

A detailed historical map of New England, showing parts of Maine, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, and Rhode Island. The map is aged and yellowed, with various place names and geographical features labeled. It serves as the background for the top section of the book cover.

DISCOVERING
GOD'S PLAN
FOR
AMERICA

BOOK ONE 1492-1787

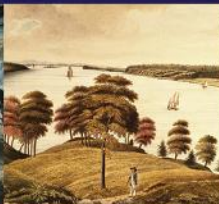
THE LIGHT & THE GLORY

for YOUNG READERS

AGES 9-12

PETER MARSHALL & DAVID MANUEL

WITH ANNA WILSON FISHEL



DISCOVERING
GOD'S PLAN
FOR AMERICA

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PETER MARSHALL
AND DAVID MANUEL

WITH ANNA WILSON FISHEL



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Peter Marshall and David Manuel with Anna Wilson Fishel

The Light and The Glory

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Reliving the Adventure

The ability to imagine is a wonderful gift from God; before television, it was how everyone relived the adventures of the real-life heroes of history. It can still be done, whenever you read a book.

In this book, you can stand on the deck of the *Santa Maria* alongside Christopher Columbus, sailing farther and farther westward, going boldly where no man had ever gone before.

A century (and a few pages) later, you can journey with the great explorer-missionaries who opened vast reaches of the Southwest and the wilderness north of the Great Lakes. With Father Jacques Marquette, you can paddle down the mighty river that divides this continent, the one Native Americans called the Mississippi.

You can join the Pilgrims as they start their little colony in Plymouth and celebrate the first Thanksgiving in the New World with the Wampanoag tribe.

From the colony of Georgia to the colony of Massachusetts, you can ride on horseback with George Whitefield,

the first evangelist to come to America. As he preaches, you can see whole towns become excited about living for God.

You can share the growing concern of the colonists as King George of England taxes them unfairly and punishes them if they object. And you can decide if you would have remained loyal to England or joined the Patriots in their struggle to keep the freedom that their ancestors had known for 150 years.

In July 1776, you can be present in Philadelphia for the great debate that resulted in America's Declaration of Independence.

On Brooklyn Heights, you can wait in the trenches with the other Patriots, surrounded and outnumbered by the British—and then see the extraordinary fog that came and stayed, enabling you and the entire American army to escape to Manhattan. Even the British acknowledged the importance of that fog, which many Americans called a miracle.

In the cold winter of 1777–78 in Valley Forge, you can discover General Washington, alone and kneeling in the snow, praying.

