Pilgrims Journal

"They confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. Wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for He hath prepared for them a city." (Heb 11:13–16)

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New Testament Ministries
507 Orange St., Newark, NJ 07107, USA
Phone: (973) 485–1181
Email: ntcnewark@juno.com, ntcpjmail@gmail.com

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The Potter's House

In a great house there are many vessels: some are honorable while others are dishonorable. *"But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honor, and some to dishonor. If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honor, sanctified, and meet for the Master's use, and prepared unto every good work"* (2Tim 2:20-21). The Lord had spoken to Jeremiah, *"Arise, and go down to the potter's house, and there I will cause thee to hear My words."* So Jeremiah went and watched the potter's hands molding a vessel *"as seemed good to the potter to make it"* (Jer 18:2-4). Let us do the same, seeing as we go through the potter's stock of vessels, spiritual purposes for each custom-designed piece. May the Lord cause us to hear His words in the process.

Firstly, let us consider vessels of honor. The culture in Biblical times would have had many traditions. For example, a friend arriving at his neighbor's house might find water vessels sitting by the entrance way. Each day these symbols of "vessels of honor" were filled with fresh water and made available to visitors. Failure to provide water in this manner could bring about great shame to a household.

Jesus Christ, the fulfillment of scripture, is the true Vessel of honor. On the final day of the feast of tabernacles, Jesus stood in the midst of the multitude and cried: *"If any man thirst let him come unto Me, and drink. He that believeth on Me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water'"* (Jn 7:37-38). His words reveal a great spiritual truth. Priests may have been responsible for filling the vessels of honor in the temple and making them available for thirsty pilgrims—especially those visiting during the days of feasting. On the last day, these vessels may have been emptied and the remaining water used to wash away the debris left behind by the many pilgrims. It is possible that Jesus witnessing this scene stood and proclaimed, *"If any man thirst let him come unto Me and drink."* He is the Fountain of living waters.

Jesus met a Samaritan woman at the well and said, *"Whosoever drinkest of this water shall thirst again. But whosoever drinkest of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst"* (Jn 4:13-14). This woman's life was transformed by the living waters and she ran to tell everyone about this Man named Jesus Who had told her everything she had ever done. Vessels of honor abide in the presence of God and pour out their lives for others.

Vessels of Mercy

The Apostle Paul spoke about vessels of mercy. *"Vessels of mercy, which He had afore prepared unto glory, even us, whom He hath called not of the Jews only, but also of the*

Gentiles" (Rom 9:23-24). Outwardly, vessels of honor and those of mercy may have appeared to be the same; but each had a particular function assigned by the owner. Whereas vessels of honor may have been placed beside the doorway of one's house, the vessels of mercy could have been along the main roadways leading into the town. Any stranger taking a long journey and passing through could easily find water along the way. This provision of fresh water was free, and was an act of mercy shown to strangers. *"Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy"* (Mat 5:7).

In the house of God, vessels of mercy can be believers placed by God in public places or high-profile positions. Their role is to comfort and refresh strangers. For you it may be at your job, where there is a lot of pressure. Or, perhaps you live in a dangerous, high-crime area of the city, and you wonder, "Lord, why am I in this place?" Well, vessels of mercy are prepared by God and placed in all levels of society to bring calm and comfort where there is stress and tension. Therefore, God has specially designed and strategically placed you where you may reveal Christ to unbelievers.

Chosen Vessels

As Saul traveled along the Damascus road, he met the Lord and fell to the ground. He heard a voice saying, *"I am Jesus Whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks"* (Ac 9:5). God's word concerning Saul was that *"he is a chosen vessel unto Me, to bear My name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel"* (Ac 9:15-16). Saul served zealously as a *chosen vessel*.

As the potter did his work, certain vessels caught his attention. These he set apart, as "chosen vessels" and they were kept hidden from public view for weeks, months, or maybe even years. They would remain set apart, waiting for a client seeking a special vessel for a special purpose. Unlike other vessels, each chosen vessel had the name of the potter inscribed upon it, like a "signature edition," for it was worthy to be identified as belonging to the potter.

