

Columbus Quote #6

Once again, it's time to celebrate Columbus Day. Yet, the stunning truth is: If Christopher Columbus were alive today, he would be put on trial for crimes against humanity. Columbus' reign of terror, as documented by noted historians, was so bloody, his legacy so unspeakably cruel, that Columbus makes a modern villain like Saddam Hussein look like a pale codfish.

Question: Why do we honor a man who, if he were alive today, would almost certainly be sitting on Death Row awaiting execution?

If you'd like to know the true story about Christopher Columbus, please read on. But I warn you, it's not for the faint of heart.

Columbus Day, as we know it in the United States, was invented by the Knights of Columbus, a Catholic fraternal service organization. Back in the 1930s, they were looking for a Catholic hero as a role-model their kids could look up to. In 1934, as a result of lobbying by the Knights of Columbus, Congress and President Franklin Roosevelt signed Columbus Day into law as a federal holiday to honor this courageous explorer. Or so we thought.

Columbus wasn't a hero. When he set foot on that sandy beach in the Bahamas on October 12, 1492, Columbus discovered that the islands were inhabited by friendly, peaceful people called the Lucayans, Tainos and Arawaks. Writing in his diary, Columbus said they were a handsome, smart and kind people. He noted that the gentle Arawaks were remarkable for their hospitality. "They offered to share with anyone and when you ask for something, they never say no," he said. The Arawaks had no weapons; their society had neither criminals, prisons nor prisoners. They were so kind-hearted that Columbus noted in his diary that on the day the Santa Maria was shipwrecked, the Arawaks labored for hours to save his crew and cargo. The native people were so honest that not one thing was missing.

Columbus was so impressed with the hard work of these gentle islanders, that he immediately seized their land for Spain and enslaved them to work in his brutal gold mines. Within only two years, 125,000 (half of the population) of the original natives on the island were dead.

Columbus' acts of cruelty were so unspeakable and so legendary - even in his own day - that Governor Francisco De Bobadilla arrested Columbus and his two brothers, slapped them into chains, and shipped them off to Spain to answer for their crimes against the Arawaks. But the King and Queen of Spain, their treasury filling up with gold, pardoned Columbus and let him go free.

Columbus Quote #5

"...the admiral (Columbus), it is true, was as blind as those who came after him, and he was so anxious to please the King that he committed irreparable crimes against the Indians..."

...(the Spaniards) grew more conceited every day and after awhile refused to walk any distance...(They) rode the backs of Indians if they were in a hurry or were carried on hammocks by Indians running in relays...(They) thought nothing of knifing Indians by tens and twenties and of cutting slices off them to test the sharpness of their blades...

...They (Indians) suffered and died in the mines and other labors in desperate silence, knowing not a soul in the world to whom they could turn for help...

...(In 1508) there were 60,000 people living on this island (Hispaniola), including the Indians; so that from 1494 to 1508, over three million people had perished from war, slavery, and the mines. Who in future generations will believe this? I myself writing it as a knowledgeable eyewitness can hardly believe it..."

Columbus Quote #4

Since his death in 1506, Columbus' life story has undergone many revisions. He is vilified by indigenous rights groups, yet was once seriously considered for sainthood. What's the real scoop?

Columbus was neither a monster nor a saint. He had some admirable qualities and some very negative ones. He was not a bad or evil man, simply a skilled sailor and navigator who was also an opportunist and a product of his time.

On the positive side, Columbus was a very talented sailor, navigator and ship captain. He bravely went west without a map, trusting his instincts and calculations. He was very loyal to his patrons, the King and Queen of Spain, and they rewarded him by sending him to the New World a total of four times. He took slaves from those tribes that fought him and his men: he seems to have dealt relatively fairly with those tribes that he befriended, such as that of Chief Guacanagari.

But there are many stains on his legacy as well. Ironically, the Columbus-bashers blame him for some things that were not under his control and ignore some of his most glaring actual defects. He and his crew brought awful diseases, such as smallpox, to which the men and women of the New World had no defenses, and millions died. This is undeniable, but it was also unintentional and would have happened eventually anyway. His discovery opened the doors to the conquistadors who looted the mighty Aztec and Inca Empires and slaughtered natives by the thousands, but this, too, would likely have happened when someone else inevitably discovered the New World.

Columbus Quote #3

Sunday, 14 October.

