



The Sinaitic Light

Tripartite: The Baptismal Formula Matthew 28:19

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This article uses the English terms for Elohim (God), Yah (Father) Yahoshua (Christ).

Objective and Learning Outcome

Objective:

The objective of this article is to better understand the origin of the tripartite formula, “Father, Son and Holy Spirit” baptismal rite that appears in Matthew 28:19. The questions we have are: Is the tripartite formula original to Matthew’s gospel, did the apostle’s baptize in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and should we as believers baptize in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit when there does not appear to be any evidence that the apostles and disciples performed this rite in the first and second centuries?

Learning Outcome:

Upon completion of this study, the reader will:

1. Understand the controversy surrounding the tripartite formula;
2. Understand if the disciples baptized in the tripartite;
3. Understand when the neo-Christian church began baptizing in the tripartite;
4. Understand what manuscripts (MSS) or books did not contain the tripartite statement;
5. Understand critical scholars view on the tripartite formula;
6. Understand what name neo-Christians stated had efficacy in the second century, and what it means to baptize in the tripartite. Finally;
7. Understand how Yah and Yahoshua were glorified within the confines of the gospel.

Introduction

Baptizing in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit has been one of the most controversial passages in the Bible. It is a major point of contention in what many regards as the baptismal formula or the *tripartite*, meaning “to consist of three parts,” from Latin, *tri* meaning three, and *partitus* meaning to divide. Some refer to it as the Trinitarian baptism, from Latin, *tri*, and *itās* meaning a state of being or being, hence, three beings. The Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia says, “. . . the distinctly liturgical character of the formula Matt. xxviii, 19 is strange; it was not the way of Jesus to make such formulas. . . Therefore, while the formal authenticity of Matt. xxviii, 19 must be disputed, it must still be assumed that the later congregations recognized as the will of their Lord that which they experienced as the effect of baptism and traced it back *to a direct word of Jesus*” (Schaff-Herzog, 435) [emphasis added].¹

The question this study asks is: “Did Christ say baptize in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit?” or is it a later interpolation added by the Catholic Church? This is an important topic of discussion that needs to be analyzed. Many neo-Christian groups such as Baptists, Catholics, Orthodox, Coptic, etc., and some restorationist organizations such as the Jehovah Witnesses and Seventh Day Adventist baptize in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The Seventh Day Adventist writes, “there’s a biblical understanding that we have in that the Father and the Son are equal in every respect as God (John 1:1, Col. 1:17, Zech. 6:13). The Holy Spirit is said to be a Comforter like Jesus (see John, chapters 14-16), and intercedes for us (see Romans 8). When we baptize, we baptize in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit as Jesus commanded us to (Matt. 28:19). The one name of “God” includes all three of these Persons” (Wilson, 2020). Jehovah Witnesses believe that although one may have been previously baptized in the tripartite, they will need to be baptized again through their organization, since one’s previous baptism was a pagan Babylonish tripartite immersion.

Often the question is asked whether one baptized previously in a ceremony performed by some other religious group should again be baptized when coming to an accurate knowledge of the truth and making a dedication to Jehovah. Because of what has been already said, now there is compelling reason for also saying, Yes, one must be baptized again. *Obviously, by any of such religious systems one was never in reality baptized “in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the holy spirit,”* because had he been so baptized he would have appreciated the authority and office of such true Higher Powers And if previously dedicated to Jehovah, *the individual would have separated himself from such God-dishonoring Babylonish systems even before letting them baptize him.* So, the act of being baptized is not the important thing, but, rather, that which the act symbolizes is the element of importance (JW.org, 2020) [emphasis added].²

¹ What does tripartite mean?

² Why do Jehovah Witnesses feel that although one has been previously baptized in the tripartite they need to be rebaptized again by them in the tripartite formula?

