

The Visions of Ezekiel

Lesson 8

After telling the *elders of Judah* the story of Ezekiel's incredible visionary visit to Jerusalem, the LORD did not waste time but immediately spoke to him again about the *rebellious house of Israel*. It was time for Ezekiel to once again become an actor!

7. Ezekiel's Seventh Assignment from the LORD

a) The Rebellious House of Israel Announced

Eze 12:1 Then the word of the LORD came to me, saying, Eze 12:2 "Son of man, you live in the midst of the rebellious house, who have eyes to see but do not see, ears to hear but do not hear; for they are a rebellious house.

With Ezekiel mentally back home by the *Chebar River*, the LORD directed his attention to the *rebellious house of Israel* in his seventh assignment. For background, Ezekiel's home was surrounded by two groups of people.

The first group consisted of exiles from the Northern Kingdom. They had lived in the area for about 131 years. Obviously, not a single original exile was still alive. All of those exiles had been removed by 722 BC. These exiles living near Ezekiel were children, grandchildren and great grandchildren of those exiles from the north.

The second group of people living near Ezekiel consisted of exiles removed from the Southern Kingdom in 606 BC or in 597 BC. These people were the righteous ones rescued by the LORD from all the wretched people still living in the Southern Kingdom.

At the time of this assignment, it was 591 BC and 131 years had passed since the fall of the Northern Kingdom and 16 years had passed since the fall of the Southern Kingdom. The northern *house of Israel* had evolved into a rebellious group; the southern *house of Judah* was still righteous. Here, the LORD reminded Ezekiel that the northern group was blinded and deaf to the LORD's message.

a) The Rebellious House of Israel Imitated

Eze 12:3 "Therefore, son of man, prepare for yourself baggage for exile and go into exile by day in their sight; even go into exile from your place to another place in their sight. Perhaps they will understand though they are a rebellious house.

In this seventh assignment, it was time for Ezekiel to playact a story again. His first drama in the first vision reenacted the scene in Jerusalem; this drama would foretell the actions the king in Jerusalem would take about five years after this prophecy.

(1) Carry Your Bags

Eze 12:4 "Bring your baggage out by day in their sight, as baggage for exile. Then you will go out at evening in their sight, as those going into exile.

The stage blocking for Act One was simple. Ezekiel was to pack his luggage and set it outside his home during the morning hours to draw the attention of the Israelites. Then, after the sun had reached its apex in the sky and begun to descend, Ezekiel was to pick up the luggage and act like he was leaving.

For clarity, in the Hebrew mindset of Ezekiel's time, when the Scripture speaks of the "day," it corresponds to our *morning*. When the Scripture speaks of the "evening," it corresponds to our *afternoon*. When the Scripture speaks of the "dark" or "night" it corresponds to our *evening or night*. At the time of Ezekiel, the 24 hours were divided into *day, evening and night* which translates in our culture to *morning, afternoon and evening or night*.

(2) Dig Your Hole

Eze 12:5 **"Dig a hole through the wall in their sight and go out through it.**

After picking up his luggage and leaving his home, he was to go a nearby wall and dig a hole in it. He was not to do it in secret; rather, every Jew whose ancestor came from the Northern Kingdom was to see everything he was doing.

(3) Cover Your Face

Eze 12:6 **"Load *the baggage on your shoulder in their sight and carry it out in the dark. You shall cover your face so that you cannot see the land, for I have set you as a sign to the house of Israel.*"**

By nightfall and after the hole was dug, Ezekiel was to pick up his luggage, put a veil over his face and blindly step through the hole. Why? To get the attention of the *rebellious house of Israel*.

(4) Follow Your Command

Eze 12:7 **I did so, as I had been commanded. By day I brought out my baggage like the baggage of an exile. Then in the evening I dug through the wall with my hands; I went out in the dark and carried *the baggage on my shoulder in their sight.***

Without saying a word, Ezekiel set out to perform the first act of this play. We see the "day ... evening ... dark" once again as an indication that this was an all-day process.

We would be remiss if we did not stop to ask a timing question at this point in the story. Did the LORD ask Ezekiel to pack his luggage in the morning, dig a hole in the afternoon and go through the hole in the dark with his head covered? We simply do not know; however, the first part of this second vision occurred on the *sixth year, sixth month and fifth day of the month*. Most likely, this second vision started early in the morning as the *elders of Judah* gathered in Ezekiel's tent. After he relayed the prophecy to them, the LORD immediately spoke to him and told him to pack his bags and start this part of the play.

