**Sources of the Crusades**

**The following sources are primary documents on each of the four major Crusades taken by Europeans. Pay careful attention to the authors of each document, in order to get an appropriate idea of the perspective.**

**Pope Urban II (1088-1099): Speech at Council of Clermont, 1095**

*In 1094 or 1095, Alexios I Komnenos, the Byzantine emperor, sent to the pope, Urban II, and asked for aid from the west against the Seljuq Turks, who taken nearly all of Asia Minor from him. At the council of Clermont Urban addressed a great crowd and urged all to go to the aid of the Greeks and to recover Palestine from the rule of the Muslims. The acts of the council have not been preserved, but we have 5 accounts of the speech of Urban which were written by men who were present and heard him. Below are 2 versions and a letter by Urban.*

**The** **Gesta Version**

*Circa 1100-1101, an anonymous writer connected with Bohemund of Antioch wrote the* Gesta francorum et aliorum Hierosolymytanorum*; (The Deeds of the Franks) This text was used by the later writers as a source.*

When now that time was at hand which the Lord Jesus daily points out to His faithful, especially in the Gospel, saying, "If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me," a mighty agitation was carried on throughout all the region of Gaul. (Its tenor was) that if anyone desired to follow the Lord zealously, with a pure heart and mind, and wished faithfully to bear the cross after Him, he would no longer hesitate to take up the way to the Holy Sepulchre.

And so Urban, Pope of the Roman see, with his archbishops, bishops, abbots, and priests, set out as quickly as possible beyond the mountains and began to deliver sermons and to preach eloquently, saying: "Whoever wishes to save his soul should not hesitate humbly to take up the way of the Lord, and if he lacks sufficient money, divine mercy will give him enough." Then the apostolic lord continued, "Brethren, we ought to endure much suffering for the name of Christ - misery, poverty, nakedness, persecution, want, illness, hunger, thirst, and other (ills) of this kind, just as the Lord saith to His disciples: 'Ye must suffer much in My name,' and 'Be not ashamed to confess Me before the faces of men; verily I will give you mouth and wisdom,' and finally, 'Great is your reward in Heaven."' And when this speech had already begun to be noised abroad, little by little, through all the regions and countries of Gaul, the Franks, upon hearing such reports, forthwith caused crosses to be sewed on their right shoulders, saying that they followed with one accord the footsteps of Christ, by which they had been redeemed from the hand of hell.

**Source:** August. C. Krey, *The First Crusade: The Accounts of Eyewitnesses and Participants*, (Princeton: 1921), 28-30. See also Rosalind M. Hill, ed. and trans., *Gesta francorum et aliorum Hierosolymitanorum: The Deeds of the Franks* (London: 1962), [Latin text with English translation.]

**Version of** **Guibert de Nogent**

*Guibert, Abbot of Nogent, attended the Council of Clermont. His* Historia quae dicitur Gesta Dei per Francos *used both his own knowledge and other sources such as the* Gesta*.*

"If among the churches scattered about over the whole world some, because of persons or location, deserve reverence above others (for persons, I say, since greater privileges are accorded to apostolic sees; for places, indeed, since the same dignity which is accorded to persons is also shown to regal cities, such as Constantinople), we owe most to that church from which we received the grace of redemption and the source of all Christianity. If what the Lord saysnamely, 'Salvation is from the Jews,' accords with the truth, and it is true that the Lord has left us Sabaoth as seed, that we may not become like Sodom and Gomorrah, and our seed is Christ, in whom is the salvation and benediction of all peoples, then, indeed, the very land and city in which He dwelt and suffered is, by witnesses of the Scriptures, holy. If this land is spoken of in the sacred writings of the prophets as the inheritance and the holy temple of God before ever the Lord walked about in it, or was revealed, what sanctity, what reverence has it not acquired since God in His majesty was there clothed in the flesh, nourished, grew up, and in bodily form there walked about, or was carried about; and, to compress in fitting brevity all that might be told in a long series of words, since there the blood of the Son of God, more holy than heaven and earth, was poured forth, and His body, its quivering members dead, rested in the tomb. What veneration do we think it deserves? If, when the Lord had but just been crucified and the city was still held by the Jews, it was called holy by the evangelist when he says, 'Many bodies of the saints that had fallen asleep were raised; and coming forth out of the tombs after His resurrection, they entered into the holy city and appeared unto many,' and by the prophet Isaiah when be says, 'It shall be His glorious sepulchre,' then, surely, with this sanctity placed upon it by God the Sanctifier Himself, no evil that may befall it can destroy it, and in the same way glory is indivisibly fixed to His Sepulchre. Most beloved brethren, if you reverence the source of that holiness and I . you cherish these shrines which are the marks of His footprints on earth, if you seek (the way), God leading you, God fighting in your behalf, you should strive with your utmost efforts to cleanse the Holy City and the glory of the Sepulchre, now polluted by the concourse of the Gentiles, as much as is in their power.