Other religious denominations and institutions only baptize in the name of Jesus or Christ. Both processes seem to be biblical, *though one more than the other*. If Christ said to baptize in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, why didn't the apostles and disciples do it? Were they being disobedient or is there something else that needs to be considered? Before the question is answered, the authenticity of the text has to be corroborated through manuscript tradition. There are many scholars who are quite vocal on this subject. While there are many sources pertaining to this topic, one will satisfy the consensus from scholarship, the Tyndale New Testament Commentary. The commentators for Tyndale say,

Secondly, it is often affirmed, that the words in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost are not the *ipsissima verba* [the words themselves] of Jesus, but either the evangelist's words put into His mouth, or a later liturgical addition. It is argued that on the lips of Jesus they are an anachronism; that the early Church did not in fact use them as a baptismal formula till the second century; and that Eusebius of Caesarea in quoting this passage often omits or varies these words. *On the other hand, the words are found in all extant Mss*; and it is difficult to see why the evangelist should have inserted them if at the time when he was writing they formed no part of the Church's liturgy. It is also difficult to suppose that, if Eusebius had really known of Mss which omitted these words, some trace of the influence of these Mss would not have survived in the textual tradition. Furthermore, it may well be that the true explanation why the early Church did not at once administer baptism in the threefold name, is that the words of xxviii.19 were not originally meant by our Lord as a baptismal formula. He was not giving instructions about the actual words to be used in the service of baptism, *but, as has already been suggested, was indicating that the baptized person would by baptism pass into the possession of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost* (Tasker, 275) [emphasis added].^{3 4}

Tyndale's commentary states that *all* extant (existing) manuscripts (MSS): Greek, Latin, Coptic, Syriac, Arabic, Armenian, Georgian, Gothic, Old Church Slavonic, and Saxon, contain the *tripartite* (three-fold) phrase – formula. So, to argue that the tripartite formula is a later liturgical interpolation based upon MS tradition cannot be sustained because there is not one manuscript that differs in this area dating from the third and fourth centuries. However, Tyndale does posit that the tripartite statement may be derived from the evangelist (Matthew), not Yahoshua (Christ). What further validates the argument that the tripartite is original to Matthew's gospel is the fact that it is quoted by the patristics in the second century AD. One of the earliest patristics and ante-Nicene father, Ignatius (35 - 107) says, "For those things which the prophets announced, saying, 'Until He come for whom it is reserved, and He shall be the expectation of the Gentiles,' have been fulfilled in the Gospel, [our Lord saying,] 'Go ye and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the *Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost*'. All then are good together, the law, the prophets, the apostles, the whole company [of

³ How do the editors of the Tyndale New Testament Commentary interpret the tripartite formula?

⁴ True or False. The tripartite is found in all extant (existing) MSS.

others] that have believed through them: only if we love one another” (Ignatius, Epistle to the Philadelphians: IX) [emphasis added].⁵

Patristic and ante-Nicene father, Bishop Irenaeus (130 - 202) writes, “And again, giving to the disciples the power of regeneration into God, He said to them, Go and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost” (Irenaeus, Against Heresies Book III, Chapter 17). Christian Apologist, Justin Martyr (100 - 165) presents the tripartite phrase in his discourse. He writes “For, in the name of God, the Father and Lord of the universe, and of our Saviour Jesus Christ, and of the Holy Spirit, they then receive the washing with water . . . And for this [rite] we have learned from the apostles this reason. . .” (First Apology, Chapter LXI). Patristic and ante-Nicene apologist and author, Tertullian (155 - 240) writes, “For the law of baptizing has been imposed, and the formula prescribed: ‘Go,’ He saith, ‘teach the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit’” (On Baptism, Chapter XIII).

Nearly all the *early patristics* recite the Matthean tripartite phrase, which sustains the premise that the passage is original to Matthew or *at least in the second century, some 100 years after the death of the apostles, it appears in MSS*, “this suggests that it could have been added by a neo-Christian scribe to Matthew’s Gospel in the early second century.” However, until a manuscript is produced which shows a variant reading, one will have to conclude that the tripartite is original to Matthew’s gospel and are the words of the Messiah. However, some will cite the neo-Christian Historian and Exegete, Eusebius of Caesarea (260 - 340) who does not appear to quote the tripartite phrase. In the book, *The Church History of Eusebius*, chapter V, “The Last Siege of the Jews after Christ”, he writes, “But the rest of the apostles, who had been incessantly plotted against with a view to their destruction, and had been driven out of the land of Judea, went unto all nations to preach the Gospel, relying upon the power of Christ, who had said to them, *Go ye and make disciples of all the nations in my name*” [emphasis added]. However, to argue that Eusebius did not recognize the Matthean tripartite would be an error. In his letter on the Council of Nicaea he writes,⁶

