

The Power of the Hand: χεῖρ in the Acts of the Apostles

1. χεῖρ - ΠΡΑΞΕΙΣ ΑΠΟΣΤΟΛΩΝ

χεῖρ, ἡ	Occurrences	
(ἡ) χεῖρ – nom sing	4:28; 7:50; 11:21	4
(τῆς) χειρὸς - gen sing	2:23; 3:7; 7:25 ; 11:30; 12:11; 15:23; 23:19; 28:3, 4	9
(τῆ) χειρὶ - dat sing	7:35; 12:17; 13:16; 21:40	3
(τῆν) χεῖρα – acc sing	4:30; 9:41; 19:33; 26:1	4
(αἱ) χεῖρες – nom pl	20:34	1
(τῶν) χειρῶν – gen pl	5:12; 7:41; 8:18; 12:7; 14:3; 17:25; 19:11, 26; 24:7*	9
(τὰς) χεῖρας – acc pl	4:3; 5:18; 6:6; 8:17, 19; 9:12, 17; 12:1; 13:3; 19:6; 21:11 (2), 27; 28:8, 17	15

2. χεῖρ - compound words

	Liddell-Scott definition	Acts	New Testament occurrences
χειραγωγέω	lead by the hand	9:8; 22:11	Only occurrences in NT
χειραγωγός	leading, leader	13:11	Only occurrence in NT
χειροποίητος	made by hand	7:48; 17:24	Mark 14:58; Ephesians 2:11; Hebrews 9:11, 24
χειροτονέω	vote/elect by show of hands	14:23	2 Corinthians 8:19
αὐτόχειρ	with one's own hand	27:19	Only occurrence in NT
διαχειρίζω/ (-ομαι)	lay hands on, slay (<i>middle</i>)	5:30; 26:21	Only occurrences in NT
ἐπιχειρέω	put one's hand to, attempt	9:29; 19:13	Luke 1:1
προχειρίζω (-ομαι)	choose, select (<i>middle</i>)	3:20; 22:14; 26:16	Only occurrences in NT
προχειροτονέω	choose, elect before	10:41	Only occurrence in NT

3. χείρ - ΠΡΑΞΕΙΣ ΑΠΟΣΤΟΛΩΝ

Book	Occurrences (χείρ + compounds)	Words in book	Percentage
Acts	45 +15 = 60	18, 450	.244/.325%
Luke	25 +1 = 26	19,482	.133%
Matthew	23 +0 = 23	18, 346	.125%
Mark	22 + 1 = 23	11, 304	.203%
John	13 + 0 = 13	15, 635	.083%
other NT overall	40 + 4 = 44	50,491	.087%
Revelation	17	9,851	.173%
Philemon	1	355	.282%

4. χείρ - Healing

Verse	χείρ	form	Verbs/action/result	Owner	Recipient
3:7	τῆς δεξιᾶς χειρὸς	genitive singular	πιάζω/πιέζω (squeeze) + unusual δεξιός	Peter	lame man/ alms at temple
9:12, 17	τὰς χεῖρας	accusative plural	ἐπιτίθημι (repetition of same construction)	Ananias	Saul/ blindness
9:41	χεῖρα	accusative singular	δίδωμι + (dat αὐτῇ) ἀνίστημι	Peter	Tabitha
28:8	τὰς χεῖρας	accusative plural	ἐπιτίθημι + (dat αὐτῷ) + προσεύχομαι (pray) + ἰάομαι (cure) + (acc αὐτόν)	Paul	Father of Publius

