

Jeremiah 29:31

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Send to all them of the captivity, saying, Thus saith the LORD concerning Shemaiah the Nehelamite; Because that Shemaiah hath prophesied unto you, and I sent him not, and he caused you to trust in a lie:

Analysis

Because that Shemaiah hath prophesied unto you, and I sent him not—the devastating verdict **וְאֲנִי לֹא שְׁלַחְתִּי** (*va'ani lo shelachti*, 'and I did not send him') exposes the core issue. True prophecy requires divine **שְׁלִיחוּת** (*shlichut*, 'sending/ commission'). Without it, religious speech is unauthorized presumption, however sincere or eloquent.

He caused you to trust in a lie (**שֶׁקֶר**, *sheqer*)—false prophecy's damage isn't merely incorrect prediction but moral corruption, teaching people to trust falsehood. The causative **הִבְטִיחַ** (*hivtiach*, 'caused to trust') emphasizes Shemaiah's active culpability: he didn't merely speak error but built false confidence. This recalls Eden's serpent causing Eve to trust God's word was restrictive rather than protective (Genesis 3:1-5). False teaching always invites trust in something other than God's revealed truth.

Historical Context

Shemaiah's lie was that exile would end quickly, contradicting the '70 years' prophecy. Those who trusted this built their lives on false hope, unprepared for generations of displacement. When Jerusalem fell (586 BC), Shemaiah's followers faced shattered expectations—the inevitable fruit of trusting lies.

Related Passages

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. How can you test whether teaching comes from divine sending or human presumption—what marks distinguish them?
2. When has trusting a 'lie' about God's promises or timing caused spiritual damage in your life or others'?
3. What responsibility do teachers bear not just for truth-content but for the trust their words create in listeners?

Interlinear Text

שְׁלַחַת יו	עַל	כָּל	הַגּוֹלָה	אָמַר	כֹּה	אָמַר
Send	H5921	H3605	to all them of the captivity	Thus saith	H3541	Thus saith
H7971			H1473	H559		H559
אֵל יְהוָה	אֶל	שְׁמַעִיָּה	הַנְּחֵלְמִי	עַן	אֲשֶׁר	
the LORD	H413	Because that Shemaiah	the Nehelamite	H3282	H834	
H3068		H8098	H5161			
נָבֵא	לְךָ	שְׁמַעִיָּה	וְאֲנִי	לֹא	שְׁלַחַת יו	
hath prophesied	H0	Because that Shemaiah	H589	H3808	Send	
H5012		H8098			H7971	
וְצִטָּה	אֶתְּךָ	עַל	שֶׁקֶר:			
him not and he caused you to trust	H853	H5921	in a lie			
H982			H8267			

Additional Cross-References

Jeremiah 29:9 (References Lord): For they prophesy falsely unto you in my name: I have not sent them, saith the LORD.

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