

# Israel's Place of Refuge

## Yeshua's Warning

"Therefore when you see the 'ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION,' spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place" (whoever reads, let him understand), "then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. Let him who is on the housetop not go down to take anything out of his house. And let him who is in the field not go back to get his clothes. But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! And pray that your flight may not be in winter or on the Sabbath. For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be. And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened.

Matthew 24: 15-22

Yeshua's warning relates to the mid-point of the tribulation period – when the Coming World Leader (often called the antichrist) breaks the covenant he has confirmed 3½ years earlier, enters the temple and brings an end to the sacrifices and erects 'the abomination of desolation'.

"Then he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week; but in the middle of the week He shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate, even until the consummation, which is determined, is poured out on the desolate." Daniel 9: 27

And forces shall be mustered by him, and they shall defile the sanctuary fortress; then they shall take away the daily *sacrifices*, and place *there* the abomination of desolation.

Daniel 11: 31

## To Where will Israel Flee?

In Matthew 24 the Jews are told to flee to the mountains – but in Revelation 12 the woman (Israel) flees to the wilderness.

Then the woman fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God, that they should feed her there one thousand two hundred and sixty days.

Revelation 12: 6

There is a place (of safety) prepared by God for the Jewish people – a refuge from the forces seeking their destruction.

It seems most likely that Yeshua, in Matthew 24, was speaking of mountains in present day Jordan – the mountains of Old Testament areas of Ammon, Moab and Edom – these are indeed mountainous wilderness.

Prophetic Scripture speaks of such a place of safety: Daniel, in his end-time prophetic visions, speaks of places where the Coming World Leader and his forces are prevented (by the Lord) from entering.

He shall also enter the Glorious Land, and many countries shall be overthrown; but these shall escape from his hand: Edom, Moab, and the prominent people of Ammon. Daniel 11: 41

Many scholars (on the basis of Micah 2 verse 12) identify this place of safety as 'Bozrah' – the name Bozrah (Hebrew: *botsrâh*) means 'sheep-fold' or 'fortress'.

It is the area in which the ancient city of Petra is located.

"I will surely assemble all of you, O Jacob, I will surely gather the remnant of Israel; I will put them together like sheep of the fold, like a flock in the midst of their pasture; they shall make a loud noise because of *so many* people." Micah 2: 12

The LORD had pronounced destruction and desolation on Edom, a people descended from Esau. As recorded in Obadiah's prophecy, Edom had rejoiced over the destruction of Jerusalem, and there was constant conflict between Edom and the Jews from the time of the escape from Egypt.

"For I have sworn by Myself," says the LORD, "that Bozrah shall become a desolation, a reproach, a waste, and a curse. And all its cities shall be perpetual wastes." Jeremiah 49: 13

Behold, He shall come up and fly like the eagle, and spread His wings over Bozrah; the heart of the mighty men of Edom in that day shall be like the heart of a woman in birth pangs. Jeremiah 49: 22

Today, Bozrah is a region in southwest Jordan, where the ancient fortress city of Petra is located. It is both mountainous and a wilderness.

In several of the prophetic passages of scripture, the Lord makes clear the distinction between those Jews who are unbelieving and those who are faithful. The faithful remnant will be protected by the Lord and He will provide for them – see Isaiah 41: 8-20 and 65: 1-16.

"The poor and needy seek water, but *there* is none, their tongues fail for thirst. I, the Lord, will hear them; I, the God of Israel, will not forsake them. I will open rivers in desolate heights, and fountains in the midst of the valleys; I will make the wilderness a pool of water, and the dry land springs of water. I will plant in the wilderness the cedar and the acacia tree, the myrtle and the oil tree; I will set in the desert the cypress tree *and* the pine and the box tree together, that they may see and know, and consider and understand together, that the hand of the Lord has done this, and the Holy One of Israel has created it." Isaiah 41: 17-20

Isaiah 41 speaks of the Lord providing for His people in the wilderness, but other passages speak of provision in the mountains.

The sinners in Zion are afraid; fearfulness has seized the hypocrites: "Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? Who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?"

He who walks righteously and speaks uprightly, he who despises the gain of oppressions, who gestures with his hands, refusing bribes, who stops his ears from hearing of bloodshed, and shuts his eyes from seeing evil: he will dwell on high; his place of defence will be the fortress of rocks; bread will be given him, his water will be sure.

Isaiah 33: 14-16

The prophetic scriptures indicate that the Lord will provide refuge for His people in the end-times – it will be a place in the wilderness and the mountains, which is defensible like a fortress – it is a place the Lord has prepared.

Linking these prophecies with that in Micah 2: 12; it pinpoints the sheepfold of Bozrah in Mount Seir (in the present day country of Jordan) – and the ancient fortress city of Petra which is in the area of Bozrah, as being the place of refuge.

This place will be protected from the Coming World Leader (Daniel 11: 41).

## **The Final End-Time Battles**

So the angel thrust his sickle into the earth and gathered the vine of the earth, and threw it into the great winepress of the wrath of God. And the winepress was trampled outside the city, and blood came out of the winepress, up to the horses' bridles, for one thousand six hundred furlongs. Revelation 14: 19-20

These verse are an allusion to the end time battle of Armageddon – detailed in Revelation 19: 11-21. 'Har Megiddo' is Mount Megiddo which overlooks the valley of Jezreel, a few miles south east of present day Haifa.

