

## Ezekiel 13v1-16—The False Message And Doom Of The False Prophets

### **Memory Verse**

Ezekiel 36:26-27 NKJV

I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. <sup>27</sup> I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them.

**Revision: God both loves and is angry with the sinner (~~God loves the sinner but hates the sin~~)**

Last week we saw that God prolonged the judgement against Judah (see Ezekiel 12:21-28). Why? The judgement was prolonged for one reason only—God wanted to give the people of Judah more time to repent because He loved them greatly and therefore didn't want to punish them (also see 2 Peter 3:9-10 and Psalm 86:15).

Ezekiel 33:11 NKJV

Say to them: 'As I live,' says the Lord God, 'I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live. Turn, turn from your evil ways! For why should you die, O house of Israel?'

This verse demonstrates a perfect balance within God's nature between His love and His wrath—they co-exist or dwell together in perfect harmony—God is as wrathful towards sin and the sinner as He is loving. A just, righteous, perfect, fair, and holy God must judge sin (and therefore the sinful man who commits the sin). However, at the same time, God made the decision in eternity past to love the people He created, and therefore God's heart is crushed (broken) when the people He loves choose to reject Him (see Ezekiel 6:9), and He is forced to judge them. Consider God's love and wrath:

- **God's love** for the people He created can be described as a limitless and unconditional love (see Romans 5:8, John 3:16, Ephesians 3:17-19).
- **God's wrath**—His righteous indignation and anger towards and His hatred and repulsion of sin—is directed towards sinful man because we are sinners born with a sinful nature. The sinful nature (flesh) we are born with is by definition: openly hostile to God; at enmity with God (an enemy of God); and repulsive to God (see Psalm 5:4-6, Romans 8:7-8). It is no wonder that as sinners we can't stand in God's presence (also see Nahum 1:6, Malachi 3:2, and 4:1, Jeremiah 10:10, Joel 2:11, Revelation 6:17).

Isaiah 33:14 NKJV

The sinners in Zion are afraid; fearfulness has seized the hypocrites: "Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? Who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?"

Hebrews 10:30-31 AMP

For we know Him Who said, Vengeance is Mine [retribution and the meting out of full justice rest with Me]; I will repay [I will exact the compensation], says the Lord. And again, The Lord will judge and determine and solve and settle the cause and the cases of His people. [Deuteronomy 32:35, 36.]

31 It is a fearful (formidable and terrible) thing to incur the divine penalties and be cast into the hands of the living God!

Matthew 10:28 NLT paraphrase

“Don’t be afraid of those who want to kill your body; they cannot touch your soul. Fear only God, who can destroy both soul and body in hell.

*The beautiful thing is that in Christ, God’s love and righteousness meet, and the result is salvation for those who choose to respond to God’s invitation with repentance and faith.*

Psalms 85:10-11 NKJV

Mercy [God’s loving kindness] and truth have met together; righteousness and peace have kissed. <sup>11</sup> Truth shall spring out of the earth, and righteousness shall look down from heaven.

It is good for us to remember our hopeless situation, and how God becoming the payment for our sin made it possible for us to come back into relationship with Him once again. Notice here how God both loves us and was angry with us at the same time.

Ephesians 2:1-7 NLT paraphrase

Once you were dead because of your disobedience and your many sins. <sup>2</sup> You used to live in sin, just like the rest of the world, obeying the devil—the commander of the powers in the unseen world. He is the spirit at work in the hearts of those who refuse to obey God. <sup>3</sup> All of us used to live that way, following the passionate desires and inclinations of our sinful nature. **By our very nature we were subject to God’s anger [wrath], just like everyone else.**

<sup>4</sup> **But God is so rich in mercy, [because] he loved us so much,** <sup>5</sup> that even though we were dead because of our sins, he gave us life when he raised Christ from the dead. (It is only by God’s grace that **you have been saved!**) <sup>6</sup> For he raised us from the dead along with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms because we are united with Christ Jesus. <sup>7</sup> **So God can point to us in all future ages as examples of the incredible wealth of his grace and kindness toward us, as shown in all he has done for us who are united with Christ Jesus.**

