

The Change of the Baptismal Formula in Matthew 28:19

The Original Text of the Gospel of Matthew

According to Bible scholars, the original Gospel of Matthew was written in Hebrew (Aramaic/Hebrew dialect), not in Greek.

Here are the proofs of the original text in Hebrew/Aramaic.

- „Papias, an early Christian author in 100 AD stated: **“Matthew wrote the words in the Hebrew dialect, and each one interpreted as he could”** in Eusebius Ecclesiastical History 3.39. [Page 16]“
Source: Kent, H. A. (1962). The Gospel according to Matthew. In: Pfeiffer, C. F. & Harrison, E. F. (Eds.), The Wycliff Bible Commentary (p. 929). Chicago: Moody Press.
- „It is believed by a formidable number of critics **that Matthew was originally written in what is loosely called Hebrew**, but more correctly Aramaic, or Syro-Chaldaic, the native tongue of the country at the time of our Lord; and that the Greek Matthew we now possess is a translation of that work, either by the Evangelist himself or some unknown hand. The evidence on which this opinion is grounded has been deemed conclusive by Grotius, Michaelis, Michaelis translator, Marsh, Townson, Campbell, Olshausen, Creswell, Meyer, Ebrard, Lange, Davidson, Cureton, Tregelles, Webster and Wilkinson.“
Source: Brown, D. (1878). The Gospel According to S. Matthew. In: Jamieson, R., Fausset, A. R., & Brown, D. (Eds.), A commentary, critical and explanatory, on the Old and New Testaments (p. 3). Hartford : S.S. Scranton & Co. ; Hillsdale, MI : J.B. Names
- „Five individuals stated, in effect, that **Matthew wrote in Aramaic and that translations followed in Greek**: Papias (80-155 AD), Irenaeus (130-202 AD), Origen (185-254 AD), Eusebius (4th century AD) and Jerome (6th century AD)“
Source: Walvoord, J. F., Zuck, R. B., & Dallas Theological Seminary. (1983-c1985). The Bible knowledge commentary: An exposition of the scriptures (Vol 2, p. 15). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books
- Early Christian tradition held the view **that Matthew was originally written in Hebrew or Aramaic, not in Greek**
Source: Carson, D. A., & Moo, D. J. (2009). An introduction to the New Testament. HarperCollins Christian Publishing, p. 135-152
- „All of the ancient writers, whose extant writings allude to the question, represent **Matthew as having written a narrative in Hebrew**; „
Source: McGarvey, J. W. (1875). Commentary on Matthew and Mark. Delight: Gospel Light Publishing Company, p. 8
- „We next hear of Irenaeus in the second half of the first century, who writes that **Matthew issued "a gospel" in Hebrew** at the time when Peter and Paul were preaching and founding the church in Rome (about 64-65 AD). „
Source: Lenski, R. C. H. (1943). The Interpretation of St. Matthew's Gospel. Wartburg Press. R.C.H Lenski, Gospel of Matthew, p. 10

- „Pantaenus (180 AD) claims to have **seen a Hebrew Gospel by Matthew in southern Arabia**, which was brought there by Bartholomew. „
Source: Lenski, R. C. H. (1943). The Interpretation of St. Matthew's Gospel. Wartburg Press. R.C.H Lenski, Gospel of Matthew, p. 10
- „**The translation into Greek may be dated as early as the year 65**“
Source: Lenski, R. C. H. (1943). The Interpretation of St. Matthew's Gospel. Wartburg Press. R.C.H Lenski, Gospel of Matthew, p. 11

The original Text of Matthew 28:19

In the Aramaic original text of the New Testament, there was no form of baptism but only the "go" command.

