



“Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit.” -John 12:24

Adoniram Judson

Adoniram Judson was born August 9, 1788 in Maiden, Massachusetts. His father was a Congregational minister. He attended what is now Brown University, entering at age 16 and graduated at 19 valedictorian of his class. While studying at college, he met a young man named Jacob Earnes, who was a deist and who led him away from the faith.

One night, Judson was staying at an inn and through the night heard the death throes of a man next door. When he inquired the next morning with the clerk, he found out the man had died and that it was Jacob Earnes. This shook him to the core, knowing Earnes was not a believer, and it was a pivotal turning point in him surrendering to Christ. In 1808, Judson dedicated his life to God and to missionary service. In 1810, he joined a group of mission-minded students and they established the first American missionary society.

Before he sailed from America, he wrote the father of Ann Haseltine, asking for permission to marry her, stating:

“I have to now ask whether you can consent to part with your daughter early next spring, to see her no more in this world? Whether you can consent to her departure to a heathen land, and her subjection to the hardships and sufferings of a missionary life? Whether you can consent to her exposure to the dangers of the ocean, to the fatal influence of the southern climate of India, to every kind of want and distress, to degradation, insult, persecution, and perhaps a violent death?”

In 1812, he set sail to Calcutta, India, where him and his wife, Ann, were both baptized. In July 1813, they moved to Burma, where he would serve for 37 years. Judson suffered much to bring the good news to Burma (now called Myanmar) in Southeast Asia. His wife, Ann, miscarried their first child on the ship and later lost their second child before his second birthday.

It took him three years, studying up to 12 hours a day, to learn the language. In 12 years, Judson saw 18 converts, but he was encouraged as he had written a grammar of the language and had also begun translating the Bible.

He was imprisoned for 17 months during the Anglo-Burmese War, where he was subjected to torture, as at night the prisoners' feet were hooked to a Bamboo pole that was lifted in the air, and they hung with only their shoulders and head touching the floor. His wife, Ann, worked

hard throughout the time to secure his freedom, even as she struggled to keep herself and their new baby alive. His wife and third baby died shortly after his release from prison. He fell into a deep sadness, questioning his calling as a missionary, but the Lord sustained him. He would marry two more times and had 10 more children, six of whom survived to adulthood.

In 1831, the missionaries gave out over 10,000 tracts and many Burmese came to the mission house to find out more, including some as far as a two to three month journey away. In his journal, Judson wrote of their inquiries:

“Sir, we hear that there is an eternal hell. We are afraid of it. Do give us a writing that will tell us how to escape it.” ... “Sir, we have been given a writing that tells about an eternal God. Are you the man that gives away such writings? If so, please give us one, for we want to know the truth before we die.” ... “Are you Jesus Christ’s man? Give us a writing that tells about Jesus Christ.”

In 1834, Judson completed the first full translation of the Bible into the Burmese language. This version of the Bible remains the most popular in the country today. In 1850, Judson developed a serious lung infection, and was advised to go on a sea voyage. He died onboard the ship on April 12, 1850 and was buried at sea. By the time of his death, there was the full translation of the Burmese Bible, over 100 churches and 8,000 believers. Today, there are more than two million evangelical Burmese Christians.

“If I had not felt certain that every additional trial was ordered by infinite love and mercy, I could not have survived my accumulated suffering.” Adoniram Judson

“The future is as bright as the promises of God.” Adoniram Judson