

THE WOMAN IN THE WILDERNESS AND THE 144,000 : PART 1

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When I authored the original version of this series back in December of 1998, I was of a very different mindset than I am twenty-six years later today. As I explain in other BBB articles, including in "Jesus Christ's Return: Have We Been Deceived?" and "Fight Against Futurism!", back then I very strongly embraced a doctrinal belief system -- that is, a theological perspective -- which is commonly referred to as Futurism.

For those of you who may have never heard of this word, and who thus may not fully understand what Futurism is, in the simplest of terms, it is a doctrine and belief system which takes ancient, already-fulfilled prophecies, and places them in our current time, as if they have not been fulfilled yet.

One of the core beliefs behind Futurism is the belief that the return of Jesus Christ will occur at some point in the near future. But even saying "near future" is a subjective phrase, the reason being that there are a lot of different points of view within Futurism. As a result, when someone states that Jesus will return soon, it is actually wise to

inquire of such a person exactly what they mean, because for some of them, "soon" is a matter of days, while for others, it could really mean weeks, months or even years. That in itself is one of the deceptions of Futurism, because due to its flexibility, a person who promotes Futurism has a layer of protection, so that it can be challenging to prove them wrong. Just ask them what they mean by "soon", and you will see exactly what I mean.

At any rate, it is upon this core belief in the near future return of Jesus Christ that a number of other beliefs are based. Most notable among these are those which concern the exact timing of such events as the theorized construction of a third Jewish temple in Jerusalem, the signing of the Holy Covenant, the rise of the Beast and the False Prophet, the appearance of the Two Sackcloth Witnesses in Jerusalem, the Great Tribulation, the 144,000, the Mark of the Beast, the destruction of Babylon the Great, the Battle of Armageddon, and the Rapture. The Futurist-leaning interpretation of all of these events form a part of this widely-accepted belief system.

As I said a moment ago, twenty-six years ago when I penned the original version of this article, I was a rather solid Futurist, and there was no way that anyone could convince me to believe otherwise. I had the very same expectations as so many other Christians. I embraced the same beliefs as many of my Christian friends still do today. I earnestly clung to the firm belief that many of the events I just mentioned to you were future events, and not past, fulfilled events. Most importantly, I enthusiastically awaited the return of Jesus Christ during my lifetime with eagerness and anticipation. Furthermore, I preached Futurism quite fervently to others for forty-two years of my adult Christian life.

However, then, as I explain in "Jesus Christ's Return: Have We Been Deceived?", in 2011-2012, the Lord just began to shake up my Futurist beliefs, and challenge me by showing me verses which seemed to contradict what I had so fervently believed for so many years of my life. You can read about it more in the aforementioned series. The end result is that I was forced to make a complete U-turn in my belief system, and totally re-evaluate everything I had believed regarding Bible prophecy up until that point.

One of the byproducts of that major theological shift in my personal thinking, is that I had to begin the very lengthy

process of going back and re-reading all of my Bill's Bible Basics articles and series which had been written up until that point, and editing each one of them accordingly, so that they conform to my current beliefs. Thus, after I had written "Jesus Christ's Return: Have We Been Deceived?" in 2016, in which I fully explained how and why I had made such a dramatic shift in my thinking, I began to update all of my other articles and series where I discuss Bible prophecy to some degree.

My friends, that is precisely what I have been slowly doing ever since that year, and I am still far from done, because this is a one-man ministry, I am getting old, my health is in a slow decline, and I just have so many different things that I need to do with the BBB ministry. In other words, in addition to updating all of my old articles, I am constantly writing new articles, creating new graphics, composing new poetry and songs, compiling new KJV Bible Verse Lists, and keeping busy posting on the social networks. It is a lot for an old guy like me, so your prayers are much appreciated.

But, thank the Lord! Alas, after so many years, I am finally getting around to updating this series called "The Woman in the Wilderness and the 144,000". My friends, believe me when I say that it is long overdue, because what I stated in the original version of this article back in 1998 was wrong, sad to say. So as I said earlier, the 144,000 and the woman in the wilderness are two of the events which Futurists claim to be hinged on a future return of Jesus Christ.

Now, if you were to ask a Futurist who the 144,000 are, the common answer which you will probably receive is that they represent 144,000 Jews/Israelis who will come to know Jesus Christ during the three-and-a-half-year-long, or perhaps the seven-year-long -- depending on who you want to believe -- Great Tribulation. Supposedly, these 144,000 Jews will then proceed to evangelize the world. The common belief regarding why this will become necessary, seems to be that based on a widely-held misunderstanding regarding the phrase "Come up hither" which we find in Revelation 4:1, the Church will no longer be on the Earth, having been taken up in the Rapture, prior to the beginning of the Great Tribulation. Consider the following verse:

"After this I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither, and I

will shew thee things which must be hereafter."

Revelation 4:1, KJV

Now, if you had asked me if I believed this a dozen years ago, I would have probably agreed with it to some degree. Not so anymore, my friends. So let us begin to set things straight, shall we?

As some of my readers will know, in Matthew 24, Mark 13 and Luke 21, we find a sermon that was given by Jesus which is commonly referred to as the Olivet Discourse, being as Jesus shared this extremely important message with His followers as they sat on the Mount of Olives, which overlooks the city of Jerusalem across the Kidron Valley. This sermon resulted from the Lord's followers asking Him a two-pointed question: When would He return, and when would the end of the age occur, as we see by these verses:

"And Jesus went out, and departed from the temple: and his disciples came to him for to shew him the buildings of the temple. And Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things? verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down. And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?"

Matthew 24:1-6, KJV

The next thing we need to do is to see how Jesus responded to their inquiry. The very next three verses in Matthew 24 state as follows:

"And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you. For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many. And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet."

