

Tribulation for Believers until the End

Matthew 24:1-14

Halifax: 26 November 2006

Introduction

It's time to give three year old Junior his first gardening lesson.

- As Junior holds the little pumpkin seeds in his hand, his mother says...
 - "These are pumpkin seeds. If we put them in the ground, they will grow into little plants, and then the plants will have flowers and the flowers will become pumpkins."
 - Junior looks at the little flat seeds in his hands with curious amazement.
 - He and his mother go out and dig the little holes, put the seeds in, and make the little mounds of dirt.

The next day, Junior rushes out to the garden.

- "Mom, something is wrong. We planted those seeds yesterday and there are still no pumpkins."
 - "It will take time Junior, the seeds have to sprout first, and then they have to grow into plants... remember what I told you?... then the flowers, and then the little pumpkins will start to grow."
 - "You will have to water them and pull the weeds that come up around them so they can grow."
- "But Mom, I wanted to have a pumpkin today. If we water them today will they come up tomorrow?"
 - "No, you have to be patient. It will take a long time."
- A couple of weeks later the little plant comes up...
 - Junior has pretty much given up, but his mother shows him the little plants. Junior looks on with amazement and asks,
 - "Can we have pumpkins tomorrow then?"
 - "No Junior, the flowers have to come first, and then after that the little pumpkins will grow. It will take a long time."
 - "But Mom, I don't want it to take a long time. I don't want to have keep watering and weeding. I want to have pumpkins now."

Such is the way of the whole human race!

- We want our pumpkins now...
- We want them without having to plant them and water them and weed around them.

It is no different for believers.

- We have come into Christ kingdom and we always want to know...
 - “When will we get to the good part?”
 - And indeed, we are told that we are “kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed at the last time.”
 - The best is yet to come...we are not there yet and we want to be there...
 - But our Lord says to us,
 - “Don’t keep asking me that.”
 - “There’s a lot that has to happen first.”

This is what we find Him saying to His disciples (and to us as the Holy Spirit has included this in the scriptures for us) in Matthew 24:1-14.

- In verses 1-3, we have the disciples essentially asking, “When do we get to the good part?”
- And in verses 4-8, we have Jesus saying, “Don’t keep asking about that.”
- And in verses 9-14, He says, “There are a lot of things that have to happen first.”

The LORD is telling us that we will have to bear tribulation as believers until the end of the world and that we should not expect it to be otherwise.

- Heaven will not come until we get to... Heaven.
- Until then, we must endure much tribulation for the sake of His kingdom.
- Let us examine these first fourteen verses of Matthew today that we might gain a heart of patience.

First there is the question that believer’s ask found in verses 1-3...

I. “When do we get to the good part?”

A. This is essentially what Jesus’ disciples were asking...

1. Their hopes that paradise was about to break into their lives had recently been stirred!
 - a. Jesus had, only a few days before, ridden into Jerusalem and received praise as the promised Messiah who had come to save...
 - Then He had cleansed the temple...
 - Then He had publicly defended His authority...
 - And now He had denounced the scribes and Pharisees, concluding with the point that their house would be left desolate.

b. In chapter 24, we find Him departing from the temple with His disciples for the last time, making His way to the Mount of Olives,

1) The disciples point out to Him the temple!

- It was truly a remarkable building!
 - According to the Jewish historian Josephus, some of the stones in the temple were over 38 feet long, 18 feet wide, and 12 feet high.
 - Herod had employed 10,000 workers for eight years—
 - If each employ cost him \$12,500 per year in our money;
 - that would come to one billion dollars just for his labour force.
 - Everything in the temple that was not covered with gold was polished white marble!
 - Josephus says that when the sun rose on, you had to shield your eyes because of the brilliance—
 - from a distance, it looked like a snow covered mountain.
 - The permanence and the glory of that building stood as a symbol of the permanence and glory of God to the disciples!
 - It is very easy to find our security in the church's great monuments, but we must remember that many of them were built by wicked men like Herod who hate the Saviour.
 - St. Peters in Rome was built with proceeds obtained by the selling of church offices, the trafficking of indulgences, and revenues charged for viewing relics...

2) Jesus is not so impressed with the temple...

- He says to the disciples,
 - v. 2: "Do you not see all these things? Assuredly, I say to you, not one stone shall be left here upon another, that shall not be thrown down."
- And I might add that in 70 AD this prophecy was very literally fulfilled.
 - The Roman armies tore down the temple stone by stone in order to gather all the gold that had melted from the parts they had burned and that had run down between the stones.
 - They did not leave one stone upon another...
 - The Wailing Wall that we see today is only a retaining wall.
 - The huge and glorious building was completely flattened.

