



Study Guide

A SURVEY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

secret  church

www.secretchurch.org

Shhh. Close the door behind you.

Welcome to Secret Church. There are two reasons we are here this evening. One is to know God's Word more intimately. Most of our time together is going to be spent diving into Scripture to uncover some of the timeless truths contained in this incredible living Book. You'll need a Bible, this study guide and a pen this evening. If you didn't bring a Bible, you'll find free copies available to you in the lobby. Dr. Platt will be teaching from the New International Version (NIV), but you'll be able to easily follow along with any modern translation.

There's a second, and ultimately far more important, reason that we are here tonight. We want to identify with our brothers and sisters in Christ who are persecuted around the world. Right now, in 2007, there are nearly 200 million Christ-followers worldwide who do not have basic human rights. That means they cannot have a gathering like this in public to study God's Word. In almost all cases they would be harassed. In many cases they would be arrested. In some cases they would be imprisoned, tortured or killed.

Today it's estimated there are 70 million Christ-followers in prison worldwide. They take their faith and their God very seriously. They are willing to sacrifice work, family, comfort, reputation, even their lives if necessary. And they are members of the same Church that we are. They are not asking for our pity. In fact, persecution has built their faith in ways we can hardly imagine. If anything, let us be inspired by them to know God more fully and His Word more deeply than ever before.

Many around the world gather for worship as we do tonight—under cover of darkness, quietly, in secret. They often meet for long periods of time because it's dangerous to be in a large group with other Christ-followers and they want to make the most of their time together. Imagine for a moment that what happens tonight inside this room could threaten your life or the lives of your family. But these Christ-followers do not cower in fear. Instead they come together joyfully to praise God and thank Him for His grace and mercy. Let us live by their example as they follow Christ.

Tonight we will pray for the persecuted. Each Secret Church meeting focuses on a different region of the world where Christ-followers suffer because of their faith. In the back of this Study Guide you'll find information on one particular continent that will guide your prayer time for our neighbors in these many nations. Keep this Study Guide as a reminder not only to share what you are learning from God's Word, but to pray for people and places where "Secret Church" is a reality.

God, may we know Your Word more fully. May Your watchcare be with our brothers and sisters in Christ around the world who even now meet, pray, and study in secret. Amen.

Program Notes

TONIGHT'S SCHEDULE

- 6:00 to 6:30 p.m. Welcome, opening, musical worship
Special guest from Asia
- 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. Teaching Session 1
- 7:30 to 7:45 p.m. Special guest from Asia
- 7:45 to 8:45 p.m. Teaching Session 2
- 8:45 to 9:00 p.m. Break (coffee, water and snacks in the lobby)
- 9:00 to 9:30 p.m. The Persecuted Church
- Special Guest from Asia
 - Prayer Time
 - Giving of Our Resources
- 9:30 to 10:40 p.m. Teaching Session 3
- 10:40 to 10:50 p.m. Prayer and Commissioning of Asia Teams
- 10:50 p.m. to Midnight Teaching Session 4 and Closing

BOTTLED WATER ONLY is allowed in the Worship Room. Please do not bring food or other types of beverages into the Worship Room. Complimentary beverages will be provided in the lobby for attendees during the break time.

RESTROOMS are located in the lobby and at the rear of the Worship Room.

SO AS NOT TO DISTRACT FROM THE STUDY, please turn all cell phones and pagers to the “silent” or “off” position while in the Worship Room. We realize many parents need to keep in touch with baby sitters, but if you must use your phone during the evening, please go all the way out into the lobby before calling.

BIBLES, PENS AND NOTE PAPER are available free of charge in the lobby. If you do not have your own Bible, please keep the Bible you receive as our gift.

SECRET CHURCH RESOURCES are available for purchase in the lobby before and after the sessions and during the break time. Follow this evening's teaching, a four-CD audio set of the sessions will be available for purchase for \$29. A two-DVD set of videos of the sessions will be available for \$39 in the coming weeks.

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 website, www.secretchurch.org.

Beyond These Walls...

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

You'll notice video cameras in the room tonight that will be recording the teaching sessions. In the coming days, these sessions will be re-recorded and translated into many different languages, including Spanish, Chinese, Japanese, Russian and Arabic. The foreign-language versions of Secret Church will be available online as translations are completed. But that's 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 several more Secret Church studies, creating 30 to 40 hours of Bible teaching on the Old and New Testaments, Covenants, Disciple-Making, Bible Study and Teaching and other topics in the coming years. These sessions together will comprise a "seminary on a stick"—a mini-course in solid Bible knowledge accessible to anyone.

During the evening we'll be taking an offering. This offering will go directly to believers in restricted areas around the world to purchase needed resources and help build up the church in these difficult regions.

Portions of the proceeds will provide Secret Church Bible studies in multiple languages on iPods, Memory Sticks, Flash Drives and other small computer devices that are easily transported to other countries. We're excited about providing hours of Bible teaching, in people's native languages, to those who cannot attend a course like this. Imagine a house-church leader in Asia or the Middle East, now able to attend 40 hours of Bible teaching classes as he plugs in a video iPod with Secret Church teaching in his own language. With your help, this will be a reality!

Survey of the New Testament: Part 1

HOW SHOULD WE STUDY THE NEW TESTAMENT? Examining Three Dimensions

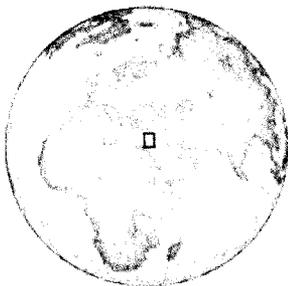
- ▶ The **literary** dimension.
- ▶ The historical dimension.
- ▶ The **theological** dimension.

WHAT IS THE NEW TESTAMENT? The New Testament as Literature

- A collection of 27 books...
- Written by one divine author and approximately **nine** human authors...
- In koine Greek, the common language of the people...
- Over a span of less than 100 years.
- Three key genres in New Testament literature...
 - ▶ Historical **narrative**.
 - ▶ Epistle.
 - ▶ Revelation.
- Three key characteristics of New Testament literature...
 - ▶ Historical **accuracy**.
 - ▶ Textual authenticity.
 - ▶ Divine **authority**.

WHEN AND WHERE DID THE EVENTS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT TAKE PLACE? The New Testament as History

- The Intertestamental Time Period
 - ▶ Persian Rule
 - ▶ Greek Rule
 - ▶ Maccabean Period: 166-63 B.C.
 - ▶ **Roman** Period: 63 B.C. – New Testament.
- The Timeline of the New Testament...
 - ▶ The life of Christ begins between 4-6 B.C. at the earliest.
 - ▶ The book of Revelation is written near the close of the first century.
- The Timeliness of the New Testament...
 - ▶ The right time **theologically**.
 - ▶ The right time religiously.
 - ▶ The right time culturally.
 - ▶ The right time **politically**.



ELEVATIONS (in ft.)

Mt. Hermon	9,232
Lake Huleh	223
Sea of Galilee	-695
Nazareth	1,245
Mt. Tabor	1,929
Jerusalem	2,693
Dead Sea	-1,285

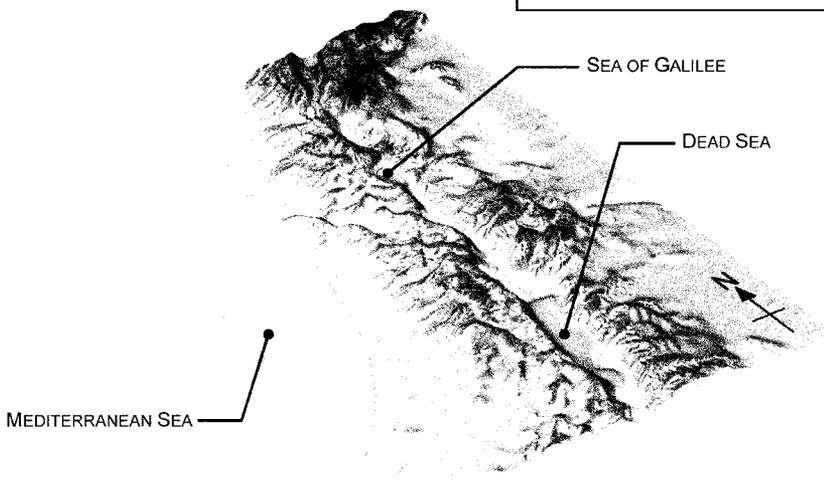
AREA (approx.)

Sea of Galilee	13 x 7 mi.
Dead Sea	43 x 9 mi.

LATITUDES

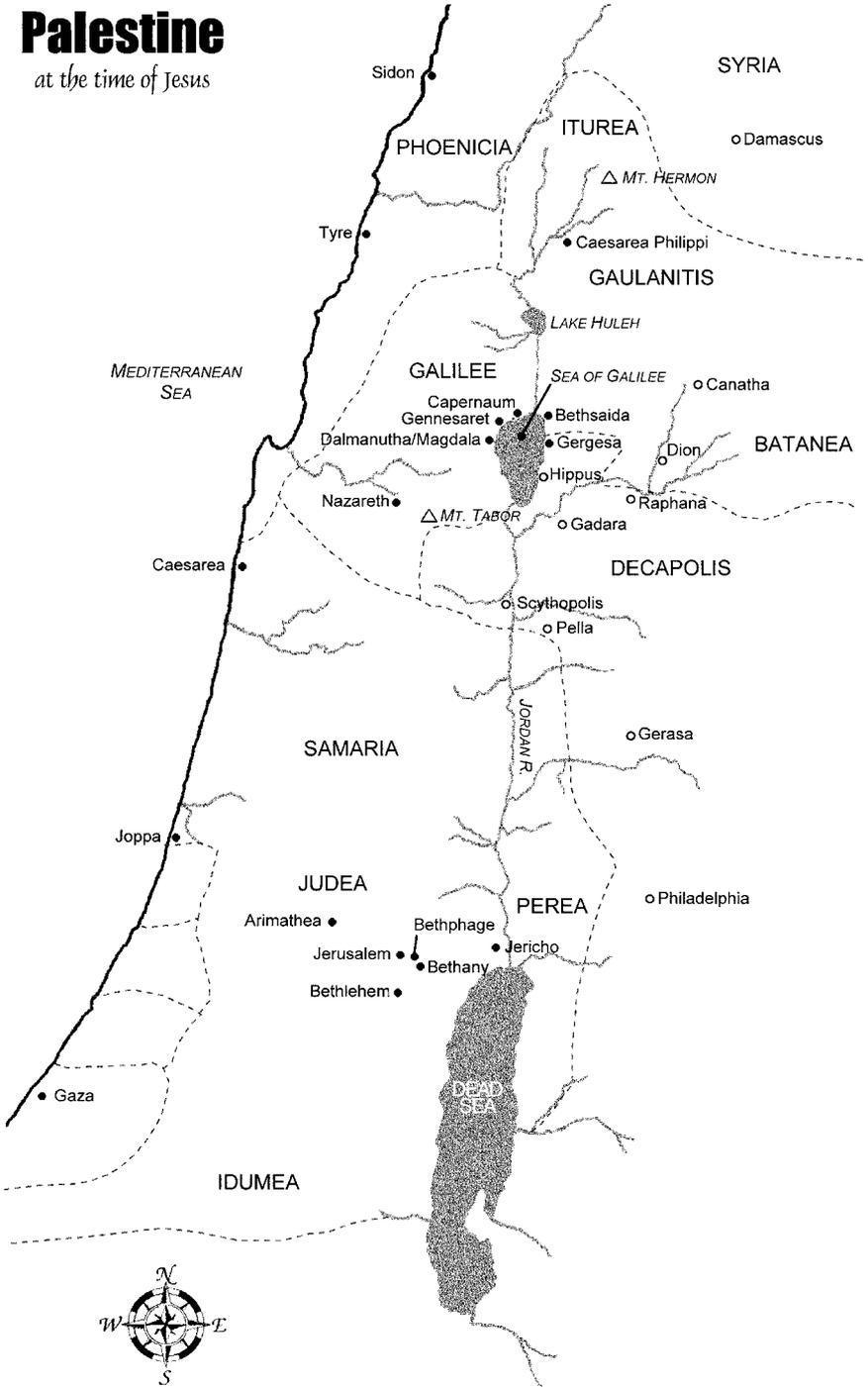
Galilee and San Diego are approximately the same.

o city of the Decapolis



Palestine

at the time of Jesus



AN OVERVIEW OF THE BOOKS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

- Three primary divisions:
 - ▶ The **story** of the New Testament.
 - ✦ About 60% of the New Testament.
 - ✦ First 5 books.
 - ✦ Matthew – Acts.
 - ▶ The **letters** of the New Testament.
 - ✦ Next 21 books.
 - ✦ Romans – Jude.
 - ▶ The **conclusion** of the New Testament.
 - ✦ Final book.
 - ✦ Revelation.
- Methodology:
 - ▶ Overview each section.
 - ▶ Overview each book.
 - ✦ Primary information for starters...
 - ✦ Practical advice for study...

