

Moroni 2 — In My Name Shall Ye Give It — The Words of Christ on the Gift of the Holy Ghost

Moroni 2: Moroni preserves the words Christ spoke to the twelve Nephite disciples at his first appearing (3 Nephi 11), as he laid his hands upon them and gave them power to confer the Holy Ghost. Heard only by the disciples and not by the multitude, these words are recorded here by Moroni as the pattern by which the gift of the Holy Ghost is given — through mighty prayer to the Father in the name of Christ, and the laying on of hands in that name. Three verses, but they preserve the authority and the manner of one of the central ordinances of the restored gospel.

Moroni 2 is three verses, and it preserves something Mormon's abridgment of 3 Nephi had passed over: the actual words Christ spoke to the twelve Nephite disciples when he gave them power to confer the Holy Ghost. At his first appearing (3 Nephi 11), the risen Lord laid his hands on the twelve and spoke privately to them — *the multitude heard it not, but the disciples heard it* (v. 3) — and Moroni, writing in his last days, recovers those words for us. The chapter is brief but weighty: it preserves both the *authority* (given by Christ himself, by the laying on of his hands) and the *manner* (mighty prayer to the Father in Christ's name, and the laying on of hands) of the gift of the Holy Ghost. It is one of the ordinance chapters with which Moroni closes the record, gathering up the practical pattern of the church so that a future people could administer the things of God exactly as Christ established them.

Hebrew Word Studies

ruach / *semikhah* / *shem* (רוּחַ / הִכְיָמוֹס / שֵׁם) — **spirit, breath, wind (the Holy Ghost) / the laying on of hands / name (and the authority it carries)** vv. 2–3, vv. 2–3, v. 2. Three Hebrew ideas anchor the ordinance. *Ruach* — spirit, breath, wind — is the Holy Ghost given in the ordinance. *Ruach* is the breath of God that moved on the waters at creation (Gen. 1:2) and the breath breathed into man (Gen. 2:7); the gift of the *ruach ha-qodesh* (the Holy Spirit) is the imparting of God's own breath and life. That the *ruach* fell on those whose hands were laid on (v. 3) is the conveyance of divine life by ordinance. *Semikhah* — the laying on of hands — is the ancient gesture of conferral, by which Moses ordained Joshua (Num. 27:18–23, *lay thine hand upon him*) and blessings and authority were transmitted; in later Judaism *semikhah* is the very word for ordination. The Nephite ordinance is *semikhah* — hands laid on to confer the *ruach*. *Shem* — name — governs the whole act: *in my name shall ye give it* (v. 2). In Hebrew the *shem* carries authority and identity; to act *in the name* of another is to act with that one's authority. The disciples give the *ruach* not by their own power but *in the shem* of Christ — by his authority, as his instruments. The ordinance is the conferral of the *ruach* (Spirit) by *semikhah* (laying on of hands) in the *shem* (name and authority) of Christ — breath, hands, and name together making the gift.

From the Chapter's Architecture

“cross-references Gen. 1:2; 2:7 (the *ruach*/Spirit and breath of God — the gift conferred, v. 3); Num. 11:16–17, 25 (the spirit put upon the seventy elders — vv. 2–3); Num. 27:18–23 (Moses lays hands on Joshua, the *semikhah* of conferral — vv. 2–3); Deut. 34:9 (Joshua full of the spirit of wisdom; for Moses had laid his hands upon him — the laying on of hands conferring the Spirit, vv. 2–3); Isa. 59:21 (my spirit... and my words... shall not depart out of thy mouth — the abiding Spirit given, v. 3); Jn. 14:16–17, 26 (the Comforter, the Holy Ghost, promised — the gift of vv. 2–3); Jn. 20:22 (he breathed on them, and saith... Receive ye the Holy Ghost — the conferral of the Spirit, v. 3); Acts 8:14–17 (Peter and John lay hands on the Samaritans, and they received the Holy Ghost — the direct parallel to vv. 2–3); Acts 19:1–6 (Paul lays hands and the Holy Ghost comes — vv. 2–3); 1 Tim. 4:14; 2 Tim. 1:6 (the gift by the laying on of... hands — the ordinance of vv. 2–3); 3 Ne. 11:18–22 (Christ gives the twelve disciples power to baptize — the same first-appearing occasion, v. 1); 3 Ne. 18:36–37 (Christ touches the disciples and gives them power to give the Holy Ghost — the event this chapter records, vv. 1–3); 3 Ne. 19:9, 13 (the disciples pray for and receive the Holy Ghost, which falls upon them — vv. 2–3); Moro. 3:1–4 (the manner of ordaining priests and teachers — the companion ordinance); Moro. 6:4 (those baptized are wrought upon and cleansed by the power of the Holy Ghost — the gift of vv. 2–3); A of F 1:4 (the laying on of hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost — the ordinance of vv. 2–3); D&C 33:15 (the laying on of hands for the baptism of the Holy Ghost — vv. 2–3); D&C 20:41, 43 (confirming members and giving the Holy Ghost by the laying on of hands — vv. 2–3).”