

MOST EXCELLENT MASTERS DEGREE

Bible: 2 Chronicles vii

M E M: ** Brother Senior Deacon, you will take with you suitable assistance and prepare the candidate to be received in the first section of the Most Excellent Masters Degree in due and ancient form.

S D: (*Rises, sign, retires, prepares Candidate, returns to station*)

M C: ** ** **

S D: (*Rises, gives sign*) Most Excellent Master, there is an alarm at the inner door.

M E M: Brother Senior Deacon, you will attend to the alarm and report the cause.

S D: (*At inner door*) ** ** **

M C: *

S D: * (*Opens door*) Who comes here?

M C: A Worthy Brother who has been regularly initiated an Entered Apprentice Mason, passed to the degree of Fellowcraft, raised to the sublime degree of Master Mason, advanced to the honorary degree of Mark Master, regularly seated in the Oriental Chair, and now prays for further light in Masonry by being received and acknowledged a Most Excellent Master.

S D: My Brother, is it of your own free will and accord you make the request?

Candidate: It is.

S D: Brother Master of Ceremonies, is the candidate duly and truly prepared, worthy and well qualified?

M C: He is.

S D: By what further right does he expect to gain admission into this Worshipful Lodge of Most Excellent Masters?

M C: By benefit of the password.

S D: Has he the password?

M C: He has it not, but I his conductor have it for him.

S D: Advance and give it.

M C: G_____.

S D: The password is right. The candidate will await the time with patience until his request shall be made known to the Most Excellent Master and his answer returned. (*At Altar, sign*) Most Excellent Master, the alarm at the inner door was caused by a Worthy Brother who has been regularly initiated an Entered Apprentice Mason, passed to the degree of Fellowcraft, raised to the sublime degree of Master Mason, advanced to the honorary degree of Mark Master, regularly seated in the Oriental Chair, and now prays for further light in Masonry by being received and acknowledged a Most Excellent Master.

M E M: Brother Senior Deacon, is it of his own free will and accord he makes the request?

S D: It is.

M E M: Is he duly and truly prepared, worthy and well qualified?

S D: He is.

M E M: By what further right does he expect to gain admission into this Worshipful Lodge of Most Excellent Masters?

S D: By benefit of the password.

M E M: Has he the password?

S D: He has it not, but I his conductor have it for him and will give it at the proper time.

M E M: It is my order that the candidate be permitted to enter and be received in due and ancient form.

S D: (*Opens ante-room door*) It is the order of the Most Excellent Master that the candidate be permitted to enter and be received in due and ancient form. (*Senior Deacon backs up but does not touch Candidate*)

My Brother, you will halt. The manner of your reception in the preceding degrees has already been explained to you. In this Most Excellent Masters Degree, you are received upon the apex of the keystone applied to your naked breast (*done*) which is to teach you that as the keystone completes the arch, so is this Most Excellent Masters Degree founded in the completion and dedication of the Temple by King Solomon to the service of Almighty God. Most Excellent Master, the candidate has been received in due and ancient form.

M E M: Brother Senior Deacon, it is my order that the candidate be conducted six times around the Lodge and caused to halt at the West and East.

(Senior Deacon conducts Candidate six times around lodge leaving Altar on the right.)

S D and Candidate: (*In West, E.A. Sign*)

R W S W: (*E.A. Sign*) *

M E M: *I WAS GLAD WHEN THEY SAID UNTO ME, LET US GO INTO THE HOUSE OF THE LORD.*

S D and Candidate: (*In East, E.A. Sign*)

M E M: (*E.A. Sign*) *

S D and Candidate: (*In West, F.C. Sign*)

R W S W: (*F.C. Sign*) **

M E M: *OUR FEET SHALL STAND WITHIN THY GATES, O JERUSALEM. JERUSALEM IS BUILDED AS A CITY THAT IS COMPACT TOGETHER.*

S D and Candidate: (*In East, F.C. Sign*)

M E M: (*F.C. Sign*) **

S D and Candidate: (*In West, M.M. Sign*)

R W S W: (*M.M. Sign*) ** *

M E M: *WHITHER THE TRIBES GO UP, THE TRIBES OF THE LORD, UNTO THE TESTIMONY OF ISRAEL, TO GIVE THANKS UNTO THE NAME OF THE LORD.*

S D and Candidate: (*In East, M.M. Sign*)

M E M: (*M.M. Sign*) ** *

S D and Candidate: (*In West, MK.M. Sign*)

R W S W: (*M.K.M. Sign*) ** **

M E M: FOR THERE ARE SET THRONES OF JUDGMENT, THE THRONES OF THE HOUSE OF DAVID.

