

AS AUTHORIZED AND ADOPTED
BY THE
GENERAL GRAND COUNCIL
R. AND S. MASTERS

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
SEPTEMBER 27, 1927
DENVER, COLORADO

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Committee on Ritual
and Custodians of the Work

Ninth Edition, 1956

FOREWORD TO FIRST EDITION.

In the preparation of this Ritual, the Committee has endeavored to present one that can be utilized by a small Council in the usual hall and at the same time will admit of elaborate settings with stage accessories.

Nothing has been added to it. In its present form it is a mere elaboration of the theme of the old Ritual, in a concise, direct and dramatic manner.

The historical inaccuracies have been corrected; the great lesson of the degree pushed to the forefront, and made to conform to that dignity and solemnity that should characterize Masonic degrees.

The Ritual is a compilation and arrangement of the old General Grand Council Ritual, the New York work and the rituals of several Councils in Ohio.

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OFFICERS AND CAST OF CHARACTERS

The officers in a Council of Super
Excellent Masters are the
Illustrious Master.
Captain of the Guard.
Conductor of the Council.
Recorder.
Steward and
Sentinel.

(Their stations in opening of the
Council are the same as in the R. & S.
degrees.)

DRAMATIS PERSONAE.

Scene 1.

Ezekiel, the Prophet.
Twelve Comps. and a Courier.

Scene 2.

Zedekiah, King of Judah.
Gedeliah, a Prince.
Pashur, a Councilor.
Zaphaniah, a Councilor.
Jeremiah, the Prophet.
Seraiah, High Priest.
Three Keepers of the Temple.
Four Guards.
A Herald.

Scene 3.

Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon.
Nebuzaradan, General.

Sissinna, Capt. of Guard.
Artaban, Lieut. of Guard.
Four Satraps of Provinces.
Six Soldiers.
Sentry.
Trumpeter.

(The list of characters in scenes 2 and 3 is the minimum. The number of Princes, Councilors, Satraps, Soldiers, Guards and Captives can be increased at pleasure. The costuming, stage setting, etc., should conform to the scenes enacted.)

SECTION 1. OPENING CEREMONY.

(Candidates are in hall, but seated by themselves. No hoodwinks.)

I. M.:—o—Comp. Captain of the Guard, are all present S. E. Masters?

C. of G.:—*I. M.*, all present are S. E. Masters except the candidates.

I. M.:—Is the Sanctuary securely guarded?

C. of G.:—I will ascertain and report. Companion Steward, see that the Sanctuary is securely guarded.

(Steward opens door and says):

St.:—Comp. Sentinel, a Council of S. E. Masters is about to be opened. Take due notice thereof and guard accordingly.

(Closes door, give o o o—o o o—o o o—o; answered by Sent. o o o—o o o—o o o—o. *St. o.*)

St.:—Comp. *C. of G.*, we are duly guarded and the Sanctuary is secure.

C. of G.:—*I. M.*, the Sanctuary is securely guarded.

I. M.:—What is the hour?

C. of G.:—It is the time of the Second Watch.

I. M.:—o o o—Since it is the time of the Second Watch, let us repair to the Holy Altar and offer up our adorations to Deity, for His protecting care and favor.

(Members and candidates remain standing in place.)

(The officers advance and kneel at the altar on the left knee, right elbow resting on right knee, forehead resting on hand, hats on head, according to Jewish custom. After silent prayer.)

I. M.:—Arise, let each repair to his station. (Done.)

I. M.:—I now declare a council of S. E. Masters duly opened. o.

RECEPTION

I. M.:—Comp. Recorder, is there any business to come before this Council?

Recorder:—*I. M.*, numerous (or several) Companions, S. Ms., are desirous of being introduced into the Mysteries of the degree of S. E. M.

I. M.:—Companions, you have heard the announcement of the Recorder; if there is no objection we will confer the degree upon them.

I. M.:—Comp. C. of Council, you will present the candidates.

(The candidates are formed into lines on west side of the altar) then:

I. M.:—Comp. C. of Council, whom have you there?

C. of C.:—*I. M.*, numerous (or several) Comps., R. & S. M., who are desirous of being introduced into the mysteries of the degree of S. E. M.

I. M.:—(To Cond.) Why do you come at this time?

C. of C.:—We, R. & S. Masters, having heard tidings that the people of Israel are to be liberated, desire to cast our lot with the S. E. Masters. We have, therefore, presented ourselves so that if it meets your pleasure we may here and now assume the vows of the craft.

I. M.:—How say you, is Jehovah the only and true God?

C. of C.:—He is, and we worship only Him.

I. M.:—In what spirit of mind do you worship Him?

C. of C.:—In faith.

I. M.:—Have you ever bowed down to graven images or worshiped other gods?

C. of C.:—We have not.

I. M.:—Are all true Masons your brothers?

C. of C.:—They are.

I. M.:—In what spirit of mind do you regard them?

C. of C.:—With Love and Friendship.

I. M.:—Do you acknowledge the vows you have previously taken?

C. of C.:—We do.

I. M.:—How will you observe them and the one of this degree?

C. of C.:—With Fidelity.

I. M.:—It is well, with Faith, Friendship and Fidelity may we ever dwell, and under this pledge, advance, kneel at our Altar and assume the vow.

(Candidates kneel on both knees, both hands resting on stone Altar as in M. M. degree.)

I, _____, o m o fr wi a ac, i the pr of A. G. a th C. of S. E. M., do he a he m s a s pr a sw th I wi for K a C th S of ths d an wl nt rvl thm ex to hm or thm to whm t of ri blg.

I f pr th I wi conf to a ab by, th reg of this d so fa as t m co to m kno.

I f pr tht I wl gv m, drk nd ldgs to p, wrthy C, ac to thr nes and m abil, and wl dfd thm in dngr nd v thr c so fr as T, H, nd J ma wrnt.

I f pr tht I wi n as or be pr at th c of th deg u a on who h n rec th pre d, fr E. A. to S. M. inc, in a ju an la man, to my f a en sat.

I f pr th I wi no bw dw to oth gds, nr pa relig ad to id, tht I wl not w th S, M or S of Hvn, bt in g fai and con, and to th bst of m aby wl srv nd w th onl lvg nd tr G.

All this I m s a si pr nd sw witho eq, m res, or sec eva in m whtvr bi mys un no le p th tht of hav m ths

c ff, m e pl out, m b b wi cha of bra, and car to a stra a dist land, sho I kn or willf v th, m s ob as a S. E. M., so h me G a ke m ste.

