

Finally, the other two participles (*baptízō* and *didáskō*) should not be taken as attendant circumstance. First, they do not fit the normal pattern for attendant circumstance participles (they are present tense and follow the main verb). And second, they obviously make good sense as participles of *means*; i.e., the means by which the disciples were to make disciples was to baptize and then to teach.<sup>2</sup>

11. The editors of the *NET Bible* cite Dr. Wallace's analysis in their "translator's notes" to Matthew 28:19 along with an important additional comment:

As for the two participles that follow the main verb (*baptízō*, "baptizing"; and *didáskō*, "teaching"), these do not fit the normal pattern for attendant circumstance participles, since they are present participles following the main verb. However, some interpreters do see them as carrying additional imperative force in context. Others regard them as means, manner, or even result.<sup>3</sup>

12. The first point from all this is that in the Great Commission the Lord clearly gives the apostles two commands: (1) go to all people, not just Jews, and (2) make them disciples, or followers, by means of the gospel.
13. Secondly, it is also clear that the two participles "to baptize" and "to teach" are secondary components to the commandments "to go" and to "make disciples." Why? Because unless a person responds to the gospel, baptism is unnecessary and teaching is impossible.
14. Therefore, the issue before the apostles was to go out indiscriminately to whoever would give them a hearing with the objective of recruiting followers of Jesus. This could only be accomplished by witnessing to them proclaiming Jesus as the Jewish Messiah and risen Savior. In other words, the first step in *making* a follower is to present the gospel.
15. Once a person believes, then he *becomes* a follower, either by *means* of certain resources, in a *manner* that utilizes certain procedures, or as a *result* of the consequences of these things.

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<sup>2</sup> Wallace, *Greek Grammar: Beyond the Basics*, 645.

<sup>3</sup> *NET Bible* (Dallas: Biblical Studies Press, 2001), 1867tn18.

16. Those that will be evangelized *initially* by these apostles will be Jews and later Gentiles. The Jews who will be reached are involved in a religion that has demonstrated violent public hatred for Jesus as the Christ and categorical rejection of His message.
17. For Jews to become followers of Jesus they must separate themselves from Judaism and the legalistic mental attitude that drove them to insist that He be crucified. To do this they will be required to profess publicly their conversion through baptism followed by spiritual growth enabled by submission to the teachings of the apostles.
18. Similarly, the Gentiles were involved in a Greco-Roman culture that stressed false gods and the deity of the Roman emperor. The Roman Pantheon housed twelve major gods that were worshipped throughout the empire to one degree or another. Emperors were usually deified by the Senate following their deaths. After worship of the emperor, citizens were allowed to then worship any of the gods they pleased.
19. Romans worshipped these gods in a variety of festivals but each was typically a reflection of the mother-son cult that was introduced by Lucifer at Babel and later adopted by the Catholic Church with its idolatrous Madonna-Christ Child bric-a-brac.
20. In addition to these, there were household gods called Lares \lär-éz\ and Penates \pa-nā' tēz\ which were the spirits of deceased family members who guarded the home and protected the family. The sanctuary for these "spirits" was usually in the vestibule of the home, called a *lararium*, and every Roman household had one. Its absence in a Christian household indicated a major break with Roman religious tradition and culture.
21. The initial manner by which this break was announced was by water baptism followed by instruction in Christian theology by the apostles and others who became associated with the apostles.

22. This instruction began with the baptism ritual which was a visual aid designed to illustrate the doctrine of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Immersion into the water taught the believer's identification with Christ in his death and burial while emersion out from the water illustrated the believer's identification with the Lord in His resurrection, ascension, and session.
23. These concepts are evident in the execution of the Lord's instructions, given in Matthew 28, throughout the book of Acts. However, as we have noted, these passages have been interpreted in a variety of ways that have resulted in a multiplicity of applications and associated controversial doctrines.
24. One of the most controversial is the interpretation of the first application of the baptismal ritual in the Church Age which is documented in Acts 2:38. The context of this verse is extremely important and will assist us in properly analyzing the ritual, its intended purpose, and its present status.

### III. Acts 2:38, the Controversy

1. There are several denominations in Protestant Christendom as well as the Catholic Church that make baptism a part of the gospel. One of the major passages used to support this claim is: Acts 2:38 which reads:  
**Acts 2:38 -** And Peter said to them, "Repent, and let each one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." (NASB)
2. There are two key words in this verse that are presumed attached to the forgiveness of sins and the reception of the Holy Spirit: **(1)** repent and **(2)** be baptized. Both are in the imperative mood thus indicating that forgiveness of sins and the baptism of the Holy Spirit are contingent upon the fulfillment of these two mandates, the first a change of mental attitude and the second an overt act.