

A large, curling ocean wave with a sunset in the background. The water is a vibrant blue-green, and the sky is a mix of orange, yellow, and grey. The sun is low on the horizon, creating a bright glow. The wave is the central focus, curving from the left towards the right. The overall mood is powerful and serene.

# LIVING WORD BREAK OUT!

Andrew Taylor

**“Deep calls to deep at the roar of your  
waterfalls, all your breakers and your  
waves have gone over me” Psalm 42:7**

# LIVING WORD BREAK OUT!

**Andrew Taylor**

Unless stated scripture quotations taken from the HOLY BIBLE, ENGLISH STANDARD VERSION. Copyright © 2001 by Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. All rights reserved.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank everyone who helped to make this devotional prayer manual possible. Sections from Waters, JJ *et al.* United prayer: *Rising Tides*, 2019 were used, on pages, 2,7,8,9,10,11,12,13,14,15 (authors JJ Waters, Andy Page, Sarah Whittleston, Jason Mandryk, Michelle Joy Wuethrick, Hannah Letty, Rico Alfaro, Janina Marie Rivera). The population and national religion statistics were drawn from *Rising Tides* also to inform this prayer guide for each European nation, and statistics were also drawn from *Operation World*, Patrick Johnstone, Gabriel Resources, 2001.

**“Deep calls to deep at the roar of your waterfalls, all your breakers and your waves have gone over me” Psalm 42:7**

# INTRODUCTION

## ONE FAMILY OF NATIONS IN EUROPE!

**T**here is a massive opportunity in Europe for there to be a coming together as one, of the unreached and those who are on fire with Jesus! The nations are bringing passion back to the church in Europe. The biggest churches in London are Nigerian. Latin Americans are bringing passion to the church in Spain<sup>1</sup>. At the same time migrants are coming to Europe. Some are already Christian, many are unreached. It is time to pray for the nations to come together as one in Europe. The Lord Jesus Christ was on earth for three years, but for the past 2,000 years, since he died and was resurrected and ascended into heaven, he has been asking the Father for the nations as his inheritance<sup>2</sup>. Today, will you line up your prayers with his, for one family of nations in Europe carrying his presence?

About 1,500 years ago, a monk in Italy called Benedict wrote “a rule” for his fellow monks encouraging them to “wake up ... to listen to God’s voice ... and to run in the path of God’s commands.”<sup>3</sup> The Roman Empire had fallen 70 years before and this had been a traumatic shock to the entire civilised world as successive barbarians had begun to dismember the Empire and the church was torn apart. Small groups of believers followed Benedict’s rule, they prayed the Psalms and then lined up their prayers with God’s word and over the centuries Europe was transformed by Benedictine monasteries. Europe woke up and a continent turned to Christ. These communities praying the Bible became like beacons set on a hill. Over the past 400 years, since the Enlightenment, reason has triumphed over revelation in Europe, the church has been backed into a corner and Europe has become secularised. It is time to wake Europe up again and to run in the path of God’s commands! In this devotional prayer manual, over 60 days, a psalm and a summary of God’s deep heart-cry in each book of the Bible will invite you to pray for a youth awakening leading to one family of nations with his presence in Europe! It is time to line up in prayer with God’s heart-cry in his living word.

What is God’s heart-cry in his living word? There is a deep longing in the heart of God for intimate fellowship with mankind. That relationship between God and man was broken when Adam and Eve sinned and God could no longer be present with mankind. There is a deep cry running through scripture — can you hear it? — for the dwelling of God to be with man once again. There is a dream in the heart of God flowing like a river through the Bible of “One family of nations on earth, fearing and obeying him, loving one another and in his presence”.

### **Will you line up in prayer with God’s heart for Europe revealed in his Word?**

God has revealed in the beginning of the Old Testament his longing for a family on earth living in intimacy with him. God gave Abraham a dream of a big family, making a blood covenant with him so that his people Israel, could worship God in his holy presence and carry his presence to the nations. God called his children to love him passionately and obey him wholeheartedly and to live victoriously, but they rebelled. He heard their cries and disciplined them, bringing judgement through suffering so they might share in his holiness and be restored like sons to their heavenly Father. Their hearts were wellsprings of life ... to be guarded. He longed for his glory to go to the nations and his kingdom to come in all the earth, but Israel repeatedly disobeyed. They had lost his presence, but he was passionate for his dwelling-place with man to be restored on the earth. Towards the end of the Old Testament in the book of

---

1 Mandryk, J and Riviera, JM. ‘Make the church in Europe one!’ In: Waters, JJ *et al.* *United Prayer: Rising Tides*. 2019: 4.  
2 Psalm 2:7–9. 3 Benedict. ‘The Prologue’. *The Rule*. Penguin, 2008: p7.

Zechariah, God said that it would be! Then in the New Testament Jesus Christ came and made a way for the requirements of God's blood covenant with man to be fulfilled, and for God's dream to dwell with man again, to be realised. Christ is the promised King of righteousness, the suffering servant, the saviour of the world! He commands his people to go, empowered by his promised Holy Spirit taking his glory to the nations. We have the legal right to be children of God, to be built on Christ, to live blamelessly. So love God and one another with a pure heart! Pray with Christ your passionate priestly intercessor! Contend for the faith! God's dream will come true. King Jesus will reign over all the earth!

## **This is the revelation of God's heart in His living word in the Old and the New Testament.**

There is a burning passionate desire in the Godhead for a global family. Isaiah 2:3 and Micah 4:1-4 were favourite scriptures that we know from Origen<sup>4</sup> were used by the Early Church in the catechesis of new believers. These scriptures describe the mountain of the Lord, which is a picture of the Gentiles coming to Christ, to that place of restoration of relationship and peace between God and man and between man and his fellow man. However, a major hindrance to our relationships on this earth is our inability to appreciate differences between different people ... but our heavenly Father values these differences and yearns for the time when those from every tribe, language and people turn to him. This is the heavenly country we are hurrying to, as Benedict says in the last sentence of his Rule<sup>5</sup>. This is the mountain of the Lord we are climbing. As we pursue the heights of intimacy with the Lord, and live in love with one another, he will bring us to that place of rest. God's deep heart-cry is crying out to 'the deep' in us. The Lord is waking up his church, to line us with his living word, but he is also inviting us to come up higher, to come to the mountain of the Lord, to see the Gentiles coming to Christ, from every tribe, tongue and language and people, to see the beauty of Jesus and to worship him together and to listen to his voice! Let's run along the path of God's commandments ... Let's hurry to that place of rest! Let's line up with his living word.

In Europe we need to turn around and run along the path of God's commands. Like Jonah, we have been running in the wrong direction! The story of Jonah is a picture of how God's people had run from God and from his presence. God's word came alive to Jonah, in the depths of a whale, in the depths of the sea, and he prayed the words of Psalm 42 and God heard his cry. Jonah woke up to his destiny and he called a pagan nation back to God. We, the church in Europe, are like Jonah. Open our eyes, Lord! We have run away from you. Waves of young immigrants crash over our shores! Wake us up into our destiny! The unreached and those on fire for Jesus are coming together as one, in our midst: one family of nations in your presence ... help us to line up with your will in your revealed word. It is time for us to yield to God's living and active word and it is time to let it wash over us and have its way ...

## **Living word break out and ... BREAK OVER ME!**

---

4 Kreider, A. *The Change of Conversion and the Origin of Christendom*. 1990: Trinity Press International, p27. (Origen. *Epistle to Julius Africanus*. p15). 5 'Whoever you are then, who are hurrying towards the heavenly country...' Benedict. *The Rule*, chapter 73.

# HOW TO USE THIS PRAYER GUIDE

This devotional prayer guide is intended to be used from Ash Wednesday (February 26th) to the middle of Holy Week (Wednesday 8th April) as an aid for praying that God's living word will break out in Europe in 2020. The broad narrative of scripture is that God is gathering one family of nations under his rule and in his presence and the glory of the Lord will cover the earth as the waters cover the sea. The intention is that over the period of Lent the reader will gain a big picture of the Lord's heart cry in each book of the bible. By taking time as well, for the Lord to highlight key verses each day, it is hoped that God's living word will "break out" and give the reader an opportunity to pray for Europe both according to his general will revealed in scripture but also according to any specific words that have been highlighted.

## TWO OPTIONS

### Option A

Take 20 minutes each morning and evening to go through the following:

#### STEP 1

Read the summary of the Lord's heart-cry in each book of the Bible.

#### STEP 2

Ask the Holy Spirit to highlight a phrase or a few phrases to you, as you read the verses at the top of the page and reflect on their meaning for 5 minutes.

#### STEP 3

Ask the Lord to show you what he is saying to you personally, as you wait on Him for a further 5 minutes.

#### STEP 4

Pray for Europe or a particular nation in Europe, after reading and praying the sentences at the bottom of each page. For more information to help you pray in more depth go to: [www.operationworld.org](http://www.operationworld.org)

### Option B

Alternatively take 40 minutes each morning and evening to go through the same steps as above, but in addition, under step 2 go to the back of the booklet and read the 3 chapters in the bible reading plan that have been assigned to be read on that morning or evening.

Saturday can be a day to catch up (if necessary) in reading the three chapters a day. Sunday is traditionally a day off in Lent. If the prayer guide is being used in a small group of 2 to 4 or more people, the three chapters could be read out loud, each person taking a few verses, in turn.

## TAKE THE OPPORTUNITY TO FAST

Lent is an ideal time to add fasting to your prayers. Jesus said in Matthew 6:16: "When you fast ..." and not "if you fast", and he assumed his disciples would fast.

Lou Engle is calling for a global 40-day Jesus fast in 2020, during the season of Lent in preparation, for another Global Jesus movement. This devotional is designed to help the reader cry out to the Lord that his living word will break out in Europe and that a family of nations in Europe would come together as one. Seriously consider adding fasting to your prayers for Europe, in Lent.

## TAKE THE OPPORTUNITY TO GO

In the Netherlands there will be a big gathering at the end of July called 'Awakening Europe', with outreaches to 20 cities across Europe. See [www.awakeningeurope.com](http://www.awakeningeurope.com)

Also, in England "Call of the Wild" is focusing on Europe and teams of students will be trained and released in July across the continent. See [www.studentmissions.co.uk](http://www.studentmissions.co.uk)

## DREAM WITH GOD! ONE FAMILY OF NATIONS WITH HIS PRESENCE

In Genesis, God woke up the created order. Man was created as the bearer of the very image of God. He was woken up into his purpose in the Garden of Eden, to glorify God and to enjoy him forever. Tragically, man and woman were tempted by the Devil and sinned. Fellowship and intimacy with God were lost when Adam and Eve rebelled and the image of God in man was broken. Cain murdered Abel and God saw the evil intentions of mankind and he regretted making man. However, though God flooded the world, he would not destroy the world with water again. God chose Noah and then he chose Abraham and with him dreamed a big dream of a godly family that would cover the globe. He blessed Abraham and his family, that they in turn would be a blessing to all the nations of the world!

### A promise of space to flourish

Though the descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were oppressed in slavery in a foreign land, God's will and his glory and his presence would not be obstructed or obscured. Though enemies blocked up his Father's wells, Isaac redug those wells. One well was named Rehoboth, "a spacious place". There would be space to flourish again. There will be a spacious place in our hearts for the presence of God where God can dwell once again. However unfaithful humanity may be, Paradise will be regained. The image of God in man will be restored. God's dream of one family of nations with his presence will come! The enemy will be crushed for God wills it, God has planned it, God has promised it and what God begins he finishes.

### A global darkness<sup>6</sup>: Living Word Break Out

**PRAYER** *There is darkness in the world today. TEENAGE SUICIDE: At present one death happens every 40 seconds. ABORTION: One out of five pregnancies. STREET CHILDREN: 150 million children. MALNUTRITION, HUNGER AND DISEASE: 600 million children malnourished in Asia and Africa. ORPHANS: 12 million orphaned by Aids. SEXUAL VIOLENCE AND RAPE: 15 million adolescent girls worldwide have experienced forced sex. CHILD SOLDIERS: 250,000 recruited in 12 countries. CHILD LABOUR: 168 million children exploited for labour. We pray for an open space for your presence, for rivers of life to flow again. Redig that well in our broken world again, space for your word and space your presence, Lord! May the light of your presence break out among another generation of young people carrying waves of your presence across the nations of Europe ... LIVING WORD BREAK OUT!*

### READINGS

#### PSALM 1:2

*but his delight is in the law of the Lord and on his law he meditates day and night*

#### GENESIS 26:22

*... and he moved there and dug another well, and they did not quarrel over it. So, he called its name Rehoboth, saying "For now the Lord has made room for us, and we shall be fruitful in the land."*

May the light of your presence break out!

<sup>6</sup> 'Generations today: A global perspective'. *Rising Tides*, 10.

## OBEY GOD'S BLOOD COVENANT

**A**braham was blessed to be a blessing to the nations of the world in Genesis. At the beginning of Exodus, Egypt is oppressing and enslaving Abraham's descendants that had multiplied. The story of Moses being rescued from the Nile, raised by his mother in pharaoh's palace and being called by God to deliver his people is a story of salvation. After pharaoh resisted God's command and 10 plagues were visited on Egypt, finally all the firstborn were killed in Egypt, but the Israelites were saved if blood was put on their doorposts when the angel of death passed over the land.

**Israel violates God's gracious covenant**

Moses met God at the top of Mount Sinai and the law was given and a blood covenant instituted. God proscribed the pattern for construction of the tabernacle, which evoked memories of Eden. The children of Israel did not keep the stipulations that were made by God on Mount Sinai and revealed through the 10 commandments. Israel made a golden calf even before Moses had come down from the mountain. When Moses called out to God to save Israel and "show him his glory and his ways",<sup>7</sup> God revealed his glory and his name as merciful and gracious, repaying sin to the third and fourth generations. Though Israel ignored and violated God's gracious covenant by the making an idol of a golden calf, the Lord forgave and went with them to the land he had promised.<sup>8</sup> God's purpose for his people of taking the glory of his presence to the nations, and his purpose for them to obey his blood covenant, would not be thwarted!

**FACING EUROPE'S PHAROAHS: UNBELIEF, SECULARISM AND HUMANISM<sup>9</sup>**

**PRAYER** *Christianity in Europe has declined drastically. Europe needs setting free from its slavery to pharaohs of unbelief, secularism and humanism. Identity confusion is rife, abortion is high in Eastern Europe and the Muslim population grows. It is time to line up with the cry on God's heart. "Lord, 'Let your people GO ... may the nations be your inheritance'. I will covenant with you for the destiny of my land, my city and my nation, and my continent. Crush all opposition to your purposes, all unbelief, secularism and humanism and may the glory of your presence inhabit the nations of Europe!"*

God reveals he is merciful and gracious.

**READINGS****PSALM 2:8-9**

*Ask of me and I will make the nations your heritage and the ends of the earth your possession. You shall break them with a rod of iron and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.*

**EXODUS 24:7,8**

*Then he took the book of the covenant and read it in the hearing of people. And they said "All that the Lord has spoken we will do and we will be obedient." And Moses took the blood and threw it on the people and said "Behold the blood of the covenant that the Lord has made with you in accordance with these words."*

# WORSHIP HIM IN THE GLORY OF HIS HOLY PRESENCE

**G**od's people are to be set apart because they are his and he is a Holy God. This third book of the Pentateuch describes what it meant to be God's people, so that they could understand how they were to live under his Lordship. God could not remain in the midst of his people if they rebelled against him and defiled his sanctuary. Everything was to be done for the glory of God. The good news of Leviticus is that in a world where there has been a chasm created between man and God, where man has sinned and is out of relationship with God, God's chosen people have a means of relating to the holy God who possesses them as his very own special people.

## Without sacrifice, unholy to God

Leviticus is the foundation of the Gospel that Jesus brought to mankind, because Leviticus emphasises that without a sacrifice that is effective in removing sins, man and woman are separated from God because they are unholy in his sight. Jesus is the perfect sacrifice, as explained in Hebrews. Revelation of this perfect sacrifice, this way for men and women, to be made holy, and revelation of the glory of the completed work of his sacrifice and his resurrection and ascension, his defeat of Satan and sin is founded on the Good News of Leviticus, that men and women can be made holy in God's sight through a sacrifice, offered in obedience to the will of the Father. What is our response? That the fire of God's holy presence shall be kept burning on the altar of our hearts continually: it shall not go out!

## KEEP THE FIRE BURNING CONTINUALLY: THE MORAVIAN LEGACY<sup>10</sup>

**PRAYER** *In 1727 in Herrnhut, on Count Zinzendorf's land, among a group of Moravians, 24/7 prayer broke out and the fire kept burning on that altar of prayer for 100 years, non-stop! John Wesley came to Christ through the Moravians and the Methodist awakening shook the nations in the 18th century. We come to you afresh today to receive your cleansing as we repent of our sins. We and the peoples of Europe can be restored to the Lord's presence, through your perfect sacrifice, Lord. Save our continent! Raise up a prayer and worship movement once more! Lord, restore that Moravian legacy in Europe once again. I cry out to you! Set a fire deep down in my heart today! May the fire of your holy presence burn in my heart forever! Let there be night and day worship IN MY COUNTRY, IN EVERY STREET, IN MY LIFETIME!*

## READINGS

### PSALM 3:1–3

*How many are my foes! Many are rising against me, many are saying of my soul there is no salvation for him in God. But you, O Lord, are a shield about me, my glory and the lifter of my head.*

### LEVITICUS 6:13

*Fire shall be kept burning on the altar continually: it shall not go out.*

Jesus made a perfect sacrifice.

<sup>10</sup> Viado, J.C, The Moravians: Their story our heritage, *Rising Tides*, 31, 32.



# CARRY HIS PRESENCE TO THE NATIONS

**T**he book of Numbers begins with a list of those who could have entered the promised land but failed to do so, as a result of disobeying God. It ends with the counting of those are ready to possess the land. This is a story of wanderings in the wilderness for 40 years. Spies were sent to the land of Canaan, but apart from Caleb's report, all the reports of the other spies were given in fear and intimidation. They felt like grasshoppers in the eyes of the tribes in the land of Canaan. Israel grumbled and in the desert they then sang to "the well that the princes made, that the nobles of the people dug with their sceptres and their staffs." Jesus would be that well of living water, meeting the desperate dryness of a people lost in sin rebellion and disobedience.

### God's glory revealed through judgement

The rebellion of the lost generation of his Israelites is the theme of Numbers. God's glory is revealed in judgement. Even Moses received God's judgement, taking God's holiness too lightly, and he never entered into the promised land. The message of Numbers is clear. God will not remain with his people if they disobey. The children of Israel assembled on the edge of the land. God's glory had been revealed in his judgement of the sins of a lost generation. His glory could now be revealed through the obedience of a new generation who could enter the land with faith, courage and obedience.

### A NEW WAVE OF PRAYER AND MISSIONS IN EUROPE<sup>11</sup>

**PRAYER** *Lord, shine on us and shine on our continent today! There has been a growing prayer and missions movement. In Summer 2019 UPRISING EUROPE took place in Sussex in England. In Summer 2020 there will be AWAKENING EUROPE in Rotterdam in the Netherlands. We thank you, Lord, for the legacy of the Moravians and the Methodists. Lord, open up the wells that the spiritual princes dug in days gone by! You are that well of living water, Lord. SPRING UP, O WELL! May a new wave of prayer and missions be raised up, Lord! No more wanderings! No more shrinking back like grasshoppers in front of giants! May your presence be carried to the nations! ... Lift up the light of your presence on our continent, the continent of Europe, we pray.*

### READINGS

#### PSALM 4:6b-7

*Lift up the light of your face upon us, O Lord! You have put more joy in my heart than they have when their grain and wine abound. In peace I will lie down and sleep for you alone, O Lord, make me dwell in safety.*

#### NUMBERS 21:17, 18

*Spring up, O well! – Sing to it! – the well that the princes made, that the nobles of the people dug, with the sceptre and with their staffs.*

A story of wandering in the wilderness for 40 years.

<sup>11</sup> Three great needs of this Generation, *Rising Tides*, 11.

## LOVE THE LORD WITH ALL YOUR HEART

**4**0 years of wandering are nearly over, and as Moses addresses the nation of Israel at Mount Sinai, he knew that he would not be entering the promised land. These words were his last opportunity to pass on the wisdom that God had given him for the generation that would go on to take possession of the land that the Lord had given them. He told the children of Israel of that tragic lost opportunity, when they could have moved on and taken the land but they had submitted to dread and fear of the future rather than trusting in him. These were the words of God, from the meekest man that ever lived, crying out to his people that they would seek him with all their heart, and if they sought him they would find him (4:29).

