

## Freemasonry

(a.k.a. Masonry, Masonic Lodge, or The Lodge)

Notes compiled from Watchmen Fellowship, NAMB, TGC, & The Secret Teachings of the Masonic Lodge (by Moody Press)

**Founders:** Though the origin of Freemasonry is debated, it appears that Anglican clergymen James Anderson, George Payne, and Theophilus Desaguliers played a founding role.

**Founding date:** Apparently 1717 A.D.

**Sacred Scriptures:** The Christian Bible, the Hindu Vedas, the Muslim Quran, and Scriptures of other religions, all of which are said to teach the same ethical truths.

**Respected publications:** *A Comprehensive View of Freemasonry* and *Coil's Masonic Encyclopedia*, both by Henry Wilson Coil; *A Manual of the Lodge* and *Encyclopedia of Freemasonry*, both by Albert Mackey; *Morals and Dogma*, by Albert Pike; *The Religion of Masonry: An Interpretation*, by Joseph Fort Newton.

**Organizational structure:** There are three degrees in Blue Lodge Freemasonry: Entered Apprentice, Fellow Craft, and Master Mason. One can then pursue the higher degrees of the York Rite or the Scottish Rite.

### What is Freemasonry?

Freemasonry is the teachings and practices of the secret fraternal (men-only) order of Free and Accepted Masons, known as Freemasons or Masons. In addition to the main body of Freemasonry, there are various offshoots, such as the Shriners (known formally as the Ancient Arabic Order Nobles of the Mystic Shriners, they are also required to be Masons).

The basic, local organizational unit of Freemasonry is the Lodge, which is usually overseen at the regional level (state, province, or national border) by a Grand Lodge.

An applicant for admission to a Masonic lodge is required to be an adult male, and believe in the existence of a Supreme Being and in the immortality of the soul.

The experience of becoming a Freemason is divided into three ceremonial stages that Masons call "degrees." These three degrees are loosely based on the journeyman system, which was used to educate medieval craftsmen: entered apprentice, fellow craft, and master Mason. The degrees symbolically represent the "three stages of human development: youth, manhood, and age."

The candidate is not considered unless he is a worthy individual who has been vouched for by another Mason in good standing. The candidate's petition is reviewed, as are his character and reputation, and a vote is taken in the lodge. A single negative vote, as evidenced by a "black ball," is enough to bar the candidate's petition. But if no black ball appears, the candidate is declared duly elected.

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The candidate promptly goes through the ritual for the Entered Apprentice degree, which is the first degree of the Blue Lodge. The ritual is bizarre and elaborate, and symbolizes the initiate—said to be in spiritual darkness—coming to the Masonic Lodge for “light.” With his left hand upon the holy book of his choice, the initiate promises to keep the secrets of the lodge, and takes a blood initiation oath (with a penalty of a cut throat) toward that end.

Initiation rituals into the Fellow Craft degree and the Master Mason degree have similar violent penalties for betraying the secrets of the Lodge. The candidate is given a lambskin as an emblem of innocence that points to the purity of life necessary for one seeking entrance into the celestial lodge above (heaven).

For many Masons, the first three degrees of Masonry, then, are merely a stepping-stone to the higher "truths" of the Lodge. In fact, as in the ancient pagan mystery cults (which were also divided into the "lesser" and "greater" mysteries), many Masons will admit that the Blue Lodge teachings are purposely deceptive. They are intended to hide the real truths of Masonry from the initiate until such a time as he is "worthy" of receiving them." It would seem, then, that Blue Lodge Masonry parallels the "lesser mysteries" while the York and Scottish rites parallel the "greater mysteries." Under his discussion of the Third Degree of the Blue Lodge in *Morals and Dogma*, Albert Pike observes that,

Masonry, like all the Religions, all the Mysteries, Hermeticism and Alchemy, conceals its secrets from all except the Adepts and Sages, or the Elect (the worthy), and uses false explanations and misinterpretations of its symbols to mislead, conceal the Truth, which it calls Light, from them, and to draw them away from it. Truth is not for those who are unworthy.

In other words, according to Pike, many Masons are uninformed about Masonry because the Craft has purposely kept the truth from them. And lest Masons claim that Pike was only asserting his own opinions, remember the words of C. Fred Kleinknecht affirming that Pike's *Morals and Dogma* "endures as the most complete exposition" of Scottish Rite Masonry.

