

FOR THE LOVE OF GOD + -

WITCHES: FEAR AND LOATHING IN SALEM

This segment comes from **EPISODE 4: POWER + HUMILITY**.

The church's record of holding power – from Emperor Constantine in the 4th century onwards – has involved some terrible acts of coercion, exploitation, and abuse. Yet Jesus set an example of selfless service, and started a “humility revolution” that fundamentally transformed the West and the way we think about leadership and power. For groups like women and indigenous peoples, what has it looked like when Christians have exercised power for their own benefit? What has it looked like when they've exercised it for the good of others? This segment looks at the complicated history of the witch hunts that swept across Europe and America in the early modern period.



THEME QUESTION

Make a list of some examples in history of when power has been used to persecute people.

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.



ENGAGE

1. How would you feel if you were falsely accused of a crime?
2. Using words and images, create a collage of things that come to your mind when you hear the term “witch hunt”.

3. Find three examples of witchcraft in popular culture, and for each example choose three adjectives to describe how witchcraft is portrayed.

Example 1:	Example 2:	Example 3:

4. Read this article, “[Witch hunting in the digital age](https://cpx.video/witchhunt)” (cpx.video/witchhunt). Based on the information given in the article, discuss in pairs how online witch-hunts compare with the witch-hunts of the 15th-18th centuries.

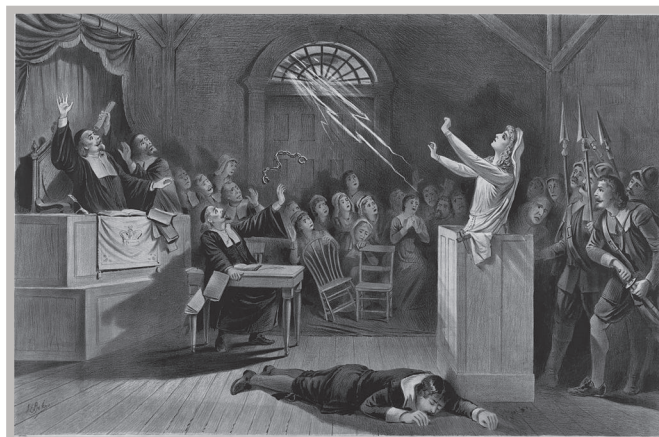


UNDERSTAND AND EVALUATE



WATCH the segment: “[Witches: Fear and loathing in Salem](https://cpx.video/witches)” (cpx.video/witches)

1. How does the video segment contrast Walpurgisnacht today with the witch panics that swept across Europe in the 1600s?
2. Explain what happened to Rebecca Lemp. Why do you think she might have been accused?
3. Write another paragraph of Rebecca Lemp’s letter.
4. Write down as many things as you can remember from the video segment about what happened in Salem in February 1692.



Fanciful representation of the Salem witch trials, lithograph from 1892.

5. Outline how each of the following may have contributed to the Salem Witch Hunts:
 - a. Misogyny
 - b. Economic tensions
 - c. Factional/personal vendettas
6. What role did Christianity play, both in contributing to the Salem witch hunts and in bringing the terror to an end?

BIBLE FOCUS

READ Proverbs 3:29-31.

1. Summarise each of these verses in your own words.
2. How might these verses speak into events such as the Salem witch hunts?

READ Mark 12:28-31.

3. How does Jesus say we should treat our neighbour?
4. Why do you think Jesus calls these two commandments the most important?

APPLY

1. Create a series of images for an Instagram story that might be used in a campaign against modern online “witch hunts”.
2. Read this opinion piece in the *New York Times*, “[The Persecution of Witches: 21st-Century Style](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/01/26/opinion/the-persecution-of-witches-21st-century-style.html)” ([cpx.video/persecution](https://www.cpx.video/persecution)).
 - a. Imagine you have the opportunity to interview one of the following people mentioned in the article. Choose who you would interview and write five questions you would ask them.
 - i. Jeff Crisp, an official with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

- ii. PNG's Prime Minister Peter O'Neill
 - iii. Rev. Jack Urame of the Melanesian Institute, a human rights agency in PNG
- b. In small groups, discuss the following questions: To what extent is religion, including Christianity, responsible for modern witch hunts? How might Christianity be part of the solution to religiously based violence?
3. Write a fictional short story about a modern "witch hunt" (maximum one page).



"Examination of a Witch (1853)" by T.H. Matteson, inspired by the Salem witch trials

EXTEND

1. Read Act 1 Scene 1 of *The Crucible*, Arthur Miller's 1953 classic play about the Salem Witch Trials. Write a one-page essay about how religion influences the attitudes and actions of the characters in the scene.