

TAKING THE AMERICAS FOR JESUS

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Printed in Korea

1st Printing, 2021

ISBN: 000-0-0000000-0-0

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Cover Design: Justin Turley

Interior Layout Design: Sarah Lee Bryant

Published by:

Generations

19039 Plaza Drive Ste 210

Parker, Colorado 80134

www.generations.org

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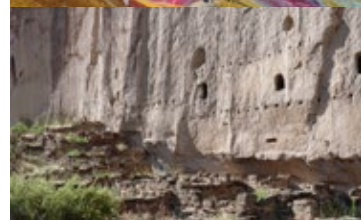
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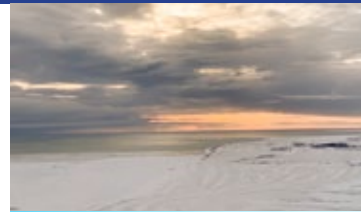
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INTRODUCTION FOR PARENTS AND TEACHERS

Dear Parents and Teachers,

Thank you for choosing *Taking the Americas for Jesus* for your student's history studies. Before your student gets started, here is some introductory information so that you can make the best use of this course.

Taking the Americas for Jesus contains twenty-six chapters retelling some of the most significant stories from Christian history in the Americas. Because this course is designed for third grade readers, it is necessarily limited in its scope. We've selected some of our favorite stories, but many stories that could be told were not included. We hope this book will whet you and your student's appetite for further studies in this area. History has laid up for us many more wonderful works of God on the American continents. You will find that later courses produced by Generations contain many of those stories.

Many of the chapters in this book are biographical in nature. We use biography to teach history for a few reasons. First, this biographical approach immerses the reader into a particular place and time with living color. The student gets to "see the sights" and "hear the sounds" by reading stories of real people. We also use biography because God accomplishes His purposes through faithful messengers. The gospel of Jesus Christ is spread throughout the world by His servants.

WHY THE TITLE?

In 2017, Generations published a high school textbook called *Taking the World for Jesus*. Within that book, author Kevin Swanson recorded the history of the spread of Christ's church from Jerusalem in the first century to the ends of the earth. To be used alongside this work, we have prepared books that retell this history continent by continent for younger children by

focusing on a single area of the world and delving into greater detail in the stories contained in each volume. These stories chronicle Jesus Christ's rule as it is recognized and acknowledged throughout the world. Scripture tells us that He is Ruler over all kings on earth (Rev. 1:5). The stories in this series of history books recount in a small way how Jesus' rule was both further established and recognized all over the world.

The title *Taking the Americas* is not intended to be a reference to colonialism. Of course, we are grateful that the Christian faith was spread around the world through European colonial efforts. But not every aspect of colonialism was righteous. Nor was every colonial effort a Christian effort. This book focuses on how the Christian message reached the Americas, not on how Spain or Britain took the Americas.

A LOOK AT THE CHAPTERS

The textbook begins with two introductory chapters focused on geography. In these chapters, the student will learn about North, South, and Central America. This material is intended to orient the reader to the locations and sights they will encounter in the stories that follow. The third chapter briefly explores the question, "How did native Americans get to the Americas?" It details some of the archaeological remains that inform us about the civilizations located in the Americas before the arrival of Europeans. Chapters 4-6 retell the stories of the first European explorers including Leif Erickson, Christopher Columbus, and the Spanish Conquistadors.

The remaining chapters bounce back and forth between stories covering North America and South America. You will find some of the most familiar stories of American history such as the Mayflower Pilgrims, David Brainerd, and George Whitefield. But we've also tried to include some lesser-known figures such as Jens Haven, the Dane who took the gospel to the Eskimos of Labrador, W. B. Grubb, the missionary to Paraguay, the Indian Clah who shared the gospel with his own people in Alaska, and more.

