

# The Life of Adoniram Judson

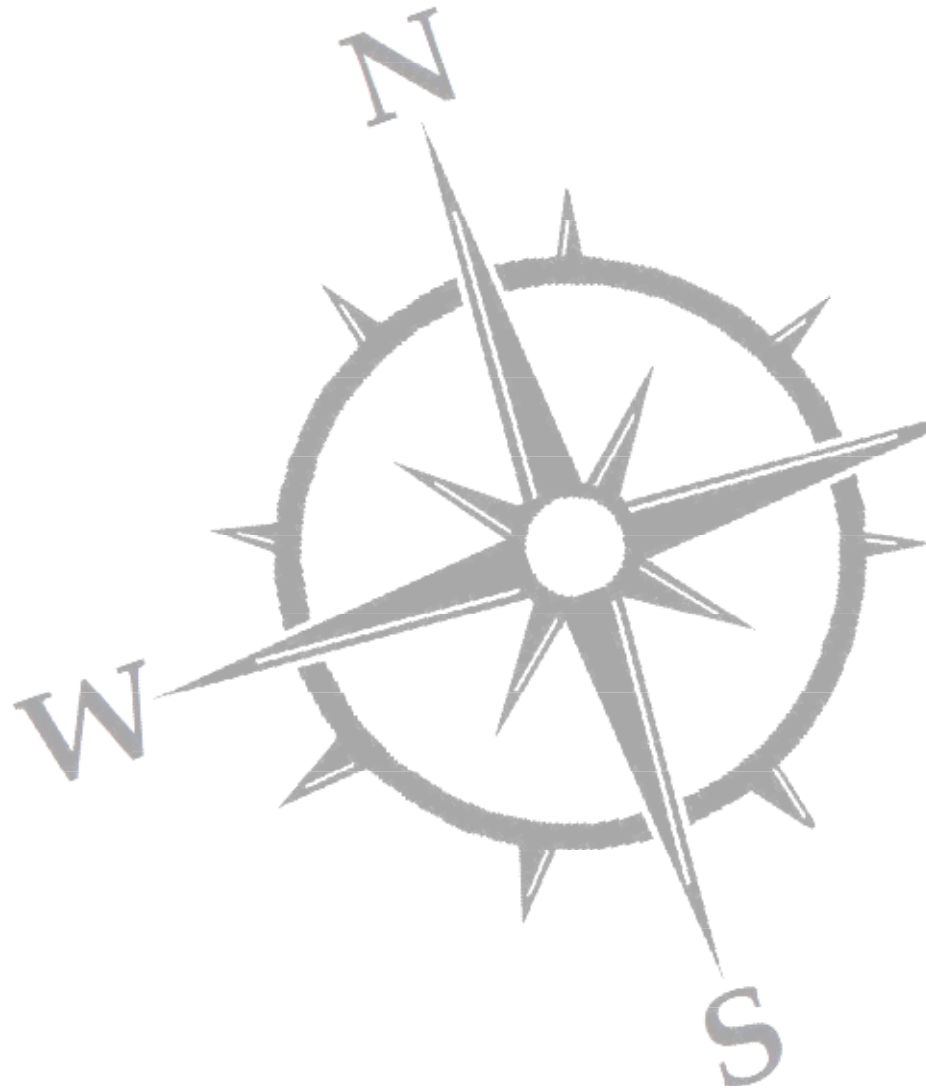
(1788–1850)

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## Lesson: 2.10 – Finishing Missionary Spotlight Series

This story reminds us that even if we start out our Christian life well, it is very important that we finish well. We must be faithful in serving the Lord throughout our whole life. Adoniram Judson had served the Lord all of his life, but finishing the race is just as important as running hard the rest of the race.

*"I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith." – 2 Timothy 4:7*







### **Who remembers where we left off last week?**

(Read the last paragraph from last week's lesson to begin this lesson as a review).

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“What do you see?” one of the other prisoners asked. Before either Henry or I could answer, we heard a large roar from the cage. A lion! The guards had somehow caught a lion and had brought it into our camp. Over the next several days, they did not feed the lion at all. With each passing day his roar grew louder and longer. All through the night, the hungry lion roared and growled. “The guards will surely turn it loose on all of us now that he is good and hungry!” one of the other prisoners said. Each day we waited for the guards to come. Every time the keys jingled in the lock, all of us sat up to see if this was the day.