Matthew 24:4-6, KJV

Thus began Jesus' explanation regarding all of the dreadful events which would occur prior to His return to the Earth. Now, for those of you who are wondering why my explanation is beginning at this point, instead of digging straight into the Book of Revelation where the 144,000 and the woman in the wilderness are mentioned, it's for a very simple reason. The fact of the matter -- as I have explained before -- is

that the prophecies of Daniel, Matthew 24, Mark 13, Luke 21 and the Book of Revelation focus on some of the same events. Thus, for us to properly understand Bible prophecy, it is important that we see the links between these books, as well as their links to the actual historical record.

There are two important things which you need to understand from the previous sets of verses. First of all, as I explain in "Jesus Christ's Return: Have We Been Deceived?", there is a translational error in the AKJV version of the Holy Bible. Yes, I can already hear some of you KJV extremists groaning. But the truth of the matter is that whereas the KJV Bible states "end of the world", some other Bibles state "end of the age", and rightly so.

Why do I say this? Well, to begin with, the Koine Greek word which is used in the previous verse is "aion". According to Thayer's Greek English Lexicon, the primary meaning of the word "aion" is a period of time, or an age. The word "aion" can also refer to perpetuity of time and eternity. In all cases, it primarily concerns units of time. In fact, as you may have already figured out, it is from this Greek word that we likewise derive our English word "eon". We all know what an eon is. It is a very long period of time, right?

There is another Koine Greek word which is also translated as "world" in the New Testament of the KJV Bible. That is the word "kosmos". This word is primarily concerned with the physical planet, or with the inhabitants of the Earth, or with the governments of the world. It can also refer to the Earth as a whole, or even the universe. It is from this word that we derive English words such as cosmos, cosmology and cosmopolitan. But what I find so interesting here is that Matthew 24:3 does NOT use "kosmos". It uses "aion". So what does this mean? It means that the Apostles did NOT ask Jesus when the end of the world would occur. They asked Him when the end of the age would occur.

If you require a more thorough explanation than what I have provided here, then I again invite you to read my seven-part series "Jesus Christ's Return: Have We Been Deceived?". The second thing to which I wish to draw your attention is the fact that in Matthew 24:6 above, Jesus says "but the end is not yet." So the Lord mentions a few signs, and then He says this. Thus, we have the Apostles asking when the end of the age will occur, and then we have Jesus sharing a few of the signs and then saying the end is not yet. So the question we

need to ask ourselves is what in the world are they all talking about?

As I clearly explain in some of my other Bill's Bible Basic articles, when Jesus says "the end is not yet", I'm inclined to believe that He is actually referring to the end of TWO things. First is the end of the prophetic age of Daniel. In other words, the conclusion of the Seventy Weeks prophecy of Daniel which consisted of seventy seven-year periods, for a total of four hundred and ninety years in all. So Jesus is talking about the end of that 490-year period, or prophetic age.

The second event that Jesus is talking about is the end of the coming First Jewish-Roman War, which concluded that same prophetic age. The end of that war and that age culminated in a very major event. If you don't know or understand what that event was, then I again refer you to the aforementioned series. Please remember that it was based on those two very questions in the aforementioned three chapters -- Matthew 24, Mark 13 and Luke 21 -- that the Lord shared this astounding information with His Disciples. By the way, if you truly want to get into the nitty gritty of the First Jewish-Roman War, I likewise encourage you to read my 25-part series "Vespasian, Titus and the Fall of Jerusalem".

So then, let us continue with my explanation. The historical record indicates that the First Jewish-Roman War occurred from 66 AD to 73 AD. As you can see by the dates, it lasted for seven years, and it corresponds to the Seventieth Week -- or last seven years -- of Daniel's Seventy Weeks prophecy. As some of my readers will already know, it was precisely in the middle of that seven-year war in 70 AD -- which again, the Prophet Daniel specifically referred to as "the midst of the week" -- that Jerusalem and the temple compound were utterly destroyed.

This great destruction was wrought by the hands of General Titus and his Roman legions, along with their local allies, which included King Herod and his forces. In fact, coward Herod later fled to Rome along with his sister Berenice. But this comes as no surprise, considering that all the Herods were puppet kings of the Roman emperor. In case you weren't aware of it, the first Herod in the Herod dynasty -- Herod the Great -- was in fact appointed by the Roman Senate. He was actually Idumaeen -- or Edomite, a descendant of Esau -- who married into a Jewish family, and thus adopted the Jews'

religion as his own.

The destruction of the temple compound of course resulted in the temple sacrifice and the oblation ceasing, EXACTLY as the Prophet Daniel had also written. In his prophetic book, Daniel describes General Titus and the Romans as "the people of the prince that shall come", and he says that "the end thereof shall be with a flood". Please note that the word "flood" is sometimes used in Scripture to symbolize a host, or army, as in "the arms of a flood". While I discuss the Daniel prophecies in other articles, allow me to share the four key verses for those of you who may not be familiar with them, along with another verse where "the arms of a flood" is used:

"Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy. Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times. And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined. And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate."

Daniel 9:24-27, KJV

"And with the arms of a flood shall they be overflowed from before him, and shall be broken; yea, also the prince of the covenant."

Daniel 11:22, KJV

Let me mention here that while this war had actually been initiated by his father, Vespasian -- as ordered by Emperor Nero -- Titus had to take over the war campaign after his father had to suddenly return to Rome in order to become the new emperor. This was a result of cowardly emperor, Nero,

committing suicide in the late 60s. In describing how the city of Jerusalem would be encompassed about by the armies of Rome, Jesus offered this warning in the Gospel of Luke:

"And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh."

Luke 21:20, KJV

To say the least, it was a terrible time for the Jews. After all, they were feeling the full brunt of God's Wrath against them. This was due to their stubborn and foolish rejection of the Son of God, who was their very own Messiah who they had failed to recognize, and who they killed out of hatred, jealousy and fear of the Romans.

