

Prophets 9.

the other way sometimes. The one who starts in under a delusion may perhaps find that he was under delusion and become convinced that there was nothing to it but yet find it profitable and continue as an imposter. It's rather hard then to be sure exactly which category each one belongs in and I Kings 22:5-28, the story of Micaiah--you remember that when they came to Micaiah they said, "Let thy word be like one of them." That was a definite bid to him to be an imposter. That was saying, "This is what the king wants to hear and now you say it." Well, of course a true prophet would say what God wants us to hear, and not what the king wants. He would be making himself an imposter by doing that. When Balaam received the message from the king of Moab and the messenger said, "Come down here and curse Israel," Balaam said, "If I go I will say exactly what the Lord wants me to say." He said, "I will go as a true prophet to give God's message." Balak said, "You come down and you say what we want you to say. If Balaam said what Balak wanted him to say and pretended he was giving God's message he would have become an imposter but as we know he resisted that temptation. He went down and said what the Lord wanted him to say, so he failed of his reward that Balak would have given him. In Ezekiel 13, vv. 17-19, we have an instance of false prophets who were planning to speak in the name of God, and in these verses, Thou son of man, set thy face against the daughters of thy people which prophesy out of their own heart; and prophese against them. That verse sounds as if--well, it's hard to tell. Are they prophesying out of their own hearts, does that mean? Are they saying what they made up, or are they saying what they imagine? Are they imposters or they deluded. Certainly verse 19 sounds as if they are imposters, because he says, "Will you pollute me among my people for handfuls of barley and for pieces of bread, to slay the souls that should not die, and to save alive the souls that should not live, by your lying to my people that hear your lies?" That suggests very strongly that they are men who are prophesying what they know doesn't come from God, but comes from their own hearts. I remember once when I was attending the Bible Institute of Los Angeles and we had various ministers from the various churches, different denominations in Los Angeles give us a talk on the work of their denominations. I remember how I was impressed when the pastor of what was then the third largest church in the United States came and spoke to us, and he told us how some people came to him and said, "We wish you would give us some doctrinal sermons. We'd like to know what we believe," and he said to them, "Do you think I want to empty my church? Why,