

June 27th

Memory Verse

One generation shall praise thy works to another,

and shall declare thy mighty acts. Psalm 145:4

Younger children can learn the words in **bold**. More on today's memory verse in tomorrow's lesson.

A painting to enjoy



Today's painting is by Reyer Jacobsz van Blommendael (1628-1675) a Dutch artist who was born on **27 June**.¹ Almost nothing is known about his life but a number of his paintings have come down to us, including this one which has found its way to a gallery in Canada. You probably do not need me to tell you which Bible story the painting is about.² If you can't guess, read Luke 10:25–37.

The artist has put the scene into a more tree-lined context that we usually imagine it; this robbery has clearly happened on one of those narrow lanes where the branches form an arch overhead. The donkey is waiting patiently in the background for its new burden. The cloudy sky makes us think of the Netherlands too. The artist came from Haarlem which is in the very flat part of Holland and even gently rolling hills such as the ones in the picture are only found right in the south of the country. The Samaritan has already bound up the man's head and thrown some clothes around him. We cannot see the Samaritan's face very clearly as it is in shadow, but the poor robbed man is looking straight into the eyes of his rescuer with great gratitude.

Painting the human form has always been important to artists. In the pre-reformation times artists painted and sculpted what were known as "*Pietàs*", sad pictures of the dead Christ lying on his

1 Maybe a little earlier if this was his baptismal date.

2 It is called *The Good Samaritan*.

mother's knees. When the reformation arrived such things were banished from churches. They had been worshipped by the superstitious people as idols and a *Pietà* was often associated with the adoration of Mary. Christ is risen, he is not dead any more and such representations are clearly forbidden in the second commandment. This Dutch painter from reformation times has chosen a different way of exhibiting skill in painting the human form in the context of the New Testament.

Dutch art flourished at this time. We will be looking at other, more famous, Dutch artists of the period in the lessons for October 4th (another parable) and 20th December.

Something to draw

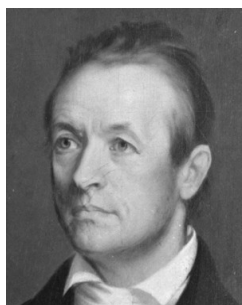


Drawing a whole person can be fun. It does not have to be in a style like the picture by Reyer Jacobsz van Blommendael above, of course. The ancient cave picture of the left is also a drawing of a whole figure and given how few lines the artist has used it is quite animated! Have you ever tried drawing stick figures? You can make them get up to all sorts of antics if you use your imagination.

Or you might like to draw a friend or someone from your family. Think about the person you would like to draw. Think about the colour of their hair, does it curl or wave – is it straight? What sort of things does your friend enjoy? Perhaps they enjoy reading, then you could draw them reading a book. Or maybe they enjoy the outdoors, say gardening...

What kind of clothes does your friend wear? What about their shoes? How do they move? Are they usually dancing about or sitting in a chair? You could make a list of as much information as possible that will help you make a picture that will remind you of your friend every time you look at it.

A Missionary story to read³



A dark-eyed baby boy lay in his old fashioned cradle more than two hundred years ago. In the little town of Malden, Massachusetts, USA this child was born, and named Adoniram, after his father, a Congregational minister. The father, and the mother, too, thought this baby a wonderful child, and determined that he should do a great deal of good in the world. They thought that the best way to get him ready for a great work was to begin early to teach him as much as he could possibly learn. Long pieces were given him to commit to memory when he was hardly more than a baby, and he learned to read when he was three.

When he was four, he liked best of all to gather all the children in the neighbourhood about him and play church. He always preached the sermon himself, and his favourite hymn was, “Go, preach My Gospel, saith the Lord.”

At ten this boy studied Latin and Greek, and at sixteen he went to Brown University, from which he graduated when he was nineteen. He was a great student, loving study, and ambitious to do and be something very grand and great indeed. But alas, at the university young Adoniram made a friend who led him astray. His friend, Jacob Eames, did not believe the gospel and he persuaded Adoniram to give up his belief too. On his 20th birthday Adoniram told his parents that he was no longer a Christian and went off to New York to be a playwright. How grieved his parents must have been to see all their hopes for him dashed! But God was still watching over Adoniram (I'm sure his parents

³ Adapted from Julia H. Johnston, *Fifty Missionary Heroes Every Boy and Girl Should Know* (New York, 1913) and other sources.

were praying for him) and he had the most strange experience you can imagine.

He was staying in an hotel. In the next room he could hear someone groaning. He could tell that whoever it was was very ill – dying in fact. He could not sleep. He wondered about death. He had come to believe that death was the end, that there was nothing beyond the grave. It was not a comforting thought at that moment and Adoniram felt afraid, suppose he was wrong? He seemed to hear in his mind the voice of his old college friend Jacob Eames, taunting him for being afraid. “What a stupid superstition! Judgement after death! No there is nothing, nothing!”

Eventually the groaning ceased and Adoniram drifted off into a troubled sleep.

In the morning as he was leaving the hotel he asked at the reception desk. How was the man in the next room?

“I'm afraid he died, Sir,” came the sad reply.

“Died! How awful!” said Adoniram. “What was his name?”

“He was a Mr Eames, Sir, Jacob Eames, from Brown University.”

