



Good day Worthy Knights,

In this part 67, Godfrey de Bouillon

(Wikipedia)

Godfrey of Bouillon was born around 1060 as the second son of Eustace II, Count of Boulogne, and Ida, daughter of the Lotharingian Duke Godfrey the Bearded and his first wife, Doda.

His birthplace was probably Boulogne-sur-Mer, although one 13th-century chronicler cites Baisy, a town in what is now Walloon Brabant, Belgium.

However his maternal uncle, Godfrey the Hunchback, died childless and named his nephew, Godfrey of Bouillon, as his heir and next in line to his Duchy of Lower Lorraine. This Duchy was an important one at the time, serving as a buffer between the Kingdom of France and the German lands.

In 1095 Pope Urban II called for a Crusade to liberate Jerusalem from Muslim forces and also to aid the Byzantine Empire, which was under Muslim attack. Godfrey took out loans on most of his lands, or sold them, to the bishop of Liège and the bishop of Verdun. With this money he gathered thousands of knights to fight in the Holy Land as the Army of Godfrey of Bouillon. In this he was joined by his older brother, Eustace, and his younger brother, Baldwin,

Godfrey and his troops were the second to arrive in Constantinople (after Hugh of Vermandois). During the next several months the other Crusader armies arrived. Suddenly, the Byzantine Emperor had an army of about 4,000 to 8,000 mounted knights and 25,000 to 55,000 infantry camped on his doorstep. But Godfrey and Alexius I had different goals. The Byzantine Emperor wanted the help of the Crusader soldiers to recapture lands that the Seljuk Turks had taken. The Crusaders, however, had the main aim of liberating the Holy Land in Palestine from the Muslims and reinstating Christian rule there. For them, Alexius I and his Turks were only a sideshow. Worse, the Byzantine Emperor expected the Crusaders to take an oath of loyalty to him. Godfrey and the other knights agreed to a modified version of this oath, promising to help return some lands to Alexius I. By the spring of 1097, the Crusaders were ready to march into battle.

In 1098, Godfrey took part in the capture of Antioch, which fell in June of that year after long and bitter fighting. During the siege, some of the Crusaders felt that the battle was hopeless and left the Crusade to return to Europe. Alexius I, hearing of the desperate situation, thought that all was lost at Antioch and did not come to help the Crusaders as promised. When the Crusaders finally took the city, they decided that their oaths to Alexius had been breached and were no longer in effect. Bohemond, the first to enter the city gates, claimed the prize for himself. A Muslim force under Kerbogha, from the city of Mosul, arrived and battled the Crusaders, but the Christians finally defeated these Islamic troops.

After this victory, Most of the foot soldiers wanted to continue south to Jerusalem, but Raymond IV of Toulouse, by this time the most powerful of the princes, having taken others into his employ, such as Tancred, hesitated to continue the march. After months of waiting, the common people on the crusade forced Raymond to march on to Jerusalem, and Godfrey quickly joined him.

It was in Jerusalem that the legend of Godfrey of Bouillon was born. The army reached the city in June 1099 and built a wooden siege tower (from lumber provided by some Italian sailors who intentionally scrapped their ships) to get over the walls. The major

attack took place on July 14 and 15, 1099. Godfrey and some of his knights were the first to take the walls and enter the city. It was an end to three years of fighting by the Crusaders, but they had finally achieved what they had set out to do in 1096: to recapture the Holy Land and, in particular, the city of Jerusalem and its holy sites, such as the Holy Sepulchre, the empty tomb of Jesus Christ. He endowed the hospital in the Muristan after the First Crusade.

Once the city was returned to Christian rule, some form of government had to be set up. On July 22, a council was held in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. Raymond of Toulouse refused to become king. Godfrey agreed to become ruler.

As was typical of Godfrey's Christian ethics, he refused to be crowned king "upon the plea that he would never wear a crown of gold where his Saviour had worn a crown of thorns". The exact nature and meaning of his title is thus somewhat of a controversy.

"While he was besieging the city of Acre, Godfrey, the ruler of Jerusalem, was struck by an arrow, which killed him", reports the Arab chronicler Ibn al-Qalanisi. Christian chronicles make no mention of this; instead, Albert of Aachen and Ekkehard of Aura report that Godfrey contracted an illness in Caesarea in June 1100. It was later believed that the emir of Caesarea had poisoned him, but there seems to be no basis for this rumour; William of Tyre does not mention it. It is also said that he died after eating a poisoned apple. In any event, he died in Jerusalem after suffering from a prolonged illness. Godfrey never married.



Castle of Bouillon, Ardennes, Belgium

