The Crusades
What is a crusade?

A crusade was a “Holy War” between European Christians and the Muslim Turks.
What were they fighting over?

• Three major religious groups all claimed Jerusalem in the land of Palestine as their holy city.
  – **To Christians**, it was the place where Jesus was crucified and ascended to heaven
  – **To Muslims**, it was the place where Muhammad ascended to heaven
  – **To Jews**, it was the site of the ancient temple built by Solomon
Jerusalem from 600 CE to 1093

- In 600 CE, Arabs entered the city and took control.
- The Arabs allowed Christian and Jewish pilgrims to visit Jerusalem. In fact, Jews and Christians could live in Palestine as long as they paid their taxes like everyone else.
But...

• **The Problem:** Around 1095, a new group of Arabs took control of Jerusalem. They closed the city to Jewish and Christian pilgrims.

  And...

• Began trying to invade the Byzantine empire
The Invaders

• In 1093, Byzantine Emperor named Alexius Comnenus ask for help against invaders
  – THE INVADERS: The Muslim Turks aka Ottoman Turks
• The Muslim Turks were trying to take over the Byzantine capital of CONSTANTINOPLE.
Pope Urban II Responds

• Pope Urban II read the letter asking for help and called for a “holy war” or CRUSADE

• He said those who fought and died in the Crusades would be promised a spot in Heaven with all sins forgiven

• And about 30,000 men took up his offer and left western Europe to fight in Jerusalem
Why did they fight?

• There were **economic** and **religious** motives for the Crusades
  – **Kings and the Church**: A way to get rid of **knights** who always fought each other and threatened the peace of the kingdom
  – **Younger Sons**: A way to gain **land** and **position** in society since the oldest son gets everything
Why did they fight?

• For knights, this was a chance to use their fighting skills, something they enjoyed and did well. They were delighted to have such a worthy battle to fight.
Why did they fight?

- For **peasants**, this was a chance to escape from their dreary life in the feudal system. The pope promised that if they died while fighting a holy crusade, they would automatically be welcomed into heaven.
Why did they fight?

For **others**, it was a chance to have an adventure, and perhaps even to get rich.
Peasants wanted to fight because…
THE GOAL

• The goal of these Christian soldiers were to recover
  - 1. Jerusalem and
  - 2. Holy Land
• They wanted it back from the Muslim Turks
The **Red Cross**: Each crusader had a huge red cross, made out of fabric, stitched onto their shirts or armor. It made all crusaders, irrespective of rank or background, appear to be a unified army. It reminded the crusaders that they were fighting a cause. The red cross was added to flags and banners.
First Crusade 1093-1095

- Unprepared troops
- No strategy
- Captured Jerusalem
- Carved in up into 4 Crusader states
Second Crusade 1147-1149

- Muslim leader Saladin takes control of Jerusalem
- Muslim Turks re-conquer the city
- Saladin is described to be honest and brave.
Third Crusade

- Richard the Lion Hearted = English King and two other leaders fail to recapture Jerusalem
- He and Saladin respected each other
Fourth Crusade 1202-1204

- Crusades attack Constantinople instead
- Stole statues, money, paintings and jewelry
- Burned libraries, destroyed churches
- Said they needed money to defend Constantinople from the same fate as Jerusalem and to rescue Jerusalem from Muslims
- People of Constantinople hated the west for sacking their city
Children’s Crusade 1212

- Thousands of French and German children try to reach Jerusalem
- Believed God would help them because they were children
- Many died of hunger, some froze to death
- When they reached the Mediterranean sea, expected they waters to part for them….
  They didn’t
- Forced to return home
In the End

• The Christians are finally pushed out of Jerusalem

• Muslim Turks are the victors and take over the Byzantine in 1453
Effects of the Crusades

• Negatives:
  – Weakened the Byzantine Empire, the Pope and nobles
  – Kings become stronger
  – Leaves a legacy of bitterness between the Christians, Jews and the Muslims
Effects of the Crusades

• Positives:
  – Stimulated trade throughout the Mediterranean and Middle East
    • Goods such as spices, cotton, linen, dates, coral, pearls, porcelain, silk and metal goods
  – Europe learns much from the Muslims
    • Science and astronomy, “Arabic” numerals, paper production
  – Serfs had used the Crusades to leave their lands and found new opportunities
Pictures Cited

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