

# MATAN AL HAPEREK

## The Six-Year Online Weekly Tanach Learning Program



### Perek 12:21 - 13

A series of prophecies concerning vision and prophecy appear in these pesukim. They are divided into two pairs. The first pair (12:21-28) describes two sayings concerning true prophecy that were prevalent at the time. The people discount the words of the prophets with the argument that they will not be realized in their time, while the prophet lays claim to legitimacy by saying that they will be realized shortly. The second pair (perek 13) consists of two prophecies against false prophets (1-16) and false prophetesses (17-23).

- 1 *“What is this proverb of yours about the land of Israel...”* (22). The two sayings mentioned above concerning the true prophecies are similar in content and style. The first (22), however, is more general, while the second (27) refers specifically to Yechezkel’s prophecy. Focus on the differences between the sayings and on the attitude of the people to each of the visions that are referred to in these sayings.
- 2 The false prophets are referred to by two unique similes: foxes in ruins and plasterers with daub (1-16).





a) What is the sin of the prophets according to the first simile? Be assisted by **Radak**:

*“As foxes in ruins”* – Your prophets were like foxes who enter vineyards through breaches in the fence and destroy the vineyard, as it says (Shir HaShirim 2:15) “little foxes who ruin the vineyards.” The breach is called a ruin because a ruin is a place of breaches, and Israel is called a vineyard. The false prophets who are the foxes enter through the breach in order to destroy the vineyard. The breach refers to those of little faith among them who are enticed by the beautiful words of the false prophets and who support them so that the others will also listen to them, and they destroy the vineyard of God...

As to the role of the true prophet in this regard, see the description in **Tehillim** (106:23) of Moshe Rabbeinu after the sin of the golden calf. *“He intended to destroy them [and would have] were it not that Moshe, His chosen one, stood before Him in the breach to return His wrath from destroying.”* In addition, study the prophecy later in this book (22:28-30).

b) In the second simile, a wall serves to demonstrate the actions of the false prophets. The picture that emerges here is the opposite of the one of the foxes in the vineyard. Focus on the differences between the similes. What is the sin that is described in the second simile? How does it complement the sin described in the simile of the foxes in the vineyard?

- 3 Verses 17-23 contain a prophecy condemning false prophetesses. What is the focus of the criticism of the prophetesses (examine pesukim 19 and 22 and pay attention to the repetition of the concept of “ensnaring” in the prophecy)? Notice the difference between the general description of the prophecy of the false prophets as opposed to the more specific description of the false prophetesses.



## Perek 14

This perek begins by condemning the elders who come to consult God while they still cling to idolatry in their hearts (1-11). The rest of the perek deals primarily with the principle of personal retribution during a period of national punishment. The end of the perek concerns the fate of Jerusalem and its survivors in the context of this principle.

- 4 “*But the prophet who is enticed and speaks a word...*” (9). The pesukim that conclude the first part and deal with the prophet who fabricates his prophecy appear to contradict the concept of free choice. Study the commentaries, and see how each commentator explains the pesukim.

**Rashi:** “*But the prophet who is enticed and speaks a word*” – that is not true. “*I have enticed*” - I made an opening for him [to go] where he wanted. From this we learn whoever chooses to be impure [the way] is opened for him.

**Radak:** “*But the prophet who is enticed*” – He said and such will be the punishment of the prophet who is enticed. The idea is similar to that of “who will entice Achav” (1 Melachim 22:20) meaning the awakening of the willing spirit (to arouse the will of the prophet to prophesy in that way). **For the false prophet deserves to die for things that he did secretly...** and the Lord aroused their desire for this [false prophecy] in order to expose their lies and their wantonness. [Later] when they are punished by the Lord, the people will justify their sentence... This is similar to “and I will harden Pharaoh’s heart.”