In our retelling of the historical accounts, we have striven for historical accuracy. To engage the young reader, we have introduced dialogue into the

stories. Some of this dialogue is taken directly from primary sources but simplified for younger readers. In some cases, fictional dialogue is supplied. These dialogue portions portray “what might have been said” based on what we know about the events.

In this book, the terms *native*, *native American*, and *Indian* are generally used interchangeably. We understand that *Indian* is not historically accurate as Columbus never did discover the *Indies*. But, since the time of Columbus’ original error, the term *Indian* has stuck and is often used in historical writings past and present. The historical circumstances of how *Indian* became a designation for native Americans is explained to the student in the chapter on Christopher Columbus.

In order to make this course visually engaging, we have provided maps, historical artwork and photography, and some custom illustrations. Taking time to examine the maps will help the student gain a grasp of the geography of the area they are studying.

This course also contains Prayer Points. These are suggested topics to guide the reader into a time of prayer. We should give thanks and praise to God for His great works done in the past. And we should pray that God’s kingdom would come and His will be done in the future. It is recommended that the parent/teacher and student take time to pray together after each chapter is read.

A workbook to accompany *Taking the Americas for Jesus* is also available. It contains a lesson schedule, written assignments, and enrichment projects to further reinforce the material introduced in this book.

We offer this resource to Christian families around the world with the prayer that Jesus Christ, our Great King and Savior, would be glorified in its use and in our humble efforts to record His marvelous works in history.

For Christ’s Kingdom,

Joshua Schwisow

The Generations Curriculum Team

January 2021



Buffalo in Grand Teton National Park, Wyoming

NORTH AMERICA

1

O LORD, our Lord,
How excellent is Your name in all the earth! (Psalm 8:9)

Welcome to the Americas! In this book, you will learn about what God has done in this part of the world. In the last 2,000 years, much has changed in the Americas. This book tells just a few stories about this change. It is an exciting story. It is exciting because God is the Lord of history. God is wise. God is good. God has a plan.

Two thousand years ago, the Lord Jesus rose from the dead. He then went to heaven. In heaven, Jesus rules over the world. The Bible says that Jesus is King over all things (Rev. 1:5). He has all power (Matt. 28:18-20). This means that He is ruling over the Americas. One day, every person on earth will bow to Jesus. They will confess that He is Lord.

Right now, the good news of the gospel is spreading. God is saving people everywhere. All over the world, people are learning that Jesus rules and reigns.

Long ago, people in the Americas believed in false gods. But now, many people here follow Jesus. How did this happen? Why did these people change? In the past, men and women came to America. These men and women loved and served God. They told the people in this land about the good news. Many of these people learned to believe in God and worship Him.

Soon you will read stories about these people. But first, we'll learn a little about **geography**. Geography is a big word. It teaches us what a land is like. It tells us about the mountains, rivers, forests, and other things in a land. It tells us if a land is hot or cold or wet or dry.

The land of America is split into two **continents**. A continent is a large piece of land with an ocean all the way around it. North America is one continent. South America is the other. In this chapter, we will learn about North America.

MAJOR COUNTRIES IN NORTH AMERICA



North America has three large countries in it. They are the United States of America, Canada, and Mexico. Canada is in the north. Mexico is in the south. And the United States is in the middle. The United States has the most people in it. About 330 million people live here. This country has fifty states in it. Forty-eight of these states are joined to each other. But two of the states don't touch the rest. These two states are far away from the others. Their names are Alaska and Hawaii. Alaska is beside Canada. Hawaii sits all by itself in the middle of the ocean. Most people in the United States speak English.

Canada is larger than the United States. But not as many people live here. Most of the people live near the border. This border divides the United States from Canada. Not many people live in the north parts of Canada. It's hard to live in the north because it gets so cold up there. Canada is filled with mountains, rivers, trees, and animals. It is a beautiful land. It the second largest country in the world. Only Russia is bigger than it is. People in Canada speak English and French.

