

14th Century: Questioning the Power of the Pope

Historical Theology

Date: 7/17/22

Author: Lonnie Moore

I. Philip the Fair (King of France) v Pope Boniface VIII

A. Round One

1. Philip taxes the clergy to pay for war
2. Clergy complained to the Pope
3. Boniface tells the clergy that they can't pay the tax or they will be excommunicated
4. Philip stopped all gold and silver from leaving Rome
5. The economy of the papacy was crippled
6. Boniface gives the okay for the clergy to "voluntarily" contribute to Philip

B. Round Two

1. Boniface sent an ambassador to Philip in 1301
2. The ambassador was to complain about Philip's actions such as the seizure of church property
3. Philip arrested and imprisoned the ambassador
4. Boniface ordered the release of the ambassador and for Philip to come to Rome to answer for his actions.
5. Philip called a National Assembly (nobles, clergy, and commoners) They supported Philip
6. Boniface released a papal bull claiming political and spiritual authority rests in the _____ and submission to the _____ is necessary for _____

C. Round Three

1. Philip declared Boniface unfit to be Pope
2. Philip called for Boniface to appear before a Council of the Church
3. The French Parliament and the University of Paris joined in the call for Boniface to appear before a Council
4. Boniface was about to excommunicate Philip but
5. Philip had Boniface kidnapped and imprisoned
6. Boniface refused to resign

7. Boniface's allies rescued him but he died a month later.

II. The Babylonian Captivity

- A. Next pope, Benedict XI, died after eight months on the job
- B. After that the French cardinals were successful in electing one of their own, Clement V
- C. Clement was a mere puppet in the hands of King Philip
- D. Clement never went to Rome, instead he set up court at Avignon (Av-vin-yon)
- E. Avignon was, at the time, an independent country. Today it is part of France.
- F. The next pope, Clement VI, purchased Avignon and made it a papal city.
- G. Avignon was independent country, a papal city, so it was independent of Philip/French influence--- Right?
- H. Problem: Avignon was totally inside of France and dominated by the French monarchs
- I. The papacy was in Avignon for almost 70 years (1309-1377)
- J. This time was known as the "Babylonian Captivity" by _____
- K. It is known as the "Avignonese Captivity" by _____
- L. Seven popes, in all, all French, all appointed by a College of Cardinals that was majority French.

III. Aftermath of Avignon

- A. Wasn't the papacy all about the successors of Peter?
- B. And wasn't Peter the Bishop of Rome?
- C. So how can his successor not be in Rome?
- D. This led to many people criticizing the office of the papacy

VI. Marsilius of Padua

- A. Was Italian, but was the rector of University of Paris
- B. His writings and speeches questioned the Popes of Avignon
- C. His opposition caused him to flee for his life to a German duchy

- D. The Holy Roman Emperor, Louis the Bavarian, gave him and other critics protection.
- E. Louis was no friend of the popes, Pope John XXII had excommunicated Louis
- F. The Pope had condemned the Franciscans, so Louis went to Rome and set up a pope there in 1328
- G. Marsilius wrote the *Defensor Paicis*
 - 1. Authority really lay with the _____ not with the _____
 - 2. Spiritual and political leaders are appointed by _____
 - 3. The power resides in a _____ representing a body of believers, not in the pope
 - 4. The Church includes the _____, the _____, and all the other believers in Christ.
 - 5. The pope does not have a divine right-it was merely by happenstance that he ended up exercising the power. That is the governmental power was in Rome so the Bishop of Rome became powerful.
 - 6. The pope has no right to depose political leaders.
 - 7. Priests only have power to teach, persuade, and rebuke
 - 8. The church and the state are the spiritual and political aspects of a single Christian society.

Question to Ponder: Did Marsilius have any influence on Luther or Calvin?

V. Evaluating the Popes' time in Avignon

- A. Achievements
 - 1. Agencies and offices of the papacy were reorganized and centralized
 - 2. Missions were expanded and reached as far as China
 - 3. They promoted university education
 - 4. College of Cardinals strengthened their role in church government
 - 5. Settled many secular conflicts
- B. Poor reputation
 - 1. Even when not bowing to the wishes of the kings, it looked like they were under French influence.
 - 2. Pope Clement V gave into Philip's demands to arrest and put on trial the Knights Templar. Many Knights

were executed and their wealth confiscated by Philip.

