



Jordan—the latter-day Moab and Ammon

Michael Jenner

26 OCTOBER 2001 saw the seventh anniversary of peace between Israel and Jordan. Since October 1994 the two countries have developed a strong economic and political relationship. The fact that this alliance continues to be reinforced should be of no surprise to the Bible reader, as this article shows.

Who represents Jordan in Bible prophecy?

Any map of the Old Testament Middle East will clearly show that Edom, Moab and Ammon occupied the land which is now called Jordan. The latter two nations, the children of Lot, remained in constant opposition to the Jews up to and including the rebuilding of Jerusalem as recorded in Nehemiah. After their hostility towards Nehemiah they passed off the historical scene in the second century B.C.

The restoration of Moab and Ammon was prophesied by Jeremiah:

“Yet will I bring again the captivity of Moab in the latter days, saith the LORD. Thus far is the judgment of Moab” (48:47);

“And afterward I will bring again the captivity of the children of Ammon, saith the LORD” (49:6).

It is apparent that today’s Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan is the fulfilment of the re-establishment of these nations.

However, Ezekiel 35:9 tells us of Edom: “I will make thee perpetual desolations, and thy cities shall not return”. Verse 2 shows that this is a prophecy against Mount Seir, which is today’s Petra, the popular Jordanian tourist attraction. In addition, Obadiah verse 10 says that Edom will be “cut off for ever”. This is in stark contrast to Moab and Ammon. We will see that Edom is mentioned in Bible prophecy, but there is some ambiguity as to whether it constitutes Jordan or some other power, because of the fact that Edom was destroyed never to return.

Concerning “the time of the end”, Daniel 11 tells us that Edom, Moab and Ammon are to escape out of the hand of the king of the north when he surges towards Egypt (vv. 41,42). The fact that Jordan remains unscathed is a central part of the prophecy in Isaiah 16. In verses 1-5 we are told that the people of Jordan will take in and protect God’s outcasts. This evidently has a future application, as verse 5 describes the setting up of Christ on the throne of David. We are told that, after the Gogian host, “the spoiler” of verse 4 (*cf.* Ezek. 38:12), has attacked and destroyed much of Israel, the remaining Jews will flee to Jordan for protection.

As a point of interest, this will not be the first time they have done so. Jeremiah 40:11,12 describes how the Jews who had sought refuge from the coming Babylonian invasion in Moab, Ammon, and Edom returned when they saw that a remnant was left governed by Gedaliah. This mirrors what we expect to happen in the future; the Jews flee to Jordan and return when the remnant that is left have Christ as their King.

It is written in Isaiah 63:1 that the Lord Jesus will come from Bozrah, which is on the King’s Highway and is situated in Edom, twenty miles south of the Dead Sea in Jordan. It is fitting, then, that many Jews will be in Jordan when the Lord Jesus returns to walk up the King’s Highway, and they may be converted as he goes towards Jerusalem (Isa. 11:14,15). Verse 10 of Isaiah 11 confirms for us that this is a latter-day prophecy.

Relationships between Jordan and Israel today

We look for some alliance between Jordan and Israel today to fulfil these prophecies. Recent developments between Jordan and Israel have shown a robust union forming.¹

Since July 1996 there has been an agreement of bilateral commerce in which exports and imports are being traded across the two regions. In addition, Israel has recently been permitted to use Jordan's Aqaba airport to bring in tourists, and to transport freight to other countries. A soaring tourist industry has formed, with Israeli nationals accounting for just over eleven per cent of all tourists in Jordan each year (can we imagine Jews visiting any other Arab country for a holiday?).

Israel provides Jordan with seventy-five million cubic litres of water per year. This is a significant amount, especially when taking into account the water shortage in the area. Israeli farmers have suffered water quota cuts by up to fifty per cent, so it is evident that giving water to Jordan is a significant move of friendship.

There are also continuing plans to link the Israeli and Jordanian railways in the Dead Sea area. If this plan is carried out it may lead to the relaxing of some border controls, as the countries will be directly linked. This shows another bond between the two countries.

Arab peoples are becoming increasingly aware of the friendship between Jordan and Israel. On 23 November 2001 Jordan refused Sheikh Ra'ad Salah entry to their country as he was on route to Mecca for Ramadan.² The Sheikh, the leader of the Islamic movement in Israel, blamed pressure from Israeli authorities as the cause of his third rejection of entry to Jordan this year.

Through the eyes of prophecy we can see that the growing links between the two countries are necessary and part of God's preparation for the confrontation to come.

Joint links to America and the EU

A combined communications venture between Israel and Jordan has been undertaken with the construction of a fibre-optic cable link capable of taking 500,000 calls at once. It is being hailed as a new tie between the two states and the Western world. The year 2001 saw America award special status to joint ventures between Israel

and Jordan, allowing them special duty-free treatment to export to the US.

Since 1993 a trilateral economic committee from the US, Israel and Jordan has been active in trying to harmonise economic policies. Jordan is one of the most recent countries to join the World Trade Organisation; they became a member on 11 April 2000.³

The consolidation of Israel's and Jordan's connections with the West is very significant. After the defeat of the southern army, the remnants may take refuge in Jordan since there is nowhere else to run to for safety. Who is to say that Britain and America will not establish their base in Jordan to make a stand against Gog? It would be unlikely that any other country in the Middle East would allow this to happen.

These current developments show us that it is becoming increasingly easy to see some Israelis taking refuge in Jordan to escape the descending northern power as is prophesied. There is one factor that would present an obstacle to Israelis obtaining protection in Jordan today. Over fifty per cent of the people of Jordan are Palestinian nationals, who, as we know, are hostile to the Jews. Could it therefore be that the Palestinians will leave Jordan? They may be inclined to do so if they are given their own state, something that is increasingly spoken of by today's world leaders. This may allow the peace we are looking for to be realised and allow Israelis to flee to Jordan without hostility.

The role of Jordan in latter-day prophecy may often be seen as small and insignificant. However, the Bible shows that it will play a vital role in the future. It will take in God's people, and its inhabitants will be some of the first to see Christ at his return when he comes from Bozrah. Therefore let us watch Jordan in anticipation.

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1. Much of what follows is taken from <http://www.israel-embassy.org.uk/>.
 2. *Haaretz Daily*, 24 Nov. 2001.
 3. <http://www.wto.org/>.

Dr Carey praises Islam

"I can say unreservedly that Muhammad was clearly a great religious leader whose influence on millions has been for the good. We can acknowledge too the ways in which his teaching and that of Jesus Christ and of the Hebrew scriptures have so much in common", said the Archbishop of Canterbury. "We can point with admiration to the uncompromising devotion to God found in Islam. Christians and Muslims, whether we like it or not, are on a journey together and we live in a world where different faiths jostle side by side—in my view interfaith dialogue is not an option but a necessity".