As we have received from the Bishops who preceded us, and in our first catechisings, and when we received the Holy Laver, and as we have learned from the divine Scriptures, and as we believed and taught in the presbytery, and in the Episcopate itself, so believing also at the time present, we report to you our faith, and it is this. We believe in One God, the Father Almighty, the Maker of all things visible and invisible. And in One Lord Jesus Christ, the Word of God, God from God, Light from Light, Life from Life, Son Only-begotten, first-born of every creature, before all the ages, begotten from the Father, by Whom also all things were made; Who for our salvation was made flesh, and lived among men, and suffered, and rose again the third day, and ascended to the Father, and will come again in glory to judge the quick and dead. And we believe also in One Holy

⁵ Who was the earliest patristic (church Father) that quoted the tripartite formula, demonstrating that it was in the earliest MSS tradition?

⁶ True or False. There is a possibility that the tripartite formula was added to Matthew’s Gospel early in the second century by a neo-Christian scribe.

Ghost: believing each of these to be and to exist, the Father truly Father, and the Son truly Son, and the Holy Ghost truly Holy Ghost, as also our Lord, *sending forth His disciples for the preaching, said, Go teach all nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.* (Letter of Eusebius of Caesarea to the people of his Diocese: 174) [emphasis added].⁷

There is also the matter of the Gospel of Matthew written in Hebrew and translated by the late George Howard, PhD, former Professor of Religion at the University of Georgia. In his book titled *Hebrew Gospel of Matthew*, his translation reads “*Go and (teach) them to carry out all the things which I have commanded you forever*” (Howard, 151). However, two other Hebrew translations, the Munster Hebrew Matthew and the Du Tillet Hebrew Matthew carry the tripartite phrase, and thus, brings to question Howard’s Hebrew Matthew translation. However, when the Curetonian Gospels are read, which is a Syriac reading of the four Gospels based upon Western text-type tradition written between the late first century and early second century, the tripartite formula is absent. In this Syriac reading, Yahoshua simply says, “go and make disciples”. When all the data is considered, Matthew’s tripartite phrase appears to be genuine and inarguable if we place the weight of evidence on the lips of the patristics who are quoting this passage very early. Although the statement is extremely unorthodox, as a Biblicist, one has no other alternative but to accept the passage as is. So, this brings one’s attention to the biblical process used by the apostles. Did the apostles baptize in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit? Did they understand Yahoshua to give them a command to baptize in the tripartite? The answer to this question is no.⁸

The reality is, not one apostle baptized anyone in the name of the tripartite, which clearly demonstrates they did not view it as a formula or a command. Everything that was done, beginning with the gospels, was executed in identical manner in the epistles. Everything, including baptisms, were done in the name of Christ (Yahoshua). The gospels record exorcisms in the name of Christ (Matt. 7:22), receiving a child in his name (Matt. 18:5), gathering in his name (Matt. 18:20) and forsaking others for his name (Matt. 19:29). Mark records those who cast out demons in his name (Mark 9:38-39; 16:17-18). Luke records the same acts in the name of Christ and states that forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name *alluding to the fact that baptisms were to be done in his name, not the tripartite* (Luke 24:45-49). This is confirmed in Acts 2:38 when Peter told the Israelites to repent and be baptized in the name of Christ. Peter continues to perform miracles in the name of Christ (Acts 3:6), and disciples were evangelizing and *baptizing in Christ’s name* (Acts 8:12; 9:27-28; 10:48). When Paul baptized, it was done in the name of Christ (Acts 19:4-5; 22:16; Rom. 6:3; Gal. 3:27; 1 Cor. 6:11). There is no mention of any apostle doing anything in the name of the tripartite.⁹ The Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia says,

⁷ True or False. The Church historian, Eusebius quotes the tripartite formula.

