



Scientia Coronati Research Lodge No. 4 F&AM

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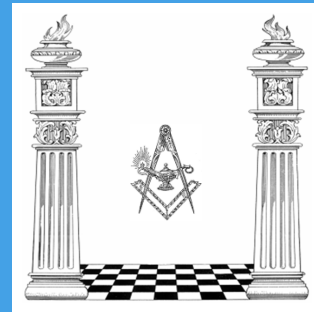
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## And the Earth was without

form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters, and God said, 'Let there be light'



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# The Holy Saint's John

Presented to Scientia Coronati Lodge #4

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By: Boyd Robertson

This subject piqued my curiosity when I was first initiated as an Entered Apprentice Mason. And throughout my career in Masonry it has only continued to grow. I certainly know who St. John the Baptist and St. John the Evangelist are through my upbringing in our church. But why are they the patron saints of Freemasonry? They are certainly not the patron saints of masons or stonemasons. And why does Masonry even have patron saints?

My first point of reference in this presentation is actually myself and my religious upbringing. My mother was raised Southern Baptist and my father Presbyterian. We occasionally went to a Presbyterian church, but in reality I was raised as a Southern Baptist. The reason that I am giving you this information is as follows. The Southern Baptists do not have saints. And the Presbyterians, from what I remember, consider all "saved" people to be saints. Some of my friends growing up were Catholic, so I at least knew what saints were and what they represented to them in their faith.

Now on to our Patron Saints.

**John the Baptist:** John the Baptist is referred to as the forerunner to the ministry and beliefs of Jesus. And it is also accepted that he baptized Jesus. There is some belief that he was influenced in his works by the Essenes. Josephus actually talks about John as well and describes his execution by beheading as a political act by Herod due to the size of John's following among the people. John is considered a prophet of Islam and is mentioned in the Qur'an.  
St. John the Baptist's day – June 24<sup>th</sup>.

**John the Evangelist:** One of Jesus main followers. And he is the main disciple that carried on the traditions of Jesus' teachings & ministry. There is currently debate as to his writings of the Gospel, the Epistles and Revelations. Some believe that he wrote them all, others that there were different Johns that wrote each of them.  
St. John the Evangelist's day – December 27<sup>th</sup>.

In Masonry:

The patron Saint of Stonemasons is Saint Steven.

Saint Thomas, Saint Barbara, and the Four Crowned Martyrs. Their characteristics are mystical, symbolical and historical.

Saint Thomas, one of the 12 apostles, who's symbol is the square or builders rule is referred to as a good architect. He is claimed as the Patron Saint of Architects and Builders. The legend is that he was hired to build a palace for a king and gave the money for construction to the sick and

the poor. When the king learned of this he had Saint Thomas thrown in jail to await death. As explanation for this St. Thomas said “those who possess heavenly things have little care for things of this earth”. Does this remind you of anything in Masonry?

Saint Barbara was confined to a high tower by her father where she studied the stars and came to realize the omnipotence of the Supreme Being. She then converted to Christianity and directed modifications to the tower. Three windows in reverence to the Holy Trinity. Upon discovery of this her father had her beheaded and because of this was struck by lightning and his body consumed. In relation to the work on the towers she is claimed as Patroness of the Architects and Builders, especially castles and fortifications. Saint Barbara is actually more closely associated with Higher Degrees and Truth.

The Four Crowned Martyrs legend is actually about 9 Saints. 5 stone masons and 4 soldiers. The stone masons, who were Christians, were sentenced to death for refusing an order from a Roman Emperor to make a statue to a heathen god. Believing that their abilities and skill came from their belief in the one true God. The Roman soldiers, who were also Christians, were sentenced to death for refusing to offer gifts to a heathen god. The Four Crowned Martyrs are accepted as Patron Saints of Masonry due to the resemblance to the fidelity of Hiram Abif. Do any of you get the connection to Quatuor Coronati?

Saint John the Baptist is said to be the original of the two patron saints. Saint John the Evangelist was not connected with the Masonic order until after the 16<sup>th</sup> century.

John the Baptist preached righteous living and change of character. His heroism, fidelity and integrity are said to be mirrored in the legends of Hiram Abif and Jacques Demolay. All were willing to give up their lives instead of renouncing their beliefs or betraying a trust.

John the Evangelist explored “the Word and the Light” in his works. As well as the thorough examination of “Brotherly Love and Fellowship”. The book of Revelations (attributed to him) is wrought with symbolism.

