



For millions of believers around the world, faith in Christ and belief in the teachings of the Bible are not only discouraged, but actually dangerous.

**KNOW HIS PERSECUTED.  
KNOW HIS WORD.**

Periodically, Secret Church gatherings are held to engage in an intense six-hour Bible study as we identify with and pray for our persecuted brothers and sisters across the globe.

The objective of Secret Church is for you to pass along what you learn in these gatherings to others, so that you can make disciples of Christ in all nations for God's glory.

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# Beyond These Walls...

We're glad you've decided to participate in this Secret Church meeting. But even if nobody showed up, it would still be worth the effort. Actually, this Bible study will hopefully benefit far more people outside this gathering than those present. Here's why...

This teaching session and others, are being transcribed and translated into many different languages, including Spanish, Mandarin, Indonesian, Russian, Hindi and Arabic. The foreign-language versions of Secret Church will be available online as translations are completed. But that is just the beginning.

Most Christ-followers around the world don't have access to seminaries or Bible colleges. In fact, most parts of the world have no formal Christian teaching at all. Dr. Platt will be leading additional Secret Church studies, creating numerous hours of Bible teaching. We will then distribute Secret Church teachings worldwide. These sessions together will comprise a "seminary on a stick"—a mini-course in solid Bible knowledge accessible to anyone.

Any donations or offerings given to Secret Church will go directly to support persecuted Christians worldwide through both ongoing ministry initiatives, as well as providing Secret Church Bible teaching materials in many native languages. Imagine a house-church leader in Asia or the Middle East, now able to attend hours of Bible teaching classes with Secret Church teaching in his own language. With your help, this is becoming a reality. For more information about Secret Church go to [www.secretchurch.org](http://www.secretchurch.org).

# Survey of the Old Testament: Session 1

## Why Study the Old Testament?

- Common Myths...
  - ▶ “The Old Testament is **insignificant**.”
  - ▶ “The Old Testament is **irrelevant**.”
  - ▶ “The Old Testament is **inconsistent**.”
  - ▶ “The Old Testament is **incomprehensible**.”
- The Central Message...
  - ▶ “The Old Testament is **invaluable**.”

## HOW SHOULD WE STUDY THE OLD TESTAMENT? Examining Three Dimensions

- ▶ The **literary** dimension.
- ▶ The **historical** dimension.
- ▶ The **theological** dimension.

## WHAT IS THE OLD TESTAMENT? The Old Testament as Literature

- A collection of **39** books...
  - ▶ Traditionally classified according to **genre**:
    - + Law
    - + History
    - + Prophecy
    - + Poetry
  - ▶ Rich in literary **form**:
    - + Historical narratives.
    - + **Laws** and statutes.
    - + Prophetic oracles.
    - + Genealogies.
    - + **Songs**.
    - + Wisdom sayings.
    - + Laments.
    - + Apocalyptic **visions**.
    - + Many more...
- Written by a variety of authors...
  - ▶ One **divine** author—the Holy Spirit.
  - ▶ Various human authors.
  - ▶ Predominantly written in **Hebrew**, though some is in Aramaic.

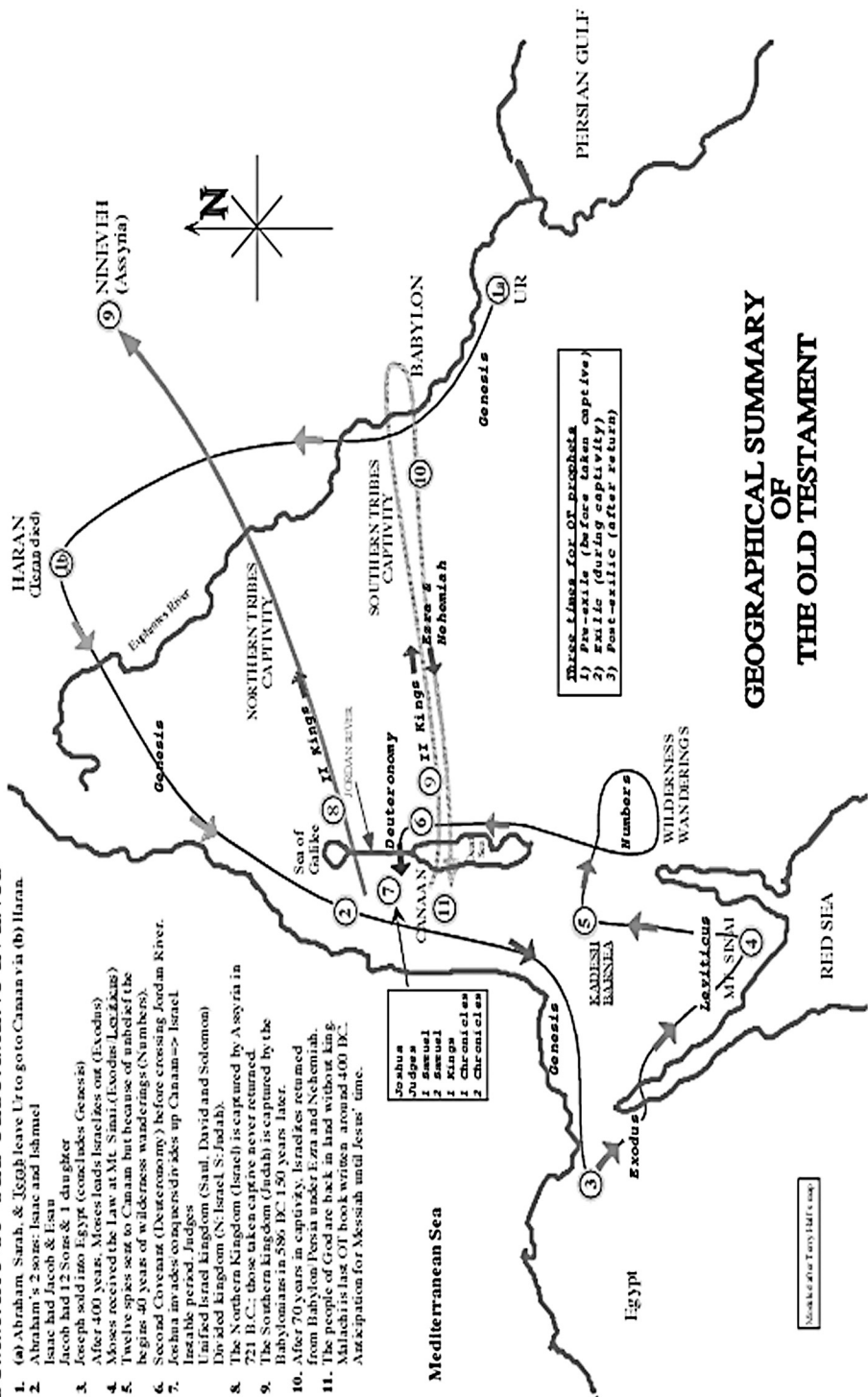
- Over a span of around 1000 years.
  - ▶ Earliest parts written around **1,500 B.C.**
  - ▶ Latest parts written around **400 B.C.**
- How did we get the Old Testament?
  - ▶ Collected into a **canon**.
  - ▶ Transmitted through **scribes**.
  - ▶ Translated through servants.
- Septuagint = the **Greek** Old Testament.

## WHEN AND WHERE DID THE EVENTS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT TAKE PLACE? The Old Testament as History

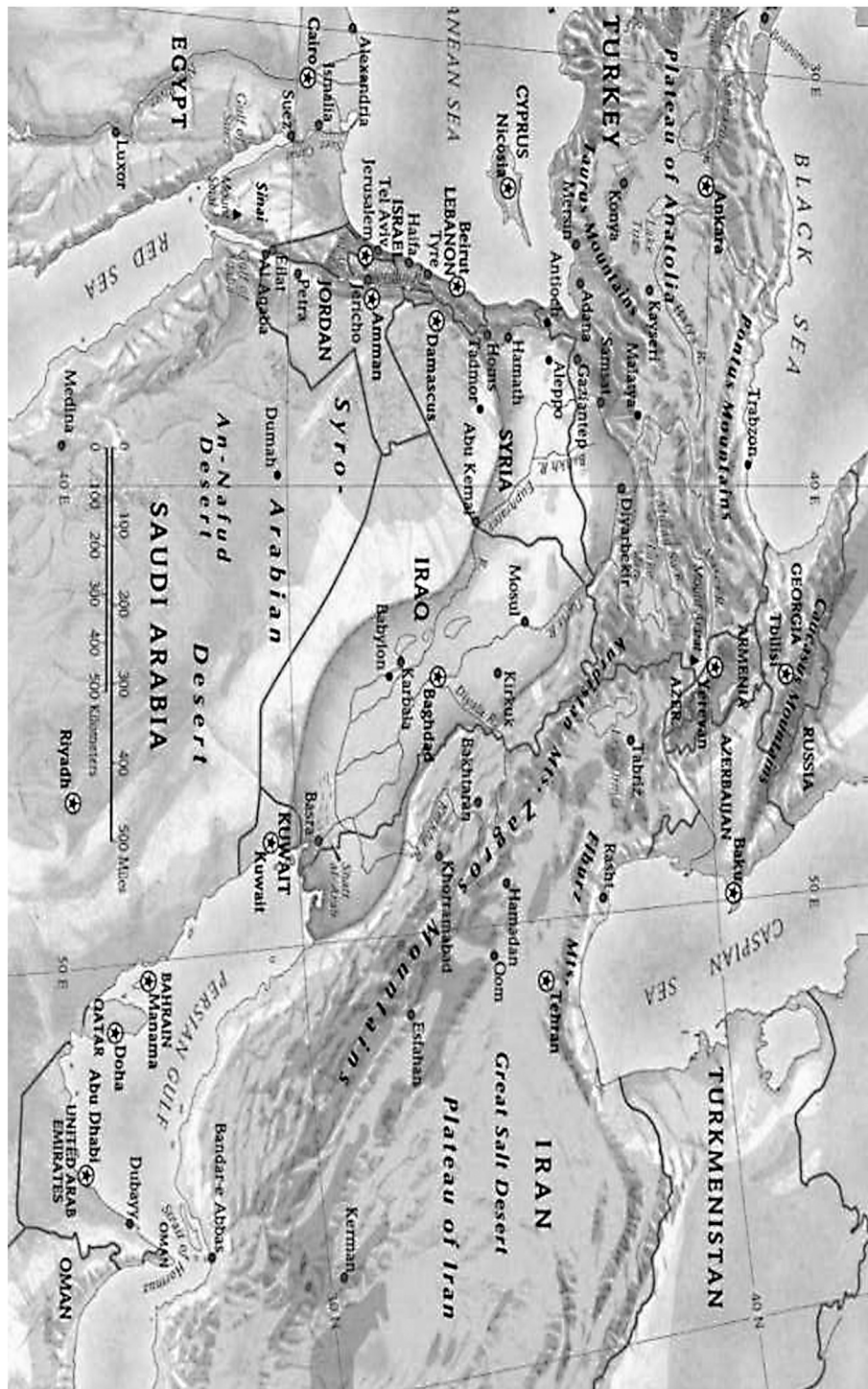
- The Old Testament is a **real** story set in **real** history.
  - ▶ Real Places.
  - ▶ Real **People**.
  - ▶ Real Time.
- Old Testament history made simple...
  - ▶ In the beginning... **nothing**, then something.
  - ▶ Creation... life... creatures... **man** made in God's image.
  - ▶ The Garden of Eden quickly becomes the location of the **fall** of Man.
  - ▶ Humankind degenerates for many generations.
  - ▶ God judges the world with a **flood**, but he spares one righteous man—Noah—and his family.
  - ▶ Humankind rebels at the Tower of Babel—the result is division and dispersion.
  - ▶ A new beginning... God's faithfulness to **Abraham** and his family.
  - ▶ Abraham's prosperity turns into Israel's slavery.
  - ▶ The **exodus**—Moses leads Israel out of Egypt.
  - ▶ God gives Israel the **law**.
  - ▶ The people enter the promised **land**, where they are ruled for a while by judges.
  - ▶ Eventually a kingdom is established, epitomized by King **David** and his son Solomon.
  - ▶ Solomon builds a **temple**, home of the ark of the covenant and center of the people's worship.
  - ▶ After Solomon dies, the kingdom divides into Israel (northern kingdom) and Judah (southern kingdom).
  - ▶ Idolatry grows.
  - ▶ Assyria destroys **Israel** in 722 B.C.
  - ▶ Babylon destroys **Judah** from 597-586 B.C.
  - ▶ Survivors are taken to exile in Babylon for the next **70** years.
  - ▶ A remnant returns to Jerusalem and rebuilds the temple.
  - ▶ But Israel still longs for the glory it knew under David.
  - ▶ Thus the Old Testament becomes a story without an **ending**...

## SUMMARY OF OLD TESTAMENT EVENTS

1. Abraham, Sarah, & Isaac leave Ur to go to Canaan via (a) Haran.
2. Abraham's 2 sons: Isaac and Ishmael.  
Isaac had Jacob & Esau.
3. Joseph sold into Egypt (come back Genesis).
4. After 400 years, Moses leads Israel/ies out (Exodus).
5. Moses received the Law at Mt. Sinai (Exodus/Leviticus).
6. Twelve spies sent to Canaan but because of unbelief of the people 40 years of wilderness wanderings (Numbers).
7. Second Covenant (Deuteronomy) before crossing Jordan River.  
Joshua in address to people in sides up Canaan → Israel.  
Isaiah period: Judges.
8. Unified Israel Kingdom (Saul, David and Solomon).  
Divided Kingdom (N: Israel, S: Judah).
9. 721 B.C.: those taken captive never returned.  
The Southern kingdom (Judah) is captured by the Babylonians in 586 B.C. 150 years later.
10. After 70 years in captivity, Israel/ies returned from Babylon/Persia under Ezra and Nehemiah.
11. The people of God are back in land without King. Malachi is last OT book written around 400 B.C. Anticipation for Messiah until Jesus' time.



## GEOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY OF THE OLD TESTAMENT



# Old Testament Overview

Persons	Periods and Events	Contemporary Cultures	Old Testament Books Written
Adam	Before the PATRIARCHS Creation Flood	Prehistorical Era	
Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph	PATRIARCHS Abraham enters the land c. 2090 b.c. Joseph Prime Minister c. 1885-1805 b.c.	Patriarchal Narratives reflect culture of Mesopotamia and Egypt	Job?
	EGYPTIAN SOJOURN c. 1875 - 1445 b.c.	Egypt enslaves the Israelites	
Moses	WILDERNESS WANDERING c. 1445 - 1405 b.c.		Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy
Joshua, Deborah Gideon, Jephthah, Samson	CONQUEST AND JUDGES C. 1405 - 1050 b.c.	Palestine occupied, various nations oppress Israel	Joshua, Judges
Samuel, Saul, David, Solomon	UNITED MONARCHY Established 1050 b.c.	Surrounding nations defeated by Israel	Ruth, Samuel, Psalms, Song of Solomon, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes
DIVIDED MONARCHY 931 - 722, Divided 931			
SOUTH: Rehoboam	NORTH: Jeroboam I	Aramean Kingdom 931 - 732	
Jehosaphat Ussiah	Ahab Jeroboam II		Obadiah, Joel, Jonah, Amos, Hosea Isaiah, Micah
Hezekiah		Fall of Aram c. 732 Assyrian domination of Palestine 745-650	Nahum, Zephaniah
Josiah	Fall of Samaria c. 722 JUDAH ALONE 722-586		Jeremiah, Lamentations, Habakkuk, Kings, Daniel, Ezekiel
	Daniel's Captivity  Ezekiel's Captivity		
Jeremiah	Fall of Jerusalem c. 586	Babylonian Supremacy 625 - 539	Haggai, Zechariah
Zerubbabel Haggai Zechariah	RESTORATION 538 - c. 400 Second Temple	Medo-Persian Rule 539 - 331	
	Ezra's Return c. 458		Chronicles, Ezra Esther
Malachi	Nehemiah's Return c. 444		Nehemiah, Malachi

## AN OVERVIEW OF THE BOOKS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

- Three divisions:
  - ▶ The **story** about God's people.
    - ✦ First 17 books.
    - ✦ Genesis – Esther (fairly chronological)
  - ▶ The **writings** of God's people.
    - ✦ Next 5 books.
    - ✦ Job – Song of Solomon
  - ▶ The **prophets** from among God's people.
    - ✦ Final 17 books.
    - ✦ Isaiah – Malachi (major and minor)
- Methodology:
  - ▶ Overview each section.
  - ▶ Overview each book.
    - ✦ Primary information for starters...
    - ✦ Practical advice for study...
- **THE STORY ABOUT GOD'S PEOPLE...**
  - ▶ Divided into two major categories:
    - ✦ The **Law**/The Pentateuch—Genesis through Deuteronomy.
    - ✦ The **History**—Joshua through Esther
  - ▶ The essential character of these books is narrative, telling us the story of God's people—**Israel**.

### ■ **GENESIS**

*Primary information for Starters...*

- ▶ **Moses** is the author of the five books of Law.
- ▶ Genesis literally means "**beginning**."
- ▶ Before the fall - The beginning of creation.
- ▶ After the fall - The beginning of God's plan to **redeem** His creation.