⁸ What Gospel written in Hebrew does not carry the tripartite formula?

⁹ Give five passages where apostles were baptizing and doing works in the name of Christ.

Jesus, however, cannot have given his disciples this Trinitarian order of baptism after his resurrection; for the New Testament knows only baptism in the name of Jesus (Acts ii, 38; viii, 16; xix, 5; Gal. iii, 27; Rom. vi, 3; I Cor. i, 13-15), which still occurs even in the second and third centuries, while the Trinitarian formula occurs only in Matt. xxviii, 19 and then only again Didache vii, 1 and Justin, Apol., i, 61. It is unthinkable that the Apostolic Church thus disobeyed the express command of the Lord, which it otherwise considered the highest authority. Occurrences like those of Acts xix, 1-7 ought to have shown that the prescribed formula of baptism could not have been shortened to ‘the name of the Lord Jesus,’ if the character of baptism was to be retained as commanded (*Schaff-Herzog*, 435).

Father and Holy Spirit

To understand the purpose of the “questionable” tripartite formula we must begin with Matthew 28:18. Matthew writes, “And Jesus came and said to them, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me’” (Matt. 28:18). There are two words that captures the essence of this passage. These two words are *authority* and *me*. Yahoshua is stating to the apostles, *after his resurrection*, that Yah has given *him* all authority over earth and its atmosphere (heaven). Thus, he has been given sovereign authority over earth’s inhabitants as Yah’s administrator, ambassador, intercessor and king. He then says in v.19 “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.” Yahoshua specifically says to the apostles that they must go and make disciples (students) from every nation in the world and then baptize them *into the name of the tripartite*.

What is of particular interest now are the phrases, “In the name of” or rather “into the name of.” These two phrases mean “by the authority of, on behalf of, under the possession or ownership of or under the designation of” (Dictionary.Com). The Collins Dictionary states, “by the sanction or authority of.” Hence, Yahoshua is saying to the apostles that within the confines of himself (his name) lies the authority of the Father and the Holy Spirit. In other words, whatever is done in his name is also done in the name of the Father and Holy Spirit because he embodies by commission their essence and authority. This supposition is not new, as we see this displayed throughout his ministry.¹⁰

Praying or petitioning the Father in the name of Christ is the biblical process to approach God (Yah). When one prays to the Father in the name of Christ, they are approaching Yah with Christ’s authority, in Christ’s righteousness, imputed by Yah to each covenant worshiper who has been baptized in the name of Christ. Thus, the term *name* represents authority. “For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ” (Gal. 3:27). Christ commanded that all things be done in his name for the glory of the Father so that the son may be glorified in the Father (John 14:13). Christ came in the name of the Father and did miracles in His name (John 5:43; 10:25) which is to say, with the Father’s authority, for the Father’s glory (Matt. 9:8; 28:18). The Holy Spirit is also key to this process of glorifying the Father and Christ. The Holy Spirit

¹⁰ What does the phrase, “in the name of mean?”

served as Yah’s agent to perform the miracles which brought glory to God and His son (Luke 3:21-22; 4:1,14,18; 5:17; Acts 1:2; 2:22) as well as honor, prestige, and reputation to Christ and magnified the gospel of the kingdom. The story of Lazarus supports this position. “But when Jesus heard it he said, ‘This illness does not lead to death. It is for the glory of God, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it’” (John 11:4).^{11 12 13 14}

The Holy Spirit was sent by the Father in the name of Christ to bear witness to Him and His son, the Messiah (John 14:26; 15:26; 16:13-15). It is in this process that we begin to see the movement and ministry of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The Father, the Creator, seeks to undo the damage caused by Adam’s sin. Christ, Yahoshua, the human vessel is used as Yah’s earthly agent to articulate His will amongst men through the gospel, and the Holy Spirit has been sent by Yah to aid Christ in his ministry, which was done in the name of the Father. Luke writes, “And we are witnesses to these things, and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey him” (Acts 5:32). Interestingly, Christ informed the apostles that as long as they are on one accord, agreeing with his gospel, and his words abide and remain in them, whatever they ask of the Father he will grant to them. Christ says, “If you abide in me, and *my words abide in you*, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you (John 15:7) [emphasis added].¹⁵

