

## The Japanese

### Introduction / History

Japan is a large group of islands located between the North Pacific Ocean and the Sea of Japan. The five main islands are Honshu, Hokkaido, Kyushu, Shikoku, and Okinawa. Honshu contains the capital, Tokyo, as well as many major industrial areas.

Rugged mountain chains containing several active volcanoes account for more than 71% of Japan's total land area. Most of the countryside is covered by dense forests, leaving little land for farming. Japan is subject to numerous earthquakes, typhoons, and monsoons.

Racially, culturally, and ethnically, the Japanese are one of the most homogenous people groups in the world. They identify themselves in terms of biological heritage, birth in Japan, a shared culture, and a common language (Japanese). One group, the burakunin, speaks a unique Japanese dialect. Society considers them undesirable outcasts-"untouchables."

### What Are Their Beliefs?

Shintoism is the native religion of Japan. It is rooted in animism (belief that non-living objects have spirits). Its many gods or spirits are known as kami. Buddhism was introduced to Japan in the sixth century. Today, most Japanese claim to be both Shintoist and Buddhist.

Traditions of Shintoism, Buddhism, Confucianism, and Taoism have all contributed to Japanese religious principles: ancestor worship; a belief in religious continuity of the family; a close tie between the nation and religion; a free exchange of ideas among religious systems; and religious practices centered on the use of prayer meditation, amulets, and purification.

### What Are Their Needs?

Many Japanese are indifferent and skeptical of established religion. On the outside, they seem to have few needs. However, many of them have become obsessed with materialistic pleasures, careers, and possessions. Their greatest need is to be introduced to the Father through His Son, Jesus.

### Prayer Points:

#### Pray...

- for the Lord to call laborers to go to Japan and share Christ with the Japanese.
- that Christian businessmen will have open doors to share the Gospel with the Japanese.
- for the Holy Spirit to open the hearts of the Japanese toward Christians so that they will be receptive to the Gospel.
- that Japanese Christians will have opportunities to share the love of Jesus with their families and friends.
- that Christian radio and television broadcasts will be effective in reaching the Japanese.
- that God will raise up teams of intercessors to stand in the gap for these precious people.
- and ask the Lord to raise up strong local churches among the Japanese.

# Catechism

13 Q. Did our first parents continue in the state wherein they were created?

A. Our first parents being left to the freedom of their own will, fell from the state wherein they were created, by sinning against God, (Eccl. 7:29) by eating the forbidden fruit (Gen. 3:6-8).

14 Q. What is sin?

A. Sin is any want of conformity to, or transgression of the law of God (1 Jn. 3:4).

15 Q. Did all mankind fall in Adam's first transgression?

A. The covenant being made with Adam, not only for himself but for his posterity, all mankind descending from him by ordinary generation, sinned in him, and fell with him in his first transgression (1 Cor. 15:22; Rom. 5:12).

16 Q. Into what estate did the fall bring mankind?

A. The fall brought mankind into a state of sin and misery (Rom. 5:18).

17 Q. Wherein consists the sinfulness of that state whereinto man fell?

A. The sinfulness of that state whereinto man fell, consists in the guilt of Adam's first sin (Rom. 5:19), the want of original righteousness, (Rom. 3:10) and the corruption of his whole nature, which is commonly called original sin (Eph. 2:1; Ps. 51:5), together with all actual transgressions which proceed from it (Matt. 15:19).

18 Q. What is the misery of that state whereinto man fell?

A. All mankind, by their fall, lost communion with God (Gen. 3:8, 24), are under his wrath and curse (Eph. 2:3; Gal. 3:10), and so made liable to all the miseries in this life, to death itself, and to the pains of hell for ever (Rom. 6:23; Matt. 25:41).

19 Q. Did God leave all mankind to perish in the state of sin and misery?

A. God having, out of his good pleasure from all eternity, elected some to everlasting life (2 Thess. 2:13), did enter into a covenant of grace to deliver them out of the state of sin and misery, and to bring them into a state of salvation by a Redeemer (Rom. 5:21).

20 Q. Who is the Redeemer of God's elect?

A. The only Redeemer of God's elect is the Lord Jesus Christ (1 Tim. 2:5), who being the eternal Son of God, became man (Jn. 1:14), and so was and continues to be God and man, in two distinct natures and one person for ever (1 Tim. 3:16; Col. 2:9).

21 Q. How did Christ, being the Son of God, become man?

A. Christ, the son of God, became man by taking to himself a true body (Heb. 2:14), and a reasonable soul (Matt. 26:38; Heb. 4:15), being conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit in the Virgin Mary, and born of her (Lk. 1:31, 35), yet without sin (Heb. 7:26).

22 Q. What offices does Christ execute as our Redeemer?

A. Christ as our Redeemer executes the offices of a prophet (Acts 3:22), of a priest (Heb. 5:6), and of a king (Ps. 2:6), both in his state of humiliation and exaltation.