



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

### *'That They May Know.....'*

November 2014

### Babylon

At a meeting of the Issachar Ministries' trustees last month we were discussing the message about 'Living in Babylon' which we have been speaking about throughout the past year. One of the trustees remarked on the frequency that the phrase *"That they may know that I am the Lord"* occurs in the Book of Ezekiel. I have often noticed this but I have never either written or spoken about it. It is unique to Ezekiel who uses the phrase about 80 times in chapters 5 to 39.

### God's Actions

The phrase almost invariably refers to some action of God; of one that either brings calamity or blessing. In chapter 6 Ezekiel foretells the terrible judgement that is going to come upon the land of Judah from which many of the people in exile in Babylon had come. Despite Jeremiah's warnings that God would not defend an unholy nation steeped in idolatry; and despite the fact that Jerusalem had already surrendered to the Babylonian army and Nebuchadnezzar had carried many of the population into slavery in Babylon; most of the people who remained in Jerusalem and in the surrounding area were still practising idolatry instead of putting their trust in God.

Ezekiel foresees further destruction coming upon the people who *"have lusted after their idols"* (Ezekiel 6.9). Ezekiel prophesied that the Babylonian army would come back and complete the desolation that they began in 597 BC. For him the significance of this was that when the catastrophe happened the people would recognise it as their own fault. In the same verse he says *"They will loathe themselves for the evil they have done and for all their detestable practices"*. And then he comes to the punchline *"And they will know that I am the Lord; I did not threaten in vain to bring this calamity on them."* The people would learn that God keeps his word: his warnings are not to be ignored for they will certainly come to pass.

### Warnings

There are many similar warnings about the consequences of ignoring warning signs, but in chapter 20 where Ezekiel begins to speak about a time of restoration after judgement there is a change of tone. In verse 42 he reports God saying *"Then you will know that I am the Lord, when I bring you into the land of Israel, the land I have sworn with uplifted hand to give to*

*your fathers."* This is repeated two verses later with the words *"You will know that I am the Lord, when I deal with you for my namesake and not according to your evil ways and your corrupt practices."* This is what God is longing to do for his people, to **ble**ss them and not to allow calamity to come upon them. God's purpose is clearly stated in 33.11, *"As surely as I live, declares the Sovereign Lord, I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that they turn from their ways and live."*

This theme is elaborated in chapter 34 where Ezekiel foresees God establishing a 'covenant of peace' with his people (verse 25) and there will be *"showers of blessing"* (Ezekiel 34.26). The passage concludes with the statement *"Then they will know that I, the Lord their God, am with them and that they, the house of Israel, are my people, declares the Sovereign Lord"*.

This statement summarises the whole purpose of God's dealings with his people through the 'New Covenant relationship' which Jeremiah foresaw (Jeremiah 31.31). It affirmed that even if disaster descended upon the nation God would find a way of restoring and blessing his people with love and prosperity as in the vision of the 'Valley of dry bones' which was filled with new life.

## Revelation

God's purpose in all his actions is to reveal to his people his nature and purposes - that he is a covenant-keeping God who keeps his promises, who loves his people, who warns them when they are going in the wrong direction and who opens the Windows of Heaven to bless them with love and prosperity when they repent and turned to him in humble trust.

## Change Direction

Through the life and death and resurrection of Jesus that 'New Covenant relationship' is opened to the Gentiles. When nations acknowledge him as God - as Britain has done in the past (and still does so, although only nominally) God sends warning signs when the nation is heading for catastrophe. But his purpose is to alert the nation to danger so that they can change course away from the consequences of their own sinful actions.

## The Statement

We should take note that God did not save Israel from the judgement that the people brought upon themselves and neither will he save our nation. The word of warning in the Statement given to us at High Leigh last month needs to be heard by everyone in Britain. It is not a message of doom and gloom but one that reflects God's deep love and concern for our future and our well-being.

*This paper comes to you as part of the Issachar Ministries Intercessionary prayer e-mail in November 2014 and also as blog on the Issachar Ministries website if you want to comment [www.issacharministries.co.uk](http://www.issacharministries.co.uk)*

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**ISSACHAR**  
MINISTRIES UK

*(C and M Ministries Trust)*  
*registered charity no 1029797*

*Moggerhanger Park, Park Road, Moggerhanger, Bedford, MK44 3RW*

*Telephone: 01767 641006*

*Website: [www.issacharministries.co.uk](http://www.issacharministries.co.uk)*

*office e-mail: [info@issacharministries.co.uk](mailto:info@issacharministries.co.uk)*