Far to the south is Mexico. Because it is so far south, Mexico has much warmer weather. It also has more people than Canada. In Mexico you can find some of the oldest buildings in the world. Long ago, the Aztecs and Mayans built large cities here. You will learn more about these nations in later chapters. People in Mexico speak Spanish.

MAJOR COUNTRIES IN NORTH AMERICA

Country	Population
United States of America	330 million
Mexico	131 million
Canada	38 million



Big Sur Bridge, California



Banff National Park, Alberta, Canada

MOUNTAINS

Before the mountains were brought forth,
Or ever You had formed the earth and the world,
Even from everlasting to everlasting, You are God. (Psalm 90:2)

Every part of God's creation shows us His glory. We see God's wisdom, power, and beauty by looking at the earth. What do you think of when you look at a mountain? You might think about how strong God must be to make such a big, tall thing. North America has many **mountain ranges**. A mountain range is a group of mountains in a long line.

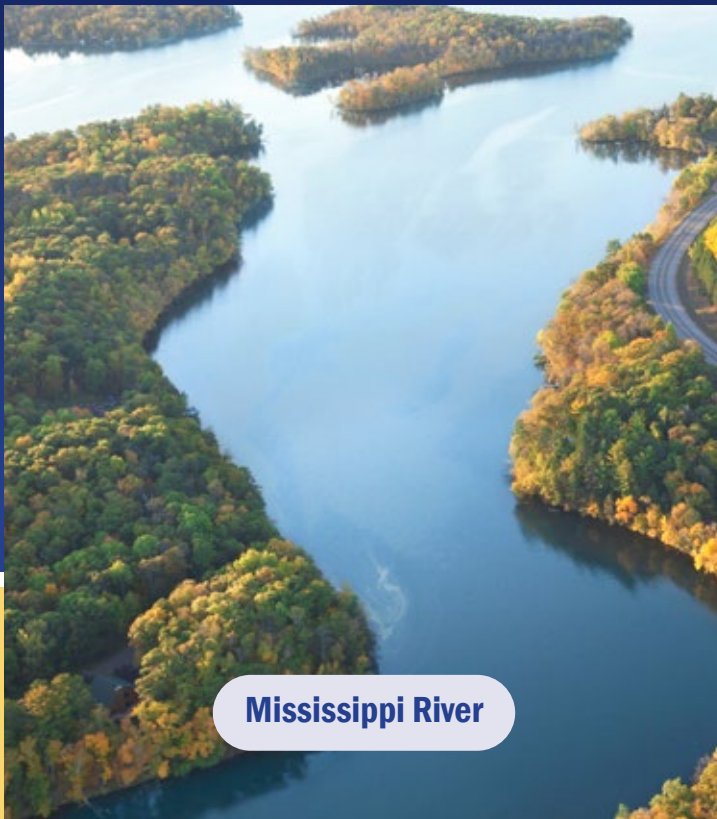
The tallest mountain in North America is in Alaska. It is called Mt. Denali. This mountain is 20,310 feet tall. Because it is in Alaska and because it is very tall, it can get very cold on top of the mountain. If you ever climb to the top, you will need a lot more than just a coat! Sometimes it gets as cold as 100° below zero. Even during the summer, the top of the mountain will be freezing cold.

