
THE THREE CRYPTIC DEGREES

THE ROYAL MASTER degree is the first degree of the Cryptic Rite in the United States. The ritualistic presentations in the degree explain the articles contained in the Holy of Holies of King Solomon's Temple, including the Ark of the Covenant, a knowledge of which is essential to those who would fully understand the preceding degrees. The principal characters in the degree are Hiram Abiff and Adoniram. In this degree Hiram Abiff is alive and speaks, imparting to the candidate the sublime teachings of useful labor on earth and a worthy end of life. The tragedy of his death is brought forth with the great loss by the Craft.

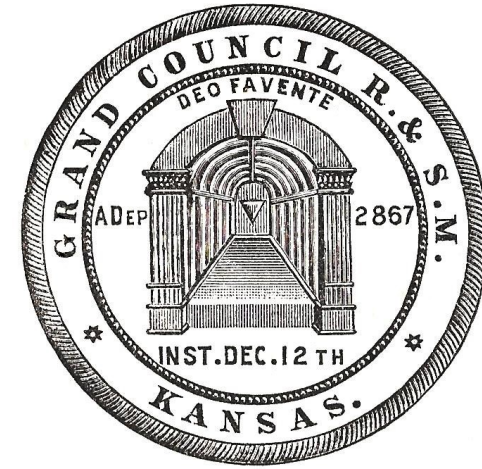
THE SELECT MASTER degree displays one of the incidents during the building of the Temple and is closely connected with the Royal Arch degree. The meeting location represents a "Secret Vault" or crypt beneath the Temple. Our ancient Grand Masters participate in an important work connected with the Temple. One of King Solomon's most particular friends is promoted to the work, in which only a limited number are employed. The degree commemorates the deposit of an important secret or treasure.

THE SUPER EXCELLENT MASTER degree is not a degree of the Crypt. It relates events that lead to the recovery of the lost Word. This degree tells of a period in history following the destruction of the First Temple. The essence of the degree is foretold by the Principal Sojourner in the Royal Arch Degree when he makes the reference to Zedekiah and his reign for eleven years in Jerusalem.



KANSAS YORK RITE

P.O. Box 346, Spring Hill, Kansas 66083-0346



THE GRAND COUNCIL CRYPTIC MASONS OF KANSAS

INVITES YOUR CONSIDERATION OF THIS BRIEF

EXPLANATION OF WHAT THE

CRYPTIC DEGREES

AND CRYPTIC MASONRY

MEAN TO YOU AND WHY YOU SHOULD

CONSIDER THE CRYPTIC DEGREES IN YOUR

CONTINUED MASONIC SEARCH FOR LIGHT

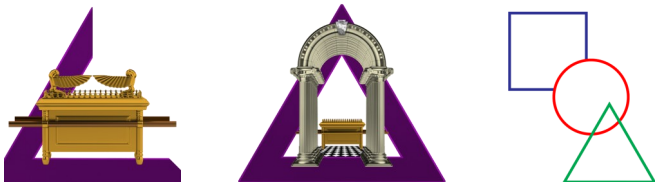
THE CRYPTIC DEGREES

No rite of Freemasonry has come into its own so much as the series of degrees known as the Cryptic Rite, also known as Cryptic Masonry.

Its popularity is well deserved for there are no more beautiful or meaningful degrees in all of Freemasonry than those conferred in a Council of Cryptic Masons. The degrees conferred complete a story, a Masonic allegory. Ancient Cryptic Masonry centers on the story of the preservation, loss and recovery of the Word. The Word represents man's search for life's purpose and the nature of God. Symbolic Freemasonry teaches of the loss of the Word and hope for its recovery. Royal Arch Masonry teaches its recovery. Cryptic Masonry completes this story by teaching of the Word's initial preservation.

THE VAULT AND THE MYSTERIES

Biblical students and archaeologists know of the vaults or crypts beneath King Solomon's Temple. Masonic Degrees were probably not actually conferred in these vaults. However, such a legend does persist throughout Freemasonry. The legends, conveyed in this system of degrees form a beautiful allegory or story. The Masonic author, Albert G. Mackey, MD, writing of the vault says: "The vault was, therefore, in the ancient mysteries, symbolic of the grave; for initiation was symbolic of death, where alone Divine Truth is to be found. Freemasons have adopted the same idea. They teach that death is but the beginning of Life; that if the first, or evanescent Temple of our transitory life be on the surface, we must descend into the secret vault of death before we can find that sacred deposit of Truth, which is to adorn our second Temple of Eternal Life." This teaching is not unusual in Freemasonry since, as was stated previously, the requirements for membership include a professed belief in God and one's eternal life.



WHY CRYPTIC MASONRY?

The degrees of the York Rite are classified as Symbolic (Lodge of Master Masons), Capitular (Chapter of Royal Arch Masons), Cryptic (Council of Cryptic Masons), and Chivalric (Commandery of Knights Templar). The Cryptic Rite derives its name from the setting of the degree of Select Master in the underground crypt beneath King Solomon's Temple. The word cryptic means hidden; hence its use in describing these degrees.

BLUE LODGE QUESTIONS ANSWERED

Some of the questions the Cryptic Degrees answer include:

- How was the True Word of a Master Mason lost and why?
- Who was involved in the recovery of the True Word?
- What work did Hiram Abiff have for the Temple?
- Did death end the ability to communicate the True Word?
- What more is there to explain of the Third Degree story?

ROYAL ARCH QUESTIONS ANSWERED

Royal Arch left a few questions the Cryptic Degrees answer:

- Why could the True Word no longer be communicated?
- Where was the True Word ultimately found?
- In what way was the True Word to be given?
- Did the True Word really become Lost?

INTERESTED IN THE CRYPTIC DEGREES?

If you find these concepts interesting, and of value to you as a Capitular Mason, please visit the Grand York Rite of Kansas website (www.kansasyorkrite.org) to locate a Council near you, or send an email to grand.sec.rec@ksyorkrite.net,
