

CHAPTER 2

THE KNIGHTS TEMPLAR PAVES WAY FOR PROTESTANT REFORMATION

A CALL FOR HELP

Most all have read or heard about the Roman Catholic religious wars during the Middle Ages to free Jerusalem, called the "Crusades". In the Catholic religion, 'indulgences', or special favors in the forgiveness of sins are given by the pope to those who make pilgrimages to holy shrines. Jerusalem had the very holiest of shrines. However, Jerusalem fell to the Muslims in 1071 AD, depriving Roman Catholic pilgrims from entering into the city. The whole Catholic world became alarmed.

To recover Jerusalem, an urgent appeal was presented by Pope Urban II at the Council of Clermont, arousing an enthusiastic response of Catholics to arms. It became the first of a series of eight religious wars from 1096 to 1291 AD, nearly 200 years, mostly ending in defeat and horrible disasters. Pope after pope through the years, made their appeals urging and rallying crusade after senseless crusade. One in particular is repugnant in history, where mere children were allowed to answer the call. Many became sick and died along the way or were sold into slavery before ever reaching their destination. To the popes, who are supposed to be the representatives or vicars of Christ, winning back Jerusalem at any cost, was all that mattered. Yet the humble Jesus of Nazareth said, (John 18:36) "My Kingdom is not of this world, if my Kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight".

The crusaders precariously delivered Jerusalem from the

Muslims, and even though they occupied the area, the severe hostilities and frequent skirmishes from surrounding neighbors was a constant reminder of how insecure the victory really was. The crusaders had fulfilled their vows, and were now ready and anxious to return home. What was needed for their replacement, was a provision establishing a permanent defensive military force against the enemy and also a means to ensure protection and safety for traveling pilgrims. These needs brought about the creation of a very unique institution — the 'military monk' order of knighthood.

Two orders of knights were established. One, the Knights of Hospitallers of St. John of Jerusalem, later to become the Knights of Malta, who took care of the sick and the physical needs of the pilgrims. The other, were the Knights of Templar, who became the military arm for defense and protective escorts for pilgrims traveling to and from the city. The Knights Templar history is one of extreme importance and becomes one of the most fascinating stories ever to be researched. As the first order of men becoming military monks, they became the role model for every succeeding military order afterwards. The meteorite like career in their rise to power, wealth, and fame, was as legendary and sensational as the tragic and grisly manner they were brought to their end — or at least their 'visible' end. Mystery, intrigues, and cover up surround their demise, and it is in this atmosphere that presents a great paradox today, especially when considering the parties involved during the founding of the United States of America.

It would be very hard to find a greater contrast, when comparing the principles on which the Roman Catholic Church is ruled, along side those which the American Republic was founded. Catholicism is controlled through the rule of 'one', who has been invested with infallible, absolute, and ruthless dictatorial powers compelling all to fully submit, with all democratic processes banished and condemned. On the other hand, the American Republic extended to its people the 'right' as individuals to think, to express themselves unobstructed, to be ruled by a government whose laws were for the people and by the people, that they might live and move and worship freely, in peace and unmolested.

John Carroll was a Roman Catholic Jesuit priest. George

Washington was a Protestant Freemason. They indeed, according to the principles they each represented, were supposed to be opposed to one another. Instead, they worked in perfect harmony together in laying out Washington D.C., the city and seat of our nation's government, and in conjunction with and at the very same time, founded the first Jesuit college in the states, known today as Georgetown University. As we progress further in our study, it will be shown the hidden connection between the Roman Catholic Knights Templar and Freemasonry, and how the Jesuits infiltrated Freemasonry, then by creating a secret society within a secret society, founded their "Order" of the Illuminati.

TEMPLARS FOUNDED

In the year 1118, a few years after the first crusade conquest of Jerusalem, the Knights Templar were founded. Their name was taken from the ancient Temple of Solomon, the site of their first headquarters. They continued as an order until the year 1307, nearly 200 years, and were dissolved a few years after the permanent loss of Jerusalem. Their immediate popularity after becoming an order has been contributed to the two great passions of the Middle Ages; religious fervour and martial prowess. Their expansion in wealth, power, and land possessions was phenomenal. Gifts of every kind were showered upon them. One such example in 1131, the king of Aragon bequeathed to them a third of his domains. At the peak of their prosperity, it is said that they held over 9000 manors all over Europe, plus mills, markets, and trade monopolies. These were all income producing properties. In addition, they controlled a considerable fleet of fighting and merchant ships and maintained an international banking operation.