**Mt. Denali, Alaska****Pico de Orizaba**

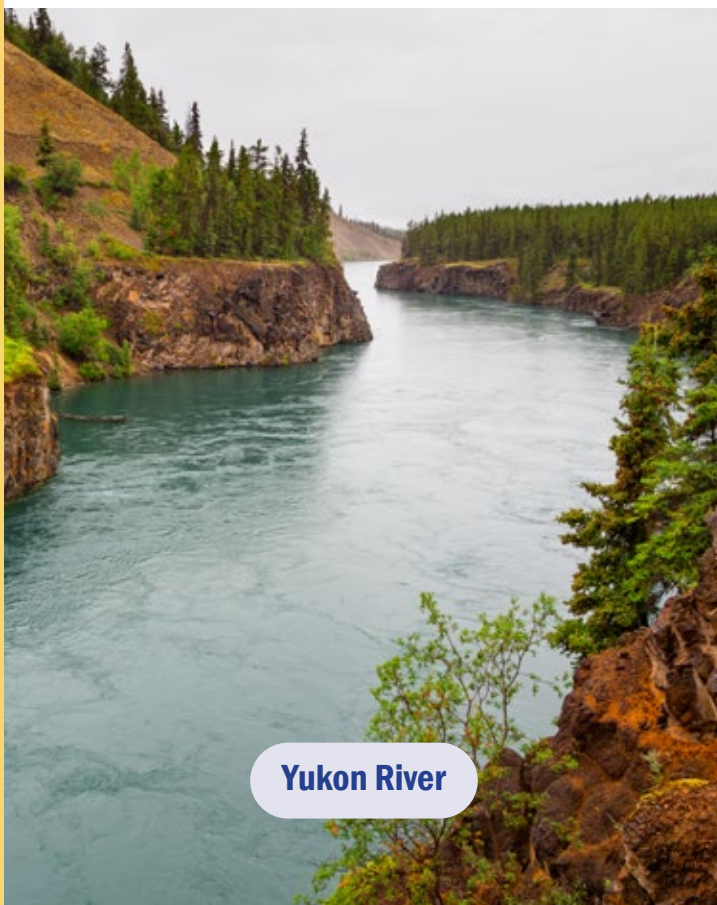
If we go down to Mexico, we will find another tall mountain. This one is called Pico de Orizaba. It is the tallest mountain in Mexico. It is 18,491 feet tall. Because this mountain is so far south, it is not as cold as Mt. Denali. But there is always snow at the top of this mountain. Even in summer, the snow never melts.

HIGHEST MOUNTAINS IN NORTH AMERICA

Country	Population	Location
Mt. Denali	20,310 feet tall	Alaska, USA
Mt. Logan	19,551 feet tall	Yukon, Canada
Pico de Orizaba	18,491 feet tall	Veracruz, Mexico



Mississippi River



Yukon River

RIVERS

The earth is the LORD's, and all its fullness,

The world and those who dwell therein.

For He has founded it upon the seas,
And established it upon the waters.

(Psalm 24:1-2)

Without water, we could never survive. We need water to stay alive. People use water to drink, to cook, and to clean. They also use it to water their crops. Because the Lord is full of grace, He gave America many rivers and lakes. This is a sign of His mercy to the people here. Many cities are built near rivers. People built cities near rivers because the water helps them survive.

One of the largest rivers in North America is the Mississippi River. Take a break from reading here. Try to spell Mississippi. Can you do it?

The Mississippi is over 2,000 miles long. Look at the map to find some big cities that were built beside this river. It is a very wide and long river. Because it is so long, it is very useful. For hundreds of years, people

have used this river for moving food and supplies from one place to another.

Another very long river is the Yukon. It flows through Canada. The waters of the Yukon flow all the way into the ocean. This river helps many people by bringing them lots of fish. The Yukon abounds with salmon. Because this river is so far north, it can get very cold. There are many small towns along the river. In one of the towns, it might get as cold as 28° below zero. That’s very cold! There are no roads to many of these little towns. People use the Yukon River as a water road to bring in food and other things they need.

Much further south, there is the mighty Rio Grande River. How do you think this river got its name? The name is Spanish, and it means “Big River.” Just like its name says, it is a very big river. It divides Texas from Mexico.



MAJOR RIVERS IN NORTH AMERICA		
River	Length	Location
Missouri River	2,341 miles long	USA
Mississippi River	2,320 miles long	USA
Yukon River	1,980 miles long	Alaska, Canada
Rio Grande	1,896 miles long	USA, Mexico



Grand Canyon, Arizona

BEAUTIFUL PLACES IN NORTH AMERICA

O LORD, how manifold are Your works!

