

# Where Does the Masonic Ritual Conflict with the Bible? – Part 1

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In the material that follows we will examine the religious teachings of Masonry and compare them with the teachings of the Bible. Remember that it is the Ritual of Masonry that is the supreme authority.<sup>1</sup> Individual Masons may disagree among themselves on various issues, but they may not disagree with the Ritual. And while there may be minor variations in the Ritual from state to state, these are largely insignificant. All Masonic Lodges accept the same basic interpretation of the Ritual that we will give.

During Masonic ceremonies various symbols are employed. Different symbols are used to identify the same idea or teaching; for example, both the compass and a sprig of acacia can symbolize immortality.<sup>2</sup>

Masonic authorities universally acknowledge the importance of the Masonic symbols. Roberts admits, “Symbolism is the lifeblood of the Craft.... It is the principal vehicle by which the ritual teaches Masonic philosophy and moral lessons.”<sup>3</sup> Mackey confesses, “To study the symbolism of Masonry is *the only way* to investigate its philosophy.”<sup>4</sup> In the questions below we will show how the symbols and rituals of Masonry teach things that are contrary to Jesus Christ and the Bible.

## **The Masonic Lodge teaches that all men including Christians live in spiritual darkness until they enter and become members of the Lodge. Is this biblical?**

The Masonic Lodge teaches the non-biblical view stated above in the first three degrees of the Blue Lodge, especially in the Entered Apprentice degree where the candidate is told he will now be brought out of darkness and into the light. This teaching can also be seen from the fact that *light* is the first and most important symbol in Masonry.<sup>5</sup> For the Mason, light symbolizes the seeking of truth. It is the goal of Masonic Ritual to bring the ignorant or unenlightened candidate to “Masonic Light.”<sup>6</sup> Only Masonry brings light to the candidate, therefore only the Mason knows the truth.<sup>7</sup> This means all non-Masons exist in spiritual darkness.

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<sup>1</sup> Transcript, The John Ankerberg Show, “Christianity and the Masonic Lodge: Are They Compatible?” (Guests: William Mankin, Dr. Walter Martin), Chattanooga, TN, The John Ankerberg Evangelistic Association, 1985, p. 5.

<sup>2</sup> Allen E. Roberts, *The Craft and Its Symbols: Opening the Door to Masonic Symbolism* (Richmond, VA, Macoy Publishing and Masonic Supply, 1974), pp. 62, 80).

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. xi, cf. p. 11.

<sup>4</sup> Albert G. Mackey, *The Symbolism of Freemasonry: Illustrating and Explaining Its Science and Philosophy, Its Legends, Myths, and Symbols* (Chicago, IL, Charles T. Powner Co., 1975), p. 5, emphasis added.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 148, 158.

<sup>6</sup> Roberts, *Craft*, p. 21.

<sup>7</sup> Mackey, *Symbolism*, pp. 148, 158.

Proof that Masonry teaches this concept can be found by examining the Ritual of the first degree of Masonry. In the first degree, each candidate is instructed, “You have long been in darkness, and now seek to be brought to light.” In the Ritual, when the candidate stands at the anteroom door, he knocks three times. On the other side of the door, the Junior Deacon also knocks three times and opens the door. He then says, “Who goes there?” The answer given by his conductor (the Senior Steward) is given in the Ritual itself:

Mr. \_\_\_\_\_, who has long been in darkness, and now seeks to be brought to light, and to receive a part in the rights and benefits of this Worshipful Lodge, erected to God....<sup>8</sup>

During our telecast, former Worshipful Master Jack Harris quoted Albert Mackey, who held the highest positions Masonry has to offer. Mackey was a thirty-third degree Mason and Secretary General of the Supreme Council of the Thirty-Third Degree Scottish Rite, a position he held for a great many years. In his book, *The Manual of the Lodge*, Mackey describes the candidate who seeks to enter the Masonic Lodge:

There he stands without [outside] our portals, on the threshold of his 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, he comes inquiringly to our door, seeking the new birth, and asking a withdrawal of the veil which conceals divine truth from his uninitiated sight.<sup>9</sup>

But how can any Christian take the first degree of Masonry and say that he has “long been in darkness, and now seeks to be brought to light”? Is it really true that Christians are still in darkness and the only way they can enter the light is to join the Masonic Lodge? When you became a Christian, weren’t you rescued out of darkness? Let’s look at what the Bible says.

Jesus said, “I have come into the world as a light, *so that no one who believes in me should stay in darkness*” (John 12:46, emphasis added). He also said, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life” (John 8:12). Here Jesus teaches that *He* is the Light. He teaches that believing in *Him* removes spiritual darkness; He does not teach that any *ritual*, Masonic or other, removes darkness.