During the bloody First Jewish-Roman War, it has been estimated that somewhere between six hundred thousand and one million plus Jews died. This was either a direct result of the actual fighting, or due to other causes, including Roman crucifixion, starvation, disease, and betrayal and infighting amongst the Jews of Jerusalem themselves, who were trapped within a Roman siege wall which surrounded Jerusalem. Concerning the various ways in which the Jews were killed during this dark period, you may find these verses from the Book of Revelation very interesting:

"And I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals, and I heard, as it were the noise of thunder, one of the four beasts saying, Come and see. And I saw, and behold a white horse: and he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him: and he went forth conquering, and to conquer. And when he had opened the second seal, I heard the second beast say, Come and see. And there went out another horse that was red: and power was given to him that sat thereon to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another: and there was given unto him a great sword. And when he had opened the third seal, I heard the third beast say, Come and see. And I beheld, and lo a black horse; and he that sat on him had a pair of balances in his hand. And I heard a voice in the midst of the four beasts say, A measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny; and see thou hurt not the oil and the wine. And when he had opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth beast say, Come and see. And I looked, and behold a pale horse: and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him. And power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword,

and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth."

Revelation 6:1-8, KJV

Let me also add at this point that I am convinced that this terrible war is the very same war for Jerusalem that we find described by the Prophet Zechariah in the following verse:

"For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle; and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished; and half of the city shall go forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city."

Zechariah 14:2, KJV

Now, if you are wondering how all of the previously described events relate to the 144,000 sealed servants of the Lord and the woman in the wilderness, please recall what I shared with you earlier. As I explained, all of these various prophetic books and chapters are closely interconnected, and are to a large degree discussing some of the very same prophetic and historic events. While I have just spent considerable time describing these events for you, there is a really important reason for doing so. That reason is to establish the exact time frame for when these events took place -- meaning the distant past -- to show you how the Bible and the historical record match up, and to prepare you for what comes next in our discussion. Are you ready?

Now, in the aforementioned three chapters -- Matthew 24, Mark 13 and Luke 21 -- when all of these terrible things began to occur in First Century Israel as the Roman legions encircled Jerusalem with their armies and their dreadful siege wall, do you recall what Jesus very clearly instructed His followers to do? For those of you who may not be too familiar with the chapters, let me share the following verses with you which reveal the answer:

"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:) Then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains: Let him which is on the housetop not come down to take any thing out of his house: Neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes. And woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days! But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath day: For

then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elects sake those days shall be shortened."

Matthew 24:15-22, KJV

"But when ye shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing where it ought not, (let him that readeth understand,) then let them that be in Judaea flee to the mountains: And let him that is on the housetop not go down into the house, neither enter therein, to take any thing out of his house: And let him that is in the field not turn back again for to take up his garment. But woe to them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days! And pray ye that your flight be not in the winter. For in those days shall be affliction, such as was not from the beginning of the creation which God created unto this time, neither shall be. And except that the Lord had shortened those days, no flesh should be saved: but for the elects sake, whom he hath chosen, he hath shortened the days."

Mark 13:14-20, KJV

"And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh. Then let them which are in Judaea flee to the mountains; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out; and let not them that are in the countries enter thereinto. For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. But woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck, in those days! for there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people. And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled."

Luke 21:20-24, KJV

In short, the Lord is giving His followers a clear warning regarding the approaching seven-year First Jewish-Roman War, and telling them that if they want to endure, and survive to the end of that awful war, they need to immediately flee to the mountains and hills surrounding Jerusalem, once they see Jerusalem surrounded by Roman armies and a siege wall, and once they witness the Roman standard -- or raised flag -- standing in the temple compound. That is, in the holy place.

For those of you who may not be aware of it, this standard was considered to be an abomination to the Jews, because as I point out in the four-part series entitled "Abomination of Desolation: Explained!", it had a metallic eagle on the top of it. The eagle is in fact an unclean bird according to the Levitical Laws that were given to Moses. The KJV Bible calls it an abomination, because it is something disgusting and detestable. Why so? I suspect that it is because the eagle eats its prey with the blood still in it, which is forbidden.

So, as I was saying, Jesus was telling His followers that if they really expect to endure or survive that war, and the terrible Roman destruction which is going to be wrought on Jerusalem and the temple compound, they have to get out of town, and they have to do it quickly. Jesus told them to flee with just the clothes on their backs. Don't even take time to try to get anything else, because that is how fast the wrath of Rome is going to fall on the Jews of Jerusalem. This urgency is explained more clearly in "Vespasian, Titus and the Fall of Jerusalem".

Okay, my friends, now we are ready to connect some more of the dots, and you will hopefully, and immediately, see how very clear the prophetic picture is.

First of all, I am convinced by the Scriptures that these obedient Jews who obey Jesus' warning to flee for their lives constitute the 144,000 sealed servants of the Lord who escape the wrath of the Roman Beast in the Book of Revelation. As you can see by the verses below, we are informed that 12,000 people are sealed from each of the twelve tribes of Israel:

"And I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God: and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea, Saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads. And I heard the number of them which were sealed: and there were sealed an hundred and forty and four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel. Of the tribe of Juda were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Reuben were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Gad were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Aser were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Nepthalim were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Manasses were sealed twelve

thousand. Of the tribe of Simeon were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Levi were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Issachar were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Zabulon were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Joseph were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Benjamin were sealed twelve thousand."

Revelation 7:2-8, KJV

Now here is a very important point which I would like for you to consider. As I mentioned earlier, Futurist-leaning Christians are convinced that the 144,000 represent modern Jews/Israelis who convert to the Christian faith at some point in the future as the Great Tribulation engulfs them. However, the simple truth of the matter is that these twelve tribes no longer even exist in Israel. As such, this seems to be clear proof in my mind that the Book of Revelation's prophecy cannot possibly be referring to our modern times, despite what misguided, Futurist-leaning Christians think.

Of course, having been a Futurist myself for more than four decades, and knowing how they think, I can just imagine how they will respond to my previous argument. They will probably say that even though the literal twelve tribes of Israel no longer exist in our current day, God still recognizes the Jews by their ancient tribal lineage. Personally, I view this as a weak argument, and stretching the truth. You see, one thing about Futurist thinking is that they will stretch the truth, and even twist the meaning of Bible verses, so as to find supposed support for their misguided beliefs.

