

Evangelism and Other Religions Part 6a Freemasonry 6/4/23

Introduction

1. Freemasons

a. History and Overview

- As with every other class, this is not to say that every person involved in the Freemasons is some sort of terrible person. Rather, this class simply asks, "What are some things they believe? Are these things compatible w/ biblical Christianity?"
- Freemasons are known to be involved with charity and charitable endeavors.
- Masonry developed from the guilds of stonemasons who built the majestic castles and cathedrals of the Middle Ages. Called "freemasons" because of the traveling liberties they were given as members of an admired craft, these craftsmen formed a fraternal group that later expanded to non-practicing members (or "speculative masons").¹
- In 1717, four Masonic Lodges joined to create the first Grand Lodge in England. By 1731, when Benjamin Franklin joined the Fraternity, there were already several Lodges in the Colonies.
- Thirteen signers of the Constitution and 14 U.S. presidents were Masons, including George Washington.² Voltaire, Mark Twain, FDR, Winston Churchill, and J. Edgar Hoover were among the Freemasons.³
- You might know someone in Freemasonry who is a kind, charitable individual. My great-grandfather was a Freemason.
- "A Freemason is committed to bettering himself, his community, and the world. He is on a journey of self-discovery believing in something greater than himself, a journey in which he will be supported by other good men."⁴
- There are roughly 2 million Freemasons in North America.

¹ <https://mnmasoniccharities.org/blog/news/who-are-the-masons/>

² <https://mnmasoniccharities.org/blog/news/who-are-the-masons/>

³ <https://www.ghlilley.com.au/blogs/news/famous-freemasons>

⁴ <https://beafreemason.org/>

- There are currently 56 Freemason Lodges in Wyoming.⁵
- Though some Masonic Lodges admit women, many do not. The Grand
- To become a Mason (in the Ohio State Masonry)⁶:
 - Be a man at least 19 years old
 - Be an Ohio resident for at least six months
 - Be able to read and write English
 - Be prepared to profess a belief in a deity
 - Be of good reputation as a man of honor and integrity
 - Be a peaceful citizen not engaged in subversive activities
 - Be recommended by two members of the lodge you wish to join
- The local congregating unit of Freemasonry is the Lodge, which is usually overseen at the regional level (state, province, or national border) by a Grand Lodge. An applicant for admission to a Masonic lodge is required to be an adult male, and believe in the existence of a Supreme Being and in the immortality of the soul. As one Grand Lodge notes, “Freemasonry unites men of good character who, though of different religious, ethnic, or social backgrounds, share a belief in the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of mankind.”⁷
- The Freemason journey is divided into three stages. These three degrees are loosely based on the journeyman system, which was used to educate medieval craftsmen: entered apprentice, fellow craft, and master Mason. The degrees symbolically represent the “three stages of human development: youth, manhood, and age.”⁸

b. Beliefs & Biblical Evaluation

- This is not to say what every Freemason believes, but to present a very brief overview of doctrine from various Freemason authorities.
- Since its founding in the 1700s, professing Christians have both supported and condemned Freemasonry.

⁵ <https://www.wyomingmasons.com/map-of-lodges-in-wy/>

⁶ <https://www.freemason.com/joining-faq/requirements/>

⁷ <https://www.freemason.com/what-is-freemasonry/>

⁸ <https://www.freemason.com/what-is-freemasonry/>

- Currently, many Protestant denominations (and Roman Catholics) have rejected Freemasonry as incompatible with Christianity. These include: The Orthodox Presbyterian Church, The Presbyterian Church of America, Evangelical Lutheran Synod.⁹
 - In 1942, The Orthodox Presbyterian Church gave a formal statement, concluding that “Masonry is a religious institution and as such is definitely anti-Christian.”¹⁰
 - The entire statement can be read at this website:
<https://opc.org/GA/masonry.html>
- In 1993, the North American Mission Board, in affiliation with the Southern Baptist Convention, formally stated that Freemasonry is incompatible with biblical Christianity.¹¹
- Why have many Christian movements held that Freemasonry is incompatible with biblical Christianity?
- Much of the material will be drawn from Freemasonry recommended reading. For example, works from Albert Pike, Albert Mackey, Manly Hall, Rex Hutchens, W.I. Wilmshurst (e.g. *Morals and Dogma, A Bridge to Light, An Encyclopedia of Freemasonry, and The Meaning of Masonry*).

