

VSL Verses for Each Degree

As Freemasons we are all very much aware that the lectern at the Chair of King Solomon (usually occupied by the Worshipful Master) contains a copy of what we call 'The Volume of the Sacred Law', normally shortened to The VSL.

How many of us really notice that towards the end of the Opening Ceremony the Immediate Past Master moves to the front of the Masters Pedestal and opens the VSL. If we watch carefully we should be able to see that he uses markers to open at a predetermined point. Equally we should also be aware that the point at which the VSL is opened changes as we change to Fellowcraft and again as we enter the Master Mason degree. Now I have to confess that I, without really thinking, presumed that all Lodges opened their VSL at the same point but I have come to understand that that is not the case.

As there are three degrees in Craft Freemasonry, each degree has a separate series of verses pertinent to that degree.

In Huncoat Lodge, in the First Degree we open the VSL at Chronicles ch2 v6 which is concerned with the settling in of King Solomon on the throne of Israel. The G.A. offered KS whatever he wanted. He asked for nothing of Great Architect probably because of his humility, other than the gift of wisdom & knowledge which was granted largely because of that demeanour. We should also remember that King Solomon was the son of King David and had seen how his Father ruled Israel. However he gathered together a great multitude of chariots & horsemen, he made gold, & silver available in plenty in Jerusalem as well as buying linen from Egypt with a silver chariot with associated horses & horses for the Kings of the Hittites and the Syrians.

Other Lodges open at Psalm 133, which relates directly to what is behind the 1st Degree; namely Brotherhood and how good it is to be able to converse with like minded people. We may not think it at the time but fellowship is one of the good things we all pick up in Freemasonry, though at the time of our Initiation we are somewhat in the dark. Not too long ago a Brother in a local Lodge lost his wife due to ill health and he was helped through a very difficult time by the support of his fellow brethren in the Lodge.

As we open into the Second Degree the reading is changed to Ruth ch1 which explains where Ruth came from but she was unfortunate in the death of her husband quite early on. Her Mother-in-Law took Ruth and her sister-in-law back to the land of Judah and tried to persuade them to return to their mothers. Ruth decided not to and gave the famous quote *'entreat me not to leave thee, or to refrain from following after thee; and where you go so will I. Where you lodge I will lodge, your people are my people'*.

Thus depicting care of the elderly.

Who was Boaz in the Bible?

Heroes are easier to admire than to define. They are seldom conscious of their moments in heroism and others may not recognize their acts as heroic. Heroes simply do the right thing at the right time, whether or not they realize the impact their actions will have. Perhaps the one quality they share is a tendency to think of others before they think of themselves. Boaz was a hero.

When Boaz dealt with other people he always was sensitive to their needs. His words to his employees, relatives and others were coloured with kindness. He offered help openly, not grudgingly. When he discovered who Ruth was, he took several steps to help her because she had been faithful to his relative Naomi. When Naomi advised Ruth to request his protection, Boaz was ready to marry her if the legal complications could be worked out.

Boaz not only did what was right, he also did it right away. At that time he didn't see all that his actions would accomplish. He could not have known that the child he would have by Ruth would be an ancestor of both David and Jesus. He only met the challenge of taking the right action in the situation facing him.

In the 1st Degree we are told that the two pillars to the entrance to King Solomon's Temple are named Boaz and Jachin

Other Lodges use Amos which declares that the Grand Geometrician stood on a wall with a Plumb Line and asked Amos what he saw. Well there is a Plumb Line in your hand and the wall is true; the GG promised that he would always be with his people, guiding them and watching over them.

The third Degree is opened at Kings ch1 in which King David is by now an old man and finding it difficult to retain warmth from his food and clothing and this clearly is a time when unscrupulous people can pick up on any weakness. However that can be reset and in this reading King David determined that Solomon should rule after him so we see how succession was carried out.

Others use Ecclesiastes c12 v1-7; briefly this restates that 1st degree covers youth, the 2nd degree middle age and the 3rd degree old age.

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