



**PROVINCIAL
GRAND CHAPTER
OF MIDDLESEX**



**SETTING THE SCENE OF
THE EXALTATION CEREMONY**

**EXPLANATIONS FOR THE
CANDIDATE DURING EXALTATION
AND FOR CHAPTER MEMB**

READINGS FOR THE CANDIDATE

It is recommended that readings should be delivered to the Candidate outside the Chapter (perhaps in an ante-room). And delivered just before each of his three entries into the Chapter during the Ceremony.

The purpose is to give a brief introduction to the main parts of the ceremony so that the Candidate can better appreciate the experience through which he will pass.

It is suggested that one of the Assistant Sojourners (or other nominated member) delivers the readings to the Candidate.

BEFORE THE FIRST ENTRANCE

When the Principal Sojourner has Retired to entrust the Candidate

The Temple of King Solomon at Jerusalem, which we learn about in the three Craft degrees, stood for about 400 years, until it was completely destroyed by the Babylonians under King Nebuchadnezzar. He killed many of the inhabitants of Jerusalem and exiled most of the rest to Babylon, leaving only a few behind to carry out farming and menial tasks.

After some 70 years the Babylonians themselves were overthrown by the Persian Empire under King Cyrus who also conquered what was left of Jerusalem. Within a year King Cyrus issued a decree allowing the descendants of those exiles from Jerusalem to return home, in order to help rebuild their Holy City and its Temple,

As a candidate for exaltation, you will represent one of those exiles returning to the ruined city of Jerusalem to help rebuild the Temple, or more accurately, to help build the Second Temple.

Building on the teachings of the Craft, the Royal Arch encourages you to a greater understanding of yourself and particularly your relationship with your God

BEFORE THE SECOND ENTRANCE

**When the Sojourners have retired with the
Candidate to dress as Master Masons**

You will remember that the First Temple at Jerusalem was destroyed by the Babylonians under Nebuchadnezzar. After the Decree of King Cyrus, many exiles returned almost immediately from Babylon to Jerusalem, led by a Prince called Zerubbabel, and prepared to rebuild the Temple on the site of the former one, Other exiles arrived a little later, and we three represent some of these later arrivals, whom we call "Sojourners".

This next part of the ceremony represents our entrance into Zerubbabel's Council (or Grand Sanhedrin) to apply to work on some part of the rebuilding of the Temple. Although we are working masons, we are proud to be direct descendants of the royal line of David and princely tribe of Judah, which used to rule Jerusalem.

BEFORE THE THIRD ENTRANCE

**When the Sojourner's and Candidate retire and
Prepare to re-enter with ropes and tools**

As masons we have carried out our instructions to clear the site of the former Temple, to prepare for the foundations of the Second Temple. Whilst doing so, we have made a discovery which might be of great importance. We are now reporting this discovery to the Sanhedrim under Zerubbabel.

Just as the Second Temple was built on the site of the First, you are about to discover that the teachings of the Royal Arch are built on those of the Craft, to complete your journey in pure Ancient Freemasonry.

READINGS FOR THE CHAPTER MEMBERS

The Exaltation ceremony is rather complicated and often leaves Companions somewhat bemused, probably because we do not hear it as often as Craft ceremonies; and it is very different. Also, unlike the Craft, it can be confusing as the location of the story changes throughout the ceremony without any obvious change in the Chapter.

Therefore, it might help members to understand the ceremony more if the Scribe E (or other nominated member) delivers readings in the Chapter Room, setting the scene by explaining what is about to happen - at the same time that a Sojourner has retired from the Chapter to explain the ceremony to the Candidate.

INTRODUCTION IN THE CHAPTER

When the Principal Sojourner has retired From the Chapter to entrust the Candidate

Companions: A Sojourner has retired from the Chapter to explain the Royal Arch ceremony to the Candidate. The purpose is to give a brief introduction to parts of the story and history so that the Candidate can better appreciate and understand the experience through which he will pass.

The Exaltation ceremony is rather complicated and can cause all of us to be somewhat bemused, probably because we do not hear it that often, and it is so different to the Craft ritual. It can also be confusing, as the location of the story changes throughout the ceremony without any changes to the Chapter room.

