

“Death, Burial & Resurrection in the Masonic Lodge”

by

Duane Washum

with

Lora Brown

The Legend of Hiram Abif (the Hiram Legend) of the Master Mason degree is the new member’s baptism into the religion of Freemasonry. Because there is no water involved, it is not easily recognized as such.

Every candidate for 3rd Degree of Freemasonry (Master Mason Degree) plays the role of Hiram Abif, Grand Architect of King Solomon’s temple, during his initiation. Hiram has a secret word and three ruffians kill him for not revealing it. The ruffians bury Hiram who is later resurrected.

The original “Death, Burial & Resurrection in the Masonic Lodge” was written by Duane Washum and presented by him as a lecture at an annual National Leadership Conference on Ministry to Masons and subsequently to other groups. In 2010, Lora Brown asked Duane’s permission to use and modify this lecture to deliver at an Evangelical Ministries to New Religions conference. That presentation, as well as this booklet, is Lora’s adaptation of Duane’s lecture. It is being used with his full knowledge, permission and approval.

Death, Burial and Resurrection in the Masonic Lodge

DUANE WASHUM

In Search of Light Ministries was founded in 1986. Its founder, Duane Washum, is a former Mason. In 1983, he was Worshipful Master of the lodge he was once a member of; but in 1984, he was convicted by the Holy Spirit and left Freemasonry to follow Jesus Christ. *Ex-Masons For Jesus* was founded in 1995, with Tom Hilton, also a former Mason, being one of its co-founders.

Because the two organizations enjoyed such a mutual cooperation with one another, it was inevitable that they would merge, thus combining their efforts more fully. And so, in March of 2006, the two organizations officially became one: *Ex-Masons For Jesus*.

Ex-Masons For Jesus is dedicated to the service of God, serving Him as a witness to His Church about Freemasonry and its incompatibility with the Christian faith. We work closely with other counter-cult ministries by providing speakers and educational materials, including free downloads from our website: www.emfj.org. *Ex-Masons For Jesus* also serves as a support group for former Masons who are still struggling with the darkness of Freemasonry that they have walked away from, in order to follow Jesus Christ.

Tom Hilton continues to serve as a member of its Board of Directors, as does Lora Brown of Rooftop Ministries.

Ex-Masons For Jesus
www.emfj.org

I pray that God uses this article, *“Death, Burial & Resurrection in the Masonic Lodge”* to shed light on a dark subject and that you are better informed about the deceptive inner workings of the Masonic Lodge.

Please take an interest in those men, women and children being misled by Masonic & Junior and Auxiliary Masonic Orders. Please love them and pray for them, remembering that ***“our struggle is not against flesh and blood but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world, and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.”*** (Ephesians 6:12)

Thank you and God bless you!

Duane Washum and Lora Brown

DEATH, BURIAL & RESURRECTION IN THE MASONIC LODGE

Most professing Christians who are members of the Masonic Order have no idea that what actually transpires during the Hiram Legend of the Master Mason degree is the new member's baptism into the religion of Freemasonry.

The new member, called a candidate, is neither sprinkled nor immersed; there is no water involved in the ceremony. Perhaps this is why professing Christians who are members of the order don't recognize the ceremony as being what it actually is. For most, when they hear of baptism, they seem to automatically think of a sprinkling of water, or total immersion in a baptismal font. Perhaps this is the reason for the obvious question that comes to the minds of most Christians who are outside the lodge: "How can you possibly have something called a baptism, without water?" The answer is very simple, yet it is also complex.

Symbolism and allegory are the keys to understanding Freemasonry. They are the keys to understanding the baptism of the candidate that is exemplified by his symbolic death, burial and resurrection as he is supposedly portraying a person by the name of Hiram Abif during an acted out drama that is admittedly a trumped up chain of events that never happened in the first place.

To help us in our endeavors to better understand the allegories and symbolisms of the Hiram Legend, there are a few words that should be defined. I have used the dictionary of the 'World Book Encyclopedia' as a reference, which is a Thorndike-Barnhart Dictionary, published exclusively for Field Enterprises Educational Corporation. When a different source is used, I will so indicate.

The first word I'll define is "Resurrection".

Resurrection is defined as being:

"a coming to life again; rising from the dead." A second definition given for this word is, *"a being alive again after death."*

The definition of baptism is,

"the act of baptizing; rite or sacrament or dipping a person into water or sprinkling water on him, as a sign of the washing away of sin and of admission into the Christian church."

This is the definition of the word, baptism that most of us who are Christians think of, thus the confusion about the "waterless" baptism performed by the Masonic Order. However, look very closely at this second definition of the word, from the same dictionary:

"any experience that cleanses a person, or introduces him into a new kind of life."

