

## Chapter 10

# From the Crusades to New Muslim Empires

*How did the Crusades affect the lives of Christians, Muslims, and Jews?*

### 10.1 Introduction

In this chapter, you will learn about a series of religious wars, the Crusades, that took place during the Middle Ages. The Crusades were launched by European Christians to reclaim Jerusalem and other holy sites in the Middle East from Muslims.

Christians mounted these religious wars between 1096 and 1291. A major purpose was to gain control of Palestine. This area is the ancient homeland of Jews and the place where Jesus lived. The spiritual heart of Palestine was the city of Jerusalem. As you will learn, the city was, and is, sacred to Jews, Christians, and Muslims alike.

In the 11th century, Palestine came under the rule of a rising Muslim power, the Seljuk Turks. They were building a huge empire and treating Christians badly. The advances of the Seljuk Turks into Byzantine territory, and their ill treatment of Christians, alarmed the Byzantine emperor. In 1076, the Seljuks took Jerusalem. In 1095, the emperor asked Pope Urban II for help. The pope called on Christians to go on a religious war to turn back the Seljuks and win control of Jerusalem and the surrounding area. The next year, the first armies set out from Europe.

Muslims were not the only targets of these religious wars. Europeans also mounted violent campaigns against Jews and Christian heretics. Religious wars were waged in Europe and North Africa, as well as the Middle East.

In this chapter, you will read the story of these religious wars. You will explore the effects of this warfare on Christians, Muslims, and Jews. You will also learn how new Muslim empires arose after the wars, and how Islam continued to spread to new parts of the world.



Two important religious sites stand near each other in Jerusalem. Muslims believe that Muhammad ascended to heaven at the site of the gold-roofed Dome of the Rock. In the foreground, Jews gather to pray at the Western Wall, the remains of their ancient Temple. It is the holiest place in the world for Jews.

◀ This 12th-century map shows the city of Jerusalem, which is holy to Jews, Christians, and Muslims.



**Crusades** a series of religious wars launched by European Christians to reclaim Jerusalem and other holy sites from Muslims

**sultan** the supreme ruler of a Muslim state

**Holy Land** the area between Egypt and Syria that was the ancient homeland of Jews and the place where Jesus Christ had lived; also called Palestine

## 10.2 Events Leading Up to the Crusades

Why did European Christians begin the religious wars, or **Crusades**, at the end of the 11th century? To answer this question, we need to look at what was happening in Muslim lands at the time.

During the 11th century, the Seljuk Turks established a new Muslim dynasty. The Turks were a Central Asian people who had been migrating into Muslim lands for centuries. The Seljuks were named for a Turkish chieftain who converted to Islam in the mid-11th century. In 1055, his descendants took control of the Abbasid dynasty's capital of Baghdad in what was then Persia. A Seljuk **sultan** now ruled the old Abbasid Empire.

The Seljuks were eager to expand their territory. Moving westward, they took Syria and Palestine from the Fatimid dynasty. They also overran much of Anatolia (also called Asia Minor), which was part of the Byzantine Empire. In 1071, the Seljuks defeated a large Byzantine army at Manzikert in present-day Turkey.

The Seljuk advance alarmed Christians in Europe. They feared for the safety and property of Christians living to the east. The Seljuks' growing power seemed to threaten the Byzantine Empire itself. Christians also worried about the fate of the **Holy Land**, especially the city of Jerusalem, where the Seljuks treated Christians and their holy sites with intolerance.