**Moses' final address**

The 10 commandments are repeated here,<sup>12</sup> and the greatest commandment above every other commandment is emphasised. "Hear O Israel ... you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart,<sup>13</sup> and with all your soul with all your might, and these words I command you TODAY will be on our heart." Israel is challenged by Moses to seize the opportunity that very day, and make a right choice before God. Moses' final addresses to his people were given over the last two years before he died and are recorded in this book; they are weighty words indeed. Deuteronomy was central to the teaching of the Early Church. It is one of the four most referenced books of the Old Testament (namely Genesis, Deuteronomy, Psalms and Isaiah) by the New Testament writers.<sup>14</sup> Jesus memorised passages from Deuteronomy and quoted them when facing temptations from the Devil in the wilderness. Moses' words are not the dead words of a legal statute book but were very much alive for the New Testament writers, Jesus and the Early Church. Here are words of life for us to today, to seize the opportunity God has given us today and to choose life.

**A COVENANT TO FIGHT FOR A YOUTH AWAKENING<sup>15</sup>**

**PRAYER** *Listen to my cry, my king and my God. I choose life and not death. I covenant to fight for my generation for a youth awakening, keeping my hands clean and my heart pure ... I will not lift up my soul to idols ... I will not swear deceitfully ... so help me God! I will love you wholeheartedly with every fibre of my being today! I choose to obey your commandments. I will love you with all my heart and my soul and my might today.*

**READINGS****PSALM 9:1**

*I will give thanks to the Lord with my whole heart.*

**DEUTERONOMY 6:5**

*Hear O Israel: The Lord our God is one. You shall love the Lord your God with all you heart and with all your soul and all your might.*

Love him wholeheartedly with every fibre of your being.

<sup>12</sup> Deuteronomy 5: 1-33. <sup>13</sup> Deuteronomy 6:5. <sup>14</sup> Raymond Brown.

<sup>15</sup> A Psalm 24 Generation: Corporately seeking the face of God together, *Rising Tides*, 2.

## LIVE THE VICTORIOUS CHRISTIAN LIFE

In Joshua the enemies of the children of Israel are crushed emphatically. In battle after battle, the enemies of Israel that are living in the land promised to Abraham and his numerous seed are driven out again and again. The message of Joshua, when read through the lens of the death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ, is a message that speaks of the hope of the abundant life in Christ. Jesus has defeated the enemy totally and the book of Joshua has been read, by the Early Church fathers and by the Church through the centuries, as a book that speaks of Christ's victory in the life of the believer.

### Joshua succeeds Moses

Moses had died and his successor was Joshua. Joshua, in following the commission to arise and cross the Jordan and to go into the land the Lord was giving him, obeyed and crossed that river and took the land. After travelling 40 years in the wilderness, in fear and intimidation, through grumbling and disobedience, Joshua would now be leading Israel to possess the land. Joshua met the commander of the Lord of hosts, and fell on his face and worshipped. Joshua would complete the commission entrusted to him. This would require obeying exactly what was required, whether it was as bizarre as walking round Jericho seven times or as apparently ruthless as killing Achan for coveting and taking the enemies' silver, in what became known as the valley of Achor. Throughout the book of Joshua there are allusions to the victory in Christ. Christ has won the victory that is appropriated when every sinner repents, believes and turns to Christ, but is also turned into victory progressively when, as a new believer he takes possession of all the areas of his life still under the dominion of Satan.

### VICTORY: BRINGING DOWN WALLS OF DIVISION

**PRAYER** *Lord, we pull down every proud argument raised against the knowledge of God in Europe. Following a growing prayer movement, culminating with 500,000 gathering and praying, the Berlin wall came down on 9 November 1989<sup>16</sup>. You have broken down every dividing wall of hostility in Europe today! We declare that you are – and you will be – victorious over every battle we face! You came, Lord Jesus, that we might have life, life in abundance. Break every hindrance and every obstacle to a youth awakening in Europe we pray. Lead us, Lord, and make straight our paths today.*

### READINGS

#### PSALM 10:16

*The Lord is king for ever and ever, the nations perish from his land.*

#### JOSHUA 1:6

*Be strong and courageous, for you shall cause this people to inherit the land that I swore to their fathers to give them. Only be strong and very courageous, being careful to do all the law that Moses my servant commanded you to do.*

Through Christ every defeat can be turned into victory.

## TAKE COURAGE! A SAVIOUR KING WILL COME!

**B**oth Moses and Joshua had died, and the nation that was blessed as it obeyed God's command had taken hold of the promises of God. But would Israel be faithful afterwards? The story that unfolds is of a nation that was not faithful, where everyone did as they saw fit. Without a godly king, Israel suffered terribly. Repeatedly Israel did evil in God's sight and they cried out to him, and each time he gave them a saviour/deliverer, each successive deliverer bringing some grace and hope.

### Israel sinks into depravity

Othniel and then Ehud (who killed Eglon the fat king of Moab) brought periods of rest for Israel. Then a woman named Deborah rose up and led Israel as a judge during a time of severe oppression. Gideon was called by God when hiding in a winepress and was used by God to deliver the Israelites when the military odds against them were overwhelming. Samson's colourful season as judge of Israel was a time of very mixed blessing. Although he rose up in his supernatural strength to defeat the Philistines he was controlled by the lusts of the flesh. The depths of depravity to which Israel sank are shocking. The final story of Micah and the Levite priest reveal how lost the nation had become. The people of Gibeah committed a vile act against the Levite's concubine, rooting out the sin that the Benjamite tribe committed in failing to bring Gibeah to account. The bizarre and shocking tales in the book of Judges are the dark ages of Israel. This story provides a severe, sombre backdrop for the light of God's glory that would shine brightly in the future. A saviour King who is worthy would shine forth with dazzling brightness. A Saviour King would come.

### MAKING REVIVAL LAST<sup>17</sup>

**PRAYER** *In the early 1970s<sup>18</sup> hippies in Europe started to reject drugs and promiscuity and started converting to Christianity in large numbers, adopting a dramatic change in their lifestyle. The preaching of Billy Graham<sup>19</sup> and the music of Larry Norman were key ingredients of Expo 1972 organised by Campus Crusade in the USA, which was the pinnacle of the Jesus People movement. But the movement did not last, probably because of the breakdown between the generations. Lord, we pray for a revival that lasts. Today, though we live in day when everyone does as they see fit, we will remember your wonderful deeds. Come and save us in Europe, Jesus our saviour King, from a shameful and inglorious end. Come make revival last!*

God would hear their cries. A saviour King will come.

### READINGS

#### PSALM 15:1b-2

*Who shall dwell on your holy hill? He who walks blamelessly and does what is right.*

#### JUDGES 21:25

*In those days there was no king in Israel. Everyone did what was righteous in their own eyes.*

17 Ocampo, J, Making revival last: A strategy from heaven., Rising Tides, 36.

18 D.D. Sabatino, *The Jesus People Movement: An Annotated Bibliography and General Resource.*

19 [www.one-way.org/jesusmovement](http://www.one-way.org/jesusmovement)

## OFFER REFUGE FOR THE VULNERABLE

Following straight after Judges, the book of Ruth tells a story that takes place in the midst of this very dark time in Israel's history. Ruth, a Moabite woman shows extreme strength of character by loyally standing with her Israelite mother-in-law. Even in a faithless, godless, immoral age, when God's very own people are so evil, God would find a way to raise up a redeemer, even if it meant grafting in a faithful Moabitess in to his family tree. God would find a way and he would receive the glory.

### God's kindness during apostasy

God is kind and faithful and a refuge for the vulnerable. After Naomi's husband and her two sons had died, leaving Ruth her daughter in law and herself without a husband, these two women were now in a desolate and desperate place. Ruth the Moabitess loyally follows Naomi to Bethlehem. Ruth in her poverty is reduced to gleaning the harvest, a practice that was part of God's covenant provision for strangers and aliens. Although she was a despised Moabitess, she obeyed God's laws at a time when Israel was disobeying them. Ruth obeys Naomi and asks Boaz to be her kinsman-redeemer as Ruth is legally allowed to ask a relative of her deceased husband to marry her. Boaz is not the closest kinsman-redeemer, for there is another possible one, but he marries Ruth and they have a son, Obed, David's grandfather. The Davidic line is thus seen by the readers of this book to be maintained through the difficult time of the Judges. Ruth, a Moabitess, had become part of his genealogy. There is room in God's heart for the outcast, the poor and despised as members of his family, as sons and daughters of the living God.

### READINGS

#### PSALM 16:1

*Preserve me, O God, for in you I take refuge.*

#### RUTH 1:16

*But Ruth said, "Do not urge me to leave you or to return from following you. For where you go I will go and where you lodge I will lodge. Your people shall be my people and your God my God."*

### THE MIGRANT CRISIS: AN OPPORTUNITY TO SHOW THE LOVE OF CHRIST

**PRAYER** *"God is bringing the unreached to the heart of Europe. There are Somalis, Afghans Cambodians, Chinese. Many nationalities finding a home on our soil. This gives the European Church a challenge to reach the unreached and show the love of Christ."<sup>12</sup> Already the nations are bringing passion back to the Church in Europe. The biggest churches in London are Nigerian. Latin Americans are bringing passion to the Church in Spain. Thank you, Lord, for this massive opportunity for there to be a coming together as one, the unreached and those who are on fire with Jesus! Lord, open our hearts to share the love of Christ as the unreached flock into Europe ... and make us all one!*

God is a redeemer who rewards the faithful.

## FOLLOW THE SHEPHERD KING ... A KING AFTER GOD'S OWN HEART

**H**annah's prayer at the beginning of 1 Samuel was not just answered by the birth of her son Samuel, who became a prophet to Israel. Hannah's son also prepared the way for a king after God's own heart, a humble king who would vindicate the righteous and destroy the evil ones. David foreshadowed the coming of Jesus. God's presence was with David wherever he went.<sup>21</sup> David desired to build a temple for God and make God's name great, but the Lord said to David, "I will make for you a great nation." God would build David a house, a dynasty that David's son would continue.

### David valued God's presence

David is anointed by Samuel and steps into the limelight when he fells Goliath with a stone and the Philistines are then repeatedly pushed back. God's presence in the ark of the covenant is valued by David. For those who despised God there was no place for God's presence to rest. Even though David was a man after God's own heart, the biblical record honestly relates David's failings. When he should have gone to war he saw Bathsheba bathing and had sex with her and went on to arrange for her husband to be killed. God meted out punishment on David and Israel as a result. Although Israel was blessed under David's kingship and God made an everlasting covenant with David,<sup>22</sup> he was not the king that God would use to bless the world. Jesus would be the ruler and saviour of mankind and bless and rule the whole world.

### EUROPE'S GIANTS<sup>23</sup>

**PRAYER** *Lord, hear our cries and deliver us from our giants in Europe! The giant of ABORTION in Eastern Europe, which has the highest abortion rates in the world — 43 abortions per 1,000.<sup>24</sup> The giant of IDENTITY CONFUSION is in Europe,<sup>25</sup> and the giant of PLURALISM is intimidating too. The Muslim population is growing and Hinduism, Buddhism and secularist atheism are all gaining strength in Europe too. Desperation in the book of Samuel brought deliverance, when the cries of God's people ascended to heaven. You are the one, Lord Jesus, Son of David, our Shepherd King, who alone can lead us in paths of righteousness and deliver us today!*

### READINGS

#### PSALM 23:1-3

*The Lord is my shepherd I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters. He restores my soul. He leads me in paths of righteousness for my name's sake.*

#### 1 SAMUEL 13:14

*But now your kingdom shall not continue. The Lord has sought out a man after his own heart, and the Lord has commanded him to be prince over his people, because you have not kept what the Lord commanded you.*

David was a forerunner of Jesus, the King of Kings.

## ANSWER ME ... THAT THE PEOPLE MAY KNOW ...

**A**t the beginning of 1 Kings, King Solomon, the son of David, is preparing to build a temple as the Lord's dwelling place. Solomon was blessed by the Lord as he chose wisdom rather than wealth at the beginning of this section. Israel then enters a season of peace. People came from distant lands to hear Solomon's wisdom.

### Solomon builds the temple

The temple is built as Solomon directs and the land does not just enjoy peace, it enjoys the presence of Yahweh. The climax of the building of the temple is Solomon's prayer of dedication. The priests could not stand because the cloud of the glory of the Lord filled God's house. Solomon dedicates the people of Israel to the Lord's service. The Lord appeared to Solomon, declaring that Israel would be cut off from the land and disaster would follow them if they disobeyed the Lord and his commandments. Solomon, however, loved many foreign women and turned away from the God of Israel and worshipped foreign gods. Many evil kings followed Solomon, including Ahab and his wife Jezebel, who blatantly worshipped Baal. Elijah confronted the prophets of Baal at Mount Carmel, and Elijah's successor, Elisha, after 10 years of serving Elijah, took up his mantle after crossing the Jordan again and then continued to declare God's word in the face of much opposition, resisting the worship of Baal. Israel and Judah were now two divided kingdoms and both neglected God's commandments; the curse of Deuteronomy began to be fulfilled as both Judah and Israel went their own way.

**PRAYER** *Lord, give me that passion, that desperate hunger that Elijah had, to seek your face! I will ask! Give me your answer! I will seek you on your holy mountain in holiness. I will pull heaven down to earth, like Elijah. Let that fire fall. Let your kingdom come.*

### READINGS

#### PSALM 24:3-4

*Who shall ascend the hill of the Lord? And who shall stand in his holy place? He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not lift up his soul to what is false and does not swear deceitfully.*

#### 1 KINGS 18:37-38

*Answer me, O Lord, answer me that this people may know that you, O Lord, are God and that you have turned their hearts back. Then the fire of the Lord fell and consumed the burnt offering and the wood and the stones and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench.*

---

**ALBANIA** A formerly closed centrally-planned state, Albania was the most atheist country in Europe. It is now making the difficult transition to a modern open market economy. Fewer long-term missionaries are there now than in the initial rush after the country opened.

Population: 3,169,087. Largest religion: Islam: 62%; Christian: 30.5%

**Lord, bring revival to what was the most atheist nation in Europe! Let revival come in Albania! Let your fire fall today!**

## PRAY AND SEEK HIS FACE

**1** and 2 Chronicles cover a similar period to 1 and 2 Kings, but Chronicles includes the dynamic answer to Solomon's prayer when fire comes down from heaven and consumes the burnt offering and the glory of the Lord fills the temple.<sup>26</sup> Solomon's prayer prefigured Jesus' prayer after his ascension, when fire came down from heaven at Pentecost on his body that remained on earth – the Church. After Solomon's completion of the building of the house of the Lord,<sup>27</sup> the promise that the Lord gives Solomon is that "if my people who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and forgive their sin and heal their land." There is a strong message here that obedience leads to God's blessings and revival.

### The importance of worship

The chronicler believed that the future for Israel lay in the restoration of a heart of worship to Israel,<sup>28</sup> seeking the Lord with both "heart and soul". Looking forward to John's Gospel, this heart worship is to be focused on Jesus, who is the embodiment of the temple of God. Not only does Jesus cleanse the temple, Jesus was himself a new temple, the place of God's presence: as men and women came to him, rivers of living water flowed from within them.

**PRAYER** *Lord, dwelling in your house and gazing on you is that one thing I seek after! I stand on the blood covenant you bought on the cross ... before you on behalf of my land, I call on your name for mercy. Our hearts and souls have cleaved to false gods. I repent on behalf of my nation. May it turn from its wicked ways. Hear from heaven ... Forgive our sin ... Heal our land today!*

Seek the Lord with heart and soul.

### READINGS

#### PSALM 27:4

*One thing I have asked of the Lord that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the Lord and to inquire in his temple.*

#### 2 CHRONICLES 7:14

*If my people who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land.*

**ANDORRA** In Andorra biblical Christianity is weak as Catholicism has lost its fire. Tourism, retail sales and finance are the mainstays of Andorra's tiny well-to-do economy, accounting for more than three-quarters of GDP. The evangelical church is small.

Population: 86,685. Largest religion: Christian 91% (Evangelical 0.4%)

**May Andorra turn from materialism today! Lord, hear from heaven ... forgive their sin ... and heal that land today!**

<sup>26</sup> 2 Chronicles 7:1 <sup>27</sup> 2 Chronicles 7:11

<sup>28</sup> Fee, G. D and Stuart, D *How to read the bible book by book*, Zondervan, 2002, 101, 107



## SET YOUR HEART TO STUDY GOD'S WORD AND TO TEACH IT

**C**yrus, King of Persia, made a decree that the Israelites were permitted to leave Babylon and return to Jerusalem to rebuild the temple. Cyrus personally gave the vessels from the temple back to the Israelites as they left. The numbers of the Israelite people were counted. Ezra provided a detailed list of the returning exiles and their family background. God was fulfilling his promise to restore his people to the land after 70 years; Jeremiah's prophecy was being fulfilled. Zerubbabel and Jeshua set out to rebuild the temple, with the help of the Levites. When the foundation was laid, singers gave thanks to the Lord, singing "his steadfast love endures"; many shouted for joy and many wept with a loud voice.

### Exiles return to Jerusalem

Ezra is commissioned by Artaxerxes with money and a decree to begin temple worship in Jerusalem. This amazing backing of a pagan ruler was evidence of God's favour and faithfulness in restoring his people spiritually and physically. Ezra then led the returning exiles back to Jerusalem. They fasted, petitioning God for safety as they travelled, and they offered burnt offerings when they arrived in Jerusalem. This was also the beginning of the restoration of temple worship. Ezra on his return to Jerusalem heard that the people of Israel, the officials, the priests and the Levites had taken for wives some of the people of the land; the holy seed had been mixed with the people of the lands. He led the people in confession and repentance and they resolved to send away all their wives. The importance of not mixing with the people of the land and serving other gods was clear. After mourning over the faithlessness of the Israelites, the heads of the families examined the matter of marriage to foreign women and the wives were sent away and records included of which men had sent wives away. God fulfilled his promise despite their unfaithfulness. God is faithful to restore physically and spiritually, but don't serve other gods!

**PRAYER** *Lord, I set my heart to study your word. Teach me your ways and lead me on a level path. Where the affection of my heart has been drawn after other things and other people, I repent and declare that you alone have the first place in my heart. I confess my faithlessness and turn my heart wholly to you!*

---

**ARMENIA** is a land-locked mountainous nation, culturally Christian but with a small evangelical population. It suffers from the legacy of the communist era with economic depression and poverty.

Population: 3,090,379. Largest religion: Christian 94% (Evangelical 8.7%)

### READINGS

#### PSALM 27:11

*Teach me your way, O Lord, and lead me on a level path because of my enemies.*

#### EZRA 7:10

*... Ezra had set his heart to study the law of the Lord and to do it and to teach its statutes and rules in Israel.*

**Restore a love for your word and may your ways be taught in Armenia!**

## THE WALLS AND THE GATES ARE DESTROYED! HEAR MY CRY!

**N**ehemiah received the burden of the Lord as he heard about the broken walls of Jerusalem. He asked the king to send him and he received permission from King Artaxerxes. He arrived at Jerusalem and saw for himself that the walls of Jerusalem are broken down. Work began on the rebuilding of the gates of Jerusalem but Nehemiah was angry that there was social injustice as some were forced by the rich to pledge fields. They were clearly guilty of the same injustices that had sent the Israelites into exile. It needed to be rooted out again. Sanballat tried to distract Nehemiah but he would not be distracted and the wall was built. Ezra read the law and the people heard about the character of God and they understood. They wept and then they rejoiced. Israel's hearts were beginning to turn back to God. This was a new day!

### Disobedience of forefathers rejected

The returned exiles heard the law of God read by Ezra and they understood it. They then put it into practice, promising not to engage in intermarriage, to keep the Sabbath and to pay tithes. The dedication of the wall took place with much rejoicing, with the Levites inspired by the worship of King David. The Israelites were grateful to God, but Nehemiah was angry when he realised that many abuses were taking place that were not consistent with the Law. He removed these practices, including marriage to foreign woman, the ignoring of the Sabbath and not giving the Levite portion. The returning exiles had rejected the disobedience of their forefathers and really had begun to live by the covenant by rejecting old practices and obeying the Law.

