

The Crusades

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The Crusades

•The term 'Crusades' generally refers to a series of Holy Wars that lasted nearly 200 years between Christian Europeans and the Muslim Turks of the Middle East.

•The first Crusade was initiated by Pope Urban II in 1095 at the Council of Clermont. The Byzantine Emperor Alexius I asked the Pope for help in defending his Empire



against the expansion of the Seljuk Turks.

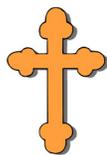
•The Turks had recently conquered the Holy Land of Jerusalem. The Byzantine Emperor sought help from the west, and the Pope saw an opportunity to extend his influence. Keeping in mind that the East-West Schism occurred in 1054, the Pope saw this as an opportunity to reconcile the two churches.

•The Pope also saw this as a way to channel the energies of the military segment of society. In other words, knights and warriors were creating a significant amount of violence in European society – violence that was better aimed at the Middle East.



Course of the Crusades

•Overall, there were nearly a dozen crusades over the course of 200 years. Some were more successful than others (some were dismal failures).



•In each crusade, a military effort was mounted to regain the Holy Land of Jerusalem, and in some cases, they were met with success. In general however, the Byzantine Empire, or the Crusader states that were set up in the Holy Land, were too weak to hold the territory, and they reverted back to Muslim possession

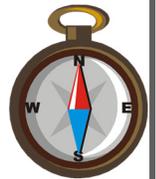
Results of the Crusades

•The results of the Crusades cannot be evaluated simply on the basis of their military success or failure. Clearly, they were considered military failures for Western Europe, however, they yielded important social, political and economic effects.

•**Economic Effects:** One of the largest and most important impacts of the Crusades was the increase of trade that was stimulated within Europe and between Europe and the Middle East.

•Goods from the Middle and Far East flowed into Europe en masse for the first time since the fall of Rome. Roman roads, long unused in Medieval Europe, were bustling with trade and travel by the end of the Crusades.

•More than just goods flowed into Europe. Technology and innovation like the astrolabe and compass also arrived, and began to stimulate European interest in exploration.



•**Political Effects:** The increase in trade would help bring about the end of feudalism. Trade necessitated the growth of towns, and towns lay outside the manor system and outside the control of lords.

Towns were under the control of kings, and kings gained substantial power over lords as a result.

•The Church also lost power during this time, and national monarchies began to take shape with the rise of powerful kings.

•**Social Effects:** The split between the Roman Catholic Church and the Eastern Orthodox Church was solidified in this time period. Western crusaders sacked Constantinople, and killed fellow Christians there. Bad feelings following this would persist.