

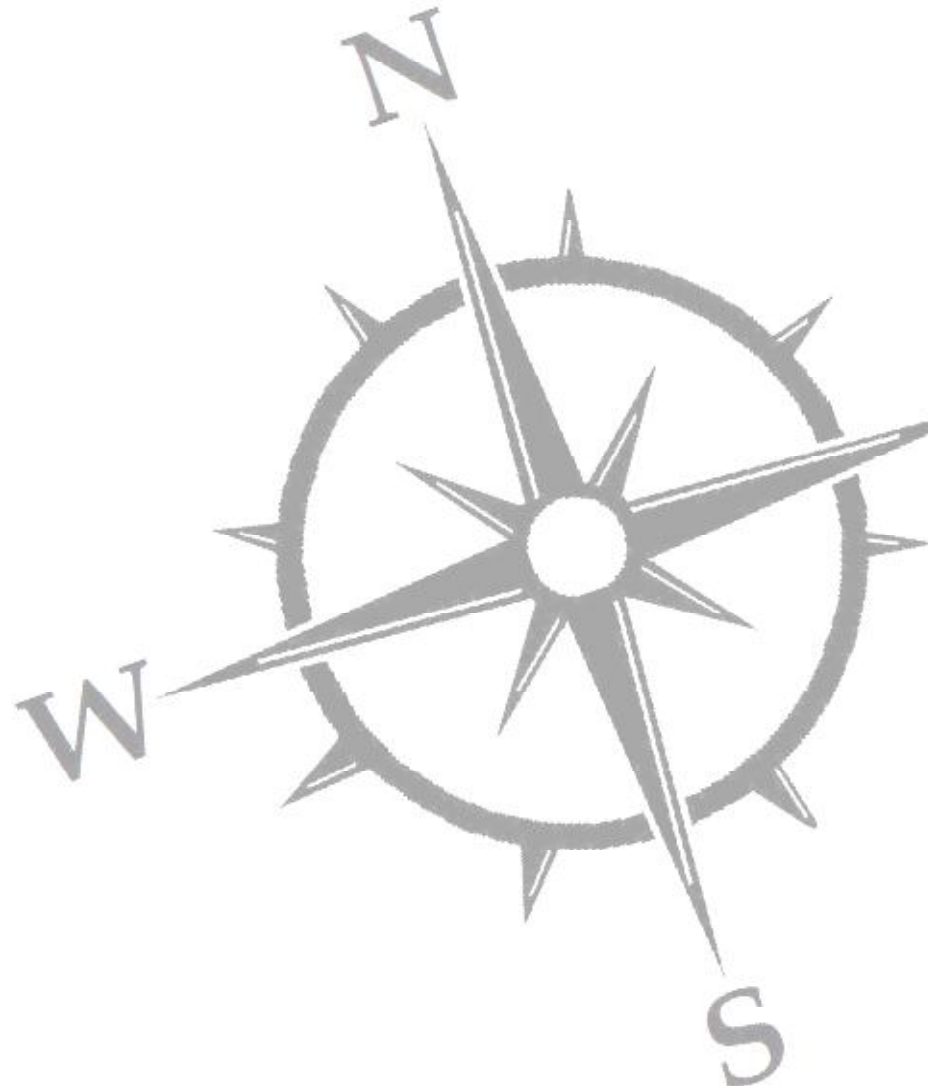
The Life of Adoniram Judson

(1788-1850)

Lesson: 2.3 – Lost Missionary Spotlight Series

This story reminds us of how important the soul of each sinner is to God. God loves the world and desires for everyone to be saved. The angels rejoice over every person who is saved. God had some big plans for Adoniram Judson, but Adoniram also needed to learn some things first. The first thing God wanted Adoniram to see was that he was lost and needed to be found.

“For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.” – Luke 19:10







thought back to when I was just a little boy in the United States. My mom and dad always had high hopes for me. I wondered what they would be thinking of me if they could see me now. I grew up in Massachusetts in a small town called Wenham. My father was a pastor of a small church in our town. When I was just three years old, I had learned to read and could quote the whole 23rd Psalm by memory. The other kids gave me a lot of nicknames in school because of how quickly I learned and how well I did in class. I couldn't help it, I loved to learn about new things and it always seemed to come easy to me.

