

PRAYING FOR

INDIA

— A 31 DAY —
PRAYER GUIDE

INTRODUCTION

Thank you for joining in for a month of prayer for India. This prayer guide is aimed at encouraging people and churches to pray for the spread of the gospel and the strengthening of the church in India.

Please spread the word and pass this guide on to mobilize more people to pray with us. You are welcome to forward this guide to others, print it, and distribute it to your church. Permission should be requested to make any edits to this guide.

As you join us on this **31-day prayer journey**, you will discover that India is one of the most spiritual places in the world. We will introduce you to many of the religions found in India and give you ways to pray for people who follow Hinduism, Sikhism, Buddhism, and more. You also will get a glimpse of the rich culture of India and have the opportunity to pray for people in all walks of life. Use each day to pray for God's name to be glorified among the 1,469 different people groups in India.

If you would like more information about how God is working in India, **PrayingForIndia.org** is a great resource for more stories and prayer requests for the peoples of India.

WHY INDIA?

Out of **1.2 BILLION PEOPLE** in India, only about **2.2%** follow Jesus Christ. India houses almost all of the world's major religions, including Hinduism, Sikhism, Buddhism, and Christianity. Despite this diversity, 80 percent, or over 827 million people, are Hindu, following millions of gods. For many, to be truly Indian is to be Hindu.

Of India's 1,469 different people groups, 1,245 are considered unreached with the gospel. Of those unreached people groups, a staggering 477 people groups are labeled as unengaged, meaning that they have no one actively working to bring the gospel to them.

Recent years have brought tighter restrictions on minority faiths by the Indian government, specifically for converts from Hindu backgrounds. In many states, anti-conversion laws enable harsh punishments for Hindu-background Christians and those who share the gospel with them. Christians in India face persecution from the government, their communities, and oftentimes their own families.

Join us this month in praying for India, that God would be glorified among all the peoples that call India home.

HINDU // 80%
827,578,868

MUSLIM // 13.4%
138,188,240

CHRISTIAN // 2.2%
24,080,016

BUDDHIST // 0.8%
7,955,207

SIKH // 1.9%
19,215,730



WEEK ONE

DAY 1 PERSECUTION

From the very beginning, new believers in India are taught to expect persecution according to Jesus' words to his disciples in John 15:20, which says, "Remember the word that I said to you: 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you. If they kept my word, they will also keep yours." Persecution for Indian Christians is part of daily life, as believers face pressure from families, communities, and the government.

Recently, anti-conversion laws in some states have been tightened, as the government seeks to stop all conversions from Hinduism. Muslim-background Christians also face persecution when choosing to follow Christ. Christians can face losing their homes, being beaten, and sometimes even being killed as a result of following Jesus and telling others about him.

Pray that Christians in India would not be driven by fear but would continue to boldly proclaim the gospel to those around them.

Pray for those who persecute—for the government and radical religious groups—to hear the gospel and be changed. Pray that they will become witnesses for Christ.

DAY 2 INDIA'S MAJOR CITIES: DELHI

With a population of almost 22.5 million, Delhi is India's second largest metropolis and one of the world's fastest growing cities. Delhi is India's capital city and political center, representing India to the rest of the world.

All major religions are represented in Delhi, though the majority of people (80 percent) are Hindu. Delhi's population grows by an overwhelming 300,000 births each year, which is more than the total number of Christians in the whole city.

Pray for Indian Christians in Delhi to reach out to their neighbors of other religions and for the church to grow significantly this year in Delhi.

Pray for unity among believers in Delhi, especially among church leaders, so that the world will know they are Christians by the love they have for one another (John 13:35).

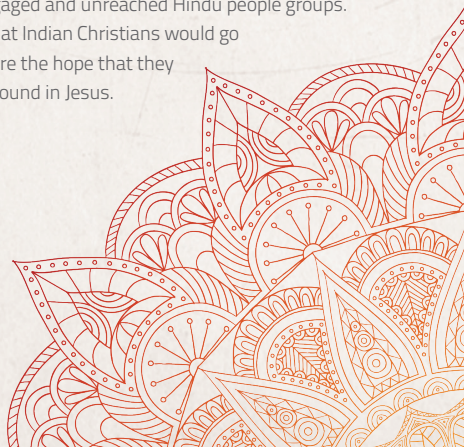
DAY 3 HINDUISM

More than 800 million people in India worship millions of gods. As Hindus, they traditionally believe in a triune view of god—Brahma, the creator; Vishnu, the preserver; and Shiva, the destroyer. The remaining 300 million or more gods relate to these three in some way. Hindus strive their whole lives to build up enough good karma to escape reincarnation and join the gods.

