

## “Ordination” In the Old Testament

Afolarin Olutunde Ojewole, Ph.D.  
Religious Studies Department, Babcock University,  
Ilesan-Remo Ogun State, Nigeria  
Tel: +2348060376577 Email: [aojewole@msn.com](mailto:aojewole@msn.com)

### ABSTRACT

Ordination is widespread and varied in Christendom, yet the exact biblical parallel of the current practices is unclear. Also, the word “ordination” does not appear in the Hebrew Old Testament. However, English translations of the OT and the LXX freely employ the words: “ordain,” “ordained,” and “ordination” to translate about twenty-five (25) Hebrew words and phrases. This study attempts to examine these words to see how they informed the practice of ordination in late Judaism, early Christianity, and modern Christianity. It is interesting to note that most of these Hebrew words so freely translated into English as “ordain,” “ordained,” and “ordination” have no cultic connotation whatsoever. The few relevant uses showcase a variety of ceremonies and rituals: appointment to an office or task, inauguration of religious leaders, places, institutions, and observances, investiture, anointing, consecration, commission, laying on of hands, and basic concepts of divine purpose, providence, calling, and choice. The “laying on of hands” for Joshua and the Levites seem to be the closest.

**KEYWORDS:** Ordain; ordained; ordination; consecration, anointing, “laying on of hands.”

### 1. INTRODUCTION

The search for the biblical theology of ordination has been the preoccupation of exegetes and various theologians for a very long time (Ehrhardt, 1954; Peacock, 1958; Schweizer, 1961; Hummel, 1966; Ferguson, 1975; McEachern, 1980; Culpepper, 1981; Warkentin, 1982).

The word “ordination” does not appear in the Hebrew Old Testament. Notwithstanding, there are several words which point to what we now know and practice as ordination. The practice or service of ordination was not well described and enumerated in the Old Testament, at least it does not appear, full-blown and in our sense of the term today (Bagger, 1965). A Theology of ordination was not clearly enumerated in the Old Testament. However, the Old Testament exhibits a generous amount of information about several ceremonies and rituals utilized to select religious leaders such as priests, Levites, prophets, and elders in the Jewish religious corpus. These would provide important background and could be the possible antecedents to Christian and late Judaism ordination and also useful in developing an Old Testament theology of ordination.

This study attempts to examine key words that relate to ordination and exegete some of the texts to which the practice of ordination in late Judaism, early Christianity, and modern Christianity seem to be tied to as likely antecedents. Several religious installation rituals and rites would also be briefly examined.

### 2. DEFINITION OF TERMS:

Ordination involves the appointment of a person to a public ministry or office while investing the individual with the necessary authority required for performing in it (Manser, 1999). It involves “appointing, consecrating, or commissioning of persons for special service to the Lord and His people (Fink, 2003, p. 1230). It is the declaration given to a church worker who “has earned the church’s confidence and enjoys the endorsement of the local church for specific forms of ministry (Veech, 2006, p. 249). It is the Church’s “recognition of a divine appointment and the commending to God’s care and blessing of those so appointed” (Strong, 1907, p. 920).

There are two levels of ordination in Christendom. “Absolute ordination” is usually offered to deacons, priests, and bishops and they are ordained for life without repetition or re-ordination. On the contrary, “relative ordination” is used mostly by Pentecostals who ordain a person each time he or she takes up ministry in a local church. Similarly, some others “install” a person into specific ministry on the basis of prior ordination.

Ordination rites vary based on whether ordination was construed as instrumental or expressive. An instrumental view teaches that “appropriate gifts of the Holy Spirit are conferred on the ordinand by prayer and the imposition of hands and that thereby the ordained becomes himself or herself a gift to the church for life” (Fahlbusch & Bromiley, 2003, p. 843). On the other hand, the expressive view of argues that “ordination itself does not convey any specific lifelong gifts but is rather a recognition by the church by its prayer for the person being ordained; the ordination is not seen as adding anything to the person” (Fahlbusch & Bromiley, 2003, p. 843).

