

## **Lodges Examined By The Bible.**

### **Is it a Sin for a Christian to Have Membership in Secret Orders? By John R. Rice**

**Sword of the Lord Publishers  
P.O. Box 1099  
Murfreesboro, TN 37133  
ISBN 0-87398-510-9**

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Biography of Dr. Rice and other preachers is found on their [web site](#) along with the history of Sword of the Lord Ministry, as well as their resources and additional ministry information.

#### **Lodges Examined By the Bible**

Many influential people are members of secret orders. Their memberships include church members and even preachers.

Lodges claim to be centers of morality and claim to give great light on spiritual things. These orders often profess to show the way to heaven – even calling their buildings temples.

Using the light of the Bible, Dr. Rice asks the question, “Is it a sin for a Christian to have membership in secret orders?”

He answers with a resounding “YES”. His words are strong, but the evidence is stronger. He gives the details and tells where to find plenty more to prove every statement and implication.

**FASCINATING AND RIVETING, THIS BOOK TELLS THE SECRETS MANY HAVE SWORN BLOODY OATHS TO “EVER CONCEAL AND NEVER REVEAL”.**

Here is a book where honest Christians, earnestly seeking to know the will of God, can find with certainty what they ought to do.

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## Why I Write Against Lodges

In the United States there are about eight hundred different secret societies, and nearly half of the adult men and women of the United States are affiliated with them, according to the Rev. James Putt, Th.M., in the scholarly pamphlet *Masonry*. He quotes the Grand Lodge Bulletin of Iowa that for 1936 there were 2,665,511 Masons. Masonry is the oldest secret order, the largest, and the parent of the others.

Multitudes of the most influential people are members of secret orders. The membership includes hosts of church members and many preachers. Many active church workers are proud to wear the lodge ring or pin. A good many preachers leave the active ministry to become lodge lecturers. Lodges are called on to lay the cornerstones for new church buildings, and preachers frequently announce special sermons in groups of lodge members. A great many men that I know and love including preachers, are members of lodges. My own father was very active as a Mason and an Odd Fellow. The lodges claim to be centers of morality, claim to subdue the passions of men, claim to give great light on spiritual things, and by many are claimed to be great aids to Christianity. The lodges themselves often profess to show the way to Heaven. They speak much about God, have Bibles as lodge furniture, have priests, chaplains, Worshipful Masters, their buildings are often called temples. And now we are to examine the lodges in the light of the Bible, the Word of God. And we ask the question, "Is it a sin for a Christian to have membership in secret orders?"

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It was in the summer of 1921, I believe, when, influenced by many friends, I went to the lodge to be made a Mason. A preacher friend said, "To be a Mason will give you a lot more influence. You can reach many men through your Masonic connections whom you could not otherwise reach. And it is a great factor in the safety of you and your family to be a Mason."

My father said that he, of course, could not ask me to become a Mason, but that nevertheless it would be a great help to me in my work as a preacher. All I had ever heard about the secret orders was good, or nearly all. Many preachers whom I had known and loved and respected were Masons. I was told that Solomon, John the Baptist, the Apostle John, and other Bible characters were Masons and that this ancient fraternity held in trust many great spiritual truths that the rest of the world did not have. Just previously I had surrendered to preach the gospel of Christ, and I was anxious to have all the help I could have in winning men. So I presented myself for membership.

But the lodge was a great disillusionment to me. A man whom I knew as a practical infidel, who laughed at the inspiration of the Bible and mocked the idea of Christ being the divine Son of God, a rationalist who despised the churches, I found to be the most active and prominent member of the lodge! He stood at my father's elbow as the work of the degree progressed, prompting him. This was a notoriously profane man whom I had heard take God's name in vain, yet he was the lodge brother and bosom companion of my father, who before his lodge days had been an active preacher of the gospel! Others who made no pretense to being children of God were in the lodge room. Without loving Christ or having trusted Him for salvation, they spoke familiarly of God and were on the same basis as earnest Christians and preachers of the gospel.

