

## The Crusades

During the Middle Ages, Christians called Palestine the Holy Land because Jesus of Nazareth lived there. Many Christian pilgrims traveled to see the places that Jesus had visited. In the seventh century, Muslims conquered Palestine. For nearly 400 years, the Muslims let Christian pilgrims visit the Holy Land. But early in the 11<sup>th</sup> century, the Muslims Turks took control of the Holy Land and prevented Christian pilgrims from visiting the Holy Land. Some pilgrims reported that the Turks had killed Christians and destroyed churches. Rumors spread.

In 1095 A.D., Pope Urban II, the head of the Roman Catholic Church, called on all Christians in Europe to unite and fight a holy Crusade or war against the Muslim rulers of Palestine. The Pope wanted to free Palestine from Muslim control.

Seven Crusades were fought over the next two centuries. The Crusades brought rulers and nobles from different parts of Europe together in a common cause. Although Christians never achieved more than temporary control of Jerusalem, the Crusades had many important effects.

Questions:

1- Why did Christian pilgrims visit Palestine during the Middle Ages?

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2- Who conquered Palestine in the seventh century?

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3- What change occurred early in the eleventh century that increased hostility between Christians and Muslims?

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4- Who was Urban II and what did he call for in 1095 A.D.?

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5- What is a Crusade and how many Crusades were fought?

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6- Who won?

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**“Accordingly undertake this journey for the remission of your sins, with the assurance of the imperishable glory of the kingdom of heaven.”** Pope Urban II  
The Byzantine Empire, ruling from Constantinople, was ruled by emperor Alexius Comnenus. To his East, the Turks were rapidly encroaching on his

empire, and had begun attacking pilgrims on their way to - and in - Jerusalem, causing him great distress. He wrote to his friend Robert, a Western European lord, in 1093, telling him about supposed cruelties committed by the Turks on the Christian pilgrims, and Robert passed this letter on to Pope Urban II. Urban promoted a Holy Crusade to reclaim the Holy Lands from the “barbarian” Turks. Thus, the First Crusade was launched in 1096 A.D.

The Crusades were a series of military campaigns during the Middle Ages against the Muslims of the Middle East. Muslims had captured Jerusalem - the most holy of holy places for Christians. Jesus had been born in nearby Bethlehem and Jesus had spent most of his life in Jerusalem. He was crucified on Calvary Hill, also in Jerusalem. There was no more important place on Earth than Jerusalem for a true Christian which is why Christians called Jerusalem the "City of God".

However, Jerusalem was also extremely important for the Muslims as Muhammad, the founder of the Muslim faith, had been there and there was great joy in the Muslim world when Jerusalem was captured. A beautiful dome - called the Dome of the Rock - was built on the rock where Muhammad was said to have sat and prayed and it was so holy that no Muslim was allowed to tread on the rock or touch it when visiting the Dome. Therefore the Christian fought to get Jerusalem back while the Muslims fought to keep Jerusalem. These wars were to last nearly 200 years.

Questions:

7- Why were the Byzantines concerned about the Muslim Turks?

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8- Who did the Byzantine emperor write to and how did his letter influence Western European history during the Middle Ages?

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9- What were the Crusades?

