



Kingdom of Heaven

A Ridley Scott film, *Kingdom of Heaven* follows the story of Balian, the black smith (Orlando Bloom) from France, rising up to be a heroic knight and living up to an oath sworn to his dying father. The film is set during the 2nd crusade launched in the winter of 1144 spanning up to the **recapture of Jerusalem in 1187** by the great Muslim general **Salah-Uddin**.

Syrian actor and scholar **Ghassan Massaud** captured the role of Salah Uddin with dignity and intelligence and exuded great presence on the big screen translating the chivalric nature and great leadership quality of the Kurdish general who was respected by all around him, notably his enemies.



The film portrays Muslims in a positive light instead of being depicted as the "badies". **The overall message of the film is the promotion of peaceful co-existence.** The scenes of Muslims, Jews and Christians working together to irrigate the holy land under Balian's supervision was put forward as the utopian society where people of all faiths can live in the same wider community without wishing to kill one another. At a time when contemporary inter-faith relations in the holy land and across the globe continue to be fragile, *Kingdom of Heaven* appears to be a sensitive comment on our times.