When I was asked to repeat after my father words of the Apprentice's oath, I began and then stopped. I had no idea that such an oath was a part of Masonry, and I did not want to proceed. My father and others told me that there was nothing in the oath nor in Masonry that would be offensive to God or my conscience. I continued. But I was shocked, and the more I thought of it the more shocked I was at the words I had spoken. When I was presented with the white apron and told that I

was to be buried in it and that at my funeral Masons should have charge and Masonry exalted, my heart cried out that if I should die I wanted a simple gospel sermon and I wanted sinners to hear about the blood of Christ, I wanted an invitation given! And so I went away that night, grieved and shocked. The Holy Spirit within me seemed offended. I never went back to the lodge. After some months' time, I came to the conclusion that I had sinned in going there and taking part in such language and ceremonies and in such company. I asked God to forgive me and promised Him never to take up the work, although good friends had volunteered to pay the cost of my first three degrees.

### **Lodge Religion is Not the Christian Religion But Pagan and Antichristian**

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In the *Encyclopedia of Freemasonry* in the Scottish Rite Cathedral in Dallas, I studied at length the Masonic teaching about whether or not Masonry is Christian. This Masonic Encyclopedia was prepared by Dr. Albert G. Mackey, famous Masonic authority. He was the Past General High Priest and Secretary General of the Supreme Council, 33<sup>rd</sup> for the Southern Jurisdiction of the United States, and it is said that he put more than ten years of labor on this work. The book is certainly considered one of the best, if not the best authority on Masonry. I quote here the article on "Religion" from page 619 (the pages may be different in older editions of the work).

"The religion of Masonry is not sectarian. It admits men of every creed within its hospitable bosom, rejecting none and approving none for his peculiar faith. It is not Judaism, though there is nothing in it to offend a Jew: it is not Christianity, but there is nothing in it repugnant to the faith of a Christian. Its religion is that general one of nature and primitive revelation—handed down to us from some ancient and patriarchal priesthood—in which all men may agree and none may differ."

Note that this Masonic authority says, "The religion of Masonry is not sectarian". And again, "It is not Christianity." *The religion of Masonry is not Christianity.* "It admits men of every creed within its hospitable bosom, rejecting none and approving none for his peculiar faith."

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### **THE BIBLE OF THE LODGES MAY BE THE KORAN OR ANY SO-CALLED "SACRED BOOK" OF HEATHEN RELIGIONS**

In the article on the *Bible* on page 104 of the *Encyclopedia of Masonry* by Mackey, so largely used by Masons everywhere, we find the usage of the Bible and the attitude toward the Bible, of the secret orders and lodges. I copied from the *Encyclopedia of Masonry* in the Scottish Rite Cathedral in Dallas, a few years ago, this statement:

"The Bible is properly called a greater light of Masonry, for from the center of the lodge it pours forth upon the East, the West, and the South its refulgent rays of Divine truth. The Bible is used among Masons as a symbol of the will of God, however it may be expressed, and therefore, whatever to any people expresses that will, may be used as a substitute for the Bible in the Masonic Lodge. Thus, in a lodge consisting entirely of Jews the Old Testament alone may be placed upon the altar, and Turkish Masons make use of the Koran. Whether it be the Gospels to the Christian, the Pentateuch to the Israelite, the Koran to the Mussulman, the Vedas to the Brahman, it everywhere Masonically conveys the same idea—that of the symbolism of the Divine will revealed to man."

Masons, then, regard the Bible as only one of many sacred books, the one as good as the other, for Masonic purposes. A Mohammedan can be as good a Mason as a preacher. The Hindu religion fits in as well with Masonry as does the Christian religion, so this Masonic Encyclopedia plainly says.

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In a Masonic lodge the Bible is only a symbol. It had just as well be the Koran, and it often is the Koran wherever there are Turks or others who are Mohammedans. It may be only the Vedas to the Brahman or Hindu. The Vedas are the sacred writings of these heathen people. So the Bible does not mean in the Masonic lodge as furniture what it means to a Christian. It is only "used among Masons as a symbol of the will of God, however it may be expressed." Certainly you can see that the lodge attitude toward the Bible is not the same as the Christian attitude toward the Bible.

