



The Christian Church Family Tree

A Study on the History of the Church by Dr. Harley Ihm

Lesson 6: The Christian Wars

AD 1075 – 1203

Opening: If someone were to ask you how a just God could allow the crusades to take place, what would you say?

Let's go back to the year 1075 AD and see what role the church may have played in preparing for the mindset that would issue in the Christian Wars that were anything but Christian.



1.

AD 1075 - Hildebrand was the birth name of Pope Gregory VII. With Islamic forces overrunning Asia Minor, he planned to gather the armies of the west, united under his own command to reconquer the lost territory and reunite Christendom. His dream would not happen. There was a battle brewing as Emperor Henry IV set out to reclaim his empire from the German nobility. Hildebrand was fighting to rule the kingdom as God's ruler. Hildebrand, the pope, ruled

that any lay leader who appointed a bishop, abbot or priest would be excommunicated along with those he appointed. They would then burn in hell! He then declared that the Roman church has never made a mistake and never could. They were without error in judgment. From now on every duly ordained pope shall become a saint. This infuriated the emperor.



Henry IV responded by appointing a new bishop in Milan. He then declared Hildebrand to no longer be a pope but was a false monk! Hildebrand then excommunicated the Roman emperor and forbid anyone of faith to be subject to the emperor. Instead they must obey the church. In a complete surprise, the emperor repents and stands barefoot in the snow at the pope's gate for 3 days. Hildebrand grants forgiveness

and reinstates him into the church but not as emperor. The bishops of Rome gathered and appointed another emperor. This began a horrendous war between the 2 emperors that engulfed Germany. Henry won the war and Hildebrand was blamed for the bloodshed. The bishops deposed Hildebrand and appointed a new pope.

In 1081 Henry marched on Rome and after 3 years of war against Rome, he took the city and put his pope on the throne. That pope then crowned Henry IV as the Holy Roman Emperor, meaning God was setting Henry over all of Rome's empire. The great dream of Pope Gregory VII was not to be. He had no power to unite against Islam, only to divide and promote war. Hildebrand then was sent into exile to die. It is ironic that it wasn't his wickedness that caught up with him. It was that one act of forgiveness that destroyed Pope Gregory VII. All this had taken its toll on the Byzantium Empire. The kings of Europe had to face the fact that the popes were finally beginning to wield the authority they had always claimed to have. Sadly, this set the stage for some of the worst examples of atrocities done in the name of the cross of Christ.

2. **1084-1099 – The March of the Christian Soldiers** – After 700 years of fighting for survival Christian Europe has outlived the barbarian kingdoms and is now pushing back the Muslims. The Pope declares this time a holy war. It is a new day. New methods of agriculture have taken the people out of the extreme poverty of the dark ages. Trade, cities and schools began to grow. Religious movements are popping up everywhere bringing theology mixed with radical ideals back to life. Freelance preachers start wandering the country often wearing rags, no shoes and calling people to poverty and a radical holiness. Jerusalem has been no voice since its fall in AD 70. However, people still made the pilgrimage to Jerusalem. It reached a height of popularity in the 11th. The Arabs were tolerant of the Jews and Christians. When the Turks conquered the city and much of the route, they made it impossible to make the pilgrimage.



3. **In 1095 AD the Byzantine emperor appealed to Pope Urban II.** The Pope was trying to heal the division between the church and the emperor. The emperor asks the Pope to help him gather soldiers to reclaim Asia Minor. Pope Urban II decided that driving back Islam, defending the pilgrims and reclaiming the Eastern Church would be a great triumph for everyone. Neither the Pope nor the Emperor had any idea what they were about to unleash on the world. The pope called for Christians to stop fighting one another and unite in a war that even if they fell would send them straight to heaven! (Sounds a lot like the promise of Mohammed!) They would wear a red cross and in the will of God they crowds were ecstatic and ready for the Holy War that would end in Jerusalem.