The tripartite formula is *operational* and *authoritative*, representing the activity of the ministry through the authority of Yah granted unto Yahoshua by the direction of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:2). This authority is bound in *one name* and that name is *Yahoshua* who glorifies the Father through the power of the Holy Spirit. Thus, “in the name,” should properly be stated “*into the name*” which we see in Acts 19:3 (Gr. *eis*, into) representative of John’s baptism, viz., his authority, just as Paul speaks facetiously about being baptized “into his name” (1 Cor. 1:13). The tripartite was not intended to be taken as a literal formula for baptism. If that were the case, there would have been at least one account in the epistles demonstrating the veracity of this formula. It does not exist. The apostles were baptizing *into* the name of the Messiah alone, because they understood that Yahoshua was explaining the efficacy of his name, as it is interwoven within the authority of the Father and the Holy Spirit. Luke writes,

On the next day their rulers and elders and scribes gathered together in Jerusalem, with Annas the high priest and Caiaphas and John and Alexander, and all who were of the high-priestly family. And when they had set them in the midst, they inquired, ‘By what power or *by what name did you do this?*’ Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, ‘Rulers of the people and elders, if we are being examined today concerning a good deed done to a crippled man, by what means this man has been healed, let it be known to all of you and to all the people of Israel *that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth*, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead—by him this man is standing before you well’ (Acts 4:5-10) [emphasis added].

¹¹ How was Christ glorified?

¹² How was Yah glorified?

¹³ Who served as God’s agent to perform miracles?

¹⁴ What does it mean for Christ to come in the name of the Father?

¹⁵ What did Christ say must abide in every believer?

The *invalid* was healed in the name of Yahoshua, which represented the authority in which Peter healed the disabled person. Peter says, “And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved” (Acts 4:12). Peter is communicating to the authorities that there is no other *literal name* and *authoritative name* whereby one might be saved, because the name of Yahshua embodies the authority of Yah and the Holy Spirit who were the active forces behind this man’s restoration (Luke 4:14; 5:17; 7:16; John 3:2; Acts 2:22). Yahoshua was the vessel whom Yah used through the agency of the Holy Spirit to heal believers and to extend salvation. Hence the apostles did not recognize the tripartite as a formula for baptism because this was not what Yahoshua intended to convey, neither did the apostles receive it as such. Therefore, to be truly apostolic is to follow the process of redemption as they understood it from Yahoshua. The tripartite interpretation is solely based upon Eastern Orthodox and Catholic traditions and adopted in the sixteenth century by the Protestant churches. Thus, we determine that the tripartite or trinitarian formula for baptism is not Messianic or apostolic, but rather ecclesiastical, viz., of the neo-Christian church.^{16 17}

Rise of the Tripartite Process and the Holy Name

During the first century AD, and perhaps the second, all baptisms were done in the name of Yahoshua. This is what Christ commanded, and this was what the apostles and disciples understood as a part of Yah’s plan of redemption. No apostles or disciples were baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit because it was not a baptismal formula. So, where does this *unbiblical interpretation* and process come from? It comes from the Orthodox church of the third century ratified by the Catholic church in the fourth century. Catholic Reverend and author, John Kersten SVD (1915-2012) writes, “Into Christ. The Bible tells us that Christians were baptized into Christ (no. 6). They belong to Christ. The Acts of the Apostles (2:38; 8:16; 10:48; 19:5) tells us of baptizing ‘in the name [person] of Jesus.’ – a better translation would be ‘into the name [person] of Jesus.’ *Only in the 4th Century did the formula ‘In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit’ become customary*” (Kersten, 164) [emphasis added].¹⁸

Kersten appears to allude to the official practice of the church recognizing the tripartite (Father, Son, and Holy Ghost) as official entities within the baptismal process in the fourth century. Prior to this point there were various creedal formulas used by the Orthodox and Catholics for baptismal rites as early as the third century, emanating from the Eastern Orthodox church that scantily held this ceremony as an official sacrament ordained by Christ. Dr. Stuart G. Hall, Professor of Ecclesiastical History at King’s College says,

‘In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,’ although those words were not used, as they later are, as a formula. Not all baptisms fitted this rule. . . More common and perhaps more ancient was the simple, ‘in the name of the Lord Jesus or,

¹⁶ The _____ formula is _____, representing the _____ of the ministry.

