

ROBERT C JONES



*The Crusades and  
the Inquisition*  
A Brief History

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## The Crusades: A Brief History (1095-1291)



Written by Robert Jones  
Acworth, Georgia

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# Christian Theology and History Adult Sunday School Courses

Robert Jones

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I've always been a strong believer in adult Sunday School classes and Bible studies in our churches. And many churches have quality, Biblically-based adult-focused programs. Unfortunately, just as many churches tend to downplay adult education, focusing on children's education (not a bad thing in itself), or focusing on the needs of the "unchurched", where topics such as church history and theology are often purposely ignored.

Yet there is a strong need for adult education focused on both the Bible and the basic tenets and history of the Faith. Among the reasons:

- Not all adults come from a strong childhood background in the church – adult Sunday School classes/Bible studies may be their first serious introduction to what Christianity is all about
- Christianity (and especially Evangelical Christianity) is under constant attack from the media and popular culture (movies, music, etc.). We need to give fellow Christians the tools to defend the Faith against attack (or to provide a "ready defense" as Peter says in 1 Peter 3:15)
- Even adult Christians that have a strong Biblical background often know little about the origins and history of their Faith

To better meet the needs of adult Christians (both those mature in their Faith, and those just starting out in the "School of Christ"), I've written a series of courses that focus on the history of the Christian Church (including the Jewish roots), as well as the development of doctrine in the Church. The topics represented in these courses are intended to both further the participant's walk in the Faith, as well as serve as a starting point for Christian apologetics.

While the primary purpose of these courses is for use in churches, they also may be useful for High School and College projects, especially the courses focused primarily on historical aspects.

One note: these courses are primarily written from an Evangelical Protestant viewpoint (I come from a Reformed Church background), but I hope I've given ample time to other points of view throughout the various courses.

Front Cover: Crusaders on the march

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## Introduction

In modern times, the Crusades are often looked upon with disfavor even by Christians, often being lumped together with the Inquisition (or, in extreme cases, with the Holocaust). But while the Crusaders didn't always live up to the Christian ideal, they were the first wars fought *for* an ideal – the protection of the Holy Lands. Most of the early Crusaders were fighting for their concept of God, and for the Papal promise of “full remission of sins”. Most of them certainly weren't fighting for personal gain – it is estimated that a knight in the Crusades needed to spend over 4 times his yearly earnings just to be outfitted for the Crusades. There are many extant records of the Medieval version of bankruptcy as a result of the Crusades, as knights lost lands that they'd put up as collateral for their costs.

The Crusades are tricky from the point of view of the historian, too. How many Crusades were there? Should we include the Peasant's Crusade, the Children's Crusade, the Albigensian Crusade? Should Christian attempts to take back Moslem Spain be considered Crusades? Should the despicable Fourth Crusade, which twice sacked Constantinople, be considered an official “Holy Lands” crusade? Most historians view that there were eight “official” crusades, although I've seen some that count as many as 23. Even for the eight, read five different books, and you'll see five different dates for most of the individual crusades. From the papal standpoint, what defined a Crusade was the promise of remission of sins, or gaining an indulgence.

Another thing that makes the Crusades hard to pin down is that they weren't a monolithic clash between Christendom and Islam. During the 200 years of the Crusades, at various points, England and France were at war, Eastern and Western Christianity were at war, internal division and civil war racked Byzantium, and various Moslem factions were jockeying for power in the Middle East, sometimes fighting each other. The picture was hardly one of complete clarity.

Hopefully this “brief history” of the crusades will shed some light on a complicated subject.

## Allies and enemies in the Crusades



## Arab terms

1. *Djimmī* – Moslem concept that Jews and Christians are “protected peoples”, or “people of the Book”
2. *Imam* – leader or exemplar; Shiites view an imam in almost messianic terms
3. *Islam* – submission, or surrender (to the will of God)

4. *Jihad* – literally “striving”; the spiritual struggle between good and evil. May refer to Holy War against non-believers.
5. *Khalifa* – Caliph; supreme leader of Islam; the successors to Mohammed
6. *Muslim* – one who submits; a follower of Mohammed’s revelation
7. *Quran or Koran* – collection of the words of Mohammed; literally, “reading”
8. *Shiites* – “partisans of Ali”. Moslem followers of Ali, the prophet’s cousin, son-in-law, and the fourth caliph. He was murdered in 661.
9. *Sunnis* – sometimes seen as the orthodox part of Islam; believe not just in the Koran, but in the *sun-na*, or corpus of Mohammed’s words and deeds

## Quiz

1. T/F St. Francis of Assisi participated in the Crusades
2. T/F Moslem armies reached as far as central France in the 8<sup>th</sup> century
3. T/F Crusader armies sacked Constantinople twice in 1203/04
4. T/F The Albigensian Crusade was launched against Moslems in Southern France
5. T/F For all intents and purposes, the Second Crusade was ordered by Bernard of Clairvaux
6. T/F The Knights Templar were so called because they were Jewish
7. T/F The Children’s Crusade (1212/13) was a great success, from the point of view of Christendom
8. T/F Richard the Lion-Hearted was so named because of his successful battles against Philip II of France
9. T/F Godfrey of Bouillon was crowned the first King of Jerusalem
10. T/F The only Crusader King made a saint by the Catholic Church was Frederick II
11. T/F Frederick Barbarossa was especially known for his heroic deeds in the Holy Lands
12. T/F Marmeluke Sultan Baibar was known for his chivalry towards his enemies
13. T/F Frederick II took Jerusalem without firing a shot
14. T/F One of the great advocates of the First Crusade was Peter the Hermit
15. T/F One of the primary reasons that knights “took the cross” was for personal financial gain
16. T/F Key weapons of the Crusader armies were giant siege towers and catapults
17. T/F A primary reason for participating in the Crusades was to receive an indulgence for remission of sins from the church
18. T/F St. Louis invaded Egypt in the 13<sup>th</sup> century
19. T/F St. Augustine was a strict pacifist

## Timeline

Date	Event
312 A.D.	Constantine seizes Rome, becomes first Christian emperor
330	Church of the Holy Sepulcher built by Helen, mother of Constantine
c. 400	St. Augustine of Hippo promulgates doctrine of “Just War”
570	Mohammed born in Mecca
622	Mohammed’s <i>Hegira</i> (flight) from Mecca to Medina
630	Mohammed conquers Mecca
632	Death of Mohammed; Abu Bakr becomes caliph
7 <sup>th</sup> century	Moslems occupy Holy Lands
661	Shiites (“partisans of Ali”) are formed after the murder of Ali, the prophet’s cousin and son-in-law, and the fourth caliph
c. 700	Dome of the Rock built in Jerusalem
711	Moslems begin conquest of Spain
717	Moslems lay siege to Constantinople, but are eventually repelled