Matthew 28:18..20							
נתן	לי	להם	ואמר	אליהם	קרבו	יוש"ו	18
given	to mi	to them	and said	to them	came	Jesus	
			ובארץ	בשמי	היכולת	כל	
			and in earth	in heaven	the power	all	
					אתם	לכו	19
					you	go to them	
אשר	הדברים	כל	לקיים	אותם	ושמרו		20
that	the things	all	so that they do	of them	and take care		
		עולם	עד	אתכם	צויתי		
		forever	until	(I am) with you	I commissioned		

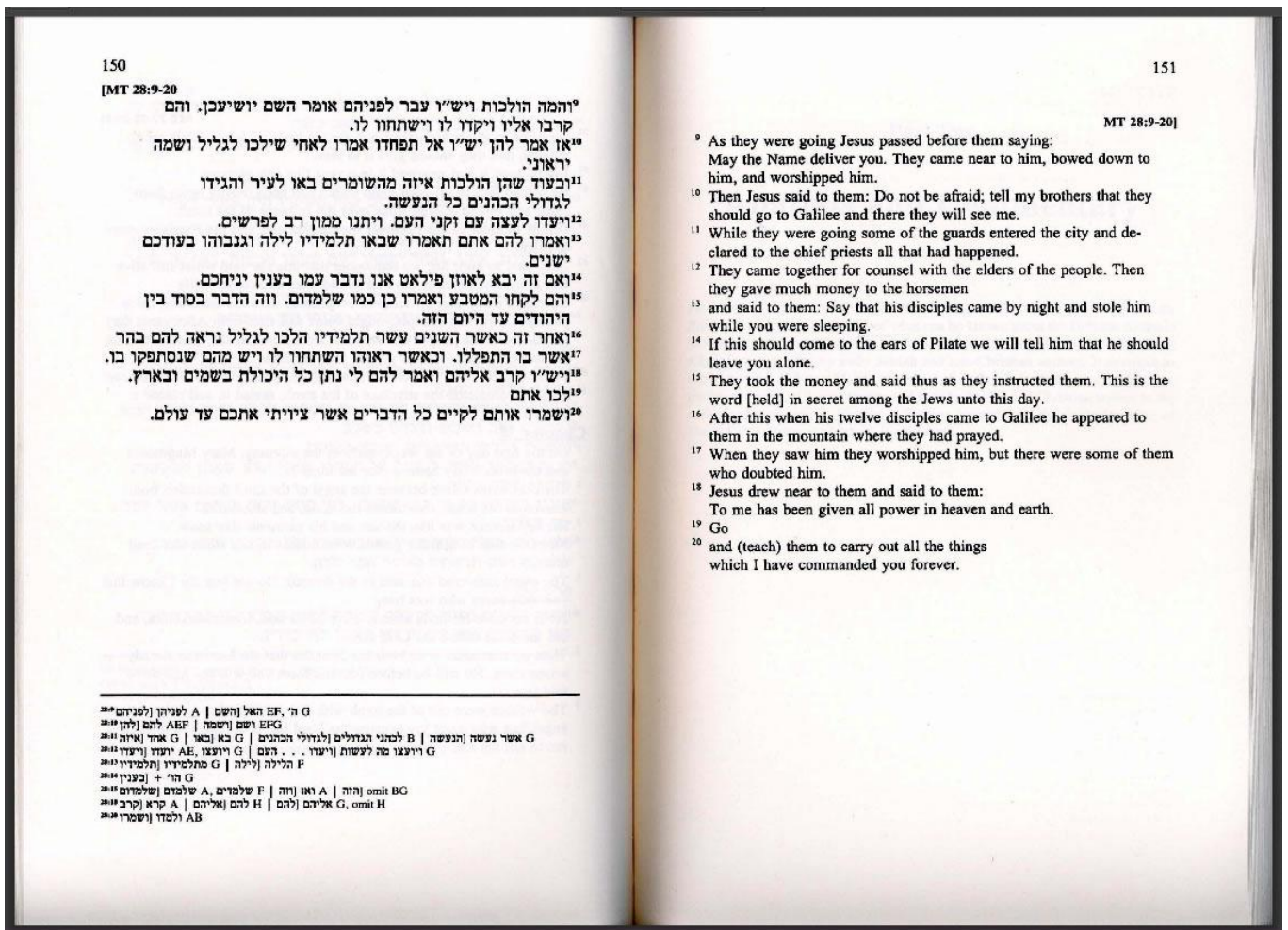
The translation into English (in the style of KJV) would therefore be as follows:

18 And Jesus came and spake unto them, all power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.

19 Go ye

20 and teach them to do all things I have commanded you forever

The Hebrew Gospel of Matthew by George Howard (1995) translated as follows:



Source: Howard, G. (1995). Hebrew Gospel of Matthew. Mercer University Press

There is no such form of Trinitarian baptism in the Bible. The apostles baptized only in the name of Jesus. Here are the Bible texts about it (KJV):

Acts 2:38 "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 8:12 "But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, **and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized**, both men and women."