The popes took them under their immediate protection, exempting them from all taxes including paying tithes. They were above all laws and answered to no one but the pope. By virtue of their possessions, manpower, diplomatic skills, and martial expertise, the Temple Knights wielded enormous political and military influence. But it was no less influential financially, handling much, if not most, of the available capital in western Europe. Kings deposited their royal treasuries with the Templars and became quite often deeply in debt to them,

and at a high rate of interest. It is impossible to calculate the profound and lasting influence the Knights Templar had on every level of society. With such a vast amount of power and influence, especially in high places, it would not be rational to believe that with the termination of the Order, all traces of its influence also just stopped and abruptly vanished along with them.

Nearly everyone has some notion about the Inquisition; at the very least, that it was a Catholic Church ordained and perpetuated hunt for, and destruction of dissenters, apostates, heretics, Jews, witches, warlocks, alchemist, and anyone else out of ecclesiastical favour. That it operated a long time ago, say from the Middle Ages to the French Revolution, and that it achieved its ends by means so terrible and ferocious that history had recorded nothing comparable until the Holocaust of 1939-45. It was a time when no one was ever safe from the bloodlust of the Church. Prosecution and destruction for a banned thought or feeling, or merely for being suspected of one, was an ever present peril for all. It was during this time period and this mind set that the Knights Templar were founded, when they flourished, and when they came to their sudden end.

In 1291 Roman Catholics forced from the Holy Land was complete, never to be restored. The Knights Templar retreated to the island of Cypress as a temporary place of residence. Here they dreamed and planned for another crusade. But Europe no longer rallied to the cry for a holy war. The fervor was gone. So much wealth had been spent and so many lives lost in vain, that it became a dead issue. In effect, the Templars had lost their purpose to exist. What was worse, they had made many enemies because of their arrogance and haughty ways. They were also in constant conflict with the Hospitallers. Some even suggested, including the pope, for practical purposes, the two orders of knights should be combined. And with this in mind, Pope Clement V summoned Jacques de Molay, the last Grand Master of the Knights Templar, to appear before him.

The king of France, Philip IV, the most powerful monarch on the Continent at the time, also looked favorably on the merger proposals, but with a totally different point of view. He had proposed to Pope Clement V, that the kings of France be named the hereditary grand masters of the combined orders and that

he himself be appointed as supreme commander, to be known as "War King". The only one who seemed to like his idea was Philip himself. So as an alternative to gain access to the Templars wealth, Philip developed a plan to bring the Templar order down.

TEMPLARS BETRAYED

By 1306, the Templars had become the focus of particular attention for Philip IV of France. Philip was enormously ambitious. He had grandiose designs for his country, and gave little thought about crushing whoever or whatever stood in his way. He had already engineered the kidnapping and murder of one pope, Boniface VIII, and is widely believed to have orchestrated the death, probably by poison, of another, Benedict XI, who followed. By 1305, he had installed his own puppet on the papal throne, Clement V. In 1309, Philip hijacked the Papacy itself, uprooting it from Rome and relocating it on French soil, at Avignon, where it remained, dividing the Catholic Church for the next sixty eight years. With the Papacy thus in his pocket, Philip had the latitude he needed to move against the Templars, and with staggering swiftness and efficient precision, he did.

With sealed orders, kept absolutely secret and not to be opened until the given time, in one stroke, every Knight Templar found in France, including Grand Master Jacques de Molay, were arrested, placed in chains, and cast in prison. Trumped up charges of the most sinister kinds of heresy were brought to bear and broadcasted effectively throughout the realm. Immediately the Inquisitors went to their hideous work, torturing their victims, extorting those confessions they wanted to hear. The shrieks rent the air of those tortured, terrified those who knew they were next. Within a few days after the tortures began, thirty-six Templars died as a result. Some had their feet burned totally off and, understandably, a number are reported to have gone mad from the pain. One Templar was helped to a council of inquiry later, carrying with him the blacken bones that had dropped out of his feet as they were burned off. He had been permitted by his torturers to keep the bones as sickening souvenirs.⁴

Pope Clement V refused to believe the accusations Philip was bringing against the Templars. But with some bullying,

relentless pressure, and intimidation, the weak pope finally caved in, reluctantly cooperating with the king. It was true, the Templars had made some enemies, but it was also true and very obvious, that the other nations in Europe did not believe the charges either. Most nations acquitted them outright, saying they were innocent. Some allowed them to go into other orders or change into secular clothes, shave their beard, and melt into the crowd. In Portugal, they found refuge by just changing their name to Knights of Christ. Christopher Columbus was a Templar Knight of Christ.⁵ England and Ireland dragged their feet. Scotland ignored the pope's excommunication altogether, and became a haven for the fugitives.