Date	Event
732	Moslem advances through the Pyrenees into Gaul (France) stopped by Charles Martel ("the Hammer") at the Battle of Tours
969	Antioch (Syria) captured by Byzantine emperor Nikephoros Phokas
969	Shiite Ismailis conquer Egypt, and set up rival caliphate to the Sunnite one in Baghdad
1009	Egyptian caliph Al-Hakim destroys Church of the Holy Sepulcher, and begins persecution of Christians and Jews
1021	Al-Hakim assassinated by a Moslem "out of zeal for God and Islam"
1027	Byzantine emperor Constantine VIII seeks a treaty that would allow rebuilding of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher
1040-1050s	Turks conquer Persia, Armenia, Iraq; Baghdad falls in 1055 A.D.
1054	Byzantine patriarch Michael Cerularius excommunicated by Pope Leo IX; Greek church separates from Roman church
1059	Seljuk Turks massacre Armenian town of Sebastea
1064	Seljuk Turks under Alp Arslan occupy Ani, capitol city of Armenia
1064-65	7,000 German pilgrims set out for the Holy lands
1071	Byzantine emperor Romanus IV Diogenes, with an army of 100,000, defeated and captured by Turks at the Battle of Manzikert
1072	Robert Guiscard and his brother Roger defeat Moslems at Palermo
1081	Alexius Comnenus seizes imperial throne of Byzantium
1085	Toledo captured from Moslems by a Christian army
1085	Antioch (Syria) falls to the Turks
1088	Urban II becomes Pope
1094	El Cid (Rodrigo Diaz de Vivar; 1043-99) conquers Valencia and Cuarte, Spain
1095	Byzantine emperor Alexius I Comnenus appeals for help against the Seljuk Turks to Pope Urban II
November 1095	Pope Urban II calls for a crusade at the Council of Clermont
1095/96	Urban II tours France, marketing the crusade
May 1096	<i>Peasant's Crusade</i> under Peter the Hermit departs for the Holy Lands. On their way, they robbed and pillaged in Hungary, and persecuted Jews wherever they found them
August 1096	Crusader army leaves for the Holy Lands
1097	El Cid defeats Moslems at Battle of Bairen
1097	Crusader army captures Nicaea; turned over to Byzantine emperor Alexius Comnenus
1098	Cistercian order founded in Citeaux by Robert Mol��sme
1098	Baldwin of Boulogne occupies Edessa, and creates first Latin kingdom in the Holy Lands
1098	Crusader armies capture Antioch, and set up second Latin Kingdom in Holy Lands
1098	Egyptians capture Jerusalem
July 1099	Urban II dies, unaware that his Crusader army had captured Jerusalem

Date	Event
July 15, 1099	Jerusalem captured by Crusader Army – third Latin kingdom created; first ruler is Godfrey of Bouillon
1100	Death of Godfrey of Bouillon, succeeded by his brother Baldwin I as King of Jerusalem
1113	Hospitalers of St. John recognized
1115	St. Bernard founds new Cistercian abbey at Clairvaux
1118	Death of Baldwin I, succeeded by his cousin, Baldwin II; death of Alexius I
1118	Hugh de Payens and eight companions form the Knights Templar in Jerusalem
1124	Tyre captured by forces sent from Baldwin II – high water mark of the Crusades
1128	Knights Templar adopt Cistercian rule
1138	Saladin born in Takrit (Iraq)
1144	Turks take back Edessa, and massacre inhabitants
1145	Pope Eugenius III issues bull ( <i>Quantum praedecessors</i> ) authorizing new Crusade – the Second Crusade is launched; Bernard of Clairvaux begins preaching in the favor of the new Crusade
1146	Louis VII of France and Conrad III of Germany take the cross
1147-1149	Second Crusade: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assists in the capture of Lisbon (1147)</li> <li>Attack Damascus (led by a friendly Moslem power), and fail (1148)</li> </ul>
1153	Baldwin III captures Ascalon
1165/66	Pope Alexander III reissues <i>Quantum praedecessors</i> bull; first income tax levied to support the crusades
1174	Canonization of St. Bernard of Clairvaux
1174	Saladin becomes caliph of Egypt
July 3, 1187	Christian Army decisively defeated by Saladin, at the Battle of Horns of Hattin; a fragment of the True Cross captured by Saladin, and paraded through Damascus
October 2, 1187	Saladin captures Jerusalem
October 29, 1187	Pope Gregory VIII issues call for new crusade, <i>Audita tremendi</i> (Third Crusade 1187-1192)
1189	Richard I becomes King of England
1190	Teutonic Knights founded at Acre
June 10, 1190	Frederick I Barbarossa, with an army of 150,000, drowns on his way to fight the Third Crusade
1191	French and English Crusaders arrive in the Holy Lands
July 1191	Acre falls to the Crusader armies under Richard the Lionhearted and Philip II Augustus of France; Richard orders massacre of Moslem hostages after prisoner exchange negotiations bog down
September 7, 1191	Richard the Lionhearted defeats Moslems at Arsuf
Spring 1192	Richard the Lionhearted hears news that his brother John is trying to usurp his throne
September 2, 1192	Richard the Lionhearted signs three year truce with Saladin, and sets out for the West (October 9, 1192)

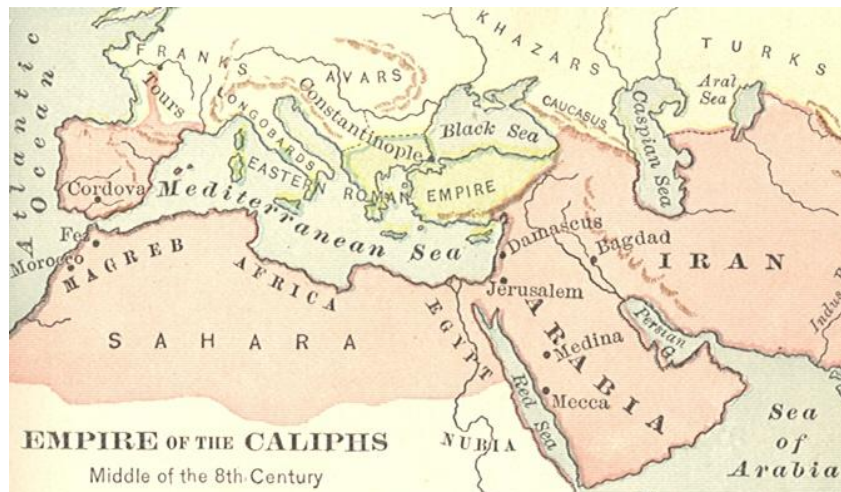


Date	Event
1192	Richard the Lionhearted captured by Leopold, duke of Austria; Richard was eventually released for a ransom
March 4, 1193	Death of Saladin
1198	Pope Innocent III calls for a new crusade to the Holy Lands
1199	Death of Richard the Lionhearted
1202	Fourth Crusade (1202-1204) begins; Doge of Venice negotiates with the Crusaders – if the Crusaders take port of Zara, Hungary, they can pay for their sea route to the Holy Land
November 1202	Zara falls to the Crusader army
July 1203	Crusaders capture Constantinople (!) and install new emperor, Alexius IV
April 1204	Crusaders capture and loot Constantinople, when the new emperor, Alexius IV, is murdered by a rival who becomes Alexius V
May 1204	Baldwin, Count of Flanders, is crowned Byzantine emperor
1208	Innocent III calls for crusade against the Cathars
1209	Innocent III launches the Albigensian Crusade in Languedoc against the Cathars; Beziers is destroyed by crusaders – 20,000 men, women and children massacred
1212	Innocent III orders new crusade in Spain; Christians defeat Moslems at Las Navas de Tolosa
1212/1213	Children's Crusade ends in disaster
1217	Fifth Crusade (1217-1221) begins
1218/19	Siege and fall of Damietta, Egypt; Francis of Assisi preaches to Moslem sultan
1221	Moslems recapture Damietta
1227/31	Gregory IX launches Papal Inquisition
Feb. 18, 1229	Holy Roman Emperor Frederick II recaptures Jerusalem, by Treaty with Egyptian sultan Al-Kamil (6 <sup>th</sup> Crusade)
1229	Albigensian Crusade ends (Peace of Paris)
1239	Treaty with Al-Kamil expires; crusader army under Theobald IV, king of Navarre and count of Champagne captures Beaufort, Safed, and Ascalon
1244	Cathar stronghold at Montsegur falls to secular forces – 215 Cathar <i>perfecti</i> burned
1244	Khwarazmian Turks retake Jerusalem
1244	Louis IX takes the cross
1249	Louis IX takes Damietta, Egypt (7 <sup>th</sup> Crusade)
Feb. 1250	Louis IX of France wins the battle of Mansourah
April 1250	Louis IX captured by Saracens during retreat from Mansourah
May 1250	Louis IX released for ransom of 800,000 gold bezants, and the port of Damietta
1261	Byzantines recapture Constantinople
1268	Antioch falls to Moslems
1270	Louis IX dies fighting in Tunis during the Eighth Crusade
1271	Hospitaller fortress of <i>Krak des Chevaliers</i> falls to Moslems
1289	Tripoli falls to Moslems
1291	Last Christian stronghold in the Holy Lands falls (Acre)
1297	Louis IX becomes Saint Louis (under Boniface VIII)

