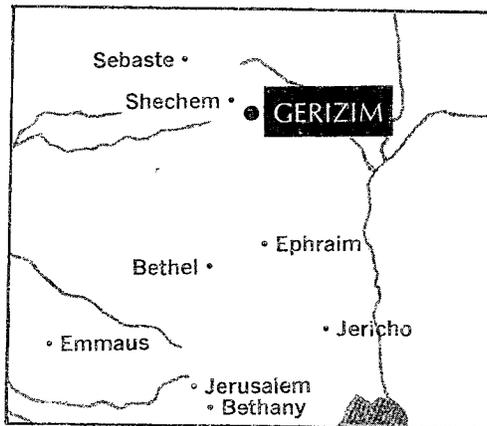
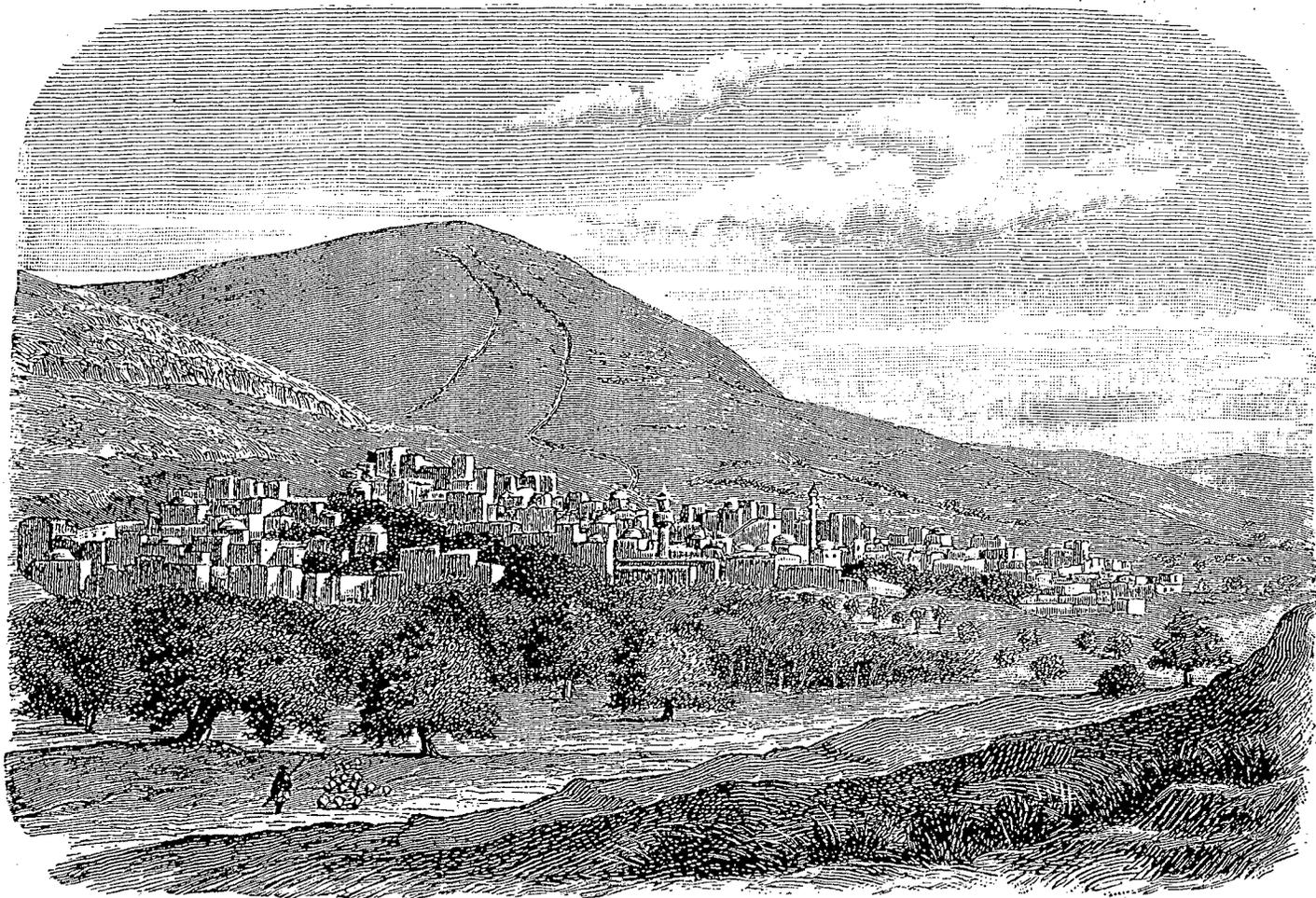


Mt. Gerizim – The Woman, the Well and True Worship

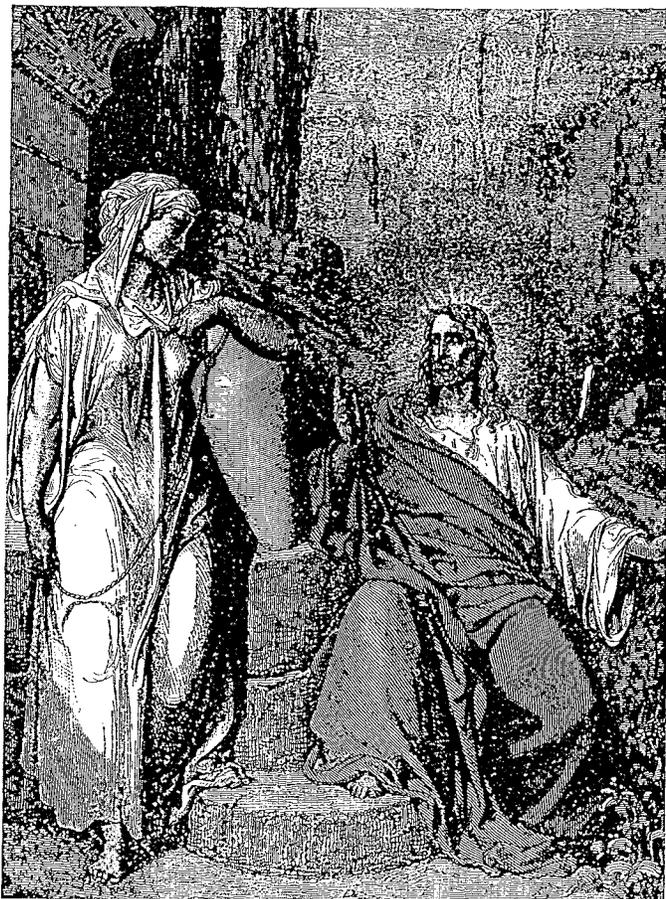


Dee Berg Gerizim (Gazim).

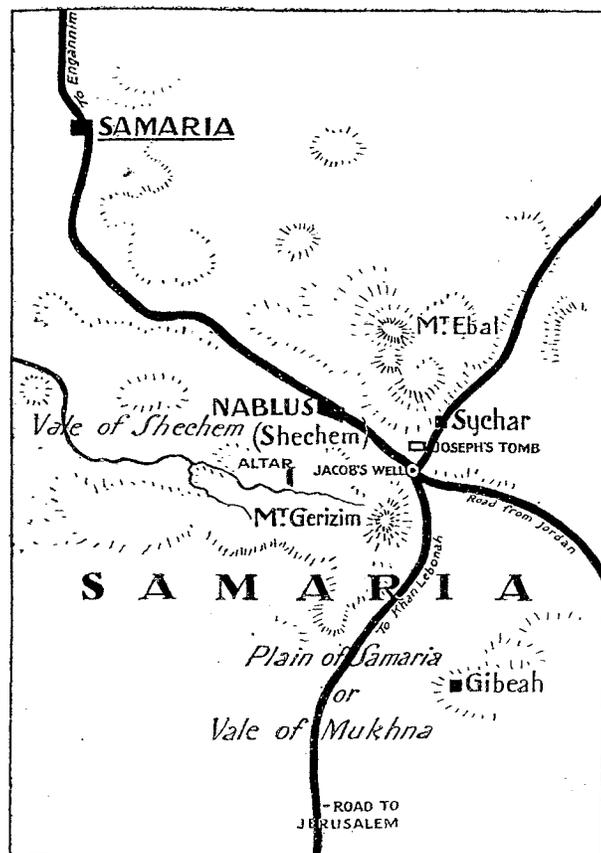




Der Berg Grissim (Garizim).



THE DISCOURSE AT THE WELL.—Drawn by Doré.



COUNTRY ROUND JACOB'S WELL (GREEK CITIES UNDERLINED), PICTURE 3.

Mt. Gerizim – The Woman, the Well and True Worship

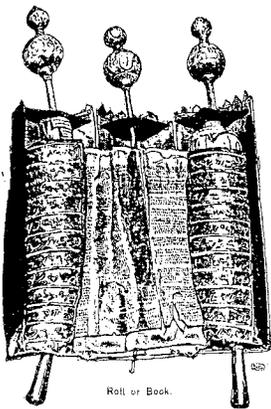
1A. The Significance of Mt. Gerizim:

1b. The importance for biblical worship::

A mountain in central Samaria, near Shechem and about ten m. SE of the city of Samaria, esp. important as the center of worship for the Samaritans. From Mount Gerizim and Mount Ebal (about three m. NE) the sacred sites of Shechem and Jacob's well are visible.

The most important reference to Mt. Gerizim is in John 4:20-23. The woman referred to "this mountain" as the worship center for the Samaritans. She said, "Our fathers worshiped on this mountain." Jesus answered "neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. . .but. . .in spirit and in truth" shall men worship the Father.

The area is sacred to Jews as well as Samaritans. Here, Abraham and Jacob entered the Promised Land (Gen. 12:6; 33:18). Jacob built an altar, dug a well, and purchased a burial ground at Shechem. The Israelites used it for a burial ground for the bones of Joseph (Josh 24:32). Both Mt. Gerizim and Mt. Ebal were the sites used when Joshua gathered all the people of Israel to Mt. Gerizim and Mt. Ebal for the ceremony of taking possession of the Promised Land. According to the command of Moses (Deut. 11:29; 27:11-14) Gerizim was to be the mount to pronounce the blessing on godliness, while Ebal would be the mount from which would be declared the curse of God upon wickedness. There Joshua read the law of Moses in full to the whole assembly (Josh. 8:30-35) gathered before Gerizim and Ebal, but he built an altar only on Mt. Ebal (Josh. 8:30).



Joshua called Israel back to Shechem, under the shadow of Gerizim and Ebal, to renew the covenant, which he did in this manner: "he took a great stone, and set it up there under the oak in the sanctuary of the LORD" (Josh 24:26). This site was sacred to the Israelites in the early days of their occupation of the Promised Land. In the movement toward centralization of worship at Jerusalem under David and Solomon, other worship centers were not looked upon with favor. When the division of the kingdom took place, Jeroboam made Shechem the capital of the northern kingdom (1 Kings 12:25), discouraged worship at the Temple in Jerusalem, and substituted calf worship at Bethel and Dan. He thereby instigated a new and separate religion, centering at Shechem and Mt. Gerizim. (Merrill C. Tenney, Ed., *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*, Vol. 2, Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1975, J. C. DeYoung "Gerizim," 701-703.)

2b. In relation to biblical events:

An older, somewhat dated volume, gives some additional details about the area:

A mountain of Ephraim opposite to Mount Ebal, in close proximity to Shechem. It became very important in the history of Israel, because from it the blessing was pronounced upon the people after the entrance into the promised land, Deut. xi, 29: xxvii, 1-13; while from the opposite mountain, Ebal, the curse was thundered against all transgressors, Josh. viii, 30-34. At Ebal a copy of the law, engraved

on limestone tables, was erected in the valley, and an altar raised to commemorate the renewal of the covenant between Jehovah and Israel, and to receive the first thank-offering for the occupation of the land of promise. The priests stood at the altar with their faces toward the East; on the left of these, at Ebal, six of the tribes; on the right, at Gerizim, the other six, and these evidently the most important and favored; these last, as standing on the favored *right* side of the altar, responded to the blessings spoken from the altar with amen, while the first six tribes answered and affirmed the curses. That a greater holiness did not at this time already attach to Gerizim above Ebal is evident from this, that the altar was erected at Ebal and not at Gerizim, Deut. xxvii, 4; and the curse was not pronounced upon the mountain, nor upon those standing upon it, but upon transgressors of the law. In Judg. ix, 7-21, we have the noted parable which Jotham addressed to the men of Shechem from "the top of Mount Gerizim."

After the exile the Samaritans obtained leave from Darius Nothus to erect a temple on Gerizim, and here they worshiped till the temple was destroyed by Hyrcanus. Still, however, they had here an altar, and cherished a determined hatred against the Jews, John iv, 20, 21. At the present day the few remnants of this people still living at Nablus visit the holy mountain at the four yearly festivals, when not prevented by Turkish fanaticism. (*Handbook of Bible Geography*, New York: Nelson & Phillips, 1877, 148-149.)



DESCENDANTS OF THE SAMARITANS AT WORSHIP.

2A. The Relation of the Samaritans to the Jews:

The history of the Samaritans is closely interwoven with that of the neighboring Jews. A few excerpts from a detailed article on the Samaritans must suffice:

In the New Testament Samaria is subordinate to Judea and Galilee. Since the exile a mixed race with a mixed creed had taken the place of the Ephraimites; the descendants of Joseph and Rachel who had remained or who returned from exile, intermarried with Greek and Syrian colonists. Henceforward the Samaritans were hated and abhorred as semi-heathen heretics and schismatics by the Jews of pure blood, and they hated them in turn. Christ broke through the national prejudice, held up a despised Samaritan as an example of true charity, revealed to a poor Samaritan woman of quick wit and light heart, the nature of spiritual and universal worship; and in view of the ripening grain around Jacob's Well he predicted a large harvest of converts, which was reaped by the apostles. (Philip Schaff, *Through Bible Lands: Notes of Travel in Egypt, the Desert, and Palestine*, New York: American Tract Society, 1878, 311.)

It is no wonder that the Jews consider the Samaritans as hybrid heretics who re-wrote biblical history to fit their own religious errors.

J. C. Kelso has a fine discussion of the Samaritan religion and its marked differences from Judaism in the *Zondervan's Pictorial Bible Dictionary*.

The Samaritan theology of NT times (as nearly as can be traced from scanty records) seems to be similar to that of the Jews. (1) Both considered themselves to be true Yahweh worshipers. (2) Both placed the supreme emphasis on the Pentateuch not only as Scripture but as a detailed way of life. The Samaritans rejected the remainder of the Jewish canon; but, according to the records available, the Jews never specifically

indicted them for this heresy. One might conjecture that the Samaritans did not include the other OT books in the canon because of the emphasis on the major importance of Jerusalem as a central sanctuary, and the relation of that city to the Messiah. The Samaritans, however, as did the Jews, looked for a Messiah, as is seen in the Samaritan woman's reference to Him (John 4:25).

(3) The major point of difference concerning the Pentateuch was that the Samaritans insisted that Mt. Gerizim was the only true central sanctuary for all Israel. The text of the Samaritan Pentateuch in Deuteronomy 27:4 reads Gerizim, not Ebal as in the Heb. MT. The Genesis passages that emphasized Jerusalem as the place of Abraham's offering of Isaac, and the Melchizedek episode were no problem to the Samaritans, who located these events at sites of similar name near Mt. Gerizim. Their interpretation may date from NT times, or even later. Following the Ten Commandments in Exodus and Deuteronomy, the Samaritan text adds another commandment requiring the building of an altar on Mt. Gerizim and the celebration of a sacrificial service there.

(4) Samaritans of OT times prob. held the same views of Moses as did the Jews, but when the Samaritans developed their own theology after A.D. 400, they exalted Moses excessively and gave him titles that Christians reserve uniquely for Christ.

(5) Like the Jews, the Samaritans looked for a final judgment with rewards and punishments in charge of the Messiah. Both Jews and Samaritans emphasized circumcision, the Sabbath, and the Kosher law. Thus Jews could stay in a Samaritan home for two days, eating their food and drinking water from Jacob's well (John 4:1-42). (1975, Vol. 5, 246-7.)

3A. The Worship on Mt. Gerizim:

A description of the top of Mt. Gerizim in Thomson's classic volume is worth citing here:

It was doubtless to this mountain, with its ruined temple, that our Saviour pointed when he enunciated that cardinal truth in religion, "Woman, believe me, the hour cometh when ye shall neither in *this mountain*, nor yet a Jerusalem, worship the Father. God is a spirit; and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." Josephus tells us that this temple was destroyed about a hundred and twenty-nine years before the birth of Christ; but the site of it has been the place where the Samaritans have continued to "worship the Father" from that day to this, *not* in spirit nor in truth, it is to be feared, but in form and fanaticism, according to the traditions of their elders. (*The Land and the Book*, London: T. Nelson and Sons, 1884, 477 [emphasis in the original].)

4A. The Discoveries on Mt. Gerizim:

For those interested in excavations on Mt. Gerizim over the past 25 years, with amazing discoveries brought to light, I'll refer to an article "Bells, Pendants, Snakes & Stones," in the *Biblical Archaeology Review*.

The archeologist Yitzhak Magen shows that a number of O.T. events were changed in the Samaritan Pentateuch.

In the Masoretic Text [the traditional Hebrew text], upon entering the Holy Land the Israelites are commanded to build an altar on Mt. Ebal (Deuteronomy 27:4), opposite Mt. Gerizim; in the SP [Samaritan Pentateuch], the altar is to be built on Mt. Gerizim. In Samaritan tradition, the Israelites' Tent of Meeting (or Tabernacle) was set up on Mt. Gerizim. In the MT, it is set up in Shiloh (Joshua 18:1). More importantly, wherever the

MT has "the place the Lord (Yahweh) *will* choose" (envisioning Jerusalem, which had not yet been conquered), the SP has "the place the Lord *has* chosen," (referring to Gerizim). The SP even has an additional commandment to worship on Mt. Gerizim.

The SP makes no claim, however, that a temple was built on Mt. Gerizim. That happened only centuries later. (November/December 2010, Vol. 25, No. 6, 28. [emphasis in the original]).

