



Sussex Freemasons - West Group
‘The West Wing’
(Bognor, Chichester, Clapham, Littlehampton,
Maiden, Petersfield, Pulborough, Steyning and
Worthing)

The West Wing Learning and Development Team

‘The West Wing’ Lodge of Instruction Lesson 12

Opening the Volume of the Sacred Law

Preceptors Notes



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Lesson 12 -

Lesson Aim

Opening the VSL in the First Degree

Lesson Objectives.

By the end of this lesson /tutorial the Masonic Student will be able to :

State the reason the VSL is opened at Psalm 133 in the First Degree.

Analyse and explain verses 1-3 and their masonic application

Analyse and explain the Book of Ruth and its Masonic relevance.



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Psalm 133 and the Book of Ruth

An Educational Lecture for a Lodge of Instruction

Introduction

Among the many symbols encountered by a candidate in the First Degree, one of the least discussed—but perhaps most profound—is the opening of the Volume of the Sacred Law at **Psalm 133**. Many brethren notice the page, few ask why it is there, and fewer still appreciate the depth of its symbolism.

Similarly, the **Book of Ruth**, although not explicitly featured in the ritual of the Entered Apprentice Degree, occupies an important place within Masonic symbolism because it introduces Boaz, one of the names associated with the pillars at the Porchway of King Solomon's Temple. Yet Ruth's story is far richer than simply explaining the origin of a name.

This lecture examines both Psalm 133 and the Book of Ruth, distinguishing between historical evidence, Masonic tradition, and symbolic interpretation.

Part I – Why Psalm 133?

Historical Background

The custom of opening the Bible to Psalm 133 is primarily associated with the **United Grand Lodge of England (UGLE)** and many constitutions derived from English practice, including numerous lodges throughout the Commonwealth.

Historically Documented Facts

There is no evidence that the earliest speculative lodges of the early eighteenth century consistently opened the Bible at Psalm 133.

The earliest rituals following the formation of the Premier Grand Lodge in 1717 show considerable variation.

During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, ritual gradually became standardized.



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By the Victorian period, opening the Bible at Psalm 133 in the First Degree had become well established within English working.

Therefore, this practice is best understood as a **later ritual development** rather than an inheritance from operative stonemasons.

Psalm 133 (King James Version)

1. Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!
2. It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard: that went down to the skirts of his garments;
3. As the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion: for there the Lord commanded the blessing, even life for evermore.

Only three verses.

Yet every word carries symbolic weight.

Verse One

"Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity."

This is perhaps the single verse most frequently associated with Freemasonry.

Notice the emphasis. Not simply "brethren." Not merely "together." But **dwelling together in unity.**

Freemasonry is not merely an organisation.

It is intended to become a society in which men of different:

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The Lodge becomes a place where external distinctions disappear. Unity does not mean uniformity. Each brother remains an individual. Rather, unity means harmony despite differences.

This is one of the greatest lessons of the First Degree.

Symbolic Interpretation

The candidate enters the Lodge as an individual. He leaves having become part of a brotherhood.

Psalm 133 reminds us that Masonry succeeds only when personal ambition gives way to collective harmony.

Verse Two

"It is like the precious ointment..."

Historically this refers to the consecration of Aaron as High Priest.

Historical Meaning

The sacred oil represented divine appointment.

It separated ordinary service from sacred service.



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Masonic Interpretation

Freemasonry does not claim priestly authority. Instead, the oil symbolises something different. Harmony spreads. Like oil flowing from Aaron's head, Brotherly Love flows from one Mason to another.

Notice the imagery. The oil begins at the head. It descends naturally. Unity begins with example. The Worshipful Master cannot command harmony. He demonstrates it. The officers imitate it. The brethren share it.

Harmony spreads downward—not through authority—but through example.

Verse Three

"The dew of Hermon..."

Mount Hermon lies far to the north of Jerusalem. Its dew nourished the surrounding land. Without it, the region became barren.

Symbolically

Harmony nourishes the Lodge.

Without harmony: ritual becomes mechanical, charity becomes obligation, friendship becomes formality.

With harmony: the Lodge flourishes. Exactly as dew quietly sustains life, Brotherly Love quietly sustains Freemasonry.

