

The Book of Ezekiel

Lesson 21-Chapter Thirteen (Ezekiel 13:1-10)

Executive Summary

This briefing document provides an in-depth analysis of Dr. Luther Ray Smith's study on **Ezekiel 13:1-10**. The text details God's command to the prophet Ezekiel to denounce the false prophets of Israel. These individuals prophesied out of their own internal desires ("inspiration") rather than divine instruction, misleading the people with promises of "Peace!" during a period of impending judgment.

Contextual Background and Demonstrative Prophecies (Review)

Ezekiel 12:21-28 serves as a prologue to the pronouncements in Chapter 13. Through Ezekiel's actions and verbal declarations, God communicates the inevitability of divine judgment upon Jerusalem, its political leadership, and its religious establishment. The broader objective of this judgment is to demonstrate God's righteous character and reputation to the surrounding pagan nations. Within this framework, two distinct demonstrative prophecies are highlighted:

1. **Fourth Demonstrative Prophecy:** Aimed at informing the nation of Israel regarding the remaining population of Judah, its prince, and its military forces.
2. **Fifth Demonstrative Prophecy:** Communicates the mental, psychological, and physiological state of the Israelites during God's active period of judgment

I. Detailed Exegesis of Ezekiel 13:1-10

1. Self-Generated Inspiration vs. Divine Authority (Ezekiel 13:1-2)

God commands Ezekiel ("Son of man") to prophesy directly against Israel's self-appointed prophets who prophesy from their own "inspiration."

- **Linguistic Insight — Heart (*lēb/lave*):**
 - **Occurrences:** Appears 596 times in the Hebrew Scriptures; 41 times in Ezekiel.
 - **Meaning:** Represents the immaterial spirit of man where understanding, thinking, and comprehension originate. The false prophets sourced their proclamations from their own intellect and desires rather than God.

II. The Mandate: "Listen to the Word of the LORD"

This specific phrase occurs only **six times** in the Hebrew Scriptures (e.g., 2 Kings 7:1; Jeremiah 17:20; Jeremiah 42:15-16; Hosea 4:1). Its deployment in Ezekiel 13 carries two vital implications:

1. **Contrast of Credibility:** It directly contrasts prophets acting on self-generated thoughts with authentic divine communication, thereby invalidating the credibility of the false prophets.
2. **Direct Manifestation:** It signifies a direct personal communication from the Word of the LORD (understood contextually as the preincarnate Christ) to Ezekiel.

The Fifth Demonstrative Prophecy: Physiological Impact of Judgment (Ezekiel 12:17-20)

God pronounces "Woe" upon the "foolish" (or "stupid") prophets who follow their own spirit and have seen no real visions from God.

METAPHOR OF THE PROPHETS
"O Israel, your prophets have been like foxes among ruins!" • Destructive & Opportunistic: Wild animals seeking self-interest. • Neglect of Duty: Failed to repair breaches or defend the people.

- **Linguistic Insight — Ruins (*hārbâ/khorbaw*):**
 - **Occurrences:** Appears 42 times in the Hebrew Scriptures, occurring most frequently in Ezekiel (14 times).
 - **Root Word:** Derived from *hōreh* (meaning "heat," "dry," or "drought"). It is translated as "waste" or "waste places," describing an area devoid of life, like a desert.
 - **Application:** Instead of rebuilding or fortifying the spiritual walls of the nation, the false prophets operated like predatory wild foxes exploiting an already desolate land.
 - **Failure in the prophets' words (v. 5):** The prophets did not step into the breaches or build protective walls for the "house of Israel to stand in the battle on the day of the LORD."

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III. The Examination of the "Day of the LORD" ('yôm y^hhōvâ)

Immediately following the sign of exile, God instructed Ezekiel to perform a second physical demonstration focusing on the internal, emotional, and psychological reality of Jerusalem's impending collapse:

The phrase "Day of the LORD" occurs **18 times** in the Hebrew Scriptures, including two occurrences in Ezekiel (Ezekiel 13:5 and Ezekiel 30:1-3). Analysis reveals shared characteristics as well as distinct historical applications:

Feature Dimension	Key Characteristics
Similar Features	• Proclaimed directly by God's authentic prophets. • Involves active divine intervention and judgment. • Results in destruction, devastation, and doom. • Triggered by systemic idolatry, violence, and immorality.
Contrasting Features	• Contains both a <u>present-day</u> (historical) aspect and a <u>future</u> aspect. • Features both a <u>regional</u> (Israel-focused) and a <u>global</u> dimension.

Two "Days of the LORD" in Ezekiel

1. **Historical / Regional:** Executed via the Babylonian army, resulting in the destruction of Jerusalem, the Temple, and the punishment of idolaters.
2. **Future / Global:** Executed worldwide during the "Time of Jacob's Trouble" (also designated as the Great Affliction or Tribulation), characterized by planetary devastation, pestilence, and divine wrath.

IV. Divination, Deception, and Misleading Promises (Ezekiel 13:6, 10)

The false prophets utilized illegitimate practices to deceive the populace, who eagerly anticipated the fulfillment of false prophecies.

- **Falsehood (šāv):** Occurs 53 times in the Hebrew Scriptures (9 times in Ezekiel). Means "empty," "useless," "vain," or "vanity."
- **Lying Divination (kāzāb qesem):** This exact combined phrase occurs only **twice** in the Hebrew Scriptures, both times in Ezekiel.
 - *Qesem* (Divination): Casting spells or incantations to manipulate nature or alter outcomes.
 - *Kāzāb* (Lying): Direct distortion of reality; untrue statements.
- **Eager Expectation / Hope (yāḥal):** Occurs 22 times in the Hebrew Scriptures (2 times in Ezekiel). Written in the Piel grammatical stem, emphasizing the **intense, eager anticipation** with which Israel ingested these deceptive prophecies.

V. Divine Judgment and the Three Negations (Ezekiel 13:7-9)

1. Elimination of the Cynical Proverb (Verses 21-25)

Because the prophets presented empty visions and lied in the name of God, God declared explicitly: "Behold, I am against you." God enforces punishment through three absolute negations:



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

VI. The Wall and the Whitewash Metaphor (v. 10)

When the people built an unstable wall, the false prophets coated it with whitewash rather than reinforcing it, reassuring them with false promises of "Peace!" when no peace existed.

- **Plaster (tūah):** Occurs 12 times in the OT (7 times in Ezekiel—its most frequent usage). Written in the Qal stem, meaning "to smear," "spread over," or thickly coat.
- **Whitewash (tāpēl):** Occurs 7 times in the OT (5 times in Ezekiel). Refers to a slimy or filthy film applied over stone. Contextually linked to false visions and forbidden divination (cf. Ezekiel 22:28).

Conclusion

The Word of the LORD addresses the error of the prophets within Judah and how they are responsible in negatively impacting the Israelites which have caused them to be destroyed in this manner. As a result, God declared that they will not survive the judgment of God that is coming at the hand of the Babylonians.