

## The Crusades (1095 - 1291)

### ➤ Perspectives on the Crusades [Western - Byzantine - Muslim]

*Crusades as religious war (jihad)*

*Crusades as European expansion (attempts to colonize the Middle East)*

*Crusades as European liberalization (exposure to a wider world)*

- A. Tradition of Western / Christian resistance to Islam begun by Charlemagne in his campaign in Spain (c. 800)
- B. 4 MAIN REASONS FOR THE CRUSADES:
  - 1. the pope (Urban II) hoped to unite the entire eastern Mediterranean and the divided Christian faith under the Latin church
  - 2. the Italian city-states, w/ their large navies, hoped for commercial gains
  - 3. the Byzantine Empire was in severe decline --> could no longer act as a buffer between the Muslim East and the Christian West
  - 4. the Seljuk Turks, declining in military power, were no longer able to ensure the safety of Christian pilgrims visiting the Holy Land
- C. Background
  - 1. Request for aid from Byzantine Emperor Alex Comnenus in 1095 seen by Pope Urban II as an opportunity to regain leadership of the Church --> called for Crusade to reconquer Jerusalem from the Muslims.
  - 2. Pope's plea aroused enthusiasm among:
    - a. religious persons who believed that "God wills it"
    - b. Christians who desired papal forgiveness for their sins
    - c. nobles who expected to acquire new lands and great riches
    - d. middle-class merchants who wanted increased trade
    - e. serfs who sought escape from feudal oppression
    - f. adventurers who welcomed travel and excitement
- D. Major Events (1st and 3rd crusades were the most significant of 7 major crusades)
  - 1. The First Crusade - The Conquest of the Holy Land:
    - a. well-organized military expedition that drove the Muslims from part of Palestine, recaptured Jerusalem ("glorious slaughter" of the inhabitants), established a Christian kingdom in the Holy Land ("occupied territory")
    - b. Opposed by Orthodox Christians of Byzantium, Sunni Muslims in the Turkish states and Shi'a Muslims in Egypt
      - 1) Fortunately for crusaders, their enemies would never combine against them
    - c. Latent prejudice against Jews broke into open in Crusades leading to slaughter of many innocent people, especially in Central Europe
    - d. Muslim Counterattacks: Salah al-Din (Saladin) [BTW - Saddam Hussein's heroic model] recaptured Jerusalem in 1187 --> setting the stage for
  - 2. The Third Crusade
    - a. Fredrich Barbarossa of Germany, Richard the Lion-Hearted of England and Philip II of France led the Crusader armies
    - b. Leaders not united and quarreled among themselves
    - c. Salah al-Din agreed with Richard to allow Christian pilgrims to visit Jerusalem in peace
    - d. Reasons For Crusades? In the end, none of these were met more than temporarily
  - 3. Subsequent Crusades failed to establish Christian rule in Palestine. By 1291, Muslim Turks again completely controlled the Holy Land -- and retained it until after World War I

## Results Of Crusades -- Cultural and Commercial Exchanges

### POSITIVES - Long-Lasting Cultural Exchanges:

- Muslim world introduced crusaders to a wide range of new foods and luxury items
- some crusaders joined the different way of life, intermarrying and becoming assimilated with the indigenous populations
- commercial growth of Italian city-states - supplied crusader states AND established direct contact with the whole Muslim world --> opened land and sea trade routes to India, central Asia, and East Asia [economic basis for the Renaissance]

⇒ trade continued even in times of open war

- Commercial centers: cinnamon from India, ginger / pepper from Indonesia, cotton / metals from Egypt, porcelain from China, silks / brocades from Syria, pearls from Persian Gulf --> Damascus emerges as key city
- broadened Western outlook - geographical knowledge, progress in arts and sciences
- Changes in European institutions: stronger central governments / monarchies <--> weaker nobility; rising merchant / middle class; weakened serfdom
- Helped *stabilize* European society --> directed violent energies overseas
- Increased power of women --> managed estates of Crusader husbands

### NEGATIVES - Aggressive Militaristic Ventures:

- Significant loss of life
- Justified violent war for religious purposes
- Intensified religious animosities between the Christian and Muslim worlds --> persisted until the present
- Fostered further religious disputes between Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Christians

⇒ indigenous eastern Christians suffered persecution at the hands of both Latin Christians and the previously tolerant Muslims

- Crusades ironically proved instrumental in making the eastern Mediterranean predominately Muslim

⇒ nearly half the Arab population in the eastern Mediterranean were Christian when the Crusaders arrived --> converted to Islam due to outrages of the excesses and massacres of the crusaders OR to avoid persecution by zealous Muslim leaders

*INSTEAD OF UNITING CHRISTIANITY AND DEFEATING THE MUSLIMS, THE CRUSADERS HAD DIVIDED CHRISTIANITY AND WERE DEFEATED BY THE MUSLIMS.*