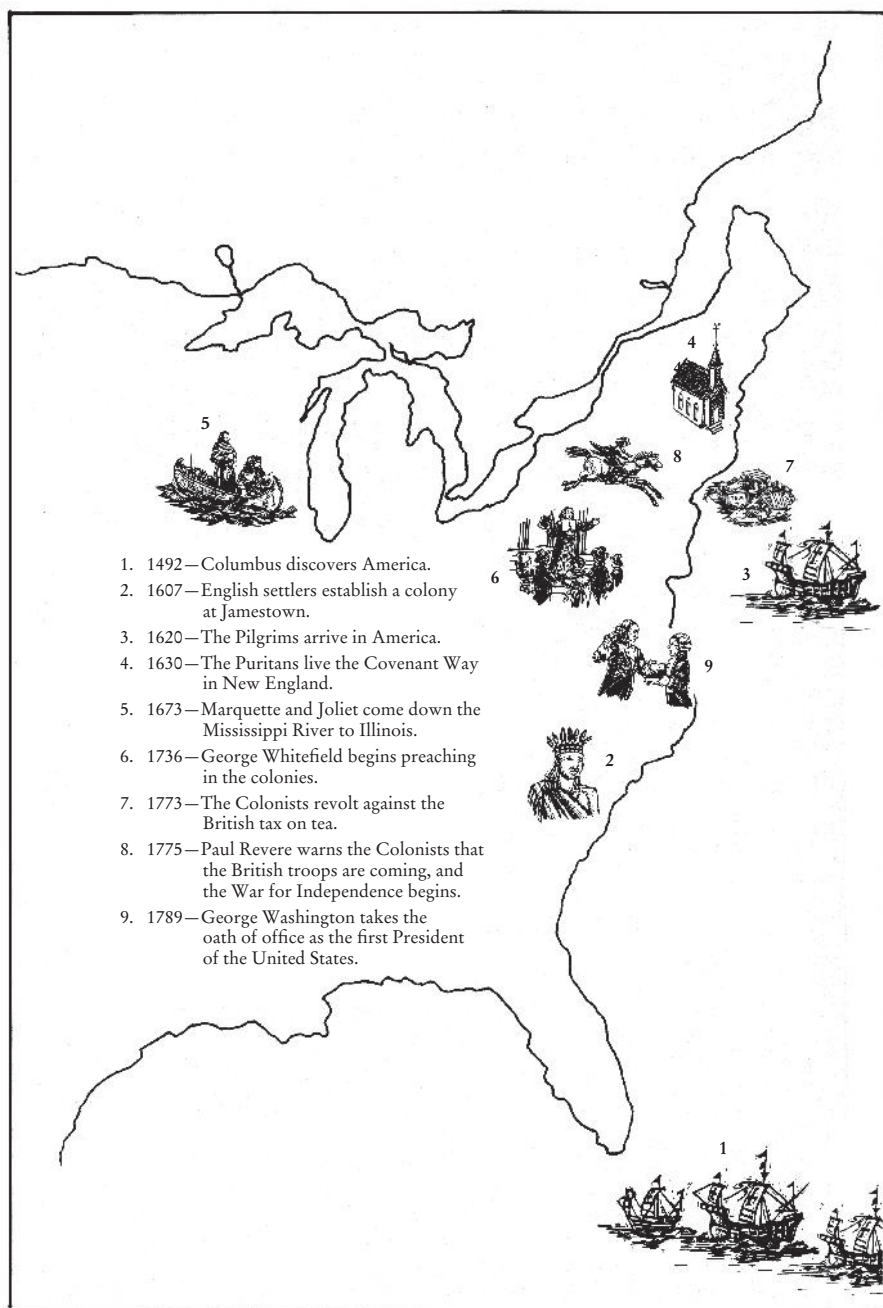
You can return to Philadelphia's Independence Hall in 1787, where once again the future of our country is at stake. Now the new States' delegates are trying to agree on the form our government will take. But there is much more arguing than agreeing, until Benjamin Franklin gets to his feet. He reminds them that when they were up against the mightiest military power on earth, the only thing that saved them was reliance on God.

In this revised and expanded edition of the book there are even more adventures awaiting you than there were in the first edition. Now you can also come to North Carolina with John White as he searches for the Lost Colony of Roanoke; you

can stand with the Patriots in Boston and watch the “Indians” throw the tea into Boston Harbor; you can listen with the other Virginia delegates to Patrick Henry’s powerful “Give me liberty or give me death” speech; you can ride with Caesar Rodney as he pushes through the thunder, lightning, and rain to cast the decisive vote that gave us the Declaration of Independence; and you can stand with Daniel Morgan’s Continental army on the banks of the Yadkin River and watch the rising water prevent Lord Cornwallis’s British army from pursuing and destroying them.

This book is full of heroes—real men and women who were not afraid to share their faith and let it guide them in all the things they did. It made the difference in their personal lives—just as it can in yours. Let their example inspire you to make sure our nation stays on course!

Peter Marshall
David Manuel





Christ-Bearer



*The Lord called Me from the womb.
From the body of My mother He named
Me. . . . I will make You a light of the
nations so that My salvation may reach
to the end of the earth.*

Isaiah 49:1, 6

In the year 1271, an Italian explorer named Marco Polo set out on a long and dangerous journey across land and sea. He traveled to countries far away to the East—India, China, and Japan. When he returned to Europe, Polo brought back samples of valuable goods such as spices, ivory, and silk.

