

# The Spirit of Slumber

## *A Sermon*

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**Rom 11:8** (According as it is written, God hath given them the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear;) unto this day.

**Isa 29:10-11** For the LORD hath poured out upon you the spirit of deep sleep, and hath closed your eyes: the prophets and your rulers, the seers hath he covered. And the vision of all is become unto you as the words of a book that is sealed, which *men* deliver to one that is learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee: and he saith, I cannot; for it *is* sealed:

The voice of the prophet has always been on the earth, sometimes in the fiery form of an Elijah or an Amos, sometimes in the weeping drama of a Jeremiah, sometimes in the panoramic vision of a John, sometimes is the stern dictums of a Moses, but God has always had men on this planet, who were not ordinary men. They have higher connections, mysterious callings, different abilities and gifts. They are in the world, but not of it, and it becomes obvious to everyone. They are always sold out to a cause that is far greater than themselves. They are usually misunderstood, usually rejected of men, usually considered to be too otherworldly, too strange, too radical for the age in which they live. But over the thousands of years they have consistently called out to realities which no one else can see. They have punctuated the moments in which they live with messages of supreme importance to their age, received messages, and not something concocted in their own brain's. They call it: "the burden", because it weighs them down. It is "the burden of the Lord". It possesses their soul. It grabs their absolute attention. It rattles their emotions and minds. It scares them at first, and then it crushes them. It pounds them into the rocks and pavement. It brings them lower than low. It brings them to their knees, crying out to God, "What, Oh Lord, could I possibly do about this? This is too heavy for me, Lord. I am just an ordinary man. Why have you shown this to me? Can't you get someone else Lord?"

These noble men, many of which are tortured and killed, usually live and die in great obscurity and poverty. They are not rich, none of them are. They are poor in everything that this world affords, but they have a secret vault of hidden wealth which most men cannot imagine. They are not well liked, because their message burdens them, and then it burns the proud and self-centered sinners to whom they deliver it. They are confrontational men, by Divine design, always embroiled in some kind of battle with the forces of darkness. They will wrestle with angels and men to get hold of the blessing of a God that nobody can see but them. They are fitted for their grueling task, because He blesses them just enough, when they beg just enough. Sometimes they camp, isolated for long stretches in obscurity, while God feeds them with ravens food and equips them on the backside of some forsaken desert, all for the equipping, all for the carrying, all for the

delivering of the word. The word of the Lord Almighty, is committed to their custodianship. An unimaginable responsibility, is theirs...to deliver it unscathed and unchanged. And it is required of them that they take it very seriously. They are constantly reminded of what happened to poor Jonah when he sought to flee from the duty, when he ran from his destiny, when he shirked his shoulders at the Almighty, and tried to bail out on his commission.

Jonah learned the lessons of the prophet the hard way, but he's not the only one. Nobody wants this job. It is absolutely horrible. It alienates you from everyone. It isolates you from real humanity. It turns you into a freak, that nobody wants anything to do with. Your friends turn on you the moment they hear what God told you to deliver. It's a cold job. A ruthless sternness is required. A person that is on fire, is a spectacle that nobody can get close to. It's lonely to be consumed with something nobody else can see, feel or touch. When you are a prophet, you cry out to your Sovereign and say: "Lord, why cannot anyone see what I see? Why can they not hear what I'm saying? Why can they not do what I tell them? Why do they not turn? Why do they not listen? Why do they not repent? Why is thy Word a closed book to them?"

I know that God has put certain verses in the Bible especially for the prophets. While these cannot comfort them in any kind of a worldly way, they can bring peace and understanding to their heart. These verses create a sort of ballast in their soul, to buoy them against the crashing surf that incessantly pummels the shoreline of their difficult life. Money does not come to them, nor does it comfort them in the least; but these strange verses, these cryptic wonders, they reach way down into the deepest abysses of their humanity and touch them in a way nothing else can. These are the prophet's lyrics. These are the sacred announcements from a distant and unseen realm. These are the holy oracles which open the eyes of the prophets, so that they in turn will open the eyes of people. These are the eyeglasses of the seer, and the balancing scales of the administrators of justice, and the potentiators of a righteous indignation, and the chariot wheels of a perpetual army of truth fighters.