- c. Now to hear Jesus say that this magnificent building would be flattened must have really gotten the minds of Jesus' disciples going!
- 1) From their infancy, they had been taught that this temple would stand until the end of the world!
 - Surely Jesus must have been telling them that the time of the end was near!
 - Paradise was at hand!
 - But when will it be?

 - 2) In verse 3, we find Jesus seated on the Mount of Olives (from which the temple could be seen—glistening gloriously in the sun) and His disciples break the question to Him privately, saying:
 - v. 3: Tell us, when will these things be? And what will be the sign of your coming, and of the end of the age?"
 - It is clear from this question that they expected all these things to occur at once...
 - The temple would be destroyed and then Jesus would come to usher in everlasting happiness and an end to the curse for all believers!
 - I should point out that the word translated “**coming**” is the Greek word “*parousia* (parousia)” which is a very specialised word...
 - It is not used in any of the other gospels, and the only place it is used in Matthew is in this chapter where it is used four times.
 - This word signifies “being present” and was used to refer to a personal visit from an important person like a king.
 - It becomes the standard word in the epistles to refer to Jesus' physical bodily return.

TRANS> So you see then that the disciples, in asking this question, were expecting the destruction of the temple to occur at the time of Jesus' return.

- They saw this as the beginning of paradise.
2. We can be sure that this is what they had in mind because this is what was always on their minds as they went about with Jesus...
 - a. Two of them had recently asked Him if they could sit on His right and left hand when He came in the glory of His kingdom...
 - which they expected Him to do in their lifetime...

- b. In just another day or so at the last supper (when Jesus was announcing His approaching death),
 - Jesus would have to expose their folly in arguing about which of them would be the greatest in His kingdom...again, supposing that very soon Jesus would be honours according the manner of a great king of this world.
- c. And even after His resurrection, their great question to Him was,
 - Acts 1:6: "Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?"
 - And of course by "restore the kingdom," they meant,
 - "bring in paradise with us reigning by your side on those twelve thrones you have spoken about."

TRANS> They were just like little Junior looking for his pumpkin.

- "When do we get to the good part?"
- But now I must ask you a question:

B. Do you not very often find your heart inclined in the very same way?

1. Do you not find that you would much rather reap a harvest than sow seeds?
 - that you would rather have your pumpkins now than wait for them?
 - a. This is particularly a plague in our society...
 - We want to spend money that we don't have because we want what we want *now*.
 - People play the lottery because they want a harvest without having to sow the seed.
 - We want everything to come to us with ease.
 - b. Of course there is not a one of us who likes hardships and trials and testings and crosses...
 - I don't mean to say that we are meant to *like* these things...
 - The LORD has indeed promised paradise to us in which nothing will be lacking to make up our happiness.
 - But the problem is, He has not promised it *yet*.
 - We cannot expect to reap the harvest until the appointed time and we must set our minds to the work before us with patient resolve.
2. Let me ask you this...
 - Do you ever find yourself saying,

- “Why does all this happen to me? I try to serve the Lord, but it seems that I just go from one hardship to another. Why doesn’t He bless me the way He blesses other people?”
 - One person is wishing for a spouse, another is wishing for a different spouse, almost all are wanting just a little bit more money...
- Do you often find yourself wondering why God doesn’t give you more of that happiness you crave?
 - Silly little sentimental Christian songs are sung about how happy we are and we forget that the LORD calls to hardship now.
 - I don’t mean to say that we don’t have a happiness that the world knows nothing about...
 - We have the forgiveness of sin and the hope of eternal life and communion with God and with each other...
 - but we don’t have the fullness of paradise yet (we don’t have our pumpkin yet)...
 - and Jesus tells us to quit looking for it in the sense of wanting it now, on our own terms...
 - It is right for us to look for it as our hope that is reserved for us in heaven, but don’t keep asking for it before the time!
 - You are like a worker in the field who starts asking if it’s quitting time in the morning...
 - or like a child at the beginning of long trip asking if you are there yet.

TRANS> And that brings us to our second point from verses 4-8...

- Having seen how we tend to keep asking, “When do we get to the good part?”
- We now see Jesus response...

