

## Doctrine of Authority

### The Laying on of Hands

1. The doctrine of the laying on of hands representing biblical authority and spiritual power is considered to be a foundational principle of the Christian life.
  - *Hebrews 6:1 Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, 2 Of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. 3 And this will we do, if God permit.*
  
2. In the *Old Testament* the laying on of hands represented specific spiritual realities.
  - The blessing of God. When Jacob blessed Joseph and his two sons he laid his hands on Ephraim and Manasseh. *Genesis 48:14 And Israel stretched out his right hand, and laid it upon Ephraim's head, who was the younger, and his left hand upon Manasseh's head, guiding his hands wittingly; for Manasseh was the firstborn.*
  - The identification of a sinner with a substitutionary sacrifice. When the people or the priests laid their hands on their offerings, there was a spiritual identification with the sacrifice and a transfer of sin or defilement to the offering. *Leviticus 1:4 And he shall put his hand upon the head of the burnt offering; and it shall be accepted for him to make atonement for him.*
  - The establishment of a specialized priesthood. The laying on of hands was used to appoint the Levites to spiritual service thereby separating them from the people. *Numbers 8:10 And thou shalt bring the Levites before the LORD: and the children of Israel shall put their hands upon the Levites...8:14 Thus shalt thou separate the Levites from among the children of Israel: and the Levites shall be mine.*
  - The commissioning of a spiritual and political leader over the nation. According to divine instruction Moses appointed Joshua as his successor thereby giving him authority. *Numbers 27:18 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; 19 And set him before Eleazar the priest, and before all the congregation; and give him a charge in their sight. 20 And thou shalt put some of thine honour upon him, that all the congregation of the children of Israel may be obedient.*
  
3. In the *New Testament* the laying on of hands was also significant.
  - Blessings were conveyed by the laying on of hands. *Mark 10:16 And he [Jesus] took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them.*

- Healing power was conveyed by the lay on of hands. *Matthew 8:3 And Jesus put forth his hand, and touched him, saying, I will; be thou clean. And immediately his leprosy was cleansed. Acts 3:6 Then Peter said, Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk. 7 And he took him by the right hand, and lifted him up: and immediately his feet and ankles bones received strength. 8 And he leaping up stood, and walked, and entered with them into the temple, walking, and leaping, and praising God. 9 And all the people saw him walking and praising God:*
  - The Holy Spirit was given. *Acts 8:17 Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost.*
  - A spiritual gift was conveyed to Timothy from the elders and from Paul. *1 Timothy 4:14 Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery.*
  - Individuals were appointed or set apart to a work. *Acts 6:6 Whom they set before the apostles: and when they had prayed, they laid their hands on them. Acts 13:3 And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away.*
4. Because of the importance of laying on of hands it is not to be done lightly.
- *1 Timothy 5:22 Lay hands suddenly on no man, neither be partaker of other men's sins: keep thyself pure.*