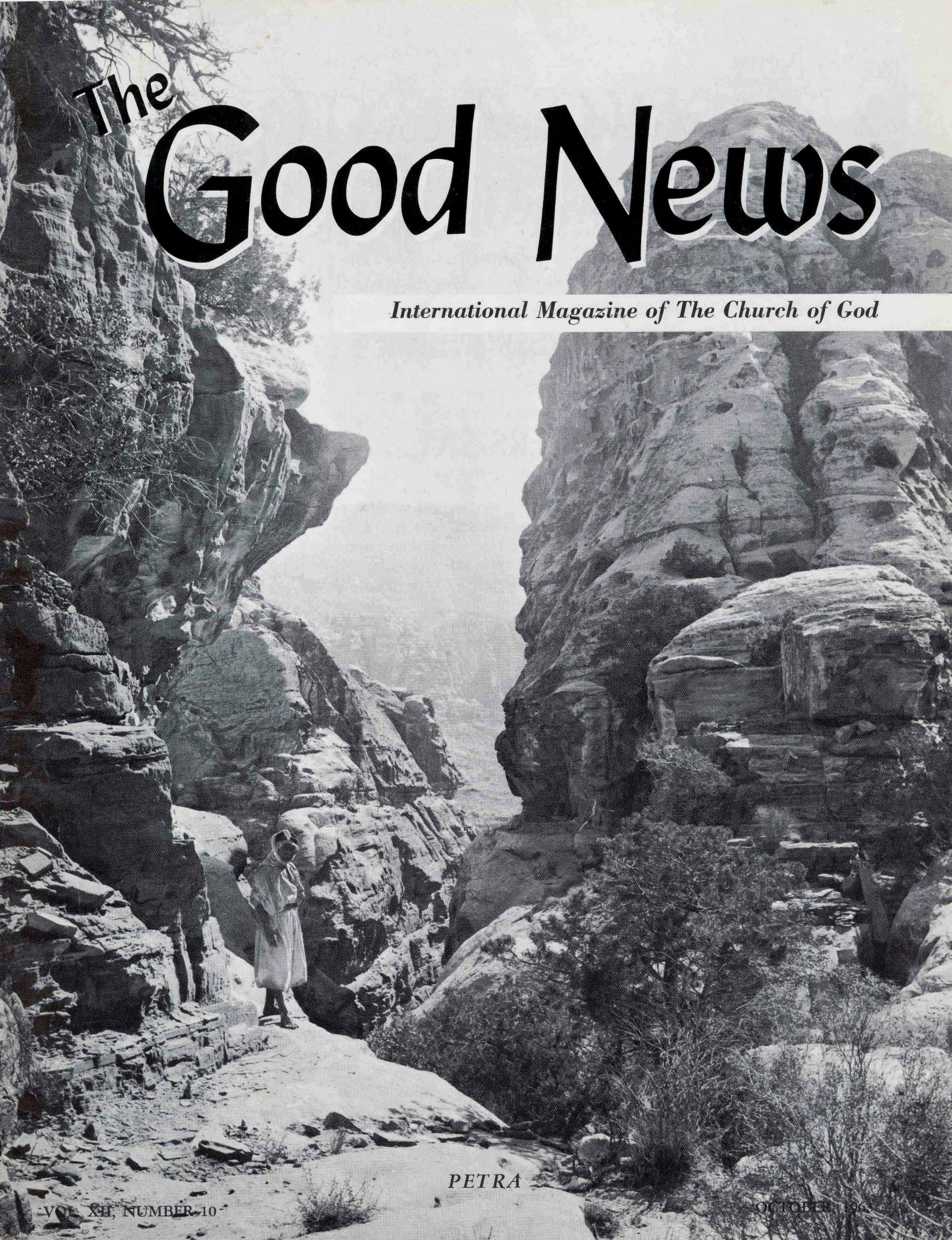


The

Good News

International Magazine of The Church of God



PETRA

VOL. XII, NUMBER 10

OCTOBER 1963



More About Our Cover

Petra is located in the isolation of southern Jordan—nearly halfway around the world from the United States. This picture shows only one small section of the valley of Petra—a section on a trail high above the actual

valley floor. The main body of Petra is down and to the right as you view this picture. Be sure you read the article regarding Petra on page 13.

What our READERS SAY . . .

