

Job 7

Job 7:1–21

Introduction: Throughout the book of Job, many pairs of chapters should not have been split. So it is with Job 6 and Job 7. Job continues speaking to his friends. However, whereas in the last half of Job 6, where he spoke mostly of his friends, he speaks of himself and his relationship to God in this chapter. Midway through this chapter, Job will go from speaking directly to Eliphaz and his friends to placing his complaint squarely before God. Job will speak of his own physical infirmities, his mental anguish; and then he will speak of himself and God's relationship to him. Keil and Delitzsch write: *Job...[turns] toward God, but without penetrating the darkness in which God, the author of his suffering, is veiled from him.*¹

Outline of Chapter 7:

- Vv. 1–6 **Job is uncomfortable and in pain all day and all night**
- Vv. 7–10 **Job's life hangs by a thread**
- Vv. 11–21 **Job speaks directly to God concerning his situation**

Charts:

- v. 7 **Forms of Râga ʿ**

Job Is Uncomfortable and in Pain All Day and All Night

Literally:

Smoother English rendering:

**“[Is] not warfare to man upon earth
and like days of a subordinate his days?”**

Job 7:1

**“Is man not engaged in warfare upon this
earth?
Are his days not like those of a subordinate?”**

We begin this verse with an interrogative, which we generally translate as a verb, a negative and the masculine singular substantive *tsâbâʿ* (אָצַבָּ) [pronounced *tsaw^b-VAW*], and it can mean *army*, *war*, or *warfare*. This same word is used for Israel's captivity and exile under Babylonia. Strong's #6635 BDB #838. This is followed by the two prepositional phrases *to* [or, *for*] *man upon earth*. Interestingly enough, because of the context, many of the less literal translators did not translate this line this way; to see the change they have inserted, observe:

KJV	<i>Is there not an appointed time to man upon earth?</i>
NKJV	<i>Is there not a time of hard service for man on earth?</i>
NAB	<i>Is not man's life on earth a drudgery?</i>
NASB	<i>“Is not man forced to labor on earth,...</i>
NEB	<i>Has not man hard service on earth,...</i>
NJB	<i>Is not human life on earth just conscript service?</i>
NIV	<i>Does not man have hard service on earth,...</i>
REB	<i>Does not every mortal have hard service on earth,...</i>
The Septuagint	<i>Is not the life of man upon earth a state of trial?</i>
TEV	<i>Human life is like forced army service,...</i>

Surprisingly enough, TEV, in some ways, was more accurate than the KJV. The New Jerusalem Bible had a good rendering though: *Is not human life on earth just conscript service?* We have the correct notion of the substantive, yet it gives a better feel of what Job is saying. We were drafted into this life. This was not something we have chosen. We are involved in heavy labor, life and death struggles, daily abuse and worse of all, we were drafted into this for our entire lives. *“You have renewed Your witnesses against me, and You have increased Your anger toward*

¹ Keil & Delitzsch's *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. IV, p. 309.

me. Hardship after hardship is with me.” (Job 10:17). “Man, who is born of woman, is of limited days and those full of turmoil.” (Job 14:1).

The second line should carry with it the same interrogative and negative from the previous line. It begins with the wāw conjunction and the prepositional phrase *like days of*. Next, we have the adjective, used as a substantive, sākīyr (שָׂכִיר) [pronounced *saw-KEER*], which means *hired* or *hireling*. Although *employee* is a good up-to-date rendering, *subordinate* might better communicate Job’s inference here. Strong’s #7916 BDB #969.

The last phrase is *his days*. Both questions properly demand an answer in the affirmative.² The second line, more freely rendered, would be: **and are not his days like the days of a subordinate?** It doesn’t matter what position one holds, man still works as a subordinate works. Those who have their own business can generally confirm that they work harder, they work for more hours often for less money and with much greater responsibility, than their hired counterparts in the workforce. Job was one of the richest men on this earth and his life had been one of work throughout. He worked every bit as hard as those he hired. A point of interest here: we have a very similar phrase in Leviticus: “**He then with his purchaser will calculate from the year when he sold himself to him up to the year of jubilee; and the price of his sale will correspond to the number of years. Like the days of a hired man, he will be with him.**” (Lev. 25:50). In Leviticus, we are speaking of a man who has sold himself into slavery in order to satisfy debt (an outstanding way to deal with indebtedness, by the way); Job feels that the life of any man is not better than one who is a subordinate or even one sold into slavery.

Barnes: Job...had a certain and definite hard service to perform, and which he must continue to discharge until he was relieved by death. It was a service of hazard, like the life of a soldier, or of toil, like that of one who had been hired for a certain time, and who anxiously looked for the period of his release. The object of Job in introducing this remark evidently is, to vindicate himself for the wish to die which he had expressed. He maintains that it is as natural and proper for man in his circumstances to wish to be released by death, as for a soldier to desire that his term of service might be accomplished, or a wear servant to long for the shades of the evening...He [simply] maintains that it is not improper to desire that such a service should close.³

What Job was saying here was simple: he has expressed a desire to die, to have his life over with. He has not mentioned suicide—the number of days in his life is with God. However, he has come to the end of his life and just like a person under conscription looks to the point in time when he is honorably discharged; and just as the hired subordinate looks toward the time when he is paid for his work and discharged from his service, Job looks forward to the time when he is discharged from the service of his life; when God removed him from this life, because he has served his time. Few people grasp this, particularly as life is often portrayed in the media as something not to let go of no matter what, but often a believer in Jesus Christ will look expectantly toward being taken out of his life—this is not a call for suicide, as that would mean that we have quit prior to the fulfillment of our reasonable service, but this is looking toward the time when we have fulfilled our time here on earth, fulfilled the number of days which God set aside for us, and we are ready to be removed.

“As a slave desires a shadow and as a subordinate looks for his wages;	Job 7:2	“Just as a slave desires an occasional shadow and just as a subordinate looks expectantly for his wages;
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The second verse translates rather handily; the better translators have few disagreements:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	As a servant earnestly longs for the shade <i>and</i> evening shadows, and as a hireling who looks for the reward of his work,
Barnes' Translation	As a servant earnestly desireth the shadow, and as an hireling looketh for <i>the reward</i> of his work:

² *Figures of Speech Used in the Bible*; E.W. Bullinger; ©originally 1898; reprinted 1968 by Baker Books; p 918.

³ *Barnes' Notes, Job, Volume 1*; Baker Books, ©1996; p. 184.

<i>The Emphasized Bible</i> Keil and Delitzsch NASB	As a bondman panteth for the shadow, And as a hireling longeth for his wage Like a servant who longs for the shade, And like a hireling who waits for his wages, “As a slave who pants for the shade, And as a hired man who eagerly waits for his wages,...
<i>Young's Lit. Translation</i>	As a servant desireth the shadow, And as a hireling expecteth his wage,

The only problematic word is the second verb, the 3^d masculine singular, Piel imperfect of qāvâh (הִקַּו) [pronounced *kaw-VAW*], and it means *to wait for, to wait expectantly for, to look for*. The connotation of this verb is generally a good one; that is, whatever is being waited on or waited for is truly expected (see Psalm 25:3 27:14 37:9 40:1). Strong's #6960 BDB #875 (for *wait*) and BDB #876 (*collect*).

V. 2 is a setup for the next verse. Barnes: *Nothing is more grateful in oriental countries, when the sun pours down intensely on burning sands, than the shadow of a tree, or the shade of a projecting rock. The editor of the Pictorial Bible on this verse remarks, “We think we can say, that next to water, the greatest and deepest enjoyment we could ever realize in the hot climates of the East was, when on a journey, any circumstance of the road brought us for a few minutes under some shade,. Its reviving influence upon the bodily frame, and consequently upon the spirits, is inconceivable by one who has not had some experience of the kind. Often also during the halt of a caravan in the open air, when the writer has been enabled to secure a station for repose under the shelter of a rock or of an old wall, has his own exultation and strong sense of luxurious enjoyment reminded him of this and other passages of Scripture, in which shade is mentioned as a thing panted for with intense desire.” Probably here, however, the reverence is to the shades of night, the time when darkness falls upon the earth, and the servant is released from his toil. It is common in all languages to speak of night as enveloped with shadows.*⁴ Freeman gives us a slightly different view of this verse. The lengthening of the shadow of a slave or a hireling indicates that the day is drawing to a close and that his work is almost finished. He mentions that the time of day in India is often determined by examining the length of one's shadow while standing in the sun.⁵ Job is not a slave nor is he a subordinate. However, just as a slave desires to spend a short time in the shadows (or, desires the evening shade, meaning that his day is through) and just as a subordinate looks to be paid for his work,⁶ Job also expects some relief and some remuneration for his life. We have a saying similar to this: *take the bad with the good*. Except Job was expecting to *take the good with the bad*. More precisely, what Job was looking forward to was death. *...he anxiously desires his work to be finished, and expects the reward of his labours. So Job looked to the reward of a life of toil and piety. Is there not here an undoubted reference to a future state? Is it not manifest that Job looked to some recompense in the future world, as real and as sure, as a hired servant looks for the reward of his toils when his work is done?*⁷ The point being made here by Barnes is that it was well understood by Job, as well as by his friends, that there was a life to come. Death was not an end for some, but a beginning of a great rest. This would have been the great relief from what he had suffered.

**“So I have been caused to inherit [or,
caused to take as a possession] to myself
months of emptiness
and nights of exhaustion have been
apportioned to me.**

Job 7:3

**“So I have been paid with months of
emptiness;
nights of exhaustion are my lot in life.**

However, rather than to receive what he would expect, Job has been paid with months of emptiness and his shade has been night after night of misery. You will notice how Job parallels the two thoughts from v. 2; he tells what he has receive in reverse order. This verse begins with the adverb kên (כֵּן) [pronounced *kane*], which means *so, so this is how the matter stands, rightly, well, so very, so long, so often, it is so*. Here, we find this adverb used in a rather ironic way; *slaves desire shade and hirelings expect to be paid; however this is what I have*; might be the sense of this little adverb. Job is setting up more of a contrast here. Strong's #3651 BDB #485.

⁴ Barnes' Notes, Job, Volume 1; Baker Books, ©1996; p. 185.

⁵ Manners and Customs of the Bible; James M. Freeman; ©1972; p. 208.

⁶ See Lev. 19:13

⁷ Barnes' Notes, Job, Volume 1; Baker Books, ©1996; p. 185.

The first verb is the 1st person singular, Hophal (passive causative) perfect of *nâchal* (נָחַל) [pronounced *naw-KHAHL*], which means, in the Hiphil, *to give as a possession, to cause to inherit*; in the Qal it means *to get or to take as a possession, to inherit*. However, the Hophal is the passive of the Hiphil, the causative stem. Therefore, Job has been *caused to receive [as a possession], or caused to inherit*. Strong's #5157 BDB #635. What Job has been paid with is *months of emptiness or months of vanity* (Rotherham inexplicably has *months of calamity* instead). Eliphaz held on to this thought, and later said, “**Let him not trust in emptiness, deceiving himself; for emptiness will be his recompense.**” (Job 15:31).

In v. 2, Job began by telling how a slave longs for shade. Similarly, Job looks for relief from the blazing sun, but what he receives are nights of misery. The verb in the second line is the Piel perfect of *mânâh* (מָנַח) [pronounced *maw-NAW*], which means, in the Qal, *to count, to number, reckon, assign*. In the Piel, it means *to appoint, to assign, to prepare*; in the Niphal, it means *to be numbered*. Gesenius gives the means as *to be divided, to be divided out, to divide*; he also points out that when *mânâh* is followed by the lamed preposition, it means *to allot, to assign, to apportion* (Job 7:4—Piel stem; Isa. 65:12—Qal stem). Interestingly enough, this is not the word used in the book of Numbers for the numbering of the people, but this is the word used when David *numbered* the people (Qal stem). This is the word used when God *prepared* a worm and then *prepared* a gourd in the book of Jonah (Piel stem). Gesenius' explanation here is that when you *divide something into parts or arrange something according to parts*, that this is from whence we get the meaning *to prepare, to make ready* (I Kings 20:25 Jonah 4:6–8). Strong's #4487 BDB #584.

What has been apportioned to Job are nights of *ʿâmâl* (אָמַל) [pronounced *aw-MAWL*], which means *wearisome labor* or simple *misery* from living, as per the context. Here, I am going to go with *exhaustion*, which is in keeping with both the context and the primary meaning of the verb. Strong's #5999 (and #5998) BDB #765. Most people, regardless of how hard they work in the day, enjoy a night's sleep, a respite from it all. Job's nights are as difficult as his days. He works all night, so to speak; and then gets up and is in misery all day. “**But now He has exhausted me; You have laid waste all my company and You have shriveled me up.**” (Job 16:7–8a). David himself mentions having trouble with sleeping: *I am weary with my sighing; every night I make my bed swim. I dissolve my couch with my tears* (Psalm 6:6). Many of the Israelites in exile had the same feelings: *As the deer pants for the water brooks, so my soul pants for You, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When will I come and appear before God? My tears have been my food day and night, while they say to me all day long, “Where is your God?”* (Psalm 42:1–3; see also Jer. 9:1 Lam. 1:2). “**For these things I weep, My eyes run down with water, because far from me is a comforter, One Who restores my soul. My children are desolate, because the enemy has prevailed.**” (Lam. 1:16).

