

**EZEKIEL**

Please turn in your Bibles this evening to Ezekiel chapter 11 as we continue our study through the Word of God. We have seen in our study the judgment of the Southern Kingdom of Judah and it was going to be devastating. This judgment was going to be complete as the nation was destroyed and the people taken captive to Babylon.

I realize that for many this is hard to swallow and they think God was not being fair. If you feel that way, if you think that God was not being fair and that God went too far, then read again Ezekiel chapters 8 through 10 because it will show you why God judged His people.

In fact, it is Ezekiel chapters 8-11 where God exposes the sin of His people. He speaks of this “**image of Jealousy**” that was in the Temple even during the time of Ezekiel, this idol that King Manasseh put up!

He exposed the idols that the elders of Israel were worshiping. He exposed the women who “**were sitting there weeping for Tammuz.**” He exposed how these men were worshiping “**the sun towards the east.**” And because of all this wickedness we are told, “**Then the glory of the LORD went up from the cherub, and paused over the threshold of the temple; and the house was filled with the cloud, and the court was full of the brightness of the LORD’S glory.**” Ezekiel 10:4.

In other words, the glory of the Lord, the One who dwelt between the cherubim in the Temple, above the Mercy Seat was departing from Israel, from the Temple because of their sin! So the purpose of these visions is to show that the divine judgments against Judah were justified. As we move into Ezekiel chapter 11 this evening we will see God finish up exposing the sin of His people and speak of the restoration of the remnant who believed.

With that as our background, let's begin reading in Ezekiel chapter 11 beginning in verse 1 and see what the Lord has for us this evening as we study through His Word.

## EZEKIEL 11

### VERSES 1-3

1. Here we see that Ezekiel is transported from the inner court, where he was last said to be standing, (Ezekiel 8:16) and now he is at the eastern gate of the outer court. This area by the gate was the traditional place where the elders of the city would sit to administer justice and to hear legal matters.

And it is here at this gate that the Lord is showing Ezekiel the wickedness of these elders. I don't believe that they are the same 25 men we read about in chapter 8 of Ezekiel, verses 16-18. These men are found in the inner court and this area was where the priests had access. And Ezekiel sees 25 of these men, possible representing the 24 courses of priests along with the high priest himself. It was showing the wickedness of the religious leaders who turned from Yahweh and were worshiping the Babylonian sun god!

Here in these opening verses of Ezekiel chapter 11 these are the leaders in Judah. And as we have seen, they were found in different locations in the Temple than the priests. Now these leaders, two are mentioned by name, are seen giving "**wicked counsel in the city.**"

What was this wicked counsel that they were giving? They were not only mocking the prophets of God but they were also mocking God Himself by saying that those who were taken captive to Babylon were not to settle in, build homes but Jerusalem itself will come back to life, they are not going into captivity.

And yet, Jeremiah warned them as he spoke to those who were already taken captive to Babylon by telling them, “**Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, to all who were carried away captive, whom I have caused to be carried away from Jerusalem to Babylon: Build houses and dwell in them; plant gardens and eat their fruit. Take wives and beget sons and daughters; and take wives for your sons and give your daughters to husbands, so that they may bear sons and daughters - that you may be increased there, and not diminished. And seek the peace of the city where I have caused you to be carried away captive, and pray to the LORD for it; for in its peace you will have peace.**” Jeremiah 29:4-7.

But these men were mocking the Words of God!

2. They also spoke of the city being a caldron, a pot, and the people being the meat. And I think the point they were trying to make is that the walls of Jerusalem were like the pot, kind of like walls for protection to contain the people. And the people were within the walls or this pot; again they are spoken of as the meat. The walls of the city would be adequate protection from the fires of the enemy, the people would be protected or so they were saying!

No matter what the prophets of God were saying, they were saying the exact opposite and God is rebuking them for their actions. Later on in this chapter we are going to see the Lord turn that around and show them that judgment is what is in store for them and not protection!

VERSES 4-12

1. Ezekiel now speaks through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit to these leaders and tells them that God knows what is in your mind, what you are thinking, the evil that is in you. And as much as you thought you alone knew these things God is going to shout out loud these things they thought were a secret. In other words, you can't hide anything from God because He knows everything!

