

**Gifts of Finest Wheat**  
**Year 2, Session 2, Week 4:**  
**The Conflict With Islam and East/West Divisions**

**Change in Format This Week**

- Can be confusing to break up one topic by period
  - Talk about something while focusing on 8<sup>th</sup> century, put it aside, talk about other topics from 8<sup>th</sup> century, talk about it while focusing on 10<sup>th</sup> century, put it aside, talk about other topics from 10<sup>th</sup> century, talk about it while focusing on 12<sup>th</sup> century, etc., etc.
- Two topics we've talked about quite a bit
  - Conflict with Islam
  - Division between Eastern and Western Halves of the Church
- These topics intertwine to great extent
- This week instead of covering several century chunk of church history will deal almost exclusively with these two topics and follow them through most of church history

**The Crusades**

10<sup>th</sup> century background

- Christian world was caught between the Muslims in the south and the Vikings in the north
  - Church really did seem to be in a life and death struggle<sup>1</sup>
- At times internal Christian political divisions meant it wasn't safe for the Popes to live in Rome<sup>2</sup>
- Given these circumstances it wasn't really possible to seriously consider rolling back the bulk of the Muslim advances
- Continuous preexisting conflict with Islam does away with stereotype of Crusades being pure acts of aggression
  - Does not excuse excesses, atrocities even, that were at times part of the wars of the Crusaders
  - But allows us to see Crusades as one phase in continuous war with expansion minded Islam, war that realistically could not be avoided

1071 Battle of Manzikert and it's aftermath

- Byzantine forces suffer crushing defeat
- Emperor Romanus IV Diogenes killed

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<sup>1</sup> Tyerman, Christopher, *God's War: A New History of the Crusades*. Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2006), *God's War*, 38.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, 8.

- Turkish tribes, led by Seljuk family, able to establish their capital in Nicaea  
Within striking distance of Constantinople itself
- 1074 Pope Gregory VII called upon western Europe to form an army to liberate the Byzantines<sup>3</sup>
- Project came to nothing, but paved way for later actions of Pope Urban II<sup>4</sup>

#### Pope Urban II and the First Crusade

- 1095, Urban II calls upon Christians to free the Holy Land
- 1096, Peasants' Crusade
  - Those who left early
    - Without backing of or coordination with Pope and nobility
    - Anti-Semitic violence and looting in Western Europe
    - Violent looting of Eastern European Byzantine towns<sup>5</sup>
    - Arrived in Constantinople (used as staging area for Crusading armies) prior to more organized forces
    - Quickly and utterly defeated in first encounter with Muslim forces<sup>6</sup>
- 1096-1099
  - Under leadership of prominent nobility large crusader force formed
  - Arrives in East 1097
  - Antioch comes under Christian control in 1098, Jerusalem in 1099
- Massacres of inhabitants after the capture of both cities
  - Way wars were often fought then
  - Same practices seen in internal Islamic wars
  - Fear of Egyptian Army moving towards city may have spurred these actions in Jerusalem
    - Inhabitants seen as saboteurs/insurgents waiting to aid approaching forces
  - Very sad/frightening that best that could be said by some surviving inhabitants of cities was that at least the Christians didn't commit rape when they conquered a city
  - Despite these excesses some descriptions of bloodshed in Jerusalem that have been passed down are clearly exaggerations<sup>7</sup>

#### 2<sup>nd</sup> Crusade, 1147-1149

- European held land east of Jerusalem retaken by Islamic forces
- Crusade called to retake this land
- Military disaster for Europeans

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid, 11.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, 49-50.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid, 94-60.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid, 59.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid, 147, 157-159.

### 3<sup>rd</sup> Crusade, 1189-1192

- 1187, Muslim forces under leadership of Saladin conquer Jerusalem
- Some military success for European forces
- Divisions among various Western rulers meant there was not a sufficient force to retake Jerusalem
- Richard I of England, Richard the Lionheart, negotiated for right of unarmed Christian pilgrims to visit Jerusalem, which was to remain under Islamic control

### 4<sup>th</sup> Crusade, 1202-1204

- Crusaders seeking to retake Jerusalem arranged for Venetian merchants to transport them
- Recruitment for Crusade fell short of goals
- Smaller group unable to give Venice full amount of promised payment
- To make up for this shortcoming Venetians asked Crusaders to help them in attacking rival city of Constantinople
- Diversion to Constantinople meant no substantial number of Crusaders ever made it to Holy Land
- Will say more later about impact of diversion to Constantinople and its effect on East/West relations

### 1212, Children's Crusade

- Common perception
  - Large crowd of children inspired by desire to free Holy Land
  - Ended with them being sold into slavery by deceitful Italian merchants who promised them safe passage
- Reality
  - Probably made up of group of all ages, although with many younger people present
  - Probably dissipated when they reached Italian ports and could not secure proper transportation
  - Numbers sold into slavery probably low<sup>8</sup>

### 5<sup>th</sup> Crusade, 1213-1221

- Initial victory, followed by defeat, against Muslim forces in Egypt
- Holding Egypt key to being able to securely rule Jerusalem

### Frederick II (1194-1250), Holy Roman Emperor 1220-1254

- Reluctant to fulfill his pledge to go on Crusade, delay led to his excommunication by Pope in 1227

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid, 607-611.