Incline your ear to listen to but one of these special verses for the prophets.

**Rom 11:8** (According as it is written, God hath given them the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear;) unto this day.

## First of all, The prophet knows that he sees things that other people cannot see.

It is not because they are ignorant or stupid that the people cannot share the vision of the prophet. That they do not see, is not because they lack the education that the prophet has, because oftentimes the prophet has little or none. It is not because of their upbringing, or their families that their eyes are closed. Their unseeing is not the result of their religiosity or lack of it. That things pass before their eyes unseen, is not due to the synagogue or

church they attend. Nor is it because they have not prayed enough, or believed enough, or cried enough, or given enough, or read their Bibles enough, or commiserated with others enough. They do not see what he sees, because the spirit of slumber is upon their eyes. Like the Jews of old, whom this verse is talking about, they are physically awake, but spiritually asleep.

Their eyes are opened wide, but it is as though they were closed shut tightly. They stare intently, squinting to see, but those eyes are as if blindfolded. It is not just that they are spiritually asleep, but they are in the very deepest state of sleep. Under normal conditions the sleeper can be easily awakened, but in this case they are so sleepy that nothing the prophet can do or say is able to awaken them. Shake them as he may, they slumber on. This is no regular sleep, it is a coma! It is a deep unconsciousness, a languishing insensibility, a stupor of oblivion, a nocturne of blackest hue. He slaps them. He sounds a loud horn and they sleep on...and on...and on. There is no waking them. They are living dead. They are walking, and moving zombies. When it comes to the prophets words, nothing on this earth can awaken them and make them see. They just go on...and on...and on. Having eyes to see they see not.

The prophet knows about this all too well. Everywhere he goes, he meets them...the unseeing. Every time he opens his mouth, he encounters them...the blind ones. They live where he lives. They work where he works. They fill the citadels of education. They flood the thoroughfares of commerce. They occupy the chief seats in all levels of government. They play the pied piper song of false promises. Some of them even presume to open the Holy Book, imagining that they can read it, and see with their glossed over eyeballs. The really audacious ones pretend to instruct others...blind leaders of the blind. They congregate in his church. They listen to his sermons. They sing with raised hands, and pump themselves up with the right vocabulary, but they are catatonic none the less. They still cannot see, even though the glare of the stained glass, and the polish of communion ware, and the thunderous blasts of the organ, or the blaring riffs of an electric guitar, try to awaken them...they just slumber on...and on...and on. But he sees. He sees clearly. He sees incessantly. He sees disturbingly, and he sees on...and on...and on. The prophet has "eyes to see, and he sees".

## Secondly, The prophet knows who this cloud of unseeing people is.

The unseeing are masters at hiding. They have done so in every generation. But you will not find them hiding in a cave. You will not find them hiding in a place of lonely solitude. You will not find them sleeping in a far off forest glen like Rip Van Winkle. But hide they do. Being discovered by the prophet, or by any of those who have caught his vision, strikes terror in their souls. They do not want to be exposed. They cannot be exposed, because if they are, they could lose everything. Hiding is imperative for them. It is bad enough that they cannot see, but by hiding they complicate matters for themselves tenfold. But exposure is too painful, so they drape themselves, and cower

while standing tall.

They fear what exposure could do to them, so they hide, very carefully. Their hiding places are well chosen. They have a methodology of concealment. It is quite sophisticated. It is immensely complicated. It enables them to hide in the very places where they will be least likely to be found. So they hide in places where nobody would ever think of looking. They do not slumber in the gloom of night, hiding from a watchful eyes in the shadows. They hide in plain view, and in broad daylight. They hide among the unsuspecting and naïve.

They hide among the successful and rich when they can. They figure that if they grope their way high enough up the ladder of fame, fortune, recognition, success and high society, they will never be recognized. They become idols, professional athletes and stars. They become motivational speakers or politicians. These are all extremely safe hiding spots. Nests where discovery is slim. Fancy clothes and cars, big houses and jewels make fine camouflage. Evening gowns are better than fig leaves.

They hide among the intelligentsia. This is another fine hide out. Scientist, Professors, Doctors, Lawyers, Educators and the like, make good bedfellows for the blind. They cloak their walls with degrees and trophies. They fill their houses with books, computers, journals and coffee table folios. Pretension makes them comfortable. Entrenched in this domain, they make the best Philosophers. Aristocracy makes them proud. But none of that will ever make them see. So they just hide in the sunshine, and bask in self-glory.

Some hide in the places of best intentions. They hide among the generous and self-sacrificing. They love the peace corps, feed the hungry, Greenpeace, save the whales, save the children, Mother Theresa, Gandhi, and all the other worth while causes and charities. Goodness varnishes their blackness completely. Helping, covers-up their destitution. They ooze with kindness, and it's the best costume of all. Giving greases the doors of their secret vaults of darkness.

They hide among the good church folk. They hide with Bibles tucked under their arms. Glory be! That's the very best hiding place of all. They'll never be found out in all those pews, candles, pulpits missionaries and bake-sales. Surely, nobody will find them there. It's a safe hiding ground. The bold ones entrench themselves firmly behind the pulpits, surrounding themselves with offering plates full of comforting money. Those are the hardest to expose, along with the ones who have discovered the filthy lucre of Televangelism, where they can bilk the unsuspecting under cover of tax exemption, to the applause of millions. They are akin to magicians and sorcerers who can make things appear to be what they are not. Similar to Alchemist who transform the lead into gold. Wolves in sheep's clothing, they are called. All decorated up like the most outstanding saints. You cannot see them, because they have mastered their shifty disguises. But they are right next to you on Sunday morning, sitting in the very same pews, and singing the very same songs as you. They hide in plain view, and in broad daylight. They hide in plain view, and in broad daylight.

But the prophet knows who they are. His are on them. He sees them clearly. They are not safe from his searching, penetrating gaze, especially in the church. No they are not safe. He sees them, and knows them like a book. And he is all set to expose them. And indeed he will.

## In the Third Place, The prophet knows exactly why this dulled crowd cannot see.

They cannot fool the prophet. He knows where they lurk. He knows why they hide. He knows why they are blind. Do you know? Have you looked into their glazed over eyes, and can you tell why it is so?

Some of you right now, are thinking that this crowd of unseeing, are blind because they are lost souls. You think that this is only about those people who are under the grip of the Devil, and the power of unforgiven sin. You imagine that this whole crowd of un-seers are castaways from the grace of God, reprobates and scullions of Lucifer. Whose pitchfork is at their backs, forcing them to do his bidding. Those for whom the blackness of darkness is reserved forever. Those who are spiritual vagrants and vagabonds, wandering souls, the dregs of the earth, the flotsam and scum on the waves of time. To you they are drifters, and some of them are indeed like that. But some of them are not like that at all. The saved are among them! That's right you heard correctly... There are saved ones in their midst.

Listen to the power of the strange oracle. Hear the haunting words clearly. Let them enter your ears and go deeply into your mind. Burn them into your heart. This is what the prophets knows. They have known it since time immemorial. You need to know it too. You need to understand it also. It tells us why these poor blind creatures cannot see. It discloses the truth with crystal clarity. **“God hath given them the spirit of slumber!”**

Did you hear that? Think about it a minute. It should stun your sensibilities. It should shatter your preconceived notions. It should re-arrange your brain. Mull it over closely. Let it sink in. **GOD GAVE THEM THE SPIRIT OF SLUMBER!** It was not some fiendish Devil in chains, with the smell of sulfur on his clothes, a cloven hoofed master of sin and abomination. No... God did it! Not some Lord of Darkness, or the denizens of hell. It was God. The Lord of Glory, the Everlasting God, The Holy One, The Pure One, The Righteous One, The Eternal I am. He is the reason they cannot see. He is the cause of their unseeing, and only He.

He did it to them, and he can do it to you. Are you sure and certain that He has not done it to you? When I ask you this you, blunt and pointed question you recoil. “Certainly He has not done it to me. I'm a believer”, you say. Yes, but some of them are believers also. On what basis do you say that you can see? It is an automatic knee-jerk response you are

making, a response to a difficult question, that you would rather not think about, but would rather ignore. You can see them, as the blind, but not yourself. It is too much for you to think about, that even right now you may be one of them. You think highly of yourself. You value your opinions and thoughts. Of course they are not darkness, to you. To you they are light. But can you see? You might be hiding yourself, in plain view, and not even know it. You might be holding up in the choir loft, but you can't see. You might preach a fine sermon on Sunday, but you can't see. How do you know you can see? What proof have you that you can see? What evidence is there that you are a seer and not an impostor? What substance can you show that says, "I can see"? How do you know that God has not given to you, what He has given to them? Eyes that see not. Produce your evidence, if you can. Just having eyeballs is not proof. Having a retina is not proof. Having people tell you so, is not proof. The un-seeing cannot see! Remember, they are blind. So how do you know that you are not blind also?

When the prophet comes, he'll let you know whether you can see or not, because he recognizes every one of you. He will tell you how to know and prove that you can see, and in doing so, he will expose every one of you. Your bald eyes, and crippled vision will be exposed to the light of truth. Then you will know whether you can see or not.

## Fourthly, The prophet explains exactly what it is that they are incapable of seeing.

This blindness is not total. They can see the things they want to see. They see their families, and friends. They see the things that make them feel happy. They see the things that make them feel good. They see the things that bring them pleasure. They see the things that work for their benefit. They see the candy and fluff. They see success, and things always going just the way they want. They see the rosy road of ease through life. They see the approbation of men, the approval that soothes their consciences. But things that make them uncomfortable, they have shut out into the outer darkness. Things they dislike, they dislodge from their brains and cast away from the realm of sight and light. It's a simple solution...Out of sight, and out of mind. We won't think about what we don't want to think about, and that's why we won't see. We don't worry about what we cannot see.

It is a form of self-hypnosis, self-delusionment. A deception so strong, that it convinces you that you are not deceived. It lulls you into believing that you cannot be deceived, that you are immune to blindness, and that only others are deceived, but not you. The worst thing that you cannot see, is that you cannot see. The prophet exposes this, the most significant thing that the blind cannot see is their own blindness. When you cannot see, you cannot visualize a color. When you cannot see you cannot comprehend blindness, or sight for that matter. When the prophet take up the horn, to pipe his special message, he pipes this first...that you cannot see, and need to awaken out of your slumber. But if you do not hear him, and you shuffle it into the realm of your own darkness, you will never

see, you will never awaken from your bed of ease, from the slumber of carelessness.

## Fifth, The prophet faithfully delivers his message anyway, knowing they cannot see and why.

He is not daunted in his task, by the vast cloud of unseeing. He has a message from heaven, that can awaken even the dead if need be. He prophesies to the wind in the valley of dry bones. "Come Oh breath, and breathe upon these slain that they might live". "Revive Thy church Oh, Lord". "Show them Thy light, that they may see". "Come Holy Spirit, and awaken the sleepers." "Open your eyes you sinners". "Awake thou that sleepest". This is the most important part of his message. "Turn Oh Nineveh". "Jerusalem, Jerusalem, How often would I have gathered you together? and ye would not." "Repent for the kingdom of God is at hand". "Repent for the kingdom of light and truth has come". Walk in the day." "Walk in the light." "Ye are the light of the world, so why walk ye in darkness?" "You are city on a hill, so why put your candles under a bushel?"

## Sixth, The prophet knows the secret to the opened eye.

What can you do? You know that you cannot see. He has convinced you of that, and you know it on the deepest level. You may not admit it to anyone else, but you know it yourself. You have hid it from others, but you cannot hide it from yourself any longer. But what can you do? If God has sealed your eyes, how one earth can you ever open them? How will you ever regain the opened eye? How will you ever be able to look into the blazing Son of Righteousness, who has arisen with healing in His wings?

It is not within you to see, if God has sent the spirit of slumber over you. Your eyes are hollow and empty shells. Darkness has permeated all the things that should be light and life, love and hope to you. But you still cannot see. He tells you that: "The beloved has a vineyard on a very fruitful hill, where the flowers of pure doctrine and salvation grow, where the fat grapes of Eshcol flourish, where the pomegranates and figs are sweet", but you cannot see it. What, pray tell, can you do? How on earth shall you ever see?

