

Short Talk #2

HOLINESS TO THE LORD

What thoughts or feelings did you have when you first heard the words "Holiness to the Lord"?

Was it a feeling of curiosity? Did you feel fear or a sense of unworthy? Were thoughts of honor or spiritual kingship evoked with the phrase?

As Royal Arch and Most Excellent Master Masons, our teachings include the phrase in several places and should invoke to candidates and companions alike a sense of the majesty of this phrase and the change that it can make in each of our lives.

In the setting of the Most Excellent Master degree, we find Grand Master Solomon surveying a completed temple. This earthly king, historically considered to have possessed more wealth and wisdom than any man in the ancient world, dedicates and blesses a place of worship to the One True God. He bows down to his Superior, who is the One True God. Does it strike you that the Arch holding the Keystone, broadly proclaims "Holiness to the Lord" and overshadows the dedication ceremony during this degree?

The "Holiness" that is referred to in the Most Excellent Master degree is that reverence due from a Creature to his Creator; by His people to God. A biblical fear, blessing, praise, thanksgiving and an act of worship are rolled up into one short expression of love to our One and Almighty God. Just as this degree represents the completion of the temple, this feeling of Holiness is the lesson of this degree, which symbolizes the completion and dedication of each individual Masons' temple. The overriding theme of Christian thought is the reclaiming that perfect state before the fall of Adam. It represents a return to that place where Sin had no hold and we are in a right relationship with God.

"Holiness to the Lord" appears a second time in the Royal Arch degree. It represents a similar but slightly different sense of Deity or praise. All companions should remember that place where it is spoken three times in the Royal Arch degree. Three characters speak the phrase after making a discovery that can only be a sign, a blessing, a gift from God. It is said three times, which in ancient Hebrew shows an ultimate or the highest quality. Do you remember singing the hymn, "Holy, Holy, Holy" in church? Do you remember the awe and reverence it brought forth. The same is true of the use of the term in the Royal Arch.

Let us consider where the term "Holiness to the Lord" is placed on the symbol of the Arch itself. This expression is written on a symbol of strength, completeness, and vitality. An arch by its design strengthens the building beyond the means of the squares and right angles used in earlier buildings. The arch allows the builder to build higher towards heaven. This symbolizes that God's Holiness strengthens and supplies mankind with a design that goes higher than that which be attained through his own devices.

Lastly, "Holiness to the Lord" is reserved onto God himself. This mean that only God is holy. As our creator, He possesses a character and a Being greater than any mortal human being has ever known. "Holiness" is that idea of being without sin. It goes even further than that, it is a concept of not being capable of being with sin. His Spirit and Being are pure, undefiled, and above downfall. Thus "Holiness" can only attributed to the Lord.

How does this phrase affect you in your journey through life? What about your activity in Freemasonry? As you hear this term, remember who is really Holy, to whom true Holiness can be attributed, and the true source of all Blessing...all Good... all Charity. The answer is God, the Creator, the One and all.