



False Assurances

Ezekiel 13:1-3, 10-16 *The word of the LORD came to me: "Son of man, prophesy against the prophets of Israel who are now prophesying. Say to those who prophesy out of their own imagination: 'Hear the word of the LORD! This is what the Sovereign LORD says: Woe to the foolish prophets who follow their own spirit and have seen nothing! ...Because they lead my people astray, saying, 'Peace,' when there is no peace, and because, when a flimsy wall is built, they cover it with whitewash, therefore tell those who cover it with whitewash that it is going to fall. Rain will come in torrents, and I will send hailstones hurtling down, and violent winds will burst forth. When the wall collapses, will people not ask you, 'Where is the whitewash you covered it with?'*

"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 the LORD. So I will spend 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 prophets of Israel who prophesied to Jerusalem and saw visions of peace for her when there was no peace, declares the Sovereign LORD.'"

Do you remember when you were a kid and you could create your own world of make believe with a pile of pillows for a castle, a wooden ruler as a sword, and the family pet as a fire breathing dragon? Yes, it was fun, and we may have even wished it were true and could go on forever, but once mom came through to clean up the living room, our make believe got dismantled and gave way to reality.

The false prophets of Ezekiel's day were preaching the delusions and desires of their own minds and trying to pawn them off as God's Word. They were deceiving the people of Judah and Jerusalem into a false sense of security by insisting that there would be peace. They reassured the Israelites that all would be well despite their idolatry and open rebellion against the Lord—just continue on as is and God's judgment would never come upon them, in fact, better days were yet to come. Compared to Ezekiel's message of repentance and impending destruction, the false prophets had far more curb appeal. The picture they painted was full of freedom and prosperity, where people could believe whatever they wanted and live however they pleased and a permissive God would smile down from heaven at the silliness of his children. It all sounded so good, but it was all a lie. A flimsy diabolical fabrication that only sought to cover up the spiritual decay underneath with a thin veneer of religiosity. But the Lord saw through their sham, and he likened their behavior to a mason covering up a crumbling wall with whitewash, a layer of white plaster, to make it look all smooth and shiny on the outside, but while that structure may escape scrutiny for a time, when a storm comes, the whitewash and the rotting wall are shown for what they really are, and both will come crashing down together. The storm of God's judgement—the destruction of Jerusalem—was on its way to shatter their make-believe spirituality into a billion bits and prove Ezekiel's word true.

But as they say, "The more things change the more they stay the same." False prophets are just as plentiful today as they were in Ezekiel's time, and although they have updated their look and padded their resumes, they still speak the same satanic lies: that people have the right to fashion God into whatever they want him to be, to live without any moral inhibitions, to dismiss the traditional family as unnecessary and snuff out life in the womb, to embrace lifestyles that are in direct opposition to God's will, and God just sit back and approve of it all.

But as in Ezekiel's day, one final wakeup call is coming: the Last Day, and God says through the apostles Peter and Paul that the heavenly fire of that day will bring everything to light and expose the secret motives of people's hearts (1 Cor. 3:13; 2 Peter 3:2; Romans 2:16). Then only God's truth will remain as Jesus says, "Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away" (Matt. 24:35). How thankful we are and all the world can be that Jesus words aren't only words of judgment but also words of mercy, salvation, and grace. His cross and empty Easter tomb promise free forgiveness for every sin and peace with God to all who repent. His eternal words are reliable and true and real and provide a firm foundation through this life into eternity (Matt. 7:24-25).

Prayer: Lord God, give me the wisdom of your Spirit and the clarity that comes from your Word so that I may discern between the false messages that promote spiritual indifference and decay and the message of truth and grace that comes from your mouth in the holy Scriptures. Amen.