The Europeans liked these things and wanted more of them. So they began to look for different trade routes to the Far Eastern countries, which they called the Indies, after the name India. But land travel from Europe to the Far East was

long and treacherous. The only known sea route at that time was around the continent of Africa.

Christopher Columbus believed he could sail to the Far East by going *west* across the Atlantic Ocean and around the world. He discovered the continents of North and South America. Many historians think that he was only looking for a better trade route to the Indies, and that his discovery of America was an accident. But was that all there was to it? Or was something else involved?

As you will see, God Almighty was using Columbus to work out His plan.

Christopher Columbus grew up in the seaport town of Genoa, Italy, where his father owned a wool shop. In 1484, he moved to Lisbon, Portugal, to work with his brother Bartolomeo, who made maps for shipowners. At that time, Lisbon was the seafaring capital of the world. Many ships came and went from its ports. The Portuguese were great explorers. They already knew the earth was round. If only they could find a better way to get to the Indies.

A God-given love of the sea took Christopher out on the ocean many times. He learned how to plot the course of a ship and how to locate its position. This is called navigation. He gathered the newest geographical information. He studied the latest maps, and he began to think about a voyage of his own.

Columbus kept a journal. In it he wrote that God Himself had given him the idea to sail west into the Atlantic Ocean. "It was the Lord who put into my mind the fact that it would be possible to sail from here to the Indies," he explained. "There is no question that the inspiration was from the Holy Spirit."

Columbus sensed God's leading. He could sail across the

Atlantic and discover another trade route. But he could do something more. He could take the Gospel message to distant lands. Columbus was going to be a missionary explorer and spread the Good News about Jesus.

The young sailor marked charts and plotted the course. Yes, it could be done. Now he had to find a country that would give him enough money to carry out the mission.

Columbus first presented his plan to the King of Portugal. He also sent his brother to talk to King Henry of England. Neither king liked the idea, and both turned him down. So Columbus approached the country of Spain.

Columbus waited over four years for King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella of Spain to give him an answer. They said no. It was 1490, and Spain was at war with the Moors. The country could not afford such an expedition. The King and Queen told Columbus to come back after the war.

That day Columbus left the court to return to La Rábida, the monastery where he often stayed. Columbus walked slowly down the road. He felt sad and lonely. Doubts filled his mind.

“Where did I go wrong?” he mumbled to himself. His eyes filled with tears. With a sigh, he placed his hands in the pockets of his pantaloons.

“Maybe I’ve been wrong from the start,” he mumbled. “Maybe this is not God’s vision after all. Maybe everyone is right—it’s not a good idea.”

The head of the La Rábida monastery was a wise old monk named Juan Pérez. He was a man of great spiritual wisdom. That night Columbus talked with Juan Pérez and another monk named Father Marchena. The monks listened carefully as Columbus poured out his disappointment at being turned

down by the King and Queen. They asked Columbus if he was still sure God was calling him to carry the message of Christ across the ocean. When he said yes, the three men prayed together and asked God to make it happen.

That night at La Rábida marked a turning point in the story of Columbus. Father Pérez was a friend of Queen Isabella. The next morning he wrote to her that he believed God's hand was upon Columbus. He asked her to consider the proposal again. And she did. She sent word for Columbus to meet her and King Ferdinand in the city of Santa Fé.

In Santa Fé, Spain was celebrating their defeat of the Moors. By the time Columbus reached the city, the Spanish monarchs were ready to accept his idea. They wanted a special way to thank God for giving them victory over the Moors. And Columbus's plan was a wonderful way to do it. He proposed to discover new lands for the glory of God and for Spain and to spread the Gospel to the ends of the earth. The King and Queen decided to send Columbus and to pay for the voyage.

Columbus had waited years for this moment! He stood straight and tall as the King spoke to him. But as he listened, his heart began to swell. He began to think about the riches and honor that would be his when he discovered these places.

