

Against the Modern Modalist:
An Apology of the Holy Trinity

Part II: Of the Use of the Trinity, and Of the History of the Church

“Is any new doctrine to be set forth or new faith to be received in the church of God? By no means. For as there is only one God, so also is there no faith but one. And this is that one true and very ancient faith which is founded not in new but most ancient doctrine and is in the true ancient and catholic church.”

~ Martin Chemnitz, *Enchiridion* II 41

The Issues:

Statement 3: The Triune Name was never a part of the baptismal formula, but later replaced the name of Jesus.

Theses:

1. The Triune Name is the baptismal name. (*Matt 28:18–20; 1 Cor 6:11; 2 Cor 13:14*)
 - According to the command of Christ, the baptismal name has always been the Triune name. When Christ speaks, it is the duty of faith to agree, and to follow, submitting and subverting one’s own will and reason to that of Christ.
 - The Triune name is used in Baptism not simply as a label or tie to historic persons, as if the name merely represents an individual (cf. 1 Cor 1:12–15). Rather, the Triune name is an invocation of the fullness of God, and a tangible and effective reminder of the fullness of God as it is present with man. To have the name of a thing is to know the thing fully and intimately.
 - The Triune Name is also used because of the reality that the Trinity is at work in Baptism. God the Father washes away sins (Titus 3:5, 7), God the Son is the person into whom a Baptism brings entry (Rom 6:3) and the person whom the baptized dons (Gal 3:27), and God the Holy Spirit cleanses, and brings about renewal and rebirth (John 3:5; Titus 3:5–7). To baptize in the Triune Name is to have the Triune God revealed and present to perform the promised act of salvation according to his own word.
 - “[T]his is indicated, that we are baptized in the name, that is, in, or with, invocation, of the true God, or as the Greek words say, into the name, that is, into the knowledge and invocation, of the true God, who is the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.”
~ Martin Chemnitz, *Enchiridion* II 228b

2. The name “Jesus” is a catechetical name. (*Num 13:16; Deut 34:9; Josh 1:1–9; Matt 1:21*)
 - “Jesus” is a derivative name evolving from the Greek Ἰησοῦς through the Latin *Iesus*. The original name in Hebrew is Yeshua, the same name given to the successor of Moses.
 - The name Jesus is given to the son of Mary because of what the name means: “The Lord saves.” The name reflects the greater Moses, Joshua, who goes where Moses cannot go. Joshua leads the people of Israel into the promised land as the greater Moses. So too, then, is Christ identified by name as the greater Moses—

and, indeed, the greater Joshua—who will lead his people into a new promised land of life and salvation.

3. The name of Jesus is the Triune Name. (*Ps 54:1; Matt 18:20; John 1:12; 10:23–30; Acts 2:38; 10:48; Rev 14:1*)
 - “Jesus” is the name by which the Son of God is known, but his name is the I AM that identifies the fullness of the godhead. The name of Jesus references the name of God which Jesus, as the Son of God, a person of the Trinity, possesses. “In other words, Jesus is entrusted with manifesting God.”¹
 - To be “in the name of Jesus” is to be within the person of Jesus in his death and resurrection, by the power and working of the entire Trinity.
 - Historically, the phrase, “the name of Jesus” has also been a stand-in for the divine name, since many were hesitant to vocalize the divine name in full out of reverence.

4. The Triune Name, according to the command of Christ, is the only name that has been used for Baptism within the history of the church.
 - Since Christ himself mandated that the Triune Name be present in Baptism, the church has historically used no other name but that which Christ prescribes. This name is also used because of all the theological implications described above.
 - The Didache records the practice within the first century as utilizing the Triune Name.
 - “Now concerning Baptism, baptize as follows: after you have reviewed all these things, baptize in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit in living water. . . . [But if you have no living water, warm water, etc.,] then pour water on the head three times in the name of the Father and Son and Holy Spirit.” ~ *Didache* 7:1, 3
 - “But let no one eat or drink of your Eucharist except those who have been baptized into the name of the Lord.” ~ *Didache* 9:5

Statement 3: The early Fathers were Roman Catholics and should therefore not be heeded since the Roman Catholic Church is a heretical sect.

- Thesis:**
1. There was no such thing as the Roman Catholic Church during the first millennium of church history.
 - There was the Christian church, or The Way, which consisted of all believers in Christ living according to his word, worshipping regularly with liturgical traditions, and partaking of the sacraments. The Roman Catholic Church named as such did not originate until the year 1054 AD when the Eastern church and the Western church severed ties with one another.
 - 1054 AD is long after the first century of Christian development during which the teachings and practice that were handed down had been established.
 - The early Fathers are the Fathers of Christianity as a whole, not of one single denomination.

¹ David P. Scaer, *Baptism*, Confessional Lutheran Dogmatics, Volume XI (St. Louis: The Luther Academy, 1999), 78.