

This Is PETRA!

This concluding installment continues the history of Petra from the Old Testament, and reveals the prophetic significance of Petra's past.

by Herman L. Hoeh

THE second installment revealed that Moses led the Children of Israel through Petra toward the Promised Land. At Petra, Miriam was buried. Nearby, atop Mount Hor, Aaron died in the sight of the whole congregation.

From Petra—called Kadesh or Kadesh-Barnea in the account of the Exodus—Moses expected to lead Israel into Palestine. The direct route from Petra to east of Jordan was by the King's Highway. Now we pick up the story of the Exodus with Moses' request to journey on

this important road-link with Eastern Palestine.

Where Was the King's Highway?

When Moses and the Israelites were at Kadesh they sent messengers to the king of Edom asking permission to "go by the king's highway" (Num. 20:17). Edom refused passage.

"And the children of Israel said unto him, 'We will go by the highway: and if I and my cattle drink of thy water, then I will pay for it.'" In response to this second request we read: "And he

said"—this is Edom's reply—"Thou shalt not go through." They refused again. "And Edom came out against him with much people, and with a strong hand. Thus Edom refused to give Israel passage through his border: wherefore Israel turned away from him" (Num. 20:19-21).

Israel was not permitted to go through Edom by the King's Highway. Where was this highway?

Part of it may still be seen today. It lay *east* of the Dead Sea and *east* of Mt. Seir. It is nearly identical with today's

Petra Valley showing Cook's Camp erected for the tourist season. The dry stream bed at the far left is part of the Wadi Musa — the Stream of Moses.

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The Arabah Plain with the mountains of Edom in the background. Northward through this near-barren plain the Children of Israel moved in their journey toward the Promised Land.

main-traveled road from Amman to the Gulf of Aqaba. *All of us who have visited Petra have had to travel the same general route of this ancient highway!* It is the only highway in the region!

This route east of Palestine and Mt. Seir has always been known in history as the King's Highway.

What was Israel going to do, now that Edom refused them passage by this route?

Journey NORTHWARD in the Arabah

After Israel had moved from Eziongeber to Kedesh the second time, God said to Moses: "Ye have compassed this mountain long enough; turn NORTHWARD. And command thou the people, saying: 'Ye are to pass through the border of your brethren the children of Esau, that dwell in Seir . . . contend not with them'" (Deut. 2:2-5).

After Kadesh was reached and the King's Highway closed to them, Moses summarizes the next few months by saying: "So we passed by from our brethren the children of Esau, that dwell in Seir, *through the way of the Arabah* [the King James Version has "plain"], from Elath and from Eziongeber" (Deut. 2:8).

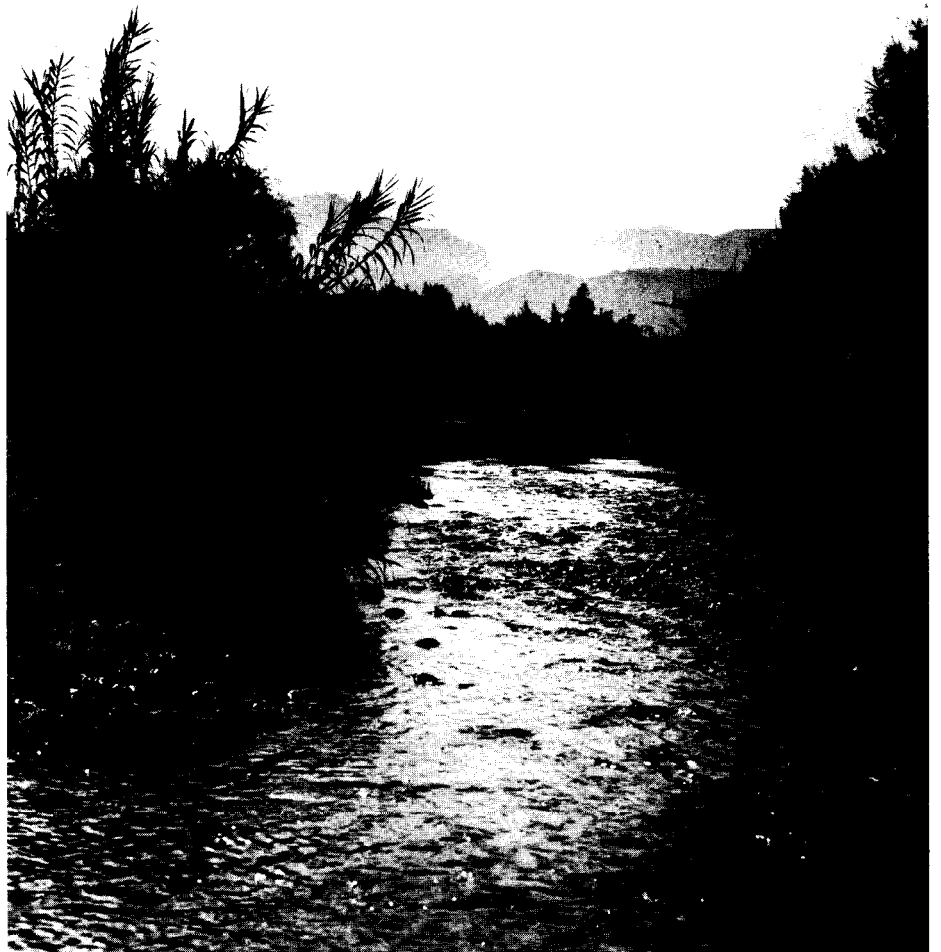
Since Edom refused passage, Israel had to turn back, pass by Mt. Hor, and continue *northward* through the Arabah to by-pass the territory of Edom.

