

ESCHATOLOGY: DOCTRINE OF LAST THINGS

PART 60

THE REMNANT, PART 4

PETRA

In another lesson, I mentioned that we believe the place of sanctuary for believing Jews during the Tribulation will be located at Petra. How do we arrive at that conclusion? The background for this is in the Olivet Discourse in Matthew 24:15-20

Matthew 24:15–20 ¹⁵“Therefore when you see the ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand), ¹⁶then those who are in Judea must flee to the mountains. ¹⁷“Whoever is on the housetop must not go down to get the things out that are in his house. ¹⁸“Whoever is in the field must not turn back to get his cloak. ¹⁹“But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! ²⁰“But pray that your flight will not be in the winter, or on a Sabbath.

At the midpoint of the Tribulation, the Antichrist will set himself up in the Temple and demand to be worshiped. This is the abomination of desolation Daniel predicted.

Daniel 12:11 ¹¹“From the time that the regular sacrifice is abolished and the abomination of desolation is set up, there will be 1,290 days.

During the Tribulation, we know the Antichrist will institute some procedures that will make it very difficult for believers, both Jew and Gentile, to survive. Remember, in the Olivet Discourse, the Lord is specifically dealing with Jewish believers.

Revelation 13:16–18 ¹⁶And he causes all, the small and the great, and the rich and the poor, and the free men and the slaves, to be given a mark on their right hand or on their forehead, ¹⁷and he provides that no one will be able to buy or to sell, except the one who has the mark, either the name of the beast or the number of his name. ¹⁸Here is wisdom. Let him who has understanding calculate the number of the beast, for the number is that of a man; and his number is six hundred and sixty-six.

Isaiah 41 involves Cyrus and the Persians doing God's will in punishing the nations that have persecuted and subjugated Israel. Fruchtenbaum applies part of this to the provision God will make for the Israelites during the Great Tribulation. The Lord is going to supernaturally provide for the Remnant during that time. Others also see this as a type of what will happen in the future. “Taking Israel from insignificant worm to world power in the future millennium will showcase God's power and let the nations know

that it is Israel's God who controls the course of history." [Michael Vanlaningham and James Spence, "Isaiah" in *The Moody Bible Commentary*, p. 1064].

Isaiah 41:17–20 ¹⁷"The afflicted and needy are seeking water, but there is none, And their tongue is parched with thirst; I, the LORD, will answer them Myself, As the God of Israel I will not forsake them. ¹⁸"I will open rivers on the bare heights And springs in the midst of the valleys; I will make the wilderness a pool of water And the dry land fountains of water. ¹⁹"I will put the cedar in the wilderness, The acacia and the myrtle and the olive tree; I will place the juniper in the desert Together with the box tree and the cypress, ²⁰That they may see and recognize, And consider and gain insight as well, That the hand of the LORD has done this, And the Holy One of Israel has created it.

But before Israel can get to the Messianic Kingdom, they have to survive the Great Tribulation. Part of their survival is the miraculous provision God will make for them as they shelter in place at Petra. The Israelites will see what God is doing for the Remnant and they will know God is at work among them. This situation brings to mind the miraculous provisions God made for Israel during the Exodus when they were in the wilderness. God's provision will cause many of the Jewish people to at least consider the truth of Messiah whose identity is Jesus and some of them will come to faith. We have to remember the purpose of the Tribulation is to place Israel under divine discipline and bring the Israelites to a place of repentance so they will believe in their Messiah and be saved—both temporally and eternally. One of the ways they will realize this is through the provision of God on their behalf during Jacob's Trouble.

Deuteronomy 2:7 ⁷"For the LORD your God has blessed you in all that you have done; He has known your wanderings through this great wilderness. These forty years the LORD your God has been with you; you have not lacked a thing."

Deuteronomy 8:3–4 ³"He humbled you and let you be hungry, and fed you with manna which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, that He might make you understand that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by everything that proceeds out of the mouth of the LORD. ⁴"Your clothing did not wear out on you, nor did your foot swell these forty years.

In Isaiah 65, the prophet clearly pronounces judgment on the non-remnant by withholding provision from them while providing for the Remnant. Not only will provision be withheld from the non-remnant, they will be destined to fall by the sword.

