

## Understanding The Times

Contributed by Tesh Njokanma on Mar 27, 2020

**Scripture:** 1 Chronicles 12:23-32, Matthew 24:3-8

**Denomination:** Pentecostal

---

**Summary:** A message of hope to help us understand the times and deal with Covid-19. Understanding the times we are in is so crucial to our walk with God, our Christian faith, our preparation and readiness for Christ when He returns.

In 1 Chronicles 12:23-32, the Bible gives us a list of men that were equipped for war, these were men that came to David to help him turn over the kingdom of Saul to him. The sons of Judah numbered 6800, the sons of Simeon 7100, the sons of Levi 4600. We also had distinguished men like Jehoiada, a leader, and Zadok, a valiant warrior. The sons of Benjamin who were 3000 in number were not left out of the list, so also the 20800 sons of Ephraim and the 18000 men that made up the half tribe of Manasseh. If you total all these men, they were over 60,000. The record of the sons of Issachar came after these over 60,000 men earlier mentioned. The record of the sons of Issachar was completely different from these men. The over 60,000 men mentioned in 1 Chronicles 12:23-32 were ready to go to battle which is good, but it's not enough. We must not only be listed in the Lord's army, we must have understanding of the times. The sons of Issachar stood out from all others because they were the only ones that the understanding of the times were attributed to; they were the only ones who had discerning minds to know what was happening at the time in question and knew the appropriate steps to take or things to do in line with the times they were in. This goes to show that spiritual understanding is rare; it is in the heart and mind of just a few people. I pray that in our own generation, you and I will be part of the few that move and walk with spiritual understanding of the times we are in.

It's no longer news that there is a virus that has affected virtually everything in our world today. We know about the coronavirus because of the effect it has had on every aspect of our lives in the last couple of weeks. The virus has caused major disruptions to our daily lives; schools have been closed down, large gatherings prohibited, movements restrained, events cancelled, borders closed to prevent the spread of the virus. For a vast majority, the income they had hoped to receive from certain jobs, businesses and programs have been cut off. In other words, all the 7 Pillars of society: religion, family, government, business, education, media, arts and entertainment have been affected by

the coronavirus. If you don't understand the times, all you may be doing at this time is washing your hands, using hand sanitizer and avoiding crowded places to protect yourself from getting the coronavirus virus when there's so much more God wants you to do besides following the necessary health precautions. Don't get me wrong, following safety measures to curtail the virus is wonderful, but is that all God wants us to do in the times we are in?

If you don't understand the times we are in, then you won't know what you should be doing at this present time. You could end up doing nothing or the wrong thing, you could do something that could have a negative effect on you, or you could waste this present opportunity. Every time, every season comes with its own opportunities. For the present times we are in, if we don't understand it, we can easily miss out on what God is calling out to us to remember, pay attention to, do, stop, change, let go of, hold onto and improve in our personal lives and families, in the body of Christ, in our nation and the nations of the world. Without understanding of the times, opportunities are wasted. Without understanding of the times, people live foolishly instead of wisely (Ephesians 5:17).

This is why we need to be praying this prayer at such a time as this:

PRAYER: LORD, PLEASE I DON'T WANT TO LIVE FOOLISHLY; I DON'T WANT TO BE DEVOID OF SPIRITUAL UNDERSTANDING, GRANT ME UNDERSTANDING OF THE TIMES. GRANT ME, MY FAMILY, THE CHURCH OF GOD AND OUR LEADERS UNDERSTANDING OF THE TIMES SO WE KNOW WHAT WE OUGHT TO BE DOING.

How can one have an understanding of the times we are in?

It's simple. By placing what is happening in these times alongside the Word of God not just viewing it from the news perspective or from opinions being circulated on social media. Your Bible must be so close to you at this time, much closer than your phone or iPad to get the latest update on the coronavirus. It's not just enough to read or listen to the news, we must go to the Word of God.

What does the Word of God say about the times we are in?