About 197 million Hindu people in India are in people groups that are unengaged with the gospel. They have never heard the good news of Jesus Christ and will likely die without hearing unless someone goes to tell them.

Pray for Hindus to know the One True God who created them and all things. Ask God to help them reject the gods and idols of their religion and embrace Him alone.

Pray for God to send more workers to the unengaged and unreached Hindu people groups. Ask that Indian Christians would go to share the hope that they have found in Jesus.



DAY 4 **DIWALI: THE FESTIVAL OF LIGHTS**

Probably the most popular holiday in India, Diwali is a five-day festival that welcomes in the Hindu New Year. For Hindus, the New Year festivities have religious significance. The festival is a celebration of the return of the Hindu god Rama, who was greeted at night with an elaborate light display after his fourteen-year exile. Diwali also celebrates when the Hindu god Krishna defeated a demon.

People from other religions join in on Diwali celebrations too, including Sikhs, Jains, and Buddhists. For many, Diwali is like Christmas in the West, where families come together and buy gifts of gold, clothing, decorations, and more for their family, friends, and neighbors. People decorate with lights all over their cities and light candles as a sign of triumph while staying up late into the night lighting fireworks and playing music.

Christians in India celebrate the festival with their Hindu friends by looking for opportunities to share about Jesus, the Light of the World.

Pray for Hindus and people from other religions to be introduced to the Light of the World during Diwali this year.

Pray for the enemy's power over the hearts, minds, and souls of Hindus to be broken and for them to see Christ as King of kings and Lord of lords.

Class" because they have been very poor for many generations. The Gujar Marwari people group is unengaged and unreached, with no one actively trying to reach them for Christ.

Pray for the Gujjars to find their true joy in Christ, the One who was despised and rejected by men.

Pray for God to call workers from all over the world to share the gospel among the Gujar people.

DAY 6 **HOMELESSNESS IN INDIA**

Worldwide, more than 100 million people are homeless, living on the streets in terrible conditions. India's streets are covered with the poorest of the poor, with 78 million of the world's homeless found there. Almost half of India's homeless live in the busy, overcrowded streets of its megacities. Homeless children are often targets for exploitation and human trafficking, and India is home to 11 million children who live on the streets.

Pray for the homeless and marginalized people of India to find true hope in Jesus Christ.

Pray for ministries that reach out to the overwhelming numbers of homeless and exploited people of India. Pray for God to strengthen them and enable them to continue making a difference.

DAY 7 **SMALL BUT GROWING**

Christians make up only 2.2 percent of India's 1.2 billion people. Christianity has a long history in India, and Christian ministries have operated there for years. The church continues to grow but not without opposition. Church leaders often have opportunities for training, and church-planting movements have been successful in many parts of the country. Still, over 1,200 people groups remain unreached.

Pray for the church in India to continue to grow and for millions of believers to be added this year.

Pray for Indian believers to become passionate about reaching the remaining unreached people groups and to take the gospel boldly to places it has not been before.

DAY 5 **UNENGAGED, UNREACHED: THE GUJJAR (MARWARI)**

"A few people have tried to tell us about Jesus, but we find it very difficult to believe there could be only one God."

There are 3.34 million Marwari-speaking Gujjars living in and around Rajasthan in North India. As a Hindu tribe, the Gujjars worship millions of gods. Traditionally the Gujjars are looked down on as "The Backward

WEEK TWO

DAY 8 THE COST OF FAMILY

When Raj* and Isha* decided to trust Jesus Christ and leave their many Hindu gods, their family immediately turned against them. They were labeled as outcasts who abandoned their family and culture. For two years they heard nothing from their families. Slowly, through very tense relationships, they are connecting with their families again.

Pray with Raj and Isha that their families will know the Lord Jesus Christ and trust him.

Pray for Christians in India who must count the cost of losing family and friends in order to follow Christ.

DAY 9 INDIA'S GATEWAY

As the "Gateway to India," Mumbai is widely known as the country's business center and financial capital. People from all over India come to Mumbai in search of better opportunities, and 65 percent of Mumbai is age 35 or under. In this bustling city, you can find billionaires and luxurious shopping centers in close proximity to slums filled with the poorest of the poor.