Laid Off—Rehired!

"My husband has just begun paying full tithes. Since he refused to work on the Sabbath, he was laid off Friday. Another man worked on the job Saturday and some way ended up in the hospital Saturday. Today the boss came and asked my husband to come back to work. He was out of work for six months before he got this job."

Woman, West Virginia

Defender of the Faith?

"The other night I was able to fight three Jehovah's Witnesses to a draw on the subject of the Ten Commandments. I didn't convince them that the law still stands, but after a two-hour battle—with three of them—I don't think they left feeling they had met a soft one. They asked for a return engagement, so tonight the war is on again."

Man, Maryland

• *Try II John 10.*

Handles Situation Wisely!

"For some time I've wanted to tithe but could not get my husband to agree, and I felt I should not fight with him about it. So last week he gave me the income tax check for my own use—I sent you the first tithe of it. I prayed my husband would come to see we should tithe even if we are not members, for we were really robbing the Lord of what was His. Today he

cashied his pay check and bought a money order for one-tenth of what he made before deductions. I hadn't said a word. The Lord answered my prayer."

Woman, Maryland

• *And you handled your part just right!*

No Doubt Now

"I have been to God's Church before but quit. I told the minister that if I ever came back it would be when I had proven it out. Since I have joined the Air Force I have learned that everything you said was true and now I know you are God's true minister. Now I want to come back. Pray for me and please help me."

Serviceman, Texas

• *Sometimes the "school of hard knocks" is a stern teacher.*

Quits Tithing—Curses Come

"I only make \$18 a week and I am sending my tithes from now on. I pray I will not lose my home. The bank is about to close in on me. I have had nothing but trouble since I quit tithing."

Man, Tennessee

Delivery Room Victim

"This is a prayer request for healing. I have a granddaughter (who is 19 years old), a victim of cerebral palsy and showing no improvement. When this girl was born, the delivery pains

(Please continue on page 6)

The Good News

International magazine of
THE CHURCH OF GOD
*ministering to its members
scattered abroad*

VOL. XII

NO. 10

Published monthly at Pasadena, California.
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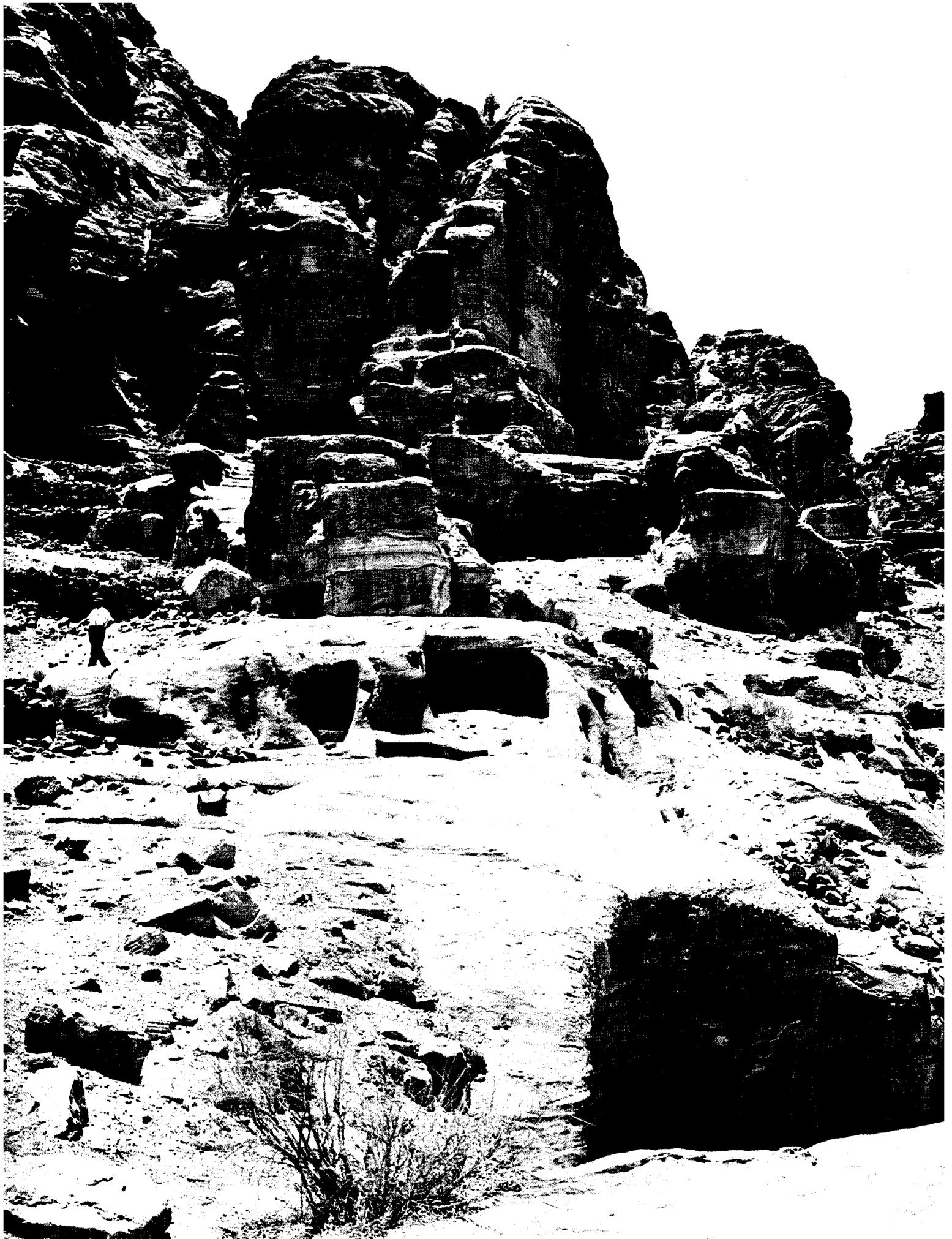
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and new address. IMPORTANT!