Date	Event
1307	Knights Templar accused of heresy; charged by the Inquisition
1310	Hospitalers capture Rhodes
1312	Council of Vienne dissolves Knights Templar
1314	Last Templar Grand Master Jacques de Molay burned alive, after recanting of an earlier confession
1453	Constantinople falls to Ottoman Turks
1492	Granada, the last Moslem stronghold in Spain is lost
1502	Spanish Inquisition <i>Edict of Expulsion</i> for Moslems – baptism or exile
1522	Hospitalers driven out of Rhodes by the Ottoman Turks
1530	Hospitalers occupy Malta on behalf of Holy Roman Emperor Charles V
1565	Hospitalers defeat massive Ottoman Turk invasion of Malta
1798	Knights of Malta (former Knights Hospitalers) defeated by Napoleon I
1830	St. Bernard is declared a doctor of the Church by Pope Pius VIII

## Background

### *Historical and political background*



It is easy to forget in modern times that, by the time of the First Crusade, Islam had made alarming (from the point of view of Christendom) gains throughout the Middle East, North Africa, and even into the Europe itself. Moslems had occupied the Holy Lands by the end of the 7<sup>th</sup> century, and had built the Dome of the Rock in c. 700 A.D. on top of one of the most sacred sites in Judaism. In the 8<sup>th</sup> century, Moslems attacked (unsuccessfully) Constantinople, the center of the Eastern Church, and also took over Spain. Moslem armies had gotten as far into the heart of Europe as Tours, in modern day France, when they were finally checked in 732 A.D. by Charles Martel at the battle of Tours.





Charles Martel ("the Hammer") at the Battle of Tours

The 11<sup>th</sup> century – the century of the First Crusade – started off poorly for Christendom, too. Egyptian caliph Al-Hakim ordered the destruction of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, (built by Constantine's mother Helen in 330 A.D.); this remains today the most wanton destruction of a key Christian holy site in history. Al-Hakim also began a systematic persecution of both Christians and Jews:

"The Christians were ordered to dress in black and to hang wooden crosses from their necks, half a metre long, half a metre wide, weighing five ratls, and uncovered so that people could see them. They were forbidden to ride horses and allowed only to ride mules or donkeys, with wooden saddles and black girths without any ornament. They had to wear the zunnar sash, and could not employ any Muslim or buy any slave of either sex. These orders were so strictly enforced that many of them became Muslims...Churches were destroyed and their contents were pillaged...

In the year 1013 the Jews were compelled to wear belts around their necks when they entered the public baths...He [Al-Hakim] ordered the Christians and Jews to leave Egypt." (Al-Maqrizi, 15<sup>th</sup>-century Egyptian scholar; translation from *Chronicles of the Crusades*)

(Note: It is only fair to point out that even fellow Moslem rulers considered Al-Hakim to be insane, and that not all Moslem rulers persecuted Christians and Jews.)

As the 11<sup>th</sup> century wore on, Islam began chipping away at the Byzantine Empire, too. In 1071, Byzantine emperor Romanus IV Diogenes was defeated and captured by the Turks at the Battle of Man-zikert. It was against this backdrop that Byzantine Emperor Alexius I Comnenus appealed for help against the Seljuk Turks to Pope Urban II in 1095 A.D.

### ***Theological background***

The early Christian church, up to the time of Constantine in the early 4<sup>th</sup> century, was generally pacifist in nature. However, after Constantine became emperor and accepted Christianity, pure pacifism started to have less sway as a Christian doctrine. After all, as the saying goes, they had an empire to run! And after the Roman Empire fell, "Christendom", now headed by the Pope, with the support of Frankish, German, and English sovereigns, also had an interest in maintaining its borders against intruders.

No less a theological authority than St. Augustine of Hippo (354-430), perhaps the greatest theologian of the Early Church Fathers, promulgated the idea of a "just war", and indicated that it was OK for Christians to use violence in certain circumstances. One example comes from early in Augustine's *City of God*, where he defines that there are certain circumstance where by "divine authority", men can be put to death:

"However, there are some exceptions made by the divine authority to its own law, that men may not be put to death. These exceptions are of two kinds, being justified either by a general law, or by a special commission granted for a time to some individual. And in this latter case, he to whom authority is dele-

gated, and who is but the sword in the hand of him who uses it, is not himself responsible for the death he deals. And, accordingly, they who have waged war in obedience to the divine command, or in conformity with His laws, have represented in their persons the public justice or the wisdom of government, and in this capacity have put to death wicked men; such persons have by no means violated the commandment, "Thou shalt not kill." (City of God, p. 49, translated By Rev. Marcus Dods, D.D)

In an exchange of letters (concerning the fate of some pagans who vandalized Christian churches) with Nectarius in 408/409 A.D., Augustine opines that it is valid to use violence against enemies of Christianity, as long as the motive isn't revenge. Several excerpts follow.

"We are therefore resolved, neither on the one hand to lay aside Christian gentleness, nor on the other to leave in your city that which would be a most pernicious example for all others to follow." (Letter 91, translated by The Rev. J. G. Cunningham, M.A.)

"Do you really think that a case of such cruel rage should be held up to the world as passing unpunished? We do not desire to gratify our anger by vindictive retribution for the past, but we are concerned to make provision in a truly merciful spirit for the future. Now, wicked men have something in respect to which they may be punished, and that by Christians, in a merciful way, and so as to promote their own profit and well-being. For they have these three things: the life and health of the body, the means of supporting that life, and the means and opportunities of living a wicked life. Let the two former remain untouched in the possession of those who repent of their crime: this we desire, and this we spare no pains to secure. But as to the third, upon it God will, if it please Him, inflict punishment in His great compassion, dealing with it as a decaying or diseased part, which must be removed with the pruning-knife." (Letter 91)

