

# Church History I

## (Early Church to Scholasticism)

### Week 10 – The Crusades and Scholasticism

#### Introduction:

#### I. A History of Warfare

##### A. Not East Versus West

1. The Crusades are often pictured as intolerant Christians who attacked these completely gentle and innocent peoples of the East, most particularly the Muslims.
2. It is pictured as if the Christians were trying to take something from the Muslims that was theirs.
3. This is a truncated and uninformed view of history. The church was still considered one in those days from east to west.
4. It is hard for us to remember that Christendom does not just mean Europe. In reality, most of Christendom existed across northern Africa and in the Middle East.
  - i. Remember 4/5 Christian centers existed in the East.
  - ii. Antioch
  - iii. Constantinople
  - iv. Jerusalem
  - v. Alexandria
5. These are the particular places that came under attack through the 7<sup>th</sup> century.

##### B. The Crusades were Christians responding in many ways to Muslim aggression that had been existing for hundreds of years.**PTQ**

1. The Battle of Yarmouk in 636, which was really only 6 days of fighting, introduced a hefty victory on the Side of the Muslims, in which they defeated a highly inflated Christian army of nearly 40,000 against 24,000. This is considered one of the first great battles staged between the Muslims and the Christian nations.<sup>1</sup>
2. In 640, Muslims were conquering Alexandria, Egypt, and taking places in Persia as well.<sup>2</sup>
3. By 690, they had taken all of North Africa and Carthage.
4. By 711, all of Spain had been conquered. They were moving into France until they were stopped in the Battle of Tours in 732 by Charles Martel.<sup>3</sup>
5. From 716-718, there is a major assault on Constantinople, a siege if you would. The Muslims could not take the city just as they had previously been unable to do in a four-year siege.<sup>4</sup>
  - i. This became a chief Goal in which they tried several times to defeat because this was the new Rome.**PTQ**

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<sup>1</sup> Raymond Ibrahim, "Were the Crusades a Good Idea?," YouTube, February 28, 2025, [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yh1fnG5Un\\_8&t=1197s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yh1fnG5Un_8&t=1197s).

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

- ii. It is interesting that the Muslim leaders and Horde viewed the people of Constantinople as Romans.
- 6. During the 8<sup>th</sup> Century, the Muslim people also found themselves attacking in more minor but important battles in taking the Mediterranean.<sup>5</sup>
  - i. In managing to take the Mediterranean control through piracy and particular land battles Muslims effectively cut off trade between the West and the rest of the previously wealthy Roman Empire.
  - ii. It is worthy to note that part of the reason for the weakness and timeline of the Dark Ages (600-1000) overlaps with the Muslim Golden Ages of success and plunder (700-1100), was their success was against nations and people who had been previously Christian.**PTQ**
  - iii. This plunder was not just in finances but in the enslavement, kidnapping, and raping of non-Muslim people. **PTQ**
  - iv. Islam encouraged Tribal mores among many different national groups to be considered great Muslims because they viewed them as Jihadists (those who commit Holy Wars).
  - v. It's worth noting that these actions have continued by Muslims far past this time as well. To the point that the first American war after independence was the Barbary War against Muslims, and 9/11 itself al Qaeda was parroting the same thoughts and theology previously all the way back to the earliest Muslims.
  - vi. There were several different national changes among the Muslim forces in this time
- 7. In 1009, One Caliph in the Middle East claimed to have destroyed 30,000 churches.<sup>6</sup>
- 8. It is worth noting that the East had attempted to fight back and forth with the Muslim armies throughout this timeframe and had even had large portions reconquered by Nikephoros II, John Tzimiskes, and Basil II. (Reigning between 963-1025)<sup>7</sup>
- 9. In 1071, around the Battle of Manzikert, the fall of Asia Minor towards the Muslim conquests was occurring, and 10,000's-100,000's of thousands of Christians were being killed and Enslaved.<sup>8</sup> This is what prompted the Emperor Alexius to reach out to the Pope and other nobles for help in dealing with Muslim advances.
- C. What happened in the Crusades?
  - 1. For a brief overview see the Table Below.**PTQ**
  - 2. Although they were not as helpful as they could have been, it is important to remember that these Crusades helped stop the progression of the Muslims westward, Gave portions of the land back to Christian hands for a time, and managed to hold off the fall of Constantinople for hundreds of more years.
  - 3. (Minus the fourth Crusade that was a mess)**PTQ**

## II. Scholasticism

### A. The Rise of Universities

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<sup>5</sup> Ibrahim, "Were the Crusades a Good Idea?"