1. It Is Biblical Confirmation of The Things That Will Precede The Coming Of Christ (Matthew 24:3-8).

Matthew 24:7 tells us that when you hear of pestilence in various places like coronavirus, when you hear of deadly and overwhelming diseases that can affect a community and the world at large, understand the times. Understand that all these are part of the things

that will precede the coming of Christ. Matthew 24: 8 says what we see now is nothing compared to what is coming, more painful and sorrowful things are still to unfold as the days and years progress.

Jesus has made it plain and clear to us that no one knows the exact day and hour of His coming (Matthew 24:36). We can't say that because we are facing things like coronavirus, Jesus is coming back today, this month, this year, in ten years' time or even a hundred years because the way we view and calculate time is very different from God's own concept of time (2 Peter 3:8). What we can say is that if the events Jesus said would precede His coming are happening, then our concern should be to prepare ourselves NOW not next year, not when we are older, not when we become less busy or make more money, to meet with the Lord and not be shut away from the Lord (Matthew 24: 42-44).

So what should be the prayer, the attitude of someone who understands the times? It should be to not just take precautions against coronavirus, but to also take every precaution necessary for Jesus' coming. It should be to not just pray that the virus will stop so we can resume our normal life, but to pray that everything in our normal life that distracts us from God be removed. It should be to not just pray that the virus be kept far away from us, but to pray that we ourselves are not kept far away from God.

The major precaution for the coming of Christ is to be in Christ not outside Christ (John 15:6), to live for Christ not for self or the things of this world (1 John 2:15-17), to be ready when the Lord shall come, not taken unawares. In other words, to live each day as if it were your last (Matthew 24:44). Coronavirus will come and go, other things will still come after it and this is not being pessimistic – it is the Word of God. It's not just enough to take precaution against the pestilence, we must take every precaution necessary for Jesus' coming.

It's good to follow all the health precautions to avoid coronavirus, to do otherwise would be foolish. But what is even more foolish is to take precautions against the things that precede the coming of Christ, but not take any precaution against the main thing all these events are pointing to which is the return of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

So now more than ever before, this should be our prayer:

**PRAYER: LORD, HELP US TO BE IN CHRIST, HELP US TO LIVE FOR CHRIST, HELP US TO DO EVERYTHING NECESSARY TO GET OURSELVES READY TO REIGN WITH YOU IN GLORY.**

2. It is a time to humble ourselves before God and seek God's mercy (2 Chronicles 7:13-14)

If we have understanding of the times, we know that God is calling us to humble ourselves, seek His face; spend more time with Him, turn from our sinful ways and repent.

2 Chronicles 7:13-14 tells us that whenever there is a pestilence in the land, the people of God must take decisive action. The people of God must be very deliberate. We must think carefully about our lives, reflect on our actions and then take steps to bring us out of where we are to where God wants us to be.

God didn't say if government, the educational sector or the health sector humble themselves and do the right thing, there will be a change. It's a waste of time in times like this to sit down and blame government or the health sector for not being proactive or equipped for the times. Our response at this trying time is to go back to our Maker, the One that calls us His people and seek His mercy and intervention. It's not a time for passing the buck to government and analysing their incompetence and irresponsibility, it's not a time to catch up on all the latest movies you have missed. It's a time for prayer of repentance. Like Nehemiah did, it's a time to stay before God and weep, a time to confess our personal sins, the sins of our families, and the sins of all believers in our nation and all over the world (Nehemiah 1:4-7).

Our confidence in approaching God and taking time to pray this prayer is the promise of hope and deliverance God has given us which is that He will listen to us, He will restore us and our land to health.

So from the bottom of our heart and with all sincerity, can we say this prayer?

PRAYER: FATHER, FORGIVE ME FOR ALL THE SINS I HAVE COMMITTED. FORGIVE THE SINS OF ALL CHRISTIANS ALL OVER THIS COUNTRY AND THE NATIONS OF THE WORLD.

Father, please forgive us for neglecting You and going contrary to Your Word and ways. Forgive us for disconnecting ourselves from you. Forgive us, cleanse us, purge and purify our hearts and bring us back to the cross, bring us back to Christ.

