

Baptism: “I do!”

Greek βαπτίζω (*baptizo*) = to dip repeatedly, to immerse, to submerge, to make fully wet.

Repentance and faith in Jesus Christ is the prerequisite for baptism.

Acts 2:38: Peter said to them, “Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”

Baptism does not save; it is symbolic unity with Christ by faith.

Read **Romans 6:1-8**.

What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? ² By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it? ³ Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? ⁴ We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. ⁵ For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. ⁶ We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. ⁷ For one who has died has been set free from sin. ⁸ Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him.

We are dead to sin and raised to new life in Christ.

Dying under the water is faith unity with Christ in his death.

Rising out of the water is faith unity with Christ in his resurrection.

Baptism is commanded by Christ and therefore submission to the Lordship of Christ: **Matthew 28:16-20**.

¹⁶ Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. ¹⁷ And when they saw him they worshiped him, but some doubted. ¹⁸ And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the

Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

Baptism is commanded by Christ. Here’s my military analogy. Can you be saved and refuse baptism? What would happen to a soldier who swore an oath of enlistment to defend the Constitution against all enemies and obey the orders of the President and his officers and then refused to obey? There would be a court martial, prison, and dishonorable discharge from the military. If you willfully refuse baptism (after you believe) knowing it is commanded by Christ, then Christ is not your Savior and Lord.

I use an imperfect marriage analogy to illustrate baptism.

Three stages in a relationship: courtship (dating), engagement, marriage.

When a person is interested in Christianity and attends church and reads the Bible that’s like courtship or dating. A man is interested in a woman or a woman is interested in a man. They spend time getting to know each other, but no commitment yet. We call this person a “seeker” and some churches refer to their worship services as “seeker sensitive.”

After spending some time together and falling in love there is a marriage proposal, an engagement. The engagement is sealed with a ring. This is like when a person knows Christ’s love for him/her and falls in love with Christ. The “seeker” decides to believe in Christ for salvation. The “seeker” is “born again” and receives the gift of eternal life and the engagement ring of the Holy Spirit.

This is where my analogy breaks down because the person is saved by faith in Christ prior to baptism: Ephesians 2:8-9: ⁸ *For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, ⁹ not a result of works, so that no one may boast.*

The engagement period ends with a wedding ceremony and the two are married. No couple stays engaged for a long time. It should quickly lead to a wedding ceremony. They exchange vows and say “I DO.” Baptism is saying “I DO” to Jesus Christ.

Many men and women want to live together without the commitment of marriage. They say they love each other, but don’t need to make marriage vows. People who claim to be Christians, but don’t want to get baptized are

like men and women who live together without the commitment of marriage. They may say they love Jesus, and even read the Bible and sing worship songs, but they are afraid to make baptismal vows. They don't want to say "I do" to Christ.

When I got married, I was asked some serious questions.

As I stood facing Sandie, the pastor asked me: "Do you take this woman, Sandie Lai Ping Chan, to be your lawfully wedded wife, to have and to hold, from this day forward, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, until death do you part?"

I looked at her and answered, "I do!"

A baptism vow is very similar to the marriage vow: "Do you take this God-Man, Jesus Christ, to be your one and only Savior and Lord, to have and to hold, from this day forward, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, until at death your faith becomes sight." Jesus says it to you. Can you say it to Him?

Let me add to my imperfect analogy. A marriage relationship takes work and even counseling! If you ignore your new spouse then the marriage will not last long. You must develop your post-baptism relationship with Jesus Christ. I have seen people drift away from Christ after baptism. You develop your post-baptism "I DO" with Christ by growing in your relationship. Attend worship, study the Bible, pray in the Spirit, and serve Christ's Great Commission.

So where are you with Jesus Christ?

Are you just courting/dating? Are you a seeker of truth?

Are you engaged? Have you made a faith commitment to Christ as Savior?

Have you been "born again" and received the Holy Spirit?

If you are engaged, then you need to plan the wedding ceremony. Get baptized!