You preachers who join the lodges, you church members in the lodges, is the Koran as good as the Bible to you? Is the Bible to you only a symbol? Or is it really the very Word of God, different from all the other books in the world, the very revelation of God Almighty?

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#### **THE SPIRIT OF THE LODGES IS THE OPPOSITE OF THE SPIRIT COMMANDED OF CHRISTIANS**

When I went for the first time into a lodge room, I was struck forcibly by, and the Holy Spirit of God in me was grieved at, the attitude and spirit of men therein. I have mentioned elsewhere the levity about holy things, the profane and careless use of God's name, the oaths, and the association with unchristian and wicked men. But here let us mention further evidences that the spirit of the lodges is unchristian, not the spirit commanded in the Bible for Christian people.

First, the secrecy of the lodges is the very opposite of the Great Commission. The lodge says, "Stay! We have wonderful spiritual lessons, lessons that subdue the passion, lessons that inculcate charity and virtue, lessons to fit men for Heaven. But tell them to no one except lodge brothers, those who have paid for the right to hear. Tell not these lessons to your wife. Tell them not to your son. Only persons of certain age and certain qualifications and certain sex may join your lodge, and that only by paying money or having others pay it for him. To these only, if they be in good standing, having paid their dues, you may reveal the wonderful secrets that bless mankind."

How different is the command of the gospel! The command of Jesus is given in Mark 16:15 as follows: "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature". Again He said, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations" (Matt. 28:19). The last invitation in the Bible says, "The Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely" (Rev. 22:17).

The contrast is great. The lodges say, "Keep the message secret". But Jesus says, "Tell it abroad". The message is not the same message, and the spirit is not the same spirit in the churches and in the lodges.

There are those who would make us believe that John the Baptist, the Apostle John, even Jesus Himself and other disciples, were members of secret orders. Masonic lodges are "dedicated to God and the Holy Saints John," with shocking blasphemy. But the idea that Jesus or His disciples had anything to do with secret orders is wickedly false. Jesus Himself said, "I spake openly to the world; I ever taught in the synagogue, and in the temple, whither the Jews always resort; and IN SECRET HAVE I SAID NOTHING" (John 18:20).

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Remember, I do not say that lodge members are not Christian. Some of them are, and some certainly are not, I am not talking about individuals now, but about the institutions themselves. The lodges are unchristian, and their religion is certainly not the Christian religion.

## CHRIST IS REJECTED AS SAVIOUR BY THE LODGES

Christianity is not simply a worship of God. The Christian religion involves a coming to God *through Jesus Christ*. Christ Himself said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me" (John 14:6). Jesus claimed emphatically, "I and my Father are one" (John 10:30). The Bible says, "There is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus" (I Tim. 2:5). The Old Testament prophecy about Jesus was that He should be called "The mighty God, The everlasting Father" (Isa. 9:6). Christianity and the Christian religion involves recognizing that Christ is God. According to the Bible, God created all things through Christ (Heb. 1:2; Col. 1:16, 17). According to the Bible, it is only by the death of Christ that man's sins can be paid for, and only through faith in Him as Saviour that any man can be saved (John 3:16, I Cor. 15:3, 4; John 5:24; John 3:36). Christianity, then, must be centered around Christ as the only begotten Son of God, the only way that we can approach God for salvation, and the only way we can call upon God acceptably in prayer. Christ Himself, as God, is the heart and center of Christianity.

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Repeatedly, from many, many sources I have heard that in Masonic lodges it was not proper for people to pray in the name of Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord. For instance, I have before me a statement by Mr. Wendell P. Loveless. Mr. Loveless was ex-chaplain of the Masonic lodge at Wheaton, Illinois. He says:

" I was regularly initiated into seven degrees of the Masonic Order, holding, for a time, the Office of chaplain in the Blue Lodge, and my knowledge of this society is therefore the result of my experience as a member of it. I now hold a regular demit from the order, which indicates that I was in good and regular standing when I seceded from it." (Page 1, *The Christian and Secret Societies*, by Loveless; National Christian Association.

