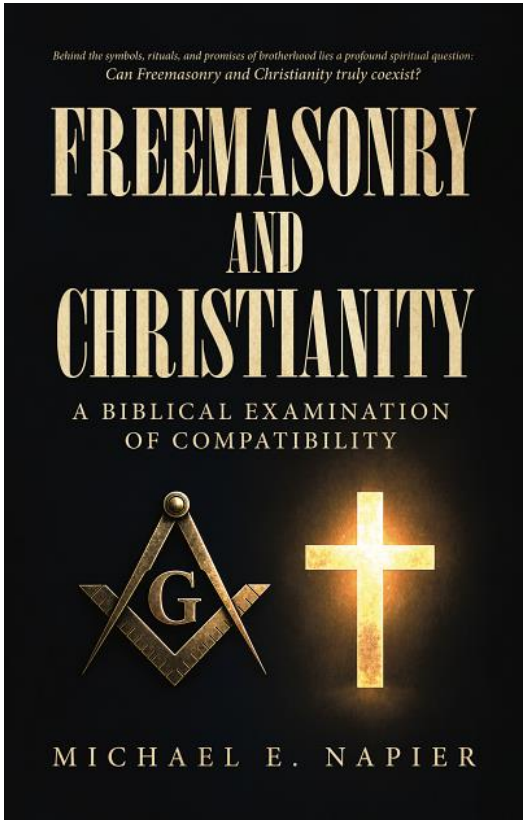


Exploring Christianity and Freemasonry Compatibility.

Freemasonry and Christianity:
A Biblical Examination of Compatibility
By Michael Napier

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Behind the symbols, rituals, and promises of brotherhood lies a profound spiritual question:
Can Freemasonry and Christianity truly coexist?

FREEMASONRY AND CHRISTIANITY

A BIBLICAL EXAMINATION OF COMPATIBILITY



MICHAEL E. NAPIER

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Table of Contents

Introduction 1
Chapter 1 – What is a Mason? 5
Chapter 2 – Origins of Freemasonry 23
Chapter 3 – Beliefs of Freemasonry 31
Chapter 4 – Is Freemasonry Occult? 43
Chapter 5 – Freemasonry's Influence in the Church 53
Chapter 6 – 10 Reasons Why Christians Should Never Be Masons 61
Chapter 7 – Conclusion 79
End Notes 83

Introduction

"You would make a great Mason," my co-worker Bill said. "With your Bible knowledge and ability to explain the scripture, you would be a real asset to the lodge". I told him I had no time for the Lodge or Freemasonry, because I considered Freemasonry incompatible with true Christianity. Bill was a past Potentate of the local Shrine and on a national board overseeing Shriner hospitals. He was certainly a man who was knowledgeable about the Masons, or so he seemed. Several months later, after multiple invitations to spaghetti suppers, steak dinners, and charitable events, I found the Masonic saying "To be one ask one" to be untrue, for Bill evangelistically recruits new members.

Bill, who professed to be a Christian and actively attends a Baptist Church, again approached me about becoming a Mason. I again pointedly explained to him I would never consider being a Mason because of their doctrine, unequal yoke, and probable occult connections (Eph.5:11). He quickly told me Freemasonry was a Christian Organization that "made good men better". I told him everything I had studied about Freemasonry reinforced to me that the lodge was incompatible with Christianity, and with the shroud of secrecy the lodge maintained, I could only conclude the things I had read were true. Shortly after this conversation, Bill brought me a number of books produced by Freemason printing companies explaining the history and beliefs of the lodge and asked me to read the material and reconsider my point of view.

Many professing Christians have been heavily influenced by Freemasonry. One study report that Southern Baptist Church members comprise approximately 40% of total U.S. Lodges. Freemasonry had an impact on US government, with men such as George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Benjamin Franklin, Ethan Allen, John Hancock, John Paul Jones, and Paul Revere, as well as 14 U.S. Presidents were Masons.

