

The Acts of the Apostles

[Wed. Aug. 13, 2014] Acts Series, Acts 9.17-19 - Craig A. Thurman

Briefly consider the closing topic of our last lesson. It was about *filling* and *indwelling* of the Holy Spirit. For the full explanation please refer to my notes posted on our web site at Acts 9.17. This text states that Saul would *be filled with the Holy Ghost*. Whether this means an immediate filling that day, or to the fact that his life would be filled with such experiences, I cannot tell. I think both are correct. He was filled then, and his life would be one filled with the Holy Spirit. Being filled with the Spirit *was manifested* when the saints were put into places where special instances of witness were necessary. However, it would be wrong to think of *filling* as if we were to wait for special moments to come along in our lives, where the Lord would fill us then to witness specially of Christ. We have the imperative to *be filled with the Spirit* in Eph. 5.18 which should be understood as a potentially continuous enjoyment of the saints, and because of that, they are prepared for the opportunity to witness Christ when the moment presents itself.

Along with this we considered how that the Lord had constituted that His Spirit be with Moses in a special way. (Is. 63.11) That this special endowment of the Spirit was later distributed among 70 other men. (Nu.11.25) With this we also mentioned that there are many men, mostly prophets, in O.T history who had been filled with the Holy Spirit. In the N. T., at the time of our Lord's birth, only these persons are said to have been filled with the Spirit until after our Lord's resurrection: John the Baptist from his mother's womb, (Lk.1.15); John's mother, (Lk.1.41); John's father, (Lk. 1.67); and Simeon (Lk.2.25-27). Our Lord Jesus Christ was *full of the Holy Ghost* from His baptism. (Lk.4.1) The Spirit of God was not given to Him in a measured portion.

Jo. 3. 34 ... God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto Him.

The work of Jesus Christ for men is the work of God for us. So, from Jesus' baptism, and during his entire earthly ministry no one was said to be filled with the Spirit of the Lord. It was not until **after** His resurrection that we see the Holy Spirit work again, in this manner, publically, in others. Then, we see filling begin at these ten places:

- At Pentecost (Acts 2.4); remember this filling was a result of outpouring
- Peter, as he stood before the Sanhedrin (Acts 4.8)

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- The prayerful church (Acts 4.31)
- Men appointed as servants of the Lord were to be *full of the Holy Ghost* and Stephen in particular (Acts 7.3, 5)
- Stephen at his death (Acts 7.55)
- Paul, after his conversion (Acts 9.17)
- Barnabas was *full of the Holy Ghost* (Acts 11.24)
- Paul, when dealing with a sorcerer (Acts 13.9-12)
- The disciples of the churches sown among the nations (Acts 13.52)
- And the final command for us to be filled with the Spirit (Eph. 5.18-21)

Beyond all doubt, those who were filled with the Holy Spirit were always a part of the Lord's N. T. church. This is always for service and witness.

Now, there is a distinction that can be made between the filling of the Holy Spirit that came only upon N.T. church saints, and the outpouring, baptism, gift of the Holy Spirit, shedding forth, which is that special, permanent residence, indwelling of the Holy Spirit with those of the N.T. church. Before there was *filling* there was the *outpouring* or baptism of the Holy Spirit upon church. Only after having received this special indwelling of the Holy Spirit do we begin to witness of Jesus Christ, receive gifts for the service of Christ, are taught the things of Christ and guided into all truth. This began with the apostles and ends with the N.T. church saints:

- The apostles received the Holy Spirit's indwelling (Jn.14.17 notice here the distinction between the disciples enjoying the Spirit's previous presence, and now the special indwelling; 20.22 He breathed on them.) This was **after** our Lord's resurrection, but before His final ascension to be seated in the throne of His Father in glory.

