

Ezekiel Part 13 (Ezekiel 13)

1. Ezekiel had answered the selfish thinking of the exiles and the people in Jerusalem, but now he attacked the source of their blind optimism: the messages of the false prophets.
2. Jeremiah in Jerusalem had to confront a similar group of men who claimed to have a word from the Lord.
3. The false prophets claimed to speak in the name of the Lord, just as Jeremiah and Ezekiel did, but they didn't get their messages from the Lord.
4. Ezekiel spoke against both false prophets (vv. 1–16) and false prophetesses (vv. 17–23) who were actually using the cultic practices forbidden to the people of Israel. (Deuteronomy 18:9–14)
5. ***The lying prophets (13:1–16).***
6. Four times in these verses God declares that the false prophets saw vanity (nothingness) and spoke lies.
7. God hadn't called them (Jeremiah 23:21–22) and God didn't give them their messages, yet they claimed to be His prophets.
8. They spoke out of their own imaginations and their "inspiration" was self-induced. Ezekiel compared them to the foxes (jackals) that lived as scavengers in the deserted ruins of the land.
9. They cared only for themselves, they did nothing to improve the situation, and they lived off the fears of the people.
10. Ezekiel also compared the false prophets to workmen who failed to build something that would last.
11. The spiritual "wall" that had protected the Jewish people for centuries had fallen into ruin, and prophets like Ezekiel and Jeremiah were trying to rebuild and strengthen it by proclaiming the Word and calling the people back to God.
12. But the false prophets ignored the Word of God and substituted their own lies.
13. They were like workers who whitewashed a weak wall to make it look sturdy, because they promised peace when God had promised destruction.
(Ezekiel 13:10, 16; Jeremiah 6:14; 7:8; 8:11)
14. Just as the storm would come, and the rain, hail, and wind knock down the wall, so God's wrath would come and destroy Jerusalem, the prophets, and their deceptive messages.
15. A true prophet tells people what they ***need*** to hear, but a false prophet tells them what they *want* to hear. (2 Timothy 4:1–5)
16. A true servant of God builds carefully on a strong foundation and keeps the wall in good repair, but a hireling builds carelessly and whitewashes things to make them look better.

17. Next - God explained how He would judge the false prophets. (13:9)
18. First, they would be exposed as counterfeits and no longer have an exalted reputation among the people. They would lose their prominent places in the councils of the nation.
19. God would treat them like Jews who had also lost their citizenship. The counterfeit prophets gave the people a false hope, so God gave them no hope at all.
20. It's a serious thing to be called of God and to speak His Word to His people. To assume a place of ministry without being called is presumptuous.
21. The false prophets in Ezekiel's day were declared guilty. Popularity is not a test of truth.
22. History shows that those who spoke the truth were usually rejected by the majority, persecuted, and even killed. Jesus used the same image of a storm to warn us about false prophets. (Matthew 7:15-27)
23. It's easy for people to say, "Lord, Lord," but it's not easy to walk the narrow road and confront the crowd that's going in the opposite direction.
24. ***The lying prophetesses (13:17-23).***
25. The gift of prophecy wasn't given exclusively to men, for several prophetesses are named in Scripture: Miriam (Ex. 15:20), Deborah (Jud. 4:4-5), the wife of Isaiah (Isa. 8:3), Hulda (2 Kings 22:14), and the daughters of Philip the evangelist (Acts 21:8-9).
26. The Jewish women Ezekiel was exposing were more like sorceresses who claimed to be prophetesses.
27. They practiced the magical arts they had probably learned in Babylon, all of which were forbidden to the Jews. (Deuteronomy 18:9-14)
28. They manufactured magic charms that people could wear on various parts of the body and thus ward off evil. They also told fortunes and enticed people to buy their services.
29. Like the false prophets, they were using the crisis situation for personal gain and preying on the fears of the people.
30. But these women weren't helping people; they were hunting them and catching them like birds in a trap to take their money.
31. They told the people lies, they didn't expose their sins, and they kept them from trusting the true and living God and depending on His Word alone.
32. Instead of condemning the evil and rewarding the good, they were slaying the good and rewarding the evil!
33. But their end would come. God would strip them of their charms and amulets and then take His people back to their land, leaving these evil women behind to die.