

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.