

# The Life of Adoniram Judson

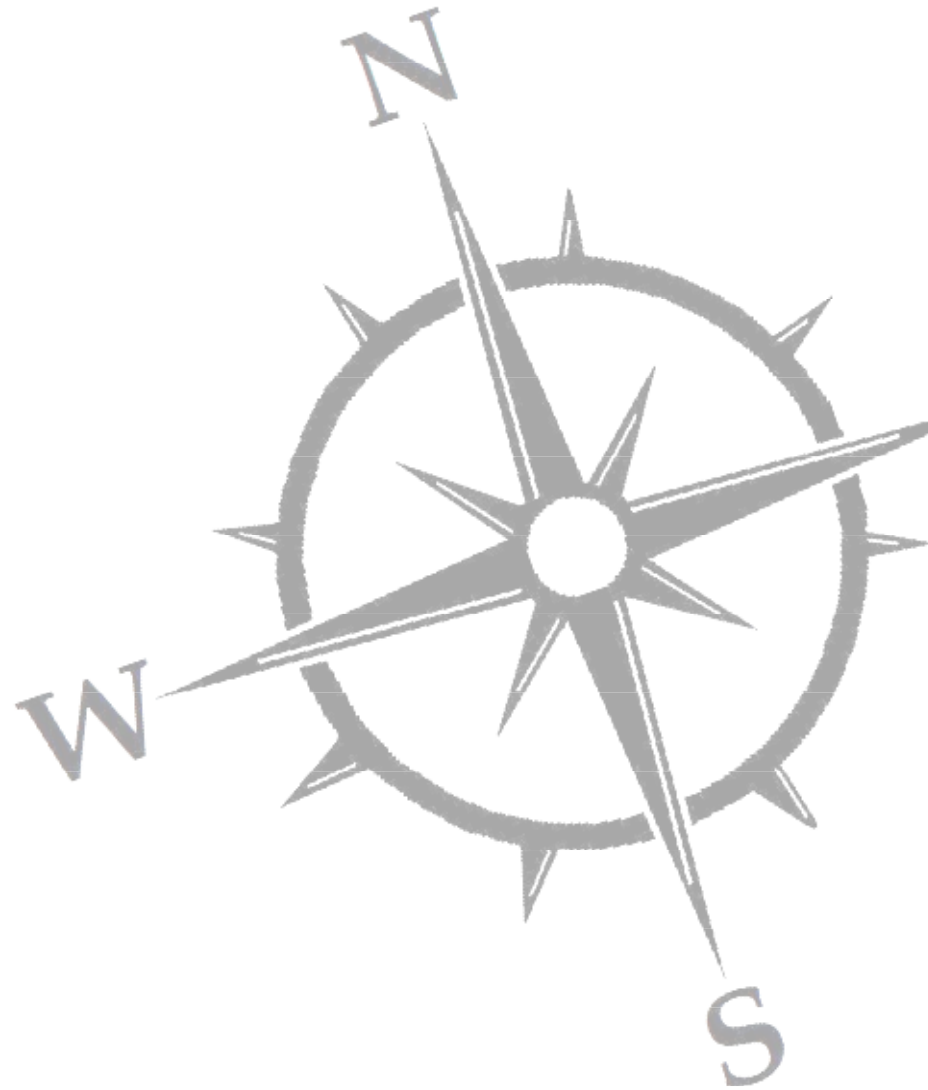
(1788-1850)