I. M.: Arise.—I wl n invest y with the S's, Grs, an Ws, of ths dgr.

1.—Ths is the D. G.—H clsd, th extd, crs th, ri up. It al to a prtn of the pen of yr O, and is th si with wh y sal th pres off on ent or ret from a cou of S. E. M.

2.—Ths is th frst si.—Hds clsd, thbs extd, ar crsd on brst ri ar up; pt th t ey. Als allu t pen.

3.—Ths is th scd si.—Ri hnd clsd, frst nd scd fng ext, poi to yr own ey, thn drt thm fowd horizontally. Also allu to pen.

4.—Ths is th H. S. Ri ha clsd, th ext. Mk Zi Za mtn frm lf shl to ri hp, Al t chns of brs.

Wds accompa Za-her-la-her-bon, sig, Rembr th dstretn.

5.—Ths is th P. G. (given.) It i th sm as th P. G. of a M. M. M., exc th thmbs r rai, prsg ea oth altrntly.

P. W.—So-lee-mah.

6.—Ths is the T. G. (given.) Tk P. G. with bo hds (ri up) arms crsd. One sa Sau th 1 K of I, the oth Z, the last K. of J.

You will now be seated.

I. M.:—The emblems of this degree are the square, the triangle and the circle. Their symbolism will now be explained to you.

(At this time the emblems will be formed around the altar by a sufficient number of Comps. who march in from the ante-room or are on the stage. Or the emblems may be successively projected upon a screen by a lantern. The explanation is given by the *I. M.* or by some Comp. selected for that purpose.)

Note:—If the emblems are to be formed on the stage or around the Altar, the Comps. who form them should be thoroughly drilled, so that each emblem may be accurately formed. A march should be played and all movements executed in time and step. The Capt. of G. or some Comp. selected for the purpose should be in charge. He should know in detail every movement to be made. They should march in from the ante-room or wings of the stage to form the Square; the movements afterwards are left to be planned and executed by the officer in charge.

The Comps. should be clothed in white robes with flowing sleeves to body (commonly known as angel sleeves).

As the square is formed or appears on the screen: (The R. A. banners may be used in this square.)

I. M.:—The square is one of the most significant of the emblems of Masonry. Its four equal sides subtended by four perfect angles, sym-

bolize the four Cardinal Virtues, which are imprinted upon the memory and engraven upon the very soul of every true Mason: Temperance, Fortitude, Prudence and Justice.

In Masonry every Perfect Ashlar must be true and square, in order that the structure may possess strength and beauty, each living stone must be squared by the square of truth and virtue, in order that the Masonic edifice may continue to hold aloft its hoary head, crowned with majesty and clothed with stately lines, to be in the future, as in the past, the wonder and admiration of all ages.

(As the triangle is formed or appears on the screen:)

I. M.:—The triangle or delta is emblematic of Deity, its three equal sides representing His omnipotence, His omniscience and His omnipresence; His universal power, universal knowledge and universal presence.

It also symbolizes the triumph of Freemasonry over Ignorance, Intolerance and Bigotry, the three greatest enemies of human liberty and progress. It also teaches the three great virtues: Faith, Hope and Charity, reminding us of our triple duties as

Masons, those we owe to God, to our neighbors and to ourselves, teaching Faith in God, **all-wise, all-powerful,** and all-merciful; Hope in the ultimate triumph of truth over every form of error, and Charity, or Love, for all mankind, especially our brethren.

(As the circle is formed or appears on the screen:)

The circle is an emblem of Friendship, the Sacred Law in the center, like the blazing star in the Mosaic pavement, is an emblem of Divine Providence, the radii from which verge in direct lines to every part of the circle, and end in that. It is also emblematic of the circle of our moral duties, reminding us of the point within a circle in E. A. degree. It is further an emblem of Eternity, having neither beginning nor end. This emblem encourages the hope of a full immortality by faith in the Divine promise.

(Curtain.)

LECTURE.

I. M. :—My Companions, a brief rehearsal of the ceremony of this degree

reveals to you a sad historical event in the life of the Jewish Nation and bears with it a lesson of profound moral significance.

Zedekiah, who reigned at that time in Jerusalem, was the Uncle of Johoiachin, the youthful King, placed at eighteen years of age upon the throne of Judah, who having rebelled against his master, King Nebuchadnezzar, was dethroned and imprisoned after a brief reign of three months. The King of Babylon bestowed the vacant throne upon Zedekiah in the expectation of securing a faithful liegeman. In this he was mistaken. Zedekiah "did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord." Forgetting his obligations to Nebuchadnezzar, he formed an alliance with Egypt, the hereditary enemy of Assyria and Chaldea, and attempted to overthrow the authority of Babylon. Swift vengeance overtook the traitor. A Babylonian army invaded and ravaged the country, besieged Jerusalem and after inflicting a crushing defeat on the Egyptian Allies, captured the city. Zedekiah, accompanied by his family, fled in the darkness of the night toward the Jordan; but was overtaken and made prisoner near Jericho. Zedekiah and his sons were taken to Riblah, where

Neb. then abode; and he, with customary Asiatic cruelty, ordered the sons to be slain before their father's face; then deprived the wretched parent of his eyesight, bound him with fetters of brass, and conveyed him to Babylon, where he probably died.

Thus were verified what had seemed to be the contradictory prophecies of Jeremiah and Ezekiel. The former predicting of Zedekiah—"Thine eyes shall behold the eyes of the King of Babylon and he shall speak to thee mouth to mouth, and thou shalt go to Babylon," and the latter announcing, "I will bring him to Babylon to the land of the Chaldeans, yet see it he shall not, though he shall die there." The Temple and City of Jerusalem were destroyed, the inhabitants carried away into captivity and the Kingdom of David and Solomon ceased to have a place on the earth.

This ceremony depicts the consequences of infidelity to trust, the certain punishment that follows perfidy in friendship, not only to the perjurer but also to those of his household. It also brings forcibly to attention the mercy of the Divine Father as illustrated by His forgiveness of the Jewish people and their restoration to their native land.

The degree teaches that Fidelity to all vows is an absolute necessity if we would be worthy of the title of Super Excellent Master; it also inculcates true devotion in spirit and in truth to the Great I AM in contradistinction to idolatry, teaches traditionally life's vicissitudes; encourages generous hospitality and friendship; enlightens the mind and amends the heart, that we may become wiser and purer, brighter and brighter unto the perfect day.