For this reason, and at the same time that a Sojourner is giving an explanation to the Candidate, I will also present explanations about the ceremony.

BEFORE THE FIRST ENTRANCE

Continued from the previous introduction

Companions, the story about to unfold takes place some 500 years after the dedication of King Solomon's Temple. King Solomon has long since died and Jerusalem has subsequently been attacked by the Babylonians. The city and its once magnificent temple have been destroyed; and its inhabitants have been taken into captivity to Babylon where they have remained for 70 years.

We are now at that period in history where the Babylonian Empire itself has been attacked and defeated by Cyrus the King of Persia. Cyrus has recently issued a decree allowing the descendants of the Hebrew exiles to return to their native land. The Candidate enters the Chapter blindfolded, representing one of those exiles returning to Jerusalem seeking to participate in the light of our mysteries with his colleagues as Sojourners or Journeyman builders.

The Chapter and the carpet represent a building site in the ruined city, where King Solomon's temple formerly stood. The Candidate is traversed across the ruins and arrives at the crown of a vaulted chamber where the first change in the scene occurs. The carpet and equipment on the floor of the Chapter now represent an underground vaulted chamber and its contents, where, as we shall see, a most important discovery is made.

BEFORE THE SECOND ENTRANCE

When the Sojourner's have retired with the Candidate to dress as Master Masons

When the Sojourners return to the Chapter, we go right back to the start of the story but, this time, as the Candidate is not blindfolded, he is able to see what happened in the previous part of the ceremony! Whilst scenery in the Chapter has not changed, the room now represents the Grand Sanhedrin, the Council of 72 Elders which sat together to regulate the affairs of the Temple and the religious life of the Jewish people. Here Zerubbabel presides, together with Haggai and Joshua.

You now represent the Council Members. You have to imagine that the secret vault, represented by the carpet and its equipment, is still undiscovered under the foundations of the former temple building; and Cyrus has issued his decree allowing the exiles to return to Jerusalem.

The three Sojourners (or journeymen builders) including the Candidate are about to arrive from their captivity in Babylon. Having heard that the Temple is about to be rebuilt, they offer their services in that great and glorious undertaking.

BEFORE THE THIRD ENTRANCE

**When the Sojourners and Candidate retire and
prepare to re-enter with ropes and tools**

Companions, the Sojourners and the Candidate, having been issued with the implements of labour have left the Chapter figuratively to prepare the ground for the foundation of the second temple. On their return, the Chapter still represents the Grand Sanhedrim but, the secret vault represented by the carpet and other equipment where the important discovery was made now becomes the focal point of the story.

The discovery made by the Sojourners, as members of the princely tribe of Judah, who were given the heavy and menial task of clearing the ground for the foundations of the Second Temple, make an important discovery, as we shall see. A lesson that truly humble workmen, though engaged on unskilled and uninteresting work, may nevertheless find in it great reward entitling them to a place among the wisest of men in the Council of Rulers.

Traditionally, the Grand Sanhedrin was the Council of Princes and Rulers of the people set up by command of God to assist Moses. The word Sanhedrin means 'the body of elders. We will now hear a detailed dramatic account of how the important discovery was made.

WHILE BEING CLOTHED WITH THE ROBES OF INNOCENCE

**When the Sojourners and Candidate
change clothing (or retire to do so)**

Companions: When the Candidate is rewarded and presented with his staff of office, he is told that he will ever have the right to bear it unless 72 of the Elders are present.

Our Royal Arch Regulations state:

According to ancient custom a complete Chapter of this Order of Freemasonry consists of Three Principals who, when in Chapter assembled are to be considered conjointly as the Master; and each severally as a Master, two Scribes, a Treasurer, A Principal Sojourner, two Assistant Sojourners, and other Companions, making up the number 72 as a Council: And no regular chapter can consist of more; but any number may be elected, exalted and received as Companions with all the privileges of membership save they are not to hold the staff of office or to be considered as Councillors when more than 72 are present.

Provincial Grand Chapter of Middlesex
148 London Road, Twickenham, Middlesex, TW1 1HD
Tel: 020 8891 3300
E-mail: office@pglm.org.uk
Web Site: www.pglm.org.uk