Freemasons have influenced the United States Military claiming notable men such as; Omar Bradley – Five Star General of the Army WWII, Admiral David G. Farragut (First Admiral of the U.S. Navy)), General Henry "Hap" Arnold - Commander of the Army Air Force WWII, Douglas MacArthur - Five Star General, Allied Commander in the Pacific WW II, General Norman Schwartzkopf - Desert Storm commander, Major General George E. Pickett CSA), led "Pickett's Charge" at Gettysburg, to name a few.

Freemasons have entertained us with such notables as Ty Cobb, Jack Dempsey, Arnold Palmer, Mel Tillis, Gene Autry, Ernest Borgnine, Roy Clark, Bob Hope, Sir Author Conan Doyle, W.C. Fields, John Wayne, Peter Sellers, and Will Rogers. Great composers have been Freemasons: Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, William "Count" Basie, Duke Ellington, and John Philip Sousa. The list of notable men who were claimed to be Masons extends into the thousands. There is no doubt that men of the fraternity have many accomplishments. The claims of greatness could be made of any group with numerous members, including Christians, Atheists, Russians, Americans, British, etc., and the Masons are no exception.

Freemasonry charity work is widely known: twenty-two Shriners Hospitals providing free care for injured and crippled children, free dental care for the handicapped, free eye surgery for the poor, scholarships for those who cannot afford higher education, free learning centers for children with learning disabilities, etc. What could be wrong with an organization that does so much good?

I thanked Bill for the books, promised to read them and get back with him on my conclusions. Several months later, I again discussed Freemasonry with him with more conviction than ever that a Christian should never be associated with Freemasonry. After our discussion based on comparing the Masons' writings with the Bible, he stated that he could not deny my conclusion that Freemasonry was unbiblical. Ten years later, Bill is still heavily involved with the Freemasons.

Chapter 1

What Is a Mason?

A Mason is a man who holds membership in Freemasonry, also known as the Lodge, Craft, or Masons, one of the oldest fraternal organizations in the world. Freemasonry has many reputations, some of its own making and some fabricated by people outside the organization. Freemasonry promotes itself as an organization that exists for the betterment of humanity through education, influence, and charity.

Those opposed to Freemasonry condemn the organization and its members as subversive, occultic, Luciferian, and a host of other charges. To begin to understand the organization, a person must look at their theoretic origins, teachings, and present work in light of God's Word.

Because Freemasonry has hidden under a cloud of secrecy for many years, most analysis of the organization was left to speculation. But over the last couple of decades, Freemasonry has opened many of its mysteries to public scrutiny, allowing a reasonable and truthful examination of the fraternity. To understand Freemasonry, we begin with the individual Mason and his work in the Lodge.

A Mason is a member of one of the largest fraternal organizations in the world. According to the Masons, to become a member of a Masonic Lodge, a person must be a man over the age of 18 (some lodges require 21), have a good reputation, be recommended by another Mason, and believe in a "Supreme

Being". Although attitudes are slowly changing in some Lodges, African Americans are normally not allowed to join the lodge, instead being referred to the Prince Hall. The Prince Hall is the Black version of the Masonic Lodge.

In addition to the Local Lodge, inside Freemasonry there are multiple organizations that exist to perform a certain function. A Mason or member of his family may belong to one or more of these organizations. Some of the more well-known of these organizations are listed below.

- **International Order of the Rainbow for Girls** – An organization for young ladies, 11 – 20 years of age, that provides leadership training through community service projects. A primary focus of the organization is community charity. Being related to a Master Mason is not a requirement for membership. Any young lady willing to be law-abiding, serve their community, and acknowledge the Supreme Authority may join. Rainbow Girls are a recruiting arm of the Eastern Star.

- **Job's Daughters** – An organization for young women, 10 – 20 years of age, and related to a Master Mason. Although this organization claims to exist to help young ladies build character through moral and spiritual development, the organization accepts all religions and does not require the ladies to practice any particular religion.

