

13. The downward movement indicated by the prefix, *katá*, solicits “stab,” but the NASB’s “pierce” is also good. The passive voice provides us with the idea behind this metaphorical phrase.
14. Each of these individuals is receiving the action of the verb in their “heart,” the singular noun **καρδία** (*kardía*) which refers to the stream of consciousness of the soul.
15. This is the place where truth is stored and from which a person is able to recall and apply biblical truth. What each person has in his *kardía* is a repository of things believed.
16. In the case of these Jews, the inventory of ideas in their “hearts” is human viewpoint, human good, and dead works associated with the ritual plan of God that Jesus fulfilled during the Incarnation and resurrection.
17. Therefore, the gospel, made understandable by the Holy Spirit in the **νοῦς** (*noús*) of the soul, challenges the inventory of the ritual plan over in the *kardía*.
18. The content of Peter’s sermon has resulted in their hearts being pierced with divine thought supplied under common grace by the Holy Spirit.
19. They are struggling with the antithetical choice that now confronts them: ritual or reality? Stay with ritual or convert to reality?
20. To answer this “piercing question,” the people turn to the apostles and ask, “Brethren, what shall we do?”
21. At least for some, they are in wonderment about what ritual they are to perform. These people, because of the requirements of the Mosaic Law, are ritually oriented people.
22. They have spent their lives watching animals and birds being sacrificed in the atonement, rebound, and sin offerings. What now? Is there something new we must do?

23. In response to this query, Peter will provide the grace presentation of the gospel through faith in Christ and illustrate through ritual the baptism of the Holy Spirit. We refer to this today as “Christian baptism.”
24. This ritual is practiced in two stages: **(1)** total immersion into the water and **(2)** emersion out from the water. Immersion symbolizes and illustrates the spiritual death, physical death, and burial of Jesus Christ. Emersion is identification with the Lord’s resurrection, ascension, and session at the right hand of the Father.
25. Immersion illustrated the doctrine of retroactive positional truth while emersion depicts current positional truth. Thus the finished work of Christ on behalf of the human race is portrayed in immersion while His confirmation before God is depicted in His session.
26. Retroactive positional truth refers to our salvation and the new spiritual life while current positional truth indicates our royal status in Christ.
27. Baptism was only required during the development of the New Testament canon and is no longer necessary. Grace Doctrine Church’s position on water baptism is stated as follows:

Water baptism was a visual aid practiced by the apostles in the first century before the canon of Scripture was completed. The ritual was designed to visually demonstrate to new believers the reality of the baptism of the Holy Spirit that occurs at the moment of salvation. Being immersed into water is a picture of retroactive positional truth by which the believer is identified with Christ in His spiritual death, physical death, and burial, dramatizing the principle that the power of the sinful nature is broken. Emersion out from the water is a picture of current positional truth by which the believer is identified with our Lord’s resurrection, ascension, and session, dramatizing the future reality of the resurrection body. Once the canon of Scripture was completed, believers could learn these doctrines without dependence upon the ritual. When a believer understands the doctrine of the baptism of the Holy Spirit, the ritual of water baptism can be meaningful; however, without this knowledge, it becomes a ritual without reality.²

² *Forty Proclamations: The Theology of Grace Doctrine Church* (St. Charles: Joe Griffin Media Ministries, 2011), 15.

28. For this process to take place, those gathered must use their free will to believe in “Jesus whom you crucified” as both Lord – deity – and Christ – Messiah (Acts 2:36.)

Acts 2:37 - Now when they were caused to hear this, their streams of consciousness were pierced with an antithetical choice of ritual versus reality, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, “Brethren, what shall we do?” (EXT)

29. Beginning at verse 38, Peter gives the gospel to those interested and then requires those who respond to participate in the ritual of water baptism.
30. Unfortunately, some denominations assert that the gospel of salvation is a two-part process: repent from your sins and be baptized. But salvation is a one-step process consisting of faith alone in Christ alone.
31. As presented above, water baptism was a temporary ritual to be practiced post salvation and intended to be used until the canon of Scripture was completed.
32. There is nothing wrong with practicing the ritual of water baptism, if one is so motivated, but it has nothing to do with salvation and is unnecessary to engage if one understands the doctrines of retroactive and current spiritual truths.
33. For a thorough examination of Acts 2:38 and the controversy that accompanies it, we will continue our study with an addendum:

BAPTISM: Controversies & Schisms

I. Introduction

Water baptism is a ritual that has been an extremely divisive doctrine throughout the history of the Church Age. The reasons for its practices vary with virtually every denomination of Protestant Christianity.

The manner of performing the ritual also varies. Some prefer **aspersion** or sprinkling the individual with water, others opt for **affusion** or pouring, and still others require total **immersion**.