In other words, if certain verses don't fit their Futurist theology, they will simply reinterpret them, and in effect invent something. A clear case in point concerns the third temple doctrine. The truth of the matter is that there is no mention of a third temple being constructed in Israel. When Jesus speaks of the temple in the aforementioned chapters, and when John likewise writes about the temple in the Book of Revelation, they are both referring to the temple which stood in Jerusalem during the First Century.

In fact, as I mention in a number of other BBB articles, God already destroyed their temple twice in the distant past due to their stiff rebellion, disobedience and corruption. That being the case, do you honestly believe that the Lord would allow the Jews to build yet another temple at some point in the future, so that they can continue with their blasphemous animal sacrifices, when Jesus has already died once for the

sins of all men, and paid the full price for our Salvation?

Yet, once again, the Futurists have found a supposed way to circumvent the Scriptures by inventing a futurist scenario where a third temple is constructed. How do they do this? By pointing to certain verses of Scripture, and claiming that said verses are describing a third temple which is yet to be built. To be more specific, verses such as the following are used as supposed support for this wayward doctrine:

"Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God."

2 Thessalonians 2:3-4, KJV

"And there was given me a reed like unto a rod: and the angel stood, saying, Rise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein. But the court which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not; for it is given unto the Gentiles: and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months."

Revelation 11:1-2, KJV

I am not absolutely certain at this point, but I believe the Futurist-leaning Christians may possibly take verses from the Book of Ezekiel which describe how the exiled Jews who returned from Babylon -- and later Herod the Great as well -- would rebuild and expand the temple which had been left in ruins following the Babylonian invasions. This temple became known as the second temple of Solomon, or as Herod's temple. It was the same temple which stood on Mount Moriah when Jesus walked the Earth. Consider the following verses:

"Then answered the Jews and said unto him, What sign shewest thou unto us, seeing that thou doest these things? Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up. Then said the Jews, Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days? But he spake of the temple of his body."

John 2:18-21, KJV

Please go to part two for the continuation of this series.

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THE WOMAN IN THE WILDERNESS AND THE 144,000 : PART 2

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Futurists' Claim Of A Third Temple, Orthodox Jews' Intentions To Build A Third Temple, Temple Preparations, 144,000 Sealed Servants And Woman In The Wilderness Are Same Thing, Joseph's Dream And Its Symbolism, Similarities Between Joseph's Dream And The Woman In The Wilderness, King Herod Joseph And Mary, Dragons Symbolize Worldly Leaders, Satan Is False God Of This World, Spiritual Israel Of Faith, Jesus Is The Man Child Who Was Caught Up To Heaven, At The Right Hand Of God, Holpen With A Little Help, No Smoke: Shadrach Meshach And Abednego, A Special Prepared Place, Wings Symbolize Divine Protection, Satan Tempts Jesus With The Scriptures, They Shall Mount Up With Wings As Eagles, The Carcase And The Eagles, Caught Up Together With Them In The Clouds, Jesus Christ Kept His Word

Continuing our discussion from part one, as I mentioned to you at the very beginning of this series, the primary error of the Futurists is that they take ancient prophecies that have already been fulfilled, and they try to apply them to our modern day. Thus, even though I am personally convinced that the previous verses which are found in 2 Thessalonians, the Book of Revelation, and the Book of Ezekiel, are really referring to Herod's temple which still existed during the First Century, and which was later destroyed by Titus along with his Roman legions, the Futurists twist those verses and say that they are talking about an as-of-yet-to-be-built third temple.

Now, I don't want to come across to you as a know-it-all, so let me add the following as a caveat. As a former Futurist, and as someone who has more or less kept abreast of events that transpire in Israel, I am fully aware of the fact that

the Orthodox Jews are very desirous to build a third temple on the Temple Mount in East Jerusalem, as explosive as such an event would be, unless the Muslims agreed to it. In fact, I have written about this very topic in a number of my other BBB articles.

Furthermore, there has been chatter since the 1960s or 1970s of prefabricated temple construction materials being secretly stored in warehouses in Jerusalem. I am likewise aware of the fact that certain Jewish organizations -- such as the Temple Mount Faithful and the Temple Institute -- have in the recent decades been taking steps to prepare for the eventuality of a third Jewish temple on the Temple Mount in East Jerusalem.

From what I have read over the years, these preparatory steps include building various pieces of furniture which will be required for the interior of such a temple; constructing the altar for the outside courtyard; making all of the necessary temple vessels; creating all of the required priest garments; training a new Jewish priesthood; raising a pure red heifer which will be required for the sanctification rituals; and even practicing animal sacrifices. If I recall correctly, a number of years ago, some Jews even tried to take the temple cornerstone to the Temple Mount, but were stopped, either by Israeli security, or perhaps by the Jordanian Waqf.

So, it is evident that the Orthodox Jews are indeed quite serious regarding seeing a third temple built on the summit of Mount Moriah. However, the question is this: Will such a feat really come to fruition? While it seems highly likely based on their efforts alone, and on the fact that Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is doing his very best to subdue Hamas in Gaza, Hezbollah in Lebanon, the Palestinians in the West Bank, and even Iran, so that the environment is safer for such a temple, I still have my doubts, based on my understanding of certain Scriptures. But if another temple is built, then I will humbly admit that I have been wrong, and that I need to re-evaluate some of my current positions.

Getting back on track with our primary discussion regarding the 144,000 and the woman in the wilderness, as I explained to you in part one, I am convinced that the obedient Jews who heeded the Lord's warning, and who fled to the mountains and hills that surround the city of Jerusalem in order to escape the wrath of the Roman armies which encompassed that city during the First Century, were in fact the 144,000 sealed servants of the Lord.

Furthermore, I am likewise convinced by the Scriptures that the 144,000 are the same thing as the woman in the wilderness who is described in the twelfth chapter of Revelation, who is "given two wings of a great eagle", so that she might escape into the mountains around Jerusalem, and thus avoid the wrath of the dragon, exactly as Jesus instructed His followers to do. Consider the following group of verses which describe the symbolic woman for us:

"And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars: And she being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered. And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads. And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth: and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born. And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne. 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. And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night. And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death. Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time. And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man child. 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. 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. 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. And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ."