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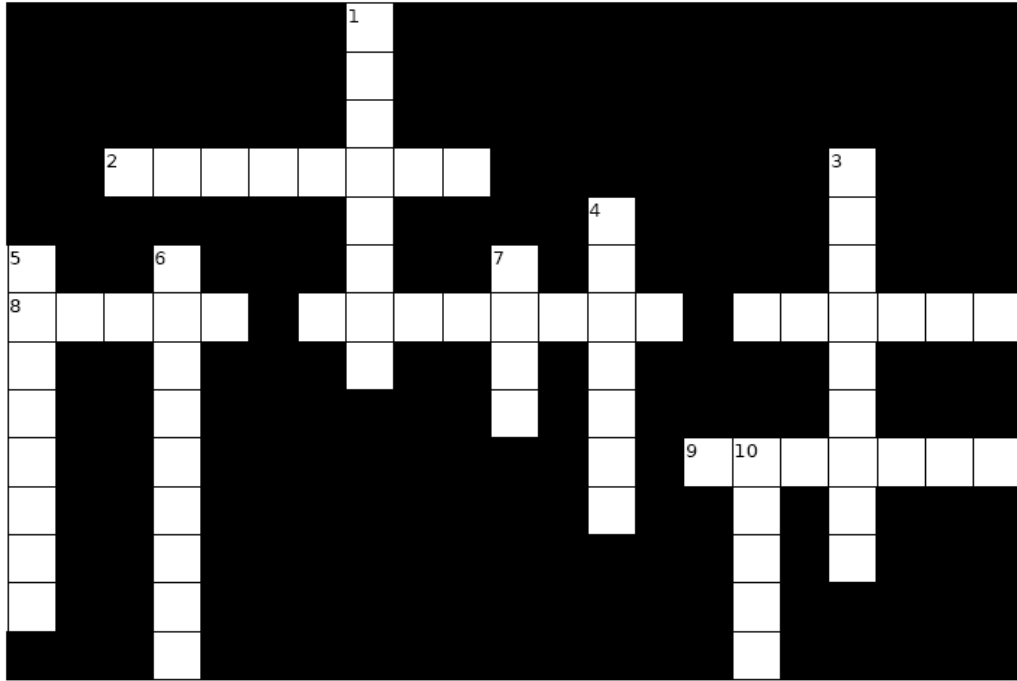
10- Why was Jerusalem important to Christians and Muslims?

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- Across**
- 2 People who travel for religious reasons
  - 8 The most powerful institution in Medieval Europe
  - 9 Captured the Holy Land

- Down**
- 1 Another term for Middle Ages
  - 3 A holy city for Christians and Muslims
  - 4 Warriors on horseback during the Middle Ages
  - 5 Holy wars between Christians and Muslims
  - 6 Roman term for the "Holy Land"
  - 7 The leader of the Roman Catholic Church
  - 10 Pope who called for a Crusade

**Word Bank:**

Crusades, Palestine, Urban, Muslims, Jerusalem, Medieval, Knights, Roman Catholic Church, Pope, Pilgrims

A major goal of the Christian Church during the Crusades (1096–1291) was to

- 1. establish Christianity in western Europe
- 2. capture the Holy Land from Islamic rulers
- 3. unite warring Arab peoples
- 4. strengthen English dominance in the Arab world

In 1095, Pope Urban II decided that Europe's kingdoms should help the Byzantine emperor. The Byzantine Empire had faced many invasions. Now the Seljuk Turks were a strong force on the Byzantine borders. Speaking to a group of nobles, Pope Urban II called for all Christians to take up arms and take control of Jerusalem and the Holy Land. The Pope's speech was witnessed and recorded by a nobleman. Many European men, women, and children joined the Crusades and fought in the Middle East. In 1099 they took Jerusalem. Wars continued in the region for many years. In 1187, the Muslim leader Saladin prepared to try to take Jerusalem back from the Christians.

#### Pope Urban's Speech

"...Your brethren who live in the east are in urgent need of your help, and you must hasten to give them the aid which has often been promised them. For, as most of you have heard, the Turks and Arabs have attacked them and have conquered the territory of Romania [the Byzantine Empire]. . . . They have occupied more and more of the lands of those Christians, and have overcome them in seven battles. They have killed and captured many, and have destroyed the churches and devastated the empire. On this account I, or rather the Lord, beseech you as Christ's heralds to publish this everywhere and to persuade all people of whatever rank, foot-soldiers and knights, poor and rich, to carry aid promptly to those Christians and to destroy that . . . race from the lands of our friends...All who die by the way, whether by land or by sea, or in battle against the [Muslims}, shall have immediate remission of sins.

#### The Words of Saladin

"If God blesses us by enabling us to drive His enemies out of Jerusalem, how fortunate and happy we would be! ... Time has passed, and so did many generations, while the Franks succeeded in rooting themselves strongly there. Now God has reserved the merit of its recovery for one house, the house of the sons of Ayyub [Saladin's family], in order to unite all hearts in appreciation of its members."

1. What arguments does the Pope use to persuade his listeners?

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2. What are the similarities and differences between the arguments the Pope and Saladin use to persuade their listeners?

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