

The Exaltation Ceremony - Setting the Scene

After the Principal Sojourner has retired to entrust the Candidate

DC or Nominated Reader:

Companions, we are now at that place in history some 500 years after the completion of King Solomon's Temple. King Solomon has long since died. Jerusalem has been attacked and conquered by the Babylonians, the city and King Solomon's temple and all its holy artefacts have been destroyed and its inhabitants taken into captivity by the Babylonian empire to the city of Babylon, where they have been living for 70 years. King Cyrus now rules the area and has recently issued a decree allowing the descendants of those exiles from Jerusalem to return to their native land.

This is the symbolic part of our Ceremony and the whole story is encompassed by this first part whilst our Candidate remains blindfolded.

After the candidate has been informed, 'You are now at liberty to retire and on your return to the Chapter the Ceremony will continue' and after the Sojourners and Candidate have retired.

DC or Nominated Reader:

We now go right back in time to the start of our story. The Chapter Room represents the Grand Sanhedrin, the Council of 72 Elders which sat together to regulate the affairs of the Temple, where Zerubbabel presides with Haggai and Joshua and, Companions, you now represent the Council Members.

You have to imagine that the secret vault, represented by the carpet and its equipment, at this time is still undiscovered under the foundations of the former Temple building.

King Cyrus has issued his decree allowing the exiles to return to Jerusalem. The two Sojourners and the Candidate, represent returning exiles, who have only heard of Jerusalem through stories. They are about to arrive from their captivity, having heard that the Temple is about to be rebuilt and they wish to offer their services in its reformation.

After Zerubbabel orders them to, “Go and may the God of your fathers be with you” and after the Sojourners and Candidate have retired.

DC or Nominated Reader:

“Companions, the Sojourners and the Candidate have left the Sanhedrin to prepare the ground for the foundation of the second Temple.

On their return, the Chapter room still represents the Grand Sanhedrin but, the secret vault represented by the carpet and other equipment now becomes the focal point of the story.

The discovery made by the Sojourners is a very significant one, as we shall see. A lesson that truly humble workmen, though engaged on unskilled and uninteresting work, may nevertheless find in it, great reward.

We will now hear a detailed and dramatic account of how that discovery was made.”