S D and Candidate: (*In East, M.K.M. Sign*)

M E M: (*M.K.M. Sign*) ** **

S D and Candidate: (*In West, P.M. Sign*)

R W S W: (*P.M. Sign*) ** ** *

M E M: PRAY FOR THE PEACE OF JERUSALEM: THEY SHALL PROSPER THAT LOVE THEE. PEACE BE WITHIN THY WALLS, AND PROSPERITY WITHIN THY PALACES.

S D and Candidate: (*In East, P.M. Sign*)

M E M: (*P.M. Sign*) ** ** *

R W S W: ** ** **

M E M: FOR MY BRETHREN AND COMPANIONS' SAKES, I WILL NOW SAY, PEACE BE WITHIN THEE. BECAUSE OF THE HOUSE OF THE LORD OUR GOD, I WILL SEEK THY GOOD. ** ** **

S D and Candidate: (*In West*)

S D: ** ** **

R W S W: ** ** ** (*Rises*) Who comes here?

S D: A Worthy Brother who has been regularly initiated an Entered Apprentice Mason, passed to the degree of Fellowcraft, raised to the sublime degree of Master Mason, advanced to the honorary degree of Mark Master, regularly seated in the Oriental Chair, and now prays for further light

in Masonry by being received and acknowledged a Most Excellent Master.

R W S W: My Brother, is it of your own free will and accord you make the request?

Candidate: It is.

R W S W: Brother Senior Deacon, is the candidate duly and truly prepared, worthy and well qualified?

S D: He is.

R W S W: By what further right does he expect to gain admission into this Worshipful Lodge of Most Excellent Masters?

S D: By benefit of the password.

R W S W: Has he the password?

S D: He has it not, but I his conductor have it for him.

R W S W: Advance and give it.

S D: G ____.

R W S W: The password is right. He has my permission to pass.

S D and Candidate: (*In East*)

S D: ** * * *

M E M: ** * * * (*Rises*) Who comes here?

S D: A Worthy Brother who has been regularly initiated an Entered Apprentice Mason, passed to the degree of Fellowcraft, raised to the sublime degree of Master Mason,

advanced to the honorary degree of Mark Master, regularly seated in the Oriental Chair, and now prays for further light in Masonry by being received and acknowledged a Most Excellent Master.

M E M: My Brother, is it of your own free will and accord you make the request?

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S D: He is.

M E M: By what further right does he expect to gain admission into this Worshipful Lodge of Most Excellent Masters?

S D: By benefit of the password.

M E M: Has he the password?

S D: He has it not, but I his conductor have it for him.

M E M: Advance and give it.

S D: G_____.

M E M: The password is right. It is my order that the candidate be reconducted to the Right Worshipful Senior Warden in the West, who will teach him how to approach the East, the place of Masonic Light, in due and ancient form.

(Senior Deacon and Candidate West of Altar.)

S D: Right Worshipful Senior Warden, it is the order of the Most Excellent Master that you take charge of the candidate

and teach him how to approach the East, the place of Masonic Light, in due and ancient form.

(Right Worshipful Senior Warden in charge of Candidate.)

R W S W: My Brother, you will step off on the left foot, bring the heel of the right to the hollow of the left, step off on the right foot, bring the heel of the left to the hollow of the right, step off on the left foot, bring the heel of the right to the heel of the left, step off on the right foot, bring the heel of the left to the toe of the right, step off on the left foot, bring the heel of the right to the toe of the left, step off on the right foot and bring the left parallel with the right, body erect. Most Excellent Master, the candidate awaits your pleasure.