Isaiah 65:8–16 ⁸Thus says the LORD, "As the new wine is found in the cluster, And one says, 'Do not destroy it, for there is benefit in it,' So I will act on behalf of My servants In order not to destroy all of them. ⁹"I will bring forth offspring from Jacob, And an heir of My mountains from Judah; Even My chosen ones shall inherit it, And My servants will dwell there. ¹⁰"Sharon will be a pasture land for flocks, And the valley of Achor a resting place for herds, For My people who seek Me. ¹¹"But you who forsake the LORD, Who

forget My holy mountain, Who set a table for Fortune, And who fill cups with mixed wine for Destiny, ¹²I will destine you for the sword, And all of you will bow down to the slaughter. Because I called, but you did not answer; I spoke, but you did not hear. And you did evil in My sight And chose that in which I did not delight." ¹³Therefore, thus says the Lord GOD, "Behold, My servants will eat, but you will be hungry. Behold, My servants will drink, but you will be thirsty. Behold, My servants will rejoice, but you will be put to shame. ¹⁴"Behold, My servants will shout joyfully with a glad heart, But you will cry out with a heavy heart, And you will wail with a broken spirit. ¹⁵"You will leave your name for a curse to My chosen ones, And the Lord GOD will slay you. But My servants will be called by another name. ¹⁶"Because he who is blessed in the earth Will be blessed by the God of truth; And he who swears in the earth Will swear by the God of truth; Because the former troubles are forgotten, And because they are hidden from My sight!

Isaiah wrote about the Jews being hidden in their rooms during the Day of the Lord. Many theologians see this as an echo of Israel's deliverance on the day of Passover in Egypt when they stayed safely in their homes.

Isaiah 26:20–21 ²⁰Come, my people, enter into your rooms And close your doors behind you; Hide for a little while Until indignation runs its course. ²¹For behold, the LORD is about to come out from His place To punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity; And the earth will reveal her bloodshed And will no longer cover her slain.

"Deliverance from the Great Tribulation and its fearful anguish will be near for the beleaguered remnant.... Closing their doors behind them, God's people will be told to await the issue calmly and confidently." [Merrill F. Unger, *Unger's Commentary on the Old Testament*, p. 1213].

The Bible provides some clues that enable us to understand where the place of refuge will be for the Remnant.

Matthew 24:16 ¹⁶then those who are in Judea must flee to the mountains.

Revelation 12:6, 14 ⁶Then the woman fled into the wilderness where she had a place prepared by God, so that there she would be nourished for one thousand two hundred and sixty days.... ¹⁴But the two wings of the great eagle were given to the woman, so that she could fly into the wilderness to her place, where she was nourished for a time and times and half a time, from the presence of the serpent.

1. It is in the mountains.
2. It is in the wilderness.
3. It is a place prepared/selected by God.

After the abomination of desolation is set up in the holy place, the Lord's command is for the Jews to flee to the mountains. This is, of course, Israel. The area south and east of

Jerusalem is full of mountainous wilderness. Being nourished implies the provision of food. The two wings of an eagle “speaks of supernatural assistance given by God in a time of human incapability.... It also connotes supernatural protection and provision, patterned after the way in which an eagle, when training a youngster to fly, pushes it out of the nest but also flies with it and catches it to bear it upwards again when needed. The woman [Israel] will be given supernatural assistance in her flight as well as supernatural protection and provision en route and upon arrival at her destination.” [Tony Garland, *A Testimony of Jesus Christ: A Commentary on the Book of Revelation*, p. 1:496]. The parallels with the Exodus are significant.

Exodus 19:4 ⁴“You yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles’ wings, and brought you to Myself.

Deuteronomy 32:10–13 ¹⁰“He found him in a desert land, And in the howling waste of a wilderness; He encircled him, He cared for him, He guarded him as the pupil of His eye. ¹¹“Like an eagle that stirs up its nest, That hovers over its young, He spread His wings and caught them, He carried them on His pinions. ¹²“The LORD alone guided him, And there was no foreign god with him. ¹³“He made him ride on the high places of the earth, And he ate the produce of the field; And He made him suck honey from the rock, And oil from the flinty rock,

Isaiah 40:31 ³¹Yet those who wait for the LORD Will gain new strength; They will mount up with wings like eagles, They will run and not get tired, They will walk and not become weary.

Supernatural intervention and protection is a bit of a theme here in the Revelation and pertains to both Church and Israel. “Supernatural intervention had protected the *Church* from the entire ‘hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world’ (Rev. 3:10). Here, supernatural intervention protects the woman *in the midst* of the last half an hour when “the Lord comes out of His place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity.” [Tony Garland, *A Testimony of Jesus Christ: A Commentary on the Book of Revelation*, pp. 1:496-497].

