

The Three-minute Nugget...

Wages, Penalties, and the Square

In our opening ritual we hear a familiar statement about "Master's wages". What are they? I believe they are the bond of friendship, the enjoyment of relief, brotherhood and service. Today's Freemason is concerned with moral work. His reward, therefore, is found within himself. The spiritual wages go well beyond these and have a worth, or value, that is priceless. The very heart of being a Freemason and the joy one receives is a much more meaningful wage. The intangibles of love, friendship, respect, act of kindness, good deeds of service, and the gift of your time to others. They are earned perhaps by mentoring a new brother, helping others, remembering the widow and the orphan, or visiting the sick. In short, wages are earned much as the biblical truth says: "Do unto others as you would HAVE them do unto you." But, not all will earn them, hence, the phrase "to pay the Craft their wages if any be due. . ." A member may earn as much as he desires, and the old adage is so true, that the more you put into this gentle Craft, the more you will receive.

Every Mason is well aware of the "penalties" verbalized in obligations that we have all taken at the altar. Most are purely symbolic while others are actual and enforced. What are some of the enforced Masonic penalties? The penalties known to Freemasonry are the reprimand, definite suspension from membership, and expulsion from the Fraternity. Additionally, the penalties of our ritual are wholly symbolic in nature and have not been Masonically enforced. They were however, legal penalties in the Middle Ages. In the past accepted religious beliefs held that an incomplete or mutilated body, or one buried in unconsecrated ground could not ascend into Heaven.

So, what is an "Oblong Square"? The term dates back to the time of King Solomon. When Solomon ruled what was then believed to be the world, the land mass was indeed an "oblong square". The form ran just north and just south of the Mediterranean Sea, then stretched from Spain in the West to Asia Minor in the East. It is said to have been a large rectangle or oblong square. It truly was because at that time the oblong square was described as a figure with right angles in all four corners and having parallel sides of different lengths. The present day square still has four right angles, but must have sides of equal length. This "shape of the world" was also represented by the shape of the floor of Solomon's Temple; an oblong square which, in a symbolic way, represented the shape of the known world at the time. In summary, "oblong square" meant to our ancient Brethren what "oblong" means today. The term is used in our lectures to describe the shape of the lodge.



...#67 in a series of 'nuggets from the quarries of Freemasonry' SM

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