2. These leaders were arrogant, proud and they thought they were right in what they were doing and saying and God is holding them responsible for the death of the people. When it speaks of the "**slain**" being scattered in the city of Jerusalem it is often used of helpless victims of social and political iniquities.

But I also see this as the Babylonians coming in and destroying these people, slaughtering them and these leaders are just as responsible because they refused to surrender to the Babylonians as God had told them to do. Because of their rebellion the streets of Jerusalem will be filled with those who were slain by the Babylonian swords!

3. Remember what these elders were saying, "**. . . ' . . . this city is the caldron, and we are the meat.**"? Well, God is going to turn that around as I have said! You see, they were saying that this city would protect them and God is saying that it won't! Not only that, but those whom you have killed or really those who have died by the hands of the Babylonians will be better off. They died within the walls of the city but you are going to be removed from these walls of protection, this pot.

4. And I find this interesting, the very thing they were afraid of, their biggest fears, those things they tried to escape from on their own were going to come upon them because they refused to repent and get right with God. And just as Ezekiel said, it came to pass. The walls of the city were broken down, the people taken captive and brought to the boarder of Israel, a place called Riblah, and many people were put to death there and the rest taken as captives to Babylon.

5. They looked at Jerusalem as a place of protection, but the Lord is telling them it won't be, judgment is coming. And the reason once again is to awaken them out of their spiritual sleep so they shall know that ***"I am the Lord!"*** You see, they had forgotten that fact and walked away from Him and the Lord is trying to draw them back.

What a lesson for us to learn. Who or what are we clinging to for protection? You see, whatever it is apart from the Lord will fail you. It is a false sense of security just like the Southern Kingdom of Judah had and in the end, what they trusted in did not save them.

It is as Solomon said in Proverbs 3:5-8, **"Trust in the Lord with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding; In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths. Do not be wise in your own eyes; Fear the Lord and depart from evil. It will be health to your flesh, And strength to your bones."**

Who or what do you put your trust in? I am sure we find it very easy to put our trust in all kinds of things and yet, when it comes to God, it is difficult to trust Him. Now we would not say that but our actions speak louder than words. Listen to what A. W. Tozer wrote regarding true faith, trusting in the Lord. And Tozer hits this hard, he gives us something to think about as we live out our faith. He tells us,

Pseudo-faith always arranges a way out to serve in case God fails. Real faith knows only one way and gladly allows itself to be stripped of any second way or makeshift substitutes. For true faith, it is either God or total collapse. And not since Adam stood up on the earth has God failed a single man or woman who trusted him.

- A. W. Tozer, *The Root of the Righteous*, p. 50

You see, if you are saying that you are trusting God and yet, you have a plan just in case, a way of escape you might say, are you really trusting Him? No you are not and we have all been there. And here's the thing. Are we willing to lay our lives out, place our lives into His hands, rest our whole weight upon Him even when we can't figure it out, even when we don't understand what God is going to do, how He will bring salvation to this situation? He wants us to because He wants to direct us on the path we are to take but we need to trust in Him!

Once you understand and believe that God is in control and He has what is best for your life, you can rest in Him knowing the path He has you on is the best one, it is the right one, even though it might not be the easiest one. Trust in Him and don't trust in your understanding of things, our all-knowing God is at the controls!

And here's the thing, if it wasn't for this problem, trusting in the Lord would be easy. What is the problem? It is ourselves, that we become wise in our own eyes, we think we know better and in the end, we may have done it our way, but we find out that it was a mistake. I am feeling a song coming on, you know, my old friend, Frank Sinatra who did it his way or as the song goes, "I Did It My Way!" You remember,

And now, the end is near; And so I face the final curtain.  
 My friend, I'll say it clear, I'll state my case, of which I'm certain.  
 I've lived a life that's full. I've traveled each and ev'ry highway;  
 But more, much more than this, I did it my way.

Yes, there were times, I'm sure you knew  
 When I bit off more than I could chew.  
 But through it all, when there was doubt, I ate it up and spit it out.  
 I faced it all and I stood tall; And did it my way.

For what is a man, what has he got?  
 If not himself, then he has naught.  
 To say the things he truly feels; And not the words of one who kneels.  
 The record shows I took the blows - And did it my way!

