

# ***Guns, Germs, and Steel* - Transcript**

## **Episode 2: Conquest**

Spanish coming into Inca city and challenging Ataxalpa

Voiceover: One day in November, 1532, the New World and the old world collided...

Spaniards and Incas in battle, Spaniards moving on with captured Incas

Jared on river in boat, in helicopter, studying old maps

Voiceover: 168 Spaniards attacked the imperial army of the Incas in the highlands of Peru. Before the day was out, they had massacred 7,000 people, and taken control of the Inca Empire. Not a single Spanish life was lost in the process. Why was the balance of power so uneven between Old World and New? And why, in the centuries that followed, were Europeans the ones who conquered so much of the globe? These are questions that fascinate Professor Jared Diamond. He is on a quest to understand the roots of power, searching for clues in the most unlikely places. He's developed a highly original theory that what separates the winners from the losers is the land itself – geography. It was the shape of the continents, their crops and animals that allowed some cultures to flourish while others were left behind. But can this way of seeing the world shed light on the events of 1532? How can geography explain the conquest of the world by guns, germs and steel?

Titles: Episode 2: Conquest

Conquistadors traveling, led by Pizarro, on mountainside

Voiceover: For two years, a band of Spanish conquistadors has been traveling in search of gold and glory. They're not professional soldiers, but mercenaries and adventurers, led by a retired army captain, Francisco Pizarro. He's already made a fortune for himself in the colonies of Central America. Now he's taking his men south, into unknown territory. They are the first Europeans to have climbed the Andes, and ventured this far into the continent of South America.

Pizarro and conquistadors finding local inhabitants

Voiceover: As they travel, they find evidence of a large native civilization. They've reached the edge of the mighty Inca Empire. For Indians and Spaniards alike, any encounter is a clash of cultures. These Indians have never seen white men before, and have no idea of the threat they represent. They can't imagine that within a few days, these strangers will turn their world upside down.

Earth from space, with highlighted areas

Voiceover: By the 1530s, the Inca Empire was enormous. It stretched along the length of the Andes, from modern-day Ecuador to central Chile, a distance of 2,500 miles. But just 500 miles to the north began the colonies of Central America and the Caribbean – prized possessions of

the Spanish empire. At the time, the Spanish king controlled a third of mainland Europe, but Spain itself had only recently become a unified state, having fought off 700 years of occupation by Islamic Moors.

Pizarro's home, with Jared walking around it

Voiceover: It was still a rural society. Most of the conquistadors came from villages and small towns in the heart of the country; towns like Trujillo, where Pizarro grew up. He spent much of his childhood here, working as a swineherd in the fields nearby. Today he's remembered as a great warrior. His statue dominates the main square in Trujillo, and his family home has been turned into a museum. Jared Diamond has come here to explore the world of the conquistadors, and understand the secret of their success.

Statue of Pizarro

Jared Diamond: This is Francisco Pizarro, a Spaniard who conquered the most powerful state in the New World, the Inca Empire. Why did Pizarro and his men conquer the Incas instead of the other way round? It seems like a simple question. The answer isn't immediately obvious. After all, Pizarro started out as a rather ordinary person, and Trujillo here is a rather ordinary town. So what is it that gave Pizarro and his men this enormous power?

Pizarro and conquistadors traveling

Jared Diamond: Why am I so interested in Pizarro's conquistadors? Because their story is such a grimly successful example of European conquest. And for 30 years I've been exploring patterns of conquest.

Voiceover: Jared Diamond is a professor at UCLA in Los Angeles. But most of his fieldwork has been done in Papua New Guinea. His time there inspired him to explore the roots of inequality in the modern world. To understand why some people have been able to dominate and conquer others. Looking back thousands of years, he argues that farming gave some cultures an enormous head start, and those who were lucky enough to have the most productive crops and animals became the most productive farmers. Agriculture first developed in a part of the Middle East known as the Fertile Crescent. Over time, crops and animals from the Fertile Crescent spread into North Africa and Europe, where they triggered an explosion of civilization. By the 16th Century, European farms were dominated by livestock animals that had come from the Fertile Crescent. None were native to Europe. They provided more than just meat. They were a source of milk and wool, leather and manure. And crucially, they provided muscle power.