8. Ezekiel's Eighth Assignment from the LORD

a) People Question Ezekiel

Eze 12:8 **In the morning *the word of the LORD came to me, saying,* Eze 12:9 **"Son of man, has not the house of Israel, the rebellious house, said to you, 'What are you doing?'****

If the first part of the visions occurred on the fifth day of the month, this part occurred the next morning on the sixth day of the sixth month of the sixth year. As the *rebellious house of Israel* watched Ezekiel the previous day, surely, when he began to dig the hole in the wall, a leader of the people asked him, **"What are you doing?"** Ezekiel heard them say it and so did the LORD. As we read through the assignment, we must wonder what the people were thinking about this crazy Act One of the play. But remember, Ezekiel could not answer them, not yet!

b) Ezekiel Answers People

(1) Sign to the Prince and People in Jerusalem

Eze 12:10 "Say to them, 'Thus says the Lord GOD, "This burden *concerns* the prince in Jerusalem as well as all the house of Israel who are in it.'"

On the day after the exiles who were of the *house of Israel* asked him, “**What are doing?**” the LORD told Ezekiel what to say to them. The night before the prophet did not know what he was doing or why he was doing it, but the LORD told him the reason now. It “***concerns* the prince in Jerusalem as well as the house of Israel who are in it.**” The ten tribes of the Northern Kingdom were taken into exile 131 years before this vision. These were the tribes of the *house of Israel*. If they were taken away from the northern part of the Promised Land, who was being addressed as the *house of Israel* living with the prince in Jerusalem?

To answer the last part of the question first, the “**prince**” was King Zedekiah. He was the last true bloodline king of the Jews still living in the Promised Land. A descendant of David, he was put on the throne as king by Nebuchadnezzar. The Bible is kind to Zedekiah when it calls him a king here and in other places in the Scripture. He was a king in name only. He was supposed to be working for Nebuchadnezzar. On the books in Jerusalem he was the king; on the books in Babylon he was a prefect working under the direction of the prophet Daniel; on the books with the LORD he was a prince. The prince always reported to someone further up the ladder in the government who held the power over all. Zedekiah could have complied with the orders that came down to him from Daniel, Shadrack, Meshach and Abednego, the administrators under Daniel, but Zedekiah refused and began to rebel.

What is the answer to the first part of the question, “who was the *house of Israel* still living within the walls of Jerusalem?” The short answer is this; *they were Jews descended from the people of the Northern Kingdom who ran to the Southern Kingdom before the north was defeated – at least 131 years before!* Here is that story found in 2nd Chronicles showing that some of the Northern Kingdom Jews began to live in the Southern Kingdom during the reign of King Asa.

2 Chronicles 15:1 Now the Spirit of God came on Azariah the son of Oded,² and he went out to meet Asa and said to him, "Listen to me, Asa, and all Judah and Benjamin: the LORD is with you when you are with Him. And if you seek Him, He will let you find Him; but if you forsake Him, He will forsake you."³ "For many days Israel was without the true God and without a teaching priest and without law."⁴ "But in their distress they turned to the LORD God of Israel, and they sought Him, and He let them find Him."⁵ "In those times there was no peace to him who went out or to him who came in, for many disturbances afflicted all the inhabitants of the lands."⁶ "Nation was crushed by nation, and city by city, for God troubled them with every kind of distress."⁷ "But you, be strong and do not lose courage, for there is reward for your work."⁸ Now when Asa heard these words and the prophecy which Azariah the son of Oded the prophet spoke, he took courage and removed the abominable idols from all the land of Judah and Benjamin and from the cities which he had captured in the hill country of Ephraim. He then restored the altar of the LORD which was in front of the porch of the LORD.⁹ He gathered all Judah and Benjamin and those from Ephraim, Manasseh and Simeon who resided with them, for many defected to him from Israel when they saw that the LORD his God was with him.¹⁰ So they assembled at Jerusalem in the third month of the fifteenth year of Asa's reign.

