



Becoming a Royal Arch Master Mason

Before going any further you must understand that you must be a Master Mason and a Current member of a Blue Lodge before you can be considered for membership in a Royal Arch Chapter. If you are a Master Mason, please by all means read on my Brother.

If you are not yet a Master Mason, return to our home page and follow the link that says "Join Masonry, Click Here." You will be lead to another page that explains a bit about Freemasonry and what it means to become a Freemason and you will be given an opportunity to email your name and contact information so a member of a local Masonic Lodge can contact you to tell you more about becoming a Freemason and help you through the process of petitioning a local lodge.

Royal Arch Mason, "Further Light In Masonry"

No Rite of Freemasonry covers the world so much as does Royal Arch Masonry. In every country on the earth; on every continent and on many isles of the sea, will be found Royal Arch Chapters; eager and willing to receive their companions from other parts of the world into that full fellowship that characterizes Royal Arch Masonry. In Asia, in Africa, in Europe, in the Americas, and on the Continent of Australia will be found hundreds of Royal Arch Chapters into whose halls you will ever be a welcome visitor. In our own country we find upwards of three quarter million members in 3,000 chapters.

Founded in 1797, in Boston, Mass., as a national organization, the General Grand Chapter, Royal Arch Masons, International now has jurisdiction over half the 7,000 Chapters in the world, including provinces of Alberta, Manitoba, and Saskatchewan in Canada, the Grand Chapters of Mexico, Philippines, Germany, Italy, Greece, and many chapters in South America. Upon your exaltation as a Royal Arch Mason you will become a member of the oldest and largest rite of freemasonry.

What has attracted so many brethren to seek further light in Royal Arch Masonry? In your journey through the three degrees of Symbolic masonry and as you have learned the proficiency lecture for each degree, no doubt many questions have arisen concerning the meaning of the ritualistic ceremonies, the historical implications and the "why" of the legends of Freemasonry.

Many believe the Sublime Degree of Master Mason to be the ultimate degree of Freemasonry and all others to be added and explanatory. Most students of Freemasonry agree that the story of the Craft as presented in the three degrees is incomplete and that the degrees of the Royal Arch complete the story and answer many of the questions in the mind of the newly made Master Mason.

The Royal Arch Degree was Considered most important in the early years of Freemasonry and so dogmatic was the Mother Grand Lodge from which all Speculative Masonry derives that in 1813, when the two grand lodges in England united, a firm and solemn landmark was adopted and placed in the Articles of Union to guide Masons throughout the world forever on this matter:

"Pure Ancient Freemasonry consists of but three degrees, viz., that of Entered Apprentice, Fellowcraft, and Master Mason, including the Supreme Order of the Holy Royal Arch."

This Landmark has never been changed and to this day, no other degree has been officially recognized by the Mother Grand Lodge and every rite, system or additional degree of Freemasonry cannot confer its degree on a Master Mason until he has received the Royal Arch Degree. Naturally, this is as it should be, because a man is not a Master Mason until he receives the Master's Word and he can only receive it in the Royal Arch!

The Chapter or Royal Arch Masonry consists of four degrees, Mark Master, Past Master, Most Excellent Master, and Royal Arch Mason.

The Mark Master Degree is believed to have originated as a ceremony of registering a craftsman mark in those years distinguished by the operative craft masons and their temple building. It was later developed into a full-fledged degree by the Masonic fraternity as we know it today. Some scholars say it was the earliest degree and may predate all others by many years. It is highly regarded by students and ritualists as one of the most beautiful degrees in all Masonry, teaching lessons that have proven of value in all walks of life. Some Grand Lodges place so high an eminence on the Mark Master Degree, that they confine it to the jurisdiction of a separate grand body, the Grand Lodge of Mark Master Masons.

A Degree that emphasizes the lessons of regularity, discipline, and integrity. It is a most impressive Degree centered on the story of the Fellowcraft of the quarry and their role in the building of the Temple. Its importance in English Craft Masonry can be judged by the fact that it operates as a separate Grand Lodge, and is highly sought by members of the Craft in that jurisdiction.

