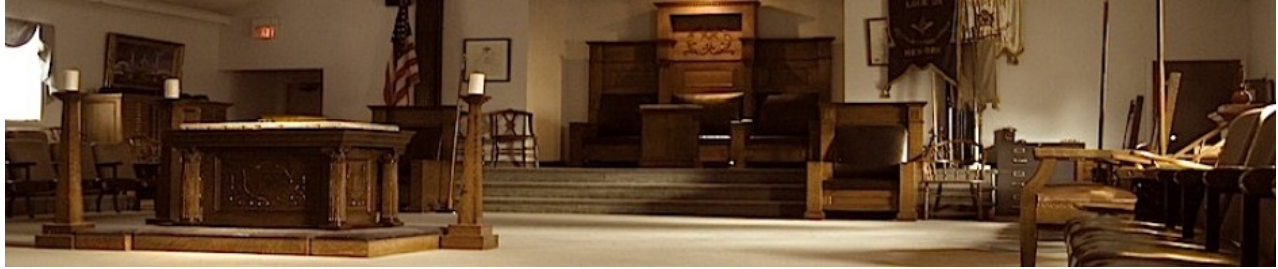


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[The Keystone in Royal Arch Masonry](#) →

Jeshua, Zerubbabel and Haggai

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“JESHUA, Zerubbabel and Haggai Those three ancient worthies who formed the First Grand Council and held their meetings in Jerusalem”.

As we listen to the opening of a Royal Arch Chapter in Maryland, we hear this repeated over and over, how many times have you considered just what it means. Were you the least bit curious about the origin of these characters, their names and their contribution to our craft? First let us study the three names individually.

JESHUA This name has been used throughout the Bible as the name of important places and people. It is a basic name in Hebrew history and appears with many different spellings. Some of which are Oshea, Joshua, JESHUA, and Jesus. The name indicates DELIVERER or SAVIOR and is used in connection with persons who eventually had a part in the deliverance and salvation of the people. We will limit our comments to three particular individuals who have had a particular influence on York Rite Masonry.

Moses was led to appoint Joshua, the son of Nun, as his successor during the final wanderings in the wilderness, and it was this Joshua who delivered the children of Israel into the Promised Land. His leadership role was military, political and spiritual.

JESHUA, the son of Jozaddek the High Priest, was the spiritual leader in the rebuilding of the temple, when the children of Israel were delivered from the Babylonish captivity. He shared the political leadership with Zerubbabel. He was probably born in Babylon

during the Exile. He, being the logical successor in the Priestly line, was, we must assume, educated for the priestly task even in exile. As the spiritual leader, the Jewish people in captivity surely knew and trusted him. Since there was no government in exile, it is logical to believe that JESHUA had a great deal of influence in promoting the leadership of Zerubbabel during this return. To give us some idea of the number of people who were involved in this return, the house of JESHUA alone numbered nine hundred and seventy-three a small house of only one priest.

ZERUBBABEL, “Son (male heir) of Shealtiel, Governor of Judah.” Actually he was the grandson of Jeconiah, a great grandson of Hezekiah, King of Judah. He was indeed a part of the Davidic line and as we see in the New Testament a part of the messianic line. Jeconiah had several sons; Shealtiel, Malchiram, Pedaiah, Shenazar, Jekomiah, Hoshama, Nedabiah. Pedaiah’s sons were Zerubbabel and Shimei. Zerubbabel was the father of Meshullam, Hananiah and Shelomith their sister. In Matthew we read that Zerubbabel begot Abiud. Thus we see that Zerubbabel was the nephew of Shealtiel, and that in the Old Testament, the male heir is always referred to as the son of his predecessor. The genealogy of Zerubbabel was through Abraham, David and after him we can trace to the birth of Christ. We cannot stress too greatly the importance of the messianic line of descent.

Zerubbabel was born in captivity, and being a Prince of the House of Judah, he was very probably afforded chances that other young captives would not have been offered. He was possibly a part of the Kings Body Guard. Let us remember how important royal blood lines were. In those days royal captives were considered royalty. Even in recent time we still find some of the European Royal Families in Exile still inter-marrying to preserve the blood lines.

As we well know, he was appointed first by Cyrus as the “Governor” of Judah and later by Darius. By this choice of a Prince of the house of Judah and working with JESHUA the High Priest, the people were eager to follow these men in returning to Jerusalem to rebuild the City and Temple. Zerubbabel was able to accomplish much in restoring the city and completing and dedicating the new temple.

HAGGAI was the first prophet of the restoration. His name means festal or feast. He was contemporary with Zachariah he was probably present at the destruction of the first Temple. He was a Levite, and as such was given special treatment during the captivity. He was an old man when he came back to Jerusalem with Zerubbabel to participate in the rebuilding of the Temple. Not much is known about him, except that which may be

elicited from his writings. From the time and event descriptions, the book of Haggai is one of the most precisely dated books in the entire Bible. At one period there was a fifteen year lapse in the Work on the New Temple. During this period, the people had spent their time building homes, fanning and doing many other things, almost anything but doing God's Business. They began to suffer crop failures, personal problems, bickering and fighting among themselves to a greater extent than usual. The Old Prophet encouraged them to repent and come back to God. Just twenty-four days after this encouragement, work was resumed on the Temple. Immediately their other problems were solved, and their needs were abundantly met. As we studied the book of Haggai, he referred to the "desire of all nations", we still have this desire for the "peace that passeth all understanding."

As we have looked at these three characters, we have found that they lived in the sixth century before Christ. They were a part of the Jewish nation in captivity. It was during this era Synagogue Worship began. This worship outside the Temple in Jerusalem was a new experience for the Jewish people. The governments had been overthrown, many of the political leaders had turned away from the worship of God, many of the people had been in captivity, the Temple had been destroyed, and confusion must have been the order of the day. Yet, with 0 of this, many of the people did repent and return to the worship of God.

As we continue our search for light and truth in York Rite Masonry, we see the importance of JESHUA, Zerubbabel and Haggai to our noble craft. Our Blue Lodges thread the Masonic allegory around the building of the Temple of King Solomon to, of course, represent the Temple of our present life. In Royal Arch Masonry, the allegory completes the erection of that temple, witnesses its destruction, and follows through to the building of a second temple, representing, as it does, the temple of our spiritual life. This leads to the contemplation of our relationship to the creator. As Solomon and the two Hiram's labored to build the first temple, so we labor to build our present life. As JESHUA, Zerubbabel and Haggai laboured at the second temple, so we should build the foundation of our spiritual life.

One of the strange facts that surfaced as we studied the genealogy of Jesus, we found that from Adam to Moses, several instances were exhibited of changing names and personalities. As an example of this we find Abram becoming Abraham, and Jacob becoming Israel. From MOSES to the Birth of Christ, we find no distinctive changes in the names of those listed. With the selection of the twelve apostles, we find Simon

became Peter, Saul became Paul, and with this we note that all study opens new vistas and other avenues to satisfy that curiosity and obtain a better understanding of our relationship to each other and to the great creator.

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Royal Arch Mason Winter 1991



About leader

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