Mules pulling ploughs, Incas cultivating land as llamas look on, Conquistadors riding onto Inca land

Voiceover: Harnessed to a plough, a horse or an ox could transform the productivity of farmland. European farmers were able to grow more food to feed more people, who could then build bigger and more complex societies. In the New World, there were no horses or cattle for farming. All the work had to be done by hand. The only large domestic animal was the llama, but these docile creatures have never been harnessed to a plough. The Incas were very skilled at growing potatoes and corn, but because of their geography, they could never be as productive as European farmers. Horses gave Europeans another massive advantage – they could be ridden. To the Incas, the sight of Pizarro's conquistadors passing through their land is extraordinary.

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They've never seen people carried by their animals before. Some think they are gods, these strange-looking men, part human, part beast. The horses that seemed so exotic to the Incas had already been used in Spain for 4,000 years. In an age before motorized transport, they allowed people to be mobile, and control their land.

Jared watching Javier riding

Voiceover: When Javier Martin is not herding cattle, he gives displays of traditional horsemanship.

Javier Martin: This style of riding is known as jimeta. The emphasis is on control and maneuverability, using bent knees to grip the sides of the horse, and only one hand on the reins. Very different from the more formal style of medieval knights. By the 16th century, the jimeta way of riding had become the dominant style of the Spanish cavalry. This is how the conquistadors would have ridden their horses.

Jared Diamond: It's an amazing display of a big animal being controlled by a person, precise control, stopping and starting and turning. Javier told me that he has been riding since he was five years old, and when I watched this, I have a better understanding where the conquistadors were coming from. They were masters of these techniques, and they learned these techniques for working with bulls, but the techniques were also good in a military context as well, and I can see that this control would let you ride down people in the open. People who had never seen horses before would have been absolutely terrified watching this. It would be strange and frightening, and that's even before one of these animals is rushing towards you, riding you down, about to lance you and kill you.

Inca messenger running to give news to Ataxalpa

Voiceover: News of the godlike strangers on their four-legged animals is taken by royal messenger to the emperor of the Incas, who's camped in the valley of Cajamarca in northern Peru, guarded by an army of 80,000 men.

Ataxalpa being beautified

Voiceover: Ataxalpa is revered as a living god, a son of the sun itself. He's in Cajamarca on a religious retreat, giving thanks for a series of recent military triumphs.

Messenger giving Ataxalpa the news

Voiceover: When he hears about the progress of the Spaniards, he chooses not to have them killed. Instead, he sends back a message. He invites them to join him in Cajamarca, as quickly as possible.

Messenger running to give reply

Efrain Trelles, Historian: Ataxalpa wanted the Spaniards to come to Cajamarca and enter into a trap, and to be sure that they would do so; he played like a psychological game with them, sending presents, asking them to come. Ataxalpa knew that the Spaniards were not gods. The intelligence reports speak of people wearing wool on their faces, like a lamb or like an alpaca, they're just like an animal. Then they went from one place to the other wearing on top of their heads a little pot that has never been used for cooking.

You need to be crazy to walk with a pot, but you must be beyond salvation if you arrive to a camp and you don't use that pot to cook. Ataxalpa had an idea that these were sub-humans. What could a few horsemen and a hundred or so Spaniards do to the powerful Inca? Virtually nothing.

Art depicting Spanish in battle

Voiceover: But Ataxalpa's spies don't realize that the Spanish are armed with some of the best weapons in the world. At the time of the conquistadors, Spain had the biggest army in Europe, orchestrated from the imperial capital, Toledo. For more than 700 years the Spaniards had been at war, fighting against the Moors and other European armies. There was an arms race in Europe. To survive, the Spaniards needed to keep up with the latest in weapons technology.

Man and Jared firing and loading guns

Voiceover: By the 1530s, the Jacobus was an important part of the Spanish arsenal. Gunpowder had originally come from China, but its use as a weapon was pioneered by the Arabs. In European hands, guns became lighter and more portable, and were used for the first time by foot soldiers on the battlefield. The Jacobus was still a crude weapon, but would go on to change the face of warfare.

Jared Diamond: To us moderns, this gun doesn't seem useful for anything, it's like a joke. Its aim is terrible, it takes a long time to reload, and while the shooter's reloading it a swordsman would come in and kill him, but the Incas hadn't even gotten this far, and even this gun, with its sound and with the smell and with the smoke and with every now and then a person that it manages to kill, would have been terrifying to someone who had never seen this before. This would have been shock and awe, 1532 style.

Sword smith at work as Jared watches

Voiceover: For all its bluster, the technology of gunpowder was still in its infancy. The real power of the conquistadors lay elsewhere, with the production of steel. Toledo had some of the best sword smiths in the world. But why were people here able to craft deadly steel weapons, while the Incas were still making simple bronze tools?