One evening after dinner, my father pulled out an envelope. "Do you recognize this?" he asked. Indeed I did. It was a letter that I had tried to mail earlier that morning. I had figured out the answer to a puzzle that came in the newspaper the week before. The puzzles were meant for adults, but even as a young boy, I thought that I had figured it out. I had written out my answer, put it in an envelope, and taken it over to the post office. The man at the post office had taken it from me only two hours ago, and somehow since then, he had given the letter to my father. My father said "Now let me see what kind of a fool my son was going to make of himself..." as he tore open the envelope and read my answer to himself. Then he told me to go and get him the newspaper. He read the question and then my answer and then the question once again. Finally, my mother interrupted and asked him to pray for the meal and cut the meat. He quietly set my answer and the newspaper down and said nothing more

about it. I wondered what he was going to do. "Would I be punished for trying to mail that letter?" I wondered as I chewed on a bite of my dinner.

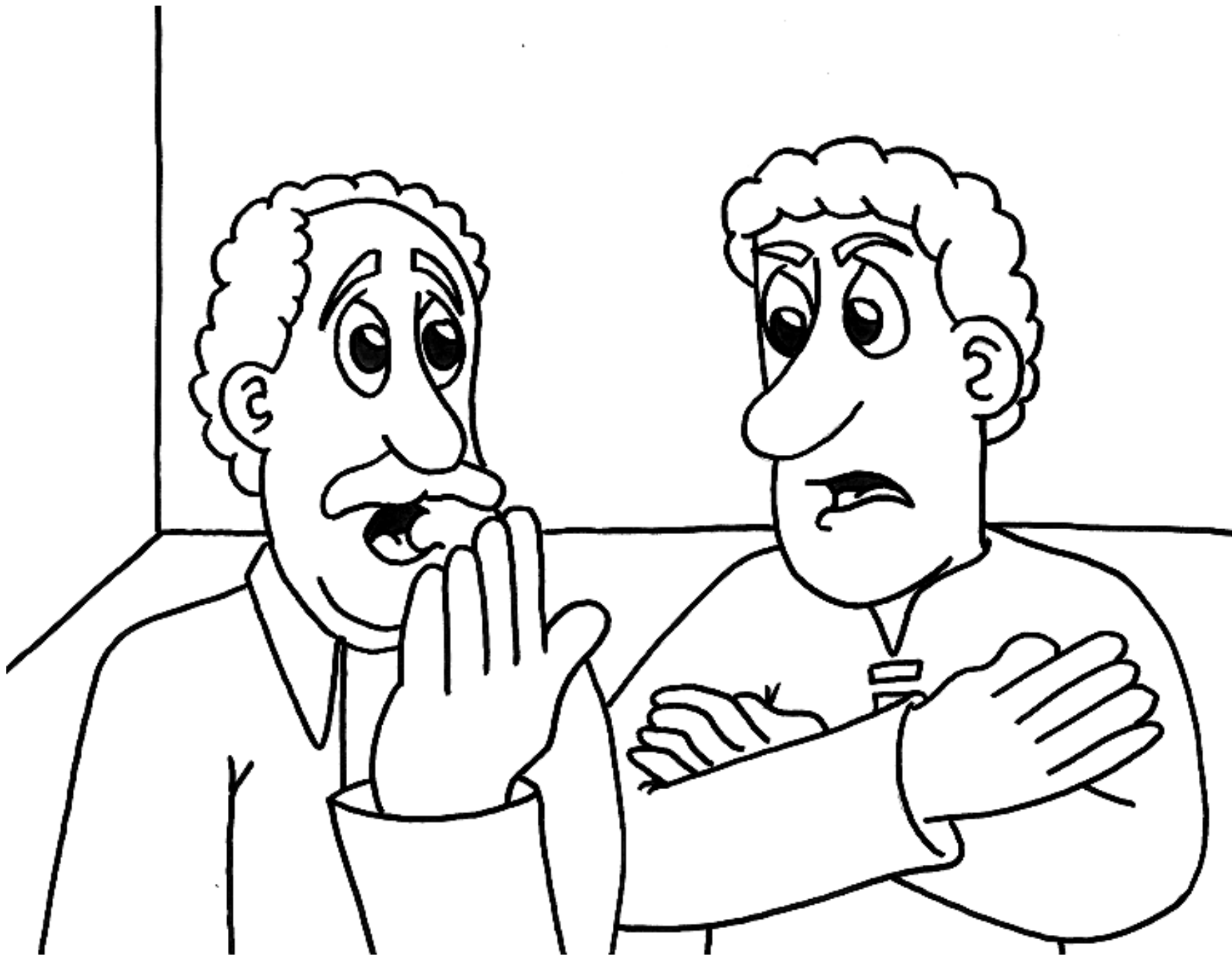
My father said nothing about the puzzle the rest of that night or the following morning either. All through the day, I wondered what my punishment would be. That evening before dinner, my father asked me to come into his study. Normally those were not good words to hear. I walked into the study awaiting to hear my punishment. Instead, my father pulled out a book and handed it to me. "It's a book of puzzles," he said. "Once you complete these, I'll buy you a harder book." He went on to say that he had also enrolled me in Captain Morgan's School of Navigation.

