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## Appendix A: Statements by Modern-Day Prophets and Apostles on Columbus

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**Abstract:** The opening story contained in the Book of Mormon depicts a prophet named Lehi taking his family into the wilderness to escape impending danger. Later in the Book of Mormon, prophets compare Lehi's journey to that of the Israelites' exodus from Egypt. Mormon scholar S. Kent Brown draws from evidence in the Book of Mormon to argue that Lehi and his family may have been conscious that they were reenacting Israel's exodus and that they understood the pattern as well as prophets who commented on their journey hundreds of years after the fact. Other stories in the Book of Mormon also portray exodus patterns, and prophets often use the precedent of Israel's deliverance from Egypt to prove God's power. These prophets symbolically link the Exodus to Jesus Christ's forthcoming Atonement and teach that Christ's sacrifice will surpass all of God's work for his children.



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## APPENDIX A

### *Statements by Modern-Day Prophets and Apostles on Columbus*

#### *Joseph Smith*

I lead the way like Columbus when he was invited to a banquet where he was assigned the most honorable place at the table, and served with the ceremonials which were observed towards sovereigns. A shallow courtier present, who was meanly jealous of him, abruptly asked him whether he thought that in case he had not discovered the Indies, there were not other men in Spain who would have been capable of the enterprise? Columbus made no reply, but took an egg and invited the company to make it stand on end. They all attempted it, but in vain; whereupon he struck it upon the table so as to break one end, and left it standing on the broken part, illustrating that when he had once shown the way to the new world nothing was easier than to follow it. (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith* 304)

#### *Brigham Young*

The Almighty . . . moved upon Columbus to launch forth upon the trackless deep to discover the American Continent; he moved upon the signers of the Declaration of Independence; and he moved upon Washington to fight and conquer, in the same way as he moved upon ancient and modern Prophets, each being inspired to accomplish the particular work he was called to perform in the times, seasons, and dispensations of the Almighty. God's purpose, in raising up these men and inspiring them with daring sufficient to surmount every opposing power,

was to prepare the way for the formation of a true Republican government. (*JD* 7:13)

***Parley P. Pratt***

Hence we contemplate that small beginning made by the American pioneers, by Columbus, the first pioneer, and by our fathers the pioneers of religion and liberty; we contemplate how that influence has spread and increased in the earth, influencing the feelings of individuals as well as national institutions . . . until by and by the rest of the world is overwhelmed, that it is obliged to bow to their superior greatness. (*JD* 1:43)

***Orson Pratt***

Some of [the religious reformers] were wrought upon to come to this continent for the purpose of securing to themselves religious freedom and religious right; and inspired by the Almighty, as was Columbus, who discovered this land, they planted their feet upon the American soil. (*JD* 3:72)

While the iron hand of despotism thus held the nations within its withering grasp, enslaving both body and soul, the great God, near the close of the fifteenth century, moved upon the mind of a Columbus, and inspired him to fearlessly launch forth upon the great expanse of unknown waters on the west of Europe; and guided by the invisible agency of the Holy Spirit, he revealed to the down trodden, despairing nations, a new world. (*JD* 7:214)

***John Taylor***

Could we have been placed in any better position than we are today? No. What has been the object of God for sometime? In the first place He operated upon Columbus to come and find this land. (*JD* 23:19)

***Wilford Woodruff***

I straightway went into the baptismal font and called upon brother McCallister to baptize me for the signers of the Declaration of Independence, and fifty other eminent men, making one hundred in all, including John Wesley, Columbus, and others. (*JD* 19:229)

Columbus was inspired of God to persevere as he did to discover this continent, and thus prepare the way for a class of people upon whom the Spirit of the Lord moved to follow. (*JD* 23:82)

When Columbus was moved upon by the Spirit of God, to cross the ocean to find a new continent, his object and desires were unpopular with those by whom he was surrounded. (*JD* 24:4)

***George Q. Cannon***

Columbus was inspired to penetrate the ocean and discover this Western continent, for the set time for its discovery had come, and the consequences which God desired to follow its discovery have taken place—a free government has been established on it. The men who established that Government were inspired of God—George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, and all the fathers of the Republic were inspired to do the work which they did. We believe it was a preparatory work for the establishment of the kingdom of God. This Church and kingdom could not have been established on the earth if their work had not been performed. (*JD* 14: 55)

This land was kept secret until Columbus was moved upon by the Spirit of God, to go forth and penetrate the western ocean. Then the land was settled and a government was formed under the protecting aegis of liberty, and a place was found for the establishment of the Kingdom of God. (*JD* 21:201)

This land was kept for this purpose. For centuries it was hidden from all the nations of the earth. It was not until the 15th century that God inspired Columbus to go forth and seek a passage across the Atlantic, and land upon some of the islands adjacent to this continent. His track was followed by other. (*JD* 23:103)

