

Ezekiel 13:5

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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.

Analysis

God continues His indictment: '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.' False prophets failed their duty to 'stand in the gap'—interceding and calling for repentance to avert judgment. The Hebrew *perats* (פֶּרֶץ, 'gap/breach') indicates broken walls needing repair; *gader* (גָּדֵר, 'hedge/wall') represents protective barriers.

True prophets stood in gaps through intercession (Ezekiel 22:30, Exodus 32:11-14, Numbers 14:13-19) and through prophetic ministry calling people back to covenant faithfulness. False prophets did neither—no intercession, no calls to repentance, only false assurances of peace. They left the nation defenseless against coming judgment by failing to address spiritual breaches.

From a Reformed perspective, this illustrates pastoral responsibility—ministers must address sin, call for repentance, intercede for congregations, and strengthen spiritual defenses through sound doctrine. Failing these duties leaves people vulnerable to judgment and deception. True pastoral care includes uncomfortable confrontations and warnings, not just comfortable affirmations.

Historical Context

The military imagery ('stand in the battle in the day of the LORD') depicts judgment as divine warfare against sin. The Day of the LORD is prophetic shorthand for divine judgment, whether historical (Babylonian invasion) or eschatological (final judgment). Prophets were spiritual commanders responsible for preparing people for this confrontation through repentance and covenant renewal.

Moses and Samuel exemplified standing in the gap through intercession (Exodus 32, Numbers 14, 1 Samuel 7, 12). Jeremiah tried but was forbidden to intercede (Jeremiah 7:16, 11:14, 14:11) because judgment time had come. Ezekiel similarly couldn't avert judgment but faithfully warned. False prophets neither interceded nor warned, leaving people entirely unprepared for coming judgment.

Related Passages

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. What does 'standing in the gap' teach about intercessory prayer's role in ministry?
2. How does failure to address spiritual breaches leave people vulnerable to judgment?
3. In what ways can modern ministers fail to prepare congregations for spiritual warfare and judgment?

Interlinear Text

ל	א	עָלִיתֶם	בְּפָרֶץ	וְת	נִתְגַּדֵּר	רִא	עַל
H3808	Ye have not gone up	H5927	H6556	H1443	neither made up	the hedge	H5921
						H1447	
בְּ	יְהִי	בְּ	לְעֵמֶד	בְּמִלְחָמָה	בְּיֹום	בְּיֹום	יְהִי:
for the house	of Israel	to stand	in the battle	in the day	of the LORD		
H1004	H3478	H5975	H4421	H3117	H3068		

Additional Cross-References

Ezekiel 22:30 (Parallel theme): And I sought for a man among them, that should make up the hedge, and stand in the gap before me for the land, that I should not destroy it: but I found none.

Isaiah 58:12 (Parallel theme): And they that shall be of thee shall build the old waste places: thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations; and thou shalt be called, The repairer of the breach, The restorer of paths to dwell in.

Psalms 106:23 (Parallel theme): Therefore he said that he would destroy them, had not Moses his chosen stood before him in the breach, to turn away his wrath, lest he should destroy them.

Isaiah 13:9 (References Lord): Behold, the day of the LORD cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate: and he shall destroy the sinners thereof out of it.

Isaiah 13:6 (References Lord): Howl ye; for the day of the LORD is at hand; it shall come as a destruction from the Almighty.

Jeremiah 23:22 (Parallel theme): But if they had stood in my counsel, and had caused my people to hear my words, then they should have turned them from their evil way, and from the evil of their doings.

Revelation 6:17 (Parallel theme): For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?

Revelation 16:14 (Parallel theme): For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.

2 Peter 3:10 (References Lord): But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.

Jeremiah 27:18 (References Lord): But if they be prophets, and if the word of the LORD be with them, let them now make intercession to the LORD of hosts, that the vessels which are left in the house of the LORD, and in the house of the king of Judah, and at Jerusalem, go not to Babylon.

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