- **Order of DeMolay** – An organization for young men, 12 - 21 years of age. Although a young man does not have to

have a Masonic family background, many join because of the family Masonic connection. The requirements include that a young man must be between 12 – 21 years of age and believe in a supreme being. The focus of The Order of DeMolay is the development of civic awareness, character development, and leadership in young men. It is a recruiting arm of Freemasonry for young men.

- **A.J.E.F.** - A primarily Latino organization for both boys and girls, ages 14 to 21 years of age. This youth organization is possibly the closest to actual Freemasonry than any of the other appendage organizations. The organization does not allow co-ed meetings except when a Master Mason is present for a special meeting. The organization claims it is aimed at developing moral values and social skills among the initiates. A.J.E.F. frequently teaches its members through Masonic esoteric themes, and it is not uncommon to find the young participants to have learned the occult teachings of Freemasonry.

- **Order of the Eastern Star** – An organization for both men and women ages 18 or older. The organization claims to be based on the Bible, but is open to people of other religions. The men must be a Master Mason and the women must be related to a Master Mason. The organization claims to promote goodness and moral values, with a dedication to helping others through charitable work. The Eastern Star many times provides the wife of a Master Mason with something to occupy her time while the husband is involved with the Lodge or Temple.

- **Shriners** – An organization of Master Masons that claim their core values as men "bound together by our shared values and a desire to have fun, do good and build relationships that can last a lifetime." [1] Shriners have a reputation for charitable work, raising millions of dollars a year to support Shriners Hospitals, helping those with educational disabilities, distribution of toys to underprivileged children at Christmas. They also have a reputation for being fun-seeking, establishing various social clubs within their organization and participating in over-the-top parties at Shriners conventions. The Shriners are the most colorful and public group of Freemasonry.

- **Societas Rosicruciana** – The Societas Rosicruciana (or Rosicrucian Society) is a Rosicrucian order which limits its membership to Christian Master Masons. Membership is by invitation only, and its teachings are occult. The order follows the teachings of Christian Rosenkruez, the supposed founder of Rosicrucianism. Rosicrucianism is an occult sect that began in the early 15th century. Masonic Rosicrucianism mixes occult teaching with Freemasonry. Membership in the Societas Rosicruciana is offered only to Master Masons who are deemed worthy due to scholastic, research, or educational abilities. These men are frequently leaders in Freemasonry.

Although there are over 30 different organizations in Freemasonry, the Masons' organizations can be collectively known as Freemasonry, Masonry, The Lodge, or The Craft. Freemasonry defines itself as "an oath-bound fraternal order of men, derived from the medieval fraternity of operative Freemasons, adhering to many of their ancient charges, laws,

customs, and legends."[2] American local Masonic Lodges are loosely connected to a state Grand Lodge.

No central body oversees all the Grand Lodges in the world. Individual Grand Lodge policies and practices vary, though they have a similar basic framework. Worldwide, the Masons claim a membership of approximately two to six million. The exact total count is impossible to determine because Freemasonry has no single centralized global governing body.

Masons in the United States are found in every state, with an undocumented national membership of 870,000. Membership reached an all-time high in 1959 with an estimated 4.1 million members nationwide. Recent trends show that numbers have steadily declined over the last few decades, dropping from about 1 million in 2019 to just under 870,000 today. This count includes mainstream, dues-paying Master Masons across thousands of local lodges in all 50 states but generally excludes appendant or youth groups. Pennsylvania boasts the largest membership with approximately 76,000 to 95,000 Masons, and Alaska the least with one thousand, three hundred and seventy-seven (1,377.[3] U.S. Masonic membership has steadily declined over the past decade, with a 60% reduction since 1932.

Most Masonic activities are centered on the Lodge. The Lodge to the Mason is as the church is to the Christian. The Lodge has many similarities to a church: membership qualifications, scheduled meeting times, ceremony, instruction, tradition, a mission, etc. Many Masons easily identify the Lodge with the church, believing they are in some way doing the work of God through the Lodge.