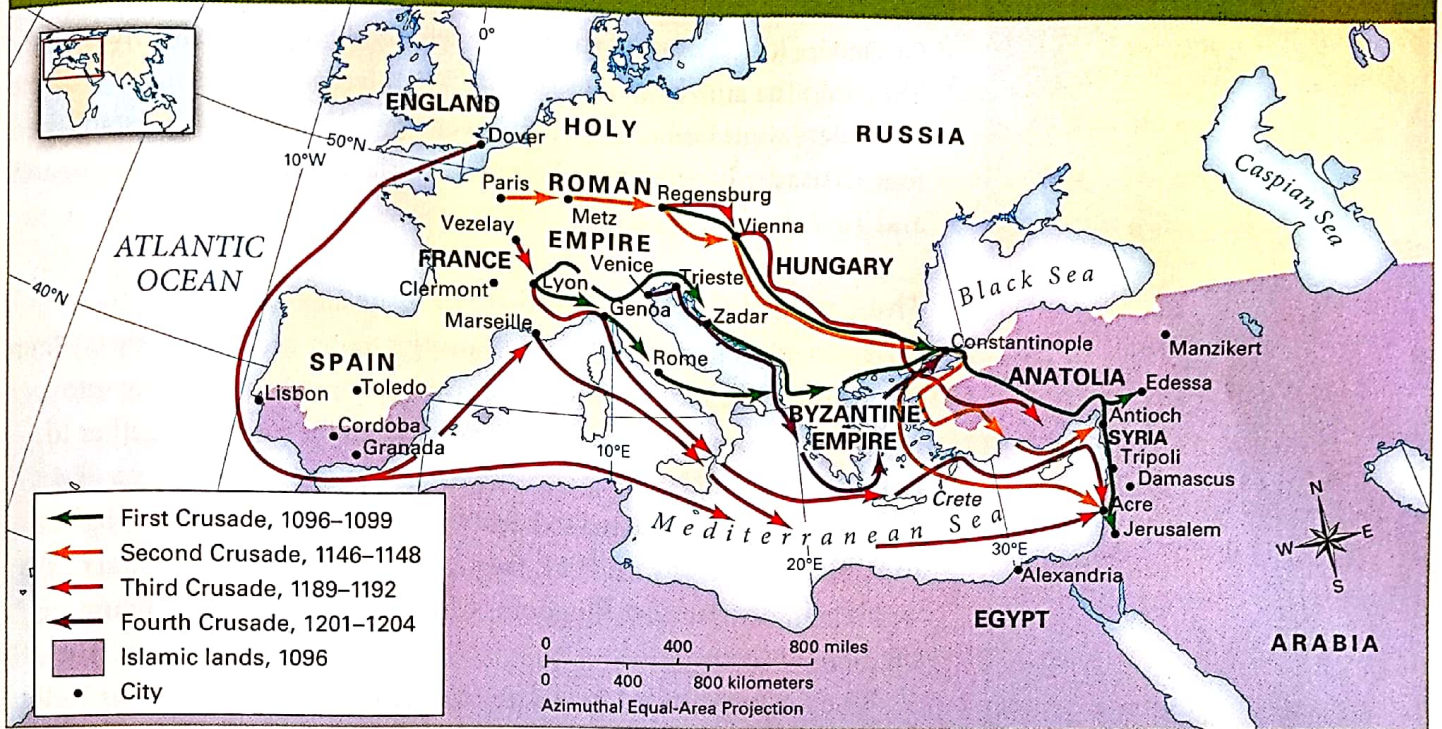
As it is today, Jerusalem was a sacred city to Jews, Christians, and Muslims. It was the spiritual capital of the Jews, where their great Temple had once stood. It had also been their political capital in ancient times. For Christians, it was the city where Jesus was crucified and arose from the dead. For Muslims, it was where Muhammad ascended to heaven during his Night Journey.

Jerusalem and the rest of Palestine first came under Muslim rule during the Arab conquests of the 7th century. Muslims built a shrine in Jerusalem, called the Dome of the Rock, to mark the spot where they believed that the Night Journey had occurred. Under Muslim rule, Jews, Christians, and Muslims usually lived together peacefully. People of all three faiths made pilgrimages to Jerusalem and built houses of worship there. Depending on the policies of various Muslim rulers, however, non-Muslims' rights and freedoms varied from time to time. Some Muslim rulers allowed the destruction of important Christian churches.

After the Seljuks took control of Palestine, political turmoil made travel unsafe. Tales began reaching Europe of highway robbers attacking and even killing Christian pilgrims. Christians feared they would no longer be able to visit Jerusalem and other sacred sites in the Holy Land. Together, with concern over the Seljuk threat to Christian lands in Europe, this fear helped pave the way for the Crusades.



