

Isaiah 24:17

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Fear, and the pit, and the snare, are upon thee, O inhabitant of the earth.

Analysis

Fear, and the pit, and the snare (פֶּחֶד וֶפְתַּח וֶפְצָח, pachad vafachat vafach)—This alliterative triplet in Hebrew creates ominous rhythm: terror, trap, and snare await. פֶּחֶד (pachad) means sudden terror, dread. פֶּתַח (pachat) is a pit or pitfall used to trap animals. פֶּצָח (pach) is a snare or trap. Together they depict inescapable judgment—no matter which direction one flees, destruction awaits.

Are upon thee, O inhabitant of the earth (עַלְיךָ יוֹשֵׁב הָאָרֶץ) (aleikha yoshev ha'aretz)—The address is universal: every earth-dweller faces this threefold doom. The verb 'are upon' indicates imminent, unavoidable threat. This isn't distant possibility but present reality hanging over humanity. Jeremiah quotes this verse (Jeremiah 48:43-44) in judgment against Moab, showing its proverbial use for describing inescapable divine wrath.

Historical Context

Ancient hunting practices inform this imagery. Hunters drove animals toward concealed pits; if the animal avoided the pit, snares waited as backup. Isaiah applies this to divine judgment—there's no escape route, no clever evasion. This counters human confidence in self-preservation. Just as animals couldn't outthink hunters' comprehensive trap systems, humanity cannot evade God's righteous judgment through cleverness or strength. New Testament echoes this: 'How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?' (Hebrews 2:3). Paul warns, 'When

they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them' (1 Thessalonians 5:3)—the unexpected terror Isaiah describes.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Study Questions

1. How does the threefold trap (fear, pit, snare) illustrate the impossibility of escaping God's judgment through human effort?
2. What does this verse teach about false securities and the illusion that we can somehow avoid accountability to God?
3. How should awareness of coming inescapable judgment motivate urgency in evangelism and personal holiness?

Interlinear Text

תִּירְאֵ	פְּתַת	פְּתַת	תִּפְתַּח	תִּפְתַּח	עַל־בָּ	יְשַׁבֵּ	
Fear	and the pit	and the snare	H6343	H6354	H6341	H5921	are upon thee O inhabitant
H6343	H6354	H6341				H3427	

תְּאַרְצָה :

of the earth

H776

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