¹⁷ How can one’s literal name and authoritative name be the same?

¹⁸ True or False. Baptizing in the name of the tripartite began with the Catholic church in the fourth century.

Jesus Christ.’ This practice was known among the Marcionites and Orthodox; it is certainly the subject of controversy in Rome and Africa about 254, as the anonymous tract *De rebaptismate* (‘On rebaptism’) shows. (Hall, 20-21).

Nevertheless, the issue at hand is: was the baptismal formula the tripartite in the first century? The answer to this question is no. And is the tripartite original to Matthew? The answer, thus far is yes, however, *it is not a formula*. It is just a phrase, which represents active elements within Christ’s name viz., the Messiah’s name embodies the authority of the Father to His glory and the work of the Holy Spirit. This is the reason Matthew writes to baptize in the *name*, not names. The name of Christ we know, the name of God we know, but the name of the Holy Spirit is not stated. Dr. John Nolland, Academic Dean and Lecturer in New Testament studies at Trinity College, Bristol, England writes,

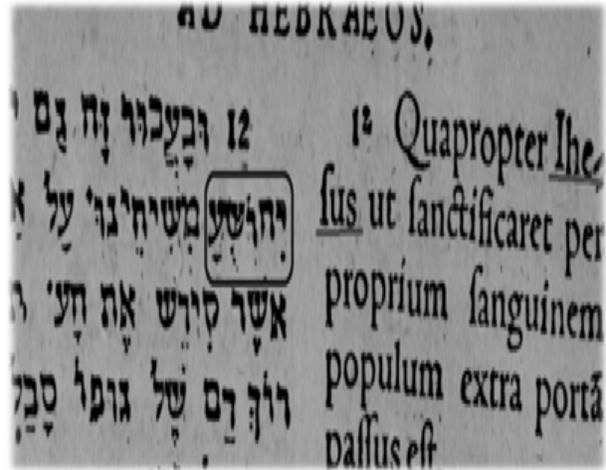
Christian baptism in Acts is also ‘in[to] the name of,’ but it is always ‘in[to] the name of Jesus’ or some equivalent. In Paul, baptism is ‘into Christ [Jesus].’ Matthew’s ‘Father, Son, and Holy Spirit’ is quite distinctive. *It is the Matthean use that predominated in later Christian baptismal practice*. And this seems to have had a distorting effect on the understanding of Matthew’s words. We cannot know whether the Matthean church used the words formulaically in baptism or not. But given the variations in NT language, clearly there was no agreed baptismal formula. And I think it unlikely that Matthew is reflecting the language of baptismal practice. In any case, our first task must be to understand the language in its present Matthean context and not in some putative context in baptismal practice. *A large number of scholars have pronounced Matthew’s language to be a foreign body in Matthew*, but this judgment seems to be derived ultimately from reading the language in relation to a (later) baptismal context and not in relation to the Gospel. My concern is to seek to understand the Matthean language in the Matthean context (Nolland, 1268).¹⁹

Finally, the last question that many will ask is, “what name should one be baptized in?” Is it Jesus or any one of his Hebrew variants (Yahshua, Yahoshua, Yehoshua)? Jesus is a transliterated name deriving from the Hebrew name Yeshua. Yeshua means, save or he saves. The names Yahshua, Yahoshua and Yehoshua means Yah (God) saves. In the second century (175 - 177), the Greek philosopher Celsus published an anti-Christian work called the *True Doctrine*. In this work he documented his interaction with Christians approximately 150 years after the death of the apostles. Celsus writes, “But of course they think otherwise: they assume that by pronouncing the name of their teacher they are armored against the powers of the earth and air. *And they are quite insistent on the efficacy of the name as a means of protection: pronounce it improperly, they say, and it is ineffective. Greek and Latin will not do; it must be said in a barbarian tongue to work*. Silly as they are, one finds them standing next to a statue of

¹⁹ True or False. A large number of scholars believe that the tripartite formula is foreign to Matthew’s Gospel.

