

# Christ is Victor

July – August 1997

## He Trusted In God and Accomplished Great Things

(An excerpt from Christopher Columbus' Biography)

While the men load supplies on the *Pinta*, Chris met a Spanish sailor who had just sailed from Ferro, the island farthest west in the Canary Islands. The sailor said he had heard three Portuguese warships were waiting at Ferro to ambush Columbus. King John did not want Spain to explore the western Atlantic.

"God, help me!" Chris exploded inside his cabin, where his men could not hear him. "My fleet is equipped to explore a new way to China, not fight the Portuguese!"

His fleet carried no soldiers, only sailing officers and seaman. Each of his ships had a couple of small cannons and a couple of scatter-guns that were even smaller.

Yet, he had no choice. Chris prayed to God. His fleet must sail on, whether Portuguese warships waited or not...

September 6th, the first morning out at sea from Las Palmas, Chris stood at the rear of the ship in front of his cabin. His first officer Juan de la Cosa was nearby at the tiller.

After one hour of sailing, de la Cosa muttered, "Our flagship couldn't escape from a rowboat, let alone Portuguese warships!"

Chris had to agree. His flagship *Santa Maria* plowed down into the waves. The other two ships almost had to sail in circles in order to slow down enough to wait for his ship, which was plowing along no faster than one mile per hour.

"All hands!" yelled Chris. "Unlash the

plies of firewood from the front of the ship and move them toward the back. Get down in the hold and move the barrels of water we added in Las Palmas toward the back of the ship!"

Those were very big jobs. The crew had spent days in Las Palmas loading the new supplies and tying them down. But all hands carried out his orders as if they were on fire. After all, they knew what a Portuguese warship could do. Inch by inch the front of the *Santa Maria* rose out of the water. And the ship moved faster and faster across the open ocean.

Chris had his fleet sail past Ferro on the north or windward side, reason-

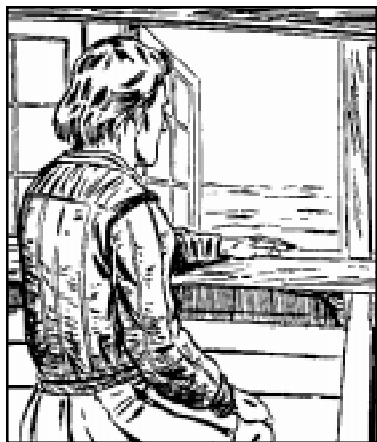
ing that if the Portuguese warships were waiting they would have to be anchored on the protected side of the island because it is very dangerous to anchor on the windward side of land.

Soon his three ships sailed well beyond Ferro. Portuguese sails were nowhere in sight. The danger was over. The Portuguese warships would have to search the Atlantic Ocean for them- a hopeless task. And the fleet of Portuguese warships was not equipped for a long voyage like his fleet was.

Chris heard the young seaman singing the changing of the sand clock. And it was also a crew change.

The helmsman yelled, "Due west! Not one

"GREAT THINGS" CON'T ON PAGE 2 ...



## The Christ of the Cross

There is no other place for salvation. There is only one place. Jesus is hanging on the Cross. What does He represent there? He represents your nature and my nature and how it should be dealt with. Jesus takes our place. Even the scenes around Golgotha present different aspects of your nature and mine. The Jews, the priests, the and the judge-all represent how I behave at different times, under different circumstances. We justify ourselves in our actions. We never hang our heads in sorrow until we see how sin wounded the loving heart of the Son of God.

Judas represents us. Nobody could discern the motive of Judas in following Jesus. He hid his ulterior motives. He hid his motives until it was evident that Jesus was not going to be a conquer with a big exchequer of which he could be in charge. Our hidden motives are known to our Lord. We hide them with a kiss which will bring some returns in money. Judas came nearest to Jesus in kissing Him but he was really far away from Him.

Treachery is in any man when he is

"RENEW" CON'T ON PAGE 4 ...

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quarter to the northwest! Not one quarter to the southwest!"

Mr. Nino yelled, "Due west! Not one quarter to the northwest! Not one quarter to the southwest!"

Mr. de la Cosa, of the new crew, yelled, "Due west! Not one quarter to the northwest! Not one quarter to the southwest!"

Mr. de la Cosa's helmsman yelled, "Due west! Not one quarter to the northwest! Not one quarter to the southwest!"

A black slate was kept beside the tiller. Every half-hour as the young seamen sang his chant, the helmsman or officer in charge of the watch recorded the information. He confirmed that the direction dictated by Chris had been kept by constantly checking the magnetic compass. In addition, he recorded his estimate of the speed of the ship. This was done by experience. There was no instrument for determining speed. The officer judged the ship's speed by glancing overboard to see how fast the ship moved past seaweed or something else floating in the sea.

Every morning, Chris took the slate into his cabin and recorded the information in his Journal of the Voyage. Then he plotted the previous day's progress on a large sheepskin map. Once again he was sailing by "dead reckoning." His course was due west and Chris did not plan on changing that course until he spotted China!