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**Blue Lodge**

1. Entered Apprentice
2. Fellow Craft
3. Master Mason

<b>York Rite</b>	<b>Scottish Rite</b>
<i>Chapter (Capitular Degrees)</i>	<i>Lodge of Perfection</i>
Mark Master	4. Secret Master
Past Master (Virtual)	5. Perfect Master
Most Excellent Master	6. Intimate Secretary
Royal Arch Mason	7. Provost & Judge
<i>Council (Cryptic Degrees)</i>	8. Intendant of the Building
Royal Master	9. Elu of the Nine
Select Master	10. Elu of the Twelve
Super Excellent Master	11. Elu of the Fifteen
<i>Commandery (Chivalric Degrees)</i>	12. Master Architect
Order of the Red Cross	13. Royal Arch of Solomon
Order of the Knights of Malta	14. Perfect Elu
Order of Knights Templar Commandery	<i>Chapter Rose Croix</i>
	15. Knight of the East or Sword
	16. Prince of Jerusalem
	17. Knight of the East & West
	18. Knight Rose Croix
	<i>Council of Kadosh</i>
	19. Grand Pontiff
	20. Master of the Symbolic Lodge
	21. Noachite or Prussian Knight
	22. Knight of the Royal Axe
	23. Chief of the Tabernacle
	24. Prince of the Tabernacle
	25. Knight of the Brazen Serpent
	26. Prince of Mercy
	27. Knight Commander of the Temple
	28. Knight of the Sun
	29. Knight of St. Andrew
	30. Knight Kadosh
	<i>Consistory</i>
	31. Inspector Inquisitor
	32. Master of the Royal Secret
	33. (Active or Honorary)

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**What is the goal of Freemasonry?**

**The goal of Freemasonry is to bring about a new world order.**

Masonic author H. L. Haywood sets forth the objectives of Masonry. He asserts that Masonry will bring about a new world order: "It (Masonry) is a world law, destined to change the earth into conformity with itself, and as a world power it is something superb, awe inspiring, godlike." - H.L. Haywood

Another Masonic writer declares that "the doctrines of Masonry will ultimately rule the intellectual world."

Masonic scholar Albert Pike affirms that the "hope" of the Mason is "in the ultimate annihilation of evil in the universe; and in the final triumph of Masonry, that shall make of all men one family and household."

Mackey's Revised Encyclopedia of Freemasonry illustrates this goal when it discloses that "the mission of Masonry is ... to banish from the world every source of enmity and hostility," "to destroy the pride of conquest and the pomp of war," and "to extend to all nations the principles of Masonry"

The most widely read and influential book in Masonry is Joseph Fort Newton's The Builders. In one of his chapters, Newton explains what Masonry "is trying to do in the world":

- "To bring about a universal league of mankind"
- "To form mankind into a great redemptive brotherhood"

Newton declares that as Masonry expands, all religious dogmas will "cease to be." All individual creeds and doctrines will be done away with, and what remains will be what is termed "the one eternal religion— the Fatherhood of God, the brotherhood of man, the moral law, the golden rule, and the hope of a life everlasting" Because of this, Newton defines Masonry as "a great order of men, selected, initiated, sworn, and trained to make sweet reason and the will of God [i.e., Masonry) prevail!"

Masonry is purposefully built on secrecy

Masonry stresses the importance of secrecy for at least two principal reasons.

1. The first is that the element of secrecy itself is something that attracts men and makes them feel important.
2. The second reason is because it offers the Craft a stabilizing influence.

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"Mystery has charms as well as power. 'The entire fabric of the universe is founded on secrecy; and the great Life-force which vivifies, moves, and beautifies the whole, is the profoundest of all mysteries.... The first obligation of a Mason— his supreme duty— his chief virtue is that of silence and secrecy.'" - Guide to the Royal Arch Chapter

"Secrecy is indispensable in a Mason of whatever degree." - Albert Pike

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**What does Freemasonry Believe?**  
(Or require that its members believe?)

**The Bible:** Masons believe the Bible is written in symbols that can be understood only through esoteric interpretations; an approach which seeks to uncover hidden meanings within the symbols. Though the Bible is a significant book, it is not the exclusive Word of God. Masons often refer to the Bible as one of many symbols of God's will—others include the Muslim Quran and Hindu Vedas. In fact, all holy books are acceptable within the confines of any Masonic Lodge. These books provide not just religious truth but *moral* truth and hence constitute ethical guides by which to govern one's life. This is the important thing for the Mason.

**God:** Masons describe God by such terms as the "Great Architect of the Universe," the "Supreme Being," the "Grand Geometrician of the Universe," the "Grand Artificer of the Universe," and "God, the Creator, Author, and Architect of the Universe, Omnipotent, Omniscient, and Omnipresent." They often say God is infinitely beyond our ability to comprehend, and hence it is inappropriate for mere humans to fight about how to define Him.

