



Holy War: The Crusades and Their Impact on Today's World

By Karen Armstrong

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Karen Armstrong, bestselling author of *A History of God*, skillfully narrates this history of the Crusades with a view toward their profound and continuing influence.

In 1095 Pope Urban II summoned Christian warriors to take up the cross and reconquer the Holy Land. Thus began the holy wars that would focus the power of Europe against a common enemy and become the stuff of romantic legend. In reality the Crusades were a series of rabidly savage conflicts in the name of piety. And, as Armstrong demonstrates in this fascinating book, their legacy of religious violence continues today in the Middle East, where the age-old conflict of Christians, Jews, and Muslims persists.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Judaism, Christianity and Islam--obviously central to Middle East crises today--were also at the crux of the Crusades nearly 1000 years ago. Maps.

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From Library Journal

Recent historians have convincingly demonstrated that 13th-century European governments institutionalized three forms of irrational bigotry that have tragically affected the modern world: anti-Semitism, anti-homosexuality, and anti-Islam. This important book, which brings the perspective of a student of theology and literature who also knows traditional political history, sees the medieval Crusades as the root of current Middle East conflicts. Such a view substantiates the historical interpretation. The book attempts a "triple vision" of the concept of crusade or holy war for Jews, Christians, and Muslims, tracing the religious origins of conflict among the three peoples to their differing interpretations of scripture, the secular origins to 19th-century nationalism and imperialism. The result is an erudite, balanced, and lucidly written study which shows that false images, ridiculous perceptions, and absurd demons have haunted all three peoples. A mine of useful information on Muslim-Western perceptions of each other, this book for the general reader can be beneficially read by scholars and Middle Eastern experts.

-Bennett D. Hill, Georgetown Univ., Washington, D.C.

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Review

"A tour de force. . . . Any reader will come away from this book with a better frame of reference for assessing today's headlines." —*The Kansas City Star*

"*Holy War* brings compassion, objectivity, breadth, and imagination to the most urgent crisis of our time." —*The Boston Phoenix*

"Erudite, balanced, and lucidly written. . . . [Provides] a mine of useful information on Muslim-Western perceptions of each other. . . . An important book." —*Library Journal*

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