Thus, from the Northern Kingdom, tribe members from Ephraim, Manasseh and Simeon had defected to the Southern Kingdom for safety before their kingdom was defeated. Others from more of the northern tribes may have escaped to the Southern Kingdom but we can safely say that some of those within the walls of Jerusalem during the days of Zedekiah were descendants

of the northern tribes of Ephraim, Manasseh and Simeon. They were all remnants of the house of Israel living in Jerusalem.

(2) Sign to the People in Chaldea

Eze 12:11 **"Say, 'I am a sign to you. As I have done, so it will be done to them; they will go into exile, into captivity.'**

The first act of Ezekiel's play was now explained to the *rebellious house of Israel* living on the *Chebar River*. Ezekiel had imitated what the descendants of *Ephraim, Manasseh and Simeon* would do in Jerusalem in five years. They would pack their luggage in the morning, dig a hole in the wall in the afternoon and carry their luggage with them as they left Jerusalem in the middle of the night, not knowing where they were going in the dark. Furthermore, the **"prince"** would join them, expecting to escape the city in the safety of darkness before it was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar. The LORD explained that next.

(a) The Actions of the Prince

Eze 12:12 **"The prince who is among them will load *his* baggage on *his* shoulder in the dark and go out. They will dig a hole through the wall to bring *it* out. He will cover his face so that he cannot see the land with *his* eyes.**

The LORD had told Ezekiel to tell the *house of Israel* the details of what Zedekiah would do in about five years when Nebuchadnezzar had the city surrounded. Zedekiah would do just as Ezekiel had done in Act One of his play the day before.

We struggle with this verse for its true meaning in context. The **"prince"** would pack his bags and step through the hole in the wall, but then came the **"they."** The prince did not dig the hole, the remnant of the *house of Israel* living in Jerusalem would do that job. That remnant was also the **"they"** in this passage. **"They"** would attempt to hide Zedekiah and escape the city and move the **"prince"** out of the country by hiding the king's face so he would not be recognized. It would not work.

(b) The Capture of the Prince

Eze 12:13a **"I will also spread My net over him, and he will be caught in My snare.**

Hide Zedekiah as best they could, it would not be good enough! The LORD would allow Nebuchadnezzar to catch him like an animal in a **"snare."**

(c) The Treatment of the Prince

Eze 12:13b **And I will bring him to Babylon in the land of the Chaldeans; yet he will not see it, though he will die there.**

And here we come to the prophecy that might have caused Zedekiah to stumble and refuse to listen to the true prophet of the LORD. The LORD had Ezekiel tell the remnant of the *house of Israel* living by the *Chebar River* that Zedekiah would not see the land of Babylon **"though he will die there."** This prophecy was five years out from the actual event. This prophecy made it back to Jerusalem and to the ears of Zedekiah. Zedekiah did not trust Ezekiel because the prophecy contradicted itself. He thought, *"How could a person die in Babylon and never see it?"* Jeremiah answered that dilemma twice in his prophecy. Zedekiah should have listened and believed.

Jeremiah 39:6 Then the king of Babylon slew the sons of Zedekiah before his eyes at Riblah; the king of Babylon also slew all the nobles of Judah. ⁷ He then blinded Zedekiah's eyes and bound him in fetters of bronze to bring him to Babylon.

Jeremiah 52:11 Then he blinded the eyes of Zedekiah; and the king of Babylon bound him with bronze fetters and brought him to Babylon and put him in prison until the day of his death. In five years, when Zedekiah slipped out of the hole in the wall with his luggage under disguise, he never would have done so had he listened to Ezekiel's Word from the LORD.

(d) The Sword Against the Prince

Eze 12:14 "I will scatter to every wind all who are around him, his helpers and all his troops; and I will draw out a sword after them.

Some of the descendants of the tribes of *Ephraim, Manasseh and Simeon* were acting as the men of King Zedekiah. They would attempt to help him escape by scurrying to "every wind," meaning in all directions. But they would not escape. The sword of Nebuchadnezzar would kill them.

(e) The People with the Prince

Eze 12:15 "So they will know that I am the LORD when I scatter them among the nations and spread them among the countries.

Some of the descendants of the tribes of *Ephraim, Manasseh and Simeon* were not in line with King Zedekiah and they must have been those who moaned and groaned over the abominations occurring in the city that the LORD showed Ezekiel in the first part of this series of visions. They would be removed from Jerusalem and placed as *exiles* in the countries that surrounded the Promised Land, those controlled by Nebuchadnezzar.

