



Grand Council of Cryptic Masons
State of New York
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The Rest of the Story

My theme for this Cryptic Year is “The Rest of the Story”. We, as Cryptic Masons, need to bring the rest of the story to our less informed brothers. Let’s whisper gentle guidance in their ears, take them by the hand and give them all the light we can. We Masons know that we believe in the Brotherhood of Man under the Fatherhood of God. We take good men and make them better. We are not a secret society but a society with secrets. Everyone knows where we meet and when.

My Companions, you may have listened to a radio program that offered you “***the rest of the story***” of a story that you may have known. Paul Harvey was the commentator of this segment of entertainment. I now offer you my version of the Masonic story.

It has been said that Masonry is a story veiled in allegory. Do you read a book completely or just a few chapters to say you have read it? Do you read the first three, skip a few, four more, skip some and then finish the last one? Do you get a sense of completion after doing this? No, you want the whole story as you may have missed some very important things by skipping around.

Ancient Free Masonry consisted of three degrees which included the Holy Royal Arch. After being separated from the Craft degrees and the Royal Arch was put on its own, it was not deemed necessary to be greeted as a Cryptic Mason to continue on into Commandery and other concordant bodies. The story was missing some important parts.

The Royal Master and Select Master degrees inform us that Masonry does not reveal her secrets to the thoughtless, nor all in one degree. There is one glory of the Sun, one of the Moon and still another glory of the Stars, so saith the apostle. One star differs from another star in its glory. So it is in Masonry, one degree differs from the other in Beauty, Truth and Wisdom. The moral truths of the Symbolic degrees and the deeper philosophy of the Capitular degrees are only a part of the Masonic teachings.

When you were raised a Master Mason you received the substitute for the Master’s word after being informed that it was lost under very distressing circumstances. You were informed that you may not receive it unless the wisdom of future generations might discover it and bring it to light. Until then, you must be content with the substitute.

After being exalted to a Royal Arch Mason you were then given the Master’s word, as you three had discovered it and brought it to light. Your industrious efforts proved fruitful and rewarding. The Master’s word was yours. You were now in possession of all the Masonic

light you needed, right? Without the Royal Master and Select Master degree neither the Master Mason degree nor the Royal Arch degree is complete, for they rationally account for the concealment and preservation of the treasures revealed in the Royal Arch degrees. Hmm, this is something for the inquisitive Mason to ponder about. Is there more Light to be revealed? Is there more to the Masonic story of the York Rite?

However, did you ever wonder who put the treasure there and why? Who built it? Why were the items deposited within the Ark? Why were the sides of the Ark covered with symbols? What explanation was given for them to be there? Do you want to know “the rest of the story”? Then, the Cryptic Rite degrees are for you.

The Cryptic Rite is the rite of preservation. It will inform you of who placed the treasures and why they were placed where you found them. It will give the reason for the placement of them. It will show you the planning and care taken to preserve the knowledge for future generations. This rite is for those who seek the most Masonic light without the need to possess it to enable them to advance to other concordant bodies. That is one of the reasons our membership is the smallest of the York Rite bodies. Membership is sought, not required.

One of the peculiar aspects of the York Rite is that the progression of degrees is sometimes in inverse order. The historical connection is reversed so that as we apparently go forward in our travels, the knowledge and light gained always reflects backward on the path we have taken and the degrees that we have already taken seemed complete, now we find that we require more explanation before they can be completely understood. The contemplative Mason now finds his understanding of the York Rite needs another lesson to fully know what the York Rite contains.

Both the Royal Master and the Select Master degrees precede the Holy Royal Arch degree. These degrees are held in reserve until the candidate is ready to receive them with the proper respect due them. He is ready to receive all the light the York Rite can confer on him and give him the answers to any questions he may have had during the previous journey through the Lodge and Chapter.

It is well to know the order in which the York Rite degrees progress if one was to look at them chronologically. It is interesting to note that the Entered Apprentice degree is not the first step. They are listed in the time frame as follows:

1. The portion of the Royal Arch antedating the building of the Temple
2. Entered Apprentice
3. Fellow Craft
4. Mark Master
5. Royal Master [1st section]
6. Select Master
7. Master Mason
8. Royal Master [2nd section]
9. Past Master
10. Most Excellent Master
11. Super Excellent Master & one section of the Royal Arch
12. Rest of the Royal Arch
13. Order of Red Cross
14. Order of Malta
15. Order of the Temple

From this arrangement it can readily be seen that the Mason who has not taken the Cryptic degrees and does not understand their teachings, cannot possibly have a thorough understanding of even the Craft Lodge, let alone the Capitular and Chivalric degrees and orders.

As contemplative and inquisitive Masons we should always be looking for more Masonic light. Let us remind ourselves that we have a duty to our brothers to inform them of what Cryptic Masonry has to offer them. While in the lodge or chapter we can obtain more light by joining our Councils. The Cryptic degrees have the extra light to shed upon the curious Mason and in doing so they will gain "***the rest of the story***".

Zealously,

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