- 1228, leaves for Crusade, relations with Papacy at low enough point that excommunication is not lifted<sup>9</sup>  
While Frederic was in Jerusalem military forces of Papal States and Holy Roman Emperor were fighting each other back in Europe<sup>10</sup>
- Managed to **NEGOTIATE** the surrender of Jerusalem  
Did so playing on divisions among Islamic rulers, promising to leave them undisturbed so they could make war on each other
- Controversial figure, continued to have up and down relationship with Papacy for the rest of his reign<sup>11</sup>

Louis IX, (1214-1270), King of France 1226-1270

- His 1248-1250 crusade against Egyptian forces seen as a noble failure<sup>12</sup>
- Louis defeated, captured, released when ransom was paid<sup>13</sup>
- 1270 Louis dies in North Africa while on crusade, forces of that crusade withdraw in the wake of his death<sup>14</sup>

1291, almost two centuries of a significant Christian presence in the Middle East is brought to an end by the fall of Jerusalem

### **The Later Expansion of the Ottoman Empire**

The final defeat of the Crusaders was part of several very dangerous centuries for Europe

1453, over 700 years after their first attempt to take the city, Muslim forces capture the Byzantine capital of Constantinople<sup>15</sup>

1529, Europe's freedom preserved when Ottoman force is defeated outside of Vienna<sup>16</sup>

1571, on October 7<sup>th</sup> the Holy League; an alliance of Papal, Venetian, and Spanish forces, score a naval victory over an Ottoman fleet at Lepanto of the western coast of Greece, this is seen by many as the event which finally guaranteed Europe's safety from the possibility of Ottoman conquest<sup>17</sup>

1683, Muslim forces again defeated outside of Vienna

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<sup>9</sup> McBrien, Richard, *Lives of the Popes*, (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1997), 213.

<sup>10</sup> Tyerman, 739-740.

<sup>11</sup> McBrien, 213-214.

<sup>12</sup> Tyerman, 770.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid, 796-798.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid, 811-812.

<sup>15</sup> This story is told in impressive detail in Crowley, Roger, *1453: The Holy War for Constantinople and The Clash of Islam and The West*. (New York: Hyperion, 2005).

<sup>16</sup> Karsh, Efraim, *Islamic Imperialism: A History*, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2007), 93.

<sup>17</sup> McBrien, 290.

## Divisions Among Christians

During period of most intense conflict with Islam Eastern and Western Christians continued to drift apart

- 1054, escalating disputes led Pope Leo IX and the Patriarch of Constantinople, the most prominent bishop in the eastern part of the Church, to issue mutual excommunications<sup>18</sup>
  - Political divisions, differences in liturgical/spiritual practice upset Patriarch of Constantinople
  - Decided to close Latin churches in Constantinople
  - Delegates sent by Pope to negotiate did not resolve issue
  - July 16, 1054 Papal Representative placed papal document excommunicating Patriarch and his followers on the altar at the Hagia Sophia (main church in Constantinople)<sup>19</sup>
  - Most average Christians unaware these divisions existed<sup>20</sup>
  - 1054 often used as date of East/West schism, but this is overly simplistic way of looking at things
  - Significant divisions existed before 1054
  - Forms of really unity persisted past this date
  - 1054 is just one more significant date in centuries long drifting apart of East and West
- 1182, great wealth of the inhabitants of Western trading outposts in Constantinople starts to be resented by area's native inhabitants
  - Resentment leads to massacre<sup>21</sup>
- 1204, during the Fourth Crusade western soldiers become involved in internal Eastern political intrigue
  - Take the side of the son of a deposed Eastern Emperor
  - Situation deteriorates and for three days the Western soldiers sack the city<sup>22</sup>
  - Situation is not helped when the Crusaders set prostitutes on the Patriarch's throne in the Hagia Sophia Church<sup>23</sup>
- 1453, westerners largely abandon Constantinople to its fate as the city is taken by Muslim forces, the reasons for this are varied and complex but this is primarily the result of the greed of Northern Italian merchants

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<sup>18</sup> Timothy Ware, *The Orthodox Church*, (New York: Penguin Books, 1985), 51-52.

<sup>19</sup> McBrien, 175.

<sup>20</sup> Ware, 67.

<sup>21</sup> Crowley, *1453*, 27.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid*, 27-28.

<sup>23</sup> Ware, 68-69.

