

According to "Nahj al-Balagha" sermon 92, does commander of the faithful believe that caliph is selected by people or almighty god?

وَلَعَلِّي أَسْمَعُكُمْ وَأَطُوعُكُمْ لِمَنْ وَلَّيْتُمُوهُ أَمْرَكُمْ

Sermon 92

Description:

One of doubts that Wahhabis discuss a lot is that if caliphate and imamate were a divine task and imam and caliph are appointed by god, so why didn't commander of the faithful [a.s] accept it after "Uthman" died? People insisted and he said:

دَعُونِي وَالتَّمَسُوا غَيْرِي ... وَأَنَا لَكُمْ وَزَيْرًا خَيْرًا لَكُمْ مِنِّي أَمِيرًا وَأَنْ تَرَكْتُمُونِي فَأَنَا كَأَحَدِكُمْ وَأَسْمَعُكُمْ وَأَطُوعُكُمْ

Leave me and go to another person. If I be your minister and consultant, it'll be better for you than being your ruler and imam. If you leave me, like you, I'll hear from you and obey.

"Nahj al-Balagha" from "Subhi Slih" – vol. 1, p 136

Original sermon:

At first we need to mention to original sermon:

دَعُونِي وَالتَّمَسُوا غَيْرِي فَإِنَّا مُسْتَعْبِلُونَ أَمْرًا لَهُ وَجُوهٌ وَأَلْوَانٌ لَا تَقُومُ لَهُ الْقُلُوبُ وَلَا تَنْبُتُ عَلَيْهِ الْعُقُوبُ وَإِنَّ الْأَفَاقَ قَدْ أَغَامَتْ وَالْمَحَجَّةَ قَدْ تَنَكَّرَتْ. وَعَلِّمُوا أَنِّي إِنْ أَحْبَبْتُمْ رَكِبْتُ بِكُمْ مَا أَعْلَمُ وَلَمْ أُضِغْ إِلَيَّ قَوْلِ الْقَائِلِ وَعَنْبِ الْعَائِبِ وَإِنْ تَرَكْتُمُونِي فَأَنَا كَأَحَدِكُمْ وَلَعَلِّي أَسْمَعُكُمْ وَأَطُوعُكُمْ لِمَنْ وَلَّيْتُمُوهُ أَمْرَكُمْ وَأَنَا لَكُمْ وَزَيْرًا خَيْرًا لَكُمْ مِنِّي أَمِيرًا.

Leave me and go to another person that we're facing a work that has different colors. Indeed, cloud of sedition has taken everywhere and right path has remained unknown.

Know that if I accept your request, I'll behave you as I want and won't listen to those who blame and others. And if you leave me, I'll be one of you and amongst those whom you leave affairs to them, I'm more obedient. If I be your minister, it'll be better than being your ruler.

"Nahj al-Balagha" from "Subhi Salih" – vol. 1, p 136

Reviewing:

To respond this doubt, several important points must be noticed:

Appointing imam is in hand of god and establishing government depends on people's will.

We must pay attention that matter of imamate is different than ruling; because imamate is a divine position but ruling is one of the principles of imamate. So, anyone who is appointed to this supreme position by god, is imam, whether people want it or not, people's will has no role in appointing imam, the same goes for appointing Prophet.

But as for this matter that hadrat "Ali" [a.s] didn't want to swear allegiance, it's not in contradictory with the right of his imamate, because swearing allegiance with people {ruling} needs people to be ready for it. But appointed imamate by almighty god doesn't need people's readiness and is like prophecy.

Appointing caliph and imam in holy Quran:

In holy Quran, almighty god has ascribed selecting caliph and imam to himself and says about appointing his Prophet and caliph on the earth:

اللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ حَيْثُ يَجْعَلُ رِسَالَتَهُ

But Allah knows best where to place His Message.

Surah al-An'am – verse 124

And god also says about appointing imam:

وَإِذْ قَالَ رَبُّكَ لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ إِنِّي جَاعِلٌ فِي الْأَرْضِ خَلِيفَةً.