Scudding west was easy. There were no storms, no high seas, no vicious winds, just steady wind at their back pushing them over 100 miles west per day. But Chris knew seamen. Soon enough, they would realize the strong steady wind in one direction was a double-edged sword. How would they get back to Spain?

No one grumbled yet. The men seemed in very good spirits. They had spotted seaweed

and even a tiny green crab in the seaweed. These they thought were signs they were already approaching land. They dropped a line with a lead weight overboard to measure the depth to bottom. The line was 1200 feet long.

"It never reached bottom!" cried one seaman. Chris remembered what old Pedro in Palos had told him about a great sea of seaweed. Each day, they saw more and more seaweed. Soon the sea was a smooth expanse of green in every direction. By the 21st of September, the seamen were alarmed. There was almost no wind. What if the ships became stuck in the seaweed?

"Look," barked Chris, as he scooped up a bucket of sea water. "The seaweed is no more than one inch thick on the top of the ocean! How could we get stuck in such a trifle?"

"But there is no wind," blurted one seaman.

Chris had no answer for that.

Then men had very little to do. The ships slowly sailed west. The men went swimming, easily keeping pace with the ships. At first, they joked with the men on the other ships. But more and more often, they shared fears with the men on the other ships. How would they ever get back to Spain?

The wind returned on September 26th. Day after day, the ships sailed farther west. Now the wind, which the men once wanted to return, became their enemy. It pushed them farther and farther from Spain.

On October 2nd, the wind blustered in a fury. The ships blazed along, averaging over 140 miles per day. The men knew they had sailed over 2000 miles. They had sailed much farther west than any crews had sailed in history.

"But who will ever know how far we sailed if we never return to civilization?" griped one sailor.

Then they lost the wind again. The ships barely moved. It was almost more than the

seamen could bear. Chris could tell they were about to crack under the strain. God help us, where is land?

On October 9th, the captains of the two caravels, the Pinzon brothers, boarded the *Santa Maria* to talk to Chris. Their faces were stony.

Inside the cabin, Martin Pinzon didn't hide his anger. "Why must we go on? It will be difficult enough to return to Spain if we turn around this very moment, which is exactly what I intend to do!" Chris asked Vincent Pinzon, "And do you agree?"

## Say What?

**The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge: *but* fools despise wisdom and instruction.**

**Proverbs 1:7**

## CHRIST IS VICTOR

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“Yes,” he said reluctantly.

So both captains wanted to turn back. Chris knew he had to compromise. He himself would have pushed on indefinitely. But that would not be possible under circumstances. So he prayed silently. And the answer came to him. He had a vision of Jesus walking out of the tomb, radiant and alive: the best news in the history of mankind.

He said, “Give me three more days...”

“And then you will turn back?” snarled Martin Pinzon.

“Yes. We will turn back.”

The next day the wind grew stronger. Soon the fleet skimmed along west at a dazzling speed that would take them nearly two hundred miles that day. Now the crew was openly angry because they were being pushed farther and farther from Spain. They didn’t know about their captain’s promise to the Pinzons.

The crew could not be reasoned with. If the wind was weak, as it had been the previous two days, they fumed because they were going to be stranded at the edge of the world. If the wind was strong, they fumed because they were being blown even farther from Spain.

Chris was in his cabin praying for God’s help when there was a knock on the door. “Enter!” he called out.

His first officer Juan de la Cosa entered.

“Captain, the crew is close to taking over the ship...”

“Yes, I know they are close to mutiny. They want to take over the ship and turn back to Spain. This is the most dangerous day of the entire voyage. We must ask God to help us to stop them.”

“Perhaps if we three officers stand before them with loaded muskets...”

“No!” Chris motioned to the door. “I’ll talk to them.”

“It’s wrong to bargain with a crew that won’t follow orders.”

“No crew in history has ever endured the doubts they have endured. Get them together.”

Juan de la Cosa walked outside and yelled, “All hands to the captain’s cabin! Shake a leg!”

Chris prayed for God’s help, then walked outside. God had let him stand tall and talk boldly to kings and queens. But never did he

need God’s help as much as he did now.

“Men,” he said calmly. “I know you want to return to Spain. But what of the signs of land we’ve seen?”

“They all turn out to be false!” cried a seaman.

That was true. Chris knew he had to try to see it from their point of view. He said boldly, “You have traveled over open ocean farther than any crew in history. You think you have sailed into a part of the Atlantic Ocean that receives only winds from the east. You think the journey back to Spain will be difficult...”

“Or impossible!” screamed one seaman hysterically.

Chris remained calm. “Not impossible- but you will have to work like mules changing the sails constantly. And what if the food runs out first? What if the water runs out first?”



The crew was stunned. “You know all that?” blurted one seaman. “Then why are we sailing farther west?”

“Because I have faith in God helping our great adventure. I will make a bargain with you men. If we don’t see land in two days we will turn back.”

“Just two days?” asked a seaman. A grin split his face.

Suddenly, the entire crew cheered.

One seaman yelled, “Three cheers for an

honest, reasonable captain!” And he said in a lower voice, “A captain who will take us back to Spain.”

