

## Th122 Foundation Doctrines

### *Lesson Th122 – 18 Laying on of Hands: Imparting Authority*

The city was a very violent place. Criminals armed with weapons would rob, injure, and even kill the citizens of the city. But on this day the mayor of the city would do something to reduce the violent crime. Gathered before him were 50 young men in uniform. They had been training for six months to become police officers. They had been taught police procedures and how to deal with crime. Each one had been issued a firearm. These 50 policemen were about to wield great power in their city. They were only missing one thing, the authority to use that power. One by one the new policemen stood before the mayor. He reached out and shook their hands and congratulated them on the completion of their training. Then he issued a police badge to each one of them. This badge would be worn on their uniforms, so that everyone would know that they had the authority to act as policemen.

This concept of a leader imparting his authority to another person can be found throughout history and in cultures around the world. In the Bible, we find many examples of authority being granted or transferred.

Now Moses was the greatest prophet in the history of Israel. He was the one God chose to deliver all of the Jewish people, who were being held in Egypt as slaves. God performed many great miracles through Moses as he led over a million descendants of Abraham out of Egypt. They set out on a journey to the land that God had promised to Abraham.

It would be on Mount Sinai that God would give to the Jewish people the Ten Commandments and the rest of the law. But the Israelites were a rebellious people. In spite of the great miracles that they had witnessed, they were afraid to enter into the land that had been promised to them. Because of this, God pronounced a judgement upon them. Not a single adult of that generation would be allowed to enter into God's Promised Land except for Joshua and Caleb. These two men were the only ones in all of Israel who believed God and were not afraid.

So it was that for 40 years Moses led the Israelites in the wilderness. God provided food for them and led them to water. But they never settled in any one place. Instead they lived as nomads sleeping in tents. One by one the adults who had rejected entering into God's Promised Land died. It would be their children and grandchildren who would conquer the Promised Land. Moses was now 120 years old. Only Joshua and Caleb were left from the original generation that had been delivered from Egypt.

Then the Lord said to Moses, "Go up this mountain in the Abarim Range and see the land I have given the Israelites. After you have seen it, you too will be gathered to your people and die" (Deut 32:49-50).

Moses replied to the Lord, "May the Lord, the God who gives breath to all living things, appoint someone over this community to go out and come in before them, one who will lead them out and bring them in, so the LORD's people will not be like sheep without a shepherd."

So, the LORD said to Moses, “Take Joshua son of Nun, a man in whom is the spirit of leadership, and lay your hand on him. Have him stand before Eleazar the priest and the entire assembly and commission him in their presence. Give him some of your authority so the whole Israelite community will obey him. ... At his command, he and the entire community of the Israelites will go out, and at his command they will come in.”

Moses did as the LORD commanded him. He took Joshua and had him stand before Eleazar the priest and the whole assembly. Then he laid his hands on him and commissioned him, as the LORD instructed through Moses (Num 27:17-23).

This is a wonderful example of how God uses the laying on of hands as the method by which authority is transferred from one person to the next. It is important to recognize two Godly principles from this story. First, a person can only give authority that they have first received themselves. A person cannot lay hands on another and pronounce the granting of authority which they themselves do not have. The second principle that is extremely important is that God is the one who commanded Moses to lay hands on Joshua to impart authority to him. The authority never belonged to Moses. It was always God’s authority and thus Moses did not have the right to give it to just anyone he chose.

It is these very principles that direct us today in the transferring of authority through the laying on of hands. Remember, Jesus said, “All authority has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples” (Matt 28:18-19). Any authority that we possess comes from Jesus Christ. And it must be through the guidance of the Holy Spirit that we exercise this authority or impart it to someone he chooses.

This lesson is **important** because it explains God’s plan to pass his authority from one generation to the next or one people group to another.

The **main truth** of this story is that Jesus Christ has all authority, which he imparts to believers to go and make disciples. As we obey him, the Holy Spirit will lead us to impart that authority to others.

Let us **review** what this lesson has taught:

1. How can we impart authority to another? [Pause 5 seconds]
  - A. If you said that we can lay hands on them and grant authority to them, then you are correct.
2. To whom did Moses transfer his authority? [Pause 5 seconds]
  - A. If you said that Moses laid hands on Joshua, you answered correctly.
3. From whom does all authority flow? [Pause 5 seconds]
  - A. If you said that Jesus Christ has been given all authority, then you are correct.

Your **assignment** for this lesson is to listen to this story as many times as is necessary to learn it. Then, discuss with your mentor the concept of spiritual authority within the body of Christ—his Church.