When your Lord said to the angels: 'I am placing on the earth a caliph.

Surah Al-Baghara – verse 30

وَجَعَلْنَاهُمْ أئِمَّةً يَهْتَدُونَ بِأَمْرِنَا.

And appointed them leaders to guide by our Command.

Surah Al-Anbiya – verse 73

وَنُرِيدُ أَنْ نَمُنَّ عَلَى الَّذِينَ اسْتُضِعُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَنَجْعَلَهُمْ أَئِمَّةً وَنَجْعَلَهُمُ الْوَارِثِينَ.

But we wanted to be gracious to those abased in the land, and to make them leaders and inheritors,

Surah Al-Qasas – verse 5

Story of hadrat “Adam” [a.s] and hadrat “David” [a.s]:

Reasons – including Quran verses and narratives - that show imam and caliph are appointed, are a lot and we say them in brief:

Almighty god says in this regard:

وَإِذْ قَالَ رَبُّكَ لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ إِنِّي جَاعِلٌ فِي الْأَرْضِ خَلِيفَةً.

When your Lord said to the angels: 'I am placing on the earth a caliph,

And in another holy verse god says:

يَا دَاوُدُ إِنَّا جَعَلْنَاكَ خَلِيفَةً فِي الْأَرْضِ فَاحْكُم بَيْنَ النَّاسِ بِالْحَقِّ وَلَا تَتَّبِعِ الْهَوَى.

(We said): 'David, We have made you a caliph in the earth. Judge with justice among people and do not yield to your own preference.

Holy verse of (إِنِّي جَاعِلٌ فِي الْأَرْضِ خَلِيفَةً) is the reason showing that imam and caliph are appointed:

“Abu Abdullah Qurtubi”, one of Sunni well-known Quran interpreters says about Surah al-Baqara, verse 30:

هذه الآية أصل في نصب إمام وخليفة يسمع له ويطاع لتجتمع به الكلمة وتنفذ به أحكام الخليفة ولا خلاف في وجوب ذلك بين الأمة ولا بين الأئمة. ...

This verse is the origin in appointing imam and caliph whose word is heard and obeyed until unity is made and caliph's orders are authorized and there is consensus amongst Islamic nation and Islam elders that imamate is compulsory.

"Al-Qurtubi" – al-Jami' li Ahkam – verse 1, p 264

And then he says these Quran verses showing that appointing imam and caliph is compulsory:

ودليلنا قول الله تعالى : «إِنِّي جَاعِلٌ فِي الْأَرْضِ خَلِيفَةً» وقوله تعالى : «وَعَدَ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مِنْكُمْ وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ لَيَسْتَخْلِفَنَّهُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ» أي يجعل منهم خلفاء إلي غير ذلك من الآي.

Then "Qurtubi" says imamate is one the pillars of religion:

فدل علي وجوبها وأنها ركن من أركان الدين الذي به قوام المسلمين.

Imamate is one of the pillars of religion that Muslims' survival depends on it.

"A-Qurtubi" – al-Jami' li Ahkam al-Quran – vol.1, p 265

And almighty god says about prophecy of "Abraham":

وَلَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا نُوحًا وَإِبْرَاهِيمَ وَجَعَلْنَا فِي ذُرِّيَّتِهِمَا النُّبُوءَ وَالْكِتَابَ.

We sent forth Noah and Abraham, and appointed the Prophethood and the Book to be given to their descendants.

Surah Al-Hadid – verse, 26

And he almighty god also says about imamate position of hadrat "Abraham" [a.s]:

إِنِّي جَاعِلُكَ لِلنَّاسِ إِمَامًا قَالَ وَ مِنْ ذُرِّيَّتِي قَالَ لَا يَنَالُ عَهْدِي الظَّالِمِينَ.

'I have appointed you as a leader for the nation. (Abraham) asked: 'And of my descendants? My covenant, ' said He, 'the harm doers shall not receive it.