Why Psalm 133 for an Entered Apprentice?

The Entered Apprentice has not yet learned the complexities of Masonic philosophy. Instead he receives one simple lesson:

Before learning secrets...

before studying symbols...

before seeking knowledge...



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learn to live peacefully with your brethren.

Everything else rests upon that foundation.

Part II – The Book of Ruth

Many Masons associate Ruth only with Boaz.

This overlooks one of Scripture's most remarkable moral narratives.

Historical Background

The Book of Ruth probably describes events during the period of the Judges.

It tells the story of: Naomi, her Moabite daughter-in-law Ruth and the wealthy landowner Boaz.

Ultimately their family line leads to King David.

Ruth's Character

Ruth was not an Israelite. She came from Moab. Yet she became one of the greatest examples of loyalty in biblical literature. Her words remain among the most beautiful expressions of fidelity ever written.

"Whither thou goest, I will go..."

Her commitment was voluntary. She expected nothing in return. This echoes one of Masonry's central ideals: true service without expectation of reward.

Naomi

Naomi represents wisdom gained through suffering. Having lost husband and sons, she returns home with almost nothing. Yet she still guides Ruth with kindness and practical wisdom.

In Masonic terms, experience becomes instruction. Older brethren guide newer brethren. Knowledge is transmitted through example.



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Boaz

Boaz is introduced as: wealthy, respected, just, merciful, honest, compassionate.

He follows the law. Yet he exceeds it through generosity. He instructs his servants: leave extra grain for Ruth. Not because she deserves charity. But because compassion exceeds mere justice.

This distinction lies at the heart of Masonic charity.

Gleaning

Perhaps no image in Ruth carries greater symbolic power. Ancient law required landowners not to harvest every corner of their fields. The poor could gather what remained.

This practice was called gleaning.

Masonic Symbolism

Every Mason labours in the quarry of life. None gathers every lesson. None harvests perfect wisdom.

Each generation leaves knowledge for those who follow. Every brother gleans from: older brethren, past Masters, tradition, history, experience.

Learning is never complete.

Labour

The First Degree repeatedly teaches the dignity of labour. Ruth embodies this principle. She does not ask for favour. She works. Her reward follows effort.

Freemasonry likewise teaches that moral improvement cannot be inherited. It must be earned.



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Loyalty

Perhaps Ruth's greatest lesson is steadfastness. She remains faithful: to Naomi, to her promises, to her work, to her faith.

Such fidelity mirrors the constancy expected of every Mason.

Humility

Boaz possesses wealth. Ruth possesses none. Yet both display humility.

True greatness is measured not by possessions, but by conduct.

Boaz and the Pillars

Within Masonic symbolism, Boaz becomes associated with one of the two great pillars at the entrance to Solomon's Temple.

Historically, the biblical account simply records the pillar's name (1 Kings 7:21), while the Book of Ruth introduces us to Boaz the man, whose character gives symbolic depth to that name.

Although Scripture does not explicitly connect the pillar to Boaz himself, Masonic tradition has long viewed the name as evocative of qualities embodied by Boaz: strength expressed through justice, generosity, and moral stability. This is therefore a **symbolic interpretation**, not a historical assertion.

Part III – The Relationship Between Psalm 133 and Ruth

At first glance, these passages appear unrelated. One is a Psalm. The other a historical narrative. Yet together they present the moral architecture of the First Degree.



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Psalm 133	Book of Ruth
Unity	Loyalty
Harmony	Fidelity
Brotherhood	Compassion
Peace	Labour
Blessing	Service
Shared purpose	Individual virtue

Psalm 133 describes **how brethren should live together**. Ruth demonstrates **how one worthy person actually lives**. One provides the ideal. The other provides the example.

Lessons for the Entered Apprentice

The First Degree is not primarily about acquiring knowledge. It is about becoming the kind of man who deserves knowledge.

Psalm 133 teaches:

- harmony
- equality
- mutual respect

Ruth teaches:

- integrity
- humility
- diligence
- kindness
- steadfastness

Together they describe the moral character expected of every Freemason.

