Explain why Emperor Alexis I received military help from the West. [12 marks]

- 1054 schism
- Threat of Islam = ruin of the buffer/safe zone/threat from Battle of Manzikert 1071
- Spiritual motivation to protect Jerusalem
- Peace of God/knights/new land/trade merchants

Emperor Alexis I received military help from the West in 1095 because of Pope Urban II’s ambition to restore papal authority in the East after the schism of 1054. The two Churches, Latin and Greek, had broken apart over differences of doctrine – the Latin including “and the son” into their system of beliefs without consulting the Eastern Christians first. This caused the Pope and the Archbishop of Constantinople to excommunicate each other, dividing the Church. Urban wanted to take advantage of a good situation – if Alexis required his help then hopefully Urban could gain papal authority in return and the Church would once again be united.

Alexis also received help because Urban feared the fall of the Byzantium Empire. If the empire was to fall, then there would be no line of defence between the Muslims and the Western Christians. It was more advantageous for the Byzantium Empire to be intact so that the threat of Islam was not so close to the Eastern Christians – by helping defend this empire, Urban made sure that the threat was not directly on his doorstep. The Western Christians were also receiving threats from Muslims in Egypt, and held strong defence lines in Spain to hold off an invasion. Urban could not afford a Muslim on both sides of the Latin Empire, so he sent military help to Alexis to invest in further protection.

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Military help was also given because of the motivation of the crusading force. As preached by Urban, they believed that the Holy Land of Jerusalem, where Jesus had lived and died, was under the harsh treatment of Islam. Alexis had received the promise of military help from Urban as a result of the schism, the threat of Islam and the Peace of God, but he received such a powerful and vast source because of the motivation of the western people due to their spiritual belief in the Holy Land.