

## Back to Basics – Laying on of Hands Heb. 6:1-2

*Thesis: To help us better understand the purpose and meaning of the laying on of hands.*

### Introduction:

What was the purpose of the laying on of hands?

This is one of the most misunderstood topics that we find in the entire Bible.

There were three main functions to the laying on of hands in the New Testament.

### I. The laying on of hands was done to heal the sick.

#### A. Jesus often laid His hands on people to heal them.

1. Jesus raised the daughter of Jairus (Mk. 5:21-43).
  - a. Mk. 5:21-24 (Jairus begs Jesus to lay His hands on his daughter to heal her) - Now when Jesus had crossed over again by boat to the other side, a great multitude gathered to Him; and He was by the sea. {22} And behold, one of the rulers of the synagogue came, Jairus by name. And when he saw Him, he fell at His feet {23} and begged Him earnestly, saying, “My little daughter lies at the point of death. Come and lay Your hands on her, that she may be healed, and she will live.” {24} So Jesus went with him, and a great multitude followed Him and thronged Him.
  - b. Mk. 5:35-42 (Jesus touches the girl and raises her from the dead) – While He was still speaking, some came from the ruler of the synagogue’s house who said, “Your daughter is dead. Why trouble the Teacher any further?” {36} As soon as Jesus heard the word that was spoken, He said to the ruler of the synagogue, “Do not be afraid; only believe.” {37} And He permitted no one to follow Him except Peter, James, and John the brother of James. {38} Then He came to the house of the ruler of the synagogue, and saw a tumult and those who wept and wailed loudly. {39} When He came in, He said to them, “Why make this commotion and weep? The child is not dead, but sleeping.” {40} And they ridiculed Him. But when He had put them all outside, He took the father and the mother of the child, and those who were with Him, and entered where the child was lying. {41} Then He took the child by the hand, and said to her, “Talitha, cumi,” which is translated, “Little girl, I say to you, arise.” {42} Immediately the girl arose and walked, for she was twelve years of age. And they were overcome with great amazement.
2. Luke records that Jesus healed many by the laying on of hands.

- a. **Lk. 4:40** (Jesus heals a great multitude) - When the sun was setting, all those who had any that were sick with various diseases brought them to Him; and He laid His hands on every one of them and healed them.
- b. **Lk. 13:10-13** (Jesus heals a woman from her infirmity) - Now He was teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath. {11} And behold, there was a woman who had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bent over and could in no way raise herself up. {12} But when Jesus saw her, He called her to Him and said to her, “Woman, you are loosed from your infirmity.” {13} And He laid His hands on her, and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God.
3. **Mk. 6:5** (Jesus has just been rejected in Nazareth) - Now He could do no mighty work there, except that He laid His hands on a few sick people and healed them.

#### **B. The apostles also had the power to do this.**

1. Jesus told His apostles that they would be able to heal the sick.
  - a. **Mk. 16:18** - they will take up serpents; and if they drink anything deadly, it will by no means hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover.
  - b. This was a promise that Jesus made just before He ascended back into heaven.
2. Paul demonstrated this power.
  - a. Paul and the other prisoners have just been shipwrecked on the island of Malta (**Acts 27**).
  - b. **Acts 28:8** - And it happened that the father of Publius lay sick of a fever and dysentery. Paul went in to him and prayed, and he laid his hands on him and healed him.
  - c. While Paul and the other apostles healed many others, this passage records that “he laid his hands on him.”

## **II. The laying on of hands was done to pass on the miraculous gift of the Spirit.**

### **A. God initially gave this gift to the twelve apostles.**

1. Notice the promise.
  - a. **Lk. 24:49** - Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high.
  - b. **Acts 1:8** - But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.
2. Notice also the fulfillment of this promise.
  - a. **Acts 2:1-4** - Now when the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. {2} And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. {3} Then

there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them. {4} And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

**B. Only the apostles could pass this gift to others.**

1. Remember the example of Simon the sorcerer (**Acts 8:9-25**).
  - a. Philip had gone to Samaria to preach the word of God to them.
  - b. While preaching, he came across Simon the sorcerer; and Simon was converted (**8:13**).
  - c. It is then that the story gets interesting.
    - a. **Acts 8:14-19** - Now when the apostles who were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them, {15} who, when they had come down, prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit. {16} For as yet He had fallen upon none of them. They had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. {17} Then they laid hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit. {18} And when Simon saw that through the laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Spirit was given, he offered them money, {19} saying, "Give me this power also, that anyone on whom I lay hands may receive the Holy Spirit."
    - b. Notice especially that it was the apostles, not Philip, that laid their hands on the brethren to give them the Holy Spirit.
    - c. It is also important to note that this was the miraculous gift of the Spirit, not the gift that we receive at baptism.
2. Paul also gave others the miraculous gift of the Holy Spirit by the laying on of hands.
  - a. **Acts 19:6** - And when Paul had laid hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke with tongues and prophesied.
  - b. It was only an apostle that could give this miraculous gift of the Spirit to others.

**A. It is important to understand that these first two methods of the laying on of hands have been done away with.**

1. Both of them involved miraculous powers.
2. These miracles are no longer necessary.
  - a. Remember the purpose of miracles.
  - b. **Jn. 20:30-31** - And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; {31} but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.

- c. **Mk. 16:20** - And they went out and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them and confirming the word through the accompanying signs.
  - d. **I Cor. 13:8-10** (Paul speaking in direct context about miracles and the gifts of the Holy Spirit) - Love never fails. But whether there are prophecies, they will fail; whether there are tongues, they will cease; whether there is knowledge, it will vanish away. {9} For we know in part and we prophesy in part. {10} But when that which is perfect has come, then that which is in part will be done away.
3. Today, we have the written word to follow.
- a. **II Tim. 2:15** - Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.
  - b. **II Tim. 3:16-17** - All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, {17} that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

### III. The laying on of hands was done to encourage others in their work for God.

#### A. Jesus laid His hands on children to bless them.

- 1. **Mk. 10:13-16** - Then they brought young children to Him, that He might touch them; but the disciples rebuked those who brought them. {14} But when Jesus saw it, He was greatly displeased and said to them, "Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of God. {15} Assuredly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will by no means enter it." {16} And He took them up in His arms, put His hands on them, and blessed them.
- 2. It is apparent that this was not done to give a miraculous gift, but rather to give a blessing to them.

#### B. The apostles encouraged others by laying their hands on them.

- 1. **Acts 6:6** (After the seven men had been appointed for the work of taking care of the widows) - whom they set before the apostles; and when they had prayed, they laid hands on them.
- 2. **Acts 13:3** (Paul and Barnabas are set aside for the work of God) - Then, having fasted and prayed, and laid hands on them, they sent them away.
- 3. **I Tim. 4:14** (Paul encourages Timothy to continue in his work and reminds him of the encouragement that he had from the eldership) - Do not neglect the gift that is in you, which was given to you by prophecy with the laying on of the hands of the eldership.

#### C. While we may not physically "lay hands" on someone, we do continue to encourage others in their work for the Lord.

### Conclusion: