

THE ORDINATION OF THE PRIESTS: THE STEPS TO ORDAINING THE MINISTERS OF GOD LEVITICUS 08:01–13

Introduction

God calls and God ordains. Ordination is essential if a person is to serve God. In fact, no person should ever try to serve in the ministry unless he has been ordained by God.

=> Ordination means to be appointed by God to serve in the ministry of God.

=> Ordination means to be called, set apart and consecrated to the service of God.

The significant fact in ordination is this: it is God who calls, sets apart, and consecrates a person to serve Him. The ministry is God's ministry; therefore, He has the right to decide who will serve in the ministry. God calls and God ordains. No person can serve God, not effectively, not unless he is called and ordained by God. Again, Scripture is clear: God calls and God ordains.

John 15:16 *"You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit — fruit that will last. Then the Father will give you whatever you ask in my name."*

Aaron and his sons had been called and appointed by God to the priesthood: they were to be the ministers of God to God's people. It was now time for the call and appointment to be demonstrated before the people...

- demonstrated in such a way that their ordination would make a lasting impression upon them, that they would never forget their call and appointment.
- demonstrated in such a way that their ordination would make a lasting impression upon the people, that the people would hold them and their ministry in the highest respect.

This is a subject that needs to be closely studied by every minister of God as well as by every believer: *The Ordination of the Priests: The Steps to Ordaining the Ministers of God*, Leviticus 8:1-36.

- I. Step 1: the LORD's call to ordination — He calls through His mediator, Moses (a symbol of Christ) (vv. 1-5).
 - II. Step 2: the washing in water (a symbol of spiritual cleansing) (v. 6).
 - III. Step 3: the putting on of special clothing, the clothing of the High Priest (a symbol of Christ's righteousness, of bringing dignity and honour to the name of God) (vv. 7-9).
 - IV. Step 4: the anointing with oil (a symbol of dedication or consecration and of the Holy Spirit) (vv. 10-13).
 - V. Step 5: confessing the forgiveness of sins through the sin-offering (a symbol of Christ) (vv. 14-17).
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- VI. Step 6: confessing the atonement through the Burnt Offering (a symbol of Christ) (vv. 18-21).
- VII. Step 7: dedicating all that one is and does to God — through the ordination sacrifice (a symbol of Christ) (vv. 22-32).
- VIII. Step 8: knowing the critical importance of ordination and heeding God's warning (vv. 33-36).

I. *Leviticus 08:01–05 The LORD's Call to Ordination — He Calls through His Mediator, Moses (A Symbol of Christ)*

The first step to ordination is the LORD's call to the ministry, His call for a person to serve the people of God.

Note that God's call comes through His mediator Moses. But keep in mind the practical application: Moses was a symbol of Christ. Being ordained to the priesthood or ministry is of critical importance to God. A person is to be ordained only if he has been called of God and willingly submits to that call. This is dramatically pictured in the ordination of Aaron and his sons to the priesthood of Israel. Two calls were issued: there was the call to the priests (ministers) to prepare for the ordination; and there was the call to the people to assemble and gather for the ordination service (vv. 2-3). The picture would be this: the elders would have joined Moses and the priests at the entrance of the Tabernacle and all the people would have stood at the entrances to their tents (Exo 33:8).

Note the obedience of everyone (v. 4). They did exactly what God commanded. Also note the important declaration made: ordination is God's commandment: "this is what the LORD has commanded" (v. 5). Ordination is not of man; it is of God. A person was to be ordained to the priesthood because of God not because of man. God called and God ordained; therefore God's call and ordination were to be symbolized in an ordination service.

Thought 1. Why do people enter the ministry? Some like the profession. They like the idea of serving and ministering to people. Others like the professionalism of the ministry, the opportunity for leadership within the community that the ministry offers. Others like the opportunity for speaking and teaching on a regular basis. Some would like the prestige, image, and respect usually shown the minister. There are many reasons why a person might choose to serve in the ministry. But there is only one legitimate reason: the call and ordination of God. No person should ever serve in the ministry unless he has been called and ordained by God to serve. God calls and God ordains: this is the only legitimate reason for the church's ever ordaining a person to serve God's people.

John 15:16 "You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit — fruit that will last. Then the Father will give you whatever you ask in my name."

Acts 9:15 But the Lord said to Ananias, "Go! This man is my chosen instrument to carry my name before the Gentiles and their kings and before the people of Israel."

Acts 26:16 'Now get up and stand on your feet. I have appeared to you to appoint you as a servant and as a witness of what you have seen of me and what I will show you.'

