

Masonic Temple Wednesday Evening 12 Mar, 2025

At a Stated Communication of St. John's Lodge #3, A.F. & A.M.

New Bern, North Carolina

HELD ON THE ABOVE DATE PRESENT:

Bro. Arthur B. Romans W.M.  
Bro. Dominick P Giorgianni S.W.  
Bro W. Terry Tripp J.W.  
Bro Thomas L. Williams, PM Treas.  
Bro. William C. Zerby, PM Sec'y.  
Bro Robert W. Webster Chaplain



Bro. Francis L. Anson S.D.  
Bro. Joseph S. Kawalski J.D.  
Bro. Nicholas C. Coyle Steward  
Bro. Christopher A. White Steward  
Bro Kito B. Romans as Tyler  
Bro. \_\_\_\_\_ as Marshall

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Lodge opened on the third degree of Masonry in Due Form at 7:30 p.m.

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St. John's Lodge #3 was opened in due form by the WM. After the flag ceremony, the WM recognized all Veterans, Certified Lecturers, Past Masters, Coaches, First Responders, and prior/current District Officers.

SD introduced our guests.

Sick and Shut-ins Bro. David Blonn's Mother-in-Law, recovering from surgery.  
WB James Warren is still, undergoing treatment  
Bro Robert Peele passed away on Jan 18. Keep family in thoughts and prayers.  
Bro Fred Whitty's wife Sue suffered a stroke and is currently in rehab.  
Bro Dale Davis's family.  
Those in the western part of the state  
Unspoken needs of our Brothers and Widows

WM read the obituary for bro. Robert E. Peele who passed away on 18 Jan 2025. Bro Peele was initiated Apr 1988, Passed to Fellow Craft Jun 1988 and Raised to Master Mason Jul 1988 and was a member of St. John's Lodge. Keep his family in your thoughts and prayers.

Good News: - New Trestle Board (2nd edition will be mailed out within the next few weeks to all members)  
- SAR presented a gavel to the lodge on Mar 8<sup>th</sup> as thanks for all the support.

The minutes of the last Stated Communication of Feb 12 were read for information.

Treasurers Report: WB Tom Williams gave the treasurers report. Gen Account \$67,654.69  
Mngt Account \$5,450.21

Bills Allowed: \$66.71 to bro Nicolas Coyle for this evenings meal

Motion by bro Robert Webster 2<sup>nd</sup> by bro Joseph Kawalski to pay the bills, motion carried.

A vote was held on the Application for Advancement for bro Aaron L. Weems. The application was accepted.

Old Business: - Reminder to Brethren, please pay your dues for 2025, we currently have 58 brothers owing dues for 2025, As a reminder, later this year, anyone owing dues for 1 year or more will be excluded for Non Payment of Dues in accordance with the Code.  
- WM commented on the Endowed Membership, cost is currently only \$1911.00 for one-time payment or can be broken up into 5 annual payments of 477.75

- New Business:
- WM announced that as of last meeting, all require reports have been submitted to the Grand Lodge.
  - District School of Instruction date is tentatively in Sept.
  - Discussion was had on Bro. Bradham Bear Dedication. Tentative date is May 2025. Service Awards are intended to be presented this day.
  - WM announced that the DDGM & DDGL Official Visit has been rescheduled date TBD
  - Thanks went out to those who attended the funeral and Masonic rites for bro Watne Anderson
  - WM extended thanks to those who helped with roadside cleanup
  - 31st May the Scottish Rite is doing 1st Responders Breakfast at York Rite. St. John's is partnering with them for Lion and Pillar credit.
  - WM Read recent opinions and messages from Grand Master.
  - WM Read, in part (1-5 of 21), proposed amendments to the code.

Masonic Education: Bro Dominick Giorgianni gave a lesson on "Amos and the plumbline" prayer and it's meaning and the importance to our rituals and fraternity.

