

YORK RITE LIGHT

Brethren, today you will take a journey of York Rite Masonry. Let us review your journey in the symbolic craft Masonry, the Blue Lodge degrees, that we all love with all the excitement and joy of learning about Masonry. Let me say that there is no higher degree than that of a Master Mason. There is no other proficiency that must or has to be learned after symbolic Masonry. But we must reflect upon what did happen to us in the Master Masons Degree. We lost something--and did not find it in symbolic craft Masonry. While you were laying in the west in the Master Masons degree, do you remember hearing the Master as King Solomon in the east saying, "Alas, I fear the Secret Word of a Master Mason is forever lost." After receiving the Master Masons degree I wondered what happened to that word. What is it? Where can I find it? Why did we lose something in the Master Masons degree that is the very summit of Ancient Craft Masonry. Why should we lose that which should and might be the ultimate in Masonry? Some of the other grand lodge jurisdiction in this country talk about the lost word in the Master Masons degree, but in Texas we do not talk about the Word as much as we should.

The word is lost in the Master Masons degree, the word is discovered in a Chapter of Royal Arch Masons in the Royal Arch Degree, the word is preserved in a Council of Royal and Select Masters, the word becomes living flesh in the Commandery of Knights Templar, which is for those Masons that have a Christian belief.

The York Rite consists of the Lodge, the Chapter, the Council and the Commandery. The Lodge has three degrees, four degrees in the Chapter, two degrees in the Council, and three orders (degrees) in the Commandery. The Council has one honorary degree designated as the Super Excellent Masters degree. In some jurisdiction the Super Excellent Masters degree is required in the Council.

The degrees in the Chapter are the Mark Masters degree, the Past Masters Degree, the Most Excellent Masters Degree and the Royal Arch Degree (which is called the Holy Royal Arch Degree in England, Ireland, Scotland and Pennsylvania as the degree is somewhat different.) These degrees of the Chapter are called the Capitular Degrees or degrees of discovery.

The degrees in the Council are the Royal Masters Degree and Select Masters Degree. These degrees are called the Cryptic Degrees. These degrees of the Council are called the degrees of preservation.

The orders (or degrees) of the Commandery of Knight Templar are the Order of the

Red Cross, the Mediterranean Pass and Order of Malta, and the Order of the Temple. These Orders of the Commandery of Knights Templar are called the Chivalric Masonry or the word becomes living flesh.

In the York Rite the degrees are not in chronically order, but evolved into to order as conferred today. These degrees make up Ancient Craft Masonry and begins with the Entered Apprentice degree and ends with the Select Masters degree.

In each degree of the York Rite we teach a lesson and explain some thing about the symbolic lodge that you do not know. I am a blue Lodge Mason and a York Rite Mason and a Scottish Rite Mason and active in all. My York Rite Masonry teaches lessons in every degree and order. My Scottish rite Masonry teaches philosophy not lessons. Albert Pike, the father of Scottish rite Masonry, wrote the degrees of Scottish as such. This is not criticism of Scottish Masonry just a fact.

The first degree we will confer will be the Mark Masters. In the symbolic lodge at the closing of each lodge you heard the Senior Warden say "to pay the craft their wages if ought be due them". What are those wages and how do you receive them? The symbolic lodge does not tell us what the wages are or how to receive them. In the Mark Masters degree you will learn what those wages are and how to receive them. As Mark Masters Masons we leave a mark on every thing we do. When we talk as a Mason or work as a Mason we make a mark every person come in contact with in the Masonry or in the world at large. We should always think and act as a Mason so that we leave a good and lasting impression on the profane. In this degree you are a fellow craft Mason working in the quarries making the building stones of the temple and each stone that you make you put your mark on that stone. The mark you choose is unique, it belongs to you only. In England and the British Isles and Europe the stone masons left their mark on every stone make by them. Even today in those countries the mark of those stone masons can still be seen. In this degree as a candidate, you become a little lazy and do not complete your work in the quarries but you want to receive your wages. So you join the other workers on the sixth hour of the sixth day of the week and march to the Senior Wardens office to be paid. You pick up piece of work laying in the quarries and carry it up the over seekers for inspection hoping to be paid his wages at the Grand Senior Wardens office but all havoc breaks loose and he learns how to receive his wages. You will learn the lesson to keep your word as you promise in thee obligation by the Bible on the Altar. In years past a man make a contract with another person by a handshake and a word from his mouth which was binding as any contract written but today the same requires a lawyer to draw a contract in writing. My how times have changed requiring a man to have written papers that he cannot read to agreed with another. When the candidate in this

degree is selected and prepared in the anti-room I will explain to the other candidates on the side what will happen at the Altar. At the end of the degree you will receive an important lesson from the Holy Bible. You will learn that the Keystone becomes one of the important stones in all the building. The keystone or capstone is what keeps a building standing. We will teach you what the letters in the keystone mean and say.

