

Jeremiah 48:43

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Fear, and the pit, and the snare, shall be upon thee, O inhabitant of Moab, saith the LORD.

Analysis

Fear, and the pit, and the snare (pachad vapachat vapach, פַּחַד וַפְּאֲחַת וַפָּאֵחַ)—this threefold alliteration in Hebrew creates an inescapable sequence of terror. Pachad (dread, terror) drives the victim toward pachat (pit, trap), where escape seems possible, only to encounter pach (snare, net). Isaiah uses identical language for universal judgment (Isaiah 24:17-18), suggesting this formula represents inescapable divine wrath.

The progression is deliberate: fleeing from obvious danger (fear/terror), one falls into hidden danger (pit), and even if escaping that, becomes caught in a final trap (snare). Ancient Near Eastern hunting techniques employed exactly this strategy—driving game toward concealed pits or nets. The imagery teaches that judgment is comprehensive and inescapable. Human ingenuity cannot evade God's ordained consequences. This parallels Amos 5:19: 'As if a man fled from a lion, and a bear met him; or went into the house, and leaned his hand on the wall, and a serpent bit him.' There is no refuge from God's judgment except in God Himself.

Historical Context

This verse describes the psychological and physical reality of Babylon's invasion. Moabite refugees fleeing one destroyed city would encounter Babylonian forces at the next. Those hiding in wilderness caves (pits) would be discovered. Those escaping initial attacks would be hunted down. The comprehensive nature of Nebuchadnezzar's campaign left no safe haven within Moabite territory. This

divine 'visitation' (verse 44) fulfilled prophecy given centuries earlier in Numbers 24:17, where Balaam predicted Moab's skull would be crushed. The certainty of prophesied judgment stands as both warning and evidence of God's sovereign control over history.

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Study Questions

1. Why does God ensure His judgments are inescapable rather than providing 'second chances' during execution?
2. How does this imagery of comprehensive judgment inform our understanding of final judgment (Hebrews 10:31)?
3. What is the only true 'refuge' from divine judgment, and how do we find it?

Interlinear Text

פֶּחַד	וּפִתַּח	וּפֶחַח	עַל יָדְךָ	יֹשֵׁב בְּ
Fear	and the pit	and the snare	H5921	shall be upon thee O inhabitant
H6343	H6354	H6341		H3427

בְּמוֹאָב	נֹאמַר	יְהוָה:
of Moab	saith	the LORD
H4124	H5002	H3068

Additional Cross-References

Lamentations 3:47 (Parallel theme): Fear and a snare is come upon us, desolation and destruction.

