

**Church History, Lesson 6:
The Medieval Church, Part 2:
The Age of the Papal Power (1054 – 1294)**

14. Military Power: Crusades (1095 – 1291)

- a. Overview: The Crusades were not a series of isolated events, but rather a movement and spirit that lasted from the end of the eleventh century to the end of the thirteenth century. (For an organized listing of the major events and details during the Crusades, see Walton, *Chronological and Background Charts of Church History*, chart 38.)
- b. Historical development:
 - i. By the 8th century, it is estimated that half of all Christians were controlled by Muslim rule.
 - ii. The First Crusade was instigated by a sermon preached by Pope Urban II (1088 – 1099). The crowds responded to the sermon with the chant, “God wills it,” which became the battle-cry of the Crusades. (Note: several of the Crusades were instigated by the Pope.)
 - iii. This sermon was in response to the Eastern emperor asking for help from the Pope against the spread of the Muslim Turks in Constantinople.
- c. Reasons and goals for the Crusades:
 - i. To regain the Holy Land that the Muslims had conquered.
 - ii. To heal the division between the East and the West.
 - iii. To extinguish the advance of Islam.
 - iv. Note: the Crusades did not begin as a quest to convert the heathen by the sword, contrary to popular opinion.
- d. Motivations for the Crusades:
 - i. Spiritual benefit: forgiveness of sins past, present, and future.
 - ii. Physical benefit: the desire for plunder and property.
- e. Results and consequences of the Crusades:

- i. All of the reasons and goals were met, but only temporarily.
 - ii. Gave more splendor and power to the Pope.
 - iii. Deeper divide between the East and West.
 - iv. Created the “military monks”: Templars (Kings of the Temple), who wore white robes with a red cross; Hospitallers (Knights of St. John of Jerusalem), who wore black robes with a white cross; Teutonic Knights (exclusively a German order), who wore white robes with a black cross.
- f. Lessons learned from the Crusades:
- i. Christians need a Savior as much as non-Christians.
 - ii. We must distinguish between what someone does in the name of Christianity versus what Christianity actually teaches; or what someone does in the name of any religion and what the religion actually teaches.
 - iii. The Crusades remind Christians of their weapons (the word of God and prayer), their true enemy (the world, flesh, and Devil), and the way Christianity spreads: by the power of the Spirit.
 - iv. “Christianity’s highest satisfactions are not guaranteed by the possession of special places, . . .”²⁸
 - v. The Crusades help us to consider what we hold most dear and what is worth fighting for.²⁹ Thomas Madden writes:

It is easy enough for modern people to dismiss the crusades as morally repugnant or cynically evil. Such judgments, however, tell us more about the observer than the observed. They are based on uniquely modern (and, therefore, Western) values. If, from the safety of our modern world, we are quick to condemn the medieval crusader, we should be mindful that he would be just as quick to condemn us. Our infinitely more destructive wars waged for the sake of political and social ideologies would, in his opinion, be lamentable wastes of human life. In both societies, the medieval and the modern, people

²⁸ Shelley, *Church History in Plain Language*, 202.

²⁹ Kevin D. Young, “Yeah, Well, But What about the Crusades?” The Gospel Coalition Blog, <http://blogs.thegospelcoalition.org/kevindeyoung/2015/02/09/what-about-the-crusades/> (accessed October 22, 2015).

fight for what is most dear to them. That is a fact of human nature that is not so changeable.³⁰

15. Organizational Power: Pope Innocent III (1161 – 1216)

a. Statements:

- i. “Vicar of Christ”: “The successor of Peter,” announced Innocent III, “is the Vicar of Christ; he has been established as a mediator between God and man, below God but beyond man; less than God but more than man; who shall judge all and be judged by no one.”³¹
- ii. “Vicar of God”: Innocent III believed he not only had supreme authority over all the church but supreme authority on earth.

b. Powers: Because Pope was the “vicar of Christ,” he believed the earthly authorities derived their authority from him. Thus, the Pope had two mighty weapons at his disposal . . .

i. Excommunication (of individuals):

1. Since the church dispensed the sacraments, which were necessary for salvation, to ban someone from participation in the sacraments was to ban someone from salvation.
2. Excommunication also prohibited a person from participating in legal affairs as judge, jury, witness, etc.
3. At death, the person who was excommunicated did not receive a Christian burial, and their body was destroyed.

ii. Interdict (of nation-states):

1. Excommunication for a nation.
2. Used this power against France, Italy, England and many others. “Indeed, there was hardly a European monarch who did not feel the weight of his authority.”³²

c. Theology: The Fourth Lateran Council (1215)

³⁰ Thomas F. Madden, *The New Concise History of the Crusades*, updated edition (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2005), 223.

³¹ Shelley, *Church History in Plain Language*, 194.

³² González, *The Story of Christianity*, vol. 1, 365.

- i. Established the doctrine of transubstantiation. Transubstantiation is the doctrine that the bread and wine *become* Christ's body and blood: a change in substance.
 - ii. Laid the groundwork for Inquisition. Inquisition ("inquire") was tool to weed out heresy in the church.
 - iii. Note: Although the Fourth Lateran Council may be the most significant, other councils convened during The Middle Ages. (See Walton, *Chronological and Background Charts of Church History*, chart 47 for a listing of those councils and conclusions.)
- d. Take-away: One historian remarks: "We simply cannot understand the pope's place in our own times without some understanding of these years."³³

16. Intellectual Power: Scholasticism³⁴

a. Overview of scholasticism:

- i. Scholasticism was the intellectual movement that developed from 1050 to 1350.
- ii. One historian defines scholasticism "as the attempt to rationalize theology in order to buttress faith by reason."³⁵
- iii. Scholasticism and scholastic comes from the Greek word *scholē*, which is a place where learning takes place.
- iv. The Scholastics (a.k.a., Schoolmen) replaced the Church Father as the guardians of truth.
- v. How scholasticism contributed to papal power is that scholasticism provided a rational theological construction for the papacy.

b. Causes of scholasticism:

- i. A spread in Europe of the philosophy of Aristotle.
- ii. A use of philosophy in the study of revelation and faith.