- Frank Sinatra, My Way

Frank Sinatra as well the Southern Kingdom of Judah and many others did it their way and in the end, it leads to death, eternal separation from God. It is not my way, it is not your way, it is **YAHWEH!** Now we can try it our way but in the end it will be a mess. Or, we can trust in the Lord, we can forget about being wise in our own eyes, and if we do it will be health to our flesh, it will be strength to our bones. In other words, the result of trusting in the Lord is that we may be physically and emotionally healthy. It tends to keep us strong.

### VERSE 13

1. As Ezekiel was prophesying Pelatiah drops dead! He was one of the wicked leaders spoken of in verse 1 that was mocking the Words of God. And as this man saw as well as the others who knew him, God is not mocked. This was a vivid object lesson for the others who felt as Pelatiah did but they did not change their ways, they did not learn the lesson.

2. Now don't forget about Ezekiel here. As Ezekiel sees this happen he is worried, he is concerned that God is not only going to wipe out the wicked but also the faithful remnant will get wiped out. It was a difficult ministry and he needed to refocus and get a proper perspective of things before he loses sight of the grace and mercy of God, before he forgets about the promises of God.

And our Lord is so gracious that He is going to encourage Ezekiel by showing that there will be a faithful remnant that will be restored, not everyone will be wiped out! Let's read on and see what the Lord has to say to Ezekiel.

#### VERSES 14-21

1. In spite of the destruction that was around them from the two previous invasions by Babylon and the deportation of some of their people, they refused to repent and get right with God, they refused to obey the Lord and surrender to the Babylonians. What we see here is pride and they were arrogant, and out of what was in their hearts they were saying, ***"This is our land, we don't need God. We have obtained it on our own and we can sustain it on our own!"***

Now we are shocked by those words but before we become too prideful here, we are no different. America has done the same thing; we have said the same thing. God has given us this land that we may freely worship Him but instead of praising Him and thanking Him we take credit for all we have. We need to be careful; judgment was at the door for the Southern Kingdom of Judah and they refused to see it and for America, I wonder how far away it is for us and if we will even recognize it?



2. Remember Ezekiel's concern; that God was going to wipe out all the Jewish people. Here we see God respond to that concern, that He is not going to wipe them all out and those who seek Him will be found by Him!

And for those that do turn to Him, no matter where they are at, no matter how far from Jerusalem they are, no matter what nation they may be in, if they would only cry to Him He will be a sanctuary, a holy place to them!

You see, worship is not matter of location; it is a matter of the heart. And even in the darkest times He is there with us if we would call to Him, He will comfort us, be a sanctuary to us. As Isaiah 26:3-4 says, **“You will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on You, because he trusts in You. Trust in the LORD forever, for in YAH, the LORD, is everlasting strength.”**

And God did bring them back home again from their Babylonian captivity, which is a partial fulfillment of this restoration. Also, in 1948 when the Jews entered the land once again after they were driven out by the Romans in 70 A. D., becoming a nation again, this too is only a partial fulfillment. Not even in 1967 when they recaptured the old city of Jerusalem is this fulfilled. You see, most of the nation at this time is agnostic or they are atheists. They can't believe God would allow 6 million of their brethren to be slaughtered by Hitler.

But there is coming a day when their eyes will be opened and they will turn to their God, but that will not take place on a national level until the time of the Tribulation Period. Yes Jews are coming to the Messiah, to Jesus today, but not on a national level.

But they will as Paul said in Romans 11:25-27, **“For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own opinion, that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: ‘The Deliverer will come out of Zion, and He will turn away ungodliness from Jacob; For this is My covenant with them, when I take away their sins.’”** So this is still speaking of a future day.

3. Listen again to what verses 19-20 of Ezekiel chapter 11 tell us, **“Then I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within them, and take the stony heart out of their flesh, and give them a heart of flesh, that they may walk in My statutes and keep My judgments and do them; and they shall be My people, and I will be their God.”**

It is what the Lord said to Jeremiah in Jeremiah 31:31-34 as God will make a new covenant with them and write His Laws not on tablets of stone but upon their hearts and He will take away their sins! The blood of bulls and goats could never do that but the shed blood of Christ can and does. Thus, just as Gentiles are saved by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone, so too are the Jews and one day, at the end of the Tribulation Period, **“... all Israel will be saved . . .”**

4. What is the other side of the coin if people refuse to come to Christ, if they refuse to turn to the Messiah? The Lord tells us, **“But as for those whose hearts follow the desire for their detestable things and their abominations, I will recompense their deeds on their own heads,’ says the Lord God.”** Ezekiel 11:21.

