

Baptism in the name of Jesus

There is salvation in no other name

By Ken Raggio

Let's talk about the importance of the name of Jesus. After all, every god is distinguished by its name. If ANY name will save you, then the name of Jesus would not be important. But if names count, we need to know.

A god is usually known by a name. There are many unnamed and defunct gods.

A god can be anything that is worshipped or thought to be supernatural. People create gods to be anything they need it to be for whatever purpose.

For example: the ancient Aztec Indians believed that fire and water were sacred to their very survival, so they imagined and worshipped gods of fire and water.

In the Far East, Hindus worshipped gods of wealth, health, and fertility, for similar reasons.

The ancient Mediterraneans idolized sensuality and carnal pleasures, and mythological gods like Venus and Isis, Eros and Cupid were worshipped.

Oriental of India revere the Brahman sages, and hold cows to be sacred.

Egyptians fearfully worship crocodiles, to appease the dangerous beasts dwelling along the banks of the Nile River.

Many societies have deified their heroic dead, such as the ancient Nimrod and his wife, Simaramis.

In the modern Western world, we worship a menagerie of gods, like money and material possessions, or fame and fortune, pleasure and power.

We hold over-achievers on a pedestal - the Olympians, the movie stars, the star athletes.

It is important to remember that man-made gods are powerless

There may appear to be many gods. But we realize that many things are worshipped which are not worthy of worship.

Many things that are perceived to be supernatural, or have supernatural powers are not indeed supernatural.

In many cases, the gods of ancient civilizations were so bizarre and ridiculous that anyone could have foreseen their eventual decline. Most of the gods of ages past have long been forgotten.

Even in modern society, we see that men's worship is usually short-lived, and popular gods and idols soon become unpopular, and men replace them with new, more attractive ones.

There are few gods that hold the public attention for more than a short time.

Are ALL gods phony?

We believe there is one God, and only one God that has endured the test of time and continues forever the same. The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. And that is the God we believe in.

Israel's King David observed, "The idols of the heathen are silver and gold, the work of men's hands. They have mouths, but they speak not: eyes have they but they see not: They have ears, but they hear not..." (Psalm 115:4-6a).

He studied the fact that the gods of this world are created by men, and are therefore lifeless. "But," he boasts that, "our God is in the heavens, he hath done whatsoever he pleased" (verse 3).

Our God is the only eternal God.

The Apostle Paul wrote to the Corinthians (I Corinthians 8:5 & 6) that "though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth, (as there be gods many, and lords many,) but to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things."

This describes the sovereignty, or the singular entity of God.

Our God is not just A god, but He is THE God; the only true and living God. He stands alone, in a class all to Himself. He is Supreme and superior to every other power.

I should not have to prove to any thinking person that there truly is a Supreme God; a Holy One whose power supercedes, precludes and leaves powerless any other so-called god.

Only a fool would argue that there is not a Higher Power, specifically, one whose very existence is not confined to time or space.

Some people ignorantly acknowledge a 'Force' with us; others perceive Him as 'Divine providence'.

But He is infinitely more to us. He is our Father. He is our Creator. He is the root and source of our life and all life.

Even though men perceive God in many contradictory terms, one thing is sure: He pre-existed us. He pre-existed the worlds.

His existence reaches into the eternal past.

When Moses first wrote about the creation of heaven and earth, he did not even suggest a proper name for the Creator. He only said, "in the beginning, God created the heaven and the earth" (Genesis 1:1).

John 1:3 said that "All things were made by him; and without Him was not anything made that was made."

Is there a significant name for the true God?

"God"? Is "God" His name?

Since Moses introduced us to the Creator without referring to Him by name, we have to look for whatever name significance we can find in this word "God".

The translators of the Hebrew language capitalized "God" when referring to the one true God. The Creator was not god, but God. The upper-case "G" subtly helps us to distinguish between the many gods and the one true God.

The ancient Hebrew language uses the word Elohiym in place of the English word God. Elohiym would be translated gods as a common noun.

