

BLUE HEN COUNCIL No. 388, A.M.D.

October 23, 2004

Lombardy Hall, Talleyville, Delaware

Blue Hen Council No. 388 was opened in form at 9:30 am with the following officers present:

Sovereign Master	James R. Herrington
Senior Warden	James T. Elliott, PSM - pt
Junior Warden	Charles J. Conley
Secretary-Treasurer	Mark E. Irwin, P.S.M.
Senior Deacon	Sheldon L. Edwards, Sr.
Junior Deacon	Charles Hart
Chaplain	Eugene R. Small
Sentinel	Wayne T. Slack

Members present as per register (17). Pledge of Allegiance to the flag was done. The Sovereign Master welcomed all present.

SM Herrington and SM Franklin R. Townsend of Keystone Council #113 received and obligated Peter Tyrrell into Blue Hen Council #388 and James Hanby into Keystone Council #113.

A motion was made, seconded and passed to meet the same date as the other bodies, which was determined to be May 14, 2005, in the Masonic Temple, Dover, Delaware at 9:30 am

The Treasurer reported a balance of \$1898.44 in the checking account. A motion was made, seconded and passed to allow the Secretary/Treasurer to pay the bills that may arise between now and the next meeting.

A motion was made, seconded, and passed that Sheldon L. Edwards, Sr. be advanced to Sovereign Master, Donald D. Thomas be reelected Senior Warden, Charles Hart be elected Junior Warden, and the Secretary-Treasurer be re-elected.

The following distinguished visitors were recognized:

M.E. Franklin R. Townsend – Grand High Priest of Royal Arch Masons in Delaware
III. Harold T. J. Littleton - 33° A.A.S.R., Active Emeritus
Em. Sheldon L. Edwards, Sr., Eminent Prior, Jesse Green Priory #70 KYCH

The following were proposed as new members: James B. Walsh and Lyman Krimmel

SM Herrington presented a paper on the "Walk Around" scriptures used in the Symbolic Lodge Degrees.

The Council was called at ease and after resuming labors it was reported that the installed Sovereign Master Degree was conferred on Sheldon L. Edwards, Sr. by PSM Mark Irwin

P.S.M. Mark Irwin installed the following elected and appointed officers assisted by SM James R. Herrington as Marshal:

Sovrcign Master	Sheldon L. Edwards, Sr.
Senior Warden	Donald D. Thomas
Junior Warden	Charles Hart
Secretary-Treasurer	Mark E. Irwin, P.S.M.
Senior Deacon	Eugene R. Small
Junior Deacon	Wayne T. Slack
Chaplain	Gilbert Greenfield
Sentinel	Peter Tyrrell

SM Edwards thanked all for the help in the installation.

The minutes of the meeting were read and approved as read.

There being no further business, the Council was closed in form at 10:00 am.

Respectfully submitted,

Mark E. Irwin

Mark E. Irwin, P.S.M.

Secretary

NOTES ON THE "WALK-AROUND" SCRIPTURES USED IN THE SYMBOLIC LODGE DEGREES

This writer has been considering this paper's theme for several years, but did not choose to do the work necessary for it until the necessity arose for the presenting of a short paper as Sovereign Master of Blue Hen Council. The readers/hearers will see that, especially in the latter two degrees, that he got much more than he originally felt he had bargained for!

The first degree's scripture is Psalm 133, the next of the last of fifteen psalms (120-134) sub-titled "A Song of Ascents". The "Psalms of Ascents" were believed to be psalms sung by pilgrims "ascending" to Jerusalem to worship in the Temple. It may have been one that the family of Joseph and Mary sang on the trip to Jerusalem when Jesus "got lost" and remained behind in the Temple, as recorded in Luke 2. Linguistic and cultural criticism date it as post-Exilic, probably during the Hellenistic period (332 B.C.E.) and following. It is important to note that the traditional position that King David wrote all of the Psalms is a pious myth. The psalms reflect both in their content and constructs/vocabulary that they, just like our own hymns, reflect a great span of history. As such, Psalm 133 does not present any great problems vis-à-vis use in Masonic ritual.

The second degree's scripture, Amos 7: 7-8. is much more "loaded" in that it is completely MIS-used in the Masonic ritual as a positive, rather than what it originally meant. Taken out of context, it sounds as if the LORD "will not pass by", meaning

“not desert” his people. Its meaning, however, is completely opposite when put in its context. It is the third of five condemnations against Israel for her continuing to sin and go against the will of God. The next verse continues: “And the high places of Isaac shall be desolate, and the sanctuaries of Israel shall be laid waste; and I will rise against the house of Jeroboam with the sword.” This is hardly compassionate and supportive! In context it says, “You, Israel, have had it!” (Amos’s most famous, and most quoted passage is 5:21-24, which reads “I hate, I despise your feast days, and I will not smell in your solemn assemblies. Though you offer me burnt offerings and cereal offerings, I will not accept them; neither will I regard the peace offerings of your fat beasts. Take thou away from me the noise of thy songs; for I will not hear the melody of thy viols. But let judgment (‘justice’ is a better word in modern usage) run down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream.”)