Historical Summary

It is important to distinguish between different levels of interpretation:

Historically Documented Facts

- Opening the Bible at Psalm 133 became established in English Craft ritual during the nineteenth century.
- Psalm 133 is a biblical hymn celebrating unity among brethren.



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- The Book of Ruth recounts the story of Ruth, Naomi, and Boaz during the period of the Judges.
- Boaz is an ancestor of King David.

Accepted Masonic Tradition

- Psalm 133 is regarded as the scriptural foundation for Brotherly Love and harmony within the Lodge.
- The character of Boaz informs Masonic reflection on the pillar bearing his name.
- Ruth is valued as an exemplar of fidelity, labour, and moral virtue.

Symbolic Interpretation

- The flowing oil of Psalm 133 represents the spread of harmony through the Lodge.
- The dew of Hermon symbolizes the quiet, life-giving influence of Brotherly Love.
- Gleaning in Ruth represents the lifelong pursuit of knowledge and wisdom.
- Boaz symbolizes strength tempered by compassion, offering a model for Masonic conduct.

Conclusion

Psalm 133 and the Book of Ruth are not merely historical passages preserved in Scripture; within Freemasonry they become enduring moral lessons. The Psalm reminds us that a Lodge can only prosper when its members dwell together in

unity. Ruth demonstrates that unity is sustained by loyalty, humility, industry, and compassion lived out in daily life.

When an Entered Apprentice first sees the Bible opened at Psalm 133, he is being presented—perhaps without yet realizing it—with the moral foundation upon which the whole superstructure of Freemasonry rests. Before he is expected to appreciate deeper symbolism or advance in Masonic knowledge, he is called to cultivate harmony with his brethren. The story of Ruth then illustrates how such harmony is expressed: through faithful service, honest labour, generosity, and unwavering integrity.

As W. L. Wilmshurst observed in *The Meaning of Masonry*, the true temple is built within the individual. Bernard E. Jones, in *Freemasons' Guide and Compendium*, emphasizes that Masonic symbols derive their power from the moral truths they convey rather than from antiquarian curiosity. Albert G. Mackey and Henry Wilson

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Coil likewise encourage us to look beyond the outward form of ritual to the ethical lessons it seeks to impart.

Thus, the Bible opened at Psalm 133 is more than a ritual custom. It is an invitation to every Mason to build a Lodge marked by peace, mutual respect, and Brotherly Love. The Book of Ruth complements that invitation by showing, through the lives of Ruth and Boaz, that true strength is inseparable from humility, justice, and compassion.

Only when these virtues are cultivated in the individual can the Lodge truly become what the Psalm proclaims: **"how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity."**

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Opening the Volume of the Sacred Law.

First Degree

Psalm 133

(A reading from Ruth 2: 19-20 First mentions BOAZ)

Second Degree

Amos 7: 7-8

Third Degree

Ecclesiastics 12: 1-7

RA

Open Chapter

Haggai 2: 1-9

Other RA readings:

- Ezra 3–6 – rebuilding of the Temple.
- Ezra 7 – the return under Ezra.
- Nehemiah 2–4 – rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem.
- Haggai 1–2 – exhortation to rebuild the Temple.
- Zechariah 4 – the vision of the golden candlestick, sometimes referenced in Royal Arch symbolism.



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From the perspective of a **Masonic Educator**, this is a well-researched and thoughtfully structured lecture that successfully distinguishes **historical fact, Masonic tradition, and symbolic interpretation**—an approach that reflects good Masonic scholarship. It avoids the common pitfall of presenting symbolic interpretations as historical certainties, which is particularly important in modern Masonic education.

Below is an educational critique.

Educational Analysis

Opening the VSL in the First Degree

Overall Assessment

Educational Value: Excellent (9.5/10)

The lecture succeeds in four important areas:

- It explains *why* the Volume of the Sacred Law is opened at Psalm 133 rather than merely stating that it is.
- It encourages critical thinking by separating documented history from symbolic interpretation.
- It develops moral lessons rather than merely explaining ritual mechanics.
- It connects Scripture with Craft symbolism in a way that is accessible to newer brethren.