Job has had months of intense physical suffering at the hand of Satan. His days are filled with pain; he receives no rest in the evenings. He had been in suffering for a great deal of time prior to his friends coming to comfort him and he tries to communicate this to them in this passage. And we all have troubles, problems, and even physical ailments; and, for most of us, these irritations temporarily cease when we sleep. Job spent night after night for months in *sleepless anxiety and distress*.⁸ *Job has no relief from his sorrow or from his pain. He is a very sick man, and his friends seem to ignore that. They have not offered him any comfort. Even his wife, his helpmeet, has suggested suicide to him. When his world caved in he became a distraught and frustrated man to be pitied.*⁹

**“When I lie down and I say, ‘When will I arise?’
And the fleeing away of an evening
and I am satiated [with] tossing [and turning]
till morning breezes.**

Job 7:4

**“When I lie down, I think to myself, ‘When will I arise?’
And the evening flees away by my continual
tossings and turnings up until the dawning.**

The better translations differ on this verse considerably in renderings, but not much in meaning:

⁸ Barnes' Notes, Job, Volume 1; Baker Books, ©1996; p. 185.

⁹ Job; J. Vernon McGee, ©1977, p. 56.

Albert Barnes	If I lie down, then I say, When shall I arise, and the night flee away? And I am full of restlessness until the dawn.
<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	When I lie down, I say, When shall I arise, and the night be gone? And I am full of tossings to and fro till the dawning of the day.
<i>The Emphasized Bible</i>	As soon as I lie down I say, When shall I arise? yet he lengtheneth out the evening, And I am wearied with tossings until the breeze of twilight.
Keil and Delitzsch	If I lie down, I think: When shall I arise and the evening break away? And I become weary with tossing to and fro unto the morning dawn.
KJV	When I lie down, I say, When shall I arise, and the night be gone? and I am full of tossings to and fro unto the dawning of the day.
<i>Young's Lit. Translation</i>	If I lay down then I said, 'When do I rise!' And evening hath been measured And I have been full of tossings till dawn.

This verse begins with the hypothetical particle *'im* (אִם) [pronounced *eem*], which generally means *if*; however, *'im* can almost equal *when*, when followed by a perfect tense which refers to a past event. In this passage, we are referring to many successive nights. Strong's #518 BDB #49.

Even though the second verb is *I say*; Keil and Delitzsch correctly render this as *I think*. This first thing that Job thinks about at night is when he is going to get up in the morning. There are some people who are so personally involved either with their jobs or with their lives that they go to sleep thinking about these things and they cannot stop thinking about them. Young people, in particular, have a difficult time turning off their minds so that they can sleep, but then they are resilient and can handle the reduced sleep. But it is much more difficult when an older person cannot shut down. Job's day and his life was so destroyed, that he could not turn it off at night. He thought as he tried to go to sleep how miserable his life was and waking up to it the next day.

The verb with *night* as its subject is generally taken as the Piel perfect of *mâdad* (מָדַד) [pronounced *maw-DAHD*], which is consistently rendered *measured* in the KJV, with the exception of this passage. Strong's #4058–4059 BDB #551. We often have different ways of measuring our nights of sleep. For me, I will wake up once to urinate, two hours prior to when I should be getting up; and when it is time for me to awake, I often wake prior to my alarm, but then I will doze off to a semi-sleep state for a few minutes. Job measured his nights by his tossing and turning. Once he stops tossing and turning, then it is time to arise. He has no contiguous period of rest. The alternate view, which makes more sense to me, is as follows: the exact Hebrew word found here is *mîddad* (מִדָּד) [pronounced *MEED-dahd*], and Keil and Delitzsch suggest that this is the construct of *mîddâd* (מִדָּד) [pronounced *MEED-dawd*], which is based upon its verb cognate *nâdad* (נָדַד) [pronounced *naw-DAHD*], which means *retreat, flee, depart*. Therefore, it would be rendered *a fleeing away of, a retreating of*. Noun: Strong's #none BDB #none Verb: Strong's #5074 BDB #622. This explains the translations given by Barnes, by Keil and Delitzsch, and by Noyes. The reason cited by Keil and Delitzsch is that the noun better fits with the meter of the verse.

The verb in the 3rd line is the Qal perfect of *sâ^bva^c* (שָׂבַע) [pronounced *saw^b-VAHG*], which means *to satisfy, to fill, to satiate*. Strong's #7646 BDB #959 Job's evenings are completely filled to the brim with his sleeplessness.

What Job's night is filled with is a word found only in this verse; but it is closely related to the verb *nâdad* (נָדַד) [pronounced *naw-DAHD*], which means *retreat, flee, depart, stray, wander, flutter*. Therefore, *tossing and turning* is a reasonable rendering. Noun: Strong's #5076 BDB #622 Verb: Strong's #5074 BDB #622.

The amount of time Job spent in restlessness was *until* *nesheph* (נֶשֶׁף) [pronounced *NEH-shef*], which literally means *blowing, breathing*; it comes from the verb *blow* (Strong's #5398 BDB #676). It is a reference to the gentle breeze which accompany the morning and the evening, and therefore can refer to the morning or evening; here, it stands for the early morning. Strong's #5399 BDB #676.

The simple understanding of this verse is that Job is not receiving any rest whatsoever; his nights are as filled with misery as are his days. Job will mention this again in vv. 13–14. God promised the same pain for discipline to Israel: "So your life will hang in doubt before you, and you will be in dread night and day, and you will have no assurance of your life. In the morning, you will say, 'Would that it were evening!' And at evening, you will say, 'I

wish it were morning!’ because of the dread of your heart which you dread, and for the sight of your eyes which you will see.” (Deut. 28:65–66).¹⁰

**“My flesh is clothed with worm and a clod of dust
my skin is at rest then it flows afresh.**

Job 7:5

**“My flesh is covered with worms and dust;
my skin find temporary rest and then it pus
begins to flow from it again.**

The idea here is quite simple; Job’s diseased body has taken on itself worms (whether from the inside working their way out or the outside attaching themselves to his rotting flesh, we don’t know). His skin is alternately hardened and portions of it pop open and ooze fluids. However, what I desire to have is a good, very literal, and reasonably consistent translation, with whatever choices that I made backed up with good, Hebrew exegesis. Let’s view a few other translations:

- Albert Barnes My flesh is clothed with worms, and clods of dust; My skin becomes rigid, and is loathsome.
- The Amplified Bible* My flesh is clothed with worms and clods of dust; my skin is broken and become loathsome, *and* it closes up and breaks out a fresh.
- The Emphasized Bible* My flesh is clothed with worms and a coating of dust, My skin hath hardened, and then run afresh;
- Keil and Delitzsch My flesh is clothed with worms and clods of earth; My skin heals up to fester again.
- Young’s Lit. Translation* Clothed hath been my flesh *with* worms, And a clod of dust, My skin hath been shriveled and is loathsome,

I have rendered this slightly differently than have others before me for a couple of reasons. The wāw conjunction, which we generally use to compound a sentence is often used in Hebrew poetry to begin the next line. Literally, this verse reads: **Is clothed [with] my flesh a worm and a clod of dust my skin is at rest then runs.** Most translators render this as we think in English—as compounding the sentence at hand. We know the subject of *is clothed* is *flesh* as *worm* is a feminine singular and the verb is a masculine singular. The Hebrew often uses a singular for a plural—in Exodus, the plague of the locusts is really the plague of the locust.

However, what I am concerned about is the next verb and its subject. My original thought was that this should read *a clod of dust hardens my skin and then [my skin] runs.* Both *skin* and *a clod of dust* are in the masculine singular, which would make them both candidates for the subject of the verb, the 3rd person masculine singular, Qal perfect of rāga (רָגַע) [pronounced *raw-GAH* or *raw-GAHG*], and it means *to disturb* in the Qal; possibly *to twinkle* in the Hiphil; *to be at rest or to be in repose* in the Niphal and the Hiphil. This is all according to BDB, and several translations, as is also the idea that in this one place alone, this word in the Qal means *to harden*. When looking up this word in Gesenius, it is like a different world. Their definition: *to terrify, to restrain by threatening, to be afraid, to shrink back, to be still*; in the Niphal, it is said to mean *to be still*; in the Hiphil, it means *to found, to establish, to still, to make still*; in the Hiphil intransitive, it is said to mean *to rest, to dwell quietly*; it can mean *to wink* in the Qal. *To shrink back* (in fear) could be easily applied to the skin tightening back on Job. I really don’t see many ways of doing this other than a verse-by-verse study of the occurrences of rāga.

Forms of Rāga		
Passage	Verse text	Stem
Job 26:12	“By His power, He has rāga-ed the sea, and by His understanding He has struck down the proud.”	Qal perfect

¹⁰ You know, I have been looking for the time that my NKJV, my NASB, Scofield’s KJV and my NIV all give the same references exactly. Scofield left out w. 13–14. It’s like getting 5 numbers of 6 in a lottery, except that there are no prizes.

Forms of Râga ʿ		
Passage	Verse text	Stem
Isa. 51:15	“And I am Y ^e howah, your God, râga ʿ-ing the sea, when its billows roar; Y ^e howah of Hosts [is] His name.” [Jer. 31:35 is very similar]	Qal participle
Jer. 31:35	“Ho, sword of Y ^e howah, till when will you are removed unto your sheath, râga ʿ and cease.”	Niphal imperative
Isa. 34:14	And Ziim has met with Alim, and the goat for its companion calls; only there the night owl has râga ʿ-ed and has found for herself a place of rest.	Hiphil perfect
Jer. 50:34	Their redeemer is strong; Y ^e howah of Armies [is] His name, He thoroughly pleased their cause, so as to cause the land to râga ʿ.	Hiphil perfect
Jer. 31:2	Thus said Y ^e howah, “Found grace in the wilderness has a people remaining from the sword; going to cause it to râga ʿ—Israel.	Hiphil infinitive
Deut. 28:65a	And among those nations you will not râga ʿ; in fact, there is no resting-place for the sole of your foot; (Isa. 51:4 Jer. 49:19 50:44 are similar)	Hiphil imperfect

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It's other occurrence at Prov. 12:19* needs to be exegeted; there it is probably Strong's #7281 and not #7280. Now, I realize that I probably beat this to death, but there is no reason to translate this word anything but **to rest, to cause to be at rest, to be in a state of peaceful repose**. So, certainly I recognize that this word can mean something different in Job 7:5; however, there is no reason to change its meaning here other than it might sound better. Strong's #7280 BDB #920, #921. Therefore, the subject, *my skin* becomes much more reasonable than *a clod of dust*.

The second verb is the 3rd masculine singular, Niphal perfect of mā`aḥ (וּחַח) [pronounced *maw-AHS*], another verb which appears to have wildly diverse meanings in BDB. However, this is a simpler matter; this word generally means to **reject** (Job 30:1 Psalm 53:6 Jer. 14:19); but it also means to *eject slime, to ooze pus* (Psalm 58:8). What is occurring is that the body is rejecting these fluids. Strong's #3988 BDB #549.

In this verse, we have perhaps one of the most disturbing pictures painted by Job of his misery. What is occurring is that flies have possibly laid their eggs in Job's rotting skin. in any case, he has worms or larva infesting his epidermis. In fact, his clothing is larva and dust; it is possible that it is far too painful to bathe. Then his skin alternates between being at rest and oozing pus. Isaiah paints a similar picture of Babylon under God's wrath: “Your pomp and the music of your harps have been brought down to Sheol; maggots are spread out beneath you and worms are your covering.” (Isa. 14:11; see also Job 21:26).

Barnes has a slightly different view on the disease of Job, which is probably more accurate: *There is a reference here to the worms which are produced in ulcers and in other forms of disease. Michaelis remarks that such effects are produced often in the elephantiasis. Bochart, Hieroz, P. II., Lib. IV. c. xxvi. pp. 619–621, has abundantly proved that such effects occur in disease, and has mentioned several instances where death ensued from this cause...the same thing would often happen—and particularly in hot climates—if it were not for the closest care and attention in keeping running sores as clean as possible. ¶ And clods of dust. Accumulated on the ulcers which covered his whole body. This effect would be almost unavoidable. Dr. Good renders this, “worms and the imprisoning dust,” and supposes that the image is taken from the grave, and that the idea in thw whole passage is that of one who is “dead while he lives;” that is, of one who is undergoing putrefaction before he is buried. But the more common an dcorrect interpretation is that which refers it to the accumulated filth attending a loathsome disease.*¹¹

¹¹ Barnes' Notes, Job, Volume 1; Baker Books, ©1996; p. 186.