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Raymond Ibrahim, *Sword and Scimitar: Fourteen Centuries of War Between Islam and the West* (New York, NY: Hachette Books, 2018). Ch. 4 8:00-21:00

<sup>8</sup> Ibrahim, "Were the Crusades a Good Idea?"

1. The Aim and basis for the increase in Learning in general
    - i. “Appropriately, schools in these cathedrals gave birth to medieval universities, for the supreme task of the university was to understand and explain the light of God’s revealed and universal truth.”<sup>9</sup>
    - ii. “The aim of the schoolmen—as these teachers are sometimes called—was twofold: to reconcile Christian doctrine and human reason, and to arrange the teachings of the church in an orderly system.”<sup>10</sup>
  2. The aim for Christian education from Papal point of view
    - i. The Creation of Canon Law. In other words, a more thorough corpus in which the church could govern the lives of all.
    - ii. Secondly, to help address a rational theological construction of Christian society.
  3. Educational history among Christendom
    - i. Learning was encouraged for clergy, especially in Benedictine systems, which played a role in basic education.
    - ii. Later, Charlemagne set out to increase the possibility for more public education.
    - iii. “The event that marked the flowering of the universities was the grouping of students and masters into guilds. “As craftsmen had done before them,” explains Fremantle, scholars banded together for mutual interest and protection, and called themselves a *universitas*, the medieval name for any corporate group.”<sup>11</sup>
    - iv. “At first lectures were given in wayside sheds at Oxford and Cambridge, in the cathedral cloisters in Paris, and in the squares in Italy. In time teachers rented rooms. Students sat on the floor, which was usually covered with straw against the dampness. Unencumbered with athletic stadiums, libraries, or other equipment, universities could pick up and move elsewhere at any time if they found themselves at odds with local citizens.
    - v. In addition to lectures, the method of teaching was the disputation. Two or more masters—and occasionally the students—debated text readings, employing Abelard’s question-and-answer approach.”<sup>12</sup>
    - vi. It is worthy of note that some of the educational formation and expansion at this time was also attributed to Muslims.
- B. Household Scholastic Names**
1. Peter of Abelard (1079–1142).
    - i. “The eldest son of a minor noble of Brittany (northwestern France), “Abelard for love of learning had given up his inheritance rights to younger brothers, and roamed France to sit at the feet of the great masters, now listening, now openly challenging them in class.” In time he established himself as a lecturer in Paris, where he attracted a host of students. He also began to write.”<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Bruce L. Shelley, [\*Church History in Plain Language\*](#), ed. Marshall Shelley, 5th Edition (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2020), 237.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 237–238.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 240.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 241.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 239.