This makes it suitable for:

- Lodge of Instruction
- Provincial Education programmes
- New Members' Evenings
- Lodge Mentoring
- Candidate follow-up after Initiation

Lesson Aim

The stated aim is:

Opening the VSL in the First Degree.



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This is clear.

However, after reading the lecture the true aim is broader.

A more educationally focused aim might be:

To explain the historical development and symbolic significance of opening the Volume of the Sacred Law at Psalm 133 and to explore how Psalm 133 and the Book of Ruth establish the moral foundations of the Entered Apprentice Degree.

This better reflects the lecture's actual content.

Lesson Objectives

The objectives are measurable.

Students should be able to:

- ✓ State the historical reason Psalm 133 is used.
- ✓ Explain the symbolism of verses 1–3.
- ✓ Analyse the Book of Ruth.
- ✓ Explain the relationship between Ruth and First Degree symbolism.

One further objective could be added:

Evaluate the difference between historical evidence, Masonic tradition and symbolic interpretation.

This reinforces one of the lecture's greatest strengths.

Structure

The progression is excellent.

The lecture moves naturally from

Historical context



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Biblical text

↓ Verse analysis

↓ Symbolic interpretation

↓ Book of Ruth

↓ Connection between the two

↓ Lessons for the Entered Apprentice

↓ Summary

↓ Conclusion

This follows sound educational practice by moving from knowledge to understanding and then application.

Historical Accuracy

One of the strongest aspects.

The lecture repeatedly avoids unsupported claims.

Examples include:

"There is no evidence..."

"Later ritual development..."

"Accepted Masonic Tradition..."

"Symbolic Interpretation..."

Many Masonic lectures blur these distinctions.

This one consistently maintains them.

That greatly increases its credibility.



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Analysis of Psalm 133

Verse 1

Excellent.

The lecture correctly focuses on

Brotherhood

Unity

Harmony

Equality

rather than simply quoting the verse.

One particularly strong sentence is:

Unity does not mean uniformity.

This is a sophisticated educational point and resonates with modern Freemasonry.

One addition might include the observation that Psalm 133 belongs to the **Songs of Ascents (Psalms 120–134)**, traditionally sung by pilgrims journeying to Jerusalem. This enriches the symbolism of brethren travelling together toward a common spiritual destination.

Verse 2

The explanation of Aaron's anointing is historically accurate.

The Masonic interpretation is careful.

The comparison:

Oil

↓Example

↓Harmony



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↓Brotherly Love

is elegant.

The statement

Harmony spreads downward—not through authority—but through example.

is one of the lecture's strongest educational insights.

Verse 3

The dew imagery is explained well.

The transition from agriculture to Lodge harmony is natural.

One possible enhancement would be mentioning that dew falls silently. This strengthens the symbolism:

Harmony rarely announces itself.

It quietly sustains everything.

That perfectly mirrors successful Lodges.

The Book of Ruth

Many Masonic lectures reduce Ruth to one sentence:

"Boaz was Ruth's husband."

This lecture avoids that.

Instead it develops:

Ruth

Naomi

Boaz

Labour



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Gleaning

Loyalty

Humility

Each becomes a moral lesson.

That is educationally richer.

Ruth as a Moral Example

Excellent emphasis.

Ruth represents

Loyalty

Faithfulness

Industry

Selflessness

rather than merely genealogy.

This aligns well with First Degree teaching.

Naomi

An unexpected but valuable inclusion.

Many lectures ignore Naomi.

Her role as mentor mirrors

Past Masters

Mentors

Experienced Brethren

guiding younger Masons.



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That connection is highly effective.

Gleaning

Possibly the finest symbolic interpretation in the lecture.

The comparison between

gleaning grain

and

gleaning wisdom

is original without becoming speculative.

It is memorable.

Students are likely to remember it.

Labour

Very appropriate.

The First Degree continually refers to labour.

Connecting Ruth's work ethic with Masonic self-improvement is entirely consistent with Craft teaching.

Boaz

The lecture wisely avoids saying:

"The pillar represents Boaz."

Instead it says:

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The character of Boaz gives symbolic depth to the pillar's name. That distinction is historically responsible.

Relationship Between Psalm 133 and Ruth

The comparison table is one of the lecture's strongest teaching devices.