THE STORY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT...

- The life and ministry of **Christ** (Matthew - John).
 - ▶ Written for the same primary **purpose**.
 - ▶ Written from different viewpoints.
 - ▶ Written for different **audiences**.
- The life and ministry of the **church** (Acts).
 - ▶ “Part Two” of Luke’s Gospel.

■ MATTHEW

Primary Information for Starters...

- ▶ Written...
 - ✦ By Matthew, a Jewish tax collector.
 - ✦ In the 70s-80s A.D., soon after the destruction of the **temple**.
 - ✦ To Jewish Christians and/or Jews considering faith in Christ.
- ▶ Primary theme: Jesus is the “**King** of the Jews.”
- ▶ Key Verses: 1:20-23; 16:13-20; 28:18-20.

Practical Advice for Study...

- ▶ Look for the focus on the “**Kingdom** of God” in the book’s overall structure:
 - ✦ 1 – 4:11 – Introduction of the King.
 - ✦ 4:12-7:29 – Proclamation of the kingdom.
 - ✦ 8:1-10:42 – The power and mission of the kingdom.
 - ✦ 11:1-13:52 – Questioning of the kingdom.
 - ✦ 13:53–18:35 – Opposition to and confession of the kingdom.
 - ✦ 19:1-25:46 – Reception and rejection of the kingdom.

- 26–28 – Victory of the King.
- Look up **cross-references** - there's 129 references of allusions to 25 of the 39 Old Testament books!
- When reading about the teachings of Jesus, remember to put yourself in the hearers' shoes.

■ MARK

Primary Information for Starters...

- ▶ Written...
 - By John Mark, who was close to **Peter**.
 - Between 65-70 A.D.
 - To Gentile Christians in Rome who were suffering persecution.
- ▶ Primary theme: Jesus is the "Suffering **Servant** of God."
- ▶ Key Verses: 8:31-38; 10:43-45

Practical Advice for Study...

- ▶ Keep up! Mark shows Jesus constantly on the move.
 - 41 times he says, "And **immediately**..."
- ▶ Notice that almost **half** of his Gospel is devoted to events in the last week of Jesus' life.
- ▶ Overall structure:
 - The Servant's Ministry in Galilee (1-9)
 - The Servant's Journey to Jerusalem (10)
 - The Servant's Last Week of Ministry (11-15)
 - The Servant's Victory (16)
- ▶ NOTE: The **Synoptic** Gospels
 - The certainty: Matthew, Mark, and Luke "see" the life and ministry of Christ in a very similar way.
 - The confusion: Is Mark the primary source for Matthew and Luke?
 - **97%** of Mark's words are in Matthew.
 - **88%** of Mark's words are in Luke.
 Is there an unknown source that was a foundation for these books?
 - The conclusion: Matthew, Mark, and Luke did not write their Gospels in **isolation** from one another.

■ LUKE

Primary Information for Starters...

- ▶ Written...
 - By Luke, a Gentile physician, historian, and companion of **Paul**.
 - In the 70s or 80s A.D.
 - To Theophilus, primarily for Gentile Christians.
- ▶ Primary theme: Jesus is the perfect "Son of Man" who brings **salvation** to both Jews and Gentiles.

- ▶ Key verses: 1:1-4; 15; 19:10 (theme verse).

Practical Advice for Study...

- ▶ See how the overall structure works leads geographically toward **Jerusalem**:
 - Introduction of the Son of Man (1-4:13)
 - The Son of Man in Galilee (4:14-9:50)
 - The Son of Man in Judea (9:51-13:21)
 - The Son of Man in Perea (13:22-19:27)
 - The Son of Man in Jerusalem (19:28-24:53)
- ▶ Notice the emphasis on the Gospel as “good news for the poor” and the need for followers of Christ to honor Christ with their money (3:10-14; 12:13-21; 16:1-13; 16:19-31; 19:1-10).
- ▶ Make notes each time you see **prayer** and/or the Holy Spirit mentioned.

■ JOHN

Primary Information for Starters...

- ▶ Written...
 - By John, the “disciple whom Jesus loved.”
 - Sometime between 70-90 A.D.
 - To the **world**.
- ▶ Primary theme: Jesus is the eternal “Son of God.”
- ▶ Key verses: 1:1-14; 3:16; 20:30-31 (theme verse).

Practical Advice for Study...

- ▶ Circle/underline key words that summarize the message of the Gospel: Father (137), **believe** (98), world (78), send (60), love (57), life, light and darkness, truth, witness, glory, eternal.
- ▶ Note the seven “I AM” statements of Jesus.
 - Bread of Life (6:35, 41, 48, 51).
 - Light of the World (8:12; 9:5).
 - Door of the Sheep (10:7, 9).
 - Good Shepherd (10:11, 14).
 - Resurrection and the Life (11:25).
 - The Way, the Truth, and the Life (14:6).
 - The True Vine (15:1, 5).
- ▶ John highlights the Incarnation, using seven “**signs**” to demonstrate the deity of Christ.
 - Changing water to wine (2:1-11).
 - Healing the nobleman’s son (4:46-54).
 - Healing the paralytic (5:1-9).
 - Feeding the 5000 (6:1-14).
 - Calming the storm (6:16-21).
 - Healing the blind man (9:1-7).
 - Raising of Lazarus (11:38-45).
- ▶ Pay attention also, though, to John’s depiction of the **humanity** of Christ.

■ ACTS

Primary Information for Starters...

- ▶ Written by Luke as “Part Two” of His Gospel.
 - + Luke – what Jesus “began” to do...
 - + Acts – what Jesus “**continued**” to do...
- ▶ Primary theme: The Gospel spreads **universally** through the church in the power of the Holy Spirit.
- ▶ Key verses: 1:8; 2:42-47.

Practical Advice for Study...

- ▶ See how the overall structure leads geographically **away from** Jerusalem:
 - + The Witness of the Church in Jerusalem (1-7)
 - + The Witness of the Church in Judea and Samaria (8-9)
 - + The Witness of the Church to the Ends of the Earth (10-28)
- ▶ Again, make notes every time you see prayer and/or the Holy Spirit mentioned.
- ▶ Notice the repetition of “salvation” (2:21; 2:47; 4:12; 5:31; 13:23; 13:26, 47; 16:31; 28:28) and the “**progress reports**” regarding the advancement of the Gospel...
 - + 6:7 – The Gospel in Jerusalem.
 - + 9:31 – The Gospel in Judea and Samaria.
 - + 12:24 – The Gospel in Syria.
 - + 16:5 – The Gospel in Asia Minor.
 - + 19:29 – The Gospel in Europe.
 - + 28:31 – The Gospel in Rome.
- ▶ See in the different **speeches** of Acts how the Gospel is contextualized in different settings to reach different people.

THE LETTERS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT...

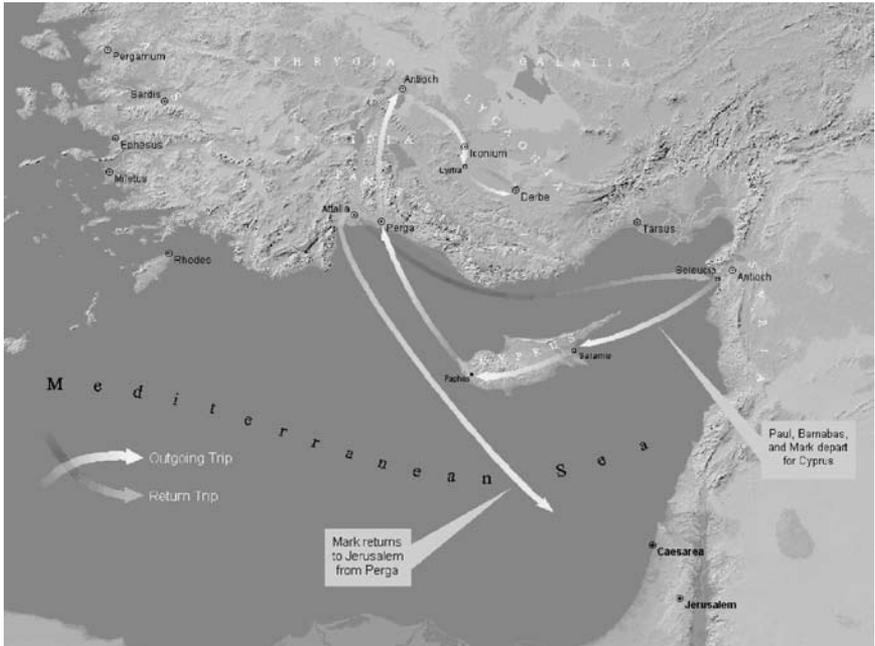
- ▶ **22** of the 27 books in the New Testament are letters – over 35% of the New Testament!
- ▶ Why letters?
 - + The church is **reproducing**.
 - + The church is **relational**.
- ▶ Two groups...
 - + Pauline epistles (Romans – Philemon).
 - + General epistles (Hebrews – Jude).

THE LIFE AND WRITINGS OF PAUL...

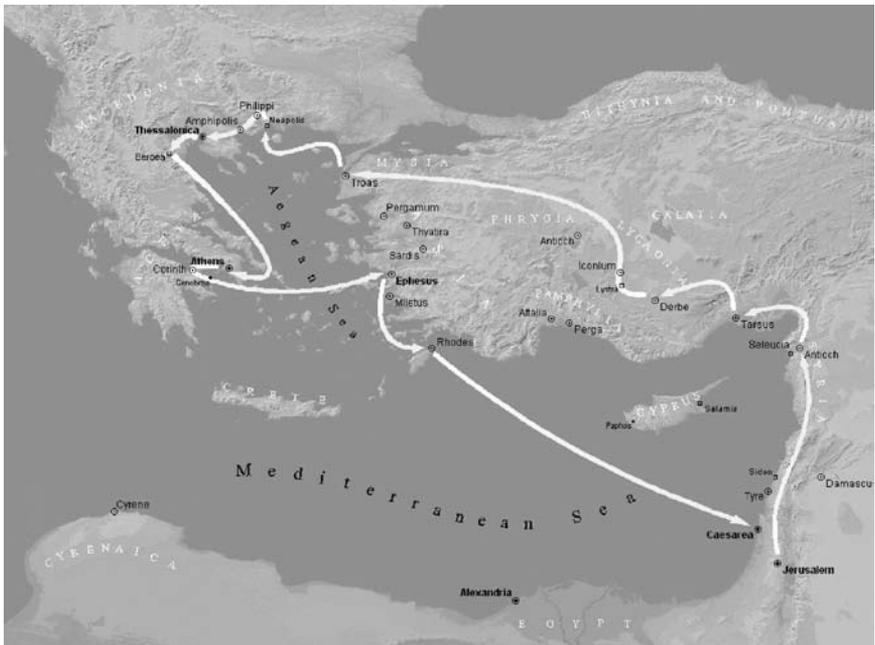
- ▶ Paul wrote **13** New Testament letters.
 - + Ordered from longest to shortest.
 - + Nine written to churches; four written to individuals.
- ▶ Paul the person...
 - + Born Saul of Tarsus

