

CHAPTER 29

The contest between Jeremiah and the false prophets was carried on before by preaching, here by writing; there we had sermon against sermon, here we have letter against letter, for some of the false prophets are now carried away into captivity in Babylon, while Jeremiah remains in his own country. Now here is,

I. A letter which Jeremiah wrote to the captives in Babylon, against their prophets that they had there (v. 1-3), in which letter,

- 1.** He endeavours to reconcile them to their captivity, to be easy under it and to make the best of it (v. 4-7).
- 2.** He cautions them not to give any credit to their false prophets, who fed them with hopes of a speedy release (v. 8, 9).
- 3.** He assures them that God would restore them in mercy to their own land again, at the end of 70 years (v. 10-14).
- 4.** He foretels the destruction of those who yet continued, and that they should be persecuted with one judgment after another, and sent at last into captivity (v. 15-19).
- 5.** He prophesies the destruction of two of their false prophets that they had in Babylon, that both soothed them up in their sins and set them bad examples (v. 20-23), and this is the purport of Jeremiah's letter.

II. Here is a letter which Shemaiah, a false prophet in Babylon, wrote to the priests at Jerusalem, to stir them up to persecute Jeremiah (v. 24-29), and a denunciation of God's wrath against him for writing such a letter (v. 30-32). Such struggles as these have there always been between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent.

◀291▶ JEREMIAH 29:1-7

ADVICE TO THE CAPTIVES IN BABYLON

We are here told,

I. That Jeremiah wrote to the captives in Babylon, in the name of the Lord. Jeconiah had surrendered himself a prisoner, with the queen his mother, the chamberlains of his household, called here the *eunuchs*, and many of *the princes of Judah and Jerusalem*, who were at that time the most active men; *the carpenters and smiths* likewise, being demanded, were yielded up, that those who remained might not have any proper hands to fortify their city or furnish themselves with weapons of war. By this tame submission it was hoped that Nebuchadnezzar would be pacified. *Satis est prostrasse leoni — It suffices the lion to have laid his antagonist prostrate*; but the imperious conqueror grows upon their concessions, like Benhadad upon Ahab's, ¹²⁰⁵1 Kings 20:5, 6. And, not content with this, when these had *departed from Jerusalem* he comes again, and fetches away many more of *the elders, the priests, the prophets, and the people* (v. 1), such as he thought fit, or such as his soldiers could lay hands on, and carries them to Babylon. The case of these captives was very melancholy, the rather because they, being thus distinguished from the rest of their brethren who continued in their own land, looked as if they were greater sinners than all men who dwelt at Jerusalem. Jeremiah therefore writes a letter to them, to comfort them, assuring them that they had no reason either to despair of succour themselves or to envy their brethren that were left behind. Note,

1. The word of God written is as truly given by *inspiration of God* as his word spoken was; and this was the proper way of spreading the knowledge of God's will among his *children scattered abroad*.

2. We may serve God and do good by writing to our friends at a distance pious letters of seasonable comforts and wholesome counsels. Those whom we cannot speak to we may write to; that which is written remains. This letter of Jeremiah's was sent to the captives in Babylon by the hands of the ambassadors whom king Zedekiah sent to Nebuchadnezzar, probably to pay him his tribute and renew his submission to him, or to treat of peace with him, in which treaty the captives might perhaps hope that they should be included, v. 3. By such messengers Jeremiah chose to send this message, to put an honour upon it, because it was a message from God, or perhaps because there was no settled way of sending letters to Babylon, but as such an occasion as this offered, and then it made the condition of the captives there the more melancholy, that they could rarely hear from their friends and relations they had left behind, which is some reviving and satisfaction to those that are separated from one another.

II. We are here told what he wrote. A copy of the letter at large follows here to v. 24. In these verses,

1. He assures them that he wrote in the name of the *Lord of hosts, the God of Israel*, who indited the letter; Jeremiah was but the scribe or amanuensis. It would be comfortable to them, in their captivity, to hear that God is *the Lord of hosts*, of all hosts, and is therefore able to help and deliver them; and that he is the *God of Israel* still, a God in covenant with his people, though he contend with them, and their enemies for the present are too hard for them. This would likewise be an admonition to them to stand upon their guard against all temptations to the idolatry of Babylon, because the *God of Israel*, the God whom they served, is *Lord of hosts*. God's sending to them in this letter might be an encouragement to them in their captivity, as it was an evidence that he had not cast them off, had not abandoned them and disinherited them, though he was displeased with them and corrected them; for, if the Lord had been pleased to kill them, he would not have written to them.

