

HOLINESS TO THE LORD

What thoughts or feelings were invoked when you as a candidate heard or saw the phrase "**Holiness To The Lord**"?

Was it a feeling of **curiosity**? Maybe the reactive emotion was one of thanksgiving or praise. Did you feel **fear or unworthiness**? Were thoughts of honor or spiritual kingship assigned the expression?

As Royal Arch and Most Excellent Master Masons, our teachings include this phrase in several places, and should invoke to candidates and companions conferring or watching these degrees the **majesty** of this phrase and the change it can make in each of their lives.

In the setting of the Most Excellent Master's degree, we find Grand Master Solomon of Israel surveying a completed temple. This earthly king, historically reported to possess more wealth and wisdom than any man ever in the ancient world, **dedicates and blesses** a place of worship to the One True God. He bows down to his Superior, who is God. Does it strike you how the Arch holding the Keystone broadcasts symbolically to the Jewish nation and God's chosen people, "Holiness To The Lord" and overshadows the dedication ceremony during the degree?

The "Holiness" referred to in the Most Excellent Master's degree is that reverence due a Creator from his creatures; by a God from His People. A biblical fear, blessing, praise, thanksgiving, and act of total worship are all rolled into one expression of love heavenward. Just as the degree represents the completion of the temple, this feeling of "**Holiness**" is the lesson of this degree, which completes the work of building each Mason's spiritual Temple. The overriding theme is the Judeo-Christian thought of the reclaiming the perfect state of Adam before the Fall. It represents a return to a place where Sin has no hold and we are in a right and close relationship with God, our Heavenly Father.

"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 well remember how the phrase 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, and a gift from God. It is said three times, which in ancient Hebrew shows an ultimate or highest quality or characteristic. How many of you have sung the hymn "**Holy, Holy, Holy**" in church? Do you remember the awe and reverence the hymn conveys to the singer? The same is true of the use of our "Holiness" expression in the Royal Arch degree.

The Royal Arch is a degree of redemption, a reinstatement of that which was lost similar to the previously mentioned connection with the original male human being, Adam. With the discoveries made by the returning Jewish men in the narrative

of the ritual, "Holiness To The Lord" is the only **proper praise** to be sung. Captives from a foreign land, after 70 years in exile, find secrets that unlock a golden past and restore the worship of a the One True God and the secrets of Freemasonry.

To explore "Holiness To The Lord" further, consider the placement of the phrase on the symbol of the **Arch** itself. This expression is written on a symbol of strength, completeness, and vitality. An arch by design strengthens the building beyond the means of the squares and right angles used in earlier buildings. The arch allows the architect to go higher toward heaven with his labors and dreams. This symbolizes that God's Holiness strengthens and supplies mankind with a design that goes higher than that which could be attained on his own resources. Thus "Holiness To The Lord" finds a fitting position painted on the central symbol of the Arch.

Finally, "Holiness To The Lord" is reserved only to God Himself. This means that only God is Holy. As our Creator, He possesses a Character and a Being greater than any mortal ever known to human history. "Holiness" is the idea of being without sin. Yet it goes really even further, it is the concept of not even being **capable** of sin. His Spirit and Being are pure, undefiled, and above downfall. Thus, "Holiness" can only be attributed to the "Lord."

So, how does this phrase affect you in your sojourn through life? And what about your activity in Freemasonry? As you view or hear this phrase, 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, alone.

DISCUSSION

QUESTIONS

What intent do you believe that the Grand Council, in the Royal Arch Degree, had for exclaiming this line upon receiving each discovery from the quarries?

What emotion do you have when you speak or hear this phrase in the Royal Arch Degree? What does it say to you about the connection that you feel between Freemasonry and your belief in Deity?

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