Surah al-Baqara – verse 124

Hadrat "Moses" wants god to appoint the successor after him:

وَاجْعَلْ لِي وَزِيرًا مِنْ أَهْلِي.

Appoint for me a minister from my family.

Surah al-Taha – verse 29

Responding to praying of hadrat "Moses" [a.s], almighty god says:

قَالَ قَدْ أُوتِيتَ سُؤْلَكَ يَا مُوسَى.

He replied: 'Moses, your request is granted.

Sura Al-Taha – verse 36

God says about prophets of children of Israel:

لَقَدْ أَخَذْنَا مِيثَاقَ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ وَارْسَلْنَا إِلَيْهِمْ رُسُلًا.

We took a covenant with the Children of Israel and sent forth Messengers to them.

Surah al-Maeda – verse 70

In all these verses god has ascribed selecting caliph and imam to himself as he's ascribed selecting and sending Prophets to himself.

Appointing caliph in Prophet's [PBUH] sunnah:

In the sunnah of messenger of Allah [PBUH] selecting caliph and imam have been ascribed to almighty god.

Appointing caliph is in hands of god:

Sunni big scholars such as: "Ibn Hisham", "Ibn Kathir", "Ibn Habban" and others have quoted that when messenger of Allah [PBUH] was inviting Arab tribes toward Islam, some of big figures of tribes like: "Bani Amir ibn Sa'sa'ah" said to him: can we select your successor if we help you?

أَيكون لنا الأمر من بعدك؟

Will we be in charge of governing after you?

Messenger of Allah [PBUH] said: appointing caliph is not in my hand; but it's in hand of god and anyone that he wants, will be appointed as caliph.

Some of sentences of messenger of Allah [PBUH] in this regard are as follow:

1. الأمر إلي الله يضعه حيث يشاء

عن الزهري أنه أتى بني عامر بن صعصعة فدعاهم إلي الله عز وجل وعرض عليهم نفسه فقال رجل منهم يقال له بيحرة بن فراس قال ابن هشام فراس بن عبدالله بن سلمة الخير بن قشير بن كعب ابن ربيعة بن عامر بن صعصعة:

والله لو أنني أخذت هذا الفتى من قريش لأكلت به العرب ثم قال أرأيت إن نحن بايعناك علي أمرك ثم أظهرك الله علي من خالفك أيكون لنا الأمر من بعدك. قال: الأمر إلي الله يضعه حيث يشاء.

"Zahri" has been quoted that messenger of Allah [PBUH] came to "Bani Amir Sa'sa'ah" tribe and invited them toward almighty god; a man from that tribe who was called "Beiharah ibn Faras" ... said: if we swear allegiance with you and god make you to win over your opponents, will we get the reign after you? Messenger of Allah [PBUH] said: the matter of caliphate is in hand of god and places it where he wants...

"Ibn Hisham" – Al-Sirah al-Nabawiyah – vol. 2, p 272 // "Al-Tabari" – Tarikh al-Umam wa al-Moluok – vol. 2, p 84 /// "Ibn Habban" – al-Thuqat – vol. 1, p 89 /// "Ibn Athir" – The complete history – vol. 1, p 609 /// "Ibn Kathir Damascene" – al-Bidayah wa al-Nihayah – vol. 3, p 139 /// "Al-Halabi" – al-Sirat al-Halabiyah – vol. 2, p 154

2. الملك لله يجعله حيث يشاء

And many Sunni elders have quoted this narrative from "Ibn Abbas":

عن ابن عباس، عن العباس قال: قال لي رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم: «لا أري لي عندك ولا عند أخيك منعة، فهل أنت مخرجي إلي السوق غدا حتي نقر في منازل قبائل الناس» وكانت مجمع العرب. قال: فقلت: هذه كندة ولفها، وهي أفضل من يحج البيت من اليمن، وهذه منازل بكر بن وائل، وهذه منازل بني عامر بن صعصعة، فاختر لنفسك. قال: فبدأ بكندة فاتاهم فقال: ممن القوم ؟ قالوا: من أهل اليمن. قال: من أي اليمن ؟ قالوا: من كندة قال: من أي كندة ؟ قالوا: من بني عمرو بن معاوية.

