

## **Response from Ken Bassett re: GWR question:**

**>>> I have a question for you. In reading your books, you spoke of the Jews fleeing to Pella, if I recall correctly, after the A/C temple desecration. From what I can determine, the Jews might have gone there during their 70AD flight, but why did you choose Pella over Petra for the Tribulation run for the hills?**

Great question, Gary.

The short answer is that I was probably discussing Revelation 12. And while some believe the latter part of Revelation 12 discusses the future Tribulation and the flight of the Jews to Petra, I believe that Revelation 12 has nothing to do with the Tribulation, the Antichrist, or the Future Roman Empire. Instead, I believe the entire narrative of Revelation 12 is confined to events that occurred during the Old Roman Empire (except verse 4 -- the fall of the rebel angels -- which merely helps set the framework.)

Hence, I'm convinced the flight of the "Woman" (Jewish believers) through the "wilderness" and into a specific place that "God hath prepared for her" refers to the flight that occurred in March of 67 AD to the city of Pella, where the believers remained well-fed and

unmolested until the Roman siege ended in September of 70 AD (exactly 3 ½ years).

(Note that Revelation 12 never mentions the “mountains,” or the Abomination of Desolation, even though Matthew 24 does. That’s because these narratives are speaking about two different events. Please see item 3 below for a list of major discrepancies between these two narratives.)

Now here’s the longer answer...

## **EVIDENCE THAT REVELATION 12 IS TIED EXCLUSIVELY TO THE OLD ROMAN EMPIRE**

The fact that Revelation 12 is not talking about the flight of Jewish believers during the future Tribulation, but only about Old Roman Empire events, is signaled by at least three bits of data:

All of the events that are mentioned in chapter 12 took place at some point during the Old Roman Empire: the birth of Christ, the slaughter of the innocents (implied), the ascension of Christ, Satan’s wrath against the Jews (the siege of Jerusalem), the dispersal of the Jews throughout the earth (the diaspora), and the start of Satan’s long wait for the Antichrist to arise from the Sea.

The crowns on the Beast are time markers. They separate the Old Roman timeframe from the New. When the Heads wear the crowns (all throughout chapter 12), the narrative is speaking exclusively about Old Roman Empire events. When the Horns take the crowns (all throughout chapter 13), the narrative is speaking exclusively about Future Roman Empire events. Indeed, this is why the crowns don't appear anywhere in chapter 17—it's because you can't use time markers to restrict a narrative that freely transitions between both eras, the way chapter 17 does.

There are too many discrepancies between the action described in Revelation 12 and that described in Daniel 11/ Matthew 24 for these passages to be discussing the same event:

**SEAMLESS TRANSITION** – Revelation 12:5 flows seamlessly into Revelation 12:6, and there is no indication that a transition from the First Century to the Twenty-First Century has occurred. I fully acknowledge that unannounced skips sometimes occur in prophetic narratives, but aside from the common feature of "1260 days," there is no evidence to support a 2000-year transition here.

**PLACE OF REFUGE** – Revelation 12:6 says the Woman fled through the wilderness and ended up in a specific place of refuge that God had prepared for her, a place that supplied all of her needs: "And the woman fled [to]...where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days." On the other hand, Matthew 24:16 says that the Jews will flee "to the mountains," which (clearly) is not a specific place. And there is no indication that God is going to stock all of the mountains with food and water for their survival.

**DEGREE OF PROTECTION** – Revelation 12:14 says the Woman [a group of Jewish believers] was brought "into her place" for 1260 days "where she is...[kept] from the face of the serpent," meaning she was shielded. However, Revelation 13:7, 10 and Matthew 24:9, 21-22 say that the Jews will be overtaken and slaughtered, not shielded.

**IDENTITY OF THE ANTAGONIST** – Revelation 12:13 says the Woman fled from the forces of ancient Rome (i.e., the Dragon). But Revelation 13:7 says the Jews will be hunted down by the forces of revived Rome (i.e., the Beast).

**IDENTITY OF THE DEFENDER** – Revelation 12:16 says the Earth helped the Woman by draining the flood that was sent by the Dragon, a reference to the First Century dispersal of Jews

throughout the earth after being pursued by the Romans. But Daniel 12:1 says that Michael the archangel is the one who will defend the Jews during the Tribulation, although most of the Jews will still be killed. Matthew 24:22 then says it is only the arrival of another defender, Jesus himself, which will prevent the total annihilation of God's people.

**RESULT OF MICHAEL'S INVOLVEMENT** – Revelation 12:7-13 says that Michael's involvement endangered the Jews: "And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels... And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, **he persecuted the woman** [Israel] which brought forth the man child." But Daniel 12:1 says that Michael's involvement will repel the attacks of the enemy, not trigger them: "And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people... and at that time **thy people shall be delivered**, every one that shall be found written in the book."

**FATE OF THE ANTAGONISTS** – Revelation 12:17 (ESV) says that when the Dragon finished persecuting Israel, the Dragon stood on a beach waiting for the birth of the Antichrist (i.e., he waited for the Beast to rise from the Sea). On the other hand, Revelation 19, Matthew 24, and Daniel 12 say that at the end of Israel's

persecution, the Dragon will be defeated and placed in chains, while the Antichrist will be hurled into the Lake of Fire.