*Practical Advice for Study...*

- ▶ The first **11** chapters are foundational to the rest of the Bible.
- ▶ Catch hold of the major themes...
  - ✦ The **sovereignty** of God.
  - ✦ The sinfulness of man
  - ✦ The promise of redemption
- ▶ Catch hold of the major plot—God's gracious **election** of Abraham's family.
  - ✦ Abraham (12:1-25:18)
  - ✦ Isaac (25:19-26:35)
  - ✦ Jacob (27:1-36:43)
  - ✦ Joseph (37:1-50:26)
- ▶ Minor subplots...
  - ✦ Already looking to Christ (3:15; 22:7-14; 35:11-13; 49:8-12).



- ✦ **Covenants** with Adam, Noah, and Abraham.
- ✦ Major **flaws** in main characters.
- ▶ Don't forget—Genesis wasn't written to answer **every** question we may have about these events.

## ■ EXODUS

*Primary Information for Starters...*

- ▶ Literally means "**departure**."
- ▶ God is all-powerful and mighty to **save** (1-19).
- ▶ God is faithful to His covenant (20-40).

*Practical Advice for Study...*

- ▶ Notice three defining moments in Israel's history...
  - ✦ The deliverance from slavery.
  - ✦ The significance of God's **presence**.
  - ✦ The terms of the covenant.
- ▶ Key Chapters
  - ✦ Exodus 12 – The sacrifice of the **Lamb**.
  - ✦ Exodus 20 – The giving of the **Law**.
- ▶ Key Places
  - ✦ Egypt
  - ✦ The Red Sea
  - ✦ Mount Sinai
- ▶ Recognize both the sovereignty of God and the **responsibility** of man.
  - ✦ Pharaoh hardens his heart (7:13, 14, 22; 8:11, 15, 28; 9:7, 34, 35; 13:5).
  - ✦ God hardens Pharaoh's heart (4:21; 7:3; 9:12; 10:1, 20, 27; 11:10; 14:4, 8, 17).
- ▶ If we don't understand Exodus, we won't understand the **New Testament!**

## ■ LEVITICUS

*Primary Information for Starters...*

- ▶ Takes place at Mount Sinai.
- ▶ Referred to as "The Law of the **Priests**."
- ▶ A book about **holiness** (mentioned over 90 times!).
- ▶ A book about **sacrifice**.

*Practical Advice for Study...*

- ▶ Two main sections...
  - ✦ Fellowship with God through **ritual** offerings (1-17).
  - ✦ Fellowship with God through **righteous** living (18-27).
- ▶ One main chapter...
  - ✦ Leviticus 16 – The Day of **Atonement**.
  - ✦ "Atonement" = "to cover" (used 45 times in the book!).
  - ✦ Necessary elements...
    - A **bold** priest.
    - A **blood** sacrifice.

- ▶ Don't miss the practical application...
  - ✦ God is **holy**.
  - ✦ Sin is **serious**.
  - ✦ God is **gracious**.

## ■ NUMBERS

*Primary Information for Starters...*

- ▶ Named for **census** accounts in 1-4 and 26-27.
- ▶ God honors faith and punishes unbelief.
- ▶ The root of sin is **unbelief**—a lack of trust in God's Word.

*Practical Advice for Study...*

- ▶ Look for six definite failures of God's people between the census records.
  - ✦ Complaining (10:11-12:16)
  - ✦ **Rebelling** at Kadesh-Barnea (13:1-14:45)
  - ✦ Rebelling (15:1-19:22)
  - ✦ **Disobeying** (20:1-29)
  - ✦ Complaining (21:1-35)
  - ✦ Adultery and Immorality (25:1-18)
- ▶ See the price of unbelief in the geography and time frames of Numbers.
  - ✦ Geography
    - Sinai (1:1-10:10)
    - Journey to Kadesh (10:11-13:25)
    - Encamped at Kadesh (13:26-20:21)
    - Journey to Moab (20:22-21:35)
    - Encamped at Moab (22:1-36:13)
  - ✦ Time Frames
    - 1-10 – 20 days.
    - 11-14 – 70 days.
    - 15-20 – **38** years.
    - 21-36 – 5 months
- ▶ See the God who is faithful despite His people's failures.

## ■ DEUTERONOMY

*Primary Information for Starters...*

- ▶ "**Second Law**"—restating the Law to the new generation.
- ▶ A **rehearsal** of the covenant as they prepare for the Promised Land.

*Practical Advice for Study...*

- ▶ See how the Law applies to **all** of God's people.
- ▶ **Memorize** the Shema (6:4-5)
  - ✦ One God.
  - ✦ One Word.
  - ✦ One **Love** (repeated at least 20 times).
- ▶ Look for their...
  - ✦ Anticipation of the land.
  - ✦ Commitment to the **covenant**.

- A new generation.
  - A new challenge.
  - A new **leader**.
  - New temptations.
- ▶ Read it closely... it's the most **quoted** book in the Bible (356 times—190 in the New Testament!).

## ■ THE NEXT 12 BOOKS IN THE STORY...

- ▶ Pre-monarchy – 3.
  - Continuing the story—Joshua and Judges
  - **Ruth** (spotlight possibly around Judges 10)
- ▶ Monarchy – 6 (3 double books).
  - Continuing the story—Samuel and Kings
  - **Chronicles** (spotlight around the Davidic kingdom)
- ▶ Post-monarchy – 3.
  - Continuing the story—Ezra and Nehemiah
  - **Esther** (spotlight during the time of Ezra)

## ■ JOSHUA

*Primary Information for Starters...*

- ▶ Joshua's name literally means "The Lord will **save**."
- ▶ In Greek, the name is equivalent to "**Jesus**."
- ▶ The people of God claim the inheritance God had promised them.
- ▶ God will keep His **Word** (21:43-45).

*Practical Advice for Study...*

- ▶ See the journey into the Promised Land...
  - May even be good to read with a map nearby.
  - **Cross** (1:1-5:12)
  - Take (5:13-12:24)
  - Divide (13-21)
  - **Serve** (22-24)
- ▶ See the judgment of God, both on Israel and other nations.
- ▶ Joshua is the **application** of Deuteronomy 30.

## ■ JUDGES

*Primary Information for Starters...*

- ▶ Key Characters: God used judges (**military** leaders) to deliver His people out from under their sin.
- ▶ Key Theme: Disobedience results in judgment.
- ▶ Key Verse: "Every man did that which was **right** in his own eyes" (17:6).
- ▶ Key Chapter: 2—a miniature version of the whole book (summary in 2:10-19).

*Practical Advice for Study...*

- ▶ Observe the structure of oppression and deliverance.
  - Failure to conquer the land (1:1-2:9)

- ✦ Failure to keep the law (2:9-3:6)
- ✦ **Oppression** and **salvation** (repeated 8 times from 3-16)
- ✦ Failure to conquer the land (17-18)
- ✦ Failure to keep the law (19-21)
- ▶ Observe the cycle of disobedience and victory (3-16).
  - ✦ **Relapse.**
  - ✦ Ruin.
  - ✦ Repentance.
  - ✦ **Restoration.**
  - ✦ Rest.
- ▶ Observe the gradual deterioration of Israel.

## ■ RUTH

*Primary Information for Starters...*

- ▶ Ruth means “friendship.”
- ▶ Overall purpose is to **trace** the royal lineage of King David (and Jesus).
- ▶ Boaz, a kinsman-redeemer, pays the price to bring Ruth, a Moabite, into the people of God.

*Practical Advice for Study...*

- ▶ Pay attention closely to the transition in Naomi’s life...
  - ✦ From emptiness to fullness (1).
  - ✦ From despair to **hope** (2-3).
  - ✦ From barrenness to inheritance (4).
- ▶ Even in the darkness of God’s people, He shines the **light** of His covenant.
- ▶ Don’t miss the point...
  - ✦ Connect 4:13 with Genesis 12:1-3.
  - ✦ Connect 4:14 with Matthew 1:1-7 (especially 1:5).

## ■ 1 AND 2 SAMUEL

*Primary Information for Starters...*

- ▶ Time frame: From Samuel’s birth (1100) to the end of David’s kingship (970).
- ▶ Overall theme: **Kingship.**
  - ✦ 1 Samuel depicts transition from theocracy to monarchy.
  - ✦ 2 Samuel depicts David’s dynasty as king.
- ▶ Three key characters:
  - ✦ Samuel (1 Samuel 1-7) – the last judge; anoints first two kings over Israel.
  - ✦ Saul (1 Samuel 8-15) – Israel’s first king.
  - ✦ **David** (1 Samuel 16 – 2 Samuel 24) – Israel’s second and most important king.
- ▶ Key verse: 1 Samuel 15:22 – “To obey is better than sacrifice.”

*Practical Advice for Study...*

- ▶ Look for how the King of Israel was expected to be **loyal** to the covenant.
  - ✦ Saul's disobedience to the covenant – 1 Samuel 15.
  - ✦ David's obedience to the covenant - 2 Samuel 7.
- ▶ Pay attention to the **transitions** in 1 and 2 Samuel:
  - ✦ From the rule of periodic judges to a more permanent monarchy;
  - ✦ From a typical worldly expectation of a king to a king that is loyal to the Lord;
  - ✦ From no central place of where God's name dwells to a new center in Jerusalem.
- ▶ Even as a king after God's heart, David's life demonstrates the need for another King who will come in purity and absolute loyalty to the Lord.
  - ✦ His kingly **success** is described in one chapter (8).
  - ✦ His kingly **sin** and its effects are described over eleven chapters (10-20).

■ **I AND 2 KINGS**

*Primary Information for Starters...*

- ▶ Contains over **400** hundred years of Israelite history (970-560).
- ▶ This chronology grouped into four segments, each ending with a major **catastrophe**.
  - ✦ 970-931 – Division of the twelve tribes.
  - ✦ 931-841 – Jehu's slaughter of all but one of the crown-prince heirs of the throne of David.
  - ✦ 841-722 – Fall of Samaria to Assyria
  - ✦ 722-586 – Fall of Jerusalem to Babylon
- ▶ Two major themes:
  - ✦ The **rejection** of Israel as God's people.
  - ✦ The **rise** of prophets who proclaim God's Word.

*Practical Advice for Study...*

- ▶ The overall structure...
  - ✦ The united kingdom (1 Kings 1-11)
  - ✦ The divided kingdom (1 Kings 12 – 2 Kings 17)
  - ✦ The captive kingdom (2 Kings 18-25)
- ▶ Covers 39 kings from the united and divided monarchy.
- ▶ Covenant loyalty is the measure of success or downfall for a king.
  - ✦ **0** of the 19 Northern kings followed the Lord.
  - ✦ **8** of the 20 Southern kings followed the Lord.
    - Asa, Jehoshaphat, Joash, Amaziah, Uzziah, Jotham, Hezekiah, Josiah
- ▶ As kings are disloyal, God raises up **prophets** like Elijah and Elisha to accomplish His purpose.

## ■ I AND 2 CHRONICLES

### *Primary Information for Starters...*

- ▶ Final book in the Hebrew Bible.
- ▶ Possibly written by **Ezra**.
- ▶ Written more from a spiritual kingdom perspective.
  - + Focuses exclusively on the **positive** facets of David and Solomon.
  - + Demonstrates the blessing of God on **obedient** kings in Judah.
  - + Pictures a more idealized representation of the kingdom of God.
- ▶ Central focus on the **temple** and Israel's wholehearted worship.

### *Practical Advice for Study...*

- ▶ Understand the perspective of the author – trying to **restore** the kingdom.
- ▶ The story told in the chronicles has three parts:
  - + Genealogies (1 Chronicles 1-9) – Don't get bogged down!
  - + United Monarchy (1 Chronicles 10 - 2 Chronicles 9)
  - + Divided Monarchy in Judah (2 Chronicles 10-36)
- ▶ See the emphasis on God's goodness when the **Ezra** of God is renewed in Israel...
  - + When the ark is brought to Jerusalem (1 Chronicles 16:34).
  - + When the ark is brought into the temple (2 Chronicles 5:13).
  - + When the temple is consecrated (2 Chronicles 7:3)

## ■ EZRA - NEHEMIAH

### *Primary Information for Starters...*

- ▶ One book in the Hebrew Bible as they tell one story.
  - + The return of the **remnant** to Jerusalem.
  - + The rebuilding of the **temple**.
  - + The rebuilding of the city **walls**.
- ▶ The author is likely Ezra or Nehemiah.
- ▶ "Ezra" = "helper;" "Nehemiah" = "God is comfort."
- ▶ God sovereignly works to **preserve** His people for His glory.

### *Practical Advice for Study...*

- ▶ Overall structure...
  - + National Restoration (Ezra 1-6)
  - + Spiritual **Reformation** (Ezra 7-10)
  - + Physical Repair (Nehemiah 1-6)
  - + Spiritual **Revival** (Nehemiah 7-13)
- ▶ See both the physical and spiritual reform.
  - + Rebuilding the temple and walls.
  - + Repenting of sin.
  - + Renewing the **covenant** (Ezra 10; Nehemiah 9-10).
- ▶ Nehemiah 8-10 is the high point of the story with a covenant-renewal ceremony.

- ▶ **Purity** and obedience to the Word are at the heart of the covenant.

## ■ ESTHER

### *Primary Information for Starters...*

- ▶ Events take place before or during time of Ezra.
- ▶ God's providence is evident, though His name is **never** mentioned.
- ▶ Four main characters...
  - Persian King Xerxes (mentioned by name 29 times)
  - Haman (mentioned by name 48 times)
  - Mordecai (mentioned by name 54 times)
  - Esther (mentioned by name 48 times)
- ▶ The people of Israel are saved by God's providence from **extinction**.

### *Practical Advice for Study...*

- ▶ Though God's name is not mentioned, look for evidence of His **providence**.
  - Esther being chosen...
  - Mordecai discovering the plot to kill the king...
  - Casting lots to destroy the Jews...
  - The king's welcome to Esther after ignoring her for a month...
  - The king's deep concern for Esther's welfare...
- ▶ Compare Esther and Proverbs
  - Esther 3:7 with Proverbs 16:33
  - Esther 5:9-14 with Proverbs 16:18
  - Esther 7:10 with Proverbs 11:8
  - Esther 5:1-4 with Proverbs 21:2
- ▶ Recognize the **influence** of the godly on the lost.
- ▶ What does this mean for the way we use our influence?

## ■ THE WRITINGS OF GOD'S PEOPLE...

- ▶ Also known as **poetic** and wisdom literature.
- ▶ Stand in the final position of the Hebrew Bible.
- ▶ Include man's **responses** to the words and deeds of God found throughout the Law and the Prophets.
- ▶ Divine speech is **rare**.
- ▶ Primary theme: The **fear** of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom" (Proverbs 1:7).

## ■ JOB

### *Primary Information for Starters...*

- ▶ A lot of questions...
  - Written anonymously.
  - Written most likely during the patriarchal period.
- ▶ Job was a real man in real history (Ezekiel 14:14-20; James 5:11).

- ▶ The Question: How and why do the **righteous** suffer?
- ▶ God is completely sovereign in His dealings with His people and will never allow anything to come to them which is not for their **good** and His **glory**.

*Practical Advice for Study...*

- ▶ Remember...
  - ✦ This is an Oriental book.
  - ✦ This is a poetical book.
  - ✦ This is a **difficult** book.
- ▶ Don't be too intimidated by the structure...
  - ✦ Prologue (1:1-2:13)
  - ✦ Poetry (2:14-42:6)
    - Three dialogues (4-27)
    - "Where does **Ezra** come from?" (28)
    - Three monologues (29-41)
  - ✦ Epilogue (42:7-17)
- ▶ Don't look for an **wisdom** answer.
- ▶ Practically...
  - ✦ God **alone** is Sovereign.
  - ✦ Suffering is a **privilege** God extends to His children.
  - ✦ God is glorified when suffering saints **worship** Him.

## ■ PSALMS

*Primary Information for Starters...*

- ▶ Psalm = "a poem sung to musical accompaniment."
- ▶ The **hymnal** of the Jewish nation.
- ▶ Written by many authors from the early monarchy until after the exile.
  - ✦ David, Asaph, the sons of Korah, others
- ▶ Express trust in and praise to the Lord for His greatness and goodness.
- ▶ The Lord is the sovereign **King** of the universe and the nations.

*Practical Advice for Study...*

- ▶ Five divisions, each concluding with a doxology, which reflect Israel's **history**:
  - ✦ Book 1 (1-41)
  - ✦ Book 2 (42-72)
  - ✦ Book 3 (73-89)
  - ✦ Book 4 (90-106)
  - ✦ Book 5 (107-150)
- ▶ Types of Psalms...
  - ✦ Personal **praise**
  - ✦ Personal **lament**
  - ✦ Corporate praise
  - ✦ Corporate lament
- ▶ Also includes wisdom psalms and royal psalms.



- ✦ Psalm 22 – The crucified Savior.
- ✦ Psalm 23 – The **shepherd**.
- ✦ Psalm 40:68 – The sacrifice.
- ✦ Psalm 118:2-3 – The stone.