**PRAYER** *Show me where I am neglecting your vision for my life, Lord. Show me where my nation has departed from your ways. The walls have been broken down and the gates have been burnt! Lord, give me your burden to pray and show me the part I can play, the work that you are calling me to do.*

### READINGS

#### PSALM 31:9

*Be gracious to me, O Lord, for I am in distress; my eye is wasted from grief; my soul and body also.*

#### NEHEMIAH 1:3, 4

*And they said to me, the remnant there in the province who had survived the exile is in great trouble and shame. The wall of Jerusalem is broken down, and its gates are destroyed by fire. As soon as I heard these words I sat down and wept and mourned for days and I continued fasting and praying before the God of heaven.*

**AUSTRIA** There is a desperate need for renewal in this strongly Catholic nation with a prosperous economy, but high suicide, alcohol and abortion.

Population: 8,387,491. Largest religion: Christian 82.5% (Evangelical 0.5%)

**Austria has departed from its Christian heritage. Lord, build up the broken walls and restore this land!**

## QUEEN ESTHER FASTS AND PRAYS, NATION DELIVERED

**T**he story of the deliverance of the Jews is masterfully told in this delightful story of a Jewish girl, Hadassah, who is raised up to be queen of Persia in Susa at a critical moment in the history of the Jewish people. God's covenant with the Jews was honoured when they faced a genocide.

### Esther's brave intervention

Queen Vashti had refused to honour King Ahasuerus with her presence. Esther was a young beautiful Jewish girl who was selected to replace Queen Vashti, and she found favour and delighted the king and became queen.

However, when Mordecai, Esther's uncle, discovered a plot to annihilate the Jews, Esther was challenged by Mordecai that maybe she had been brought to prominence "for such a time as this." After three days of intense fasting and prayer by Esther and her ladies-in-waiting and all the Jews in Susa, Esther asked Ahasuerus that he might come to a feast and shortly after to a second one. Over the course of these two feasts there was a dramatic reversal of fortunes. Mordecai was revealed as a man worthy of honour. When Haman's plot to murder the Jews was revealed dramatically by Esther to King Ahasuerus, he acted swiftly to condemn Haman to be executed. Ironically, the huge gallows that Haman had erected to kill Mordecai ended up being used for his execution. Queen Esther's brave intervention after fasting and prayer was critical in precipitating the deliverance of the Jews from the hand of Haman at the very last moment. The Jews' enemies were destroyed and the feast of Purim was inaugurated to celebrate their deliverance

**PRAYER** *Thank you, Lord, that when we call you answer ... and you deliver us from all our fears. You are the covenant-keeping God who honours his promises and is faithful to his people and vindicates them. Those who look to you are radiant and their faces are never covered with shame. Show me today the specific role I have as your agent and your vessel for your kingdom purposes, that your faithful promises might be upheld in my generation today, in such a time as this.*

---

**AZERBAIJAN** A politically unstable nation which is still in conflict with Armenia is Number 50 on Open Doors' list of most persecuted nations for Christians worldwide.

Population: 8,933,928

Largest religion: Islam 87.6%; Christian 2.7%

### READINGS

#### PSALM 34:4-5

*I sought the Lord and he answered me and delivered me from all my fears. Those who look to him are radiant and their faces shall never be ashamed.*

#### ESTHER 4:14

*For if you keep silent at this time, relief and deliverance will rise for the Jews from another place, but you and your father's house will perish. And who knows whether you have not come to the kingdom for such a time as this?*

**Save and deliver the Church in Azerbaijan from persecution! You are a faithful God! Dramatically intervene! Save and deliver your Church now, we pray!**

# HONOUR GOD IN THE MIDST OF SUFFERING

**T**he fundamental question that faces the reader of the book of Job is: “If God is good then why do the righteous suffer?” Job was a blameless man who feared God and was prosperous. Satan saw Job and said to God that the only reason that Job feared God was that God himself had blessed the work of his hands. God allowed Satan to take away his possessions but did not allow him to touch his person.<sup>29</sup> Within a few verses Job lost everything.<sup>30</sup> A second time, Satan appeared before God and God said that Job had maintained his integrity but Satan said that if Job’s body was touched, he would curse God to his face. At this point Job was inflicted with “loathsome sores”, but still Job did not “curse God and die”, which was his wife’s very unhelpful advice.

In a series of cycles of speeches, Job’s three friends — Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar — offered their advice but did not bring any comfort. The main theme of all these speeches was that the calamities he faced was the result of his sin. In the middle of the dialogues with his friends he cried out prophetically, “I know that my Redeemer lives, and at the last he will stand upon the earth.”<sup>31</sup>

## Job’s fortunes restored

At the very end, after a few cycles of interactions with his friends, God spoke out as Job began to question God’s righteousness. Job had effectively erred by questioning God’s righteousness, and God addressed Job with question after question, asking “Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth?” In response, Job admitted that he had spoken without really understanding. However, the Lord restored his fortunes, blessing him more than he had before.

**PRAYER** *Lord Jesus, I know that you are my redeemer ... you live and I put my hope and confidence in you. I know Lord that you are a righteous God and I can trust in your vindication because you are a just and righteous God. In your grace give me the strength to honour you in the midst of suffering. I will trust in you. For I know that you, Lord Jesus Christ, my redeemer lives, and at the last you will stand upon the earth.*

**BELARUS** Belarus suffered terribly through the Chernobyl disaster in 1986. The economy struggles and visas are being refused to missionaries.

Population: 9,587,940.

Largest religion: Christian (Evangelical 1.3%), Islam 70.5%

## READINGS

### PSALM 35:22–24

*You have seen, O Lord; be not silent! O Lord, be not far from me!*

### JOB 19:25

*For I know that my Redeemer lives, and at the last he will stand upon the earth.*

**May the Belarusians who have experienced so much suffering in recent years know that their redeemer lives. You are a righteous God! If we put our hope and confidence in you ... you will deliver! Deliver Belarus we pray!**

## HEAR THE CRIES FROM MY HEART

**D**evotion to the Psalms of David are one of the main ways over the past 3,000 years that the Lord has established his presence in the temple of the human heart. The Psalms were Jesus' prayer book when he walked this earth, and frequently he turned to the Psalms in critical times in his life and ministry. When on the cross he drew from the words of David in 22:1: 'My God, my God, why have you forsake me?'

**Second Temple hymn book**

The Psalms are deep cries from the heart, a compendium of heartfelt prayers, some written by David and Solomon and others probably by exiles in Babylon. These beautiful songs probably formed the basis of a hymn book that would have been used in the Second Temple and would have brought consolation and sanity during very difficult times. Psalm 2 and Psalm 110 are the most quoted parts of the Old Testament in the New Testament, and were foundational to the Early Church's revelation that Jesus was now ascended and seated at the right hand of the Father. The Lord is coming to dwell with us. He is establishing his presence among a family of nations. The Psalms have been and will continue to be essential in the devotional life of the Church.

Psalm 2 reveals that Jesus is seated at the right hand of the Father, interceding passionately for God's kingdom to come on earth. As we draw to the end of this age, deep cries from our hearts are called out from us if we are aligned with the passion of Psalm 2. Opposition to God's purposes will be crushed. The nations will be restored as God's inheritance and his dwelling place. At midnight when the virgin Church will need oil in its lamps, deep passionate cries from the heart drawn from the Psalms will sustain the Church through times of tribulation, as she waits for Jesus' second coming.

**PRAYER** *Deep calls to deep, at the roar of your waterfalls, as the difficulties of life's circumstances break over me like waves, as I line up with your purposes in this end-time generation. Break the nations with a rod of iron. Dash them to pieces like pottery. Rule them with righteousness. Judge them with justice ... but in justice remember mercy. Let your kingdom come!*

**READINGS****PSALM 42:7-8**

*Deep calls to deep at the roar of your waterfalls; all your breakers and your waves have gone over me.*

**PSALM 130:1-2**

*Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord! O Lord, hear my voice! Let your ears be attentive to the voice of my pleas for mercy!*

**BELGIUM** Home of the EU. Belgium has become rapidly secularised, with many liberal laws, many atheists and many nominal Catholics.

Population: 10,697,588.

Largest religion: Christian 62.7% (Evangelical 1.2%)

**Lord, revive this nation that is materially prosperous and spiritually poor. Come, King Jesus, and soften the heart of Belgium. Restore to the Church her first love for you, Lord Jesus, we pray.**

## GUARD YOUR HEART, FOR IT IS THE WELLSPRING OF LIFE

The book of Proverbs emphasises the importance of wisdom and the dangers of folly. It is addressed particularly to young men, beginning by addressing those who might be easily tempted to loose living, to have sex outside marriage, or to gain money illicitly or deceitfully, and it ends by describing the virtues of an excellent wife. The book of Proverbs uses aphorisms, riddles and maxims that were a familiar method of instruction in the Ancient Near East. “The fear of the Lord” is an important theme in this book and is described as the beginning of wisdom<sup>32</sup> and as the hatred of evil.<sup>33</sup> Proverbs also identifies various character types — the fool who is described as simple and the sluggard who does not finish things. The power of words in penetrating hearts, and the importance of marriage and the dangers of sexual sin, are also stressed.

### Wise words from a father

Proverbs is written from the perspective of a father instructing his son and teaching him wisdom, which lines up with the broader theme in scripture — that the hearts of the fathers will be restored to the sons.<sup>34</sup> The coming of John the Baptist will turn hearts of fathers to the sons.<sup>35</sup> This will prepare hearts for the coming of Jesus Christ. God is establishing a family on the earth, but this will not happen without the fear of the Lord, it will not happen unless folly is exposed and wisdom is loved and put into practice in everyday life. The crucible for God’s purposes is as ever the human heart. So let us keep our hearts as spiritual sons, with all diligence, for it is from our hearts that the springs of life flow.

**PRAYER** *Show me, Lord, the folly of my ways, where lustful or covetous thoughts have polluted my heart. I will guard my heart ... may my heart be an open space, a well of life for you to inhabit with your presence. I make space for you and your words to come and have your way in my life today. I make space for the conviction of your Holy Spirit, to teach me to walk in your ways, to order and to number my days, to fear you that I might have a heart of wisdom.*

**BULGARIA** A former communist country with a legacy of Islam from the Ottoman Empire. Younger generation is at a very different place from their parents.

Population: 7,497,282

Largest religion: Christian 79.9% (Evangelical 1.9%)

### READINGS

#### PSALM 44:1

*O God, we have heard with our ears, our fathers have told us, what deeds you performed in their days, in the days of old.*

#### PROVERBS 4:23

*Keep your heart with all vigilance, for from it flow the springs of life.*

**Open up a well of spiritual life. Let your living word break out in new, fresh, creative ways in Bulgaria, particularly among the young.**

## FEAR GOD AND KEEP HIS COMMANDMENTS

**S**olomon, a ruler of Israel noted for his great wisdom and his vast riches, has been accepted traditionally as the author of Ecclesiastes. In this book he questions the meaning of life and uses a pessimistic form of wisdom literature to challenge the reader to think. He says that all is vanity and is meaningless. The Hebrew word for vanity is “smoke” or “vapour”. Just as smoke rises up and it can be gone in a second, so life can be temporary and sometimes it can feel like it is slipping through our fingers. The meaning of life sometimes feels like an arbitrary nothingness. Life is and has no bearing on anything else, and as a result he declares that he hates life, that “life under the sun” is just a chasing after the wind.

### Life is futile without God

The more a man hunts for pleasure, the less he finds. Eating and drinking is referred to frequently in the book. People can have a hunger to get more out of life than they were designed to receive, and the love of money grows by what it feeds on. Solomon paints a moving picture through a poem of the need for balance to life but also through comparison, of the futility of life without God. He concludes that riches as well as wisdom are of no benefit without the gift of enjoying this gift, which comes from God. He highlights the truth that God is judge of everything, including every secret thing whether good or evil, but his real message is his exhortation in conclusion to “Fear God and keep his commandments.”<sup>36</sup> He says that “the words of the wise are like goads, and like nails firmly fixed.”<sup>37</sup> This powerful image of permanence contrasts profoundly with his vaporous image of meaningless vanity at the start of the book.

**PRAYER** *Though from dust I come and to dust I return ... may my life count for eternity. Though life is short and temporary, I thank you that you have placed eternity in my heart. Help me to fear you, Lord, and keep your commandments. Let your words be nails firmly fixed on which my life depends. I cleave to your will and your word.*

---

**BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINIA** A long season of violence, including the war of 1992–95, has left the young pessimistic, with 60% wanting to leave the country.

Population: 3,759,633

Largest religion: Islam 54.1%; Christian 40.9% (Evangelical 0.1%)

### READINGS

#### PSALM 44:25

*For our soul is bowed down to the dust; our belly clings to the ground.*

#### ECCLESIASTES 12:7

*And the dust returns to the earth as it was, and the spirit returns to God who gave it. Vanity of vanities, says the preacher, all is vanity.*

**We pray for another generation of Bosnians with hope for the future, and fearing the Lord and keeping his commands. May your words be like nails firmly fixed on which their life depends.**

## LOVE GOD PASSIONATELY

The Song of Songs has been read over the centuries as a song extolling the virtues of marriage, but also as a love song that speaks of the love of the Lord Jesus for his Bride. It is poetry that takes the form of a dialogue between a husband and his wife. The paradox of our faith is that we are dark in our heart, yet we are lovely to God. Jesus, represented by the bridegroom, is then pictured as effortlessly skipping and leaping over the mountains, or as working to fulfil the Great Commission. The mountains speak of obstacles (human and demonic). She is accustomed to eating apples at his table, under the shade of a tree. She refuses him, unwilling to face the mountains, telling him to go to the mountain without her. This painful compromise by the bride is due to her immaturity and her fear, but not rebellion.

**Union with Christ**

She experiences the discipline of God as he hides his face from her. Jesus reveals himself as one who is safe to obey 100 per cent. His heart is ravished with desire for her.

In the ultimate two-fold test of maturity she experiences her first test as God withdraws his presence. She experiences her second test as her ministry is rejected. Jesus is “conquered” only by his Bride’s extravagant love. Our eyes of devotion deeply touch the King’s heart. She walks out mature bridal partnership with Jesus, which is expressed in obedience, in her intercession for more power, in her boldness, in public ministry and in their full union.<sup>38</sup>

**PRAYER** *Lord Jesus, bridegroom of my soul, ride out victoriously for the cause of truth and meekness and righteousness, over every part of my life. Thank you for the invitation to grow in intimacy with you, Lord Jesus. Come, Lord Jesus, and ride victoriously. Where we have deliberately rebelled, we repent. Where you have withheld your presence, draw us back that we might run after you as a bride runs after a bridegroom, once again!*

**READINGS****PSALM 45:3–4**

*Gird your sword on your thigh, O mighty one, in your splendour and majesty! In your majesty ride out victoriously for the cause of truth and meekness and righteousness, let your right hand teach you awesome deeds!*

**SONG OF SONGS 8:6**

*Set me as a seal upon your heart, as a seal upon your arm, for love is strong as death, jealousy is fierce as the grave. Its flashes are flashes of fire, the very flame of the Lord.*

**CROATIA** Though war in the Balkans finished over 20 years ago, there is still hatred between Croat, Serb and Bosnian.

Population: 4,409,659

Largest religion: Christian 92% (Evangelical 0.4%)

**Ravish Croatia with your desire for her. Let Croatia run hard after you, Lord, and grow in deeper love for you and for the Serbians and the Bosnians. Heal the deep wounds of the past, we pray.**



## BE COMFORTED!

Isaiah wrote this book at the end of King Uzziah's reign, to the people of Judah. In the first section (chapters 1–39) he focuses on the threat from Assyria. Isaiah declares that God will purify Judah as silver is purified and smelted in a furnace. It is like a vineyard bearing wild grapes. The first coming of the Messiah is prophesied and a child will be born, and his coming will be like a shoot coming out of the stump of a tree. Then towards the end of this section Isaiah prophesies exile in Babylon. Hezekiah is delivered from the Assyrians but when Hezekiah shows Babylon his treasures in the palace, Isaiah prophesies that Babylon would take all, and his sons will become eunuchs in the Palace of Babylon.

**Israel's punishment for sins paid**

In the second section (chapters 40–66), Isaiah's prophecies are directed to Israel and Jerusalem's future, and the hope of a new heaven and a new earth. It begins with Isaiah's prophecy addressing Jerusalem after the future captivity to Babylon. She will be comforted and her punishment for her sins paid for. God is like a shepherd, enabling those who wait on him to put their trust in him to soar like the eagle. The coming Messiah will take care of the poor and needy. He will bring justice to the nations. He will comfort and sustain the weary and bear the sins of many, bind up the broken-hearted and bring liberty to the captives. God will raise up Cyrus who he has appointed to set his exiles free from Babylon and to help them rebuild Jerusalem. Through Isaiah, God says to Israel that though he briefly abandoned her, he will have compassion on her. He says, "With deep compassion I will draw you back ... Arise and shine for your light has come." Nations will come to your light, saying that he has posted sentinels to watch until Jerusalem is established. Isaiah reveals God's deep, intimate, comforting love for his people, saying that he will come in zeal, might and compassion to claim his people as his holy possession.

**PRAYER** *Thank you, Lord, that you came with good news, setting poor sinners like me free from captivity to sin. Thank you for the joy of my salvation, for your comforting love for me, that you bound up my broken heart and set my heart free.*

**READINGS****PSALM 51:12**

*Restore to me the joy of your salvation and uphold me with a willing spirit.*

**ISAIAH 61:1a–3**

*The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me ... To (comfort) those who mourn in Zion.*

**CYPRUS** Cypriots have been ruled by the Venetians, the Romans, the Ottomans and the British, and since 2009 there has been an economic recession.

Population: 879,723

Largest religion: Christian 72.4% (Evangelical 0.8%)

**Lord, bring reconciliation between the Greeks and the Cypriots. May the Muslims put their hope in you and not economic success. You alone are the one who is the hope of salvation for Cyprus.**

## CRY AND WEEP, DAY AND NIGHT

**J**eremiah was called as a young man in the reign of King Josiah. He was called to pluck up, pull down, destroy, overthrow, build and plant, and later when he saw a potter working at his wheel he asked the question, "Cannot God do with you as the potter has done?" God can pluck up, break down and destroy. Jeremiah spoke out strongly against Judah, that it had pursued false gods like a well-fed, lusty stallion. Sacrificing their children by fire had been strictly forbidden by the Lord but Judah had recklessly chosen a course in defiance of God, like a horse plunging into battle, paying no heed to where it is going. So Jeremiah wept for Judah, saying that just as an Ethiopian could not change its skin and a leopard could not change its spots, so Judah could not change from its rebelliousness. Not even if the mighty intercessors, Moses and Samuel, had prayed for Judah would the Lord relent, and there was going to be a complete destruction.

**Jeremiah vindicated and released**

Jeremiah brought God's word and no-one listened; he was shamed, put in stocks and later thrown into a cistern. The Lord showed Jeremiah that the nation's leaders were like bad shepherds that had scattered their flock, and he showed him some good and bad figs. The good figs represented those going to exile in Babylon, obeying the word of God. The bad figs represented those that stayed. He said that the whole land would become a ruin, and Judah would serve the king of Babylon for 70 years. Jeremiah told Zedekiah, the king of Israel, that the Lord was going to give the city of Jerusalem into the hands of Babylon. Nebuchadnezzar breached the walls of Jerusalem, Zedekiah fled, and although the Judean elite was exiled in Babylon, the captain of the Babylonian guard released Jeremiah and he was totally vindicated!

**PRAYER** *Oh, that you would give me the gift of tears as well ... that I too might weep for my nation, that my head might be waters and my eyes a fountain of tears that I might weep day and night for my people. Put my tears in your bottle Lord! Give me your heart for your people, I pray!*

**READINGS****PSALM 56:8**

*You have kept count of my tossings, put my tears in your bottle. Are they not in your book?*

**JEREMIAH 9:1**

*Oh, that my head were waters and my eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the daughter of my people.*

**CZECH REPUBLIC** In the vacuum after communism, hedonist materialism, immorality, depression and suicide has resulted in emptiness in the lives of many.

Population: 10,410,786

Largest religion: Christian 25.9% (Evangelical 0.7%)

**This country so desperately needs living water, rather than the empty cisterns and traditionalism that the Catholic church offers. Bring renewal to the Czech Republic, we pray.**

## GRIEVE FOR JERUSALEM

Lamentations is a passionate expression of grief that was written as a funeral dirge or lament after the fall of Jerusalem. The fall of Jerusalem was a cataclysmic event in the history of Judah. The siege brought the people of God to the very end of themselves, and they were desperately hungry. They were hungry enough to resort to becoming cannibals.

