

A Biblical Perspective of Freemasonry

By Clark Blanchard

- *What is Freemasonry?*
- *What is its purpose?*
- *Is it compatible with biblical Christianity?*

Freemasonry is the largest, and perhaps oldest, secret fraternity in the world. It is also one of the most unique and subtle cults which the Christian church faces today. It is subtle because it claims to be merely a fraternity for the improvement of personal character and service to the community. It denies being a religious organization. It offers as proof that its members are free to participate in the church, synagogue, temple, or mosque of their choice.

Nevertheless, Freemasonry requires belief in a Supreme Being, promotes a liberal universalist theology, teaches righteousness by character, and engages in secret religious rituals. Doctrinally, it denies the deity of Christ, the truth of the Gospel, and the authority of the Bible.

How did Freemasonry begin?

In medieval Europe (900-1600 A.D.), large construction projects, such as castles and cathedrals, were built mainly by “free” itinerant skilled tradesmen. Often they lived together in huts or sheds called “lodges,” sharing not only the skills of their crafts but views on philosophy, politics, and religion as well. Because of the prominence of brick and stone construction, masons became the prominent craftsmen. It was in these craft groups that apprentices were mentored by the masters and learned the skills of the trades. They were also taught the spiritual values of integrity, brotherhood, and belief in God. Gradually allegories, symbolism, and rituals developed comparing the building crafts, especially masonry, with the building of personal character and the spiritual life. Initially, Christianity influenced much of the spiritual teaching, but then their theology, symbolism, and rituals liberalized to encompass broader religious ideas, including medieval European occultism.

Freemasonry, as we know it today, began in 1717 in London, England. Local groups called “**lodges**” subsequently sprang up throughout Europe and came to America in 1733. Today, Masonic Lodges number over 33,000 and can be found in over 165 countries, encompassing most of the major world religions. But it is in America that Freemasonry has enjoyed its greatest influence in business, the church, and government.

For example, in 1793, George Washington laid the cornerstone for the U.S. Capitol Building under full Masonic ritual. In addition, at least 16 presidents, and as many vice presidents, were Masons. Other influential leaders include Herbert Hoover, Barry Goldwater, John Wayne, Bob Dole, Sam Nunn, Clark Gable, Jessy Helms, John Glenn, Red Skelton, Mark Hatfield, Jim Wright, Trent Lott, Douglas MacArthur, Robert Byrd, and Howard Baker, to name a few.

How is Freemasonry organized?

Freemasonry has little real central organization, hierarchy, or spokesman above the local lodge level and is intentionally secretive about its structure and roles. Except for a few philanthropic activities, it is publicly low-profile and obscure. Its liberal theological influence is almost entirely behind the scenes.

The core of the Masonic fraternity is the local lodge, which is autocratically governed by its “Worshipful Master.” The vehicle of teaching is centered in secret rituals called “degrees.” The means of teaching is by allegories, signs, skits, and symbols. Its stated objectives include improvement of personal character, brotherhood, and belief in a Supreme Being. Its actual effect is the propagation of a liberal anti-Christian universalist world view.

Membership is restricted to men who are at least 21 years old and are of reputable character. The candidate must petition the lodge through an existing Mason. Masons are not allowed to actively solicit new members. The candidate is investigated regarding his character and then voted upon. Any individual Mason within the lodge may anonymously and literally “blackball” a candidate and deny him membership.

Assuming a favorable vote, the candidate must pass through three secret teaching rituals called “degrees.” They are (1) the Entered Apprentice, (2) the Fellow Craft, and (3) the Master Mason. He must openly profess belief in a Supreme Being, admit to being in spiritual darkness, and actively seek the spiritual enlightenment of Freemasonry. Prior to any ritual instruction, the candidate must swear a blood oath on the holy writings of his particular culture (i.e., the Bible, Torah, Koran, etc.) that he will “always conceal and never reveal” the teachings of Freemasonry.

As the applicant “earns” his three degrees, he is taught the fundamentals of Freemasonry by rituals that employ allegories, symbols, signs, and skits. The central thrust of these teachings creates a parallel between the ancient craft of the stone mason and the building of character, belief in a Supreme Being and in universal brotherhood.

Completion of the initial three degrees makes the applicant a full-fledged “Master Mason.” No other degrees are required. Beyond this point numerous other optional degree paths are available. These allegedly provide additional spiritual education and illumination. A 32nd Degree Mason is not uncommon. Other subgroups called “Rites” are also available, such as, a 32nd Degree Mason may join the “Ancient Arabic Order of the Nobles of the Mystic Shrine” founded in 1872, more commonly known to the public as “Shriners” in red hats, who sponsor the Saladan Shrine Circus.

