



PRAYER FOR THE PEOPLES

Chad

The Karanga people

The Karanga are a people group related to the larger Bantu people. In Chad, they number around 117,000. They speak their own language and live in a small area outside the city of Abeche in South Central Chad. A major source of income for the Karanga is the farming of crops, ranging from groundnuts and sesame to grains and wheat. Much of their planting is based on the amount of rainfall, so drought is always a serious threat to their livelihood. In recent years, the people here have also seen some damage to their crops from grain-eating birds who steal much of their harvest.

▶ *Little is known about the Karanga. Prayer is needed to see them come to a knowledge of the One True God made manifest in Christ.*

Arabs in the Bible

God really loves Arabs

Muslims are found in literally hundreds of different ethnic groups around the world. Possibly three quarters of the world's Muslims are not from an Arabic background; however, Mohammed's Arab lifestyle and cultural background have profoundly influenced Islam. Knowing that Islam has such deep roots in Arabia it would be good for all Christians to understand that God really loves Arabs. The Bible is a major source of Arab genealogies. We know that there are at least three types of Middle-Eastern Arabs: the Joktanites, the Ishmaelites and the Keturahites.

The Descendants of Joktan

Many Arabs see themselves as descendants of Joktan (Gen 10:25). The Arabs call him "Kahtan." One of the very famous tribes descending from Joktan was Sheba whose descendants founded the kingdom of the Sabeans in Yemen and Africa. The Arabs call the famous queen of Sheba by the name "Bilquis." Her visit to Jerusalem during King Solomon's reign is an example of how God's people had an influence on Arabia even in Old Testament times. Solomon writes one of the so called "Messianic Psalms" (Ps. 72) partly with Sheba in mind (see verses 10 and 15). Jesus speaks very positively concerning the Queen of Sheba (Mt. 12:42). It would



appear that at least some of the Semitic tribes worshipped the God of Shem even if they did not know him fully.

The Descendants of Ishmael

God made promises to Abraham concerning Ishmael that he would bless him exceedingly (Gen. 17:18-27). God's covenant to bless all the nations did not come through Ishmael but rather through Isaac. However, God did not forget Ishmael. His descendants are included in God's promise to bless all the nations (all ethnic groups around the world) through the seed of Abraham (See Gen. 12:1-3; 18:18; 22:18; 24:4; and 28:14). This promised blessing was eventually fulfilled in Jesus.

It is remarkable that Ishmael's name is a revelation concerning God's person and character. His name means "God hears." God clearly heard the distress of Hagar when she called out for help in the desert (Gen. 16:1-16). It was God who designated the name. The name Ishmael is an everlasting testimony of God's concern for the weak, the afflicted and those who are unjustly treated.

The descendants of Ishmael seem to have settled predominantly in northern Arabia. One of Ishmael's twelve sons named Nabajoth (Nebaioth) fathered (continued)



the tribe which eventually became the head of the Nabatean kingdom. The kingdom's famous capital, Petra, is in present day Jordan. Muslims believe that Mohammed was descended from Nabajoth.

The Descendants of Abraham through Keturah

After Sarah's death Abraham took another wife (or concubine) named Keturah (Gen 25:1-3). Abraham had six other sons through Keturah after the birth of Isaac (Zimran, Jokshan, Medan, Midian, Ishbak and Shuah). All of Keturah's sons eventually became the heads of Arab tribes. Later Moses married Zipporah the daughter of Jethro the priest of Midian (Ex 2:16-22). Jethro recognized the true God and even gave Moses good advice which apparently pleased the Lord (Exodus 18). Certainly the Midianites had some revelation of God through their father Abraham. The Midianites also attacked Israel during the time of Gideon.

The Arabs were involved in gross idolatry for many centuries. In a very similar way the Jews were also involved in idolatry, and God gave them scriptures and prophets to bring them back to repentance. Mohammed (AD 570 - 632) eventually sought to turn the Arabs from their idolatry to worship



the God of Abraham, Moses and Jesus, but his understanding of God's plan and provision in Christ was distorted.

Hope of Salvation for Arabs

Millions of Arabs around the world already identify themselves with the Messiah. Many are in the ancient churches of the Middle East in Lebanon, Egypt and Iraq. Isaiah the prophet speaks of a time when the glory of the Lord will be manifested among the Arabs (Isaiah 60:1-7).

We also find encouragement to believe God for the salvation of a multitude of Arabs from the story of Pentecost. On the day of Pentecost some of those who were filled with the Spirit spoke of the mighty deeds of God in Arabic (see Acts 2:11). The praises of God were proclaimed in Arabic before they were ever proclaimed in English, French, German or Spanish! Arabs can also be blessed with Abraham through Christ.

Recommended reading: "Arabs and Jews on Biblical Perspective" (order from www.WorldChristian.com bookstore)

THE FIVE PILLARS OF ISLAM

The Islamic religion is lived out according to five main "pillars" which are obligatory religious practices for all adult Muslims:

1. Reciting the Creed (shahada) - "There is no God but Allah and Mohammed is his prophet".
2. Prayer (salat) - Five times each day.
3. Almsgiving (zakat) - Both obligatory and voluntary giving to the poor.
4. Fasting (saum) - Especially during the "holy" month of Ramadan.
5. Pilgrimage (hajj) - At least once in a lifetime to Mecca, known as the Hajj.