Most Bible maps would have the children of Israel going southward

around Mt. Seir and then taking the King's Highway in order to by-pass Edom! It shows how little most scholars read their Bibles. Israel had to go *west* of Edom through the Arabah in order to avoid cutting through the border of Edom.

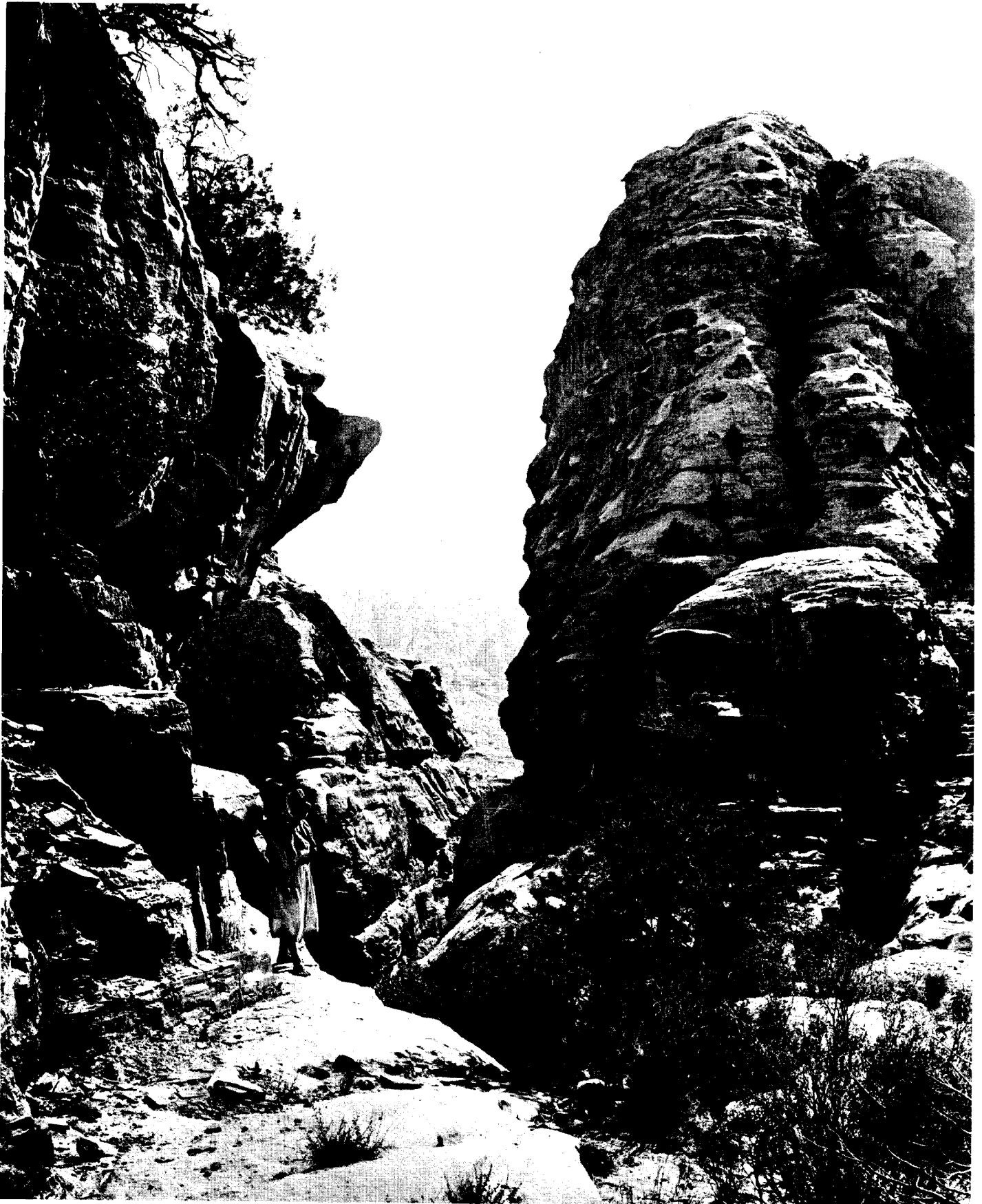
Upon leaving Mt. Hor, Israel journeyed to Gudgodah and to Jotbath (Deut. 10:7). These two places on the road from Petra to the Arabah Road are probably spelling variants of the two locations—Hor-hagidgad and Jotbathah—which Israel stopped at about 38 years earlier when leaving Kadesh the first time (Num. 33:33).