**TIMING OF THE EVICTION** – Revelation 12:12 says the Dragon was kicked out of heaven and became furious with the Woman (Israel), realizing that his days were numbered: "he knoweth that he hath but a short time." However, legally speaking, this eviction had to occur when Jesus rose from the grave, shamed his enemies, and led captivity captive (Col. 2:15; Eph. 4:8). It had to occur immediately after Jesus returned to the Father's house in triumph and began preparing that house for his Bride. Otherwise, the devil has been distracting our Lord from his mansion-building project these last two thousand years and the Bride will have to compete with the devil for Jesus' attention (in heaven) during the first 3½ years of the Tribulation — i.e., in the midst of Jesus' honeymoon!

Although the Old Testament does record several incidents in the past where Satan appeared in heaven and accused the believers to the Father, nothing in Scripture indicates that Satan is now in heaven accusing the brethren. In fact, inasmuch as every believer today stands totally and forever innocent before God — thanks to the Cross — the devil has no basis to accuse us at all. He lost his position as the "accuser of the brethren" when Jesus paid the price at Calvary (Rev. 12:10-11). As Revelation 12:8 puts it, "neither was

[the devil's] place [i.e., his role as prosecutor] found in heaven any longer." Indeed, the New Testament now pictures Satan either moving across the atmosphere (Eph. 2:2) or roaming across the earth (1 Pet. 5:8). There is no mention of him in heaven.

Hence, the "short time" that Satan was given after being kicked out of heaven refers to the 2000 years between the Cross and the Battle of Armageddon. It does not refer to the 3½ years that make up the last half of the Tribulation.

Remember: Satan was allotted 4000 years to test mankind the first time around (i.e., from the Fall of Adam to the Temptation of Christ.) Therefore, the 2000 years that Satan now possesses to complete his testing of mankind is indeed relatively "short." It is only half the original time:  $4000 \times \frac{1}{2} = 2000$ . (Compare this with the phrasing in Revelation 22:12, "behold, I come quickly," a reference to Jesus' "speedy" — yet 2000 years long — delay between his ascent to heaven and the Second Coming.)

## **BOTTOM LINE 1**

The Jews may indeed flee to Petra (among other places) during the future Tribulation. This seems to be indicated by the passages you cited, including those recorded in Isaiah, Matthew, and Daniel.

However, I believe that Revelation 12 is discussing what happened to the Jewish believers between 67—70 AD, when they quickly departed Jerusalem and fled to Pella (in obedience with God’s oracle), so they would be protected from Satan and his agents, the Romans. (As you know, this escape was recorded by Eusebius.)

Consequently, I don’t see a “skip” from the Old Roman Empire to the Future Roman Empire between verses 12:5 and 12:6. For me, the “skip” occurs between verse 12:17 and verse 13:1. And that’s why I believe Pella is in view in Revelation 12, not Petra.

## **BOTTOM LINE 2**

The reason I believe you asked such a great question is this: Once we understand that Revelation 12 is speaking only about the Old Roman Empire, we can then see that the Seven Heads must be seven Roman Emperors. And that, in turn, will help us to identify the Antichrist!

(And believe it or not, those emperors are easy to identify.)



All that's required to solve this mystery is to remember what the numbers 7 and 3 represent in Scripture. Seven represents something that's complete; three represents the beginning, middle, and end of a set.

Hence:

Inasmuch as there are **7 Caesars**, these 7 represent the "complete" ancient empire (27 BC—476 AD)

Then, since they're divided into **3 groups**, they must represent the beginning, middle, and end of the empire:

The first five **started** the empire, but were already dead ("fallen") by 95 A.D. These were Augustus, Tiberius, Caligula, Claudius, Nero. Only these five comprised the first dynasty.

The sixth Caesar was Domitian. He existed at the time of John's vision ("one is"). He therefore represented the **middle group**, that is, all the intervening emperors between those above and the one below.

The final king was Romulus Augustus. As the seventh king, he **completed** the empire. In fact, he not only completed the empire, but in accordance with the prophecy, he was not yet living in 95 AD (he was “not yet come”). But when he did come, he reigned less than a year (he will reign “a short space.”)

Now, the correct identification of these kings might seem academic to some, but it’s not. It’s actually quite critical because once we realize these kings were seven specific Caesars, it becomes apparent the Antichrist will look exactly like one of them (he is not only the Eighth King in this line, but he is actually “one of the seven.”) And that means he will look just like Augustus, Tiberius, Caligula, Claudius, or Nero.

Indeed, the fact that people will recognize the AC as a former Caesar is supported by Revelation 17:8 – “[A]nd they that dwell on the earth shall wonder...when they **behold** the beast that was (a Caesar who lived before 95 AD), and is not (was dead in 95 AD), and yet is (the man who rises during the Tribulation).”

These verses therefore give us a way to identify the Antichrist visually.