“Let those who were brigands (outlaws) become soldiers of Christ!” – Pope Urban II



The pope toured France enlisting the nobility who would then send the fighters on their lands. A preacher named **Peter the Hermit** rode a donkey covered in mud and ate nothing but fish. His sermons throughout Germany and France ignited the fires of a

- a. crusade within the peasants. They heard that Peter the Hermit carried a letter from God promising absolute victory and paradise on earth! 40,000 men, women and children followed Peter eastward. On the road some took it upon themselves to massacre hundreds of Jews throughout the Holy Roman Empire. It was recorded that on one day 1100 Jews were killed including many children and babies. They were early Hitlers wearing the cross of Christ. The bishops who tried to protect the Jews were slaughtered as well. Constantinople was appalled to see the mobs. They expected mercenaries led by the Lord. Instead they saw a filthy monk and a mob of murderers. The mob raided Nicea and tortured, robbed and killed the locals. It's recorded that they roasted babies on spits. Possibly an act joyfully allowed by God, the Turks attacked and killed Peter and his entire mob.
- b. The main army of the crusades arrived in Antioch. It was a massive, fortified city that was impossible to break into. There were not enough crusaders to break into the city. So they began catapulting a barrage of 200 Turkish heads over the wall. For 8 months they fought but could not defeat the Turks. They were starving to death and resorted to cannibalism. It was okay because they were only eating Turks. It looked as if all was lost. Another peasant named Peter comes along and says he has found the Holy Lance which pierced the side of Christ buried under the cathedral. Although it wasn't true, the mob believed it an apocalyptic sign and charged the Turks and defeated them. After four and a half centuries, Antioch, the city that invented the word Christian was back in Christian hands. Well, kind of Christian hands.
- c. The war should have ended there. While this was happening the Arabs who had been favorable to the Christians and allowed them to come to Jerusalem had taken the city again. Finally, there was a time for peace that was possible. The emperor was ready to stop. So were the Christians who lived there. However, a 60 year old French count named Raymond decided to lead a group to Jerusalem. Going into the city barefoot and disguised as pilgrims, they entered the fortified city, but only because of the kindness of the Arabs. Once inside they charged through the streets hacking to pieces every man, woman and child they saw. They went to the mosque at the time of worship. On the same spot that Jesus had cleansed the temple 1,000 years before; they stripped the Dome of the Rock of all its Muslim treasures and killed everyone there. They went to the Synagogue that was crammed with Jews and burnt them on the Sabbath, calling it a just and splendid judgment of God. They slaughtered everyone in Jerusalem except the ruler and his people who they allowed to buy their lives. The Christians living there only escaped being killed in the crowd because the Muslims

expelled them from the city when they saw the crusaders coming. It was not seen by Europe as evil, but a triumph of God over the powers of darkness.



Dome of the Rock

4. 1099-1192 AD – A Light and More Darkness



- a.** **Peter Abelard** – was a theologian from France. He was a new voice in the wilderness. He gave lectures to contradict his famous professor. He was so powerful that he got the professor fired and the students and the job became his. Later he would study under the greatest biblical scholar of the day and he said, “Useless. The man is a master of words, but not of their meaning.” He soon became the head of the school in Paris and the greatest philosopher alive. He was quite arrogant in the fact that he saw no one as wiser than himself. Unfortunately, he was asked to teach a beautiful young girl. They fell in love and he gets the young lady, Heloise, pregnant. He is so in love he quits philosophy to write love songs. He is caught then by her father and it was a greater sin in the church for him to marry that to commit fornication. So the obvious career choice was to become a monk. Once in the monastery he began to gather conflicting writings by the church fathers and compare them with the Bible and give the Fathers a yes or no on their teachings. He challenged readers to grapple with issues for themselves. He said, “Doubting leads us to enquire, and enquiry leads us to truth.” He brought a new understanding of the cross. He rejected the current teaching and said that our atonement was achieved through Christ’s human life, not just His death. Jesus took human nature on Himself and taught us by word and example to the point of death. Such a love is to light a fire of grateful love within us.” That profound truth pointed us to the sinless life of God in the flesh and that atoned for our sins in the way He lived sinlessly and well and His sacrificial death. Abelard was opening a door to testing everything and holding on to what is good, what is true by the Scriptures, not by man.



Bernard of Clairvaux, 1144 – a Cistercian abbot, theologian and a man with great power in the Popes political circle. He got one pope deposed for having a Jewish great-grandfather. He said, “It would be an insult to Christ if the offspring of a Jew were to occupy the throne of Peter.” He violently opposed the theology of Peter Abelard.