Notice that the result of this indwelling the apostle Peter guided the church into their first business meetings concerning refilling the vacated apostolic office of Judas Iscariot. (Acts 1.15-26)

- The church received the Holy Spirit's indwelling at Pentecost (Acts 2.32 *shed forth*)
- Subsequent members of the church already established at Jerusalem received the Holy Spirit. (Acts 2.38 It was a **potential** blessing promised to

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all those who had repented and were baptized ... and it us *understood* that they *should* be *added* to that church. (Acts 2.41) And finally,

- Subsequent churches received the Holy Spirit. (Acts 8.16 the baptized believers in the city of Samaria; Acts 11.16-17 the first gentile converts of Caesarea; 1Co.12.13 which would show that all baptized believers who join to a N.T. church enjoy the same.)

This sums up where we left off in our last lesson. Now let's move forward into this chapter. Back up to verse 17 again so that we might pick up the new thought where Ananias goes to Saul.

Tonight we want to consider in our reading these two points:

- 1. What does baptism do?**
- 2. Who is it that administers baptism to the repentant sinner?**

17 And Ananias went his way, and entered into the house; and putting his hands on him said, Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost.

18 And immediately

εὐθέως, straightway, immediately, forthwith.

there fell

ἀπέπεσον, 3rd ρ, pl, aor 2, ind of ἀποπίπτω; ἀπό forth, from + πίπτω to fall, ; only time used in the N.T.; Lit. *there **fell away** from his eyes ...*

LXX

Lev.19.9; 23.22 falls from; Job 24.24 falling off; 29.24 has failed; Ps.5.10 let them fail; 7.4 perish; 36 (37).2 fall away; 89 (90).6 let it droop.

from ἀπό his eyes (or, fell away from his eyes)

ὀφθαλμῶν, ophthalmon. Object of the Greek preposition ἀπὸ, *from*.

as it had been scales:

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λεπίδες, nom, pl of λεπίς; used only this once in the N.T.

In the LXX:

*Le.11.9, 10, 12 have fins and **scales** λεπίδες **in the waters** ... which have not fins or **scales** λεπίδες in the water ... that have not fins or **scales** λεπίδες ...*

*Nu. 16.38 and do thou make them beaten **plates** λεπίδας a covering to the altar*

*Deu. 14.9, 10 that have fins and **scales** λεπίδες ... not fins and **scales** λεπίδες*

and he received sight

ἀνέβλεψε, 3rd p sing, aor 1, ind of ἀναβλέπω; Lit. 'he saw again.' (vss. 12, 17)

forthwith, (instantly, at the falling away of the scales) and arose, and was baptized.

The scales from his eyes fell immediately, and as **soon** as they were fallen Saul **could see again** ...

παραχρήμα; KJV, **presently** 1 (Mt. 21.19), **soon** 1 (Mt.19.20), **forthwith** 1 (**our text**), **straightway** 3 (Lk.8.55; 5.10; 16.33 **last time used in Scripture**), **immediately** 13; **All but 2 instances are found in Luke's books.** citing those instances in the book of Acts where this is found:

*Acts 3.7 and **immediately** his feet and ankle bones received strength.*

*Acts 5.10 Then fell she down **straightway** at his feet*

*Acts 12.23 And **immediately** the angel of the Lord smote him (Herod)*

*Acts 16.26 and **immediately** all the doors were opened (for Paul)*

*Acts 16.33 he and all his, **straightway**.*

Parallel Text:

Ac 22:12 And one Ananias, a devout man according to the law, having a good report of all the Jews which dwelt there,

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13 *Came unto me, and stood, and said unto me, Brother Saul, receive thy sight* (ἀνάβλεψον, 2nd p, sing, aor 1, imper.). **And the same hour ὥρα I looked up** (ἀνέβλεψα, 1st p, sing, aor 1, ind. *I looked, I saw again*) **upon εἰς him.**

14 *And he said, The God of our fathers hath chosen thee, that thou shouldest know his will, and **see that Just One, and shouldest hear the voice of his mouth.***

We must be made alive, quickened, regenerated or born again spiritually, before we can comprehend with the hear ear that great message of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

*Joh 3:3 Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. (In order to perceive spiritual things he **must** first be born of God.)*

Then comes the **hearing:**

Mt 11:15 He that hath ears to hear, let him hear. (We need to mark this verse in our Bibles. This is an appeal to those who have already the spiritual faculty of hearing spiritual things.

