

~ARABIA (813)

- Arabian Tribes
- Biblical References
- Language

• The Arabian Peninsula forms part of the Asiatic continent at its extreme Southwest corner. It is bounded on the East by the Persian Gulf and the Gulf of Oman, on the South by the Arabian Sea and the Gulf of Aden, and on the West by the Red Sea, while the Fertile Crescent of Mesopotamia, Syria, and Israel curves around its northern end. Surrounded as it is on three sides by water, in part it resembles a huge island and is commonly called by its people the Island of the Arabs, *Jazirat al-`arab*

• With an area of about 2,600,000 square kilometers (1,000,000 square miles), or the equivalent of about one third the land surface of the continental United States, Arabia is the world's largest peninsula. The western coastline stretches some 2,900 kilometers (1,800 miles), and at its widest point the peninsula is about 1,900 kilometers (1,200 miles) across.

• The peninsula consists of a rocky tableland sloping eastward down toward the Persian Gulf from its backbone formed by the mountain range running parallel to the West coast. One peak in the Southwest corner reaches an altitude of over 3,600 meters (12,000 feet).

• Across the interior of the southern end of the peninsula lies the great desert called **Rub` al-Khali**, the largest continuous stretch of sandy area on earth, known as the Empty Quarter. To the North of the Nejd or central plateau is the smaller An Nafud Desert region, which culminates in the Syrian Desert.

• The small streams, or Nejd, are not numerous, found along the outer edges of the peninsula and in the high central plateau, and their flow is only during certain seasons. Job, who evidently lived in what is today the Syrian Desert region, describes the drying up of such winter torrents.

• My own brothers have dealt treacherously, like a winter torrent, like the channel of winter torrents that keep passing away. (**Job 6:15**)

- They are dark from ice, upon them snow hides itself. (**Job 6:16**)
- In due season they become waterless, they have been silenced, when it grows hot they are dried up from their place. (**Job 6:17**)
- The paths of their way are turned aside, they go up into the empty place and perish. (**Job 6:18**)
- The caravans of Tema have looked, the traveling company of Sabeans have waited for them. (**Job 6:19**)
- They certainly are ashamed because they had trusted, they have come clear to the place and they get disappointed. (**Job 6:20**)
- Though so much of this vast tableland is arid, sufficient rainfall does occur along the western mountain range, the central plateau, and in the South to sustain a considerable population. Here and around the larger oases the fellahin, or peasant farmers, can produce crops of millet, wheat, barley, and corn, and here date palms
- After that they came to Elim, where there were twelve springs of water and seventy palm trees. So they went camping there by the water. (**Exodus 15:27**)
- And fig trees grow. Acacia trees, producing the resinous gum known as gum arabic, and other aromatic trees and plants formed a major part of the ancient **Arabian** economy, as they do to a lesser extent in modern times, being eclipsed today by the black gold of petroleum.
- And the gold of that land is good. There also are the bdellium gum and the onyx stone. (**Genesis 2:12**)
- Because of a general scarcity of water, animal and bird life is necessarily reduced, yet sheep, goats, camels, wild asses, jackals, falcons, and eagles live there today, as they did in Bible times.
- The **Arabs** and all the chieftains of Kedar themselves were merchants in your employ. In male lambs and rams and he-goats, in them they were your merchants. (**Ezekiel 27:21**)
- And from the Philistines they were bringing to Jehoshaphat presents and money as tribute. The **Arabs** also were bringing to

him flocks, seven thousand seven hundred rams and seven thousand seven hundred he-goats. ([2 Chronicles 17:11](#))

- For they and their livestock would come up with their tents. They would come as numerous as the locusts, and they and their camels were without number, and they would come into the land to ruin it. ([Judges 6:5](#))
- Who sent forth the zebra free, and who loosened the very bands of the wild ass. ([Job 39:5](#))
- Whose house I have appointed the **desert plain** and whose dwelling places the salt country? ([Job 39:6](#))
- It laughs at the turmoil of a town, the noises of a stalker it does not hear. ([Job 39:7](#))
- It explores mountains for its pasturage and after every sort of green plant it seeks. ([Job 39:8](#))
- Is it owing to your understanding that the falcon soars up, that it spreads its wings to the south wind? ([Job 39:26](#))
- Or is it at your order that an eagle flies upward and that it builds its nest high up. ([Job 39:27](#))
- All the flocks of Kedar, they will be collected together to you. The rams of Nebaioth, they will minister to you. With approval they will come up upon my altar, and I shall beautify my own house of beauty. ([Isaiah 60:7](#))
- On her dwelling towers thorns must come up, nettles and thorny weeds in her fortified places, and she must become an abiding place of jackals, the courtyard for the ostriches. ([Isaiah 34:13](#))
- Some wildlife, such as the lion, the wild bull, and the ostrich, have now become extinct in this territory.
- Can you hunt prey for a lion itself and can you satisfy the lively appetite of young lions. ([Job 38:39](#))
- When they crouch in the hiding places, or keep lying in the covert for an ambush? ([Job 38:40](#))