The place was a location God specifically designated to be the place of refuge for the Remnant. It was a place where Israel would be protected from the presence of the serpent. The wilderness is not specifying a place in general; it refers to a specific place prepared by God.

Revelation 12:13–14 ¹³And when the dragon saw that he was thrown down to the earth, he persecuted the woman who gave birth to the male child. ¹⁴But the two wings of the great eagle were given to the woman, so that she could fly into the wilderness to her place, where she was nourished for a time and times and half a time, from the presence [πρόσωπον] of the serpent.

Presence, *πρόσωπον*, means face; it is the personal presence of an individual at a particular place. This means Israel will be “protected from the ‘face, countenance’ of the serpent. This denotes his inability to access her.... She [Israel, the woman] is *hidden* from his access, and possibly even from his knowledge.” [Tony Garland, *A Testimony of Jesus Christ: A Commentary on the Book of Revelation*, p. 1:497]. It seems unlikely the Antichrist will not know where they are because at the end they will need the Lord’s intervention to prevent their annihilation. In the Olivet Discourse, the Lord said unless those days were shortened, no one would survive (Mt. 24:22). It is more likely the Antichrist is divinely prevented from attacking and destroying them during the Great Tribulation. Not all the Jews will be in Petra and Jews around the world, especially in Israel/Jerusalem, will also be pleading for the Lord to come back.

Isaiah 33:13-16 also hints at the place of refuge and it too distinguishes between the fate of the non-remnant and the divine protection of the Remnant.

Isaiah 33:13–16 ¹³“You who are far away, hear what I have done; And you who are near, acknowledge My might.” ¹⁴Sinners in Zion are terrified; Trembling has seized the godless. “Who among us can live with the consuming fire? Who among us can live with continual burning?” ¹⁵He who walks righteously and speaks with sincerity, He who rejects unjust gain And shakes his hands so that they hold no bribe; He who stops his ears from hearing about bloodshed And shuts his eyes from looking upon evil; ¹⁶He will dwell on the heights, His refuge will be the impregnable [מְצֻדָה] rock; His bread will be given him, His water will be sure.

The place of refuge is described as a place on high in a location that is a refuge of impregnable rock and there Israel will be proved food and water. These words imply a place that is easy to defend. Impregnable, [מְצֻדָה], means an inaccessible, secure place possibly up high in rim-rock or mountain area where one may dwell or reside in a defensive position. This word is translated various ways, but all imply a secure, defensible position. The NASB has it “impregnable rock”; the NKJV and the RSV “fortress of rocks”; the KJV and ASV “munitions of rocks”, the HCSB “rocky fortresses”; and the NET Bible “mountain strongholds.”

Micah 2:12 explicitly identifies the place of refuge.

Micah 2:12 ¹²“I will surely assemble all of you, Jacob, I will surely gather the remnant of Israel. I will put them together like sheep in the fold [בְּצֹרָה]; Like a flock in the midst of its pasture They will be noisy with men.

Fold, [בְּצֹרָה], translated Bozrah in English, means pen, sheepfold; an enclosure for holding sheep or possibly goats. Most translations translate the word as “fold” and the KJV and ASV use “Bozrah.”

“The ancient city of Bozrah was located in the region of Mount Seir. Mount Seir is a very rocky range of mountains, and its name means the ‘hairy mountains.’ This fulfills the

requirement of the Matthew passage. It is located in the wilderness section of ancient Edom and so fulfills the requirement of the Revelation passage. The very nature of the chain of mountains of Mount Seir makes it quite defensible, fulfilling the requirements of the Isaiah passage.... Today the area is in southern Jordan." [Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum, *The Footsteps of the Messiah: A Study of the Sequence of Prophetic Events*, p. 292].

The question still remains concerning the exact location of Bozrah in the area of Mount Seir. There are only two possible locations and Petra seems to be the most likely. "Petra is located in a basin within Mount Seir, and is totally surrounded by mountains and cliffs. The only way in and out of the city is through a narrow passageway that extends for about a mile and can only be negotiated by foot or by horseback. This makes the city easy to defend, and its surrounding high cliffs give added meaning and confirmation to Isaiah 33:16. Only a few abreast can enter through this passage at any one time, giving this city even greater defensibility. The name *Bozrah* means 'sheepfold.' An ancient sheepfold had a narrow entrance so that the shepherd could count his sheep. Once inside the fold, the sheep had more room to move around. Petra is shaped like a giant sheepfold, with its narrow passage opening up to a spacious circle surrounded by cliffs." [Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum, *The Footsteps of the Messiah: A Study of the Sequence of Prophetic Events*, pp. 292-293].

