

Why Ethiopia?

Have you ever questioned why the ruffians attempted to book passage to Ethiopia rather than some other destination? The standard work of the Grand Lodge of Illinois, A.F. & A.M., is a bit different than here in Iowa. It proceeds thus: *“Hello, are you a sea captain? I am. Are you going to put to sea soon? I am, tomorrow. Wither are you bound? To Ethiopia. The very place we wish to go. Here are three of us. Can we book passage with you?”* Their Ritual then proceeds in a manner similar to ours. Why did they wish to go to Ethiopia? Without really

considering the reality of the time in which the Third Degree was written, around 1725, I always assumed that the sea captain’s ship was located at a port on the Mediterranean Sea. But, if you look at a map of that region in the time the events occurred “you can’t get there from here.” The Suez Canal was not in existence and I seriously doubt that a trip around the Cape of Good Hope was a regular occurrence. So what is another option that fits the circumstances? If you travel due south (150 miles) from Jerusalem you come to Ezion-geber (Elat) at the northern tip of the Red Sea. From there you can get to Ethiopia by ship. The next question is why by ship? If you are traveling in 950 B.C. what are the common modes of travel available? One could go by foot, camel, horse, chariot or ship.

Now suppose you had just killed one of the King’s personal friends and principle supervisor of the King’s pet project. I would think you would want to “get out of town” FAST and go to a place where you could not be easily reached yet with customs similar to your own.

During the period of the building of the Temple by Solomon there was regular trade and social interaction between the Queen of Sheba (Ethiopia) and King Solomon. One of the locations farthest from and feasible to reach from Israel known to the workmen was probably Ethiopia. Thus it follows that if you want to get out of Israel fast without being run down by cavalry you go where ships are going most regularly, that is south. If you follow this logic you end up in Ethiopia.