قال: فهل لكم إلي خير ؟ قالوا: وما هو ؟ قال: " تشهدون أن لا إله إلا الله وتقيمون الصلاة وتؤمنون بما جاء من عند الله"

قال عبدالله بن الاجلح: وحدثني أبي عن أشياخ قومه، أن كندة قالت له: إن ظفرت تجعل لنا الملك من بعدك ؟ فقال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم: « إن الملك لله يجعله حيث يشاء». فقالوا: لا حاجة لنا فيما جئنا به.

"Ibn Abbas" quotes from his father "Abbas" who said: messenger of Allah [PBUH] told me: Do you come with me to the market tomorrow to settle in a place tribes come there which is the site of Arab gathering? "Abbas" said: I said to messenger of Allah [PBUH]: "Kandeh" tribe and "Manazil Bakr" and "Manazil Amir ibn Sa'sa'ah" are there, choose each one of them that you want, "Abbas" said: messenger of Allah [PBUH] began from "Kandah" tribe, went to them and said: who are you? They said: we're from "Yemen"? Prophet said: which tribe? They said: from "Bani Amr ibn Muawiyah". Messenger of Allah [PBUH] said: Do you want Good? They said: what's that? He said: testify that there is no god but Allah and establish prayer and believe in what has come from god, "Abdullah ibn Ajlah" said: my father quoted from elders of his tribe that "Kandeh" tribe said to messenger of Allah [PBUH]: if you can win, will you place reign for us? Prophet Muhammad [PBUH] said: reign is only for god and places it where he wants.

"Ibn Kathir" – al-Sirah al-Nabawiyah – vol. 2, p 189, "Ibn Kathir", "Al-Bidayah wa al-Nihaya – vol.3, p 1

3. إنما ذلك إلي الله عز وجل يجعله حيث يشاء

And many of Sunni elders have quoted this story about "Amir ibn Tufayl" and "Arbad ibn Rabi'ah" as well that they had such request and messenger of Allah [PBUH] gave the same response:

عن ابن عباس رضي الله عنهما قال أقبل عامر بن الطفيل وأربد بن ربيعة وهما عامريان يريدان رسول الله وهو جالس في المسجد في نفر من أصحابه فدخلا المسجد فاستشرف الناس لجمال عامر وكان أعور وكان من أجل الناس فقال رجل يا رسول الله هذا عامر بن الطفيل قد أقبل نحوك فقال: دعه فإن يرد الله به خيرا بهذه فأقبل حتى قام عليه فقال يا محمد مالي إن أسلمت قال لك ما للمسلمين وعليك ما علي المسلمين قال تجعل لي الأمر بعدك قال ليس ذلك إلي إنما ذلك إلي الله عز وجل يجعله حيث يشاء.

"Ibn Abbas" has been quoted: "Amir ibn Tufayl" and "Arbad ibn Rabi'ah" that both of them were from "Bani Amir" tribe went to messenger of Allah [PBUH] when he was sitting in mosque, they went to mosque, a man said: O messenger of Allah! "Amir ibn Tufayl" is here, Prophet said: leave him, if god wants to give news by him, it'll come by his coming. "Amir ibn Tufayl" stood in front of Prophet and said: O "Muhammad" [PBUH]! What's in convert to Islam for me? Messenger of Allah [PBUH] said: what is harmful and profitable for Muslims will be harmful and profitable for you as well. "Amir" said: I want the caliphate after you. Prophet Muhammad said: this matter isn't in my hand, almighty god places his caliphate where he wants.