5. χείρ - Violence

Verse	χείρ	Form	Verbs/result	Owner(s)	Recipient(s)
4:3	τὰς χειρᾶς	accusative plural	ἐπιβάλλω (lay hands on, seize) + dat (αὐτοῖς)	chief priests, officer/custody of the temple in Jerusalem, Sadducees	Peter and John
5:18	τὰς χειρᾶς	accusative plural	ἐπιβάλλω (+ἐπὶ τοὺς ἀποστόλους)	chief priest (singular), Sadducees (those who were with him)	apostles
12:1	τὰς χειρᾶς	accusative plural	ἐπιβάλλω + κακῶω (persecute, mistreat)	Herod	some of the ἐκκλησία (assembly)
21:27	τὰς χειρᾶς	accusative plural	ἐπιβάλλω (+ ἐπ' αὐτὸν)	Jews from Asia	Paul
21:11	τὰς χειρᾶς	accusative plural	δέω (to bind) + τοὺς πόδας (feet)	Agabus	Paul (demonstration of future event)
	εἰς + χειρᾶς	accusative plural	παραδίδωμι (to "hand" over or surrender)	Agabus (Jews of Jerusalem)	Paul (demonstration)
28:17	εἰς + τὰς χειρᾶς	accusative plural	παραδίδωμι	Romans	Paul (delivered into)
12:11	ἐκ + χειρὸς	genitive singular	ἐξαίρω (set free, deliver) (+acc με)	Herod	Peter– rescued from Herod's hand
2:23	διὰ + χειρὸς	genitive singular	προσπῆγνυμι (crucify/fix on) + ἀναιρέω (kill)	ἀνόμων (lawless men)	Jesus
5:30	διαχειρίσασθε	aor ind mid 2 nd plural	διαχειρίζω (middle – lay hands on, slay)	you (replying to chief priest)	Jesus
9:29	ἐπεχείρουν	imp ind act 3 rd plural	ἐπιχειρέω (put one's hand to, try) + ἀναιρέω (kill)	Hellenists (Jerusalem)	Paul
26:21	διαχειρίσασθαι	aor inf mid	διαχειρίζω + πειράω (attempt, try)	Jews (Ἰουδαῖοι)	Paul
28:3,4	τῆς χειρὸς	genitive singular	καθάπτω (fasten)	ἔχιδνα (viper)	Paul
	ἐκ + τῆς χειρὸς	genitive singular	κρεμάννυμι (hang, suspend)	τὸ θηρίον (wild, poisonous animal)	Paul

6. χείρ - Blessing/Transference

Verse	χείρ	Form	Verbs/result	Owner(s)	Recipient(s)
6.6	τὰς χεῖρας	acc plural	ἐπιτίθημι + dat (αὐτοῖς) + προσεύχομαι (pray)	apostles	The Seven (Stephen, Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, Nicolaus)
13.3	τὰς χεῖρας	acc plural	ἐπιτίθημι + dat (αὐτοῖς) + ἀπολύω (release, discharge) + νηστεύω (fast) + προσεύχομαι (pray)	prophets and teachers (Antioch)	Barnabas and Saul (<i>Holy Spirit</i> “ <i>separate them</i> ”)
19.6	χεῖρας	acc plural	ἐπιτίθημι + dat (αὐτοῖς) ἔρχομαι + ἐπ’ (+ acc αὐτούς) (<i>Holy Spirit</i>) + λαλέω γλώσσαις (speak in tongues) + προφητεύω (interpret under influence of Holy Spirit)	Paul	12 men/disciples (Ephesus)
8:17 -19	τὰς χεῖρας	acc plural	ἐπιτίθημι + ἐπ’ + acc (αὐτούς) + λάμβανω (receive) πνεῦμα ἅγιον (Holy Spirit)	Peter and John	Samaria (received the word of God)
	τῶν χειρῶν	gen plural (ὅτι/διὰ)	ἐπιτίθημι + δίδωμι (give) τὸ πνεῦμα (the spirit)	Peter and John (apostles)	Simon (seeing this)
	τὰς χεῖρας		ἐπιτίθημι + λάμβανω (receive) πνεῦμα ἅγιον (Holy Spirit)	Simon (wanting this ability)	whomever he lays hands on receive the Holy Spirit