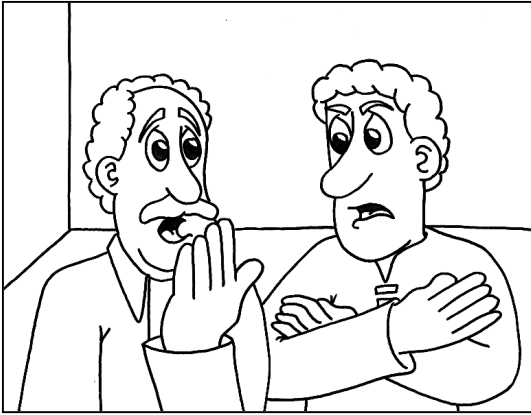
The navigation school was fascinating. I learned how to use all kinds of tools and how to tell where I was by looking up at the stars. Soon afterward, my father got very sick. Our whole family moved a couple of times and finally settled in a town called Plymouth. My father began being a pastor at a church there. I became sick as well and had to be out of school for almost a year. When I returned, I decided that I was going to catch up on everything that I had missed. I did so well that I finished school when I was sixteen years old, which was a whole year ahead of time. My father decided that I should go to Rhode Island College in Providence which was about thirty miles away from where I lived.

I was excited to begin, but first I had to take my entrance exams, which were some tests to see how much I knew. I remember

ROAR! The sound shook me out of my sleep. I was lying on my back chained between two other prisoners. To prevent us from trying to escape, the guards would chain our feet to a piece of wood each night and raise it in the air so that just our neck and shoulders touched the ground. The roar that had waked me from my sleep had come from the lion that the guards were keeping in a cage just outside our small prison hut. They had caught the lion a few weeks before. Yesterday, we overheard one of the guards say to another that they were going to starve the lion for a little while and then when he was good and hungry they would set him loose on the prisoners to eat whomever he chose. Each day the lion did not eat, his roar grew louder and louder. As I lay there, I suddenly heard some keys jingling in the lock of our hut. "What was going to happen? Had they let the lion out?" I wondered. The door slowly opened and a guard peeked his head inside and then quietly shut the door and left. The guard must have just checked on us to see that we were all still chained up.

As I lay there in the darkness, I





finishing my last exam and looking up and realizing that no one around was finished. I read over my answers again...nervous that maybe I had missed something. Finally, the teacher said that the exam was over. I turned in my papers and went out for a walk. About two weeks later, I hurried over to where they had put up the results. I looked through each of the lists, but couldn't find my name anywhere on any of them. If I had failed these tests, it would mean that I couldn't go to college, but had to go back home. I quickly looked at the lists again. Someone walked up behind me and patted me on the back. "Don't see your name there do you?" he asked. It was my new friend Jacob Eames. Jacob told me that I had done so well on the tests that they were letting me skip my first year of college and move on to my second year.

Soon after that, Jacob introduced me to some rich friends of his named John Bailey and Nicholas Brown. Nicholas Brown's father had given so much money to the school that they had changed the name of the school to Brown University.

Because I was friends with these rich people, I was invited to a lot of parties. Even though I kept my grades up, I began to party a lot with my friends. My father did not know about my partying or about something else that he would have thought was much worse. My friend Jacob Eames was a deist. Deists believed that God doesn't care at all about people and that there is no place like Heaven or Hell after you die. I had talked with Jacob and decided that I was going to become a deist too.

