When is a Lodge Room a Temple ??

Presented by MEC Norman McEvoy

In a previous paper I shared with you a summary of the events and personalities that have gone into the creation of what we affectionately refer to as Holy Royal Arch Masonry and, working from that base, it is now my intent, over as many editions as are required, to deal with clarifications on People ; Places & Things we encounter in our ceremonies.

In this paper I have decided to deal with the answer given by the Third Sojourner in the closing of the Chapter,
when he is asked "***Where was the First or Holy Lodge held***?" and again ***"Who presided? "***
The answer to the first question (in my ritual book) states ***"At the foot of Mount Horeb in the wilderness***" and
to the second question, ***" Moses ; Aholiab & Bezallel"***

Now the question I have asked myself is this:
What are we talking about??, Who are these people,?? & Why them????

Question 1. What are talking about???
To answer this question adequately it is necessary to refer to the Bible, specifically Exodus Chapter 25 right through to Chapter 31.
In these passages the whole story of God calling on Moses to build a **Tabernacle** in his name is spelt out, including **HOW** it was to built and **WHO** would be called upon to do it.

Comment

I have found in my research, that it is essential to get to the very beginning, and understand the same, before attempting to build further. This is a wonderful example of what I mean, because, were it not for Moses being given the "Ten Commandments" and **TOLD** to build a **Tabernacle** to house them, we would not have the Jewish Religion; the Christian Faith that followed, and there could be no Holy Royal Arch as we know it today.

Currently I am reading "**The Spirit of Masonry**" written by William Hutchinson in 1775 with Editorial Notes by the Rev George Oliver DD. In his Chapter on "Design" he offers this biblical quote:-

" See, I have called by name Bezallel, the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah. And I have filled him with the spirit of God, with skill, ability and wisdom, and in knowledge, in all kinds of Crafts.==to make artistic designs for work in gold, silver & bronze, to cut and set stones, to work in wood, and to engage in all kinds of craftsmanship. Moreover, I have appointed Ohloliab son of

Ahisamach, of the Tribe of Dan .to help him. Also I have given skill to all the craftsmen to make everything I have commanded you, "The Tent of the Meeting" The Ark of the Testimony" with the atonement cover on it, and all the other furnishings of the Tent. The table & its articles.The pure gold lampstand and all its accessories, the altar of incense, the altar of burnt offering and all its utensils, the basin with its stand. And also the woven garments, both the sacred garments for Aaron the Priest and the garments for his sons when they serve as priests and the anointing oil and fragrant incense for the Holy Place. They are to make them just as I commanded you"

The Tabernacle of the Congregation.

Thus wrought Bezallel and Aholiab and every wise hearted man, in whom the Lord put wisdom and understanding, to know how to work all manner of work for the service of the Sanctuary, according to all that the Lord had commanded.
And Moses called Bezallel and Aholiab, and every wise-hearted man, in whose heart the Lord had out wisdom,
even every one whose heart stirred him to come unto the work to do it" (Exodus xxxi2-7; xxxvi 1,2.)

The next question to be dealt with is what is a **"Tabernacle**" and to answer that question I have referred to The Lexicon of Freemasonry by Albert G. Mackey and I quote as follows: (with small modifications)

Tabernacle

The tabernacle was the place of worship, representing a Temple, which God commanded Moses to construct in the wilderness for the religious service of the Jews, and in which the ark of the covenant and sacred vessels were kept until Solomon removed them into the Temple at Jerusalem.

The Tabernacle was in the shape of a parallelogram fronting the East. thirty Cubits (forty five feet) in length, ten Cubits (Fifteen Feet) in height and breadth. The inside was divided by a richly embroidered veil of fine linen into two parts, the holy place and the holy of holies, in the latter of which was placed the ark of the Covenant.
Besides this Veil of linen which separated the most holy place, the Tabernacle was furnished with other veils of divers (different) colours, namely, of blue and purple, and scarlet and fine twined linen, from which are derived the emblematic colours of the several degrees of Masonry. (see Note below)

The room in which a Chapter of Royal Arch Masons meets, is called **the Tabernacle,** and is a representation of that temporary Tabernacle which was erected by Zerubbabel near the ruins of the Old Temple while the Jews, under his direction, were constructing the New One.

Note

According to the writings of Josephus, the Tabernacle was a symbol of the Universe.

The 12 loaves placed on the table were emblematic of the 12 months of the year; the 70 branches of candlesticks represented the 70 *decani* or divisions of the planets and the 7 lamps the 7 Planets.

The veils of the Tabernacle composed of four different colours, were emblematic of the 4 elements; the fine linen, made of flax, the produce of the Earth, represented the Earth; the purple represented the sea, because it was stained by the blood of marine shell-fish, the murex; the blue represented the air, it being of the colour of the sky; and the scarlet represented Fire.

Comment

With this information before us it should be easier to understand our Ceremonies and therefore make them more meaningful and easier to present.
To me this also enforces my opinion that the building in which we meet could never be referred to as a Masonic Hall etc. but only as a **"Temple".** To do otherwise diminishes who we are.

Conclusion

Once again I wish to thank you for the opportunity to share my findings and the joy of learning together.
Have a wonderful day & God Bless
Norm