

**APPENDICES TO**

**THE**

**'PLACE OF SAFETY'**

**DOCTRINE**

**AND THE**

**CHURCH OF GOD**

**Assembled by C White**

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**Appendix 1: *It's Called Petra* by Dr John William Burgon**

John Burgon was a noted Biblical scholar. He won the famous Newdigate poetry prize in 1845.

**It seems no work of Man's creative hand,  
by labor wrought as wavering fancy planned;  
But from the rock as by magic grown,  
eternal, silent, beautiful, alone!  
Not virgin-white like that old Doric shrine,  
where erst Athena held her rites divine;  
Not saintly-grey, like many a minster fane,  
that crowns the hill and consecrates the plain;  
But rose-red as if the blush of dawn,  
that first beheld them were not yet withdrawn;  
The hues of youth upon a brow of woe,  
which Man deemed old two thousand years ago,  
match me such marvel save in Eastern clime,  
a rose-red city half as old as time.**

["This must be the most quoted couplet from any of the poems to have won the coveted Newdigate Prize for poetry at Oxford University. Burgon wrote it in 1845, before becoming a clergyman and disappearing into obscurity. None the less, this is a fine piece of verse to be remembered by."]

-- Kenneth Baker, *Unauthorized Versions*]

## **Appendix 2: HWA's Coworker Letters**

Herbert W. Armstrong  
Post Office Box 431  
Tucson, Arizona 85701

February 25, 1982

Dear Brethren and Co-Workers with Christ:

I have just returned from a very busy trip to Honolulu, Hong Kong, Bangkok, Thailand, Manila, Philippines, and Tokyo, and am writing in flight to Big Sandy, Texas, to speak before the college and Church there. Then on to Atlanta, Georgia, to speak to a combined group of about 3,000 brethren.

I think the Far East trip was reported in *The WORLDWIDE NEWS*. I spoke before a Church group at Honolulu, a group of nearly 200 subscribers to *The PLAIN TRUTH* in Hong Kong, more than 200 *PLAIN TRUTH* subscribers in Bangkok, and a similar number in Tokyo. In Thailand I flew on north to Chiang Mai, where King Bhumibol of Thailand sent his mountain jeep to bring me to his mountain palace for an hour's visit.

At Manila I was guest speaker at the Rotary Club of leading businessmen, a banquet of 1,000 leading citizens, addressed a meeting of all the ministers and wives of the Worldwide Church of God from all parts of the Philippines (about 80 present), a luncheon and a morning tea with Mrs. Dona Josepha Marcos, mother of President Ferdinand Marcos, who is only a year younger than I, visited with the President and First Lady and held two overflow services in the large new public auditorium -- the Philippines Convention Center -- attendance 4,200 and 4,500 on successive nights.

In Tokyo I also was guest speaker at a prestigious banquet of some 400 leading Japanese, including Prince Mikasa, brother of the Emperor, and his wife Princess Mikasa, several congressmen of the Japanese Diet who call themselves my "Japanese sons," 21 ambassadors from 21 other nations and many leading citizens. Some of these speeches will be telecast on my weekly TV program in some three or four weeks. I also had a private luncheon with the ambassador from Israel and his wife.

I am leaving in about three weeks for a trip to London and Amman, Jordan, for a private meeting with King Hussein, a visit to Cyprus to obtain radio and TV time, Jerusalem and Paris.

This schedule has kept me very busy. We are opening up radio and TV time in Hong Kong, Bangkok, Manila and probably Tokyo as a result of this trip.

Many other near-breathtaking opportunities are opening now for the expansion of God's Work. More details next letter. Don't forget February is the shortest month, which reduces income, though month's bills remain the same. We are now nearing Big Sandy. More next time.

THANKS for your prayers, and you have mine. **I hope to arrange for the use of Petra as a possible refuge or place of safety during the Great Tribulation, when I see King Hussein. Pray about this, please. God is leading, opening doors and blessing His Work now beyond all expectation. Praise Him and thank Him!** [emphasis mine]

With deep love, in Jesus' name,

Herbert W. Armstrong

Herbert W. Armstrong  
Post Office Box 431  
Tucson, Arizona 85701

July, 1982

Dear Brethren and Co-Workers with Christ:

**Incidentally, I know many of you seem to have your hearts set on going very soon to Petra as "the place of safety" during the soon-coming Great Tribulation. Well, GET YOUR MINDS OFF PETRA. Brethren, I HAVE NEVER said that Petra definitely is the place of protection where God will take us. I HOPE IT IS NOT! One reason it could be the place is that it is a place NOBODY ELSE WOULD WANT TO GO. It would be the most UNpleasant, UNcomfortable, miserable place you could go!**

**There is nothing to be desired there. But, just in case, God HAS miraculously given me very gracious favor in the eyes of King Hussein and also his brother, the Crown Prince. They are very friendly to me personally. And through the Ambassador Foundation, I am keeping up a very close assistance and cooperation with a Jordan school for retarded children, a project carried on by Princess Sarvath, wife of the Crown Prince--even to the extent of planning to send some trained Ambassador College personnel to be stationed there to help train teachers for this school, and otherwise help expand its operations. It is a very worthy cause, and the King and the people of Jordan do appreciate what we are doing to cooperate with them in this.** [emphasis mine]

Also I am to produce a few TV programs that the King's TV station may wish to send out on the air over their TV facilities. This, incidentally, will also reach the "cities of Judah" (see Isaiah 40:3-10, especially verses 9-10). God has providentially opened the door for me to get this warning to the "cities of Judah."

Brethren, THE TIME IS NOW! Your offerings and God's tithes are behind that voice crying in the spiritual wilderness of modern religious confusion, even as John the Baptist was a voice crying in the physical wilderness of the Jordan River, preparing for Christ's Second Coming. And this voice will be reaching across that same Jordan River!

I have been reading the book of the Archduke Otto von Habsburg of Austria on The Social Order of Tomorrow. It is his outline plan for the resurrection of the "HOLY ROMAN EMPIRE" in Europe. Also Franz Josef Strauss's book, The Grand Design, on the same theme, showing also the plans of this "strong man of Europe" for the same prophesied "United Europe." I know Dr. Strauss well. He has dined in my home in Pasadena. I last saw him two days after his private meeting with President Brezhnev of the Soviet Union last November.

The whole world will be literally STUNNED when, very soon now, this union of nations in Europe is publicly announced. It will be a new STUPENDOUS WORLD POWER, possibly even greater than either the Soviet Union or the U.S.A.!

And IT IS MUCH NEARER THAN WE HAVE BELIEVED! Brethren, time is running out on us. When this great European power emerges, our great Work will be just about over. The day shall have arrived when "no man can work," as Jesus said (John 9:4). God has held back world events until Christ's Bride (His Church) has "made herself READY." We were off the track. Christ has been getting us back ON THE TRACK!

NOTHING ELSE MATTERS NOW. We must sacrifice and devote our all that is reasonably possible to GOD'S WORK in these closing days.

Soon God will move swiftly to cut time short and make a quick Work of it. Intensify your prayers.

With deep love, in Jesus' name,

Herbert W. Armstrong

### Appendix 3: Petra

Source: <http://www.bibarch.com/ArchaeologicalSites/Petra.htm>

Located in the Edomite Mountains, Petra (Arabic *Batra*) lies in a narrow, winding valley called *Wadi Musa* (Valley of Moses), which breaks through the rugged hills flanking the eastern side of the *Wadi Arabah*, south of the Dead Sea. Petra was the home of the cave-dwelling Horites (*Horim*; cave-dwellers; Genesis 14:6) driven out by the Edomites (Deuteronomy 2:12). The site became an Edomite stronghold, or capital, called *Sela* (or *Selah*), meaning "rock" (see Genesis 36: 8). This was the region known as Mt. Seir.

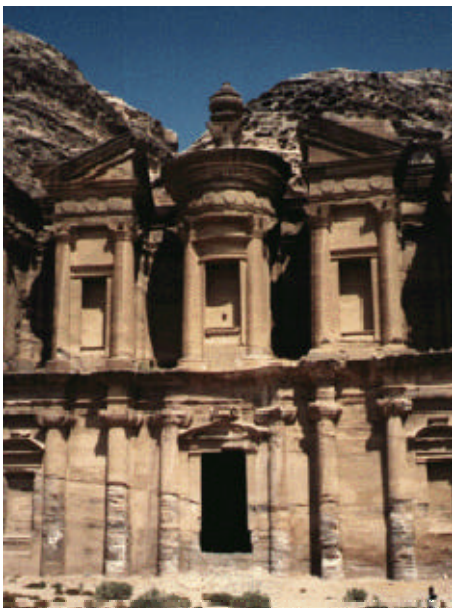
Amaziah, king of Judah, sent a 300,000-man army for the recovery of Edom (see Josephus, Antiquities, IX, ix, 1). Following a great battle in the Valley of Salt he had 10,000 Edomites hurled to death from the cliffs of *Selah* (II Chronicles 25:11-13, II Kings 14:7, Isaiah 16:1). This occurred in the 12th year of his reign (794–3 BCE). Josephus writes of these victims as those: "whom he brought to the great rock which is in Arabia, and threw them down from it headlong." Amaziah renamed the city *Joktheel* -- "subdued by God" -- to commemorate his victory. Edomites later re-took the city.

About 300 BCE nomadic Arabs called the *Nabatu*, or Nabataeans, drove the Edomites out of the region of Mt. Seir. The Nabataeans captured *Sela* and made it their capital and the religious center of the Nabatean Kingdom. They renamed it *Rekumu* from *rekem* ("rock"). In the second century BCE, Hellenistic culture swept the Near East, and the Nabataeans slowly accepted it. It



**The rugged terrain of Petra makes accessibility quite difficult. Good walking shoes and a bottle of drinking water are essential. A BIBARCH™ Photo.**

was the Greeks who called the city *Petra* (meaning, "rock").



**This beautiful tomb is known as the Monastery. Its access requires a long hike. A BIBARCH™ Photo.**

**the Monastery. Its access requires a long hike. A BIBARCH™ Photo.**

The Nabataeans were the first to settle and to develop a significantly distinctive type of architecture, pottery, sculpture and stone dressing at Petra. The monumental caves served as Nabatean tombs. Some believe that the tomb Arabs refer to as the *Al-Khaznah* ("the Treasury") was likely the tomb of the Nabatean king Aretas IV [*Harithat* IV] (8 BCE–CE 40). A representative of Aretas served as governor in Damascus when the apostle Paul (then the recent convert Saul) escaped arrest by being let down in a basket through an opening in the city wall (Acts 9:25; II Corinthians 11:32-33). The Romans defeated the Nabataeans in CE 106 and the region became part of the Roman province of Arabia.

A lingering fascination of some Christians with Petra comes from speculation of a few Christian groups that the site will someday become a "place of safety" where a small number of end-time Christians will escape the Great Tribulation (Revelation 3:10; 12:14-17 when taken with Daniel 11:31-12:1; Matthew 24:16-21; Luke 21:21-23; Mark 12:14-17). Some confuse Petra with Pella. The latter apparently served as a refuge for Jerusalem Christians in the 66-70 CE Roman war with Jewish zealots in the Holy Land.



**A series of hillside tombs. A BIBARCH™ Photo.**



## Appendix 4: Petra and the Place of Safety Study No. 127

Source: <http://www.giveshare.org/BibleStudy/127.petra.html>

### God is Our Hiding Place

Scripture is full of encouraging reminders that only the Eternal is our source of refuge and protection, and that we are not to worry and fret about coming dangers of famine, disease epidemics, war and earthquakes.

**Psalm 18:2, 31**, "The Lord is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my buckler, and the horn of my salvation and my high tower . . . For who is God save the Lord? or who is a rock save our God?"

**Psalm 27:5**, "For in the time of trouble he shall hide me in his pavilion: in the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me; he shall set me up upon a rock."

**Psalm 31:20**, "Thou shalt **hide them** in the secret of thy presence from the pride of man: thou shalt keep them **secretly in a pavilion** from the strife of tongues."

**Psalm 32:7**, "**Thou art my hiding place**; thou shalt preserve me from trouble; thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance. Selah."

**Psalm 91:1-16**, "He that dwelleth in the **secret place** of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the Lord, **He is my refuge and my fortress**: my God; in him will I trust . . . Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night; nor for the arrow that flieth by day; Nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness; nor for the destruction that wasteth at noonday. A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand; but it shall not come nigh thee . . . Because thou hast made the Lord, which is my refuge, even the most High, thy habitation; There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling."

**Proverbs 14:26**, "In the fear of the Lord is strong confidence: and his children shall have a **place of refuge**."

See also **Job 5:21, Psalm 62:1-8, 34:19, 121:1-8**.

### False Prophets of Petra

There are many "Places of Safety" claimed by different religious groups, such as Arkansas, northeast Pennsylvania, or the Caucasus Mountains. Others have identified the rose red city of **PETRA** in modern Jordan as **the** location where the Eternal will protect His people during the Great Tribulation. Some imply that being taken to the "Place of Safety," is almost equivalent to entering the Kingdom of God.

According to past Worldwide Church of God teaching, January 7, 1972, was the date the church was to flee to Petra. When this event failed to materialize, time was extended. The church's "long-winded prophet of Petra," Gerald Waterhouse, continued to tour churches, expounding his prophetic speculations. At one time, purchase of a fleet of DC-10's was said to have been predicted, which would usher church members to Jerusalem, where they would trek to Petra. Waterhouse's "Petra Doctrine" emphasized loyalty to the organization above loyalty to the Creator. Only faithful church members would be protected in the Place of Safety. Disloyal or lukewarm believers would suffer the Great Tribulation. Because of erroneous prophetic date setting, some church members put off needed dental work, failed to plant fruit trees, didn't save for their children's education, and lived in fear that they would miss the boat or plane to Petra. Such prophetic excesses make it almost impossible for some to objectively study the subject of Petra and the Place of Safety.

Nevertheless, the Bible says a great deal about Petra and the fact that the Almighty will divinely protect His chosen people. In spite of others, we should heed what the Bible has to say about Petra and the Place of Safety.

### Refuge in Selah (Petra)

Petra has had several names: Sela, Kadesh, Kadesh-barnea, Arce, Rekem, and Joktheel. It

is a well-known fact that the Greek word for rock, *petra*, is the equivalent of the Hebrew *Selah* or *Sela*.

**Isaiah 16:1-4** Mentions *Selah* and outcasts seemingly being hidden in the land of Moab. **Verse 5** shows that this will happen just before the return of the Messiah to rule from the throne of David. This chapter shows the Eternal's judgment on Moab.

**Isaiah 33:15-17** shows that the righteous shall dwell in the munitions of rocks (i.e., rock fortresses), and be given bread and water. Just as the Almighty protected Israel in the wilderness, so will He protect and provide for His people in the last days.

**Isaiah 42:10-13** prophesies that the inhabitants of the rock (*Selah*) shall sing and rejoice, along with seafarers and others living on the coast lands and the wilderness.

**Isaiah 43:20-21**, ". . . I give waters in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert, to give drink to my people, my chosen . . . they shall shew forth my praise."

**Psalms 108:10-13** speaks of God leading us to the strong city of Edom, and the Almighty helping us in a time of trouble.

Petra is at the entrance to the ancient land of Edom, just 16 miles northwest of Ma'an in the southern part of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. This area may be spared from the scourge of the King of the North in the end time:

**Daniel 11:41**, "He 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.**"

### **Satan's Wrath: The Great Tribulation**

The Great Tribulation is Satan's wrath against the people of the Almighty. The Eternal promises to protect those who are faithful to His word.

**Revelation 3:10**, "Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from **the hour of temptation**, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth."

On the other hand, the Father also promises that the lax, lazy and lukewarm of His people shall be chastised, in order to encourage them to be zealous for God, **Revelation 3:14-19, 7:14, Ezekiel 5:2-4, 34:5-10, 13-16, and Zechariah 11:3-5, 15-17.**

**Revelation 12:12-17**, ". . . Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time . . . he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man child. And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent. And the serpent cast out of his mouth water as a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood. And the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed up the flood which the dragon cast out of his mouth. And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ."

**Matthew 24:16-22**, "Then let them which be in Judaea **flee** into the mountains: . . . For then shall be **great tribulation**, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened."

We are not to follow into the desert impostors claiming the Messiah is there. If we go anywhere, the Eternal must lead us, **Matthew 24:23-26.**

**Luke 21:12**, "But before all these, they shall lay their hands on you, and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues, and into prisons, being brought before kings and rulers for my name's sake."

**Luke 21:16-18**, "And ye shall be betrayed both by parents, and brethren, and kinsfolks, and friends; and some of you shall they cause to be put to death. And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake. **But there shall not an hair of your head perish.**" Some will be put to death, others will go through unscathed.

**Romans 8:38-39** shows that nothing can separate us from the love of God, not even persecution.

### **Hid From God's Wrath**

After Satan's Wrath (the Great Tribulation), comes God's Wrath (the Seven Last Plagues), described in Revelation chapters 16-19. While the former is directed against God's remnant people, the latter falls on the unrighteous.

**Isaiah 26:20-21**, "Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: **hide thyself** as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast. For, behold, the Lord cometh out of his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity: the earth also shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain."

**Zephaniah 2:3**, "Seek ye the Lord, all ye meek of the earth, which have wrought his judgment; seek righteousness, seek meekness: it may be ye shall be **hid in the day of the Lord's anger.**"

The wicked will not **flee** from the wrath to come, **Matthew 3:7**. We need to listen to what the Eternal says, or we will never flee (escape), **Hebrews 12:25**. Just as the early New Testament church fled to Pella, so the Almighty's people flee in the last days:

**Luke 21:36**, "**Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape [Greek *ekphugo*, literally, "to flee out of"] all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man.**"

**Hebrews 2:3** uses the same word *ekphugo*, exhorting us, "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation . . . ?" The unrighteous will not be hid from the Almighty's wrath:

**Revelation 6:15-17**, "And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: For **the great day of his wrath** is come; and who shall be able to stand?"

**Revelation 9:4**, ". . . they should not **hurt** the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree; but **only those men which have not the seal of God in their foreheads.**"

### **A Way to Escape**

**Ezekiel 9:4-6** is a prophecy explaining that an angel will put the Eternal's mark on the foreheads of the righteous so they will be spared.

**I Corinthians 10:13**, ". . . God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make **a way to escape**, that ye may be able to bear it." The word here for "escape," the Greek #1545 *ekbasis*, means "a way out," or literally "to walk out," or "hoof it" in the vernacular today. This shows "there is a way out of our difficulties. That way is directly ahead, straight through the problem!" with the help of the Almighty (The Good News, November-December 1988, page 8). **Hebrews 13:6-7** show us that we are to not fear what man can do to us, realizing God is our helper, following the example of the faithful leaders in the Church, considering the end (*ekbasis*) of their righteous conduct.

A person "escapes" a trial by being delivered, not necessarily by being absent from the conflict. Escape can mean survival. Daniel escaped the lion's den, though spending the night in it; the three Hebrew boys escaped the fiery furnace by divine presence and protection, though right in the fire. **Luke 21:16**, says "some of you shall they cause to be put to death," yet **verse 18**, says "there shall not an hair of your head perish." Obviously, "escape" in this sense does not imply absence from the trouble, but survival: whether living through the trouble, or resurrection after the trouble has brought death. Jesus escaped death — it could not hold Him, though He suffered it.

**Colossians 3:3**, "For ye are dead, and **your life is hid with Christ** in God." **Hebrews 6:18**, "That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have **fled for refuge** to lay hold upon the hope set before us."

### **Fear Versus Arrogance**

**I John 4:18** says "Fear hath torment." Some who believe in a Place of Safety feel tormented and fearful they might "miss the plane" and have to go through the Great Tribulation. The

Apostle John assures us that "There is no fear in love." Those fearful are holding to an incorrect doctrine. See also **II Timothy 1:7, Romans 8:15, Matthew 6:25, 32-33, 10:39, Acts 21:13.**

On the other hand, some are so sure of themselves going there, that they have a cocky arrogance and look down on others whom they think are "less righteous" and will have to suffer through the Great Tribulation. Both extremes are wrong.

The Jonestown, Guyana Jim Jones People's Christian Church mass suicide episode shows the dangers of an extreme Place of Safety idea. One who seeks to save his life shall lose it, **Luke 17:33.** The prophecy of **Revelation 6:15-17** shows the unconverted, not the believers, seeking refuge from God's wrath among the caves and mountains in the last days. One should only flee to a cave or mountain if the Heavenly Father sends us there!

### **Physical Description and History of Petra**

Petra is the Greek name for Sela, or Selah, a city of ancient Edom. The Hebrew word sela means "lofty, craggy rock, fortress, stronghold, cliff." Petra is located 120 miles south of Jerusalem, almost due south of the southern tip of the Dead Sea, and 60 miles north of Aqaba (Eilat). Roman geographer Strabo said Petra was 3-4 days journey south from Jericho. It is in the modern nation of Jordan, a few miles from the Israeli border.

Petra is legendary as the rock-cut "rose-red city half as old as time." The rose-red cliffs, nestled in a craggy canyon, are practically invisible from the air and almost impregnable from the ground.

In Abraham's time, Petra was known as Selah. It is located in the mountains of Seir, the land of the Edomites. Petra has many natural caves that are ideal hiding places. In addition, inhabitants have hollowed out many more caves.

From Lebanon to the Gulf of Aqaba (Akaba), piercing through the Sea of Galilee, the Jordan Valley, and the Dead Sea, the rift valley splits the Holy Land in two. Petra is located about half way between the Dead Sea and Aqaba on the east side of the rift, near Jebel Shera, the Mount Seir of the Bible. The Wadi Musa (Valley of Moses, one of the traditional sites where Moses struck the rock and water gushed forth) is a great ravine running east to west enclosed by crimson cliffs which give the area its name, the Land of **Edom**, which means **red**. The Valley of Moses enters Petra from the East through a narrow winding 1 1/4 mile long gorge, or "Siq," 10-30 feet wide with walls over 150 feet high.

The city of Petra is only 3/4 mile long from north to south, varying width from 250-500 yards. There are ruins of rock carved temples, a theater, tombs and public buildings. Petra's "suburbs" cover about 25 square miles, consisting of residential cliff dwellings with modest carvings around their entrances.

A mount rising 1,000 feet above it, Umm el Biyara, has eight deep cisterns for storing water. Sela in Arabic means "rock cleft." A few miles south of Petra is 4,280 feet high Mount Hor, which some say is where Aaron died. Josephus says that Miriam died at a mountain called Sin, near Petra, and that Aaron also died at a mountain in Petra (Ant. IV, iv, 6-7). He relates that a king Rekem was among five Midianite kings who fell to Moses and the Israelites, giving his name to the city, Arecem, later called by the Greeks Petra. In Jesus' and Josephus' day, Petra was "the chief and capital of all Arabia" (Ant. IV, vii, 1).

Petra was originally inhabited by cave dwelling Horites. Esau drove out the native Horites and established the kingdom of Edom with its capital at Petra, **Deuteronomy 2:12.** Josephus says the Amalekites lived there (Ant. III, ii, 1) at the time of Moses. Esau's descendants were called "Edomites." The name "Seir," often associated with the Edomites and a mountain, means "rugged." At that time, the area was fertile, as prophesied in **Genesis 27:39**, and attested to in **Numbers 20:17.** The Edomites were defeated by King Amaziah of Judah.

### **Nabatean Kingdom of Arabia Petra**

An Arab (Ishmaelite) tribe known as the Nabateans replaced the Edomites, and made Petra their center beginning about 300 B.C. The Nabateans migrated up from southern Arabia and had a history of carving cities in stone. They worshipped rock, and their god Dushares is represented in obelisk carvings on buildings and niches throughout Petra. Nabateans gained

a monopoly on the lucrative spice trade from the East through Elath (Aqaba) and Gaza. They battled the Seleucids, successors to the Greek Empire, and sacked Damascus in 85 B.C. Nabateans dug thousands of room size chambers into the rose-colored limestone mountains that rise steeply from the valley floor of Petra. The largest monument is a massive cliff building named El Deir, a two hour climb up a carved stone staircase to a temple on top of a mountain. In New Testament times, the Nabatean Kingdom of "Arabia Petraea" included the Sinai Peninsula, Ailah on the Gulf of Aqaba of the Red Sea, the eastern part of the Dead Sea, and much of the modern Jordan.

Several of Petra's kings bore the title "Aretas." An Aretas of Petra warred against Herod Antipas. (It should be noted that the Herodian dynasty were part Jew, part Edomite.) The immediate cause was a border dispute, but it was aggravated by the fact that Herod divorced Aretas' daughter because of his shameful attachment to his brother Philip's wife. John the Baptist preached against this public divorce and remarriage, and as a result, lost his head. Herod's army was later destroyed through treachery when some of his brother Philip's troops joined Aretas. As Josephus records, "some of the Jews thought that the destruction of Herod's army came from God, and that very justly, as a punishment of what he did against John, that was called the Baptist . . ." (Ant. XVIII, v, 1-2). Many Jews rejoiced at Herod's defeat.

The Nabatean kingdom finally fell to Rome. In A.D. 106, Petra became a Roman province, and prospered greatly as a trading center between Rome and the East. Changing trade routes, and Rome's fall, caused Petra to decline into obscurity for a thousand years. It gradually became abandoned except for wandering Bedouin tribesmen. Petra was re-discovered in a well-preserved state in 1812 by European John L. Burckhardt. In the late 1950s, archeologists excavated Roman ruins at Petra.

E. Raymond Capt's book, *Petra*, has many fine pictures, maps and drawings of Petra, detailing its history. "Petra's once fertile valleys are now covered with sand from the desert and debris from the soft rock of which the mountains are composed. Petra's springs and streams have dried up to such an extent that much of the area is incapable of supporting life. Only a few isolated places can be found containing enough vegetation and water to sustain the few Bedouin Arabs with their goats and sheep, that call Petra their home" (Capt, p. 107).

### **The Curse of Edom**

Crighton's "History of Arabia and its People," refers to the "curse of Edom," also known as Idumea. He notes the desolation of Petra as a sign of the fulfillment of Bible prophecy.

**Isaiah 34:5, 8-15** speaks of the Eternal's judgment against *Idumea* [Edom], "the people of my curse" and that the land shall lie waste from generation to generation, inhabited only by satyrs (wild goats) and screech owls. **Ezekiel 35:1-9, Obadiah 1:1-4** and **Jeremiah 49:7-18** repeat the divine prophecy of doom against Mount Seir and Edom. **Malachi 1:3-4** prophesies of the waste of Edom and says they will not be allowed to rebuild it, for the Lord has indignation against them forever.

Crighton writes, "The solitude [of Petra's Siq] is disturbed by the incessant screaming of eagles, hawks, owl and ravens, soaring above in considerable numbers, apparently amazed at strangers invading their lonely habitation." At night the screech owl is heard above the rest. As late as the 18th Century A.D., both lions and leopards were seen in the hills around Petra. Wild goats (KJV "satyrs"), foxes, wolves and jackals and hyenas were also in the area.

### **Biblical References to Selah or Petra**

**Judges 1:36** shows the rock [Petra, Moffatt translation] was one of the boundaries of the territory of the Amorites. In **II Kings 14:7**, King Amaziah of Judah defeated Edom (Seir) and took Selah by war, renaming it Joktheel. **II Chronicles 25:11-12** adds that 10,000 Edomite captives were brought to the top of the 1,000 foot tall rock and cast down to their deaths.

Herman L. Hoeh says that **Petra is mentioned more often in the Bible than any other city except Jerusalem, Samaria, and Babylon**. The reason this is usually unnoticed is that Petra goes by different names. He concludes that Israel spent considerable time in Petra on their way to the Promised Land and that the Eternal will do likewise to His people in the last

days. Here are references to Petra which are well camouflaged in the Bible:

(1) **Wilderness of Paran. Numbers 10:11-12**, and **12:16** refer to "the wilderness of Paran" as a stopping place for Israel after they left Sinai. Paran means "full of caverns," from the Hebrew root word for "to dig out." No other city is so famous for its beautiful carved out caves as Petra. Ishmael, father of the Arabs, lived in the Wilderness of Paran, **Genesis 21:21. Numbers 12:16 to 13:1-16** shows that the twelve spies were dispatched from the Wilderness of Paran. In **verse 26**, they returned to the Wilderness of Paran, to a specific city there named Kadesh.

(2) **Kadesh, Kadesh-barnea.** "Kadesh" in Hebrew means "holy." God's presence in the cloud above the tabernacle made the place holy. **Deuteronomy 9:23** shows that another name for Kadesh is Kadesh-barnea. "Barnea" means "son of the wanderer, vagabond." Abraham was a stranger and a pilgrim, wandering from place to place. His son Ishmael lived in Paran's wilderness. At Kadesh, the Israelites wavered in their faith, failing to trust God, **Numbers 14:1-11**. As punishment, they had to wander, or be fugitives, in the wilderness, **32:1, 13**.

NOTE: Many Bible Atlases are inaccurate. They show the route of the Exodus, not through the Red Sea, but through a shallow pond, the Sea of Reeds, in the Nile Delta. Likewise, some maps incorrectly show Kadesh-Barnea, the launching point of the spies to the Promised Land, as a place south of the Negeb Desert, on the west side of the Arabah (referred to in Scripture as "the plain," that sunken land from the south end of the Dead Sea to the Gulf of Aqaba).

(3) **Mount Seir, the mountain of the Amorites. Deuteronomy 1:2, 6-7, 19-21.** Mount Seir is the name for the chain of mountains between the Arabian Desert and the Arabah. It was there, the same place as Kadesh, where the spies left and returned, that Israel rebelled against God and fought the Canaanites and were defeated by the Amorites at Seir, **Numbers 14:40-45** and **Deuteronomy 1:42-46**.

(4) **Wilderness of Zin.** This is the same as Kadesh, **Numbers 20:1, 27:14, 33:36**. "Zin" comes from a Hebrew root word meaning "a mountainous crag, piercing the sky." (**Zin** is not the same as the Wilderness of **Sin**, which Israel reached before Sinai.) Note that Miriam died there. Whiston, in his footnote to Josephus (Ant. IV, iv, 7) says Miriam's sepulcher is still in Petra, the old capital city of Arabia.

(5) **Water of Meribah** is the place where the people demanded water, **Numbers 27:14** and Moses got so mad he disobeyed God's instruction to speak to the rock. Instead, Moses angrily struck the rock to give them water, and as a result he was denied entrance to the Promised Land, **Numbers 20**, especially **verse 24**. Moses was reminded of the waters of Meribah-Kadesh, in the wilderness of Zin, **Deuteronomy 32:51**.

Aaron died near Kadesh on Mount Hor, **verses 22-29**. A little southwest of Petra is a 4,800 foot mountain called by the Arabs "Jebel Nebi Harun," meaning "Mount of the Prophet Aaron."

Further proof that Kadesh is Petra on the east of the Arabah is the fact that Edom would not let Israel enter the Promised Land by the "King's Highway," **Numbers 20:17-21**. Instead, they had to bypass Edom by way of the plain, i.e. go through the flat dry Arabah, **Deuteronomy 2:2-8**. This was the same "way of the spies" who had come forty years previously, **Numbers 21:1, 4**.

(6) **Paul Went To Arabia.** After his conversion at Damascus, Jewish persecution became too severe and Paul fled to Arabia where he apparently remained for three years, later returning to Damascus and going on to Jerusalem, **Galatians 1:15-18**. It appears that during that time Damascus was under the control of King Aretas of Petra. Aretas along with the Jews tried to apprehend Paul, **II Corinthians 11:32-33, Acts 9:23-25**. (Some Arabians kept Pentecost and other festivals in Jerusalem, **Acts 2:11**.)

The "Arabia" Paul fled to probably included the region of Petra, capital of Arabia Petraea. Paul's later references to Sinai in Arabia indicate that he had firsthand knowledge of the area, **Galatians 4:25** and **Hebrews 12:18**. Sinai was at that time part of the Nabatean Kingdom. Conybeare & Howson, in *The Life and Epistles of Paul*, page 80, say that Paul may have gone there to preach the gospel in Petra, as well as to deepen his repentance and

grow closer to the Eternal through prayer. Paul followed the footsteps of Moses, Elijah and the Savior, who was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, **Luke 4:1**.

God led Israel out of Egypt, and they stopped over at Petra on the way to the Promised Land. The Apostle Paul was personally trained by the Savior for three years in this same area.

### **False Ideas About Petra**

After a 1963 visit to Petra, David Jon Hill listed several false impressions he had to unlearn about Petra:

**False:** The Siq is the only entrance to Petra. **True:** It's the only road, but the other side of the valley has gentle sloping mountains over which any army could swarm. **False:** The Siq is so narrow, you can touch either side as you walk through. **True:** Mr. Hill couldn't do this when he went through on horseback. (The narrowest point is eight feet wide.) A large dump truck or a tank could drive through.

**False:** Petra is small. **True:** Its thousands of caves could accommodate 250,000 people, if they had adequate food and water. **False:** Petra is an impregnable fortress. **True:** Any army could easily send tanks and paratroopers into Petra.

**False:** Petra has two springs, and the Wadi Musa (River of Moses) flows into its valley. **True:** This used to be so, but springs and river have been dry for years. Jordan constructed a ditch to make sure the Wadi Musa never again flows into Petra via the treacherous Siq. **False:** There is plenty of food in Petra. **True:** Only 150 Bedouins and their goats live there. (In 1986, some cave dwellers had electric generators and portable radios and televisions.)

Rather than a great place to live, Hill says, "Petra is literally what it is advertised to be — the Rose Red City of the DEAD!"

### **Summary of Place of Safety Doctrine**

Just as the Eternal protected His people in the past, so will He also protect His people as a whole during the Great Tribulation. Historically, the desert area of Petra has been the scene of God's providential protection of His people. How and where He chooses to protect His people in the future is stated in general prophecies which He can fulfill in a multitude of ways. It is important for us to be zealous for Him, ready for His coming, in constant personal contact with the Eternal through prayer and righteous living.

### **Arguments Against Place of Safety Doctrine**

Several writers have expressed opposition to the Place of Safety doctrine. Here are some of their arguments, followed by our answers. (For references to their works, see the Bibliography at the end of this article.)

(1) No man can know the day when the Savior returns, **Matthew 24:36**, yet Place of Safety advocates claim to know the day, which will be 3 1/2 years after they flee, **Revelation 12:14**.

**ANSWER:** When the Savior said this, neither He nor the angels in Heaven knew the day nor the hour of the coming of the Son of Man. He did not say that in the future the Father would not reveal it to Jesus or to others of His choosing. We should not trust in dates of our own devising. Instead, we should be ready, doing His work now, waiting on the Eternal to reveal all things, **Amos 3:7**.

(2) Place of Safety advocates have a poor track record for prophecy. In 1963, Hoeh said, "It is time we realized that civilization has less than 15 years to go, unless a supernatural God in heaven intervenes on earth to stop madmen from destroying all life on earth in their crazed dreams for world conquest."

**ANSWER:** We should not set prophetic dates.

(3) Some claim **Daniel 12:11-12** shows they will have 45 days to prepare for flight, another 30 days to assemble in Jerusalem to organize before going over to Petra. **Luke 21:21** shows we are to stay away from Jerusalem and surrounding area.

**ANSWER:** Here again, date setting should be avoided. If the Eternal doesn't provide the way to a Place of Safety, we must not cut the path ourselves.

(4) When Christ returns, He will gather His elect from all different parts of the world, not just

one place, **Matthew 24:31**. Jesus prayed to the Father not to be taken **out of** the world, but rather they should be sent **into** the world.

**ANSWER:** It is true that not all of God's people will be holed up in one physical "place of safety." The Place of Safety doctrine does not preclude others of God's people being scattered around the world and protected by the Almighty wherever they are.

(5) Jesus warned us not to flee to the desert to meet or await His return, **Matthew 24:26**.

**ANSWER:** His warning is not to follow false prophets claiming that Messiah is in the desert. However, if an angel speaks directly to you, will you heed and go?

(6) The logistical problems of gathering 144,000 to Petra are immense. Therefore, it is impossible.

**ANSWER:** Humanly speaking, it is impossible. However, with the Eternal, all things are possible. He protected Israel with a cloud from her enemies, and fed them manna from heaven and water out of a rock. Can He not do the same again?

(7) Steven Ross says Christians are to be busy in Christ's service when He returns, **Matthew 24:46**, "Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing." He says it is hard to fulfil this hiding in a cave in Petra.

**ANSWER:** The Eternal doesn't need us to preach the Gospel. He will do it through various means, the two witnesses of **Revelation 11**, the three angels of **Revelation 14**, etc.

(8) Roy Marrs says the woman of **Revelation 12** is Israel, not the Church. Compare **Revelation 12:7-10, 13** with **Luke 10:18, John 12:31**. "NOW shall the prince of this world be cast out" shows that Satan's wrath was focused on Israel. Israel fled to the wilderness. Christ told Israel, the inhabitants of Judaea to flee to mountains, **Matthew 24:16-22**. **Revelation 12:17** shows that the remnant of Israel is the Church. **Revelation 13:7** says Satan shall war against the saints and overcome them, they don't escape.

**ANSWER:** If the woman of **Revelation 12** is Israel, then what is the period of 1260 years (3 1/2 prophetic times)? Our understanding is the 1260 years was from **325 A.D.**, the Council of Nicea, when the true church had to flee, to **1585**, when the true church came out of hiding after the Dark Ages. **Revelation 13:7** squares with **Daniel 7:25**. The fourth beast wears out the saints of the most High, that is, prevents them from proclaiming the gospel to the world.

(9) Steven Collins says "The Bible does say that the place 'sela' (Petra) will be a place from which people are taken captive in the latter days and not a place where they are given refuge from captivity . . . Numbers 24 indicates Petra will be a very dangerous place in the latter days . . . those who put their trust in Petra may blunder into the very captivity they are seeking to avoid by 'fleeing to Petra.'" Instead of going to Petra, we should "stay away from Petra."

**ANSWER:** Collins believes that **Numbers 24:14-24** and other passages indicate that Balaam may have uttered his prophecy in the area of Petra. **Verse 21**, "nest in the rock," he says is sela or Petra. Balaam's prophecy is for the "latter days," verse 14. The Kenites shall be carried away captive by Asshur (Assyria), which historical research indicates is Germany. **Daniel 11:40-41** is thought by some to indicate that Germany will lead the "King of the North" and attack Palestine, and Moab and the chief of Ammon shall escape out of his hand. Collins is not a trustworthy prophet. When Balaam uttered his prophecies, Israel had defeated the Amorites and Bashan. They were encamped nowhere near Petra, but instead on the east side of Jordan near Jericho, **Numbers 21 and 22:1-5**. Mt. Pisgah (23:14) is near the north end of the Dead Sea. Not every use of selah (Strong's #5553) refers to Petra.

(10) Capt disagrees with the theory that Petra will be a "hiding place" for 144,000 Israelites, 12,000 from each tribe. Capt thinks the "great tribulation" is past, not future. The prophecies of **Daniel 11:41, Matthew 24** and **Luke 21**, he believes, were fulfilled with the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D.

**ANSWER:** It is preposterous to say that the prophecies of **Matthew 24** have been fulfilled. Read them for yourself.

(11) Ross says the Place of Safety idea is a weird "curious theological concept," of an "end time 'hideout' for God's people."

**ANSWER:** This is a good point. Some who hold this view are unbalanced. God is our refuge. We should not think ourselves better than others.



(12) Ross says the day of Messiah's return will come unexpectedly, **Matthew 24:42-44, I Thessalonians 5:2.**

**ANSWER:** He doesn't quote **verse 4** which says **we** are not in darkness and that day should not overtake **us** as a thief.

(13) Ross disputes the seven church eras idea, saying six are addressed in an end time tone.

**ANSWER:** Several of the messages to the seven churches of Revelation appear to refer to the end time. But, the Place of Safety doctrine is not dependent upon the Seven Church Historical Eras doctrine. The Philadelphia group is promised protection because of their faithfulness.

(14) William F. Dankenbring says that **Revelation 12:6** shows that during the Middle Ages, the true Church fled the boundaries of the Roman Empire to "the wilderness, where she had a place prepared of God." That was the mountains of eastern Europe, southern France and northern Italy, and western Europe and England. Thus, he now says, this "place prepared of God" need not be a desert rocky wasteland such as Petra, but any mountainous region beyond the reach of the beast power. "The idea that God will lead 144,000 Church members from locations around the globe to a hostile desert near Jerusalem, to a barren rocky region in southern Jordan, and feed all of them there for three and one half years — carrying them on jet aircraft and steamships from around the world, seems preposterous, to say the least."

**ANSWER:** Why would the Almighty, who transported Philip by His Spirit power, need to use modern means of transportation to carry His people to a Place of Safety? **He doesn't!** However, the Bible example is that the "badlands" of the desert is the place where man comes into contact with His Maker. Abraham, Jacob, Moses, Elijah, John the Baptist, and Jesus are prime examples. We should not ignore many scriptures which indicate that Petra, the place of the craggy rock, is at the very least a type, if not the very place of the Almighty's end time protection for His people.

### **Warnings for Us Today**

Dankenbring says, "God is the One we must look to. For no matter where the chosen place of safety is, or when we flee, unless God takes us there, it will either be the wrong place, or else we will go there either too early, or too late!" Amen!

Hoeh says that the Place of Safety "is only [for] those who are having a part in the work of God — who have their minds on the Kingdom of God, not some physical place of protection — who will escape. That escape cannot be planned for in advance. It is a supernatural escape!" Hoeh continues, "It is not those who heap up provisions that shall escape! It is those who obey God, who do His work, and who trust Him to provide the necessities and the divine protection when that time arrives!"

David Jon Hill says, ". . . GOD HIMSELF will have to be our Protection, our Safety, our Buckler, our Shield, our Tower, our Defense — or Petra will become, as it has for many thousands of others, OUR TOMB, instead of our Place of Safety!" Daily miracles will be necessary to keep us alive. "There is NO WAY we can save ourselves from the prophesied famines to come upon this land. No matter how much whole wheat . . . [etc.] we have stowed away in a cave we're not going to live through that time of famine except by God's express will and desire and by His direct intervention!" See **Matthew 16:25.**

### **Lessons From Petra**

L. Leroy Neff in his article "You May Not Escape the Tribulation!" gives balanced, uplifting principles we can learn from Petra and the Place of Safety:

We all need to prepare now to make our election and calling sure. Many in the Church of God are "weak and carnal minded. They have no zeal. They do not have their hearts completely and totally in God's work and are not doing with their might the great work that God has commissioned all of us to do."

We should have our goal on the Kingdom of God, not just escaping end time calamities. Being taken to the Place of Safety does not mean that all our troubles will be over and we then have it made into the Kingdom of God. The Place of Safety is "not a time of ease but a

time of trouble." Some will fall by the wayside, unwilling to forsake all (money, relatives, friends), to follow the Master. "It will be a time of serious decisions for God's people and many will not make the right decision."

We complain too much, like Israel of old, **I Corinthians 10:1-13**. It's too hard for some to travel to the Feast of Tabernacles. Would we complain about the lack of food and water in the desert on the way to a Petra? We are not thankful enough for what we have now. "Lack of appreciation for the wonderful spiritual and physical blessings of God will bar some from going to safety." Beware of the warning in **Luke 21:34-35**.

God is going to nourish His people, physically and spiritually, **Revelation 12:14**. At a Place of Safety, believers can grow spiritually and fellowship with God's people. We have **small** trials and temptations now. Troubles will increase as Satan attacks God's people. Let's appreciate the physical blessings while we have them, and use this precious time to grow in the Spirit and be able to overcome during the trials ahead.

### Conclusion

True believers today can claim the promise of **Luke 21:36**. If we are wide awake spiritually, always in the attitude of prayer, we will be accounted worthy to escape (flee out of) the coming worldwide calamities. **How** He does it is the Almighty's business.

**Who are the worthy?** The word "worthy" in **Luke 21:36** is from the Greek kataxio-omai, #2661. **Luke 20:35** notes that the "worthy" are those in the first resurrection. **Acts 5:41-42** adds that the worthy suffer persecution with rejoicing (not with counter lawsuits and political action), never ceasing to teach and spread the word about our Savior. **II Thessalonians 1:4-6** defines the worthy as those who patiently and faithfully endure persecution and tribulation for the Kingdom of God's sake. The "worthy" are not those who get out "scot free." They go through difficult times, yet are mercifully delivered from great tribulation.

We need to put our trust in the Creator, not a rock of death in the Middle East, **II Samuel 22:1-3**. Let us learn to live by faith NOW, **Habakkuk 2:4**, crying out to God daily to help us overcome, or we won't be protected by the Eternal. Don't worry how God will protect you. Be concerned whether He *will*. Make your calling and election **sure**. Remember **I Peter 4:18**.

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Bible Study Index

## **Appendix 5: There is a Place of Safety for the Philadelphians Why it May Be Petra**

Updated 6/24/04

By Robert J. Thiel

Are some of God's people actually going to flee right before the tribulation? According to Jesus the answer is yes. He said, "And pray that your flight may not be in winter or on the Sabbath. For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no nor ever shall be" (Matthew 24:20-21, NKJ throughout). As all members know, the Living Church of God is serious about proclaiming the "Ezekiel warning" to the world. But do all know that those who need to be warned include the members of the Church of God?

Many issues of *The Journal* have had somewhere (normally in an ad) the assertion to the effect that "Petra is not the place of safety" (or that there will be no such place). The December 2001 edition even contained the following quote, "Mr. Henson sees relevance in Joshua 15, where Joshua assigns the tribe of Judah its boundaries. 'This passage talks about a "salt sea" (verse 2), which could bring to mind Utah's Great Salt Lake. "If you take away the J [from the word Judah] and change the D to a T, you have Utah,' he pointed out. 'Also, in verse 55 appears the name Juttah, which is the same as Utah if one simply deletes the J and one of the T's.' " The purpose of this article is to explain some of the reasons why Petra seems to be a more logical choice to be the "place of safety" for the Philadelphians.

### **Two Groups**

Let this be perfectly clear, there are two groups of God's people mentioned in Revelation 12--one which goes to a place of safety and one which does not. It states: "But the woman was given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness to her place, where she is nourished for a time and times and half a time, from the presence of the serpent. So the serpent spewed water out of his mouth like a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away by the flood. But the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed up the flood which the dragon had spewed out of his mouth. And the dragon was enraged with the woman, and he went to make war with the rest of her offspring, who keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ" (vv. 14-17). Note that just keeping the commandments of God and having the testimony of Jesus Christ is not enough to insure that one will go "into the wilderness", be "nourished", and protected "from the presence of the serpent". The dragon, through the Beast power, will "make war" with those who do not go. For "the saints shall given to his hand for a time and times and half a time" (Daniel 7:25).

Jesus himself warned, "But take heed to yourselves, lest your hearts be weighed down with carousing, drunkenness, and cares of this life, and that Day come on you unexpectedly. For it will come as a snare on all those who dwell on the face of the whole earth. Watch therefore, and pray always that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man" (Luke 21:34-36). Whether you believe that the churches mentioned in Revelation 2 & 3 are prophetic church eras or conditions that exist within the Church throughout history (or both), it seems clear that some will be protected and others will not. Regarding the letter to the angel of the Church of Philadelphia, Revelation 3:10-11 states, "Because you have kept my command to persevere, I also will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth. Behold I come quickly! Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown". The Philadelphians are the only ones that God promises to keep "from the hour of trial that comes upon the whole world". Regarding the letter to the angel of the church of the Laodiceans shows they walk a different path: "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent" (v.19).

What are the differences between those groups? To the Philadelphians, Jesus said, "I know your works. See I have set before you an open door, and no one can shut it; for you have a little strength, kept My word, and have not denied My name" (v. 8). The message starts out the same for the Laodiceans, "I know your works..." but it certainly does not end the same-- "...that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot. So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew you out of my mouth. Because you say, 'I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing'--and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked--I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see" (vv.15-18).

The Philadelphians are promised to be kept from the hour of trial because they kept God's "command to persevere" or as the AV says "kept the word of my patience" (v. 10). **If the Philadelphia era of the Church existed while Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong was alive (as he believed it was), could this possibly mean that the remaining remnant of the Philadelphia era are the ones who still believe, teach, and practice what Jude referred to as "the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints" (Jude 3)?** (Click here for the article [What is a True Philadelphian?](#)) Would this not include the 18 truths that HWA restored to the Church of God without adding extrabiblical requirements? Would not this Church also have the same priority of proclaiming the Gospel of the Kingdom to the world? Remember Jesus said, "Blessed is that servant whom his master will find so doing when he comes" (Luke 12:43).

John Ogwyn has some interesting ideas on this subject as he wrote (prior to the formation of the United Church of God), "In Revelation 3, we read of two final phases of the history of the Church of God. The Church of Philadelphia was to be characterized by a zeal to do the Work. God promised to set before them an 'open door' as well as to protect them from the future Great Tribulation. However, there is a final seventh stage of the Church described, as the Church at Laodicea. This church was to be described by spiritual lukewarmness and lethargy. It is described as a worldly church, and certainly one which fit in with the spirit of these permissive, modern times...Some of God's people have been overwhelmed by the cares and problems of this life or by personal problems and have dropped by the wayside. Others have been deceived by false prophets and have gone into apostasy. Still others have become so lethargic and softened by comfort that they have lost their vision and merely wish to maintain local churches, no longer caring about doing the Work...Will you be one whom God uses to finish his end-time Work? Do you have that true Philadelphian spirit that reaches out to the whole world in genuine love and concern to share God's message of Truth and hope? Do you consider it important that the House of Israel be warned of the impending time of Jacob's trouble?"