Although we have not found the temple itself, we have found the sacred precinct or compound in which the temple was located. IT is a nearly square compound (321 x 315 ft) that sits on the highest point on the mountain. The walls are more than 3 feet thick. Two sides of the enclosure (northern and western) are preserved for their entire length, sometimes to a height of nearly 7 feet.

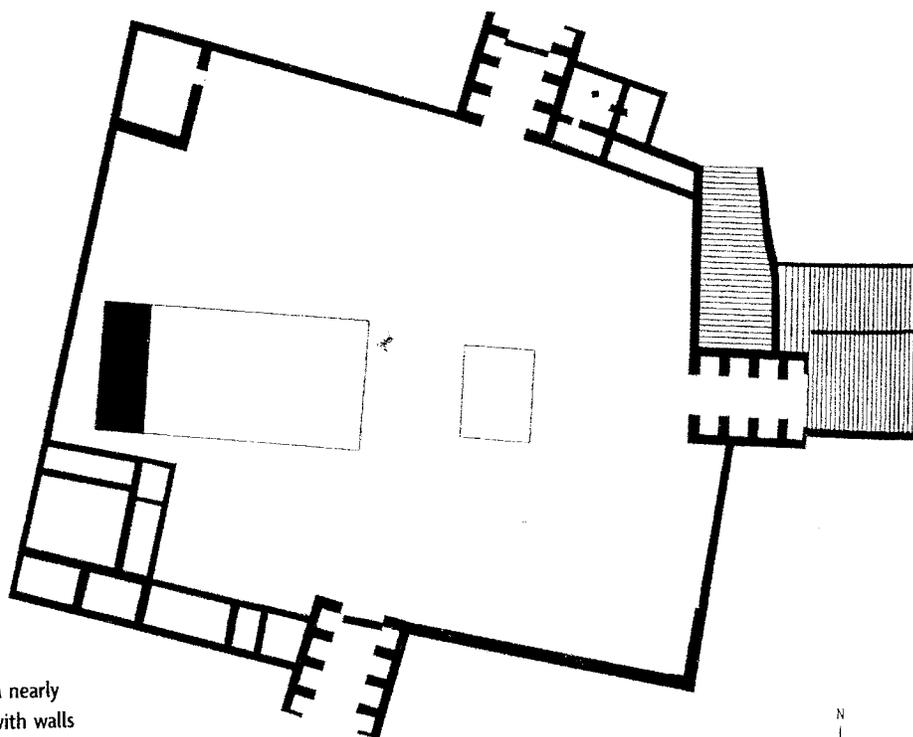
Three of the four walls of the sacred precinct had impressive gates. The best preserved is in the center of the northern wall. All three are six-chambered gates (three chambers on each side of the gate). The path through each gate was nearly 50 feet long, and the gate with its chambers was almost as wide.

There was no gate in the western wall, however, despite the fact that the site was easily accessible from this side. The reason for this is no doubt because the back of the Samaritan temple with its "holy of holies" faced this wall.



Samaritans at Prayer on Mount Gerizim. (From a Photograph.)

and Hellenistic period sacred precinct.



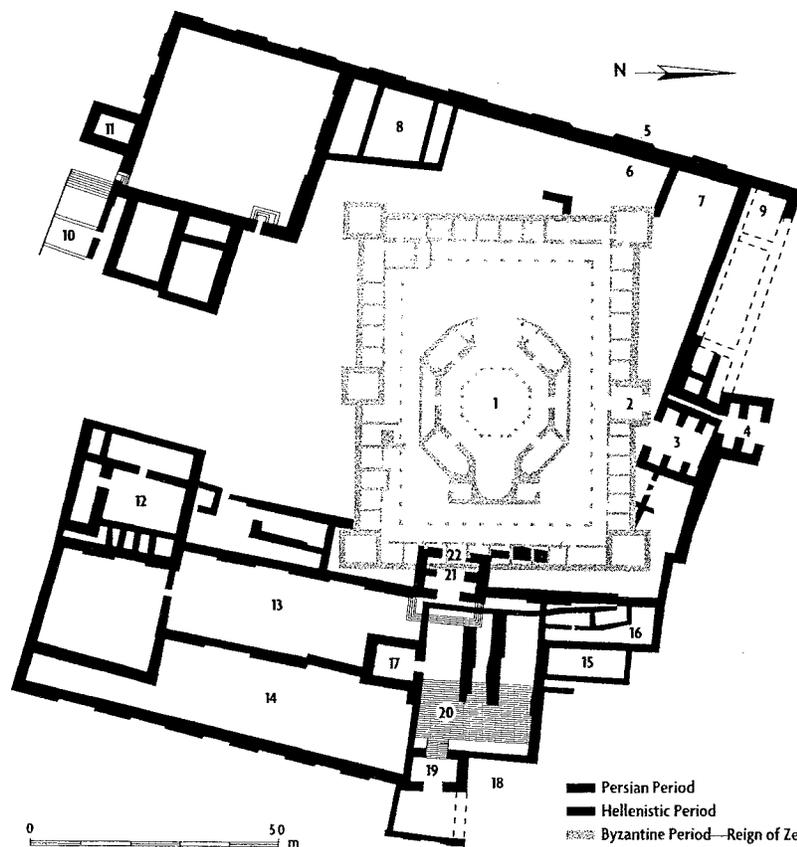
THE SACRED PRECINCT from the Persian period was a nearly square compound more than 300 feet on each side with walls over 3 feet thick. Impressive six-chamber gates (with entrance halls)—similar to those at Gezer, Hazor and Megiddo in the First Temple period—were located on the northern, eastern and southern walls of the Samaritan precinct. The assumed proximity of the temple's holy of holies to the western wall explains the absence of a gate on that side of the complex.

Hypothetical reconstruction of the Persian period sacred precinct.



ALBATROSS PHOTOGRAPHY LTD., ISRAEL

A MORE COMPLEX COMPLEX. As construction continued in later periods, some of the earlier phases of the sacred precinct were demolished—especially in the central temple area. The Samaritan holy site reached its peak in the Hellenistic period (shown in dark blue below), doubling in size and adding new gates, gatehouses, buildings and monumental staircases on the eastern (pictured at left) and southwestern sides. The construction of the octagonal Church of Mary Theotokos in the Byzantine period (shown in pale green below) effectively destroyed all remains of the Samaritan temple that once stood on the site.



AFTER FELIX PORTINOV/COURTESY THE STAFF OFFICER OF ARCHAEOLOGY

- 1 Church of Mary Theotokos and fortress
- 2 Gate of the fortified church enclosure
- 3–4 Northern gates of the sacred precinct
- 5–6 Walls of the sacred precinct
- 7–8 Courtyards in the corners of the sacred precinct
- 9 Northwestern tower of the sacred precinct
- 10 Western gate of the Hellenistic sacred precinct
- 11 Tower protecting the western gate
- 12 Southeastern citadel
- 13–16 Courtyards for accommodating pilgrims
- 17 Tower protecting the ascent to the sacred precinct
- 18 Paved street leading to the lower eastern gate
- 19 Hellenistic lower eastern gate of the sacred precinct
- 20 Monumental staircase leading to the eastern gate
- 21 Eastern gate of the sacred precinct
- 22 Remains of an altar, apparently Persian period

5A. The Area of Mt. Gerizim and Mt. Ebal:

1b. The valley between the mountains:

While Van Dyke discusses the amazing view from Mt. Ebal, the vista from Mt. Gerizim is equally impressive:

About a mile from Jacob's Well, the city of Nablus lies in the hollow between Mount Gerizim on the south and Mount Ebal on the north. The side of Gerizim is precipitous and jagged; Ebal rises more smoothly, but very steeply, and covered with plantations of thornless cactus, (*Opuntia cochinillifera*), cultivated for the sake of the cochineal insects which live upon the plant and from which a red dye is made.

The valley is well-watered, and is about a quarter of a mile wide. A little east of the city there are two natural bays or amphitheatres opposite to each other in the mountains. Here the tribes of Israel may have been gathered while the priests chanted the curses of the law from Ebal and the blessings from Gerizim. (Joshua viii:30-35.) The cliffs were sounding-boards and sent the loud voices of blessing and cursing out over the multitude so that all could hear.

It seems as if it were mainly the echo of the cursing of Ebal that greets us as we ride around the fierce little Mohammedan city of Nablus on Friday afternoon, passing through the open and dilapidated cemeteries where the veiled women are walking and gossiping away their holiday. The looks of the inhabitants are surly and hostile. The children shout mocking ditties at us, reviling the "Nazarenes." We will not ask our dragoman to translate the words that we catch now and then; it is easy to guess that they are not "fit to print."

Our camp is close beside a cemetery, near the eastern gate of the town. The spectators who watch us from a distance while we dine are numerous; and no doubt they are passing unfavourable criticisms on our table manners, and on the Frankish custom of permitting one unveiled lady to travel with three husbands. The population of Nablus is about twenty-five thousand. It has a Turkish governor, a garrison, several soap factories, and a million dogs which howl all night.

At half-past six the next morning we set out on foot to climb Mount Ebal, which is three thousand feet high. The view from the rocky summit sweeps over all Palestine, from snowy Hermon to the mountains round about Jerusalem, from Carmel to Nebo, from the sapphire expanse of the Mediterranean to the violet valley of the Jordan and the garnet wall of Moab and Gilead beyond.

For us the view is veiled in mystery by the haze of the south wind. The ranges and peaks far away fade into cloudlike shadows. The depths below us seem to sink unfathomably. Nablus is buried in the gulf. On the summit of Gerizim, a Mohammedan *weli*, shining like a flake of mica, marks the plateau where the Samaritan Temple stood. (Henry Van Dyke, *Out-of-Doors in the Holy Land*, New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1948, 205-208.)

This vivid description of the area by Van Dyke permits the reader almost to visualize the beauty and uniqueness of that area of the world.

2b. The effects upon the traveler:

George Adam Smith describes his impressions from the heights of Mt. Ebal, although the same emotions would be elicited by the vistas from Mt. Gerizim:

It is on Ebal too that we feel the size of the Holy Land—Hermon and the heights of Judah both within sight, while Jordan is not twenty, nor the coast thirty miles away—and that the old wonder comes strongly upon us of the influence of so small a province on the history of the whole world. But the explanation is also within sight. Down below us, at the mouth of the glen, lies a little heap of brown stones. The road comes up to it by which the Patriarchs first entered the land, and the shadow of a telegraph post falls upon it. It is Jacob's well: Neither in this mountain nor in Jerusalem shall ye worship the Father: but rather the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth. (George Adam Smith, *The Historical Geography of the Holy Land*, Gloucester, Mass.: Peter Smith, 1972, 96-97).

A traveler's report on Samaritan distortions:

It is interesting and surprising to note with what fire and conviction the high priest still dilates upon the, to him, obvious fact that Gerizim is the only place where men ought to worship Jehovah. He points out that the ark was left there by Joshua, that all accounts of its removal are in spurious records of the Jews; that the whole story of Shiloh and Samuel and Eli are "inventions of the Evil One"; and the temple of Jerusalem, with the supposed sanctity of Mount Moriah, nothing less than a fraud, it being on Gerizim that Abraham would have offered up his son Isaac.

Even at his advanced age he is actively engaged in the disseminating what he believes to be the truth on this subject, and points you to the ruins on Mount Gerizim, above his head, of the magnificent temple built by Sanballat, the Horonite, in opposition to the temple which Nehemiah was restoring at the time in Jerusalem. There, to this day, the Paschal lamb is sacrificed as nowhere else in the whole world, and is indeed perhaps the most interesting sight of a religious nature to see in all Palestine. (Alfred T. Schofield, *Palestine Pictured*, London: Sampson Low, Marston & Co., Ltd., n.d., 70-71.)

3b. Jacob's well:

1c. The mystery of the well:

Mount Ebal and Mount Gerizim now rise before us in their naked bulk; and, as we mount toward the valley which lies between them, we stay for a while to rest at Jacob's Well.

There is a mystery about this ancient cistern on the side of the mountain. Why was it dug here, a hundred feet deep, although there are springs and streams of living water flowing down the valley, close at hand? Whence came the tradition of the Samaritans that Jacob gave them this well, although the Old Testament says nothing about it? Why did the Samaritan woman, in Jesus' time, come hither to draw water when there was a brook, not fifty yards away, which she must cross to get to the well?

Who can tell? Certainly there must have been some use and reason for such a well, else the men of long ago would never have toiled to make it. Perhaps the people of Sychar had some superstition about its water which made them prefer it. Or perhaps the stream was owned and used for other purposes, while the water of the well was free.

It makes no difference whether a solution of the problem is ever found. Its very existence adds to the touch of truth in the narrative of St. John's Gospel. Certainly this well was here in Jesus' day, close beside the road which He would be most likely to take in going from Jerusalem to Galilee. Here He sat, alone and weary, while the disciples went on to the village to buy food. And here, while He waited and thirsted, He spoke to an unknown, unfriendly, unhappy woman the words which have been a spring of living water to the weary and fevered heart of the world: "God is a spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth." (Henry Van Dyke, 203-205).

2c. The visit to the well:

George Adam Smith offers several solutions why the woman went past several water streams to obtain her water at Jacob's well:

Granted that Sychar is either Shechem, the present Nablus, or 'Askar, is it likely that a woman from either, seeking water, should have come past streams in their immediate neighborhood to the distant, deep and scanty well of Jacob? There is a fountain in 'Askar: and a stream, turning a mill, flows down the valley "a few rods" from Jacob's well. This the woman, if from 'Askar, must have crossed, while, if from Shechem, she must have passed near it and other sources of water. Jacob's well is over one hundred feet deep, and often dry.

In answer to this, it may be said that the difficulty is not why the woman should have come to the well, but why the well should be there at all. That anyone should have dug so deep a well in the neighbourhood of many streams is perplexing, unless in those far away summers the streams ran dry, and the well was dug so deep that it might catch their fainting waters below the surface. Be that as it may, the well is there, testifying past all doubt the possibility of the woman's use of it. Dug for man's use by man, how impressively among the natural streams around it explains the intensity of the woman's words: *Our father Jacob gave us the well. It was given, not found.* The signs of labour and expense stand upon it the more pathetically for the freedom of the waters that rattle down the vale; and must have had their share in increasing the fondness of that tradition which possibly was the attraction of Jacob's fanatic children to its scantier supplies.

It is impossible to say whether the well is now dry, for many feet of it are choked with stones. Robinson says there is a spring in it, Conder that it fills by infiltration. If either is correct, we can understand the double titles given to it, both of which our version renders by *well*. It is *Jacob's fountain*, Πάγη (iv. 6); but the pit ῥοφῆς ἄβυσσος deep (iv. 11); and *Jacob gave us the pit* (iv. 12). By little touches like these, and by the agreement of the rest of the topography—Mount Gerizim, and the road from Judea to Galilee—(as well as by the unbroken traditions of three religions), we feel

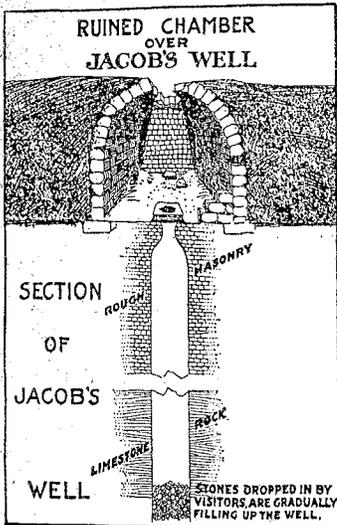
sure that this is the Jacob's well intended by the writer, and that he had seen the place.

(George Adam Smith, 244 [emphasis in the original].)

It is not certain when the well was cleaned, but the gentle reader should be assured that Jacob's Well it is functioning again and has for at least 40 years. In antiquity travelers at times reported its either being almost filled with rubble or completely dry, but this writer can attest to the fact that anyone can visit the well now and drink from its living waters—clear, cool, refreshing--reliving somewhat the scene of John 4.

Smith further quotes a medical missionary to Nablus who suggests why the woman might have by-passed several waters to draw her water from Jacob's well:

Apart from the sacred character of the Well, its waters have a great reputation for purity and flavour among the natives of El-'Askar and Nablus. . . From the nature of the soil the springs at Nablus are mostly very hard water, 'heavy' as the natives say. . . Now Jacob's Well has . . . the repute of containing cool, palatable, refreshing water, free from the deleterious qualities of their other supplies (24-246).



Ruined Chamber over Jacob's Well.
Palestine Exploration Fund.

3c. The certain identification of the well:

One is inclined to ask why Jacob dug a well when there is such a copious spring, Ai Balata, a few rods distant. But we must remember that his property here was limited, and that the Canaanites would probably object to the foreigner using their stream. After the well Jacob builds an altar to Elohim, having taken the precaution to purchase the land,—as the Church requires an edifice to be paid for before consecrating it.

Tradition, like an endless chain, has passed on from generation to generation the site of Jacob's well, and here at the beginning of the twentieth century after Christ we stand in the presence of the twentieth century before Him. Yes the world is old; but how it comes back to the old mother-breasts of Nazareth and Bethlehem, of Shechem and Shiloh, and how wrinkled we find them and how milkless! Look! There is not one drop of water in the well of Jacob and of the Samaritan woman. **No spot in all the Holy Land is better authenticated. Nowhere can we surer say, "Here the feet of the Man-God have trodden and rested"** (Rev. J. T. Durward, *Holy Land and Holy Writ*, Baraboo, Wisconsin: The Pilgrim Publishing Company, 1913, 102, emphasis added).

4c. The significance of the well:

Here our Savior sat, weary from traveling, hungry and thirsty for the salvation of souls. . . Here he delivered that marvelous discourse with the Samaritan woman, which no thoughtful traveler will omit to read and to

ponder on the spot. The patriarchal memories are absorbed in the memories of Him who is greater than "our father Jacob," and who is himself and alone the never-failing fountain of life eternal. There is no reasonable doubt as to the identity of the well. Jews, Samaritans, Mohammedans, and Christians are here agreed. The tradition is supported by the landscape, which is a living illustration of the narrative of John. The well is a natural resting-place on the highroad from Jerusalem to Galilee, over which Christ traveled, in the grain-field which Jacob bought, and which was then, as now, whitening to the harvest, near Joseph's tomb and the town of Shechem, and in full view of Mount Gerizim, to which the woman pointed as the true place of worship, as the Samaritans of the present day still do. The well is sunk in the living rock, 75 feet deep, but covered with rubbish and surrounded by the ruins of a Christian church, which is mentioned by Jerome, and was destroyed during the Crusades. The Palestine Exploration Fund has recently been furnished with money to restore the Well and to make it comfortably accessible alike to Protestants, Greeks, and Roman Catholics. (Schaff, 312-313.)