Some groups claim that baptism is necessary for salvation while others claim that one's sins are not forgiven until he is baptized. Unofficial Catholic doctrine maintains that if an infant dies before he is baptized he cannot enter into heaven, but is instead retained in Limbo, a place where the souls of all those without baptism are assigned.

The Baptists require baptism for membership. Believers in Jesus Christ are allowed to attend services, but they cannot join the church unless they submit to baptism by immersion.

There are varied positions taken on the significance of baptism. There are those who view it as a **sacrament** through which sins are forgiven. The Catholics claim that this ritual must be administered by the church for it to be efficacious while Lutherans contend that the faith expressed by the individual is the deciding factor.

Some denominations believe that salvation is not dependent upon baptism but that the ritual is a "**sign of God's covenant**" to save the elect. Through this covenant God promises forgiveness of sins and regeneration to the elect alone and baptism is the means by which the elect person enters into this covenant.

There is also the **symbolic** view which holds that baptism is an outward profession of an inner conversion and is therefore a ritual that commemorates publicly the believer's identification with Christ through the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

It is this last position that is biblically sound but needs clarification since water baptism was deemphasized during the development of the New Testament epistles.

Therefore the purpose of this study is to examine the origin of the ritual, the various reasons for its practice, and some of its categories. In doing so we will establish from Scripture our position that contends there is no longer a need for the practice of water baptism, but that it is not wrong to do so if the doctrines it illustrates are understood by the candidate.

This conclusion is controversial because all mainline Protestant denominations as well as the Catholic Church include this ritual among the sacerdotal functions of their clergy. Most, to one degree or another, make it a requirement for membership in their congregations; some even attach it to their doctrine of salvation.

(End CR14-77. See CR14-78 for continuation of study at p. 771.)

The key passage that these churches cite as the biblical requirement for practicing this ritual is Matthew 28:19-20, also known as the Great Commission.

II. The Great Commission

Matthew 28:19 - “Go [orist active participle of πορεύομαι (*poreúomai*): the action of “going” precedes the action of the main verb] therefore and [καί (*kai*): connects the attendant-circumstance participle with the main verb] make disciples [orist active imperative of the main verb μαθητεύω (*mathēteúō*): informal, conversational teaching that wins followers to the message of the gospel] of all the nations [not to the Jews only but to all], baptizing [present active participle of βαπτίζω (*baptízō*): to immerse in water] them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit,
v. 20 - teaching [present active participle of διδάσκω (*didáskō*): formal academic instruction] them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” (NASB)

1. This is the Great Commission. It is proclaimed by Jesus Christ to the eleven disciples who meet Him on the day of the resurrection on a mountain near Galilee. These eleven are permanent-rank disciples who are now on the promotion list for permanent-rank apostles. They are given the authority to teach mystery doctrine before the completion of the canon of Scripture.
2. The Commission begins with our Lord’s mandate to the eleven to take the message of the gospel of Jesus Christ to all nations. When anyone, anywhere, responds positively to the message that Jesus is Savior he will become a disciple, which simply means a “follower or believer in Jesus Christ.”

3. In this passage there is one imperative mood and three participles. The imperative is found in the main verb which is the aorist active imperative of **μαθητεύω** (*mathēteúō*), “to make disciples.” However, the mandate also includes the aorist active participle of the verb “to go,” **πορεύομαι** (*poreúomai*).
4. The action of the aorist participle precedes the action of the main verb, *mathēteúō*, “to make disciples.” Therefore, the eleven disciples are ordered to first go into all nations and second, to make disciples.
5. The other two verbs are *not* associated with the main verb “to make disciples,” because they are not participles of *attendant circumstance*. These two verbs are the present active participles of **βαπτίζω** (*baptízō*), “to baptize” and of **διδάσκω** (*didáskō*), “to teach.”
6. To fully understand this passage it is important that we address the issue of *attendant circumstance* participles. Again, the verb “to go” *is* one of these while the verbs “to baptize” and “to teach” *are not*. The importance of this can be seen by defining the attendant circumstance participle and then applying this information to our passage. In the reference we are about to note, I will insert from Matthew 28:19-20 the verbs that correspond to the definition provided:

Attendant Circumstance

- a. **Definition:** The attendant circumstance participle [*poreúomai*: “to go”] is used to communicate an action that, in some sense, is coordinate with the finite verb [*mathēteúō*: to make disciples]. It is dependent *semantically* because it cannot exist without the main verb. It is translated as a finite verb connected to the main verb by *and* [*kaí*]. The participle then, in effect, “piggy-backs” on the mood of the main verb [*imperative*]. This usage is relatively common, but widely misunderstood.
- b. **Clarification:** First, we are treating this participle as a *dependent* verbal participle because it never stands alone. That is, an attendant circumstance [*poreúomai*: “to go”] will always be related to a finite verb [*mathēteúō*: to make disciples]. (p. 640)
- d. **Structure and Semantics**