

Can the Hiram Legend be found in the Bible?

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I have titled this research paper, “Can the Hiram Legend be found in the Bible?”. That is obviously a question, and I hope by the time you reach the end of this work, you will have found the answer to that question. For a good definition of legends and traditions, let us consider the one given by Dr. E. Raymond Capt in his book “The Traditions of Glastonbury”. He says, and I quote: *“Consider the Traditions of Glastonbury, they cannot be dismissed as mere fables for legend is not fiction, nor is truth confined only to that which can be established by documentary evidence. It is a fact that legends and traditions are generally rooted in a basis of truth. In the absence of proof to the contrary, there is no reason why one would not accept traditions as having a foundation in fact.”*

Many would say that we should begin our search for the answer by looking at the Scottish Rite of Masonry, they have many degrees and they have extensive libraries for research purposes, so let us start our quest there. The Long Beach Scottish Rite is one of the few that confers all 29 degrees, namely degrees 4 through 32. One might immediately ask why do they start with 4? The answer to that comes from the Grand College of Rites, an organization in Washington, D.C., that keeps track of all the Rites in existence and who is currently conferring them in the United States of America. The State of Louisiana is the only State in the U.S. that confers, in the Scottish Rite, the Scottish Rite degrees 1, 2, and 3. All the other jurisdictions, including the State of Louisiana, have Symbolic York Rite Grand Lodges, and therefore all of the subordinate lodges throughout the entire U.S. are actually Symbolic York Rite Lodges.

In California, the Long Beach Scottish Rite confers degrees 4 through 32, but most other Valleys only confer degrees 4, 14, 16, 18, 30, 31 and 32. For the other degrees, they have written a book titled “A Bridge to Light”, which is used as a textbook for classroom lectures about the other degrees that they do not confer. Since 33 is an important number in the Scottish Rite, we might look at page 33 in this book. There we find a discussion of the 6th degree. In the ceremony, it says *“In the Scottish Rite workings of the Symbolic Degrees (1-3) the Pythagorean Tetractys is an important symbol. Since it is not to be found in the York Rite symbols of these degrees, it is not well known among Masons in America, virtually all of whom take the first three degrees in York Rite lodges.”* Well there you have it, the Scottish Rite book, page 33, tells you that the first three degrees of Masonry in the United States of America are York Rite degrees. So, if we were to look for the continuation or conclusion of the Hiram legend, we should turn to the York Rite.

In turning to the York Rite we find considerable history discussed in the book “The York Rite of Freemasonry” by Frederick G. Speidel. This is one of the finest books available on Freemasonry. One of the first things we learn is the traditional story that in 1717 four lodges in England formed the Grand Lodge of England and *documented* Freemasonry proceeds forward from that point. One might ask “where did the four lodges come from that formed the Grand Lodge of England?” The York Rite consists of four bodies:

- The Symbolic (Blue) Lodge
- The Chapter of Royal Arch Masons (Capitular Masonry)
- The Council of Royal and Select Masters (Cryptic Masonry)
- The Commandery of Knights Templar (Chivalric Masonry)

We find some things of particular importance before 1717:

- 1390 A.D. - the Regis Poem mentions many things before 1717
- 926 A.D. - the York Legend of King Athlestan (Mark Master Degree)

When we look at 1390 A.D. and 926 A.D. we must conclude that Freemasonry was around long before the four lodges formed the Grand Lodge, it appears that it was around for at least eight centuries before 1717!

Immediately after the organization of the Grand Lodge, a search was conducted throughout England for all existing Masonic documents. These were analyzed by Dr. James Anderson, a Presbyterian minister, who sifted through the collected data and constructed a Constitution for the government of the Grand Lodge. This was adopted in 1723. Anderson’s Constitution of 1723 included a history of Masonry that preceded recorded history and was actually a condensation of numerous legends and allegories that had previously existed within the craft. This Constitution also included charges for the Entered Apprentices and Fellowcrafts.