2. God by him owns the hand he had in their captivity: *I have caused you to be carried away*, v. 4 and again, v. 7. All the force of the king of Babylon could not have done it if God had not ordered it; nor could he have any power against them but what was given him from above. If God caused them to be carried captives, they might be sure that he neither did them any wrong nor meant them any hurt. Note, It will help very much to reconcile us to our troubles, and to make us patient under them, to consider that they are what God has appointed us to. *I opened not my mouth, because thou didst it*.

3. He bids them think of nothing but settling there; and therefore let them resolve to make the best of it (v. 5, 6): *Build yourselves houses and dwell in them*, etc. By all this it is intimated to them,

(1.) That they must not feed themselves with hopes of a speedy return out of their captivity, for that would keep them still unsettled and consequently uneasy; they would apply themselves to no business, take no comfort, but be always tiring themselves and provoking their conquerors with the expectations of relief; and their disappointment at last would sink them into despair and make their condition much more miserable than otherwise it would be. Let them therefore reckon upon a continuance there, and accommodate themselves to it as well as they can. Let them

*build, and plant, and marry, and dispose of their children there as if they were at home in their own land. Let them take a pleasure in seeing their families built up and multiplied; for, though they must expect themselves to die in captivity, yet their children may live to see better days. If they live in the fear of God, what should hinder them but they may live comfortably in Babylon? They cannot but weep sometimes when they remember Zion. But let not weeping hinder sowing; let them not sorrow as those that have no hope, no joy; for they have both. Note, In all conditions of life it is our wisdom and duty to make the best of that which is, and not to throw away the comfort of what we may have because we have not all we would have. We have a natural affection for our native country; it strangely draws our minds; but it is with a *nescio qua dulcedine* — *we can give no good account of the sweet attraction*; and therefore, if providence remove us to some other country, we must resolve to live easy there, to bring our mind to our condition when our condition is not in every thing to our mind. If the earth be the Lord's, then, wherever a child of God goes, he does not go off his Father's ground. *Patria est ubicunque bene est* — *That place is our country in which we are well off*. If things be not as they have been, instead of fretting at that, we must live in hopes that they will be better than they are. *Non si male nunc, et olim sic erit* — *Though we suffer now we shall not always*.*

(2.) That they must not disquiet themselves with fears of intolerable hardships in their captivity. They might be ready to suggest (as persons in trouble are always apt to make the worst of things) that it would be in vain to build houses, for their lords and masters would not suffer them to dwell in them when they had built them, nor to eat the fruit of the vineyards they planted. “Never fear,” says God; “if you live peaceably with them, you shall find them civil to you.” Meek and quiet people, that work and mind their own business, have often found much better treatment, even with strangers and enemies, than they expected; and God has made his people to be *pitied of those that carry them captives* (¹⁹⁶⁵Psalm 106:46), and a pity it is but that those who have built houses should dwell in them. Nay,

4. He directs them to seek the good of the country where they were captives (v. 7), to pray for it, to endeavour to promote it. This forbids them to attempt any thing against the public peace while they were subjects to the king of Babylon. Though he was a heathen, an idolater, an oppressor, and an enemy to God and his church, yet, while he gave them protection, they must pay him allegiance, and live *quiet and peaceable lives* under

him, *in all godliness and honesty*, not plotting to shake off his yoke, but patiently leaving it to God in due time to work deliverance for them. Nay, they must pray to God for the peace of the places where they were, that they might oblige them to continue their kindness to them and disprove the character that had been given their nation, that they were *hurtful to kings and provinces*, and *moved sedition*, ^{<15015>}Ezra 4:15. Both the wisdom of the serpent and the innocency of the dove required them to be true to the government they lived under: *For in the peace thereof you shall have peace*; should the country be embroiled in war, they would have the greatest share in the calamitous effects of it. Thus the primitive Christians, according to the temper of their holy religion, prayed for the powers that were, though they were persecuting powers. And, if they were to pray for and seek the peace of the land of their captivity, much more reason have we to pray for the welfare of the land of our nativity, where we are a free people under a good government, *that in the peace thereof we and ours may have peace*. Every passenger is concerned in the safety of the ship.

