

Forgotten Lives
The Men of Issachar
1 Chronicles 12:32

June 21, 2026 am

HDBC

Continuing our series ***Forgotten Lives***. Looking at several second-tier men and women in the Bible. People who are easily overlooked or forgotten, as they are overshadowed by the looming figures of Abraham, Moses, Paul, Peter, David, Solomon, Isaiah, James and John.

Some are heroes whose actions need to be remembered and emulated. Others are villains whose actions are to be shunned and avoided.

Some are men, women, and even a few children who are worthy of making the list. Most are individuals, but some are groups hidden in the shadows. That is the case today. We are not looking at one individual, but a group. We have no individual names, yet these men are worth our attention. They are ***the men of Issachar***.

Let me off some context: David was a gifted man. Musician, Poet, Shepherd, King. But above all he was a warrior. He knew what it meant to be in battle, to risk his life, to fight for a cause. And there were times when he fought alone. On a hillside protecting sheep. In a valley running toward Goliath. But as this warrior's reputation grew he began to find himself surrounded by other men who also had a warrior mentality.

These men were **tough, courageous, loyal men** who would do anything for their leader, David. They seemed to thrive on the excitement of living on the edge of life and death. They were the Seals, Rangers, Green Berets of that time and place. They were absolutely fearless. While Saul was forfeiting his kingdom, these warriors, aware that David was God's new choice, began to gather in support of him. When the time came to receive the throne, David's army would be in place and these men would be the ones to lead it. The record of these men is found 1 Chronicles 12.

Reads like a report from department of defense.

Impressive force. Not just warm bodies, but real soldiers. Fighting men who for the most part had earned great reputations. Listed by tribes with interesting descriptions. Read each of the texts below.

Benjamin (1-2) - Switch-hitters. Could fight with left and right hands.

Gad (8, 14-15) - Ironmen

Judah (24) - 6,800 - Shield and Spear

Simeon (25) - 7,100 - Mighty men of valor for war

Zebulun (33) - 50,000 - Undivided heart, variety of weapons, organized.

Among these was a select group of men who were different from those around them. And they are singled out by God because of two distinctions. Those two distinctives are needed for every nation, every church, every family. These men numbered only 200 but they were leaders.

Others helpful in backyard brawl, but were useless in planning strategy and in developing policy. These men were the kind of leaders who could build solid families, protect their neighborhoods and shape a nation. **Verse 32.**

1. Men of Discernment

Men who understood the times. What a great description! What an important thing. They knew the condition of their country. Not fooled by Saul or his administration. They saw the spiritual apathy & degeneration around them. They saw what the other warriors could not see. Others could see the battle at hand, but the men of Issachar could see the greater spiritual war raging. They understood the root causes, the moral and spiritual failures. Saw the spiritual dimension. They knew that their country needed a change.

What was true of their country is true of our country. What was true of their cities is true of our cities. What was true of their families is true of our families. So, are we discerning? Do we understand the times?

We need discernment in three areas. Least to greatest importance.

1) **Political Discernment**

Some of you are surprised to hear me even use the word political. A few of you are nervous. A few of you are excited. The great majority are simply curious to know what I'm going to say. Let me make a series of statements that are true, and I hope helpful.

a. Our nation invites and expects political involvement.

We are blessed to live in a nation that allows us to vote, to influence, to freely express our thoughts and desires. This grand experiment is now almost 250 years old. It is not perfect but I'll take it over any other governmental system on the planet. Christians must be involved in the political processes.

b. Our political system is imperfect but necessary.

Some of the processes and systems are unproductive. Some of the people involved are corrupted and untrustworthy.

The fact that it is imperfect should cause us to abandon it. If we do, we are dooming our nation to be influenced and led only by those who do not know Jesus and who have a different agenda. Let's change what we can for the better, and trust the Lord for the things we cannot change.

c. Political parties and candidates must be honestly evaluated.

For the most part the two parties have staked out pretty clear positions on a host of issues. It's not hard to see what each party supports and endorses. It is up to us as Christ-followers to be discerning when it comes to the parties and candidates we support with our votes and voices.

d. We must never prioritize politics about spiritual disciplines.

Our praying is more important than our political action. How we lead our families is more important than civil leadership. Our commitment to the local church is more important than our commitment to our city, state or nation.

We must have political discernment. The men of Issachar did.