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

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

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

Acts 22:16 “And now why tarriest thou? arise, and **be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.**”

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

Galatians 3:27 “For as many of you **as have been baptized into Christ** have put on Christ.”

The change of the original Text of Matthew 28:19

Here are some sources of the Catholic Church that have confirmed the change of the baptismal formula.

- **Catholic Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger (Pope Benedict XVI)**

„The basic form of our (Matthew 28:19 Trinitarian) profession of faith took shape during the course of the second and third centuries in connection with the ceremony of baptism. So far as its place of origin is concerned, **the text (Matthew 28:19) came from the city of Rome.**“

Source: Ratzinger, Joseph (1968. Introduction to Christianity, Munich, pp. 82, 83

- **Professor Stuart G. Hall (former Chair of Ecclesiastical History at King's College, London, England)**

“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, Jesus Christ.” This practice was known among 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.”

Source: Hall, S. G. (2011). Doctrine and practice in the early church. Wipf and Stock Publishers., pp 20,21

- **The Catholic Encyclopedia**

“The baptismal formula was changed from the name of Jesus Christ to the words Father, Son, and Holy Spirit by the Catholic Church in the second century.” (p. 263)

“The threefold immersion is unquestionably very ancient in the Church. ...Its object is, of course, to honor the Three Persons of the Holy Trinity in whose name it [the baptism] is conferred.” (p. 262)

Source: Catholic Encyclopedia (1907). Volume II. New York: Robert Appleton Company, p. 262, 263

- **Eusebius (Church historian and Bishop of Caesarea)**

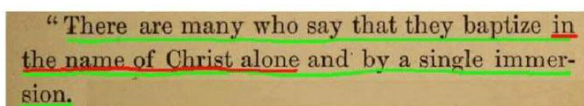
“With one word and voice He said to His disciples: **“Go, and make disciples of all nations in My Name,** teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.”

Source: Ferrar, W. J. (1920). Eusebius: The Proof of the Gospel. Book III, Chapter 6, 132 (a). London: Baker Book House, p. 152

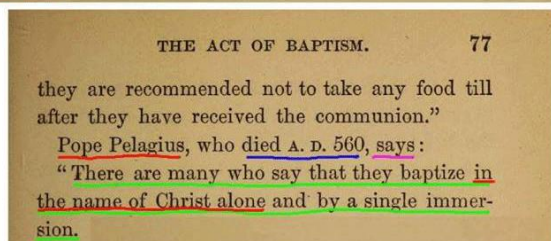
- **Pope Pelagius (556 - 560)**

“There are many who say that they **baptise in the name of Christ alone and by a single immersion.**”

Source: Burrage, H. S. (1879). Act of Baptism in the History of the Christian Church. Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, p. 38.



“There are many who say that they baptize in the name of Christ alone and by a single immersion.”

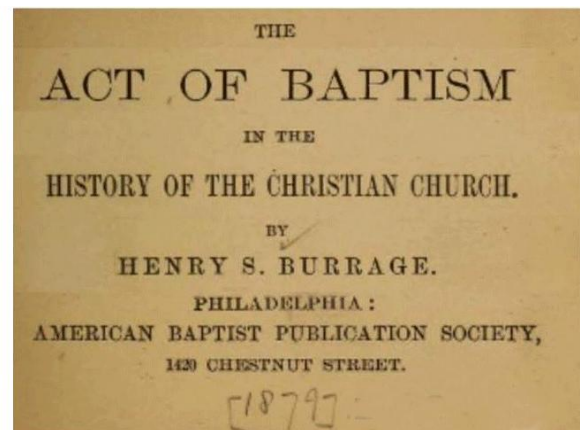


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they are recommended not to take any food till after they have received the communion.”

