



Foundations

Hebrews 6

'Laying on of Hands'

THE LAYING ON OF HANDS

Between the foundations that relate to our salvation - repentance, faith and baptism in water and baptism in the spirit - and the foundations that relate to our eternal hope - the resurrection of the dead and eternal judgement - the writer to the Hebrews sums up all that relates to the outworking of our faith in this current age in the foundation of the laying on of hands.

The Purpose of the Laying on of Hands

The laying on of hands has a two-fold purpose: to impart a blessing to someone or to commission someone to act on your behalf.

To Impart a Blessing

There are four types of blessings that the laying on of hands can impart:

1. A word of blessing over a person's life. Often as a child. Ge 48:14-16, Mk 10:13 Mk 10:16
2. The baptism in the Holy Spirit. Ac 8:17-18, Ac 19:6, Ac 9:17 cf. Nu 11:16-17. The principle here is "I will take the Spirit that is on you and put it on them." The only requirement then is that you yourself are filled with the Spirit.
3. To impart a specific spiritual gift. Dt 34:9, 1Ti 4:14, 2Ti 1:6. While we all have the same Spirit we do not all have the same gifts. The gifts on some, particularly the ascension ministries, are not just for themselves but to be communicated to the body. Another case of "I will take the Spirit that is on you and put it on them."
4. To impart divine health and healing. Mk 5:23, Mk 6:5, Mk 16:17-18. When we lay hands on the sick, our hands are acting in proxy for Jesus' hands to continue his work.

To Commission

We can consider this another type of impartation. An impartation of delegated authority.

- The Levites were commissioned by the laying on of hands to represent the people before God as priests. Nu 8:10-11
- Joshua was commissioned by Moses by the laying on of hands to continue his leadership of God's people Nu 27:18-20
- "The Seven" including Stephen were commissioned by the apostles by the laying on of hands to do the administrative work of looking after widows on their behalf. Ac 6:5-6
- The church commissioned Paul and Barnabus by the laying on of hands to do the work of the Lord on their behalf. Ac 13:2-3

This is the aspect of the laying on of hand that the scriptures warn us "not to be hasty" in 1Ti 5:22. If we are commissioning someone to represent us we want to be sure they will not bring us into disrepute with their actions. (The same principle when you share something on Social Media! When something goes out from you - it represents you. Don't be too quick to share something that might not be accurate or honourable!)

Questions for discussion:

- In what ways is the laying on of hands foundational for us as believers?
- In which situations should we be more ready to lay on hands?
- What should our expectations be when we lay on hands? Why can we have this confidence?
- Do you have any testimonies of the things God has done through the laying on of your hands?