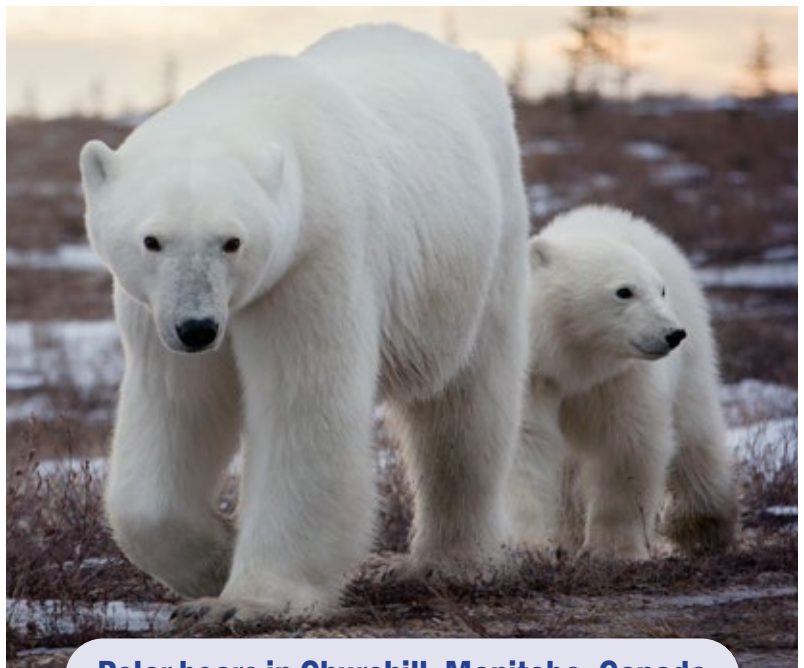
In wisdom You have made them all. (Psalm 104:24)

God's beauty and glory is found all over His creation. North America has many beautiful places. Perhaps you can visit some of them.

Are you looking for a lovely sunrise? You might see one if you ever go to Arizona. This is where you will find the Grand Canyon. The Grand Canyon is so big and so amazing that you might gasp when you see it. We call it a breathtaking sight. This is one of the most amazing places in the world. The Canyon is about 270 miles long. At points, it is eighteen miles wide. In this canyon, you will see many kinds of rock layers.

Would you like to see some polar bears? Take a trip to the town of Churchill. This town is in the far north of Canada. Yes, it is hard to get there. And you will need a very warm jacket. But in Churchill, you can see polar bears up close. This town is called the "Polar Bear Capital of the World."

If Churchill is too cold for a visit, you could go south. Take an airplane down to Mexico. Instead of snow and ice, you will find tropical jungles. Instead of polar bears, you will find lots and lots of bugs. Here, in a place called Yucatan, you will find something very strange. This part of Mexico has a number of **cenotes** (pronounced "suh-no-tees"). These are underground lakes or ponds. The sun shines through a hole in the ceiling onto the water below. There are over 6,000 cenotes in Yucatan.



Polar bears in Churchill, Manitoba, Canada

Another thrilling sight is found on the border of Canada and the US. There you will find Niagara Falls. Niagara Falls has three large waterfalls. Water drops over 150 feet into the river below. If you get too close to the falls, you won't be able to hear anything. The water is too loud! The falling water makes a sound louder than thunder.

Now you've seen a little of the vast continent of North America. What should we do after seeing all these wonderful things? We should stop and praise God. This land shows us His great power and majesty. Can you see His power in these mighty mountains? Can you see His majesty in the beauty of His creation?



PRAYER POINTS: NORTH AMERICA

Take time now to pray a prayer of praise. Let us adore and worship our great God!

- **Praise God for His Power**

We learn much about God by studying creation. We learn how powerful our God is when we see Niagara Falls. The Lord by His power made Mt. Denali to stand. The God who made all things is worthy of our praise.