(f) The Remnant with the Prince

Eze 12:16 "But I will spare a few of them from the sword, the famine and the pestilence that they may tell all their abominations among the nations where they go, and may know that I am the LORD."

Just to make sure Ezekiel and all those with him from the *house of Israel* understood, not all of the remnant of the tribes of *Ephraim, Manasseh and Simeon* living in Jerusalem would die by the "sword, famine and the pestilence." Why? The righteous among them had a job to do. They were to go into exile armed with the story of the destruction of the city and the kingdom in order to pass along the history of their people to all the nations.

9. Ezekiel's Ninth Assignment from the LORD

a) Ezekiel Eat with Anxiety

Eze 12:17 Moreover, the word of the LORD came to me saying, **Eze 12:18** "Son of man, eat your bread with trembling and drink your water with quivering and anxiety.

It was time for Act Two of the play. This act might well be called "*Trembling, Quivering and Anxiety*." It was Ezekiel's ninth assignment and it was time for a meal. As Ezekiel ate and drank in front of the *house of Israel*, he was to exhibit the characteristics of "*Trembling, Quivering and Anxiety*." Can you imagine what the *house of Israel* thought when they saw Ezekiel eating. But this time they did not say, "What are you doing?" They must have known by then that when Ezekiel was acting out a scene of a play, it had a meaning and the LORD would soon have Ezekiel proclaim the meaning.

b) Inhabitants Eat with Anxiety

Eze 12:19 "Then say to the people of the land, 'Thus says the Lord GOD concerning the inhabitants of Jerusalem in the land of Israel, 'They will eat their bread with anxiety and drink their water with horror, because their land will be stripped of its fullness on account of the violence of all who live in it. **Eze 12:20** "The inhabited cities

will be laid waste and the land will be a desolation. So you will know that I am the LORD."

As expected, the LORD did not disappoint! Ezekiel's second act of this play was to present a living application as to what the **"inhabitants of Jerusalem"** would be doing in five years when Nebuchadnezzar had the city surrounded. They would be filled with *"Trembling, Quivering and Anxiety."* Furthermore, when that time came, and the people on the land were destroyed as well as the walls and buildings of the city and kingdom, whether those people were alive or dead, they would know beyond any shadow of doubt that the LORD was LORD of all.

10. Ezekiel's Tenth Assignment from the LORD

a) LORD's Question about a Proverb about a Vision

Eze 12:21 **Then the word of the LORD came to me, saying,** Eze 12:22 **"Son of man, what is this proverb you people have concerning the land of Israel, saying, 'The days are long and every vision fails'?"**

With the ninth assignment complete, it was time for the tenth and this one involved a proverb and a conversation between Ezekiel and the LORD. **"What is this proverb?"** the LORD said to Ezekiel. We might say it like this today, *"Why do you say 'The days are long and every vision fails.'"* What does that mean? The LORD had already given a clue to this proverb in Ezekiel 7:26.

Eze 7:26 *'Disaster will come upon disaster and rumor will be added to rumor; then they will seek a vision from a prophet, but the law will be lost from the priest and counsel from the elders.*

Trouble was already brewing in Jerusalem at the time of the giving of this prophecy. Jeremiah was warning of the coming destruction, but the king and the people did not trust him. Ezekiel was warning of the same coming destruction, but they did not trust him. Other minor prophets were adding to the warnings, but they were not trusted either. Yet, while not trusting the true prophets, the people of the Southern Kingdom were still seeking a prophet they could trust. We might call this selective trust. People do this all the time, even today. We trust who we want to trust because we like what they say. We distrust those we want to distrust because we do not like what they say. They said, **"The days are long and every vision fails"** because they had prophets they were listening to and waiting day after day for the fulfillments, but they never came because their prophets were fake prophets.

b) LORD's Judgment on the Proverb about a Vision

Eze 12:23 **"Therefore say to them, 'Thus says the Lord GOD, 'I will make this proverb cease so that they will no longer use it as a proverb in Israel.' But tell them, 'The days draw near as well as the fulfillment of every vision.**

And so in this tenth assignment the LORD tasked Ezekiel with a new warning and here it is in a paraphrase for today. *"Whatever you are waiting for, don't worry, your time is about up! In just a few days you will see the fulfillment of the LORD's visions!"* In other words, the judgment of the LORD was on its way and it was coming soon.

