

***Sermons***  
*of the*  
*Concordia Lutheran Conference*

**Ezekiel's Message for  
These Critical Times**

**Ezekiel 13:1-16**

1. Concerning  
False Teaching
2. Concerning  
Unscriptural Appeasements.

## **First Annual Meeting 1951**

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## *Ezekiel's Message for These Critical Times*

Ezekiel 13:1-16

*And the word of the Lord came unto me, saying Son of man, prophesy against the prophets of Israel that prophesy, and say unto them that prophesy out of their own hearts, Hear ye the word of the Lord:*

*Thus saith the Lord God; Woe unto the foolish prophets, that follow their own spirit, and have seen nothing!*

*O Israel, thy prophets are like the foxes in the deserts.*

*Ye have not gone up into the gaps, neither made up the hedge for the house of Israel to stand in the battle in the day of the Lord.*

*They have seen vanity and lying divination, saying, the Lord saith: and the Lord hath not sent them: and they have made others to hope that they would confirm the word.*

*Have ye not seen a vain vision, and have ye not spoken a lying divination, whereas ye say. The Lord saith it; albeit I have not spoken?*

*Therefore thus saith the Lord God; Because ye have spoken vanity, and seen lies, therefore, behold, I am against you, saith the Lord God.*

*And mine hand shall be upon the prophets that see vanity, and that divine lies: They shall not be in the assembly of my people, neither shall they be written in the writing of the house of Israel, neither shall they enter into the land of Israel; and ye shall know that I am the Lord God.*

*Because, even because they have seduced my people, saying, Peace; and there was no peace; and one built up a wall, and, lo, others daubed it with untempered mortar:*

*Say unto them which daub it with untempered mortar, that it shall fall; there shall be an overflowing shower; and ye, O*

*great hailstones, shall fall; and a stormy wind shall rend it.*

*Lo, when the wall is fallen, shall it not be said unto you,  
Where is the daubing wherewith ye have daubed it?*

*Therefore thus saith the Lord God; I will even rend it with a  
stormy wind in my fury; and there shall be an overflowing  
shower in mine anger, and great hailstones in my fury to con-  
sume it.*

*So will I break down the wall that ye have daubed with  
untempered mortar, and bring it down to the ground, so that  
the foundation thereof shall be discovered, and it shall fall,  
and ye shall be consumed in the midst thereof: and ye shall  
know that I am the Lord.*

*Thus will I accomplish my wrath upon the wall, and upon  
them that have daubed it with untempered mortar, and will  
say unto you, The wall is no more, neither they that daubed  
it;*

*To wit, the prophets of Israel which prophesy concerning  
Jerusalem, and which see visions of peace for her, and there  
is no peace, saith the Lord God."*

Dear companions in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience  
of Jesus Christ:

In the last chapter of the last epistle which the Apostle Paul wrote  
by inspiration of the Holy Ghost there is a passage which is of par-  
ticular significance at this time. We may translate or paraphrase this  
passage directly from the original: "*The time will come when they  
will not endure sound, healthy wholesome teaching, but, since they  
have itching ears, they will, after their own desires, load upon them-  
selves teachers, and they will turn away their ears from the truth and  
turn them to fables and their own inventions.*" This word, I say, is of  
particular significance to us, who have met here as an act of criti-  
cism, yea, of open defiance, of false teaching and practice in The  
Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. We feel compelled to turn to the  
Word of God for reassurance, comfort, and strength, and we find  
some very important truths in the text before us, which presents to us

### **Ezekiel's Message for These Critical Times:**

1. Concerning false teaching;
2. Concerning unscriptural appeasements.

#### 1.

It is the Lord God Himself who is speaking in our text, as He bids the prophet to speak, to prophesy against the prophets of Israel out of their own hearts. The Lord addresses Himself directly to these false teachers: Woe unto the foolish prophets, that follow their own spirit, and have seen nothing! And the Lord describes their false teaching as vanity and lying divination, and He denounces the fact that they have made others to hope that they would confirm the word, thus supporting them in their unholy pursuits. And the Lord adds a threat of punishment upon the false teachers, saying that His hand would be upon the prophets that see vanity and that divine lies: They shall not be in the assembly of My people, neither shall they be written in the writing of the house of Israel. And to this condemnation we must add another, namely: Ye have not gone up into the gaps (or breaches), neither made up the hedge for the house of Israel to stand in the battle in the day of the Lord. The complaint is very much like that of the prophet Amos, when he states that those who are named chief of the nations “*are not grieved for the affliction (or breach) of Joseph.*”

There are thus chiefly three accusations which the Lord brings against the false teachers at the time of the Exile, namely that they followed their own spirit instead of teaching only the Word of the Lord; that they followed a vain vision and a lying divination; that they did not go up into the breaches, to strengthen the walls of Zion.