- **Praise God for His Goodness**

We live in a fallen world. All the world is wounded by the fall into sin. But God is still good to His creation. He continues to send us sunshine to give us warmth. He sends rain to the peoples of North America so they can eat. He gives them rivers for food and travel. Behold the goodness of God. Praise Him for this goodness!



Niagara Falls



Viking Ship

LEIF ERIKSON AND THE VIKINGS

Those who go down to the sea in ships,
Who do business on great waters,
They see the works of the LORD,
And His wonders in the deep. (Psalm 107:23-24)

Leif peered over the bow of the ship. Ninety feet long with a dragon's head, the Viking ship was an impressive sight.

"Land! Land!" cried one of the sailors.

In the distance, an icy coast was spotted. The Vikings had discovered a new island. It was the island we know today as Greenland.

Leif was just a boy when he first saw Greenland. He and his family had embarked for the west. As Vikings, they had lived in Iceland. But Leif's father Erik the Red ran into legal troubles there. He was outlawed from the island. Erik could have returned to Norway. Or he could have taken his family to Ireland or Scotland. But instead, Eric wanted freedom. Together with his family, he set sail for the west.

Some thought Erik was crazy. Was there any land west of Iceland? Or would Erik and his family die at sea? No one knew.

Around the year 982, Erik the Red reached Greenland. The voyage took many weeks. Around fifty people were with him in the ship. Wearily, they set foot on the newfound island.

The sight of Greenland dazzled their senses. It was a much greener land than Iceland. The land was full of creatures too. Whales, seals, and walrus filled the waters. Foxes and caribou roamed the land. With all these animals, Erik and his family would never lack food. The Norse settlers also



Summer in the Greenland Coast by Carl Rasmussen

found polar bears. The fur of these beautiful creatures would soon keep their new homes warm.

Erik and his family started a colony on the island. They called it Brattahlid. For the next few years, they lived here and explored the rest of Greenland.

Three years later, Erik returned to Iceland. He told other Icelanders about Greenland. It was Erik who named it Greenland. He said, "This name of Greenland will draw other Norse to join me there."

Erik was right. Twenty-five ships returned with him to Greenland in AD 986.

KING OLAF OF NORWAY

Yes, all kings shall fall down before Him;
All nations shall serve Him. (Psalm 72:11)

Leif shared his father Erik's love for exploration. He often stared at the ocean, wondering what lay beyond. Leif wanted to go further west. Perhaps he could find more land, a new land that no one had ever found before.

Leif went to his father and asked him for a ship.

"Father, I would like a ship. I want to sail west and explore."

Erik said, "Very well. I will give you a ship. But first, you must sail east, not west. Return to our homeland of Norway. You must visit the king. Tell him about Greenland. Take him gifts from our beautiful land."

Leif agreed to what his father asked of him. Leif said, "Father, I will go to Norway. But then I will sail west of Greenland. I will sail into new waters where no one has gone before."

Erik gave Leif his ship. Leif and the other Norsemen prepared for their long journey. The ship was loaded with walrus hides, skins, and ropes. These were gifts for the king of Norway. Then Leif chose a special present for the king. He captured a Greenland polar bear. Such an impressive gift was just right for the great king of Norway.

Leif set sail for Norway. It was around the year AD 998. Before reaching Norway, Leif and his companions stopped on the Orkney Islands. Here, earlier Vikings had settled and lived. Today, the Orkney Islands are part of Scotland.





Model of Viking Ship

After a long and perilous journey, Leif reached the shores of Norway. He was welcomed into the court of King Olaf.

King Olaf was delighted by Leif's gifts. He thanked Leif for the polar bear and the other treasures from Greenland.

King Olaf asked Leif, "Are you a Christian?"