"Your Majesty," Columbus began, "I must thank you for this honor and for your faith in me. But I must request something else."

"What is it?" King Ferdinand asked.

Pride filled the sailor's voice. He spoke boldly.

"When I discover these lands," Columbus said, "I want to be governor over them. I also want one-tenth of all the riches I find. And I want you to make me an admiral."

The King and Queen stared at Columbus.

“This is too much!” the King replied angrily. “You’re dismissed at once!”

Columbus had let his sinful nature take control by asking for power and riches instead of trusting God to take care of him. And he almost lost his golden opportunity, but God was watching over him. The royal treasurer, a friend of Columbus’s named Luis de Santangel, persuaded the King and Queen to accept the proposal. Spain would finance the expedition after all.

Eight months later, three small ships called caravels, the *Niña*, *Pinta*, and *Santa Maria*, set sail “in the name of Jesus.” It was August 3, 1492.

A tall, red-haired man stood on the deck of the *Santa Maria*. His clear, blue eyes looked out at the great ocean around him. His rugged, brown face showed a man who had spent many years of his life on the high seas. As the ship rolled with the waves, Columbus held the rail with steady hands. He shouted commands to the sailors and watched them obey.

Several months later, on October 9, 1492, Columbus’s ships had stopped sailing and were drifting side by side in a calm sea. Martin Pinzón and his brother, Vincent, were captains of the *Pinta* and the *Niña*. They had come to the *Santa Maria* for an emergency meeting with the commander, Columbus. As the Pinzón brothers climbed aboard the *Santa Maria*, tension filled the air.

Columbus welcomed the two captains into his private cabin. His smile disappeared when he saw their expressions. They did not look happy.

“Commander, things are not going well,” Martin Pinzón began. “Our men are tired. They are scared and grumbling.

We have not seen land for thirty-one days. You do not even know if there is land ahead.”

“We are too far away from Spain, sir,” Vincent continued. “And we don’t know what lies ahead. You must turn the ships around.”

Columbus sighed. Was there anything except water ahead of them?

Silently, Columbus walked over to the window of his cabin. He gazed out at the golden sun as it began to set below the sparkling sea in front of them. The Pinzóns wanted him to cancel the voyage. They were asking him to give up all his hopes and dreams. This voyage was his mission in life. How could he quit now? He had waited eight long years to set sail. He had been rejected and called a fool. If he turned back now, everyone in Europe would laugh at him. He would not get another chance.

The Pinzón brothers were waiting for his answer. Should he stop the mission and turn back? The commander turned to face his two captains.

“I know we’ve been sailing for a long time,” he began. “We’ve been heading due west from the Canary Islands for thirty-one days. I realize the men can’t take much more. I’ve heard their talk.” Columbus stopped and swallowed hard.

“All right,” he whispered. “We’ll turn back.”

With a heavy heart, Columbus glanced out the porthole again.

“But before we do, I want three more days on this course—just three days. You can tell the men,” he continued, “that if we don’t sight land on October 12, we will head home.”

The Pinzón brothers agreed and returned to their ships. The ships resumed sailing, but Columbus remained alone in his

cabin. He could hear the groaning masts of the *Santa Maria*. He could feel her steady movement through the smooth waters. How he loved the ocean! How he had dreamed about this voyage. But that did not seem to matter anymore. It was all over now. Columbus slumped down at his desk and began to scribble on paper. He wrote his name, Christopher . . . *Christo-ferens*. In Latin his name meant “Christ-bearer.”

What would happen over the next three days? To turn back meant defeat. Columbus felt defeated. Yet God was still God, and He always answered prayers. Humbly, the commander knelt in his cabin and prayed for God’s help.

Over the next several days, amazing things happened. First, the three ships began to speed through the water. In fact, strong winds blew them along so quickly that the sailors grew frightened because they were sailing even farther from home! Then on the second day, sailors on the *Pinta* saw a reed and a small piece of carved wood floating in the water. These were definite signs of land. Everyone grew excited.