Now it is interesting to note that these men did not repudiate the Word of Jehovah in the fundamental ordinances given to their people by Moses and other men of God. They did not repudiate the Ten Commandments and the whole Law of God, as contained in the Sacred Books of their nation. But they **added** to the Word of God; they

**gave their own explanations** of God's laws and ordinances; and they added their own ideas to the truths as transmitted to them. They insisted that they had visions of their own, which must be taught in addition to the written Word. And when they noted that certain sins were gaining headway among the people, such as idolatry, they did not try to stem the growing tide of liberal views and thus did nothing to heal the breaches.

The story of those terrible years was repeated frequently in the history of the Church. In the days of Luther, for example, his fine work was soon threatened by false teachers, even in the Wittenberg faculty, as when Carlstadt, who as late as 1518 had published theses in defense of the sound position held by Luther, joined the enthusiasts and fanatics. Other members of the Wittenberg faculty likewise became guilty of false teaching, so that Luther was repeatedly compelled, for the sake of the truth, to oppose such men privately and publicly. Not a few of them were guilty of the same practices which are rejected by the Lord in our text, namely in teaching their own ideas, in following their own spirit, in proclaiming lying divinations, and in neglecting to step into the breaches when the walls of Zion were in danger of being undermined.

It is a matter of deep sadness that we must raise similar accusations against many of our former brethren at this time. But it is a fact that in the very midst of the bodies in America which call themselves Lutheran, which profess to the acceptance of an inspired Holy Writ, we find men, leading theologians and prominent clergymen, who have openly repudiated some of the very truths for which our fathers fought with such holy vehemence. We find among them men who are very dubious about accepting the full inspiration and inerrancy of the Bible, who declare certain doctrines of the Bible to be non-divisive of church fellowship, who deny the obvious teaching of Romans 16:17-18 as applying to errorists everywhere, whether members of the Lutheran Church or not, who deny the plain teaching of Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions that the pope is "the very Antichrist," who accept the inadequate and partly unscriptural statements of the so-called "*Common Confession*," as accepted by The Lutheran Church-

Missouri Synod in the convention of 1950, who ruthlessly ignore the conscientious objections made by their brethren against this document or try to comfort them with the bland assurance that certain changes would be made in the document, so that errors would be eliminated. – But this thought leads us into the second part of our discussion, namely concerning unscriptural appeasements.

## 2.

In the second part of our text the Lord gives the reasons for His denunciation of the false teachers at the time of the Exile. The Lord says: “*Because, even because they have seduced My people, saying, ‘peace’, and there is no peace; and one built up a wall, and lo, others daubed it with untempered mortar.*” The Lord speaks with holy irony when He asks: “*Lo, when the wall is fallen, shall it not be said to you, Where is the daubing wherewith ye have daubed it?*” The following verses are full of holy indignation and with threats of punishment upon the unfaithful, the faithless teachers, the Lord stating that the foundations of the wall would be uncovered, and it shall fall, and ye shall be consumed in the midst thereof.

We find that we have chiefly two points in this text, which the Lord so sternly rebukes. The expression “*daubing with untempered mortar*” is particularly appropriate in characterizing the activity of false teachers and leaders. For, if a wall, which is or has become unsafe in itself, is then tempered or whitewashed with untempered mortar, instead of being properly pointed up, it may have the appearance of a good, sound wall, but it will not be able to stand against the storms and the waters which will threaten its safety. And this activity of the false teachers is found in particular in the fact that they, as the Lord says, seduce His people, insisting that they see visions of peace for Jerusalem and proclaiming over and over again, Peace, Peace! where there is no peace. Thus it was in the days of the prophet Ezekiel and of his contemporary prophet, Jeremiah. The false teachers constantly endeavored to discount the true teaching of the Lord by saying that there was nothing to fear, that the threats of punishment were not seriously meant, and that, if calamity should strike, it

would soon be overcome. But history tells us what happened when the patience of the Lord was exhausted. It was then that the Lord came down in His fury.

