

**Fake Visions, Fraudulent Divination:
Hijacking the Prophetic Office**

Ezekiel 13:1–16

Veritas Adult Community

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Background to Ezekiel 13:1–16 (Deut 18:9–22)

1. The Taboo Pagan Revelatory Practices

“When you enter the land the LORD your God is giving you, be very careful not to imitate the detestable customs of the nations living there.

¹⁰ For example, never sacrifice your son or daughter as a burnt offering. And do not let your people practice fortune-telling, or use sorcery, or interpret omens (שִׁנְיָה), or engage in witchcraft, ¹¹ or cast spells, or function as mediums or psychics, or call forth the spirits of the dead.

¹² Anyone who does these things is detestable to the LORD. It is because the other nations have done these detestable things that the LORD your God will drive them out ahead of you. ¹³ But you must be blameless before the LORD your God. ¹⁴ The nations you are about to displace consult sorcerers and fortune-tellers, but the LORD your God forbids you to do such things.

2. The LORD’s Gracious Revelatory Provision

¹⁵ Moses continued, “The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your fellow Israelites. You must listen to him. ¹⁶ For this is what you yourselves requested of the LORD your God when you were assembled at Mount Sinai. You said, ‘Don’t let us hear the voice of the LORD our God anymore or see this blazing fire, for we will die.’

¹⁷ “Then the LORD said to me, ‘What they have said is right.

¹⁸ I will raise up a prophet like you from among their fellow Israelites. I will put my words in his mouth, and he will tell the people everything I command him. ¹⁹ I will personally deal with anyone who will not listen to the messages the prophet proclaims on my behalf.

²⁰ But any prophet who falsely claims to speak in my name or who speaks in the name of another god must die.’ ²¹

“But you may wonder, ‘How will we know whether or not a prophecy is from the LORD?’ ²² If the prophet speaks in the LORD’s name but his prediction does not happen or come true, you will know that the LORD did not give that message. That prophet has spoken without my authority and need not be feared. (Deut 18:15–22 NLT)

Interpretation

1. Preamble (13:1–3a)

¹The following message of YHWH came to me: ²Human, prophesy against the prophets of Israel, who are prophesying. Declare to the self-inspired prophets: “Hear the message of YHWH! ³Thus has the Lord YHWH declared:

2. The Charges against the Prophets (vv. 3b–7)

“Woe to the foolish prophets, who follow their own impulse, even though they have not seen a thing. ⁴Your prophets, O Israel, have lived like jackals among ruins. ⁵You have not gone up into the breaches, nor repaired the wall around the house of Israel that it might stand in the battle, on the day of YHWH. ⁶Those who say, “The declaration of YHWH,” have envisioned emptiness and deceptive divination. Even though YHWH has not commissioned them, they

expect him to fulfill the pronouncement! ⁷Surely you have envisioned an empty vision and declared a deceptive divination—you, who say “The declaration of YHWH,” when I have not even spoken.’

- a. No matter how smart the false prophets think they are, they are fools!
- b. They functioned autonomously.
- c. They are fake.
- d. They are jackals among the ruins.
- e. They are traitors (v. 5).

3. The First Announcement of Judgment (vv. 8–9)

⁸Therefore, thus has the Lord YHWH declared: “Because you have made empty pronouncements, and have envisioned lies—therefore, I am challenging you!”—The declaration of the Lord YHWH. ⁹My hand will come upon those prophets who envision emptiness and who divine lies:

In the company of my people, they will not be found;
And in the register of the house of Israel, they will not be recorded;
And to the land of Israel, they will not come back,
Then you will know that I am the Lord YHWH.’

4. The Second Announcement of Judgment (vv. 10–16)

¹⁰For the very reason that they have misled my people by saying, “All is well,” when nothing is well—as if a person would build a crude wall, but others would smear it with hogwash. ¹¹Tell those who are smearing on the hog-wash that it will collapse. Should a driving rainstorm come, and great hailstones fall, and a tempestuous wind burst forth, ¹²then look, the wall would fall! Will you then not be asked, “Where is the hogwash that you applied?”

¹³ Therefore, thus has the Lord YHWH declared: “I will release a tempestuous wind in my fury, and a driving rainstorm will come in my wrath, along with hailstones, in wrath to destroy. ¹⁴I will demolish the wall that you have smeared with hogwash; I will raze it to the ground so that its foundation is exposed. When it falls, and you perish in its midst, then you will know that I am YHWH.

- a. A Reiteration of the Charges against the Prophets (v. 10).
- b. A Reiteration of the Judgment (vv. 11–14).

5. Addendum (vv. 15–16)

¹⁵I will satisfy my wrath against the wall, and against those who smear it with hogwash. Then I will say, to you, “Gone is the wall, and gone are those who smeared it—¹⁶the prophets of Israel, who prophesy about Jerusalem, and who see visions of well-being for her, though nothing is well.”—The declaration of the Lord YHWH.

Application

1. Counterfeits characteristically claim divine authority, even when they speak only from their own inspiration.
2. Counterfeits characteristically proclaim messages that people want to hear, especially when the truth is painful.
3. Counterfeits characteristically are more interested in their own status than in the welfare of the community.
4. Counterfeits characteristically have their pronouncements die with them.
5. Counterfeits characteristically stand under the judgment of God.