After several years, additional background material was accumulated and Dr. Anderson revised his Constitution in light of the new discoveries. This edition was adopted by the Grand Lodge and is known as Anderson’s Constitution of 1738. Adjustments had been made in the legendary history of the craft and a number of the charges that had previously been applied to Fellowcrafts were now assigned to the new degree of Master Mason.

The early Constitutions of Freemasonry were decidedly Christian in nature. The operative Masons were predominantly Roman Catholic in England until the Protestant Reformation of the 16th century. Anderson’s Constitutions of 1723 and 1738 omitted all pre-existing references to Christianity, and modern Symbolic Freemasonry embraces all religions.

In addition to the Grand Lodge of England, in 1730 the Grand Lodge of Ireland was formed and in 1736 the Grand Lodge of Scotland was formed. After the establishment of the Grand Lodge in 1717, that body instituted a number of practices that overly modernized the craft in the opinion of many Masons. They became known as the “Moderns”. Therefore, in 1751, six independent London lodges formed The Ancient Grand Lodge or “Ancients”.

This was actually the resurrection of the first *undocumented* Grand Lodge of England which was formed in 926 A.D., at York under King Athlestan. These four Grand Lodges chartered many lodges in the United States of America. Those that were chartered by the “Moderns” were basically F. & A.M., those that were formed by the Grand Lodges of Ireland, Scotland and the “Ancients” were A.F. & A.M. As these lodges formed their own Grand Lodges, they deviated somewhat from the original degrees that had been given to them. This explains why we see so many different rituals practiced in the United States.

In 1813, the two Grand Lodges that existed in England, after an extended period of discussion, merged into the United Grand Lodge of England. The main thing that had kept them apart was the dominant subject of their discussions. The delegates shared different views as to the place the degree of the Holy Royal Arch should, or should not, occupy in the official structure of Freemasonry. Delegates from the “Modern” Grand Lodge advocated its omission, while the “Ancient” delegates maintained it should be incorporated into the system. After much debate and arbitration, the following statement was inserted into the act of union, *“It is declared and pronounced, that pure Ancient Masonry consists of three degrees and no more; viz: Those of the Entered Apprentice, the Fellowcraft, and the Master Mason, including the Supreme Order of the Holy Royal Arch.”*

So, what have we learned? We learned that in 1813, Masonry actually consisted of only three degrees, namely the Entered Apprentice and Fellowcraft, and also the newly created Master Mason Degree including the Supreme Order of the Holy Royal Arch. Those who have not gone through the Royal Arch Chapter Degrees are not aware that in the Master Mason Degree, we only saw part of the story. Pieces were left out, and the basis of it all was that the Masters Word was lost and a substitute was given for it. In fact, the Masters Word was never lost! There were a lot of things surrounding its being hidden but the important thing is this, in the Royal Arch Degree we find that which was lost by finding the key! Thus the story is complete.

Having now thrown some history into it all, we unfortunately find that the York Rite doesn't supply us with the answer to our question, but we do find a clue! In 1766, the first Royal Arch Chapter was formed, and thus began the separation of the Master Mason Degree from the Supreme Order of the Holy Royal Arch. The Master Mason Degree tells us that the Grand Master Hiram Abif was no longer alive at the time the Temple was completed. But, we find secular history telling us that he was alive and well at the dedication of the Temple. How could both stories be true? There is a way! How do we find out? The clue is this, if we can separate the two degrees, it is possible that we have two stories about two different people! Where could we turn after looking at the Scottish Rite and the York Rite and not finding the answer to our question? We must turn to the most obvious place of all --- the Great Light of Masonry, the Holy Bible. There we will find our answer!

When we look at the Holy Bible, we find that there are two accounts of the building of King Solomon's Temple. We find an account in 1st Kings and another in 2nd Chronicles. Why two accounts? Were there two temples? We know better than that! There was but one temple so we must understand the history that leads us to find two accounts. Let's go back in time. Dr. John Gerstener, former Professor of Church History at the Xenia Theological Seminary in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania had a favorite question. If you were to summarize the Bible in one word, what would your choice be? His choice, and I agree with him, was redemption. God knew before the fall of Adam that he would fall and provided a means to redeem him which was the promise He made to Adam.

