

EZEKIEL 13 AGAINST FALSE PROPHETS AND PROPHETESSES

A very close connection exists between the subject of this chapter and the one immediately preceding it. The last chapter denounced the false expectations of the people, concerning the safety of Jerusalem; and here the prophet denounces the persons who were the chief instruments in feeding those expectations. It is more than probable that most of these false prophets were perfectly conscious of the fraud that they were practicing upon the people; their claims that they had received Divine communications were only pretexts for more easily securing their own selfish but shortsighted purposes. But it seems evident – especially from what is written in the Book of Jeremiah – that there were a few of these prophets who had truly become the dupes of their own delusions. A crafty deceiver who plays upon the gullibility of others for the sake of his own gain or aggrandizement will always be careful to make his announcements run in such a way that they seem to feed the desires and prejudices of the persons whom he addresses; but at the same time, the deceiver will be careful to never provide any clear or definite grounds for detecting his hypocrisy. And whenever such vain pretenders claim to have such great insight into the Lord's will, that they begin to prophesy events which will plainly be either confirmed or falsified by the workings of Divine Providence – then we may be sure that the spirit of fanaticism has taken over their brains. We will surely know that while they are busy deceiving others, they themselves have already been deceived.

This chapter is naturally divided into two principal parts – the first one speaking to the false prophets among the Lord's people, and the second to the false prophetesses. "Son of man, prophesy against the prophets of Israel that prophesy," the Lord told Ezekiel (verse 2). "Say thou unto them that prophesy out of their own hearts, Hear ye the word of the Lord: Thus saith the Lord Jehovah, Woe unto the foolish prophets that follow their own spirit, and have seen nothing." Their error was double. First, their messages were derived from the wrong source – namely, "their own hearts," instead of the mind of the Lord. And second, the point which they aimed at was going "after their own spirit," or following the natural bent of their wicked inclinations – instead of preaching for God's glory, and for the blessing of the souls of their fellow-men.

The punishment threatened against these false prophets is one that exactly corresponded with the nature of their sin. By making high pretensions of having communion with the Lord, they had endeavored to become persons of great rank and influence among the people; but all the while, the true foundation for such greatness was lacking. Therefore, the Lord declared His determination to make their fate appropriate for their condition; He would unmask their hypoc-

Outline of the chapter:

- ❖ The prophet speaks God's words of woe to the false prophets – verses 1-16
- ❖ He speaks against the false prophetesses as well – verses 17-23

risly, and reveal their nothingness. He would cast them out of His Kingdom as empty and worthless creatures. By their deceitful work, they had only ministered to the foolish desires and vain confidences of their hearers. The people were like the builders of a loose and shotty wall, and the false prophets were like persons coming after them and daubing it over with showy but unsubstantial mortar. Therefore, this wall would be assailed with the storm of the Lord's fury.

Some closely related words concerning false prophetesses occupy the remainder of this chapter. These wicked women are plainly represented as playing an important part in strengthening the reigning delusions of the time, and in lulling the people into a false security. The pernicious influence which they exerted was probably more from the seductive behaviors which they pursued, rather than from false prophecies that they uttered. Their falsehoods took the form of a more effeminate and luxurious character. They not only aimed at encouraging the people in their false security; but they also endeavored to pamper their love of fleshly ease and carnal enjoyments, in order to ensnare their souls. Therefore, the prophet turns upon them with a question of fiery indignation and sharp rebuke: "Will ye hunt the souls of my people, and save your own souls alive?" These wicked women were playing the part of soul-destroyers to other people, and it was vain for them to expect to escape the coming vengeance that was coming upon those whom they had led astray.



It is a part of Satan's deceitful schemes to avoid a formal repetition of old errors. He continually shifts and adapts his stratagems to whatever the ever-changing times require. Our Lord plainly forewarned us to beware of false prophets, who would arise and deceive many. In all ages, and under all forms, the objective of Satan is to corrupt and overthrow the truth of God. Therefore, our only effectual safeguard against his wily schemes – no matter what form or shape they assume – always remains the same. And that safeguard is that we must hold to the truth of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, in the simplicity and confidence of faith! It is a momentous concern to know the truth, so that the truth may make us free! But how shall we be able to discern a lying prophet? We must examine what he teaches us concerning Christ. What do the preachers of our present generation tell us of Jesus? Do they hold Him up as the Scriptures reveal Him – namely, as the Way, the Truth, and the Life? Do they delight to speak of the glories of His Person, and of the everlasting merit and efficacy of His blood and righteousness? If so, then they are indeed the spokesmen of the Lord; for they lead people's souls, as the star guided the wise men, unto Jesus! This is how we may know the difference between true preachers and false prophets.

Lord, protect all Your sons and daughters so they may never be led astray from the truth amidst the multitude of lies that are promulgated in this world! Amen.