Pope Pelagius, who died A. D. 560, says :

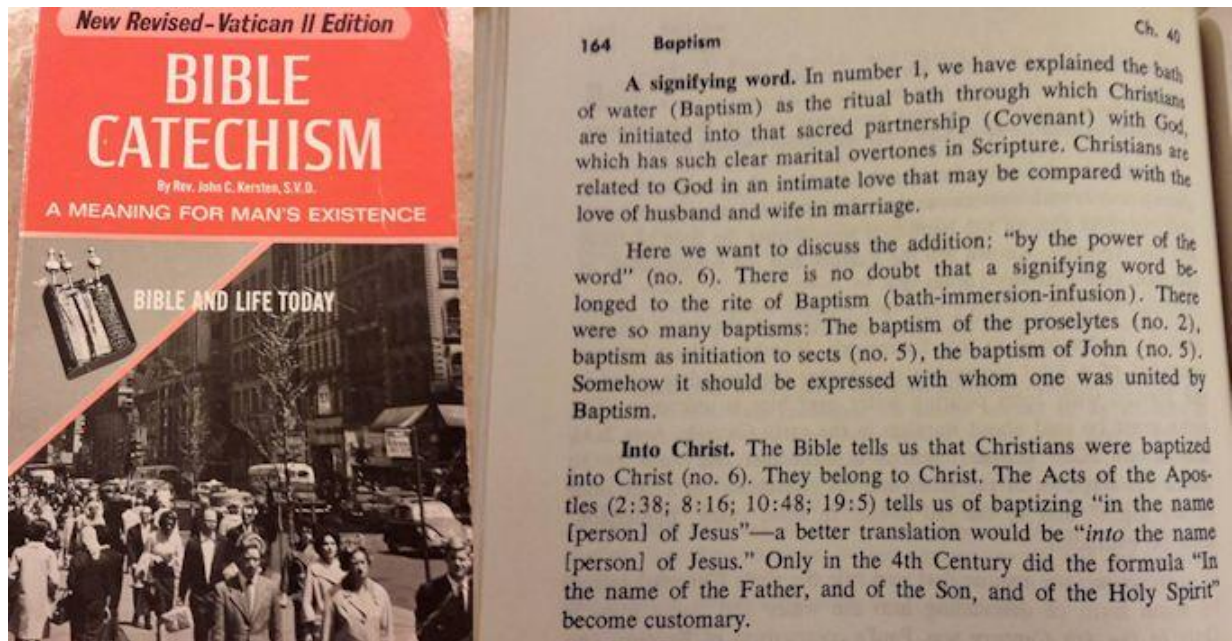
“There are many who say that they baptize in the name of Christ alone and by a single immersion.”



- **Catholic Catechism**

“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.**”

Source: Kersten, J. C. (1973). Bible Catechism. NY., N.Y.: Catholic Book Publishing Co., p. 164



- **Hastings Dictionary of The Bible**

“The Trinity.-...is not demonstrable by logic or by Scriptural proofs,...The term Trias was first used by Theophilus of Antioch (c AD 180),...(The term Trinity) not found in Scripture...” “The chief Trinitarian text in the NT is the baptismal formula in Mt 28:19...This late post-resurrection saying, not found in any other Gospel or anywhere else in the NT, has been viewed by some scholars as an interpolation into Matthew. It has also been pointed out that the idea of making disciples is continued in teaching them, so that the intervening reference to baptism with its Trinitarian formula was perhaps a later insertion into the saying. Finally, Eusebius’s form of the (ancient) text (“in my name” rather than in the name of the Trinity) has had certain advocates. (Although the Trinitarian formula is now found in the modern-day book of Matthew), this does not guarantee its source in the historical teaching of Jesus. It is doubtless better to view the (Trinitarian) formula as derived from early (Catholic) Christian, perhaps Syrian or Palestinian, baptismal usage (cf Didache 7:1-4), and as a brief summary of the (Catholic) Church’s teaching about God, Christ, and the Spirit:...”

Source: Hastings, J. (1963). Dictionary of the Bible, 2nd edn, revised by FC Grant and HH Rowley. Edinburgh: T & T Clark., p. 1015