

MID-EAST e-NEWS

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Welcome

It's about time for another quiz. Can you name the countries highlighted on the maps? (Yes, college research meant that I had a page to fill!)

And from today (14th) I'm in London & Paris with our high school seniors. I won't neglect *e-NEWS* though!

To accompany our view of Islam, I thought the information about the Qur'an chapters might be illuminating. The feature shows the actual chronological order compared with the published order (and color-coded, for us left-brainers!)

Email your responses to pkclark@pmbx.net & check the web for back issues.

Southern Sudan

On January 9th, 2005, a peace agreement was finalized that brought to an end twenty-one years of civil war in southern Sudan. During that period more than a million people may have died, with many more displaced, primarily in the neighboring countries of Uganda and Kenya. (Issue 12 of *e-NEWS* contains more information on Sudan.)

The capital of the region is to be Rumbek, which is centrally located but suffers from a lack of infrastructure common to the south. The largest town, Juba, has only intermittent electricity, and most of its population does not have running water. Throughout southern Sudan there are few roads, and those that do exist have been financed by the oil companies that are operating in the region. Under the peace agreement the revenues from the oil will be shared equally between north and south.

From July the south will have autonomy for a period of six years, after which a referendum will decide for or against full independence. John Garang, the leader of the rebellion, was born into a Christian family that belonged to the animist Dinka tribe. After an earlier peace agreement was made with the south, his forces became part of the government army in Khartoum. After oil was discovered the government reneged on its agreements, and in 1983 he was sent to quell the resulting disturbances in the south. Instead, he unified the various warring factions and led the growing rebellion.

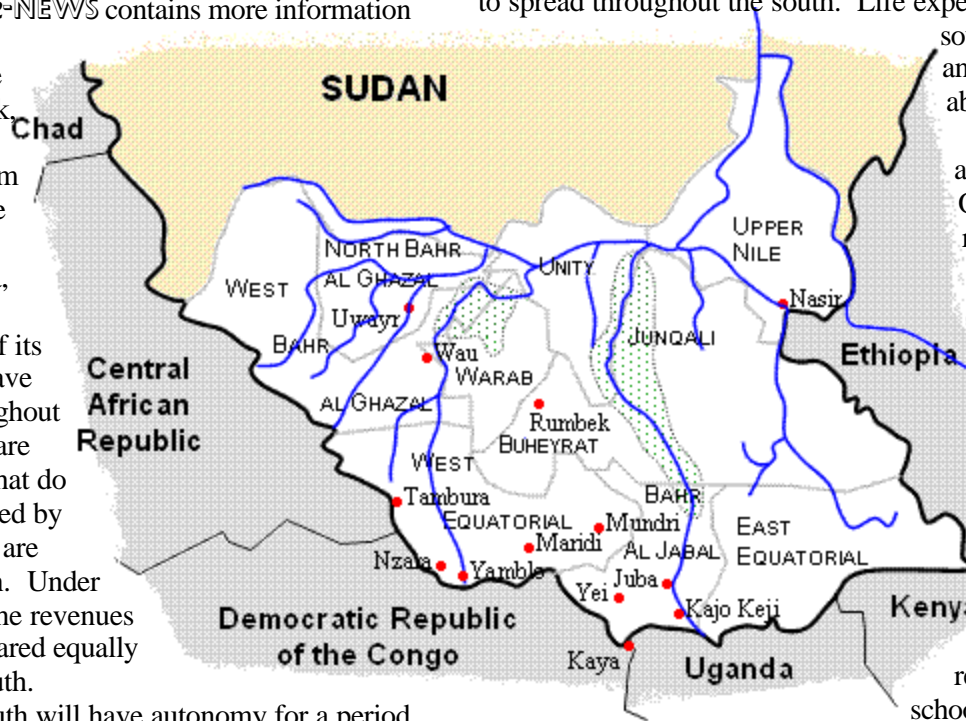
Today, between the various tribes, some of the internal stresses are again evident. The people look forward to Western aid flowing in, as it already is, but the region is so deprived, with water in short supply and the dirt roads so poor, that improvements are going to be slow to spread throughout the south. Life expectancy in the

south is 42 years, and illiteracy is at about 75%.

