

The Middle Ages

Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.—Matthew 7:21

During the Middle Ages terrible things were done by many of those in power to others who did not agree with them. Some were tortured, others stoned to death or burned at the stake. All these things were done in the name of God, Christianity, truth, and righteousness. However, Charlemagne (whose name means Charles the Great) was an excellent emperor who realized that knowledge and law and order are necessary in a good kingdom.

When Pope Leo III crowned Charlemagne ruler of the Holy Roman Empire in 800 A.D., many people hoped that this would be the end of wars and that peace would come at last. But his empire was not God's kingdom; all of his schools of learning and courts of law were made by men and could not last forever or give perfect justice. He accomplished much to advance civilization during his short reign of fourteen years, but it was not God's time to set up his kingdom.

The Crusades did much to break down the old system of poor peasants working for rich lords and stimulated the economic and intellectual life of the West. Groups of people came into being who held and spread ideas which were in conflict with the doctrines and government of the Roman Catholic Church.

One of these groups was the Albigenses of France, Spain, and Italy. They completely rejected the clergy and the claims of the Church of Rome. They lived lives of self-denial and moral purity,

and made great use of the Scriptures. They were considered heretics (a word describing those who hold religious beliefs opposed to the official and established views of a church).

Followers of Peter Waldo were called Waldenses. They were also from France and Italy. They believed that the Bible, and especially the New Testament, provided the only rule of faith and life for Christians. Their preaching caused a great desire among the people to read the Bible. Both groups were non-trinitarian.

Terrible persecutions completely destroyed the Albigenses within a hundred years. The Waldenses fled to the high valleys of the Alps where they still live; they are the only group from the Middle Ages that has survived to the present time. They carry out evangelistic work in Italy today.



Original Photo-Drama slide

Many Christians were tortured for their beliefs during the Middle Ages.