

# Dissolving A Few Oneness Pentecostal Aspirins

By

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This article is intended to debunk and show the ineffectiveness of some arguments used by the advocates of the Oneness doctrine to defend the false doctrine of the baptismal formula. These modern teachers seem to have constructed a “pillbox of aspirins” to be given to likeminded individuals in order to relieve them of the pains and headaches caused by the truth as a result of the false doctrine they expound. The aim of this endeavor is to begin the process of emptying the box and dissolving those aspirins in order to make them ineffective even to those who use them.

## Are Quotes From “Authorities” A Proof For The Baptismal Formula?

Those who are insisting that there is a particular set of words that must be pronounced by the baptizer while baptizing an individual, try to give credence to their doctrine by finding solace in the statements of certain “authorities.” They cite statements from encyclopedias and other books to give justification to their doctrine. The claim is made that the practice of mentioning “the name of Jesus” by the baptizer dates back to the early church and that the formula was changed to “*the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit*” sometime after the New Testament. Since they cannot justify their claim using the Bible, they must resort to human authorities to defend their practice. However, such argument only lands them into more serious trouble as shall be seen in this piece. It is amazing that those who are using this argument are the same people who affirm that faithful members of the Lord’s church would not insist on a particular formula or set of exact words to be said while baptizing an individual. How upon common reasoning would someone argue that is wrong to insist on a particular formula to be said during baptism, yet at the same time, gives a list of quotations from human authorities showing that “a particular formula” was used from the New Testament times by the baptizers while baptizing.

## The Catholics Have Proven Infant Baptism Using Similar Historical Quotes From Authorities

In the first place, it is extremely important to realize that in proving anything to be scriptural, we have to go by the Scriptures, not by men (II Timothy 3:16-17, II Peter 1:3, Galatians 1:11). It would interest readers to know that one of the ways that the Roman Catholic Church have used in proving that infant baptism is scriptural is to give statements from authorities that the practice have been in existence for a very long time. This aspirin has been taken from the Roman Catholic Church’s pillbox and placed inside the pillbox of the Oneness doctrine advocates. Here are a few of the quotes that Catholics use to prove infant baptism:

**Hippolytus** – “*Baptize first the children, and if they can speak for themselves let them do so. Otherwise, let their parents or other relatives speak for them.*” – **The Apostolic Tradition 21:16 [A.D. 215]**

**Origen** – “*according to the usage of the Church, baptism is given even to infants*” – **Homilies on Leviticus 8:3 [A.D 248]**

**Origen** – “*The Church received from the apostles the tradition of giving baptism even to infants.*” – **Commentaries on Romans 5:9 [A.D. 248]**

Would our “beloved” modern Oneness Pentecostal advocates agree that infant baptism is scriptural since we have statements from “authorities” that the practice has been on as far back to the early centuries? They do not teach this and would not teach it! However, the aspirin that is supposed to cure their headache says we must accept the baptismal formula to be scriptural simply because we find some statements from human authorities that suggest that it has been practiced from the beginning. How weak and poor such argument could be!

### **Authorities Disagree On What Formula Was Used From The Beginning**

It is not enough for the modern Oneness Pentecostal advocates to just go over to the Internet to copy statements from people who believe that the practice of invoking the name of Jesus Christ during baptism dates back to the early church. They ought to be diligent enough to read well and realize that there are other authorities who believe that the “triune” formula was used from the beginning. There are quotes from various Authorities that say the "triune" formula was used at the beginning. Here are a few of them:

**Origen** – *“the authority and dignity of the Holy Ghost is so great that saving baptism cannot be conferred except by the authority of all the Persons of the most exalted Trinity, that is, through the mention of the Father and Son and Holy Ghost.”* (Treatise De Principiis 801, 3, 2: CBXXII, 50, 5 ff).

**Justin Martyr (100–165)** – *“In the name of God, the Father and Lord of the universe, and of our Savior Jesus Christ, and of the Holy Spirit, [new converts] then receive the washing with water”* (First Apology, 61).