PETRA!

Here is an eyewitness report on Petra. The facts and pictures you've been wanting to know and see. But MOST IMPORTANT, an understanding of what your attitude toward a place of safety should be.

by David Jon Hill

Getting to Petra

"WE'RE BACK in Jerusalem again—we go across the border tomorrow, early. From Petra to here is even more arid than Arizona—and yet people manage to live in scattered groups. The goats seem to be *eating the very dirt*—camels crossing the road caused us to stop several times. We picked up a little Arab boy a little older than Jonathan [eight years old]. He had walked all the way from Petra [30 or more kilometers] where his father worked. He was on his way to see his mother, traveling across the desert, *alone!*"

This is what I wrote to my wife from Jerusalem just before crossing into the Israeli sector. Mr. Meredith and I have just returned from a trip around the world including an extensive tour of the Middle East, and *two days in Petra itself!*

"PETRA—the Rose Red City of the Dead—half as old as time!" This is how Petra is advertised in Jerusalem and in Amman, the capital of Jordan. It is becoming more and more a tourist attraction as world-wide tourism increases. To most of you brethren the word Petra has a *special* meaning as a possible place of protection in which God will hide us from the Great Tribulation!

Having just been there I wanted to pass on to you an eyewitness report of what Petra is like—to show you some of the pictures I took while there—and most important of all, to explain to you as God's minister the one overwhelming lesson that being in Petra itself taught me!

We left the hotel in Amman at 5:00 in the morning and traveled over an American-built highway for over 100 miles. Then we turned west on a small, but paved, access road to Petra. Just before we got to Petra we stopped at the supposed site where Moses struck the rock and the water came out to save the Israelites—the beginning of Wadi Musa—the River of Moses. Mr. Meredith and I drank from the clear, cold water which was both delicious and clean. Then we drove to within about 200 yards of the entrance of the Siq, got out of the car and climbed on horseback to ride through the Siq.

Many things that I had heard about Petra were flooding my mind at this time and I was comparing the reality of being there with the information I had about it. The Siq is a narrow gash cut through the 500-foot sandstone cliffs that surround the eastern edge of Petra. It is a very narrow cleft or defile through the mountain barrier into the valley. I had always heard and read that this was the *only access* to Petra, and that the Siq was so narrow that you could reach out and touch either side as you walked through it. Actually being there I found both of these impressions incorrect in today's modern world.