While listening to the reasons a Christian should not be a Freemason, one Mason angrily grabbed his Bible with the Masonic symbol on the cover and explained that all Lodges have a King James Bible "just like this one" in them. It is easily seen how immature church members, carnal Deacons, and shallow Pastors proudly proclaim their allegiance to the Lodge. The Lodge has no more attachment to the King James Bible than it does to any "Volume of the Sacred Law".

Quoting the Masonic Dictionary;

> "… that according to the ancient regulations, it is the Sacred Book of the Law which is placed upon the altar. It will be readily understood that the Sacred Book of the Law includes the Koran, the Veda, the Shruti, the Pentateuch, as well as the Bible."[4]

Although the Lodge claims to be a fraternity, it is not a Christian organization in its design or function. The Freemasons who study their own writings will authoritatively declare that Freemasonry is a fraternity that exists to "make good men better" but never claims this is done through Christian faith. A man who joins Freemasonry can be of any religion or no religion at all. The Masonic Dictionary, citing foundational Freemasonry documents, defines Freemasons as Universalists with regard to religion.

> "Referring to the question of the use of the Holy Bible on the altar in English and American lodges, we note in a recent Proceedings of the Grand Lodge of England that it was decided that the Provincial Grand Lodge of India could initiate candidates without interference with

> religion, and laid down the rule, "He need not cease to be a Mohammedan, Buddhist, Hindu, Jew, Christian, or any other denomination."[5]

Agnostics are equally welcome in the membership of Freemasonry, for Masons are only expected to believe in a "Great Architect of the Universe".

The United States Lodges differ in degrees and ritual from other Lodges around the world. The prospective Mason is introduced to Freemasonry as an initiate of the Blue Lodge. All Masons are members of the Blue Lodge. Inside the Blue Lodge, the Mason will have obtained one of three levels or stages of membership that are called degrees.

The degrees of Freemasonry are considered steps of knowledge. Albert G. Mackey in *An Encyclopedia of Freemasonry*, states, "The degrees of Freemasonry are, then, the steps by which a candidate ascends from a lower to a higher condition of knowledge."[6] The degrees of Freemasonry are: Entered Apprentice, Fellow Craft, and Master Mason.

1st Degree - Entered Apprentice

The Entered Apprentice is the first step in Lodge membership. To qualify for Entered Apprentice, the man must be of legal age, have no felony convictions, be of good reputation, and profess a belief in a Supreme Being and the immortality of the soul. Although Freemasonry claims it is not a religion, American Masons perform many practices that have the appearance of Christianity. Some of their ceremonies include baptism, confirmation, and catechisms. The Entered Apprentice must

"duly prepare" by learning his catechism before his initiation rite. The ceremony for his first degree is called the "Rite of Destitution". The candidate removes his clothes except his shirt; drawers are provided by the Lodge, his left foot is bare, and his right foot has a slipper; his left arm and breast are left naked; he is then blindfolded or hooded to symbolize the secret Mysteries of Freemasonry and the darkness of the uninitiated (non-Masons).

The candidate is led by a rope, called a "cable tow," to symbolize the voluntary and complete acceptance of anything Masonry may call on the candidate to do. When the candidate first steps into the lodge room, the candidate is told he is leaving the darkness of the hopeless world and entering a new existence and light.

The reception of the Entered Apprentice into the lodge room is intended to demonstrate to the candidate that the rituals about to be undertaken are serious and confidential to Freemasons and have serious consequences to those who break Masonic trust. The hooded and rope-towed candidate is led in a clockwise manner around the altar that allows the attending Freemasons to observe if the candidate is ready for the initiation. The Entered Apprentice candidate is led to the altar in search of the light and to assume the obligations as a Mason. At the Masonic altar, the candidate performs what is known as "Obligation". The Obligation gives the essence of the oath and binds the candidate to Freemasonry for life. These obligations include guarding the secrets of the Lodge.

At the center of the candidate's ritual, he is introduced to the "Three Great Lights of Masonry"; "the volume of the sacred law" (The Bible in the United States Lodges), the square, and the

compass. The Three Great Lights embody the foundations of Freemasonry. The Open Bible (the volume of the sacred law) relates to the soul, symbolizing that a Mason should allow its teachings to guide future conduct. The compass relates to the Entered Apprentice's mind, symbolizing skill and knowledge. The square relates to the Entered Apprentice's body, symbolizing morality and honesty.

