PLACE OF SAFETY:

- The horrible period of time, just before the end of this age, when Satan’s wrath reaches its peak, was described by Jesus Christ in – Matthew 24:21-22.
- God will need to supernaturally intervene to prevent man’s total annihilation.
- Jesus Christ will return in power and glory to reestablish God’s government on earth and set up the Kingdom of God.
- During this time of Great Tribulation Christ promises His Church a place of safety (Revelation 3:10). The Philadelphia church is to be protected during this time.
- God has revealed enough in the Bible to make it clear that He will provide for His Church to go to a place of protection at the right time, to the right place an in the right way.
- God could protect His people wherever they are during the Great Tribulation – but will He? It is not what God could do, but what He will do, that matters! God could have miraculously protected Noah and his family for the more than one year they were in the ark, but He didn’t choose to. Noah and his family had to go into the ark – their place of safety. He could also have protected Lot and his family in Sodom, but instead God sent angels to lead them out of that wicked city to their place of safety. God could protected the Israelites in Egypt but instead he led them out.

Four related events – In order to better understand this subject let’s review four different but related events:

(1) The migration of the early Church.
- The first event occurred as a result of Christ’s warning in Luke 21:20-21; Compare Matthew 24:15-22.
- This prophecy was fulfilled after events in Judea in the fall of A.D. 66. Jerusalem was surrounded and besieged by the Roman army under Cestius Galius. After a few days, for no apparent reason, the siege was lifted and the Romans departed from the area.
- Sometime after this (the exact time is not known). Before General Vespasian and the Roman forces returned and besieged Jerusalem starting at the Passover in A.D. 69, the true Church did leave Jerusalem and Judea for protection.
- The Greek word for “flee” used in Luke 21:21 – “means to escape or run away, to take flight” (not flying in the air).
- One ancient reference to this “escape” is found in the writings of Eusebius. Eusebius said the Church went to Pella sometime between – A.D. 66, and 70. It had to be late in this time period. Had the Church moved early in the period they would have been killed or captured by Vespasian’s army, which was active in northern Palestine. Pella is northeast of Jerusalem beyond the Jordan River, south of the Sea of Galilee (Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History, III, 5).
Some believe the Church left after the “sound” was heard, in the Temple, of a great multitude saying, “Let us remove hence.” This incident was reported by the Jewish historian Josephus, who said it occurred on Pentecost (see Josephus, Wars, book 5, section 3).

This move or migration of the Church was no emergency “flight” as described by Luke and Matthew, but made protection possible for the Church during and after the fall of Jerusalem.

(2) Those in Judea flee.
- The second event involves the same prophecy. There will be an end-time fulfillment of this text, but it is an urgent, emergency escape (Matthew 24:16-21).
- Note – This refers to people of God in Judea. Those people of God’s Church who happen to be in this geographical area when the abomination of desolation or surrounding of Jerusalem comes to pass must literally flee for their lives!
- People in this circumstance will be in such danger that they must not call attention to the fact they are fleeing, or they will be captured and unable to escape.
- They must flee, run away, escape (not fly in the sky by plane) to the mountains. Jerusalem is surrounded by mountains. These mountains may not be the final destination, but would have to be passed through to ultimate protection.

(3) Church fled to wilderness.
- The third prophecy concerns God’s Church from about A.D. 325 to about 1585 (Revelation 12:6). This scripture describes the Church after Christ’s ascension to God’s throne (verse 5) and before the end-time war in heaven” (verse 7).
- In this case the woman also “fled.”
- The period mentioned is 1,260 days, which in this case prophetically refers to 1,260 years, according to the day-for-a-year principle found in – Numbers 14:34 and Ezekiel 4:5.
- The Church in this text flees into the “wilderness,” a solitary, lonely, desert place.
- The Church was severely persecuted during the reigns of both Emperor Diocletian and Emperor Galerius from A.D. 303 to 313 (Revelation 2:10).
- In A.D. 325 Constantine convened the Council of Nicaea. Catholicism became the state religion. In order for God’s Church to fully obey God and put into practice its beliefs, had to flee from the centers of influence and into the less-populated areas.
- In the early period of this exile the true Christians were most numerous in what today is eastern Turkey. In later centuries they were found in scattered areas of Europe, especially in the mountains, away from populated areas.
- Around 1585 – 1,260 years later, Catholic domination of the throne of England ended. This brought to a close the period when the Church had to carry on in the wilderness, or less populated centers.

(4) The Church that flies to her place at the time of the end.
- The fourth related event concerns the very end time, just three and a half years before Christ’s return.
- After the war in heaven pitting Michael and his angels against the devil and his angels (Revelation 12:7), Satan is cast to the earth and starts a new, vigorous persecution against the Church (verse 13).
Revelation 12:14 “But the woman was given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness to her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times and half a time, from the presence of the serpent.”

- The woman (the Church) is given two wings of a great eagle that she might “fly.” Here the Greek word literally means “fly” (as a bird or plane does), not flee or escape by other means. She flies to “her place.” Here she is nourished (fed physically and spiritually) for three and a half years (“time, and times, and half a time”). However, this is not the only possible explanation. A similar statement is found in Exodus 19:4 – “You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles’ wings and brought you to Myself.” They walked out of Egypt.
- Verse 17 – shows that there are certain others in the Church who do not make this flight. They face not just persecution from Satan but war with him, and there is no indication of divine protection for them.

Who will be taken and to where?
- Some claim that there will be many “places of safety.” That God will simply protect His people wherever they are during the Great Tribulation. But that is NOT what the Bible teaches. The scripture say the Church will go to “her place” (verse 14). The word “place” is singular, not plural.
- That one place is said to be in “the wilderness.” That indicates a solitary, sparsely populated area.
- This place of safety may quite possibly be in the area anciently occupied by Edom, Moab and Ammon – since that area will escape the final invasion of the king of the north (Daniel 11:41). Other prophecies show that this same area will later be taken over by people from the east (Ezekiel 25).
- Several texts, including – Isaiah 16:1-4, Isaiah 33:13-17 and Isaiah 42:11-12 – indicate that Petra, located in this wilderness area, could be/might be, the place. The word “Petra” – comes from a Greek word meaning “rock” (“Sela” – in Hebrew). This area is very rocky and is generally entered through a narrow pathway with precipitous rock walls on each side. If this is the place – the temperatures in this desert area are extreme in both summer and winter, and even from night to day. Living here would be challenging.
- The place of safety will be a place of protection but it will not yet be God’s Kingdom. Those who go will not yet have endured to the end. They will still be able to sin and fall away. To some the “place of safety” could prove to be a place where they finally lose out on salvation.
- It will be necessary to live together in peace and harmony 24 hours a day for 1,260 days.

Revelation 3:10 “Because you have keep My command to persevere, I will also keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth.”
- The woman symbolizes the Church of God, that group of people who are individually begotten and led by the Holy Spirit and who are living in obedience to God (Romans 8:9; Acts 5:32).
- The Philadelphia Church is kept from this sore trial that is going to come on all the world.
- This verse does not refer to any period of temptation the whole world went through during the time the original, small church at Philadelphia existed. It can only refer to the Great Tribulation. The trial takes place for “an hour.” (The same “hour” the 10 kings receive power with the beast – Revelation 17:12; compare Revelation 13:5.)
• We must forget about trying to save yourselves and concentrate on helping others. If we do our part, God will protect and provide for us during the time of trouble to come!