### **Greek Terms May Also Describe the Groups**

Looking at the meanings of the names of the different churches may help reveal some characteristics of each. According to *Strong's* Greek concordance, Philadelphia means "fraternal affection", "brotherly love", "love of the brethren", "fond of the brethren". Also according to *Strong's*, Laodicea is a combination of two words, laos which it defines as "people" and dike, which is defined by *Strong's* as "right", "judgment", "punish", and "vengeance". *Smith's Bible Dictionary* defines Laodicea to mean "justice of the people". Might the term Laodicean convey that the predominant characteristic of this Church is that people rule, the people judge, or, in fact that the people are judgmental? I personally feel that the term Laodicea conveys a difference in governance and that most Laodiceans have rejected the restored truth about governance (which results in a lukewarm attitude about doing the work).

### **What Happens to Those Not in a Place of Protection?**

We have seen that God will not keep those in the Laodicea era of His Church from entering the tribulation. So what, specifically, will happen to those who are not in a place of protection? Some of the answers may lie in the book of Lamentations, which details that time: "The tongue of the infant clings To the roof of its mouth for thirst; The young children ask for bread, But no one breaks it for them...Those slain by the sword are better off Than those who die by hunger; For these pine away, Stricken for lack of the fruit of the field. The hands of the compassionate women Have cooked their own children; They became food for them In the destruction of the daughter of my people...Our pursuers were swifter Than the eagles of the heavens. They pursued us on the mountains And lay in wait for us in the wilderness" (Lamentations 4:4-19). This book, written by the prophet Jeremiah, foretells what will happen to the modern-day descendants of Israel, and indications are that it may include "spiritual" and not just physical Israel (i.e., Lamentations 1:4,2:20,4:7,5:21-22). Even if you believe that these prophecies were fulfilled around the fall of Jerusalem in 70 A.D., remember Jesus said, "For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no nor ever shall be" (Matthew 24:21). Thus, we can look at the most horrifying events that have happened in the past and yet realize that the coming Tribulation will be worse.

Since a portion of God's people have fallen in the past (I Corinthians 10:1-11), many things were recorded "for our admonition, on whom the ends of the ages have come. Therefore let him who thinks he stand take heed lest he fall" (I Corinthians 10:11-12). Matthew 24:22 states, "And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved" yet, though the situation appears bleak--almost hopeless--notice the conclusion of the verse, "but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened". Similarly in Jer 30:7 it says, "Alas! For that day is great, So that none is like it; And it is the time of Jacob's trouble, But he shall be saved out of it". Yes, God will deliver some of His Spirit-begotten children from the the physical terror of the Tribulation. He'll deliver the remnant of the Philadelphians. For Jesus says, "But not a hair of your head shall be lost" (Luke 21:18).

Are most of God's people going to go to a place of protection or most going to go through the Tribulation? The Bible seems to give us clues. The three places where the NKJ Bible uses the expression "time and times and half a time" are Revelation 12:14, Daniel 7:25, and Daniel 12:7. They seem to be referring to the same time period. Daniel 12:7 states "a time, times, and half a time, and when the power of the holy people has been completely shattered, all these things shall be finished". This suggests that nearly all of the "holy people" are affected. In Daniel 7:24-25 it states, "The ten horns are ten kings Who shall arise from this kingdom. And another shall rise after them; He shall be different from the first ones, And shall subdue three kings. He shall speak pompous words against the Most High, Shall persecute the saints of the Most High, And shall intend to change times and law. Then the saints shall be given into his hand For a time and times and half a time". Note that the saints will be persecuted before they are "given into his hand"; perhaps that means all of God's people will be persecuted before the period "time and times and half a time" begins. The expressions "completely shattered" and "the saints shall be given into his hand" seem to suggest that most of the saints will be in the tribulation. We know this cannot mean all because the book of Revelation says the Philadelphians will be kept from the hour of trial (3:10)--protected "from the presence of the serpent" (cf. 12:14). God will in some way separate Christians living in when these terrible calamities finally come to be. Some will be protected from the Tribulation--many, however, will not be! (3:16).

Why would God allow much of the Church to go through tribulation? Daniel 11:35 states, "And some of those of understanding shall fall, to refine them, purge them, and make them white, until the time of the end; because it is still for the appointed time". Also Daniel 12:9-10 states, "And he said, 'Go your way Daniel, for the words are closed up and sealed til the time of the end. Many shall be purified and made white, and refined, but the wicked shall do

wickedly; and none of the wicked shall understand, but the wise shall understand". Who is counseled to by gold that has been refined? Who is warned that they will be rebuked and chastened? The Laodiceans (Revelation 3:18,19). Even when Babylon the great is clearly evident on the world scene, it seems that God's people still need to be warned, "And I heard another voice from heaven saying, 'Come out of her my people, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues'" (18:4). Some, sadly, probably will "receive of her plagues" (or that warning would probably have not been necessary).

### **Some Clues about Where the Place Isn't**

Although some have suggested that the Bible gives no clue about where the place of safety will be, this is inaccurate. First let's look in Luke 21:20-21, "But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation is near. Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, let those who are in the midst of her depart, and let not those who are in the country enter her." It thus appears that the place of safety is not in Jerusalem or Judea.

Since the Bible also warns that God's people should flee Babylon and go out of Chaldea (Jeremiah 50:8;51:6,44-45; Zechariah 2:7; Revelation 18:4), Babylon and Chaldea apparently are not the places either. The statement, "Flee from the land of the north", says the LORD...Up Zion! Escape you that dwell with the daughter of Babylon" (Zechariah 2:6,7) suggests that the place may not be in a northern land.

### **More Information About the Place**

"He who walks righteously and speaks uprightly, He who despises the gain of oppressions, Who gestures with his hands, refusing bribes, Who stops his ears from hearing of bloodshed, And shuts his eyes from seeing evil: He will dwell on high; **His place of defense will be the fortress of rocks**; Bread will be given him, His water will be sure" (Isaiah 33:15-16)..."**Assemble yourselves and come; Draw near together**, You who have escaped from the nations" (Isaiah 45:20). Isaiah thus indicates this place will be a fortress of rocks for those that escape.

It is also of interest to note that those that escape will be assembled--they are not lone independents--this is also consistent with Zephaniah 2:1-3 "**Gather yourselves together**, yes gather together, O undesirable nation, **Before the decree is issued**, Or the day passes like chaff, **Before the day of the LORD's fierce anger** comes upon you, Before the day of the LORD's anger comes upon you! Seek the LORD, all you meek of the earth, who have upheld His justice. Seek righteousness, seek humility. **It may be that you will be hidden in the day of the LORD's anger.**" (It would seem that the major part of the Church of God that is most active in proclaiming the Gospel to the world as a witness would be the instrument to make the decree, but that could be the subject of another article.) This concept of gathering together prior to when the decree is issued would suggest that those who are 'independent' or 'unaffiliated' need to change that status soon, or they may not be going.

Furthermore, Zephaniah continues by suggesting that the place will not be in Gaza, at the seacoast, nor Canaan, the land of the Philistines, "For Gaza will be forsaken, And Ashkelon desolate; They shall drive out Ashdod at noonday, and Ekron shall be uprooted. Woe to the inhabitants of the seacoast; The nation of the Cherethites! The word of the LORD is against you, O Canaan, the land of the Philistines" (2:4-5). According to the commentary at *Nelson's Study Bible* on these verses Gaza, Ashkelon, Ashdod and Ekron are major cities of the Philistines and Cherethites is simply another name for Philistines. The land mentioned is currently primarily occupied by the Palestinians.

Since people are to leave Judea, are not to go to Gaza, nor Canaan, nor to various places in the north, which direction can they go? Well, they cannot go west because the Mediterranean sea is in the way. This would seem to suggest going east, south, or possibly southeast (southwest would take one to Gaza).

### **Where is the Place?**

David wrote, "For in the time of trouble He shall hide me in His pavilion; In the secret place of His tabernacle He shall hide me; He shall set me high upon a rock" (Psalm 27:5). This may have a dual meaning. It may be referring to the tribulation and may also be referring to an interesting event in David's life. David was hiding in the woods from Saul (I Samuel 23:19), and "When Saul and his men went to seek him, they told David. Therefore he went down to the rock, and stayed in the wilderness of Maon...So David made haste to get away from Saul...so they called that place the Rock of Escape" (I Samuel 23:25,26,28). The word translated 'Rock' is Sela, the word translated as 'rock' is a derivative of the same word. Thus there was a Sela of Escape for David.

Jesus taught, "And pray that your flight may not be in winter or on the Sabbath" (Matthew 24:20) which is consistent with Revelation 12:14 which clearly states that it is a place to go to, it is in the wilderness, and it is away from the presence of the serpent. The word translated as wilderness, is translated as desert in the NIV. This word is eremos, which Strong's defines as lonesome, waste, desert, desolate, solitary, wilderness. Thus, it is not protection in our own houses (as some have erroneously suggested), nor is it protection in a large city. It is somewhere in the wilderness.

Petra, the rocky outpost in Jordan has been speculated to be the place.

"Situated within the harsh desert, Petra's vitality was dependent upon an intricate hydraulic system fed by a perennial spring. This spring, the Ain Musa (Spring of Moses), is fabled to have been one of the places where Moses struck the rock with his staff to produce water for his wandering people after their flight from Egypt. Not surprisingly, the valley in which Petra is situated, the Wadi Musa (Valley of Moses) is also named after the Biblical patriarch. In addition, Moses' brother Aaron is believed to be buried atop the Jebel Haroun (Mount of Aaron), a mountain just south of the city. The belief that Aaron was buried so near Petra is especially noteworthy because it played an important role in Petra's rediscovery by John Burckhardt" (Petra: History, Myth, and Earthquakes; Standford.edu website).

### **Herbert Armstrong and Petra**

I should probably mention that some have alleged that the idea of Petra and the 'place of safety' were non-biblical inventions of Loma and/or Herbert Armstrong. This is not the case. The idea of biblical Sela being the area currently known as Petra predates the Armstrongs (e.g. it was mentioned in *Smith's Bible Dictionary* which was finished in 1863). It may also be of interest to note that there are even a few outside the COGs which believe in the same concept--though some of those feel that Petra is the place that the Jews, not Christians, will be protected in.. Most recently, the ninth book in the "Left Behind" series, titled *Desecration: Antichrist Takes the Throne* mentions some 'believers' congregating in Petra at the end-time.

Although it is not certain that it will be, Herbert Armstrong thought it may be as he wrote, "Petra may very well be the site for God's protection of HIS PEOPLE---those who are counted WORTHY TO ESCAPE the terrifying GREAT TRIBULATION that is soon to strike an unsuspecting Israel! PETRA, an ancient Arab stronghold deep in the rugged mountains, is accessible only by traveling through narrow, twisting gorges on horseback!" (Letter, April 15, 1956). "We thought of that, when we were in Petra---and how undoubtedly that is the very place where WE shall spend from 3 to 7 years during the Great Tribulation and possibly also the terrible Day of the Lord, soon to come---IF we are close to God instead of this pleasure-man world--- if we are praying always, and WATCHING, and accounted worthy to escape the things that are coming on the earth!" (Letter, May 8, 1956). "Apparently many are carelessly supposing they are now SURE of being protected through the Great Tribulation (now ALMOST READY TO STRIKE!). Whether it will be Petra or another place, many feel carelessly secure, and, after that, entering God's Kingdom with ETERNAL LIFE! But YOU

DON'T HAVE IT "MADE." You are still being TRIED -- to determine whether you shall have this protection -- whether you shall enter the Kingdom of God! It is those who are LED BY the Spirit of God -- NOT those who are led by desire for more and more physical and material things!...SO, hundreds of you are SLACKING OFF in your RESPONSIBILITIES in GOD'S WORK!...SO, hundreds of you are SLACKING OFF in your RESPONSIBILITIES in GOD'S WORK!" (Letter, September 1, 1968). Thus, Mr. Armstrong felt that those who slacked off in their responsibilities in doing God's work, would probably not go.

He further wrote, "I hope to arrange for the use of Petra as a possible refuge or place of safety during the Great Tribulation, when I see King Hussein." (Letter February 25, 1982). After this writing apparently Mr. Armstrong felt that many misconstrued this writing to indicate that it was about time to go, so he then wrote, "Incidentally, I know many of you seem to have your hearts set on going very soon to Petra as "the place of safety" during the soon-coming Great Tribulation. Well, GET YOUR MINDS OFF PETRA. Brethren, I HAVE NEVER said that Petra definitely is the place of protection where God will take us. I HOPE IT IS NOT! One reason it could be the place is that it is a place NOBODY ELSE WOULD WANT TO GO. It would be the most UNpleasant, UNcomfortable, miserable place you could go! There is nothing to be desired there. But, just in case, God HAS miraculously given me very gracious favor in the eyes of King Hussein and also his brother, the Crown Prince. They are very friendly to me personally. " (Letter, July 16, 1982).

### **Petra and Other Scriptures**

Another reason that Petra may be place is found in Isaiah 16:1-4, "Send the lamb to the ruler of the land, from Sela to the wilderness, to the mount of the daughter of Zion. For it shall be as a wandering bird thrown out of the nest; So shall the daughters of Moab at the fords of the Arnon. Take counsel, execute judgment; Make your shadow like the night in the middle of the day; Hide the outcasts, Do not betray him who escapes. Let my outcasts dwell with you, O Moab; Be a shelter to them from the face of the spoiler". From these verses, we learn that Moab hides the outcasts, those who escape--this could be God's people as Jesus told them "pray always that you may be counted worthy to escape" (Luke 21:36).

We have seen that this place has something to do with Moab, Sela, and the wilderness. We know that the area that once was Moab is modern Jordan. We also know that Sela means rock. It is called Petra in Greek, which also means rock. There is a deserted town in Jordan named Petra, which is the place called Sela in Isaiah. Petra is not a city itself, and is in a lonesome, rocky, desert wilderness that contains caves. It is possible that some other place on Earth also meets these criteria, but thus far Petra appears to be the leading candidate. Interestingly, Jeremiah wrote, "You who dwell in Moab, Leave the cities and dwell in the rock, And be like the dove which makes her nest in the sides of the cave's mouth" (Jeremiah 48:28).

It should also be noted that Petra is southeast of Jerusalem, which, as we saw earlier, is a possible direction for the place to be. Other than the aspect of caves (which does not mention the amount of caves), it should be noted, that many other areas in Jordan also are in the right direction and fit the description of the place--so it is possible that the Church may flee into Jordan and not stay in Petra, but somewhere else in Jordan.

### **Some Other Scriptures Which Seem to Discuss The Place**

There is another scripture that may be alluding to a Jordanian location for the place, which states, "If you have run with footmen, and they have wearied you, then how can you contend with horses? And if in the land of peace, in which you trusted, they have wearied you, then how will you do in the floodplain of Jordan? For even you brothers, the house of your father, even they have dealt treacherously with you; Yes they have called a multitude after you. Do not believe them, even though they speak smooth words to you" (Jeremiah 12:5-6). The implication to God's people is if you are having a difficult time living in a relatively peaceful



land, what will happen to you when you are being pursued by 'a multitude' in the 'floodplain of Jordan'? Remember, the serpent spews out a flood to try to destroy those who flee to the wilderness (Revelation 12:14-15). Thus it is possible that this is why Jeremiah is warning God's people about how they will do in the 'floodplain of Jordan' (most any map suggests this floodplain looks like it is east of Jerusalem, God's people would probably need to cross it if they arrive in Jerusalem and head towards Petra).

Another portion in Zephaniah, which occurs slightly after it talks about the meek of the earth being hidden (2:3), also seems to provide confirmation to a Jordanian location: "I have heard the reproach of Moab, And the insults of the people of Ammon, With which they have reproached My people, And made arrogant threats against their borders. Therefore, as I live," Says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, "Surely Moab shall be like Sodom, And the people of Ammon like Gomorrah-- Overrun with weeds and salt pits, And a perpetual desolation; The residue of My people shall plunder them, And the remnant of My people shall possess them." This they shall have for their pride, Because **they have reproached and made arrogant threats Against the people of the LORD of hosts**" (Zephaniah 2:8-10). Right after recording that God told Moab to shelter His outcasts (Isaiah 14:4), Moab's pride (vs. 6) and the fact that Moab would be stricken (vs. 7) are mentioned. These verses appear supportive of the concept that the place is somewhere in Jordan (like Petra) and that all in Moab (modern Jordan) will not like God's people being there. This will not be an east place to live in (though better than the alternative of being turned over to the one who shall "destroy the mighty and also the holy people", Daniel 8:24).

"Come, my people, enter your chambers, And shut your doors behind you; Hide yourself, as it were, for a little moment, Until the indignation is past. For behold, the Lord comes out of His place To punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity" (Isaiah 26:20-21). "Therefore thus says the Lord God: 'Behold, My servants shall eat, But you shall be hungry; Behold, My servants shall drink, But you shall be Thirsty; Behold, My servants shall rejoice, But you shall be ashamed; Behold, My servants shall sing for joy of heart, But you shall cry for sorrow of heart, And wail for grief of spirit'" (Isaiah 65:13-14).

So in spite of the hardships at this place, God's servants shall rejoice at this place.

### **There Could Be A City Location**

"Let the redeemed of the LORD say so, Whom He has redeemed from the hand of the enemy, And gathered out of the lands, From the east and from the west, From the north and from the south. They wandered in the wilderness in a desolate way; They found no city to dwell in. Hungry and thirsty, Their soul fainted in them. Then they cried out to the LORD in their trouble, And He delivered them out of their distresses. And He led them forth by the right way, That they might go to a city for a dwelling place" (Psalm 107:2-7 ).

These verses may be saying that after being in the wilderness, that possibly God's redeemed may end up dwelling in a city. There is a town near Petra, called Wadi-Musa. Wadi-Musa still is in the wilderness. In biblical times, a town of that size would have been considered a city. Thus it may possibly be a place that we will dwell.

### **Do the Work**

Now, let's look at what God's people will be doing after being in this place: "I will set a sign among them; and those among them who escape I will send to the nations: to Tarshish and Pul and Lud, who draw the bow, and Tubal and Javan, to the coastlands afar off who have not heard My fame nor seen My glory. And they shall declare My glory among the Gentiles" (Isaiah 66:19). Doesn't this sound like those that go to this place will preach the Gospel once they leave it? Is it not then logical that those that were allowed to escape and go to this place were those that placed their top emphasis on getting the Gospel out prior to escaping?

### **Watch, Pray, and Do the Work**

Jesus said, "Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming...Blessed is that servant whom his master, when he comes, will find so doing" (Matthew 24:42,46). He also said, "Take heed, watch and pray; for you do not know when the time is" (Mark 13:33). Also, look at what we are warned in the book of Ezekiel (the book must be warning people who at least have read the Bible), "Son of man, when a land sins against Me by persistent unfaithfulness, I will stretch out My hand against it; I will cut off its supply of bread, send famine on it, and cut off man and beast from it. Though these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, they would deliver only themselves by their righteousness, says the LORD God...they would deliver neither sons nor daughters; only they would be delivered, and the land would be desolate" (Ezekial 14:13-14,16).

Thus depending on others will not save you. That is why Paul says in Philippians, "work out your own salvation with fear and trembling" (2:12). Since the Living Church of God believes the '18 restored truths' and places its highest priority on publicly proclaiming the Gospel of the Kingdom, it seems that its members make up the bulk of the remnant of the Philadelphia era of the Church (for more information, please read [What is a True Philadelphian?](#)). However, just being in Living (or any other group) is not a ticket to the place of safety. However remember that God's people are to be gathered together "Before the decree is issued...Before the day of the LORD's fierce anger" (Zephaniah 2:1-2), thus the Church will probably be the instrument that issues the decree to flee!

All indications are that we are living during the Laodicean era of God's Church. That means that of all the truly converted Christians most are Laodecian (which is why only the remnant of the Philadelphia era would be around today). And the Laodiceans are not only confined to groups other than Living. That means that you could be one. I could be one. Any of us could be Laodicean. And if so, we need to make some big changes. Otherwise, God will resort to drastic measures--putting us through the worst trial in human history.

So what are we now to do, individually, to be delivered and to avoid the consequences of the Great Tribulation? We are to pray that we will be accounted worthy (Mat 24:20); to ask God to help us repent now so we won't need to be severely chasten during the Tribulation later. We need to pray that our flight will not be on the Sabbath or in the winter (Luke 21:36). We need to watch. Watch world events (Matthew 24:20, Mark 13:33) and our own lives (Luke 21:36). And take heed that no one deceives us! (Matthew 24:4)--in today's "attend the COG of your choice" environment being at least partially deceived is easier than before (here is an article titled [Unity: Which Church of God for You?](#)).

The Philadelphians have God's "command to persevere" (Rev 3:10) and are told to "hold fast to what you have, that no man may take your crown" (v.11). Perhaps this is a warning not to be swayed by doctrinal changes contrary to our core, fundamental beliefs, which are instituted by men, irrespective of their position or education. We are told to be "so doing" when Jesus returns (Matthew 24:46). We need to have works of which God approves (Revelation 3:8). We must be hot--not lukewarm (v.15).

Herbert W. Armstrong thought those in the Body of Christ who were part of doing the work were going to be protected. He wrote the following, "Those in the true Body of Christ shall be protected until this tribulation will be over (Rev. 3:10-11)--applying to those faithful in God's Work now going to the world. Rev 12:14; U.S.A. 26:20. But YOU must make your own decision -- and to neglect doing so is to have made the wrong decision! God isn't kidding! This is for real!...The decision is now yours!" (Armstrong, Herbert W. *The United States and British Commonwealth in Prophecy*. 1975; p:60). And of course he was right--the decision is yours. We all need to heed God's warning to the Laodiceans--"He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches" (Revelation 3:22).

Herbert Armstrong authorized a similar statement decades ago, "God will set before us an open door and no man can shut it. God can shut it, and He will when the work is finished and the Philadelphia Church has gone to the place of safety...Philadelphia has little strength to do this great work which God has given it to do...It is the Church of Laodicea who had no vital part in the work of God today even though they live today and are part of the generation which will see Christ return" (What is the Laodicean Church? Good News, August 1959, p.12).

I believe the Bible teaches that the remnant of the Philadelphia era of the Church will go to the place of safety. My position is that Petra may be the place, but if it (or some similar area in Jordan) is not the place, then the Bible is simply not specific enough to any other particular location for us to know. Those who assert that Petra is not the place (or near the place), seem, to me at least, to be asserting a questionable position at best.

Bob Thiel 2001,2002,2004

## **Appendix 6: Place of Safety** **Sermon given on July 26, 2003 by Wayne Bedwell**

Some have asked me what I think about the Place of Safety. I have always said that I didn't know for sure. Some openly do not support a place of safety. Other Churches of God not only believe in a place of safety, but believe very fervently that Petra is the place. It has always been my gut feel that Petra was the place, although in recent years I have wondered about that. Some people who have been there, however, claim Petra could never be the place. So far, I have not had the opportunity to visit Petra, so I can't comment on that from first hand experience.

Today I want to provide you with some scriptures about the Place of Safety - including some which seem to describe Petra - so you can draw your own conclusions. The scriptures I'm going to give you are in no particular order, but all seem to relate to a place of safety.

### **The Seals of Revelation**

From what dangers do we need a place of safety? The media today gives us a plethora of potential dangers: Persecution from the government via FBI files; personal attack from political eccentrics; IRS, BATF and other law enforcement agency abuses; violation of our constitutional freedoms; retaliation against the Christian right; loss of sovereignty to the UN; economic and political antagonism by the European Union; Islamic terrorist attacks; a resurgent Russia; North Korean nuclear threats; loss of American influence in the western Pacific; personal ID cards and implants; collapse of the dollar; depression; proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. The list seems endless. But are these the dangers from which people will be safely protected? Maybe so.

One of the best-known references to a place of safety is in Revelation 7. As we will see, there are many others. Let's read Revelation 7.

(Rev 7 NKJV) After these things I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, on the sea, or on any tree. {2} Then I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God. And he cried with a loud voice to the four angels to whom it was granted to harm the earth and the sea, {3} saying, "Do not harm the earth, the sea, or the trees **till we have sealed the servants of our God** on their foreheads." {4} And I heard the number of those who were sealed. One hundred and forty-four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel were sealed: {5} of the tribe of Judah twelve thousand were sealed; of the tribe of Reuben twelve thousand were sealed; of the tribe of Gad twelve thousand were sealed; {6} of the tribe of Asher twelve thousand were sealed; of the tribe of Naphtali twelve thousand were sealed; of the tribe of Manasseh twelve thousand were sealed; {7} of the tribe of Simeon twelve thousand were sealed; of the tribe of Levi twelve thousand were sealed; of the tribe of Issachar twelve thousand were sealed; {8} of the tribe of Zebulun twelve thousand were sealed; of the tribe of Joseph [considered to be the tribe of Ephraim] twelve thousand were sealed; of the tribe of Benjamin twelve thousand were sealed. {9} After these things I looked, and behold, **a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues**, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, with palm branches in their hands, {10} and crying out with a loud voice, saying, "Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!" [Not binitarianism, is it?] {11} All the angels stood around the throne and the elders and the four living creatures, and fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, {12} saying: "Amen! Blessing and glory and

wisdom, Thanksgiving and honor and power and might, Be to our God forever and ever. Amen." {13} Then one of the elders answered, saying to me, "Who are these arrayed in white robes, and where did they come from?" {14} And I said to him, "Sir, you know." So he said to me, "**These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation**, and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. {15} "Therefore they are before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple. And He who sits on the throne will dwell among them. {16} "They shall neither hunger anymore nor thirst anymore; the sun shall not strike them, nor any heat; {17} "for the Lamb who is in the midst of the throne will shepherd them and lead them to living fountains of waters. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes."

So these obtain forgiveness, became guiltless, and come out of the great tribulation. But do all the Saints, over and above the 144,000 who were sealed, need to go through the great tribulation? And what is the great tribulation? The 6th chapter of Revelation describes the first six seals of what seem to be phases of the great tribulation. Let's look at them and their corresponding verses from the Olivet prophesy of Mat. 24: The first seal is false religions including false so-called Christian religions. Satan's deception of mankind starts the series and permeates it all.

(Rev 6:1-2 NKJV) Now I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals; and I heard one of the four living creatures saying with a voice like thunder, "Come and see." {2} And I looked, and behold, a white horse. He who sat on it had a bow; and a crown was given to him, and he went out conquering and to conquer. [Religiously deceived leaders.]

We see a description of that in Matthew 24:4-5. Hold your place in Rev. 6.

(Mat 24:4-5 NKJV) And Jesus answered and said to them: "Take heed that no one deceives you. {5} "For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will deceive many.

The second seal is war. People begin to kill others who have different values. Hold on to Mat.24.

(Rev 6:3-4 NKJV) When He opened the second seal, I heard the second living creature saying, "Come and see." {4} Another horse, fiery red, went out. And it was granted to the one who sat on it to take peace from the earth, and that people should kill one another; and there was given to him a great sword.

We also see a description of that in Matthew 24:6.

(Mat 24:6 NKJV) "And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not troubled; for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet.

The third seal is famine. God punishes nations by giving them adverse weather.

(Rev 6:5-6 NKJV) When He opened the third seal, I heard the third living creature say, "Come and see." So I looked, and behold, a black horse, and he who sat on it had a pair of scales in his hand. {6} And I heard a voice in the midst of the four living creatures saying, "A quart of wheat for a denarius [a Roman coin], and three quarts of barley for a denarius; and do not harm the oil and the wine."

We also read of famines in Matthew 24:7.

(Mat 24:7 NKJV) "For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places.

The fourth seal is disease or pestilence.

(Rev 6:7-8 NKJV) When He opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature saying, "Come and see." {8} So I looked, and behold, a pale horse.

And the name of him who sat on it was Death, and Hades [the grave] followed with him. And power was given to them over a fourth of the earth, to kill with sword, with hunger, with death, and by the beasts of the earth.

This could even be the result bio-weapons. This is also included in Matthew 24:7 which we read.

The fifth seal is martyrdom. A martyr is one who **willingly** dies or suffers for a belief.

(Rev 6:9-11 NKJV) When He opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the testimony which they held. {10} And they cried with a loud voice, saying, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, until You judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?" {11} Then a white robe was given to each of them; and it was said to them that they should rest a little while longer, until both the number of their fellow servants and their brethren, who would be killed as they were, was completed.

Saints will continue to be martyred until a certain predetermined number has been reached. We also read of this martyrdom in Matthew 24:9-12.

(Mat 24:9-12 NKJV) **"Then they will deliver you up to tribulation** [affliction and persecution by mankind] and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations for My name's sake. {10} "And then many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another. {11} "Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many. {12} "And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold. [Hatred will increase.]

The sixth seal, Rev 6:12-17, is regarding heavenly signs and great earthquakes.

(Rev 6:12-17 NKJV) I looked when He opened the sixth seal, and behold, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became like blood. {13} And the stars of heaven fell to the earth, as a fig tree drops its late figs when it is shaken by a mighty wind. {14} Then the sky receded as a scroll when it is rolled up, and every mountain and island was moved out of its place. {15} And the kings of the earth, the great men, the rich men, the commanders, the mighty men, every slave and every free man, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains, {16} and said to the mountains and rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! {17} "For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?" [Not the soft, gentle Lord Jesus some proclaim, is He?]

Let's look at Luke 21:25 for the parallel to what we just read.

(Luke 21:25-26 NKJV) "And there will be signs in the sun, in the moon, and in the stars; and on the earth distress of nations, with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring; {26} "men's hearts failing them from fear and the expectation of those things which are coming on the earth, for the powers of heaven will be shaken.

The seventh seal, described in Revelation 8 and 9, describes the horrible times for those alive at the time of Christ's punishment of mankind. But Revelation 7:3 tells us that the 144,000 selected descendants of the twelve tribes of Israel will be protected from the seventh seal. We won't go into the details of the seventh seal here but you should read Rev. 8 and 9 for yourself to see what horrible conditions Godfearing people remaining alive at that time are to be protected from.

### **The Former and the Latter Fulfillment**

Let me ask you a question: How many of these seals are occurring now? Do we have false religions? Even some false Christian religions have been occurring since the first century. Have we had wars? They have occurred forever. Have we had famine? They are common

after and during wars and are occurring today. Have we had disease epidemics? How about smallpox and Aids? Have we had martyrdom? Yes, in the middle ages, during the Holocaust, even today in east Africa and elsewhere. We read and hear discrimination and blame targeted toward Christian Conservatives, Evangelicals, and other people who totally believe the word of God, for openly disagreeing with the unbiblical plans of worldly leaders. All of the prophesied troubles of the first five seals and their corresponding prophesies of Matthew 24 and Luke 21 have already occurred but are now occurring at an accelerating pace. How much time is left before the sixth seal opens?

(Mat 24:16 NKJV) "then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. "Mountains", G3735, comes from the Greek word "oros" and means any elevation from the plain, hence, it can also mean "hills".

This has already happened once. In 70 AD when the temple was about to be destroyed, the Christian community moved out of Jerusalem and went to Pella for their safety. Where is Pella? It is about 65 miles north of Jerusalem, about eight miles southeast of Bet-Shean or Scythopolis (the Roman name), across the Jordan River in what is now the country of Jordan. This exodus from Jerusalem and the lack of support from these Christians for armed resistance against Rome was one of the major causes of the schism between Judaism and Christianity which continues to this day. Incidentally, from pictures of Pella that I have seen, it is hilly but not an area of solid rock. How did these Christians know where to go? Was their choice to go to a location so close to the major Roman city of Scythopolis the result of some kind of logic that they had more to fear from the Jews than the Romans? Pella was close to the Jordan River, where they could obtain both water and fish, so perhaps that influenced their decision. We only know that they apparently complied with Mat 24:16. It must be pointed out, though, that most of Israel, including Jerusalem, is hilly. My point in all this is that the decision to go to Pella for their place of safety may have been God-directed, but may also have been a purely logical human decision.

So where are we today? **We could be** at the very time for the Saints to be protected. So that brings us to the question, where will the place of safety be? As I said earlier, many think the place of safety for the Saints will be in Petra. Let's look at many scriptures which may support that.

Petra is located in what is now the country of Jordan. It is in a dry, mountainous area about half way down and just east of the high Negev desert between the Dead Sea and the Gulf of Aqaba. In Biblical times it was in the general area of Edom. You might remember that the northern part of what is now Jordan was Ammon, the central part was Moab, and the southern part, which apparently included all of the Negev, including what is now the Gulf city of Eilat, was Edom.

Petra is often shown on TV. It is characterized by its building fronts carved into solid rock walls and the very narrow gorge which provides access to it. Today it is an important tourist attraction for Jordan. I have not heard of any terrorism in this area.

Several religious organizations recognize Petra as the Place of Safety and it is reported that some have even stored food in Petra's many caves in anticipation of going there. I tend to doubt that report because I think the local inhabitants would take the food as fast as it's stored in the caves.

What does the Bible have to say about Petra and/or the Place of Safety? Here's some scriptures:

Rev 12:13-17

When the dragon saw that he had been hurled to the earth, he pursued the woman who had given birth to the male child. {14} The woman was given the two wings of a great eagle, so that she might fly to the place prepared for her **in the desert**, where

she would be taken care of for a time, times and half a time, out of the serpent's reach. {15} Then from his mouth the serpent spewed water like a river, to overtake the woman and sweep her away with the torrent. {16} But the earth helped the woman by opening its mouth and swallowing the river that the dragon had spewed out of his mouth. {17} Then the dragon was enraged at the woman and went off to make war against the rest of her offspring--those who obey God's commandments and hold to the testimony of Jesus.

In prophesy, a woman is usually a church; and water is often people. The dragon is, of course, Satan. A time, times and half a time is considered as three and a half years - the same time as Christ spent in His ministry before He was cut off. It also reflects the time the two witnesses preach in Jerusalem and is assumed by some to be the time Christ will teach His people before He returns to earth. Are we watching world events and obeying God's commandments?.

Luke 21:28

When these things **begin** to take place, stand up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near."

When these things **begin**, it's close.

verse 36

Be always on the watch, and **pray always** that you may be able to escape all that is about to happen, and that you may be able to stand before the Son of Man."

### **Keeping the Commandments of God and the Testimony of Jesus Christ**

Pray we will be **worthy** of escaping these things. Listen to the news. Much news today is **very** unreliable, very politically oriented. Try to find a reliable news source. I have found that the internet has some good sources. When you find an accurate source, check with it every day or two to stay abreast of the news. What should we watch for and be prepared to do?

Isa 26:20-21

Go, **my** people, enter your rooms and shut the doors behind you; **hide yourselves** for a little while until his wrath has passed by. {21} See, the LORD is coming out of his dwelling to punish the people of the earth for their sins. The earth will disclose the blood shed upon her; she will conceal her slain no longer.

It will be time to hide.

Rev 3:10

Since you have kept my command to **endure patiently**, I will also keep you from the hour of trial that is going to come upon the whole world to test those who live on the earth.

If we are patient, Christ will protect and lead us. There is no mention of martyrs here.

Deu 32:12

The LORD alone led him; no foreign god was with him.

This verse has to be prophetic because when God led Israel out of Egypt, they took their gods with them, at least in their minds. Hold your place in Deu 32 and turn to Acts 7:40:

Saying to Aaron, "Make us gods to go before us; for as for this Moses, which brought us out of the land of Egypt, we don't know what is become of him.

This verse is a quote from Exodus 32.

Back to the prophesy in Deu 32. This time let's begin in verse 7. We'll read verses 7-11.

Remember the days of old; consider the generations long past. Ask your father and he will tell you, your elders, and they will explain to you. {8} When the Most High gave the nations their inheritance, when he divided all mankind, he set up boundaries for the peoples according to the number of the sons of Israel. {9} For the Lord's portion is



his people, Jacob his allotted inheritance. {10} In a desert land he found him, in a barren and howling waste. He shielded him and cared for him; he guarded him as the apple of his eye, {11} like an eagle that stirs up its nest and hovers over its young, that spreads its wings to catch them and carries them on its pinions.

Notice that we should **ask** our fathers and elders for direction. The 60s generation in this country has changed all that. We see today an intentional disregard for the wisdom and experience of our elders; a disregard for history. Many of the problems we have today are the result. Remember the old adage: Those who do not learn from history are doomed to repeat it.

In verse 11, the Eagle is synonymous to God. We must be **ready** to go when God is ready.

Verse 13

He made him ride on the heights of the land and fed him with the fruit of the fields. He nourished him with honey from the rock, and with oil from the flinty crag,

If this refers to the latter day place of safety too, then this is only one of many scriptures that indicate that God is going to care for His people.

Isa 58:13-14

"If you keep your feet from breaking the Sabbath and from **doing as you please** on my holy day, if you call the Sabbath a delight and the Lord's holy day honorable, and if you honor it by **not going your own way** and **not doing as you please** or **speaking idle words**, {14} then you will find your joy in the LORD, and I will cause you to **ride on the heights of the land** and to feast on the inheritance of your father Jacob." The mouth of the LORD has spoken.

Keeping the Sabbath properly, will enable these people to ride on the high places of the earth. Some Bible scholars interpret this to mean that God will place His people in lofty and inaccessible places where they will be safe from all their enemies. It also implies the giving of great dignity and advancement to His people.

Isa 16:1-5

Send lambs as tribute to the ruler of the land, from Sela [Sela is another and preferable name for Petra], across the desert, to the mount of the Daughter of Zion. {2} Like fluttering birds pushed from the nest, so are the women of Moab at the fords of the Arnon. {3} "Give us counsel, render a decision. Make your shadow like night-- at high noon. **Hide the fugitives**, do not betray **the refugees**. {4} Let the Moabite fugitives stay with you; be their shelter from the destroyer." The oppressor will come to an end, and destruction will cease; the aggressor will vanish from the land. {5} In love a throne will be established; in faithfulness a man will sit on it-- one from the house of David-- one who in judging seeks justice and speeds the cause of righteousness.

God commands Moab to protect these people, as they travel through Moab to Petra, but also while in Petra. Notice the relationship between Petra and the refugees.

As pointed out, Sela in Isa 16:1 is Petra. You can find this referenced in the margin of many Bibles and in Bible dictionaries. Petra is a Greek word meaning 'A rock'. Sela, is its Hebrew equivalent. Petra (Sela) is an ancient city of rock, towering rock. You will find two definitions for Sela. One is H5553, describing a rocky crag. The other is H5554, describing the actual rock city of Petra in Idumaea.

Who are the fugitives or refugees in verses 3 and 4? A fugitive is one who is fleeing from danger. A refugee is one who flees from his own country or home to seek refuge elsewhere from persecution or war or danger. Are these verses describing a place of safety for God's people from the tribulation described in Rev. 8?

Jer 48:28

Abandon your towns and dwell among the rocks, you who live in Moab. Be like a dove that makes its nest at the mouth of a cave.

Doesn't this describe being able to see what is going on while being able to escape the danger?

Isa 42:11-13

Let the desert and its towns raise their voices; let the settlements where Kedar lives rejoice. Let the people of Sela sing for joy; let them shout from the mountaintops. {12} Let them give glory to the LORD and proclaim his praise in the islands. {13} The LORD will march out like a mighty man, like a warrior he will stir up his zeal; with a shout he will raise the battle cry and will triumph over his enemies.

Inhabitants of Petra (Sela) will praise God from the top of the mountains, which constitute the area. Kedar were nomadic Bedouins of Arab extraction who lived and still live throughout this region.

Isa 33:15-22

He who walks righteously and speaks what is right, who rejects gain from extortion and keeps his hand from accepting bribes, who stops his ears against plots of murder and shuts his eyes against contemplating evil-- {16} this is the man who will dwell **on the heights, whose refuge will be the mountain fortress. His bread will be supplied, and water will not fail him.** {17} Your eyes will see the king in his beauty and view a land that stretches afar. [Israel?] {18} In your thoughts you will ponder the former terror: "Where is that chief officer? Where is the one who took the revenue? Where is the officer in charge of the towers?" {19} You will see those arrogant people no more, those people of an obscure speech, with their strange, incomprehensible tongue. {20} Look upon Zion, the city of our festivals; your eyes will see Jerusalem, a peaceful abode, a tent that will not be moved; its stakes will never be pulled up, nor any of its ropes broken. {21} There the LORD will be our Mighty One. It will be like a place of broad rivers and streams. No galley with oars will ride them, no mighty ship will sail them. {22} For the LORD is our judge, the LORD is our lawgiver, the LORD is our king; **it is he who will save us.**

Notice the Place of Safety described in verse 16. Notice the military maneuvers described in verse 18. Verse 20-22 certainly describes Christ's Kingdom with its Headquarters in Jerusalem, about 100 air miles from Petra, if that's the place described. Petra is only few miles east of present day Israel's Negev desert.

Isa 43:19

See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? **I am making a way in the desert** and streams in the wasteland.

The Wadi Musa (if I remember correctly, Musa means Moses), a normally dry creek bed, runs through the Sik, the narrow eastern entrance to Petra, then through the rocky valley of Petra.

Dan 11:40-45

**"At the time of the end** the king of the South will engage him in battle, and the king of the North will storm out against him with chariots and cavalry and a great fleet of ships. He will invade many countries and sweep through them like a flood. {41} He will also invade the Beautiful Land. Many countries will fall, but **Edom, Moab and the leaders of Ammon** will be delivered from his hand. {42} He will extend his power over many countries; Egypt will not escape. {43} He will gain control of the treasures of gold and silver and all the riches of Egypt, with the Libyans and Nubians

(Sudanese? Ethiopians?) in submission. {44} But reports from the east and the north will alarm him, and he will set out in a great rage to destroy and annihilate many. {45} He will pitch his royal tents between the seas at the beautiful holy mountain. Yet he will come to his end, and no one will help him.

The leaders of Jordan are in Ammon, the capital city.

Exo 19:4

You yourselves have seen what I did to Egypt, and how I carried you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself.

Notice how God describes His protection of the Israelites when He took them out of Egypt. The parallel to the removal of God's people from a Babylonish, crazed world is obvious.

But Jordan will not escape forever. Notice what Ezekiel has to say about Ammon's final fate:

Ezek 25

The word of the LORD came to me: {2} "Son of man, set your face against the Ammonites and prophesy against them. {3} Say to them, 'Hear the word of the Sovereign LORD. This is what the Sovereign LORD says: Because you said "Aha!" over my sanctuary when it was desecrated and over the land of Israel when it was laid waste and over the people of Judah when they went into exile, {4} therefore I am going to give you to the people of the East as a possession. They will set up their camps and pitch their tents among you; they will eat your fruit and drink your milk. {5} I will turn Rabbah into a pasture for camels and Ammon into a resting place for sheep. Then you will know that I am the LORD. {6} For this is what the Sovereign LORD says: Because you have clapped your hands and stamped your feet, rejoicing with all the malice of your heart against the land of Israel, {7} therefore I will stretch out my hand against you and give you as plunder to the nations. I will cut you off from the nations and exterminate you from the countries. I will destroy you, and you will know that I am the LORD.'" {8} "This is what the Sovereign LORD says: 'Because Moab and Seir [Edom per Gen 36:8] said, "Look, the house of Judah has become like all the other nations," {9} therefore I will expose the flank of Moab, beginning at its frontier towns--Beth Jeshimoth, Baal Meon and Kiriathaim--the glory of that land. {10} I will give Moab along with the Ammonites to the people of the East as a possession, so that the Ammonites will not be remembered among the nations; {11} and I will inflict punishment on Moab. Then they will know that I am the LORD.'" {12} "This is what the Sovereign LORD says: 'Because Edom took revenge on the house of Judah and became very guilty by doing so, {13} therefore this is what the Sovereign LORD says: I will stretch out my hand against Edom and kill its men and their animals. I will lay it waste, and from Teman to Dedan they will fall by the sword. {14} I will take vengeance on Edom **by the hand of my people Israel** (apparently not just the Jews), and they will deal with Edom in accordance with my anger and my wrath; they will know my vengeance, declares the Sovereign LORD.'" {15} "This is what the Sovereign LORD says: 'Because the Philistines [people of the area of Gaza - part of the Palestinian Administration today] acted in vengeance and took revenge with malice in their hearts, and with ancient hostility sought to destroy Judah, {16} therefore this is what the Sovereign LORD says: I am about to stretch out my hand against the Philistines, and I will cut off the Cherethites and destroy those remaining along the coast. [The Cherthites were a clan of Philistines.] {17} I will carry out great vengeance on them and punish them in my wrath. Then they will know that I am the LORD, when I take vengeance on them.'" {17}

Keep in mind that it was the **chief** of the Ammonites that was to be previously protected. The chief of the Ammonites today is King Abdullah II. King Abdullah, a military man, takes a somewhat more cautious approach toward normalization of ties with Israel than did his father, King Hussein.

2 Pet 3:3-10

First of all, you must understand that in the last days scoffers will come, scoffing and following their own evil desires. {4} They will say, "Where is this 'coming' he promised? Ever since our fathers died, everything goes on as it has since the beginning of creation." (or via evolution they might say today) {5} But they deliberately forget that long ago by God's word the heavens existed and the earth was formed out of water and by water. {6} By these waters also the world of that time was deluged and destroyed. {7} By the same word the present heavens and earth **are reserved for fire**, being kept for the **day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men**. {8} But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day. {9} The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance. {10} But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare.

### God Spares his Own

And what of godly men? They will be protected from the tribulation caused by Satan which we read about in Rev. 6 and the plagues of God which are described in Rev.8 and 9.

Mal 3:16-18

Then those who feared the LORD talked with each other, and the LORD listened and heard. A scroll of remembrance was written in his presence concerning those who feared the LORD and honored his name. {17} "They will be mine," says the LORD Almighty, "in the day when I make up my treasured possession. **I will spare them**, just as in compassion a man spares his son who serves him. {18} And you will again see the distinction between the righteous and the wicked, between those who serve God and those who do not.

Psa 91

He who dwells in **the shelter of the Most High** will rest in the shadow of the Almighty. {2} I will say of the LORD, "He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust." {3} Surely he will save you from the fowler's snare and from the deadly pestilence. {4} He will cover you with his feathers, and under his wings you will find refuge; his faithfulness will be your shield and rampart. {5} You will not fear the terror of night, nor the arrow that flies by day, {6} nor the pestilence that stalks in the darkness, nor the plague that destroys at midday. {7} A thousand may fall at your side, ten thousand at your right hand, but it will not come near you. {8} You will only **observe with your eyes and see the punishment of the wicked**. {9} If you make the Most High your dwelling-- even the LORD, who is my refuge-- {10} then no harm will befall you, no disaster will come near your tent. [Not a permanent building] {11} For he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways; {12} they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone. {13} You will tread upon the lion and the cobra; you will trample the great lion and the serpent. {14} "Because he loves me," says the LORD, "**I will rescue him; I will protect him, for he acknowledges my name**. {15} He will call upon me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble, I will deliver him and honor him. {16} With long life will I satisfy him and show him my salvation."

Mal 3:17 and Psa 91 promise protection for God's people. But we read in Rev. 6:9-11 and in Mat 24:9-12 that Saints would be and have been martyred. Are these scriptures contradictory? No, because Rev 6 and Mat 24 are describing martyrdoms performed by evil people before they themselves are destroyed in the tribulation described in Rev. 8 and 9. Those servants of God surviving until the tribulation of Rev. 8 will be put in a place of safety as indicated by Rev. 7:3.

You can learn more about God's Holy Name (verse 14) by reading or listening to our website sermon "[Whom Do We Worship?](#)".

We've mentioned that God selects His own, but let's now look at some more scriptural examples of that.

Rev 3:9-10

I will make those who are of the synagogue of Satan, who claim to be Jews though they are not, but are liars--I will make them come and fall down at your feet and acknowledge that I have loved you. {10} Since you have kept my command to **endure** patiently, **I will also keep you from the hour of trial that is going to come upon the whole world** to test those who live on the earth.

Isa 43:1-13

But now, this is what the LORD says-- he who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel: "Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name; you are mine. {2} **When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned;** the flames will not set you ablaze. {3} For I am the LORD, your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior; I give Egypt for your ransom, Cush and Seba in your stead. {4} Since you are precious and honored in my sight, and because I love you, **I will give men in exchange for you, and people in exchange for your life.** {5} **Do not be afraid, for I am with you; I will bring your children from the east and gather you from the west. {6} I will say to the north, 'Give them up!' and to the south, 'Do not hold them back.' Bring my sons from afar and my daughters from the ends of the earth--** {7} everyone who is called by my name, whom I created for my glory, whom I formed and made." {8} **Lead out those who have eyes but are blind, who have ears but are deaf.** {9} All the nations gather together and the peoples assemble. Which of them foretold this and proclaimed to us the former things? Let them bring in their witnesses to prove they were right, so that others may hear and say, "It is true." {10} "You are my witnesses," declares the LORD, "and my servant whom I have chosen, so that you may know and believe me and understand that I am he. Before me no god was formed, nor will there be one after me. {11} I, even I, am the LORD, and **apart from me there is no savior.** {12} I have revealed and saved and proclaimed-- I, and not some foreign god among you. You are my witnesses," declares the LORD, "that I am God. {13} Yes, and from ancient days I am he. No one can deliver out of my hand. When I act, who can reverse it?"

Some say this refers to the Jews returning to Israel. But these verses sound more like God gathering His saints from around the world. Can this be anything else but the journey to the place of safety and away from the tribulation described in Rev. 8?

