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HISTORICAL PERSECUTION OF BELIEVERS – LESSON 9
CRUSADE AGAINST THE ALBIGENSES

The Cathars rose in the eleventh and twelfth centuries in parts of Southern France and Italy around the same time period as the Waldensians. The Cathars are historically called Albigenses due to the city of Albi, France being where Catharism began.

The beliefs of the Cathars derived partly from Gnosticism, a heretical teaching that disputes the true identity of Jesus. It is dualistic, featuring Good (God) versus Evil (the physical realm). They referred to themselves as “Good Christians.”

Their unorthodox teaching conflicted with the orthodoxy of the Roman Catholic Church (RCC). Pope Innocent III sent emissaries in 1208 to persuade local officials to take action against them. That failed, so the Pope launched the Albigensian Crusade in 1209. This military assault lasted twenty years with the 1229 defeat of the Cathars. This led to the “Papal Inquisitions” starting in 1230 with the Cathars (Albigensians) and the Waldensians being the primary targets.

It is estimated by various accounts that at least 100,000 and perhaps one million Albigensians were rounded up and executed. The Albigensians were eventually eradicated, although some pockets of Waldensians still exist.

Historians write that this Inquisition was a prime example of outright genocide by the RCC. As Christians, we are to show love for all people, not just the ones of whom we approve or agree. The murderous inquisitions of the RCC show that they are in direct conflict with Christ’s teaching of love. This is another proof that it is an apostate church. The RCC over the next several centuries launched numerous other inquisitions, murdering millions of believers who did not conform to Catholic rulership.

Not only was Jesus’ greatest commandment “to love”, but I Corinthians 13 gives quite a dialogue on love (charity). I John 4:8 says, **“He that loveth not knoweth not God, for God is love.”** The Catholic leadership “knows not God” because they have murdered countless millions of believers. However, many individual Catholics are true believers, and they love God. They love Jesus and people in general. God honors their faith even though they identify with an apostate religious hierarchy. We must love everyone. There is no room for hate.