

LESSON ON PASSWORDS OF THE VEILS

DO I KNOW YOU?

As Texas Royal Arch Masons, one of our highest privileges is participating in or observing our beautiful, rich, and symbolic Chapter opening ceremonies, and the conferral of the Royal Arch degree. Yet many of us are unsure of the teachings that the **Masters of the Veils** guard in their stations. We are blissfully ignorant of how these characters, whose names and lives are recorded in the Old Testament scriptures can impact our Faith and pathway through life.

So what do we need to learn? Why does the Royal Arch degree portray our three candidates as returning members of the Jewish race from captivity in Babylon? Why do they need to know and hold in veneration these men portrayed in this degree? How do these patriarchs, prophets, and servants contribute to combined history of the modern-day **Jewish and Christian Faiths**?

Just who are we referring to?

This list includes:

- Shem, Ham, and Japheth
- Moses, Oholiab, and Bezalel
- Joshua, Zerubbabel, and Haggai

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All these men were to be found **faithful** by our Supreme Father in Heaven. They obeyed His commandments, edicts, and promises even in the greatest test of adversity which they all endured as told in the Old Testament Books of Genesis, Exodus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Joshua, Ezra, and Haggai.

Although not perfect, these heroes of the Old Testament lived under the **All-Seeing Eye** of the Supreme Grand Overseer and were found to bring up "good and square work, just such work as was necessary" to complete God's plans for His Chosen people, the Israelites.

But how do figures from some distant Biblical account impact our Masonic faith and practice? Each **trusted** in God for life itself, each used their God given talents to the benefit of those who lived around them. Each **expressed, stood for, and implemented** the Great Law Giver's Wisdom and Divine Truth. And for this, their Creator found them worthy of faith. They were chosen, gifted, and strengthened by God to do his work on Earth in their generation. Not all were the Presiding elder or Ruler of Men such as Moses, Joshua, or Zerubbabel. Some, such as Shem, Ham, Japheth, Oholiab, and Bezalel, used their skills as craftsmen or artisans to make physical objects that help complete God's mission.

So the answer to the question, why were these men used as **models of faith** in our ritual? It is to show each of us that God has a plan to use us by our talents if we will only make ourselves faithful and available for the work He has planned for each of us in our generation. Furthermore, it shows us that every companion of our Royal Arch chapters can make great and memorable contributions by working in our ritual, taking part in leadership, or just being active and faithful in attendance.

Finally, on a level where our symbolism reinforces our faith, we find examples for the Jewish as well as the Christian companions. For those of the Jewish faith,

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these heroes have shaped your worship and practice thereof. They brought a blind world, the true Law of the One True God. They have established a way to approach Him and commune with Him.

For Christians, not only are the aforementioned attributes to be added as examples of overcoming faithfulness, partners in God's plans, and being standard bearers of His Truth, each can directly tie into Jesus' ministry and/or genealogy as recorded in the Gospel of Matthew as well as outlined by the writer of Hebrews.

Our goal as Royal Arch Masons should be to grow in knowledge of the excellent models of faith given to us in the beauty of our Royal Art. Shem, Ham, Japheth, Moses, Oholiab, Bezalel, Joshua, Zerubbabel, and Haggai are men that all Royal Arch Masons should become more learned of to better understand the deep riches that could impact each companion's life by implementing these practical examples of men who overcame trials in life by Faith in God.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

What significance, if any, is there to the sequence that the Masters of the Veils use to recite these characters in the opening of the Royal Arch Chapter?

Find each of these characters in the Holy Bible. What is the unique contribution that each made in his time? Why do we remember each today?

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