THE CRUSADES: 1095-1291

- European Christians regularly traveled to the Holy Land (Israel) on pilgrimages to visit the holy sites of Jesus’ life, especially those in Jerusalem.
- Muslims won control of Jerusalem by 638 CE, but Christians allowed to continue visiting.
- Seljuk Turks (an Islamic Empire that controlled the Abbasid caliphs), expanded against the Byzantine Empire, an Orthodox Christian civilization.

Motivations for the Crusades:

- Seljuk expansion blocked European Christian pilgrims from traveling to Jerusalem.
- Byzantine Emperor asked Pope Urban II for help fighting the Seljuk Turks (1095 CE)
  - Pope Urban II called on Europe’s nobility & knights
    - desire to bring Christian control over Jerusalem.
- defeat Islamic enemies of Christ
- Pope sees chance to increase his/the Church’s power and glory.
  - spread Christianity to Islamic lands & gain influence over Byzantine Empire
- Christian knights have opportunity to gain wealth, glory, and God’s grace by fighting Muslims!
  - “God Wills It!”

The 8 Crusades:

- First Crusade (1095-1099) – The only successful Crusade for the Europeans (captured Jerusalem and most of Israel; Europeans established small kingdoms there).
- Second Crusade (1147-49) – Seljuks rallied & began recapturing territory; Europeans beaten
- Third Crusade (1188-1192) – Seljuk General Saladin led Muslim forces & recaptured Jerusalem
- Fourth Crusade (1202-1204) – Crusaders, led by Italian city-state Venice, attacked, occupied, & plundered Orthodox Christian Constantinople in the Byzantine Empire.
- ...all the other Crusades were Islamic victories.

...BUT, the Crusades had a tremendous long-term impact on Europe despite the humiliating losses.