In the morning, I ordered the boats to be got ready, and coasted along the island toward the north- northeast to examine that part of it, we having landed first at the eastern part. Presently we discovered two or three villages, and the people all came down to the shore, calling out to us, and giving thanks to God. Some brought us water, and others victuals: others seeing that I was not disposed to land, plunged into the sea and swam out to us, and we perceived that they interrogated us if we had come from heaven. An old man came on board my boat; the others, both men and women cried with loud voices--"Come and see the men who have come from heavens. Bring them victuals and drink." There came many of both sexes, every one bringing something, giving thanks to God, prostrating themselves on the earth, and lifting up their hands to heaven. They called out to us loudly to come to land, but I was apprehensive on account of a reef of rocks, which surrounds the whole island, although within there is depth of water and room sufficient for all the ships of Christendom, with a very narrow entrance. There are some shoals within site, but the water is as smooth as a pond. It was to view these parts that I set out in the morning, for I wished to give a complete relation to your Highnesses, as also to find where a fort might be built. I discovered a tongue of land which appeared like an island though it was not, but might be cut through and made so in two days; it contained six houses. I do not, however, see the necessity of fortifying the place, as the people here are simple in war-like matters, as your Highnesses will see by those seven which I have ordered to be taken and carried to Spain in order to learn our language and return, unless your Highnesses should choose to have them all transported to Castile, or held captive in the island. I could conquer the whole of them with fifty men, and govern them as I pleased. Near the islet I have mentioned were groves of trees, the most beautiful I have ever seen, with their foliage as verdant as we see in Castile in April and May. There were also many streams. After having taken a survey of these parts, I returned to the ship, and setting sail, discovered such a number of islands that I knew not which first to visit; the natives whom I had taken on board informed me by signs that there were so many of them that they could not be numbered; they repeated the names of more than a hundred. I determined to steer for the largest, which is about five leagues from San Salvador; the others were some at a greater, and some at a less distance from that island. They are all very level, without mountains, exceedingly fertile and populous, the inhabitants living at war with one another, although a simple race, and with delicate bodies.

Columbus Quote #2

The Mission and Faith of Christopher Columbus

It was early in the morning on this day in 1492 that Columbus stepped from his command post on the Santa Maria into a tiny boat. A few yards from the shore, he plunged into the shallow water and went ashore on a tiny island of the Bahamian archipelago and wept tears of joy. He lifted his head toward Heaven and cried out in thanksgiving to God in the words of the traditional dawn-watch canticle: "Blessed be the light of day, and the Holy Cross we say; and the Lord of Verity, and the Holy Trinity. Blessed be the light of day, and He who sends the dark away."

Columbus was one of the greatest seamen in the history of the world. Any competent sailor could have reached America by sailing west long enough, but it's unlikely that any others could have found their way back to Spain or could have returned to the same island on later voyages.

Columbus had great moral and physical courage. Again and again he faced mutinous sailors, armed rebels, frightful storms, and fighting Indians.

Christopher Columbus had a mystic belief that God intended him to sail the Atlantic Ocean in order to spread Christianity. He said his prayers several times daily. Columbus wrote what he called a *Book of Prophecies*, which is a compilation of passages Columbus selected from the Bible which he believed were pertinent to his mission of discovery. What a person believes is what determines his interpretation of life and history and inspires his vision and purpose in life. Columbus's own writings prove that he believed that God revealed His plan for the world in the Bible, the infallible Word of God. Columbus believed that he was obeying the mission God staked out for his life when he set sail west across the Atlantic Ocean.

Columbus's voyage to America ranks among history's most important events. It led to lasting contacts between Europe and America, and it opened new windows. To few men in modern history does the world as we know it owe so great a debt as to Christopher Columbus.

Columbus Quote #1

At a very early age I began to sail upon the ocean. For more than forty years, I have sailed everywhere that people go. I prayed to the most merciful Lord about my heart's great desire, and He gave me the spirit and the intelligence for the task: seafaring, astronomy, geometry, arithmetic, skill in drafting spherical maps and placing correctly the cities, rivers, mountains and ports. I also studied cosmology, history, chronology and philosophy.

It was the Lord who put into my mind (I could feel His hand upon me) the fact that it would be possible to sail from there to the Indies. All who heard of my project rejected it with laughter, ridiculing me. There is no question that the inspiration was from the Holy Spirit, because he comforted me with rays of marvelous illumination from the Holy Scriptures ... encouraging me to continually to press forward and without ceasing for a moment they now encourage me make haste.

Our Lord Jesus desired to perform a very obvious miracle in the voyage to the Indies, to comfort me and the whole people of God. I spent seven years in the royal court, discussing the matter with many persons of great reputation and wisdom in all the arts; and in the end they concluded that it was all foolishness, so they gave it up. ...

It is possible that those who see this book will accuse me of being unlearned in literature, of being a layman and a sailor. I reply with the words of Matt. 11:25, "Lord, because thou has hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hath revealed them unto babes. ...

For the execution of the journey to the to the Indies I did not make use of intelligence, mathematics or maps. It is simply the fulfillment of what Isaiah had prophesied. All this is what I desire to write down for you in this book.

No one should fear to undertake any task in the name of our Savior, if it is just and if the intention is purely for His holy service. The working out of all things has been assigned to each person by our Lord, but it all happens according to His sovereign will even though He gives advice. He lacks nothing that it is in the power of men to give him. Oh what a gracious Lord, who desires that people should perform for Him those things for which He holds Himself responsible! Day and night moment by moment, everyone should express to Him their most devoted gratitude. ...