It also teaches the faithful fulfillment of our several vows, and the fearless discharge of our respective duties; and admonishes us that the violation of our solemn obligations as in the case of Zedekiah, the last King of Judah, will not only cause us to forfeit the respect and friendship of our Companions, but will also most surely destroy our own peace of mind.

(End of Short Form.)

(Circle of Friendship should be formed and Council closed as on pages 49-52.)

SECTION 2. DRAMA.

PROLOGUE.

I. M.:—My Companions, the degree of Super Excellent Master has no connection, either in history or symbolism, with the Royal or Select Master. It refers to circumstances which occurred during the siege of Jerusalem by Nebuzaradan, Commander of the Army of the King of Babylon. The ceremonies are intended to represent the final destruction of the Temple and the carrying away of the Captive Jews to Babylon, as exemplified in the first portion of the Royal Arch Degree.

The opening scene represents the captives in Babylon, under the direction of Ezekiel, the Prophet. Here in their darkest hour, under a foreign despot, there came to them from the Sacred Law a peaceful light from Heaven, promising a final restoration to the scenes of their former glory

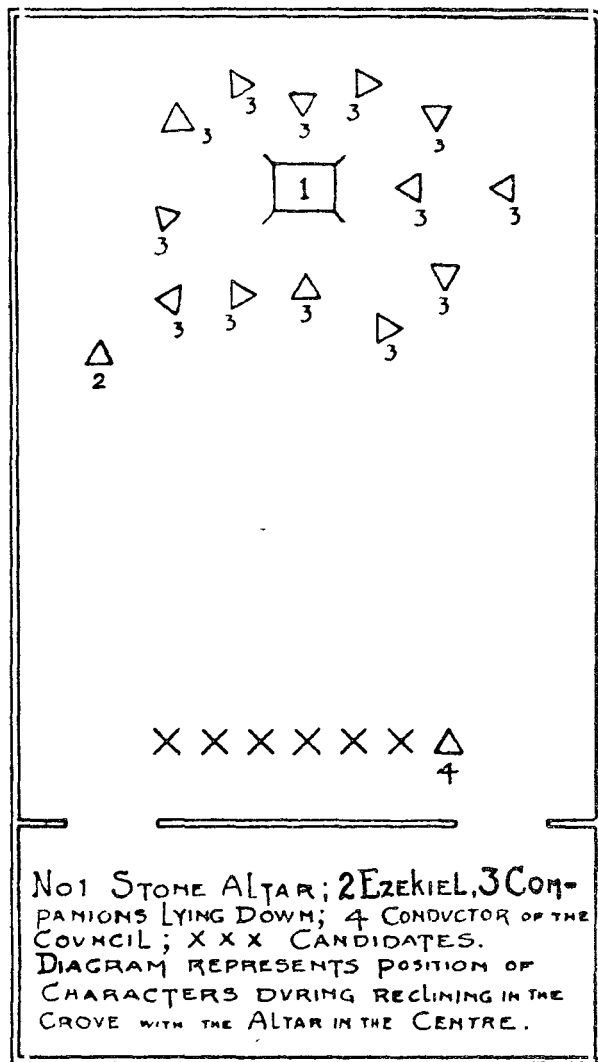
The second scene of this degree is laid in one of the apartments of the Temple, and the events narrated therein, occurred in the last hour of the last day of the third and last siege of Jerusalem. Zedekiah, the last and

twentieth king of Judah, was upon the throne. His infidelity to his vows, his contempt for the Prophet of God, and his cowardly acquiescence to his false Councilors are faithfully depicted.

The third scene represents Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, with his court at Riblah. Jerusalem had been taken, Zedekiah was a fugitive and captive, his arraignment and terrible punishment follows. Zion is desolate.

These scenes are not intended to merely represent a historical event, but to bring to your minds and hearts the great lesson of *fidelity*—fidelity to your vows as Masons, and as citizens, and a firm faith and reliance in God.

IN BABYLON SCENE 1



PROLOGUE TO SCENE 1.

The first scene represents a typical incident in the captive life of the Jews in Babylon, where they were taken after the fall of Jerusalem in the eleventh year of the reign of Zed., the last of the Judean kings.

The capture of Jerusalem and the captivity of the Jews and their return therefrom was depicted in the R. A. degree.

Here you see them in their captivity reaping the results of their infidelity and that of their perjured king. They have been toiling in the nearby fields and are gathered here at the close of the day. The Prophet Ezekial is seeking to console them by reading from their Sacred Writings. The Prophet Jeremiah is in Jerusalem.

SCENE 1.

The Captives in Babylon.

The Sanctuary in a Grove.

(The scene is laid in a grove, an altar of stone with a scroll of the Sacred Law in center of stage. The twelve companions lying on the floor about the altar. All participants except Ezek. are clothed in black. The singing should be in a soft and plaintive manner. The Hall to be in semi-darkness.)

(The following should be sung or recited by one of the twelve Comps.):

How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land? If I forget thee, O, Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning. If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth, if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy. Ps. cxxxvii: 4-6.

Ezek.:—(Sitting, reads) How doth the city sit solitary, that was full of people! how is she become as a widow! she that was great among the nations, and princess among the provinces, how is she become tributary!

She weepeth sore in the night, and her tears are on her cheeks. Among all her lovers she hath none to comfort her; all her friends have dealt treacherously with her, they are be-

come her enemies. — Lamentation I:1-2.

SING.

By Babel's stream we sit and weep;
Our tears for Zion flow;
Our harps on drooping willows sleep;
Our hearts are filled with woe.

Ezek.:—(Reads) By the rivers of Babylon there we sat down; yea, we wept when we remembered Zion. We hanged our harps upon the willows in the midst thereof. For there they that carried us away captive required of us a song, and they that wasted us required of us mirth, saying, sing us one of the songs of Zion.—Psalms cxxxvii:1-3.

SING.

Our walls no more resound with
praise;
Our Temple foes destroy;
Judea's courts no more upraise
Triumphant songs of joy.

(Reads.) Judah is gone into captivity because of affliction, and because of great servitude; she dwelleth among the heathen; she findeth no

rest; all her persecutors overtook her between the straits. The ways of Zion do mourn, because none come to the solemn feasts; all her gates are desolate; her priests sigh; her virgins are afflicted; and she is in bitterness. Her adversaries are the chief, her enemies prosper; for the Lord hath afflicted her for the multitude of her transgressions; her children are gone into captivity, before the enemy. Lam. I:3, 4, 5.