Joh 8:47 He that is of God heareth God's words: ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God. (We must be made His in our experience in order to be able to hear His voice.)

Remember how that those that were with Saul at this time heard a voice

*Acts 9.7 And the men which journeyed with him stood speechless, **hearing a voice, but seeing no man.***

but couldn't understand

*Acts 22.9 And they that were with me saw indeed the light, and were afraid; but they **heard not the voice** of him that spake to me.*

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what was being said. We know from Scripture that the Lord spoke to Saul in the Hebrew language.

*Acts 26.14 And when we were all fallen to the earth, I heard a voice speaking unto me, and **saying in the Hebrew tongue**, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.*

This shows us in plainest terms how purposefully the Lord chose to reveal Himself only to Saul and not a single other person that was with him. They saw the light (Acts 22.9), but no man. (Acts 9.7). It shined round about them all (Acts 26.13), but to Paul alone was The Light Himself revealed, Jesus our Lord.

*Joh 8:12 Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, **I am the light of the world**: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.*

*Joh 9:5 As long as I am in the world, **I am the light** of the world.*

6 When he had thus spoken, he spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and he anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay,

7 And said unto him, Go, wash in the pool of Siloam, (which is by interpretation, Sent.) He went his way therefore, and washed, and came seeing. (Jesus Christ has the power to bring light to the sin-blinded heart.

They all fell to the earth in fear, but the voice only spoke to Saul. (Acts 26.14, 16) How can any doubt that this is the result of the eternal election of some by the Heavenly Father. (Eph.1.3, 4; 1Pe.1.2) Having been chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world guarantees that every one of them shall come to the knowledge of the Savior, Jesus Christ. While this doctrine, like all doctrine, is not understood to a greater extent until we grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ we should learn to receive it as

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the truth of God's Word and trust that we shall become established in it.

15 For thou shalt be his witness unto all men of what thou hast seen and heard.

16 And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized,

The commandment to baptize is upon every true N. T. church; the commandment to be baptized is upon every genuine repentant soul who has come to faith in Jesus Christ.

- **The requisite for administering water baptism** is repentance from sin and faith in Christ. It is not contingent on church membership. The Ethiopian eunuch went on his way rejoicing not having a church. (Acts 2.10 presents the likelihood for baptized believers to be in many places already ... Cyrene ... north Africa.)
- **The requisite for church membership** then follows that there is an expressed desire to join with such a church. (Water baptism does NOT add members to a church ... Acts 2.41 says neither says nor implies such a thing.)
- **The requisite to receiving the baptism, gift, outpouring of the Holy Spirit** then follows with a faithful walk in His church with Jesus Christ.

To qualify that statement: To live in such a way so that the church must exercise discipline must remove one from the blessings of the Spirit in their lives just as it clearly severs their membership with that church. (1Co.5.5, 7) Or, to carelessly walk away from a church must be to dismiss one's self from that membership, and thus lose His blessed presence. (He.10.25 *forsaking, ἐγκατελείποντες*, root ἐγκαταλείπω, to leave, which implies previously having been present for the meetings of the assembly, 29 *done despite unto the Spirit*, 35 *Cast not away therefore your*

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confidence, 38 if any man draw back) Otherwise the Holy Spirit is guaranteed/promised to be with those who constitute a part of that church!!!

Additionally, the candidate is commanded to receive baptism at the hands of God's authority, the church. (The authority or right for carrying out the great commission and to whom the ordinances were delivered is not pastors and deacons; but the Lord's N. T. church.)