## Major European Crusades, 1096–1204



### 10.3 The Story of the Crusades

The Crusades began as a **response** to the threat posed by the Seljuks. By 1095, the Seljuks had advanced to within 100 miles of the Byzantine capital, Constantinople. The emperor appealed to Pope Urban II for help.

The pope invited nobles and Church leaders to attend a council in Clermont, France. There, he called for a crusade to drive out the Muslims and reclaim Jerusalem. He promised entry to heaven to all who joined the fight.

French-speaking nobles quickly organized armies to fight in the Holy Land. In addition to trained knights, thousands of townspeople, craftsmen, and peasants joined the crusade.

Throughout the Crusades, the Christian faith inspired many to put on the red cross, worn by Crusaders as a symbol of their mission, and join the fight. But people joined the Crusades for other reasons as well. Merchants saw the chance to earn money through trade. Younger sons of nobles hoped to gain estates in the Holy Land. A person who had fought in the Holy Land also gained respect and prestige at home.

**The First Crusade (1096–1099)** Four European nobles led the First Crusade. Close to 30,000 Crusaders fought their way through Anatolia, and headed south toward Palestine. In June of 1098, the Crusaders laid siege to the city of Antioch in Syria. Antioch was protected by a ring of walls. After nine months, the Crusaders found a way over the walls. Antioch fell to the Christians.

For more than 200 years, in four major Crusades, Europeans and Muslims clashed over control of the Holy Land and the nearby territory. In the end, Muslims retained control of the area.



In 1099, the Crusaders surrounded Jerusalem and scaled the city walls. After a month of fighting, the city surrendered. The victorious Crusaders killed most of the people who had fought against them. They sold the survivors into slavery. With Jerusalem taken, most of the Crusaders went home. Some, however, stayed behind. They established four Crusader kingdoms in Palestine, Syria, and modern-day Lebanon and Turkey.

**The Second Crusade (1146–1148)** The Crusaders owed their early victories, in part, to a lack of unity among Muslim groups. When the Crusades began, the Seljuk empire was already crumbling into a number of smaller states. Muslims had trouble joining together to fight the invaders.

When Muslims started to band together, they were able to fight back more effectively. In 1144, they captured Edessa, the capital of the northernmost crusader kingdom. Christians answered by mounting the Second Crusade.

That Crusade ended in failure. An army from Germany was badly defeated in Anatolia. A second army, led by the king of France, arrived in Jerusalem in 1148. About 50,000 Crusaders marched on the city of Damascus, which was on the way to Edessa. Muslims from Edessa came to the city's aid and beat back the Crusaders. Soon after this defeat, the French army went home, ending the Second Crusade.

Richard I, king of England, led the Third Crusade to try to regain Christian control of Jerusalem from Muslims.

**The Third Crusade (1189–1192)** Over the next few decades, Muslims in the Middle East increasingly came under common leadership. By the 1180s, the great sultan Salah al-Din (SAL-eh ahl-DEEN), called Saladin by Europeans, had formed the largest Muslim empire since the Seljuks. Salah al-Din united Egypt, Syria, and other lands to the east. He led a renewed fight against the Crusaders in the Holy Land. Salah al-Din quickly took back most of Palestine. In 1187, his armies captured Jerusalem.

The loss of Jerusalem shocked Europeans and sparked the Third Crusade. King Richard I of England, known as “the Lionheart,” led the European fight against Salah al-Din.

In 1191, Richard's army forced the surrender of the Palestinian town of Acre (AH-kreh). Afterward, arrangements were made between the two sides to exchange prisoners. When Richard lost patience waiting for Salah al-Din to complete the exchange, Richard ordered the deaths of all 2,700 of his Muslim prisoners.

Richard then fought his way toward Jerusalem, but his army was not strong enough to attack the city. Salah al-Din's forces had also grown weaker. In September 1192, the two leaders signed a peace treaty. The Crusaders kept a chain of cities along the coast of Palestine. Muslims agreed to let Christian pilgrims enter Jerusalem.





**Later Crusades** The Crusades continued for another 100 years. Some Crusades were popular movements of poor people, rather than organized military campaigns. In 1212, for example, thousands of peasant children from France and Germany marched in a Children's Crusade. Few, if any, ever reached the Holy Land. Some made it to European port cities, only to be sold into slavery by merchants. Some returned home. Many disappeared without a trace.

