

FOR THE LOVE OF GOD + -

HOLY WAR: THE CRUSADES

This segment comes from **EPISODE 1: WAR + PEACE**.

From Jesus' command to "love your enemies" to the idea of "holy war" is a giant leap. Yet from the Old Testament through to the Crusades and the inquisitions, Christian history is full of violence. At times Christians have been enthusiastic proponents of violence and war. How have the followers of a crucified leader managed to get things so wrong? This segment looks at one of the darkest events in Christian history: the Crusades. The reasons for the Crusades are complex and are not the focus of this segment. Instead, it focuses on the moral character of the Crusaders, and whether they followed the example of Jesus.



THEME QUESTION

"Religion is responsible for most/all wars." What do you think about this statement?



ENGAGE

1. Find three images online that come to your mind when you think of the words "holy war". Discuss why you chose these images.
2. Make a list of some famous battles that have occurred in history and/or in movies.



3. Is it ever right to invade someone else's land?

4. What observations can you make about the following images of the Crusades?



UNDERSTAND AND EVALUATE



WATCH the segment: “Holy War: The Crusades” (cpx.video/crusades)

1. Summarise what happened in the massacre in Jerusalem on 15 July 1099. How does this event make you feel? What about it particularly shocks or surprises you?
2. What did Pope Urban say that “changed the course of history”?



3. Pope Urban’s message offered the crowds “salvation for taking up the sword”.
 - a. How do you think this could have been a powerful motivator for the crowds listening to Urban?
 - b. Were the Crusaders also motivated by the desire for material benefits e.g. land and money?
4. What were some of the values that were part of the warrior culture in Europe at the time of the Crusades?
5. Evaluate how this warrior culture contributed to the Crusades being promoted as spiritually beneficial.

6. Complete this table to contrast the words and actions of the Crusaders and the words and actions of Jesus.

Crusaders (words and actions)	Jesus (words and actions)

7. Hold a debate to answer the question: Were the Crusaders truly followers of Jesus?

BIBLE FOCUS

READ Luke 6:27-36.

1. What does Jesus call his followers to do in this passage?
2. What is difficult about Jesus' teaching? What problems can you imagine could come from obeying this?
3. Did Jesus practice what he preached?
4. V.31 is sometimes known as "The Golden Rule".



- a. Do you think this is a good rule to follow? Why or why not?
 - b. What do you think the world would be like if everyone followed this rule?
 - c. Why do you think people don't follow this?
5. Do you have any further questions about this teaching of Jesus or its implications?

APPLY

1. Do we have the right to judge the church today for historical events such as the Crusades?
2. The church at the time of the Crusades was influenced by warrior culture. Are there ways in which you think the church today might be affected by cultural factors that pull it away from Jesus' original teachings?
3. Is loving your enemies something that you personally try to practice?

EXTEND

1. Read the five versions of Pope Urban II's speech at the council of Clermont in 1095 [here](#) ([cpx.video/urban](#)). Imagine that Jesus was present at this speech. Write a follow-up speech from Jesus that addresses Urban's argument.



2. Watch the segment: "[Kill them all: The Albigensian Crusade](#)" ([cpx.video/crusades2](#)). List some similarities and differences between this crusade, and what happened in Jerusalem in 1099.

Similarities	Differences