### God's faithfulness to discipline

The structure of the book (as with many of the books of the Old Testament) is chiastic; that is, the book is symmetrical, with the main theme of the book right at the very centre. The very middle of the book is in Lamentations 3:22: "The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; his mercies never come to an end." It was written as an acrostic, each stanza starting with a different letter of the Hebrew alphabet. The book of Lamentations provokes the question, "Why is this suffering happening?" The disaster that befell Jerusalem happened because the people deserved it. The wrath of God is clear in this passage but God's character is unchanged. God's faithfulness is seen in his discipline.

Lamentations follows immediately after the book of Jeremiah. Jeremiah had been vindicated. The book of Jeremiah had taught Judah that even though he had no form of outward success, Jeremiah had obeyed God and was ultimately released by the leader of the Babylonian army. If Judah had been teachable and soft-hearted and had cried out to God like Jeremiah, it could have been saved, but it chose not to follow the Lord, but to be hard-hearted. Lamentations challenges the reader to fear God and not to fear man.

**PRAYER** *O God, earnestly I seek you. Have compassion on me. Do not cast me off forever but have compassion according to the abundance of your steadfast love. I hunger and thirst for you and your presence. Obedience is the pathway to success. Show me where I am not following you. You are a faithful God and great is your faithfulness! Help me to be faithful too! ... to mourn for Zion, to cry for Jerusalem.*

**DENMARK** There is a strong post-modern culture in Denmark. In Christiania in Copenhagen drugs have been sold freely and police turn a blind eye.

Population: 5,481,283

Largest religion: Christian 85% (Evangelical 3.5%)

### READINGS

#### PSALM 63:1

*O God, you are my God, earnestly I seek you, my soul thirsts for you; my flesh faints for you, as in a dry and weary land where there is no water.*

#### LAMENTATIONS 3:31–33

*For the Lord will not cast off forever but though he causes grief he will have compassion according to the abundance of his steadfast love, for he does not afflict from his heart or grieve the children of men.*

**We seek you for spiritual refreshment again for this weary land which needs you. You are a faithful God, have compassion on Denmark according to your steadfast love. Heal this land!**

## TAKE HIS GLORY TO THE NATIONS

**E**zekiel was at the river Chebar with the exiles from Judah. The heavens were opened and he had a vision of the glory of the Lord. The Lord addressed Ezekiel and called him to speak to a nation of rebels. Ezekiel, after acting out the siege of Jerusalem in a symbolic way, lamented the disaster that was about to befall the land. Ezekiel saw in a vision the leaders in Jerusalem and some women in the temple defiling it with false worship, worshipping false gods. He then saw the glory of the Lord begin to lift, leave the sanctuary and depart. God chose to leave because of the defilement of the temple with the worship.

**God's presence departed the temple**

The Holy Spirit lifted Ezekiel up and took him to the temple. The removal of the presence of the Lord from the temple and Jerusalem was tragic. God had demonstrated his unwavering loyalty, but Israel and their ancestors had tragically rejected him and his ways and now his presence had departed from the temple and Jerusalem. The Lord said through Ezekiel that he was against the shepherds of Israel, that is Jehohaz, Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin and Zedekiah. Ezekiel saw a vision of bones in graveyard and when he prophesied the bones stood up and became a vast army. God was giving hope of restoration to Israel. Then the whole world shall know that he is Lord. Finally, Ezekiel described the dimensions of the new temple, and the return of the glory of the Lord. This would have been a huge encouragement! The glory of the Lord will return to the temple!

**PRAYER** *Lord, may yours be the kingdom, the power and the glory. Lord, I line up with this vision of the glory of the Lord returning to your temple. May the whole world know you ... and may your glory cover the earth! Shine on us Lord! ... and may your way be known and your saving power on the earth!*

**READINGS****PSALM 65:1-3**

*By awesome deeds you answer us with righteousness, O God of our salvation, the hope of all the ends of the earth and of the farthest seas.*

**EZEKIEL 39:28-29**

*Then they shall know that I am the Lord their God because I sent them into exile among the nations and then assembled them into their own land. I will leave none of them remaining among the nations anymore and I will not my hide my face any more from them when I pour out my spirit upon the house of Israel, declares the Lord.*

**ESTONIA** For 50 years this land was impoverished under occupation by communist USSR, but Estonia now has a modern market economy.

Population: 1,339,459

Largest religion: Christian 45.3% (Evangelical 4.9%)

**There was revival in 1989, but now few young people follow Jesus. We pray for hope for the future for the 50,000 university students. May your kingdom, power and glory come in Estonia!**

## LET GOD'S ETERNAL KINGDOM COME!

**D**aniel is apocalyptic literature, revealing God's sovereignty when Israelites had been taken captive by Nebuchadnezzar after the siege of Jerusalem, but also revealing God's sovereignty over the nations in the future. Israelites from the royal family had been made captive by Nebuchadnezzar. Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah had separated themselves unto the Lord by only eating vegetables and drinking water. They did not compromise when being educated in the palace. When Nebuchadnezzar had a dream and commanded his magicians to tell him the dream and its interpretation, only Daniel was able to do this. Daniel was rewarded with many gifts, promotion and rulership over the whole province of Babylon. King Nebuchadnezzar made a decree that those who did not worship the golden statute he had created would be thrown into fiery furnace. When Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego were thrown in and survived unharmed, this would have powerfully demonstrated it was possible in the most difficult of circumstances to live wholeheartedly for the Lord.

**Daniel thrown to the lions**

Belshazzar brought the vessels from the temple at a feast and immediately the fingers of a human hand appeared, writing "Mene, Mene, Tekel, Parsin", meaning "Your reign has come to an end. It is numbered." Belshazzar was killed that night, dramatically revealing God's sovereignty over Babylon. Daniel was thrown in to the lions' den because he prayed to God and not King Darius. However, he was saved and Darius gave glory to God. Daniel prayed that Lord would restore Israel on the basis not of God's righteousness, but his mercies. Daniel had grounds to pray, because God had promised in the book of Jeremiah to restore them after 70 years. Throughout this apocalyptic book God is revealed to be sovereign. He alone is in control of history.

**PRAYER** *Lord, you are a great God above all gods! You ride in the heavens and send out your mighty voice. May your will be done in the nations of the earth today. In your mercy where nations are rising up against your sovereign purposes, rule them with righteousness and let your kingdom come!*

**FINLAND** The church in Finland has become more liberal and less evangelical.

Population: 5,345,826

Largest religion: Christian 84% (Evangelical 12%)

**READINGS****PSALM 68:32-33**

*O kingdoms of the earth sing to God; sing praises to the Lord, to him who rides the heavens, the ancient heavens; behold he sends out his voice, his mighty voice.*

**DANIEL 2:44**

*And in the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that shall never be destroyed nor shall the kingdom be left to another people. It shall break in pieces all these kingdoms and bring them to an end and it shall stand forever.*

**The last revival in Finland took place in the 1960s. May you who ride the heavens ride in victory over Finland. You are a great God above all gods! Rule in righteousness in Finland ... let your kingdom come!**

## YOU HAVE THE HEART OF A PROSTITUTE! TURN BACK TO GOD!

**T**he Lord commanded Hosea to take a prostitute for his wife. This act powerfully communicated to Judah the unfaithfulness of Israel. Israel had been unfaithful to God as a whore is unfaithful. Israel was like a stubborn heifer as it takes a position, going against the very will of God, and Israel's idolatry was like spiritual adultery in God's eyes. Hosea said that the consequences of Israel's sin would be quickly visited upon them like a whirlwind and Israel would be swallowed up by Assyria. Destruction would follow their spiritual adultery and Israel would go into captivity.

### Tender love of God

Hosea used the evocative image of a luscious vine with ripened grapes to highlight the beauty and abundance of the calling and destiny of Israel, and contrasted it with Israel's choice of shame and barrenness. This led Hosea to say, "It is time to seek the Lord", and if they did not change their ways they would be taken captive. The Lord used the powerful provocative language of a parent's tender love for his child to demonstrate how painful it was to the Lord that his child should go into captivity. Making a treaty with Assyria, like King Ahaz, was like "herding the wind". Hosea challenged Judah not to be like Israel. Judah should not be a supplanter like Jacob or like a crooked merchant with false weights, but hold fast to love and justice. The consequences of Israel's idolatry in Samaria were very clear, Israel would be totally destroyed. However, Hosea concluded with a promise of restoration for God's covenantal love, which is always faithful like an evergreen cypress tree.

**PRAYER** *My heart is unfaithful, seeking false comforts, and is so quickly drawn after other things. Thank you, Lord, that when I repent from worshipping other gods ... from lusting with eyes and gorging my flesh ... you remove my sin and shame. I will hold fast to your love and faithfulness. Swallow up my sinful ways and wipe away the shame of my sin. It is time to turn back to you, O God. Through your death I have life and victory over sin and shame. You are the lover of my soul!*

---

**FRANCE** Paris is a wonderfully romantic place but the soft heart of this nation has been drawn after other things. Some worship other gods through false religions, others have closed their hearts through atheism.

Population: 62,636,580

Largest religion: Christian 61% (Evangelical 1%)

### READINGS

#### PSALM 69:7

*For it is for your sake that I have borne reproach, that dishonour has covered my face.*

#### HOSEA 3:1

*And the Lord said to me, "Go again, love a woman who is loved by another man and is an adulteress, even as the Lord loves the children of Israel, though they turn to other gods and love cakes of raisins."*

**We pray for France, that it would repent. Swallow up her sinful ways, soften her heart and draw her back to you, Lord.**

## BLOW A TRUMPET IN ZION

The book of Joel begins with an intensely terrifying description of a locust plague. Locusts are one of the covenant curses of Deuteronomy.<sup>39</sup> Locusts were also sent in judgement on Egypt.<sup>40</sup> Judah was being challenged to return to God. Even God's just judgement was avoidable because God is gracious and merciful. If Judah repented, God would hear Judah's weeping and fasting. However, Judah did not change its ways and went into exile when Jerusalem fell in 586BC and the temple was burned. The book of Joel is a timely reminder of the urgency of seeking the Lord for any nation that has departed from its Christian foundations, and is particularly relevant to the Western world today that has departed from its Christian heritage. Today it is also time to blow the trumpet in Zion and to urge the Church to be spiritually violent, to take up the weapons of prayer and fasting. It is time to sound the alarm, to rouse the spiritual warriors and to cry out to the Lord!

**Promised Holy Spirit outpouring**

After beginning with this terrifying prophecy of the locusts, Joel changed his tone to an encouraging prophecy that there would be restoration for Judah. He said that the Lord would repay Judah for the years that the locusts have eaten. This message to Judah foretells the end of the Babylonian captivity and speaks of future restoration. When Peter preached at Pentecost, he declared that the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on that day was a fulfilment of Joel's prophecy.<sup>41</sup> Joel collapsed two distinct events – the fall of Jerusalem and the Day of the Lord – into one. He highlighted the restoration that would come to Judah, and he also warned specifically of the coming future Day of the Lord. The valley of decision referred to the decision to turn from sin that all will need to make at the coming day of the Lord. The Lord will restore the fortunes of his people, and his judgement is real and terrifying, but his covenantal love will endure and he will roar from Zion on that day and the mountains will drip with sweet wine.

**PRAYER** *We return to you with all our heart with prayer and fasting. Forgive us for abandoning our Christian foundations. Wake us up out of our lethargy and apathy and pour out your Spirit on us again, we pray.*

**GEORGIA** Since communism fell, the Orthodox Church and Protestant churches have distrusted one another.

Population: 4,219,191

Largest religion: Christian 79% (Evangelical 1.5%)

**READINGS****PSALM 70:1**

*Make haste, O God, to deliver me! O Lord, make haste to help me!*

**JOEL 3:9**

*Proclaim this among the nations. Consecrate for war; stir up the mighty men. Let all the men of war draw near, let them come up.*

**We pray for Georgia, that this nation would return to its Christian foundations and repent. Blow a trumpet in Georgia, Lord. Sound the alarm!**

## RESTORE THE TABERNACLE OF DAVID

**A**mos was a shepherd from Tekoa, an honest businessman from the Southern Kingdom who brought a stinging judgement to six nations, before bringing judgement to Judah and Israel. In Israel, the readers of this prophecy from Amos were rich, self-satisfied and indulgent but they had oppressed the poor with social injustice, incurring the wrath and judgement of God. Amos said, “The Lion has roared, who will not fear?” Amos used the grim and disturbing image of a lion to describe the impending judgement that would take place for Israel and to describe God’s anger against Israel’s guilt of social injustice. Neglect to love your neighbour was a serious omission in following God’s commands and would have betrayed a lack of compassion for the poor; this would then lead to judgement.

**Prophesied restoration of 24/7 worship**

Amos described the impending disaster that would befall Samaria as a result of Israel’s self-satisfied and hard-hearted oppression of the poor. In 722BC the prediction of doom was fulfilled and the people of Samaria went into captivity. Amos brought a vision of a plumbline and challenged Israel, saying that it did not measure up to the standard that the Lord had provided and judgement was predicted. King Jeroboam told Amos to go away but Amos said that Jeroboam’s wife would become a prostitute and his sons and daughters would fall by the sword. God’s judgement on the house of Israel was final and never again would it be restored in the same way. However, Amos prophesied that a day would come when the tabernacle of David would be restored.<sup>42</sup> Just as the author of Chronicles believed that the future for Israel lay in a restoration of a heart of worship to Israel,<sup>43</sup> Amos also foresaw a day when the Lord would restore 24/7 worship and day-and-night prayer.

**PRAYER** *Lord, there is none in heaven I desire but you, and there is nothing on earth that I desire besides you. I give you the first place in my heart. I will seek you by day and I will seek you by night. Restore the tabernacle of David in my city and in my nation. May the fire and passion for prayer and worship never go out ... may it burn forever.*

**READINGS****PSALM 73:25–26**

*Whom have I in heaven but you?  
And there is nothing on earth  
that I desire besides you. My  
flesh and my heart may fail, but  
God is the strength of my heart  
and my portion forever.*

**AMOS 9:11**

*In that day I will restore the  
tabernacle of David.*

---

**GERMANY** The decline of Christianity in Germany has resulted in city-wide prayer movements coming together.

Population: 82,056,775

Largest religion: Christian 64% (Evangelical 2.1%)

**Lord, restore the tabernacle of David in Germany. May wells of prayer and worship open up and break out into Germany and spill over into other nations**



## EDOM BE JUDGED

**O**badiah was an obscure prophet living in the Southern Kingdom of Judah, probably bringing his message to the Edomites who were the descendants of Esau (the brother of Isaac),<sup>44</sup> after the fall of Jerusalem in 586BC. There was enmity between the sons of Esau (Edom) and the sons of Isaac (Judah). This message of judgement was on Edom, because it had rejoiced over Jerusalem's destruction, and it would have encouraged Judah that there is a God who acts justly.

**Pride was the root of Edom's sin**

In the ninth year of his reign Zedekiah had revolted against Babylonia and Nebuchadnezzar had invaded Jerusalem. While Jerusalem was under siege, other Judean cities had fallen to the Babylonians. Edom had looted their wealth (verse 13). Pride had been at the root of their sin (verse 3). Obadiah was exposing this and declaring that there would be consequences for Edom for rejoicing in the day of calamity of their brother, Judah. Obadiah says, "As you have done, it shall be done to you; your deeds shall return on your head."<sup>45</sup> Proverbs says, "Pride goes before destruction and a haughty spirit before a fall."<sup>46</sup> There is grace for the humble but pride is an ugly sin that God judges. It can take various forms ... there can be the horse pride — running ahead of God out of arrogant independent self-sufficiency — or mule pride — where an individual stubbornly digs his heels in and does not move because of a rebellious heart.<sup>47</sup> Both heart attitudes are ungodly. Often an individual can be totally unaware of the pride in their hearts, and a Christian brother or sister can serve them by gently revealing their character weakness. Jesus said that he was meek and humble of heart.<sup>48</sup> But pride was the root of Edom's sin and it was pride that led to Edom's destruction.

**PRAYER** *Lord, open my eyes and show me where there is boastful pride in my life. Show me where there is a proud desire in my heart to put myself before others. Shine your light on my heart and give me the grace to respond in humility to your conviction.*

**READINGS****PSALM 75:2-5**

*At the set time I appoint I will judge with equity. When the earth totters and all its inhabitants it is I who keep steady its pillars. I say to the boastful, "Do not boast." And to the wicked, "Do not lift up your horn; do not lift up your horn on high, or speak with haughty neck."*

**OBADIAH 10**

*Because of the violence done to your brother Jacob, shame shall cover you and you shall be cut off forever.*

**GREECE** The Greek economy is in recession and youth unemployment at 55%.

Population: 11,183,393

Largest religion: Christian 91% (Evangelical 0.4%)

**May this nation that has such an impressive classical heritage (Plato, Aristotle and the Olympic Games) come humbly before you and call out for a spiritual awakening.**

# CALL OUT TO THE LORD AND HE WILL ANSWER

**J**onah was prophesying during the time of Jeroboam, which was a time of corruption, injustice and oppression and a patriotic pride. Israel had confidence that they were God's chosen people, even though they were worshipping Baal and Asherah. Assyria had left Israel in peace for 40 years but Jonah knew that the Assyrians ruled by violence and intimidation, with terrible methods of torture. So when Jonah was given the command to go to Assyria he fled in the opposite direction to Tarshish. When there was a storm and the sailors on board the ship asked Jonah, "What on earth are you doing here", he said, "fleeing from God's presence". The sailors picked Jonah up and threw him into the sea. When a big fish swallowed Jonah alive, for three days and three nights Jonah prayed in the belly of the whale.

## God hears Jonah's cry

Jonah cried out to the Lord in his distress. Seaweed was wrapped around his head when he cried out in the belly of the whale. He offered praise and thanksgiving in the belly of the fish and the fish vomited him up. The word came to Jonah a second time. God is a God of the second chance. The living God hears every cry and he told Jonah again to get up and go to Nineveh, that great city. Jonah's bleached clothes and bleached hair from the acids in the stomach of the fish would have made him a horrific sight to behold. Forty days more he said and Nineveh shall be overthrown. There was no mention of repentance, no mention of God, no mention of what they had done wrong. When the news reached the king of Nineveh, he covered himself with sackcloth and ashes and even cows fasted. Jonah was angry when God relented and Nineveh was not destroyed. God said, "Should not I pity Nineveh that great city?" God showed Jonah that he did not have God's love for the Assyrians. Jonah loved what God hated and hated what God loved.

**PRAYER** *Give me your heart of compassion for the lost. Change my heart, where I have hardened my heart towards evangelism. Thank you, Lord, that when I call aloud to you, you hear! I want to love what you love and hate what you hate! Hear my cry!*

---

**HUNGARY** There are huge numbers of nominal Christians in Hungary, but in September 2015 a student prayer movement broke out, gathering 3,000 people.

Population: 9,973,141

Largest religion: Christian 88% (Evangelical 3%)

## READINGS

### PSALM 77:1

*I cry aloud to God, aloud to God and he will hear me.*

### JONAH 2:2

*I called out to the Lord, out of my distress, and he answered me; out of the belly of Sheol I cried, and you heard my voice.*

**We call out to you, Lord,  
for waves of revival to  
break out on Hungary!  
Hear the cries of the  
students and bring  
awakening to this land!**

# DO JUSTICE, LOVE KINDNESS AND WALK HUMBLY

**M**icah prophesied during the reigns of three kings in Judah: Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah. Micah's name means "Who is like the Lord?", and he wrote to warn that social injustice grieved the heart of God and would result in judgement, exile and captivity. Micah declared that there were consequences for Israel's and Judah's injustice, which was sinful in God's sight and would incur his judgement. God required from his people justice and kindness and that they walk humbly with him. God would execute vengeance for the sin of social injustice and he was angry with leaders who used their position unrighteously and perverted justice and oppressed the poor. Israel had violated their covenant with the Lord and were therefore threatened with covenant curses as a result.

