



PETRA

**PLACE OF SAFTY
OR
PLACE OF
SLAUGHTER!**

by Robert Ardis

PETRA

Place of Safety...

or

Place of Slaughter?

by Robert G. Ardis



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Author's Statement

When this booklet was first published in 1998, Gerald Flurry, Pastor General of the Philadelphia Church of God (PCG) headquartered in Edmond, Oklahoma, was cooperating with the royal family of the nation of Jordan in a restoration work to make the rose-red city of Petra one of the most beautiful areas on Earth. Mr. Flurry's interest in this ancient pagan city is based on his belief that Petra is the "place prepared of God," or place of safety, referred to in Holy Scripture (Rev 12:6). In magazine articles and sermons, Mr. Flurry leaves no doubt of his belief that Petra is the place of safety.

He wanted to participate in the restoration of Petra as the future place of safety. "Even during the Great Tribulation, this work will continue until the desert blossoms as the rose," Mr. Flurry declared. After Jordanian officials discovered his true intentions, Gerald Flurry and his Philadelphia Foundation were expelled from the project.

Petra will *not* become one of the most beautiful areas on Earth. God's Word declares that that part of the world will suffer destruction so complete that it will be an utter devastation. People will not be impressed by the great beauty of Petra, but will be astonished at its ruin. Jeremiah 49:17-18 states, "Also Edom [the land where Petra is located] shall be *a desolation*: every one that goes by it shall be astonished, and shall hiss at all the plagues thereof. As *in the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah* and the neighbor cities thereof, saith the Lord."

Isaiah 34:5-6 adds more: "For my sword shall be bathed in heaven: Behold it shall come down upon Idumea [Latin for Edom]...for the Lord has a sacrifice in Bozrah [the ancient capital city of Edom], and a *great slaughter* in the land of Idumea."

Gerald Flurry teaches that Petra will be the place of safety. God's Word says Petra will be a place of slaughter. What do you believe? Or have you even thought about the place of safety being somewhere other than Petra?

The plain truth concerning this vital subject is revealed, right out of the Word of God, in the pages of this booklet.

Introduction

Over four thousand years ago, the patriarch Noah was given the task of warning the entire world to repent of their sins, or God would destroy the Earth with a great worldwide flood. God told Noah to build a huge ark in which he, his family, representatives of all life forms, and any person who would believe the warning message, could be saved. Noah was given one hundred twenty long years to build this large ship and to preach the warning message.

People laughed and scoffed at Noah, his message and his boat. Noah's wife and sons were probably embarrassed by his words and actions. This did not deter Noah. The Holy Bible, in Genesis 6:22, states, "Thus did Noah; according to all that God commanded him, so did he." Noah was a righteous man, the only righteous man on Earth. Verse 9 says, "Noah walked with God."

Mankind had become so wicked, it grieved God.

And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was *only evil* continually. And it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart...The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence. And God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt; for *all flesh* had corrupted his way upon the earth. And God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before me; for the earth is filled with violence through them: and behold, I will destroy them with the earth (Gen 6:5-6,11-13).

Genesis 7:5 repeats the statement, "Noah did according to all that the Lord commanded him." But only Noah was obedient to the will of God. All others on the face of the entire Earth followed their own evil ways.

God had a great plan, and a definite time to fulfill this plan. Through the powerful preaching of righteous Noah (2Pe 2:5), God gave the inhabitants of Earth a hundred twenty years to repent of their evil ways. At the end of this warning period, God told Noah and his family to go into the ark.

And Noah went in, and his sons, and his wife, and his sons' wives

with him into the ark, because of the waters of the flood...They and every beast after his kind...and they went in unto Noah into the ark... And they that went in, went in male and female of all flesh, as God had commanded him: *and the Lord shut him in* (Gen 7:7,14-16).

The ark was the only place of safety on Earth. The scoffing ceased abruptly as the rains began and the fountains of the deep began gushing water upon the Earth. Then, instead of laughter and merrymaking, there were screams of terror and cries for help. But it was too late. God had closed the door. Genesis 7:21 states: "And all flesh died that moved upon the earth, both of fowl and of cattle, and of beast, and of every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth, and every man." That is history; that is the way it happened. People would not listen to the warnings sent from God. As a result, they all died.

Jesus Christ prophesied in Matthew 24:37-39:

But as the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days 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.*

Especially since September 11, 2001, aren't conditions on Earth more and more similar to what they were in the days of Noah? Violence and bloodshed are commonplace. Two great religions, composed of two and a half billion people, are preparing for "holy" war against each other. Anthrax, smallpox, Ebola, AIDS, and other horrible plagues have raised their evil heads as weapons of mass destruction. The president of the United States declared that we have entered into a new type of war—terrorist warfare. And war will bring famine and more pestilence. The four horsemen of Revelation 6 are in full gallop across the Earth!

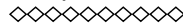
As it was in the days of Noah, the world is so corrupt that children are arming themselves and going on killing sprees, killing one another or becoming suicide bombers killing themselves and any others in their path. There are millions of broken homes, with the resultant decay and perversion of morals. Homosexuality has come out of the closet and has become a powerful political influence in our country. God tells us, in no uncertain words, that this is a corruption

in the thinking of society: “Thou shalt not lie with mankind as with womankind; it is abomination” (Lev 18:22 and Rom 1:26-27). Abortion is openly practiced and its participants are protected by law—contrary to the law of God, “Thou shalt not kill” (Exo 20:13). There is no justice in the land (Isa 59:4). Many of our national leaders have corrupted themselves, and the people as a whole do not seem to care. Just as it was in the days of Noah, people eat and drink, marry and build houses, they laugh and cry, and go on with their lives.

But now time is up. The Great Tribulation looms directly ahead. Now it's too late for America, Britain, Israel, and the whole world. Now it may be too late for many of God's Church! The door of the “ark” will be closing very soon. God's place of safety will definitely be needed in the near future. This may be your final warning. Please read on.



Chapter One:



Warnings to God's Church

Almighty God, the Creator, has a great overall plan, and for that plan He established a time limit. In this fantastic plan, mankind was given six thousand years to go his own way, under the influence of Satan the devil. Humanity has descended from the sons of Noah, and has been given the example of the “world that then was” (2Pe 3:6), which perished in the great flood. And people have ignored the warnings of God’s prophets throughout history. Now it is too late.

According to man’s best calculations, six thousand years ended on October 1, 1997. At that precise time, a great secret, kept hidden through the centuries, was revealed to God’s faithful Church. Since then, the Church of God’s Faithful has understood the amazing fact that the Day of the Lord and the Day of the Lord’s Wrath are not the same event!

Revelation 1:10 states, “I was in the spirit on the Lord’s Day...” We did not realize before the Feast of Trumpets 1997 that this scripture means exactly what it says, that everything the apostle John saw and recorded in the book of Revelation was from the viewpoint of the Day of the Lord. John was projected forward to the end of man’s six thousand years, into our time now—the Day of the Lord! In chapters 2 and 3, John was inspired to give the history of the true New Testament Church, from its beginning in 31 AD to the end of the Laodicean era. The reader is brought from the beginning of the Church age to the final knocking on the door of Laodicea (Rev 3:20), which is taking place as you read these words. (Please write for our free booklet, *The Day of the Lord*, for a clear explanation of this vitally important subject.)

1. The white horse: religious deception culminating in the great false prophet and the beast system of Revelation 13 and 17;

2. The red horse: war with the end-time beast (Rev 13 and 17);
3. The black horse: food shortage and famine resulting from war and upset weather;
4. The pale horse: disease and death from famine, war and beasts of the Earth.

Come and See

We have entered the period of time called “The Day of the Lord.” Jesus Christ has answered the cries of “Come and see,” i.e., He has come to see that all is in readiness for the opening of the chilling fifth seal—the Great Tribulation.

The Day of the Lord was predicted to come “as a thief in the night” (2Pe 3:10), and it did. Christ was prophesied to come suddenly to His Temple (Mal 3:1), and He did. He found the Temple, His Church, in a state of chaos and confusion, except for His faithful few who have kept the sixth candlestick burning brightly (see Rev 1:20). (Request our free booklets, *Elijah’s Message to the Philadelphia Church of God* and *Bloody Jezreel*).

Our Lord then immediately began setting apart those who are holding fast to His truth, keeping every word patiently (Rev 3:10). These are His true Philadelphians who respect and honor their Father and strive with all their might to keep His Word, as Malachi 3:16-17 declares:

Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another: and the Lord hearkened and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name. And they shall be mine saith the Lord of Hosts, in that day [in the Day of the Lord] when I make up my jewels [special treasure] and I will spare them, as a man spares his own son that serves him.

Spare them from what? He will spare them from the horrors of the first four seals, and from the fifth seal, the Great Tribulation, which will be opened after the four horsemen have completed their work.

Revelation 6:1-8 ends with this sentence: “And power was given

unto them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth.” From the effects of the four horsemen, one quarter of the population of Earth will die. Over one and a half billion people will perish as a prelude to the Great Tribulation.

Closing the Door

A warning has gone out to the whole Earth through the end-time Elijah, Herbert W. Armstrong, who preached the gospel of the Kingdom of God as a witness to all nations (Mat 24:14). Mr. Armstrong was a voice crying in the wilderness of religious confusion (Isa 40:3). He preached personally to many world leaders, including kings, prime ministers, emperors and presidents. The world had its warning. Now it's too late. The door to God's spiritual Temple (His Church) has been closed, except for those comparative few whom God will compel to come from “the highways and the hedges” (Luk 14:23).

A stern warning has been given to the Worldwide Church of God (WCG), which was established by Jesus Christ through His servant, Herbert Armstrong. After Mr. Armstrong's death, the WCG turned from the restored truths given by Christ. The WCG's daughter churches have also turned from the truth in one way or another, and are now in the “outer court” of the spiritual Temple, as defined in Revelation 11:1-2.

Gerald Flurry was raised up by Christ to warn those of the spiritual Temple who turned from the truth. He, as the leader of the Laodicean candlestick (Church) and the faithful of the Philadelphia candlestick who remained in the inner court, warned the WCG and the outer court through the truth contained in *Malachi's Message to the Church of God Today*. This warning took seven years, and Mr. Flurry suffered the same ridicule and persecution as did Herbert Armstrong and all the prophets of old (Mat 5:10-12). The outer court was informed of their turning away from the precious truth of God. Some may have gone so far away from the truth that they have completely quenched the Spirit of God in themselves (1Th 5:19 and Heb 10:26-27).

Now it is too late for some of God's Church!

Christ has come suddenly to His Temple in the Day of the Lord.

Through the Church of God's Faithful, He is standing at the door (Rev 3:20) of the Laodiceans, i.e., the Philadelphia Church of God.

Members of the PCG are a part of the Laodicean work of God and could still understand, but they have now gone to sleep, spiritually. Most of them heeded the warning shouted out by Gerald Flurry and came out of the WCG into the PCG. However, Satan has caused Mr. Flurry and his ministry to become a terribly abusive church government, and to take their eyes off of following Christ. Having lost the way in blind stubbornness, the PCG has veered way off course, as explained in *Elijah's Message to the Philadelphia Church of God*. The PCG membership has become lukewarm and spiritually asleep, as Revelation 3:15-18 clearly describes. They are the Laodiceans!