It is interesting to note that the Apostle Paul spent years in obscurity before the Lord began to use him. Years after his conversion, when the church in Antioch was growing, Barnabas needed someone to help and thus departed to Tarsus to seek Paul. *"And when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to pass, that a whole year they assembled themselves with the church, and taught much people"* (Ac 11:26). Paul eventually carried the gospel to the Gentiles and unto many nations.

Chosen vessels are servants of God, set apart and wholly committed to the Lord's service. The Father's name is written upon their foreheads and they forsake all to follow the Lamb. As they patiently wait, some servants ask, *"I'm anointed, why am I hidden away here?"* Remember every

chosen vessel has to learn to wait on the Lord and trust in His name. *"Who is among you, that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of His servant, that walkest in darkness, and hath no light? Let him trust in the name of the Lord"* (Isa 50:10). God has an appointed time when He will use His chosen vessels.

Clean Vessels

After much use, older vessels became worn, cracked, or broken and were no longer useful as water vessels. When this happened, they may have been removed from the entrance and placed inside the house. Since every vessel was needed, these older vessels may have been assigned to yet another useful purpose.

Every Jewish family was required to give tithes; therefore a tenth of their corn and grain was also given to the Lord. The tithe of their grain could have been collected into 'clean vessels' (these vessels may have formerly been vessels of honor or of mercy); once full, they would have been taken to the priests and left at the temple. Clean vessels were used to carry that which was holy unto the Lord. In Luke chapter two, we read of the prophetess Anna, an elderly widow who never left the temple but served God for many years with fasting and prayer. Anna is an example of a clean vessel who was blessed to see the long-awaited Redeemer of Israel (Lk 2:36-38).

Occasionally the priest may have gathered these accumulated clean vessels from the temple, and taken them to the potter's house for repairs and restoration. If you are a clean vessel, be faithful to the end. Don't allow physical limitations or age to prevent you from fulfilling God's purpose for your life.

Broken Vessels

The restoration of broken vessels may have followed this four-step procedure. *Step 1:* a complete emptying and cleansing. *Step 2:* the vessel was rubbed down with a file. *Step 3:* to insure a lasting restoration, a special mixture of clay, water, and animal blood (usually crushed leeches) was applied to the broken section. *Step 4:* the repaired vessel was placed in the fire. Passing through the fire without cracking was the proof of true restoration: *"...when thou walkest through the fire, thou shall not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee"* (Isa 43:2).

Every useful but broken vessel needs to be repaired. It had to be taken to the potter's house to be emptied, cleansed, restored, and placed back into the fire. If you are in the fire, God is still doing a work of restoration.

Vessels of Wrath

"What if God, willing to show His wrath, and to make His power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction" (Rom 9:22). Not every vessel

could be restored. Some resisted the work and cracked in the fire. The potter may have repaired it again and put it back into the fire, but it often broke once again in the same place where it had been repaired.

This is the sad case of some who are delivered from the power of sin and addictions. When faced with fiery trials, they fall back into the same addiction from which they had once been delivered. After several unsuccessful attempts to restore them, these vessels of wrath fail when they go through the fire. What was their destiny? They were taken and thrown over the cliff into a large field. Lepers would have come to collect the pieces and scratch their wounds. Judas, unwilling to yield to the hand of God, became a vessel of wrath by betraying Jesus for 30 pieces of silver. With this silver the potter's field was purchased and it became a burial ground for strangers. What was Judas' destiny? *"Now this man purchased a field with the reward of iniquity; and falling headlong, he burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out…that field is called…the field of blood"* (Ac 1:18-19). Beware: do not resist God's hand working in your life.