The Jewish people are forewarned by Jesus to flee to the mountains when they see 'the abomination which desolates standing in the holy place' when the Beast desecrates the temple in the middle of the 7 year tribulation period – see Matthew 24: 15-16

The place to which the remnant of Israel flee for refuge is 'Bozrah' (modern day Petra) – see Micah 2: 12-13...the word translated 'fold' in v.12 is the Hebrew word *botsrah* (same word as in Isaiah 34: 6 and 63: 1) – it can be translated as sheepfold, enclosure or fortress (inaccessible)...and its primitive root word means to gather grapes. Yeshua speaks of Himself as the 'door of the sheep' - a link to Bozrah (sheepfold) – see John 10: 7

The Lord will return from Bozrah with His robe stained with blood – see Isaiah 63: 1-6 which is prophetic of the return of the Lord

The Reaping of the Grapes of Wrath and Armageddon:

In Isaiah 63 we have a prophetic description of the return of the Lord Jesus Christ. Israel's remnant will one day call upon the Lord for Him to return (see Matthew 23: 37-39; Luke 13: 34-35) and they will look upon Him who they pierced (Zechariah 12: 10).

In Isaiah 63: 1-2 we see Yeshua coming from Edom (specifically from Bozrah) with His garments dyed – see also Isaiah 34: 1-6.

In these verses about the end-time battles we are told that 'blood came out of the winepress, up to the horses' bridles, for one thousand six hundred furlongs' – the Greek word '*stadion*' is translated as furlongs.

'Bozrah' is modern day Petra – it is about 1600 stadia (184 miles) from Megiddo to Petra!

Christ's garments are dyed red with the wine (blood) from the winepress (Isaiah 63: 1). It seems that before Christ stands on the Mount of Olives (Zechariah 14: 4), He first has an appointment to save the Jewish remnant...at Megiddo and Bozrah (Isaiah 63: 3-6) and in the Valley of Jehoshaphat (Joel 3: 1-3) – see also Zechariah 12: 1-9.

Yeshua has trodden the winepress alone – it is His enemies blood on His garments (Isaiah 63: 3-4) – verses which relate clearly to Revelation 14: 19-20.

The day of vengeance is in His heart (a reference to Isaiah 61: 2) – the 'day of vengeance of our God' which Jesus omitted in Luke 4: 18-19. The mandate for Christ's first coming is Luke: 4: 18-19, but the mandate for His second coming is 'the day of vengeance'...Isaiah 61:2.

Christ is coming again in judgement and fury and anger – Isaiah 63: 3-6.

## **The Battle in Bozrah**

When Yeshua returns, it seems that before the final battle in the valley of Jehoshaphat (by Jerusalem) there will be an assembling of the Coming World Leader's armies, from many nations, in the Valley of Megiddo (Armageddon) and the destruction of Babylon.

The scriptures seem to indicate that the end time destruction of the Coming World Leader and his armies will begin at Bozrah (see Jeremiah 49: 13-14). Isaiah prophesies of a great slaughter at Bozrah, in Edom.

"For My sword shall be bathed in heaven; indeed it shall come down on Edom, and on the people of My curse, for judgment. The sword of the LORD is filled with blood, it is made overflowing with fatness, with the blood of lambs and goats, with the fat of the kidneys of rams. For the LORD has a sacrifice in Bozrah, and a great slaughter in the land of Edom. The wild oxen shall come down with them, and the young bulls with the mighty bulls; their land shall be soaked with blood, and their dust saturated with fatness."

For *it is* the day of the Lord's vengeance, the year of recompense for the cause of Zion. Its streams shall be turned into pitch, and its dust into brimstone; its land shall become burning pitch. It shall not be quenched night or day; its smoke shall ascend forever. From generation to generation it shall lie waste; no one shall pass through it forever and ever.

Isaiah 34: 5-6

Isaiah also prophesies of the Lord, Yeshua, coming from Bozrah with blood stained garments from His (not Israel's) defeat of the opposing armies of the antichrist.

Who is this who comes from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah, this *One who is* glorious in His apparel, travelling in the greatness of His strength? — "I who speak in righteousness, mighty to save."

Why is Your apparel red, and Your garments like one who treads in the winepress?

"I have trodden the winepress alone, and from the peoples no one was with Me.

For I have trodden them in My anger, and trampled them in My fury; their blood is sprinkled upon My garments, and I have stained all My robes. For the day of vengeance is in My heart, and the year of My redeemed has come.

I looked, but *there was* no one to help, and I wondered that *there was* no one to uphold; therefore My own arm brought salvation for Me; and My own fury, it sustained Me. I have trodden down the peoples in My anger, made them drunk in My fury, and brought down their strength to the earth."

Isaiah 63: 1-6

How those who have fled Israel for this place of refuge in Bozrah are fed and watered is not stated. Some think it will be tribulation saints; and others that it is the 144,000 Jewish Evangelists; whilst others think it is the angels.

Whatever the means is of this feeding and watering, it is clearly the Lord's provision and care which enables those Jewish people who heeded Yeshua's warning, and fled Israel, to be kept and provided for 3½ years in the last half of the tribulation – that period called by Yeshua 'The Great Tribulation'.



Ruins of Bozrah



Ruins of Petra



The Treasury  
In Petra

## Bible Lands Maps

Note the preserved regions (see Daniel 11: 41) of Ammon, Moab and Edom. Note 'Bozrah' in southern Edom (present day Jordan) – Petra is in the area of Bozrah.



Megiddo

Bozrah

“Who *is* this who comes from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah, this *One who is* glorious in His apparel, travelling in the greatness of His strength? — “I who speak in righteousness, mighty to save.”  
Isaiah 63: 1

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# The Location of Petra