- ✦ Diverse background...
 - A **Hebrew** heritage.
 - A Greek education.
 - A **Roman** citizen.
- ✦ Converted to Christ around 31-33 A.D.
- ▶ Paul the missionary...
 - ✦ First Missionary Journey (48-49)
 - Approximately 1400 miles.
 - Epistle: **Galatians**
 - ✦ Jerusalem Conference (49)
 - ✦ Second Missionary Journey (49-52)
 - Approximately 2800 miles.
 - Epistles: 1-2 **Thessalonians**
 - ✦ Third Missionary Journey (53-57)
 - Approximately 2700 miles.
 - Epistles: **Romans**, 1-2 Corinthians
 - ✦ Prison in Caesarea by the Sea (58-60)
 - ✦ Trip to Rome (60-61)
 - ✦ First Imprisonment in Rome (61-63)
 - Epistles (called the **Prison** epistles): Philippians, Ephesians, Colossians, Philemon.
 - ✦ Final Ministry and Final Imprisonment
 - Epistles (called the **Pastoral** epistles): 1-2 Timothy, Titus
- ▶ Paul the writer...
 - ✦ Salutation and Greeting
 - ✦ Thanksgiving and Blessing
 - ✦ Body
 - ✦ Exhortations and Requests
 - ✦ Closing

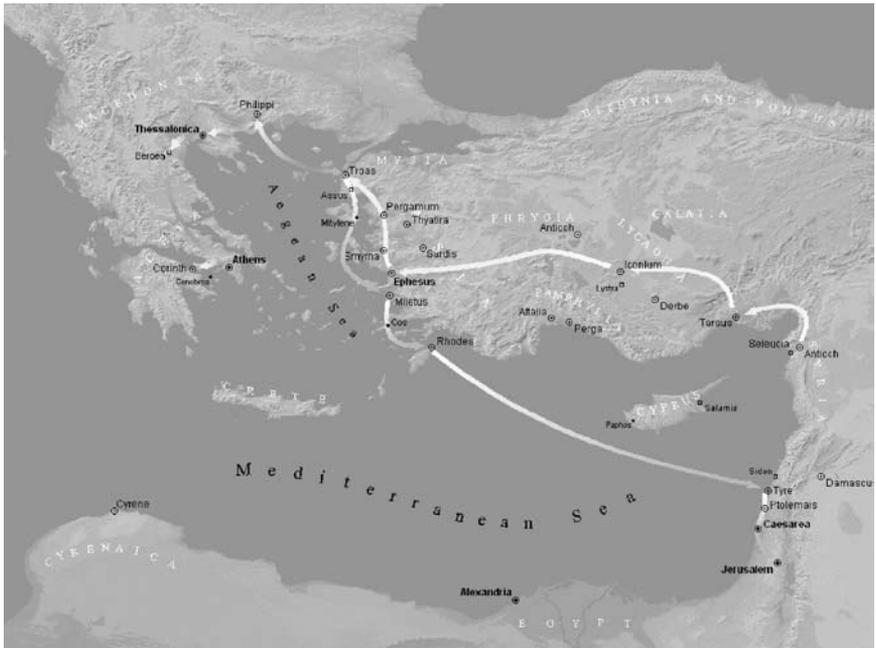
PAUL'S FIRST MISSIONARY JOURNEY



PAUL'S SECOND MISSIONARY JOURNEY



PAUL'S THIRD MISSIONARY JOURNEY



■ ROMANS

Primary Information for Starters...

- ▶ Written to Jewish and Gentile Christians in Rome.
- ▶ Primary themes: The “righteousness of God” and the “**gospel** of God.”
- ▶ Threefold purpose:
 - To instruct the church in the basic doctrines of the Gospel.
 - To show the practical implications of the Gospel.
 - To garner support for expansion of the Gospel to **unreached** peoples.
- ▶ Key Verses: 1:16-17; 3:21-26; 8:28-39

Practical Advice for Study...

- ▶ Overall structure:
 - The **Need** for Righteousness (1-3).
 - God’s Provision of Righteousness (3-8).
 - Israel’s Rejection of God’s Righteousness (9-11).
 - The Practice of Righteousness (12-16).
- ▶ Note the core Christian doctrines which fill this letter: revelation, depravity, justification, propitiation, faith, original sin, union with Christ, adoption, sanctification, glorification, the election of Israel, spiritual gifts, respect for government.

- ▶ Read it, study it, memorize it... this book is **key** to unlocking the entire Word of God.

■ 1 CORINTHIANS

Primary Information for Starters...

- ▶ Written to a **divided** church in Corinth.
- ▶ Primary theme: the “**wisdom** of the cross.”
- ▶ Key verses: 1:18-31; 2:14; 6:18-20; 10:12-13; 13:4-8.

Practical Advice for Study...

- ▶ Notice the letter’s bookends:
 - The cross (1:17-2:16).
 - The **resurrection** (15:1-58).
- ▶ Notice how Paul develops a theology of the cross that affects Christian ethics, Christian priorities, and Christian attitudes.
- ▶ See how Paul addresses at least **11** different issues in the church, including the purpose of spiritual gifts, regulations for worship, and sexual immorality.

■ 2 CORINTHIANS

Primary Information for Starters...

- ▶ Written to a church amidst dissension in Corinth.
- ▶ Primary theme: **reconciliation** in the body of Christ.
- ▶ Four main elements in the letter:
 - Paul’s explanation of his plans to visit Corinth.
 - Paul’s collection for the church in Jerusalem.
 - Paul’s **defense** of apostleship and ministry.
 - Paul’s concern about Jewish Christian opponents to the Gospel.
- ▶ Key Verses: 4:5-6, 16-18; 5:17-19; 8-9.

Practical Advice for Study...

- ▶ Overall structure:
 - Response of the church to Paul’s ministry (1-7).
 - The church’s giving (8-9).
 - Defense of Paul’s ministry (10-13).
- ▶ Feel the **heart** of Paul in this book – one of his most personal and intimate letters.
- ▶ Look for these dominant themes: forgiveness, restoration, Christian giving as an expression of generosity (not of obligation), suffering, and spiritual triumph.

■ GALATIANS

Primary Information for Starters...

- ▶ Written in **response** to the Jerusalem Conference (Acts 15).
- ▶ Paul is countering Judaizers who are putting regulations on Gentiles to enter the church.

- ▶ Paul condemns the false Gospel of faith **and** works.
 - The false Gospel: Faith + Works = Justification.
 - The true Gospel: Faith = Justification + Works
- ▶ Key Verses: 2:20-21; 5:1; 5:13-16; 6:14.

Practical Advice for Study...

- ▶ Overall structure:
 - Grace and the Gospel (1-2).
 - Grace and the Law (3-4).
 - Grace and the Spirit (5-6).
- ▶ Circle/underline key words: law (32), flesh (16), works (7), circumcision (13), Christ (38), the Spirit (17), faith/believe (26), grace (8); justify (8); Abraham (9), promise (10), son/seed (18); freedom (10), slavery (11), Gentiles (10).
- ▶ Note the danger of legalism and the joy of **freedom** in Christ.

■ EPHESIANS

Primary Information for Starters...

- ▶ Written from prison to church leaders in Ephesus and surrounding areas.
- ▶ Three major themes:
 - The **unity** of the church.
 - The **victory** of Christ.
 - The power of the Spirit.
- ▶ Key Verses: 1:3-14; 2:8-10; 4:11-13; 6:10-20

Practical Advice for Study...

- ▶ Overall structure:
 - The Doctrine of the Church (1-3)
 - The Practice of the Church (4-6)
- ▶ Mark each time you see “love” (agape) mentioned.
- ▶ Mark each time you see the phrase “**in** Christ” or “with Christ” – 35 times!

■ PHILIPPIANS

Primary Information for Starters...

- ▶ Written from prison to the church at Philippi (a Roman colony).
- ▶ Delivered by Epaphroditus – “God’s **Gambler**.”
- ▶ Primary themes: joy and unity in Christ.
- ▶ Key Verses: 1:21; 2:5-11; 3:8-11; 4:9-13.

Practical Advice for Study...

- ▶ Overall structure:
 - Christ is our life (1).
 - Christ is our example (2).
 - Christ is our goal (3).
 - Christ is our strength (4).
- ▶ Note the “Christ hymn” of 2:5-11.
 - Jesus is **God**.

- ✦ Jesus is man.
- ✦ Jesus is Savior.
- ✦ Jesus is **Lord**.
- ▶ Enjoy Philippians – it’s a breath of fresh air in Paul’s letters!
- ▶ Listen for the heart of a disciple-maker, writing from the persecuted to the persecuted.

■ COLOSSIANS

Primary Information for Starters...

- ▶ Written to a church Epaphras had founded and Paul had **never** visited.
- ▶ Paul is countering Gnostics in Colosse who were denying the deity of Christ.
- ▶ Primary theme: The **sufficiency** of Christ - “Christ is all and in all” (3:11) and we are “made full in Him” (2:10).
- ▶ Key Verses: 1:15-20; 2:8-10; 3:1-3.

Practical Advice for Study...

- ▶ See a portrait of Christ in Colossians:
 - ✦ The **Head** of all things (1:18; 2:10).
 - ✦ The Lord of creation (1:16-17).
 - ✦ The Author of reconciliation (1:20-22; 2:13-15).
 - ✦ The basis for the believer’s hope (1:5, 23, 27).
 - ✦ The source of the believer’s power (1:11, 29).
 - ✦ Redeemer and Reconciler (1:14, 20-22; 2:11-15).
 - ✦ The embodiment of God (1:15, 19; 2:9).
 - ✦ The **Creator** and Sustainer of all things (1:16-17).
 - ✦ The all-sufficient Savior (1:28; 2:3, 20; 3:1-4).
- ▶ As you read, mark these key words: all, fullness, filled, supremacy, sufficiency.
- ▶ Notice the **practical** implications of a life that is sustained by Christ alone.

■ I THESSALONIANS

Primary Information for Starters...

- ▶ Written from Corinth to a young church in Thessalonica.
- ▶ Paul’s fourfold purpose:
 - ✦ To encourage **new** believers.
 - ✦ To answer charges against Paul.
 - ✦ To explain the **second coming** of Christ.
 - ✦ To warn against idleness.
- ▶ Key verses: 1:4-10; 4:1-3; 4:13-18

Practical Advice for Study...

- ▶ Overall structure (based on 1:3):
 - ✦ Work Produced by Faith (1-3).
 - ✦ Labor Prompted by Love (4:1-12).

- ✦ Endurance Inspired by Hope (4:13-5:28).
- ▶ Note how every chapter ends with a reference to the coming of Christ.
 - ✦ The coming of Christ and salvation (1:9-10).
 - ✦ The coming of Christ and service (2:19-20).
 - ✦ The coming of Christ and stability (3:13).
 - ✦ The coming of Christ and sorrow (4:18).
 - ✦ The coming of Christ and sanctification (5:23).
- ▶ See full-circle disciple-making described in 1 Thessalonians!
 - ✦ Share the Word (1:4-5).
 - ✦ Show the Word (1:5-6).
 - ✦ Teach the Word (1:6).
 - ✦ Serve the World (1:7-10).
 - ✦ The Joy of Disciple-Making (2:19-20).
- ▶ Pay close attention to how Paul emphasizes “sanctification” (4:3, 4, 7) and “the coming of the Lord” (1:10; 2:19; 3:13; 4:15; 5:23).
- ▶ Notice the centrality of the **word** (1:5, 6, 8; 2:2, 4, 8, 9, 13).

■ 2 THESSALONIANS

Primary Information for Starters...

- ▶ Written as a follow-up letter to Thessalonica.
- ▶ Paul’s threefold purpose:
 - ✦ To encourage believers who were facing increasing persecution.
 - ✦ To exhort those who were idle to work for the glory of Christ until He comes back!
 - ✦ To edify the believers in their pursuit of **holiness**.
- ▶ Key verses: 2:1-4; 3:1-5, 16.

Practical Advice for Study...

- ▶ Note how 18 out of 47 verses deal with the “**day** of the Lord.”
- ▶ Pay close attention to these key words: judgment, retribution, destruction.
- ▶ Let this book remind you to live with the expectation that “it might be today.”

■ 1 TIMOTHY

Primary Information for Starters...

