

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

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

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

1 John 4:8 — God is love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

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

Give	to the LORD	your God	glory	before he cause darkness
H5414	H3068	H430	H2962	H2821
נָתַן	לְהָיוֹת	אֱלֹהִים	כְּבוֹד	בָּרְךָם
stumble	and before your feet	and before your feet	upon the dark	upon the dark
H2962	H5062	H7272	H5921	H2022
בָּשָׂךְ	בְּרַגְלֵיכֶם	עַל	בְּרַגְלֵיכֶם	בְּרַגְלֵיכֶם
and while ye look	for light	he turn	it into the shadow of death	and make
H6960	H216	H7760	H6757	H7896
וְנִשְׁתַּחַת	לְאֹור	וְשָׁמַת	לְצִלְמָה	וְשִׁתְּתִּית
it gross darkness				
לְעַרְפָּלִי:				

Additional Cross-References

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.