In recognition of acceptance by the Lodge and completion of the first degree, the Entered Apprentice is given a white lambskin apron to symbolize the pure, clean condition of the soul. The rights of the first-degree Mason are limited primarily to attendance of most lodge meetings and assistance on Lodge projects. The Entered Apprentice cannot hold offices, vote, or organize projects. In the Lodge, there is no set time to progress from an Entered Apprentice to a Master Mason. Most Masons agree it will require three months to three years to complete the first three degrees.

Even though the Entered Apprentice completes the Rite of Desolation and takes his oath on the Bible resting on the Masonic altar, he is still not considered a "legal" Mason. Masonic writer Carl H. Claude, who wrote several Masonic handbooks, describes the Entered Apprentice in his handbook, Introduction To Freemasonry – The Entered Apprentice, as not being a "legal" Mason and owned by the Lodge as property, with his local Lodge having total power over his future as a Mason.

> "He then becomes an Entered Apprentice Mason. He is a Mason to the extent that he is called "brother" and has certain rights; he is not yet a Mason in the legal Masonic sense.

> Seeing a framework erected on a plot of ground, we reply to the question, "What are they building?" by saying, "A house." We mean, "They are building something which eventually will be a house." The Entered Apprentice is a Mason only in the sense that he is a rough ashlar stone in the process of being made into a perfect ashlar.
>
> The Entered Apprentice is the property of the lodge; he can receive his Fellowcraft and Master Mason degrees nowhere else without its permission. But he does not yet pay dues to the lodge; he is not yet permitted to sign its by-laws; he can enter it only when it is open on the first degree; he cannot hold office, vote or ballot, receive Masonic burial, attend a Masonic funeral as a member of the lodge and has no right to Masonic charity."[7]

2nd Degree – Fellow Craft

The second degree of the Freemason is "Fellow Craft". It symbolizes the man's maturity and contribution in life. A consistent Masonic definition of Fellow Craft is,

> "The term Fellow Craft is now used as the name of the Second Degree; of the ritualistic ceremonies and other contents of that degree; of a member of it; and to a Lodge when opened on it. You are a Fellow Craft; you passed through its ceremonies, assumed its obligations, are registered as such in the books of the Lodge, and can sit in either a Lodge of Apprentices or of Fellow Crafts but not of Master Masons. Your duties are to do and be all that is required of Fellow Crafts."[8]

The initiation into Fellow Craft is similar to the initiation into Entered Apprentice. The Fellow Craft candidate removes his clothing, except for his shirt; he is furnished with a pair of drawers by the Lodge. Unlike the Entered Apprentice, this time his right breast is bare, his left foot in a slipper and his right foot is bare; he is semi-hooded (hood-winked), a cable tow is tied twice around the Fellow Craft candidate's arm and the candidate is led to the door of the Lodge by a "Deacon" and requests entrance to the lodge through a series of knocks and question-and-answer sessions, requesting entrance into "more light".

Once admitted to the Lodge, the candidate is examined by the Masons as to past faithfulness as an Apprentice and preparation for the Fellow Craft. Upon acceptance by the Masons, on a bare knee, the candidate kneels to the Masonic Altar and delivers a blood oath to protect Masonic secrets and other Masons, as well as an oath to morality and obedience to the teachings of the Lodge. The new Fellow Craft Mason is then presented with the "working tools" of the Fellow Craft; a plumb, a square, and a level.

3rd Degree - Master Mason

The third degree or Master Mason degree is the culmination of the previous two degrees. It is considered the "Crown of the Blue Lodge". The Master Mason candidate is a man considered mature as a man and Mason.