That means that we have a choice, to come to the Lord or to reject Him but if you reject Him then you will stand before Him in your own righteousness and be found guilty. You will end up in the Lake of Fire! I would rather spend eternity with the Lord than apart from Him but the choice is yours!

### VERSES 22-25

1. Back in Ezekiel chapter 10 we see the glory of the Lord move from the Holy of Holies to the east gate of the Temple and as sad as that was, it gets worse here. We see the glory of the Lord, the Shekinah glory moving from the east gate to the Mount of Olives. He is leaving the city, He is leaving the nation. At this point you could place a sign over the city of Jerusalem saying, **“ICHABOD”** or “The glory has departed!” God’s chariot-throne was waiting for Him as He departed from this nation.

God does not remain where He is not wanted and tragically, our nation has turned away from God and I think we can place this sign on the door post of this nation, **“ICHABOD”** or “The glory has departed!” My prayer is that as God’s people we would repent and interceded for this nation that His glory might return!

2. As this chapter ends we see that Ezekiel has returned from this vision and he is going to speak to the captives in Babylon the things that God has shown him. He will not only share the judgments of God because of their disobedience but the blessings that God has for them when they return to Him.

May we have that same passion, to share God’s Word with people because God’s Word is living and powerful and it can transform people’s lives!

**EZEKIEL 12****VERSES 1-7**

1. The blindness of the people was willful. The deafness of the people was willful. They chose not to see or hear what God was showing them and saying to them. So God is going to use Ezekiel as an object lesson, showing them what is coming their way. That they need to pack their bags because they are going into captivity! The false prophets can say all that they want; captivity is coming and coming very quickly!

Notice what Ezekiel is to do. He is to pack his bags, make sure the people see what he was doing and at night dig through a wall and as he crawls through to escape from the enemy he is to carry his bags upon his shoulder. But they will not be able to escape the enemy; the Babylonians will come upon them and take them captive!

Yes this was kind of extreme but God was trying to get their attention. And, interestingly enough, Ezekiel at this point did not understand the significance of this lesson; he just did as he was commanded. Understand this; God does not always give you an explanation why He is having you do something. He just wants you to take that step of faith and then He will show you what you are to do next.

2. We see this principle played out for us in Acts chapter 8. In this section of Scripture we see Philip go down to Samaria and revival breaks out. Things were happening. People were getting saved. And then the Lord tells Philip to leave Samaria and go down to Gaza, a desert!

Philip is not given any reason why and it seemed foolish to leave Samaria and go to a place where there was no one at, a desert. But Philip obeyed the Lord, he went down to Gaza, and then the Lord showed Him the reason but he first had to take a step of faith and obey the Lord and he did!

And as Philip took that step of faith and was traveling through this area there was an Ethiopian eunuch who was reading from Isaiah and he didn't understand what he was reading. And as Philip caught up with him he explained the Scriptures to this eunuch and this eunuch got saved and was baptized! And he also took the joy of the Lord back home with him to Ethiopia. You see, it is a matter of trust, of faith on our part to take those steps of faith and then God will show us the reason why many times and sometimes He won't. We just need to trust in Him that all things will work out for good for those who love the Lord and are called for His purposes!

3. So we have seen God get the attention of the people and they are going to wonder what is going on. And God is going to explain to Ezekiel what this means so he could tell the people. Look at what happens next.

#### VERSES 8-16

1. The people see Ezekiel doing this and they are curious, they are wondering what in the world this means. And God explains to Ezekiel that this object lesson is speaking of the captivity of the nation and specifically, the last King in Judah, Zedekiah.

And if you remember from our study of the Old Testament, specifically II Kings chapter 25 we saw how King Zedekiah tried to escape the night before the city of Jerusalem fell to the Babylonians. You see, the night before the city fell Zedekiah packed his bags, got his family together, covered his head to look like a common person and not the King and he tried to escape through a break in the wall.

Zedekiah did not make it too far, only to the plains of Jericho. There they were captured by the Babylonians and taken to Nebuchadnezzar who was in Riblah, to the north of Jerusalem. His guards, those who traveled with him who were to protect him fled, they tried to save their own lives!