- ii. “The first key to wisdom,” Abelard asserted, “is assiduous and frequent questioning.... For by doubting we come to inquiry, and by inquiry we arrive at the truth.” This idea, commonplace to the Greeks, was hardly so to medieval Europeans. Abelard’s zest for doubt won the applause of some but alarmed as many others...
  - iii. (He) invoked condemnation by a church council at Soissons in 1121, and the brilliant scholar found himself behind the walls of a monastery. Resourceful as usual, Abelard secured the monastery’s permission to leave a year later to live in the wilderness southeast of Paris...
  - iv. Abelard again and again fell afoul of conservatives in the church, this time including Abbot Bernard of Clairvaux... “The faith of the righteous believes,” he declared, “it does not dispute.” At Bernard’s instigation, a church council at Sens in 1140 condemned Abelard for heresy. Abelard retired to the abbey of Cluny, where he stayed in seclusion for the remaining two years of his life.<sup>14</sup>
2. Thomas Aquinas (1224–74)
- i. “Thomas was a Dominican monk of noble birth, brilliant mind, tireless industry, and gentle disposition. Like Abelard he honored reason above all other human attributes, but he had distinguished himself by his fidelity to the church as well as his scholarship. Rather than denounce the tenets of Averroes, Maimonides, and Aristotle out of hand, he examined their writings point by point, refuting some and reconciling others with Christianity. The result was his *Summa Theologica* (a summation of theological knowledge).”<sup>15</sup>
  - ii. “Each person is a sinner and in need of special grace from God. Jesus Christ, by his sacrifice, has secured the reconciliation of humanity and God. All who receive the benefits of Christ’s work are justified, but the key, as in traditional Catholic teaching, lies in the way the benefits of Christ’s work are applied. Christ won grace; the church imparts it. Aquinas taught that Christians need the constant infusion of “cooperating grace,” whereby the Christian virtues—above all, love—are stimulated in the soul. Assisted by this cooperating grace, a Christian can do works that please God and gain special merit in God’s sight.
  - iii. This saving grace, said Aquinas, comes to men and women exclusively through the channel of divinely appointed sacraments placed in the keeping of the church, the visible, organized Roman body, led by the pope. So convinced was Aquinas of the divine sanction of the papacy that he insisted that submission to the pope was necessary for salvation.”<sup>16</sup>
  - iv. Thomas connected himself with theological truths in which we would agree and in some that we certainly would not.
3. These educational reforms brought about the recognition that things were not as they ought to be.
- C. With the increase in Education and examination of misuse of church power, there was a need for reformation in the church, and many new groups came forth addressing issues, most of which were deemed as heretical. However, some were sanctioned and used on behalf of the

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<sup>14</sup> Shelley, [\*Church History in Plain Language\*](#), 239–240.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 243.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 244.

church, like new monastic orders (Franciscans and Dominicans). Even still this primed the way for the future reformers.

### The Crusades PTQ

CRUSADE	DATES	CHIEF MOTIVATORS	NOTABLE PARTICIPANTS	GOAL	RESULTS
FIRST CRUSADE	1095–1099	Urban II Peter the Hermit	Walter the Penniless Peter the Hermit Raymund of Toulouse Godfrey Tancred Robert of Normandy	Liberate Jerusalem from the Turks.	Peter the Hermit led a horde of peasants toward the Holy Land but most died or were slaughtered en route. Crusaders captured Nicea, Antioch, Edessa, Jerusalem; established feudal Crusader kingdoms.
SECOND CRUSADE	1147–1148	Bernard of Clairvaux Eugene III	Konrad III Louis VII	Retake Edessa from Turks.	Mistrust between Western Crusaders and Eastern guides led to decimation of Crusader army; attempt to take Damascus failed.
THIRD CRUSADE	1189–1192	Alexander III	Frederick Barbarossa Philip Augustus Richard I	Retake Jerusalem from Saladin and the Saracens.	Frederick drowned; Philip returned home; Richard captured Acre and Joppa, made treaty with Saladin, and was captured and imprisoned in Austria on the way home.
FOURTH CRUSADE	1200–1204	Innocent II	Thibaut of Champagne Louis of Blois Baldwin of Flanders Simon de Montfort Enrico Dandolo	Undermine Saracen power by invading Egypt.	Christian city of Zara was sacked to repay Venice for transportation; for this the Crusaders were excommunicated; they then sacked Constantinople.
CHILDREN'S CRUSADES	1212	Nicholas of Cologne Stephen of Cloyes		Supernatural conquest of Holy Land by "the pure in heart."	Most of the children were drowned at sea, sold into slavery, or slaughtered.

FIFTH CRUSADE	1219–1221	Honorius II	William of Holland John of Brienne	Undermine Saracen power by invading Egypt.	Crusaders succeeded in taking Damietta in Egypt, but soon lost it again.
SIXTH CRUSADE	1229		Frederick II	Regain Jerusalem.	Crusaders made treaty with Sultan, giving Frederick control of Jerusalem; Frederick was excommunicated for this.
SEVENTH CRUSADE	1248		Louis IX	Relief of Holy Land through invasion of Egypt.	Crusaders were defeated in Egypt. <sup>17</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Robert C. Walton, *Chronological and Background Charts of Church History*, Revised Edition, ZondervanCharts (Zondervan, 2018), 38.