

On the Road to Varanasi.

by Gareth Evans

Gareth Evans recounts a miraculous journey to Varanasi that highlights divine intervention and the power of friendship in overcoming obstacles.

Scripture: Psalm 37:5, Proverbs 16:9, Isaiah 55:8, Ephesians 3:20, Philippians 4:19

Topics: "Divine Intervention", "Faithfulness Of God"

Description

Gareth Evans shares a powerful testimony of divine intervention during a challenging travel experience in India, where God used unexpected connections and circumstances to provide a way for Gareth to reach his destination. Through the kindness and influence of a respected businessman named Simon Job, Gareth's seemingly impossible situation turned into a miraculous opportunity to board a flight despite being #10 on the waiting list. This story highlights the faithfulness of God in orchestrating events beyond human understanding and the importance of trusting in His divine provision.

Transcript

The year was 1997 and I was in Allahabad, northern India, teaching at a seminary 'Spiritual Emphasis' week. The following Monday I was due to fly on to Kathmandu in Nepal to spend a month with Youth With A Mission (YWAM). However, the Air India agents told me that my flight ticket (booked by computer several weeks earlier in Canada) could not be found, and that the earliest date they could put me on a plane was Friday, a week later. The only alternative was to take a fifteen hour bus ride over a second class road, and to carry my two heavy travel bags a considerable distance over the border.

That year, the president of the seminary had left and an interim leader, a former missionary from the USA, was directing the work. Rudy Rabi and his wife Eleanor were well into their 70s but their love for the Lord and His work was undiminished.

"Gareth, I must go to the airport Saturday, to pick up a visitor from Australia," said Rudy. "Why don't you come with me to see if you can find what happened to your ticket? Maybe they have your name mixed up in their records there." As I woke that Saturday morning I assured the Lord that I was willing to travel by bus but I'd much prefer to travel by plane! So it was that, a short while later, Rudy, Eleanor and I began the five hour journey from Allahabad to Varanasi, the airport.

The journey was slow as the winding, narrow road was full of potholes, people and cows.

About three hours into our journey, Eleanor felt a desperate need for a toilet break. In India that often means 'behind the nearest bush' so Rudy was instructed to stop at the first convenient place. That was not suitable to Eleanor so Rudy was told to drive a little further. This was repeated three times until we pulled up behind a stationary car. As Eleanor went off into the nearby shrubbery, the driver of the car, who would have seen our stop-go motion of the last few minutes, left his car and approached us.

"Anything wrong?" he enquired. "No, just a toilet break" replied Rudy, and then, taking a closer look, "I say, aren't you Simon Job?"

"Yes," replied the stranger. "Who are you?" "I'm Rudy Rabi!" shouted Rudy as he leapt out of the car and the two of them embraced. Evidently, fifteen years earlier, Simon and Rudy's son had been closest of friends in school together. I was introduced and, when he heard of my ticket dilemma, Simon asked me for my itinerary, saying "Leave this to me." "Are you an angel?" I asked, looking to see if there were any wings evident.

Later that evening, as we relaxed in a Varanasi hotel, Simon called to tell me his agent would take me to the airport in the morning. He had not been able to arrange a ticket but assured me that his agent would try his best. On the 25km journey to the airport next morning, his 'agent', my hotel manager, told me that, in that Hindu city, Simon Job was one of the most respected of all men, whose Christian ethics were seen in all his business actions.

He also told me that he had been in contact with the Air India office that morning and they had made me #10 on their 'business class' waiting list. Number 10! My heart sank as I realised what little hope I had of a seat, knowing there are only about ten seats in total in business class.

The airport lounge was crowded with travelers, mostly pilgrims and sightseers to this most Hindu of Indian cities. I sat on my luggage in one corner while the agent went off in search of my ticket. Ten minutes later he returned. "Mr Evans, I have found your name!" he exclaimed, "but they have knocked you off the manifesto for Monday because they have a large tour party coming through!" Seeing my disappointment, he hastened to add, "I told them nobody knocks a friend of Simon Job off the manifesto!"

An hour passed. Most of the travelers had left for the departure lounge, and I was patiently waiting for the agent and his chauffeur to return so we could go back to the city. Just then, a young man rushed up with a ticket in his hand. "Come on, sir," he shouted, "you're on this plane today." He took both my travel bags and ran toward the departure gate. As I caught up with him, I asked, "How many from the waiting list got on the plane?" When he told me that only two had obtained tickets, I expressed surprise, knowing that I was #10.

"Oh no, sir, anyone who is a friend of Simon Job is #1 up here!"

Could it be that God, knowing His child was having travel problems, caused a young businessman to take a roadside break at exactly the same place where, a few minutes later, an elderly lady would need to stop for a toilet break? Coincidence? I don't think so!

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