- ▶ Written to encourage **young** Timothy as he leads the “big city church” in Ephesus.
- ▶ Primary theme: God desires for **godly** leaders to lead His church.
- ▶ Key verses: 3:14-16; 4:12; 6:11-12.

Practical Advice for Study...

- ▶ Overall structure:
 - ✦ Guard the doctrine of the church (1).
 - ✦ Guard the worship of the church (2).
 - ✦ Guard the leadership of the church (3).

- ✦ Guard the purity of the church (4).
- ✦ Guard the practice of the church (5-6).
- ▶ Pay close attention to these key words: **charge**, commandment (1:3, 5, 18; 4:11; 5:7; 6:13, 17); sound doctrine (1:10; 4:6; 6:1-3); conduct, godliness (2:2, 10:3; 16; 4:7, 8; 6:3, 5, 6, 11).
- ✦ Put yourself in Timothy's shoes as you read this letter...

■ 2 TIMOTHY

Primary Information for Starters...

- ▶ Paul writes this letter – likely his last – while awaiting his trial and death.
- ▶ Paul demonstrates **how** a Christian martyr should face death.
- ▶ Key verses: 1:7; 2:1-4; 3:14-4:5

Practical Advice for Study...

- ▶ Overall structure:
 - ✦ The Pastoral Appeal (1)
 - ✦ The Practical Appeal (2)
 - ✦ The Prophetic Appeal (3)
 - ✦ The Personal Appeal (4).
- ▶ See the picture of a successful ministry in Chapter 2:
 - ✦ A **reproducing** ministry (1-2).
 - ✦ An enduring ministry (3-13).
 - ✦ A studying ministry (14-18).
 - ✦ A holy ministry (19-16).
- ▶ Feel the weight of Paul's concern for Timothy.
- ▶ Feel the weight of Paul's concern for the **church**.
 - ✦ 1 Timothy – “some have turned aside” (1:6); “some have made shipwreck” (1:19); “some have turned aside after Satan” (5:15); “some have been led astray” (6:10); “some have erred” (6:21).
 - ✦ 2 Timothy – “**all** have turned away from me” (1:15); “**all** forsook me” (4:16).

■ TITUS

Primary Information for Starters...

- ▶ Written to Titus, a leader of the church in Crete who had been led to Christ by Paul (2 Cor. 8:23).
- ▶ Fourfold purpose:
 - ✦ To remind Titus to appoint elders in the church.
 - ✦ To warn Titus against false teachers in the church.
 - ✦ To **instruct** Titus how to lead different types of people in the church.
 - ✦ To encourage Titus regarding the importance of grace in the church.
- ▶ Primary theme: **Grace** leads to godliness (1:4; 2:11ff; 3:7, 15).
- ▶ Key verses: 2:11-14; 3:3-8

Practical Advice for Study...

- ▶ Overall Structure:
 - ✦ Organizing the Church (1).
 - ✦ Following Christ (2-3).
- ▶ Note the major emphasis on good works (1:16; 2:7, 14; 3:1, 5, 8, 14) and faith (1:1, 4, 13; 2:10, 13; 3:15).

■ PHILEMON

Primary Information for Starters...

- ▶ Written...
 - ✦ To Philemon, a Christian in Colosse who had come to faith in Christ through Paul.
 - ✦ About Onesimus, a **slave** of Philemon who had come to faith in Christ through Paul.
- ▶ Paul writes to...
 - ✦ Inform Philemon of Onesimus' salvation.
 - ✦ Ask Philemon to **forgive** him.
 - ✦ Request to visit Philemon.
- ▶ Key verses: 15-18

Practical Advice for Study...

- ▶ See the picture of Christ as the Redeemer of lost sinners.
- ▶ See the effect of the Gospel on **slavery**.
- ▶ See how Christ transforms our relationships.

THE GENERAL LETTERS...

- ▶ Nine letters not written by Paul.
- ▶ Ordered (again) basically by length.
- ▶ Titled according to the **names** of their authors.
 - ✦ James, Peter, John, Jude, and the author of Hebrews.
- ▶ Written to more general **audiences**.

■ HEBREWS

Primary Information for Starters...

- ▶ Who wrote Hebrews?
 - ✦ **Only God knows!**
- ▶ Most likely written to Jewish Christians facing persecution.
- ▶ Primary theme: the **superiority** of Jesus Christ.
- ▶ Message of Hebrews revolves around five exhortations (13:22 – a word of exhortation):
 - ✦ Let us not drift from the Word (2:1-4).
 - ✦ Let us not doubt the Word (3:7-4:13).
 - ✦ Let us not grow dull toward the Word (5:11-6:20).
 - ✦ Let us not despise the Word (10:26-39).
 - ✦ Let us not disobey the Word (12:14-19).

Practical Advice for Study...

- ▶ Overall structure:
 - ✦ A Superior Person: Christ (1-6)
 - ✦ A Superior Priesthood (7-10)
 - ✦ A Superior Principle: Faith (11-13)
- ▶ See how these key words point to the supremacy of Christ:
 - ✦ **Better** (1:4; 6:9; 7:7, 19, 22; 8:6; 9:23; 10:34; 11:16, 35, 40; 12:24).
 - ✦ **Perfect** (2:10; 5:9, 14; 6:1; 7:11, 19, 28; 9:9, 11; 10:1, 14; 11:40; 12:2, 23).
- ▶ See and study the **Old Testament** everywhere in Hebrews!
 - ✦ Psalm 8:4-6 in 2:5-18.
 - ✦ Psalm 95:7-11 in 3:7-4:13.
 - ✦ Psalm 110:4 in 4:16-7:28.
 - ✦ Jeremiah 31:31-34 in 8:1-10:18
 - ✦ Habakkuk 2:3-4 in 10:32-12:3
 - ✦ Proverbs 3:11-12 in 12:4-13
 - ✦ Exodus 19 in 12:18-29
- ▶ Things to remember...
 - ✦ The author is quoting from the **Greek** Old Testament.
 - ✦ The author argues many times from the lesser to the greater.
 - ✦ The author views everything in the Old Testament through the lens of **Christ**.

■ JAMES

Primary Information for Starters...

- ▶ Likely written by James, the brother of Jesus.
- ▶ Written to address the practical implications of true faith – what does Christianity look like in **action?**
- ▶ Key verses: 1:2-5; 2:14-17.

Practical Advice for Study...

- ▶ Overall structure:
 - ✦ Stand with confidence (1).
 - ✦ Serve with compassion (2).
 - ✦ Speak with care (3).
 - ✦ Submit with contrition (4).
 - ✦ Share with concern (5).
- ▶ See the Old Testament all over James – in 108 verses, there are references or allusions to 22 OT books and at least 15 references or allusions to the teachings of Christ.
- ▶ Note the emphasis on **social justice** (1:9-11, 27; 2:1-13; 4:13-5:6).
- ▶ Compare this book with Romans...
 - ✦ Paul addresses our standing before God.
 - ✦ James addresses our **witness** before the world.

■ 1 PETER

Primary Information for Starters...

- ▶ Written to the church in Asia Minor – modern day **Turkey** – facing increasing suffering and persecution.
- ▶ Major theme is the sufficiency of God's **grace**, which is used in every chapter (1:2, 10, 13, 2:19-20; 3:7; 4:10; 5:5, 10, 12).
- ▶ Key verses: 1:3-7; 3:15-17; 4:12-13.

Practical Advice for Study...

- ▶ Overall structure:
 - A call to **holy** living (1:13-2:10).
 - Living for the sake of a pagan world (2:11-4:11).
 - Walking through suffering as the church (4:12-5:11).
- ▶ Read and compare with Ephesians.
 - 1 Peter 1:12; Ephesians 3:5, 10.
 - 1 Peter 2:2; Ephesians 4:13, 15.
 - 1 Peter 4:10; Ephesians 4:7, 11.
 - 1 Peter 4:11; Ephesians 3:6, 21.
- ▶ Pay close attention to these key words: suffering (16 times); behavior/way of life (six times); God (39 times); Christ (22 times); Spirit (8 times); God's will (4 times); election/calling (10 times); salvation (6 times); hope (5 times).
- ▶ Learn how to live out the Christian life in the middle of **suffering** and persecution.

■ 2 PETER

Primary Information for Starters...

- ▶ Peter is most likely awaiting execution as he writes this letter.
- ▶ Primary theme: growth in grace and **knowledge**.
- ▶ Key verses: 1:20-21; 3:8-11.
- ▶ Compare with themes of 1 Peter regarding the church:
 - Satan can come as a lion to devour with persecution (1 Peter).
 - Satan can come as a serpent to **deceive** with false doctrine (2 Peter).

Practical Advice for Study...

- ▶ Overall structure:
 - Grow in His grace (1:1-11).
 - Look forward to His coming (1:12-21).
 - Trust in His judgment (2).
 - Cling to His Word (3).
- ▶ Compare with 2 Timothy to see two perspectives on facing martyrdom.
- ▶ Note the explanation of the Bible's **inspiration** in 2 Peter 1:19-21.

■ 1 JOHN

Primary Information for Starters...

- ▶ John states five purposes:
 - That we might have fellowship (1:3).

- ✦ That we might have joy (1:4).
- ✦ That we might not sin (2:1-2).
- ✦ That we might overcome error (2:26).
- ✦ That we might have assurance (5:13).
- ▶ Primary themes:
 - ✦ God is **light** (1:5).
 - ✦ God is love (4:8, 16).
 - ✦ God is **life** (1:1-2; 5:11-13).
- ▶ Key verses: 1:5-2:2; 5:11-13.

Practical Advice for Study...

- ▶ See how John uses **simple** foundational words over and over again: love (46 times), know (40 times), sin (27 times), abide/remain (24 times), world (23 times), life (13 times).
- ▶ As you read, see 1 John more in terms of a musical arrangement than a well-ordered argument.

■ 2 JOHN

Primary Information for Starters...

- ▶ Written to either one local church or an esteemed woman in a local church.
- ▶ The church must...
 - ✦ Guard the doctrine of the Incarnation.
 - ✦ **Avoid** false teachers.
- ▶ Key verses: 6-11.

Practical Advice for Study...

- ▶ Overall structure:
 - ✦ Practicing the truth (1-6).
 - ✦ Protecting the truth (7-11).
- ▶ Look for words that are repeated over and over again: **commandment** (14), truth (9), walk, love, teaching, deceivers.

■ 3 JOHN

Primary Information for Starters...

- ▶ **Shortest** book in the Bible.
- ▶ Four characters involved...
 - ✦ John, who wrote it.
 - ✦ Gaius, who received it.
 - ✦ Diotrephes, who caused it.
 - ✦ Demetrius, who carried it.
- ▶ Primary theme: **hospitality** in the church.

Practical Advice for Study...

- ▶ Overall structure:
 - ✦ Gaius – A prosperous Christian (1-8).
 - ✦ Diotrephes: A **proud** Christian (9-10).
 - ✦ Demetrius: A pleasant Christian (11-12).

■ JUDE

Primary Information for Starters...

- ▶ Written by Judas, the brother of Jesus.
- ▶ Primary theme: “**Contend** for the faith” (3).
- ▶ Twofold purpose:
 - To condemn the practices of the ungodly in the church.
 - To counsel believers to hold fast and contend for the faith.
- ▶ Key verses: 3, 24.

Practical Advice for Study...

- ▶ See the condemnation of false teachers based on seven Old Testament examples:
 - Israel (5)
 - Fallen angels (6)
 - Sodom and Gomorrah (7)
 - Michael and Moses (8-10)
 - Cain (11)
 - Balaam (11)
 - Korah (11)
- ▶ Jude emphasizes the power of Christ to **keep** His church to the end.

REVELATION

- ▶ What genre is it?
 - Apocalyptic literature (1:1).
 - **Prophecy** (1:3).
 - Epistle (1:4).
- ▶ This book has no **parallel**...

■ REVELATION

Primary Information for Starters...

- ▶ Written...
 - By John when he was exiled on Patmos.
 - To Christians facing persecution in the first century.
 - About the **Gospel** and the future of God's kingdom.
- ▶ Primary theme is the revelation of **Jesus Christ**.
- ▶ Key chapters: 1-5; 19-22.

