The Three Principals
Of
Royal Arch Masonry

Zerubbabel

Lived (6th century BC), prince of Judah, and the secular (Israelite) governor of Jerusalem, He was born probably in Babylon, during the Babylonian Captivity and was a grandson of King Jehoiachin (reigned 598-597BC), of Judah, and was also a direct descendant of King David (see Ezra 2:2; Haggai 1:1).

His Life & Importance to Royal Arch Freemasonry

When after 80 years in captivity, King Cyrus the Great of Persia permitted the captive Jews in Babylon to return to Judah (538? BC), he placed Zerubbabel in charge of the expedition. Zerubbabel thus led the first contingent, numbering some 42,000 out of Babylon in their move to resettle in Jerusalem.

Cyrus appointed him (see Haggai 1:14) secular (Israelite) governor of Jerusalem.
With that authority he organized the rebuilding of the Temple, which had been destroyed in 586BC by King Nebuchadnezzar II of Babylonia.

The remainder of Zerubbabel's life is obscure; however tradition indicates that he resigned his post and returned to Babylon.

In Royal Arch Freemasonry we see him as the Leader of the **TEAM** and, by virtue of his political appointment, the one carrying administrative authority.

Haggai

His story is told in one of the 12 short prophetic books of the Old Testament known as the Minor Prophets because of their brevity.

Nothing is known of the life and person of the prophet Haggai, to whom the book is attributed and it is even suggested that the Scriptural book bearing his name was written by an unknown disciple of Haggai.

Haggai's prophecy of economic & spiritual chaos was uttered in 520BC, a year of blight, drought, and general dissatisfaction for the exiled Israelites who had recently returned to Jerusalem from Babylon. He claimed that these misfortunes were due to the failure of the people to finish rebuilding the Temple.

He declared that God was punishing them for decorating their own homes and, looking after their own personal needs, before completing the house of the Lord. He also urged Zerubbabel, governor of Judah, and Joshua, the high priest, to rally the people to their primary task (chap. 1).

We read that work began again, but the people soon tired of the task and once again went back to doing as they wanted to do.

Haggai rallies them the second time by prophesying that the spirit of God will remain with them, that God will bring silver and gold from all nations, and that he will fill the new Temple with his glory (2:1-9), and by such tactics he eventually gets the job done.

It is important to note that without his perseverance the Temple may never have been completed.

Relevance to Royal Arch Masonry
Haggai our Second Principal is a Key Member of the TEAM in that he leads the Administrative side of the Chapter and through personal effort & perseverance ensures that the Chapter is sound administratively.

Joshua,

According to the traditional view, its author was Joshua, the military leader and hero chosen by Moses to be his successor and to lead the Israelites out of Egypt and into the Promised Land. Most modern biblical scholars, however, reject this view; their studies have shown that the book contains material drawn from a number of different sources. Attempts to date the various strands have largely been inconclusive. The only conclusion widely accepted today is that the oldest passages of the book, which some scholars date from the middle of the 10th century BC, were completely rewritten and much elaborated upon in the 7th century BC by a member (or members) of the so-called Deuteronomic school (see Deuteronomy; Pentateuch). Later, probably after 500BC, editors concerned primarily with priestly matters added to or rewrote much of the latter half of the book.

The Book of Joshua concludes the accounts begun in Genesis, Exodus, and Deuteronomy of the origin and early history of the Jews. It begins (chap. 1-6) with an account of the Hebrews' entry into the Promised Land, Canaan, and the sack of the ancient Palestinian walled city of Jericho. It then relates (chap. 7-12) how the Hebrews established themselves throughout Canaan by their conquest of another ancient city, Ai. They did this by making a covenant with the fearful Gibeonites, by their bloody rout of an army led by the kings of five other southern Canaanite cities, and by the slaughter of an army gathered by yet other Canaanite kings "at the waters of Merom" (11:5) in the north. Much of the latter half of the book (chap. 13-24) describes how Joshua distributed the conquered land among the 12 tribes of Israel. The book concludes with Joshua's final exhortation (chap. 23) to Israel to honor the covenant entered into with God on Mount Sinai and an account of the last gathering of the tribes under Joshua (chap. 24), at which time the people and Joshua entered into another covenant to serve and obey God.

The central theme of the Book of Joshua is that God will lead his people if they observe his law; but if they deny him, he will turn from them, giving them over to marauding nations and to foreign rule.