The Saviour of the world, came to redeem a fallen race, stops long enough in his great mission to preach to an audience of *one!* Think of it, ye great and mighty "canons" who must have cathedrals and great audiences and fine music. And how natural. "Give me to drink." Here was the well, and the woman then, as now, had come to draw water. We came upon such a scene at Bethany, where three young women vied with each other in offering their water-pots. But this woman in her astonishment (perceiving he was a Jew) desires a reason for such an unusual request. A bigoted Jew would have gone all the way to Shechem thirsty before he would ask a favor of a Samaritan. Not so with Jesus. Water from the hands of a Samaritan is just as acceptable to the Lord as Jew. An then commences that delicate, yet wonderful unfolding of her life until at length she sees in the wayside traveler the promised Messiah, and asks for that living water which springeth up unto life everlasting: (John Lemley, *The Land of Sacred Story*, Albany, New York: 1891, 208).

Give me to drink, O thou prophet!
That my soul thirst not again;
Wearied and faint and often
I have drawn of this well in vain.

I am weary of sin and labor,
And I long to be forgiven;
From this mountain of Samaria
Riseth my prayer to heaven.

I know when Messiah cometh
His blessing will be free,
But how speakest thou, O, prophet!
Ye deal not with such as we?

Then, Jesus in spirit feasting,
Forgetting all earthly need,
Gave of the heavenly manna,
The fainting woman to feed.

Gave of the living water
From the well of eternal life,
To the weary, wayside wanderer
From the mart of sin and strife.

What though his disciples marvel,
And murmur against his ways;
He came to comfort the mourner,
The fallen one to raise.

He ever waiteth at Sychar
For the weary who draw near;
'Tis the feast and joy of his spirit,
The prayer of the lost to hear.

(Cited by John Lemley,
The Land of Sacred Story, 208-209).



tain that which
thou dost prom-
ise, make us to
love that which
thou dost com-
mand; through
Jesus Christ our
Lord. AMEN.



Christ and the Woman at the Well: John 4:1-42

1A. The Return to Galilee: 1-3

- 1b. The apprehension of the Pharisees:
- 2b. The activity of John the Baptist:
- 3b. The ascendancy of the disciples of Christ:

2A. The Route Through Samaria: 4

- 1b. The possibility of routes to Galilee:
 - 1c. The route Trans-Jordan:
 - 2c. The route Cis-Jordan:
- 2b. The purpose of the rest in Samaria:
 - 1c. The declaration of His Messiahship: 4:26
 - 2c. The refutation of the Samaritan error: 22
 - 3c. The regeneration of the woman and citizens: 39
 - 4c. The description of true worship: 23-24
- 3b. The place of the action in Samaria: 4-5
 - 1c. Outside the city of Sychar:
 - 2c. Near the property of Joseph:
 - 3c. By the well of Jacob:
 - 1d. The condition of the well:
 - 1e. Its antiquity:
 - 2e. Its appearance:
 - 3e. Its access:
 - 2d. The centrality of the well:
 - 3d. The circumstances at the well:

- 1e. A stressed Savior:
- 2e. A scorching sun:
- 3e. A searching sinner:

3A. The Request of the Savior: 7

- 1b. The approach of the damsel:
- 2b. The absence of the disciples:

4A. The Reasoning With the Woman: 9-26

- 1b. The woman's first question: 9
Why does a Jew ask a Samaritan for water?
- 2b. The Savior's answer: 10
Because who I am, I can give you even better water.
- 3b. The woman's second and third questions: 11-12
 - 1c. How can you get better water from this deep well?
 - 2c. In what way are you greater than our Patriarch Jacob?
- 4b. The Savior's answers: 13-14
I dispense water that has internal and eternal effects.
- 5b. The woman's response: 15
Please give me this miraculous water.
- 6b. The Savior's response: 16
Summon your spouse.
- 7b. The woman's response: 17a
I have no husband.
- 8b. The Savior's answer: 17b-18
You have been married five times and now live in sin.
- 9b. The woman's response:
 - 1c. I see you are a prophet.
 - 2c. Since you know theology: We Samaritans worship on Mt. Gerizim.
You Jews worship in Jerusalem. Who is right?
- 10b. Christ's response: 21-24

- 1c. The time will come when worship will no longer be limited to two mountains: 21
- 2c. The Samaritans are wrong in their worship: 22a
- 3c. The Jews are right: 22b
- 4c. **Salvation comes from the Jews:** 22c
- 5c. Worship is in spirit and in truth: 23
- 6c. True worship is rare.
- 7c. Worship must be according to God's standard and truth: 24
- 11b. The woman's response:

Ultimate truth and salvation will come from the Messiah (The Samaritans knew of a coming Messiah from Deuteronomy 18 and related passages.)
- 12b. The response of Jesus: 25
I am the Messiah.



Jesus am Jakobsbrunnen. (Joh. 4.)

5A. The Return of the Disciples: 27

- 1b. Their surprise:
- 2b. Their silence:

6A. The Response of the Woman: 28-29

- 1b. She departed in haste: 28
 - she left her water pot
 - as someone well observed:
 - “She left behind the water pot and went away with the well.”
- 2b. She declared Christ: 29
 - 1c. Christ’s perceptiveness;
 - 2c. Christ’s person:

7A. Reasoning With the Disciples: 31-38

- 1b. The disciples’ request: 31
- 2b. The Savior’s response: 32
- 3b. The disciples’ ignorance: 33
- 4b. The Savior’s instruction: 34-38
 - 1c. The importance of His ministry: 34
 - 2c. The immediacy of His mission: 35-38
 - 1d. His discerning of the spiritual need:
 - 2d. His dissemination of the spiritual seed:
 - 3d. The reaping of souls:
 - 4d. The reaping of rewards:
 - 5d. The rejoicing of the sower and reaper:

8A. The Revival Among the Samaritans: 39-42

1b. The salvation of the sinners of Sychar: 39

1c. The Samaritans' salvation:

2c. The woman's witness:

2b. The searching out of the Savior: 40-42

1c. An urgent invitation: 40

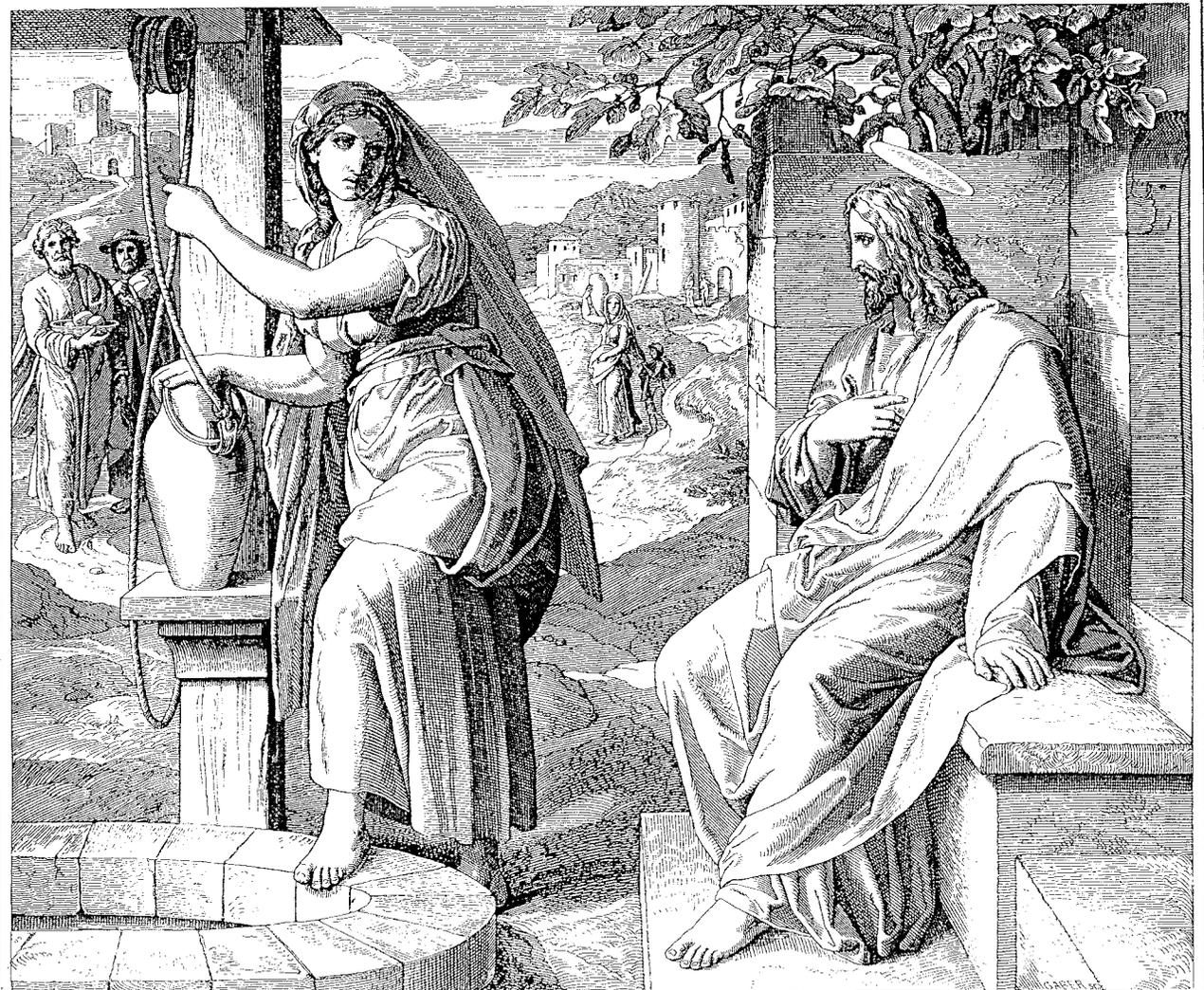
2c. An unscheduled interruption: 40

3c. An unusual revival: 41

4c. An unavoidable conclusion: 42

1d. A response to Christ's delightful words:

2d. A recognition of Christ's divine nature:





Nicodemus Comes to Jesus by Night.

Christ's Concern For Conversions



Jesus and the Woman of Samaria. Gopping.

<i>Nicodemus: John 3:1-21</i>		<i>The Woman of Samaria: John 4:1-42</i>
	The Person	
	The Location	
	The Amount of Verses	
	The Time of Day	
	The Religion	
	The Relationship to the Old Testament	
	The Place of Worship	
	The Number of Exchanges	
	The Confrontational Statements	
	The Prerequisite for Salvation	
	The Testimony	
	The Reference to an Old Testament Person	
3:13	The Divine Attribute	4:18, 39



Nicodemus Comes to Jesus by Night.

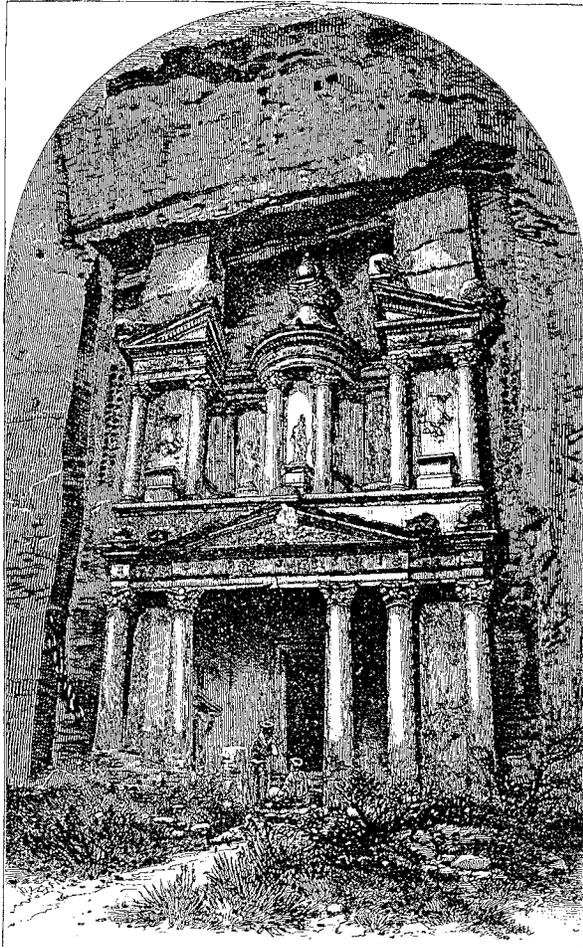
Christ's Concern For Conversions



Jesus and the Woman of Samaria. Cupping.

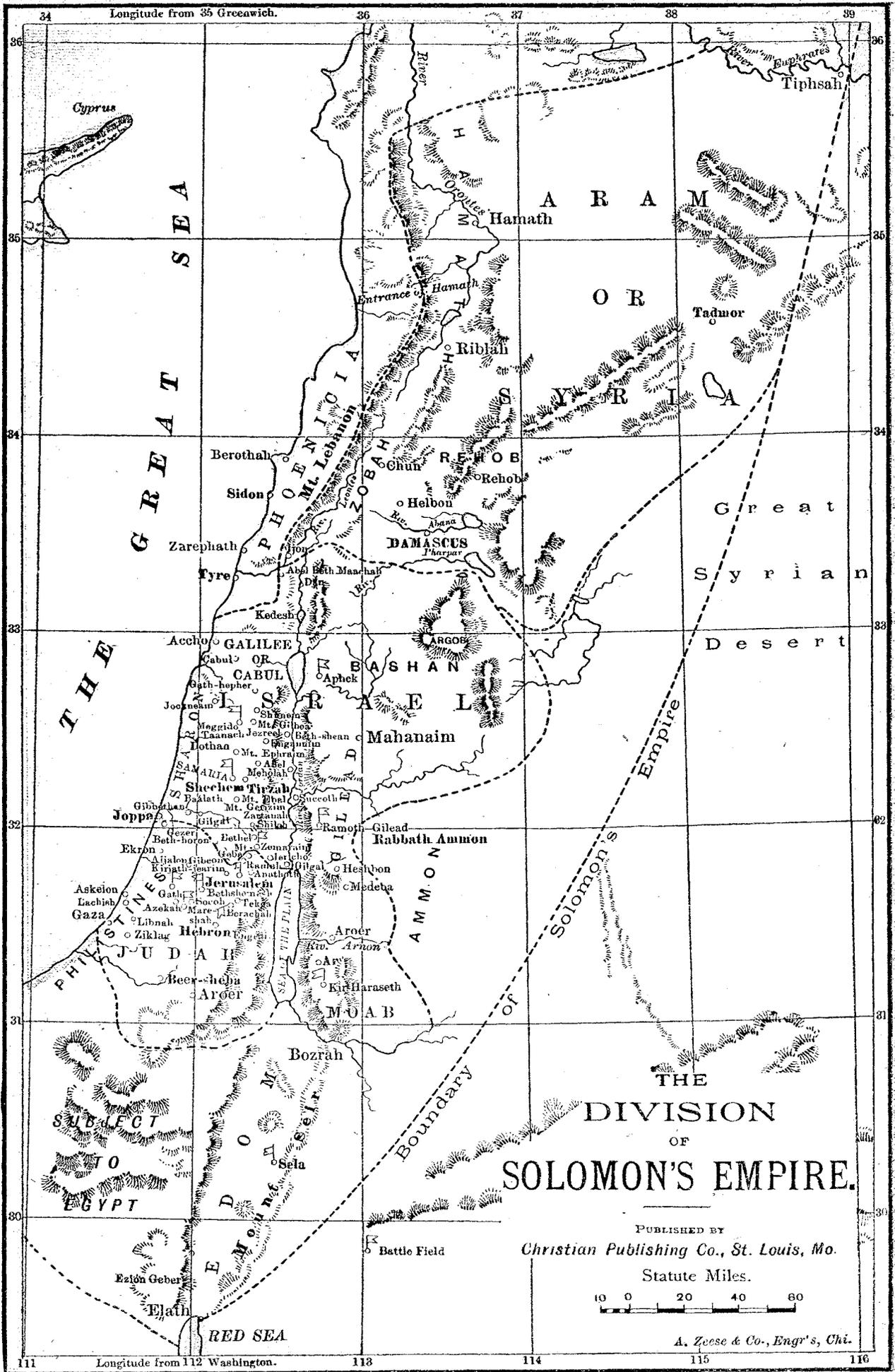
<i>Nicodemus: John 3:1-21</i>	<i>Christ's Concern for Conversions</i>	<i>The Woman of Samaria: John 4:1-42</i>
Spiritual Sage	The Person	Wayward Woman
Jerusalem in Judea	The Location	Sychar in Samaria
21	The Amount of Verses	42
Night	The Time of Day	Noon
Strict Judaism	The Religion	Samaritanism
The entire Old Testament	The Relationship to the Old Testament	The five Books of Moses
Temple in Jerusalem	The Place of Worship	Temple Ruins on Mt. Gerizim
Three	The Number of Exchanges	Sixteen
"Are you the teacher of Israel and do not know these things?" 3:10	The Confrontational Statements	"You worship what you do not know..." 4:22
Believe in God's Son	The Prerequisite for Salvation	Drink of the Water of Life freely given
Hidden at first	The Testimony	Immediately public
Moses 3:14	The Reference to an Old Testament Person	Jacob 4:12
Omnipresence 3:13	The Divine Attribute	Omniscience 4:18, 39