### 3. WORD STUDY

English translations of the OT and the LXX use the words “ordain,” “ordained,” and “ordination” to translate about twenty-five (25) Hebrew words and phrases. Most of them have entirely general applications. Few of them were used within cultic settings but with general nuances in meaning. Hebrew words translated as “anoint” and “holy” are also included since they occur a lot in connection to priestly consecration. The most relevant of these words showcase a variety of ideas appointment to an office or task, religious places, institutions, and observances, and basic concepts of divine purpose, providence, and choice (Fink, 2003). None of these carry the notion of ordination as broad as the modern use. All these words are presented in a tabular form below.

#	Hebrew Words	Range of Meanings	Sample Texts	Application/Use
1	mn' or mnh	appoint(ed), numbered, “ordained”	Dan 2:24	General use
2	`mr, diatasso	Assign, designate, ordain	1 Kgs 1:36; 1 Chron 9:33	General use
3	bkurah, protogonos	First-ripe; first-ordained	Micah 7:1	General use
4	Haytah	ordained	2 Chron 22:7	General use
5	l'ôlam zôt 'al-yiSrâ'el	“ordained forever for Israel”	2 Chron 2:3 [Heb 4]	General use
6	Hâraq diatasso	Decree, command, those ordained	Isa 30:8 Ezek 4:1	General use
7	yâsad	Appointed, ordained	Ps 8:2; 1 Chron 9:22	General use
8	yâcar	Formed, ordained	Ps 139:16	General use
9	yârâh or yârâ' nomotheteo (7 times in LXX)	Instructed, ordained	Exod 24:12	General use
10	kûn	Appointed, ordained	Psalms 8:3[Heb 4]	General use
11	mânâh	Appointed, ordained	Dan 1:5	General use
12	nâtan	Appointed; chosen; ordained	Jer 1:5; 2 Kings 23:5	Cultic religious but not modern sense
13	Sûm or Sîm	Put; appointed; ordained	1 Chron 17:9; Ps 81:5; Ezek 21:19-20	General use
14	špt	Establish; ordain	Isa 26:12	General use
15	qiyym	Established; ordained	Esther 9:27	General use
16	ciwwâh	Appointed; ordained	Lam 2:17	General use

17	ᶜāsāh	Appointed; ordained	Num 28:6; 2 Kgs 12:32-33	General use
18	ᶜāmad	Appointed; ordained	1 Chron 11:15	General use
19	ᶜārak	Prepared; ordained	Ps 132:17; Isa 30:33	General use
20	āsad	Appointed; ordained	Ps 8:2	General use
21	mālāᵑ or mālēᵑ are (251 times)	Consecrated (27x); ordained (12x)	Lev 8:22-33	Cultic-priestly
22	milu'îm	Ordination; consecration	Exod 29:22 Lev 8:28	Cultic-priestly
23	Smk	Ordination; consecration; to lay	Num 27:18, 23	Cultic; leadership
24	māšaH	Anointed	Num 3:3	Cultic-priestly
25	qdš	Holy	Lev 8:9-10	Cultic

#### 4. FILLING THE HAND: [From the root “to fill the hand”]

The phrase “fill the hand,” containing the word mālēᵑ is translated by many English versions translate as “consecrate” or “ordain.” The phrase ultimately became the idiomatic expression for “installing a priest into office,” or “ordination” (Beck, 1962; de Vaux, 1965). See passages like: Exod 28:41; 29:9, 35; 32:29; Lev 8:33; 16:22; 21:10; Num 3:3; Judges 17:5, 12; 1 Kings 13:33; 1 Chron 29:5; 2 Chron 13:9; 29:31. This could have originated from the wages or support a priest received for his services as evidenced in Judges 17 where Micah made his son a priest by ‘filling his hand’ with silver (17:5) and later hiring a Levite and paying him for his priestly services (17:10-12).” Jacob Milgrom (1991) sees the idiom as a derivative of an Akkadian term “to appoint to a task or authorize by ceremony” (p. 539). It could reflect the practice of filling the priest’s hands with the offerings of the sacrificial animals as the reason for the term. In Lev 8:25-29, Moses placed portions of the sacrificial ram and cake offerings in the hands of Aaron and his sons to offer them as a wave offering to God and later consumed them on the altar as “an ordination offering for a soothing aroma” to the Lord (Beck, 1962, p. 667).

Numbers 3:3 reads: “These are the names of the sons of Aaron, the anointed priests, whom he consecrated to minister as priests.” The multiplication of verbs that refer to cultic actions in this short verse is interesting: hammᶜšuhîm [ha -particle article; mšḥ -verb qal passive participle masculine plural absolute] “anointed;” millē yādā [verb piel perfect 3rd person masculine singular plus noun common feminine singular construct suffix 3rd person masculine plural] which is literally rendered: “fill their hand” but means: “consecrated;” and lᶜkahēn [lᶜ -particle preposition khn -verb piel infinitive construct] which means: “minister in priestly roles” or “perform the duties of a priest.”

In Numbers 3:3, the phrase millē yādā, as a figure of speech, it literally means: “fill their hand,” thus describing the ceremonial rite of ordination (Kiel & Delitzsch, 1973). This signified two things for the ordination of priests. First, it represented the duty and privilege the priest had in making offerings to the Lord on behalf of others. Second, it represented that the Lord would indeed fill their hand in the sense of providing for the material needs of the priests, representing God’s sufficiency. “‘To fill one’s hand’ (with sacrifices) is ‘to consecrate’ one’s service (1 Chron 29:5; Exod 32:29) or a priest (Judges 17:5)” (Kaiser, p. 506).

In Exodus 32:29, after the molten calf experience, Moses told all the children of Israel to milᶜû yedkem , literally, “fill your hand” meaning “consecrate yourselves.” This has no cultic intention but just that they confess their sins, and re-dedicate themselves to serving God alone. In 1 Chronicles 29:5, King David had given so much for the construction of the Temple and hereby challenges each of the leaders and the people of Israel to follow

suit: *l'mallôt yādô* , literally, “fill his hand” meaning “consecrate himself.” This has no cultic connotation but that they commit themselves and their services to God whole-heartedly and sacrificially.

In Judges 17:5, a man named Micah made a shrine and installed one of his sons as the priest for it. He waymallē<sup>o</sup> *et-yad* , literally “filled the hand of” meaning “he consecrated.” Later on in Judges 17:12, Micah had found a Levite to install as his personal priest instead; literally: “Micah filled the hand of the Levite” meaning “Micah consecrated the Levite.” Like Numbers 3:3, these two verses have strong cultic connotations pointing to some form of “ordination.”

Two main Hebrew words translated “hand” [in RSV *yād* and *kap*] and each has many variant translations and carries very wide meanings; “all of which are related to the primary meaning, ‘hollow’ or ‘palm’, from a root meaning ‘curved’ or ‘bent’” (Banwell, 1996, p. 443). The “hand,” much more than the “arm,” (especially the right hand) is considered to be “a symbol of might and power” (Banwell, 1996, p. 444). Touching another person’s hands communicates “authority, power or blessing, the right hand being more significant in this respect than the left, but both hands were often used (Gen 48:13–14; Deut. 34:9)” (Banwell, 1996, p. 443; Wright, 1986; Hamilton, 2000). Actions with the hands were an important part of ancient religious ritual, as in prayer (1 Kings 8:54) and invocation of divine blessing (Gen 48:8-20; Lev 9:22), connoting the symbolic passing of spiritual blessing flowing from one person to another.

## 5. CONSECRATION OF HIGH PRIEST AARON AND HIS SONS AS PRIESTS

The consecration of Aaron and his sons for the priestly office is fully described in Leviticus 8, following the pattern prescribed in Exodus 28-29 (Wenham, 1979; Levine, 1989; Gerstenberger, 1993). Leviticus 9 gives an account of the newly ordained priests taking up their posts while Leviticus 10 stipulates the rules and regulations guiding the priests’ duties (Péter-Contesse & Ellington, 1990). The office was hereditary and in Israel, restricted to males. Although God had selected Aaron and his sons to serve as priests (Exod 28:1), entrance into the priesthood was not by divine calling. Old Testament passages “speak of a man being called or chosen by God to be a king or prophet, but they never use the term of a priest” (de Vaux, 1965, p. 346). Priests were consecrated, not dedicated, as is the case of Levites or “called” as was the case for prophets. The language of consecration regularly employs Hebrew terms where most mean “to make holy” or “to sanctify” (de Vaux, 1965). The ordination of Aaron and his sons was a seven-day act of consecration accompanied by washing, donning vestments, anointing, sacrificing, and eating (Lev. 8). “The numerical symbolism of ‘seven’ indicated that the ordination ritual was complete” (Matthews, 2009, p. 81). The ordination of the priests was in public view because Moses was to convoke, or summon, the entire group, or “all the people of Israel,” for this ceremony (Lev 8:3), taking place at the door of the tent of meeting.

The basic Hebrew term here for “ordination” literally means to “fill the hands” and may refer to filling the priest’s hands with the offerings as in Leviticus 8:27 (Fink, 2003; Morris, 1996). Moses “took the fat and the fat tail, all the fat that was on the entrails, the fatty lobe attached to the liver, the two kidneys and their fat, and the right thigh; and from the basket of unleavened bread that was before the LORD he took one unleavened cake, a cake of bread anointed with oil, and one wafer, and put them on the fat and on the right thigh; and he put all these in Aaron's hands and in his sons’ hands, and waved them as a wave offering before the LORD. Then Moses took them from their hands and burned them on the altar, on the burnt offering. They were consecration offerings for a sweet aroma. That was an offering made by fire to the LORD” (Lev 8:25-28; NKJV).

## 6. LAYING ON OF HANDS:

The meaning of “laying of hands” has generated so much controversies in Jewish and Christian circles (Wenham, 1981; Wright, 1986; Gonzalez, 1999). The Old Testament phrase “laying on of hands” occurs twenty-five (25) times in a variety of contexts with a variety of meanings. Of the twenty-five occurrences, twenty-three can be explained as a technical term describing a ritual act. The most common use is in acts of sacrifice (18 times) when the one making an offering lays a hand upon the sacrificial victim. While some interpreters see this act as a “transference of sin or guilt from the one making the offering to the victim,” (Brisco, 2002, p. 162) others suggest think it only identifies “the victim as belonging to the one making the offering and implied ownership as well as an attribution of the gift to God” (Brisco, 2002, p. 162). Thus, the one presenting the sacrifice symbolically offered their lives to God as a gift.

The key verb in “laying on of hands” is *smk* which means: “support, lean, lean upon, lay, uphold, refresh.” This verb is used 48 times in the OT. It is generally used to refer “to support or strengthening provided, often in parallel with other verbs connoting help” (Harman, 1997, p. 2:628; Patterson, 1980). The Hebrew words

Sim and šim are two of the synonymous verbs to smk. However, smk is a technical term which connotes exercising some force, while each of these other verb is less of a technical term with a wide range of applications indicating touching without application of physical pressure. The uses of this verb in Psalm 88:7[8] and Ezek 24:2 indicate the use of some pressure, attack, or coming against (Harman, 1997).

Out of the 48 uses of smk in the OT, over 20 uses point to the leaning of hands on an animal about to be sacrificed (Harman, 1997). While both hands are put on the goat on the Day of Atonement, only one hand is laid on the other sacrifices throughout the daily sacrificial activities. The Day of Atonement clearly involves the imposition of hands as transference of sin (Lev 16:22). For all the other sacrifices with one hand laid, some argue that this touching only identifies the offerer with the animal, without transferring his sin to it.

Out of the 48 appearances of the verb smk, only four (4) times does it refer to some form of consecration, "ordination," commissioning of leadership and transference of authority: three times with Joshua's inauguration (Num 27:18, 23; Deut 34:9) and once in the dedication ceremony of the Levites (Num 8:10; Harman, 1997). Daube (1956) concluded that samak was a strong term meaning to lean vigorously with pressure and is used in rituals of sacrifices and consecration, thus signifying the "pouring of one's personality into another being, the creation of a representative or substitute" (p. 229). Summarily, the OT seems to use the term "laying on of hands" to communicate several ideas including transference, substitution, confirmation of legal decisions, ownership, and recognition and setting aside.

