

Ezekiel 13:2

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Son of man, prophesy against the prophets of Israel that prophesy, and say thou unto them that prophesy out of their own hearts, Hear ye the word of the LORD;

Analysis

God commands: 'Son of man, prophesy against the prophets of Israel that prophesy, and say thou unto them that prophesy out of their own hearts, Hear ye the word of the LORD.' Ezekiel must prophesy against false prophets, identifying their core error—they 'prophesy out of their own hearts' rather than receiving divine revelation. The Hebrew *mil-libbam* (מִלִּבָּם, 'from their heart') indicates self-generated messages, not God-given ones.

The command to tell them 'Hear ye the word of the LORD' is ironic—those claiming to speak for God must themselves hear His actual word through true prophets. They need to become listeners/receivers rather than self-appointed speakers. This exposes their presumption—speaking for God without being sent or commissioned (Jeremiah 23:21).

From a Reformed perspective, this warns against ministry based on human wisdom, personal opinion, or contemporary trends rather than biblical revelation. True ministry involves receiving and transmitting God's Word (1 Corinthians 11:23, 15:3), not inventing messages. The sufficiency of Scripture means ministers needn't create new revelation but must faithfully exposit existing revelation.

Historical Context

The phrase 'prophesy out of their own hearts' indicates false prophets invented messages they thought would be popular, profitable, or politically expedient. Jeremiah accused them of speaking visions 'of their own heart, and not out of the mouth of the LORD' (Jeremiah 23:16). They prophesied what audiences wanted rather than what God said.

This pattern continues in Christian history—prosperity preachers promising wealth, therapeutic ministers avoiding sin/judgment, political religionists blessing national agendas. Any teaching prioritizing human desires over biblical revelation repeats this ancient error. The test: does teaching align with Scripture's full counsel or merely with contemporary preferences?

Related Passages

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. How can you discern whether teaching originates from Scripture or from human preferences and cultural trends?
2. What does prophesying 'out of their own hearts' teach about the danger of eisegesis versus exegesis?
3. In what ways might even well-intentioned ministers substitute their wisdom for God's revelation?

Interlinear Text

בֶּן	אָדָם	הַנְּבִיאִים	אֶל	לְנִבְיֵי י	לְיִשְׂרָאֵל	הַנְּבִיאִים
Son	of man	prophesy	^{H413}	against the prophets	of Israel	prophesy
H1121	H120	H5012		H5030	H3478	H5012
וְאָמַרְתָּ	לְנִבְיֵי י	מִלִּבָּם		שְׁמַע ו	דְּבַר	
and say	against the prophets	out of their own hearts		Hear	ye the word	
H559	H5030	H3820		H8085	H1697	
יְהוָה:						
of the LORD						
H3068						

Additional Cross-References

Ezekiel 13:17 (Prophecy): Likewise, thou son of man, set thy face against the daughters of thy people, which prophesy out of their own heart; and prophesy thou against them,

Jeremiah 37:19 (Prophecy): Where are now your prophets which prophesied unto you, saying, The king of Babylon shall not come against you, nor against this land?

Isaiah 1:10 (Word): Hear the word of the LORD, ye rulers of Sodom; give ear unto the law of our God, ye people of Gomorrah.

Isaiah 9:15 (Prophecy): The ancient and honourable, he is the head; and the prophet that teacheth lies, he is the tail.

Ezekiel 22:25 (Prophecy): There is a conspiracy of her prophets in the midst thereof, like a roaring lion ravening the prey; they have devoured souls; they have taken the treasure and precious things; they have made her many widows in the midst thereof.

Ezekiel 22:28 (Prophecy): And her prophets have daubed them with untempered mortar, seeing vanity, and divining lies unto them, saying, Thus saith the Lord GOD, when the LORD hath not spoken.

