

Questions About Whether Apostles Baptized in Name of Trinity and Whether Jesus IS the Trinity

By Pastor Ed Anderson

The Lord Jesus told the Apostles to baptize in the Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. However, I cannot find Scriptures showing that this formula was used in the way that the majority of churches baptize today. The Apostles baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus, and also, in the name of Jesus Christ.

Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: (Matthew 28:19 KJV)

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 KJV)

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

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

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

[personal note: I don't know if this list of Scriptures is complete...there may be other examples...the pastor would know.]

Why didn't the Apostles use the specific formula as instructed by the Lord Jesus? Or, better yet, did the Apostles understand and follow the Lord's instruction perfectly? I would say yes they did! I don't understand why the vast majority of Christian leadership do not follow the example of the Apostles when carrying out the Lord's instructions on baptism? Is my understanding in error?

Is Jesus Christ the Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit?

[A personal note to pastor Ed Anderson...my stance on "Oneness" and my stance on "baptism"...is very unwelcome in almost every church I've attended...I'm deeply grateful to you for allowing me to continue asking questions...thank you 🙏❤️]

Answer:

You're asking one of the most honest, heartfelt, and historically rich questions in Christian theology—and I deeply respect you for digging in and not being afraid to wrestle with the Word of God.

Let's take this step by step, with a spirit of grace and truth.

What Did Jesus Command?

In **Matthew 28:19**, Jesus clearly said:

"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit."

Note: He said *"name"* (singular), not *"names"* (plural). This is a clue that Jesus saw **Father, Son, and Spirit** as a united reality—**one divine name** revealed in three persons.

What Did the Apostles Do?

As you rightly quoted, the apostles in the book of Acts baptized:

- "in the name of **Jesus Christ**" (Acts 2:38),
- "in the name of the **Lord Jesus**" (Acts 8:16),
- "in the name of the **Lord**" (Acts 10:48),
- "in the name of the **Lord Jesus**" (Acts 19:5).

Now here's the key: **none of these verses are meant to be formulas**—they're **descriptions**, not necessarily **verbatim liturgies**. The emphasis is always on the **authority** and **identity** of **Jesus as Messiah** and Lord.

In fact, most biblical scholars agree that **baptizing "in the name of Jesus"** was a way to publicly declare that a person had become a follower of **Jesus the Christ**—the very One rejected by many at that time.

So Did the Apostles Disobey Jesus?

No. They obeyed Him **perfectly**—but **understood His command deeply**.

Jesus didn't give a magic phrase to recite in Matthew 28:19. He revealed the **divine reality** behind baptism:

- **The Father:** the Source of salvation.
- **The Son:** the visible expression of God in the flesh.
- **The Holy Spirit:** the One who enters the believer at conversion and empowers the new life.

The apostles rightly **baptized people into this divine identity** by calling on the name of **Jesus Christ**, who fully embodied the will of the Father and gave the Spirit.

So What About the “Oneness” View?

The **Oneness Pentecostal** movement teaches that **Jesus is the one name of God**, and therefore, **Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are just different roles or titles of Jesus**, not distinct persons. This belief leads them to **reject the Trinity** and **insist on baptizing only in Jesus' name** as a legal formula.

The historic Christian faith—including **Catholic, Orthodox, and Protestant churches** (including Seventh-day Adventists)—**rejects this view** because:

- The **Father and Son interact** with each other throughout the Gospels (e.g., John 17).
- The **Holy Spirit** descends on Jesus at baptism **as a separate Person** (Matthew 3:16-17).
- The Trinity is a **mystery**, not a contradiction.

So while baptizing in Jesus' name is **biblical**, limiting baptism **only** to that phrase while **denying the triune God** is a **departure** from the teachings of Jesus Himself.

Is “Jesus Christ” the Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit?

No—but **Jesus is the full revelation of God's character**, and to call on His name is to call on the **Godhead bodily** (Colossians 2:9). The apostles invoked **Jesus' name** to signify a person's loyalty to Christ, but **they still baptized under the authority of the full Godhead**.

Pastor-to-Heart Response

You are **not in error** for asking deep questions. You're being **noble like the Bereans** (Acts 17:11). The tension you feel in many churches comes not because you're rebellious—but because you're **hungry for truth**.

I want you to know:

- You are **welcomed**.
- You are **safe to ask**.
- I admire your pursuit of God.

Let's never forget: **Jesus saves**—not a formula. But the formula matters **because truth matters**, and Jesus said we are to worship God **in spirit and in truth** (John 4:24).