### 3. It Is a Time To For Personal and Corporate Revival

In 2 Chronicles 6:28-31, Solomon said in times of crisis, calamity and pestilence like we see today, whatever prayer is genuinely made by anyone or by all the people of Israel, God would hear those prayers.

So, for God to move at a time like this, individuals must be praying. As a person, your prayer life must be alive, intense and vibrant in these times. All the people of Israel; all of God's people must be praying. As a church, as a body of believers, we must pray vibrant and intense prayers corporately. The fire of prayer must be burning on our personal altar, family altar as well as the altars where we gather to worship God and meet with God. When there's a pestilence, the prayer of one person can go a long way, the prayer of God's people together with one heart and mind even if it is an online prayer or gathering, can accomplish great things.

We understand from Psalm 80:18 that it takes a people who are revived to call on God. It takes a people who are alive with the power and fire of God to pray and God will arise, to pray and there is a change, to pray and things turn around for good. We can't afford to be spiritually asleep at a time like this when so many people need our prayers. There are so many people at a time like this that need the prayer of one person, that need the prayer of the church of God. Those affected by the virus need our prayers, those treating those that have been affected by the virus need our prayers, government leaders need our prayers to make wise decisions and not be manipulated by Satan to carry out his evil agenda.

If we are not ready to stay in the presence of God, to cry out to God, to pray, then we are not ready for God to save us and deliver us from this virus (2 Chronicles 20:9).

We need to pray and seek God and you can't pray fervently and effectively if your prayer life is dead or dying. Let's not be like King Asa that in a time of sickness focused only on the physical and ignored the spiritual (1 Chronicles 16:12). Let's not approach the times we are in with just physical measures and with our physical senses. Let's not just wash and sanitise our hands regularly which is good, let our hearts be washed with the blood of Jesus, let our spirits be alive to pray and bring down the mercy and power of God on our land and the nations of the world.

Can you pray this prayer now?

PRAYER: FATHER, REVIVE ME O LORD AND POUR OUT A SPIRIT OF PRAYER, GRACE AND SUPPLICATION ON ME (Zechariah 12:10).

PRAYER: HOLY SPIRIT HELP ME TO PRAY WHAT I OUGHT TO BE PRAYING AT THIS TIME (Romans 8:26).

PRAYER: LORD, LET THERE BE A STIRRING UP IN YOUR CHURCH, LET THERE BE A REVIVAL IN THE BODY OF CHRIST

#### 4. It Is a Time to Seek Divine Exemption and Protection

In Psalm 91:3-6, we are informed that when there are perilous pestilence like coronavirus, those that dwell with God will be divinely protected. He will cover them and all that concerns them with His feathers; with His hand of protection. If God is covering you with His hand of protection, no evil can get to you, no virus can get to you.

No matter how bad it gets out there, God always has a way of protecting His own. In the time of Moses, when there were plagues that affected virtually everything in Egypt just like the coronavirus has affected all aspects of society, God created a safe haven for His people, they only heard of what was happening, it didn't get to their dwelling places (Exodus 8: 22-23, Exodus 9:26, Exodus 10:23). The God who supernaturally diverted and kept the plague of flies, hail and darkness away from the homes of the Israelites will do everything possible to keep the coronavirus away from you. You will hear of it, you will not see it in Jesus mighty name, amen.

This is not a time to say God knows what I want so why bother to pray about it, why bother to ask Him to protect me when He knows I need His protection (Matthew 6:8)? We must seek divine protection and exemption in the place of prayer. This should be our cry to God:

PRAYER: FATHER, PLEASE COVER ME, MY ENTIRE FAMILY, MY LOVED ONES, CHURCH MEMBERS, OTHER BELIEVERS WORLDWIDE, WITH YOUR HAND OF PROTECTION THAT NO EVIL; NO PESTILENCE OR VIRUS WILL ENTER INTO OUR BODIES AND OUR HOMES. HIDE US O LORD IN THE HOLLOW OF YOUR HAND.

