

EZEKIEL

Cry Me a River

*By the rivers of Babylon, There we sat down,
yea, we wept When we remembered Zion
Psalm 137:1*

Text

Ezekiel 13:1-23

Topic

False prophets convinced their fellow Jews that there would be peace in Jerusalem.

Title

"All We Are Saying Is Peace Is At Hand"

They drank the *Kool-Aid*.

On November 18, 1978, Jim Jones, founder & leader of the People's Temple cult, orchestrated a mass murder-suicide in his remote jungle commune at Jonestown, Guyana. More than nine hundred members "drank *Kool-Aid*" laced with cyanide.¹ We say a person or persons "are drinking the *Kool-Aid*" to refer to blindly accepting or following ideas, beliefs, or instructions without question.

The Jews were drinking the *Kool-Aid*.

They were being served a steady diet of false, foolish prophecy from false, foolish non-prophets.

Throughout our lives **we** are served a steady diet of bad religion, foolish philosophy, fake news, the hubris of humanism, corrupt politics, conflicting scientific theories, etc., etc.

¹ Fact check: It wasn't *Kool-Aid*. It was the British equivalent, *Flavor-Aid*.

The devil is a liar, and the father of lies. He is also the ruler of this world. You should expect there will be as much falsehood as is absolutely possible. Especially when it comes to undermining Christians.

I'll organize my comments around two points: **#1 The Liars Seduce You With False Peace**, and **#2 The Lord Sustains You With His Peace**.

#1 The Liars Seduce You With False Peace (v1-9 & v17-23)

c.586BC. The Kingdom of Judah was a vassal state to the mighty Babylonian Empire. Twice the Babylonian forces had descended upon Jerusalem. What should the Jews do? Listen to God's prophets.

God's major prophets were Jeremiah, in Jerusalem, and Ezekiel, exiled in Babylon. They urged Judah to submit. If they refused, or tried subterfuge, the Temple & the City **would** be destroyed and the casualties & captives would be extensive.

False prophets were promising that the LORD would *never* allow the Temple to be razed to the ground. He would... He did.

Ezk 13:1 And the word of the LORD came to me...

How did the Word come to OT prophets? By Direct Speech; in Visions; in Dreams, by Angel Messengers; and by Inner Inspiration.

God's Word and the permanent indwelling of God the Holy Spirit are everything you require to obey Jesus and live a godly life. That does not negate God from communicating in other ways. Remember two things:

1. If you, or someone else, claims God spoke to them in one of those ways, what was said must be tested using the canon of Scripture.
2. There is no office of the Prophet in the NT Church - only the gift of prophecy.

Ezk 13:2 "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!'"

Your unregenerated heart "is deceitful above all things, And desperately wicked" (Jeremiah 17:9). Any human attempt at self-knowledge, or self-improvement, or salvation, will fall short. It's not wrong to call them lies, and their proponents, "Liars."

- Sigmund Freud - **"Liar!"**
- Joseph Smith - **"Liar!"**
- Charles Darwin - **"Liar!"**

"Beware lest **anyone** cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, **according to the tradition of men**, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ" (Colossians 2:8).

John Flavel wrote, *"By entertaining of strange persons, men sometimes entertain angels unawares. By entertaining strange doctrines, many have entertained devils unawares."*

Jude talks about men "creeping in" to the Church. We must be diligent "to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints."

Ezk 13:3 Thus says the Lord GOD: "Woe to the foolish prophets, who follow their own spirit and have seen nothing!

Ezk 13:4 O Israel, your prophets are like foxes in the deserts.

Ezk 13:5 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.

We learn from Isaiah that the nation of Israel is God's vineyard.² The operation of a vineyard illustrates His relationship with His people.

Vineyards were walled, either with stacked stone or a hedge. That's because the cute but cunning foxes would otherwise ruin it. As it is, they squeeze through weak spots and dig under the foundation. The keepers of the vineyard must be constantly repairing breeches.

The surprise here is that the non-prophets are the foxes! Their so-called ministry was making things worse, not better.

If you get the Word of God wrong, you are going to seriously hurt people, and maybe entire Churches.

² Isaiah 5

Because they had the Temple, and the LORD was dwelling among them there, they concluded He could not discipline them. Or, at the very least, they would not be conquered.

He loved them so much that He would without hesitation sacrifice the city He loved and the Temple. By the end of this story of redemption we will understand that the Temple was always in the background. In Heaven, there will be no Temple. "The Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple" (Revelation 21:22).

In the NT, the Lord tells us that we are a pearl of great price. He is the Merchant who gave all He had to purchase us.

Ezk 13:6 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.

One of our standards for judging a ministry is encapsulated in the question, "Were you *sent*? Or did you just *went*?"

There is too much self-advancement and self-promotion among believers. Find out the history, the calling, the ordination of persons and groups. Vet them to be reasonably sure the Lord has raised them up.

"They hope that the word may be confirmed." In other words, they didn't think their prophecies had to be 100% true. I've heard my share of false words attributed to the Lord as prophecies.

Ezk 13:7 Have you not seen a futile vision, and have you not spoken false divination? You say, 'The LORD says' but I have not spoken."

Ezk 13:8 Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: "Because you have spoken nonsense and envisioned lies, therefore I *am* indeed against you," says the Lord GOD.

Ezk 13:9 "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.