Knocking on the Door

Warning messages have been sent from the Church of God's Faithful to the ministry and members of the PCG. They are still a part of the inner court. They must be awakened by our loud, persistent, loving knocking so they can understand and repent. They do not realize they are the Laodicean Church. We are doing all possible to inform them of this and of the consequences. But only a few have heeded our warning.

The greater part of God's Church is now in "the synagogue of Satan" (Rev 3:9). Their ministers have deceived and confused them to believe they are part of the "Churches of God," when in reality they are the "churches of god"—the synagogue of Satan. Satan has gushed forth torrents of confusion (Rev 12:15), to the extent that most of God's people are bewildered lost sheep. Currently, they cannot understand because they have been led astray by their hiring shepherds (see Jer 50:6 and Jn 10:12). (Request our book, *Set Apart by Truth*.)

Time to Wake Up

The PCG can still understand if they awaken in time. Since this booklet was originally written in 1998, we have given the PCG continual warnings, but they have drifted into deeper spiritual sleep.

They must be made aware of the confusion Gerald Flurry has plunged himself and his church into. In 1Samuel 13, we see that King

Saul needed a gimmick to prevent his soldiers from deserting him, so he offered a sacrifice that was supposed to have been offered by Samuel. This was unacceptable to God. Saul refused to follow the simple instructions God had given him through the prophet, Samuel. Mr. Flurry is following Saul's example and the dictates of his own human heart.

In 1996, Gerald Flurry was concerned over the dwindling number of members and income. The abusive government enforced by Mr. Flurry and his ministers on the membership of the PCG was not God's way. Consequently, God began to withdraw His blessings from the PCG. Mr. Flurry needed a gimmick, so he took to himself the right to publish and distribute Mr. Armstrong's greatest book, *Mystery of the Ages*, without permission of the copyright holder, the Worldwide Church of God. Just as King Saul had done, Gerald Flurry perpetrated an illegal act. He got involved in a lawsuit against his "brother," which is opposed to the plain instruction of Holy Scripture (Rom 13:1-8; 2:21-23; 1Pe 2:13-17).

Gerald Flurry said that *Mystery of the Ages* is God's book, and therefore he has a right to it. How far would this man get if he applied this bizarre thinking to Jacob's Pillar Stone in Scotland? Is he free to walk in and take this priceless relic because it belongs to God? Does he have the right to remove the Dome of the Rock from the holy ground in Jerusalem because the ground belongs to God? Of course not!

After taking things wrongly into his own hands, King Saul became more and more depressed and confused. Gerald Flurry sank into the same emotional state, and so he decided to try another gimmick.

Mr. Flurry vainly began preparing a place of safety in Petra, Jordan for his misled PCG members. But, as mentioned, Mr. Flurry has been expelled from the Petra project. According to his sermons and articles, however, it looks like he still believes Petra is the place of safety.

A place of safety is definitely going to be needed, just as it was in the days of Noah. The first four seals are open; the horsemen have ridden out. War, death, and destruction are on the horizon. The fifth seal will be opened soon. At this moment, Jesus Christ is here examining, investigating, and having His mark (Eze 9:4) placed upon those who will be found worthy to be taken to the place of safety that He, not Gerald Flurry, is preparing.

And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she has a place *prepared of God*, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and three score days...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 a half of time, from the face of the serpent (Rev 12:6,14).

The PCG must be awakened to what their leader is doing. They must follow Christ instead of a man who has turned from his commission to follow the dictates of his own human heart (Pro 14:12). There is a place where there will be safety. But the Bible reveals that there will be *no safety in Petra!*

The Great Deceiver

God's prophets have warned the world throughout the ages (Mat 23:34-35), but very few people have ever heeded the warnings sent by a loving God. As stated previously, it is too late for the world and most of God's Church. Why? What has happened?

"And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent called the devil, and Satan, *which deceiveth the whole world*: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels with him" (Rev 12:9). The entire Earth has been deceived by the influence of this evil enemy of God and man.

We have entered the Day of the Lord. Satan has but a short time remaining (Rev 12:12) before the mighty Christ will depose him and remove him from the presence of man for one thousand years (Rev 20:2-3). Satan is in a rage and will stop at nothing that God will allow. Soon, the opening of the fifth seal will bring Satan's wrath (see Rev 12:17).

Unrepentant and rebellious mankind, including the begotten of God who have turned from the truth and all blind, lukewarm Laodiceans, will face the wrath of Satan—the Great Tribulation. Matthew 24:21 states, "For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be." Similar statements are made throughout the Bible. These days of tribulation, nearly upon us, will be unequaled in horror and misery.

Satan has deceived the world and most of God's Church. He is

very busy in his attempt to completely deceive Gerald Flurry and the PCG. He has Mr. Flurry at the point of thinking he is infallible in his judgments. And Mr. Flurry has made some very unwise decisions on behalf of the PCG. One such decision was to offer his services to the royal family of Jordan in the plan to restore the ancient city of Petra.

About Petra

Why is there such great interest in Petra and this remote area of the world? Where is Petra? What is its history? *The New Unger's Bible Dictionary* has this recorded on page 995 under the article, "Petra":

The capital of Edom and subsequently of Nabataea... about 50 miles S of the Dead Sea. The name is from the Greek word "petra," "rock", Hebrew "sela." The rock-cut city of Petra was a noted *pagan center*. It was also a notable fortress and stronghold. Many identify Petra with OT Sela...The site is about a mile long and a half mile wide. Its dominant natural feature is the 950-foot acropolis known as Umm el-Biyara. Its high place is an excellent example of the high places referred to and *condemned* in the OT. Petra is striking even in ruins. Some of the structures are rose red and others a dark red ochre shade of sandstone with bands of yellow, gray, and white. These buildings and tombs are almost all cut into the rock cliffs of the area. (Emphasis mine)

A more recent article by Tim Friend in the newspaper, *USA Today*, gives the following information:

Petra National Park, Jordan—The rose-red city of Petra, "half as old as time," is showing rapidly advancing signs of age. Registered as a World Heritage Site by the United Nations and regarded as one of the most endangered sites in antiquity, Petra is a city of unique sandstone temples melting under a cascade of flash floods and crumbling beneath the footsteps of too many careless tourists. But now an ambitious effort to rescue the city is being led here by the Petra National Trust (PNT), a group of scientists, philanthropists—including American real estate developer Bruce Ludwig—and Jordanian

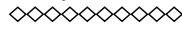
royalty. Preserving Petra will depend largely on how successful the PNT is at resurrecting an elaborate water system built more than 2000 years ago by the city's inhabitants, the ancient Nabataeans.

Why is Gerald Flurry so interested in this ancient ruin? Why does he teach that this noted pagan center is the place prepared of God, the place of safety (Rev 12:6,14)?

Petra is most certainly not a secret place known only to God's elect. Thousands of tourists flock to Petra each year. Other well-known televangelists, like Benny Hinn, are interested in Petra and Jordan. Petra was the capital of ancient Edom, but who were the Edomites? And who are the Jordanians of today? What does the Bible have to say about the land of Edom and the Jordanians? Who was Edom? These are very important questions!



Chapter Two:



The Middle East in History: The Origin of the Edomites

In the 1930's, God's end-time Elijah and apostle, Herbert W. Armstrong, wrote a very important book containing revealed truth about *The United States and British Commonwealth in Prophecy*. This book presented a vital key to understanding the prophecies of the Bible. It revealed the ancient identities of the major nations of today.

It all began with the man, Abram, who later had his name changed to Abraham, the "father of the faithful." God called Abram out of the land of Ur of the Chaldees. He was told to go to a land that the Eternal would show him. This is recorded in Genesis 12, and occurred approximately five hundred years after the great flood of Noah's time.

God told Abram, "And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing... and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed..." (Gen 12:2-3). This is the first mention of the great blessings this man was offered in return for his faithfulness to God. Abram and his wife were childless and getting up in age. Abram correctly reasoned that, if he was to become a great nation, God was promising him a son.

Abram and Sarai waited nearly twenty-five years for this great event to happen. During this time of waiting, God again brought Abram wonderful promises:

And the Lord said unto Abram, after that Lot was separated from him, Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art northward and southward and eastward and westward: For all the land which thou seeth, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed forever. And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth: so that if a man can number the

dust of the earth, then shall thy seed also be numbered. Arise, walk through the land in the length of it and in the breadth of it; for I will give it unto thee (Gen 13:14-17).

In Genesis 15, an even more important promise begins to emerge. Abram was getting older and was unsure of exactly how God was going to perform what He had promised. He thought perhaps God was going to allow his steward Eliezer to be his heir. But God said, "This shall not be thine heir; but he that shall come forth out of your own bowels shall be thine heir. And he brought him forth abroad, and said, look now toward heaven, and tell the stars if you be able to number them: and he said unto him, so shall thy seed be" (Gen 15:4-5).

Even though Abram was in his old age, he believed God, and God "counted it to him for righteousness" (verse 6). The promise of the land being given to Abram's descendants is again declared by the Eternal in verses 7 and 18: "And he said unto him, I am the Lord that brought thee out of Ur of the Chaldees, to give thee this land to inherit it... Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates."

Many times the impatience of mortal man causes acts that lead to great trouble and sorrow. Abram and his wife Sarai became engrossed in a plan that stemmed from their impatience. Sarai suggested to Abram a very foolish idea: "Behold now, the Lord hath restrained me from bearing: I pray thee, go in unto my maid; it may be that I may obtain children by her. And Abram hearkened unto the voice of Sarai...and he went in unto Hagar and she conceived" (Gen 16:2,4).

This was not God's plan and it caused much heartache. Almost immediately, animosity welled up between the two women. Hagar had to flee from her mistress, but was told by the angel of the Lord to return and submit herself unto Sarai. The angel told Hagar, "Behold thou art with child, and shalt bear a son, and shalt call his name Ishmael; because the Lord hath heard thy affliction. And he will be a wild man; his hand will be against every man, and every man's hand against him; and he shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren" (Gen 16:11-12). This description of Ishmael and his descendants shows that they would dwell in the wilderness, plundering and creating turbulence. They would live in tents among their brethren, but maintain their own independence.

"And Hagar bare Abram a son: and Abram called his son's name

which Hagar bare, Ishmael. And Abram was fourscore and six [eighty-six] years old when Hagar bare Ishmael to Abram" (Gen 16:15-16).

Abram loved Ishmael and thought he would be the heir. But this was not in God's plan. Twenty-four years after Abram had been called out of Ur of the Chaldees, when he was ninety-nine years old, God Almighty appeared to him. He told Abram that He was establishing His covenant with him, and that his name was to be changed to Abraham, "...for a father of many nations have I made thee...And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for a perpetual covenant, to be a God unto thee and to thy seed after thee" (Gen 17:5,7).

God also changed Sarai's name to Sarah. "And God said, Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son indeed; and you shall call his name Isaac: and I will establish my covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, and with his seed after him" (verse 19). Isaac was the promised heir, not Ishmael.

This caused Abraham great concern for his son, Ishmael. In verse 18, Abraham laments, "O that Ishmael might live before thee!" God, in His great mercy, told Abraham, "And as for Ishmael, I have heard thee: Behold, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly; Twelve princes shall he beget, and I will make him a great nation. But my covenant will I establish with Isaac" (Gen 17:20-21).