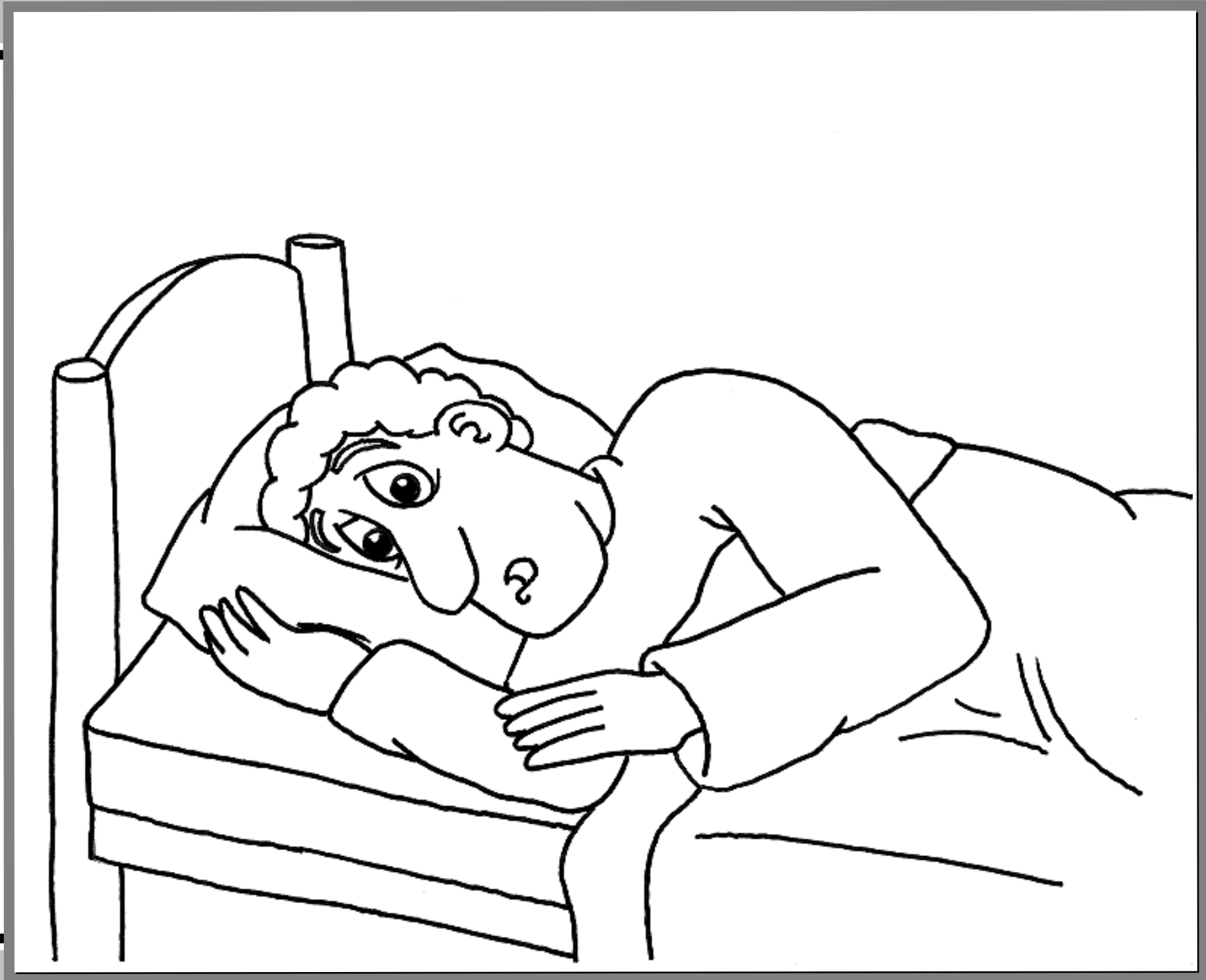
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## Lesson: 2.4 – Trust Missionary Spotlight Series

This story reminds us that we can trust in what God has promised. Others may break their word and disappoint us, but God will not fail to keep every promise He has ever made. God promises to always be with us and protect us as Christians. Adoniram Judson was determined to trust in what God was doing, even when others around him doubted.