After showing how he was compelled by the Lord to leave the Masonic lodge and come out from the unbelievers there, Mr. Loveless says (page 14):

"As Chaplain in the Masonic Lodge, I offered the prayers of the lodge and heard many others offered, but never once in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. His name is excluded. Certainly it must be very plain that a true believer in Jesus Christ can have no fellowship in that kind of organization. Lodge prayers are not offered in the name of Jesus Christ. The lodge promises the unconverted Jew, the Hindu, the Mohammedan, or any Christ-rejecting sinner who believes there is a Supreme Being, that he may come to the lodge and there find nothing to offend. Since unconverted sinners do not love Jesus Christ, since modernists and rationalists deny that He is the very Son of God, atoning for man's sins, and the only way of salvation, and since Mohammedans and Hindus, like other pagans and heathens, reject Christ and do not accept Him as the Saviour, Son of God and very God, then the lodges shut out Jesus Christ that they may not offend those who hate Him and reject Him!"

A famous Southern Baptist preacher wrote me saying that in a Masonic lodge meeting he prayed and was rebuked for offering his petition in the name of Jesus Christ, God's Son, the only Saviour. Because of that rebuke, showing the utterly unchristian and anti-Christian character of the lodges, he discontinued attendance on the lodge.

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**Lodges Damn Millions of Souls With a False Plan of Salvation That Denies the Blood and Rejects Christ**

Where Christ as the Son of God, the dying Saviour, is not honored as Lord, and where the blood of Christ is counted useless, it is certainly to be expected that men would teach a false plan of salvation. And that is true of all the lodges of which we have any knowledge.

The lodges believe in a Supreme Being. "In whom do you put your trust?" One is asked; and then is prompted to say, "In God". But to believe there is a God, or to trust in God without acknowledging Christ as Saviour, will never save a soul. Jesus said, "No man cometh unto the Father, but by Me". Jesus is the way to God, the only way to God. To all the lodge people the Word of God cries out, "Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble" (James 2:19). Any demon in Hell, then, could meet the requirements to join a lodge as far as his religion is concerned, for every demon believes that there is one God. But they are not Christian, and the lodges are not Christian either. Some lodge *members* are Christians, but the lodges did not make them Christian. The lodges are definitely unchristian and antichristian.

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Any time, then, that a Christian talks to a Mason and urges him to turn to Christ and be saved, and the Mason answers that he does not need salvation because he is a Mason, that the Masonic lodge is as good as the church, and that if a Mason lives up to his obligations he will get to Heaven all right without Christ; then you may know that this unconverted Mason is saying exactly what he has been taught in the lodge.

Again I repeat it, the lodges are not Christian in their religion. They are antichristian. They teach a false plan of salvation, a plan that never saved a soul, a plan that is of Satan and not of God, a plan that takes honor from Jesus Christ and gives it to the lodges and to the lives of men. Every Christian worker who earnestly tries to win souls finds lodge members who are trusting in their lodges, trusting in their good deeds, and who will not hear the gospel that they need to be born again and must trust in Christ or be forever lost. Every Christian in the lodges is to blame for that awful sin. They have blinded the eyes of the unconverted; they have taught in the lodges or have lent their presence and their influence to the teaching of the lodges that people are saved by just and virtuous lives, or by obeying the maxims and the precepts of the lodge. Every preacher who preaches the gospel of salvation by grace and by the blood of Christ in a church, and then is a member of a lodge, is damning souls in one place while he tries to save them in another.

**"Wherefore Come Out from Among Them, and Be Ye Separate, Saith the Lord"**

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Beyond any shadow of a doubt, then, the lodges deny the gospel of Jesus Christ. They are blind leaders of the blind, leading millions of men and women away from Christ, away from the Bible, away from salvation by the blood. They lead them to depend upon their own righteousness and doubtless

lead them to feel no need of regeneration, lead them to ignore the warnings of the gospel, and so lead them to fall at last unprepared into a devil's Hell! How many poor sinners who die depending on the lodges and their good works will rise to confront the preachers and church members in the churches who were also members of the lodges!

