

Master Mason Degree: Ecclesiastes 12: 1-7

Remember now thy creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them; while the sun or the light or the moon or the stars be not darkened, nor the clouds return after the rain; in the day when the keepers of the house shall tremble, and the strong men shall bow themselves, and the grinders cease, because they are few, and those that look out of the windows be darkened, and the doors shall be shut in the streets, when the sound of the grinding is low, and he shall rise up at the voice of a bird, and all the daughters of music shall be brought low. Also when they shall be afraid of that which is high, and fears shall be in the way, and the almond tree shall flourish, and the grasshopper shall be a burden, and desire shall fail; because man goeth to his long home, and the mourners go about the streets; or ever the silver cord be loosed, or the golden bowl be broken, or the pitcher be broken at the fountain, or the wheel broken at the cistern. Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was and the spirit shall return to God who gave it.

All Master Masons will recognize this as the scripture used during the Master Mason Circumambulation.

The book of Ecclesiastes author and date are uncertain. Until the 19th century, scholars thought it was authored by King Solomon, but modern theologians feel the true composer is unknown. They believe it is written as if King Solomon were the author. Whoever the author may be, here He is exhorting young people to avail themselves of God's blessing while they are still young. One can read this passage over and over without actually understanding its meaning. At least two different Bible commentaries however, offer the following explanations.

Remember now thy Creator: here remember means more than just recalling to mind. It means to reverence, honor, glorify, and worship God.

In the Days of thy Youth: means while men are young.

While the Evil Days come not: pertains to the rigors of old age

Nor the Years Draw Nigh: means when the time comes near.

When thou shalt say I have No Pleasure in them: refers to the sadness of old age.

When the sun or the light, or the moon or the stars be not darkened, nor the Clouds Return after the rain: refers to the storm clouds of old age.

In the days when the Keepers of the House shall tremble: the keepers are the hands and arms while the house represents the body.

And the Strong Men shall bow themselves: refers to the legs becoming crooked. (bow is a archaic word meaning to bend)

And the Grinders cease because they are few: refers to missing teeth

And those that look out of the Windows be darkened: indicates the eyes becoming weak.

And the Doors shall be shut in the streets: pertains to the ears (hearing impaired)

When the sound of the grinding is low: pertains to toothless chewing

And He shall rise up at the voice of a bird: indicates the inability to sleep, gets up early when the birds start to sing.

And all the Daughters of Music shall be brought low: indicates the voice is failing and the inability to sing.

And when they shall be afraid of that which is high: pertains to the fear of falling and the fear of heights.

And Fears shall be in the way: indicates the fear of crime, because man cannot protect himself

And the Almond Tree shall flourish: pertains to gray hair, referring to the almost white blossoms of the almond tree.

And the Grasshopper shall be a burden: means man becomes weak, unable to lift.

And Desire shall fail: pertains to the loss of physical appetites.

Because man goeth to his long home: means Heaven

And the mourners go about the streets: pertains to the funeral procession.

Or ever the silver cord be loosed or the Golden Bowl be broken : the picture here is of a golden lamp suspended by a silver cord, The silver cord becomes loose, the golden bowl crashes to the floor, and the light of life is extinguished.

Or the Pitcher be broken at the fountain, or the wheel broken at the Cistern: this pertains to the water of life. The broken pitcher can contain no more water. With the wheel broken, water can no longer be drawn from the cistern.

Then shall the Dust return to the Earth as it was: pertains to that from which God created man.

And the Spirit shall return unto God who gave it: Genesis 2:7 tells us that God formed man from the dust of the earth and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life and Man became a living soul. So, at the time of Death, man ceases to exist on earth and his spirit returns to God who gave it to him in the first place.

It is much easier for a young person to accept new concepts, ideas and disciplines than one who is older and set in his ways. By the same token, it is easier for a youth to accept God and his teachings, principals and ordinances than it is for an older person. Whatever the stage of our life, it is imperative that we as men and Masons "REMEMBER NOW OUR CREATOR."

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Questions for discussion:

How do you, apply these Masonic teachings in your daily life?

As a Mason could the "Silver Cord" have additional symbolic meaning?

As a Master Mason what do you feel is your most important obligation to; Masonry, your Lodge and your Brother?

As a Master Mason how do you promote "Brotherly Love, Relief, and Truth" in your Lodge?