It is estimated that nearly every one of India's unengaged, unreached people groups (UUPGs) have someone living in Mumbai. If these people hear the gospel and believe, then they can take it back to their homes and share with their people.

Pray for those who come to Mumbai in search of a better life to hear the gospel and find eternal life through Jesus Christ.

Pray for Indian believers and Christian workers to reach people from the UUPGs with the gospel and have opportunities to train the new believers to go back to their own people.

* Name Changed

DAY 10 ISLAM IN INDIA

Muslims in India make up 14.2 percent of the population with more than 138 million people. Many Muslims strive constantly to earn their way into paradise through good deeds. Although Muslims recognize Jesus as a prophet, they believe that the prophet Mohammad was the final and greatest prophet.

Muslims who convert to Christianity in India face heavy persecution when they choose to follow Christ.

Many Muslim groups remain unreached, like the Mappila group of 9 million people who are unengaged and unreached.

Pray for Muslims in India to hear the gospel and believe in Jesus as the Son of God who takes away their sins, rather than seeing Him simply a prophet.

Pray for Muslim-background Christians who face persecution to find Christian community and to be bold to share the gospel with their Muslim friends and family.

DAY 11 THE FESTIVAL OF SACRIFICE

Id-ul-Zuha / Bakr-Id is a festival celebrated by many Muslims in India and around the world. Muslims believe that Allah commanded Abraham to sacrifice his son Ishmael. At the time of the sacrifice, Allah provided a sheep so that Ishmael could be spared. To celebrate this provision, Muslims wear new clothes, attend prayer meetings, and sacrifice a sheep or goat. Some view this time of sacrifice as a way to cover their sins and gain favor from Allah.

Pray for Muslims in India to hear about Jesus' sacrifice that truly covers their sins.

Pray for Christians to reach out to Muslims with the gospel during this year's festival in September.

DAY 12 THE MALI (MARWARI)

The Marathi-speaking Mali of India number around 3 million. They are commonly gardeners who grow and sell flowers and plants that are used in Hindu worship. A common belief among the Mali is that they were created when the goddess Shiva pricked her hand on a thorn in the garden and drew blood. Currently the Mali are labeled as an unengaged, unreached people group (UUPG) with no active gospel witness among them.

Pray for the Mali to realize that only Jesus' sacrifice for them can save them, not their spiritual cords, garlands, or sacrifices.

Pray for the Mali to hear the true story of creation and know that the God who created them loves them and wants them to know Him.

DAY 13 THE EXPLOITED MILLION

Abandoned and alone, five-year-old Alama cries in a ditch on the side of the road. In her blurry vision, three large men appear. She stops crying. Staying very still, she feels a hand pull at the few worn rags barely covering her little figure. When she tries to pull away, one of them smacks her cheek, grabs her arm, and yanks her to her feet as the others look her up and down.

Before long, Alama finds herself pushed into a vehicle, dropped at a house with other little girls, cleaned well, dressed in the prettiest clothes she has seen, and forced into a soft bed.

Over and over, one man after another comes, gives something to the strong man at the door, takes what he came for, and leaves. Finally, the men stop coming, but Alama feels dirtier than ever.

It is estimated that one million children are in prostitution in India and are often as young as little Alama. Children between the ages of 5-12 are at the most risk of abuse in the country. India is a source and destination for human trafficking and often serves as a transit country for men, women, and children subjected to forced labor or sex trafficking.

Pray for a total and complete end to sexual exploitation and human trafficking in India.

Pray for victims of human trafficking to be rescued and for God to transform their lives and give them a reason to live. Ask that they will know of the everlasting love of God.

DAY 14 BECOMING FAMILY

Often when Indians decide to place their faith in Christ they lose their families and the communities they've known all their lives. Fellow Christians come alongside these new believers to support them in their walk with Christ. Many times churches and pastors will help with financial burdens left by the family. They meet regularly to pray. At every moment they stand with their new brothers and sisters in Christ.

Pray for new believers to find Christian community quickly after they choose to follow Christ.

Pray for pastors and church members to continue to reach out to new believers and to have strength to continue in this ministry.

WEEK THREE

DAY 15 UNITED IN PERSECUTION

Persecution is a part of life for Indians who choose to follow Christ, especially those who come from Hindu and Muslim backgrounds. Indian pastors do their best to make sure that no one has to face persecution alone. Many times pastors will visit a person facing persecution to encourage them with God's Word, pray for them, and counsel them. If pastors sense a serious threat, then they do what they can to get someone to safety.