They would be cast out, treated as if they had never been born. Does that seem harsh? It isn't. Like everything He does, God's discipline is perfect.

Drop down to verse seventeen...

Ezk 13:17 "Likewise, son of man, set your face against the daughters of your people, who prophesy out of their own heart; prophesy against them,
Ezk 13:18 and say, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: "Woe to the *women* who sew *magic* charms on their sleeves and make veils for the heads of people of every height to hunt souls! Will you hunt the souls of My people, and keep yourselves alive?"

We could call them 'non-prophetesses,' but the greater emphasis is on their occult practices.

These black magic women wore charmed clothing. You recognized their adherents by their veils.

Some members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (the Mormons) really *do* wear a type of sacred undergarment. These Magic Mormon Mentionables come in a two piece, or you can get a onesie.

Mormons testify how their underwear saved their lives in car wrecks & natural disasters. They think of it as spiritual Kevlar.

I wanted to talk more about their underwear, but Geno asked me to keep it **brief**. He thinks that in a service with children present, it is inappropriate and should remain **unmentionable**. That might be good for GenX, but not for us **Baby Bloomers**.

Ezk 13:19 And will you profane Me among My people for handfuls of barley and for pieces of bread, killing people who should not die, and keeping people alive who should not live, by your lying to My people who listen to lies?"

"Barley" & "bread" were payment for occult services. These were not valuable commodities until the final Babylonian siege. It lasted 18 months and brought starvation and cannibalism.

One commentator explains "should not die" and "should not live" as follows:

- The false prophets threatened the exiled captives in Babylon with destruction, telling them they would die. No; they would live because they obeyed the LORD and went to Babylon.
- The false prophets promised the people in Jerusalem safety and prosperity. But they would die. Judgment, not Jubilee, would be their portion.

Ezk 13:21 I will also tear off your veils and deliver My people out of your hand, and they shall no longer be as prey in your hand. Then you shall know that I *am* the LORD.

Moving here in 1985 from Southern California, there was a lot to learn. Like the opening day for dove hunting. I awoke to gunfire; I thought it was *Red Dawn!*

The LORD portrays the false prophets as hunters going after prey. Christian, *you are being hunted*, and will be all your live-long days. Snares and traps and fiery darts and stumbling blocks are just a few of the ways malevolent supernatural beings are seeking to capture and destroy. They are very good at it.

Aragorn described the Nazgûl who were seeking the One Ring of Power. He told Frodo, "They will *never* stop hunting you."

We are hunted. We don't run, or hide, or withdraw. We stand, or at least that is what we *can* do. Our weapons are spiritual. Spiritual strength is measured by our corresponding weakness and subsequent dependence upon Jesus.

Having trouble at the workplace? Take a stand with the weapons at the Lord has given you. You gotta love the folks who are out to get you. Your fight isn't with them. It's with sinister beings who use them for their benefit.

Ezk 13:22 "Because with lies you have made the heart of the righteous sad, whom I have not made sad; and you have strengthened the hands of the wicked, so that he does not turn from his wicked way to save his life.

Lies lull the unrighteous into a false spiritual security. *They don't see their need to be saved!*

The righteous were "sad." Are you sad? D.L. Moody said, "*Christians should be the happiest people in the world. There is no reason why we shouldn't be happy, for we have the joy of the Lord, which far surpasses all earthly pleasure.*"

Moody wasn't being overbearing. He spoke a truth - *Be happy!* It's something we forget or leave behind as we're getting hammered by devils.

David speaks to his own soul in the Psalms multiple times, often instructing it to rejoice, hope, or trust in the Lord. He encourages his soul to shift from discouragement to rejoicing and trusting in God's faithfulness. Overcoming sadness is what we call a perishable skill. We need to practice it always.

Ezk 13:23 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." ' "

The LORD lets things go on longer than we think He should, and longer than we would like - especially if we are being adversely affected by them. He has His divine timing.

#2 The Lord Sustains You With His Peace (v10-16)

When I sold title insurance in Riverside & San Bernardino Counties, the Realtors I dealt with had a slogan. "Sellers aren't tellers, and buyers are liars."

You may have had the experience of purchasing a home only to discover that its condition is not as advertised. New homes are not exempt.

Ezekiel tells us about shoddy construction on a wall.

Ezk 13:10 "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 -

We enjoy a love relationship with God. He is spiritually jealous over us. When we begin to entertain things in our lives that are false it is spiritual adultery.

Ezk 13:11 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.

Ezk 13:12 Surely, when the wall has fallen, will it not be said to you, 'Where *is* the mortar with which you plastered *it*?' "

The 'ministry' of the non-prophets is likened to building a brick wall. They stacked bricks on top of, and next to, one another but did not use mortar. They then "plastered" over it. It looked fantastic.

A storm was coming, a violent storm in the person of King Nebuchadnezzar. How effective would their wall be?

We do not need the materials that the world thinks it has discovered.

Ezk 13:13 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*.

Ezk 13:14 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.

Ezk 13:15 "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,

Ezk 13:16 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.

C.S. Lewis made this observation: "God cannot give us... peace apart from Himself *because it is not there*. There is no such thing."

Do we sing,
*He has made me sad,
O He has made me sad
I will lament for He has made me sad*

Is your God the Lord?

If He is, then here is a prophetic word from Him, a 'prophecy' in the best NT sense.

Happy are the people whose God is the LORD
Psalm 144:15