Colossians 1:12-14 says, “Giving thanks to the Father who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the kingdom of light. For *he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves*, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins” (emphasis added).

Another example is Ephesians 5:8, where the apostle Paul writes, “For you were *once darkness, but now you are light* in the Lord. Live as children of light (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth) and find out what pleases the Lord. *Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them*. For it is shameful even to mention what the disobedient do in secret” (Eph. 5:8-12, emphasis added).

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<sup>8</sup> Malcolm C. Duncan, *Masonic Ritual and Monitor* (New York, David McKay Co., nd), p. 29; cf. Transcript, The John Ankerberg show, “The Masonic Lodge: What Goes on Behind Closed Doors?” (Guests: Jack Harris, William Mankin, Dr. Walter Martin, Paul Pantzer), Chattanooga, TN, The John Ankerberg Evangelistic Assoc., 1986, p. 4.

<sup>9</sup> Albert Mackey, *The Manual of the Lodge* (New York, Clark Maynard, 1870), p. 20; cf. Transcript, “What Goes On Behind Closed Doors?”, p. 5.

Jesus and the Bible plainly teach that any person who believes in Him is no longer in darkness. If you are a Christian, how then could you enter the Masonic Lodge and swear that you are still in darkness and seeking light? In the first degree of Masonry, didn't you say that which is directly contrary to what your Lord and the Scriptures teach?

In Henry Wilson Coil's *Masonic Encyclopedia* he writes, "Light is everywhere the symbol of intelligence, information, knowledge, and truth and is opposed to darkness which symbolizes ignorance and evil. So, in the ceremonies, the candidate is said to be brought from darkness to light."<sup>10</sup>

But if Coil is right, then no Christian should take the vows of the Lodge, confessing that he does not have the truth and is living in spiritual ignorance and evil. The Scriptures clearly state that Christians "are *not* in darkness" and are "all sons of the light and sons of the day. We do not belong to the night or to the darkness" (1 Thess. 5:4-5, emphasis added).

How can a Christian participate in rituals and promote another religion that denies and opposes the teachings of Christ? Jesus Himself asks, 'And why do you call Me, 'Lord, Lord,' and not do what I say?'" (Luke 6:46).

### **Masons teach and believe in a universal Fatherhood of God and brotherhood of man. Is this biblical?**

The Masonic Lodge teaches the non-biblical view stated above in their first, second, and third degrees, but especially in the prayer of the Entered Apprentice and during their ceremony in the third degree concerning the legend of Hiram Abiff.<sup>11</sup> Specifically, the Masonic Lodge teaches its belief in the unity and universality of all men as "one family" accepted by God regardless of race, religion, or creed.<sup>12</sup> This Masonic teaching sounds good to most people. But if we examine it carefully, does the Bible really teach the concept of the universal Fatherhood of God and brotherhood of man, so that all men are automatically sons of God? Does the Bible teach that all men are in good standing before God even if they are ignoring God's Son?

The Bible does *not* teach any of the above, but Masonry *does*. During the ritual of the first three degrees, every Mason is introduced to the Masonic teaching concerning the Fatherhood of God. For example, in his discussion of the ritual encompassing the Masonic legend of Hiram Abiff, Allan E. Roberts in his *The Craft and Its Symbols: Opening the Door to Masonic Symbolism* instructs new candidates that "through these teachings the Mason will put into practice the brotherhood of man under the Fatherhood of God. In doing so, he will develop his character and personality in the image of the Great Architect of the Universe."<sup>13</sup>

Every man who has gone through the first degree of Freemasonry remembers when he prayed the following prayer. It can be found in the *Standard Masonic Ritual and Monitor* of every state for the first degree (Entered Apprentice) of the Blue Lodge:

Vouchsafe Thine aid, *Almighty Father of the universe*, to this our present convention; and grant that this candidate for Masonry may dedicate and devote his life to thy service, and

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<sup>10</sup> Henry Wilson Coil, *Coil's Masonic Encyclopedia* (New York, Macoy Publishing and Masonic Supply, 1961), p. 375.

