

## KANSAS TOPICS

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Greetings Sir Knights of Kansas!

### Doing Right, Is Never Wrong

So, I'm hoping you see this title and think, "Well, that is obvious." I would say most the time, yes. We all would agree that to do what is right, what is the most beneficial, is part of being, not just a good Templar or Mason, but part of being a good Christian and a good person. However doing what is right is not always easy.

I'm once again talking of Frederick II, Holy Roman Emperor and reluctant Crusader. His appearance in Acre in the year 1228 put the ancient Templars in a rather precarious position by forcing a decision: to either disobey a Papal Bull and assist in recapturing Jerusalem, or remain in Acre and have no influence in the outcomes which Frederick would bring. The Templars deemed it of great importance that they should know of his movements, and thought if there were territorial or military gains, they should be included. In the end they chose to help Frederick with his capture of Jerusalem, but they would not become part of his army.

The Templars were forbidden from assisting or fighting with a leader who had been excommunicated by the Pope, and therefore could not fight for Frederick. As a solution to this problem, Templars marched a day behind Frederick at some times or, at others, to his flank on a parallel path, so as to show they were a different army. They would not fight under the command of Frederick either, but only if the commands of his army were made "in the name of God" would they

offer their assistance. In this way they viewed themselves as fighting in the name of God and not assisting an excommunicate.

The large armies of Frederick and the Templars were on the move, and al-Kamil – nephew of Saladin, and heir to his realm, – fearing that he would have to give up his own ambitions to turn and fight with this united group, quickly offered terms with Frederick II. Frederick was able to win a 10 year truce along with control of Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Hebron and other parts of the Holy Land. Years earlier Saladin had torn down the city walls of Jerusalem, and as part of the truce, the Franks and the Templars were forbidden from building defensive fortifications, so the foothold gained, was tenuous at best. Frederick II left after just two days; he had to crown himself King of Jerusalem as no priest or Templar would defy the Pope and place the crown on Frederick's head.

This was the last time in the history of the Crusades in which there would be a Christian hold on Jerusalem, a hold that was brief and mostly symbolic. The Templars addition to Frederick's forces was a violation of orders and Papal law at the time, but as Templars we should always be prepared to do what is right regardless of what is considered acceptable, either by social or even legal standards.

Some might see this as a "better to ask for forgiveness" type of situation, because the Templars faced no consequences for violating the Papal orders or assisting Frederick. Others could see it as taking an opportunity to do what is best, even though it wasn't "government approved." Either way, Templars should always be ready to make the world a place where people can apply the teachings Jesus in their everyday lives.

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