

## UNDERSTANDING THE TIMES - Part 9: Applying What You've Interpreted

Now these were the numbers of the divisions that were equipped for war, and came to David at Hebron to turn over the kingdom of Saul to him, according to the word of the LORD...of the sons of Issachar who had **understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do**, their chiefs were two hundred; and all their brethren were at their command. (1 Chr 12:23, 32 NKJV)

### Ten-Week Study on UNDERSTANDING THE TIMES

- Week 1: Seeing "The Big Picture" **DONE**
- Week 2: God's Kingdom vs. The Culture **DONE**
- Week 3: The Fear of the Lord Is The Beginning of Wisdom **DONE**
- Week 4: God's Word Is the Plumb Line For Everything **DONE**
- Week 5: God's Heart For Seers **DONE**
- Week 6: Desiring the Greater Gifts **DONE**
- Week 7: Old Testament vs. New Testament Prophets **DONE**
- Week 8: Interpreting What You See **DONE**
- Week 9: Applying What You've Interpreted **TODAY**
- Week 10: Walking In Discernment

### Applying What You've Interpreted

- **Our "Understanding the Times" is a gift from God...** That means it does not originate in us, but Him. We surely won't understand the times because we're *smarter* than everyone else. The wisdom and understanding we need are supernatural and come *from* Him!
 

<sup>2</sup> Tune your ears to wisdom, and concentrate on understanding. <sup>3</sup> Cry out for insight, and ask for understanding. <sup>4</sup> Search for them as you would for silver; seek them like hidden treasures. <sup>5</sup> Then you will understand what it means to fear the LORD, and you will gain knowledge of God. <sup>6</sup> For the LORD grants wisdom! From his mouth come knowledge and understanding. (Prov 2:2-6 NLT-SE)

  - **So, what is it, exactly, that we get from Him?** We get His voice. We get His heart. We get to know Him at deeper and deeper levels. We learn to listen, not just for the words He says, but *how* He says those words, and *in what context*.
 

"My sheep **listen** to my voice; I know them, and they follow me." (John 10:27 NLT-SE)
  - **This is very important!** We are to **pay attention to** the voice of Jesus, in the Word, through what we read and hear from others, and what we hear and see directly from God Himself. Truth is, God often time speaks in unusual ways. As **Steve Thompson** (*You May All Prophesy*) points out, "God wants to draw us closer to Him. He delights in using unusual and strange means to speak to us, drawing us away from the mundane routine of our lives to pursue Him. Since most of us are prone to living our lives independent of Him, He uses something unusual to catch our attention and draw us to Himself."
 

<sup>18</sup> "Have any of these prophets been in the LORD's presence to hear what he is really saying? Has even one of them cared enough to listen?...<sup>22</sup> If they had stood before me and listened to me, they would have spoken my words, and they would have turned my people from their evil ways and deeds. (Jer 23:18, 22 NLT-SE)
  - We are living in a time of impending doom/breakthrough and the number of believing followers is shrinking, yet being strengthened. **The darkness is getting darker and the light is getting brighter!**

Then your light will shine out from the darkness, and the darkness around you will be as bright as noon. (Is 58:10 NLT-SE)
- **Revelation** is there if we want it and are willing to prepare to receive it.
 

"Remember that prophecy itself is the expressed thoughts of God spoken in a language that no people in their natural gift of speech could articulate on their own. The substance and nature of prophecy exceed the limits of what the natural mind could conceive. Prophecy comes through the mouth of people, but from the mind of God — spiritual thoughts in spiritual words." **Jim Goll** (*The Seer: The Prophetic Power of Visions, Dreams and Open Heavens*)

- **So, how can we know that what we are hearing is from God?** Here are nine scriptural tests that **Jim Goll** (*The Seer: The Prophetic Power of Visions, Dreams and Open Heavens*) suggests we use to test revelations we receive for accuracy, authority, and validity.

- **Test #1: Does the revelation edify, exhort, or console?**

"One who prophesies **strengthens** others, **encourages** them, and **comforts** them." (1 Cor 14:3 NLT-SE)

- **Test #2: Is it in agreement with God's Word?**

<sup>16</sup> "All Scripture is **inspired by God and is useful to teach** us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right. <sup>17</sup> God uses it to prepare and equip his people to do every good work." (2 Tim 3:16–17 NLT-SE)

- **Test #3: Does it exalt Jesus Christ?**

"He will **bring me glory** by telling you whatever he receives from me." (John 16:14 NLT-SE)

- **Test #4: Does it have good fruit?**

<sup>15</sup> "Beware of false prophets who come disguised as harmless sheep but are really vicious wolves. <sup>16</sup> **You can identify them by their fruit...**" (Matt 7:15–16 NLT-SE)