*"In God I will praise his word, in God I have put my trust; I will not fear what flesh can do unto me." - Psalm 56:4*







### **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 did you say his name was?” I asked the inn keeper to be sure that I had heard him right. “He was a young fellow...and smart. He recently graduated from Brown University. His last name was Eames...Jacob Eames.” Jacob had been that man lying and groaning and coughing all night! I went across the room and sat down and stared at the fire in the fireplace. Jacob didn't believe in Heaven or Hell. “What really happened to a person after they passed away?” I wondered. I sat there for most of the day thinking. In the afternoon, I got on my horse and headed west again. Not long after I had left, I came to a fork in the road. I sat there for few moments and finally knew which way I needed to go. I turned my horse completely around. I was heading back to my parent's house. Maybe they would have some

answers for me.

My parents were very surprised to see me back at home. A couple of weeks after I got home, my father had some visitors over. Dr. Stewart and Dr. Griffen were pastor friends of my father and they were planning to start a seminary. My father liked the idea and had offered to do anything that he could to help them get it going. I spoke with these pastors late into the night. One question led to another until finally Dr. Griffen made me an unusual offer. He told me that I could enroll in the seminary, not as someone looking to become a pastor, but as an unsaved person looking to learn more about Christianity. I thanked him, but said no.

I took a job as an assistant teacher in Boston. My thoughts kept going back to Jacob and what happens after death. Finally, I could take it no longer. I decided to go to the seminary like Dr. Griffen had offered and see if I could get my questions answered.

Going to the seminary was like going back in time. The mail was only delivered three times per week and there were no newspapers to read. All of the students kept busy by doing chores around the seminary, helping to cook the meals, and studying of course. I worked harder than I ever had at school in search of answers to all these questions that I had. I became good friends with Dr. Pearson, who taught Greek and Latin at the seminary. Dr. Pearson talked with me a lot about the questions that I had. After some months of study and discussion, I had my answer. On December 2, 1808, I was by myself under a small apple tree. I knew that the Bible was right and that all that I had

believed about God was wrong. I asked the Lord to forgive me for my sins and asked Jesus to save me.

Not too long afterward, I went home to my parent's house and shared the good news with them. I joined my father's church. My entire family was so excited about what God had done in my life. I headed back to seminary now with some purpose in my life. I didn't know what God would have me to do, but knew He had a plan for me.

Because the school was so young, they were getting new books to add to their library all the time. I was always checking out one of the new books that had come in and reading it. One day, I checked out a pamphlet that had come in called “Star of the East.” It was written about the people of India. I was fascinated learning all about the people of India. Over the next couple of days, I read a book about William Carey and all of the wonderful things that he was doing in India. Then I read a book written by a soldier who had gone to a place called Burma. I couldn't get India and Burma out of my mind. I spent weeks reading everything that I could about the people of Burma and India and those who had worked with them. I knew that the Lord wanted me to go as a missionary to tell these people about Jesus. I didn't know when or how, but I knew that God wanted me to go there.

I was excited to tell my parents all about becoming a missionary. On my next break from seminary, I traveled home to tell them. I didn't say anything about it on the first day back home and it seemed like my family had something exciting that they





many didn't seem very interested. I did come across three friends who had started a group called the Brethren. Their names were Samuel Mills, Samuel Newell, and Samuel Nott. We decided to form this group to remind ourselves that we wanted to be missionaries and to look for the chance to actually become one.

As I came to the end of seminary, I learned that there were no mission boards in the United States that could afford to send missionaries to other places. I talked it over with Dr. Griffen and other teachers at the seminary. The teachers put together a meeting for me to and my three friends to meet with many pastors in the area and bring up the idea of starting a mission board to send out missionaries around the world.

I was very nervous on the night of June 28, 1810, to get up and share with all of these pastors the idea of starting a mission board. I spoke and then the pastors had each one of the four of us come up and answer questions. We were asked to leave while the pastors stayed up late into the night discussing what to do. The following morning they told us that they had decided to start a mission board. We all went over to Deacon Haseltine's house afterward to celebrate and each lunch. A young lady brought some food to a pastor sitting next to me. She had black curly hair and lovely blue eyes. I found out that it was Deacon Haseltine's daughter and her name was Ann. I began to come and see Ann often and a little while later, I wrote a letter to her parents to ask if I could marry their daughter. Some time later, Ann agreed to marry me and

follow me to Burma, but a new problem had come up.