Mt. Seir – Security Despite the Schemes of Satan and the Son of Perdition



PETRA: REFUGE IN THE ROCKS





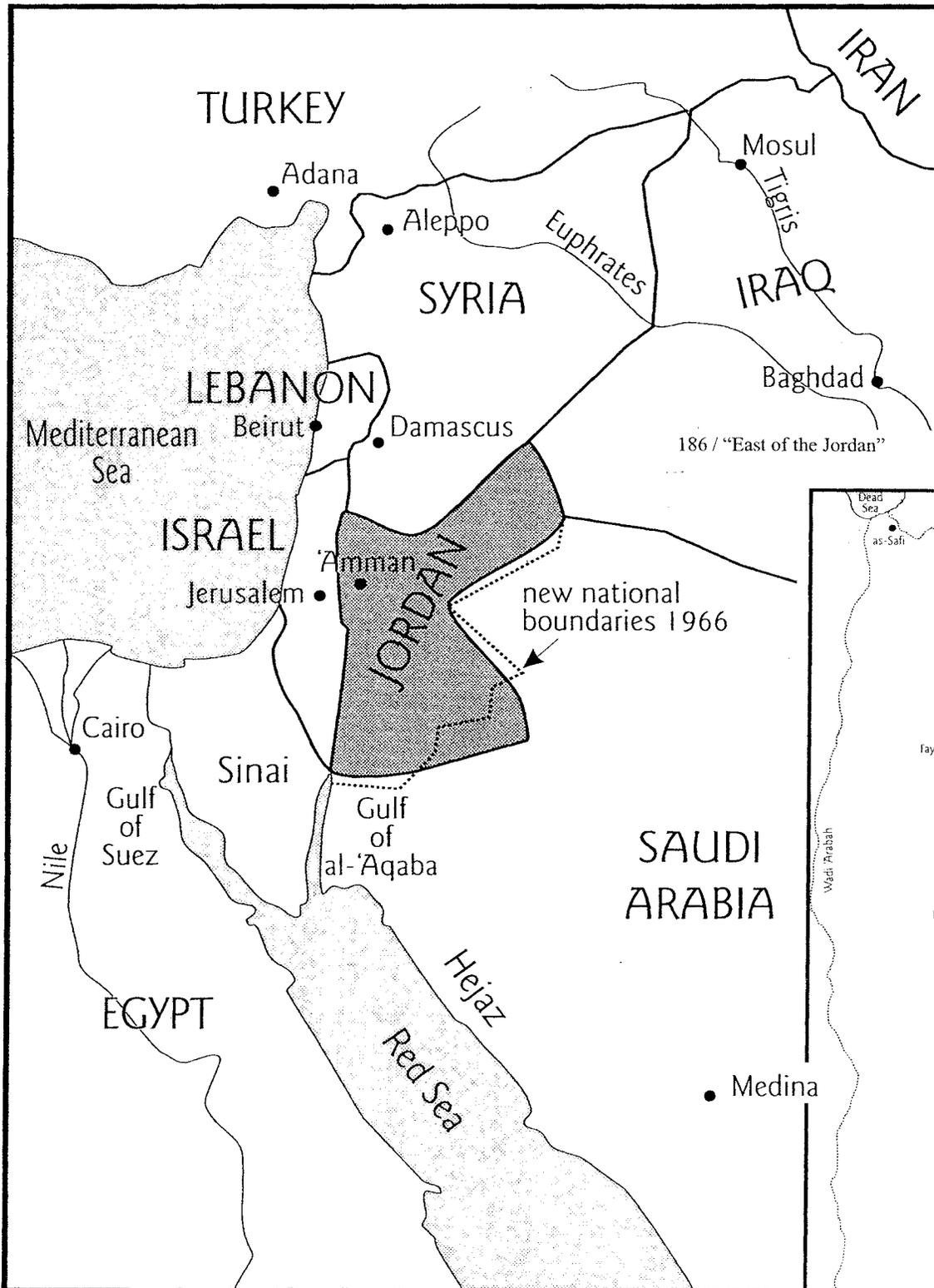


Fig. 1. Situation Map of Jordan.

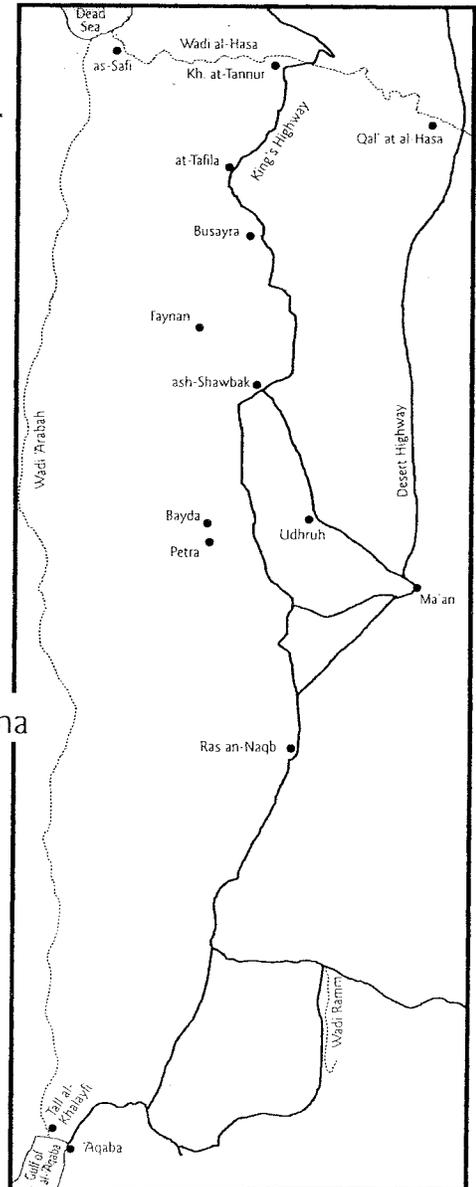


Fig. 12. Edomite Territory and Sites.

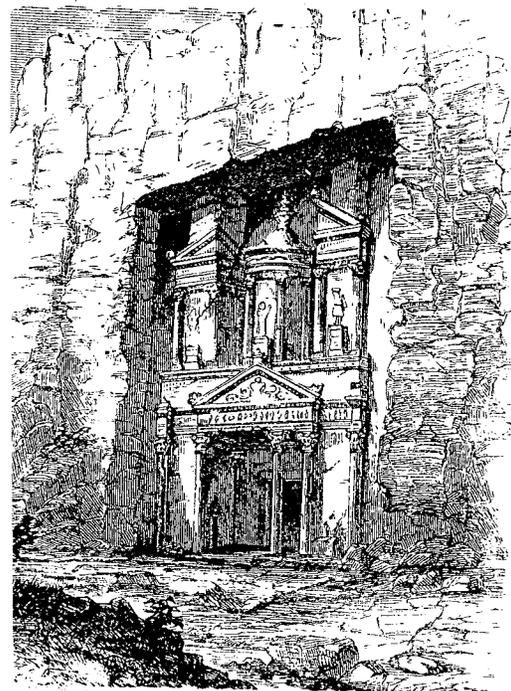
Mt. Seir – Security Despite the Schemes of Satan and the Son of Perdition

1A. Seir:

Mt. Seir is concisely described in *Smith's Bible Dictionary*:

Seir, (*hairy, shaggy*). We have both "land of Seir," Gen. 32:3; 36:30, and "Mount Seir." Gen. 14:6. It is the original name of the mountain range extending along the east side of the valley of Arabah, from the Dead Sea to the Elanitic Gulf. The Horites appear to have been the chief of the aboriginal inhabitants, Gen. 36:20; but it was ever afterward the possession of the Edomites, the descendants of Esau. The Mount Seir of the Bible extended much farther south than the modern province, as is shown by the words of Deut. 2:1-8. It had the Arabah on the west, vs. 1 and 8; it extended as far south as the head of the Gulf of Akabah, ver. 8; its eastern border ran along the base of the mountain range where the plateau of Arabia begins. Its northern border is not so accurately determined.

(William Smith, *A Dictionary of the Bible*, Philadelphia: The John C. Winston Co., 1884, 302.)

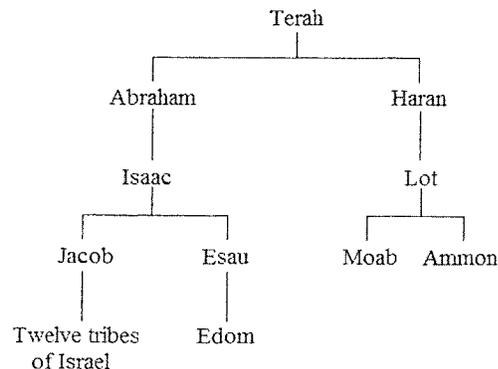
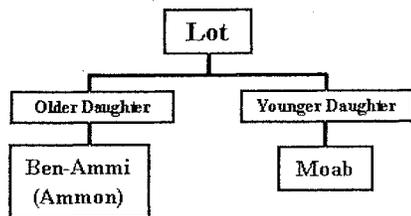


2A. Sela or Selah:

Before a more detailed description of Petra is given, it may be helpful to cite a brief overview of that amazing city from the *Westminster Bible Dictionary*:

Sela or Selah, [The rock]. The first form of this word occurs in Isa. 16:1; the second form in 2 Kings 14:7. In three passages (Judg. 1:36; 2 Chron. 25:12; Obad. ver. 3) the proper name is rendered in our Authorized Version "the rock." It designates, beyond a question, that ancient rock-city, the capital of Idumaea, which in later times was known as Petra. It was in the midst of the mountain-region denominated Seir, in the neighborhood of Mount Hor, about two days' journey north of the head of the Elanitic Gulf. It lay in a deep valley a mile in length and a half mile in width. The valley is defined by precipitous rocks, which rise to heights varying from two hundred to one thousand feet. In the face of these rocks dwellings for the living and tombs for the dead were excavated with vast labor. As the city lay in the great route of the Western caravan-traffic of Arabia, and of the merchandise brought up to the Elanitic Gulf, it was at one time not only the strong capital of Idumaea, but also the busy metropolis of a commercial people. In the end of the fourth century B.C. Petra appears as the head-quarters of the Nabathaeans. About 70 B.C. it was the residence of the Arab princes named Aretas. It was brought into subjection to the Roman empire by Trajan. It is now and has been for ages unpeopled, the country around it being occupied by bands of roving Bedouin.

(Thomas J. Shepherd, *The Westminster Bible Dictionary*, Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1850, 462.)



3A. Petra:

1b. The description of Petra in Encyclopedia Britannica:

Petra: ancient city, centre of an Arab kingdom in Hellenistic and Roman times, its ruins are in southwest Jordan. The city was built on a terrace, pierced from east to west by the Wadi Musa (the Valley of Moses)—one of the places where according to tradition, the Israelite leader Moses struck a rock and water gushed forth. The valley is enclosed by sandstone cliffs veined with shades of red and purple varying to pale yellow, and for this reason Petra was called by the 19th-century English biblical scholar John William Burgon a "rose-red city half as old as Time."

The Greek name Petra ("Rock") probably replaced the biblical name Sela. Remains from the Paleolithic and the Neolithic periods have been discovered at Petra, and Edomites are known to have occupied the area about 1200 B.C. Centuries the Nabataeans, an Arab tribe, occupied it and made it the capital of their kingdom. In 312 B.C. the region was attacked by Seleucid forces, who failed to seize the city. Under Nabataean rule, Petra prospered as a centre of the spices trade that involved such disparate realms as China, Egypt, Greece, and India, and the city's population swelled to between 10,000 and 30,000.

When the Nabataeans were defeated by the Romans in A.D. 106, Petra became the Roman province of Arabia but continued to flourish until changing trade routes caused its gradual commercial decline. After an earthquake (not the first) damaged the city in 551, significant habitation seems to have ceased. The Islamic invasion occurred in the 7th century, and a Crusader outpost is evidence of activity there in the 12th century. After the Crusades, the city was unknown to the Western world until it was rediscovered by the Swiss traveler Johann Ludwig Burckhardt in 1812.

(cited by <http://wonderingminstrels.blogspot.com/2000/07/petra-john-williamburgon>)

2b. The discoverer of Petra, Johann Ludwig Burckhardt:

The Swiss explorer who rediscovered Petra in 1812, Burckhardt was a classic nineteenth-century adventurer, the kind of man who would spend years polishing his disguise as an Arab so he could pass unnoticed through the Middle East, a land not always hospitable to curious Europeans. Under contract to the African Association, a private group of wealthy men in Britain who sponsored exploration, Burckhardt planned to cross the Sahara and seek the source of the River Niger. He first perfected his traveling persona as an Arab trader named Sheikh Ibrahim Ibn Abd Allah, the set off from Damascus toward Cairo. On the way he decided to take a look inside the Wadi Mousa (the Valley of Moses) in hilly region north of the Red Sea, rumored to contain the ancient ruins of a lost city. Burckhardt told his reluctant guide that he had promised to sacrifice a goat at the tomb of the prophet Aaron, which lay on a mountaintop inside the valley. Although his guide grew increasingly suspicious of his charge's interest in the archeological wonders, Burckhardt's ruse allowed him to become the first European to see Petra in a millennium.

(<http://wonderingminstrels.blogspot.com/2000/07/petra-john-williamburgon>)

Another account, equally interesting, is found at the Atlas Tours website:



Petra the “rose-red city” of the ancient Nabataean civilization is situated in the south of Jordan. It lies to the east of Wadi Araba, a part of the Great Rift Valley, approximately 133 kilometers as the crow flies from the shores of the Gulf of Aqaba.



Hidden away amidst the fold of spectacular hills, this unique site was lost to Europeans until it was rediscovered in 1812 by the Swiss explorer Johann Ludwig Burckhardt. After spending several years learning Arabic and studying the tenets of Islam, Burckhardt, who passed himself off as a Muslim from India, set out on his journey under the auspices of the London-based “Association for Promoting the Discovery of the Interior parts of Africa.”

En route to Cairo, through the area of what is now Jordan, his fluent Arabic enabled him to understand stories of a wondrous ancient city hidden away amongst impenetrable mountains. However, he needed a plausible excuse to gain access to the city without arousing any suspicion as to his real intentions. By claiming he wished to make a sacrifice at the tomb of the Prophet Aaron (pbuh), which was nearby, he gained entry to the forgotten city of Petra.

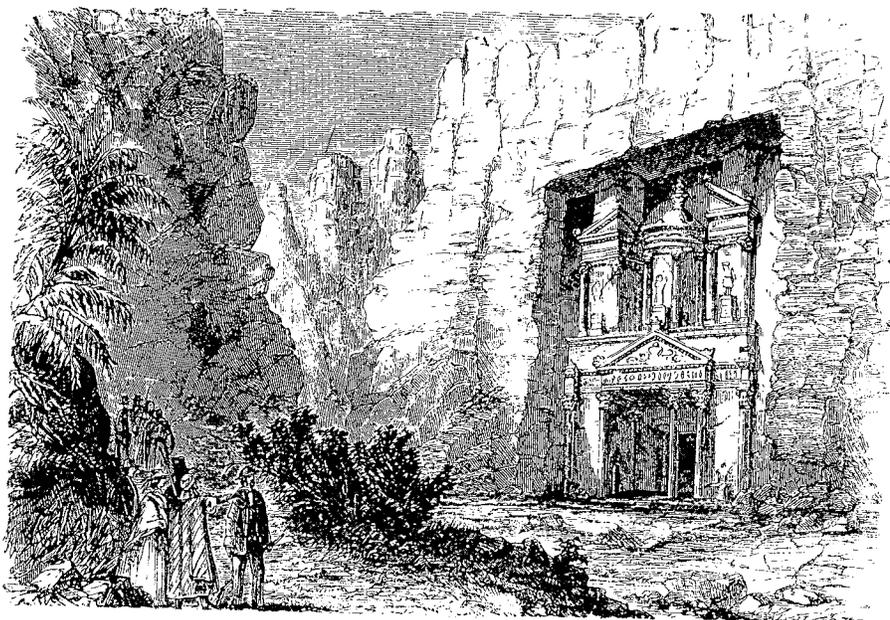
One can imagine the impression the ruins made upon him, for he was fully able to appreciate the importance of his discovery and correctly identify the city as ancient Petra. In spite of the fact that he was obliged to conceal his interest and excitement from his guides, Burckhardt recorded what he had seen, and his account, published in 1822 was to excite great interest in Europe and inspire a long line of travelers to visit the site.

Today, the dangers of such an expedition have disappeared and the visitor is able to explore the city in comfort. One can share the excitement Burckhardt would have felt on his first visit in 1812 as one enters the narrow gorge of Al-Siq—the secret entrance to Petra. After winding down this great natural cleft for over a kilometer, the sudden impact of the view of the Treasury is as strong every time.

This unique site never fails to enchant visitors; the setting of the monumental Nabataean remains against a background of rugged mountains scenery is spectacular and its colors, equally thrilling.

Petra, once described by a poet as a “rose-red city” is in fact dusky pink, broken at times by swirls of yellow, mauve, gray and white. No two colors remain the same, for the colors constantly change according to the time of day and the quality of the light. The rock is further set off by the bright green and pink of oleanders or the orange of cactus flowers. (http://www.atlastours.net/jordan/petra_discovery.html.)

Johann Ludwig Burckhardt



The Khuzneh at Petra.



3b. Sonnet about Petra:

John Burgon

John William Burgon (21 August 1813 – 4 August 1888) was an English Anglican divine who became the Dean of Chichester Cathedral in 1876. He is remembered for his passionate defence of the historicity and Mosaic authorship of Genesis and of Biblical inerrancy in general.



John William
Burgon

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

(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Burgon)

The entire poem, scarcely remembered anymore, is reproduced at the end of this monograph. The poem deals with the area's fateful biblical and secular history, its place in biblical prophecy, and its unrivalled beauty among cities of antiquity. May the gentle reader find time to appreciate this magnificent poem.

4b. A traveler's account of Petra:

Three days hard traveling from Akabah through Wady Arabah, twice traversed by the Israelites during the exodus, brings us to Petra, the long-lost capital of Arabia Petraea, or ancient Edom, the Idumea of the Greeks—very remarkable ruins, nothing like them anywhere. Petra was at first inhabited the Horites, or "Dwellers in Caves," and it would appear that the inhabitants have always lived in caves; that after the conquest of the place by the Greeks and Romans, the natural rock dwellings of the aborigines were only enlarged and beautified, so that Petra has always been what its name imports, "A city in the clefts of the rocks," almost every house in it being hewn out of the solid rock—a variegated sandstone in which the crimson, orange, blue, and other natural tints blend so

richly as to give to the palaces, temples, theaters, and tombs, the appearance of being beautifully frescoed.