One night, the lion seemed to roar all night. It was very hard to sleep with lion loudly roaring outside the window. Finally, late in the night, the lion quieted down and I

was able to fall asleep. Henry woke me up the next morning with a start. “Listen!” he said. I strained to hear it...I heard nothing, not a sound. We looked through the crack in the wall and saw the guards dragging the lion away. He had starved to death during the night. The Lord had protected us.

A few days later, I asked the guards if I could move to the old lion's cage instead of the hut. They agreed and even let me sleep in there at night. It was the first time in over a year and half that I was able to sleep with my feet on the ground. It felt kind of strange.

Not long after the lion died, we were all moved to a town called Amarapura and each of us was put into a cell by ourselves. We were all afraid that this was the end. I wished that I had been given the chance to say goodbye to Ann. Soon, I was taken from my cell and found myself standing before the king of Burma. As he began to speak, I realized that Henry and I had been brought here...not to die, but to translate. The British had won the war, but the only ones who spoke both English and Burmese were Henry and I. Over the next three months, I was reunited with Ann and worked with the British and the King of Burma to draw up terms of surrender.

It was now March of that year. Ann, Maria, and I were now on a ship called the *Irrawaddy* and were headed to Rangoon. It had been a couple of years since I had seen our house. After all the fighting, I wondered what was left of it. When we arrived, I was shocked to see that it still was standing. As I walked inside, I thought of all the work that I had done here in Rangoon. I thought about

how that translation of the Bible that I had worked so hard on and had hid inside the pillow was gone forever. I would have to start all over again.

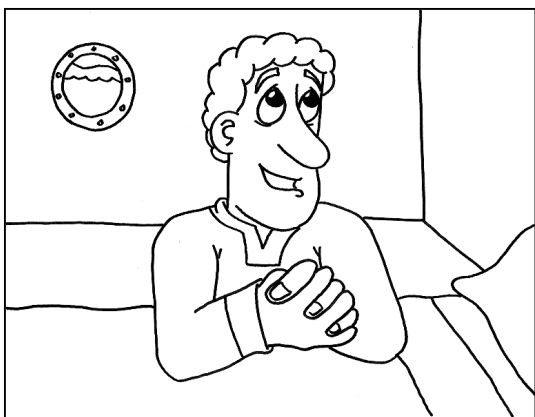
That night, a Burmese Christian named Maung Ing, arrived at our house with some wonderful news. Maung Ing had been hanging around Ava after I had been put in prison there. The day after we were moved, Maung Ing went to the old prison to see if he could find something to remember me by. On his way out, he saw an old pillow in the mud. The Spotted Faces had thrown it over the wall and left it. He recognized it as the one Ann had brought for me and he took it home and washed it. It was then that he realized there was something inside it. Tears came to my eyes as Maung Ing pulled my translation out from under his coat. It wasn't destroyed after all...God had kept it safe.

There were not many Christians still in Rangoon. The British had been given the town of Amherst as part of the surrender. The British promised me that there would be no persecution of Christians in Amherst so I decided to move there with my family.

Soon after that, I was asked by both the British and the king of Burma to come do more translating for them. I had come to Burma to be a missionary, not a translator. The British told me that if I came with them, they would work hard to try to talk the Burmese king into accepting Christianity as one of Burma's religions. I knew that if the king recognized it, many Burmese people wouldn't be afraid to listen to it too. I decided to go again to Ava.

The negotiations and translating





was a printer and he got me excited to start translating the scriptures once again.

It would take me almost seven more years before I would complete translating the entire Bible. So many things happened during that time. Some of the things were very wonderful and others were not. Dr. Price passed away and so did the new missionary George Boardman. George's wife Sarah, however, continued working with the Karen people by herself.