## Justice, kindness and humility

Micah strongly implored Israel to change their actions and stop oppressing the poor and stop moving in pride. Micah exhorted them that God is a compassionate God who had a covenant relationship with his people, treading iniquity underfoot, faithful, and not retaining his anger forever, because he delights in showing clemency. He is a just God and justice, loving kindness, punishing sin and judging perverted justice and executing vengeance. He has the heart of a shepherd and he goes ahead of his people and breaks open the way for them. He feeds his flock and shepherds them as with a staff. He speaks to his people and he rules and judges wisely between peoples, and there will be a time when he will bring complete peace and reconciliation where there is enmity. He is a refuge for his people. Micah brings a significant prophesy that a Messiah would come forth from Bethlehem,<sup>49</sup> and in Matthew's Gospel this prophesy is cited as clear evidence that Jesus Christ was the Messiah.<sup>50</sup>

**PRAYER** *Lord, you are a shepherd who guides his flock skilfully and with an upright heart. You are faithful and you delight in showing clemency. Help me to love kindness and to walk humbly. Show me where my actions are oppressing the poor and help me to align my heart and my actions with yours, O Lord.*

**ICELAND** A large migration into Iceland has taken place recently, possibly the largest recent migration in Europe.

Population: 329,279

Largest religion: Christian 91% (Evangelical 4%)

## READINGS

### PSALM 78:72

*With upright heart he shepherded them and guided them with his skilful hand.*

### MICAH 6:8

*He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you, but to do justice, and to love kindness and to walk humbly.*

**May the Church in Iceland act justly, love kindness and walk humbly, responding to the influx of migrants. May many come to Christ through the witness of your Church in this nation.**

## BE ASSURED: NINEVEH WILL BE DESTROYED

“Nahum” means “comfort” or reassurance”, and the purpose of Nahum’s message was to bring comfort by declaring that the days of Assyria as a world power were coming to an end for the city of Nineveh. The downfall of Assyria started in 627BC with the King of Assyria, Ashurbanipal – the last strong king of Nineveh. Nineveh then fell in 612BC. Nineveh had killed many people through plunder and would receive punishment for all its cruelty. The temple in Nineveh would be exposed to the attack of the enemy through a flood, fire would burn the city to the ground and much blood would be shed too, and Judah and Israel would be avenged. God is a jealous God who brings justice, breaking the yoke of oppressors and protecting those who seek refuge in him. Nineveh would receive a full punishment for its endless cruelty.

### God is a refuge

The truth that God wants to destroy the enemies of our soul and for us to find refuge in him is revealed in Psalm 91, which says, “He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will abide in the shadow of the Almighty. I will say to the Lord, ‘My refuge and my fortress, my God in whom I trust.’”<sup>51</sup> God is just and righteous and is angered by wickedness, cruelty, deceit, murder and idolatry. However, God is also committed to give immunity for the man or woman who would see God as more than just their first ‘port of call’ in time of emergency, but as their dwelling place, their number one source of joy and peace, their comfort and their life.<sup>52 53</sup>

**PRAYER** *Lord, I come to you as my refuge, my dwelling place, my joy and my peace. May you be the source of my comfort. Thank you that you give me strength over the enemies of my soul. I set myself apart for the holy life that you have called me to. I will abide in the Shadow of the Almighty. I will trust in you.*

### READINGS

#### PSALM 79:6

*Pour out your anger on the nations that do not know you, and on the kingdoms that do not call upon your name.*

#### NAHUM 1:7–8

*The Lord is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble. He knows those who take refuge in him. But with an overflowing flood, he will make a complete end of the adversaries and will pursue his enemies into darkness.*

**IRELAND** Traditionally Ireland was a missionary-sending nation. Over the centuries there has been division between Catholics and Protestants.

Population: 4,589,002

Largest religion: Christian 92% (Evangelical 1.5%)

**Bring unity to this land. May your Church be a safe place of refuge for the lost. Deliver this nation from division and may you, Lord, be the dwelling place for the whole of Ireland.**

51 Psalm 91:1-4. 52 Russell, *Dwelling in the secret place* [www.youtube.com/watch?v=MgiXpPHdXz4](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MgiXpPHdXz4) Corey  
53 Nahum 1:7; 1:2,6; 1:11; 3:19; 3:1; 1:14; 2:4; 3:1; 2:4; 1:3; 3:7; 1:13; 2:2.

## IN WRATH REMEMBER MERCY!

**H**abakkuk was astonished when he saw that God was raising up the Babylonians. When Habakkuk asked God about the problem of violence in the world, the answer from God shocked him. He asked God how God can look on the wicked and let them prosper and violently oppress the nations. Habakkuk complained to the Lord of the violence that God seemed to ignore. He called out to the Lord to deliver his nation once again. Habakkuk is shocked that the violent Babylonians are going to be God's instrument for judgement. The Lord declared that the wicked Babylonians would themselves be judged for their sins in due course. Those who heaped up wealth and worshipped idols and had caused violent bloodshed would be destroyed. Although God is holy, he is able to look on the wicked and use them to judge Judah, because eventually the wicked Babylonians would also be judged in their turn. Habakkuk then responded by declaring that he will wait quietly for that day of calamity for the Babylonians and finally he praised the Lord, the God of his salvation.

**Habakkuk rejoices**

This dialogue between Habakkuk and God articulated the very questions Israel would have had while they were there in Babylon. Although judgement would come in the short term through Babylon, Habakkuk said poetically that Babylon is like a fig tree failing to blossom. The judgement of Babylon and the understanding that the whole earth would be filled with the knowledge of God as the waters cover the sea<sup>54</sup> led Habakkuk to rejoice. Judgement would not last forever. Habakkuk trusted in God, that in wrath he would remember mercy, and he determined that he would wait patiently for deliverance. This revelation of Habakkuk — that the righteous live by faith — would be inspirational to Paul as he wrote the book of Romans.<sup>55</sup>

**PRAYER** *Restore, O Lord, the honour of your name. With works of sovereign power come shake the earth again. Lord, I have heard of your fame, I stand in awe of your deeds, Lord. Repeat them in our day, in our time make them known ... in wrath remember mercy. Revive my nation again! Rend the heavens and come down. Though the fig trees do not blossom I will wait for you, O Lord, the God of my salvation.*

**ITALY** Cynicism about the Church is the norm in Italy, although Italians are culturally Catholic. Economically it is virtually bankrupt.

Population: 60,097,564

Largest religion: Christian 82% (Evangelical 1%)

**READINGS****PSALM 80:3**

*Restore us, O God; let your face shine that we may be saved!*

**HABAKKUK 3:2**

*Lord, I have heard the report of you and your work, O Lord, do I fear. In the midst of the years make it known; in wrath remember mercy.*

**Italy has a rich history but has never seen widespread biblical revival! Revive this land! Bring hope for the future! Save this nation from deadly religion, the pale imitation of the real thing.**

## GOD WILL JUDGE THE WICKED

**Z**ephaniah is a message of warning that the day of God's wrath is coming and Jerusalem will be destroyed, with a message of hope for future restoration. God would judge fraud, violence and complacency, but if the humble sought the Lord, they might be hidden from God's wrath. This book is written to a people who have lived through the reigns of the very wicked kings Amon and Manasseh, and though King Josiah is good, the level of wickedness is too great for the tide of God's anger to be removed. God would judge Jerusalem for it participated in evil as had Moab, the Ethiopians and Assyrians, who would all be destroyed too. This prophecy was fulfilled in 586BC with the destruction of Jerusalem. The severity of God's judgement and the heat of his anger were very intense. When this message was first delivered it would have been shocking, because of the violence of Zephaniah's condemnation.

**The Lord rejoices over his people**

However, the original reader of Zephaniah would have had their heart strings pulled by Zephaniah 3:9–20. This beautiful passage draws the Lord's people back to himself. The Lord exults with loud singing over his people. He fights for his people like a warrior and he is ready to relent and to remove his judgements. He is also tender-hearted, rejoicing over his people with gladness and renewing them in his love. He has the heart of Father, bringing correction, and he will bring his people home. He is compassionate on the lame and the outcast. He is humble in his heart, longing for a people who are humble and lowly. He is a restorer of fortunes for his people.<sup>56</sup>

**PRAYER** *Lord, I thank you that you are a just judge and a worshipping warrior, fighting for your people like a warrior to save them from their sin but also tenderly exulting over your people with singing. Where I have strayed, through complacency to sin or a pride that offends your heart, bring me home. I will return to you, to your tough yet tender love. I yield to your embrace.*

**KAZAKHSTAN** Traditional Islam is growing. The Kazakh Church is the most persecuted church in Europe (34th on Open Doors' global list).

Population: 15,753,460

Largest religion: Islam 54%; Christian 12% (Evangelical 0.1%)

**READINGS****PSALM 82:1**

*God has taken his place in the divine council; in the midst of the gods he holds judgement.*

**ZEPHANIAH 3:16–17**

*On that day it shall be said to Jerusalem: "Fear not, O Zion; let not your hands grow weak. The Lord your God is in your midst, a mighty one who will save; he will rejoice over you with gladness; he will quiet you by his love; he will exult over you with loud singing."*

**We call out to you to free the evangelical church from the historic prejudices of the past. Lord, you are a worshipping warrior! Fight for your people and protect them in Kazakhstan.**

## HOW LOVELY IS YOUR DWELLING PLACE

The book of Haggai was written to encourage the exiles to obey the covenant and pursue a lifestyle of holiness. As God's people were released from exile, God's first priority was to build the temple. Haggai accused the returned exiles of a lack of faithfulness and complacency and for being selfish by not putting God first. Haggai spoke to Zerubbabel and challenged him to rebuild the house of the Lord, saying the glory of the latter house would be greater than that of the former.

**Building project completed**

Zerubbabel was a descendant of David and in the direct line of the ancestry of Jesus,<sup>57</sup> and was the head of the tribe of Judah at the time of return from Babylonian captivity. He was the prime builder of the Second Temple and with the blessings of Cyrus,<sup>58</sup> Zerubbabel and Jeshua led the first band of captives back to Jerusalem.<sup>59</sup> Then they set about rebuilding the temple, but after rebuilding the temple foundation in the first two years, construction came to a standstill for 17 years. This delay came principally because of the settlers in Samaria who wanted to help with the building,<sup>60</sup> but the outcome was that the building project was frustrated. Urged by the prophets Haggai and Zechariah, Zerubbabel diligently resumed the work on the temple in the second year of the reign of King Darius.<sup>61</sup> The book of Haggai reveals that God will complete what he has started and it will be glorious. He is a Holy God and his spirit abides among his people. He is Lord of the nations and Lord of the earth. His chosen ones are precious to him and he is a covenant-keeping God. He is worthy of honour and he is a passionate God and stirs up the spirit of his people to accomplish good works.<sup>62</sup>

**PRAYER** *How lovely is your dwelling place, Lord! My soul longs, yes, faints for the courts of the Lord. Lord, may worshipping you and putting you first in my heart become my priority! I line up with your longing for one family of nations with your presence. Fill the earth with your presence and may your glory cover the earth as the waters cover the sea.*

**READINGS****PSALM 84: 1–2**

*How lovely is your dwelling place, O Lord of hosts! My soul yearns even faints for the courts of the Lord, my heart and my flesh sing for joy to the living God.*

**HAGGAI 2:7**

*And I will shake all nations so that the treasures of all nations shall come in, and I will fill this house with glory, says the Lord of hosts.*

**KOSOVO** Hatred between the Serbians and ethnic Albanians precipitated the crisis of 1998–1999.

Population: 2,084,224

Largest religion: Islam 87%; Christian 7%

**How lovely is your dwelling place, Lord. Bring peace where there has been ethnic hatred in the land. Fill this land of Kosovo with your presence.**

**GOD IS ZEALOUS FOR JERUSALEM**

**Z**echariah was another prophet bringing God's word about the rebuilding of Jerusalem. This book begins with eight colourful visions that Zechariah received during the reign of King Darius. God revealed through Zechariah that he is compassionate for Jerusalem and there would be a future Messiah. God says that not only does he have a deep passion for Jerusalem,<sup>63</sup> but he is going to be king over all the earth from Jerusalem. Whether or not one believes that Zechariah is speaking about a physical Jerusalem or a spiritual Jerusalem it is clear from the book that God is faithful to restore his people and to bring spiritual salvation. God says to Zechariah, "I am zealous for Zion with great zeal ... I will return to Zion, and dwell in the midst ..."<sup>64</sup> Zechariah then made an exhortation to the returned exiles to stop fasting for the wrong reasons, and to live selflessly, rendering true judgements, showing kindness and mercy to one another and not oppressing the widow, the orphan, the poor or the alien.

**The coming King**

Zechariah made a number of prophecies about a Messiah coming in the future. The Messiah will come in peace on a donkey,<sup>65</sup> will appear like lightning and will be a protector of his people. These prophecies would have given the original recipients of his message much hope for the future. The Lord will pour out compassion on the house of David and they will look at the one whom they have pierced and mourn for him as a firstborn son. A time will then come when all nations will gather against Jerusalem. Finally, the Messiah will be king over all the earth. Some of Zechariah's prophecies were fulfilled in Jesus' coming as a man humbly on a donkey, but others have not yet been fulfilled but will be, in his second coming. We long for Jesus to come and rule on earth as it is heaven — and that day will come. In our prayers let us co-labour with Jesus to see his kingdom come!

**PRAYER** *Lord Jesus, I line up my heart with your plans and purposes for Jerusalem. Come and complete your purposes to rule here on earth, come and reign, King Jesus! One family of nations with your presence!*

**READINGS****PSALM 87:1–3**

*On the holy mount stands the city he founded; the Lord loves the gates of Zion more than all the dwelling places of Jacob.*

**ZECHARIAH 1:14**

*So, the angel who talked with me said to me, "Cry out, thus says the Lord of hosts: I am exceedingly jealous for Jerusalem and Zion."*

**LATVIA** Corruption is still high in this post-Soviet state. The Orthodox Church is the main religious group, but there are a large number of youth ministries in the nation.

**Population:** 2,240,265

**Largest religion:** Christian 60% (Evangelical 7%)

**Come, Lord Jesus!  
Cleanse this land! Line  
up this nation with  
your purposes and your  
will and establish your  
presence in this nation.**



# UNFAITHFULNESS TO THE COVENANT WILL BE JUDGED

**T**his last book in the Old Testament finishes with a strong challenge to remain faithful to the covenant, as unfaithfulness will be judged. God is a covenant-keeping God, and with integrity he requires wholehearted worship from his covenantal people. The exiles had been rebuilding Jerusalem physically despite opposition, but their worship was not wholehearted. Malachi brings a sharp accusation against the priests for bringing lame, sick and blind animals for sacrifice as worship. Sub-standard sacrifices are not acceptable and reveal that the hearts of the people are not devoted to the Lord. Malachi focuses on the low value placed on marriage by the Israelites, saying, “God hates divorce,” and then said that if the people bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, God will respond to their generosity with abundant blessing.<sup>66</sup> Malachi was warning the returned exiles not to return to the old faithless ways of their ancestors but to live as covenantal people of God and return to him with all their hearts.

## God’s treasured possession

Malachi, in the closing chapters of the Old Testament, declares that his messenger will come and prepare a way for the Lord, reminding the reader of Isaiah 40,<sup>67</sup> and Malachi says that the Lord will be like a refiner’s fire<sup>68</sup> and a fuller’s soap. God will choose those who fear him to be his treasured possession and he will spare them as a man spares his son who serves him. Though he will burn up the arrogant like stubble, the righteous will be joyful, receiving healing at the time of his appearing.<sup>69</sup> Malachi says that the Lord will turn the hearts of the fathers to the children at the day of his coming. God has planned it and he has promised it and will bring to completion what he has begun, a family of nations worshipping him in the glory of his holy presence and carrying his presence to the nations.

**PRAYER** *Lord, bring to completion what you have begun, a family of nations worshipping you in the glory of your holy presence and carrying your presence to the nations. Turn the hearts of the fathers to the children. Turn my heart back to yours and choose me as your treasured possession.*

**LIECHTENSTEIN** The first evangelical fellowship of believers was started in 1985. The evangelical population, mostly ex-patriates, is slowly increasing.

Population: 36,190

Largest religion: Christian 79% (Evangelical 0.5%)

## READINGS

### PSALM 89:1

*I will sing of the steadfast love of the Lord, forever; with my mouth I will make known your faithfulness to all generations.*

### MALACHI 4:6

*And he will turn the hearts of the fathers to their children and the hearts of children to their fathers, lest I come and strike the land with a decree of utter destruction.*

**Make known your faithfulness to this nation. Choose Liechtenstein to be your special possession. Show them the futility of both atheism and Islam.**

## JESUS THE PROMISED KING OF RIGHTEOUSNESS HAS COME

The Gospel of Matthew was written for a Jewish audience in Judea in the time of the Roman occupation, revealing that Jesus is the predicted Messiah of the Old Testament and the King of the kingdom of heaven. At this time there would have been a glorious hope that the Lord would deliver them spiritually and politically, but how this would be and when it would take place would have been unclear. They were looking for a military saviour and would have longed for someone with the military prowess of King David to deliver them from the Roman occupation. At Jesus' birth Herod slaughtered all the babies he could find,<sup>70</sup> to kill off any hope in a future Israelite king.

### Jesus, the prophesied Messiah

Matthew is the Gospel placed first because it explicitly declares Jesus was the Messiah foretold by the prophets, and it was the most frequently cited Gospel by early Christian writers.<sup>71</sup> Matthew begins with a genealogy. The inclusion of four women — Tamar, Rahab, Ruth and Bathsheba the wife of Uriah<sup>72</sup> and involving improper sexual behaviour — prefigures the mission to the nations that Jesus declares in Matthew 28. Matthew presents Jesus as a new Moses, taking forward the story of Israel, describing the people of God in the Sermon on the Mount as a community of discipleship, requiring a greater degree of righteousness than that required by the Torah.<sup>73</sup> Those who hunger and thirst for righteousness will be satisfied. The destiny of Israel was to take God's light to the nations of the world. Matthew retells this narrative, showing how Jesus was prophesied and prefigured in scripture. Matthew's Gospel calls for heart change and radical obedience. It is a manifesto for global mission, "to go into all the world and make disciples of all nations".<sup>74</sup>

**PRAYER** *You are my hope and the hope of the nations. You have saved me from my sins. You are the promised King Lord Jesus! Let your kingdom of righteousness come in and through my life today! Come and rule and reign in my life. Help me take the light of the Gospel to the nations. I wait and hope in you, the Bridegroom of my soul.*

**LITHUANIA** Freedom from Communism brought materialism and now drugs, suicide and the trafficking of women for prostitution to the West.

Population: 3,255,324

Largest religion: Christian 79% (Evangelical 0.5%)

### READINGS

#### PSALM 98:1–3

*Oh sing to the Lord a new song, for he has done marvellous things! His right hand and his holy arm have worked salvation for him.*

#### MATTHEW 21:5

*Behold your king is coming to you, humble and mounted on a donkey.*

**You are the hope of Lithuania. The promised king of righteousness. Come and rule and reign today. Come and make disciples in this nation today. Their promised king has come!**

70 Jeremiah 31:15. 71 Hays, R.B *Echoes of Scripture in the Gospels*, Baylor University, 106. 72 Matthew 1:5, 6  
73 Hays, R.B, 121. 74 Hays, R.B, 190.

# JESUS CHRIST THE SUFFERING SERVANT IS REVEALED

**T**he Book of Mark was written to Gentiles probably in Rome to reveal Jesus as the suffering servant. This Gospel would have encouraged them to persevere during persecution. Christians were being burnt alive during Nero's garden parties and two of the Early Church's most prominent figures, Peter and Paul, had been executed.

## Blood covenant restored<sup>75</sup>

Mark's narrative is fast-paced, reflecting a sense of urgency, beginning with the declaration by Jesus that the time had come for God's kingdom to appear, and his call for repentance. Mark presented Jesus as the kingly Messiah who was God's suffering servant and who said that his identity should be kept secret. However, after Jesus had been transfigured on a mountain top, with Peter, James and John, Jesus went on to tell the 12 how he would suffer.<sup>76</sup> At the end of his Gospel Mark records how Jesus appeared before the high priest and before Pilate, and Roman soldiers placed a purple cloak on him and hailed him king of the Jews and mocked him and led him out to crucify him. As Jesus died, cried and gave up his spirit, a centurion said, "Truly this man was God's son."<sup>77</sup> Jesus was shamed as the suffering servant and died on our behalf for our guilt, sin and shame. Mark says there is now no more place for shame "for whoever is ashamed of me and my words ... of him will the Son of Man also be ashamed when he comes in ... glory."<sup>78</sup> Jesus' death is shown by Mark to reaffirm God's covenant promise. Jesus says, "This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many."<sup>79</sup> The covenant that was made in Exodus at Sinai<sup>80</sup> is thus restored. In this way Jesus is seen as the promised king and the suffering servant who restores God's blood covenant with Israel, through his suffering, shame and the shedding of his blood.