Now would be an outstanding opportunity to examine the **Doctrine of the Worm—not finished yet!**

“My days are swifter than a loom [or, a weaver’s shuttle] and they come to an end without a hope.

Job 7:6

“My days are swifter than a loom and they come to an end without hope.

After looking at a couple of translations, I almost let the first line go by without commenting on the Hebrew found therein. However, I was interested by the verb, translated *are swifter* in most translations. I guess that I was bothered that Job’s days went by swiftly, something true for most older people, and I was just curious about the verb. First, let’s see how others have translated this verse and then we’ll look at the verb:

Albert Barnes <i>The Amplified Bible</i>	...they are consumed without hope. My days are swifter than a weaver’s shuttle, and are spent without hope. [ditto for Barnes, <i>The Emphasized Bible</i> , the KJV and the NKJV, and the first half is the same for Keil and Delitzsch, NASB, NIV, Noyes, NRSV and Owen).
NJB	Swifter than a weaver’s shuttle my days have passed, and vanished leaving no hope behind.
NRSV	...and come to their end without hope [or, as the thread runs out].
REB	My days pass more swiftly than a weaver’s shuttle and come to an end as the thread of life runs out.
The Septuagint	And my life is lighter than a word, and has perished in vain hope.
<i>Young’s Lit. Translation</i>	My days swifter than a weaving machine, And they are consumed without hope.

The verb in question is one which we have studied before in Job 3:1; it is the 3rd person plural, Qal perfect of qâlal (לָלַץ) [pronounced *kaw-LAL*] and it means *to treat something lightly, in a trifling manner* in the Niphal (I Sam. 18:22 Isa. 49:6); *to curse, to despise, to be accursed* in the Piel (Lev. 20:9 Deut. 23:4), Pual (Job 24:18 Isa. 65:20). The connection is simple; you may treat something as unimportant; and when that is intensified, you curse it. However, in the Qal stem, *swift, moving quickly, moving aside* seem to be the meaning (Gen. 8:8 II Sam. 1:23 Job 7:6). The Hiphil is a mixture of these meanings (Ex. 18:22 Isa. 23:9 Jonah 1:5). I include several passages so that you can see in many cases the same author will use this word in several ways. Strong’s #7043 BDB #886. Job refers to this again later in Job 9:25–26: “**Now my days are swifter than a runner; they flee away, they see no good. The slip by like reed boats, like an eagle that swoops on its prey.**”

The analogy to a weaver’s shuttle is used later by Isaiah: “**Like a shepherd’s tent my dwelling is pulled up and removed from me; as I weaver I rolled up my life. He cuts me off from the loom; from day until night, You make an end of me.**” (Isa. 38:12).

The verb the 3rd person plural, Qal imperfect of kâlâh (הִלָּץ) [pronounced *kaw-LAWH*], which means *to complete, to bring an end to, to finish, to complete, to accomplish, spent*. Strong’s #3615 BDB #477. You will notice that these two verbs sound almost exactly alike and in this verse, they both drop the last consonant and pick up a wâw dagesh, so that they sound almost identical; in other words, this is an alliteration which we certainly lose in the English.

Then we have the bêyth preposition (*in, at by, with, against, up to*) and the masculine singular construct of ’epheç (עֲפֵחַ) [pronounced *EH-fes*], which means *ceasing, end, extremity* and expresses *non-existence*. Strong’s #657 BDB #67. The final word is the word *hope*. This is the word tiq^evâh (תִּקְוָה) [pronounced *tick^e-VAW*] and it can mean *cord* (Joshua 2:18, 21), *an outcome hoped for* (Job 8:13 17:15 Prov. 10:28 Ezek. 19:5); or *the basis or ground for hope* (Job 4:6 Psalm 71:5). Strong’s #8615 BDB #876.

Each day which passes brings again to an end the ceasing of hope for Job. Job alternated between having no hope and between hope in God concerning his state, although the longer he suffered, the less hope he clung to: “**Though he slay me, I will hope in Him.**” (Job 13:15a). “**Water wears away stones, its torrent wash away the dust of the earth—so You destroy a man’s hope.**” (Job 14:19). “**Where now is my hope? And who regards my hope? Will**

it go down with me to Sheol? Will we together go down into the dust?” (Job 17:15–16). “He breaks me down on every side, and I am gone. And He has uprooted my hope like a tree.” (Job 19:10). Each day brought Job to the end of his rope. James wrote: **Yet you do not know what your life will be like tomorrow. You are a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away** (James 4:14). McGee: *In all this his friends paid no attention to his problem. They have come to him but have not ministered to his need. They just didn't understand. It has been said that a friend is one who knows you and still loves you. These friends didn't really know Job. He says that at least his physical condition should have called forth some sympathy from them.*¹²

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Job's Life Hangs by a Thread

**“Recall that my life [is] a breath;
my eye will never return to see prosperity.**

Job 7:7

**“Realize that my life is but a breath
and that I will never again enjoy prosperity.**

With this first line, Job speaks both to his friends, but primarily to God. *Recall* is in the 2nd person singular, not plural; so he lifts his head in prayer and speaks directly to God, and indirectly to his companions. The first line is pretty consistently rendered throughout the various translations. Job reiterates this sentiment later in this chapter: “I waste away; I will not live forever. Leave me alone, for my days are but vapor.” (Job 7:16). “Y^ehowah make me know my end, and what is the extent of my days. Let me know how transient I am. Observe, You have made my days as handbreadths, and my lifetime as nothing in Your sight. Certainly every man at his best is a mere breath.” (Psalm 39:4–5). *Man is like a mere breath; his days are like a passing shadow* (Psalm 144:4; see also Psalm 39:11 78:39 89:47).

The second line will require a little work: the second line is still related to the first verb, where Job is telling Eliphaz to remember (in this instance, it almost means *realize*); the verb is the 3rd person feminine singular, Qal imperfect of *shûb* (שׁוּב) [pronounced *shoo^b*]; which means *to return, to turn back, to return, to turn around*. Strong's #7725 BDB #996. This verb is preceded by the negative and followed by the subject, *my eye*, and the Qal infinitive construct of *to see*. At this point, Job looks off and says these words, half-speaking to his companions and half-speaking to God. In v. 8, he will actually go from speaking of God in the third person to speaking to Him in the second person.

What Job will never again see is *ṭûw* (טוּב) [pronounced *too^b*], which means *good things, goodness, prosperity, well-being, beauty*. Strong's #2898 BDB #375. Barnes: *The sense is that he would no more be permitted to look upon the things which now so much gratified the sight, and gave so much pleasure.*¹³

Job had no hope at this time of ever being restored to his former life. It did not matter that he saw himself as blameless; or, at least not as much to blame as his discipline would indicate—however, there was no way that he could see his previous life being restored to him. “**Would He not let my few days alone? Withdraw from me that I may have a little cheer?**” (Job 10:20). *As a chronic sufferer, [Job]...has lost all sense of purpose in life...He does not anticipate healing and sees death as his only escape.*¹⁴

You will note that with this verse, Job, for all intents and purposes, breaks into a public prayer, if you will, speaking directly to God concerning this matter.

¹² Job; J. Vernon McGee, ©1977, pp. 56–57.

¹³ Barnes' Notes, Job, Volume 1; Baker Books, ©1996; p. 187.

¹⁴ The NIV Study Bible; ©1995; p. 732.

“[The] eye of Him seeing me will observe me
no more;
Your eyes against me, and not I [or, I am not].

Job 7:8

“The eye of Him seeing me will observe me
no more;
Your eyes will be against me, and I will
suddenly be gone.

The meaning of the first line is fairly easy to ascertain, but the translations differ enough to warrant some work:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	The eye of him who sees me shall see me no more; while your eyes are upon me, I shall be gone.
<i>The Emphasized Bible</i>	Nor shall see me—the eye that used to behold me, Thine eyes are upon me, and I am not.
Keil and Delitzsch	The eye that looketh upon me seeth me no more; Thine eyes look for me,—I am no more.
KJV	The eye of him that hath seen me shall see me no <i>more</i> ; thine eyes <i>are</i> upon me, and I <i>am</i> not.
NIV	The eye that now sees me will see me no longer; you will look for me, but I will be no more.
REB	The eye that now sees me will behold me no more; under your very eyes I shall vanish.
<i>Young's Lit. Translation</i>	The eye of my beholder beholdeth me not. Thine eyes <i>are</i> upon me—and I am not.

It was Young's alliterative translation that made me think perhaps we are seeing different forms of the same word, but that is not the case. The subject of the first sentence is the third word, which is the feminine construct of *eye*. My thinking is that the literal *eyes* are meant, generally speaking, when found in the dual; mental and spiritual states or more of a poetic (not literal) use are alluded to when this is found in the singular. Strong's #5869 BDB #744. Being in the construct means that it is further modified. Here, it is modified by the masculine singular, Qal active participle, 1st person suffix of the word meaning *to see*. This gives us so far [*the*] *eye of One [or, Him] seeing me*. Strong's #7200 BDB #906.

This verse actually begins with the negative and the verb *shûr* (שׁוּר) [pronounced *shour*], which means *to behold, to regard, to observe, to watch*. The idea is that someone is watching over carefully, from whence comes the meaning *to regard*. Strong's #7789 BDB #1003. From this line and the passage in general, we have one of the few times that one could argue from the Bible that there is nothing after death. It reads: “The eye of Him seeing me will observe me no more; Your eyes against me, and I am not. A cloud mass has come to completion then it goes; so the one going down to Sheol does not come up. He does not return again to his house; and his place is not caused to regard him again.” (Job 7:8–10). However, that is the problem with taking words out of their context. We have abundant Scriptural evidence elsewhere that life continues after death, in some form. Job is anticipating his death and the idea is that the One watching him (and I believe that we are referring to God the Father, rather than to a guardian angel) will no longer observe Job's life on earth. This doesn't mean that Job expects that he will fade into nothingness nor does this mean that all contact with God will cease. God will no longer observe him on earth. This simply means that from the standpoint of human observation, this is what happens at death. NIV Study Bible: *Such statements are based on common observation and are not meant to dogmatize about what happens after death. Mesopotamian descriptions of the netherworld refer to it similarly as the “land of no return.”*¹⁵

The second line is literally: *Your* [2nd person, masculine singular] *eyes* [plural, not dual] *against me and not I*. The preposition is not the preposition which generally means *on, upon* (that is, 'al = לַעַל), but it is the *bêyth* preposition, which emphasizes proximity. In this case, with our understanding of *their eyes being on Job*, we might get away with the rendering *on*; however, *bêyth* generally means *in, into, by, at* and *against*. Strong's #413 BDB #39. This is followed by the *wâw* conjunction, the negative and the 1st person suffix. We have several ways that we could go with this: *Your eyes [are] on me, I will be no longer; Your eyes against me, but I will no longer be; Your eyes will be on me and I will not be*. We could possibly carry over the sense of the previous line, so that we would have: *Your*

¹⁵ *The NIV Study Bible*; ©1995; p. 733.

eyes which now see me will see me no more. The sense of this second line I think allows for the meaning of *bêyth* to be *against*; the eyes of Job's friends and the eyes of God are against him, and, suddenly, he will perish before their eyes. Zophar will use this statement of Job's later, almost word-for-word, in his own argument in Job 20:9.

The final phrase is quite brief. We have the *wâw* conjunction and the negative with a 1st person singular suffix. Literally, this could be *and my not, and not I*. It is a brief and sudden phrase, conjuring visions of the death of Job, which Job expects to come suddenly. Our Lord said something quite similar when speaking of His own death and resurrection: **"A little while, and you will no longer behold Me; and again, a little while, and you will see Me."** (John 16:16).

I believe that in this verse, we have a nice transitional parallelism. In the first line, we still have Job speaking of God in the 3rd person; however, in the second line, we have two possible interpretations: (1) that these eyes are the eyes of Job's friends; or, (2) these are the eyes of God. Job is still staring out into space. It is not until v. 14 when he is uncontrovertably speaking directly to God. So how do we decide which way to go?

Let's look at option #1: Job has already spoken to his friends, but has used the 2nd person masculine singular, as he would speak directly to each of his friends. In v. 7, recall that *recall* was in the 2nd person masculine singular. This was Job speaking at once to God in his prayers and at once to his friends while praying (note that the first line of this verse, Job speaks of God in the 3rd person, allowing for Job to address his friends in the 2nd person in the previous verse). Now not only do Job's friends realize that this is his end—that he will not return to his previous life of prosperity and that this state is not a temporary setback—but further, while they are watching him and judging him, he will probably die before their eyes. You have no doubt had the experience, if you are older, of not saying something to a person who has died, or the last words that you said to them were not the words you would have liked to have been your last words to them; and if you are younger, you have certainly seen this in a movie or a television show. This is what Job's friends are about to do, in Job's eyes, anyway. They will be judging him, saying vicious things to him at a time when he needs comfort (and this will be divine viewpoint as well, as we will see in Job chapter last), and before their eyes, he will die. It's a pretty powerful statement from one who is about to die.

Now let's look at option #2. Prior to this, Job has spoken to his friends in the 2nd person masculine singular (Job 6:22–29). Except for v. 7, this is the first time we find the 2nd person masculine singular. Therefore, it is more likely that the correct interpretation of this verse is that Job has slipped into a prayer to God and is speaking directly to God, beginning with v. 7. *Your*, as I mentioned, was in the 2nd person masculine singular and *eyes* were in the plural.¹⁶ Therefore, even though in the first line, Job speaks of God's eye as being on him in the 3rd person, this does not mean that Job is not in a state of prayer to God. In fact, this allows for Job to be addressing his prayer to God the Father and the *eye of Him seeing me* to refer to Jesus Christ or to God the Holy Spirit. Now this does not mean that God will no longer be able to see Job after Job dies. God will no longer see Job in his failed and decrepit human body living on this earth. While God's eyes are on Job, Job will die. What I said of Job's friends applies as well to God, although it is not directly stated. Job has made clear to his friends and to God what his state of being was—a seemingly unending life of physical pain and emotional distress—and that even if he is being disciplined for something, that God will have His eyes on Job and suddenly, Job will be no longer. Later in this chapter, vv. 19–20, Job will ask God to back off—to stop inflicting him with this great pain and suffering. Even more likely, the sense is, because God's eyes are on Job (for pain and suffering here, rather than for guidance and blessing), Job cannot endure God's wrath and he will die, as would anyone placed under this sort of scrutiny. Barnes wrote: *There is an energy [in this verse] which is greatly enfeebled in the common translation. God had fixed his eyes upon Job, and he at once disappeared.*¹⁷ To support this, Barnes quotes Rev. 20:11, which reads: **And I saw a great white throne and Him Who sat upon it, from Whose presence earth and heaven fled away, and no place was found for them.**

Now, as I said, I believe that this passage, vv. 7–8, is a marvelous poetical transitional statement, spoken both to Job's friends, as he leaves them while he prays to God; and spoke directly to God, allowing for both interpretations. Job both speaks to the individual soul of each one of his friends as well as speaking directly to God.

¹⁶ In case you think that *eyes* should therefore be in the dual, we find them in the plural when used of God in Psalm 11:4.

¹⁷ *Barnes' Notes, Job, Volume 1*; Baker Books, ©1996; p. 187.

“A cloud mass has come to completion then
it goes;
so the one going down [to] Sheol does not
come up.

Job 7:9

“A cloud mass completes its cycle and then it
moves on;
similarly, when one completes his cycle and
goes down to Sheol, he does not come up
again.

Again, the meaning of this verse is easier to ascertain than its literal rendering:

The Amplified Bible

As the cloud is consumed and vanishes away, so he who goes down to Sheol [the place of the dead] shall come up no more.

The Emphasized Bible
NASB

A cloud faileth, and is gone, So he that descendeth to hades, shall not come up;
When a cloud vanishes, it is gone. So he who goes down to Sheol does not come up.

Young's Lit. Translation

Consumed hath been a cloud, and it goeth, So he who is going down to Sheol cometh not up.

We have seen the first verb many times before; it is the 3rd person masculine singular, Qal perfect of *kâlâh* (כָּלָה) [pronounced *kaw-LAWH*], which means *to complete, to be finished, accomplished, spent*. Strong's #3615 BDB #477. The subject of the verb is the Hebrew word for *cloud* or *cloud mass* (Strong's #6051 BDB #777). The picture painted here is of a cloud mass or a storm system, more properly, which has completed its cycle and moves on; it may continue as a cloud mass or as storm system and it may just fade away. Job focuses in on the clouds in particular, apart from any rain. You look up and see a number of clouds; you look up again and they are gone. Job uses this image again in Job 30:15: “Terrors are turned against me. They pursue my honor as the wind and my prosperity has passed away like a cloud.”

Interestingly enough, the second verb is the Qal imperfect of *hâlak* (הָלַךְ) [pronounced *haw-LAHK*], which means *to go, to come, to walk*. It is one of the more common verbs in the Old Testament, being found about 500 times in just about every stem. Strong's #1980 (and 3212) BDB #229. Job uses the cloud activity to set up an analogy.

The second line begins with the particle of analogy, *kên* (כֵּן) [pronounced *kane*], which means *so*. Strong's #3651 BDB #485. This is followed by the Qal active participle of the verb *yârad* (יָרַד) [pronounced *yaw-RAHD*], which means *to descend, to go down*. Strong's #3381 BDB #432. Barnes: *The extent of his sufferings, and the certainly that he must die...are the reasons on which he dwells why his life should be closed, and he released. The language is respectful, but it is the expression of deep anguish and sorrow.*¹⁸

As most of you know, Sheol is a transliteration rather than a translation. It is the Hebrew word *sh^ol* (שְׁאוֹל or שְׁאֹל) [pronounced *sh^ohl*], and it is a word for the underworld, for the unseen world of souls which have passed away. Strong's #7585 BDB #982. We will hear two differing views of *Sh^ol* in the book of Job: “Before I go—and I shall not return—to the land of darkness and deep shadow; the land of utter gloom as darkness, of deep shadow without order and which shines as the darkness.” (Job 10:21–22). “Oh that You would hide me in Sheol that You would conceal me until Your wrath returns that You would set a limit for me and remember me!” (Job 14:13). Bearing in mind that Job was written about midway through the book of Genesis, this is actually the first time that we encounter the unseen world known as *Sh^ol*, and it is spoken of throughout Job without any sort of introduction. It is simply there, and Job and his three companions all have a grasp of what *Sh^ol* is. At bare minimum, when this proper noun is used, we can think of it as the grave or as the underworld holding cell for those who have died. In fact, now would be an excellent time for the **Doctrine of Sheol—not finished yet!!** (Job 9:7).

This verse ends with the verb *to ascend, to come up*; the opposite of *yârad*. With it is the negative. This in no way means that Job did not believe in the resurrection. He will later say: “After my skin has been destroyed, this I know,

¹⁸ Barnes' Notes, Job, Volume 1; Baker Books, ©1996; p. 187.

that in my flesh I will see God” (Job 19:26). Those who descend into Sheol do not return to the earth—this is a commonly attested to fact with which no one can argue.¹⁹

**“He does not return again to his house;
and his place is not caused to regard him
again.**

Job 7:10

**“He does not return again to his own house
nor does his place regard him anymore.**

In terms of our life on earth, we find here the complete and absolute finality of death. “If he is removed from his place, then it will deny him, ‘I never saw you.’” (Job 8:18). As for man, his days are like grass. As a flower in the field, so he flourishes. When the wind has passed over it, it is no more and its place acknowledges it no longer (Psalm 103:15–16). The verb in the second line is quite interesting. It is the 3rd person plural (with a 3rd person masculine singular suffix), Hiphil imperfect of *nâkar* (נָכַר) [pronounced *naw-KAHR*], and it means *to regard, to recognize, to acknowledge*. Some translators render it *discern, distinguish*. Strong’s #5234 BDB #647. No longer does the place where he spent his entire life regard, acknowledge or recognize him. Have you ever returned to your childhood home and a different family lives there and all up and down the street are different families than were there when you lived there. There is this sudden unreality, as if you had never lived there; there is possibly even no sign of you having ever been there—and this place which was once your home become distant and removed, as if you had been excised from it entirely. At death, after a certain period of time, the memory of your life is just about nil. Only in some cases do we have the memory of a man lasting past his own generation—and it is only because of what he has done, not what he is, because, insofar as the earth is concerned, he is no more.

Barnes waxes most eloquent at this point: *He shall not revisit his family. Job is dwelling on the calamity of death, and one of the circumstances most deeply felt in the prospect of death is, that a man must leave his own house to return no more. The stately palaces that he has built; the splendid halls which he has adorned; the chamber where he slept; the cheerful fireside where he met his family; the place at the table which he occupied, he will revisit no more. His tread will be no more heard; his voice will no more awaken delight in the happy family group; the father and husband returning from his daily toil will no more give pleasure to the joyous circle. Such is death. It removed us from all earthly comforts, takes us away from home and kindred—from children and friends, and bids us go alone to an unknown world. Job felt that it was a sad and gloomy thing. And so it is, unless there is a well-founded hope of a better world. It is the gospel only that can make us willing to leave our happy dwellings, and the embraces of kindred and friends, and to tread the lonely path to the regions of the dead. The friend of God has a brighter home in heaven. He has more numerous and better friends there. He has there a more splendid and happy mansion than any here on earth. He will be engaged in more blissful scenes there, than can be enjoyed by the most happy fireside here; will have more cheerful employments there, than any which can be found on earth; and will have higher and purer pleasures there, than can be found in parks, and lawns, and landscapes; in splendid halls, in music, and the festive board; in literary pursuits, and in the love of kindred.*²⁰

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Job Speaks Directly to God Concerning His Situation

**“Moreover, I, [even] I, will not restrain my
mouth;
I must speak in anguish of my spirit;
I must declare in bitterness of my soul.**

Job 7:11

**“Furthermore, I will not refrain from
speaking my mind;
I must speak in anguish of my spirit;
I must declare in bitterness of my soul.**

The three translations with which I spend the most time differ as to the inference of this verse:

¹⁹ Keil and Delitzsch give the more complex argument that Job was operating under limited revelation, so that he was not aware of the resurrection; therefore, he will speak of death and the assignment to Sheol as being final.

²⁰ *Barnes’ Notes, Job, Volume 1*; Baker Books, ©1996; p. 188.

<i>The Emphasized Bible</i>	I also cannot restrain my mouth,—I must speak in the anguish of my spirit, I Must find utterance in the bitterness of my soul.
Owen's Translation	Therefore, I myself will not restrain my mouth. Let me speak in the anguish of my spirit. Let me complain in the bitterness of my soul.
TEV	No! I can't be quiet! I am angry and bitter. I have to speak.
<i>Young's Lit. Translation</i>	Also I—I withhold not my mouth—I speak in the distress of my spirit, I talk in the bitterness of my soul.

This verse begins with an adverb which I don't believe that we've seen before: *gam* (גַּם) [pronounced *gahm*] means *also, moreover*; the idea is addition; possibly *furthermore* might be a good connotation. Strong's #1571 BDB #168. We have the personal pronoun *I* here, was well as the 1st person in the verb, so it means *I, even I, I myself*; literally, it is *I-I*. Strong's #589 BDB #58. The verb is the Qal imperfect of the verb for *withhold, refrain*. Strong's #2820 BDB #362. There is also the negative, followed by the simple word *my mouth*, giving us: **Moreover, I, [even] I, will not restrain my mouth.** The meaning is that Job will not refrain from speaking and saying what he has to say. Job is at the end of his life and all of his prosperity has slipped through his fingers, but he is not going to not speak his peace.

The second line begins with the 1st person singular, Piel imperfect, voluntative of the common word for *speak*. The Piel is intensive; the voluntative is a problem for me right now. The translators who do not acknowledge any sort of difference are *The Amplified Bible*, Keil and Delitzsch, KJV, Noyes—in fact, the only place where we find any sort of difference in translation is with *The Emphasized Bible*, with Owen, and, with, of all places, Today's English Version. I am going to tentatively go with the idea of being compelled by oneself and use the words *I must*. The pain of his suffering; the anguish of his spirit, necessitates that Job speak out. As David under discipline cried out: **O my God, I cry by day, but You do not answer. And I cry by night, but I have no rest.** (Psalm 22:2).

The next verb is the 1st person singular, Qal imperfect, voluntative of *sīyach* (שִׂיַח) [pronounced *SEE-ahkh*], and it means *to communicate, to declare, to speak of, to talk about* and possibly *to complain*; and this word is found primarily in poetry (Judges 5:10 Job 7:11 Psalm 119:15, 23, 27). Strong's #7878 BDB #967. Some of us have trouble being criticized, or being hurt, or being placed in a harsh situation. However, this is intensified when it is a loved one who puts us in that position. We can stand being treated harshly by someone that we don't give a rip about; but we do mind someone that we love and respect treating us harshly. If some catty co-worker criticizes our work, our taste in clothes, or whatever, this does not touch our souls nearly as much as one who loves us saying the same things. Job has been crushed and he recognizes that this is all at the hand of God. He is hurt and in pain; just as much by Who has placed him where he is as he is by what has happened. He can't let this go. He can't not just say something. And with his friends there, all thinking that he has committed some awful sin to deserve his life—he has to speak. **"I loathe my own life. I will give full vent to my complaint; I will speak in the bitterness of my soul."** (Job 10:1).

