

The Widow's Son

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Who was the "Widow's Son"? The answer might seem easily answered, but when one reads of legends, scripture writings, the Apocrypha and other historical documents it becomes apparent that perhaps we cannot answer this question so easily.

In the writings of Masonic scholars we learn of Hiram Abiff, "The Widow's Son". There are others referred to as "The Widow's Son". It seems this is a title to which more than one can be named. The use of the title is actually traced back to the Grail lore traditions which speak of a descended blood line and specifically reference Ruth. Ruth, a woman of the Moabite tribe, was married to Boaz, and she was a heroine of the Old Testament; she was also the Great Grandmother of King David, the father of King Solomon, who built the Temple. Ruth became pregnant, and married Boaz. He was quite a bit older, being 80, while Ruth was 40. The book says that Boaz dies the next day. That must have been some wedding night.

From this point on, all the descendants of Ruth, were known simply as "Sons of the Widow", a genetic title, if you will. A genealogy can be traced: Ruth gives birth to the first "Son of the Widow", Obed, who grows up and bears his son Jesse, who bears his son David who bears his sons Solomon and Nathan.

Using the lineage given in the Gospels of the Christian Bible, Jesus, the Nazarene, is a descendant of Ruth, making him also, a "Son of the Widow" or "Widow's Son". There are forty-five generations from Ruth to Jesus. This leaves an interesting problem for us, as Masons. Nowhere in the lineage mentioned in the Bible does it refer to Hiram Abiff. Knowing this, it seems the trail grows cold in the search for Hiram Abiff's title of "The Widow's Son". The Grail legends were written in a way that lends itself to allegory and therefore, the story cannot be just assumed to mean that Hiram was literally just a son of woman who lost her husband. These legends, early on, establish this title and what it means, which is: a descendant of Ruth, or more aptly, a descendant of Boaz, either the 31st or 30th generation from Adam, if you rely on Luke's genealogy. Could Hiram Abiff be related somehow to the historical Jesus the Nazarene? The Gospels leave either a cold trail or a definitive "no," since he isn't mentioned at all in the genealogy given by Luke or Mathew.

The term "Widow's Son," a flip flop of the term "Sons of the Widow," was not actually meant to refer to a man whose father had passed, but rather the epithet given to the offspring and lineage of Ruth, heroine of "The Book of Ruth" or "Scroll of Ruth" presented in the Old Testament. When Hiram Abiff is referenced as being a "Widow's Son", it is implied that he was of the line of Ruth, who was married to Boaz and, from them, according to Luke, a continued line to King David, King Solomon and eventually to Jesus the Nazarene. The problem here is that nowhere in the lineages mentioned in Luke or Mathew does Hiram show up. Was he a distant relative or cousin?

King Solomon was also a "Widow's Son", in the sense of being of the lineage of Ruth. Is this why King Solomon called for a Tyrian, who was handpicked to be the architect of the Jewish Temple of the God of Israel? Could Solomon have hired Hiram, since they were family?

Doing detective work in genealogy can be taxing enough when researching ancestry just a few generations removed from the researcher, a task made much more difficult using biblical origins as references. The lineage of Jacob is vital to this story. Twelve generations prior to the time of King Solomon, and eight generations prior to the time of Boaz, the twelve sons of Jacob were the founders of the twelve tribes of Israel. The fourth son of Jacob, Judah, was of the line that included the wise King, and extended through him to Jesus the Nazarene. The sixth son, Naphtali, was the founder of the line that included Hiram Abiff.

It is elementary to suggest that at the time of Jacob the designation of "Widow's Son" had not yet been used; however, in his offspring, through time until we reach the time of Ruth, and from then on, it is not so unthinkable that the lineage would have used this epithet when speaking of their heritage or when scholars were recording the history of the time or even the Gospels.

What is it about this lineage which draws the title to it? What was so special? The three greatest monotheistic religions, Judaism, Christianity and Islam all regard it [the lineage] with reverence. After all, this lineage contains Adam, Enoch, Noah, Shem, Abraham, David, Solomon, Nathan, Zerubbabel and Jesus the Nazarene. Perhaps the coincidence which ties this lineage together is the ability to create. According to Luke, the line starts with Elohim (The Great Architect of the Universe) and then Adam. The Christian Bible does not specifically make any magnificent claims to what Adam had ever built, however several other men in this lineage in fact are great builders. Enoch was the builder of the mythological underground temple consisting of nine vaults with an altar where on the "Stone of Creation" and the Tetragrammaton were said to have been hidden. These legends are featured in the York and Scottish Rites namely the 7th degree in the York Rite called "The Holy Royal Arch" and the 13th degree of the Scottish Rite Southern Jurisdiction, called the "Royal Arch of Solomon". In recent years it has even been suggested that Enoch was the builder of the Great Pyramid at Giza. The ancient Egyptians are said to have known the Great Pyramid as "The Pillar of Enoch".

A somewhat obscure reference to that is found in the Bible, *"In that day shall there be an altar to the LORD in the midst of the land of Egypt, and a pillar at the border thereof to the LORD. And it shall be for a sign and for a witness unto the LORD of hosts in the land of Egypt..."* Isaiah 19:19.

Noah, of course, built the mythological Ark to house all of the creations of God that were spared in the legend of the great flood. Abraham or Abram and his son Ishmael are purported to have built the Kaaba, a cube shaped building in Arabia, which is one of the holiest sites for Brothers of the Muslim faith.

King David built a city and his palace and had sons, one of whom was King Solomon, who was responsible for the Temple of Solomon, which we all know is at the centre of the teachings of our noble craft. These builders in the original line or "Alpha Lineage" the line that according to Luke starts with God and leads to Jesus the Nazarene go on and on with fantastic accomplishments. Let us not forget, however, that there is the allusion to the building of the spiritual temple, a spiritual artificer which Jesus, the Nazarene, seemed to personify. Ages before then was the character Freemasonry calls its patron, Hiram Abiff, the handpicked chief architect of the Temple of God. A man to emulate in his duty and fealty to his brothers, both Hiram of Tyre and King Solomon. This is the man we learn about in our degrees and indeed try to emulate.

The "Alpha Line" is synonymous with "The Widow's Son". It could merely be the separation of the generational gap and a more coded obscure way of saying "of the Tribe of Judah" without being abrasive. It could be that the Tribe of Judah was the main branch of this line and that The Widow's Sons are an offshoot of the original line, but whose closeness to the original line needed to be preserved by means of a title given to these builders. In the end, we will never know if Adam, Jesus the Nazarene or Hiram were truly related; however, it is clear that "The Widow's Son" is a title given to the offspring of Ruth and her descendants. It is also clear that Freemasonry calls its patron saint Hiram Abiff a "Widow's Son". He was a builder and the lessons taught philosophically within our Masonic system have much to do with building as well. The main difference is that we are building our spiritual temples. In the Masonic system, we follow in the footsteps of Hiram Abiff, but we not only represent him, we physically become him in the degrees, and in the end, we all end up a "Widow's Son". By becoming a Master Mason, we all end up being builders of fantastic edifices of hearts, minds and souls.

So brethren, I ask you, "Who is the Widow's Son?"

Look in the mirror brothers and you will surely see him.