Masons often speak of God's "all-seeing eye," which is viewed as a symbol of the omnipresent deity. They note it is the same symbol the Egyptians used to represent the god Osiris in all their temples. Some Masons believe this all-seeing eye is alluded to in Proverbs 15:3: "The eyes of the LORD are everywhere, keeping watch on the wicked and the good" (see also Ps. 34:15; 121:4).

It is believed that Jews, Christians, Hindus, Muslims, and those of other faiths all worship the same all-seeing God using different names. God is "the nameless one of a hundred names." He "is equally present with the pious Hindoo [sic] in the temple, the Jew in the synagogue, the Mohammedan in the mosque, and the Christian in the church."

Freemasonry *as an institution*, however, does not affirm the Christian belief in the Trinity. Masons believe that if Freemasonry affirmed belief in the Trinity, that would amount to sponsoring the Christian religion, since Christianity is the only religion that holds to this doctrine. The Masonic policy is that "no phrase or terms should be used in a Masonic service that would arouse sectarian feelings or wound the religious sensibilities of any Freemason."

In the Royal Arch degree of the York Rite, the real name of God is revealed to be *Jabulon*. This is a compound word derived from "Ja" (for Jehovah), joined with "Bel" or "Bul" (for Baal, the ancient Canaanite God), and "On" (for Osiris, the ancient Egyptian mystery god). Masons say that "in this compound name an attempt is made to show by a coordination of divine names... the unity, identity and harmony of the Hebrew, Assyrian and Egyptian god-ideas."

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**Jesus:** The deity of Christ is either denied or greatly downplayed within Masonic circles. “Christian Masons” may consider Jesus to be divine, but they typically choose not to invoke His name when praying. Masons are instructed to pray more generally “in the Most Holy and Precious name.” If the name of Jesus were invoked during prayer, then others from different religious persuasions would seek to invoke the name of their deity during prayer. Since Masons seek to avoid religious disputes, invoking *any* name—including that of Jesus—is avoided.

Jesus is typically regarded by Masons as a great moral teacher and ethical philosopher in the same league with other great men like Socrates. He stood for virtue. Some Masons believe the reason Jesus was put to death was because of His high morality. Though Jesus is admired, any suggestion that He is the only way to God is outright rejected by most Masons. Such an idea is viewed as intolerant, and intolerance is not tolerated within the halls of Masonic Lodges. Masons believe there are many acceptable paths to God, all based on attaining a high level of morality.

**Salvation:** Masons deny the Christian doctrine of original sin and reject any suggestion that humans are depraved. Humans are viewed merely as imperfect. They make mistakes. If a person works hard at keeping the principles and teachings of the Masonic Lodge—if he lives *ethically*—he will finally be ushered into the “Celestial Lodge Above,” where the “Supreme Architect of the Universe” resides.

Masons use symbols like the gavel to represent the goal of removing the “rough edges” from a person’s overall good character. The Mason’s heightened morality is said to be evidenced in their charity and involvement in civic duties.

**Occultic Beliefs:** There is an occult connection in Freemasonry, though many Masons—particularly those who consider themselves “Christian Masons”—may be unaware of this. The 19th through the 28th degrees of the Scottish Rite, in particular, involve such occultic elements as the development of psychic powers, telepathy, altered states of consciousness, mysticism, Kabbalism (an occultic art and mystical system of interpreting Scripture that began among some first-century Jews), Rosicrucianism (a mystical brotherhood involving occult powers and spirit contact), and hermetic philosophy (alchemy).

Moreover, Isis, Serapis, and Osiris are pagan deities affiliated with ancient Egyptian mystery religions that are mentioned regularly in Masonic literature. Other Egyptian deities, such as the great sun god Re, Apis, Thoth, Phtha, Hermes, Orpheus, and Horus, among others, are also regularly cited. Masonry is viewed as “a successor of the mysteries,” and is said to be “identical with the ancient mysteries.”

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**Biblical and Christian Response to Freemasonry**

**Rituals:** Masonic rituals which position initiates as being in darkness, and needing the light of Freemasonry, are inappropriate for Christians who have been redeemed by Jesus, the Light of the world (John 12:46) who has brought us into the kingdom of light (Col. 1:12–14). God’s children walk in the light, not in darkness (1 John 1:4–7; see also Eph. 5:8; 2 Pet. 1:3–4; Ps. 119:105). Moreover, the penalty for not keeping the secrets of the lodge (cutting one’s throat) is barbaric and offensive not just to Christians but to all civilized people.