The story continues in Chapter 21 with the birth of Isaac. "And Abraham was an hundred years old, when his son Isaac was born unto him" (verse 5). The jealousy and resentment between Sarah and Hagar continued. Now a great crisis came into Abraham's life. Sarah insisted that Hagar and Ishmael be banished.

Wherefore she [Sarah] said unto Abraham, Cast out this bondwoman and her son: for the son of this bondwoman shall not be heir with my son, even with Isaac. And the thing was very grievous in Abraham's sight because of his son. And God said unto Abraham, Let it not be grievous in thy sight because of the lad, and because of thy bondwoman...for in Isaac shall thy seed be called. And also of the son of the bondwoman will I make a nation, because he is thy seed (Gen 21:10-13).

Isaac would be the heir, and through Isaac's lineage would

come the seed through which all nations of Earth would be blessed, i.e., the Messiah!

Unconditional Promises

Sending Ishmael and his mother away was, indeed, a grievous trial for Abraham, but his most severe test was yet to come. Some years went by, and then one day God told Abraham that he must sacrifice his beloved son, Isaac. God instructed Abraham to go to one of the mountains in the land of Moriah, a three-day journey, and offer Isaac as a burnt offering. Abraham surely must have felt the deepest anguish at being required to kill his dear son. But Abraham trusted God (see Heb 11:17-19).

Abraham came face to face with the most bitter trial of his life. But he believed God and had faith that, even if he killed his son, God could resurrect him and fulfill the promise that “in Isaac shall thy seed be called” (Gen 21:12). (Also see Rom 4:21.)

Genesis 22:9-12 shows this man’s great determination to obey his God:

And they came to the place which God had told him of; and Abraham built an altar there, and laid wood in order, and bound Isaac his son, and laid him on the altar upon the wood. And Abraham stretched forth his hand, and took the knife to slay his son. [In his mind, Abraham did it. However...] the angel of the Lord called unto him out of heaven, and said Abraham, Abraham: and he said, Here am I. And he said, Lay not your hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him: for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me.

Abraham had done it! God was impressed and greatly pleased, and made a fantastic statement to the father of the faithful:

And the angel of the Lord called unto Abraham out of heaven the second time, and said, By myself have I sworn, saith the Lord, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son: That in blessings I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore:

and thy seed shall possess the gates of his enemies; and in thy seed shall all of the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice (Gen 22:15-18).

Because of Abraham's unquestioning willingness to do whatever God required, even sacrificing his son, God Almighty swore that these promises would be fulfilled. No thing or being could prevent these promises from being fulfilled, although Satan the adversary, with all of his power to deceive, would try to hinder their accomplishment.

The Eternal God, at that time, unconditionally guaranteed His friend, Abraham, the fulfillment of the promises. All of the land stretching from the Nile to the Euphrates was given to Abraham and to his sons after him, and *the seed* would come through them, because Abraham had been obedient.

Years passed, and then it was time to find a wife for Isaac. Abraham made his servant swear that he would search out a wife for Isaac among the kinsmen of Abraham's own country: "Thou shalt not take a wife unto my son of the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I dwell" (Gen 24:3). This faithful servant, under God's guidance, found Rebekah and brought her to Isaac. "And the servant told Isaac all things that he had done. And Isaac brought her into his mother Sarah's tent, and took Rebekah, and she became his wife; and he loved her" (Gen 24:66-67). Gen 25:20 states, "And Isaac was forty years old when he took Rebekah to wife, the daughter of Bethuel the Syrian of Padanaram, the sister of Laban the Syrian." Rebekah was of their close kin. She was not a Canaanite.

Abraham married another woman (possibly after Sarah died) by whom he had six sons (Gen 25:1-2). "And Abraham *gave all that he had unto Isaac*. But unto the sons of the concubines, which Abraham had, Abraham gave gifts, and sent them away from Isaac his son, while he yet lived, eastward unto the east country" (Gen 25:5-6). Isaac was the heir of the promises and the blessings. The other sons were sent away, as was Ishmael.

Twenty more years passed before Isaac and Rebekah had children. At last, twin boys, Esau and Jacob, were born to them. Esau was the firstborn and was heir to the birthright and the promises.

All for a Bowl of Soup

Abraham died when his grandsons were fifteen years old. But before he died, he surely had told these boys on numerous occasions of the exciting relationship he had been permitted to have with the Creator, the God of the Universe. Abraham knew and understood much of God's plan for mankind (see Heb 11:8-19). Most likely, he vividly and in great detail told his grandsons of the sacrifice he had made of their father, Isaac. And he told them of the tremendous promises God had given him to pass down to his son and to his firstborn grandson.

Jacob must have thrilled to the stories his grandfather and his father told of the blessings and the promises. But Jacob was not the firstborn. Jacob so greatly desired the promises and the birthright blessing that he began to devise plans to acquire them by any means. Esau had no real vision of the magnitude of these blessings that were his by right of birth. Esau's thoughts were on things at hand and his physical satisfaction. Sly Jacob knew this.

Esau was a hunter. One day, as he returned from an unsuccessful hunt, he was very hungry. Jacob just happened to have a savory red stew cooking on the fire as Esau came by. Esau begged for some of the stew. Most of us know the story.

Who was Edom? Genesis 25:30 gives the answer: "And Esau said to Jacob, Feed me, I pray thee, with that *red* pottage; for I am faint: therefore was his name called *Edom*." Esau was Edom! "Edom" means "red." Continue with verses 31-34:

And Jacob said, Sell me this day thy birthright. And Esau said, behold, I am at the point to die: and *what profit shall this birthright do to me?* And Jacob said swear to me this day, and he sware unto him: and he sold his birthright unto Jacob. Then Jacob gave Esau bread and pottage of lentils; and he rose up, and went his way: *thus Esau despised his birthright.*

Through his disdain for his birthright, Esau lost the opportunity to have the Messiah born through his family line.

The birthright blessing of the elder son meant that he would receive a double portion of his father's wealth (Deu 21:16-17). This law would have provided Esau with two-thirds of Isaac's great wealth (see Gen 26:12-14), and the other third would be divided according to Isaac's wishes. But now, Jacob was to receive all the birthright

blessings of the firstborn. Esau threw all of this away for a bowl of soup! And Jacob was not finished yet. Jacob plotted with his mother, Rebekah, to also wrest the greatest portion of the remaining third of his father's wealth for himself. Rebekah remembered the words the Lord had told her before she gave birth to her two sons: "...the elder shall serve the younger" (Gen 25:23), so she schemed with Jacob to fraudulently take Esau's blessing. This action was not of God, but He allows us to do foolish things at times. We always suffer for them, and Rebekah was no exception.

Jacob was a cunning and unscrupulous man. Esau was lacking in vision and very foolish.

Genesis 27 tells how Jacob deceived his father and stole the other major blessings from his brother. Disguised as Esau, Jacob came before Isaac to receive his blessing. He lied to his father, who was nearly blind. "And he [Isaac] said, art thou my very son Esau? And he [Jacob] said, I am" (verse 24).

Believing Jacob to be Esau, Isaac bestowed upon him the greater portion of the blessing. The blessing also confirmed the birthright. Isaac blessed Jacob with these inspired words:

...the smell of my son is as the smell of a field which the Lord has blessed: therefore God give thee of the dew of heaven, and the fatness of the earth, and plenty of corn and wine: Let people serve thee, and nations bow down to thee: be lord over thy brethren, and let thy mother's sons bow down to thee: cursed be everyone that curses thee, and blessed be he that blesses thee (Gen 27:27b-29).

Jacob quickly left the presence of his father, and none too soon, for Esau immediately came striding into Isaac's tent. It did not take long for a bewildered Isaac and Esau to realize that Jacob had tricked his father and stolen Esau's blessing.

And Isaac trembled very exceedingly, and said, Who? Where is he that has taken venison, and brought it me, and I have eaten of all before you came, and have blessed him? Yea and he shall be blessed. And when Esau heard the words of his father, He cried with a great and exceeding bitter cry, and said unto his father, Bless me, even me also, O my father. And he [Isaac] said, Thy brother came with subtlety, and hath

taken away thy blessing. And he [Esau] said, Is he not rightly named Jacob? For he hath supplanted me these two times: He took away my *birthright*; and, behold, now he hath taken away my *blessing*...Hast thou not reserved a blessing for me? And Isaac answered and said unto Esau, Behold, I have made him thy lord, and all his brethren have I given to him for servants: and with corn and wine have I sustained him: and what shall I do now unto thee, my son? And Esau said unto his father, Hast thou not one blessing, my father? Bless me, even me also, O my father. And Esau lifted up his voice and wept. And Isaac his father answered and said unto him, Behold, thy dwelling shall be the fatness of the earth and of the dew of heaven from above; and *by thy sword* thou shalt live, and shalt serve thy brother; and it shall come to pass when thou shalt have the dominion, that thou shalt break his yoke from off thy neck. And Esau *hated Jacob...and said in his heart...I will slay my brother Jacob* (Gen 27:33-41).

When Rebekah was told of Esau's plan to kill Jacob, she advised Jacob to flee to Haran. So the son she loved so dearly had to leave, and she probably never saw him again. Breaking God's laws always causes sadness and sorrow. Esau had married Canaanite wives, much to the chagrin of Isaac and Rebekah. So before Jacob began his flight from Esau's wrath:

And Isaac called Jacob, and blessed him and charged him, and said unto him, Thou shalt not take a wife of the daughters of Canaan. Arise, go to Padanaram, to the house of Bethuel thy mother's father; and take thee a wife from thence of the daughters of Laban thy mother's brother. And God Almighty bless thee, and make thee fruitful and multiply thee, that thou mayest be a multitude of people; and give thee the blessing of Abraham, to thee, and to thy seed with thee; that thou mayest *inherit the land* wherein thou art a stranger, *which God gave unto Abraham* (Gen 28:1-4).

The story of Jacob is well known to all who have been called into God's Church. Jacob, who had to learn some hard lessons, was finally converted and his name was changed to Israel. God's end-time apostle, Herbert Armstrong, makes plain the truth concerning Israel

and his descendants in the book, *The United States and British Commonwealth in Prophecy*. This wonderful book, this vital key to the understanding of Bible prophecy, traces the history of Israel up to the very time in which we live. We understand the great truth of Israel's identity today. But what about Esau's descendants?

Time for a Review

Here are some of the facts we have seen so far:

1. The promises of the land of Canaan, national greatness, and the line to produce the Messiah were given unconditionally to Abraham and later confirmed to Isaac and Jacob.
2. Ishmael was Abraham's firstborn but was *not* the heir. He was the son of the bondwoman, Hagar, and appears to have calmly accepted his situation. He did not appear to be hostile to Isaac or his sons. Ishmael is not mentioned very often in the Bible. Only rarely were his descendants at war with Israel or Judah. He usually dwelt peacefully among his brethren.
3. Esau was the firstborn of Isaac and the rightful heir. He sold his birthright, and his blessing was also taken from him. However, he was still to inherit some very productive real estate described as "the fatness of the earth." Some versions of the Old Testament render this "*away* from the fatness of the earth," but that expression does not agree with the actual facts. Esau was given the land of Mount Seir, according to Deuteronomy 2:4-5. Mount Seir at that time must have had much lush pastureland, and Esau had great herds of cattle (see Gen 36:6-7). It is also thought by some that the Hebrew word rendered "fatness," #4924 in *Strong's*, taken from #8080, can mean "oily, wax, fat"—or oil or petroleum.
4. Esau was to live by the sword and would have to serve his brother.
5. Esau married Canaanite wives. Esau reasoned that they had a claim to the land of Canaan, although Jacob now had the promise of that land. It would be very natural for the wives of Esau to share the bitterness of their husband who had lost

his right to the land by his own callousness and his brother's trickery. Esau wanted his rights restored by any means. This attitude would be passed on to the children of Esau.