1) Freemasonry is a distinct religion itself

The Orthodox Presbyterian Church, *Freemasonry: Its Aims and Ideals*:

“On this score the evidence is overwhelming. There is no room for any reasonable doubt as to Masonry’s being a religion. Not only do the symbols, rites and temples of this order point unmistakably to it as a religion, but a great many Masonic authors of note emphatically declare it to be just that. Of almost numberless quotations that could be given here the committee has selected a few.

S. M. Ward, the author of several standard Masonic works, defines religion as ‘a system of teaching moral truth associated with a belief in God’ and then declares: ‘I consider Freemasonry is a sufficiently organized school of mysticism to be entitled to be called a religion.’

⁹ <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/the-faqs-is-freemasonry-compatible-with-christianity/>

¹⁰ <https://opc.org/GA/masonry.html>

¹¹ <https://www.namb.net/apologetics/resource/freemasonry-overview/>

He goes on to say: 'I boldly aver that Freemasonry is a religion, yet in no way conflicts with any other religion, unless that religion holds that no one outside its portals can be saved' (pp. 182, 185, 187)."

- 2) Freemasonry permits syncretism, risks idolatry and the breaking of the first two of the Ten Commandments

Belief in any deity is permitted.

The questionable use of words such as "Abaddon" and "Jab-Bul-On," for the so-called secret name of God.

Albert Pike, an authority in Freemasonry, wrote:

"This is probably Jabulum, incorrectly copied; which, as I have shown, meant 'the product of, that which proceeded, issued or emanated from Om.'

If correctly written, it is compounded of ... Yu or Yah-u, ... Baal or Bal or Bel, and Om, thus combining the names of the Hebrew, Phoenician and Hindu Deities, to indicate that they are in reality the same. In some old rituals it is Jabulum."¹²

- This is a type of syncretism, which is forbidden in the worship of the true God (Exod 20:3-4; 2 Cor 11:1-3).

- 3) A flawed view of Scripture

"The Bible, with all the allegories it contains, expresses, in an incomplete and veiled manner only, the religious science of the Hebrews."¹³

The NAMB says that Freemasonry considers the Bible to be one book among many.

"The *Holy Bible*, Square, and Compasses, are not only styled the Great Lights in Masonry, but they are also technically called the Furniture of the Lodge; and, as you have seen, it is held that there is no Lodge without them. This has sometimes been made a pretext for

¹² Albert Pike, *The Book of the Words* (Kila, Mont.: Kessinger Publishing Co., n.d.), p. 151. Also see. *A Bridge to Light*, pp.31, 120, 139.

¹³ Pike, *Morals and Dogma*, p. 744.

excluding Jews from our Lodges, because they cannot regard the New Testament as a holy book. The Bible is an indispensable part of the furniture of a *Christian* Lodge, only because it is the sacred book of the Christian religion. The Hebrew Pentateuch in a Hebrew Lodge, and the Koran in a Mohammedan one, belong on the Altar; and one of these, and the Square and Compass, properly understood, are the Great Lights by which a Mason must walk and work.”¹⁴

4) Erroneous view of the Person and work of Christ

Rex Hutchens wrote:

“The purpose of teaching the concept of a Messiah in Freemasonry is to point out its near universality in the well-developed religions of the ancient world. We see references to Dionysius of the Greeks, Sosiosch of the Persians, Krishna of the Hindus, Osiris of the Egyptians, Jesus of the Christians. The purpose of these varying cultures’ messiahs was to find in human form a source of intercession with Deity; in particular one who, as a human, had been tempted and suffered the daily pangs of life and so could be expected to possess a particular sympathy and understanding; in a word, the messiahs expressed hope.”¹⁵

The Orthodox Presbyterian Church: Frequently in Masonic ritual the inspired Word of God is seriously mutilated, and in many instances this mutilation consists in the omission of the name of Jesus Christ. In Mackey’s *Masonic Ritualist* the name of Christ is omitted from 1 Peter 2:5 (p. 271), 2 Thessalonians 3:6 (p. 348), and 2 Thessalonians 3:12 (p. 349).”¹⁶