At ten o’clock that night, Columbus and one of his sailors thought they spotted a tiny light far in the distance. Columbus took this as encouragement from the Lord. The ships pressed on.

Then at two o’clock in the morning, the lookout aboard the *Pinta* sighted a low, white cliff shining in the moonlight. “Land! Land!” he cried.

The *Pinta* fired its cannon to signal the others. With just four hours left until the dawn of the third day, they had discovered land! It was October 12, 1492.

Immediately, the three caravels turned south to avoid hitting the reefs near shore. They sailed until daybreak. As the sun rose, they reached the southern tip of the island. The

coastline began to glow in the morning sun. The sailors stood on the decks of their ships and silently gazed across the clear, blue water to the shore. They knew this day was important. They had discovered an unknown land three thousand miles from home. It was a day no one would forget.

At noon, the landing party rowed ashore. Every officer had dressed in his best uniform. Columbus carried the Spanish flag. As the men waded toward shore, they addressed Columbus by his new title: “Admiral of the Ocean Sea.” Their eyes filled with tears when they reached the beach. The sailors knelt in the sand and bowed their heads. The admiral prayed. He named the island *San Salvador*, which means “Holy Savior.” He and his men erected a huge cross on the beach in honor of the Savior. And then he thanked God for using them to proclaim His Holy Name in this part of the earth.

Short, dark-skinned people welcomed the explorers to San Salvador. These people believed the Spaniards were friendly white gods who had come down from heaven in canoes pulled by white clouds. They had never seen white men or sailing ships. Columbus called the natives “Indians” because he thought he had landed on an island in the Indies.

The Spaniards offered the Indians gifts of red hats and glass beads. Columbus wanted to treat them kindly, and he wanted to tell them about Jesus.

Since the natives did not speak Spanish, they used a type of sign language with the sailors. Columbus questioned them about the tiny gold ornaments worn around their necks. The Indians told him about the gold located south of San Salvador. The Spaniards got excited and decided to sail southwest in search of gold.

The three caravels set sail, stopping at many islands and putting up crosses in honor of the Lord Jesus. However, they did not find gold. When the *Pinta* turned off toward the island of Babeque, the *Niña* and the *Santa Maria* tried to follow. But bad weather forced the two vessels to another island. They named this one *Española*. And here, Columbus experienced a sea captain's nightmare.

It was shortly after midnight on Christmas morning. The *Santa Maria* was floating calmly in a cove off the island. Everyone was asleep except a young ship's boy, who was guarding the ship's tiller. The boy did not notice the waves gently moving the ship toward shore. Suddenly the rudder under the ship became stuck. The boy cried out. Admiral Columbus ran topside to see what had happened. The *Santa Maria* had struck a reef! Disaster!

"Launch the longboat and carry the anchor astern!" Columbus yelled. "Maybe we can haul the ship off the reef before the tide goes out!"

The men hurried, but it was too late. The *Santa Maria* was stuck fast. As the tide went out, sharp rocks cut into the bottom of the ship. Water poured into her hull. The damaged vessel leaned over in the water. She would never sail again.

But at least the friendly natives from the island helped the seamen unload the ship's cargo. And on *Española* the Spaniards finally found the gold they had been searching for. Here the admiral also set up the first European settlement in the New World. He called it *La Navidad*, which means "the Nativity." Thirty-nine men volunteered to remain on *Española* as the first settlers.

Columbus boarded the *Niña*. It was time to return to Spain. The little caravel began to weave its way back through the

islands. Three days out, she met the *Pinta*. The two ships sailed home together in the calm seas and sunny skies.

A steady wind pushed them through the waters of the Atlantic. For much of the voyage, the men thanked God for the good weather.

But then everything changed.

