**Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Perspectives on the Crusades**

**Introduction:** The dialogue takes place in the palace of the Sultan in the city of Cairo, Egypt. All around the Mediterranean world – in Spain, North Africa, Palestine, Syria, and throughout Christendom - warfare had been raging for centuries. Christians killing Christians, Muslims killing Muslims, Muslims killing Christians, Christians killing Muslims and Jews, and lately, a new and violent power had arrived from the east, the Mongols. So much murder, and most of it carried out in the name of Allah, or God! In the Muslim world, the wars of Christians against Muslims is called al-Hurab al-Salibiyya, or the “Wars of the Cross.” Christendom came to refer to them as the Crusades.

**The Palace of the Sultan**

**Narrator:** It is the 21st day of the moon Sefer, in the year of the Hegira 647 (1249 AD). The Sultan, surrounded by advisors, has just received a letter from King Louis. He bids an advisor translate the letter aloud.

**Sultan:** Let me hear the words of this heathen king. Read.

**Advisor 1:** This is what the French King writes, Your Highness: “You are not ignorant that I am the prince of those who follow the religion of Jesus CHRIST, as you are of those who obey the laws of Muhammad. Your power inspires me with no fear. How should it? I who make the Muslims in Spain tremble! I lead them as a shepherd does a flock of sheep. I have made the bravest among them perish, and loaded their women and children with chains. They endeavor by presents to appease me, and turn my arms to another quarter. The soldiers who march under my standards cover the plains, and my cavalry is not less redoubtable [impressive]. You have but one method to avoid the tempest that threatens you. Receive priests, who will teach you the Christian religion, embrace it, and adore the Cross; otherwise, I will pursue you everywhere, and God shall decide whether you or I be master of Egypt.”

**Sultan:** This troubles me greatly. How sad! How sad! This man, this Christian, is bent on our destruction. What should I do? What say you all?

**Advisor 2:** Your Highness, we are in great danger. We must not underestimate our enemies. They have come with many ships, and many thousands of mounted soldiers. Already our army is fleeing from Damietta!

**Advisor 3:** Do not fear, your Highness! Our forces shall regroup, and we shall defeat the infidels. We are fighting to defend our homeland, and we must not forget that the enemy is far from their homes, far from any hope of re-supply!

**Sultan:** It is so! Let me respond to this King Louis. Write this as I say it: In the name of Allah, most gracious, most merciful, salvation to our prophet Muhammad and his friends! I have received your letter: it is filled with menaces, and you make a boast of the great number of your soldiers. Are you ignorant that we know the use of arms, and that we inherit the valor of our ancestors? No one has ever attacked us without feeling our superiority. Recollect the conquests we have made from the Christians; we have driven them from the lands they possessed; their strongest towns have fallen under our blows. Recall to your mind that passage of the Qur’an that says, ‘Those who make war unjustly shall perish’; and also another passage, ‘How often have the most numerous armies been destroyed by a handful of soldiers’! Allah protects the just, and we have no doubt of his protection, nor that he will confound your arrogant designs.

**Questions**

1. What does the King of France demand in his letter to the Sultan?

2. What does the Sultan respond to King Louis?

3. Why is the Sultan so confident?

4. In your opinion, should people or nations go to war to advance their religious beliefs? Explain.

**The Crusades**

**Do Now:** Can you think of one piece of territory that has been considered more important or more desirable than any other and has caused competition and conflict? Why is this the case?

**1095: *Pope’s Call for Crusade Embraced by Some Christians***

The Byzantine emperor Alexius I urgently asked Pope Urban II for Christian knights to help him fight the Seljuk Turks. Although Roman popes and Byzantine emperors were longtime rivals, Urban agreed stating:

“From Jerusalem and the city of Constantinople comes a grievous report…an accursed race…has violently invaded the lands of those Christians and has depopulated them by pillage and fire. The noble race of Franks must come to the aid of their fellow Christians in the East. The infidel Turks are advancing into the heart of Eastern Christendom; Christians are being oppressed and attacked; churchs and holy places are being defiled. Pilgrims are harassed and even prevented access to the Holy Land. The West must march to the defense of the East. Both knights and footmen, both rich and poor…strive to help expel [the Seljuks] from our Christian lands before it is too late… Remission of sins will be granted to those going thither. Let none hesitate; they must march next summer. Christ commands it!”