We see both sides of the commandment in Scripture: In the eunuch's question, *See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?* That is the candidate's acknowledgement of his duty to be baptized. With Ananias' question, *And now why tarriest thou? Arise and be baptized ...* Both are correct responses to Christ's commandment. Again, we see it in these two verbs: *baptizing them* (Mt.28.19), the commissioned; *be baptized* (Acts 2.38), the candidate.

and wash away thy sins (briefly discussed below), calling on the name of the Lord.

To be clear, not everyone should be baptized, and not everyone is worthy of baptism, that is, meets the standards required for receiving to themselves the execution of that ordinance. Multitudes (whether just Pharisees and Saducees, Mt. 3.7, or more Lk.3.7) came to John the Baptist to receive baptism and it was denied to them because they had not manifested repentance from sins.

Baptism neither remits sin, nor causes regeneration. Consider this: If baptism truly remitted sins and regenerated souls to life before God, shouldn't John the Baptist have gladly received the multitudes, the Pharisees and the Sadducees, without any question of suitability? But what do we find instead? **John did not baptize them!** Why? Because he knew that they were unrepentant. John knew that they were unfit for receiving what this simple ordinance pictured. This alone proves that the ordinance of baptism had neither the intent nor the power to remit sins or bring about a change in the nature of a

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sinner through the new birth experience. Yet, look at the confusion there is today surrounding water baptism in Christendom. All of the christening, and pouring, and sprinkling today, and for what? Supposedly bringing souls to Christ by *washing away their sins*, and putting them all into the imaginary, universal church. And yet for all of this, John the Baptist, the first man appointed of God to baptize refused baptism to many because they had not met the first requisite of God to repent of their sins. So then, what is the purpose for baptism?

- **To picture/show a good conscience** that is in that new man created in Christ Jesus, which he has before God, by obeying the first commandment upon him after having come to faith in Jesus Christ: be baptized;
- **To picture** that our old man, representative of our previous manner of life before faith in Jesus Christ, died on His cross that day nearly 2000 years ago; He bore our punishment for sins on His cross; **our old man received in Christ its death sentence that day;**
- **To picture** that the former life without Christ is buried, or put away in the grave when Christ's body was put away for us in the tomb; **our former manner of life should be put off;**
- **To picture** that we were raised with Jesus Christ in His resurrection; We are to walk in newness of life from this day forward by the faith of the Son of God who has raised from the dead and lives forever more. (a pictorial ordinance, just as the Lord's Supper)

Next, consider the great potential there is for misunderstanding these two clauses: *be baptized for the remission of sins* and *wash away thy sins*. Herein is the root cause for those who would teach the heresy of baptismal regeneration.

The first clause, *be baptized for the remission of sins ...* states that because we have repented we want to be baptized.

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The second clause, *wash away thy sins* states that, from this day forward, we disown our former manner of life and identify with Jesus Christ ... *calling on the name of the Lord*.

Most religionists, and those who are not taught in the Scriptures, misunderstand what these words truly say. For example,

Barnes Notes, vol.10, p.315, 'Receive baptism as emblematic of the washing away of sins. It cannot be intended that the external rite of baptism was **sufficient** to make the soul pure, but that it was an ordinance divinely appointed as *expressive* of the washing away of sins, or **of purifying the heart.**'
(bolded)

Barnes' statement that *baptism was* [not] *sufficient* clearly leaves the door open for allowing baptism to be **added** to what Christ has done on the cross. This statement could be read to mean that baptism was not sufficient *alone* to make the soul pure; that with Christ's offering for sin is also added baptism. This sense from these words appear to be justified by his remarks that follow; *it was an ordinance divinely appointed 'expressive' of ... purifying the heart*. He does not say *expressive of a purified heart*, or *expressive of the purifying of the heart*.