Practical Advice for Study...

- ▶ Look for the Old Testament throughout Revelation...
 - **278** out of 404 verses contain references to the Old Testament!
 - Most often referring to the Psalms, Daniel, Zechariah, Genesis, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Joel.

- ▶ See how Genesis and Revelation serve as **book-ends** of the Bible.
 - Creation of the heavens and earth (Gen. 1-2)
 - Creation of the new heavens and earth (Gen. 21-22).
 - The first Adam reigning on earth (1:26).
 - The last Adam reigning in glory (21:5).
 - Night and seas created (1:5, 10).
 - No more night; no more sea (21:1, 25).
 - A bride brought to Adam (2:18-25).
 - The Bride prepared for Christ (19:7ff.)
 - A tree of life in Eden (2:9; 3:22).
 - A tree of life in the new creation (22:2).
 - Satan utters the first lie (3:1).
 - Nothing that makes a lie enters the city (21:27).
 - Death and a curse (3:14, 17-19).
 - No more curse; no more death or tears (22:3).
 - Conflict between Christ and Satan (3:15).
 - Satan's final doom (20:10).
 - Man driven from God's face (3:23; 4:16).
 - Men see His face in glory (22:4).
- ▶ Help in understanding the apocalyptic imagery...
 - Remember that the imagery is **fantasy**.
 - John interprets the most important images.
 - Pay attention to the **fixed** images throughout the book.
 - See the visions as a **whole**, not always pressing every detail.
- ▶ See the **majesty** of God in Christ all over Revelation!
 - Throne is used 44 times.
 - King, kingdom, or rule about 37 times.
 - Power and authority about 40 times.

Survey of the New Testament: Part 2

WHY DID GOD GIVE US THE NEW TESTAMENT?

The New Testament as Theology

- **Why did God give us the Old Testament?**
 - ▶ To reveal how God **redeems** His people for His kingdom.
 - ▶ God's Kingdom...
 - **People** who are ruled by the King.
 - A **place** where the King has dominion.
 - A **purpose** for the King and His kingdom.
 - ▶ Throughout the Old Testament, God is bringing His people to His place for His purpose.
 - ▶ Everything points to the day when God will redeem His people for His kingdom and establish His reign over all creation.
 - ▶ But the Old Testament is an **incomplete** story...

- **Why did God give us the New Testament?**
 - ▶ To **finish** what the Old Testament started.
 - ▶ God redeems His people for His kingdom in **Christ!**
 - ▶ God's Kingdom...
 - Jesus perfectly represents the **people** of God.
 - Jesus is the perfect **place** where the glory of God dwells.
 - Jesus perfectly fulfills the ultimate **purpose** of God.
 - ▶ He is the **King** at the center of Scripture!
 - ▶ The fading shadow of the Kingdom of God in the Old Testament has been illuminated by the glorious **reality** of Christ in the New Testament!

- **How does God reveal His Kingdom in the New Testament?**
 - ▶ Through the **Gospel** of the Kingdom.
 - ▶ Through the **Mission** of the Kingdom.
 - ▶ Through the **Hope** of the Kingdom.

THE GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM

- The King has come.
 - ▶ The Old Testament people's **anticipation**...
 - Micah 5:1-5; Zeph. 3:14-17; Zech. 14:9ff.
 - ▶ The King's **introduction**...
 - He is the anointed **King**.
Mat. 1:1-17; 1:20; 2:1-2, 6, 9; 17; 15:22; 20:29-31; 21:9, 15; 22:23;
Lk. 1:26-33; see also Rom. 1:3.

- ✦ He is **God**.
Mat. 1:20-23; Jn. 1:1-14.
- ✦ He is the new **Adam**.
Lk. 3:23-38; see also Rom. 5:12-21; 1 Cor. 15:20-22, 45-49.
- ✦ He is the true **Israel** (the seed of Abraham).
Mt. 2:14-15; Mt. 4:1-11; Lk. 1:54-55, 70-75; 4:1-13.
- ✦ He is the Passover **Lamb**.
Jn. 1:29.
- ✦ He is the **Word** of God.
John 1:1-3, 14-18; Mk 1:14-15; see also Acts 3:22 (Deut. 18:15);
Eph. 1:8-10; Col. 2:2-3; Heb. 1:1-2; 2 Pet. 3:5-7.
- ✦ He is the **tabernacle**.
John 1:14.
- ✦ He is the **temple**.
John 2:13-22.
- ▶ The King's **proclamation**...
 - ✦ Mt. 4:17, 23-35; Mk. 1:15; Lk. 4:43.
 - ✦ Over **100** references to the kingdom of God in the Gospels.
 - ✦ “The **time** has come...”
Zeph. 3:14-20; Is. 52:7-10.
 - ✦ “The kingdom of God is **near**.”
Lk. 4:14-30; 61:1-4.
 - ✦ “**Repent** and believe the good news.”
Mt. 12:41; Lk. 5:32; 13:3, 5.

■ The King has conquered.

- ▶ The power of the Kingdom displayed...
 - ✦ Isaiah 35:1-10; Mt. 11:1-6.
 - ✦ Jesus has authority over **nature**.
Mk. 4:35-41; Jn. 6:1-14, 16-21.
 - ✦ Jesus has authority over **disease**.
Mk. 1:33; Jn. 9:1-41.
 - ✦ Jesus has authority over **demons**.
Mt. 12:24-29; Mk. 5:1-20; Lk. 9:37-43.
 - ✦ Jesus has authority over **suffering**.
Mk. 5:25-34.
 - ✦ Jesus has authority over **sin**.
Mk. 2:1-11.
 - ✦ Jesus has authority over **death**.
Mk. 5:37-43; John 11:38-45.
- ▶ The power of the Kingdom in doubt...
 - ✦ The unexpected **tragedy** of the cross.
Mk. 8:31-9:1; Mt. 27:32-56; Mk. 15:21-41; Lk. 23:26-49; Jn. 19:28-37.

- ▶ The power of the Kingdom declared...
 - ✦ The ultimate **triumph** of the resurrection.
Mt. 28:1-10; Mk. 16:1-8; Lk. 24:1-12; Jn. 20:1-9.

■ Have you accepted the Kingdom?

- ▶ Receive the gift of the Kingdom...
 - ✦ A **present** and a **future** gift.
Lk. 17:20-25; Mt. 5:3-10.
 - ✦ A **free** gift.
Lk. 12:32.
 - ✦ A **gracious** gift.
Lk. 10:21.
 - ✦ A **valuable** gift.
Mt. 13:44-46.
 - ✦ An **eternal** gift.
Mk. 10:17-31.
- ▶ Enter into the life of the Kingdom...
 - ✦ A radical **turn** to the King.
Mt. 3:2; 4:17; Mk. 1:15; 10:17-31.
 - ✦ Radical **trust** in the King.
Mt. 6:33; 18:2-4.
 - Not immaturity in the **faith**.
 - Complete and total trust in the **Father**.
 - ✦ Radical **transformation** by the King.
 - We embrace the King's **teachings**.
Mt. 5-7; Jn. 8:31-36.
 - We embody the King's **character**.
Jn. 14:15-21.
 - We experience the King's **power**.
Mt. 10:1; Mk. 3:14-15; Lk. 10:9, 17-24; Jn. 14:12.
 - We enlist in the King's **mission**.
Matt. 28:16-20; Mk. 16:15-18; Lk. 24:45-49; Jn. 20:21-23.

THE MISSION OF THE KINGDOM

■ The King is in control.

- ▶ He has a **plan**.
 - ✦ His plan never **fails**.
 - Luke 2:49; 4:43; 9:22; 13:33; 17:25; 19:5; 22:37; 24:7, 44.
 - Acts 1:16, 21; 2:23; 3:12; 4:21; 9:16; 10:1-16; 13:27, 47; 14:21; 15:15-18; 17:3; 19:21; 23:11; 27:24.
 - ✦ He planned to go to the **cross**.
Luke 9:51; 13:22; 17:11; 18:31; 19:28; Jn. 10:18; Acts 2:23; 4:27-28.
 - ✦ He planned to **rise** from the grave.
Acts 2:24; 13:32-37.

■ Are you advancing the Kingdom?

- ▶ The New Testament church and mission...
 - The church was **born** in the context of mission.
Acts 2:1-41.
 - The church **exists** for the completion of mission.
Mat. 24:14; Rom. 10:12-15; 1 Cor. 9:24-27.
 - The church **dies** for the cause of mission.
Acts 1:8; 5:41-42; 7:54-60; 12:1-4; 1 Cor. 4:9-13;
2 Cor. 11:23-28; 4:7-12; Gal. 6:12-14.
- ▶ The contemporary church and mission...
 - We will miss the entire point of the New Testament if we read and study it **apart from** the context of mission in the church.
Phil. 1:6.
 - The New Testament church advanced the Kingdom of God; which **kingdom(s)** are we advancing?
Acts 8:12; 19:8; 20:25; 28:23, 31.
 - The Kingdom does not exist for us; **we** exist for the sake of the Kingdom.
Gal. 1:15-16.
 - If we really desire to live out New Testament Christianity, we must **risk** our lives for the cause of mission.
Acts-Jude; 2 Tim. 3:12; Rev. 6:9-11.

THE HOPE OF THE KINGDOM

■ The King is coming back.

- ▶ The work of Christ in the Kingdom:
 - The Gospels show the completion of Christ's work **for** us.
Hebrews 9:24-28.
 - Acts and the letters show the continuation of Christ's work **in** us.
Acts 1:1-6; Col. 1:27.
 - Revelation shows the consummation of Christ's work **with** us.
1 Thess. 4:16-18; Rev. 1:4-8.
- ▶ The King who's coming...
 - He came as the **Lamb** (Rev. 5:6, 12; 13:8; 12:11).
 - He came in weakness.
 - He came in poverty.
 - He came in humiliation.
 - He will come as the **Lion** (Rev. 5:5).
 - He will come in power.
 - He will come with the wealth of heaven.
 - He will come in glory.

- ✦ He is...
 - The faithful witness and the **Ruler** over the kings of the earth (Rev. 1:5).
 - The Alpha and the Omega (Rev. 1:8; 22:13).
 - The First and the Last (Rev. 1:17).
 - The **Living** One (Rev. 1:18).
 - The Son of God (Rev. 2:18).
 - Holy and **true** (Rev. 3:7).
 - The **Amen**, the faithful and true Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God (Rev. 3:14).
 - Faithful and True (Rev. 19:11).
 - The **Word** of God (Rev. 19:13).
 - The King of Kings and Lord of Lords (Rev. 19:16).
 - The Root and the Offspring of **David** (Rev. 22:16).
 - The Bright and Morning Star (Rev. 22:16).
 - The **Lord** Jesus Christ (Rev. 22:21).
- ▶ The King will bring...
 - ✦ Final **redemption** for those who have accepted the Kingdom. Rev. 19:1-10.
 - ✦ Final **judgment** for those who have rejected the Kingdom. Rev. 19:11-16.

■ **The King will host an eternal celebration.**

- ▶ The picture of the Kingdom...
 - ✦ Indescribable **beauty**.
 - A new **creation**. Rev. 21:1.
 - A new Jerusalem. Rev. 21:2.
 - A new **temple**. Rev. 21:3, 22.
 - A new order. Rev. 21:4-5.
 - ✦ Inexpressible **joy**.
 - Rev. 21:6.
 - It is full.
 - It is **free**.
 - ✦ Irreversible Justice.
 - Rev. 21:7-8.
 - Eternal **sonship**.
 - Everlasting **separation** (Rev. 20:11-15).
- ▶ The promise of the Kingdom...
 - ✦ The claim of Christ: "I am coming soon" (22:7, 12, 20).
 - ✦ The **cry** of the church: "Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!"