When any one uses measures involving the infliction of some pain, in order to prevent an inconsiderate person from incurring the most dreadful punishments by becoming accustomed to crimes which yield him no advantage, he is like one who pulls a boy's hair in order to prevent him from provoking serpents by clapping his hands at them; in both cases, while the acting of love is vexatious to its object, no member of the body is injured, whereas safety and life are endangered by that from which the person is deterred... Wherefore it is for the most part an advantage to themselves when certain things are removed from persons in whose keeping it is hazardous to leave them, lest they abuse them. **When surgeons see that a gangrene must be cut away or cauterized, they often, out of compassion, turn a deaf ear to many cries.** If we had been indulgently forgiven by our parents and teachers in our tender years on every occasion on which, being found in a fault, we begged to be let off, which of us would not have grown up intolerable? which of us would have learned any useful thing? Such punishments are administered by wise care, not by wanton cruelty." (Letter 104, translated by The Rev. J. G. Cunningham, M.A., emphasis added)

"But how can there be any healing virtue in the repentance of those who not only fail to acknowledge, but even persist in mocking and blaspheming Him who is the fountain of forgiveness?...**But we think that we are even taking measures for the benefit of these men, if, seeing that they do not fear God, we inspire fear in them by doing something whereby their folly is chastened, while their real interests suffer no wrong.** We thus prevent that God whom they despise from being more grievously provoked by their greater crimes, to which they would be emboldened by a disastrous assurance of impunity, and we prevent their assurance of impunity from being set forth with even more mischievous effect as an encouragement to others to imitate their example." (Letter 104, emphasis added)

## First Crusade (1095-1099)

In November of 1095, at the Council of Clermont, Pope Urban II gave a public speech calling on Western Christians to give aid to their Eastern Christian brethren, who were under attack from Moslem Turks. He also called for the liberation of Jerusalem, which had been under Moslem control for 400 years. It is said that when Urban II finished his speech, the crowd as one shouted "God wills it!" Many in the crowd vowed to "take up the cross" on the spot, and had pieces of red cloth pinned to their shirts in the shape of the cross (the red cross would later be a symbol of many of the crusader knights, including the Knights Templar).

In various letters written after the Council of Clermont, Urban II explained his reasons for launching the crusade – and what those that “took the cross” could expect to gain from it:

“We know you have already heard from the testimony of many that the frenzy of the barbarians has devastated the churches of God in the east. and has even - shame to say - seized into slavery the holy city of Christ, Jerusalem. Grieving in pious contemplation of this disaster. we visited France and strongly urged the princes and people of that land to work for the liberation of the Eastern Church.” (*Letter to Flanders*, translation from *Chronicles of the Crusades*)

“We have heard that some of you desire to go to Jerusalem. because you know that this would greatly please us. Know, then, that **anyone who sets out on that journey, not out of lust for worldly advantage but only for the salvation of his soul and for the liberation of the Church, is remitted in entirety all penance for his sins**, if he has made a true and perfect act of confession. This is because he has dedicated his person and his wealth to the love of God and his neighbor.” (*Letter to Bologna*, translation from *Chronicles of the Crusades*; emphasis added)

Urban II set August 15, 1096 as the official date for the beginning of the Crusade. That would indeed be when the “official” crusader army left for the Holy Lands, but another group would beat them to the punch.

### ***Peasant’s Crusade***

Several months prior to the official launch of the First Crusade (1096), a rag-tag army of peasants, led by a French monk, began their march to the Holy Lands. The monk was Peter the Hermit (c. 1050-1115), and he was every bit as much of an advocate (and every bit as much responsible) for the First Crusade as Pope Urban II. Peter became fanatical about seizing back the Holy Lands for Christendom when he made a pilgrimage to the Holy Lands two years before the first Crusade, and observed the poor conditions under which Christians lived.

Sources quote varying figures for the size of the Peasant’s Crusade (which included only 8 Knights, and many women, children, and clerics). 20,000 seems to be a reasonable figure (although one source says they were “more numerous than the sand or the stars”). While the Peasant’s Crusade started out as a pious desire to seize back the Holy Lands, on the 2,000-mile route from France to Constantinople (through Germany, Hungary, Bulgaria), the so-called crusaders turned into a mob, looting and pillaging at will, with Jews their special target. When they finally arrived at Constantinople, the emperor recommended that they wait for the crusader army to follow, but they refused, and struck out for the Holy Land. In short order, they were decimated by the Turks near Nicaea.

Peter the Hermit, though, escaped capture or death – he was in Constantinople at the time of the defeat by the Turks. After facing charges of desertion at the later Crusader siege at Antioch, Peter the Hermit later delivered a key speech before the gates of Jerusalem that helped turn the tide against the Moslem defenders.

## Latin kingdoms in the Holy Land



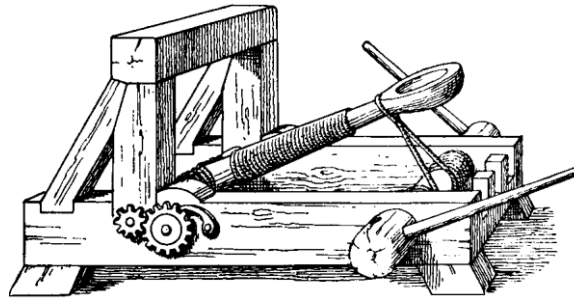
In August 1096, a vast Crusader army began the long trek from Europe to Constantinople. All of them took the overland route, except for Raymond of Toulouse, who crossed the Adriatic Sea with his army. The vast armies (modern accounts say 30,000 – 150,000; older accounts say several hundred thousand) used Constantinople as a staging area. Byzantine emperor Alexius I promised them his support in return for a pledge from the Crusaders that any heretofore Byzantium land seized back from the Moslems would be returned to Byzantine control (this pledge was only kept by the Crusaders in a small number of cases).

In 1097, a Crusader army, 43,000 strong, captured Nicaea (capital of Seljuk sultan, Qilij Arslan), and dutifully returned it to the control of the Byzantine emperor. In 1098, though, Baldwin of Boulogne occupied Edessa, and created the first Latin kingdom in the Holy Lands. Antioch fell soon after to the Crusader army, and became the second Frankish kingdom. On June 7, 1099, the Crusader army encamped before the greatest prize of all – Jerusalem. The Crusader army (15,000 strong) was led by:

- Godfrey of Bouillon, Duke of Lower Lorraine
- Raymond, Count of Toulouse
- Robert, Duke of Normandy (son of William the Conqueror)
- Robert, Count of Flanders

In the five-week siege, the Crusader army suffered severe losses, and was short of just about everything needed to be successful – water, food, and wood for building siege engines. Repeated attacks against the well-defended walls of Jerusalem failed.

In time, though, supplies arrived via Jaffa, and wood was brought in from far away in the Judean countryside. Huge siege engines were built, including portable towers (a la *Lord of the Rings: Return of the King*), and catapults that could hurl a 300-pound stone 150 yards. On July 8, in response to a vision received by a Christian cleric, the Crusader army marched around the walls of Jerusalem barefoot. The Moslem defenders mocked them. The Crusaders then listened to a speech by Peter the Hermit on the Mount of Olives, exhorting the Crusaders to put aside their differences and work together to take Jerusalem. The stage was set for the successful assault.



Medieval catapult

On July 13, 1099, the great assault began, with the cry rising up from the Crusader army, "God wills it!" After two days of furious (and inconclusive) fighting, Godfrey of Bouillon pierced one of the walls of Jerusalem, and his army crowded in. In a short time, Jerusalem belonged to the Crusaders.

