Medieval Church: The Crusades

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Today’s Lesson: As Relevant as Today’s Newspaper

Those who forget history are condemned to repeat it

- Innocent pilgrims the victims of unprovoked terrorist attacks
- Religious fanatics battle for their “God given” “Holy Land”
- Eternal salvation promised to those who die in the Holy War
- Islamic Jihad declared against Kingdom of Jerusalem
- Innocent civilians butchered
- Assassin terrorists hide in mountains of Iran, promising Sensual Paradise to martyrs who die killing Christians
- Military victories on battlefields overwhelmed by animosity of local populations
- Previously divided Muslims, unite in hatred of the West
Verses to Consider

• Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, my servants would have been fighting, that I might not be delivered over to the Jews. But my kingdom is not from the world."
  John 18:36

• “And behold, one of those who were with Jesus stretched out his hand and drew his sword and struck the servant of the high priest and cut off his ear. Then Jesus said to him, "Put your sword back into its place. For all who take the sword will perish by the sword. Do you think that I cannot appeal to my Father, and he will at once send me more than twelve legions of angels?"
  Matthew 26:51-53

• And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."
  Matthew 28:18-20
Muhammed
(570?-632)
Moslem Raids and Expansion Into Europe

Muslims sack Rome twice!
Treatment of Christians: Pact of Umar

- It may have originated as early as 673, after the Muslims conquered Christian Syria and Palestine. But scholars date the text in its current form to about the ninth century.
- The Pact is embedded in the *shari'a* or Islamic law.
- Jewish and Christian minorities (*dhimmi*, or literally "protected peoples") have freedom to remain in Muslim countries but no freedom to recruit.
- *Dhimmi*
  - disallowed from exerting any authority over Muslims
  - barred from the army or civil service
  - head-tax (*jizya*).
- Muslims have not always dealt with Christians and Jews as enemies, as they have the pagans, but have allowed these fellow "peoples of the book" to keep practicing their own religion.
- The treatment has varied over the centuries and from place to place (compare Turkey with Saudi Arabia).
- In some cases there has been oppressive treatment of Christians and Jews, consistent with *jihad*. 
The Alleged Pact of Umar with Christians

• We shall not build, ...new monasteries, churches, convents, or monks' cells, nor shall we repair, ...such of them as fall in ruins
• We shall not manifest our religion publicly nor convert anyone to it. We shall not prevent any of our kin from entering Islam if they wish it.
• We shall show respect toward the Muslims, and we shall rise from our seats when they wish to sit
• We shall not seek to resemble the Muslims by imitating any of their garments, the cap, the turban, footwear, or the parting of the hair. We shall not speak as they do, nor shall we adopt their surnames.
• We shall not mount on saddles, nor shall we gird swords nor bear any kind of arms nor carry them on our persons.
• We shall not sell fermented drinks.
• We shall shave the fronts of our heads.
• We shall not display our crosses or our books in the roads or markets.
• We shall use only clappers [wooden noisemakers used to call people to worship] in our churches very softly.
• We shall not raise our voices when following our dead. We shall not carry lighted candles on any of the roads of the Muslims or in their markets.
• We shall not bury our dead near the Muslims
Islam Unity Dissolves Into Ethnic Factions

- Moors
- Turks
- Kurds
- Persians
- Egyptians & Syrians
- Arabs
Map of Medieval Crusades
The Tide Turns: Christians Recapture Spain 1000-1300 AD

- Islamic Spain was intellectually lively but politically chaotic
- Dictator Al-Mansur played off aristocracy, mercenary soldiers and slave bureaucracy against each other.
- After his death, Spain collapsed into revolt and civil war, and fragmented into small states
- Advance of Christian Spain facilitated
Pope Urban Calls “Holy Crusade” 1095

• 1095--Pope Urban II proclaims the First Crusade to reclaim Jerusalem from the Moslems.

• In response to a plea for help from Byzantines and Eastern Christians living under Muslim rule, Pope Urban II called on Western nobles at the Council of Clermont to aid the East. The result of his preaching and that of others, including Peter the Hermit, was the First Crusade (1095-99).

Objectives

• Help the Byzantines Fight the Turks
• Heal Great Schism on Rome's terms
• Capture Holy Land from the Moslems,
• Stop the French nobility from fighting each other

• The Crusades also demonstrated how influential the pope was during the High Middle Ages (1000-1300)

“Crusade” comes from Latin & French for Take up the Cross
Urban II Forgives Sins of Crusaders.