II. Jesus says, “Don’t keep on asking that.”

A. First off, He warns you that it is dangerous to do so.

- You will easily fall into the hands of deceivers if you keep looking for paradise now.
- This is the first thing He says to them when they ask this question...
 - Mat 24:4-5: And Jesus answered and said to them: “Take heed that no one deceives you. For many will come in My name, saying, ‘I am the Christ,’ and will deceive many.”

1. These deceivers claim to be Christ...the promised Messiah...

- a. They will claim that the end you are looking for has come.
 - They claim that they are Christ, the one God has sent to redeem the world, to bring the paradise that you seek!
 - They are antichrists...
 - Do you remember what antichrists are?
 - The prefix anti means “instead of”
 - They are those who come “in the place of Christ” claiming that they themselves are Christ...
 - And if not directly claiming that in name,
 - they promise that they can give you paradise.
 - b. If you are looking for paradise *now*,
 - you will easily be deceived by them.
 - If following Jesus of Nazareth (as he is revealed in scripture) does not seem to be giving you the happiness that you were looking for...
 - here is someone with the answers!
 - Here is someone with higher life promises, the promise of a second blessing, a prophecy of paradise now!
 - And you forget to check to see if the answers are from scripture—
 - “At least it answers that promise to give me the happiness I want!”
 - c. Jude tells us how such deceivers do a lot of grumbling...
 - They look for people who are discontent and they stir them up.
 - Is this not what happened to Israel in the wilderness?
 - The leaders of the rebellion found a bunch of people who were discontent and they fed that...
 - They said to God,
 - “We wanted the Promised Land and instead you brought us out to die in the wilderness.”
 - And their grumbling destroyed them
2. Jesus tells us that *many* such deceivers will come, and that *many* will follow them.
- a. This is not just a theoretical danger—it is something that is going to happen and Jesus says it is going to happen a lot—to **many**!

- It is something that you need to be careful about when you find that you are asking when the good part comes all the time...
 - when do we get to the promised land?
 - when do we get the pumpkins?
- b. And of course, history has proven this to be true:
- Many deceivers do come and many disciples do follow them!
- 1) In the generation of Jesus, there was an expectation of the coming of the Christ because the prophets were rightly understood to have indicated that those days were the time of Christ.
 - And because Jesus didn't bring the expected deliverance from the Romans and the paradise that many expected,
 - We have record from Josephus, the Jewish historian, of many who were claimants....
 - There were two or three claimants by the name of Theudas, and one by the name of Dositheus who said they were Christ.
 - Many were deceived by them, which serves them right for having rejected the true Messiah when He was presented to them.
 - 2) There have been many more all through the ages that have since made this claim...
 - There has been the grand claim for centuries of the Pope, that He is the Vicar of Christ—that is, his substitute... and he has offered the world an alternate way of salvation.
 - We have those individuals that come along, claiming to be Christ—
 - Charles Manson is a good example.
 - 3) And of course there are many others who, perhaps not claiming themselves to be Christ,
 - promise salvation to their disciples on terms other than those of Jesus...
 - a) We have Mary Baker Eddy, the founder of Christian Science, who taught that if we followed her, we would never be sick or have problems...
 - b) We have our Kenneth Copelands that promise us perfect health and great wealth if we will follow his doctrine...
 - c) And then we have the very sophisticated dreamers of the late 19th and early 20th centuries who presented education as a Messiah...

- or politicians who promised us the end of war and poverty if we would follow them.

TRANS> But Jesus is telling us that we must not look for perfection to come in these ways.

- We should not be expecting that He has come when all these claims are made...
 - He elaborates more on this in verse 24 where he says that this antichrists will tell you that Christ is in the desert or in the inner room...
 - that He is physically present somewhere on earth...
 - But He says that His second coming will not be like that at all... where you have to go to the desert or to some temple to find Him!
 - His coming will be very public and very world wide.
 - Do not be so anxious to get your pumpkin that you settle for one of these substitutes! for a stone!
 - Don't always be asking if this is the end...
- He goes on to warn us...

B. Do not think that all the problems you see in the world are a sign of the end...as so many do...

1. He tells us first of all that wars are not an indication that the end has come...
 - a. In verse 6 He says very clearly:
 - Matthew 24:6: And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not troubled; for all *these things* must come to pass, but the end is not yet.
 - b. It is quite remarkable to me that there are so many in the church today who completely turn this upside down!
 - Instead of recognising the wars are not a sign that the end has come, they take this very verse to say that they are sign that it has come!
 - As soon as there is some disturbance in the Middle East, these frantic souls get out their prophecy glasses and start trying to find Kuwait or the al-Qaeda in prophecy some where.
 - And they tell us that it is all a sure sign that the end is near!
 - And they make claims that the return of Christ has to occur within so many years...
 - And after so many years have past, they make new claims as if their old ones had never failed...
 - c. Don't you see brothers and sisters, Jesus saying the very opposite here!