The next degree is the Past Masters degree. When the Holy Royal Arch degree was organized or began in the British Isles all candidates for the Holy Royal Arch had to be Past Masters of a Lodge to be a member. In those lodges before a member could serve as Worshipful Master he had to receive the chair degree or what we call the Past Masters degree. The Worshipful Master elect receive the chair degree from the other Past Masters of that Lodge before installation as such. Even today in the jurisdiction of Pennsylvania the Past Masters degree belongs to the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania and the Grand Officers must confer upon you the degree before your installation. There are a few other states that require the same. Even the Grand Lodge of Texas before the early 1900's required the Past Masters degree on Masons elected to be Master of a Lodge. This degree started in the British Isles but was perfected by the American Rite which is now called the York Rite. In this degree one of you will be installed as Worshipful Master of the Lodge and preside over the Lodge and in doing so will learn how and way a Master of a Lodge rules and governs the same. It is an impressive lesson indeed. At the end of the degree you will receive a beautiful lesson about the Holy Bible on our Holy Altar. You will truly understand that no man can live unto himself alone and that he is dependent upon his fellow beings. You will learn how and why the Worshipful Master rules and governs the Lodge in an impressive manner.

The next degree is the Most Excellent Masters degree. This degree is the only degree in Masonry that the Temple of Solomon is completed and dedicated to the service of the only true and living God. In the symbolic Lodge and in the Scottish Rite or any other body of Masonry the Temple is not completed and dedicated. When we study the Bible in the Old Testament we read that to dedicate our belief in God a sacrifice had to be made to God, which was usually the first born son upon the altar. Remember in the Bible that Abraham attempted to offer his son Isaac as a sacrifice, but God told Abraham that from hence forth a human sacrifice would not be necessary, thus a lamb was usually sacrificed upon that altar and God would send fire from Heaven to consume the sacrifice. If any of you were present when your church built a new sanctuary, before the members could use the sanctuary a ceremony of dedication was performed before its use. This is what the Most Excellent Masters degree

represents. You are in attendance at the completion and dedication of King Solomon's Temple to the service of the one true and living God. If you were present when your church built a new sanctuary. The sanctuary was not used until it was dedicated to the service of God.

Now we come to the last degree in the Chapter known as the Royal Arch degree which completes Capitular Masonry. It is the Capstone of Freemasonry for the word that was lost in now found. The Royal Arch degree in this jurisdiction requires eighteen people to do the work and about two and one half hours. The Temple is completed but the people refused to follow the prophets and the laws of God and have turn from following the ways of God. As God has said in the Bible, the Temple is destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar the people taken captive and carried away to Babylon where they remained captive to him and his successors for period of seventy years until the reign of Cyrus, King of Persia, by whose proclamation they were liberated and permitted to return to Jerusalem to assist in the noble and glorious undertaking of rebuilding the house of the Lord. In the symbolic Lodge you were told in the Masters degree while you were in the south wearing the jewel of the Junior Warden that you had a rough and roughed road to travel over and that you might lose your life. You did not take that rough and roughed journey in the Lodge but you will in this degree. As one of the captives in Babylon of the three Most Excellent Masters left after seventy years and hearing that you have release and granted permission to return to Jerusalem to rebuild the Temple, you will take journey in this degree. On your return you volunteer to remove the rubbish of the old Temple to rebuild the new Temple and in doing so are told to be very careful to observe and preserve everything have marks of antiquity upon it. In doing so you discover the lost word of a Master Mason. You have known the word all this time but did not realized it.

