

## JORDAN

In Jordan there are 21 distinct people groups. Following are two of the groups.

### Arab, Palestinian



Palestinian Arabs fall into a category classified as Levant Arabs. "Levant" is a broad term that includes several groups of Arabs: the Jordanian, Palestinian, Iraqi, Arabic Jewish, Chaldean, and Syrian Arabs. Today, several hundred thousand Levant Arabs live along the northern edges of the Arabian Desert. They are spread from Israel to Kuwait and as far east as Iran. Small groups can also be found in North Africa.

Most scholars consider Arabs from the Arabian Peninsula to be the original Arabs. Tribes of nomads and villagers who lived in the Arabian Desert developed the Arabian culture. It was also from there that Arab migrations began, eventually leading to the expansion of the Arab world.

The Palestinian Arabs have had a close association with Islam throughout their history and today, most of them are Muslims. However, there has long been a sizable contingent of committed Christians among the Palestinian Arabs. The two main branches of Islam in the region are the Shi'ites and Shafiites. Palestinian Arabs speak an Arabic language called Mashriqi, with various local dialects.

What are their lives like?

The Palestinian Arabs typically live in villages located near fertile regions; however, they can also be found near mountain foothills in less arid regions.

Although the Palestinian Arabs have settled in towns or villages, they are still tribal in nature. The various tribes are ruled by sheiks (Arab chiefs that are considered to be experts in Islam and in relating to the outside world). Their fortress-like villages can be easily defended. Each house has windows on all sides and is built facing the outside of the village. All goods and persons passing through town are strictly controlled.

Individual dwellings tend to be elaborately decorated, flat-roofed homes called "town houses." Lime wash and brickwork are used around the windows as a form of artistic design. The rooms usually have some type of carpeting, and when entering the house, one must leave his shoes at the door. The walls are lined with mattresses and cushions

to sit on and lean against. A main reception room and a kitchen are located on the top floor. The flat roofs are used by the women for drying laundry.

Social life is extremely important to Arabs. They like to share a daily coffee time by sitting on the floor and drinking coffee from cups without handles. Their diet basically consists of wheat bread and porridge made with boiled meat or chicken.

Despite Islamic teachings on equality, different classes of Arabs still persist. The type of clothing worn has become one of the determining factors. Palestinian Arab tribesmen dress differently than other villagers and can be easily recognized. The women wear veils both in town and at home. Boys show that they are becoming men by changing their headgear and wearing daggers.

Muslims are allowed to have up to four wives but most marriages among the Palestinian Arabs are monogamous. In the past, all marriages were arranged by the parents; however, it is becoming more acceptable for young people to choose their own mates.

In recent years, many of the Arabic Jewish Arabs have settled into mountain villages where they raise grains, vegetables, coffee, melons, dates, mangoes, and pomegranates. Domestic animals are kept to supply milk and eggs.

What are their beliefs?

Virtually all of the Palestinian Arabs are Muslims. Islam is a religion of works that is based on five basic "pillars" which are (1) A Muslim must affirm that "there is no god but Allah, and Mohammed is his prophet;" (2) He must pray five times a day while facing Mecca; (3) He must give generously; (4) He must fast during Ramadan, the ninth month of the Muslim year; and (5) He must try to make at least one pilgrimage to Mecca in his lifetime.

Islamic laws have greatly influenced the lives of the Palestinian Arabs. For example, to preserve their people, they are only allowed to marry those inside their own group. The tribes living in the mountainous regions have intermarried the least with other Arab groups. Their society, like other Islamic communities, is patrilineal. This means that inheritances are passed down through the males. In this system, boys inherit more than girls. Since children are considered a family's greatest asset, females are valued for their ability to bear children.