This clearly proves that the Eternal was leading the children of Israel into the Arabah from Kadesh both times—the first time *southward* by the Red Sea Road into the wilderness; the second time by the same Red Sea Road *north-*



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At the southeast corner of the Dead Sea is this charming rivulet at Ghor Es-Safieh. Its Biblical name is the Brook Zered (Num. 21:12 and Deut. 2:13). Along its banks the Israelites moved eastward between the border of Edom and Moab.



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In Petra may be seen this deep gorge en route to Ed-Deir high above the valley. The trail jumps across the head of the gorge. Watch your step here! The following two pages illustrate the location of Ed-Deir.



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Atop Ed-Deir is this beautiful urn carved out of rock. Notice the height of the Arab. Now compare the urn with the size of Ed-Deir, below. Notice that the door sill is the height of a tall man!

ward to compass the land of Edom (Num. 21:4). This road is called the "Arabah Road" in Deut. 2:8, because it ran the length of the Arabah, north and south of Petra.

When the Canaanites heard that Israel was proceeding *northward* (Deut. 2:3, 8), "by the way of the spies" (Num. 21:1)—that is, by the way which the spies used to enter Palestine when they searched the land 40 days—then the Canaanites fought Israel and were this time defeated (Num. 21:3).

These verses show that Israel proceeded *northward*, not southward, on the Arabah Way—the "Way of the Plain," sometimes called the "Way of the Red Sea." To go the Way of the Red Sea does not mean one has to go *to* the Red Sea. It would, of course, be the route leading

to the Red Sea, but one may be going *in the opposite direction on the road*—just as Israel did! This Arabah road stretched from the Gulf of Aqaba northward to near the Dead Sea.

En route north, they came to Punon (Num. 33:42). The settlement of Punon is *north* of Petra and in the Arabah. It is an area of extensive *copper* mines. (See Keller's *The Bible as History*, p. 143.) Its modern Arabic name is Phenan.

The stop at Punon immediately preceded the stop at Oboth (Num. 33:43). Now compare this with Numbers 21:9 and 10. Notice that at Punon—the stop just before Oboth—Moses made a "serpent of brass"—an alloy of *copper*. Certainly there is no mistaking where Punon is!