"If in olden times the Maccabees attained to the highest praise of piety because they fought for the ceremonies and the Temple, it is also justly granted you, Christian soldiers, to defend their liberty of your country by armed endeavor. If you, likewise, consider that the abode of the holy apostles and any other saints should be striven for with such effort, why do you refuse to rescue the Cross, the Blood, the Tomb? Why do you refuse to visit them, to spend the price of your lives in rescuing them? You have thus far waged unjust wars, at one time and another; you have brandished mad weapons to your mutual destruction, for no other reason than covetousness and pride, as a result of which you have deserved eternal death and sure damnation. We now hold out to you wars which contain the glorious reward of martyrdom, which will retain that title of praise now and forever.

"Let us suppose, for the moment, that Christ was not dead and buried, and had never lived any length of time in Jerusalem. Surely, if all this were lacking, this fact alone ought still to arouse you to go to the aid of the land and city -- the fact that 'Out of Zion shall go forth the law and the word of Jehovah from Jerusalem!' If all that there is of Christian preaching has flowed from the fountain of Jerusalem, its streams, whithersoever spread out over the whole world, encircle the hearts of the Catholic multitude, that they may consider wisely what they owe such a well-watered fountain. If rivers return to the place whence they have issued only to flow forth again, according to the saying of Solomon, it ought to seem glorious to you to be able to apply a new cleansing to this place, whence it is certain that you received the cleansing of baptism and the witness of your faith.

"And you ought, furthermore, to consider with the utmost deliberation, if by your labors, God working through you, it should occur that the Mother of churches should flourish anew to the worship of Christianity, whether, perchance, He may not wish other regions of the East to be restored to the faith against the approaching time of the Antichrist. For it is clear that Antichrist is to do battle not with the Jews, not with the Gentiles; but, according to the etymology of his name, He will attack Christians. And if Antichrist finds there no Christians (just as at present when scarcely any dwell there), no one will be there to oppose him, or whom he may rightly overcome. According to Daniel and Jerome, the interpreter of Daniel, he is to fix his tents on the Mount of Olives; and it is certain, for the apostle teaches it, that he will sit at Jerusalem in the Temple of the Lord, as though he were God. And according to the same prophet, he will first kill three kings of Egypt, Africa, and Ethiopia, without doubt for their Christian faith: This, indeed, could not at all be done unless Christianity was established where now is paganism. If, therefore, you are zealous in the practice of holy battles, in order that, just as you have received the seed of knowledge of God from Jerusalem, you may in the same way restore the borrowed grace, so that through you the Catholic name may be advanced to oppose the perfidy of the Antichrist and the Antichristians then, who can not conjecture that God, who has exceeded the hope of all, will consume, in the abundance of your courage and through you as the spark, such a thicket of paganism as to include within His law Egypt, Africa, and Ethiopia, which have withdrawn from the communion of our belief? And the man of sin, the son of perdition, will find some to oppose him. Behold, the Gospel cries out, 'Jerusalem shall be trodden down by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.' 'Times of the Gentiles' can be understood in two ways: Either that they have ruled over the Christians at their pleasure, and have gladly frequented the sloughs of all baseness for the satisfaction of their lusts, and in all this have had no obstacle (for they who have everything according to their wish are said to have their time; there is that saying: 'My time is not yet come, but your time is always ready,' whence the lustful are wont to say 'you are having your time'). Or, again, 'the times of the Gentiles' are the fulness of time for those Gentiles who shall have entered secretly before Israel shall be saved. These times, most beloved brothers, will now, forsooth, be fulfilled, provided the might of the pagans be repulsed through You, with the cooperation of God. With the end of the world already near, even though the Gentiles fail to be converted t the Lord (since according to the apostle there must be a withdrawal from the faith), it is first necessary, according to their prophecy, that the Christian sway be renewed in those regions either through you, or others, whom it shall please God to send before the coming of Antichrist, so that the head of all evil, who is to occupy there the throne of the kingdom, shall find some support of the faith to fight against him.