Leon King, my pastor for 37 years said this about *Barnes'* comment above, and I asked him because there was something amiss with his statement, I was uncomfortable with it, but I couldn't quite pin it down. Brother King 'hit the nail on the head' for me by saying this, **'To say that baptism is not sufficient is to say that it is required, but that there is something else added to make it efficacious.'**

Baptism is a declaration of our previous repentance and faith in Jesus Christ, that we want to, from this day forward, live separated and holy lives for Christ. Or to say it another way, we want to *save* our lives, manage our affairs, all of our business, squeeze every ounce out of our existence for the glory of God through Jesus Christ: as we live our lives as children, grandchildren, great grandchildren,

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teenagers, young adults, husbands, wives, parents, grandparents, as we go to school, as we go to work, as we interact with others, drive our cars, hunt and fish; entertain ourselves, and every part of our lives ... for Jesus Christ. Brethren, baptism doesn't do this. It is the outward, demarcation line that tells everyone that this day is the day of all days for me. Where once I was dead, now I live; was blind but now I see. What I once was is past, and what I shall be will be for the glory of God by Jesus Christ my Lord. Baptism marks out what has already been begun in the heart by the grace of God. The testimony of baptism is that our sins have already been washed away by the blood of Jesus Christ, or else we are unworthy to receive it.

In addition to this, to conclude this subject as fully as it should be, I must say that *unbaptized believers* fail to give glory or honor to the Lord by their unwillingness to submit themselves to baptism. This is such an important first step for the believer to take before God. For a believer to fail to be baptized must be a serious offense to God.

Lu 7:29 And all the people that heard him, and the publicans, justified God, being baptized with the baptism of John.

These who had been baptized after that they had heard the words of Jesus Christ standing there in His day, all that He had just spoken to them concerning John the Baptist's ministry, showed, by obeying the commandment of baptism, their agreement, not only with God and His appointment of John the Baptist for this great task, but with His Messenger, that is, His Son. Those who rejected the counsel of Jesus showed it by refusing baptism.

Lu 7:30 But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God (meaning what our Lord Jesus had just spoken) against themselves, being not baptized of him.

Today the same is being repeated again and again. There are those who repent and trust in Christ who will following on to be baptized, and there are those who will not. When the Lord has done a work of grace in the heart and brought to the sinner eternal life, doubtless, in

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my mind all such ones have a willingness to show agreement with God, but for some reason, fear, doubt, inadequacies, there is hesitation, waiting, and they don't, and they won't. But we say it again, ... *Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive gift of the Holy Ghost. There is no other motivation for being baptized than this!*

J-F-B, vol. 3, p.160, 'Remission of sins is obtained solely through faith in the Lord Jesus, (ch.x. 43, & c.); but baptism being the visible seal of this, it is here and elsewhere naturally transferred from the inward act of faith to that which publicly and formally proclaims it.'

Robertsons Word Pictures in the New Testament, vol. 3, p. 391, 'Get washed off,' your previous past manner of life. (I would add, *in a picture.*)

Saul/Paul had, to this time, persecuted them that he found of **this way**.

*Ac 9:2 And desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any of **this way**, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem.*

Suddenly, from this day forward he could no longer follow that *old manner of life*. **It wasn't baptism that changed his mind**, it was that Jesus Christ revealed Himself to him on the road to Damascus that made the change by the Spirit of God. His conversion took place that day when on the road to Damascus, **not** at baptism. Forgiveness of sins is not by water. Only God can forgive sins. And He only forgives sins because of the blood of Christ.

Lu 5:21 ... Who can forgive sins, but God alone?

Heb 9:22 ... and without shedding of blood is no remission.

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Joh 1:29 The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.

Re 1:5 ... Unto him [Jesus Christ] that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood ... 6. ... be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.,

19 And when he had received

λαβών, nom, sing, mac, part, aor 2, act of λαμβάνω most often translated with the English words *receive* and *take*.