<sup>11</sup> Roberts, *Craft*, p. 84.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 21.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 84.

become a true and faithful brother among us! Endue him with a competency of thy divine wisdom, that, by the secrets of our art, he may be better enabled to display the beauties of brotherly love, relief, and truth, to the honor of thy holy name. Amen.<sup>14</sup>

Masonic authority Carl Claudy admits that this prayer, at the start of the Masonic journey, forms the foundation of the Craft: “Among the most beautiful of Freemasonry’s symbols, these express at the very beginning the fundamental principle of Freemasonry: the Fatherhood of God, and the Brotherhood of man.”<sup>15</sup>

The Masonic temple itself is said to symbolize the idea of the harmony between the Fatherhood of God and brotherhood of man. For example, “The temple that the Craft is building is the unification and the harmonizing of the entire human family. This is summed up for us in the well-known lines: ‘God hath made mankind one vast brotherhood, Himself their Master, and the world His Lodge.’”<sup>16</sup> God Himself is said to be the ultimate “W.M. [Worshipful Master] working through His supervising Master Masons.”<sup>17</sup>

But the Bible does not teach the universal Fatherhood of God (that all Masons are in good standing with God and a part of His Lodge) and brotherhood of man (that all men can live in harmony even though they hold different religious beliefs). Scripture clearly teaches that sinful men only become children of God and attain favorable standing before Him when they place their faith in Jesus Christ as their Savior.

The following Scriptures prove that, apart from Christ, men may be the creation of God, but they are not the *spiritual* “sons” or “children” of God.

But *as many as received Him*, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name (John 1:12, emphasis added).

[Jesus said] If I speak truth, why do you not believe Me? He who is of God hears the words of God; for this reason you do not hear them, *because you are not of God* (John 8:46-47, emphasis added).

The apostle Paul describes the condition of all men before God prior to their faith in Christ:

And [you] were by nature *children of wrath*, even as the rest.... Remember that you were at that time *separate from Christ...* and strangers to the covenants of promise, *having no hope and without God in the world* (Eph. 2:3, 12, emphasis added).

[Men] being darkened in their understanding, *excluded from the life of God*, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardness of their heart (Eph. 4:18, emphasis added).

But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, *he does not belong to Him* (Rom. 8:9, emphasis added).

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<sup>14</sup> Duncan, *Masonic Ritual*, p. 30, emphasis added; cf. Carl H. Claudy, *Foreign Countries: A Gateway to the Interpretation and Development of Certain Symbols of Freemasonry* (Richmond, VA, Macoy Publishing and Masonic Supply, 1971), p. 23; George Simmons and Robert Macoy, *Standard Masonic Monitor of the Degrees of Entered Apprentice, Fellow Craft and Master Mason* (Richmond, VA, Macoy Publishing and Masonic Supply, 1984), p. 17.

<sup>15</sup> Claudy, *Foreign Countries*, p. 24.

<sup>16</sup> Foster Bailey, *The Spirit of Masonry* (Hampstead, London, Lucius Press, Ltd., 1972), p. 110.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*

Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, *for God's wrath remains on him* (John 3:36, emphasis added).

In Jesus' prayer to His Father, He describes the world's natural condition: "The world has *not* known Thee" (John 17:25, emphasis added). The Bible also teaches that someday Christ will return, "dealing out retribution to those *who do not know God...*" (2 Thess. 1:8, emphasis added).

When Masonry teaches that all men are already saved because of the Fatherhood of God and brotherhood of man, they are effectively inhibiting and preventing Masons from coming to a personal knowledge of Jesus Christ and having their sins forgiven. In this sense, Masonry is unbiblical (John 3:16).

In the above verses, notice first of all that if Jesus gives to those who believe on Him the right to become children of God, then all men were not children of God before that. This means that men are not *born* children of God, as Masonry teaches, and that God is not the Father of all men – spiritually or relationally.

Why? It seems Masonry has forgotten or ignores the account of man's fall in Genesis – of Adam and Eve in the garden. The Bible teaches that man, through disobedience to God, sinned and broke his spiritual relationship with God. All men, although created by God, are not in a right relationship with God. Proof of this can be found in the book of Acts where we read, "The God who made the world and all things in it... is Lord of heaven and earth.... Being then the offspring of God..." (Acts 17:24, 29). Notice that because God is the Creator, all men may be said to be His children, His offspring, in the sense of His *creating* them. But they are not His children *relationally or spiritually*. Here is the problem. Look at what God says to His children. God now "commands all people everywhere to repent" (Acts 17:30). Repentance means we must be willing to turn away from our beliefs and reliance on self and turn to and fully rely upon Christ's salvation provided for us.

How is it possible for a Christian to promote and defend a false teaching which says that all sinful men regardless of their relationship to Christ will go to heaven? The Scripture says a Christian should know better.

The Scriptures instruct Christians to proclaim that only through Christ will men receive forgiveness of their sins and be able to go to heaven. Jesus said: "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but through Me" (John 14:6).

(This information is excerpted from John Ankerberg and John Weldon, *The Facts on the Masonic Lodge* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 1989). This book, along with other material examining the Masonic Lodge from a Christian perspective, is available at our website: [www.johnankerberg.org](http://www.johnankerberg.org).)