

An Introduction to Royal Arch Masonry

adapted by MEC Norman McEvoy (Columbia Chapter No 1. G.C of BC&Yukon)
Canada, from an article date and source unknown.

The first comment many make when a discussion comes up about membership in a Concordant or Appendant body is:-

"Why should I belong to another Masonic Body? "

There are also those who say

"There is no Degree higher than the Master Mason Degree"

and of course they are correct-

"there is no degree higher than the Master Mason in Craft Masonry"

And for those who are proud of their Master Mason Apron, I also agree, as I am also very proud of mine and my standing in the Craft.

Their teachings and symbolism is where I concentrate the majority of my efforts.

But for those who have extended their work to include the Holy Royal Arch and other Masonic Bodies, they have made a discovery that is yet to be made by many Freemasons.

Everyone is looking for a reward in all things they do.

Would we work if there was no pay, no satisfaction for a job well done, no praise for accomplishments?

What about our community and family involvement, are there rewards? Certainly there are!!!!

So what are the rewards in Royal Arch Masonry?

Craft Masonry, is like the family or elementary school environment where we learn the basics, the lessons of Charity; Brotherly Love; Relief and Truth. It also teaches Honesty; Integrity and your relationship to your fellow man as well as the ability to interpret Symbolism for a better life style.

Royal Arch Masonry, is the College.

It is where the Temple is completed, i.e. the final truth of the Craft Degrees.

Many Royal Arch Masons say that the Royal Arch Degrees are the completion of the Craft Masonic Degrees but it is **MUCH MORE** than that.

Remember when your children were little and you embellished stories to get your point across and/or drive your point home. Just as we do in Craft Masonry, we embellish the truth to drive home the lessons of Freemasonry.

When your children go to College or University, they are not so easily fooled, so the facts have to be told and understood. So it is with Freemasonry!!

The Royal Arch Degrees complete the building of King Solomon's Temple, its destruction, and then it's rebuilding by Zerubabel as is recorded in the Bible.

Royal Arch Masonry takes this historical and biblical path to tell this story and better explains the history and lessons of the three Craft Degrees.

Who were **KING SOLOMON, HIRAM KING OF TYRE & HIRAM ABIFF** and what were their roles in the completion of the Temple??

Why is Charity; Brotherly Love; Relief and Truth important in a man's life??

Although we are still brothers, why are we now called **Companions??**,

a word referred to in the Master Mason Degree but not mentioned again in Freemasonry until it appears in the Holy Royal Arch.

You may recall in the Master Mason Degree a piece of lecture which states:-

"it is thus that all Master Masons are raised from a figurative death to a reunion with the former companions of their toils"

In Royal Arch Freemasonry YOU discover the lost word. But what is the Lost Word?? Is it a Word?? You may recall at the beginning of the Gospel of St John, where it is said. **"In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God & and the Word was God"**

If it were **ONLY** a Word, we could substitute any word from any language. But it is not **ONLY** a word, it is the knowledge of one's self.

The reality is until we discover who we are ourselves we cannot identify with our Creator and that is the message of the true Lost Word.

The Royal Arch Degrees take this one step closer because it enlightens the Craft Degrees with the Historical & Biblical perspectives.

Royal Arch Masonry provides an outstanding opportunity for Master Masons, desirous of **Further Masonic Light in Masonry** to explore some of the deeper mysteries of the Craft.

The **FOUR** Degrees in the Royal Arch **CHAPTER**, which is analogous to the word **LODGE** in Craft Masonry, are truly some of the most profound and impressive within the whole family of Freemasonry.

Most impressive of all is the Royal Arch Degree itself.

It is here that the **TRUE** word of a Master Mason is re-discovered in a beautiful ceremony that takes the candidates through the destruction of King Solomon's Temple, the seventy years of Babylonian captivity, and the ultimate return to the Holy Land to help; aid and assist in the re-building of the Temple to the Most High.

So important is the Holy Royal Arch to Craft Masonry that at the Act of Union in December 1813, the newly formed United Grand Lodge of England made the following pronouncement:-

" it was declared and pronounced that pure Ancient Masonry consists of three Degrees and no more, viz., those of the Entered Apprentice, the Fellow Craft, and the Master Mason, including the Supreme Order of the Holy Royal Arch`

For the Mason who takes seriously the injunction to search for `Further Light in Freemasonry` there can be no more impressive or meaningful experience than Royal Arch Freemasonry.

Earlier it was stated that there are Four Degrees in Royal Arch Masonry, it should be explained that one of those Degrees, that of the **Past Master**, is conferred by only one Chapter in the British Columbia & Yukon Jurisdiction and that is Columbia Royal Arch Chapter No 1, established under a Charter from the Supreme Grand Chapter of Scotland in 1867.

This is a historical matter & not pertinent to this educational paper.

The other **THREE** Degrees are the **Mark Master Mason**; the **Most Excellent Master** and the **Sublime Degree of the Holy Royal Arch**. The exact titles for these Degrees & even the order of same, may change depending of the Jurisdiction in which they are being conferred.

The Value of Royal Arch Masonry will be appreciated by all who are **EXALTED** to that most sublime degree, particularly those who are seeking the completion of their Masonic Education and the adding of more tools to assist in their **Personal Spiritual Journey**. It reveals the full light of our Ancient Craft by presenting it as a complete & unified system.

No other Degrees in Freemasonry are so intimately linked with the Craft Lodge or have so ancient and noble a history.

Every man, at least once in his lifetime, will ask himself and, by prayer, his Creator **WHY was I born??; WHAT is expected of me??; and WHAT is my purpose in life??.**

The answers are available, but you must first search for them as the following story demonstrates:-

It's a story which some of you may have already heard, and it concerns a man who found himself in considerable trouble when the countryside around him was flooded.

He was standing on his front porch when a rowboat came by and offered him a ride.

"NO" he said "**my faith is in the Lord and he will rescue me**"

When the waters had reached the second floor of his home a power boat came by and again he was asked if he wanted a ride. Again he said "**NO my faith is in the Lord and He will rescue me**"

When the waters had reached the roof, and he was clinging to the chimney, a helicopter came by offering him help. Once more he said "**No my faith is in the Lord and HE will rescue me**"

Well he finally drowned and went to meet his Lord and Creator, the first thing he said was "Why Lord did you allow me to drown" and the Lord replied

"My son what more did you want from me - did I not send you two boats and a helicopter"

The Point of this story is there is always HELP and ASSISTANCE in Freemasonry. You just have to be aware of their availability and the only way you will be able to do that is by making the EFFORT to make a daily advancement in Masonic Education.

It is my hope that this paper has provided an advancement for today