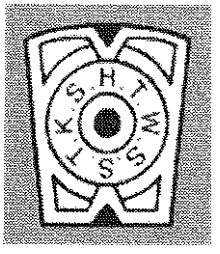
Grand Chapter State of New York

Mark Master Degree Introduction Lecture



My Brother:

The Degree of Mark Master Mason which you will receive tonight is a most important one, so much so that England and some other countries confine it to the Jurisdictions of a separate Grand Body. In America, however, we give it to you as the introductory degree of the Capitular Rite.

You will recall that at the building of King Solomon's Temple, there were 3300 Masters or Overseers of the Work. In this degree the setting reverts to the quarries where skilled Fellowcrafts present their work for approval of the Overseers so that each stone may fit with that exact nicety previously described.

Each Fellowcraft was required to select for himself a distinctive mark. This mark chiseled on each stone was as complete identification as the written signature of today. A mark was held by the possessor in the same honor as his good name. It was frequently handed down from father to son and was in practical use in the building of Cathedrals and public buildings down to the Feudal Ages in Europe. You will learn this evening it was also an acceptable pledge of credit in emergency. This mark, with a copy displayed when receiving wages, contributed much to that freedom from discord and confusion which prevailed among the workmen at the Temple.

The wages of a Fellowcraft were Corn, Wine, and Oil, as preferred, but history records the wages were mostly grain. The term "Penny a Day" used in this degree refers to a stated wage and in no way associated with the small coin known today.

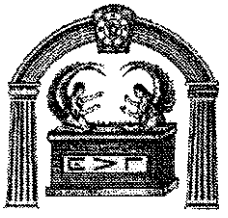
In previous degrees you were in darkness and were directed by a guide. Here you are at work in the open quarries, and after due instruction, you proceed alone with your specimen of work to the Overseers. You then call for your wages the same as the other workmen. You become skilled in forming a perfect ashlar used in wall construction. But, what of the stones that form the arch which you have not been taught as yet to frame? This lesson you will meet tonight, bearing in mind that the Temple you are building, is your own Temple. The Temple of your present life, in which every stone is a good act or constructive deed and each bearing the mark of your own good name.

Enjoy the degree!

Produced by the Masonic Education Committee
R:.E :. Richard J. Kessler, Chairman

Grand Chapter State of New York

Most Excellent Master Degree Introduction Lecture



My Brother:

That you may full understand the completeness of the Degree you are receiving, it is fitting at this time that you know the origins of the Degree of Most Excellent Master as a unit of the Chapter Degrees. The former degrees you have received have dealt with the structural features of the Temple. This Degree was founded on the interior and the completion of the building. Masonry is a progressive science. Likewise, among the Fellowcrafts presenting their work, history records, these workmen to have been the finest stone masons, sculptors, polished and setters of that time. Also chosen were those of highest skills in carving of wood for overlay of gold.

The laborers produced marvels of excellence. Luxury and splendor everywhere prevailed. A temple erected to God, with a generous display of the finest, richest products God had given to man. King Solomon then arranged a most magnificent ceremony of Dedication and Consecration of the Temple. He invited all his Rulers and Members of His Royal Households, and all the High Priests and Prophets of his Realm to participate in the grandeur of that momentous occasion.

Then in the presence of all this great assembly he summoned before him all the skilled workmen that had wrought physical glory to the finished edifice, and as a reward for their zeal and fidelity to the Craft, he greeted them "Most Excellent Masters," the highest honor then to be conferred upon an artisan.

Enjoy the degree!

Produced by the Masonic Education Committee
R:.E :. Richard J. Kessler, Chairman

Special thanks to: E:.Alan Troland

Grand Chapter State of New York

Holy Royal Arch Degree Introduction Lecture



My Brother:

On this occasion we have the pleasure of conferring, and you have the privilege ofreceiving the crowning Degree of Masonry, that of the Holy Royal Arch. This degree is founded upon the building of the Second Temple, which was by no means a rebuilding of the renowned Temple of Solomon.

History records that the Temple of Solomon stood for 420 years when Nebuzaradan, Captain of the Guard of Nebuchadnezzar, King of the Chaldeans, destroyed it. The Second Temple erected by Zerubbabel stood for nearly 500 years when it was taken down by Herod and replaced by a third. The Temple of Herod, after standing about I 00 years, was destroyed by the Romans under Titus. The Mosque of Omar now occupying the same site has stood for about 1200 years.

With all these changes of possession, the ravages of war, time, and the elements of thirty centuries, the foundations built by Solomon remain unmoved. Those massive stones so durably laid are still in place. Each said to still bear the "mark" of the quarry men.

King David was by heritage in possession of the Sacred Ark of the Covenant and Tables of Moses called the Book of the Law, which for safety he kept under strong guard at the King's house. In his instructions to Solomon, he desired that a secret apartment be built in the Temple as an invulnerable protection to the Ark.

In the Royal Arch Degree you will meet characters and conditions at the time of the destruction of the first Temple, when the people ofJerusalem, were taken by thousands as captives to Babylon. You will witness the return of some of those captives to Babylon. You will witness the return of some of those captives over a long sojourn to help rebuild the Temple under the direction of Zerubbabel.

As you go along as a Sojourner in this degree, may we urge your closest attention to its significant symbols. In the character of workmen you will discover these sacred articles among the ruins together with an accompanying discovery, with which you will be vested with gratifying satisfaction; "The Long Lost Masters Word."

Enjoy the degree!

Produced by the Masonic Education Committee
R:.E :. Richard J. Kessler, Chairman