Ephesians 2:1-7 AMP

And you [He made alive], when you were dead (slain) by [your] trespasses and sins <sup>2</sup> In which at one time you walked [habitually]. You were following the course and fashion of this world [were under the sway of the tendency of this present age], following the prince of the power of the air. [You were obedient to and under the control of] the [demon] spirit that still constantly works in the sons of disobedience [the careless, the rebellious, and the unbelieving, who go against the purposes of God]. <sup>3</sup> Among these, we as well as you, once lived and conducted ourselves in the passions of our flesh [our behaviour governed by our corrupt and sensual nature], obeying the impulses of the flesh and the thoughts of the mind [our cravings dictated by our senses and our dark imaginings]. **We were then by nature children of [God’s] wrath and heirs of [His] indignation, like the rest of mankind.**

<sup>4</sup> **But God—so rich is He in His mercy! Because of and in order to satisfy the great and wonderful and intense love with which He loved us,** <sup>5</sup> Even when we were dead (slain) by [our own] shortcomings and trespasses, He made us alive together in fellowship and in union with Christ; [He gave us the very life of Christ Himself, the same new life with which He quickened Him, for] it is by grace (His favour and mercy which you did not deserve) **that you are saved (delivered from judgment and made partakers of Christ’s salvation).** <sup>6</sup> And He raised us up together with Him and made us sit down together [giving us joint seating with Him] in the heavenly sphere [by virtue of our being] in Christ Jesus (the Messiah, the Anointed One). <sup>7</sup> **He did this that He might clearly demonstrate through the ages to come the immeasurable (limitless, surpassing) riches of His free grace (His unmerited favour) in [His] kindness and goodness of heart toward us in Christ Jesus.**

Why is it so important to understand our wretchedness and absolute moral bankruptcy? The answer is in Romans 5:6-8.

Romans 5:6-8 AMP

While we were yet in weakness [powerless to help ourselves], at the fitting time **Christ died for (in behalf of) the ungodly**. 7 Now it is an extraordinary thing for one to give his life even for an upright man, though perhaps for a noble and loveable and generous benefactor someone might even dare to die. 8 **But God shows and clearly proves His [own] love for us by the fact that while we were still sinners, Christ (the Messiah, the Anointed One) died for us.**

Like Romans 5:7-8 and Ephesians 2:1-7 clearly explain, the strength or measure of God's love towards us is in direct proportion to the hatred, wrath, anger, or righteous indignation towards sin that it had to overcome. The modern prosperity gospel, as it goes to great lengths to avoid offending people, basically tells people the opposite of the hard truth concerning our sinful condition that we just read—*we are unworthy or underserving of salvation*. In contrast the prosperity gospel teaches that people are "worthy" of being saved. Here's an excerpt from one of these false teachers as he shares the false prosperity gospel:

"You know what God says, "You're so worthy I died for You. You're so loveable... I love you." You are His prize that was worth dying for. ... So don't be so hard on yourself and don't take yourself so seriously. ... You are worthy to be that prize."

David Guzik comments on this twisted thinking in his commentary on Jude 20-21: "But we should understand what it means when the Bible says that God loves the ungodly [Romans 5:6]. The significance of the idea that God loves us all has been twisted considerably. Consider the sinner who defends his sinful practice by saying "God loves me just the way I am." His implication is that "God loves me; I must be pretty good." Actually, the fact that God loves him is a reflection on *God's* goodness, not his own. The perspective isn't, "I'm so great that **even** God loves me." but "God is so great that He loves **even** me" (David Guzik).

Again, like Romans 5:7-8 explains, it takes very little love to save a good person, a person who is worthy of saving—it's basically the noble or right thing to do. The modern prosperity gospel at least implies that God was basically obliged to save us because of our inherent goodness. Why is this false, "you are worthy" gospel, so dangerous?

