

## The Great and Holy War: How World War I Became a Religious Crusade



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(Davon Senger)*

## THE GREAT AND HOLY WAR: HOW WORLD WAR I BECAME A RELIGIOUS CRUSADE

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HarperOne. 1 Cloth(s), 2014. hard. Book Condition: New. Fought by the world's leading Christian nations in an era of emerging mass media, World War I was accompanied by a steady stream of patriotic and militaristic rhetoric, using language that spoke of holy war and crusade, apocalypse and Armageddon. But this rhetoric was not merely state propaganda, argues Philip Jenkins. Also the author of *The Lost History of Christianity*, *Jesus Wars*, and *The Next Christendom*, he reveals how the widespread belief in angels, apparitions, and the supernatural was a driving force throughout the war and shaped all three of the major religions—Christianity, Judaism and Islam—and founded modern perceptions of religion and violence. It was the disappointed hopes and moral compromises that followed the war, argues Jenkins, that shaped the political climate of the rest of the century, giving rise to such phenomena as Nazism, totalitarianism, and communism. "In his masterful book Jenkins . firmly establishes that WWI did not just reshape the political landscape, but it created the religious world we exist in today." *Catholic World Report* "Sounding like a medieval priest galvanizing 11th-century Crusaders, a 20th-century Yale theologian urges his countrymen to 'buckle on Christian armor and take their place in the fighting ranks' of doughboys up against German heathens. What is more, Jenkins finds such religious rhetoric in the mouths of countless combatants on both sides of the Great War. In Germany, Russia, Britain, America, and the Ottoman Empire, readers hear fervid sermons urging attacks on devilish foes and promising divine deliverance to righteous warriors. Jenkins recognizes the incongruity between ancient scriptural phrases and modern weaponry—machine guns, mustard gas, tanks, and airplanes. Yet he finds the archaic language of godly violence pervading even officially secular France and infecting even America's most liberal clergy (one of whom calls for the extermination of...



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