



# LESSON 44

# Water Baptism, Part 2

*“Receive every inward and outward trouble, every disappointment, pain, uneasiness, temptation, darkness and desolation with both hands, as to a true opportunity and blessed occasion of dying to self and entering into a fuller fellowship with thy self-denying, suffering Savior.”*

**JOHN WESLEY**

## **Kirk's Comment**

I thank God that I am saved by grace alone, because anything else I tried to add would only pollute it. Apart from His grace, all the prayers, church attendance, good works, even my baptism wouldn't save me: “Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us” (Titus 3:5).

## QUESTIONS & OBJECTIONS

*“I need to get my life cleaned up first.”*

Those who think that they can clean up their lives don't see their true plight. They are standing guilty before a wrath-filled God. They have been condemned by His Law (John 3:18; Romans 3:19). If a man commits rape and murder and admits to the judge that he is guilty, will the judge let him go just because the man promises to clean up his life? He is in debt





- Jesus told the repentant thief, “Today shall you be with me in paradise” (Luke 23:43). The thief was saved without baptism.
- In Acts 10 Cornelius exercised faith in Christ and was clearly saved prior to being baptized in water. The moment Cornelius believed in Christ, he received the Holy Spirit (Acts 10:45).
- Paul separates baptism from the gospel, saying, “Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel” (1 Corinthians 1:17). It is the gospel that saves us (Romans 1:16; 1 Corinthians 15:1,2); therefore, baptism is not what saves us.

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

To properly understand Peter’s meaning, we must consider the phrase “for the remission of sins” in light of its usage, its context, and the rest of Scripture.

- The word “for” (*eis*) can mean either “with a view to” or “because of.” In the latter case, a person would be baptized *because* he had been saved, not *in order* to be saved.
- People are saved by receiving (not rejecting) God’s Word, and Peter’s audience “gladly received his word” before they were baptized (Acts 2:41).
- Verse 44 speaks of “all that believed” as constituting the early church, not all who were baptized.
- Those who believed Peter’s message clearly received the Holy Spirit before they were baptized. Peter said, “Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Spirit as well as we?” (Acts 10:47).
- Jesus referred to His baptism as a work of righteousness (Matthew 3:15). But the Bible declares clearly that salvation is “not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Spirit” (Titus 3:5).



- Not once in the entire Gospel of John, written explicitly so that people could believe and be saved (John 20:31), is baptism noted as a condition of salvation. Rather, this Gospel instructs people to “believe” to be saved (John 3:16,18,36).

It seems best, therefore, to understand Peter’s statement like this: “Repent, and be baptized, *as a result of* the remission of sins.” That this view looked backward to sins being forgiven at the moment of salvation is clear by the context and the rest of Scripture. Believing or repenting is often mentioned with being baptized, since baptism should follow belief. But Jesus does not say in Mark 16:16, or anywhere in Scripture, “He that is not *baptized* shall be damned,” but instead states emphatically “he that *believes* not is condemned already” (John 3:18). Nowhere does Scripture make baptism a condition of salvation.

## QUESTIONS

1. **What does salvation by grace become when any requirement is added to it?**
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. **What verse tells us that we are saved by grace and not by works?**
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. **What are some acts of obedience that are important but not essential to salvation?**





believe certain historical events happened. Television waves are invisible, but an antenna and a receiver can detect their presence. By the way, did you know that you have a receiver?”

**Will Fullyblind:** “No.”

**Christian:** “Your ‘receiver’ (your spirit) is dead because of sin [see Ephesians 2:1]. You need to be plugged into the life of God, and then you will come alive and be aware of the invisible spiritual realm. Do you think you have kept the Ten Commandments? . . .”

## Memory Verse

*“For by grace  
are you saved  
through faith;  
and that not of  
yourselves: it is  
the gift of God:  
not of works,  
lest any man  
should boast.”*

**EPHESIANS  
2:8,9**

## WORDS OF COMFORT

When my 11-year-old niece wrote to me from New Zealand, I wrote back and, as an added blessing, I dropped in a few Russian rubles that someone had sent me. Russian currency wasn’t worth the paper it was printed on, but I thought she would like to see how their money looked. I liked to do little things that would make her happy.

I found out later that the letter arrived on her birthday, and that she excitedly rushed to the bank to see how much I had sent her.

### Last Words

**Vicomtesse D’Houdetot**, daughter-in-law of Rousseau’s Madame D’Houdetot, left the sad lament:

**“I regret my life.”**