And there in Riblah the King of Babylon killed Zedekiah's son's right before his eyes and then he blinded Zedekiah and took him away as a captive to Babylon, even though he never saw Babylon because he was now blind! And it was in Babylon that Zedekiah spent the remainder of his life, he died in captivity. You can't escape the judgment of God!

2. But there will be some who survive, those who have come to know the Lord and they will tell others, wherever they go who the Lord is! Yes, God could have wiped them all out but there were the faithful remnant as well as those that still had hard hearts. And I believe God was protecting His name, His character, showing that He could protect His people, but because of their rebellion this judgment came upon them costing many their lives.

VERSES 17-20

1. I tend to believe Ezekiel once again did this out in the open so all could see. If he ate his bread and drank his water in his home no one would see it. And the point that Ezekiel is making as he eats his bread and water with trembling is that he is showing them the terror of their people as the Babylonians break through the walls and capture them, killing many of the people.

Yes there will be a lack of food and water but even what they have they will partake in fear of the enemy breaking through the walls. In fact, the word “**trembling**” in verse 18 is used to speak of earthquakes in other parts of the Bible. The idea is that they are going to partake of these necessities of life shaking violently in fear!

Why was God doing this? We have seen this over and over again in the book of Ezekiel, “**... you shall know that I am the LORD.**” That is the key, drawing them back to God but it is their choice if they want to see and hear or they can close their eyes and shut their ears to what God is saying to them! That is the same today, God does not force people to come to Him but it is their choice!

VERSES 21-28

1. This proverb that was going around was against the prophets of God. They were saying these visions have failed; they are not going into captivity. Now understand a good portion of the nation was already in captivity. And thus, as we have seen, they had eyes but they didn't see, they had ears but they didn't hear the things of God, their hearts were hard and cold towards the things of God.

Even if they believed what God was saying or if they didn't, this proverb will be put to silence when the judgment of God is poured out. Even if they agreed with it or not, this proverb will be put to silence when the judgment of God is poured out. In fact, the Lord is saying the time is short; He is about ready to pour out His wrath upon them.

You see, they had mistaken the patience and longsuffering of God for God delaying His judgment, that it won't happen for a long time. How many people, in their own lives, have mistaken the patience and longsuffering of God and have received His wrath? Tragically, many have.

Peter even warns us about the days we are living in and how people will deny the wrath of God being poured out. He said in II Peter 3:3-7, **“knowing this first: that scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts, and saying, ‘Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation.’ For this they willfully forget: that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of water and in the water, by which the world that then existed perished, being flooded with water. But the heavens and the earth which are now preserved by the same word, are reserved for fire until the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.”** II Peter 3:3-7.

You see, just as the Southern Kingdom of Judah was doing people in our day are doing the very same thing. The judgment of God is coming and I believe it is very close. And it is their choice to believe it or not and tragically many willingly forget what the Lord has done in the past and what He is going to do once again. His wrath is going to be poured out upon a Christ rejecting world.



2. As we move into Ezekiel chapter 13 we are going to see the Lord is going to come against the false prophets who were not only in Jerusalem but many had already been taken into captivity and yet they still were speaking forth lies. And you can read about these two groups of false prophets in Jeremiah chapters 28 & 29 on your own, but what a sad statement in the face of all these warnings!

### **EZEKIEL 13**

#### **VERSES 1-3**

1. What was wrong with these prophets? They “**... prophesy out of their own heart. ‘Hear the word of the LORD!’**” These were not the words of God but they came from the imagination of their own hearts, it was their own ideas!

Denis Lane explains what the preaching was like back then and you will see that for the most part, things have not changed much over the years. He said,

It never rose higher than the preacher’s own minds. It deceptively claimed to be God’s Word. It had not practical or useful effect. It offered cheap grace and a false peace. It simply endorsed the latest world view.

- Denis Lane, *The Cloud and Silver Lining*, pp. 53-62

That sums up a lot of preaching we see today. It is not the Word of God that is being taught but the latest world view, man’s ideas, his philosophies instead of what God has to say. Thus, the preaching is empty and it is dangerous just as it was in Ezekiel’s day!

