

Ezekiel, God's Herald Ezekiel 5:13

From John Calvin, *Commentaries on the First Twenty Chapters of the Book of the Prophet Ezekiel*, trans. Thomas Myers (Edinburgh, Scotland: Calvin Translation Society, 1843), Vol. I, 209-210, emphasis added; updated to modern American English.

Ezekiel 5:13

“Thus shall My anger be spent, and I will cause My fury to rest upon them, and I will be avenged; and they shall know that I, the LORD, have spoken *it* in My zeal, when I have spent My fury upon them.”

He afterwards adds, *and they shall know that I, the LORD, have spoken it*. Here God obliquely blames the stupidity of the people, because they not only despised all prophecies, but also proudly laughed at his threats.

As often, then, as the Prophets declared the vengeance and judgments of God, they gave material for laughter to a perverse and impious people, and their obstinacy so blinded them that they did not think it was God who spoke; for they supposed that men only would be their adversaries, and hence their rage against the Prophets. For if they had thought that the prophets had spoken by divine inspiration, they would never have dared to rise against them so madly; but because they thought that the Prophets uttered in public their own comments, therefore they strove with them in forgetfulness of God.

The Jews, therefore, did not acknowledge Him. But let us mark the source of their ignorance: they turned aside their senses from God of their own accord, as at this time many do not think that God speaks when His truth is openly shown from the Scriptures. Why do they not think so? because they are unwilling.

Hence this blindness was voluntary and affected, so to speak, in the ancient people, since they imagined that the prophecies would be without effect. This is the reason why the Prophet says, *then they shall know that I have spoken*, because, as the proverb is, experience is the fool's teacher; since, therefore, they rejected all threats, it came to pass that, by the teaching of calamity, they perceived too late that God was the speaker.

And so there is an antithesis between experimental knowledge, and blindness which arises from an evil disposition and a contempt of God. For when he says, *they shall know when He has fulfilled His wrath*, that knowledge shall be too late and unfruitful.

Lastly, God here pronounces, that He would inflict just punishment on their voluntary ignorance, from which the Jews should know, whether they would or not, that the prophecies against which they had closed their eyes had proceeded from Himself alone.

He says also, *that He had spoken in His zeal*, or jealousy, because the Prophets were thought to be very furious when they thundered so against the impious. God therefore here acquits those whom we know were commonly esteemed fanatics, and says *that He spoke in His zeal*, because the impious, when they wish to load the servants of God with envy, object that He is mild and merciful, and that it does not accord with His character to speak roughly and sharply. God therefore says that He also uses zeal, or anger, that

the Jews might not think His Prophets carried away with inconsiderate zeal and fervor, since we know that they fell into that grievous error.