

Saladin

A Reading A-Z Level T Leveled Book
Word Count: 1,157

LEVELED BOOK • T

Connections

Writing

Saladin said, "I have become as great as I am because I have won men's hearts by gentleness and kindness." Do you agree or disagree with Saladin's statement? Write an essay explaining your answer using specific examples from the book to support your opinion.

Social Studies

On a map, mark five important locations from the book. Write about their significance in relation to Saladin's life.

Saladin

 **Reading A-Z**

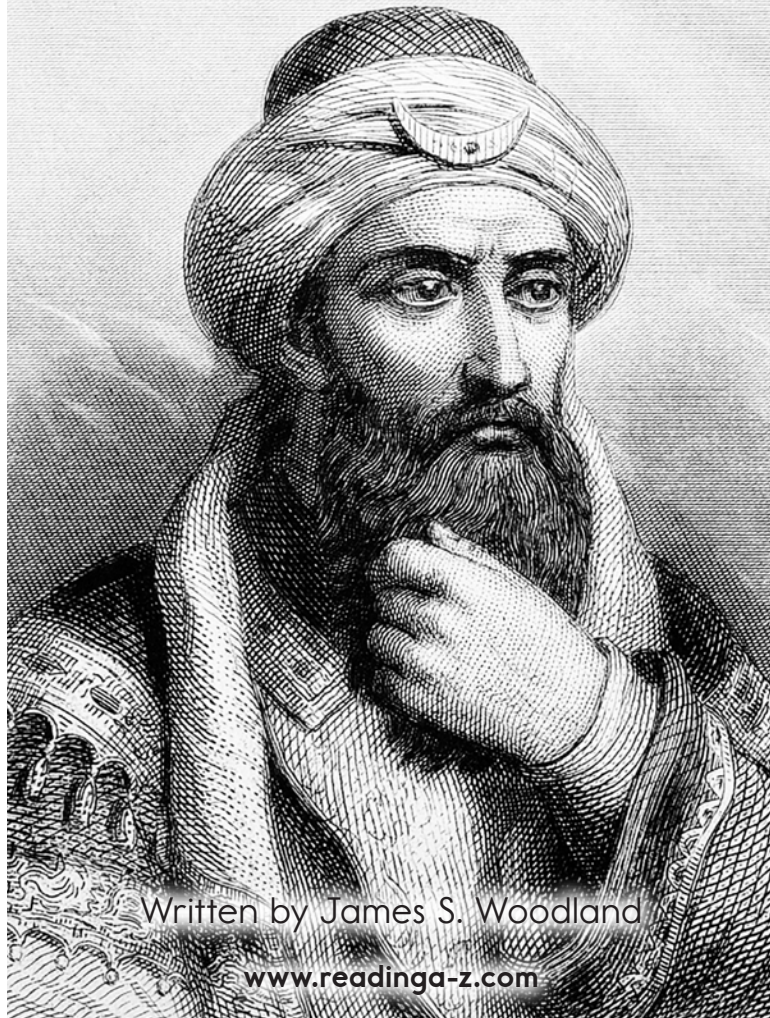
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Focus Question

What kind of leader was Saladin?

Words to Know

brilliant
empire
governor
holy
mercy

Muslim
sultan
treaties
truce

Front cover: Saladin on horseback with a raised sword during a battle

Title page: A portrait of Saladin

Page 3: Today, Middle Eastern countries include Turkey, Cyprus, Syria, Lebanon, Iraq, Iran, Israel, the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, Jordan, Egypt, Sudan, Libya, and the countries on the Arabian peninsula.

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Correlation

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Jerusalem is one of the world's oldest cities.

The Holy City of Jerusalem

Almost nine hundred years ago, a **Muslim** boy named Saladin lived in the Middle East. As a Muslim, he studied and practiced his faith daily. When he grew up, he became one of the most famous Muslim leaders in history.

Jerusalem, in the Middle East, is **holy** to three religions. The city has many special places that Christians, Muslims, and Jews visit. Jerusalem belonged to Muslims long ago. People of all three religions lived there.

In 1099, Western European Christians came to Jerusalem and took control. They promised safety to everyone in the city but instead killed many people. Saladin was born into this world. One day, he would take the city back.

