



## **Adoniram and Ann Judson** (1788 – 1850) (1789 – 1826)

# A Man and Woman of DILIGENCE

### Adoniram and Ann's Story

Thirteen days after their wedding, Ann and Adoniram Judson boarded a ship to India. The Judsons were America's first missionaries to another country.

Unable to remain in India, the Judsons sailed to Burma. Ann, who was pregnant at the time, lost their baby during the voyage. She arrived in Burma so weak and sick that she had to be carried off the boat. Adoniram and Ann were often sick because of the harsh climate. But they diligently studied the Burmese language 12 hours a day six days a week so they could share the gospel with the Burmese people.

Ann and Adoniram trusted God and told many Burmese people about Jesus. But after the Judsons had worked in Burma for six years, not a single person had become a Christian.

Burmese people gathered in *zayats*, small huts with wide porches, to rest and talk about the news of the day. The Judsons decided to build a *zayat* by the side of a busy road. All kinds of people stopped by, including beggars, merchants, and Buddhists. They shared the truth about Jesus with anyone who would listen, and some of their visitors put their trust in Jesus!

People who did not like Christians threatened and persecuted the new Burmese believers. During a war between Britain and Burma, Adoniram was sent to prison because the Burmese leaders thought all foreigners were spies. Ann often visited officials and diligently pleaded for his release. Adoniram was finally released after 18 months. Sadly, Ann died not long after that. Adoniram was overwhelmed with grief. In spite of his sadness, he continued translating the Bible into Burmese. The entire project took more than 25 years to complete.

Adoniram worked in Burma for several more years, 37 years in all. By the time he died, in 1850, at the age of 61, there were 7,000 Christians in Burma.

#### Key Bible Verse:

"You shall diligently keep the commandments of the LORD your God, and his testimonies and his statutes, which he has commanded you."  
(Deuteronomy 6:17)

#### Key Word: DILIGENCE

Diligence: Careful hard work over a period of time even in the face of difficulty or opposition, perseverance, determination, dedication



### **A Good Student**

As a child, Adoniram missed a year of school because of an illness. But he was so intelligent and diligent in his school work that he was admitted to college at age 16. He graduated at the top of his college class, and at 19 he started a school of his own in Massachusetts.



### **Becoming a Christian**

Even though Adoniram grew up as the son of a pastor, he rejected his Christian upbringing in college and became a deist. But he was unhappy. Deists believe that God created the world but doesn't have a relationship with humans or interact with them. Christians know that God is a loving heavenly Father Who cares for His children (see 1 Peter 5:7, John 3:16, and 2 Corinthians 6:18). Adoniram wholeheartedly trusted in Christ as his Lord and Savior at the age of 20.



### **Buddhism**

Most people in Burma are Buddhists. Buddhism teaches that there is no creator/savior God to save them and that there is no such thing as sin to be saved from. The Judsons wanted the Buddhists to know the truth about God and Jesus.



### **No Letters**

Ann and Adoniram did not get any letters from America until they had been gone for almost four years.



### **Hidden Treasure**

Adoniram had translated part of the Bible into Burmese before he went to prison. The story is told that Ann sewed the Burmese Bible manuscripts into a pillow to hide and protect them. She smuggled the pillow into Adoniram's prison, and he slept on it. Adoniram was separated from his treasure when officials transferred him to another prison. A guard in the old prison threw the pillow away, but a Burmese Christian found it and safely returned it to the Judsons. (Color these scenes on pages 128–29.)



### **Hard Work**

Ann and Adoniram ministered in Burma for 12 years to bring 18 Burmese to Christ. Today there are an estimated 4.8 million Christians in Burma (Myanmar).



### **A Living Sacrifice**

Missionary life sometimes requires the ultimate sacrifice: Ann Judson died at age 37, Adoniram's second wife, Sarah, died at age 41, and his third wife, Emily, died at 36.

## A Difficult Language



The following is John 3:16 in Burmese.