"Al-Baghwi" – Tafsir al-Baghwi – vol. 3, p 10 /// "Al-Ta'labi" – Kashf al-Bayan, vol. 5, p 276 /// "Al-Qurtubi" – al-Jami' li Ahkam al-Quran – vol. 9, p 297 /// "Al-Nuwayri" – Nihayat al-Arb fi funoun al-Adab – vol. 3, p 37 /// "Al-Maydani, Abu Muhammad al-Hanafi" – Takhrij al-Ahadith – vol. 2, p 189 /// "Al-Halabi" – al-Sirah al-Halabiyah – vol. 3, p 246

Studying sermon:

Is rejecting caliphate by commander of the faithful Ali [a.s] not kind of evading responsibility?

Rejecting caliphate by hadrat "Ali" [a.s] in the beginning of caliphate:

One of the most fundamental doubts that Wahhabis make about this sermon is that why imam "Ali" [a.s] didn't accept caliphate in the beginning of his apparent caliphate? While you say that imam is appointed and rejecting imamate, is against god's order.

Response:

This saying of imam "Ali" [a.s] is allusion to those who went to "Abu-Bakr", "Umar" and "Uthman" before coming to him!

In fact, commander of the faithful Ali [a.s] is saying: You, who went to others before me, now go to others as well. How come that it's so far been possible that Islamic caliphate exists and religion settles in its place and you didn't come to me; but now you've come to me and ask me to be caliph!

If the creator of this doubt studied incorrect developments during the caliphate of three caliphs, he'd never make this doubt and would know that rejecting caliphate on that day doesn't mean that imamate of hadrat "Ali ibn abi Talib" wasn't ordered by god, but it's because status of Islamic ruling of Prophet Muhammad era had totally changed and people weren't ready to accept his ruling method and justice, as commander of the faithful [a.s] says in rest of this sermon:

فانا مستقبلون امراً له وجوه و ألوان.

Hadrat "Ali" [a.s] said this sentence when Islamic society was facing crisis; changes and developments made in Uthman era caused serious problems for nation; that's why imam "Ali" [a.s] said:

We're facing events that have various faces... know that if I accept your requests, I'll behave you as I want and won't listen to what others say.

Imam "Ali" [a.s] knew very well that during caliphs' caliphate, third caliph in particular, Muslims had gotten away from real Islam. Dividing positions of Islamic government and unfair distributing of public treasury which had reached to its maximum during "Uthman" caliphate, had made people to seriously oppose anyone who wanted to implement Prophet Muhammad's

[PBUH] tradition exactly and subsequent events {Nakithin – Mariqinn and Qasitin opposition} proved imam Ali's [a.s] correct prediction; that's why when people wanted to swear allegiance with him, he said:

Leave me. You can't stand enforcing right and justice by me.

This saying of hadrat Ali [a.s] will become so clear to us when we comprehend historical situation of that time very well and know that after assassinating "Uthman", a group of sahaba and "Tabe'in" who had gathered up swearing allegiance with imam, would try to do so like swearing allegiance with last caliphs, caliph in such position, gets the legitimacy of his caliphate from people's allegiance and this kind of caliphate is different than divine imamate and has been proved for commander of the faithful [a.s] by the affirmation of messenger of Allah [PBUH] in numerous cases such as: {Day of Dar and Ghadir Khum and..} because in that situation, those who were swearing allegiance would only think of appointing caliph without paying attention that imamate of hadrat "Ali" [a.s] is in god's behalf.

After caliphate of three caliphs, people weren't ready to accept such method, as people of "Mecca" weren't ready to accept Islamic government thirteen years before immigration and messenger of Allah [PBUH] didn't set up Islamic government.

Another point is that like Quran verses, some of narratives – said by messenger of Allah or his "Ahl al-Bayt" – are precise in meaning and some other one are obscure, therefore, assuming that some of sayings of hadrat "Ali" [a.s] imply the claim of doubt creator due to being obscure, what does doubt creator do, if he finds contradictory in sayings of caliphs or sahabe who are all known righteous by Sunni? And how can justify sahaba opposition with elder of sahaba hadrat "Ali" [a.s]?

