



## “A new enlargement of Japheth” Ezra Stiles (1783)

*Ezra Stiles was a white Congregational minister and president of the college that later became Yale University. The following selection comes from a sermon Stiles delivered to newly elected members of Connecticut’s state government in his capacity as a minister of Connecticut’s state church. Titled The United States Elevated to Glory and Honor, the sermon predicted a splendid future for the newly independent United States and offered lengthy religious and political advice for how to achieve it. In this short selection, Stiles interprets European colonization of the Americas and the subjugation of indigenous peoples as fulfilling a biblical prophecy about the sons of Noah.*

[N]umerous population, as well as industry, is necessary towards giving value to land, to judiciously partitioned territory. The public weal requires the encouragement of both. A very inconsiderable value arose from the sparse, thin settlement of the American aboriginals, of whom there are not 50,000 souls on this side the Mississippi. The Protestant Europeans have generally bought the native right of soil, as far as they have settled, and paid the value ten-fold and are daily increasing the value of the remaining Indian territory a thousand-fold; and in this manner, we are a constant increasing revenue to the sachems and original lords of the soil. How much must the value of lands reserved to the natives of North and South America be increased to remaining Indians by the inhabitation of 200 or 300 millions of Europeans?

Heaven hath provided this country, not indeed derelict, but only partially settled and consequently open for the reception of a new enlargement of Japheth. Europe was settled by Japheth, America is settling from Europe—and perhaps this second enlargement bids fair to surpass the first, for we are to consider all the European settlements of America, collectively, as springing from and transfused with the blood of Japheth. Already for ages has Europe arrived to a plenary, if not declining, population of 100 millions; in 200 or 300 years, this second enlargement may cover America with three times that number if the present ratio of increase continues, with the enterprising spirit of Americans for colonization and removing out into the wilderness and settling new countries [...] There may now be 3 or 4 millions of whites, or Europeans, in North and South America, of which one half are in rapid increase [...] The number of French, Spaniards, Dutch, and Portuguese may be 1 million souls in all America, although they have transfused their blood into twice that number of Indians. The United States may be 2 million souls, whites, which have been an increase upon perhaps fewer than 20 or 30 thousand families from Europe.

Can we contemplate their present and anticipate their future increase and not be struck with astonishment to find ourselves in the midst of the fulfillment of the prophecy of Noah? May we not see that we are the object which the Holy Ghost had in view four thousand years ago, when he inspired the venerable patriarch with the visions respecting his posterity? [...] While the principal increase was first in Europe, westward from Scythia, the residence of the family of Japheth, a branch of the original enlargement, extending eastward into Asia and spreading round to the southward of the Caspian, became the ancient kingdoms of Media and Persia; and thus he dwelt in the tents of Shem. Hence the singular and almost identical affinity between the Persic and Teutonic languages, through all ages, to this day. And now the other part of the prophecy is

fulfilling in a new enlargement, not in the tents of Shem, but in a country where Canaan shall be his servant, at least unto tribute.

I rather consider the American Indians as Canaanites of the expulsion of Joshua, some of which, in Phoenician ships, coasted the Mediterranean to its mouth, as appears from an inscription which they left there. Procopius, [...] the historiographer of the great Belisarius, tells us that at Tangier he saw and read an inscription upon two marble pillars there, in the ancient Phoenician—not the then modern Punic—letter: "We are they who have fled from the face of Joshua the robber, the son of Nun." [...] The Canaanites, in coasting along from Tangier, might soon get into the trade winds and be undesignedly wafted across the Atlantic, land in the tropical regions, and commence the settlements of Mexico and Peru. Another branch of the Canaanitish expulsions might take the resolution of the ten tribes and travel northeastward, to where never man dwelt; become the Tchuschi and Tungusi Tartars about Kamschatka and Tscukotskoinoss, in the northeast of Asia; thence, by water passing over from island to island through the northern archipelago to America, become the scattered sachemdoms of these northern regions. [...] Amidst all the variety of national dialects, there reigns a similitude in their language, as there is also in complexion and beardless features, from Greenland to Del Fuego and from the Antilles to Otaheite, which show them to be one people. [...]

Indians are numerous in the tropical regions, not so elsewhere. Baron Lahontan, the last century, and Mr. Carver, so lately as 1776 and 1777, traveled northwest beyond the sources of the Mississippi. From their observations, it appears that the ratio of Indian population in the very heart of the continent is similar to that on this side of the Mississippi. By an accurate numeration made in 1766 and returned into the plantation office in London, it appeared that there were not 40,000 souls, Indians, from the Mississippi to the Atlantic and from Florida to the Pole. [...] Partly by actual numeration and partly by estimate, the Indians in the Spanish dominions in America are considered as 1 million souls in New Spain and 1½ million in Peru, or 2 or 3 million souls in the whole. [...] The aboriginals have been injudiciously estimated at 20 millions, but I believe they never exceeded 2 or 3 million souls in all North and South America since the days of Columbus.

The European population so surpasses them already that, of whatever origin, they will eventually be, as the most of them have already become, servants unto Japheth. [Already] 612,000 Indians pay tribute in Peru. We are increasing with great rapidity, and the Indians, as well as the million Africans in America, are decreasing as rapidly. Both, left to themselves, in this way diminishing, may gradually vanish; and thus an unrighteous slavery may at length, in God's good providence, be abolished and cease in this land of liberty.

But to return: The population of this land will probably become very great, and Japheth become more numerous millions in America than in Europe and Asia; and the 2 or 3 millions of the United States may equal the population of the oriental empires, which far surpasses that of Europe. There are reasons for believing that the English increase will far surpass others and that the diffusion of the United States will ultimately produce the general population of America.

**Source:** Ezra Stiles, *The United States Elevated to Glory and Honor* (New Haven, CT: Thomas & Samuel Green, 1783), as reproduced in John Wingate Thornton, ed., *The Pulpit of the American Revolution: Or, The Political Sermons of the Period of 1776* (Boston: Gould & Lincoln, 1860), 405-412, <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/hvd.32044009767450>. Public domain, Google-digitized.

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