



The First Crusade: A New History: The Roots of Conflict between Christianity and Islam

By Thomas Asbridge

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In *The First Crusade*, Thomas Asbridge offers a gripping account of a titanic three-year adventure filled with miraculous victories, greedy princes, and barbarity on a vast scale. Beginning with the electrifying speech delivered by Pope Urban II on the last Tuesday of November in the year 1095, readers will follow the more than 100,000 men who took up the call from their mobilization in Europe (where great waves of anti-Semitism resulted in the deaths of thousands of Jews), to their arrival in Constantinople, an exotic, opulent city--ten times the size of any city in Europe--that bedazzled the Europeans. Featured in vivid detail are the siege of Nicaea and the pivotal battle for Antioch, the single most important military engagement of the entire expedition, where the crusaders, in desperate straits, routed a larger and better equipped Muslim army. Through all this, the crusaders were driven on by intense religious devotion, convinced that their struggle would earn them the reward of eternal paradise in Heaven. But when a hardened core finally reached Jerusalem in 1099 they unleashed an unholy wave of brutality, slaughtering thousands of Muslims--men, women, and children--all in the name of Christianity. The First Crusade marked a watershed in relations between Islam and the West, a conflict that set these two world religions on a course toward deep-seated animosity and enduring enmity. The chilling reverberations of this earth-shattering clash still echo in the world today.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

In 1095, Pope Urban II preached a fiery sermon that changed the course of Western history: he urged Christian warriors to take up the sword and defend their brothers in the East who had been defeated by the Muslims, and to retake the holy city of Jerusalem, then under Islamic control. Asbridge, a British authority on the Crusades, brilliantly re-creates the three-year history of the First Crusade, chronicling its difficulties and victories, not downplaying its brutality but emphasizing its genuinely religious impulse. He vividly recounts the terrible winter of 1096 in Antioch, which reduced the Christian armies from 100,000 to 30,000. Focusing on the warriors' beliefs, Asbridge astutely points out that the warriors interpreted this as God's cleansing of the weaker and less committed fighters and concluded that victory was ordained for the survivors in the final, bloody battles. Asbridge also observes that the Christian forces acted less out of an inborn hatred of Islam than out of a desire for a place in heaven if they died in battle. While relations between Christianity and Islam did not break down immediately as a result of the crusaders' triumph, later pro-war propaganda on both sides drove a wedge between the two religions. Asbridge combines fast-paced history writing, evocative prose and lucid research for a first-rate history of the First Crusade. B&w illus., 9 maps.

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From School Library Journal

Adult/High School—This concise, fascinating account begins with a brief discussion of the events and individuals who influenced Pope Urban II's call for a holy war in 1095. Blending recent research with 11th- and 12th-century writings, Asbridge describes the extraordinary circumstances that introduced the pacifist Christian church to militarism and launched tens of thousands of men and women on a journey they could scarcely comprehend. The number of significant participants of the First Crusade was huge, but the author keeps the telling manageable by focusing on two dozen of the most famous. Readers learn about their appearance, backgrounds, and beliefs before setting out with them for Jerusalem. Vivid eyewitness accounts are quoted, with corrections made for obvious errors, such as estimates of numbers of fighters. The frenetic preparations for departure, the horrors of the journey, and the savage battles are described with compelling realism. The bloody sack of Jerusalem concludes the main narrative, but an aftermath covers the subsequent lives of the major participants, and a conclusion evaluates the crusade's long-term impact. Several useful features include 9 maps, 16 pages of black-and-white photographs of medieval art and fortifications, an annotated cast of characters, and a glossary.—*Kathy Tewell, Fairfax County Public Library, VA*

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From [Booklist](#)

In November 1095, Pope Urban II launched the First Crusade in the French city of Clermont, declaring that Christians had endured oppression and abuse at the hands of "their savage Muslim masters." He alleged that Jerusalem, the epicenter of Christian tradition, lay in the grasp of Islam. The pope called on Catholic Europe to take up arms and that those fighting as "soldiers of Christ" would be purified by the fire of battle. Asbridge chronicles this three-year, 3,000-mile battle across Europe, which involved 100,000 soldiers. The crusaders faced exhaustion, disease, and starvation while demonstrating a capacity for intense religious devotion and appalling brutality. Thousands of Muslims were killed in the name of Christianity, as well as thousands of Jews because of fervid anti-Semitism. The author sheds new light on the expedition's inception, explaining what motivated such a large number of Europeans to join the crusade. *George Cohen*
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Users Review

From reader reviews:

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This book untitled The First Crusade: A New History: The Roots of Conflict between Christianity and Islam to be one of several books that will best seller in this year, that's because when you read this publication you can get a lot of benefit onto it. You will easily to buy this particular book in the book shop or you can order it by way of online. The publisher of the book sells the e-book too. It makes you more readily to read this book, as you can read this book in your Smart phone. So there is no reason to you to past this book from your list.

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