On the other hand, we see in many of sermons of "Nahj al-Balagha" that imam "Ali" [a.s] says unequivocally that imamate is his right not others. We mention to some of these sermons:

1: third sermon of "Nahj al-Balagha":

أَمَّا وَاللَّهِ لَقَدْ تَعَمَّصَهَا فَلَانَ وَإِنَّهُ لَيَعْلَمُ أَنَّ مَحَلِّي مِنْهَا مَحَلُّ الْقُطْبِ مِنَ الرَّحَى يَنْحَدِرُ عَنِّي
السَّيْلُ وَلَا يَرْقِي إِلَيَّ الطَّيْرُ...

"Be aware, swear to god, "Abu-Bakr" put on caliphate clothing by force while he knew that my position for Islamic government is like axis for mill.

"Nahj al-Balagha" from Subhi Salih – p 201, sermon 144

2: Sermon 144:

إِنَّ الْأئِمَّةَ مِنْ قُرَيْشٍ غُرِسُوا فِي هَذَا الْبَطْنِ مِنْ هَاشِمٍ لَا تَصْلُحُ عَلَي سِوَا وَ لَا تَصْلُحُ الْوَلَاةُ مِنْ
غَيْرِهِمْ.

... All imams were from "Quraysh" that its tree has been planted in "Bani Hashim" dynasty, position of imamate and guardianship doesn't befit others and they don't deserve to be caliph.

"Nahj al-Balagha" from "Subhi Salih" – p 201, sermon 144

3: letter 33

... فَدَعَّ عَنْكَ قُرَيْشًا وَ تَرَكَاضَهُمْ فِي الصَّلَالِ وَ تَجَوَّالَهُمْ فِي الشَّقَاقِ وَ جِمَاحَهُمْ فِي التَّيِّهِ فَإِنَّهُمْ
قَدْ أَجْمَعُوا عَلَي حَرْبِي كَأَجْمَاعِهِمْ عَلَي حَرْبِ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ (صَلِيَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَ آلِهِ وَ أَهْلِهِ وَ أَصْحَابِهِ) قَبْلِي فَجَزَتْ
قُرَيْشًا عَنِّي الْجَوَازِي فَقَدْ قَطَعُوا رَجْمِي وَ سَلَبُونِي سُلْطَانَ ابْنِ أُمِّي...

... {O brother}, let "Quraysh" gallop in straying and be perplexed in separation and live with enmity and rebelliousness. Indeed, they became united in war against me as they did so against messenger of Allah [PBUH]. May god punish "Quraysh" due to their bad deeds. They cut out my kinship link and stole the reign of messenger of Allah [PBUH] from me.

Nahj al-Balagha from Subhi Salih, p 409, letter 36

4: letter 62.

It's commander of the faithful's [a.s] letter to people of Egypt conveyed by "Malik Ashatar", ruler of "Egypt".

أَمَّا بَعْدُ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ سُبْحَانَهُ بَعَثَ مُحَمَّدًا (صلي الله عليه وآله وسلم) نَذِيرًا لِلْعَالَمِينَ وَ مُهَيِّمًا عَلَي الْمُرْسَلِينَ فَلَمَّا مَضَى (عليه السلام) تَنَازَعَ الْمُسْلِمُونَ الْأَمْرَ مِنْ بَعْدِهِ فَوَاللَّهِ مَا كَانَ يُلْقِي فِي رُوعِي وَ لَا يَخْطُرُ بِنَالِي أَنَّ الْعَرَبَ تُزَعِّجُ هَذَا الْأَمْرَ مِنْ بَعْدِهِ (صلي الله عليه وآله وسلم) عَنْ أَهْلِ بَيْتِهِ وَ لَا أَنَّهُمْ مَنُحُوهُ عَنِّي مِنْ بَعْدِهِ فَمَا رَاعِنِي إِلَّا انْتِيَالُ النَّاسِ عَلَي فَلَانٍ يَبَايِعُونَهُ فَأَمْسَكْتُ يَدِي حَتَّى رَأَيْتُ رَاجِعَةَ النَّاسِ قَدْ رَجَعَتْ عَنِ الْإِسْلَامِ يَدْعُونَ إِلَي مَحْقِ دِينِ مُحَمَّدٍ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ

Almighty god sent "Muhammad" [PBUH] to be warner of people and proof of Prophets prior to him. When messenger of Allah [PBUH] left the world, Muslims got into fight with each other over matter of ruling. Swear to god I never thought that after messenger of Allah, "Arab" takes caliphate from his "Ahl al-Bayt" or doesn't let me to rule, the only thing that made me worried was that people rushed to that person swearing allegiance with him. I withdrew until I saw that a group of people who has left Islam wants to destroy religion of messenger of Allah [PBUH].