This city is mentioned by Pliny, Strabo, Josephus, and others; but about the sixth century of our era it disappeared from history, and for twelve hundred years its very site was unknown, and only within the present century recovered by Burckhardt. It is situated in a wild, rugged region, almost inaccessible, with many deep ravines, the rocks appearing to have been rent asunder by earthquakes, and standing two or three hundred feet high, almost perpendicular, and in places not more than ten or twenty feet apart, so that the city was surrounded with natural walls, strong gates closing the narrow defiles through which access only could be had.

In entering the city by the chasm of the Sik, which is over a mile long, you first pass many beautiful tombs with niches cut in the face of the cliff for statues and inscribed tablets, then under a picturesque arch spanning the ravine, supported by two Corinthian columns, called the Gate-way; when suddenly El Kuzneh, the Treasury, rises like a vision before you. The entire edifice, which is one hundred feet front by one hundred and fifty high, (except two columns of the portico, one of which has fallen,) is cut out of the rose-tinted rock, looking more like an apparition than any thing real.

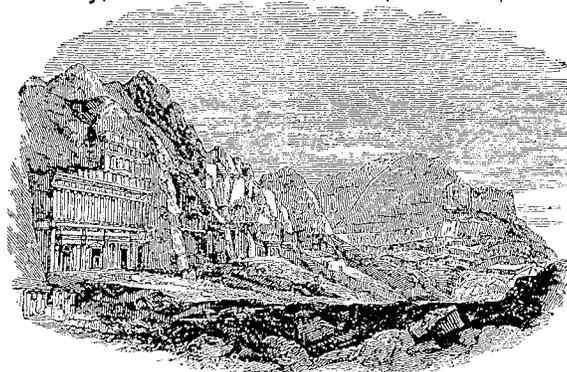
This is the gem of Petra's monuments, and yet nothing is known of its history or object. It is called the Treasury, from a legend that it was built by a certain king as a depository for his valuables, and the Arabs believe that the inaccessible urn high up on its pediment still contains much gold and many rare jewels.

There are other edifices in Petra much larger than the Treasury. The amphitheater has an arena one hundred and twenty feet in diameter, with thirty-three tiers of seats and many private boxes, capable of seating an audience of three thousand or more, all cut out of the living rock. Another monument, known as Ed Deir, the Convent, measuring one hundred and fifty feet front and two hundred and forty feet high, its façade ornamented with two rows of eight Corinthian columns one above the other, the lower tier of columns fifty feet high and seven feet in diameter, is a vast monolith—the entire edifice being hewn out of one massive block of stone. But no description of ours can do justice to these unique remains of a past civilization. They must be seen to be appreciated.

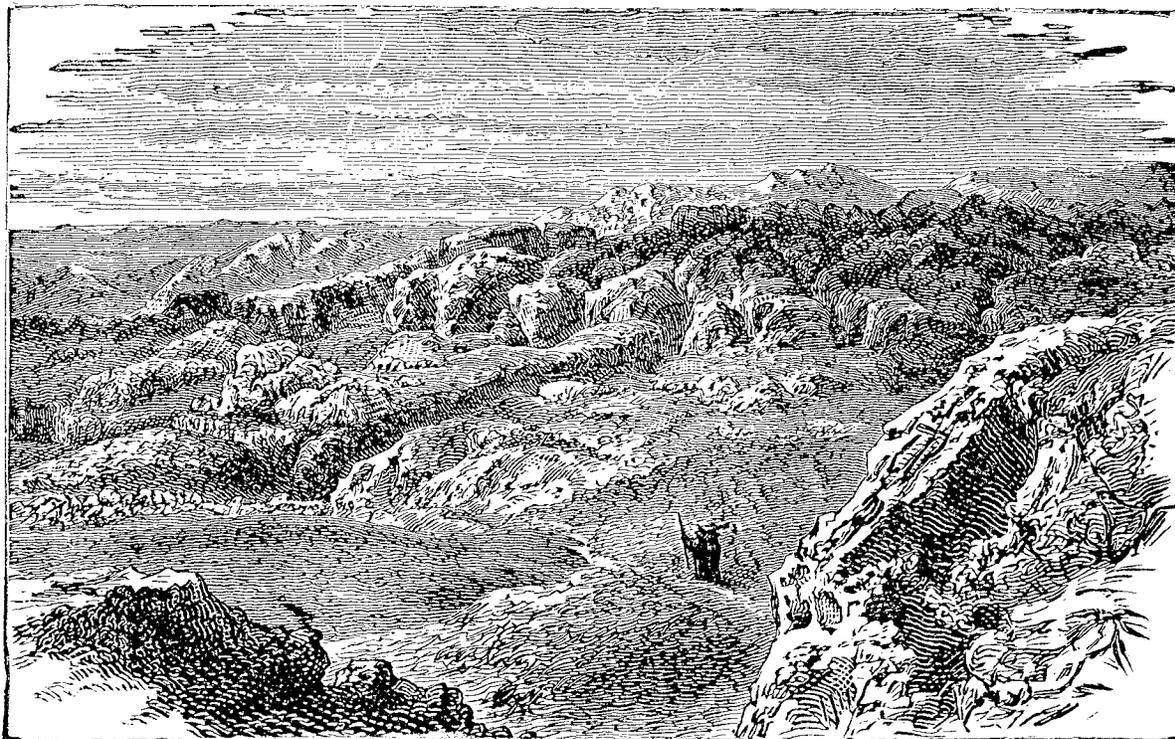
In the present desolate condition of Petra we see how literally the judgments of God denounced against it have been executed. "O thou that dwellest in the clefts of the rocks, that holdest the height of the hill, though thou shouldst make thy nest as high as the eagle, I will bring thee down from thence, saith the Lord. Edom shall be a desolation; every one that goeth by it shall be astonished; . . . no man shall abide there, neither shall a son of man dwell in it." Its ancient inhabitants have all been cut off, and so far as known, not an Edomite to-day is to be found in all the world.

Near this Aaron died, and in a rock-hewn tomb covered with a welly, on the highest summit of Mount Hor, the brother of the great lawgiver sleeps his last long sleep.

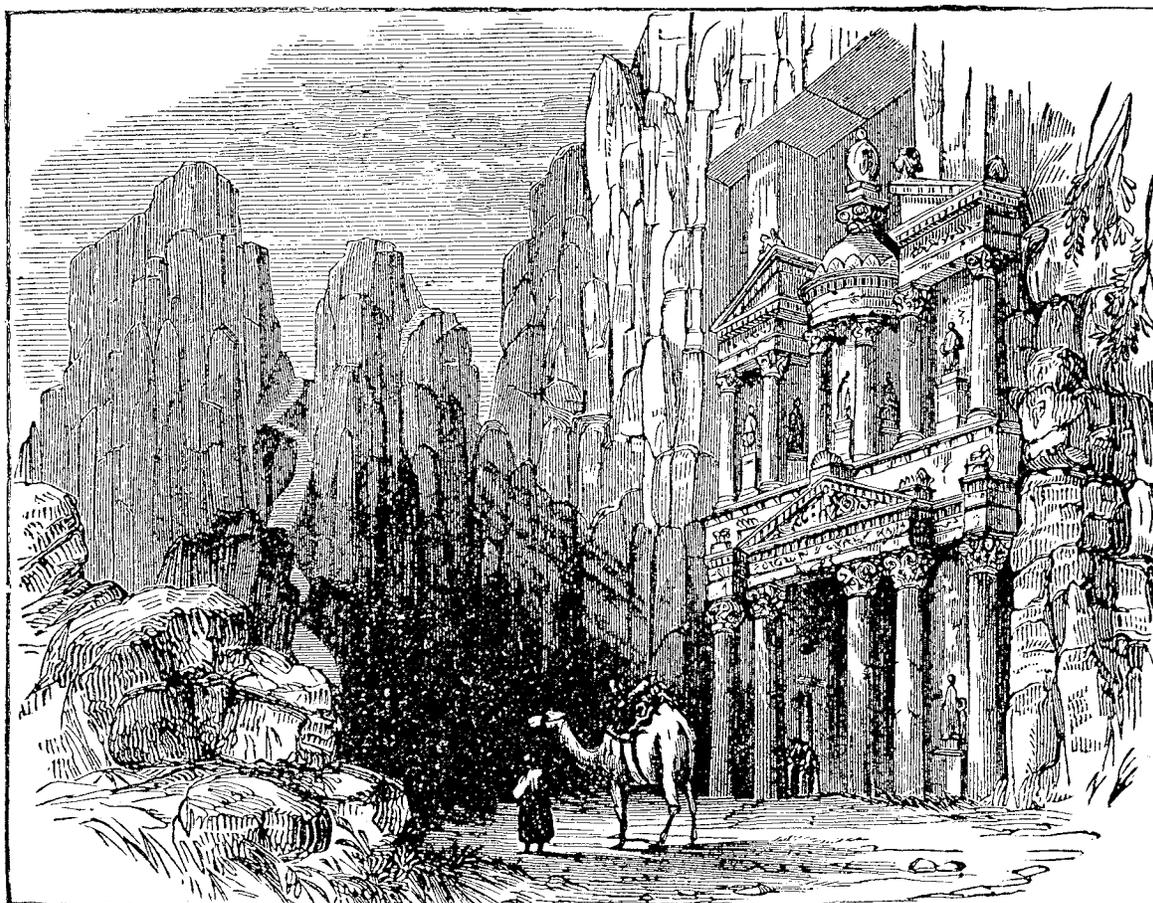
(Frank S. DeHass, *Buried Cities Recovered, or Explorations in Bible Lands*, Philadelphia: Bradley, Garretson & Co., 1883, 101-102, 105-106.)



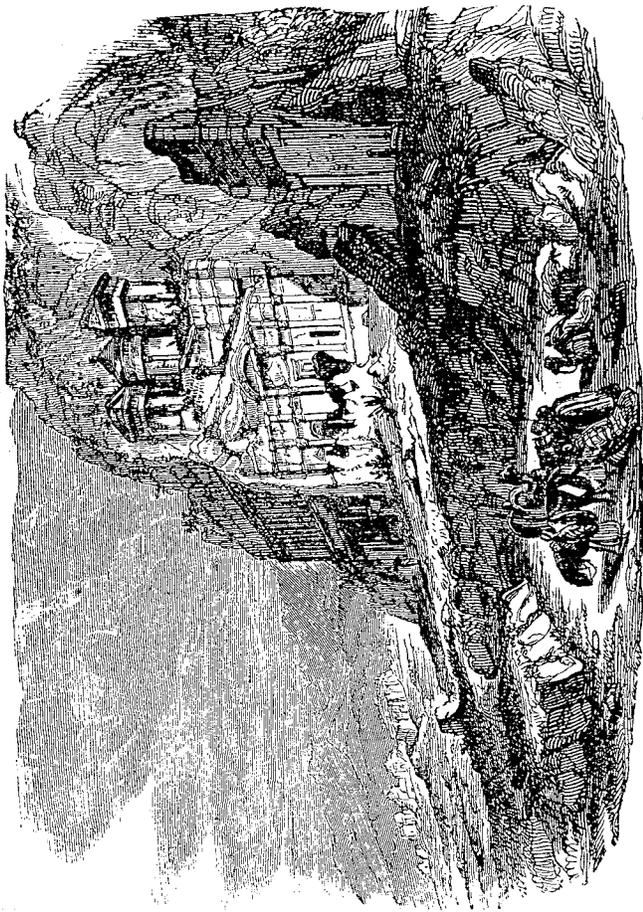
PETRA—LOOKING TOWARD THE THEATER.



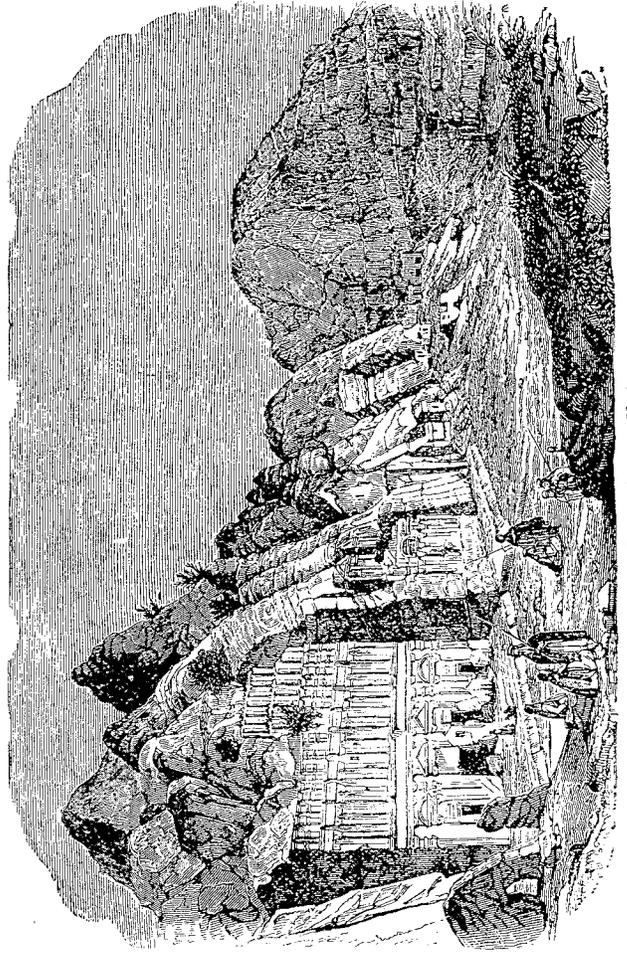
Approach to Edom. (*From an original Photograph.*)



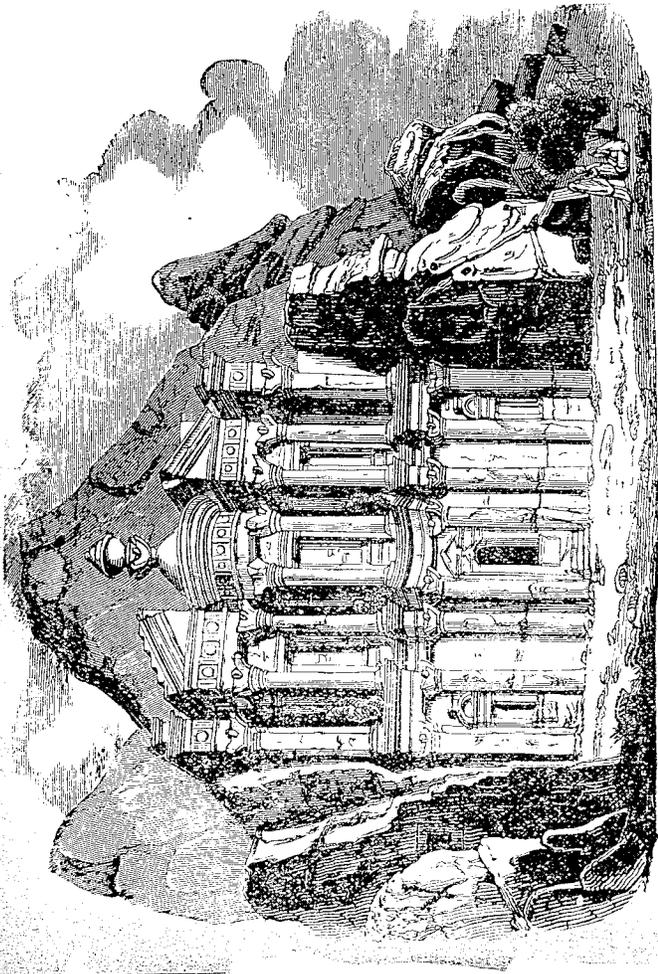
Tombs at Petra in Edom. (*From an original Photograph.*)



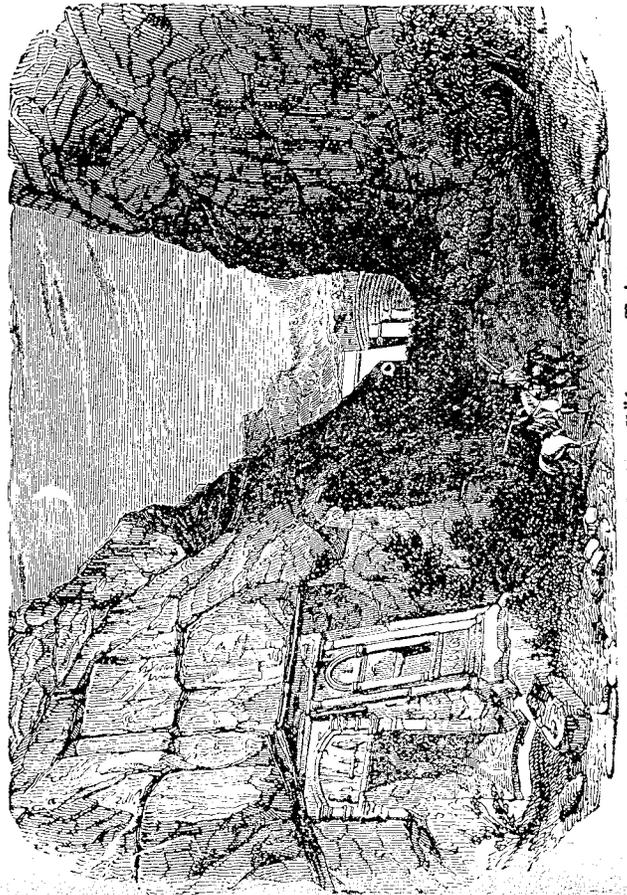
Aussicht eines Theiles der Ruinen von Petra.



Aussicht von Petra.



Grufte zu Petra.



Felsenkammer in der Nähe von Petra.

4A. The Geography of the Area:

Nearly four thousand years ago an old, blind Hebrew bestowed his patriarchal blessing upon his two sons. To one of them he gave the promise of the family headship, implying peculiar privileges; to the other he said (Gen. xxvii. 39): "Behold, thy dwelling shall be of the fatness of the earth and of the dew of heaven from above." That patriarch was Isaac, and it was to Esau that the promise of the "fatness of the earth" was made. Was that promise, which evidently concerned the heritage of himself and his posterity, ever fulfilled?

