



Nugget

Wine, Women and King

One of a series of Twelve short talks about the Royal Arch

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Wine, Women and King - one of a series of introductory talks about the Royal Arch for Craft Meetings.

Summary

Wine, Woman and King - one of a series of short talks for presentation at Craft Meetings, to introduce members to the Holy Royal Arch and encourage them to join.

Keywords

Royal Arch, Talks, Attract, Recruit

Twelve Short Talks for Craft Lodges regarding Royal Arch Chapters

10. WINE, WOMEN AND THE KING

Most visitors to Rosslyn Chapel in Scotland are fascinated by the carvings there, which include the green men, fallen angels and a menagerie of animals. The chapel tells a story in stone, but among all the decorations there is only one carved quotation, in the South aisle, on one of the lintels: *'Forte est vinum, Fortior est Rex, fortiores sunt mulieres; super omnia vincit veritas'*, which translates as: *'Wine is strong, the king is stronger, women are even stronger, but truth conquers everything'*. The quotation comes from the First Book of Esdras in the Biblical Apocrypha, and has been attributed to Zerubbabel, the grandson of King Jehoiachin of Judea, who had been captured and taken into captivity in Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar. Zerubbabel led the first group of Jews who returned to Jerusalem to rebuild the temple, following the decree of King Cyrus of Persia. The Book of Esdras tells the story of King Darius of Persia posing a question years later, during a banquet attended by Zerubbabel, as to whether the power of wine, women or the king was the strongest. Three guests were chosen to write answers for Darius to judge after he had slept. The first said wine was the strongest, for it leads the mind astray, induces changes in behaviour, reduces Intelligence, diminishes capacity and causes memory loss. The next said the king was the strongest as he rules over others, sending them to work or to war, and takes what they earn or conquer for himself, and is obeyed in all matters. However, Zerubbabel wrote that women give birth to kings, and to men that plant vineyards. Men cannot exist without women, they give women all they possess, leaving their parents to be with a woman; they have risked and lost their lives over women and become slaves to them. But, he argued, even though women can take the crown from the heads of kings, they cannot compete with truth, which is greater than all things and is blessed by heaven. With truth, there is nothing unrighteous.

Impressed by Zerubbabel's answer, Darius granted him safe passage to return again to Jerusalem, and ordered that the holy vessels, that had been seized by Nebuchadnezzar years before, be returned to the temple there.

In Rosslyn Chapel, the text is next to carvings of two of the men who provided answers and the sleeping figure of King Darius. Of Zerubbabel, there is no sign, other than his wise words. As we hear nothing further about him in the Bible, it seems likely he lived to a great age, as no successor to him is named until the appointment of Ezra by Artaxerxes, 57 years after the completion of the Second Temple.

##END##

Recommended use of Nuggets

Nuggets offer a short, simple and readily absorbed means of progressing Masonic knowledge and an easy way to introduce learning to Lodges and Chapters. It is hoped that they will become a regular feature of Lodge and Chapter meetings as well as a source for private-study.

Nuggets can be included as an item in the summons and read at most Lodge/Chapter meetings. They can be:

- Read by either a new or an experienced Mason with the minimum of preparation and practice; *though ideally, they need to be read a few times beforehand.*
- Themed with the meeting or activity.
- Used to initiate a discussion within a Lodge/Chapter, LOI/COI, or group.
- Read at home and shared as a topic for a future discussion.
- Used as a focus for an unplanned, informal discussion.

For further nuggets and other learning materials visit “Solomon” at <http://solomon.ugle.org.uk>

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