Much of the black eye that the Crusades have today is based on what happened in the next twelve hours. Moslems and Jews were slaughtered wholesale, and the Crusader army pillaged everything of value in the city, including the Dome of the Rock. Contemporary Christian sources recorded:

"On Friday 15 July 1099, early in the morning, we attacked the city from all sides, but we could make no headway against it, and we were all numb with astonishment and very frightened. Godfrey of Bouillon and his brother, Baldwin, count of Boulogne, were fighting bravely in the siege-tower. Then one of our knights, Lethold by name, climbed up on to the wall of the city. As soon as he had climbed it, all the defenders of the city fled along the walls and through the city, and our men, following Lethold, chased after them, killing them and dismembering them as far as the Temple of Solomon. **And in that place there was such slaughter that we were up to our ankles in their blood.**

Count Raymond of Toulouse led his army and a siegetower from the south close up to the wall. But then the emir who was in David's Tower surrendered to the count, and opened up for him the gate where the pilgrims used to pay their taxes.

Our pilgrims entered the city, and chased the Saracens, killing as they went, as far as the Temple of Solomon. There the enemy assembled, and fought a furious battle for the whole day, so that their blood flowed all over the Temple. At last the pagans were overcome, and our men captured a good number of men and women in the Temple; they killed whomsoever they wished. and chose to keep others alive.

Soon our army overran the whole city, seizing gold and silver, horses and mules, and houses full of riches of all kinds. All our men came rejoicing and weeping for joy, to worship at the church of the Holy Sepulcher.

In the morning our men climbed up cautiously on to the roof of the Temple and attacked the Saracens, both male and female, and beheaded them with unsheathed swords. The other Saracens threw themselves from the Temple." (*Gesta Francorum*, translation from *Chronicles of the Crusades*, emphasis added)

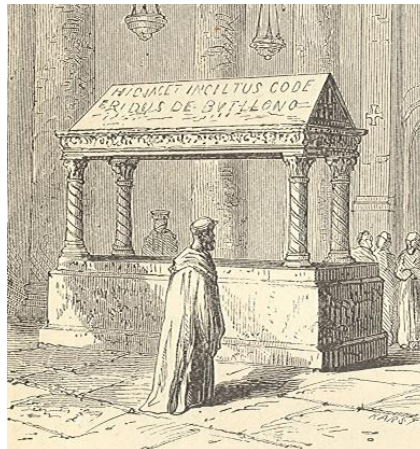
"If you want to know what was done to the enemies we found in the city, know this: that in the portico of Solomon and in his Temple, **our men rode in the blood of the Saracens up to the knees of their horses.**" (Letter from Crusader army to the Pope, September 1099, translation from *Chronicles of the Crusades*, emphasis added)





Modern day view of the Temple Mount, and the Dome of the Rock

A week after the fighting stopped, on July 22, 1099, Godfrey of Bouillon was elected ruler (although not king) of Jerusalem. He would rule for only a year until his death. His brother, crowned king as Baldwin I, succeeded him in 1100.



Tomb of Godfrey of Bouillon

On August 12, the Crusaders won a huge victory at Ascalon. The Holy Lands were, for all intents and purposes, in Christian hands. Ironically, Pope Urban II had died in July 1099, and never heard about the Crusader victories in Jerusalem and Ascalon.

After the huge Crusader victories, most of the crusaders returned home to Europe, leaving Godfrey and Baldwin to defend the Holy Lands with just a few thousand troops. Among the defenders that stayed were the military orders.

## The military orders

The successful crusades of the late 11<sup>th</sup>/early 12<sup>th</sup> centuries spawned a curious new kind of monk – the warrior monk. Could monks dedicated to God also be fighting men? Three important groups, the Knight Templars, the Knights Hospitallers, and the Teutonic Knights were exactly that.

The Knights Templar were founded in 1118 A.D., to protect pilgrim routes to the Holy Lands. They operated out of what they believed were the ruins of the Temple of Solomon in Jerusalem (hence the name, Knights *Templar*.) The Templars received the backing of St. Bernard of Clairvaux (who some people believe was involved in their founding), and they became nominal Cistercians (1128). Over time, these warrior monks became key figures in the Crusades - one source estimates that over 20,000 Knights Templar were killed in the Crusades. The





Templars were notable for the fact that they answered only to the Pope, and not to any local ecclesiastical authority.

In time, the Templars established local offices (called Temples) throughout Western Christendom. Always innovative, they started what is considered by many to be the first European banking system, and it was their involvement as bankers that eventually led to their downfall. By the early 1300s, King Philip IV of France was deeply in debt to the Paris Temple. In 1307, he charged the order with heresy. Charges eventually brought against the Templars included that postulants were required to deny Christ and spit on the cross, and that the Templars worshiped a mysterious head named “Baphomet” (perhaps a mangling of “Mohammed”?) These charges were never proved, except in confessions received under torture at the hands of the Inquisition.

The Council of Vienne in 1312 officially dissolved the order, giving most of their property to a similar order, named the Hospitalers (see below). The final part of the saga of the Knights Templar occurred in 1314, when Templar Grand Master Jacques de Molay was burned alive, after recanting of an earlier confession.

After the Templars were dissolved, the French crown received cancellation of all debts owed to the Templars, as well as much of their monetary wealth. At their peak in the 13<sup>th</sup> century, it is estimated that the Templars owned 9000 castles and manor houses, and had 20,000 members.

A similar group of warrior monks were formed in c. 1110, originally to man hospitals in the Holy Lands – *The Knights of the Order of the Hospital of St. John of Jerusalem*, or the *Knights Hospitalers*. Many advances in nursing were developed under the Hospitalers. They also contributed significantly to the defense of the Kingdom of Jerusalem. The Hospitalers started out in Jerusalem, then moved to Acre (1187), Cyprus (1291), Rhodes (1310) and finally Malta (1530). They were forced out of Malta in 1798 by Napoleon I, but still exist today as the *Knights of Malta*.

*The Teutonic Knights of Saint Mary's Hospital at Jerusalem*, made up of German nobles, were a third military order formed during the Crusades, founded at Acre in 1190. By 1198, the Teutonic Knights (like the Templars and Hospitalers before them) were primarily a military order. The Teutonic Knights wore distinctive white tunics with black crosses. Today, perhaps, we associate them more with fighting against Alexander Nevsky on the steppes of Russia.

## Second Crusade (1145-1148)



On December 24, 1144, the Turks seized the city of Edessa, and murdered all of the inhabitants. It was the first major loss of a territory won by the Crusader armies in the First Crusade. In 1145, Pope Eugenius III issued a bull (*Quantum praedecessors*) authorizing a new Crusade. When the bull was not greeted with great enthusiasms by either French or German nobles, Bernard of Clairvaux (1090–1153), the greatest churchman of his era, began preaching and writing in favor of the new crusade. Up to 50,000 volunteers responded to the call from France, alone. What the Pope couldn't do, Bernard was able to – the Second Crusade was born.

The two most significant military leaders of the Second Crusade were Louis VII of France, and Conrad III of Germany. The German crusaders were defeated at Dorylaeum in 1147. Although the two kings hated each other, they united to try to take Damascus from a hitherto friendly Moslem power in 1148, and also failed. Adding to the less than satisfactory results from the Second Crusade were persistent rumors that the wife of Louis VII, Eleanor of Aquitaine, conducted a torrid affair with Raymond II, the ruler of Antioch.

Generally, the Second Crusade was considered an ignominious failure, and Bernard of Clairvaux lost some prestige for the last several years of his life. One bright spot from the Second Crusades: a Crusader army helped take Lisbon from the Moslems in 1147.

