

- I. Setting which gave rise to the Crusades
 - A. Sociological changes from 1000 leading to population displacement and feudalism
 1. Stronger power of lords over land, oppression of serfs, weaker kings.
 2. Technological advances creating more competitive workforce.
 3. Genovese shippers made travel to east possible after defeat of Moorish settlements releasing trade route. Disclosed East's sophistication and riches.
 - B. Psychological issues:
 1. Feudal lords garnered less loyalty, more fear, adding to people's sense of psychological displacement.
 2. Constantly warring, violent nature of society, many serving as mercenaries
 3. Second born sons of noblemen – wandered in gangs, abusing poor
 - C. Religious issues:
 1. Pilgrimages to Holy Land reignited interest in holy places, gave focus for spiritual quests.
 2. Coincided with church's attempts to incite spiritual renewal
- II. Crusades (1095-1270)
 - A. Crusades – not called crusades at first. Travelers called themselves pilgrims. But it gained name Crusades from French word *croix* (cross) because all pilgrims engaged in it had a red cross on their uniforms.
 - B. Pope Urban II preached First Crusade at Council of Clermont (1095)
 1. Justification:
 - a. Defeat Moslems who threatened Constantinople
 - b. Save Byzantine Empire and reunite Eastern and Western Christianity.
 - c. To reconquer the Holy Land for Christianity

- d. To divert energy of Europeans away from internecine wars to destroy outsiders
2. The Pope's tools to motivate people to participate:
 - a. Describes Moslems as vile race, infidels who destroyed churches, worships demons
 - b. Remission of sins granted to all crusaders
- C. Effects of the Crusades
1. Muslim states were caught unaware, tended to be independent of each other, so initially were defeated. Resulted in establishment of Crusader states (Acre, Jerusalem, Antioch, Nicaea) which were gained and lost at various times.
 2. Crusaders on way to First Crusade killed Jews and Eastern Orthodox Christians as practice. (Serbia, Bosnia, Yugoslavia).
 3. Cultural interactions across classes and religions led to cultural and social exchange (ideas, customs, technologies, intellectual & religious ideas).
 4. Increased travel and commerce
 5. Fourth Crusade diverted to Constantinople, sacked city and western church ruled it 1204-1261.
 6. Spiritual developments:
 - a. Theological focus on spiritual warfare in a physical way
 - b. Rise of religious knights such as the Knights Templar
 - c. Increased awareness of religious relics in Holy Land and narrative sense of Christ's humanity spurred Christian piety.
 - d. Increased international power of the pope (Gonzalez, 299)
 7. Muslim/Christian Relations:
 - a. Personal encounters of knights with Islamic people and their chivalric customs (Sultan Saladin) gave rise to chivalric customs among nobility of France and England.
 - b. Civilized/sophisticated Muslim societies had allowed Christians and Jews to live in their lands as protected people (*dhimmis*), paying a tax but allowed to worship freely and work

in Muslim society. Crusades gave rise to permanent Christian/Muslim distrust. Christian/Crusader mentality viewed as sole goal to destroy Islamic people and culture.

III. The Black Plague (1347-1660s):

A. Antecedent factors:

1. Dense population hit by weather changes and famine weakening them for epidemic.
2. Increased trade by ship after defeat of Moors led to increased contact between northern Europe and Mediterranean
3. Carried by fleas on black rats on ships from Mediterranean

B. Effects of the Black Plague:

1. 1/3 of European population died
2. Economic markets disappeared
3. Unemployment in areas not hit by plague leading to riots & political turmoils.
4. Increased religious superstition and fear – preoccupation with death in literature and art.
5. Anti-Jewish pogroms and blood libels – accused Jews of poisoning wells, practicing witchcraft (since less Jews seemed to get plague, possibly due to their dietary/sanitary laws and custom of keeping cats). Blood libel – said Jews mixed blood of Christian babies with their Passover seders.
6. Flagellants – traveling pilgrims who beat themselves in spiritual drama to appease God’s wrath (reenacting Christ’s crucifixion).
7. Focus on the afterlife, purgatory, and suffering for Christ in mystical literature – Catherine of Genoa, St. John of the Cross (*Dark Night of the Soul*).
8. Eventual positive effects: Reduced population had more land to cultivate, remaining workers earned more due to competition for workers, less workers weakened structure of feudalism (added to invention of more labor-saving devices).

Further Reading:

Armstrong, Karen. *Holy War*. New York: Anchor Books (Random House), 2001.

Brooke, Rosalind and Christopher. *Popular Religion in the Middle Ages*. London: Thames and Hudson Ltd., 1984.

Geary, Patrick, ed. *Readings in Medieval History*, 3rd edition, 407-442.

Gonzalez, Justo L. *The Story of Christianity*, vol. 1. New York: Harper-Collins Publishers, 1984, 1985, repr. 1999, 292-300; 324-329.

Nelson, Janet. "Society, Theodicy, and The Origins of Heresy: Towards a Reassessment of the Medieval Evidence" in Derek Baker, ed., *Schism, heresy and religious protest; papers read at the tenth summer meeting and the eleventh winter meeting of the Ecclesiastical History Society*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972, 65-77.

Spickard, Paul A. and Kevin M. Cragg. *A Global History of Christians*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic: 1994, repr. 2003, 146-149.

Van Voorst, Robert E., Compiler. *Readings in Christianity, Second Edition*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishers, 2001, 120-124.