As you can see, the scope of baptism, particularly outside of the Christian church, has now been broadened with this second definition of the word.

I would like to quote from an additional source, regarding the definition of baptism as it pertains to at least one major Christian denomination of the body of Christ. From the *Report of Committee on Baptist Faith and Message*, as adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention on May 9, 1963, we find this:

“Christian baptism is the immersion of a believer in water in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. It is an act of obedience symbolizing the believer’s faith in a crucified, buried, and risen Savior, the believer’s death to sin, the burial of the old life, and the resurrection to walk in newness of life in Christ Jesus. It is a testimony to his faith in the final resurrection of the dead. Being a church ordinance, it is prerequisite to the privileges of church membership....”

Here it is clearly spelled out that the baptism a Christian believer undergoes is symbolic of the believer’s death, burial, and resurrection, *“...to walk in newness of life in Christ Jesus.”*

Note the similarity between this definition and the second definition of the word previously quoted, which also speaks of being introduced into *“...a new kind of life”*.

Let’s see what Freemasonry has to say about this.

From the Masonic Kentucky Monitor, pp. 26, 27,

“There you stood without our portals, on the threshold of this new Masonic life, in darkness, helplessness and ignorance. Having been wandering amid the errors and covered over with the pollutions of the outer and profane world you came inquiringly to our doors, seeking the new birth and asking a withdrawal of the veil which concealed the divine truth from your uninitiated sight...There was to be not simply a change for the future, but also an extinction of the past; for initiation is, as it were, a death to the world and a resurrection to a new life.”

Comparing these three definitions, we’ll find they are very congruent.

Of course we must define Freemasonry, and in all fairness to the Order, I think we should allow Freemasonry to offer up its own definition. The Heirloom Bible Publishers, Wichita, Kansas, publishes a Master Reference Edition of the Holy Bible, King James Version, exclusively for Freemasonry. Its primary distributor is the Macoy Publishing & Masonic Supply Company. On page 26 of this *Heirloom Masonic Bible*, we find the following:

“Freemasonry has been well defined as, “A peculiar system of morality veiled in allegory and illustrated by symbols.”

And because of this definition of Freemasonry, we are necessarily brought to the definition of the word, allegory:

“A long and complicated story with an underlying meaning different from the surface meaning of the story itself.”

(World Book Dictionary)

Bearing all this in mind, let us now take a look at what transpires within a Masonic lodge room, as a new member, called a “candidate”, undergoes the three degrees of Blue Lodge Masonry. This “walk through”, by the way, including the legendary portrayal we will be into shortly, is as per Nevada’s Blue Lodge ritual, which I will be using.

AN OVERVIEW OF RITUAL

The three degrees are named as follows: The first degree is called Entered Apprentice; the second degree is Fellow Craft; and the third degree is Master Mason. Together, these three degrees are referred to as the ‘Blue Lodge’ of Freemasonry.

The entered Apprentice and Fellow Craft degrees, mechanically, are pretty much in “lock-step” with each other. The lessons and teachings covered in each of these degrees is different, one from the other, but the mechanics are basically the same. In each of these degrees, the candidate dons the required clothing, which includes a blindfold; he enters the lodge room and is conducted around the lodge room for inspection; he kneels at an altar to assume an obligation; his blindfold is removed; he is invested with certain signs, grips and words; he is presented, emblematically, with the Working Tools of the degree; he is led from the lodge room so he can change into his regular clothing; and he is then returned to the lodge room for further instruction, by way of a lecture.

In the Master Mason degree, however, once the candidate has undergone procedures somewhat similar to what he experiences in the Entered Apprentice and Fellow Craft degrees, but before he receives a lecture, he finds himself in a very different situation. After donning his own clothing, he is returned to the south side of the lodge room and escorted to the empty chair which is the station of the Junior Warden, one of the three principal officers of the lodge.

He is given a ruse of an explanation that he will be sitting there as an honorary sort of thing. The jewel of the Junior Warden is hung around his neck.

The Worshipful Master raps his gavel; and as instructed, the candidate leans forward and places the Junior Warden's gavel in the upright position; then he sits back to enjoy the celebration of his achievement, or so he thinks.

However, the Worshipful Master raps his gavel a second time, looks to the candidate and says, "Brother Junior Warden, what is the hour?" The candidate stands up, but he is usually very confused at this point because he has no idea what the meaning of the question is. The Worshipful Master raps his gavel again and repeats, "Brother Junior Warden, what is the hour?"

Now the Senior Warden rises and says, "Worshipful Master, there appears to be a stranger in the South."

The Worshipful Master says, "What?! A stranger in the South?! Brother Senior Deacon, conduct the stranger to the East."