## ■ PROVERBS

*Primary Information for Starters...*

- ▶ “Proverb” = “**comparison**”
- ▶ Solomon wrote most of Proverbs.
- ▶ Foundational Passage: Proverbs 1:1-7.
- ▶ Major themes:
  - ✦ Attain wisdom and reject **folly**.
  - ✦ Walk in righteousness and avoid **evil**.

*Practical Advice for Study...*

- ▶ Read a **chapter** of Proverbs a day.
- ▶ Overall structure...
  - ✦ Preface (1:1-7)
  - ✦ Introduction (1:8-9:18)
  - ✦ Proverbs of Solomon I (10:1-22:16)
  - ✦ Sayings of the Wise I (22:17-24:22)
  - ✦ Sayings of the Wise II (24:23-34)
  - ✦ Proverbs of Solomon II (25:1-29:27)
  - ✦ Sayings of Agur (30:1-33)
  - ✦ Sayings of Lemuel (31:1-31)
- ▶ Reminders about proverbs...
  - ✦ **Figurative**.
  - ✦ Practical.
  - ✦ **Memorable**.
  - ✦ Variety of **literary** techniques.
  - ✦ Not guarantees, but guidelines.
  - ✦ **Good** advice, but not exhaustive.
- ▶ The goal of wisdom literature is to **apply** the Word to practical living.
- ▶ **Jesus** is the wisdom of God (see 8:22-31).

## ■ ECCLESIASTES

*Primary Information for Starters...*

- ▶ Written by “the **teacher**” – likely Solomon (1:1-2, 12).
- ▶ Key question: Is **life** really worth living?
- ▶ Key words: man, labor, under the sun, **meaningless**, wisdom, evil.

*Practical Advice for Study...*

- ▶ One of the most difficult books in the Old Testament.
- ▶ Look for major ideas:
  - ✦ God is the **ultimate** Reality, the Creator of all.
  - ✦ God’s ways are not always understandable.

- ✦ Life does not always progress as expected.
- ✦ **Death** is the ultimate equalizer.
- ▶ Don't forget – Ecclesiastes is a book without an **ending**.
- ▶ Practical application...
  - ✦ Enjoy the blessings of God **today**.
  - ✦ Fear God.
  - ✦ **Obey** God's Word.

## ■ SONG OF SONGS

*Primary Information for Starters...*

- ▶ Song of Songs = The **finest** of all songs!
- ▶ Like Esther, Song of Songs never mentions the name of God.
- ▶ Theme: Celebrating the sexual love between a man and woman.

*Practical Advice for Study...*

- ▶ Three main characters...
  - ✦ The woman (leading role) – “Beloved”
  - ✦ The man – “**lover**”
  - ✦ The woman's companion's (“the daughters of Jerusalem”) – “Friends”
- ▶ Three possibilities for interpretation...
  - ✦ **Literal** – A man and a woman.
  - ✦ **Historical** – God and His people, Israel.
  - ✦ **Typical** – Christ and His church.
- ▶ See the **delight** and unquenchable nature of true love.

## ■ THE PROPHETS FROM AMONG GOD'S PEOPLE

- ▶ God's **commentaries** on the story of God's people (the history of Israel).
- ▶ Remember the historical context...
  - ✦ A time of political, military, economic, and social upheaval;
  - ✦ A time characterized by much **unfaithfulness** to God's covenant;
  - ✦ A time of international shifts in the balance of power.
- ▶ Remember that prophets speak of both the **near** future and the **ultimate** future.
- ▶ Remember that much of the language of the prophets was **poetic**.

## ■ ISAIAH

*Primary Information for Starters...*

- ▶ “Isaiah” = “the Lord **saves**.”
- ▶ Time period: 760-680 B.C.
- ▶ Historical setting: Isaiah prophesied concerning the destruction of Israel by **Assyria** and the exile in Babylon.
- ▶ God's people (and all nations) are destined for **both** judgment and salvation.

### *Practical Advice for Study...*

- ▶ Two primary sections comprise this miniature **Bible**:
  - ✦ Present **judgment** (1-39)
    - 39 books that display the effects of sin and the judgment of God.
  - ✦ Future **hope** (40-66)
    - 27 books that describe the merciful servant and the comfort of God.
- ▶ Look for four major ideas:
  - ✦ The Lord is the “Holy **One** of Israel” (mentioned 30 times)
  - ✦ Israel is the Lord’s “holy **people**” (62:12).
  - ✦ Jerusalem is God’s “holy **city**” (48:2) and “holy mountain” (11:9; 27:13).
  - ✦ The Lord is calling the Gentiles (the nations) to worship Him (2:2; 56:7)
- ▶ Isaiah gives a rich picture of Christ...
  - ✦ His birth (7:14).
  - ✦ His life (61:1-2).
  - ✦ His **death** (52:13-53:12).
  - ✦ His resurrection (55:3).

## ■ JEREMIAH

### *Primary Information for Starters...*

- ▶ “Jeremiah” = “The Lord **appoints**”
- ▶ Time period: 626-586 B.C.
- ▶ Historical setting: Jeremiah prophesied during the last 40 years of Judah’s history – until its destruction at the hands of **Babylon**.
- ▶ A call to **repent** and return to covenant loyalty to God.
- ▶ Key Chapters...
  - ✦ Jeremiah 7 – The **temple** address.
  - ✦ Jeremiah 31 – The new **covenant**.

### *Practical Advice for Study...*

- ▶ Jeremiah is the **longest** book in the Bible.
- ▶ Overall structure...
  - ✦ Personal – God’s call to Jeremiah (1)
  - ✦ National – Messages to Judah (2-33)
  - ✦ Personal – Jeremiah’s **sufferings** (34-45)
  - ✦ International – Messages to the nations (46-51)
  - ✦ Personal – God’s vindication of Jeremiah
- ▶ God’s heart for His people is revealed through the **heart** of His prophet.
- ▶ Learn from object lessons.
  - ✦ Potter’s clay (18), clay pots (19), and baskets of figs (24).

## ■ LAMENTATIONS

### *Primary Information for Starters...*

- ▶ “Lamentations” = “**funeral** poems.”
- ▶ Time period: 586-585 B.C.

- ▶ Historical setting: The **fall** of Jerusalem at the hands of Babylon.
- ▶ Reveals the **suffering** heart of God over sin.

*Practical Advice for Study...*

- ▶ Each chapter is a separate funeral poem.
- ▶ The verses in each chapter are arranged in an **acrostic** where the first letter of each stanza (verse) corresponds to the Hebrew alphabet.
  - ✦ Chapter 3 is the climax...
- ▶ **Feel** the weight of the destruction of the people of God – famine, thirst, cannibalism, rape, slaughter.
- ▶ Key Passage: Lamentations 3:22-24
  - ✦ Great is your **faithfulness**...

## ■ EZEKIEL

*Primary Information for Starters...*

- ▶ “Ezekiel” = “God **strengthens**.”
- ▶ Time period: 592-570 B.C.
- ▶ Historical setting: Prophesying to the Jews held **Ezra** by Babylon.
- ▶ “The **Word** of the Lord came to me...” (approximately 50 times)
- ▶ Ezekiel’s twofold purpose:
  - ✦ Promote **repentance** and faith.
  - ✦ Stimulate hope and trust.

*Practical Advice for Study...*

- ▶ Overall structure...
  - ✦ Introduction – God calls Ezekiel (1-3)
  - ✦ The Judgment against Judah (4-24)
  - ✦ The Judgment against the Nations (25-32)
  - ✦ The Restoration of God’s People (33-48)
- ▶ Reads like a **picture** book – filled with symbolic actions, visions, allegorical pictures.
- ▶ Emphasizes the glory of God in His **temple**.
- ▶ Ezekiel **lived** out his prophecy.
  - ✦ Play at war (4:1-3).
  - ✦ Lie on his side a certain number of days (4:4-17).
  - ✦ Shave his hair and beard (5:1-4).
  - ✦ Act like someone fleeing from war (12:1-16).
  - ✦ Sit and sigh (21:1-7).
  - ✦ Endure the death of his **wife** (24:15-27).

## ■ DANIEL

*Primary Information for Starters...*

- ▶ “Daniel” = “God is my **judge**.”
- ▶ Time period: Late sixth century (535 B.C.?)
- ▶ Historical setting: Daniel had been deported to Babylon and served in three different kingdoms: Babylonia, Media, Persia.

- ▶ Written in **both** Hebrew and Aramaic.
- ▶ God is sovereign over all **kings** and all history.

*Practical Advice for Study...*

- ▶ Overall structure...
  - Personal History - Court stories (1-6)
  - Prophetic Ministry - Apocalyptic visions (7-12)
- ▶ Daniel's prophecy covers time from captivity of Jerusalem to Christ's **return** to earth to judge the nations and establish His kingdom.

## ■ HOSEA

*Primary Information for Starters...*

- ▶ "Hosea" = "**Salvation**"
- ▶ Time period: 758-722 B.C. (see 2 Kings 15-17)
- ▶ Historical setting: Prophesying to Israel preceding their captivity by Assyria.
- ▶ God's unfailing love for an **unfaithful** people.

*Practical Advice for Study...*

- ▶ Overall structure...
  - The **picture** of Israel's unfaithfulness (1-3)
  - The prophecy of God's faithfulness (4-14)
    - The sins of Israel (4-7)
    - The judgment of Israel (8-10)
    - The restoration of Israel (11-14)
- ▶ Note Hosea's metaphors...
  - To describe **God** – lion, leopard, bear eagle, husband, lover, parent.
  - To describe **Israel** – adulterer, snare, heated oven, senseless dove, faulty bow, headless talk, a baby refusing birth, mist, chaff, smoke, like a twig on water.
- ▶ Feel the heart of a God who judges unfaithfulness, yet **burns** with love for His people.

## ■ JOEL

*Primary Information for Starters...*

- ▶ Time period: Unknown.
- ▶ Historical setting: Following a **locust** plague among God's people.
- ▶ The impending **day of the lord** is a day of judgment and salvation.

*Practical Advice for Study...*

- ▶ Overall structure...
  - The day of the Lord typified (1:1-2:17)
  - The day of the Lord prophesied (2:18-3:21)
- ▶ "Day of the Lord" – when God will pour out His **wrath** on the Gentile nations because of their sins against Israel.

- ▶ See major biblical **themes** throughout: God's wrath against sin, the need for repentance, the grace, salvation, and the Spirit of God.

## ■ AMOS

### *Primary Information for Starters...*

- ▶ "Amos" = "**Burden.**"
- ▶ Time Period: 765-750 B.C. (see 2 Kings 14:23-15:7)
- ▶ Historical setting: Prophesying in a time of **prosperity** approximately 25 years before Israel's destruction.
- ▶ God has rejected Israel's religious and social practices.

### *Practical Advice for Study...*

- ▶ Overall structure...
  - Amos looks around - Judgment on the Nations (1-2)
  - Amos looks **within** - Judgment on God's People (3-6)
  - Amos looks ahead - Visions of Destruction and Ultimate Restoration (7-9)
- ▶ See two primary offenses against God:
  - **Religious** syncretism (1:7-8; 4:4-5; 5:21-26; 8:10, 14).
  - **Social** injustice (2:6-8; 3:9-10; 4:1; 5:7, 10-13, 15, 24; 6:12; 8:4-6).
- ▶ Consider the **connection** between these two offenses and the two great commandments in the New Testament.

## ■ OBADIAH

### *Primary Information for Starters...*

- ▶ Time period: 586 B.C.
- ▶ Historical setting: Probably just after the fall of Jerusalem.
- ▶ Prophecy of God's judgment on **Edom** for their sins against God's people.
  - Edom – descendants of **Esau**.
  - Israel – descendants of **Jacob**.

### *Practical Advice for Study...*

- ▶ **Shortest** book in the Old Testament.
- ▶ Overall structure...
  - The coming doom of Edom (1-16)
  - The coming restoration of Israel (17-21)
- ▶ Read Obadiah alongside Psalm **137**.
- ▶ Be reminded of God's ultimate **victory** over earthly powers.

## ■ JONAH

### *Primary Information for Starters...*

- ▶ Time period: 780-750 B.C.
- ▶ Historical setting: A time when the Assyrians were a cruel, heartless people, hated by the people of Israel.

- ▶ The people of God are reluctant to acknowledge the **compassion** of God for the nations.

*Practical Advice for Study...*

- ▶ Overall structure...
  - ✦ Jonah's **Resistance** (1)
  - ✦ Jonah's Repentance (2)
  - ✦ Assyria's Revival (3)
  - ✦ Jonah's Rebellion (4)
- ▶ Imagine reading this from the **perspective** of an Israelite.
- ▶ Connect the story of Jonah with the **purpose** of God's blessing in Genesis 12:1-3.

## ■ MICAH

*Primary Information for Starters...*

- ▶ Time period: 740-686
- ▶ Historical setting: A contemporary of Isaiah before Assyria's destruction of Israel.
- ▶ God's judgment on **idolatry** and **injustice**.

*Practical Advice for Study...*

- ▶ Composed of three sermons (1-2; 3-5; 6-7).
- ▶ Each sermon includes two emphases:
  - ✦ Oracles of judgment.
  - ✦ Oracles of future hope.
- ▶ Structure of prophecy reflects **balance** of God's justice and mercy.

## ■ NAHUM

*Primary Information for Starters...*

- ▶ Time period: 630-610 B.C. (see 2 Kings 17-23)
- ▶ Historical setting: Assyria had conquered Israel and was at the peak of power, and Nahum prophesied concerning her destruction.
- ▶ God is sovereign and will **execute** judgment against evil.

*Practical Advice for Study...*

- ▶ See the variety of **forms** of prophecy – hymn, salvation, doom, taunt, dirge.
- ▶ Consider how the God of **goodness** and grace can also be the God of **justice** and judgment.

## ■ HABAKKUK

*Primary Information for Starters...*

- ▶ Time period: sometime between 625-586 B.C. (see 2 Kings 22-23)
- ▶ Historical setting: The time period leading up to Babylon's attack on Jerusalem.
- ▶ How do people **get away** with evil while God seems to do nothing?

- ▶ God's people can **trust** in His justice, power, and faithfulness.

*Practical Advice for Study...*

- ▶ The overall structure:
  - The Prophet's Dialogue with the Lord (1-2)
  - The Prophet's Prayer to the Lord (3)
- ▶ The overall truth: God will do something about human **sinfulness**.

## ■ ZEPHANIAH

*Primary Information for Starters...*

- ▶ Time period: sometime between 640-609 B.C. (see 2 Kings 22-23)
- ▶ Historical setting: A contemporary of Habakkuk, leading up to Babylon's destruction of Jerusalem.
- ▶ God is bringing **present** judgment and **future** salvation to Judah.

*Practical Advice for Study...*

- ▶ Overall structure...
  - God will judge Judah (1:1-2:3).
  - God will judge the Nations (2:4-3:7).
  - God will restore His people (3:8-20).
- ▶ The **day** of the Lord (17 times between 1:7-2:3) – a coming day of judgment on the wicked.
- ▶ God's people will one day exchange **shame** for honor.

## ■ HAGGAI

*Primary Information for Starters...*

- ▶ Time period: Around 520 B.C. (see Ezra 1-6)
- ▶ Historical setting: The people had returned to Jerusalem from the exile and had stalled work on rebuilding the **temple**.
- ▶ God's people must rebuild His temple to restore their **worship**.

*Practical Advice for Study...*

- ▶ Overall structure...
  - The First Word – rebuild the temple (1:1-11).
  - The Second Word – continue the work (1:12-2:9).
  - The Third Word – commit to purity (2:10-19).
  - The Final Word – trust the Lord (2:20-23).
- ▶ Remember the significance of the temple in Israel's history.
- ▶ Note the **tension** between present hope and future glory regarding the temple (2:1-5, 6-9).

## ■ ZECHARIAH

*Primary Information for Starters...*

- ▶ "Zechariah" = "The Lord **remembers**."
- ▶ Time period: Starting in 520 and extending into the 400s.
- ▶ Historical setting: A contemporary of Haggai in post-exilic Jerusalem.



- ▶ Two primary themes:
  - Israel's city (**Jerusalem**) will be restored to peace and glory.
  - Israel's king (**Jesus**) will be slain for the sins of his people and will triumph over his enemies.

*Practical Advice for Study...*

- ▶ Overall structure:
  - Visions of Deliverance and Restoration (1-8)
  - Victory of God Over All Nations (9-14)
- ▶ Keep in mind both present and future fulfillment in Zechariah's prophecy.
- ▶ Compare Zechariah 11-13 with **Isaiah 52-53**.

## ■ MALACHI

*Primary Information for Starters...*

- ▶ "Malachi" = "My **Messenger**."
- ▶ Time period: Around 460-400 B.C.
- ▶ Historical setting: Postexilic Jerusalem close to the time of the reforms of Nehemiah and Ezra
- ▶ The Lord is **faithful** to His covenant and requires faithfulness from his covenant people.

*Practical Advice for Study...*

- ▶ Contains six disputes between the Lord and His people regarding their covenant disloyalty, each following a similar pattern:
  - The Lord confronts the people.
  - The people **question** the Lord.
  - The Lord responds to the people.
- ▶ Compare the sins described in Malachi with Ezra 9-10 and Nehemiah 13.
- ▶ Concludes with **expectation** of a coming messenger of the covenant.

