

Understanding the Time: A Call to Respond with Dr. Samuel Sarpiya

Discussion Guide – October 26 2025

From the tribe of Issachar, there were 200 leaders of the tribe with their relatives. All these men understood the signs of the times and knew the best course for Israel to take. 1 Chronicles 12:32

And do this, understanding the present time: The hour has already come for you to wake up from your slumber, because our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed. 12 The night is nearly over; the day is almost here. So let us put aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light. 13 Let us behave decently, as in the daytime, not in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and debauchery, not in dissension and jealousy. 14 Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the flesh. Romans 13:11-14

The Pharisees and Sadducees came to Jesus and tested him by asking him to show them a sign from heaven.² He replied, “When evening comes, you say, ‘It will be fair weather, for the sky is red,’ ³ and in the morning, ‘Today it will be stormy, for the sky is red and overcast.’ You know how to interpret the appearance of the sky, but you cannot interpret the signs of the times. A wicked and adulterous generation looks for a sign, but none will be given it except the sign of Jonah.” Jesus then left them and went away.⁵ When they went across the lake, the disciples forgot to take bread. ⁶ “Be careful,” Jesus said to them. “Be on your guard against the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees.” Matthew 6:1-6

Also, seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which I have carried you into exile. Pray to the LORD for it, because if it prospers, you too will prosper. Jeremiah 29:7

Quotes

From a political standpoint, they knew the future lay with David, the shepherd boy turned warrior who had already been anointed king of Israel but had yet to ascend his throne.

The tribe of Issachar’s reputation for understanding the times and seasons is a powerful example of how God equips His people with wisdom and discernment to navigate life’s complexities. As we seek to grow in understanding, let us be encouraged to align ourselves with God’s purposes, to be attentive to His guidance, and to respond with faith and action.

Discussion Questions

1. What does it mean for believers today to “understand the times,” and how can we cultivate spiritual discernment in our daily lives?
2. Where do you see the greatest signs of spiritual “sleep” in today’s Church or in your own life? What would it look like to truly “wake up” to God’s timing and mission?
3. The Tribe of Issachar combined wisdom, awareness, and action — how can we model that same balance in responding to polarization and division in our society?
4. What spiritual practices or habits help you stay sensitive to God’s movement in culture and history? How might you deepen that sensitivity?
5. In what ways might we, like the Pharisees in Matthew 16, miss the signs of what God is doing around us? What prevents us from seeing clearly?
6. Like Jeremiah’s call to seek the peace of the city, how can understanding the times move us from fear or withdrawal to faithful presence and engagement in our communities?
7. What practical steps can we take to “wake up from our slumber,” as Romans 13 urges, and align our actions with God’s purposes in this current season?