The Siq is indeed very narrow but as I rode my horse through I vainly tried to touch both sides and failed every time. Then I began to notice that there were well-traveled wheel tracks at my horse's feet! Much to my surprise—and even a little disappointment I think—I discovered a full-sized dumptruck



Looking up from the floor of the narrow Siq, all you see is a narrow piece of sky between the rough sandstone walls.

parked in the heart of Petra! Also, as I came into the valley of Petra itself I discovered that the other side of the valley was composed of rather gentle-sloping mountains over which any army could swarm! Although there is not any other road built into Petra than the one that comes through the Siq, there is certainly access from many other points of the compass.

I also had the erroneous impression that Petra was quite small, and when I beheld its hugeness I had mixed emotions about it. I felt *good* because I began to realize that Petra would not only accommodate a few thousand but perhaps as many as a *quarter of a million or more!* Multiple thousands of caves dot the cliffs on every side and there are still many areas that could be developed and made comfortable in a very short time within the vast valley. But, looking at it physically I began to feel less and less secure within the much-vaunted protective walls of Petra! I realized that not only was the Siq accessible to armored cars and tanks, but that *any army* in the world could send its forces over the low mountains to the west. I also realized that thousands of paratroopers could be very easily dropped into the great valley. And of course with modern warfare, helicopters even obviate this necessity!

The Lesson I Learned

There is a *difference* between *knowing* and REALIZING! Of course I had *known* that Petra was not going to save me from the coming Tribulation. But I had been thinking more about the security of the *physical* attributes of Petra than the spiritual attributes of how our Creator God will save us from the coming Tribulation—Petra only being *incidental* to His Plan.

PETRA CAN'T SAVE ANYBODY!

If you're looking forward to going to Petra to save your skin—thinking it is relatively safe because it is out of the civilized areas of the world—that it is nestled in protective safety in the rose-red rocks of Mount Seir—then you need to have impressed upon you the same lesson I learned. If you have *not* been thinking about Petra in this way, then this lesson will only confirm the *proper way* in which Petra should be regarded.

Petra as the coming place of safety is referred to most plainly in Isaiah 16. "Take counsel, execute judgment; make thy shadow as the night in the midst of the noonday; hide the outcasts; bewray not him that wandereth. Let mine outcasts dwell with thee, Moab" (Isa. 16: 3-4). Moab is one of the areas that will

escape out of the hands of the Beast Power when it sweeps into the Middle East to take over (see Dan. 11:41). Even presently of all of the Arab lands it is the one which has the least hatred toward Israel. Petra *could well be* the place which God has in mind for the safety of the Philadelphian Church in the coming world Tribulation.

But 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!

We'll need outright, *daily miracles* from God to keep us alive in that hot, dry and desolate place. Yet *with* that protection from God being given to us for those three and a half years I can think of no other place on the face of the earth that would be more beautiful than Petra!

Petra's Problems

The more I thought about this situation, the more specifically I began to realize how God was going to have to intervene in every way to provide the protection and safety that He promises. Let me explain.

THERE IS NO WATER IN PETRA!

I had heard, and it was true some time ago, that there were two springs in Petra and that Wadi Musa itself flowed into the valley. Now both of those springs are bone dry and have been for some years, and the Wadi Musa is being used by an Arab village *outside* Petra. The government of Jordan is even constructing a special ditch and embankment to be sure that the waters of Wadi Musa *never* flow through the Siq into Petra! In about April of this year 22 French tourists died in a 15-foot wall of water that came surging through the Siq from a rainstorm so far distant from them that they did not even *realize it was raining*. They died with no chance of escape because the Siq walls are as smooth as the walls of your living room and there *was* no escape! As a result of this, the government is determined to keep this from happening again. In so doing it is making sure that

Wadi Musa will not flow into Petra!

GOD, then, will have to *provide water daily* for the thousands that He brings to this place of safety. I can guarantee you that Petra is one of the worst places on earth to be in without water!

The sun is so hot that unless there were some protection from it, activity would be cut to a minimum—especially for the many older people which we have in the Church.

Should any government wish to *attack* us, the Siq is a *natural entrance* through which any number of armored vehicles and tanks could come. And in this modern day and age armies could swarm over the mountains from any side as well as descend on us from the skies!

There is also of course the matter of *food!* I had heard that people were storing great reserves of food in the caves of Petra—although I went into dozens of caves I never ran across any food! There are a number of Arabs—about 150—living inside Petra in some of the caves with their *goats*. But other than a handful of goats there is no other visible food supply in the entire valley!