^{<2008>}JEREMIAH 29:8-14

ADVICE TO THE CAPTIVES IN BABYLON

To make the people quiet and easy in their captivity,

I. God takes them off from building upon the false foundation which their pretended prophets laid, v. 8, 9. They told them that their captivity should be short, and therefore that they must not think of taking root in Babylon, but be upon the wing to go back: “Now herein *they deceive you*,” says God; “*they prophesy a lie to you*, though they prophesy *in my name*. But *let them not deceive you*, suffer not yourselves to be deluded by them.” As long as we have the word of truth to try the spirits by it is our own fault if we be deceived; for by it we may be undeceived. *Hearken not to your dreams, which you cause to be dreamed*. He means either the dreams or fancies which the people pleased themselves with, and with which they filled their own heads (by thinking and speaking of nothing else but a speedy enlargement when they were awake they caused themselves to dream of it when they were asleep, and then took that for a good omen, and with it strengthened themselves in their vain expectations), or the dreams which the prophets dreamed and grounded their prophecies upon.

God tells the people, *They are your dreams*, because they pleased them, were the dreams that they desired and wished for. They *caused them to be dreamed*; for they hearkened to them, and encouraged the prophets to put such deceits upon them, desiring them to prophesy nothing but *smooth things*, ²³⁰⁰Isaiah 30:10. They were dreams of their own bespeaking. False prophets would not flatter people in their sins, but that they love to be flattered, and speak smoothly to their prophets that their prophets may speak smoothly to them.

II. He gives them a good foundation to build their hopes upon. We would not persuade people to pull down the house they have built upon the sand, but that there is a rock ready for them to rebuild upon. God here promises them that, though they should not return quickly, they should return at length, *after seventy years be accomplished*. By this it appears that the seventy years of the captivity are not to be reckoned from the last captivity, but the first. Note, Though the deliverance of the church do not come in our time, it is sufficient that it will come in God's time, and we are sure that that is the best time. The promise is that God will visit them in mercy; though he had long seemed to be strange to them, he will come among them, and appear for them, and put honour upon them, as great men do upon their inferiors by coming to visit them. He will put an end to *their captivity*, and *turn away* all the calamities of it. Though they are dispersed, some in one country and some in another, he will *gather them from all the places whither they are driven*, will set up a standard for them all to resort to, and incorporate them again in one body. And though they are at a great distance they shall be brought again to their own land, *to the place whence they were carried captive*, v. 14. Now,

1. This shall be the performance of God's promise to them (v. 10): *I will perform my good word towards you*. Let not the failing of those predictions which are delivered as from God lessen the reputation of those that really are from him. That which is indeed God's word is a *good word*, and therefore it will be made good, and not one iota or tittle of it shall fall to the ground. *Hath he said, and shall he not do it?* This will make their return out of captivity very comfortable, that it will be the performance of God's good word to them, the product of a gracious promise.

2. This shall be in pursuance of God's purposes concerning them (v. 11): *I know the thoughts that I think towards you*. Known unto God are all his works, for known unto him are all his thoughts (⁴⁴⁵⁸Acts 15:18) and his

works agree exactly with his thoughts; he does all *according to the counsel of his will*. We often do not know our own thoughts, nor know our own mind, but God is never at any uncertainty within himself. We are sometimes ready to fear that God's designs concerning us are all against us; but he knows the contrary concerning his own people, that they are *thoughts of good and not of evil*; even that which seems evil is designed for good. His thoughts are all working towards the expected end, which he will give in due time. The end they expect will come, though perhaps not when they expect it. Let them have patience till the fruit is ripe, and then they shall have it. He will give them *an end, and expectation*, so it is in the original.

(1.) He will give them to see *the end* (the comfortable termination) of their trouble; though it last long, it shall not last always. *The time to favour Zion, yea, the set time, will come*. When things are at the worst they will begin to mend; and he will give them to see the glorious perfection of their deliverance; for, as for God, his work is perfect. He that in the beginning finished the *heavens and the earth*, and all the *hosts* of both, will finish all the blessings of both to his people. When he begins in ways of mercy he will *make an end*. God does nothing by halves.

(2.) He will give them to see the *expectation*, that *end* which they desire and hope for, and have been long waiting for. He will give them, not the expectations of their fears, nor the expectations of their fancies, but the expectations of their faith, the end which he has promised and which will turn for the best to them.

3. This shall be in answer to their prayers and supplications to God, v. 12-14.

(1.) God will stir them up to pray: *Then shall you call upon me, and you shall go, and pray unto me*. Note, When God is about to give his people the expected good he pours out a spirit of prayer, and it is a good sign that he is coming towards them in mercy. Then, when you see the *expected end* approaching, *then you shall call upon me*. Note, Promises are given, not to supersede, but to quicken and encourage prayer: and when deliverance is coming we must by prayer go forth to meet it. When Daniel understood that the 70 years were near expiring, then he *set his face* with more fervency than ever *to seek the Lord*, ~~200~~ Daniel 9:2, 3.

