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False Prophets Condemned
Jeremiah 23:13-22 and Ezeki'el 13:1-23

False prophets condemned DIG: What is the basic message of the false prophets? What does God mean that the false prophets are like Sodom and Gomorrah? What distinguishes the false prophet (see **Deuteronomy 31:1-5)? How are Judah's prophets measuring up to these criteria? What false image of ADONAI do the false prophets project? Compared to the source of the false prophet's word, where does the true prophet get God's word (Jeremiah 23:18** and **22)? What will God do to intervene and put a stop to their lies? How will this prove that the LORD is Adonai ELOHIM?**

REFLECT: What does it mean for you to stand at the council of ADONAI? What is involved? Where? When? With whom? How do we "hear" God's Word today? What can we do to make sure we aren't fooled today? How did Jesus distinguish between true and false prophets (see **Matthew 7:15-23; 23:13-28; 24:23-26)? How do His warnings compare with Ezeki'el's? Are you more concerned with "what the future holds" or "who controls the future?" What are you doing to reduce your stress level?**

597 BC during the eleven-year reign of Zedekiah

Ezeki'el, who was among the Jews taken into the Babylonian captivity in the second deportation (**to see link click Du – Jehoiachin Ruled For 3 Months in 598 BC**). **He was the first prophet to live and prophesy in exile. His prophecies were addressed to both the people who were left in Judah as well to his fellow-captives in Babylon.**

The works of the false prophets: Ezeki'el, a contemporary of **Jeremiah,** now turns to **the false prophets** of **Jerusalem. The word of the LORD came to me: Son of man, prophesy against the prophets of [Judah] who are now prophesying.** They were sinning in seven ways. First, **prophesied out of their own imagination,** in other words, they made up prophecies, saying, **"Hear the word of ADONAI." This is what Adonai ELOHIM** says, secondly, **Woe to the**

foolish prophets who follow their own spirit, and thirdly, **have seen nothing** and **they** know it**!** Fourthly, **your prophets, [Judah], are like jackals among ruins.** Fifthly, **You have not gone up to the breaches in the wall to repair it for the people of [Judah] so that it will stand firm in the battle on the day of the LORD**, or the Great Tribulation in **the far eschatological future. The false prophets** had set a pattern that will eventually cause **Judah** to enter the Great Tribulation. True **prophets** were primarily responsible for the leadership of the nation. The way **they** lead the nation tends to follow. Because of this tendency, the pattern that was set in the past will continue in the future. Sixthly, **Their visions are false and their divinations a lie.** And seventh, **even though YHVH has not sent them, they say, "ADONAI declares," and expect Him to fulfill their words. Have you not seen false visions and uttered lying divinations when you say, "The LORD declares," though I have not spoken (Ezeki'el 13:1-7).** As a result, **they** gave **the Jewish people** a sense of false hope and false security.[252]

Jeremiah brought the example of **the northern kingdom of Isra'el,** who had already fallen to Assyria, because what happened to **her** will now happen to **the southern kingdom of Judah**. **The prophets of Isra'el had been guilty of openly practicing idolatry. Among the prophets of Samaria I saw this repulsive thing: They prophesied by Ba'al and led My people Isra'el astray (Jeremiah 23:13).** But at least **they** were honest about it. **They** didn't claim to **prophesy** in the name of **ADONAI**. **They** were **prophets of Ba'al** and **they prophesied** in **his** name! By doing so **they** caused the people **of Samaria** to turn away from the real **God**.

But among the prophets of Jerusalem I have seen something horrible (5:30, 18:13, 23:14, 29:17). More horrible because **the prophets of Zion** claimed to prophecy in the name of **ADONAI** when **they** were doing no such thing. In this way **the prophets of the northern Kingdom** were superior because **they** admitted that **they prophesied** in the name of another **God**. Not only did **they prophesy** in the name of **YHVH**, they were **committing** spiritual **adultery and living a lie.** By means of **their** false **prophecies they** were encouraging **the wicked**, not the righteous. **They strengthen the hands of evildoers, so that no one turns (shuwb) them from their wickedness (Jeremiah 23:14a).**

So from **the LORD's** point of view **the people of Jerusalem** had become **like** the people of **Sodom and Gomorrah** who were destroyed and never rebuilt **(Jeremiah 23:14b).** Now **Jerusalem** deserved the same type of judgment;

however, **they** would not receive the same type of judgment because **God** does not violate **His** covenants. But **Zion** would receive judgment of another kind – seventy years of it (see **Gu – Seventy Years of Imperial Babylonian Rule**).