- Does a wild bull want to serve you, or will it spend the night by your manger? ([Job 39:9](#))
- Will you bind a wild bull fast with its ropes in the furrow, or will it harrow low plains after you? ([Job 39:10](#))
- Will you trust in it because its power is abundant, and will you leave your toil to it? ([Job 39:11](#))
- Will you rely on it that it will bring back your seed and that it will gather to your threshing floor? ([Job 39:12](#))
- Has the wing of the female ostrich flapped joyously, or has she the pinions of a stork and the plumage? ([Job 39:13](#))
- For she leaves her eggs to the earth itself and in the dust she keeps them warm. ([Job 39:14](#))
- And she forgets that some foot may crush them or even a wild beast of the field may tread on them. ([Job 39:15](#))
- She does treat her sons roughly, as if not hers, in vain is her toil because she has no dread. ([Job 39:16](#))
- For God has made her forget wisdom, and he has not given her a share in understanding. ([Job 39:17](#))
- At the time she flaps her wings on high, she laughs at the horse and at its rider. ([Job 39:18](#))
- **Arabian** horses are renowned for their beauty and strength to this day.
- Can you give to the horse mightiness? Can you clothe its neck with a rustling mane? ([Job 39:19](#))
- Can you cause it to leap like a locust? The dignity of its snorting is frightful. ([Job 39:20](#))
- It paws in the low plain and exults in power. It goes forth to meet armor. ([Job 39:21](#))
- It laughs at dread, and is not terrified, nor does it turn back on account of a sword. ([Job 39:22](#))

- **Against it a quiver rattles, the blade of a spear and a javelin. (Job 39:23)**
- **With pounding and excitement it swallows up the earth, and it does not believe that it is the sound of a horn. (Job 39:24)**
- **As soon as the horn blows it says; Aha! And from far off it smells the battle, the uproar of chiefs and the war cry. (Job 39:25)**

.. Arabian Tribes

- **Arabia** eventually became the home of many of the post-Flood families listed at (**Genesis Chapter 10**). In the Semitic branch, Joktan fathered the heads of some 13 different **Arabian** tribes, while three of **Aram's** descendants, Uz, Gether, and Mash, appear to have settled in the area of North **Arabia** and the Syrian Desert.
- **And the sons of Aram were Uz and Hul and Gether and Mash. (Genesis 10:23)**
- **And Joktan became father to Almodad and Sheleph and Hazarmaveth and Jerah. (Genesis 10:26)**
- **And Hadoram and Uzal and Diklah. (Genesis 10:27)**
- **And Obal and Abimael and Sheba. (Genesis 10:28)**
- **And Ophir and Havilah and Jobab, all these were the sons of Joktan. (Genesis 10:29)**
- **The tent-dwelling Ishmaelites ranged from the Sinai Peninsula, across North Arabia and as far as Assyria.**
- **Now these are the names of the sons of Ishmael, by their names, according to their family origins, Ishmael's firstborn Nebaioth and Kedar and Adbeel and Mibsam. (Genesis 25:13)**
- **And Mishma and Dumah and Massa. (Genesis 25:14)**
- **Hadad and Tema, Jetur, Naphish and Kedemah. (Genesis 25:15)**
- **These are the sons of Ishmael, and these are their names by their courtyards and by their walled camps, twelve chieftains**