In France the terror went on. Torture, excommunications, and for "relapsed heretics", they were burned alive in public wholesale executions. Four and one half years after the first arrests, Pope Clement V, on March 1312, declared the Knights Templar disbanded, yet 'without' proclaiming them either guilty or innocent. All Templar property, except in Spain and Portugal, was to be transferred to the Hospitallers. Two years after that, March 1314, the Grand Master, Jacques de Molay, was roasted alive over a slow fire. The Order that began in such glory, now ended in public disgrace.

The decree from the pope was infallible. Any Templar not brought to justice was a fugitive from law, and subject to arrest. Yet everyone knew the whole affair was disturbingly wrong. It became a Church scandal that needed to be hushed, covered up. But certainly the cover up 'business' was nothing new to Rome. The Church's suppression of its repulsive involvement, especially when it advertises it can do no wrong, was to save face. The running Templars silence, was to keep from being caught.

What seems to us today as a minor, generally obscure fragment of medieval history, is just the point that should be made here; it has been purposely made obscure. How many today have even heard of the Knights Templar? But you can be assured of this, when it was all happening, it was the most dominant issue of its time, dramatically surpassing events in far away Scotland, galvanizing opinions and reactions across the Catholic world, sending tremors throughout all Western culture. The Templar, it must be remembered, was, with the

sole exception of the Papacy itself, the most important, most powerful, most prestigious, most apparently unshakable institution of its age. It was regarded as one of the central pillars of Western Catholicism. For most of its contemporaries, it seemed as immutable, as durable, as permanent as the Church herself. That such an edifice should be so suddenly demolished, rocked the very foundation upon which rested the assumptions and beliefs of that time. Indeed, for an example of the indelible impression this tragedy made upon minds, is found in the superstition which holds Friday the 13th to be a day of misfortune; most today having not the vaguest idea of its origin, will find that it grew from the very date when King Philip made his initial arrests, Friday, 13 October 1307.

So here all of a sudden, a very large and prestigious group of men of Europe, the rejected military monk, found himself in a weird and totally new condition. The pope had rejected him, so he had no choice but to reject the pope. Before, during his entire life in the Templar order, his link with God had been through his Grand Master, who was responsible only to the pope, who claimed to be God's sole viceroy on earth. Now his religious order had been dissolved, his Grand Master had been burned at the stake, and Christ's vicar had cast him aside. He still believed in God, but his chain of intercession with God had been ripped away. Now for the first time in his life, no one stood between God and himself. His prayers of solicitation and thanksgiving, his acts of adoration, his hopes of salvation could no longer be through the pope, and were now on a purely personal basis, not by choice, but brutally thrust upon him. To the medieval mind, there could have been no other harrowing and traumatic experience imaginable.

It was from this most brutal and overwhelming experience, that the 'seeds' of protestantism were violently sown; left to germinate fully sixty years and more before John Wycliffe and the Lollards came on the scene. Those seeds were free to germinate and propagate because they were nurtured in complete secrecy, and they gave strength to others who were also religiously persecuted and disillusioned.

FRIENDLY HELP

The nations of England, Ireland, and Scotland, were separated from the Continent, and so it helped to breed their own independent ideas. One example, they never allowed machines of the Inquisition permanently on their soil. That doesn't mean they were not staunch Catholics, or they were much less brutal in the way those who came under the law were treated. They just had their own way of thinking about certain things, and that included Rome. This independent thought became fertile ground for friends and families in their efforts to hide, feed, and to give any needed assistance to keep the running Templars safe from being caught. They became vital contacts, providing what any fugitive is desperate for; safe lodging, food, some news, and a chance to let his panic subside. These basic provisions allowed the Templars some needed time to think clearly and rationally, to organize an underground network of contacts, and a secret system for survival.