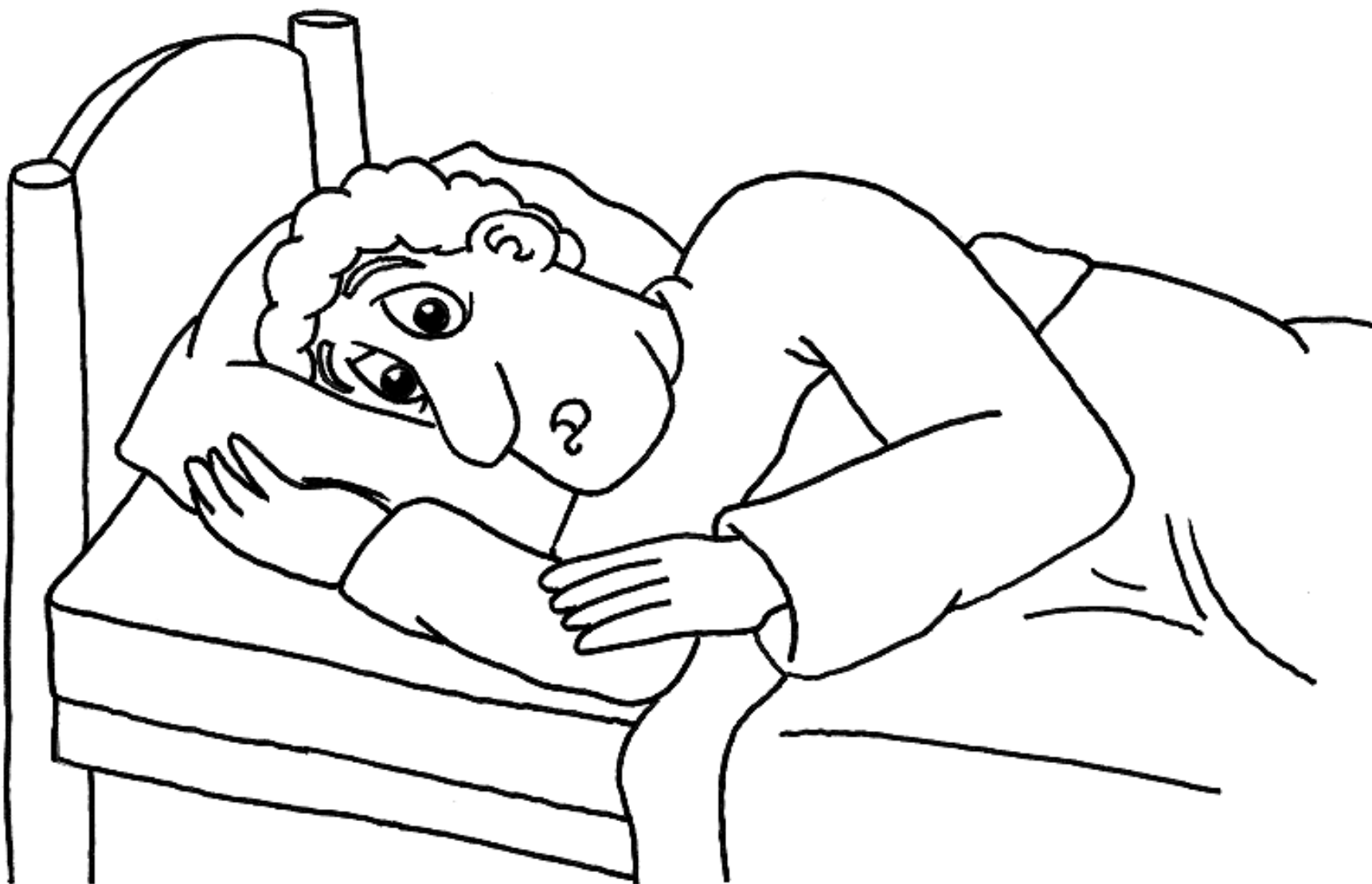
I continued to do very well in school and finished up first in my class. After I graduated, I went back home to figure out what I wanted to do. I decided to open a school called the Plymouth Independent Academy. I didn't think that the school books were very good, so I wrote two new books to use in the school. I was living at home with my parents and after a couple of years, I was tired of teaching. I remembered Jacob talking about going to New York and making lots of money by writing plays and being an actor. I thought it over for some time and decided that I would go to New York myself.