Man handling sword

Jared Diamond: There was nothing innately brilliant about Europeans themselves that allowed them to be the ones to make high quality swords. Just as with guns, swords were the result of a long process of trial and error that began outside Europe. People started working with metal in the Fertile Crescent 7,000 years ago, and because Europe is geographically close to the fertile crescent, Europeans inherited this metal technology. But they took this technology on to a new level. European soldiers demanded stronger, longer, sharper swords.

Jared Diamond: This is what a Toledo sword looks like when it's finished. This particular one is modeled on the sword that Pizarro carried. It's a fearsome weapon. It's used for stabbing and it's also used for slashing, and I can easily understand how the person wielding the sword could kill dozens of people within a short time.

Mike Loads, Historical Weapons Expert: Swords like this, rapiers, represented a high point in a very sophisticated metalworking technology. You think about what the qualities are that are

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needed in a sword. First of all, it has to be hard enough, the metal has to be hard enough to take a sharp edge, and that requires steel that is iron infused with carbon, and the more carbon you put into the iron, then the harder the metal is. But if you make it too hard, then it's brittle, and that's not good because as you hit somebody, your sword would break, and so you also need your sword to have a certain pliability, an ability to bend and spring back into shape. And it's got by heating it to certain temperatures, plunging it into cold water, immense amount of experimentation, it took centuries to get to the level of sophistication where you could get something so long and elegant and fine, and deadly as the rapier.

## Swordfight

Voiceover: The rapier, with its extra long blade, was developed as a dueling weapon, but became so fashionable in Renaissance Europe; it was the sword of choice for any aspiring gentleman.

Mike Loades: The word rapier derives from the Spanish term "espara ropera", and that means dress sword. And for the first time in Spain, we start to see people wearing the sword with their everyday clothing, their civilian dress, going about their everyday business. They didn't do that in the Middle Ages. This is something new in the 16th century, and it's saying I have arrived, I am a gentleman, I am upwardly mobile, and I claim ancestry from the knights of the Middle Ages. It was very much a symbol of the conquistadors' aspiring greed. The thing that drove them through all their hardships, the thing that made them go to the Americas, was their lust for gold, their lust for self-advancement, and the rapier absolutely symbolized that overbearing avarice.

Conquistadors traveling, looking across valley to huge town and massed troops

Voiceover: On November 15th 1532, Pizarro's band of adventurers entered the valley of Cajamarca. They've been told that Ataxalpa is waiting for them here. But they're not prepared for the sight that greets them. In the hills beyond the town of Cajamarca is the imperial Inca army - 80,000 men in full battle order. The conquistadors' own journals bear witness to their first impressions.

Diary Reading: Their camp looked like a very beautiful city. We'd seen nothing like it in the Indies until then, and it scared us, because we were so few and so deep in this land.

Spanish entering Inca camp and being taken to Ataxalpa

Voiceover: Pizarro sends a party of his best horsemen into the heart of the Inca camp. They are led by Captain De Soto. They are gambling that Ataxalpa will allow them to pass through the camp unharmed, and agree to meet them.

Efrain Trelles: Soto's visit had a very important psychological purpose; to intimidate the Inca in front of his people. Challenging him with the horse. Ataxalpa at first didn't react to Soto's presence, as if nobody had entered the room. Once the, the horse comes eye to eye with the Inca, the Inca is still calm, showing that the horse has no impact on him, calling Soto's bluff. The captain advanced so close that the horse's nostrils disturbed the fringe of the Inca's forehead. But the Inca never moved. And then, after a brief silence comes Ataxalpa's explosion. He was telling them, the time has come for you to pay. I understand this as the time has come for you to pay with your lives. Soto I understand was nervous enough to come back with fear to the, the camp, and as we know, the Spaniards spent

the night before in extreme fear.

### Spaniards' camp at night

Voiceover: The conquistadors had made their camp in the town of Cajamarca. Many of them are now convinced they are facing oblivion. 168 soldiers, 1,000 miles from any other Spaniard, facing an army of 80,000 Incas.

Diary Reading: Few of us slept that night. We kept walking the square, from where we could see the campfires of the Indian army. It was a fearful sight, like a brilliantly star-studded night.

Voiceover: Pizarro and his most trusted officers debate their options for how to deal with Ataxalpa. Some advise caution, but Pizarro insists their best chance is to launch a surprise attack the next day. It's a tactic that's worked successfully in the past. Twelve years before Pizarro went to Peru, another famous conquistador, Hernan Cortez, had gone to Mexico and encountered another formidable civilization; the Aztecs. He conquered the country by kidnapping the Aztec leader and exploiting the ensuing chaos. Cortez's story was later published and became a bestseller, a handbook for any would-be conquistador. It can still be found in the great library of Salamanca University in Northern Spain.

Jared Diamond: This wonderful library here can be thought of among other things as a repository of dirty tricks, because in these books are the accounts of what generals had been doing to other generals for thousands of years in the past and across much of Eurasia, and here from this library we have a famous account of the conquest of Mexico with all the details of what Cortez did to the Aztecs and what worked. That was a model for Pizarro to give him ideas what exactly to try out on the Incas, whereas the Incas without writing, had only local knowledge transmitted by oral memory, and they were unsophisticated and naïve compared to the Spaniards because of writing.

Voiceover: But if books were so useful, why couldn't the Incas read or write? To develop a new system of writing independently is an extremely complex process, and has happened very rarely in human history. It was first achieved by the Sumerian people of the Fertile Crescent at least 5,000 years ago. They pioneered an elaborate system of symbols called cuneiform, possibly as a way of recording farming transactions.

Ever since, almost every other written language of Europe and Asia has copied, adapted or simply been inspired by the basics of cuneiform. The spread of writing was helped enormously by the invention of paper, ink and moveable type, innovations that all came from outside Europe but were seized upon by Europeans in the Middle Ages to produce the ultimate transmitter of knowledge – the printing press. The written word could now spread quickly and accurately across Europe and Asia. The modern world would be impossible without the development of writing.

### Jared studying maps

Voiceover: But there's another part of the world where a new system of writing was invented independently. In Southern Mexico, at least 2,500 years ago, native people developed a way of working with symbols that involved into the Mayan script. But if the Maya had writing, why didn't it spread south to the Andes and help the Incas become literate? For Diamond, the answer lies in the shape of the continents.

Jared Diamond: Here were Europe and Asia forming the continent of Eurasia, a giant continent but it's stretched out from east to west, and narrows from north to south. The American continent

is long from north to south, narrow from east to west – very narrow at Panama where it narrows down to less than 100 miles. The two continents are of the same lengths, about 8,000 miles in maximum dimensions, but Eurasia is 8,000 miles from east to west, and the Americas are 8,000 miles from north to south, it's as if these continents were rotated 90 degrees of each other.

Voiceover: Diamond has already shown that crops and animals could spread easily east and west across Eurasia. Because places the same latitude automatically share the same day length and a similar climate and vegetation. But the American continents were the opposite of Eurasia. A journey from one end of the Americas to the other is a journey from north to south, a journey through different day lengths, different climate zones, and dramatically different vegetation. These basic differences hindered the spread of crops and animals as well as people, ideas and technologies. The people of the Andes were chronically isolated, without access to writing or almost any other innovation from elsewhere in the Americas. By contrast, Pizarro and his men were geographically blessed. As Spaniards, they enjoyed the benefit of technologies and ideas that had spread easily across Eurasia.

Jared Diamond: The events of 1532 were clearly influenced by deep causes, over which no individual Spaniard or Inca had any control. The shape of the continents, the distribution of plants and animals, the spread of Eurasian technology, these were facts of geography, and at almost every turn of the drama, geography was tilted in favor of the Europeans.

Conquistadors preparing for battle, inter-cut with Ataxalpa being prepared for day's events

Inca party en route to meeting

Voiceover: It's the morning of November 16th, 1532. Ataxalpa has agreed to meet the Spaniards in the town of Cajamarca, and sends his entourage ahead of him. But he makes a fateful decision; that his soldiers should not carry weapons.

Efrain Trelles: The Indians were musicians and dancers. They were soldiers, but unarmed. Why would Ataxalpa unarm his own soldiers? Why, because he was in the festivity, he was celebrating. He wasn't going to war. He was going for a celebration so that the whole people could see how the alleged gods would run away in fear. The fact that some people believed that the Spaniards were gods would play better in the hands of Ataxalpa's purpose. If I know they are not gods and I defeat the gods, then of course everybody will be with me. But what if I defeat the gods with no show of force at all? Then I am beyond the gods.

Party with Ataxalpa on litter

Voiceover: While Ataxalpa and his men enter Cajamarca, the Spaniards are waiting, hidden from view. Ataxalpa coming into main square with troops

Diary Reading: There were five or 6,000 men and behind them, the figure of Ataxalpa, seated in a very fine litter, lined with feathers and embellished with gold and silver. Many of us pissed ourselves out of sheer terror.

Efrain Trelles: The square is filled with Ataxalpa's people, but there's, there's not one Spaniard at sight. Ataxalpa asks, 'Where are these dogs?' One of his right hands answers, 'They have run away because they are afraid of magnificent Inca'. Of course the whole crowd listened to this and believed that this was the case.

Ataxalpa receiving visit from Spanish priest

Subtitles: I come before you in the name of Christianity...

Pizarro sends out his priest to confront Ataxalpa.

Subtitles: ...to show you the path of truth

The conquistadors are obliged to try and convert native people before any resort to violence.

Subtitles: What are you talking about hair face?

Subtitles: I am the Son of the Sun!

Subtitles: I have the right to govern my people

Subtitles: What right do you have to speak to me in this way?

Subtitles: My authority comes from The Lord

Subtitles: His Word is written in this book

Subtitles: This is your power?

Ataxalpa has never seen a book before. He doesn't know what to do with it.

Subtitles: It's worthless

Subtitles: I don't hear the word you speak of

Subtitles: How dare you, Indian dog!

Subtitles: Come out, Spaniards!

Subtitles: Destroy these dogs who don't respect things of God!

Spaniards open fire and battle begins

Efrain Trelles: At that moment, with the crowd absolutely unprepared, the horses come. There was massive panic.

Mike Loades: Just imagine the scene in Cajamarca. The Incas hadn't seen horses before, and these aren't ordinary horses, these are Spanish horses, fierce, big, fighting horses. They could get in amongst men, they would trample men and they made the most excellent platform. From the horse, you could stab down to the left, stab down to the right, you could cut, you could scythe, hacking all about you.

Voiceover: If only the Incas had known that what you had to do against cavalry was stand firm, then they'd have been alright, they had superior numbers, but they didn't know that. They fled,

they broke ranks, and then the horsemen could get in amongst them and they cut them down.

Mike Loades: There was an Inca god called Viracoxa, and he was a white man, and he was the god of thunder, and they thought these men with their aquabuses were the very incarnation of Viracoxa.

Efrain Trelles: The Inca Ataxalpa was in his litter, held by his carriers. As soon as they were able to do it, the Spaniards went after the litter. And they started killing the carriers. One carrier would fall, and another one would replace him. Only at the very, very, very end of the tragedy, the litter started to move because there were no more carriers left. As the litter falls, Pizarro himself captures Ataxalpa. His plan has worked to perfection. Ataxalpa is taken to a makeshift prison in the royal quarters at Cajamarca.

Diary Reading: He thought we were going to kill him, but we told him, no. Christians only kill in the heat of the battle.

Voiceover: Outside, thousands of Incas are dead. The rest of the army has retreated to the hills. In spite of a massive imbalance in number, Spanish horses, swords and strategy have proved decisive. But the Spaniards possessed another weapon they didn't even know they had – a weapon of mass destruction that had marched invisibly ahead of them.

Spanish slave showing signs of illness

Voiceover: Today, the war against infectious disease is waged at biological research centers like Porton Down in Southern England. They produce vaccines here against the world's deadliest viruses. In the 16th century there were no vaccines, and there was no protection from the rampant spread of infectious disease. Twelve years before Pizarro arrived at Cajamarca, a Spanish ship sailed to Mexico. On board, one of the slaves was suffering from the first signs of a fever. He was the first person to bring a deadly disease to the American mainland. The disease was smallpox. Within weeks, the smallpox virus would spread from a single source to infect thousands of native Americans.

Dr Tim Brooks, Health Protection Agency, Porton Down: Smallpox gets into the body when you breathe in the particles, and they attach themselves to the back of your throat and the inside of your lungs. About two to three days into the illness, then the classic rash appears, and in its worst forms, this takes over the whole of the body with initially pimples and then enormous blisters until the whole of the skin, starting with the hands and the face and then spreading down to cover the rest of the body, is taken over by the smallpox blisters. From that time on, the patient is highly infectious. Because each of those blisters is packed full of smallpox particles, then if you burst a blister, fluid will come out and large numbers of viruses will be spilt onto whatever it touches. Ten to twelve days later, his friends would be taken ill, and then ten to twelve days after that, their friends. That kind of rate means the disease spreads exponentially. Its rate of increase gets bigger and bigger and bigger the more people are infected, until eventually it will cause tremendous devastation in the population.

Depiction of smallpox victims, Smallpox victim being nursed

Jared in field looking at cows and sheep, Livestock in fields

Voiceover: The first smallpox epidemic of the New World swept through Central America and

reached the Inca Empire. Wherever it went, the virus decimated native populations, making them easier prey for Spanish conquest. But why were the germs so one-sided? Why did the Spaniards pass their diseases onto the Incas, and not the other way around?

Jared Diamond: This is Pizarro's secret weapon; pigs and cows, sheep and goats, domestic animals. Remember that Pizarro was a swineherd. He grew up in huts like this, in intimate contact with domestic animals, breathing in their germs, drinking the germs in their milk, and it was from the germs of domestic animals that the killer diseases of humans evolved, for example our 'flu evolved from a disease of pigs transmitted via chickens and ducks. We acquired measles from cattle; we acquired smallpox from domestic animals, so that these worst killers of human people were a legacy of 10,000 years of contact with our beloved domestic animals.

Voiceover: During the Middle Ages, infectious diseases swept through Europe and claimed millions of lives. But paradoxically, repeated epidemics made Europeans more resilient. In each outbreak, there were always some people who were genetically better able to fight off the virus. These people were more likely to survive and have children. In the process, they'd pass on their genetic resistance.

Over centuries, whole populations acquired some degree of protection against the spread of diseases like smallpox – a protection the Incas never had.

Tim Brooks: Once smallpox was taken to the New World, nobody in the New World had ever seen a disease like this before, so the number of people who were susceptible was much greater. There was no natural immunity, and so therefore the number of people who could both contract the disease and then spread it, and the number of people to receive it once it had spread, was much higher.

Voiceover: More people would die, and more people would be susceptible to catch it in the first place. It would spread rapidly throughout the population, and the death toll would be enormous.

Jared Diamond: Why hadn't Native Americans encountered smallpox before? And why didn't they have any deadly diseases of their own to pass on to the Spaniards?

It's simply because they didn't have the same history of contact with farm animals. The Incas had llamas, but llamas aren't like European cows and sheep. They're not milked, they're not kept in large herds, and they don't live in barns and huts alongside humans. There was no significant exchange of germs between llamas and people.

Voiceover: The key to Diamond's argument is the distribution of farm animals around the world. Aside from the llama, all the large farm animals were native to Eurasia and North Africa. None was ever domesticated in North America, Sub-Saharan Africa, or Australia. As a result, the worst epidemic diseases were also native to Eurasia and North Africa, and were then spread around the world with deadly effect. There's been a long debate about the number of indigenous people who died in the Spanish conquest of the New World. Some scholars think there may have been a population of 20 million Native Americans, and the vast majority, perhaps 95%, were killed by Old World diseases. A continent virtually emptied of its people.

Ataxalpa playing chess

Voiceover: After the initial shock of his capture, Ataxalpa became a cooperative prisoner. He learned to speak Spanish, and play chess with his captors. The Spaniards realized he was more useful to them alive than dead. He was allowed to re-establish his court in prison, as long as he

ordered his people to accept Spanish rule. He also ordered them to melt down a vast amount of treasure. Pizarro had promised Ataxalpa his freedom in return for the gold. It proved to be an empty promise. Having handed over 20 tons of gold and silver, Ataxalpa was no longer useful to his captors. He was garrotted to death, in the same square where so many of his followers had been slaughtered eight months earlier. With Ataxalpa dead, the conquistadors went on to colonize the rest of Peru. Relying on the power of their guns, germs and steel.

Voiceover: Gold from the Spanish colonies was brought back to Seville in Southern Spain. There's little activity in the Guadocreata River today, but in the 16th century, this was among the most important, busiest ports in the world. A steady flow of ships carrying treasure from the Americas helped Spain become one of the richest nations on earth. The conquistadors had changed forever the relationship between Old World and New.

Jared Diamond:: I came to Spain to answer a question – why did Pizarro and his men conquer the Incas instead of the other way around? There's a whole mythology that that conquest and the European expansion in general resulted from Europeans themselves being especially brave or bold or inventive or smart, but the answers turn out to have nothing to do with any personal qualities of Europeans. Yeah, Pizarro and his men were brave, but there were plenty of brave Incas. Instead, Europeans were accidental conquerors. By virtue of their geographic location and history, they were the first people to acquire guns, germs and steel.

Steam train, Slaves in chains, Guns being loaded and fired on people armed with spears

Voiceover: By the end of the 19th century, European powers had ventured down the Americas and colonized Africa, Australia and much of Asia. The process that began at Cajamarca had reached its logical conclusion. European guns, germs and steel were reshaping the world.

ENDS