The candidate is then brought before the Worshipful Master who tells him: Even though he has been obligated as a Master Mason; even though he has received the Working Tolls of a Master Mason; even though he has been taught to wear his apron as a Master Mason; and even though he now wears the jewel of the Junior Warden, one of the three principal officers of the lodge, he has not yet attained to the Sublime Degree of a Master Mason. He has not yet proven himself to be a Master Mason.

The Worshipful Master advises him that there is one more hill he must climb, so to speak – one more test he must pass, to demonstrate that he is indeed a Master Mason. He is informed that it is a dangerous way to go, and that he may even meet with death, as did once befall an eminent brother of this degree.

Please note a similarity at this point, between Christian baptism, and what is referred to as Masonic baptism: I have already quoted from the Southern Baptist statement on baptism that baptism "... is prerequisite to the privileges of church membership..." In a Masonic lodge room, the Worshipful Master informs the candidate that what he is about to endure is prerequisite to his becoming a Master Mason.

How do we begin to make sense of all this? ALLEGORY! We look beyond the exoteric into the esoteric meanings.

Freemasonry's Grand Lodge of South Carolina claims, "Albert Gallatin Mackey (is) regarded as among the great, if not the greatest of all Masonic authorities."

Albert Mackey states that allegory is, "...to say something where the language is one thing and the true meaning another, exactly expresses the character of an allegory...Thus the legend of the Third degree is an allegory, evidently to be interpreted as teaching a restoration to life; and this

we learn from the legend itself, without any previous understanding.” (An Encyclopaedia of Freemasonry)

The Senior Deacon conducts the candidate to the altar, where he is once again blindfolded. He is caused to kneel and pray. He is told that his prayer may be mental or audible, and when he has concluded it, he is to audibly say “Amen”, and rise. Upon conclusion of the candidate’s prayer, the Hiramic Legend begins.

HIRAMIC LEGEND

The candidate is caused to represent a character named Hiram Abif. Even though there is no historical evidence to back up any part of the “drama” that is about to unfold, it is explained to the candidate, or initiate, that Grand Master Hiram Abif was the Grand Architect at the building of King Solomon’s Temple. Supposedly, Hiram knows some sort of a secret, which by its mere possession, a person would be allowed to pass himself off as a Master Mason, or journeyman builder, if you will, thus allowing him to travel and work in foreign countries and to receive Masters’ wages.

It had been promised to the workmen on the temple that upon its completion, those who were found worthy would receive the secrets, but three of the Fellow Crafts got a little over anxious and entered into a pact of extorting the secrets which Hiram supposedly held. So, one day Hiram is confronted by these ruffians, demanding the secrets from him. He refuses their demands, and they kill him.

DEATH

It is at this point that the candidate, portraying Hiram Abif, experiences Part I of the symbolism of baptism – Death.

At midnight, or low-twelve, under the cover of darkness, the ruffians remove his body from the temple grounds and take it to the brow of a hill where a grave had already been dug for the purpose, and bury him.

BURIAL

It is at this point that the candidate, portraying Hiram Abif, experiences Part II of the symbolism of baptism – Burial.

The ruffians attempt to flee the country, but they are discovered by three Fellow Crafts who has been sent out in search of them. They are returned to the temple and brought before King Solomon, who is portrayed by the Worshipful Master. The ruffians confess their guilt, and are summarily executed.

A new search is launched to find the remains of Hiram Abif. These same three Fellow Crafts return to the brow of the hill where they had come across the ruffians, and there they discover what appears to be a newly made grave. They dig down and find a body. Owing to the high state of decomposition, the body cannot easily be recognized, but the Fellow Crafts remove the jewel from around its neck and carry it back to King Solomon, who identifies it as being the jewel of Grand Master Hiram Abif.

King Solomon then leads a procession to the gravesite, presumably for the purpose of removing the body from the grave and returning it to the temple for more decent interment. Further, he advises the workmen that even though the Master's Word, which it has been promised they would eventually receive, has now been lost, and he will devise a substitute word that will do just fine until the real word is found again.

In a lecture that the candidate is to hear later on, after the conclusion of the Hiram Legend, he is told that the body of Hiram was indeed removed from the temporary grave and returned to the temple, where it was buried in due form. But that is not what transpires at the gravesite.

Rather, King Solomon orders the Senior Grand Warden (Hiram, King of Tyre) to raise the body by the grip of an Entered Apprentice. The Senior Grand Warden applies that grip to the cadaver, but owing to the high state of decomposition, the skin slips from the flesh, and the body cannot be raised. King Solomon then orders him to apply the grip of a Fellow Craft. He does so – first, with the Pass Grip of a Fellow Craft, and then with the Real Grip of a Fellow Craft – and for the same reasons as before, neither of those grips is strong enough. King Solomon asks, "What shall we do?" And the Senior Grand Warden suggests, "Let us pray."