**Didache (ca. AD 120-150)** – *“Concerning baptism, baptize in this way. After you have spoken all these things, ‘baptize in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit’ in running water”* (7:1). (Everett Ferguson’s Early Christians Speak, p.35)

**Irenaeus, AD 190** – *“we have received baptism for remission of sins in the name of God the Father, and in the name of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who became incarnate and died and was raised, and in the Holy Spirit of God.”* (Everett Ferguson’s Early Christians Speak, p.35)

**Tertullian** – *“The ‘paths are made straight’ by the washing away of sins, which faith obtains, sealed in the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.”* (David W. Bercot’s A Dictionary of Early Christian Beliefs, p.53)

**The Apostolic Constitutions** – *“After that, either you, the bishop, or a presbyter that is under you, will in the solemn form pronounce over them the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and will dip them in the water.”* (David W. Bercot’s A Dictionary of Early Christian Beliefs, p.58)

**The Apostolic Constitutions** – *“He [Christ] said, ‘Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.’ Therefore, O bishop, baptize three times into the Father, and Son, and Holy Spirit, according to the will of Christ.”* (David W. Bercot’s A Dictionary of Early Christian Beliefs, p.58)

**St. Justin Martyr (100–165)** – *“in order not to remain children of necessity and ignorance, but of free choice and knowledge, the name of God, the Father and Lord of all things, in the water is invoked upon him who chooses to be born again and has repented his sins, the one who conducts the baptism pronouncing only this very name. For no one can state the proper name of the ineffable God; but if any one ventured to say that God has a proper name, it would remain incurable madness. (First Apology, 61)*

**Tertullian** – “After His resurrection He promised to send to His disciples the promised of the Father, and in the end commanded that they baptise into the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost, not into one. For not once, but thrice we are immersed at the mention of the separate names” (Adv. Prax. 26: CV XLVII, 279, 13 ff),

**Tertullian** – Elsewhere he says that “those who are cleansed are made clean, not through the first, nor the second invocation, but except the third invocation be pronounced, one cannot be made clean.” (81 Horn, in Lev. VII, 4: CB XXIX, 384, 18 f)

**Origen (AD 248)** – “legitimate baptism is had only in the name of the Trinity” (Commentary on Romans 5:8)

**Firmilian** writes to St. Cyprian that the invocation of the three divine Persons confers the grace of baptism when the baptizer has the true faith. Here again the invocation of the Trinity constitutes the essential words of the sacrament (Leo F. Miller; The Formula of Baptism in the early Church, p.524).

**The Acts of Xantippe and Polyxena (AD 250)** – “Then Probus...leapt into the water, saying ‘Jesus Christ, Son of God, and everlasting God, let all my sins be taken away by this water.’ And Paul said, ‘We baptize thee in the name of the Father and Son and Holy Ghost.’ After this, he made him to receive the Eucharist of Christ” (Acts of Xantippe and Polyxena 21)

Other sources which contain quotes that the “triune” formula has been used from the beginning include; *Funk and Wagnalls New Encyclopedia, 1972, volume 3, page 177; A Dictionary of the Bible, by John D. Davis, 1969, page 265; An Outline of Church History, by Theodore Huggenvik, 1955, page 56, etc.*

What do all of these prove? Absolutely nothing, except that uninspired “authorities” disagree, and that you cannot prove anything by them anyway. Only the Scriptures should be used to justify a practice that is approved by God and not human authorities (Acts 18:28).

### **Has God Given Any Formula To Be Used In Baptism?**

It is important to state here that the Bible nowhere tells Christians “what to say” while baptizing; and anyone insisting that “this is what you must say” while baptizing anyone, is only adding his own opinion to the scriptures. There is clearly a difference between doing something and saying something. This fact is abundantly established in I Samuel 25:5-9. Furthermore, in Acts 2:14-40, what Peter **said** is recorded in verses 14, 38 and 40; but it is not recorded what was said by Peter when the baptizing took place in verse 41. In Acts 19:2-5, what Paul **said** is recorded in verses 2, 3 and 4 (notice the quotation marks in the NKJV in verses 2, 3 and 4 but none in verse 5) but there is no record of what was said by Paul when he baptized the Ephesians neither is it recorded what the baptizer said **anywhere** else in the Bible.

Up till now, no one has been able to tell us HOW the penitents were to “repent...in the name of Jesus Christ” (Acts 2:38); did someone have to call over the name of Jesus Christ over the one that is repenting? Also, no one has been able to tell us HOW David’s young men **went to Carmel** “in the name of David;” did someone have to call over the name of David over the young men while they were travelling? Or did the young men have to call over the name of David over themselves while on their journey? Some have refused to understand the essence of citing I Samuel 25:5-9 and were proving what is not necessary. Whether or not David’s name was mentioned by the young men when they got to Nabal’s house is **NOT** the issue since David specifically told them what to say and part of what they are to say is **to mention his name** (vs.8). Did Jesus ask us to

mention a particular (single) phrase or name while baptizing? No! The point from I Samuel 25 is that it shows a difference between what to do and what to say.