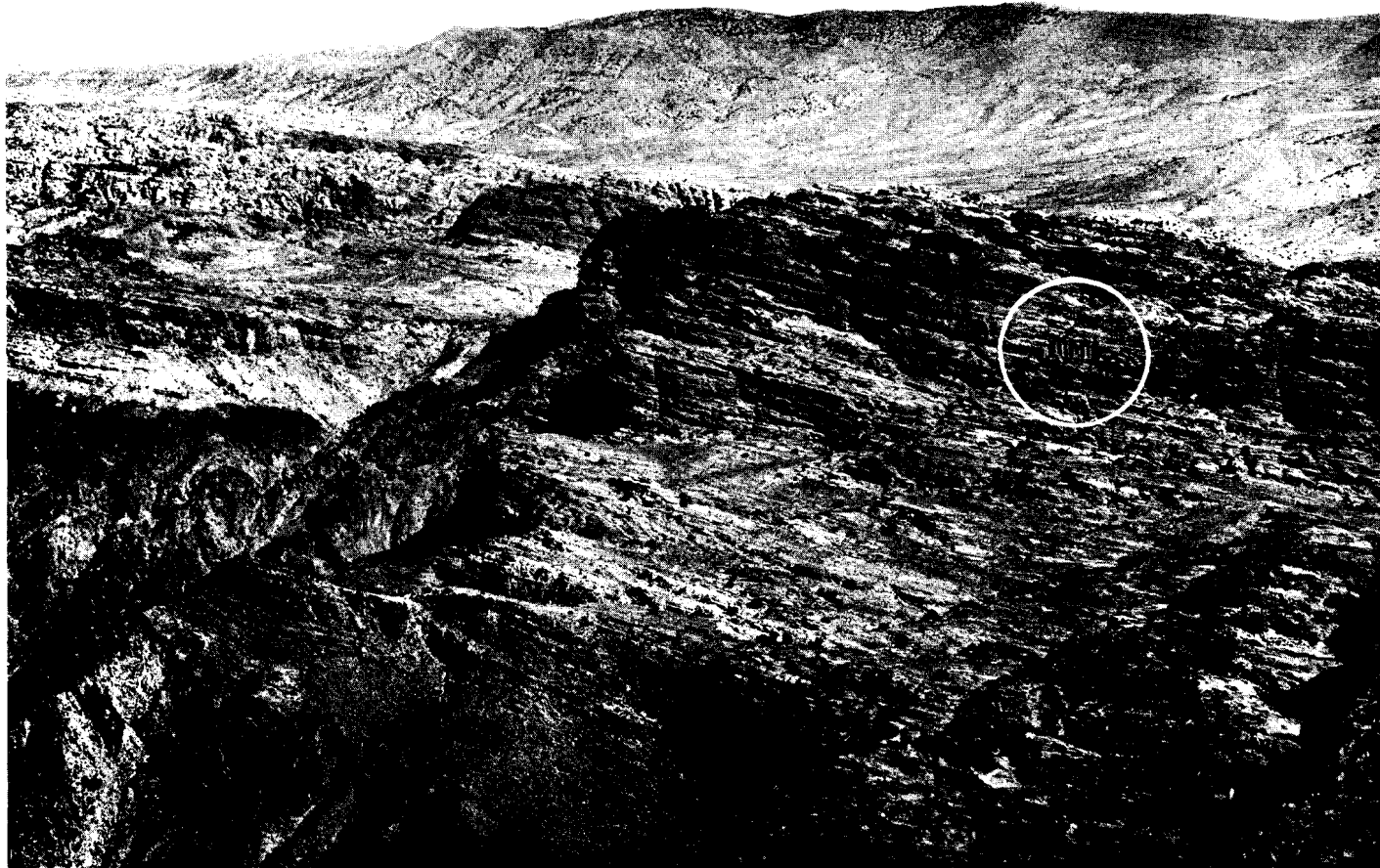
High above the Petra Valley, carved into the mountainside, is Ed-Deir. In this picture the urn above the temple is encircled. In the small plateau in front of the ancient temple is a great circular court shown here. Native Bedouins use it today for growing a little grain for their stock. On the next page you will see the location of this temple on the mountainside.

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A distant view of Ed-Deir from the wilderness west of Petra. This picture vividly portrays the incomparable magnitude of the rock walls that jut up into the sky around Petra. Notice the frightening gorges at the lower left.

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The very next encampment is on "the border of Moab" (Num. 33:44).

Not until they reached the northern border of Edom did Israel cut eastward between Moab and Edom along the brook Zered (Deut. 2:8, last part, and 13). This was 38 years after they left Kadesh the first time (Deut. 2:14).

They had to journey eastward because Israel had rejected the direct route into Palestine from the south nearly forty years earlier!

Petra Occupied by Israel

Next, let us skip over to the time Israel under Joshua took the promised land. Remember that Kadesh rightfully belonged to Israel (Deut. 1:19-20).

Observe what Joshua did: "And Joshua smote them from Kadesh-barnea even unto Gaza, and all the country of Goshen, even unto Gibeon" (Joshua 10:41). Here the easternmost limit of southern Palestine is the city Kadesh-barnea. Compare this with Joshua 15:1-3:

"This then was the lot of the tribe of

Judah . . . even to the border of Edom the wilderness of Zin southward. . . . And their south border was from the shore of the salt sea . . . and passed along to Zin, and ascended up on the south side unto Kadesh-barnea."