- **Test #5: If it predicts a future event, does it come to pass?**

<sup>20</sup> "Any prophet who falsely claims to speak in my name or who speaks in the name of another god must die." <sup>21</sup> "But you may wonder, 'How will we know whether or not a prophecy is from the LORD?' <sup>22</sup> If the prophet speaks in the LORD's name but his prediction does not happen or come true, **you will know that the LORD did not give that message.** That prophet has spoken without my authority and need not be feared. (Deut 18:20–22 NLT-SE)

- **Test #6: Does the prophetic prediction turn people toward God or away from Him?**

<sup>1</sup> "Suppose there are prophets among you or those who dream dreams about the future, and they promise you signs or miracles, <sup>2</sup> and the predicted signs or miracles occur. If they then say, 'Come, let us worship other gods' —gods you have not known before— <sup>3</sup> do not listen to them. **The LORD your God is testing you to see if you truly love him with all your heart and soul.** <sup>4</sup> Serve only the LORD your God and fear him alone. Obey his commands, listen to his voice, and cling to him. <sup>5</sup> The false prophets or visionaries who try to lead you astray must be put to death, for they encourage rebellion against the LORD your God, who redeemed you from slavery and brought you out of the land of Egypt. Since they try to lead you astray from the way the LORD your God commanded you to live, you must put them to death. In this way you will purge the evil from among you. (Deut 13:1–5 NLT-SE)

- **Test #7: Does it produce liberty or bondage?**

"You have **not** received a spirit that makes you fearful slaves. Instead, you received God's Spirit when he adopted you as his own children. Now we call him, 'Abba, Father.'" (Rom 8:15 NLT-SE)

- **Test #8: Does it produce life or death?**

"He has enabled us to be ministers of his new covenant. This is a covenant not of written laws, but of the Spirit. The old written covenant ends in death; but under the new covenant, **the Spirit gives life.**" (2 Cor 3:6 NLT-SE)

- **Test #9: Does the Holy Spirit bear witness that it is true?**

"As for you, the anointing which you received from Him abides in you, and you have no need for anyone to teach you; but as **His anointing teaches you about all things and is true and is not a lie**, and just as it has taught you, you abide in Him" (1 John 2:27).

- **Interpretation is the messy part**

- The reason most people won't **mess** with prophecy is simply the **mess** that invariably comes with it.

The only clean stable is an empty stable. So if you want the work of an ox And enjoy an abundant harvest, You'll have a mess or two to clean up! (Prov 14:4 PASSION)

- If we **despise immaturity** individually, we will never grow out of it corporately.

<sup>19</sup> Do not quench the Spirit. <sup>20</sup> Do not despise prophecies. <sup>21</sup> Test all things; hold fast what is good. (1 Th 5:19–21 NKJV)

- **Application demands Godly wisdom to mature**

- **Levels of Revelation**

- **Level 1 Revelation: Inspiration**...includes mental or spiritual impressions or perceptions, gentle internal visions, and the still, small voice of God we hear in our spirits. Part of the nature of every believer is that they can hear God's voice. "If you are a Christian, you have already heard God speak. In fact, you cannot come to Jesus unless the Father draws you. You must "hear His voice" in order to be drawn to Him." (You May All Prophecy, by Steve Thompson) Paul gave this exhortation.

"One who prophesies **strengthens** others, **encourages** them, and **comforts** them." (1 Cor 14:3 NLT-SE)

- Another way to say this is that inspirational prophecy builds us up, stirs us up, and cheers us up!
- **Level 2 Revelation: Direction**...generally requires greater spiritual wisdom and understanding. Timing is a huge issue when direction comes through spiritual revelation. Many times, the interpretation and application of directive revelation comes with confirmation, so we need to be patient, pay attention, and expect confirmation.
- **Level 3 Revelation: Correction**...often leads to periods of what is described as "wilderness" or "spiritual desert" experiences. The Lord used these seasons to re-shape or re-form our ministry or calling. Willingly going into and through a desert time usually means that a promotion is coming! In the same way that we are to not despise that days of small beginnings, we should not despise the dry seasons.
- **Level 4 Revelation: Engagement**...would include open visions, angelic visitations, visitations of the Lord, dreams, trances, being caught up in the Spirit, and translocation. These experiences are often seen as elite prophetic encounters by those who are walking in community with these believers. In reality, many who engage with the Lord in these ways have gone through personal times of significant sacrifice and brokenness. Another common trait of those who engage with the Lord in these ways is the hunger and thirst for intimacy...
- The **veil between heaven and earth** seems to be getting thinner.
  - **Dr. Nora Tubbs Tisdale**, a professor at Yale University, talks about these "thin places" historically...
 

"On the coasts of Scotland and Ireland there are certain sites that the locals call "thin places." Thin places are not so named because the altitude is any higher or the air any thinner there. Rather, they are called "thin" because it is believed that in these places the distance between heaven and earth shrinks, and the veil between the two worlds is so "thin" you can actually perceive something of heaven itself.