I decided to move to a small town just north of Amherst called Moulmein. Everywhere I looked, it seemed like Burma was changing. That year, I traveled to Rangoon to the Shwe Dagon Pagoda for the festival. I was able to pass out about 10,000 tracts that Cephas had printed and talked with people in *zayats* there. I had worked so hard for almost 9 years to see the first 18 people get saved in Burma. This year, in 1831 alone, we had already baptized over two hundred Burmese people. That meant total that we had about two hundred and forty Burmese Christians now and one hundred and thirteen foreigners that had been saved. I wished so badly that Ann could be here to see all that God was doing.

I finally finished the huge job of translating the Bible into the Burmese language. It was now 1834. I now had to wait for it to be printed. Because there were so many pages to print, I knew that it would probably take several years for Cephas Bennett to complete it. Sarah Boardman wrote me a letter to congratulate me and we began to write letters back and forth. Not long after this, Sarah and I were married.

dragged on and on. Ann kept writing me, and I soon learned that little Maria was getting sick. It was November 24, 1826, a day that I will never forget. I received a letter in Ava that had a black seal on the back. That black seal normally meant the letter was about some terrible news. I sadly opened the letter guessing that something had happened to my little Maria. Instead the note said that my dear wife Ann had become very sick and had passed away very suddenly.

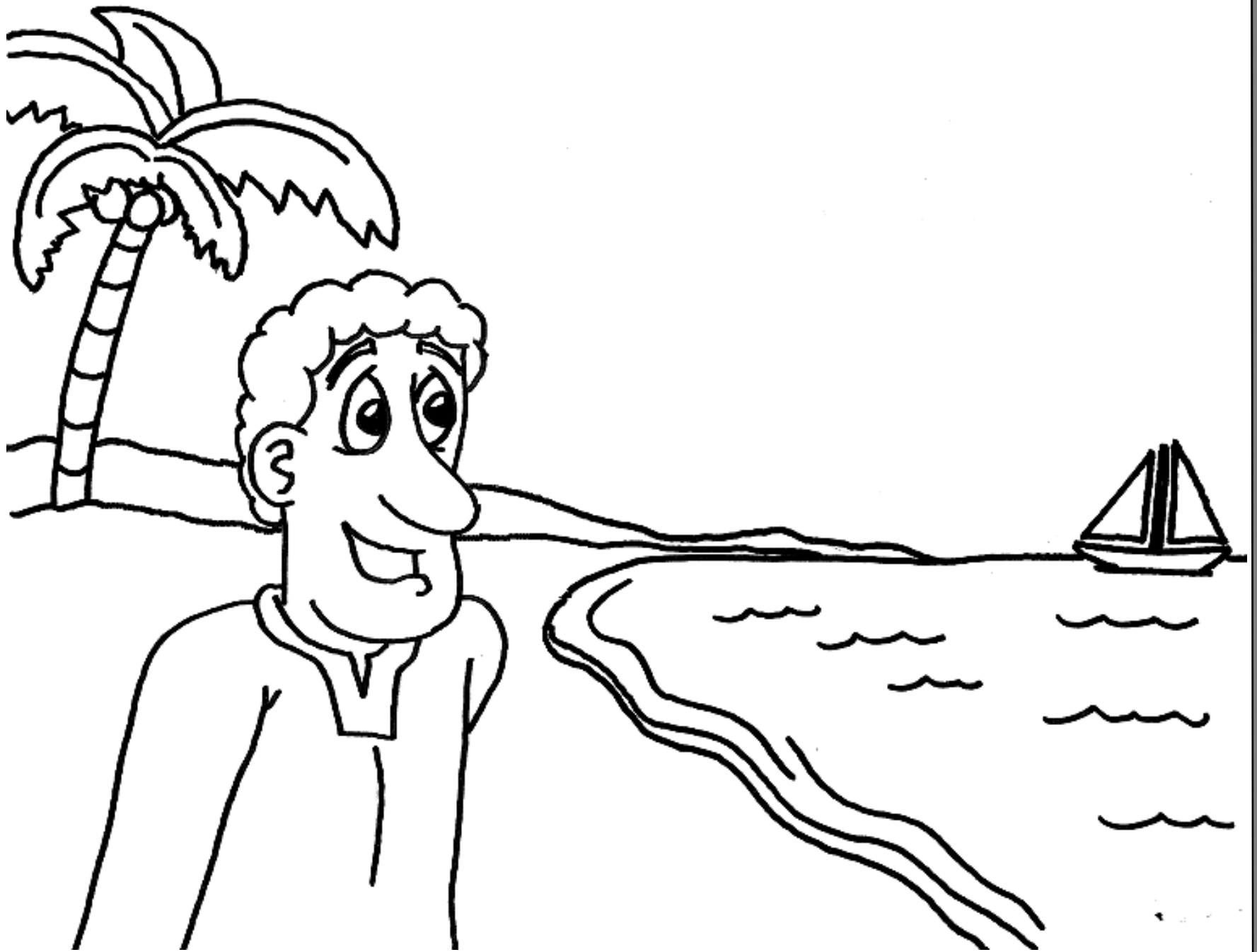
It was two months later when they finally let me go home. I was very angry at the British. There was nothing negotiated at all about Christianity. My precious wife was gone and I was not even there to help her and comfort her or to say goodbye. It was only a few months after I got home that my daughter Maria also passed away. I was terribly sad for almost two years because of losing these special people that I loved.

