

UNDERSTANDING OUR TIMES

Text: I Chronicles 12:32

Key Word: Understanding

Key Thought: Understanding "Our Times" is often based upon "Understanding Past Times."

We are told that our world is doubling its knowledge every 10 years. It would be great if we would double our wisdom as well. It seems like we know very much but understand little. Time has not changed much. Every generation has had its time of testing its decision making. **Good decisions are based upon obtaining and correctly discerning ALL THE FACTS.**

Issachar stood forth with 200 chiefs and their relatives at a critical time in the nation's history. If you study its past, you'll soon understand how this tribe was guided in their decision making.

The meaning of the name Issachar held some of the secrets for the **nation's success.** The name is made up of two words,

"is" - man

"sakar" - wages

It appears that the name refers to a man who is hired for a certain amount of work - a hired worker.

"Issachar is a rawboned (strong) donkey lying down between two saddlebags.

15. When he sees how good is his resting place and how pleasant is his land, he will bend his shoulder to the burden and submit to forced labour."

Genesis 49:14,15

This prophecy shows us that the tribe of Issachar was going to be willing to maintain its liberty and freedom at the cost of not living an easy life. This tribe indeed carried the burden of being the nation's agricultural people. **Issachar submitted to the yoke of heavy labour to preserve its possessions and peace in the daily struggle for liberty.** This truth is needing to be understood and appreciated especially as we honour those who have given their lives in Military Battles so that we can have life and liberty.

Lets Study Biblical History as Well as the Facts of Our Time in Order to Help Us Understand the Direction We Should Take Now and in the Future.

I. DECISIVENESS FOR O.T. ISRAEL
II. DECISIVENESS FOR N.T. ISRAEL
III. DECISIVENESS FOR LAST DAYS CHURCH

I. DECISIVENESS FOR O.T. ISRAEL

The easy life for Israel only lasted for a short time. Soon the high cost of liberty became apparent. After the death of king Saul, the nation was facing a time of critical decisions. Issachar gave leadership at this time proclaiming that the nation's freedom was worth fighting for. The 200 chiefs stood firm on their decision making.

Issachar learned its lesson earlier in their history when Deborah became the judge of Israel.

*"The princes of Issachar were with Deborah; yes, Issachar was with Barak, rushing after him into the valley. In the districts of Reuben **there was much searching of heart.**"*

Judges 5:15

It was because of their precise and immediate decisions that the land rested from its enemies for 40 years. Bravery is one thing while decisive action is quite another.

This led to another important decision. The nation had to accept their newly appointed king. The Bible says,

*"They came to Hebron **fully determined** to make David king over all Israel."*

I Chronicles 12:38b

This was a time when a nation could be at odds with itself. But it was at this time of history that Issachar fulfilled God's plan for its existence. It now recognized the joy of bearing a burden for the sake of its own people. The army that king David had accumulated required a great demand for food supplies. It was here that Issachar knew what to do.

*"Also, their neighbors from as far away as Issachar, Zebulun and Naphtali came bringing food on donkeys, camels, mules and oxen. There were plentiful supplies of flour, fig cakes, raisin cakes, wine, oil, cattle and sheep, **for there was joy in Israel.**"*

I Chronicles 12:40

I. DECISIVENESS FOR O.T. ISRAEL (Contd.)

Issachar led the way in fulfilling the prophecy of their existence because God helped them to understand what they were to do at this critical time of history. The nation entered into what became known as its "golden years." The ark of the covenant was returned; worship was reestablished; the treasury was overflowing; all the enemy nations were conquered or subdued; plans were made and supplies were gathered to build Solomon's Temple.

All this came about because this tribe of Issachar knew how they should act when a key decision had to be made. They took into account all the information they were given and then acted on the will of God. They chose to have 200 chiefs whom they could trust to seek the will of Jehovah.

II. DECISIVENESS FOR N.T. ISRAEL

The early church also faced many times when they had to make important decisions. Anytime we see an opportunity for advancement, we know that difficult decisions will have to be made and true leaders will arise.