2) Cultural Discernment

We must understand the culture in which we live. The culture of 2026 is vastly different from the culture of 1956. It is even different from the culture of 1986 or 2006. Changing at much more rapid rates than in the past.

By culture, I'm referring to the moral, ethical and spiritual attitudes and practices that are embraced or shunned. Sex/marriage, life & death, laws & punishments, race relations, religion, and more.

What does the culture deem unacceptable?

What does the culture deem acceptable?

What does the culture celebrate?

When it comes to sin, what one generation accepts the next celebrates. We are seeing this played out before our eyes.

Ten challenges I see in our culture that we must discern.

Growing hostility toward true Biblical Christianity.

How do we live out authentic faith in a secular and hostile society. How do we differentiate true faith from cultural Christianity.

Dangerous apathy toward the threat of Muslim influence.

Threaten our way of life, our freedoms, and our future.

We have opened Pandora's box of sexual perversions.

Or to use a different illustration, the Genie is out of the bottle. Without boundaries, the good gift of sex for marriage has become a destructive force for harm in our communities. Water held in check by a dam is useful, but destructive and deadly when the dam breaks. **Acceptance of sexual perversions is a real threat to children.**

Growing confusion on human identity and gender issues.

How do we communicate truth and still find ways to minister to the hurting and confused.

Belief in the sanctity of human life is rapidly eroding.

Abortion is still a problem. Proponents of euthanasia are growing.

Tolerance is presented as the greatest virtue.

The loudest voices promoting tolerance are often the least tolerant.

Gambling is promoted as good and helpful.

Just the opposite is true. Encourages greed. Hurts the poor.

Open antisemitism is continuing to rise.

Targeting Jewish people for persecution is evil and wicked.

Challenges with AI and the takeover of digital technology.

How do we find the right balance. Use it for good without letting it consume us.

Disconnect between Bible authority and personal beliefs.

This is expected in the culture, but this is becoming increasingly a problem in the church. We MUST remain anchored to the Bible as our only source of absolute truth.

3) Spiritual Discernment

a. Where am I in my spiritual journey?

Am I fully surrendered to Jesus as Lord?

Am I fully involved in the life of the church?

Am I spending enough time in prayer?

Am I spending enough time in God's Word?

Am I serving, using my spiritual gifts, through the church?

Am I leading my family in spiritual things?

b. What next steps do I need to take to keep growing?

Do I need to trust Jesus as Lord and Savior for salvation?

Do I need to be baptized as a testimony of my faith?

Do I need to join a mission team?

Do I need to volunteer on a ministry team?

Do I need to be more intentional in my faith at home?

Do I need to be more intentional in sharing my faith?

2. Men of Direction

With a knowledge of what Israel should do.

*Alice in Wonderland Conversation between Alice and the Cheshire Cat
Would you please tell me which way I ought to go? That all depends on
where you want to get to. I don't care much where. Then it doesn't
matter which way you go.*

What direction do we need to go?

They were followers of King David. They were committed to him as their leader. He was not perfect but understood three important priorities.

These same priorities will serve us well.

Know God's Heart

Trust God's Plan

Desire God's Presence

A. Know God's Heart

Greatest description of David was that he was a man after God's own heart. Knew the heart of God like few men have. The great need for 21st century is for believers to continue to focus on knowing the heart of God.

B. Trust God's Plan

Sons of Issachar knew that Israel needed not only a new leader, but **a new kind of leader**. One who knew the heart of God and desired to followed the plan of God. They were willing to follow God's plan by

following God's leader. He was a man who had proven himself in the heat of battle and in his faithfulness in the little things.

We must also be willing to trust the plan of God. More and more we will hear voices calling for moral relativism and tolerance of things that are counter to the plan of God. As this happens, we must courageously trust that God's plan, God's will is always best. We must anchor our lives on it. Live it. Proclaim it.

C. Desire God's Presence

First thing David does is to seek to bring the Ark back to Jerusalem. Desired the presence of God. Knew the great need of his nation was a heaven-sent revival. The same is true today. Today, we need to experience on a regular basis the presence of God. We need sweeping revival across the land and world.

These are politically charged days in our nation. There is a cynicism that most Americans have toward politicians. We are so used to hearing the rhetoric and double-speech. However sometimes a political figure will get it right and say something downright profound. Such was the case with Franklin Roosevelt while speaking to the National Council of Churches.

I doubt if there is a problem—political or economic—that will not melt before the fire of a spiritual awakening.

—President Franklin Roosevelt, former U.S. president (1882–1945)