To show the determination of the English people in their resistance to Rome's decree, a royal dragnet assisted by other religious orders, had turned up just two fugitives in England and one in Scotland. In addition, a number of them escaped who had been earlier imprisoned, which undoubtedly had required help from inside or outside, or both. Then too, because the king was slow to act, the arrests in England had come three months after the arrests in France, providing good time to make preparations. Bruce, the newly elected king of Scotland during this same time period was struggling for Scotland's independence from England, had desecrated a church by shedding blood in it found himself also excommunicated by the pope. And yet, significantly enough, this made no impression on the Scottish clergy, giving Bruce their full support, and allowing a perfect haven for the fugitive Templars.

In any case, there was some kind of mutual assistance organization, to the extent that it stayed alive functioning for three generations, seventy years. There had been a common goal, a common fear, and a common enemy to require the usefulness and need of a mutual protection society to motivate such longevity. In 1381, the "Peasant Uprising" gave ample proof of a 'secret society' that was in place and working, giving both leadership and organization to the uprising, as they vented their

specific hatreds and grievances.

As we review historical events and circumstances during those turbulent times, we see the most deplorable conditions which could only have possibly produced the groans of a population thoroughly oppressed. The rigorous suppression, the complete disregard for human life, the vicious and incredible practices of butchery that were constantly before a person's eye to keep everyone in line from generation to generation, all in the name of religion, where king and pope vied for the position as to who was the 'top' agent of God — this was that marvelous apparatus which was loved by Rome, known as the feudal system. To get a better perspective or the 'pulse' of the times, from when the Templars were first arrested in 1307, and for two hundred years after, we shall briefly, in chronological order, list just a few events that historians felt worthy to record.

The history of man, and certainly the nations of medieval times were constantly at war, causing a steady drain on manpower and finances. England and France, 1337-1453, fought their historic **Hundred Years' war**. The people were taxed, taxed, and taxed again to replenish depleted treasuries. In 1340, the plague **Black Death** swept through Europe and Asia, annihilating whole communities and killing nearly half of the European population. Because of the ruthless oppression of the people, priests of the lower clergy who were intimately involved with the pains and emotions of their parishioners, began to petition and preach against Rome for reform. Around 1360, priests like **John Ball**, **John Wrawe**, and **John Wycliffe**, with other local priests openly condemned the corruptions of Rome and demanded freedom for all men. Clerics, being then the only literate class, wrote and sent letters to other parish priests, intending them to be read aloud for others to hear. By 1380, **John Wycliffe** had translated the Bible into the English language and was sending it to other preaching priests throughout England. His followers were known as Lollards. John Wycliffe himself was spoken of as the "Morning Star of the Reformation". The **Peasant Uprising** was in the year of 1381. In 1450 the printing press was invented and the **John Gutenberg Bible** was printed. Columbus discovered the New World in 1492. **Henry VIII** reigned 1509-1547 and made himself head of the English Church instead of the pope. In Germany, **Martin Luther**, another

humble Catholic parish priest, nailed his famous **Ninety-Five Theses**, in 1517, to the church door, giving new vitality to an already growing and uncontained sentiment of the people.

To go back again to the Peasant Uprising in 1381, there are some important factors involved that can not be dismissed if we're to believe it was just a spontaneous eruption. It's true, conditions were at a boiling point, but there are too many evidences showing that the uprising had been well planned in advance to be a coincidence. First, there were over 100 thousand rebels who took part in the rampage coming from great distances of fifty miles or more and from every direction, but strangely enough, the movement began simultaneously, as by a predetermined given time. Also, some 1500 were wearing a special identifiable hooded uniform, so that they could be readily recognized. Prison gates were left open, draw bridges left down, certainly the work of inside help. Too many inconsistencies to examine them all here in this brief description. However, with all the head choppings that took place, and all the destruction of property, there was marked evidence that the Knights Hospitallers and their properties which had been given to them by the pope, but belonging originally to the Templars, were a very special target. Considering in that day and time, when communication and transportation was by foot or horseback, (and only the noble class had horses) there seems to have been some real quality time, leadership, and organization put into the planning, to have successfully pulled the uprising off.

BROTHERHOOD OF FUGITIVES

Historical and archaeological findings have produced substantial evidence to show the Knights Templar had fully established themselves in a secret underground society through the years, known to the peasants as the "Great Society". It was the influence of that society working with the lower parish priests, that made the clandestine peasant uprising possible. To be a Templar, you could not be of peasant descent, you had to be free born and of the noble class. Yet it was the peasants who always suffered most miserably and it was to their great masses that the seeds of protest and reform, with the urging of the Templars, had the greatest appeal. The uprising was crushed,

but the seeds that gave hope of a better way lived on through the centuries. And whether history records it or not, for an honest researcher, the proof is overwhelming that it was the fugitive Knights Templar who gave birth to the effective protesting of Rome.

