuity from Peter the apostle. These claims are false. The Romans persecuted Christians in the 1st to the 3rd centuries and then adopted a form of religion in the 4th Century under Constantine. You will never understand Roman Catholicism until you understand the mystery of the Roman Empire. Catholicism is the religion of the anti-God empire, Rome, and not of Jerusalem. Observe the warnings; ^{Matthew 24:5} For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will deceive many. Don't be deceived. Catholicism is counterfeit Christianity and bears no witness to God.

God is not three persons, but ONE and when baptism is done in Jesus Name, the Father is honored. **This is a GREAT MYSTERY!**

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