c) LORD's Promise about a Proverb about a Vision

Eze 12:24 **"For there will no longer be any false vision or flattering divination within the house of Israel.** Eze 12:25 **"For I the LORD will speak, and whatever word I speak will be performed. It will no longer be delayed, for in your days, O rebellious house, I will speak the word and perform it," declares the Lord GOD."**

In the next breath, the LORD confirmed the context of this commentary on this assignment when he said the **“false vision or flattering divination within the house of Israel”** will be no longer. The *house of Israel in Jerusalem* had selected prophets, but they were fake. The people should have been listening to the LORD’s real prophets. Their visions would come true soon; the fake visions would never occur. In other words, *“If the LORD said He was going to do something, He was going to do it! Therefore, get ready!”*

11. Ezekiel’s Eleventh Assignment from the LORD

a) Israel’s Concern Over Timing of a Vision

Eze 12:26 Furthermore, **the word of the LORD came to me**, saying, **Eze 12:27** **“Son of man, behold, the house of Israel is saying, ‘The vision that he sees is for many years from now, and he prophesies of times far off.’”**

On to the eleventh assignment the LORD commenced. He would not have covered this topic had the people not been saying or thinking these words. **“The vision that he sees is for many years from now, and he prophesies of times far off.”** By now, the *house of Israel* living near Ezekiel surely knew he was a true prophet of the LORD. However, the *Israelites* at the *Chebar River* and the Southern Kingdom did not think that the people alive at that time were so filled with sin that the LORD would bring judgment on them or even on their generation. Surely the prophecies of Ezekiel were for some far-off sinful generation of Israel – not them, in either location. We become so accustomed to our own sins that we do not even consider them sins against the LORD. *“I don’t sin! I never sin! I don’t think what I am doing is that bad a sin! The LORD would not punish me for my little sin! My sin doesn’t hurt anyone else; therefore, it really isn’t a sin!”* We must understand, *sin is sin, big or small, it does not matter.* Sin must be dealt with by the LORD. It does not matter if you have become so accustomed to your sin that you do not consider it a sin; if the LORD called it a sin, it is a sin! The *house of Israel* did not think they were sinful enough at the time of Ezekiel’s prophecies that they needed to take action. They thought the LORD would never bring judgment on them in their day. Were they ever wrong! It would come in their day because their abominations were a stench in the nose of the LORD and He had had enough.

b) LORD’s Promise for Fulfillment of a Vision

Eze 12:28 **“Therefore say to them, ‘Thus says the Lord GOD, “None of My words will be delayed any longer. Whatever word I speak will be performed,””** declares the **Lord GOD.**

“Say this, Ezekiel,” the LORD proclaimed. *“Everything I said I will do, I am about to do!”* The exiles of *Israel* at the *Chebar River* were surely not ready for that word from the LORD. It was then time for the twelfth assignment; it would be directed at the fake prophets of *Israel*.

12. Ezekiel’s Twelfth Assignment from the LORD

a) Prophecy Against Israel’s Prophets

(1) Personal Inspiration

Eze 13:1 **Then the word of the LORD came to me** saying, **Eze 13:2** **“Son of man, prophesy against the prophets of Israel who prophesy, and say to those who prophesy from their own inspiration, ‘Listen to the word of the LORD!’”**

It was time for Ezekiel, a true prophet to **“prophesy against the prophets of Israel.”** The fake prophets were in the firing sights of the LORD and Ezekiel’s message was aimed right at them. Where were the fake prophets going wrong? They were conjuring up their **“own inspiration.”** In other words, they were not hearing the words of the LORD; they were speaking the figments of their own imaginations! We can call them, fabrications of personal inspiration.

(2) Foolish Inspiration

Eze 13:3 **'Thus says the Lord GOD, "Woe to the foolish prophets who are following their own spirit and have seen nothing.**

But the personal inspiration of the fake prophets was “foolish” inspiration drawn from their imaginations out of thin air - out of nothing.

(3) Destructive Inspiration

Eze 13:4 **"O Israel, your prophets have been like foxes among ruins.**

The “foolish” inspiration was a *destructive inspiration* “*like foxes among ruins.*” To that, the great Methodist Commentator of yesterday said the following.

