

Royal Arch – FAQ

Biblical Time lines and the Royal Arch

The Historical Lecture in the “Red Book” opens with the line – *there are three epochs in Masonry which particularly merit your attention*. This is certainly true because the Lecture refers to the three Lodges. They are the First or Holy Lodge, the Second or Sacred Lodge and the Third or Grand and Royal Lodge. We toast the Grand Originals from these three Lodges at the festive board.

There is however a great deal to be gained from setting these moments of time in a wider context. Some aspects of our story make more sense when we take a broader view of the history surrounding the three main epochs.

BC – circa	AL	Event	Significance to Royal Arch Masonry
4000	0	Creation	The first words of the Bible, God’s holy word and will.
2000	2000	Abraham leads the Jewish people from Babylon to Canaan (later Israel) using the sky knowledge - astronomy	The Banners are placed in the Chapter using the sky knowledge. They are always on the same place N,E,S,W
1750	2250	Jacob (who later changed his name to Israel) and his 12 sons move to Egypt because of the famine in Canaan. Jacob was Abraham’s grandson.	Jacob’s 12 sons became the patriarchs of the 12 tribes of Israel which are represented by the Banners in the Chapter
1500	2500	Moses leads the children of Israel out of captivity in Egypt. It takes 40 years for them to reach the Promised Land, Canaan, later to be called Israel.	Moses, Bezaleel and Aholiab build the Tabernacle and hold the First or Holy Lodge in the wilderness of Sinai at the foot of Mount Horeb.
1000	3000	Solomon, son of David, builds the First Temple with help from Hiram, King of Tyre and Hiram Abif.	Solomon, Hiram King of Tyre and Hiram Abif hold the Second or Sacred Lodge. The genuine secrets are lost due to the <i>untimely death of our Master Hiram Abif</i> as explained in the 3 rd Degree in the Craft

500	3500	Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon conquers Israel, destroys Jerusalem and Solomon's Temple. He takes the Jewish people into captivity in Babylon	This is the specific event which forms the foundation of the Royal Arch story and is a major theme in the ceremony
70 years later		Cyrus King of Persia defeats the Babylonians and lets the Jewish people return to their native land to rebuild the Temple. Z, H, and J lead the Sanhedrin in supervising this work.	Z, H, J hold the Third or Grand and Royal Lodge. During the Exaltation Ceremony the genuine secrets of a Master Mason are found by the Sojourners/Candidate in the ruins of the first Temple
70 AD	4070 AL	The Temple is destroyed again by the Romans	

The dates are presented as both BC (Before Christ) and AL (Anno Lucis – “in the year of Light”) They are approximate and presented as easy to remember rather than exactly accurate.

There are other biblical dates of interest to the Royal Arch Mason which can be covered later on. The dates above set a wider context to help a greater understanding of the Royal Arch story. Getting to know the story itself is the first step in understanding the allegory within it.