6. Later, Esau married daughters of Ishmael in an attempt to placate his bitter mind, thinking they also had a right to the land because they were daughters of Abraham's firstborn.
7. Esau hated Jacob and wanted to kill him. However, after twenty years, as Jacob was returning to Canaan with his family and herds, Esau came to meet him and forgave him (See Gen 33:4). God evidently intervened in this situation.

The Generations of Edom

Those who have read and studied *The United States and British Commonwealth in Prophecy* are well aware of the identity of the United States, Britain and many of the nations of northwestern Europe that have descended from the twelve sons of Jacob/Israel. In Genesis 36, the sons of Esau are listed. Where are their descendants in the world today?

By the time Jacob returned home to Canaan with his wives, children, flocks and herds, Esau and his sons had conquered the Horites, who lived in the area of Mount Seir, and had taken their land, *for God had given it to Esau* (see Gen 32:3; Deu 2:5,12). Genesis 36:8-9 states, "Thus dwelt Esau in Mount Seir: *Esau is Edom*. And these are the names of the sons of *Esau the father of the Edomites in Mount Seir*." Esau is Edom. But who and where are the Edomites today?

Nelson's *Illustrated Encyclopedia of Bible Facts*, on page 202, states the following concerning Edom and Mount Seir:

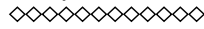
Edom was another name for Esau, son of Isaac and brother of Jacob. Originally Esau went to live in the hills of Seir, southeast of the Dead Sea. The area came to be known by his name, and the people Edomites. Edom also means "red," and speaks of the reddish color of the sandstone mountains in south Edom. Here we find Petra, the fabled "rose-red city"... The Edomites inhabited a mountainous territory extending from the Zered [River] to the Gulf of Aqaba.

Esau's family record is listed in Genesis 36. Esau had three Canaanite wives: Adah, a Hittite; Aholibamah, a Hivite; and Bashemath, daughter of Ishmael. Esau's wives gave birth to five sons in the land of Canaan. His firstborn was Eliaphaz. Eliaphaz was the father of six sons. Their names were Teman, Omar, Zepho, Gatam, Kenaz, and Amalek. Teman means "south" and is the name of a city in the south of Jordan even today. Omar is an easily recognized name today, from the Mosque of Omar in the city of Mecca. When Jacob returned to Canaan, Esau decided to leave Canaan and go to Mount Seir and, "Thus dwelt Esau in Mount Seir: Esau is Edom" (see Gen 36:7-8).

Genesis 36:12 declares, "And Timna was concubine to Eliaphaz, Esau's son; and she bare to Eliaphaz *Amalek*." Timna was the granddaughter of Seir, the Horite, whom Esau and his sons had conquered. She was a captive concubine, but her son, Amalek, became one of the pre-eminent princes.



Chapter Three:



The Middle East in History: The Fight for the Birthright



Over two hundred years pass until we come to the time of Moses. During this two hundred years, Jacob and his sons went to Egypt to find relief from the terrible famine that had swept over all the land, Canaan included. Jacob, now named Israel by God, had come into the land of Egypt. Originally, they were seventy people (Gen 46:27); but during the years in Egypt, they increased to 600,000 men, plus women and children (Exo 12:37). They had come into Egypt while Joseph, Israel's favorite son, was second only to Pharaoh as ruler of the nation. However, after Joseph died, the Israelites became slaves to the Egyptians. Their cries went up to God in Heaven, and He raised up Moses to deliver them.

While the Israelites were increasing in numbers, the Edomites were growing, also. The descendants of Esau filled the land of Edom, from the Zered River to the Gulf of Aqaba. The Amalekites, the pre-eminent tribe, spread out from the southwestern shores of the Dead Sea and occupied most of the desert all the way to the River of Egypt, and also parts of southern Canaan.

After God led Moses and the Israelites through the Red Sea into the land of Midian, the news of this great event spread throughout the entire region. Amalek heard the news. Why was Israel coming into this area? Was Israel going to claim this land, too? This would not be allowed, vowed the Amalekites.

The huge crowd of Israelites was slowly heading toward Mount Sinai in Midian. (Notice, I am stating that Mount Sinai is in Midian, in Arabia, not in the Sinai Peninsula. Please see Galatians 4:24-25, and request our free booklet *Set Apart by Truth*.) The vast number of Israelites did not intimidate the Amalekites. The Amalekite fighting men also must have numbered in the hundreds of thousands. The Amalekites possessed the land of Edom to the north of the Israelites'

trek and considered themselves the rightful owners of Canaan. They would not lose their land as their forefathers had done—they would wage war! They were Amalekites, descendants of Esau—Edomites! They lived by the sword!

Exodus 17:8-9,13 picks up this important part of history: “Then came Amalek, and fought with Israel in Rephidim. And Moses said unto Joshua, Choose us out men and go out, fight with Amalek... And Joshua discomfited Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword.”

Notice the awesome words God uses as He warns Moses about Amalek in verses 14-16:

...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 under heaven...* And Moses built an altar, and called the name of it Jehovahnissi [the Lord my Banner]: For he said, Because the Lord has sworn that *the Lord will have war with Amalek* from generation to generation.

Why was God so upset with Amalek? Why was this frightening curse put on all of the Amalekites forever? Deuteronomy 25:17-19 gives more understanding of the nature and character of the Amalekites:

Remember what Amalek did unto you by the way, when ye were come forth out of Egypt; How he met thee by the way, and smote the hindmost of thee, even all that were feeble behind thee, when thou wast faint and weary; and he feared not God. Therefore it shall be, when the Lord thy God hath given thee rest from all thine enemies round about, in the land which God giveth thee for an inheritance to possess it, that thou shalt blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven; *thou shalt not forget it.*

Amalek practiced terrorist type warfare, preying on the weak and helpless. And “he feared not God!” This is the reason the Eternal God was upset—Amalek did not fear God, and attempted to thwart God’s plan. Perhaps a better translation of Exodus 17:16 would be: “Because Amalek lifted his hand *against the throne of God*” (Jubilee Bible 2000).

Amalek attempted to destroy those through whom “the seed” was to come. God’s plan is for this seed, i.e., the Messiah, to sit upon the throne in Jerusalem, in the land of Canaan, which was promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Israel. Through the Spirit of God, we realize

that Satan is the unseen motivator behind the action and attitude of Amalek. Satan used Amalek to try to hinder God's plan to set up His Kingdom.

In the book of Numbers in the Holy Bible, a false prophet by the name of Balaam is introduced. Balaam was requested by the King of Moab to pronounce a curse on the Israelites as they camped in his land. God would not allow Balaam to curse Israel, but had him bless them instead—and curse their enemies. This blessing and cursing is also a prophecy for the very end time.

Balaam prophesied against Amalek, “And when he looked on Amalek, he took up his parable, and said, Amalek was the first of the nations [the pre-eminent] but his latter end shall be that he *perish forever*” (Num 24:20). One of Amalek's descendants, Agag, was such a powerful leader of the Amalekites that his name was given to all of the subsequent kings of Amalek. Consequently the royal line of Amalek were Agagites. Balaam prophesied in verse 7 that a king would rise in Israel that would “be higher than Agag.”

The Hatred Continues

Approximately four hundred years later, we come to the first king of Israel, Saul. The prophet Samuel reminds King Saul of the command God had given in regard to Amalek:

Samuel also said unto Saul, the Lord sent me to anoint thee to be king over his people, over Israel: now therefore hearken unto the voice of the words of the Lord. Thus saith the Lord of hosts, I remember that which Amalek did to Israel, how he laid in wait for him in the way, when he came up out of Egypt. Now go and smite Amalek and *utterly destroy* all that they have, and spare them not; but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass (1Sam 15:1-3).

Here were people that were filled with bitterness toward God and deep hatred for the Israelites. God is righteous! The words, “utterly destroy” seem very harsh, but as we proceed, it will become obvious why God commanded the annihilation of these people.

The Amalekites had spread far and wide, and not all of them were killed in that battle with Saul. And King Saul did not carry out the

commission God gave him through Samuel. After the battle, instead of destroying all the animals, Saul brought the best of them back home, along with Agag, the Amalekite king. This was the second time Saul had failed to follow God's instructions and disqualified himself as king of Israel.

Samuel, on the other hand, did not take God's instructions lightly:

Then said Samuel, Bring ye hither to me Agag the king of the Amalekites. And Agag came unto him delicately. And Agag said, surely the bitterness of death is past. And Samuel said, as thy sword hath made women childless, so shall thy mother be childless among women. And Samuel hewed Agag in pieces before the Lord in Gilgal (1Sam 15:32-33).

In 1Samuel 21 and 22, King Saul made another terrible mistake involving an Edomite. Saul was intensely jealous and fearful of David. In a rage, he commanded Doeg, the *Edomite*, his servant, to kill eighty-five priests of Israel that he jealously thought were loyal to David. King Saul made mistake after mistake, using wrong judgment. God's Spirit had departed from him, leaving Saul in a melancholy state of mind (see 1Sam 16:14).

It is ironic that King Saul died at the hands of an Amalekite. "Now it came to pass after the death of Saul, when David had returned from the slaughter of the Amalekites" (2Sam 1:1), a young man came into David's camp and told him Saul was dead. When David asked him for details, he admitted that Saul had been sorely wounded and had asked the young man to put him out of his misery, so he had killed the King of Israel. "And David said unto the young man that told him, Whence art thou? And he answered, I am the son of a stranger, an Amalekite" (verse 13). He was not a very bright Amalekite! Acknowledging to David that he was an Amalekite and had killed the king of Israel, sealed his own death warrant. David had him put to death immediately.

The Throne of David

King David was a warrior. Through his trust in God, David conquered the surrounding nations—Philistia, Syria, Moab, Ammon and Edom. This is recorded in 2Samuel 8:14: "And he put garrisons

in Edom; throughout all Edom put he garrisons, and all they of Edom became David's servants. And the Lord preserved David whither so ever he went." David ruled with God's blessing. God established the throne in Jerusalem with David as King over all of Israel.

The Eternal God had inspired Jacob, hundreds of years before the throne was established in the nation of Israel, to give the prophecy recorded in Genesis 49. This prophecy would apply to the descendants of Jacob's twelve sons "in the last days" (verse 1). The great blessing would be fulfilled in Joseph's descendants (see verses 22-26), but the kingly line and the Messiah would come through Judah: "The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, *until Shiloh come*; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be" (verse 10).