M E M: *(Stands)* My Brother, it becomes my duty to inform you that you cannot proceed further without taking upon yourself a solemn obligation appertaining to this degree, while I take pleasure in informing you that there is nothing contained in it which will interfere with the duties you owe to God, your country, your family, or yourself. With this assurance upon my part, are you willing to proceed?

Candidate: I am.

M E M: Brother Senior Deacon, you will place the candidate in proper position to receive the obligation.

S D: My Brother, you will kneel on both knees and place both hands upon the Holy Bible. *(Done)* Most Excellent Master, the candidate is in position and awaits your pleasure.

M E M: *** *(Goes to Altar)* My Brother, you will announce your name and repeat after me:

I, _____, % m on fr wl @ ac, in t prs % A G, @
ths wfl :: % M E Ms, erc t Hm @ ddc t K S, do hb @ hn mst
sl pr @ s, tt I wl nt cmc t scs % ths d t an on exc it b in a rg ::

or to a kn wr br M E M, @ nt unt aft stc tr, d ex, o lfl mc inf I sh hv fnd hm or thm jsly entl t rc t sm.

An I ms sl pr @ s, tt I wl std t @ ab b t b-ls, rls, @ rgls % ths or ay ot :: % M E Ms % wh I m bc a mb, @ wl suprt t cnstn, rsltns, @ edcs % t Gr Ch und whs jrsdcn I ma b, s fr as thy ma cm t m knl @ r nt subvr % t prnc @ grwk % Fmy; @ wl ob al du sgs @ sms snt or hnd t m fm a rg :: or by a kn wth br M E M, if wthn lgh % m c-t.

An I ms sl pr @ s tt I wl dsps tr Mc lt @ knl to al ls infd bn, whrvr dsp, thy mkg aplcn to m @ I fdg thm wr.

An I ms sl p @ s tt I wl nt wrg a :: or a b M E M t th vl % anth, nr prmt i t b dn if wthn m pr t prv it.

T al % wch I m sl pr @ s, wght an eqv, slf evs, or mn rsvn wtev, bndg msl und t pn % hvg m br tn op, m hr @ vt tkn thc @ thrn upn a dh t rt, shd I wlfl vl an pt % t sl ob % a M E M; s hl m G.

In token of your sincerity, you will kiss the book before you which is the Holy Bible.

Brother Senior Deacon, you will release the Brother from the cabletow as he is bound to the fraternity by stronger ties.
*(Returns to East) **

My Brother, you now observe me as Most Excellent Master of this Lodge approaching you from the East upon the step, under the due guard, and sign of a Most Excellent Master. *(Takes step)* This is the step, this the due guard, and this the sign. It alludes to the penalty of the obligation wherein you said you would have your breast torn open, your heart and vitals taken thence and so forth. It is also the working sign of the degree, the sign to be given on entering or retiring from a Lodge of Most Excellent Masters.

As a further token of my brotherly love and esteem, I extend to you the right hand of fellowship, and with it the pass grip

and password of this degree. You will take me as I do you. Here I left you and here I find you; will you be off or from?

S D: From.

M E M: From what to what?

S D: From the grip of a Past Master to the pass grip of a Most Excellent Master.

M E M: Pass

S D: From a grip to a span.

M E M: From a span to a grip. A threefold cord is not easily broken.

S D: A four fold cord cannot be broken; a threefold cord is not easily broken.

M E M: A four fold cord cannot be broken, what is this?

S D: The pass grip of a Most Excellent Master.

M E M: Has it a name?

S D: It has.

M E M: Will you give it to me?

S D: I did not so receive it, neither can I so impart it.

M E M: How will you impart it?

S D: I will syllable it with you.

M E M: Syllable and begin.

S D: You begin.

M E M: The word is with you, begin.

S D: L__

M E M: G__

S D: G__

M E M: L__

S D: G_____

M E M: G_____ is the password, and this is the pass grip of a Most Excellent Master. Will you be off or from?

S D: From.

M E M: From what to what?

S D: From the pass grip of a Most Excellent Master to the grip of the same.

M E M: Pass. (*Done*) What is this?

S D: The grip of a Most Excellent Master.

M E M: Has it a name?

S D: It has.

M E M: Will you give it to me?

S D: I did not so receive it, neither can I so impart it.