Vessels of Dishonor

Every vessel has been created for a purpose, *"some to honor, some to dishonor"* (2Tim 2:20). Some are created to contain trash and waste. How insignificant, but can you imagine a house without any trash baskets? Who would want to live in such a place? Trash baskets don't receive any special honor, but we still need them. However, there is a hidden lesson to learn. What is the secret of becoming a useful "vessel of dishonor"? Each day these vessels have to be emptied and cleaned, otherwise the waste may begin to rot and attract flies. In the same way, our adversary casts at us his darts of fear, bitterness, anger, immoral lifestyles, etc. What is the secret of remaining free from these defilements? Daily repentance and cleansing by the blood of Jesus. Don't allow trash and defilements to remain in your heart. Instead, be healed and continue as a useful vessel for the glory of God.

The prophet Jeremiah lived during a difficult time in the life of Israel. Although God threatened to judge this nation, in His mercy He sought to restore His people. *"'O house of Israel, cannot I do with you as this potter?' saith the Lord. 'Behold as the clay is in the potter's hand, so are ye in Mine hand, O house of Israel'"* (Jer 18:6). God is able to restore His vessels of clay. Let go, submit to His hands, and yield to His special purpose for your life. He will make you a beautiful glorious vessel in His palace for all eternity. ❑

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"The Lord hath chosen Zion; He hath desired it for His habitation. This is My rest forever: here will I dwell; for I have desired it" (Psa 132:13-14).

In previous installments of our study of eternal Zion, we have seen that Mount Zion is the eternal dwelling place of God, and the seat of His heavenly kingdom. It is the highest and most beautiful place in the heavens (Psa 2:6; 50:2; Eph 1:20-23). It is also a marvelous thing, that God in His great love and counsel has ordained 144,000 people to dwell with Him eternally in that glorious place. Now in our study, we are seeking to answer the age-old question (Psa 15:1; 24:3), that is, ***who*** are these 144,000 that will be eternally with God in Zion? It is our belief, based on the many scriptures about Zion, that these 144,000 are servants of God of the very highest order.

Thrice Redeemed

From our last study we have seen that these 144,000 have the *"Father's name written in their foreheads"* (Rev 14:1). As we have seen, this group is clearly a special possession of the Father. **All** those in heaven would readily agree that God is their Redeemer. This word *redeem* means *"to purchase something back again"* or, *"to deliver through the payment of a ransom."* Our redemption in this New Testament age is exclusively provided for us through the precious blood of Jesus Christ, shed on the cross of Calvary (Eph 1:7; 1Pet 1:18-19). It is interesting to note, as we study our principal passage of Revelation 14:1-5, that we find there ***two other*** references to redemption—both which appear to exclusively relate to the 144,000 on Mount Zion. So in addition to being redeemed by the blood of the Lamb—along with all others in heaven—the 144,000 experience two *other* "redemptions."

We saw in our last study (*PJ* #69), that the 144,000 are also *"redeemed from the earth"* (Rev 14:3). Today the people of earth are divided—often hostile, and even violent—one against another, based on divisions of race, caste, language, or national boundaries. But Christ gave us His precious Word, shed His blood at Calvary, and sent forth the Holy Spirit, in order to form a wonderful new union for all of mankind called the Church. In this holy church, such distinctions, divisions, and separations disappear, as the calling and grace of God change us from glory to glory (1Cor 12:12-13; Col 3:10-11; Gal 3:27-28; Eph 2:11-22). The 144,000 who are redeemed from the earth express God's perfect

in other tongues. Words began to pour out of their lips: words incomprehensible, even to the one speaking. Yet the words were powerful and full of life! The power flowed out from deep inside them. Jesus was glorified! This was the fulfillment of the promise.

From that moment, they were transformed. Peter stood up and began to preach boldly—the same Peter who had recently denied the Lord three times. Now he was fearless. Through his preaching that day about three thousand souls came to accept the Lord and were baptized in water. These disciples, who had forsaken the Lord in the garden of Gethsemane, now became known as the "men who turned the world upside down." Wherever they went they brought the fire of the Holy Ghost with them.