The call of Abraham was the beginning of the implementation of that plan of redemption. Abraham was given many blessings, and these blessings were passed on to his son Isaac and then passed on to his son Jacob. Jacob was the father of twelve children, his son Joseph, was his favorite. You have probably heard the story of how Joseph was hated by his brothers and sold into slavery and went through numerous negative experiences. Refusing the advances of Pharaoh's wife, she then accused him of raping her. Falsely accused, thrown into prison, this man had nothing but bad times. But in the end, when Pharaoh had a dream and could not understand it, he was told of a man in prison that could tell him its meaning. Pharaoh sent and had Joseph brought to him and when he interpreted the dream, Pharaoh made him the number two man in all of Egypt. He had tremendous power. His own people, his father and his brothers, were going through a great famine, they came to him and he saved them, he forgave them, he loved them. He loved his father and his father was happy to see his son.

Israel was near death and he called his sons to him and of his twelve sons, he first blessed the eleven. But when he blessed Joseph, he passed the blessing on to his two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, and said that they shall be known by his name Israel. Now we find the twelve sons of Jacob become the heads of the twelve tribes of Israel. And we also know that there is the 13th tribe, namely the tribe of Manasseh because of Joseph's blessing being split between his two sons. We find the history of the Hebrew people going on until the death of Solomon. After Solomon's Temple was completed by our ancient brethren, we find the ten northern tribes, known as the Kingdom of Israel, rebelled against Solomon's son Rehoboam, and complained about the heavy tax burden that his father had placed upon them. Well things haven't changed much, we're still griping about taxes.

The tribe of Judah, with the Benjamites, remained loyal to Rehoboam, who then doubled the tax burden of the people. This caused the ten northern tribes to secede from the monarchy and thus the Hebrew nation suddenly became two kingdoms, the Kingdom of Judah and the Kingdom of Israel. As we go forward in history, we find that about one hundred years before the destruction of the Temple by Nebuchadnezzar, the Assyrians conquered the ten northern tribes and hauled them off to the Caucasus mountains, and took the people from that area known as Samaria, and moved them to what was the Kingdom of Israel, a common military maneuver at that time. When Christ went to Jerusalem, He found the Good Samaritan there. Also, He sent His apostles out to the lost sheep of the House of Israel, obviously they were to go to where they had been moved.

So, the result of all this is that there was a split in recording the chronological actions of the Kingdoms, there were now two kingdoms. The books of Kings record the chronological events

of the Kings of Judah. Chronicles records the chronological events of the Kings of Israel. Having Saul, David and Solomon common to both kingdoms is why we have two accounts of the building of King Solomon's Temple

Let us look first at Chronicles to see what we can find. We find in 2nd Chronicles, chapter 2 verse 3, *"and Solomon sent to Hiram the King of Tyre, saying, as thou didst deal with David my father and didst send him cedars to build him a house to dwell therein even so deal with me"*; skipping down to verse 7, *"send me now therefore a man cunning to work in gold and in silver and in brass and in iron and in purple, and in crimson, and in blue and that can skill to grave with the cunning men that are with me in Judah and in Jerusalem whom David, my father did provide."*

Skipping down to verse 13, *"Hiram, King of Tyre, said and now I have sent a cunning man, endued with understanding, of Hiram my father's, the son of a woman of the daughters of Dan, and his father was a man of Tyre, skillful to work in gold, and in silver, in brass, in iron, in stone, and in timber, in purple, in blue, and in fine linen, and in crimson; also to grave any manner of graving, and to find out every device which shall be put to him, with thy cunning men, and with the cunning men of my lord David thy father."* Skipping now to chapter 3, verse 1, *"Then Solomon began to build the house of the Lord at Jerusalem in mount Moriah, where the Lord appeared unto David his father, in the place that David had prepared in the threshingfloor of Ornan the Jebusite. And he began to build in the second day of the second month, in the fourth year of his reign."*

So we find Solomon, according to this story, talked to Hiram --- by the way, why do we have this Hiram, Hiram thing? Hebrew has no vowels, so Hiram or Hiram would have been spelled the same. The King James translators tried to put vowels in to get the proper English pronunciation, but made a few errors. They decided on the side of consistency; throughout Chronicles they used Hiram, throughout Kings they used Hiram. Nobody can be sure, but one thing we should note, is that Solomon entered into an agreement with Hiram of Tyre to build the house and to have a man sent to him who could do everything. That man was the son of a woman of the daughters of Dan and then the Temple was built.