*meat, (... after his three days fasting and blindness. [vs.9])
he was strengthened.*

ἐνίσχυσεν, 3rd p, sing, aor 1, ind of ἐνισχύω; ἐν + ἰσχύω; very interesting that the only other time this Greek word is used is just after our Lord Jesus was praying in the garden just before his sorrowful betrayal, beating, and crucifixion ... *there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him.* (Lk.22:43)

Then was Saul certain days with the disciples μαθητῶν which were at Damascus.

Obviously there was a church in Damascus. Acts 9.31 leads us to this conclusion. These disciples must have been meeting and living in such a way that makes them identifiable as a group.

On the issue of baptism, that we have been discussing, let me ask this question. Who baptized Saul? There is a tremendous amount of emphasis placed upon the executor or agent of baptism. So, who baptized Saul? Biblically, we do not know. Our opinion can be to answer, Ananias, but it is only an opinion. We simply have no way of proving it was he. Next, if we place great importance upon this agent, we must ask, Who is he? We only know one thing about him and it is that he is a **disciple**. *A certain disciple at Damascus.* To say he was a *certain* disciple means that he is distinguishable

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among others which lived in Damascus. We cannot say that he was a pastor, or a deacon, a prophet or a teacher. And it is just as certain that we cannot say he was one of the seventy that some would assert **based on extra-biblical sources**. (Traditions being held with equal authority as the Word of God is a great error on the part of the saints!) So, let me make this premature assertion from what we know of Ananias and baptism: **disciples of the Lord's church can baptize**. Will that statement stand the test of Scripture?

We have the opinion that besides John the Baptist baptizing, that his *disciples* did as well. And we are certain that the disciples of our Lord baptized.

*Joh 3:23 And **John also was baptizing** in Aenon near to Salim, because there was much water there: and they came, and were baptized.*

*Joh 3:22 After these things came **Jesus and his disciples** into the land of Judaea; and there he tarried with them, **and baptized**.*

*Joh 4:1 When therefore the Lord knew how the Pharisees had heard that Jesus **made and baptized more disciples than John**,
2 (Though Jesus himself baptized not, but **his disciples**),
3 He left Judaea, and departed again into Galilee.*

Does this mean that only the twelve apostles did the baptizing? Perhaps the 70 sent out later in Luke chapter 10 did as well? We do not know for sure in either of these cases. It is very noteworthy that not a single Scripture, or a single apostle, one of the twelve is ever said to have baptized anyone. They are always called *disciples*. If someone could show otherwise from the Word of God I could change my mind on this matter.

Why am I pointing this out? I am, and you are learning as we study the Scriptures. My goal is to know the truth of the Word of God, just as this is your goal. Sometimes we need to strip away the excess of our thoughts and get down to the bare essentials of Scripture.

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Now, I beg for your patience for the next few moments as we work through this list of those names that we can say for certain, positively, 100%, baptized others:

- John the Baptist baptized our Lord. (Mt.3.13-15)
- Philip baptized the eunuch. (Acts 8.38)
- Paul baptized Crispus, Gaius, and the household of Stephanus. Probably meaning of those that lived in Corinth. (1Co.1.14-17, *Christ sent me not to baptize ...*)

What is the common, biblical term given to those that are known to have baptized others? Pastors? No. Deacons? No. Apostles? No. They are simply called *disciples*.

*Joh 3:22 After these things came **Jesus and his disciples** into the land of Judaea; and there he tarried with them, **and baptized**.*

*Jn.4.2 (Though Jesus himself baptized not, but **his disciples**.)*

Is the church to keep the ordinances? Yes. So, they are to keep the Lord's Supper and baptism. Is that correct? Does a church, to be a church have to have a pastor, or a deacon? No. A house church is just that, a church that gathers in someone's house that bears the commandments, keeps the same ordinances just any church who meets in a formal structure as is this one that we gather in tonight. Is that correct? Of course it is. Examples of house churches in Scriptures:

