

The Grace of God



"For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, instructing us..." (Titus 2:11-12).

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FIRST PRINCIPLES: LAYING ON OF HANDS

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Continuing our study of "the basics of basics of the word of God" (Heb. 5:12-13) we now look at the "laying on of hands" (6:2). At first glance, one may wonder what place this has in the "first principles". After all, what place does "laying on of hands" have in our lives today? But if we take a look at it's role in the first century, we will quickly learn why this is among "the basics" of the gospel.

In the middle of the first century, disciples had access to the Septuagint, a Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament. Yet, at least initially, there was only limited access to the writings of apostles and prophets of the New Testament. They had no copy machines, no printing press and no quick way to ship copies great distances. Every letter had to be carefully written and copied by hand, and then delivered by hand. This does not mean that there were no copies made, but they took time to make and to spread.

This is where the "laying on of hands" demonstrates God's great wisdom. For, "through the laying on of the apostles hands the Holy Spirit was given" (Acts 8:18). What this means is that the apostles were authorized to give others spiritual gifts. There are no other passages that demonstrate anyone other than the apostles doing this.

The gifts that the Spirit gave include a range of things. These were: The word of wisdom, the word of knowledge, faith (in a miraculous sense), gifts of healings, powers, prophecy, discerning of spirits, other languages, and interpretation of other languages (1 Cor.,12:4-11). These gifts were not given just to heal all of mankind's diseases or to impress onlookers with fancy shows. These gifts were given for two specific purposes: (1) to reveal

God's word (John 14:26; 15:26; 16:13) and (2) to give clear proof that this new message was from God (Mark 16:20; Acts 14:3; Heb. 2:3-4).

With these miraculous gifts the apostles and prophets of the first century had direct access to God's will (1 Cor. 2:12-13). Thus, while the gospels, the book of Acts, and the epistles were being written (Eph. 3:3-4), shared, copied (Col. 4:16; Rev. 1:4) and spread abroad; the saints could fill in the pieces of the puzzle that they did not yet have in writing.

Paul even describes these revelations, prophecies and miraculously delivered pieces of knowledge as "parts" of the "whole" or "perfect" message of God (1 Cor. 13:9-10). And, it is in this same passage that Paul fully describes the process of revelation and its ultimate goal.

Paul speaks of knowing and prophesying "in part" (v. 9) and of the "perfect" that would come. If the parts are revelations of God's will, what is the whole? It will be made up of the same thing that the parts are, so it is the completed revelation of God. Hence, Paul says that the "parts" (prophecies and revelations of knowledge) would cease (v. 8) when the completed revelation was given.

Paul illustrates this point in several ways. He compares it to being a child who grows up to manhood. When this happens, the man "puts away childish things" (v. 11). Then, Paul compares this to looking in a mirror. Their mirrors were made of bronze which gave only a dark reflection, hence in Paul's day the "see in a mirror, darkly" (the partial revelations and prophecies), but then face to face (the completion of God's revelation) (v. 12). To relate Paul's point to our day, we can compare the "parts" and the "perfect" to a puzzle. You begin with the first piece, then the next, and so on. Eventually, when you have all the pieces in place and the puzzle is completed, you will not need any more parts. This is exactly what Paul is saying here.

Thus, the only question that remains is: "When was the revelation of God completed?" According to John 16:13, the Spirit of Truth would come to the apostles and guide them into "ALL the truth." Hence, it had to be in the lifetime of the apostles. I know that this is not a specific date, but it does set a limit on the miraculous work of the Spirit, which is in harmony with what Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 13. Beyond that, we must respect that there are some things we do not know every detail of

(Deut. 29:29). But, we can confidently say that we (as those of the first century) "have all things that pertain unto life and godliness" (2 Pet. 1:3). Everything we need to know about how to live pleasing to God has been revealed to us. Also, we may boldly say with Paul that "all scripture is inspired of God and profitable... that the man of God may be made complete, furnished completely unto every good work" (2 Tim. 3:16-17). After all, if "all truth" has not been revealed yet, then the Holy Spirit failed to give it all to the apostles and Jesus was wrong when we said it would be accomplished. Who will believe that? Only one who does not have their faith grounded properly in the sure promises of God.