Idumea, or ancient Edom, was the region which that posterity occupied for many centuries. It lies to the south of Palestine and the Dead Sea. Yet the traveler, as he approaches it, seems to see before him a wild tract of country, bristling with rugged hills and craggy mountains. The old name of the region—Mount Seir—recurs to his memory, while he sees before him a billowy waste of rocky heights, as if a great volcanic sea had been suddenly arrested with its heaving masses, and congealed in giant waves of sandstone and porphyry. Is this the land, he may well ask, which the words of the Hebrew patriarch described as "the fatness of the earth"? Is this a heritage to be envied or to be regarded as a portion fit to be coupled with the patriarch's blessing?

But a closer survey of the region will reveal more than a merely repulsive aspect. The valleys that wind about among the hills and mountains are singularly fertile, and even now, after centuries of neglect, the scene that meets the eye when the morning light falls on the dew-drops that cluster thickly on leaf and flower is well-nigh enchanting. Along up the bleak mountain sides, once terraced and covered with fruits and vines, the verdure often extends, while the varied colors of the rocks, rich with strange hues, contrasts with the deep green that here and there hides their deep red or dark purple tints. With civilized industry the land might once more resume its ancient fertility and beauty. It needs only that an end be put to the plundering and marauding habits of the Arabs, and with well-directed enterprise the land of Idumea might again become what it was when travelers, from East and West alike, were constrained to confess that it justified the epithet of the old patriarch, "the fatness of the earth."

Esau was not the original settler of Edom. The earliest inhabitants of the country were the Horites, from whom Mount Hor doubtless derives its name. They were so called, it is said, from Hori, the grandson of Seir (Gen. xxxvi. 22), because that word was descriptive of their habits as "dwellers in caves," and by them undoubtedly the earliest excavations in the precipitous cliffs of Petra were made.

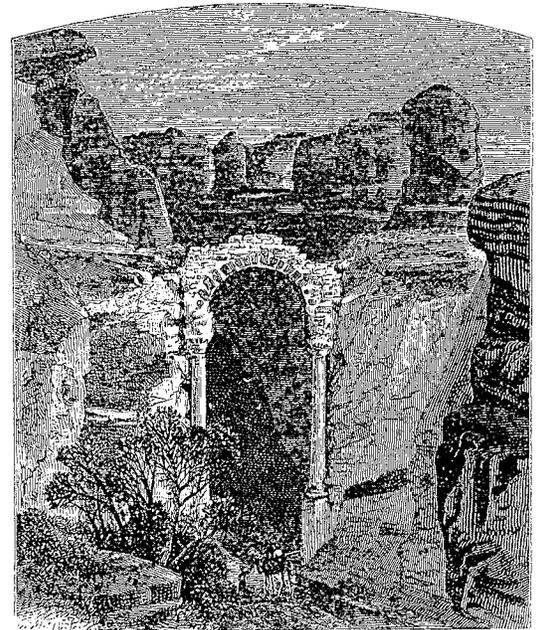
The physical geography of Edom has not a little to do with its history. It lay between the Gulf of Elath, reaching out from the Red Sea, and the Mediterranean, and was thus fitted to become a thoroughfare for the commerce between the two seas and the regions adjoining. On its western side it is bounded by low limestone hills, and on its eastern runs an almost unbroken limestone ridge, a thousand feet or more higher than the western elevations, but sloping away eastward into the plateau of the Arabian Desert. Within the space thus bounded rise lofty masses of igneous rock, chiefly porphyry, over which lies red and variegated sandstone, sometimes rich in its varied tints, and the average elevation of the summits is about 2,000 feet above the level of the sea. Edom is thus rendered in many parts wild, rugged and inaccessible, while the deep glens and flat terraces along the mountain sides are covered with rich soil, from which trees, shrubs and flowers spring up after the rains in great abundance. Indeed, travellers have marked the changed aspect of vegetation as they passed from the desert region on the east into the territory of Edom in the vicinity of Petra. The contrast is striking between the bare, parched plains on either side and the tinted rocks and green and flower-sprinkled valleys and terraced hillsides of Edom. We can readily conceive that industry and irrigation must have made this region answer to the description of it as promised by Isaac to Esau, whose dwelling was to be "of the fatness of the earth and of the dew of heaven from above."

(E. H. Gillett, *Ancient Cities and Empires: Their Prophetic Doom*, Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1865, 121-124.)

5A. A Description of Petra:

1b. The approach to Petra:

As the traveler advances the valley contracts and the cliffs which bound it rise to a greater height. On either side is a street of rock-hewn tombs. At length the gorge is reached, the walls of rock approach still nearer together, and a few steps further on a noble arch is thrown across high up from one precipice to another, while niches, doubtless intended for statues, are cut underneath each end. Here the walls are but twelve feet apart, and for a mile and a half further they never expand to more than a space of from thirty to forty feet. It would seem as if they had been torn asunder by some great convulsion, leaving barely room for two horsemen to ride abreast. A swelling stream, at certain seasons of the year, rushes between them, along the whole distance watering a thicket of oleanders, tamarinds and wild figs, while vines of creeping plants hang in festoons on the sides of the cliffs, hundreds of feet above the traveler's head. The eagle is heard screaming above, while the almost overarching rocks nearly shut out the view of the sky, and amid the sculptured tombs, open on each side, the dimness seems truly sepulchral. The remains of aqueducts, by which the water was anciently distributed, are still to be seen, while on the left are traces of a channel cut in the rock near the level of the ground. A conduit of earthen pipes, four or five inches in diameter, let into the rock and cemented, is carried along high up on the right-hand precipice, but only the ruins of it now remain.



GATE-WAY TO PETRA.

The bottom of the passage, anciently paved with squared stones, is still here and there to be seen, and in it the traveler notes the ruts worn by ancient chariot wheels. Far above are shallow niches, the outlines an first cuttings of pediments, where busts and statues perhaps once stood, or where inscriptions were traced. As the gorge widens, now this way and now that, lateral chasms and clefts are seen, showing apparently that the whole region has been rent by the same convulsion.

(*Ibid.*, 127-128.)

2b. The excitement of visitors

One traveler speaks of the "indomitable wildness" of this main avenue, and others become almost enthusiastic in its description. Dr. Robinson says, "The character of this wonderful spot, and the impression which it makes, are utterly indescribable, and I know of nothing which can present even a faint idea of them. I had visited the strange sandstone lanes and streets of Adersbach, and wandered with delight through the romantic dells of the Saxon Switzerland—both of which scenes might be supposed to afford the nearest parallel; yet they exhibit few points of comparison. All here is on a grander scale of savage and yet magnificent sublimity. We lingered along this superb approach, proceeding slowly and stopping often, forgetful of everything else, and taking for the moment no note of time."

At length the gorge, about a mile and a half in length, terminates, or rather strikes almost at right angles into another broader one, running from the south to the north-west. But all at once, as the traveler approaches the angle, the front of the Khuzneh, in the western precipice, bursts upon his view. He beholds a temple hewn out of the rock, and set in a niche of rock, its material a rose-colored stone, which is shown off most delicately by the dark shrubs which grow before it. Its height is between sixty and seventy feet, while of its six columns five are still standing. Its position is "wonderfully fine," while its elaborate carvings of garlands, its bas-reliefs (somewhat defaced), and the suddenness with which this admirably preserved structure strikes the eye of the traveler emerging from the dim avenue by which it is approached, deepen the impression. Buckhardt calls the temple "one of the most elegant remains of antiquity existing in Syria."

Stanley says that to one coming upon it unexpectedly from the east, he "cannot conceive of anything more striking." Stephens speaks of it as "the pride and beauty of Petra." His companion, on beholding it, involuntarily cried out, clapped his hands, and shouted in ecstasy. Long afterward the traveler declared that "neither the Coliseum at Rome, nor the ruins of the Acropolis at Athens, nor the pyramids, nor the mighty temples of the Nile," were so often present to his memory. Dr. Robinson speaks of the delicacy of its fine chiseling and the freshness and beauty of its soft coloring. "I had seen," he adds, "various engravings of it, and read all the descriptions; but this was one of the rare instances where the truth of the reality surpassed the ideal anticipation. It is indeed most exquisitely beautiful; and nothing I have seen of architectural effect in Rome or Thebes, or even Athens, comes up to it in the first impression." In spite of its debased style of architecture, its position, its wonderful state of preservation, the framework of cliffs, several hundred feet high, in which it is set, the glow and tint of the stone, and the wild scenery around, are enough to justify the traveler's confession—"I was perfectly fascinated with this splendid work of ancient art in this wild spot. . . ."

Of Petra itself, Dr. Robinson says: "In looking at the wonders of this ancient city, one is at a loss whether most to admire the wildness of the position and natural scenery, or the taste and skill with which it was fashioned into a secure retreat and adorned with splendid structures, chiefly for the dead. The most striking feature of the place consists, not in the fact that there are occasional excavations and sculptures, like those above described, but in the innumerable multitude of such excavations along the whole extent of perpendicular rocks adjacent to the main area, and in all the lateral valleys and chasms, the entrances of very many of which are variously, richly and often fantastically decorated, with every imaginable order and style of architecture."

(*Ibid.*, 128-130, 132.)

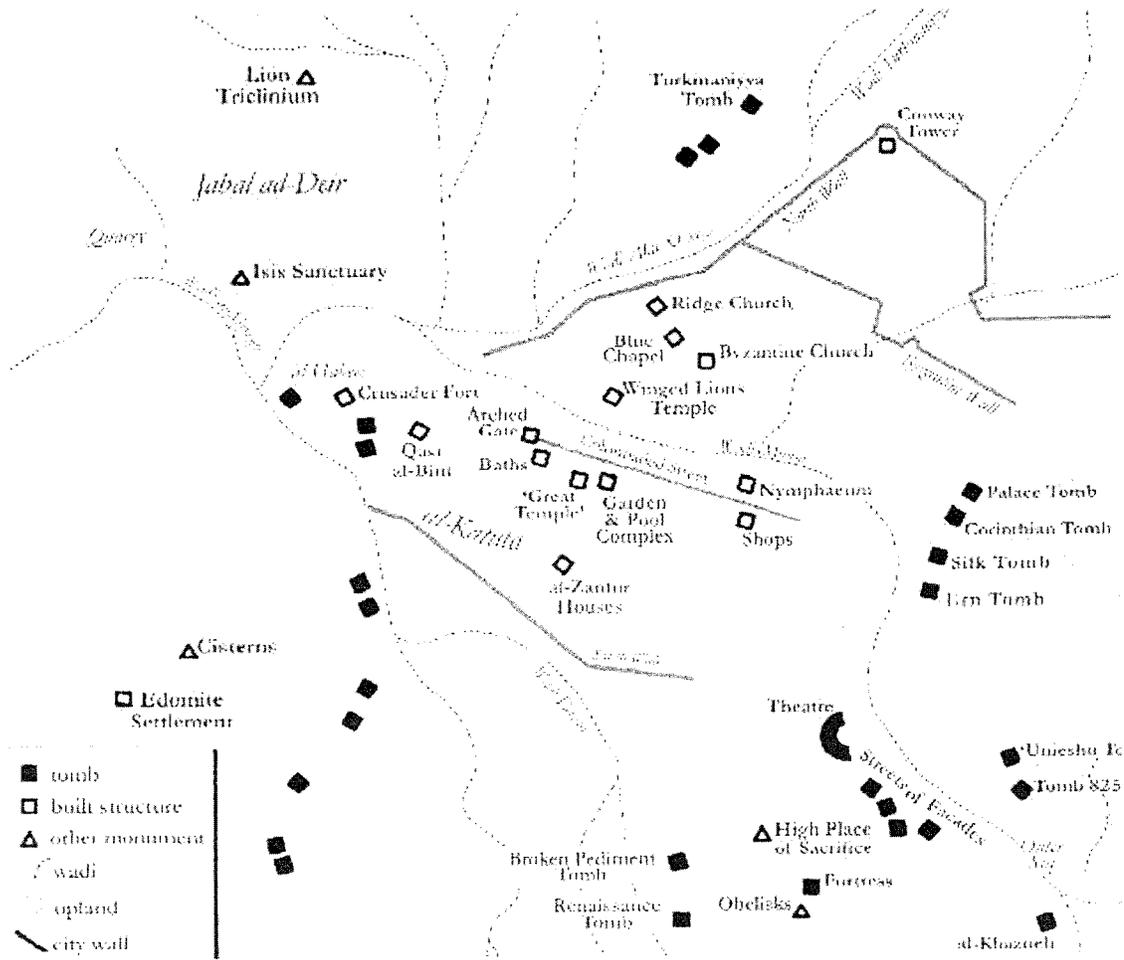
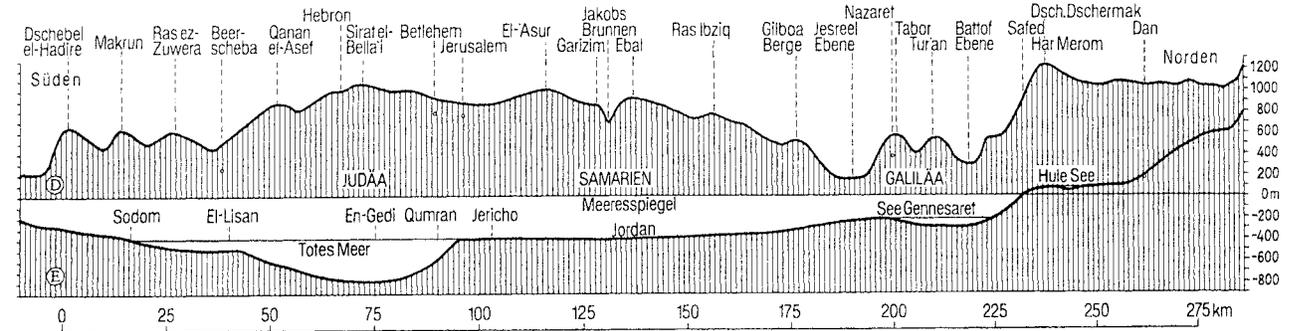
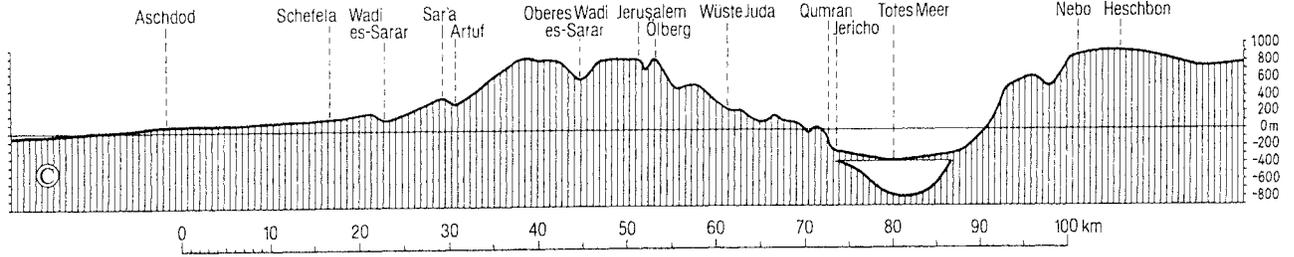
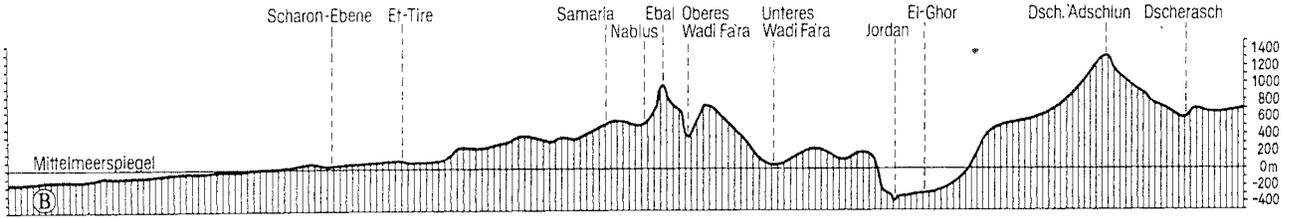
The *Biblical Archaeology Review* has posted an interesting online article entitled, "Solving the Enigma of Petra and the Nabataeans." The author has captured the utter delight and amazement of tourist to that unforgettable site.

The Siq is a tortuous half-mile-long canyon that winds its way from the entrance of Petra to the large open plaza at the foot of the Khazneh. Formed through countless millennia of geological activity and water action, the canyon was used by the Nabataeans as a ceremonial route into their capital. The sides of the Siq were also outfitted with tunnels and pipes that carried fresh water into the city.

For every tourist who visits the ancient city of Petra in modern day Jordan, there is one breathtaking moment that captures all of the grandeur and mystery of this city carved in stone. After passing the final bend of the tortuous narrow canyon that leads into the site (the Siq), one is confronted by the awe-inspiring spectacle of a towering rock-cut façade, its sun-struck sandstone gleaming through the darkness of the canyon.

The façade, popularly known as the Khazneh, or "Treasury," appears first only as a faint vision, its architectural details and full dimensions crowded out by the darkened walls of the Siq. But as you leave the Siq and enter the large open courtyard that sits before the Khazneh, you begin to realize, with astonishment and wonder, the immensity of the monument that towers above you.

The Khazneh is both unexpectedly familiar, and at the same time, strangely exotic. Its ornamented face is adorned with the columns, capitals and pediments of classical Western architecture, yet it seems entirely out of place in the rugged desert landscape of southern Jordan, an area historically inhabited by flock-tending Bedouin and simple farmers. Perhaps it was this bewildering juxtaposition that made the Khazneh the ideal backdrop for the climactic scene of the 1989 film *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade*.