**PRAYER** *Thank you, Lord, for redeeming my life from the pit, and restoring your blood covenant, through the cross. Wake me up to the urgency of the days in which I live and help me to make the best use of my time today, because the days are evil.*

**LUXEMBOURG** A secular and highly affluent nation that has a Catholic heritage and is hardening against evangelicals.

Population: 491,772

Largest religion: Christian 81.6% (Evangelical 0.5%)

## READINGS

### PSALM 103:1-4

*Bless the Lord, O my soul and all that is within me, bless his holy name! ... who redeems your life from the pit, who crowns you with steadfast love and mercy.*

### MARK 1:15

*The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel.*

**Wake up this materialist nation to the urgency of the hour in which they live ... may they repent and believe your Gospel, Lord Jesus Christ. Soften those hard hearts and save them.**

# JESUS, THE SAVIOUR OF THE WORLD RESTORES LOST SONS

The book of Luke was written by a Gentile to a Gentile audience.<sup>81</sup> Luke was a companion of Paul investigating the gospel message and his readers would not have been familiar with the prophetic expectation that the Jewish people had that a Messiah would be coming during the Roman era. Luke describes how Jesus was the promised Messiah who would bring redemption to Israel and would be “a light for revelation to the Gentiles”<sup>82</sup> but his purpose as a saviour of mankind would be to bring Good News to the poor. After being led into the wilderness, he came out of the desert in the power of the Holy Spirit. Jesus came to seek and save the lost, and healed the leper,<sup>83</sup> the paralysed<sup>84</sup> and a man with a withered hand.<sup>85</sup> Jesus appointed the 12 apostles and taught the crowds a new kingdom way of living. This was a new manifesto for a new kingdom that was open for all, even Gentiles. Using parables, Jesus taught the importance of hearing and obeying the word of God in order to be saved.

## Jesus, the Son of God

Jesus set his face to Jerusalem and continued through parables to teach the importance of loving one’s neighbour practically. Jesus approached Jerusalem and was greeted as king. Jesus then continued to be cornered by Pharisees and Sadducees and he revealed himself not only as the promised king of the Old Testament but also the rejected cornerstone. He warned of the destruction of the temple, which happened in AD70. Jesus celebrated the Passover and revealed himself as the Passover lamb who died on our behalf. He came to seek and save the lost and died on our place. Jesus was betrayed with a kiss, found not guilty, but was crucified and he died and gave up his spirit. After three days Jesus rose from the dead and appeared to Cleopas and his disciples, explaining the scriptures and how he had fulfilled them. The story of Cleopas emphasises the humanity of Jesus and explains who Jesus was and why he had come. He was and is the resurrected saviour of the world!

**PRAYER** *Lord Jesus Christ, saviour of the world, I was lost but now I am found! Thank you for redeeming me and saving me from the power of the enemy. Continue to cleanse me and restore me from sin, I pray.*

**MALTA** Evangelical witness was forbidden under British rule before independence in 1964 in Malta: now ... there are approximately 500 evangelicals.

Population: 409,999

Largest Religion: Christian 96.8% (Evangelical 1.3%)

## READINGS

### PSALM 106:10

*So he saved them from the hand of the foe and redeemed them from the power of the enemy.*

### LUKE 15:24

*This son of mine was dead, and is alive again, he was lost and is found.*

**Have mercy on Malta; according to your steadfast love and mercy blot out their transgressions. Wash Malta thoroughly from their iniquity and cleanse them from their sin.**

# JESUS IS THE EMBODIED PRESENCE OF ISRAEL'S TEMPLE

The revelation of the identity of Jesus Christ is a focus in the Gospel of John. Initially, Jesus was not recognised for who he really was and is. John wrote his gospel as an eyewitness to Jesus' ministry, that his readers might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God,<sup>86</sup> showing that he is the only way to the Father. He came and dwelt among us as a man, but when he came into the world, he was rejected. John's Gospel is more poetic and symbolic than the other Gospels. There are seven "I am" in the Gospel of John,<sup>87</sup> where Jesus is revealed symbolically as the light of the world; the bread of life; the way, the truth and the life; the resurrection and the life; the Gate; the Good Shepherd; and the vine. Jesus is also revealed as the Passover lamb,<sup>88</sup> through his crucifixion at Passover. The Temple is also a sign for Jesus' body. When Jesus says, "If anyone is thirsty let him come to me and drink",<sup>89</sup> he is clearly identifying himself with the temple and the image of water flowing out of Jerusalem in Ezekiel 47 and Zechariah 14.<sup>90</sup>

## Love of the Father revealed

The narrative of Jesus' miracles revealed who he was too. He fed the hungry, healed the sick and turned water into wine. As the Son of God he revealed the love of the Father but frequently he was not recognised. Just as this Gospel begins with reference to Jesus' own people not recognising him, similarly in the final few verses even Peter, his very own disciple, did not recognise him at first. The abundant life that Jesus came to bring<sup>91</sup> begins when we see who Jesus really is.

**PRAYER** *O God, you are my God, earnestly I seek you, my soul thirsts for you, my flesh faints for you as in a dry and weary land where there is no water. I have come to you that I might have life. You alone satisfy the longings of my soul.*

**MOLDOVA** Moldova is one of the poorest countries in Europe. Many women have been victims of the European sex slave trade.

Population: 4,040,000

Largest religion: Christian ?% (Evangelical ?%)

## READINGS

### PSALM 110:4

*The Lord has sworn and will not change his mind, "You are a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek."*

### JOHN 7:37b-38

*If anyone thirsts let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the scripture has said, "Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water."*

**In this desperately dry and spiritually barren land, may many in their thirst come to you and drink. For you are that well of living water that will not run dry.**

<sup>86</sup> John 20:31. <sup>87</sup> John 8:12, John 6:35, John 14:6, John 11:25-26, John 10:9, John 10:11, John 15:5.

<sup>88</sup> Hays, R.B. 316. <sup>89</sup> John 7:38. <sup>90</sup> Hays, R.B. *Echoes of Scripture in the Gospels*, Baylor University, 315. <sup>91</sup> John 10:10

# THE HOLY SPIRIT EMPOWERS THE CHURCH TO GO INTO THE WORLD

**A**cts was addressed to Theophilus and was most probably written by Luke, the companion of Paul. It records the astonishing growth and multiplication of the Church in the first few years after Jesus Christ's resurrection.<sup>92</sup> Jesus had commissioned his disciples to be his witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and to the ends of the earth, but he had told his disciples to wait first until they were clothed with power from on high. Then he ascended to heaven. As the disciples waited the Holy Spirit came down like fire from heaven and Peter preached with fresh revelation that Jesus was now exalted at the right hand of the Father.<sup>93</sup> These uneducated fishermen who had been with Jesus then continued his work and ministry, preaching the Gospel with signs and wonders following. This amazed and astounded the watching world as simple believers devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching, the breaking of bread and prayer. They held everything in common and lived holy lives in the fear of the Lord, and despite martyrdom they proceeded to turn the world upside down, preaching hope in the resurrection of Jesus from the dead.

## Paul's missionary journeys

Stephen was martyred and then Saul breathed out murderous threats against the Early Church. He was then radically converted and left blinded by his encounter with Jesus on the Damascus Road. After Cornelius had been led to him and Saul's eyesight restored, Saul — known as Paul to the Gentile world — travelled tirelessly despite opposition, preaching the gospel to Jew and Gentile alike. James was killed and Peter imprisoned, and Barnabas and Paul set off for their first missionary journey, starting in Syria and travelling to Cyprus and Asia Minor. In their second missionary journey, Paul and Barnabas went to Syrian Antioch. On the third journey Paul travelled to Galatia and Phrygia in Asia Minor. His defence against Agrippa, Festus and Felix culminated with his journey to Rome, and then he survived a shipwreck as he made his way to be tried before Caesar.

**PRAYER** *"O God of burning cleansing flame, send the fire, your blood-bought gift today we claim, send the fire today! Look down and see this waiting host, and send the promised Holy Ghost, we need another Pentecost, send the fire today!" (William Booth)*

**MONACO** Famous for the Grand Prix, Monaco has a materialist and indifferent culture to a strong Catholic church community.

Population: 38,695

Largest religion: Christian 85% (Evangelical 1%)

## READINGS

### PSALM 110:5

*The Lord is at your right hand.*

### ACTS 1:8

*"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth."*

**Send the fire today in Monaco, your promised fire, send the rain today and cleanse and burn away all indifference and materialism.**

## THE RIGHT TO BE CHILDREN OF GOD FOR JEW AND GENTILE ALIKE

**P**aul was a Jew born into a family of Pharisees<sup>94</sup> of the tribe of Benjamin<sup>95</sup> in Tarsus of Cilicia.<sup>96</sup> Paul was exhorting the Church in Rome to the obedience that comes from having one faith (both Jew and Gentile) in Jesus Christ. There was conflict in the Church in Rome between Jews and Gentiles. The Jews had been expelled from Rome and had now returned five years later, and there would therefore have been cultural tensions between the two. Paul said that all Jews and Gentiles are under the power of sin, but although all have sinned, all can now be justified by God's grace as a gift. The Jews should not put all their hope in circumcision or in being descended from Abraham. Abraham was saved by faith just like the Gentiles and was justified by faith, not works. Abraham did not weaken in his faith when he considered the barrenness of Sarah's womb.<sup>97</sup> Abraham's righteousness was never based on his bloodline, but on the promises of God. Christ gave a free gift of righteousness to all. Through Christ's death, Jew and Gentile alike both have the right to be part of the same family, the right to be children of God.

### READINGS

#### PSALM 113:9

*He gives the barren woman a home, making her the joyous mother of children.*

#### ROMANS 4:13

*For the promise to Abraham and his offspring that he would be heir of the world, did not come through the law but through the righteousness of faith.*

### Call to faith and unity

This letter is a call to unity to the Gentile and Jewish Church in Rome, that no division will bring separation from the love of God. A universal truth for both Jew and Gentile is that if you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead you will be saved. The inclusion of the Gentiles was to make Israel jealous and is a reminder that ultimately redemption is for everyone who wants to have saving faith. The purpose of the gospel is to bring about the obedience of faith and unity.

**PRAYER** *Thank you that through the righteousness of faith, I can be a son of God. You have purposed for me an obedience that comes from faith, that I may lay hold of all your calling on my life to be a child of God, a son and an heir! I choose to walk in obedience today.*

---

**MONTENEGRO** A small newly independent country, with the ethnic tensions that are rife in the Balkan nations. The global financial crisis has had a negative impact on this country.

Population: 622,471

Largest religion: Christian 77% (Evangelical 0.0%)

**Heal the deep wounds of the past and bring unity to the different ethnic groups, the Bosnians, the Albanians and the Romani. We call forth sons of the living God in Montenegro!**

## BUILT ON CHRIST AND HIS LOVE

Corinth was a military and commercial strategic location and a melting pot for religion, culture, philosophy and lifestyles, and was a seaport where there was debauchery and a strongly sexualised culture. The founding of the Corinthian Church was described in Acts 18. Paul probably wrote his first letter to the Corinthians from Ephesus<sup>98</sup> during his third missionary journey.<sup>99</sup> Paul and Sosthenes had heard in a report from Chloe that there had been divisions and factions in the Church in Corinth. Paul emphasised the importance of the cross, saying that the cross is not about the superior eloquence of the leader of one faction over another. The cross is the power of God and the wisdom of God, though it is foolishness in the world's eyes. The kingdom of God is not a matter of talk but of power. Paul goes on to argue that both he and Apollos are not in competition, as he (Paul) planted whereas Apollos watered. As God's people laboured together, God was building his people into a holy temple.

Addressing the Corinthian Church in a strongly sexualised culture, Paul emphasises the importance of abstaining from sexual immorality. The body is the temple of the Holy Spirit. He challenged the Corinthians to keep "eros" love within marriage. This would have been helpful, practical discipleship for those coming from a pagan, idolatrous background and would have been instructional on how to love one's brethren and marriage partner in a church that was planted in a depraved society.

### Earnestly desire the spiritual gifts

Paul contrasted the way of idolatry with the way of love. The spiritual gifts are a manifestation of the spirit for the common good. Paul outlines the spiritual gifts of wisdom, knowledge, faith, healing, miracles, prophecy, discernment, tongues, and interpretation of tongues. The Corinthians should make love their aim and earnestly desire the spiritual gifts, especially prophecy.

**PRAYER** *I trust in you and your character, Lord Jesus ... for your name ... your character is a strong tower and the righteous run into it and are safe. I will make love my aim, especially that I might prophesy. May I be conformed into your likeness, Lord Jesus, in my character and my gifting, built on your love.*

### READINGS

#### PSALM 118:22

*The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone.*

#### 1 CORINTHIANS 1:25

*For the foolishness of God is wiser than men and the weakness of God is stronger than men.*

**NETHERLANDS** A rich Christian heritage from the Protestant Reformation. Immigrant churches now bringing vitality and diversity.

Population: 16,653,346

Largest religion: Christian 47% (Evangelical 4%)

**Rebuild the Netherlands on sure foundations. Where apathy is masked by Dutch tolerance may a passion for you, Jesus, and your name break out in the Netherlands. Conform this nation into your likeness.**



## POWER MADE PERFECT IN WEAKNESS

**P**aul probably wrote his second letter to the Corinthians 12–15 months after he wrote 1 Corinthians, from Macedonia, where Paul had met Titus.<sup>100 101</sup> Paul was now encouraging the Corinthians that just as he has been comforted in his sufferings with the comfort he had received from Christ, so they could be comforted too. Paul was correcting a misunderstanding, that Christians should not suffer, showing them that their suffering is part of the lot of the believer. He said that the Spirit of God writes on our hearts like ink on a tablet and that Christ is in us, like treasure in a clay vessel. He encouraged them that though they were weak vessels they were constantly able to be in the Lord's presence, letting the glory of God shine out. Paul said that God's power is made perfect in weakness and as servants of God, and he and Timothy had commended themselves to the Corinthians through their great endurance, afflictions, hardships and calamities.

**Paul received grace in weakness**

Paul challenged the Corinthians to excel in giving, saying that Christ was their example. For their sakes he who was rich became poor. Christ's example of giving was an example to them to give out of their abundance. Paul explained the importance of giving and how "God loves a cheerful giver". So, Paul reminded the Church of Corinth to give towards the Jerusalem offering. Paul used military language, as many of the Corinthian Church were retired soldiers, to explain how believers destroy arguments and every obstacle raised up against the knowledge of God. Paul dared to boast of the afflictions, punishments and sacrifices he made for the cause of Christ. The grace of the Lord was sufficient for the Corinthians. Christ's power is made perfect in weakness and Paul's legitimacy as an apostle was in his weakness.

**PRAYER** *Thank you, Lord, that your grace is sufficient for me and that your power is made perfect in weakness. In my weakness and in all the troubles I face today I take my strength from you, Lord, for you have gone before me ... I receive from you all the grace I need for this day.*

**NORTH MACEDONIA** This is one of the poorest regions of the former Yugoslavia. The evangelical witness is small but growing.

Population: 2,043,360

Largest religion: Christian 65% (Evangelical 0.2%)

**READINGS****PSALM 119:32**

*Turn to me and be gracious to me as is your way with those who love your name.*

**2 CORINTHIANS 12:9**

*"My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore, I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me.*

**Lord, your grace is sufficient for North Macedonia. Pour out your Holy Spirit on the Orthodox Church. Strengthen the evangelical witness in North Macedonia. Remove the racial tensions and grow a vibrant Church in this country, standing strong for you, Jesus!**

## BE FREE

**P**aul begins writing his message to the Galatians — that is to the Christian Jews of Galatia and Christian Gentiles in Galatia — by saying that he is astounded that they have turned away so quickly to a different gospel. Paul is making his strong contention that “a person is justified through faith not by works of the law.” To require believers to be circumcised would have been a different gospel. Paul explains that the law is like a schoolteacher leading believers to Christ. The righteous will live by faith and that faith is based on a promise to Abraham that was not annulled by law of Moses. This idea that the law was a schoolteacher would have been a powerful metaphor, providing a defence for the gospel of grace, bringing correction to the Judaisers, by saying that they were no longer under a hard schoolteacher whose standards they could never attain.

**Christ has set us free**

Paul continues his argument by saying that the Church is a child of the promise not a child of the slave woman. As a result, the Church should rejoice because it is free and has an inheritance of freedom not of slavery. Paul argues that it is for freedom that Christ has set us free and that we should not to submit to a yoke of slavery, otherwise Christ will be of no benefit, for in Christ there is neither circumcision nor uncircumcision. Paul concludes by saying that he has provided a defence for the gospel of grace and he emphasises the two ways of living that are diametrically opposed. Living by the Spirit requires sowing to the Spirit. Living by the law is a different gospel. He goes on to say that his boast is not in obeying the law but in the cross of Christ. Paul who used to be a fanatical Pharisee is now following Christ and he bears the marks of Jesus on his body. This way of freedom, he says, is to follow Christ and to be free to live by the Spirit and not to come under the yoke of slavery, the yoke of the law.

**PRAYER** *I lift up my eyes to the hills! From where does my help come from? My help comes from you, Lord, who made the heavens and the earth. It is for freedom that you set me free, not to be under a yoke of slavery. I put my hope and trust in you.*

---

**NORWAY** The majority of the nation are church members but Islam is the second largest religion in Norway.

Population: 4,409,659

Largest religion: Christian 92% (Evangelical 0.4%)

**READINGS****PSALM 121:1**

*I lift up my eyes to the hills. From where does my help come from.*

**GALATIANS 5:1**

*For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.*

**For freedom Norway has been set free! As we look at the beautiful mountains in Norway we ask where does the hope for freedom for Norway come? It comes from you, Lord!**

## SIT WALK STAND

**P**aul was writing this beautiful poetic letter from prison to the Church in the rich city of Ephesus. Just as a speck of sand irritates an oyster in its shell, but produces a beautiful pearl, so this letter to the Ephesians would have been received as a beautiful precious pearl from Paul the apostle, fashioned in hard circumstances, while he was chained to a Roman guard in a Roman prison. In a long and inspirational opening, he emphasises the spiritual wealth of the believer in Christ. They had been dead in their transgressions and sins, following the ways of the world but now they had been raised up with Christ and were seated with him in heavenly places. Paul calls them to live a lifestyle worthy of their calling and to abandon their former way of life that was futile, corrupt and deluded.

**Wake up, O sleeper**

Paul challenges the Ephesians to walk out their Christian lives in a manner worthy of their calling, to grow in maturity and unity, and to put aside sexual immorality and angry speech. At one time these Ephesians he was addressing were in darkness but now they should live as children of light and should wake up from sleep, because the days are evil.<sup>102</sup> Paul encourages them to flee fornication and to stay alert and not to get drunk with wine but be filled with the Holy Spirit. At the same time Paul said the Ephesians were also to stand against the Devil and all his schemes. The believer should put on his spiritual armour, including the helmet of salvation, the sword of the Spirit, the shield of faith, the belt of truth and breastplate of righteousness, his feet shod with the gospel of peace, staying alert and always keeping on praying. Paul was exhorting the Ephesian Christians to live a balanced Christian life to sit, to walk and to stand.<sup>103</sup>

**PRAYER** *Lord, I thank you that you are my keeper and at my right hand ... that you have chosen me in love as a son according to your purpose and will and I am seated with you in heavenly places. I choose to live and walk in a manner worthy of my calling. Help me, Lord, to keep alert and stand firm against all the wiles of the enemy today.*

---

**POLAND** The Catholic Church kept Poland afloat during the communist era. Now there is spiritual stagnation.

Population: 38,038,094

Largest religion: Christian 90% (Evangelical 0.3%)

**READINGS****PSALM 121:5**

*The Lord is your keeper; the Lord is your shade on your right hand.*

**EPHESIANS 2:13**

*But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.*

**Open the eyes of the Church in Poland to know that it has an authority in you. It is seated with you in heavenly places, it is walking out its calling on this earth and it is standing against the enemy!**

## BE HUMBLE AND OBEDIENT LIKE CHRIST

**P**aul came to Philippi as a result of a vision he had when he was at Troas, and Acts 16 records how Lydia provided hospitality, Paul had been released from prison and a jailer had come to Christ in Philippi. In this letter Paul calls Philippians to live a life of service with no entitlements, exemplified by Christ who lived a life of obedience and humility.<sup>104</sup>

**Surpassing greatness of knowing Christ**

Paul encouraged the Philippians to hold fast to the word of life in a crooked and corrupt generation. In this way, they could be joyful in suffering and deal with problems of disunity in church. Paul exhorted the Philippians to “beware” of putting confidence in the flesh, although Paul had every reason to be confident in the flesh. He was circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews ... but he said that he counted everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ.<sup>105</sup> Paul said that “to gain the world and not to have Christ is the loss of everything.” The Philippian Church in the city would have highly valued Roman citizenship but Paul said that the Philippians should recognise their real citizenship was heavenly not Roman, and put confidence in that. He was pressing on that he might gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of his own that comes from the law but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith. He encouraged the Philippians to rejoice and not to worry and to focus on honourable things, saying that if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, then ... think about these things. He said in closing that he had learned how to abase and how to abound in all circumstances, that he could do all things through Christ who gave him strength.