Let me give you one example to show you where the church is headed. When Rob Bell was asked how he would present the Gospel on Twitter, this is how he responded,

I would say that history is headed somewhere. The thousands of little ways in which you are tempted to believe that hope might actually be a legitimate response to the insanity of the world actually can be trusted. And the Christian story is that a tomb is empty, and a movement has actually begun that has been present in a sense all along in creation. And all those times when your cynicism was at odds with an impulse within you that said that this little thing might be about something bigger - those tiny little slivers may in fact be connected to something really, really big.

- Rob Bell

Do you even understand what he said? What I hope you caught is what he didn't say. There is no mention of the cross. There is no mention of Jesus. There is no mention of sin. There is no mention of repentance, or salvation or faith in Christ or everlasting life! It is an empty gospel! It is a non-offensive gospel and one that can't save you. Paul said, "**For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek.**" Romans 1:16.

But what is the Gospel? Paul tells us in Romans 15:3-4, "**For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures.**"

You see, it is not that difficult unless you are going to speak from the imagination of your own heart as Rob Bell has done and many are doing today. And God held these false prophets accountable for their actions and God holds these false teachers accountable as they say they are speaking for Him or representing Him and they are not!

#### VERSES 4-7

1. Here we see the Lord liken these false prophets to foxes. The reason He does that is because foxes are sly, they are cunning and they love to prey on dead carcasses. In other words the nation was as good as dead and these false prophets, acting like foxes, were not giving the people anything to eat, anything to live on in terms of spiritual food but instead they were feeding off the people. They indeed were foxes!
2. You see, they should have been the ones to stand in the gap, they were to lead the people back to God but instead they were leading the people away from God. They were to be a wall of protection and they were not protecting the people but putting them in danger of the wrath of God, which was coming!
3. And the idea here is that they were telling the people the things they wanted to hear, they were tickling their ears and then hoping it would come to pass. It was wishful thinking on their part and not of the Lord. And of course what they said did not come to pass!

Things are no different today. Peter tells us in II Peter 2:1-3, **“But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, and bring on themselves swift destruction. And many will follow their destructive ways, because of whom the way of truth will be blasphemed. By covetousness they will exploit you with deceptive words; for a long time their judgment has not been idle, and their destruction does not slumber.”**

They will use the Bible and twist the Words of God to fit their own ideas just like Satan did in the Garden of Eden! And I have to admit I get angry when I hear these teachers prey on people. One pastor told his people that if you don't tithe you won't get into heaven! How sad, and I'm sure many believed what he said, but it was not of God but was a lie of the devil. Like these false prophets of Judah's day, God did not speak to them these words and yet they proclaimed them boldly and many, tragically, listen to them and people are doing that very thing today, they are having their ears tickled instead of their spirits built up in the faith! Thus, be careful, God warns us to stay away from these things, these false teachers!

#### VERSES 8-16

1. These people had built their lives around these lies that were given by these false prophets. It was like using untempered mortar to repair the walls. It won't hold, it is not strong, and in the end everything you placed your trust in will come crashing down. It was a false security.

Let me show you what I mean. Back in World War II when the Jehovah Witnesses were told not to side with Hitler, which was a good thing to do, it was the right thing to do. But they were also told that if they were captured and placed before a firing squad that before the bullets hit them the bullets would stop. These bullets would not enter them or kill them.

Where in the world did they get that from? They received this instruction from false teachers, from the Watch Tower. These men who speak for the Jehovah Witnesses have a direct line with God or so they say. And what they speak forth is supposedly gospel even though they have been wrong many, many times before. They are nothing more than false prophets! And many Jehovah Witnesses stood with complete confidence in this lie and these people not only died physically but spiritually, believing the lies of these false prophets!

And here's the thing, and this is important. I don't want you to believe me or anyone else. I want you to believe what God's Word has to say. That means if I or anyone else tells you something that is contrary to the Scriptures we are wrong!

2. And make no mistake about it, God's judgment is coming and when it does, everything they placed their trust in will crumble to the ground and what will these false prophets say then? And for us, if your faith is not built upon the Rock, Jesus Christ, it will fail.

Jesus makes that point in Matthew 7:24-27, when He said, **“Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock: and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock. Now everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand: and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall.”**

And just like the false prophets of Ezekiel’s day, God holds these false teachers accountable for what they are doing and also understand we are accountable. Some may not see that as being fair but there is no reason we should be deceived, we have the Word of God that exposes the lies!