(2.) He will then stir up himself to come and save them (~~806~~ Psalm 80:2): *I will hearken unto you, and I will be found of you.* God has said it, and we may depend upon it, *Seek and you shall find.* We have a general rule laid down (v. 13): *You shall find me when you shall search for me with all your heart.* In seeking God we must search for him, accomplish a diligent search, search for directions in seeking him and encouragements to our faith and hope. We must continue seeking, and take pains in seeking, as those that search; and this we must do with our heart (that is, in sincerity and uprightness), and with our whole heart (that is, with vigour and fervency, putting forth *all that is within us* in prayer), and those who thus *seek God shall find him*, and shall find him their bountiful rewarder, ~~816~~ Hebrews 11:6. He never said to such, *Seek you me in vain.*

~~295~~ JEREMIAH 29:15-23

THE DOOM OF THE FALSE PROPHETS

Jeremiah, having given great encouragement to those among the captives whom he knew to be serious and well-affected, assuring them that God had very kind and favourable intentions concerning them, here turns to those among them who slighted the counsels and comforts that Jeremiah ministered to them and depended upon what the false prophets flattered them with. When this letter came from Jeremiah they would be ready to say, “Why should he make himself so busy, and take upon him to advise us? *The Lord has raised us up prophets in Babylon*, v. 15. We are satisfied with those prophets, and can depend upon them, and have no occasion to hear from any prophets in Jerusalem.” See the impudent wickedness of this people; as the prophets, when they prophesied lies, said that they had them from God, so the people, when they invited those prophets thus to flatter them, fathered it upon God, and said that it was the Lord that raised them up those prophets. Whereas we may be sure that those who harden people in their sins, and deceive them with false and groundless hopes of God's mercy, are no prophets of God's raising up. These prophets of their own told them that no more should be carried captive, but that those who were in captivity should shortly return. Now, in answer to this,

1. The prophet here foretells the utter destruction of those who remained still at Jerusalem, notwithstanding what those false prophets said to the

contrary: “As for the *king* and *people* that *dwell in the city*, who, you think, will be ready to bid you welcome when you return, you are deceived; they shall be followed with one judgment after another, *sword, famine, and pestilence*, which shall cut off multitudes; and the poor and miserable remains shall be *removed into all kingdoms of the earth*,” v. 16, 18. And thus God *will make them*, or rather deal with them accordingly, as the salt that has *lost its savour*, which, being good for nothing, is cast to the dunghill, and so are rotten figs. This refers to the vision and the prophecy upon it which we had Jeremiah 24. And the reason given for these proceedings against them is the same that has often been given and will justify God in the eternal ruin of impenitent sinners (v. 19): *Because they have not hearkened to my words. I called, but they refused.*

2. He foretells the judgment of God upon the false prophets in Babylon, who deceived the people of God there. He calls upon all the children of the captivity, who boasted of them as prophets of God's raising up (v. 20): “Stand still, and hear the doom of the prophets you are so fond of.” The two prophets are named here, *Ahab* and *Zedekiah*, v. 21. Observe,

(1.) The crimes charged upon them — impiety and immorality: They *prophesied lies in God's name* (v. 21), and again (v. 23), They have *spoken lying words in my name*. Lying was bad, lying to the people of God to delude them into a false hope was worse, but fathering their lies upon the God of truth was worst of all. And no marvel if those that had the face to do that could allow themselves in the gratification of those vile affections to which God, in a way of righteous judgment, *gave them up*. They have done *villainy in Israel*, for they have *committed adultery with their neighbours' wives*. Adultery is villainy in Israel, and in such as pretend to be prophets, who by such wickednesses manifestly disprove their own pretensions. God never sent such profligate wretches on his errands. He is the *Lord God of the holy prophets*, not of such impure ones. Here it appears why they flattered others in their sins — because they could not reprove them without condemning themselves. These lewd practices of theirs they knew how to conceal from the eye of the world, that they might preserve their credit; but *I know it and am a witness, saith the Lord*. The most secret sins are known to God; he can see the villainy that is covered with the thickest cloak of hypocrisy, and there is a day coming when he will bring to light all these hidden works of darkness and every man will appear in his own colours.