"Consider, therefore, that the Almighty has provided you, perhaps, for this purpose, that through you He may restore Jerusalem from such debasement. Ponder, I beg you, how full of joy and delight our hearts will be when we shall see the Holy City restored with your little help, and the prophet's, nay divine, words fulfilled in our times. Let your memory be moved by what the Lord Himself says to the Church: 'I will bring thy seed from the East and gather thee from the West.' God has already brought our, seed from the East, since in a double way that region of the East has given the first beginnings of the Church to us. But from the West He will also gather it, provided He repairs the wrongs of 1 Jerusalem through those who have begun the witness of the final faith, that is the people of the West. With God's assistance, we think this can be done through you.

"If neither the words of the Scriptures arouse you, nor our admonitions penetrate your minds, at least let the great suffering of those who desired to go to the holy places stir you up. Think of those who made the pilgrimage across the sea! Even if they were more wealthy, consider what taxes, what violence they underwent, since they were forced to make payments and tributes almost every mile, to purchase release at every gate of the city, at the entrance of the churches and temples, at every side journey from place to place: also, if any accusation whatsoever were made against them, they were compelled to purchase their release; but if they refused to pay money, the prefects of the Gentiles, according to their custom, urged them fiercely with blows. What shall we say of those who took up the journey without anything more than trust in their barren poverty, since they seemed to have nothing except their bodies to lose? They not only demanded money of them, which is not an unendurable punishment, but also examined the callouses of their heels, cutting them open and folding the skin back, lest, perchance, they had sewed something there. Their unspeakable cruelty was carried on even to the point of giving them scammony to drink until they vomited, or even burst their bowels, because they thought the wretches had swallowed gold or silver; or, horrible to say, they cut their bowels open with a sword and, spreading out the folds of the intestines, with frightful mutilation disclosed whatever nature held there in secret. Remember, I pray, the thousands who have perished vile deaths, and strive for the holy places from which the beginnings of your faith have come. Before you engage in His battles, believe without question that Christ will be your standard-bearer and inseparable forerunner."

The most excellent man concluded his oration and by the power of the blessed Peter. absolved all who vowed to go and confirmed those acts with apostolic blessing. He instituted a sign well suited t so honorable a profession by making the figure of the Cross, the stigma of the Lord's Passion, the emblem of the soldiery, or rather, of what was to be the soldiery of God. This, made of any kind of cloth, he ordered to be sewed upon the shirts, cloaks, and *byrra* of those who were about to go. He commanded that if anyone, after receiving this emblem, or after taking openly this vow, should shrink from his good intent through base change of heart, or any affection for his parents, he should be regarded an outlaw forever, unless he repented and again undertook whatever of his pledge he had omitted. Furthermore, the Pope condemned with a fearful anathema all those who dared to molest the wives, children, and possessions of these who were going on this journey for God. . . .

**Source:** August. C. Krey, *The First Crusade: The Accounts of Eyewitnesses and Participants*, (Princeton: 1921), 36-40

**Urban II: Letter of Instruction to the Crusaders, December 1095**

Urban, bishop, servant of the servants of God, to all the faithful, both princes and subjects, waiting in Flanders; greeting, apostolic grace, and blessing.