■ **Are you anticipating the Kingdom?**

- ▶ We live for His appearing.
 - ✦ See the temporary nature of this world.
 - Soon, there will be no sin.
Rev. 20:7-10; 21:4.
 - Soon, there will be no sorrow.
Rev. 21:4; Rom. 8:18-25.
 - Soon, there will be no sickness.
Rev. 21:4; 1 Cor. 15:50-57.
 - Soon, there will be no separation.
Rev. 21:4; Rom. 8:38-39.
 - ✦ See the eternal importance of our work until He comes.
1 Thess. 5:4-11; 2 Thess. 3:6-15.
- ▶ We live for His appearing.
 - ✦ We must pursue holiness in all areas of our lives.
Col. 3:1-5; 1 Tim. 6:11-16; Titus 2:11-14.
 - ✦ We must proclaim the Gospel to all peoples of the world.
Mat. 24:14; 2 Tim. 4:1-2.
- ▶ We long for His appearing (2 Tim. 4:8).
 - ✦ For the day when He will save us fully.
Rom. 8:28-30; 1 Peter 1:9.
 - ✦ For the day when we will see His face.
Rev. 22:4.

“And there were loud voices in heaven, which said: “The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he will reign for ever and ever.”

Revelation 11:15

Missing teaching notes?

• • •

*This complete teaching guide, including all
the blanks filled-in, is available for download
in PDF format at www.secrechurch.org.*

THE KINGDOM OF GOD

A Map for Understanding the Storyline of the New Testament



The <u>Gospel</u> of the Kingdom	The <u>Mission</u> of the Kingdom	The <u>Hope</u> of the Kingdom
The King has <u>come</u> .	The King is in <u>control</u> .	The King will host an eternal <u>celebration</u> .
Have you <u>accepted</u> the Kingdom?	Are you <u>advancing</u> the Kingdom?	Are you <u>anticipating</u> the Kingdom?

Asia

R U S S I A



Asia is approximately 23.5% of the world's surface. Asians, as a people group, comprise over 83% of the 4.4 billion non-Christians in the world.

The three largest non-Christian religions in the world and the most challenging for Christians are represented in Asia with 832 million Muslims, 805 million Hindus and 400-900 million Buddhists. Of the 55 countries of the world that are less than 10% Christian, 44 are in Asia.

In 1900, all but five Asian nations were under Western control. By 2000 there were none. In only about 5-6 Asian countries is there a genuine, deep-rooted culture of democratic freedom. The nations could be characterized by their disparity; with great extremes of wealth and poverty, to immense differences in development from highly urbanized, industrial or post-industrial to rural subsistence economies.

Special areas of ministry need: Children in crisis. The 1997 economic downturn in Asia affected the quality of life of millions of children. Child labor became even more widespread. It was reckoned in 1997 that one million or more children were forced into sex slavery in Asia. Malnutrition affects over 60% of India's children.

Also, Bible translation presents a major challenge with 1,300 languages having a definite or likely need. Work is in progress to translate the Word into 271 Asian languages.

Indonesia

- **Population:** 245 million
- **Main Religion:** Muslim
- **Non-Christians:** 84%
- **Area:** 1,919,317 sq. km. The Republic's 17,000 islands stretch land over 9.5 million sq.km of the Indian/Pacific Oceans, with 23 provinces, 2 special regions and the capital district.
- **People-groups:** 15
- **Languages:** Indonesian
- **Christians:** 16%

▪ **Briefing:** The Communist coup of 1965 and its bloody aftermath, in which maybe 500,000 Communist sympathizers perished, also led other sympathizers to become Christians. Fierce Muslim reprisals on the Communists offended many—especially in Java. Many nominal Muslims turned to Christ. The government mandate that each citizen adhere to one of five recognized religions impelled many animists to consider the claims of the gospel. Rising levels of persecution in the 1990s has fuelled greater unity among Christians, the growth of a National Prayer Movement and commitment to cross-cultural outreach in Indonesia and beyond. Please pray for the nation's leaders, that they not bow to Muslim extremist pressure, which could polarize the nation with disastrous results. Algeria in 2010. *Please pray for our U.S. mission team as they go into Indonesia in 2007.*

▪ **Persecution:** The government forces people to carry an identification card, which includes their religious status, and has promoted a belief called “Pancasila,” meaning all may freely choose to follow Christianity, Islam, Buddhism or Hinduism; but in reality Muslims receive preferential treatment. The political strength of Islam has been used to limit evangelism and reduce Christian influence on public life. The Islamists' stated aim is the complete elimination of Christianity in the country. Militant Muslims have orchestrated an Islamic jihad against Christians, killing thousands and destroying hundreds of churches. Areas such as Central Sulawesi and the Maluku Islands, where Christians are the majority, have been subjected to outright military attacks and killings. For the first time in 50 years, Aceh province was opened to Christian missionaries in early 2005, as many conducted tsunami relief efforts. In May 2005, Muslim radicals detonated two bombs in a marketplace killing 23 people and injuring 50 in the Christian city of Tentena. In September 2005, three Sunday school teachers were sentenced to three years in prison for proselytizing Muslim children, a violation of the Child Protection Act of 2002. The Muslim parents had permitted their children to attend the Sunday school. Also, in late summer and early fall 2005, Muslim mobs forced the closure of at least 60 churches, most of them in West Java.

Brunei

- **Population:** 379,444
- **Main Religion:** Muslim
- **Non-Christians:** 88.75%
- **Area:** 5,765 sq. km. Two small enclaves in Sarawak, East Malaysia on the island of Borneo.
- **People-groups:** 8
- **Languages:** Malay, English
- **Christians:** 11.25%

▪ **Briefing:** Muslims aim for a 'pure' Islamic state by 2020. By offers of houses, jobs and by intimidation of Christians has yielded a slow but steady trickle of converts from among the tribal and Chinese minorities. Pray for both the thwarting of these designs and the re-instatement of constitutionally guaranteed religious freedom. The king is reputed to be the world's wealthiest man. Pray for conversions to Christ in the large royal family. The Christian Church is under much pressure. No foreign Christian workers are permitted — even to visit, and all Catholic priests and nuns were expelled in 1991. No Bibles or Christian literature may be imported legally. There are three registered churches but many others' applications for registration are ignored, and they must meet clandestinely. Please pray for Further growth despite the restrictions. Most of those converted are local Chinese. *Please pray for Singapore as we equip them to go into Brunei in 2016.*

▪ **Persecution:** Constitutional guarantees allowing free practice of religion are steadily eroding. Christian leaders were expelled in 1991, and the following year Christian literature was banned and the celebration of Christmas outlawed. Conversion to Christianity is restricted since it is illegal to evangelize Muslims.

China

- **Population:** 1.3 billion
- **Main Religion:** Chinese
- **Non-Christians:** 92.75%
- **Area:** 9,573,000 sq. km. The third largest state in the world, also containing the highest mountains and plateaus in the world.
- **People-groups:** 12
- **Languages:** Putonghua
- **Christians:** 7.25%

▪ **Briefing:** The faith and commitment of Christians under what may prove to be the most harsh and widespread persecution of the Church in all history. The persecution purified and indigenized the Church and has inured it to successive waves of further repression and government efforts to weaken or destroy it. The aftermath of the Beijing massacre in Tiananmen Square in 1989 was a defining moment in Chinese history. The discredited leadership is still haunted by the debacle, and the result was a significant turning to God for the first time among urban intellectuals. Christians are now found in every stratum of Chinese society. The majority of these evangelists and church planters have been women — many still in their teens. The Internet is creating extraordinary new openings for evil and for good — the latter in providing discipleship and leadership development materials. Please pray for the millions of unemployed have become an impoverished under-class. *Please pray for our U.S. mission team as they go into China in 2007.*

▪ **Persecution:** Constitutional guarantees allowing free practice of religion are steadily eroding. Christian leaders were expelled in 1991, and the following year Christian literature was banned and the celebration of Christmas outlawed. Conversion to Christianity is restricted since it is illegal to evangelize Muslims.

Vietnam

- **Population:** 84 million
- **Main Religions:** Buddhist
- **Non-Christians:** 91.84%
- **Area:** 331,653 sq.km. Long, narrow country occupying the entire eastern and southern coastline of Indochina.
- **People-Groups:** 2
- **Languages:** Vietnamese
- **Christians:** 8.16%

▪ **Briefing:** One of the few Communist nations in the 21st Century, Vietnam faces new challenges. Repression of all types of freedom continues, but at the same time, social ills are on the rise. Drug addiction, AIDS, prostitution and exploitation of children are all too common. There are two abortions for every live birth, one of the world's highest rates. Pray that the ideological and moral darkness over this nation might be banished by the light of the gospel. Vietnam remains one of the worst persecutors of Christians. Seeing the role of Christianity in the demise of Communism elsewhere, the regime has attempted to either control or wipe out believers. Government efforts have intensified as churches respond to persecution with growth and outreach. Registration implies compromise; failure to register churches is illegal—forcing most believers underground. Please pray for those in prison for their faith. At any time there are probably dozens of Christian leaders imprisoned. *Please pray for our U.S. mission team as they go into Vietnam in 2007.*

▪ **Persecution:** Believers are harassed, beaten and imprisoned for illegally preaching or organizing evangelistic activities. Persecution is especially harsh for unregistered and ethnic minority churches. Seeing the role of Christianity in the demise of communism elsewhere, the regime has attempted to either control or wipe out believers. Government efforts have intensified as churches respond to persecution with growth and outreach. Believers see church registration as compromise. Failing to register churches is seen as illegal in the eyes of the government, forcing the church underground. In May 2005, the Vietnamese government promised the U.S. it would begin to allow greater religious freedom. But little has changed since the agreement. Only a handful of Christians have been released from prison, and many have been forced to renounce their faith.

Maldives

- **Population:** 359,008
- **Main Religion:** Muslim
- **Non-Christians:** 99.9%
- **Area:** 298 sq.km. 1,200 coral islands in 19 administrative groups 600 km southwest of Sri Lanka in the Indian Ocean.
- **People-Groups:** 2
- **Languages:** Dhivehi
- **Christians:** .1%

▪ **Briefing:** Global warming threatens the survival of the Islands through rising sea levels that could flood and destroy them. Coral mining and a recent rise in sea temperature resulting from el Niño have killed much of the coral that is the foundation of these islands. Pray that this doomsday challenge may cause many to seek the caring God who sent Jesus. The Maldivian are still among the least evangelized on earth. No Christian mission work has ever been neither permitted nor Christian literature allowed. A severe crackdown by the authorities in 1998 resulted in the imprisonment and torture of 50 Maldivian suspected of being Christian and the expulsion of 19 Christian expatriates from several nations. They have suffered ostracism, loss of jobs and they cannot openly meet together or read the Scriptures. Pray that their faith may be strengthened and their lives radiate the beauty of Jesus to others. Please pray also that the high-handedness of the authorities may provoke many to question the dictatorial imposition of what they should believe. *Please pray for Sri Lanka as we equip them to go into Maldives in 2013.*

▪ **Persecution:** Free speech is not respected for the press or for non-Muslim religions. Outsiders are only allowed brief visits to inhabited areas of the Maldives, so their influence on Muslim communities will be minimized. In 1998, all known Christian foreigners were expelled from the country, and all known Maldivian Christians were arrested. International prayer and protest helped facilitate their release later in the year. Maldivian believers are now carefully watched. They have suffered ostracism and loss of jobs, and they cannot openly meet together or read the Scriptures.

Mindanao (Philippines)

- **Population:** 89 million
- **Main Religion:** Christian
- **Non-Christians:** 6.81%
- **Area:** 300,000 sq.km. 80 provinces; 7,250 islands, of which over 700 are inhabited
- **People-Groups:** 19
- **Languages:** Filipino
- **Christians:** 93.19%

▪ **Briefing:** The great potential of the Philippines has not yet been realized despite being rich in natural resources and having a well-educated population. Failures by successive governments to deal with the serious economic and social issues (see above) have held back development, and kept half the population in poverty. The major export of the Philippines is people. Filipinos are rich in skills but work opportunities are few. There are estimated to be over 6.5 million in Asian, Middle Eastern and Western countries as nurses, engineers, seamen, domestic servants, nannies and menial workers. Many have gone to difficult and 'closed' countries to be witnesses for Christ, and some have suffered much for the gospel. Pray for all Christians that they may shine for Him. Please pray for the unconverted that they may hear the gospel — especially pray for the 244,000 Filipino seamen scattered around the world (the largest number for any nation). *Please pray for Mongolia as we equip them to go into Philippines in 2016.*

▪ **Persecution:** The Muslim minority in Mindanao, Philippines has been trying to establish an independent Islamic state in the south. According to Compass Direct, a 24-year-old Christian man in Zamboanga City, Philippines, was shot and injured by Muslim activists on November 17, 2004. Several Muslim terrorist organizations exist in the Philippines, such as the Abu Sayyaf and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front, which have been linked to Al-Qaeda. According to police sources, the groups are attracting new converts to Islam in greater numbers than Muslims born into the faith. "Converts are ideal terrorists because they are eager to prove themselves worthy of their new faith," Chief Superintendent of Police Rodolfo Mendoza recently told a journalist. There are over 200 missionaries working in this area and are doing so at great risk.

