

Truth Or Tradition

“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).

In history there was a great man named Aristotle. He taught that heavier objects fall faster than lighter ones. Because he was one of the greatest thinkers of his time, people believed him. After two thousand years of people believing this, another man named Galileo called for learned men to come to the base of a high tower. He then climbed to the top and pushed off a five kilo and a one kilo weight at the same time. Much to the surprise of everyone who had gathered, both objects fell at the same time. The power of belief in man's wisdom was so strong that the learned people refused to believe what they had seen. They denied Galileo's experiment and insisted Aristotle was correct. The tradition of what they had been taught would not allow for them to accept the truth; even when they had seen it; and admit that they were incorrect. They persisted to believe an inaccurate teaching. This story was related in a book called, *Strong Men in Tough Times*, by Ed Cole. He stated, “A person's beliefs hold the greatest potential for good or harm in life.”

This same man related a story that has been repeated in several other books on various subjects. It is an old story about a ship's captain who one night saw what looked like a light of another ship heading toward him. He had the signalman blink to the other ship, “Change your course ten degrees south.”

The reply, “Change your course ten degrees north.”

Again a response, “I am a captain and I say change your course south.”

To that the reply came, “I am a seaman first class. Change your course north.”

The captain was angry and signaled back, “I say change your course south. I'm on a battleship.”

The reply came back, “Change your course north. I'm in a lighthouse.”

What we believe about our salvation matters when we consider our future destiny. We must adjust to the truth of God's Word. If someone says something is wrong, and then a thousand people say it is correct, it is still wrong.

We cannot be like the boy who reacted stubbornly to his mother.

One day the mother told the son to sit down and he refused. She again insisted he sit down and he insisted on refusing. She demanded he sit down and forced him. The boy retorted, “Mother even though you see me sitting down, in my spirit I am still standing up!”

This brings us to the point of this lesson.

What are the correct words to be used for Water Baptism?

As we look at churches that practice baptism by immersion we realize there are two varying formulas used. Many use the words of Jesus in Matthew 28:19. Others use the words recorded in Acts 2:38 as contained in the first sermon preached in the New Testament Church. Because of these two different formulas there is confusion in the minds of many as to which should be used.

We do not see anyone in the New Testament baptized using the triune formula.

Baptism in Jesus' Name

Matthew 28:19 is considered to be the Great Commission. Luke also records the Great Commission in Luke 24:45-47. "Remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations."

In history the triune formula was not used by the early church. It started in 325 A. D. at the Council of Nicea.

No record of the Trinitarian formula can be found in the Book of Acts, neither in any of the Epistles. No where in the New Testament was there an example of someone being baptized using this formula.

It is important that we are baptized in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ because, "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).

Peter was given the keys to the kingdom by Jesus in Matthew 16:19 and used these keys to open the door to salvation in Acts 2:38.

Jesus Himself in Matthew 28:19 commanded we baptize in a name. We are aware that "Jesus" is the only saving name. The Apostles did not disobey or fail because we know all Scripture is inspired by God. Jesus is the highest name known to mankind (Philippians 2:9-11).

Everything we do in word or deed should be done in the name of Jesus (Colossians 3:17). Jesus died for us and we are His bride; therefore we must take on the family name (Ephesians 3:14-15).

We are to be buried with Him in baptism (Colossians 2:8-12). We are washed in the name of the Lord Jesus (1 Corinthians 6:11).

We do not refute the words of Matthew 28:19 but we are trying to show how the command was interpreted and obeyed by the Apostles.

We are not trying to minimize the sincere religious experience of those who have been baptized in the titles. Rather we want you to be like the sincere believers of Ephesus, who upon hearing the truth were rebaptized "in the name of the Lord Jesus" (Acts 19:3-5).

We cannot follow the traditions of men; making the Word of God of none effect (Mark 7:13). It is possible, like Jesus said to hold to "the tradition of the elders" (Mark 7:3). All doctrine must be clearly based on Scripture for it is the only measure of truth.

Pilate asked, "What is truth?" Jesus kept silent. However for those who truly seek truth, He said "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth" (John 17:17).

For those who obey the truth, the Bible gives us a great promise. "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32).

Study Questions

1. What do we learn from the illustration concerning Aristotle and Galileo? _____

2. What is the best measurement of truth? Explain. _____

3. What are the correct words to be used for water baptism? _____
4. Prove using Scriptures that baptism is in the name of Jesus. _____

5. Quote one Scripture in the New Testament where you find someone being baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. _____