"Nahj al-Balagha" from "Subhi Salih" – p 451, letter 62

"Ibn Abi al-Hadid" has restated that imam "Ali" [a.s] avoided swearing allegiance with "Abu-Bakr", he's said about this letter:

قوله : فأمسكت يدي ، أي امتنعت عن بيعته ، حتى رأيت راجعة الناس.

As for this saying this saying of hadrat "Ali" [a.s] that I "Withdrew", it means that I avoided swearing allegiance until I saw that people are leaving Islam religion.

"ibn Abi al-Hadid" – Interpretation of Nahj al-Balagha – vol. 17, p 87

"Ibn Qtaybah Dinwari" has said this issue as well:

"Al-Dinwari" – al-Imamate and policy – vol. 1, p 126

Next notable point is that in numerous narratives, along with confirming historical events, imamate of hadrat "Ali" [a.s] has been restated and if someone sees contradictory amongst these narratives, narratives that most of scholars have accepted them are confirmed and opponent narratives are justified based on the opinion of most of people.

So, if hadrat "Ali" [a.s] didn't accept people's allegiance quickly and said: "Select another person", it doesn't show that his imamte had not been restated; but with such work, hadrat "Ali" [a.s] wanted announce his sadness from wrong methods of last caliphs and warn about tough future and prepare people.

It's quite clear that people's allegiance will remove barriers of establishing reign, no that it gives legitimacy to the ruling of Islamic ruler.

After messenger of Allah[PBUH], even during caliphate of "Abu-Bakr", "Umar" and "Uthman", hadrat "Ali" [a.s] was the imam appointed by messenger of Allah [PBUH] ordered by almighty god and if in the time of three caliphs, he rises in the path of helping Islam and saving religion, it's not because of cooperating with caliphs; but it's because he wants to stick to his task as much as possible, hadrat "Ali" [a.s] says in "Nahaj al-Balagha":

...فَخَشِيتُ أَنْ لَمْ أَنْصُرِ الْإِسْلَامَ وَأَهْلَهُ أَنْ أَرَى فِيهِ تَلْمَماً أَوْ هَدْمَماً تَكُونُ الْمُصِيبَةُ بِهِ عَلَيَّ أَعْظَمَ
مِنْ قُوَّةِ وَلَايَتِكُمْ الَّتِي إِنَّمَا هِيَ مَتَاعُ أَيَّامٍ قَلِيلٍ يَزُوكُ مِنْهَا مَا كَانَ كَمَا يَزُوكُ السَّرَابُ أَوْ كَمَا
يَتَفَشَّعُ السَّحَابُ فَتَهَضَّتْ فِي تِلْكَ الْأَحْدَاثِ حَتَّى زَاغَ الْبَاطِلُ وَرَهَقَ وَاطْمَأَنَّ الدِّينُ وَتَنَهَتْهُ....

I was afraid that if I don't help Islam and its followers, I'll see breach in it or will see its destruction that enduring its disaster is more difficult than leaving governing on you that its days pass quickly as mirage disappears or like cloud pieces that spread quickly. So I arose amongst that uproar until void was removed and religion was settled.

"Nahj al-Balagha" from "Subhi Salih" – p 451, letter 62 /// "Ibn Abi al-Hadid" – interpretation of Nahj al-Balagha – vol. 17, p 86 /// "Al-Dinwari" – Al-Imamate and policy- vol. 1, p 126

Thus, position of imamte isn't in hand of people but it's a selection on god's behalf.

Good luck