And again: "So Joshua took all that land . . . and the Arabah ["the plain" in King James Version] . . . even unto the mount Halak, that goeth up to Seir" (Josh. 11:16-17). "Mount Halak" is not quite a clear translation of the original Hebrew. The word "Halak" means smooth, bare. Smith's Bible dictionary indicates it is "the mountain range on the east side of the 'Arabah, or one of the bare mountain summits in that range." *Hastings' Bible Dictionary* declares: "The Arabah Valley gradually rises toward the summit level, which it reaches immediately in front of Mount Hor on the borders of Seir; and to this line of elevation the term 'smooth' would not be inapplicable, while at the same time it would be on the line of communication between southern Palestine and Petra, the capital of Seir."

Observe that all these verses point out that Israel occupied the Arabah just west of Mt. Seir even to the barren mountain region of Petra. Yet we found (Joshua 10:41) the easternmost border city is Kadesh-barnea.

Surely Petra and Kadesh are the same from these verses!

Years later Judah had to recapture Petra after the Edomites rebelled (II Kings 8:20; 14:7). Petra belonged to Israel. The capital of Edom was not Petra, but Bozrah (Amos 1:12; Jer. 49:13, 22). Petra was the gate by which Israel controlled their Edomite enemies.

Consider another important fact. Josephus, Eusebius and Jerome wrote that the Aramaic, Assyrian and Arabic name for Petra was *Rekem* (*Antiquities*, bk. iv, ch. 7, sec. 1). *Rekem* comes from the Arabic word for "ROCK." "But in the Aramaic versions *Rekem* IS THE NAME OF *KADESH*," according to the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*! This authority, under article "Petra," further states: "Sometimes the Aramaic versions give the form *Rekem-Geya* [for Kadesh], which

recalls the name of the village El-ji, southeast of Petra."

Here are literally dozens of Scriptures—hidden from the world—which clearly speak of Petra and the route to Petra!

These Scriptures are profitable for our INSTRUCTION. Those events in Old Testament times are *examples for us today* (I Cor. 10:11). Under Moses, Kadesh—Petra—was the station from which the promised land could have been entered. Will it again be the last station today for those who are obedient, before entering the promised eternal Kingdom of God?

We must remember, however, that

Below, a remarkable staircase cut into the ravine by the Siq entrance. Barely visible to the right is El-Khazneh, the beautiful edifice immediately in front of the Siq.

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Above, the Citadel Rock—Umm El-Biyara—in Petra. In the foreground is El-Habis. From such a pinnacle as this the ancient Edomites cast their war prisoners to their death. In turn, the Jews punished the Edomites in similar manner when Petra fell to Judah.



the route to Palestine at the first exodus did not go directly to Palestine; it went via Mt. Sinai! What the route for God's people will be this time is not revealed yet! When God reveals it to His ministers on earth, it may seem just as unusual as that first route.

God will reveal it in His time!

Church Moves Forward

(Continued from page 4)

the wave-sheaf offering, and the importance of the Holy Days in general. He brought out the tremendous need for repentance from vanity and the development of God's character.

The largest convocation of God's people on the Day of Pentecost was held at our own Tabernacle near Gladewater, Texas, with Mr. Garner Ted Armstrong in charge.

The services were opened with a fast-moving sermonette by Mr. Richard Rice—assistant to Mr. Swisher in the Gladewater area and teacher in Imperial School. He set the theme for the day by showing that all things are possible with God. This was followed by Mr. Ted Armstrong who sang, "How Great Thou Art" with such feeling and inspiration that many an eye was moist when he finished.

Mr. Albert J. Portune preached the morning sermon and showed that man is nothing compared to God and His tremendous power. He spoke of suns much larger than our own—some 160 million miles in diameter, and galaxies so far away that they are just a speck in the sky to our eyes. Then, Mr. Portune thundered out the message of the part we are to play in ruling this vast universe.

After the noon Feast, Mr. Ted Armstrong, in the afternoon service, showed how God is going to bring all these things into focus, and that through His might and power we are to be changed into the very *sons of God* to help Him rule this vast universe.

As the Day of Pentecost came to an end at Gladewater, the large crowd of over 1500 people was moved to realize the greatness and power of God—and *His purpose in our lives*—in a very special way.

Pentecost at Chicago, Portland and Pittsburgh

The northern Midwest churches met at Chicago under the direction of Mr. Dean Blackwell. There were over 1400