India

- **Population:** 1 billion
- **Main Religion:** Hindu
- **Non-Christians:** 97.60%
- **Area:** 3,166,000 sq.km. A further 121,000 sq.km. of Kashmir is administered by Pakistan and China.
- **People-Groups:** 4,635
- **Languages:** Hindi
- **Christians:** 2.40%

▪ **Briefing:** Praise God for Christianity's two millennia in India since the arrival of the Apostle Thomas. In the past 20 years the Christian presence representing all the world's main Christian traditions is at last beginning to be visible as an indigenous component of the mainstream of Indian life. Persecution in the 1990s has refined the Church, focused its vision and brought a greater unity of purpose than ever before. It has pushed the person of Jesus and the existence of the Church to centre stage, and has also not shown extremist Hinduism in a favorable light. Please pray for continued freedom for Indian Christians to proclaim the gospel despite efforts to limit this through intimidation and persecution. *Please pray for our U.S. mission team as they go into India in 2007.*

▪ **Persecution:** Christians in the states of Orissa and Gujarat. In 2005, more than 200 acts of violence against Christians occurred in the first four months of the year. Several pastors and evangelists were martyred, and radical Hindus brutally beat Christians arriving for a seminary graduation ceremony in Kota. In May 2004, an anti-conversion law in the state of Tamil Nadu was repealed after the Congress Party election victory. Anti-conversion laws are still on the books in five Indian states. They impose prison terms and hefty fines against anyone who converts Indians by force, fraud or allurement. Christians say their mission to serve the sick and needy is threatened because the anti-conversion laws have broad definitions of force and allurement. Under the laws, any gift or material benefit received by Christian converts can be considered an allurement to convert.

Bhutan

- **Population:** 2.2 million
- **Main Religion:** Buddhist
- **Non-Christians:** 99.54%
- **Area:** 47,000 sq.km. A small kingdom in the eastern Himalaya Mountains.
- **People-Groups:** 11
- **Languages:** Dzongkha
- **Christians:** 0.46%

▪ **Briefing:** Bhutan is one of the world's least evangelized nations. The strongly isolationist policies of the government further reinforce the hold of Tantric Buddhism with much that is demonic. Pray for true spiritual liberation for this land of the Dragon (Druk Yul). Pray for King Wangchuk and his salvation. Bhutan was closed to all Christian witness until 1965. There followed 25 years of slight relaxation during which Indian and other expatriates were able to witness through NGOs. Over the 1990s restrictions increased because of the success of that witness — especially among the Nepali. There are now a few legally permitted congregations with their own buildings. Pray for the growth of the Church in this land. The Drukpa majority is strongly Buddhist, and Christians among them number only a few hundred. Most of these believers are isolated and scattered with little opportunity for fellowship, and some have suffered for their faith. Please pray for the emergence of a vital witnessing fellowship in every ethnic group of the Bhutanese. *Please pray for Maldives as we equip them to go into Bhutan in 2016.*

▪ **Persecution:** After 1965, the country stayed open for more than two decades, until Christianity began making headway. A new restrictive atmosphere has taken hold, and missions have been allowed to operate in humanitarian projects, but they cannot evangelize. Some ministries are being eliminated since leprosy, Bhutan's greatest problem, has been nearly eradicated. All public worship and evangelism by non-Buddhists are illegal in Bhutan. When Bhutanese are discovered to have converted to Christianity, they are denied government benefits—including public education. Christian government workers have been fired from their jobs, and others have been expelled from country.

Myanmar (Burma)

- **Population:** 47 million
- **Main Religion:** Buddhist
- **Non-Christians:** 91.30%
- **Area:** 676,577 sq.km. Basin and delta of the Irrawaddy River ringed by a horse-shoe of high mountains that isolates the country from India, China and Thailand.
- **People-Groups:** 25
- **Languages:** Burmese
- **Christians:** 8.70%

▪ **Briefing:** Four decades of repressive military rule have isolated the nation and brought it to destitution. Widespread despair followed the repression of democracy in 1990. The courage of the leader of the main opposition party, Aung San Suu Kyi, was recognized in her being awarded the 1991 Nobel Peace Prize. She has remained under house arrest since 1990. Pray for an orderly transfer to a just and democratic government that will rebuild the country with both democratic and religious freedom. The military regime is seeking to marginalize and even eliminate the Church, yet growth continues. Christianity has been deeply rooted and has grown stronger in adversity. Many Christians are well educated and are in positions of responsibility all over the country. However, growth slowed during the 1980s because of liberal theology. Growth is now most marked in the newer denominations. Please pray that they may continue to evangelize every sub-group in their respective peoples and reach out to other unreached peoples and to the Burmese majority. *Please pray for Cambodia as we equip them to go into Burma in 2016.*

▪ **Persecution:** The State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) attempts to control every religious activity. Almost all Christian missions were expelled in 1966, and ethnic Christians are often singled out for repression. Theoretically there is freedom of religion, but because Christianity is strong among the ethnic minorities (i.e., Northern Chin groups, Lisu and Karen), there is much discrimination against Christians. There have been many cases of forced conversions to Buddhism. The government often targets Christians because they support democracy.

Bangladesh

- **Population:** 147 million
- **Main Religion:** Muslim
- **Non-Christians:** 99.28%
- **Area:** 143,998 sq.km. Occupying the delta and floodplains of the Ganges and Brahmaputra Rivers, with high rainfall and frequent flooding.
- **People-Groups:** 41
- **Languages:** Bangla
- **Christians:** .72%

▪ **Briefing:** The downward spiral of poverty and suffering cannot be reversed without good, honest and impartial leadership for the nation. The majority of the population is illiterate, malnourished and without adequate medical care. Pray for political stability and a government that is courageous to stand against Islamist demands for increased Islamization and against corruption. It also needs to make tough decisions to improve the quality of life for all. Discrimination against ethnic and religious minorities, under pressure from extremist Muslim groups, has increased. Christians, Hindus and Buddhists suffer many disadvantages and there have been cases of destruction of churches and persecution of Christians for their faith. Pray for the binding of the powers of darkness operating in the religious, social and ethnic realms. Please pray also that constitutional freedom for all to practice and propagate their own religions might be maintained. *Please pray for Maldives as we equip them to go into Bangladesh in 2016.*

▪ **Persecution:** Muslim extremists often deny Christians access to public water wells, as well as force them from their homes and beat them. These extremists have also destroyed rickshaws owned by Christians, thereby taking their only source of income.

Malaysia

- **Population:** 24 million
- **Main Religion:** Muslim
- **Non-Christians:** 90.79%
- **Area:** 330,434 sq.km. Two distinct parts: Peninsular (West) Malaysia on the Kra peninsula of mainland Asia (PM), and East Malaysia (EM) consisting of the territories of Sarawak and Sabah on the northern third of the island of Borneo.

- **People-Groups:** 3
- **Languages:** Malay
- **Christians:** 9.21%

▪ **Briefing:** Muslims have been politically and socially divided because of the vociferous Islamist minority, which has pressed for radical Islamic reforms and imposition of shari'a law. Severe penalties for infringements by Muslims or for their apostasy have been instituted in 4 of the 13 states. Muslims, and thereby almost all Malays, have been denied the privilege of receiving the gospel. Pray that Christians may respond and act constructively and their faith be strengthened at this time. Since Malay became the official national language, Christians have been pushed into a series of crises. Pray for the need for Christian literature in the Malay language. Writers are few and the market is still small, yet all the younger generation is being educated in this medium. Christian literature is widely available in English. There are 24 Christian bookstores and an active Bible Society. Please pray for the rejection of proposed national legislation to impose an apostasy law so that everyone, including Malays, may have opportunity to hear the gospel. Please pray for Indonesia as we equip them to go into Malaysia in 2010.

Persecution: Badawi Malaysia's constitution guarantees religious freedom, but fundamentalist Muslims do everything in their power to inhibit Christian evangelism. Christian literature is limited only to non-Malays. Ethnic Malays are not allowed to have a Christian place of worship. Governmental efforts to prevent the unauthorized use of religious terms have led to the banning of the Indonesian Bible and several other Christian books containing certain phrases common to Islam. Permission to build new churches is rarely granted, and house churches are strongly discouraged.

Sri Lanka

- **Population:** 20 million
- **Main Religion:** Buddhist
- **Non-Christians:** 92.38%
- **Area:** 65,610 sq.km. Large Island 80 km. Southeast of India.
- **People-Groups:** 9
- **Languages:** Sinhala
- **Christians:** 7.62%

▪ **Briefing:** Claimed by some to be the site of the Garden of Eden, Sri Lanka is now an island of tears. The ugly conflict between the Sinhala and Tamil has brought great suffering with an estimated 100,000 killed, 800,000 Sri Lankans (mainly Tamil) have emigrated or fled to India and the West, and between 700,000 and 1.5 million displaced in Sri Lanka. Buddhists have long prided themselves on their non-violent religion and tolerance. The bigotry and violence of Buddhist extremists against both Hindu Tamil and Christians has shattered that image. There is widespread disillusionment in both Buddhism and Hinduism that has caused many to consider the claims of Christ despite the social disadvantages and threat of persecution. Please pray for increased numbers to find peace in Him. *Please pray for India as we equip them to go into Sri Lanka in 2010.*

▪ **Persecution:** Although freedom for other religions is assured, there has been a steady erosion of that freedom with discrimination against minority religions through taxation, employment and education. Many Sri Lankans perceive Christianity as a foreign religion and a colonial imposition. From 2003 to 2005, 170 acts of violence against Christians or their organizations have been recorded. In 2005, Buddhist clerics and lawyers aggressively pursued attempts to pass an anti-conversion law through the Supreme Court. The proposed law would make leading a Buddhist to Christ a crime punishable by up to seven years in prison and a fine as high as \$5,000 U.S.

Laos

- **Population:** 6 million
- **Main Religion:** Buddhist
- **Non-Christians:** 98.15%
- **Area:** 236,800 sq.km. Narrow landlocked country mainly between Thailand and Vietnam.
- **People-groups:** 138
- **Languages:** Lao
- **Christians:** 1.85%

▪ **Briefing:** The Church has suffered much since the Communist takeover. Christianity has been labeled “a lying religion which violates Lao custom” and declared the number one enemy of the state. Government spies have infiltrated the church in Vientiane, and persecution and incarceration of believers has intensified in the last few years. In 2000 there were 24 confirmed cases of imprisonment of some its leaders. Yet the church grows and spreads. Recently over 200 Laotians were trained in church planting and leadership based on a house church model. Pray that these methods, supplemented by TEE and radio, might equip leaders thoroughly for their ministry. Christian work is not officially permitted, but a number of expatriate believers are helping in areas from agricultural development to removing American bombs dropped during the Vietnam war, the opportunities are many, but the government vacillates between the great need of Laos and its desire for self-sufficiency. Please pray for a reopened door for Bible translators, pioneer church planters and Bible teachers—the spiritual ministries of greatest need. *Please pray for Vietnam as we equip them to go into Laos in 2010.*

▪ **Persecution:** The three or four Christian churches in the capital city of Vientiane are considered potentially subversive and are closely monitored by the government. House-church meetings are raided, and Lao Christians are arrested, while foreign Christians are expelled. Communist leaders in some districts have implemented a program called “New Mechanism,” in which anyone who does not convert to Buddhism or animism is forcibly removed from their district. Christian villagers also have been forced to sign a document renouncing their faith. If they refuse, they are forced to leave their homes, and their property is either seized or destroyed.

