



The tribe of Issachar understood the times and knew what Israel should do

Issachar Ministries UK seeks to be a people who understand the times, listen to the Lord and know what should be done

Issachar Comments Papers

Expounding biblical concepts on the world scene today

Signs of Hope

- at the end of the year

December 2013

As the year 2013 draws to an end I have been spreading before the Lord many of the things that I have noted since the beginning of January this year. I take seriously my role as a watchman on the walls of our nation seeking to understand what is happening and what the Sovereign Lord God Creator of the Universe may be saying to us.

Banks

I've noted the steady rise in the national debt now reaching astronomic proportions despite the austerity policy and cuts in public spending of the Coalition Government as they struggle to keep the national economy from collapsing. Similar battles to stave off (or delay!) disaster are being fought in other nations throughout the Western world where greed and corruption have prevailed for decades. I notice that despite all the warning signs of the collapse of the big banks and financial institutions in 2008 the same corrupt policies driven by greed are being followed in the banks where many individuals in the City of London still have salaries and bonuses in excess of £1 million a year while the poor have to choose between heating and eating.

Energy

I notice that the big energy companies who sell their products to themselves and then sell onwards to the public making enormous profits for themselves and their investors are creating real hardship for many elderly and poor people in Britain. I notice that the cost of food and the general cost of living has increased significantly since the beginning of the year. The gap is increasing between the rich and the poor, the powerful and the powerless, the North and the South, and even between white and black young people at a time of increasing competition for jobs.

Children

I notice that corruption and deceit is still being exposed among prominent people in public life as well as among politicians and celebrities. The general moral anarchy of the nation is declining while at the same time sexual exploitation of children increases and the tide of pornographic filth on the Internet is still pouring out across the country polluting the minds of a whole generation of children. A report from the Deputy Children's Commissioner for England last month stated "The evidence is absolutely compelling that pretty much 100% of boys from 13, 14 upwards are looking at adult pornographic materials, including extreme and violent images, and there is a correlation between the looking at and the carrying out of such acts." I notice that even the Government has become anxious about the influence of pornography upon children and steps have been taken to put pressure upon Google and Facebook to impose restrictions upon key search words that lead to these pornographic sites.

Dark Web

I note that both Britain and America are attempting to control the Dark Web part of the Internet, where everything is handled anonymously which is why it is popular with intelligence agencies, whistleblowers and criminals. But as soon as the Silk Road, where you can buy anything from drugs to weapons, was closed down five new Silk Road marketplaces opened up. The battle to clean up the Internet will be long and hard.

Last month I had a private meeting at the House of Commons with Sir Gerald Howarth. He is the MP for Aldershot who chairs the Family and Child Protection Group of which I am the Convener. We were discussing the future direction of the group and the need to focus more upon measures for strengthening family life. At one point he said, "The destruction of family life is the greatest single social catastrophe of our times."

Family Breakdown

I'm quite sure he is right in this because the family is the cornerstone of society; when it breaks down the foundations of organised community life begin to crumble. Suffering brought about by family breakdown is immeasurable. It impacts, not just the adults involved, but the children who are not responsible for their parents' actions. Yet still our politicians do not understand the destructive forces that are deliberately attempting to destroy traditional family life in order to promote their unnatural lifestyles. The power of evil to deceive humanity is unlimited. The blindness of our political leaders in passing the Same-Sex Marriage Bill is almost unbelievable as it will further undermine marriage and the stability of family life, as is demonstrated in Canada and the Netherlands where marriage rates have plummeted since the legalisation of homosexual unions as 'marriages'.

Family life in Britain has never been weaker. In a vast number of households today they never share a family meal. There isn't even a dining table for the family to sit around. Meals are all informal affairs where individuals have a plate of food and sit on the settee to watch TV or DVDs, or the children take their plate of food to their bedroom and sit watching things on their computers or laptops or iPads and texting on their phones.

Individualism

This individualisation of behaviour within family life undermines the family and directly leads to breakdown. Many children live in a little world of their own and never have a meaningful conversation with their parents. We are rapidly becoming a nation of individuals with no family identity and no close ties within the family. They lack the kind of loyalty and 'belongingness' that is traditionally provided by the family. As a result millions of children suffer emotional damage, especially where they have to live within reconstituted families with siblings from other relationships with one or other of their natural parents.

Half of all children born today will suffer a family breakdown before they leave school. The harm being done to these children is incalculable and numerous research studies show that children from broken homes are twice as likely to suffer a marriage breakdown or relationship breakdown as children from homes with two natural parents who are married. As family life becomes ever weaker the instability of society increases along with a vast increase in emotional and physical health problems.

The weakness and instability of family life impacts the whole of society and it only takes a spark to generate flames of passion when unrest spills over onto the streets as happened in many inner-city areas at the time of the Tottenham riots in 2011. Today, tensions are rising in some parts of the country in anticipation of immigrants pouring in from Eastern Europe when Bulgaria and Romania are admitted to the EU on 1st January next year.

Good News!

The outlook for the future is grim, but is there any good news at the end of the year? Yes there is! The first small signs of a backlash against the liberalising forces of social change are just beginning to appear. A National Survey of Sexual Attitudes and Lifestyles published last month in *The Lancet* revealed a highly significant shift in attitudes regarding adultery and un-faithfulness in marriage. The number of 16 to 44-year-olds who disapprove of extramarital affairs has increased greatly in the past two decades. 63% of men and 70% of women in this age-group believe "non-exclusivity in marriage is always wrong". This compares with 45% and 53% respectively in 1990, showing a huge shift in attitudes in the past 20 years, which indicates a longing for stability in family life among young people and a rejection of the values of their parents.

Prayer and Bible Study

The social significance of this finding is immense. It indicates the beginning of disillusionment with our glitzy shallow civilisation driven by greed and corruption which is slowly being exposed and preparing the way for a new openness to truth. At the same time there is a rising level of commitment to prayer and Bible study among small groups of Christians. This commitment to prayer among Christians is increasing as they become more aware of the dangers to the nation of the forces of corruption which are spreading like a cancer through society.

A further sign of hope is that children and young people are increasingly open to closer relationships with their grandparents, especially those who have suffered broken homes and damaged relationships with parents. Grandparents have all been raised with biblical values as foundational in their childhood. As the hunger for truth among children and young people increases, grandparents have an opportunity to share these values and help to turn the tide towards a new advent season of light and truth.

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