7. χείρ - Power

Verse	χείρ	Form	Verbs/result	Owner(s)	Recipient(s)
5.12	Διὰ + τῶν χειρῶν	gen plural	γίγνομαι (happen) + σημεῖα καὶ τέρατα πολλὰ (many signs and wonders)	apostles	the people assembled (λαός)
11.30	διὰ + χειρὸς	gen sing	ποιέω (make, do) + ἀποστέλλω (send off)	Barnabas and Saul	elders (τοὺς πρεσβυτέρους)
14.3	διὰ + τῶν χειρῶν	gen plural	δίδωμι [<i>Lord</i> (κύριος)] γίγνομαι (happen) + σημεῖα καὶ τέρατα (signs and wonders)	Paul and Barnabas	Iconium

15.23	διὰ + χειρὸς	gen sing	γράφω παρακαλέω (encourage)	apostles and elders?	Antioch Gentiles – sending Judas and Silas with Paul and Barnabas
20.34	αἱ χεῖρες αὐτοῦ	nom plural	ὑπηρετέω (serve) + dat (ταῖς χρείαις μου καὶ τοῖς οὖσι μετ' ἐμοῦ) (the needs of mine and of those with me)	Paul	Paul (and others)
27.19	αὐτόχειρες	nom plural	ρίπτω (throw, hurl)	ship crew	the tackle of the ship τὴν σκευὴν τοῦ πλοίου

8. χείρ - Chosen/appointed

Verse	χείρ	Form	Verbs/result	Owner(s)	Recipient(s)
10.41	τοῖς προκεχειρότονημένοις	perf m/p part masc pl	προχειροτονέω (choose before)	God	witnesses chosen before /apostles
14.23	χειροτονήσαντες	aor act part masc pl	χειροτονέω (choose, elect)	Paul and Barnabas ("apostles")	elders/ assemblies
22.14	προχειρίσατό	aor ind mid 3 rd sing	προχειρίζω (-ομαι) (choose, select)	God of our fathers	Saul

9. χείρ - Motion – speak, silence

Verse	χείρ	Form	κατασεῖω	Owner(s)
12.17	τῇ χειρὶ	dat sing	κατασεΐσας	Peter
13.16	τῇ χειρὶ	dat sing	κατασεΐσας	Paul
19.33	τὴν χεῖρα	acc sing	κατασεΐσας	Alexander
21.40	τῇ χειρὶ	dat sing	κατέσεισε	Paul
26.1	τὴν χεῖρα	acc sing	ἐκτείνω – to stretch	Paul
24.10	n/a		νεύω – nod, beckon	Paul

10. ἡ χεὶρ - The hand of God vs. hands of men

Verse				
4.28	ποιῆσαι ὅσα ἡ χεὶρ σου καὶ ἡ βουλή προώρισεν γενέσθαι.	do	hand of God	
7.48	ἀλλ' οὐχ ὁ ὕψιστος ἐν χειροποιήτοις κατοικεῖ	live	hands of men	
7.50	οὐχὶ ἡ χεὶρ μου ἐποίησεν ταῦτα πάντα;	make	hand of God	
11.21	ἦν χεὶρ Κυρίου μετ' αὐτῶν,	blessing	hand of the Lord	with them
13.11	ἰδοὺ χεὶρ Κυρίου ἐπὶ σέ	curse	hand of the Lord	against you

11. Signs and Wonders καὶ σημεῖα καὶ τέρατα

2.19	τέρατα ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ” (wonders in the sky) σημεῖα “ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς” (signs on the earth)		God	
2.22	καὶ τέρασι καὶ σημείοις		Jesus of Nazareth	
2.43	πολλὰ δὲ τέρατα καὶ σημεῖα		through the apostles	
4.30	καὶ σημεῖα καὶ τέρατα		through name of Jesus	
5.12	σημεῖα καὶ τέρατα πολλὰ		by hands of the apostles	
6.8	τέρατα καὶ σημεῖα μεγάλα		Stephen (no hands)	
7.36	τέρατα καὶ σημεῖα		Moses (in Egypt)	
14.3	σημεῖα καὶ τέρατα		by hands of Paul and Barnabas	
15.12	σημεῖα καὶ τέρατα		God had done through Barnabas and Paul	