SING.

Here, mourning, toil the captive bands;

Our feasts and Sabbaths cease;
Our tribes, dispersed through distant lands,
Are hopeless of release.

(A courier enters hastily and presents a scroll to Ezekiel. The courier retires and Ezekiel exclaims):

Ezek.:—A message from Jeremiah!
(The Comps. rise hastily and crowd around Ezekiel to hear the message.)

(Reads.) Thus saith the Lord of Hosts, the God of Israel, unto all that are carried away captives, whom I have caused to be carried away from Jerusalem unto Babylon, build ye

houses, and dwell in them, and plant gardens and eat the fruit of them.

Take ye wives and beget ye sons and daughters, and take wives for your sons, and give your daughters to husbands, that they may bear sons and daughters, that ye may be increased there, and not diminished.

For thus saith the Lord, that after seventy years be accomplished at Babylon, I will visit you, and perform my good word toward you, in causing you to return to this place.

For I know the thoughts I think toward you, saith the Lord; thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end.—Jeremiah xxix:4, 5, 6, 10, 11.

SING.

Then shall the ever gracious power
To us propitious be,
Chaldeans shall our race restore,
And Kings proclaim us free.

(During singing of last stanza, companions sing with energy and fervor.)

Ezek.:—And now, my Comps., let us to our rest. The tasks of tomorrow await us. We shall need all our strength of both mind and body.

Let us endure with patience having faith in Jehovah and His promises.

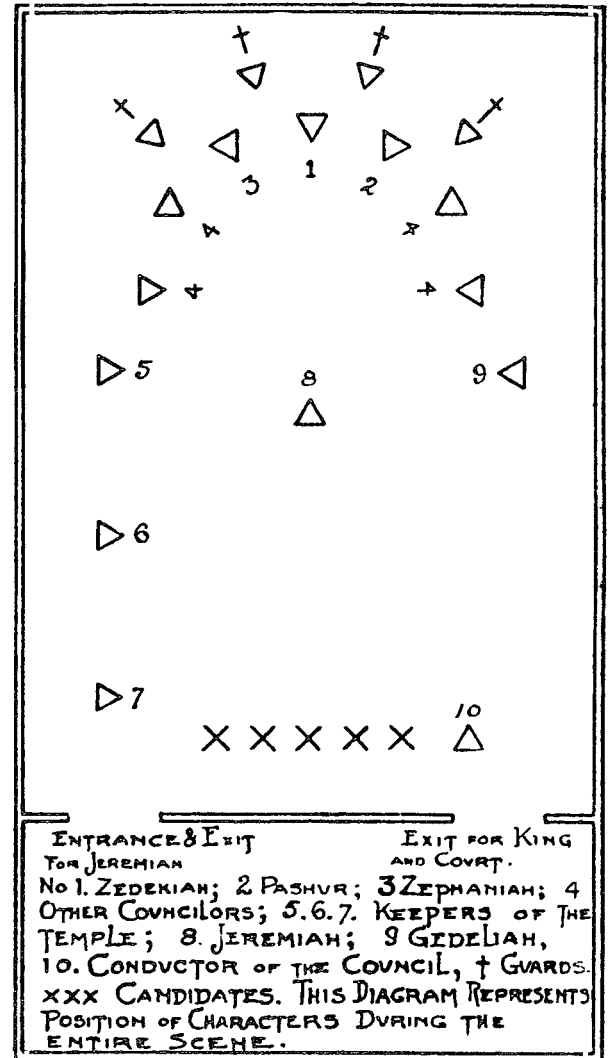
Let us be ever faithful to our pledges and obligations and true to our God, our brethren and our fellow-men.

So may we ever walk in faith, promote friendship and practice fidelity.

(All the Companions march out with Ezekiel.)

(Curtain.)

COURT OF ZEDEKIAH SCENE 2



SCENE 2.

Court of Zedekiah at Jerusalem.

PROLOGUE TO SCENE 2.

You have just had an intimation of the servitude and sadness of a people in captivity. How they came to be in such condition is the subject matter of the two scenes which now follow.

The next scene represents the court of Zed. at Jer. This wicked and faithless king had been besieged within the walls of his city for eighteen months and the scene shows the last day of that siege, closing with the capture of the city.

The scene begins just after a herald has brought reports from the walls of the city.

(If the hall does not have a stage, a curtain should be stretched across the center to avoid the necessity of removing candidates from hall at change of scene, as well as to facilitate change of settings. The Court of Zedekiah is seated in the East, the King in the center and his Councilors on right and left. Gedeliah and Keepers of the Temple on left or right to suit entrance to hall. Guards or Soldiers to King stationed to rear and side of Court. The King and Councilors remain seated while speaking.)

(A trumpet sounds in the ante-room and a Herald enters hastily, approaches Gedeliah and hands him a scroll; then retires. Ged. opens it and reads it hurriedly. Then):

King Zed.:—Prince Gedeliah, what news brought the Herald?

Gedeliah:—(Arises and remains standing.) That Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, approaches with innumerable forces and fills the city.

King Zed.:—How did they report the enemy?

Ged.:—That he was formidable and victorious, approaching the King's palace, and within a few furlongs of the Temple, and everywhere is unhalloed ravage and devastation.

Pashur:—Mighty Sovereign, be not discouraged, I pray thee, by these

false reports. The King of Babylon shall not prevail against thee. I, myself, have just learned that King Nebuchadnezzar has been completely overwhelmed by your armies and your noble allies, the Egyptians.

(Sound of disturbance at the door.)

(Keepers go quickly to entrance.)

(Jeremiah forces his way to inside the door.)

Jeremiah:—Hinder me not. I will see the King, I will see the King.

(First Keeper advances and addresses the King.)

First Keeper:—Jeremiah has escaped from prison.

King Zed.:—Jeremiah! Why comes he hither?

(To Jeremiah, who is restrained by Keepers.)

King Zed.:—Jeremiah! Thou didst promise to abide in the court of the prison. Why hast thou come without my consent?

Jeremiah:—I have a message which may not wait.

King Zed.:—Keepers, go hence until you are called.

(Pause while Keepers go to their stations.)

King Zed.:—And now, Jeremiah, thy message.

(Jeremiah advances to center of hall.)

