

## POWER OF THE NAME OF JESUS IN BAPTISM

***Malachi 1:11*** For from the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same my name shall be great among the Gentiles; and in every place incense shall be offered unto my name, and a pure offering: for my name shall be great among the heathen, saith the LORD of hosts.

Six times God mentions his great name in the Book of Malachi which precedes the Gospel of Matthew. God was preparing Israel and the world for the revelation of his great name. He clearly prophesied that his name would be great among the gentiles and the heathen. From the time of Adam, to the time of Caiaphas, the blood of nameless animals was shed for sins. I say nameless animals because without a name there is no power to deliver from sin. Each animal that was slain pointed to the coming Lord who would be slain for the sins of the world. But what is his name? What name was revealed to the whole world for salvation? In the last two weeks, we have studied the meaning of baptism for salvation. Unfortunately, much of the Christian world baptizes souls in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost. This Bible study will seek to show that this is incorrect – there is salvation only in the name of Jesus Christ.

***Matthew 1:21*** And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.

We can gauge the importance of a name in the Genesis story of Jacob who wrestled with the angel of God. Jacob was desperate and did not want to die at the hands of his brother, Esau, who was advancing towards his position to exact revenge. How did God respond? He changed the name of Jacob to Israel. God's blessing was in the new name – there is incredible power in a new name given by God. "And he said, Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed (Genesis 32:28). Jacob knew that his own name did not bring him the blessings he desperately looked for in his life up to that point. He was fully aware of the power inherent in God's word and declarations – his own father, Isaac, was the result of God's promised word to Abraham.

Do we want to be saved by baptism in the name of God or in three titles invented at the Councils of Nicaea and Constantinople in the fourth century AD? We dare not contradict the name of God that the messenger Gabriel revealed to Mary in favor of three titles invented by Greek philosophers in Turkey three hundred years later. As I said last week, the first time the name in which we must be baptized was declared with power in the Bible was actually

Acts 2:38 – not Matthew 28:19. Matthew had not yet written his Gospel. How could he? He was not yet filled with the Holy Ghost. Matthew was present when Peter stood up and declared to the devout Jews in Jerusalem, “... 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 same Peter said to the assembled apostles and disciples of the early church in the first council, “And when there had been much disputing, Peter rose up, and said unto them, Men and brethren, ye know how that a good while ago God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel, and believe” (Acts 15:7).

Matthew is in total agreement with Peter and Paul – the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost is Jesus – Matthew 28:19 states “in the name” not “in the names”. He knew the name was Jesus because he was there on the Day of Pentecost, and definitely must have been among those who baptized the 3000 souls in Jesus name. We cannot imagine that Matthew baptized in the titles of Father, Son and Holy Ghost, while Peter and the rest baptized in the name of Jesus alone. Let there be no doubt whatsoever, baptism has the power to save us, but only if it is administered in the name of Jesus.

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

Let us approach the need to use the name of Jesus in baptism through the prism of another story in the Bible. “Then certain of the vagabond Jews, exorcists, took upon them to call over them which had evil spirits the name of the Lord Jesus, saying, We adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preacheth” (Acts 19:13). These seven Jew were the sons of a certain Sceva, chief of the priests. These Jews did not believe in the Lord Jesus, but they were clearly impressed at the authority in the name of Jesus to cast out demons. In other words, demons who demonstrate enormous power were subdued at the name of Jesus. The sons of Sceva knew there were many Jews called Jesus, so they decided to be as precise as possible and make sure to add, “whom Paul preacheth”. They were actually correct in trying to follow the apostles’ doctrine, but they forgot to first follow Jesus. Nevertheless, my point is that even unbelievers knew that the power is in the name of Jesus – not in some vague titles. Had the sons of Sceva believed in Jesus, the demons would have screamed and fled because they were following the example of an apostle – power and salvation is only in the name of Jesus.

***Ephesians 2:20** And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone;*

Furthermore, let us analyze the precise theology behind baptism in Jesus name. The English word baptize comes from the Greek *baptizō*. This word has the following meanings: immerse, submerge and overwhelm. When we are baptized in Jesus name, we are declaring that we are joining ourselves to the Lord Jesus Christ who died on the Cross and allowed himself to be immersed, submerged and overwhelmed by death because of our sins. However, in rising from the death, Jesus demonstrated the power in his name to overcome death. This is why it is impossible to use any other name than Jesus in baptism because Jesus alone is God and had the power to go down to the depths of hell, bury our sins and rise up gloriously.

**Rom 6:3** *Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?*

**Rom 6:4** *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.*

**Eph 4:8** *Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.*

**Eph 4:9** *(Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth?*

**Eph 4:10** *He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.)*

So who did all the mighty acts mentioned in the scriptures above? Let us say his name proudly and without hesitation – Jesus! There is indeed no other way to be baptized and saved, according to Peter. “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). There are Christians today who refuse to be baptized in the name of Jesus alone but are happy to say that one day they will bow down at the name of Jesus. “That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth” (Phil 2:10).

Let us further analyze the meaning of the death of Jesus and why his name is indispensable in baptism. Understand that death is the most potent power that exists since it first struck Abel – the first individual to experience death. This must have shocked all creatures profoundly; perhaps even the animals wondered and despaired at the death of Abel – what a fearful and mysterious force this was! But, let us not forget that death was pronounced by God – God created and sustains death. “But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die” (Genesis 2:17). Since death came from God, should we not expect to find salvation from death in God?

This is precisely why God the Father was manifested in flesh – to destroy death through his name Jesus which means Jehovah is salvation.

***Isaiah 52:6*** *Therefore my people shall know my name: therefore they shall know in that day that I am he that doth speak: behold, it is I.*

***Hosea 13:14*** *I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death: O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction: repentance shall be hid from mine eyes.*

Who is the “I” who will ransom us from the grave? The fact that he uses the single first person pronoun “I” proves that he is one person and hence his name must be Jesus. The God who comes to save us is not a Trinity, but Jesus alone. The logical conclusion of a study of the theology and meaning of salvation in the Bible demands baptism in Jesus name alone. The apostle Paul met the disciples of John the Baptist preaching salvation in Ephesus, which is quite far from Jerusalem. These men were upright servants of God but they knew the baptism of John alone. God, in his mercy, brought the apostle Paul so he could reveal the name of God for salvation through baptism in his name.

***Act 19:3*** *And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism.*

***Act 19:4*** *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.*

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