Similar conditions existed at the time of the Reformation and in the century following the death of Luther. No sooner had the followers of the great Reformer declared their uncompromising adherence to the full truth of Holy Writ, than the enemies tried to meet the challenge with “deep guile and great might.” Their answer to the *Augsburg Confession* was so weak that it could easily be refuted. But then they did much damage by the two so called “*Interim*” documents, statements of compromise and appeasement, by which the evangelical, that is, the Lutheran Christians were to be lulled into security by certain apparent concessions, in return for which they were to permit papistical teachings and practices to be reintroduced. In all too many cases the fiendish scheme resulted in losses for the truth. Again and again weak men, like Melancthon, sounded the cry: Peace! Peace! No one has as yet fully appraised the damage which was done by such appeasements during the era of the Reformation. And it may be said with emphasis that the terrible Thirty Years War was one of the ways in which the Lord showed His wrath over the manner in which men dealt with the eternal verities of His Word.

And now we face similar conditions with regard to appeasements in the church. Even the so-called *Intersynodical Theses of 1929* showed whither the wind was blowing, and it was only by the grace of God that the Missouri Synod at that time did not accept (that is, in effect, it rejected) these theses. The synodical resolutions of 1938 were likewise based on a false conception of the foundation of truth. But in the so-called *Chicago Statement* of September, 1945, false teaching and practice showed itself in its true colors. The clear teaching of Romans 16:17-18 was set aside, prayer fellowship without doctrinal unity was advocated, while the brethren in the Missouri Synod were attacked and maligned in a heretofore unheard of manner. This document, although “withdrawn” in January, 1947, at the instigation of synodical officials, as a “basis of discussion,” has wrought untold havoc in the entire Lutheran Church of America and



is being upheld and defended by a growing number of liberal pastors. For this we have unmistakable proof. However, the most damaging defeat of the full truth of God's Word came at the Convention of The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod at Milwaukee in 1950, when that organization, as a corporate body, contrary to Scripture and its own constitution, accepted the so-called "*Common Confession!*" In spite of the fact that numerous members of Synod had voiced their conscientious objections to this document, bringing ample proof for its inadequacy and unscriptural nature, the document was adopted by a majority voice vote. It was then submitted to the convention of the American Lutheran Church at Columbus, Ohio, and there promptly accepted. And thereby the iron-clad orthodoxy of The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod has come to an end.

We shall not here discuss the glaring inadequacies and errors of the "*Common Confession,*" since this has been taken care of in memorials addressed to the Synod and in many releases issued by us. We have pointed out that the walls of the spiritual Zion are being daubed with untempered mortar, that appeasement has been proclaimed by the very officials of the synod; that there have been cries of Peace! Peace! where there was no peace, since the new document does not resolve the differences existing for three-quarters of a century. Among the statements of our blessed Lord we find the following: "*I have not come to bring peace, but the sword.*" And again: "*Beware of false prophets!*" And again: "*Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is their false teaching!*" And St. Paul writes: "*Though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed!*" And again: "*A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.*"

The situation as it now obtains may be illustrated by a parable which is not a fable. A man has a neighbor who has for many years been drinking a liquid which contains some poison, apparently not enough to kill him outright, but still poison. So he says to that neighbor: It is too bad that you insist upon drinking that drink. Let me add a little sugar, and then we both may drink it. Enough said!

We hereby give the assurance that there is no animosity, no personal spite in our utterances, but only the deepest pity for those who have left the full truth. However, we shall continue in our unequivocal condemnation of all errors in doctrine and practice, as Romans 16:17-18 teaches us. There the Lord says: "*Avoid them!*" He does not say: Mark them, and then wait until they put you out. The initiative rests with those who recognize the defection, the denial of the full truth of Holy Writ. Those who waver, those who condone falsehood, thereby become guilty of other men's sins.

May God give us strength and wisdom to confess the full truth of the Word, since we can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth.  
Amen.

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# ***False Teaching and Appeasement***

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