12. χεὶρ – repeated/clustered

Passages	Contexts	Occurrences
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7.25-56	Stephen – Moses/God in speech to high priest	5 (+ 1 δεξιός)
8.17-19	Simon (magus) seeing Peter and John lay hands/Holy Spirit	3 – tight repetition of same construction
9.8-41	blinding of Saul (Ananias), seizing of Saul, Peter healing Tabitha	3 + 2 (compounds)

13. Translations

English translations	Hand for χεῖρ	χεῖρ – compounds
King James Version	44 out of 45 (15:23)	7 out of 15 <i>7:48, 9:8, 13:11, 17:24, 22:11; 23:19, 27:19</i>
Revised Standard Version	41 out of 45	4 out of 15 <i>7:48; 13:11; 22:11; 27:19</i>
English Standard Version	38 out of 45	5 out of 15 <i>7:48; 9:8; 13:11; 22:11; 27:19</i>
New International Version	27 out of 45	7 out of 15
New Living Translation	22 out of 45	5 out of 15 <i>7:48, 9:8, 13:11 handmade (19:26), 22:11</i>

Top verses	Where most/all translations using “hand” for χεῖρ
3.7	Peter taking lame man at temple by the right hand and raising him up
6.6	the apostles, who prayed and laid their hands on them [the Seven chosen to serve the growing community]
8.17-19	Peter and Simon (magus) – would pay money to lay hands on others to receive the Holy Spirit (repetition 3x)
9.8,12, 17	Ananias– heals Saul’s blindness, Saul needed to be led by hand
13.3	Barnabas and Saul anointed/sent to work of Holy Spirit
19.6	Paul transferring Holy Spirit laying hands on twelve disciples in Ephesus
21.11A	Agabus binding his hands/feet in demonstration for Paul
28.3,4, 8	Paul and the viper as well as healing of Publius’ father

Verses mostly “missed”	χείρ or χεῖρ-compound	Translations using “hand”
3.20	προχειροτονέω – Jesus	CEB - handpicked
5.30	διαχειρίζω/(-ομαι) - Jesus	none
9.29	ἐπιχειρέω – Paul	none
11.30	ἀποστείλαντες...διὰ χειρὸς - Barnabas and Saul	ESV, KJV, NKJV – others “send”
15:23	γράψαντες διὰ χειρὸς αὐτῶν – apostles/elders	Darby – others “wrote, sent, carried”
	<i>wrists, power, handed over</i>	

τότε ἐπέτιθεσαν τὰς **χεῖρας** ἐπ’ αὐτούς, καὶ ἐλάβανον πνεῦμα ἅγιον.
 Ἴδων δὲ ὁ Σίμων ὅτι διὰ τῆς ἐπιθέσεως τῶν **χειρῶν** τῶν ἀποστόλων δίδοται τὸ πνεῦμα,
 προσήνεγκεν αὐτοῖς χρήματα λέγων δότε κάμοι τὴν ἐξουσίαν ταύτην ἵνα ᾧ ἔάν ἐπιθῶ
 τὰς **χεῖρας** λαμβάνη πνεῦμα ἅγιον

ΠΡΑΞΕΙΣ ΑΠΟΣΤΟΛΩΝ 8:17-19
 (Nestle-Aland)

Then Peter and John laid their **hands** on them, and they received the Holy Spirit.
 Now when Simon saw that the Spirit was given through the laying on of the apostles’ **hands**, he offered them
 money, saying, “Give me also this power so that anyone on whom I lay my **hands** may receive the Holy Spirit.
 Acts 8:17-19
 (Oxford Annotated NRSV)

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