Our new mission board still did not have a way to pay for a missionary to go to a place like Burma. They decided that the only way that we could come up with the money was to go and ask the famous London Missionary Society for help. I was chosen as the one to go to England and ask. On New Year's Day in 1811, I climbed on board a small ship called *the Packet*. The ship only had three passengers...two Spanish men and myself. About fifteen days into the journey, I heard a lot of noise up on deck. I left my cabin and hurried up on deck. A small French privateer ship was behind us. France and England had been at war. When French ships came across any English ship, they attacked it and took the crew as their prisoners. Some of them would be thrown into the ocean...never to be seen again. No wonder the crew was running all over trying to get the ship to move faster. But no matter what the crew tried, I could tell quickly that the French ship was gaining on us. I hurried back to my cabin. I grabbed a letter that I brought from Ann and then reached for my three Bibles—one in English, one in Hebrew and one in Latin. I stuffed everything in my coat just as a French man kicked the door open. I was led up on deck and found the rest of the crew already tied up. We were all brought on board the *L'Invincible Napoleon*. Because the French were not at war with the Spanish, the two Spanish sailors were given their own cabin. The rest of us were taken to the hold below the deck.

It was a very disgusting place. There

wanted to tell me as well. My sister was constantly whispering to my mother and they would stop and smile the moment when I came into the room.

Finally, one night their secret came out. Dr. Griffen had come by and told my father that he was very impressed me. Dr. Griffen was so impressed that he wanted me to come and be his assist. "Can you imagine," my mother said "you would be a pastor at the biggest church in Boston." I told my parents that it was quite an honor, but that I believed that God had somewhere a lot further than Boston for me to go. My parents and family were shocked to find out that I wanted to be a missionary to Burma. They felt like I was throwing away a great opportunity, but I knew that God wanted me in Burma. The rest of my visit was quiet with no one wanting to talk much about it anymore. I guessed that when I got back to seminary that Dr. Griffen would call me into his office wondering why I had turned it down, but no such thing happened.

As I began to tell others at the seminary about becoming a missionary,





was no place to go to the bathroom and the smells got worse every day. Everyone began to get sick and to throw up which made it even more horrible to be there. "Would I even make it to England? Would I die before ever becoming a missionary?" I thought. I had heard that many English prisoners were simply thrown overboard into the ocean. "Was that how I would die? Would I ever see Ann again? Would we be able to get married?"

The only visitor that ever came down was the ship's doctor. It smelled so awful that he carried a handkerchief with perfume on it and always held it over his nose and mouth. Every time he came down, I tried to talk with him. I wanted to explain that I was not from England, but from America. But the doctor did not speak any English and I did not speak any French. Each time he came down, I would try again to talk with him, but he couldn't understand what I was saying.

There was a small crack in one side of the ship that let in just a little light. I sat next to it and each day tried to read some verses from the Bible. I would read a chapter

in Latin and translate it into Hebrew and then read a chapter in Hebrew and translate it into Latin. The doctor came down while I was reading one day, saw what I was doing, and reached out and grabbed all three of my Bibles from me and tucked them under his arm and left. Why would he take them from me? Would I ever see my Bibles again?

