

Ecclesiastes 12 **by W. Bro. Rob Lund**

In a previous article, I wrote about the meaning of Psalm 23, which is used in some American Masonic ritual. In the third degree of the Ontario working, a part of Ecclesiastes 12 is included from the King James version:

Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them; While the sun, or the light, or the moon, or the stars, be not darkened, nor the clouds return after the rain: In the day when the keepers of the house shall tremble, and the strong men shall bow themselves, and the grinders cease because they are few, and those that look out of the windows be darkened, And the doors shall be shut in the streets, when the sound of the grinding is low, and he shall rise up at the voice of the bird, and all the daughters of musick shall be brought low; Also when they shall be afraid of that which is high, and fears shall be in the way, and the almond tree shall flourish, and the grasshopper shall be a burden, and desire shall fail: because man goeth to his long home, and the mourners go about the streets: Or ever the silver cord be loosed, or the golden bowl be broken, or the pitcher be broken at the fountain, or the wheel broken at the cistern. Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it.

Some Masons may have given thought to this passage to try and understand it. To others it may be too cryptic. It is a poem that is about realizing that we will all grow old, and we will all die.

I provide below my own interpretation.

Give thought to the Creator now, while you're young. Don't wait until bad times or until you grow old: when you have no pleasure in life anymore, when your sight starts failing and you can't distinguish the sun from the moon or blue skies from grey; when your hands tremble from weakness or are bowed with infirmity, and you cannot chew because you've lost your teeth; when you cannot see out the window; when your neighbours don't want your company anymore; when you don't sleep for long; when you grow deaf and cannot hear music anymore; when you are afraid of height, or obstacles; when the hair turns white, and when food has little taste; when you cannot carry the lightest objects; when you have no libido; and your friends and neighbours have been buried; or you lose your mind or the brain doesn't work anymore; or the heart starts to fail. Then, the spirit is released from its bodily vehicle, and the body becomes dust and is returned to the earth again, and the spirit returns to where it came from.