- according to their clans. (**Genesis 25:16**)
- And these are the years of Ishmael's life, a hundred and thirty-seven years. Then he expired and died and was gathered to his people. (**Genesis 25:17**)
 - And they took up tabernacling from Havilah near Shur, which is in front of Egypt, as far as Assyria. In front of all his brothers he settled down. (**Genesis 25:18**)
 - The Midianites were located mainly in the Northwest part of **Arabia** just East of the Gulf of `Aqaba.
 - And the sons of Midian were Ephah and Epher and Hanoch and Abida and Eldaah. All these were the sons of Keturah. (**Genesis 25:4**)
 - Esau's descendants were based in the mountainous region of Edom to the Southeast of the Dead Sea.
 - So Esau took up dwelling in the mountainous region of Seir. Esau is Edom. (**Genesis 36:8**)
 - And this is the history of Esau the father of Edom in the mountainous region of Seir. (**Genesis 36:9**)
 - From the Hamitic branch several descendants of Cush, including Havilah, Sabtah, Raamah and his sons Sheba and Dedan, and Sabteca, seem to have occupied mainly the southern part of the **Arabian** Peninsula.
 - And the sons of Cush were Seba and Havilah and Sabtah and Raamah and Sabteca. And the sons of Raamah were Sheba and Dedan. (**Genesis 10:7**)
 - Ancient Assyrian and Babylonian inscriptions make mention of various tribes of **Arabia**. Shalmaneser III lists Gindibu', from **Arabia**. Zabibe and Samsi are mentioned as **Arabian** queens in the inscriptions of Tiglath-pileser III. Sargon II mentions Samsi, queen of **Arabia** (and) It'amar the Sabaean. Other cuneiform inscriptions refer to the Sabai, the Nabaiti, the Qidri, and the Idibaili, the Masai, and the Temai.
 - And Jokshan became father to Sheba and Dedan. And the sons of Dedan became Asshurim and Letushim and Leummim. (**Genesis**

25:3)

- Now these are the names of the sons of Ishmael, by their names, according to their family origins. Ishmael's firstborn Nebaioth and Kedar and Adbeel and Mibsam (**Genesis 25:13**)
- And Mishma and Dumah and Massa. (**Genesis 25:14**)
- Hadad and Tema, Jetur, Naphish and Kedemah. (**Genesis 25:15**)

.. Biblical References

- Hadhramaut, one of the four major ancient kingdoms of South **Arabia**, is usually identified with Hazarmaveth of,
- And Joktan became father to Almodad and Sheleph and Hazarmaveth and Jerah (**Genesis 10:26**)
- The **Wadi Hadhramaut**, a long valley running parallel to the South coast of **Arabia**, was the center of the kingdom with its capital at Shabwa. Other Biblical names occurring as places in **Arabia** are Dedan, Tema, Dumah, and Buz.
- The pronouncement against **Dumah**. To me there is one calling out from Seir; Watchman, what about the night? Watchman, what about the night? (**Isaiah 21:11**)
- The watchman said; The morning has to come, and also the night. If you people would inquire, inquire. Come again! (**Isaiah 21:12**)
- The pronouncement against the desert plain. In the forest in the desert plain you will spend the night, O caravans of men of **Dedan**. (**Isaiah 21:13**)
- To meet the thirsty one bring water. O you inhabitants of the land of **Tema**, confront the one fleeing away with bread for him. (**Isaiah 21:14**)
- And **Dedan** and **Tema** and **Buz** and all those with hair clipped at the temples. (**Jeremiah 25:23**)
- And all the kings of the **Arabs** and all the kings of the mixed company who are residing in the wilderness. (**Jeremiah 25:24**)

- Abraham skirted around **Arabia** in migrating from Ur of the Chaldeans to the land of Canaan. When later obliged to go down to Egypt, he may have passed through part of **Arabia** by traversing the northern portion of the Sinai Peninsula, instead of following the route along the Mediterranean Coast, as also on his return trip.
- Now a famine arose in the land and Abram made his way down toward Egypt to reside there as an alien, because the famine was severe in the land. (**Genesis 12:10**)
- Following that Abram went up out of Egypt, he and his wife and all that he had, and Lot with him, to the Negeb. (**Genesis 13:1**)
- The drama of the book of Job has its setting in the land of **Uz** in northern **Arabia**
- There happened to be a man in the land of **Uz** whose name was Job, and that man proved to be blameless and upright, and fearing God and turning aside from bad. (**Job 1:1**)
- And the Sabeen raiders who attacked the property of this greatest of all the Orientals were an **Arabian** tribe perhaps descended from Joktan.
- And his livestock got to be seven thousand sheep and three thousand camels and five hundred spans of cattle and five hundred she-asses, along with a very large body of servants, and that man came to be the greatest of all the Orientals. (**Job 1:3**)
- And **Joktan** became father to Almodad and Sheleph and Hazarmaveth and Jerah. (**Genesis 10:26**)
- And Hadoram and Uzal and Diklah. (**Genesis 10:27**)
- And Obal and Abimael and Sheba. (**Genesis 10:28**)
- Job's three comforters and Elihu also appear to have come from **Arabian** sectors.
- And three companions of Job got to hear of all this calamity that had come upon him, and they proceeded to come, each one from his own place, Eliphaz the **Temanite** and Bildad the **Shuhite** and Zophar the **Naamathite**. So they met together by appointment to

come and sympathize with him and comfort him. ([Job 2:11](#))

- But the anger of Elihu the son of Barachel the **Buzite** of the family of Ram came to be hot. Against Job his anger blazed over his declaring his own soul righteous rather than God. ([Job 32:2](#))
- Moses spent 40 years in **Arabia** when sojourning with the Midianite Jethro.
- At this speech Moses took to flight and became an alien resident in the land of **Midian**, where he became the father of two sons. ([Acts of Apostles 7:29](#))
- And when forty years were fulfilled, there appeared to him in the wilderness of **Mount Sinai** an angel in the fiery flame of a thornbush. ([Acts of Apostles 7:30](#))
- The next event of major importance to occur in **Arabia** was the giving of the Law covenant at **Mount Sinai** in the southern part of the **Sinai Peninsula**, where the liberated nation of Israel had congregated.
- In the third month after the sons of Israel came out of the land of Egypt, on the same day, they came into the wilderness of Sinai. ([Exodus 19:1](#))
- And they proceeded to pull away from Rephidim and to come into the wilderness of **Sinai** and to encamp in the wilderness, and Israel went camping there in front of the mountain. ([Exodus 19:2](#))
- Thus, the apostle Paul some 15 centuries later referred to the event as taking place at Sinai, a mountain in **Arabia**.
- Now this Hagar means Sinai, a mountain in **Arabia**, and she corresponds with the Jerusalem today, for she is in slavery with her children. ([Galatians 4:25](#))
- In view of the present state of **Arabia** in general, the picture of perhaps some three million Israelites living for 40 years in the wilderness may seem a near impossibility.
- And the sons of Israel proceeded to depart from Rameses for Succoth, to the number of six hundred thousand able-bodied men on foot, besides little ones. ([Exodus 12:37](#))

- And a vast mixed company also went up with them, as well as flocks and herds, a very numerous stock of animals. (**Exodus 12:38**)
- The major factor, of course, was the miraculous provision of food and water assured them by Yehowah.
- And you must remember all the way that Yehowah your God made you walk these forty years in the wilderness, in order to humble you, to put you to the test so as to know what was in your heart, as to whether you would keep his commandments or not. (**Deuteronomy 8:2**)
- So he humbled you and let you go hungry and fed you with the manna, which neither you had known nor your fathers had known, in order to make you know that not by bread alone does man live but by every expression of Yehowah's mouth does man live. (**Deuteronomy 8:3**)
- Your mantle did not wear out upon you, nor did your foot become swollen these forty years. (**Deuteronomy 8:4**)
- Then Yehowah spoke to Moses, saying; (**Numbers 20:7**)
- Take the rod and call the assembly together, you and Aaron your brother, and you must speak to the crag before their eyes that it may indeed give its water, and you must bring out water for them from the crag and give the assembly and their beasts of burden drink. (**Numbers 20:8**)
- Although the conditions were clearly difficult and the scarcity of water is obviously indicated in the Scriptural account.
- And why have you men brought Yehowah's congregation into this wilderness for us and our beasts of burden to die there? (**Numbers 20:4**)
- And why have you conducted us up out of Egypt to bring us into this evil place? It is no place of seed and figs and vines and pomegranates, and there is no water to drink. (**Numbers 20:5**)
- There is, nevertheless, reason to believe that at that time, some 3,500 years in the past, the water supply in **Arabia** was to some extent

superior to what it is at the present time. The existence of many deep dry wadis, or valleys, which were once riverbeds, gives evidence that at some time in the past there was sufficient rainfall to produce streams of water coursing through them.

- The disappearance of certain forms of animal life may be due in part to the decrease in the water supply. Yet, basically, **Arabia** was then just what it is now, an arid land, or steppe.
- Out of **Arabia** during the period of the Judges came hordes of camel-riding Midianites, Amalekites, and Easterners to ravage the land of Israel.
- Then the sons of Israel began to do what was bad in the eyes of Yehowah. So Yehowah gave them into the hand of Midian for seven years. (**Judges 6:1**)
- And the hand of Midian came to prevail over Israel. Due to Midian the sons of Israel made for themselves the underground store places that were in the mountains, and the caves and the places difficult to approach. (**Judges 6:2**)
- And it occurred that, if Israel sowed seed, Midian and Amalek and the Easterners came up, yes, they came up against them. (**Judges 6:3**)
- And they would camp against them and would ruin the yield of the earth all the way to Gaza, and they would not let any sustenance or sheep or bull or ass remain in Israel. (**Judges 6:4**)
- For they and their livestock would come up with their tents. They would come as numerous as the locusts, and they and their camels were without number, and they would come into the land to ruin it. (**Judges 6:5**)
- And Israel became greatly impoverished due to Midian, and the sons of Israel began to call to Yehowah for aid. (**Judges 6:6**)
- Such razzias, or sudden raids, have always been the principal method of warfare in **Arabia**.
- Then the inhabitants of Jerusalem made Ahaziah his youngest son king in place of him, for the marauder band that came with the **Arabs** to the camp had killed all the older ones, and Ahaziah

the son of Jehoram began to reign as king of Judah. ([2 Chronicles 22:1](#))

- The camel, whose domestication is believed to have been effected in **Arabia**, was in use as a mode of transportation at least as early as the time of Abraham.
- Now Abraham was old, advanced in years, and Yehowah had blessed Abraham in everything. ([Genesis 24:1](#))
- Hence Abraham said to his servant, the oldest one of his household, who was managing all he had. Put your hand, please, under my thigh. ([Genesis 24:2](#))
- As I must have you swear by Yehowah, the God of the heavens and the God of the earth, that you will not take a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites in among whom I am dwelling. ([Genesis 24:3](#))
- But you will go to my country and to my relatives, and you will certainly take a wife for my son, for Isaac. ([Genesis 24:4](#))
- So the servant took ten camels from the camels of his master and proceeded to go with every sort of good thing of his masters in his hand. Then he rose and got on his way to Mesopotamia to the city of Nahor. ([Genesis 24:10](#))
- After that Rebekah and her lady attendants rose and they went riding on the camels and following the man, and the servant took Rebekah and got on his way. ([Genesis 24:61](#))
- When Rebekah raised her eyes, she caught sight of Isaac and she swung herself down from off the camel. ([Genesis 24:64](#))
- Because of the great superiority of the camel over the ass for extended desert travel, its domestication is considered to have accomplished somewhat of an economic revolution for **Arabia**, contributing to the development of the so-called Spice Kingdoms of South **Arabia**.
- Camel caravans out of the more fertile South wound along the desert routes that ran parallel to the Red Sea, moving from oasis to oasis and from well to well until reaching the Sinai Peninsula, from which point they could branch off to Egypt or continue up into

Palestine or to Damascus. Besides their highly prized spices and aromatic resins, such as frankincense and myrrh.

- **The heaving mass of camels itself will cover you, the young male camels of Midian and of Ephah. All those from Sheba, they will come. Gold and frankincense they will carry. And the praises of Yehowah they will announce. (Isaiah 60:6)**
- **They might carry gold and algum wood from Ophir.**
- **And they proceeded to go to Ophir and take from there four hundred and twenty talents of gold and bring it in to King Solomon. (1 Kings 9:28)**
- **And Hiram's fleet of ships that carried gold from Ophir also brought from Ophir timbers of algum trees in very great amount and precious stones. (1 Kings 10:11)**
- **And precious gems, as did the queen of Sheba on her visit to King Solomon.**
- **Now the queen of Sheba was hearing the report about Solomon in connection with the name of Yehowah. So she came to test him with perplexing questions. (1 Kings 10:1)**
- **Finally she arrived at Jerusalem with a very impressive train, camels carrying balsam oil and very much gold and precious stones, and she came on in to Solomon and began to speak to him all that happened to be close to her heart. (1 Kings 10:2)**
- **Solomon, in turn, went on to tell her all her matters. There proved to be no matter hidden from the king that he did not tell her. (1 Kings 10:3)**
- **When the queen of Sheba got to see all the wisdom of Solomon and the house that he had built. (1 Kings 10:4)**
- **And the food of his table and the sitting of his servants and the table service of his waiters and their attire and his drinks and his burnt sacrifices that he regularly offered up at the house of Yehowah, then there proved to be no more spirit in her. (1 Kings 10:5)**
- **So she said to the king; True has the word proved to be that I**

heard in my own land about your matters and about your wisdom. (1 Kings 10:6)