### ***Bernard of Clairvaux***

As we have already noted, the driving force behind the Second Crusade was Bernard of Clairvaux. Bernard was a Cistercian monk, and in c. 1115, he founded a new Cistercian Abbey at Clairvaux, which had over 700 monks at its height. By the time of Bernard's death in 1153, Clairvaux had spawned 68 daughter houses.

Bernard secured official recognition of the Knights Templar at the Synod of Troyes, 1128.

Prior to the Second Crusade, Bernard preached a sermon admonishing crusaders from attacking Jews during the Crusade:

"We have heard with joy that zeal for God burns in you, but wisdom must not be lacking from this zeal. The Jews are not to be persecuted, nor killed, nor even forced to flee." (*Epistolae*, Bernard of Clairvaux, translation from *Chronicles of the Crusades*)

Bernard was canonized in 1174, and was declared a doctor of the Church by Pope Pius VIII in 1830.

### **Third Crusade (1187–1192)**

Things weren't looking much better for the Crusader kingdoms by the latter half of the 12<sup>th</sup> century. England and France were at war with each other, and not focused on the Holy Lands. In the 1170s, the greatest foe of the Crusaders was gaining power in Egypt – Saladin (c. 1138-1193). In July of 1187, near the Sea of Galilee, Saladin defeated the Crusader armies at the Battle of Hattin. The Knights Templar sustained especially high losses in this battle.

On October 2, 1187, Saladin seized Jerusalem. While Saladin allowed most of the Christian inhabitants to be ransomed, some of his actions were provocative – the cross from the Church of the Holy Sepulcher was dragged through the streets for two days, and the bells of Christian churches were melted down.

In two years, Saladin took 50 Crusader castles.

Pope Gregory VIII, and the archbishop of Tyre issued appeals for help. Three of the most famous Christian figures of the Crusades responded to that appeal – Richard the Lionhearted (1157-1199) of England (the first time England joined the Crusades), Philip (Augustus) II of France (1165-1223), and Frederick



Barbarossa (1122-1190) of Germany. The Crusade got off to an unfortunate start - in June 1190, Frederick drowned in a river on his way to the Holy Lands.

Richard and Philip took Acre in 1191 after a long siege, which made use of huge, stone-throwing catapults. As part of the negotiated settlement, the Moslems were supposed to return the relic of the True Cross, seized by Saladin's troops in 1187, as well as some Christian prisoners. When progress was too slow for Richard's liking, he had 2,700 Moslems massacred in sight of Saladin's army.

Richard quickly went on to capture Arsuf (September 7, 1191) where he gained the sobriquet "Lion-Heart", and Jaffa (September 19, 1191). When he was within sight of Jerusalem, he received news that his brother John was plotting with King Philip of France against him (the source of the Robin Hood legends). Richard signed a three-year truce with Saladin (September 2, 1192), and started back for England. En route, he was captured by Leopold, Duke of Austria, who turned him over to the Holy Roman Emperor. Richard was kept in captivity until 1194, when he was released for ransom, and returned to England. He died in a battle in France at the age of 41.

Saladin had a reputation. Once in the heat of a battle, Saladin saw that Richard's horse had been killed. Saladin sent a groom with two fresh horses. Another time, upon learning that Richard was ill, Saladin sent him some fruit and ice (!) Saladin, perhaps the greatest of all Moslem military leaders, died on March 4, 1193, just 6 months after the truce with Richard I was signed.

The Third Crusade, while not as effective as the First Crusade, was the first significant gain (or reclamation) of territory by the Christian Crusaders in 100 years. Richard I cemented his place in history as the greatest of the Crusader kings, with the possible exception of Godfrey of Bouillon.

## **Fourth Crusade (1202-1204)**

Easily the most shameful of all the Holy Land crusades, the Fourth Crusade ended with no gains in the Holy Lands, but it captured a small Greek town on the Adriatic Sea, and twice sacked Constantinople (!) The sharp-eyed reader will note that the original reason for the First Crusade was to come to the aid of the Eastern Church in Constantinople. Slightly over 100 years later, Crusader armies decimated it.

In 1198, Pope Innocent III (ruled 1198-1216) called for a new Crusade, and offered a remission of sins, and "a greater share of eternal salvation". Many "took the cross". To help finance the Crusade, Innocent III established what was, in modern terms, an income tax, which was no more popular than taxes are today.

The Fourth Crusade made a contract with the Venetian Doge for transportation to the Holy Lands by ship (eliminating the painful 2000 mile overland journey via Constantinople). When the time came to transport the 30,000 man Crusader Army, the Crusaders had only half of the required fees. The Doge, always helpful, offered to let the Crusaders earn part of their passage by capturing a rival commercial city, Zara in Dalmatia. The Crusaders were successful in taking Zara (November 1202). It should be noted that the Crusaders did not have the backing of the Pope for this action, as Zara was a Christian city.

Alexius, son of the former Byzantine emperor Isaac Angelus, asked the Crusaders to help restore his father to the throne, in return for money and supplies. It was the single greatest mistake in the long history of Constantinople. The Crusader army took Constantinople in July 1203, and crowned Emperor Alexius IV. Again, Innocent III was not in favor of the attack, but his letter forbidding it arrived too late.

The Crusaders became increasingly impatient, as Alexis was slow to meet his obligations to them. In February 1204, Alexius IV was murdered by his Byzantine rivals, and the Crusaders again stormed Con-

Constantinople (April 1204), this time looting, pillaging, and destroying everything in their path. Baldwin, count of Flanders was crowned new Byzantine emperor.

## Albigensian Crusade (1209-1229)

The Fourth Crusade had established the unfortunate precedent of launching crusades against fellow Christians. Similar atrocities would follow.

By the early part of the 13<sup>th</sup> century, much of Southern France had been heavily influenced by a group of nominal Christians with Gnostic philosophies named the Cathars. Like their Gnostic forebears, the Cathars were *dualists* – they believed that there were two creator Gods – a pure God that created the heavens and things spiritual, and an Evil God that created all things physical and temporal. They generally associated the Evil God with the God of the Old Testament.

They were also *docetists* – they believed that Jesus was a spirit, not a flesh and blood human being. Thus, they rejected the doctrine of the death of Jesus on the cross, and His subsequent resurrection.

The Albigensian Crusade (so named, because the French city of Albi was a Cathar stronghold), lasted for 20 years, from 1209 to 1229, led primarily by Simon de Montfort. The suppression of the Cathar heresy established new “standards” for ferocity for the Roman Church in dealing with its own flock. Perhaps the most famous example was on July 22, 1209, when the city of Beziers was sacked, with over 20,000 men, women and children killed by crusaders. Arnold, abbot of Citeaux describes the carnage:

“Our forces spared neither rank nor sex nor age. About twenty thousand people lost their lives at the point of the sword. The destruction of the enemy was on an enormous scale. The entire city was plundered and put to the torch. Thus did divine vengeance vent its wondrous rage.” (translation from *Chronicles of the Crusades*)

The event will forever be framed in history by the words of papal legate Arnaud, whom, when asked if Catholics should be spared during the assault, answered “Kill them all, for God knows His own”.

Wholesale burnings of Cathars were carried out during the Crusade, including 400 burnt after the fall of Lavaur in 1211, and 94 burnt after the fall of Casses in the same year. It was against this backdrop that Pope Gregory IX instituted the Papal Inquisition in 1227/31. While the Albigensian Crusade had wiped out most of the Cathar strongholds, there were still heretics to be hunted down and burned – many of whom had gone into hiding during the years of the Crusade. Examples of post-Crusade slaughter of the Cathars include 183 burned in Montwimer (Marne) in 1239, and the burning of 215 Cathar *perfecti* (the Cathar priests) at the Castle of Montségur in 1244 (sometimes referred to as the *Massacre at Montségur*.)