**The Bible:** The Bible is not one of many holy books, but is rather the unique Word of God that is both inspired (“God-breathed”) and inerrant (2 Pet. 1:21; 2 Tim. 3:16–17; 1 Cor. 2:13). The Bible is therefore the supreme and infallible authority for the believer (Matt. 4:4–10; 5:18; 22:29; Luke 16:17; John 10:35; Gal. 1:12). The folly of saying all holy books teach the same truths is evident in that the Christian Bible, Hindu Vedas, and Muslim Quran teach diametrically opposing concepts on God, Jesus, sin, salvation, and the afterlife. If one holy book is correct (the Bible), the others are necessarily incorrect.

**God:** The only true God is the God of the Bible (Isa. 43:10; 44:8). His unique name is Yahweh (Ex. 3:14–15), not *Jabulon* (a name rooted in idolatry—Judges 2:17; 3:7; 1 Kings 18:28; Jer. 19:4–5). Moreover, the world religions do *not* worship the same God with different names. While the Bible teaches there is one God (Isa. 44:6, 9; John 5:44; 17:3; Rom. 3:29–30; 16:27; Gal. 3:20; Eph. 4:6; 1 Tim. 2:5; James 2:19) who is triune (Matt. 3:16–17; 28:19; 2 Cor. 13:14), Islam denies the Trinity, Freemasonry denies God can have a Son, and exalts Allah. Meanwhile, Hinduism espouses millions of gods all subsumed under the one monistic reality of Brahman.

**Jesus:** The biblical Jesus was more than a good moral teacher. No *mere* moral teacher would ever claim the destiny of the world lay in His hands, or that people would spend eternity in heaven or hell depending on whether they believed in Him (John 6:26–40). The only example this would provide would be one of lunacy. And for Jesus to convince people that He was God (John 8:58) and the Savior of the world (Luke 19:10) when He really was not would be the ultimate *immorality*.

Jesus’ deity is evidenced by biblical names of deity being ascribed to Him, including the Old Testament word for God (*Elohim*—Isa. 9:6; 40:3); the Old Testament word for LORD (*Yahweh*—Isa. 40:3), the New Testament word for God (*Theos*—John 20:28; Acts 16:31–34; Titus 2:13; 1 Pet. 1:1); and the New Testament word for Lord (*Kurios*—Phil. 2:9–11). Moreover, Jesus demonstrated the attributes of deity, including self-existence (John 1:3; Col. 1:17), immutability (Heb. 1:10–12; 13:8); omnipresence (Matt. 18:20), omniscience (Matt. 17:27; Luke 5:4,6; John 7:29; 8:55; 10:15; 16:30; 17:25), and omnipotence (Mark 1:29–31; Luke 8:25; John 11:1–44; Col. 1:16–17). Jesus also did



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what only God can do (miracles) (see, for example, John 11:43-44). He also received worship that belongs only to God (Heb. 1:6; Matt. 2:11; 8:2; 9:18; see also Ex. 34:14; Deut. 6:13).

**Salvation:** Human beings are not just imperfect but are sinners (Ps. 51:5; Isa. 64:6; Rom. 3:10; 5:12,19; see also 1 Cor. 15:21-22; Eph. 2:3). Jesus said man's big problem is the sin *in the heart* (Matt. 15:19). While Freemasonry focuses attention on external ethics, it can do virtually nothing to cure the ills of the *inner* human heart. Only Christ can do that.

People's lives do not need an external Masonic *tune-up*, they need a *brand new engine*. That is, they need to become brand new creatures (2 Cor. 5:17), and that can only happen with a personal relationship with Christ that begins at the new birth (John 3:3-5). Salvation can never be obtained through ethical living or good works (Rom. 4:1-25; Gal. 3:6-14), but is a grace-gift received through faith in Christ (Rom. 3:26). "A man is justified by faith apart from works of the Law" (Rom. 3:28; 5:1).

Scripture portrays Jesus as the *only* way of salvation. Jesus said He is humanity's *only* means of coming into a relationship with God (John 14:6). This was confirmed by those who followed Him (Acts 4:12; 1 Tim. 2:5). And Jesus warned His followers about those who would try to set forth a different "Christ" (Matt. 24:4-5).

**Occultic Beliefs:** God condemns *all* forms of occultism (Ex. 22:18; Lev. 19:26,31; 20:27; Deut. 18:9-12; 1 Sam. 28:3). Many aspects of Freemasonry are thus off-limits to the Christian.