

Message #16**Ezekiel 13:1-23**

We are living in an age of religious deception. Various religions, various denominations, various ministries and televangelists have duped people out of millions of dollars and duped people into believing lies.

When Jesus was here on earth, He warned His own disciples to see to it that no one misleads them or deceives them because many will try (i.e. Matt. 24:4-5). He specifically warned that there are many “false prophets” who are religious frauds. They come looking the part of one of the sheep, but in fact they are wolves (Matt. 7:15-16).

There are actually two different kinds of false prophets. There are those who represent false deities and those who speak things that are false, saying their messages are from God.

One of the things that many of these wolves say is that they get revelatory visions or revelatory messages from God. This is claimed by the Mormons, the Muslims, Seventh-Day Adventists and some Catholics. This is claimed by many Pentecostals and those in the Charismatic movement. They all claim God told them something beyond the Bible. They are all false and they are corrupt and they will suffer the judgment of God.

This kind of thing is not new to us; this was happening back in the days of Ezekiel. There were men and women who were claiming they were prophets of God, when in fact they weren't. They were telling Israel that they knew God and His Word and they were telling them things that weren't true. In fact, they were dangerous and demonic, which is specifically stated in **verse 6**.

Now the real prophet of God was Ezekiel and God wanted him to point this out to the people of God. This data, as **verse 1** says, came to Ezekiel by “the word of the LORD.” This is not Ezekiel coming up with some scheme or message to preach; this business came to him directly from God. What God wants Ezekiel to do here is easy to see:

GOD TOLD EZEKIEL TO PROCLAIM THE TRUTH ABOUT FALSE PROPHETS AND PROPHETESSES BY PROPHESYING AGAINST THEM AND PROCLAIMING WHAT GOD WILL DO TO THEM.

Verse 2 makes it clear that this prophecy is aimed straight at those who claim they are prophets. This prophecy is aimed straight at those who claim they get direct messages from God and then go out and tell the people that.

PART #1 – God tells Ezekiel to prophesy against the false prophets. **13:2-3**

We live in a politically correct world that wants to tolerate all religious beliefs, even those that are contrary to the Word of God. Well God does not tolerate it and He did not want Ezekiel to tolerate it. He wanted Ezekiel to target the false prophets and preach against them. Most think we need to love and coddle those in false religion. We need to speak against them.

There were at least six specific messages He wanted Ezekiel to give them:

Message #1 - Tell them their prophecy is from their own imagination and inspiration. **13:2a**

These false religious leaders were inventing things and saying they were inspired by God. They were making this up. They were telling people God gave them some extra Biblical revelation when in fact they invented it in their own minds. Their words and their messages came out of their own hearts and minds, not out of God's Word.

I cannot tell you the number of times I have said to someone concerning their opinion, it doesn't square with the written Word. They don't care.

Message #2 - Tell them they need to listen to the Word of God. **13:2b**

Here is the straight forward truth concerning all people—people need to carefully understand the Word of God. They need to listen to that and not a bunch of religious mumbo-jumbo. This is what people need to hear, the written Word of God.

Message #3 - Tell them they will face a woe judgment. **13:3a**

The “woe” warnings and judgments are the worst kind of judgments in the Bible. In fact, the final three judgments of the Great Tribulation, which are horrifying judgments, are classified as “woe” judgments (Rev. 8:13). So when God says to Ezekiel tell these false prophets “woe,” it is very serious. False teachers and prophets are not just confused; they are heading to serious judgment. Any who lead people away from God's Word and truth will face serious consequences.

Message #4 - Tell them they are foolish. **13:3b**

Religious leaders do not like to be called foolish. False religious leaders want to be viewed as great scholarly “men of the cloth.” God tells Ezekiel, you go tell them they are foolish because they are not seriously dedicated to Me and My Word.

Just this week the pope told the priests that they now have the power to forgive a woman who has had an abortion. Do you really believe that? Do you really believe a sinful man has the power to forgive a sinful woman? This is foolish theology. These are false religious leaders and they are leading people away from truth.

Message #5 - Tell them they are following their own spirit, not My spirit. **13:3c**

These men are not following God's Spirit, they are following their own spirit. I think one of the great contemporary illustrations of this is Mormonism. The Mormons say we have a “burning in the bosom that their testimony is true.” Their testimony is a bunch of mumbo-jumbo that is not true and yet they feel it. That is what false people do; they follow their own feelings, not the Word of God.

Message #6 - Tell them they have seen nothing. **13:3d**

The Lord was not the source of their messages; they were the source of their own messages. God had not spoken to these people and these people did not speak for God.

PART #2 – God tells Ezekiel to prophesy about false prophets to Israel. **13:4-7**

Ezekiel was not only to preach against the false prophets, he was to preach to Israel about the false prophets. God gave Ezekiel specific realities to communicate about these false prophets:

Reality #1 - Israel's false prophets have been like foxes among ruins. **13:4**

We could call them “fox-prophets” or “jackal-prophets.” These creatures make their comfortable dens among fallen ruins. They do not make their dens in thriving places. This is what false prophets do. They move in not among the strong, but among the weak and broken down and they prey on them with their false teaching.