God's judgment on the false prophets: Therefore because **they** prophesied lies**, this is what ADONAI Tzva'ot says concerning these prophets, "I am against you." My hand will be against the false prophets who see false visions and utter lying divinations. They will not belong to the counsel of My people** (**they** will lose **their** influence upon **the people**) **or be listed in the records of Isra'el** (**they** will be excommunicated from the priesthood as in **Ezra 2:62**)**, nor will they enter the land of Isra'el** (**they** will not participate in the return after the exile)**. Then you will know that I am Adonai ELOHIM (Ezekiel 13:8-9).**

Because they gave the people a sense of false security, **ADONAI** said: **They lead My people astray, saying, "Peace," when there is no peace, and because, when a flimsy wall is built** (the Hebrew word *chayitz*, simply refers stones piled on top of each other, but not cemented together)**, they cover it with whitewash.** The best way to strengthen **the wall** would be to put cement in between the stones. But instead of really strengthening that **flimsy wall**, **they** merely put a coat of **whitewash** over it. The **wall** looked better, but it didn't really strengthen it at all. And that represented the vain hopes of **the people**. **Therefore, tell those who cover it with whitewash that it is going to fall. A flooding rain will come and I will send hailstones hurtling down, and violent wind will burst forth.** Whenever **a flood** is used symbolically in the Bible it pictures a military invasion. So this will be the military invasion of Babylon. Then the false hopes of **the people** will be knocked **down** when Nebuchadnezzar invaded **the Land**. **When the wall collapses, will people not ask you, "Where is the whitewash you covered it with" (Ezeki'el 13:10-12)?**

Therefore, this is what the Sovereign LORD says: **In My wrath I will unleash a violent wind, and in My anger hailstones and torrents of rain will fall with destructive fury. I will tear down the wall you have covered with whitewash and will level it to the ground so that its foundation will be laid bare. When it falls, you will be destroyed in it; and you will know that I am ADONAI. So I will pour out My wrath against the wall and against those who covered it with whitewash. I will say to you, "The wall is gone and so are those who whitewashed it, those false prophets of Isra'el who prophesied to Jerusalem and saw visions of peace for her when there was**

no peace, declares Adonai ELOHIM" (Ezeki'el 13:13-16).[253]

For those **false prophets**, **God** said: **I will feed them bitter wormwood and make them drink poisonous water, for ungodliness has spread through all the Land from the prophets of Yerushalayim" (Jeremiah 23:15 CJB). YHVH's** sentence on **the false prophets** was bitterness and tragedy. Why? Because **the prophets of Jerusalem** had spread wickedness and ungodliness throughout **Y'hudah**. **They** had failed to recognize the pervasive and stubborn wickedness of **the people** and had prescribed an over-the-counter medication when only radical surgery could resolve the matter.

The words of false prophetesses: ADONAI Tzva'ot says: **Don't listen to the words of the prophets who are prophesying to you. They are making you act foolishly** (**they** were full of hot air), **telling you visions from their own minds** (does that sound familiar?) **and not from the mouth of ADONAI.** What was **their** claim? **They keep reassuring those who despise Me, "ADONAI says you will be safe and secure," and saying to all living by their own stubborn hearts, "Nothing bad will happen to you" (Jeremiah 23:16-17 CJB).**