None of the later Crusades succeeded in recapturing Jerusalem. Muslims, meanwhile, were gaining back the land they had lost. In 1291, they took Acre, the last Crusader city. This victory ended some two hundred years of Christian kingdoms in the Holy Land.

**The Reconquista** Crusaders fought against Muslims in Europe and North Africa, as well as in the Middle East. One important series of wars was called the *Reconquista* (ree-con-KEE-stah), which means "reconquest" in Spanish. Christians launched these wars to retake the Iberian Peninsula from Muslims. The Iberian Peninsula is a region in southwestern Europe that contains Spain and Portugal.

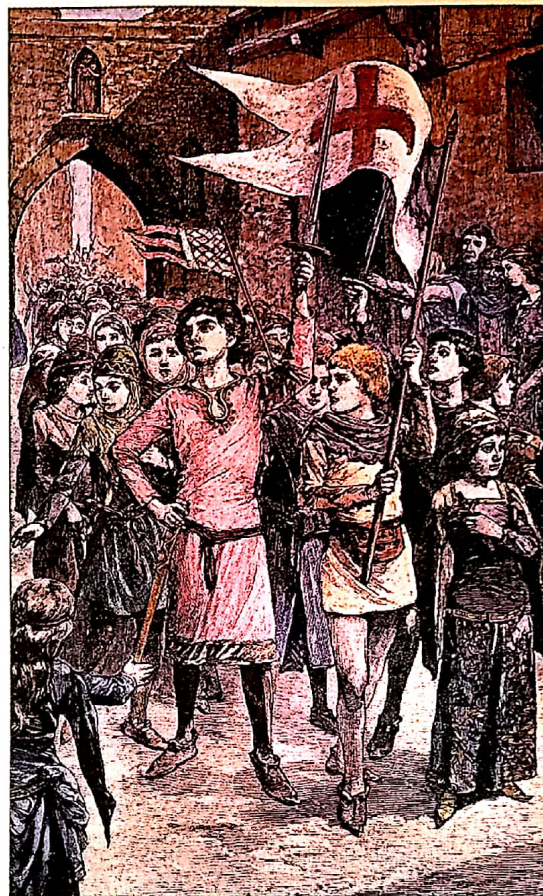
The Umayyads had established a Muslim dynasty in Spain in the 8th century, where Muslims, Jews, and Christians lived together in peace. However, non-Muslims had to pay a special tax.

Over time, Christian rulers in northern Iberia chipped away at Muslim lands. The pace of reconquest quickened after the Umayyad caliphate in Cordoba broke up into rival kingdoms in 1002. In 1085, Christians gained a key victory by capturing Toledo, in central Spain.

Muslims gradually gave up more and more territory, and new Muslim dynasties were intolerant of Jews and Christians. In 1039, Portugal became an independent Christian kingdom. By 1248, only the kingdom of Granada, in southern Spain, remained in Muslim hands.

Many Jews and Muslims remained in areas ruled by Christians. In the late 1400s, Queen Isabella and King Ferdinand wanted to unite Spain as a Catholic country. They used the **Inquisition**, a Roman Catholic court, against Muslims and Jews who claimed to have converted to Christianity. The Spanish Inquisition was extremely harsh. Judges, called inquisitors, sometimes used torture to find out whether supposed converts were practicing their old religion. Thousands of people were burned at the stake.

In 1492, Granada fell to Ferdinand and Isabella, ending Muslim rule in Spain. In the same year, Jews were ordered to become Catholics or leave the country. More than 170,000 Jews left their homes forever. Many found refuge in Muslim lands, including in Constantinople, now called Istanbul, the capital of the Ottoman Empire. Muslims remained in Spain, but many were forced to become Catholics. Spain expelled remaining Muslims beginning in 1609. This expulsion ended centuries of cooperation among these groups and Christians in Spain.



Later Crusades, such as the Children's Crusade, were movements by poor people, rather than organized military events led by monarchs or nobles.