## Signs of Unity and Hope

1453, the city of Constantinople was taken on May 29<sup>th</sup>, on May 28<sup>th</sup> the Byzantine emperor, the Eastern clergy, and those Western clergy and soldiers who were in the city overcame their divisions and celebrated a common Eucharist, the next days Greeks and Italians went out to fight and die together

Emperor Constantine XI addressed the Western soldiers in the city with these words; “You men of Genoa, men of courage and famous for your infinite victories, you who have always protected this city, you mother, in many a conflict with the Turks, show now your prowess and your aggressive spirit toward them with manly vigour. You men of Venice, most valiant heroes, whose swords have many a time made Turkish blood to flow and who in our time have sent so many ships, so many infidel souls to the depths under the command of Loredano, the most excellent captain of our fleet, you who have adorned this city as if it were your own with fine, outstanding men, lift high your spirits now for battle. You, my comrades in arms, obey the commands of your leaders in the knowledge that this is your day of glory-a day on which, if you shed but a drop of blood, you will win for yourselves the crowns of martyrdom and eternal fame.”<sup>24</sup>

Early 1700s, excellent relations exist between the Orthodox and Catholics in the eastern Mediterranean world

- Catholic missionaries are invited to speak to Orthodox bishops
- Catholic and Orthodox priests hear the confessions of members of each other’s churches<sup>25</sup>

The Catholics and Orthodox slaughtered in Constantinople in 1453 driven together by the Muslim threat they faced together

But the Muslim conquest of the city drove East and West further apart

- Muslim conquerors immediately appointed an extremely anti-Catholic monk as the Patriarch of Constantinople
- In coming centuries the Patriarchs, heads of the Orthodox Church, were manipulated, deposed, and sometimes killed by their Muslim rulers  
Possibility of a Patriarch of Constantinople actively working for closer ties with the Catholic Church nonexistent as long as the Patriarchs were dominated by the Ottomans who saw Western Europe as their most dangerous enemy<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Darrel Cole, *The Virtue of War: Reclaiming the Classic Christian Traditions East and West*, (Salisbury, Ma: Regina Orthodox Press, 2004), 86-90.

<sup>25</sup> Ware, *The Orthodox Church*, 108.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid*, 97-99.

Part of the reason that the mutual condemnations of 1054 were not formally lifted until December 7, 1965<sup>27</sup>

- Since 1965 situation greatly improved, relationship between Catholics and Orthodox still strained at times
  - Frequent meetings, including common prayer, between Popes and Patriarchs
  - Formal theological dialogues
    - Greater Orthodox willingness to acknowledge reality of Pope as most important/prominent of Church's bishops
    - Catholic willingness to discuss degree to which Eastern Churches would maintain autonomy even in union with Rome
  - Progress does not mean disappearance of problems
    - Full union between East and West is simply not something we should expect to see soon

There are some key points to keep in mind as we consider divisions within Christianity and the impact of Islam on these

- If Western Europe had provided significant military aid to the Byzantines in 1453, and not just token forces, Constantinople might not have fallen. Significant portions of the world that were for centuries ruled by Muslims, and in some cases still are, would have been areas where Christians would have been free to practice their faith.
- Whether significant Western aid saved Constantinople or not it would have generated tremendous good will on the part of the Orthodox towards Catholics. It might not have meant reunification, but the divisions would likely have been much less than they are now. The depth of division between the worlds 1,000,000,000 + Roman Catholics and 300,000,000 + is Eastern Orthodox is one of the greatest tragedies of all time and we should feel deep regret when it comes to anything that has served to make these divisions worse.

### **The Weakening and Division of the Ottoman Empire**

Ottoman power seems to have peaked in the 1500s. Over the course of the following centuries they faced reversals in fortune at the hands of European powers.

- 1788-1791, an alliance between Russia and Hapsburg Empire leads to the loss of Ottoman possessions in the Balkans<sup>28</sup>
- 1800s, in an ironic twist various European powers prop up the Ottomans to preserve international stability, an example of this is the aid given to Sultan Selim III when he resisted Napoleon's invasion of Egypt<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid, 324.

<sup>28</sup> Karsh, *Islamic Imperialism*, 96.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid, 99.

- 1822-1833, the successful fight against the Ottomans for Greek independence is aided by a number of European powers<sup>30</sup>
- 1830, France occupies Algeria
- 1881, France occupies Tunisia
- 1882, Great Britain occupies Egypt
- 1911-1912, Italy conquers Libya<sup>31</sup>
- 1918-1920s, European powers and their Arab allies in fighting the Ottomans during World War I divide up remnants of Ottoman Empire, creating among other things the ethnically divided nation of Iraq<sup>32</sup>

### **Implications for our Present Situation**

This violent history has influenced our current world situation in a number of ways

- In those areas where Muslims have been ruled by Christian occupiers, and vice versa, there is tremendous resentment and hatred. The persecution of Christians in the Middle East shows this, as does the massacre of Muslims by Serbian forces in the 1990s.
- The legacy of the Crusades and colonialism has fueled Islamic extremism.

There also seems to be some surprising ways in which this violent history has not influenced our current world situation.

- Muslims certainly remember the Crusades, as well as European colonialism in former Ottoman territories
- The West does not seem to have a clear memory that Muslim forces reached into Spain, France, Austria, Poland, and Italy
  - Horrors and excesses that were at times part of the Crusades and colonialism are inexcusable
  - Perfectly natural that this would cause a real wariness on the part of Muslims when they consider the motivations of Western nations
  - But when the finger pointing goes on everyone seems to forget that to a large extent these were European reactions to significant Islamic military threats

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid, 110-111.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid, 102-103.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid, 195-198.