## Children’s Crusade (1212-1213)

One of the most lamentable episodes in the Crusades was the *Children’s Crusade* of 1212/1213. In the summer of 1212, thousands (one report says 30,000) of children (ages 10-18), mostly from France and Germany, left for the Holy Lands to recapture Jerusalem. A number of lesser nobles and clergy joined them on their ill-fated journey.

Most of the “crusaders” never reached the Holy Lands. Many died crossing the Alps. Others were captured and sold as slaves. Some girls ended up in Roman brothels. Few of the crusaders ever returned home.

Some people believe that the Children’s Crusade was the impetus behind the “Pied Piper of Hamelin” legend.

While the Children's Crusade was an unmitigated disaster, Pope Innocent III used it as a positive example when calling for a new Crusade in 1215:

"These children shame us. While we are asleep, they march forth joyously to conquer the Holy Land."  
(Pope Innocent III)

## Fifth Crusade (1217-1221)

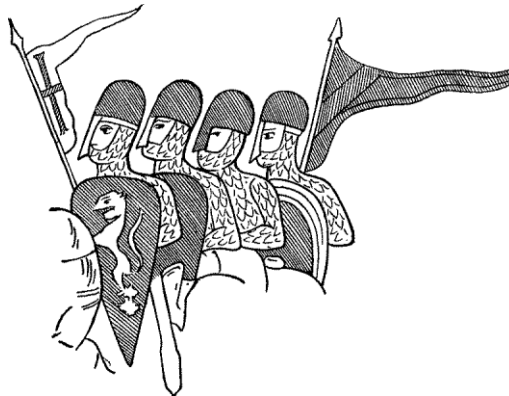
Although Pope Innocent III had called for a new Crusade in 1215, his death in 1216 put things on hold for a short while. His successor, Pope Honorius III began plans for a new crusade in 1217, seeking (and receiving) the backing of the King of Hungary and the Duke of Austria. The goal of the Fifth Crusade: strike a blow against the Moslem power centers in Egypt, and eventually reclaim Jerusalem.



300 German ships took the Crusaders to the Holy Lands in 1218. After a long siege, the Crusaders captured the Egyptian port of Damietta, in the mouth of the Nile. In 1221, the Crusaders headed up the Nile, but the invasion failed when the sultan flooded the low-lying lands of the Nile, threatening the Crusaders position. The Crusader armies retreated shortly after, and the Moslems retook Damietta in the same year.

During the Fifth Crusade, St. Francis of Assisi crossed enemy lines to preach to the Moslem sultan. The preaching was not successful, but the sultan returned Francis safely to Crusader lines.

## Sixth Crusade (1228-1229)



An argument can be made that the Sixth Crusade was the most successful Crusade of all; it was certainly the most unusual. The leader was Holy Roman Emperor Frederick II (grandson of Frederick Barbossa). Frederick had originally planned on joining the Fifth Crusade, but bowed out because of illness. When Frederick failed to live up to his Crusader obligations (made at his coronation in 1220), he was excommunicated by Pope Gregory IX in 1227.

Frederick, although excommunicated, sailed for the Holy Lands with a crusader army in 1228. Instead of fighting the Moslems, he went into Treaty negotiations with the Sultan of Egypt and, astonishingly, was granted Jerusalem, Jaffa, Bethlehem, and Nazareth (Treaty of Jaffe, February 1229). On March 17, 1229, Frederick II marched into Jerusalem, and soon claimed the title King of Jerusalem.

The Crusaders kept hold of Jerusalem this time until 1244, when they were ejected by a group of Khwarazmian Turks. The Crusaders would never retake Jerusalem.

## Seventh Crusade (1248-1250)



The last two Crusades would be led by Louis IX, later Saint Louis. Like Saladin before him, St. Louis was a leader honored by both sides in the Crusades. St. Louis may have been the most honestly pious of all the Crusader kings.

In 1243, at the Council of Lyons, Pope Innocent IV called for a new Crusade. After the fall of Jerusalem in 1244, Louis IX answered the call, and spent four years carefully planning his Crusade. It was to follow the same basic strategy as the Fifth Crusade, with the same poor results.

In 1249, Louis IX led his forces against Damietta, Egypt, a port on the Nile. Like in the Fifth Crusade, the Crusader armies captured the port, and then moved into the interior of Egypt, with Cairo their target. In 1250, after initial successes, Louis IX and his forces were defeated at the Battle of Mansourah, and surrendered. As part of his ransom: 800,000 gold bezants, and the port of Damietta. Most of the Crusader armies returned home, although Louis stayed in the Holy Lands for four more years, helping to rebuild Christian fortresses in Syria. He returned to France in 1254 upon the death of his Mother, Queen Blanche.

## Eighth Crusade (1267-1272)

In 1260, a new Moslem power arose in Egypt, when the Mamelukes, Turkish bodyguards of the sultan, revolted and seized power. One of their number, Baibars, became the new sultan. By 1268, he had captured Antioch and Jaffa. He was known for the wholesale slaughter the inhabitants of the towns he captured, and for selling the captured women into slavery.

Louis IX gathered an army to, once again, recapture the lost parts of the Holy Lands. His army never reached the Holy Lands, though – it was sidetracked into Tunis (1270), when Louis heard an (erroneous) report that the Moslem leader was willing to convert to Christianity if the Crusading army would help protect him from his subjects.

The stillborn Crusade was trapped in Carthage, and soon was decimated by typhus, dysentery, and plague. In August 1270, Louis himself died.

Prince Edward of England set out in 1270 to support his Uncle Louis' crusade, but Louis was already dead by the time Edward could have arrived. Instead, he sailed to Acre, where he received little support from the Frankish nobles for raising a new Crusader army. He made a truce with Baibars, and prepared to return to England. Baibars sent an assassin to kill him, but Edward survived the attack. He returned to England, and became King upon the death of his father, King Henry III.

In 1297, Louis IX was canonized by Pope Boniface VIII



## The Fall

By the late 13<sup>th</sup> century, the crusading spirit had waned, and no new major efforts were made after the failure of the Eighth Crusade. Baibars died in 1271, but his successors continued his aggressive strategy to reclaim the Holy Lands for the Moslems. In 1289, Tripoli fell to Al-Mansur Qalawun. And in 1291, the last major stronghold of the Crusaders, the massive castle at Acre, fell. The end at Acre is described below:

"Then on Friday 18 May 1291, before daybreak, there came a loud and terrible sound of a kettledrum, and as the drum sounded, the Saracens assaulted the city of Acre on every side...They came in countless numbers, all on foot; in front came men with great tall shields, after them men throwing Greek fire, and then men who shot bolts and feathered arrows so thickly that they seemed like rain falling from the sky.

When Henry of Lusignan, king of Jerusalem and Cyprus, witnessed this disaster, he went to the master of the Hospitalers; they saw clearly that no advice or help could do any good, so they fled and went aboard the galleys.