Lets consider one important decision that Paul had to make after leaving Silas and Timothy at Thessalonica while on their second missionary journey. Paul went on to the city of Athens and was quickly concerned about what he saw.

"While Paul was waiting for them (Silas and Timothy) in Athens, he was greatly distressed to see that the city was full of idols."

Acts 17:16

Paul earnestly sought for the key to win the city from idol worship or at least to break up the hardened hearts of the people to receive the gospel message. His preaching found little results until he found the key to the city.

*"Paul then stood up in the meeting of Areopagus [he knew where to be] and said [he knew what to say]: 'Men of Athens! I see that in every way you are very religious [he knew the right approach to take].
23. For as I walked around and looked carefully at your objects of worship, [he knew what to see], I even found an altar with this inscription: **TO AN UNKNOWN GOD.** Now what you worship as something unknown I am going to proclaim to you.'"*

Acts 17:22,23

II. DECISIVENESS FOR N.T. ISRAEL (Contd.)

Paul realized that religion led people to an unknown god. The apostle had lived that life. Instead of condemning them, he used his knowledge as a lever to open up their hearts.

Paul used the same wisdom when addressing the citizens and visitors of Corinth during the Grecian Olympic Games. He used a thought that was common to the people to teach a Biblical truth.

"Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last; but we do it to get a crown that will last forever."

I Corinthians 9:25

Paul kept himself undefiled from his environment and used the differences to win those who were lost in their sin. He subjected himself to a disciplined Christian life. **He never compromised his faith to reach the lost. He shone as light in the darkness around him.**

III. DECISIVENESS FOR THE LAST DAYS CHURCH

I am telling you all of this because the church in Canada is at a crucial point and we need the right spiritual leadership to discern the signs of the time. **We must not only rightly understand what is happening but also know how to respond in a manner that is pleasing to God.** We do not have time to make any mistakes.

What Is Important to Know to Reach Our World with the Gospel?

A. Age Level - According to a 2011 Census, 1/3 of our population is composed of the baby boomers (born 1946-1965). The Median age in Canada was 40.5 years in 2015 (and is increasing). The average church age in Canada is 52 years. By 2031 all the baby boomers will reach 65 years of age. In 1946 women were averaging 3.7 babies compared to 1.7 in recent years (and falling). Its going to take something abnormal to reach people who are set in their ways.

B. New Trends - Never before has an entire generation been raised on T.V. and now smart phones. According to Statista, the average amount of TV watching among those 18+ was 25 hrs/wk. Those more than 55 years watched 38.5 hrs/wk and teenagers watched 12 hrs./wk.

According to Common Sense Media, teens spend an average of 9 hrs./day online; 6 hrs/day for those 8-12 years; and children between 0-8 years of age spend 50 minutes/day.

III. DECISIVENESS FOR THE LAST DAYS CHURCH

B. New Trends (Contd.) It's safe to say that media is influencing the thought patterns of Canadians. When you filter it down, they project that there are no longer any rights and wrongs - no absolutes - just relativity. We are being fed a consistent diet of lies and deception

We raised our children during the rise of He-man, She-Ra, Unicorns, My Little Pony, Masters of the Universe, Star Wars, Ghostbusters, E.T. Smurfs, Bat Man, Care Bears, Dungeons and Dragons, Transformers, Barbie, Gummie Bears, Rainbow Brite, G.I. Joe, Garbage Pail Kids, Ninja Turtles, Beetle Juice, Mighty Morphin Power Rangers, Doctor Dreadful, Techno Ziods, X-Men.

Today the popular shows are Paw Patrol, Daniel Tiger, Peppa Pig, Power Rangers, Elmo's World, Dora the Explorer, Backyardigans, Bubble Guppies, Chip & Potato, Thomas and Friends, Paganimals, Elias: Rescue Team Adventures, Caillou, Curious George.