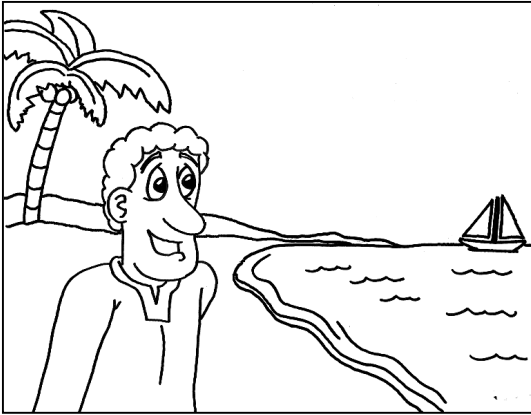
Some other missionaries had arrived to help me. George and Sarah Boardman came from America to work with a tribe of people called the Karen tribe. Cephas Bennett and his family also came. Cephas

Things went well over the next several years. Sarah and I had six more children. It was at this time that Sarah began to get very sick and the doctor said that she must return to America. It had been 27 years since I had left on board the *Georgiana* with Ann. Now, I was headed back home. During our voyage back, Sarah got very ill and passed away. As the ship pulled into the harbor in Boston, I was nervous. I wondered if I would still be able to talk well with people in English, because I had been speaking Burmese for so long. Hundreds of people were lining the shores. As I stepped off of the boat they began cheering. It was so neat to see that people had not forgotten about me even though I had been away for so long.

Many churches asked me to come and speak. After one service, a familiar looking man came to the platform... Samuel Nott! I had not seen him in 27 years. We talked about all that God had done in our lives. I spent several months speaking in many churches in America. While I traveled, I also met a lady named Emily Chubbock. Emily and I began to write letters to one another and she later agreed to marry me and return to Burma with me. She planned to write a biography about Sarah's life. The voyage back to Burma went well and I was excited to get back to work.

The Lord continued to do many wonderful things upon our return. I began working on an English-Burmese dictionary to help any future missionaries who came to Burma. As I was writing this, I began to get sick quite often. After about two years of





Savior. At the time of his death, there were around seven thousand Burmese and Karen people who had been baptized.

The Burmese people now also had a translation of the Bible in their language that is still the only translation used to this day. His English-Burmese dictionary has been used by many generations of missionaries to Burma. His life and writings inspired generations of Christian missionaries to follow his example of service and sacrifice.

Adoniram Judson once said: "I am not tired of my work, neither am I tired of the world; yet, when Christ calls me home, I shall go with the gladness of a boy bounding away from his school."

Adoniram heard his Master calling him home. He had been faithful to serve his God. He had finished his life well and could be proud to meet his Savior face to face.

being back in Burma, I completed the dictionary. I got very sick and the doctor said that the only way that I might feel better was to take a sea voyage and get some fresh air.

This morning, I got on board the *Astride Marie*, heading for the Isle of France. I'm hopeful that the sea air will do me some good. God has blessed me in so many ways. I am grateful that I could be used like this for Him.