But in the Genesis story elohiym is used as a proper noun, and indicates the supreme God. In the so-called majestic plural, elohiym refers not to a plurality of gods or personages of god, but a plurality of virtues or attributes of the one true Spirit of God; at once manifesting the attributes of a multitude of lesser gods.

He is the Lord of lords.

The God of the Bible came to be known by various names

He came to be known by many names. In the days of Adam's son, Seth, "then began men to call upon the NAME of the LORD" (Genesis 4:26).

The Hebrew term Yehovah is translated Lord in English, and means Self-existent One.

When you combine Yehovah Elohiym, you say Lord God, or Self-existent One God.

Later, God told Moses in Exodus that He had appeared unto Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, "by the name of God ALMIGHTY, but by my name JEHOVAH was I not known to them" (Exodus 6:3).

Five times in the book of Genesis, God (Elohiym) is used in conjunction with Almighty (Shaddai), (Genesis 17:1, 28:3, 35:11, 43:14, 48:3). So El Shaddai was God Almighty.

The scripture tells us that "Abram called upon the name of the LORD" (Genesis 12:8,21:33). In other words, Abraham was familiar with God by the name El Shaddai, but never knew the name Jehovah.

Eventually, all three names combined. Jehovah Elohiym Shadday, or the Self-existent One God Almighty.

It is critical to understand that the LORD is a single person Moses said that Elohiym was "One Lord" in Deuteronomy 6:4. He commanded the Hebrews, "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is One Lord".

That fact was held to be more important than all other facts of life. Every Jewish child had a monotheistic concept of God imposed upon his or her thinking so forcefully that absolutely no person but God the Father was allowed to be worshipped. In the book of Job, Job asked, "Will ye accept His PERSON?", referring to God as one person.

In Genesis, Moses described a single person as creator when he said, "So God created man in His own image, in the image of GOD created He him" (Genesis 1:27).

What is the name of the ONE LORD?

It is unthinkable that the God of universal power and glory can be adequately named by merely capitalizing the common noun - god.

Even as human civilization multiplied and filled the earth, and men began to know God more fully, they still did not know how to properly address Him. His name was not given at first. It was a secret.

When Jacob wrestled with the Angel of the Lord, he asked "Tell me, I pray thee, thy NAME" (Genesis 32:27). The Angel would not tell him, but responded: "Wherefore is it that thou dost ask after my name?"

Later, Samson's father, Manoah, was also visited by the Angel of the Lord. Manoah wanted to find out what His name was, but was forbidden: "Why askest thou thus after my NAME, seeing it is SECRET" (Judges 13:18).

It would seem that the Angel of the Lord would be able to declare the NAME of the Lord, but not so.

There were numerous names ascribed to God given to us, but the highest, all-encompassing name was mysteriously withheld for centuries.

Something in the plan and purpose God prevented ONE SPECIAL NAME from being revealed. But it became more apparent that the earlier names were incomplete.

From the beginning, the significance of each name of God was confined to a particular attribute of God.

Jehovah was compounded with specific adjective-like names, such as Jehovah-jireh, Jehovah-nissi, and Jehovah-shalom.

Jireh implied Provider, and was introduced when God provided the ram in Isaac's stead on Mt. Moriah, (Genesis 22:14).

Nissi was introduced at an altar in the desert, when Moses declared the Lord to be his Banner of war against the Amelekites, (Exodus 17:15).

Shalom referred to the Peace that Gideon found in the presence of the Lord, (Judges 6:24).

Jehovah Rapha meant the Lord that Healeth, in Exodus 15:26. There were no less than sixteen Jehovah names in all. NONE of them defined His name to be Salvation.

That fact is significant. God's SAVING name was not revealed in the Old Testament!

Isaiah did describe it, however, in an Old Testament prophecy. He said, "His NAME shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace" (Isaiah 9:6).

God's highest and saving name was reserved for a very special time

Zechariah prophesied, "And the Lord shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be ONE LORD, and His NAME ONE" (Zechariah 14:9).

ONE NAME FOR GOD! Think about it!

Consider all the great names ascribed to God through the ages. Then consider the implications of having them all reduced to one simple name, and you may begin to understand the importance of the name.