He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you for ever

The powers of darkness were shaken and put to flight as the Holy Spirit formed the body of Christ out of those who believed. When Jesus was anointed with the Holy Ghost, immediately the evil spirits were exposed and cast out. The devil himself had come with all his wiles to tempt Jesus, hoping He would fall. Jesus overcame. God anointed Him with the Holy Ghost and power. He went around doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil. *Jesus is in heaven but now because the Holy Spirit is in us, there are many "anointed ones" for the devil to contend with. Christ's death on the cross did not spell victory for the devil, but rather his destruction.*

Jesus had spoken of this. He said, "Verily I say unto you, that there be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste of death, till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power" (Mk 9:1). **The baptism of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost brought the kingdom of God down into the lives of men.** This experience is absolutely essential for God's children. It was the experience of the first-century Christians.

God invites us to come and receive this promise: "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters…" (Isa 55:1). "In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, 'If any man thirst, let him come unto Me, and drink. He that believeth on Me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.' (But this spake He of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified)" (Jn 7:37-39).

When we receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit, we will speak with other tongues. Tongues that even the person speaking will not understand. When about one hundred and twenty people received the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, they all spoke with tongues (Ac 2:1-4). When Cornelius and those in his house received the Holy Spirit, they spoke with tongues and magnified God (Ac 10:46). When the disciples at Ephesus received the Holy Spirit, they spoke with tongues and prophesied (Ac 19:6).

Let us receive of His promise, be filled with His Spirit and be made ready for the soon return of Christ

The baptism of the Holy Spirit is an experience distinct from and subsequent to the experience of salvation, i.e. the born-again experience. **The Father wants all who believe in His Son Jesus Christ to receive this experience and enjoy the fulfillment of His promise.** When Peter preached on the day of Pentecost he said, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call" (Ac 2:38-39). It is for all who believe. **God the Father wants all His children to receive His promise.**

So, how do we receive the Holy Spirit? By faith. The apostle Paul wrote, "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, 'Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree': that the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith" (Gal 3:13-14). *Because Jesus died on the cross, and shed His blood to cleanse us from our sins, we can come with boldness to God to receive the Holy Spirit.* It is a gift (Ac 10:45). We cannot earn it. The Holy Spirit is freely given to those who ask.

"Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled" (Mat 5:6). The Father has promised to fill those who hunger and thirst for the things of God. "For I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour My Spirit upon thy seed, and My blessing upon thine offspring" (Isa 44:3). This is the time of the latter rain. God says, "Ask ye of the Lord rain in the time of the latter rain" (Zech 10:1). Those who want to receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit should simply ask.

The Holy Spirit is given to us to bring us to maturity and perfection, and thereby we can be made ready for the coming of

Christ. The continuous outpouring of the Holy Spirit is like the downpour of rain. As the rain prepares the crops for harvest, so the Holy Spirit prepares the church to be caught up or resurrected at the second coming of Christ. Speaking about this outpouring of the Holy Spirit, James writes, "Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain. Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh" (Jas 5:7-8). **As the Father is pouring out His Spirit, we are instructed to be filled with the Spirit.** "And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit" (Eph 5:18). This speaks of an experience of being continually filled with the Spirit. The pure river of the water of life that proceeds from the throne of God never stops flowing. We can keep on drinking continually.

As we allow the Holy Spirit to work in us, He is continually transforming us into the image of Christ. "But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord" (2Cor 3:18). This process of change is also called putting *off* the old man and putting *on* the new man. "Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; and have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created him" (Col 3:9-10). This new man is continually being renewed. Yesterday's "new man" is old today. Every day we need to be renewed by the Holy Spirit. As the Apostle Paul wrote, "And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness" (Eph 4:23-24). **The Father's desire is that we all be conformed to the image of His Son and He has made a way for this to be accomplished by sending us the Holy Spirit.** Let us receive His promise, be filled with His Spirit and be made ready for the soon return of Christ. ❑

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The workmanship of His hands

SECRETS OF SLUMBERING

"I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep: for thou, Lord, only makest me dwell in safety" (Psa 4:8). "The sleep of a labouring man is sweet..." (Ecc 5:12).

When food becomes scarce during the colder seasons and energy must be conserved, many mammals, certain birds, and some insects, will go into dormancy or hibernation. These prolonged bouts of inactivity are genetically hard-wired modes of survival.

