

Ezekiel 14:9

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And if the prophet be deceived when he hath spoken a thing, I the LORD have deceived that prophet, and I will stretch out my hand upon him, and will destroy him from the midst of my people Israel.

Analysis

God addresses Prophet deceived in this verse. Even prophets face judgment for error, demonstrating that God sees hearts and motives, not just external religious practices. The scenario reveals the futility of seeking God while maintaining idolatry—true inquiry requires undivided allegiance. Attempting to consult God while harboring idols represents the divided heart God rejects.

The passage illustrates that religious externals without heart reality constitute hypocrisy God abhors. Mere consultation of prophets, attendance at worship, or performance of rituals means nothing if the heart remains idolatrous. God demands total allegiance, not partial commitment combined with idolatrous hedging. The call is to genuine repentance involving both turning from sin and turning to God.

From a Reformed perspective, this passage teaches the doctrine of regeneration's necessity. External religion without heart transformation cannot save. Only the Spirit's work creating new hearts produces genuine faith and repentance. Attempts to maintain both God and idols reveal unregenerate hearts needing divine recreation, not mere moral reformation.

Historical Context

The elders coming to Ezekiel (v. 1) represented Jerusalem's leadership or fellow exiles seeking prophetic guidance. However, God revealed their secret idolatry—they maintained household gods or idolatrous practices while outwardly seeking Yahweh. This duplicity characterized pre-exilic Israel and necessitated judgment. Even prophets face judgment for error within this context of widespread syncretism where people attempted to hedge spiritual bets by worshiping both Yahweh and other deities. Archaeological discoveries of household figurines and foreign cult objects in Israelite homes confirm this pattern. The practice violated the Shema's demand for exclusive love and loyalty to Yahweh (Deuteronomy 6:4-5).

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Study Questions

1. How does this passage expose the futility of religious practices divorced from heart reality?
2. What modern idols do people attempt to maintain while still seeking God's blessing?
3. In what ways does Prophet deceived illustrate the necessity of genuine conversion versus mere external religion?

Interlinear Text

אֵת	וְ	דָּבָר	רֹא	בְּנֵבֶב	יְאָחָד	יְהִי	פָּתָח	יְתִי	כִּי	פָּתָח	יְתִי	כִּי	בְּנֵבֶב	יְאָחָד	
And if the prophet		H3588	be deceived			when he hath spoken		a thing							
H5030			H6601			H1696		H1697						H589	
I the LORD			be deceived	H853		And if the prophet	H1931							and I will stretch out	H5186
H3068			H6601			H5030									
אַתָּה	וְ	דָּבָר	רֹא	בְּנֵבֶב	יְאָחָד	יְהִי	פָּתָח	יְתִי	כִּי	פָּתָח	יְתִי	כִּי	בְּנֵבֶב	יְאָחָד	
H853			H5921			H8045									
my hand						upon him and will destroy		him from the midst						of my people	H5971
H3027						H8045		H8432							
וְיִשְׁרָאֵל						וְיִשְׁרָאֵל									
Israel															
H3478															

Additional Cross-References

Jeremiah 4:10 (References Lord): Then said I, Ah, Lord GOD! surely thou hast greatly deceived this people and Jerusalem, saying, Ye shall have peace; whereas the sword reacheth unto the soul.

Ezekiel 20:25 (Parallel theme): Wherefore I gave them also statutes that were not good, and judgments whereby they should not live;

Isaiah 9:12 (References Israel): The Syrians before, and the Philistines behind; and they shall devour Israel with open mouth. For all this his anger is not turned away, but his hand is stretched out still.

Isaiah 9:21 (Parallel theme): Manasseh, Ephraim; and Ephraim, Manasseh: and they together shall be against Judah. For all this his anger is not turned away, but his hand is stretched out still.

Isaiah 5:25 (References Lord): Therefore is the anger of the LORD kindled against his people, and he hath stretched forth his hand against them, and hath smitten them: and the hills did tremble, and their carcases were torn in the midst

of the streets. For all this his anger is not turned away, but his hand is stretched out still.

Isaiah 10:4 (Parallel theme): Without me they shall bow down under the prisoners, and they shall fall under the slain. For all this his anger is not turned away, but his hand is stretched out still.

Isaiah 63:16 (References Lord): Doubtless thou art our father, though Abraham be ignorant of us, and Israel acknowledge us not: thou, O LORD, art our father, our redeemer; thy name is from everlasting.

Isaiah 66:4 (Parallel theme): I also will choose their delusions, and will bring their fears upon them; because when I called, none did answer; when I spake, they did not hear: but they did evil before mine eyes, and chose that in which I delighted not.

Isaiah 9:17 (References Lord): Therefore the Lord shall have no joy in their young men, neither shall have mercy on their fatherless and widows: for every one is an hypocrite and an evildoer, and every mouth speaketh folly. For all this his anger is not turned away, but his hand is stretched out still.

Job 12:16 (Parallel theme): With him is strength and wisdom: the deceived and the deceiver are his.