

ATAHUALPA AND THE BIBLE

CENTRAL HISTORICAL QUESTION

- ❓ Did Atahualpa hold the Bible to his ear?

MATERIALS

- 📄 PowerPoint Presentation - Atahualpa and Pizarro
- 📄 Textbook Passage - Atahualpa and the Bible
- 📄 Historical Document A - Francisco de Xeres's Account
- 📄 Historical Document B - Pedro Pizarro's Account
- 📄 Student Handout - Graphic Organizer

COMMON CORE ALIGNMENT

- ☰ Page 61 - #1 (Gr. 6-12), #2 (Gr. 6-8), #6 (Gr. 6-12), #8 (Gr. 6-12), #9 (Gr. 9-12), and #10 (Gr. 6-8)

PLAN OF INSTRUCTION

- 1 Use the PowerPoint to provide basic background information about Atahualpa and Francisco Pizarro. (Note: This lesson is not intended to provide a comprehensive overview of the Inca Empire or its conquest.)

(a) Slide 2: Sapa Inca Atahualpa. *Atahualpa was the 14th emperor of Tawantinsuyu, or Inca Empire, which spanned parts of present-day Peru, Chile, Ecuador, Bolivia, and Colombia. At the time of Atahualpa's reign, it was home to approximately 12 million people. He became Sapa Inca, or emperor, when he defeated his brother Huáscar in a civil war in 1532.*

(b) Slide 3: Francisco Pizarro. *Pizarro was a Spanish conquistador and distant cousin of Hernan Cortés. His first two expeditions to conquer the Inca Empire failed due to lack of resources and hostilities of the Inca. During his third expedition, he captured and executed Atahualpa. He then traveled to Cuzco, the capital of the Inca Empire, signaling the conquest of Tawantinsuyu. Later he founded Lima, which became the capital of Peru under Spanish rule.*

(c) Slide 4: Meeting at Cajamarca. *Atahualpa was traveling with his army to Cuzco to claim his position as emperor after his victory over Huáscar. The Inca and Spanish forces both neared a town called Cajamarca. Pizarro invited Atahualpa to come to the plaza. Atahualpa entered the town with several thousand unarmed men. When the Inca arrived, they saw no Spaniards since Pizarro had ordered his men to hide in order to launch a surprise attack. The only Spaniard to come forward was Friar Vicente de Valverde, who carried a Bible.*

(d) Slide 5: Central Historical Question. *Because this meeting was so important, many stories and legends have been told about what happened when Atahualpa and Friar de Valverde met. Today we will explore three different accounts to answer the central historical question: Did Atahualpa hold the Bible to his ear?*

2 Hand out the textbook passage and have students answer questions individually.

3 Discuss student answers. Ask students:

- (a) Why would Atahualpa hold the Bible to his ear?
- (b) What picture does this account paint of Atahualpa?
- (c) Is this account reliable?
- (d) How could we find out if this account is accurate or not?

4 Distribute Documents A and B and the Graphic Organizer.

Explain to students:

I'm passing out 2 documents about the meeting between Francisco Pizarro and Atahualpa. Read both and answer the graphic organizer and guiding questions.

5 Review student answers:

- (a) From what perspective were these accounts written?
- (b) According to each document, what did Atahualpa do to the Bible?
- (c) Whose perspective is missing from these documents? (*Answer: an Inca perspective.*) How would having a document from this perspective be helpful in determining whether or not Atahualpa held the Bible to his ear?
- (d) If you corroborate Documents A and B with the textbook, what do you conclude about whether or not Atahualpa held the Bible to his ear?

6 Discuss.

Why are these two documents more persuasive than the textbook? The answer has to do with sourcing and corroboration:

- (a) Both documents were written by eyewitnesses (as opposed to the textbook).
- (b) Both documents gave virtually the same account, even though they were written over three decades apart.
- (c) Although we don't know where the story of Atahualpa holding the Bible to his ear originates, the fact that neither Spanish document corroborates the account suggests that it probably didn't happen.

Finally, draw students' attention to the last paragraph of Document A. Explain to students that once Atahualpa was seized, he was imprisoned by the Spanish. Atahualpa's imprisonment dealt a huge blow to the Inca army, and the Spanish used Atahualpa while in captivity to collect silver and gold. Because the civil war had just ended, the empire was very divided, making resistance against the Spanish all the more difficult for the Inca. Two weeks after the meeting between Atahualpa and Friar Vicente de Valverde, the Spanish executed Atahualpa. Atahualpa's death precipitated the disintegration of the Inca Empire and the beginning of Spanish colonial rule.

REFERENCES

Textbook passage

Burstein, S. M., & Shek, R. (2006). *World history: Medieval to early modern times*. San Diego, CA: Holt, Rinehart, & Winston.