## 7. LAYING HANDS ON THE LEVITES:

There is no record of laying of hands on Aaron and his sons. However, Numbers 8:5-23 enumerated the process of setting the Levites apart for service to God through a series of ritual cleansing whereby the Levites were sprinkled with water, shaved, and their garments washed, sin offering, dedication, and laying on of hands by Moses and the whole congregation of Israel. These signal "both the holiness of God and the requirement for holiness among God's people (Lev 11: 45; 19:2; Exod 19:5-6)" (Brisco, 2002, p. 165; Milgrom, 1991, p. 278). The Levites were "a substitute for all the Israelite first born males who belonged to God and should therefore be consecrated for his service. In effect the Levites became a ransom for all first born males in Israel" (Brisco, 2002, p. 165). Their tasks included caring and guarding the Tabernacle and its furnishings, assembling and disassembling the structure on the journey to Canaan (Num 1:47-51; 3; 4), and later on, temple music (1 Chron 15:16; 2 Chron 7:6; 29:26).

The Levites were publicly presented at the Tent of Meeting before "the whole congregation of the sons of Israel" (Num 8:9) for the laying on of hands by the whole congregation. Some commentators propose Perhaps the tribal elders represented the whole congregation in the laying on of hands (Torrance, 1958). Philip J. Budd (1984) interprets this as Israel's way of dedicating the Levites as their offering to Yahweh in place of the first born. The Levites were to concentrate, unhindered, on their Temple duties.

## 8. LAYING ON OF HANDS FOR JOSHUA

The ordination of a successor for Moses was at Moses' initiative (Num 27:15-17), but Joshua was chosen by God because he was "a man in whom is the Spirit" (v. 18). Joshua's ordination involved standing before the priest and the entire congregation and being commissioned in their sight. Moses laid his hand on Joshua, and Moses placed some of his authority on Joshua, including the role of inquiring of the judgment of the Urim (Fink, 2003). This laying of hands has been commonly referred to as one of the clearest antecedents to ordination as practiced in the Christian church and Judaism.

The first command was for Moses to take a man "in whom is the spirit" (Num 27:18). The nature of this spirit has been debated. This could be the spirit of wisdom conferred upon Joshua when Moses laid his hands upon him (Deut 34:9; Culpepper, 1981). Others note that Joshua already possessed a portion of the divine spirit from a previous outpouring (Num 11:24-30; Harrison, 1992). Milgrom (1990) believes the reference is to a spirit of courage or special skills divinely provided to Joshua to complete the task ahead. He would demonstrate an indomitable and courageous spirit needed for leadership.

The term "laying of hands" is very crucial in this Moses-Joshua succession ceremony. It is mention in Numbers 27:18 and 23. Numbers 27:18 reads: w<sup>c</sup>sāmaḳta ʾet-yādkā ʿālāw. The verb is analyzed as w<sup>c</sup> particle conjunction plus the root smk (verb: qal waw consecutive perfect 2nd person masculine singular); and translated as "You will lay your hands on him." Numbers 27:23 reads: w<sup>a</sup>yyismōk ʾet-yādayiw ʿālāw. The verb is



analyzed as  $w^c$  -particle conjunction plus the root *smk* (verb: *qal waw consec imperfect 3rd person masculine singular*), translated as “He laid his hands on him.”

In Numbers 27:20, *mēhōdkā min hōd* is analyzed as: *min* -particle preposition; *hōd* (noun common masculine singular construct suffix 2nd person masculine singular homonym); where *hōd* means “weight, power, splendor, height, majesty, vigor, authority.” Moses placed some of his authority to Joshua. The term translated “authority,” is only used here in the Pentateuch and it describes the majesty and splendor of God here and as it is for kings (Noth, 1968). Warkentin equates this to the divine authority given to Moses at Mount Sinai and the extra wisdom Joshua received when Moses laid hands on Joshua in Deut 34:9 (1982). Joshua already had the Spirit of God in him but got more endowment, commensurate to his added new responsibility in governing Israel.

The commissioning or “ordaining” of Joshua included a solemn “charge” given by Moses as instructed by God. In Num 27:19, the words:  $w^c$ šiwwîṭā ʾōtō [ $w^c$  -particle conjunction; root *šwh* (verb *piel waw consec perfect 2nd person masculine singular*) and ʾōtō -particle direct object marker suffix 3rd person masculine singular homonym], means “and he charged him.” Similarly, in Numbers 27:23, *wayšawwēhū* [ $w^c$  -particle conjunction; root *šwh* (verb: *piel waw consecutive imperfect 3rd person masculine singular suffix 3rd person masculine singular*)] meaning, “he charged him.”