The physiological changes required for prolonged sleep are extremely complex. Nearly every cell, organ system, and metabolic pathway in an animal is involved. A groundhog will slow its heart rate from 80 beats per minute (bpm) to a barely life-supporting 4 bpm and its temperature from 38°C (100°F) to 7°C (45°F). Amazingly, a bat can drop its heart rate of 1000 bpm in flight to 25 bpm during hibernation, its rate of breathing to one breath every two hours, and its temperature by 20°C (36°F). Then they *really* look dead!

The preparation that goes into hibernation is enormous. It could not have evolved one step at a time in all these different species. From the moment these animals awake from a long sleep, they restart building fat stores for the next season of hibernation. Instinctively, they know what to eat, how to find it, how much to store, and when they have enough stashed away. As their sleep begins, every cell in their body will slow down in a controlled, synchronized manner. Bears drop their oxygen consumption by 50 percent, calories are burned more slowly, heart rate and blood pressure drop, and kidney function diminishes. Even the intestines prepare by lining their walls with extra white cells that stand guard and protect the hibernator from the threat of bacteria.

Many questions can arise due to this behavior: can hibernation be an accident of evolution, or accomplished by trial and error? For example, could the bears' ancestors have tried sleeping different lengths of time (and survived) until they got it right and then passed the proper directions to their offspring? This would require incredible genetic modifications.

What is it that enables bears to maintain most of their strength even though they sleep for months? If one were to put a man to bed for only a couple of weeks, he would soon be "as weak as a kitten." Bears may lose 20 percent of their strength, but they can still tear an intruder apart within seconds of being aroused.

As amazing as hibernation is, even regular sleep of the type that we humans engage in is altogether astonishing. Do we sleep because we are tired? Most everyone would respond with a "yes"; however, there is evidence to suggest that sleeping has more to do with the brain's need to reorganize than actually resting the body. For example, orca whales and some dolphins will stay awake for a month after giving birth. They keep nudging their newborn to the surface to take a breath every 30 seconds. One would think, if sleep were designed to reverse fatigue only, these mothers would eventually sink from exhaustion. The okapi, which is a small giraffe-like animal, needs only 20- to 30-second naps for a total of 5 minutes of sleep in 24 hours. Some dolphins sleep with half their brain and one eye closed, while the other half remains awake with the other eye open keeping watch.

A person can spend the entire night lying in bed awake, essentially resting every muscle, bone, and organ, yet rise in the morning feeling exhausted. For reasons that are unclear, the brain desperately needs a period of changed brain waves. To encourage us to get some sleep, the brain sends signals to the body, that make us feel physically tired. This is then followed by an overwhelming need to sleep; we yawn, doze off, and eventually collapse if we don't take heed to these signs.

However, the question arises: is our body truly exhausted? The winner of a marathon race does not doze on the medal stand or tell the press he needs to take a nap first before his interview. Yet newborn babies, who are not competing, sleep constantly. Are they exhausted, or is this a function of development? More than likely it is the latter. Sleep appears to be something more than rest—something uniquely needed by the brain.

All of our bodily functions are maintained and adjusted during our time of sleep. Metabolism slows, temperature falls, heart rates drop, and blood pressure relaxes. Shortly before we wake, however, the body begins preparing for the day. Adrenaline, blood pressure, and heart rate begin to rise. We awake ready to face a new day. While we sleep, most of our muscles remain somewhat paralysed while our eye muscles move back and forth. Some people wake temporarily paralysed (and panicked), as if a portion of the waking mechanism was delayed. Breathing remains intact, however, and this frightening state only lasts a few seconds.

Despite seeming so vulnerable during sleep, we are surprisingly protected. Very few of us fall out of bed, linger in one position too long and get bedsores, or smother in our pillows. Our body senses most problems early and automatically makes us change positions or move our head. We automatically kick the covers off when it is too hot or pull them up when we are feeling cold. Our ears are always listening. Our skin is like a

home security system—a single out-of-the-ordinary touch and we awake.