In April an aid conference in Oslo hoped to raise \$2.6 billion, but was pleased to get pledges of as much as \$4.5 billion for reconstruction.

Of the Christian agencies providing aid are some who are focusing on rehabilitating the schools in the south.

For example, Open Doors is providing textbooks, blackboards and other supplies for nine Christian schools in southern Sudan, which have few resources. The fighting has virtually destroyed the school system in the areas where Christians live. International Christian relief agencies like Samaritan's Purse are also providing medicine, water, and food.



History of Islam

Qur'an – Arrangement

Ibn Thabit's compilation of the Qur'an, is not ordered thematically, as we might expect, nor chronologically, as the various sections of the Bible. The order of the 114 *Suras* (chapters) of the Qur'an is such that the longest are at the beginning, and the shorter suras tend to be towards the end of the Qur'an. The first sura is introductory, so the second sura – actually one of the latest – is the longest at 286 verses. Since Muhammad's style tended towards longer passages as time elapsed, the shorter suras are usually the earliest written, and the chronology tends to be reversed throughout.

This makes it difficult to recognize the order in which they were written. In fact, Muslims scholars disagree over the precise chronological order of the writing.

The chapters are usually divided into three categories, according to the period when they were written:

Early (A) Meccan,

Middle (B) Meccan,

Late (C) Meccan,

and **Medinan (D)**

suras*. The table shows the suras in their normal sequence, with names, followed by the number giving their chronological order. The letters and the color coding represents the period in which they are considered to have been written. We will discuss the effect of this sequence in future issues of e-NEWS.

* Scholars differ about the actual sequence.