The content of this charge can be found in Deut 31:1-8, 14-23, and Josh 1:1-9. J. Roy Porter analyzed this charge into four categories. Joshua was to be “strong and courageous” as he leads Israel (Deut 31:6-7, 9; Josh 1:6-7, 9). Secondly, Joshua must give military leadership to Israel and apportion the land among the various tribes (Deut 31:7, 23; see also Num 34:17; Josh 1:67). Joshua was assured of divine protection and sustaining help (Deut 31:8, 23; see Josh 1:5, 9). Fourthly, Joshua and all Israel must obey all the laws of God or face the dire and fatal consequences of disobedience ([Deut 31:9-13; 16-22; 24-30; see also Josh 1:7-8]; 1970, pp. 102-109). “This solemn charge, an indispensable part of the commissioning ceremony, prepared Joshua for the challenge that lay ahead” (Brisco, 2002, p. 164).

## 9. CALL OF PROPHETS:

The overwhelming majority of OT prophets were males. However, several women prophetesses were fully attested to and socially accepted such as Miriam (Exod 15:20), Deborah (Judg 3:4), Huldah (2 Kgs 22:14), and Isaiah's wife (Isa 8:3) all are described as prophetesses.

No ceremony of the divine call to prophetic ministry is attested to in the Bible, neither was it gotten by inheritance like Levites and priests. Some OT prophets' theophanic encounter with God at their call include: Moses at the burning bush (Exod 3:1-10; 33:7-11; Deut 34:10); Samuel at Shiloh (1 Sam 3:1-21); Isaiah in the Jerusalem Temple (Isa 6:1-13); Ezekiel in a vision of the wheeled throne (Ezek 1:4-3:27); Amos (1:1-2); Jeremiah (1:1-19); and Elisha (1 Kgs 19:16-21). Prophets were called God's anointed ones, showing that there must have been some form of anointing with oil done on them (1 Chron 16:22; Psa 105:15). Only Elijah's anointing of Elisha with oil, followed by the placing of Elijah's mantle on him, is recorded of any prophetic call (1 Kgs 19:16-21).

The prophetic calls exhibit “several common elements including a theophany, assignment of task or commission, and expressions of the prophetic unworthiness or inability to perform the assignment. The accounts include assurances of divine presence and provision for the prophet. (Exod 4:11-12; Jer 1:7-10; Ezek 3:8-10)” (Brisco, 2002, pp. 171-172). Some of them were reluctant at the heavenly call and commission (Jer 20:9; Amos 7:14-15; Ezek 2:1-3).

## 10. APPOINTMENT OF KINGS, JUDGES, AND ELDERS

Anointing indicated the divine choice in the appointment of kings (1 Sam. 10:1; 16:13; Ferguson, 2000). Kings were usually anointed (1 Sam 24:6; 26:9; 2 Sam 1:14). The qualifications of appointed elders are mentioned in Exod 18:21: “able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness.” No ceremony of installation for judges and elders is recorded in the OT. Later practice in the greater and lesser Sanhedrins was to appoint persons by a solemn seating in the council (m. Sanh. 4.3-4; Sipre Num. 27; cf. As. Mos. 12.2).

The appointment of the seventy (70) elders and leaders to assist Moses in bearing “the burden of the people” (Num. 11:17) was at God's initiative, but Moses selected these persons. Their ordination involved standing with Moses and receiving from the Lord the Spirit who previously was upon Moses. When the Spirit rested on them, they prophesied (Num 11:25). “Then the LORD came down in the cloud and spoke with him, and he took some of

the power of the Spirit that was on him and put it on the seventy elders. When the Spirit rested on them, they prophesied—but did not do so again” (Num 11:25).

“This is evidently a divine endowment giving all necessary resources for the leadership of God's people” (Budd, 1984, p. 128). There was a visible effect of this ceremony on these elders in terms of ecstatic prophetic utterances. From this, one can deduce that having more of the spirit of God is a necessary ingredient of leadership. Moreover, there seems to be “an important connection between prophecy and leadership” (Brisco, 2002, p. 171).