- His very point is that all of these things are going to go on, and that they are not signs either way!
 - In the section we will look at next week, He tells us that there **will** be a clear sign of the destruction of Jerusalem,
 - But that is a sign about the destruction of Jerusalem—
 - He tells us that the second coming will be like a thief in the night... there will be no sign.
 - His very point here is that wars and rumours or wars are going to go on before the end, and that they do not tell us that the end has come.
 - He is telling you to quit asking (or worse claiming) that wars signify that the end has come!
 - Just be sure that you are serving Him when He comes!
2. He further tells us that famines and earthquakes are not a sign of the end either...
- They are just the beginning of sorrows.
 - a. In verse 7 and 8 He says,
 - Matthew 24:7-8: For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places. All these *are* the beginning of sorrows.
 - b. It is clear that Jesus is not talking only about Judea here—
 - He says that these things will occur in various places. These are things that will occur all over the world.
 - When we see them, it does not mean that God is starting to bring the final judgement.
 - These are things that will be going on all along—
 - They are only the **beginning** of sorrows.
 - There is a sense in which they do **point** to the final judgement—all suffering does...
 - God has afflicted us with these things ever since the fall, and they are reminders to us that there is a God who judges...
 - But they are not time indicators of when that judgement will be.
 - There won't be any kind of gradual ramping up to that final judgement...
 - It will come suddenly when no one expects it—just as the flood came in Noah's day.

TRANS> And so the LORD is essentially telling His disciples (and us) to stop asking if this is the end all the time.

- When it comes, we will know it has come.
- But until then, there will be many things that we will have to endure.
 - This is the third thing He tells us in this passage:

III. There's a lot that has to happen before the end—a lot of hard things that you will have to endure. (9-14)

A. First, He tells you that you will have to endure persecution.

1. This persecution will not be light

a. He says (v.9):

- “they will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you.”
- He is not talking about people not quite accepting your message...
 - He is talking about beatings and imprisonments and impoverishment and banishment and torturous death!

b. Yes, you will have to endure the common afflictions that all must endure—the wars between nations and the famines and earthquakes that we have already seen...

- But on top of that, you, a Christian, will be deliberately targeted for persecution.
- Jesus' disciples had thought they would soon be sitting on thrones, with many honours and servants...
 - But Jesus tells them something quite different.
 - He had told them that this would happen at the end,
 - but until the end they were going to have to suffer...
 - and that the end would not come for a long time...
 - They had expected as Jesus' followers to receive better treatment in this world, but Jesus tells them to expect worse.

c. We sometimes suffer from the same misguided expectation...

- As those who have been taught by Jesus to love,
 - and who have learned to love one another and who enjoy happiness in our homes and good relationships with our children...
 - We expect people to think well of us and to be nice to us...

- But brothers and sisters,
 - that is often not the case, and you must not be surprised when people hate you and call you evil...
 - Jesus tells you to expect such things if you are following Him.
 - In his epistle, Peter says, don't be surprised by it.
2. The disciples had seen this maltreatment of their master already by their own brethren—
- a. They had witnessed how the scribes and Pharisees and High Priests opposed Jesus...
 - and soon they were going to see how deep this hatred went—
 - when these same ones would take Jesus and deliver Him up to be crucified!
 - Jesus is telling them that this is what they can expect...
 - b. But He tells them to expect it not only from their own countrymen, but also from every nation!
 - Wherever the messengers of the gospel carry the gospel, they will be despised and hated.
 - Jesus says, “You will be hated by all nations.”
 - Again, He is not just talking about Jerusalem in their day...
 - He is looking into the future and seeing His people despised wherever they go.
 - There is hardly a nation that has ever welcomed the gospel when it first came...
 - There is always a strong resistance at first.
 - Look at the places where the gospel is breaking ground today...
 - What do you see? Persecution!

TRANS> Now you may say, “but why, why do they hate us?”

3. And Jesus tells us why—He says, “It is for my sake.”
 - a. Now there is something very glorious and comforting about that!
 - When people come at you because of your service to Christ, it should be an encouragement to you...
 - Of course it's not pleasant, but it is a blessing because it shows you are in union with Christ.

