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Before Hiram there was Noah

By Jason D. Rees 32° KCCH

It would surprise many brothers throughout the world, that Hiram Abiff has not always been the central figure in our ancient order. Long before the widow's son there was a man by the name of Noah, from the Mesopotamia area, who had a wife and three sons. Noah is a central figure in the Abrahamic faiths of Judaism, Islam, and Christianity. This patriarch of Freemasonry was an expert in geometry and construction; it was by divine command and instruction that Noah constructed the Ark out of Gopher wood.

We read about Noah in the Old Testament in the Bible in Genesis 5:28-29 and his lineage from Adam "the first man" created by God. In Genesis 6 we read how the world has been plunged into darkness so thoroughly that every thought of man was evil and out of the entire world only eight people were found worthy. Genesis 6:9-10 Noah was a righteous man, blameless among his people of his time, and he walked faithfully with God." Not just Noah, but also his sons Japheth, Shem, and Ham were central to ancient Masonic teachings.

One of the earliest Masonic teaching records of Noah and his sons can be found in the Matthew Cooke Manuscript dated around the early 1400's. The manuscript states that Noah "wrote their science in the 2 pillars of stone." As the manuscript explains "2 pillars were found and as the Pilicronicon saith, that a great clerk that called Pthagoras found that one and Hermes the philosopher, found the other."

We also find several mentions of Noah and the flood from the writings in Genesis in our "Old Charges" or Gothic Constitutions of the Free-Masons of 1723. Herein, Noah is mentioned by name several times; "Noah, the ninth from Seth, was commanded and directed of God to build the great Ark, which, tho' of wood, was certainly fabricated by Geometry, and according to the Rules of Masonry."

Further still we find evidence of Noah preserved in the Graham Manuscript of 1726, where, at the death of Noah, he was buried with an inestimable secret. Noah's three sons desired to gain this secret and, after visiting his grave and three attempts, they were able to obtain the secret/substitute. Through these masonic teaching a name was given to those masons. In Traditions and Arts of the Antediluvians, which came from the Constitutions of the Free-Masons authored by Anderson in 1738, "a Mason was to be a true Noachida or Noachite."

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Be careful what you promise and Vow

By Jason D. Rees 32° KCCH

In life sometimes we want something so passionately we will sometimes say or do anything to obtain it. This very thing happened in the to a man named Jephthah as seen the Bible in the Book of Judges chapter 11. Jephthah was a mighty warrior and the illegitimate son of his father Gilead, leader of the Gileadites, who was unfaithful to his wife with a prostitute. Jephthah's brothers, whose mother was Gilead's wife, chased Jephthah out of his home and land. They told him, "You are not going to get any inheritance in our family because you are the son of another woman."

Jephthah fled to another land and with his reputation as a great warrior he soon developed followers. These weren't men of great status, as the Bible refers to them as "a gang of scoundrels". So Jephthah carried on with his life, married, had a daughter, but always remembered the treatment of his brothers who cast him out. Time passed and the land of Israel found themselves under threat of the Ammonites. The elders of Gilead asked Jephthah to be the commander of their troops and help defend Israel. He reminded the elders of what happened years before and how they hated him and the elders turned to him and said "come with us to fight the Ammonites, and you will be head over all of us who lived in Gilead."

Jephthah took up the challenge and attempted to broker a peace deal with the Ammonites, but they refused. War was imminent and much was at stake: not just to save Israel, but it was a chance to right the wrong of Jephthah being cast out of his land at no fault of his own and regain what was lost. As the Army of Israel commanded by Jephthah made its way through the hills they came upon the Ammonites army and Jephthah made a vow to the Lord: "If you give me the Ammonites into my hands, whatever comes out of the door of my house to meet me when I return in triumph from the Ammonites will be the Lords and I will sacrifice it as a burnt offering."

The Army of Israel was victorious, and Jephthah was celebrating his great victory. Music was playing and, as he approached his home, the front door flew open at the sound of the celebration and his young daughter stepped out. When he saw his daughter emerge, Jephthah began to cry out, and he ripped his clothes and explained to her the vow he made to the Lord. Like her father she was very honorable and said they must fulfill the vow, but she requested that he allow her two months to weep in the hills with her friends; Jephthah granted her request.

After the two months was over, Jephthah's daughter returned home and he fulfilled his vow. The Israelite people still to this day remember Jephthah's daughter each year, honoring her

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Researchers have found that the early Scots Master degree contained the legend of Noah instead of Hiram. In Mackey's History of Freemasonry, we find another teaching where it says there was a system of religious instruction called "antediluvian Masonry." These teachings were taught by Noah to his family and followers alike and were used until man's heart became corrupted with the building of the Tower of Babel to reach the heavens. This is when God dispersed mankind by changing the tongues of all men, which caused confusion and halted the construction of the tower.

Research is ongoing in the rituals of ancient Masonry and the Scots Masters degrees. To find masonic degrees within the Scottish Rite that refer to Noah, look no further than the Franken Manuscript of 1783, "Prussian Knight or Noachite/21st degree." This degree is still practiced today across the world in the Southern Jurisdiction of the Ancient & Accepted Scottish Rite. The Allied Masonic Degrees also has a degree centered on Noah called the Royal Ark Mariner; to have this degree conferred you must be a member of the York Rite and a Royal Arch Mason.

"Give a man purpose and the ability to achieve it; he will crawl over broken glass with a smile"

"Journey Passport" Program
The Houston Valley is participating in the "Journey Passport" program which includes 33 challenges that allow participants to earn six unique Scottish Rite challenge coins. The passport program is designed to take brothers throughout the Valley of Houston and the Southern Jurisdiction of the Scottish Rite. To learn more and get a passport, contact Brother Jason Rees 32° KCCH at: acompass@yahoo.com

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bravery and dedication to the Lord. Shortly after these events, not everyone in the land of Israel was happy. The men of Ephraim came to Jephthah and asked him why he did not ask them to fight, and why he crossed over their land. Jephthah explained that he had asked for their help, but no reply was given so he took his life into his own hands and gained the victory. This upset the men of Ephraim and they began to make threats against Jephthah.

So Jephthah led the Gileadite army to capture the crossings of the river Jordan that lead to Ephraim and to clear out the renegades who were making these threats. When the survivors approached the river crossing they attempted to lie about where they were from and who they were. Jephthah came up with a great plan: "All right say SHIBBOLETH, if he said sibboleth, because he could not pronounce the word correctly, they seized him and killed him at the fords of the Jordan." This should sound familiar.

It is important to always keep this in mind when making promises or overpromising to gain something: do not allow your zeal to take charge of your passions. Remember that honorable men keep their word and fulfill their vows, more especially when you are asking the Lord for intercession.

By the work you did today

Author Charles L. Mead 33°

Boynton Lodge #236

Can you say tonight in parting
with the day that's slipping past
That you helped a single brother
of the many that you passed?
Is a single heart rejoicing
over what you did and said?
Does the man whose hopes where fading,
Now with courage look ahead?
Did you waste the day or lose it,
Was it well or poorly spent?
Did you leave a trail of kindness,
Or a scar of discontent?
As you close your eyes in slumber,
Do you think God will say,
You have earned one more tomorrow,
By the work you did today.

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