

# ORDAINING ELDERS

By Leon King

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Acts 14:23 (KJV) ***And when they had ordained them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed.***

According to the *On-line Bible*, the Greek word: "χειροτονεω cheirotoneo khi-rot-on-eh'-o" is translated as "ordained" in this verse. This Greek word appears three more times in the New Testament. Two of those times, the word appears in the adding notations at the end of 2nd Timothy 4 and Titus 3. Before I quote those, I want to quote William Tyndale's translation of Acts 14:23.

Acts 14:23 (Tyndale) And when they had ordered them elders by eleccion in every congregacio after they had yrayde and fasted they comended them to God on whom they beleved. (Tyn)

Please notice Tyndale's translation reads: "And when they had ordered them elders BY ELECCION in every congregacio..." This agrees with the On-Line Bible's definition of the Greek word quoted above.

Here are the NT uses of the Greek word "χειροτονεω" other than Acts 14:23.

2Co 8:19 *And not that only, but who was <5500> also chosen <5500> of the churches to travel with us with this grace, which is administered by us to the glory of the same Lord, and declaration of your ready mind:*

2Ti 4:22 *The Lord Jesus Christ be with thy spirit. Grace be with you. Amen. «The second epistle unto Timotheus, ordained <5500> the first bishop of the church of the Ephesians, was written from Rome, when Paul was brought before Nero the second time.»*

Tit 3:15 *All that are with me salute thee. Greet them that love us in the faith. Grace be with you all. Amen. «It was written to Titus, ordained <5500> the first bishop of the church*

*Young's Analytical Concordance*, on page 722 defines the Greek word translated as ordained in Acts 14:23 this way: "To elect by stretching out the hand."

The *On-Line Bible's* comments on this Greek word says it comes "from a comparative of 5495 and teino (to stretch);" The Greek word 5495 χείρ cheir khire is always translated as hand – 178 times. It suggests stretching forth the hand. The On-Line Bible comments for this Greek word say the meaning is this:

- 1) to vote by stretching out the hand
- 2) to create or appoint by vote: one to have charge of some office or duty
- 3) to elect, create, appoint

Could not help but notice John Gill's comments on this: "And when they had ordained them elders in every church, -- As soon as ever any number of disciples were made, or souls were converted to Christ in any place, they were at once formed, by the apostles, into a church state; and as the gifts, as well as the grace of the Holy Ghost, attended the ministry of the word, so among those that were converted, there were some that were honoured with ministerial gifts, qualifying them to preach the Gospel, and take upon them the care of the churches: these the apostles directed the churches to look out from among themselves, as in the case of deacons, an inferior office, who by joint suffrages declared their choice of them by the stretching out, or lifting up of their hands, as the word here used signifies, and not the imposition of them; and the apostles presiding in this affair, they were installed into the office of bishops, elders, or pastors over them; which expresses the great regard the apostles had to the order, as well as to the doctrine of the Gospel, and the concern they had for the welfare of souls

converted under their ministry, by making a provision for them when they were gone.”

Considering these meanings and Tyndale’s translation which says “they had ordained them elders by election,” I believe that Paul and Barnabas were doing mission work in this area, but the churches, obviously being instructed by Paul and Barnabas about elders, chose the elders in each church by election – stretching forth the hand and not by some fanciful ordination ceremony which are being held nowadays.

In other words, when a church considers a person for the office of a Bishop (Elders or Pastors), then give forth their hands they effectively “ordain - appoint” him to that office. Nothing else is required by scripture – that appears to me to have been the Lord’s purpose of putting the qualifications of bishops and deacons in the scripture so the churches can decide whether or not a man aspiring to be a bishop or deacon is qualified. No wonder Mr. Spurgeon was so against the procedures and extra-scripture “ordinations” held in his day. Me too!