> "Mental faculties are sharpened and horizons expanded. In Masonic terms the next degree "delves into the deepest recesses of man's nature and leads the initiate into the *Sanctum Sanctorum* (Latin for Holy of Holies) of the

> Temple and a probing into the Holy of Holies in his heart."[9]

In the ritual of the Master Mason, the candidate removes his clothing except his shirt; he again is given drawers by the Lodge, which are rolled up above the knees and the candidate's shirt pulled off the arms, leaving the breast, knees and feet bare. The Master Mason candidate is then hooded (hood-winked) and a cable tow is wound around the body three times. The candidate is then led to the door of the Lodge by a "Deacon" and requests entrance to the lodge through a series of knocks and question-and-answer sessions, requesting entrance into the further light of Masonry by being raised to Master Mason. Upon admittance into the Lodge Hall, the candidate is subjected to a series of Masonic questions, rituals, and benedictions, including a compass pressed to the candidate's naked breast with the exhortation that all a Mason holds dear is between the points of the square, indicating the heart. The Master Mason candidate is then required to demonstrate the three steps of Freemasonry using a special walk. At the conclusion of the ritualistic demonstrations, the candidate, while still hooded and tied to a rope, is asked to kneel at the Masonic Altar, where the blood oath is performed to never reveal the secrets of Freemasonry, be obedience to its direction, aid any fellow Mason as needed. At the end of the blood oath, the hood is removed, and the Master Mason candidate is told to kiss the sacred book. Some questions continue for a short time, secret words are spoken, and the candidate is given the Master Mason apron and trowel, with instruction of their purpose. Afterward, the Lodge's "Worshipful Master" conducts a complex performance regarding the murder of Hiram Abiff. In the ceremony, the candidate is symbolically slain as Hiram Abiff and

hastily buried by conspirators. Later in the ceremony, the candidate's body is "discovered" and ordered to be entombed properly in Solomon's Temple. The conspirators are captured and put to death. This play is enacted by the Masons of the Lodge with the candidate in the central role of Hiram Abiff. Although many in the Lodge claim the person of Hiram Abiff was a real person during the building of Solomon's Temple, no historical fact can be found of any such person. The story of Hiram Abiff is given as central to Masonic lore, but like most Masonic ritual, the true origin of the story is lost in antiquity.

After a Mason has obtained the third degree, they are recognized as having fully obtained their status as a Master Mason and considered equal with all other Masons. Because the third degree is the highest degree, many people outside the Lodge find confusion understanding the additional (4 - 33) degrees of Freemasonry. Obtaining degrees 4- 32 can be obtained in a single eight-hour class. The additional degrees are best explained using the letter *T*. The vertical upright of the *T* represents the first 3 degrees: Entered Apprentice, Fellow Craft, and Master Mason. The Master Mason would be the top of the *T*. The horizontal part of the *T* represents degrees 4 – 32. The degrees above the third degree are given to honor the Master Mason for learning the "mysteries" of Freemasonry. The 33rd degree in Freemasonry is bestowed as an honorary degree for long and/or exemplary service.

Why Would a Man Become A Mason?

When meeting men who are Masons, the author routinely asks why they joined the Masons. The reason a man joins is as diverse

as the men themselves, but there are five common reasons most men desire to become Masons.

1. The person has a connection with a relative who was a Mason. The son is often recruited by a man who was a positive influence in his life, and the younger man, through devotion to the older man, joins to please or emulate. Frequently, this person is a grandfather or Father, who becomes the younger man's mentor through the process. The Christian is to *Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.* 1 Thessalonians 5:21, even when it looks to be fine to others, we have the obligation to ensure God's will is done in our individual lives. The believer who joins the Lodge to follow the footsteps of a respected man in their life is obliged first to seek the Lord's will through prayer and study.