And yes, God does hold teachers to a higher standard because they are leading the people; they are teaching the people the things of God. We are told in James 3:1, **“My brethren, let not many of you become teachers, knowing that we shall receive a stricter judgment.”** I wish more teachers would understand that and it would cause them to speak the truth instead of telling people what they want to hear. Just share the truths of God found in the Word of God, don’t tickle the ears of those who are listening. And also understand that this goes for anyone who teaches the Word, shares the Word of God, you are accountable to give an accurate representation of Him!

3. They were looking for peace apart from God and there is no peace apart from God. The Bible is very clear on that. We are told in Isaiah 57:20-21, **“But the wicked are like the troubled sea, When it cannot rest, Whose waters cast up mire and dirt. ‘There is no peace,’ Says my God, ‘for the wicked.’”** People may speak of peace, they may see visions of peace but apart from God there is no true peace for those who don’t know God, for the wicked!

#### VERSES 17-23

1. Not only were the men speaking lies from their heart, but the women were doing the same thing and God is judging these false prophetesses as well. (You can find prophetess in both the Old Testament, Exodus 15:20; and in the New Testament, Acts 21:8-9, as a couple of examples)

Keep in mind that these were women of God and should have known better and yet, they were into these **“magic charms.”** These were nothing more than good-luck charms and these women were preying on the gullibility of the people so they might make a profit off of them. But they were giving people a false hope so they could fill their pockets with money.

And they were destroying lives by their lies. The reality was, according to the Law, these false prophetesses should have been put to death! Look at what they were involved in because these practices, as I have said, were not harmless cranks. One writer summed it up like this,

The women employed magical arts by which they pretended to foretell the future. Magic bands – perhaps cases containing incantations and charms - were sewn on their wrists. This seems to be similar to a Babylonian custom in which a sorcerer binds the wrist of a client to symbolize the binding power of the spell that was pronounced. The sorceresses also drape their clients with full length veils or shawls. They possessed a whole wardrobe of such veils adapted to persons of various heights, so that in all cases it shrouded their whole form. Just what the purpose of these veils was cannot now be determined. Some spoken spell must have accompanied the use of these objects (cf. v 17).

The sorceresses were not harmless cranks. Their object was to lie in wait for the souls (i.e., the lives) of God's people. They were determined to capture the attention and control the minds of those who were still trying to be faithful to the Lord. Ezekiel seems to think of those magical veils as nets cast over victims, a snare from which they could not escape.

While they could care less about the fate of God's people, the prophetesses were determined to save their own lives. This probably means that they were driven by the profit motive. Their sole concern was to receive the fees by which they could sustain their lives. By means of a variety of spells and incantations, the prophetesses claimed the power to keep clients alive on payment of certain fees.

- James E. Smith, An Exegetical Commentary on EZEKIEL, p. 96

Make no mistake about it, these false prophets; these false doctrines are nothing more than hunters and destroyers of men's souls. Remember the story of Nimrod back in Genesis chapter 10. It says that, "**He was a mighty hunter before the Lord.**" Literally that can be translated, "*He was a mighty hunter of men's souls before the Lord.*"



You see, with Nimrod came false religion and what he started continues on today with many different branches. They are out there hunting men's souls, they are there to destroy people's lives and thus, they come from the pit of Hell! Make no mistake about it, there are many false prophets waving people down the broad way that leads to Hell today. These people are dangerous! Be careful!

2. We also need to understand that God is going to expose their lies by bringing judgment upon the people. You see, these false prophets used a white plaster to cover over the defects, the sin in the lives of God's people. And instead of exposing sin, they covered it over and judgment came! Yes, the people were accountable for what they believed, but these false prophets were in no way excused in what they were teaching.

And I love how this chapter closes and how I will close this evening. The Lord says, **“Therefore you shall no longer envision futility nor practice divination; for I will deliver My people out of your hand, and you shall know that I am the Lord.”** Ezekiel 13:23. These false prophets, false teachers will come to an end because God will deliver His people. May we not be fooled by the lies but allow God's Word to expose the false teaching and teachers that are out there! God will deliver His people! **“... you shall know that I am the Lord.”**