**PRAYER** *As a servant looks to the hand of his master I look to you, O Lord. Help me above all to become like you, Lord Jesus, and to press on to that place where lasting joy remains.*

**READINGS****PSALM 123:2**

*Behold as the eyes of servants look to the hand of the master, as the eyes of a maidservant to the hand of her mistress, so our eyes look to the Lord our God till he has mercy upon us.*

**PHILIPPIANS 2:6–7**

*Who though he was in the form of God did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself by taking the form of a servant.*

---

**PORTUGAL** The strength and passion of the Church in Portugal comes from the immigrants, particularly the Brazilians.

Population: 10,732,357

Largest religion: Christian 94.4% (Evangelical 3%)

**Lord, we pray for the Church in Portugal to press on to become like you, Jesus. May a passion for Christ-likeness burn brightly in Portugal, we pray.**

## WALK LIKE CHRIST

In this letter Paul wrote with Timothy<sup>106</sup> from prison<sup>107</sup> to a Christian community in Colossae, addressing a number of themes. False teaching had taken root in Colossae. Jewish Christians in Colossae had been influenced by Judaizers who had been attempting to impose the Jewish ‘way of life’ on Gentile Christians. The former religion of the Gentile Christians of Colossae was pagan and they had worshipped a multitude of pagan gods. After encouraging the Colossians that they have a hope laid up for them in heaven, and that they will be able to endure and remain faithful to the Lord, he then corrects them from drifting into error, emphasising the supremacy and centrality of Christ alone, saying that Christ alone saves from sin. Paul was challenging the Colossians to not let anyone take them captive through deceptive philosophy and empty deceit according human tradition, but to hold firm to the truth that the fullness of the deity dwells in Christ. Religious observance had no value in checking indulgence to sin.

**Word of Christ dwell richly**

Paul says that if they have been raised with Christ and are seated at the right hand of God, they should set their minds on things above. They are to strip off their old selves. They are to “put to death therefore what is earthly in your sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness which is idolatry.”<sup>108</sup> They are to clothe themselves with the new self. He tells them “to put on as God’s chosen ones holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness and humility, meekness and patience bearing with one another and if one has a complaint against another forgiving each other as the Lord has forgiven you.”<sup>109</sup> He exhorts them to let the peace of Christ rule in their hearts and to let the word of Christ dwell in them richly.

**PRAYER** *Lord, give me more fear of you that I might walk in your ways and not in the ways of the world. I put off unclean thoughts, impurity, the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh and the pride of life and I put on compassion, kindness, humility and meekness. Help me to endure and remain faithful as I walk out my faith this day.*

**ROMANIA** There is a legacy of brokenness from the era when Ceausescu was president. There is a high rate of abortion and high levels of poverty.

Population: 21,190,154

Largest religion: Christian 96.9% (Evangelical 5.4%)

**READINGS****PSALM 128:1**

*Blessed is everyone who fears the Lord, who walks in his ways.*

**COLOSSIANS 3:5**

*Put to death therefore what is earthly in you, sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness which is idolatry. On account of these the wrath of God is coming. In these you too once walked when you were living in them.*

**Your gospel is good news for the poor. A bruised reed you will not break. May your word dwell richly in the hearts of your Romanian Church. Heal Romania, we pray!**

## LIVING BLAMELESSLY AND WORKING UNTIL THE RETURN OF CHRIST

In his first letter to the Thessalonians, Paul addresses the church in Thessalonica that he founded on his second missionary journey,<sup>110</sup> telling them that even through persecution they should live blamelessly until the return of Christ. He encouraged them to be patient and to put their hope in Jesus, who will rescue them from the wrath that is coming. He also encouraged them to live quietly, to mind their own affairs and to work with their hands, as they respond to this call to holiness to live a life of impurity but to abstain from fornication. He told them that suddenly destruction will come upon those who find their peace and security in things other than the Lord Jesus. The Day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. It will come suddenly, as the labour pains of a pregnant woman. But Jesus is the hope of their salvation. He said that they should be patient and pray without ceasing. He calls them children of the day, exhorting them to keep awake and to be sober, with a final prayer that “their whole spirit and soul and body might be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

### READINGS

#### PSALM 130:5–6

*I wait for the Lord, my soul waits and in his word I put my hope.*

#### 1 THESSALONIANS 1:10

*... to wait for his Son from heaven whom he raised from the dead who delivers us from the wrath to come.*

### Working until Christ's return

In Paul's second letter, he challenged them to keep working until Christ's return. Paul prayed for the Thessalonians, that they will be worthy of the call on their lives and will fulfil in Jesus' strength every good resolve and work of faith. Paul told the Thessalonians that it had come to his attention that some had not been willing to work (apparently, they were overly focused on the Day of the Lord). He said that if anyone was unwilling to work he should not eat. Despite persecution they should pray and persevere and even though they might be tempted to criticise their leaders, they should respect them and they should also sanctify themselves, and be pure in spirit, soul and body.

**PRAYER** *My soul waits for the Lord more than watchmen wait for the morning. I wait for you and long for your appearing, Lord Jesus. I put my hope in you. May my whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus. Deliver me from the wrath to come.*

---

**RUSSIA** This is geographically the largest nation in the world. Powerful oligarchs remain influential and criminal networks too in this post-communist country.

Population: 140,366,561

Largest religion: Christian 66.9% (Evangelical 1.2%)

**You are the hope of this nation! Raise up Christian leaders, disciple the Church. We wait for you, Lord Jesus, and your appearing!**

## TEACH SOUND DOCTRINE

In Paul's first letter to Timothy he is writing from Macedonia.<sup>111</sup> Timothy had been left in Ephesus to oversee the congregation. Paul was deeply troubled by false teaching, and he is charging Timothy that the aim of all his instruction that he gives to his congregation should be love that comes from a pure heart, a good conscience<sup>112</sup> and sincere faith. Paul was helping him to discern sound doctrine from false instruction. As his spiritual son he said that Timothy should fight the good fight in spiritually godless Ephesus. Some have had their faith shipwrecked but he, Timothy, should hold his faith and keep a good conscience. Paul charged Timothy not to despise his youth but to set an example for the believers in faith, love and purity; to devote himself to public reading of scripture, exhortation and teaching; and to not neglect the gifts he was given by prophecy when the elders laid their hands on him.

### Guard the deposit entrusted to you

Paul told Timothy that those who want to be rich, fall into temptation and the love of money is the root of all kinds of evils. It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs. He says, "But as for you, O man of God, flee these things and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, steadfastness, and gentleness. Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called and about which you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses." Paul continues: "As for the rich, charge them not to be haughty, nor to set their hopes on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly provides us with everything to enjoy. They are to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous, ready to share, thus storing up treasure for themselves as a good foundation for the future." This was Paul's injunction to Timothy: "Guard the deposit entrusted to you."<sup>113</sup>

**PRAYER** *I have calmed and quieted my soul, like a weaned child with its mother. Thank you for the deposit that you have entrusted me with, that love that I have received as an adopted member of your heavenly family, that love that comes from a pure heart, a good conscience and sincere faith. Help me to guard that deposit and to be proved faithful!*

### READINGS

#### PSALM 131:2

*I have calmed and quieted my soul, like a weaned child with its mother.*

#### 1 TIMOTHY 1: 5

*The aim of our charge is love that issues from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith.*

---

**SAN MARINO** There is freedom to worship but very little evangelism takes place. Outreach has resulted in jailing or expulsion.

Population: 31,537

Largest religion: Christian 88.8% (Evangelical 0.0%)

**This nominally Christian country needs you, Lord! Pour out your Spirit on San Marino and mobilise the Church to preach the gospel ... may it be faithful!**

# ENTRUST TEACHING TO FAITHFUL WITNESSES

**P**aul is writing again to Timothy in Ephesus.<sup>114</sup> He wrote from a Roman prison, encouraging Timothy to complete the fight, to stand strong in the faith, to discern false teachers, and to continue to carry out his ministry. Paul was nearing the end of his life and he began by reminding Timothy of all that had been invested in him, of his grandmother Lois and his mother Eunice, and he exhorted him to fan into flame the gift of God, which was in him through the laying on of his hands. He told Timothy not to be ashamed of his testimony or to be ashamed of Paul that he was imprisoned suffering for the gospel. This is the reason that Paul suffers as he does. Paul himself is not ashamed of the gospel, and says that he is convinced that he is able to guard what has been given to him until the day of the appearing of Jesus Christ. Timothy should follow the pattern of sound teaching that he had been given.

## Present yourself a workman

Paul says that life is like a race that needs to be run like an athlete with perseverance and it is a fight that needs to be fought like a soldier, it is a work that needs the endurance of a hard-working farmer. Suffering and endurance are part of the assignment. Putting off a spirit of timidity and shamelessly keeping his pattern of teaching is Paul's exhortation to Timothy, fleeing youthful passions and pursuing righteousness, faith, love and peace, and having nothing to do with foolish ignorant controversies. He will finish that race worthily and take up that victor's crown, and when he stands before the Lord, the righteous judge on that day, he will be found faithful. Persecution, godlessness and hardship will be terrible in the last days. This letter is a passionate call to endure and remain faithful to live a holy life as an instrument for noble purposes in order to obtain that salvation that is in Christ who will rescue him from every evil deed.

**PRAYER** *Lord, I thank you that I am a spiritual son with a heavenly entrustment. Give me the grace to endure and to remain faithful to the ministry you have called me, in order that might obtain that salvation that is in you Lord, who rescues me from all evil. I put my hope in you, Lord!*

---

**SERBIA** Although Protestantism has a long history among Hungarian and Slovak minorities, there is little impact on Slovaks and Albanians in Serbia.

Population: 4,409,659

Largest religion: Christian 92% (Evangelical 0.4%)

## READINGS

### PSALM 131:3

*O Israel, hope in the Lord.*

### 2 TIMOTHY 2:15

*Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth.*

**We pray for a faithful witness to the very end among the Slovaks and Albanians, and for a family of nations living in your presence in this ethnically diverse country.**



## BE TRAINED FOR GODLINESS

The main reason for Paul writing this letter was to warn Titus against false teaching in Crete and to give him advice on sound doctrine and renouncing worldly passions. Paul had left Titus on the island of Crete<sup>115</sup> to continue establishing churches by appointing elders in every city as Paul had directed him.<sup>116</sup> There are a number of themes in this letter, but “restoring the church back to a godly standard” is probably the main one. Crete was a prosperous but immoral place. There was fertile soil and much growing of grapes, and a culture of drinking was common. To worship the god of wine the Cretans would get drunk. So Paul showed Titus that the only way to adopt a godly lifestyle was to grasp the doctrine of grace. It is the grace of God that brings salvation for all people, training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in the present evil age.<sup>112</sup>

**Teach sound doctrine**

Paul began the letter urging the Greek Church to live a godly lifestyle in this godless place. Paul reminded his readers that Cretans are referred to as “always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons.” So, Paul instructed Titus to rebuke them that they may be sound in the faith, not devoting themselves to Jewish myths and commands of people who turn away from the truth. Paul encouraged the leaders to lead by example. They must not be arrogant or quick tempered or drunkards or violent or greedy for gain, but hospitable, lovers of good, self-controlled, upright, holy and disciplined. Paul commanded Titus to teach the Church in Crete what accords with sound doctrine, namely that each category within the Church should be self-controlled and submissive. Finally he reminded Titus that he and all his Church were called for every good work and were justified by the grace of God, that they might be heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

**PRAYER** *Lord, I thank you that it is the grace of God that has appeared and has brought salvation for me, training me to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions and to live a godly life in the present evil age. I receive that grace today. Thank you, Lord!*

**SLOVAKIA** There is high foreign investment in this low-cost nation with a highly skilled labour force. A nominally Christian nation, the foreign mission presence in Slovakia has plateaued.

Population: 5,411,640

Largest religion: Christian 93.3% (Evangelical 1.2%)

**READINGS****PSALM 132: 11–12**

*If your sons keep my covenant and my testimonies that I shall teach them, their sons also forever shall sit on your throne.*

**TITUS 2:11**

*The grace of God has appeared bringing salvation for all people, training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in the present evil age.*

**We pray for renewal and training for both Christian leaders and believers in Slovakia, to renounce materialism and worldly passions and to live a godly life.**

## BE RECONCILED!

Paul was writing from prison in Rome<sup>118</sup> to Philemon, a believer, telling him of his affection for Onesimus, a runaway slave who was owned by Philemon. Paul was sending Onesimus back to his owner. Philemon had every right under Roman law to punish Onesimus as he saw fit. Philemon lived in the Roman culture which treated individuals as property instead of persons. Slavery was integrated into the social and economic way of the whole Roman Empire and was the accepted way of life in the ancient world. This letter concerned pardoning an offence and forgiving someone who the state regarded as a criminal.

**Formerly useless now useful**

It was Philemon's legal right to punish or even kill a runaway slave. Slaves were considered as the legal property of their masters and were at the mercy of their masters. An individual might become a slave through the conviction of a crime, through being born to a slave, being sold as a child, through being a prisoner of war, or through selling oneself. The punishment for rebellion was crucifixion and punishment for a runaway was torture or being branded. If someone housed a runaway slave that person was also legally responsible and had committed a crime. Even though Paul knew that slavery was not good, he did not seem to address slavery, but seemed to be appealing to Philemon on the basis of his relationship with him.<sup>119</sup> Paul said that Philemon was loving and faithful,<sup>120</sup> a beloved brother.<sup>121</sup> The name Onesimus means "useful". Paul used some word play when he said, "formerly he was useless to you and now indeed he is useful to you and me."<sup>122</sup> He said to Philemon, "I am sending him back to you, sending my very heart." He went<sup>123</sup> on to say, "I would have been glad to keep him with me, in order that he might serve me on your behalf during my imprisonment for the gospel, but I preferred to do nothing without your consent in order that your goodness might not be by my compulsion but of your own accord."<sup>124</sup> The fact that this letter was preserved indicates that Onesimus was welcomed back as a brother. Traditionally it is understood that Onesimus became a bishop.

**PRAYER** *Lord, help me to have a forgiving and merciful heart, that I might be quick to extend grace and mercy to others, both forgiving and forbearing those around me.*

**READINGS****PSALM 133:1-3**

*How good and pleasant it is when brothers dwell in unity.*

**PHILEMON 12**

*I am sending him back to you, sending my very heart.*

**SLOVENIA** The Catholic, Orthodox and Lutherans lack vitality and there is division between the ethnic minorities.

Population: 2,024,912

Largest religion: Christian 54% (Evangelical 0.1%)

**Help the Slovenians to live in unity. Give them a forgiving and merciful heart for one another and breath your Holy Spirit into your Church in that nation. Renew it by your power and with your love.**

## JESUS THE GREAT HIGH PRIEST: STAND FIRM

**T**he book of Hebrews declares that Jesus Christ is superior over everyone, over any and every prophet, angel and priest. Jesus is better and the new covenant is better than the old covenant. He is the heir of all things and the radiance of God's glory and he has sat down at the right hand of the Father. It is this Jesus who is now exalted above everyone and everything. He is greater than Moses, for although Moses was a faithful servant, Jesus is a faithful son. He is also a Great High Priest forever in the order of Melchizedek, making the old covenant obsolete. As the mediator of that better covenant he is able to save to the uttermost, because of his once-and-for-all perfect sacrifice.

### Fix your eyes on Jesus

The writer of Hebrews said that Jesus opened a new and living way through the curtain when he died on the cross. Since we have a great high priest over the house of God, let us approach him with a true heart in full assurance of faith. It is by that assurance of faith that the children of God overcome. It is by that faith that Abraham obeyed God, by faith looking forward to the city that has foundations whose architect and builder is God. The world was not worthy of the men and women of faith in the past who persevered despite opposition and persecution. By fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, and by throwing off entangling sin, the faithful can overcome. We have not just come to a physical mountain like Moses who was given the 10 commandments, we have come to the heavenly Jerusalem, to the judge of all men, to Jesus the mediator of a better covenant. We have received a spiritual kingdom and not an earthly one, and so we are to worship God with reverence and awe and to continually offer a sacrifice of praise – the fruit of lips that confess his name.

**PRAYER** *Lord, you are my God ... give ear to the voice of my pleas for mercy, O Lord. You are my Great High Priest, Lord Jesus Christ, you are able to save me to the uttermost! Hear my cry!*

### READINGS

#### PSALM 140:6

*I say to the Lord, You are my God; give ear to the voice of my pleas for mercy, O Lord!*

#### HEBREWS 7:25

*Consequently, he is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them.*

---

**SPAIN** Spain is a strongly Catholic nation in desperate need of an evangelical presence. Most of its evangelicals live in the Canary Islands.

Population: 45,450,497

Largest religion: Christian 77% (Evangelical 1%)

**You are our Great High Priest, Lord Jesus, and you are able to save Spain completely. I lift up the Basques and the Muslims in Spain. In your mercy save this nation, I pray.**

## GUARD YOUR TONGUE

There are four possible people with the name James that could have written this letter, but James the brother of Jesus (the oldest of Jesus' four brothers)<sup>125</sup> was probably the most likely author.<sup>126</sup> After the ascension of Jesus, James had emerged as a leader of the Church in Jerusalem,<sup>127</sup> a position that he occupied for nearly 30 years until his martyrdom, according to church tradition. He would have been writing to the Jewish Christians who had scattered from Jerusalem after the persecution that took place at the beginning of the book of Acts. James begins his letter, telling his readers that the testing of their faith produces endurance. To these Jewish Christians, for whom persecution was very real, this would have been a great encouragement, to let the word of Christ bear fruit in their hearts even through testing.

**The tongue is like a fire**

James encourages patient endurance like Job. God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble, and for those who were among the working-class poor, this letter would have an encouragement as well, to endure being mistreated by the rich. James says it is important not to treat people according to their wealth or lack of it. The rich will disappear like flowers in the midst of a busy life and there will come a day when the rich will weep and wail because of the miseries that are coming to them because of their riches. James speaks about the importance of living out one's faith in practice, saying that faith without works is dead. Both legalism and licence are possible responses to Christ's finished work on the cross, and whereas Paul highlights the danger of legalism in his letter to the Galatians, James addresses licence. The Christian's speech and prayer life are both very important. The tongue desperately needs bridling just as a beast or a bird needs taming.<sup>128</sup> He also encourages to pray like Elijah, who was a man just like us and who prayed fervently and the Lord heard his prayers and answered them.

**PRAYER** *Lord, show me where I have lied, deceitfully planning to make an impression contrary to the naked truth ... where I have slandered another person, talking about someone behind their back in a way I would not be willing before their face, and ... where I have criticised, speaking about others without love. Set a guard over my mouth, O Lord.*

---

**SWEDEN** Humanism and liberalism have deeply affected the universities and theological colleges in Sweden.

Population: 4,409,659

Largest religion: Christian 92% (Evangelical 0.4%)

**READINGS****PSALM 141:3**

*Set a guard, O Lord, over my mouth.*

**JAMES 4:8**

*But no human can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil full of deadly poison.*

**We pray for the proclamation of the word of truth in Sweden in the training of the next generation and in a release of a new wave of missionaries from Sweden to the nations.**

# GUARD THAT INHERITANCE KEPT IN HEAVEN FOR YOU

**T**he first letter of Peter was written shortly before Peter's death, in a time of great suffering for the Early Church. This letter would have prepared the church for Nero's persecution following AD64. During this time of great chaos, the truth that Jesus Christ is the living stone rejected by man but chosen by God was a truth that believers could stand on. They were born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead to an inheritance that is imperishable undefiled and unfading. They were redeemed from the futile ways of their forefather by the precious blood of Jesus Christ. Although strangers in this world, they were a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God. Nothing less than radical obedience to Jesus will build God's kingdom in a wicked and rebellious age. Those living stones that God is building together as a spiritual temple may feel rejection and shame and of little worth in the world's eyes. However, he is building his people as a dwelling place for his Son and the trials that they were enduring were a refining fire, purifying them and producing a faith more precious than gold.