Your brotherhood, we believe, has long since learned from many accounts that a barbaric fury has deplorably afflicted an laid waste the churches of God in the regions of the Orient. More than this, blasphemous to say, it has even grasped in intolerabe servitude its churches and the Holy City of Christ, glorified b His passion and resurrection. Grieving with pious concern at this calamity, we visited the regions of Gaul and devoted ourselves largely to urging the princes of the land and their subjects to free the churches of the East. We solemnly enjoined upon them at the council of Auvergne (the accomplishment of) such an undertaking, as a preparation for the remission of all their sins. And we have constituted our most beloved son, Adhemar, Bishop of Puy, leader of this expedition and undertaking in our stead, so that those who, perchance, may wish to undertake this journey should comply With his commands, as if they were our own, and submit fully to his loosings or bindings, as far as shall seem to belong to such an office. If, moreover, there are any of your people whom God has inspired to this vow, let them know that he (Adhemar) will set out with the aid of God on the day of the Assumption of the Blessed Mary, and that they can then attach themselves to his following.

**Source:** August. C. Krey, *The First Crusade: The Accounts of Eyewitnesses and Participants*, (Princeton: 1921), 42-43

**Account of the First Crusade: The Fall of Jerusalem**

*The following is an account of the capture of Jerusalem by the Franks during the First Crusade.*

At length, our leaders decided to beleaguer the city with siege machines, so that we might enter and worship the Saviour at the Holy Sepulchre. They constructed wooden towers and many other siege machines. Duke Godfrey made a wooden tower and other siege devices, and Count Raymond did the same, although it was necessary to bring wood from a considerable distance. However, when the Saracens saw our men engaged in this work, they greatly strengthened the fortifications of the city and increased the height of the turrets at night. On a certain Sabbath night, the leaders, after having decided which parts of the wall were weakest, dragged the tower and the machines to the eastern side of the city. Moreover, we set up the tower at earliest dawn and equipped and covered it on the first, second, and third days of the week. The Count of St. Gilles erected his tower on the plain to the south of the city.

While all this was going on, our water supply was so limited that no one could buy enough water for one *denarius* to satisfy or quench his thirst. Both day and night, on the fourth and fifth days of the week, we made a determined attack on the city from all sides. However, before we made this assault on the city, the bishops and priests persuaded all, by exhorting and preaching, to honor the Lord by marching around Jerusalem in a great procession, and to prepare for battle by prayer, fasting, and almsgiving. Early on the sixth day of the week we again attacked the city on all sides, but as the assault was unsuccessful, we were all astounded and fearful. However, when the hour approached on which our Lord Jesus Christ deigned to suffer on the Cross for us, our knights began to fight bravely in one of the towers - namely, the party with Duke Godfrey and his brother, Count Eustace. One of our knights, named Lethold, clambered up the wall of the city, and no sooner had he ascended than the defenders fled from the walls and through the city. Our men followed, killing and slaying even to the Temple of Solomon, where the slaughter was so great that our men waded in blood up to their ankles....

Count Raymond brought his army and his tower up near the wall from the south, but between the tower and the wall there was a very deep ditch. Then our men took counsel how they might fill it, and had it proclaimed by heralds that anyone who carried three stones to the ditch would receive one *denarius.* The work of filling it required three days and three nights, and when at length the ditch was filled, they moved the tower up to the wall, but the men defending this portion of the wall fought desperately with stones and fire. When the Count heard that the Franks were already in the city, he said to his men, "Why do you loiter? Lo, the Franks are even now within the city." The Emir who commanded the Tower of St. David surrendered to the Count and opened that gate at which the pilgrims had always been accustomed to pay tribute. But this time the pilgrims entered the city, pursuing and killing the Saracens up to the Temple of Solomon, where the enemy gathered in force. The battle raged throughout the day, so that the Temple was covered with their blood. When the pagans had been overcome, our men seized great numbers, both men and women, either killing them or keeping them captive, as they wished. On the roof of the Temple a great number of pagans of both sexes had assembled, and these were taken under the protection of Tancred and Gaston of *Beert.* Afterward, the army scattered throughout the city and took possession of the gold and silver, the horses and mules, and the houses filled with goods of all kinds.