Jeremiah:—The fate of Israel, her city and Temple, hang trembling in the balance. This day—nay, this hour—must decide if the Kingdom founded by Jehovah, and the Temple erected by Solomon his servant, shall together and forever cease to be. Ere the cock crows shall it be decided if thou be indeed the last King of Judah. For this reason, therefore, I have come to thee, O King. I have come to conjure thee to leave off thy impieties and transgressions and to take care of that which is right, and neither to give ear to those wicked advisers, nor to yield credit to their false prophesies who have deluded thee. They told thee that the King of Babylon would no more make war against thee, and that the King of Egypt would make war against him and conquer him. They told thee after Nebuchadnezzar had laid siege to our city, that the King of Egypt came with a mighty army to drive the Babylonians away and that the army of Nebuchadnezzar had given up the siege, having been driven away by the Egyptians. And then they steeped thy soul in forgetfulness. They filled thine ears with unholy music. They catered to thy pleasures with wine and to

thy lust with harlots and concubines. They told thee not that the Egyptian Army had been routed and destroyed, but I tell thee that the Babylonian Army has again renewed the siege, that even now they make a passing breach in the walls, and that they may be upon us at any moment. Lo, I prophesy.

(Keepers drop to knees in attitude of fear.)

Jeremiah:—Before another dawn shall lighten the Eastern sky the soldiers of Nebuchadnezzar shall throng the courts of the Temple and everywhere shall be unhallowed ravage and devastation.

Keepers:—Lord! have mercy.

Jeremiah:—I see thee, O King, a fugitive upon the Plains of Jericho.

Keepers:—Lord! have mercy.

Jeremiah:—I see thee caught like a skulking dog, thy sons slain before thine eyes.

Keepers:—Lord! have mercy.

Jeremiah:—I see thee bound in chains of brass and carried a Captive to Babylon.

Keepers:—Lord! have mercy.

Jeremiah:—I see the Holy Place defiled by the soldiers of Nebuchad-

nezzar, and the Shekinah departed from Israel forever.

Keepers:—Lord! have mercy.

Jeremiah:—All this must be unless thou repent.

(Keepers arise and approach Gedeliah.)

(King confers with courtiers.)

Pashur:—Heed him not, O King. His troubles have made him mad.

Zephaniah:—The old man's mind wanders.

Pashur:—Long confinement in prison has unsettled his reason.

Zephaniah:—It was ever his wont to prate of naught but woe and lamentation.

King Zed.:—Jeremiah, I long have loved thee and have often listened to thy words. I have heard and believed agreeing to that which thou hast said as true, yet now do I recall that ever thy sayings were heavy with tales of woe. Naught else hast thou ever dinned into mine ears. Thy soul was surely begot 'neath gloomy shades. For thee the sun never shines, lovers do not love, birds do not sing, nor flowers bloom. Canst thou not, O Priest, prophesy pleasant things?

Jeremiah:—Wouldst thou have me merry while death hangs over our

people? Wouldst thou have me speak lightly when destruction broods over our city and Temple? Yet, fain would I prophesy pleasant things—yea, verily, I bring thee good tidings if thou wilt but repent. Repent and I will pray the Lord God of Israel for thee. The hosts of Nebuchadnezzar are thundering at our gates, yet if thou wilt repent, even now, the God of our Fathers will deliver thee out of his hands. Listen to the promise:

Thus saith the Lord God of Israel: (Soft music.) "Then will I build thee up and not pull thee down; then will I plant thee and not pluck thee up for I repent me of the evil I have done thee. Be not afraid of the King of Babylon. Be not afraid of him, saith the Lord, for I am with thee to save thee and to deliver thee from out his hands, and I will show mercies upon thee, that thou and thy children shall dwell in the land forever." (Music ceases.)

Then shall the prophecy spoken by Ezekiel be turned back.

Zephaniah:—Ha! He speaks of the prophecy of Ezekiel.

Pashur:—I pray thee, judge this matter with an even mind. Yon

prophet did say that thou shouldst go bound to Babylon, Ezekiel did say thou shouldst never see Babylon.

Zephaniah:—Here are the rolls. I pray thee compare them.

Pashur:—They cannot both be true. (King examines rolls.)

King Zed.:—(To Jeremiah.) How sayest thou of Ezekiel? Is he a true prophet?

Jeremiah:—Ezekiel is a Priest and Prophet of the living God.

King Zed.:—And thou, art thou also such?

Jeremiah:—Yea, Oh, King, I am also such.

King Zed.:—Ezekiel did say that I never should see Babylon.

Jeremiah:—Yea.

King Zed.:—And thou sayest I shall be taken bound to Babylon?

Jeremiah:—Yea.

King Zed.:—But how shall I believe you both?

Jeremiah:—Darest thou juggle with the words of prophecy?

King Zed.:—Thou hast not answered my question.

Jeremiah:—Once more answer thou my question, and take heed to thine

answer. Wilt thou repent and become obedient?

(King confers with his courtiers.)

King Zed.:—Jeremiah! Go thy way.

Jeremiah:—(Kneeling before King.) Oh, King, thou seest that which no mortal man ever saw before. A Priest and Prophet of Israel kneeling to any save his God. Dear Prince, relent.

King Zed.:—Go thy way.

Jeremiah:—I go (rises).

(Turns to go). Yes, I go, Farewell. Henceforth thou shalt see my face no more forever. (Starts to go out, hesitates, then turns and speaks to Zedekiah.) And now will I read to thee the riddle, the answer to which thou dost not guess. Bound thou shalt go to Babylon. Babylon thou shalt not see, for after the King of Babylon shall have wreaked his vengeance upon thee, thou shalt go sightless.

(Exit Jeremiah.)

(Gedeliah and Keepers follow Jeremiah to the door and stand, looking out.)

(King examines rolls.)

King Zed.:—Gedeliah, take these rolls and place them in the archives.

(Gedeliah still looks off.)

King Zed.:—(Loudly) Gedeliah.

(Gedeliah turns slowly and approaches throne. Takes rolls.)

King Zed.:—How now, Gedeliah; why this rueful countenance? Thou art as cheerless as yon woe-begotten old man.

Gedeliah:—Oh! King, my soul is full of heaviness, even unto death.

King Zed.:—Wherefore?

Gedeliah:—Thou hast refused to hearken unto the voice of God speaking through his Prophet.

King Zed.:—Thou holdest in thy hands the rolls and knowest their testimony is not alike.

Gedeliah:—Yea! Oh, King, I know; but my soul quakes with the fearful import of his words.