2. The person seeks camaraderie. Presently, the Masons are actively recruiting returning war veterans with the promise of supporting continued camaraderie, similar to their soldier life. Many Masons were recruited by friends or relatives who frequently speak of the fellowship and closeness of other men through the Lodge. The seeker is drawn into the lodge with the expectation of friendship and a connection with other men. For a Christian man to fellowship with the lost of the Lodge, he must sacrifice his walk with Christ. The Scripture asks a pertinent question about our fellowship: "*Can two walk together, except they be agreed?"* Amos 3:3 The answer is, certainly not. The Christian in the Lodge compromises his beliefs to join in the goals with ungodly men. True love and unity among men is found in the fellowship of

the family of God. The believers' fellowship is most pleasant. "*Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!"* Psalms 133:1

3. The person seeks a higher purpose for their life. Many men feel the need in their life to be a part of something larger than themselves. As they age, they realize the need to accomplish fulfillment outside their own life. Turning to the Lodge allows them to invest in others while having the praise of other men. A Christian can only find true purpose in Jesus Christ. The Apostle Paul explained this to the men of Mars Hill when he said of Jesus Christ, "*For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring."* Acts 17:28. Love and fulfillment sought outside Christ is as adulterous to Christ as Israel was to God. *"And they transgressed against the God of their fathers, and went a whoring after the gods of the people of the land, whom God destroyed before them."* 1 Chronicles 5:25

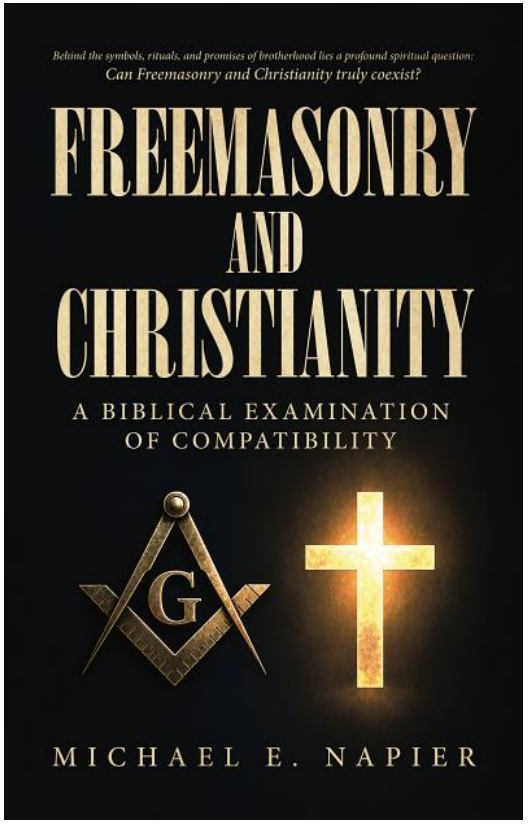
4. The person seeks the praise and admiration of other men. In the Lodge, men can apply themselves to the teachings and work of the Masons and find recognition of other men they would not have accomplished otherwise. A Christian in Freemasonry will find his reward in this world instead of eternity, for Jesus Christ Himself declared, "*Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven. Therefore when thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory*

of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward" Matthew 6:1-2. Man was created for God's glory; to find glory or glorify anything other than God demonstrates a man dedicated to fulfilling his fleshly desires instead of the God that created and redeemed him. The Bible speaks of chief rulers who believed in Jesus, but would not glorify Him because of losing their esteem among men. A man who seeks praise outside of the will of God cares more about the empty praise of man than the fulfilling praise of God. **"***For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God."* John 12:43

5. The person seeks connections. Freemasonry is known to watch out for their fellow Masons, coming to their aid in distress and developing bonds that promote strong friendships. Some unscrupulous men see the Lodge as a place to make business or political connections, for their own profit. Although in some instances this may benefit a man, most Masons will testify that the work a man does in the Lodge is the key to his Masonic success. The Lodge is a place for a man to give, not take.

The reasons given for joining Freemasonry have nothing to do with Christianity; rather, it is a false substitute for the fulfillment found in Christ. Masons declare "they take good men and make them better", yet the author has never seen a Christian who was truly seeking to grow in Jesus Christ decide to join the Lodge to strengthen his faith. The true Christian finds strength in Jesus. Jesus declared in John 15:4 "*Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me.*" Nowhere in the Word of

God do we find that our strength and fulfillment are to come from anything outside Jesus Christ.



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