(2.) The judgments threatened against them: *The king of Babylon shall slay them before your eyes; nay, he shall put them to a miserable death, roast them in the fire*, v. 22. We may suppose that it was not for their impiety and immorality that Nebuchadnezzar punished them thus severely, but for sedition, and some attempts of their turbulent spirits upon the public peace, and stirring up the people to revolt and rebel. So much of their wickedness shall then be detected, and in such a wretched manner they shall end their days, that their names shall be a curse among the captives in Babylon, v. 22. When men would imprecate the greatest evil upon one they hated they would think they could not load them with a heavier curse, in fewer words, than to say, *The Lord make thee like Zedekiah and like Ahab*. Thus were they made ashamed of the prophets they had been proud of, and convinced at last of their folly in hearkening to them. God's faithful prophets were sometimes charged with being the troublers of the land, and as such were tortured and slain; but their names were a blessing when they were gone and their memory sweet, not as these false prophets. As malefactors are attended with infamy and disgrace, so martyrs with glory and honour.

~~2021~~ JEREMIAH 29:24-32

THE DOOM OF SHEMAIAH

We have perused the contents of Jeremiah's letter to the captives in Babylon, who had reason, with a great deal of thanks to God and him, to acknowledge the receipt of it, and lay it up among their treasures. But we cannot wonder if the false prophets they had among them were enraged at it; for it gave them their true character. Now here we are told concerning one of them,

I. How he manifested his malice against Jeremiah. this busy fellow is called *SHEMAIAH the Nehelamite*, the *dreamer* (so the margin reads it), because all his prophecies he pretended to have received from God in a dream. He had got a copy of Jeremiah's letter to the captives, or had heard it read, or information was given to him concerning it, and it nettled him exceedingly; and he will take pen in hand, and answer it, yea, that he will. But how? He does not write to Jeremiah in justification of his own mission, nor offer any rational arguments for the support of his prophecies

concerning the speedy return of the captives; but he writes to the priests, those faithful patrons of the false prophets, and instigates them to persecute Jeremiah. He writes in his own name, not so much as pretending to have the people's consent to it; but, as if he must be dictator to all mankind, he sends a circular letter (as it should seem) among the priests at Jerusalem and the rest of the people, probably by the same messengers that brought the letter from Jeremiah. But it is chiefly directed to Zephaniah, who was either the immediate son of Maaseiah, or of the 24th course of the priests, of which Maaseiah was the father and head. He was not the high priest, but sagan or suffragan to the high priest, or in some other considerable post of command in the temple, as Pashur, ²⁴⁰¹Jeremiah 20:1. Perhaps he was chairman of that committee of priests that was appointed in a particular manner to take cognizance of those that pretended to be prophets, of which there were very many at this time, and to give judgment concerning them. Now,

1. He puts him and the other priests in mind of the duty of their place (v. 26): *The Lord hath made thee priest instead of Jehoiada the priest.* Some think that he refers to the famous Jehoiada, that great reformer in the days of Joash; and (says Mr. Gataker) he would insinuate that this Zephaniah is for spirit and zeal such another as he, and raised up, as he was, for the glory of God and the good of the church; and therefore it was expected from him that he should proceed against Jeremiah. Thus (says he) there is no act so injurious or impious, but that wicked wretches and false prophets will not only attempt it, but colour it also with some specious pretence of piety and zeal for God's glory, ²⁴⁰⁵Isaiah 66:5; ²⁴⁰²John 16:2. Or, rather, it was some other Jehoiada, his immediate predecessor in this office, who perhaps was carried to Babylon among the priests, v. 1. Zephaniah is advanced, sooner than he expected, to this place of trust and power, and Shemaiah would have him think that Providence had preferred him that he might persecute God's prophets, that he had come to this government for such a time as this, and that he was unjust and ungrateful if he did not thus improve his power, or, rather, abuse it. Their hearts are wretchedly hardened who can justify the doing of mischief by their having a power to do it. These priests' business was to examine *every man that is mad and makes himself a prophet.* God's faithful prophets are here represented as prophets of their own making, usurpers of the office, and lay-intruders, as men that were mad, actuated by some demon, and not divinely inspired, or as distracted men and men in a frenzy. Thus the characters of the false

prophets are thrown upon the true ones; and, if this had been indeed their character, they would have deserved to be bound as madmen and punished as pretenders, and therefore he concludes that Jeremiah must be so treated. He does not bid them examine whether Jeremiah could produce any proofs of his mission and could make it to appear that he was not mad. No; that is taken for granted, and, when once he has had a bad name given him, he must be run down of course.