Some are also watching SpongeBob Square Pants, Kody Kapow, The Simpsons, Rainbow Ruby, Care Bears which I wouldn't recommend along with most of the Disney Productions.

A good source for evaluating movies, shows, toys and video games is **Focus on the Family through "Plugged In."** Television is absorbing 14,000 hours of the crucial stage of a child's development so it MUST BE MONITORED. Many shows change over time so be on your guard.

The same is beginning to Rear It's Ugly Head in what has been Conservative or Right Wing News Corporations. "Fox News and Fox Business are now part of the newly created Fox Corporation . . . *"The Walt Disney Company's acquisition of 21st Century Fox will become official early Wednesday morning, with Fox News becoming a key part of the newly created Fox Corporation (Mar 19, 2019)."* The Walt Disney Company only owns 43 percent of the Shanghai Resort; the majority 57 percent is held by Shanghai Shendi Group, a joint venture of three companies owned by the Shanghai government.

C. Materialism - Consumers today can choose more than 40,000 items compared to the 1990's. We live in a society that demands excellence at a reduced price. In 1987 the Chrysler Corporation found that the number one thing that their consumer wanted was CONVENIENCE. Our churches also find that when people are inconvenienced that the attendance drops off. **But there is rising a new generation that wants God to take control of the wheel.**

The old adage of SHOPPING for a church to see which one will SERVE their need is quickly disappearing because of desperation. The previous competition in some larger cities had turned some churches into a 3-ring circus. **Loyalty had become a word of years gone by but that is quickly disappearing with the new generation.** They now are searching for **sincerity not gimmicks.** They don't want to be played as a fool that believes everything they hear. They are quickly seeing that **truth is beginning to expose deception.** You can put lipstick on a pig but it is still a swine. Many of those who decided upon turning their lives over to the Hollywood Dream have woken up from the nightmare or have ended with their names on a tombstone.

III. DECISIVENESS FOR THE LAST DAYS CHURCH (Contd.)

D. Knowledge - We are now doubling our knowledge every 13 months and are well onto our way to doubling our knowledge with the help of the internet every 12 hours according to recent statistics. Our children and grandchildren are the first generations to be raised by an increasing influence of computers. **We used to feed our bodies with chips. Now chips feed our minds. We are quickly creating the impersonal teacher.** If we have any problem, we can hit the "help" or "F1" key for a list of commands or ask Apple Siri, Google Assistant, Cortana or Alexa. It only takes the click of a button or now simply a voice command to open up a world of discovery.

*** I was at Best Buy yesterday purchasing some new Iphones. I had time to wait while they transferred all of my information over to the new phones. Just about everything you purchase now is SMART. It makes me feel a little stupid that I don't know how all of them work. I can now sit in recliner and see who is at my door and talk to them. I can even spy on my home!

My New Smart Samsung TV comes with an app called **Smart Things** that I can turn on my lights, Lock my doors. Open and Close My garage door. Control my stereo, fridge, oven washer and dryer.

I am now informed when we need to clean our vacuum and even reminded when we last vacuumed with our Tineco vacuum. I can start my car and know where I parked. Soon my car will DRIVE ME to places.

I can now pay for a whole body coloured MRI that breaks down every specific area (bones, muscle and tissue, veins and arteries etc.) that my doctor needs to see to better diagnose any of my physical problems. **Literally now he can see right through me.** ***

If I have a problem - there is a pill for that. If I don't want to catch the flu I can take a vaccine. If I want to prevent getting the COVID - 19 virus I can take (or I'll maybe have to take) the new Vaccine even though bio-pharmaceutical companies like AstraZeneca have been now reported to use fetal tissue in their vaccine.