- 3. A scholar in the work of the Papacy was not happy about being in Avignon instead of Rome. He (Petrarch) is the one who referred to Avignon as the "Babylon of the West"
- 4. Roman Church was weakened by the Avignon years because of the bickering between factions: French v Italians. Many people already wondering about the Church because of the Black Plague began to question the authority of the Church and the Papacy even more.

VI. William of Ockham

- 1. Raised in Ockham, England
- 2. About the age of 10, was sent to London to become a member of the Franciscan order (Greyfriars)
- 3. Went on after "grade school and high school" to Oxford
- 4. Was called to Avignon and charged with heresy
- 5. One problem was the view that the clergy should not own property or be wealthy, but be like Christ and his disciples. Pope John XXII was against this doctrine.
- 6. William stated that Pope John was a heretic since he rejected the view that since Jesus and his apostles were poor and lived off the generosity of others.
- 7. William fled for his life with several other Franciscans to the protection of Louis of Bavaria.

VII. Peter D'Ailly

- A. Studied the works of Roger Bacon and William of Ockham
- B. Was a member of the conciliar movement, which wanted to bring the papacy under the authority of an ecumenical Council.
- C. He defended the doctrine of the immaculate conception.
- D. He denied the infallibility of the pope
- E. He thought that "impanation" was a better explanation of the eucharist than transubstantiation.
- F. Biggest problem: often changed his mind if it provided a better opportunity.

Sources: "14th Century" Christianity.com

"Unam Sanctam" Papal Encyclicals Online

The Remnant Trust, Texas Tech University

The Avignon Papacy. ThoughtCo.com

Clement V. New World Encyclopedia

2000 Years of Christ's Power. Nick Needham



Marsilius of Padua



Boniface VIII



William of Ockham



Philip the Fair



Peter D'Ailly



Clement V

Unam Sanctam-Papal Bull

One God, One Faith, One Spiritual Authority

Pope Boniface VIII- November 18, 1302

1. Church is one, holy, catholic, and also apostolic.
 2. Outside of the Church, there is neither salvation nor the remission of sins
 - a. The Church represents one sole mystical body whose Head is Christ and the head of Christ is God [1 Cor. 11:3].
 - b. In the Church, then is one Lord, one faith, one baptism [Eph. 4:5].
 - c. There had been at the time of the deluge only one ark of Noah, prefiguring the one Church, which ark, having been finished to a single cubit, had only one pilot and guide, i.e., Noah, and we read that, outside of this ark, all that subsisted on the earth was destroyed.
 3. We venerate this Church as one
 - a. The tunic of the Lord, the seamless tunic, which was not rent but which was cast by lot [John 19:23- 24].
 - b. Therefore, of the one and only Church there is one body and one head, not two heads like a monster.
 - c. Peter was the Vicar of Christ and now, the successor of Peter, since the Lord speaking to Peter Himself said: '*Feed my sheep*' [Jn 21:17], meaning, all my sheep, not some here and someone else feeds other sheep. We understand that He entrusted all to him [Peter].
 - d. Therefore, if the Greeks (Eastern Orthodox) say that they are not confided to Peter and to his successors, they must confess not being the sheep of Christ, since Our Lord says in John '*there is one sheepfold and one shepherd.*'
 - e. There may be two swords, one for the spiritual and one for the temporal. However, one sword ought to be subordinated to the other.
 - f. The Temporal authority, subjected to spiritual power. For since the Apostle said: '*There is no power except from God and the things that are, are ordained of God*' [Rom 13:1-2].
 4. We must recognize the more clearly that spiritual power surpasses in dignity and in nobility any temporal power whatever, as spiritual things surpass the temporal.
 - a. For with truth as our witness, it belongs to spiritual power to establish the terrestrial power and to pass judgement if it has not been good.
- b. Thus is accomplished the prophecy of Jeremiah (1:10) concerning the Church and the ecclesiastical power: '*Behold to-day I have placed you over nations, and over kingdoms*'
 - c. Therefore, if the terrestrial power err, it will be judged by the spiritual power; but if a minor spiritual power err, it will be judged by a superior spiritual power; but if the highest power of all err, it can be judged only by God, and not by man, according to the testimony of the Apostle: '*The spiritual man judgeth of all things and he himself is judged by no man*' [1 Cor 2:15].
 - d. This authority is exercised by a man, but it is not a human power but a divine power since it was given to Peter by a divine word. The Lord saying to Peter himself, '*Whatsoever you shall bind on earth, shall be bound also in Heaven*' etc., [Mt 16:19].
 - e. Therefore whoever resists this power thus ordained by God, resists the ordinance of God [Rom 13:2].
 - f. Furthermore, according to the testimony of Moses, in the beginning, God created heaven and earth [Gen 1:1].
 - g. Furthermore, we declare, we proclaim, we define that it is absolutely necessary for salvation that every human creature be subject to the Roman Pontiff.