Early Years

Saladin was born in 1137 or 1138 to a family in Tikrit, in modern-day Iraq, far from Jerusalem. He was the son of a wealthy chief. The family moved to northern Syria when Saladin was a baby. The area was part of the Turkish **Empire**. Saladin's father started working for the ruler, **Sultan** Zengi, when Saladin was six.

The family later moved to the city of Damascus. Saladin started school there at age seven. He learned about the religion of Islam. He also studied science, math, poetry, and the history of his people. He was more interested in learning than in being a soldier.

Saladin's Muslim name is Salah al-Din (Saladin), which means "he who honors the faith."



The Five Pillars of Islam

These are the duties of Islam, the religion of Muslims.

Faith	Declare one's faith: "There is no God but Allah, and Muhammad is his messenger."
Prayer	Pray facing Mecca five times a day: dawn, noon, afternoon, evening, and night.
Fasting	During the holy month of Ramadan, Muslims cannot eat or drink from dawn to dusk.
Almsgiving	It is the duty of Muslims to give a portion of their income to poor and needy people.
Pilgrimage	If possible, Muslims must make a pilgrimage to Mecca once in their lives.

Sultan Zengi died in 1146. His second son, Nur al-Din, took control of part of his father's kingdom. Saladin's father became **governor** of Damascus, and Saladin's uncle Shirkuh became a leader of the army. Saladin joined Nur al-Din's army at age fourteen. He became Nur al-Din's main helper a few years later. The new sultan was rich and powerful, but he led a simple life and ruled fairly. Saladin wanted to become the same kind of man.

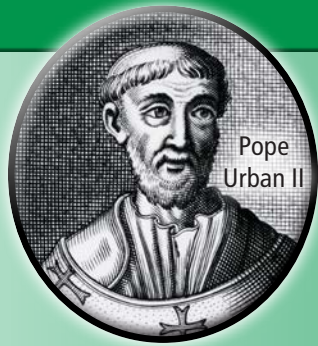
Becoming a Leader

Years later, when Saladin was in his late twenties, he traveled to Egypt several times with his uncle Shirkuh. The purpose was to keep Egypt from falling under Christian control. His uncle ended up becoming Egypt's ruler but died nine weeks later. Saladin, age thirty-one, became the new ruler in 1169. He was also in charge of Egypt's Syrian army.

Saladin announced that he planned to free Jerusalem from Christian control. He built many schools in Egypt, which drew educated people from Europe and Asia. Saladin could have lived in a huge palace. However, he lived in a small, simple house, and he gave away most of his riches. He gained followers because he was firm, gentle, and generous.

The Crusades

Crusades, or wars, were ordered by Popes who called for Christians to fight in the Middle East. Their purpose was to stop Muslim control and reclaim Jerusalem and other areas. Pope Urban II ordered the First Crusade in 1095.



Saladin ordered the Citadel of Saladin, in Cairo, Egypt, to be built between 1176 and 1184. It was built for protection from the Crusaders.

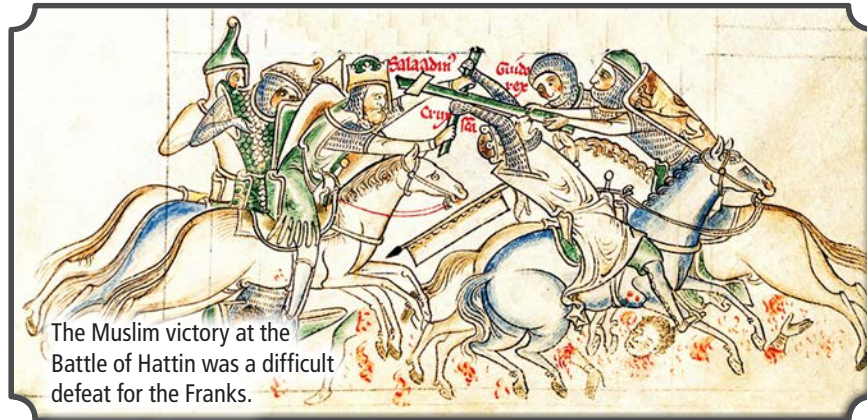
Nur al-Din died in 1174. Saladin believed he was the best choice to rule. He took an army into Syria and fought with Nur al-Din's brothers for nine years. During that time, he ordered his soldiers to treat their enemies with respect. Saladin's men never burned or stole from villages, and they never treated captured soldiers without **mercy**.

