

NV Grand Lodge Short Lecture Series

ST. JOHN, THE EVANGELIST

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As mentioned in "The Baptist" discussion, early in our Masonic travels, we were told that we were seeking admission to a lodge, erected to God, and dedicated to the Holy Saints John. God, we know, for we had to state that we believed in God to be considered for membership. Who are these Saints John? Why were they considered to be appropriate models for us? Why do we have two days on which we recognize and remember them.

Today we will discuss just our second St. John, *the Evangelist*, various religions group and fraternal organizations, such as Freemasonry recognize, him every December 27th.

One was the "forerunner" of Jesus, John the Baptist. The other was the apostle John, the brother of James. He is commonly known as John the Evangelist because of his supposed authorship of the Gospel of John in the New Testament.

Duality and the Two Saint Johns

From the Masonic perspective, we can understand the balanced dualism of John the Baptist on one side and John the Evangelist on the other. Together, they represent two sides of a coin: the passionate zeal of the Baptist and the knowledge of faith of the apostle. A Masonic lodge dedicated to the two patron saints of Freemasonry can be seen as a space to both reflect on and channel our passion. Taken as an abstract compilation of symbols, they represent a well-balanced path toward enlightenment. Even more, their feast days are closely associated with the summer and winter solstice—underscoring the symbolic duality of the two figures. The word evangelist means writer of the gospel and St. John is accredited with writing the Gospel of John, the Epistles of John, and the book of Revelation. Bro Mackey states that St. John is venerated in Masonry because his constant admonition to the cultivation of brotherly love, and the mystical nature of his Apocalyptic visions, have been perhaps, the principal reasons for the veneration paid to him by the Craft. (Mackey, 1914).

John the Evangelist and Jesus Christ

He is referred to as, "disciple whom Jesus loved." John was the one whom Mary Magdalene went to with news of the Resurrection. And when John and Peter were on the Sea of Galilee, they witnessed the Vision of the Resurrected Christ. He appeared as an astral figure on the shore in the first light of morning. Peter could not recognize him, but John could. Possibly signifying that John had a greater understanding of the spiritual perception over the physical senses, or material world.

St. John witnessed the Ascension and received the spiritual fire of the Holy Spirit at the Pentecost. This indicated that St. John was baptized both by fire and water.

Masonry and St. John, the Evangelist

St. John's connection to the craft is vague and shrouded in mystery. St. John the Baptist was the patron saint of the builders' guilds and St. John the Evangelist was not adopted into the craft until after the sixteenth century. This would place the adoption of the Evangelist around the time of the shift from operative Masonry into the speculative craft.

Within the speculative craft the Saints John are called the parallels of Masonry and between them we see the point within a circle. From the oldest times, the point within a circle was a symbol of the sun and has been adopted in various cultures as such. If we look at the St. John the Evangelist symbolically within the context of the Masonic journey, John is every individual initiate. John is initiated by John the Baptist into the mysteries and purified, similarly how the entered apprentice is given a white apron to represent a new sense of purity. John travels with his Master and is indoctrinated in the parables of truth, like the Fellowcraft traveling the different compartments of the Temple being indoctrinated with the spiral staircase leading to truth, Like the Master Mason John is witness to the death and resurrection of his master.

It is also important to note that the book of Revelation shows the revelation of a new name of God identified as Alpha Omega. I only mention this because there are old rituals, and some modern cryptic rites, that see the restored lost word being Alpha Omega. Which correlates to the famous verse from Revelation 22 "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End. Blessed is those who wash their robes. They will be permitted to enter through the gates of the city and eat the fruit from the tree of life." (St. James Bible).

Brotherly Love

Looking closely at St. John the Evangelist seems to be the principal recorder of Christ's commandments for us to love our neighbors (John 13:34; 15:12, 17) as well as Christ's words on what the ultimate act of love can be (John 15:13). He also identifies the source of all righteous love (1 John 4:19).

Charity

John has also been called the Apostle of Charity.

Truth

He seems also to be the only one who recorded Christ's words on the principle of Truth and how it sets us free (John 8:32).

Reference

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