

Acts 8:17

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost.

Analysis

The apostles laid hands on the Samaritans, and 'they received the Holy Ghost.' This apostolic act confirmed the Samaritan believers as full members of Christ's church. The laying on of hands symbolized apostolic authorization and blessing. Reformed theology recognizes this as a transitional event establishing that salvation comes to all peoples equally - neither Jews nor Samaritans have preference. The visible reception of the Spirit (evidently manifested outwardly, given Simon's observation in v.18) authenticated the Samaritan mission.

Historical Context

Laying on of hands was used in the Old Testament for blessing (Genesis 48:14) and for conferring office (Numbers 27:18). In the apostolic church, it accompanied gifts of the Spirit, healing, and ordination, signifying identification and authorization.

Related Passages

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. What is the purpose of laying on of hands in Scripture?
2. How did the visible reception of the Spirit confirm the Samaritan believers' inclusion?
3. What does this teach about the unity of all believers regardless of ethnic background?

Interlinear Text

τότε ἐπετίθουν τὰς χεῖρας ἐπ' αὐτούς καὶ ἐλάμβανον
Then laid they their hands on them and they received
G5119 G2007 G3588 G5495 G1909 G846 G2532 G2983

πνεῦμα ἄγιον
Ghost the Holy
G4151 G40

Additional Cross-References

Acts 19:6 (Holy): And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied.

Acts 6:6 (Parallel theme): Whom they set before the apostles: and when they had prayed, they laid their hands on them.

2 Timothy 1:6 (Parallel theme): Wherefore I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands.

Acts 8:18 (Holy): And when Simon saw that through laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money.

Acts 2:4 (Holy): And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

Hebrews 6:2 (Parallel theme): Of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment.

Acts 9:17 (Holy): And Ananias went his way, and entered into the house; and putting his hands on him said, Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost.

Romans 1:11 (Spirit): For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established;

Numbers 27:18 (Spirit): 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;

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