

## Christopher Columbus (1451-1506)



Columbus landing near “San Salvador”

### Key Designation:

- ◆ Father of the New World
- ◆ “The Captain of the Ocean Seas” (official title)

### Key Background Information:

- ◆ Born in Genoa, Italy as Christobal Columbo
- ◆ A robust faith in God and the Bible led him to become a loyal Roman Catholic and a lay student of the Scriptures.
- ◆ Felt his name “Christopher” meant he was to be a “Bearer of Light”
- ◆ Rejected by Portugal, eventually Queen Isabella of Spain sponsored his expedition at the urging of a Franciscan friar.
- ◆ Kept an extensive journal replete with Scriptural references

### Key Events:

- ◆ April 30, 1492, Columbus set sail with the Nina, the Pinta, and the Santa Maria
- ◆ August 3, 1492. Columbus plants the Spanish flag, and consecrated the spot in honor of his Lord Jesus Christ, naming it “San Salvador,” (The Savior).

### Key Ideas

- ◆ God ordained him to discover the new world: “God made me the messenger of the new heaven and the new earth of which he spoke in the Apocalypse of St. John, after having spoken of it through the mouth of Isaiah, and he showed me the spot where to find it.”

- ◆ He made it clear that his success was due “to the holy Christian faith and to the piety and religion of our Sovereign.”
- ◆ Strongly supported the Inquisition of Cardinal Xemines in Spain which opposed all non-conformists to the Roman Catholic faith, including Jews and Muslims.
- ◆ The Protestant Reformation had yet to occur during his voyages.
- ◆ Saw the new world as an opportunity for a new spiritual crusade: “Let Christ rejoice on earth as he rejoices in heaven in the prospect of the salvation of the souls of so many nations hitherto lost.”
- ◆ Brought the first expression of the Christian faith to the new world through the Roman Catholic priests that flooded over with him

**Key Work:**

- ◆ The Journals of Christopher Columbus

**Conclusions**

Columbus was a very sincere Catholic and perhaps the bravest man who ever lived. He ventured to do something more incredible than astronauts. At least astronauts could point up to the moon, “we’re going up there and coming back down.” Columbus could not see where he was headed. He staked his entire life and that of his crew on the Renaissance science of the day that said you could arrive East by heading West because the earth is round! However, it was his intense faith and Biblical devotions that made him feel chosen by God to prove the scientific postulate, as well as bring Christian witness to its inhabitants.