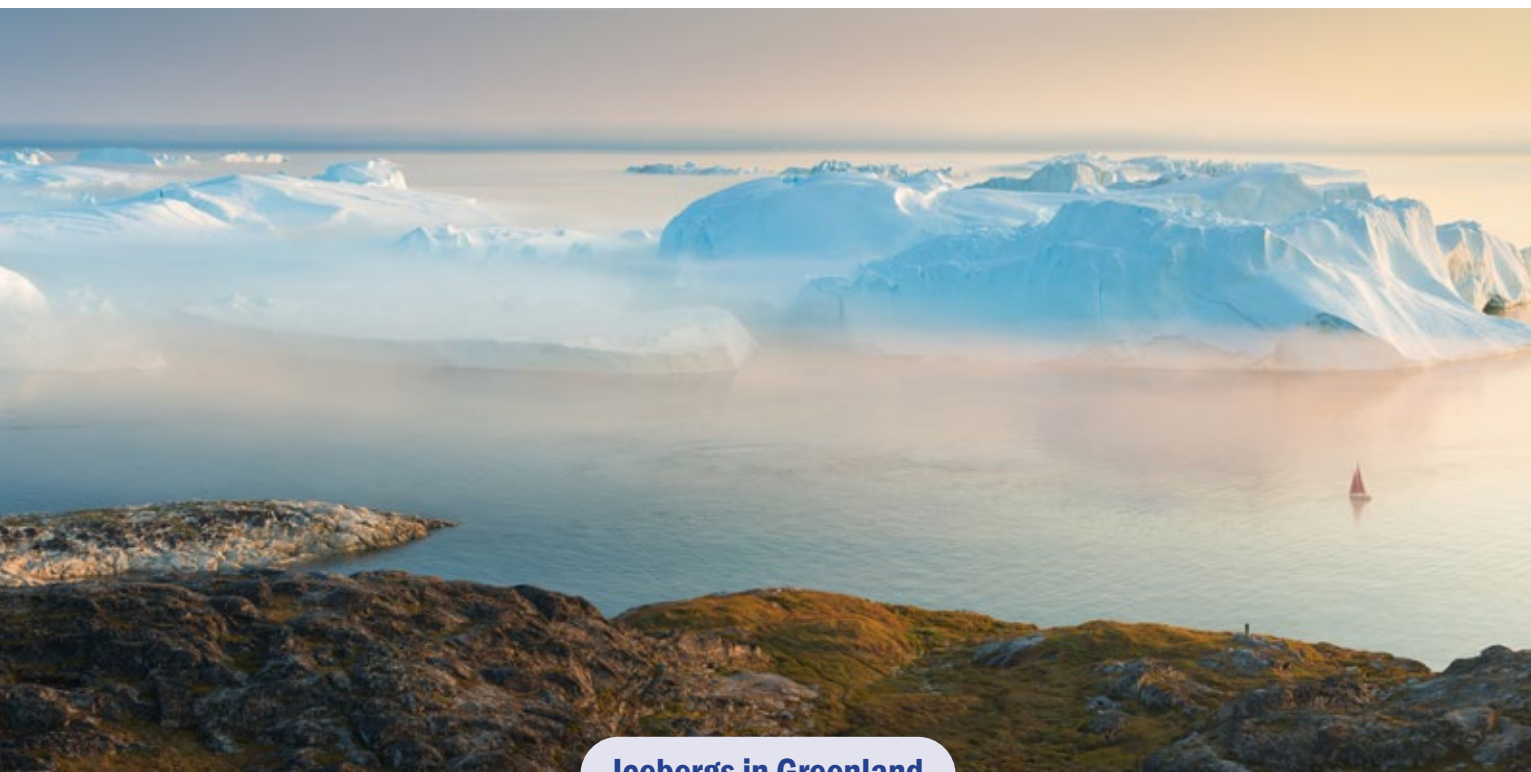
Leif answered, "No, O king. I am not."

King Olaf explained to Leif his plans for Norway. "I am a Christian, Leif. I want the Christian faith to spread through all of Norway. I would like you and the others in Greenland to become Christians as well."

King Olaf made Erik the Red the ruler of Greenland. He told Leif that he would be ruler after his father. The king also asked Leif, "Will you take two Christian teachers with you? Will you take Christianity to Greenland?"