Revelation 12:1-17, KJV

To fully understand why I believe that the 144,000 and the woman in the wilderness are speaking about the same people, let us go back thousands of years to the time of Joseph and his brethren. As you may possibly recall, one of the dreams which Joseph had was the following:

"And he dreamed yet another dream, and told it his brethren, and said, Behold, I have dreamed a dream more; and, behold, the sun and the moon and the eleven stars made obeisance to me. And he told it to his father, and to his brethren: and his father rebuked him, and said unto him, What is this dream that thou hast dreamed? Shall I and thy mother and thy brethren indeed come to bow down ourselves to thee to the earth? And his brethren envied him; but his father observed the saying."

Genesis 37:9-11, KJV

In this dream, Joseph's eleven brethren are represented by eleven stars. Therefore, it is obvious that Joseph must be the twelfth star. In like manner, the Sun represents Jacob, Joseph's father, and the Moon must therefore represent his mother, according to Jacob's own words. In short, this is a symbolic picture of the nation of Israel. Now let's move up several thousand years into the future to the time of the Revelation of the Apostle John.

It isn't difficult to see that the woman in Revelation 12 is represented by the very same three symbols as we see in Joseph's dream. In other words, the Sun, the Moon, and the twelve stars. As such, by simply comparing Scripture with Scripture -- which is the proper way to interpret any Bible prophecy -- I believe that we can safely assume that, even though their accounts were written literally thousands of years apart, the Patriarch Joseph and the Apostle John were both describing the very same thing. That is to say, Israel.

If we apply John's vision to the time in which it was given, we could say that the woman represents Mary, the mother of

Jesus. This would indeed be a very fitting interpretation. As we all know, Joseph and Mary were in fact persecuted by evil King Herod when Jesus was about two years old. It may possibly have been at that time when they put the expensive gifts of the three magi to good use by fleeing into Egypt until Herod was dead, as we see by the following verses:

"And when they were departed, behold, the angel of the Lord appeareth to Joseph in a dream, saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I bring thee word: for Herod will seek the young child to destroy him. When he arose, he took the young child and his mother by night, and departed into Egypt: And was there until the death of Herod: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Out of Egypt have I called my son . . . But when Herod was dead, behold, an angel of the Lord appeareth in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, Saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and go into the land of Israel: for they are dead which sought the young child's life."

Matthew 2:13-15, 19-20, KJV

It is also interesting to note that just as we witness this woman being persecuted by the Red Dragon, in the Bible, the Lord does refer to worldly leaders as dragons in the rivers and seas of people. This is because they are merely puppets of the great Red Dragon himself. That is to say, Satan, the Prince of the Power of the Air, and the god of this world, who has blinded the eyes of them that believe not. Thus, it is evident that King Herod was indeed a dragon in Israel who persecuted the seed of the Lord's fledgling Church. Consider the following group of verses which verify these points:

"Speak, and say, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I am against thee, Pharaoh king of Egypt, the great dragon that lieth in the midst of his rivers, which hath said, My river is mine own, and I have made it for myself."

Ezekiel 29:3, KJV

"And he saith unto me, The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues."

Revelation 17:15, KJV

"And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out

with him."

Revelation 12:9, KJV

"And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years,"

Revelation 20:2, KJV

"Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience:"

Ephesians 2:2, KJV

"In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them."

2 Corinthians 4:4, KJV

While the previous interpretation which points to Mary and King Herod is indeed valid to a certain degree, I believe that it is more in agreement with Joseph's dream to believe that the woman in John's vision represents the spiritual nation of Israel as a whole. That is to say, the Israel of faith, which was born of the seed of Isaac. This is in fact the Israel which brought forth the Savior, of which Mary was indeed a member, because she believed what the Angel Gabriel had spoken to her. By extension, this same seed of faith is also represented by the 144,000 Jews who are persecuted by the Roman Beast, and who thus flee into the wilderness area outside of Jerusalem, in obedience to Jesus' warning.

Returning to the opening verses of the twelfth chapter of the Book of Revelation, it should be obvious that the man child who was born to the woman, and who "was caught up unto God, and to His Throne", can be none other than Jesus Christ Himself, who now sits at the Right Hand of His Father. This is made perfectly clear by the following verses which are found in the writings of the Apostles Peter and Paul:

"Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us."

Romans 8:34, KJV

"Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly

places,"
Ephesians 1:20, KJV

"If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God."
Colossians 3:1, KJV

"Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high;...But to which of the angels said he at any time, Sit on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool?"
Hebrews 1:3, 13, KJV

"Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum: We have such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens;"
Hebrews 8:1, KJV

"But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God;"
Hebrews 10:12, KJV

"Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God."
Hebrews 12:2, KJV

"Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him."
1 Peter 3:22, KJV

It is at this point that we find an interesting link between the words of the Prophet Daniel, who said that the Saints would be "holpen with a little help", and John's description of the 144,000 sealed servants of the Lord receiving help at the time of this great Roman persecution and war against the Jews. I am also reminded of how Daniel's three companions -- Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego -- came out of the Babylonian furnace without even the smell of smoke on their clothes. Consider the following verses which are found in the Book of Daniel, as well as a few of the other verses I shared with you earlier which are found in the twelfth chapter of the Book of Revelation:

"He answered and said, Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God. Then Nebuchadnezzar came near to the mouth of the burning fiery furnace, and spake, and said, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, ye servants of the most high God, come forth, and come hither. Then Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, came forth of the midst of the fire. And the princes, governors, and captains, and the king's counsellors, being gathered together, saw these men, upon whose bodies the fire had no power, nor was an hair of their head singed, neither were their coats changed, nor the smell of fire had passed on them."

Daniel 3:25-27, KJV

"Now when they shall fall, they shall be holpen with a little help: but many shall cleave to them with flatteries."

Daniel 11:34, KJV

"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 . . . 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. 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. 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."