- b. He used his power to get Abelard condemned by Rome as a heretic. He was also a brilliant preacher. They called him, Doctor Honeytongue. He was used by King Louis the VII of France to unite him with the Pope and he relit the fires starting a second crusade. The crusade fought all the way to Antioch. Unfortunately the French queen allegedly had an affair with the rule of the city who was her uncle. Her husband, King Louis was not happy with him and the crusade was over.
- c. **A New Era** – Western Europe is thriving. The wars were in the east and they were in a time of peace and building. New engineering produced Gothic cathedrals. Universities were built in Oxford and Paris. Peter Lombard revived the theological challenges developed by Abelard. His method of contrast to judge teaching for truth was embraced and became the primary theological textbook of the west.



d. **Cathars** – The reformers had denounced sin within the church but had not stopped it. So a group arose out of France and Italy called ‘the Clean’ or ‘the Cathars.’ They decided they must break away from the church to remain pure. They determined that all matter and the Old Testament were the work of Satan. They demanded celibacy. If you were married, you were to get divorced to be pure. They were vegan, because all animal products were of the flesh and could not be taken. Fish were permitted because they were spontaneously created by water. They fasted 3 days a week. They banned all

killings, possessions and oath-taking. They allowed women to be priests on the grounds that our fleshly body’s differences are irrelevant. It’s all just flesh, the satanic part of our creation. They offered 2 ways to belong to their church. Level 1 was for those who could live this demanding life of perfection, obeying all the rules. They were the ‘perfect.’ Only the perfect had assurance of salvation. However, Level 2 were ‘the believers.’ They supported the perfect and could be initiated into perfection on their deathbed. If they did not make it, then they would be reincarnated to try again.



e.

Waldensians – While the Cathars was an anti-Catholic movement, the Waldensians were turned into dissidents by the church. In 1175, Valdes, a rich French merchant, her a wandering minstrel about St. Alexis, sold his money and gave it to the poor. Most who did this then became monks. He did not. He started preaching repentance in the streets and lived off donations.

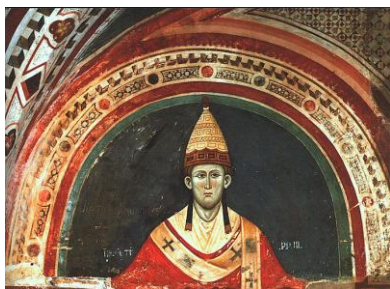
The local clergy opposed him so he appealed to the pope. The Pope said he could preach as long as the local clergy approved, which they did not. He preached anyway and in 1179 both the Cathars and the Waldensians were excommunicated. The Waldensian movement began to grow rapidly. The Bible became their only rule of faith and they excluded all Catholic traditions not in the Bible, such as mass and prayers for the dead. They reached Spain and Moravia.



f.

The Third Crusade – In 1187 a Kurdish Muslim named **Saladin** defeated the armies of the crusader states and conquered Jerusalem. They did not loot a single house or kill a single civilian. Saladin offered Christians their freedom for 10 pence each. If anyone redeemed a group of peasants who couldn't afford the

fee, he was given a special price for helping them. The bishop of Jerusalem paid the 10 pence, went to the church, packed its vast treasures into carts and made a run for it. Saladin did not retaliate. Instead he released thousands of people and within days reopened the church of the Holy Sepulchre for pilgrims. Talk about Jesus principle of killing people with kindness! The pope died and the next pope proclaimed the third crusade. Fredrick Barbarossa the Holy Roman emperor, King Philip of France and Richard the Lionhearted of England all led their armies. By 1192, they gave up realizing they could not defeat Saladin.



g.

The Fourth Crusade – Pope Innocent III gained so much power that he stated as Pope he was given the world-wide church to govern and therefore the entire world. He overruled the divorces and marriages of kings.

When King John of England tried to appoint his own archbishop, Innocent excommunicated him and removed him as king! He declared himself the successor of St. Peter, the Lord's anointed, Pharaoh's god, set between God and man, lower than God, but higher than man. The Pope had been a substitute for St. Peter, now he claims to be the substitute for Christ. He announced a fourth crusade. The crusades have many failures, but they finally make their way to Constantinople. In 1203 AD they ransacked the city in a 3-day atrocity of rape and murder, not even sparing the nuns in the convent. They desecrated Justinian's

Cathedral of Hagia Sophia, and stood a prostitute on the Justinian's throne to dance and entertain them with filthy songs. They burned whole districts of the city and filled their ships with treasures and holy relics.