

14- A SPIRIT OF SLUMBER

As we shared in the previous Bible lessons, conditions are going to get a lot worse as the wrath of the Living, Three Mighty Ones continues to be visited upon a sinful, religious world. According to the procedure that the Lord outlined to the prophet Isaiah in chapter three, one of the things that God will do is **take away the ancient**. In the Old Testament, the ancient were celebrated as men and women of sense and wisdom above all others.

Based upon what God said in other passages, the word translated “the ancient” is often used in the Old Testament to refer to men and women who were mature leaders of the nation of Israel, men and women who the people could depend upon to make judgments based upon the laws of the Lord (Exodus 19:7; Exodus 24:1-9; Numbers 11:16-17).

In a true theocracy, a wise and benevolent God rules a church or a nation. A church is no longer a theocracy when they lose their leaders who make judgments in their church based upon the laws of the Lord. *“⁴You must obey my laws and be careful to follow my decrees. I am the LORD your God. ⁵Keep my decrees and laws, for the man who obeys them will live by them. I am the LORD.” Leviticus 18:4-5 (New International Version)*

The church in Jerusalem began with this type of government. The church in Jerusalem was established at the beginning of the ministry of Jesus Christ, before John the Baptist was murdered. When the converts received scriptural baptism according to the authority of Jesus Christ, they became disciples of Jesus Christ and they put themselves under His authority " ¹ *When Jesus therefore understood that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus maketh more disciples, and baptizeth more than John, ² (Though Jesus himself did not baptize, but his disciples,) ³ He left Judea, and went again into Galilee.” John 4:1-3 (Douay-Rheims Version, New Catholic Edition)*

The members of the local church in Jerusalem agreed His laws would govern their lives and actions and they would be sustained by His power. The Holy Spirit of God inspired the recording of these laws in a library of books under one cover, the Bible. But once a church ceases to be a theocracy, they become a democracy where the majority of the members decide the policies and direction. Once a church becomes a democracy, they soon become an oligarchy. Oh, they still maintain the skin of a democracy but inside they operate as an oligarchy. An oligarchy is a form of government in which the authority to decide the policies and direction belong to a few, elite people. Satan, the prince of this world, loves an oligarchy when the elite

group who controls a church or a nation is composed of his children (*the lost- Matthew 13:24-30*) and the saved who are following his leadership.

Based upon what God said in other passages, the word translated “the ancient” seems to have a reference to being able to (1) **understand** and to (2) **forecast** what was going to happen in the future. **Those who predict false things will replace them.** In the last days the Lord will allow those who replace them to gain control of most of the news media and to gain control of many of the pulpits (Revelation 3:14-22). They will keep repeating messages of false hope until the general population believes everything is getting better, not worse. ¹ *And they continued three years without war between Syria and Israel.* ² *And it came to pass in the third year, that Jehoshaphat the king of Judah came down to the king of Israel.* ³ *And the king of Israel said to his servants, Do ye know that Ramoth in Gilead is ours, and we keep quiet without taking it out of the hand of the king of Syria?* ⁴ *And he said to Jehoshaphat, Wilt thou go with me to battle to Ramoth-Gilead? And Jehoshaphat said to the king of Israel, I am as thou, my people as thy people, my horses as thy horses.* ⁵ *And Jehoshaphat said to the king of Israel, Inquire, I pray thee, this day of the word of Jehovah.* ⁶ *And the king of Israel assembled the **prophets**, about four hundred men, and said to them, Shall I go against Ramoth-Gilead to battle, or shall I forbear? And they said, Go up, and the Lord will give it into the king's hand.* ⁷ *But Jehoshaphat said, Is there not here a prophet of Jehovah besides, that we might inquire of him?* ⁸ *And the king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, There is yet one man by whom we may inquire of Jehovah; but I hate him, for he prophesies no good concerning me, but evil: [it is] Micah the son of Imlah. And Jehoshaphat said, Let not the king say so.* ⁹ *Then the king of Israel called a chamberlain, and said, Fetch quickly Micah the son of Imlah.* ¹⁰ *And the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat the king of Judah, having put on their robes, sat each on his throne, in the open place at the entrance of the gate of Samaria; and all the prophets prophesied before them.* ¹¹ *And Zedekiah the son of Chenaanah made for himself horns of iron, and he said, Thus saith Jehovah: With these shalt thou push the Syrians, until thou have exterminated them.* ¹² *And all the prophets prophesied so, saying, Go up to Ramoth-Gilead, and prosper; for Jehovah will give it into the king's hand.* ¹³ *And the messenger that went to call Micah spoke to him saying, Behold now, the words of the prophets [declare] good to the king with one assent: let thy word, I pray thee, be like the word of one of them, and speak good.* ¹⁴ ***And Micah said, As Jehovah liveth, even what Jehovah shall say to me, that will I speak.*** ¹⁵ *And he came to the king. And the king said to him, Micah, shall we go*

against Ramoth-Gilead to battle, or shall we forbear? And he said to him, Go up, and prosper; for Jehovah will give it into the hand of the king. ¹⁶ And the king said to him, How many times shall I adjure thee that thou tell me nothing but truth in the name of Jehovah? ¹⁷ And he said, I saw all Israel scattered upon the mountains, as sheep that have no shepherd. And Jehovah said, These have no master: let them return every man to his house in peace. ¹⁸ And the king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, Did I not tell thee that he prophesies no good concerning me, but evil?