ဘုရားသခင်၏သားတော်ကို ယုံကြည်သောသူအပေါင်းတို့သည်၊ ပျက်စီးခြင်းသို့မရောက်၊  
ထာဝရ အသက်ကို ရစေခြင်းငှါ၊ ဘုရားသခင်သည် မိမိ၌ တပါးတည်းသော သားတော်ကို စွန့်  
တော်မူသည်တိုင်အောင် လောကီသားကို ချစ်တော်မူ၏။

Try to copy the Burmese verse over the outline below.

ဘုရားသခင်၏သားတော်ကို ယုံကြည်သောသူအပေါင်းတို့သည်၊  
ပျက်စီးခြင်းသို့မရောက်၊ ထာဝရ အသက်ကို ရစေခြင်းငှါ၊  
ဘုရားသခင်သည် မိမိ၌ တပါးတည်းသော သားတော်ကို စွန့်တော်မူ  
သည်တိုင်အောင် လောကီသားကို ချစ်တော်မူ၏။

Now look up the verse in an English Bible and write it below.

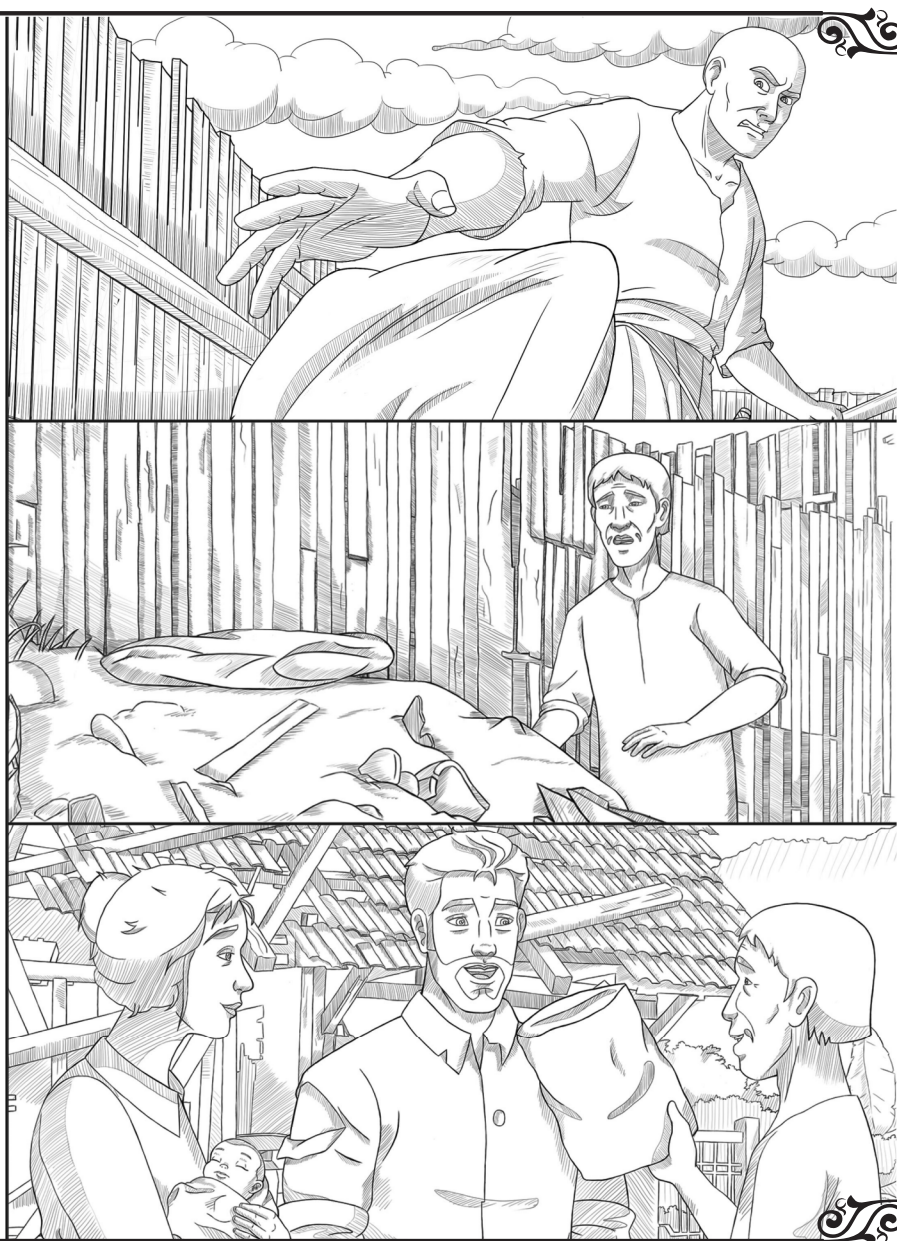
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Adoniram Judson translated the Bible into the Burmese language. The work was extremely difficult. At that time, Burmese had no capital letters or punctuation and had no spaces between words, sentences, or paragraphs.