1. **No Repentance—>>false conversions**: The "you are worthy" gospel blinds people to the absolute depravity of their sinful nature, and therefore they don't understand that they need to repent of their sin—the "God loves me just as I am thinking". Therefore, if they make a profession of faith, based on this false understanding of the gospel, they will not be truly saved because they never repented of their sin—they didn't know that they had to because they were never made to understand that they were reprehensible sinners in God's sight (see Matthew 7:21-23 and Mark 1:15).
2. **He who is forgiven little, loves little**: *Our understanding of how much God loves us is directly proportional to our understanding of how sinful we are.* Jesus made this clear with His conversation with Simon the Pharisee in Luke 7:36-50. The "sinner" woman had a good understanding of just how greatly her sin offended God. She therefore, by her actions, demonstrated a deep understanding and appreciation of God's love and acceptance of her. She washed Jesus' feet with her tears, wiped them with her hair, then kissed Jesus' feet and anointed them with fragrant oil—what a beautiful display of gratitude and love—all because she had an accurate understanding of her depravity and moral bankruptcy.

**Application:** It's only when we come to understand just how abhorrent, distasteful, abominable, despicable, repellent, repugnant, repulsive, revolting, disgusting, distasteful, horrible, horrid, horrifying, awful, heinous, reprehensible, obnoxious, odious, nauseating, offensive, and contemptible our sinful nature is to God that we can really begin to understand how great His love towards us is—why God would choose to bear with us and make us the recipients of His love by giving us the opportunity to repent and believe.

*The best way to help people understand how much they are loved by God, is to first show them how vile their sinful nature is to God because of it's inherent moral corruption, utter depravity, corruptness, pervertedness, degeneracy, immorality, shamelessness, wickedness, baseness, viciousness and brutality. The response should be, "Wow, God's loves even me! How is it possible that Someone could love such a sinful wretch like me so much that He would die for me, willingly taking on Himself the punishment I fully deserve!"*

## **Ezekiel 13:1-16—The False Message And Doom Of The False Prophets**

Our revision of last week is a great introduction to the message today where God condemns the false prophets. The prosperity gospel is nothing new. The idea that you can "get religion" or say a prayer and then continue to live like the world and think that God will accept you into Heaven is nothing new. As we will see today, this gospel that requires no repentance is an abhorrence to God, and as Jude 13 says, these false teachers have only blackness of darkness reserved for them forever. Let us learn this lesson from the nation of Israel, because, as predicted, there are many false prophets around today who are seducing people with flattering words to gain advantage over them—they are sensual persons who do not have the Spirit (see Jude 16-19).

**The setting:** The true prophets, Ezekiel and Jeremiah, had been telling the people to *repent of their sins and turn to God*. Their sins included: idolatry, adultery, fornication/sexual immorality, worship of false gods, child sacrifice, violence, injustice, corruption, rebellion against God, pride... and the list goes on. *However, the people didn't like the repentance message, and so chose to listen to the false prophets instead.*

Remember that the people were still worshipping at the temple on the Sabbath, but living just like, or even worse than, the gentile pagan nations all around them—they were religious hypocrites. The false prophets and false teachers/priests encouraged this by teaching that, because they had the temple and were still going through the motions of worship, reading scripture, and offering sacrifices to God, that God would keep them safe from the coming Babylonian judgement. But little did they realise that God's presence had already departed from the temple, and the wicked, unrepentant people had already been condemned. They had listened to a false message, were trusting in a false hope, and in the end it would cost them their life when the Babylonians came and destroyed Jerusalem and the temple.

*This account is a physical example of what is happening in the spiritual today. Today, just like the Jews did in Ezekiel's day, people with itchy ears are heaping up teachers for themselves according to their own desires—because they have willingly turned their ears away from the truth and sound doctrine or teaching (see 2 Timothy 4:3-4). In reality they are gambling with their eternal future. They choose to trust in a false gospel, which gives them a false hope; but despite their enthusiasm and feelings of assurance and security, they remain condemned and will burn forever in the Lake of Fire none-the-less.*

## **Ezekiel 13:1-16 NKJV**

And the word of the Lord came to me, saying, <sup>2</sup> “Son of man, prophesy against the prophets of Israel who prophesy, and say to those who prophesy out of their own heart, ‘Hear the word of the Lord!’ ”

<sup>3</sup> Thus says the Lord God: “Woe to the foolish prophets, who follow their own spirit and have seen nothing! <sup>4</sup> O Israel, your prophets are like foxes in the deserts. <sup>5</sup> You have not gone up into the gaps to build a wall for the house of Israel to stand in battle on the day of the Lord. <sup>6</sup> They have envisioned futility and false divination, saying, ‘Thus says the Lord!’ But the Lord has not sent them; yet they hope that the word may be confirmed. <sup>7</sup> Have you not seen a futile vision, and have you not spoken false divination? You say, ‘The Lord says,’ but I have not spoken.”