- They are dealing with you the same way they dealt with Him because you are like Him!
- b. Now I'm not talking about when you are obnoxious and bring it on yourself...
- I'm talking about when you are loving people and serving people and following Christ,
 - And the world comes after you because you are shining too much of the light of Christ around...
 - They hated Christ because they hated the light... the light exposed their wickedness that they were trying to hide...
 - Even our very testimony that we are not trusting in our own works, but in Christ who died for our sins is a savour of death to them...
 - It tells them that you, a person is living close to God, need a Saviour or you will perish in your sin!
 - In their eyes, if **you** need a Saviour, what does that say about them?
 - Now of course the logical thing would be for them to just trust in the Saviour too...
 - But that's the very thing they are trying to avoid...
 - They want to be able to work things out for themselves!
 - "Don't tell me I need a Saviour."
 - And as I showed you recently, when your life keeps saying that to them, it makes them desperate to silence you...
 - They will resort to whatever method works.
 - When that happens, rejoice because it means that you are in union with your dear Jesus who gave Himself for you!
 - And it also means that your light is shining and the world is noticing that you are Christ's...
 - Perhaps some of them will be saved.

TRANS> So you see that persecution is something we, the church, will have endure throughout the ages...

- Let me add that according to the statisticians, more people were slain for Jesus Christ in the twentieth century than in all other centuries combined!
 - Just because we live in a part of the world where the gospel has spread far and where not many shed their blood for their faith does not mean that the worldwide Church of Jesus Christ is not suffering this same sorrow...

- But Jesus tells of a second way that we will suffer until He returns—a way that is very common to us in the West...

B. Second, He tells you that you have to bear with the corrupting of the church.

1. That's right, you have to bear with the affliction of seeing many of your brothers apostatise!

a. Jesus says, "Then many will be offended."

1) The word **offended** is the word *skandalon*.

- It refers to a trap that catches something—like an animal trap.
- As it is used here, Jesus is talking about apostasy...

2) He is talking about people who come to follow Christ with high hopes and expectations...

- but who after a time decide that they are just not getting what they want from Christ and His church...
- They feel as if they were deceived.
 - They did not come for persecution—they did not come to endure hardships...
 - They thought the pumpkins would come sooner!
 - They don't rejoice in the hope reserved in heaven, they wanted some peace and safety now...
 - And instead there is persecution and they still have tough relationships and sickness and poverty—
 - "What is the point of all this religion?" they say...
 - And so they turn away from the truth.

b. Well now you see,

- this becomes yet another thing that you, as a believer have to endure...
 - There is all the persecution that comes from the outside,
 - but now you have the painful and discouraging experience of seeing your beloved brothers and sisters in the church reject your Lord!
 - It can be extremely painful
 - Jesus says that they will betray one another!
 - Those who used to serve you and encourage you to go on become those who try to get you in trouble with the authorities...

- They become worse toward you than your persecutors—they become as Judas who betrayed his master with a kiss.
- They hate you all the more than if they had never been in fellowship with you.
- Jesus says, they hate one another...
- Those who used to live in the communion of Christian love now are full of hatred and bitterness.

TRANS> You will have to endure apostasy in the church... but that is not all...

2. Jesus says that you will also have to endure false prophets who rise up and deceive many...
 - a. We have already seen Jesus' prediction that this would happen...
 - But here he speaks of the reality of the church body being split up because of it...
 - He speaks of those ones who come along as teachers in the church and who benefit you and many others...
 - And who then take a detour into error and lies...
 - b. And the difficult thing is that they lead many of your brethren with them!
 - It is been extremely painful to me to see persons I love being slowly corrupted by men in the pulpit who reject the word of God...
 - It can be hard and very lonely at times to follow Christ...
 - What must it have been like on that day when Jesus fed the five thousand and they wanted to make Him King...
 - And He preached to them and they all went away—all but the twelve!
 - They went away because they found out that Jesus didn't come to give them the pumpkins they were looking for...
 - He wasn't going to be king on their terms, and they were offended...
 - How difficult it must have been for the disciples...
 - But how much difficult when, in later years, they had planted churches only to see heretics arise and lead many astray!
 - Even heretics that they had laboured to disciple!

TRANS> These are grievous things to endure, but Jesus says that we can expect them until He comes.