Source: August. C. Krey, *The First Crusade: The Accounts of Eyewitnesses and Participants*, (Princeton: 1921), 256-57

**The Second Crusade: The Siege of Damascus**

*The most significant episode of the inconclusive Second Crusade, which was begun under the shodow of the loss of Edessa, was the short and ineffective siege of Damascus (1148). Ibn al-Qalanisi, a Muslim, was an eye-witness, and provides a nice account.*

At the beginning of 543/1148 news was brought from several sources of the arrival of a Frankish fleet on the Syrian coast. Troops disembarked on the ports of Tyre and Acre to link up with the Franks already there. These were estimated at 100,000 men, allowing for the depredations of war, plague and famine. After the new arrivals had completed the obligatory pilgrimage to Jerusalem and returned, some by land and some by sea, they assembled in the camps of the King of Germany, the leading Frankish noble there, and of other, lesser princes. They had not decided which of the Muslim cities to attack. In the end they decided to besiege Damascus, for in their evil hearts they deluded themselves that they could take it, since the town and country districts merge into one another. The amir of Damascus, Mu'in ad-Din Unur, received several warnings of the invasion and made preaparations to defend his realm and repulse the enemy. . . .They[the Franks] closed in on the city walls, coming up closer than any army in ancient or modern times had ever been. On this day the Malakite lawyer and scholar, the imam Yusuf al-Findalawi-may God have mercy on him!-fell in battle, a martyr to the Faith, by the river at ar-Rabwa. He was facing the enemy and refusing to withdraw, in obedience to the precepts of God Almighty in His noble Book. The devout 'Abd ar-Rahman al-Halhuli met the same fate.

The Franks set to work to cut down the trees and build fortifications with them, and to destroy the bridges. This occupies them for the whole of the night. The population of Damascus,after the experiences of the last hours, were disheartened and uncertain what to do. But at dawn on the Sunday the Muslim army made a sortie, attacked the Franks and defeated them, killing and wounding large numbers. . .

[The following] day a large detachment of archers arrived on foot from the Biqa, increasing the number of defenders and doubling their supply of arms. . .[The Franks] dared not take the initiative until they could see an opportunity to charge the Muslims, or an avenue of escape. Anyone bold enough to come within range of the Muslims was struck down by an arrow, stone, or lance. Men of the Damascus militia and from the surrounding regions lay in wait for the Franks along paths they thought safe and killed anyone who used them. The heads were taken to Damascus to be exchanged for a reward; in this way a large number of heads was collected.

News reached the Franks from many sources that the Muslims were bearing down on them to attack them and wipe them out, and they felt that their defeat was certain. They consulted among themselves, and decided that the only escape from the trap or abyss that loomed ahead of them was to take flight. At dawn on the following Wednesday they retreated in miserable confusion and disorder.

**Another account by Sibt Ibn Al-Jauzi**

. . . It was harvest time. The Franks went down into the valley and ate much of the crop, and this gave them dysentery. Many died of it, and all the others were ill. The people of Damascus were in great need, but gave alms of what they had, each in proportion to his possessions. The whole population, men , women and children, assembled in the Great Mosque. Uthman's Qur'an was displayed, and the people sprinkled their heads with ashes and wept tears of supplication. And God heard their prayers.

The Franks had with them a great Priest with a long beard, whose teachings they obeyed. On the tenth day of their siege of Damascus he mounted his ass, hung the cross round his neck. They had the Testaments and the crosses and the Holy Scriptures set before him and assembled the army in his presence; the only ones to remain behind were those guarding the tents. Then he said: 'The Messiah has promised me that today I shall wipe out this city.' At this moment the Muslims opened the city gates and in the name of Islam charges as one man into the face of death. Never, in pagan times or since the coming of Islam, was there a day like this. One of the men of the Damascus militia reached the Priest, struck his head from his body and killed his ass too. As the whole Muslim army bore down upon them the Franks turned and fled. The Muslims killed 10,000, smote their crosses and their cavalry with Greek fire, and pursued the army as far as the tents. Night separated them, and in the morning the Franks were gone and no trace of them remained.