¹⁹ And he said, Hear therefore the word of Jehovah: I saw Jehovah sitting upon his throne, and all the host of heaven standing by him, on his right hand and on his left; ²⁰ and Jehovah said, Who shall entice Ahab that he may go up and fall at Ramoth-Gilead? And one said after this manner, and another said after that manner. ²¹ And there came forth a spirit, and stood before Jehovah, and said, I will entice him. ²² And Jehovah said unto him, Wherewith? **And he said, I will go forth, and will be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets.** And he said, Thou shalt entice [him], and also succeed: go forth, and do so. ²³ **And now, behold, Jehovah has put a lying spirit in the mouth of all these thy prophets, and Jehovah has spoken evil concerning thee.** ²⁴ Then Zedekiah the son of Chenaanah went near, and smote Micah upon the cheek, and said, Where now went the Spirit of Jehovah from me to speak to thee? ²⁵ And Micah said, Behold, thou shalt see on that day when thou shalt go from chamber to chamber to hide thyself. ²⁶ And the king of Israel said, Take Micah and carry him back to Amon the governor of the city, and to Joash the king's son; ²⁷ and thou shalt say, Thus says the king: Put this [man] in the prison, and feed him with bread of affliction and with water of affliction, until I come in peace. ²⁸ And Micah said, If thou return at all in peace, Jehovah has not spoken by me. And he said, Harken, O peoples, all of you!

²⁹ And the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat the king of Judah went up to Ramoth-Gilead. ³⁰ And the king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, I will disguise myself, and will enter into the battle; but put thou on thy robes. And the king of Israel disguised himself, and went into the battle. ³¹ And the king of Syria commanded the thirty-two captains of his chariots saying, Fight neither with small nor great, but with the king of Israel only. ³² And it came to pass when the captains of the chariots saw Jehoshaphat, that they said, Surely that is the king of Israel; and they turned against him to fight; and Jehoshaphat cried out. ³³ And it came to pass that when the captains of the chariots perceived that it was not the king of Israel, they turned back from pursuing him. ³⁴ And a man drew a bow at a venture, and smote the king of Israel between the

fastenings and the corslet. And he said to his charioteer, Turn thy hand, and drive me out of the camp; for I am wounded. ³⁵ *And the battle increased that day; and the king was stayed up in his chariot against the Syrians, and he died at even; and the blood of the wound ran out into the hollow of the chariot.* ³⁶ *And there went the cry throughout the host at the going down of the sun, saying, Every man to his city, and every man to his own country!* ³⁷ *And the king died, and was brought to Samaria; and they buried the king in Samaria.* ³⁸ *And one washed the chariot in the pool of Samaria; and the dogs licked his blood, where the harlots bathed: according to the word of Jehovah, which he had spoken." (Darby's Translation)*

Again, the Lord will allow those who replace **the ancient** to gain control of most of the news media and many of the pulpits. They will keep repeating messages of false hope until the general population believes everything is getting better, not worse. Because of this, the people will wander as sheep oppressed for lack of a shepherd. When the Lord brings chastisement upon that nation or upon that church, the citizens of the nation or the members of that church will not have a clue why these things are happening to them because, up to that point, they had been kept in the dark like mushrooms. Most of the people in this world will find themselves destitute, fearful, disorientated and without any hope. It is at that time that God the Father instructs His Son to come back and get His children. The saved will be caught up and removed from this earth.

Suddenly, faster than a speeding bullet, more powerful than a moving locomotive, super hero, the Antichrist, will arrive on the scene from the Middle East to save the world from chaos and doom. Because most of the people have no other hope, they will quickly associate themselves with the Antichrist and receive any identification that he demands. Please remember that the majority of people are already becoming dependent upon their government to take care of them. Yes, it is a bitter pill for us to swallow but we need to admit that the majority of the adults in the United States are already receiving a check of some sort or other from the United States government. Some might say that the check they receive was a return on the monies they sent to the government over many years in the past. But the point is, that the life style of the majority of the adults in the United States, in the year 2019, is **dependent** upon receiving a check from the government in one form or another. Whoever controls the "purse strings" will eventually have the ability to control the mindset of the majority of the those who are **dependent** upon them. We can see that in the welfare system we allowed the government to set up. Yes,

while we were sleeping and seeking the things this present world has to offer instead of the things of the Kingdom of God, Satan has cleverly advanced his plan to prepare this world for the acceptance of the Antichrist he plans to project upon the scene, as soon as he is able. At times things may seem to improve but please remember that Satan's operating plan is one step backward, two steps forward until he reaches his ultimate goal.