The Gothic Legends related back to the building of King Solomon’s Temple, approximately 1000 years before there was a St. John but, nevertheless, the first legendary lodge was said to be that of St. John, presumably meaning a lodge at Jerusalem dedicated to St. John the Baptist. In some places St. John the Evangelist, also called the Mystic, was deemed more to be revered and was substituted. In other places, or most places, it was not known which was right and it was not known why there should be any necessity for a choice so that both were adopted as the Patron Saints and lodges came to be dedicated to them. – Coil’s

The first ritualistic reference to the Saints John in America occurs in *Webb’s Monitor* of 1797. – Coil’s

At the Union of 1813 between the two Grand Lodges of England (both of which had indulged in many innovations), the rituals of the United Grand Lodge were revised to eliminate all Christianity and lodges became dedicated to King Solomon. –Coil’s

In one old lecture of the eighteenth century, this dedication to the two Saints John is thus explained:

Q. Our Lodges being finished, furnished, and decorated with ornaments, furniture, and jewels, to whom were they consecrated?

A. To God.

Q. Thank you Brother; and can you tell me to whom they were first dedicated?

A. To Noah, who was saved in the Ark.

Q. And by what name were the Masons then known?

A. They were called Noachidae, Sages, or Wise Men.

Q. To whom were the lodges dedicated during the Mosaic Dispensation?

A. To Moses, the chosen of God, and Solomon, the son of David, king of Israel, who was an eminent patron of the Craft.

Q. And under what name were the Masons known during that period?

A. Under the name of Dionysiacs, Geometricians, or Masters in Israel.

Q. But as Solomon was a Jew, and died long before the promulgation of Christianity, to whom were they dedicated under the Christian Dispensation?

A. From Solomon the patronage of Masonry passed to Saint John the Baptist.

Q. And under what name were they known after the promulgation of Christianity?

A. Under the name of Essenes, Architects, or Freemasons.

Q. Why were the Lodges dedicated to Saint John the Baptist?

A. Because he was the forerunner of our Saviour, and by preaching repentance and humiliation, drew the first parallel of the Gospel.

Q. Had Saint John the Baptist an equal?

A. He had; Saint John the Evangelist.

Q. Why is he said to be equal to the Baptist?

A. Because he finished by his learning what the other began by his zeal, and thus drew a second line parallel to the former; ever since which time Freemasons' Lodges, in all Christian countries, have been dedicated to the one or the other, or both, of these worthy and worshipful men. –

Mackey

There is another old lecture, adopted in to the Prestonian system, which still further developed these reasons for the Johannite dedication, but with slight variations in some of the details.

From the building of the Temple at Jerusalem to the Babylonish captivity, Freemasons' Lodges were dedicated to King Solomon; from thence to the coming of the Messiah, they were dedicated to Zerubbabel, the builder of the second Temple; and from that time to the final destruction of the Temple by Titus, in the reign of Vespasian, they were dedicated to Saint John the Baptist; but owing to the many massacres and disorders which attended that memorable event, Freemasonry sunk very much into decay; many Lodges were entirely broken up, and but few could meet in sufficient numbers to constitute their legality; and at a general meeting of the Craft, held in the city of Benjamin, it was observed that the principal reason for the decline of Masonry was the want of a Grand Master to patronize it. They therefore deputed seven of their most eminent members to wait upon St. John the Evangelist, who was at that time Bishop of Ephesus, requesting him to take the office of Grand Master. He returned for answer, that though well stricken in years, being upwards of ninety, yet having been initiated into Masonry in the early

part of his life, he would take upon himself the office. He thereby completed by his learning what the other Saint John effected by his zeal, and thus drew what Freemasons term a line parallel; ever since which time Freemasons' Lodges, in all Christian countries,, have been dedicated both to Saint John the Baptist and Saint John the Evangelist. – Mackey

The ancient sun worshipers, as well as the druids, celebrated the summer and winter solstices when the sun reached its apex in the southern and northern skies. These dates are generally set at June 21<sup>st</sup> and December 21<sup>st</sup>. Our Christian ancestors, using important pagan festival dates to further the spread of Christianity set two dates near these events to celebrate Christian beliefs and Saints. June 24<sup>th</sup>, St. John the Baptist's day and December 27<sup>th</sup>, St. John the Evangelist's day. You can also assume that the day of the birth of Jesus was set in this same manner. The Grand Lodge of England was established on June 24, 1717.

One saint was dogmatic and rigid, one was intellectual and esoteric. How do we as Masons follow these ideas of the parallel lines?

The conclusion that the connections with Freemasonry and the Saints John is obviously one more symbolic occurrence within the fraternity, rather than an historic one.

So far in my studies I have still not come up with an answer as to why we have patron saints in Freemasonry But my studies on this subject are far from over. I have only begun to scratch the surface. I can only assume that our ancient brethren were all men of faith and they have symbolically tied all of these saints to our fraternity. At the formation of the Grand Lodge of England in 1717 London the men were more than likely made up of members of either the Church of England or the Catholic Church. The time frame also being during the enlightenment only lends credence to the use of symbolism to tie Saint John the Baptist and Saint John the Evangelist to our great fraternity.

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