Stephen Merritt, an undertaker, later a mission superintendent and Christian editor and soul-winning layman, filled with the Spirit, had an experience that ought to warn many others. He was Master of the biggest lodge in New York in the time of the Civil War. He says:

“But I found the tendency of the whole thing evil, and only evil, continually. So I protested and left, but still I paid dues and attended funerals. I was a very dull scholar.

“One incident helped to open my eyes. I have always preached that there is no other name but Christ by which we can be saved. But again and again I found Masons dying without God and without hope. I was called to the bedside of one member of my lodge who was thought to be dying. He gave me the grip as I sat down by him. He said he was dying and was in great distress for his soul. I tried to have him look to Christ. But he reproached me, saying I had led him astray. I had told him in the lodge, as Master, that a moral life was enough. He said, ‘You told me then that it was all right if I was an upright man, and obeyed the precepts of the lodge, but I am leaning on a broken reed; and now I am dying without God. I lay this to your charge, Worshipful Master. I leaned on you and now I am dying.’

“I groaned in agony and fell on my knees and cried to God to spare the man's life. My heart was almost broken. God heard, and spared the man, but he has since died a Christian. He was converted, and told me I must get out of the lodge; that I could not be consistent as a Christian and a Mason. But I did not see it. Ministers and other good men are in the lodge. They help to make it a delusion and a snare. The times of such ignorance God winked at, but now every man is commanded to repent of lodge folly.”

I beg you, reader, whether you be a man in the lodge, or a woman, or even a boy in the De Molays, to come out from the lodges before you are responsible for the damning of souls!

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Since the first of these articles appeared in *The Sword of the Lord*, I have received many letters on the question of the lodges, and to my surprise, without exception, they are praising God for such plain speech and telling again and again how the writers, after they were soundly converted, were led by the Holy Spirit to quit the lodges. Others tell how their fathers were lodge members, but the Holy Spirit led them away from such a sin. One Christian, in a letter, tells how Dr. R. K. Maiden, a Baptist preacher and editor, whispered to him at a Masonic funeral, saying, “George, listen for the name of Jesus Christ.” The writer then tells how shocked he was that the name of Christ was never mentioned, and how surprised he was to hear the Masonic funeral service teaching salvation as the just reward of a pure and holy life! Another man, on fire for God, writes to say that when he was converted, God showed him who his brothers were. “Who is my BROTHER?” says Jesus. “He that heareth the words of My Father and doeth them.” So he quit the lodges. Preachers write to encourage me. One man wrote to tell how a friend was converted reading the very first issue containing these articles. Many, many have written, asking for extra copies of these papers by ones and twos and by bundles. *I say that the sentiment of multiplied thousands of devout Christians is that no child of God has any business in the lodges.* And the Holy Spirit says, “Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; And I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you and ye shall be My sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty” (II Cor. 6:17, 18).

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Christian, I have urged upon you the solemn duty to break the yoke that binds you in secret orders, and to come out from among them and please God. You, too, may have the sweet peace of God. Christ Himself will make up to you all you lose in friends and all you lose in business. Do not be afraid to step out in faith. God has said of wisdom, that “her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace” (Prov. 3:17). No one ever lost by doing what God said. Better yet, Jesus said, “Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light” (Matt. 11:29, 30). And may God give you joy in your heart; may the way be clear between you and God when you pray; and may you have power from Heaven on your testimony to win unconverted, dying men to trust the Lord Jesus Christ and love Him and serve Him!

If some person reads this booklet who does not know for sure that he or she is a child of God, then let me urge upon you that you make sure today. Jesus Christ died to save sinners—sinners, mind you, not good people! For we are all sinners, and God’s only way of saving sinners is to have them trust in Jesus Christ and be cleansed by His atoning blood. Do not look upon the filthy garments of your righteousness. God will have none of them! Do not count upon church membership, nor lodge membership, nor morality. The only hope for a sinner is that Christ died for sinners. Put your trust in Him today and be saved!