

The Revelation of Dan Brown

by Sir Knight Jeff Kuntz

Like a good many of my fellow Masons, I had been waiting for over two years for Dan Brown's latest novel to come out. We knew it was going to be set in Washington, D.C., and we knew it was going to be about Freemasonry, at least to an extent. I needed to read it, not only because it was to be about Masonry, but also because millions of others, including many Masonic brothers, would be reading it.

When barely halfway through the book, I asked a brother, a thirty-third Degree Scottish Rite Mason, if he started to read Brown's latest book. He responded, "No, but my wife is reading it." Then I said; "Good! Let her read it, and then you be sure to read it!" Every Mason and every Mason's wife should read it, as well as every prospective Mason.

The Lost Symbol, as the titled turned out to be, goes quite beyond my expectations. Yes, the book is a work of fiction, and Dan Brown is a master of suspense, but he certainly did his homework-perhaps too well-on his research of Freemasonry and esoteric knowledge, or as he calls it in his novel, the Ancient Mysteries.

First of all, it must be pointed out that this especial knowledge of the Ancient Mysteries is not synonymous with such things as black magic or any other weird, sinister occult activities. In fact, one of the many statements in The Lost Symbol that would, no doubt, dumbfound many is one made by one of the main characters in the story; "The Ancient Mysteries and the Bible are the same thing."

Throughout the book, Brown superbly expounds upon and correlates the relationship between the Ancient Mysteries, the Bible, and Freemasonry. One of the many ways he does this is by quoting statements of Jesus in the Gospels, such as; "Greater works than these shall ye do" (John 14:12) and "The Kingdom of God is within you" (Luke 17:21). He also points out that Scriptures do speak of things like secrets, mysteries, and wise sayings, and that Christ indicated in the Gospels that some were ready to receive certain knowledge for which most others were not prepared.

Another very interesting and important matter that Brown seems to elucidate quite well is that there is really no quarrel between true science and true religion. Some have said that some of the great scientists such as Newton, Darwin, and Einstein were atheists. These assessments are grossly unfair. Their concepts of God may not have been traditional, but how does one really define God? Scripture makes it clear that God's power is beyond our human understanding, but it also makes it clear that His kingdom is among us, and yes, even within us. What wisdom and understanding we do attain is by grace and faith. At the same time, Brown brings out how some prophesies and other passages in the Bible have been misunderstood or even distorted.

As a lifelong student of mysticism, Freemasonry, and the Bible, I strongly agree with Dan Brown's claim that much in the Bible has been misunderstood. I also believe that

Freemasonry is a channel-if but a somewhat contracted one-through which some of this greater knowledge and wisdom is passed on, largely in the form of symbolism.

Will *The Lost Symbol* have a positive impact on Freemasonry? My guess is that, in the end, it will have little really favorable effect on either the fraternity's membership or its public relations. I hope I am wrong. Dan Brown said in an Associated Press interview that he believed his book would greatly increase interest in Freemasonry.

On the other hand, there will likely be some repercussions, especially from church leaders. Some of the more hidebound and radical ones will surely have something to say. Some of the clergy in various denominations have always considered the Masonic fraternity, or any other such mystically inclined or open-minded organization, a threat to the traditionally established church.

There is much said and written these days about a soon to come shift or a new awakening of consciousness, collectively, as well as among individuals, on which, by the way, Brown also touches in his book. The flip side of this seems to be that this spiritual awakening, which some say is already in progress, is coinciding with an increase in evil in the world. One needs only to look to the 24th chapter of the Gospel of Matthew or the third chapter of Paul's second Letter to Timothy to read biblical passages that seem to describe present-day troubles.

The Book of Revelation says, "...the time is at hand." Dan Brown is, indeed, a brilliant writer of intriguing fiction, but could it be that he has a much greater purpose? He professes to be a non-Mason, but maybe we need to intently heed what he seems to be trying to tell us about our great fraternity and what it is really about. Is it a stretch to say that perhaps Brown has a knowledge of its teachings and a wisdom greater than that of the most enlightened among us?

Maybe the question we should really be asking ourselves, as Masons, is whether we should look beyond our great fraternity as merely a social organization and take a much closer look at its teachings and real purpose. Maybe we should be asking ourselves if we are being called to disseminate our true teachings while we still can, for perhaps the time IS at hand!

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