The Chaplain then leads all those present in a prayer which concludes with,

"Yet, O Lord, have compassion on the children of Thy creation; administer them comfort in time of trouble, and save them with an everlasting salvation." (Nevada Ritual, p. 137)

RESURRECTION

After praying for the salvation of the fallen martyr, King Solomon states how timely the prayer is, and declares that the body will be raised. After determining a substitute word to replace that which was supposedly lost upon the death of Grand Master Hiram Abif, King Solomon informs the craftsmen that the substitute word will be the first word uttered after the body is raised. The Worshipful Master, who up to this time has been portraying King Solomon, then reaches down and grasps the hand of the candidate, who up to this time has supposedly been portraying Hiram Abif, with the real grip of a Master Mason, or lion's paw grip. And by the real grip of a Master Mason, the candidate is raised

“from a dead level to a living perpendicular”.

(Officers’ Manual of Lodge Organization and Operation – Nevada, p. 96)

(Note: This is not the terminology that is used during the legend, but I bring this phrase to your attention because you will see it again later on.)

As the candidate is “raised”, he and the Worshipful Master assume the position known as the five points of fellowship; and while in that position, which is foot to foot, knee to knee, breast to breast, hand to back, and cheek to cheek or mouth to ear, the Worshipful Master whispers the words, “Mah-Ha-Bone” into the ear of the candidate, “Mah-Ha-Bone” is the substitute for the Master’s Word.

RESURRECTION

And it is at this point, known as “raising”, that the candidate symbolically experiences the third and final state of the symbolism of baptism – Resurrection.

With the exception of explaining to the candidate what the word, “Mah-Ha-Bone” means – “What, the Builder”; and instructing him in the proper use of the Grand Hailing Sign of Distress, this pretty much concludes the Part III of the degree.

You no doubt have noticed by now that there is no re-interment. No body is returned to the temple for the purpose of burying it in due form, because at this point, there is no body. The purpose of the Hiram Legend is NOT the re-enactment of some nonsensical fairy tale with a moral attached to it, much like an Aesop’s Fable. The REAL intended purpose of the entire staged production, is “allegory illustrated by symbols”, is just exactly what is symbolized – the death, burial and resurrection of the candidate, that symbolism being exactly the same as is done by immersion in the baptismal font of a Christian Church.

The candidate, “representing” Hiram Abif, has not been initiated into a fraternity. Rather, the candidate, representing no one but himself, has been baptized into “the religious faith of Freemasonry”.

Why do those who profess to be Christians not realize what it is that is happening to them at the time? The explanation is quite simple:

Allegory – “a long and complicated story with an underlying meaning different from the surface meaning of the story itself.”

On page 58 of the *Heirloom Masonic Bible*, previously quoted from:

“Some of the most sublime symbolisms of Freemasonry relate to the building of this spiritual temple under the principles and tenets of Freemasonry, based upon the building of Solomon’s Temple by Operative Masons. These Operative Masons constructed the material temple of stones, cedars, with ornamentations of gold and precious stones, while Freemasons are constructing the spiritual temple of moral, ethical and spiritual virtues.”

From the *Officer’s Manual of Lodge Organization and Operation*, from the Grand Lodge of Nevada, page 100:

“The Temple of Solomon is a symbol of perfection; a symbolic representation of man as a temple of God.”

RAISED

This comes from a ‘Questions and Answers’ section of the *Heirloom Masonic Bible* previously referred to (p. 55)

We now have two additional areas to consider in regards to the Hiramic Legend: its origin; and its purpose.

ORIGIN

The Hiramic Legend is believed to have been a part of Freemasonry at least as early as 1725, but the idea that lies behind it is as old as religious thinking among men. The same elements existed in the allegorical ceremonies of those ancient religions which we refer to collectively as the Ancient Mysteries.” (Nevada’s Officer’s Manual, p. 96)

The legend of the 3rd degree has been considered of so much importance that it has been preserved in the symbolism of every Masonic rite. No matter what modifications or alterations...the legend...has been left untouched, to present itself in all the integrity of its ancient mythical form. (Book of Constitutions, Grand Lodge of SC, pg. 144)

Is Jesus Christ represented in Masonic Ritual?

When have you read any mention of Him previously in this booklet? Never. And there isn’t because Masonry’s rituals and monitors, which are their official documents, don’t have one single word about the Hiramic Legend having anything whatever to do with any Christian ceremony of a similar nature.

“Jesus answered him, ‘I have spoken openly to the world; I always taught in synagogues, and in the temple where all the Jews come together; and I spoke nothing in secret.’” (John 18:20, Holy Bible)