# Survey of the Old Testament: Session 2

## WHY DID GOD GIVE US THE OLD TESTAMENT? The Old Testament as Theology

- The key to understanding how to **interpret** the Old Testament is understanding why God gave us the Old Testament.
- A few possibilities...
  - ▶ For **historical** information?
  - ▶ For **moral** lessons?
  - ▶ For **character** studies?
  - ▶ For **examples** in life?
- A much **deeper** purpose...
  - ▶ A foundational purpose at the **heart** of Old Testament history...
    - + We want to **know** it.
    - + We want to **apply** it.
    - + We want to **proclaim** it.
  - ▶ The purpose of the Old Testament is to reveal how God **redeems** His people for His **kingdom**.
    - + How God redeems His people...
  - ▶ God is restoring His people to Himself.
  - ▶ God is re-**creating** us in His image.
    - + For His kingdom.  
A kingdom...
      - **People** who are ruled by the King.
      - A **place** where the King has dominion.
      - A **purpose** for the King and his Kingdom.
  - ▶ **God's** Kingdom...
    - God is bringing His people...
    - To His place...
    - For His purpose.
  - ▶ A **map** for understanding the storyline of the Old Testament...
    - + A **progressive** story.
    - + An **incomplete** story.

### EDEN (GENESIS 1-2)

- People - God's Blessing on His People
  - ▶ The Sovereign King creates man and woman as the **summit** of his creation.
  - ▶ **Two** complementary accounts of creation display a unique relationship between God and man.

- ✦ Genesis 1, which is cosmic and **universal** in its scope;
  - ✦ Genesis 2, which is decidedly anthropomorphic (man-centered).
- ▶ Man constantly **enjoying** the love of God.
- Place – Perfect Fellowship
  - ▶ The very best place of all – the garden of **paradise** in Eden.
  - ▶ Eden is a place where all relationships are perfect.
    - ✦ Between God and **man**.
    - ✦ Between man and **woman**.
    - ✦ Between man and his **environment**.
- Purpose – God’s Glory Multiplied to All Peoples
  - ▶ Created in God’s image, man **represents** God Himself as the sovereign over all creation.
  - ▶ Man’s purpose:
    - ✦ To **enjoy** a relationship with God (Gen. 1:26a).
    - ✦ To **rule** over all creation (Gen. 1:26b).
    - ✦ To **reproduce** God’s glory to the ends of the earth (Gen. 1:28).

### FALL (GENESIS 3-11)

- People – God’s Blessing and Judgment through Adam and Eve
  - ▶ Two results of the Fall...
    - ✦ Righteous **judgment**.
    - ✦ Undeserving **grace**.
  - ▶ Salvation and judgment are now **inseparable** and complementary aspects of the action of God in bringing in His kingdom.
  - ▶ Two **lines** of human development (Gen. 4-11):
    - ✦ An **ungodly** line expressing human sin and inviting God’s judgment;
    - ✦ A **godly** line showing God’s purpose of grace to make a people for Himself.
- Place – Disrupted Fellowship
  - ▶ All **relationships** are now disrupted...
    - ✦ Discord between God and man.
      - **Guilt** (Gen. 3:7).
      - **Shame** (Gen. 3:8).
      - **Fear** (Gen. 3:10).
    - ✦ Discord between man and woman (Gen. 3:16).
    - ✦ Discord between man and his environment (Gen. 3:17).
  - ▶ Fallen man is **outside** the garden.
- Purpose – God’s Glory Marred For All Peoples.
  - ▶ Man is now only free to be what he is – a sinner who **hates** God.
  - ▶ The picture of man after the fall...
    - ✦ Total **disobedience** to the purpose of God (Gen. 11:2).
    - ✦ Total **disregard** for the glory of God (Gen. 11:4).

## PATRIARCHS (GENESIS 12-50)

- People – God’s Blessing and Judgment through Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob
  - ▶ God establishes a **covenant** people (Israel).
    - ✦ “I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you...” (Gen. 12:2-3)
  - ▶ God promises to **bless** Abraham and his descendants.
    - ✦ Genesis 12:1-3; 15:1-6; 17:1-27
  - ▶ God’s promise received by grace alone through **faith** alone.
- Place – Promised Fellowship
  - ▶ God establishes a covenant place.
    - ✦ “Leave your country, your people, and your father’s household and go to the **land** I will show you” (Gen. 12:1).
  - ▶ God continually gives **seeds** of promised fellowship in the land.
    - ✦ Isaac (Gen. 26:1-6); Jacob (Gen. 28:10-22); Joseph (Gen. 39)
- Purpose – God’s Glory Made Known to All Peoples Through His Faithfulness
  - ▶ God provides a **sacrifice** for His promise to be realized (Gen. 22).
  - ▶ God promises to establish His kingdom for all **nations** through His people (17:6, 16; 35:11; 49:9-10).

## EXODUS & CONQUEST (EXODUS-I SAMUEL 8)

- People – God’s Blessing and Judgment through Moses, Joshua, Judges, Samuel
  - ▶ God’s blessing...
    - ✦ He **redeems** His people (Ex. 2:23-24).
    - ✦ He **reveals** Himself to His people (Ex. 6:1-12).
    - ✦ He **delivers** His people (Ex. 7-18).
      - See also 2 Sam. 7:23; 1 Chr. 17:21; Is. 63:12-14; Jer. 32:20-21; Dan. 9:15; Neh. 9:10.
    - ✦ He **renews** His covenant with His people at Mount Sinai (Ex. 19).
    - ✦ He gives His people the **Law** (Exodus-Deuteronomy).
    - ✦ He gives His people the **land** (Joshua).
    - ✦ He gives His people **leadership** (Judges).
  - ▶ God’s judgment...
    - ✦ On **Pharaoh**.
    - ✦ On **pagan** lands.
  - ▶ The **riddle** of the Old Testament - Exodus 34:6-7
    - ✦ “The Lord, the Lord, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished.”
- Place – God with His people: Tabernacle
  - ▶ The presence of God...
    - ✦ In the pillars of cloud and fire.

- ✦ In the **tabernacle**.
  - ✦ In the promised **land**.
- ▶ The tabernacle becomes the focal point of God's **dwelling** with His people (2 Sam. 7:6).
- ▶ God dwells among his people but can only be approached through a **mediator** who offers an acceptable sacrifice for sin.
- Purpose – God's Glory Made Known to All Peoples Through His Deliverance
  - ▶ God's zealous actions derive from His desire that all individuals, groups, and nations "might **know** that I am the Lord" and acknowledge and trust in His glory.
    - ✦ "They/You will know that I am the Lord" (mentioned almost **50** times from Genesis to Numbers).
  - ▶ Exodus 19:6 – A kingdom of **priests**...
    - ✦ **Intercessors** between a holy God and all the peoples of the earth.
    - ✦ Israel joined an eternal God in His eternal desire to promote and proclaim the glory and greatness of His own name.
  - ▶ Israel was delivered to **rid** the land of foreign gods and **reflect** the glory of His name to the nations.

### MONARCHY (1 SAMUEL 9 – 1 KINGS 11; 1 CHRONICLES - 2 CHRONICLES 9)

- People – God's Blessing and Judgment through Saul, David, & Solomon
  - ▶ God mediates His covenant through the **kings**.
    - ✦ Blessing in covenant **loyalty**.
    - ✦ Judgment in covenant **disloyalty**.
  - ▶ God **renews** His covenant with His people through David – 2 Samuel 7.
    - ✦ Promises to bless his **name** (2 Sam. 7:9; Gen. 12:2).
    - ✦ Promises **victory** over enemies (2 Sam. 7:11; Gen. 22:17).
    - ✦ Promises a unique relationship with His people (2 Sam. 7:14; Gen. 17:7-8).
    - ✦ Promises future **seed** (2 Sam. 7:12-16; Gen. 21:12).
  - ▶ God's blessing among His people is at its **height** under David and Solomon.
- Place – God with His people: Temple
  - ▶ God's people established in God's **land**.
  - ▶ God's presence established in God's **city**.
    - ✦ From the tabernacle to the temple...
      - The temple **promised** to David.
      - The temple **prepared** by Solomon.
  - ▶ God's **dwelling** established with God's people.
    - ✦ The people **encounter** His glory.
    - ✦ The people **express** their worship.

- Purpose – God’s Glory Made Known to All Peoples Through His Anointing
  - ▶ God renews the covenant to David for His **renown** in all nations (2 Sam. 7:22-24).
  - ▶ God establishes the temple to express His **glory** to people from all nations (1 Kings 8:41-43).
  - ▶ God gives favor to Solomon to increase His **fame** in all nations (1 Kings 10:6-9).

### ANARCHY (1 KINGS 12 – 2 KINGS; 2 CHRONICLES 10 – ESTHER)

- People - God’s Blessing and Judgment through Major Prophets & Minor Prophets
  - ▶ God mediates His covenant through kings.
    - + Blessing in covenant loyalty.
    - + Judgment in covenant disloyalty.
  - ▶ God **guards** His covenant through the **prophets**.
  - ▶ The prophets **fortell** both judgment and blessing through...
    - + A new **captivity** for God’s people.
    - + A new **exodus** for God’s people.
      - Deliverance from exile follows the pattern of deliverance from **Egypt** (Jer. 16:14-15, 23:7-8; Is. 43:15-21).
      - God’s work in the exodus provides God’s **comfort** for the people in exile (Is. 40:3-4; 41:17-20; 42:7; 43:1-2, 16-20; 48:20-21; 49:24-26; 51:9-11; 52:3-4, 11-12).
    - + A new **covenant** for God’s people.
      - God’s **law** on His people’s hearts (Jer. 31:31-33).
      - God’s **forgiveness** in His people’s lives (Jer. 31:34).
- Place – God with His people: Exile
  - ▶ God will remember His people.
    - + God strengthens His people through exile.
    - + God **sustains** His people through a remnant.
  - ▶ They will return to His land.
    - + The restoration of **Zion (Jerusalem)** will be like...
    - + The restoration of **Eden** (Is. 51:3; Ezek. 36:35)
  - ▶ They will rebuild His temple.
    - + It will display the greatness of God’s **glory** (Ezek. 40-47).
    - + It will demonstrate the work of God’s **Spirit** (Zech. 4:6-9).
- Purpose – God’s Glory Made Known to All Peoples Through His Discipline
  - ▶ God’s glory will be realized in all nations...
    - + Through their **exile** (Ezek. 20:32-37; Hab. 1:5-2:20).
    - + Through their survival (Isa. 48:9-11).
    - + Through their **return** (Ezek. 36:22-23; Isa. 60:22).
    - + Through their salvation (Isa. 46:13; 49:6).
  - ▶ God’s glory will be shared in all nations...
    - + With His **Servant** (Isa. 42:1, 6-8).
    - + With His **Son** (Isa. 9:6-7).

## JESUS (MATTHEW – JOHN)

- People – God’s Blessing and Judgment through Christ
  - ▶ Jesus inaugurates His ministry: “The time has come. The **kingdom** of God is near.”
  - ▶ Jesus **solves** the riddle of the Old Testament (Ex. 34:6-7; Rom. 3:21-26)
  - ▶ The family line...
    - ✦ He is the **son** from Adam’s lineage.
    - ✦ He is the **seed** of Abraham’s lineage.
    - ✦ He is the **king** from David’s lineage.
  - ▶ The full picture...
    - ✦ He is our **prophet** (Deut. 18:15 and Acts 3:22; Hebrews 1:1-2).
      - He reveals the **Word**.
    - ✦ He is our **priest** (Heb. 4:14-5:10).
      - He removes our **guilt**.
    - ✦ He is our **king** (Jer. 23:5-6).
      - He reigns as **Lord**.
- Place – God among His people: Incarnation
  - ▶ God lives among His people!
  - ▶ The claims of Jesus...
    - ✦ I am the **tabernacle** (John 1:1-14).
    - ✦ I am the **temple** (John 2:13-22).
- Purpose – God’s Glory Made Known To All Peoples Through His Salvation
  - ▶ He is the **Lamb** of God’s provision for the world (John 1:29).
  - ▶ He is the **accomplishment** of God’s glory in the world.
    - ✦ Proverbs 30:4 – “Who has gone up to heaven and come down? Who has gathered up the wind in the hollow of his hands? Who has wrapped up the waters in his cloak? Who has established all the ends of the earth? What is his name, and the name of his son? Tell me if you know!”
    - ✦ Daniel 7:13-14 – “In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all peoples, nations, and men of every language worshiped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed.”
  - ▶ He is the radiant **center** of God’s plan for the world.
    - ✦ See His beauty...
      - He is the **anticipated** glory of God.
      - He is the **eternal** God of glory.

## PRESENT

- People – God’s Blessing and Judgment through His Church.
  - ▶ Christ our prophet...
    - ✦ We are now his **spokesmen** (Acts 1:8)
  - ▶ Christ our priest...
    - ✦ We are now his kingdom of **priests** (1 Peter 2:5-9; Rom. 15:14-16).
  - ▶ Christ our king...
    - ✦ We are now his **heirs** (Galatians 3:26-4:7).
  - ▶ Christ our judge...
    - ✦ We are now under his **judgment** (John 5:21-27).
- Place – God in His people: Body
  - ▶ The prophets foretold the rebuilding of God’s temple.
    - ✦ It will display the greatness of God’s **glory** (Ezek. 40-47).
    - ✦ It will demonstrate the work of God’s **Spirit** (Zech. 4:6-9).
  - ▶ The temple of God and our body...
    - ✦ **We** display the greatness of God’s glory (1 Cor. 3:16-17; 2 Cor. 6:16).
    - ✦ **We** demonstrate the work of God’s spirit (1 Cor. 6:18-20).
  - ▶ The temple of God and our **mission**...
    - ✦ The nations would **come** to the temple (1 Kgs. 8:41-43).
    - ✦ The temple now **goes** to the nations (Acts 1:8).
- Purpose – God’s Glory Multiplied To All Peoples
  - ▶ Jesus purpose: **establish** the kingdom.
  - ▶ Our purpose: **multiply** the kingdom.
    - ✦ John 20:21 – “As the Father has sent me, so I am **sending** you.”
    - ✦ Make disciples of all nations!
      - Going – **Announce** the kingdom to all peoples.
      - Baptizing – **Embody** the kingdom before all peoples.
      - Teaching – **Spread** the kingdom to all peoples.
  - ▶ God, help us to learn from Israel and the Old Testament and **connect** God’s blessing with God’s purpose.

## FUTURE

- People – God’s Final Blessing and Judgment
  - ▶ The **consummation** of the kingdom (Rev. 20:11-21:8):
    - ✦ **Heaven** exemplifies the King’s eternal blessing.
    - ✦ **Hell** exemplifies the King’s eternal judgment.
  - ▶ The **call** of the kingdom:
    - ✦ “**Repent**, for the kingdom of heaven is near” (Matt. 4:17).



- ▶ The **confession** of the kingdom:
  - ✦ “That if you confess with your mouth, ‘Jesus is Lord,’ and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be **saved**” (Rom. 10:9).
- Place – God with, among, and in His People: Redeemed Body
  - ▶ We are co-**residents** in his kingdom (Rev. 22:1-5).
    - ✦ The glory of **Eden** is restored (Gen. 3:24).
    - ✦ The glory of **Zion** is realized (Is. 35:10; Heb. 12:22-24).
  - ▶ We are co-**recipients** of his kingdom (Rom. 8:17).
    - ✦ We belong to **Him** (Zech. 13:9).
    - ✦ He belongs to **us** (Zech. 13:9).
  - ▶ We are co-**rulers** in his kingdom (Rev. 5:10; 2 Tim. 2:12).
    - ✦ Our relationship with God is completely **restored**.
      - From total guilt to total **innocence**.
      - From lowest shame to highest **honor**.
      - From everlasting fear to everlasting **peace**.
    - ✦ Our relationship with man is completely **renewed**.
    - ✦ Our relationship with our environment is completely **redeemed**.
- Purpose – God’s Glory Enjoyed By All Nations
  - ▶ The **completion** of God’s kingdom:
    - ✦ God’s **people**...
    - ✦ In God’s **place**...
    - ✦ Fulfilling God’s **purpose**.

