**Preparation for the Last Days (2 Timothy 3:1–5) 9/21/2025**

The central theme of 2 Timothy is - in the last days of the world and in the final moments of our lives, what will we leave behind on earth before we stand before God? The passage for today warns that in the last days, there will be times of suffering. Not just “the last days,” but specifically “times of great suffering.”

The Bible warns of three kinds of “ends.” **First is the end of history.** The prophetic books repeatedly record this. Assyria, Babylon, and Persia that conquered the world all eventually collapsed. Thus, every nation and ruler must remain humble before God, because He is the one who governs the rise and fall of history. **Second is the end of the world.** This is what we must carefully reflect upon through today’s text. **Third is the end of each individual.** One day, each of us will finish our earthly life and stand before God’s judgment seat (2 Corinthians 5:10). This will be next week’s message. The reason the Bible speaks of the end is so that, within the time God has permitted, we may live before Him thinking about how to live, what to live for, and what to leave behind. God is both the one who begins and the one who ends all things.

**1. Why must believers, especially disciples who will be used as gospel witnesses, prepare for the last days?**

**1) Because that day is the fulfillment of Christ’s final covenant.**

**① What covenant has God continually emphasized in Scripture?** He sent Christ to set us free, make us eternal children of God, and dwell with us (eternalcovenant). He promised to raise us as witnesses to save our generation and the ends of the earth (covenantof the age). He gave us the covenant to save our regions, nations, and especially the great nations where the peoples gather (field covenant). And each week through the pulpit, He gives us the covenant to have victory throughout the week and the year.

**② Why does God give us these covenants?** So that by holding to them, we may gain victory with faith in every problem and event, and wait for the coming Christ.

**2) Because on the day Christ returns, the world will end, and judgment will come upon all evil.**

**① That will be the day when God’s love of patience and perfect justice are fulfilled.** On that day, the wicked will be judged according to what is written in the book of life (Revelation 20:12–13), and Satan will be cast into the lake of fire forever (Revelation 20:14).

**② Then God will wipe away every tear from the suffering church and believers (Revelation 21:4).** There will be no more death, mourning, or pain.

**3) Because on that day, God’s people, the disciples who gave their lives for the gospel will receive special glory.**

**① Jesus warned that the world will hate us simply because we became His people (John 15:19).** For the gospel, we may sacrifice and lose many things. But God promised that we will receive a hundredfold even in this life, eternal life in the world to come (Mark 10:29–30), and further, rule with Christ over the new heaven and new earth (Revelation 22:5).

**② That will be the day when God’s people are eternally comforted.** This is why the end must come, and why we must prepare for it.

**2. How should we prepare for that day?**

**1) Our eyes must be opened to see the end.** **Then we will understand the attitude of faith we must have and the work we must do.
① Jesus said many signs will appear before the end (Matthew 24:1–28). These are historical evidences.** We will hear news of disasters in the world (wars, famines, and earthquakes). And this is only the beginning. Believers will face persecution, they will betray each other, and false prophets will rise to deceive many.
**② Tpday’s passage describes inner signs that will appear within people. Spiritual evidences (the “deep darkness” prophesied in Isaiah 60:2).** People will endlessly fall into corruption to become lovers of self, arrogant, impatient, violent, and lovers of pleasure. As for the church and believers, three things will be evident. They will have a form of godliness but deny its power (6), oppose spiritual leaders (8), and face continued persecution and hardship (12).

**2) What we need to prepare in the last days is to build the bartizan and stand as watchmen.** **This is about restoring our true identity.**
**① What identity?** **As 2 Timothy 2 said last week, the “identity of a disciple”.** Beyond just being a child of God, a disciple is one who follows Christ and lives and dies for Him. Stand as a strong soldier of Christ, run the race of covenant as a runner with Christ, and be a disciple like a farmer that sows the seeds for Christ. The reason the world is dark and churches are closing is because there is a lack of disciples.
**② At that time, God Himself will send watchmen for us who never rest (Isaiah 62:6–7).** While we hold the covenant of the bartizan and stand as spiritual watchmen, God sends heavenly watchmen (His heavenly army and angels) to work. While we stay awake and prepare for spiritual battle, Christ Himself moves the angels to fight (Revelation 17:14). Thus, our spiritual victory is guaranteed (Rom. 16:20).

**3) With that identity, we must be in three spiritual flows that we can enjoy.** **Then we will experience inevitable victory and a life where things take place.
① God gives us His Word and places us in the flow of the Word.** By His Word He created the world, the Word became flesh and came down to us, and now He has given us the written Word. By His Word He rescues us from crisis (Psalm 107:20), He makes us wiser than our enemies (Psalm 119:98), and He revives all people (Ezekiel 37:10). The Word is not just text. It is the Word of the gospel by which Christ is proclaimed, lifted high and is with us (Romans 10:17, Ephesians 2:13, John 15:7). Thus Paul says, “Continue in what you have learned and become convinced of” (14). Believe and hold firmly to the power of the Word (the blessing of meditation).
**② God leads us to hold His Word and pray, and in prayer He works through the Holy Spirit (flow of prayer).** Why must we pray with the Word? Because only then can we pray according to God’s will and in faith. All Scripture is God-breathed (Work of the Holy Spirit, 16). That is why holding to the Word is the beginning of the Holy Spirit’s work. Through it God gives teaching (comfort and strength), rebuking (repentance, healing, renewal), correcting, and training in righteousness (challenge).
**③ God’s conclusion is to use us in evangelism and mission for saving all people and all nations (flow of evangelism).** Scripture says God equips us as His people for every good work (17). What does it mean to be made complete as God’s people? It means knowing God’s heart to save all lives, nations, and peoples, and devoting our lives fully to it (Luke 15 parables of the lost son, lost coin, and lost sheep).

**Conclusion -** In the days of the first judgment of the flood, Noah and his family were chosen by grace, saved the world, and fulfilled God’s will (Genesis 6:8, Romans 11:5). In the same way, may every believer prepare for the last days like Noah and his household, and be used to fulfill God’s will.