I. Introduction:

And of the children of Issachar were men that had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do;

1 Chronicles 12:32    KJV

A. Moving in the Spirit of Issachar

1. One of the 12 tribes of Israel was the tribe of Issachar.

2. Each of the 12 tribes had particular gifts and characteristics that applied to their tribe more than others. (See Jacob’s prophecy over his 12 sons in Genesis 49)

   a. So it is with the many spiritual “tribes” in the Body of Christ; different parts of the Church have their particular anointings and strengths.

3. Right now we need the spirit of Issachar to come forth; those who understand the times and know what to do.

B. The Fog of War

1. We are in a “war of the worldviews” today; the Christian church and the biblical worldview are under attack on so many fronts and the times are so confusing it’s hard to know what to do because it’s difficult to know what to do because of “fog of war”.

2. This term (“the fog of war”) originated with Carl von Clausewitz, a German military analyst who said observed that….

   “Military commanders frequently find themselves in a state of ignorance regarding the real strength of their position, not only of their foes, but also of their friends.”

   Carl von Clausewitz, (1780-1831)
a. These are prophetic words for the war of the worldviews we fight today. The battle is raging and many among us are in a state of ignorance. Our commanders are in a state of ignorance.

b. Von Clausewitz determined that…

“Three quarters of the factors on which action in war is based are wrapped in a fog of greater or less uncertainty. A sensitive and discriminating judgment is called for; a skilled intelligence to scent out the truth.”

Carl von Clausewitz

3. The same holds true in spiritual warfare! In the fog of war, ¾ of the action is wrapped in uncertainty:

- Somebody is shooting at me; who is it?
- I’m shooting at something; but I’m not sure what it is.

4. What we need in the fog of war is judgment; skilled intelligence; the wisdom of spirit of Issachar, we need to understand the times so we can know what to do!

5. Say it in the negative: we cannot know what to do until we understand the times! Will we be a prophetic people or a pathetic people?

II. Understanding the Times-Knowing What To Do

A. Jesus and the Sign Seekers

1. In Matthew 16…

Then the Pharisees and Sadducees came, and testing Him asked that He would show them a sign from heaven. 2 He answered and said to them, "When it is evening you say, 'It will be fair weather, for the sky is red'; 3 and in the morning, 'It will be foul weather today, for the sky is red and threatening.' Hypocrites! You know how to discern the face of the sky, but you cannot discern the signs of the times. 4 A wicked and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, and no sign shall be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah." And He left them and departed.

Matthew 16:1-4 NKJV
2. These religious leaders demanded Jesus show them a sign from heaven; but they already had plenty of signs; Jesus had already been working signs, wonders and miracles all over Israel. But they wanted something new.

3. Jesus rebuked them; He says, “You can understand the weather patterns by looking at the sky but you can’t discern the signs of the times that are already around you!”

4. Beloved, I believe in signs and wonders. I praise God for every healing and every answered prayer; but I don’t need to see another miracle to make me believe in God; or believe in Him more.

5. Right now, the enemy is not attacking the Church over signs and wonders; he has launched a major attack on the heart and soul of our nation!

- Our personal liberties are under attack
- There is an attack on the traditional family and the biblical concept of marriage
- There is a full-fledged fight over sexual orientation, transgender bathrooms and gay marriage

6. But recent surveys show that the largest American churches are largely ignoring all these battles in favor of an emphasis on other things:

- Grace (and in some cases, “hyper-grace”)
- Signs and wonders
- Positive thinking
- Praise and worship

7. I’m sure I’ll be misunderstood here! We NEED to preach a message of grace; we long to see signs and wonders; our gospel is a positive message and praise and worship is always a priority.

8. But are we “understanding the times”? Are we aware of the warfare being waged against us? Are our sermons answering questions no one is asking?

9. We need a wind of the prophetic spirit of the children of Issachar to sweep through our church today; a wind that blows away the fog of war; a wind that affects the pulpits and the pews.
B. Pulpits and Pews

1. There is no question that God will hold us Pastors accountable for our pulpits.

“As goes the pulpit, so goes the pew. As goes the pew, so goes the nation.”
Dr. Michael Youssef

2. Todd Wilson, a PHD from Cambridge, calls modern ministers to return to the biblical and historical model of local church shepherds as “pastor theologians”.

a. He challenges church leaders to resist the challenge of fads and succumbing to the temptation of novelty preaching:

“A pastor theologian is not only a student of the Bible, but a student of church history. He doesn't suffer from what C. S. Lewis rightly referred to as ‘chronological snobbery’, the notion that what is most recent must also be the most helpful, or insightful, or true.

Todd Wilson
PhD, Cambridge University

b. Wilson recognizes that there’s nothing new under the sun; but our job is to take the old truth and apply it as we understand our times, so the people will know what to do.

“A pastor theologian retrieves the treasures of the Christian tradition in order to reapply them to the contemporary context.”

Todd Wilson

3. Martin Luther is a great example.

“If I profess with the loudest voice and clearest exposition every portion of the truth of God except that little point which the world and the devil are at that moment attacking, I am not confessing Christ, however boldly I may be professing Christ.”

Martin Luther

4. In Luther’s day, the warfare was inside the church; the foundational doctrine of salvation by faith had been displaced with salvation by works; the priesthood was corrupt; the people were ignorant.
a. He could have contented himself with sermons and writings on any subject under the sun. But at that moment, the devil was attacking the fundamental theology of the church; and that’s where Luther fired his guns.
b. He understood the times and knew what to do.

5. The devil will always undermine sound doctrine and try to corrupt the gospel of grace; but that is not where he is attacking right now.

- Surveys say that 9 out of 10 American Christian ministers today are intentionally avoiding the very subjects where the enemy is hitting us the hardest.

“Where the battle rages, there the loyalty of the soldier is proved, and to be steady on all the battlefield everywhere else is mere flight and disgrace if he flinches at that point.”

Martin Luther

6. I personally believe that the vast majority of the Christian pastors in America are true men of God and do not doubt that most of them preach a biblical message every weekend. But the time has come for all of us to ask ourselves: “In light of the times, is this the right message?” Does it speak to the “now”?

“We have somehow got hold of the idea that error is only that which is outrageously wrong; but the most dangerous person of all is the one who does not emphasize right things.”

David Martyn Lloyd-Jones

7. But understanding the times and knowing what to do is not limited to the pulpit; it has to hit the pews as well. Dr. Al Mohler, the President of Southern Baptist Theological seminary said it well:

“As God’s people, we are a Scripture people, and it is our responsibility to learn how to rightly apply scripture to our lives and to our own times.”

Dr. Albert Mohler, President of Southern Baptist Theological Seminar

8. With God’s help, this is what we intend to do!

III. Conclusion
A. How Long Will We God With The War of the Worldview?

1. Personal testimony on how this series came about.

   “There is another King, even Jesus.”
   Acts 17:7

2. My own experience acquiring a biblical worldview.

   The earth is the Lord's, and all it contains;
   the world, and those who dwell in it.
   Psalm 24:1 NASB

3. The special commission God has given us.

4. The special opportunity we have to…

   “Understand the times and know what to do.”