M E M: How will you impart it?

S D: I will syllable it with you.

M E M: Syllable and begin.

S D: You begin.

M E M: The word is with you, begin.

S D: B_

M E M: R_

S D: N_

M E M: B_

S D: R_

M E M: N_

S D: R_____

M E M: R_____ is the word and this is the grip of a Most Excellent Master. Prior to the dedication of the Temple while the chief priests and elders were assembling in the hall of audience, our Grand Master Solomon passed through the different apartments to see if the work had been completed in accordance with divine command given by God to his father David. Finding the work complete in all its parts, he came forth and grasping the Master Architect in this manner, hailed him R_____ which means Most Excellent, or Good Master. This is called the covering grip, and as it covers all the other grips from the Entered Apprentice Degree up, so should we, as with a mantle of charity, ever endeavor to cover up the faults, foibles, and follies of a Brother Most Excellent Master, ever esteeming it our duty and privilege not only to remind him of his errors, but to aid in his reformation.
(Senior Deacon conducts Candidate North center of lodge room facing South)

(Confusion)

M E M: * Right Worshipful Senior Warden, what is the cause of all this confusion among the craft in and about the Temple?

R W S W: Most Excellent Master, it is the day set apart for the celebration of the capstone and dedication of the Temple.

M E M: Right Worshipful Senior Warden, this being the day set apart for the celebration of the capstone and dedication of the Temple, it is my order that you assemble the craft in procession in the South, facing the East to assist in those solemn ceremonies.

R W S W: *** Craftsmen, it is the order of the Most Excellent Master that you assemble in procession in the South, facing the East to assist in the solemn ceremonies of the celebration of the capstone and dedication of the Temple. Brother Marshal, you will form the procession.

MAR: (*In front of Junior Warden station*) Fall in craftsmen, fall in. (*done*) Right Worshipful Senior Warden, the procession is formed.

R W S W: Forward march.

All: (*Singing or play Song*)

ALL HAIL TO THE MORNING, THAT BIDS US REJOICE; THE TEMPLE'S COMPLETED, EXALT HIGH EACH VOICE, THE CAPSTONE IS FINISHED, OUR LABOR IS O'ER; THE SOUND OF THE GAVEL SHALL HAIL US NO MORE.

TO THE POWER ALMIGHTY, WHO EVER HAS GUIDED THE TRIBES OF OLD ISRAEL, EXALTING THEIR FAME; TO HIM WHO HATH GOVERNED OUR HEARTS UNDIVIDED, LET'S SEND FORTH OUR VOICES TO PRAISE HIS GREAT NAME.

COMPANIONS ASSEMBLE ON THIS JOYFUL DAY. (THE OCCASION IS GLORIOUS) THE KEYSTONE TO LAY. FULFILL'D IS THE PROMISE BY THE ANCIENT OF DAYS. TO BRING FORTH THE CAPSTONE WITH SHOUTING AND PRAISE.

Most Excellent Master: ** G ____ ** T ____ ** and T ____.

THERE'S NO MORE OCCASION FOR LEVEL OR PLUMBLINE,

(remove aprons)

FOR TROWEL OR GAVEL, FOR COMPASS OR SQUARE;
OUR WORKS ARE COMPLETED, THE ARK SAFELY SEATED,

(seat ark)

AND WE SHALL BE GREETED AS WORKMEN MOST RARE.

NOW THOSE WHO ARE WORTHY, OUR TOILS WHO HAVE SHAR'D, AND PROVED THEMSELVES FAITHFUL, SHALL MEET THEIR REWARD. THEIR VIRTUE AND KNOWLEDGE, INDUSTRY AND SKILL, HAVE OUR APPROBATION, HAVE GAIN'D OUR GOOD WILL.

WE ACCEPT AND RECEIVE THEM, MOST EXCELLENT MASTERS, INVESTED WITH HONORS AND POWER TO PRESIDE, AMONG WORTHY CRAFTSMEN, WHEREVER ASSEMBL'D, THE KNOWLEDGE OF MASONS TO SPREAD FAR AND WIDE.

