

KSA Prayer Journal

May 21st 2011

Riyadh: Diriyah (City of old Ad'Diriyah)

“They will rebuild the ancient ruins and restore the places long devastated; they will renew the ruined cities that have been devastated for generations” (Isa 61:4, NIV)

The ruins of this old city are about 11km northwest from the city center of Riyadh. The area at the Wadi Hanifah is mostly a dry riverbed. It was first settled in 1446; however the historically significant event that occurred here was in 1745. At this time, a convention was agreed upon, between the ruler of Ad'Diriyah, Imam Mohammed bin Saudi and Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdul Wahab. They agreed to call for the correction of the faith of people and to clear faith from heresy, polytheism and superstition. This was a call to reform, with a very strict return to adherence to the Qur'an and the example of Mohammed. The severe conservative brand of Islam, 'Wahabbism' takes its name from these reforms proposed by bin Wahab. From here, the Saudi's began the conquest of the Arabian Peninsula. It was the capital of the first Saudi dynasty from 1744 to 1818. Saud the Great's seat of government was here from 1803-14. The Saudi monarchy captured large parts of what is now Saudi Arabia, but when they took the cities of Mecca and Medina, the Ottomans were angry, and Diriyah was laid waste by them in 1818. The bulk of the inhabitants moved south to Riyadh, and when the Saudis revived their fortunes, they made Riyadh their capital. Mostly former nomads resettled the area. The government in the 1970s founded a new city. Diriyah is now a small but modern town, but the ruins remain a tourist attraction, which are slowly being restored.



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We arrived after dark, and drove around the ruins old city, situated on either bank of the *Wadi* (Arabic for valley or river bed) Hanifa. The origins of the Saudi kingdom (similarly to other kingdoms) were steeped in war, conquest and bloodshed. As we saw the partial restoration of the old city, we asked the Lord for spiritual renewal. We also drove around the new town of Diriyah, where there was a mixture of modern buildings, old style buildings, and obviously poorer areas. There was a noticeably large presence of Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi men on the sidewalks, in the coffee houses, and eating-places. We asked for the Lord to have mercy on them, to pour out His Spirit on the people living in the area (Saudis and expats alike), and to raise up laborers for the harvest to share the Gospel here.

We then walked around a poorer section of new Diriyah, and found a restaurant full of Indian men. Here we had some delicious bread and chicken curry. After eating we walked back to the car, praying for these men and the others who live and work in this area.

PRAYER

Ask God to renew the ruins of lives, just as these mud brick ruins are being restored. Ask Him to pour out His Spirit on local Saudis and expatriates in this district. Just as Ibn Wahab's conservative brand of Islam spread from here, pray that the liberating good news of the Gospel of Jesus would also take root and spread from here. As the Kingdom of the Saudi dynasty spread from here, may God's Kingdom grow and spread throughout this land bringing life. Pray for any local Saudi, Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Philippine believers to be bold and fruitful for the Lord. Ask Him to raise up more laborers for this area.

“Father in Heaven, may all the inhabitants in the old place praise your holy name in joyful voices one day. We know that you are a God who restores old wasted places to dwell in. We know that you are a God who loves all people on earth. Please remember the people in this old place – Bangladeshis, Pakistanis, Indians, Saudis, and so many other nationalities. They are created in your image as children of light. As you gave us the gift of life, may they know you through your Holy Son, Jesus by your grace,. Father God we pray that this Wadi Hanifa will turn into a river of joy and peace so that people rejoice in your presence. We pray that these old ruins will turn into a place of remembrance of your story in history, because you are the God who makes true history on earth. May your people come forth like a spring out of this old historical place, for your glory, through Jesus the restorer of mankind. May people praise your name from this place. We ask this in the name of your Holy Son Jesus.”
Amen.