The Defensor Pacis (In defense and restoration of peace) by Marsilius of Padua

1. The author of the law is the people
 - a. Therefore, the people should themselves elect, or at least appoint, the head of the government.
 - b. The head of the government, lest he should be tempted to put himself above the scope of the laws, should have at his disposal only a limited armed force.
 - c. This chief is responsible to the people for his breaches of the law, and in serious cases they can condemn him to death.
2. The real cause of the trouble which prevails among men is the papacy, a "fictitious" power, the development of which is the result of a series of usurpations.

Some of Marsilius' conclusions:

1. The one divine canonical Scripture, the conclusions that necessarily follow from it, and the interpretation placed upon it by the common consent of Christians, are true, and belief in them is necessary to the salvation of those to whom they are made known.
2. The general council of Christians or its majority alone has the authority to define doubtful passages of the divine law, and to determine those that are to be regarded as articles of the Christian faith, belief in which is essential to salvation; and no partial council or single person of any position has the authority to decide these questions.
3. It is necessary to salvation to obey the commandments of the new divine law [the New Testament] and the conclusions that follow necessarily from it and the precepts of reason; but it is not necessary to salvation to obey all the commandments of the ancient law [the Old Testament].
4. No mortal has the right to dispense with the commands or prohibitions of the new divine law; but the general council alone has the right prohibit things which are permitted by the new law, under penalties in this world or the next, and no partial council or single person of any position has that right.

5. Decrees of the bishop of Rome has no power to coerce anyone by secular penalties or punishments.
6. Coercive power and coercive judgments are the prerogatives of the state and cannot be exercised by the church.
7. There can be only one supreme ruling power in a state or kingdom.
8. No bishop or priest has coercive authority or jurisdiction over any layman or clergyman, even if he is a heretic.
9. No bishop or priest or body of bishops or priests has the authority to excommunicate anyone or to interdict the performance of divine services, without the authorization of the body of citizens.
10. All bishops derive their authority in equal measure immediately from Christ, and it cannot be proved from the divine law that one bishop should be over or under another, in temporal or spiritual matters.
11. No mortal has the authority to permit marriages that are prohibited by the divine law, especially by the New Testament.
12. The prince who rules by the authority of the laws of Christians, has the right to determine the number of churches and temples, and the number of priests, deacons, and other clergy who shall serve in them.
13. The prince alone, acting in accordance with the laws of the body of citizens, has the authority to condemn heretics, delinquents, and all others who should endure temporal punishment, to inflict bodily punishment upon them, and to exact fines from them.
14. The general council of Christians alone has the authority to ordain fasts and other prohibitions of the use of food.
15. The general council of Christians alone has the authority to canonize anyone or to order anyone to be adored as a saint.
16. The general council of Christians alone has the authority to forbid the marriage of priests, bishops, and other clergy, and to make other laws concerning ecclesiastical discipline, and that council or the one to whom it delegates its authority alone may dispense with these laws.
17. The people as a community and as individuals, according to their several means, are required by divine law support the bishops and other clergy authorized by the gospel, so that they may have food and clothing and the other necessities of life; but the people are not required to pay tithes or other taxes beyond the amount necessary for such support.