On the night of February 12, 1493, the *Niña* and the *Pinta* sailed into a huge storm. Great waves crashed down on the decks, tossing the ships to and fro. The winds howled. Heavy rains pounded the men as they labored against the waves. On the first night, the two little ships lost sight of each other.

Why? Columbus agonized as he prayed in his cabin. Why is this happening, Lord? Do You want us to sink? Don't You want us to return to Spain with the good news about our discovery?



If Gold Is Your Almighty



*If you return to the Almighty, you will
be restored.*

Job 22:23

Christopher Columbus had sailed across the Atlantic Ocean and discovered a great, unknown land. God had given him a vision, and he had carried it out. But just as he was almost back to Spain, he had to battle this terrible storm. Columbus knew God must have a reason. But what was it?

The answer lay deep within Columbus's heart. God saw that the sailor was becoming very proud. Columbus deserved to be called admiral. He had discovered a new land and a new people. Soon the admiral would become rich and famous. God was concerned that he would let those things take priority in his life. He was concerned that Columbus would forget his true mission. God wanted Columbus to return to Spain in obedience and humility to Him. Such a bad storm should

have warned Columbus to search his own heart and seek forgiveness.

Would Columbus hear God's message? Would he return to Spain relying on the Almighty? Or would riches and power become his gods?

The storm raged on for nearly a week. When at last it came to an end, Columbus and the sailors sighed with relief.

And then, toward evening, a blessed sight appeared. Far away on the northeast horizon lay the Azores, a group of tiny islands off the coast of Portugal. The explorers had made it home. The date was Tuesday, February 19, 1493. Columbus and his men stopped at the islands to rest.

When the *Niña* set out again, she ran into another monster storm. The little ship once again battled fierce winds and rain. This time her sails blew away. For five days the storm pushed the ship through the water. Then on the sixth day, the crew spotted land. It was the coast of Portugal.

But now the winds were blowing the ship straight toward the rocky coast. If the ship hit the rocks they would all drown. Admiral Columbus knew they had only one slim chance. If he could steer the vessel into the nearby River of Lisbon, they would be safe. But to do this he had to turn the ship broadside into the wind. That was terribly dangerous, because the wind could blow her over. God would have to help them.

The admiral wiped the rain from his eyes. Could he do it?

"Lean her to starboard!" Columbus yelled to the helmsman. "Keep her to the right. Yes, that's it. Now hold her there—steady, steady as she goes."

The *Niña* slowly turned toward the coast. But the wind and waves kept pushing her closer and closer to the rocks.

“Hold her now,” Columbus shouted. “Don’t let go! We have to make it to the river.”

The ship keeled over so far that water came rushing over the starboard side.

“She’s tipping over!” the helmsman yelled.

“We’re going to drown!” another sailor screamed.

The nervous admiral held his breath. For a moment she held steady, and then, slowly but surely, the *Niña* began to straighten up as the storm howled around them. Just then a large wave pushed her directly into the mouth of the Lisbon River!

It was a miracle. They had made it. The sailors clapped and danced with joy. Columbus sighed with relief—God had been with them.

The storm continued for a few days and kept them from sailing home right away, but on March 15, 1493, Columbus and his sailors finally entered the harbor of Palos, Spain. Good news awaited them. The *Pinta* had been blown to the coast of Africa, but she was now on her way home! It was time for a great celebration.

Columbus traveled to Barcelona, the winter home of King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella. The city was prepared for him. Colorful flags decorated the streets. Spanish capes hung on the sides of the buildings. Women threw rose petals from the balcony windows. People crowded the streets.

Columbus led the small procession on horseback. His officers, some cargo wagons, and two Indian interpreters who had come home with him followed along behind. The admiral sat tall and erect in his saddle. One hand held the reins. The other rested proudly on his hip. As the parade reached the palace, the crowd cheered. Columbus waved.

That evening, Columbus and his group entered the grand

throne room, where marble columns glowed in the light of hundreds of candles. As Columbus approached the throne, the monarchs stood to greet him. The crowd was amazed — no one had ever seen them do that before.