- The house-church of Aquila and Priscilla, which moved from place to place (Ro.16.3, 5; 1Co.16.19 had moved from Philippi to Rome!), who evidently chose to gather in their house wherever they went, in spite of the fact that there were other congregations where they were, and of whom each was familiar; similar could be said of those in Ro.16.15 as well (*Salute ... and all the saints with them*, a house church);

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- The Philippians likely began in the house church. (Acts 16.15, Lydia's house, and/or 16.32, the jailor's house)
- The Caesarean church likely began as a house church and might have moved to Philip's house, or there could have been as many as three house churches if we include Aquilla and Priscilla's house church. (Acts 10.48; Acts 21.8; 1Co.16.19)
- Nymphas had a house church which was in the city of Colossae (Col.4.15);
- Philemon had a house church (Phile vs. 2)

Discovering the actual agent of baptism, other than saying that it was by the church's disciples, is but for these three instances absolutely impossible to prove. To claim any more than what the biblical record provides is presumptuousness. We do not know anyone by name that baptized during our Lord's earthly ministry and they were always called disciples. And, as far as any office of the church is concerned, the office is never attached to the administration of the ordinances. While it is customary to have the pastor of a church administer the ordinances, it should never be thought that the church cannot continue in obedience to the commands of Christ whenever they haven't a pastor. In relation to this we should consider these few facts as well.

We do not know who baptized those at Pentecost; or who baptized the believers in the city of Samaria; or, who baptized Simon (Acts 8.13); or of those in Caesarea (Acts 10.48); we are left to assume that either Paul or Silas baptized the jailor and his believing household when they were in Philippi (Acts 16.34); that it was either Paul, Timothy, Erastus, or Luke that baptized the Ephesian brethren. (Acts 19.22)

We should ask ourselves who are Timothy, Erastus and Luke? Timothy is assumed to be a pastor, but he is properly called a minister of Paul during his travels. (Acts 19.22) Who is Luke? He might have been a Macedonian, and he is called a physician by Paul. (Col.4.4) Erastus is called the chamberlain or *steward* (οἰκονόμος) of the city of Rome.

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What we know about the administrators of baptism in the Word of God is evidently deemed sufficient for the Lord's churches to be able to continue administering this ordinance with unbroken succession unto the time of Christ's second coming. Brethren, it doesn't matter what the best church history books say, it doesn't matter what the record of the church fathers say, it doesn't matter what great Baptist men of the past say like B. H. Carroll, J. R. Graves, John Gill, or Charles Spurgeon; it doesn't matter what any ancient church has said at any time or any place, it doesn't matter what Primitive Baptists say, or the Old School Baptists, it doesn't matter what all of our doctrinal statements and Church Confessions say; it doesn't matter what this or that Baptist associational effort says, and it doesn't matter what this preacher says tonight; no amount of extra-biblical record, no words of a man, no words of men, bears the authority of the Word of God. We shall not be judged by the standards of men. We shall be judged by the Word of God. The Scriptures state *That the books were opened* (Re.20.12) in that day of judgment! We must learn, believe, and practice what is written. Our church constitution is, **'Thus saith the Lord!'** In this day until Christ's second coming, we cannot know any more than what is written – Believe what is written.

In closing, what harm is there in the case of baptism, when we superimpose into the baptismal equation some teaching like *apostolic* or *preacher authority*? Aside from the fact that we have *added* to the Word of God, which should have been enough, we also impose constraints upon the church that the Lord Himself did not see fit to install Himself. If the contrary is so true, then why can't it be proved? For every man-made tradition that we add to the Word of God the church loses that much more liberty to be all that she should be before her Lord. There are churches today who are without pastors that, due to well-meaning preachers have taught them that they cannot practice the ordinances until they have such men as those who hold the pastoral office in their congregations. The churches of the Lord Jesus Christ have become burdened with such a teaching. This deprives them of their confidence and right to function as fully as a church ought.

God bless you dear brethren.