Ezek 20:33-36

As surely as I live, declares the Sovereign LORD, I will rule over you with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm and with outpoured wrath. {34} I will bring you from the nations and gather you from the countries where you have been scattered--with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm and with outpoured wrath. {35} **I will bring you into the desert** of the nations and there, face to face, **I will execute judgment upon you.** {36} As I judged your fathers in the desert of the land of Egypt, so I will judge you, declares the Sovereign LORD.

God shall gather his people from all the earth. We have all heard that the Saints will be judged before they are resurrected. Verse 35 says He will take his people into the desert and judge them. If we don't go into the desert, what then?

Now let's look at some scriptures which refer to how the Saints are or were chosen:

Luke 17:26-30

"Just as it was in the days of Noah, so also will it be in the days of the Son of Man. {27} People were eating, drinking, marrying and being given in marriage up to the day Noah entered the ark. Then the flood came and destroyed them all. {28} "It was the same in the days of Lot. People were eating and drinking, buying and selling, planting and building. {29} But the day Lot left Sodom, fire and sulfur rained down from heaven and destroyed them all. {30} "It will be just like this on the day the Son of Man is revealed.

On the day that God's elect leave, or are put in a place of safety, the nations will be destroyed.

2 Cor 6:16-18

What agreement is there between the temple of God and idols? For we are the temple of the living God. As God has said: "I will live with them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they will be my people." {17} "**Therefore come out from them and be separate**, says the Lord. **Touch no unclean thing, and I will receive you.**" {18} "I will be a Father to you, and you will be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty."

We must not pollute ourselves with the religions and ways of this world if we want God to receive us. We have the potential to become sons and daughters of God the Father.

Rev 3:12

Him who overcomes I will make a pillar in the temple of my God. Never again will he leave it. I will write on him the name of my God and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which is coming down out of heaven from my God; and I will also write on him my new name.

If the churches of Rev 2 and 3 are church eras, God's Saints have got to be the Philadelphia Church era. But I guess I would have to ask, "Are church eras limited in time?" Were there no Saints in the first hundred years of Christianity?

Eph 1:4-6

For **he chose us in him before the creation of the world** to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love {5} he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will-- {6} to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves.

Yes, He chose us before He created the world. Now let's read how King David realized this too.

Psa 71

In you, O LORD, I have taken refuge; let me never be put to shame. {2} Rescue me and deliver me in your righteousness; turn your ear to me and save me. {3} Be my rock of refuge, to which I can always go; give the command to save me, for you are my rock and my fortress. {4} Deliver me, O my God, from the hand of the wicked, from the grasp of evil and cruel men. {5} For you have been my hope, O Sovereign LORD, my confidence since my youth. {6} From birth I have relied on you; you brought me forth from my mother's womb. I will ever praise you. {7} I have become like a portent to many, but you are my strong refuge. {8} My mouth is filled with your praise, declaring your splendor all day long. {9} Do not cast me away when I am old; do not forsake me when my strength is gone. {10} For my enemies speak against me; those who wait to kill me conspire together. {11} They say, "God has forsaken him; pursue him and seize him, for no one will rescue him." {12} Be not far from me, O God; come quickly, O my God, to help me. {13} May my accusers perish in shame; may those who want to harm me be covered with scorn and disgrace. {14} But as for

me, I will always have hope; I will praise you more and more. {15} My mouth will tell of your righteousness, of your salvation all day long, though I know not its measure. {16} I will come and proclaim your mighty acts, O Sovereign LORD; I will proclaim your righteousness, yours alone. {17} Since my youth, O God, you have taught me, and to this day I declare your marvelous deeds. {18} Even when I am old and gray, do not forsake me, O God, till I declare your power to the next generation, your might to all who are to come. {19} Your righteousness reaches to the skies, O God, you who have done great things. Who, O God, is like you? {20} Though you have made me see troubles, many and bitter, **you will restore my life again; from the depths of the earth you will again bring me up.** {21} You will increase my honor and comfort me once again. {22} I will praise you with the harp for your faithfulness, O my God; I will sing praise to you with the lyre, O Holy One of Israel. {23} My lips will shout for joy when I sing praise to you-- I, whom you have redeemed. {24} My tongue will tell of your righteous acts all day long, for those who wanted to harm me have been put to shame and confusion.

David speaks here of his trust in God as a refuge and his resurrection from the dead to become King of Israel again.

Isa 43:18-21

"Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. {19} See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the desert and streams in the wasteland. {20} The wild animals honor me, the jackals and the owls, because I provide water in the desert and streams in the wasteland, **to give drink to my people, my chosen, {21} the people I formed for myself that they may proclaim my praise.**

We will forget the old world and establish a new society beginning in the Place of Safety.

Luke 21:34

"Be careful, lest your hearts will be weighed down with dissipation, drunkenness and the anxieties of life, and that day will close on you unexpectedly like a trap.

Don't get carried away with the pleasures and cares of this world and not be ready for the final days of this world.

Verse 36

Be always on the watch, and pray that you may be able to escape all that is about to happen, and that you may be able to stand before the Son of Man."

Mat 24:20

Pray that your flight will not take place in winter or on the Sabbath.

Pray for escape.

Well, there you have it. I can't positively say whether God's people are going to go to Petra for their safety of the plagues of Rev. 8, or to somewhere else. To avoid persecution we may simply stay in our homes unknown and therefore hidden from the world around us. But, my impression is that the place of safety from the tribulation of Rev. 8 will be in Petra. There's just too much scripture which describes or names Petra. As you review these scriptures, particularly those referring to the rocks, you might ask yourself, "how many rocks do I have in my back yard?" I suppose it is possible that the place of safety from persecution could be in our own house but how about a place of safety from the tribulation of Rev. 8 and 9? We might need a lot more than our house and yard. The important thing for all of us is staying so close to God that He doesn't leave us out when He's deciding who is to be protected and where it is to be done. And as we read earlier, keep the Sabbath and respect God's name

appropriately.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Studies in the Word of God - Church of God Most High, P.O. Box 89741, Tucson, AZ 85752-9741, USA*



## Appendix 7: The Rapture & Your Place of Safety: True or False? by Peter Salemi

**"I pray NOT that thou shouldest take them out of the world," (John 17:15)¶**

Millions of people believe in the doctrine called the Rapture of the saints. Best selling books have been written on the subject. Preachers in the Christian world preach it, but is it true? And in some of the churches of God, some still believe in a place of safety. That God will whisk his church away somewhere in Jordan, in a place called Petra, where they will be protected from the great tribulation. In this article we are going to deal with both these doctrines and see what the bible really says about the church. Where it will be in this end time.

### Origin of the Rapture Doctrine

When did this doctrine of the Rapture appear in church? In his book "Secret Rapture" by Alan Campbell, he writes:

"...the Secret Rapture theory was virtually unheard of and untaught until around 1830, it is essential to examine its origins first. Such a teaching was unknown to the early Church Fathers e.g. Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, and Tertullian, who were convinced that the Christian Church would pass through great tribulation at the hands of the antichrist system before the return of the Lord. Furthermore the Rapture theory was not taught by the great stalwarts of the Reformed Faith - Huss, Wycliffe, Luther, Calvin, Knox, Cranmer or even by the Wesley brothers in the 18th Century. Whence came this teaching therefore and where did this novel idea arise?

At the time of the Reformation, the first Protestants widely believed and taught that the Papacy was antichrist, and the Roman Church the Harlot System of Revelation 17. *It therefore became necessary for certain Romish theologians to take the pressure off the Pope by inventing a new school of prophetic interpretation now known as Futurism. It was a Jesuit priest named Ribera (1537-1591) who first taught that the events prophesied in the books of Daniel and Revelation would not be fulfilled until three and a half years at the end of the age when an individual world dictator called Anti-Christ would arise. Thus Ribera laid the foundation of a system of prophetic interpretation of which the Secret Rapture has now become an integral part.*

Nevertheless in spite of the efforts of false prophets like Ribera and Cardinal Bellarmine it was not for another two and a half centuries that the Jesuit fables began to gain acceptance by Evangelical Christians. In the early 19th Century Futurism entered the bloodstream of Protestant prophetic teaching by three main roads:

(a) A Chilean Jesuit priest, Emmanuel Lacunza wrote a book entitled '*The Coming of Messiah in Glory and Majesty*', and in its pages taught the novel notion that Christ returns not once, but twice, and at the 'first stage' of His return He '*raptures*' His Church so they can escape the reign of the '*future antichrist*'. In order to avoid any taint of Romanism, Lacunza published his book under the assumed name of Rabbi Ben Ezra, a supposedly converted Jew. Lacunza's book found its way to the library of the Archbishop of Canterbury, and there in 1826 Dr Maitland, the Archbishop's librarian came upon it and read it and soon after began to issue a series of pamphlets giving the Jesuit, Futurist view of prophecy. The idea soon found acceptance in the Anglo-Catholic Ritualist movement in the National Church of England, and soon it tainted the very heart of Protestantism.

(b) The Secret Rapture doctrine was given a second door of entrance at this time by the ministry of one, Edward Irving, founder of the so-called '*Catholic Apostolic Church*'. It was in Irving's London church, in 1830, that a young girl named Margaret McDonald gave an

ecstatic prophecy in which she claimed there would be a special secret coming of the Lord to 'rapture' those awaiting His return. From then until his death in 1834 Irving devoted his considerable talent as a preacher to spreading the theory of the 'secret rapture'.

(c) However, it was necessary for Jesuitry to have a third door of entrance to the Reformed fold and this they gained via a sincere Christian, J. N. Darby, generally regarded as the founder of the 'Brethren'. As an Anglican curate Darby attended a number of mysteriously organised meetings on Bible Prophecy at Powerscourt in Ireland, and at these gatherings he learned about the 'secret rapture'. He *carried the teaching into the Brethren and hence into the heart of Evangelicalism. With a new veneer of being scriptural the teaching spread and was later popularised in the notes of the Schofield Reference Bible.*

So today the three measures of Roman leaven have corrupted the Prophetic teaching of almost all the Fundamentalist world. Well might we say of the 'secret rapture', can any good thing come out of Rome?" (The Secret Rapture-Is It Scriptural?, emphasis added). So now we see the reason behind the doctrine of the rapture and why it was created. Before this time mentioned all scholars believed that the church, which the bible plainly says it does, which we will show you later, goes through the tribulation period.

But what is interesting is, "**Many sincere, born again Christians don't believe in the secret rapture.** Sometimes impressions are given in certain publications and in certain circles is that serious, conservative, born-again, Bible believing Christians hold to the secret rapture. But there are many such-both lay people and scholars-who do not believe in the secret rapture teaching" (The Rapture -A Second Look, Marvin Moore, p. 5 Inset box, emphasis theirs). Interesting that the impression most people get is that all Christians believe in the rapture, but this is simply not so. But still many of them do, so we are going to have to deal with this doctrine and pray that people will look into these things for themselves, and believe what the bible says about this matter.

### **An attempt by Grant Jeffery**

*(By William Arnold III Author of The Post-Tribulation Rapture a graduate of Christian Life College (B.A.) and is presently in the M.A. in Exegetical Theology degree program at Western Seminary, empahsis added)*

### **"No Pre-Tribulationists Before the Last Century**

It has long been pointed out that pre-tribulationism is a relatively new doctrine. With one possible exception, there is no record of it being taught before the past century. Now this does not in itself mean that it is false, but it should raise some eyebrows. If Peter and Paul taught pre-tribulationism, then we would expect the early church to have been pre-trib [Meaning the church raptured before the Great Tribulation]. *This challenge intrigued Grant R. Jeffrey so much that he searched for over ten years for evidence of pre-tribulationism before the 1800s.*<sup>1</sup> He found *one person* in the **fourth century** whom he claims was a pre-tribulationist.<sup>2</sup> This person is called Pseudo-Ephraem.<sup>3</sup> Since there had been no official translation of this work into English, Jeffrey had someone translate it for him.

According to his translation, Pseudo-Ephraem wrote "See to it that this sentence be not fulfilled among you of the prophet who declares: 'Woe to those who desire to see the Day of the Lord!' Because all saints and the Elect of the Lord are gathered together before the tribulation which is about to come and are taken to the Lord, in order that they may not see at any time the confusion which overwhelms the world because of our sins." Now on the surface this does seem to support Jeffrey's claim. But a few things are worthy of note. According to this document, Pseudo-Ephraem correctly understood the Tribulation to refer to the *second 3 ½ years of Daniel's seventieth week*, not in the common way it is used today, which is to refer to the entire period.

Also, in this same document Pseudo-Ephraem says, "Already there have been hunger and plagues, violent movements of nations and signs, which have been predicted by the Lord, they have already been fulfilled, and there is not other which remains, except the advent of the wicked one in the completion of the Roman kingdom." If Pseudo-Ephraem is claiming that some of the things which Jesus had predicted were then being fulfilled, then he *thought that he was already in Daniel's seventieth week*. Also, *he expected to see the antichrist before the Lord would return*. At best, Pseudo-Ephraem was what we would today call a *mid-tribulationist* (explained below).

*Furthermore, I think it is amazing evidence against Jeffrey's position that in over ten years of research this is all that he could find. This shows that even if Pseudo-Ephraem was a pre-tribulationist, this was the exception, not the rule.*4

#### **Footnotes:**

1. Grant R Jeffrey, "A Pretrib Rapture Statement in the Early Medieval Church" in *When the Trumpet Sounds*, 105-125.¶2. Actually, he claims two. John Gill taught that after the church is caught up to meet Christ we will be taken away while the earth is burned and then return. Since this happens *after the Millennium*, John Gill could hardly be considered a pre-tribulationist.¶3. It was common in antiquity for unknown writers to write in the name and style of someone who was rather well respected, hence the name "Pseudo-Ephraem."¶4. It was not until after I had completed the rough draft of this book that I began to read books by other post-tribulationists. Robert Gundry in his book, *First the Antichrist* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1997), gives very convincing evidence that this passage has been taken out of its context and misapplied. A summary of his argument is as follows:

First, he states that "neither of the slightly separated passages cited for early pretribulationism mentions a coming of the Lord (as in the classic New Testament description of the rapture at 1 Thess. 4:16-17), or a resurrection of deceased Christians and translation of living ones (as in 1 Cor. 15:51-52; see again 1 Thess. 4:16-17 for the resurrection), or a heavenly destination (as in a pretrib understanding of John 14:2-4 and, often, of Rev 4:1-2)."

Second, just a casual reading of some of the surviving works of the real Ephraem (which Pseudo-Ephraem is undoubtedly building on) will show that he was clearly a post-tribulationist. Ephraem expected to see the antichrist and stated that he would come before Jesus would. He said that "the tribulation will be upon us . . . the dawn of the morning will be near to us for the good news and joy of our Lord; as also our Savior said, . . . 'For the sake of the elect those days will be shortened.'" Also that "before the rise of the Man of Wickedness we must teach and admonish people (about) his ways, and his deceits . . . Even our Savior said, . . . 'If possible, he would lead astray many of the elect.'" This passage goes on to describe as our hope the coming of Christ after the tribulation. He also warns Christians against being deceived by "the Man of Sin" (cf. 2 Thess. 2:1-12). He says that Jesus spoke his command to flee to the mountains (during the tribulation, Matt. 24:16) "concerning the church." Gundry also gives several other examples and states that such quotations could be multiplied indefinitely.

Finally, Gundry demonstrates that Ephraem very commonly spoke of "gathering" in reference to evangelism and conversion. Once again, many examples are cited. He even states that "This theme of Christ's gathering Christian believers to himself attains so much force that Ephraem even makes the Antichrist imitate that gathering with one of his own: 'Like a partridge he [Antichrist] will *gather* to himself the sons of confusion.'" If there is still any question on this matter the reader is urged to read Gundry's book, *First the Antichrist* for himself.

#### **Daniel's Seventy Weeks**

The whole theory of the rapture I have found is centred around the prophecy in Daniel the

9th Chapter. People who believe in the rapture believe that the last week, meaning the 70th week in Daniel's prophecy is the great tribulation, and that week really means 7 years, which is correct. They believe that the "Anti-Christ" "shall confirm the covenant with many for one week:" meaning some sort of peace plan, and that "in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease," he will break this peace plan and all hell is going to break loose. Is this interpretation true? Absolutely Not! Nowhere in the bible do you find that the great tribulation lasts for 7 years. You find in the bible "42 months," "time, times, and half a time," "thousand two hundred *and* threescore days," which is a *span of 3 and one half years*. This is the time span of the great tribulation.

So what does the last week of Daniel actually mean? Who is the one who "confirms the covenant" for one week? That one, is Jesus Christ! Romans 15:8, says, "Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, *to confirm the promises made unto the fathers*:" He was the one who confirms the covenant not the Anti-Christ.

JFB Commentary says: "The confirmation of the covenant is assigned to Him also elsewhere. Isa 42:6, "I will give thee for a covenant of the people" (that is, He in whom the covenant between Israel and God is personally expressed); compare Luk 22:20, "The new testament in My blood"; Mal 3:1, "the angel of the covenant"; Jer 31:31-34, describes the Messianic covenant in full. Contrast Dan 11:30, Dan 11:32, "forsake the covenant," "do wickedly against the covenant." *The prophecy as to Messiah's confirming the covenant with many would comfort the faithful in Antiochus' times, who suffered partly from persecuting enemies, partly from false friends (Dan 11:33-35)....*" (pp.436-437, emphasis mine).

Notice, verse 26 of Daniel 9: "And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself:" Notice its "AFTER" the 69 weeks that pass that Jesus was killed *not during*, that leaves us with the last week left, and "and in the midst of the [70th] week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease," When Jesus died he caused the sacrifices of the temple to cease when the veil of the temple was split right down the middle and the holy of holies was exposed, "the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom;" (Matthew 27:51).

Again the Commentary says:"...Messiah was to cause all sacrifices and oblations in general to "cease" utterly. There is here an allusion only to Antiochus' act; to comfort God's people when sacrificial worship was to be trodden down, by pointing them to the Messianic time when salvation would fully come and *yet temple sacrifices cease*. This is the same consolation as Jeremiah and Ezekiel gave under like circumstances, when the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar was impending (Jer 3:16; Jer 31:31; Eze 11:19). Jesus died in the middle of the last week, A.D. 30. His prophetic life lasted three and a half years; *the very time in which "the saints are given into the hand" of Antichrist (Dan 7:25)....* The rending of the veil marked the cessation of sacrifices through Christ's death (Lev 4:6, Lev 4:17; Lev 16:2, Lev 16:15; Heb 10:14-18). *There cannot be a covenant without sacrifice (Gen 8:20; Gen 9:17; Gen 15:9, &c.; Heb 9:15). Here the old covenant is to be confirmed, but in a way peculiar to the New Testament, namely, by the one sacrifice, which would terminate all sacrifices (Psa 40:6, Psa 40:11)....*" (ibid., pp.436-437, emphasis mine). History also records the oblations and the sacrifices ceased because of the crucifixion of Jesus, see Edersheims, Life and Times of the Messiah, pp.610-611. So this is the true meaning of that verse. We have a booklet "Daniel's Seventy Weeks" that explains it in full, and it will be up on our website soon!

Now since we now know the Messiah is the one who "confirms the covenant," and in the "midst of the week" was cut off, then we don't have to deal with one group who believes Christ is going to rapture his church away in the *middle* of the seven year period. Their whole argument is based on that, and since we debunked it, we don't have to deal with them, so we will deal mostly with the one other group who believes Christ is coming for his church before

the Tribulation. Let's examine that theory and see whether it is true or not.

### Labels

I have noticed that many people, theologians etc...like to label people when they believe in certain doctrines so they can degrade them in a certain way, so they can feel better about what they believe, or that if they label them in a certain way it makes their doctrine right and the other wrong. I have been labeled on a lot of my beliefs, like "a legalists," a "cult" or an "Armstrongists," and do people think that because they label people these things that this makes their doctrines true and the others false?

The three labels that people want to hang on other people and categorize them into certain groups about this particular subject are:

**1) Pre-tribulationists** that believe that the rapture will happen before the great tribulation. This will cause many non Christians, including the 144,000 Jews to put faith in Jesus Christ and become the martyrs of the tribulation period.

**2) Mid-tribulationists** believe that the rapture will happen in the middle of the tribulation period. (at the 3 1/2 year point) They say that its improper to link the Great Tribulation to Daniel's 70th week. The first three and one half years will be peace and safety. The second three and one half years will be when desolation occurs, so this is when we will be raptured out, just as the desolation begins.

**3) Post-tribulationists** believe that the resurrection of the saints will happen at the end of the tribulation period, just when Jesus is returning to earth to begin the 1000 year reign. They believe that they will have God's loving hand upon them to protect them but they will go through the tribulation period untouched by God's wrath.

These are the three categories, so when people know which one you believe, they can say "Oh your a so and so..." thinking that if they sneer and snarl long enough, it makes what ever you believe in wrong. Well this article is not going to label anyone for their beliefs, but simply show you what the bible says about WHEN the second coming of Christ is going to occur, and when the saints will be resurrected. Afterward if people are going to put a label on it, its their affair, we just want to print the truth of your Bible!

### When Will the Saints be Resurrected?

We are going to deal with the subject of when the saints will be resurrected. Will it be before the tribulation? During it? Or after the tribulation and the start of the setting up of the Kingdom of God? What does your bible say?

In Matthew the 24th chapter is the greatest prophecy given by Jesus Christ and he gave us a serious of events that will happen in the end time. He spoke of the Great Tribulation that was coming and the resurrection of the saints and the exact time sequence of those events to occur.

Jesus said: "For then shall be *great tribulation*, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. "And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: *but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened...* Immediately **after** the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: "And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory" (Matthew 24:21, 22, 29-31). Here we have a serious of events that exactly fit with Joel 2:31: "The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, **before** the great and the terrible day of the LORD come." Notice Jesus said that "after" the tribulation the sun shall be darkened and the moon will not give her light. Joel says "before" the "day of the Lord" the sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood. So here we have a clear serious of events from both scriptures:

### **Great Tribulation--> Heavenly signs--> Day of the Lord.**

Simple step by step serious of events. Now comes the part when the saints are resurrected:

"Immediately **after the tribulation** of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: [Heavenly signs] "And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the *Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.* [Day of the Lord; Second Coming of Christ] "**And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other**" (Matthew 24:30-31). Here is the simple plain answer from the Bible. The saints will be resurrected AFTER the tribulation during the time of the day of the Lord at the second coming of Jesus Christ! Why so much debate? Why so much confusion as to whether Jesus comes before or after the tribulation when Jesus makes it so plain?

Matthew 24:31 shows that there are angels sounding the trumpet and resurrecting the saints of God at his second coming. I Thessalonians and 1 Corinthians shows the same events that are taking place.

Notice: "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with **the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God:** and the dead in Christ shall rise first: "Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the *clouds, to meet the Lord in the air:* and so shall we ever be with the Lord" (1 Thess 4:16-17).

"Behold, I show you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, "In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, **at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound,** and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed" (1 Corith 15:51-52).

Some important points have to made in these scriptures.

- 1) These two events are speaking of the same event because the apostle Paul included himself in both passages. He said "we" shall be changed, and "we" shall be with the Lord.
- 2) Nowhere does it say that the saints go to Heaven. It says they shall meet the Lord in the "air" in the "clouds." That is this atmosphere. On earth!
- 3) When does this transformation occurs, Paul said an Old Testament prophecy will be fulfilled. In 1 Cor 15:54 it says: "So WHEN this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, **THEN** shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, **Death is swallowed up in victory.**"

This is a direct quote of Isaiah 25:8. And, Isaiah's prophecy is clearly speaking of the coming of Christ's Millennial Kingdom.

"He will swallow up death in victory; *and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from off all faces;* and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth: for the LORD hath spoken it." This is Isaiah's prophecy. Notice God wipes the tears from their eyes. This very quote John writes in Revelation about God's people that went THROUGH the Great Tribulation, "**These are they which came out of great tribulation,** and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. " They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat." For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: **and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.**" (Rev 7:14-17) **Paul said that this particular Millennial prophecy will be fulfilled at the resurrection of the Church.** Therefore, the resurrection of the Church must occur at the beginning of the Kingdom, which is AFTER the Tribulation

4) Notice the apostle Paul calls the trumpet the "LAST" trump. Why the "last"? Because there are six other trumpets that are sounded that we find in the book of Revelation.

The 7th trump sounds at the END of the the tribulation, heavenly signs during the day of the Lord. Notice in Revelation 6 we see the 6 seals being broken. The 5th seal was the Great Tribulation and the persecution of the church, Rev 6:9-11. The 6th seal starts the heavenly signs, Rev 6:12-16, and in verse 17 it says, "For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?" This is the seventh seal which kicks off the wrath of God, the *trumpet plagues* and the three woes.

Notice Rev 7:1, "**And after these things**" John says, after the 6 seals were broken, then the sealing of the 144,000 happens, and the sealing of the great multitude of people. Why are these being sealed? Because God's wrath is going to start when the seventh seal is broken and God is sealing them to protect them from the wrath of God that is going to happen to the entire earth. Divine protection from God. We read of the same thing in Ezekiel 9. The man with the "writer's inkhorn" (v.3) was to "set a *mark upon the foreheads* of the men that sigh and that cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof. "And to the others he said in mine hearing, Go ye after him through the city, and smite: let not your eye spare, neither have ye pity: "Slay utterly old and young, both maids, and little children, and women: **but come not near any man upon whom is the mark;**" (vv.4-6). The people that had the mark were spared from God's wrath. The same thing is happening here in Revelation 7. God is sealing his people to protect them from the wrath of God to come on sinning mankind. Here is one example in the book of Revelation during the wrath of God of the sounding of the 5th trumpet: "And it was commanded them that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree; *but only those men which have not the seal of God in their foreheads*" (Rev 9:4). So during the wrath of God, its obvious that God is protecting his people. That is why the Bible says , "For God hath not appointed us to wrath," ( 1 Thess 5:9).

So here, and the *trumpets are not even sounded yet*, and we are already *past the Great Tribulation and the Heavenly signs*, and into the start wrath of God with the breaking of the 7th seal. Yet Paul said that the saints will be resurrected at the "last trump." So the saints must be resurrected during the day of the Lord, which is what Jesus said all along in Matthew 24.

Revelation 8 continues the sequence: "And when he had opened the *seventh seal*, there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour. "And I saw the seven angels which stood before God; and to them were given seven trumpets" (vv.1-2). When does this occur? At the start of the wrath of God, the day of the Lord!

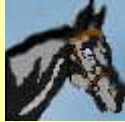

The 5th, 6th and 7th trumpets blasts start the "three woes" Rev 8:13; 9:1, 12; 11:14. The seventh trumpet starts the third woe which is the time of the "vials" of God's wrath which are poured out without admixture, see Rev 16. By this time the saints are resurrected. They meet the Lord in the air, and we come back with him with the armies of Heaven, and to set up the kingdom of God with Christ, Rev 19:11-16. Here is the sequence of events from the Bible:

**Chart of Events of the Great Tribulation, Heavenly Signs, Day of the Lord**

**The Seven Seals of Revelation**

**v---The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse---v**

<b>First Seal</b> White ¶Horse	<b>Second Seal</b> Red ¶Horse	<b>Third Seal</b> Black ¶Horse	<b>Fourth Seal</b> Pale ¶Horse	<b>Fifth Seal</b> Great Tribulation	<b>Sixth Seal</b> Heavenly ¶Signs	
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<p><b>Deception</b>                  Matthew 24:4-5                  ¶Revelation 6:1-2</p>	<p><b>War</b>                  Matthew 24:6-8                  ¶Revelation 6:3-4</p>	 <p><b>Famine</b>                  Matthew 24:7-8                  ¶Revelation 6:5-6</p>	<p><b>Pestilence</b>                  Matthew 24:7-8                  ¶Revelation 6:7-8</p>	<p><b>National Captivity</b>                  Matthew 24:9, 21-22; Luke 21:23-24                  Revelation ¶6:9-11</p>	 <p>¶Matthew 24:29-30;                  ¶Joel 2:30-31                  Revelation 6:12-17</p>
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**Sealing of God's People**  
 Revelation 7;  
 Ephesians 1:13-14; Ezekiel 9:4

**Seventh Seal: Seven Trumpet Plagues (Revelation 16:1)**

<b>Silence in heaven (Revelation 8:1-6)</b>	<b>First Trumpet</b>	<b>Second Trumpet</b>	<b>Third Trumpet</b>	<b>Fourth Trumpet</b>	<b>Fifth Trumpet</b>	<b>Sixth Trumpet</b>	<b>Seventh Trumpet: Seven Last Plagues</b>						
	One third of trees and all grass burned	One third of sea becomes blood, one third of sea creatures die, one third of ships destroyed	One third of rivers become wormwood	One third of sun, moon, stars darkened	Locusts, symbolic of beast's military power (Revelation 17:8-14)	200 million horsemen; one third of humanity killed, humanity refuses to repent	<b>First Plague</b>	<b>Second Plague</b>	<b>Third Plague</b>	<b>Fourth Plague</b>	<b>Fifth Plague</b>	<b>Sixth Plague</b>	<b>Seventh Plague</b>
	Revelation 8:7	Revelation 8:8-9	Revelation 8:10-11	Revelation 8:12	Revelation 9:1-12	Revelation 9:13-21	Sores on people who accepted mark of the beast	Sea turns to blood, all sea creatures die	Rivers turn to blood	Sun scorches humanity with great heat, humanity blasphemes God	Beast's seat of government afflicted	Euphrates dried up, world's armies gathered to Armageddon (Joel 3:9-17)	Great earthquakes and hail
							Revelation 16:2	Revelation 16:3	Revelation 16:4-7	Revelation 16:8-9	Revelation 16:10-11	Revelation 16:12-16	Revelation 16:17-21
				<b>First Woe</b>	<b>Second Woe</b>	<b>Third Woe (Revelation 8:13)</b>							

**Return of Jesus Christ**  
 Revelation 10:7; 11:15-19; 19:1-21; ¶Matthew 24:30-31;  
 1 Corinthians 15:51-52; ¶1 Thessalonians 4:16;  
 Zechariah 14:1-4

**The Seventh Trumpet**

In Revelation 11 we see the two witnesses who are a type of Elijah and Moses, and their job



was to "...prophesy a thousand two hundred *and* threescore days, clothed in sackcloth" (v.3). This three and one half year period is the Great Tribulation, heavenly signs, and Day of the Lord. Notice in verse 7: "And when they shall have *finished their testimony*, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them." When does this happen? Verses 8-14 answers that question:

"And their dead bodies *shall lie* in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified.

"And they of the people and kindreds and tongues and nations *shall see their dead bodies three days and an half, and shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves.*

"And they that dwell upon the earth shall rejoice over them, and make merry, and shall send gifts one to another; because these two prophets tormented them that dwelt on the earth.

"*And after three days and an half the Spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet; and great fear fell upon them which saw them.*

"And they heard a great voice from heaven saying unto them, Come up hither. And they ascended up to heaven in a cloud; and their enemies beheld them.

"*And the same hour was there a great earthquake, and the tenth part of the city fell, and in the earthquake were slain of men seven thousand: and the remnant were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven.*

"***The second woe is past; and, behold, the third woe cometh quickly.***" The death of the two witnesses comes at the time of the end of the second woe (Sixth Trumpet) just before the third woe (Seventh Trumpet) after the tribulation, and at the end of the Day of the Lord.

Now Verse 15 we get to the Seventh Trumpet, the third woe, the "last trump" Paul was speaking of, which is the resurrection of the saints at the end of the day of the Lord, at the time of God's wrath *after* the tribulation!

"And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become *the kingdoms* of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever....***thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great; and shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth***" (vv.15-18). The reward of eternal life comes to the saints at the last trumpet during the time of God's wrath after the tribulation. The third woe kicks off the vial plagues which is the "vials of the wrath of God upon the earth" (Rev 16:2). This is why the apostle Paul wrote "For God hath not appointed us to wrath" (1 Thess 5:9). So there is the scenario of the resurrection of the saints in the end time. We have Tribulation, Heavenly signs, Day of the Lord. And at the end of the day of the Lord, at the time of the last vials plagues of God's wrath on the earth, the third woe, God resurrects his saints, meets them in the clouds of the air and they will ever be with the Lord! Now that should settle the issue. But we know that it does not settle the issue. So we are going to examine some of the scriptures people try to use to justify a rapture *before* the tribulation.

### **Scriptures Examined**

Now we are going to examine of the scriptures people try to use to justify a rapture before the tribulation in the bible.

#### **1) "Coming as a Thief "**

"Our blessed Lord said: 'But know this, that if the good man of the house, had known in what

hour the thief would come he would have watched and not have suffered the house to be broken up. Therefore be ye also ready for in such an hour as ye think not your Lord will come.' Matt. 24:43-44; Luke 12:39-40.

The Rapturists tell us that this shows the secret nature of the Lord's '*coming for*' the saints, but does it? The only secrecy implied in the texts is in relation to the day and hour of Christ's coming and there is nothing to indicate that the coming itself is a secret. In fact we are told:

*'The Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a SHOUT, with the VOICE of an Archangel and the TRUMP of God.'* I Thess. 4:16. Nothing quiet about that, is there?

Again they refer us to the words: *'I will come on thee as a thief in the night and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee.'* Rev. 3:3. Or again:

*'Behold I come as a thief, blessed is he that watcheth.'* Rev. 16:15.

However, in both instances just quoted, the secrecy is in connection **with the timing not the nature of the event**, and it is exactly the same in the other '*thief text*'.

*'The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night'* II Peter 3:10

Here again it is the **element of surprise** that leads to the use of the thief as a symbol. Peter himself finishes this very same '*thief text*' by saying that at the time of the Lord's coming:

*'The heavens shall pass away with a GREAT NOISE'*

Not much secrecy about that is there? After all did not Paul tell his readers:

*'But ye brethren ARE NOT in darkness that, that day shall overtake you as a thief.'* I Thess. 5:4.

You see, as Christians, they were studying the signs of the times as we should be doing and were ready for Christ's return. He will only come as a thief for those who are not prepared for Him.

Furthermore the very concept of a '*thief*' must be called into question for, at the time when our Lord and the Apostles spoke, a thief was much more likely to be a **bandit or leader of a gang of robbers who swept down on his victims in swift, sudden, but open and daring raids**, and he was not a sneak thief or burglar, as we have today" (Campbell, Secret Rapture, emphasis added).

## 2) "That Blessed Hope" Titus 2:13

People who believe in the Rapture often quote this passage to justify a rapture: "Looking for that blessed hope [The Rapture], **and** the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ [Second coming of Christ;]" They read two events here in this passage. The Blessed Hope is the rapture, and the second event is the second coming of Jesus to this earth with his saints. Because the word "And" is there in the middle of the sentence, this is how they come to this conclusion.

"The KJV is technically correct here, by translating the word "and" [Greek - **kai**]. But, it does not account for the "Granville Sharp rule," which applies to this verse. The Greek word **kai** usually means "and." But, it can either mean "in addition to," or in the case of the Granville Sharp rule, it is used to *restate, or connect words*.

The Granville-Sharp rule is as follows;

*"If two nouns of the same case are connected by a "kai" [and] and the article is used with both nouns, they refer to different persons or things. If only the first noun has the article, the second noun refers to the same person or thing referred to in the first."* (Curtis Vaughn, and Virtus Gideon, A Greek Grammar of the New Testament, (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1979), p. 83, Emphasis added).

Now, let's apply this rule to Titus 2:13. Here is the Greek text.

"prosdecomenoi **thn** makarian elpida **kai** epifaneian thV doxhV **tou** megalou Qeou **kai**

**swthroV** hmwn Cristou Ihsou."

Here is a word-for-word literal translation;

"Expecting **the blessed hope and appearing** the glory **the great God and savior** of us Christ Jesus."

The Granville sharp rule actually applies twice in this verse (1). It applies to the words "*the great God and saviour.*" Both "great God" and "savior" are nouns of the same case (masculine singular). The first noun "great God" has the definite article "the" and the second noun does not. This means that the Greek word "kai" [and] is being used to restate, and the second noun is referring to the same thing as the first noun. So, in effect, "savior" [who is Jesus Christ] **IS** "the great God." *This is a definitive statement on the deity of Christ which is lost if Granville Sharp is not applied.*

The same rule applies to the first sentence. Both "blessed hope" and "appearing" are nouns of the same case. And, the first noun [blessed hope] has the definite article in Greek, while the second noun [appearing] does not. This means the "appearing" and "blessed hope" are *being referred to as a unit.* The word "kai" [and] is used to restate or refer back to the first noun, it does NOT mean that the "appearing" is something we are looking for IN ADDITION TO looking for the "blessed hope."

The NIV captures the meaning best in this verse.

*Titus 2:13¶¶ "while we wait for the blessed hope - the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ,"(NIV)*

So, in essence, this verse says that our "blessed hope" IS the "glorious appearing" of Christ. This begs the question, what is the "glorious appearing?"

*Matt 16:27¶¶ "For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works. (KJV)*

*Matt 24:29-31¶¶ "Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken:¶¶ And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see **the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.**¶¶ And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other. (KJV)*

*Mark 8:38¶¶ "Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, **when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.** ¶¶(KJV)*

The "glorious appearing" is when Christ comes in all His power and glory, being manifest to all the world. So, in effect, Titus 2:13 tells us that our "blessed hope" is Christ's coming in power and glory, *which is after the tribulation.* Notice also it says that this is what we as Christians are "looking for." This strongly implies that the rapture [RESURRECTION] is *after the tribulation*" (Tim Warner, October 2000, emphasis added).

The Moffatt translates it this way: "awaiting the blessed hope **of the** appearance of the Glory of the great God and of our saviour Jesus Christ." The Blessed Hope IS the second coming of Jesus Christ. There is no indication of a rapture Here in this passage.

### 3) "As the days of Noah" Matthew 24:37

"But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.¶¶ For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark,¶¶ And knew not until the flood came, and *took them all away*; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.¶¶ Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left.¶¶ Two women shall be grinding at the mill; the *one shall be taken, and the other left*" (Matthew 24:37-41).

People who believe in the rapture say that these texts show that God's people will be "taken" up to heaven, and the worldly people will be "left" behind. Is that what Jesus is teaching us here in these passages? Absolutely not! They have taken this totally out of context.

Notice the context here. The context is the days of Noah. There "eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage," meaning that life goes on as usual. Until Noah entered into the ark, and "knew not." Knew not what? Noah was a preacher of Righteousness, see 1 Peter 3:20; 2 Peter 2:5. While the ark was being prepared he was warning them about GOD'S WRATH if they did not repent of their deeds. When the flood came, then they *knew it was God's wrath on them*. And Jesus says "until the flood came, and *took them all away*;" Its very important to understand that language to understand the rest of the *verse in context*.

Now Jesus says "so shall also the coming of the Son of man be." It will be the same in the end time Jesus says.

"Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left.¶"Two women shall be grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken, and the other left." Taken where? Nowhere! Remember the context of Jesus words. The flood came and "took" them all away. The woman at the mill and the man in the field that are "taken" are the ones killed in God's wrath like the flood of Noah's day, where the others that are left, like Noah and his family, they were left (**alive**) because God protected them from his wrath, like he does in the book of Revelation with the people who are sealed. They are protected from God's wrath because they, like Noah, obeyed God! So there is no rapture in these verses when you keep it in context. Actually the whole point of this scripture is that it would be unexpected (the point also of the comparison of his second coming to that of the thief in the night). The verse that introduces the section in which our two verses appear says, "But of that day and hour knoweth no man..."(verse 36). And the verse that immediately follows the 4 verses in question says, "*Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come.*" (v. 42). In other word's here's the point, be ready, repent and be righteous because you don't know what hour your Lord doth come!

#### **4) Greek Word: "Parousia" "APOKALUPSIS" "Epiphaneia"**

Now I believe out of desperation to hold on to the hope of the doctrine of the rapture, some of the prophetic gurus turn to the Greek to try and prove that the rapture is in the Bible. One of the Greek words that they try to use for the rapture is "Parousia." (Coming). This word means in the Strong's Exhaustive Concordance, number 3952 in the Greek, and is rendered: "a being near; *advent*; often, *return-spec.* of Christ to punish Jerusalem, or finally the wicked: aspect, coming, presence."

Campbell writes: "... the one most used is Parousia, *but never in the sense of anything that is secret*. Paul frequently used this word to refer to the physical presence of himself and others at various locations e.g. he spoke of the 'coming' (PAROUSIA) of Titus to him from Corinth, II Cor. 7:6, and again in the same Epistle the 'coming' (PAROUSIA) of Stephanas etc. I Cor. 16:17. Again when writing to the saints at Philippi, Paul said that he would be 'coming' (PAROUSIA) to visit them. " (ibid).

In 2 Thessalonians 2:8, this scriptures shows exactly when the "Parousia" is going to take place, Paul writes, "And then shall that Wicked [One] be revealed, whom the Lord shall **consume with the spirit of his mouth**, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming [Parousia]:" Jesus Christ's "Parousia" happens at the time when he destroys the false prophet. When does this happen? Before the Tribulation? No! At the time of God's wrath at the second coming of Jesus Christ during the day of the Lord. Revelation 19:11-20 shows Jesus' "Parousia:

"And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war." His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself. " And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God. " And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. " And **out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword**, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the **winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God**. " And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS." And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God;" That ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great." And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army." *And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him*, [see 2 Thessalonians 2: 9] with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone." Is there any question when his "Parousia" is going to be? Campbell writes: "Furthermore Paul spoke of the 'Coming (PAROUSIA) of the Lord and our gathering together to Him.' II Thess. 2 is an event seen by all *after* the appearance of antichrist, not in secret *before* the appearance of antichrist." (ibid, emphasis his & mine).

Another word they use is "APOKALUPSIS" But clearly the scripture shows when his APOKALUPSIS is going to be.

"And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed [APOKALUPSIS] from heaven with his mighty angels, "In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: " Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power; " When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day." (2 Thes 1:6-10). This is clearly after the tribulation at his second coming in Revelation 19.

And the third word is "Epiphaneia" which means "brightness." But this word also fails the test because in 2 Thessalonians 2:8 again we see Jesus destroying the false prophet " with the brightness [Epiphaneia] of his coming [Parousia]"

#### **5) 1 Thessalonians 4:15-17; 1 Corinthians 15:50-52**

As we described above the resurrection happens after the tribulation at the last trump, or seventh trumpet, during the time of God's wrath on the ungodly.

Now some try to argue that 1 Thessalonians is the rapture before the tribulation, and that Matthew 24 is the resurrection of the saints that were converted after the rapture and went through the tribulation. However the parallelism between the two passages clearly indicates they are describing a single event, not two different ones. If the resurrection of the saints is before the tribulation takes place with the sound of the trumpet, why doesn't Christ mention it before he talks about the tribulation? If its a "blessed hope"?

#### **6) 1 Thessalonians 5:9: "For God hath not appointed us to wrath,"**

As described above God is going to protect his people with the seal of the Father on their foreheads, see Revelation 7:1. Also the "wrath of God upon the children of disobedience" (Ephesians 5:6). Why would God's wrath come upon the people who obey him? That's the reason why they are sealed. He does not have to rapture his people away, but protect them during that time.

**7) Revelation 4:1: "Come up hither, and I will show thee things which must be hereafter."**

Some preachers say that this is the rapture before all the events in the book of Revelation take place.

First of all you do not see any of the saints of God going up to heaven in this scripture. Second John has to go up to him into Heaven, where in 1 Thessalonians 4:15-16 Jesus comes down to us from Heaven to this atmosphere. In Revelation 4 we read of a, "voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking." His voice is *like* a trumpet. In 1 Thessalonians, 4:16; 1 Corinthians 15:50-52; Rev 11:15, a trumpet is blown.

In Rev 4:1 Jesus is not present, unlike 1 Thessalonians 4:15-17 where he is present.

In 1 Thessalonians 4:15-17 Jesus is not in heaven but in *our heaven* meaning this atmosphere, where as the voice in Revelation 4 is *in* Heaven and *not* our heaven. So as you can see these two events are different. All this event is, is the apostle John receiving a vision of the things that are happening in heaven of the opening of the seals, nothing here about a rapture.

**8) Luke 21:36: "Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man."**

This argument is also weak. The expression "to escape" is "*ek-fyoo'-go*" which means in the Strong's' **G1628** "to flee out: - escape, flee." This is the same expression in the Old Testament "to flee" to the place of cities of refuge, see Numbers 35. As we prove below, God, Jesus is our refuge, he will protect us during the time of Great Tribulation on this earth, see below.

**9) Revelation 3:10: "Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth."**

The word **keep** in the Greek is as important as the word **from**.

Strong's Concordance number, 5083. tereo, tay-reh'-o; from teros (a watch; perh. akin to G2334); to guard (from loss or injury, prop. by keeping the eye upon; and thus differing from G5442, which is prop. to prevent escaping; and from G2892, which implies a fortress or full military lines of apparatus), i.e. to note (a prophecy; fig. to fulfil a command); by impl. to detain (in custody; fig. to maintain); by extens. to withhold (for personal ends; fig. to keep unmarried):-hold fast, keep (-er), (ob-, pre-, re) serve, watch.

**A Conditional Promise** Notice the promise to "keep thee from" the hour of temptation is conditional upon keeping Jesus' Word with patient endurance. The Greek word "patience" in this verse is found seven times in Revelation (1:9, 2:2, 2:3, 2:19, 3:10, 13:10, 14:12). The last two are referring to believers in the tribulation patiently enduring the persecution of the Antichrist. Jesus' promise to the local church of Philadelphia was **because** they had kept His Word with patient endurance thus far. Jesus did not make this promise to the other six local churches in Revelation. The promise is limited to one local church among many, and in response to their faithfulness. Of course, we can and should make broader application just as we do with all of the Epistles, written to local churches. However, we must also keep in mind the conditional nature of the promise, for those who have patiently kept Jesus' Word. To assume a guarantee for all believers from this verse is a huge mistake. That goes far beyond what is stated or implied, and enters the realm of presumption. Remember Jesus' statement at the end of His Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5-7)? He likened believers who keep His Word to one who builds his house on the rock. He said that whoever keeps His sayings in that sermon would stand firm when the storm comes. Not all believers keep Jesus' Word with patient endurance. If we are going to make a broader application of this promise than

what is literally stated, at best it can be seen as a promise to **SOME** believers who take Jesus' advice in the Sermon on the Mount. It is certainly not a blanket promise for the Church at large.

**A Promise of Immunity? Or a Promise of Preservation?** Much of the meaning of this verse hangs on the phrase "keep thee from." It is pretty obvious that the "hour of temptation" refers to the events in the future. But, does "keep thee from" mean removal or preservation? This is the key question.

**The Meaning of "From"** People who believe in the rapture claim the word "from" in the Greek [ek] means "out of." Therefore, they claim we will be physically kept "out of" the tribulation.

It is true the Greek word "ek" means "out of." However, as we will see later, they misinterpret the word "keep." They also misunderstand this little Greek preposition "ek." "Ek" normally requires a previous presence within the object, in this case, the tribulation. In the multitude of occurrences of "ek" in the Bible, in virtually all of them "ek" implies a previous connection to the object, usually within it. Rather than denoting a stationary position, "ek" implies a movement or emerging from within the object. The meaning of "ek" would more accurately be translated "out from among," or "out of the midst of." This is how it is defined in the Greek lexicons. In Rev. 3:10, the object is the tribulation. In order to come "out from among" the tribulation you must first be **IN** the tribulation. This usage can be demonstrated from the following verse.

*Rev. 7:14 ¶14 ... These are they which came **OUT OF** great tribulation,...*

The words "out of" are also translated from the Greek word "ek." In this case, it is clear these saints were in the tribulation first, and emerged from it.

There are three Greek prepositions which could be translated "from" in English, with different meanings. The Greek words "para" and "apo" mean motion away from, or a fixed position outside the object. Had either of these been used in Rev. 3:10, the implication would be that believers would be kept out of, and remain outside, the tribulation. However, "ek" in contrast, means, **motion from the interior of the object**. That is, emerging from within the tribulation. Based on the meaning of "ek" alone, the implication strongly favors a post-trib view of the saints emerging from within the tribulation.

**The Meaning of "Keep"** Our English word "keep" can have a variety of meanings, including to prevent, restrain, obey, hold, preserve, etc. Because of this, it is confusing in Rev. 3:10. They interpret the phrase "keep thee from" to mean "prevent from entering." That is, "keep thee from" would mean to restrain or prevent from entering or experiencing the tribulation. But, "preventing" is not the meaning of the word "keep" in this verse. "Keep," is translated from the Greek word "tereo" which literally means "to keep an eye upon" in the sense of putting your full attention on someone or something. It does not mean to prevent or restrain. "Tereo" implies a kind of giving one's full attention to something or someone. It often implies preservation, but does not require that meaning. The most common usage of "tereo" in the New Testament is in regards to "keeping" God's commandments or words. That is, observing them.

**The Meaning of "Keep...from"** Thayer's Greek Lexicon says that when "keep"[tereo] is used with "from" [ek], it means: *"by guarding, to cause one to escape in safety out of."* That is, to keep full attention on them so as to assure their final emergence. Therefore, Rev. 3:10 cannot mean removal before the tribulation begins, but safely emerging from within the tribulation. They misunderstand both the word "ek" and the word "keep."

There is only one other time this Greek phrase appears in the entire Bible. And, as we shall see, Jesus' statement in Rev. 3:10 is a reference to His High Priestly prayer in John 17, which also contains the phrase. The night before Jesus was crucified, He prayed in the garden for His disciples whom He was leaving in the world, and also all believers who would come after them. In this prayer, Jesus used the word "tereo" (keep) several times, but in two different ways. He spoke of His and the Father's "keeping" (attentiveness and preservation) of believers, and also believers being attentive to, and "keeping," Jesus' words.

*John 17:6 ¶6 I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me **out of** (ek) the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have **KEPT** (tereo) thy word. ¶(KJV)*

*John 17:11 ¶11 And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, **KEEP** (tereo) through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are. ¶(KJV)*

*John 17:12 ¶12 While I was with them in the world, I **KEPT** (tereo) them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled. ¶(KJV)*

*John 17:15 ¶15 I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest **KEEP** (tereo) them **FROM** (ek) the evil. ¶(KJV)*

Notice the word "ek" in verse 6. Jesus considered His disciples as having come "out of" the world. He did not mean physical removal, nor did He mean they were never a part of this world. Rather, He meant they had emerged from the world system, being called out unto Christ. In verse 6, Jesus also used the word "keep" (tereo) in reference to His followers observing God's Word, as delivered by Jesus. In response to their "keeping" His Word, Jesus prayed in verses 11 & 12 that the Father would "keep" (preserve, or be attentive to) believers. In verse 17, we have the only other occurrence of the phrase found in Rev. 3:10, "tereo...ek." Jesus asked the Father NOT to take them out of the world. That is, not to physically remove them from the sphere of this present evil world. Jesus in effect prayed that the Father leave us here, in the midst of this evil world. But, He also prayed that He would "keep (tereo) them from (ek) the evil.

Notice the exact parallel in Rev. 3:10. In both John 17 and Rev. 3:10, Jesus spoke of our "keeping" His Word. And in both He spoke of our being "kept" (preserved or given God's full attention) in RESPONSE to our keeping His Word. And in both we are preserved out from among evil. In Rev. 3:10, John clearly defines it as "the hour of temptation." It is the same as Paul's "The day, The evil" in Eph. 6:13, and Jesus' "the evil" in John 17:15.

Jesus' Prayer & Promise	John 17	Rev. 3:10
Believers <b>KEPT</b> (tereo) His Word	thou gavest them me; and they have <b>KEPT</b> (tereo) thy word. (vs. 6)	because thou hast <b>KEPT</b> (tereo) the word of my patience
He will <b>KEEP</b> (tereo) believers	And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, <b>KEEP</b> (tereo) through thine own name those whom thou hast given me (vs. 11)	I also will <b>KEEP</b> thee
" <b>KEEP...FROM</b> " (tereo...ek)	I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world,	I also will <b>KEEP</b> (tereo) thee <b>FROM</b> (ek)



	but that thou shouldest <b>KEEP</b> (tereo) them <b>FROM</b> (ek)(vs. 15)	
Preservation from...	"the evil" (vs. 15)	"the hour of temptation"

It is extremely important to understand that the exact phrase in Rev. 3:10 (tereo...ek) is put in contrast to the idea of removal from the world in John 17:15. In effect Jesus said, "Don't take them out of the world, instead keep attentive to them with a view to their safely emerging from among the evil." **Therefore, not only was Jesus referring the Philadelphian believers back to His High Priestly prayer in John 17, but by doing so He was indicating they would NOT be removed from the world, but would be watched over attentively during the "hour of temptation," having "kept" Jesus' Word with patience.** Revelation 3:10 is not a promise of removal before the tribulation. It is a conditional promise for those who have been attentive to keep His Word. Jesus will be just as attentive to them until they emerge from the "hour of temptation."

Some rapturists argue that Rev. 3:10 cannot mean preservation in the tribulation because Revelation 13:7 indicates the Antichrist will "overcome" the (tribulation) saints, making this just an empty promise. However, Rev. 13:7 is speaking of persecution of the saints by the Antichrist. He will physically overcome many believers, who will become martyrs. However, Rev. 12:11 says the saints overcome Satan, by being faithful unto death. While the Antichrist may overcome many of the believers physically, these same believers are said to 'overcome' Him by being faithful unto death. The promise in Rev. 3:10 is not of physical survival. It is a promise of God's presence going with us through the trials. One could make the very same argument from John 17, that Christians today experience 'evil' all the time. Therefore Jesus' prayer goes unanswered! Of course we realize that in John 17 Jesus did not pray that no physical or emotional harm would ever come to His disciples. All of them were martyred but John! We understand this as a prayer that they would not be overcome by the evil, but would emerge victorious. So it is with Rev. 3:10.

### **Kept From The Hour of Trial in History**

Note that Revelation 3:10 doesn't promise the church a pre-trib rapture, but simply promised the 1st century church of Philadelphia that it would be kept from the hour of trial, which was probably a great persecution in their own time, *and they weren't raptured.*

Note that Revelation 3:10 could simply be saying that Jesus would keep the 1st century church of Philadelphia from the persecution by the Roman Emperor Domitian that was to come upon all the Roman Empire, for the Bible refers to trials in the time of the Roman Empire as happening throughout "all the world" (Acts 11:28), as it refers to the Roman Empire as "all the world" (Luke 2:1, Colossians 1:5-6). Note that even the Greek word translated "earth" in Revelation 3:10 doesn't have to refer to the entire planet, as it is the same word used in verses such as Matthew 9:26 (land) and Matthew 9:31 (country).

Irenaeus of Lyons (b.130) says Revelation was written by John "towards the end of Domitian's reign" (Against Heresies, Book 5, Chapter 30, Paragraph 3), which ended in 96 A.D., and was marked by persecution against the Christians flourishing throughout the Roman Empire, to the point where, as Eusebius says, "even those writers who were far from our religion did not hesitate to mention in their histories the persecution and the martyrdoms which took place during it" (Church History, Book 3, Chapter 18). This is why John says he is a "companion in [the] tribulation" (the Greek has a "the" before tribulation), as under that persecution he was banished to "the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ" (Revelation 1:9).

Revelation 3:10's "TRY them that dwell upon the earth" may refer to all the believers in the Roman Empire who were tried in the persecution under Domitian. It doesn't have to refer to unbelievers, just as the statement that the False Prophet "deceiveth them that dwell on the earth" (Revelation 13:14) during the reign of the Antichrist doesn't refer to us believers who will be on the earth during that time (Revelation 13:7-10, 14:12-13, 15:2, 20:4).

Now does history record that the Philadelphian Church survived the Emperor's war against God's church throughout the entire world at that time?:

"From 93 until his death in 96, Domitian's reign became literally a reign of terror. 'All this made him everywhere hated and feared,' wrote Suetonius. 'Christians also were targets of Domitian's fury. Though he never instituted an organized or empire-wide campaign, several sources refer to persecutions of Christians during his reign. The emperor banished his cousin's wife because she was believed to be a Christian, and ordered other Christians killed. Some 200 years later Eusebius wrote: 'He was the second that raised a persecution against us.' ("After Jesus: The Triumph of Christianity," The Reader's Digest Association, 1992, p. 99).

¶"John wrote Revelation as Christians, especially in Asia Minor [which included Philadelphia], were refusing orders to worship the emperor. Christians who faced the harshness of Roman oppression would surely have taken comfort and courage from John's awesome vision. They would need such courage to defy the emperor, Christians were beginning to pay dearly for their faith" (Ibid., p. 109).

What is the significance here? History has established the meaning of Revelation 3:10.

Christians in Philadelphia, to whom Revelation 3:10 was addressed, WERE NOT REMOVED FROM THE IMMEDIATE SPHERE OF PERSECUTION; THEY PASSED THROUGH THE PERIOD OF TRIAL. The Zondervan Pictorial-Bible Dictionary clearly says of Philadelphia: "A Christian witness, in spite of Moslan invasion and pressure, *was maintained in Philadelphia through medieval and modern times*" (s.v. PHILADELPHIA, E. M. Blaiklock, Litt.D, p. 648, emphasis added).

Note that Jesus didn't have to remove the 1st century church of Philadelphia from time itself, but simply kept them from a time of testing that came upon the rest of the church, just as one student excused from taking a test during the hour in which it is being administered to all his fellow students, and is allowed to sit at his desk for that hour reading the Bible, doesn't have to be removed from time itself in order to be excused from the hour of testing, for it will not be an hour of testing for that student, but only for those who are being tested at that time.

#### ¶10) "The last trump" The Dating argument

One argument Rapturists come up with is that "1 Corinthians 15:51-52 was written by the Apostle Paul near 59 A.D.

"The trumpet judgments of Revelation was written by the Apostle John near **96 A.D. Nearly 37 years after Paul mentioned the Last trump!!!** Why didn't Paul give any kind of explanation of what the last trump was!!! Because everyone knew already what the last trump was; it had nothing to do with the trumpet judgments of Revelation which was written 37 years afterward. The early Church was predominately Jewish and they understood what he was referring to :

"In Numbers chapter10, Moses is told to make two trumpets of silver (Redemption). One trumpet caused the people to arise and stand (compare 2 Thess 2:1; Eph 1:10; John 11:52; Luke 13:34) at the tent door (compare Rev 4:1) and the other could cause them to march. The "Last trump" is the Tekeha-HaGodola, which is the last of a series of trumpets blown on

Rosh Hashanah, (or the Feast of Trumpets).."

Let's deal first with the argument that because *the dates are so far apart*, the trumpets in Revelation and the last trump in 1 Corinthians cannot be the same because the Jews understood it to mean the Feast of Trumpets, and the book of Revelation, the trumpets in that book mean something else.

Why do rapturists reason like this? Is it because they are so desperate to justify a rapture they'll try any excuse? There are many scriptures in the bible that were revealed earlier that line up exactly with the book of Revelation and even the rapturists have no problem with it. In 2 Thessalonians 2, written in 51 A.D., speaks of the false prophet who does signs and wonders after the working of Satan which is the same individual in Revelation 13:11. He also spoke of God's vengeance on them who don't obey in 2 Thessalonians 1 coming down with his army of angels and being glorified in the saints. This is parallel to Revelation 19. Are they the same events? Yes! Written 45 years apart? Yes! Disputes? No! So why is the scripture in 1 Corinthians disputed? Because it knocks the theory of the rapture into oblivion, and they'll do anything to protect the doctrine of the rapture with illogical theories.

Number 2. The Corinthian church was a predominantly A GENTILE CHURCH, not a Jewish church, and its interesting that no explanation is given about the trumpets because the gentiles knew about the feast of trumpets and the other holy days of Leviticus 23. Colossians 2:16, written in 60 A.D. shows the Colossians, who were gentiles, keeping these feasts and people were judging them on HOW they were keeping them, "Let *no man* therefore *judge* you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days:" They knew about the feast of Trumpets. Interesting, "These three terms occur in similar or reverse sequence, five times in the Septuagint and several times in other literature" (See Septuagint, 2 Chon 2:4; 31:33; Neh 10:33. See also Jubilees 1:14). In these passages, these terms designate the sequential order of the sacred times of the Jewish calendar. But Paul's use of the specific term "new moon" (neomenia) in Colossians 2:16 instead of the generic name "month" (men) as used in Galatians 4:10, clearly shows he is thinking about the sacred days of the Jewish and not the pagan calendar. The mention of the "new moon" is connected with the Feast of Trumpets because the the blowing of the trumpets every month was a reminder "of the forthcoming Feast of Trumpets on which the trumpets were blown in a massive way to call people to stand trial before God during the ten days preceding the Day of Atonement..." (God's Festivals in Scripture & History, Bacchiocchi, p.95). So this theory that the Jews knew about the Feast of Trumpets and the gentiles did not is totally false.

Are the trumpets in Revelation connected with the Feast of Trumpets? Absolutely!

The Feast of Trumpets was a call for repentance, warning people about the Judgement of God preparing them for the awesome day of Judgment.

The blowing of the trumpet in the bible was a call for repentance: "Blow the trumpet in Zion, sanctify a fast, call a solemn assembly:" (Joel 2:15).

"Cry aloud, spare not, *lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and show my people their transgression*, and the house of Jacob their sins." (Isaiah 58:1).

In *What Christians Should Know About Jews and Judaism*, Rabbi Yechiel Eckstein explains that the shofar [Trumpet]: "is sounded on Rosh Hashanah to arouse us from our moral reverie, to call us to spiritual regeneration, and to alert us to the need to engage in Teshuvah (repentance). The shofar is the clarion call to perform Teshuvah-to *search our deeds and mend our ways before the awesome day of Judgement*" (p.119, emphasis added).

In the New Testament, many scholars and Bible students recognize this with the 7 Trumpets

of Revelation: "The Feast of Trumpets is closely associated in Jewish thought with the new moon festivals that were celebrated at the beginning of each month....[Then] the Feast of trumpets comes as the climax of a seven month series of *mini Feast of Trumpets*....If John is *familiar with Jewish thinking* in these matters, as we have already seen abundant evidence that HE IS [like Paul and the Gentiles and the Jewish Christians are], the seven trumpets of Revelation probably represent the ongoing sequence of seven months with the *seventh trumpet representing the Feast of Trumpets itself*. It is interesting, within the seventh trumpet (Rev 11:18) that we find the first explicit use of the Judgement terminology in Revelation. In Jewish thought the seventh-month feast of Trumpets ushered in the time of Judgment that led up to the Day of Atonement (cf. 11:18, 19). Correspondingly, from Revelation 11:19 to near the end of the book there is an increasing focus on Judgement" (Jon Paulien, (note 22) pp.259-260), emphasis added). So the first six trumpets blown on the new moons leading up to the Feast of Trumpets, are warning and calling on people to repent, and its like a day of judgement "in MINIATURE, warning people to prepare for the final judgement ushered in by Feast of Trumpets," ( *ibid*, p.103 Bacchiocchi, p.103). Its interesting that the first six trumpets (*typified by the new moons leading up to Feast of Trumpets; The miniature Judgements*) in Revelation, the plagues are *limited* territorially because they fall on thirds of the earth (Rev 8:7, 9, 11, 13). And the time span was *limited* for only "five months" (Rev 9:5). By Contrast, the seven bowl plagues, typified by the Feast of trumpets, fall on *all the earth* (Rev 16:1-4, 8). The are called the "seven last plagues" because they represent the final, end time manifestation of God's wrath, the final Judgment that Took place on the FEAST OF TRUMPETS!

After that, when the seventh trumpet sounds, "And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament: and there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail" (Rev 11:19). This is "a clear allusion to the Day of Atonement which finds its antitypical fulfillment in the coming of Christ as indicated by the manifestation of the cosmic signs of the end (Rev 11:19)" (*ibid*, p.105). So to say that the Feast of Trumpets and the Trumpets of Revelation are not associated with each other is ludicrous and totally unbiblical and unhistorical. Not to mention as we have proved above, John, Paul, the gentiles, all were familiar with Jewish thought, and all knew that this was a type of the Feast of Trumpets, that takes place after the tribulation!

### **11) "Church" Not Mentioned?**

Some argue that "the church" isn't mentioned in Revelation after Revelation 4:1, until Revelation 19. I'm glad we may agree that the 24 elders in Revelation 4-5 aren't the church, but aren't they Christians mentioned throughout Revelation (6:11, 7:14, 9:4, 12:17, 13:7-10, 14:12-13, 15:2, 16:15, 18:4, 20:4), and aren't all Christians part of the church (Ephesians 4:4-5)?

First of all what is God's church?

Jesus said, "I will build my church!" (Matthew 16:18). The Greek word is *ekklesia*, which you will recognize as the root of our English word "ecclesiastical." It merely means "assembly," or "called-out ones." It comes from a root word which means to call out, separate, set apart, or assemble. These are people who are God's "called out ones" out of this world and into his assembly of people. This is not a political organization, but a spiritual organism. His body of believers begotten of the Holy Spirit scattered all over the world.

Note that the word "church" isn't used in Chapters 19-21 of Revelation, or anywhere in the books of 2 Timothy, Titus, 2 Peter, 1 John, 2 John, and Jude. Do some then believe that these chapters and books don't refer to the church?

If we look at all the myriad descriptions of Christians in all the NT books, how many of these descriptions don't use the specific word "church," but do use other key words and phrases

such as "in the Lord," "the faith of Jesus," "saints," and "brethren," the same key words and phrases used to describe those Christians who will face the coming tribulation?

Why should those "in the Lord" in Revelation 14:13 not be considered to be the church, but those "in the Lord" in Romans 16:11-13, 1 Corinthians 4:17, Ephesians 2:21, Colossians 4:7, and 1 Thessalonians 3:8 should be?

Aren't the Christians "in the Lord" in the tribulation, New Covenant saints, after the cross and after Pentecost, and not Old Covenant saints?

Why should those who have "the faith of Jesus" in Revelation 14:12 not be considered to be the church, but those who have "the faith of Jesus" in Romans 3:22, Galatians 2:16, Galatians 3:22, Philippians 3:9, and James 2:1 should be?

Why should the "saints" in Revelation 13:10 and Revelation 14:12 not be considered to be the church, but the "saints" in Revelation 19:8, 1 Corinthians 14:33, Ephesians 5:3, Colossians 1:12, Jude 3 should be?

Does it say the church ends in Revelation 6 and then resumes again in Revelation 19?

Why should the "brethren" in Revelation 6:11 not be considered to be the church, but the "brethren" in Revelation 19:10, Revelation 22:9, Romans 1:13, 1 Corinthians 1:10, and 1 Thessalonians 4:13 should be?

The Entire Book Of Revelation Is For The Church!

From beginning to end, the Lord Jesus Christ gave the church the book of Revelation that the church might understand what it must face before he comes (Revelation 1:1-7; 22:7-16). This is why we Christians are referred to throughout Revelation (6:11, 7:14, 9:4, 12:17, 13:7-10, 14:12-13, 15:2, 16:15, 18:4, 20:4).

"The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass... Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand... Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him" (Revelation 1:1, 3, 7).

"Behold, I come quickly: blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book... Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for the time is at hand... I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches" (Revelation 22:7, 10, 16).

Here are some quotes in Revelation about God's church.

And at the time of the seventh seal we see the prayers of the saints again: "And when he had opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour. " And I saw the seven angels which stood before God; and to them were given seven trumpets. " And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. " And the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel's hand." (Rev 8:1-4). Now if the saints were in Heaven there is no need for them to pray because they are saved. What is the reason for the praying of the saints? Because of percecution on the earth because of the beast: "And it was given unto him [the beast] to make **war with the saints**, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations." (Rev 13:7).

"And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held: " And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?¶" And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, **until their fellowservants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled.**" (Rev 6:9-11). Here we see the saints of God being persecuted for their faith. Here are some passages of God's church being persecuted, "And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they? " And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. " Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. " They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. " For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." (Rev 7:13-17).

"And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations." (Rev 13:7)

"Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.¶" And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, **Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them.**" (Rev 14:12-13).

During God's vial judgments, his wrath on the wicked the angel shouts: "Thou art righteous, O Lord, which art, and wast, and shalt be, because thou hast judged thus. " **For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and thou hast given them blood to drink; for they are worthy**" (Rev 16:5-6).

In Rev 17, we see a great fallen church called a woman"... drunken with the **blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus:** and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration." (v.6).

And in end time Babylon, " was found the blood of prophets, **and of saints,** and of all that were slain upon the earth." (Rev 18:24). The saints are all over the book of Revelation!

**12) The "Yo-Yo" Argument** People who believe in the rapture frequently mock people who believe in the resurrection after the tribulation by saying that the view believes in an up and down rapture, thus the yo-yo simile. They say that it is ridiculous for the Lord to call Christians to himself in mid-air only to come right back down. Why not have the Lord just come down to the earth and meet us down here? ¶ ¶This is a silly man-made argument. First of all, the Lord can do whatever he wants--He is sovereign. If he wants to rapture the Church in this manner, He can do so. Who are we to question his methods? ¶ ¶Secondly, we can use the same silly argument to refute Pre tribulationism. Why does the Lord have to meet us halfway? Why have him come in the skies, only to go back up to heaven? Why not have him just wait in heaven for us to meet him? So long as there is a meeting in mid-air, someone has to turn around and go back. See how ridiculous that sounds? ¶ ¶ ¶By the way, it was common in New Testament days for a representative portion of citizens to go out of their city a distance, meet a dignitary, and give him honor by escorting him back into the city. A similar escorting of Christians coming with our Lord certainly would fit into a Post Tribulation resurrection view. ¶ ¶Anyway, you can see the extent that they go to defend their position. They use silly arguments which try to put God in a man-made theological box. God is God and will do whatever he pleases, however he pleases!

### Other Doctrines Considered

Some others make the excuse that "Christ could return tonight!" What does the bible say about that theory?

"Now we beseech you brethren by (concerning) the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by (concerning) our gathering together unto Him that ye be not soon shaken in mind or be troubled, neither by spirit nor by word, nor by letter as from us, **as that the day of Christ is at hand** (at any moment), let no man *deceive you*, for that day shall not come except there come, a falling away first and the Man of Sin be revealed." (II Thess. 2:13). Paul wrote to watch out for this deception. Jesus cannot come at any moment. There are events that have to happen first and when we witness these events come to pass, we can expect the Lord at any moment. It was this very doctrine which had come into the Church at Thessalonica and made it necessary for Paul to write this passage.

Another excuse people use to justify a rapture is the "elect" of God. They say the elect of God in Matthew 24:31 is Israel and not the church. Where does it say that *all Israel* will be resurrected to eternal life at his second coming? Nowhere! The ones who are resurrected at his coming are his church. *Besides the 144,000, the prophecies of Israel show Israel to be brought back to the promised land, not resurrected to eternal life, see Isaiah 11.* The first resurrection is for the saints and the saints only, "And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.¶" But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection.¶" Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years [see Rev 5:9-10; Rev 15:1-3]" (Rev 20:4-6). These are the saints of God persecuted for the faith and for obeying God's law and not the Beast's mark or law.

In the Kingdom of God, the apostles who are resurrected to eternal life will be "upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel" (Matthew 19:28). When Israel, that is left, is brought back to the promise land, they will be judged meaning they will have there chance for salvation the way the church is being judged right now, see 1 Peter 4:17.

In the second resurrection, during the time of the great white throne Judgment, *all Physical Israel* will be resurrected and have a chance for salvation, see Ezekiel 37. So the elect that Jesus resurrects at his coming is his church. These are they that are dead and alive and meet Christ in the air. These could be Jew and Gentile, as long as they are converted to Christ, are they Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise, Galatians 3:29.

### Scriptures To Think About

As we have shown you from the Bible, the rapture is a false theory that you cannot prove in the bible. There are so many scriptures that show that the church will remain here till the second coming Jesus Christ.

Jesus says in John, "**I pray not** that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil." (John 17:15). Why does Jesus pray to the Father that he should NOT take them out of the world but that he should *protect* them from Satan? Jesus does not want the church out of the world. God's church is the only light of the world, why would he take them out when the world needs them the most, at the time of the tribulation?

Why does the apostle Paul say this in the book of Acts? "...we must through much **tribulation enter into the kingdom of God**" (Acts 14:22). We have to go through the time called the tribulation period. We are not appointed to God's wrath. But Satan's wrath on the other hand is a different matter. Satan is after God's church and wants to destroy it by all

means necessary, as Revelation 12 says, "And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to *make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ*" (v.17). Satan hates God and his church, so he makes war with them until God comes back stops Satan the devil and locks him up for a thousand years.

Jesus said also, " In the world ye shall have tribulation:" (John 16:33). Jesus says we will have tribulation including the great tribulation in the end time. Was it just for them? The disciples? No! When Jesus prayed it was not just for them, but also, "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word;" (John 17:20)

And this last one in the book of Revelation. Why does it say in Revelation 20:4-6, that those who were persecuted for the word of God and who did not receive his mark on his forehead and hand takes part in the first resurrection? "And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and *I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands;* (see, Revelation 15:2) and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.¶" But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. ***This is the first resurrection.***¶" Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years." Do you see, this is the FIRST resurrection. Not the second! There is only one resurrection of the saints, *not two*. This scripture means there are ***no other resurrections of the saints besides this one***, which takes place after the tribulation, and it contains the saints that suffered *during* the tribulation. I also looked up the word "first" in Thayer's to confirm that "first" means the primary, first one and only resurrection of the followers of Jesus Christ:

"p?? t?? pro tos"

**Thayer Definition:** "1) **first in time or place** 1a) in any succession of things or persons 2) **first in rank** 2a) influence, honour 2b) **chief** 2c) principal 3) first, at the first." (emphasis added). So there are no other resurrections besides this one of the saints which include the persecuted ones that went through the tribulation.

### **One Last Question?**

If you are one who believes in the Rapture, how could you actually believe that you are in heaven having the "Marriage Feast" with Jesus, the LOVING GOD, knowing that your relatives and other people on the earth are going through the torment of the Great Tribulation? You Party while they are being tortured. Is that what a loving God does?

### **God's Warning About False Prophets**

The rapture is based on the idea that Jesus will come down and take his own before all the events start. It is called a "Secret Rapture" and only the believers will be taken away. Jesus warns us of this type of deception in the end time.

Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not.¶" For there shall arise *false Christs, and false prophets*, and shall show great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.¶" Behold, I have told you before.¶" Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert; go not forth: behold, he is in the *secret chambers*; **believe it not**" (Matthew 24:23-26). What is Jesus saying here? His coming is not going to be done in a corner of the world somewhere that YOU GO TO! Jesus comes to you, you don't go to him. Jesus explains further:

"For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the



coming of the Son of man be" (v.27). The word "lightning" should read "lightening." And what light goes "east, and shineth even unto the west" every single day? The Sun! And Jesus is called the "Sun of Righteousness" (Malachi 4:2). And his "his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength." (Rev 1:16). He also called himself the "light of the world." (John 9:5). Jesus compared himself to the *physical sun that shines bright all over the world to give us light!* So Jesus is saying, that his coming is like the sun in the sky, THE WHOLE WORLD IS GOING TO SEE IT! ITS NOT GOING TO BE A SECRET! And we don't go to him, he comes to us as he says, "For wheresoever the carcass is, there will the eagles be gathered together" (v.28). We are the carcass in the analogy, and Jesus and his angels are the eagles, that come to us, we don't go to him. So its not a secret, "every eye shall see him," (Rev 1:17).

## **Part II:**

### **Where is your Place of Safety?**

Many years ago there was a major belief in the churches of God about the church going into a place of safety. That God was going to Wisk his church away to Petra in Jordan and we will be protected from the Great Tribulation. This is much like the Rapture except, instead of Heaven, it was Petra where the church is going to dwell. One major split group of that church still holds on to that idea of the place of safety, I am not to sure about the others. Let's examine this theory and the scripture to support it.

The one scripture to support this theory is found in Revelation: "And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into *her place*, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent" (Revelation 12:14). The woman of course is the church. The serpent is Satan the devil. And the wings of the great eagle was interpreted to mean airplanes which were to take God's church to Jordan, the wilderness, in a place called Petra, meaning the Rock, and of course Jesus is called the Rock. Perfect, it all fits, right? Wrong! Does the Bible interpret the "two wings of a great eagle" as airplanes? Is the rock a place? Or is it God himself, Jesus Christ?

Now Obviously Jesus is the Rock, "And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ" (1 Corinthians 10:4). That rock that followed the Israelites was of course YHWH of the Old Testament which is of course Jesus, see Exodus 17:6. God is the rock, "Unto thee will I cry, O LORD my rock;" (Psalm 28:1). So the rock is not a place in the Jordan, but Jesus Christ! But how is the church supposed to fly to Jesus Christ? With airplanes? Are we supposed to fly at all? What does the "great eagle" mean? We must let the Bible interpret the Bible to understand the meaning.

### **"The Great Eagle"**

When Almighty God saved Israel from Egypt, he told them, "Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how *I bare you on eagles' wings*, and brought you unto myself." ( Exodus 19:4). Now did Israel fly away from Egypt on eagle's wings? No they walked every step of the way to the Holy Mountain of God, Mt Sinai, see Psalm 68:17. Obviously this has the same meaning as in Revelation 12, where the woman is a symbol of the Church, see 2 Corinthians 11:2; Ephesians 5:22-27; Rev 19:7. Israel was called "the church in the wilderness" (Acts 7:38). They fled into the wilderness in Sinai, and met with God at Mt Sinai, with the blasts of the trumpets, see Exodus 19:19. Well the New Testament Church, the woman, will fly on the "two wings of a great eagle" into the "wilderness" to "her place." What is that place? Its the place where "she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, *from the face of the serpent.*" Its a place where they are taken care of and PROTECTED from Satan the devil. This is also called "a place of refuge." In the old Testament there were cities or places of Refuge where people were *protected* from the "avenger of the blood," see Numbers 35. This is the same language that Revelation 12 is using here.

Notice in the Old Testament, Israel was in the wilderness and God, "fed you in the wilderness, when I brought you forth from the land of Egypt" (Exodus 16:32). It was a place where they "lacked nothing" for "forty years," see Deuteronomy 2:7. It was a place where God "nourished them." It was also a place of safety, " But made his own people to go forth like sheep, and guided them in the wilderness like a flock.¶" *And he led them on safely*, so that they feared not: but the sea overwhelmed their enemies" (Psalm 78:52). A shepherd always protects his sheep, see John 10:11-16. So its was a place of protection a place of safety. But It was not the wilderness that fed them, or protected them, I was God that did these things. He was the one that protected them and nourished them IN THE wilderness. God was their place of refuge, as the Psalmist says, "The LORD of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob *is our refuge*" (Psalm 46:7). So God told the Israelites "*I bare you on eagles' wings*, and brought you unto myself," he means he brought them to the place of Refuge which is Himself, Almighty God was their refuge *in the wilderness of Sinai*.

But before we move on to the full meaning of Revelation 12, what does the eagle's wings mean? Obviously Israel did not fly away, so it must mean something else. Its a symbol, a symbol of protection. The Psalmist explains, "He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the *shadow of the Almighty*.¶" I will say of the LORD, He is my **refuge and my fortress**: my God; in him will I trust.¶" Surely he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence.¶" He shall cover thee **with his feathers, and under his wings** shalt thou trust: his truth shall be thy shield and buckler." (Psalm 91:1-4). Here is the meaning of the wings! Its the wings of the Almighty! Jesus says the same thing about protecting Jerusalem. He used the symbol of a hen and her chicks, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a *hen gathereth her chickens under her wings*, and ye would not!" (Matthew 23:37). God says, "Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how *I bare you on eagles' wings*" (Exodus 19:4). God is telling them, "did you see all the terrible things that happened to the Egyptians and how I PROTECTED YOU FROM ALL THE CALAMITIES!"

There is evidence of this in the book of Exodus itself! Notice: "And all the firstborn in the land of Egypt shall die, from the firstborn of Pharaoh that sitteth upon his throne, even unto the firstborn of the maidservant that is behind the mill; and all the firstborn of beasts.¶" And there shall be a great cry throughout all the land of Egypt, such as there was none like it, nor shall be like it any more.¶" *But against any of the children of Israel shall not a dog move his tongue, against man or beast: that ye may know how that the LORD doth put a difference between the Egyptians and Israel*" (Exodus 11:5-7). God protected Israel from the plagues of Egypt and the killing of the firstborn.

Here are a few more scriptures that show the same thing: "And Moses stretched forth his hand toward heaven; and there was a thick darkness in all the land of Egypt three days:¶" They saw not one another, neither rose any from his place for three days: *but all the children of Israel had light in their dwellings*." (Exodus 10:22-23).

"And the hail smote throughout all the land of Egypt all that was in the field, both man and beast; and the hail smote every herb of the field, and brake every tree of the field.¶" *Only in the land of Goshen, where the children of Israel were, was there no hail*" (Exodus 9:25-26).

Else, if thou wilt not let my people go, behold, I will send swarms of flies upon thee, and upon thy servants, and upon thy people, and into thy houses: and the houses of the Egyptians shall be full of swarms of flies, and also the ground whereon they are.¶" And I will sever in that day the land of Goshen, in which my people dwell, that no swarms of flies shall be there; to the end thou mayest know that I am the LORD in the midst of the earth.¶" *And I will put a division between my people and thy people: to morrow shall this sign be*" (Ex 8:21-23).

"Behold, the hand of the LORD is upon thy cattle which is in the field, upon the horses, upon the asses, upon the camels, upon the oxen, and upon the sheep: there shall be a very grievous murrain.¶" And the LORD shall sever between the cattle of Israel and the cattle of Egypt: and there shall nothing die of all that is the children's of Israel" (Ex 9:3-4). So God bare them on eagles wings, meaning he protected his people like an eagle protects her young, and he protected them RIGHT THERE WHERE THEY LIVE, they did not have to go anywhere!

Now back to Revelation 12. What does this scripture mean? "And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into *her place*, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent" God is going to be a refuge for his people " a place of safety" in the wilderness which is this world, wherever God's church is scattered as I showed you above, and God is going to protect his people RIGHT THERE WHERE THEY LIVE, the way God protected Israel in their dwelling places! Protected from the "seven last plagues" like the plagues in Egypt on the wicked.

Isaiah Tells us God will repeat his protection on his people as he did in the days of Moses and Noah, "Come, my people, enter thou into thy *chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment*, until the indignation be overpast.¶" For, behold, the LORD cometh out of his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity: the earth also shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain" (Isaiah 26:20-21).

The Commentaries quote this scripture and agree: "When God is about to take vengeance on the ungodly, *the saints shall be shut in by Him in a place of safety, as Noah and his family were in the days of the flood (Gen\_7:16), and as Israel was commanded not to go out of doors on the night of the slaying of the Egyptian first-born (Exo\_12:22-23; Psa\_31:20; Psa\_83:3)*. The saints are calmly and confidently to await the issue (Exo\_14:13-14)" (JFB Commentary, pp.644-645, emphasis added).

"*It seems to be an allusion to the command of Moses to the Israelites, when the destroying angel was to go through the land of Egypt, "not to go out at the door of their houses until the morning;" Exo\_12:22. And before the passage of the Red Sea: "Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of Jehovah. Jehovah shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace, "Exo\_14:13, Exo\_14:14."* (Adam's Clarke Commentary).

God will protect you right in your own home supernaturally the way he did the Israelites and Noah, "LORD shut him in" (Gen 7:16) And protected them from the flood and the plagues in Egypt.

Now we can understand the full meaning in Psalm 91: "He shall cover thee with his *feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust: his truth shall be thy shield and buckler.*¶" Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night; nor for the arrow that flieth by day;¶" Nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness; nor for the destruction that wasteth at noonday.¶" A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand; ***but it shall not come nigh thee.***¶" ***Only with thine eyes shalt thou behold and see the reward of the wicked.***¶" Because thou hast made the LORD, which is my ***refuge, even the most High, thy habitation;***¶" ***There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling***" (vv.4-10). God is going to protect you during the great Tribulation, heavenly signs and the Day of the Lord RIGHT THERE IN YOUR HOME! DIVINE PROTECTION! Just trust in him and make him your refuge and he will nourish and take care of you during the terrible time of trouble, "Be merciful unto me, O God, be merciful unto me: for my soul trusteth in thee: yea, in the ***shadow of thy wings will I make my refuge, until these calamities be overpast.***" (Psalm 57:1).

## Persecuted Saints?

What about the people who are killed for their faith? "I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held:¶"And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?¶" And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellowservants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled." (Rev 6:9-11).

"And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death." (Rev 12:11).

"Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them" (Rev 14:13).

"I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years" (Rev 20:4).

Obviously there are going to be Christians that are going to be persecuted during the time of the Great Tribulation. Why is there no protection for these people?

"Remember, there IS NO DOUBT God *promises* SOME (not *all*) of His people *protection* (Revelation 3:10). But WHICH?

Notice: "...Ye shall be betrayed both by parents, and brethren, and kinsfolks, and friends; and SOME OF YOU shall they cause to be put to death!

"And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake.

"But there shall not an hair of your head perish"! (Luke 21:16-18).

Obviously, if verse 18 ("there shall not an hair of your head perish") is to be taken to mean not one of the true church will be *martyred*, then How are you to understand verse 16?

*Obviously*, Christ is saying that SOME will be *put to death*, while *others* will be delivered! But *how does God make that choice?*

Notice! "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: But God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted *above that ye are able*; but will with the temptation [trial] also make a *way to escape*, that ye may be ABLE TO BEAR IT"! (I Corinthians 10:13).

This scripture says a GREAT DEAL!

God absolutely *promises* that the degree of trial, trouble, pain, suffering or "temptation" placed before each individual will NOT be more than that individual is "*able to bear*"! Who, then, is weakest and who is strongest? Are not those who are *able to endure* the MOST the *stronger*? Are not those who would *very quickly* give up their faith, perhaps swear allegiance to the beast, the number of his name or his image; even *curse their God* (and this has been REQUIRED of people in the past!) under threat or the actual pain of physical torture or death, the *weaker*?

And are not those who are able to "*endure unto the end*," even if it means the end of their own *lives*, spiritually STRONGER?

Does it not become OBVIOUS, then, that God would provide a "way of escape" and supernatural protection for those who are WEAKEST, while perhaps singling out for a last testimony and final *martyrdom* those who are STRONGEST?

Make no mistake!

God did not call you to His truth, beget you as His child whom He LOVES, only to have you live a life of *fearful concern* over the very things of which YOU REPENTED!

What were some of these?

Did they not include the mundane, daily concerns of HOW YOU WILL SURVIVE; how to feed, clothe, care for, preserve and protect yourself?

Do you see God's people, according to the Word of God, spending decades worrying about whether they are "qualified" to GO TO PETRA, or, instead, watching world conditions, *praying*, studying God's Word, fellowshiping together as His church, caring for and visiting the sick, helping the poor, OVERCOMING their human nature by the power of His Spirit—busily ACCOMPLISHING HIS WORK?

If YOUR LIFE is "HID" with Christ in God—cannot *you* say, with the apostle Paul, "I will not fear what man can do unto me"?

God has not given His people the spirit of FEAR, but of POWER, and of LOVE, and of a SOUND MIND" (II Timothy 1:7).

IF God has determined *you* are one He must supernaturally PROTECT from the terrible times ahead—and *He knows* your strengths and weaknesses—THEN HE WILL PROTECT YOU! It does NOT MATTER HOW, OR WHERE!

If He has HONORED you with the decision that you are to give powerful WITNESS for HIM and HIS ETERNAL GOVERNMENT He will soon establish on this earth—then you will join ranks with the most righteous, spiritfilled, dedicated, COURAGEOUS men and women in all history—those like Stephen, Paul, Peter and your Lord and Savior Jesus Christ Himself!

CHRIST is your PETRA! He is your ROCK, and your hiding place!  
You need no other" (*GTA, Where is your Place of Safety?, emphasis his*).

## Appendix 8: Is Petra in Biblical Prophecy?

Source: <http://nabataea.net/prophecy.html>

For many years now, there has been a popular theory among some Bible believing people that Petra holds a special place in Biblical prophecy. This idea has permeated many sectors of Christianity, and has left us puzzled as to its origin. After some research we believe we have discovered the source of this interesting, if not somewhat controversial theory. It seems that it all began with a man in the USA, known as W. E. Blackstone. This man was so certain that Petra would be the secret hideout of Jews escaping from the Battle of Armageddon, that he invested \$8000.00 (in the 1920's) to place boxes of Bibles in all of the caves in Petra, so that the Jews would have some interesting reading when they were hiding from the ravages of war. This idea was picked up by Joseph Hoffman Cohn of the American Board of Missions to the Jews and published in a small booklet titled: *The Man from Petra*. We have now obtained a copy of this book, and have reproduced it in full on Nabataea.net. The first part of the book deals with Cohn's theory of how the Battle of Armageddon will take place and how the Jews will use the ancient city of Petra as a hideout during the war. The most interesting part of the book comes on pages 16 and 17. I'm sure you will find it interesting reading. If you want to access all of this small booklet, please click here: [The Man from Petra](#).

### LINKS

*The following links lead to pages that present various theories about the city of Petra being in Biblical prophecy. Nabataea.net does not support or refute any of these views, they are simply presented for your information. We do note however, that Petra as a city name, is not specifically mentioned in the Bible. All other interpretations require reading the name of Petra into various verses of the Bible. This is just a partial list of the many sites on the internet that present their particular twist on the Petra connection to Biblical prophecy.*

<http://www.bible-prophecy.com/petra.htm>

<http://www.angelfire.com/id2/petrasworld/apagereligion/petramain.html>

<http://www.ldolphin.org/kingdom/ch11.html>

<http://www.tribulation.com/prtpetra.htm>

<http://www.clarifyingchristianity.com/fulfill.shtml>

[http://www.amazingbible.org/Documents/Bible\\_Prophecy/Tribulation\\_part3.htm](http://www.amazingbible.org/Documents/Bible_Prophecy/Tribulation_part3.htm)

<http://www.watchman.org/cults/prophesy.htm>

<http://petragrail.tripod.com/orders.html>

<http://www.hartresearch.org/seminars-digging-up-past.html>

<http://www.amazingdiscoveries.org/petra.html>

**Appendix 9: A Place of Safety? (Part 1)**  
**By John W. Ritenbaugh**  
**August 1, 1992**  
**Tape 032**

Source:

<http://bibletools.org/index.cfm/fuseaction/Library.showResource/CT/TRANSCRIPT/k/161>

I'm going to look, once again, into something that is highly speculative. As long as we remember to keep things in the proper perspective, and realize that there are risky aspects to what we are doing, I think that we are going to be okay. With this understanding that **we're not** going to put all of our hopes and dreams into something that is speculative, I think we should be able to glean all the vision, instruction and encouragement we can from these things. It is interesting to look into while, at the same time, not becoming unbalanced fanatics by making **speculative** things "our life."

Now the subject we're going to go into is "Fleeing and Petra." Are we really going to do it? And if so, where **to** and... Well, I don't even think we're going to look at when. I had that in my notes, but I think that's a little bit too shaky.

There are some who say there is no place of safety. These people say that the church has been wrong all of these years. It's been reported to me that some have even written to King Hussein, in Jordan, telling them of the Worldwide Church of God's plans. But, brethren, even if somebody did that, it would not be so unusual because we are **not** the only church that has their eye on Petra. Many, many churches of this world are looking to that area of the world as a [possible] place of safety [site]. And with good reason, because the scriptures seem to indicate that **there is** a place of safety and that the place of safety is in Petra.

This is so well known that I have been told (again this is not first hand information, its second hand information) that the guides (Bedouin guides, the Jordanians, or whoever who lead tours in the Holy land) actually use biblical passages to explain the importance (or possible importance) both historically and what many believe may occur in the future when they lead the leg of the tour to the area of Petra. Because they know that many, many people coming from many parts of the world (the Christian parts of the world) are interested in these things and that's why they've come. Their interest in Petra has a religious basis to it.

Some people have gone so far as to have bags packed ready to go at a moment's notice. You have probably heard the well-known case of a Worldwide Church of God member who took in all kinds of goodies (into his house trailer), in preparation for a time of famine (or whatever). Anyway, as he was getting ready, he loaded his house trailer up so much (so he would be ready for these things) that his house trailer collapsed. Well I don't think that we need to include that in our thoughts regarding this subject. But I do think that we need to think of it in its overall terms as to the possible impact that it might have on our lives right now. Because if there is a place of safety, then undoubtedly there are going to be qualifications that God has established regarding who is going to go there and who is not going to go there.

This subject is important. It is well known and I think that we need to take some time here to nail some things down. Now my impression of "end-time" prophecy is of a well orchestrated, intricately timed, interdependent series of events moving toward a very logical and necessary intervention of Jesus Christ. We understand that is not going to occur until man is backed into a corner and forced to admit (at least individually as each person repents) that unless Christ had intervened " **no flesh would be saved alive.**"

Now what I have just said actually forms the foundation that we are going to build upon

that "no flesh would be saved alive". The New International Version translates that verse in Matthew 24:21: "*unless God intervened, no one would survive*". I think that the translators understood that, what is in the context there, is something that is going to affect life **physically**. It is going to be **so devastating, so terrifying, so unusual, and absolutely unique** in the history of man that no one would survive it.

Does such a circumstance require the protection of God? If any of His people are going to survive it, are they going to have to be protected? I think that we can conclude, without a doubt, that somebody is going to have to be protected otherwise no one will survive.

We are talking about an occurrence that is similar in scope to the flood except the means of destruction of life is different. Rather than water [being the destructive force], it will consist of a series of devastating events that will systematically take life from one part of the earth to the other. Step by step, it moves in a logical sequence of events toward the conclusion the return of Jesus Christ.

There are a number of factors that need to be considered and I will try to address some of them. I am undoubtedly going to miss some; there are many I undoubtedly do not know. I will address the ones that I do know. I want you to understand that I don't think or feel that I am the last word on this and that I am open to any suggestions that anybody might make in regard to this.

Now some have said that the place of safety is in: Houston Texas, Pasadena California, Big Sandy Texas, Masada, Edom, Moab, Petra and then there are others who say the place of safety is wherever you happen to be. Now the popular belief in the church has been that the church is going to flee to a place of safety. But the term "place of safety" appears absolutely nowhere in all the pages of the Bible. Neither do these words appear: "*the church will flee*". It does say "that the woman is given two wings of a great eagle that she might fly to her place." It does say the "that those who are in Judea will flee" but it doesn't specify exactly who these people are or where they will flee **to**. I think there is no doubt, in any of our minds (those of us who are converted), that God does promise protection. The doubts and differences [between us] have to do with when and where. Will we be protected **where we are** or will it be in "**a place of safety?**"

I feel there are two major aspects to this subject that need to be considered. These two are related. Indeed, they cannot be separated. I call them the "*practical*" and the "*biblical*." Now it is not that the "biblical" is not "practical," but to carnal minds, the Bible does not seem practical. It is what God is going to accomplish that makes it practical for Him to separate His people away from the world, even though He could protect them where they are. This is an important aspect of this [to consider]. It is not what God is **capable** of doing, it is what God's **purpose** is. That is going to determine whether there is going to be a place of safety or whether He is going to protect a person where they are. Can we agree that God is able to do both to protect a person wherever they are, just as if they were in a bubble and completely impervious to what was going on around them?

Did God protect the three young men Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego right in the midst of a fire? If we can extend that out is God's power great enough that He could protect one right in the midst of a hydrogen bomb explosion? Is God limited? I know of two places in the scripture where it says that there is **nothing** too hard for God. If God created the suns (all those multitude of stars) then isn't He capable of protecting us **even** within the midst of [destruction]? I think He certainly is. So it's NOT what God is **capable of doing** that needs to be considered, but what He says **He's going to do?**

Now we're going to begin as we continue to lay the foundation for this in Jeremiah. We need these verses because a foundation needs to be laid to understand the times in which this is



going to occur.

**Jeremiah 30:4-6** Now these are the words that Lord spoke concerning Israel and Judah. For thus says the LORD; We have heard a voice of trembling [ominous words, meaning dread and terror] of fear, and not of peace. Ask now, and see whether a man is ever in labor with child?

He's setting the stage to help us to understand the times that confront us just down the road (in the future a bit). We are moving toward a time that is **unique** in the history of man as unique as a man giving birth to a child and being in the throes of labor. Have any of you ever seen that? No historian has ever seen the kind of times that are just around the corner. Unless God has a place of safety for us, then we are going to find ourselves involved in these unique times that are coming.

**Jeremiah 30:6-7** Ask now, and see where a man is ever in labor with child? So why do I see every man with his hands on his loins, [or as modern versions say "thighs", you see like he was in a position to give birth] like a woman in labor, and all faces turned pale? [Scared, terrorized] Alas! For that day is great, so that none is like it: it is the time of Jacob's trouble; but he shall be saved out of it.

God is of course speaking of the nations of Israel. They are going to be going through it we know that for sure because the verse says, "they shall be saved out of it". In other words their protection is not going to come until they have gone through (maybe) most of it. So they're going to go through it they are going to suffer through it. Then God is going to intervene save them out of it. If God won't save them out of it, then what Jesus said in Matthew 24:21 ("*that they simply would not survive*") will come to pass. They will all die in it. **It's going to be that bad!**

Now we have to put ourselves into this because the Church of God is largely located in the nations of Israel. The overwhelming majority [of us] are in the United States and Canada. So are we consigned to the same fate as Israel (in this prophecy) because we [live] in Israel? I don't know about you, but I do not want to go through it. My hope is that God has a place of safety, and that I am worthy to escape. But, I think that you can see that we, as a nation, are facing **very terrifying times**. I want you to turn with me to the book of Amos just a get a little bit of insight into the kind of unrelenting terror that people are going to go through.

**Amos 5:3** For thus says the Eternal God; The city that goes out by a thousand shall have a hundred left, [90 percent dead] and that which goes out by a hundred shall have ten left, to the house of Israel.

It's almost as if Israel is left without a future. Indeed, unless God intervened, there would be no future for Israel. **There would be no future for mankind**. That's how bad the times are going to be.

**Amos 5:18-19** Woe to you who desire the day of the Lord! For what good is the day of the Lord to you? It will be darkness, and not light. It will be as though a man fled from a lion,

Can you imagine how terrifying that would be? If you are in a place where a lion is you are out of your element; you are in the **lion's** element. He has the advantage, he's on home territory, and you're *in his* territory. You're the stranger. You're the intruder there. All by itself that is enough to give a person a feeling of insecurity and THEN comes the **roar** of a lion your hair stands up on end, your loins begin to quake. "*Where was he? Where is he now? Is he creeping up on me? **There he is! RUN...***(pant, pant, pant, pant)." You know, you're just out of breath. "*Oh I escaped him, I escaped him.*" And just as you feel safe again...

**Amos 5:19** ..and a bear met him...

If that isn't bad enough if a lion isn't bad enough how about a bear? Think you can outrun a bear? A bear can run much faster than you can, especially after you just escaped from a lion. "*I'll go up a tree.*" A bear can come up after you all several hundred pounds of him, if he wants to. Well, you escape the bear and then...

**Amos 5:19** ...as though he who just escaped from the bear went into the house. [At last he's safe, four walls around him, good strong walls, brick walls all mortared together. He's inside. The door is locked. "*Ha, ha bear, lion you're outside.*" ] He leaned his hand on the wall, and a serpent bit him.

That's not a very happy picture. I think that God is trying to draw our attention to the kind of times that are coming. They will be **unrelenting** in their terror to such an extent that unless He intervened "no flesh would be saved alive." Now we have to put ourselves into this. Is God able to protect us in a time like this? **Yes, he can.**

We'll look at a couple of scriptures. David's life was being threatened, when he wrote Psalm 3. His son, Absalom, had rebelled against him and Absalom had been able to secure the allegiance of the larger part of the nation. An insurrection occurred, and David was thrown out of office. David had to flee for his life, with only a loyal cadre of men around him and their families. David had to flee across the Jordan River. David was in the minority; Absalom was the one who had the heart of the people. Absalom, undoubtedly, had most of the army with him as well. So David was in a bad, bad situation. Listen to what David says though:

**Psalms 3:5** I lay down and slept [In the **middle of all that trouble**, David felt secure. David felt tranquil even while surrounded by enemies a minority whose life could have been squashed out]. I awoke for the Lord sustained me, I will not be afraid of ten thousands of people, who have set themselves against me all around.

Now there's the cry of a man who felt that he could be protected at anytime, anyplace. So I don't think that we should ever sell God short. We should **never** underestimate God's sovereignty over His creation.

We might think back on the way God acted on behalf of the Israelites in Egypt. Did He not, after the third plague, spare the Israelites from having to go through the plagues that He brought on Egypt? God made a dividing line; He's able to do those things. What He can do for two million people, He can do for two people. Anywhere, anytime, anyplace it all depends on what His purpose is. Did God slay 180,000 of the finest soldiers of the Assyrian Empire for Hezekiah and the Jews in Jerusalem? He just made a dividing line between the two of them. Hezekiah went to bed at night; a whole army surrounded him. He got up in the morning; the whole army was dead. The Jews were safe; the Assyrians were dead.

Did God save Noah? The most terrible devastation (in the history of man) took place on the face of this earth while Noah and seven others of his family lived right through it. So God's hand isn't short. **He can save anybody, anytime, anyplace. It all depends on His purpose.** Let's look at Psalm 91. A very, very encouraging Psalm here.

**Psalms 91:1-3** He who dwells in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. And I will say to the Lord, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in him I will trust. Surely he shall deliver you from the snare of the fowler, [An indication there of people making secret plans] and from the perilous pestilence.

Not only can God spare us from those who are secretly plotting against us, God can also save us from disease, (you see) the pestilence.

**Psalm 91:4** He shall cover you with his feathers, and under his wings you shall take refuge; his truth shall be your shield and buckler.

Now the imagery shifts to warfare and if God wants to get rough with your enemies, He can get rough, like a military man would.

**Psalm 91:5-8** You shall not be afraid of terror by night; [it doesn't matter whether it's in the daytime, or nighttime] nor for the arrow that flies by day; Nor for the pestilence that walks in darkness [you might think back to the Israelites in Egypt and the death angel going through]. Nor the destruction that lays waste at noonday. A thousand shall fall at your side and ten thousand at your right hand; but it shall not come near you. Only with your eyes shall you look, and see the reward of the wicked.

You see, as a witness, God will sometimes do things like this so that we can **literally** observe His intervention on our behalf, and see with our own eyes, the reward of the wicked. Again a reminder in spite of Psalm 91, Psalm 3 and many, many other places we are talking about a time that even the Bible describes as **unique**.

There is none like it; there is no other time in man's history like the Tribulation and the "Day of the Lord" when this kind of protection (that we are talking about here in Psalm 91) is needed. *Never* has it been *more* needed than it will be at this time we're talking about. Now if it is unique for the world, THEN it is also unique for the church. That is, it is a time *unique* in God's purpose as well. Now this Psalm is a sort of, "if God be for us, who can be against us"?

We are not **of** the world, but we are still **in** the world. Therefore, what happens in the world is also *going to affect the church, and the church members* at least to some degree (maybe to a **very major degree**). I am talking about things like famine; I am talking about things like depression Are all of you people working right on through this recession (the economic difficulty the United States is going through) without a hitch? You're still making as much money as you always did? None of you have ever been laid off because of what is going on in the United States economically?

You **are** being affected by what is going on. **You are in it**. How about wars? Do wars just pass Christians by? No they don't. How about inflation rather than depression? How about hurricanes? How about tornadoes? What about earthquakes those of you in Southern California? Everybody else's [house] shakes, but your house doesn't. How about floods? We could go on and on, I think that you can get the point here though. With this thought in mind, let's go back to I Corinthians.

**I Corinthians 10:13** There has no *temptation* [a better application of that word, for us, would be "*trial*"]. overtaken you except such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able; but with the temptation will also make the way to escape, that you may be able to bear it.

"Common to man" means that the trials that come to Christians are the same as come to all men. Now as we live life we find that (in most cases) these trials are unavoidable. They just happen. It's happening in the world, we are part of what is going on in the world and so those things affect us and they are unavoidable. God says that He will provide "a way of escape." I should not use the general article "a." It says in my Bible "**the** way of escape". There is **one right way out** of each trial that comes. There may be other optional ways, but what Paul is saying is that there is "a way" or "the way." Now we want "**the way**" the one that God provides for man. And the imagery, given here, is that of an army trapped during a battle, but suddenly a mountain pass opens up before them to provide them a way out of their dilemma. Now that is what the apostle Paul uses to illustrate how Christians escape the trial.

Again we want to emphasize here, that the Christian is going through it as well. There is a reason for that. The trial God provides is good for the Christian to go through. He wants to see what our reaction is going to be to it. Are we going to avail ourselves of "a way of escape" that might be provided by ourselves or by the world, OR are we going to submit to "the way of escape" He will make available to us. You can be sure that "the way of escape" is **always** going to involve the use of faith. God is testing our response to His declarations, His promises of faithfulness (that is *God's* faithfulness), and He wants to see whether or not we are going to respond because God is faithful. Which way will we go?

Let's contrast Psalm 91 with another series of scriptures beginning with Isaiah 26. Notice the context.

**Isaiah 26:16** Lord, in trouble have they visited you, they poured out a prayer when your chastening was upon them.

Think about the Tribulation, think about the "Day of the Lord," think about the nations of Israel being right in the midst of the trouble. God's chastening is on them.

**Isaiah 26:17-19** As a woman with child, is in pain and cries out in her pangs; [when she draws near the time of her delivery] so have we been in your sight, O Lord. We have been with child, we have been in pain, we have, as it were, brought forth wind [vanity, you see]. We have not accomplished any deliverance in the earth; nor have the inhabitants of the world fallen. Your dead shall live

Look at the time element a resurrection is being spoken of here. When does the resurrection occur? At the blowing of the 7<sup>th</sup> trump. You see the context here, the time element we're talking about the same time in Isaiah 26 (as Jeremiah 30:4-7). The time of Jacob's trouble. Now, a resurrection.

**Isaiah 26:19** Your dead shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing you who dwell in the dust: for your dew is like the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead.

Now, verse 20 reflects back on something that is occurring (or even before this thing is occurring).

**Isaiah 26:20-21** Come, my people, enter your chambers, and shut your doors behind you: hide yourself as it were for a moment, until the indignation is past. For, behold, the Lord comes out of his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity: the earth will also disclose her blood, and will no more cover her slain.

Very interesting. "Come, my people, enter your chambers." "*Your chambers.*" Think about Revelation 12. "*She flies to her place.*" "*Enter your chambers.*" Reflect back upon Israel and Egypt. Reflect upon the Passover night when the Death Angel went through. Where did Israel go for protection? They went into their chamber, into their house, and they closed the door behind them. They were safe there because the blood was on the door. But they had to wait until the Death Angel went through. As long as they were in their house (under the blood), as long as they were in their chamber, they were safe. All you have to do is think about the time element. The time element is what we call "the end" and God is going to put His people into their chamber.

Now what is interesting is that this can actually happen, let's say, twice. It can happen to the church even before the Tribulation begins. As we know from the book of Hosea, God begins to intervene in the history of Israel after the Tribulation is past and as the Day of the Lord

begins. He says in the "**second year**" Israel begins to come under the protection of God so that they are not wiped out. They are beginning to go into "their chamber" for protection as well. So this can apply dually. It can apply to the church before the Tribulation begins it can apply to Israel just as the "Day of the Lord" is beginning.

Now I said we're going to compare that with Psalm 91. You see, God chose to say in Psalm 91 that, "*He is fully capable of protecting anybody, anywhere at anytime.*" But what is God's purpose? What does He say that He is going to do? You see we are going to begin to track this down now. So here is an opening scripture that indicates that God is going to take His people into a separate place "their chamber". So yes, He's capable of doing that [protecting His people anywhere], but His word indicates that He is not going to do it that way. He's going to take them into "their chamber."

Now let's go to the book of Daniel 12. I think we can agree that Daniel is speaking about the time of the end here. But, let's back up a little bit, to chapter 11, so we understand the time that he's talking about.

**Daniel 11:35** And some of those of understanding shall fall, to refine them, to purge them, and make them white until the time of the end; because it is still for the appointed time. [Okay, there's the time.]

In verse 40, it uses the words, "time of the end" again.

**Daniel 11:40** And at the time of the end shall the king of the south push at him: and the king of the north shall come against him like a whirlwind, with chariots, and with horsemen, and with many ships; and he shall enter into the countries, and shall overflow and pass over.

**Daniel 12:1-2** At that time [The time of the end. The time, within the context, of the end of chapter 11] Michael shall stand up, the great prince which stands watch over the sons of your people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that time: at that time your people shall be delivered, everyone who is found written in the book. And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.

We have here a clarification that His people are going to be "**delivered**." "At that time your people shall be delivered" at the time of the end. And it is going to be those people whose names are written in the book of life. Now this word "*delivered*" is very interesting because it can mean "*slip away, escape*." Some are going to "**slip away**," they're going to escape. Parallel this with Isaiah 26:20-21. What we are seeing here are indications of separation, of segregation of some of the people of God. Now, again (just as in Isaiah 26), it is tied in context to the resurrection in verse 2. But, it doesn't clarify how much these people have gone through before being delivered. There could be a time gap between verse 1 and 2, and some could be delivered at different times though still in the context of the end time. Before we leave this, I want you to notice how similar the wording is to Jeremiah 30:4-7, Isaiah 26, Matthew 24:21 " **a time that never was before**".

Let's go to Malachi. Again, another end time prophecy. You'll see these scriptures just dovetailing together beautifully.

**Malachi 3:16** Then those that feared the Lord spoke to one another: and the Lord listened, and heard them, and so a book of remembrance was written before him [before this gets out of my mind, we saw a book mentioned in Daniel 12. The people whose names were in the book were the ones who were going to be delivered, who were going to slip away, who were going to escape. Now we find here a further detailing of the characteristics of these people; they feared the Lord, they spoke often to one another] for them that feared the Lord, and they

meditated on his name.

That word "meditate" is a little bit more closely related to our English word "esteem" or "honor". These people fear God and they honor Him, they esteem Him

**Malachi 3:17** They shall be mine, said the Lord of hosts, on the day that I make them my jewels; and I will spare them [That's so clear. A time of tremendous trouble is coming and people with certain characteristics are going to be spared.], as a man spares his own son who serves him.

Okay, I just wanted to pull that in and help you to see that in context with other scriptures that are talking about the same period of time. Now let's turn to that famous chapter, Matthew 24.

**Matthew 24:15-22** Therefore when you see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place, (whoever reads, let him understand) Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains: Let him who is on the housetop not come down to take anything out of his house: And let him who is in the field not go back to get his clothes. But woe to those who are pregnant, and those with nursing babies in those days! And pray that your flight may not be in winter, nor on the Sabbath. For then there shall be great tribulation, such as had not been since the beginning of the world until this time, [Jeremiah 30, Isaiah 26, Daniel 12] no, nor ever shall be. And unless those days were shortened, no flesh shall be saved, but for the elect's sake those day will be shortened.

Now how is it going to be shortened? Is God going to lessen time than would normally come? I think that is also a part of the explanation. I think the inference, though (right within the context), is that God will stop short what is occurring lest everybody be killed. If He allowed the events that were taking place to continue, everybody would die. So, when He stops the event, time (in a sense) stops right there at least as far as this event is concerned. Now to whom are the pronouns referring to here? Verse 15, "Therefore when **you**." Verse 16, "Then let **those**." Verse 17, "Let **him**." Verse 18, "Let **him**." Verse 19, "But woe to **you**." And on and on it goes. The pronouns refer to those who understand the prophecies and are alive at the time these things are taking place. Now how many people are involved here? Well, it's unspecified.

One thing is clear. There is no doubt that, in this prophecy, deliverance involves a flight (fleeing at least to those who are around Jerusalem during it's unprecedented distress). Now in this case, to flee in no way implies flying. The verb here is "phuego" and it means to flee, it means to escape danger. There is no indication of anything other than escaping by running shoe-leather express.

Now the context of the chapter is "literal and physical." It is not "figurative and spiritual;" it involves physical survival worldwide, though the prophecy itself focuses on Jerusalem. It is worldwide because verses 21 and 22 make it very clear "that no one would be saved alive". He means worldwide not just that nobody would be saved alive in Jerusalem. We are talking about a worldwide occurrence, so it involves physical survival worldwide. It is so bad that even the elect would die, except for God's intervention. Now I want you to notice (this may not seem all that important, but it is important) that God through His servant Jesus Christ says " *don't stay in the midst of the trouble, **get out**.*"

Considering the time that we are talking about, Psalm 91 would have to be modified (to apply it directly to us), because our understanding, from other portions of God's word, is that He expects us to get out to flee (apparently) to some designated place called "your chamber, her place". So it involves segregating ourselves away from something. And I think that we can also understand that we will have help from God in segregating ourselves as 1 Corinthians 10:13 would indicate. He makes a "way of escape through which this people can

go through, just as He did for Israel. He opened up the Red Sea so that they could go through and escape. They walked [to safety] they had to flee the Egyptian army. But, God opened up a way [of escape]. He intervened.

Let's go back to Luke 21:20-22. I think all of us understand that Luke 21 is the parallel to Matthew 24.

**Luke 21:20-22** But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that the desolation is near. And let those in Judea flee to the mountains [an added detail]. Let those who are the midst of her depart; and let not those who are in the country enter her. For these are the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled.

The times are so bad at this point, He says don't even come down and get your clothes. I always wondered (for a long time), how a person could do that? How could a person not come down off his housetop and go through his house; and on the way through, pick up some clothing? But one day I discovered that the way the homes were built in Jerusalem made it entirely possible to run from one housetop to another because they butted up against one another. The top of the house was built flat and the people used it in the same way that we would use a patio. In the cool of the evening they went to the top of their house and they sat there and talked to their neighbors across one rooftop to the other rooftop.

So if a person was on the top of his house when the time came to get out of Jerusalem, he could literally run from housetop to housetop to housetop, to housetop without even coming down on the street for a long, long period of time. Can't do that in the U.S. and Canada. But, nonetheless, doesn't it put (into your mind) a sense of urgency? If indeed you happen to be there then, you would have to flee for your life.

Now the question always arises, "*was this fulfilled during the period that the temple was destroyed there in 70 AD?*" It is interesting when one looks (apart from the Bible) into church history not necessarily **true** church history. We'll call it "*secular church history*," where people are call themselves Christians. These [people] left a record of events that were occurring. The church historian, Eusebius, had this to say regarding the true church (which he thought that he was a part of) in Jerusalem during the period between 66 AD and 70 AD:

*"That it [meaning the church] was instructed to leave Jerusalem and take up residence in one of the cities of Perea."*

Now the church did not flee in the sense that is given in Matthew 24. But it migrated from Jerusalem to one of the cities of Perea. We know that city was Pella.

Pella is not in a wilderness area, we'll get to that later. Pella is one of the cities of the Decapolis. You've probably read of that word. I believe it's in Matthew, I'm not real sure. Decapolis means 10 cities; there were 10 small cities in the area of Perea, right around the Sea of Galilee. It is not in the mountains, though it is near some. The church probably left somewhere in late 69 AD. If they had left earlier than that, they would have run headlong into Vespasian's army, because Vespasian's army was stalled in fighting in the area of Galilee. Right around 69 AD, Vespasian was recalled to Rome where he was crowned Emperor. Vespasian's son Titus took over the army and came down on Jerusalem. Now by moving his army toward Jerusalem, it became safe for the church to migrate away from Jerusalem.

Josephus records that on the Day of Pentecost, while a great multitude of people were in the temple, they heard a voice say, "*let us go or get hence*" and so they left in an orderly way **without** urgency (without the kind of urgency that Matthew 24 shows where "*you do not even come down off your housetop*") and migrated to the area of Pella. We're going to see that is the exact opposite direction indicated in the Bible concerning where the place of safety is

located. So we would have to conclude that what happened there (in the time period of 66 to 70 AD) was a "type" of the church being removed to a place of safety, so that it could survive. However, it was **not** what Jesus was talking about (for the end time church) where some leave with such urgency that they ***don't even come down into their house*** for their clothing, but flee for their lives.

In Matthew 10:22-23 is some general advice:

**Matthew 10:22-23** And you will be hated by all for my name's sake: [Jesus is speaking] but he who endures to the end will be saved. But when they persecute you in this city flee to another: for surely I say to you, You will not have gone through the cities of Israel, before the Son of man comes.

Again I just wanted you to see that, so that you'll understand that though God is capable of the kind of salvation the kind of deliverance that He indicates He will give to His people in Psalm 91, His general advice to His people is to: "***flee, get out, get away from the trouble.***" Even though God could protect one there [in the midst of trouble], still God gives this general advice [to flee]; and I might remind you that David (who was the author of Psalm 3 where he said that he felt safe surrounded by ten thousand people) was fleeing when he wrote it. So this in no way denigrates God; and in no way makes for a "cowardly Christian" when they flee persecution or maybe certain death, demanding that God save them under this horrible circumstance. We have to understand that God places responsibilities on us. I feel certain that, as we take His advice **to flee** He will " *open up the mountain*" before us so we can go through the path that He makes clear for us.

Now let's go back to the book of Revelation as we begin now to focus in on another aspect of this sermon.

**Revelation 2:7** He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches; To him who overcomes I will give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God.

I read this verse because it is the last verse in the message to the church at Ephesus and there is no indication of fleeing, no indication of protection, and no indication of an "end-time event." Let's go to the next one, in verse 11, the last verse to the church at Smyrna.

**Revelation 2:11** He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches; He who overcomes shall not be hurt by the second death.

Again similar to Ephesus; Let's go to the next one in verse 17; the last verse to the church at Pergamos.

**Revelation 2:17** He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches; To him who overcomes I will give some of the hidden manna to eat, and I will give him a white stone, and on the stone a new name written, which no man knows except him who receives it.

Again, there is no indication of the "time of the end," fleeing or anything of that nature. Let's go on to Thyatira in verse 25 where we begin to see a bit of a difference in the closing part of the message.

**Revelation 2:25-26** But hold fast what you have till I come. [The first indication of a church group that might be around when He returns.] But he who overcomes and keeps my works unto the end,



Not the person's end (which it might be interpreted as, and that's a possibility). When we think of it, within the context of what the book is all about (the book of Revelation), it's about the "**time of the end.**" I think that the number one application [here] is there might be people who are in the church, having God's Spirit, alive at "the end," the Tribulation and the "Day of the Lord" people who are part of these people that God classifies as Thyatira.

Sardis:

**Revelation 3:3** Remember therefore how you have received and heard, hold fast and repent. Therefore if you will not watch, [here we have "end time" terminology] I will come upon you, as a thief, and you will not know what hour I will come upon you.

That's "end time" language to those who are part of Sardis.

Philadelphia:

**Revelation 3:10** Because you have kept my command to persevere, I also will keep you from the hour of trial, which shall come upon the whole world...

Now hey, was God only talking to a little congregation in the city of Philadelphia, in Western Asia Minor? Or was He talking to a group of people that are scattered over the whole world? If these people are not scattered over the whole world, why did He mention the whole world? It is because it concerns people who are "Philadelphians," around the whole world. Now if this doesn't fit into Jeremiah 30, Isaiah 26, Daniel 12, and Matthew 24, I don't know what does. We're talking about a group of people who are at the "time of the end."

**Revelation 3:10-11** ...to test those who dwell on the earth. Behold I come quickly: [other end time language] hold fast what you have, that no one can take your crown.

Laodicea:

**Revelation 3:18** I counsel you to buy of me gold refined in the fire, [Ah, interesting language here] that you may be rich; and white garment, that you may be clothed and that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and anoint your eyes with eye-salve, that you may see. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: therefore be zealous and repent. Behold, I stand at the door, [Is that end-time language? I certainly think it is. Again when we view it within the context of the book, He is saying, "*I am so close (in terms of time) when this group of people exists, that I'm right at the door.*"] and if any man hears my voice, and opens the door, I will come into him, and dine with him, and he with me. [Indicating a very intimate relationship.]

What do we have there? We have two full eras and at the very least, two remnants of two other eras that are existing at the end, but only one of the four is delivered from the hour of trial.

We need to connect the testing that is mentioned in Revelation 3:10 with 1 Corinthians 10:13.

Now what about the Laodiceans? Well, prophecy tends to show that the Laodiceans will die proving their loyalty and their zeal to God. Let's turn to Ezekiel 5.

**Ezekiel 5:1** And you, son of man, take a sharp razor, or a sharp sword, and take it as a barber's razor, and pass it over your head and your beard: then take balances to weigh, and divide the hair.

I want you to note that God's instruction to Ezekiel was that he was to shave his head and beard and then it was to be precisely divided. It wasn't just a matter of, "*well divide it into three piles.*" No, He told Ezekiel to use balances and I think what He wanted here (since no other information is given) is for each of the piles to weigh exactly the same amount. So we

have a very precise division or separation of the hairs of his head, which of course you understand represent the population of the nations of Israel.

**Ezekiel 5:2-3** You shall burn with fire one third in the midst of the city, when the days of the siege are finished: then you shall take one third, and strike around it with a sword: and one third you shall scatter in the wind; and I will draw out a sword after them. You shall also take a small number of them...

Now I think the "them" from the context has to be the last of the third, those that he is to scatter in the wind. So we have one pile here, one pile here, another pile here. That third pile he takes and throws it. However before he does it, he just takes a small number of that pile and holds it back and he puts it into the folds of his garment, or (as we might say) into his pocket. Then what remains, he throws up into the air and it just gets blown away. Now we understand this of course means that it represents those people being blown into all nations, being scattered in captivity.

**Ezekiel 5:4, 12** Then take some of them [the "them" here refers to the small number that he took from that third group. So now he takes the ones out of his pocket and puts it into the palm of his hand, the hair that's there and then he takes some of that and he throws it into the fire] and throw them into the midst of the fire, and burn them in the fire; for from there a fire will go out into all the house of Israel. One third of you shall die in the pestilence, and be consumed with famine in your midst: one third shall fall by the sword round about you; and I will scatter another third to all the winds, and will draw out a sword after them.

Now here's what I think. We're talking here about the nations of Israel. I said earlier that most of the church is in the nations of Israel, primarily the United States and Canada. I believe the "small number" taken from the third group, which goes into captivity, and is thrown to the "four winds" represented by the hair that he puts into his pocket represents the church, showing a *measure* of protection. However, he then takes from that group [a part], and throws it into the fire. Now hair is the most flammable part of the body, and surely, brethren, it must indicate death.

Now you can connect this with the fifth seal of Revelation 6: the martyrdom of the saints. You can connect it with Revelation 3 and those people who are represented by the hair put into Ezekiel's pocket, which remained there. These are the "Philadelphians" who are kept from the hour of trial that comes upon the whole earth. The group that he took out from his pocket and threw into the fire (and therefore burned up consumed in the fires of tribulation) represents the Laodicean church. It surely seems to indicate that very few, if any, of them are going to survive through the tribulation. Five segregation's, five separations are indicated here in Ezekiel 5, but only one very small amount is protected in the fold of his skirt.

Now, brethren, I think that this a good time to stop. Next week we will pick this up where we left off.

## **Appendix 10: A city for 'end times' Petra hiding place for Israeli remnant during Armageddon?**

*Editor's note: Last year, WorldNetDaily international correspondent Anthony C. LoBaido traveled to Jordan. He filed several stories on that nation, its culture, new king and strategic relationship with the UK and U.S. LoBaido retraced the trek of Lawrence of Arabia through Trans Jordan, as well. In this update, LoBaido examines the history and possible future significance of this ancient and beautiful place.*

*"Match me such a marvel, save in Eastern clime  
rose-red city, half as old as time." -From  
"Petra" by Dean Burgen*

By Anthony C. LoBaido© 2001 WorldNetDaily.com

PETRA, Jordan -- Carved from the rock that served as a base for Esau -- the father of the Edomites -- Petra is a magical and mysterious ancient city that illuminated the imaginations of mankind through the millennia and now serves as a key location for many scholars tracking so-called "end-times" events.

Historians, anthropologists and archaeologists are still fascinated by Petra and continue to travel to Jordan to unearth its many mysteries. Famed director Steven Spielberg came here to film "Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade." Perhaps most significant, however, is the trend of modern Judeo-Christian believers to increasingly turn to Petra over what some Bible scholars consider its future prophetic significance -- the hiding place for the Jewish/Israeli remnant during the biblical events widely known as Armageddon and the Great Tribulation.

What is Petra? Petra is a heavily fortified rock/city situated south of Amman, Jordan. To the south are Aqaba and the Red Sea. It is surrounded by the mountainous deserts of Wadi Rum, which played host to the mobile guerilla camps of Lawrence of Arabia during World War I.

According to official accounts, Petra was established by Nabataean Arabs in the sixth century before Christ. These Arabs were nomads, but their work around Petra provided the impetus for a grand and widespread commercial empire that reached north all the way to Damascus. They worked diligently to carve out temples, burial chambers and other facilities from the yellow, white, red and brown sandstone rocks. King Aretas IV was the most prominent Arab architect.

Herod the Great of New Testament fame lusted after Petra, but was unable to take control of it. Pompey, the Roman general, ordered his legions to literally carve out a military fortress amid the sheer cliffs of Petra. Pompey overturned Nabataean rule around A.D. 99. Even through the Byzantine era, Rome retained some influence in the region, yet the empire was shifting away from Jordan and establishing itself in western Turkey.

The Crusaders, led by a knight named Baldwin, came in the 12th century and, like the Romans, built military fortifications. During the Crusader era, wild legends about Petra sprang up in the imaginations of the West. The Crusaders, upon examination of Petra's burial chambers and temples that had been dedicated to the Nabateans' god Dhushares and goddess Allat, concluded that these represented the Pharaoh of Exodus and the Pharaoh's daughter.

Since the ancient center of the city was known as the Wadi Musa or "Valley of Moses" and a nearby mountain, Jaal Haroun, was named after Aaron, the Crusaders drew some

remarkable conclusions. They claimed that the Pharaoh of Exodus had garrisoned his army at Petra while chasing the fleeing Hebrews, and that Petra was the place where Moses struck the rock in search of water. These stories were propagated by the devout Monks of Saint Aaron, who worked closely with the Crusaders of that era.

After the Crusaders withdrew, the local Arabs had complete control of Petra. In 1812, Swiss adventurer Johann Ludwig Burckhardt traveled to Petra incognito, dressed as an Arab Bedouin. He was fascinated by the royal tombs, sacrificial chambers and obelisks he encountered at Petra. Burckhardt encountered the local Bedouins and tried to learn from them about the history of this wildly rugged place.

### **The Palestinian connection**

What did Burckhardt "discover" at Petra amid the baths, old coins, temples, theaters and water works? It was clear he didn't have much of an historical record to go on. The entire area had disappeared from Western thought since the Crusades. The only historical document in the Western psyche concerning Petra was the Peutinger Table (an examination of the Roman Empire in what is today the Middle East, compiled in the 12th century). There was also a rare map -- drawn by cartographers at the time of the American Revolutionary War -- based on the works of the historian Flavius Josephus.

Marianne Roy, a Swiss graduate student from the French canton of Switzerland, came to Petra to research her graduate school thesis on Burckhardt.

Roy told WorldNetDaily, "Burckhardt may well have followed this map to Petra from the Swiss Alps. One can only wonder about the dangers such a journey entailed back in those times."

Various accounts of Petra from the first century A.D. vary about the inhabitants of Petra. Diodorus, from the island of Sicily, wrote a first century account claiming the inhabitants of the Petra basin were merely "barbarians" and warlike. Yet a contemporary writer of Diodorus, a man named Strabo, wrote of a bustling commercial center.

Could both men have been correct?

Micah Mohammed, WorldNetDaily's Arab-speaking driver and guide on the trip said: "Long ago, according to the Koran and Islamic folklore, the area around Wadi Rum was much different, tropical with lakes and game, like Uganda. The most esteemed scientists and climatologists of today accept this as a fact. The Koran also says that this area was changed into a barren desert as a punishment from Allah. This happened when men turned their backs on God and claimed that it was man himself who had created such a paradise."

Real scientific investigation of Petra was not undertaken until 1897. A book called, "The Sepulcher of an Ancient Civilization" was finally published in 1930. The book claimed that Petra had existed through the millennia as a "dead city," mostly uninhabited and used for burials and other similar ceremonies.

Yet the Roman Senate had dubbed Petra as a "metropolis." Certainly, the Roman Empire -- which had expanded into Syria, Lebanon, Turkey, Jordan, Palestine and north Africa -- would not have adopted a dead city, drawn it on their official maps, fought over it, quartered a garrison there and defended Petra all for naught. These actions suggest that someone had resisted Roman rule.

Today, the mystery of the discrepancy of the accounts of Diodorus and Strabo are easily explained. And this is where the Palestinian connection comes into play.

The modern-day Palestinians, according to historians and archaeologists, came into Petra via a migration from the west. They were known as the Edomites. Once they arrived at Petra, they became known as the Idumeans. Some confusion exists over the Semitic to Hellenistic name change.

Through the careful analysis of Petra's ancient metal works, coins, art, burial rights and water works, archaeologists and historians have presented a fusion of two cultures. They are the Arab Nabateans and the Edomites/Idumeans. The two peoples combined to create a strong culture, featuring a vast commercial infrastructure and war-making capabilities.

Concerning the significance of Petra and the biblical end times, Pastor Noah Hutchings of the Southwest Radio Church, an expert on Petra, offers this account:

"Jacob and Esau were twins. Jacob got the best of the deal in trading for Esau's birthright, and then he stole Esau's blessing. The blessing was far more valuable than the birthright. Esau took his minor share of Isaac's cattle and goods and went to Petra, which in the Bible is called Mount Seir, Mount Hor, Selah and Edom's strong city. Esau chased the Horites (cave dwellers) out of Mount Hor and established Petra and the capital city of his kingdom, Edom.

"Five hundred years later, when Moses tried to pass through Petra to the Promised Land, the Edomites refused passage and even fought the children of Israel. After the Israelites finally got into the land, the Edomites continually tried to kill them. The wars between Edom and Israel are recorded in the Old Testament in great detail. It was the inherited mission of the Edomites to exterminate the entire population of Israel to the last man.

"In 600 B.C., when Babylon invaded Israel, thousands of Israelis were moved to Babylon (today's Iraq) and the Edomites were moved into Israel. The Edomites even helped the Babylonians destroy Jerusalem and the temple (Psalm 137). When a remnant of Israel returned after the Babylonian captivity, the Edomites were there to wage war against them while the city and the temple were being rebuilt.

"While the scriptures are silent for the 400 years between the book of Malachi and the birth of Jesus, Josephus records the struggle between the Edomeans and the Israelites. This racial division and strife in the land prevented Israel from regaining any semblance of its former glory. The nation was easy prey for the Roman Empire on its march to world conquest.

"The Romans favored the Edomeans over the Jews because Jews would not compromise their religion and worship Caesar or allow idols in the Temple. The Romans placed Edomean stooges like the Herods in places of authority. Josephus recorded an endless list of the most heinous crimes committed by the Herods against the Jews.

"In A.D. 70, the Romans destroyed the temple and Jerusalem. Over 1 million Jews were either killed or died of starvation in Jerusalem alone. The vast majority of the Jews left alive were sold as slaves to other nations. The balance fled to other countries to save their lives."

Of course, there are those who doubt the connection between Esau and the modern Palestinians. This line of reasoning says that Esau was the father of the Philistines and that there is, in fact, no connection between these two peoples other than the similarity in name, which was assigned to the people of "Palestine" by the Romans.

"The Talmud states that Sennacherib the Assyrian despot conquered the Middle East and transferred entire populations. Therefore, the Edomites, Amonites, Egyptians, etc. who lived after Sennacherib [about 2,500 years ago] are not the real ones, they are transferred populations. The Talmud uses the term Esau to mean a Jew who took Jewish ideas but denied Judaism, and it generally refers to Rome. Because Esau was the twin brother of

Jacob, indeed, the older brother, the greatest converts, who became the greatest rabbis, are from the Edomite line. Two of the most famous ones are Unkelus, in the time of Hillel, who authored the accepted Aramaic translation of the bible, and Akilas. Both were from the family of the Roman emperor," Rabbi David Eidensohn told WorldNetDaily. Eidensohn serves as a consultant to the Knight Ridder news service on Jewish issues.

"No other nation, other than Edom, produces outstanding converts. In Cabala, the greatest souls -- period -- were in the soul of Esau, and when the Jews and the world merits, they reveal incredible light that even Jews cannot reveal. Rabbi Mayer, whose name means 'light' was so brilliant that 'none of his colleagues could follow his thoughts,' and he descends from a Roman emperor. Again, the Palestinians are not Edom," stated Eidensohn.

### **Petra: The ultimate defensive position**

WorldNetDaily traveled to Petra with the Amman-based Mossad intelligence agent Avi Rubin -- a former airborne commando in the Israel Defense Force. Rubin explained that Petra might be the ultimate defensive position in a regional war.

"It is an outstanding defensive position. Airborne assault would be most difficult. It is what I would call a natural defensive position. The Roman legions, the Crusaders, the Arabs and now the IDF, Iraq and the Jordanian army all recognized this," said Rubin.

"The most important defensive feature is called 'the Shiq,' which is about 2,000 meters long. [Today, the passage is marked by the 'Indiana Jones' souvenir shop.] It is a narrow passageway which leads into the city. It has very high, sheer walls which will protect the Israeli population as they enter the city from the west. The rocks of Petra can help protect from gunfire, bombing, artillery and perhaps even absorb some radiation."

Bible fundamentalists point to Old Testament passages they claim to be speaking about a war between Israel and the Palestinians. These include Ezekiel 35:2-5 and Ezekiel 36:5. Also, Amos 9:11-12 says, "In that day will I raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen. ... That they may possess the remnant of Edom. ..."

Ezekiel 36:5 says, "Therefore thus saith the Lord God; Surely in the fire of my jealousy have I spoken against the residue of the heathen and against all Idumea, which have appointed my land into their possession with the joy of all their heart, with despiteful minds, to cast it out for a prey."

Ezekiel 35:2-5 says, "Son of man, set thy face against mount Seir, and prophesy against it. ... Because thou hast had a perpetual hatred, and hast shed the blood of the children of Israel by the force of the sword in the time of their calamity, in the time that their iniquity had an end."

Rubin said that both the IDF and the Mossad had examined Petra from a strategic and military perspective.

"The Old Testament speaks of a coming war between Israel and the Palestinians. Any fool can see the Palestinians do not want peace with Israel. We would all be wise to keep an eye on Petra in regard to future events in world history," Rubin concluded.

Speaking of what Jewish writings include about the end times, Eidensohn told WorldNetDaily, "As a Jew -- who has divinely imparted secrets about the affairs of earth, especially the family of Abraham, Ishmael and Esau, Israel, Moslems and Christians -- we see the world heading away from secular [conflicts] to religious ones. The Moslems are pushing up into Russia, and as they gain nuclear weapons, they will not be afraid of China, either. This is the war of the jihad people against America. It is a war against not the U.S.,

but Christianity.

"The mystical books stress that in the end of days the secular Jews will battle the authority of the rabbis, attempt to make peace with Ishmael, fail, and after that will be the Messianic Era. Zionism was founded to create solutions for the 'Jewish problem,' and the Orthodox opposed this, saying that there will never be a solution for the 'Jewish problem' until Jews behave so honestly and so correctly that Messiah came. As Israelis realize that the Arabs will never make peace, the Orthodox movement is exploding. When Rabbi Amnon Yitschok speaks (he is a former secularist, as are the major movers in the 'Return movement') tens of thousands of people crowd the stadium. Outside, people hawk tickets for ridiculous prices. Once inside, hundreds of people come forward with their gold and silver nose and earrings, and promise to Return. Israel is now a land pulsing with the Messiah and a large amount of people who are coming to grips with the realities opposed to their fervent secular beliefs."

Eindensohn told WorldNetDaily that he believes end-times prophecy has been unfolding over the past decade.

"You remember, of course, that Iraq rained down Scud missiles on Israel, 39 huge containers of explosives, and almost nobody was killed, despite the fact that the Jews were penned up in their apartments and could not go to bomb shelters for fear of poison gas. This was in the Gulf War and was one of the first major public miracles that will herald in the Messianic Era," he added.

"The Orthodox community can take the constant saber rattling because they believe that Arafat and Hussein are harbingers of the Messiah, but the secular community cannot take it. They seek solutions, and there are none. This is the major issue in modern Israel today: whether to seek solutions at any price, or to forget about them and await the Messiah. More and more people realize that there are no secular solutions. Nobody wants peace; they want peace without Jews."

As interest in the end times and the Great Tribulation continues to grow in Western culture, Petra will most likely continue its mysterious hold on those who look to the scriptures for clues to future events.

*Anthony C. LoBaido is an international correspondent for WorldNetDaily.*

## Appendix 11: Bozrah the Sheep Pen of the Messiah

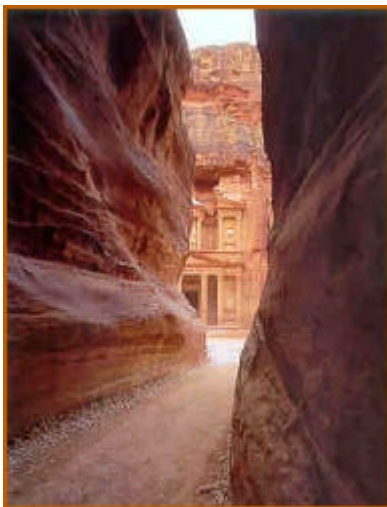
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### ***The Location of the Coming of the Messiah according to the Hebrew Scriptures.***

The purpose of this study is to show where the Second Coming of the Messiah will take place. This subject is often misunderstood by even the most noted scholars. There is much confusion concerning the timing of the Second Coming and the Rapture of the Church, and the term Battle of Armageddon is also an event that is often misunderstood. This will detail the scriptures indicating the return of the Jewish Messiah, Yeshua (Hebrew for Jesus).

The main error about the Valley of Armageddon is that it is incorrectly named. From the Hebrew Har-Meggido or Mount Meggido. Meggido is an ancient city near the Valley of Jezreel. There is no battle here only a gathering of the Gentile armies of the Anti-Messiah against the nation of Israel. This gathering is very much like the gathering of the Allied Forces in Ryad, Saudi-Arabia in Operation Desert Storm 1 in the early 1990's. Bozrah is not the same Boseria in southern Iraq. (Both meaning sheep pen but are different locations.)



The armies are gathered, and Israel will learn of the passage:

Matthew 24:15-16, "Therefore when you see the 'abomination of desolation,' spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place" (whoever reads, let him understand), then let those who are in Judea **flee to the mountains.**"

They heed this prophesy and flee to the mountainous wilderness in Southern Jordan (Edom) to a city called Bozrah. Bozrah is an Old Testament city in Edom whose name translates as sheep pen. The city that closely resembles a sheep pen in Southern Jordan is the ancient Roman city called Petra. A rock fortress that is highly defensible with the surrounding mountains. The remnant of Israel flees Jerusalem as foretold in Isaiah.

Isaiah 33:16-17 "He will dwell on high; His place of defense will be the **fortress of rocks**;



Bread will be given him, His water will be sure. Your eyes will see the King in His beauty; They will see the land that is very far off."

The LORD will provide for the remnant just as He did for the Israelites during the Exodus from Egypt. A clear passage of the remnants gathering as prophesied by Micah.

Micah 2:12-13 "I will surely assemble all of you, O Jacob, I will surely gather the remnant of Israel; I will put them together (in Bozrah) like **sheep of the fold**, Like a flock in the midst of their pasture; They shall make a loud noise because of so many people. The one who breaks open will come up before them; They will break out, Pass through the gate, And go out by it; Their king will pass before them, With the LORD at their head."

One way in and one way out of the city.

The term **sheep of the fold** is the Hebrew name for the city of **Bozrah**. The phrase should read ...I will put them together in Bozrah... when a city is not well known the translators often usually translate the meaning of the name instead of the name itself. For example Jerusalem is well known and is usually never "the city of peace" which is what the name translates. The passage that clearly shows the battle which is to take place is clearly written in Isaiah 34:6 " The sword of the LORD is filled with blood, It is made overflowing with fatness, With the blood of lambs and goats, With the fat of the kidneys of rams. For the **LORD has a sacrifice in Bozrah**, And a great slaughter in the land of Edom."

#### Isaiah 34

*Judgment on the Nations* ¶¶ *The LORD's Wrath upon the Nations* ¶

<sup>1</sup> Come near, **you nations**, to hear; ¶ And heed, you people! ¶ Let the earth hear, and all that is in it, ¶ The world and all things that come forth from it. ¶

<sup>2</sup> For the indignation of the LORD is against all nations, ¶ And His fury against all their armies; ¶ He has utterly destroyed them, ¶ He has given them over to the slaughter. ¶

<sup>3</sup> Also their slain shall be thrown out; ¶ Their stench shall rise from their corpses, ¶ And the mountains shall be melted with their blood. ¶

<sup>4</sup> All the host of heaven shall be dissolved, ¶ And the heavens shall be rolled up like a scroll; ¶ All their host shall fall down ¶ As the leaf falls from the vine, ¶ And as fruit falling from a fig tree. ¶¶¶

<sup>5</sup> **For My sword shall be bathed in heaven; ¶ Indeed it shall come down on Edom, ¶ And on the people of My curse, for judgment. ¶**

<sup>6</sup> The sword of the LORD is filled with blood, ¶ It is made overflowing with fatness, ¶ With the blood of lambs and goats, ¶ With the fat of the kidneys of rams. ¶ **For the LORD has a sacrifice in Bozrah, ¶ And a great slaughter in the land of Edom. ¶**

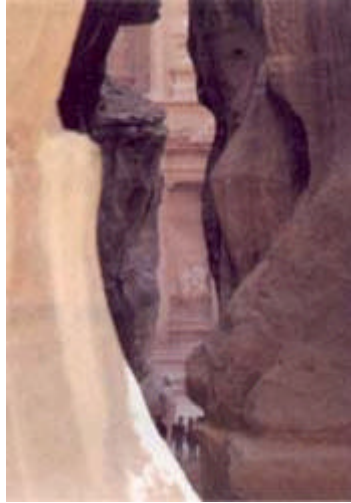
<sup>7</sup> The wild oxen shall come down with them, ¶ And the young bulls with the mighty bulls; ¶ Their land shall be soaked with blood, ¶ And their dust saturated with fatness. ¶¶¶

<sup>8</sup> **For it is the day of the LORD's vengeance, ¶ The year of recompense for the cause of Zion. ¶**

#### Isaiah 62

<sup>11</sup> Indeed the LORD has proclaimed ¶ To the end of the world: ¶ **"Say to the daughter of Zion, ¶ Surely your salvation is coming; ¶ Behold, His reward is with Him, ¶ And His work before Him."** ¶

<sup>12</sup> And they shall call them The Holy People, ¶ The Redeemed of the LORD; ¶ And you shall be called Sought Out, ¶ A City Not Forsaken.



**Isaiah 63**

<sup>1</sup> Who is this who comes from Edom, ¶ With dyed garments from Bozrah, ¶ This One who is glorious in His apparel, ¶ Traveling in the greatness of His strength?--

¶¶¶ "I who speak in righteousness, mighty to save." ¶¶¶

<sup>2</sup> Why is Your apparel red, ¶ And Your garments like one who treads in the winepress? ¶¶¶

<sup>3</sup> "I have trodden the winepress alone, ¶ And from the peoples no one was with Me. ¶ For I have trodden them in My anger, ¶ And trampled them in My fury; ¶ Their blood is sprinkled upon My garments, ¶ And I have stained all My robes. ¶

<sup>4</sup> For the day of vengeance is in My heart, ¶ And the year of My redeemed has come.



¶ ¶ "Who could this be? Only the Messianic Person, **the only one who is capable to save**. The garments are dyed with blood, and not His blood. The blood is from the war with the armies of the Anti-Messiah who have chased the Jewish people from Jerusalem to Bozrah or Petra. The following passage is often thought to be the Messiah's blood, but it is clear that the Messiah was given glorified clothing at the resurrection.

**Revelation 19:11-13** Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat

on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war. His eyes were like a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns. He had a name written that no one knew except Himself. **He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood**, and His name is called The Word of God.

Something happens in this city to cause such judgment that it will like that of Babylon a perpetual wasteland. Jeremiah 49:13-16 "For I have sworn by Myself," says the LORD, "that Bozrah shall become a desolation, a reproach, a waste, and a curse. And all its cities shall be perpetual wastes." I have heard a message from the LORD, And an ambassador has been sent to the nations: "Gather together, come against her, And rise up to battle! "For indeed, I will make you small among nations, Despised among men. Your fierceness has deceived you, The pride of your heart, **O you who dwell in the clefts of the rock**, Who hold the height of the hill! Though you make your nest as high as the eagle, I will bring you down from there," says the LORD.

Jeremiah 49:22 Behold, He shall come up and fly like the eagle, And spread **His wings over Bozrah**; The heart of the mighty men of Edom in that day shall be Like the heart of a woman in birth pangs.

These passages collectively show that something takes place at the Second Coming of the Messiah. The initial return will not be in Armageddon, or on the Mount of Olives. A summary sequence of the events are as follows:

1. At the close of the tribulation all Gentile nations gather in the Valley of Jezreel near the Mountain of Meggido.
2. The Jewish remnant will flee Jerusalem and run south because the armies of the Anti-Messiah are in the north in Meggido.
3. They will flee the land of Israel and somehow end up in Southern Jordan (Edom) in the city of Petra or ancient Bozrah.
4. Out of desperation the Jewish remnant will call upon the Messiah while in Petra or Bozrah. They will say; "Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD." All of Israel will be Saved (Romans 11).
5. **The Messiah will return with the great sacrifice of the Gentile armies** in Bozrah. Bozrah will be made into a total burning wasteland through out the millennial kingdom.
6. The Sword of the Lord will smite the Gentile Armies until there is blood up to the horses neck for 200 miles back to Jerusalem.
7. The movement will be northward to Jerusalem where He will make the victory ascent to the Mount of Olives.
8. There will be a gathering of all surviving Gentiles where the Messiah will divide them according to their helping Jesus' brethren the Jews. The pro-Semitic sheep gentiles will be allowed into the Kingdom and the anti-Semitic goat gentiles go into everlasting punishment.
9. The Davidic throne will be established in Jerusalem and the earth will be renovated for the Messianic Kingdom that will last one thousand years.



## Appendix 12: The Persecution of the Sun Clothed Woman Rev. 12:13-16

<http://www.sacred-texts.com/chr/tbr/index.htm>

"And when the 'Dragon' saw that he was cast unto the earth, he **persecuted the 'Woman'** which brought forth the '**MAN-CHILD.**' And to the 'Woman' were given **two wings of a Great Eagle**, that she might fly into the Wilderness, **into her place**, where she is nourished for a '**time,**' and '**times,**' and '**half a time**' (3½ years), from the face of the '**Serpent**' (The Dragon). And the '**Serpent**' cast out of his mouth water as a flood after the 'Woman,' that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood. And the earth helped the 'Woman'; and the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed up the flood which the Dragon cast out of his mouth."

When the Dragon is cast out of Heaven into the Earth, knowing that his defeat has been brought about by the elevation of the "MAN-CHILD" to the place of power, he will concentrate his hatred and malice on the "Sun-Clothed Woman" (Israel), who gave the "Man-Child" birth. To the "Woman" will be given the "WINGS OF A GREAT EAGLE" that she may fly into the "Wilderness," into "HER PLACE" where she shall be nourished for a "TIME, TIMES and HALF A TIME," or 3½ years. This takes us back to the flight of Israel from Egypt, of which God said--"Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on 'EAGLE'S WINGS,' and brought you unto myself." Ex. 19:4. As the "Woman" and the "Dragon" are symbols, so are the "Eagle's Wings." They speak of the rapid and safe flight of the "Woman" (ISRAEL) into the "Wilderness" where she shall be safely kept and nourished for 3½ years until the Dragon is bound.

The Prophet Isaiah speaks of this time when he says--"Come, my people (ISRAEL).enter thou into thy **CHAMBERS**, and **SHUT THY DOORS ABOUT THEE: HIDE THYSELF AS IT WERE FOR A LITTLE WHILE** (3½ years) **UNTIL THE INDIGNATION** (The Great Tribulation) **IS OVERPAST.** . . . In **THAT DAY** (the Day of the casting out of the Dragon) the Lord with His sore and great and strong sword shall punish '**LEVIATHAN**' (the "**Dragon**" or "**Serpent**") the **piercing SERPENT**, even '**LEVIATHAN**' the **crooked SERPENT**, and He shall slay '**THE DRAGON**' that is in the sea." Isa. 26:20; 27:1. This may mean the "**BEAST**" that comes up **out of the sea**, the "**ANTICHRIST.**" Rev. 13:1-2.

This is the time that Christ refers to in Matt. 24:15-22. "When ye therefore shall see the '**ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION,**' spoken of by Daniel the Prophet (Dan. 9:27), stand in the Holy Place (whoso readeth, let him understand), then let them which be in Judea flee into the mountains: let him which is on the housetop not come down to take anything out of his house: neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes. And woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days! But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the Sabbath day: for then shall be **GREAT TRIBULATION, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.** And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved; but for the **ELECT'S SAKE** (the elect of Israel) those days **shall be shortened.**" The flight that Matthew here speaks about is not the same flight that Luke speaks about. "And when ye shall see Jerusalem **COMPASSED WITH ARMIES**, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh. Then let them which are in Judea flee to the mountains: and let them which are in the midst of it depart out: and let not them that are in the countries enter thereinto. For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. But woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck, in those days! for there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people. And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be **led away captive into all nations:** and **JERUSALEM SHALL BE TRODDEN DOWN OF THE GENTILES, UNTIL THE TIMES OF THE GENTILES BE FULFILLED.**" Luke 21:20-24.

A careful comparison of these two passages will reveal their difference. Luke refers to the "Destruction of Jerusalem" by Titus, A. D. 70, at which time Jerusalem was compassed by the Roman Army, and the sufferings of the inhabitants of the city were so great that mothers

cooked and ate their own children. This is **past**. And verse 24 has been fulfilled for the Jews have been "**led away captive into ALL NATIONS**," where they still remain, and Jerusalem has since then been "**TRODDEN DOWN OF THE GENTILES**," and will continue to be until the "**TIMES OF THE GENTILES**" shall be fulfilled. But the "**flight**" that Matthew speaks about is still **future**. He locates it at the time of the "Great Tribulation," which he says is to be preceded by the **setting up** of the "**ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION**," spoken of by Daniel the Prophet. The gods, or idols of the heathen, are spoken of as "**ABOMINATIONS**." Milcom, or Molech, was the "**abomination**" of the Ammonites; Chemosh, the "**abomination**" of Moab. 1. Kings 11:5-7. This interprets the "**ABOMINATION**" spoken of by Daniel, as nothing other than an "**IDOL**" or "**FALSE GOD**." In the "Middle of the Week," a "**DESOLATOR**" (Antichrist) will appear and cause the sacrifices and oblations to cease, and set up in the "Holy Place" of the Temple an "**IDOL**," and that "Idol" will be an "**IMAGE OF THE BEAST**." Rev. 13:14-15.

Let us now return to the "Flight of the Woman" and see if we can locate "**her place**," the "**chamber**" to which she is to flee, and "**shut to the door**," and "**hide herself for a little while**," and be **nourished by God** for a "Time, and Times, and Half a Time," or 3½ years.

### THE CITIES OF REFUGE

The "Cities of Refuge" of Old Testament times are a type of this "Wilderness Refuge" of the Children of Israel.

The "Cities of Refuge" were designated cities, 3 on each side the river Jordan, where the "Man-Slayer" could flee for safety from the "Avenger of Blood." If it was proved after trial that he had slain a man "wilfully," he was turned over to the "Avenger of Blood," but if he did it unwittingly, his life was spared, but he had to remain in the city until the death of the High Priest. If there were no "Man-Slayer" there would be no "Avenger of Blood," and therefore no need for a "City of Refuge."

Now if I find in the New Testament that a certain class of people are called upon to flee to a "Place of Refuge" for the protection of their lives, then I must believe that they flee because an "Avenger of Blood" is after them, and that they flee because they are guilty of "Manslaughter."

Such a class of people I find in the Jewish Race. They were the cause of the death of Christ, and though He was crucified by the Roman authorities they assumed the guilt for they cried--"His **blood** be on **Us**, and on **Our Children**." Matt. 27:25. At first sight it looks like "wilful" murder, yet from the prayer of Jesus on the Cross--"Father, forgive them for they **know not what they do**," it is clear that Jesus' death was not so much a premeditated murder as it was a murder committed in a blind religious frenzy. Paul says--"had they **known** they would not have crucified the Lord of Glory." 1. Cor. 2:8.

It is clear then that the Jewish race is only guilty of "Man-slaughter." As the "Man-Slayer" of Jesus they have been for over 1800 years running for a "City of Refuge" and have not as yet reached it. The "Avenger of Blood" has been on their track and has hounded them from nation to nation, and the epithet of "**The Wandering Jew**" has followed them down the centuries, and the prophecy of Moses is being fulfilled that they should find no rest for the sole of their foot. Deut. 28:64-67.

If the Jews are the "Man-Slayer" who is the "Avenger of Blood"? Antichrist.

And now as to the "City of Refuge" that God will provide for Israel when the "Avenger of Blood" (Antichrist), who shall then be indwelt by the Dragon, is on her track.

When the Lord God brought the Children of Israel out of Egypt they journeyed from the Red Sea, tarrying for a while at Mt. Sinai to receive the Law and build the Tabernacle, until they came, one year, after leaving Egypt, to Kadesh Barnea. There they sent up spies to spy out the land of Canaan, but refused to go up and take possession of the land, and were compelled to wander in the Wilderness south of the Dead Sea. There God took care of them and fed them for 40 years. Now it is in the same Wilderness that God is going to provide for them a place of "Refuge" in the day when the "Avenger of Blood" shall seek to destroy them.

Speaking of the Antichrist, the Prophet Daniel says—

"He shall enter also into the Glorious Land (Palestine) 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**." Dan. 11:41.

Now Edom takes in the Wilderness where Israel wandered for 40 years. And it is here in Edom that the "City of Refuge" that God has provided for Israel is located, and is known today as Petra. It was a great commercial centre in the days of King Solomon. In A. D. 105 the Romans conquered the country and called the province Arabia Petra. When the power of Rome waned Petra gradually fell into the hands of the Arabs and became completely lost to the civilized world in the seventh century, and remained so until it was rediscovered by Burckhardt in 1812.

It is located in the mountains like as in the crater of a volcano. It has but one entrance, and that is through a narrow, winding defile or canyon from 12 to 40 feet wide, the sides of which are precipitous and at times so close together as to almost shut out the blue sky above and make you think you are passing through a subterranean passageway. The height of the sides varies from 200 to 1000 feet, and the length of the canyon is about two miles. No other city in the world has such a wonderful gateway. The sides of the canyon are lined with wonderful monuments and temples carved out of the rocky sandstone of the sides. Once inside the rocky inclosure of the city we find the ruins of magnificent buildings, tombs and monuments. The cliffs that surround the city are carved and honeycombed with excavations to a height of 300 feet above the floor of the valley, and the excavations cut as they are out of different colored strata of the rock, such as red, purple, blue, black, white and yellow, lend a beauty to their appearance that is indescribable and overpowering to the beholder.

When the time comes for the "Man-Slayer" (Israel), to escape from the hands of the "Avenger of Blood" (Antichrist), the rocky fastness of the ancient city of Petra will be her "City of Refuge." We read that when the "Woman" (Israel) shall flee into the Wilderness that the "Serpent" (Antichrist, indwelt by Satan) shall cast a flood of water out of his mouth after her to destroy her, but that the earth shall open her mouth and swallow the flood. That is, Antichrist will send his army after the fleeing Israelites, and it will probably be swallowed up in a "Sand storm" of the desert, and Israel shall safely reach her place of refuge, where she shall be safe, not until the death of the High Priest, but until the return of "The High Priest" (Jesus) from Heaven, who as "King-Priest" of the Armies of Heaven will deliver her and allow her to leave her place of refuge. During the period of Israel's 'hiding" in the Wilderness God will "**nourish**" her as He did during her 40 years' wandering in the same Wilderness in the days of Moses.

## **Appendix 13: Excerpts from Thy Kingdom Come, Thy Will Be Done Chapter 11**

Source: <http://www.bible-prophecy.com/petra.htm>

### ***Petra***

**The rose-red city of Petra, an ancient Edomite city, and later Nabatean capitol, may be the place God will protect the fleeing remnant of Israel during the Great Tribulation.**

### **The Flight of the Remnant from Jerusalem at Mid-Tribulation**

Earlier it was pointed out that Revelation 12 is a symbolic overview of all of Israel's history. In Revelation 12:6 we read, "The woman fled into the desert to a place prepared for her by God, where she might be taken care of for 1,260 days." The woman is symbolic of Israel. 1260 days is exactly three and one half years--the standard lunar (prophetic) years of the Bible, with 360 days each.

Later in the same chapter, this event is described this way:

The woman was given the two wings of a great eagle, so that she might fly to the place prepared for her in the desert, where she would be taken care of for a time, times and half a time, out of the serpent's reach. Then from his mouth the serpent spewed water like a river, to overtake the woman and sweep her away with the torrent.

But the earth helped the woman by opening its mouth and swallowing the river that the dragon had spewed out of his mouth. (Revelation 12:14-16)

This also corresponds to Jesus' warning in His Olivet Discourse, a sermon by Jesus to his disciples known as the "Olivet Discourse"--so-called because Jesus was seated with his disciples on the Mt. of Olives opposite the Second Temple when he gave this sweeping outline of the future.

So when you see standing in the holy place 'the abomination that causes desolation,' spoken of through the prophet Daniel--let the reader understand--then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. Let no one on the roof of his house go down to take anything out of the house. Let no one in the field go back to get his cloak. How dreadful it will be in those days for pregnant women and nursing mothers! Pray that your flight will not take place in winter or on the Sabbath. For then there will be great distress, unequalled from the beginning of the world until now--and never to be equaled again. If those days had not been cut short, no one would survive, but for the sake of the elect those days will be shortened. (Matthew 24:15-22)

### **Jerusalem Surrounded by Armies**

The parallel passage in Luke 21 adds what Matthew does not tell us, that Jerusalem will be surrounded by hostile armies at the time of the end.

When you see Jerusalem being surrounded by armies, you will know that its desolation is near. Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, let those in the city get out, and let those in the country not enter the city. For this is the time of punishment in fulfillment of all that has been written.

How dreadful it will be in those days for pregnant women and nursing mothers! There will be great distress in the land and wrath against this people. They will fall by the sword and will be taken as prisoners to all the nations. Jerusalem will be trampled on by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled. (Luke 21:20-24)

This same scene is depicted by the Old Testament prophet Zechariah,



Behold, a day of the LORD is coming, when the spoil taken from you will be divided in the midst of you. For I will gather all the nations against Jerusalem to battle, and the city shall be taken and the houses plundered and the women ravished; half of the city shall go into exile, but the rest of the people shall not be cut off from the city. Then the LORD will go forth and fight against those nations as when he fights on a day of battle. (Zechariah 14:1-3)

Jerusalem, "trodden down by the Gentiles" again and again since the time of the Babylonian captivity is yet to suffer one last final, terrible invasion by the Gentiles.

#### Flight of Jews from Judea

The prophet Joel foresaw this calamity.

Blow the trumpet in Zion; sound the alarm on my holy hill. Let all who live in the land tremble, for the day of the LORD is coming. It is close at hand--a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and blackness. Like dawn spreading across the mountains a large and mighty army comes, such as never was of old nor ever will be in ages to come. Before them fire devours, behind them a flame blazes. Before them the land is like the garden of Eden, behind them, a desert waste--nothing escapes them. They have the appearance of horses; they gallop along like cavalry. With a noise like that of chariots they leap over the mountain tops, like a crackling fire consuming stubble, like a mighty army drawn up for battle.

At the sight of them, nations are in anguish; every face turns pale. They charge like warriors; they scale walls like soldiers. They all march in line, not swerving from their course. They do not jostle each other; each marches straight ahead. They plunge through defenses without breaking ranks. They rush upon the city; they run along the wall. They climb into the houses; like thieves they enter through the windows. Before them the earth shakes, the sky trembles, the sun and moon are darkened, and the stars no longer shine. (Joel 2:1-10)

The size of this believing remnant at the mid-tribulation point is open to discussion, but for the sake of argument it would seem to be some thousands or perhaps tens of thousands of believing Jews who are warned to flee from Jerusalem.

The words and teachings of Jesus to His people Israel were not heeded when He was with them during His First Advent. We can not expect the entire nation to take this warning to leave Jerusalem seriously even though it will no doubt be heralded again by a new generation of prophets in the end time. Those Jews in Israel who have come to know Yeshua personally during the first half of the tribulation will be responsive and it is to this believing remnant that Jesus makes His appeal.

#### Petra - The Prepared Place

##### Historical Background of Petra

The ancient capital of Edom was the city of Bozrah---the Hebrew bosra means sheepfold. It lies 30 miles southeast of the Dead Sea in present-day Jordan. The present Jordanian city of Buseirah is not on any modern road but is a remote mountain village of difficult access. Ancient Bozrah at the same location, however, was on the main North West trade route known as the King's Highway (Numbers 20:17). The city was noted for its weaving industry and export of dyed garments.

Edom, as the territory allotted to Jacob's brother Esau, is documented in Genesis 36. A man named Bozrah was a descendant of Seir the Horite, who inhabited the land "before there were any kings in Israel." The historical record in Deuteronomy includes this parenthetical note:

(The Emities used to live there--a people strong and numerous, and as tall as the Anakites. Like the Anakites, they too were considered Rephaites, but the Moabites called them Emities. Horites used to live in Seir, but the descendants of Esau drove them out. They destroyed the

Horites from before them and settled in their place, just as Israel did in the land the LORD gave them as their possession.) (Deuteronomy:2:10-12)

Edom's long-standing enmity against Israel ultimately brought God's judgment on Edom. Obadiah the prophet devotes his short but potent message to the judgment of Edom, telling us of her pride and arrogance and the reasons for God's final judgment on these people. Amos, the shepherd of Tekoa, wrote of impending judgment on Edom:

This is what the LORD says: "For three sins of Edom, even for four, I will not turn back. Because he pursued his brother with a sword, stifling all compassion, because his anger raged continually and his fury flamed unchecked, I will send fire upon Teman that will consume the fortresses of Bozrah." (Amos 1:11-12)

Several writers have written fine descriptions of Petra and the history of that region of ancient Edom. The Nabateans displaced the descendants of Esau probably in the 6th Century BC. They controlled the entire region as far North as Damascus until the First Century. The Greeks and Romans built extensively in Jordan and the area around Bozrah and Petra was well populated as late as Roman times. Today the area is desolate and sparsely populated because of the very low rainfall and scarcity of natural resources there.

South of Bozrah, 20 some miles on the King's Highway, is Petra, the capital city of the Nabateans. Tourists to this vast mountain-enclosed ancient city in the Wadi Musa generally enter from the east on foot or on horseback through El Siq, an 6000 feet long narrow cleft (width: 12-30 feet) with 100-500 foot high cliff walls. Tombs and houses carved into the bed rock over a vast area at Petra would be suitable for temporarily housing many thousands of people. Mt. Hor is nearby, where Aaron died after Moses passed the high priestly garments of Aaron on to Eliezer in the sight of the congregation (Numbers 20:23-29). An Islamic shrine marks the probable tomb site.

Not to be conquered by Antichrist

The route of escape for the Jewish believing remnant from Antichrist's military pursuit as he seeks to annihilate them, has been made ready by the Lord:

He [the last king of the North] will also invade the Beautiful Land. Many countries will fall, but Edom, Moab and the leaders of Ammon will be delivered from his hand. (Daniel 11:41)

A hiding place

Evidently Jordan is given special protection during the last great invasion of Israel which will in fact devastate the Land. Isaiah the Prophet instructs the believing remnant of Israel to find a safe hiding place during the time of Jacob's trouble when God's judgment will fall on the whole earth,

Go, my people, enter your rooms and shut the doors behind you; hide yourselves for a little while until his wrath has passed by. See, the LORD is coming out of his dwelling to punish the people of the earth for their sins. The earth will disclose the blood shed upon her; she will conceal her slain no longer. (Isaiah 26:20-21)

During the second half of the tribulation period there will be no safe place to hide anywhere on the earth--except in the refuge God has provided, probably at Petra. We gain glimpses of how terrible life will become for non-believers in those days from many passages in the Book of the Revelation. For example at the opening of the Sixth Seal of judgment John notes:

I watched as he opened the sixth seal. There was a great earthquake. The sun turned black like sackcloth made of goat hair, the whole moon turned blood red, and the stars in the sky fell to earth, as late figs drop from a fig tree when shaken by a strong wind. The sky receded

like a scroll, rolling up, and every mountain and island was removed from its place. Then the kings of the earth, the princes, the generals, the rich, the mighty, and every slave and every free man hid in caves and among the rocks of the mountains. They called to the mountains and the rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! For the great day of their wrath has come, and who can stand?" (Revelation 6:12-17)

**Appendix 14: The Coming Exile of Israel in Edom**  
**by Lambert Dolphin**  
**¶With Chuck Missler at Petra, Jordan, February 1996**

**The Right of the Jews to Live in the Land**

The God of Israel does not act whimsically or arbitrarily, but deals with individuals and nations on the basis of great contracts or covenants which He Himself initiates. Five principle covenants--all still in effect--apply to the nation of Israel. These include the Abrahamic Covenant (later confirmed to Isaac and Jacob), The Mosaic Covenant, the Palestinian Covenant, the Davidic Covenant, and the New Covenant. (For details see The Mainline Covenants of God). Covenants can be conditional or unconditional. As it turns out only one of the covenants applicable to Israel is conditional--the right of the Jews to live in the promised land. 2 Kings, Chapter 17, documents God's reasons for His temporarily removing the ten Northern tribes from the Land. The Lord indicates that the approaching 70 year Babylonian captivity would allow the Land to enjoy its seventh-year Sabbath rests which had been ignored by the Jews since their entry into the land under Joshua. Small numbers of Jews returned to the Land at the end of the appointed 70 years in Babylon, a modest Second Temple was constructed and the city walls rebuilt, in answers to Daniel's prayer of intercession (Daniel 9:1-19). The land from that time until now was under gentile dominion, however. (See The 400 Years Between the Testaments). The second application of the conditional provisions of the Palestinian Covenant occurred when Israel as a nation rejected her rightful Messiah, Yeshua, on Palm Sunday.

As he [Jesus] was now drawing near, at the descent of the Mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works that they had seen, saying, "Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!" And some of the Pharisees in the multitude said to him, "Teacher, rebuke your disciples." He answered, "I tell you, if these were silent, the very stones would cry out." And when he drew near and saw the city he wept over it, saying, "Would that even today you knew the things that make for peace! But now they are hid from your eyes. For the days shall come upon you, when your enemies will cast up a bank about you and surround you, and hem you in on every side, and dash you to the ground, you and your children within you, and they will not leave one stone upon another in you; because you did not know the time of your visitation." (Luke 19:37-44)

One might have thought that during the 400 years following the close of the Old Testament the nation would have learned its lessons from history and been ready for the coming of the Promised One. But the priesthood had become thoroughly corrupt and the bulk of the populace wanted relief from Roman Oppression--not release from inner evil, sin and death. Messiah's rejection as rightful King in the line of David was followed within a few days by His betrayal and execution. In the ensuing clamor the people asked instead for the release of Barabbas,

Now at the feast the governor was accustomed to release for the crowd any one prisoner whom they wanted. And they had then a notorious prisoner, called Barabbas. So when they had gathered, Pilate said to them, "Whom do you want me to release for you, Barabbas or Jesus who is called Christ?" For he knew that it was out of envy that they had delivered him up. Besides, while he was sitting on the judgment seat, his wife sent word to him, "Have nothing to do with that righteous man, for I have suffered much over him today in a dream." Now the chief priests and the elders persuaded the people to ask for Barabbas and destroy Jesus. The governor again said to them, "Which of the two do you want me to release for you?" And they said, "Barab'bas." Pilate said to them, "Then what shall I do with Jesus who

is called Christ?" They all said, "Let him be crucified." And he said, "Why, what evil has he done?" But they shouted all the more, "Let him be crucified." So when Pilate saw that he was gaining nothing, but rather that a riot was beginning, he took water and washed his hands before the crowd, saying, "I am innocent of this man's blood; see to it yourselves." And all the people answered, "His blood be on us and on our children!" (Matthew 27:15-25)

The resurrection of Jesus three days after his death, and the sudden and dramatic formation of the church of Jesus Christ in Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost (50 days after the resurrection) did not turn the heart of the nation to their Messiah. It was only a matter of time until the Jewish followers of Jesus, some thousands in number, were forced to flee Jerusalem. Soon the unbelieving Jews, in their continuing revolt against Rome, provoked the Romans to remove them from the land. Thus in reality the provisional terms of the Palestinian Covenant were invoked for the second time by the Owner of the Land. The great Diaspora of the Jews from the Land this time lasted not 70 years but for 2000 years! The exciting history of the regathering of the Jews from all lands began a hundred years ago---culminating in the rebirth of the State of Israel in 1948 and the tiny nation's rise to power and a restored place of great power and influence as a modern progressive democracy. Thankfully, God is faithful to His promises in spite of our unbelief! One might ask if the past hundred years of great economic development, prosperity, and overwhelming military victories against enormous odds, has brought the Jews to a place of contrition and repentance and humility as far as their God is concerned---especially since the restoration of the State of Israel was born out of terrible persecution and hardship? It is quite true that many thousands of Jews from all over the world have become believers in Yeshua over the past 2000 years, and these have been added to the church (see Ephesians 2:11-3:12 for God's purposes in this present age). It is true that there is also a small remnant of some thousands of believing Jews now resident in the Land of Israel, (Romans 11:5). Yet for the most part Israel is a secular state, most of her citizens are not only indifferent to the God of their Fathers, but openly hostile to any notions that the God of the Land is anything more than an interesting mythology now outgrown and to be discarded. Although God is known for his great patience and longsuffering, it is appropriate to ask how much longer the Holy God of the Covenants will tolerate the present indifference, rebellion and disregard for His Person which typifies the Israel of the past hundred years? Sadly, we have further indications from the New Testament that tell us that not only will Israel continue in its denial of Yeshua as Messiah--they will in fact readily embrace a counterfeit Messiah. Jesus warned His people,

You search the scriptures, because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness to me; yet you refuse to come to me that you may have life. I do not receive glory from men. But I know that you have not the love of God within you. I have come in my Father's name, and you do not receive me; if another comes in his own name, him you will receive. How can you believe, who receive glory from one another and do not seek the glory that comes from the only God? (John 5:39-44)

Israel is God's model nation, yet in spite of the fact that Israel's history of repeated failure is on public display in the Bible for all to read, God has neither abandoned nor rejected His chosen people. When all the final scores are in concerning all the nations and their animosity and hatred of the one true God no one will have any cause for boasting. In fact God will judge all the nations of the world by how they have treated the Jews (Joel 3)! One hundred years of God's grace, kindness, mercy and favor have not turned the nation of Israel towards faith in their God. Nor are they any closer to accepting their true Messiah. Will then God banish the Jews from the land again, perhaps this time permanently? The answer from Scripture is clear. Israel's final testing will occur **in the land** and involve the destruction of a majority of the populace, a time of trial compared to which the Nazi holocaust will pale to insignificance.

### **The Next Major Biblical Event in History: The Rapture of the Church**

According to the New Testament, God has been occupied with the calling out of a church from all the nations:

Peter has related how God first visited the Gentiles, to **take out of them a people for his name**. And with this the words of the prophets agree, as it is written, 'After this I will return, and I will rebuild the dwelling of David, which has fallen; I will rebuild its ruins, and I will set it up, that the rest of men may seek the Lord, and all the Gentiles who are called by my name, says the Lord, who has made these things known from of old.' (Acts 15:14-18. The quote is from Amos 9:11-12).

In his great discourse on Israel's future the Apostle Paul assures us,

¶Lest you [believing Gentiles] be wise in your own conceits, I want you to understand this mystery, brethren: a hardening has come upon part of Israel, until the full number of the Gentiles come in [to the church], and so [or, "then"] all Israel will be saved; as it is written, "The Deliverer will come from Zion, he will banish ungodliness from Jacob"; "and this will be my covenant with them when I take away their sins." As regards the gospel they are enemies of God, for your sake; but as regards election they are beloved for the sake of their forefathers. For the gifts and the call of God are irrevocable. Just as you were once disobedient to God but now have received mercy because of their disobedience, so they have now been disobedient in order that by the mercy shown to you they also may receive mercy. For God has consigned all men to disobedience, that he may have mercy upon all. (Romans 11:25-32)

### **The 144,000 Called**

Revelation Chapter Seven describes the calling out of 144,000 select Jewish evangelists from the nation Israel at the beginning of the Tribulation period, just after the Rapture of the Church. The 144,000 will vigorously evangelize Israel, completing the task begun by the disciples of Jesus, within Israel but also extending their field to all the nations. The result of their bold and fearless evangelism program will be hundreds of thousands of converts to Jesus Christ. This great company of true believers are neither part of the church, nor members of believing Israel as such. They are usually called "the tribulation saints" by Bible scholars. Persecution by the forces of evil under the beast and false prophet will be so swift and severe most, if not all, of these new converts will be martyred. After the Rapture the believing remnant of Jews in Israel who place their faith in Yeshua will be reduced temporarily to zero. However, the calling and conversion of the 144,000 will soon result in new converts to the God of Israel within the nation, (Revelation 6:9-11, 7:9-17) . Judging by recent history, the number of Jews living in Israel who find a personal relationship with Jesus on an annual basis is perhaps only a few dozen, but possibly might reach several hundreds - --as many converts to Yeshua remain secret believers and do not openly and publicly acknowledge their faith. Suffice it to say that during the first half of the tribulation period we might expect the size of the believing remnant of Jews in Israel to climb to at least several thousands, perhaps several tens of thousands.

The seven year period following the *parousia* (the rapture) and preceding the *epiphaneia* (the Second Coming in power and glory), is normally divided into two halves. The first three and a half years are characterized by some degree of apparent world peace as the false prophet (i.e. the false Messiah--Revelation 13:11-18, 2 Thessalonians 2:1-10, Matthew 24:15) in Israel negotiates a favorable Middle Eastern peace treaty with the help of the political and religious leaders of Western Europe (Revelation 13:1-10).. That peace treaty, described by Isaiah as Israel's "covenant with death," will fail---and terrible war will break out in Israel. The second half of the tribulation period is usually called "the great tribulation" (Matthew 24:21) or "the Day of the Lord." Jeremiah calls it "the time of Jacob's trouble," (Jeremiah 30-31, Daniel 12:1). See The Great and Terrible Day of the Lord.

## **The Flight of the Remnant from Jerusalem at Mid-Tribulation**

The mid-point of the tribulation is to be marked by a great sign in Jerusalem. The false Messiah (Paul's "man of sin," 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12) will enter the Third Temple in Jerusalem and declare himself to be God. That event Jesus had said in the Olivet Discourse, would bring great peril to the residents of Jerusalem. The peril for believers in Yeshua at that time period will include the immediate danger of military invasion of Jerusalem by foreign armies. The believing remnant of Jews in Jerusalem at the time the false messiah enters the Third Temple declaring himself to be God will also be in grave danger of their lives because of the antichrist's vigorous persecution of believers, that is, those few Jews who believe in the God of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Yeshua. As mentioned above, the size of this believing remnant at the mid-tribulation point is open to discussion, but for the sake of argument it would seem to be some thousands or perhaps tens of thousands of believing Jews. The warning to this group by Jesus in Matthew 24 is as follows,

"Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains; let him who is on the housetop not go down to take what is in his house; and let him who is in the field not turn back to take his mantle. And as for those who are with child and for those who give suck in those days pray that your night may not be in winter or on a sabbath."

Luke's gospel (Chapter 21) gives a slightly different slant on this crisis,

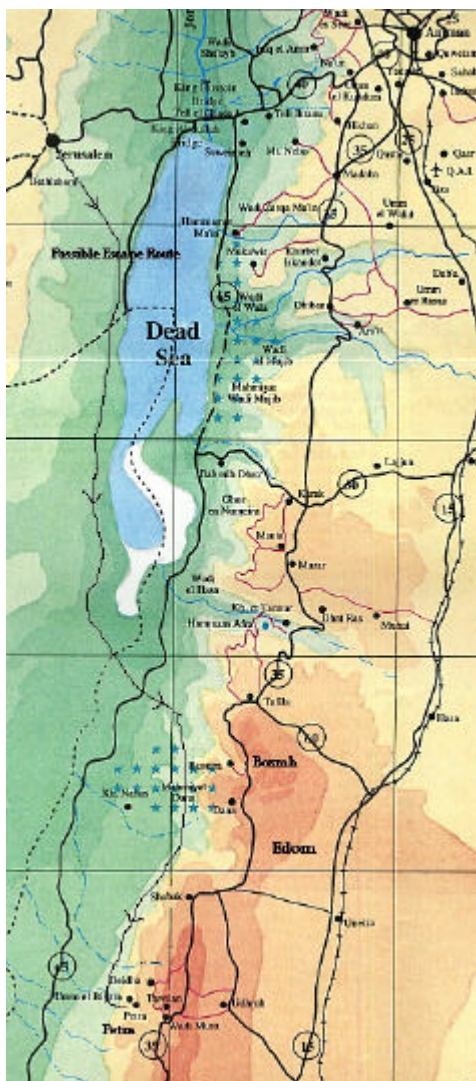
"But when you [believing Jews] see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation has come near. Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, and let those who are inside the city depart, and let not those who are out in the country enter it; for these are days of vengeance, to fulfill all that is written. Alas for those who are with child and for those who give suck in those days! For great distress shall be upon the earth and wrath upon this people; they will fall by the edge of the sword, and be led captive among all nations; and Jerusalem will be trodden down by the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled. " "And there will be signs in sun and moon and stars, and upon the earth distress of nations in perplexity at the roaring of the sea and the waves, men fainting with fear and with foreboding of what is coming on the world; for the powers of the heavens will be shaken."

Ray Stedman remarks on this event:

Who are they who must flee so urgently when the last days begin? Who dare not hesitate long enough even to go back into the house to pick up a wrap, but must immediately head for the hills? There is no need to wonder, for the Lord says plainly, "those who are in Judea" Now Judea is a geographical part of the land of Israel, ancient Palestine. It comprises the hill country surrounding the city of Jerusalem and includes the city as well. It is to the residents of Jerusalem and Judea that this warning is addressed. Furthermore, the Lord's mention of the Sabbath establishes the fact that these residents of Judea are Jews. He urges them to pray that their flight will not be in the winter, with its distress of cold, or on the Sabbath, with its travel limitations, for Jews are allowed to travel only a short distance on a Sabbath day. Later in this passage these Jews are called "the elect" ("for the sake of the elect those days will be shortened"), and this makes clear they are believing Jews, that is, men and women of faith who know and love Jesus Christ as Lord and are prepared to live or die for him. They are not Christians in the usual sense of that term, referring to those who are members of the church, for we are told that in the church there is neither Jew nor Gentile, bond nor free. Jews are not to be distinguished from Gentiles within the church. These distinctions, we are precisely told by the apostle Paul, have been invalidated in the church. The "middle wall of partition" has been eliminated; there are no distinctions of background, race or religious training that are recognized within the church of Jesus Christ. Furthermore, Christians, we are told, are free from the law and no longer observe special days, special feasts, new

moons and Sabbaths. In his letter to the Colossians the apostle Paul clearly speaks of the fact that the Sabbaths were included in those shadows which were done away in Christ. But here the Sabbath distinctly will be a restricting factor in the flight of these people. Here then will be a class of people who cannot be identified with the present day church. They will be Jewish believers in Christ who will be converted after the removal of the church and before the time of the Great Tribulation.

As Ray Stedman has noted, Jesus does not tell the residents of Tel Aviv or Haifa to flee. The greatest danger is in Jerusalem and the peril is so great that the true believers must leave town immediately. The number fleeing will certainly number thousands, perhaps several tens of thousands. They are called to flee to the mountains, and since Jerusalem is already in the mountains of Judea, the flight will evidently be down to Jericho, then across into Jordan. Most Bible scholars believe this godly remnant will find refuge in the ancient rock-hewn cliff city of Petra, or at least in the land of Edom (Southern Jordan). They will survive, protected by God, for three and a half years.



The route of escape for the Jewish believing remnant from Antichrist's military pursuit as he seeks to annihilate them, has been made ready by the Lord:

"He (the last king of the North) shall come into the glorious land. And tens of thousands shall fall, **but these shall be delivered out of his hand: Edom and Moab and the main part of the Ammonites.**" (Daniel 11:41)

Evidently Jordan is given special protection during the last great invasion of Israel which will in fact devastate the Land. Isaiah the Prophet instructs the believing remnant of Israel to find a safe hiding place during the time of Jacob's trouble when God's judgment will fall on the whole earth,

"Come, my people, enter your chambers, and shut your doors behind you; hide yourselves for a little while until the wrath is past. For behold, the LORD is coming forth out of his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity, and the earth will disclose the blood shed upon her, and will no more cover her slain." (Isaiah 26:20-21)

#### **Not All the Jews Flee to Edom**

The majority of Jews in Israel will remain in Jerusalem and elsewhere in Israel during the second half of the tribulation, ignoring the warning of Jesus given some 2000 years earlier. The majority of Jews in fact will stay---and will maintain their secular, apostate stance opposing the God of their forefathers. God will continue to warn them---as Jeremiah did at the time of the Babylonian captivity. At that time when Nebuchadnezzar pillaged Israel, remnants led by Daniel and Ezekiel had escaped to Babylon where they enjoyed God's protection and blessing. Jeremiah's warnings went unheeded in Jerusalem, yet God did not leave Himself without a witness in the capital. God clearly told His people to find refuge in Babylon but those who remained in Jerusalem died in the terrible destruction of 586 BC. The glorious Temple of Solomon was pillaged, burned and destroyed on the 9th of Av. Jeremiah



was taken by rebellious countrymen to Egypt where he was soon martyred, according to tradition. In the last half of the coming tribulation period, Jerusalem is to come under military siege and be overrun by foreign armies one more time. Zechariah announces that this will happen just prior to Messiah's final return to the city,

"For I will gather all the nations against Jerusalem to battle, and the city shall be taken and the houses plundered and the women ravished; half of the city shall go into exile, but the rest of the people shall not be cut off from the city" (Zechariah 14:2).

The prophet Joel also describes this final invasion,

"Blow the trumpet in Zion; sound the alarm on my holy mountain! Let all the inhabitants of the land (of Israel) tremble, for **the day of the LORD** is coming, it is near, a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and thick darkness! Like blackness there is spread upon the mountains a great and powerful people; their like has never been from of old, nor will be again after them through the years of all generations. Fire devours before them, and behind them a flame burns. The land is like the garden of Eden before them, but after them a desolate wilderness, and nothing escapes them."

Joel wrote of the approaching invasion of Israel by Nebuchadnezzar in his own day, and also about the final invasion of foreign armies, especially from the North that would come just prior to Messiah's coming in power and glory. The clue to the end-time application is the phrase "the Day of the LORD" which occurs again at the end of the following section:

"Their appearance is like the appearance of horses, and like war horses they run. As with the rumbling of chariots, they leap on the tops of the mountains, like the crackling of a flame of fire devouring the stubble, like a powerful army drawn up for battle. Before them peoples are in anguish, all faces grow pale. Like warriors they charge, like soldiers they scale the wall. They march each on his way, they do not swerve from their paths. They do not jostle one another, each marches in his path; they burst through the weapons and are not halted. They leap upon the city (Jerusalem), they run upon the walls; they climb up into the houses, they enter through the windows like a thief. The earth quakes before them, the heavens tremble. The sun and the moon are darkened, and the stars withdraw their shining. The LORD utters his voice before his army, for his host is exceedingly great; he that executes his word is powerful. For **the day of the LORD** is great and very terrible; who can endure it?"

God in mercy has previously saved the godly remnant in Israel at the mid-tribulation point and taken them safely to refuge in Petra for the last half of the tribulation period. Still, Yahweh calls to the remaining Jews in Israel to turn to Him, even at the late hour they are now living in. Joel's words apply well to both the approaching captivity in Babylon--which was on the near horizon in Joel's day--and even more to the situation during the end time period. God pleads with His people to come back to Him, even at the midnight hour.

"Yet even now," says the LORD, "return to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning; and rend your hearts and not your garments." Return to the LORD, your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love, and repents of evil. Who knows whether he will not turn and repent, and leave a blessing behind him, a cereal offering and a drink offering for the LORD, your God? Blow the trumpet in Zion; sanctify a fast; call a solemn assembly; gather the people. Sanctify the congregation; assemble the elders; gather the children, even nursing infants. Let the bridegroom leave his room, and the bride her chamber. Between the vestibule and the altar let the priests, the ministers of the LORD, weep and say, "Spare thy people, O LORD, and make not thy heritage a reproach, a byword among the nations. Why should they say among the peoples, 'Where is their God?'"

Joel also foresees the final conversion of Israel at the very last minute--just preceding the final return of Messiah. In mercy and grace God will at that time turn one third of the nation back to himself. In fact the prayers of this remnant are necessary for Messiah's return to His own land for the final time. This eleventh-hour conversion of great numbers of Jews to Messiah could well amount to more than one million new believers coming into the kingdom just as the Messiah is returning to the land for the final time:

Then the LORD became jealous for his land, and had pity on his people. The LORD answered and said to his people, "Behold, I am sending to you grain, wine, and oil, and you will be satisfied; and I will no more make you a reproach among the nations. "I will remove the northerner far from you, and drive him into a parched and desolate land, his front into the eastern sea, and his rear into the western sea; the stench and foul smell of him will rise, for he has done great things. "Fear not, O land; be glad and rejoice, for the LORD has done great things! Fear not, you beasts of the field, for the pastures of the wilderness are green; the tree bears its fruit, the fig tree and vine give their full yield. "Be glad, O sons of Zion, and rejoice in the LORD, your God; for he has given the early rain for your vindication, he has poured down for you abundant rain, the early and the latter rain, as before. "The threshing floors shall be full of grain, the vats shall overflow with wine and oil. I will restore to you the years which the swarming locust has eaten, the hopper, the destroyer, and the cutter, my great army, which I sent among you. "You shall eat in plenty and be satisfied, and praise the name of the LORD your God, who has dealt wondrously with you. And my people shall never again be put to shame. You shall know that I am in the midst of Israel, and that I, the LORD, am your God and there is none else. And my people shall never again be put to shame. "And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions. Even upon the menservants and maidservants in those days, I will pour out my spirit. " [only partially fulfilled at Pentecost, Acts 2] And I will give portents in the heavens and on the earth, blood and fire and columns of smoke. The sun shall be turned to darkness, and the moon to blood, before the great and terrible day of the LORD comes. And it shall come to pass that all who call upon the name of the LORD shall be delivered; for in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there shall be those who escape, as the LORD has said, and among the survivors shall be those whom the LORD calls. (Joel 2)

Joel's apocalyptic warning is but one of many in the Old Testament which has a double fulfillment. Joel warned against the devastating invasions of Nebuchadnezzar that lay just ahead in his own day. But the Spirit of God also had in mind a greater and more complete fulfillment of this passage at the end of the age we now live in. At the same time Jesus calls his faithful remnant to flee Jerusalem and hide in the desert place, he will place two powerful witnesses in Jerusalem. For a full 3.5 years they will speak to the nation and to the world of impending judgment. In spite of the enormously hostile environment of Jerusalem in that Day, these fearless spokesman for the Lord will be kept safe until their mission is accomplished.

### **Two Fearless Witnesses on the Temple Mount**

Revelation, Chapter 11, gives us details concerning two special servants God sets before His nation during the final turbulent months just prior to the return of Messiah in power and glory:

Then I (John the Apostle) was given a measuring rod like a staff, and I was told: "Rise and measure the temple of God and the altar and those who worship there, but do not measure the court outside the temple; leave that out, for it is given over to the nations, and they will trample over the holy city for forty-two months. And I will grant **my two witnesses** power to prophesy for one thousand two hundred and sixty days, clothed in sackcloth." These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands which stand before the Lord of the earth. And if any one would harm them, fire pours out from their mouth and consumes their foes; if any one would harm them, thus he is doomed to be killed. They have power to shut the sky, that no

rain may fall during the days of their prophesying, and they have power over the waters to turn them into blood, and to smite the earth with every plague, as often as they desire. And when they have finished their testimony, the beast that ascends from the bottomless pit will make war upon them and conquer them and kill them, and their dead bodies will lie in the street of the great city which is allegorically called Sodom and Egypt, where their Lord was crucified. For three days and a half men from the peoples and tribes and tongues and nations gaze at their dead bodies and refuse to let them be placed in a tomb, and those who dwell on the earth will rejoice over them and make merry and exchange presents, because these two prophets had been a torment to those who dwell on the earth. But after the three and a half days a breath of life from God entered them, and they stood up on their feet, and great fear fell on those who saw them. Then they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, "Come up hither!" And in the sight of their foes they went up to heaven in a cloud. And at that hour there was a great earthquake, and a tenth of the city fell; seven thousand people were killed in the earthquake, and the rest were terrified and gave glory to the God of heaven. The second woe has passed; behold, the third woe is soon to come. Then the seventh angel blew his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever." And the twenty-four elders who sit on their thrones before God fell on their faces and worshipped God, saying, "We give thanks to thee, Lord God Almighty, who art and who wast, that thou hast taken thy great power and begun to reign. The nations raged, but thy wrath came, and the time for the dead to be judged, for rewarding thy servants, the prophets and saints, and those who fear thy name, both small and great, and for destroying the destroyers of the earth." Then God's temple in heaven was opened, and the ark of his covenant was seen within his temple; and there were flashes of lightning, voices, peals of thunder, an earthquake, and heavy hail. (Revelation 11)

The great earthquake mentioned in this passage is probably the same earthquake that marks the last of the Seven Seals (Rev. 6:5), the last of the Seven Trumpets (Rev. 9:19), the last of the Seven Thunders (Rev. 11:13, above) and the last of the Seven Bowls of wrath (Rev. 16:18-21)--which all run in parallel. (See also Ezekiel 38:19-20 and Zechariah 14:4-5). Many Bible scholars hold that all these scriptures are homing in on one or possibly a connected series of great cataclysmic earthquakes that punctuate the end of the age, the open return of Messiah and the dawning of the Millennial age. Not only does the city of Jerusalem suffer great damage from this earthquake, but "the cities of the nations fall," according to Revelation 16:19. See [Earthquakes and the Bible](#).

### **A Symbolic Overview of All of Israel's History**

The Book of the Revelation, Chapter 12 presents a great vision of the nation of Israel portrayed as a woman. The vantage point is that of eternity.

And a great portent appeared in heaven, a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars; she was with child and she cried out in her pangs of birth, in anguish for delivery. And another portent appeared in heaven; behold, a great red dragon, with seven heads and ten horns, and seven diadems upon his heads. His tail swept down a third of the stars of heaven, and cast them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was about to bear a child, that he might devour her child when she brought it forth; she brought forth a male child, one who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron, but her child was caught up to God and to his throne, and the woman fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God, in which to be nourished for one thousand two hundred and sixty days. Now war arose in heaven, Michael and his angels fighting against the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought, but they were defeated and there was no longer any place for them in heaven. And the great dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent, who is called the Devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world--he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him. And I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, "Now the salvation and the power and the kingdom of

our God and the authority of his Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren has been thrown down, who accuses them day and night before our God. And they have conquered him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, for they loved not their lives even unto death. Rejoice then, O heaven and you that dwell therein! But woe to you, O earth and sea, for the devil has come down to you in great wrath, because he knows that his time is short!" And when the dragon saw that he had been thrown down to the earth, he pursued the woman who had borne the male child. But the woman was given the two wings of the great eagle that she might fly from the serpent into the wilderness, to the place where she is to be nourished for a time, and times, and half a time (i.e., for 3 1/2 years---the second half of the tribulation period). The serpent poured water like a river out of his mouth after the woman, to sweep her away with the flood. But the earth came to the help of the woman, and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed the river which the dragon had poured from his mouth. Then the dragon was angry with the woman, and went off to make war on the rest of her offspring, on those who keep the commandments of God and bear testimony to Jesus. (Revelation 12)

Ray Stedman offers the following commentary on this passage,

There is no mystery to the dragon's identity, for John will disclose that to us in verse 9: "that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray." In the opening verse of chapter 12, the devil is symbolized as a great red dragon with seven heads and ten horns and seven crowns upon his heads. But he is also "that ancient serpent" the very one who appeared in the Garden of Eden to the first woman, Eve, deceiving her and introducing sin into the human race. Dragons, of course, symbolize satanic worship in many cultures around the world. As John says in verse 9, the career of the devil has been devoted to deceiving the entire human race and leading human beings astray. The male child who is born to the woman is the next easiest to identify because verse 5 says that He is the one "who will rule all the nations with an iron scepter." This is one of four references in Revelation to Psalm 2. In verse 9 of that prophetic, messianic psalm we read, "You will rule them with an iron scepter." Though the book of Revelation is truly rooted in the entire Old Testament, it would be a valid analogy to compare Revelation to an oak tree that grows and expands out of the acorn of Psalm 2. In this psalm we read that the One enthroned in heaven says, "I have installed my King on Zion, my holy hill," and that this King will rule the nations with an iron scepter. Clearly this is a reference to the thousand-year reign of Jesus Christ during the Millennium, as is pictured for us in the book of Revelation. The reference to an iron scepter (in Psalm 2 and Revelation 12:5) always indicates a millennial scene. The iron scepter speaks of strict justice. The Millennium will be a time of worldwide blessing and prosperity when the curse of sin will be at least partly removed from the natural world. But sin will still manifest itself to some degree---hence the iron scepter of Christ. As we shall see in Revelation 20, righteousness will reign on earth during the Millennium, but it will have to be enforced. After the Millennium the new heaven and the new earth will appear. At that time Christ will no longer reign with a scepter of iron. Nothing evil can enter into the new heaven and the new earth. When sin is finally extinguished forever, the defining characteristic of Christ will no longer be His iron reign but tender, shepherd-like love as He ministers personally and kindly to His redeemed people. That brings us to the mystery of the woman. Why is she clothed with the sun? Why is the moon under her feet? Why are twelve stars arranged in a crown over her head? There are several theories as to whom or what this symbolic woman represents. Roman Catholic scholars have concluded that she is Mary, the mother of Jesus. Having understood that the child who will rule the nation with an iron scepter is Jesus, it certainly makes sense that the mother that child would be Mary. The problem with this theory, however, is that there is no way you can fit Mary into verse 6 where we read that she "fled into the desert to a place prepared for her by God, where she will be taken care of for 1,260 days." That never happened to Mary, and never will. The woman in Revelation 12 does not represent a single individual but rather a community of people.

Some Bible scholars say she symbolizes the church. Certainly there is some substantiation for this view, in that the church is pictured at the close of Revelation as a woman, the bride of Christ. But as with the previous theory this view has an insurmountable problem: It is impossible for the woman to represent the church because she is depicted as giving birth to Jesus. The church did not produce Jesus; Jesus produced the church! The church was "born" out of the wounded side of Jesus. What, then, is the true identity of this woman of mystery? Let us examine the clues one by one and see where they lead. The clues are significant: The woman is clothed with the sun, moon is under her feet, and a crown of twelve stars is on her head. There is only one other place in Scripture where you find all these symbols clustered together in one place: Genesis 37, the story of Joseph the boy-dreamer. He dreamed one night that the sun, the moon, and eleven stars bowed down before him. The sun, moon, and stars represented his father, mother, and eleven brothers, respectively. Eventually this dream would come true---but not until after those eleven brothers sold Joseph into slavery, not until after Joseph overcame trials of false accusation and unjust imprisonment, not until after Joseph became second in command over all of Egypt. The symbols of the sun, moon, and stars make it clear: The woman represents the people of Israel, all of whom are descendants of Joseph's father Jacob. Joseph himself would be the twelfth star. In Romans 9:5 Paul said of the people of Israel, "from them is traced the human ancestry of Christ." That is why Jesus told the Samaritan woman at the well, "Salvation is from the Jews." Even the salvation of the Gentiles comes by way of the Jews, because it is the Jewish race that produced Jesus Christ. So here again, in the symbolism of the woman clothed in the sun with the stars at her head and the moon at her feet, we have a picture of Israel coming again into prominence in the last days.