Then he tells you the secret of the opened eye. He tells you how you may see, by simply seeing. "Open your eyes". "They shall see Him whom they have slain". "Look unto me, all ye ends of the earth, and be ye saved, for I am the Lord". There is life in a look. It's so simple it sounds stupid. But to see, you must look. You can hide no more. You can cloak yourself in darkness no longer. You must gaze in simple faith, full-faced upon Him in whom is no darkness at all. Look unto Jesus, and you will see. He is the uplifted one.

He alone is the great attraction, that to gaze upon, removes every cloud, takes away all darkness. That is the very reason God made you sleep/ He wants you to awaken with the Son of Righteousness, shining in your face. Your first sight of Him will lighten any darkness. A look in His eyes will open yours.

You cannot see this now, because you have yet to look. Doubt tells you that's too easy, don't do it. It sounds ridiculous. But don't listen to the silent whisperer, listen to the prophet, he knows because he sees. The secret of the opened eye is to open the eye by faith and see.

## Seventh, The prophet knows that he too could have the spirit of slumber.

The prophet's text says: "the LORD hath poured out upon you the spirit of deep sleep, and hath closed your eyes: the prophets and your rulers, the seers hath he covered." Many are the lures to blindness, and prophets and rulers, and seers are turned into the unseeing with one stroke of the finger of God. This serves as a warning to him also, and not just to you. False doctrine, and pride, greediness and prestige, these are all snares, a few of many. It teaches him never to be comfortable in the status quo. Never to think he has arrived at the state of all-seeing, for only One is All-seeing, and He is not a man.

The prophet is reminded, and you should be also, that having looked, he must continue to look. Having seen Christ, he must continue to see Christ. If he turns his eyes away, even for a minute, his eyes shall see darkness, and he shall be blinded. He must persevere in the beatific vision. He must not give in, or give up, to the lesser things that beckon him. A look for life, is a look for life. A look for life, lives forever. It perseveres because He works it in them. He applies the spittle, and the scales fall off the eyes. And when He does it, it is lasting and real, true and enduring. So the prophet is cautious, as must you be. Don't ever think you have arrived. Don't become cocky, lest you fall. Having seen, you must see. Having looked, you must continue to look. And it is only Grace that can help you. It is the same kind of non-meritorious love that opened your eyes in the first place, that will keep you in the way.

One day, though the skin worms destroy the body, with your eyes you shall see God. Face to face, you shall be seen, and you shall see. Till then, it is a walk of simple faith, that keeps you in the path that shineth more and more unto a perfect day. May God bless you in your own enlightenment, and may you see forevermore.

## Applications.

1. Never assume that you can see. Because maybe you can't, and don't know it.
2. Never lull yourself into indifference. It matters what you believe and why. If you don't care, you will join the cloud of unseeing, and will hide yourself from the truth, because that is not what you like to hear.



3. Recognize that God has always had prophets, whose main job is to lead men to the land of light and sight.
4. Listen when you are beckoned to turn and look, to learn and change. They know what they know, because they see it clearly, and want you to also. Listen to them, and obey. They are watchers, that care for your soul.
5. But don't listen to the false ones, who are many. They are blind, like you, and cannot show you the way. Blind leaders of the blind. Beware! You will know them by their fruits. They speak of themselves, and of pleasant things that you naturally want to hear, not of Christ, and the difficult things of righteousness and truth.
6. Be diligent in your own awakening. Strengthen your unbelief with faith. Loosen the grip of doubt, with trust in the word of the Lord. He say's it's true, that there is life in a look. So believe Him against all deception, and you shall see.
7. Learn to see those around you who are blind, and become the prophet to them yourself. Do for them, what was done for you. This is how the cloud of unseeing may disappear from your church, and your workplace, your schools and your family. Having eyes to see, you must show others. This is the Lord's great commission. No man can keep the truth to Himself.
8. Thank God daily for the precious gift of spiritual vision, and pray that he never send the spirit of slumber on you again.
9. Learn to walk in the light as He is in the light, and stay there by faith, through the grace that He loves to bestow.