## 11. CONCLUSIONS:

The Old Testament contains abundant information of numerous ceremonies and rituals connected with consecration and inaugurating religious leaders. Laying on of hands, anointing with oil, investiture with distinctive clothing, and specialized sacrificial offerings were commonly used when installing people into offices or for specific tasks. The priests were consecrated, the Levites dedicated while appointments were documented for Joshua and the seventy elders. Prophets received divine calling and commission. However, “none of these terms correspond precisely to Christian ordination, but the rituals offer some foundation and insight” (Brisco, 2002, p. 174). My conclusions and summaries are as follows:

1. No word used in OT covers the modern nuances of the words “ordain” or “ordination” or the ordination service as practiced in Christendom today. There is a free use the English word for translating a variety of Hebrew words, most of which have no cultic connotation whatsoever.
2. “The laying on of hands” for Joshua, the priests, and Aaron and his sons seem to be the closest to a form of separation of individuals for leadership and or cultic service in the OT. The process varies, so do the accompanying ceremonies. Some of these are not to be replicated today because the ritual uncleanness and animal sacrifices have ceased with the cross.
3. All the relevant instances of apparent referents to “ordination,” especially, laying on of hands, inauguration, consecration, and dedication involve only males and no females. There were females who played roles of leadership in the OT but none is described with any of the terms which directly or indirectly, intentionally or inadvertently, refer to ordination or referred to with Hebrews words with the loose translation of “ordain” or “ordained.”
4. God is the one who made all these choices and not human beings. God chose the persons and places, in the context of worship in God’s solemn presence..
5. The ceremonies were significant and public, involving the entire congregation in one form or another as more than mere observers.

More research would be needed on the implications of not doing the “laying on of hands” for High Priest Aaron or the other priests even though that was done for Joshua and the Levites. It will be of interest to know more of the implication of Joshua’s “ordination” to the practice of ordination in Christendom today.

## References

- Bagger, H. H. (1965). Pastor, ordination of. In J. Bodensieck, ed. *The Encyclopedia of the Lutheran Church*, pp. 1857-1859. Philadelphia: Fortress.
- Banwell, B. O. (1996). Hand. In D. R. W. Wood, I. H. Marshall, A. R. Millard et al., ed. *New Bible Dictionary*, 3rd ed. Leicester, England; Downers Grove.
- Beck, H. F. (1962). Consecrate, consecration. In Buttrick, G. A., ed. *Interpreter’s Dictionary of the Bible*, 3:676-677. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press.
- Brisco, T. (2002). Old testament antecedents to ordination. *Perspectives in Religious Studies*, 29(2), 159-175.
- Budd, P. J. (1984). Numbers. WBC, 5. Waco: Word Books.
- Culpepper, R. A. (1981). The biblical basis for ordination. *RevExp* 78, 471-478.
- Daube, D. (1956). *The New Testament and Rabbinic Judaism*. Jordan Lectures 1952. London: The Athlone Press.