King Zed.:—Dost thou then believe he spoke true?

Gedeliah:—Yea, Oh, King. I would stake my life upon his words of prophecy.

King Zed.:—(Hesitating) Go.

(As Gedeliah starts for the door, a High Priest enters.)

High Priest:—The soldiers of Nebuchadnezzar have defiled the Holy of Holies and the Shekinah has departed.

The courts of the Temple are filled with carnage.

King Zed.:—Gedeliah! is there no way of escape?

Gedeliah:—None, save by way of the King's garden, between the walls, by the private entrance leading out to the Plains of Jericho.

King Zed.:—By that way we will make our escape.

(The King, guards, courtiers and H. P. rush out.)

(Gedeliah and Keepers remain.)

(Silence and a pause.)

(Trumpet sounds.)

Third Keeper:—(Rising) A Herald.

(Second and First Keepers repeat.)

(Herald enters.)

Gedeliah:—What tidings of the King?

Herald:—The King, with his household and all his men of war, fled by way of the gate between the walls, which is by the King's garden, and the army of the Chaldeans pursued after him and overtook him upon the Plains of Jericho and all his army were scattered from him.

Gedeliah:—Oh, Jeremiah, Jeremiah! bring Jeremiah hither.

(1st Keeper goes out and returns with Jere. on right passing by the 2. and 3. Keepers who fall in behind them and all four mount the stage, or go to the front where the stage should be. 1st K. passes to Ged. left to a position just behind him faces inward; 2d and 3d Keeper stop opposite Ged. & 1st Keeper and face them. Jere. steps in between and faces the Council. Ged. & Keepers should quarter-face the Council and Jere.)

Jere.:—Why sendest thou for me? Why art thou so cast down? What news of the King?

Ged.:—(Repeats the report of the Herald and continues) Alas! our young men are captive, our old men are slain; the sword of the enemy has prevailed. (Ged. and Keepers kneel on left knee and bow heads, depressed.)

Jere.:—(As if soliloquizing, reflectively) Verily, verily, the prophesies of the servants of God are fulfilled. JEHOVAH reigneth! THUS shall the wicked come to destruction. Judah is vanquished and her people must suffer in captivity. (Then with firm voice and gesture): but the Lord God of Israel (Ged. and Keepers look up quickly at Jere.) will not forsake his people. "I will raise up mighty men among them," saith the Lord, "and they shall return to the land of their fathers." It is for us who remain to

keep alive the voice of God until their coming. Arise (Jere. motions them up and Ged. and Keepers rise to their feet, looking intently at Jere.): ye servants of the Most High, renew (Jere. raises his right arm to form a triangle and others do likewise) your pledge of fidelity to the Lord God of Israel. Plant deep (all place right hand on left breast and drop arms) in your hearts the terrors of infidelity. Go forth and aid the worthy poor and lead the faltering to a higher devotion. "Make ready for the day of their coming for they shall return," saith the Lord. I, Jere. (Ged. and Keepers drop on left knee, bring palms of hand together in front of neck, ends of fingers level with chin to perfect tableau) have proclaimed the prophesy. Let your children's children greet them with God's promise on their coming in that day: ISRAEL LIVES.

(Jere. steps forward on right foot and thrusts his right arm as high as he can says "ISRAEL LIVES" and holds that position until):

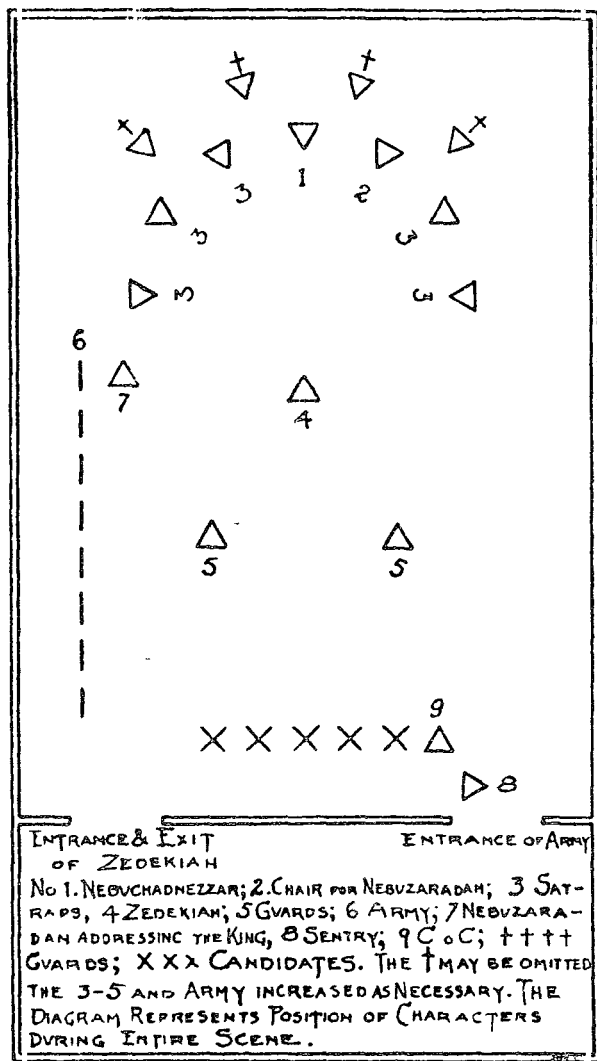
(Curtain.)

PROLOGUE TO SCENE 3.

The last scene represents the court of Nb., King of Bab., who has just come up from Bab. to Riblah, about 100 miles northwest of Jerusalem, and there set up his court to await the capture of Jer. Here the captured King of Judah was brought before him to receive the just desert for his infidelity.

COURT OF NEBUCHADNEZZAR

SCENE 3



SCENE 3.

Court of Nebuchadnezzar at Riblah.

(Nebuchadnezzar and Courtiers seated, guards to rear, vacant chair next to King. Curtain rises.)

(Trumpet sounds.)

(Sentry inside door; opens door and asks.)

Sentry:—Who approaches?

Sentinel:—(Outside) Nebuzaradan, Captain of the Guard, desires an audience with the King.

(Sentry advances to center of hall.)

Sentry:—Nebuzaradan, Captain of the Guard, desires an audience with Your Majesty.

King Neb.:—(To his councilors) How fortunate that Nebuzaradan has come to Riblah so soon after our arrival from Babylon.

King Neb.:—(To Sentry) Let him enter.