Pray for pastors as they shepherd their people to face persecution. Ask that they will be strengthened to continue the work.

Pray for church members to band together during persecution and be bold in their faith.

DAY 16 INDIA'S SPIRITUAL CENTER

Varanasi has been India's religious hub and a cultural heritage site for hundreds of years. The city is best known for its access to the Ganges River, considered by Hindus to be a holy place where they can wash away their sins. Idols situated on platforms called ghats line the riverbank where worshippers come to offer prayers and gifts. According to Hindu beliefs, to die in Varanasi brings release from the cycle of reincarnation.

Pray for the billions of souls who come to the Ganges River, that they might believe in Jesus who is the only one who can truly wash away sins.

Pray for Christians in Varanasi to be lights in the immense darkness that permeates this spiritual city. Ask that they will be bold to share the gospel and make disciples.

DAY 17 INDIAN BUDDHISTS

Buddhists do not believe in the existence of God or the soul. Instead they focus on emptying themselves of all desire, which is the cause of suffering. Buddhists live a life of good deeds versus bad deeds, and they see life as a constant cycle of reincarnation. India has almost 8 million Buddhists, and it is believed to be the place where Buddhism originated.

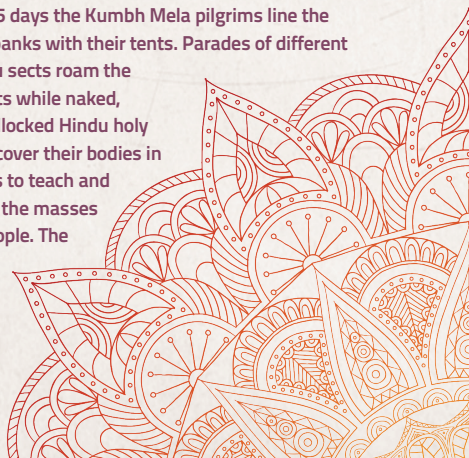
Pray for Buddhists in India to hear about and believe in God and find in Jesus Christ the true end to suffering.

Pray for evangelistic materials that have been created for Buddhists to be received well and to clearly communicate the gospel. Pray for a great harvest from this distribution.

DAY 18 THE FESTIVAL OF WASHING

Hopes of washing their sins away and escaping the cycle of reincarnation continue to bring hundreds of millions of Hindus to one of four holy cities for the Kumbh Mela festival. In the city of Allahabad, Hindus believe that the Ganges and Saraswati Rivers intersect with a mystical river where the gods come to bathe. Pilgrims travel from all over India and the world to bathe in the river; they will even bring sticks to dip in the water for their loved ones who cannot attend.

For 55 days the Kumbh Mela pilgrims line the riverbanks with their tents. Parades of different Hindu sects roam the streets while naked, dreadlocked Hindu holy men cover their bodies in ashes to teach and bless the masses of people. The



Kumbh Mela in 2013 was called the largest religious gathering in the world with a total of 100 million participants converging on a city of 1.2 million.

It is illegal for Christians to share the gospel on the festival grounds during Kumbh Mela. However, many national believers risk imprisonment and sometimes their lives to share how people can really have their sins washed away.

Pray that the pilgrims of the next Kumbh Mela will hear the gospel and will place their faith in Jesus who can truly wash away their sins.

Pray for national believers and Christian workers who boldly proclaim the gospel during the festival. Ask for their protection and also for their witness to reach the masses.

devadasis, or temple prostitutes. Families struggling to survive dedicate their daughters in hopes of gaining favor from the goddess Yellamma. Although this practice was outlawed in 1982, the devadasi system is still in business underground. Once girls are dedicated, they are never allowed to marry since they are already considered to be married to the goddess. After they reach physical maturity, they are forced to begin their lives as prostitutes. In this underground business, women work out of their homes, often at risk of being trafficked into the red light districts.

Pray for the devadasi system to be abolished once and for all and for temple prostitutes to find freedom and healing.

Pray for impoverished families who feel like they have no choice but to devote their daughters to lives of prostitution. Ask that God will send people to them to share the hope of a life with Christ.

DAY 19 THE BAIRAGI (HARAVTI)

The unengaged, unreached Bairagi get their name from the Sanskrit word vairagya, which means "one who is free from passion." As Hindus, the Bairagi worship millions of gods, especially Vishnu, who is their supreme god. Most Bairagi people can be found in the state of Rajasthan in Northwest India, where they make a living as farmers.