**Metzudat David:** *“But the prophet who is enticed”* – He will be enticed by his heart and will speak from his soul to satisfy the questioner. “I” – as in “was it I?” and the [words of] question are absent. There are many such cases. The meaning is: Was it I, God who enticed him to speak a lie? Isn’t there freedom of choice? Therefore – *“I shall stretch out My hand upon him and destroy him from the midst of My people Israel.”*

- 5 The second part of the perek (12-23) consists of four similarly styled sections and deals with the punishments that God will bring upon the land, and the rescue of individuals like Noach, Daniel and Iyov. Consider what these men have in common and why they are brought as examples. Pay attention to their personalities and their experiences. Study the midrash:

Three [people] saw three worlds: Noach, Daniel and Iyov. Noach saw a settled world, saw it destroyed, and saw it rebuilt. Daniel saw the first Temple, saw it destroyed, and saw the rebuilt second Temple. Iyov saw his home built up, saw it destroyed, and saw it built up again. (**Tanchuma (Warsaw) Parashat Noach 6**)

- 6 The concept of personal retribution, repeated several times in the prophecy, determines that the righteous cannot even save their own families: *“they will not save sons and daughters, but they alone will be saved”* (18). However, in the description of the destruction of Jerusalem (21-23), there is a deviation from this from this principle. What is the reason for this? Study the **Metzudot**:

*“But behold, a remnant remains therein”* – In spite of all this, because of My mercy, there will be some survivors, and these are the sons and daughters who are taken from Jerusalem to go into exile... *“And you will be comforted”* – And you will find consolation in your mourning for the evil that I brought upon Jerusalem when I bring them and you see that they were deserving of annihilation.



## Appendix

*“Now should these three men be in its midst - Noah, Daniel (written: Danel), and Iyov...”*

“Danel” is mentioned three times in sefer Yechezkel – twice in perek 14 and another time in 28:3. The identity of this man is not clear. According to [the way we] read, it is “Daniel”, and according to most commentators, this is Daniel who was exiled to the Babylonian king’s palace and who gave his name to the book of Daniel in the Tanach. However, there are several difficulties with this interpretation. First, Daniel was a younger contemporary of Yechezkel’s, and it is hard to imagine that in the time of Yechezkel he was already famous enough to serve as an example. Second, this Danel appears with two other righteous men who were not Jewish – Noah and Iyov – and it is therefore reasonable to assume that he, too, was a figure well known throughout the ancient near east. Even the fact that the written name – Danel – differs from Daniel testifies to the fact that this is someone else.

This Danel is mentioned another time in sefer Yechezkel, in the prophecy to the prince of Tyre (28:3): *“Behold, are you wiser than Danel (read: Daniel), that no secret is hidden from you?”* The man mentioned here is known, not just for his righteousness, but also for his wisdom, and his fame has reached as far as Tyre.

In Ugaritic texts, there is a work whose central characters are Danel and his son. As told in the Ugaritic story, Danel was a childless king who prayed to the gods and brought sacrifices. The god hearkened to his prayer and a son was born. Danel is described as a righteous king who always



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judged justly as he sat in the gate of the city “to judge the case of the widow and to rule in the case of the orphan.” As in the story of Iyov, it is also told how his son, Aqhat, was killed by the god, and that despite his righteousness, Danel was unable to save him. (**Y. Avishor, The World of the Tanach – Yechezkel**)

According to this interpretation, this prophecy concerns three universal (not Jewish) righteous men who suffered and were saved due to their righteousness, but were unable to save others. It is interesting to compare the righteous men described by Yechezkel to the righteous men listed by his contemporary, Yirmiyahu, in his prophecy concerning the destruction (Yirmiyahu 15:1). *“And the Lord said to me; If Moshe and Shmuel stand before Me, I have no desire for this people, send [them] away from before My face and let them go forth.”* The prophets of Israel were characterized by their prayers and their self-sacrifice in order to save the nation. This is in opposition to Noach, Danel and Iyov, who represent universal righteous men, but who make no effort to save those around them. Yirmiyahu’s prophecy, in that case, presents a more serious situation where even the prayers of the prophets and the righteous cannot save the people from destruction.

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