(Sentry salutes, goes to door, opens it for Nebuzaradan with escort to enter.)

(Nebuzaradan enters with escort of soldiers. Marches to north side of Hall and halts. Soldiers right face; Nebuzaradan advances and salutes. The escort under the C. of G., remain standing.)

King Neb.:—Nebuzaradan, I am indeed glad thou hast come to Riblah, for I did come up from Babylon to

speak to thee concerning that Jewish King, Zedekiah. Surely thou dost remember the many great wars in which my armies have been victorious under thy command—all the great Kings from the River of Egypt to the River Euphrates have been made to pay homage and tribute—therefore, I ask thee, Nebuzaradan, why hast thou for eighteen long months permitted this weak vassal, Zedekiah, to withstand our mighty army, our chariots and horsemen? Hast thou lost thy cunning? Hast thou become less a warrior, that this weakest of rulers hath put thee to naught? Remember, Nebuzaradan, nearly two years have passed since I commanded thee to bring this wicked King Zedekiah before me.

Nebuzaradan. :—Mighty Sovereign! hear me, I pray thee. Since thou didst make me Captain of thy Guard I have led thy armies in many fierce conflicts to victory, but never to defeat. I swear to thee that my arm is as strong, my nerve as steady, and my brain as clear now as ever before, but this wicked King is full of subtlety, and as thou knowest, did enter into alliance with the King of Egypt and secure the aid of Pharaoh's army, which for a time diverted my attack

upon Jerusalem, but we did overwhelm them, and returned again to the siege upon Jerusalem, and I now come to thee with good tidings of victory. Our assault has been successful. Jerusalem is taken, and their last stronghold is in our hands, but King Zedekiah and all his men of war fled by night by way of the gate between the walls, which is by the King's garden, leading out upon the Plains of Jericho, and thus escaped—

King Neb. :—Zedekiah escaped! He whose capture I most desired! Speak! Nebuzaradan—sayest thou Zedekiah escaped?

Nebuzaradan. :—Yea, Oh, King. But our army pursued after him and overtook him on the Plains of Jericho, made him prisoner, and he is now without and awaits your commands.

King Neb. :—(To his councilors) At last, then, the conquest of that city is again accomplished. Twice before, when our armies invested Jerusalem, did their King submit tamely, opening his gates without resistance; but this Zedekiah, whom I myself placed upon the throne and who swore to me an oath that he would keep his kingdom for me and make no league of friendship with the Egyptians, hath despised his oath and defied our armies.

Surely will I now make desolation in the place of that proud city, but, until I have poured out my punishment upon the head of its wicked ruler, my vengeance will not be complete.

King Neb.:—(To soldier of Nebuzaradan) Bring the captive before me.

(Soldiers salute and under command of the C. of G., retire and bring in King Zedekiah, who is in chains, his clothing in disorder, etc.)

(As soldiers retire, King Neb. addresses Nebuzaradan as follows):

Most noble Nebuzaradan, accept our commendation and grateful thanks. Thy faithfulness shall not go unrewarded. Captain of our Guard thou hast been. I now make thee Grand Captain of all our Armies. Be seated near the throne.

(Nebuzaradan is seated next the King.)

Nebuchadnezzar:—Aha! thou base and perjured Zedekiah, thou wicked covenant breaker, at last I have thee in my power!

Did not I set thee on thy throne, in the room of Johoiachin, after that I had taken him captive?

King Zed.:—Yea, sir.

King Neb.:—And didst thou not then solemnly agree and covenant with me, swearing by the name of thy God,

that thou wouldst be faithful unto me, and hold thy kingdom loyal unto me? Answer me.

King Zed.:—Yea, sir, but thou didst demand of me the impossible. I am a man in whose veins runs blood as royal as thine own. Take off these chains, array me in my own pomp and glory, and I will show thee that I can play the Monarch as well as thou.

King Neb.:—(Interrupting) Silence! Wouldst thou flout me to my face? Thou hast well said, that thou canst play the King, but thou canst not be a King, thou canst not even be loyal to a friend—and I was that friend. Thou canst not be faithful to a trust—and I trusted thee; and how hast thou repaid me? The chief glory in the crown of manhood is fidelity, the brightest jewel in the diadem of a Monarch is fidelity, and behold, there is not one of thy promises that thou hast not broken, for thou didst enter into alliance with the King of Egypt, and didst make rebellion against me, so that thou hast twice compelled me to come up against thee with all my armies, my chariots and my horsemen—

King Zed.:—(Interrupting) Hear me, pray, I did no more than thou wouldst have done, hadst thou been

placed in my situation. Couldst thou blame me if I would free my people from thy yoke? Pashur and Zephaniah did counsel me to throw off thy rule. I know thee to be a hard and cruel man, reaping where thou hast not sown and gathering where thou hast not strewn—

King Neb.:—(Interrupting) It may be all true that thou hast said, but my bitterest foe hath yet to say that Neb. ever betrayed a trust, or was false to a friend. Thou wert false to me.

And surely it is thine own God that has delivered thee into my hands, because thou didst mock his messengers and practice cruelty towards his prophets, placing them in prison, and in the stocks, and even in the pit of mire, and hast more and more hardened thy heart and stiffened thy neck until there is no remedy except thy complete destruction.

Therefore, this is the judgment that I pronounce upon thee and upon thy people.

Nebuzaradan, Captain of our armies, shall utterly destroy thy city of Jerusalem.

The Temple shall be burned with fire, the remaining remnant of its

vessels and ornaments shall be broken and carried to Babylon, thy palaces and the houses of thy great men shall be destroyed and the walls of the city thrown down even to the ground, and all the people that have escaped the famine and the pestilence and the sword, shall be taken captive to Babylon.

And as for thee, it is my order that thy sons be slain before thine eyes, that none of thy perjured race may remain after thee, and that thou mayest see and know that thou art indeed the last King of Judah, and then that thou mayest know that the words of the prophets of thy God were true when the one said that thou shouldst be taken to Babylon, while the other said that thou shouldst not see Babylon, thine eyes shall be put out and thou be taken in chains of brass unto Babylon. (Laughs.)

King Zed.:—Have mercy! Have mercy!

King Neb.:—(Arises) I, Nebuchadnezzar, have spoken the judgment. Let it be executed with speed. Away with him.

(Guards remove Zedekiah in half fainting condition, walking backward. Guards return.)