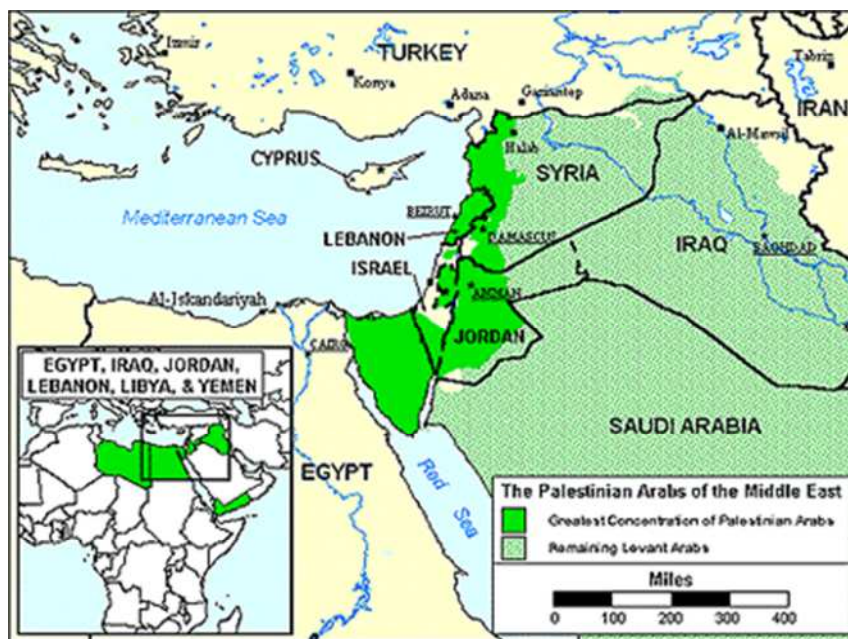
What are their needs?

There is a great need for the Gospel to be preached among the Palestinian Arabs.

A Muslim who professes faith in Jesus Christ can lose his family, his honor, his job, or even his life. At the present time, there are only a few known Palestinian Arab Christians. Evangelization efforts among these tribes are challenging due to restrictions in many of the countries, as well as general antagonism to Christianity. Intercession is the key to reaching them with the Gospel.

## Prayer Points

- \* Ask the Lord to send forth willing laborers to live and work among these tribes.
- \* Pray that God will raise up faithful intercessors who will stand in the gap for the Palestinian Arabs.
- \* Ask God to give the few Palestinian Arab believers opportunities to share the love of Christ with their own people.
- \* Pray that their traditional Muslim culture will soften, creating open doors for the Gospel to be preached among them.
- \* Pray that God will reveal Himself to these precious people through dreams and visions.
- \* Ask the Lord to raise up strong local churches among the Palestinian Arabs.
- \* Pray for completion of Bible translation in this people group's primary language.



Country: Jordan

Continent: Asia

Region: Middle East and North Africa

Persecution Rank: 39 (Only top 50 ranked, 1 = highest persecution ranking)

Affinity Bloc: Arab World

People Cluster: Arab, Levant

People Name General: Arab, Palestinian

Primary Language: Arabic, South Levantine Spoken

Primary Religion: Islam

Religion Sub-division: Sunni

% Christian Adherents: Data not available

% Evangelical: 0.20 %

## **Arab, Jordanian**



Bedouins traditionally live a nomadic lifestyle, spreading from the Persian Gulf to the Atlantic Ocean, and from the borders of Turkey to Yemen. The word 'bedouin' comes from the Arab word 'Bedou' that means "desert dweller." Estimates say nomadic Bedouins constitute about one-tenth of the population of the Middle East.

What are their lives like?

Bedouin life is generally pastoral, herding camels, sheep, goats and cattle. They normally migrate seasonally, depending on grazing conditions. In winter, when there is

some rain, they migrate deeper into the desert. In the hot, dry summer time, they camp around secure water sources. Bedouins define themselves as members of tribes and families. People are divided into social classes, depending on ancestry and profession. Passing from one class to another is relatively feasible, but marriage between a man and a woman of different classes is difficult.

Traditionally, the Bedouin's home, the tent, is divided into three sections by curtains: the men's section, the family section and the kitchen. In the men's area, guests are received around the hearth where the host prepares coffee on the fire. This is the center of Bedouin social life. Tea is served as a welcome drink; coffee is usually prepared after the meal and is the last drink before the guest leaves. The serving of food and drink represents the generous hospitality of the host. The men pass the

evening trading news and discussing their animals. Separated from them by a curtain, the women gather in the family area and kitchen along with their small children to bake bread and prepare the main meal. A dinner of rice and chunks of mutton or lamb are then served to the gathered guests.