The Past Master Degree came into being because originally the degree of Royal Arch was conferred by the Symbolic (Blue) Lodge only on actual Past Masters. This degree was instituted to make it possible for all worthy Brethren to receive the Royal Arch Degree. The first record of its conferral is found in 1768 in England.

A Degree that emphasizes the lesson of harmony. This Degree is conferred because ancient custom required that a Mason must be a Past Master in order to be exalted to the Royal Arch. In some Grand Jurisdictions this Degree is conferred upon all sitting Masters of the Blue Lodge. The Degree confers no actual rank upon the recipient, but is exemplified to maintain the ancient custom.

The Most Excellent Master Degree is a product of American innovation. It was conferred in Royal Arch Chapter as early as 1783 in Middletown, Conn. It is by far the most spectacular degree in all Freemasonry. It is the only degree that brings forcibly to our attention the

completion and dedication of King Solomon's Temple. The very idea upon which all Masonic symbolism, has been based. A Degree that emphasizes the lesson of reverence.

This Degree is centered on the dedication of the Temple after its completion, particularly the consecration of the Sanctum Sanctorum and the descent of the Host into the Temple. It is complimentary to the Mark Master Degree and completes the symbolic lessons introduced in that Degree.

The Royal Arch Degree is the climax of Ancient Craft Masonry and Masonic Symbolism. It is described as "the root and marrow of Freemasonry." It is the complete story of Jewish History during some of its darkest hours. Jerusalem and the Holy Temple are destroyed. The people of Israel are being held captive as slaves in Babylon. Here you will join with some of the captives as they are set free to return home and engage in the noble and glorious work of rebuilding the city and the Temple of God. It is during this rebuilding that they make a discovery that brings to light the greatest treasure of a Mason - the long lost Master's Word.

The completion of the Master Mason Degree and the summit of the original Degrees of the Blue Lodge as practiced in the Antients Lodges of England before 1820. The Degree explains the origins of the Substitute Word found in the Master Mason Degree, the recovery of the Ineffable Word, and its concealment within the Royal Arch Word.

This Degree, together with the Master Mason Degree, may have once been exemplified as one large or "super" Degree, with the Master Mason Degree explaining the loss of the Master's Word and the Royal Arch explaining the recovery of the Master's Word.

The presiding body is a Chapter, and the presiding officer is a High Priest (titled Excellent).

Many historians have traced the earliest origins of the Royal Arch Degree to Ireland, late in the 17th century and in England in 1738. In 1752, ambulatory or military warrants for lodges were introduced. This was instrumental in placing the Royal Arch Degree on a par with the Master Mason Degree.

Military lodges were greatly responsible for planting Freemasonry in the Colonies and also gave birth to use of the Mark and Royal Arch Degrees in the "New World." Lodge records show that the Royal Arch Degree was conferred at Fredericksburg No. 4 on December 12, 1753. George Washington was raised in this lodge a few months prior to this date.

The value of Royal Arch Masonry will be appreciated by all who are exalted to that most sublime degree, particularly by those who are seeking to complete their Masonic education. It reveals the full light of Ancient Craft Masonry presents it as a complete system in accordance with the original plan and justly entitles you to claim the noble name of Master Mason. Royal Arch Masonry contains some simple, plain statement of Truth, easily understandable and helpful in our relation to life. Lodge symbolism deals with lessons of the material side of life. The Chapter degrees, and particularly the Royal Arch, deal with the spiritual side of life. Offering the true completion of the ancient Craft, Royal Arch Masonry is, therefore, the logical step for every Master Mason to take. If after becoming a Royal Arch Mason, you are desirous of continuing your studies, you may take the Council Degrees and the Commandery Orders, both of which are illustrative of and carry forward the principals of the Royal Arch.

Any Royal Arch Mason will eagerly propose your name as a candidate for the advancement in the mysteries of Freemasonry.