Barnes: *The idea of this verse is, "such is my distress at the prospect of dying, that I cannot but express it. The idea of going away from all my comforts, and of being committed to the grave, to revisit the earth no more, is so painful that I cannot but give vent to my feelings."*²¹

**"Am I a sea—or a sea-monster [or, crocodile]—
That You place a guard over me?"**

Job 7:12

**"Am I a sea—or a sea-monster of some sort—
that You find it necessary place a continual guard over me?"**

Gesenius offers the explanation that Job is as untamed as the sea and the sea monster. God does look over the sea and He has seen to it that the sea has a specific boundary in which it must remain. As He will say to Job later in this book: **"Or Who enclosed the sea with doors, when, bursting forth, it went out from the womb? When I made a cloud its garment and thick darkness its swaddling band and I placed boundaries on it and I set a bolt and doors**

²¹ Barnes' Notes, Job, Volume 1; Baker Books, ©1996; p. 188.

and I said, 'So far you will come, but no farther; and here your proud waves will stop.' " (Job 38:8–11). Barnes offers essentially the same explanation as Gesenius. *That is, "am I like a raging and tumultuous sea, that it is necessary to restrain and confine me?" The sense of the verse is that God had treated him as if he were untamable and turbulent, as if he were like the restless ocean, or as if he were some monster, which could be restrained within proper limits only be the stern exercise of power...The Chaldee paraphrases [this verse]..."Am I condemned as the Egyptians were, who were condemned and submerged in the Red sea; or as Pharaoh, who was drowned in the midst of it, in his sins, that thou placest over me a guard?"*²² With respect to the sea-monster, there are several opinions. I've read *dragon, sea serpent, whale*. I would think that the context would allow for an animal of the sea or of the water who would be well-known to Job's friends, and as erratic and hard-to-control as the sea. Barnes offers *crocodile* as probably the correct understanding, writing: *It refers here probably to a crocodile, or some similar monster, that was found either in the Nile or in the branches of the Red sea. There is no evidence that it means a whale. Harmer (Obs. iii, 536, Ed. Lond. 1808) supposes that the crocodile is means, and observes that "Crocodiles are very terrible to the inhabitants of Egypt; when, therefore, they appear, they watch them with great attention, and take proper precautions to secure them, so as that they should not be able to avoid the deadly weapons the Egyptians afterwards make use of to kill them."* According to this, the expression in Job refers to the anxious care which is evinced by the inhabitants of countries where crocodiles abound to destroy them. Every opportunity would be anxiously watched for, and great solicitude would be manifested to take their lives. In countries, too, which were subject to inundation from waters, great anxiety would be evinced. The rising waters would be carefully watched, lest they should burst over all barriers, and sweep away fences, houses, and towns. Such a constant vigilance Job represents the Almighty as keeping over him—watching over him as if he were a swelling, roaring, and ungovernable torrent, or as if he were a frightful monster of the deep, whom he was anxious to destroy.²³ This explanation would fit well with the context, as Job will speak of several times of God watching over him too closely and asking that God back off for the last few days of his life. Keil and Delitzsch are a bit more succinct than Barnes (Job is a book which apparently inspired the marvelous writing prowess of Barnes). They take the illustration to be Egyptian in nature as well. The Nile is watched to see that it does not break out of its channels and the crocodiles which would have cause to move due to flooding, would also be watched carefully and kept in check. So Job is watched over by God and kept in check by inflicting pain on him periodically—just as he thinks he might have a few moments of peace, or rest or painlessness, God, watching over him carefully, inflicts upon Job more pain.²⁴

**"When I say, 'My bed will comfort me,
my couch will bear up against my complaint;'"** Job 7:13

**"When I say, 'My bed will comfort me,
my couch will ease my complaint;'"**

Let me give you an alternate rendering:

**"When I say, 'My bed will comfort me,'
He takes up my couch in my complaint;'"** Job 7:13
alternate

**"When I say, 'My bed will comfort me,'
He takes up my couch in my declaration,'"**

Let's look at the renderings of this verse:

Albert Barnes	When I say my couch shall console me, My bed shall lighten my complaint,...
<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	When I say, My bed shall comfort me, my couch shall ease my complaint,...
<i>The Emphasized Bible</i>	When I say, My bed shall comfort me, My couch shall help to carry my complaint...
Keil and Delitzsch	For I said, My bed shall comfort me; My couch shall help me to bear my complaint.
KJV	When I say, My bed shall comfort me, my couch shall ease my complaint;
NASB	If I say, My bed will comfort me, My couch will ease my complaint,'
The Septuagint	I said that my bed should comfort me, and I would privately counsel with myself on my couch.

²² Barnes' Notes, Job, Volume 1; Baker Books, ©1996; pp. 188–189.

²³ Barnes' Notes, Job, Volume 1; Baker Books, ©1996; p. 189.

²⁴ Keil & Delitzsch's *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. IV, p. 311.

Young's Lit. Translation When I said, 'My bed doth comfort me,' He taketh away in my talking my couch.

The key to this verse is whether it is self-contained or attached to the next verse. Young translate's it as a self contained verse, one which stands by itself. It is almost proverbial in nature when taken in that way. Most other translators tie vv. 13–14 together as one thought.

We begin with the conjunction *kîy* (כִּי) [pronounced *kee*] which means *when, that, for, because*. Strong's #3588 BDB #471. This is followed by the simple Qal perfect of *I say*.

The content of what Job has to say that his bed will comfort him. The second line begins with the 3rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect of *nâsâ'* (נָסָא) [pronounced *naw-SAW*], a word which means, as we have seen, *to lift, to take, to bear, to carry*. Strong #5375 (and Strong's #4984) BDB #669. The subject is difficult to determine, as the two nouns in this phrase are both masculine singular. However, immediately following the verb we have the prepositional phrase *in my complaint* or *in my declaration* (this is the noun cognate of the word that we had in the previous verse). Therefore, this is not the subject. That leaves the word *couch* to be the subject, giving us the phrase: *the couch lifts up [or, takes up] in my declaration*. Linguistically, this is not completely clear-cut one way or the other. Without the preposition, this would read: "When I say, 'My bed will comfort me, my couch will bear my complaint;' then [lit., and] you scare me with dreams and with vision, you terrify me." If we had the participle, rather than the verb, this would read: "When I say, 'My bed will comfort me,' He takes my couch in my complaining. And you scare me with dreams and with visions you terrify me." I guess what I want to see is that participle, or the first person personal suffix on the verb *nâsâ'* (so it would mean *bear me up*). Or if the verb were in the 2nd person, as below, then it would be easy. There are several things which could have been done to make this somewhat clearer. However, the preposition in question can mean *against* so that would give us the reading: "When I say, 'My bed will comfort me, my couch will bear up against my complaint;' The context of this verse allows us to make a decision as to which rendering is the best of the two, as it can go either way. However, Job has taken to speaking to God in the 2nd person singular (vv. 12 and 14), so that it is less likely for him to suddenly refer to God in the 3rd person. Therefore, we should understand vv. 13–14 to be a contiguous whole, where even when Job's bed and couch give him some small relief, that God then torments him with nightmares.

**"And You scare me with dreams
and with visions You terrify me.**

Job 7:14

**"And You scare me with dreams
and You terrify me with visions.**

This verse is certainly tied to the previous verse. The sense is that because Job takes some comfort in rest, God removes this rest by scaring him with visions and dreams. As Job had previously stated, "I am not at ease, nor am I quiet; and I am not at rest when turmoil comes." (Job 3:26). The means of revelation from God were limited, and God often used dreams to speak to man, as He has access to our subconscious mind as well as our conscious thinking. Therefore, Job assumed that the few times that he did find some modicum of rest, he would be disturbed by horrible dreams and nightmares from God. As a person who suffered from great and horrible night mares as a child (I can specifically recall two of them to this day), I understand how they robbed Job of his sleep and of the peaceful rest which should be night.

**"Then my soul would choose strangulation;
death rather than my bones.**

Job 7:15

**"Then my soul would choose strangulation;
death rather than my bones.**

To get a better feel for the meaning of this verse, let's examine what others have done with it:

The Amplified Bible
The Emphasized Bible
Keil and Delitzsch
NASB
NJB

So that I would choose strangling *and* death rather than these my bones.
So that my soul chooseth strangling, Death rather than [these] my bones!
So that my soul chose suffocation, Death rather than this skeleton.
"So that my soul would choose suffocation, Death rather than my pains."
...so that strangling would seem welcome in comparison, yes, death preferable to what I suffer.

NIV	So that I would prefer strangling and death rather than this body of mine.
NRSV	...so that I would choose strangling and death rather than this body.
REB	I would rather be choked outright; death would be better than these sufferings of mine.
The Septuagint	You will separate life from my spirit; and yet <i>keep</i> my bones from death.
TEV	...until I would rather be strangled than live in this miserable body.
Young's Lit. Translation	And my soul chooseth strangling, Death rather than my bones.

This verse begins with the wâw consecutive (*so, then, so then*), the verb *to choose* with the subject *my soul*. The object of the verb is the substantive *strangling, suffocation* found only here (its verbal cognate is found in II Sam. 17:23 Nahum 2:13.* Noun: Strong's #4267 BDB #338. Verb: Strong's #2614 BDB #338.

The literal order of the words are: **then would choose strangulation my soul death more than my bones**. Job would prefer death over the bones in which he inhabits. As we have seen before, several saints have requested death from God over life: Elijah in I Kings 19 and Jonah in Jonah 4. To properly understand this verse, it must be taken with the previous two verses, as they all form one contiguous whole: “When I say, ‘My bed will comfort me, and my couch will bear up against my complaint;’ then You scare me with dreams and You terrify me with visions so that my soul would choose strangulation—death rather than my bones.” (Job 7:13–15). One must grasp that Job once and awhile does fall asleep, and when he does, he is greeted with terror and horrible visions, which he assumes are from God. To this he would prefer being strangled; to this he would prefer death. This apparently is not an arbitrary choice of death. With all of the tumors a person diseased with elephantiasis suffers, his breathing becomes severely impaired. What Job is asking for is that this difficulty of breathing to be increased to the point of suffocation, which can be the final cause of death for a person so afflicted.²⁵

What we should also deal with is the final phrase—that Job would prefer death over his bones. The life which was left Job was no real life at all. All that remained of his life was a wasted skeleton. He had no family, just a nagging wife. He has no home, just an ash heap upon which he sat. He had no friends, just three men who had come and assumed the worst of him. He had once been strong and vigorous, now his body was rotted with disease. His entire life was in shambles and only a pale reflect on of what it had once been. He preferred death to his emaciated body and his emaciated life.

“I have wasted [away], not forever I [continue] living; Cease [and desist] from me, for my days [are] a breath.	Job 7:16	“I have wasted away, I will not continue in this state of existence forever; Cease and desist from me, for my days are but a breath.
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Owen differs considerably from some of the other translations:

Albert Barnes <i>The Amplified Bible</i>	I loathe [life]; I would not live always Let me alone, for my days are vanity. I loath my life; I would not live for ever. Let me alone, for my days are a breath [futility].
<i>The Emphasized Bible</i>	I am wasted away, Not to times age-abiding can I live, Leave me alone, For a breath are my days.
Keil and Delitzsch	I loathe it, I would not live away; let me alone, for my days are breath.
NEB	I am in despair. I would not go on living; leave me alone, for my life is but a vapour.
NIV	I despise my life; I would not live forever. Let me alone; my days have no meaning.
Owen's Translation	I loathe [or, despise]; Not for ever I would live. Let me alone for a breath my days.
The Septuagint	For I will not live for ever, that I should patiently endure; depart from me, for my life is vain.
TEV	I give up; I am tired of living. Leave me alone. My life makes no sense.

²⁵ Keil & Delitzsch's *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. IV, p. 312.

Young's Lit. Translation I have wasted away—not to the age do I live. Cease from me, for my days are vanity.

Our major bone of contention is the first verb, which is the 1st person singular, Qal perfect of mâ`aç (אָחַץ) [pronounced *maw-AHS*], a verb that we studied back in v. 5, a verb which appears to have wildly diverse meanings in BDB. BDB lists the meanings: *reject, despise, lightly esteem, refuse, despise*. We find this word used often when God rejects a people or an individual (I Sam. 15:23 Jer. 6:30 7:29 14:19); it is used of man rejecting God and His precepts (I Sam. 15:23 II Kings 17:15 Amos 2:4). Our problem here is that we have no direct object. With the passive (Niphal), we might have pulled together a reasonable translation, using the next phrase; however, that is not the case. My first guess was that this was the ancient Hebrew root mâ`am (אָמַם) [pronounced *maw-AHM*], not found in Scripture, but which means *to stain, to disfigure* (see Gesenius, p. 445 or BDB #548) You will notice that there is little difference between the ending letters, mêm (מ) and çâmek (ם); however, mêm is written differently at the end of the word than it is in the middle and mêm is not the last letter of the 1st person singular, Qal perfect of this verb. My second thought is that this word did have a meaning at one time which meant, in the Niphal, *to ooze out* (recall Job 7:5?). For that reason, I would go with something like *I am oozing out, I waste away, I am dissipating*. Barnes gives the different viewpoint on pp. 186 and 190 of his commentary on Job that this word does mean *to reject, to despise*. The Syriac codex gives the rendering *it fails to me*. Strong's #3988 BDB #549.

