



# THE HOUSTON VALLEY HERALD

August 25, 2024

A MONTHLY PUBLICATION

Volume 3 Issue 08

## Wise Ass!!



By Jason D. Rees 32° KCCH

We find in the book of Numbers 22:21-35 an account of a talking donkey. We read about a man by the name of Balaam. Balaam was not an Israelite and lived with the Moabites and Midianites. He was regarded as a prophet of God and soothsayer, who could bless or curse with his words. His brother was King of Edom. The story goes, the King of the Moabites, Balak, was concerned that the Israelites had encroached on the plains of Moab and, knowing of Balaam who had great knowledge of God, ordered him to go and curse the Israelites.

In a vision God told Balaam “that he should not go and curse the Israelites.” So, he informed Balak that he would not go. Balak then sent more messengers who were more highly distinguished to ask Balaam to do as the King asked. He did not listen to God and he mounted his female donkey and went on his way. God was very angry that he disobeyed and sent an angel to block the path. The donkey was the only one who could see the angel.

When the donkey saw the angel, it stopped. Balaam struck the donkey. Again, the donkey did not move. Balaam struck the donkey again and then the donkey laid down. This angered Balaam even more and he struck the donkey for a third time. The Lord allowed the donkey to speak. “What I have done to you, to deserve to be struck three times? Am I not your own donkey and have I ever done this to you before?” Then the Lord allowed Balaam to see the angel of the Lord standing before him with a sword drawn and he bowed and repented.

This story is very interesting for many reasons. First of course is the donkey speaking: sometimes God must use extreme measures to get our attention away from what we want to do or what we think is the right thing. We as Freemasons see another story where someone or something is struck three times without just cause. The donkey knew that the pain of a beating was better than death and disobeying God.

We also learned in this story that an evil King enticed Balaam to disobey God and go against his plan by having people with great honors and promises of prestige lure him away from the light. Balaam knew God and had faith and was practiced in walking in the light of God, yet he was so easily lured away from his path by earthly honors and rewards.

Cont'd on next page

## Thirty three columns, Thirty three feet tall



By Jason D. Rees 32° KCCH

On October 23, 1909 a resolution was passed at the Biennial session to erect a new House of the Temple in Washington D.C. The following year, on April 16, 1910, the Supreme Council hired Architect John Russell Pope to design and build this great edifice. Pope would later design the Jefferson Memorial and the American Museum of National History, to name a few, but the House of the Temple would be his first great commission.

***“The Temple should be built right, so that it could, and would be pointed to, by our brethren here and elsewhere, as the pride of the Mother Council of the Rite and all Scottish Rite Masons in the world. We are building a Temple, a permanent home, in the Great Capital of the Greatest nation of the Earth. I would prefer to be criticized for building a Temple, considered by some, too fine and costly, rather than for a cheap or mediocre building, surrounded as it will be, by the beautiful structures of our Capital. Better not build at all, than only half way build, while we are engaged in the laudable enterprise. (1911 Transactions, p. 125).***

— Grand Commander James D. Richardson (1911)

With Grand Commander Richardson leading the charge and an Architect hired, the work on the Temple could commence. Land was purchased on 16<sup>th</sup> street between S & R Street at a cost of \$164,333.85, approximately \$5.44 million today.

With 6,000 people in attendance on October 18, 1911, the cornerstone ceremony was celebrated. By 1912, 33 monolithic columns 33 feet tall from Bedford, Indiana were on their way, each one carved from a single piece of stone. Train tracks had to be laid to the construction site of the Temple. Within the building, the granite stairway that rises from the main entrance is laid out in groups of three, five, seven, and nine which is a representation of the sacred numbers of Pythagoras. In the Temple room are large windows representing a Freemason’s search for more light.

Cont'd on next page



*Cont'd from front, "Wise Ass"*

How often have we all veered off the right path we have been on despite starting off with the best intentions and goals in mind? Much like any journey it has bumps and turns and obstacles to overcome. Even the path itself can become hard to find if we do not keep our eye on the path. We must be watchful on our journeys to stay on the path and strive to be those perfect ashlar for the builder's use. We must be humble and remember our duty.

If there is one lesson to be learned above all others from this story it is this:

**Even a jackass can have discernment**

**Something to Think About:**

*"The music is not in the notes,  
But in the silence between."  
Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart*

**"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](mailto:acompass@yahoo.com)

**The Houston Valley Herald Email List**

This publication is printed monthly and distributed at stated meetings of the Valley of Houston for the benefit of the brethren assembled. *The Houston Valley Herald* is also available online at [www.HoustonScottishRite.org](http://www.HoustonScottishRite.org) (Click the "Newsletter" tab). Anyone is welcome to receive this publication via email as well. To join our mailing list, email [acompass@yahoo.com](mailto:acompass@yahoo.com)

**Attention Brothers check this out!!**

**THE HOUSTON VALLEY SCOTTISH RITE**  
 Christmas Toy Lodge Challenge  
 September 1 - December 1, 2024



**TEXAS**  
**SCOTTISH RITE HOSPITAL**  
**FOR CHILDREN**  
[www.tsrhc.org](http://www.tsrhc.org)

Attention to all Houston Valley area Masonic Lodges  
 Donate toys to win a Christmas Dinner provided and served by  
 the Houston Valley Scottish Rite at your lodge's stated meeting.  
 The Rules are simple!!  
 The Lodge who donates the most toys wins.  
 Toys can be dropped off at the Houston Valley Scottish Rite building  
 starting September 1, 2024  
 Please call and coordinate before delivery  
 713-432-1980  
 Any and All Questions please email [acompass@yahoo.com](mailto:acompass@yahoo.com)

*Cont'd from front, "Thirty three columns"*

On either side, just before the granite stairs, are two sphinxes, "wisdom" and "power", which are carved from black marble, holding tablets with hieroglyphics that translate "Established to the Glory of God" and the other says "Dedicated to the teaching of wisdom to those men working to make a strong nation".

At the top of the granite stairs are two busts: Albert Pike and Past Grand Commander John Henry Cowles. Both men are entombed behind their respective bust.

Even though John Russell Pope was not a member of our great fraternity, he incorporated symbols throughout the building, too many to mention in this humble newsletter. No matter where you go or look inside the House of the Temple, be it the walls, windows, lamps, chairs, or flooring, you will find symbolism.

One last note: the address of the House of the Temple is 1733 16<sup>th</sup> Street. The year 1733 is when the first Scots Master degree was conferred, which is considered the first of the high degrees of Freemasonry.



If you would like to watch the original footage of the House of the Temple from October 18, 1915 you can find it on YouTube!

**Sign of the Good Shepherd**



The Scottish Rite Ritual and Guide describes and defines the sign of the Good Shepherd. While attending prayers at Scottish Rite functions, members stand in the sign of the Good Shepherd by bowing the head slightly, folding the left hand over the right with the fingers extended towards the shoulders. The cap is not removed. This dignified position reflects the compassionate spirit of the Scottish Rite in recalling the Good Shepherd as he carried a lamb over his neck, holding its feet with his crossed hands.

**Editor in Chief**  
**Jason D. Rees 32° KCCH**

**Copy Editor**  
**Eric Wylie 32° KCCH**