Chris went back inside his cabin. He felt like he had done nothing. The destiny for the voyage was in God’s hands, as it had been from the beginning.

A man screamed, “A flower!”

Chris ran outside his cabin. He smiled at the dawn sky. “Thanks to God for this glori-

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ous day.” It was October 11th.

The entire crew gathered to gawk across at the *Nina*. A seaman on the *Nina* held up a green branch. He yelled, “Look at the red flower! I saw it floating alongside the ship.”

They heard shouting from the *Pinta*. A seaman had found a stick floating in the ocean. The stick had lines carved on it!

One of the seamen beside Chris took a deep breath. “And we were so close to turning back.”

The wind was still strong. The were blazing west. All day they found signs of land: more carved sticks, more pieces of land plants, kinds of birds they had never seen before.

The crew was cheerful until nightfall. Then the blazing speed and nearness of land scared them. What if they hit a reef in the night? The sea was choppier now than it had been during the entire voyage. Now many men were able to sleep.

At two o’clock in the morning, the moon beamed high above to the west. The moon was nearly full and lit up the ocean below it like a giant lantern. Dozens of anxious eyes scoured the western horizon. Where was land?

“Land! Land!” It sounded like a seaman on the *Pinta* screaming.

On the *Pinta* the cannon fired twice. That was the signal for land!

not born of the Spirit. Did you not kiss Jesus and show outward respect? You kneel before Him at the altar, but not in your heart. You are kneeling before the idol of gold. Look at Him. See how He was betrayed to bleed to death.

Everyone who receives bribes belongs to the category of Judas Iscariot. Everyone who is covetous and robs the poor and the widow comes under this category. The vital question is do you love God? If so, you will love His holy laws and delight in His word. If not, one day you will be a Judas. The devil will lead you to that. If you look at the Cross aided by the Holy Spirit you will see your nature. That will cause you to call yourself a Judas. Everyone with the fallen nature will one day act like Judas.

The priests and the scribes, who professed great piety, were happy when the holy Son of God was put to death. They were prepared to speak lies and make use of lewd people to shout, "Crucify Him! Crucify Him!" When we want our will to be fulfilled at any cost we will use such methods. We are prepared to scandalize others and destroy the good reputation of another. We take comfort in hearing some evil about men who are better than ourselves. We are being constantly judged by the lives of these priests and scribes. We want to see, the prophet who speaks the truth, and the holy man to be annihilated. For a while we appreciate him but when it comes to the point of our being corrected or rebuked, either by a sermon or personal talk, we begin to use the dangerous weapon of our tongue. Let us look at Him and be saved. All ignominy He bore on the Cross that you and I may be forgiven when we repent. There is no other place for repentance and for forgiveness.

The Lord will tell you whether you are worthy to take that particular responsibility. How many Judases are there in our churches! You take financial responsibility not knowing your inner nature. The hidden Judas will suddenly put up his head. Know that you are a dangerous man until you look at the Cross and are saved and regenerated.

Joseph of Arimathaea was the only man who did not give his consent to the death of Jesus. He gave Jesus an honourable burial and this man was not guilty in the sight God. There were the

holy women who shared the sorrow of the Cross. Joseph took Jesus from the cross. The blood dripped on his body too. Ah, the love he bore for Jesus! Mary Magdalene was also there. Did you ever look at the Cross, dear reader? Did you ever fathom your sinful nature at the Cross?

—Late Mr. N. Daniel

# Adoniram Judson

Adoniram Judson's conversion was not quite so simple. It was two years later that he was seeking a theatrical career in New York City. He had joined a travelling dramatic troupe which led "a reckless, vagabond life, finding lodgings where we could and bilking the landlord where we found opportunity- in other words, running up a score and then decamping without paying the reckoning."

But twenty-year-old Adoniram didn't feel right about it. That certainly was not the way he wanted to spend the rest of his life. Disillusioned, he headed back to his home in Plymouth, Massachusetts, stopping for a night at a wayside inn.

Adoniram had trouble sleeping that night because a man in the next room was critically ill, moaning and groaning in the next room, and was dying. In the darkness of his room, Adoniram thought about the possibility of his own death and whether he was prepared for it.

At time during the long hours, he thought about returning to the Christian belief of his father, but then he imagined what his college chum Jacob Eames would say about his father's doctrines. He waited for morning to come so that the terrors of the night would be forgotten.

Early the next morning Adoniram went to the innkeeper. "That poor old man in the next room. How is he?" he asked.

"He passed away early this morning."

came the reply. "And he wasn't old at all. He was a young man, about your age."

For some reason, Adoniram asked, "What was his name?" It was a rather stupid question, because Adoniram certainly didn't know anyone in that section of the country.

The innkeeper replied, "His name was Jacob Eames."

There was no mistaking the name or the identity. It was the young college friend whose religious scepticism had turned Adoniram against the religion of his father.

Dazed, he returned to Massachusetts and to his father. Echoing through his mind was the old word LOST. But it took three more months of intellectual struggle before he "made a solemn dedication of himself to God". It was December 2, 1808. Remember that date, because that's when things started to happen in Adoniram's life.

—Selected

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