## The Devil prowls like a lion

The call to endure opposition and stand firm in the face of persecution would lead to eternal rewards. This was a call to rejoice in suffering. God would accomplish his purpose through the patient endurance of a suffering Church; Jesus the Great Shepherd of the sheep would give them a crown of glory that will not fade or perish. So, Peter's final words to the persecuted church were: "Your adversary the devil prowls around like a lion seeking someone to devour. Resist him firm in your faith ... and after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen and establish you. To him be the dominion forever and ever. Amen."<sup>129</sup>

**PRAYER** *Lord, you are my refuge, my portion in the land of the living. I thank you for that inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled and unfading, kept in heaven me. Show me how to endure difficulties and to rejoice in suffering.*

**SWITZERLAND** Christianity has a strong spiritual heritage in Switzerland and is mainly Catholic or reformed but now there are many other religious minorities also.

Population: 7,594,561

Largest religion: Christian 75.7% (Evangelical 4.4%)

## READINGS

### PSALM 142:5

*I cry to you, O Lord; I say, "You are my refuge, my portion in the land of the living.*

### 1 PETER 1:4–5

*To an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled and unfading, kept in heaven for you.*

**I pray for that spiritual inheritance that Switzerland has that is imperishable, undefiled and unfading and kept in heaven. Pour out your spirit and give the Swiss Church a burden for those of other faiths in their nation and beyond!**

## STAND STRONG AGAINST FALSE TEACHERS

**T**he second letter of Peter was written to messianic Jews and its primary purpose was to combat false teachers.

In the ancient world there was a widespread view that sparks of eternal light lay trapped within the prisons of human bodies. These sparks of light, which longed to return to their home, could be liberated only by gnosis or knowledge.

Peter countered this false teaching, reminding his readers that it is important to live godly lives. He, Peter, was an eyewitness of his majesty, Jesus Christ, and they, his readers were not following cleverly invented stories. He warns his readers that throughout Asia Minor there are false teachers who have introduced destructive heresies. They are springs without water and mists driven by the storm. Although false teachers promise freedom, they themselves were slaves of corruption. For whatever overcomes a person — to that he is enslaved. For if after they have escaped the defilements of the world through the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ and are again entangled and overcome, the last state has become worse than the first. The dog returns to its own vomit.<sup>130</sup>

### Live godly lives

Peter says that they are to make every effort to live godly lives and to be found spotless and blameless when the day of the Lord comes, and come it will. There was a false teaching that Jesus was not going to return but in response Peter said God did create the world and he is coming again to judge the world. “The day of the Lord would come like a thief in the night.”<sup>131</sup> The world needs waking up out of sleep; the time will come in the last days when people have deliberately overlooked the fact that the God who created the heavens and the earth through his word, through that same God and his word, the heavens and earth “are stored up for fire, being kept until the day of judgement and destruction of the ungodly.”<sup>132</sup>

**PRAYER** *Lord, teach me to do your will, to keep awake, to keep the faith, to live a blameless life and to grow in the grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ and not to be deceived by false teaching.*

### READINGS

#### PSALM 143:10

*Teach me to do your will, O Lord, preserve my life! Let your good spirit lead me on level ground.*

#### 2 PETER 1:16

*For we did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

**TURKEY** Historically, Turkey was the guardian of Christendom. Now it is almost completely a Muslim nation.

Population: 75,705,147

Largest religion: Islam 96.6%; Christian 0.2%

**We pray for Turkey to wake up again. May the light of the gospel burn brightly once again! Where false teaching has robbed this nation of its destiny in Christ, come and move again, that a pure and spotless Church might stand strong in Turkey, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.**

## LOVE ONE ANOTHER

These three letters were written from Ephesus towards the end of the first century AD and are normally understood to be by John the apostle. He refers to his readers as “little children”. He must have been well known and well loved by those to whom he wrote. The apostle John was popular. He was one of Jesus’ closest disciples and called himself the “beloved disciple”.<sup>133</sup> In his first letter, John at the end of his life asserts some profound truths. God is light and in him is no darkness. Whoever hates his brother is walking in darkness.<sup>134</sup>

Love not the world, John writes endearingly to his readers, to those in the Church who are like children in the faith, “that their sins are forgiven.”<sup>135</sup> He says that “the Father has lavished his love on us so that, we can now be called children of God for that is what we are.”<sup>136</sup> Jesus appeared, and “the reason he appeared was to destroy the works of the evil one.”<sup>137</sup> John says that they are not to love the world ... “for the lusts of the eye, the lust of the flesh and the pride of life do not come from the Father but from the world.”<sup>138</sup>

**Love not the world**

In his second letter, John writes to the elect lady and her children, which is a personified way of referring to the Church and its believers. This letter is written to warn the Church, saying that the Church should not make space for false teachers, but should walk in the truth and love one another. In his third letter, John writes that the believers had been walking in the truth<sup>139</sup> and John is writing to deepen their spiritual life and to guard them against false teachers. He encourages them to be hospitable to travelling missionaries and to send them on their way in a manner worthy of God.

**PRAYER** *Lord, thank you for your steadfast love ... that if I walk in the light as you are in the light, I can have fellowship with my brothers and sisters in Christ. I can have love for them too. I confess my sins to you ... forgive my sins and purify me today, I pray.*

**READINGS****PSALM 144:2**

*He is my steadfast love and my fortress, my stronghold and my deliverer, my shield and he in whom I take refuge, who subdues people under me.*

**1 JOHN 3:1**

*See what kind of love the Father has given to us that we should be called children of God and so we are!*

**UKRAINE** Ukraine is very dependent on Russia for energy supplies. The Ukrainian Orthodox Church is torn by factions, loyal to competing factions.

Population: 45,433,415

Largest religion: Christian 79% (Evangelical 3.8%)

**Lord, cleanse the Ukrainian Church from unforgiveness and factionalism so that they may love one another. Shine your light on Ukraine and reveal to them the lavish love of the Father.**

## CONTEND FOR THE FAITH

Jude was the half-brother of Jesus, and he wrote this letter to encourage believers to contend for the faith and to build themselves up in the most holy faith. This letter from Jude is brief but hard-hitting. False teaching that there was grace in abundance had crept in stealthily and silently without being seen.<sup>140</sup> This teaching abused grace, giving Christians licence to do whatever they wanted. Jude gave three graphic examples of those who abused grace: firstly the Israelites who were saved out of Egypt but did not believe; secondly those angels who are locked up in chains until Judgement Day; and thirdly Sodom and Gomorrah, which indulged in sexual immorality. Three more instances are referenced — Cain rebelling, Balaam’s error and Korah’s rebellion.<sup>141</sup> Some vivid imagery is used by Jude to describe the effect of Cain, Balaam and Korah. They are described as waterless clouds, wild waves of the sea and wandering stars.<sup>142</sup> Like waterless clouds these false teachers had led people astray. Proverbs says, “Like clouds without rain, is a man who boasts of a gift he does not give.”<sup>143</sup>

**There will be scoffers**

In the last times there will be scoffers, following their own sinful desires<sup>144</sup> and their own ungodly passions. It is these who cause divisions. Jude tells his readers that they should contend for their faith, building themselves up in their most holy faith and “snatch”<sup>145</sup> others from the fire that they may be saved, keeping themselves in the love of God and waiting for the mercy of the Lord Jesus Christ that leads to eternal life. Jude closes with a prayer that the Lord would keep them from stumbling and present them blameless before him in the presence of his glory.<sup>146</sup>

**PRAYER** *Lord Jesus Christ, show me how to contend for my faith that I might be built up in the most holy faith. You are my rock. Train my hands for war and my fingers for battle. I stand on the truth. You are the way, the truth and the life, Lord Jesus. Give me the discernment to recognise false teaching and to fight against it.*

**READINGS****PSALM 144:1**

*Blessed be the Lord, my rock,  
who trains my hands for war,  
and my fingers for battle.*

**JUDE 3**

*Beloved, although I was very  
eager to write to you about our  
common salvation I found it  
necessary to write appealing to  
you to contend for the faith that  
was once for all delivered to the  
saints.*

**UNITED KINGDOM** The UK has a strong Christian heritage but now is a multifaith, secularised society with 26% having no religion.

**Population: 62,129,818**

**Largest religion: Christian 59.7% (Evangelical 8.8%)**

**Thank you for the destiny of  
this land to take your glory  
to the ends of the earth. We  
contend for a youth awakening  
unto the nations from the UK,  
once again!**



# THE DREAM HAS COME TRUE! KING JESUS REIGNS OVER ALL THE EARTH!

**T**he book of Revelation<sup>147</sup> or the apocalypse of John was written in a time of persecution in the first century by John the apostle, while he was exiled on the island of Patmos. “Apocalypse” means unveiling. John begins to prophesy,<sup>148</sup> giving letters to seven churches in Asia, encouraging them to persevere and giving them revelation and insight into what the end-time Church must overcome.<sup>149</sup>

## Rule with rod of iron

Jesus takes the scroll<sup>150</sup> — God’s battle plan to judge and cleanse the earth and to prepare the nations for Jesus’ rule.<sup>151</sup> Seven seals, seven trumpets and seven bowls are released on the Antichrist’s empire. Jesus is revealed, seated on a white horse called Faithful and True, and his eyes are like flames of fire; he is clothed in a robe dipped in blood; from his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations and he will rule them with a rod of iron. His name is “King of Kings and Lord of Lords”.<sup>152</sup> John sees a new heaven and a new earth and a new Jerusalem coming out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband, and he hears a loud voice saying, “Behold the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them and they will be his people and God himself will be with them as their God.”<sup>153</sup> There is a river of the water of life and, on each side, the tree of life and its leaves will be for the healing of the nations.<sup>154</sup> Jesus is coming soon and he will bring his recompense, repaying each one for what he has done.<sup>155</sup>

**PRAYER** *I line up with your will and your word. Come, King Jesus, and rule the nations with your rod of iron and dash the nations like pottery. May your dwelling place be with man. King Jesus, come and reign over all the earth! ... one family of nations with your presence.*

## READINGS

### PSALM 150:1

*Praise the Lord! Praise God in his sanctuary; praise him in his mighty heavens!*

### REVELATION 5:9

*And they sang a new song saying, “Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open the seals, for you were slain and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and nation, and you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God and they shall reign on the earth.”*

---

**VATICAN CITY** This is the home of the Pope; the global leader of the Catholic Church. It is the world’s smallest country.

**I pray for the renewal of the Catholic Church. Prepare your global Church to be the bride of Christ. May your dwelling place be on earth, one family of nations with your presence!**

# BIBLIOGRAPHY

## Books

- Benedict (trs: White, C). *The Rule*. Penguin, 2008.
- Bergus, C. *Philemon lecture notes*. Cambridge 18/09/17.
- Brown, R. *The Message of Deuteronomy*. IVP, Nottingham, 1993.
- Fee, DG and Stuart, D. *How to read the Bible book by book*. Zondervan, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 2002.
- Gregg, S, Kona, *Revelation lecture notes*. Hawaii 27/06/17.
- Hays, R.B *Echoes of Scripture in the Gospels*. Baylor University Press, Waco, 2016.
- Johnstone, P. *Operation World*. Gabriel Resources, 2001.
- Kreider, A. *The change of conversion and the origin of Christendom*. Trinity Press International, 1990.
- Nee, Watchman, *Sit, Walk, Stand*. Kingsway Publications, Eastbourne, 2005.
- Nelson, *New Illustrated Bible Dictionary*. Thomas Nelson, Nashville, 2014.
- Ocampo, J, *Making revival last: A strategy from heaven*. Rising Tides.
- Origen. *Epistle to Julius*. Acanus.
- Mandryk, J and Rivera, JM. *Making the Church one!* Rising Tides.
- McClaren, D. *The Jesus Movement Encyclopaedia of New Religions*.
- Merton, T. *Bread in the wilderness*. New Directions, New York, 1953.
- Nelson. *Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary*.
- Sabatino, DD. *The Jesus People Movement: An Annotated Bibliography and General Resource*.
- Sasing, L. *A history of victory: Building unity through prayer*. Rising Tides.
- Scarlata, M. *The Abiding Presence*. SCM Press, London, 2018.
- Schreiner, TR. *The King in his beauty*. Baker Academic, Grand Rapids, 2013.
- Taylor, JV. *The Go-between God: The Holy Spirit and mission*. SCM Press, London, 1972.
- Tyndale. *Tyndale Bible Dictionary*. Tyndale House Publishers, Carol Stream, Illinois, 2008.
- Viado, JC. *The Moravians: Their story our heritage*. Rising Tides.
- Waters, JJ *et al*. *United prayer: Rising Tides* (Used throughout this manual for population and national religion statistics and to inform the prayer guide for each European nation).
- Yang, S. *Philemon lecture notes*, Kona, Hawaii, 24/05/17.

## Websites

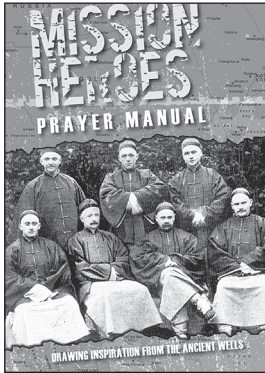
- Bickle, M. Overview of the Song of Songs  
[www.mikebickle.org.edgesuite.net/MikeBickleVOD/2007/20070302B\\_Overview\\_of\\_the\\_Storyline\\_in\\_the\\_Song\\_of\\_Solomon\\_SOS04.pdf](http://www.mikebickle.org.edgesuite.net/MikeBickleVOD/2007/20070302B_Overview_of_the_Storyline_in_the_Song_of_Solomon_SOS04.pdf)
- Bickle, M. Overview of Revelation  
[www.mikebickle.org/articles/pdfs/Outline\\_of\\_the\\_Book\\_of\\_Revelation-\\_Main.pdf](http://www.mikebickle.org/articles/pdfs/Outline_of_the_Book_of_Revelation-_Main.pdf)
- Russell, C. Dwelling in the secret place  
[www.youtube.com/watch?v=MgjXpPHdXz4Corey](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MgjXpPHdXz4Corey)
- The Jesus People movement  
[www.one-way.org/jesusbovement](http://www.one-way.org/jesusbovement)
- Dalia Research 2016  
[www.daliaresearch.com](http://www.daliaresearch.com)
- Pew Research 2017  
[www.pewresearch.org](http://www.pewresearch.org)

# WEEKLY READING PLAN

<b>DAY</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Further Reading</b>
Wednesday 26 February	Evening	Genesis 1–3
Thursday 27 February	Morning	Exodus 20:1–21, 32:1–20, 33:12–23
Thursday 27 February	Evening	Leviticus 6, 16, 26
Friday 28 February	Morning	Numbers 9, 12, 13
Friday 28 February	Evening	Deuteronomy 1, 28
Monday 2 March	Morning	Joshua 1, 5, 6
Monday 2 March	Evening	Judges 1, 2, 6:11–24 Ruth 1–4
Tuesday 3 March	Morning	Ruth 1–4
Tuesday 3 March	Evening	1 Samuel 16–17
Wednesday 4 March	Morning	1 Kings 18–19 • 2 Kings 2
Wednesday 4 March	Evening	1 Chronicles 17 • 2 Chronicles 6–7
Thursday 5 March	Morning	Ezra 1, 7, 10
Thursday 5 March	Evening	Nehemiah 1–3
Friday 6 March	Morning	Esther 1–4
Friday 6 March	Evening	Job 1–3, 40:6–24
Monday 9 March	Morning	Psalms 2, 23, 84, 91, 130
Monday 9 March	Evening	Proverbs 1, 4, 31
Tuesday 10 March	Morning	Ecclesiastes 1–3, 12:9–14
Tuesday 10 March	Evening	Song of Songs 1, 2, 8
Wednesday 11 March	Morning	Isaiah 40, 53, 61
Wednesday 11 March	Evening	Jeremiah 1, 9, 38
Thursday 12 March	Morning	Lamentations 1–5
Thursday 12 March	Evening	Ezekiel 1, 2, 37, 47
Friday 13 March	Morning	Daniel 1, 3, 6
Friday 13 March	Evening	Hosea 1–3
Monday 16 March	Morning	Joel 1–3
Monday 16 March	Evening	Amos 1, 6, 9
Tuesday 17 March	Morning	Obadiah 1
Tuesday 17 March	Evening	Jonah 1–4
Wednesday 18 March	Morning	Micah 4–6
Wednesday 18 March	Evening	Nahum 1–3

<b>DAY</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Further Reading</b>
Thursday 19 March	Morning	Habakkuk 1–3
Thursday 19 March	Evening	Zephaniah 1–3
Friday 20 March	Morning	Haggai 1–2
Friday 20 March	Evening	Zechariah 1–4, 14
Monday 23 March	Morning	Malachi 1–4
Monday 23 March	Evening	Matthew 1:18–5:16
Tuesday 24 March	Morning	Mark 1, 4, 9
Tuesday 24 March	Evening	Luke 15, 23, 24
Wednesday 25 March	Morning	John 1–4, 20
Wednesday 25 March	Evening	Acts 1–4
Thursday 26 March	Morning	Romans 1–3, 8
Thursday 26 March	Evening	1 Corinthians 1, 2, 13–15
Friday 27 March	Morning	2 Corinthians 1–5
Friday 27 March	Evening	Galatians 1–6
Monday 30 March	Morning	Ephesians 1–5
Monday 30 March	Evening	Philippians 1–4
Tuesday 31 March	Morning	Colossians 1–4
Tuesday 31 March	Evening	1 Thessalonians 1–5 • 2 Thessalonians 1–3
Wednesday 1 April	Morning	1 Timothy 1–6
Wednesday 1 April	Evening	2 Timothy 1–4
Thursday 2 April	Morning	Titus 1–3
Thursday 2 April	Morning	Philemon 1
Friday 3 April	Morning	Hebrews 10–12
Friday 3 April	Evening	James 1–5
Monday 6 April	Morning	1 Peter 1–5
Monday 6 April	Evening	2 Peter 1–3
Tuesday 7 April	Morning	1 John 1–5
Tuesday 7 April	Evening	Jude 1
Wednesday 8 April	Morning	Revelation 1, 4, 21, 22

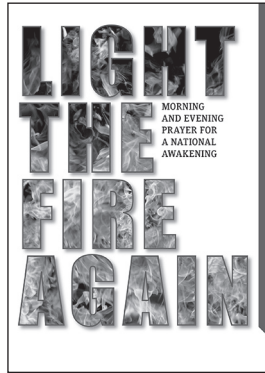
## OTHER PRAYER GUIDES



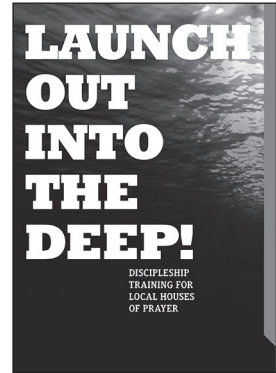
The spiritual fathers of the Christian faith are like wells. As we have failed to draw from their inspiration and example, those wells have become blocked. This guide is designed to remind us of the mission heroes of this nation, and to help us call upon the Lord to open those wells again.

### Ordering

Please contact Andrew Taylor at the address below.



This devotional prayer manual is a resource to facilitate group prayer that includes the daily reading and praying of all 150 Psalms over one month. Two hundred and seventy five years ago, John Wesley, an Anglican clergyman of the 18th century, was used powerfully in a national awakening. This manual consists of inspirational devotionals based on his life, to be read alongside the corporate reading and praying of the Psalms. The theme is 'prayer for a national awakening'. Lord, light the fire again!



This discipleship manual is designed to facilitate group prayer and group Bible reading in the context of a local House of Prayer. It is inspired by Benedict's *Rule*, which was written just under 1,500 years ago for disciples following Christ in community. It is also inspired by the principles for developing a passionate community of prayer used by Mike Bickle of the International House of Prayer, in Kansas City. As we respond to the Lord Jesus Christ and His call to follow Him into a deeper devotional life with a small group of disciples,

## FEEDBACK

If you have any feedback, comments or questions for Andrew Taylor, please contact:  
[andrew.taylor@ywamcambridge.org](mailto:andrew.taylor@ywamcambridge.org)    [www.ywamcambridge.org](http://www.ywamcambridge.org)

# LIVING WORD BREAK OUT

**T**his devotional prayer guide — for Lent 2020 — is an aid to pray for God’s living word to break out across Europe. It tracks the broad narrative of scripture: God is gathering one family of nations under his rule and in his presence, and his glory will cover the earth as the waters cover the sea. Currently, there is a significant opportunity, in Europe, for those unreached and those on fire for Jesus to come together as one. The nations are bringing passion back to the Church in Europe



Andrew with his wife Connie pioneered YWAM Cambridge in 2008. Then Andrew started a House of Prayer in 2011. More recently they pioneered a School of Biblical Studies and currently they are leading a Discipleship Training School.

---