This map shows the average annual precipitation around our globe. The lighter colors represent the drier areas and the darker tones show the wetter regions. This map is a very general description of the precipitation patterns we observe on the ground. For instance, Cherrapunji, India has a monsoon climate which means most of their precipitation falls during one time of the year, in this case the summer. By yearly averages it is considered one of the wettest places on earth, receiving 12,700mm (500 inches) a year. Yet because of its circumstances and geographic position, Cherrapunji has significant agricultural problems and difficulty maintaining clean water because of its concentrated rainfall during the summer. There are two other places that also claim to be the wettest place on Earth. They are Mt. Waialeale, Hawaii and Tutunendo, Columbia. These places both claim to receive annual precipitation in excess of 11,500mm (450 inches) a year. The driest place on Earth is located at Arica, Chile in the Atacama Desert (0.8mm a year). This situation is due to a strong subtropical high pressure region offshore, a persistent trade wind causing a rain shadow effect on the west side of the Andes, and a cold ocean current. We also see this pattern set up other dry areas along the Sahara (North Africa), Southwest Africa, Southwestern Asia, middle Australia, and even parts of the southwestern U.S. and Mexico. The very high latitudes are dry areas because of the very cold temperatures that restrict the air from holding much moisture. Areas near the equator have very wet climates, as we would expect, due to very warm temperatures and an abundance of available moisture.