

*This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all. 6 If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth.* (1 John 1:5-6 NKJV)

*"for I am persuaded that none of these things are hidden from him; for this thing was not done in a corner."* (Acts 26:26 KJV)

Many individuals have asked us whether it is alright to join a lodge, or to use the colloquial term - "secret order". Some, even though they have asked go on to say, "but I don't see anything wrong with it!" This week, we will deal briefly with this subject. Lodges and similar organizations are tools of the devil to take the Christian away from the worship of the true God, the creator of the universe, the God of Abraham, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Nothing done in secret, in darkness, is of God. Everything that Jesus did was done in the open. Some people, operating under the spirit of Anti-Christ, have tried to inject negative connotations into Jesus' ministry - like the idea that He had an affair with Mary Magdalene. These people do not have the first clue about the reason why Jesus came and His nature. Others have diluted the Gospel and injected idolatrous ideas and practises, causing distortions to the Word of God that lead people away to satanic worship. The devil uses many devices to obtain mankind's worship and the lodges are no exception.

God does not withhold anything from us. God is not a mysterious God. He tells us in Jeremiah 33:3 (AMP) *"Call to Me and I will answer you and show you great and mighty things, fenced in and hidden, which you do not know (do not distinguish and recognize, have knowledge of and understand).* Our limited brain capacity, in comparison to God, cannot hold all the knowledge in the universe, but we can ask God to reveal anything to us and He will do it according to the capacity of our understanding.

Commonly termed "masonic lodges or freemasonry, lodges go back to the Middle Ages. The first Grand Lodge was formed in England in 1717 out of the amalgamation of four lodges. The origin of these in the Middle Ages came as the result of itinerant craftsmen, known as Masons formed a sort of trade union to afford themselves protection and professional credibility. These organisations became the foundation of the lodges we know today. Like most things that are formed out of a good motive, the devil corrupted it by introducing symbolism, ritual and teachings based on ancient paganism. These ideas took firm root in the organisation because it gave members a sense of power through "brotherhood". Here I will pose a question - what sort of brotherhood or sisterhood would destroy another member or their family if it is suspected that they "spilt the beans" on what goes on behind closed doors? What "brotherhood or sisterhood" would employ the services of witches and warlocks to spy on others?

Back to the origins - the teachings of the lodges are based predominantly on the ancient mystery religions of Egypt, Rome, Greece, Persia and China and other cultures. Most of those religions stressed oaths of secrecy, religious quest and immorality. Secret rites of initiation were required and these rites were associated with or dedicated to various gods and goddesses. In short, the teachings of the modern lodges are idolatrous, opposed to Christian teaching and condone immorality.

Many individuals are tricked and deceived into joining lodges because the recruiters are masters at semantic distortion (an unfair or dishonest use of words) which is a common practice among cults.

Ambiguity is often used through words such as God, resurrection, monotheist etc. but when pressed for detailed information, the "secret of the order" line kicks in using terms like "that will be revealed as you graduate in the order". We know several individuals who have left "the Order" when they realised what was really going on behind the scenes! Their leaving was followed by threats but, knowing their authority in Jesus Christ, these individuals could not be touched.

Christians are often fooled because the lodges present an up-front semblance of Christianity - why do Christians fall prey?

- 1) Lack of commitment to God. Most people do not treat Christianity as a lifestyle. They want 99% of the world and 1% of God
- 2) Ignorance of who God is - a person cannot get to know someone they spend little or no time with.
- 3) Lack of spiritual discernment - many "Christians" are not born-again believers with the Spirit of God in them. Most main-stream denominations reject the necessity to be born again when Jesus himself told Nicodemus "you must be born again". Therefore many "Christians" are really children of the devil and are easy prey to "every wind of doctrine."
- 4) Lack of the knowledge of the Word of God. Many Christians are so driven by society and activities of daily living that they spend little or no time in prayer and in reading and studying the Word of God.

These factors combine to form confusion in the minds of many individuals as to who the true God is, His character and what is required of the Christian. Many young adults fall prey to lodges because if they are educated to a high level, they feel they can understand the Bible for themselves and do not need to be taught. They go on a "spiritual quest" to find God but get detoured into witchcraft because they are not rooted and grounded in the Word of God. If you want spirituality, accept Jesus as Lord and Saviour, tell

God you want the baptism of the Holy Ghost with the evidence of speaking in tongues. As you pray in other tongues and get into the realm of the Spirit, you go where God is. You and God become one! Can you get more spiritual than that?

The ones who are not highly educated are drawn by the aspect of belonging to the "brotherhood" that will work on their behalf to get them big breaks.

As we see these peoples' lives falling apart in spite of the "brotherhood" we are reminded of what the Word of God says - you cannot serve two masters.

Read *Ezekiel 8* - what a similarity to the lodge idea! Worshipping and conducting religious rituals in secret with all sorts of strange drawings and representations! Furthermore, they got their wives involved in idolatrous worship by weeping and baking cakes for Tammuz! How many Christian women today are afflicted and die because of the open door of the lodge to which their husband belongs. Instead of standing up for God, they cook and bake for their husband's lodge events - indirectly supporting idolatry!

There is much more to this lodge business, but a little research would show how, through the influence of lodges on the major denominations, most churches are built so the worshippers face the east. Check out the burial rituals of lodge members, why do they wear aprons? What is the significance of the branch between the teeth. Again Ezekiel tells of men wearing twigs under the nose!

Why do major denominations support lodges and give their members places of honour?

Often the church leaders are lodge members themselves and some of the denomination's buildings are used by the lodges. Many of these church leaders are not born-again and Spirit-filled themselves and so lack spiritual discernment. Check out their lifestyles outside of the pulpit!

Why on earth would any born-again believer who wants to go places in God wish to be a part of those denominations? Remember what is on the head drips down to the body and you cannot rise above the level of your leader!

The Word of God was never preached in a corner! God intended our worship to be free, pure and untainted. Some Christians, because of persecution from the main religion of the country must worship underground or face martyrdom. Elsewhere, let us worship God in freedom and abandonment, with all our heart, soul and strength. Let your light as Christians shine before men.

Before, it was kept secret that you were in a secret order. Now they are out of the closet like the homosexuals, proclaiming their membership with banners

and car-stickers. Christians, don't be intimidated - be bold! God does not require a secret handshake! Any on-fire Christian can be spotted and is soon identified by his speech and actions.

Christians do not need a lodge to be successful, not when you have God on your side, He is the Provider, He is the God of more than enough! You are blessed and highly favoured! Speak what God speaks, be who God says you are, remain attached to the Vine and nothing can hold you back!