**By 1096, thousands of knights were on their way to the Holy Land. What do you think Knights hoped to gain? The pope, too, had mixed motives. What do you think Urban II hoped to gain from the Crusades?**

The pope promised forgiveness of sins and entrance into the kingdom of heaven for anyone who died in the Crusades. Serfs could obtain freedom from their lords. Citizens who enlisted were freed from paying taxes. Those who owed debts were allowed to pay them back without additional fees. Prisoners were released from jails, and sentences of death were commuted to life service in Palestine.

**If you were in one of the positions mentioned above, would these promised incentives be enough to have you join the Crusades during this time period? Why or why not?**

***Causes of the Crusades***

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| --- | --- |
| **CAUSES** | **Religious, Political, Cultural or Economic?** |
| The desire to take control of Jerusalem away from Muslims. |  |
| The belief that fighting in a crusade would give you forgiveness of sins. |  |
| The chance to travel and make money. |  |
| The desire to defend the Byzantine empire from Turks. |  |
| The opportunity for younger sons of European nobles to get new land. |  |
| The possibility of opening up new trade routes between Europe and the Middle East. |  |
| To restore the right of Christians to make pilgrimages to the holy shrines in Jerusalem. |  |
| To gain some of the fabulous riches of the East. |  |
| To reunify the Orthodox and Latin branches of the Church under the Pope. |  |

**Take another look at the reasons why Europeans were willing to fight. Which one would have convinced you most to go on a crusade? Why?**

**The First Crusade 1096-1099:**

***First Crusade Results in Bloody Capture of Jerusalem***

At the urging of Pope Urban II in 1095, the First Crusade succeeded in taking Jerusalem and was the most successful from the European point of view. When Jerusalem fell in 1099, crusaders massacred and disgraced the dead bodies of 70,000 Muslims and Jews who were living there. An eyewitness stated: “In fact Jerusalem was taken from the north on the morning of Friday July 15, 1099. The population was put to the sword by the [crusaders]. In the [mosque near the summit of the city, the crusaders] slaughtered more than 70,000 people, among them a large number of Imams and Muslim scholars, devout men who had left their homelands to live lives of [holy] seclusion in the Holy Place.  ” Then the leaders divided up the land into territories, each governed by a European feudal lord.

**How could the actions of the First Crusaders cause future conflicts or problems?**

***The Second Crusade 1146-1148:***

***Louis VII and Conrad III Lead Failed Second Crusade-Return Home Disgraced***

The Second Crusade started when Europeans lost control of Edessa, territory that they had previously controlled, to the Muslims. Led by King Louis VII of France and King Conrad III of Germany, the Europeans failed to regain any land and the crusade was a failure from a European point of view. Almost 1 million people were involved in the Second Crusade. The crusaders changed direction for an unknown reason, and instead of attacking the Muslims who overthrew Edessa, they attacked the only Muslim friends the Christians had, who lived in the city of Damascus. This strategy only helped to unite all the Muslim nations together against the Christians.

In 1187, the Muslim leader Saladin prepared to try to take Jerusalem back from the Christians:

 "If God blesses us by enabling us to drive His enemies out of Jerusalem, how fortunate and happy we would be! For Jerusalem has been controlled by the enemy for ninety-one years, during which time God has received nothing from us here in the way of adoration. At the same time, the zeal of the Muslim rulers to deliver it languished. Time passed, and so did many [in different] generations, while the Franks succeeded in rooting themselves strongly there. Now God has reserved the merit of its recovery for one house, the house of the sons of Ayyub [Saladin's family], in order to unite all hearts in appreciation of its members."