2 Cor 5:18-20 All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God.

2 Cor 3:4-6 Such confidence we have through Christ before God. Not that we are competent in ourselves to claim anything for ourselves, but our competence comes from God. He has made us competent as ministers of a new covenant — not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.

Eph 3:7 I became a servant of this gospel by the gift of God's grace given me through the working of his power.

1 Tim 1:12 I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has given me strength, that he considered me faithful, appointing me to his service.

2 Tim 1:9-11 Who has saved us and called us to a holy life — not because of anything we have done but because of his own purpose and grace. This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time. But it has now been revealed through the appearing of our Saviour, Christ Jesus, who has destroyed death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. And of this gospel I was appointed a herald and an apostle and a teacher.

(see Abraham in Gen 12:1; Moses in Exo 3:10; Gideon in Jud 6:14; Elisha in 1 Kng 19:19; Isaiah in Is 6:8).

II. *Leviticus 08:06* The Washing in Water (A Symbol of Spiritual Cleansing)

The second step in ordination is washing in water.

Moses, God's mediator, took the men to be ordained and washed them in water. This is important: it was God's mediator who did the washing and the cleansing. Washing in water was a symbol of their need to be spiritually cleansed. No person can cleanse himself, not spiritually, not from sin. Only God's mediator can wash and cleanse a person spiritually.

Note one other fact as well: the washing and cleansing with water took place right before the putting on of the priestly clothes. The putting on of holy clothes is symbolic of putting on the righteousness of God. A person must be cleansed from sin before he is clothed in the righteousness of God.

Thought 1. It is Jesus Christ who washes us, who cleanses us from sin.

Heb 9:14 How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God!

Acts 22:16 And now what are you waiting for? Get up, be baptised and wash your sins away, calling on his name.

Eph 1:7 In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace.

1 John 1:7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.

Rev 1:5 And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, the first-born from the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood.

1 Cor 6:11 And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.

Eph 5:25-26 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her. To make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word.

Rev 7:14 I answered, "Sir, you know." And he said, "These are they who have come out of the great tribulation; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."

Psa 51:2, 7 Wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin....Cleanse me with hyssop, and I will be clean; wash me, and I will be whiter than snow.

Psa 65:3 When we were overwhelmed by sins, you forgave our transgressions.

Ezek 36:25 "I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols."

Zec 13:1 On that day a fountain will be opened to the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, to cleanse them from sin and impurity.

III. *Leviticus 08:07–09 The Putting On of Special Clothing, the Clothing of the High Priest (A Symbol of Christ's Righteousness)*

The third step in ordination involves clothing, the putting on of special clothing. What clothing? The clothing of the High Priest. Remember: the High Priest symbolized the High Priesthood of Jesus Christ, and the clothing symbolized the righteousness of Jesus Christ. A person must put on and be covered with the righteousness of Jesus Christ in order to be acceptable to God. The clothing of the High Priest declared two truths:

⇒ that the High Priest had to wear a different clothing than the people. He had to be covered with the most honourable and perfect clothing possible. This, of course, pointed to the righteousness of Jesus Christ, to His perfection.

⇒ that the High Priest was holy, set apart to God. He was to be respected and honoured as the mediator between man and God. This, of course, pointed to the dignity and honour of Jesus Christ, the dignity and honour of His righteousness.

1. The High Priest was clothed with the tunic, sash, robe and ephod (v. 7).

=> The linen tunic was a long, coat-like garment that essentially covered the whole body. It symbolized righteousness, the putting on of God's righteousness. (See note, Exo 28:1-5.)

The multicoloured sash of fine linen was symbolic of truth, the truth of God's Word. It is comparable to the belt of truth in the armour of God that the believer is to put on (Eph 6:14). The Word of God enlightens and wraps together everything in the believer's spiritual wardrobe. (See note, Exo 28:1-5.)

=> The robe was worn by the High Priest as he entered through the veil and ministered to the LORD in the Sanctuary. The robe was called the robe of the ephod and symbolized the intercessory or mediatory ministry of the High Priest. (See note, Exo 28:31-35.)

=> The ephod was a sleeveless, coat-like garment. It had two onyx stones sewn into it with the names of Israel's twelve tribes engraved on them, six names on each stone. The ephod symbolized that the priest carried the names of God's people before the LORD as their mediator and intercessor. (See note, Exo 28:6-14.)

2. The High Priest was clothed with the breast-piece that had the Urim and Thummim placed in its pouch (v. 7). The breast-piece or chest-piece was a pouch-like garment that was worn close to the heart, right next to the ephod. The pouch was for the purpose of carrying the Urim and Thummim. This symbolized two things:

=> It symbolized that the High Priest represented and carried the names of God's people upon his heart, that he represented them before the LORD continually. (See notes, Exo 28:29-30.)