This tragic event was the turning point in Adoniram Judson's life. He turned back to his God and Saviour and then came a great longing to be a minister. He studied diligently with this end in view. There was one question which he asked about everything, and this was, “Is it pleasing to God?” He put this question in several places in his room so that he would be sure to see and remember it.

Mr. Judson taught in a school for a while, wrote some school-books, and travelled about to see the world. After some years he read a little book called “The Star in the East.” It was a missionary book, and turned the young man's thoughts to missions. His thoughts turned towards Burma, modern-day Myanmar, and he longed to go there.

At this time there were four young men in Williams College who used to meet together in a grove for prayer and conference. One day a heavy shower forced them to find better shelter than the trees afforded, and they took refuge under a haystack in a field near by. They were earnestly talking on this day about sending the Good News to the faraway heathen, and in the shelter of that haystack they pledged themselves to go as foreign missionaries as soon as the way should open. Mr. Judson met the four young men. These five were of one heart, and were much together encouraging one another.

There was no money to send out missionaries, and Mr. Judson was sent to London to see if the Society there would promise some support. The ship was captured by a privateer, and the young man made prisoner, but he found an American who got him out of the filthy cell. This man came in, wearing a large cloak, and was allowed to go into the cell to see if he knew any of the prisoners. When he came to Mr. Judson he threw his cape over him, hiding him from the jailer, and got him out safely, giving him a piece of money, and sending him on his way.

The London Society was not ready to take up the support of American missionaries, but not long after this, the American Board, in Boston, sent him to Burma, with his lovely young bride, whose name, as a girl, was Ann Hasseltine. It took a year and a half to reach the field in Rangoon, Burma, and get finally settled, in a poor, forlorn house, ready to study the language. “The Burmese would rather dwell in hell with their families than go to heaven alone,” warned his language teacher when he heard why Mr Judson had come!

The Burmese were sad Buddhists, and the fierce governors of the people were called “Eaters.” The work was very hard, but the missionary said that the prospects were “bright as the promises of God.” It was not until he was thirty-one and had been in Burma six years that he baptized the first convert to Christianity. This was MOUNG NAU who was baptised on 27th June 1819. MOUNG NAU was a poor man. He heard and believed the Gospel saying:



I believe that the Divine Son, Jesus Christ, suffered death, in the place of men, to atone for their sins. Like a heavy-laden man, I feel my sins are very many. The punishment of my sins I deserve to suffer. Since it is so, do you, Sirs, consider, that I, taking refuge in the merits of the Lord Jesus Christ . . . shall dwell with yourselves, a band of brothers, in the happiness of heaven?

Mr Judson wrote in his journal: “Oh, may it prove to be the beginning of a series of baptisms in the Burmese Empire which shall continue in uninterrupted success to the end of the age.”

After this came great trouble. Burma and Great Britain were at war. Missionaries were unwelcome. Dr. Judson was put in a dreadful prison and treated with great cruelty. After great suffering there, his wife was allowed to take him to a lion's cage, left empty by the lion's death. She put the translation of the New Testament that he was working on in a case, and it was used for a pillow. After he left the prison, a servant of Dr. Judson's found and preserved the precious book. Set free at last, he went on with his work.

His wife and children died. Death came to his home again and again, and trials bitter to bear. At last poor Adoniram Judson became so overwhelmed with sadness that he went off into the jungle to live in a little hut on his own. “My tears flow at the same time over the forsaken grave of my dear love and over the loathsome sepulchre of my own heart,” he wrote in an agony of despair and self doubt. But God brought him out of his misery and enabled him to carry on again.

ဘုရားသခင်၏သားတော်ကို
ယုံကြည်သောသူအပေါင်းတို့သည်၊
ပျက်စီးခြင်းသို့မရောက်၊
ထာဝရ
အသက် ကိုရစေခြင်းငှါ၊
ဘုရားသခင်သည်
မ ဝိမ့်၍တပါးတည်းသော
သားတော်ကို
စွန့်တော်မူသည်တိုင်အောင်
လောကီသားကို
ချစ်တော်မူ၏။

The preparation of a dictionary, and the translation of the New Testament, now occupied much time. You can see his translation of John 3:16 into Burmese on the left.⁴

“Remember, a large proportion of those who come out on a mission to the East die within five years after leaving their native land. Walk softly, therefore; death is narrowly watching your steps.” he warned prospective missionaries.

At a great festival in 1831 Judson and his helpers gave out thousands of gospel tracts in the Burmese language. These bore much fruit and soon people were seeking the missionaries out to ask about the message they had read on the tracts. In his journal Mr Judson wrote:

Some come two or three months' journey, from the borders of Siam and China—“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 seen a writing that tells about an eternal God. Are you the man that gives away such writings? If so, pray give us one, for we want to know the truth before we die.” Others come from the interior of the country, where the name of Jesus Christ is little known—“Are you Jesus Christ's man? Give us a writing that tells about Jesus Christ.”

4 The whole of Judson's translation can be seen here: <https://newchristianbiblestudy.org/bible/myanmar-judson-1835/>

For thirty-seven years Adoniram Judson toiled in Burma, several times returning to America, but hastening back to his field. By the time of his death there were sixty-three churches in Burma, under the care of one hundred and sixty-three missionaries and helpers, and over seven thousand converts had been baptized.

Something to find out

There are Christians in Myanmar today which reminds us of today's memory verse. Can you find out any information about them? They are in difficult circumstances and suffer persecution. Do not forget them in your prayers.