Our physiology adjusts as well. Our kidneys slow their work so we don't have to get up every two hours and use the bathroom. Our saliva dries so we don't choke. Our eyeballs roll upward when we close our eyes, presumably for additional protection. Our mouth will function as a backup opening for breathing should our nostrils become plugged. We even toss and turn so that our muscles will not be stiff in the morning.

Almost every living being sleeps in some form or another. Most rest for minutes to hours, but some slumber for months, and a few even remain dormant for years. Sleep is critical, but the reasons why are not entirely known. Without it, however, humans would die. Even though the instructions controlling sleep can be found within the DNA in every living cell, Darwinists have not been able to explain how restorative slumber came about. In fact, they avoid the topic. Rest assured, sleeping is not the result of an accident or mutation. This was something carefully planned out by a loving God who continually cares for our well being. *"Upon this I awaked, and beheld; and my sleep was sweet unto me"* (Jer 31:26). ❏

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At a time when Americans cared little for foreign missions, the Lord placed a burden on the heart of a young man named Adoniram Judson to take the gospel to faraway lands. Amidst continual opposition, Judson persevered and became part of the first group of Protestant missionaries from North America to the East. His inspiration, zeal, and work, led to the formation of many American foreign mission boards, paving the way for missionaries to follow in the steps of this bold young man.

Even from his early years, Adoniram Judson was a very intelligent and promising young man. At nineteen years of age, he graduated from Brown University as valedictorian of his class. Although gifted intellectually, Adoniram abandoned his faith in God while in university, being especially affected by one of his unbelieving but brilliant friends.

One night while staying in an inn, Judson overhead the cries of agony coming from a dying man in the next room. At the sound of this, Judson pondered the questions of life: *"Was the dying man prepared to die? Where would he spend eternity? Would he go to heaven or hell?"* The next morning, when Judson inquired about the dead man in the next room he was absolutely shocked to discover it was the same friend from school who had destroyed his faith in God! The words "lost, lost, lost" gripped Judson to the point that he realized he was totally helpless and without God. He returned home, surrendered himself to the Lord, dedicated his life for Christian service, and enrolled in Andover Theological Seminary.

At Andover, he heard and read about the mission work of William Carey in India. This caused him to give serious consideration to foreign missions. He struggled between his worldly ambitions and the claims of the love of Christ. The love of Christ was something very real to Judson and would later become the theme of his life. One day he went out into the woods and prayed: *"More than all else, I long to please Thee, my Lord. What wilt Thou have me to do?"* As he prayed he felt the presence of God and soon heard His voice: *"Go to the uttermost parts and preach the gospel of My love."* Shortly thereafter, Judson joined four other young men (sometimes referred to as the "Haystack Men") who also shared a burden for foreign missions. There were so many hurdles to be overcome in order to see their vision fulfilled that things seemed hopeless. However, through a series of remarkable events, the Lord enabled Judson and a

few colleagues to be part of the first group of American missionaries to be sent out to faraway lands.

Shortly after his marriage, the Judsons departed for India in 1812 where they faced many obstacles and closed doors. Finally, they ended up in Burma, an exotic land filled with millions of people, yet not one known Christian. It was an uphill task, but encouraged by the love of Christ, Judson pressed forward with the gospel of the love of God. Judson tirelessly poured out his life for the Burmese people; yet after six long and hard years, not one soul was saved. The lack of souls coming to Christ was not the only discouraging situation that Judson had to face. He endured sickness and death in his family as well. His son died after only eight months and Judson had to bury him in Burmese soil. That was the first death in Judson's family, but it would not be the last.

When war broke out in Burma, the Judsons were seen as spies and Adoniram was cast into prison. The horrors of prison that Judson faced cannot be adequately described with words—the inhumane treatment was far beyond imagination. Yet Judson managed to endure seventeen months of imprisonment and then return to his gospel work.

