

Laying On of Hands - Old Testament - Part 1

KEY VERSE:

Long time therefore abode they speaking boldly in the Lord, which gave testimony unto the word of His grace, and granted signs and wonders to be done by their hands. (Acts 14:3)

The doctrine of the laying on of hands is the fourth principle in the foundations of the Christian faith. Laying on of hands is an act in which one person places his hands on the body of another person with a definite spiritual purpose. This laying on of hands is accompanied by prayer or prophecy.

The 6 Doctrines of Christ *[Doctrine meaning the basic supporting truths essential to all believer's. Believer's must know and they must be able to teach these 6 doctrines.]*

- Repentance from dead works
- Faith towards God
- The Doctrines of Baptism
- The Laying on of Hands
- The Resurrection of the Dead
- Eternal Judgment

The Laying on of Hands in the Old Testament was used for the following purposes.

1. Transference of spiritual blessing or authority
2. Public confirmation of a spiritual blessing or authority received from God.
3. Commitment to God for a special ministry.

Transference of spiritual blessing or authority

Genesis 48: - a message was brought to Joseph informing him that his father Jacob was sick so he gathered his 2 sons Manasseh and Ephraim and went to see his father Jacob. In a previous biblical account God had spoken to Jacob saying, Behold I will make thee fruitful, and multiply thee, and I will make thee a multitude of people; and I will give this land to thy seed after thee for an everlasting possession.

This covenant/promise was first given to Abram who was later named Abraham. **Genesis 17: 5**

Covenant - a written agreement or promise usually under seal between two or more parties especially for the performance of some action. In this case the seal was the Word of God given.

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Read - verse 8 - 22

It was an accepted practice in those days that blessings and authority were imparted through the laying on of hands. The greater blessing was imparted through the right hand and the lesser through the left. And the greater blessing usually went to the elder this is why Joseph got out of joint as the saying goes. He had a traditional expectation but God had a plan. Jacob transferred the blessing as I believe the Holy Spirit directed him.

Jacob considered Joseph's two sons as his own, thus guaranteeing Joseph a double portion of the inheritance. Ephraim and Manasseh would therefore have equal rights and status with Jacob's other sons, Reuben and Simeon. The descendants of Ephraim and Manasseh each became a full tribe.

Insights:

Public confirmation of a spiritual blessing or authority received from God.

Read - Numbers 8: 1-16 - *These verses describe the purification and the consecration of the Levites, who were appointed to help the priests in the ministry of worship.*

In this account Moses was instructed to have the children of Israel lay their hands upon the Levites. **Verses - 9 - 10** By laying their hands on the Levites the whole assembly was confirming the blessing and authority that God had given to the Levites. After the ceremony the Levites entered into the tabernacle to do service. Vs. -22

Insights:

Commitment to God for a special ministry.

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As Moses approached the end of his earthly ministry, he asked the Lord to appoint a new leader over Israel.

Read - Numbers 27: 18 - 20, 22 - 23

And the Lord said unto Moses, Take thee Joshua the Son of Nun, a man in whom is the spirit, and lay thine hand upon him; and set him before Eleazar the priest, and before all the congregation; and give him a charge in their sight. And thou shalt put some of thine honor upon him, that all the congregation of the children Israel may be obedient.

You see in this scripture how God instructed Moses to lay his hand upon Joshua and that there is mention of a transference taking place, “ *and thou shalt put some of thy honor upon him*”. A transference of authority and wisdom was imparted to Joshua. And you note in verse 18 that the Lord chose Joshua because he was a man, “ *in whom is the spirit*”. It appears that God promotes people who are filled with the Spirit.

Deuteronomy 34: 9 - And Joshua the son of Nun was full of the Spirit of wisdom; for Moses had laid his hands upon him: and the children of Israel hearkened unto him, and did as the Lord commanded Moses.

The laying on of hands and the transference of authority was also for the benefit of the congregation. They were witnesses to God’s chosen leader and to the fact that when Moses laid his hands upon him the anointing to lead was now upon him. Vs. 20 - *And thou shalt put some of thine honor upon him, **that all the congregation the children of Israel may be obedient.***

Read - Joshua 1: 16 - 17

And they answered Joshua saying, All that thou commands us we will do, and wherever thou sends us we will go. According as we hearkened unto Moses in all things, so will we hearken unto thee: only the Lord thy God be with thee, as he was with Moses.

Insights:

Scripture References: Genesis 48: 8 - 22 - Genesis 17: 5 - Numbers 8: 1 - 16 - Numbers 27: 18 - 20, 22 - 23 - Deuteronomy 34: 9 - Joshua 1: 16 - 17