Psalm 133	Ruth
Unity	Loyalty
Harmony	Fidelity
Brotherhood	Compassion
Peace	Labour
Blessing	Service

This immediately helps students connect two apparently unrelated passages.

Excellent instructional design.

Educational Methodology

The lecture follows Bloom's Taxonomy remarkably well.

Students first

Remember

↓ Understand

↓ Apply

↓ Analyse

↓ Reflect

↓ Internalise

It never becomes merely an academic Bible study.

Nor does it become purely symbolic speculation.



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It balances both.

Conclusion

The conclusion successfully draws together

Psalm

↓ Ruth

↓ Entered Apprentice

↓ Personal character

↓ Lodge harmony

without introducing new material.

The references to Wilmshurst, Jones, Mackey and Coil provide authority without overwhelming the lecture.

Areas That Could Be Enhanced

Although excellent, several refinements could deepen the educational impact.

1. Include Psalm 133 as a Pilgrim Psalm

Mentioning that it is one of the **Songs of Ascents** would reinforce the symbolism of brethren progressing together on a shared journey.

2. Explore Covenant

Ruth is fundamentally a story of covenant faithfulness.

Freemasonry places considerable emphasis upon fidelity to obligations.

A brief comparison would strengthen the moral message without overstating the connection.

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3. Explain Why Psalm 133 Was Chosen

The lecture notes *when* the practice became established but could speculate—carefully labelled as such—on *why* Victorian ritualists may have favoured it:

- the emphasis on Brotherly Love,
 - the growth of organised Lodges,
 - the desire for greater ritual uniformity.
-

4. Link More Explicitly to the Three Grand Principles

An explicit connection would reinforce First Degree learning:

- Brotherly Love → Psalm 133
- Relief → Boaz's generosity and gleaning
- Truth → Ruth's fidelity and integrity

This triad neatly integrates Scripture with familiar Masonic teaching.

5. Add Questions for Discussion

To encourage active participation in a Lodge of Instruction, conclude with reflective questions such as:

- Why might harmony be presented before knowledge in the First Degree?
 - How does Ruth's loyalty reflect the obligations of a Freemason?
 - What does "gleaning" mean in our own Masonic education?
 - How can a Worshipful Master cultivate harmony by example rather than authority?
 - What practical actions help brethren "dwell together in unity" in today's Lodge?
-

Style

The language is:

- clear,
- dignified,
- accessible,

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- free from unnecessary jargon.

The repetition of short sentences ("Before learning secrets... before studying symbols... before seeking knowledge...") is rhetorically effective and suitable for oral delivery.

Scholarly Merit

The lecture demonstrates sound Masonic educational practice by:

- distinguishing evidence from interpretation,
- avoiding unsupported legendary claims,
- grounding symbolism in Scripture before extending it into Masonic application,
- citing respected Masonic authors while keeping the focus on moral instruction.

One further enhancement would be to include references to recognised ritual historians such as Harry Carr or John Hamill, whose work on the evolution of English ritual would strengthen the historical discussion.

Final Evaluation

This lecture is an exemplary piece of contemporary Masonic education. Rather than treating Psalm 133 as a ritual curiosity or the Book of Ruth merely as the source of the name "Boaz," it presents both texts as complementary foundations for the moral architecture of the First Degree. Its careful distinction between documented history, accepted Masonic tradition, and symbolic interpretation is a hallmark of mature scholarship and encourages brethren to think critically without diminishing the inspirational value of the ritual.

With only minor enhancements—such as broader biblical context, explicit links to the Three Grand Principles, and a few discussion prompts—it would be of publishable quality in a Provincial or Grand Lodge educational journal and entirely suitable as a Lodge of Instruction lecture or mentor's resource for Entered Apprentices. I would assess it as **9.5–10/10** for educational content, historical balance, and practical Masonic relevance.