The cunning of the fox in obtaining his prey has been long proverbial. These false prophets are represented as the foxes who, having got their prey by great subtlety, run to the desert to hide both themselves and it. So the false prophets, when the event did not answer to their prediction, got out of the way, that they might not be overwhelmed with the reproaches and indignation of the people.³⁰

(4) Lazy Inspiration

Eze 13:5 **"You have not gone up into the breaches, nor did you build the wall around the house of Israel to stand in the battle on the day of the LORD.**

The *destructive inspiration* was a *lazy inspiration*. “**You have not,**” the LORD warned the fake prophets! In other words, they had not done anything to help the Southern Kingdom – no suggestions, no directions, no corrections. Moreover, they offered no answers, no words from the LORD, no truth in the midst of abominations.

(5) Lying Inspiration

Eze 13:6 **"They see falsehood and lying divination who are saying, 'The LORD declares,' when the LORD has not sent them; yet they hope for the fulfillment of their word.**

The *lazy inspiration* was a *lying inspiration*. Let us be clear, when the LORD said to a prophet, “*speak this,*” the prophet had to speak the words. But when a prophet had no words from the LORD, he should have kept his mouth shut. Humans get in situations where they think they must say something godly even in the dry seasons of life when the LORD has not instructed them to say anything. It is a time for silence. It is a time for listening, watching, learning, waiting. It is not a time for lying, saying, “*thus says the LORD when the LORD has said nothing.*” Preachers, teachers, leaders, elders, deacons, do not speak for the LORD when He has not spoken to you. If you need something to say, open the Word of God and read a passage and leave it at that. Not every passage needs an explanation. After all, the Holy Spirit is the ultimate teacher of all passages.

(6) False Inspiration

Eze 13:7 **"Did you not see a false vision and speak a lying divination when you said, 'The LORD declares,' but it is not I who have spoken?'"**

The *lying inspiration* turns into *false inspiration*. It is a *false inspiration* to say, “*The LORD told me*” when He did not! How do you know if the LORD has spoken to you? First, it will not conflict with anything in the Scripture. A good warning here might be, “*If you do not know the Scripture well, do not say the LORD told you something unless you received that message directly out of the Scripture.*” If it came in a dream at night or something you saw in a movie or

³⁰ Adam Clarke's Commentary.

out of a morning devotional book, look it up in Scripture before you say, “*The LORD told me.*” It does not matter how meaningful it is to your life or how it changed your life or how you want others to experience the same revelation you found in your life; if it conflicts with Scripture in any way, it is not of the LORD.

Second, if the LORD speaks to you, it will be a message supported in Scripture and it will be a message that leads ultimately to the edification or building up of the saints and the glory of the LORD. “*The LORD told me to give you my rent money because He wants me to live in expectations of His provisions.*” What? The LORD provides for your needs. He provides you with your rent money. If you give it away, how are you going to pay your rent? The LORD will never ask you to give away what you need to provide for your family. He will never ask you to give what you do not have to give. No matter what the prophet says in his preaching, if he asks you to give your rent money and that is all the money you have to pay your rent, he is a fake prophet pronouncing a *false inspiration*.

(7) Doomed Inspiration

Eze 13:8 Therefore, thus says the Lord GOD, "Because you have spoken falsehood and seen a lie, therefore behold, I am against you," declares the Lord GOD.

The *false inspiration* leads to a *doomed inspiration*. Speaking for the LORD when He has not directed your words is a *doomed inspiration* and the penalty is the judgment of the LORD against you.

(8) Rejected Inspiration

Eze 13:9 "So My hand will be against the prophets who see false visions and utter lying divinations. They will have no place in the council of My people, nor will they be written down in the register of the house of Israel, nor will they enter the land of Israel, that you may know that I am the LORD GOD.

The *doomed inspiration* results in a *rejected inspiration*. Simply, the fake prophet will not inherit the kingdom of the LORD in heaven. He will not be part of the LORD’s people eternally; his name will not be written in the book of the LORD’s people; he will not receive an inheritance in the Promised Land now or ever. When the LORD brings His judgment on these fake prophets, they will die. Even after death they will still know that the LORD is LORD of all.

b) Rejection of Israel’s Prophets

(1) Doomed Falsified Peace

Eze 13:10a "It is definitely because they have misled My people by saying, 'Peace!' when there is no peace.

