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**THE ROCK CITY**

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In the classic movie 'Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade', the actor Sean Connery, the original James Bond, plays Indie's elderly father whose lifetime obsession is to find the Holy Grail. Their quest to find the sacred relic leads them to the ruins of a lost city which was conquered by the crusaders and knights back during medieval times. In order to find the city, the two have to travel by horseback through a winding narrow passageway. The crevice, with towering granite walls skyrocketing upwards on both sides of the canyon, finally opens up onto a spectacular view of a city with its walls and pillars literally carved into the face of the massive rock cliffs that surround the area.



This city, which many viewers of the movie are probably unaware of, is the rock fortress of Petra, a major city of the Biblical Edomites. And although in reality the Holy Grail has never been found, the city of Petra remains as one of the greatest discoveries in the annals of biblical archaeology. Not just because of its finding, but because of the prophecy it fulfills and the prophecy that is yet to be fulfilled in the original capital of Edom, Bozrah.



Many of the Old Testament prophets spoke out against this once mighty city that was the pride of the nation of Edom. The Edomites were the descendants of Jacob's brother Esau, as mentioned in Genesis 36:43, and they lived in the mountainous regions south of the Dead Sea.

According to the Bible, Esau's hand was always against his brother. He even plotted once to kill Jacob because he had deceived his father Isaac into giving him a blessing. And later when the children of Israel were seeking safe passage on their way to the promised land, Esau's descendants refused to allow Israel permission to travel through their territory.

Because of their constant hostility against Israel, God declared their fate in Malachi 1:2-4: "I have loved you," says the LORD. "Yet you say, 'In what way have You loved us?' Was not Esau Jacob's brother?" Says the LORD.

"Yet Jacob I have loved; But Esau I have hated, And laid waste his mountains and his heritage For the jackals of the wilderness."

Even though Edom has said, "We have been impoverished, But we will return and build the

desolate places," Thus says the LORD of hosts: "They may build, but I will throw down; They shall be called the Territory of Wickedness, And the people against whom the LORD will have indignation forever."

Did the Lord lay waste this Edomite stronghold and give it to the jackals? Oh yes. You see from 550 B.C. to 400 B.C. the Edomites were overrun by Nabatean Arabs who ransacked their territory. And although Petra was inhabited by others up until the time the Crusaders conquered it, afterwards the city was completely deserted to the jackals until being rediscovered by archaeologists in the late 1800's.

Once a mighty fortress situated on a major trade route between North Africa and Europe. Now all that is left is a bunch of empty stones, a wasteland of thorns and thistles, crawling with snakes, lizards, and owls by night, while birds of prey can be seen circling the sky's overhead by day.

During our time, the only men who come to its gates are tourist who marvel at how such a mighty kingdom could have fallen. Yet the Lord has spoken these words of judgement against Edom's cities many years in the past:

"... the owl and the raven shall dwell in it. And He shall stretch out over it. The line of confusion and the stones of emptiness. They shall call its nobles to the kingdom, But none shall be there, and all its princes shall be nothing. And thorns shall come up in its palaces, Nettles and brambles in its fortresses; It shall be a habitation of jackals, A courtyard for ostriches. The wild beasts of the desert shall also meet with the jackals, And the wild goat shall bleat to its companion; Also the night creature shall rest there, And find for herself a place of rest. There the arrow snake shall make her nest and lay eggs And hatch, and gather them under her shadow; There also shall the hawks be gathered, Every one with her mate. "Search from the book of the LORD, and read: Not one of these shall fail; Not one shall lack her mate. For My mouth has commanded it, and His Spirit has gathered them."

Isaiah 34:11-16

God said that he would strip this rock fortress free of all the Edomites and make their empty stones a marvel for all that pass by:

"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." I have heard a message from the LORD, And an ambassador has been sent to the nations: "Gather together, come against her, And rise up to battle! "For indeed, I will make you small among nations, Despised among men. Your fierceness has deceived you, The pride of your heart, O you who dwell in the clefts of the rock, Who hold the height of the hill! Though you make your nest as high as the eagle, I will bring you down from there," says the LORD. "Edom also shall be an astonishment; Everyone who goes by it will be astonished And will hiss at all its plagues. As in the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah and their neighbors," says the LORD, "No one shall remain there, Nor shall a son of man dwell in it.

Jeremiah 49:13-18

In Ezekiel 25:14, God mentions that the nation of Israel would one day take out the Lord's vengeance on Edom, and history confirms that this prophecy has been fulfilled.

The first century Jewish historian Josephus gives us one account of Israel's defeat of Edom:

"The Idumeans (formerly the Edomites) surrendered to Hyrcanus who allowed them to live as long as they agreed to circumcise their sons and to abide by Jewish customs. This they did, and from that point on they followed the practices of the Jews." Antiquities Book 13 Chap 9: 1

Another account can be found in the historical texts of the book of Maccabees:

"At the same time the Idumeans, who held some important strongholds, were harassing the Jews; ...Maccabeus and his companions, after public prayers asking God to be their ally, moved quickly against the strongholds of the Idumeans (the Edomites). Attacking vigorously, they gained control

of the places, drove back all who manned the walls, and cut down those who opposed them, killing as many as twenty thousand men." (2 Maccabees 10:15-17)

The Lord's vengeance against the Edomites was complete, and to this very day the mountains of Seir, Bozrah, Teman and Petra all lie as a barren wasteland in fulfillment of Scripture.

But there is still one prophecy given by the Lord about one of Edom's cities, Bozrah, that is still yet to come. It will be fulfilled when Christ returns to this earth in all power and great glory.

Isaiah 62:11-63:8: Indeed the LORD has proclaimed To the end of the world: "Say to the daughter of Zion, 'Surely your salvation is coming; Behold, His reward is with Him, And His work before Him.' " And they shall call them The Holy People, The Redeemed of the LORD; And you shall be called Sought Out, A City Not Forsaken.

Who 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." 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." I will mention the lovingkindnesses of the LORD And the praises of the LORD, According to all that the LORD has bestowed on us, And the great goodness toward the house of Israel, Which He has bestowed on them according to His mercies, According to the multitude of His lovingkindnesses. For He said, "Surely they are My

people, Children who will not lie." So He became their Savior."

### **THE GREATEST PROPHECY CONCERNING PETRA:**

**Upon this Rock (Petra) I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.**

(The Petra in this passage refers to Jesus Christ, the Lord himself. For a mighty rock fortress is our God.)

### **THE GREATEST SONG TO BE SUNG ABOUT A MIGHTY ROCK FORTRESS:**

A mighty fortress is our God,  
A stronghold never failing;  
Our helper He amid the flood  
Of mortal ills prevailing;  
For still our ancient foe  
Does seek to work us woe;  
His craft and power are great,  
And armed with cruel hate,  
On earth is not His equal

Did we in our own strength confide,  
Our striving would be losing;  
Were not the right Man on our side,  
The Man of God's own choosing;  
Do you ask who that may be?  
Christ Jesus, it is He;  
Lord Sabbath is His name,  
From age to age the same,  
And He must win the battle.  
And though this world, with devils filled,  
Should threaten to undo us,  
We will not fear, for God hath willed  
His truth to triumph through us;  
The prince of Darkness grim,  
We tremble not for him;  
His rage we can endure,  
For lo, his doom is sure,  
One little word shall fell him.

That word above all earthly powers,  
No thanks to them, abideth;  
The Spirit and the gifts are ours  
Through Him who with us sideth:  
Let goods and kindred go,  
This mortal life also;  
The body they may kill:  
God's truth abideth still,  
His kingdom is forever.

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