2. He informs them of the letter which Jeremiah had written to the captives (v. 28): *He sent unto us in Babylon, with the authority of a prophet, saying, This captivity is long, and therefore resolve to make the best of it. And what harm was there in this, that it should be objected to him as a crime? The false prophets had formerly said that the captivity would never come,* ²⁴⁴³ Jeremiah 14:13. Jeremiah had said that it would come, and the event had already proved him in the right, which obliged them to give credit to him who now said that it would be long, rather than to those who said that it would be short, but had once before been found liars.

3. He demands judgment against him, taking it for granted that he is *mad*, and *makes himself a prophet*. He expects that they will order him to be put *in prison* and *in the stocks* (v. 26), that they will thus punish him, and by putting him to disgrace possess the people with prejudices against him, ruin his reputation, and so prevent the giving of any credit to his prophecies at Jerusalem, hoping that, if they could gain that point, the captives in Babylon would not be influenced by him. Nay, he takes upon him to chide Zephaniah for his neglect (v. 27): *Why hast thou not rebuked and restrained Jeremiah of Anathoth?* See how insolent and imperious these false prophets had grown, that, though they were in captivity, they would give law to the priests who were not only at liberty, but in power. It is common for those that pretend to more knowledge than their neighbours to be thus assuming. Now here is a remarkable instance of the hardness of the hearts of sinners, and it is enough to make us all fear *lest our hearts be at any time hardened*. For here we find,

(1.) That these sinners would not be convinced by the clearest evidence. God had confirmed his word in the mouth of Jeremiah; it had *taken hold* of them (³⁰¹⁶Zechariah 1:6); and yet, because he does not prophesy to them the smooth things they desired, they are resolved to look upon him as not

duly called to the office of a prophet. None so blind as those that will not see.

(2.) That they would not be reclaimed and reformed by the most severe chastisement. They were now sent into a miserable thralldom for *mocking the messengers of the Lord* and *misusing his prophets*. This was the sin for which God now contended with them; and yet in *their distress they trespass yet more against the Lord*, ⁴³⁰²2 Chronicles 28:22. This very sin they are notoriously guilty of in their captivity, which shows that afflictions will not of themselves cure men of their sins, unless the grace of God work with them, but will rather exasperate the corruptions they are intended to mortify; so true is that of Solomon (³⁷⁷²Proverbs 27:22), *Though thou shouldst bray a fool in a mortar, yet will not his foolishness depart from him*.

II. How Jeremiah came to the knowledge of this (v. 29): *Zephaniah read this letter in the ears of Jeremiah*. He did not design to do as Shemaiah would have him, but, as it should seem, had a respect for Jeremiah (for we find him employed in messages to him as a *prophet*, ³²¹¹Jeremiah 21:1, 37:3), and therefore protected him. He that continued in his dignity and power stood more in awe of God and his judgments than he that was now a captive. Nay, he made Jeremiah acquainted with the contents of the letter, that he might see what enemies he had even among the captives. Note, It is kindness to our friends to let them know their foes.

III. What was the sentence passed upon Shemaiah for writing this letter. God sent him an answer, for to him Jeremiah committed his cause: it was ordered to be sent not to him, but *to those of the captivity*, who encouraged and countenanced him as if he had been a prophet of God's raising up, v. 31, 32. Let them know,

1. That Shemaiah had made fools of them. He promised them peace in God's name, but God did not send him; he forged a commission, and counterfeited the broad seal of Heaven to it, and made the people *to trust in a lie*, and by preaching false comfort to them deprived them of true comfort. Nay, he had not only made fools of them, but, which was worse, he had made traitors of them; he had *taught rebellion against the Lord*, as Hananiah had done, ²⁴³⁶Jeremiah 28:16. And, if vengeance shall be taken on those that rebel, much more on those that teach rebellion by their doctrine and example.

2. That at his end *he shall also be a fool* (as the expression is, ^{<2471>}Jeremiah 17:11); his name and family shall be extinct and shall be buried in oblivion; he shall leave no issue behind him to bear up his name; his pedigree shall end in him: *He shall not have a man to dwell among this people*; and neither he nor any that come from him shall *behold the good that I will do for my people*. Note, Those are unworthy to share in God's favours to his church that are not willing to stay his time for them. Shemaiah was angry at Jeremiah's advice to the captives to see to the building up of their families in Babylon, that they might be increased and not diminished, and therefore justly is he written childless there. Those that slight the blessings of God's word deserve to lose the benefit of them. See ^{<3076>}Amos 7:16, 17.