

Time

Many brethren would have noticed that in their Masonic Certificate, the date, for example 1999, is shown as 5999. Why is that?

James Ussher, an Anglican priest born in Dublin in 1580, interpreted the time of the Creation in the Bible as being 4,004 BC. This was generally accepted by the Church as well, and was adopted in Anderson's "Constitutions", the basic text of modern Freemasonry. Hence, a Masonic date adds 4000 years to the currently accepted origins of the Christian era, and is called "anno Lucis," or the year of light. However, other Masonic bodies have different interpretations. For example, the Knight Kadosh of the Scottish Rite use "anno hebraico (a.k.a. anno mundi)", taken from Hebrew months and a calendar based on Jewish chronology. This thinking begins in September and adds 3,760 years on the Gregorian calendar. In the Royal Arch, the date of Creation is "anno inventionis", or 530 BC, the date when work commences on the second temple by Zerubbabel. The Royal and Select Masters degree uses the time of the dedication of K.S. Temple, or 1,000 BC and is called "anno depositionis." The Templars (especially in Europe) count the beginning as 1,118 AD, the founding of the Order and is called "anno ordinis."