- But this is still not the end of what we will have to endure as far as the corrupting of the church...
3. Thirdly, He says we will have to endure in a context of growing lawlessness and coolness of love in the church...
 - a. There will be disciples, at least so called disciples, in the church who do not love God's law...
 - They look at the Law of God as a burden instead of a delight...
 - They don't have a new heart and so instead wanting to be all that God calls them to be, they want to cut corners and find loopholes...
 - Some of them do this by legalism—that is, they make much of certain externals while their heart is far away...
 - They want to find a righteousness in observing certain ordinances and in abstaining from certain things,
 - but they do not rejoice in the gospel and sever with sincerity.
 - And those who don't go the legalism route go the antinomian route...
 - That is, they openly claim that they are not interested in God's law...
 - Their heart is right, and so if they want to be promiscuous, they will say that their heart is right and that they are free in Christ to do as they wish...
 - They will ignore the letter of the law claiming to keep the spirit.
 - b. This too is a hardship for those who do love God and who do love His Law...
 - On the one hand, they are forced to keep a bunch of rules that God has not bound them to keep,
 - and on the other hand, they are enticed by their own brethren to break away from the commandments that God has told them observe.
 - This can be very trying for those who truly want to do the will of God and who want to leave all to follow Christ...
 - who want to do what's right in God's eyes rather than what's right in their own eyes.

TRANS> Jesus says that you will be faced with lawlessness and lovelessness in the church.

- Do not be surprised...
 - This is something you will have to endure along with persecutions and apostasy as long as you remain in this world until Jesus comes.
 - You have to keep waiting for the pumpkins.
 - You must see to it that you are not drawn away from Christ by any of these things...
 - In verse 13 He says,
 - “He that endures to the end will be saved!”
 - If you are always expecting peace and harmony in this world instead of afflictions, persecutions, and corruption of the church...
 - You will not be able to endure...and in the end you will not be saved.
 - You will never get the real pumpkins that Jesus promises.
 - It is only those who lose their lives now for Jesus sake that will find them in the end.
 - Coming out of a fallen state in a fallen world is not easy,
 - The world will oppose you and your own flesh will oppose you...
 - It is something you can only do by the grace of God...
 - But all of you who have truly turned to Jesus Christ to take you and save you...
 - You can be certain that through all these things He will sustain you and you will enjoy sweet fellowship with Him...
 - The outward man will perish, but the inward man will be renewed day by day.
 - You will be saved by His grace!
 - You will continue in His fellowship and nothing will be able to separate you from Him.
 - That is the good news!
 - And look—Jesus shows a third thing that must happen before the end...
 - an encouraging thing!
- C. Third, He tells you that the gospel will be preached in all the world before the end comes...
- v. 14: And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come.
1. This gospel—what does Jesus mean by this gospel?

- Well no doubt He refers to the gospel (gospel means good news) that He just referred to...
 - That whoever endures to the end will be saved!
 - That whoever continues with Christ by faith, looking to Him for what He has promised instead of looking for paradise in this world...
 - will be saved—will obtain that paradise by His grace!
 - Those who are not enticed away from Him by empty hopes of false Christs...substitute Christs...
 - Those who are not discouraged away from Him by common afflictions of this world...
 - Those who are not driven away from Christ by persecutors...
 - or disheartened away from Him by a corrupting Church...
 - These who continue with Christ, who trust in Him and abide with Him until the end will be saved!
2. And Jesus says that there will be a faithful church to bear witness to this gospel in all the world...
- a. The end will not come until it has been faithfully declared everywhere.
 - b. He does not say what the results of that proclamation will be,
 - but elsewhere we are told that the knowledge of the LORD will cover the earth as the waters cover the sea.
 - that all will know Him from the least to the greatest...
 - That does mean that there will be no tares at the end... Jesus says there will be—
 - but they will be tares in a wheat field rather than wheat in a tare field.
 - The gospel will be faithfully carried to the ends of the earth.
 - c. How will we know when that has happened?
 - 1) We won't!
 - I have already told you that throughout this chapter, Jesus is telling us that there are no signs to tell us when He will return.
 - Paul was able to say even in His day that the gospel had gone out into all the world.
 - 2) The whole point here is that you are to stop trying to figure out when Jesus is coming back...
 - Stop reading into things that Jesus says will occur all along the way...

- And concentrate rather on loving Him and abiding in Him and serving Him with all your heart until the end.
- If you are always looking for the end, you will be discouraged...
 - But if you are always mindful of the end and have hope that it will surely come and so continue in your Lord's service,
 - You will be filled with hope and joy in believing and at last will have your pumpkin.