We also know the area of Edom, Moab, and Ammon will be spared the domination of Antichrist and those countries are now what we call Jordan.

Daniel 11:41 ⁴¹"He will also enter the Beautiful Land, and many countries will fall; but these will be rescued out of his hand: Edom, Moab and the foremost of the sons of Ammon.

This fact leads to the conclusion that Petra would be a logical location for Israel's place of refuge. Isaiah also wrote about Moab as a place of refuge for the Israelites.

Isaiah 16:3-5 ³"Take counsel, execute judgment; Make your shadow like the night in the middle of the day; Hide the outcasts, Do not betray him who escapes. ⁴Let My outcasts dwell with you, O Moab; Be a shelter to them from the face of the spoiler. For the extortioner is at an end, Devastation ceases, The oppressors are consumed out of the land. ⁵In mercy the throne will be established; And One will sit on it in truth, in the tabernacle of David, Judging and seeking justice and hastening righteousness." [NKJV] There is a textual issue in this verse. The NASB has "Let the outcasts of Moab stay with you," but it should read "Let My outcasts dwell with you." The point is the outcasts are the Israelites and not the citizens of Moab.

"The Lord was saying to Moab, through the Spirit of prophecy in Isaiah, 'When My people Israel will be outcasts, be a haven to them, hiding them from their persecutors.' Envisioned is that preeminent time of Israel's trouble, the Great Tribulation under

Antichrist, Israel's supreme 'destroyer.'" [Merrill F. Unger, *Unger's Commentary on the Old Testament*, p. 1186].

Bozrah also plays a significant role in the Second Coming of Christ Jesus, which reinforces the idea that it is the place of refuge. The Lord will not return until the Jewish leadership at the time asks for Him to rescue them from what will seem to be certain destruction.

Joel 2:28–32 ²⁸“And it shall come to pass afterward That I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh; Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, Your old men shall dream dreams, Your young men shall see visions. ²⁹And also on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days. ³⁰“And I will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth: Blood and fire and pillars of smoke. ³¹The sun shall be turned into darkness, And the moon into blood, Before the coming of the great and awesome day of the LORD. ³²And it shall come to pass That whoever calls on the name of the LORD Shall be saved. For in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there shall be deliverance, As the LORD has said, Among the remnant whom the LORD calls.

It makes sense that He will return to the place of refuge to prevent the destruction of the Remnant and this place is Bozrah. Most people think the Lord will return directly to the Mount of Olives, but that is incorrect; He will return to Bozrah in order to save the Remnant.

Isaiah 63:1–6 ¹Who is this who comes from Edom, With dyed garments from Bozrah, This One who is glorious in His apparel, Traveling in the greatness of His strength?— “I who speak in righteousness, mighty to save.” ²Why is Your apparel red, And Your garments like one who treads in the winepress? ³“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. ⁴For the day of vengeance is in My heart, And the year of My redeemed has come. ⁵I 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. ⁶I have trodden down the peoples in My anger, Made them drunk in My fury, And brought down their strength to the earth.”

Isaiah 34:1–7 ¹Come near, you nations, to hear; And heed, you people! Let the earth hear, and all that is in it, The world and all things that come forth from it. ²For the indignation of the LORD is against all nations, And His fury against all their armies; He has utterly destroyed them, He has given them over to the slaughter. ³Also their slain shall be thrown out; Their stench shall rise from their corpses, And the mountains shall be melted with their blood. ⁴All the host of heaven shall be dissolved, And the heavens shall be rolled up like a scroll; All their host shall fall down As the leaf falls from the vine, And as fruit falling from a fig tree. ⁵“For My sword shall be bathed in heaven; Indeed it shall come down on Edom, And on the people of My curse, for judgment. ⁶The 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. ⁷The 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."

Habakkuk 3:3 ³God came from Teman, The Holy One from Mount Paran. Selah His glory covered the heavens, And the earth was full of His praise.

Teman and Paran are both in the mountain range of Mount Seir near Bozrah.

We looked at Micah 2:12-13 earlier, but it also reinforces the idea the Lord is returning to Bozrah at the Second Coming.

Micah 2:12–13 ¹²I will surely assemble, O Jacob, all of thee; I will surely gather the remnant of Israel; I will put them together as the sheep of Bozrah, as a flock in the midst of their pasture; they shall make great noise by reason of the multitude of men. ¹³The breaker is gone up before them: they have broken forth and passed on to the gate, and are gone out thereat; and their king is passed on before them, and Jehovah at the head of them. [ASV]

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