

Sources : The Bible, King James Version  
The First Crusade, Sir Steven  
Runciman  
The Templars, Dan Jones  
Medieval Military Orders,  
Nicholas Morton



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# FROM SOJOURNER TO TEMPLAR

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AN INTRODUCTION



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15. So...the Templars were on a roll. The Order was popular and influential with an abundance of recruits. With legacies and donations of land the Order's wealth grew and grew. Seeing other people do well can inspire suspicion and jealousy in some. Such a one was Philip the Fair, King of France. Suspicion of Templar power and/or greed for their possessions motivated on his part a most cruel suppression of the Order. Since 1312 the original order has been no more but its fascination lives on; if you hold that fascination and would like to explore more about the Knights templar and in a Masonic context then the Masonic Order of Knights Templar is probably for you!

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he and other companions came to Europe to seek papal blessing for their order. In good management style, this was passed to a committee. In 1129 there took place the Council at Troyes. There was a problem to be faced by the council. Should we always turn the other cheek; or can a religious order fight with steel as well as spiritual weapons? The Council considered the matter and decided it could; so, the Templars got their official recognition from the church.

14. The Abbot of Clairvaux, Saint Bernard, as he later became, was a supporter. He was a Cistercian monk, and he permitted the Templars to wear the white garments of the Cistercians. In 1139, the then pope, Innocent II gave authority to the Templars to wear the red cross on the breast of the tunic.

## **The Knights Templar – an Introduction**

1. Who were the Knights Templar? They were an order of warrior monks, according to an Arab writer, the 'fiercest fighters of all the Franks'. As a religious order, they were vowed to poverty, chastity and obedience; denied the society of women. They came into existence shortly after the First Crusade. Their role was to protect the Holy Places in Palestine and to protect pilgrims en route from the seaport of Jaffa to Jerusalem.
2. Fear not: The Masonic Templar Rite does not require us to lead monkish lives, still less engage in battle with sword and shield. We do wear the same dress and are similarly armed. We obtain, we hope, knowledge and edification from a study of the Templar knight of old. That apart, there is no link save a genealogical

one; for it is entirely possible, who knows, that one or more of us may trace descent from a hero of old.

3. Some explanation of the origins. You know what a 'knight' is. 'Templar' is not so obvious. It connotes a 'temple', but which one, and where is it or was it?
4. As Companions of the Royal Arch you will be familiar with the Ritual relating to the 3 Temples or Lodges. From what you already know, (appropriately filled out with a bit of scripture) we can move to what you do not yet know. Let me remind you of some of the history.
5. The first Temple is the Holy Lodge, the magnificent tent or tabernacle which housed the Ark of the covenant. This tabernacle (once constructed) accompanied Moses and

useful in the continuing defence of Jerusalem and in the protection of pilgrims, so they were given a permanent home. Where was this, you enquire? Well, in the eastern part of Jerusalem there is an area of elevated ground. It is known as the Temple Mount. On it there are 2 fine buildings. One was called the Dome of the Rock. The Crusaders had this consecrated as a church, the 'Temple of the Lord'. The other building was, under Islamic rule, the 'al Aqsa Mosque'. This became the lodging house for the Knights. Living, as they did, next to the Temple they were dubbed 'the Templars'.

13. By this time the Templar master was the Knight Hugh de Payns. He recognised that the necessary increases of funds and manpower needed some salesmanship. After all, for reasons already stated, they could not breed their reinforcements. So...

brothers, Godfrey of Bouillon and his brother Eustace (that name has a familiar ring).

10. Against all odds, the Crusaders made it to Jerusalem, besieged it and on the 15 July 1099 took it by storm; the sequel was an indiscriminate slaughter of the Muslim population.
11. The Crusaders gave thanks in the Holy Sepulchre. Godfrey of Boulogne was elected as *Advocatus Sancti Sepulchri*, by interpretation, Defender of the Holy Sepulchre.
12. After the taking of Jerusalem many returned home, considering their Crusader vows performed. Some stayed, a handful of knights, attached to the Holy Sepulchre. They lived in poverty; often their food was the leftovers from the Hospitallers' table. Clearly the rulers of Jerusalem recognised that these men could be

the tribes in their wanderings around the wilderness of Sinai.