Thus, the laying on of hands is very important and very much part of the "first principles" of God. Without it, the first century saints would have had a difficult time in knowing God's will as completely and easily as we can today.

So, the question is: "Do you place as much importance on knowing God's word as God does?" That is, after all, the whole point of the "laying on of hands".

Johanna Fletcher, Othena Kinnard, Wesley Geer, Mag Bumbalough, Thelma Cunningham (NHC 210), Mary Cox, Monie Petty, Dave Poteet (NHC 229), Robert & Betty England, Joe Smith, Mike Tenpenny, Thelma Klein, Nathan Hill, DeLeesa Price, Lydia Poe, Larry Bumbalough, Jake Hale, Joshua & Misty Poteet, Ed & Carolyn Williams, Kenley Streeval. Matthew Taylor (leukemia), Joyce Simmons Wagner.

THINGS TO REMEMBER

- **Radio Program** - Every Sun. 2pm, AM 1050 WSMT
- **Home Bible Study** - Sat. Oct. 13th & 27th.
- **Ladies Class** - 2nd & Last Sunday Each Month.
- **Business Meeting** - Sun. Sept. 30th.
- **GM** - Raymond Castillo, Oct.14-19, 2007.
- **GM** - Ron Daly, April 2008.
- **GM** - Lanny Smith, Oct.12-17, 2008.

We Invite You To All Our Services!

Sunday @ 9am, 10am & 6pm
Wednesday @ 7pm

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PEOPLE TO REMEMBER & PRAY FOR

2007 October						
SUNDAY-MORNING		10/7/07	10/14/07	10/21/07	10/28/07	
<i>Greeter</i>		Randy White	Ralph Sims	Ralph Sims	Jonathan Hickerson	
<i>Announcements</i>		Matt Eller	Michael Fletcher	Kevin Blankenship	Randy White	
<i>Reading</i>		Anthony Rece	Jack Stafford	Matt Eller	Micah Eller	
		Mark 6	Mark 7	Mark 8	Mark 9	
<i>Song Leader</i>		Sam Gardner	Kevin Blankenship	Chad Sims	Harold Frazier	
<i>Opening Prayer</i>		Michael Fletcher	Adam Featherston	Randy White	Kevin Blankenship	
<i>Lord's Supper Lead</i>		Mark Eller	Sam Gardner	Jonathan Hickerson	David Price	
<i>Lord's Supper Assist</i>		Ben Trute	Ben Trute	Jack Stafford	Jack Stafford	
		Chad Sims	Anthony Rece	Micah Eller	Anthony Rece	
		Micah Eller	Chad Sims	Ben Trute	Chad Sims	
<i>Closing Prayer</i>		Jack Stafford	Matt Eller	Anthony Rece	Ralph Sims	
SUNDAY-EVENING		10/7/07	10/14/07	10/21/07	10/28/07	
<i>Opening Prayer</i>		David Price	Adam Featherston	Sam Gardner	Mark Eller	
<i>Song Leader</i>		Kevin Blankenship	Mark Welte	Mark Eller		
<i>Closing Prayer</i>		Harold Frazier	Ralph Sims	Jerry Taylor	Adam Featherston	
<i>Lord's Supper Lead</i>		Jonathan Hickerson	David Price	Harold Frazier	Michael Fletcher	
<i>Speaker / Invitation</i>			Randy White		Mark Welte	
<i>Group</i>		1	2	3	4	
WEDNESDAY-EVENING		10/3/07	10/10/07	10/17/07	10/24/07	10/31/07
<i>Opening Prayer</i>	Mark Eller	Doug Hill	Michael Fletcher	David Price	Sam Gardner	
<i>Song Leader</i>	Doug Hill	Harold Frazier	David Price	Sam Gardner	Mark Welte	
<i>Closing Prayer</i>	Micah Eller	Jerry Taylor	Mark Welte	Jerry Taylor	Matt Eller	
<i>Invitation</i>	Mark Welte	Jonathan Hickerson	Adam Featherston	Doug Hill	Doug Hill	