The fighting finally ended in 1185. The area between the Nile and Tigris Rivers was under Saladin's control.

Going to War

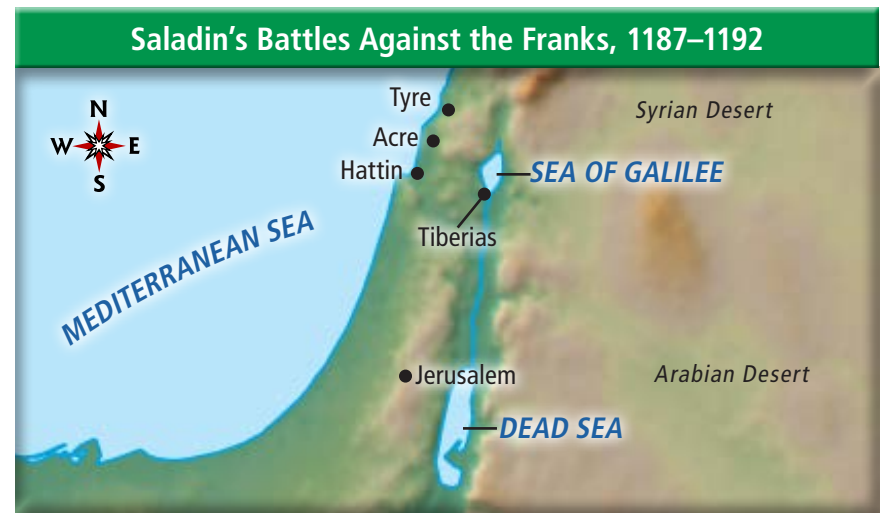
In 1187, Saladin started a war against the Christians to take back Jerusalem. In the years before, the Christians had been fighting among themselves over who should rule Jerusalem. Raynald, a man who did not like Muslims, gained power of trade routes, and Guy, a French knight, became king. Before then, Arab and Christian traders had passed through each other's lands peacefully. When Raynald took charge, he broke **treaties** with Saladin and attacked Muslim towns and traders. Saladin decided it was time to go to war.

In July 1187, Saladin's army trapped Guy's soldiers on two hills called the Horns of Hattin. Saladin's army beat the Christians badly.



King Guy was captured, but Saladin later let him go free. However, Saladin killed Raynald, who had destroyed the peace between Saladin and the Christians.

In September, Saladin's army surrounded Jerusalem and took the holy city two weeks later, on October 2, 1187. Unlike the Christian takeover of Jerusalem in 1099, Saladin did not kill thousands of people. No Christian holy places were destroyed, and even Christians reported that no one was treated badly. Afterward, Saladin still let Christians visit their holy places in the city. Saladin had finally reached his goal of returning Jerusalem to Muslim control.



Europe Fights Back

Europe was shocked to learn that the Muslims had taken Jerusalem. Leaders called for another war. King Richard I of England (Richard the Lionheart) was one of several European kings who raised armies. They wanted to take back the holy city. In the end, Richard led the armies.

Saladin tried without success to capture Tyre, the strongest Christian fortress that remained. He freed King Guy at about the same time. Guy and his supporters went to the city of Acre, which was under Muslim control. They surrounded it, and Crusaders from Europe arrived to help. For 638 days, Christians surrounded the Muslims at Acre, and Saladin's army surrounded the Christians.

In the spring of 1191, Christian leaders from Western Europe and their armies arrived. First came Philip Augustus of France, followed by Richard the Lionheart a few weeks later. Richard was a **brilliant** commander who forced the Muslims to give up Acre only a month after he got there.



In August of the same year, Richard marched Christian soldiers toward the coast and captured coastal cities. Again, Saladin couldn't stop them. Instead, he took his army to Jerusalem to strengthen it

against Christian soldiers. However, the Christians never attacked. Richard realized his army wasn't strong enough to take and hold the holy city.

On September 2, 1192, Saladin's brother and Richard agreed to a **truce**. Saladin let the Christians keep parts of the coast. The rest of the land, including Jerusalem, would be Muslim land. Christians would still be able to visit holy places. The battles were over. Saladin won lasting respect from the Christian world for his fair conduct.