Just as false prophets were found in Judah, so were there false prophetesses. Ezeki'el now condemns the women who, like their male counterparts, were misleading the people. Now, son of man, set your face against the daughters of your people who prophesy out of their own imagination. They also make up prophecies. This is the only place in the TaNaKh were **false prophetesses** are mentioned. **Prophesy against them and say, "This is what the Sovereign LORD** says: **Woe to the women who sew magic charms,** like bands around **their wrists,** on the one inquiring of **the false prophetess** to symbolize the binding power of **her magic** spells. Those occultic bands symbolized **her** possession of that person, not unlike some practices in voodoo today. **And make veils of various lengths for their heads in order to**

ensnare people to whom **they** were about to prophesy. By means of spells, the occult and incantations **they** were hunting **their** victims. **Will you ensnare the lives of my people but preserve your own? They** were claiming to be able to keep their victims alive, but it would require a fee. **You have profaned Me among My people for a few handfuls of barley and scraps of bread.** These were used both as payment and for divination purposes to see if the victim would live or die. **By lying to My people, who listen to lies, you have killed those who should not have died and have spared those who should not live (Ezeki'el 13:17-19). They** used magic to temporarily cure **people** who would die when the Babylonians came.

The words of false prophets: God repudiated **the false prophets** with some questions. **But which of you has been present in the council of ADONAI** (those who paid close attention to **God's word**, listened to **it** and proclaimed **it**) **to see and hear His word? Who has paid attention to His word enough to hear it (Jeremiah 23:18 CJB)? The prophets** stood **in the counsel of the LORD (Isaiah 6:1-9; Amos 3:8).** Neither method had been followed by **the false prophets**.

The visitation of God upon those who prophesied falsely: The wrath of **God** would come against those **false prophetesses** and **their** occult practices. **Therefore, this is what Adonai ELOHIM says: I am against your magic charms with which you ensnare people like birds** to be trapped, **and I will tear them from your arms; I will set free the people that you ensnare like birds. I will tear off your veils and save My people from your hands, and they will no longer fall prey to your power. They** will be freed from **their** blindness imposed by witchcraft. **Then you will know that I am the LORD. Because you dishearten the righteous with your lies, when I had brought them no grief, and because you encouraged the wicked not to turn from their evil ways and so save their lives. They** made the righteous sad and the wicked even more wicked. **Therefore you will no longer see false visions or practice divination. I will save My people from your hands. And then you will know that I am YHVH (Ezeki'el 13:20-23).**[254]

"I did not send these prophets; yet they have run in eagerness **with their counterfeit message** which **they** have invented**; I did not speak to them, yet they have prophesied. But if they had stood in My council they would have proclaimed My words to My people and would have turned (shuwb) them from their evil ways and from their evil deeds (Jeremiah 23:21-22).** Perhaps

they were believed in the inviolability of the Temple and Jerusalem (see **Cc – False Religion is Worthless**). But the fact is **they** had not been called by **God** to proclaim **His word** and as a result, **they** had no **word** to proclaim. The task of **a** true **prophet** was to convict **the people** of **their** sinfulness. To do that **he himself** would need to have a clear understanding of the nature of the covenant and its demands upon **the people** of **God**.[255] Nevertheless, **they** encouraged **the people** to go **their** own way was proof that **they** had not **stood in the council of the LORD.**

I will Look! The storm of ADONAI, bursting out in fury, a whirlwind down upon the heads of the wicked! ADONAI's anger will not turn back (shuwb) until He fully accomplishes the purpose in His heart. In the acharit-hayamim, or in the days to come, you will understand everything. When **Jeremiah** (under the direction of **the Holy Spirit**) uses the phrase **in the days to come**; **the days are coming**; **in those days**; **in that day, at that time**; or **for the time will surely come**, the context points either to **the near historical future** or **the far eschatological future** and which one should be used. This is the thirteenth of twenty-five times that **Yirmeyahu** uses one of **these phrases**.

Is was as if **Jeremiah** was saying, "At present you refuse to recognize this, but in the end you will know it from examining yourselves and from your experience." This **near historical prophecy** would be fulfilled in 586 BC when the Temple, **Jerusalem** and Judah would be destroyed and the people taken into captivity by King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon. Then **they would understand everything (Jeremiah 23:19-20 CJB). God's purposes may be delayed in fulfillment, but never stopped by human action.**

All **God's** promises are sure. When **He** says **He** will deliver **His** people, **He** means just that. When **He** promised repeatedly to send deliverance in **Messiah**, **He** kept **His** promise to the letter. But what benefit is it if **Jew** or Gentile has not been told of this Good News?[256]