Columbus knelt to kiss their hands, but they made him stand. And then they ordered a special chair to be brought for him. King Ferdinand began, “We are most anxious to hear about your voyage, Commander.”

The court listened as Columbus related his story. He told about the long journey across the Atlantic. He described San Salvador and the kind natives. He told them about Española and losing the *Santa Maria*. He introduced them to the Indians he had brought back with him. They were wearing their native clothes and carrying strange creatures that the King and Queen had never seen before — large jungle rats, brightly colored parrots, and dogs that could not bark.

Columbus next had a large oaken chest brought in and placed before Ferdinand and Isabella.

“Your Majesties,” he announced, “it is with great pleasure that I present this to you and to Spain.” And then Columbus threw open the lid.

Everyone’s eyes opened wide. The chest was filled with gold! There were masks and crowns of pure gold, and bright gold jewelry shone in the candlelight. The chest even held gold nuggets. Anyone who had doubted Columbus before did not doubt him now. He had made a great discovery — the Indies had gold!

King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella stared at the contents of the oak chest. They both stood and then fell to their knees, lifting their faces toward heaven. In the throne room of Spain that night, everyone gave thanks to Almighty God.

Columbus was a hero. He had kept his promise to Spain by discovering a new land, a new people, and great riches. Now Spain would keep her promise to him. The king and queen officially titled Columbus “Admiral of the Ocean Sea.” They pronounced him governor of the new land. And they gave him permission to receive one-tenth of all the riches.

Columbus had kept his promise to God, but something was changing deep within his heart. In appreciation for what he did, Spain gave the admiral 335,000 maravedis. This was a lot of money, but it was not enough for Columbus. He wanted more. He demanded the 10,000 maravedis that was to be paid every year to the first person that had sighted land on the voyage. The lookout aboard the *Pinta* had been the one that spotted land first, but Columbus stepped in and took the prize. The admiral was letting gold become his god.

The first voyage to the New World had been a success. On the second voyage across the Atlantic in 1493, seventeen ships and twelve hundred men accompanied Columbus. They dreamed of gold and adventure, but their dreams soon turned to nightmares.

When the ships arrived at the settlement of La Navidad, none of the settlers were there. The natives had killed all thirty-nine men! Columbus quickly found out what happened.

Soon after the *Niña* had sailed for Spain the year before, the settlers had started hurting the native women and stealing the Indians’ gold. The natives could not stop them. At last, the angry Indians ambushed the men, killing every one of them.

As governor of Española, Columbus now had some big problems. His men hated the natives for what they had done

to the Spanish settlers. Also, they didn't trust Columbus anymore. They no longer believed his stories of gentle natives and abundant gold. Columbus was losing his authority over them because he had lost their respect. How could he control them now?

The governor knew he had to do something, and he had to do it fast. But he did not think to get on his knees and pray. He did not think to ask his Heavenly Father to forgive him for his greed and selfishness. He tried to work things out by himself.

Gold, he thought to himself. I'll start exploring for gold. That will make the men forget what has happened here.

So Columbus had the men search Española for gold. But everything went wrong. The heat spoiled their food. Disease-bearing mosquitoes plagued them, and many of the men became sick with terrible fevers. And no one found any gold.

Columbus *had* to come up with some gold, so he made the Indians pay a tax in gold. If they could not pay, the Spaniards punished them and treated them like slaves. Just fourteen years later, out of the original population of 300,000, there would only be 20,000 natives left. A massacre was taking place.

The governor decided to return home. He was worried about facing the King and Queen and telling them what was happening to the natives. Sure enough, when he arrived in Spain, he learned that the monarchs were very concerned about the Indians.

"Governor Columbus," King Ferdinand began, "you must understand. We are responsible to God for the welfare of our people. And now these natives are also our people. This terrible treatment cannot continue. You must govern the Indians as we would govern them."

Columbus sighed. He knew the King was right.