M E M: THEN SAID SOLOMON, "THE LORD HATH SAID THAT HE WOULD DWELL IN THE THICK DARKNESS. BUT I HAVE BUILT AN HOUSE OF HABITATION FOR

THEE, A PLACE FOR THY DWELLING FOREVER." AND THE KING STRETCHED FORTH HIS HANDS AND TURNED HIS FACE, AND BLESSED THE CONGREGATION OF ALL ISRAEL, AND ALL THE CONGREGATION OF ISRAEL STOOD. THEY THEN KNEELED DOWN AND PRAYED. (*Lights out*)

M E M: O LORD GOD OF ISRAEL, THERE IS NO OTHER GOD LIKE THEE, EITHER IN HEAVEN ABOVE, OR UPON THE EARTH BENEATH. BEHOLD, HEAVEN, AND THE HEAVEN OF HEAVENS CAN NOT CONTAIN THEE; HOW MUCH LESS THIS HOUSE WHICH I HAVE BUILT. HEARKEN THOU, THEREFORE, TO THE SUPPLICATION OF THY SERVANT, OF THY PEOPLE ISRAEL; HEAR THOU FROM THY DWELLING-PLACE, EVEN FROM HEAVEN, AND WHEN THOU HEAREST, FORGIVE.

NOW WHEN SOLOMON HAD MADE AN END OF PRAYING, FIRE CAME DOWN FROM HEAVEN AND CONSUMED ALL THE BURNT OFFERINGS AND SACRIFICES, AND THE GLORY OF THE LORD FILLED THE LORD'S HOUSE. WHEN ALL THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL SAW HOW FIRE CAME DOWN FROM HEAVEN, AND THE GLORY OF THE LORD UPON THE HOUSE, THEY BOWED THEMSELVES DOWN TO THE GROUND, WITH THEIR FACES ON THE PAVEMENT AND WORSHIPPED AND PRAISED THE LORD, SAYING,

All: FOR HE IS GOOD; FOR HIS MERCY ENDURETH FOREVER.

FOR HE IS GOOD; FOR HIS MERCY ENDURETH FOREVER.

FOR HE IS GOOD; FOR HIS MERCY ENDURETH FOREVER.

FOR HE IS GOOD; FOR HIS MERCY ENDURETH FOREVER.

FOR HE IS GOOD; FOR HIS MERCY ENDURETH

FOREVER.

*FOR HE IS GOOD; FOR HIS MERCY ENDURETH
FOREVER.*

(Lights on, rise and give Grand Hailing sign) R_____.

{{Optional}}}

M E M: *{{ALMIGHTY JEHOVAH, DESCEND NOW AND FILL THIS LODGE WITH THY GLORY, OUR HEARTS WITH GOOD WILL; PRESIDE AT OUR MEETINGS, ASSIST US TO FIND TRUE PLEASURE IN TEACHING GOOD WILL TO MANKIND. THY WISDOM INSPIRED THE GREAT INSTITUTION, THY STRENGTH SHALL SUPPORT IT TILL NATURE EXPIRE; AND WHEN THE CREATION SHALL FALL INTO RUIN ITS BEAUTY SHALL RISE THROUGH THE MIDST OF THE FIRE.}}*

M E M: The Lodge will now stand at ease for the purpose of clearing the Altar and resuming clothing. *(In East)* * The newly made Brother will approach the East.

My Brother, you doubtless remember when you were first permitted to enter upon the threshold of freemasonry and were presented with the lamb skin or white apron and taught its emblem; also when you were permitted to pass between the two columns at the outer porch and by a winding stairway were conducted into the middle chamber, where you learned the wages of a fellowcraft and had your name recorded as such; also when you were caused to represent the tragical scene connected with the premature death of our Grand Master Hiram Abif, one of the noblest men and Masons whoever lived, who fell a martyr to his Masonic fidelity; also when you were remanded to the quarries and ordered to resume your labors and continue them until you had learned to bring up good and square work, just such work as would stand the test of the Grand Overseers square.