Some think that because Peter mentioned the name of Jesus while healing the lame man in Acts 3:6 (cf. Acts 4:10), then doing something in the name of someone must mean that you have to mention the name of that individual while doing the very thing. They are miserably mistaken and other passages expose their error. In Acts 9, Peter went to Joppa and raised Dorcas to life. He simply said to her, “Tabitha, arise” (vs. 40)—without the use of any formula. Paul healed the lame man in Lystra by simply saying, “Stand upright on your feet.” The man “leaped up and began to walk” (Acts 14:10). These passages clearly show that it was possible to heal or perform a miracle “in the name of Jesus Christ” without actually using this phrase as a technical formula to be stated at the time of the healing or other miracle (cf. Mark 16:17). Similarly, it is possible to carry out a scriptural baptism “in the name of Jesus Christ” without the use of any particular formula that must include the name of “the Lord Jesus Christ.”

Other uses of the phrase, “*in the name of,*” would also lead us to understand that this must not be audibly stated when carrying out the instruction attached to it. Jesus said, “Whoever receives this child in My name receives Me” (Luke 9:48a). Does this mean that one must say, “*I receive you in Jesus’ name*”? In Matthew 10:41-42, the disciples are to “receive” or “welcome” a prophet in the name of a prophet. Also, one is to receive a righteous man “in the name of a righteous man.” Does that mean that when receiving a prophet, one has to say “*I receive you in your name*”? Not at all! And in Matthew 18:20, two or three are to gather in Christ’s name. Does that mean anytime Christians gather (say to exercise discipline of a sinful brother), they must audibly repeat the formula, “we have gathered in the name of Jesus Christ” for Christ to be in their midst? In Matthew 7:22, Jesus said; “Many will say to Me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?’” Does this mean that those who prophesied necessarily said, “*I now prophesy in the name of Jesus*”? Jesus said, “The Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name” (John 14:26a). Did the Father audibly say, “*I am sending the Holy Spirit in the name of Jesus*”? Honestly, the advocates of the Oneness doctrine are terribly confused and they seriously need to be helped!

### **The Grammar of Matthew 28:19**

One of the aspirins in the pill box of the Oneness Pentecostals is the grammatical construction of Matthew 28:19. In fact, that is their major argument and they would not let go of it as it seems their life depends on it. They claim that the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit means the three have one single name simply because the word “name” in that verse is singular and not plural. This claim has been proven to be incorrect and false in several ways in my previous articles and no one has been able to debunk it. All you see are confusing miscalculations intended to deceive (see link at the end of this work). But I want to draw our attention to the book of Isaiah 9:6. In that verse, we read; “*And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.*” Notice that we have the singular word “name” yet there are up to 4 different terms that the Messiah will be called. Is it grammatically incorrect to have “*His name shall be called...*”? Must it be written that “*His names shall be called...*” for it to be grammatically correct? If our “beloved” Oneness Pentecostal folks can understand that the use of the singular “name” in Isaiah 9:6 in connection with more than one term for the Messiah is acceptable, they should be wise enough to understand that the use of “name” in Matthew 28:19 should NOT necessarily refer to one single name ***if at all the name refers to a literal name***. This is especially true since the Bible gives us several other names that Christ is called (Matthew 1:21; Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:23; Revelation 19:13; 19:16).

However, it has been severally reiterated that the word “name” in Matthew 28:19 does NOT refer to an actual literal name. We must understand that the term “name” (Greek, *onoma*) must have the significance that it often does in the New Testament. Instead of just referring to a literal name or an appellation, the “name” (*onoma*) can refer to: authority (Acts 4:7; I Corinthians 6:11); reputation (Revelation 3:1; Luke 6:22); person or personality (Acts 1:15; Revelation 3:4), etc. Sadly, some people have decided to be baptized and baptize into a formula instead of being baptized into the union with God, Christ and the Holy Spirit. How are they different from the Roman Catholic Church that invalidates thousands of baptisms conducted by a Catholic priest (Father Andres Arango) in Arizona, USA in February, 2022 simply because he has been using “a wrong word” while baptizing? May God have mercy on these set of individuals and open their eyes quickly before it is too late. Hopefully, we shall continue with the process of dissolving other aspirins at a different time and in different articles.

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