**What reasons does Saladin give for retaking Jerusalem? What arguments does he use to inspire his listeners?**

**What are the similarities and differences between the arguments Pope Urban II and Saladin use to persuade their listeners?**

***The Third Crusade 1189-1192:***

***Richard’s Crusade for Jerusalem Ends in an Agreement***

The Third Crusade was a response to Jerusalem’s fall in 1187 to Salah al-Din (Saladin). Three great armies from Europe were led by Richard the Lion-hearted of England, Philip II of France, and the Holy Roman emperor Frederick Barbarossa, Europe’s greatest warrior. However, Frederick accidentally drowned, the other two kings quarreled, and the whole crusade failed from a European point of view. The Third Crusade, while not as effective as the First Crusade, was the first significant gain (or reclaiming) of territory by the Christian Crusaders in 100 years. Richard signed a three-year truce with Saladin. Some of the Holy Land went to the Christians and some to the Muslims. Saladin still held Jerusalem, but he allowed Christians to make pilgrimages freely. The agreement was only for three years only because Richard believed he could return and retake Jerusalem. He never did.

**Why do you think Richard and Saladin signed a truce? What do you think they hoped to accomplish?**

***The Fourth Crusade: 1202-1204:***

***The Capture of Constantinople***

Easily the most shameful of all the 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! Instead of going to Jerusalem, the Fourth Crusade went to the Byzantine Empire’s capital, Constantinople, for various reasons. The European armies looted (robbed) the city and overthrew the Byzantine emperor. A resident of Constantinople describes how crusaders attacked the city during the Fourth Crusade: “And so the streets, squares, houses of two and three stories, sacred places, nunneries, houses for nuns and monks, sacred churches, even the Great Church of God and the imperial palace, were filled with [European crusaders], all of them maddened by war and murderous in spirit, all clad in armor and bearing spears, swords and lances, as they [robbed] the sacred places and trampled on the divine things [and] ran riot over the holy vessels. ... Moreover, they tore children from their mothers and mothers from their children, fearing neither God's anger nor man's vengeance.” The main outcomes of the Fourth Crusade were to deepen the division between Greek and Latin Christianity and to hasten the Byzantine Empire’s decline.

**Why was the Fourth Crusade considered shameful?**

**Based on what you have read, were the first four Crusades a success or failure for the Europeans? Why?**

***The Children’s Crusade 1212-1213:***

***Children’s Crusade Tragedy: Slavery, Hunger, Disease***

One of the most tragic events of the Crusades was the Children’s Crusade of 1212/1213. In 1212, thousands of children (ages 10-18 mostly from France and Germany) left for the Holy Lands to recapture Jerusalem joined by several lesser nobles and clergy. Most of the crusaders never reached the Holy Lands, many dying crossing the Alps. Others were captured and sold as slaves, few of them ever returned home. Some people believe that the Children’s Crusade was the impetus behind the “Pied Piper of Hamelin” legend. The Children’s Crusade appears in medieval sources, but historians now question its authenticity.

**If the Children’s Crusade did not take place, what would be the motivation behind such a strange tale?**

***The Fifth Crusade 1217-1221 & The Sixth Crusade 1228***

***The Seventh Crusade 1248-1254 & The Eighth Crusade 1270-1291***

***Reconquista 1492: Jews and Muslims Expelled from Spain***

***Effects of the Crusades***

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| --- | --- |
| **EFFECTS** | **Religious, Political, Cultural or Economic?** |
| Stimulated trade, introduced new products and technology, architecture, and the growing urban culture |  |
| Led directly to the Turkish wars and expansion of the Ottoman Empire into the Balkans |  |
| Expanded use of a money economy. |  |
| Hardened Muslim attitudes towards Christians. |  |
| Weakened Feudalism |  |
| Transmitted Islamic science, philosophy, and medicine to the West |  |
| Curious Europeans left to explore far-off places such as India and China. Broadened contacts with the Muslim world |  |
| Increased the power of the monarchs. Rulers won new rights to collect taxes in order to support the Crusades. |  |

**What did Europe gain from contact with the Muslim East?**

**Why do you think the Crusades had such a significant impact? Do you think the Crusades could have been prevented? Explain. If so, how?**

**What is your opinion of the Crusaders’ actions?**

**Why is it important to analyze a variety of perspectives when studying a historical event like the Crusades?**