King Neb.:—Most noble Captain of our Armies, it is my order that the captive Jews, together with their King, be taken forthwith to Babylon. See that the remnant of the poor left under Gedeliah, are supplied with seed for their planting, and that no harm befalls Jeremiah. Form the lines for our march to Babylon.

(Capt. of Guard forms a column of twos. Guards march twice around the hall. Music by trumpet and cymbals for marching. On second round King Neb. and his court all join the parade, behind guards. All march out. Outside King Zedekiah and other prisoners are ready with chains about necks, they join in the parade which re-enters the hall, the prisoners led by chains from necks held by guards. Zedekiah's eyes are bound with a cloth. He is led by chain and other guards hold him by his arms. Pageant marches around hall once and goes out.)

(Curtain.)

CLOSING.

I. M.:—Companion C. of G., where do S. E. M. convene in council?

C. of G.:—In a place representing the Sanctuary.

I. M.:—Their last as well as their first care?

C. of G.:—To see the Sanctuary duly guarded.

I. M.:—Attend to that duty.

C. of G.:—Companion Steward, see that we are duly guarded.

Steward:—(At door o o o—o o o—o o o—o, ans. by Sent. o o o—o o o—o o o—o.) Comp. Sen. this Cou. of S. E. M. is about to be closed, take due notice thereof and guard accordingly.

Steward:—Companion C. of G., the Sanctuary is secure.

C. of G.:—I. M., the Sanctuary is secure.

I. M.:—Where is the King?

C. of G.:—In prison in Babylon, his eyes put out, his body bound in chains of brass, a captive in a strange and distant land, suffering the penalty of a Perjurer.

I. M.:—What is the hour?

C. of G.:—It is the time of the Third Watch.

I. M.:—ooo Since it is the time of the Third Watch, let us repair to the Holy Altar, and offer up our fervent prayers to Almighty God for His protecting care and favor.

(Surround the Altar, same as the opening. Silent prayer.)

I. M.:—Arise. Attend to giving the Signs.

(Signs S. E. M. only.)

I. M.:—I now declare this Coun. of S. E. M. closed. Comp. C. of G., inform the Sen.

(Sen. is inf thro Steward who repts to C. of G.)

C. of G.:—*I. M.*, the Sent. is informed.

I. M.:—o

(Or the following may be used):

(Immediately after the Pageant has left the room on its march to Babylon, the Illustrious Master and officers assume their stations. Visitors are introduced and speakers called on, if it is so desired. After which):

I. M.:—Comp. Marshal, form the Circle of Friendship.

(The Marshal then forms the Circle of Friendship. The officers take positions in the Circle immediately in front of their several stations and the candidates and members complete the Circle.)

I. M.:—We have learned that this Circle is emblematical of Friendship. Let us now close our ranks, standing shoulder to shoulder, with arms crossed, and hands warmly clasped, thus welding the Circle of Friendship into an unending chain of fraternal union.

While the segments of which this Circle is formed will shortly be dispersed, never to be again so united, still the experience through which we have all passed, to arrive at this place, which none but the Select may enter, ought to bind us together forever and make this Circle stronger and more enduring than bands of steel.

Then let us, my Companions, labor diligently and fearlessly in the cause of Truth our allotted time, doing with our might whatsoever our hands find to do, so that, when at the time of the third watch our work is finished, we may be greeted as Super Excellent Masters, and be released from our captivity in the flesh, to return over the rough and rugged way of the valley of the Shadow of Death to our abiding place, eternal in the heavens, there to erect our last and perfect moral and Masonic Temple and adore

the Holy One of Israel throughout the endless cycles of eternity. Amen. *So mote it be.*

(Sing one verse of "God be with you till we meet again," or "Auld Lang Syne.")

I. M.:—Waiving further ceremony, I declare this Council of S. E. M. closed. Companions, you are dismissed.

PRONOUNCING VOCABULARY

Artaban (Ar'ta-ban)
 Assyria (As-sŷr'i-ä)
 Babel (Bä'bel)
 Babylonians (Bäb'y-lö'ni-ans)
 Belteshazzar (Běl'te-shäz'ar)
 Chaldea (käl-dē'ä)
 Euphrates (yu-frä'tēz)
 Egypt (Ē'jŷpt)
 Ezekiel (E-zē'ki-el)
 Gedaliah (Gēd'a-lī'ah)
 Isaiah (I-zä'yä)
 Jehoiachin (Je-hoi'a-kīn)
 Jehoiakim (Je-hoi'a-kīm)
 Jehovah (Je-hō'vah)
 Jeremiah (Jēr'e-mī'ah)
 Jericho (Jēr'i-kō)
 Jerusalem (Je-ru'sa-lēm)
 Jonathan (Jōn'a-than)
 Jordan (Jōr'dan)
 Judah (Jū'dah)
 Judea (Jū-dē'ä)
 Media (Mē'di-ä)
 Nebuchadnezzar (Nēb'yu-kad-nēz'zar)
 Nebuzar-adan (Nēb-yu-zār'ad'an)
 Palestine (Päl'es-tīne)
 Pashur (Pāsh'ur)
 Pharaoh (Fä'rō or fä'ra-ō)
 Riblah (Rīb'lah)
 Samaria (Sa-mā'ri-ä)
 Satraps (Sat'raps)
 Seraiah (Se-rī'a)
 Shekinah (She-kī'nah)
 Sissinna (Sissin'na)
 Solema (So-le'ma)
 Zedekiah (Zēd'e-kī'ah)
 Zacherlaherbon (Za-her-la'-her-bon')
 Zephaniah (Zēf'a-nī'ah)
 Zion (Zī'on)

GLOSSARY

ADONIRAM—Accent on "NI." I as in "Die."

AHISHAR—Accent on "HI." I as in "Die."

AZARIAH—Accent on "RI." I as in "Die."

CHERUBIM—Accent on "CHER." E as in "Cherry."

GEBAL—Accent on "GE." G as in "Give." E like EE in "Feet." A in second syllable very short, almost silent.

GIBLIM—Accent on "GIB." G as in "Give." I in both syllables, as in "Liberty."

ISH SODI—"ISH" as in "Wish." "SODI" as if spelled "SOD'EE."

PHOENICIAN—As if spelt "FEE-NISH-AN." Accent on second syllable.

SHEWBREAD—As if spelt "SHOW-BREAD." Accent on "SHOW."

ZABUD—Accent on "ZA." A as in "Hay."

ZEREDATHA—Accent on "DATH."