
The Man From Petra

Where will the Jews hide when
the nations gather against Jeru-
salem at the Battle of Arma-
geddon?

By Joseph Hoffman Cohn

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MOUNT 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,

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
vengeance 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 re-discovered. 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, 1300 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-

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 lisp 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

Transjordan. 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

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 Nabataens 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

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.

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

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

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 Akabah, 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

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

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

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?"

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

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 Malenkov 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!

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?

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.

Do Not Let This Tract Die

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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.

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?

“Come Thou With Us!”

IF 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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