The ancient Celts--sensing the deep spirituality of these sites--built many of their worship places on them, some still marked today by circles of stone. Later Christians also built churches and monasteries and cemeteries there. And people who visit these sites today sometimes say they lose all track of time and space while there, and they know--deep down inside--they are on holy ground. For in thin places, boundaries of time and space fade away. There is no yesterday, today or tomorrow--only eternity stretching forth in a timeless continuum."
  - **Another group of 'believers'** who talk a lot about places where the veil is thinning are **New Age** leaders, false prophets who do not hesitate to engage with those "on the other side." Remember, occult practices are nothing new. They are simply **defiled reproductions** of Godly pathways that have always been there for Christ followers, yet abandoned by most believers and claimed by charlatans.
  - The apostles **Peter, Paul and John** the Revelator have given us a glimpse through the veil as well. (Acts 10:9–16; 2 Cor 12:2–4; Rev 7:9–12 NLT-SE)
  - **The question remains, will the church of Jesus Christ, motivated by a pure and holy desire for intimacy with Jesus, encounter the living God here, on this side of eternity?** When Jesus gave the invitation in Revelation 3 to open the door to Him, he was not talking about salvation, but an intimacy that is available to us here and now!
 

<sup>20</sup> "Look! I stand at the door and knock. If you hear my voice and open the door, I will come in, and we will share a meal together as friends. <sup>21</sup> Those who are victorious will sit with me on my throne, just as I was victorious and sat with my Father on his throne. <sup>22</sup> "Anyone with ears to hear must listen to the Spirit and understand what he is saying to the churches." (Rev 3:20–22 NLT-SE)

#### - **Applying Revelation: What are our options?**

- **Process** it...Look at it, let it touch your heart, let it stir your imagination, "What if..."
- **Believe** it...Some words are activated by faith; they need to be received and believed!
- **Meditate** on it...Sometimes a simple phrase in a less-than-simple word stands out. It's often good to "stew" on a revelation from the Lord, to allow the flavors to blend.

- **Shelve** it...Revelations are not always for today. Don't be afraid to sit them on the shelf and see what comes in the future. You may find confirmation after confirmation of the same word.
  - **Pray** it...There are some words that are best lifted back up to the Lord in prayer. Many times these revelations will stir us to pray specifically as intercessors for breakthrough.
  - **Act** on it...Some revelations require immediate and intentional action. If this is true, the Lord will give you the grace and faith to act decisively.
- **How then shall we pray?**
- **Reflection** and **Repentance**...Don't hurry. This is not a sprint, but a marathon. Take time to listen, respond, and listen some more to what the Lord is revealing.
  - **Intercession**...If you are filled with God's Spirit, you have a mandate to pray and intercede for others. This is not an option for those who are called, but for those who are filled!
  - **"Crafted" or "Framed" Prayers**...Not all prayer is spontaneous. Some prayers become most effective by asking yourself, What is the Lord is saying and how can I pray in a way that my prayer is significantly aligned with His heart for this situation."
  - **Petitions** and **Decrees**...We have much more authority than we realize. Our words count, because they are His words. When our words truly reflect His words, things move and change!
  - The **Courts of Heaven**...For those who have a hunger and thirst for intimacy with God, bringing the most important issues in life and setting them before Him only makes sense. Robert Henderson's four-part series on "The Courts of Heaven" (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q8Qqu7s6Wwc>) is very helpful in understanding the power of this avenue of prayer.
- **Let's give this a shot!**
- **#1 Revelation:** "I heard, 'Under the table Christianity is no longer acceptable'...I also saw tables being overturned; the Lord is going to turn over the tables of our hearts."
    - Interpretation: \_\_\_\_\_
    - Application: \_\_\_\_\_
  - **#2 Revelation:** "I saw a hand make a sweeping motion through a dark powdery substance that is over Longview...I then heard, 'Soot of contempt'."
    - Interpretation: \_\_\_\_\_
    - Application: \_\_\_\_\_
  - **#3 Revelation:** "I was in a field of corn, walking down a row with the Father in front, me in the middle, and Jesus behind me. I felt like I was in a "love sandwich," so safe and so loved. We came to a stop and there was a piece of ground that looked like a big square with no corn on it. It reminded me of the movie, "Field of Dreams." Then a big gold frame came down and hovered in the air over it."
    - Interpretation: \_\_\_\_\_
    - Application: \_\_\_\_\_
  - **#4 Revelation:**
    - "I was praying for a friend of mine and had a vision of her arm being an extension of a staff, like the one Moses carried. She told me she had a vision of the Lord visiting her and handing her His staff. I was praying for her arm and it was healed!"
    - Interpretation: \_\_\_\_\_
    - Application: \_\_\_\_\_