**A History of Christian/Muslim Conflict**

Starting in the century that followed the founding of Islam in 622 CE, interactions between followers of two of the world’s major religions, Christianity and Islam, inevitably grew more frequent. While early contacts were not always violent, relations between European Christians and Muslims grew more and more tense.

As you have previously learned, during the 7th and 8th centuries, the Islamic religion expanded rapidly from Arabia to Northern Africa and Southwest Asia. By the year 713 CE, Arab Muslims had conquered Spain in Western Europe. Islam was also expanding into Eastern Europe at this time, threatening the Byzantine Empire, which had been founded by the Roman Emperor Constantine in 330 CE. Muslim expansion into Europe was halted in 732 CE at the Battle of Tours in France.

By the 9th century, Europe had slowly begun to recover from the fall of the Roman Empire. The great Charlemagne unified parts of Western Europe in the year 800 CE, and the Byzantine Empire remained in Eastern Europe, preventing the further spread of Islam. However, military clashes between the Byzantines and Muslims continued over the following centuries.

Eventually, the tension between Christian Europe and the Islamic world erupted in a 200-year period of conflict known as the Crusades, during which Christians from all over Europe made their way to the Eastern Mediterranean in order to wage war against Muslims in hopes of recapturing holy sites special within their religion.

In the areas of present-day Syria and Israel there are numerous sites that are very sacred (special) to Christians, Muslims, and Jews. Of particular importance is the city of Jerusalem, a place of historical significance for Jews, the site of numerous sacred places of worship for Muslims, and, according to Christians, the site of Jesus’s death and resurrection. The goal of the Christian Crusaders from the time the First Crusade began in 1095 CE, the city was taken by the invaders in 1099 CE. It was eventually recaptured by Muslims in 1187 CE.

During the Crusades, people from Europe began to travel to the Holy Land as a pilgrimage (religious journey). All of the soldiers and pilgrims traveling to and from Europe and Southwest Asia was a primary cause of the expansion of trade between Europe and the rest of Afroeurasia, including the increase in importance of the Italian city-states, as you have previously learned about.

Adapted from: Bentley, Jerry H., and Herbert F. Ziegler. *Traditions & Encounters: A Global Perspective on the Past*. 3rd ed. New York: McGraw-Hill, 2006. Print.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

A. Arab Muslims conquer Spain

B. Islam is founded by the prophet Muhammad

C. Charlemagne unifies much of Western Europe

D. Christians conquer the city of Jerusalem

E. Battle of Tours – Muslim expansion into Western Europe is halted

F. Muslims recapture the city of Jerusalem

G. The Byzantine Empire founded by the Roman emperor Constantine

H. The First Crusade begins

Place the events (A through H) from “A History of Christian/Muslim Conflict” in chronological order on the timeline below. Write the letter of the statement, and the year in which the event took place, in the boxes provided. Refer to the reading as necessary.



[Link to a map of the first and third Crusades in World Book Student here.](http://worldbookonline.com/student/article?id=ar142340&st=crusades+map#tab=homepage)