# THE SOJOURNER'S READINGS

It is highly recommended that these readings should be delivered to the Exaltee/s outside the door of the Chapter, just before each of his three entries into the Chapter room during the ceremony of Exaltation.

The purpose is to give a brief introduction to the main parts of the ceremony so that the Candidate can better appreciate the experience through which he is about to pass.

It is either the Principal Sojourner or one of the Assistant Sojourner's that will deliver the Readings, dependant upon who is undertaking that part of the ceremony.





# Provincial Grand Chapter of Essex

# EXPLANATIONS FOR THE CANDIDATE FOR EXALTATION

To be read to the Exaltee by a Sojourner during the Ceremony

### BEFORE THE FIRST ENTRANCE

The Temple of King Solomon at Jerusalem, which we learn about in the three degrees of Craft Masonry, stood for about 400 years, until it was completely destroyed by the Babylonians under King Nebuchadnezzar. He killed many of the inhabitants of Jerusalem and exiled most of the rest to Babylon, leaving only a few behind to carry out farming and menial tasks.



After some 70 years, the Babylonians themselves were overthrown by the Persian Empire under King Cyrus who also conquered what was left of Jerusalem. Within a year, King Cyrus issued a decree allowing the descendants of those exiles from Jerusalem to return home, in order to help rebuild their Holy City and its Temple.

As a Candidate for Exaltation, you will represent one of those exiles returning to the ruined city of Jerusalem to help rebuild the Temple, or more accurately to help build the second Temple.

Building on the teachings of the Craft, the Royal Arch encourages you to a greater understanding of yourself and particularly your relationship with your God.

### **BEFORE THE SECOND ENTRANCE**

You will remember that the First Temple at Jerusalem was destroyed by the Babylonians under Nebuchadnezzar. After the decree of King Cyrus, many exiles returned almost immediately from Babylon to Jerusalem, led by a Prince called Zerubbabel, and prepared to build the second Temple on the site of the former one. Other exiles arrived a little later, and we three represent some of the later arrivals, whom we call "Sojourners" (journeymen).



The Cyrus Cylinder with the Decree

The next part of the ceremony represents our entrance into Zerubbabel's Council (or Grand Sanhedrim) to apply to work on some part or other of the building on the second Temple. Although we are working Masons, we are proud to be direct descendants of the Royal line of David and Princely Tribe of Judah, which used to rule Jerusalem.

## **BEFORE THE THIRD ENTRANCE**

As Masons, we have carried out our instructions to clear the site of the former Temple, to prepare for the foundations of the second Temple. Whilst doing so, we have made a discovery which might be of great importance. We are now reporting this discovery to the Sanhedrim under Zerubbabel.

Just as the Second Temple was built on the site of the First, you are about to discover that the teachings of the Royal Arch are built on those of the Craft, to complete your journey in Pure Ancient Freemasonry.