=> It symbolized that the High Priest sought the will of God for the people. The Urim and Thummim were two stones that symbolized the special revelation or guidance that God gave the High Priest. (See note, Exo 28:15-30.)

3. The High Priest was clothed with the turban for the head and the gold plate or sacred diadem on the front of it (v. 9).

=> The turban was something like a linen headband that covered the head. This symbolized the need for mental righteousness. The mind and thoughts of the High Priest must be subjected to God and His righteousness. (See *Types Chart*, Exo 28:1-43.)

=> The gold plate (medallion) or sacred diadem was attached with a blue ribbon to the headband of the High Priest and was the crowning piece of the High Priest's wardrobe. The words "HOLINESS TO THE LORD" were written upon the medallion.

- The gold medallion symbolized that the High Priest bore the guilt for the shortcomings of the people.
- The gold medallion symbolized that the people must seek the acceptance of a holy God. (See *Types Chart*, Exo 28:1-43.)

Thought 1. This point is critical: no person should be ordained unless he has put on the righteousness of Jesus Christ. The righteousness of Jesus Christ must clothe a person completely, totally. In fact, two things are absolutely essential before a person should be ordained:

=> A person must demonstrate that he has been clothed with the righteousness of Christ, that God has clothed him with the righteousness of Christ.

2 Cor 5:21 *God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.*

Gal 3:6 *Consider Abraham: "He believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness."*

Phil 3:9 *And be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ — the righteousness that comes from God and is by faith.*

Col 3:9-10 *Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices. And have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator.*

Gen 15:6 *Abram believed the LORD, and he credited it to him as righteousness.*

=> A person must demonstrate that he will walk in the righteousness of Christ, that he will bring dignity and honour to the ministry of God.

Mat 5:20 *"For I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven."*

1 Cor 15:34 *Come back to your senses as you ought, and stop sinning; for there are some who are ignorant of God — I say this to your shame.*

2 Cor 5:17 *Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!*

Eph 4:24 *And to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.*

Eph 6:14 *Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place.*

Phil 1:11 *Filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ — to the glory and praise of God.*

IV. *Leviticus 08:10–13 The Anointing with Oil* ***(A Symbol of Dedication or Consecration and of the Holy Spirit)***

The fourth step in ordination is the anointing with oil. Throughout Scripture, both people and places were anointed if they were to be consecrated to God. Note that dedication or consecration was the basis for being anointed. If a person was to be consecrated to the

service of God, he was to be anointed with oil. The oil is a symbol of consecration and of the Holy Spirit, who anointed person for service. The points of the Scripture and outline give a clear picture of the anointing service.

1. Moses anointed the Tabernacle and its furnishings, everything in it (v. 10). The Tabernacle was consecrated, set apart for the service of God.
2. Moses anointed the altar seven times and anointed its utensils, basin and stand (v. 11). Why was the altar anointed seven times? Remember, the altar was where the atoning sacrifice was offered, the place where the payment or ransom for sin was made. The sacrifice or payment for sin was full and complete. It provided a perfect redemption for man. Throughout the Bible, the number seven symbolizes the idea of completion, fullness and perfection. The altar was anointed seven times to symbolize that a complete, full and perfect sacrifice was being made for man's atonement (reconciliation) and redemption.
3. Moses anointed Aaron's head, symbolizing thereby that Aaron was being consecrated, set apart to God and His service (v. 12).
4. Moses anointed and clothed the other priests, symbolizing that they also were being consecrated, set apart for the service of God (v. 13).

Thought 1. A person being ordained to the ministry must be anointed by the Spirit of God. He must be called by God and led to the point of dedication and consecration to God. The person must be totally dedicated to the service of God through the presence and power of the Holy Spirit.

Luke 9:23 *Then he said to them all: "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me."*

Acts 4:31 *After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly.*

Acts 11:22-24 *News of this reached the church in Jerusalem, and they sent Barnabas to Antioch. When he arrived and saw what the grace of God had done, he was glad and encouraged them all to remain true to the Lord with all their hearts. He was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and faith, and a great number of people were brought to the Lord.*

Acts 13:2 *While they were worshipping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them."*

Rom 8:14 *Because those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.*

Lev 8:30 *Then Moses took some of the anointing oil and some of the blood from the altar and sprinkled them on Aaron and his garments and on his sons and their garments. So he consecrated Aaron and his garments and his sons and their garments.*

Isa 16:13 *So Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the presence of his brothers, and from that day on the Spirit of the LORD came powerfully upon David. Samuel then went to Ramah.*

Isa 61:1-2 *The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is on me, because the LORD has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners. ■*