



## **The Symbol of the Royal Arch**

### **Short Talks for Royal Arch**

The Triple Tau, within a triangle, within a circle, symbol of the Royal Arch, holds much more meaning than many think. It was adopted as the symbol of the Royal Arch by the General Grand Chapter of the United States, in Chicago at a meeting in 1859.

The meaning of the first two, the triangle within the circle, are fairly obvious and strait forward. The circle represents eternity and the equilateral triangle represents God. The triangle is symbol of divine union and the attributes of omnipotence (all powerful), omnipresence (eternal) and omniscience (all knowing).

The Triple Tau is a union of three tau's but it can also be seen as "T" mounted on the cross bar of an "H". The Tau itself is an ancient symbol which represents many things to many peoples.

First let's talk about the tau by itself and its meaning.

#### **Meaning of the (T) Tau:**

- Tau or Tav means "cross" and is at times referred to as the St. Anthony cross (because he was crucified on that type of cross)
- It is the nineteenth letter of the Greek Alphabet and the final (22<sup>nd</sup>) letter of the Hebrew Alphabet.
- It is numbered 300 in the Greek Alphabet and 400 in the Hebrew Alphabet
- Astrologically it is associated sometimes with planet Saturn and planet Mercury (as the messenger of the gods)
- In architecture it represents the T-square
- It represents finality because it is the final letter of the Hebrew Alphabet
- To the Egyptians it was a phallic symbol representing the male, creative power and life (bottom part of the ankh, the ankh represents eternal life)
- To some ancient cultures the glyph "T" represents the meeting place between earth and sky (the horizon)
- In mythology it represents the Greek god Attis (god of vegetation)
- To the Rosicrucian's it represents God and the attributes of wisdom, strength and harmony
- In Rosy Croix it symbolize the union of subject and object
- Kabbalistic it indicates the number three and refers to creativity, expansion, magic and intuition
- In Tarot cards it alludes to the Major Arcana (Latin for the "big secret")

### **Meaning of the Triple Tau:**

- The 3T can be looked in different way, as (the union of) three “Ts” connected at their base or as a “T” resting on the crossbar of an “H”
- As three “T” it represents, like the triangle the three attributes of God: omnipotence, omnipresence and omniscience
- To Christians the three forms of God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit
- Some interpret the “H” and “T” to represent Hiram Abif , because he was Hiram from Tyre
- *Templum Hierosolym* (the Temple of Jerusalem) ergo servant of God
- Three T-squares and alludes to the jewels of three Grand Masters
- In Greek the “H” relates to a “gate” and therefore the life-death transition
- All of these things indicate how we relate and inter act with God as his servants, children and Mason. Therefore, the triple tau represents us as his people and how He surrounds our lives or how we are contained within Him.

As you can see, the meanings concealed within the symbol of the Royal Arch are deep and ancient. The symbols that make up its component parts have different meanings dependent on the viewer and their background. But to us as Royal Arch Masons the meaning is relatively clear and strait forward. The equilateral triangle represents God and all his attributes, within the circle of eternity. The triple tau, at the center, surrounded by God, represents us and our commitment to God as His children and as Royal Arch Masons.