**Exodus 35,30-35; 36,1-2**

*30: And Moses said unto the children of Israel, See, the LORD hath called by name Bezaleel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah; 31: And he hath filled him with the spirit of God, in wisdom, in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship; 32: And to devise curious works, to work in gold, and in silver, and in brass, 33: And in the cutting of stones, to set them, and in carving of wood, to make any manner of cunning work. 34: And he hath put in his heart that he may teach, both he, and Aholiab, the son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan. 35: Them hath he filled with wisdom of heart, to work all manner of work, of the engraver, and of the cunning workman, and of the embroiderer, in blue, and in purple, in scarlet, and in*

*fine linen, and of the weaver, even of them that do any work, and of those that devise cunning work.*

*1: Then wrought Bezaleel and Aholiab, and every wise hearted man, in whom the LORD put wisdom and understanding to know how to work all manner of work for the service of the sanctuary, according to all that the LORD had commanded. 2: And Moses called Bezaleel and Aholiab, and every wise hearted man, in whose heart the LORD had put wisdom, even everyone whose heart stirred him up to come unto the work to do it:*

6. The second Temple is that of King Solomon, the Sacred Lodge. One of the materials Solomon needed was wood, so he wrote to Hiram, King of Tyre.

### **Kings I, 5, 5-10**

*5: And, behold, I purpose to build an house unto the name of the LORD my*

8. So...after that historical and scriptural tour, from what temple was it, then, that the Templars took their title? For that we have to move on over 1000 years. Since 686 AD, Jerusalem had been under Arab rule. Having said that, Christians still lived there and had freedom of worship in their church, the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. ( As the name implies, this was the church erected over the site of Jesus' tomb and resurrection). The new force in the area, however, were the Seljuk Turks ; moving from further East, they had overrun large tracts of the Byzantine empire. Constantinople itself was under threat.
9. Urban, the Pope of Rome received an appeal for help from Constantinople; he was concerned to free the Holy city from Arab rule. He declared the First Crusade. Prominent among its leaders were 2

*hosts: 5: According to the word that I covenanted with you when ye came out of Egypt, so my spirit remaineth among you: fear ye not. 6: For thus saith the LORD of hosts; Yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land; 7: And I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come: and I will fill this house with glory, saith the LORD of hosts. 8: The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, saith the LORD of hosts. 9: The glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former, saith the LORD of hosts: and in this place will I give peace, saith the LORD of hosts.*

The Royal Lodge lasted over 500 years until it's destruction by Titus, son of the Emperor Vespasian in AD 70.

*God, as the LORD spake unto David my father, saying, Thy son, whom I will set upon thy throne in thy room, he shall build an house unto my name. 6: Now therefore command thou that they hew me cedar trees out of Lebanon; and my servants shall be with thy servants: and unto thee will I give hire for thy servants according to all that thou shalt appoint: for thou knowest that there is not among us any that can skill to hew timber like unto the Sidonians. 7: And it came to pass, when Hiram heard the words of Solomon, that he rejoiced greatly, and said, Blessed be the LORD this day, which hath given unto David a wise son over this great people. 8: And Hiram sent to Solomon, saying, I have considered the things which thou sentest to me for: and I will do all thy desire concerning timber of cedar, and concerning timber of fir. 9: My servants shall bring them down from Lebanon unto the sea: and I will*

*convey them by sea in floats unto the place that thou shalt appoint me, and will cause them to be discharged there, and thou shalt receive them: and thou shalt accomplish my desire, in giving food for my household. 10: So Hiram gave Solomon cedar trees and fir trees according to all his desire.*

Solomon then recruited Hiram out of Tyre.

### **Kings I, 7, 13-15**

*13: And king Solomon sent and fetched Hiram out of Tyre. 14: He was a widow's son of the tribe of Naphtali, and his father was a man of Tyre, a worker in brass: and he was filled with wisdom, and understanding, and cunning to work all works in brass. And he came to king Solomon, and wrought all his work. 15: For he cast two pillars of brass, of eighteen cubits high apiece: and a line of twelve cubits did compass either of them about.*

Solomon's Temple lasted about 400 years. It fell victim to destruction under the Babylonian empire. All the Jews of any account were exiled to Babylon. Once the Persian king Cyrus had conquered Babylon, his policy was to allow the Jews a return to their native land, 'if it be they so wished it'. Their being no temple to return to, they had to fashion their own.

7. The third Temple, the Royal Lodge was erected in Jerusalem: the prophet Haggai had spoken the word of the Lord to Zerubbabel and to Joshua, son of Josedech:

### **Haggai, 2, 4-9**

*4: Yet now be strong, O Zerubbabel, saith the LORD; and be strong, O Joshua, son of Josedech, the high priest; and be strong, all ye people of the land, saith the LORD, and work: for I am with you, saith the LORD of*