

Ezekiel 13:22

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Because with lies ye have made the heart of the righteous sad, whom I have not made sad; and strengthened the hands of the wicked, that he should not return from his wicked way, by promising him life:

Analysis

God condemns false prophets regarding Made sad the righteous. 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.

False teaching harms the faithful. 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. False teaching harms the faithful 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

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

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 Made sad the righteous warn against mixing biblical faith with cultural superstitions?

Interlinear Text

בְּכָא וְתִּעְן
H3282 sad H3512 ye have made the heart
H3820 of the righteous
H6662 Because with lies

לֹא תָּגַב
H589 whom I have not made sad
H3808 H3510 and strengthened
H2388 H3027 the hands

לְבָלָתִי בְּשֵׁע
H1115 that he should not return
H7725 H1870 way
H7563 from his wicked

לְפָנֶיךָ
by promising him life
H2421

Additional Cross-References

Jeremiah 23:14 (Evil): I have seen also in the prophets of Jerusalem an horrible thing: they commit adultery, and walk in lies: they strengthen also the hands of evildoers, that none doth return from his wickedness: they are all of them unto me as Sodom, and the inhabitants thereof as Gomorrah.

Jeremiah 23:17 (Evil): They say still unto them that despise me, The LORD hath said, Ye shall have peace; and they say unto every one that walketh after the imagination of his own heart, No evil shall come upon you.

Ezekiel 13:16 (Parallel theme): 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.

Ezekiel 9:4 (Parallel theme): And the LORD said unto him, Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and that cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof.