Document A

de Xeres, F. (1872). Report of Francisco de Xeres. In C. R. Markham (Ed. & Trans.), *Reports on the discovery of Peru*. New York: Burt Franklin. Retrieved from <http://archive.org/details/reportsondiscove04mark>

Document B

Pizarro, P. (1921). Relation of the discovery and conquest of the kingdoms of Peru. In P.A. Means (Trans.), *Documents and narratives concerning the discovery and conquest of Latin America*. New York: Cortes Society. (Original work published 1571). Retrieved from <http://archive.org/details/relationofdiscov00pizauoft>

TEXTBOOK PASSAGE - ATAHUALPA AND THE BIBLE

NAME: _____ DATE: _____

DIRECTIONS

Please read the document below and answer the questions that follow.

Biographies

Atahualpa

1502-1533

Atahualpa was the last Inca king. He was brave and popular with the Inca army, but he didn't rule for long. A Spanish friar offered Atahualpa a religious book to convince him he should accept Christianity. Atahualpa held the book to his ear and listened to it. When the book didn't speak, he threw it on the ground. The Spaniards used this as a reason to attack.

Source: A 2006 history textbook titled World History: Medieval to Early Modern Times.

QUESTIONS

(1) According to the textbook, what did Atahualpa do to the Bible?

(2) Is this account reliable? Why or why not?

(3) How could we find out if this account is accurate or not?

DOCUMENT A - FRANCISCO DE XERES'S ACCOUNT (MODIFIED)

Francisco de Xeres was a Spanish explorer who became a historian and the personal secretary of conquistador Francisco Pizarro. He participated in the conquest of Peru from 1531-1533. He wrote Reports on the Discovery of Peru in 1534.

Father Friar Vicente advanced, with a cross in one hand and the Bible in the other, to where Atahualpa was, and addressed him through an interpreter: "I am a priest of God, and I teach Christians the things of God, and in like manner I come to teach you. I teach what God says to us in this Book."

Atahualpa asked for the Book, that he might look at it, and the priest gave it to him closed. Atahualpa did not know how to open it, and the priest was extending his arm to do so, when Atahualpa, in great anger, gave him a blow on the arm, not wishing that it should be opened. Then he opened it himself, and, without any astonishment at the letters and paper, he threw it away from him five or six steps, and, to the words which the priest had spoken to him through the interpreter, he answered with much **scorn**, saying: "I know well how you have behaved on the road, how you have treated my Chiefs, and taken the cloth from my **storehouses**."

The priest told Francisco Pizarro what had passed between him and Atahualpa, and that he had thrown the Scriptures to the ground. Pizarro took his sword and dagger, and, with the Spaniards who were with him, entered amongst the Indians most **valiantly** and seized Atahualpa. Then the guns were fired off, the trumpets were sounded, and the Spanish troops, both horse and foot, attacked.

Source: From Reports on the Discovery of Peru, written by Francisco de Xeres in 1534.

GLOSSARY

scorn
belief that something is worthless

storehouses
building for storing goods

valiantly
bravely

DOCUMENT B - PEDRO PIZARRO'S ACCOUNT (MODIFIED)

Pedro Pizarro was a Spanish conquistador and cousin of Francisco Pizarro. He took part in most events of the Spanish conquest of Peru and wrote an extensive chronicle of them called Relation of the Discovery and Conquest of the Kingdoms of Peru, which he finished in 1571.

Don Francisco Pizarro sent Father Friar Vicente and an interpreter, with orders to go and speak to Atahualpa and require that he subject himself to the law of our Lord Jesus Christ and to the service of His Majesty and to say that Pizarro would regard him as a brother, and would not allow any injury be done to him nor any damage be done to his land. When the priest arrived, he spoke to Atahualpa and told him the things he had come to say, and he preached unto him the matters pertaining to our holy faith. The priest carried in his hands a Bible from which he read what he preached. Atahualpa asked for it and the priest closed it and handed it to him. When he had it in his hands he did not know how to open it, and he threw it upon the ground.

The priest returned and related all to Pizarro, who made a signal, and the Spanish began to fire and at the same time caused the trumpets to sound. It all happened in such a way that, with the noise of the firing, and the blowing of the trumpets and the bells on the horses, the Indians were thrown into confusion and were cut to pieces.

Source: From Relation of the Discovery and Conquest of the Kingdoms of Peru, written by Pedro Pizarro in 1571.

ATAHUALPA AND THE BIBLE - GRAPHIC ORGANIZER

NAME: _____ DATE: _____

DIRECTIONS

Please complete the Graphic Organizer below and answer the questions that follow.

Document	Who wrote the document? What is the author's perspective?	According to this account, what does Atahualpa do to the Bible?
A		
B		



QUESTIONS

(1) Do Documents A and B give the same account about what Atahualpa did to the Bible?

(a) Yes

(b) No

Explain:

(2) Does the textbook give the same account as Documents A and B?

(a) Yes

(b) No

Explain:



