

~ARETAS (51)

(A-re'tas) [Virtuous, Excellent]

- The last of several Arabian kings of this name controlled Damascus when its governor joined a plot of the Jews to do away with Paul. The apostle Paul escaped in a wicker basket lowered from a window in the city wall.
- 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**)
- In Damascus the governor under **Aretas** the king was guarding the city of the Damascenes to seize me. (**2 Corinthians 11:32**)
- But through a window in the wall I was lowered in a wicker basket and escaped his hands. (**2 Corinthians 11:33**)
- **Aretas** had given his daughter in marriage to Herod Antipas, who divorced her to marry Herodias the adulterous affair that John the Baptizer condemned.
- For Herod had arrested John and bound him and put him away in prison on account of Herodias the wife of Philip his brother. (**Matthew 14:3**)
- For John had been saying to him: It is not lawful for you to be having her. (**Matthew 14:4**)
- Further aggravated by border disputes, **Aretas** attacked and totally defeated Antipas. Emperor Tiberius then ordered the governor of Syria, Vitellius, to take **Aretas** dead or alive. Vitellius, himself no friend of Antipas, mobilized his forces, but Tiberius died in **37 C.E.**, and the campaign against **Aretas** was called off. Tiberius successor Caligula

reversed this foreign policy, installed Herod Agrippa I in place of Antipas, and permitted **Aretas** to rule Damascus. A coin of Damascus bearing an inscription of **Aretas** is dated in this period.

See Also HEROD 2