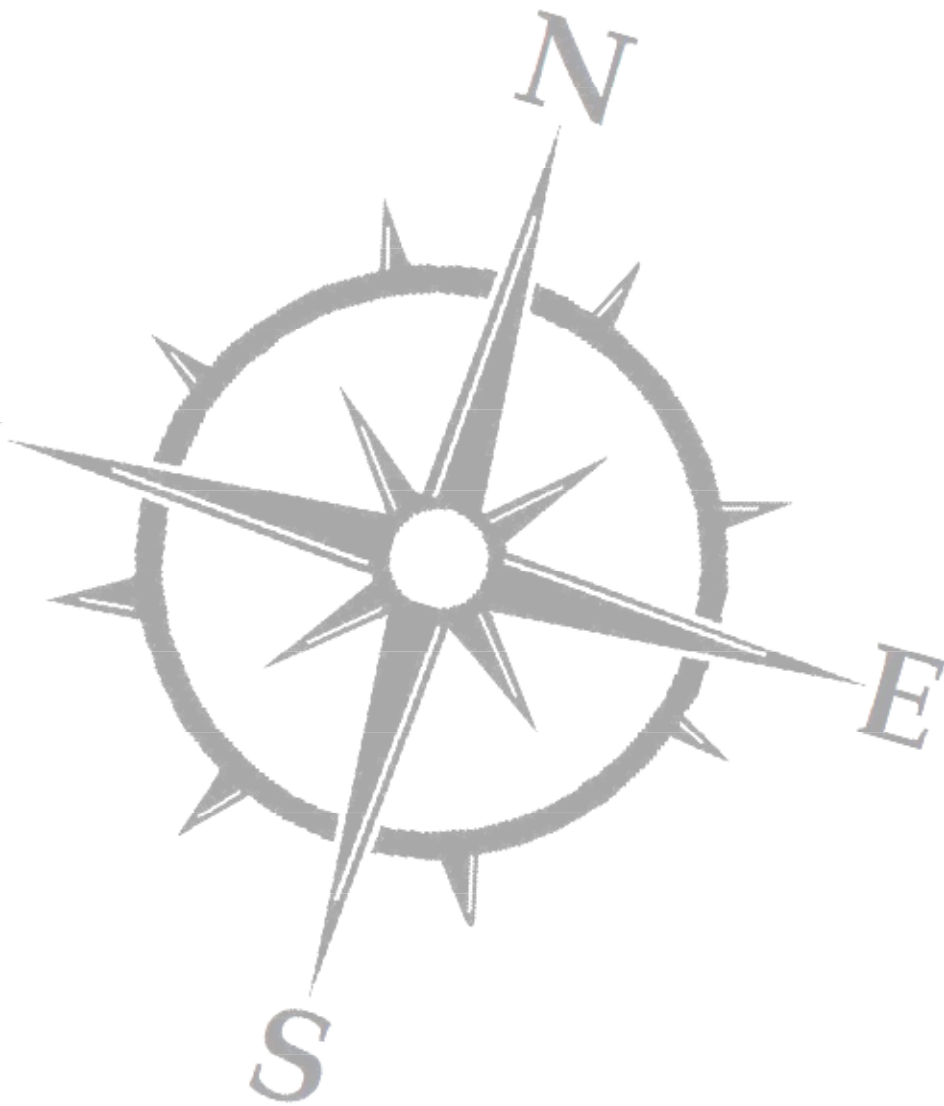
### ***(Summary of the life of Adoniram Judson)***

Adoniram Judson did not return from that voyage. Only nine days into his trip, he quietly went home to be with his Lord on April 12, 1850. He was buried at sea.

Ironically, he was buried in nearly the exact same spot that his first baby had been buried when he and Ann had traveled to Burma for the very first time to be missionaries. Adoniram had arrived on the shores of Burma over thirty-seven years before. It was a land of spiritual darkness. It took seven long years of work before the first Burmese person accepted Jesus as their

### **Would you be willing for God to use you to do great and wonderful things like He used Adoniram Judson?**

*(For additional information, discussion questions and materials on this lesson please refer to lesson 2.10 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:

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