

## Adam Clarke:

## Introduction

This chapter denounces heavy judgments against the lying prophets who flattered the people, in the midst of their sin and danger, with false hopes of peace and security, Ezekiel 13:1-9. The work of these deceivers is beautifully compared to a frail and insolent piece of building, which can never stand against the battering elements of heaven, (the Chaldean forces), which God will commission against it, Ezekiel 13:10-16. In the remaining part of the chapter woes are denounced against false prophetesses who practiced vain rites and divinations, with the view of promoting their own gain by deceiving the people, Ezekiel 13:17-23.

## Verse 2

That prophesy out of their own hearts - Who are neither inspired nor sent by Me. They are prophets out of their own hearts. They have their mission from their own assumption, and proceed in it from their own presumption. Such either go of themselves, or are sent by man. Such prophets, ministers, preachers, and clergy have been a curse to the Church and to the world for some thousands of years.

## Verse 4

Thy prophets are like the foxes in the deserts - The cunning of the fox in obtaining his prey has been long proverbial. These false prophets are represented as the foxes who, having got their prey by great subtlety, run to the desert to hide both themselves and it. So the false prophets, when the event did not answer to their prediction, got out of the way, that they might not be overwhelmed with the reproaches and indignation of the people.

## Verse 5

Ye have not gone up into the gaps - Far from opposing sinners, who are bringing down the wrath of God upon the place, you prevent their repentance by your flattering promises and false predictions. Ye have neither by prayers, example, nor advice, contributed any thing for the preservation of the place, or the salvation of the people's souls.

## Verse 9

They shall not be in the assembly of my people - They shall not be reputed members of my Church. They shall not be reckoned in the genealogy of true Israelites that return from captivity; and they shall never have a possession in the land; they shall be exhereditated and expatriated. They shall all perish in the siege, by the sword, the famine, and the pestilence.

## Verse 10

One built up a wall - A true prophet is as a wall of defense to the people. These false prophets pretend to be a wall of defense; but their wall is bad, and their mortar is worse. One gives a lying vision, another pledges himself that it is true; and the people believe what they say, and trust not in God, nor turn from their sins. The city is about to be besieged; it needs stronger fortifications than what it possesses. The prophet should be as a brazen wall for its defense; and such my prophets would have been had the people received the word from my mouth. But ye have prevented this by your lying vanities; and when you have perverted the people, you pretend to raise up a rampart of specious prophecy, full of fine promises, for their defense. What one false prophet says, another confirms; and this is like daubing over a bad wall with bad mortar, which prevents its blemishes and weaknesses being discovered, though it has no tendency to strengthen the building.

## Verse 11

There shall be an overflowing shower - That shall wash off this bad mortar; sweep away the ground on which the wall stands, and level it with the earth. In the eastern countries, where the walls are built with unbaked bricks, desolations of this kind are often occasioned by tempestuous rains. Of this sort of materials were the walls of ancient cities made, and hence the reason why no vestige of them remains. Witness Babylon, which was thus built. See the note on Ezekiel 4:1.

## Verse 17

Set thy face against the daughters of thy people, which prophesy - From this it appears that there were prophetesses in the land of Israel, that were really inspired by the Lord: for as a false religion necessarily implies a true one, of which it is the ape; so false prophetesses necessarily imply true ones, whom they endeavored to imitate.

That there were true prophetesses among the Jews is evident enough from such being mentioned in the sacred writings. Miriam, the sister of Moses Exodus 15:20; Numbers 12:2; Deborah, Judges 4:4; Huldah, 2 Kings 22:14;

Anna, the daughter of Phanuel, Luke 2:36; the four daughters of Philip the deacon, Acts 21:9. Calmet observes that there was scarcely a heresy in the primitive Church that was not supported and fomented by seducing women.

#### Verse 18

That sew pillows to all arm holes - I believe this refers to those cushions which are so copiously provided in the eastern countries for the apartments of women; on which they sit, lean, rest their heads, and prop up their arms. I have several drawings of eastern ladies, who are represented on sofas; and often with their arm thrown over a pillow, which is thereby pressed close to their side, and against which they thus recline. The prophet's discourse seems to point out that state of softness and effeminacy to which the predictions of those false prophetesses allured the inhabitants of Jerusalem. A careless voluptuous life is that which is here particularly reprehended.

And make kerchiefs - The word kerchief is French, *couvre chef*, that which covers the head; hence handkerchief and neck handkerchief, and pocket handkerchief are pitifully improper; because none of them is used to cover the head, from which alone that article of dress has its name. But what are we to understand by kerchiefs here? Probably some kind of ornamental dress which rendered women more enticing, so that they could the more successfully hunt or inveigle souls (men) into the worship of their false gods. These they put on heads of every stature - women of all ages, *komah*, of every woman that rose up to inveigle men to idolatry. The word *mispachoth*, translated here kerchiefs, and by the Vulgate *cervicalia*, bolsters, Calmet contends, means a sort of nets used in hunting, and in every place where it occurs it will bear this meaning; and hence the use to which it is here said to be applied, to hunt souls.

#### Verse 20

The souls that ye hunt to make them fly - *lephorechoth*, into the flower gardens, says Parkhurst. These false prophetesses decoyed men into these gardens, where probably some impure rites of worship were performed, as in that of *Asherah* or Venus. See Parkhurst under *Asherah*.

#### Verse 21

Your kerchiefs - Nets, or amulets, as some think.

#### Verse 22

With lies ye have made the heart of the righteous sad - Here is the ministry of these false prophetesses, and its effects. They told lies: they would speak, and they had no truth to tell; and therefore spoke falsities. They *saddened* the souls of the righteous, and strengthened the hands of the wicked. They promised them life, and prevented them from repenting and turning from their sins.

#### Verse 23

Ye shall see no more vanity - They pretended visions; but they were empty of reality.

Nor divine divinations - As God would not speak to them, they employed demons. Where God is not, because of the iniquity of the people, the devil is, to strengthen and support that iniquity. And if he cannot have his priests, he will have his priestesses; and these will have a Church like themselves, full of lying doctrines, and bad works.