<sup>8</sup> Therefore thus says the Lord God: “Because you have spoken nonsense and envisioned lies, therefore I am indeed against you,” says the Lord God. <sup>9</sup> “My hand will be against the prophets who envision futility and who divine lies; they shall not be in the assembly of My people, nor be written in the record of the house of Israel, nor shall they enter into the land of Israel. Then you shall know that I am the Lord God.

<sup>10</sup> “Because, indeed, because they have seduced My people, saying, ‘Peace!’ when there is no peace—and one builds a wall, and they plaster it with untempered mortar—<sup>11</sup> say to those who plaster it with untempered mortar, that it will fall. There will be flooding rain, and you, O great hailstones, shall fall; and a stormy wind shall tear it down. <sup>12</sup> Surely, when the wall has fallen, will it not be said to you, ‘Where is the mortar with which you plastered it?’ ”

<sup>13</sup> Therefore thus says the Lord God: “I will cause a stormy wind to break forth in My fury; and there shall be a flooding rain in My anger, and great hailstones in fury to consume it. <sup>14</sup> So I will break down the wall you have plastered with untempered mortar, and bring it down to the ground, so that its foundation will be uncovered; it will fall, and you shall be consumed in the midst of it. Then you shall know that I am the Lord.

<sup>15</sup> “Thus will I accomplish My wrath on the wall and on those who have plastered it with untempered mortar; and I will say to you, ‘The wall is no more, nor those who plastered it, <sup>16</sup> that is, the prophets of Israel who prophesy concerning Jerusalem, and who see visions of peace for her when there is no peace,’ ” says the Lord God.

### **1. God commands Ezekiel to speak against the false prophets (1-2)**

#### **Ezekiel 13:1-2 NKJV**

And the word of the Lord came to me, saying, <sup>2</sup> “Son of man, prophesy against the prophets of Israel who prophesy, and say to those who prophesy out of their own heart, ‘Hear the word of the Lord!’ ”

v 2 **Prophesy against the prophets of Israel who prophesy:** These numerous Jewish prophets were both in Judah and in the Babylonian exile. Their singular, optimistic and very positive message was that God would deliver Jerusalem and Judah from the Babylonians, and that those already in exile would return home soon (see Jeremiah 28).

v 2 **Who prophesy out of their own heart:** “The source of their false prophecy wasn’t necessarily directly demonic. There was simply a large element of **their own heart** in what they said. Their own desires, their own hopes, their own wisdom, their own needs for acceptance prompted their words. (David Guzik)

“They were misled by their own desires, which is the scriptural method of asserting they were not inspired of God. The wish was father to the thought, and they spoke accordingly.” (Feinberg)

“There were many prophets on the scene saying, “Thus saith the Lord,” when, in reality, they were simply giving their own opinions. This can be a terrible tendency even today. Wanting to be liked or to comfort others, we can find ourselves saying hopeful words to people that are not truly from the Lord.” (Jon Courson)

v 2 **Hear the word of the Lord:** This is the solution to the problem; the false prophets needed to start listening to God instead of their own heart. *They needed to start paying close attention to **the word of the Lord.***

## 2. The false and foolish prophets (3-7)

### **Ezekiel 13:3-7 NKJV**

**Thus says the Lord God: “Woe to the foolish prophets, who follow their own spirit and have seen nothing! <sup>4</sup> O Israel, your prophets are like foxes in the deserts. <sup>5</sup> You have not gone up into the gaps to build a wall for the house of Israel to stand in battle on the day of the Lord. <sup>6</sup> They have envisioned futility and false divination, saying, ‘Thus says the Lord!’ But the Lord has not sent them; yet they hope that the word may be confirmed. <sup>7</sup> Have you not seen a futile vision, and have you not spoken false divination? You say, ‘The Lord says,’ but I have not spoken.”**

v 3 **Woe to the foolish prophets, who follow their own spirit:** What makes these false prophets also foolish is that they regarded what they thought or felt (what came from their own heart and spirit) as being more important than what God says.

“These prophets, whether in good faith but self-deluded or in bad faith and deliberately deceiving, have professed to speak the mind of the Lord when in reality no spirit other than their own moved them.” (Vawter and Hoppe)

v 2 **Who follow their own spirit and have seen nothing:** Similar to what it says in Jude 19, these false prophets don’t hear from God because, unlike Ezekiel and Jeremiah, they didn’t have God’s Holy Spirit upon them—they had **seen nothing** from God, rather their message was their own.

v 4 **Your prophets are like foxes in the deserts:** The word “**deserts**” can also mean ruins. Just imagine the foxes burrowing under the walls and buildings in deserted towns and causing them to collapse. The idea is that they cause havoc and destruction.

v 4 **Like foxes:** Like foxes or wolves, the false prophets are crafty, cruel, and destructive. They get in amongst the sheep and viciously, needlessly, and mercilessly kill and maim—it’s just their nature. Jesus warned, ““Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. <sup>16</sup> You will know them by their fruits” (Matthew 7:15-16 NKJV).

v 5 **You have not gone up into the gaps to build a wall for the house of Israel to stand in battle on the day of the Lord:** “The prophets had shown no courage in battle. In time of war a brave soldier would rush to any break in the defensive perimeter and defend it until the position could be secured. These prophets, however, had not ‘gone up into the breaches’ in the moral and spiritual walls of the nation.” (Alexander)

One thing false prophets lack is *courage*. They lacked the *courage* and boldness to tell God’s truth, especially when it convicts people of their sins and is therefore not well

received by the masses. As someone said, the reason they don't tell the truth is because they want big churches—they want to be popular (and rich). However, if they had been courageous and spoken the truth, then many people would have repented, and would therefore have been safe (or able to stand) when the day of judgement (**the day of the Lord**) came.

v 5 **The day of the Lord:** In this context “**the day of the Lord**” refers to the promised judgement upon the people of Judah by the hand of the Babylonians. In most other places in the Bible, “**the day of the Lord**” refers to the 7 year tribulation that is soon to come upon this earth (Daniel's 70th week)—at the end of which time Jesus returns with His bride, the church.

v 6-7 **They have envisioned futility and false divination, saying, ‘Thus says the Lord!’ But the Lord has not sent them; yet they hope that the word may be confirmed. 7 Have you not seen a futile vision, and have you not spoken false divination? You say, ‘The Lord says,’ but I have not spoken:** “This was a strong condemnation of the self-appointed prophets. To claim calling when there is none is a significant sin. They claimed to speak in the name of the Lord, but it was an empty claim.” (David Guzik)

### **Application: to stand in battle on the day of the Lord (v 5)**

In this context the rebellious Jews were wiped out by (*could not stand before*) the Babylonian judgement because they had not repented of their sin and come back to relationship with God. Spiritually, anyone who doesn't have right standing with God (justification), will not stand, but will instead be condemned at the Great White Throne judgement, where they will be cast into the Lake of Fire (see Revelation 20:11-15).

Several Scriptures ask the question, *who is able to stand?* For example, “For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?” (Revelation 6:17, also see 1 Samuel 6:20, Job 41:10). However, the answer is simple. If I have repented of my sins and believed in Christ's sacrifice in my place to save me from my sin, then I will be able to stand in the day of judgement. I will be able to stand because I have received right-standing with God because I have been justified or made righteous by God (see Romans 5:9-11, 14:4, Ephesians 2:6). In fact, my standing before God is even better than “not guilty”. Why? Because Christ's righteousness, his perfection, has been imputed or transferred to me. He took my sin and gave me His righteousness—it's as though I had lived a perfect life (see Romans 4:6-8, 11, 23-24, and 2 Corinthians 5:21).

### **3. The nonsense and lies spoken by false prophets (8–9)**

#### **Ezekiel 13:8-9 NKJV**

**Therefore thus says the Lord God: “Because you have spoken nonsense and envisioned lies, therefore I am indeed against you,” says the Lord God. 9 “My hand will be against the prophets who envision futility and who divine lies; they shall not be in the assembly of My people, nor be written in the record of the house of Israel, nor shall they enter into the land of Israel. Then you shall know that I am the Lord God.**

v 8 **Because you have spoken nonsense and envisioned lies:** This is what their message amounted to—**nonsense and lies**. However, to the people whose itchy ears they were scratching, their words would have sounded like the words of God—they would have been hanging onto every word, believing every word, and living accordingly.

v 8 **Therefore I am indeed against you:** God promised to protect Ezekiel and Jeremiah and to be *for* them (see Jeremiah 1:18-19, 15:20 and Ezekiel 3:7-9). In contrast, God is **against** the false prophets.

v 9 **They shall not be in the assembly of My people, nor be written in the record of the house of Israel, nor shall they enter into the land of Israel:** “One aspect of God’s judgment upon these false prophets was for the Lord to regard them as not among His covenant people. They had no share in Israel’s **assembly**, in Israel’s **house**, or in Israel’s **land**.” (David Guzik)

“When it was affirmed that would not come into the council of God’s people, the sense is that they would lose the place of authority and respect they held among the people by virtue of their alleged calling.” (Feinberg)

v 9 **Then you shall know that I am the Lord God:** When all this came to pass in about 5 years time, when the Babylonians conquered Judah and Jerusalem and these false prophets were shown to be false and therefore disgraced, the people would remember what the true prophets had predicted would happen to the false prophets. They would realise that God had indeed spoken and that God was in control and could be trusted. The problem was that most of those who trusted the false message were killed in the invasion—it would be too late for them. The same is true for many in today’s church.

#### **4. The weak wall and the storm—a picture of false hope and confidence (10–16)**

##### **Ezekiel 13:10-16 NKJV**

“Because, indeed, because they have seduced My people, saying, ‘Peace!’ when there is no peace—and one builds a wall, and they plaster it with untempered mortar—<sup>11</sup> say to those who plaster it with untempered mortar, that it will fall. There will be flooding rain, and you, O great hailstones, shall fall; and a stormy wind shall tear it down. <sup>12</sup> Surely, when the wall has fallen, will it not be said to you, ‘Where is the mortar with which you plastered it?’ ”

<sup>13</sup> Therefore thus says the Lord God: “I will cause a stormy wind to break forth in My fury; and there shall be a flooding rain in My anger, and great hailstones in fury to consume it. <sup>14</sup> So I will break down the wall you have plastered with untempered mortar, and bring it down to the ground, so that its foundation will be uncovered; it will fall, and you shall be consumed in the midst of it. Then you shall know that I am the Lord.

<sup>15</sup> “Thus will I accomplish My wrath on the wall and on those who have plastered it with untempered mortar; and I will say to you, ‘The wall is no more, nor those who plastered it, <sup>16</sup> that is, the prophets of Israel who prophesy concerning Jerusalem, and who see visions of peace for her when there is no peace,’ ” says the Lord God.

v 10 **They have seduced My people:** Just like today’s false prophets, the message of the false prophets in Ezekiel’s day was attractive and full of hope, inspiration, optimism and confidence—God will give us victory over the Babylonians! However, their message of a false **peace** with God seduced the people to continue to rebel against God instead of repenting of their sins and trusting in God.

v 10 **My people:** The expression ‘My people’ is used seven times in chapter 13. This reminds us of how serious the judgement is that awaits the false prophets—they are deceiving God’s people. Baby Christians are prime targets/victims of the false prophets.

v 10 **“Peace!” when there is no peace:** “They never spoke of repentance, but guaranteed that the blessings of God were just around the corner.” (Wright) Doesn’t this sound like the today’s false prophets who always seem to be predicting great revivals, great victories for the church, rapid church growth and other inspiring but usually untrue prophecies. As Solomon said, “there is nothing new under the sun” (see Ecclesiastes 1:9).

“That is the essence of false prophesying. Men, who have no Divine message, but pose as though they had, seek to find favour with those to whom they speak, and so agree with them in their desires and policies.” (Morgan)

v 10 **One builds a wall, and they plaster it with untempered mortar:** This was a wall that was poorly built and ready to collapse at any moment, but the defects were covered up by a thin layer of plaster. Of course the plaster has no structural strength, and when pressure is applied, the wall will collapse. It is an illustration of the false prophet’s message—it sounded great, but it simply wasn’t true—and in the end it would fail.

v 11 **Say to those who plaster it with untempered mortar, that it will fall. ...and a stormy wind shall tear it down:** The wall represented the false promises of the false prophets, the untempered mortar or plaster represented the deception that everything was okay with God, and the hail and stormy wind represented the coming Babylonian judgement that God had repeatedly warned them about.

