

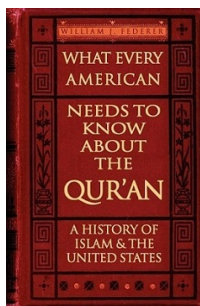
American Minute with Bill Federer Who are the Houthis?

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Houthis of Yemen have been in the news for attacking ships in the Red Sea.

A little history and geography is helpful
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A little geography is helpful.

The Tigris and Euphrates Rivers run across Iraq and empty into the Persian Gulf, where also oil pipelines end. Oil from Iraq, Kuwait and Iran is put on tankers and shipped south past Bahrain, Qatar, United Arab Emirates, Abu Dhabi, Dubai, and through the Strait of Hormuz, into the Gulf of Oman in the Indian Ocean.



Turning west, the oil tankers sail around the south side of the Arabian Peninsula along the coast of Oman into the Gulf of Aden, then along the coast of southern Yemen, an area controlled by anti-Houthi forces.

Then tankers turn the corner of the Horn of Africa, past Somalia and near Djibouti, passing through the dangerous, narrow 14-mile-wide Bab-el-Mandeb Strait continuing north into the Red Sea. This is where the ships sail with the African coast on the west, passing Eritrea, Sudan and Egypt, but on the east passing the Houthi controlled coast of northern Yemen.

If the ships get past this point, they continue up the Red Sea till they get to Egypt and the Sinai Peninsula, where they go through the Suez Canal and into the Mediterranean, where they deliver their oil to Europe or continue their route to America.

Fifteen percent of the world's maritime traffic travels this route, but as the Yemen Houthis attack oil tankers, the only alternative route is to sail around South Africa's Cape of Good Hope, taking weeks longer and adding thousands of additional miles to the trip. This consumes much more fuel and drastically increases the costs of products shipped.

According to Open Door's World Watch List, the countries passed around the Arabian Peninsula are listed as some of the most dangerous places for Christians in the world: Somalia ranks number two, Eritrea number four, Yemen number five, Sudan number eight, and Iran number nine and Oman

number 31. In recent years, large numbers of immigrants from these anti-Christian countries have immigrated to the United States.

But this hostile environment in the Arabian Peninsula and the Horn of Africa was not always the case.

Yemen has a long history. It was originally called Sheba.

According to the Bible's Table of Nations in Genesis, chapter 10, Noah's son Shem had a great-grandson named Eber, an ancestor of both Israelites and Arabs. Eber's son Joktan migrated into Southern Arabia. The children of Joktan were called Joktanites or Qahtanites. Joktan's son Ya'rub is possibly the origin of the name "Arab."

Additionally, everyone knows Abraham and Sarah had their son Isaac. Abraham also had Ishmael by the Egyptian slave woman Hagar. After Sarah died, Abraham had another wife named Keturah, whose name means incense.

Abraham and Keturah's son were Midian, Medan, Ishbak, Shuah, Zimran, and Jokshan. The sons of Jokshan were Dedan and Sheba. Sheba migrated into the Arabian Peninsula, to the furthest west corner, to the area known today as Yemen. Sheba is the oldest and most important of the South Arabian Kingdoms. The people of Sheba were called "Sabaeans." They considered themselves the original Arabs and viewed Ishmaelites as northern Arabs.

The Book of Job, 1:15, stated:

“And the Sabeans fell upon them, and took them away; yea, they have slain the servants with the edge of the sword; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee.”

Job 6 mentioned: "The troops of Tema looked, the companies of Sheba waited for them."

Around the year 1750 B.C., during era of Abraham, the Sabaeans began building near their capital city of Marib an enormous dam to collect rainwater from the periodic monsoons.

The dam, built with the same precision as the pyramids, was 50-feet high and nearly 2,000-feet long. It was located where several mountain valleys joined together at Wadi Saba. A wadi is an area of dry creek beds that fill up with water during heavy rains.

The Marib Dam was considered one of the wonders of the ancient world. Canals from it channeled water to irrigate 50 square miles, creating a garden oasis. It was repaired several times and functioned successfully for over a thousand years.

Sheba was renowned for aromatic resins, frankincense and myrrh which was their most profitable trade. Sheba was on the caravan trade routes from Egypt south through Sudan to the Horn of Africa, across the Bab-el-Mandeb Strait, to Sheba, then by ships over to India.

The histories of Sheba and Ethiopia are intertwined,

being just a short 14-mile distance across the Red Sea from each other. For centuries, both Sheba and Ethiopia were ruled by the same kingdom.

Josephus wrote in Antiquities of the Jews that Moses gained fame as a prince in Egypt for conquering Saba, which was possibly Ethiopia on the African side of the Bab-el-Mandeb Strait from Sheba.

Some believe Moses and the Israelites wandered 40 years, not in the tiny Sinai Peninsula, which is the size of West Virginia, but instead in the Arabian Peninsula, which is nearly five times the size of Texas.

Archeologist Dr. Doug Petrovitch proposed that the Ten Commandments were given to Moses in the Paleo-Hebrew script, and that in their wanderings the Israelites may have influenced the Sabaic script of Ancient Southern Arabia, as both have phonetic consonants, no vowels and are read right to left.

The Sabaic script possibly influenced the development of the Ge'ez language used in Ethiopia and Eritrea.

Psalm 72:10, 15 "The kings of Sheba and Saba shall offer gifts ... And to him shall be given of the gold of Sheba."

Around 970 B.C., according to First Kings 10: "And when the Queen of Sheba heard of the fame of Solomon concerning the name of the Lord, she came to prove him with hard questions. And she came to Jerusalem with a very great train, with

camels that bare spices, and very much gold, and precious stones ... There came no more such abundance of spices as these which the queen of Sheba gave to Solomon."

Isaiah 60:6 "The multitude of camels shall cover thee, the dromedaries of Midian and Ephor; all they from Sheba shall come: they shall bring gold and incense; and they shall shew forth the praises of the Lord."

Isaiah 45:14 "Thus saith the LORD, The labour of Egypt, and merchandise of Ethiopia and of the Sabeans ... shall come over unto thee, and they shall be thine ... and they shall fall down unto thee, they shall make supplication unto thee, saying, Surely God is in thee."

Jeremiah 6:22 "To what purpose cometh there to me incense from Sheba."

Ezekiel 27:22 "The merchants of Sheba and Raamah, they were thy merchants: they occupied in thy fairs with chief of all spices, and with all precious stones and gold."

Joel 3:8 "O Tyre and Zidon ... and all the coast of Palestine ... because ye have taken ... the children also of Judah and ... sold (them) unto the Grecians ... Behold ... I will sell your sons and your daughters into the hand of the children of Judah, and they shall send them to the Sabeans, to a people far off."

Sheba was called Arabia Felix, or Arabia fertile, by the Greeks and Romans. It was considered like Paris - a prosperous, cultural center of the ancient

world.

Beginning in 400 B.C., Ethiopia was ruled by the Askumite Kingdom.

According to the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church, the New Testament account was that an Ethiopian Jew, the eunuch treasurer of Queen Candace, was baptized as a follower of Christ by the disciple Philip.

In the highlands of Sheba, later called Yemen, a Himyarite Kingdom began in 110 B.C., and invaded Sheba, also called Saba, in 25 B.C.

Then, around 200 A.D., the Ethiopia's Askumite Kingdom crossed the Bab-el-Mandeb Strait and captured northern Yemen. The Askumites were driven out by a Sabaean-Himyarite alliance, but then the Himyarites proceeded to conquer the Sabaeans, taking full control of Sheba in 280 A.D.

A Himyarite king at this time was named Shammar Yahri'sh, from whose name Yemen is thought to have been derived.

A large group of Sabaeans, called Ghassanids, fled from the Himyarites conquest of Yemen and migrated to Syria in 220 A.D. There, they converted to Christianity and had a significant kingdom between the Eastern Roman Empire and Persian Empire which lasted for over four centuries, until it was conquered by Muslims of the Rashidun Caliphate in 638 A.D.

In 354 A.D., the Christian Roman Emperor

Constantius the Second sent missionary Theophilus the Indian to request permission of the Himyarite King to build a church.

On the African side of the Red Sea, Ethiopia's Askumite Empire grew to control the Horn of Africa, Sudan, Somalia, and Eritrea. Eritrea is the Greek name for Red Sea.

In 316 A.D., Askumite King Ezana had a Christian slave named Frumentius, who share the Gospel with him. Ezana converted to Christianity. Frumentius was appointed the first Bishop of Axum, and called the Apostle to Ethiopia, translating the New Testament into the Ge'ez language.

Gold coins with King Ezana's inscription have been discovered, some before his conversion with a pagan motif and some after his conversion with a Christian motif. Askumite coins were found as far away as Israel and India.

In the third century, the Persian prophet Mani considered the Askumite Empire as one of the four world powers, next to Persia, Rome, and China.

In Yemen, around the year 380 A.D., the King of Saba and Himyar was named Abu Karib. He was a polytheist.