Coaching Report: Bro William Hall is working on 1<sup>st</sup> degree catechism

- Building Report:
- WM reported on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor bathroom construction progress.
  - Fireplace in Lodge Room needs assessment and work due to water leak or damage. Bro Dominick Giorgianni motioned and was 2<sup>nd</sup> by bro Robert Mull to get estimates for the repair. Motion carried.

Membership Outreach: Bro Mark Bledsoe announced the next coffee & donuts event is scheduled for Apr 5<sup>th</sup> @ 9am.

The New Bern Masonic Theater, Historic Preservation Foundation: WM announced there will be a meeting Mar 13 @ 530 pm regarding the building in the ballroom.

- Important Dates:
- Scottish Rite Reunion 14-15 March
  - York Rite Open House 22 March
  - Mar 29 Grotto International will be having degree work @ 1pm
  - Mar 29 Cherry Pt lodge 3<sup>rd</sup> degree
  - Apr 5 Coffee & Donuts. 9am in Lowthorp hall
  - Apr 12 St. John's #1 is having a 3<sup>rd</sup> degree on the battleship North Carolina

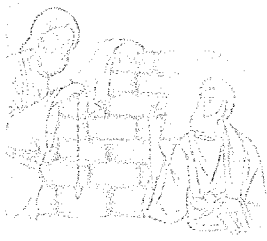
WM thanked bro Nicholas Coyle for the meal.

The meal was served in Lowthorp hall before the meeting.

There being no further business to come before this Lodge, the minutes were read and approved, and this Lodge was closed in due form.

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William C. Zerby, PM  
Secretary



## AMOS AND THE PLUMBLINE

By Dominick Giorgianni  
St. John's No. 3  
12 March 2025

This education is based on the research and work of MW Brother Ray W. Burgess, PGM of the Grand Lodge of Louisiana (1985).

In all the lodges under the jurisdiction of the Grand Lodge of North Carolina, and many other Grand Jurisdictions, on the Fellowcraft degree we open the Bible on the Seventh Chapter of Amos.

As I'm learning the degree, I wondered about this verse and why we use it.

Since one of the working tools of a Fellowcraft is the Plumb, it seems appropriate, but who is the prophet Amos? What do we know about this man, and why had the Lord called on him to deliver His message of judgement to His people of Israel?

To better understand, let's establish some historic background: King Solomon inherited a powerful empire from his father, King David. However, in later years, it began to fall apart. As the various tributary nations saw an opportunity for independence, they did so, and Solomon was unable to prevent the empires disintegration. With the breakdown of the monarchy, subject states declared their independence so that the territory previously ruled by David was divided into autonomous units.

The portion of Solomons empire north of Mount Herman, revolted and formed the Kingdom of Syria, with Damascus as the capital.

South of Syria was the kingdom of ten tribes, known as Israel, with its capital at Shechem,

The kingdom of Judah included the tribe of that name, along with portions of Benjamin and Simeon. Kings of the Davidic line reigned over Judah until the fall of Jerusalem in 587 B.C. to Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon

South of the Dead Sea was the kingdom of Edom, which had been conquered by David and remained a tributary during the reign of Solomon.

Of course, the three kingdoms strove for supremacy, and wars were constant between Judah and Israel. But with the threat from the powerful Syrian state of Damascus, the two warring states reconciled their differences.

Many of the smaller nations were required to pay tribute to Israel and Judah. Both kingdoms collected tolls to pass through their territories. Israel and Judah were transitioning from an agricultural to a commercial way of life. As industries and cities sprang up, it gave rise to a class of wealthy merchants and landholders.

Naturally, they built large winter and summer homes, out of hewn stone, which were elaborately adorned and decorated with fine furnishings, which they reclined on while eating prime cuts of meat, drinking wine out of bowls, and listening to varied music.

The presence of great wealth did not mean there was no poverty in the land. The extremely rich had obtained their wealth by their merciless oppression of the poor, taking shares of wheat from them. The merchants used false weights and measures and sold refuse wheat to cheat the lower classes. Because these unscrupulous men were able to bribe judges, there was no redress for the innocent.