Elohiym had referred to the multifaceted nature of God, but it still sounded like a common noun, and had an almost generic meaning.

But a better name was going to come.

A Name was revealed by the Angel for the Incarnate Savior

It was not until the magnificent occasion of the Incarnation that God chose to unveil the highest name ever revealed.

It somehow had to be related to the fact that through all the ages, God had remained an invisible Spirit, showing Himself only on rare occasions in a variety of temporary forms, or Theophanies, (i.e., men, angels, apparitions, smoke, fire, clouds, whirlwinds, and in dreams and visions).

Since God had revealed Himself only partially, it was fitting that His name was also only partially revealed.

But when God finally became physically embodied in a human vessel, that is, when He was incarnated in the body of His infant human Son, God "made himself of no reputation, and took on him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:" (Philippians 4:7).

"And being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him", (referring to the human son), "and given him a name which is above every name: that at the name of JESUS every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that JESUS Christ is LORD" (we have identified the Lord as Jehovah: the Self-Existent One), "to the glory of God the Father" (Philippians 2:8-11).

So Jesus is the Self-existent one, whom the ancient fathers knew as the Father, or Lord. Now He is incarnate in the human body of His son.

The name Jesus brought salvation

Until that time, men had approached God through a wide variety of names, none of which related to salvation.

Earlier names had offered healing, peace, provision, et cetera, but the angel had instructed Mary and Joseph that the son of God was to have a very special name.

"And thou shalt call his name JESUS, for he shall SAVE his people from their sins" (Matthew 1:21).

JESUS' name meant SALVATION. The roots of the Greek word Jesus trace to the Hebrew Jehoshua which is a combination of Jehovah (Self-existent One) and Yasha (Savior,) forming the highest name of Jehovah ever known: Jehovah-Yasha (Savior)!

JESUS is the all-encompassing name of God

It was the Father's undisclosed name: JESUS!

It was the Holy Spirit's secret name: JESUS!
 And it was given to and revealed in the human Son: JESUS!
 The Spirit's name was revealed in a man. The Son (human) prayed to the Father (Eternal Spirit) and said: "I have DECLARED unto them thy name, and will declare it" (John 17:26). In Hebrews 2:12, the Son again says, "I will DECLARE thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee."
 The name the Son declared was JESUS. And he plainly told them that it was His Father's name!
 Jesus told the Jews, "I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not: if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive" (John 5:43).
 Since it was the Holy Ghost who conceived the infant in the womb of the virgin Mary, according to Luke 1:35, we must recognize the fact that the HOLY GHOST is the FATHER of Jesus Christ.
 You can be sure that God the Father did not beget another deity.
 There simply is no God the Son. That phrase is not to be found in the Bible, and for a reason.
 Since the Holy Ghost was the Father, and the Father's name was Jehovah Savior (that is, JESUS), then the the name of the Holy Ghost is also Jehovah Savior (that is, JESUS).
 If you have never realized or admitted it, now would be a good time to say it - "The Father's name is Jesus. The Son's name is Jesus. And the Holy Ghost's name is Jesus."
The only begotten son was a man, in which the Father was incarnate!
 So the man, the Son, wore the name of the God who was in him. That name was Jesus.
 He said, "I am come in my Father's name." We see then that the name Jesus belongs as much to the Father as it does to the Son.
 Jehovah Savior is the Eternal Spirit and Jehovah Savior is embodied in the Son of Man.
 When we speak the name Jesus we address the "fullness of God bodily" (Colossians 2:9).
 Therefore we must conclude that Jesus' commandment in Matthew 28:19 to "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the NAME of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost" can only be fulfilled when the name Jesus is actually pronounced, because there is no other name given under Heaven that simultaneously addresses the Spirit of God and the Son of Man as SAVIOR, the name whereby we MUST BE SAVED!
 The entire remainder of the New Testament is conspicuously void of any illustrations of the Apostles ever baptizing their converts while pronouncing the titles "Father, Son, and Holy Ghost" over them, for the simple reason that salvation is not in the titles, but in the name!
Sins are remitted in His name.
 In fact, Jesus' own commandment was that REMISSION of sins should be preached IN HIS NAME (Luke 24:47).
 The Apostles' own ministries confirmed their conviction that EVERY CONVERT should be baptized in the NAME of JESUS Christ.
 The Old Testament remained in effect until the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Even the thief on the cross had to be saved under the Old Testament jurisdiction.
 But New Testament guidelines changed everything.

