



**THE GRAND COMMANDERY OF KNIGHTS TEMPLAR
OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA OCTOBER 2024 NEWS
SK Eloi P. Kpamegan, Grand Commander; SK Carter L. Diggs Jr., Editor**

**Historical Events That Led to the Destruction of the Knights Templar
By Eloi Kpamegan, REGC DC Grand Commandery**

After the six Crusades failed to free the Holy Land, King Louis IX again prepared his army in 1248 for a re-attack. He landed with his army in Egypt, capturing the city of Damietta. The next step, attacking Cairo, was a complete disaster. The Egyptians opened the flood gates, trapping his army. Captured, Louis IX had to pay a large sum of money as ransom for his release (167,000 Pounds) and returned to France in 1254. Louis IX did not have a lot of money at the time, and the ransom was paid, reluctantly, by the Knights Templar.

After returning to France, Louis IX made peace with Henry III of England in 1259, so he could save funds in preparation of his army for another Crusade. The Pope allowed Louis IX to tax the Church for the first time, and with this money, Louis IX was able to launch the seventh Crusade. He sailed with his army, but fell ill, and died in 1271 in Tunis. The money problems were getting worse. The son of Louis IX was Philip III, who also tried to launch another Crusade, called the "Aragonese Crusade". It was a disaster. Philip III died, and the Crusade cost France 1,229,000 Pounds. In those days the Crown collected taxes of 656,000 Pounds per year, and spent 652,000 Pounds annually to sustain the country, hence the total expenditure for this crusade was equal to spending the entire country's funds on nothing else but the Crusade for two years!

The son of Philip III was Philip IV ("The Fair" 1268-1314) and became King at the young age of 17. He calculated that the debt his father had made would take over 300 years to repay. At the same time, the war with England had to be paid for as well. Something had to be done, and he ordered Jews to be specially taxed between 1292-1303. In 1306 he ordered the seizure of all Jewish properties. He was also the first to implement a devaluation of the currency, by recalling all coins, melting them down, and re-issuing them with less precious metal content in them. He also taxed the Church again in 1296, but Pope Boniface VIII issued a Bull in 1302 forbidding the clergy to pay. In retaliation, Philip IV ordered that no more gold be exported, causing the Vatican to lose all income from France. Pope Boniface VIII issued another Bull, known as the "*Unam Sanctum*" ascertaining the superiority of the papacy over all secular rulers. When Philip IV received the decree, he burned it in front of all assembled.

In retaliation to the papal Bull, Philip IV tried Pope Boniface VIII in abstinence on a variety of charges, saying that Boniface VIII was "unfit to sit on the throne of Peter". Pope Boniface VIII excommunicated Philip IV as a result. Pope Boniface VIII died a few weeks later, under mysterious circumstances, after being kidnapped by men that Philip IV had arranged for. Pope Boniface VIII was succeeded by Pope Benedict XI. It was said that Philip IV, feeling that this new Pope was

not going to be any friendlier to France, arranged for Pope Benedict XI to be poisoned. Meanwhile, Philip IV arranged for his own candidate, Bernard de Goth (1264-1314), Archbishop of Bordeaux to be named Pope Clement V, but ordered him to stay in France (in Avignon). This period was known as the "Babylonian captivity of the papacy". History showed that Bernard de Goth (Pope Clement V) and Philip IV did not get along with each other. In fact, Bernard de Goth sided many times with the reigning Pope against Philip IV before he was made Pope himself. However, being offered the papacy was what he wanted more than anything else? and simply made a deal. With this new ally in the papacy, Philip IV was able to levy the tax on the Church once again. To consolidate his own new power, Pope Clement V appointed 24 new cardinals, 23 of them being French.

The stage is now set: With the mounting debt, Philip IV was getting in deep trouble. Riots were breaking out, and the monarchy was in trouble. Two main riot leaders, *Noffo Dei* and *Squin De Florian* were caught, and claimed that they were ex-Knights Templar, probably thinking that by claiming such a connection, the authorities would not put them on trial. They were brought before Philip IV, and confessed that the Knights Templar were heretic, unlawful, and unfaithful to the Pope amongst other charges. Armed with this excuse, and with his "own" Pope on the Throne of Peter, Philip IV decided to attack the 15,000 Knights Templar in France on Friday October 13, 1307. Many Knights Templar were arrested, and horribly tortured. The Knight Templar's Grand Master, Jacques De Molay confessed, after lengthy torturing, that the Order does not see Jesus as God but denied any other wrongdoing. Pope Clement V asked his Bishops to confirm the Order's guilt, but the bishops refused, citing long and distinguished service to the Church by the Knights Templar over the many years. So, on April 3, 1312, Clement V took the matter in his own hands, and abolished the Order with a Bull, called "Vox in Excelso" on March 22, 1312. He further issued another Bull, called "Ad Providum" on May 2, 1312, ordering all of the Knights Templars' possessions to be given to the Knights Hospitaller (later known as The Knights of Malta).

Jacques De Molay amongst others was burned at the stake on March 18, 1314, but before dying, Jacques De Molay curses both Philip IV and Clement V to die within one year. Both died within 9 months. Pope Clement V dies in April 1314, and King Philip IV dies in a hunting accident on November 29, 1314. All three of Philip's sons become king in their own time (Louis X, Philip V, Charles IV) and his daughter, Isabella, becomes Queen consort to Edward II of England.

Conclusion: It is because of the abuse of power, the despotism, shown by Philip IV and Clement V that they played such a central role in the Scottish Rite degrees in which Philip IV symbolized tyrannical Kings, and Pope Clement V symbolized ambitious religious leaders.

References:

- The Second Messiah by Christopher Knight and Rober Lomas
 - A Bridge to Light by Rex Hutchens
- The Hiram Key by Christopher Knight and Robert Lomas
 - Born in Blood by John Robinson
- The Columbia Encyclopedia by the Columbia University Press