

Short Talk #4

Lessons From the Passwords of the Veils

Many of us are unsure of the teachings that Masters of the Veils teach. We are blissfully ignorant of how these characters, whose names and lives are recorded in the Old Testament scriptures can impact our Faith and journey through life.

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 we need to know and hold in veneration these men portrayed in this degree? How do these patriarchs, prophets, and servants contribute to the combined history of the Jewish and Christian faiths?

How are we referring to?

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

All these men were found to be faithful by God. They obeyed his commandments, edicts, and promises even in the greatest tests 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 God and were found to bring up "good work, square work, just such work as was necessary" to complete God's plans for His chosen people, the Israelites.

How do these figures from ancient times, impact our Masonic life and practice? Each trusted 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 Wisdom and Truth of Almighty God. And for this, their Creator found them worthy. 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 to complete God's mission.

So, 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 lives. It also shows that every companion of our Royal Arch chapters can make great and memorable contributions by working in our ritual, taking part in leadership, and just being active and faithful in attendance.

Finally, on a level where our symbolism reinforces our faith, we find examples of the Jewish as well as the Christians companions. For those of Jewish faith, these heroes have shaped your worship and practice. They brought a blind world, the true Law of the One True God. They have established a way to approach and communicate 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 the ministry of Jesus 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 the Royal Arch. Shem, Ham, Japheth, Moses, Oholiab, Bezalel, Joshua, Zerubbabel, and Haggai are men that all Royal Arch Masons should learn more about to better understand the deep riches that could impact each companions life