The real tragedy of all of this is that Israel's social structure was completely disrupted. Israel had originally been a covenant community in which there was no class distinction. All men were equal before the law, God, and one another. Instead of the wealthy using their wealth for all people, they squandered it on luxuries and status symbols.

However, the people remained very religious, especially the rich. They attended religious services regularly, tithes and offerings were freely given, impressive festivals were held and pilgrimages were made. They thought they were in God's favor and under his protection. But the opposite was true. The Lord despised the feasts and would not accept their sacrifices. Their worship was a profane travesty, an act of men and women morally unclean and unwilling to submit themselves to the discipline of God.

God had entered into a covenant with Israel, chosen out of all the families of the earth. God had given them land, and special laws with which to guide them. It seems that Israel believed the covenant was inviolable and it gave her privileges and a license no other nation had. But Israel broke her covenant. She used her freedom from bondage to enslave a large segment of her own people. She used the gift of land for selfish purposes and rejected the law of God.

What was God going to do in the face of Israel's sin? Was there no hope for Israel? Here is where the story of Amos begins.

We know little about him. He is never mentioned by any other biblical writer. All we know of him comes from a little book which bears his name. Amos' name probably means "burdened" or "burden-bearer".

He lived in Tekoa, a village in Judah. He was a shepherd or herdsman and dresser of sycamore trees. He was probably very poor, and was one who performed menial tasks. But he was not uneducated. His formal training might have been nil, but he was a keen observer of the ways of God and men. His literary style is free and pure. He is generally recognized as the first of the writing prophets of Israel. He was the first to preach the message of judgement that meant the end of the kingdom of Israel.

At about 760 B.C. God called Amos to deliver His message of judgment to the people of Israel. Amos began his ministry with biting words of judgement against the six nations and Israel. Next he announced God's judgement against Judah, then a vivid description of God's judgement against the

nation of Israel. He condemned the people of Israel for their oppression of the poor, worship of idols, rejection of God's salvation and defilement of the Lord's name.

Twice Amos saw the judgement of God coming to Israel and interceded for Israel, and God turned away his judgement. But with the third vision of the plumbline, we arrive at the subject of this talk.

*"Thus he showed me: and behold the Lord stood upon a wall made by a plumbline, with a plumbline in His hand. And the Lord said unto me, Amos, what seest thou? And I said, a plumbline. Then said the Lord, I will set a plumbline in the midst of my people Israel: I will not pass by them any more". Amos 7:7-8*

*"I will not pass by them anymore"*. The third vision of Amos shows that God will not turn away again.

Now, let's look further at this plumbline.

The plumbline is a simple tool made of a cord with a weight at the end. It is used to test verticality of a wall or structure. If the wall or structure leans, it is out-of-plumb.

So why did the Lord say, *"I will set a plumbline amidst my people Israel?"* Because the plumb admonishes us to walk uprightly before God and man. The people of Israel had sinned and ignored the warnings of Amos. God made it plain that each man must try himself by the unerring standard of the plumbline.

The plumbline is a symbol of uprightness of character, of integrity, of honest and fair dealings among persons. To plumb one's life and actions is to test them by the eternal laws of God. In all these tests, the people of Israel failed. That's why he said, *"I will set a plumbline in the midst of my people Israel."*

And so it is with Freemasonry. The real worth of a Mason can never be measured in the opinion of his brothers or in the Masonic honors he attained. The standard by which a Mason must be judged is by his own evaluation of his conduct and by the principles which he knows to be unerring and unchanging.

We often say, a Mason gets out of lodge what he puts into it. The rewards of Freemasonry and the wages of a Mason are endless, so long as a man is willing to strive for them. If a Mason measures himself by the plumb, and sets his standards accordingly, he will benefit from Masonic education, Masonic philosophy and from the association with the finest men in the community.

In closing, I would remind you that the standard by which a man judges himself as a Mason is the same unerring principle by which he judges himself as a family man, as a churchman, as a businessman, and as a citizen, he will learn to walk uprightly in all his endeavors, learning from the plumb the lesson of rectitude of conduct.

Each man must stand by the plumbline which is set in the midst of God's people.

Thank you.