There is also a significant possible variant in the reading of the passage Masons use, which completely changes the meaning for Masonic symbolism. The Hebrew word אָנָק (transliterated “anak”) translated in the King James Version of the Bible as “plumb-line” has no other usage in Scripture. It was traditionally believed to be “plumb-line” because of the context. Scholars do not now accept uncritically that “plumb-line” is an automatic translation of the word! It may, indeed, be “plumb-line”, but cognate language usage, which cannot be discounted, can make it a “lump of tin”.

Likewise if the glottal stop beginning the word (Hebrew consonant א) is changed to a glottal shock (Hebrew consonant א). The word in the second verse becomes “grief”, which is utterly defensible in the context of an irrevocable judgment, which the passage certainly is. It is also instructive to Masons (or anyone) who sees wrong, and speaks against it. One theologian would call it a “Divine Imperative”. Amos saw it that way. But when he did it, he literally got run out of town! (Amos 7: 10-17)

The scripture for the third degree, likewise, brings interesting aspects of consideration to mind. It is generally accepted that it is, indeed, an allegory of the aging process, but some modern scholars disagree with the Masonic usage. Traditional attribution of the book to King Solomon is easily discounted because of the many Persian “loan” words in the text. Likewise the writer, who calls himself “Qoheleth”, (the Teacher) never makes that claim, and his claim in 1:16, to “more wisdom than all they that have been before me in Jerusalem” certainly exempts Solomon, who had only David as a predecessor! A date in the third century B.C.E. is generally accepted.

It is this writer’s intention to explain all of the parts of the allegory. The passage was “explained” in a 2000 edition of the Delaware Freemason, but that explanation, which according to then Grand Secretary M.W. Benjamin F. Lloyd, Jr., was “borrowed” from a mid-western Grand Trestle Board, was not credited. This writer will be using some of that material, but making corrections, as necessary.

The first, and definitely one of the two most important issues is the beginning:

“Remember now thy creator”, which Masons have universally assumed meant the “Supreme Architect”, and this writer accepts will continue to be our assumption. Modern scholarship, in light of the rest of the passage posits that the “creator” mentioned is really the “creator of the home” and that, especially in light of verse 5, it is intended to mean “Keep your wife happy while you can, because there will be problems as you age”!

Most of the other problems of aging are easily understood, with one exception, as follows:

“Keepers of the house” refers to the arms and legs of the aging man;

“Strong men shall bow themselves” presents the second major issue, at least in the Grand Lodge of Delaware. This is another virtually unique entry in the Scripture. The word is “bow”, as in “bow and arrow”, not “bow” as in “bow to royalty”. The Hebrew word is וַיִּשְׁתַּבְּחוּ, transliterated whith’uthu, and pronounced w-hith-(r)u-thu. It comes from the Hebrew root שׁוּב, transliterated ‘wt, which translates “be bent, or crooked”. It refers to the bowing (long o) of the body by osteoporosis. Proper translation of this passage in modern idiom would be “the strong men will be bent over with age.”

“Grinders are few” refers to the loss of teeth.

“Those that look out the windows” and “doors shut” refer to the eyes and ears.

“Sound of the grinding” refers to the deafness of aging.

“Rise up at the voice of the bird” refers to the inability to sleep.

“Voice of the bird” also refers to the thinness of the voice of the elderly.

“Almond tree” refers to the white hair of the elderly.

“Grasshopper shall be a burden” refers to the loss of physical strength.

“Desire shall fail” refers to impotence of old age.

“Long home” means the grave.

“Mourners” mean the professional mourners waiting to participate at one’s death.

“Loosening of the silver cord” and the breaking of the “golden bowl” refers to the end/destruction of life.

The last two, the “broken pitcher” and the “broken wheel at the cistern” both refer to the loss of the very necessary “water” to maintain life and its non-availability.

“Dust” (ref. Genesis 2:7) refers to how and from what man was created.

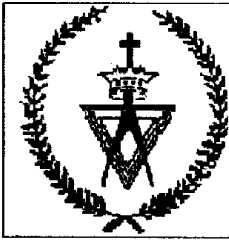
The final issue is “the spirit returns to God, who gave it.” This, Qoheleth granted, but Masons have put the “eternal spirit/everlasting life” interpretation on it, when it definitely is not there. All modern critical scholars agree that Qoheleth offered no eschatological hope.

This concludes this writer’s “Notes on the Walk-arounds”. In no way does he suggest that they be changed, so long as educated Masons realize that what is being said requires the listener to appreciate that it is Masonic “creativity” that offers hope in the third degree scripture, and God’s compassion in the second.

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James R. Herrington
Sovereign Master
Blue Hen Council #388, A.M.D.



**BLUE HEN COUNCIL #388
ALLIED MASONIC DEGREES**

October 23, 2004

	NAME	OFFICE	COUNCIL IF VISITOR	LOCATION
1	Mark In...	Sec.		
2	Harold J. Linton			
3	Ernest R. Smith	Chaplain		
4	Arthur C. Tucker Jr			
5	James K. Hunter	Sen. Mstr.		
6	Herbert A. Senior	PSM		
7	SHELDON EDWARDS			
8	Wayne K. Ketch	PSM		
9	Robert G. Smith			
10	Richard G. Moore			
11	Wayne T. Clark			
12	John B. Cottrell			
13	Charles T. Hart			
14	Dick Ward			
15	James G. DeWalt	PSM		
16	Arthur G. ...			
17	Robert ...			
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