Prophets of the LORD declared when the LORD was pleased and when He was displeased. Either way, the message built up the saints who heard the message and took action. But when a fake prophet proclaimed “**peace! When there is not peace,**” he was doomed and rejected by the LORD.

(2) Doomed Whitewashed Walls

Eze 13:10b And when anyone builds a wall, behold, they plaster it over with whitewash;
Eze 13:11a so tell those who plaster it over with whitewash, that it will fall.

You cannot paint over the actions and decisions of the LORD to make them what you want them to be. “**Plaster**” is a good, substantive product that will last for years. It covers all the imperfection and provides a beautiful surface. We call it drywall mud today and it has a little different consistency from the plaster that goes back for centuries. We put up sheetrock today and all we have to do to make it look right is plaster the joints. However, for centuries walls were made of rough stones, slats of wood, grates of wire and several other materials. To make the

walls smooth, a heavy plaster was smeared over the rough material in layers, allowed to dry and then another layer was added, layer after layer until a smooth, perfect surface hid the roughness behind. **“Whitewash”** was different. It was a thin, sloppy paint like material that would not hold up with the test of time. It would cover the imperfection for a while, but after it cured, the imperfection would begin to show again. It was a temporary covering intended to deceive the buyer or impress the visitor. It was less costly than plaster and less effective.

The fake prophets were guilty of proclaiming a cheap message that comforted for a moment but could not stand the test of time. The true prophets proclaimed the proper message that healed the rough underlying sin which could stand the test of time.

(a) Destroyed by the Elements

Eze 13:11b A flooding rain will come, and you, O hailstones, will fall; and a violent wind will break out.

The **“white wash”** was also used to hide the truth of the construction, to cover up the poor craftsmanship we might say. Behind the whitewash no one could see the structure that needed to withstand the storms of life. **“Whitewash”** is quickly destroyed with the elements of nature.

(b) Questioned by the Inhabitants

Eze 13:12 "Behold, when the wall has fallen, will you not be asked, 'Where is the plaster with which you plastered it?'"

When elements of nature destroy the house, the question will be asked of the inhabitants, *“What kind of materials did you use! Why did you not use plaster instead of whitewash?”* Plaster has lasted for centuries; whitewash lasts only for a season.

(c) Removed by the Omnipotent

Eze 13:13 Therefore, thus says the Lord GOD, "I will make a violent wind break out in My wrath. There will also be in My anger a flooding rain and hailstones to consume it in wrath. ^{Eze 13:14} "So I will tear down the wall which you plastered over with whitewash and bring it down to the ground, so that its foundation is laid bare; and when it falls, you will be consumed in its midst. And you will **know that I am the LORD.**

The prophecies of the fake prophets were **“whitewash”** and they could not stand the test of the LORD. The elements He would send would destroy them. When that happened, the fake prophets would know that the LORD was LORD of all.

(d) Judged by the Rhetoric

Eze 13:15 "Thus I will spend My wrath on the wall and on those who have plastered it over with whitewash; and I will say to you, 'The wall is gone and its plasterers are gone, ^{Eze 13:16} along with the prophets of Israel who prophesy to Jerusalem, and who see visions of peace for her when there is no peace,' declares the Lord GOD.

The LORD intended to judge the fake prophets based on their words. The true prophets had spoken but were ignored. The fake prophets had lied to the people. Lying was a sin then and it is still today.

c) Rejection of Israel’s Daughters

(1) Personal Inspiration

Eze 13:17a "Now you, son of man, set your face against the daughters of your people who are prophesying from their own inspiration.

The men were not the only fake speakers for the LORD in Ezekiel’s day; the women were involved too. May we call the fake prophets what they are, *creators of heresy*. May we also make another assessment, based on centuries of history; *“Not one heresy in Judaism or Christianity*

occurs without the input of so-called prophesying women.” And in each case, the women have divined a theology that conflicts with the Scripture. But that does not matter! When a conflict occurred, the women simply created new definitions for the old words in support for their heretical argument. And so we see it in the religious works of Mary Baker Eddy, Amie Simple Macpherson, Katherine Kuhlman, Marilyn Hickey, Paula White and Joyce Meyers, just to name a few from the past ten decades. Each of these women claim inspiration from the LORD that conflicts with Scripture. To solve the issue when the conflict is pointed out, these women have just claimed that the LORD had revealed to them the true meaning of the old words and a new interpretation. So, too, were the women in Jerusalem in Ezekiel’s day; they were dreaming up prophecies in their own warped imaginations that were in direct conflict with the Word of the LORD.