Women occupy a very important position in Bedouin society. Not only do they raise the children, herd the sheep, milk the animals, cook, spin yarn and make the clothes, but they also weave the cloth that constitutes the tent. The Bedouin men gather around the fire, sharing stories and sipping coffee. They might discuss falconry, the saluki greyhound and Arabian stallions, all animals the Bedouins are credited with breeding, as well as other matters of importance to the tribe. Traditionally, one of the men recites poetry or sings. To mark the end of the evening, the host burns incense in a mabkhara (incense burner) passing it to each of his guests to inhale and fan their clothes. Poetry has been a central cultural form of expression for the Bedouins throughout their history. In early centuries of Islamic history, Bedouin poetry represented the ideal standard for other literary achievements, as well as for the Arabic language. The traditional foods of the Bedouin are dairy products and meat. Bedouins sell and barter products in order to obtain agricultural food from sedentary peoples.

Bedouin society has a strict code of honor which dictates proper behavior for all members, including children. Because of the demanding nature of the Bedouin lifestyle, children are expected to assume a considerable amount of responsibility in order to help their families survive. Although modernization has changed the Bedouin lifestyle somewhat, emphasis is placed on teaching children to carry on traditional ways of life, and the advancement of modern technology is not considered important to children's education.

Modern societies have made the traditional Bedouin lifestyle less attractive since as it is demanding and often dangerous. Because of that, many tribes have settled in urban areas. It is not uncommon to see a young Bedouin building a house and living in it; however, his parents will pitch their tent in the garden, where they will live very happily until the end of their days. Governments have a strong tendency to regulate Nomadic lifestyles since it is only then that taxation works. Providing services for the people also works best in an urban setting. Today, the Arab world has one of the highest rates of urbanization in the world.

What are their beliefs?

Islam's prophet Mohammed was born and raised in the Bedouin tribe of the Quraish. The Qur'an, first revealed to Mohammed, was later written and compiled in the Arabic language. The first converts to Islam came from the Bedouin tribes living in and around Mecca. Therefore, Islam is embedded and deeply rooted in Bedouin culture. Although there are pockets of Christians in Bedouin tribes, by and large the word Bedouin is synonymous with being a follower of Islam. Prayer is an integral part of Bedouin life. As there are no formal mosques in the desert, they pray where

they are, facing Mecca and performing the ritual washing, preferably with water. Since water is not always readily available, they 'wash' with sand instead.

What are their needs?

In modern Arab states and Israel, Bedouins are faced with challenges in their lifestyle, as their traditional Islamic, tribal culture has begun to mix with western practices. Men are more likely to adjust and interact with the modern cultures, but women are bound by honor and tradition to stay within the family dwelling. They therefore lack opportunity for advancement. Problems facing the Bedouin population of Israel include dispossession and the struggles connected to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Some live in townships, while others either live as squatters on land they claim as their own, or in the original 1948 refugee camps.

The Bedouins who have Israeli citizenship receive free education and medical services as well as cash benefits for children, something that has attributed to the high birthrate among Bedouins (5% growth per year). Unemployment, on the other hand, is very high, and few obtain a high school degree (4%), and even fewer graduate from college (0.6%). Even though the Bedouin population exceeds 110,000 in the Negev, there are still many physical, social, and spiritual problems. The Bedouins are almost untouched by the gospel. Christian resources are available in the Arabic language, the Bedouin's mother tongue.



Country: Jordan

Continent: Asia

Region: Middle East and North Africa

Persecution Rank: 39 (Only top 50 ranked, 1 = highest persecution ranking)

10/40 Window: Yes

Location within Country: Far eastern Jordan.

People Name in Country: Arab, Bedouin

People Name General: Bedouin

Population in this Country: 776,000

Affinity Bloc: Arab World

People Cluster: Bedouin, Arabian

Primary Language: Arabic, Eastern Egyptian Bedawi Spoken

Primary Religion: Islam

Religion Sub-division: Sunni

% Christian Adherents: Data not available

% Evangelical: 0.00 %