When the Babylonians did come about 5 years later, and, as predicted, they conquered and destroyed Jerusalem, it was like the wall of false promises, false hope, and false assurance that the false prophets had built came tumbling down on top of the people who trusted in it, killing them.

**Application—Be Bereans:** [The Berean Jews] were more fair-minded [noble] than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness, **and searched [examined closely, investigated, discerned] the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so.** (Acts 17:11 NKJV)

“To use the figures of building and walls, the problem with the false prophets was that their work was not *inspected* before the great storm or test came. When the storm came and the wall fell, everyone knew the message was false. The key was to do proper inspection of the “wall” before the storm came.” (David Guzik) It is a sad reality that many in the modern church don’t read their bibles regularly and are therefore easily deceived because they don’t check what they are taught to see if it agrees with Scripture. It is so easy to hook up with a particular bible teacher or ministry or denomination or teaching and blindly follow what they say. The reality is that it’s so easy to just accept what someone says to be true if it sounds good to us and agrees with our lifestyle. It takes humility and submission to God to be willing to commit to the hours of study in the word of God required to really know if what people teach is true or not. It ‘s hard work, but well worth the effort—it could save your eternal soul or at least your reward!

v 13-14 **I will cause a stormy wind to break forth in My fury...So I will break down the wall you have plastered with untempered mortar:** God is furious with these self-appointed false prophets—God will judge them and destroy their manmade message.

v 14 **It will fall, and you shall be consumed:** Symbolically speaking, like when a physical wall falls down, it crushes and kills people, so will people (the false prophets and their followers) be killed or hurt when this wall of lies and deception, false hope, and optimism eventually collapses—either the second death or loss of reward.

v 15-16 **Thus will I accomplish My wrath on the wall and on those who have plastered it with untempered mortar; and I will say to you, ‘The wall is no more, nor those who plastered it, <sup>16</sup> that is, the prophets of Israel who prophesy concerning Jerusalem:** In His wrath God promises to destroy both the lies of the false prophets and also the false prophets themselves. “The counterfeit prophets gave the people a false hope, so God gave them no hope at all.” (Wiersbe)

v 16 **Who see visions of peace for her when there is no peace:** Ezekiel and Jeremiah’s message was essentially that judgement was coming, and they needed to repent of their sins and submit both to God and the Babylonians. If they did, then God would spare them and they would be able to stay in the land. However, the false prophet’s **visions of peace** left God’s people completely unprepared for the judgment that was on the way, and as a result the judgement destroyed them.

## Conclusion and Application and Warning

Jeremiah 23:14, 16-17 NLT paraphrase

<sup>14</sup> But now I see that the prophets of Jerusalem are even worse! They commit adultery and love dishonesty. *They encourage those who are doing evil so that no one turns away from their sins [repents]. ...For it is because of Jerusalem’s prophets that wickedness has filled this land.*”

<sup>16</sup> This is what the Lord of Heaven’s Armies says to his people: *“Do not listen to these prophets when they prophesy to you, filling you with futile hopes. They are making up everything they say. They do not speak for the Lord! <sup>17</sup> They keep saying to **those who despise My word**, ‘Don’t worry! The Lord says you will have peace!’ And to those who stubbornly follow their own desires, they say, ‘No harm will come your way!’*

*Consider the audience of the false prophets—“**those who despise [God’s] word**”.* I can either choose to be a Berean, a noble person who is *submitted to God* and therefore treasures and highly esteems His word by *searching* the scriptures *daily* in my quest to know and obey God’s truth (Acts 17:11, Job 23:12). Or, I can choose to **despise the word of God by neglecting it**, because in reality I am seeking peace with God without repentance (not willing to change my ways). It’s then only a matter of time before the wall of lies and false hope will collapse on me. It’s only if I have right standing with Christ based on the truth of the word of God that I will have genuine hope and assurance for eternity.