King David was of the tribe of Judah, and his throne was to be established forever. These words of God state this absolute promise:

And when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build an house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be his father and he shall be my son. If he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the sons of men: But my mercy shall not depart away from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away before thee. And thine house and thy kingdom shall be established forever before thee: thy throne shall be established forever (2Sam 7:12-16).

In the New Testament, the mighty angel, Gabriel, announced to Mary:

Fear not Mary: for thou hast found favor with God. And behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him *the throne of his father David: and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever: and of his kingdom there shall be no end* (Luk 1:30-33).

Esau gave up all of this for a bowl of soup! However, Satan, the devil, has caused the descendants of Esau to do all they could to

re-claim the land and regain the promises. And if they could not acquire the true promises, they would create counterfeit promises!

David's son, Solomon, reigned after David's death. God was with Solomon in all that he did. Solomon's wealth, wisdom and glory were known throughout the world. Solomon built the first temple in honor of God, which was probably the most magnificent building ever constructed. These were the glorious years of the Israelite kingdom. But in his old age, Solomon sinned grievously before God. Then, as promised, God chastened Solomon: "And the Lord stirred up an adversary unto Solomon, Hadad the Edomite, he was of the king's seed in Edom" (1Kg 11:14). Hadad was an Agagite!

Battles raged back and forth for approximately a hundred fifty years longer. In the days of Amaziah, King of Judah, a great battle was fought between Judah and Edom. Amaziah was victorious. "He slew of Edom in the valley of salt ten thousand, and took Selah ["Selah" in Hebrew is "rock," as "Petra" is "rock" in Greek] by war" (2Kg 14:7).

From this point in time, the Edomites, the Ishmaelites, the descendants of Lot's sons, Ammon and Moab, and the descendants of Abraham's other sons inter-married. As their numbers increased, they spread out from the borders of Egypt, down through the Sinai and Arabian peninsulas, all the way to the Persian Gulf and the Tigris-Euphrates Valley.

On page 21 of his book, *Petra*, E. Raymond Capt states concerning the battle between Amaziah and the Edomites:

Although it is often implied by Bible scholars that this battle recorded by Obadiah (verses 3-4) meant the near destruction of the whole Edomite race, this was not the case. There were many other Edomite communities that were left to fight the Judeans another day. History has shown that a defeated nation seldom, if ever, becomes completely extinct. Usually, a considerable proportion of the population survives to build a new life in a new territory, where its national characteristics continue to be seen in new generations.

Time Marches On

In the year 721 BC, the northern ten tribes of Israel were

conquered by Assyria, and much of the population was deported and resettled in other captive territories. About a hundred years later, in 605 BC, King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon conquered Nineveh and ended Assyrian dominance in the Middle East.

We continue from E. Raymond Capt's book, *Petra*, pages 24-25:

Then in 587 BC, Nebuchadnezzar with his Babylonian army attacked Jerusalem after several attempts to subject the city to his reign. Jehoiakim, who had been placed on the throne of Judah by Pharaoh Necho, transferred his allegiance (under pressure) to Babylon.

Angered after several abortive attempts to throw off Babylonian control of Jerusalem, Nebuchadnezzar again sent his forces to totally subdue Judah. Jerusalem was taken and completely destroyed. The Judean king, Zedekiah, with all his court and most of the people of Judah of any consequence, were taken into Babylonian captivity. Only the poorest and simplest of the people of Jerusalem remained to see the walls of their city come crashing down.

Although they had no hand in the attack against Jerusalem, the children of Esau gloated over the destruction of the city. They joined the sack of the city and with great cruelty slaughtered some of the fugitives. Jerusalem was a symbol of Judean tyranny to the Edomites and they reveled in seeing it destroyed. They produced their own Song of Triumph, "Down with it, down with it, even to the ground," which they sang jubilantly. The Israelites were to remember the humiliation. In the 137th Psalm the Israelites called to God, "Remember O Lord, the children of Edom in the day of Jerusalem; who said, Rase it, rase it, even to the foundations thereof."

The land of Judah lay empty and unprotected but for a few peasants. The Edomites needed no invitation to leave their inhospitable hills and take possession of their enemies' land. They came down, a few at a time, as though not daring to believe their good fortune. When it became clear that there were no obstacles to overcome, others flooded down in great numbers. They took control of Hebron and other towns in the southern portion of Judah.

In the land of Judah, the Edomites set up a new kingdom of Edom which the Greeks called, "Idumea" (a corruption of Edomean). No effort was expended to make any provision against attack. They gave their allegiance to Babylon and looked to them for protection. The nation of Edom included the people known as "Amalek," against whom God set His face: "For he said, because the Lord hath sworn that the Lord will have war with Amalek from generation to generation" (Exo 17:16).

Queen of the Persians—Servant of God

But mighty nations, and even empires, come and go. In the autumn of 539 BC, the mighty, "impregnable" Golden City of Babylon was overwhelmed and taken captive by the forces of the Medes and Persians. The Babylonian Empire came to a close, and the Medo-Persian Empire began.

Satan constantly stirs up the hatred of those who are the enemies of God. In the Bible, the story of Esther shows the desire of Satan to destroy the people of promise. The enemy was, again, an Edomite. Haman, whose father was Hammedatha the Agagite, convinced the King of Persia that all the Jews in the empire should be annihilated.

And the letters were sent by posts into all the king's provinces, *to destroy, to kill and to cause to perish, all Jews, both young and old, little children and women*, in one day, even upon the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, which is the month Adar, and to take the spoil of them for a prey (Est 3:13).

King Ahasuerus of Persia had chosen Esther, a Jewess, as his queen. She was used by God to save the Jewish people of that time from certain death.

And Esther spake yet again before the king and fell down at his feet, and besought him with tears to put away the mischief of Haman the Agagite and his device that he had devised against the Jews...Then the king Ahasuerus said unto Esther the queen and to Mordecai the Jew, Behold, I have

given Esther the house of Haman, and him they have hanged upon the gallows, because he laid his hand upon the Jews (Est 8:3,7).

Again, remember God's words: "For he said, because the Lord hath sworn, that the Lord will have war with Amalek from generation to generation" (Ex 17:16),

We will conclude this chapter with another quote from Mr. Capt's book, pages 26-27:

In about 500 BC, after Babylon had fallen to the Persians, some of the captive Judeans were allowed to return to Palestine. Their arrival triggered conflicts with the Edomites, who had occupied the Judean homeland during their sojourn in Babylon. At first they plagued each other with raids, but ultimately the returning Judeans were strong enough to become the dominant force in Palestine.

The complete subjection of the Edomites came about when John Hyrcanus (135-105 BC) crushed all Edomite resistance and forced them to integrate into not only the new "Jewish" (originally meaning remnant of Judah) state but also into the Jewish religion. Josephus records the assimilation of the Edomites into the Judean nation: "Hyrcanus took also Dora and Marissa, cities of Idumea, and subdued all the Idumeans; and...they submitted to the use of circumcision, and the rest of the Jewish ways of living; at which time therefore this befell them that they were hereafter no other than Jews" (Book XIII, Ch. IX, Sec. 1). From that day forward, the name "Jew" could mean either an Israelite Judean or a non-racial Israelite. The new Idumean "converts," now a legalized part of the Jewish nation, began to seize power by any means at their disposal. The House of Hyrcanus itself, was finally deposed by the Idumean councilor Antipater who called in the help of the Nabataeans. The Idumeans remained in power in Hebrew life throughout the time of Christ.

It was an Idumean, Herod I, who upon gaining authority, ordered the extermination of the Hasmonaeon priestly line which Josephus, himself, claimed descent. This same Herod ordered the massacre of the infants when Jesus Christ was

born. Herod (the Tetrarch), son of Herod I and a Samaritan wife, being half Idumean and half Samaritan, was perhaps without a single drop of Israelitish blood in his veins. He was responsible for the murder of John the Baptist.

It should be pointed out that the Idumeans (Esau-Edomites) were unwilling converts to Judaism, and their conversion was never genuine. Whenever the opportunity presented itself, they either speedily cast off a faith for which they only had a natural antipathy, or deformed it substantially, contributing to the *rise of a false Judaism*. It is perhaps only logical that as descendants of Esau they should resent the loss to Israel of what once appeared to be his birthright and should aspire dominion for themselves. Their own dominion could only be held *at the expense of the religion of Israel*.

The true Israelite clung tenaciously to all that was Hebrew; this is true especially of those Israelites who later became the disciples of Jesus Christ. It was they who opposed the acceptance of Hellenism into the mainstream of their Hebrew religion, whereas the Idumeans embraced it and sought to substitute it for the true Hebrew religion. After all, The Edomites only “accepted” Judaism as a matter of convenient policy where they might achieve their ambition of dominion. It was the *Edomite/Idumeans* who fostered and organized the vicious campaign *against Jesus Christ that resulted in his death on the cross*. (Emphasis mine throughout.)

Experienced Creator of False Religions

The god of this world, Satan the devil, has tried to counterfeit practically everything God has done. One way he accomplishes this is by manipulating man’s emotions. Satan is very familiar with the emotions of jealousy, resentment, envy, bitterness, hatred and lust for power. This is Satan’s nature, and he knows how to promote it in man.

Satan used the bitterness and hostility of Esau’s descendants to corrupt and deform Judaism, but that was just experience for what would develop in the next fifteen hundred years.

Roman Catholicism is the world's most populous religion, with nearly one billion members. Close on the heels of the Roman Catholics, in number of adherents, are those of the Muslim religion, or Islam. "Islam" means "submission" (to God's will).

These two great religions of the world are deceptive counterfeits of God's true way. Most of the Church of God understand the development of Roman Catholicism, but what about Islam? Where and how did it come about?

The founder of the Muslim religion was Mohammed, a "prophet" born in Arabia in the city of Mecca around 570 AD. Given the methods the "god of this world" has always used, there is a great probability that Mohammed was an Edomite, and probably an Agagite.

Esau, by despising his birthright, faithlessly rejected God, the Messiah, and God's words. Mohammed, in the same pattern of conduct as his ancient forefather, rejected the God of the Bible for his god, "Allah." Mohammed made himself "the prophet," instead of acknowledging Jesus Christ. Mohammed replaced the Bible with the Koran. If the birthright blessing could not be regained, the descendants of Esau would create a counterfeit. The Muslim religion was born and has been accepted as the predominant religion in the Arab nations of the Middle East.



Chapter Four:

The Middle East in Prophecy



Remember, Deuteronomy 25:18, speaking of Amalek, declares: "...and he feared not God." Psalm 36:1-4 (The New Century Version of the Bible) adds:

Sin speaks to the wicked in their hearts. *They have no fear of God.* They think too much of themselves so they don't see their sin and hate it. Their words are wicked lies; *they are no longer wise or good.* At night they make evil plans; what they do leads to nothing good. They don't refuse things that are evil.

Enemies of the Lord

The Edomites/Amalekites/Agagites have been the enemy of God for thousands of years. Read Exodus 17:16 again: "For he said, because the Lord has sworn that the Lord will have war with Amalek from generation to generation." In the Hebrew-Greek Key Study Bible (1985), the marginal rendering of this verse by the editor, Spiros Zodhiates, is: "Because the hand of Amalek is against the throne of the Lord."