Pray for the Bairagi to hear the gospel and believe in Jesus as the one who fulfills all of their needs.

Pray for new believers among the Bairagi to be trained to share the gospel with their people and for more Bairagi to be added to God's Kingdom.

DAY 21 THE QUEST FOR PEACE

"I used to worship, but there was no peace in my soul. When I saw those statues, I said, 'How can these statues build a whole world? How can they be the creator of the universe?' And I had never heard any story about gods who came and died and saved us from our sin."

Rehaan* shared his story about how he came to faith in Christ. When he heard the story of Jesus, he knew that Jesus truly was God and could take away his sins.

Pray for Hindus who worship millions of gods and are not sure that their gods can save them.

Pray for Christians from Hindu backgrounds like Rehaan to tell their family and friends about Jesus who died to save them from sin.

DAY 20 MARRIAGE TO THE GODS

In a system that is more than 5,000 years old, hundreds of young girls are dedicated to temples to become

* Name Changed

WEEK FOUR

DAY 22 JESUS IS WITH YOU

"My name is Husaam* and I am a pastor in India. When new believers come to my church, first I teach them that Jesus is always their first love and is with them in their persecution. I tell them that Jesus already said that they would be persecuted because Jesus was persecuted. So I tell them in every situation Jesus is there. If you are hungry, don't worry, Jesus is with you. If someone is beating you, remember, Jesus also was beaten."

Pray for new believers to find people to equip them to face persecution just as Husaam does with his church.

Pray for pastors like Husaam to continue to teach, train, and equip their churches to stand strong under persecution and to share the gospel boldly.

DAY 23 SIKHISM

Known as the youngest world religion, Sikhism branched off of Hinduism when the founder had a vision he believed was from God. Sikhs strive to free themselves from human weaknesses by living a disciplined life, seeing this as the way to escape reincarnation. The majority of Sikhs live in Punjab, India, and can be distinguished from Hindus and Muslims by their turbans. There are just over 19 million Sikhs in India.

Pray for Sikhs to see Jesus as the sacrifice for all sins and to follow him rather than their many gods.

Pray for Sikhs' respect for religious scriptures to draw them to God's Word. Ask that God will reveal his truth to them through the Bible.

DAY 24 THE CITY OF SIKHS

Amritsar is the spiritual capital for Sikhs where their holiest shrine, the Golden Temple, attracts an average of 100,000 visitors each day. Amritsar is located in the northwest in the state of Punjab about 15 miles from Pakistan. The city is well known for its cultural heritage and its production of wool and pashmina.

Pray for God to bring followers of Jesus to Amritsar to share the gospel among its many visitors.

Pray for Sikh background believers to reach out to their own people with the gospel, being bold to proclaim Jesus despite opposition.

DAY 25 THE HARVEST FESTIVAL

Lohri is a Sikh festival celebrated mainly in Punjab and surrounding areas. It is a time to express deep appreciation to nature gods for a bountiful harvest. The main activity centers around a huge bonfire where people offer gifts and perform rituals around the blaze. The fire is believed to rid people of sadness and give them renewed happiness in life. It is a time when people take a break from farming and reflect on the importance of fire in their trade.

Pray for Sikhs to learn of their Creator who is the One responsible for their abundant harvests.

Pray for an abundant gospel harvest among the Sikhs of India and for them to worship the One True God.

* Name Changed



DAY 26 THE LOHAR (MARATHI)

The Marathi-speaking Lohar of India often live together in large villages and urban centers and are well known as workers of iron. Their name comes from the Hindu god Viswakarma who is called “the divine architect.” They are commonly hard-working people who put in long hours to feed their families. They are currently unengaged and unreached with the gospel.

Pray for Indian believers who speak the Marathi language to reach out to the Lohar people with the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Pray for people of peace from the Lohar villages to hear the gospel, believe, and open up the door to the rest of the community to hear.

DAY 27 THE UNTOUCHABLES

All over India, about 250 million people suffer through life labeled as “untouchables.” These are the Dalits, the lowest caste, so low that they are not included in the four castes defined in traditional Hinduism. The Dalits are the most marginalized and exploited people in Indian society, segregated and looked down upon. Among all of India’s trafficking victims, 90 percent are Dalits, and every day nearly 100 Dalits are victims of crime. These untouchables live their whole lives feeling unwanted and unloved.

Pray for the Dalits to hear the good news of Jesus Christ and become children of the God who created them and loves them.

Pray for Christians in India who are working to help Dalits and seeking to bridge the gap between them and the upper classes.