³³ Shelley, *Church History in Plain Language*, 195.

³⁴ The discussion of scholasticism relies especially on Cairns, *Christianity Through The Centuries*, 226.

³⁵ Ibid.

- iii. Development of the university, which began in the 12th century.
- c. Goal of scholasticism: The Schoolmen were not seeking truth, but seeking to *organize* the truth, and to make the truth reasonable by the use of Aristotelian logic (deductive logic).
- d. Schools of scholasticism:
 - i. Realism
 - 1. The idea that faith precedes knowledge. “I believe in order that I may know.”
 - 2. Major proponents
 - a. Anselm of Canterbury (1033 – 1109)
 - i. Promulgated the substitutionary view of the atonement, *Cur Deus Homo* (“Why God Became a Man”).
 - ii. Devised the ontological argument for the existence of God (*Proslogion*). The argument goes like this:
 - 1. By definition, God is the most perfect possible being that can be imagined in the mind.
 - 2. A being that exists in the mind and in reality is greater than a being that exists in the mind only.
 - 3. Thus, if God only exists as a being in the mind and not in reality, then something greater than God, a greatest possible being exists.
 - 4. But we cannot imagine a being greater than God, for it is a contradiction to imagine a being greater than God.
 - 5. Therefore, God exists.

- b. Peter Lombard (ca. 1095 – ca. 1159) (Note: some would consider Lombard a “moderate realist”)
 - i. His work *Four Books of Sentences* became the standard theology textbook in the Medieval period. He’s the first “systematic theologian.”
 - ii. He emphasized seven sacraments, which teaching had not been clear before his time.

- ii. Moderate Realism (Conceptualists)

- 1. The idea that nothing is to be believed until it is understood. “I know in order that I may believe.”

- 2. Major proponents

- a. Peter Abelard (1079 – 1142)

- i. Believed that doubt would lead to inquiry and inquiry to truth.
- ii. Espoused the moral influence theory of the atonement.
- iii. He created a system of learning by using question and answer.

- b. Thomas Aquinas (1225 – 1274)

- i. Famous for *Summa Theologica* (“Summation of Theology”) which attempts to harmonize faith and reason. This work is the basis for much of the theological system embraced later by the Roman Catholic Church.
- ii. Rationalized the idea of indulgences, which were given to free a person from required penance.
- iii. Gave the classic presentation for transubstantiation.

- iii. Nominalism

1. The idea that faith and reason cannot exist together. "I believe separated from I know."
2. Major proponents
 - a. William of Ockham (ca. 1280 – 1349)
 - i. Theological doctrine is not rationally demonstrable and must be believed based on the authority of the Bible.
 - ii. Denied the existence of universals.
 - b. Roger Bacon (ca. 1214 – 1292)
 - i. Gave his time to science, which laid the groundwork for experimental science.
 - ii. This method was developed by Francis Bacon in the seventeenth century.

e. Results of scholasticism:

- i. The study of theology became an intellectual exercise. Study was divorced from monasticism and worship.
- ii. A greater interest in man, since the individual was more important than the institution, as least for Nominalism.
- iii. People began to question traditional authorities.

17. Serving Power: Monastic Reform

- a. Franciscan – Francis of Assisi (1182 – 1226)
 - i. Francis was converted during an illness and left his home for poverty and service of God.
 - ii. Gathered several men around him and drew up orders.
 - iii. The orders involved poverty, chastity, and obedience, especially to the Pope.
 - iv. Franciscans were great missionaries.

- v. An order for women was established by St. Clare of Assisi, which came to be known as the Order of Poor Clares.
- b. Dominicans – Dominic Guzman (1170 – 1221)
 - i. Mendicants, that is, lived by alms.
 - ii. Sought to use intellectual persuasion in missions.
 - iii. They were “friars”—those that live among the people, as opposed to “monks”—those that live separate from the people.
- c. The Franciscans and Dominicans strengthened the papacy by providing service and missionary effort. (For more information on the major monastic orders, see Walton, *Chronological and Background Charts of Church History*, chart 43.)

18. Opposition Movements

- a. Cathars (Albigenses, Patarenes)
 - i. Began in 11th century.
 - ii. Basically Gnostic in their beliefs—matter is evil but spirit is good.
 - iii. Avoided marriage, sexual intercourse, eating meat, and material possessions.
 - iv. Believed in reincarnation.
 - v. Rejected purgatory and indulgences.
- b. Waldensians – Peter Waldo (ca. 1140 – 1218)
 - i. Took up a life of poverty and preaching.
 - ii. Memorized much of the New Testament and had portions of the Bible translated in French, the vernacular language of the area.
 - iii. Eventually, the archbishop of Lyon ordered him to stop preaching but he refused citing Acts 5:29: “We must obey God rather than men.” He was excommunicated.

- iv. He appealed to the Pope, but was told that he could only preach by invitation of a bishop.
- v. Rejected purgatory and papal supremacy.
- vi. The Waldensians thought the Scripture must rule. Therefore, some see them as pre-cursors to the Protestant Reformers. However, their views on poverty and penance place them at odds with Protestantism.
- vii. The movement spread in Western Europe and became second in number to the Church.