No one was allowed to continue their ministry until first they "wait for the promise of the Father" (Acts 1:4), which Acts 1:5 identifies as the Baptism of the Holy Ghost.
 One hundred twenty souls were "filled with the Holy Ghost, and spoke with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance" (Acts 2:4) on the day of Pentecost.
 Thousands of curious passersby hungrily desired the same experience. Peter preached to them the very first gospel message of the New Testament that day.
 "Repent," he said, "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), (the gift being the Baptism of the Holy Ghost, with the evidence of speaking in other tongues).
 "Then they that gladly received his word WERE BAPTIZED" (Acts 2:41), we must assume in the NAME of JESUS Christ, and, we must also assume, receiving the gift of the Holy Ghost. This involved an additional 3,000 souls.
It is easy to see the mountain of evidence showing the importance of calling upon the name of Jesus in baptism.
 Peter's requirement to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ was in direct obedience to Jesus' command in Luke 24:47.
 In fact, Jesus himself instructed Saul of Tarsus to present himself before a man named Annanias, where it would be "told thee what thou must do" (Acts 9:6).
 On arrival, Annanias directed Saul to "Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, CALLING on the NAME of the LORD", (Acts 22:16).
 Paul obediently was baptized, (Acts 9:19) and also received the gift of the Holy Ghost, (Acts 9:17b), speaking in tongues (I Corinthians 14:18).
 The very first converts to Christianity from outside the Jewish nation were members of a Roman centurion's family, the household of Cornelius.
 An angel instructed Cornelius to call for Peter. "He shall tell thee what thou oughtest to do", the angel said (Acts 10:6).
 When Peter arrived, he preached JESUS to them. "While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on ALL them which heard the word," (Acts 10:44).
 This occasion was of the very same kind which had happened to the JEWS on the day of Pentecost, but this time it was "on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost. For they heard them speak with tongues and magnify God" (Acts 10:45b).
Peter repeatedly commanded baptism in Jesus' name
 Not to stop short of full obedience, Peter immediately responded, "Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? And he COMMANDED them to be baptized in the NAME of the Lord" (Acts 10:47,48).
 The emphasis is on the fact that the NAME of JESUS is the SAVING NAME of God. We call upon the SAVING NAME to be saved.
 Peter said, "Whosoever shall CALL on the NAME of the Lord shall be saved" (Acts 2:21).
Believers were rebaptized correctly if they had not been baptized in the name of Jesus
 Paul preached in Ephesus to some of John the Baptist's followers. "He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost.

And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism" (Acts 19:2-3).

Paul taught them that they were to "believe on him who should come after John, that is, on Christ Jesus. When they heard this, they were baptized in the NAME of the LORD JESUS.

And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came upon them; and they spake with tongues and prophesied" (verses 4-6).

Here we observe the fact that water baptism without having called on the name of the Lord Jesus was actually null and void.

These converts of John the Baptist had been baptized in water unto repentance, but they were required to be rebaptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.

And they, too, received the same gift of the Holy Ghost.

"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).

The power in the NAME is such that the enemies of God will invariably demand the church "not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus" (Acts 4:18).

The Apostle Paul, however, commanded quite the opposite: "And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the LORD JESUS" (Colossians 3:17).

"The NAME of the LORD is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into IT, and are safe" (Proverbs 19:10).

"He that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the NAME of the only begotten Son of God" (John 3:18).

"...in his name shall the Gentiles trust" (MATTHEW 12:21).

"Blessed is He that cometh in the NAME of the LORD" (Matthew 21:9).

Now, on to a revelation of the Spirit of God within us!

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