Psalm 83 brings these prophecies right up to the present time, in the Day of the Lord:

Keep not thou silence, O God: hold not thy peace, and be not still, O God. For, lo, *thy enemies* make a tumult: and *they that hate thee* have lifted up the head. They have taken crafty counsel against thy people, and consulted against thy hidden ones. They have said, Come, and let us cut them off from being a nation; that the *name of Israel be no more* in remembrance [For many years, people have attempted to change the name of "Israel" to "Palestine"]. For they have consulted

together with one consent: *they are confederate against thee* (Ps 83:1-5).

Who are these enemies of God? What nations would dare be confederate against God? Verses 6-8 list these enemy nations—enemies of God! All but one of these enemy nations are Islamic nations of the Middle East. Notice that Egypt, Libya, Ethiopia, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iran, Iraq, and other Islamic nations that harbor Islamic extremists who practice *terrorist warfare*, are missing from the list in Psalm 83. These nations *not* listed comprise the “king of the South” that would “push” at the “king of the North,” who is the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). The United States of America is a vital part of NATO. The USA was violently “pushed at” by Islamic terrorists on September 11, 2001. The world has not been the same since. This was the first step toward World War III! The king of the South pushed at the king of the North, and a “whirlwind” has issued forth (see Dan 11:40-43). Prophecy reveals that America, Britain and Israel will collapse due to terrorist action in the near future. As this happens, the confederation of nations of Psalm 83 will form quickly and swoop into Israel and surround Jerusalem (see Luk 21:20-24 and Dan 12:1,10). The Church must then flee to the “place prepared of God,” immediately before the Great Tribulation begins. Do you know where this place is? It is the *only* true place of safety—and it is not Petra!

The Nations of Psalm 83

Listed below are the nations of Psalm 83 identified with their modern names.

- Edom: first on the list, part of modern Jordan, where Petra is located.
- The Ishmaelites: the Arabians of today.
- Moab: part of modern Jordan.
- The Hagarenes: modern Syria and parts of Turkey.
- Gebal: Lebanon of today.
- Ammon: part of modern Jordan. The Capitol of Jordan is

Amman.

- Amalek: the Jordanian “pre-eminent” ones.
- The Philistines: the Palestinians.
- Tyre: probably the Palestine Liberation Organization strongholds or terrorist groups located north of Israel today.
- Assur: modern day Germany.

These nations have never been confederated, yet. Germany has never had an alliance with this group of Middle-Eastern nations. But they will—very soon!

Petra and the Church of God

Herbert W. Armstrong originally identified the nations listed in Psalm 83 in his booklet, *The Middle-East in Prophecy*. Gerald Flurry elaborated on that booklet and brought it up to date in his publication, *The King of the South*. Mr. Flurry knows that these nations will be punished severely by the great God they have allied themselves against. Yet, Gerald Flurry wishes to ally himself with the pre-imminent ones of the nation of Jordan that are included in the Psalm 83 list!

Mr. Armstrong had close ties with the Jordanian royalty before Mr. Flurry came along. Mr. Armstrong had an interest in Petra and had toured it on more than one occasion. He stated, “If Petra is not the place of protection, the Bible does not indicate where it is!” I do not know how or when Mr. Armstrong developed this idea, but in the early nineteen sixties, Dr. Herman Hoeh wrote several articles in *The Good News* magazine concerning Petra, certainly implying that Petra is the place of safety. Gerald Flurry has reprinted parts of these articles in *The Trumpet* magazine (see the July 1996 issue, “Jordan and God’s People in Prophecy”).

Mr. Armstrong was unwilling to state dogmatically that Petra is the place of safety. Herman Hoeh wrote, “Isn’t this prophecy a clear *indication* that the place of safety...is in an Arabian wilderness, where the Bedouin dwell and is *probably* at Sela or Petra?” (Emphasis mine). His article was written in 1962, more than fifty years ago. It is not just the Bedouin that live in Petra today. Petra is the main tourist

attraction in the nation of Jordan. Petra is *not* a hidden city today. Movies, television documentaries, and the Internet have revealed all the secrets of this ancient pagan center.

Mr. Flurry understands that God will have a place prepared, and he took it upon *himself* to prepare Petra as the place of safety. As stated earlier, once it became known that Mr. Flurry's interest in Petra was for a place of safety, he was expelled from the restoration project. He has had little to say about Petra since leaving the project. Does he still believe Petra is the place of safety? I do not know. Has he really examined this subject in the light of God's Word? Just believing a questionable theory from the past is not enough. The question must be, "Is it true?"

Back to the Question

Is Petra the place of safety? Or is it to be a place of slaughter? That was our original question. With the background that has been given in this presentation, we can now proceed to a definite answer from the Word of God.

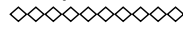
A place of safety is certainly going to be needed. We are in the Day of the Lord. The first four seals have been opened and Christ is preparing to open the fifth seal—the Great Tribulation. The world has been warned. God's Church, snared in the synagogue of Satan, has been warned. And Gerald Flurry and the Laodiceans have been warned. God in His mercy will compel many of His people who are presently snared, confused and bewildered, to come to His one true Church, to be taught His truth, in the place of safety that He has prepared (see Rev 3:9)!

God has a place of safety, but it is *not* Petra. Let's see this in the Word of God. Revelation 12:6,14 plainly declares that there will be "a place prepared of God." Understand—prepared by God, not by any man!

Which scriptures did Gerald Flurry use in an attempt to prove Petra is the place of safety? We will examine them closely. Which scriptures absolutely and conclusively prove that Petra is not the place of safety? These will be thoroughly examined, too.



Chapter Five:



Where Safety Is Not

*J*esus Christ is finalizing all preparations for the opening of the fifth seal. Very soon all people left alive will be desperately seeking a hiding place, a place of safety. We will begin here to show that Petra definitely is not a place of safety, but one of hundreds of areas on the Earth where people will be seeking to hide.

Enter into the *rock* [Hebrew: *tsur*] and hide thee in the dust, for fear of the Lord...and they shall go into the holes of the *rocks* [*tsur*], and into the caves of the earth, for fear of the Lord, and for the glory of his majesty, when he ariseth to shake terribly the earth...In that day [the Day of the Lord's Wrath, during the Day of the Lord] a man shall cast his idols of silver, and his idols of gold, which they made each one for himself to worship, to the moles and to the bats; to go into the *clefts of the rocks* [*tsur*], and into the tops of the ragged *rocks* [Hebrew: *cela*], for fear of the Lord (Isa 2:10,19-21).

All of mankind will be seeking a place to hide as the heavenly signs (the sixth seal) usher in the Day of the Lord's Wrath (the seventh seal). Revelation 6:15-16 has the same message as Isaiah 2:10.

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* [Greek: *petra*] of the mountains; and said to the mountains and *rocks* [*petra*], Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sits on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb.

I have emphasized the words "rock" and "rocks" and given the Hebrew or Greek words from which they are taken. "Tsur" (Strong's #6697) means "a rock or boulder." The Hebrew word "cela" (#5553) is defined as "to be lofty; a craggy rock, rock, stone, stronghold."

When referring to the ancient rose-red city of Petra, the KJV uses “Sela” (#5554). This word is used only twice in the Bible, in Isaiah 16:1 and 2Kings 14:7. In the New Testament the word for “rock” or “rocks” is the Greek word “petra” (#4073) and is defined as “feminine of the same as #4074; a (mass of) rock (literally or figuratively).”

Remember, God has sworn that he would have war with Amalek from generation to generation. Edom/Amalek is under a curse placed upon them by God. Moab, Ammon and the other nations listed in Psalm 83 are enemies of God. These nations will ally themselves with Germany against Israel because of their perpetual hatred of Israel. They will ally themselves with the beast of Revelation 13 and 17, but later they must face the men of the East and the wrath of God!

Son of man, set thy face against Mount Seir [Esau/Edom/Jordan] and prophesy against it, And say unto it, thus saith the Lord God; Behold, I am against thee, and I will stretch out my hand against thee, *and I will make thee most desolate*. I will lay thy cities [Petra included] waste, and thou shalt be desolate, and thou shalt know that I am the Eternal. Because thou hast 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 (Ez 35:2-5).

Please read Obadiah 10-14. Notice the last part of verse 14 especially: “Neither shouldest thou have *delivered up* those of his that did remain in the day of distress.”

Edom has sided with the enemies of Israel and Judah on many occasions. They sacked Jerusalem when the Babylonians destroyed it in 585 BC and again in 70 AD when Rome devastated the city the second time. They will repeat this in the near future when *all nations will be gathered against Jerusalem* (Zec 14:1-2).

Gerald Flurry and his blind Laodiceans will receive the same treatment owing to the perpetual hatred of these people. Mr. Flurry may try to hide out in Petra in the rocks and holes of the earth, but he would most likely be betrayed by the Agagite Jordanians. If he attempts this foolish act, he and his Laodicean followers will be delivered up to the beast and the great false prophet. This would certainly be the “time of their calamity” when they must prove their faithfulness to God with their blood. (Our free booklet, *Bloody Jezreel*, makes this clear.)

Thus will I make Mount Seir most desolate...I will make thee perpetual desolations, and thy cities shall not return... As thou didst rejoice at the inheritance of the house of Israel because it was desolate, so will I do unto thee: Thou shalt be desolate, O Mount Seir, and all Idumea, even all of it: and they shall know that I am the Lord (Eze 35:7,9,15).

God's Word says the cities of Edom, or Jordan, will become desolations. Petra is one of these cities in Jordan. It is a desolation now, although Gerald Flurry previously declared in a sermon that he would make Petra the most beautiful place on Earth, second only to Jerusalem, in the World Tomorrow. However, God says it will be a desolation.

When the Eternal God says "desolation," He means desolation! Jeremiah records the following: "Also Edom shall be a desolation: every one that goes by it shall be astonished, and shall hiss at all the plagues thereof. As in the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah and the neighbor cities thereof, saith the Lord, no man shall abide there, neither shall a son of man dwell in it" (Jer 49:17-18).

What could more describe desolation than Sodom and Gomorrah? Jeremiah 49:21-22 seems to describe an airplane dropping a nuclear device. The explosion is heard all the way to the Red Sea! This appears to be very much like the brimstone and fire that came down from Heaven and totally destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen 19:24).

Petra is not the place of safety. It is not even a place of safety. The entire region of Edom shall be destroyed!

Ammon, Moab, and Edom are the ancient names for modern Jordan. Ezekiel 25:4,10 warns the Ammonites and the Moabites that "the men of the east" are coming. The entire forty-eighth chapter of Jeremiah is addressed to Moab. God names city after city that shall be destroyed in Moab/Jordan. Verse 4 reads: "Moab is destroyed; her little ones have caused a cry to be heard." Verses 15 and 28 state: "Moab is spoiled and gone up out of her cities, and his chosen young men are gone down to the slaughter, saith the king, whose name is the Lord of hosts...O ye that dwell in Moab, leave the cities and dwell in the rock [cela], and be like the dove that makes her nest in the sides of the hole's mouth."

Is the King, the Lord of Hosts, telling these Moabites to flee to Petra as a place of safety? Of course not! God is going to destroy them. He is telling them that they had better hide in the dust of the

earth, in the dens and in the caves, and plead for the mountains to fall on them, for fear of the great God and this most frightful time ever in history (read Jer 48 again). “And Moab shall be destroyed from being a people, because he hath magnified himself against the Lord” (verse 42).