Leif knew his father did not like Christians. But he agreed to King Olaf's request.

Leif and his companions stayed in King Olaf's court for some months. During this time, Leif became a Christian. He was baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Now, Leif wanted his family to become followers of Jesus Christ.



Icebergs in Greenland

Leif returned to Greenland. Erik was proud of all the things his son had done. But Erik was not interested in becoming a Christian. He believed in the Norse gods. He didn't want to learn about the true God.

However, Leif's mother did become a Christian. Thjodhild received the Word and was baptized. But this angered Erik. He was so angry that he didn't speak to his wife for a month. Leif spoke to his father and tried to make peace. At last, Erik agreed to accept his wife again. But he still did not become a Christian.

LEIF DISCOVERS NORTH AMERICA

By awesome deeds in righteousness You will answer us,
O God of our salvation,
You who are the confidence of all the ends of the earth,
And of the far-off seas. (Psalm 65:5)

Shortly after he returned to Greenland, Leif left again. Preparing his ship, he left on his next journey. It was time to sail west into the unknown.

Leif had a friend who had seen land to the west of Greenland. His friend's name was Bjarni. The land he saw may have been the coast of modern-day Canada. This gave Leif hope. Perhaps there was land to be found.

It was the year 1000. Leif and his fellow Greenlanders set sail.

After days of sailing the frigid waters of the North Atlantic, Leif spotted land. It was a barren, rocky shore. Leif and his companions went ashore.

Where were they? We think Leif first landed in modern-day Newfoundland and Labrador. Today, this land is part of Canada. Leif Erikson was the first Christian to ever reach the Americas.



“Bjarni was right!” Leif exclaimed. “There is land here.”

Leif and his men decided to keep exploring. They followed the coastline of Labrador south. They crossed the Gulf of St. Lawrence. Leif was stunned by the beauty of this land. Here was a land greener than Greenland!

Leif and the Greenlanders built a settlement. The land was filled with animals and plant life. And the weather was better too. The winters here weren’t as cold as they were in Greenland.

Spring arrived. Warm weather came. The Norsemen gathered timber and grew grapes. Leif named the new land “Vineland.” It was called Vineland because Leif grew grapes there.

LATER EXPLORERS

Leif returned to Greenland with the good news. There was beautiful and rich land to the west!

When Leif arrived in Greenland, his brother Thorvald came out to meet him. “Leif, our father has died.”

News of his father’s death filled Leif with sadness. But now it was his job to care for the colony. Leif became the leader of Brattahlid.

Soon, a church was built in Greenland. It was the first Christian church on the island.

Leif’s home was Greenland. This was where he lived. But he still wanted to find out more about the lands to the west. He wanted someone to explore this new part of the world. His brother Thorvald set sail next. He again reached the new world. He even went further south than Leif had gone. Thorvald likely reached the region of New England.

In 1003, a man named Thorfinn came to Greenland. He married a woman named Gudrid. Leif told Thorfinn that he should settle in Vineland in the new world.

One hundred and thirty people left Greenland in AD 1004. They set sail for Vineland. When they arrived, they started a new colony there. They hoped to start a permanent settlement in the new land.

But their plans didn’t work out. The Norse ran into trouble with the

native Eskimos. Thorfinn decided it was not safe to stay in Vineland. He and the others got back in their ship and returned to Greenland.

The Vikings never forgot about Vineland. They wrote down the stories of Erik the Red and Leif Erikson. They wrote about Thorfinn too.

In the 1960s, someone found an ancient settlement in Canada. They found old Norse buildings and tools on the coast of Newfoundland. It looks like about one hundred Norse people used to live here. Here is a sign that the Norse did visit North America.

Leif was the first Christian to visit North America. By God's grace, he would not be the last.



Statue of Thorfinn



Reconstructed Viking Hall in Newfoundland, Canada