- de Vaux, R. (1965). *Ancient Israel. Religious Institutions*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Ehrhardt, A. T. (1954). Jewish and Christian ordination. *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 5(2), 125-138.
- Ferguson, E. (1975). Laying on of hands: Its significance in ordination. *Journal Theological Society*, 26, 1-12.
- \_\_\_\_\_. (2000). Ordain, ordination. In D. N. Freedman, A. C. Myers & A. B. Beck, *Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.
- Fink, M. (2003). Ordination, ordain. In C. Brand, C. Draper, A. England, et al, ed., *Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary*, 1230. Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers.
- Gerstenberger, E. S. (1993). *Leviticus. OTL*; trans. D. W. Stott. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press.
- González, R. D. (1999). *Laying on of Hands in Luke and Acts: Theology, ritual, and interpretation*. Ph.D. diss., Baylor University.
- Hamilton, M. W. (2000). Laying on of hands. In D. N. Freedman, A. C. Myers & A. B. Beck, *Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.
- Harman, A. M. (1997). smk. In W. A. VanGeemeren, ed. *New International Dictionary of Old Testament theology and exegesis*, 3:270. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.
- Harrison, R. K. (1992). *Numbers: An Exegetical Commentary*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House.
- Hummel, H. D. (1966). The holy ministry from biblical perspective. *Lutheran Quarterly*, 18, 104-119.
- Kaiser, W. C. (1980). mālē. In R. L. Harris, G. L. Archer, Jr., & B. K. Waltke, eds. *Theological Workbook of the Old Testament*, 1:506. Chicago, IL: Moody Institute.
- Keil, K. F. and F. Delitzsch. (1973). *Biblical Commentary on the Old Testament*. Trans. J. Martin et al. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.
- Levine, L. (1989). *Leviticus. The JPS Torah Commentary*. Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society.
- Manser, M. H. (1999). *Dictionary of Bible Themes: The Accessible and Comprehensive Tool for Topical Studies*. London: Martin Manser.
- Matthews, K. A. (2009). *Leviticus: Holy God, Holy People. Preaching the Word*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books.
- McEachern, A. H. (1980). *Set Apart for Service*. Nashville: Broadman Press.
- Milgrom, J. (1990). *Numbers. JPS Commentary*. Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society.
- \_\_\_\_\_. (1991). *Leviticus 1-16: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*. New York: Doubleday.
- Morris, L. L. (1996). Ordination. In D. R. W. Wood, I. H. Marshall, A. R. Millard et al., ed., *New Bible Dictionary*, 3rd ed. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.
- Martin, N. (1968). *Numbers: A Commentary. OTL*. Trans. James Martin. Philadelphia: Westminster Press.
- Peacock, H. F. (1958). Ordination in the New Testament. *Review and Expositor*, 55, 262-74.
- Patterson, R. D. (1980). smk. In R. L. Harris, G. L. Archer, Jr., & B. K. Waltke, eds. *Theological Workbook of the Old Testament*, 2:628. Chicago, IL: Moody Institute.
- Péter-Contesse, R. & Ellington, J. (1990). *A Handbook on Leviticus. UBS Handbook Series*. New York: United Bible Societies.



Porter, J. R. (1970). The succession of Joshua. In J. I. Durham and J. R. Porter, ed., *Proclamation and Presence: Old Testament Essays in Honour of Gwynne Henton Davies*. Richmond: John Knox Press.

Schweizer, E. (1961). *Church Order in the New Testament*. *Studies in Biblical Theology*, 32. London: SCM.

Torrance, T. F. (1958). Consecration and ordination. *Scottish Journal of Theology*, 11, 327.

Veech, G. (2006). *Christian Minister's Manual*. Cincinnati, OH: Standard.

Warkentin, M. (1982). *Ordination: A Biblical-Historical View*. Grand Rapids: Eerdsman.

Wenham, G. (1979). *The Book of Leviticus*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.

\_\_\_\_\_. (1981). *Numbers: An Introduction and Commentary*. TOTC. Leicester: IVP.

Wright, D. P. (1986). "The gesture of hand placement in the Hebrew Bible and in Hittite literature. *Journal of Annals of Oriental Studies*, 106, 433–46.

The IISTE is a pioneer in the Open-Access hosting service and academic event management. The aim of the firm is Accelerating Global Knowledge Sharing.

More information about the firm can be found on the homepage:  
<http://www.iiste.org>

## CALL FOR JOURNAL PAPERS

There are more than 30 peer-reviewed academic journals hosted under the hosting platform.

**Prospective authors of journals can find the submission instruction on the following page:** <http://www.iiste.org/journals/> All the journals articles are available online to the readers all over the world without financial, legal, or technical barriers other than those inseparable from gaining access to the internet itself. Paper version of the journals is also available upon request of readers and authors.

## MORE RESOURCES

Book publication information: <http://www.iiste.org/book/>

## IISTE Knowledge Sharing Partners

EBSCO, Index Copernicus, Ulrich's Periodicals Directory, JournalTOCS, PKP Open Archives Harvester, Bielefeld Academic Search Engine, Elektronische Zeitschriftenbibliothek EZB, Open J-Gate, OCLC WorldCat, Universe Digital Library, NewJour, Google Scholar

