



October 12, 2021  
**Bishop Tindal Ministries**  
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**This is what happened TODAY in the  
HISTORY OF THE CHURCH**



# **Columbus Landed in America**

## **OCTOBER 12, 1492**

There are powerful lessons that we as Christians should be able to glean from this information about Columbus. Can you find them?

Tierra! Tierra! The men had been on the sea for over thirty days without sight of land. Now land was in plain view. All the despair and gloom immediately gave way to excitement and hope as the three little ships drew closer and closer to the shore on this day, October 12, 1492.

Probably every American school child old enough to study history has heard the little rhyme, "In October 1492, Columbus sailed the ocean blue", and the story has often been told of Columbus' dream of finding the East or Asia by sailing west. Columbus is often held up as an example of someone who set goals for himself and would not give up when obstacles to achieving those goals came his way -- he waited at the Spanish court six years before King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella agreed to sponsor his voyage. He persuaded his men to continue their westward voyage even when they threatened mutiny because they had not yet reached the expected islands of the Orient. Certainly Columbus is a model of determination and courage.

Yet, the man was much more complex than the stories often reveal.

Christopher was a very devout Catholic who observed all the fasts of the church and prayed regularly. His very name Christopher, which means

Christ-bearer, he understood as a title of his destiny to carry the message of the gospel to far-off lands. He diligently searched the Scriptures and thought he found assurance for a call to sail to the far reaches of the globe with the Christian message. Zechariah 9:10 said that "he shall speak peace unto the heathen; and his dominion shall be from sea even to sea, and from the river even to the ends of the earth. And Psalm 107:23-24 promised that "They that go down to the sea in ships, that do business in great waters; These see the works of the Lord, and his wonders in the deep."

Christopher was particularly concerned with the power of the Ottoman Turks who controlled the eastern Mediterranean and were threatening Europe. If a way could be found of reaching India by sailing West, the Turks could be attacked from behind and perhaps the Holy Land itself could be rescued from their hands. Yes, Columbus was interested in trade and riches, but Christian concern also lay behind his plans.

When land was sighted on this day October 12, 1492, in recognition of the divine aid in his voyage, Columbus named the land San Salvador, which means Holy Savior, and prayed,

*O Lord, Almighty and everlasting God, by Thy holy Word Thou hast created the heaven, and the earth, and the sea; blessed and glorified be Thy Name, and praised be Thy Majesty, which hath designed to use us, Thy humble servants, that Thy holy Names may be proclaimed in this second part of the earth.*

In keeping with the Christian motive underlying his mission, Columbus at first showed great concern for how the natives, whom he called Indians, were treated. He wrote,

*So that they might be well-disposed towards us, for I knew that they were a people to be delivered and converted to our holy faith rather by love than by force, I gave to some red caps and to others glass beads, which they hung around their neck, and many other things...I believe that they would easily be made Christians, for it seemed to me that they had no religion of their own.*

All the same, Columbus' concern for the salvation of these people was coupled with an attitude of superiority which saw nothing wrong in forcibly capturing the people and making them slaves of the Europeans. And the missionary drive, which was prominent during his first voyage, in later voyages became subordinate to his love of wealth and position.

Unfortunately, Columbus was not the last to lose sight of his spiritual goals when tempted with wealth and power.

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Last updated July 2007