



The Bible teaches that there is one God. If that's so, how can we justify Matthew 28:19,20. The key, then, is understanding Matthew 28:19–20 in harmony with that truth, not in isolation.

Scripture never abandons monotheism. The key, then, is understanding **Matthew 28:19–20** in harmony with that truth, not in isolation. The Bible never asks us to choose between *oneness* and *Father–Son–Spirit*. It teaches us how to **hold them together faithfully**.

The Bible is Unambiguous: There is but “One God”

From beginning to end, Scripture affirms **absolute oneness**:

- **Deuteronomy 6:4** – “Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one.”
- **Isaiah 45:5** – “I am the LORD, and there is no other.”
- **James 2:19** – “You believe that there is one God. You do well.”

Jesus Himself affirmed this same truth:

- **Mark 12:29** – Jesus quotes the Shema and calls it “the first of all the commandments.”

So whatever Matthew 28 means, it **cannot** contradict this foundation.

What Matthew 28:19 Actually Says (and What It Does Not)

“Baptizing them **in the name** (singular) of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.”

Key observation:

- Jesus did **not** say “names” (plural)
- He said “**name**” (singular)

In Scripture, *names* represent **authority, identity, and revealed character**, not a list of separate beings.

“*The Bible says, ‘in the name’ (singular), not ‘names,’ to emphasize God’s oneness.*”

So, at the level of **essence**, there is no division:

- One God
- One divine nature
- One authority

This preserves biblical monotheism.

Example:

- Proverbs 18:10 – “The **name** of the LORD is a strong tower.”
- So, Matthew 28 is not teaching *three gods* or even *three names*—but **one divine authority revealed in three relational ways**. Matthew 28:19 identifies **how the one God is revealed and encountered**
- Father, Son, and Spirit describe **God’s self-disclosure and activity. The bible makes these distinctions crystal clear.**
- **The Father** – God as source and sender
- **The Son (Jesus Christ)** – God made flesh, dwelling among humanity (John 1:14)
- **The Holy Spirit** – God’s presence and power active in the world and within believers (John 14:26; Acts 1:8)

One God, revealed relationally and redemptively:

“Father, Son, and Holy Spirit” Describe *Who* the One God Is

Rather than naming three gods, Scripture uses these titles to describe **how the one God has revealed Himself.**

- **Father** – God as source, sender, and covenant Lord
- **Son** – God made flesh, revealed in redemption (John 1:14; Col. 2:9)
- **Holy Spirit** – God present and active within His people (John 14:26; 1 Cor. 3:16)

These are **distinctions of relationship and function**, not separations of deity.

That’s why Scripture can say:

- **John 10:30** – “I and the Father are **one**.”
- **2 Corinthians 3:17** – “The Lord **is** the Spirit.”

We stay in full compliance with biblical monotheism when we understand that:

- You are invoking **one God**
- Under **one authority**
- Fully revealed through **Father, Son, and Spirit**

This is why Matthew 28:19 uses:

- **One “name.”**
- Followed by **three relational titles**

You are not calling on three beings—you are confessing the **full self-revelation of the one true God.**

3. How Scripture Interprets Scripture: Apostolic Practice

The apostles taught and then baptized **in the name of Jesus** because:

- **Jesus is the revealed name** through which salvation comes (Acts 4:12)
- The Father sends in Jesus' name (John 5:43)
- The Spirit comes in Jesus' name (John 14:26)

So, when you say *Father, Son, and Holy Spirit*, you are acknowledging:

- The Father who sent
- The Son who Saved
- The Spirit who indwells

All one God at work.

In the Church of Christ, when we baptize, we are saying... “I baptize you **in the name of the one true God**, revealed as **Father, Son, and Holy Spirit**, according to the authority of Jesus Christ.”

This wording:

- Honors Matthew 28:19
- Preserves Deuteronomy 6:4
- Aligns with apostolic teaching
- Avoids any implication of multiple gods

Thereby, we comply with *all* of Scripture when you affirm:

- **One God in essence**
- **No other gods exist**
- **One name, one authority**

- **One God revealed relationally as Father, Son, and Spirit**

That is not a contradiction—it is **biblical completeness**.

If Matthew 28:19 was meant to introduce a new formula of three divine persons, we would expect the apostles to **repeat it verbatim**.

- They never do. Matthew 28:19 does *not* introduce three gods
- The apostles never treated the Father, Son, and Spirit as competing deities

We can clarify this by using theological language:

“Unity in essence, distinction in persons.”

That statement explains *why* Matthew 28:19 can list three without violating oneness:

- **Unity** answers *who God is*
- **Distinction** explains *how God relates and acts*

This preserves:

- Biblical monotheism
- The full deity of Christ

The personal reality of the Spirit

Instead, every recorded baptism in the New Testament is:

- **Acts 2:38** – “In the **name of Jesus Christ**”
- **Acts 8:16** – “Baptized in the **name of the Lord Jesus**”
- **Acts 10:48** – “Commanded them to be baptized in the **name of the Lord**”
- **Acts 19:5** – “Baptized in the **name of the Lord Jesus**”
- This is not accidental.
The apostles understood **what the “name” was**, and they baptized in the **name of Jesus**
- They understood Jesus as the full revelation of God’s saving authority

In other words:

- **Scripture gives the data**
- **The church articulates the doctrine**
- Matthew 28:19 supplies the framework
- The rest of the New Testament supplies the interpretation

When we put it all together, it says this:

- There is **one God** (essence)

- Revealed as **Father, Son, and Holy Spirit** (personal distinction)
- Acting together in creation, redemption, and indwelling
- Without division, hierarchy of deity, or contradiction

So Matthew 28:19:

- Protects **oneness** (“name” singular)
- Reveals **distinction** (Father, Son, Spirit)
- Remains faithful to the whole counsel of Scripture
-

Where Is the Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit Revealed?

Jesus makes this explicit:

- **John 5:43** – “I have come in **My Father’s name.**”
- **John 10:30** – “I and **My Father** are one.”
- **John 14:26** – “The Holy Spirit... whom the Father will send **in My name.**”

The Father’s name is revealed **in the Son**

The Spirit comes **in the same name**

That name is **Jesus**

- **Matthew 1:21** – “You shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.”
- **Acts 4:12** – “There is **no other name** under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.”
-

Matthew 28:19 is a Commission, not a Contradiction

Matthew 28:19 teaches:

- **Who God is relationally** (Father, Son, Spirit)
- **How God works redemptively**
- **Under whose authority are disciples made**

It does **not** redefine God into three beings.

The apostles, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, applied this command **by invoking the revealed name**—Jesus Christ.

6. One God, Fully Revealed in Christ

Paul summarizes it powerfully:

- **Colossians 2:9** – “For in Him dwells **all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.**”
- **1 Timothy 3:16** – “God was manifested in the flesh.”

Not one-third of God.
Not a second person.
But **the fullness**.

A Simple Way to Reconcile It

- **One God** → His identity
- **Father, Son, Spirit** → His roles and self-revelation
- **Jesus** → His revealed name and saving authority

Matthew 28:19 tells us **who God is**
The Acts of the Apostles tells us **how to obey it**

They are perfectly consistent. **As Christians**, we don't have to choose between **biblical monotheism** and **Matthew 28:19**.

When we read through the whole counsel of Scripture, they teach **one God, one name, one Savior**.