

Trust: “We’re Going to Heaven”
Adapted from *Hero Tales, Volume IV*, by Dave and Neta Jackson

Raised on the Chinese mission field, Betty Stam, along with her husband, returned to China to serve the Lord in the land she called home.

Three-month-old Helen Priscilla giggled and splashed in the wooden bucket of warm water that served as her bathtub. “Look, John,” I laughed, holding tight to my slippery daughter. “Helen thinks this is great fun.”

Loud knocking interrupted the early-morning bath time in our China Inland Mission house in Tsingteh, Anhwei Province. I heard my husband go to the door, followed by a babble of high-pitched voices in Chinese. “Hide! Hide!”

Wrapping baby Helen in a towel, I hurried into the main room. “John? What is it?”

John turned to me, concern in his gray eyes. “Communist soldiers...they’ve captured the city. All means of escape have been cut off.”

I could hear people running and screaming in the street. I clutched the squirming baby to my chest. “We must pray—it is our only hope.”

We called our two frightened Chinese helpers and knelt in prayer. While we were still praying, soldiers in the uniforms of the Red Army burst into our house. The head soldier demanded money and jewelry. While John tried to comply with their demands, I brought out a tray of hot tea and cakes and offered them to the soldiers. But the soldiers were angry at the small amount of money John was able to come up with. They tied John’s hands and took him away; shortly returning for the me and the baby.

The soldiers allowed John to write a short letter to China Inland Mission explaining their demand for \$20,000 in ransom. The letter was dated December 6, 1934, and ended with the words, “...as for us, may God be glorified whether by life or by death.”

Panic and chaos reigned in the city. The soldiers looted and killed many outright; others were taken captive. Six thousand strong, the Red Army evacuated the next morning, marching the captives over the mountains to their next destination: Miaosheo. My husband, John, and I knew the Wang family, Christians in the town, but we didn’t dare contact them. But the local postmaster recognized us and cried out: “Where are you going?”

A slight smile crossed my husband’s face as he said, “I don’t know where they’re going, but we’re going to heaven!”

The second night of our captivity, our family was locked in a bedroom of the house of a rich man who had fled Miaosheo. John was tied to a bedpost, unable to move. I was left free to tend to the baby as best I could. Knowing that death could come at any moment, we comforted each other. At least we were together. And nothing could happen unless God allowed it. Our greatest concern was little Helen. Oh, how we longed to protect her. But God knew....

Dawn was barely breaking over the mountains when the soldiers marched back into the house. They ordered John and me to leave the baby and come with them. Quickly I bundled the baby warmly and laid her in the middle of the big bed. With a last tender look, my hands were bound and I was pushed after my husband.

We were led through the streets as the soldiers jeered the “foreigners” and called the townspeople to come witness our execution. A man they recognized—a believer—pushed out of the crowd and begged the soldiers to let us go. They ignored him and took us to a hillside out of town.

It was over in a few moments. John was pushed to his knees; a sword flashed. I fell to my knees beside him. The sword again whistled through the air.

The soldiers thought that was the end of that. They left two hated foreigners crumpled in the dirt. But John and Betty Stam were already meeting their Savior in heaven...and their testimony was swelling like a tidal wave across the world.

Trust in God’s sovereignty can bring peace even in the face of death.