### ***Orson Hyde***

This same angel [Moroni] presides over the destinies of America, and feels a lively interest in all our doings. He was in the camp of Washington; and by an invisible hand, led on our fathers to conquest and victory; and all this to open and prepare the way for the Church and kingdom of God to be established on the western hemisphere, for the redemption of Israel and the salvation of the world. This same angel was with Columbus, and gave him deep impressions, by dreams and by visions, respecting this New World. Trammelled by poverty and by an unpopular cause, yet his persevering and unyielding heart would not allow any obstacle in his way too great for him to overcome; and the angel of God helped him—was with him on the stormy deep, calmed the troubled elements, and guided his frail vessel to the desired haven. Under the guardianship of this same angel, or Prince of America, have the United States grown, increased, and flourished, like the sturdy oak by the rivers of water. (*JD* 6:368)

Observe Christopher Columbus in his silent meditations; mark his untiring and faithful observations! Behold him watching the western breeze, and marking, with zealous eye and anxious heart, every substance that floated on the ocean's eastward bound current. . . . Inspired of the Almighty God of Heaven, he encountered the ridicule and jeer of a faithless and unbelieving world. . . . The Spirit Angel was their guardian and their guide, and was with them on the stormy deep. (*JD* 7:107–08)

Compare the coming of the Saints here, with the banishment of Joseph into Egypt, and the manner in which Columbus was sent off on his perilous exploration, and note the conclusion that follows. The world dreaded the germs of greatness which they saw. (*JD* 10:376)

There must needs be opposition in all things. We are told that in 1492 this American continent was discovered by Christopher Columbus. Look at the exertions made by him to obtain the necessary means to effect the discovery. It required ships, means and men to enable him to make his way across the trackless deep. . . . The Spirit of God came upon him and he had no rest day or night until he accomplished what the Spirit wrought upon him to do. . . . He applied to different crowned heads, and received rebuffs and discouragements. He was poor; the plans of Jehovah are mostly carried out by humble and poor individuals. So it was with Columbus; he was poor, but daring and persevering, and with a soul formed within his bosom to understand and prosecute the great enterprise that was to bring to light a vast continent reserved in the providence of God. (*JD* 10:375)

### *Joseph F. Smith*

Christ taught the gospel to Adam, and made known his truths to Abraham and the prophets. He was the inspirer of the ancient philosophers, Pagan or Israelite, as well as of the great characters of modern times. Columbus, in discovery; Washington, in the struggle for freedom; Lincoln, in emancipation and union; Bacon, in philosophy; Franklin, in statesmanship and diplomacy; Stephenson, in steam; Watts, in song; Edison, in electricity, and Joseph Smith, in theology and religion, found in Christ the source of their wisdom and the marvelous truths which they advocated. (*Gospel Doctrine* 31)

***Orson F. Whitney***

We believe . . . that Joseph Smith was inspired to begin this work, just as Gallileo [sic], Columbus, and other mighty men of old, whom I have not mentioned, were inspired to gradually pave the way leading to this dispensation. (*JD* 24:201)

***John A. Widtsoe***

The world owes most to the men, great and small, who in the name of truth have dared to challenge tradition. . . . In the public square of Genoa, 120 miles north of Pisa, stands a heroic monument to Christopher Columbus, one of the finest in Europe. Columbus spent the years of his young manhood in Genoa, and dreamed his great dreams there. A few miles northward, a little village puffs and blows because in it Columbus was born. Yet, when he challenged the geographical tradition of his day, he was scorned by his compatriots; and even when he had discovered America, jealousy and misunderstanding landed him in prison and left him broken-hearted. Nevertheless, the great era of geographical exploration and discovery may well be dated from Columbus. The history of human progress is indeed but the story of the men who have loved truth above all else, and who have refused to be coerced by unsupported tradition, however powerful its advocates have been. (*Man and the Dragon* 67–69)

***Mark E. Petersen***

The vision [1 Nephi 13:12] then became more specific. Says Nephi:

And I looked and beheld a man among the Gentiles, who was separated from the seed of my brethren by the many waters; and I beheld the Spirit of God, that it came down and wrought upon the man; and he went forth upon the many waters; even unto the seed of my brethren who were in the promised land.

It was Christopher Columbus whom he saw, and he observed that the discoverer was guided by divine power on his journey. (*The Great Prologue 3*)

***Spencer W. Kimball***

Columbus was led by God. I'm sure that he inspired a little boy, Christopher Columbus, to stand on the quays in Genoa, Italy, and yearn for the sea. He was filled with the desire to sail the seas, and he fulfilled a great prophecy made long, long ago that this land, chosen above all other lands, should be discovered. And so when he was mature, opportunity was granted to him to brave the unknown seas, to find this land which had been cut off from the rest of the world long centuries, and to open the door, as it were. (*Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball 427*)

***Ezra Taft Benson***

God inspired "a man among the Gentiles" (1 Nephi 13:12) who, by the Spirit of God was led to rediscover the land of America and bring this rich new land to the attention of the people in Europe. That man, of course, was Christopher Columbus, who testified that he was inspired in what he did. (*Teachings of Ezra Taft Benson 577*)

The temple work for the fifty-six signers of the Declaration of Independence and other founding fathers has been done. All these appeared to Wilford Woodruff when he was President of the St. George Temple. President George Washington was ordained a High Priest at that time. You will also be interested to know that according to Wilford Woodruff's journal, John Wesley, Benjamin Franklin, and Christopher Columbus were also ordained High Priests at the time. When one casts doubt about the character of these noble sons of God, I believe he or she will have to answer to God for it. (*Ibid 604*)