*“After this I looked and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands. And they cried out in a loud voice: ‘Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb.’ All the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures. They fell down on their faces before the throne and worshiped God saying, ‘Amen! Praise and glory and wisdom and thanks and honor and power and strength be to our God for ever and ever. Amen!’”*

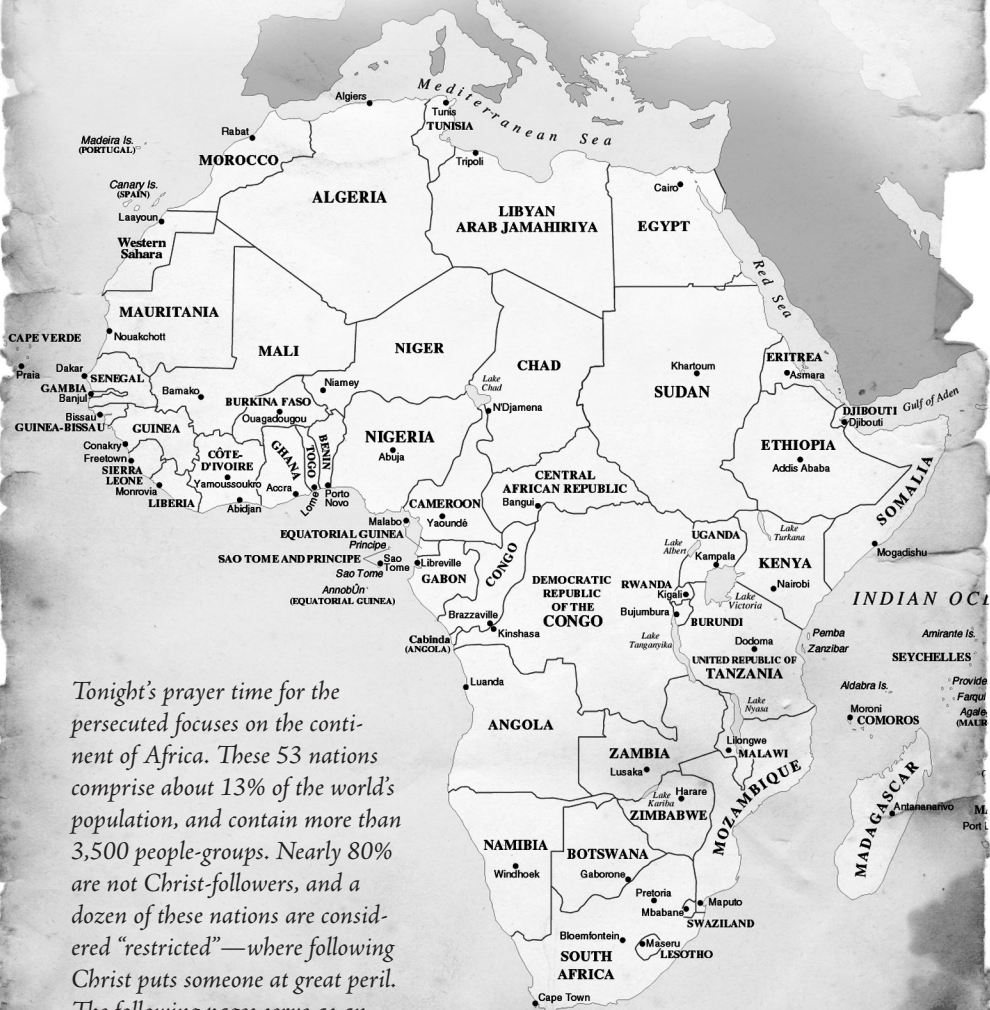
Revelation 7:9-12

*Missing teaching notes?*

• • •

*This complete teaching guide, including all  
the blanks filled-in, is available for download  
in PDF format at [www.secrechurch.org](http://www.secrechurch.org).*

# Africa



*Tonight's prayer time for the persecuted focuses on the continent of Africa. These 53 nations comprise about 13% of the world's population, and contain more than 3,500 people-groups. Nearly 80% are not Christ-followers, and a dozen of these nations are considered "restricted"—where following Christ puts someone at great peril. The following pages serve as an information and prayer guide for this region of the world.*

Africa is an amazingly diverse continent, with nearly 800 million people inhabiting 53 nations. There are more than 3,500 people groups represented, and 77% of the continent's inhabitants are black.

Though Africa only has about 13% of the earth's population, it boasts 2,100 languages—about a third of the world's dialects. Africa is divided into two main regions—Northern Africa, which includes seven nations of the Sahara Desert, and Sub-Saharan Africa, which comprises the remaining 47 countries. There are 84 cities in Africa with over one million inhabitants, 4 of these being over 10 million.

War has deeply affected 19 nations during the 1990s. Most of the world's active wars in 2000 were in Africa. Countries such as Sierra Leone, Liberia, Congo-DRC, Burundi, Rwanda, Sudan, Eritrea and Somalia have suffered immense damage and casualties. Millions have become refugees. 'Ethnic cleansing' has caused tragic bloodshed, tides of refugees and even armies with many child-soldiers in Rwanda, Burundi, Congo, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Sudan and Uganda. Violent Islamist movements have deeply affected the continent from Algeria in the north to South Africa. Bitter guerrilla warfare in Algeria, terrorist attacks in Kenya, jihad against Christians in Sudan and massacres of Christians in northern Nigeria are just some of the evidences of this.

Despite this, in the 20th Century, Christianity became the religion of the majority in sub-Saharan Africa. In 1900 there were 8 million Christians (10% of the population of Africa); by 2000 there were 351 million (48.4% of the population of Africa — 60% of sub-Saharan Africa).



# Algeria

- **Population:** 31.5 million
  - **Main Religion:** Muslim
  - **Non-Christians:** 99.7%
  - **Area:** 2,381,741 sq. km. Agriculture is possible on the Mediterranean coast, in the Atlas mountains and at oases; 80% is desert.
  - **People-groups:** 43
  - **Languages:** Arabic, Berber French
  - **Christians:** 0.3%
- **Briefing:** Opposition to the gospel is intense. Over 160 years of tearful sowing by a tenacious succession of missionaries is only now bearing fruit. North Africans have long and bitter memories of “Christian” conquests, colonialism and atrocities. Pray that centuries of prejudice and misunderstandings may be taken away and hearts opened to the gospel message. Around 100,000 civilians have been murdered in gruesome massacres during the savage civil war. No section of the nation has been spared the killings, however no evangelical Christians were killed during the war itself. Democracy had been long striven for, but seems to have failed. After years of one-party dictatorship many have looked for solutions in an Islam that would impose shari’a law, yet another tyranny, on the country. Pray for political, religious and spiritual freedom for the Algerian people. *Please pray for Morocco as we equip them to go into Algeria in 2010.*

# Angola

- **Population:** 12.8 million
  - **Main Religion:** Roman Catholic
  - **Non-Christians:** 62%
  - **Area:** 1,246,700 sq. km. Coastal state dominating Congo-DRC’s and Zambia’s trade routes to the Atlantic.
  - **People-groups:** 39
  - **Languages:** Portuguese
  - **Christians:** 38%
- **Briefing:** Continual war since 1962 has been devastating. Anti-personnel landmines outnumber the population, and by 1999 there were 100,000 amputees. A large proportion of the rural population has fled to urban areas due to widespread famine. The psychological, social and spiritual wounds are even more harmful and long-lasting. Luanda and other major cities have become the home of refugee populations living in squalid despair. Many orphaned or abandoned children struggle to survive; many victims of the war aggressively beg on the streets. Pray for churches and agencies seeking to alleviate their suffering. Christians have suffered ostracism, abuse, discrimination and outright persecution for many decades. The harsh realities of war and the ideological collapse of Communism in the 1990s resulted in an easing of nearly all discrimination against Christians. Services are packed, and despite their desperation and destitution hundreds of thousands have trusted in the Lord Jesus Christ. The dearth of trained, godly leadership is the most critical problem limiting church growth and maturity. *Please pray for our U.S. mission team as they go into Angola in 2007.*

# Benin

- **Population:** 6.1 million
- **Main Religion:** Ethnic Sects
- **Non-Christians:** 95%
- **Area:** 112,600 sq. km. A long, narrow country wedged between Nigeria and Togo.
- **Briefing:** No people in Benin has a Christian majority and evangelical believers are few. Benin has Africa's highest percentage of followers of traditional religions and is the least evangelized non-Muslim country in Africa south of the Sahara. The recent church growth has yielded many new Christians, but has led to a shortage of trained leaders to teach the Bible and demonstrate a life of holiness. Many tribes and villages are asking for pastors or missionaries to show them a biblical Christianity to replace their often-syncretized faith.
- **People-groups:** 56
- **Languages:** French, Fon, Denhi
- **Christians:** 5%

Bible translation is still a major need. Almost half of Benin's 51 languages are without a Bible. Nearly a fifth of the population is Muslim, and no one is working full time specifically for their evangelization. *Please pray for Mali and Guinea as they host Ghana, Liberia, Côte d'Ivoire, Togo and Sao Tome Principe in Benin in 2013.*

# Botswana

- **Population:** 1.6 million
- **Main Religion:** Christianity
- **Non-Christians:** 33%
- **Area:** 581,730 sq. km. The Kalahari Desert covers 80% of the country.
- **Briefing:** The majority of Tswana are Christian in name but given over to immorality and drunkenness accentuated by the breakdown of family life. In some areas, over 90% of children are illegitimate. Pray for a reversal of the moral decline. Young people need spiritual help. Teenage pregnancies are 'normal' and offspring of single parents are likely to be HIV+ and poor. AIDS has become a terrible scourge. Widespread promiscuity has rapidly spread the disease to 30-35% of the population. The result—60,000 AIDS orphans by 1999; of children under 5 who died in 2000, 64% died because of AIDS. Protestant Churches are not maintaining their numbers. Nominalism is pervasive. Many congregations have few men. African indigenous churches have multiplied. Their emphasis on healing (especially with the AIDS crisis), and local culture can often lead to syncretistic beliefs. Many are led by those with little education or theological training. *Please pray for Namibia as we equip them to go into Botswana in 2011.*
- **People-groups:** 8
- **Languages:** English, Tswana
- **Christians:** 66%

# Burkina Faso

- **Population:** 31.5 million
- **Main Religion:** Muslim
- **Non-Christians:** 99.7%
- **Area:** 2,381,741 sq. km. Agriculture is possible on the Mediterranean coast, in the Atlas mountains and at oases; 80% is desert.
- **People-groups:** 43
- **Languages:** Arabic, Berber French
- **Christians:** 0.3%
- **Briefing:** Opposition to the gospel is intense. Over 160 years of tearful sowing by a tenacious succession of missionaries is only now bearing fruit. North Africans have long and bitter memories of “Christian” conquests, colonialism and atrocities. Pray that centuries of prejudice and misunderstandings may be taken away and hearts opened to the gospel message. Around 100,000 civilians have been murdered in gruesome massacres during the savage civil war. No section of the nation has been spared the killings, however no evangelical Christians were killed during the war itself. Democracy had been long striven for, but seems to have failed. After years of one-party dictatorship many have looked for solutions in an Islam that would impose shari’a law, yet another tyranny, on the country. Pray for political, religious and spiritual freedom for the Algerian people. *Please pray for Mali as we equip them to go into Burkina Faso in 2010.*

# Burundi

- **Population:** 12.8 million
- **Main Religion:** Roman Catholic
- **Non-Christians:** 62%
- **Area:** 1,246,700 sq. km. Coastal state dominating Congo-DRC’s and Zambia’s trade routes to the Atlantic.
- **People-groups:** 43
- **Languages:** Arabic, Berber French
- **Christians:** 38%
- **Briefing:** Continual war since 1962 has been devastating. Anti-personnel landmines outnumber the population, and by 1999 there were 100,000 amputees. A large proportion of the rural population has fled to urban areas due to widespread famine. The psychological, social and spiritual wounds are even more harmful and long-lasting. Luanda and other major cities have become the home of refugee populations living in squalid despair. Many orphaned or abandoned children struggle to survive; many victims of the war aggressively beg on the streets. Pray for churches and agencies seeking to alleviate their suffering. Christians have suffered ostracism, abuse, discrimination and outright persecution for many decades. The harsh realities of war and the ideological collapse of Communism in the 1990s resulted in an easing of nearly all discrimination against Christians. Services are packed, and despite their desperation and destitution hundreds of thousands have trusted in the Lord Jesus Christ. *Please pray for Tanzania as we equip them to go into Burundi in 2010.*

# Cameroon

- **Population:** 58.5 million
- **Main Religions:** Christian, Muslim
- **Non-Christians:** 34%
- **Area:** 475,442 sq. km. On the continental 'hinge' between West and Central Africa.
- **People-Groups:** 11
- **Languages:** French, English
- **Christians:** 66%
- **Briefing:** Some claim Cameroon is the most corrupt nation on earth. Massive corruption in the government, administration, police, the legal system and business have debased living standards, crippled economic growth and brought despair and hopelessness to the great majority of the population. Pray that true Christians of integrity may be raised up to lead the nation and make the radical reforms needed to lift it from its sorry state. The spiritual poverty of the churches is the country's greatest tragedy. Nominal Christianity is a bigger problem in this land than in any other in Africa. The early pioneer work of Catholics, Presbyterians, Lutherans and Baptists was damaged by compromise and the arrival of liberation theology. These large churches lost spiritual life and opened their doors to millions who had no personal faith in Christ and with no one to lead them to Him. Tribalism, pagan practices, alcoholism and low moral standards are endemic. *Please pray for Chad and Gabon as we equip them to go into Cameroon in 2016.*

# Central African Republic

- **Population:** 3.6 million
- **Main Religion:** Muslim
- **Non-Christians:** 70%
- **Area:** 622,436 sq. km. A landlocked state in Africa's geographical center.
- **People-Groups:** 8
- **Languages:** French, Sango
- **Christians:** 30%
- **Briefing:** Evangelical nominalism and a syncretistic world-view is fairly common, and there is little depth of commitment or mature grasp and application of truths of Scripture. Divisions in the Church have hindered cooperative efforts. Ethnic based denominations enhance tribalism and create barriers. Widespread breakdown between church leaders and missionaries have caused deep heartache, multiplied splits and isolated ministries from one another. Only 4 indigenous languages (the trade language, Sango, also Gbaya, Mbai and Zande) have the whole Bible. Pray for effective use of the newly revised Sango New Testament to be released soon and for the revision of the Old Testament currently in progress. In 6 other languages Bible translation is now being undertaken, but in five more there is a definite translation need. A further 49 still need to be surveyed. *Please pray for Democratic Republic of Congo as we equip them to go into Central African Republic in 2016.*



# Chad

- **Population:** 7.6 million
  - **Main Religion:** Muslim
  - **Non-Christians:** 73%
  - **Area:** 1,284,000 sq. km. Desert in the north, dry grassland in centre, thick bush in the south.
  - **People-Groups:** 43
  - **Languages:** French, Arabic
  - **Christians:** 27%
- **Briefing:** Freedom of religion is a precious reality, but is threatened by the polarization of the country. The population is almost equally divided between the politically dominant Muslim northerners and the increasingly marginalized Christian/ethnic religion southerners. Their cultures are so different and their history is one of northerners enslaving southerners. Although most of the schooling is in French, many in the north only read Arabic. Pray both for continued freedom of religion throughout the country and peace between the different religious and ethnic communities. Islam has been in the ascendant for the past two decades, Muslims now controlling all the levers of power — government, trade and the armed forces. Muslim missionaries are multiplying, mosques are being built in non-Muslim areas and large sums of money are being invested in constructing two Muslim universities. Christians are ill-equipped to withstand such an onslaught and untrained in how best to witness to Muslims. *Please pray for Burkina Faso as we equip them to go into Chad in 2013.*

# Comoros (Comoro Islands)

- **Population:** 0.5 million
  - **Main Religion:** Muslim
  - **Non-Christians:** 99.2%
  - **Area:** 1,862 sq. km. Poor agricultural land but rich marine life in the surrounding seas.
  - **People-Groups:** 3
  - **Languages:** Arabic, French
  - **Christians:** 0.8%
- **Briefing:** Although there is religious freedom and direct evangelism is permitted, outreach has concentrated on the Maore and response has been slow. Pray for the barriers to come down and hearts to be opened. Pray for new initiatives planned for the unreached shiBushi speakers. The change in political status in 2000 resulted in massive French investment and is challenging traditional values and society. Pray that this may become a window of opportunity for the gospel, too. The only organized Protestant churches in the Comores are two evangelical groups among the Malagasy on Grand Comore and Mayotte, Assemblies of God on Mayotte, and isolated Christians elsewhere. Pray for the right church-planting strategy to be applied enabling the relatively few mature Maore believers to easily integrate while retaining their cultural ties with the majority. *Please pray for Malawi as we equip them to go into Comoros in 2015.*

# Congo

- **Population:** 2.9 million
  - **Main Religion:** Christian
  - **Non-Christians:** 8.8%
  - **Area:** 342,000 sq. km. Northwest of Democratic Republic of Congo (Congo-Zaire) with which it is often confused
  - **People-Groups:** 4
  - **Languages:** French, Lingala, Creole
  - **Christians:** 91.2%
- **Briefing:** Two decades of Communist dictatorship followed by a fragile, failing democracy and civil war have devastated the land. Six members of a team of nine church leaders seeking to mediate in 1998 were martyred. Pray for national reconciliation, the repentance and conversion of those who wreaked violence in the years of fighting, and the resettlement of the 300,000+ refugees of the civil war. Restoration is the Church's need. The destruction of many churches and the flight of thousands of Christians from the cities during the war years brought discouragement, a questioning of God's presence and a feeling of abandonment. Many Christians have compromised their faith. Pray for new life, vision and trust in God. Pray also for committed Christians to be appointed to positions of leadership. Young people were denied any ministry during the Marxist days, and in subsequent years few churches developed ministries to children or youth. *Please pray for Tanzania as we equip them to go into Congo in 2013.*