**Inquisition** a judicial body established by the Roman Catholic Church to combat forms of religious error



## 10.4 Christians and the Crusades

For Crusaders, the religious wars were a costly ordeal, although they promised rewards in the afterlife. But European Christians also reaped many benefits from the Crusades.



New foods and fabrics from Arabian seaports were introduced to Europe through the travels and trading of the Christian Crusaders.

**Impact on Christians as a Group** Crusaders suffered all the terrible effects of war. Many were wounded or killed in battle. Others died from disease and the hardships of travel.

The impact of the Crusades reached far beyond those who fought, however. The Crusades brought many **economic** changes to Europe. Crusaders needed a way to pay for supplies. Their need increased the use of money in Europe. Some knights began performing banking functions, such as making loans or investments. Monarchs started tax systems to raise funds for Crusades.

The Crusades changed society, as well. Monarchs grew more powerful, as nobles and knights left home to fight in the Middle East. The increasing power of monarchs weakened feudalism.

Contact with Middle Eastern cultures had a major impact on Christians' way of life. In the Holy Land, Christians learned about new foods and other goods. They dressed in clothing made of muslin, a cotton fabric from Persia. They developed a taste for melons, apricots, sesame seeds, and carob beans. They used spices, such as pepper. After Crusaders returned home with these goods, European merchants earned enormous profits by trading in them.

**The Experiences of Individuals** You have already learned how Richard I of England led the Third Crusade. Richard was devoted to the Christian cause and to knightly ideals of courage and honor. To pay for his armies, he taxed his people heavily. Both ruthless and brave, Richard spent most of his reign fighting in the Crusades.

Anna Comnena, the daughter of a Byzantine emperor, wrote about her experiences during the First Crusade. She expressed mixed feelings about the Crusaders. She respected them as Christians, but she also realized that many were dangerous. She questioned whether all of the Crusaders were truly fighting for God. She thought that some sought wealth, land, or glory in battle. Her suspicions proved to be justified. During the Fourth Crusade, a force of Crusaders invaded and looted Constantinople, then under Christian control.



## 10.5 Muslims and the Crusades

The Crusades brought fewer benefits to Muslims than they did to Christians. Muslims succeeded in driving the Crusaders from the Middle East, but they lost their lands on the Iberian Peninsula. In addition, the contact between cultures benefited Muslims less than Christians. At the time, Muslim societies were among the most advanced in the world, so Muslims had less to gain.

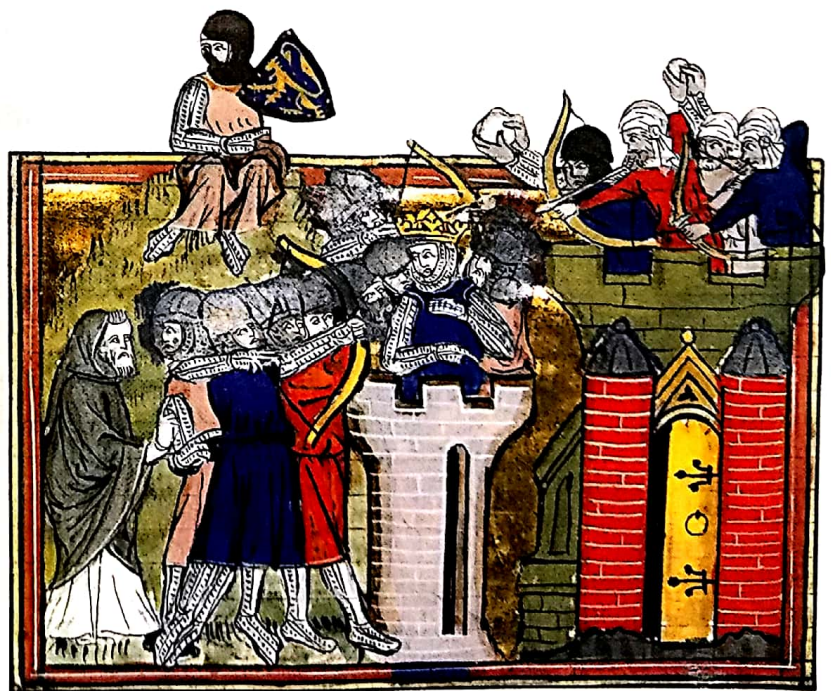
**Impact on Muslims as a Group** The Crusades were a terrible ordeal for many Muslims. An unknown number lost their lives in battles and the conquests of Middle Eastern cities. Crusaders also destroyed Muslim property in Jerusalem and other communities.