In Jeremiah 49:10, God says they will not be able to hide: “But I have made Esau bare, I *have uncovered his secret places, and he shall not be able to hide himself*: his seed is spoiled, and his brethren, and his neighbors, and he is not [will be no more].”

There is no place of safety in the land of Edom. But there will be a great slaughter there!

For my sword shall be bathed in heaven: behold, it shall come down on Idumea, and upon the people of my curse, to judgment. The sword of the Lord is filled with blood...for the Lord has a sacrifice in Bozrah, and a *great slaughter* in the land of Idumea...For it is the day of the Lord's vengeance, and the year of recompenses for the controversy of Zion (Isa 34:5-6,8).

“Who is this that comes from Edom with dyed garments from Bozrah...wherefore art thou *red* in thine apparel, and thy garments like him that treads in the wine vat?” (Isa 63:1-2). (See also Rev 19:13,15.)

God's faithful ones will be protected from the Great Tribulation and the wrath of God in “the place prepared.” Those begotten of God not “accounted worthy to escape” (Luk 21:36) will have suffered and died by this time of the Lord's wrath. If they were able to overcome in the Great Tribulation, to the point of giving their lives in obedience to God, they will await their resurrection at the sound of the last trumpet.

Following a man to a place of slaughter will be an extreme trial that could lead to deep bitterness. May God help all of us as we read and prove all things (1Th 5:21) concerning the place of safety.

Dr. Hoeh's 1962 Article

Gerald Flurry, evidently, got much of his information about Petra and the place of safety from Dr. Herman Hoeh's 1962 *Good News* article. It would be interesting to know if Dr. Hoeh still agrees with his

article after forty years. In 1998, there was no doubt that Mr. Flurry still believed what was written those many years ago. He did not dig into the Bible to obtain the facts that have been presented in this writing.

There are four series of scriptures that have been taken out of proper context to present Petra as the place of safety. These were first printed in the 1962 *Good News* article and re-printed in the 1996 *Trumpet* magazine article, "Jordan and God's People in Prophecy."

Who Are the Outcasts?

The first set of scriptures begins with Isaiah 16:1-5 and is supposed to prove that God has His "outcasts" hiding in Petra. "Send ye the lamb to the ruler of the land, from Sela to the wilderness, unto the mount of the daughter of Zion." Dr. Hoeh writes concerning this verse: "The time setting for this prophecy is the return of Christ to rule the nations. He is the King of the land."

I disagree with Dr. Hoeh's assumption. The prophecies in Isaiah 15 and 16 are near the time of Christ's return, but His visible second coming has not yet occurred. The point of time of these chapters is at the *beginning of the one-year period of the Day of the Lord's Wrath*. Christ's visible return will still be months away.

The Hebrew word rendered "ruler" in Isaiah 16:1, is *Strong's #4910, machal*, which means: "to rule, govern, have dominion, to manage." Immediately before Christ returns, who will physically be "managing" the affairs of God? Who will be representing the government of God on Earth? Two powerful but humble prophets are coming on the scene in the very near future. They are the two witnesses! They will be in charge—for God!

Quoting Dr. Hoeh, "The Moabites are commanded to seek Him, to send Him an offering as a token of their submission. The offering comes from Sela. But why are the Moabites found in Sela, when only Bedouin dwell there today?" Dr. Hoeh asked that question in 1962. Many things have changed since he offered that question. Now there exists a four-star hotel in Petra, not for the Bedouins, but for the thousands of tourists who visit the area each year.

The reason why the Moabites are there is obvious from a simple reading of the scriptures. They are there because they are cringing in fear in the dust of the earth and in the caves and rocks (see Isa

2:19-21, Rev 6:15-17, Jer 48:28). If Petra were a place of safety, they would be content to stay there. Why are they told to send an offering to the ruler? The Moabites are *fugitives or outcasts* (Isa 15:5 and 16:3-4), and are fleeing southward to hide in the rocks and caves of Petra. Remember that Ammon, Moab, and Edom occupied the land that is known today as Jordan. This entire region will be utterly destroyed! The “men of the east” are coming (Ez 25:1-14).

We need to remove from our minds the thought that some of God’s people will be hiding there in safety. Any Church of God member who would follow Mr. Flurry or any other church leader to Petra, to a place God says He is going to destroy, would soon be dead from lack of food and water, exposure to the harsh elements, and capture by the beast and the false prophet.

In the KJV, the phrase, “Let mine outcasts dwell with thee, Moab” (Isa 16:4), is a poor translation. These Moabites have realized that God is working through the two witnesses who are conducting their ministry from Jerusalem or nearby. The Moabites are beseeching the two witnesses for protection. They are not in safety in Sela/Petra. Think about that! The RSV reads: “Let the outcasts of Moab dwell with you...” The NIV states, “Let the Moabite fugitives stay with you...” The Modern Language Bible says, “Let the outcasts of Moab live among you...” The Today’s English Version simply pleads, “Let us stay in your land. Protect us from those who want to destroy us.” The New American Standard Bible entreats, “Let the outcasts of Moab stay with you...” They are crying out to the ruler of a safe place, possibly to the two witnesses. These “daughters of Moab” (verse 2) want to come to where the ruler is—not to remain in Sela/Petra. These outcasts evidently know that God’s people are being protected not far away. God will not have any living faithful in Sela, as Dr. Hoeh has written and Mr. Flurry would like to believe. The outcasts are the Moabites hiding there in the rocks and holes of the earth!

The Moabites will appeal to the ministry of God on Earth at that time, but it appears that it will be too late. Jeremiah 48 describes the total destruction of Moab. Verses 42-44 give this chilling statement:

And Moab shall be destroyed from being a people, because he has magnified himself against the Lord. Fear and the pit, and the snare, shall be upon you, O inhabitant of Moab, says the Lord. He that flees from the fear shall fall into the pit; and

he that gets up out of the pit shall be taken in the snare: for I will bring upon it, even upon Moab, *the year of their visitation*, says the Lord.”

Sinners and Hypocrites

The second group of scriptures used to depict Petra as the place of safety begins in Isaiah 33:13: “Hear ye that are far off, what I have done; and ye that are near, acknowledge my might.” Mr. Flurry writes in his “Jordan” article:

The sinners in God's Church or Zion are going to be punished. “The sinners in Zion are afraid; fearfulness hath surprised the hypocrites. Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? Who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?” (Isa 33:14). The Laodicean hypocrites are to enter the nuclear Great Tribulation. They are hypocrites because they act like God's very elect and are not. They have been dishonest and compromised God's precious truth. They will be surprised by this indescribable trial. They assume God will protect them.

Gerald Flurry labels the split-off churches of the WCG as “Laodiceans,” and accuses them of being sinners and hypocrites. But notice how these scriptures certainly apply to the leader of Laodicea, Mr. Flurry himself. Who stole the copyright for *Mystery of the Ages*? Isn't that dishonest? Who was involved in a lawsuit with his brother? Isn't that hypocrisy?

Who really is a hypocrite when viewed in the light of the following scripture? “He that walks righteously, and speaketh uprightly; he that despises the gain of oppression, that shakes his hands from holding of bribes, that stops his ears from hearing of blood, and shuts his eyes from seeing evil: He shall dwell on high...” (Isa 33:15-16). Borrowing from this scripture, Mr. Flurry continues:

The very elect walk righteously, hate deceit and shut their eyes and ears from seeing and hearing evil. They are building the faith now to become God's outcasts. When they are cast out of their own nations, it will look very perilous to most people. But this great act of faith is God's way of testing

them and at the same time rewarding them. It is through this process that God takes them to a place of safety. [Emphasis mine]

God's Word says: "There is a way which *seems* right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death" (Pro 14:12). Gerald Flurry is caught up in his own way, not God's way. He is heading for his own "dust and rocks of the earth," his place in the land of God's enemies.

Isaiah 33:16 is one of the foremost scriptures in Mr. Flurry's belief that Petra is the place of safety: "He shall dwell on high: his place of defense shall be the munition of rocks; bread will be given him; his waters shall be sure." Mr. Flurry quotes Herman Hoeh concerning this verse: "This is a poor translation. The Hebrew word for 'munitions' is *metsad*, which means a stronghold or fort. The word for 'rock' is *sela*. It should read 'stronghold of Sela'—or Petra!"

Dr. Hoeh says it *should* read "Petra," but it does *not*! Our bread and water will be sure, spiritually and physically, in the place God has prepared, but not in Petra. And we do have a rock to protect us, as we shall see in the next chapter, but it is not Petra.

What a View!

The third scripture used in defense of Petra as the place of safety is Isaiah 33:17: "Thine eyes shall see the king in his beauty: they shall behold the land that is very far off." Dr. Hoeh and Mr. Flurry both have said that this is speaking of viewing the land of Israel from the tops of the mountains in Petra. But think, when will our eyes see Jesus Christ in His glory? It will be at His coming at the First Resurrection—in the clouds (1Th 4:17). When we meet Him in the clouds, we will be a lot higher than the mountaintops of Petra and we will be able to see for miles in every direction!

Sing a New Song

The fourth set of scriptures is Isaiah 42:10-12:

Sing unto the Lord a new song, and his praise from the end of the earth, ye that go down to the sea, and all that is therein; the isles and the inhabitants thereof. Let the wilderness and

cities thereof lift up their voice, the villages that Kedar doth inhabit: let the inhabitants of the rock sing; let them shout from the top of the mountains. Let them give glory unto the Lord, and declare his praise in the islands.

Gerald Flurry homes in on the one phrase, “the inhabitants of the rock,” and supposes this is Petra, assuming those who have sought safety there are praising God from the top of the mountains. Nevertheless, the Bible is clear that this area of Earth will be destroyed. So what is this verse actually telling us?

First, it needs to be determined, in time order, when this event will take place. Notice that the entire Earth will be singing a new song of praise to the Lord. From those that live by the sea and in the islands, to those who dwell in the plains, the desert and the mountains, all the ends of the Earth will praise God. Obviously, this attitude of praising God occurs only well into the Millennium! The inhabitants of the entire Earth will be compelled to keep the laws of God, as Jesus Christ rules them with a “rod of iron” (see Zec 14 and Rev 19:11-16). The strict adherence to all of God’s laws will bring forth such blessings and benefits that all the Earth will sing praises to Him.

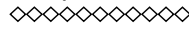
Isaiah 42:10-12 is a wee glimpse of the benefits of obeying God. These are the physical inhabitants of the entire Earth finally recognizing the joys of God’s ways. These verses have nothing to do with Petra or a place of safety, as some would have you believe.

What is shown happening physically in these verses is a type of what will also be seen spiritually. Where in God’s Word do we see a large body of people from all over the Earth standing on top of a mountain singing a new song to God?

Revelation 14:1-4 shows 144,000 resurrected firstfruits standing on Mt. Zion singing a new song of praise to their great God. This is, indeed, so plain! See Revelation 15:1-4, also. All of this is very clear, once everything is put into proper perspective, and when we allow the Bible to interpret the Bible.



Chapter Five:



Where Safety Is!