Christ commands it. All who go there and lose their lives, be it on the road or on the sea, or in the fight against the pagans, will be granted immediate forgiveness for their sins. This I grant to all who march by virtue of the great gift which God has given me.

....Let those who have been accustomed unjustly to wage private warfare against the faithful now go against the infidels and end with victory this war which should have been begun long ago. Let those who for a long time, have been robbers, now become knights. Let those who have been fighting against their brothers and relatives now fight ... against the barbarians. Let those who have been serving as mercenaries for small pay now obtain the eternal reward. .... Behold! on this side will be the sorrowful and poor, on that, the rich; on this side, the enemies of the Lord, on that, his friends.

Pope Urban II
Bernard of Clairvaux

- St. Bernard of Clairvaux
  - Revered; powerful orator
  - Word of his presence brought thousands

- Speaking about the popularity of the Crusades: “I opened my mouth; I spoke; and at once the Crusaders have multiplied to infinity. Villages and towns are now deserted. You will scarcely find one man for every seven women. Everywhere you see widows whose husbands are still alive.”

- Speaking about the Crusaders: All but a few crusaders were “criminals and sinners, ravishers and the sacrilegious, murderers, perjurers and adulterers. ..Their departure makes their own people happy, and their arrival (in the East) cheers those whom they are hastening to help. They aid both groups, not only by protecting the one but also by not oppressing the other.”

“Crosses, give us crosses!”
Christian Holy War’s Rewards

The Christian who slays the unbeliever in the Holy War is sure of his reward, more sure if he is slain. The Christian glories in the death of the pagan, because Christ is thereby glorified.

Bernard of Clairvaux
1096 The Crusaders Massacre Jews Throughout Europe

- 1096: Crusaders and their followers annihilate the Jewish communities of Northern France, the Valley of the Rhine, Towns along the Danube and in Bohemia, as well as other centers of Jewish life.
- “The inception of the Crusades ignited horrible attacks against the Jews, and even fellow Christians were not exempt from rape and plunder. Incredible atrocities befell the Muslim foes. Crusaders sawed open dead bodies in search of gold, sometimes cooking and eating the flesh—a delicacy they found “better than spiced peacock” as one chronicler chose to describe it.” Bruce Shelly, *Church History in Plain Language*.

Bernard of Clarivaux’s preaching incites crowds
The Mob Crusades

- Walter the Penniless, a German monk named Gottshalk, and Peter the Hermit preached widely in Europe in support of the First Crusade and led approximately 100,000 enthusiastic peasants with a few knights to Constantinople in 1096.
- Only 7,000 survived the journey and made it to Constantinople, the rest died of starvation or were killed by Hungarians and Bulgarians along the way!
- The survivors were hastened across the water by Emperor Alexius I.
- They marched on Nicaea but were totally slaughtered by the Moslems. Their bones were piled in a pyramid like monument to the Moslem victory.
• Led by many important nobles of the period, between 300,000 and 600,000 crusaders marched to repel the Seljuq Turks (Battle of Dorylaeum) and regain western Anatolia, parts of Armenia and Syria.

• 1099—20,000 surviving Crusaders take Jerusalem.
  • 70,000 remaining Moslems remaining in the city were slaughtered. The surviving Jews were herded into a synagogue and burned alive.
  • “Such a slaughter of pagans had never been seen or heard of. The number none but God knew.”

• Turkish threat blunted, though not eliminated
• foundation of Western principalities, including the Latin kingdom of Jerusalem and Antioch

Crusaders capture Jerusalem
Crusader States in Middle East

- Frankish farmers immigrate for land.
- Many castles built.
- Next generation became Easternized in dress, custom, outlook and only wanted to preserve *status quo*
DEUS VOLT (GOD WILLS IT)!
Knights Templar, 1119 AD

- a religious military order of knighthood established during the Crusades.
- At its beginning (c. 1119), the consisted of 8 or 9 French knights who devoted themselves to protecting from Muslim warriors those on pilgrimage to Jerusalem. They were given quarters near the site of the former Temple of Jerusalem, from which they derived their name. Taking vows of poverty and chastity, they performed courageous service, and their numbers increased rapidly, partly because of the writing of St. Bernard de Clairvaux, who also wrote their rule of life.
- They flourished for two centuries, expanding to other countries, growing in number to 20,000, and acquiring vast wealth and property.
- By 1304 rumors, probably false, of irreligious practices and blasphemies had made them the target of persecution. In 1307 Philip IV of France and Pope Clement V initiated the offensive that culminated in the Templars' final suppression in 1312, including the confiscation of all their property and the imprisonment or execution of many members; their last leader, Jacques de Molay (1243-1314), was burned at the stake.
Hospitallers, 1190

