

# **FELLOWCRAFT MASON**

## **THE CRAFT AND ITS SYMBOLS**

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The Fellowcraft Mason's Degree is enriched with the antiquity of Freemasonry. In the early development of Freemasonry, it was for the Fellowcraft Mason's Degree that a candidate needed to attend a Lodge meeting. The "highest" degree was considered the Fellow of the Craft Degree. When a man strove to become the Worshipful Master of his Lodge, we underwent the extra degrees of Master and Mark Masons.

During the development of the degrees, the Master Mason's Degree was added and the Mark Mason became part of the Royal Arch Chapter. The Fellowcraft Degree in other jurisdictions is performed differently. After the candidate takes his obligation, he is taken on a "trip" up the winding stairs of the temple. Solomon's temple had three sections. The Entered Apprentices were not permitted to have access to the second and third floors and the Fellowcrafts could not access the third floor.

The Fellowcrafts would meet at the end of the week before the Sabbath in the middle chamber of the temple on the second floor. At that time, they would be paid for their labors in grains, wines and oils. There would be plenty of time for them to return home before the beginning of the Sabbath (the day of rest). The Fellowcrafts would go up to the top of the winding stairs and be greeted by our equivalent, the Junior Warden. He would ask for the grip and password to gain access to the middle chamber. The Fellowcraft, after giving the proper response, would move down a short corridor to the next door. The Senior Warden would ask him for the grip and password that would give him admittance to the middle chamber. The Fellowcraft would give the proper grip and password and would be admitted into the middle chamber. Each Fellowcraft's work was tallied and each was paid accordingly.

The Fellowcraft goes on a journey up the winding stairs to the middle chamber of King Solomon's temple. The first three steps allude to the three stationed officers of a Lodge. In some Grand Jurisdictions, they represent the working tools of a Fellowcraft. These working tools deal with how we should treat ourselves and our fellow man. The next five steps remind us of the five orders of architecture and the five senses -- both important elements of our lives. The last seven steps deal with the seven liberal arts. The seven liberal arts are the foundation of the sciences and humanities. These areas of learning are what give a Mason and Freemasonry its strength. It is through these disciplines that we grow toward that divine wisdom.

The five principal orders of architecture are important to recognize for their beauty and geometric style: the Tuscan, Doric, Ionic, Composite, and Corinthian. The columns around the stations of the Master and Wardens are in their different styles of architecture. The Wardens columns are two different styles of architecture. The Greeks invented the Doric, Ionic, and Corinthian style, while the Romans added the Tuscan and the Composite.

The battle that is described in the degree can be found in the Holy Bible. Masonic tradition informs us that this word and the true password were used at the temple for the Fellowcrafts to gain passage into the middle chamber. In some jurisdictions, before a lodge of Fellowcraft Masons is opened the Junior and Senior Deacons will go around the Lodge getting the word from the Brethren. The passgrip password is the word they are expecting.

The working tools of a Fellowcraft Mason, the plumb, square, and level, deal with human behavior. The plumb reminds us to be proud of who and what we are before God and our fellow man. The level teaches that all men are created equal in God's eyes. We are all equal in the Masonic Lodge no matter what our social standing. The square teaches us to treat our neighbors and all mankind honestly.

It is a coincidence that geometry and God both begin with the letter "G." The letter "G" is an addition to the square and compasses that was done within the past 100 years or so. Geometry can be used to understand God's universe.

The columns from the front of King Solomon's temple are Boaz and Jachin. Boaz is the left column and Jachin is the right. Boaz and Jachin were great-grandfathers of Solomon. Each is referenced in Holy Scripture. The splendor and beauty of these columns and the completed temple was revered by the ancients as the 8th wonder of the world.

There are many other examples of symbolism and meaning to the Fellowcraft Mason's Degree. There is much material in print that relates to the degree. This paper should be considered only the beginning of your examination of the Fellowcraft Mason's Degree.