Source: Arab Historians of the Crusades, trans. F. Gabrieli, trans. E. J. Costello. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1984.

**The Third Crusade: Battle of Hattin, 1187**

*Saladin gradually consolidated his position, gaining control of Egypt, Damascus, Aleppo and Mosul. He also made periodic invasions of the Latin kingdom of Jerusalem. Then, on 4 July 1187, he decisively defeated the Christian forces at the Horns of Hattin. The disastrous battle and its aftermath were bewailed by the author of the Itinerarium (a European).*

The opposing lines were drawn up at a place called Hattin, in the hills behind Tiberius on the Sea of Galilee. At the precise instant that the fighting began, Raymond III, count of Tripoli, left the spot, feigning flight. The story is that he did this by prearrangement, so that our troops should scatter, apparently stricken by terror at the desertion of the one who should have been their support, while the spirits of the enemy were raised. So the Lord ‘gave his people over also unto the sword’ [Psalm 78.63], embroiled in conflict, consigning his inheritance to slaughter and pillage, as the sins of mankind demanded. What more of there is to say?

To cut a long story short, so many were slain, so many wounded and so many were thrown into chains that our people, completely destroyed, were a pitiable sight even to the enemy. Worse still, the Cross of our salvation, that life-giving wood, was taken into the hands of the enemy and along with it fell its bearers, the bishop of Acre and preceptor of the Holy Sepulchre; one killed and the other captured.

When Guy of Lusignan, king of Jerusalem, saw the Cross fall, he was overcome by pity. He rushed forward and flung his arms around the Cross, hoping to snatch it back, if God so willed, or at least to die beside it. So the Holy Cross suffered yet another insult because of our wickedness. Not the Ark of the Lord, not Jewish kings led away captive can compare with this disaster of our time, when King Guy had as fellow prisoner the glorious Cross. Some of the captives—and their numbers were as amazing as they were pitiable—were kept unharmed to await the victor’s will. The rest were despatched to heaven in a swift and merciful death by the murderous sword.

Among others, Reynald of Châtillon, lord of Oultrejourdain, was brought before Sultan Saladin. The tyrant, driven by rage, or possibly out of respect for such a great man, struck off that proud and venerable head with his own hand. All the Templars, with the exception of their master, he ordered to be beheaded, determined to wipe them out completely, for he knew their reputation for superiority in battle.

Then what a passionate rivalry of faith and courage ensued! Many of the captives, claiming to be Templars, vied together in a rush towards the butchers. Gladly they offered their necks to swordsmen, under a holy pretence. Among these soldiers of Christ was a certain Templar called Nicholas. He was so successful in urging others to their death that, in the rush to get ahead, he himself only just managed to be the first to win the glorious martyrdom he so earnestly desired.

Evidence of the miraculous power of God’s mercy was not lacking: throughout the following three nights, while the bodies of the holy martyrs still lay unburied, rays of the divine light shone clearly above them.

When the noise of battle had ceased, and Saladin beheld the captives being dragged away and the dead strewn about, he raised his eyes to heaven and thanked God for the victory, as he always did when things went well for him. One of his most frequent remarks was that our wickedness, not his power, gave him this victory, and the turn of events bore him out. For our army, however small, generally prevailed, with God’s help. On this occasion, however, we were not with the Lord, nor he with us, and our troops were utterly worsted, even before the flight, although there were reckoned to be more than twenty thousand of them. In fact the might of the entire kingdom had gathered there by royal decree for that disastrous conflict. Only those who, by reason of age or sex, were exempt from bearing arms, remained in the protection of the castles or cities. This fateful battle was fought on 4 July 1187. In that short space of time, all the glory of the kingdom of Jerusalem was shattered and destroyed.