Zeus or Apollo or some other god, and shouting, ‘see here: I blaspheme it and strike it, but it is powerless against me for I am a Christian’” (Celsus: 118) [emphasis added].^{20 21 22 23}

Celsus alludes to the probability that the second era Christians were using the Hebraic name of Christ, not the Greek name (Iēsous Ἰησοῦς) or Latin name (Iēsus Ἰησοῦς) (Jesus), which are transliterations of the Hebrew name Yeshua. The name that was most common and accepted within the Jewish and Christian community at that time was either Yehoshua or Yeshua. Christ’s name written in Greek would have been Iēsous because Yehoshua was not written in Greek or Latin. Thus, the supposition is that when Christ was propagated by literature, his transliterated name was presented, but when spoken, his Hebrew name was pronounced. Therefore, many within the Hebraic society find it appropriate to baptize in the name of Yahshua, Yehoshua, or Yahoshua for the remission of sins, all of which mean Yah saves. Some may baptize in the name of Yeshua. However, this may be problematic as evidence demonstrates that Christ’s name was written and spoken in its theophoric long form “Yehoshua” according to Sebastian Münster’s Hebrew text published posthumously in 1557 (see the relief on the previous page to the right).



Dr. William F. Albright (1891 - 1971), American archaeologist, biblical scholar, and philologist writes, “It seems plain from the early material in Acts that baptism was performed ‘in the name of’ and also ‘in-to the name of’ Jesus as Lord and Messiah. The mistake of so many writers on the New Testament lies in treating this saying as a liturgical formula (which it later became), and not as a description of what baptism accomplished. The evangelist, whom we must at least allow to have been familiar with the baptismal customs of the early Messianic Community, may well have added to *baptizing them his own summary of what baptism accomplished*” (Albright, 362-363).

Conclusion

The tripartite is a phrase which became a formula much later (4th century) and imposed upon believers and worshipers by the Catholic church. The spurious tripartite formula was not a formula introduced or practiced in the primitive or Nazarene assemblies in the first century. Albright believes that the tripartite words *are those of the evangelist*, not the Messiah, with the

²⁰ The name Jesus comes from the Hebrew name _____.

²¹ What name means Yah saves or Yah is salvation?

²² Who stated that the early neo-Christians stated that the Messiah’s name needed to be verbalized in the Barbaric or Hebrew speech?

²³ What group of people felt like the Messiah’s name had power only in the Hebrew speech, not Latin or Greek?

intent to convey what is accomplished when one is baptized in the name of Christ; the embodiment of the Father and Spirit in the name of the son within the confines of their authority, yet, his supposition is wanting.^{24 25}

Baptisms should be done in the name of Christ, preferably the Hebrew name because it is the correct name of the Messiah, and the name that was given whereby all men are to be saved. We are no longer hindered by linguistics, the name of the Messiah can be rendered in English, both verbally and literally, which leaves no reason why one cannot be baptized in the name of the Messiah. Theologically, the name that best fits the Messiah is Yehoshua *or* one of its theophoric variants (Yahoshua or Yahshua), but each worshiper must follow their own conscience in these matters.

There is much more to deliberate on this subject. If you have not been baptized in the name of the Messiah and would like to learn more about this topic and the biblical process for baptism, we invite you to contact us for further discussion. If you have questions about this study and others, you are welcome to join us in fellowship, prayer, praise, and study every Saturday at 11:30 am, or call us for consultation pertaining to this subject, or any other you might find intriguing. NCCI is a Messianic Judaic assembly teaching the doctrine of Sinaiticism, which means keeping God's Word in the faith of Christ (Rev. 12:17; 14:12-13) and proclaiming His gospel to the world to those who are seeking His truth without interpretation or church tradition. May the blessings of the Most High be with you and thank you for reading our article.

²⁴ True or False. Albright believes that baptisms were done in the name of the Messiah in the first century.

²⁵ True or False. Albright believes that Matthew added the tripartite as an explanation of what Yahoshua's baptism accomplishes. He does not see it as a formula.

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