PRAYER: FATHER, LAMINATE US IN THE PRECIOUS BLOOD OF JESUS CHRIST THAT IS STRONGER THAN CORONAVIRUS OR ANY DISEASE (Exodus 12:13).

Our prayers of protection can also save and help others. So, we should pray for those the virus has touched. This is the prayer they need:

Lord Jesus, Our Great Physician, the God who made a way of escape for not just your people, but also the mixed multitude that followed them out of Egypt, please make a way of healing, a way of escape from death and the spirit of infirmity for those that have been affected by the coronavirus. Protect their bodies from further damage. Let them escape from the clutches of this virus and enter into Your hands of mercy, healing, protection and deliverance in Jesus mighty name we pray, amen.

We should also pray that the doctors, nurses, all health officials and volunteers treating this virus will be shielded by God's hand of protection (Psalm 91:4).

We should earnestly call out to God to be merciful to us and cover us in this nation and the nations of the world with His hand of protection.

As we pray, we must make bold confessions and declarations of faith based on the Word of God.

Declare this by faith in Christ Jesus: I DECLARE AND CONFESS THAT BECAUSE WE ARE YOUR COVENANT CHILDREN, WE HAVE DIVINE EXEMPTION FROM EVERY DISEASE, PLAGUE, PESTILENCE AND VIRUS, IN JESUS MIGHTY NAME, AMEN! (Exodus 8:22-23).

#### 5. It Is a Time to Walk In the Peace of God Not Fear (Philippians 4:7)

God's peace is what can help us stay calm and at rest in these times. If God's peace is not in our hearts, we will be caught up in all the panic buying, fretting and fear of the virus. The best platform for the devil to operate is one of fear and panic. Fear brings worry and anxiety. Fear leads to wrong and rash decisions. Fear destroys hope. This is a time to feed your faith with God's word and not bombard and overload your mind with fear-inducing news.

God's peace is actually closely knit to prayer. You can't separate the peace of God from prayer. You see why we really need to be a people of prayer in times like this. Philippians 4:6-7 tells us that after a time of prayer, supplication and thanksgiving, instead of anxiety, a peace people can't understand, a peace that will not make you fret and panic about coronavirus or anything else will come upon you.

Peace is a guard for our hearts; peace is the security guard our heart needs. It tells negative and fearful thoughts this heart is guarded, this heart is not your territory, you can't enter here, you can't occupy this heart and mind. If peace is not guarding our hearts, then fear can come in. We need to rebuke the spirit of fear because fear is not of God (2 Timothy 1:7). Fear weakens faith, fear saps and drains out spiritual strength and emotional energy thereby leading to discouragement and depression. In these times of uncertainty that fear is gripping the hearts of people all over the world, God is saying to His children whose hearts are troubled and afraid about what they see and hear on the news, who are afraid about the pandemic and all the pandemonium going on: Be strong, don't fear, your God will come for you, your God will be with you, your God will save and help you (Isaiah 35:4). Those who have understanding of the times will know that even when everything around us gets out of control, God is still in control.

Let us take these prayers to saturate our hearts and the atmosphere with the peace of God.

PRAYER: I REBUKE AND CAST OUT THE SPIRIT OF FEAR FROM MY LIFE, MY FAMILY, THE CHURCH OF GOD AND FROM OUR LAND.

PRAYER: LORD, TAKE HOLD OF MY HAND AND WALK ME THROUGH THIS SEASON; THROUGH THIS PERILOUS TIMES (Isaiah 41:13)

PRAYER: FATHER, FILL MY HEART WITH YOUR PEACE THAT SURPASSES HUMAN UNDERSTANDING.

No matter what the news says or the statistics being rolled out, don't start running helter-skelter that you run away from God. Don't let your heart be troubled (John 14:1). Be of good cheer, remain unshakeable, have peace in your heart knowing that Jesus is with you (Joshua 1:9, Matthew 28:20, Hebrews 13:5), Jesus has overcome the world, Jesus has overcome coronavirus and every other trial and calamity in the world (John 16:33}.

SHALOM! May the peace of God be with you, in you and around you.