Source: Hallam, Elizabeth. Chronicles of the Crusades: Eye-Witness Accounts of the wars Between Christianity and Islam. London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1989. pp 156-157.

**The Third Crusade: Battle of Hittin, 1187**

*This account is given by Salah al-Din’s own secretary and chronicler of his military campaigns, Imad ad-Din al-Isfani.*

The sultan, Saladin, staye up that night of 2 July 1187 until he had positioned each company's detachments of front-rank archers and had filled their wooden and leather quivers with arrows. The number of arrows he distributed amounted to four hundred loads, not counting the supply carried by seventy dromedaries he brought on to the battlefield, from which anyone could take a supply of arrows.

As the day of 3 July dawned, our archers emerged, setting alight the people of hell-firewith a blaze of arrows. There was a creaking of bows and a plucking of strings on that day. And the army poured down on the Franks their scorching rays. As the heat flared up the forces of evil began to fade. A searing thirst descended: the air burned as passions turned to fear. Those dogs, panting, their lolling, plagued by a havoc of their own making, turned their minds to thoughts of water only to be met by the flames of hell and to be overcome by the fire of the midday sun.

That took place on Friday, the day of congregation in the mosques. Behind our army at no great distance was Lake Tiberias. The road to it had been barred from the Franks. Devastated by a thirst fed by fiery fuel, they stood patiently, steadfastly, obstinately; then struggling, rabid with greed, they drank what water their flasks contained. They lapped up whatever was held in the surrounding man-made wells, exhausting even the source of their tears as they teetered on the brink of calamity. Night came and the storm of battle subsided. They camped bewildered, drunk with thirst, yearning for the lake.

O God! What a night guarded by the angels, and what a dawn, its breezes a succession of God's mercies. The Sultan Saladin, trusting in God's victory, passed among the ranks, encouraging them and promising them the victory they expected from God, and urging them to jihad. They were strengthened by the sight of him, renewing their efforts, blocking the enemies attack and repelling them. The sultan had a slave named Mankurus, fighting at the very front. His horse, being headstrong, dashed off with him far away from his companions. As his friends were unable to keep up, he hound himself isolated among the Franks. His feet caught fast in this mire of death, he fought until they finally overwhelmed him. On capturing his head, they imagined they had taken one of the sultan's sons. As for him, he took his martyr's place by the All-merciful.

The Muslims, on witnessing his martyrdom and the cruel treatment he had received, felt their zeal well up, their hearts intent on God alone. The army appeared as though at full strength, and victory within reach. Victory occurred on that day, Saturday 4 July 1187. Tormented by thirst, the Franks succumbed to defeat, impotent to recover their fall. The breeze was in their direction, and beneath their feet was grass. Some of our holy warriors set fire to the grass. Its flame bore down on them, and its heat became intense. They, the people of the Trinity, were consumed by a worldly fire of three types, each invincible and obliterating: the fire of flames, the fire of thirst, and the fire of arrows. The Franks longed for release, and attempted a sortie, but in vain.

No matter how hard they fought they were repulsed; no matter how often they rallied, each time they were encircled. Not even an ant crawled out from among them, nor could they defend themselves against the onslaught. They retreated to Mount Hattin to escape the storm of destruction; but on Hattin itself they found themselves encompassed by fatal thunderbolts. Arrowheads, transfixed them; the peaks laid them low; bows pinned them down; fate tore at them; calamity chewed them up; and disaster tainted them.

Not since the Frankish occupation of the Syrian coast had the Muslims' thirst for victory been quenched to the extent it was on the day of Hattin, 4 July 1187. God—may he be honoured and glorified—have the upper hand to the Sultan Saladin and enabled hip to perform that in which kings had proved themselves deficient. By his grace, God guided him to obey His command and, by performing his duty, to atain the goal set before him; the road leading to his enemies' destruction and his followers' conquest God made straight for the sultan. He reserved for him the most illustrious of days, this most righteous of victories, tis happiest of joys and this most abundant of successes. Were no other merit his that that of this day, in majesty and valour Saladin would still stand out above all the kings of former times let alone those of this age. Yet this propitious attack was but a prelude to the conquest of Jerusalem, a tightening of the know on his way to an inescapable triumph.