5) A works-based understanding of salvation

Orthodox Presbyterian Church: “The Christian doctrine of salvation is heterosoteric; it teaches that man must be saved by another. Masonry’s doctrine of salvation, on the other hand, is autosoteric; it teaches that man must and can save himself. ‘Freemasonry,’ we are told by J. S. M. Ward, ‘has taught that each man can, by himself, work out his own conception of God and thereby achieve salvation’ (*Freemasonry: Its Aims and Ideals*, p. 187). And in his book, *What*

¹⁴ Pike, *Morals and Dogma*, p.11.

¹⁵ Hutchens, *A Bridge To Light*, pp. 112-113.

¹⁶ <https://opc.org/GA/masonry.html>

Masonry Means, which is warmly recommended in an introduction by J. F. Newton, William F. Hammond says: ‘Masonry’s conception of immortality is something for which man must qualify while still in the flesh. Through the fellowship of a moral discipline Masons are taught to qualify for the fellowship of eternal life’ (p. 171).”

According to Pike, in the commentary concerning the 31st degree, Hutchens stated: “The candidate is brought into the Court of the Dead to be judged for actions while living and to determine if he deserves to dwell among the gods. His escort is Horus, Isis, Horus’ mother, speaks first, inquiring whose *ka* has come to be judged.”¹⁷

c. Additional Observations

- The apparent secrecy required of Freemasonry seems antithetical to Christian fellowship

“For Christians the secrecy practised by Freemasons poses a problem in that secrecy of any kind is destructive of fellowship. The Christian community is an open fellowship.”¹⁸

“The brotherhood of secret oath-bound societies is incompatible with the fellowship of Christ’s followers (Matthew 5:33-34).”¹⁹

- The gathering of Freemasonry may conflict with the biblical requirements to the Body of Christ in the local church

Christians are commanded to practice the one another and use their gifts in the context of a NT-defined biblical local church, in meaningful accountability to biblically qualified elders (Heb 13:17). Involvement in Freemasonry could hinder one's obedience to God in doing so (1 Cor 12:14-31; Heb 10:24-25; 1 Pet 4:10-11).

God does not command involvement in a Freemasonry Lodge. However, He does command meaningful involvement in a NT local church. Therefore, if one is going to choose one or the other, that which God commands must be chosen. This becomes especially relevant when considering that one has a limited amount of time for various commitments in a given week.

¹⁷ Hutchens, *A Bridge to Light*, pp. 300-301.

¹⁸ <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/the-faqs-is-freemasonry-compatible-with-christianity/>

¹⁹ <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/the-faqs-is-freemasonry-compatible-with-christianity/>

- God has authorized, empowered, and commissioned the local church to take up his mission for the world: disciple-making.

No other organization has been authorized, empowered, and commissioned to take up God's mission for the world (Matt 28:18-20). Only the church is commanded to do so. This will require that individual believers think carefully about involvement in organizations which conflict with biblical Christianity.

d. Can Christians be involved in Freemasonry?

- There is no doubt that there are kind, charitable men involved in Freemasonry. This is not about whether or not there are kind people, but what is taught by some of the authorities and its compatibility with Christianity as defined in Scripture.
- The aforementioned syncretism demands that Christians think carefully about whether or not they can, in good conscience, participate in Freemasonry, while also remaining faithful to their Lord and Scripture.
- The several teachings which conflict with biblical Christianity within Freemasonry demands that Christians think carefully about whether or not they can, in good conscience, participate in Freemasonry, while also remaining faithful to their Lord and Scripture.
- A Christian, who is an individual redeemed by and in submission to the biblical Jesus Christ, will have to justify how involvement in Freemasonry brings glory to his Lord.
- If one wishes to justify involvement on the grounds of charitable endeavors, they might reconsider the myriad of ways in which they could do so through God's NT local church.

e. Additional resources

- <https://opc.org/GA/masonry.html>
- <https://www.namb.net/apologetics/resource/freemasonry-overview/>
- <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/the-faqs-is-freemasonry-compatible-with-christianity/>