

**Go or Make?**  
**A Discussion around the Great Commission**  
*by John Zachman*

**I. Matt 28:19-20 Go or Make?**

**A. I am not making the case that this is, but rather that there is a possibility for a different interpretation.**

1. You will have to decide.
2. Certainly don't want to unravel anyone's theology, but let's look at the depth of this passage

**B. 19 πορευθέντες οὖν μαθητεύσατε πάντα τὰ ἔθνη, βαπτίζοντες αὐτοὺς εἰς τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ πατρὸς καὶ τοῦ υἱοῦ καὶ τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος, 20 διδάσκοντες αὐτοὺς τηρεῖν πάντα ὅσα ἐνετείλαμην ὑμῖν· καὶ ἰδοὺ ἐγὼ μεθ' ὑμῶν εἰμι πάσας τὰς ἡμέρας ἕως τῆς συντελείας τοῦ αἰῶνος.**

1. 19 Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."
  - a) what are the verbs in this statement?
    - (1) (have class pick them out)
    - (2) English speakers (and the english language) tell us that there are four verbs (which these words are in English):
      - (a) Go
      - (b) Make
      - (c) Baptize
      - (d) Teach
  - b) Grammar:
    - (1) Go: πορευθέντες - AAP-NPM
    - (2) Disciple: μαθητεύσατε - AAM2P
    - (3) Baptize: βαπτίζοντες - PAP-NPM
    - (4) Teach: διδάσκοντες - PAP-NPM

**C. The misconception**

1. There are not four verbs (because the english language does not translate participles very well), but one main verb and 3 supporting participles.
  - a) "Go" (participle) shouldn't even be translated "go" but "as you are going" or "while going"
    - (1) "Go" is an aorist, passive, participle, and "baptizing", and "teaching" are both "present, active, participles" all in support of the main verb.
2. "Make disciples" or "disciple" is the main (and only) verb in the statement and it is an IMPERATIVE (limited usage in the NT) - an actual command in the statement
  - a) The imperative tense in the Greek does not make a suggestion but a COMMAND
    - (1) The emphasized command is to "teach, instruct... to make disciples."
3. Additionally, "go" is in the aorist tense which is generally punctiliar - "at one point in time", and generally in "time past"
  - a) Which the grammar certainly de-emphasizes the "going" here
  - b) Clearly this passage is about something else.
4. "Baptizing" and "teaching" are in the present tense
  - a) Both "baptize" and "teach" have a CONTINUAL action aspect to them
  - b) Which begs the question, "how do you 'continually' water baptize someone?"
    - (1) "Baptize" means: to immerse
      - (a) This doesn't necessarily mean "immerse in water." You could "immerse" into something else.

**D. Which leads to another potential misconception**

1. Is Jesus talking about water baptism here?
  - a) Our English minds hear the word "baptism" and immediately assume "water baptism."

- b) We often water baptize people in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit
  - (1) If we look at all the other places in Scripture where water baptism is referred to, NOWHERE does it say the apostles baptized in the Name of the F, S and HS
    - (a) They baptized in the Name of Jesus or in the Name of the Lord
    - (b) Why did Peter instruct baptism "in the name of Jesus Christ" in Acts 2:38?
      - i) And if this was wrong, why didn't the other eleven apostles who were with him (Acts 2:14) rebuke him?
        - (1) Jesus promised when the Holy Spirit came, he would "bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you." (John 14:26).
          - (a) So if using "the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit" was the correct formula for water baptism, why didn't the Holy Spirit bring it to their remembrance at this time, and correct Peter?
      - (c) Why did Philip baptize the Samaritans "in the Name of the Lord Jesus." (Acts 8:16)?
      - (d) Why did Peter command the baptism of Cornelius and his household "in the name of the Lord." (Acts 10:48)
        - i) and if this was wrong, why didn't the other six Jewish brethren from Joppa (Acts 10:23; 10:45; 11:12) object?
        - ii) Also when the angel instructed Cornelius to send for Peter, he said to him, "he shall tell you what you ought to do." (Acts 10:6)
          - (1) Do we now assume that the angel instructed Cornelius wrongly, because Peter gave the instruction for baptism "in the name of the Lord?"
      - (e) Why did Paul re-baptize the Ephesians "in the Name of the Lord Jesus." (Acts 19:5)?
    - (2) Were the apostles being deliberately disobedient?
      - (a) Or was it that they had a better understanding of the language than the modern churches today?
      - (b) Did they know that Jesus was not referring to WATER baptism when He said this?