(2) Magical Inspiration

Eze 13:17b Prophecy against them ^{Eze 13:18} and say, 'Thus says the Lord GOD, "Woe to the women who sew *magic* bands on all wrists and make veils for the heads of *persons* of every stature to hunt down lives! Will you hunt down the lives of My people, but preserve the lives *of others* for yourselves?"

The female prophets of today are much bolder than their counterparts in Ezekiel’s day. Today’s women confiscate the pulpits of the preachers for their own edification. In Ezekiel’s day the women were into *black magic* and promoting it among the people. Actually, we still have those kinds of women today; they have never ceased to exist though time. They are the ones who take common and perfectly acceptable jewelry or articles of clothing and attach some religious meaning to them completely conflicting with the Word of the LORD. “*When you are broke, speak to your wallet that it might be filled. When you are lonely, fill your room with smells of this incense or that incense. When you have a need, rub this bracelet and speak your need into existence. These oils will heal your soul. By the way, invite your women friends to become dealers of these charms, these lotions, these lines of spiritual clothing and the LORD will make you rich. If anyone says anything against our way of religion, call down the devil upon them and speak the prayer of curse over them!*” Essentially those same tactics were being used by the fake religious women of the days of Ezekiel. They would gather around those who agreed and shunned those who did not. But, they wanted crowds by the thousands of women to listen to them and they would not be satisfied until they had them.

(3) Worthless Inspiration

Eze 13:19 "For handfuls of barley and fragments of bread, you have profaned Me to My people to put to death some who should not die and to keep others alive who should not live, by your lying to My people who listen to lies.""

The women’s *magical inspiration* was a *worthless inspiration*. The whole purpose of the *personal and magical inspiration* was to collect “**handfuls of barley and fragments of bread.**” Even five years out from the destruction of Jerusalem, famine was beginning to show its ugly head. They would do anything that gave hope and could stir the hearts of the people to spend what they did not have for something that rarely gives back. Such it is with the lottery today. The poorest of the poor spend the most on the lottery and although they may win a little here and there, rarely do they win the jackpot. It is a *worthless inspiration*.

(4) Judged Inspiration

Eze 13:20 Therefore, thus says the Lord GOD, "Behold, I am against your *magic* bands by which you hunt lives there as birds and I will tear them from your arms; and I will let them go, even those lives whom you hunt as birds. ^{Eze 13:21} "I will also tear off your veils and deliver My people from your hands, and they will no longer be in your hands to be hunted; and you will **know that I am the LORD.**

The conjuring of the *worthless inspiration* leads to a *judged inspiration*. All the imaginative acts of the women, in this case in Jerusalem and the Southern Kingdom were abominations because the LORD had long since instructed His people, men, women, boys and girls in the practice of true worship. All the trinkets these women had constituted a great abominations on their part, and the LORD would judge soon and then they would know that the LORD was the LORD of all.

(5) Twisted Inspiration

Eze 13:22 **"Because you disheartened the righteous with falsehood when I did not cause him grief, but have encouraged the wicked not to turn from his wicked way and preserve his life,**

Why would the LORD judge the women? Their sin was *twisted inspiration*! Seeking to add to the religious experience, the women had conjured up special additions to trusting in god – their god. As such, they had taught false theology instead of how to **“turn from his wicked way and preserve his life.”** Another problem appears here. These women were not just leading women astray, they were also leading men astray. Notice the words, **“... when I did not cause him grief ... turn from his wicked way... .”** The twisted theology of these women caused the steadfast man to stumble when the LORD did not cause it and it caused the steadfast wicked man to continue in his wickedness. Prophecies should always lead to the LORD, never away from Him.

(6) Damned Inspiration

Eze 13:23 **therefore, you women will no longer see false visions or practice divination, and I will deliver My people out of your hand. Thus you will know that I am the LORD."**

Therefore, the *twisted inspiration* led to a *damned inspiration*. The LORD was about to take control and rescue the righteous from the lies of these women. They would be damned and die, the righteous would be **“delivered”** and live. Then, dead as they would be, those self-inspired women would know that the LORD was the LORD of all.