Revelation 12:6, 14-16, KJV

As you can see, in describing the flight of the woman into the wilderness, John specifically states that "she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her." Then, just a few verses later, John writes that the woman -- meaning the 144,000 -- will fly "into her place". In His Divine Wisdom, the Lord knew that these First Century Christians would be saved in the final hour. Thus, in His Mercy, He had prepared a special place for their protection.

After all, it would not make much sense for the Lord to warn His followers to flee into the hills and mountains outside of Jerusalem if He had not prepared a place for them in advance. As I mentioned earlier, this may be what Daniel meant when he wrote "holpen with a little help". Concerning John's phrase "given two wings of a great eagle", it is interesting to note

that throughout the Holy Scriptures, wings are associated with Divine Protection. Some of my favorite verses regarding this subject are found in Psalm 91, as we see below:

"He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the LORD, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in him will I trust. Surely he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence. He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust: his truth shall be thy shield and buckler. Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night; nor for the arrow that flieth by day; Nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness; nor for the destruction that wasteth at noonday. A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand; but it shall not come nigh thee. Only with thine eyes shalt thou behold and see the reward of the wicked. Because thou hast made the LORD, which is my refuge, even the most High, thy habitation; There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling. For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways. They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone."

Psalms 91:1-12, KJV

Notice how the Psalmist writes "He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust." And then we are told a few verses later that His Angels "shall bear thee up in their hands". What a wonderful promise of God's Divine Protection! In fact, as you may recall, the Devil used these very same verses to try to tempt Jesus when the Lord fasted for a period of forty days in the wilderness area of the Jordan River Valley. Consider the following verses which are found in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke:

"Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple, And saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone. Jesus said unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God."

Matthew 4:5-7, KJV

"And he brought him to Jerusalem, and set him on a pinnacle of the temple, and said unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down from hence: For it is written, He shall

give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee: And in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone. And Jesus answering said unto him, It is said, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God."

Luke 4:9-12, KJV

Equally interesting is the fact that John's phrase "given two wings of a great eagle" not only ties into Psalm 91, but it is also directly related to the following prophetic verse which is found in the Book of Isaiah:

"But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint."

Isaiah 40:31, KJV

Notice how Isaiah writes "they that wait upon the LORD". My friends, that is exactly what those First Century Christians did as they endured that seven-year First Jewish-Roman War, and patiently waited for the return of Jesus Christ. So what does Isaiah say will happen next? He writes "they shall mount up with wings as eagles". And what did the Apostle John write in the Book of Revelation? He said "given two wings of a great eagle". Thus we see that John's words, Psalm 91 and the words of the Prophet Isaiah all tie in together. But guess what? This amazing prophecy does NOT end there! Oh no! There is still more, and it ties in directly with something that Jesus told His followers in the Gospels. In fact, He said it in the very same chapter we have already discussed, as we see by the following group of verses:

"For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For wheresoever the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered together . . . And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other."

Matthew 24:27-28, 30-31, KJV

Personally, I am convinced that in the previous verses, the Lord is referring to Himself as the Carcase which was hung on a Roman cross to die, and to His First Century followers as

the eagles who would rise into the sky, and be gathered unto Him in the clouds of Heaven. This is because just as Jesus had mentioned in Matthew chapter twenty-six and John chapter six, they had symbolically fed upon His flesh, and drank His precious blood, which results in the remission of sins, as well as Redemption, Salvation and Eternal Life. Consider the following group of verses:

"And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me. This he said, signifying what death he should die."
John 12:32-33, KJV

"Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you."
John 6:53, KJV

"And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins."
Matthew 26:26-28, KJV

The Apostle Paul was likewise fully aware of these amazing events which would soon transpire, and he knew exactly how it would all end. Thus, in his first Epistle to the Thessalonian brethren, he encourages the brethren with the following very inspiring lines in which he tells them to wait patiently for their coming redemption, and their rescue from this present world. Consider the following group of verses:

"But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words."
1 Thessalonians 4:13-18, KJV

Thus we see a truly amazing connection between Revelation 12, Psalm 91, Isaiah 40, Matthew 24 and 1 Thessalonians 4. They are all describing the same wonderful events. In short, just when the situation appeared so dire for those First Century Christians who were running for their lives from the armies of Rome, and miraculously surviving in the wilderness with God's help for three and a half years -- or forty-months, or 1,260 days -- something truly remarkable happened! Something literally out of this world! Jesus kept His word to them as He had given it in John 14! The Lord's elect children of the First Century were miraculously rescued from this world, and the faithful bride-to-be mounted up with wings as eagles so as to join her spiritual Bridegroom in the clouds of Heaven!

One important point which I feel I must clarify for you, is that the woman being given "two wings of a great eagle", so that she can fly safely into the wilderness, and the Saints mounting "up with wings as eagles" at the time of the Lord's return, are not one and the same event. It is very important that you understand this difference. In short, the woman of Revelation flees into the wilderness at the beginning of the three and a half years of Great Tribulation. It is three and a half years later, at the time of the Rapture, that all of the Saints "mount up with wings as eagles" to meet the Lord in the air.

Please go to part three for the conclusion of this series.

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THE WOMAN IN THE WILDERNESS AND THE 144,000 : PART 3

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Jesus' Warning To Flee Jerusalem, Great Tribulation Occurred During Second Half Of First Jewish-Roman War, Bible Prophecy Centers Around First Century Israel, Thy People, Three And A

Half Years Of Great Tribulation, Time Of The Beast Scriptural Basis, Your Redemption Draweth Nigh, Neither On The Sabbath Day, Sabbath Day Travel Restrictions, Conclusion, Reading List

Continuing our discussion from part two, as we learned in part one of this series, Jesus warned His followers that when they saw the Abomination of Desolation standing in the holy place -- that is to say, on the temple mount -- it was time for them to immediately flee to the hills surrounding Jerusalem, because it was an obvious sign that the Great Tribulation would soon begin. Furthermore, if they chose to remain in the city, they simply would not survive.