One of Judson's dreams was to present the Bible in the Burmese language. From the very beginning, he endeavored to learn the language and became very fluent in it. He first finished a translation of the gospel of Matthew and also translated tracts and statements of Bible truth for the Burmese people. He worked on an English-Burmese dictionary and by 1834 he had completed his translation of the entire Bible into the Burmese language.

Another of Judson's passions was to see souls get saved. After ardently studying the Burmese language he would go out on the streets and preach to the people. But after a number of years no souls were saved. When he received a letter from America criticizing the fact that no one had received the Lord, Judson bravely responded: *"the prospects are as bright as the promises of God."* Judson would often go on preaching trips to remote villages throughout the jungles. He visited the Karen people in the jungles and spent almost 25 years in that region. His labors there were very fruitful, and some estimate that converts from this area numbered nearly 20,000.

Even though he underwent many trials and sufferings, Judson had a vision of his eternal rewards. His heart was set in heaven—where he stored his treasures. One of his "Rules for Living," taken from one of his own papers states: *"Endeavor to rejoice in every loss and suffering incurred for Christ's sake and the Gospel's. Remember that though, like death, they are not willfully incurred, yet, like death, they are great gain."* Although

Judson suffered much in the world physically from tropical diseases and emotionally through the death of various family members, he held an eternal vision, seeing how the Lord worked all things together for his good.

Adoniram Judson labored for 35 years in Burma. By the end of his life there was much fruit to show for his many long and hard years of service. There were approximately 7000 baptized Burmese Christians at the time of Judson's death, not to mention the many who had passed away before Judson. There were over 60 established churches with more than 150 missionaries (including native pastors). His pioneer missionary work gave rise to more foreign mission boards being established and other missionaries being sent out to faraway lands. He suffered much in prison and also in many other ways emotionally and physically on Burmese soil. His was a life constrained by the love of Christ. At the end, he is remembered as saying, *"Oh the love of Christ! The love of Christ—its breadth and length and depth and height—we cannot comprehend it now, but what a study for eternity!"* The legacy that he left behind of being a man with extraordinary zeal to evangelize the lost in other lands continues to inspire many to pour out their lives in the service of Christ. Today there are more than two million believers in Myanmar (modern-day Burma), and 40 percent of the Karen people to whom Adoniram Judson directed his ministry are now Christians. Inscribed on the inner cover of a book he used in his translation of the Bible into Burmese was:

"In joy or in pain,
Our course be onward still;
We sow on Burma's barren plain;
We reap on Zion's hill." ❑

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A Chosen Vessel

The Master was searching for a vessel to use;
Before Him were many, which one would He choose?
"Take me," cried the gold one, "I'm shiny and bright,
I'm of great value, and I do things just right.
My beauty and luster will outshine the rest,
And for someone like You, Master, gold would be best."

The Master passed on with no word at all,
And looked at a silver urn, narrow and tall.
"I'll serve You, dear Master, I'll pour out Your wine,
I'll be on Your table whenever You dine.
My lines are so graceful, my carvings so true,
And silver will certainly complement You."

The Master passed on to the vessel of brass,
Wide-mouthed and shallow, and polished like glass.
"Here, here," cried the vessel, "I know I will do;
Place me on Your table for all men to view."
"Look at me," called the goblet of crystal so dear;
"Though fragile am I, I'll serve You with fear."

The Master came next to a vessel of wood;
Polished and carved, it solidly stood.
"You may use me, dear Master," the wooden bowl said,
"But I'd rather You used me for fruit, not for bread."

Then the Master looked down on a vessel of clay,
Empty and broken, it helplessly lay.
No hope had the vessel, that the Master might choose,
To cleanse and make whole, to fill and to use.

"Oh, this is the vessel I've been hoping to find!
I'll mend it and use it and make it all Mine!
I'll need not the vessel with the pride of itself,
Nor the one that is narrow, to sit on the shelf.
Nor the one that is big-mouthed, and shallow, and proud;
Nor the one that displays its contents so proud."

Then gently, He lifted the vessel of clay,
Mended and cleansed it, and filled it that day.
Spoke to it kindly, "There's a work you must do:
Just pour into others, what I pour into you."

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