

## Ezekiel 11:1-13; 13:1-9; 22:26

False prophets had deceived the exiles with assurances of a return to Judah. Ezekiel warned of their beloved Jerusalem would be destroyed and their return delayed. Ezekiel's prophecies related to the future restoration of Israel and final blessings of the messianic kingdom.

The theological theme of Ezekiel is the glory of the Lord. The book includes graphic descriptions of Israel's disobedience. Chief among these themes is God's holiness and sovereignty. He deals with the necessity of God's wrath to deal with sin. And God's holiness and triumph is mentioned several times by the phrase "know that I am the Lord."

**POINT 1 - THE DEATH OF PELATIAH.** He was counselor who was giving bad advise to the people. He was in a position of authority. He was trusted. Yet, he was wicked. Notice in vs. 2 "these are men who devise iniquity and give wicked counsel in this city." Matthew Henry notes, "Under pretence of concerting measures for the public safety they harden people in their sins, and take off their fear of God's judgements which they are threatened with by the prophets." I want to draw your attention to fact of what false counsel does and what false prophets do, they remove the fear of God in judgment. The leaders counsel was bad assuming they would be safe in the walled city. But judgment would follow no matter what. And in vs. 10 the reason for the judgment was clear "Then you shall know that I am the Lord."

The reason for judgment is clear in vs. 12 "for you have not walked in My statutes, nor executed my judgements, but have done according to the customs of the Gentiles which are all around you." The word Gentiles can also be translated "heathen". The point being the leaders were supposed to be teaching and leading the people in God's way not the heathens way or the way of the culture around them. God has a holy standard. More on this in a moment, but look at the judgment that happened in vs. 13, "While I was prophesying, Pelatiah the son of Benaniah died."

The customs of the Gentiles or nations around them were worshipping false gods, barbarous ways and impure rituals. The culture around them had infected their worship of the true God and they had disobeyed His clear commands. In Leviticus 18:30 this warning is given, "Thus you are to keep My charge, that you do not practice any of the abominable customs which have been practiced before you, so as not to defile yourselves with them; I am the Lord your God." There is an infection in the modern day American church by the culture. Pastors have allowed their preaching, singing and worship to be driven by the culture rather than Scripture. Many leaders have embraced doctrine that is clearly opposed by the word of God.

**POINT 2 - YOU WILL KNOW THAT I AM THE LORD, EZEKIEL 13:1-9.** They would know that the Lord is God because of judgment. These prophets pretended to have a commission from God but did not. There was no fear of judgement. They were prophets out of their own hearts. They pretend to have instructions from God but speak of their own. They scattered the flock. They didn't care for the sheep. And it's clear that the fear of the Lord was far from their hearts. Thus this is the issue today in many evangelical circles. No fear of the Lord.

**POINT 3 - NO SEPARATION OF THE HOLY AND UNHOLY, EZEKIEL 22:26.** It is said, *“As the pulpit goes, so goes the church.”* First, They violated the law of God, which they should have observed and taught others to observe. There is a discipleship principal in the Scriptures that we are all to observe. Teaching others truth of God’s word. Paul said this to young Timothy in 2 Timothy 2:1-2 *“You then, my child, be strengthened by the grace that is in Christ Jesus, and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also.”* Are you being an influencer of God’s word in your life to your family, friends? Second, they profaned God’s holy things. They suffered those to eat of the holy things who were unqualified by the law. The table of the Lord was contemptible with them. By dealing in holy things with such unhallowed hands they did themselves profane them. Thirdly, They did not themselves put a difference, nor did they show the people how to put a difference, between the holy and profane, the clean and the unclean, according to the directions and distinctions of the law.

Holding to the standards of God’s word and holiness does not mean you’re a legalist. Having a standard of holiness in your life, separated from the world, living differently and not appearing to like the world while claiming to be a Christian is not wrong. In fact, it remains the key to be separate from the pollution of the world. Let’s consider these closing points as we look at our own walk in this world.

1. As a believer you are the temple of God and it is holy. 1 Corinthians 3:16,17 *“Do you not know that you are God’s temple and that God’s Spirit dwells in you? If any man destroys the temple of God, God will destroy him, for the temple of God is holy, and that is what you are.”*
2. As a believer your behavior and lifestyle should not be the same as the world. There should be a clear difference in your behavior and the world’s. 1 Peter 1:14-16 *“As obedient children, do not be conformed to the former lusts which were yours in your ignorance, but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your behavior; <sup>16</sup>because it is written, ‘You shall be holy, for I am holy’ ”.*
3. A proper fear of God produces righteousness. Proverbs 1:7 *“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge; Fools despise wisdom and instruction.”* Proverbs 1:28-30 *“Then they will call on me, but I will not answer; They will seek me diligently but they will not find me, Because they hated knowledge And did not choose the fear of the Lord. They would not accept my counsel, They spurned all my reproof.”* Proverbs 10:27 *“The fear of the Lord prolongs life, But the years of the wicked will be shortened.”* Proverbs 15:16 *“Better is a little with the fear of the Lord Than great treasure and turmoil with it.”* Proverbs 16:6 *“By lovingkindness and truth iniquity is atoned for, And by the fear of the Lord one keeps away from evil.”* Conclusion is when you fear the judgment of God, you will desire and walk in holiness towards Him. You will seek to honor Him in your life, by your behavior and your actions.