- And I did not put faith in the words until I had come that my own eyes might see, and, look! I had not been told the half. You have surpassed in wisdom and prosperity the things heard to which I listened. (1 Kings 10:7)
- Happy are your men. Happy are these servants of yours who are standing before you constantly, listening to your wisdom! (1 Kings 10:8)
- May Yehowah your God come to be blessed, who has taken delight in you by putting you upon the throne of Israel, because Yehowah loves Israel to time indefinite, so that he appointed you as king to render judicial decision and righteousness. (1 Kings 10:9)
- Then she gave the king a hundred and twenty talents of gold and a very great deal of balsam oil and precious stones. There never came anymore the like of that balsam oil for quantity such as the queen of Sheba gave to King Solomon. (1 Kings 10:10)
- Apart from the men of travel and the profit from the traders and all the kings of the **Arabs** and the governor's of the land. (1 Kings 10:15)
- And the queen of Sheba herself heard the report about Solomon, and she proceeded to come to test Solomon with perplexing questions at Jerusalem, along with a very impressive train and camels carrying balsam oil, and gold in great quantity, and precious stones. At length she came in to Solomon and spoke with him about everything that happened to be close to her heart. (2 Chronicles 9:1)
- Solomon, in turn, went on to tell her all her matters, and no matter was hidden from Solomon that he did not tell her. (2 Chronicles 9:2)
- When the queen of Sheba got to see Solomon's wisdom and the house that he had built. (2 Chronicles 9:3)
- And the food of his table and the sitting of his servants and the table service of his waiters and their attire and his drinking

- service and their attire, and his burnt sacrifices that he regularly offered up at the house of Yehowah, then there proved to be no more spirit in her. (2 Chronicles 9:4)
- So she said to the king; True was the word that I heard in my own land about your matters and about your wisdom. (2 Chronicles 9:5)
 - And I did not put faith in their words until I had come that my own eyes might see, and, look! There has not been told me the half of the abundance of your wisdom. You have surpassed the report that I have heard. (2 Chronicles 9:6)
 - Happy are your men, and happy are these servants of yours who are standing before you constantly and listening to your wisdom. (2 Chronicles 9:7)
 - May Yehowah your God come to be blessed, who has taken delight in you by putting you upon his throne as king for Yehowah your God, because your God loved Israel, to make it stand to time indefinite, so that he put you over them as king to execute judicial decision and righteousness. (2 Chronicles 9:8)
 - Then she gave the king a hundred and twenty talents of gold, and balsam oil in very great quantity, and precious stones, and there had not come to be the like of that balsam oil which the queen of Sheba gave to King Solomon. (2 Chronicles 9:9)
 - Aside from the men of travel and the merchants who were bringing in and all the kings of the Arabs and the governor's of the land who were bringing in gold and silver to Solomon. (2 Chronicles 9:14)
 - The waters of the Persian Gulf abound with pearl oysters. Since the Southwest corner of **Arabia** is separated from Africa by a narrow strait of water only about 32 kilometers (20 miles) across, products from Ethiopia
 - Accordingly Yehowah aroused against Jehoram the spirit of the Philistines and the **Arabs** that were by the side of the Ethiopians. (2 Chronicles 21:16)
 - Such as ivory and ebony, could also have been included in the wares of these traveling merchants.

- The sons of **Dedan** were your traders, many islands were merchants in your employ, horns of ivory and ebony they have paid back as gift to you. (**Ezekiel 27:15**)
- Nabonidus, the Babylonian king whose son Belshazzar was ruling in Babylon at the time of its fall **539 B.C.E**, spent ten years in the oasis city of Taima or Tema, in the northern part of the central plateau of **Arabia**.

