

A Short Work on the Earth - Matthew 24:22

"And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened."

Matthew 24:22

Perhaps the key word which should be emphasized in the above verse is '**flesh**.' This text is not speaking of salvation of the spirit for eternal glory. It plainly states that "flesh" is under consideration. Although the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus secured the resurrection of our bodies. Yet the resurrection is not being spoken of here. When the text speaks of some flesh which will be saved we can also understand there was some flesh which was not saved. This may be a good place to remember a synonym for the word '*saved*' is '*delivered*.' The intensity of the events was such that if they had not been cut short, they would entirely consume all flesh. Again we are reminded the region is Israel, not the entire world.

Speaking of Israel, we may do well to consider the words which God spake to them before Moses dies and before they entered into the Promised Land. (*The Promised Land is a type of the New Testament church*) In Deuteronomy chapter thirty God speaks of the blessing of obedience and the curse of disobedience. As it concerns the curse we read;

"But if thine heart turn away, so that thou wilt not hear, but shall be drawn away, and worship other gods, and serve them; I denounce unto this day, that ye shall surely perish, and that ye shall not prolong your days upon the land, whither thou passest over Jordan to go possess it.

Deuteronomy 30:18

The verse which follows this one is often quoted as teaching the consequences of our choice as eternal. However context will not allow me to make the same mistake. Today is no different from the time of Moses insomuch that the consequences of our choices are not eternal, but rather temporal. Our obedience prolongs our days upon the land and secures the blessing of God to us while we live in the here and now. It does not secure heaven for us. If we desire to be consistent with the doctrines of grace, there can be no other way to view it.

Just as God admonished the children of Israel before entering into the Promised Land, (*type of the church*) Jesus warns his disciples of the consequences of the disobedience of those wicked Jews. God was to shorten the days or the duration of the great tribulation which would come upon the region. This he did in consideration of His elect.

God is a God of justice and wrath, which would be evidenced in the destruction of Jerusalem during the great tribulation. At the same time He is a God of love and mercy. His justice and wrath was manifested upon those who had hardened their hearts and did not believe the report which Jesus and the Apostles preached. The love and mercy of God was manifested towards those of his chosen people which did believe the report. This was accomplished by finishing the work and cutting it short in righteousness.

God would destroy those wicked Jews which remained in the city and scatter the remainder in the region who escaped to the four winds of the earth. Without doubt, there was some chaff among the wheat. There are non-believers mixed in with believers. In this case, in order to root out the chaff, some of the wheat which would suffer tribulation on this account. This is one of the reasons there was so much turmoil in the years leading up to the destruction of Jerusalem. Jewry was gasping for its life breath while Christianity was turning the world upside down.

Now what Jesus is saying is, if the intensity of the trials and persecutions were allowed to continue, no one would survive. The word '*saved*' as it is used in the above text refers not to eternal salvation, but to deliverance from circumstances. As I mentioned earlier, this is common throughout scripture. The days or longevity of the events were cut short so God could spare the '*elect*.' Many of the elect were delivered from the tribulation alive and allowed to *prolong their days on the land*.

The apostle Paul was given some insight into this interesting subject. He quotes from Isaiah chapter ten:

"E-sai-as also crieth concerning Israel, though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved: For he will finish the work, and cut it short in righteousness: because a short work will The Lord make upon the earth."

Romans 9:27-28

Again the salvation under consideration here is not eternal salvation. Israel, God's spiritual Jews, encompasses Gentiles (other nations) as well as members of national Israel. (See Romans 2:28-29) The elect body of Christ is said to have been chosen **out of** every kindred and tongue and people and nation. (See Revelation 5:9) The blessing bestowed upon Rebekah (Isaac's wife) would make her the mother of thousands of millions. (See Genesis 24:60) Paul mentions in verse seven of Romans nine that in Isaac shall thy seed be called. God's entire body of elect is a host innumerable, as the sands of the sea and as the stars of heaven for multitude. We can expect heaven to be populated by the election of God. A vast and great multitude. Yet Paul mentions in verse twenty seven of Romans chapter nine that only a remnant will be saved. A remnant is a small portion of the whole, or the remainder. The remainder, being that portion of the whole body of Christ alive at any time upon the earth which are not taken in by the false gods of the day and who would not bow the knee to the image of Baal. This remnant would be spared from the wrath of God which would come upon the region during the siege of the Roman armies in Judea. God even today has reserved

a people who refuse the devices and traps of modern Christianity, who earnestly contend for the faith once delivered unto the saints.

Those who displayed faith and trust in the teachings of The Lord Jesus Christ were given opportunity to escape the city before its destruction. This is what verse twenty two of Matthew twenty-four is saying.