That day was appalling, for nobles and citizens, women and girls were frantic with terror; they went running through the streets, their children in their arms, weeping and desperate; they fled to the sea-shore to escape death, and when the Saracens caught them one would take the mother and the other the child, they would drag them from place to place and pull them apart; and sometimes two Saracens would quarrel over a woman and she would be killed; or a woman was taken and her sucking child flung to the ground where it died under the horses' hooves". (The Templar of Tyre; translation from *Chronicles of the Crusades*)

Shortly afterwards, Tyre, Sidon and Beirut either were abandoned by the Crusaders, or surrendered without a fight.

The Crusading dream was over. The next time an army from a Christian nation would enter Jerusalem would be December 9, 1917, under the command of General Edmund Allenby.

Interestingly, in Allenby's proclamation after taking Jerusalem, he underscored the importance of protecting the religious sites of all three major religions:

"Furthermore, since your city is regarded with affection by the adherents of three of the great religions of mankind and its soil has been consecrated by the prayers and pilgrimages of multitudes of devout people of these three religions for many centuries, therefore, do I make it known to you that every sacred building, monument, holy spot, shrine, traditional site, endowment, pious bequest, or customary place of prayer of whatsoever form of the three religions will be maintained and protected according to the existing customs and beliefs of those to whose faith they are sacred." (*History of the World War*, p. 508, by Francis March, 1919)



Allenby enters Jerusalem

## Reasons for ultimate defeat

The reasons for the ultimate defeat of the Crusades in the Holy Lands are many, and are summarized below:

- During the period from 1099-1291, the Christians were as intent on fighting each other as they were the Moslems. This included, but was not limited to:
  - France against England (multiple times)
  - The papacy against the power of the Holy Roman Empire
  - Western Christianity vs. Eastern Christianity
- The Holy Lands were a long way from Europe – 2,100 miles from Paris to Jerusalem by land, and 1,450 nautical miles from Genoa to Antioch. This is a long way from supply sources, reinforcements, etc.
- Crusaders that choose to stay in the Holy Lands after successful crusades often became complacent about the status quo, developing lucrative relationships with their Moslem neighbors. Especially in the 13<sup>th</sup> century, the last thing that they wanted to do was upset the proverbial applecart by joining in a new Crusade.
- There was never a “central command” of the Crusades. Even during the First Crusade, decisions were made by committee among several powerful nobles.



- The papacy could order Crusades, but couldn't order European nobles to "take the cross". Also, the papacy couldn't completely finance the crusades (even though the papacy several times levied an income tax).
- At a particularly low ebb for the Crusaders, after the failed Seventh and Eight Crusades in the 13<sup>th</sup> century, a particularly energetic and virulent foe arose – the Mameluke Turks
- There was no "central command" even in the Levant itself, with four Frankish kingdoms set up, each with their own independent rulers
- There was no economic reason to take and hold the Holy Lands
- The Crusaders started out with the belief that they couldn't lose, that "God was on their side". After the disaster of the Second Crusade (and the Fifth, Seventh and Eight Crusades), many people became disillusioned with the whole crusading concept, and refused to support new efforts.
- Various diseases – including dysentery, plague, typhoid – would decimate Crusader armies at inopportune moments
- The Crusader armies were not used to the parched landscape of the Levant, and the ensuing lack of water

## Results and impact

In our modern age, the Crusades are typically viewed as an unmitigated failure. And, indeed, there were many failures from the point of view of Christendom in the Crusades. And if the sole judge of success is the ability of the Crusaders to capture *and keep* the Holy Lands, we have no final conclusion to draw other than that they were indeed a failure.

From a broader strategic point of view, though, the Crusades could perhaps be viewed as a draw, for these reasons:

- By bringing the battle to Islam, it prevented Islam from further forays into the European heartland, as they tried in the 8<sup>th</sup> century when they got as far as Tours
- Even though Crusader armies twice sacked Constantinople, Islam didn't take Constantinople until 1453. It is unlikely that the Byzantine Empire, already creaky at the time of the First Crusade, would have lasted that long without the Crusades.

The Crusades, of course, had many other effects, both good and bad:

- The Knights Templar would go on to establish the first banking system in Europe
- The West would be influenced by Arab authors and poets, and Arab science. The West would adopt the Arab numbering system.
- The Crusades helped cause the rise of a middle class in Europe, as many non-nobles did well supplying and transporting the Crusader armies
- By the end of the Crusades, the Pope was the clear ruler of Christendom, not the Holy Roman Emperor, or another secular leader
- The Inquisition would be a "logical" outgrowth of the Albigensian Crusade in Languedoc, France
- One can trace the concept of an "income tax" to the Crusades
- Great strides were made in the field of nursing, especially through the Knights Hospitalers

And how should we judge the Crusades from a moral viewpoint? Today, some apologists for the West (including an ex-President) have "apologized" for the Crusades. But is an apology really in order? Certainly, there were excesses on both sides. Al-Hakim ordered the destruction of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, and order that the rock tomb be reduced to rubble; Baibar massacred most inhabitants of the cities he captured, except for those "lucky" enough to be sold into slavery; the Crusaders massacred thousands of people until the blood ran "up to the ankle" in Jerusalem after capturing it in 1099; Richard the Lion-Hearted ordered the death of 2,700 Moslems at Acre during the Third Crusade. The list could

go on and on for both Christian and Moslem forces. And there were occasional examples of chivalry on both sides, too: Saladin and St. Louis come to mind.

Can a case be made for the Crusades in political terms? Surely Christian Europe greatly feared further invasion after Spain and parts of the Byzantine Empire fell so readily to Moslem advances. And while the Holy Lands probably had no political or economic significance in of itself to the crusaders, it probably made strategic sense to take the battle to the home turf of the Moslem invaders of Europe. (Photo: Church of the Holy Sepulcher, rebuilt by the Crusaders)



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Photos and engravings:

- Cover, "Empire of the Caliphs" map, Charles Martel, "Countries of Syria" map, Tomb of Godfrey of Bouillon, Knight Templar, St. Louis – from *Barnes Brief History Series* (c. 1903)
- Allenby enters Jerusalem – from *History of the World War* (1919)
- Statue of St. Francis – photo by Robert Jones
- All other photos and engravings from Art Explosion 600,000 (1999)

## About the Author

Robert C. Jones grew up in the Philadelphia, Pennsylvania area. He made his living as a hotel lounge band leader/musician from 1974-1981. In 1981, he moved to the Atlanta, Georgia area, where he received a B.S. in Computer Science at DeVry Institute of Technology. From 1984-2009, Robert worked for Hewlett-Packard as a computer consultant.

Robert is an ordained elder in the Presbyterian Church. He has written and taught numerous adult Sunday School courses (see front inside cover). He has also been active in choir ministries over the years, and has taught the *Disciples* Bible Study five times.



Robert is also President of the Kennesaw Historical Society, for whom he has written several books, including "The Law Heard 'Round the World - An Examination of the Kennesaw Gun Law and Its Effects on the Community", "Retracing the Route of the General - Following in the Footsteps of the Andrews Raid", and "Kennesaw (Big Shanty) in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century". A new book, "Images of America: Kennesaw", was published by Arcadia in 2006.

Robert has also written several books on ghost towns in the Southwest, including in Death Valley, Nevada, Arizona, New Mexico, and Mojave National Preserve.

In 2005, Robert co-authored a business-oriented book entitled "Working Virtually: The Challenges of Virtual Teams". His co-authors were Lise Pace and Rob Oyung.

His interests include the Civil War, Medieval Monasteries, American railroads, ghost towns, hiking in Death Valley and the Mojave, and Biblical Archaeology.

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