See Also TEMA 2

- During the **Fifth Century B.C.E**, Palestine was subject to considerable influence from **Arabia**, as is seen by the references to Geshem the **Arabian** at,
- Now when Sanballat the Horonite and Tobiah the servant, the Ammonite, and Geshem the **Arabian** heard of it, they began to deride us and look on us despisingly and say; What is this thing that you are doing? Is it against the king that you are rebelling? (**Nehemiah 2:19**)
- Now it came about that, as soon as it was told to Sanballat and Tobiah and to Geshem the **Arabian** and to the rest of our enemies that I had rebuilt the wall and there had not been left in it a gap, although up to that time the doors themselves I had not set up in the gates. (**Nehemiah 6:1**)
- Sanballat and Geshem immediately sent to me, saying; Do come, and let us meet together by appointment in the villages of the valley plain of Ono. But they were scheming to do me harm. (**Nehemiah 6:2**)
- So I sent messengers to them, saying; It is a great work that I am doing, and I am not able to go down. Why should the work cease while I take off from it and have to go down to you? (**Nehemiah 6:3**)
- However, they sent me the same word four times, and I kept replying to them with the same word. (**Nehemiah 6:4**)
- Finally Sanballat sent his attendant to me with the same word a fifth time, with an open letter in his hand. (**Nehemiah 6:5**)

- There was written in it; Among the nations it has been heard, and Geshem is saying it, that you and the Jews are scheming to rebel. That is why you are building the wall, and you are becoming a king to them, according to these words. (**Nehemiah 6:6**)
- And there are even prophets that you have appointed to call out concerning you throughout Jerusalem, saying; There is a king in Judah! And now things like these will be told to the king. So now do come, and let us consult together. (**Nehemiah 6:7**)
- The Himyarite Kingdom, which gained control of South **Arabia** about **115 B.C.E.**, had its capital at Zafar, suggested by some to be the **Sephar** of,
- And their place of dwelling came to extend from Mesha as far as **Sephar**, the mountainous region of the East. (**Genesis 10:30**)
- To the North the Nabataeans, possibly descended from Nebaioth of,
- Now these are the names of the sons of Ishmael, by their names, according to their family origins. Ishmael's firstborn Nebaioth and Kedar and Adbeel and Mibsam (**Genesis 25:13**)
- With their capital at Petra in the rocky gorges of Edom, became powerful from the **Fourth Century B.C.E.**, onward. In time they extended their control throughout the South part of the Negeb and up through Moab and the region East of the Jordan. During some years of the **First Century B.C.E.** and again in the **First Century C.E.** they ruled over Damascus. Their king Aretas IV, **circa 9 B.C.E. 40 C.E.**, is mentioned at,
- In Damascus the governor under Aretas the king was guarding the city of the Damascenes to seize me. (**2 Corinthians 11:32**)
- With regard to Paul's escape from Damascus, described at;
- Now when a good many days were coming to a close, the Jews took counsel together to do away with him. (**Acts of Apostles 9:23**)
- However, their plot against him became known to Saul. But they were closely watching also the gates both day and night in order

to do away with him. (**Acts of Apostles 9:24**)

- So his disciples took him and let him down by night through an opening in the wall, lowering him in a basket. (**Acts of Apostles 9:25**)
- Herod Antipas married the daughter of Aretas IV, but divorced her in order to marry Herodias.
- For Herod himself had sent out and arrested John and bound him in prison on account of Herodias the wife of Philip his brother, because he had married her. (**Mark 6:17**)

See Also ARETAS

- Paul says that following his conversion he went off into **Arabia**, and, came back again to Damascus.
- Neither did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles previous to me, but I went off into **Arabia**, and I came back again to Damascus. (**Galatians 1:17**)
- Such a journey may have been into the neighboring area of the Syrian Desert, though the term would also allow for its being in any part of the **Arabian** Peninsula.
- During the **First Century B.C.E.**, Palmyra to the **NE** of Damascus began to develop as an **Arab** center and in time surpassed Petra as a trading state. In **270 C.E.**, under Queen Zenobia, the Palmyrene army occupied Egypt and became a serious rival to Rome until defeated in **272 C.E.**

.. Language

- The language of the peoples of **Arabia** is a member of the South Semitic group and has remained more stable than the other Semitic languages. It has, therefore, proved helpful in improving the understanding of many expressions and words in the ancient **Hebrew** of the Bible.