## Be an Encourager



The Judsons worked diligently for the Lord in Burma, but they were discouraged from time to time by obstacles and setbacks. Electronic mail was not yet invented, and they sometimes went years without getting mail.

Today it is much easier to encourage people who serve the Lord. Can you send an encouraging message to a pastor, Sunday school teacher, short- or long-term missionary, Christian musician, church maintenance worker, Christian writer or blogger, military chaplain, or other Christian worker?

Use the example below to guide you, or write or email a message of your own.

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

My name is \_\_\_\_\_, and I am \_\_\_\_\_ years old. I would like to  
thank you for serving the Lord by (see \*1 suggestions below) \_\_\_\_\_.

Your faithfulness is a good example. I hope you will be encouraged by this Bible verse:

(see \*2 suggestions below) \_\_\_\_\_

I will pray that (see \*3 suggestions below) \_\_\_\_\_.

Sincerely,

\_\_\_\_\_

- \*1.
  - a. preaching the gospel faithfully
  - b. serving our church
  - c. being willing to travel to share the love of Jesus
  - d. (another description)
- \*2.
  - a. And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up. (Galatians 6:9)
  - b. And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!" (Romans 10:15)
  - c. Casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you. (1 Peter 5:7)
  - d. (another verse you choose)
- \*3.
  - a. God will bless you and your family
  - b. God will give you wisdom in every situation
  - c. you will be strong in the Lord
  - d. (another prayer)

## What Do You Think?



**Ann and Adoniram Judson noticed that the people in Burma enjoyed the custom of gathering in *zayats* to rest and talk. After the Judsons built their own *zayat*, people began to listen to them talk about Jesus.**

What is an unwritten rule? Why does it make a difference if missionaries and other visitors follow local customs?

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How can you help new people in your church or Sunday school class who may not know your customs? How could you help non-Christian visitors who may not know anything about Christian teachings?

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What are some unwritten rules or customs in your country that others may have trouble understanding? For example, how do you greet people? (If you know people from other countries, ask how they greet people in their country and what customs they find unusual in your country.)

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### Different Customs

A visitor to the United States from another country said, "To my people, the more you go and visit someone in their house (even surprise visits), the more they like you. To the American, the more you go visit someone (especially surprise visits), the more irritating you are to them."





Adoniram Judson drifted away from Christian teachings when he went to college. As a teenager, Ann Judson thought mostly about going to parties and having a good time. Later, Adoniram and Ann became diligent about their faith and committed themselves to following God.

It's not easy to lead a Christian life, continually falling short of God's righteousness while trusting in Christ's work of redemption. If we don't make it a priority to practice our faith and hide God's Word in our hearts, we can be easily led astray by unbiblical cultural influences and ideologies.

### What are some of the ways you can strengthen your faith?

1. Pray and ask God to help you grow in your faith.
2. If you have questions about God or about Bible teachings, ask your parents to answer them, or search out the answers in the Bible together.
3. Listen to pastors in church and teachers in Sunday school. Every week, share with your family three things you learned from their teachings.
4. Read the Bible often. Ask your parents to suggest a reading plan for you.
5. Read other Christian books and biographies of faithful Christians.
6. Teach younger children about being a follower of Jesus by helping in Sunday school or Vacation Bible School. Study what you plan to teach them to be sure you understand it, too.

**“Be watchful, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong. Let all that you do be done in love.”**  
(1 Corinthians 16:13–14)