To understand the vivid images and symbols of Revelation 12 we should remember that we are viewing earthly scenes from heaven's point of view. In Revelation 4 we saw that John was caught up into heaven and shown all the things that follow in Revelation 4 through 19. When you look at earthly events from heaven's standpoint, time is never a factor. This vision does not present a sequence or an ordered chronology. It presents occurrences arranged according to their meaning and importance from a heavenly, eternal perspective. Events that may be widely separated in time may be clustered together in eternity's view. From heaven's perspective we are shown what happens, not when it happens. If we approach this chapter---and indeed all of Revelation---with this point of view, symbols that once seemed murky and obscure will pop into focus... What we have in Revelation 12 is a kind of tableau, like a scene in a wax museum, of three-dimensional figures frozen in place at the climactic moment of a dramatic event. Satan, the great dragon, is crouched with its fangs bared and its eyes smoldering, watching Israel as she prepares to give birth to her long-promised Son. Israel is pregnant and crying out in her labor pains. The dragon's intention is clear: it seeks to devour Jesus as soon as He emerges from the womb of Israel and makes His appearance upon the earth. What is the historical reality represented by this grim and symbol-laden tableau? This scene takes us back to the historical birth of Jesus, to the time of the Roman Empire and its subjugation of Israel. It takes us back to the time of King Herod the Great and the demonic malice and enmity that filled his heart when he learned of the birth of Jesus. It is easy to see events of that time in the symbolic tableau of Revelation 12:1-4...The dragon of world power in Jesus' day was the Roman Empire which in the Jewish land of Judea was represented by the person of Rome's puppet king Herod the Great. Though in his early career Herod had been a comparatively progressive and benevolent despot, his notorious cruel streak and murderous paranoia were already in full evidence by the time Christ was born. In a fit of jealous rage Herod murdered his favorite among his eight wives, as well as several of her family members. He later murdered his own firstborn son Antipas. So his attempting to kill the newborn Son of God by slaughtering the infants of Bethlehem was true to form for this brutal and unfeeling man. Like a dragon, he lay in wait for the child to be born---then pounced, beast-like, spilling blood as if it were water. But God intervened, sparing the infant Jesus from the mouth of the dragon. Warned by the appearance of an angel in a dream, Joseph and Mary took Jesus on a secret journey to Egypt beyond the reach of Herod.

This brings us to verse 5. It is at this point in the symbolic allegory of the dragon, the woman, and the child that we come upon a startling statement. John writes, "She gave birth to a son, a male child, who will rule all the nations with an iron scepter. And her child was snatched up to God and to his throne." Completely ignoring any chronology or sequence of historical events, this symbolic scene takes a sudden jump from the birth of Jesus to His ascension some 30 years later, skipping over His life, ministry, death, and resurrection in a single breath. In this image, John is shown only the birth and ascension into heaven of Jesus. This symbology encompasses both the beginning and the ending of His earthly ministry. But a problem of interpretation arises at this point. The problem is this: The clear implication of Revelation 12:5 is that Jesus was "snatched up to God" in order to deliver Him from harm, from the reach of the dragon. Yet we know from reading the gospels and the book of Acts that Jesus' ascension was by no means an escape from harm. Rather it was a triumphal exit following His victory over death. The resurrected Lord was completely beyond the reach of His enemies, and there was no harm anyone could do to Him. Why, then, does this tableau in Revelation 12 depict Jesus as having been "snatched up to God" as a child is snatched out of the path of an onrushing car? Here is where the interpretation of Revelation becomes sensitive, because of the non-linear, non-chronological nature of the vision. The interpretation is this: There is an aspect of our Lord Jesus Christ which does find deliverance from danger, from the rage of the red dragon, by being snatched away into heaven. By this I mean the Body of Christ that is on the earth today---that is, the church. Throughout the New Testament, the Lord and His church are regarded as one. When Saul (later the apostle Paul) was confronted by an appearance of Christ on the Damascus Road, Jesus said to him, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?" Saul had never even met Jesus---but he was persecuting the church. When Jesus spoke to Saul of His church He identified completely with that church. If Saul was persecuting the Lord's church, Saul was persecuting Him, because they were one. Paul later wrote to the Corinthians, "Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it." The church, he said, is a body, and "the body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ." The church and the Lord together are the body of Christ. So when we come to Revelation 12 and see that the child, representing Christ, was "snatched up to God and to his throne," it becomes clear that this is a reference to the removal of the church from the world and from the threatening presence of the dragon...

Verse 6 carries us on into the Tribulation period. In leaping immediately from the birth of Christ to the removal of the church and the beginning of the Tribulation, these verses in Revelation 12 completely eclipse all the centuries of the church age in which we now live. In verse 6, the woman (representing the people of Israel) flees into the desert to a place prepared for her by God. There she is taken care of for a period of 1,260 days---a significant time period, as we learned in the previous chapter. In Revelation 11, we saw that the two witnesses will prophesy for a period of 1,260 days---the last 3 1/2 years of the seven-year Tribulation period. So it would be reasonable and consistent to conclude that the desert exile of the believing Jewish people (represented by the woman) would also take place during the same 3 1/2-year period in which the two witnesses prophesy against the Antichrist. Notice, too, that a subtle shift has taken place in the symbolism represented by the woman. In verses 1 through 4 the woman represented the Jewish nation which was to bring forth Jesus, the Son of God. In verse 5 the child is born and is snatched up to God's throne. In verse 6 the woman flees into the desert to escape the persecution of the Antichrist and the Tribulation. The fleeing woman, then, represents not the Jewish people as a whole---for many Jews will be deceived by the Antichrist--- but the believing remnant of the Jews, those who have trusted in the Messiah and have refused to submit to the rule of the Antichrist.

...This woman, you recall, represents not all Jews of the last days but only the believing remnant. Those Jews who have not believed are suffering under the judgments that are foretold in the Old Testament prophecies. This is "the time of Jacob's trouble," when apostate

Jews are cruelly eliminated by the dragon and the faithful remnant is pursued and persecuted. The remnant escapes to the desert, and the swiftness of their flight from danger is symbolized by the eagle's wings. Many Bible scholars believe the faithful Jews of the last days will flee to the city of Petra, south of the Dead Sea---a strangely beautiful city hewn out of the rock of the earth that is presently an attraction for tourists and archeologists in the Holy Land. Perhaps this is true, but no one can say with certainty. What is important in these verses is that God will care for this believing remnant in a supernatural way. They will be borne out of danger on the metaphorical wings of an eagle. I am sure it is no coincidence that this is the very same metaphor God used when the nation of Israel was led out of Egypt by Moses. "You yourselves have seen what I did to Egypt," God said to Israel through His servant Moses, "and how **I carried you on eagles' wings** and brought you to myself." (Exodus 19:4) This is a picture of God's loving protection and care for the people who are His faithful remnant in that day. The symbolism of the river of water which the serpent spews in an effort to overtake the woman is likely an image of a vast host of soldiers sent by the Antichrist to overtake and destroy the faithful of Israel in the last days. But God will protect His faithful remnant, probably by mean of a natural cataclysm---perhaps an earthquake---that causes the destruction of the Antichrist's armies and the frustration of his plans. The Antichrist will be diverted from attacking the faithful Jews of Israel (symbolized by the woman), and will instead turn his attention to "the rest of her offspring" and make war against them. Who is John describing in this phrase? Most likely "the rest of her offspring" refers to "Christ's commandos," the 144,000 Jews we first met in Revelation 7 and will meet again in Revelation 14. They are the special band of believing Jews who move out into the four corners of the world, preaching the gospel of the kingdom to all the nations. The devil gives his final attention to destroying this group because of their powerful and effective witness to the world. The rage of the devil is increasing as he grows more and more desperate, knowing that his time is short. Like any wild and dangerous beast, the devil becomes more deadly and ferocious as he is backed into a corner.

### **The Return of the Remnant from Edom**

The ancient capital of Edom was the city of Bozrah---the Hebrew **bosra** means sheepfold. It lies 30 miles southeast of the Dead Sea in present-day Jordan. The present Jordanian city of Buseirah is not on any modern road but is a remote mountain village of difficult access. Ancient Bozrah at the same location, however, was on the main North West trade route known as the King's Highway (Numbers 20:17). The city was noted for its weaving industry and export of dyed garments. Edom as the territory allotted to Jacob's brother Esau is documented in Genesis 36 where a man named Bozrah a descendant of Seir the Horite who inhabited the land "before there were any kings in Israel." The historical record in Deuteronomy includes this parenthetical note:

(The Emim formerly lived there, a people great and many, and tall as the Anakim; like the Anakim they are also known as Rephaim, but the Moabites call them Emim. The Horites also lived in Seir formerly, but the sons of Esau dispossessed them, and destroyed them from before them, and settled in their stead; as Israel did to the land of their possession, which the LORD gave to them.) (Dt. 2:2:10-12)

Edom's long-standing enmity against Israel ultimately brought God's judgment on Edom. Obadiah the prophet devotes his short but potent message to the judgment of Edom, telling us of her pride and arrogance and the reasons for God's final judgment on these people. Amos, the shepherd of Tekoa, wrote of impending judgment on Edom:

Thus says the LORD: "For three transgressions of Edom, and for four, I will not revoke the punishment; because he pursued his brother with the sword, and cast off all pity, and his anger tore perpetually, and he kept his wrath for ever. So I will send a fire upon Teman, and it shall devour the strongholds of Bozrah." (Amos 1:11-12)

Several writers have written fine descriptions of Petra and the history of that region of ancient Edom. The Nabateans displaced the descendants of Esau probably in the 6th Century BC. The Greeks and Romans built extensively there and the area was well populated as late as Roman times. Today the area is desolate and sparsely populated.



Petra

South of Bozrah 20 some miles on the King's Highway is Petra, the capital city of the Nabateans. Tourists to this vast mountain-enclosed ancient city in the Wadi Musa generally enter from the east on foot or on horseback through El Siq, an 6000 feet long narrow cleft (width: 12-30 feet) with 100-500 foot high cliff walls. Tombs and houses carved into the bed rock over a vast area at Petra would be suitable for temporarily housing many thousands of people. Mt. Hor is nearby, where Aaron died after Moses passed the high priestly garments of Aaron on to Eliezer in the sight of the congregation (Numbers 20:23-29). An Islamic shrine marks the tomb site.



Tomb of Aaron

The deliverance of the godly remnant by Yeshua, "the angel of the presence" from Petra at the close of the tribulation period is alluded to by Moses in his last words to his people before he died.

This is the blessing with which Moses the man of God blessed the children of Israel before his death. He said, "The LORD came ["will come"] from Sinai, and dawned {"will dawn"} from Seir upon us; he shone ["will shine"] forth from Mount Paran, [in Edom] he will come with his ten thousands of holy ones, with flaming fire at his right hand. Yea, he loves his people; all those consecrated to him are in his hand; so they follow in thy steps, receiving direction from thee, (as) when Moses commanded us a law, as a possession for the assembly of Jacob. Thus the LORD will become king in Jeshurun, when the heads of the people will be gathered, all the tribes of Israel together. (Deuteronomy 33:1-5)

Earlier we saw that the imagery of the remnant being taken to Petra "on eagles' wings" was reminiscent of God's deliverance of his people under Moses. God will supernaturally protect his remnant in the wilderness of Petra and supernaturally rescue them from the pursuit of Antichrist's armies (Rev. 12:15,16). Yeshua will then lead the remnant to Jerusalem where he will make his public appearance, his *epiphaneia*.. Earth's rightful ruler will be publically



unveiled in Jerusalem. Jesus foretold of this event:

"...for these are days of vengeance, to fulfill all that is written. Alas for those who are with child and for those who give suck in those days! For great distress shall be upon the earth and wrath upon this people [Israel]; they will fall by the edge of the sword, and be led captive among all nations; and Jerusalem will be trodden down by the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled. And there will be signs in sun and moon and stars, and upon the earth distress of nations in perplexity at the roaring of the sea and the waves, men fainting with fear and with foreboding of what is coming on the world; for the [angelic] powers of the heavens will be shaken. And then they will see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. Now when these things begin to take place, look up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near." (Luke 21:22-28)

Moses at his death gave prophetic blessings upon the tribes of Israel, one by one. The fulfillment of these promises will take place after Messiah returns to Jerusalem by way of Seir and Bozrah:

"Let Reuben live, and not die, nor let his men be few." And this he said of Judah: "Hear, O LORD, the voice of Judah, and bring him in to his people. With thy hands contend for him, and be a help against his adversaries." And of Levi he said, "Give to Levi thy Thummim, and thy Urim to thy godly one, whom thou didst test at Massah, with whom thou didst strive at the waters of Meribah; who said of his father and mother, 'I regard them not'; he disowned his brothers, and ignored his children. For they observed thy word, and kept thy covenant. They shall teach Jacob thy ordinances, and Israel thy law; they shall put incense before thee, and whole burnt offering upon thy altar. Bless, O LORD, his substance, and accept the work of his hands; crush the loins of his adversaries, of those that hate him, that they rise not again."

Of Benjamin he said, "The beloved of the LORD, he dwells in safety by him; he encompasses him all the day long, and makes his dwelling between his shoulders." And of Joseph he said, "Blessed by the LORD be his land, with the choicest gifts of heaven above, and of the deep that couches beneath, with the choicest fruits of the sun, and the rich yield of the months, with the finest produce of the ancient mountains, and the abundance of the everlasting hills, with the best gifts of the earth and its fulness, and the favor of him that dwelt in the bush. Let these come upon the head of Joseph, and upon the crown of the head of him that is prince among his brothers. His firstling bull has majesty, and his horns are the horns of a wild ox; with them he shall push the peoples, all of them, to the ends of the earth; such are the ten thousands of Ephraim, and such are the thousands of Manasseh." And of Zebulun he said, "Rejoice, Zebulun, in your going out; and Issachar, in your tents. They shall call peoples to their mountain; there they offer right sacrifices; for they suck the affluence of the seas and the hidden treasures of the sand." And of Gad he said, "Blessed be he who enlarges Gad! Gad couches like a lion, he tears the arm, and the crown of the head. He chose the best of the land for himself, for there a commander's portion was reserved; and he came to the heads of the people, with Israel he executed the commands and just decrees of the LORD." And of Dan he said, "Dan is a lion's whelp, that leaps forth from Bashan." And of Naphtali he said, "O Naphtali, satisfied with favor, and full of the blessing of the LORD, possess the lake and the south." And of Asher he said, "Blessed above sons be Asher; let him be the favorite of his brothers, and let him dip his foot in oil. Your bars shall be iron and bronze; and as your days, so shall your strength be. "There is none like God, O Jeshurun, who rides through the heavens to your help, and in his majesty through the skies. The eternal God is your dwelling place, and underneath are the everlasting arms. And he thrust out the enemy before you, and said, Destroy. So Israel will dwell in safety, the fountain of Jacob alone, in a land of grain and wine; yea, his heavens drop down dew. Happy are you, O Israel! Who is like you, a people saved by the LORD, the shield of your help, and the sword of your triumph! Your enemies shall come fawning to you; and you shall tread upon their high places." (Deuteronomy 33)

An enigmatic prophecy about Enoch (who was translated into heaven prior to the flood of

Noah) is recorded in the book of Jude has a double-fulfillment: First, at the time of the Flood of Noah to judge the antediluvian world, destroying probably many billions of earth's inhabitants and delivering eight persons in the Ark. Then, at the end of the age we now live in Jesus will again appear "with his ten thousands of holy ones."

It was of these (false teachers) also that Enoch in the seventh generation from Adam prophesied, saying, "Behold, the Lord will come with his holy myriads, to execute judgment on all, and to convict all the ungodly of all their deeds of ungodliness which they have committed in such an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against him." (Jude 14-15)

A mystery-filled prophecy in Ezekiel clearly relates in part to the end time and God's judgment of His people Israel:

"As I live, says the Lord GOD, surely with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, and with wrath poured out, I will be king over you (Israel). I will bring you out from the peoples and gather you out of the countries where you are scattered, with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, and with wrath poured out [largely fulfilled in the last century]; and (then, after that) I will bring you into the wilderness of the peoples, [Note: The term "wilderness of the peoples" may refer to Edom, according to some Bible scholars], and there I will enter into judgment with you **face to face**. As I entered into judgment with your fathers in the wilderness of the land of Egypt, so I will enter into judgment with you, says the Lord GOD. I will make you pass under the rod, and I will let you go in by number. [the term the wilderness of the peoples, v35, in the Bible often refers to Edom]. {Note: The term "pass under the rod" appears in Leviticus 27 and symbolizes a separation of the consecrated and the unconsecrated animals of the flock.} I will purge out the rebels [apostates] from among you, and those who transgress against me; I will bring them out of the land where they sojourn (Edom?), but they shall not enter (back into?) the land of Israel. Then you will know that I am the LORD. "As for you, O house of Israel, thus says the Lord GOD: Go serve every one of you his idols, now and hereafter, if you will not listen to me; but my holy name you shall no more profane with your gifts and your idols. "For on my holy mountain, the mountain height of Israel, says the Lord GOD, there all the house of Israel, all of them, shall serve me in the land; there I will accept them, and there I will require your contributions and the choicest of your gifts, with all your sacred offerings. As a pleasing odor I will accept you, when I bring you out from the peoples, and gather you out of the countries where you have been scattered; and I will manifest my holiness among you in the sight of the nations. And you shall know that I am the LORD, when I bring you into the land of Israel, the country which I swore to give to your fathers. And there you shall remember your ways and all the doings with which you have polluted yourselves [see Zechariah 12:10-14]; and you shall loathe yourselves for all the evils that you have committed. And you shall know that I am the LORD, when I deal with you for my name's sake, not according to your evil ways, nor according to your corrupt doings, O house of Israel, says the Lord GOD." (Ezekiel 20:33-44)

Isaiah 11 also contains mystery concerning the end time:

There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots. And the Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD. And his delight shall be in the fear of the LORD. He shall not judge by what his eyes see, or decide by what his ears hear; but with righteousness he shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall slay the wicked. Righteousness shall be the girdle of his waist, and faithfulness the girdle of his loins. The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid, and the calf and the lion and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them. The cow and the bear shall feed; their young shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. The sucking child shall play over the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the adder's den. They shall not hurt or

destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea. In that day the root of Jesse shall stand as an ensign to the peoples; him shall the nations seek, and his dwellings shall be glorious. **In that day** [at the end of the tribulation] the Lord will extend his hand yet a second time to recover the remnant which is left of his people, from Assyria, from Egypt, from Pathros, from Ethiopia, from Elam, from Shinar, from Hamath, and from the coastlands of the sea. He will raise an ensign for the nations, and will assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather the [rest of the] dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth. The jealousy of Ephraim shall depart, and those who harass Judah shall be cut off; Ephraim shall not be jealous of Judah, and Judah shall not harass Ephraim. But they shall swoop down upon the shoulder of the Philistines in the west, and together they shall plunder the people of the east. They shall put forth their hand against Edom and Moab, and the Ammonites shall obey them. And the LORD will utterly destroy the tongue of the sea of Egypt (the Suez Canal); and will wave his hand over the River [the Euphrates?, Rev. 16:12] with his scorching wind, and smite it into seven channels that men may cross dryshod. And there will be a [new king's] highway from Assyria for the remnant which is left of his people, as there was for Israel when they came up from the land of Egypt. (Isaiah 11)

But I had concern for my holy name, which the house of Israel caused to be profaned among the nations to which they came. "Therefore say to the house of Israel, Thus says the Lord GOD: It is not for your sake, O house of Israel, that I am about to act, but for the sake of my holy name, which you have profaned among the nations to which you came. And I will vindicate the holiness of my great name, which has been profaned among the nations, and which you have profaned among them; and the nations will know that I am the LORD, says the Lord GOD, when through you I vindicate my holiness before their eyes.

Ezekiel says the following about God's mercy, grace and compassion coming on the nation of Israel at the close of the age we live in:

For I will take you [Jews] from the nations, and gather you from all the countries, and bring you into your own land. [Then] I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses, and from all your idols I will cleanse you. A new heart I will give you, and a new spirit I will put within you; and I will take out of your flesh the heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to observe my ordinances. [This is an announcement, similar to Jeremiah 30, of God's intention to bring the people of Israel into the New Covenant which Jesus put into effect with his 11 disciples at the Last Supper.] You [Jews] shall dwell in the land which I gave to your fathers; and you shall be my people, and I will be your God. And I will deliver you from all your uncleannesses; and I will summon the grain and make it abundant and lay no famine upon you. I will make the fruit of the tree and the increase of the field abundant, that you may never again suffer the disgrace of famine among the nations. Then you will remember your evil ways, and your deeds that were not good; and you will loathe yourselves for your iniquities and your abominable deeds. [Here is the national repentance of Zechariah 12:10-14 again.]

Ezekiel then describes Messiah's reign over all the nations, from Jerusalem, and the millennial prosperity He will bring to all mankind, through Israel:

It is not for your sake that I will act, says the Lord GOD; let that be known to you. Be ashamed and confounded for your ways, O house of Israel. "Thus says the Lord GOD: On the day that I cleanse you from all your iniquities, I will cause the cities to be inhabited, and the waste places shall be rebuilt. And the land that was desolate shall be tilled, instead of being the desolation that it was in the sight of all who passed by. And they will say, 'This land that was desolate has become like the garden of Eden; and the waste and desolate and ruined cities are now inhabited and fortified.' Then the nations that are left round about you

shall know that I, the LORD, have rebuilt the ruined places, and replanted that which was desolate; I, the LORD, have spoken, and I will do it. "Thus says the Lord GOD: This also I will let the house of Israel ask me to do for them: to increase their men like a flock. Like the flock for sacrifices, like the flock at Jerusalem during her appointed feasts, so shall the waste cities be filled with flocks of men. Then they will know that I am the LORD." (Ezekiel 36:21-38)

### **God's Dialogues with the Messiah**

The latter chapters of Isaiah contain a remarkable series of dialogues between God the Father and His servant the Messiah, or between the prophet and Messiah. In Chapter 42, Messiah is God's humble servant who will not only save Israel but aid the gentiles and bring world-wide justice:

"Behold my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen, in whom my soul delights; I have put my Spirit upon him, he will bring forth justice to the nations. He will not cry or lift up his voice, or make it heard in the street; a bruised reed he will not break, and a dimly burning wick he will not quench; he will faithfully bring forth justice. He will not fail or be discouraged till he has established justice in the earth; and the coastlands [isles, or continents, that is, the gentiles dwelling to the corners of the earth from Israel] wait for his law." (42:1-4)

In Isaiah 43-44, Messiah is seen as restoring Israel by forgiving them of all their sins and delivering Jacob from all his enemies. In Chapter 44, Cyrus the Mede is designated and called by name (!) many decades before he was born. God chose him to aid in the restoration of the Jews from their captivity in Babylon. Messiah gives a personal description of his commission from the Father and contains an intimate discussion between God and His Messiah which reveals much about the content of the prayers of Jesus with His Father during his time on earth which would come 700 years later. In Isaiah 50, Messiah is the true Israel who fulfills all that the nation had failed to attain because of persistent rebellion and disobedience. In Isaiah 52:13 through 53, Messiah is the suffering servant of the Lord whose death and resurrection are vividly foretold. In Chapter 49, Messiah is Israel's goel, or kinsman-redeemer:

[God]..."saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no one to intervene; then his own arm brought him victory, and his righteousness upheld him. He put on righteousness as a breastplate, and a helmet of salvation upon his head; he put on garments of vengeance for clothing, and wrapped himself in fury as a mantle. According to their deeds, so will he repay, wrath to his adversaries, requital to his enemies; to the coastlands he will render requital. So they shall fear the name of the LORD from the west, and his glory from the rising of the sun; for he will come like a rushing stream, which the wind of the LORD drives. 'And he will come to Zion as Redeemer, to those in Jacob who turn from transgression,' says the LORD. 'And as for me, this is my covenant with them, says the LORD: my spirit which is upon you, and my words which I have put in your mouth, shall not depart out of your mouth, or out of the mouth of your children, or out of the mouth of your children's children, says the LORD, from this time forth and for evermore.'" (59:15-21).

In Isaiah Chapter 63, the dialog takes the following form: ISAIAH:

Who is this who comes from Edom, in crimsoned garments (Heb.: "garments of glowing colors") from Bozrah, he who is glorious in his apparel, marching in the greatness of his strength?

MESSIAH, THE WARRIOR KING AND KINSMAN-REDEEMER:

"It is I, announcing vindication, mighty to save."

ISAIAH:

Why is thy apparel red, and thy garments like his that treads in the wine press?

MESSIAH:

"I have trodden the wine press alone, and from the peoples no one was with me; I trod them in my anger and trampled them in my wrath; their lifeblood is sprinkled upon my garments, and I have stained all my raiment. For the day of vengeance was in my heart, and my year of redemption has come. I looked, but there was no one to help; I was appalled, but there was no one to uphold; so my own arm brought me victory, and my wrath upheld me. I trod down the peoples in my anger, I made them drunk in my wrath, and I poured out their lifeblood on the earth."

The blood spattering His garments is not the blood of His crucifixion, for that work on the cross was completely finished and ended 2000 years earlier. The blood is that of His enemies, slain in battle, and especially the blood of apostate Jews who have joined the armies of Antichrist to oppose Him. This is clear by the reference to the treading of the wine press. Grapes and vines are a picture of Israel. The harvest of the gentiles is described by the figure of the wheat and the tares. Two separate judgments are involved: a judgment of apostate Jews, and a judgment of the gentile nations. This is clear from Revelation Chapter 14:

"Then I looked, and lo, a white cloud, and seated on the cloud one like a son of man, with a golden crown on his head, and a sharp sickle in his hand. And another angel came out of the temple, calling with a loud voice to him who sat upon the cloud, "Put in your sickle, and reap, for the hour to reap has come, for the harvest of the earth is fully ripe." So he who sat upon the cloud swung his sickle on the earth, and the earth was reaped. And another angel came out of the temple in heaven, and he too had a sharp sickle. Then another angel came out from the altar, the angel who has power over fire, and he called with a loud voice to him who had the sharp sickle, "Put in your sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth, for its grapes are ripe." So the angel swung his sickle on the earth and gathered the vintage of the earth, and threw it into the great wine press of the wrath of God; and the wine press was trodden outside the city, and blood flowed from the wine press, as high as a horse's bridle, for one thousand six hundred stadia." (Revelation 14:14-20).

¶Meanwhile the believing remnant is gathered under the care of the Great Shepherd of the Sheep at Bozrah,

"I will surely gather all of you, O Jacob, I will gather the remnant of Israel; I will set them together like sheep in a fold, like a flock in its pasture, a noisy multitude of men. He who opens the breach will go up before them; they will break through and pass the gate, going out by it. Their king will pass on before them, the LORD at their head." (Micah 2:12-13)

¶The Lord's return (at the *parousia*) to care for his remnant at Petra and his leading them safely back to Jerusalem by way of Bozrah is then compared by Isaiah with God's care for the Jews through the wilderness in the Days of Moses:

I will recount the steadfast love of the LORD, the praises of the LORD, according to all that the LORD has granted us, and the great goodness to the house of Israel which he has granted them according to his mercy, according to the abundance of his steadfast love. For he said, Surely they are my people, sons who will not deal falsely; and he became their Savior. In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence (compare 1 Cor. 10:3) saved them; in his love and in his pity he redeemed them; he lifted them up and carried them all the days of old. But they rebelled and grieved his holy Spirit; therefore he turned to be their enemy, and himself fought against them. Then he remembered the days of old, of Moses his servant. Where is he who brought up out of the sea the shepherds of his flock? Where is he who put in the midst of them his holy Spirit, who caused his glorious arm to go at the right hand of Moses, who divided the waters before them to make for himself an

everlasting name, who led them through the depths? Like a horse in the desert, they did not stumble. Like cattle that go down into the valley, the Spirit of the LORD gave them rest. So thou didst lead thy people, to make for thyself a glorious name.

Now follows a prayer of the remnant for deliverance:

Look down from heaven and see, from thy holy and glorious habitation. Where are thy zeal and thy might? The yearning of thy heart and thy compassion are withheld from me. For thou art our Father, though Abraham does not know us and Israel does not acknowledge us; thou, O LORD, art our Father, our Redeemer from of old is thy name. O LORD, why dost thou make us err from thy ways and harden our heart, so that we fear thee not? Return for the sake of thy servants, the tribes of thy heritage. Thy holy people possessed thy sanctuary (the Third Temple) a little while; our adversaries have trodden it down. We have become like those over whom thou hast never ruled, like those who are not called by thy name. (Isaiah 63)

### **The Hebrew Prophetic Future Verb Tense**

Verb tenses are not as clearly specified in the Hebrew language as they are in English. In a number of prophetic passages of the Old Testament the verbs are commonly translated as past tense in our English Bibles. However, the prophetic future tense can equally well be used. (Note: When the Hebrew letter *waw* is added before a word it means "and." When added as a suffix it means "his." *Waw* before a verb indicates a change of the tense of the verb from past to future and vice versa (a verb in the past tense with a *waw* in front of it is to be understood as future tense). Notice in the passage quoted below how the words of the prophet Habakkuk take on new meaning for the end of the age if one switches the verb tenses from past tense to future. Habakkuk lived just before Nebuchadnezzar's siege and destruction of Jerusalem and the Second Temple so he was downhearted and grieved because God was bringing great Israel against the chosen people through a foreign people of even great wickedness. It was a dark hour for history similar to the hour that Israel faces in our own time, so Habakkuk's words and prayers applied both to his immediate situation. Yet his pray would seem to apply equally well to the end of the present age:

A prayer of Habakkuk the prophet, according to Shigionoth. O LORD, I have heard the report of thee, and thy work, O LORD, do I fear. In the midst of the years renew it; in the midst of the years make it known; in wrath remember mercy. God **will come** from Teman, and the Holy One from Mount Paran (i.e., from Petra). His glory will cover the heavens, and the earth will be full of his praise. Selah. His brightness is like the light, rays flash from his hand; and there he will veil his power. Before him goes pestilence, and plague follows close behind. He will stand and measure the earth; he will look and shake the nations; then the eternal mountains will be scattered, the everlasting hills sink low. His ways will be as of old.

I see the tents of Cushan in affliction; the curtains of the land of Midian tremble. Is your wrath against the rivers, O LORD? Is your anger against the rivers, or your indignation against the sea, when you ride upon thy horses, upon your chariot of victory? You will strip the sheath from thy bow, and put the arrows to the string. Selah. You will cleave the earth with rivers. The mountains will see you, and writhe; the raging waters sweep on; the deep gives forth its voice, it lifts its hands on high. The sun and moon stand still in their habitation at the light of your arrows as they speed, at the flash of your glittering spear. You will stride the earth in fury, you will trample the nations in anger. You will go forth for the salvation of your people, for the salvation of your anointed. You will crush the head of the wicked (one), laying him bare from thigh to neck. Selah. You will pierce with your shafts the head of his warriors, who come like a whirlwind to scatter me, rejoicing as if to devour the poor in secret. You will trample the sea with your horses, the surging of mighty waters. I hear, and my body trembles, my lips quiver at the sound; rottenness enters into my bones, my steps totter beneath me. I will quietly wait for the day of trouble to come upon people who invade us. Though the fig tree do not blossom, nor fruit be on the vines, the produce of the olive fail and

the fields yield no food, the flock be cut off from the fold and there be no herd in the stalls, yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my salvation. GOD, the Lord, is my strength; he makes my feet like hinds' feet, he makes me tread upon my high places. (Habakkuk 3:1-19)

### **Jerusalem Surrounded by Armies**

Luke Chapter 21 parallels Matthew 24, a sermon by Jesus to his disciples known as the "Olivet Discourse" ---because Jesus was seated with his disciples on the Mt. of Olives opposite the Second Temple when he gave this sweeping outline of the future. Luke adds what Matthew does not tell us, that Jerusalem will be surrounded by hostile armies at the time of the end.

"But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation has come near. Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, and let those who are inside the city depart, and let not those who are out in the country enter it; for these are days of vengeance, to fulfill all that is written. Alas for those who are with child and for those who give suck in those days! For (a) great distress shall be upon the [entire] earth and (b) wrath upon this people [Israel]; they will fall by the edge of the sword, and be led captive among all nations; and Jerusalem will be trodden down by the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.

Jesus then described the last half of the tribulation period vividly and succinctly:

"And there will be signs in sun and moon and stars, and upon the earth distress of nations in perplexity at the roaring of the sea and the waves, men fainting with fear and with foreboding of what is coming on the world; for the (angelic) powers of the heavens will be shaken. (Compare Heb. 12:26-29) And then they will see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. Now when these things begin to take place, look up and raise your heads, because your redemption (O Israel) is drawing near." And he told them a parable: "Look at the fig tree (Israel), and all the trees; (surrounding nations) as soon as they come out in leaf, you see for yourselves and know that the summer is already near. So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that the kingdom of God is near. Truly, I say to you, this generation will not pass away till all has taken place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away. "But take heed to yourselves lest your hearts be weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and cares of this life, and that day come upon you suddenly like a snare; for it will come upon all who dwell upon the face of the whole earth. But watch at all times, praying that you may have strength to escape all these things that will take place, and to stand before the Son of man." (Luke 21:20-36)

Isaiah Chapters 24 through 27 are often called "The Little Apocalypse" because of the prophet's description of this end-time period, "the time of Jacob's trouble" for Israel (Jer. 30).

"Behold, the LORD will lay waste the earth and make it desolate, and he will twist its surface and scatter its inhabitants. And it shall be, as with the people, so with the priest; as with the slave, so with his master; as with the maid, so with her mistress; as with the buyer, so with the seller; as with the lender, so with the borrower; as with the creditor, so with the debtor. The earth shall be utterly laid waste and utterly despoiled; for the LORD has spoken this word. The earth mourns and withers, the world languishes and withers; the heavens languish together with the earth. The earth lies polluted under its inhabitants; for they have transgressed the laws, violated the statutes, broken the everlasting covenant. Therefore a curse devours the earth, and its inhabitants suffer for their guilt; therefore the inhabitants of the earth are scorched, and few men are left. The wine mourns, the vine languishes, all the merry-hearted sigh. The mirth of the timbrels is stilled, the noise of the jubilant has ceased, the mirth of the lyre is stilled. No more do they drink wine with singing; strong drink is bitter to those who drink it. The city of chaos is broken down, every house is shut up so that none can

enter. There is an outcry in the streets for lack of wine; all joy has reached its eventide; the gladness of the earth is banished. Desolation is left in the city (Jerusalem), the gates are battered into ruins. For thus it shall be in the midst of the earth among the nations, as when an olive tree is beaten, as at the gleaning when the vintage is done..."

### **The Final Conversion of Israel**

Israel's national prayer for their Messiah to come and to forgive them is found in Hosea Chapter 5 beginning at verse 15. Most reputable scholars believe this prayer **must** be prayed by the nation as a precondition for their national salvation in the coming of Yeshua the Messiah to save them:

I [the LORD] will return again to my place, until they [Israel] acknowledge their guilt and seek my face, and in their distress they seek me, saying, Come, let us return to the LORD; for he has torn, that he may heal us; he has stricken, and he will bind us up. After two days he will revive us; on the third day he will raise us up, that we may live before him. Let us know, let us press on to know the LORD; his going forth is sure as the dawn; he will come to us as the showers, as the spring rains that water the earth." (Hosea 5:15-6:3).

Earlier we traced the escape of a remnant of some thousands--perhaps tens of thousands--of believing Jews from Jerusalem to Petra which will take at the time of the desecration of the Third Temple at the mid-point of the tribulation period. Yet as the age comes to a full close many passages of Scripture speak of the **national conversion** of Israel. We have seen that the imagery of the trampling out of the vineyard and the blood like grape juice flowing as high as a horse's bridle up and down the length of Israel will be Jewish blood as God judges the apostate majority of Jews in the land of Israel. In this terrible time for Israel, millions of men from invading Gentile armies fighting World War III in Israel will also meet their violent end. All the while the terrible judgments from God depicted in the Book of the Revelation will devastate the entire earth. Most of mankind will perish and the great infrastructures of the past thousands of years of civilization will be destroyed. Yet Paul argues in Romans 11 that in spite of all this, "all Israel will be saved."

Lest you [Gentiles] be wise in your own conceits, I want you to understand this mystery, brethren: a hardening has come upon part of Israel, until the full number of the Gentiles come in, [to the church] and then all Israel will be saved; as it is written, "The Deliverer will come from Zion, he will banish ungodliness from Jacob"; "and this will be my covenant with them when I take away their sins." As regards the gospel they are [now] enemies of God, for your sake; but as regards election they are beloved for the sake of their forefathers. For the gifts and the call of God are irrevocable. Just as you were once disobedient to God but now have received mercy because of their disobedience, so they have now been disobedient in order that by the mercy shown to you they also may receive mercy. For God has consigned all men to disobedience, that he may have mercy upon all. O the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways! "For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his counselor?" "Or who has given a gift to him that he might be repaid?" For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory for ever. Amen. (Romans 11:25-36)

Paul is careful to make clear that he is not speaking of each and every Jew being converted, but true Israel is limited to those who ultimately believe in Yeshua within the nation. Just how many Jews will be saved at the very end of the age? Zechariah seems to give the clue:

### **Two Thirds and One Third of All Israel**

In the whole land, says the LORD, **two thirds shall be cut off and perish, and one third shall be left alive.** And I will put this third into the fire, and refine them as one refines silver, and test them as gold is tested. They will call on my name, and I will answer them. I will say,



`They are my people'; and they will say, `The LORD is my God.'" (Zechariah 13:8, 9)

The conversion of one third of the Jews in Israel (if it happened today) would mean well over a million and a half converts to the true and living God. Zechariah says the new converts will be called on to undergo a terrible trial of their faith during the final days (months?) of the great military campaign of Armageddon involving as it will as many as 200 million soldiers from the armies of the nations. While the believing remnant in Edom "passes under the rod" of God's merciful, evaluating judgment, the eleventh-hour converts in Israel must "pass through the fire." Though our own nation, the United States, contains a professing Christian population that appears to number many tens of millions of believers, it is more realistic to say that the "believing remnant" in America today is perhaps only 5 to 10% of those professing faith in Jesus Christ. Thus the future large-scale conversion of Jews to belief in Yeshua at the close of the age will represent *a very great work of grace* by the God of Israel. A final conversion of one-third of the populace of Israel will surely be very large in percentage compared to the size of the fractional wheat harvest from among the gentiles. The end result of Yeshua's work in Israel at the end of the age will be a completely righteous nation of believers chosen to be the head of all the nations. Isaiah wrote these words about 700 BC:

On this mountain (Mt. Zion) the LORD of hosts will make for all peoples a feast of fat things, a feast of wine on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wine on the lees well refined. And he will destroy on this mountain the covering that is cast over all peoples, the veil [of pride and spiritual blindness] that is spread over all nations. (2 Cor. 4:3,4) He will swallow up death for ever (1 Cor. 15:54), and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from all faces, and the reproach of his people he will take away from all the earth (Rev. 21:4); for the LORD has spoken. It will be said on that day, "Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, that he might save us. This is the LORD; we have waited for him; let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation." For the hand of the LORD will rest on this mountain [Jerusalem], and Moab [Jordan] shall be trodden down in his place, as straw is trodden down in a dung-pit. And he will spread out his hands in the midst of it as a swimmer spreads his hands out to swim; but the LORD will lay low his pride together with the skill of his hands. And the high fortifications of his walls he will bring down, lay low, and cast to the ground, even to the dust. In that day this song will be sung in the land of Judah: "We have a strong city; he sets up salvation as walls and bulwarks. Open the gates, that the righteous nation which keeps faith may enter in. Thou dost keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusts in thee. Trust in the LORD for ever, for the LORD GOD is an everlasting rock. For he has brought low the inhabitants of the height, the lofty city. He lays it low, lays it low to the ground, casts it to the dust. The foot tramples it, the feet of the poor, the steps of the needy." The way of the righteous is level; thou dost make smooth the path of the righteous. In the path of thy judgments, O LORD, we wait for thee; thy memorial name is the desire of our soul. My soul yearns for thee in the night, my spirit within me earnestly seeks thee. For when thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world learn righteousness. If favor is shown to the wicked, he does not learn righteousness; in the land of uprightness he deals perversely and does not see the majesty of the LORD.

O LORD, thy hand is lifted up, but they see it not. Let them see thy zeal for thy people, and be ashamed. Let the fire for thy adversaries consume them. O LORD, thou wilt ordain peace for us, thou hast wrought for us all our works. O LORD our God, other lords besides thee have ruled over us, but thy name alone we acknowledge. They are dead, they will not live; they are shades, they will not arise; to that end thou hast visited them with destruction and wiped out all remembrance of them. But thou hast increased the nation, O LORD, thou hast increased the nation; thou art glorified; thou hast enlarged all the borders of the land (of Israel). O LORD, in distress they sought thee, they poured out a prayer when thy chastening was upon them. Like a woman with child, who writhes and cries out in her pangs, when she is near her time, so were we because of thee, O LORD; we were with child, we writhed, we have as it were brought forth wind. We have wrought no deliverance in the earth, and the

inhabitants of the world have not fallen. Thy dead shall live, their bodies shall rise. O dwellers in the dust, awake and sing for joy! For thy dew is a dew of light, and on the land of the shades thou wilt let it fall.

In the midst of Isaiah's description of the terrible judgments during the time of Jacob's trouble, the prophet gives a call for the remnant to hide themselves for a season:

In that day the LORD with his hard and great and strong sword will punish Leviathan the fleeing serpent, Leviathan the twisting serpent, and he will slay the dragon that is in the sea; [these creatures symbolize our human **pride**, inspired by Satan in the hearts of men]. In that day: "A pleasant vineyard {Israel}, sing of it! I, the LORD, am its keeper; every moment I water it. Lest any one harm it, I guard it night and day; I have no wrath. Would that I had thorns and briers to battle! I would set out against them, I would burn them up together. Or let them lay hold of my protection, let them make peace with me, let them make peace with me." In days to come Jacob shall take root, Israel shall blossom and put forth shoots, and fill the whole world with fruit. Has he smitten them as he smote those who smote them? Or have they been slain as their slayers were slain? Measure by measure, by exile thou didst contend with them; he removed them with his fierce blast in the day of the east wind. Therefore by this the guilt of Jacob will be expiated, and this will be the full fruit of the removal of his sin: when he makes all the stones of the altars like chalkstones crushed to pieces, no Asherim or incense altars will remain standing. ¶For the fortified city (Jerusalem?) is [now] solitary, a habitation deserted and forsaken, like the wilderness; there the calf grazes, there he lies down, and strips its branches. When its boughs are dry, they are broken; women come and make a fire of them. For this is a people without discernment (those who remained in Jerusalem after the flight of the remnant?); therefore he who made them will not have compassion on them, he that formed them will show them no favor. In that day from the river Euphrates to the Brook of Egypt the LORD will thresh out the grain, and you will be gathered one by one, O people of Israel. And in that day a great trumpet will be blown, and those who were lost in the land of Assyria and those who were driven out to the land of Egypt will come (back) and worship the LORD on the holy mountain at Jerusalem. (Isaiah 24-27).

The post-exilic prophet Zechariah had much to say about the close of the age we live in as well as details about both the identity and character of both the true Messiah and the Antichrist.

An Oracle The word of the LORD concerning Israel: Thus says the LORD, who stretched out the heavens and founded the earth and formed the spirit of man within him: "Lo, I am about to make Jerusalem a cup of reeling to all the peoples round about; it will be against Judah also in the siege against Jerusalem. On that day I will make Jerusalem a heavy stone for all the peoples; all who lift it shall grievously hurt themselves.

The term "on that day" is a clue that the passage is referring to the Day of the Lord, i.e. the great tribulation period:

And all the nations of the earth will come together against it [Jerusalem]. On that day, says the LORD, I will strike every horse with panic, and its rider with madness. But upon the house of Judah I will open my eyes, when I strike every horse of the peoples with blindness. Then the clans of Judah shall say to themselves, 'The inhabitants of Jerusalem have strength through the LORD of hosts, their God.' "On that day I will make the clans of Judah like a blazing pot in the midst of wood, like a flaming torch among sheaves; and they shall devour to the right and to the left all the peoples round about, while Jerusalem shall still be inhabited in its place, in Jerusalem. "And the LORD will give victory to the tents of Judah first, that the glory of the house of David and the glory of the inhabitants of Jerusalem may not be exalted over that of Judah. On that day the LORD will put a shield about the inhabitants of Jerusalem so that the feeblest among them on that day shall be like David, and the house of

David shall be like God, like the angel of the LORD, at their head. And on that day I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem.

### **Israel's National Mourning for Yeshua**

"And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of compassion and supplication, so that, when they look on him whom they have pierced, they shall mourn for him, as one mourns for an only child, and weep bitterly over him, as one weeps over a first-born. On that day the mourning in Jerusalem will be as great as the mourning for Hadadrimmon in the plain of Megiddo. The land shall mourn, each family by itself; the family of the house of David by itself, and their wives by themselves; the family of the house of Nathan by itself, and their wives by themselves; the family of the house of Levi by itself, and their wives by themselves; the family of the Shimeites by itself, and their wives by themselves; and all the families that are left, each by itself, and their wives by themselves. "On that day there shall be a fountain opened for the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to cleanse them from sin and uncleanness. "And on that day, says the LORD of hosts, I will cut off the names of the idols from the land, so that they shall be remembered no more; and also I will remove from the land the prophets and the unclean spirit. And if any one again appears as a prophet, his father and mother who bore him will say to him, 'You shall not live, for you speak lies in the name of the LORD'; and his father and mother who bore him shall pierce him through when he prophesies. On that day every prophet will be ashamed of his vision when he prophesies; he will not put on a hairy mantle in order to deceive, but he will say, 'I am no prophet, I am a tiller of the soil; for the land has been my possession since my youth.' And if one asks him, 'What are these wounds on your back?' he will say, 'The wounds I received in the house of my friends.'"

### **Yeshua, the Church, and the Remnant from Edom return to Jerusalem**

Behold, a day of the LORD is coming, when the spoil taken from you will be divided in the midst of you. For I will gather all the nations against Jerusalem to battle, and the city shall be taken and the houses plundered and the women ravished; half of the city shall go into exile, but the rest of the people shall not be cut off from the city. Then the LORD will go forth and fight against those nations as when he fights on a day of battle. On that day his feet shall stand on the Mount of Olives which lies before Jerusalem on the east; and the Mount of Olives shall be split in two from east to west by a very wide valley; so that one half of the Mount shall withdraw northward, and the other half southward. And the valley of my mountains shall be stopped up, for the valley of the mountains shall touch the side of it; and you shall flee as you fled from the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah. Then the LORD your God will come, and all the holy ones (saints, i.e., the church, his holy angels, and the believing remnant from Edom] with him.

On that day there shall be neither cold nor frost. And there shall be continuous day (it is known to the LORD), not day and not night, for at evening time there shall be light. On that day living waters shall flow out from Jerusalem, half of them to the eastern sea and half of them to the western sea; it shall continue in summer as in winter. And the LORD will become king over all the earth; on that day the LORD will be one and his name one. The whole land shall be turned into a plain from Geba to Rimmon south of Jerusalem. But Jerusalem shall remain aloft upon its site from the Gate of Benjamin to the place of the former gate, to the Corner Gate, and from the Tower of Hananel to the king's wine presses. And it shall be inhabited, for there shall be no more curse; Jerusalem shall dwell in security. And this shall be the plague with which the LORD will smite all the peoples that wage war against Jerusalem: their flesh shall rot while they are still on their feet, their eyes shall rot in their sockets, and their tongues shall rot in their mouths. And on that day a great panic from the LORD shall fall on them, so that each will lay hold on the hand of his fellow, and the hand of the one will be raised against the hand of the other; even Judah will fight against Jerusalem. And the wealth of all the nations round about shall be collected, gold, silver, and garments in great abundance. And a plague like this plague shall fall on the horses, the mules, the

camels, the asses, and whatever beasts may be in those camps.

### **Messiah will Reign from Jerusalem and the Nations will come to Pay Tribute**

Then every one that survives of all the nations that have come against Jerusalem [the sheep of Matthew 25:31-46] shall go up year after year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the feast of booths. And if any of the families of the earth do not go up to Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, there will be no rain upon them. And if the family of Egypt do not go up and present themselves, then upon them shall come the plague with which the LORD afflicts the nations that do not go up to keep the feast of booths. This shall be the punishment to Egypt and the punishment to all the nations that do not go up to keep the feast of booths. And on that day there shall be inscribed on the bells of the horses, "Holy to the LORD." And the pots in the house of the LORD shall be as the bowls before the altar; and every pot in Jerusalem and Judah shall be sacred to the LORD of hosts, so that all who sacrifice may come and take of them and boil the flesh of the sacrifice in them. And there shall no longer be a trader in the house of the LORD of hosts on that day. (Zechariah 12-14)

### **The Wine Press of Wrath upon the Jews**

Then I looked, and lo, a white cloud, and seated on the cloud one like a son of man, with a golden crown on his head, and a sharp sickle in his hand. And another angel came out of the temple, calling with a loud voice to him who sat upon the cloud, "Put in your sickle, and reap, for the hour to reap has come, for the harvest of the earth is fully ripe. So he who sat upon the cloud swung his sickle on the earth, and the earth was reaped."

The first sickle and the references to the reaping of the harvest of the earth indicates the reaping of the wheat and the tares from the nations, Matthew 13. This is a final separation of the believers in the nations other than Israel divided and differentiated from the unbelievers they are co-mingled with.

And another angel came out of the temple in heaven, and he too had a sharp sickle. Then another angel came out from the altar, the angel who has power over fire, and he called with a loud voice to him who had the sharp sickle, "Put in your sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth (Israel), for its grapes are ripe." So the angel swung his sickle on the earth and gathered the vintage of the earth, and threw it into the great wine press of the wrath of God; and the wine press was trodden outside the city (Jerusalem), and blood flowed from the wine press, as high as a horse's bridle, for one thousand six hundred stadia. (Revelation 14:14-20)

This series of events is also foretold by the prophet Joel. First Joel discusses the judgment of the nations on the basis of their treatment of the God's people the Jews. This is the same judgment we know as the "Judgment of the Sheep and the Goats" from Matthew 25:31-46.