Compared to this first verb, the rest of this verse should be a cake-walk. The next phrase is *not forever*; and it is followed by the 1st person, Qal imperfect of châyâh (חַיָּה) [pronounced *khaw-YAW*], which means *to live, to have life, to remain, to survive, to exist*. Strong's #2421 & 2425 BDB #310. Therefore, this means: **Not forever I will continue existing**. We may want to change this slightly to mean: *I will not continue existing forever [in this state]*.

The next verb is the 2nd person masculine singular, Qal imperative of châdal (חָדַל) [pronounced *khaw-DAHL*], a word given many different renderings in the KJV: *ceased, left, forbear, were unoccupied, leave, forsake, left off, have failed* (and these are all Qal renderings). We will render this **cease and to desist**; but the root, according to Gesenius, has to do with becoming loose, flaccid, and often is used in terms of ceasing from one's labor. Strong's #2308 BDB #292. This is followed by the mîn preposition and the 1st person suffix (*from me*).

The Job explains; he has the explanatory kîy conjunction, which means *that, for, because*; and the phrase: **a breath my days**. This last line should read, literally: **"Cease from me, my days [are] a breath."** Less literally: **"Cease and desist from me, for my days are but a vapor."**

The idea is that Job will not continue in the state of existence that he finds himself in, but that his days are as vaporous as a breath; for that reason, he requests that God back off. He is about to die, he is under great torment and pain, and asks for some time away from God's constant pressure. **"Would He not let my few days alone? Would He not withdraw from me that I may have a little cheer?"** (Job 10:20). David asks the same in Psalm 39:13: **"Turn Your gaze away from me that I may smile before I depart and am no more."** Barnes makes the observation that: *A man who is prepared for heaven should not and will not desire to live here always. It is better to depart and to be with Christ, better to leave a world of imperfection and sin, and to go to a world of purity and love... This world is full of temptations and of sin; it is a world where suffering abounds; it is the infancy of our being; it is a place where our knowledge is imperfect, and where the affections of the best are comparatively groveling; it is a world where the good are often persecuted, and where the bad are triumphant; and it is better to go to abodes where all these will be unknown. Heaven is a more desirable place in which to dwell than the earth; and if we had a clear view of that world, and proper desires, we should pant to depart and to be there. Most men live as though they would live always here if they could do it, and multitudes are forming their plans as if they expected thus to live. They build their houses and form their plans as if life were never to end. It is the privilege of the Christian, however, to expect to die. Not wishing to live always here, he forms his plans with the anticipation that all which he has must soon be left; and he is ready to loose his hold on the world the moment the summons comes. So may we live; so living, it will be easy to die.*²⁶

²⁶ Barnes' Notes, Job, Volume 1; Baker Books, ©1996; pp. 190–191.

**“What is man that you magnify him;
and that you would turn your heart unto him? Job 7:17** **“What is man that you magnify him;
and who is man that you would give him any
thought?”**

This verse begins with the interrogative particle and the Hebrew word for *man* (or, *mankind*). The verb is often implied with the interrogative article, so this would read: What [is] mankind; or, what [is] man?

Then we have the *kîy* conjunction and the 2nd person masculine singular, Piel imperfect, 3rd person masculine suffix of *gâdal* (גָּדַל) [pronounced *gaw-DAWHL*], which, in the Qal, means *to grow strong, to become great, to grow up, to become mighty*. However, it also has the connotation, in the Piel, of *causing one to be magnified, making one great, powerful, causing one to grow* (hair: Num. 6:5, plants: Jonah 4:10 Isa. 44:14, children: II Kings 10:6 Isa. 1:2 23:4). The idea is what is man that God would magnify him? Strong’s #1431 BDB #152.

The second line begins with *and that* and the 2nd person singular, Qal imperfect of *shîyth* (שָׁיַת) [pronounced *sheeth*], which means, according to BDB, *to put, to set, to appoint, to station*. The KJV gives such diverse renderings as *lay* (Gen. 48:14, 17 Job 9:33) or *make* (Psalm 21:6 10:1), *consider* (Prov. 24:32). How this differs from the other Hebrew words which mean roughly the same thing, I don’t know. Gesenius explains that *shîyth* means (1) *to set up* that which is supposed to be upright; (2) *to place* or *to put* something where it properly belongs, (3) *to put* in the sense of *directing* or *turning* in some direction, (4) *to make* or *to render* when followed by an accusative or an accusative with the *lâmed* or *bêyth* prepositions; and (5) more rarely *to make, to prepare* (for someone) when followed by a dative and even *to give*.²⁷ My thinking is that with this verb you are placing something or doing something to something to make it the way it is supposed to be. Something should properly be upright, so you set it upright. Something should be turned in a specific direction, so you turn it in that direction. Strong’s #7896 BDB #1011. The remainder of the verse is, literally: [unto him Your heart](#).

Throughout the book of Job, there are these incredible flashes of clarity and brilliance, and this is one of those verses. Job, speaking only from what he could see with his eyes, makes this incredible statement. Such a thought has even more meaning today, since we have begun to look deep into our microscopic world, since we have gotten a fuller understanding of the flora and fauna around us, since we have probed space and found that there is infinitely more out there that we will never see as opposed to that that we do see. What is the life of one man? Isn’t man but a tiny fragment of dust in the great universe of sand? How could God even think about man and man’s place in the world. You would expect a statement like this from a present-day scientist who is a believer, not from a man whose knowledge of things geographic, microscopic and cosmologic are far inferior to the average junior high school student today. Through the incredible complexity of today’s world, how could man in any way be a part of God’s thinking; how could man even aspire to God’s notice? This explains, in many ways, the thinking of the early American deists. After discovering and coming to a whole new world, an existence far away from where they were brought up, they began to realize just how great and vast their world was, forcing them to the conclusion that even if God does exist, He could not have an interest in us anymore. We are far too puny a creature for God to daily participate in our lives. So Job asks this question, from the standpoint of a person who believes in God: what is man, that you give him any thought? Why would the Creator of the Universe give any thought to this spec of dust, man, in the universe? David, the psalmist, expressed these similar thoughts: [What is man, that You take thought of him? And the son of man that You care for him?](#) (Psalm 8:4). And again: [O Y^ehowah, what is man that You take knowledge of Him? Or the son of man that You think of him? Man is like a mere breath; his days are like a passing shadow](#) (Psalm 144:3–4). This question is answered in part by David further in Psalm 8, and better understood now in the light of the Old Testament and New Testament taken together. God created us to vindicate His righteousness and to resolve the angelic conflict. Every philosophical and theological question which has ever been raised, whether concerning the nature of man, the perfection of God, the question of the heathen, the reasonableness of the punishment of hellfire and damnation, will all be answered in human history. The Bible gives us the textbook answer to any of these questions, and human history illustrates and vindicates the justness of God’s dealings with His people and with His angels. Now, David’s approach and Job’s approach are considerably

²⁷ One of the things which I noticed here and in another passage is that Gesenius seems to be more organized in his thinking when presenting the meaning of a word than is BDB.

different. When David penned these words, they were said out of wonder. Job speaks these words as a complaint. Job, like David, recognizes how small man is compared to all there is; however, he does not speak out of wonder—he is upset. He feels as though God is looking too closely on him. God is giving him too much hands-on attention.

Now Job meant this in an entirely different way. To him it was much more personal. Barnes: *What is man, that thou shouldst magnify him? That thou shouldst make him great, or that thou shouldst regard him as of so great importance as to fix thine eye attentively upon him. The idea here is, that it was unworthy the character of so great a being as God to bestow so much time and attention on a creature so insignificant as man; and especially that man could not be of so much importance that it was necessary for God to watch all his defects with vigilance, and take special pains to mark and punish all his offences.*²⁸

We oft times exaggerate our own importance, although we are mere specs in the universe, yet God has seen to all of our needs and he saw to these needs in eternity past. Not only did He see to all of our needs, but God intertwined His provision for us with our spiritual life, our prayer life and our sins. When we pray, we receive an answer to this prayer from eternity past. Nothing surprises God about what we do and He has made provision for it long, long ago. **“For this reason, I say unto you, do not be anxious for your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; for for your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? Observe the birds in the air, that they do not sow, neither do they reap, nor do they gather into barns, and your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not worth much more than they [emphatically, yes]...so do not be anxious then, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘With what shall we clothe ourselves?’ For all these things the Gentiles eagerly search; for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. Consequently, seek first His kingdom and His righteousness; and all these things will be provided for you.”** (Matt. 6:25–26, 31–33). Furthermore, the greatest provision of all was God’s Son, Jesus Christ. Some believers do not have a clue that God is perfect justice and that He cannot tolerate even the most insignificant of sins and that, in some way, these sins must be atoned for. Our deserved punishment for the commission of any offense toward God is eternal separation from God. Although we do not fully grasp how perfect God is and how absolutely necessary it is for Him to never compromise His perfect righteousness, we can appreciate that an act of cold-blooded murder by an individual forever changes that individual’s relationship to society. In some way, he must be banished from society, whether through life imprisonment or through execution. We have had a number of murderers on death row who have believed in Jesus Christ, who will spend eternity in heaven, who have been pardoned by God and whose sin of murder, regardless of how heinous a crime it was, has been completely forgiven by God. However, there are believers and unbelievers in significant numbers who do not want to ever see those people out on the streets intermingling with society again. There are some sins that, unless we witness some kind of complete and total separation, we are not comfortable with. We react this way because we do have a sense of right and wrong. God is absolute perfection—He is perfect righteousness, and He cannot be contaminated or compromised with sin in any way, shape or form. Yet He made provision for us, through His Son, us as insignificant as we are in size in this vast universe, that our sins be washed away without compromising His righteousness. Here, we cannot help but ask, “What is man that You are mindful of him?” Barnes gives several reasons for our importance to God: (1) There is nothing in this universe which is beneath the knowledge of God. God has provided for the least of His creatures. There is not even the smallest microscopic life form about which God is not aware. (2) Man is of great importance to God, because, unlike the creatures, man has this soul, a conscious being which will spend eternity in consciousness. Even more importantly, man has a human spirit, temporarily shut down from birth, which God designed to be capable of fellowship with Him. We are able to relate to our fellow man from the standpoint of our souls; we are able to have a relationship with God because of our human spirits. (3) *Any creature who sins, always makes himself of importance. The murderer has an importance in the view of the community which he never had before. All good citizens become interested to arrest and punish him. There is no more certain way for a man to give consequence to himself, than to violate the laws, and to subject himself to punishment. An offending member of a family has an importance which he had no before, and all eyes are turned to him with deep interest. So it is with man—a part of the great family of God. We are fully aware of some people who commit certain crimes in part because it does give them some sort of standing with the public and recognition—they are no longer completely insignificant and unknown. We recall John Hinkley Jr. who made an assassination attempt upon Gerald Ford (or*

²⁸ Barnes’ Notes, Job, Volume 1; Baker Books, ©1996; p. 191.

was it Ronald Reagan?) In order to impress Jodie Foster. Here was a man whose name would have never been known to her apart from this attempted criminal action. By his sin, he made himself of some significance. Gang members, in order to prove themselves to their fellow gang members, often perpetrate crimes upon society to gain their importance and acceptance. So, as Barnes stated, sin makes us of some importance to God. (4) Our suffering, our pain and our heartache make us important to God. God recognizes our pain and difficulties and we, because we are in need, are important to God.²⁹ **O, Y^ehowah, You have searched me and You know me; You know when I sit down and when I rise up. You understand my thoughts from afar [eternity past]. You scrutinize my path and my sleeping and You are intimately acquainted with all my ways. Even before there is a word on my tongue, observe, O Y^ehowah, You already know it all. You have enclosed me behind and before and you Have laid Your hand upon me. Your knowledge is too wonderful to me; it is too high, I cannot attain to it (Psalm 139:1–6).**

Now let us not lose the significance of what Job is saying. In our interpretation as God's Word, we sometimes miss what was really being said. Job is accepting the fact that maybe there is some sin that he has committed which has resulted in all of this pain and suffering in his life. So he asks what is man that God would so carefully scrutinize his life to lay upon him such suffering for an offense that Job is even unaware of. Certainly Job is suffering at the hand of God—Job can recognize this, as do his friends. But can Job be of such importance that God has taken such a personal interest in him as to dash him into pieces for the slightest transgression? It is not with any joy that Job makes this statement. It is *as if God's only interest in man is to scrutinize him unmercifully and take quick offense at his slightest fault.*³⁰ Job's desire is that God would perhaps step back somewhat, that God would back off; that God would avert His eyes for a short time, that God would be just a little less mindful of Job.