Now let's look for a moment at 1st Kings. We find in chapter 6, verse 1, *"and it came to pass in the four hundred and eightieth year, after the children of Israel were come out of the land of Egypt, in the fourth year of Solomon's reign over Israel, in the month Zif, which is the second month, that he began to build the house of the Lord."* Going on we find in verse 38, *"and in the eleventh year, in the month Bul, which is the eighth month, was the house finished throughout all the parts thereof, and according to all the fashion of it. So was he seven years in building it."* Skipping over to chapter 7, we find King Solomon sent and fetched Hiram out of Tyre. He was a widow's son of the tribe of Naphtali. The Temple is done, why did he have to fetch him? Why didn't he just ask for him to come if he needed him? Obviously to protect him. Who was he?

He was a widow's son of the tribe of Naphtali and his father was a man of Tyre. A worker in brass only, and he came to Solomon and finished all of his work. What work? The Temple was done. What have we learned from this? We have learned that a man was sent, who was the son of a woman of the daughters of Dan, but here we find a widow's son of the tribe of Naphtali.

The first one, called Hiram in this instance, could do everything. He was not a widow's son he was the son of a woman of the daughters of Dan. His father was a man of Tyre. The Temple was completed.

Then we find Solomon sent and fetched Hiram out of Tyre, he was a widow's son. The only way he could be a widow's son is if his father were dead. Who was this second man? Abif in Hebrew means master or father. The first man was the master of the second and probably his father. As is the case of many craftsmen, their father was their master and if something were wrong, and the father had died, it would be logical to have his son complete his work even though the Temple was for all intents and purposes complete. It wasn't really finished and Solomon fearing that the same fate that befell the father would fall upon his son, sent and fetched him; meaning he sent armed guards, soldiers, to be sure that he arrived safely. When he arrives, what does he do?

Let me read to you from 2nd Chronicles, chapter 4 verse 11. I'll read it verbatim and you change the word to Hiram. *“And Hiram made the pots, and the shovels, and the basons. And Hiram finished the work that he was to make for King Solomon for the house of God; To wit, the two pillars, and the pommels, and the chapters which were on the top of the two pillars, and the two wreaths to cover the two pommels of the chapters which were on the top of the pillars.”*

Finally, we find in verse 16 the culmination of it all: *“The pots also, and the shovels, and the fleshbooks, and all their instruments, did Hiram his father make to King Solomon for the house of the Lord of bright brass.”* Let me read that again, for this is the second Hiram speaking of the first because he couldn't do bright brass. What does he say? *“and the pots also, and the shovels, and the fleshbooks, and all their instruments, did Hiram his father make to King Solomon for the house of the Lord of bright brass.”*

I'm indebted to the works of Morris Marks and Morris Rosenbaum for their research work on this and for getting me started. I am indebted to the works of Dr. E. Raymond Capt for the Biblical history; and to Frederick G. Speidel for his wonderful book “The York Rite of Freemasonry”. More importantly I am indebted to God for having revealed to me this great truth which I am sharing with you. There were two, the second one was there for the dedication of the temple, the first one is honored throughout all of Masonry and all of its degrees because he was the architect of the work. While we honor his memory, at the dedication of the temple, he was dead. His son, being a widow's son, because his father was dead, finished the work of his father and we find that revealed to us in the Great Light of Masonry, the Holy Bible. I started my paper asking you a question. Can the Hiram Legend be found in the bible? I hope that I have now answered that question and I thank you for affording me the opportunity to present this work to you!