# Democratic Republic of Congo

- **Population:** 51.6 million
  - **Main Religion:** Christian
  - **Non-Christians:** 5%
  - **Area:** 2,344,858 sq. km. Congo contains most of the Congo River system and much of the vast Central African rainforest.
  - **People-Groups:** 43
  - **Languages:** French, English, Swahili
  - **Christians:** 95%
- **Briefing:** Congo's war has embroiled the military forces of seven nations and provoked the rise of local inter-ethnic conflicts and warlords. Rwanda hunts down Hutu genocidists, Uganda exploits the wealth of the north-east, Sudan seeks to harm Uganda, Angola aims to liquidate rebel bases in Congo and Zimbabwe's army is used to enrich its generals and politicians. Much of the country has become a war zone. Nearly three million are estimated to have lost their lives through war, violence, starvation and virtual collapse of the health system. A tide of 1 to 3 million Rwandan, Burundian and Congolese refugees and rebels flows across the land and spills over into neighboring countries. Pray that international efforts to broker a cease-fire and peace agreement may succeed despite the entrenched vested interests that profit from the conflict. The binding of the demonic powers and the human sin that has brought such havoc and suffering through tribalism, extreme cruelty, greed and corruption—yet in a land that has such a large number of professing Christians. *Please pray for Uganda as we equip them to go into Democratic Republic of Congo in 2014.*

# Côte d'Ivoire

- **Population:** 14.7 million
- **Main Religion:** Muslim
- **Non-Christians:** 60%
- **Area:** 320,763 sq. km. On the West African coast between Ghana and Liberia.
- **People-Groups:** 75
- **Languages:** French, Jula
- **Christians:** 40%
- **Briefing:** The Catholic Church has made a deep impact through an extensive educational system. Many Ivoirians are nominally Catholic as a result. Catholics are a large minority in the south and among the upper and middle classes. The lack is a personal relationship with the Saviour. A charismatic movement is well established in the Catholic Church. Spiritism is still strong in Côte d'Ivoire, despite apparent numerical decline. There are 4000 evangelical churches, but 5000 sacred fetish groves. Many Christians are still affected by the power of spiritism and fetishes, compromising both their witness and their own life in Christ. Pray that all who have not fully left behind their spiritist past might be completely delivered by the power of Jesus. Pray that believers might withstand temptation to revert to old practices. Pray for unity and cooperation among Evangelicals. If the country is to be effectively evangelized and the church to mature, then denominational differences and competition must be set aside in favour of partnerships and teamwork. *Please pray for Mali and Guinea as they host Ghana, Liberia, Côte d'Ivoire, Togo and Sao Tome Principe in Benin in 2013.*

# Djibouti

- **Population:** 0.6 million
- **Main Religion:** Muslim
- **Non-Christians:** 95%
- **Area:** 23,200 sq. km. A hot, dry, desert enclave between Ethiopia, Eritrea and Somalia.
- **People-Groups:** 4
- **Languages:** Arabic, French
- **Christians:** 5%
- **Briefing:** Djibouti, Africa's third smallest state, is a haven of calm in a stormy region. It is also a key base for Christian witness. Pray that present freedoms may not be eroded by the politics of the Horn of Africa nor by the Islamist voice which gets louder as the economic situation declines. Ethiopian refugees are often destitute. Many are Orthodox Christian. There are also five lively evangelical congregations among them, many with a strong desire to witness. Pray that they may be both relevant and effective in that witness. The few Somali and Afar believers are often isolated and suffer many pressures from relatives. Most of them are jobless and some are illiterate. Pray for effective use of literacy programmes and the Scriptures in Somali and Afar. The Somali believers are meeting regularly for Bible study together. Pray that from these believers, leaders for congregations may be raised up. *Please pray for Somalia as we equip them to go into Djibouti in 2010. Please pray for Djibouti as we equip them to go into Saudi Arabia in 2016.*

# Egypt

- **Population:** 68.4 million
- **Main Religion:** Muslim
- **Non-Christians:** 88%
- **Area:** 997,739 sq. km. Mostly desert, only 3% is arable land—along the banks and delta of the Nile River and around the Western Desert oases.
- **People-Groups:** 11
- **Languages:** Arabic
- **Christians:** 12%
- **Briefing:** For over 1,000 years Egypt was a majority-Christian country—even after the Arab Muslim conquest in 640 AD. Egypt gave to the Christian world some of its greatest theologians and the monastic movement. Coptic Christians are more authentic Egyptians than those who follow the religion of their Arab conquerors. Every effort has been made to expunge Egypt's great Christian heritage from the historic records, downplay the size of the Church and marginalize its contribution to society. Pray that in a rediscovery of this heritage many might turn to Christ. 'Islam is the solution' has been the popular slogan pushing for a more Islamic state as the answer to Egypt's economic and social problems. Acts of terrorism, economic sabotage and intolerance have brought discredit to Islam itself. Pray that many might investigate the claims of the gospel and the faith of their forefathers. *Please pray for Yemen as we equip them to go into Egypt in 2015.*

# Equatorial Guinea

- **Population:** 0.5 million
- **Main Religion:** Christian
- **Non-Christians:** 5%
- **Area:** 28,051 sq. km. A small enclave, Rio Muni, on the African mainland and several islands in the Gulf of Guinea, including Bioko.
- **People-Groups:** 12
- **Languages:** Spanish, French
- **Christians:** 95%
- **Briefing:** The population was traumatized and the economy ravished by the bizarre dictatorship of the 1970s. The subsequent government led to some improvements, but the levels of corruption and injustice remained high and the government seeks to control all aspects of national life. Pray for change and a government that seeks the good of the people. The persecuted Church did not emerge unscathed. Church leaders were forced to compromise or suffer. Tragically, many Protestant church leaders fell into sin and displayed more interest in power politics than in the spiritual nurture of their flocks. Pray for men of God, fearless for the truth, to be raised up to lead the churches back to a living relationship with God. Since 1980 there has been increasing religious freedom and a number of newer Pentecostal, charismatic and evangelical denominations have started and grown. *Please pray for Congo as we equip them to go into Equatorial Guinea in 2016.*

# Eritrea

- **Population:** 3.8 million
- **Main Religion:** Muslim
- **Non-Christians:** 53%
- **Area:** 121,100 sq. km. Arid, mountainous, temperate plateau and hot desert lowlands along the Red Sea Coast.
- **People-Groups:** 11
- **Languages:** Tigrinya, Arabic
- **Christians:** 47%
- **Briefing:** Peace and national recovery has been delayed by conflicts with Ethiopia and Yemen. The Ethiopian war caused the death of 70,000+ Eritreans and Ethiopians in fierce trench warfare. The two presidents are both Tigrinya and were once friends. Pray for humility, willingness to compromise on the part of the leaders, and a just peace to end hostilities that neither country can afford. Freedom of religion is a major issue. Fear of Islamist extremism and Christian evangelicalism has virtually ended international NGO projects and aid and has also restricted the entry of expatriate Christian workers. Pray for these restrictions to be lifted and for harmony between the ethnic and religious communities to be maintained. Christians are largely Orthodox and almost entirely among the Tigrinya, with some Bilen and Kunama. Evangelicals are fewer. Christians of all denominations were refined and drawn together in fellowship during the hardships of war and Marxist propaganda. *Please pray for Sudan as we equip them to go into Eritrea in 2009.*

# Ethiopia

- **Population:** 62.5 million
- **Main Religion:** Roman Catholic
- **Non-Christians:** 35%
- **Area:** 1,106,000 sq. km. Fertile mountain plateau surrounded by the drought-prone lowlands and deserts of the Red Sea coast.
- **People-Groups:** 86
- **Languages:** Amharic, Dialects
- **Christians:** 65%
- **Briefing:** Ethiopia's political leaders confront crises on many fronts. Hostilities with Eritrea have crippled efforts to revive and modernize the country. Ethnic fragmentation remains a real possibility. The central government is predominantly Tigrayan in composition and other larger ethnic groups—Amhara, Oromo, Somali and Afar—are restive. Pray for wisdom, humility, courage and a seeking after God among those in leadership and for peace and the right climate to bring about change for the better. Repression, famines, wars and deep poverty have traumatized many. The Muslim advance. Muslims strengthened their position under Marxism, and have launched a massive campaign for the Islamization of Ethiopia by penetrating Christian areas with the offer of bribes and a mosque-building programme — many were reported to have been built during the time that many Christian churches were being closed. Their numbers are growing significantly, with converts out of both animism and the Orthodox Church. Ethiopia is strategically vital for both Islam and Christianity. *Please pray for Sudan as we equip them to go into Ethiopia in 2007.*

# Gabon

- **Population:** 1.2 million
- **Main Religion:** Christian
- **Non-Christians:** 13%
- **Area:** 267,667 sq. km. Coastal Central African state on the equator—77% being dense tropical rain forest.
- **People-Groups:** 3
- **Languages:** French
- **Christians:** 77%
- **Briefing:** Gabon is a spiritual battlefield. The conversion of the President and many government leaders to Islam, the pervasive influence of indigenous secret societies which all government leaders had to join, endemic alcoholism and widespread ignorance of the gospel are all indicators of this. While the vast majority claim to be Christian, Gabonese still fall back on their traditional religions in times of need. Pray that these influences may be broken down. Muslims have multiplied over the past 20 years—initially by immigration of Hausa, Fulani and other West African Muslims, and more recently by conversions among Gabonese men. The West African Muslim immigrants make up much of the merchant class and thus have significant influence in the country. There are moves by the national Church to partner with missions to reach the Muslims of Gabon based on models successfully used in Côte d'Ivoire and Guinea, but this plan is only in its initial phases. *Please pray for Burundi as we equip them to go into Gabon in 2013.*

# Gambia

- **Population:** 1.3 million
- **Main Religion:** Muslim
- **Non-Christians:** 96%
- **Area:** 10,689 sq. km. A narrow 400 km-long riverine enclave that virtually divides Senegal's Casamance from the rest of the country.
- **People-Groups:** 20
- **Languages:** English, Mandinka
- **Christians:** 4%
- **Briefing:** Islam is dominant, yet the land remains open for the gospel. Little effort has ever been directed at reaching the Muslim majority and converts from Islam have been few—but their numbers are increasing. The Mandinka, made famous by Alex Haley's book 'Roots', are a key people. Pray for continued freedom to witness and for openness of heart for Muslims to receive the truth. Islam is gradually gaining ground with the last few pockets of uncommitted animist peoples now becoming Muslim. Saudi Arabia has given much financial aid to the country with Islamic 'strings' attached. There is little Christian witness in the up-river towns and villages, though this is increasing. Pray for significant numbers of Muslim families from all ethnic groups to be drawn to Christ, and thus reverse this trend. There was much nominalism in the mainline denominations and evangelical believers were few. This is changing as some leaders seek to bring renewal to the Church and many nominal Christians are coming to new life in Christ. Pray for increased momentum and zeal for growth. *Please pray for Niger as we equip them to go into Gambia in 2016.*

# Ghana

- **Population:** 20.2 million
- **Main Religion:** Christian
- **Non-Christians:** 40%
- **Area:** 238,533 sq. km. Grasslands in north, farmland and forest in south.
- **People-Groups:** 100
- **Languages:** English, Dialects
- **Christians:** 60%
- **Briefing:** The rocky first decades after independence were not good soil for developing stable, fair, democratic institutions. Pray for those in government that they may subject themselves to God rather than human ideologies or demonic influences and seek the best for the diverse peoples and religious groups of Ghana. Since 1995 there have been both tribal wars and inter-religious violence. For years, Christianity has had a large following in the more developed south. Over 64% of Ghanaians call themselves Christian, but only 40% have any link with a church and only 12% are regular church attenders. African traditional worldviews and practices have gone hand-in-hand with the claim of being Christian. The deadness and formality of many older churches have stimulated rapid growth of the African Independent Churches, which offer excitement, involvement and miracles, but not always salvation by faith. *Please pray for Mali and Guinea as they host Ghana, Liberia, Côte d'Ivoire, Togo and Sao Tome Principe in Benin in 2013.*

# Guinea

- **Population:** 7.4 million
- **Main Religion:** Muslim
- **Non-Christians:** 96%
- **Area:** 245,857 sq. km on Africa's west coast; between Guinea-Bissau and Sierra Leone.
- **People-Groups:** 40
- **Languages:** French, Fulbe
- **Christians:** 4%
- **Briefing:** The Christian population is still a small minority, and concentrated in Conakry and the southeast forests. Guinea is one of the least evangelized countries in Black Africa. Despite the increase in missionary activity, most peoples are still a pioneer challenge, mostly Muslims with strong animistic elements. The three dominant peoples are all strongly Muslim. The believers from these groups are often unable to break free of their Muslim contexts to live openly as Christians. Pray for their courage and boldness. While the numbers of converts from these groups has grown to a steady trickle, much prayer is required before a major breakthrough is seen. Mission awareness has grown in the last few years. There is a growing expectancy among believers for an abundant harvest, and increased activity toward this end. Guinea has complete religious freedom, a reaction to the Marxist-Muslim years of terror which has made Muslims more receptive to Christianity. The liberty is being progressively eroded, however, especially in major towns outside the forest region. *Please pray for Mali as we equip them to go into Guinea in 2010.*

# Guinea-Bissau

- **Population:** 1.2 million
- **Main Religion:** Muslim
- **Non-Christians:** 86%
- **Area:** 36,125 sq. km. Coastal state wedged between Senegal and Guinea.
- **Briefing:** Leadership in the evangelical churches is mature, with a real vision for evangelism and missions. There are still, however, many churches in the interior without any pastor. If they do have a pastor, he is often responsible for as many as 10 other congregations as well. Pray for others to be called to the ministry. There is one Christian bookshop in the capital owned by a national believer. In an oral and largely illiterate society, books are not seen as a priority especially when they are expensive. Pray for the owner of the bookshop to have wisdom in choosing the right materials to stock. Pray also that national authors would write books appropriate and beneficial to Guinea-Bissau Christians. The publishing of the whole Bible in Portuguese Creole in 1999 was an important point in the history of the Church in Guinea-Bissau. There are also New Testaments in Papel, Bijago, Fulbe and Mandingo, but they are not widely used. Pray for wisdom and vision in knowing how best to make use of these translations in oral societies.
- **People-Groups:** 27
- **Languages:** Portuguese
- **Christians:** 14%

# Kenya

- **Population:** 30 million
- **Main Religion:** Christian
- **Non-Christians:** 22%
- **Area:** 582,646 sq.km. Most people live in the fertile plateaus of the south and west.
- **Briefing:** Praise God for the great freedom to preach the gospel since independence, for the receptivity of the people and for the exciting growth of the Church. Over four-fifths of the population claim to be Christian, and Christians are found in every level of society. Pray that Christians may bring truth and moral uplift to the nation as it edges to the brink of political disaster with possible economic collapse and inter-ethnic conflict. Pray also for peaceful change and a democratic government, responsive to the deep needs of the people. The rising level of human rights abuses, suppression of dissent, ethnic discrimination, and corruption needs to be challenged. Some Christian leaders have sought to speak out against these, which has led to confrontations with the government. The National Council of Christian Churches and the Evangelical Fellowship of Kenya are internally divided on how to handle these issues. Pray that all Christians in national and church leadership may both live exemplary lives and also speak out as one against wrongs in a society that claims to be largely Christian. *Please pray for our U.S. mission team as they go into Kenya in 2006.*
- **People-Groups:** 122
- **Languages:** English, Swahili
- **Christians:** 78%



# Lesotho

- **Population:** 2.1 million
- **Main Religion:** Christian
- **Non-Christians:** 81%
- **Area:** 30,355 sq. km. A mountainous country completely surrounded by South Africa.
- **People-Groups:** 6
- **Languages:** Sotho, English
- **Christians:** 19%
- **Briefing:** The people of Lesotho are prisoners of their geographical position, the divisions and powerlessness of their politicians and lack of resources. The 1998 South African invasion has left the population angry and frustrated. Pray that God-fearing, honest leaders may be raised up for the good of all. The Sotho have been largely Christian for generations but traditionalism and nominalism are widespread in both the Catholic Church and the Lesotho Evangelical Church. The latter is the fruit of the great pioneering work of French missionaries of the Paris Missionary Society. The rapid increase in the number of newer churches with evangelistic zeal has challenged the mainline Churches to become more spiritually vital and relevant. Pray for a humble harmony between the different denominations in place of considerable antagonism. Pray also for this land to be changed by the power of the Holy Spirit. *Please pray for South Africa as we equip them to go into Lesotho in 2011.*

# Liberia

- **Population:** 3.1 million
- **Main Religion:** Ethnic Traditional
- **Non-Christians:** 60%
- **Area:** 99,067 sq. km. Heavily forested coastal state adjoining Sierra Leone, Guinea and Côte d'Ivoire.
- **People-Groups:** 16
- **Languages:** English, Dialects
- **Christians:** 40%
- **Briefing:** The civil war was a tragedy for Liberia, the country was devastated and the people traumatized. It was also a blight that poisoned much of West Africa, especially Sierra Leone and increasingly Guinea. Its roots lay in deep ethnic hatreds, greed, lust for power and in a compromised Christianity that gave Satan opportunity. For decades Christians compromised with evil on an alarming scale. Freemasonry imported by the early settlers fused with indigenous tribal secret societies to become a pervasive influence that corrupted and compromised politics and nearly every denomination, whether mainline, evangelical or Pentecostal. During the war, Christians who refused to compromise were persecuted in some areas. Stagnation, failure of the gospel to advance in Liberia's hinterland, lack of concern for the lost, and spiritual impotence so widespread in the churches are due to condoned sin, witchcraft, alcoholism and polygamy among 'Christians'. Pray for the binding of these spiritual forces, and for a new day of freedom and power in the Holy Spirit for the Church. *Please pray for Mali and Guinea as they host Ghana, Liberia, Côte d'Ivoire, Togo and Sao Tome Principe in Benin in 2013.*