**“Then You visit [or, examine] him in regards
to mornings;
you scrutinize him in regards to moments.**

Job 7:18

**“And so You examine him with each new
morning;
and You carefully scrutinize him each and
every moment.**

The wâw consecutive is followed by the 2nd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect, 3rd person masculine suffix of pâqad (פָּקַד) [pronounced *paw-KAHD*], which is one of the toucher words in the Hebrew to define. It means, in the Qal *to pay attention to, to observe, to attend to, to seek (with interest or desire), to seek in vain (therefore, to need to miss, to lack), to visit (for different purposes) and possibly inspect, examine.* The key to all of these definitions is **personal contact** of some sort. Person A is in contact with person B in order *to bless them, to discipline them, to number them, to appoint them, to look for them (and therefore, find them lacking or missing).* From watching *Eastenders* many, many years ago, I recall that the British have a very similar colloquialism which may help some of you to grasp the meaning: *sort*; as in, *I need to sort him out.* Here, personal contact is required in order to achieve a desired result. Strong's #6485 BDB #823. This is followed by the prefixed preposition lâmed and the substantive for *mornings*. *Lâmed* can mean *with reference to*. With reference to time, *lâmed* can also mean *towards, against, on, at*; so here it would be *on mornings*, literally. Strong's #none BDB #510. Some translators have rendered this *every morning* (NASB, NRSV, Owen); others as *morning by morning* (REB, Rotherham). The psalmist, whose sentiments were not unlike Job's, wrote: **For I have been stricken all day long and chastened every morning** (Psalm 73:14). Barnes: *This language Job intends undoubtedly to be applicable to himself, and he asks with impatience why God should take a pleasure in visiting with suffering each returning day a creature like him...Why is there no intermission, even for a day? Why does not God allow one morning, or one moment, to pass without inflicting pain on a creature so feeble and so frail?*³¹

The second verb, with the exact same morphology as the first, is bâchan (בָּחַן) [pronounced *baw-KHAHN*], and it means *to examine, to [carefully] scrutinize, to test.* Strong's #974 BDB #103. David wrote: **Search me, O God,**

²⁹ These points were expounded upon and the wording was often changed (with the exception of the italicized portion), but they all came from *Barnes' Notes, Job, Volume 1*; Baker Books, ©1996; p. 191.

³⁰ *The NIV Study Bible*; ©1995; p. 733.

³¹ *Barnes' Notes, Job, Volume 1*; Baker Books, ©1996; p. 192.

and know my heart. Try me and know my anxious thoughts and see if there be any hurtful way in me; furthermore, lead me in the everlasting way (Psalm 139:23–24).

The phrasing of the first and second line is almost identical, with a change of verbs and the second line has the substantive is the plural of *rega* (רְגָעַ) [pronounced *REH-gahg*], which means *moment*. Strong's #7281 BDB #921.

What Job is saying is absolutely true; God examines each of us each and every moment; we are scrutinized each and every day. Job's concern, as mentioned before, is that God has so closely scrutinized Job's life as to give him severe discipline for the most minute transgression. **And do not enter into judgment with Your servant, for in Your sight no man living is righteous** (Psalm 143:2). What is missing from the perspective of Job is that we are also observed by angels; God's perfection and excellent righteousness are vindicated through our lives in the realm of the angelic conflict.

**“For how long will you not look away from me?
You will not abandon me until I swallow my spit.**

Job 7:19

**“For how long will you not look away from me?
Or won't You leave me until I swallow my own phlegm?**

This verse begins with the interrogative *kammâh* (כַּמָּוֶה) [pronounced *kahm-maw*], which is actually a preposition, an interrogative and the definite article strung together. According to BDB, together they mean *how many years, for how long*. Only three passages are cited: Job 7:19 Psalm 35:17 78:40. I should think that this would deserve its own Strong's number, but it is listed under Strong's #4100 it's on BDB #554.

This is followed by a negative and the 2nd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect of *shâ'âh* (שָׂא) [pronounced *shaw-AW* or *shaw-GAW*], and BDB gives the rendering *to gaze at [steadily, with interest]*; however, when followed by the *mîn* preposition, it means *to look away from, to turn the eyes from, to avert the eyes from anything* (Job 7:19 14:6 22:4). Strong's #8159 BDB #1043. This is quite an interesting statement, is it not? Job first says that God has personal contact with him each and every day and then asks for how long will God not avert His eyes from Job? We have a similar statement in Job 14:6: **“Turn Your gaze from him that he may rest [or, cease], until he makes his day acceptable like a hired man.”** In the English, it is a rather complex statement; I don't even have a good grasp of what Job is saying, so let's turn to the translators:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	How long will your [plaguing] glance not look away from me,...
<i>The Emphasized Bible</i>	How long wilt thou not look away from me?
NAB	How long will it be until you look away from me, and let me alone long enough to swallow my spittle?
NASB	“Wilt Thou never turn Thy gaze away from me,...”
NEB	Wilt thou not look away from me for an instant? Wilt thou not let me be while I swallow my spittle?
NJB	Will you never take your eyes off me long enough for me to swallow my spittle?
NIV	“Will you never look away from me, or let me alone even for an instant?”
REB	Will you not look away from me for an instant, leave me long enough to swallow my spittle?
TEV	Won't you look away long enough for me to swallow my spit?

The second line begins with a negative as well, and the 2nd person singular, Hiphil imperfect (with a 1st person suffix) of the verb *râphâh* (רָפָה) [pronounced *raw-FAW*], a verb which means, in the Hiphil *to lose interest in a person or a project and therefore abandon that person or project, to forsake* (it means *leave me alone* in the Hiphil imperative). Strong's #7503 BDB #951.

The second line is proverbial, and according to Barnes, this is used even to the present day in Arabia. *“This,” says Burder, “is a proverb among the Arabians to the present day, by which they understand, Give me leave to rest after*

my fatigue...There are two instances which illustrate this passage (quoted by Schultens) in Harris's Narratives entitled the Assembly. One is of a person, who, when eagerly pressed to give an account of his travels, answered with impatience, 'Let me swallow down my spittle, for my journey hath fatigued me.' The other instance is of a quick return made to a person who used the proverb. 'Suffer me,' said the person importuned, 'to swallow down my spittle;' to which the friend replied, 'You may, if you please, swallow down even the Tigris and the Euphrates;' that is, 'You may take what time you please'. The expression is proverbial, and corresponds to ours when we say, "in the twinkling of an eye," or, "till I can catch my breath;" that is, in the briefest interval.³²

God is constantly on Job, as Job feels, placing Job under constant pressure and pain. Job asks for just some time away from God, which is the same as asking for some time away from the pain and suffering. "He will not allow me to get my breath but saturates me with bitterness." (Job 9:18). "Would He not let my few days alone? Withdraw from me that I may have a little cheer." (Job 10:20; see also Job 14:6). However, as David points out: Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence? If I ascend to heaven, You are there; if I make my bed in Sheol, observe, You are there. If I take the wings of the dawn, if I dwell in the remotest part of the sea, even there You hand will lead me and Your right hand will lay hold of me (Psalm 139:7–10). It is obvious that Job is feeling frustrated and is somewhat impatient in his speaking to God. Although such behavior is not to be commended, we should take to heart that Job is operating under limited revelation and being struck by God as he has been, would cause anyone to become testy. With the great revelations which we have since had, the average believer—even the above average believer—could not withstand the kind of pressure that Job is now under.

<p>"I have sinned; what am I doing to You, Protector of the man? Why have You made me a target for Yourself and so I have become for a burden upon You?"</p>	<p>Job 7:20</p>	<p>"Assuming that I have sinned, what am I doing to You, Protector of mankind? Why have You made me a target for Your pleasure and I have become a burden to You?"</p>
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Let's see what the other translators have done, and then proceed line by line with this verse:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	If I have sinned, what [harm] have I done You, O You watcher and keeper of men? Why have You set me as a mark for You, so that I am a burden to myself [and You]?
<i>The Emphasized Bible</i>	I have sinned. What can I do for thee, thou watcher of men? Wherefore hast thou set me as thine object of attack [alternate reading: thy butt], Or have I become unto thee a burden?
Keil and Delitzsch	Hve I sinned—what could I do to Thee?! O Observer of men, Why doest Thou make me a mark to Thee, And am I become a burden to Thee?
NAB	Though I have sinned, what can I do to you, O watcher of men? [there is no second line in the NAB]
NASB	"Have I sinned? What have I done to Thee, O watcher of me? Why hast Thou set me as Thy target, So that I am a burden to myself?"
NEB	If I have sinned, how do I injure thee, thou watcher of the hearts of men? Why hast thou made me thy butt, and why have I become thy target?
NJB	Suppose I have sinned, what have I done to you, you tireless watcher of humanity? Why do you choose me as your target? Why should I be a burden to you?
NIV	"If I have sinned, what Have I done to you, O watcher of men? Why have you made me your target? Have I become a burden to you?"
NRSV	If I sin, what do I do to you, you watcher of humanity? Why have you made me your target? Why have I become a burden to you?

³² *Barnes' Notes, Job, Volume 1*; Baker Books, ©1996; p. 192. It is common in Barnes and other older commentaries to mention the names of various theologians without giving some acknowledgment to the works from which the quote was taken. In other words, I do not have a clue as to who Burder or Schultens are; or even Harris, for that matter.

REB	If I have sinned, what harm can I do you, you watcher of the human heart? Why have you made me your target? Why have I become a burden to you?
The Septuagint	If I have sinned, what shall I be able to do, O You that understands the mind of men? Why have You made me as Your accuser, and am I a burden to You?
TEV	Are you harmed by sin, you jailer? Why use me for your target practice? Am I so great a burden to you?
Young's Lit. Translation	I have sinned, what do I to Thee, O watcher of man? Why hast Thou set me for a mark to Thee, And I am for a burden to myself—and what?

The first line begins with the simple statement, *I have sinned*. There is no preceding *if* and there is no interrogative. I don't know whether Job is setting up an argument along the lines of *okay, assuming that I have sinned, then...* or is he to the point where, in consideration of what Eliphaz had to say, he has decided that he must have sinned and he is more or less confessing it?

The second line begins with the interrogative *what, how*. Strong's #4100 BDB #552. The verb is the 1st person, Qal imperfect of *pâ'al* (פָּעַל) [pronounced *paw-AHL*], which is the poetical equivalent of 'âsâh; we find this word only in Hebrew poetry, and it means *to do, to make, to fabricate, to prepare*. Strong's #6466 BDB #821. The imperfect means an action which is incomplete or future; so this should be rendered *what am I doing?* This is followed by the prepositional phrase *to you* and the phrase *protector of the man*. The verb is the Qal active participle of *nâsar* (נָצַר) [pronounced *naw-TSAHR*], which means *to keep, to guard, to watch over, to protect*. Here, it acts as a substantive (actually, as a vocative). *Protector* or *preserver* would be better renderings than *watcher*. Strong's #5341 BDB #665. The final word in this sentence is a word that you recognize, 'âdâm (אָדָם) [pronounced *aw-DAWM*], which can be the proper name for *Adam*, the word for *man* or a name for the human race, *mankind*. In both instances, 'âdâm can be in the singular and preceded by a definite article. Individual *man* with a definite article: Gen. 2:7–8; without a definite article: Gen. 2:5. *Mankind* with a definite article: Gen. 6:1, 5, 6 Num. 5:6. Strong's #120 BDB #9. It is in the singular here and preceded by the definite article. This would give us: [Assuming] *I have sinned, what am I doing to you, O Protector of mankind [lit., the man]?* Barnes: *What have I done unto thee? How can my conduct seriously affect thee? It will not mar thy happiness, affect thy peace, or in any way injure a being so great as God. This sentiment is often felt by men—but not often so honestly expressed.*³³

The next line begins with the lamed preposition and the interrogative particle *mâh* (מַה) [pronounced *maw*], which together mean *for what* (literally); and therefore, mean *why, for what reason, to what purpose*. Strong's #4100 BDB #554. This is followed by the 2nd person masculine singular, Qal perfect with a 1st person singular suffix of a verb that we have seen many times in Job: *sîym* (שִׂיַם) [pronounced *seem*] which means *to put, to place, to set*. It also can mean *to make, to transform into* (Psalm 104:3). Strong's #7760 BDB #962. This gives us *why have You placed me* or *why have You made me...*

This is followed by a word which occurs only here in the Old Testament; however its verbal cognate is *pâna'* (פָּנֵא) [pronounced *paw-NAH* or *paw-NAHG*], and it means *meet, encounter, reach* in the Qal and *to cause to light upon, to make entreaty, to interpose*. It is from this that we derive the meaning of *mark* or *target* for the noun. Without explanation, Rotherham gives us the meaning *your butt*. **Verb:** Strong's #6293 BDB #803. **Noun:** Strong's #4645 BDB #803. This is followed by the prepositional phrase *to Yourself* or *for Yourself*, giving us the rendering: *Why do You make me a target for yourself?* Recall that Job earlier said, "For the arrows of the Almighty are within me; whose poison my spirit drinks. The terrors of God are arrayed against me." (Job 6:4). Job asks God why God has made him the object of His attack. What has he done, even as a man of sin, to deserve this kind of attack?

