

Moroni 3 — By the Power of the Holy Ghost — The Manner of Ordaining Priests and Teachers

Moroni 3: Moroni preserves the manner in which the Nephite disciples — the elders of the church — ordained priests and teachers: after prayer to the Father in the name of Christ, the laying on of hands and a brief, exact ordaining formula, by the power of the Holy Ghost. Four verses that secure the pattern of ordination to the priesthood for the future church, grounding every calling in the name of Christ and the gifts and callings of God.

Moroni 3 is four verses preserving the manner of ordination — how the Nephite disciples, *called the elders of the church* (v. 1), ordained priests and teachers. Like the chapters around it, it is brief and practical, part of the cluster of ordinance chapters with which Moroni closes the record. Having preserved the gift of the Holy Ghost (Moroni 2), he now preserves the conferral of priesthood office, so that a future church would know the exact pattern: prayer to the Father in the name of Christ, the laying on of hands, and a plain ordaining formula naming the office and its purpose. The chapter is a small but essential piece of the practical inheritance Moroni leaves — the manner of calling and setting apart the men who would preach and serve.

Hebrew Word Studies

samakh / qara / mattanah (סָמַךְ / קָרָא / מָתַן) — **to lay on (hands), to support, to ordain / to call, to summon, to name / gift, that which is given** v. 2, v. 4, v. 4. Three Hebrew words anchor the ordinance. *Samakh* — to lay on hands, to lean, to support — is the gesture of ordination (v. 2). The same root gives *semikhah*, the rabbinic word for ordination, descending from Moses laying hands on Joshua (Num. 27:18). To *samakh* is also to *support* or *uphold* — fitting, for ordination both confers authority and binds the ordained to uphold the work. *Qara* — to call — stands behind *the gifts and callings of God* (v. 4). *Qara* means to call, to summon, even to name; a *calling* is a summons from God, and the ordination ratifies a call God has already issued. The office is not seized but answered — God *qaras*, and the man is ordained to the calling God spoke. *Mattanah* — gift — is paired with the calling: *according to the gifts (mattanot) and callings of God* (v. 4). The *mattanot* are God's endowments, the spiritual gifts that fit a person for the calling; ordination matches the office to the gift God has given. The ordinance is thus *samakh* (the laying on of hands) ratifying God's *qara* (calling) according to his *mattanah* (gift) — hands, summons, and gift together, all *by the power of the Holy Ghost*.

From the Chapter's Architecture

“cross-references Num. 27:18–23 (*Moses lays hands on Joshua and gives him a charge — the samakh/ordination of vv. 2–3*); Num. 8:10 (*hands laid on the Levites to set them apart — vv. 2–3*); Deut. 34:9 (*Joshua ordained by the laying on of hands, full of the spirit of wisdom — v. 4*); Jer. 1:5–9 (*the Lord ordained and called the prophet, putting his words in his mouth — the calling of God, vv. 3–4*); Jn. 15:16 (*ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you — the calling of God, v. 4*); Acts 6:5–6 (*the seven chosen and ordained by prayer and the laying on of hands — vv. 2–3*); Acts 13:2–3 (*the Holy Ghost calls and the church ordains by laying on of hands — vv. 2–4*); Acts 14:23 (*elders ordained in every church with prayer and fasting — vv. 1–2*); 1 Tim. 4:14 (*the gift given with the laying on of the hands — vv. 2–4*); Heb. 5:4 (*no man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God — the callings of God, v. 4, against priestcraft*); 2 Ne. 26:29 (*priestcraft defined — the corruption v. 4 guards against*); Mosiah 18:18 (*Alma ordains priests to teach and preach repentance — the pattern of vv. 1–3*); Alma 6:1 (*the ordination of priests and elders by the laying on of hands — vv. 2–4*); 3 Ne. 12:1 (*Christ gives the twelve power to baptize and minister — the authority behind v. 1*); Moro. 2:1–3 (*the gift of the Holy Ghost — the companion ordinance*); Moro. 6:1–4 (*priests and teachers serving the baptized church — the office of v. 3 at work*); A of F 1:5 (*a man must be called of God, by prophecy, and by the laying on of hands — the doctrine of vv. 3–4*); D&C 20:60 (*every elder, priest, teacher, or deacon ordained according to the gifts and callings of God unto him — verbatim echo of v. 4*); D&C 18:32 (*ordaining priests by the power of the Holy Ghost which is in you — verbatim echo of v. 4*).”