To break the bands of Roman tyranny, it took an experience literally so catastrophic within the Catholic realm, setting in motion ripples of protests, waves ever increasing through the centuries, developing into the full tidal wave of the Protestant Reformation, the French Revolution, and the pope taken prisoner in 1798 by the French Army, thus ending the temporal power of the Roman Catholic Church. It is this 'loss' of temporal power, which Scripture describes as the "Beast" receiving a "wound unto death", that rattled the very foundation of the Roman system. And to recover that loss, Rome focused its energies into an ultra important top priority secret strategy, encompassing deep and long range plans — confidently working, patiently waiting for the "Grand Design" to bear its fruit.

How can any mortal man put into descriptive words, a picture that adequately reveals the intensity of those times? The seeds of protest were born, and they lived, and would not die. Through relentless torture, starvation, genocide massacres, burning at the stake, against every conceivable fury of Rome, they could not be extinguished. History estimates that over one hundred million people lost their lives during that time of Roman tyranny. Is it any wonder that God graphically describes this onslaught of Rome as her being "drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus", and calls her the "Beast"? As viciously as Rome fought to hold on to its power, the Word of God had declared that it would receive a "Deadly Wound," and it did. What the clandestine movement the Knights Templar began, God raised up fearless preachers of His 'Word of Truth' to complete.

To try to trace the movements of the fugitive Templars historically is a monumental job, because in reality they left no recorded history. Only by searching for telltale clues, do we recognize their influence and presence. As a group of men fleeing for their lives and the torture they knew was in store for them if they got caught, secrecy and the oaths of those brought

into that secrecy was of paramount importance. Every imaginable cover was used to guarantee that safety. However, the legacy of those courageous men live on today through the records of their 'Old Charges'; prescribed rules which once governed their conduct as a brotherhood of fugitives.

After the Protestant Reformation had completed its work in lifting humanity to its rightful God given position, and the pressure for secrecy diminished, allegorical rituals came into play to preserve and remind the Templars of their earlier times. And when four London lodges finally decided to go public on 24 June 1717, they emerged not with the name Knights Templar, but instead, Freemasonry; a name that reminded them of their rage to be free, to end all serfdom and villeinage, to be a 'free man born of a free mother'. In understanding the tragic history of the Templars, then observing the rituals of Freemasonry, especially their central ritual involving the construction of King Solomon's temple, makes sense. For remember, the original headquarters and residence of the grand master were at the 'round temple' in Jerusalem, from which they took their name. And it was during the time of building their order, that their leader was struck down and murdered, leaving allegorically speaking, the construction of their 'Temple', or order, unfinished. Freemasonry is the direct descendant of the Knights Templar.

With the invention of the printing press, the Scriptures became available to the people. Like a candle illuminating the blackest night, God's truth began to shine in men's hearts. A book that was forbidden and unlawful from the very beginning, the message it contained and the hope it sparked, was valued by far much greater, than the terrible risks of having it in possession. After two hundred years since the arrests of the Templars, God using their devastating experience, brought unspeakable glory to His name and truth. Valiant men transformed by that 'Truth' held God's banner high. Martin Luther, like it was said of the apostle Paul, was turning Europe upside down. The frenzied hatred and seething revenge that Rome held for these men is fully realized in the order given by the Council of Constance, thirty-five years after the death of John Wycliffe, that his remains be dug up and burned for heresy. This desecration was not the act of some isolated fanatic, it was the official act of the Church. Rome's appetite for power and

control over others is insatiable. For one to question or disrupt that power, is an anathema.

Martin Luther's unwavering testimony sent shock waves through the Roman Catholic hierarchy. How dare this lowly monk tamper with the dogmas of Rome? Fearing for his very life, but calm and steadfast in mind, he stood in German court and struck down, one by one, the corrupt doctrines of Roman Catholicism, as compared with Bible truth. So fully did he convince the German princes, that they became his protector from Rome's fury to burn him. His faith and practical teachings of Bible truth were words that exploded in the minds of his listeners. A movement before only spoken in darken hushed tones of whispers, now suddenly burst forth as the noontide sun. The "Protestant Reformation", to the glory of Almighty God!