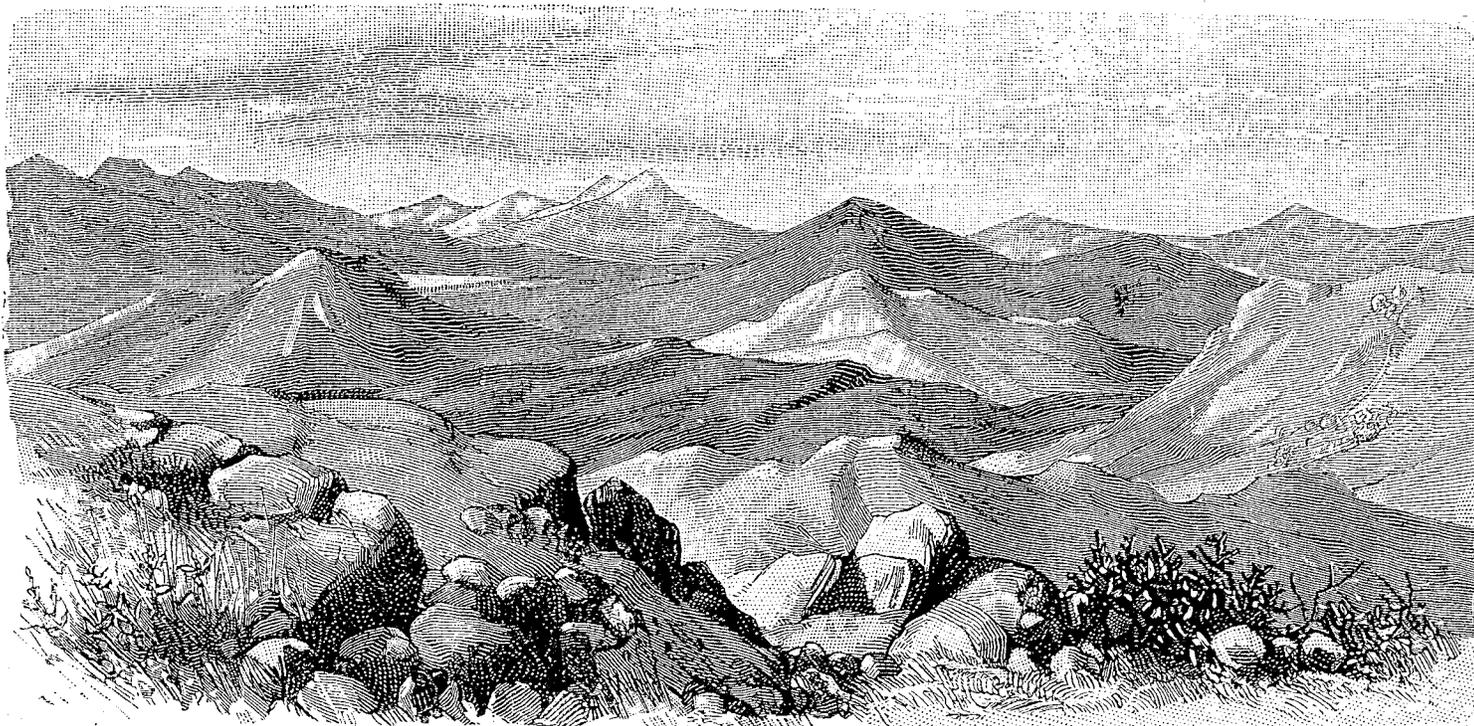
3b. The judgments upon Petra:

One only needs to sit down amid the perfect desolation and awful solitude, and open there the volume of prophecy, to see how remarkable the predictions of Scripture concerning it have been fulfilled.

The language of Isaiah (xxxiv. 5, 6) is: "My sword shall be bathed in heaven; behold, it shall come down upon Idumea and upon the people of my curse to judgment. The sword of the Lord is filled with blood." We have no record of the precise manner in which Petra was finally destroyed, but it would seem as if the sword that was to reach it was literally to descend from heaven, and there must have been a fierce slaughter before this great natural fortress could have been taken. The day of this judgment might well be described as "the day of the Lord's vengeance and the year of recompenses for the controversy of Zion."

He says again (xxxiv. 11): "He shall stretch out upon it the line of confusion and the stones of emptiness." A mere description of the ruins might suggest these very words, applicable not only to Petra, but to Idumea, with all its cities. "The cormorant and the bittern shall possess it; the owl and raven shall dwell in it." One traveler after another has found the only possessors of it, with the occasional exception of prowling Arabs, to be the "eagles," or birds of prey. "Thorns shall come up in her palaces, nettles and brambles in the fortresses thereof." One of the most striking features of the descriptions given of the precipitous cliffs with their rocky chambers is, that they are covered over with verdure. Vines, and brambles, and shrubs, answering, doubtless, to the original Hebrew words, clamber and twine about the rocks and the crumbling sculptures.

(Gillett., 135-136.)



Blick auf das Gebirge Seir (Edom).

Petra, as well as the areas of Ammon, Moab and Edom, will serve as a safe refuge from the wrath of Antichrist during the latter half of the Tribulation. According to Daniel 11:41, these areas will not be controlled by Antichrist, who for 3 1/2 years is world ruler. While the area of Transjordan has a gloomy past, it will yet enjoy a glorious future. The believer, as a companion and Bride of the returning Christ (the topic of the last session in this series) will witness the transformation and beautification of this area.

THE PROMISE OF A REFUGE	THE REFUGE FOR ISRAEL	THE PROCEDURE OF RECKONING
<p>THE PLACE</p> <p>Dan 11:41</p> <p>41 He shall enter also into the glorious land, and many countries shall be overthrown: but these shall escape out of his hand, even Edom and Moab, and the chief of the children of Ammon.</p>		<p>THE PROSECUTOR</p> <p>Is. 63:1-2</p> <p>WHO is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? this that is glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength? I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save.</p> <p>2 Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel, and thy garments like him that treadeth in the winevat?</p>
<p>THE PROTECTION</p> <p>Mt. 24:15-21</p> <p>15 When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand):</p> <p>16 Then let them which be in Judea flee into the mountains:</p> <p>17 Let him which is on the housetop not come down to take any thing out of his house:</p> <p>18 Neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes.</p> <p>19 And woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days!</p> <p>20 But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath day:</p> <p>21 For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.</p>		<p>THE PURGING</p> <p>Ez. 20:35-38</p> <p>35 And I will bring you into the wilderness of the people, and there will I plead with you face to face.</p> <p>36 Like as I pleaded with your fathers in the wilderness of the land of Egypt, so will I plead with you, saith the Lord God.</p> <p>37 And I will cause you to pass under the rod, and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant:</p> <p>38 And I will purge out from among you the rebels, and them that transgress against me: I will bring them forth out of the country where they sojourn, and they shall not enter into the land of Israel: and ye shall know that I am the LORD.</p>
<p>THE PERIOD</p> <p>Rev. 12:6, 14-16</p> <p>6 And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days.</p> <p>14 And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent.</p> <p>15 And the serpent cast out of his mouth water as a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood.</p> <p>16 And the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed up the flood which the dragon cast out of his mouth.</p>		<p>THE PERCENTAGE OF THE REDEEMED</p> <p>Zech. 13:8</p> <p>8 And it shall come to pass, that in all the land, saith the LORD, two parts therein shall be cut off and die; but the third shall be left therein.</p>

6A. Mt. Seir and Transjordan as a Refuge for Israel:

Numerous Scriptures speak of a time after the Rapture when Antichrist will rule the world (Dan. 7:25). "Power was given unto him over all kindreds, and tongues and nations" (Rev. 13:7). Israel, however, (and presumably alert Gentiles) will have a prepared refuge which Antichrist cannot touch. Daniel clearly reveals that the area East of the Jordan rift valley, anciently populated by the Ammonites, Moabites and Edomites, will be off-limits for 42 months to this world ruler

1b. The promise of a refuge:

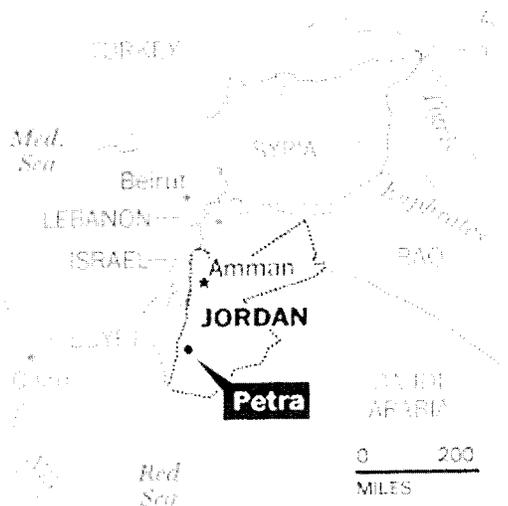
1c. **The place:** Dan. 11:41

He shall enter also into the glorious land, and many countries shall be overthrown: but these shall escape out of his hand, even **Edom** and **Moab**, and the chief of the children of **Ammon**.

2c. **The protection:** Mt. 24:15-21 (Mark 13:14-22)

When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:)¹⁶ Then let them which be in Judaea **flee into the mountains:**¹⁷ Let him which is on the housetop not come down to take any thing out of his house:¹⁸ Neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes,¹⁹ And woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days!²⁰ But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath day:²¹ For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.

Christ admonished His people living during the Tribulation to flee in great haste when Antichrist breaks his covenant with Israel half way through this time of trouble, turmoil and terror. He suggested the route they are to take: "flee into the mountains". From the zenith of the Mt. of Olives one can see in the distance the formidable mountain range to the East of the Dead Sea, precisely the area that Antichrist will not control. It is only a short distance away and the escape route is generally all downhill. As the crowd flees, the Jordan River is just 15 miles to the East of Jerusalem. Once a person has crossed that river, he is safe until the return of Christ.



Jews from Jerusalem
Escape to Ammon, Moab, and Edom
in the middle of the Tribulation
Mt. 24:15-22; Rev. 12:13-16, Is. 63:1-4

Zeph. 2:3

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

2c. **The period:** Rev. 12:6, 14-16

And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there **a thousand two hundred and threescore days.**

14 And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for **a time, and times, and half a time**, from the face of the serpent. **15** And the serpent cast out of his mouth water as a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood. **16** And the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed up the flood which the dragon cast out of his mouth.

John F. Walvoord writes that in this symbolic passage "reference must be to the preservation of a portion of the nation of Israel to await the second coming of Christ" (*The Revelation of Jesus Christ*, Chicago: Moody Press, 1966, 191).

As God had provided for some 3 million people in the wilderness, so He has prepared a means where "others will see to the immediate administration of her needed nourishment."

Robert L. Thomas, *Revelation 8-22. An Exegetical Commentary*, Chicago: Moody Press, 1995, 127).

The flood which the dragon (Satan) sends after the woman (Israel) should most likely be understood as a literal deluge. Interestingly, the Nabataeans at Petra and elsewhere developed a clever system of diversion of torrential rain waters, Thomas quotes Seiss to the end that "Very possibly, through an earthquake whatever water the dragon may send after the woman drains into underground openings" (140).

2b. The procedure of reckoning:

1c. **The prosecutor:** Is. 63:1-2

Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? this that is glorious in his apparel, traveling in the greatness of his strength? I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save. ²Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel, and thy garments like him that treadeth in the winevat?

Bozrah (Buseirah), located 20 miles SE of the Dead Sea, is one of the areas to which the Savior returns at His second coming. Petra is located to the south and serves as an ideal refuge for Israel. It is easily defensible with an abundant water supply. With some 2400 rock-hewn buildings in the area, it is easy to imagine how a million people would find safety and seclusion while Antichrist rages world-wide and the dragon fiercely pursues those Jews who did not avail themselves of this refuge (Rev. 12:17).

2c. **The purging: Ez. 20:35-38**

And I will bring you into the wilderness of the people, and there will I plead with you face to face. **36** Like as I pleaded with your fathers in the wilderness of the land of Egypt, so will I plead with you, saith the Lord GOD. **37** And I will cause you to pass under the rod, and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant; **38** And I will purge out from among you the rebels, and them that transgress against me: I will bring them forth out of the country where they sojourn, and they shall not enter into the land of Israel: and ye shall know that I am the LORD .

The purging involves a separation of the believers from the unbelievers, much like the judgment of the sheep and goat gentiles in Matthe23. The believing Israelites (like the believing gentiles) will enter alive with their King into the Millennial Kingdom. The rebels are purged and are put to death.

The judgment of Israel is said to take place in the wilderness of the people. Some Bible scholars suggest that the area of judgment is the valley called Wadi Arava, extending from the Dead Sea to the Red Sea, approximately. The valley is 120 miles long and 10 miles wide. The Gentiles, on the other hand, will be judged from Jerusalem (Mt. 25:31) in the Valley of Jehoshaphat (Joel 3:2,12), either a reference to the Kidron Valley or a new valley

3c. **The percentage of the redeemed: Zech. 13:8**

And it shall come to pass, that in all the land, saith the LORD, two parts therein shall be cut off and die; but the third shall be left therein.

Dr. Unger's commentary on the percentage of the redeemed is very helpful:

Then two-thirds of the Jews "in all the land" (v. 8) of Palestine will be cut off in death, and the one-third that is spared will be the survivors (Matt. 24:13) who will constitute the remnant that will look in faith to the pierced One (Zech. 12:10) and in repentance mourn over their past unbelief (12:10-14). The "fountain" of cleansing will be opened to them (13:1), and they will be purged from sin and idolatry (13:2-5); they will inquire of the Messiah, "What are these wounds in thine hands?" (v. 6).

They, the saved and purified, will be the redeemed remnant that will constitute the nucleus of the millennial Kingdom. The "third part" probably will be, in part at least, the 144,000 of the tribes of Israel scaled in Revelation 7:1-8 and 14:1-5. Like the three faithful Hebrews in Babylon, they will not worship the beast's (Antichrist's) image (13:1-18), but will pass through the fiery furnace of the Great Tribulation (cf. Mal. 3:2-3), coming forth from the crucible like refined silver and gold.

(Merrill F Unger, *Unger's Commentary on the Old Testament*, AMG Publishers, 2002, 2048.)

General Discussion

Topics of or related to poetry.

eMule -> The Poetry Archive -> Forums -> General Discussion

[Goto:](#) [Forum List](#) · [Message List](#) · [New Topic](#) · [Search](#) · [Log In](#)

[Goto Thread:](#) [Previous](#) · [Next](#)

'Petra' (long)

Posted by: **IanB** (192.168.128.---)

Date: May 31, 2006 07:15PM

In the recent 'Poetry Anthology' thread in Homework Assistance, some interesting posts followed a mention I made of the famous line 'A rose-red city half as old as Time', in John William Burgon's poem 'Petra', which won Oxford University's Newdigate Prize for poetry in 1845. No one who contributed to that discussion had the whole poem text, and there appeared to be no copy on the Internet.

I have since found a small book of Burgon's poetry. He had it published by Macmillan in 1885 when he was Dean of Chichester. It includes 'Petra'. The poem is presented with its own preface, and an 'Argument' (précis of its subject matter) and numerous footnotes. Some of those quote descriptions of Petra by one Dr Robinson who had visited the place (unlike Burgon when he wrote the poem!). Some explain allusions to classical Greek works. Many give Biblical references justifying references in the poem. I assume all these extras were part of the presentation when it was submitted for the Prize. The body of the poem is 371 lines long, which is strange, since the Newdigate founder prescribed 300 as the limit. The sole judge however is always the Professor of Poetry, who sets the subject.

As I ploughed through Burgon's impressively/tediously sustained effort, with all its antiquated mannerisms, I tried to imagine the state of mind of the Professor reading it. Did his eyes light up when he read the famous line? Was that why he adjudged the poem the winner, as I have heard irreverently alleged? I rather think what impressed him was Biblical learning, and the lofty tone and romantic religiosity throughout, for he was not a poet. He was the venerable James Garbett, Archdeacon of Chichester (small world!), who held the Professorship (which is a part-time, almost honorary position) from 1842 to 1852. Men of clerical bent seem to have had a mortgage on the chair in those days. His predecessor from 1831 to 1841 was John Keble, a founder of the Oxford Movement.

Anyway, to satisfy the curious who have wondered about the full text of the poem known now only for its famous line, and who don't have access to the Newdigate archives, here it is. I have reproduced the preface; but omitted the Argument – and the footnotes, interesting though they are, except to mention now one, quoted from Dr Robinson, which describes how the ancient theatre at Petra hewn out of the rock was located between cliffs full of tombs in direct view of the audience. That may help explain the poet's theatre images in one part and his rebuke of the men of Petra whiling "the listless hours away" where "graves on graves innumerable frown'd". I have reproduced the punctuation in Burgon's book (even the failure to close the inverted commas in L23), except that the long dash comes out as a doubled hyphen in Emule.

PETRA,—the capital of that portion of Arabia which is thence called Petràæ,—occupies a mountain-hollow in the rocky region known to the readers of Scripture by the name of SEIR; a territory which extends from the north-eastern extremity of the Arabian gulph to the south of the Dead Sea, and which the Almighty assigned to the Edomites, or the descendants of Esau. It is twice mentioned in the Bible by the equivalent Hebrew name SELAH, or *the rock*; and thenceforward (namely, from the seventh or eighth century before our æra), it obtains no further notice for four hundred years. During this interval, the Nabathæans, or descendants of Nebaioth, the eldest son of Ishmael, had expelled the Edomites from their ancient stronghold, and driven them northward, where their territory was recognised for a few centuries under the Hellenised name of Idumæa. Then it was that one portion of the prophecy concerning the descendants of Esau obtained its fulfilment : they faded from the world's eye, and ceased to be a nation.

Petræa, henceforth part of the Nabathæan territory, became a Roman province; and PETRA, as some ancient historians relate, and as its astonishing ruins abundantly testify, continued to be its wealthy and flourishing capital. It obtains some slight Ecclesiastical notice so late as the sixth century, but from that time it suddenly disappears from the page of history; and the doom pronounced on the land of the Edomites was entirely accomplished. PETRA had continued wholly unknown for twelve hundred years, when the adventurous Burckhardt

discovered its ruins in 1812.

Some valuable and interesting notices of this wonderful city and the surrounding region are found in the second volume of Dr. Robinson's *Biblical Researches*; but the pencil of Roberts has told the story of the present state of Edom better than any pen.