Being as I discuss this topic in considerable detail in a separate series, I don't want to expound upon it too much in this current series. However, let me state that contrary to what is erroneously believed by the modern-day Futurists, I am convinced that not only is the Great Tribulation NOT a future event, but I believe that it in fact corresponds to half of the seven-year First Jewish-Roman War, during which 600,000 to one million Jews died. Following are the verses where both Jesus and a few of the Apostles spoke and wrote about the tribulation which encompassed Believers of that era:

"For then shall be GREAT TRIBULATION, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elects sake those days shall be shortened . . . Immediately after the TRIBULATION of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory."

Matthew 24:21-22, 29-30, KJV

"But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, And the stars of heaven shall fall, and the powers that are in heaven shall be shaken. And then shall they see the Son of man coming in the clouds with great power and glory."

Mark 13:24-26, KJV

"These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have TRIBULATION: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."

John 16:33, KJV

"Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through MUCH TRIBULATION enter into the kingdom of God."

Acts 14:22, KJV

"But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God; Who will render to every man according to his deeds: To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life: But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, INDIGNATION AND WRATH, TRIBULATION AND ANGUISH, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile;"

Romans 2:5-9, KJV

"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall TRIBULATION, OR DISTRESS, OR PERSECUTION, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us."

Romans 8:35-37, KJV

"Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another; Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord; Rejoicing in hope; PATIENT IN TRIBULATION; continuing instant in prayer;"

Romans 12:10-12, KJV

"Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; Who comforteth us IN ALL OUR TRIBULATION, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God. For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ. And whether we be afflicted, it is for your consolation and salvation, which is effectual in the enduring of the same sufferings which we also suffer: or whether we be comforted, it is for your consolation and salvation. And our hope of you is steadfast, knowing, that as

ye are partakers of the sufferings, so shall ye be also of the consolation. For we would not, brethren, have you ignorant of our trouble which came to us in Asia, that we were pressed out of measure, above strength, insomuch that we despaired even of life: But we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead: Who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver: in whom we trust that he will yet deliver us;"

2 Corinthians 1:3-10, KJV

"Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. And not only so, BUT WE GLORY IN TRIBULATIONS also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; And patience, experience; and experience, hope: And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us."

Romans 5:1-5, KJV

"I speak not this to condemn you: for I have said before, that ye are in our hearts to die and live with you. Great is my boldness of speech toward you, great is my glorying of you: I am filled with comfort, I am exceeding joyful IN ALL OUR TRIBULATION."

2 Corinthians 7:3-4, KJV

"For verily, when we were with you, we told you before that WE SHOULD SUFFER TRIBULATION; EVEN AS IT CAME TO PASS, and ye know. For this cause, when I could no longer forbear, I sent to know your faith, lest by some means the tempter have tempted you, and our labour be in vain."

1 Thessalonians 3:4-5, KJV

"We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is meet, because that your faith groweth exceedingly, and the charity of every one of you all toward each other aboundeth; So that we ourselves glory in you in the churches of God for your patience and faith IN ALL YOUR PERSECUTIONS AND TRIBULATIONS THAT YE ENDURE: Which is a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God, that ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, FOR WHICH YE ALSO SUFFER: Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to THEM THAT TROUBLE YOU; And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his

mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power; When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day."

2 Thessalonians 1:3-10, KJV

"I John, who also am your brother, and COMPANION IN TRIBULATION, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ."

Revelation 1:9, KJV

"And unto the angel of the church in Smyrna write; These things saith the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive; I know thy works, and TRIBULATION, and poverty, (but thou art rich) and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan. Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and YE SHALL HAVE TRIBULATION TEN DAYS: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."

Revelation 2:8-10, KJV

"Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols. And I gave her space to repent of her fornication; and she repented not. Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her INTO GREAT TRIBULATION, except they repent of their deeds. And I will kill her children with death; and all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you according to your works."

Revelation 2:20-23, KJV

"And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they? And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of GREAT TRIBULATION, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them."

Revelation 7:13-14, KJV

Please carefully notice that Jesus very specifically referred to the soon-coming Roman siege and persecution as a period of "great tribulation". Likewise, we see that the Apostles are continually mentioning not only personal trials, but likewise tribulation which engulfs the First Century Church as a whole. It should be clear to you then that the Great Tribulation in actuality occurred during the First Century. It is certainly NOT a future event, despite what misguided Futurist-leaning Christians like to claim today. As such, please get that false doctrine out of your head. You need to be mindful of the fact that Bible prophecy centers around First Century Israel and the Jews. It is NOT about the modern, global Christian Church. Consider the following set of verses which discuss the very same events we have been talking about, and notice who they are talking about and to whom they are directed:

"Seventy weeks are determined upon THY PEOPLE and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy."

Daniel 9:24, KJV

"Now I am come to make thee understand what shall befall THY PEOPLE in the latter days: for yet the vision is for many days."

Daniel 10:14, KJV

"And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of THY PEOPLE: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time THY PEOPLE shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book."

Daniel 12:1, KJV

As I mentioned a moment ago, and also in part two, the Great Tribulation lasted for a period of three and a half years, and not the full seven years that the First Jewish-Roman War endured. As I likewise mentioned earlier, from the time that this great war first began in 66 AD, until the time that it reached its peak three and a half years later in 70 AD when Titus and the Roman legions laid siege to Jerusalem, and destroyed the temple compound "in the midst of the week" -- as per Daniel's prophecy -- 600,000 to 1,100,000 Jews died,

due to direct fighting, Roman crucifixion, famine, disease, or infighting amongst the various seditious factions which controlled Jerusalem.