The Institute of Health (IOH) officials stated in a write up by Amy Goldstein (a 30 year National Health Care Policy Writer) in the National Post dated March 18, 2020 that they are arguing "*that the pandemic warrants an exemption to a ban imposed last year (by the Trump Administration) prohibiting government researchers from using tissue from abortions in their work.*"

III. DECISIVENESS FOR THE LAST DAYS CHURCH (Contd.)

D. Knowledge (Contd.)

AutoFlip from Google

The end of annoying videos is here as Google launched AutoFlip, an AI solution that customizes each video depending on the device used. **From detection of the shot**, to analysis of video content and changing the framing of the video, AutoFlip is **a machine learning application** that compares different frames and understands changes in color and video specifics. Besides this, AutoFlip utilizes **neural networks** that differentiate objects and is widely used in ads.

So we must be able to discern our times and feed our minds with truth in order to find the peace and contentment that we often desire. Its not found in devices

Human Brain - several billion petabytes to index
The Internet = 5 million terabytes
Amount of Internet indexed by Google = 200 terabytes or .004% of the total internet

We've transitioned through the . . .

- 1930's - Dirty 30's
- 1940's - Wartime Desolation
- 1950's - Healing Ministries (Go to the Healer)
- 1960's - Jesus People (Sexual Revolution)
- 1970's - Charismatic Movement (Rootless and Anxious)
- 1980's - Prosperity and Faith Teaching (Greed is Good)
- 1990's - Decade of Evangelism (Contrasting the Rise of Terrorism)
- 2000's - Decade of Non-Affiliation (The "None" generation)
- 2010's - Decade of Innovation (Increase of Technology)
- 2020's - Decade of Crossovers (Searching for Truth and Freedom)**

If we are going to evangelize our generation, we must understand God's marching orders.
Once we sit back and evaluate what we can do, we quickly see that we must understand what is from God and what is from man.

1. Don't let fear control you - I Samuel 16:7; II Timothy 1:7;
2. Don't Believe all the experts. Search and compare - I Peter 1:25
3. Avoid globalism - Revelation 13
4. Stand strong for life and liberty - Galatians 5:1
5. Be Cautious using social media - Psalm 85:8
6. Keep yourself healthy - Body, Soul and Spirit - I Corinthians 10:31
7. Test Everything by God's Word - I Thessalonians 5:21

III. DECISIVENESS FOR THE LAST DAYS CHURCH (Contd.)

D. Knowledge (Contd.)

“Misinformation is not like a plumbing problem you fix. It is a social condition, like crime, that you must constantly monitor and adjust to.”

Tom Rosenstie

“The question: In the next 10 years, **will trusted methods emerge to block false narratives** and allow the most accurate information to prevail in the overall information ecosystem? Or will the quality and veracity of information online deteriorate due to the spread of unreliable, sometimes even dangerous, socially destabilizing ideas?”

Pew Research Center and
Elon University’s Imagining the Internet Center
conducted a large canvassing of technologists,
scholars, practitioners, strategic thinkers and others

*** Don Richardson (who also wrote “**The Peace Child**”) caught the attention of Christian leaders in 1981 with his book “**Eternity in their Hearts.**” He showed how recent studies of anthropology proved that theories promoted by Lenin, Marx, Thomas Huxley & Herbert Spencer were totally false.

These men and many others tried to find the facts that would prove that “*primitive cultures*” had no more theistic beliefs. Hundreds of examples were found to counter their theory and support what the Bible taught.

These “**hidden facts**” became the key of effectiveness in winning these “**unreached tribes**” with the gospel. The concentrated efforts of knowledgeable mission teams broke down the enemy’s flimsy wall of defence. **Whole tribes were converted to Christianity all because they gained an understanding of their times and therefore knew how to approach them with the Gospel of Jesus Christ.** ***

God is truly desiring to lead us into the right knowledge that will give us the facts required to win our city and area for Jesus. Lets become focussed on God’s knowledge and direction for us as individuals as we reach out to others.

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Date: Nov 8 & 29/20

Place: FCA

Time: 10:30 Am

Song: Everlasting God; My Testimony

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INTRODUCTION: *Genesis 49:14*

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