

faithful companion of Joshua, was the son of a member of the kin of Esau, Jephunneh the Kenizite (Gen. 36:11), but he was the *prince* of Judah chosen to spy out the land with the eleven princes of the other tribes. The only way he could have obtained this rank was if his mother was an heiress in Judah, married to a Kenizite who had converted to faith in the God of Israel. The issue of loss of land from the tribal allotment, which led to the regulations on whom an heiress could marry, would never have arisen in Jephunneh's case; he was not a member of any tribe, and had no property rights in Israel, but his son was a member of Judah through his mother, and heir to his maternal grandfather's place in the tribe.

An equally remarkable coincidence occurs in connection with Mary's family. She had a cousin, Elisabeth, a Levite, who was the mother of John the Baptist (Lk. 1:5,24,36). Having a female cousin

from Levi simply required that one of Mary's aunts married a Levite, and bore a daughter by him. Moses supplies a comparable example to this relationship between the women who bore the two remarkable cousins, John Baptist and Jesus of Nazareth. The pious Elisabeth had the same name as Aaron's wife, Elisheba (Ex. 6:23), and Elisheba was also a member of the tribe of Judah, specifically the sister of Naashon, the prince of Judah at the first numbering in the wilderness (Num. 7:12). So Nadab, Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar, the sons of Aaron and Elisheba, who obviously were all Levites, were the cousins of Salmon (Salma in 1 Chron. 2:11) the father of Boaz and the great-great-grandfather of David the king (Ruth 4:18-22). This exact parallel, pointed out to us by the echo of the lovely name Elisabeth, is all the more remarkable because the Judaite relatives of these Levites were ancestors of the Lord Jesus.

Froglie spirits in the Middle East

Nigel Bernard

In this article we consider signs of democracy in the Middle East. These signs are shown to be related to the sixth vial in Revelation 16. Democratic trends in Jordan are considered also in relation to Daniel 11.

IN REVELATION 16, as part of the sixth vial, the "unclean spirits like frogs . . . go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty" (vv. 13,14). In Revelation the phrase "kings of the earth" relates particularly to Europe. The froglie spirits of democracy have affected many European countries in the past sixteen years, causing revolutions and the downfall of communist governments. But these spirits will also affect "the whole world". The key area of the world in relation to the purpose of God is the Middle East, and the last few weeks have seen democratic developments in this area which may prove to have far-reaching consequences.

Democratic trends

There have recently been protests on the streets of Lebanon calling for more democracy and the withdrawal of Syrian troops. This follows the

assassination of Rafik Hariri, the former Lebanese prime minister, and the resignation of the Lebanese Government. *The Economist* states: "For the Lebanese, what some are calling a 'cedar revolution' and others a 'peaceful *intifada*' carries the promise of an end not just to Syrian occupation but also to a corrupt spoils system that has long sapped the country's talent and morale".¹ To what extent this "promise" will be realised remains to be seen. The pro-Syrian Lebanese Hizbullah supporters responded to these protests by holding a rally that attracted 100,000 people.

There have been various other recent signs in the Middle East that democracy is gaining a foothold. In Iraq, despite continuing violence, there has been a general election, an event credited with encouraging moves towards democracy in other countries in the region. The Palestinians have also held a successful presidential election. In Egypt, President Hosni Mubarak has announced that, for the first time, he will allow alternative candidates to stand against him when

1. "Something Stirs", *The Economist*, 5 Mar. 2005, pp. 24-26.

he seeks re-election next year. In Saudi Arabia, municipal elections are taking place, and it has been announced that women will be able to vote and run for office when the next elections for local government take place.

Of these developments *The Economist* states: "Without a doubt, something exciting is in the air. Democracy for Arabs can no longer be dismissed as the stuff of foolish dreamers".² It goes on to call these democratic tendencies a "new spirit".³ This "spirit" might be new in many Middle Eastern countries, but it is a spirit, an "unclean" spirit, as Revelation says, which has been abroad since the French Revolution.

In Revelation 16 this spirit is subdivided into three spirits, and they are described as "the spirits of devils, working miracles" (v. 14). Yet can we really describe what is currently happening in the Middle East as a miracle? Well, a former US ambassador to the United Nations, Ken Adelman, has commented: "For the first time, people are talking about democracy and human rights in that region. It is a tribute to this president [George Bush] and it's near miraculous".⁴

Jordan

Another country which has seen some development with regard to democracy is Jordan. This is of particular interest because it may lead to a more detailed fulfilment of passages such as Daniel 11:41. This verse states: "He [the king of the north] shall enter also into the glorious land, and many countries shall be overthrown: but these shall escape out of his hand, even Edom, and Moab, and the chief of the children of Ammon". The modern country of Jordan covers the territory of ancient Edom, Moab and Ammon. Indeed, the capital Amman derives its name from Ammon. We usually interpret this prophecy, and other such prophecies, as relating to Jordan. But, although this association is correct, perhaps the mention of these three countries should make us look for the emergence of identities within Jordan which reflect these three countries more closely.

The Kingdom of Jordan is a constitutional monarchy. The king appoints a prime minister who then appoints a cabinet of ministers. There is a Bicameral [two chambers] National Assembly. This consists of the Senate, with its members appointed by the king, and the House of Representatives, elected by popular vote. Beneath these are twelve so-called governorates covering the whole country. Each of the governors of



US Secretary of State Donald Rumsfeld (left) escorts King Abdullah II of Jordan (right) during a Pentagon welcoming ceremony on 5 April 2001.

Picture: Helene C. Stikkel/US Department of Defense

these governorates is appointed by the king, and each governorate at present is simply an executive organ of the central government.

In a recent speech Jordanian King Abdullah II proposed changes to this arrangement which would lead to people having more political say at a local level. He advocated the following:

"We shall have a number of 'development areas, or regions', each of which consisting of a number of governorates. Each region will have a local council directly elected by its people to work hand in hand with the elected municipal councils in the governorates to set priorities and draw up plans and programmes related to their respective region. These tasks should no longer be exclusive to central decision-makers because the people of each region are more aware of their interests and needs".⁵

So the twelve governorates are to be grouped together. Commentators expect there to be three or four groups.⁶ It is too early to know what the impact of this will be. However, these regions

2. "Democracy stirs in the Middle East", *The Economist*, 5 Mar. 2005, p. 9.
3. *Ibid.*, pp. 24-26.
4. Harnden, T., McElroy, D., and Sherwell, P. (2005), "The winds of change", *Sunday Telegraph*, 6 Mar. 2005, p. 17.
5. Speech given on 26 Jan. 2005 and found at http://www.kingabdullah.jo/main.php?main_page=0&lang_hmka1=1.
6. For example, see Satloff, R. (2005), *A Reform Initiative in Jordan: Trying to Keep Pace with Iraqi and Palestinian Elections* at <http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/templateC05.php?CID=2249>.

will have the potential for developing their own agendas and identities, perhaps similar to the national assemblies in Wales and Scotland within the United Kingdom. Maybe this will provide a means by which the ancient identities of Edom, Ammon and Moab will emerge.

Conclusion

It is difficult to judge at present to what extent democracy will impact on the Middle East. However, it cannot be denied that there are significant developments taking place. This is certainly

the view of President Bush. In writing of a speech made by him at the National Defence University in Washington *The Times* reported: "President Bush hailed recent democratic advances across the Middle East . . . claiming that people-power in the Arab world had reached critical mass".⁷ The froglike spirits are at work in the Middle East.

7. Watson, R. (2005), "Bush hails surge of democracy across Middle East", *The Times*, 9 Mar., p. 35.

Rome versus Jerusalem

The great Jewish revolt and its causes

4. The religious element

Peter L. Osborne

At the time of Christ's ministry there had developed amongst the Jews of the Land a revolutionary movement which hoped, with God's help, to overthrow the Romans. This was another major factor in causing the Jewish revolt of A.D. 66 to 73.

THE PREVIOUS TWO articles argued that economic reasons were a major cause of the Jewish revolt. Though compelling, these reasons alone may not have been sufficient to induce a full-scale revolt. An additional ingredient made the mix much more volatile. This was an ideology, a religious conviction by the rebels that they had a greater Power on their side that gave them irresistible force and guaranteed the success of the revolution. This ideology also gave them a moral justification.

As previously shown, taxation was one of the basic causes of the economic woes of the Jews in the Land before the revolt. God had warned them when they had first asked for a king to rule over them that this would bring increased taxes and grief. The obvious solution to their woes, then, was, as a matter of religious duty, to eliminate earthly rulership. This, after all, was in keeping with God's expressed will: to establish the Kingdom of God on earth. If they started the process of establishing God's Kingdom, surely God would finish it. The promised Messiah

would come and rescue the nation as they bravely fought to pave the way for him by ousting the Romans. Messiah, of course, *had* come, but they had rejected him, and now they would pay the price.

The fourth philosophy

Josephus plainly identifies an ideology that he states was at the root of the revolt. This was the so-called 'fourth philosophy' espoused by Judas of Galilee and Saddok the Pharisee, who advocated rebellion against the Roman census of A.D. 6. Josephus describes the fourth philosophy in *Antiquities* as follows: "This school agrees in all other respects with the opinions of the Pharisees, except that they have a passion for liberty that is almost unconquerable, since they are convinced that God alone is their leader and master".¹ Based on this passage, the key elements of the philosophy were:

- its agreement with the beliefs of the Pharisees
- the importance placed on freedom
- a rejection of all but divine rulership.

Like the ideologies of many other revolutions, the fourth philosophy held that a powerful

1. *Antiquities of the Jews*, 18.23. All quotations from Josephus are from the Loeb edition.