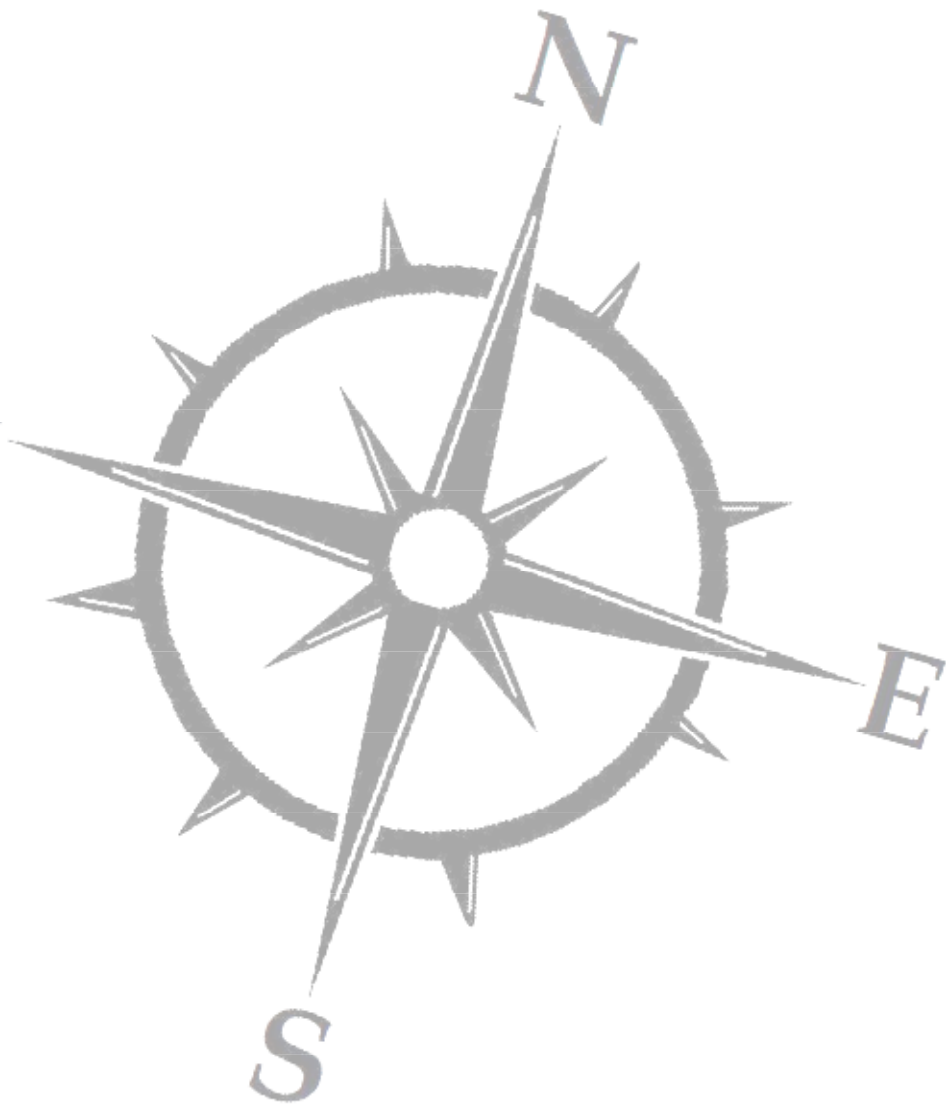
The next morning when the doctor came through, he began to talk with me in Latin. I did not even think to ask him if he knew Latin. I told him that I was from America. "I wish that you had told me that sooner," he said to me. In no time, I had been taken out of the smelly hold below the deck and given a nice cabin of my own. The rest of the voyage went very smoothly.

When we landed in France, I was chained to the other crew members and led through a large crowd toward the prison. I knew that once they got me in that prison that I could be stuck there for months or even years before they would hear my story and let me out. I had to do something. I yelled as loudly as I could with the few French words that I had learned that I was not from England. People in the crowd look strangely at me and I guessed I was probably saying something wrong. I decided to yell out in English instead. "I am being wrongly put in prison, I am not from England, I am from America," I shouted. One of the guards threatened to hit me if I didn't quiet down, but I kept on yelling for help. Someone had to hear me and help me. Suddenly, someone said in English, "keep quiet or they might shoot you." I looked around at all the faces around me. Who had said that? A man came

up beside me and told me that he was an American soldier. He told me to be patient and he would see what he could do to help me. As I walked through the darkened doors of the prison, I wondered who that man was. Would he remember me? Would I ever see that man again? Would I ever make it back home to get married and become a missionary?

**What do think is going to happen? To find out, come back next time.**

*(For additional information, discussion questions and materials on this lesson please refer to lesson 2.4 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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