"For behold, in those days and at that time, when I restore the fortunes of Judah and Jerusalem, I will gather all the nations and bring them down to the valley of Jehoshaphat, and I will enter into judgment with them there, on account of my people and my heritage Israel, because they have scattered them among the nations, and have divided up my land, and have cast lots for my people, and have given a boy for a harlot, and have sold a girl for wine, and have drunk it. "What are you to me, O Tyre and Sidon, and all the regions of Philistia? Are you paying me back for something? If you are paying me back, I will requite your deed upon your own head swiftly and speedily. For you have taken my silver and my gold, and have carried my rich treasures into your temples. You have sold the people of Judah and Jerusalem to the Greeks, removing them far from their own border. But now I will stir them up from the place to which you have sold them, and I will requite your deed upon your own head. I will sell your sons and your daughters into the hand of the sons of Judah, and they will sell them to the Sabeans, to a nation far off; for the LORD has spoken."

Joel now announces the assembly of the nations to the Battle of Armageddon. It is God who

draws these armies into His land.

Proclaim this among the nations: Prepare war, stir up the mighty men. Let all the men of war draw near, let them come up. Beat your plowshares into swords, and your pruning hooks into spears; let the weak say, "I am a warrior." Hasten and come, all you nations round about, gather yourselves there.

Next, Joel invokes the Lord to come down with his armies of heaven to fight against the nations:

Bring down thy warriors, O LORD. Let the nations bestir themselves, and come up to the valley of Jehoshaphat; for there I will sit to judge all the nations round about. [Again, this is the sheep and goat judgment of Matthew 25:31-46. The Valley of Jehoshaphat is most probably the Kidron Valley between the Temple Mount and the Mount of Olives.]

Likewise, Israel is to be judged:

Put in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe. Go in, tread, for the wine press is full. The vats overflow, for their wickedness is great. Multitudes, multitudes, in the valley of decision! For the day of the LORD is near in the valley of decision. The sun and the moon are darkened, and the stars withdraw their shining.

The Lord makes His open appearance upon the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem in the midst of the battle:

And the LORD roars from Zion, and utters his voice from Jerusalem, and the heavens and the earth shake. But the LORD is a refuge to his people, a stronghold to the people of Israel. "So you shall know that I am the LORD your God, who dwell in Zion, my holy mountain. And Jerusalem shall be holy and strangers shall never again pass through it.

The return of the Lord leads at last into the conditions of peace on earth under Messiah's long-expected reign:

"And in that day the mountains shall drip sweet wine, and the hills shall flow with milk, and all the stream beds of Judah shall flow with water; and a fountain shall come forth from the house of the LORD and water the valley of Shittim. "Egypt shall become a desolation and Edom a desolate wilderness, for the violence done to the people of Judah, because they have shed innocent blood in their land. But Judah shall be inhabited for ever, and Jerusalem to all generations. I will avenge their blood, and I will not clear the guilty, for the LORD dwells in Zion." (Joel 3)

Although quoted earlier in this chapter, a clear description of this same event---the coming of Messiah to the Mount of Olives in power and glory---is described by the aged Apostle John:

Then I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse! He who sat upon it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he judges and makes war. His eyes are like a flame of fire, and on his head are many diadems; and he has a name inscribed which no one knows but himself. He is clad in a robe dipped in blood, and the name by which he is called is The Word of God. And the armies of heaven, arrayed in fine linen, white and pure, followed him on white horses. From his mouth issues a sharp sword with which to (a) smite the nations, and he will rule [lit: shepherdize] them with a rod of iron; he will (b) tread the wine press of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty.

On his robe and on his thigh he has a name inscribed, King of kings and Lord of lords. Then I saw an angel standing in the sun, and with a loud voice he called to all the birds that fly in

midheaven, "Come, gather for the great supper of God, to eat the flesh of kings, the flesh of captains, the flesh of mighty men, the flesh of horses and their riders, and the flesh of all men, both free and slave, both small and great." And I saw the beast and the kings of the earth with their armies gathered to make war against him who sits upon the horse and against his army. And the beast was captured, and with it the false prophet who in its presence had worked the signs by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped its image. These two were thrown alive into the lake of fire that burns with sulphur. And the rest were slain by the sword of him who sits upon the horse, the sword that issues from his mouth; and all the birds were gorged with their flesh. (Revelation 19:11-21)

Notice that the armies of the world originally gather to battle at Megiddo---to fight one another. In the midst of that battle, ominous portents from outer space---visions and signs of the approach of Yeshua---cause the armies of the world to turn and fight against God and His armies!

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### **Isaiah's Prayer for the Soon-Coming of Messiah:**

O that thou wouldst rend the heavens and come down, that the mountains might quake at thy presence---as when fire kindles brushwood and the fire causes water to boil---to make thy name known to thy adversaries, and that the nations might tremble at thy presence! When thou didst terrible things which we looked not for, thou camest down, the mountains quaked at thy presence. From of old no one has heard or perceived by the ear, no eye has seen a God besides thee, who works for those who wait for him. Thou meetest him that joyfully works righteousness, those that remember thee in thy ways. Behold, thou wast angry, and we sinned; in our sins we have been a long time, and shall we be saved? We have all become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds are like a polluted garment. We all fade like a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away. There is no one that calls upon thy name, that bestirs himself to take hold of thee; for thou hast hid thy face from us, and hast delivered us into the hand of our iniquities. ¶¶¶Yet, O LORD, thou art our Father; we are the clay, and thou art our potter; we are all the work of thy hand. Be not exceedingly angry, O LORD, and remember not iniquity for ever. Behold, consider, we are all thy people. Thy holy cities have become a wilderness, Zion has become a wilderness, Jerusalem a desolation. Our holy and beautiful house, where our fathers praised thee, has been burned by fire, and all our pleasant places have become ruins. Wilt thou restrain thyself at these things, O LORD? Wilt thou keep silent, and afflict us sorely?

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### **Messiah's reply to the prophet:**

I was ready to be sought by those who did not ask for me; I was ready to be found by those who did not seek me. I said, "Here am I, here am I," to a nation that did not call on my name. I spread out my hands all the day to a rebellious people, who walk in a way that is not good, following their own devices; a people who provoke me to my face continually, sacrificing in gardens and burning incense upon bricks; who sit in tombs, and spend the night in secret places; who eat swine's flesh, and broth of abominable things is in their vessels; who say, "Keep to yourself, do not come near me, for I am set apart from you." These are a smoke in my nostrils, a fire that burns all the day. Behold, it is written before me: "I will not keep silent, but I will repay, yea, I will repay into their bosom their iniquities and their fathers' iniquities together, says the LORD; because they burned incense upon the mountains and reviled me upon the hills, I will measure into their bosom payment for their former doings." Thus says the LORD: "As the wine is found in the cluster, and they say, 'Do not destroy it, for there is a blessing in it,' so I will do for my servants' sake, and not destroy them all. I will bring forth descendants from Jacob, and from Judah inheritors of my mountains; my chosen shall inherit it, and my servants shall dwell there. Sharon shall become a pasture for flocks, and the Valley of Achor a place for herds to lie down, for my people who have sought me. But you who forsake the LORD, who forget my holy mountain, who set a table for Fortune and fill

cups of mixed wine for Destiny; I will destine you to the sword, and all of you shall bow down to the slaughter; because, when I called, you did not answer, when I spoke, you did not listen, but you did what was evil in my eyes, and chose what I did not delight in." ¶¶

Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: "Behold, my servants (the remnant) shall eat, but you (apostates) shall be hungry; behold, my servants shall drink, but you shall be thirsty; behold, my servants shall rejoice, but you shall be put to shame; behold, my servants shall sing for gladness of heart, but you shall cry out for pain of heart, and shall wail for anguish of spirit. You shall leave your name to my chosen for a curse, and the Lord GOD will slay you; but his servants he will call by a different name. So that he who blesses himself in the land shall bless himself by the God of truth, and he who takes an oath in the land shall swear by the God of truth; because the former troubles are forgotten and are hid from my eyes. ¶¶" "For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; and the former things shall not be remembered or come into mind. But be glad and rejoice for ever in that which I create; for behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy. I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and be glad in my people; no more shall be heard in it the sound of weeping and the cry of distress. No more shall there be in it an infant that lives but a few days, or an old man who does not fill out his days, for the child shall die a hundred years old, and the sinner a hundred years old shall be accursed. They shall build houses and inhabit them; they shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit. They shall not build and another inhabit; they shall not plant and another eat; for like the days of a tree shall the days of my people be, and my chosen shall long enjoy the work of their hands. They shall not labor in vain, or bear children for calamity; for they shall be the offspring of the blessed of the LORD, and their children with them. Before they call I will answer, while they are yet speaking I will hear. The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, the lion shall eat straw like the ox; and dust shall be the serpent's food. They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain, says the LORD." ¶¶

Thus says the LORD: "Heaven is my throne and the earth is my footstool; what is the house which you would build for me, and what is the place of my rest? All these things my hand has made, and so all these things are mine, says the LORD. But this is the man to whom I will look, he that is humble and contrite in spirit, and trembles at my word. "He who slaughters an ox is like him who kills a man; he who sacrifices a lamb, like him who breaks a dog's neck; he who presents a cereal offering, like him who offers swine's blood; he who makes a memorial offering of frankincense, like him who blesses an idol. These have chosen their own ways, and their soul delights in their abominations; I also will choose affliction for them, and bring their fears upon them; because, when I called, no one answered, when I spoke they did not listen; but they did what was evil in my eyes, and chose that in which I did not delight." Hear the word of the LORD, you who tremble at his word: "Your brethren who hate you and cast you out for my name's sake have said, 'Let the LORD be glorified, that we may see your joy'; but it is they who shall be put to shame. "Hark, an uproar from the city! A voice from the temple! The voice of the LORD, rendering recompense to his enemies! "Before she was in labor she gave birth; before her pain came upon her she was delivered of a son. Who has heard such a thing? Who has seen such things? Shall a land be born in one day? Shall a nation be brought forth in one moment? For as soon as Zion was in labor she brought forth her sons. Shall I bring to the birth and not cause to bring forth? says the LORD; shall I, who cause to bring forth, shut the womb? says your God. ¶¶" "Rejoice with Jerusalem, and be glad for her, all you who love her; rejoice with her in joy, all you who mourn over her; that you may suck and be satisfied with her consoling breasts; that you may drink deeply with delight from the abundance of her glory." For thus says the LORD: "Behold, I will extend prosperity to her like a river, and the wealth of the nations like an overflowing stream; and you shall suck, you shall be carried upon her hip, and dandled upon her knees. As one whom his mother comforts, so I will comfort you; you shall be comforted in Jerusalem. You shall see, and your heart shall rejoice; your bones shall flourish like the grass; and it shall be known that the hand of the LORD is with his servants, and his indignation is against his enemies. "For behold, the LORD will come in fire, and his chariots like the stormwind, to render his anger in

fury, and his rebuke with flames of fire. For by fire will the LORD execute judgment, and by his sword, upon all flesh; and those slain by the LORD shall be many. "Those who sanctify and purify themselves to go into the gardens, following one in the midst, eating swine's flesh and the abomination and mice, shall come to an end together, says the LORD. "For I know their works and their thoughts, and I am coming to gather all nations and tongues; and they shall come and shall see my glory, and I will set a sign among them. And from them I will send survivors to the nations, to Tarshish, Put, and Lud, who draw the bow, to Tubal and Javan, to the coastlands afar off, that have not heard my fame or seen my glory; and they shall declare my glory among the nations. And they shall bring all your brethren from all the nations as an offering to the LORD, upon horses, and in chariots, and in litters, and upon mules, and upon dromedaries, to my holy mountain Jerusalem, says the LORD, just as the Israelites bring their cereal offering in a clean vessel to the house of the LORD. And some of them also I will take for priests and for Levites, says the LORD. "For as the new heavens and the new earth which I will make shall remain before me, says the LORD; so shall your descendants and your name remain. From new moon to new moon, and from sabbath to sabbath, all flesh shall come to worship before me, says the LORD. "And they shall go forth and look on the dead bodies of the men that have rebelled against me; for their worm shall not die, their fire shall not be quenched, and they shall be an abhorrence to all flesh." (Isaiah 64-66)

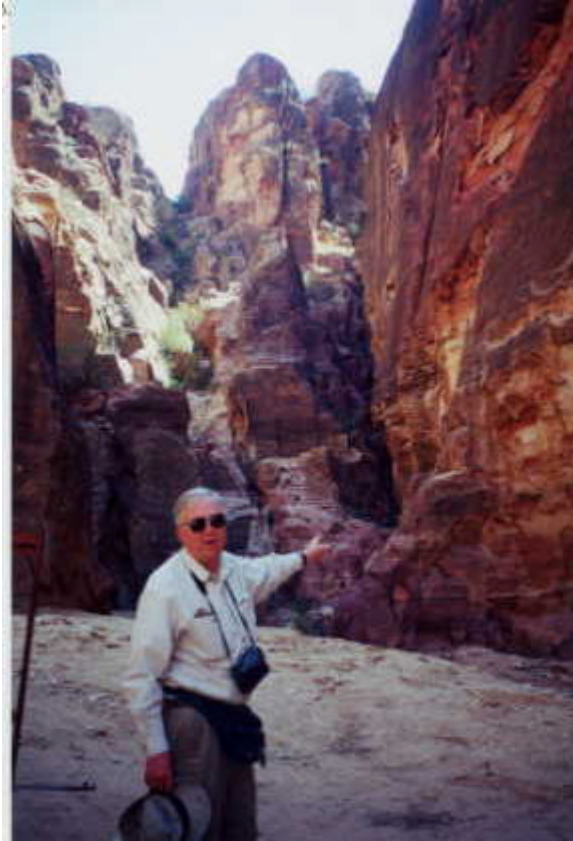
For various Bible References to Esau and the Edomites see Summary, Brief History, and Final Destiny of Edom).

A supplementary set of notes on the presence and role of the Lord---and the Church---on earth during the Tribulation Period is found in the file Supplemental Notes on End-Time Events and Israel's Exile in Edom



## Appendix 15: A city for 'end times' Is Petra hiding place for Israeli remnant during Armageddon?

*"Match me such a marvel, save in Eastern clime A rose-red city, half as old as time." --  
¶From "Petra" by Dean Burgen*



By **Anthony C. LoBaido**, PETRA, Jordan -- Carved from the rock that served as a base for Esau -- the father of the Edomites -- Petra is a magical and mysterious ancient city that illuminated the imaginations of mankind through the millennia and now serves as a key location for many scholars tracking so-called "end-times" events.

Historians, anthropologists and archaeologists are still fascinated by Petra and continue to travel to Jordan to unearth its many mysteries. Famed director Steven Spielberg came here to film "Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade." Perhaps most significant, however, is the trend of modern Judeo-Christian believers to increasingly turn to Petra over what some Bible scholars consider its future prophetic significance -- the hiding place for the Jewish/Israeli remnant during the biblical events widely known as Armageddon and the Great Tribulation.

What is Petra? Petra is a heavily fortified rock/city situated south of Amman, Jordan. To the south are Aqaba and the Red Sea. It is surrounded by

the mountainous deserts of Wadi Rum, which played host to the mobile guerilla camps of Lawrence of Arabia during World War I.

According to official accounts, Petra was established by Nabataean Arabs in the sixth century before Christ. These Arabs were nomads, but their work around Petra provided the impetus for a grand and widespread commercial empire that reached north all the way to Damascus. They worked diligently to carve out temples, burial chambers and other facilities from the yellow, white, red and brown sandstone rocks. King Aretas IV was the most prominent Arab architect.

Herod the Great of New Testament fame lusted after Petra, but was unable to take control of it. Pompey, the Roman emperor, ordered his legions to literally carve out a military fortress amid the sheer cliffs of Petra. Pompey overturned Nabataean rule around A.D. 99. Even through the Byzantine era, Rome retained some influence in the region, yet the empire was shifting away from Jordan and establishing itself in western Turkey.

The famous face of Petra

The Crusaders, led by a knight named Baldwin, came in the 12th century and, like the Romans, built military fortifications. During the Crusader era, wild legends about Petra sprang up in the imaginations of the West. The Crusaders, upon examination of Petra's burial chambers and temples that had been dedicated to the Nabateans' god Dhushares and goddess Allat, concluded that these represented the Pharaoh of Exodus and the Pharaoh's daughter.

Since the ancient center of the city was known as the Wadi Musa or "Valley of Moses" and a nearby mountain, Jaal Haroun, was named after Aaron, the Crusaders drew some remarkable conclusions. They claimed that the Pharaoh of Exodus had garrisoned his army at Petra while chasing the fleeing Hebrews, and that Petra was the place where Moses struck the rock in search of water. These stories were propagated by the devout Monks of Saint Aaron, who worked closely with the Crusaders of that era.

After the Crusaders withdrew, the local Arabs had complete control of Petra. In 1812, Swiss adventurer Johann Ludwig Burckhardt traveled to Petra incognito, dressed as an Arab Bedouin. He was fascinated by the royal tombs, sacrificial chambers and obelisks he encountered at Petra. Burckhardt encountered the local Bedouins and tried to learn from them about the history of this wildly rugged place.

The Palestinian connection

What did Burckhardt "discover" at Petra amid the baths, old coins, temples, theaters and water works? It was clear he didn't have much of an historical record to go on. The entire area had disappeared from Western thought since the Crusades. The only historical document in the Western psyche concerning Petra was the Peutinger Table (an examination of the Roman Empire in what is today the Middle East, compiled in the 12th



century). There was also a rare map -- drawn by cartographers at the time of the American

Revolutionary War -- based on the works of the Roman historian Flavius Josephus.

Marianne Roy, a Swiss graduate student from the French canton of Switzerland, came to Petra to research her graduate school thesis on Burckhardt.

Roy told WorldNetDaily, "Burckhardt may well have followed this map to Petra from the Swiss Alps. One can only wonder about the dangers such a journey entailed back in those times."

Various accounts of Petra from the first century A.D. vary about the inhabitants of Petra. Diodorus, from the island of Sicily, wrote a first century account claiming the inhabitants of the Petra basin were merely "barbarians" and warlike. Yet a contemporary writer of Diodorus, a man named Strabo, wrote of a bustling commercial center.

Could both men have been correct?

Micah Mohammed, WorldNetDaily's Arab-speaking driver and guide on the trip said: "Long ago, according to the Koran and Islamic folklore, the area around Wadi Rum was much different, tropical with lakes and game, like Uganda. The most esteemed scientists and climatologists of today accept this as a fact. The Koran also says that this area was changed into a barren desert as a punishment from Allah. This happened when men turned their backs on God and claimed that it was man himself who had created such a paradise."

Real scientific investigation of Petra was not undertaken until 1897. A book called, "The Sepulcher of an Ancient Civilization" was finally published in 1930. The book claimed that Petra had existed through the millennia as a "dead city," mostly uninhabited and used for burials and other similar ceremonies.

Yet the Roman Senate had dubbed Petra as a "metropolis." Certainly, the Roman Empire -- which had expanded into Syria, Lebanon, Turkey, Jordan, Palestine and north Africa -- would not have adopted a dead city, drawn it on their official maps, fought over it, quartered a garrison there and defended Petra all for naught. These actions suggest that someone had resisted Roman rule.

A donkey cart carries people through the trails of Petra

Today, the mystery of the discrepancy of the accounts of Diodorus and Strabo are easily explained. And this is where the Palestinian connection comes into play.

The modern-day Palestinians, according to historians and archaeologists, came into Petra via a migration from the west. They were known as the Edomites. Once they arrived at Petra, they became known as the Idumeans. Some confusion exists over the Semitic to Hellenistic name change.

Through the careful analysis of Petra's ancient metal works, coins, art, burial rights and water works, archaeologists and historians have presented a fusion of two cultures. They are the



Arab Nabateans and the Edomites/Idumeans. The two peoples combined to create a strong culture, featuring a vast commercial infrastructure and war-making capabilities.

Concerning the significance of Petra and the biblical end times, Pastor Noah Hutchings of the Southwest Radio Church, an expert on Petra,

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offers this account:

"Jacob and Esau were twins. Jacob got the best of the deal in trading for Esau's birthright, and then he stole Esau's blessing. The blessing was far more valuable than the birthright. Esau took his minor share of Isaac's cattle and goods and went to Petra, which in the Bible is called Mount Seir, Mount Hor, Selah and Edom's strong city. Esau chased the Horites (cave dwellers) out of Mount Hor and established Petra and the capital city of his kingdom, Edom."

Five hundred years later, when Moses tried to pass through Petra to the Promised Land, the Edomites refused passage and even fought the children of Israel. After the Israelites finally got into the land, the Edomites continually tried to kill them. The wars between Edom and Israel are recorded in the Old Testament in great detail. It was the inherited mission of the Edomites to exterminate the entire population of Israel to the last man.

In 600 B.C., when Babylon invaded Israel, thousands of Israelis were moved to Babylon (today's Iraq) and the Edomites were moved into Israel. The Edomites even helped the Babylonians destroy Jerusalem and the temple (Psalm 137). When a remnant of Israel returned after the Babylonian captivity, the Edomites were there to wage war against them while the city and the temple were being rebuilt.

While the scriptures are silent for the 400 years between the book of Malachi and the birth of Jesus, Roman historian Josephus records the struggle between the Edomeans and the Israelites. This racial division and strife in the land prevented Israel from regaining any semblance of its former glory. The nation was easy prey for the Roman Empire on its march to world conquest.

The Romans favored the Edomeans over the Jews because Jews would not compromise their religion and worship Caesar or allow idols in the Temple. The Romans placed Edomean stooges like the Herods in places of authority. Josephus recorded an endless list of the most heinous crimes committed by the Herods against the Jews.

In A.D. 70, the Romans destroyed the temple and Jerusalem. Over 1 million Jews were either killed or died of starvation in Jerusalem alone. The vast majority of the Jews left alive were sold as slaves to other nations. The balance fled to other countries to save their lives.



Of course, there are those who doubt the connection between Esau and the modern Palestinians. This line of reasoning says that

Esau was the father of the Philistines and that there is, in fact, no connection between these two peoples other than the similarity in name, which was assigned to the people of "Palestine" by the Romans.

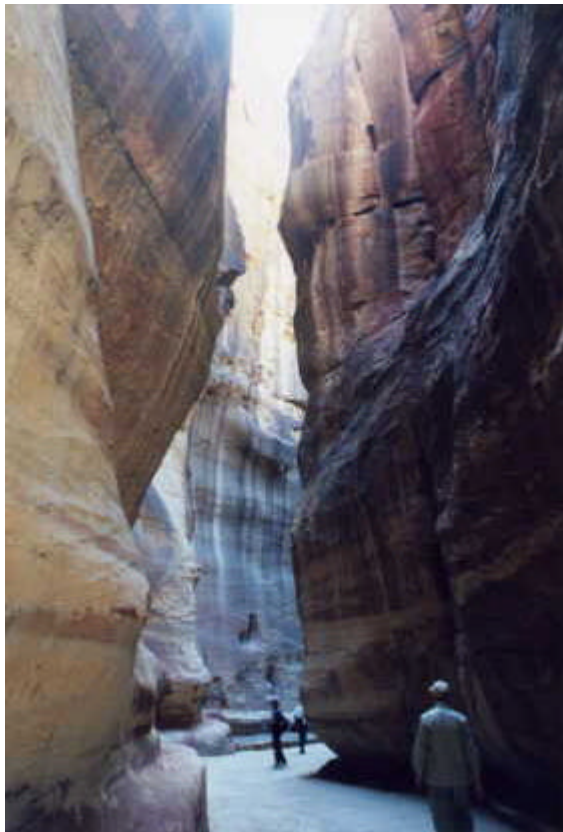
"The Talmud states that Sennacherib the Assyrian despot conquered the Middle East and transferred entire populations. Therefore, the Edomites, Ammonites, Egyptians, etc. who lived after Sennacherib [about 2,500 years ago] are not the real ones, they are transferred

populations. The Talmud uses the term Esau to mean a Jew who took Jewish ideas but denied Judaism, and it generally refers to Rome. Because Esau was the twin brother of Jacob, indeed, the older brother, the greatest converts, who became the greatest rabbis, are from the Edomite line. Two of the most famous ones are Unkelus, in the time of Hillel, who authored the accepted Aramaic translation of the bible, and Akilas. Both were from the family of the Roman emperor," Rabbi David Eidensohn told WorldNetDaily. Eidensohn serves as a consultant to the Knight Ridder news service on Jewish issues.

"No other nation, other than Edom, produces outstanding converts. In Cabala, the greatest souls -- period -- were in the soul of Esau, and when the Jews and the world merits, they reveal incredible light that even Jews cannot reveal. Rabbi Mayer, whose name means 'light' was so brilliant that 'none of his colleagues could follow his thoughts,' and he descends from a Roman emperor. Again, the Palestinians are not Edom," stated Eidensohn.

Petra: The ultimate defensive position

WorldNetDaily traveled to Petra with the Amman-based Mossad intelligence agent Avi Rubin -- a former airborne commando in the Israel Defense Force. Rubin explained that Petra might be the ultimate defensive position in a regional war.



"It is an outstanding defensive position. Airborne assault would be most difficult. It is what I would call a natural defensive position. The Roman legions, the Crusaders, the Arabs and now the IDF, Iraq and the Jordanian army all recognized this," said Rubin.

"The most important defensive feature is called 'the Shiq,' which is about 2,000 meters long. [Today, the passage is marked by the 'Indiana Jones' souvenir shop.] It is a narrow passageway which leads into the city. It has very high, sheer walls which will protect the Israeli population as they enter the city from the west. The rocks of Petra can help protect from gunfire, bombing, artillery and perhaps even absorb some radiation."

Bible fundamentalists point to Old Testament passages they claim to be speaking about a war between Israel and the Palestinians. These include Ezekiel 35:2-5 and Ezekiel 36:5. Also, Amos 9:11-12 says, "In that day will I raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen. That they may possess the remnant of Edom. "

Ezekiel 36:5 says, "Therefore thus saith the Lord God; Surely in the fire of my jealousy have I spoken against the residue of the heathen and against all Idumea, which have appointed my land into their possession with the joy of all their heart, with despiteful minds, to cast it out for a prey."

Ezekiel 35:2-5 says, "Son of man, set thy face against mount Seir, and prophesy against it. Because thou hast had a perpetual hatred, and hast shed the blood of the children of Israel by the force of the sword in the time of their calamity, in the time that their iniquity had an end."

Rubin said that both the IDF and the Mossad had examined Petra from a strategic and military perspective.

"The Old Testament speaks of a coming war between Israel and the Palestinians. Any fool can see the Palestinians do not want peace with Israel. We would all be wise to keep an eye on Petra in regard to future events in world history," Rubin concluded.

Speaking of what Jewish writings include about the end times, Eidensohn told WorldNetDaily, "As a Jew -- who has divinely imparted secrets about the affairs of earth, especially the family of Abraham, Ishmael and Esau, Israel, Moslems and Christians -- we see the world heading away from secular [conflicts] to religious ones. The Moslems are pushing up into Russia, and as they gain nuclear weapons, they will not be afraid of China, either. This is the war of the jihad people against America. It is a war against not the U.S., but Christianity.

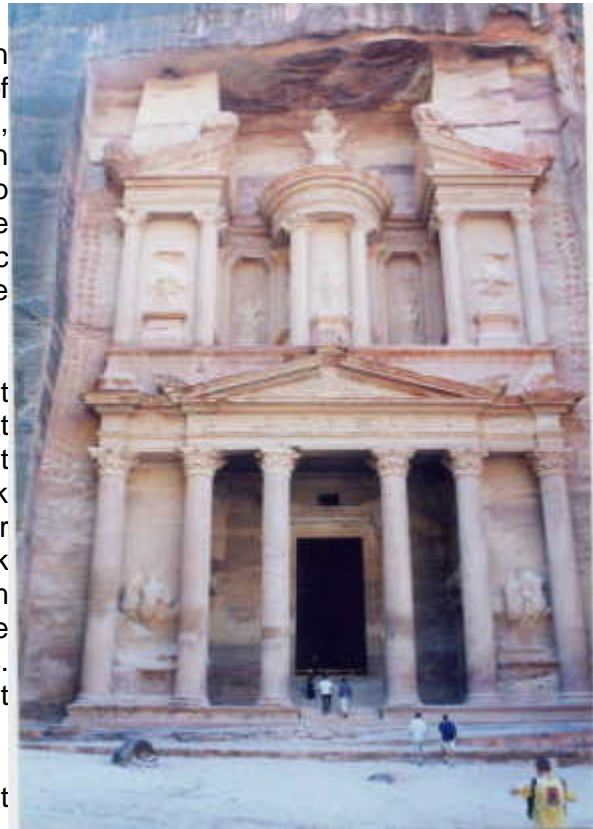
"The mystical books stress that in the end of days the secular Jews will battle the authority of the rabbis, attempt to make peace with Ishmael, fail, and after that will be the Messianic Era. Zionism was founded to create solutions for the 'Jewish problem,' and the Orthodox opposed this, saying that there will never be a solution for the 'Jewish problem' until Jews behave so honestly and so correctly that Messiah came. As Israelis realize that the Arabs will never make peace, the Orthodox movement is exploding. When Rabbi Amnon Yitschok speaks (he is a former secularist, as are the major movers in the 'Return movement') tens of thousands of people crowd the stadium. Outside, people hawk tickets for ridiculous prices. Once inside, hundreds of people come forward with their gold and silver nose and earrings, and promise to Return. Israel is now a land pulsing with the Messiah and a large amount of people who are coming to grips with the realities opposed to their fervent secular beliefs."

Eidensohn told WorldNetDaily that he believes end-times prophecy has been unfolding over the past decade.

"You remember, of course, that Iraq rained down Scud missiles on Israel, 39 huge containers of explosives, and almost nobody was killed, despite the fact that the Jews were penned up in their apartments and could not go to bomb shelters for fear of poison gas. This was in the Gulf War and was one of the first major public miracles that will herald in the Messianic Era," he added.

"The Orthodox community can take the constant saber rattling because they believe that Arafat and Hussein are harbingers of the Messiah, but the secular community cannot take it. They seek solutions, and there are none. This is the major issue in modern Israel today: whether to seek solutions at any price, or to forget about them and await the Messiah. More and more people realize that there are no secular solutions. Nobody wants peace; they want peace without Jews."

As interest in the end times and the Great Tribulation continues to grow in Western culture, Petra will most likely continue its mysterious hold on those who look to the scriptures for clues to future events.



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6. Joyce Baldwin, *Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi*, Intervarsity Press, Downers Grove, IL, 1972.
7. For outstanding briefing packages on Bible prophecy and current events by Chuck Missler go to [Koinonia House](#)
8. [NASA satellite imagery of Petra](#)

Appendix 16: The Man from Petra

What Every Christian Should Know  
About the Jews      No. 65

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## The Man From Petra

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Where will the Jews hide when  
the nations gather against Jeru-  
salem at the Battle of Arma-  
geddon?

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By Joseph Hoffman Cohn

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(Additional copies may be had at 5¢ a copy, 50¢ a dozen or \$3.50 a hundred. Address the American Board of Missions to the Jews, Inc., 236 West 72d Street, New York 25, N. Y. In Canada, 39 King William Street, Hamilton, Ontario.)

### "Come Thou With Us!"

**I**F YOU, dear reader, have been stirred and inspired with what you have read in this booklet, and if you feel that it is the Lord's will for you to have fellowship with us in the great task to which He has committed us, may we repeat the invitation given centuries ago to one who was also on the threshold of decision, "Come thou with us, and we will do thee good; for the Lord hath spoken good concerning Israel." Numbers 10:29. If the Lord leads you to cast in your lot with us, we have attached a coupon below for your convenience. Just fill it out, cut it off and mail it to us, and we shall count your fellowship as of His providing.

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### The Man From Petra

By Joseph Hoffman Cohn

**M**OUNT Seir is freighted with romance, history and destiny. What scenes does the very mention of the name conjure up! It is from Mount Seir that the cry comes, "Watchman, what of the night? Watchman, what of the night?" It is from Mount Seir that the blood-stained Divine Warrior comes trudging up the ravines and the crags of the Valley of the Kedron. The prophet looks down that ravine, perhaps he stands upon one of the undulating dips of that beautiful chain of hills known as the Mount of Olives, peering down the Valley; he sees this lonely Traveler, and calls out,

Who is this that cometh from Edom,  
with dyed garments from Bozrah (Mount Seir)? He that is glorious in his apparel,  
traveling in the greatness of his strength?  
(Isaiah 63:1.)

And the Traveler calls back in answering echoes through the great Valley as He makes his way laboriously to the Holy City,

I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save!

Again the inquiring prophet calls down the ravine,

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Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel,  
and thy garments like him that treadeth  
in the winefat?

Once more, but now in tones of poignant heartache, comes the accusing answer,

I have trodden the winepress alone; and  
of the people there was none with me; for  
I will tread them in mine anger, and trample  
them in my fury; and their blood shall  
be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will  
stain all my raiment. For the day of ven-  
geance is in mine heart, and the year of  
my redeemed is come.

Some years ago, the *National Geographic Magazine* published an article in which there appeared some thirty full-page photographs in brilliant coloring of a city that had been lost for nearly two millenniums, and then was suddenly rediscovered. That city was none other than the Mount Seir that we are now talking about; it is today called Petra.

One takes the road out of Jerusalem east through Bethany, and then slightly north, and that leads to old Jericho, just a pile of sand dunes now, much like a piece of wasteland on one of our California beaches or on the South Shore of Long Island. From there it turns south directly down into the valley of the Dead Sea, 1,300 feet below sea level.

But we are now interested in Petra and so we continue straight east until we reach the Allenby Bridge which I have crossed always with a feeling of rever-

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ence. Here it is that the River Jordan is spanned, and near this spot tradition tells us our Lord Jesus Christ was baptized. The bridge was built to honor that great Christian hero of the first world war, General Allenby, whom God used so miraculously to make conquest of Jerusalem without the firing of a single gun. Many of our readers will remember the brilliant reception and ovation given General Allenby at the Royal Albert Hall in London at the close of World War I, by way of appreciation for his phenomenal achievements in the Holy Land campaigns. On that occasion, General Allenby made an epochal address. He told how as a little boy brought up in the highlands of Scotland he had knelt at his mother's knee night after night to say his evening prayers; and he was taught from his earliest memories to hsp after his mother the closing part of the prayer, "And O Lord we would not forget thine ancient people, Israel; hasten the day when Israel shall again be thy people and shall be restored to thy favor and to their land." Then, holding back the tears with great difficulty, he said, humbly and simply, "I never knew then that God would give me the privilege of helping to answer my own childhood prayers!"

So it is this Allenby Bridge that we now cross, and find ourselves in the rather bizarre and dangerous land of

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Transjordanian. From here we travel east and south by caravan or motor until we reach the last outpost of civilization, called now Amman. The old Scripture name is Teman, or Maan. From this point on it is literally, "Each man for himself." Bedouins in wild attire fill the spaces wherever you move, and if you wish to go out of Amman, you have to hire one of these Bedouins; but you must sleep with one eye open! All of this is in exact fulfillment of God's Word, when He said, concerning Edom, "I will make it desolate from Teman." And so it is. It is from here that you start on another trek which brings you finally to the base of the city we are talking about, old Mount Seir, now called Petra, a city set on a rock, nearly 2500 feet high, arising with sudden and sheer height from the surrounding desert.

#### Esau's Old Hide-out

Petra, the city of mystery, has been called "The Rose Red City as Old as Time," "The Rainbow City," and many other descriptive names suggested by its strange, desolate beauty. All we are able to find out about it from secular history is that it once had 267,000 inhabitants; that it was on a trade route from Egypt to Sheba, Iraq and Persia; that it was inaccessible except through the Rift which was only wide enough for two horses abreast; and that the perpendicular walls

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of the Rift are from 400 to 700 feet high, and brilliant with all the colors of the rainbow.

This beautiful city was occupied by the Nabataeans from 100 B. C. until they were conquered by Rome about 106 A. D. It was mentioned by Strabo as a city of great riches and luxury. We know also that the armies of Mohammed swept down upon Mount Seir, and that soon after that it was lost and forgotten for hundreds of years until Burkhart heard of it through an Arab, and studied Arabic three years in order to go there disguised as a sheik. He stayed only a few hours, but he was thrilled by the beauty and mystery of this desolate city.

The Bible alone is able to solve the mystery for us. Petra is mentioned as one of the cities conquered by the four kings who captured Sodom and carried Lot captive. It was then called Mount Seir, and the inhabitants were called Horites or cliff dwellers. (Gen. 14:6.)

You will remember that Sanballat, the ubiquitous bumble-bee who buzzed around the poor head of dear old militant Nehemiah, was also a Horite, and so came honestly by his hatred against the Jews.

The story of the brothers, Jacob and Esau, they who were destined to mold the history of the World, is woven into the fabric of this city of Mount Seir, or

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Petra. One night Esau came home tired and out of sorts, and coveted a dish of red beans that Jacob had prepared for himself. He had to decide between the great Covenant of God with his grandfather Abraham, or that dish of beans, and he reasoned something like this: "What will the birthright profit me? Shall I do without my supper that the world may be blessed through me?" He decided to let the blessing for the world go into the discard, and have a hot supper. Jacob decided that the world should be blessed through him at the cost of his supper and almost life itself, and contrived to get the blessing. He left all the riches of his father's home and went away with only his staff (Gen. 28:3-4).

#### Esau Living in Lush Splendor

When Jacob returned from Padan-Aram in after years, Esau came from Mount Seir (Petra) with 400 men to meet Jacob. After the greeting he returned to his home in Seir, and Jacob eventually went to his father Isaac, who was still living. Gen. 33:16. Esau must have prospered greatly, for we read, "These are the generations of Esau the father of the Edomites in Mount Seir . . . and they are the kings that reigned in Edom, before there reigned any king over the children of Israel," and a long list of kings and dukes is given who reigned "in the land of their possessions." Gen. 36.

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But we read, "Jacob dwelt in the land wherein his father was a stranger." Gen. 37:1.

Esau, who despised his birthright, was living in the most beautiful city in the world, its palaces carved like beautiful cameos out of rose red, rainbowhued, and lemon-colored stone and his family reigned as dukes and kings. But wait!

Jacob returned from Padan-Aram, "a stranger in a strange land," grieving over the loss of his beloved wife Rachel, then soon despairing over the loss of Joseph. After a while they were distressed by famine, and the fear that Benjamin might be lost to him. In his despair Jacob said, "All these things are against me!" Then the news came that Joseph was alive and master of all Egypt, and that he was providing bread for the whole kingdom. With a glad heart Jacob went to his beloved son, as the Jews will one day turn to the Lord Jesus, and Jacob spent the remaining years of his life amidst the glories that surrounded his famous son. Jacob, with all his faults had chosen to be a channel of blessing to the world, and he lived to see his own son bless the world.

When Jacob died, Joseph had his body embalmed, and the great of Egypt followed his remains to the threshing floor of Atad on the east side of Jordan; so it must have been the desire of Joseph to

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pass through the land of Edom, and show Esau and his family how God had honored the humble Jacob. His sons carried him to the land of Canaan, and buried him in the cave of the field of Machpelah, and there he rests today, waiting for the coming of the Lord. What a wonderful day that will be!

#### The Wilderness Rebuff

While the Edomites (children of Esau) were living in oriental luxury in their "rainbow city," the children of Jacob were enslaved in Egypt by a king who knew not Joseph, and finally they were taken out by the hand of the Lord. Then came Amalek (descendant of Esau) and fought with Israel. "When the hands of Moses were held up, the Israelites prevailed, but when Moses lowered his hands, Amalek prevailed." And God said unto Moses, "Write this for a memorial in a book, and rehearse it in the ears of Joshua: for I will utterly put out the remembrance of Amalek from heaven." Ex. 17:14. This is one reason why beautiful Petra was lost for hundreds of years!

When the children of Israel finally came to the borders of Edom and begged to be allowed to pass through the country, the plea was one of the most pathetic in the Bible: "Let us pass, I pray thee, through thy country; we will not pass through the fields, or through

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the vineyards, neither will we drink of the water of the wells; we will go by the king's highway, we will not turn to the right hand nor to the left, until we have passed thy borders." And Edom said unto him, "Thou shalt not pass by me, lest I come out against thee with the sword." Num. 20:17, 18. There was nothing for the children of Israel to do but turn south over the rough country to Ahabah, and travel all those weary miles out around the land of Edom, which was under the rule of the children of Esau.

#### Two Kings In A World Drama

Centuries later, one dark night, two kings were face to face for the first time. On the darkest night the world has ever known, one sat on his jeweled throne in all his magnificent regalia. He had an income of about \$3,000,000 a year and everything he desired, for human life was nothing to him. Whatever stood between him and the thing he wanted was destroyed and exterminated as had been done in his father's day. He had even repaid his brother for his hospitality in Rome, by taking his wife from him. This was the Edomite usurper of David's throne, Herod Antipas. The slogan of this descendant of Esau was the same: "What will it profit ME?"

The King who stood before Herod had the same burning desire that had moved

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the heart of Jacob—He desired above all things that the whole world might be blessed through Him. He was brought in, bound, before the usurper who sat upon His own throne. What a profoundly moving picture! The king from the line of Esau, and the King from the line of Jacob, stood looking into each other's eyes! With only a gesture, the Christ could have summoned legions of angels to sweep the usurper from His throne. But He did not want that throne; not then, because He was on His way to the cross to redeem you and me. He didn't want that throne until you and I could share it with him. Herod sent Him back to Pilate. Later, He Who knew no sin, took the place of the sinner on the cross, and died in the place of Herod, as well as for you and me. Jesus even died for the man who had usurped His throne!

The son of Esau went on with his revelry, while the Son of Jacob hung on the cross. But the hand of God fell upon this tyrant soon after. He was banished to Lyons and died in exile in great misery, while Jesus Christ rose from the dead to reign as King of kings and Lord of lords for all eternity.

#### Esau's Fate Forever Settled

At this time Mount Seir (Petra) was still beautiful and prosperous, but God had spoken its doom: "I will make Mount

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Seir an astonishment and a desolation," Ezek. 35:3-7. Again, "Because that Edom has dealt against the house of Judah by taking vengeance, I will also stretch out mine hand upon Edom (Esau) and I will cut off man and beast from it; and I will make it desolate from Teman (Maan)." These words were fulfilled to the letter; Maan is the railroad station, and from just there the desolation begins.

Not only was Esau's city and kingdom doomed; but his nation, Edom, was to be destroyed: "There shall be none remaining of the house of Esau," Obadiah 18. See Joel 3:19; Amos 1:11; Isaiah 34:5; Ezekiel 25:12. Petra, or Mount Seir, his capital city, is an astonishment and a desolation. All the buildings that were constructed of stone blocks and mortar have crumbled to dust, but those cut from the solid rock of the mountain are still standing in all their exquisite beauty, enough of them to accommodate 100,000 people in comfort. A clear spring is bubbling over the rose-red rocks, with oleanders and wild figs growing on its banks; everything is ready and waiting for the children of Israel.

#### The Shadow of Armageddon

What is the significance of all that we have been trying to tell you in these pages? Only this, that as many of us are

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eagerly and earnestly seeking to study the pattern of God's weavings as He works out with majestic stride the destinies of Jew, Gentile, and the Church of God, foreknown and foreordained of Him before ever this world was created, we get such blessing and delight as we see a trace here, a hint there, of what His eternal purposes are. We try, like the little child on the playroom floor, to piece together the great jig-saw puzzle and how happy we are when we find a piece here and a piece there that fits! The truth is that Israel is being fast prepared for the terrible days ahead.

The picture given to us in Ezekiel 37 and 38 indicates clearly that the people of Israel will be gathered in substantial numbers in the land of their fathers before the final crash of the cataclysmic Armageddon will break upon them with the speed of a tornado. The Zionist movement from its very origin under the aegis of Theodore Hertzl was never a religious movement; it was purely political. And Israel has always counted on help from the world nations, rather than from God. In Ezekiel 38 the question is asked of Gog (Russia), "In that day when my people of Israel dwelleth safely shalt thou not know it?" A better translation is, "When my people of Israel dwelleth *confidently*, shalt thou not know it?"

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In other words Israel will trust gullibly whatever promises the nations of the world will make to her, and trusting in those false securities, Israel will dwell *confidently*, that is, Israel will say in her heart, "I don't need God; my own strength has gotten me all this land and treasure, and I will trust to my allies to defend me. I will dwell *confidently*." Thus, Israel, naive, gullible, will like a drowning man grasp eagerly at any straw that holds the slightest promise of deliverance. They will not turn to God that he shall in his own miraculous way bring about their salvation; they still persist in trusting to the arms of flesh. Over and over again they have been deceived by world politicians; over and over again they have gone on trusting new pretenders, new promises, new suavities, just as they will do when comes finally the Antichrist. A chief Rabbi of Rome receives baptism at the hands of a Romish Catholic! He thought that was the only way whereby he could merge his nationality and save his skin. A President of the United States promises the Jews that he will surely secure for them the land of Palestine, if only these sheep-like Jews will vote for him! At once the Hurrahs were trumpeted over America, "Here has come our Messiah!" But it soon was found that this Messiah had feet of clay, and that he did

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not mind telling a few falsehoods if it suited his purpose.

#### The Bear Astride A World

So the forces of evil began to gather, immediately upon the conclusion of World War II. There is still a Malenkoy to reckon with, a colossus that will stand literally astride two continents, and will be able to hurl defiance at any and every combination of powers that can ever be assembled to challenge his indomitable will and purpose. There will be the gathering of the nations against Jerusalem, and then will great multitudes of the Jews flee, in greater terror than ever they fled from the cohorts of Titus, or from the machine gun fire and the lethal gas chambers of the Nazi savageries. It looks as though this flight will bring them east, east, ever east, across the Allenby Bridge, into Transjordan, down the desert treks, and into the city of Petra for shelter. Here it is that the Lord Jesus Christ will appear to do battle, and here perhaps it will be that the remnant from Israel will be saved. From here it may be that the lonely Traveler will be coming up the ravine to the Mount of Olives, to the old city of Jerusalem, to the Throne of David! What glorious surprises await this world of ours so deluded and so carried away with its own sophistries and Utopian dreams!

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#### The Man Who Took His Own Medicine

The one man who first proposed this whole thought to me was the noted saint and Bible student, W. E. Blackstone. Some 15 or 20 years ago this brother took me into his study one day out in Pasadena and opened his heart to me as he explained with glistening eyes, his understanding of the Man from Bozrah. He told me something that astounded me; he said that he had just sent \$8,000 to a Jewish missionary in Palestine, and that that Jewish missionary had made up a caravan of donkeys and camels and had carried thousands of Gospel tracts, New Testaments, and Gospels, clear down through the desert of Transjordan and up into the mountain height of Petra. And there he had distributed these New Testaments and tracts in small packages, in the caves and in the empty houses, to bide the time when the refugee Israelites will flee there for escape from the Antichrist. Then they will find these New Testaments and they will understand what is going on, and what their Messiah is doing for their deliverance! I must confess that I had a feeling of astonishment, and I thought within myself that this was surely something fantastic. But here was a man known to be sober in judgment, a good Bible student, and he had taken of his own money the sum of \$8,000 to make an investment of this sort. Who then was I to gainsay?

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#### In Old Jerusalem I Find Corroboration

So, in 1938 when I visited in Palestine, I had supper with a beloved friend of mine, a Jewish Christian missionary, in the Street of the Prophets. He told me he had just returned from Petra. He had been on one of his preaching tours which took him as far as Amman, and he thought as long as he had gotten that far he would like to go down to Petra just to satisfy himself as to what had become of the Blackstone literature. To his utmost surprise, he found the boxes intact, and to the best of his judgment they were just as good as though they had been there only a few days.

Thus it is that we too, united in our common bond of love for Israel, and seeking always to discover His footsteps as He deals with His covenant people, are ever on the alert to sense His will and do His bidding. That is why we have tried to be on the front line of battle in the planning for the Post-War undertaking in Europe and Palestine. That is why our beloved friends are joining with us in abundant fellowship, affection and encouragement as we go on day after day seeking to do His will and to make known His name.

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#### Do Not Let This Tract Die

PRICELESS is the information that you have now read. Beyond calculation can be its influence in your life. But far beyond that, this message can be passed on by you so that many other lives will be touched by it and there will be fulfilled in you the blessed promise of John 7:38, that out from you will truly flow rivers of living water.

The battle lines are being drawn; and as surely as the sun rises and sets, these lines are between Satan and God. Equally as sure is the astounding truth that the battle will concern Israel, around whose head the lightnings and the thunders of Satan's fury will flash and reverberate over the world.

Which side are you on, dear reader? If you are on God's side, then grasp the far-reaching opportunity of sending out a message like this to every corner of this earth. Do your part, and you will be blessed in it. We will send you as many as you wish at wholesale prices for large distribution.

Copies of this tract may be obtained at 5¢ each, 50¢ a dozen, or \$3.50 a hundred, from the American Board of Missions to the Jews, Inc., 236 West 72d Street, New York 23, N. Y. In Canada, 39 King William Street, Hamilton, Ontario.

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#### Israel Approaches Armageddon

THE darkest hour in Jewish history is near. The Day of Jacob's Trouble will plunge the nation into an abyss of anguish beside which the recent happenings in Europe will be but a shadow. In that day it will be too late for any Jew to be saved through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ—the Church will no longer be here! She will be with the Lord.

Don't you think that fairness to the Jews requires us to give them the Gospel message now, while it is yet time? Ought we not to show a heart of pity for this poor benighted people, by showering upon them now an overwhelming Gospel testimony? And will not such an act on our part hasten the coming of Him whom our hearts long to see?

Won't you co-work with us? You can't preach to the Jews, but you can pray for them, and you can give of your means to help forward the work. We need so much your prayers, your sympathy, your help. May we have them?

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