

Ezekiel 13:20

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Wherefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I am against your pillows, wherewith ye there hunt the souls to make them fly, and I will tear them from your arms, and will let the souls go, even the souls that ye hunt to make them fly.

Analysis

God condemns false prophets regarding I am against your pillows. This verse shows how false teaching profanes God's name by attributing to Him messages He didn't give. The practice of claiming divine authority for human opinions brings God's name into disrepute and misleads His people. The Hebrew indicates serious covenant violation—using Yahweh's name falsely violates the third commandment.

God opposes manipulative practices. False prophets caused spiritual harm by distorting people's understanding of God's character, will, and covenant demands. They made judgment seem unlikely, repentance unnecessary, and sin inconsequential—all lies that endangered souls. Their deceptive ministry required divine intervention to protect the faithful.

From a Reformed perspective, this illustrates God's jealousy for His glory and His protection of His people from deception. When false teaching proliferates, God directly intervenes through faithful prophets exposing error and eventually through judgment silencing false teachers. The church must maintain doctrinal integrity, opposing error and protecting believers from wolves in sheep's clothing.

Historical Context

The specific practices condemned reflect ancient Near Eastern religious syncretism mixing Yahwism with pagan divination, magic, and superstition. God opposes manipulative practices within a context where religious professionals exploited people's fears and hopes for profit. Archaeological evidence shows widespread magical practices in Iron Age Israel despite Torah prohibitions. False prophets capitalized on this syncretistic environment, offering services that mixed legitimate spiritual authority with pagan techniques. Their ministry represented covenant apostasy at leadership level, more dangerous than lay idolatry because it carried authoritative weight.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

1 John 4:8 — God is love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. How does claiming God's authority for human opinions profane His name today?
2. What responsibility does church leadership bear to protect believers from false teaching?
3. In what ways does I am against your pillows warn against mixing biblical faith with cultural superstitions?

Interlinear Text

בְּסַתּוּתֵיכֶךָ נָה	ר אָשָׁר	אַתָּם	אַתָּה וְתִּ	שָׁמָמְךָ מִצְדָּה וְתִּ	אַתָּה
Behold I am against your pillows	H834	wherewith ye	that ye hunt	H8033	H853

מַעַל אֶת מֵיקְרָעָתִי לְפָרָחָתִי נְפָשָׁי וְיַמְּנָנָי
and will let the souls to make them fly and I will tear H853 H5921
H5315 H6524 H7167

אַתָּה מְאֹשֵׁר מִזְרָעָתִיךְ מִן־יְמֵינוֹ
את וְשַׁלְּחוֹתִי go אַת וְשַׁלְּחוֹתִי H853 and will let the souls H5315 נֶפֶשׁ יָמִינְךָ
them from your arms H2220 H7971 H834 wherewith ye H859

לפְרָחָתִים יְמִינְךָ מִצְדָּךְ וְאַתָּה תְּנַפֵּשׁ יְמִינְךָ יְמִינְךָ יְמִינְךָ
to make them fly and will let the souls that ye hunt H853 H5315 H6670

Additional Cross-References

Ezekiel 13:18 (References God): And say, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Woe to the women that sew pillows to all armholes, and make kerchiefs upon the head of every stature to hunt souls! Will ye hunt the souls of my people, and will ye save the souls alive that come unto you?

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