The King continued, “We must also talk about the gold. It’s true that we want you to find gold, because it would help our country. But we don’t want such riches at the expense of the Indians! Now see to it that our desires are carried out!”

The King and Queen knew they had to be firm with Columbus. He was a good explorer, but he was not proving to be a very good governor. He was proud and demanding. He spoke harshly and got mad easily. The people in the islands did not respect him. And he refused to take responsibility for what was happening. Yet, the monarchs let him return to the New World as soon as a small fleet of ships was ready.

After a long and terrible journey, the Spanish ships reached Española. Columbus discovered that rebellion had broken out among the men he had left on his earlier voyage. The settlers no longer wanted him to be governor, and he could not control the situation. Alarming reports went back to the King and Queen.

The Spanish monarchs had no choice but to replace Columbus as governor. They dispatched Francisco de Bobadilla, who carried a letter giving him authority to act as governor. When the new governor’s caravel arrived in Española, he discovered seven Spanish bodies dangling on ropes. Then he learned that five more were to be hanged the next morning. Immediately, Bobadilla installed himself as governor. But Columbus refused to honor the proclamation from the King and Queen.

“I am governor of these islands,” he informed Bobadilla. “This is my land. I discovered it. The King and Queen have no right to take away my authority!”

“Put this man in chains!” Bobadilla ordered. “I am sending him back to Spain for trial.”

Columbus remained in chains until he reported to the King and Queen in December of 1500. They were shocked and ordered the chains removed. But they did not appoint him governor again. Columbus begged them to send him back to the New World. A year later, they permitted him to go, but only to explore for gold.

Once again, Columbus was looking for gold. It had become the most important thing in his life. In Columbus's heart, God now held second place.

Despite the King and Queen's command that he not sail to Española, Columbus sailed directly for the island. The governor refused to let him enter, so he sailed to Cuba. Then he sailed southeast toward Central America. The trip usually took three or four days, but strong headwinds stretched the trip into thirty-eight days! God Himself seemed to be blocking the voyage. Yet Columbus never considered that he might not be doing God's will.

The four caravels proceeded down the coast of what are now Honduras, Nicaragua, and Costa Rica in Central America. At last, in Costa Rica, Columbus struck gold. He discovered gold fields in which ore lay on top of the ground. His men could dig for gold with their bare hands!

Columbus decided to build a settlement near the gold fields. But once again he encountered trouble with the natives. Upon learning that the Indians were planning a raid, he attacked first. He took many hostages, including the Indians' chief.

Not long after this, Columbus had a frightening experience. It happened one day when some of his crew sailed up a river to get water and supplies. The admiral remained behind with the other ships at the river's mouth. That afternoon, he heard shouting upriver, followed by shooting. Then everything

became strangely quiet. By nightfall, Columbus saw dead bodies floating down the river. They were the bodies of his crewmen.

Alone and frightened, the admiral did not know what to do. He climbed up the highest mast on the ship and frantically yelled, "Help me! Someone please help me!"

Columbus later fell asleep in his cabin. While he was sleeping, a Voice spoke to him!

"O foolish man," the Voice said. "How slow you are to serve your God! He was watching over you since you were born. He gave you the Indies and the keys to the Ocean Sea. You have gained fame among all Christians. Turn back to Him. Admit your mistakes. His mercy is infinite."

The Voice was kind and gentle. Columbus knew it was God, and that He spoke the truth. When he awoke, he cried. But sadly, Columbus did not ask God's forgiveness. He continued searching for gold. It seemed gold was all that mattered to him.

Finally, Columbus returned to Spain. He was now fifty-three years old and in bad health. On Ascension Day 1506, Columbus received the last rites of the Roman Catholic Church. Then he went to be forever with the Savior whose name he carried.

Christopher Columbus had allowed gold to steal his heart. But God still used him to open the door for the Gospel to enter the New World. God's plan for America was going forward. Now this new land needed to hear the message of Christ. It was time for God to send others.