#	Arab Name	English	Chron.						
1	Al Fâtihah	The Opening	5	A	58	Al Mujâdilah	She Who Pleaded	105	D
2	Al Baqarah	The Cow	87	D	59	Al Hashr	The Exile	101	D
3	Al 'Imrân	The Family Of Imran	89	D	60	Al Mumtahanah	She Who is Tested	91	D
4	An Nisâ'	Women	92	D	61	As Saff	The Ranks	109	D
5	Al Mâ'idah	The Food	112	D	62	Al Jumu'ah	The Day of Congregation	110	D
6	Al An'âm	The Cattle	55	C	63	Al Munafiqûn	The Hypocrites	104	D
7	Al A'râf	The Elevated Places	39	C	64	At Taghâbun	The Cheating	108	D
8	Al Anfâl	The Spoils Of War	88	D	65	At Talâq	The Divorce	99	D
9	At Taubah	Repentance	113	D	66	At Tahrîm	The Prohibition	107	D
10	Yûnus	Jonah	51	C	67	Al Mulk	The Kingdom	77	B
11	Hûd	Hud	52	C	68	Al Qalam	The Pen	2	A
12	Yûsuf	Joseph	53	C	69	Al Hâqqah	The Inevitable	78	A
13	Ar Ra'd	The Thunder	96	C	70	Al Ma'ârij	The Ladders	79	A
14	Ibrahim	Abraham	72	C	71	Nûh	Noah	71	B
15	Al Hijr	The Rock	54	B	72	Al Jinn	The Jinn	40	B
16	An Nahl	The Bee	70	C	73	Al Muzzammil	The Mantled One	3	A
17	Al Isrâ'	The Israelites	50	B	74	Al Muddaththir	The Clothed One	4	A
18	Al Kahf	The Cave	69	B	75	Al Qiyâmah	The Resurrection	31	A
19	Maryam	Mary	44	B	76	Al Insân	The Man	98	B
20	Tâ Hâ	Ta Ha	45	B	77	Al Mursalât	The Emissaries	33	A
21	Al Anbiyâ'	The Prophets	73	B	78	An Naba'	The Tidings	80	A
22	Al Hajj	The Pilgrimage	103	D	79	An Nazi'ât	Those Who Pull Out	81	A
23	Al Mu'minûn	The Believers	74	B	80	'Abasa	He Frowned	24	A
24	An Nûr	The Light	102	D	81	At-Takwîr	The Cessation	7	A
25	Al Furqân	The Criterion	42	B	82	Al Infitâr	The Cleaving Asunder	82	A
26	Ash Shu'arâ'	The Poets	47	B	83	Al Mutaffifîn	The Defrauders	86	A
27	An Naml	The Ant	48	B	84	Al Inshiqâq	The Rending	83	A
28	Al Qasas	The Narrative	49	C	85	Al Burûj	The Constellations	27	A
29	Al 'Ankabût	The Spider	85	C	86	At Târiq	The Night-Comer	36	A
30	Ar Rûm	The Romans	84	C	87	Al A'lâ	The Most High	8	A
31	Luqmân	Lukman	57	C	88	Al Ghâshiyah	The Overwhelming Calamity	68	A
32	As Sajdah	The Adoration	75	C	89	Al Fajr	The Dawn	10	A
33	Al Ahzâb	The Allies	90	D	90	Al Balad	The City	35	A
34	Saba'	Sheba	58	C	91	Ash-Shams	The Sun	26	A
35	Fâtir	The Creator	43	C	92	Al Lail	The Night	9	A
36	Yâ Sîn	Ya Sin	41	B	93	Ad Duha	The Early Hours	11	A
37	As Sâffât	The Rangers	56	B	94	Ash Sharh	The Expansion	12	A
38	Sâd	Sad	38	B	95	At Tin	The Fig	28	A
39	Az Zumar	The Companies	59	C	96	Al 'Alaq	The Clot	1	A
40	Ghâfir	The Forgiving One	60	C	97	Al Qadr	The Majesty	25	A
41	Fussilat	Revelations Well Expounded	61	C	98	Al Baiyinah	The Proof	100	D
42	Ash-Shûra	The Counsel	62	C	99	Az-Zalzalah	The Shaking	93	A
43	Az Zukhruf	The Embellishment	63	B	100	Al 'Adiyât	The Assaulters	14	A
44	Ad Dukhân	The Evident Smoke	64	B	101	Al Qâri'ah	The Terrible Calamity	30	A
45	Al Jâthiya	The Kneeling	65	C	102	At Takâthur	Worldly Gain	16	A
46	Al Ahqâf	The Sandhills	66	C	103	Al 'Asr	Time	13	A
47	Muhammad	Muhammad	95	D	104	Al Humazah	The Slanderer	32	A
48	Al Fath	The Victory	111	D	105	Al Fil	The Elephant	19	A
49	Al Hujurât	The Chambers	106	D	106	Quraish	The Quraish	29	A
50	Qâf	Qaf	34	B	107	Al Mâ'ûn	The Daily Necessaries	17	A
51	Az Zâriyât	The Scatterers	67	A	108	Al Kauthar	Abundance	15	A
52	At Tûr	The Mountain	76	A	109	Al Kâfirûn	The Unbelievers	18	A
53	An Najm	The Star	23	A	110	An Nasr	The Help	114	D
54	Al Qamar	The Moon	37	B	111	Al Masad	The Flame	6	A
55	Ar Rahmân	The Merciful	97	A	112	Al Ikhlâs	The Unity	22	A
56	Al Wâq'iah	That Which is Coming	46	A	113	Al Falaq	The Daybreak	20	A
57	Al Hadîd	The Iron	94	D	114	An Nâs	The Men	21	A

Recognition Quiz

Do you recognize the countries highlighted on these maps? Try to give their names. To help you, the countries are in alphabetical order. For extra credit (do you need it?) can you name the current leader?