Reality #2 - Israel's false prophets do not go after strong people or into strong places. **13:5**

The false prophets go after defenseless people. They do not go after people who are strong who breach or attack cities or build strong walls of defense around a city. They go after those who are weak and ripe for their attack.

Reality #3 - Israel's false prophets see false things. **13:6a**

These people are always talking about seeing things that God showed them. They are not carefully studying the Word; they are just making things up and using the Word as part of their evidence.

Reality #4 - Israel's false prophets are demonic liars. **13:6b**

Do you see what is said here? False teachers and prophets are not naïve and confused, they are demonic liars. They twist the truth of God to their own gain.

Reality #5 - Israel's false prophets have not been sent by God. **13:6c**

I recently heard a man say, “God called him to preach.” The problem was God didn't seem to call him to study and if you don't study, you really haven't been called to preach because Paul told Timothy to “study to rightly divide the word.” Many ministers and missionaries claim they have been sent by God, when in fact it is just their own imagination.

Reality #6 - Israel's false prophets have a false, sincere hope. **13:6d**

False prophets really believe what they are saying and teaching. They really think they know what they are talking about. They put their entire eternal hope on themselves, and not on the Word of God.

Reality #7 - Israel's false prophets see false demonic things and claim it is from God. **13:7**

God says you did not get your messages from Me or My Word. It is a very dangerous and damnable offense to stand up before people and say you got your message from God when you really didn't.

Almost every false religion claims that there was some vision from God. Islam claims Muhammed got a special vision. Mormonism claims Joseph Smith got a special vision. It is demonic. None of it is from God.

PART #3 – God tells Ezekiel to pronounce His judgments on the false prophets. **13:8-16**

God basically says I want you to reveal two judgment warnings against the false prophets:

Judgment Warning #1 - God is against false prophets. **13:8-12**

God is against false prophets. He is not favorable to them and He is not on their side. These false prophets will never be right with God and in fact as **verse 8** says God's hand is against them.

They see false visions and demonic revelations. They will not have any place at all in the council of God's people (**v. 8**). They will not be written down in the register of Israel and they will not enter the Promised Land (**v. 9**). **False religious leaders had better take a serious look at this text. They are not heading to rewards in heaven; they are heading to hell.**

Now **verse 10** makes it clear that the reason for the judgment is because they have misled people. In Ezekiel's day they misled Israel, the people of God. They were telling God's people that they were at peace with God, when they weren't. Their false message of peace was like "a flimsy wall with whitewash."

Their messages had no substance to them. They did not make the people strong. They put religious whitewash on the wall but when the storm came there was no strength and the people realized it was all a show (**v. 11-12**).

False religious leaders will one day be exposed for who and what they are.

Judgment Warning #2 - God will pour out His wrath on false prophets. **13:13-16**

God says I will specifically target false prophets with My destructive wrath. It would not just be flimsy walls destroyed; God would destroy the false prophets and He would target their false religion. They would be targets of His wrath. In the end they will all be gone and that includes not just the false religions of the world, but even the false teachers and prophets of Israel (**13:16**).

This is a serious text. If a teacher tells people they are at peace with God, when they aren't, God declares I will judge that teacher and He will receive My wrath. Many ministers are promoting things in their churches that are not right. A Bible church in this area is promoting "Rockin' Christmas." This is evil. They are telling people this is of God. It is evil.

PART #4 – God tells Ezekiel to stand against false prophetesses. **13:17-23**

In every dispensation there have always been women who claim they are speaking for God, when in fact they aren't. We have them in our day. There are witches and spiritualists and women of Christian Science and fortune tellers who claim they are of God. They are all liars.

There were female prophetesses back in the days of Ezekiel who were proclaiming satanic religious things and leading God's people astray while saying they were from God.

They were getting people to wear "magic charms" and various clothing things. They were actually tracking down the people of God and trying to convince them to follow them and their teaching.

Their motive is seen in verse 19, money. These false women were motivated by money and material gain. They would say things that were not true for "handfuls of barley and fragments of bread."

Because of this God says you pronounce My judgments on them:

Judgment #1 - God is against false religious women. **13:20**

Judgment #2 - God will tear them to shreds. **13:21**

Judgment #3 - God will put an end to their false visions and them. **13:22-23**

What this chapter teaches us is that there are men and women who go into ministry by a motive of prominence, power and wealth. They are not interested in the truth of God. They are not interested in properly communicating the Word of God. They like the limelight and they like the money.

To such people God says I will crush you and destroy you.

There is a very serious warning given in I Cor. 3:17. God says if anyone destroys the temple, God will destroy them.

Now at the end of **verse 23**, God says, "I will deliver My people out of your hand." God will always protect and preserve those who love Him and His Word. In a world filled with false teachers and false ministers and false denominations and false religion, we have the whole counsel of God. Let us always stay focused on His truth because God's truth is the truth.