

To the Student

History is a story of past events. In this book, you will learn about past events in our country. We can trust God with our history, because God is the One who controls history.

Did you know that . . .

- John Adams was elected as the second president of the United States and was the first to live in the new capital city of Washington, DC?
- The Underground Railroad was created to provide safe places for slaves to hide on their way to freedom?
- Clara Barton risked her life to help wounded soldiers during the Civil War and established the Red Cross which still helps people today?

This year you will learn that some people came to our country so they could worship God freely. You will grow in your understanding of God and how He blessed America in spite of mistakes people made.



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Beginnings

Focus

America's history began as people looked for freedom and opportunity.





The Great Commission

“Go ye therefore, and teach all nations” (Matthew 28:19). These words of Jesus are called the Great Commission. Jesus **commissioned**, or commanded, His disciples to tell others about Jesus. He told the disciples to teach those who trusted in Him to obey His commands.

The disciples went everywhere preaching the gospel. They went to India, Egypt, and Europe. Many people became Christians. Europe was special because Christianity kept growing there. After many years, most people in Europe called themselves Christians. But not all were true followers of Christ in their hearts and actions. Even so, Christianity was the main religion of Europe.

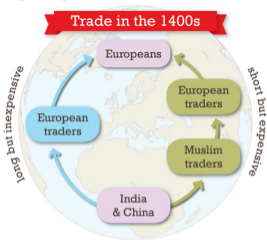
Another religion started near where Jesus had lived. This religion is called Islam. Its followers are Muslims. The Muslims took over the land of Israel. Christians in Europe thought Muslims should not rule Israel. So the European Christians tried to get Israel back.



Europeans and Trade

The Europeans traded with the Muslims for things the Europeans did not have. These goods often came from India and China. The prices for these goods were high. The goods had to pass through many different traders to get to Europe.

Europeans looked for other ways to get these goods. They built ships to sail around Africa. This way the ships could reach India and China. These places had the same goods for lower prices. The Europeans could then buy and sell the goods to make a profit. A **profit** is the extra money made after paying for goods. But sailing around Africa was long and dangerous.



Sailing West

The European traders had sailed east to reach India and China. What if their ships sailed west? Could they still reach these places? Christopher Columbus thought it would be a shorter and safer way. Most people disagreed. They thought the earth was too big for this idea to work. Columbus said the earth was much smaller than people thought.

Columbus was determined to sail west. He thought Europeans could make a bigger profit if they sailed in that direction. They could use the money to fight the Muslims and get Israel back. Columbus also thought that this new *route*, or course, could be used to spread Christianity around the world. Isabella, the queen of Spain, agreed to give him money and ships.

Columbus set sail in August 1492. He and his crew arrived at an island in the Caribbean Sea on October 12, **1492**. Columbus named the island **San Salvador**. He called the people there **Indians** because he thought he was near India. He did not know that he had discovered lands that were new to the Europeans.



Columbus sailed on ships similar to this one.