Muslims did gain exposure to some new weapons and military ideas during the Crusades. Like Europeans, they began to adopt standing, or permanent, armies. Muslim merchants, especially in Syria and Egypt, earned riches from trade with Europe. This money helped to fund building projects, such as new mosques and religious schools. The Crusades also brought political changes, as Muslims united to fight their common foe. The Ayyubid dynasty founded by Salah al-Din ruled Egypt and parts of Syria and Arabia until 1250.

**The Experiences of Individuals** Salah al-Din was the greatest Muslim leader during the Crusades. His experiences taught him many valuable lessons. As a boy in Damascus during the Second Crusade, he saw that Muslims needed to defend themselves and Islam. As a soldier, he realized that Muslims had to be organized and to cooperate with one another. He unified Muslim groups under his strong leadership. Along with his military skills, Salah al-Din also was famed for his courtesy.

Usamah ibn-Munqidh also grew up during the time of the Crusades. Believing it was the will of God, Usamah fought against the Crusaders. At the same time, he respected both Christians and Jews because of their faith in one God. Usamah wrote a valuable account of the Crusades from a Muslim viewpoint. He told how Muslims and Christians observed and sometimes admired one another. He also described how the Muslims were willing to give their lives to protect their families, lands, and property from the Crusaders.

Christian Crusaders captured the city of Jerusalem during the First Crusade.







During the Crusades, there was a great deal of violence against Jews in Europe and elsewhere.

**anti-Semitism** hostility or discrimination against Jews

**segregation** the forced separation of one group from the rest of a community

## 10.6 Jews and the Crusades

Violence and intolerance during the Crusades made targets, not only of Christians who did not strictly follow Church teachings, but especially of non-Christians. In this climate, Jews suffered enormously. Some Church leaders spoke out strongly against ill treatment of Jews and warned Christians that the only aim of the Crusades was to reclaim the Holy Land. However, some Crusaders in the Holy Land killed Jews as well as Muslims. The Crusades also **dramatically** worsened the lives of Jews in Europe.

**Impact on Jews as a Group** During the First Crusade, European Jews suffered a series of violent persecutions. As Crusaders crossed northern France and Germany, some of them murdered whole communities of Jews. They destroyed synagogues and holy books. They looted homes and businesses. Some Crusaders tortured Jews to make them accept Christianity.

In Europe, **anti-Semitism**, or hostility to or discrimination against Jews, spread among non-Crusaders, as well. Religious prejudice was mixed with resentment of Jews who were wealthy bankers and traders. Riots and massacres broke out in a number of cities.

By the end of the Crusades, the Jews' place in European society had deteriorated. Jews could not hold public office. Christians took over trading businesses that had been run by Jews. In 1290, England expelled all Jews. France did the same in 1394. Many Jews relocated to Eastern Europe.

The **segregation** of Jews spread throughout Europe during the 14th and 15th centuries. Jews were forced to live in crowded neighborhoods called ghettos. Typically, walls and gates separated the ghettos from the rest of the town or city.

**The Experiences of Individuals** A German Jew named Eliezer ben Nathan lived during the First Crusade. He wrote about the violent destruction of his community by Christians. Eliezer told of Jews who killed their families and themselves rather than give up their religion. He admired their intense devotion, but wondered how God could let so many Jews die. He also expressed his hatred for the Crusaders.

Eleazar ben Judah, a Jewish scholar, also lived in Germany. During the Second Crusade, he and other Jews were forced to flee their town. They had to leave behind their belongings, including their holy books.

Several years later, two Crusaders attacked Eleazar's home and killed his wife and children. This horrible event led him to wonder if his people would be able to survive in Europe. As a Jewish leader in the city of Worms, he continued to preach love for all humanity, despite his suffering.