The Book of Ezekiel

Lesson 22-Chapter Thirteen (Ezekiel 13:10-23)

Executive Summary

This briefing document synthesizes the exegetical analysis of **Ezekiel 13:10–23**. The passage addresses God's severe judgment against two distinct groups of deceitful religious figures in exile: the false male prophets who proclaim false peace to Jerusalem, and the female diviners ("daughters of your people") who engage in pagan sorcery and divination for personal gain.

I. Contextual Background & The Commission of Ezekiel

Israel's Ultimate Destiny

Prior to the detailed declarations of judgment in Ezekiel 13, God answered Ezekiel's plea regarding the ultimate destiny of Israel. God promised that He would gather Israel, assemble them, change their mind and perspective, and unify them within the land promised to the ethnic people. However, before this restoration can occur, the internal corruption caused by deceitful spiritual leaders must be eradicated.

The Title "Son of Man" (bēn āḏām)

In Ezekiel 13:17, God addresses Ezekiel using the phrase "son of man" (bēn āḏām / בֶּן־אָדָם).

- **Frequency**: This phrase appears 195 times in the Hebrew Scriptures, with 95 occurrences in the Book of Ezekiel alone.
- **Lexical Meaning**: It is translated as "son of man" but is not a technical term that carries the exact same meaning across every biblical usage.
- **Usage in Ezekiel**: The first occurrence is in Ezekiel 2:1 ("Then He said to me, 'Son of man, stand on your feet that I may speak with you...'"). Every instance of this phrase in Ezekiel occurs when the LORD God addresses the prophet. It functions as a title defining Ezekiel's commission as God's prophet and his specific role to minister to the nation of Israel among the exiles.

II. The Judgment on Male False Prophets (Ezekiel 13:10–16)

Metaphor of the Whitewashed Wall

Ezekiel 13:10–11 exposes the deceptive work of the male prophets:
The extended metaphor contains two distinct groups working in tandem:

1. **Constructors:** Those who build an unsolid, unstable wall.
2. **Plasterers:** Those (described as "they") who cover the structural defects with whitewash or slime.

In Ezekiel 13:12, Ezekiel uses the word *henne* ("Behold") to direct the audience's focus to the aftermath: "Behold, when the wall has fallen, will you not be asked, 'Where is the plaster with which you plastered it...?'" This rhetorical question highlights the absolute ineffectiveness and futility of the plaster used to hold the wall together.



The Manifestation of Divine Anger and Wrath

God explains that the physical elements of destruction directly represent His anger and wrath (Ezekiel 13:13–14). The textual breakdown of these terms reveals their specific intensity in the original Hebrew:

Term	Hebrew Word	OT Frequency	Ezekiel Frequency	Root / Meaning	Contextual Application
Anger	אַף('af)	276 times	15 times	From אָנַף('ānap̄), meaning "to forcefully breathe" or "to be enraged." Literally "nostril" or "face."	Refers to the flaring of nostrils or facial countenance when overwhelmed with anger.
Wrath	חֵמָה('ḥēmâ)	124 times	33 times (highest frequency in OT)	Translates to "fury" or "wrath."	Refers to the act of physical destruction and carnage.

God combines these forces through destructive agents:

- Violent Wind (vv. 11, 13)
- Flooding Rain (vv. 11, 13)
- Hailstones (vv. 11, 13)

Historical Case Study: Jeremiah vs. Hananiah

The proclamation of false peace during times of impending divine judgment is illustrated in Jeremiah 28:12–16:

- **Context:** Hananiah the prophet publicly broke the wooden yoke off the neck of Jeremiah, claiming God would break Babylon's yoke.
- **Divine Rebuttal:** God sent Jeremiah back to tell Hananiah that breaking wooden yokes only made yokes of **iron** for all nations under Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon.
- **Sentence:** Jeremiah informed Hananiah that because he made the people trust in a lie and counseled rebellion against the LORD, God would remove him from the face of the earth. Hananiah died that same year.