*R*ing David, a man after God's own heart, wrote under the inspiration of God two chapters, 2Samuel 22 and Psalm 18, stating the same mighty message. Anytime the Eternal God repeats Himself, we had better pay attention! "I will love thee, O Lord, my strength. *The Lord is my rock [cela] and my fortress [metsad]*, and my deliverer, my God, my strength [tsur] in whom I will trust; my buckler, and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower" (Psa 18:1-2).

Mr. Flurry wants to take his followers to the land of an enemy of God to hide in a rock. But *God is the Rock* and He is *our rock*—our fortress. "For who is God save the Lord? or who is a rock save our God?" (Psa 18:31). This is where safety really is!

Jesus Christ is here in the Day of the Lord preparing the place of safety that will be so necessary for His faithful during the Great Tribulation and the Day of the Lord's Wrath. The rest of mankind will search out the dens and rocks of the mountains for a place to hide during the year of the Lamb's wrath (Rev 6:15-17), but *Christ is our rock and hiding place*. Study closely the following scriptures:

- 1Corinthians 10:1-4: That Rock was Christ.
- Matthew 16:18: Christ builds His Church on the great Rock.
- Ephesians 2:20: Jesus Christ is the chief cornerstone.
- 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 upon a rock."
- Psalm 91:1-2: "He that dwells 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."

- Psalm 9:9-10: The Lord is our refuge in times of trouble and we must put our trust in Him.
- Psalm 31:3: “For thou art my rock and my fortress.”

Over and over we read that our God is our Rock and our Fortress. The world, the Laodiceans, and the others not accounted worthy to escape the Great Tribulation, will seek the rocks of this Earth. But we seek the great spiritual Rock—Jesus Christ. “Oh how great is your goodness, which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee; Which thou hast wrought for them that trust in thee before the sons of men” (Psa 31:19). Psalm 25:14 declares, “The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him, and he will show them his covenant.”

God has given His faithful Church His secrets! The great revealed truth of the Day of the Lord has been given to His faithful Church. We are the only group on Earth that knows that Jesus Christ has come suddenly to His Temple, and that the Day of the Lord has come as a thief in the night. The revelation of this astounding secret should have His faithful people in a state of humble submission to the will of God. We must allow Christ to live in us as He makes up His special treasure (Mal 3:17). Only His jewels will be ready to go to the physical place of safety that He is preparing. Right now, we must be in the spiritual place of safety. That place is deep in the inner court of the spiritual Temple. That is where Christ is, and where we must be.

Psalm 31:20 is a key scripture for us today: “Thou shalt hide them in the secret of thy presence from the pride of men, Thou shalt keep them secretly in a pavilion from the strife of tongues.” We are the only people who know the secret of His presence!

This is where the place of safety is *now*. Christ is here! He came suddenly to His Temple—to His true Church. He is here in the Church of God’s Faithful now, and we are safe with Him! And we know that if we remain close to Him, deep in the inner court, when it is necessary for us to flee, He will take care of us. He will make sure we are taken to the place He has prepared. That geographic location where the Church will then be, is also where He will be. It will truly be *the* place of safety, not a place of slaughter!

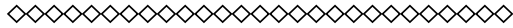
As the Laodiceans read this message, it may well be that their final warning is completed, and the knocking will cease. As it was in the days of Noah, the “door of the ark” will be closed.

May the Eternal God have mercy on us all!

Literature Available from the Church of God's Faithful



Elijah's Message to the Philadelphia Church of God



Herbert W. Armstrong was the end time Elijah and a type of Zerubbabel. What was finished and completed at Mr. Armstrong's death? Do you really know? When Mr. Armstrong died, did the 6th Candlestick cease to burn? No! It continued to burn brightly in the Inner Court. However, the WCG leaders began to dismantle the true doctrines of the Worldwide Church of God and they drifted into the Outer Court of the Spiritual Temple as the synagogue of Satan. Only those faithful few of the 6th Candlestick stayed with Christ in the Inner Court. After four years of the systematic destruction of the WCG, God ignited the 7th Candlestick and gave it to Gerald Flurry. The Laodicean Work of God began. The 6th and the 7th Candlesticks began to work together as the Philadelphia Church of God to warn those of the Outer Court to return to the truth. Now, true to the prophetic description of the Laodicean era, that Candlestick/Church has become lukewarm to the Law of God (Rom. 13, I Cor. 6, Matt. 5:19). The Faithful of the Church of God, the 6th Candlestick, have had to separate from the Laodicean 7th Candlestick. Our free booklet explains this separation and what you must do to come out of the Laodicean Church.

The Midnight Cry



Are you a part of the "WOMAN" or the "REMNANT" of Revelation 12:14, 17? Your life depends on the answer! God says that he will take the WOMAN to a place of safety to be protected from the worst time of trouble to ever come upon mankind. But, where is the WOMAN? And how will she be found?

The answer is found in Christ's parable of the Ten Virgins in Matthew 25. The time has come for God's people to read, understand, and heed Matthew 25:6 - The Midnight Cry.





The Little Book... Unveiled at Last!



Malachi's Message to the Church of God Today is claimed by its author, Gerald Flurry, to be the Little Book of Revelation 10! He also claims that the Mighty Angel who has the Little Book open in His hand and the 7th Angel (Laodicea) of verse 7, are the same Being. However, by a careful reading of this section of scripture it is evident that Mr. Flurry's claim is not true!

The Mighty Angel is easily identified by the Holy Scriptures, not by erroneous ideas of a man. The days of the 7th Angel (Laodicea) and the sounding of the Angel are also clearly revealed in light of recent history. *Malachi's Message* is just that! It is the vitally necessary message of the book of Malachi, but has NOTHING to do with the LITTLE BOOK of Revelation 10. Mr. Flurry has no understanding of the 7 Thunders of Revelation 10. Unaware of the true significance of these thunders, he minimizes their meanings with his own interpretations. His "seven thunders" are actually blunders away from the TRUTH of God!

When *Malachi's Message* was first written in 1989, it was not the TIME for the LITTLE BOOK to be UNVEILED, BUT IT IS NOW! Request your free booklet and prove these statements for yourself.

Bloody Jezreel

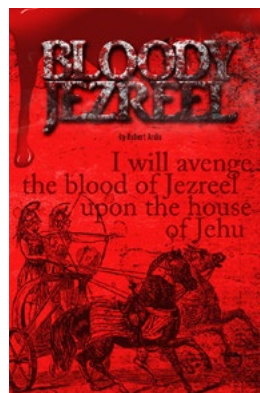


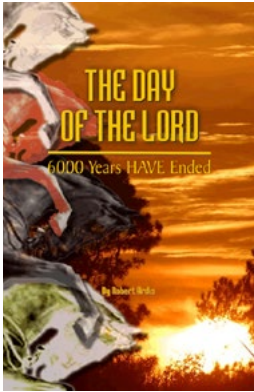
In his Hosea booklet, Gerald Flurry states on page 5, "We are typed by Jezreel. The same message taught in the PCG, or Jezreel, today is going to fill the earth."

Mr. Flurry says the Book of Hosea is an end-time book, and that is true. But, If the PCG is JEZREEL, what does it mean in Hosea 1:4 where it states, "And the Lord said unto him, Call his name Jezreel, and I will avenge the Blood of Jezreel upon the house of Jehu..."

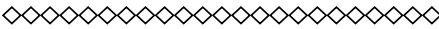
Think about what this is saying—the Blood of Jezreel!

Jezreel's Blood! If you are a member of the PCG, and the PCG is Jezreel, and these scriptures are for the end-time, isn't this speaking about **your blood**? Shouldn't this give you an uneasy feeling? And who is Jehu? You very much need to read the explanation of this in our free booklet *Bloody Jezreel*. It is a matter of Life and Death!





The Day of the Lord 6000 Years Have Ended!



Where are we in God's Master Plan? 6000 years HAVE ended! What is the Day of the Lord? Are you sure you know? Are the Day of the Lord and the Day of the Lord's Wrath the same occurrence? The Day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, according to I Thess. 5:2 and II Peter 3:10. Christ says He will come as a thief, unexpectedly (Rev. 3:3 and Luke 12:39-40).

However, we read in Rev. 1:7, Behold, he comes with clouds and every eye shall see him... How do you reconcile these scriptures? Can it be that the Day of the Lord and the Day of the Lord's Wrath are not the same event?

Yes! The Day of the Lord's Wrath is only a ONE-Year period of time within the Day of the Lord. The Day of the Lord HAS COME as a "thief in the night" and YOU did NOT know it! What happens NOW?

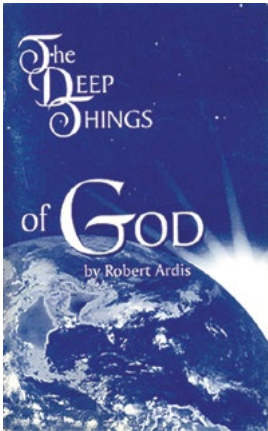
You can read all about it in our free booklet; *The Day of the Lord*. Don't wait. Order it now!

The Deep Things of God



Have you ever wondered about Gog and Magog at the end of the Millennium? These multitudes from the four quarters of the earth will be deceived by Satan's power after living their entire lives during the 1000-year reign of Christ. How could they be deceived into attacking the headquarters of the only God they had ever known? Are these people, described in such enormous numbers, lost forever? Does this part of God's Plan fail? Of course not! God's Plan is perfect.

What is the ultimate fate of Satan and the demons? You might think Spirits cannot die or be killed. But, the Creator of all the angelic beings died! Jesus Christ was KILLED and would still be dead if the Father had not raised Him up. If God can die, can He not put a rebellious demon to death? What will the Lake of Fire be created for? When will it begin to burn? Why do we believe there will be three resurrections, while the Bible mentions ONLY two? And how long is the period of the Last Great Day? All of these questions concerning these *Deep Things of God* are thoroughly explained by the Word of God as revealed in our booklet. Request your own free copy soon.



All of our literature is available at our website:

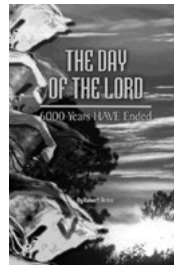
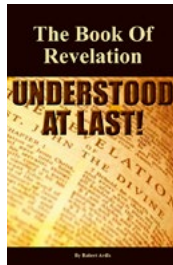
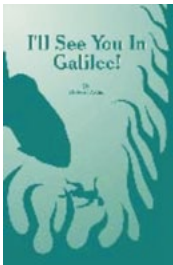
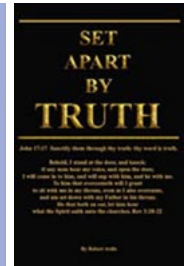
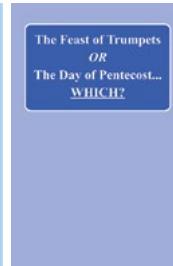
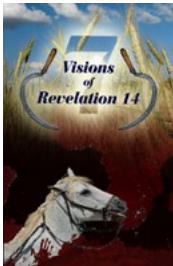
www.setapartbytruth.org


Or you may write or call for our free booklets:

Church of God's Faithful
136 Woodland Drive
Harleyville, SC 29448

843-462-7977

Please contact us with any questions you might have.
We are here to help.





The door
is open
and the
bridegroom
has come.
Go ye out
to meet
Him.

Rev. 3: 7-12 &
Matt. 25: 1-13

The Midnight



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