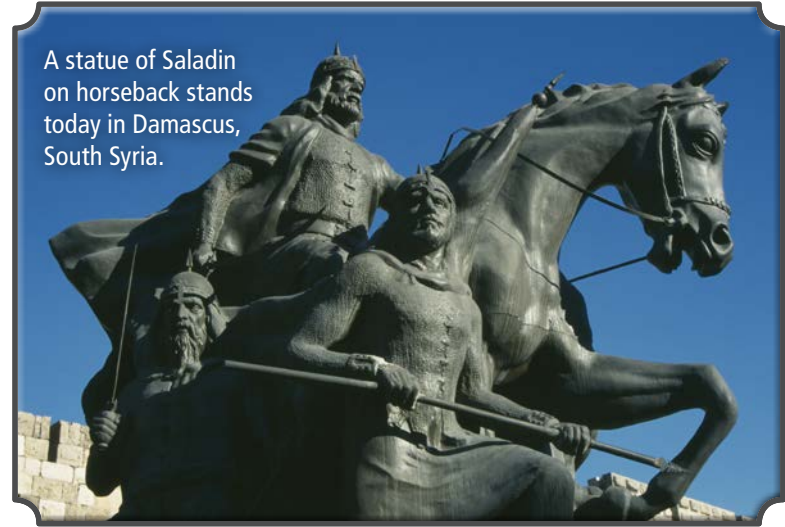
After the Truce

Saladin went home to Damascus after the truce was signed. He died only six months later, on March 4, 1193, at age fifty-five. Because he never cared much for money, he had given everything away. There was no money to bury his body. He was later buried in a building constructed by his son in Damascus. After Saladin's death, his family continued to rule over Egypt and nearby lands until 1250. At that point, another group gained power.



Saladin's tomb

The building that houses Saladin's tomb was built in 1193 and restored in 1898.



A statue of Saladin on horseback stands today in Damascus, South Syria.

Remembering Saladin

Saladin was a great leader who was kind to his enemies. After he took back Jerusalem from the Crusaders, he let Christians continue to visit the holy city. He also let the Christians keep some of the land they took.

The time in history when Saladin lived was known for fierce battles. Still, one of its most respected leaders is remembered for being fair. Just before Saladin died, he spoke with his oldest son. He said, "I have become as great as I am because I have won men's hearts by gentleness and kindness." Many people think Saladin set an example of a fair and good leader. He continues to set an example today.

The Life of Saladin



1137 or 1138: Born in Tikrit, Mesopotamia

1152–1169: Serves under Syrian ruler Nur al-Din

1169: Becomes ruler of Egypt and commander of Egypt's Syrian troops



October 2, 1187: Recaptures Jerusalem after two-week battle

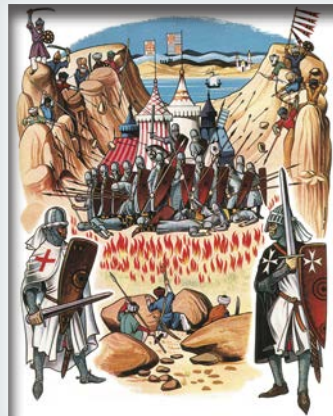
1189: Europe sends armies to fight Saladin

July 12, 1191: Battle in Acre ends

March 4, 1193: Saladin dies in Damascus

1174: Nur al-Din dies; Saladin starts effort to unite the Muslim states

1185: Succeeds in bringing the Muslim states together



July 4, 1187: Battle of Hattin

September 2, 1192: Truce between Saladin and Richard the Lionheart

Glossary

brilliant (<i>adj.</i>)	extremely intelligent or talented (p. 11)
empire (<i>n.</i>)	a collection of nations or people ruled by one government or person (p. 5)
governor (<i>n.</i>)	the political leader of an area or group, such as a colony or state (p. 6)
holy (<i>adj.</i>)	related to a god or religion; sacred (p. 4)
mercy (<i>n.</i>)	forgiveness or kind treatment of someone who deserves to be punished (p. 8)
Muslim (<i>adj.</i>)	of or relating to people who follow the religion of Islam (p. 4)
sultan (<i>n.</i>)	a ruler in a Muslim country, similar to a king or emperor (p. 5)
treaties (<i>n.</i>)	formal agreements of peace or friendship between two nations or groups (p. 9)
truce (<i>n.</i>)	an agreement not to fight (p. 12)