2. Consider the context

- a) The whole context of this passage may not have anything to do water baptism, but with the Authority that Jesus had (Matthew 28:18), which He passed on to His disciples (Matthew 10:1; Luke 9:1; 10:19).
  - (1) He was now instructing them how to bring others to the place to receive the fullness of God through discipleship.
    - (a) By not considering the context, the true meaning of this Scripture has been missed by those who use it to indicate the method of water baptism.
- b) Prepositions used support this
  - (1) εἰς vs ἐν
    - (a) ἐν (in): It would appear that here and Acts 2:38 & 10:48 the WATER receives the action of the verb and the NAME does not since it is the dative (indirect object)
    - (b) εἰς (into): but in Matt 28, Acts 19:5 and Act 8:16 the NAME receives the action of the verb since it is in the accusative (direct object)

**E. The point to note is that, the main verb of the sentence, is "make" and not "Go you." Following the main verb we have two other participles that support this idea, "baptizing" and "teaching."**

- 1. But water baptism is relatively instantaneous (aorist tense) NOT continual (present tense), so what is Jesus saying here?
  - a) The present tense participle usually refers to an action simultaneous with the main verb, indicating that the teaching, the baptizing, and the discipling are all going on at the SAME TIME.
  - b) It also indicates that the "baptizing" and the "teaching" are both going on for the same length of time as the "make disciples of." This should make it clear that the word "baptizing" (Matthew 28:19) is not referring only to the relatively instantaneous action of water baptism, but rather to the much longer process of being spiritually baptized into:
    - (1) word, and deed (Romans 15:18). This is done as the Word of God is
    - (2) written in our hearts (2 Corinthians 3:3), and
    - (3) we learn to "observe all things" (Matthew 28:20) that Jesus has commanded us.
    - (4) to obedience in thought (2 Corinthians 10:5)
- 2. Therefore, "the NAME of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit" is what the believer IS BEING BAPTIZED INTO, and not that which is used to perform the act.

- a) They are being baptized INTO (preposition εις as opposed to the preposition εν) the Person of God, the Trinity, not IN water.
  - (1) INTO the Father, Son and the HOLY Spirit
  - (2) INTO the Trinity
  - (3) INTO the essence of God
    - (a) and it's continually happening over and over, not instantaneously.
- 3. SO... If the thrust of this passage is to “make disciples,” wouldn't it make sense that Jesus used “teaching” and “baptizing” as support to “making disciples?” Is it possible that He was saying to immerse people continually into the essence of the Person of God as a way to “disciple,” rather than talking about the ordinance of water baptism?

**F. Is it wrong to water baptize someone in the name of the F, S & HS?**

- 1. NO! a) But the great commission MAY NOT be about water baptism IN the Name of the F, S & HS but Person baptism INTO the NAME of the F, S & HS

**II. The call to ministry as Christians**

**A. so what happens to US when we minister and disciple people INTO the Name of the F, S & HS?**

- 1. Isaiah 58:6-12
  - a) “Is this not the fast that I have chosen: To loose the bonds of wickedness, To undo the heavy burdens, To let the oppressed go free, And that you break every yoke? Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, And that you bring to your house the poor who are cast out; When you see the naked, that you cover him, And not hide yourself from your own flesh? Then your light shall break forth like the morning, Your healing shall spring forth speedily, And your righteousness shall go before you; The glory of the Lord shall be your rear guard. Then you shall call, and the Lord will answer; You shall cry, and He will say, ‘Here I am.’”
  - b) “If you take away the yoke from your midst, The pointing of the finger, and speaking wickedness, If you extend your soul to the hungry And satisfy the afflicted soul, Then your light shall dawn in the darkness, And your darkness shall be as the noonday. The Lord will guide you continually, And satisfy your soul in drought, And strengthen your bones; You shall be like a watered garden, And like a spring of water, whose waters do not fail. Those from among you Shall build the old waste places; You shall raise up the foundations of many generations; And you shall be called the Repairer of the Breach, The Restorer of Streets to Dwell In.