

# Jeremiah 13:16

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Give glory to the LORD your God, before he cause darkness,  
and before your feet stumble upon the dark mountains, and,  
while ye look for light, he turn it into the shadow of death, and  
make it gross darkness.

## Analysis

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This verse urges repentance before darkness: 'Give glory to the LORD your God, before he cause darkness, and before your feet stumble upon the dark mountains.' 'Give glory' (tenu kavod) means acknowledge God's authority, repent, worship properly. 'Before darkness' (beterem yachshikh) indicates approaching but not yet arrived judgment—window remains open. 'Dark mountains' (harei nesheph) picture travelers stumbling in twilight on mountain paths—dangerous, disorienting. 'And, while ye look for light, he turn it into the shadow of death, and make it gross darkness.' What they hope will be light (relief, rescue) becomes death-shadow (tsalmaveth). Hope will be disappointed; light will become darkness.

## Historical Context

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This urgent call pictures Judah on a mountain path with darkness falling. The smart response is to stop, find shelter, wait for light. But continued stubbornness means pressing on into darkness and stumbling to destruction. The 'shadow of death' (tsalmaveth) appears in Psalm 23:4, Job, and elsewhere—representing mortal danger. Continued expectation of light while walking into darkness describes false hope in false prophets' promises of peace.

## Related Passages

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**1 John 4:8** — God is love

**1 Corinthians 13:4** — Characteristics of love

## Study Questions

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1. What does 'give glory' involve as response to judgment warning?
2. How does the mountain-darkness imagery picture the urgency of response before judgment falls?

## Interlinear Text

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יְהִשׁ־רַ      בְּטָרָם      כְּבוֹד      אֱלֹהֶיךָ      לִיהוָה      תִּנוּ  
**Give to the LORD your God glory**      **before he cause darkness**  
H5414      H3068      H430      H3519      H2962      H2821

וְעַל      הָרִי      גִּשְׁף      וְיִתְנַגֵּף      וּבְטָרָם      בְּגִלְיֶיךָ  
**upon the dark mountains**      **and before your feet**      **stumble**  
H5921      H2022      H5399      H7272      H5062      H2962

וְשׂ      לְצִלָּתוֹ      וְשָׁמָּה      לְאוֹר      וְקִוִּיתָ      יְשׁ יֵת  
**and make it into the shadow of death**      **he turn for light**      **and while ye look**  
H7896      H6757      H7760      H216      H6960

לְעֶרְפָּל:  
**it gross darkness**  
H6205

## Additional Cross-References

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**Isaiah 59:9** (Light): Therefore is judgment far from us, neither doth justice overtake us: we wait for light, but behold obscurity; for brightness, but we walk in darkness.

**Isaiah 8:22** (Darkness): And they shall look unto the earth; and behold trouble and darkness, dimness of anguish; and they shall be driven to darkness.

**Isaiah 60:2** (Glory): For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the LORD shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee.

**Isaiah 5:30** (Light): And in that day they shall roar against them like the roaring of the sea: and if one look unto the land, behold darkness and sorrow, and the light is darkened in the heavens thereof.

**Proverbs 4:19** (Darkness): The way of the wicked is as darkness: they know not at what they stumble.

**Joshua 7:19** (Glory): And Joshua said unto Achan, My son, give, I pray thee, glory to the LORD God of Israel, and make confession unto him; and tell me now what thou hast done; hide it not from me.

**Psalms 44:19** (Parallel theme): Though thou hast sore broken us in the place of dragons, and covered us with the shadow of death.

**Jeremiah 4:23** (Light): I beheld the earth, and, lo, it was without form, and void; and the heavens, and they had no light.

**Jeremiah 23:12** (Darkness): Wherefore their way shall be unto them as slippery ways in the darkness: they shall be driven on, and fall therein: for I will bring evil upon them, even the year of their visitation, saith the LORD.

**Exodus 10:21** (Darkness): And the LORD said unto Moses, Stretch out thine hand toward heaven, that there may be darkness over the land of Egypt, even darkness which may be felt.