

The Watchman #6
Foolish for Following Fools

Word

Scripture Reference

Ezekiel 12-13

Discussion Questions

1. Have you ever encountered a false prophet/teacher, either in person, in magazines, or TV? How did you distinguish if that person was a false teacher?
2. Read Ezekiel 12-13. God warned His people through Ezekiel against false prophets whose messages to the people were filled with lies. Their only intention was to attract the people, saying only things that would please the people. Similar to Ezekiel's time, our generation is filled with false prophets. As a child of God and a follower of Jesus Christ, it is your responsibility to be a watchman of your generation—to be able to discern whether the teachings permeating our society are false teachings by false teachers, so that you can avoid and warn others to avoid it—else you become a foolish man who follows fools. Can you trust anyone who claims to be a man of God and teaches His Word? What are the red flags that would enable you to determine if what he/she teaches is from God or not? What is the best way to discern if the teaching is true or not?
3. In Ezekiel 12, we see a finality in God's judgment of His people (v. 28) because of their foolishness in listening and believing the false prophets. They did not heed the true prophets of God and so they were condemned. Chapter 13 describes five condemnations God placed against these false prophets, from which we learn five warning signs we need to watch out for to see if someone is a false prophet/teacher:

- a. **Warning #1: Focusing or emphasizing emotions and experiences over the Truth (v. 1-3).** God condemned the false prophets for saying that their messages and teachings were from God when it was actually from their own mind and experiences. False teachers and false teachings emphasize emotions without filtering it through the Word of God. Discuss how you can filter your emotions and experiences through the Word of God. How would you explain or demonstrate this: *"We do not interpret Scripture in light of our experiences, but we interpret our experiences in light of Scripture."* What is the danger when somebody says; "God spoke to me through dreams." Why should you be skeptical about it?
- b. **Warning #2: Not calling sin as sin or calling out wrong as wrong (v. 13:4-5).** God condemned the false teachers for being "foxes in the desert" who look for holes to hide from the sun. Instead of filling the spiritual and moral holes prevalent during Ezekiel's time, these false teachers were looking for loopholes to hide in for their own benefit. They were not calling the people out for their sins or to repentance and change, like a true prophet of God is supposed to do, and so the people were not ready when the spiritual battle came. Today, the moral and spiritual walls of our society are falling apart, and many Christians do not do anything about it, afraid that they will be unliked and unpopular amongst their circle of influence. Discuss examples of wrong behavior you have observed that many Christians do not address. How would refusing to call out sin and wrong behavior be detrimental to the spiritual and cultural battles that every Christian face?
- c. **Warning #3: Making false claims, often prophetic ones (v. 13:6-10).** God condemned the false teachers of Ezekiel's time for teaching lies (v. 6-10). All of God's prophets are 100% accurate. If someone says he or she speaks for God, and that person is wrong once, then he/she is a false prophet. Discuss the dangers of the growing charismatic and pentecostal movement in the Christian circles. How do you hold these people to account when they claim that they are speaking for

God or that “God told me this,” or when they say “I prophesy that ___”? Another dangerous notion that is growing among Christians is that God promises to prosper you in this lifetime (i.e. God will give you the desires of your heart as long as you have faith), taken from God’s promise to the Israelites in Jeremiah 29:11. Discuss why this claim is wrong. What are the dangers of making claims that the Scripture does not teach?

- d. **Warning #4: Not teaching the whole truth of the Word of God, but only selective truth (v. 11-16).** God condemned the false teachers in Ezekiel’s time because they were selective in their teaching of the Word of God. A half-truth or partial truth is a lie. Why is systematic and expositional teaching of the Word of God important instead of hopping from one verse to another? Discuss why reading a devotional book is not enough to feed you spiritually. What are the dangers of using verses out of context?
- e. **Warning #5: Replacing trusting God with mystical actions and “magical” objects.** God condemned the false prophets for telling the people to carry with them good luck charms or amulets. How is this behavior manifested in your culture/tradition? What kinds of people are usually easily swayed to use good luck charms? Could spells from evil people affect a Christian? Discuss this biblical truth: “Only God can pre-ordain your life. As a child of God, the Holy Spirit seals you.”

Walk

False teachers and false teachings are condemned by God because they emphasize emotions rather than truth, they don’t call sin as sin (or wrong as wrong), they make false claims (often prophetic ones), they don’t teach the whole truth of the Word of God, and they tell people to replace their trust in God with mystical actions and magical objects. What steps do you need to take so you can be a more discerning Christian and protect yourself from being influenced and/or controlled by people who bend the truth for their own selfish purposes?

Worship & Prayer

Heavenly Father, thank You for opening my mind that I should learn how to discern the truth about You. May Your Spirit guide me as there are many false teachers and false teachings out there that may confuse what I know about You. Help me to be hungry for Your Word, that I would learn how to thoroughly listen to it, study it and correctly apply what I learn in my life so that I will be firm in my faith and knowledge of You instead of being easily influenced by false teachings. Help me to know what is right and what is wrong in your sight. In Jesus’ Name. Amen.