III. The Judgment on Female Diviners / "Daughters of Israel" (Ezekiel 13:17–23)

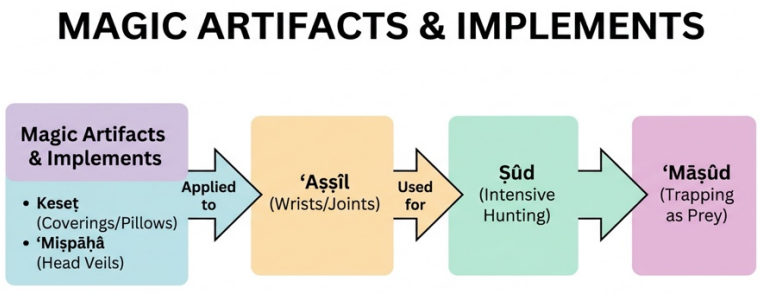
Identity and Motivation

In Ezekiel 13:17, God instructs Ezekiel to set his face against "the daughters of your people who are prophesying from their own inspiration [heart/imagination]." Unlike true prophets who receive divine revelation, these women manufactured visions out of their own thinking.

Ezekiel 13:18 pronounces a divine curse: “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?”

Exegetical Lexicon of Divination Implements

To understand the nature of these magic bands, veils, and practices, the underlying Hebrew terms provide critical context:



Historical Context of Mesopotamian Divination

In ancient Mesopotamian cultures, amulets, veils, and bands were not cosmetic accessories for beautification; they served explicit religious and occult functions. They were used to honor false gods, cast protective spells, or place lethal curses on enemies.

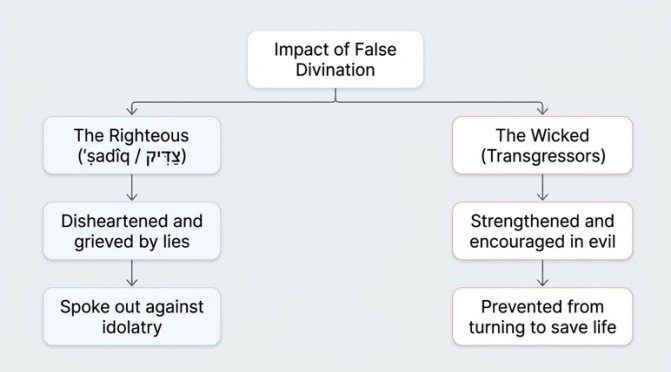
The daughters of the false prophets engaged in this form of divination to:

- Protect themselves and their allies (those who agreed with them).
- Punish and "hunt down" the lives of those who spoke against them or opposed their false messages.

Exploitation and Profanation (Ezekiel 13:19)

These diviners profaned God among His people for trivial, petty payments: "handfuls of barley and fragments of bread." By accepting these cheap offerings and issuing false pronouncements, they created a moral inversion:

- **Putting to death** individuals who should not die.
- **Preserving alive** individuals who should not live.
- Influencing the exile community to conduct themselves wickedly and violate God's law.



IV. Divine Deliverance and Retributive Justice

Deliverance of the Vulnerable (Ezekiel 13:20–21, 23)

God announces direct retributive action using the word *henne* ("Behold"):

1. **Destruction of Occult Artifacts:** God promises to tear the magic bands from their arms and tear off their veils.
2. **Liberation of Victims:** God will free the people whom the diviners hunted like birds. Their spells and curses will be rendered completely ineffective.
3. **Cessation of Divination:** God declares in verse 23 that these women will no longer see false visions or practice divination, and His people will be permanently delivered from their hands.

Complete Exclusion from the Remnant (Ezekiel 13:9)

The fate of the deceitful spiritual leaders aligns with the severe decree in Ezekiel 13:9:

1. **Exclusion from Council (sôḏ):** They will have no standing in the assembly, gathering, or sacred council of God's people (sôḏ appears 21 times in the OT, 1 time in Ezekiel).
2. **Exclusion from the Register (ˈkᵊṯāḇ):** They will be omitted from the written genealogical records and census of the nation (ˈkᵊṯāḇ appears 17 times in the OT, 1 time in Ezekiel; derived from *kāṯaḇ*, "to record/write").
3. **Exclusion from the Land:** They will be permanently barred from ever entering the land of Israel again.

V. Conclusion

God continued to levy the charges and the judgment not only against the false prophets, but the daughters of the prophets and their idol activity and how they will be destroyed by the judgment of God and will not be counted among the remainder that survive the wrath of God.