DAY 28 THE GOSPEL AND CULTURE

Sandeep* saw a problem with the way outsiders viewed the church. He noticed that although churches in India are filled with Indian people, they tend to use Western styles of worship, especially with music and instruments. Sandeep realized that many Hindus see Jesus as the foreign, Western god because of this. He prayed for God to guide him in how to change this perception.

“God told me to preach to people in a way they would understand,” Sandeep said. “So then I started singing about the Lord using Hindu-style songs. Many began to listen and come to faith in Christ because I changed my approach.”

Pray for Indian pastors like Sandeep who are seeking to reach their people in ways their people can relate to, with common cultural practices that lead to the gospel.

Pray that Christians in India would be able to discern how to best communicate the unchanging message of the gospel in ways that make sense in their context.

* Name Changed

WEEK FIVE

DAY 29 INDIA'S TECHY CITY

Bangalore, officially known as “Bengaluru,” is called the “Silicon Valley of India” because it is India’s leading exporter of information technology. People from all over India and the world have been relocating to Bangalore in search of a more peaceful life and good jobs. With that, comes increased strain on sanitation, electricity, and water supplies.

Karnataka state, where Bangalore is the capital, is one of the worst areas for Christian persecution in India. However, the church continues to grow in Bangalore and the rest of the state.

Pray for the affluent communities of Bangalore who are in search of fulfillment through possessions. Ask that God would become their one desire.

Pray for God to strengthen believers in Bangalore and around Karnataka state to stand firm in their faith despite opposition.

DAY 30 JAINISM

Though it is a little-known religion, Jainism has over 4 million followers in India. Rather than believing in one supreme God, Jains hold that humans can become gods and attain salvation through renouncing physical attachments and practicing right faith. Currently there are very few people who have become Christians from the Jain faith.

Pray for God to raise up faithful people to intercede for Jains in prayer and for Christians who will carry the gospel to the Jain people.

Pray that Jains will see that they cannot obtain salvation on their own and that they will begin looking for Jesus who is the answer.

DAY 31 HOLI FESTIVAL

Holi is one of the most widely known festivals in India and is often called the festival of colors. During Holi, people from all walks of life celebrate in the streets with bright colors and water balloons. Typically celebrated in March or April, Holi welcomes in the spring season, which is a season of renewal.

No Holi celebration is complete without the special menus of sweet dishes and cool summer drinks. Once Holi has begun, it is hard to find someone who is not covered in the bright colored powder that makes Holi famous throughout the world.

For many, Holi is a time to remember a spirit of oneness and devotion to the gods. Several mythical events portray good versus evil and commemorate certain Hindu gods. People often burn offerings from the recent harvest to invoke Agni, the god of fire. Some take fire from the large bonfire to rid their homes of disease. Many believe that being covered in color and then washed by water represents ridding oneself of hatred and gaining love for all people, even those of a different caste.

Pray for Holi participants to hear about oneness with the True God and to become part of his family.

Pray for Christians who participate in Holi to have opportunities to build relationships and share the gospel at a time when togetherness is valued.

Information for this prayer guide was gathered from various resources created by the IMB.



THANK YOU

for joining us in prayer this month. We are humbled by your commitment to intercede for the people of India. Through PrayingForIndia.org, you can continue to read about and pray for the peoples of India.

When Indian people follow Christ, Satan rises to attack. Most new Christians face some type of persecution from families, communities, and the government. Please continue to pray for these believers to be strong in their faith and boldly proclaim the gospel.

GOD IS FAITHFUL.

May we be faithful to pray for our brothers and sisters in India. May we be faithful to pray for the unreached people groups to hear the gospel and turn to Christ. May the peoples of India praise the One True God.

TO HIM BE ALL THE GLORY!

06/21

AFTER THIS I LOOKED,

AND **BEHOLD**

A GREAT MULTITUDE

THAT NO ONE COULD NUMBER,

FROM EVERY NATION,

FROM TRIBES
AND PEOPLES
AND LANGUAGES,

STANDING BEFORE THE THRONE

& BEFORE THE LAMB,

**CLOTHED WITH WHITE ROBES,
WITH PALM BRANCHES IN THEIR HANDS,**

AND CRYING WITH A LOUD VOICE,

“SALVATION

**BELONGS TO OUR GOD
WHO SITS ON THE THRONE
& TO THE LAMB!”**

REVELATION 7:9-10

P R A Y I N G F O R I N D I A . O R G

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