# Libya

- **Population:** 5.6 million
  - **Main Religion:** Muslim
  - **Non-Christians:** 96%
  - **Area:** 1,775,500 sq. km. Mostly Saharan desert; only a coastal Mediterranean strip of 2% of its land area is arable.
  - **People-Groups:** 33
  - **Languages:** Arabic
  - **Christians:** 4%
- **Briefing:** No open evangelism is possible. The last missionary outpost was closed in 1960. The entire indigenous population is unreached. Despite the increasing freedom for expatriates granted by the state, Libyans are off limits for evangelism. Approaches to them are potentially dangerous to both parties. A number of expatriate workers are seeking to reach Libyans, but are hindered by the elaborate secret police networks. There is a shared sense of despair and hopelessness. Pray for the calling of more Arab Christians and tentmakers to specifically reach Libyans in a sensitive and effective manner. Pray for this tightly-shut land to open to the gospel. Personal freedom is restricted. Political and economic sanctions of the past, as well as policies pursued by the government, continue to have long-term effects. Pray that Christians might see past the Western media's caricature of Libyans as fanatical Islamists and recognise the Libyans' need for the Saviour. Pray for many to be called to serve in Libya. *Please pray for Tunisia and Central America as we equip them to go into Linya in 2016.*

# Madagascar

- **Population:** 15.9 million
  - **Main Religion:** Traditional Ethnic
  - **Non-Christians:** 53%
  - **Area:** 587,041 sq. km. The world's 4th largest island—1,600 km long in the Indian Ocean 600 km off the coast of Mozambique in Africa.
  - **People-Groups:** 18
  - **Languages:** Malagasy, French
  - **Christians:** 47%
- **Briefing:** The Protestant Church has had a glorious history of faith despite persecution from heathen rulers and harassment from the French Catholic colonial authorities. There have been significant revival movements within the larger churches in 1895, 1941, 1948, and during the 1980s. Springing from the revival movements have been the indigenous lay movements of 'shepherds', which operate within the mainline Protestant Federation Churches from 50 centres across the island. Their emphasis on healing and exorcism has led to conversions and full churches in some areas. May this movement continue to grow and be rooted in Scripture. Spiritual deadness rather than revival characterizes many congregations. Compromise with the old beliefs, veneration of ancestral spirits, and witchcraft are widespread and even increasing among those who claim to be Christians. The forms of worship remain, but many have little understanding of the biblical message of salvation. The Christian community is 80% Christianized, but not really evangelized. *Please pray for Swaziland as we equip them to go into Madagascar in 2016.*

# Malawi

- **Population:** 10.9 million
- **Main Religion:** Christian
- **Non-Christians:** 21%
- **Area:** 118,484 sq. km. Central African state extending along Lake Malawi and its outflow river, the Shire.
- **People-Groups:** 22
- **Languages:** Chewa, English
- **Christians:** 79%
- **Briefing:** Malawi has remained relatively peaceful since independence in a region of devastating wars and turmoil. Yet these wars have exacted a terrible economic toll in under-development. Raised expectations of democratic government have not been realized. Pray that the nation may be led by leaders of integrity and that the new democracy may lead to the improved well-being of the people. The growth of Islam is a major challenge. Over 90% of the Yao are Muslim and constitute the bulk of Muslims in Malawi. The majority of the Asians are also Muslim, as is the President himself. Islam has become more visible and confident and Muslim aid projects have increased. Malawi is now the Southern African base for the Africa Muslim Agency. Expansion of Islam to other peoples is not extensive yet but is taking place. Pray for good relations between Christians and Muslims and for an effective ministry to bring Muslims to a personal relationship with Christ. *Please pray for Zambia as we equip them to go into Malawi in 2013.*

# Mali

- **Population:** 11.2 million
- **Main Religion:** Muslim
- **Non-Christians:** 98%
- **Area:** 1,240,192 sq. km. Landlocked state.
- **People-Groups:** 34
- **Languages:** Bambara, Fulbe, Songhai
- **Christians:** 2%
- **Briefing:** Islam has proved a disappointment to many, resulting in a greater openness to Christianity. The ecological crisis of the Sahel has brought much help from Christian missions and aid organizations which is reducing prejudice to the gospel. Pray for the many agencies actively involved in relief; local development to conserve soil, vegetation and water; digging wells; and medical outreach. Even so, there are only 903 medical dispensaries of any kind in Mali in contrast to 1,001 Qur'anic schools. Pray that these ministries might bear much fruit in the form of a mature, witnessing church. Of the 34 ethnic groups, only four are more than 1% evangelical. All peoples are in desperate need of the good news. There are 11 groups with no known evangelical believers. Among them are the Jula, Maure, and Tukulor. Pray also for the smaller (therefore often neglected) groups with 25,000 people or less and with no known believers (Duun, Mossi, Wolof, Banka, Jotoni, Pana, Samoa). Ask God to reveal the right approach so that these people might be reached with the gospel. *Please pray for our U.S. mission team as they go into Mali in 2007.*

# Mauritania

- **Population:** 2.7 million
- **Main Religion:** Muslim
- **Non-Christians:** 99.8%
- **Area:** 1,030,700 sq. km. Entirely desert apart from the north bank of the Senegal river on its southern border.
- **People-Groups:** About 20
- **Languages:** Arabic, Hassaniya
- **Christians:** 0.2%
- **Briefing:** Islam has been entrenched for 1,000 years with little challenge. Many are the barriers to change — low literacy, no Scriptures completed in Hassaniya Arabic, only a few local radio broadcasts from Senegal, and laws that forbid Mauritians from hearing the gospel or converting to Christ. The government takes great pains to keep Christianity away from the people. The strong man must be bound and his captives released for a truly Mauritanian Church to become a reality. Mauritania is one of the world's poorest countries. One third of children are malnourished, and when there is enough food, it is often too expensive for the poor to afford. While the government's obedience to World Bank economic liberalization has brought financial growth, it has also plunged many of the working poor into even greater poverty. Pray for wisdom and discernment on the part of the government, and that the hungry and poor may have the gospel proclaimed to them. *Please pray for Western Sahara as we equip them to go into Mauritania in 2016.*

# Morocco

- **Population:** 28.2 million
- **Main Religion:** Muslim
- **Non-Christians:** 99.9%
- **Area:** 458,730 sq. km. North-west corner of Africa.
- **People-Groups:** 8
- **Languages:** Arabic, French
- **Christians:** 0.1%
- **Briefing:** Islam was brought by invading Arab armies in the 7th Century. The once-strong North African, and largely Berber, Church was blotted out. Pride in Morocco's glorious past as a centre of civilization and Islamic learning, and prejudice against the truths of Scripture are barriers to the acceptance of the gospel. Probably no more than 5% of the population have had personal contact with the gospel. Pray that this nation may become open for the messengers of the gospel. There are great expectations for change through the new King's efforts to encourage more democracy and improve the economy as well as the lot of the underprivileged. Drought, Islamist activism and the culture of corruption in the bureaucracy all could sabotage this. Pray for the King and those in government; for peace and stability. The constitution guarantees freedom of religion — but this does not extend to freedom to leave Islam. Pray for all who have taken this step and for boldness in witness. *Please pray for Venezuela as we equip them to go into Morocco in 2007.*

# Mozambique

- **Population:** 19.6 million
- **Main Religion:** Christian
- **Non-Christians:** 43%
- **Area:** 799,380 sq. km. The Zambezi and 24 other rivers divide the 2,800 km-long land and make north-south travel difficult.
- **People-Groups:** 25
- **Languages:** Portuguese, Dialects
- **Christians:** 57%
- **Briefing:** Mozambique emerged broken and wounded from colonialism and three decades of civil war. In 1995 it was reckoned to be the world's poorest nation. The government has worked hard to open up the economy, lay true democratic foundations, grant religious freedom and bind up the wounds of the past. Mozambique has had religious freedom for the first time in its history. Intense suffering created spiritual hunger and congregations of indigenous Christians mushroomed all over the country. The flooding disasters of 2000 and 2001 stimulated much Christian assistance and churches were planted in refugee camps. Illiteracy, lack of Scriptures, legalism, syncretism and lack of understanding of biblical repentance, faith and the new birth is widespread. Yet the desire for teaching and help, wisely and tactfully given, is immense. *Please pray for Zimbabwe as we equip them to go into Mozambique in 2015.*

# Namibia

- **Population:** 1.7 million
- **Main Religion:** Christian
- **Non-Christians:** 21%
- **Area:** 823,144 sq. km. Predominantly arid, semi-desert; the driest African land south of the equator..
- **People-Groups:** 6
- **Languages:** English, Afrikaans
- **Christians:** 79%
- **Briefing:** The potential for economic collapse and strife is high if there is a failure in political leadership. Pray for the government and its leaders. Namibia for long had the highest percentage of Christians for any country in Africa. The early labours of German and Finnish Lutheran and then Anglican missionaries gave birth to large denominations. The influence of liberal and then black theology eroded that spiritual heritage, and true discipleship and holy living are now in short supply and nominalism widespread. There is a noticeable turning away from Christianity and a lack of openness to the gospel. Pray for a unity, based on Scripture and bathed in the Spirit, that will bring reconciliation and revival. Young people have become much more materialistic and are rejecting Christianity as irrelevant to their needs. Substance abuse, immorality and the rapid spread of HIV are the result. *Please pray for our U.S. mission team as they go into Namibia in 2007.*

# Niger

- **Population:** 10.7 million
- **Main Religion:** Muslim
- **Non-Christians:** 97.5%
- **Area:** 1,186,408 sq. km. Sahara desert in center and north.
- **People-Groups:** 36
- **Languages:** French, Hausa
- **Christians:** 2.5%
- **Briefing:** This Muslim land is open for the gospel, and Muslims are more receptive than ever before, yet response has been small and church growth slow. Islam is strong and well-organized. There is an Islamic university 54 km from Niamey. Pray that the land may remain open, and that every social, religious and spiritual barrier to the knowledge of the Lord may be removed. The spiritual effects of folk Islam and demonic oppression are a major hindrance to people coming to Christ. The number of professing Christians has actually declined since independence — largely because many of the Catholics were French expatriates who have now left the country. Evangelicals have steadily grown but are still a very small minority. There may be over 14 unreached peoples with no work among them, but investigations are underway for ministry among the Sokoto Fulbe, the Kanuri-Mober, the Kanuri-Tumari, Arabs, Kurfey, Mauri, Tyenga, Dendi, Kurtey, Wogo and the Kado Songhai. *Please pray for Burkinda Faso as we equip them to go into Niger in 2013.*

# Nigeria

- **Population:** 111 million
- **Main Religion:** Christian
- **Non-Christians:** 48%
- **Area:** 923,768 sq. km. Mangrove and tropical rain forests in the south, savannah and grasslands in the north.
- **People-Groups:** 490
- **Languages:** English
- **Christians:** 52%
- **Briefing:** The combined effects of ancient tribal hatreds, Muslim conquests, British colonial policy in which the North and South were handled differently and the bitter Biafra war of 1967-70 have left deep scars. Pray for healing and reconciliation. The government needs time, the support of the people and courage to bring about the painful reconstruction of the country after four decades of being plundered by its leaders. Pray for the right balance between tact and firmness and between revolution and evolution in economic affairs, vested interests and tribalism. The introduction of shari'a law in northern Muslim states is a direct challenge to the federal government and a danger to national stability. Pray with Nigerian Christians for the preservation of national unity, the integrity of the federal constitution and for full religious freedom. The culture of greed and corruption runs deep. Nigeria has become infamous for spectacular international scams, international crime and drug-running. *Please pray for Niger as we equip them to go into Nigeria in 2016.*

# Rwanda

- **Population:** 7.7 million
- **Main Religion:** Christian
- **Non-Christians:** 20%
- **Area:** 26,338 sq. km. A fertile, mountainous country similar to its southern neighbor, Burundi.
- **People-Groups:** 5
- **Languages:** French, English
- **Christians:** 80%
- **Briefing:** The genocide that caused the death of a million men, women and children stunned the world and traumatized the nation. Rwanda desperately needs peace and an end to centuries of inter-ethnic hatred. Pray that the transitional government, the churches and international bodies may succeed in achieving this. Many of the most responsible for the genocide are still on the loose. Over 125,000 have been detained because of their possible involvement, with many innocent among the guilty, but the courts are only slowly processing them — at present rates it will take 200 years! Of Rwanda's 719 magistrates in 1994, only 250 survived. Pray for justice to be done, and to be seen to be done in a timely way. Many Christians suffered much. Thousands of spiritual leaders were murdered. Many leaders despair of being able to cope with the desperate physical, social, psychological and spiritual damage done. *Please pray for Uganda as we equip them to go into Rwanda in 2011.*

# Senegal

- **Population:** 9.4 million
- **Main Religion:** Muslim
- **Non-Christians:** 95.6%
- **Area:** 196,722 sq. km. Mainland Africa's most westerly state — arid and with few natural resources.
- **People-Groups:** 52
- **Languages:** French, Wolof
- **Christians:** 4.4%
- **Briefing:** Islam grew from about 45% of the population in 1900 to over 92% in 2000. It is the religion of almost all the Wolof, Fulbe and Mande peoples. Praise God for religious freedom; tolerance for other religions being a source of pride — possibly because so few Muslims have ever come to Christ. Pray for a new receptivity to the gospel and the preservation of freedom of religion. The three Muslim Sufi brotherhoods are well-organized wealthy and politically powerful; over 85% of all Muslims belong to one of them. Christians are confined to sections of the Serer, Jola and Cape Verdian peoples. There are also some congregations among smaller ethnic groups in the south. Their influence is disproportionately great through their input into health services and education. Sadly most are nominally Catholic and from a non-Muslim background. Their lifestyle often does no credit to the cause of Christ, for few know real freedom in Christ and victory over the powers of darkness. Muslims refer to Christians as 'those who drink' rather than those who follow Christ. *Please pray for Western Sahara as we equip them to go into Senegal in 2016.*

# Seychelles

- **Population:** 77,000
- **Main Religion:** Christian
- **Non-Christians:** 4%
- **Area:** 453 sq. km. A group of 92 granite and coral islands spread across 400,000 sq. km. of the Indian Ocean, 1,600 km east of Kenya.
- **People-Groups:** 43
- **Languages:** French, English
- **Christians:** 96%
- **Briefing:** The vast majority of Seychellois claim to be Christian, but the faith of many is tainted by immorality, superstition and nominalism. Gris-gris, African-based spiritism based on black magic and herbalism, permeates the lives of Christians. Too many believers lack a personal relationship with Christ, depending instead on the rites of baptism and confirmation. Pray that the Holy Spirit may bring new life evidenced by repentance and sustained fruit. Evangelical missionary work, restricted in the past to technical and help ministries, now enjoys wider opportunities. The outer and less-populated islands are isolated and have had little challenge to a personal commitment to Christ. The youth need spiritual attention aimed at their particular needs. Pray for effective ministries to be developed to win them for the Lord. *Please pray for Malawi as we equip them to go into Seychelles in 2015.*

# Sierra Leone

- **Population:** 4.8 million
- **Main Religion:** Muslim
- **Non-Christians:** 89%
- **Area:** 71,740 sq. km. Small coastal state between Guinea and Liberia.
- **People-Groups:** 22
- **Languages:** Creole, Dialects
- **Christians:** 11%
- **Briefing:** Sierra Leone has become infamous for the barbaric maiming of innocent victims as an instrument for terror and control. Thousands of men, women and children and even babies, have had limbs cruelly amputated. Over 100,000 have been slain. Countless numbers of girls and women have been raped. Thousands of children have been kidnapped, drugged and forced to kill even their own relatives. Nearly the whole population has had experience of being refugees. Pray that all the instigators who, for greed, have unleashed such terror, would be brought to justice and even to repentance and faith in Christ. A battle rages between democracy and dementia. Pray for restoration of government and that this government might be honest, accountable to the people and might establish peace, initiate a process of national reconciliation and build up the shattered economy. The unchallenged power of the occult lies behind all the greed and cruelty, and also the powerlessness of the Church. Many Christians have compromised in this area; nominalism and sin are the result. Pray that these powers may be bound. *Please pray for Ginea-Bissau as we equip them to go into Sierra Leone in 2014.*



# Somalia

- **Population:** 10 million
- **Main Religion:** Muslim
- **Non-Christians:** 99.95%
- **Area:** 637,000 sq. km. The arid Horn of Africa east of Ethiopia and Kenya.
- **People-Groups:** 7
- **Languages:** Somali, Arabic
- **Christians:** 0.05%
- **Briefing:** Somalia is the most lawless country in the world. In contrast, the unrecognized Somaliland has a good measure of stability and peace. After 10 years of violence and anarchy, Somalis are desperate for peace and restoration of civil order. Tentative efforts to form a government are ignored or derided by some of the warlords. Pray that all factions may agree on the formation of a national government and that future rulers might learn from the past, govern the nation for the good of its people, respect human rights and also grant true religious freedom. Islam has failed the people. Two powerful competing Sufi brotherhoods have contributed to present troubles. The evident greed, intolerance and lack of love have discredited Islam. Some are seeking solutions in radical Islam. Many Islamist teachers have flooded into Somaliland and Puntland where there is more stability. Pray that Islamist plans may be thwarted and a new religious tyranny prevented. *Please pray for Ethiopia as we equip them to go into Somalia in 2008.*