The degrees of a Council of Royal and Select Masters comprise the Cryptic part of the York Rite. These degrees are called the degrees of preservation in that they preserved the word so that it be found in the Royal Arch Degree. These degrees belonged to the Southern Jurisdiction of the Scottish Rite. The Southern Jurisdiction of the Scottish at one time conferred more 65 other degrees than the 29 degrees as conferred today. Many of these 65 degrees were lost or not used and thus place in an file some where to be forgotten. The first degree called the Royal Masters degree takes place before the Temple is completed and time wise happens between the first and second section of the Master Masons Degree. You are once again a Fellow Craft Masons without the secret word and you try to receive fro our Grand Master Hiram Abif. Not by trying to take his life but trying to impress him by your skill and ability in making a very beautiful piece of work and hoping to receive the word. Grand Master Hiram Abif takes you on a journey of circumambulation of

the Altar and gives you the lessons of life and death in words that can be found in no other way.

The Select Masters degree takes place before the Temple is completed and Grand Masters Hiram Abif is working with the other Grand Masters to complete the Temple. Some time during the degree our Grand Masters Hiram Abif is slain and the Temple is completed by the others. This degree takes place in the secret vault of the Temple and under the Sanctum Sanctorum. You play the part of a particular and bosom friend of King Solomon by the name of Zabud still trying to receive the word. You stumble into the secret vault without authority. Great confusion arises and another companion loses his life and you are obligated and placed in his stead. You learn how the sacred treasures are placed in and on the Ark of the Covenant to preserve the word for future generations. At the end of the degree you will receive the Council summary that reviews all the degrees you have taken from the entered Apprentice through the Select Masters.

The Super Excellent Masters degree in Texas is an honorary degree and is only conferred every few years in the north Texas area by Dallas companions in the Scottish Rite Temple. The degree cost are a one time fixed cost and no dues are required every year and you may take your lady to observe the drama part of the degree. The Degree emphasizing the lessons of loyalty and faithfulness. The Degree centers around the events leading to the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple at the hands of the Chaldeans. The Degree interludes of biblical prophecy that highlight the end of the first Temple and the construction of the second Temple. It is noteworthy for its scenes of the Jewish court of Zedekiah and the Chaldean court of Nebuchadnezzar.

The Commandery Orders are conferred in a Commandery of Knights Templar and requires that its members profess a belief in the Holy Trinity as a Christian. The Commandery is the only branch of Masonry that is a uniform body. The orders are illustrious Order of the Red Cross, the Order of Malta, and the Order of the Temple.

The Order of the Red Cross reverts to the period of the royal Arch Degree, when the Jews were returning from Babylon to Jerusalem to rebuild the temple. One of their number prevails upon the King to restore to the new Temple the Holy Vessels carried away by the Babylonian armies when the first Temple was destroyed. You come before Darius the King as a captive in presenting his plea with the Princes to which was the greatest. The power of Wine, the power of the King, or the power of Woman. The Princes each make a very strong case for wine, the King, but you propose that the power of woman is the greatest and above that the power of truth prevails

greatest. A new Order founded which you become one of the members.

The Order of Malta and the Mediterranean Pass shift to the time of the Crusades and admission to the Mediterranean pass is sought and that a safe pilgrimage to the Holy Sepulchre might be undertaken by Pilgrims. The Mediterranean Pass or Knight of St. Paul requires the Mason to profess and practice the Christian faith and introduces the lesson and examples of unfearing faithful martyr of Christianity. The Order also traces the history of the Knights of Malta which are inheritors of the medieval Knights Hospitaller and in its several locations in history.

The Order of the Temple completes the York Rite and now the word becomes the living Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. No other degree or order in Masonry is more solemn, more impressive or more soul searching than the Order of the Temple. You will be present when Judas betrays Christ by agreeing to thirty pieces of silver to deliver him to the chief priests, you with Christ at the last supper with the disciples and he tells them that one of them will betray him and each says is it I Lord, you are there when Jesus took the three disciples into the Garden of Gethsemane to pray and the disciples could stay awake while Jesus prayed, you are there when Jesus was kissed on the cheek by Judas to betray him, you are there when Jesus was before the chief priests and the people and Pilate washed his hands of him and the people condemned him to death, you are there when they stripped him and put on a scarlet robe and put a crown of thorns on his head and he was caused to carry his Cross to Calvary but he was too weak and Simon of Cyrene was compelled to bear his cross, you were there when they gave him vinegar mingled with gall to drink, you are there when they nailed him to the cross and crucified him, you are there when he died on the Cross, when he was buried in the tomb, when he rose from the dead, when he met the disciples a last , and when he ascended into Heaven. In this Order you will drink from the dreads of misery which you will probably do only once in life. You now become a Christian Soldier of the Cross.

You have finished your York Rite degrees. Now pass it on to another Master Mason by obtaining petition for the York Rite.