- Religious order founded at Jerusalem in the 11th century to care for sick pilgrims.
- Recognized by the pope in 1113, the order built hostels along the routes to the Holy Land.
- The Hospitallers acquired wealth and lands and began to combine the task of tending the sick with waging war on Islam, eventually becoming a major military force in the Crusades.
- After the fall of the crusader states, they moved their headquarters to Cyprus and later to Rhodes (1309).
- They ruled Rhodes until it fell to the Turks in 1523; thereupon they moved to Malta, where they ruled until their defeat by Napoleon I in 1798.
Fourth Crusade, 1199-1204, Sack of Constantinople

- The Fourth Crusade (1202-4), directed against Egypt, became entangled in Venetian-Byzantine commercial rivalries.
- To finance crusade, Crusaders work for Venetians, trade rivals (enemies) of Byzantium.
- Crusaders sack Constantinople, 1204. They pillaged churches of precious jewels and metals and “holy relics”. Several mosques in Constantinople, where Byzantines allowed Moslems to freely worship, were burned.
- Latin Kingdom of Constantinople created—Repressive Rule of Byzantine Empire by Catholic Franks for 50 years.
- Chance to heal Great Schism utterly lost. Byzantines come to hate the Franks.
• (1212) thousands of children and young people, set out to take the Holy Land from the Muslims by love instead of force.
• Pope Innocent III said, “These children put us to shame.”
• the first group of c. 30,000 was led by a French shepherd boy, Stephen of Cloyes, who had seen a vision of Jesus; at Marseille they boarded seven ships. Two sank with 1,400 children on board. The other five landed in Egypt and the children were sold as slaves to the Moslems.
• A German boy led the second group across the Alps; nearly all died along the way from starvation, exposure or were raped and killed. A few survived to reach Rome, where Innocent III released them from their vows, only so they could be killed on their way home!
• Though the movement ended in disaster, it excited religious fervor that helped initiate the Fifth Crusade.
Osama Bin Laden?

• “Assassins” names after word for Hashish.
• Used mountain hideouts in Iran and Afghanistan.
• Dedicated to slaying Christians and Arabs in league with Christians.
• Believed and taught that those martyred in the jihad against the west would live in Paradise, in a garden full of virgins.
Later Crusades

- **Fifth Crusade** (1217-21) failed to capture Egypt and ended with a truce.

- **Sixth Crusade** (1227-29) was led by the emperor Frederick II, who negotiated the surrender of Jerusalem with the Egyptian sultan; Treaty gave the Crusaders Jerusalem and all the other holy cities and a truce for ten years however, the city later fell to the Turks (1244).

- **Seventh Crusade** (1248-1254), led by Louis IX of France, aimed at the conquest of Egypt and the liberation of Palestine. Despite careful planning, the Westerners were badly defeated by the Egyptians.

- **Eighth Crusade** (1270), Louis and much of his army died of disease shortly after landing in Tunis. The fall of Acre in 1291 and the loss of outposts on the mainland ended the era of the Crusades, though one small island stronghold lasted until 1303.
Crusades died out

- Lack of interest, rising European prosperity
- Repeated military defeats
- Discredited by "crusades" against Christians (e.g., Albigensians)
- September 26, 1460: Pope Pius II assembles European leaders, then delivers a three-hour sermon to inspire them to launch a new crusade against the Turks. The speech works, but then another speaker, Cardinal Bessarion, adds a three-hour sermon of his own. After six hours of preaching, the European princes lose all interest in the cause; they never mount the called-for crusade.
Questions to Consider

• Is there such a thing as a “just war” ever? If yes, what are its distinguishing characteristics?

• Can an *offensive* war be just if it is for a noble purpose, like coming to the aid of a nation or a people under attack?

• Are preemptive offensive wars, that is, wars designed to prevent an attack against oneself or another before it actually happens, “just wars”?

• What category of just war does the possible upcoming war against Iraq fit?

• Is it ever just to take up arms on behalf of the church?

• What is the best long term strategy for the middle east crisis?

• Why have Christians never, not in 1400 years, made any significant efforts to evangelize the Moslem world? Do we lack faith?