I told my parents the following night about my plans. "Why New York?" my mother asked me. "Besides you have done so many wonderful things with your school that you started!" I told my mother that I didn't want to be a teacher anymore. My father suggested that I become a pastor like he was. Before I thought about it, I blurted out "There is no way I would ever become a pastor, I don't even believe in Heaven or Hell...I am a deist." My father stood there

silently with his mouth open and my mother began to cry softly. My father told my mother to leave the room and then argued with me for hours about it. When we finished my father said, "The college has taught you how to argue very well. I will only say that you are wrong and I hope that someday you come to see that."

Soon after, I packed up my belongings, saddled up my horse, and set out toward New York. I had decided to stop along the way at my uncle's house in Albany and then ride the brand-new steamboat to New York. When I arrived at my uncle's house, I spent the night there. The following morning, I left my horse with my uncle and got on board the steamboat. By the time I arrived in New York, I had all sorts of ideas about plays that I could write and act in. Things weren't as easy as I had thought they would be though. After a week of being in New York, I had not found any work. I ended up traveling with a group of inexperienced actors. We had run out of money. Since none of us had a job, we often looked for ways to trick others. We stayed at hotels and then snuck out early the next morning before paying for the night's stay.

After about a month, of living like this, I decided that I needed to leave. I headed back to my uncle's home to get my horse. Because I had no money left, I had to walk instead of take the steamboat. I worked for farmers along the way in exchange for a meal and a place to rest for the night. "What a bad idea this had been!" I thought. I wondered if Jacob had struck it rich as a lawyer by now and how he would probably





laugh if he could see me now.

When I finally reached my uncle's house, my uncle had gone on vacation and had left a young pastor at his home. The pastor welcomed me in and gave me some supper. After dinner, we talked about religion. Normally I could easily argue with people about religion, but this time I realized that I was kind of jealous about what this young pastor seemed to have. He had a purpose in his life and real happiness and joy.

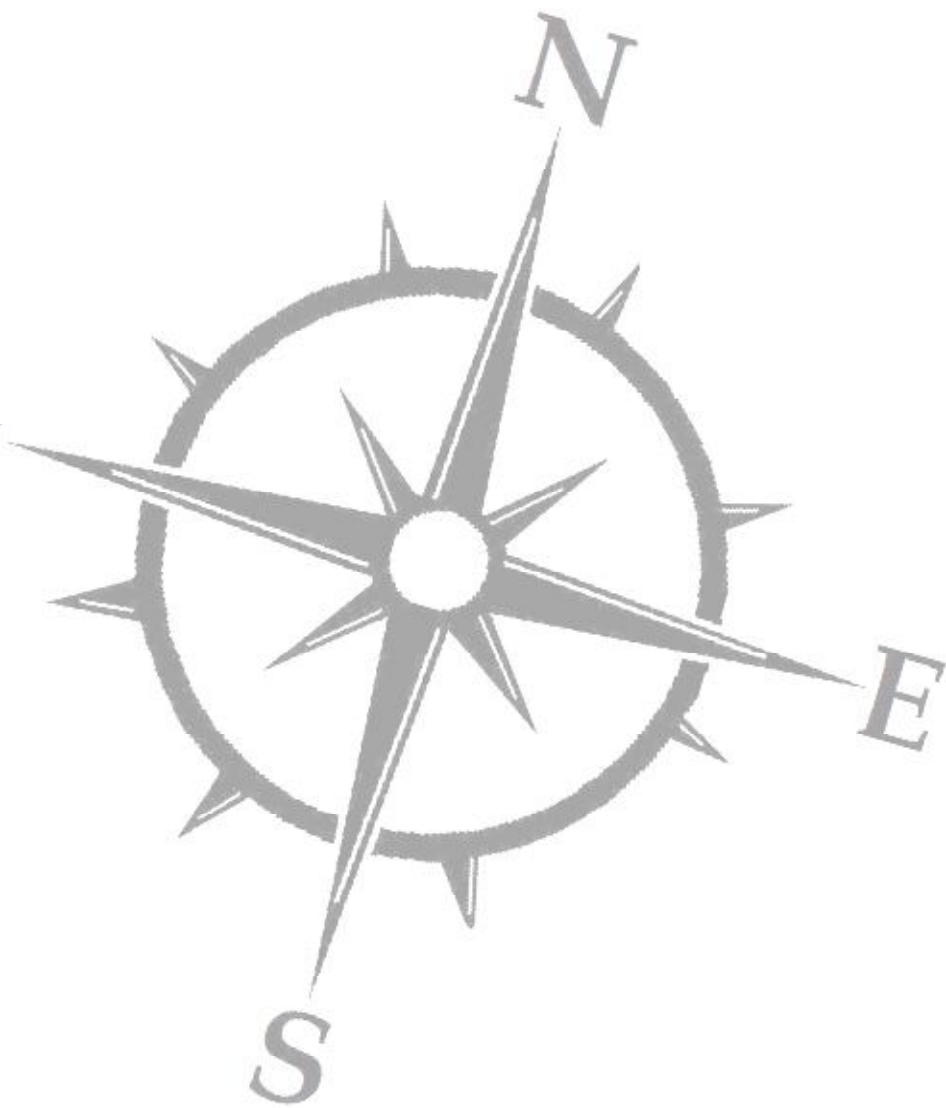
The next morning, I said goodbye and I decided that I would head west and see if I could make my fortunes there. I rode all day until I came to a small village late in the evening. The innkeeper told me that he didn't have any rooms left. As I thought back to all the horrible places that I had slept in New York, I told him anything would be fine. He finally told me that there was one room that I could probably share. There were two beds in the room separated by a curtain, but he said that the man in the other bed was very sick. I told him that I was so tired from all of my