# South Africa

- **Population:** 40.3 million
- **Main Religion:** Christian
- **Non-Christians:** 27%
- **Area:** 1,218,363 sq.km. A republic with 9 provinces at the southernmost point of Africa.
- **People-Groups:** 68
- **Languages:** 11 Ethnic Languages
- **Christians:** 73%
- **Briefing:** Transition from white rule and apartheid to a non-racial democracy was achieved relatively peacefully rather than the feared bloodbath. The courage of F.W. de Klerk, the magnanimity of Nelson Mandela and the prayers of God's people were key components in this. Strenuous efforts by local churches to roll back the centuries of discrimination, oppression and pain have borne fruit. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission under Archbishop Desmond Tutu was one means to begin addressing the wrongs of the past. There is a great distance to go, but praise God for what has been achieved. The massive growth of global vision and multiplication of South African mission involvement by all communities after the ending of South Africa's diplomatic isolation in 1993. Innovative strategies for sending and support have been developed. The legacy of contempt, mistrust, fear, injustice, violence, intimidation and deep hurt has scarred the soul of the nation. Pray for a healthy balance between non-racialism and affirmative action (favouring the previously disadvantaged) in education, the economy, employment and leadership. *Please pray for our U.S. mission team as they go into South Africa in 2007.*

# Sudan

- **Population:** 29.4 million
- **Main Religion:** Muslim
- **Non-Christians:** 77%
- **Area:** 2,503,890 sq. km. Africa's largest country.
- **People-Groups:** 88
- **Languages:** Arabic, Dialects
- **Christians:** 23%
- **Briefing:** Sudan's civil war has been one of the world's longest conflicts in the 20th Century. Pray for peace and the formation of a viable multi-cultural, multi-religious society. Wrongs have been done—the British colonial rulers (they brought peace, honest administration and an end to slavery, but were short-sighted in handling the south), the atrocities of both northerners and southerners and the bitter divisions among the southerners themselves. Pray for repentance, restitution and rebuilding of communal life. The human tragedy of Sudan was long ignored until it was revealed that the Islamic government had sanctioned the re-institution of slavery. There has been persecution of the Church over much of the past 50 years, but much more since 1985. Deliberate attempts to eliminate a viable Christian presence have been extreme, and have included bombing of Sunday church services, destruction of hospitals, schools, churches and Christian villages, massacres, killing of pastors and leaders and a food-for-conversion policy for refugees banished to desert areas around Khartoum. *Please pray for our U.S. mission team as they go into Sudan in 2006.*

# Swaziland

- **Population:** 1 million
- **Main Religion:** Christian
- **Non-Christians:** 18%
- **Area:** 17,364 sq. km. Small, fertile, well-watered, landlocked enclave between Mozambique and South Africa.
- **People-Groups:** 107
- **Languages:** siSwati, English
- **Christians:** 82%
- **Briefing:** Few African countries have retained such strong ties with pre-colonial political and cultural society. This leads to a clash between the claims of the past and those of biblical Christianity resulting in much compromise among Christians. The many evangelical churches have made little headway over the past decades and are generally stagnating. Pray for revival, holy living, a clear evangelical message proclaimed and greater unity among Christian leaders. Pray also that the strong hold of witchcraft and ancestor worship, as well as the spirit of polygamy and immorality, might be broken within the churches and nation. It is the men who are most bound—over 70% of church members are women. Pray for the wide acceptance of a constitution that both respects human rights and tradition and also respects the honoured place of the king and democratic freedoms. *Please pray for Lesotho as we equip them to go into Swaziland in 2014.*

# Tanzania

- **Population:** 33.5 million
- **Main Religion:** Christian
- **Non-Christians:** 49%
- **Area:** 945,037 sq. km. Comprising mainland Tanganyika and the offshore islands of Zanzibar and Pemba (2,460 sq. km.).
- **People-Groups:** 52
- **Languages:** Swahili, English
- **Christians:** 51%
- **Briefing:** The delicate inter-communal balance and political stability of the country cannot be taken for granted. The Muslim community is increasingly polarized between moderates and Islamists; the latter pressing for political influence and privileges and resentful of the perceived advantages enjoyed by Christians. Pray that the government may be wise and even-handed, and that communal harmony and religious freedom may be maintained in both the mainland and Zanzibar. The growth of the mainline Churches has been good but patchy. Revival movements in both the Lutheran and Anglican Churches have brought life to traditional congregations; most of the bishops are Evangelicals. However, there are problems that limit growth in numbers and spirituality. Great growth among Christians must not obscure the real needs. The coast, Zanzibar and many of the peoples in the southern provinces are largely or almost entirely Muslim. *Please pray for our U.S. mission team as they go into Tanzania in 2007.*

# Togo

- **Population:** 12.8 million
- **Main Religion:** Christian
- **Non-Christians:** 49.9%
- **Area:** 56,785 sq. km. The Atlantic coastline is only 56 km long but the little land stretches 540 km northwards to the Sahel.
- **People-Groups:** 93
- **Languages:** French
- **Christians:** 50.1%
- **Briefing:** The government of Eyadema has been maintained by manipulation of elections, widespread human rights abuses and crushing of any dissension through fear and poverty. The southern peoples have been politically marginalized. Pray that those in leadership might have a change of heart or be replaced by those who fear God, respect the constitution and treat every section of society fairly. The whole body of Christ in Togo is beginning to unite in common vision for reaching every part of their land—and beyond. Pray for barriers of mistrust and denominationalism to be broken down and for a Great Commission movement to be firmly established. Bible translation remains a major ministry challenge. Pray especially for the completion of the whole Bible in Kabiye—one of the two indigenous languages used in schools. There are at least six and possibly a further 12 languages into which the New Testament should be translated. *Please pray for Mali and Guinea as they host Ghana, Liberia, Côte d'Ivoire, Togo and Sao Tome Principe in Benin in 2013.*

# Tunisia

- **Population:** 9.5 million
- **Main Religion:** Muslim
- **Non-Christians:** 99.6%
- **Area:** 154,530 sq. km. Mountainous and agricultural in the north, Sahara desert in the south.
- **People-Groups:** 43
- **Languages:** Arabic, French
- **Christians:** 0.4%
- **Briefing:** In earlier centuries the Christian Church was widespread, producing such leaders as Tertullian and Cyprian. Schism, heresy, a failure to put roots deep in the local culture or translate the Bible into local languages, foreign invasions and finally Islam, brought about its demise. There are about 200 committed indigenous believers today; but about half that number meet together regularly for worship. Pray that a living, growing Church might become a reality again in this land. Tunisia is the one of the most progressive and open societies in the Arab world. While the outward trappings of Islam are obvious, most people are more committed to secular dreams of wealth. Pray that the emptiness of religious posturing, spiritual apathy, and materialism might be exposed and replaced with spiritual hunger for Jesus. *Please pray for Morocco as we equip them to go into Tunisia in 2013.*

# Uganda

- **Population:** 21.7 million
- **Main Religion:** Christian
- **Non-Christians:** 12%
- **Area:** 241,040 sq. km. Much of the land is fertile and well-watered.
- **People-Groups:** 74
- **Languages:** English
- **Christians:** 88%
- **Briefing:** The devastation of the Amin and Obote years with unrestrained terror, murder, tribal warfare and corruption destroyed much of the economic and social fabric of the nation and hastened the spread of AIDS. Recovery will take many years. Pray for peace—in the international Central African War and internal fighting by terror groups and robber gangs. Pray for the government that it may exercise its authority with even-handed honesty. Though the infection rate is falling, the devastation for families and communities is great. Maybe 3 million are living with the disease. There are nearly 2 million orphans of AIDS and war. Refugees are housed in many camps—over 100,000 Sudanese in the north, many Congolese in the west and Rwandans in the south-west. There are also Ugandan refugees forced into camps in the LRA-affected areas in the north-west. This is an immense extra burden for the country. *Please pray for Kenya as we equip them to go into Uganda in 2008.*

# Zambia

- **Population:** 9.1 million
- **Main Religion:** Muslim
- **Non-Christians:** 15%
- **Area:** 752,614 sq. km. Landlocked, forested Central African country.
- **People-Groups:** 96
- **Languages:** Benba, Nyanja
- **Christians:** 85%
- **Briefing:** President Chiluba openly dedicated Zambia to God as a Christian nation at his inauguration in 1991. The outworkings in public life have been disappointing, with many in the government becoming ostentatiously wealthy while half the population live in dire poverty. Pray for hearts, worldviews and structures to be moulded by God's Word, for democracy not to be discredited and for Christianity not to be debased or even rejected through such failures. The widespread poverty and lack of economic progress could lead to unrest or worse. Pray that the government may tackle the massive problems with honesty and courage. The foreign debt burden is one of the world's highest, and the economic impact of the AIDS pandemic one of the world's worst. The Spirit of God has moved through the country with many coming to personal faith in Christ—in urban areas, among educated young people and increasingly in rural areas. *Please pray for Angola as we equip them to go into Zambia in 2010.*

# Zimbabwe

- **Population:** 11.6 million
- **Main Religion:** Christian
- **Non-Christians:** 29%
- **Area:** 390,759 sq.km. Landlocked state in south-central Africa.
- **People-Groups:** 42
- **Languages:** English
- **Christians:** 71%
- **Briefing:** Zimbabwe needs a government that will serve the nation rather than those who govern. Pray for early, non-violent change and for this land to be brought back from the brink of a social and economic abyss. Malnutrition, threat of food shortages and unemployment are growing rapidly and the country is becoming a time bomb. The AIDS calamity in Zimbabwe is one of the world's worst cases. A combination of government neglect, lack of healthcare resources, promiscuity and social reluctance to face up to the drastic measures required are the root causes. Over 25% of all adults carried the virus by 2000; the number of orphans had risen to nearly 1 million (9% of the population). Deaths rose to 700 a week and the economy and life expectancy has plummeted. The land issue needs resolution. The 4,000 farms became the source of 90% of agricultural exports and most of the food and provided employment and homes for up to 2 million people. The state-sponsored anarchy in occupation of 1,600 farms by 'war veterans' could cause the eviction of hundreds of thousands of farm workers. Pray for the rule of law to be reinstated and an equitable solution found. *Please pray for Botswana as we equip them to go into Zimbabwe in 2014.*

# Twelve African Restricted Nations

While many African nations are not evangelized, twelve nations are categorized as “restricted”—openly hostile to Christians and the Gospel. Pray especially that God’s glory will be shown by His people in Africa, and that His Word may be a light to these lands...

## **Comoro Islands**

Public witness by Christians is forbidden, and believers are not permitted to meet openly. They have suffered periods of harassment and persecution while being denied many social and civil privileges.

## **Algeria**

In recent years Christians have suffered violence from the Islamic Salvation Front, whose members have been known to march through towns and slit the throats of those who have not lived up to their call to Islamic fundamentalism. Proselytism is not allowed.

## **Egypt**

The country’s constitution gives preference to Muslims, and Christians are treated as second-class citizens, denied political representation, and discriminated against in employment. An 1856 Ottoman Empire law kept any church from being built, repaired or even repainted without the permission of Egypt’s president. The law was revised in 2003, and the decision-making is now left up to local governments. In January 2003, President Mubarak declared Christmas (January 7th on the Eastern Church calendar) a public holiday. That was a first for Egypt, but Christians are still susceptible to attacks by Muslim extremists who often go unpunished. Some Christian girls have been raped and then forced to marry Muslim men. Others have been abducted and forced to convert to Islam. Financial incentives have even been offered to convince some Christian girls to convert to Islam.

## **Eritrea**

Radical Ethiopian Orthodox Christians and militant Muslims have stepped up attacks against evangelical Christians in recent years. The Eritrean Marxist government ordered all independent Protestant churches to close in May 2002, declaring only a few religions were legal. In 2005, police arrested 20 evangelicals at a Christian wedding held in a private home. The bride, groom, wedding parties and three pastors were among the 20 who refused to sign documents renouncing their faith. They were imprisoned and are denied contact from friends or relatives. Over 1,000 evangelicals, including 17 pastors, are incarcerated in Eritrea, with many of them being held in storage containers.

## **Ethiopia**

In 1974, a revolution imposed a Marxist-like government on the country. The regime persecuted Christians and allowed for the Islamic movement to strengthen its position. However, this iron-fisted reign ended in 1991, and ever since there has been great freedom to worship and evangelize. However, Muslims have started massive campaigns to Islamize Ethiopia by penetrating Christian areas with bribes and mosque-building programs. In the town of Alaba (K'olito), evangelical Christians have been the victims of severe physical abuse, confiscation and destruction of property, extortion, kidnapping, forcible marriage and unlawful imprisonment.

## **Libya**

Libyans are off limits for evangelism. A number of expatriates are seeking to reach Libyans, but they are hindered by the country's elaborate secret police network. Christian literature may enter only through secretive means.

## **Mauritania**

Freedom of religion is nonexistent in this state where Islam has dominated for over 1,000 years. It is illegal for citizens to enter non-Muslim households, and anyone who confesses Christ faces the death penalty under the law. Christian literature and religious radio broadcasts are not allowed. The government takes great pains to keep Christianity away from the people.

## **Morocco**

A Moroccan church consisting of former Muslims cannot be recognized, and other religious groups are tolerated as long as their ministry is confined to expatriate communities. Many have endured ostracism from their families, loss of employment and imprisonment for their faith. However, hearts are being turned toward the gospel of a loving Savior. Disturbed by Islamic terrorism, the king of Morocco wants a Christian influence in the country.

## **Nigeria**

Islam has been given preferential treatment over Christianity in the past. Shariah Law has been implemented in 12 of Northern Nigeria's predominately Muslim states. Christian leaders are hopeful Obasanjo's government will continue to crack down on Muslim fanaticism. In 2005, violence against Christians continued. Believers were killed; churches, Christian schools, homes and businesses were burned and destroyed. The government in the past has turned a blind eye

## **Somalia**

Fellowship among believers is dangerous, since persecution is strong in many parts of the country. A number of believers have been martyred, and others have been publicly named as targets for execution.

**Sudan**

Deliberate attempts to eliminate a viable Christian presence have been extreme and have included the destruction of hospitals, schools, churches and Christian villages. Pastors and church leaders have been killed. Men, women and children have been threatened with death or torture if they refuse to convert to Islam. In the midst of these atrocities, the Body of Christ in Sudan is growing. Massive population movements have broken down barriers of customs and languages to bring many to Christ from unreached peoples. In 2005, Sudan's new Vice President and Commander-in-Chief of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A), Dr. John Garang de Mabior, died in a helicopter crash. This Christian hero's death leaves the future of a peaceful unified Sudan in doubt.

**Tunisia**

Christian literature is not openly distributed; and with so few believers, dissemination is difficult. The government is not favorable to any Christian proselytism, but tolerance is shown to foreign minorities.



# About the Teacher

Dr. David Platt is deeply devoted to Christ and His Word. David's first love in ministry is disciple-making—the simple Biblical model of teaching God's Word, mentoring others and sharing faith. He has traveled extensively to teach the Bible and church leaders throughout the United States and around the world. Atlanta natives, he and his wife, Heather, made their home in New Orleans until they were displaced by flooding following Hurricane Katrina in 2005.

A life-long learner, David has earned two undergraduate and three advanced degrees. He holds a Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) and a Bachelor of Arts in Journalism (A.B.J.) from the University of Georgia, and a Master of Divinity (M.Div.), Master of Theology (Th.M.) and Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) from New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. He has previously served at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary as Dean of Chapel and Assistant Professor of Expository Preaching and Apologetics, and as Staff Evangelist at Edgewater Baptist Church in New Orleans.

David holds a deep and abiding passion for global disciple-making. "I believe that God has uniquely created every one of His people to impact the world. Some may count it as idealistic, but I believe it is thoroughly biblical, rooted in Psalm 67:1-2, yet covering Scripture from beginning to end. God is in the business of blessing His people so that His ways and His salvation might be made known among all people."

David practices what he preaches through his travel nationally and internationally, teaching from God's Word in churches, seminaries, the underground church or even under a shade tree in Africa.

David and Heather were married in 1999. They are the parents of two sons, Caleb and Joshua.

# Additional Resources

**SECRET CHURCH RESOURCES** are available for purchase. CD and DVD sets of past Secret Church sessions are available for purchase. For a listing of resources and purchasing information visit [www.secretchurch.org/resources](http://www.secretchurch.org/resources).

**ONLINE RESOURCES**, including free MP3 audio downloads of the teaching sessions, Quicktime (MOV) videos of the teaching sessions, study and prayer guides in Portable Document Format (PDF) and links to persecuted church resources are available at the Secret Church web site, [www.secretchurch.org](http://www.secretchurch.org).

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# Notes



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