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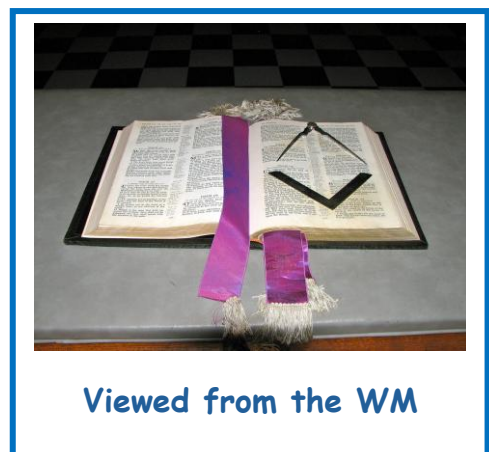
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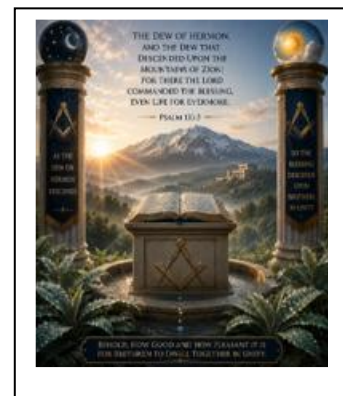
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(Bognor, Chichester, Clapham, Littlehampton,
Maiden, Petersfield, Pulborough, Steyning and
Worthing)

The West Wing Learning and Development Team

Gleaning

Perhaps no image in Ruth carries greater symbolic power. Ancient law required landowners not to harvest every corner of their fields. The poor could gather what remained.

This practice was called gleaning.

Masonic Symbolism

Every Mason labours in the quarry of life. None gathers every lesson. None harvests perfect wisdom.

Each generation leaves knowledge for those who follow. Every brother gleans from: older brethren, past Masters, tradition, history, experience.

Learning is never complete.

Labour

The First Degree repeatedly teaches the dignity of labour. Ruth embodies this principle. She does not ask for favour. She works. Her reward follows effort.

Freemasonry likewise teaches that moral improvement cannot be inherited. It must be earned.

Loyalty

Perhaps Ruth's greatest lesson is steadfastness. She remains faithful: to Naomi, to her promises, to her work, to her faith.

Such fidelity mirrors the constancy expected of every Mason.



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Humility

Boaz possesses wealth. Ruth possesses none. Yet both display humility.

True greatness is measured not by possessions, but by conduct.

Boaz and the Pillars

Within Masonic symbolism, Boaz becomes associated with one of the two great pillars at the entrance to Solomon's Temple.

Historically, the biblical account simply records the pillar's name (1 Kings 7:21), while the Book of Ruth introduces us to Boaz the man, whose character gives symbolic depth to that name.

Although Scripture does not explicitly connect the pillar to Boaz himself, Masonic tradition has long viewed the name as evocative of qualities embodied by Boaz: strength expressed through justice, generosity, and moral stability. This is therefore a **symbolic interpretation**, not a historical assertion.

Part III – The Relationship Between Psalm 133 and Ruth

At first glance, these passages appear unrelated. One is a Psalm. The other a historical narrative. Yet together they present the moral architecture of the First Degree.





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Psalm 133	Book of Ruth
Unity	Loyalty
Harmony	Fidelity
Brotherhood	Compassion
Peace	Labour
Blessing	Service
Shared purpose	Individual virtue

Psalm 133 describes how brethren should live together. Ruth demonstrates how one worthy person actually lives. One provides the ideal. The other provides the example.

Lessons for the Entered Apprentice

The First Degree is not primarily about acquiring knowledge. It is about becoming the kind of man who deserves knowledge.

Psalm 133 teaches:

- harmony
- equality
- mutual respect

Ruth teaches:

- integrity
- humility
- diligence
- kindness
- steadfastness

Together they describe the moral character expected of every Freemason.



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Historical Summary

It is important to distinguish between different levels of interpretation:

Historically Documented Facts

- Opening the Bible at Psalm 133 became established in English Craft ritual during the nineteenth century.
- Psalm 133 is a biblical hymn celebrating unity among brethren.
- The Book of Ruth recounts the story of Ruth, Naomi, and Boaz during the period of the Judges.
- Boaz is an ancestor of King David.

Accepted Masonic Tradition

- Psalm 133 is regarded as the scriptural foundation for Brotherly Love and harmony within the Lodge.
- The character of Boaz informs Masonic reflection on the pillar bearing his name.
- Ruth is valued as an exemplar of fidelity, labour, and moral virtue.