PETRA

Spirit of Song ! that oft at dewy eve,
When Elfin sprites their frolic dances weave,
Meetest the poet as he walks unseen
The twilight valley, or the dusky green;--
Or by some mountain lake's romantic brim
Wakest the drowsy echoes, all for him;--
And many a time art well content to stray
Where garden-alleys quench the blaze of day,
And small birds sing, and bubbling fountains play;
Know'st thou the land--a land of giant mould--
By Heav'n assign'd to Edom's race of old?
Where rocks on rocks--on mountains mountains pil'd--
Have form'd a scene so wondrous and so wild,
That gazing there man seems to gaze upon
The rough rude ocean frozen into stone?
Full well thou know'st ! for sure, when Israel wound
His homeward journey o'er that hallow'd ground,--
Forc'd in the depths of those wild hills to wait,
And kneel, a suppliant, at his brother's gate,--
While burning anthems rose from many a tongue,
Not coldly mute the harp of Judah hung !
And did not one, in yet remoter time,
Wake there the "birth-notes of the holy chime?
Doth not to Edom's rugged land belong
The man of Uz--the morning-star of song !

Yea, and to Fancy's ear, o'er rock and hill
More solemn harpings there are floating still.
Harps that long since have been attun'd above
To hymns of joy, and seraph-lays of love,
In awful strains from many a trembling wire
Have pour'd o'er Edom words of deepest ire !
Words that yet live and burn--in whose keen ray
The light and life of Edom ebb'd away :
Still fading, star-like, in the blaze of day !
And thou too, Petra, tho' the Roman came
And fann'd thy dying glories into flame;
Rear'd the tall column--spread the stately dome--
And seem'd the founder of a second Rome,--
How brief the pageant ! On thy fated brow
Men laid a crown--but who shall crown thee now?
A thousand summers o'er thy ruins crept :
A thousand winters o'er thy ruins wept :
A thousand years--and still the very spot
Where once thou wert so glorious, was forgot !

What joy was his--the wandering man, who first
Dissolv'd the spell !--on whom the Vision burst
Of that enchanted City, as it lay
Bath'd in the splendours of a Syrian day.
O Fancy, thou that must so oft have shed
Dreams of its beauty round his sleeping head;
Woke in his heart the wild-bird's wish to roam,
And told of marvels in that mountain-home;
Still be it thine with angel-hand to guide

These longing footsteps by that Trav'ler's side !
Waft o'er mine ear one echo of the strain
Which dark-ey'd Kedar pours along the plain;
Or let one gaze, how brief soe'er, inspire
These falt'ring lips to glow with Eastern fire !

Sudden,--around me, rocks and cliffs arise;
The earth their footstool, and their crown the skies :
Some, soaring steep,--as if to curtain round
From mortal gaze each nook of holy ground :
Some, prostrate hurl'd,--as if by that fierce storm
Which rent the mountains, when th' Almighty form
"Rose up from Seir;" and trembling Sinai saw
His thousand Saints dispense His fiery law.
And one there is which, beetling o'er the rest,
Pillows a prophet on its rocky crest :
Uplifted high--where none but stars may keep
Their bright-ey'd vigils round his saintly sleep :
Or rushing winds from Pisgah's kindred height
Pour a wild requiem through the noon of night.
Fit scene for marvels ! In such land should none
But giants move, and giant deeds be done.
O'er such huge hills might fitly seem to stray
A ransom'd people on their homeward way.
In such wild valleys, round their ark rever'd,
At set of sun their myriad tents be rear'd.
Myriads ! and yet, above them and around,
Such giant features of the landscape frown'd,
They seem'd no more--that people and their guide--
Than Jethro's flock on Horeb's hallow'd side !

Ah say, ere gather'd in their destin'd fold,
While Israel wander'd o'er this waste of old;
As, eve by eve, upon these mountains brown,
Silent as snow the heavenly bread came down:--
From the cleft rock as gush'd the sparkling wave
To cheer their sinking spirits, and to save;--
And the bright pillar, through the livelong night,
Shed o'er their tents its soft celestial light;--
Did none perchance of Judah's faithful line
Read the high teaching of each heav'n-sent sign?
Say--while around him others pin'd forlorn
For Canaan's valleys "standing thick with corn"--
Did no fond heart, with nobler instinct fraught,
Sigh for the substance which those shadows taught?
On trembling pinions seek to soar above,
Refin'd by sorrow, and sublim'd by love,--
Till Faith discern'd what Reason dimly scann'd,
And Hope gave promise of that better Land?

Still on for Petra,--till the desert wide
Shrinks to a valley; and on either side
The rude rock springeth, and a long array
Of tombs, forgotten, sadden all the way.
Then the earth yawns, terrific : and a path,
By Nature fram'd in waywardness or wrath,
Winds where two rocks precipitously frown,--
The giant warders of that wondrous town !
Day comes not here,--or in such spectral guise,
She seems an outcast from yon happy skies.
In silent awe the Arab steals along,
Nor cheers his camels with their wonted song.
Well may the spirit, left alone to brood

On the dim shapes which haunt that solitude,
O'erflow with joy--that dreary pathway past--
When Petra bursts upon the gaze at last.

O passing beautiful--in this wild spot
Temples, and tombs, and dwellings,--all forgot !
One sea of sunlight far around them spread,
And skies of sapphire mantling overhead.
They seem no work of man's creative hand,
Where Labour wrought as wayward Fancy plann'd;
But from the rock as if by magic grown,
Eternal--silent--beautiful--alone !
Not virgin white--like that old Doric shrine
Where once Athena held her rites divine :
Not saintly grey--like many a minster fane
That crowns the hill, or sanctifies the plain :
But rosy-red,--as if the blush of dawn
Which first beheld them were not yet withdrawn :
The hues of youth upon a brow of woe,
Which men call'd old two thousand years ago !
Match me such marvel, save in Eastern clime,--
A rose-red city--half as old as Time !

And this is Petra--this the lofty boast
Of Edom's once unconquerable coast !
These the gay halls thro' which, in days of old,
The tide of life so rapturously roll'd !
These the proud streets where Wealth, with lavish hand,
Pour'd the rich spoils of ev'ry Orient land;
All that the seaman's timid barque beguiles,
To Cush and Ophir, "Tarnish and the Isles :"
Afric's red gold,--Arabia's spicy store,--
And pearl and plume from India's farthest shore !
How chang'd--how fallen ! All her glory fled,
The widow'd city mourns her many dead.
Like some fond heart which gaunt Disease hath left
Of all it liv'd for--all it lov'd, bereft;
Mute in its anguish ! struck with pangs too deep
For words to utter, or for tears to weep.

Yet hearts and eyes there be, well skill'd to trace
The living features in the lifeless face,
For whom that silent desert air seems rife
With tuneful voices and the pulse of life.
For them sweeps by in glitt'ring pomp again
The warlike pageant and the peaceful train :
For them bright shadows fill these vacant halls,
And Beauty wakes where'er their footstep falls.
"Heard ye it not?"--the fervid dreamer cries,--
"Heard ye no shout from yonder seats arise?"
(And his rapt gaze in ecstasy is bent
On what seems Pleasure's mournful monument.)
"Ye deem the actor and his mimic rage
Gone like a shadow from yon ruin'd stage;
But to mine eye he lives and moves :--'tis we
Are shadows here--the substance only he !
Or do I dream?--they come and fade so fast--
Now here, now there,--now present, and now past.
But no, a stern old King,--whom anguish strong
Had goaded into madness,--stalk'd along,
Sightless and crownless : . . . Now, a Maiden stands
Ev'n where he stood; and in her delicate hands
Enfolds an urn : ineffable the grace,--

The marble sorrow of that classic face !
It fades--'tis fled ! . . . Upon a lofty car
There sits another : like some baleful star
Glares her wild eye;--and from her lips of ire
Streams a full torrent of prophetic fire.
She raves,--she rises,--and with frenzied hand
Dashes to earth her garland and her wand . . .
Sublimely beautiful ! When this is o'er
Let nothing follow.--I will gaze no more !"

And did ye thus, ye men of Petra,--say,
Thus did ye while the listless hours away?
Tho' ev'ry cliff, tho' ev'ry crag around,
With graves on graves innumerable frown'd,--
Thus could ye sit, contented with a toy,
And lapt in dreams of unsubstantial joy?
Light-hearted race ! o'er them it flung no gloom
That Echo answered from a kinsman's tomb.
Bred in these mountain valleys, those dark eyes,
Fierce as their summer,--cloudless as their skies,--
Belov'd and loving,--blest and blessing,--here
Made friends with Death throughout the livelong year :
And hop'd, perchance, when Life's gay round was o'er,
And joy and sorrow sway'd their hearts no more,
Their faithful souls, unfetter'd, yet might dwell
Amid the haunts they lov'd in life so well !

And Petra thus had rear'd another race
In turn to revel in her "pride of place :"
Thus the old eagles of imperial Rome
Seem'd on her hills to find a second home :
And Roman arts with Roman arms arose,
To blot the mem'ry of her former foes.
Tho' Edom's line, by Ishmael's sword opprest,
Had long been exil'd from their rock-built nest,
On Edom's rugged hills, as loath to set,
The sun of bygone summers linger'd yet :
And men forgot,--or deem'd an idle tale,--
The words of doom that hung o'er Petra's vale.
It could not be ! That old portentous chime
So long had slumber'd by the sores of Time.
Why heed it now? why talk of gloom today,
When Heav'n is blue, and Earth so green and gay?

So spake the men of old; and ev'ry heart
To festive revel, or to crowded mart,
Flew for its joy,--not oft'ner sought than found,--
So gaily there the circling hours went round !
And nurs'd were they in luxury--and knew
The spot of earth where ev'ry pleasure grew.
Their fountains flung their waters to the skies :
Their groves lay steep'd in hues of Paradise :
Here rose the gorgeous sepulchre, and there
Some fairy palace hung its roof in air :
While climes remote each costly gift supplied,
(For ships of Petra swam on ev'ry tide;)
And all the East, in conscious splendour, roll'd
At Petra's feet her jewels and her gold.

O that her rocks had language ! and might tell
In what wild shape at last the tempest fell.
Swift--sweeping--sudden--whensoever it came;
Blighting and blasting, like the breath of flame.

One piercing cry,--one agonizing wail,--
 One voice from Edom's cities told the tale :
 One cry of bitterness,--and all was o'er !
 But the far echo smote the Red Sea shore;
 And peal'd along its waters--till the waves
 Made hollow answer from their coral caves !

How chang'd, O Edom, since that hour, the scene
 From what the morning of thy days had been !
 When many a valley rich with corn and wine,
 When streams of Earth, and dews of Heav'n were thine;
 And flocks and herds--a patriarch's ample store--
 Till all thy cup with plenteousness ran o'er.
 Then Faith with thee her sacred mansion made;
 And holy lips, within thy summer shade,
 Of bright Arcturus and Orion told;--
 And the sweet sway the wand'ring Pleiads hold;--
 And of the matin hymn which burst sublime
 From all creation at the birth of Time;
 When "Earth self-balanc'd on its centre hung,"
 And "all the morning stars" like Seraphs sung . . .
 Such were the themes thy children lov'd to hear
 When first they dwelt along the vales of Seir :
 While youths and maids from each romantic town
 Went forth in dances when the sun went down;
 And antique tale, and legendary song,
 And harp and timbrel made the night less long.

But who are these that kneel in suppliant state,
 And plead for love at Petra's haughty gate
 That urge by each endearing claim their prayer?--
 Thy kindred, Edom,--the redeem'd are there !
 Scan well that brow,--and dost thou mark no line,
 No stamp of feature that resembles thine?
 Does nought recall an old ancestral tale :--
 Two brothers bred in Hebron's happy vale;--
 Far Mamre's oak--where blaz'd their altar fires;--
 And Mamre's cave--where sleep your common sires?
 Or if such plea, all cruel as thou art !
 Can wake no softness in thy savage heart,
 Yet feel for these--the youthful and the fair,
 The weary mother, and her fainting care !
 Yea, feel for all,--the mighty orphan host,
 Which GOD, in love, hath guided to thy coast;--
 Borne up on eagles' wings,--and fondly led
 With angels' food,--and through the desert led
 By cloud and flame;--and now, their wand'rings o'er,
 Speeds on their way to Canaan's quiet shore. . . .
 But what spake Edom? Taunting words of ill,--
 And that sharp knife,--a brother's threat to kill !
 Of all the past no image fill'd his eye
 But Jacob's blessing--Esau's bitter cry :--
 He bar'd his sword !--On that unnatural day
 A curse came down when Israel turn'd away.

Years sped their course : the fierce Chaldean came,
 And Salem's walls were wrapt in robes of flame :
 Fair Sion's height with carnage all o'erspread;
 Her temple fallen, and its glory fled :
 And *thou* wert there ! with unrelenting brow
 The first to slay--the first to triumph, thou !
 Foremost to hurl the blazing brand, and fill
 The festive cup on Sion's holy hill !

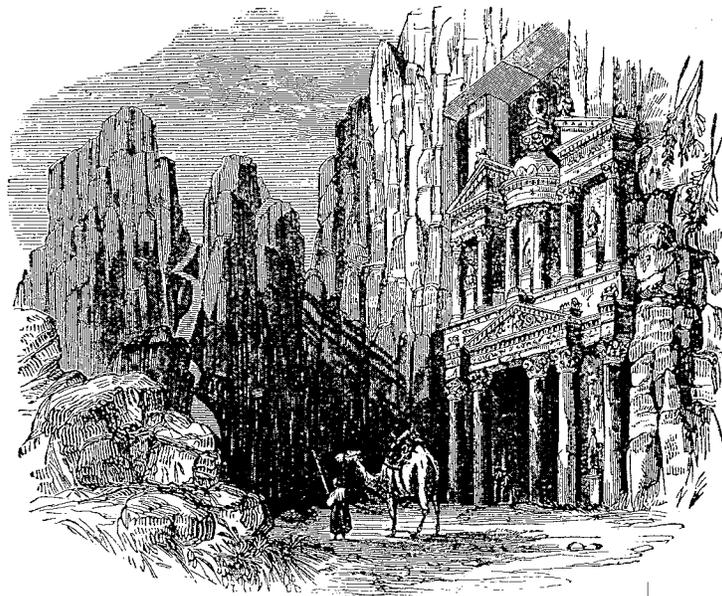
Could none be found but thee? Could wrath divine
 Be dealt on Judah by no hand but thine?
 "Remember, LORD,"--the mournful captives cried,
 As sad they wept by Babel's willowy side,--
 "O LORD, remember in that hour of woe,
 How taunting Edom prov'd our fiercest foe !" . . .
 And that poor plaint, to Heav'n's high throne upborne,
 Tho' all that heard it curl'd the lip with scorn,
 Call'd down the wrath which spake from many a lyre
 In strains that blasted like the breath of fire :
 And the wild winds the accents swept along,
 Till Edom's cliffs re-echoed to the song.

On cold high hearts at first that warning fell,
 For Edom held his wind-rock'd citadel :
 From Petra's cliff look'd forth in impious pride,
 And Sion's wrath and Sion's GOD defied.
 Then spake a voice--"Altho' thou build thy nest
 High as the stars;--and on the mountain's breast
 Sitt'st brooding like the eagle;--yet my frown
 Shall hurl thy glory and thy greatness down :
 Yea, when all earth rejoiceth, there shall be
 A desolation and a curse on thee !"

... Go, mark her well--and lies she not forlorn?
 The stranger's wonder, and the heathen's scorn !
 Her royal roofs with nettles all o'ergrown;--
 Her many towns a wilderness of stone;--
 And save where swims the eagle high in air,
 No sound of life--no pulse of motion there !
 There springs no verdure in her pathless vales :
 The river flows not, and the fountain fails :
 She keeps no feature of her ancient face :
 There breathes not one of Esau's royal race :
 And while yon stars in tuneful circles roll,--
 While Summer cheers, and Winter chills the pole,--
 While Night and Day in soft succession shine,--
 So long shall Edom own her doom divine :
 Attest His Truth, who spake the word of old,
 And stand, a sign for ages to behold :
 A wreck thrown up on Time's deserted shore,--
 A blight--a blank--a curse for evermore !

Daughter of Sion--fallen as thou art,
 Far other strains address thy sorrowing heart !
 Tho' bare thy mountains, and thy vales forlorn,
 Unblest by culture, yield thee briar and thorn,--
 Yet shall thy wilderness break forth and sing;
 The myrtle smile,--the graceful cedar spring;
 Life-giving streams thy barren rock disclose,
 And all thy desert "blossom like the rose" !
 The scatter'd sons, tho' now they wander wide,
 Shall yet be gather'd to thy longing side;
 And all Ezekiel's solemn vision be
 A type of faithful love fulfill'd in thee.
 Yea, tho' rude hands have spoil'd fair Salem's tow'rs;
 Tho' steps profane have press'd her hallow'd bow'rs;
 Tho' "Siloa's brook" no longer softly flows
 Fast by the hill where once her glory rose;
 Yet fear not thou ! the voice of Love divine
 Still cries--"Awaken thee !" "Arise, and shine !" "There is a River" which shall yet make blest
 Thy heav'nly home, the City of thy rest.

That holy City, seen by prophet eyes,
Waits but the signal that shall rend the skies,
And thou shalt all the glorious sight behold,--
The walls of jasper, and the streets of gold :
The twelve bright Angels, eager to unfurl
The twelve broad gates,--and ev'ry gate a pearl !
The Tree of Life beside the crystal wave,
With "leaves to heal the nations," and to save :
And HIM reveal'd whom thou so dimly knew,--
The LAMB,--thy Sacrifice and Temple too;
Whom Seraphs veil their faces when they sing,--
Thine own Thrice-holy Prophet, Priest, and King ! . . .
And there no Sun shall daily need to rise;
And there no Moon shall nightly sail the skies :
What need of sun by day, or moon by night?
The LORD thy glory, and the LAMB thy light !
Thy portion there, where Time itself shall be
One long, long rest--one Sabbath-day to thee !



Edited 6 time(s). Last edit at 05/31/2006 11:50PM by IanB.

Options: Reply To This Message · Quote This Message

Re: 'Petra' (long)

Posted by: marian2 (192.168.128.---)

Date: June 01, 2006 03:33AM

What a labour of love, Ian - well done. I'd no idea the short 'poem' I have under the title Petra was only a tiny extract, and it's very interesting to read the whole thing.

Are the other poems all long, and scholarly, or did he write a mix - I've looked at his bio and he seems to have been extremely serious-minded and very keen on 'defending the work of God against the errors of the church' to the detriment of his career, so I should imagine his other poetry is similar, but it would be nice to know.



Ansicht in Edom. Zu R. 49, 16.