North Korea

- **Population:** 23 million
- **Main Religion:** Ethnic Traditional
- **Non-Christians:** 98.31%
- **Area:** 122,370 sq.km. The larger part of the Korean peninsula, but climate more rigorous than in the south.
- **People-groups:** 2
- **Languages:** Korean
- **Christians:** 1.69%

▪ **Briefing:** The leader of North Korea has deified his deceased father Kim Il Sung by adulatory propaganda, erection of statues and government-enforced policies. Pray that the Holy Spirit might convict him and his cadre to cease their idolatry and worship the true God. The majority has never heard the name of Jesus. The knowledge of God has been obliterated for most by an Orwellian nightmare of repression, demands for total conformity, and isolation from the outside world. The turning to God could be dramatic when the state collapses. As many as 3 million died of starvation from 1994-2000, yet the government stockpiles rations for the military and refuses assistance on any but the strictest of terms. Floods caused by deforestation continue to devastate crops and reports of cannibalism are leaking out of the country. Some Christian agencies have been able to offer aid, but never with permission to share the gospel. Please pray for South Korean Christians who have prayed and prepared for years for the time when the land opens for the gospel. *Please pray for our U.S. mission team as they go into North Korea in 2007.*

▪ **Persecution:** All religions have been harshly repressed. Many thousands of Christians have been murdered since the Korean War. In 1953, there were about 300,000 Christians; however, the number has reduced to a few thousand today. Christians must practice their faith in deep secrecy and are in constant danger.

Nepal

- **Population:** 28 million
- **Main Religion:** Hindu
- **Non-Christians:** 98.1%
- **Area:** 147,181 sq.km. A mountain-ringed Himalayan state between China (Tibet) and India. It contains 8 of the 10 highest mountain peaks in the world.
- **People-groups:** 39
- **Languages:** Portuguese
- **Christians:** 1.89%

▪ **Briefing:** No Christian was officially allowed to live in Nepal before 1960. By 1990 there was a measure of religious freedom to worship, but not to proselytize. The first group was formed in 1959 with 29 Christians. By 1985 there were about 50,000 believers. The secret: prayer, willingness to suffer for Jesus, dynamic Nepali initiative in evangelism and church planting, and God's miracle-working power. Religious freedom has increased, but is still only partial. Persecution from the authorities was greatly reduced in 1990 with the advent of democracy. All Christian prisoners were released and all pending court cases against over 300 Christians were dismissed. Over the 1990s there have been a number of Christians who have been arrested, imprisoned or even murdered in custody for seeking to preach to Hindus. Militant Hinduists in Nepal are targeting Christians with virulent propaganda and violence, which aims to drive all Christians from the country. Please pray for full religious freedom to be both guaranteed in the constitution and upheld by the authorities. *Please pray for Maldives as we equip them to go into Nepal in 2016.*

▪ **Persecution:** Proselytizing is banned and carries a three-year jail penalty, but no one thus far has been prosecuted. In the past three years, extremist Hindu organizations from India have set up offices in Katmandu, and aggression against Christians has been on the rise. Militant Hinduists in Nepal aim to drive all Christians from the country.

Cambodia

- **Population:** 11.1 Million
- **Main Religion:** Buddhist
- **Non-Christians:** 98.81%
- **Area:** 181,035 sq.km. Fertile, forest-covered state of south-west Indo-China on the Mekong river.
- **People-groups:** 28
- **Languages:** Khmer
- **Christians:** 1.19%

▪ **Briefing:** The spiritual darkness of Cambodia must be lifted by prayer. That darkness is shown by the ubiquitous spirit shrines, the strong opposition of Buddhism to any ideological rival and the moral collapse. The sex industry thrives, but a third of all prostitutes (an estimated 50,000) are children. HIV is spreading rapidly with 180,000 known to be infected in 1999 and 3,500 children born with HIV each year. Pray for the light of the gospel to so shine that the structures of society as well as individuals may be decisively changed. The terrible genocide of 1975-79 in which nearly 2 million were killed has left deep physical and emotional scars. There are over 30,000 who have lost limbs to landmines, and almost the entire population needs deep healing from the trauma of their losses and suffering. Pray for: Justice to be done regarding those who perpetrated the crimes. *Please pray for Laos as we equip them to go into Cambodia in 2013.*

Japan

- **Population:** 126 million
- **Main Religion:** Buddhist
- **Non-Christians:** 98.44%
- **Area:** 377,801 sq.km. A 3,000 km arc of four large islands (Honshu, Hokkaido, Shikoku, Kyushu) and 3,000 small islands in NW Pacific.
- **People-groups:** 12
- **Languages:** Japanese
- **Christians:** 1.56%

▪ **Briefing:** Japan is in crisis economically and politically because of a failure of the leadership. Massive economic reforms, a shaking up of society's structures which favour self-seeking interest groups (political parties, yakuza mafia gangs, bankers, etc.) and a new opening up to the world will need leaders with courage to tackle these in the 21st Century. Pray for Christians to stand firm in Jesus and not compromise their faith under pressure as did many Christians during World War II. There are subtle attempts to reinstate past evils such as emperor worship and militarism. The sincere, polite, hard-working Japanese are too busy to give heed to the gospel and understand little of what is right or wrong or of the meaning of sin because they do not know the Creator God. Most see the value of religion, 20% have a definite religion, but only 10% believe in the existence of a personal God. Fear to witness and compromise are major issues for believers. An average of 100 new religions are started each year, based on the occult, worship of extra-terrestrial aliens and so on. Pray for the removal of a spirit of delusion. Pray that present economic shocks, instability and fears for the future may shake many out of complacency. *Please pray for South Korea as we equip them to go into Japan in 2010.*

Mongolia

- **Population:** 2.6 Million
- **Main Religion:** Shamanist
- **Non-Christians:** 99.29%
- **Area:** 1,565,000 sq.km. Grassland, forests in north, three major mountain ranges and the great Gobi Desert in the east and south.
- **People-groups:** 12
- **Languages:** Halh Mongolian
- **Christians:** 0.71%

▪ **Briefing:** The daunting economic situation is a major challenge for the government and deeply affects every aspect of life—much unemployment, poverty, 200,000 malnourished children, etc. Corruption with great wealth for some and failure to develop the economy to benefit all led to the rejection of the previous government. Pray that the leaders of Mongolia might rule with fairness and wisdom. Lamaistic Buddhism has revived, monasteries have multiplied and many Buddhist sites and images have been restored. Underlying all are the pre-existing shamanism, astrology and occultic powers. Probably over half the population now practice Buddhism and/or Shamanism. The multiplication of other religions and sects is a concern. Groups such as the Mormons, Jehovah's Witnesses and Baha'i are very active and are forming groups in the capital and in other parts of the country. Pray that evangelical groups may do more strategic networking in order to reach the whole country more effectively. *Please pray for China as we equip them to go into Mongolia in 2013.*

South Korea

- **Population:** 46 million
- **Main Religion:** Christian
- **Non-Christians:** 68.33%
- **Area:** 99,067 sq.km. Southern half of Korean peninsula.
- **People-groups:** 2
- **Languages:** Korean
- **Christians:** 31.67%

▪ **Briefing:** The Asian recession of 1997 with its reverberations in politics, industry, the economy and the churches was a severe shock. Materialism and pride were punctured, and though there has been some recovery, the needed restructuring and democratic checks and balances have not gone far enough. Pray that the country's political, industrial and religious leaders may face up to the need, and courageously tackle the changes needed. During the crisis many churches humbled themselves before God in repentance and revived earnestness. The looming crisis of possible economic and political disaster in North Korea will have an enormous impact on the South. The Korean Church grew strong through early morning prayer meetings, prayer mountains for seeking God, church-based Bible study, evangelism programmes, fellowship in home meetings and at Sunday meals. Pray that this heritage may not be lost, and that revival might be rekindled. *Please pray for our U.S. mission team as they go into South Korea in 2007.*

Thailand

- **Population:** 61.3 million
- **Main Religion:** Buddhist
- **Non-Christians:** 98.38%
- **Area:** 513,115 sq.km. A fertile and well-watered land bordering on Myanmar, Laos, Cambodia and Malaysia.
- **People-groups:** 52
- **Languages:** Thai
- **Christians:** 1.62%

▪ **Briefing:** Thailand means Land of the Free because it successfully retained its freedom when surrounding countries were colonized by Western powers. It is believed that a special guardian angel, Phra Sayam Devadhiraj, protected the land, and a golden image of this spirit being was made. It has been worshipped ever since. The land is in bondage to a complex web of culture, spirit appeasement, occult practices and Buddhism, with a social cohesiveness out of which few have dared to come. For many Thai, their nationality and religion are inextricably linked. Pray for the spiritual breakthrough so that in the Lord Jesus the Thai may be free indeed. The rottenness at the core of Thai society can only be fully excised and cleansed through a turning to God. Corrupt military, government and police leaders have protected the large sex trade, drug networks, crime syndicates and ecological degradation of the country. The sex 'industry' contributes 14% to the GDP of the country. The informal economy is larger than the official economy. Pray that honest, just leaders may be raised up who will also lay legal and social frameworks that will limit corruption. *Please pray for Singapore as we equip them to go into Thailand in 2010.*

Coming Fall 2007

SECRET CHURCH RETURNS NOVEMBER 9

Our next Secret Church meeting will be Friday, November 9, 2007, with a focus on the persecuted church in the Middle East. The foundational region of civilization, this area of the world is now known as a religious and political land mine—with confrontation often taking the form of open violence and war. Join with us as we learn about and pray for the believers in this war-torn region.

FROM DR. PLATT: HOW TO STUDY THE BIBLE

The Fall 2007 meeting of Secret Church will also feature a 4-hour teaching by Dr. Platt on “How to Study the Bible.” God’s Word is available freely to all of us who live in the United States—yet few of us *really know* it, and most of us would admit some difficulty at times understanding it. Instead of a resource for living and a daily guide for walking with God, the Bible is often seen as a book of cryptic clues which only a few learned individuals are qualified to unlock for the rest of us.

In reality, the Bible is a rich and wonderful story of God’s character and creation—a story in which each of us has a role. The fall 2007 edition of Secret Church will teach you how to read and study the Word systematically, learning as you go. You’ll get practical tools you can use to deepen your understanding of the Bible every day. Hopefully, this study will enable you to launch out on your own journey through the Word in a way you never have before. We’re looking forward to this time as perhaps the most impactful Secret Church meeting yet!

Connect to The Word

Where can you find lasting friendships and practical Bible study that you can apply to life everyday? At Brook Hills, it can start with a Small Group. These groups meet on Sunday mornings and Wednesday evenings at the church, and in homes in area neighborhoods throughout the week. They're a great way to connect with others and with God's Word.

Small Groups are available for all ages and interests. If you're looking for "what's next" after experiencing worship at Brook Hills, a Small Group is a great first step. You can find out more about Small Groups today at the display tables in the lobby. You'll also find a complete listing of available Small Groups online at brookhills.org/smallgroup.

From students to singles to married adults to seniors and everyone in between, Small Groups are a great connection to the "Faith Family" at The Church at Brook Hills. C'mon and connect to a Small Group this week!

Connect to The World

Go beyond the borders to follow Christ's command to "make disciples of all nations" (Matthew 28:19-20). At Brook Hills, we believe that following God's biblical plan for making disciples in Christ is a global endeavor. Through ministry in nations around the world—and in our own backyard—we teach through experience. As we model Christ in our own lives and see him modeled in the lives of brothers and sisters in Christ worldwide, the church shares, shows and teaches the Word in countless nations.

You can have a part in this global mission. Join Brook Hills this year on a short-term mission effort. The one-week effort you invest your life in—just 2% of your days this year—will impact the other 98% of your time here at home in ways you can hardly imagine. More than encountering other cultures, your eyes will be opened to see the world as God sees it.

To find out more or to sign up now, visit our Global Disciple-Making area online at www.brookhills.org/global, or call the Church Office at 205.313.7777.



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