Symbolic Interpretation

- The flowing oil of Psalm 133 represents the spread of harmony through the Lodge.
- The dew of Hermon symbolizes the quiet, life-giving influence of Brotherly Love.
- Gleaning in Ruth represents the lifelong pursuit of knowledge and wisdom.
- Boaz symbolizes strength tempered by compassion, offering a model for Masonic conduct.

Conclusion

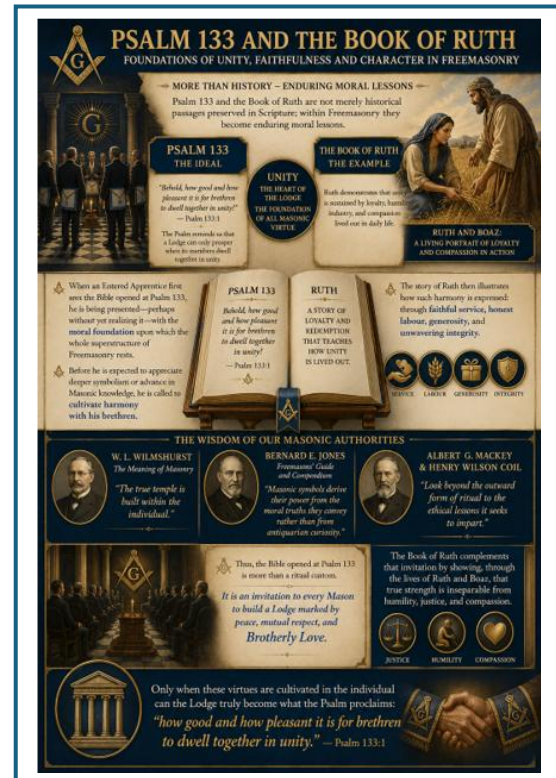
Psalm 133 and the Book of Ruth are not merely historical passages preserved in Scripture; within Freemasonry they become enduring moral lessons. The Psalm reminds us that a Lodge can only prosper when its members dwell together in



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unity. Ruth demonstrates that unity is sustained by loyalty, humility, industry, and compassion lived out in daily life.

When an Entered Apprentice first sees the Bible opened at Psalm 133, he is being presented—perhaps without yet realizing it—with the moral foundation upon which the whole superstructure of Freemasonry rests. Before he is expected to appreciate deeper symbolism or advance in Masonic knowledge, he is called to cultivate harmony with his brethren. The story of Ruth then illustrates how such harmony is expressed: through faithful service, honest labour, generosity, and unwavering integrity.



As W. L. Wilmshurst observed in *The Meaning of Masonry*, the true temple is built within the individual. Bernard E. Jones, in *Freemasons' Guide and Compendium*, emphasizes that Masonic symbols derive their power from the moral truths they convey rather than from antiquarian curiosity. Albert G. Mackey and Henry Wilson Coil likewise encourage us to look beyond the outward form of ritual to the ethical lessons it seeks to impart.

Thus, the Bible opened at Psalm 133 is more than a ritual custom. It is an invitation to every Mason to build a Lodge marked by peace, mutual respect, and Brotherly Love. The Book of Ruth complements that invitation by showing, through the lives of Ruth and Boaz, that true strength is inseparable from humility, justice, and compassion.

Only when these virtues are cultivated in the individual can the Lodge truly become what the Psalm proclaims: **"how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity."**

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Opening the Volume of the Sacred Law.

First Degree

Psalm 133

(A reading from Ruth 2: 19-20 First mentions BOAZ)

Second Degree

Amos 7: 7-8

Third Degree

Ecclesiastics 12: 1-7

RA

Open Chapter

Haggai 2: 1-9

Other RA readings:

- Ezra 3-6 - rebuilding of the Temple.
- Ezra 7 - the return under Ezra.
- Nehemiah 2-4 - rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem.
- Haggai 1-2 - exhortation to rebuild the Temple.
- Zechariah 4 - the vision of the golden candlestick, sometimes referenced in Royal Arch symbolism.