

established King in Jerusalem in the thirty-eighth year of his age, 1048 years before the Christian Era. Shortly afterwards he made friends with Hiram, King of Tyre, Grand Master of Masons in that part of the world; these Masons were renowned for their skill and the beauty of their workmanship; this Prince sent timber and men. A palace was then built for David, but considering it a deficiency in his duty and devotion to God that he should live in a palace of cedar whilst the ark was merely in the curtain of the Tabernacle, he proposed to Nathan, the prophet, to build a house to be dedicated to the Most High. Nathan was, however, inspired to inform him, that in consequence of his being a man of war and having defiled his hands with blood, that he could not accomplish such an object. In the year 1017, David was unfortunately tempted to have the people numbered, which being accounted a sin in the eyes of the Almighty, a pestilence raged among them and destroyed a great number. David, to appease the wrath of God, offered many prayers and burnt offerings, which stayed the hand of the destroying angel. This is the second grand offering which Free Masons commemorate.

David died two years afterwards, and his son, Solomon, succeeded him; immediately on ascending the throne, he sent messages to Hiram, requesting him to supply him with timber and stone to erect a temple to the living God. Hiram at once acceded to this request, and also sent a man cunning in the works of gold and silver, in brass, in iron, in purple, and in crimson; this great man was Hiram Abiff, the son of a widow of Tyre. Solomon immediately appointed him Deputy Grand Master (under himself) of the Masons employed in the building. The system these two great men adopted is well worthy of notice. To prevent confusion, owing to the great number of men employed, they divided them into three classes, according to the degree of professional knowledge possessed by each. The first was the class of apprentices, the second of fellow-crafts, and the third masters. Each class had particular signs and words entrusted to them; were also divided into lodges of 80 men each, including a Master and two Wardens. They were divided as follows: