

# The Life of Solomon Ginsburg

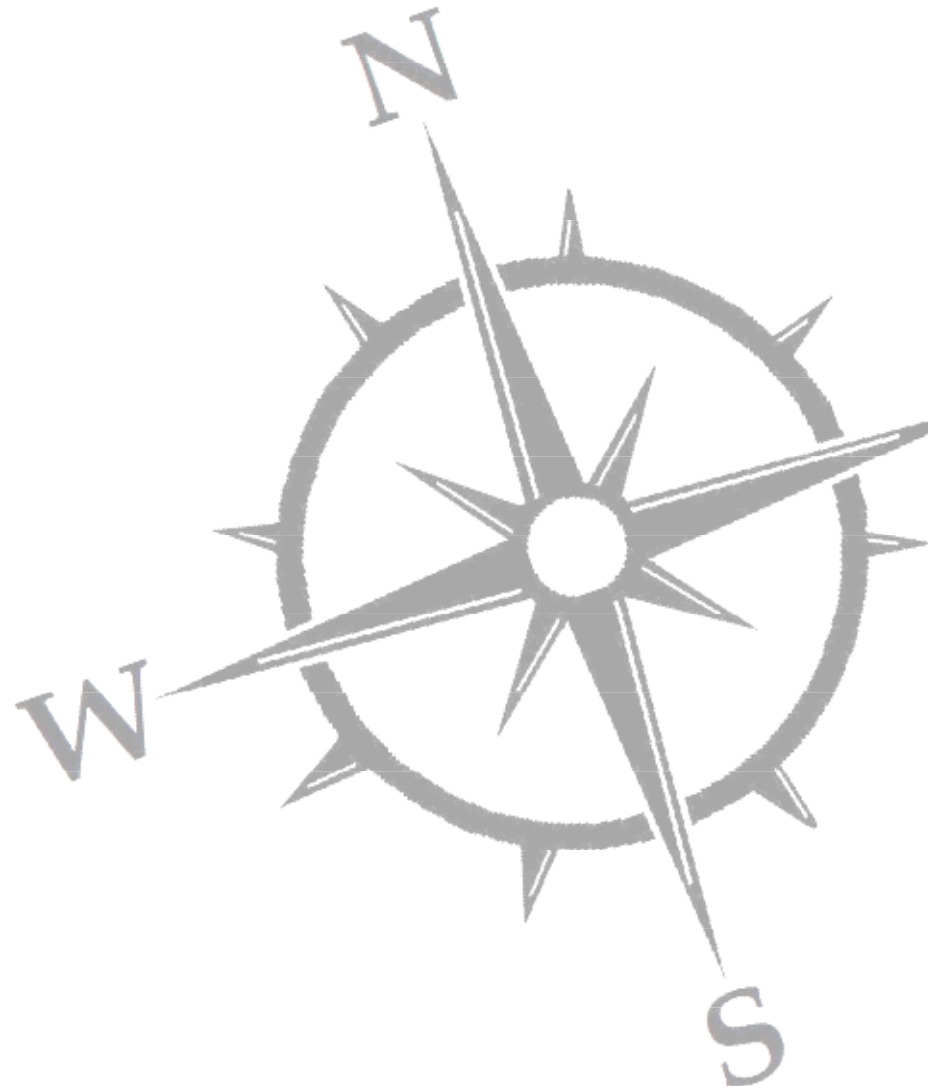
(1867-1927)

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## Lesson: 2.23 – Change Missionary Snapshot Series

This story reminds us that God can change the heart of even the worst sinner. God's wonderful gift of salvation will transform someone from God's enemy into God's child. God completely changes them. They are not just trying to live better or turning over a new leaf, they are completely new on the inside. Solomon Ginsburg watched God take those who were once God's enemies and transform them into His servants.

*"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." - 2 Corinthians 5:17*







### **Introduction:**

How many of you have ever seen a cocoon or chrysalis? Cocoons and chrysalises are amazing things. An ugly, fat caterpillar goes inside of it and a little while later, a beautiful butterfly comes out. A great change happens on the inside of that cocoon. Missionaries often get to see God do amazing things in the hearts of people. They often risk their lives to go and tell people about Jesus' love. In our story today, someone is planning something terrible, will God keep our missionary safe? Let's listen carefully and see what happens in this story about Solomon Ginsburg...

### **Missionary Story:**

TOOOOT! The train gave one last blast as it pulled away from the station in Queimadas. I had come on a Saturday and the market was bursting with thousands of people who had come from all over that region to sell their goods. I set up my little organ in an open courtyard and began to play some hymns. If there is one thing a Brazilian likes, it is music, and it did not take much

time to collect an enormous crowd. Someone in the crowd thought that I was singing for money and the crowd began to place nickels and dimes on the little organ.

I stood up on the stool and began to explain that I had not come for their gifts, but to tell them of the greatest gift of God—a Savior who would give a wonderful gift to those who would ask for it. The crowd listened intently as I told the thousands of souls that had never heard of the love of God, and of the Savior who could save them. Just as I was finishing speaking, my friend who had come with me, pointed to the far edge of the crowd. The relatives of the local priest were stirring up a part of the crowd telling them that I was the long expected anti-christ. It did not take me long to see the danger I was in as more and more people became angry. I kept on preaching fearing that as soon as I stopped, they would attack me and kill both me and my friend. While I preached, I also prayed and asked the Lord to come to my rescue. I was alone in this place. I did not know anyone and had not even visited the chief of police to tell him my plans. How were we going to escape this crowd? Several were taking out their daggers. I saw the metal reflect in the sunlight. I prayed again, asking the Lord to show me a way out, not so much for my own self, but for my friend who had so willingly left his wife and children and come with me to help me in my work. My friend looked up at me with a scared look on his face as if to say, "what are we going to do?"

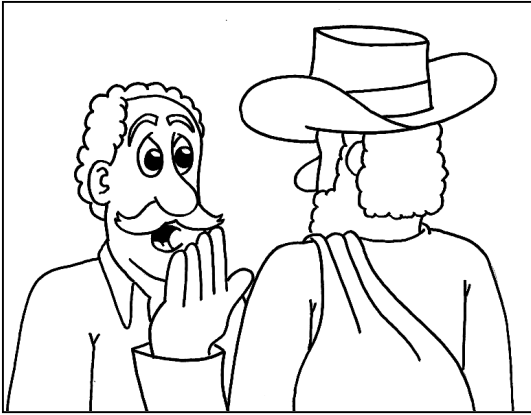
Suddenly, a man right next to me in the crowd told me to get down off the stool. I

slowly climbed down and he leaned in close. "We have come to take you to our homes," he whispered. This was a great surprise! Soon, I was safe in one of the hotels in town protected by soldiers with loaded guns. I thanked the Lord over and over again for hearing my prayers and delivering us from that angry crowd.

Very soon after this, I traveled to the northern section of Pernambuco. Here, there was a group of bandits who had done many terrible things. Their leader was Antonio Silvino, a terrible criminal who had a reputation for being a quick and accurate shooter. Little did I know, but an Italian monk, named Celestino, had told this bandit some crazy stories about me and had hired him for \$50 to kill me. Antonio learned that I was supposed to be arriving in the village of Moganga on a certain morning.

Not knowing anything about any of this, I got up early that morning and traveled to Moganga. About five o'clock in the morning, I passed by a man on the side of the road, who was holding a double-barreled gun. Thinking the man was out hunting, I stopped, kindly greeted the man, and then rode on. The people of Moganga had heard of the plot and were shocked to see me alive. A large crowd came to the evening meeting which lasted until almost midnight. I was very tired, I went back to the room that I was staying at and lay down in my hammock to sleep. Just then, there was a quiet knock at the door and a man stepped in the front room and in a deep voice said, "I am Antonio Silvino and I am here for Senor Solomon." My heart stopped. Someone in the crowd had





told me after the service about Antonio being sent and the terrible plan he had. "This is it... this is the end," I thought falling to my knees. I prayed that God would give me courage and strength to have a good testimony and that He would protect me. I opened my door and stepped out into the front room. My eyes looked first at his hands that rested on his gun and then at his face.

"Do you know who I am and why I have come here?" asked the bandit. "Yes, you are Antonio Silvino and you have been hired to kill me," I replied. "That is true," the bandit said not even blinking but continuing to stare right at me. I closed my eyes and whispered on last prayer for my wife and children, whom I would never see again. Antonio looked down at his gun. And then he looked up again...only this time I did not see anger in his eyes, I saw tears. "Mr. Solomon, the monk that hired me said that you were a wicked, dangerous person and gave me money to kill you. I don't know if you recognize me, but early this morning you spoke to me very kindly on the side of the rode. I was surprised by your kindness and I

decided not to shoot you right away, but to find out a little more about you. I wore a disguise and came to your meeting this evening. I watched you singing and praying and preaching. Sir, I know now that you are doing a good work and I will not kill you. I would rather kill the man who hired me and told me such lies about you."

I let out a sigh of relief. Antonio and I talked and prayed the rest of the night. It was there in the front room that the bandit leader, who had killed sixty-six people, was converted and the changes in his life became the talk of the entire region. Later on, a news reporter for a paper went to interview Antonio. The reporter disgustedly wrote: "All Antonio Silvino will talk about is the Bible." Yes it is wonderful, what the Lord can do in the life of a sinner who repents over his sin. The blood of Jesus is still enough to save even the ugliest sinner to the uttermost.

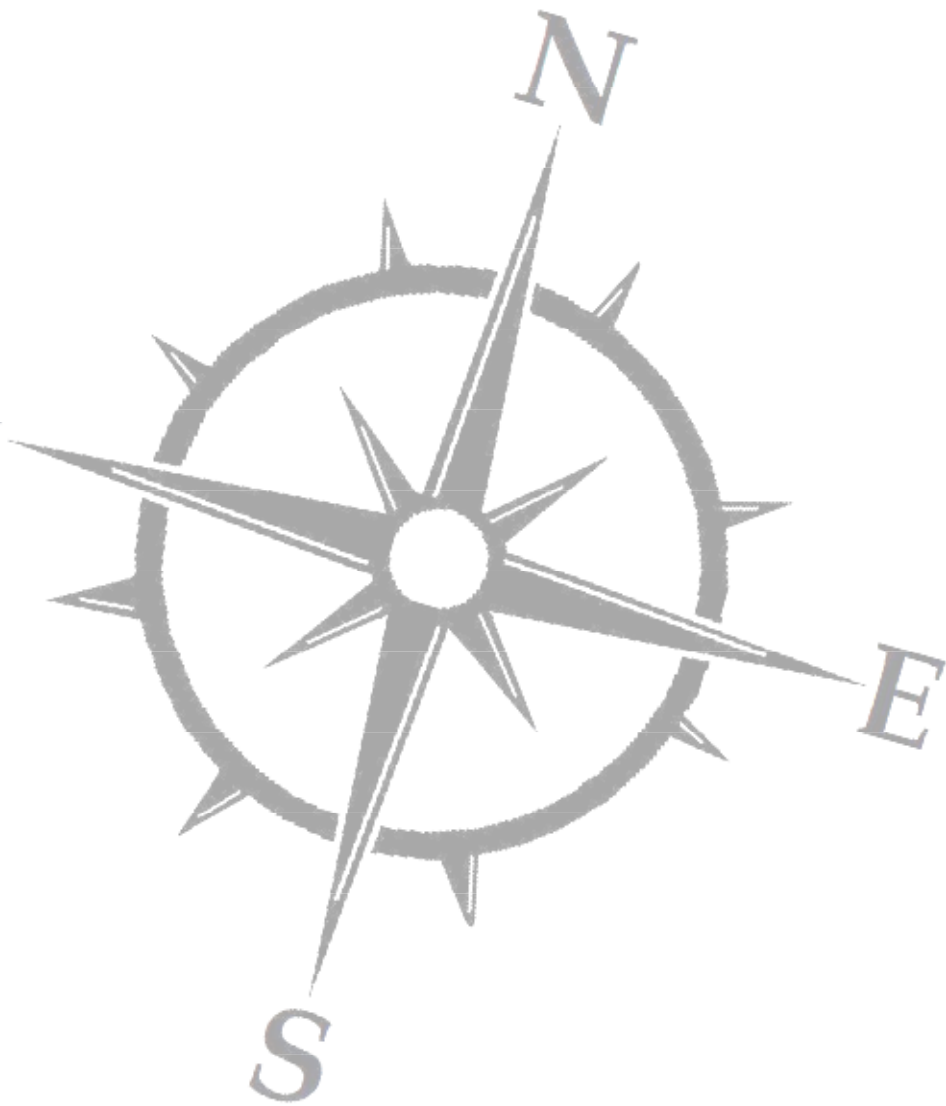
God had spared me once again and had allowed me to continue to tell others of His great love for them. After a month of traveling, I reached home and found a letter from a group of women in the United States. I opened the letter and began to read it: "Dear Brother Ginsburg, in our missionary meeting today we felt led to offer special prayers to our Heavenly Father to bless you and protect you from all danger. May the Lord continue to bless you and keep you safe." I looked at the top of the letter and my heart skipped a beat. The letter was dated for the very same day that I had met Antonio Silvino.

### **Application:**

You know, boys and girls, Ezekial 36:26-27 tells us that God can save even the worst of sinners. He can change our dirty hearts and make them clean and new through His salvation. Some people are afraid to tell others about the Lord. Solomon Ginsburg was not afraid to tell even murderous bandits about Jesus. Antonio Silvino wasn't the first or the last bandit that was hired to kill Solomon, but the Lord protected Solomon each and every time. Solomon knew that he could trust God to protect him as he served the Lord.

Solomon Ginsburg worked in Brazil for nearly 35 years. During that time, he saw over 820 churches started and over 20,000 people come to know the Lord. Solomon's family was Jewish. When he was saved, he was banished and made to work in a press room to survive. Later on, he used that knowledge to run the Baptist Mission Press in Brazil. The press printed Bibles and literature that were sent all over Brazil, but especially to the 750 prisons found there. One prisoner who was saved, walked 300 miles to tell his family of the great change God had done in his life. Like a fire, Solomon Ginsburg's life had lit up the darkness of Brazil and had brought many, many people into the wonderful saving light of the gospel.

*(For additional information, discussion questions and materials on this lesson please refer to **Lesson 2.24 on page 90 in your Burma Expedition - Leader's Guide.**)*



# References

For further reading or to obtain more information on this portion of the life of this missionary, please consult the following sources from which we obtained our information:

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