

# Jeremiah 23:12

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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.

## Analysis

**Wherefore their way shall be unto them as slippery ways in the darkness—**chalaqla<sup>q</sup>oth (חַלְאֻלָּה) means slippery, smooth places where one cannot gain footing. Combined with choshek (חֹשֶׁךְ, darkness), the imagery depicts complete disorientation—unable to see where they're going or maintain stable footing. **They shall be driven on, and fall therein—**nadach (נָדַח) means pushed, thrust, or banished. They won't choose this path voluntarily but will be driven into judgment, inevitably falling (naphal, נָפַל).

**For I will bring evil upon them**—ra'ah (רָאָה) means calamity, disaster, or judgment. **Even the year of their visitation** uses pequddah (פְּקֻדָּה), meaning appointed time of reckoning. This echoes Hosea 9:7: 'The days of visitation are come, the days of recompense are come.' God's patience has limits; there comes an appointed time when accumulated sin meets divine justice. The verse combines natural imagery (slippery darkness) with divine sovereignty (I will bring) to show judgment as both natural consequence and active intervention. Those who rejected God's light stumble in darkness; those who chose crooked paths find no solid footing.

## Historical Context

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This judgment was fulfilled in 586 BC when Babylon destroyed Jerusalem. The prophets and priests who promised peace experienced the slaughter, starvation, and exile they denied would come. Many fled to Egypt against God's command (Jeremiah 42-43), where tradition says they killed Jeremiah himself. The 'year of their visitation' arrived after decades of warnings—Jeremiah prophesied for forty years before Jerusalem fell. The judgment imagery proved literally true: refugees stumbled through darkness fleeing Babylon's army; leaders who had confidently proclaimed 'Peace!' found no secure path as their world collapsed. This vindicated Jeremiah's unpopular message and confirmed that false prophets face greater judgment than those they deceived.

## Related Passages

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**1 John 4:8** — God is love

**John 15:13** — Greatest form of love

**Romans 2:1** — Judging others

**Revelation 20:12** — Judgment according to deeds

## Study Questions

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1. What does the imagery of 'slippery ways in darkness' teach about the inevitable consequences of rejecting divine truth?
2. How does the concept of God's 'year of visitation' balance His patience with His justice?
3. In what ways do false teachers today experience the 'slippery darkness' of judgment, even if not immediately visible?

## Interlinear Text

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לִכְן H3651	יְהוָה ה' H1961	וְדַרְכֵּם H1870	לָהֶם H1992	כְּמַלְלֵקוֹת H2519
		Wherefore their way		shall be unto them as slippery
בְּאֶפְלַיִם ה'	יֵדְחוּ	וְנָפְלוּ	וְיִפְּלוּ	
ways in the darkness H653	they shall be driven on H1760	and fall H5307		
אֲבִי יֵא	עֲלֵיהֶם	רָעָה	שָׁנָה	
therein for I will bring H935	H5921	evil H7451	upon them even the year H8141	
פְּקֻדָּתָם	נֹאמַר	יְהוָה:		
of their visitation H6486	saith H5002	the LORD H3068		

## Additional Cross-References

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**Jeremiah 13:16** (Darkness): 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.

**Psalms 35:6** (Darkness): Let their way be dark and slippery: and let the angel of the LORD persecute them.

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

**Jeremiah 11:23** (Evil): And there shall be no remnant of them: for I will bring evil upon the men of Anathoth, even the year of their visitation.

**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.

**Psalms 73:18** (Parallel theme): Surely thou didst set them in slippery places: thou castedst them down into destruction.

**Exodus 32:34** (Parallel theme): Therefore now go, lead the people unto the place of which I have spoken unto thee: behold, mine Angel shall go before thee: nevertheless in the day when I visit I will visit their sin upon them.

**John 12:35** (Darkness): Then Jesus said unto them, Yet a little while is the light with you. Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you: for he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth.

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