travels that I doubted that the man would keep me awake. I was wrong! I lay there in bed listening to the man cough and groan, and to the footsteps of a woman as she came in and out of the room to bring him various things. I began to wonder what that man believed about Heaven and Hell. "Was he one of those people that my parents used to call a lost person? Or did he feel like he had a purpose in life like that young pastor I had met? Or was he like me, not sure what to do?" I wondered. I could hear the bell in the town ring with each passing hour. If only Jacob Eames knew what I had been thinking. He would surely think I was foolish. Finally, at around four in the morning, the man was quiet and I was able to fall asleep.

I got up the next morning still thinking about some of those questions, but ready to continue my journey. I went downstairs and asked the innkeeper if there was anything to eat. He gave me some oatmeal and as I finished the last bite, I thanked him for the breakfast and asked how the man in my room was doing this morning. The innkeeper said, "he passed away last night, and now I need to try to find his family to tell them the bad news." Thinking that I might be able to help I asked the innkeeper what the man's name was. As the innkeeper spoke the name I froze in shock. Could that have been who was on the other side of the curtain in my room all night long?

Who do think was on the other side of the curtain? To find out, come back next time.

*(For additional information, discussion questions, and materials on this lesson please refer to lesson 2.3 on **page 136** 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:

Benge, Janet and Geoff. *Adoniram Judson: Bound for Burma*. YWAM publishing, 2000

Bach, Thomas John. *Pioneer Missionaries for Christ and His Church* Kampen Press, 1955. Retrieved from <http://www.wholesomewords.org/missions/bjudson24.html>

Barlow, Fred. (1976) *Adoniram Judson: Father of Baptist Missionaries*. Profiles in Evangelism. Retrieved from <http://www.wholesomewords.org/biography/bmuller8.html>

Howell, Clifford G. *The Advanced Guard of Missions* Pacific Press Publishing, 1912. Retrieved from <http://www.wholesomewords.org/missions/bjudson1.html>

N.A. (2007) *Adoniram Judson's Life and Labor* Retrieved from <http://www.gfamissions.org/missionary-biographies/judson-adoniram-1788-1850.html>

N.A. (n.d.) *Adoniram Judson, First Missionary from the United States*. Retrieved from <http://www.christianity.com/church/church-history/church-history-for-kids/adoniram-judson-first-missionary-from-the-united-states-11635044.html>

Walsh, W. Pakenham. *Modern Heroes of the Mission Field* New York: n.d. Retrieved from <http://www.wholesomewords.org/missions/bjudson12.html>