Abu Karib led a military expedition a thousand miles north where he took control of Yatrib, also called Medina. He left his son as governor and continued further north, but when he received word that the inhabitants of Yatrib had killed his son, Abu Karib returned and wreaked havoc on the city.

During the siege, Abu Karib fell ill. Jewish scholars used their knowledge of medicine to heal him and then begged him to stop his siege.

Abu Karib agreed and soon after converted to religion of Moses. He proceeded to Mecca where he almost destroyed the Kaaba but hesitated. His nephew converted to Judaism and was left in charge of both Mecca and Yatrib - Medina.

His Himyarite Kingdom adopted Judaism as its state religion in 384 A.D., thereby eliminating Byzantine influence. It is hard for people to think that for nearly a century and a half Yemen was a Jewish Kingdom.

In 514 A.D, the Jewish Himyarite Kingdom was persecuting the Christian minority. When news reached Byzantine Emperor Justin the First, he asked the Christian Askumite King Kaleb to invade the Himyarite Kingdom of Yemen to rescue them.

Askumite King Kaleb proceeded to conquer Yemen around 525 A.D. It is hard for people to think that for half a century Yemen was a Christian Kingdom.

In 570 A.D., the Persian Sasanian Empire sent an army which invaded Yemen and drove the Askumites out. Now Yemen was ruled by a Persian Kingdom which had the Zoroastrian religion, mixed with Manichaeism, a belief which included elements of other religions.

That same year, 570 A.D., possibly due to neglect during the wars, Yemen's Marib Dam broke, releasing a torrential flood that devastated the

country. This crippled Yemen's economy to the point it never recovered. An estimated 50,000 people migrated away to other countries.

Persia's presence in the Red Sea also caused the Askumite Empire to decline.

In 615 A.D., the Askumite Empire allowed Muslim refugees to shelter there, but then in 630 A.D., Mohamed sent a naval expedition, led by Umar, to attack it.

Following Mohammed's death, the Rashidun Caliphate conquered Yemen. The Askumite Kingdom in Africa continued to rule Ethiopia till 960 A.D.

In the 16th century, the Ottoman Empire exerted control over the Red Sea coastline.

European powers attempted colonies.

In 1837, the British landed in southern Yemen and made it into the British Aden Colony, which was an important port to stop piracy between British controlled India, and the Suez Canal.

The French built the Suez Canal in 1869, and the British took control of it in 1882.

From 1884 to 1967, the French controlled an area near Ethiopia called Somaliland.

In 1889, the Russian Nikolav Ivanovitch Achinov attempted to establish a settlement near Somaliland but was thwarted by the French.

From 1885 to 1918, Germany had an East African colony near Tanzania.

In 1892, Italy control Somali, which included Mogadishu, till after World War Two.

Italy invaded Ethiopia in 1895, resulting in 10,000 killed. Italians invaded Ethiopia again in 1935 and ruled it till 1941, when after World War Two they were forced to relinquish control.

Eritrea was administered by the British from World War Two till 1952 when the United Nations designated it as part of Ethiopia. Islamists, with help from Egypt, formed the Eritrean Liberation Front which won Eritrean independence in 1991.

Northern Yemen was controlled by Zaydi Shites from the 9th century on. They fought nearly everyone, including the Umayyad Muslims, the Wahhabis and the Ottoman Turks.

With the fall of the Ottoman Empire in 1918, the Zaydis formed the Mutawakkilite Kingdom in northern Yemen, ruled by a monarchy.

Yemen borders Saudi Arabia. In the 1930s, there was a border war and Yemen lost territory to the Saudis.

When President Harry Truman sent the first American diplomat to the Mutawakkilite Kingdom of northern Yemen, he reported that there were no roads, no legal system, and no medical facilities.

The Zaydis monarch let no foreigners into the country unless they were doctors to treat him.

Truman arranged for Yemen to be admitted into the United Nations in 1947.

In 1962, Egypt, backed by the Soviet Union, overthrew the Zaydis, who were backed by Saudi Arabia and Israel.

In 1967, after Egypt lost the Six Day War against with Israel, Egypt and Saudi Arabia reconciled and were no longer interested in Yemen's civil war.

In 1978, Zaydi general Saleh came to power in northern Yemen and ruled for 33 years.

Britain relinquished control of its Southern Yemen Aden Colony in 1968, resulting in a communist government coming to power in Southern Yemen, the "People's Democratic Republic of Yemen."

In 1979, President Jimmy Carter abandoned the pro-U.S. Shah of Iran, allowing the Islamist Ayatollah to take over Iran, who formed the Islamist Hezbollah organization in Lebanon.

When the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991, so did southern Yemen's communist government. Northern Yemen's Zaydi leader, Saleh, quickly united northern and southern Yemen.