If you planted a seed in the sandstone it would never come up because there is no water. If there were water the seed would germinate but have a very hard time living because sandstone does not supply the needed nutrients. If the needed nutrients were supplied it would still take an entire season for any crop to come to fruition and we would die of starvation in the meantime! Besides this, although there is plenty of room in Petra for more than a quarter of a million people to live, there is not anywhere near enough land area to support crops which would feed this number of people! So *food* will be a problem from the moment we enter until the moment we leave.

As far as the other accommodations of Petra are concerned, the caves are very interesting and I am sure they will supply adequate shelter—however, they will not be the accommodations we have become used to in this luxury-glutted society.

Summing it up, it seems that the *only* problems that will face us in Petra will be: an utter lack of water, an utter lack of food, an utter lack of any kind of protection—not only from the armies of this world but from the very merciless elements of sun and heat and sand themselves. Petra is literally what it is advertised to be—the Rose Red City of the DEAD!

God's Solutions!

But God *does* promise complete protection! "And to the woman [the Church] 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" (Rev. 12:14-16).

Since our God is a *very real* God, let's look very closely at this promise that He gives us and see if it contains the necessary things we're going to *desperately need* in Petra. In the first place we're going to have to *get to* Petra. Petra is on the other side of the world from the United States—almost as far away as you can go. So naturally this is the first thing that God promises—"two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness." God will intervene to supply some sort of transportation for those people whom He does account worthy to escape to this place of safety.

The next thing promised by God is, "she is nourished"—now nourished includes *both food and water*. The duration of this nourishment is promised as three and a half years. Will the nourishment be "Manna" as it was in Moses' time? Again God promises *protection*—because Satan will stir up the Beast Power to try to crush the little group of refugees and destroy them from the face of the earth. God promises a very unusual end for these armed forces ("flood")—an *earthquake* to

swallow them up completely just as in the case of Dathan and his rebellion against Moses! (Num. 16).

God has a thousand ways where we have none!

There is NO WAY we can *save ourselves* from the prophesied famines to come upon this land. No matter how much whole wheat, yogurt, honey and blackstrap molasses 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! "For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it" (Matt. 16:25). This vital principle we *must all learn*—and be impressed with more each day—that ONLY GOD can save us from any of our troubles or problems!

You see, brethren, the very things God promises us by way of protection in Petra are the things He tells us *not* to be overly concerned about, *not* to have our minds studying on, because to be filled with a desire for these physical things is a Gentile weakness (Matt. 6:32). God's plain statement is for us not to worry about what we're going to *eat* or *drink* or how we're going to be *sheltered* (Matt. 6:25), "But seek ye FIRST THE KINGDOM OF GOD, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matt. 6:33).

Another Answer in Our Songbook

From time to time during Sabbath services we sing Psalm 121. When we do we need to realize its *meaning for us* today and in the near future. "The Lord is thy keeper: the Lord is thy shade upon thy right hand. The sun shall not smite thee by day, nor the moon by night. The Lord shall preserve thee from all evil: he shall preserve thy soul. The Lord shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in from this time forth, and even for evermore" (Ps. 121:5-8). Yes, God is not only going to supply our *basic needs* of food, water and shelter but even protect us from the glaring sun.