When the Antichrist is projected upon the scene, the people of this world will so involved in their "daily living", that the majority of them will be caught unaware. ³² "Now learn a lesson from the fig tree. When its branches bud and its leaves begin to sprout, you know that summer is near. ³³ In the same way, when you see all these things, you can know His return is very near, right at the door. ³⁴ I tell you the truth, this generation will not pass from the scene until all these things take place. ³⁵ Heaven and earth will disappear, but my words will never disappear. ³⁶ "However, no one knows the day or hour when these things will happen, not even the angels in heaven or the Son himself. Only the Father knows. ³⁷ "When the Son of Man returns, it will be like it was in Noah's day. ³⁸ In those days before the flood, the people were enjoying banquets and parties and weddings right up to the time Noah entered his boat. ³⁹ People didn't realize what was going to happen until the flood came and swept them all away. That is the way it will be when the Son of Man comes." Matthew 24:32-39 (New Living Translation)

The main reason most of the people of this world will be unaware of what is happening in the "last days" is that by the time the Lord will come back for His children, the Lord will have given most of the people of this world a spirit of slumber just as He did to the nation of Israel when they would not believe the messages He had sent to them through His prophets.

²⁷ "Now I am very troubled. What should I say? Should I say, 'Father save me from this time of suffering'? No, I came to this time so that I could suffer. ²⁸ Father, do what will bring you glory!" Then a voice came from heaven, "I have already brought glory to myself. I will do it again." ²⁹ The people standing there heard the voice. They said it was thunder. But others said, "An angel spoke to him!" ³⁰ Jesus said, "That voice was for you and not for me. ³¹ Now is the time for the world to be judged. Now the ruler of this world will be thrown out. ³² I will be lifted up from the earth. When that happens, I will draw all people to myself." ³³ Jesus said this to show how he would die. ³⁴ The people said, "But our law says that the Messiah will live forever. So why do you say, 'The Son of Man must be lifted up'? Who is this 'Son of Man'?" ³⁵ Then Jesus said, "The light will be with you for only a short time more. So walk while you have the light.

Then the darkness will not catch you. People who walk in the darkness don't know where they are going. ³⁶ So put your trust in the light while you still have it. Then you will be children of light." When Jesus finished saying these things, he went away to a place where the people could not find him.

³⁷ The people saw all these miraculous signs Jesus did, but they still did not believe in him. ³⁸ This was to give full meaning to what Isaiah the prophet said: "Lord, who believed what we told them? Who has seen the Lord's power?" ³⁹ This is why the people could not believe. Because Isaiah also said, ⁴⁰ "God made the people blind. He closed their minds. He did this so that they would not see with their eyes and understand with their minds. He did it so that they would not turn and be healed." John 12:27-40 (Easy-To-Read Version)

" ¹ Concerning times and seasons, brothers, you have no need for anything to be written to you. ² For you yourselves know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief at night. ³ When people are saying, "Peace and security," then sudden disaster comes upon them, like labor pains upon a pregnant woman, and they will not escape. ⁴ But you, brothers, are not in darkness, for that day to overtake you like a thief." 1 Thessalonians 5:1-4 (New American Bible-United States Conference of Catholic Bishops)

" ¹ Brothers and sisters, we have something to say about the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and the time when we will meet together with him. ² Do not become easily upset in your thinking or afraid if you hear that the day of the Lord has already come. Someone may say this in **a prophecy** or in **a message** or in **a letter** as if it came from us. ³ Do not let anyone fool you in any way. That day of the Lord will not come until the turning away from God happens and the Man of Evil, who is on his way to hell, appears. ⁴ He will be against and put himself above anything called God or anything that people worship. And that Man of Evil will even go into God's Temple and sit there and say that he is God. ⁵ I told you when I was with you that all this would happen. Do you not remember? ⁶ And now you know what is stopping that Man of Evil so he will appear at the right time. ⁷ The secret power of evil is already working in the world, but there is one who is stopping that power. And he will continue to stop it until he is taken out of the way. ⁸ Then that Man of Evil will appear, and the Lord Jesus will kill him with the breath that comes from his mouth and will destroy him with the glory of his coming. ⁹ The Man of Evil will come by the power of Satan. He will have great power, and he will do many different false miracles, signs, and wonders. ¹⁰ He will use every kind of evil to trick those who are lost. They

will die, because they refused to love the truth. (If they loved the truth, they would be saved.)¹¹ For this reason God sends them something powerful that leads them away from the truth so they will believe a lie.¹² So all those will be judged guilty who did not believe the truth, but enjoyed doing evil.¹³ Brothers and sisters whom the Lord loves, God chose you from the beginning to be saved. So we must always thank God for you. You are saved by the Spirit that makes you holy and by your faith in the truth.¹⁴ God used the Good News that we preached to call you to be saved so you can share in the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.¹⁵ So, brothers and sisters, stand strong and continue to believe the teachings we gave you in our speaking and in our letter." 2 Thessalonians 2:1-15 (New Century Version)

If you would like an explanation of what Paul meant by the statement, "¹³ Brothers and sisters whom the Lord loves, God chose you from the beginning to be saved", you are welcome to correspond with us.

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