In 1992, when the U.S. led Kuwait-Iraq War began, Saleh favored Saddam Hussien.

In retaliation, President George H.W. Bush

supported Saudi Arabia in its expelling of over a million Yemen workers and cut off aid to Yemen.

In 1994, Saleh survived a Saudi-backed civil war.

In 2000, when al-Qaeda attacked the U.S.S. Cole, Saleh suddenly switched sides to align with Saudi Arabia and the U.S. against al-Qaeda.

Hussein al Houthi criticized Saleh for now siding with the U.S. and Saudi Arabia and organized Houthi opposition.

In 2001, President George W. Bush met with Saleh.

When Bush invaded Iraq in 2003, the Houthis radicalized in their anti-American hatred, calling themselves “Ansar Allah” - Supporters of Allah - with the slogan “Allah is great, death to the U.S., death to Israel, curse the Jews, and victory for Islam.”

Though the Houthi in Yemen were a different version of Shiite than the Shite Hezbollah in Lebanon, backed by Iran, nevertheless, Hezbollah began helping the Houthis as the both hated Saudi Arabia, the U.S., and Israel.

International investigations revealed the Houthis raped, tortured and prostituted women.

In 2004, Saleh, with the help of the Saudis launched a military campaign which killed Hussein al Houthi.

The Houthis, with the help of Hezbollah and Iran, suddenly won some battles against Saleh and the Saudi Arabian army.

In 2011, the Arab Spring resulted in an uprising against Saleh.

Saudi Arabia decided the answer was to pressure Saleh to resign and replace him with his vice president Hadi, a Sunni Muslim from southern Yemen who had been trained in Russia.

In a strange twist, in 2014, the ousted Saleh switched sides and colluded with the Houthis to oppose Hadi. They took control of northern Yemen in 2015, the same year that Salman became the new king of Saudi Arabia.

Houthis opened direct air travel between northern Yemen and Iran, in exchange for Iranian oil.

Houthis captured the main Yemen port at Hodeidah, then marched toward the southern Yemen capital of Aden, the largest port on the Indian Ocean.

The Saudis and the U.S., under both Obama and Trump, backed Hadi against Saleh and the Houthis, implementing an air and naval blockade.

Joining in attacks against the Houthis were Saudi allies Bahrain, Qatar, Kuwait, UAE, Egypt, Jordan, Morocco, and Sudan. Over one hundred bridges and a third of the Yemen's roads were destroyed.

This created a humanitarian crisis. All sides were accused of war crimes.

When Saleh signaled that he would consider switching sides again to Saudi Arabia, he was

assassinated in 2017.

The Houthis claim to have 100,000 followers and started working closer with Hezbollah and Iran against what they consider to be a Saudi-U.S.-Israeli conspiracy.

In 2021, the U.S. designated the Houthis a terrorist organization, but President Joe Biden reversed this.

In 2022, Iran-back Houthis fired missiles at Saudi allies, including Abu Dhabi and the United Arab Emirates.

Southern Yemen's leader Hadi relinquished power to Yemen's Presidential Leadership Council led by Rashad al-Alimi.

In 2023, following the October 7th Hamas attack on Israel, the Houthis began firing missiles into Israel and attack ships traveling up the Red Sea off the coast of northern Yemen.

In January of 2024, the Houthis were again designated by the U.S. as a terrorist organization. The U.S. and the U.K. conducted a few airstrikes against Houthi targets with little results.

Yemen, or Sheba, is included the Book of Ezekiel, chapter 38, in what many Bible scholars consider an end times prophecy, where Russia, Iran, Turkey, together with other nations, including those around the Red Sea, will invade Israel.

"In future years you will invade a land that has recovered from war, whose people were gathered

from many nations to the mountains of Israel, which had long been desolate. They had been brought out from the nations, and now all of them live in safety. You and all your troops and the many nations with you will go up, advancing like a storm; you will be like a cloud covering the land ...

Sheba and Dedan and the merchants of Tarshish and all her villages will say to you, 'Have you come to plunder? Have you gathered your hordes to loot, to carry off silver and gold?'"

Though the political situation in Yemen is confusing, the conflict there holds the ominous possibility of sparking an international crisis.

Before being assassinated, Saleh, the Yemen leader for 33 years, described ruling Yemen akin to dancing on the heads of snakes.

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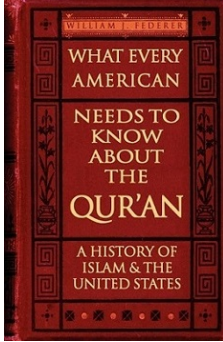
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