Source: Hallam, Elizabeth. Chronicles of the Crusades: Eye-Witness Accounts of the wars Between Christianity and Islam. London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1989. pp 157-160

**The Fourth Crusade: The Sack of Constantinople**

*The following is a lament of the fall of Constantinople in 1204 by an eye-witness. Notice the comparison with the sack of Jerusalem by Salah al-Din fifteen years earlier.*

O Christ our Emperor, what tribulation and distress of men at that time! The roaring of the sea, the darkening and dimming of the sun, the turning of the moon into blood, the displacement of the stars—did they not foretell in this way the last evils? Indeed, we have seen the abomination of desolation stand in the holy place, rounding off meretricious and petty speeches and other things which were moving definitely, if not altogether, contrariwise to those things deemed by Christians as holy and ennobling the word of faith.

Such then, to make a long story short, were the outrageous crimes committed by the Western armies against the inheritance of Christ. Without showing any feelings of humanity whatsoever, they exacted from all their money and chattel, dwellings and clothing, leaving to them nothing of all their goods. Thus behaved the brazen neck, the haughty spirit, the high brow, the ever-shaved and youthful cheek, the bloodthirsty right hand, the wrathful nostril, the disdainful eye, the insatiable jaw, the hateful heart, the piercing and running speech practically dancing over the lips. More to blame were the learned and wise among men, they who were faithful to their oaths, who loved the truth and hated evil, who were both more pious and just and scrupulous in keeping the commandments of Christ than we "Greeks." Even more culpable were those who had raised the cross to their shoulders, who had time and again sworn by it and the sayings of the Lord to cross over Christian lands without bloodletting, neither turning aside to the right nor inclining to the left, and to take up arms against the Saracens and to stain red their swords in their blood; they who sacked Jerusalem, and had taken an oath not to marry or to have sexual intercourse with women as long as they carried the cross on their shoulders, and who were consecrated to God and commissioned to follow in his footsteps.

In truth, they were exposed as frauds. Seeking to avenge the Holy Sepulcher, they raged openly against Christ and sinned by overturning the Cross with the Cross they bore on their backs, not even shuddering to trample on it for the sake of a little gold and silver. By grasping pearls, they rejected Christ, the pearl of great price, scattering among the most accursed brutes the All-Hallowed One. The sons of Ishmael did not behave in this way, for when the Latins overpowered Sion the Latins showed no compassion or kindness to their race. Neither did the Ishmaelites neigh after Latin women, nor did they turn the cenotaph of Christ into a common burial place of the fallen, nor did they transform the entranceway of the life-bringing tomb into a passageway leading down into Hades, nor did they replace the Resurrection with the Fall. Rather they allowed everyone to depart in exchange for the payment of a few coins; they took only ransom money and left to the people all their possessions, even though these numbered more than the grains of sand. The enemies of Christ dealt magnanimously with the infidels, inflicting upon them neither sword, nor fire, nor hunger, nor persecution, nor nakedness, nor bruises, nor constraints. How differently, as we have briefly recounted, the Latins treated us who love Christ and are their fellow believers, guiltless of any wrong against them. . . .

O prolific City, once garbed in royal silk and purple and now filthy and squalid and heir to many evils, having the need of true children! O City, formerly enthroned on high, striding far and wide, magnificent in comeliness and more becoming in stature; now thy luxurious garments and elegant royal veils are rent and torn; thy flashing eye has grown dark, and thou art like unto an aged furnace women all covered with soot, and thy formerly glistening and delightful countenance is now furrowed by loose wrinkles.

Source: Niketas Choniates, trans. H. J. Magoulias, O City of Byzantium, Annals of Niketas Choniates. Detroit, Wayne State University Press, 1984. pp 316-317.