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# UNDERSTANDING THE TIMES

1 CHRONICLE 12:32

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## WHAT DOES 1 CHRONICLES 12:32 MEAN?

"And of the children of Issachar, which were men that had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do; the heads of them were two hundred; and all their brethren were at their commandment." - **1 Chronicles 12:32**

## WHAT IS THE MEANING OF THE NAME ISSACHAR?

The name Issachar either comes from "ISH SAKAR" OR "YESH SAKAR." "ISH SAKAR" MEANS "MAN OF HIRE" and refers to how Leah essentially bought a night with her husband (since her husband preferred his wife Rachel over Leah). This night led to Issachar's conception. "Yesh sakar" means "there is areward" and would refer to Leah feeling rewarded with a fifth son.

Issachar was Jacob's ninth son, and his fifth biologically with his first wife,

Leah. Issachar was born into a rather complicated family situation: Jacob had fallen in love with a woman named Rachel and agreed to work for Rachel's father for seven years in order to marry her. However, on the wedding day, Rachel's father switched Rachel with her elder sister Leah, so Jacob ended up married to both sisters.

Jacob did not love Leah, but Rachel struggled with fertility while Leah had four sons: Reuben, Simeon, Levi, and Judah. Rachel then gave her servant Bilhah to Jacob to have two sons through Bilhah on Rachel's behalf: Dan and Naphtali. Leah then struggled to conceive herself, and so gave her servant Zilpah to Jacob to have sons for Leah; they were named Gad and Asher.

Understanding is a spiritual eye, and spiritual vision rules the spirit realm. The Bible offers an intriguing example

of the power of understanding: the children of Issachar.

The men of the tribe of Issachar had a deep understanding of their times. According to **1 Chronicles 12:32**, understanding their times meant they knew precisely what Israel ought to do. They were divinely endowed with the wisdom to comprehend what God was doing and what they needed to do to align themselves with Him. Knowing what God was doing and what they ought to do meant spectacular results in their lives.

During that period in Israel's history, the kingdom was transitioning from Saul to David, and it was time for David to become king.

Consider the impact on your life if you knew how to end a season of financial stress or trigger God's power in your life like a flowing stream. Many of us might be surprised to discover that most of our crises arise because we lack the necessary wisdom to know what we ought to do, not because we lack power. Our eyes are still closed in many aspects—we just do not know what we ought to do for the desired results.

**1 Chronicles 12** is a stirring chapter that describes the “mighty men” who helped David in war.

Among them are the sons of Issachar, who are described as men who

“understood the times, with knowledge of what Israel should do.” People of understanding are able to respond appropriately to the circumstances that surround them. Elders, preachers, and parents need to understand the times in which they live if they are going to know what they, as God's people should do.

1. Do we recognize the devaluation of life fueled by a humanistic system that lowers man to the level of nothing more than another beast of the field? Are we disturbed by the senseless violence that is often perpetrated by children? Do we understand that:
2. Our society is losing the war in terms of morality?
3. Our times are becoming increasingly filled with senseless violence and destruction?
4. People are turning more and more to drugs and alcohol to ease the pain of their frustrations and problems?

It is important to recognize that merely identifying problems does not necessarily “understand the times.” There are many people who fret and fume about the state of the world, without having any idea why we are entangled in a catastrophic mess. If we truly “understand the times”, we will

recognize where to go to find the solutions we seek: To the word of God. Again, this involves more than merely quoting texts. It involves the ability to properly apply the principles of Scripture to our lives. And that involves more than applying our intellect; we must apply God's revelation (our Bible) to the situation.

We must believe that God's word, when applied, will correct any situation involving sin. We must have the courage to follow it in the face of opposition from those who neither believe nor follow it. "Understanding the times" calls us to action, not to fear and dismay. People who "*understand the times*" are not going to be running amok, throwing their hands in despair, crying, "The sky is falling!" They are going to take up the armor of God and march into battle. They are going to live with the confident assurance that Satan and evil can be overcome.

In 1 Chronicles 12, the focus is on the warriors who joined David when he was still a fugitive from King Saul. The verse in question describes the warriors from the tribe of Issachar, who were known for their understanding of the times and their ability to discern what Israel should do. This ability to understand the times and know what Israel ought to do is a

unique and valuable quality, and the men of Issachar are commended for it.

The mention of the "children of Issachar" here refers to the descendants of the patriarch Issachar, one of the twelve sons of Jacob. The mention of their understanding of the times suggests that they were wise and discerning, able to perceive and interpret the political, social, and spiritual dynamics of their day. This ability set them apart as leaders and counselors, and it was highly valued by King David

The mention of the two hundred heads of the men of Issachar and their command over their brethren also indicates their leadership and organizational abilities. This suggests that the tribe of Issachar was well-organized and disciplined, with a clear chain of command and a unity of purpose. This is an important lesson for any group or community, emphasizing the need for strong leadership and unity in pursuing common goals.

### **WHAT DOES IT MEAN FOR YOU TO UNDERSTAND THE TIMES?**

- It could mean to live with an awareness that "salvation is nearer than when we first believed (**Romans 13:11**).
- It could mean realizing that now is the day of salvation for someone

you've been meaning to share Christ with (**2 Corinthians 6:2**).

- It could mean learning how to count your days, that you may gain a heart of wisdom (**Psalms 90:12**).

Maybe it means to never stop encouraging one another, "as long as it is called today" (**Hebrews 3:12-14**). No matter what it might mean, make a commitment today to understand the times, and then to put that discerning spirit to work in the service of the king.

There aren't many people around who understand the times. The kingdom needs you.

Symbolically, the men of Issachar can be seen as representatives of those who

### **CONCLUSION**

**1 Chronicles 12:32** is a verse that highlights the importance of wisdom, discernment, and leadership. It portrays the tribe of Issachar as possessing these qualities, and acknowledges their significance in the historical context. The verse serves as a timeless reminder of the value of understanding the times and knowing what ought to be done, and it holds relevance for leaders and followers in any era. Ultimately, it calls us to seek after wisdom and understanding, and to use these qualities for the benefit of others.

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possess wisdom and understanding in any given generation. They serve as a reminder of the value of insight and discernment, and the impact it can have on the course of events. Their example challenges us to seek wisdom and understanding, and to use these qualities for the betterment of society.

### **TAKE HOME LESSONS**

1. CHRISTIANS ARE TO REDEEM THE TIME – **EPH. 5:16**
2. FREEDOM IS KNOCKING ON OUR DOOR STEP (EXTEND THE HAND'S OF FREEDOM TO SOMEONE TODAY) **2CORINTHIAN 6:2; ISAIAH 49:8**