Freemasonry also oversees and sponsors similar but much simpler orders, such as Eastern Star, for women relatives, Job’s Daughters for girls, DeMolay for boys and others. It has also founded several college fraternities.

What does Freemasonry teach theologically?

(1) The fatherhood of God. The Masonic god may be any god in which a Mason believes. Initially the new Mason is taught that god is the “Supreme Architect of the Universe.” Then he is taught the “most significant secret” in Masonry--god’s name, which must never be spoken aloud: “Mah-Ha-Bone.” Eventually, he is taught the “Lost Word” of higher enlightenment, which is the “true” name for god: “Jabulon.” This blasphemous term is a joining of “Ja” from the Hebrew Jehovah, with “Bel” or “Bul” from the Canaanite god Baal, plus “On” from the Egyptian mystery sun god. This name conveys the Masonic view of universalism: that all religions have the same idea of “the deity.”

In the final analysis, Masonry teaches that god created the universe but is not currently active in either mercy or in judgment. Therefore he cannot be known personally or by revelation but only generally through reason. Jesus Christ and the Bible, therefore, are not revelations of god. Because he is the creator of all humans, he is therefore father of all.

This view is contrary to the Bible in every respect. There is only one God (1 Timothy 2:5), and He has revealed Himself in Scripture (2 Timothy 3:16-17) and in the Person of Jesus Christ (Colossians 1:13-20). The plain teaching of the Bible is that Jesus Christ is God (John 1:1) and only those who have Christ as their Savior are children of God (1:11-13).

(2) The brotherhood of man. Freemasonry teaches that all men are brothers under one supreme being, but the religions of these other brothers are primitive, narrow, and divisive. The true Mason is one who has forever given up on the worship and following of personalities, such as Moses, Buddha, Jesus, Mohammed, and others. For the ultimate good of mankind, he must work to repudiate such “superstitions and prejudices.” The Mason is taught that he and his brother Masons are the custodians of the one true world view.

This view is contrary to the Bible, which teaches that there are two categories of humans: a few saved and many lost (Matthew 7:13-14). Further, the Bible clearly teaches that the category an individual is in depends entirely on his relationship to Christ. Anyone who has “given up” on the personality of Jesus is doomed, regardless of any other affiliation (John 3:36; 1 John 5:11-13).

(3) Immortality of the soul. Simply stated, Freemasonry teaches that after this life every soul lives forever in the Grand Lodge Above, over which the Supreme Architect of the Universe presides.

This view is contrary to the Bible. While this teaching contains truth, it is a half-truth. All souls exist forever, but not all will spend eternity in heaven. Those who do not have Christ as their Savior will spend eternity in hell (John 3:16-18). Freemasonry makes no statement regarding the lost, hell, or eternal punishment.

(4) Righteousness by personal character. The “Revised Encyclopedia of Freemasonry” declares it best: “All Masons unite in declaring it [Freemasonry] to be a system of morality, by the practice of which its members may advance their spiritual interest, and mount the theological ladder [its three rungs being faith, hope, and charity] from the Lodge on earth to the Lodge in Heaven.”

The entire allegory of the Masonic craft is a works system in which the individual, by character and good deeds, merits acceptance before the Supreme Architect of the Universe and a place in the Grand Lodge in Heaven.

This view is contrary to the Bible. Of all Masonic teachings, this one is most central, most anti-biblical, and most dangerous. The Bible clearly teaches that acceptance before God is only through the person of Christ, as the result of individual repentance and conversion (Matthew 18:1-3; Romans 3:19-28; 2 Peter 3:9).

Observation

It is this writer’s personal observation that most men who go into Masonry do so out of good human intentions but are unaware of its incompatibility with biblical truth. Its effect on individuals is usually biblical apathy, doctrinal liberalism, and pride. If these men are church members, they will have the same liberalizing effect on their churches. If they have no church affiliation, Freemasonry will tend to become their entire religion (2 Timothy 2:24-26). Many oppose Freemasonry because it is a secret organization, but its secrecy is a secondary issue. The primary issue is its false teaching that a person can merit God’s approval by quality of character and good deeds apart from the Person and Work of Jesus Christ.

Questions and Answers

Q: *What is Freemasonry?*

A: It is one of the oldest and largest secret cult fraternities in the world.

Q: *What is its purpose?*

A: Allegedly, the improvement of personal character, service to mankind, and belief in a supreme being. In fact, it promotes theological liberalism, righteousness by personal character, and universalism.

Q: *Is it compatible with biblical Christianity?*

A: Absolutely not. It is contrary to the Bible. It denies the deity of Christ, the truth of the Gospel, and the authority of the Bible. It distorts the personality of God and denies His activity in mercy and judgment currently in this world.