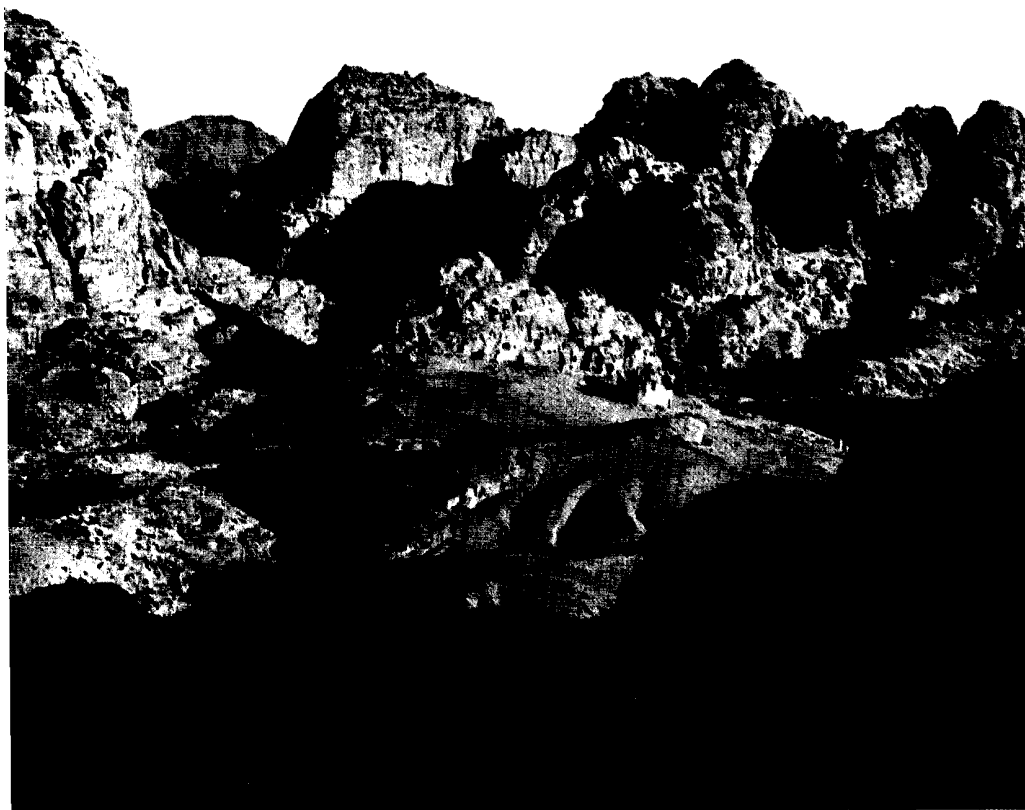
We don't need to be completely dogmatic about these things, but we can anticipate how God is going to work out His protection for us. We learn *what* the mind of God is by studying *His Word*. We are urged to make a thorough study of the Old Testament by many scriptures in the New Testament (Matt. 4:4; Luke 4:4; I Cor. 10:1-11; II Tim. 2:15).

There was *another time* when God protected His people by a cloud—in the Exodus from Egypt. If the cloud God uses to protect those of His refugees in Petra is similar—a great boiling cloud with flashing lightnings and supersonic, tornadic winds—then, at the same time it provides us with rain and shade from the sun it will also provide us with protection from any attacks from the air!

Complete faith in God—the faith of Jesus Christ—living faith day by day even after arrival in the place of safety is going to be the *only real protection* in those last years before Christ's return!

"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. 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" (Ps. 91:1-10).

In connection with this, brethren, please read Psalm 18 and Psalm 62 as well as the entire chapter of Deuteronomy 32. These are some of the refer-



The Hotel in Petra is behind the ruins in the center.

ences in God's Word which will help you orient your mind spiritually so that you're putting your trust *in your* CREATOR and not in some valley of rock in the Near East—a *rock of death* except for the present and active intervention of your Creator-God!

"And David spake unto the Lord the words of this song in the day that the Lord had delivered him out of the hand of all his enemies, and out of the hand of Saul: And he said, *The Lord is MY ROCK*, and my fortress, and my deliverer; The God of my rock; *in him will I trust*: he is my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my high tower, and my refuge, my saviour; thou savest me from violence" (II Sam. 22:1-3).

Learn This Lesson NOW

The *only* way you are going to be accounted worthy (Luke 21:36) to escape this captivity to come and BE in Petra, is for you to learn this vital lesson of absolute trust in God for *everything* NOW! Unless you can learn to live by faith *now* (Hab. 2:4), to

your heart out, and asking Him to help you overcome your *daily* problems, you will have no need to exercise faith in Petra—because you just won't be there!

If Petra is your present goal, then you are of all men (or women) MOST MISERABLE! Make God's Kingdom your goal now and in everything you do and forever! The added blessing of being in Petra—or anywhere else—as a place of safety in the time of trouble to come will also be an added time of trial and testing for those who are growing and overcoming the most, in the three and one-half years just preceding the second coming of Jesus Christ.

Forget about Petra! Forget about all the little physical things that stand in the way of your developing the character of Jesus Christ. Get down on your knees and spend more time before God in prayer—keep your eyes open and read the daily news and recognize that the prophecies of your Bible are being fulfilled *every single day before your eyes*—THIS is how you will qualify not just for a brief interim of peace in Petra, but for the Kingdom of God forever! (Luke 21:36).

There is plenty of room within the valley.