This is continued to the next line with the wâw consecutive, and the 1st person singular, Qal imperfect of the Hebrew word for *to be, to become*. This is followed by the preposition 'al (אֲלֵ) [pronounced *al*], which means *upon, against, concerning, because, in accordance with*. Strong's #5921 BDB #752. With this preposition is the 1st person singular suffix. This reads: *so I have become upon [or, concerning] myself...*

³³ Barnes' Notes, Job, Volume 1; Baker Books, ©1996; p. 193.

This is followed by the lamed preposition and the masculine singular substantive masâ' (מִשָּׂא) [pronounced *mah-SAW*], and it generally means *burden*. It can also mean *oracle, utterance* in the sense that that which is said is a burden on the heart of the person who is saying it. Strong's #4853 BDB #672. Therefore, the last line is: **And so, I have become concerning myself for a burden**; or: **And so, I have become for a burden upon myself**.

Now, according to the many of the ancient records, the Sopherim changed this end of this verse ever so slightly, replacing the 2nd person singular suffix with the 1st person singular suffix by dropping the letter kaph, because when it read **And so, I have become for a burden to You**; they judged that to be bordering on blasphemous.³⁴ The Aramaic targum, the Massoretic text and the Vulgate all read *to myself*. The reading *to you* is found in both the Septuagint and is the correct reading according to Jewish tradition. The better scholars are lined up fairly equally on this one. Those favoring *to You*: Rotherham, Keil and Delitzsch, most translators; those favoring *to myself*: Barnes, Young (who appears to favor the Massoretic text no matter what).

Job see God as using him for target practice; and he sees his own life as being a burden upon himself; or, accepting Rotherham's explanation, Job's life has come to a point to where he is a burden upon God. That is, in his own considerable pain and suffering, he is no longer any sort of testimony to God; he is a liability rather than an asset. Barnes explains: *that [Job]...would be willing to admit that he was a sinner, there can be no doubt; but the connection seems rather to require a different sense—a sense implying that though he had sinned, yet his offences could not be such as to require the notice which God had taken of them...the sense may be, "I have sinned. I admit it. Let this be conceded. But what can that be to a being like God, that he should take such notice of it? Have I injured him? Have I deserved these heavy trials? Is it proper that he should make me a special mark, and direct his severest judgments against me in this manner?"...the object is not so much to make a penitent confession...on the admission of the truth of the charge, he had not deserved the severe inflictions which he had received at the hand of God.*³⁵

**“And what—do You not bear my
transgression
and pass over my iniquity?
For now, I will lie with reference to the dust.
and You have sought me diligently [to
discipline me] and my nothing.”**

Job 7:21

**“And why will You not bear my transgression
and pass over my iniquity?
For then, I will lay dead in the dust;
Then You will diligently seek me to
discipline me and I will no longer exist.”**

Job is still going with the assumption that he has sinned; and he asks God why doesn't He pardon his sin and remove his iniquity. God does this. Because of the crushing pressures, Job says that he will succumb to death and when God looks for him for a target, he will no longer be found. Barnes: *Admitting that I have sinned (ver. 20), yet why dost thou not forgive me? I shall soon pass away from the land of the living. I may be sought, but I shall not be found. No one would be injured by my being pardoned—since I am so short-lived, and so unimportant in the scale of being. No one can be benefited by pursuing a creature of a day, such as I am, with punishment.*³⁶

It is wonderful to read the simple explanation of McGee: *Job...admits the has sinned. But why should he be selected for this special attack as a notorious sinner? Why should his life be a burden when he is not that kind of a sinner? Why doesn't God show mercy on him? Why doesn't God pardon his sin and restore him? While he admits that he is a sinner, he says that he is getting more than he deserves. We can see in Job a breaking down of his integrity. When a man's integrity is broken down, he becomes an easy mark for Satan. This is the thing that happens to many a man today who attempts to fight life alone. He begins to hit the bottle or he drops into sin. Satan has a chance to attack him because the man's integrity has broken down. This is the situation with Job. Will Job break under all of this?*³⁷

³⁴ Joseph Bryant Rotherham's *The Emphasized Bible*; ©1971 by Kregel Publications; p 505. Rotherham referenced Ginsburg here, from a book which I do not have (yet): Dr. C.D. Ginsburg's *Introduction to the Massoretico-Critical edition of the Hebrew Bible* (1897).

³⁵ *Barnes' Notes, Job, Volume 1*; Baker Books, ©1996; p. 193.

³⁶ *Barnes' Notes, Job, Volume 1*; Baker Books, ©1996; p. 194.

³⁷ *Job*; J. Vernon McGee, ©1977, p. 58.

This verse begins with the simple interrogative mâh (מַה) [pronounced *maw*], without any preceding prepositions, and it therefore means *what, how*. Strong's #4100 BDB #552.

The verb is the 2nd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect of nâsâ' (נָסָא) [pronounced *naw-SAW*], which means *to lift, to take, to bear, to carry*. Strong #5375 (and Strong's #4984) BDB #669.

The second verb is the 2nd person masculine singular, Hiphil imperfect of 'â^bvar (אָבַר) [pronounced *aw-BAHR*], which is given, in the KJV, a rather generous supply of meanings in the Hiphil: *to set apart, to cause to sound, to pass over, to cause to pass, to put away, to pass through, to conduct, to carry over, to make proclamation, to do away, to take away, to bring, carried, made, have brought*. Obviously, that is too many to try to use for one word in one particular stem. The basic idea behind this verb is the idea of *to pass over, to cross over* [a stream, a shore, etc.]. From this, we can extrapolate the meanings *to die, to depart, to go away*. The subject of this verb can be man, wind, water, and even tears. The Hiphil is the causative stem; therefore, it means *to cause to pass over, to transmit, to send over, to conduct over*. Metaphorically, this can mean *to pass by sin, to remit, to forgive* (II Sam. 12:13 24:10). Strong's #5674 BDB #716. Job plaintively cries, "Why won't you forgive me?" Later, he says, "I am afraid of all my pains, I know that You will not acquit me." (Job 9:28). The Psalmist tells us that there is nothing worse than falling under the judgment of God: *My flesh trembles for fear of You and I am afraid of Your judgments* (Psalm 119:120). However, we know that we worship a God who will forgive us and acquit us on the basis of His perfect righteousness: "I, even I, am the One Who wipes out our transgressions for My Own sake; and I will not remember your sins." (Isa. 43:25; see also Jer. 31:34).

Barnes goes out on a wonderful tangent at this point concerning the unbeliever and the forgiveness of sin: *Still it is language such as awakened and convicted sinners often use, and expresses the feelings which often pass through their hearts. They admit that they are sinners. They know that they must be pardoned or they cannot be saved. They are distressed at the remembrance of guilt, and under this state of mind, deeply convicted and distressed, they ask with a murmuring spirit why God does not pardon them? Why does he allow them to remain in this state of agitation, suspense, and deep distress? Who could be injured by their being forgiven? Of what consequence to others can it be that they should not be forgiven? How can God be benefited by his not pardoning them? It may not be easy to answer these questions in a manner wholly satisfactory; but perhaps the following may be some of the reasons why:...The main reason is, that they are not in a state of mind to make it proper to forgive them. (1.) There is a feeling that they have a claim on God for pardon, or that it would be wrong for God not to pardon them. When men feel that they have a claim on God for pardon, they cannot be forgiven...(2.) There is no proper submission to God—to his views, his terms, his plan. In order that pardon may be extended to the guilty, there should be acquiescence in God's own terms, and time, and mode. The sinner must resign himself into his hands, to be forgiven or not as he pleases—feeling that the whole question is lodged in his bosom, and that if he should not forgive, still it would be right, and his throne would be pure. In particular, under the Christian method of pardon, there must be entire acquiescence in the plan of salvation by the Lord Jesus Christ; a willingness to accept of forgiveness, not on the ground of personal claim, but on the ground of his merits; and it is because the convicted sinner is not willing to be pardoned in this way, that he remains unforgiven...(3.) There is a murmuring spirit—and that is a reason why the sinner is not forgiven...How can a parent pardon an offending child, when he is constantly complaining of his injustice and of the severity of his government?...So the awakened sinner murmurs. He complains of the government of God as too severe; of his law, as too strict; of his dealings, as harsh and unkind. He complains of his sufferings, and thinks they are wholly beyond his deserts. He complains of the doctrines of the Bibles as mysterious, incomprehensible, and unjust. In this state how can he be forgiven? God often suffers the awakened sinner, therefore, to remain under conviction for sin, until he is willing to acquiesce in all his claims, and to submit without a murmur; and then, and not till then, he extends forgiveness to the guilty and troubled spirit.³⁸* To put it simply, God has one way of salvation—Jesus Christ took upon Himself the penalty for our sins—He became sin on our behalf—and God poured upon Him the iniquity of us all. We do not deserve to be forgiven nor are our sins trivial in the sight of God. They required pain and suffering on the part of Jesus Christ beyond anything that we could imagine. I am not speaking of the time prior to the crucifixion, but to the several hours on the cross when the land was enshrouded in darkness and God the Father laid on God the Son the penalty for the iniquity of us all. This is the only basis upon which we can be forgiven. Our salvation is free, undeserved, specific and

³⁸ Barnes' Notes, Job, Volume 1; Baker Books, ©1996; pp. 194–195.

universally available. However, it is not our right, it is not trivial and it comes to us on the basis of God's perfect righteousness, not because of some namby pamby sentimentality.

The third line is generally rendered correctly in most translations, with the exception of the preposition prior to the word *dust*. It is the lâmed preposition, which means *to, for, with reference to, with respect to* and it can mean of in terms of *belonging to* (this is used throughout the Psalms in this way). Strong's #none BDB #510. The idea here is not Job just groveling in the dust, but dying and becoming one with the dust. "Recall now, that You have made me as clay and would You turn me into dust again?" (Job 10:9). Job asks for some easing of the pain and suffering, as there is little time left in his life.

The verb in the last line the 2nd person singular, Piel perfect (with a 1st person suffix) of *shâchar* (שָׁחַר) [pronounced *shaw-KHAHR*], which means *to seek early, to look for diligently*. It often has the connotation of seeking someone diligently because you are going to discipline them. Strong's #7836 BDB #1007.

This is followed by the wâw conjunction and the substantive of negation *'ayin* (אֵין) [pronounced *AH-yin*], which means, *naught, nothing*. It can mean *in the condition of being not = without*. Strong's #369 BDB #34. This substantive has the 1st person suffix affixed to it. Rotherham footnotes that this is almost equivalent to *annihilation*. Literally, this is: *You will seek me diligently [to apply discipline] and my nothing*. Less literally, but more communicatively: *Then you will see me diligently to discipline me and I will no longer exist*. Others have translated this as follows:

<i>The Emphasized Bible</i>	...and I should not be. [this is footnoted: almost =annihilation]
NKJV	...But I will no longer be
NAB	...I shall then be gone.
NASB	...but I will not be.
NJB	...and I shall be no more.
NIV	...But I will be no more.
The Septuagint	...I am no more.
TEV	...and I'll be gone when you look for me
<i>Young's Lit. Translation</i>	...and I am not!

Job knows that his sins should be forgiven and that God should pass over his iniquity; in fact, no matter how horrible his sins were, God still would forgive them and pass over them. Job does not understand why this is not the case now. Because of the intense pain and suffering that Job is suffering, he tells God, while speaking to his friends, that he will die at any time; he will become one with the dust; he will become dust; and then when God chooses to search for him in order to discipline him more, he will not be found on this earth.

Barnes draws some conclusions, which I should hope, would go without saying; however, Barnes does wax eloquently on some important points, so let me close with the final words of Barnes on this chapter: *In this chapter there is much language of bitter complaint, and much which we cannot justify. It should not be taken as a model for our language when we are afflicted, though Job may have only expressed what has passed through the heart of many an afflicted child of God. We should not judge him harshly. Let us ask ourselves how we would have done if we had been in similar circumstances. Let us remember that he had comparatively few of the promises which we have to comfort us, and few of the elevated views of truth as made known by revelation, which we have to uphold us in trial. Let us be thankful that when we suffer, promises and consolations meet us on every hand. The Bible is open before us—rich with truth, and bright with promise. Let us remember that death is not as dark and simal to us as it was to the pious in the time of the patriarchs—and the grave is not now to us as dark and chilly, and gloomy, and comfortless an abode. To their view, the shadow of death cast a melancholy chillness over all the regions of the dead; to us the tomb is enlightened by Christian hope. The empire of Death has been invaded, and his power has been taken away. Light has been shed around the tomb, and the grave to us is the avenue to immortal life; the pathway on which the lamp of salvation shines, to eternal glory. Let us not complain, therefore, when we are afflicted, as if the blessing were long delayed, or as if it could not be conferred should we soon die.*

If withheld here, it will be imparted in a better world, and we should be willing to bear trials in this short life, with the sure promise that God will meet and bless us when we pass the confines of life, and enter the world of glory.³⁹

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³⁹ Barnes' Notes, Job, Volume 1; Baker Books, ©1996; pp. 195–196.