The Temple being completed in all its parts except placing the keystone to complete the arch, our Grand Master Solomon with his chariot and suite went out to Gibeon, five miles North of Jerusalem, and took all the Holy vessels under cover and brought them to the Sanctum Sanctorum or Holy of Holies, and there offered that, the first house ever built by Masons to the Supreme Grand Artificer of the Universe for his acceptance and consecration, and when our Supreme Grand Master condescended to receive the house a miracle was wrought, fire came down from heaven and consumed all the burnt offerings and sacrifices and the Glory of the Lord filled the Lord's house. When all the children of Israel saw how fire came down from heaven and the Glory of the Lord upon the house, they exclaimed R_____, which means Good Master. This is the ceremony we have endeavored to represent in conferring upon you the Most Excellent Masters Degree, a degree regarded by Masons as one of the most sublime in Masonry. You have already been informed that the ceremonies of this degree are intended to represent the solemn ceremonies connected with the final completion and dedication of the Temple, which occurred subsequent to the death of our Grand Master Hiram Abif, consequently he was not present on that interesting occasion; hence, we have no Junior Warden in this degree, as you will observe, that seat is now vacant.

You will now receive the charge.

(Charge)

OUR MYSTIC TEMPLE IS NOW COMPLETED. THE PRICELESS KEYSTONE BINDS THE LAST ARCH TOGETHER, AND THE ARK HAS BEEN SEATED IN ITS RESTING PLACE, UNDER THE EXTENDED WINGS OF THE CHERUBIM IN THE MOST HOLY PLACE, AND FOR YOUR ZEAL AND FIDELITY TO THE CRAFT, YOU HAVE BEEN RECEIVED AND ACKNOWLEDGED MOST

EXCELLENT MASTER. AS SUCH, NEW DUTIES AND NEW OBLIGATIONS ARE IMPOSED UPON YOU, WHICH YOU ARE EXPECTED TO MEET AND FULFILL WITH EQUAL PLEASURE TO YOURSELF AND HONOR TO THE FRATERNITY. YOU ARE INVESTED WITH POWER TO TRAVEL INTO FOREIGN COUNTRIES, WORK, AND RECEIVE MASTERS WAGES, AND DISPENSE TRUE MASONIC LIGHT AND KNOWLEDGE TO ALL LESS INFORMED BRETHREN.

THE MYSTIC TEMPLE REPRESENTS OUR PRESENT LIFE; THE FOREIGN COUNTRY INTO WHICH A MASON IS EXPECTED TO TRAVEL IS THAT "UNDISCOVERED COUNTRY FROM WHOSE BOURNE NO TRAVELER RETURNS." THE WAGES WHICH HE IS TO RECEIVE ARE THE REWARDS OF A WELL SPENT LIFE, AND THE KNOWLEDGE OF DIVINE TRUTH, WHICH THE GRAND MASTER OF THE UNIVERSE WILL BESTOW UPON ALL WHO FAITHFULLY PERFORM THEIR TASK.

YOUR ADMISSION TO THIS DEGREE OF MASONRY IS A PROOF OF THE GOOD OPINION THE BRETHREN OF THIS LODGE ENTERTAIN OF YOUR MASONIC ABILITY -- BELIEVING THAT YOU WILL BE A TRUE BROTHER, BECOME A PERFECT ASHLAR AND A MASTER WORKMAN. LET THIS CONSIDERATION INDUCE YOU TO BE CAREFUL OF FORFEITING, BY MISCONDUCT, OR INATTENTION TO OUR RULES, THAT ESTEEM WHICH HAS RAISED YOU TO THE RANK YOU NOW POSSESS; PUTTING ASIDE ALL PERSONALITIES, JEALOUSIES AND ENVIES KEEN, WHICH IMPEDE YOUR PROGRESS TOWARD VIRTUE AND HAPPINESS, AND SOW THIS LIFE WITH THORNS.

LET IT BE YOUR UNREMITTING STUDY TO ACQUIRE SUCH A DEGREE OF KNOWLEDGE AND INFORMATION AS WILL ENABLE YOU TO DISCHARGE WITH

*PROPRIETY THE VARIOUS DUTIES INCUMBENT UPON
YOU, AND PRESERVE UNSULLIED THE TITLE, NOW
CONFERRED UPON YOU, OF MOST EXCELLENT
MASTER.*

You will now take your seat among the Brethren.