It was a very horrible time as my "Vespasian, Titus and the Fall of Jerusalem" series explains. It was a period of Great Tribulation. This period is mentioned in the Books of Daniel and Revelation in the following ways. They all equate to the same length of time -- three and a half years -- because a Jewish month is equal to thirty days. The word "time" means a year:

1. "forty-two months"
2. "1,260 days"
3. "time and times and the dividing of time" (3 1/2)
4. "time, times, and an half" (3 1/2)

Following are the specific verses where these time spans are mentioned in both Daniel and Revelation. I have added a few words in brackets in order to clarify what is being said. I personally refer to this period as "the time of the Beast":

"And he [the Beast] shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until A TIME AND TIMES AND THE DIVIDING OF TIME."
Daniel 7:25, KJV

"And I heard the man clothed in linen, which was upon the waters of the river, when he held up his right hand and his left hand unto heaven, and swore by him that liveth for ever that it shall be for A TIME, TIMES, AND AN HALF; and when he [the Beast] shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people, all these things shall be finished."
Daniel 12:7, KJV

"But the court which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not; for it is given unto the Gentiles: and the holy city shall they tread under foot FORTY AND TWO MONTHS. And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth."
Revelation 11:2-3, KJV

"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."

Revelation 12:6, KJV

"And there was given unto him [the Beast] a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue FORTY AND TWO MONTHS. And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven. And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations."

Revelation 13:5-7, KJV

At the end of the seven-year period, the Prophet Daniel informs us that there is another thirty-day period, which is then followed by another forty-five day period. At this point in time, I am not exactly sure what happened during these two brief periods. However, we're told that the person who survives the war to day 1,335 after the Abomination of Desolation has been set up, is truly blessed. Why is this? Please read "Jesus Christ's Return: Have We Been Deceived?" to find out:

"And from the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up, there shall be a thousand two hundred and ninety days. Blessed is he that waiteth, and cometh to the thousand three hundred and five and thirty days."

Daniel 12:11-12, KJV

So as you can see, the Bible is very consistent regarding the length of the Great Tribulation, and the persecution against the First Century Christians. While the Lord is explaining all of these things to His followers, He wants them to know that despite how dark and evil the situation will become, He does not want them to lose hope. Thus, He encourages them with the following words in the Gospel of Luke. These words in fact tie in directly to what we just read in Daniel 12 above regarding those who are blessed:

"And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh . . . So likewise ye, when ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand. Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass away, till all be fulfilled . . . Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man."

Luke 21:28, 31-32, 36, KJV

When Jesus says "that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass", it should be very obvious to you that He is referring to the events which we have been discussing throughout this series. That is to say, the siege and invasion of Jerusalem by General Titus and his Roman legions and allies, and the terrible slaughter which followed thereafter. As we learned earlier in this series, the wrath of Rome would fall so quickly upon the people of Jerusalem, that Jesus warned His followers to flee to the hills the minute that they see the Abomination of Desolation standing on the Temple Mount. He told them to flee with just the clothes on their backs, and to pray that they would not have to do it during the winter, or on the sabbath day. Let me share those verses with you again from part one:

"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:) Then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains: Let him which is on the housetop not come down to take any thing out of his house: Neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes. And woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days! But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath day: For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elects sake those days shall be shortened."

Matthew 24:15-22, KJV

Why does the Lord say "neither on the sabbath day"? Well, because First Century Jews were bound by the Mosaic Law to not travel outside of their city limits on the Sabbath day. This mandate was based on the following two verses which are found in the Old Testament. In fact, as I point out in other articles, when Jesus returned to Heaven in the first chapter of the Book of Acts, He ascended from the Mount of Olives, which was located a Sabbath day's journey from Jerusalem:

"See, for that the LORD hath given you the sabbath, therefore he giveth you on the sixth day the bread of two days; abide ye every man in his place, let no man go out of his place on the seventh day."

Exodus 16:29, KJV

"And ye shall measure from without the city on the east side two thousand cubits, and on the south side two thousand cubits, and on the west side two thousand cubits, and on the north side two thousand cubits; and the city shall be in the midst: this shall be to them the suburbs of the cities."

Numbers 35:5, KJV

"Then returned they unto Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is from Jerusalem a sabbath days journey."

Acts 1:12, KJV

Based on the previous verses, a sabbath day's journey was equal to a maximum of 2,000 cubits, which equates to about .57 miles or .91 kilometers. These verses, and the Lord's warning to His followers, is yet another clear indication that the 144,000 were Jews of the First Century. They have nothing to do with modern Jews, and much less with modern Christians, contrary to a false belief which is propagated today. While modern Orthodox Jews still observe this law on the Sabbath, generally speaking, most Jews do not, and will walk freely on the Sabbath. Concerning Christians, I invite you to read my article entitled "Are Christians Obligated to Keep the Sabbath?".

In conclusion, this then is my understanding regarding the identity of the woman in the wilderness and the 144,000. In my opinion, it is scripturally-sound, and it makes a lot of sense as well. What do you think? Please pray about it, and ask the Lord to reveal the truth to you, if you are not already convinced by what I have shared with you in this series.

With these thoughts, I will bring this article to a close. It is my hope that you've found it informative and enlightening, and I pray that it has been a blessing in your life as well. If you have an account with Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr or with any other social network, I would really appreciate if you'd take the time to click or tap on the corresponding link that is found on this page. Thanks so much, and may God bless you abundantly!

For additional information and further study, you may want to refer to the list of reading resources below which were either mentioned in this article, or which contain topics which are related to this article. All of these articles are likewise located on the Bill's Bible Basics web server. To

read these articles, simply click or tap on any link you see below.

Abomination of Desolation: Explained!

Are Christians Obligated to Keep the Sabbath?

Facebook False Prophets and Misguided Teachers

Fight Against Futurism!

He That Shall Endure Unto the End

Humility in Our Understanding of God's Word

In the Ages to Come

It Is Time to Wake Up!

Jesus Christ's Return: Have We Been Deceived?

Please Stop Misinterpreting the Scriptures

The Day of the Lord: What It Really Means

The Last Seven Years Chart

The Misguided End of the World Predictions of Harold Camping

The Office of Prophets and Teachers

Tradition or Truth? Old Wine or New Wine?

Understanding the Bible in Context

Vespasian, Titus and the Fall of Jerusalem

When Was Satan Cast Out of Heaven?

Who Hindered the Antichrist?

Who is Babylon the Great?

Who is Moshiach ben David?

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