

The Triple Tau and Triangle Within a Circle

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The Triple Tau and Triangle within a Circle is a common Royal Arch Insignia. It adorns Royal Arch jewels, aprons, letterheads, and on and on. But, how many companions, those initiated into the rites and rituals of a Royal Arch Chapter, can do more than identify this symbol? Ignorance of Masonic symbolism at any level is not bliss. This type of ignorance is a sign that such a communion has not fully received their wages from their membership. Let us explore what the Triple Tau, Triangle, and Circle are as symbols and how they remind us of our connection with Ancient Truths of Life.



The **Triple Tau** is literally three Tau's, the tau being the nineteenth letter in the Greek Alphabet. As a Royal Arch symbol, the Triple Tau consists three Ts connected in the center at their bases. These mystical characters can be seen in several ways.

First, the names of Hiram of Tyre and Hiram Abif appear in the Phoenician language with the same "H" and "T" as they do in English. Therefore, the Triple Tau takes on the interpretation of the initial letters in Hiram Abif's name similarly as in the Mark Master Degree.

Secondly, it signifies T. H., *Templum Hierosolym*, and the Temple of Jerusalem, and in some Royal Arch jurisdictions that the wearer acknowledges himself a servant of God.

Thirdly, Christians in Greek or Roman influence anciently used the tau cross. So, the basis of the Triple Tau in early church history would mean the Trinity. Therefore, this Royal Arch symbol recalls us to offer worship to the The Great Elohim, The Most High, The Everlasting: The Almighty God.

The **Triangle** is a simple shape of geometrical strength with the ability to bear large loads without deforming and has taken on great spiritual significance and symbolism. The Scottish Ritual teaches the "equilateral triangle was revered by ancient nations as containing the greatest and most abstruse mysteries and, as a symbol of God, denoting the Triad of Intelligence, a Triad of Deity, the Triune God." The first book of the Bible supports multiple facets of the same God: in Genesis 1:26 we read, "Then God said, 'Let us make man in our image, in our likeness.'" The equilateral triangle shows equality with its the three angles of the same degrees, it best repents Deity in His triune essence: omnipotence (all powerful), omnipresence (eternal), and omniscience (all knowing).

The **Circle** is an emblem of eternity having neither beginning nor end, and reminds us of the purity, wisdom, and glory of the Omnipotent, which is without beginning or end.

The Triple Tau and Triangle within a Circle was adopted as the symbol of the Royal Arch by the General Grand Chapter of the United States at their Triennial Convocation held in Chicago, Illinois in 1859. 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, and the triple tau, at the center, surrounded by God, represents us and our commitment to God as His children and as Royal Arch Masons.

The three tau crosses also teach Royal Arch Companions the Deity is in His distinct aspects of one God. In man, they also represent Body, Soul and Spirit and their union shows a spiritual body united with a perfected soul and spirit with their final attainment with God. The Royal Arch is not essentially a Christian degree but there were three crosses on Calgary, which reminds us the triple tau as Jesus would have been crucified on a tau cross. Thus, the tau cross teaches the evolution and purification of body, soul and spirit, which are now in perfect union as shown by the triple tau.



So Mote It Be!