

Job 10

Job 10:1–22

Outline of Chapter 10:

- vv. 1–7 **Job speaks directly to God: “You are not petty and vindictive like man, are you?”**
- vv. 8–13 **“Why are You destroying a work of Your hands?”**
- vv. 14–17 **“You continue to beat me down.”**
- vv. 18–22 **Job speaks of death and asks God to back off**

Charts:

- v. 7 **Job 10:2–7**
- v. 13 **Job 10:8–13**
- v. 15 **Job 10:14–15**

Introduction: In the previous chapter, Job asked for a courtroom; any place where he could confront God. In Job 10, he tells what he would say to God, given such a forum. What is important in this chapter in terms of interpreting portions of the previous chapter is the use of the 2nd person singular. We find this used in both chapters. Back in Job 9, some expositors mistakenly took this use to refer to God—is if, in the middle of speaking to his friends, he wistfully looked out to the sunset and spoke directly to God. This is not the case in the previous chapter. No where do we have any overriding evidence to support that *you* in the previous chapter refers to anyone else but Bildad or Eliphaz. However, in this chapter, Job will clearly state that he would say thus and so to God. If Job was speaking to God in the previous chapter, why does he have to stop in the first two verses of this chapter and say, “This is what I would say to God”? If he is already speaking to God, then he needn’t stop and say, “If I could speak to God, this is what I would say.” Grammatically and logically, this makes no sense. Therefore, in the previous chapter, all of what Job had to say was addressed directly to his friends. In this chapter, Job addresses God directly, as if he were presenting his case in court. There will be some confusion at the end of this chapter. There are two viewpoints: (1) that, at the end of his speech to God, Job then turns to his friends and says, “Would He not let my few days alone?” and (2) that Job never left off speaking to God. He spoke to God throughout the remainder of chapter 10. This is a tougher call, because the difference between the two viewpoints boils down to one Hebrew letter; which issue we will cover when we get to the final few verses.

The better portion of Job 10, vv. 3–13, deals with three questions which Job asks and offhandedly answers. He asks if it is right for God to destroy the work of His hands; if God has eyes of flesh, as his friends; and if God's years are as man's. Most commentaries do not allude to this because Job does not answer these questions as clearly and as satisfactorily as we would like. The key here is that he is in severe physical pain; he is given no comfort whatsoever from his three associates, and he turns to God in prayer. He is not making some great philosophical dissertation which he will, in a very organized and complete fashion, ask and answer questions on his mind, which are really supposed to be the questions on the minds of the reader. He will ask these questions, more or less answer them, and continue in his talking to God. If the book of Job were written with the intention that it be some kind of a philosophical discussion, his thoughts would have been more organized. If this were a great parable with hidden meanings, or a story with the intention of getting certain points across, then we would see a much greater flair for organization and thought development. However, these are the thoughts of a man in a great deal of pain and suffering—far beyond what we could even think to understand—so his words are a bit more haphazard and free flowing. In fact, it is passages like these which testify in their lack of organization that book of Job is a real book about a real person and the pain and suffering that he endured. Then, when we arrive at v. 3, we will take these three questions up as well as their answers before proceeding further into the exegesis.

Barnes: In chap. x, he prosecutes the argument, and indulges himself in a much greater latitude of expression and feeling than he had done in chap. ix. In particular, he expostulates with great earnestness and pathos with God on account of his rearing a creature—the work of his own hands—with such severity, and in a solemn manner, as his Maker, and asks why he deals thus with a poor, frail, and helpless creature whom he has made; acknowledges that all that he has is from God, appeals to God himself in proof that he is not a wicked man, and asks why he deals with him in this awful manner (ver. 2–12); and says that God marked him out as a hunted him

down as a lion, and multiplied the tokens of his indignation, so that he was utterly overwhelmed and confounded, ver. 13–17. As he proceeds he grows warmer; is roused to desperation at the idea that God is his enemy; and again vehemently wishes for death as a relief for his woes, asking only for a little respite before he goes down to the land of darkness and of shades, ver. 18–22. There are marks of great agitation of feeling, of deep emotion, of mingled sensibilities, in these chapters, and the whole is a remarkable illustration of the feelings which even pious men sometimes have in trials.¹

Keil and Delitzsch: *Job is passing through conflict and temptation. He does not perceive the divine motive and purpose of his suffering, nor has he that firm and unshaken faith which will keep him from mistaken views of God.* I should interrupt here and point out a couple things: (1) Job did not have much Scripture to go on. He may have had a little bit of Genesis, and that may have been verbal, and he was pretty far removed from creation—so the fact that he is a testimony in any way speaks highly of his faith. Most, if not all, of us, would have folded long ago. *The image of gracious God is hidden from him, he feels only the working of the divine wrath, and asks, Wherefore doth God give light to the suffering ones?—a question which must not greatly surprise us, for, as Luther says, "There has never been any one so holy that he has not been tormented with this quare, quare, Wherefore? wherefore should it be so?" And when the friends, who know as little as Job himself about the right solution of this mystery, censure him for his iniquity, and think that in the propositions: man has no righteousness which he can maintain before God, and God does not pervert the right, they have found the key to the mystery, the conflict become fiercer for Job, because the justice of God furnishes him with no satisfactory explanation of his own lot, or of the afflictions of mankind generally. The justice of God, which the friends consider to be sufficient to explain everything that befalls man, Job can only regard as the right of the Supreme Being; and while it appears to the friends that every act of God is controlled by His justice, it seems to Job that whatever God does must be right, by virtue of His absolute power.*²

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Job Speaks Directly to God: “You Are Not Petty and Vindictive like Man, Are You?”

Literally:

Smoother English rendering:

“My soul loathes my life.

“I am appalled at my own life.

I must loosen my complaint above myself;
I must speak in the bitterness of my soul.

Job 10:1

I must let loose my complaint above myself;
I must speak out in the bitterness of my soul.

Immediately, we begin with a difficult verse, so let me give you some other translations:

Albert Barnes	My soul is weary of my life, I will give myself up to complaint, I will speak in the bitterness of my soul.
<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	I am weary of my life <i>and</i> loathe it! I will give free expression to my complaint; I will speak in the bitterness of my soul.
<i>The Emphasized Bible</i>	My soul doth loathe my life,—I let loose my complaint, I speak in the bitterness of my soul.
Keil and Delitzsch	My soul is full of disgust with my life, Therefore I will freely utter my complaint; I will speak in the bitterness of my soul.
NASB	“I loathe my own life. I will give full vent to my complaint. I will speak in the bitterness of my soul.
NJB	Since I have lost all taste for life, I shall give free rein to my complaining; I shall let my embittered should speak out.

¹ Barnes' Notes, Job, Volume 1; Baker Books, ©1996; p. 207.

² Keil & Delitzsch's *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. IV, p. 340.

NRSV	I loathe my life; I will give free utterance to my complaint; I will speak in the bitterness of my soul.
The Septuagint	Weary in my soul, I will pour my words with groans upon him; I will speak being straitened in the bitterness of my soul.
TEV	I am tired of living. Listen to my bitter complaint.
<i>Young's Lit. Translation</i>	My soul hath been weary of my life, I leave off my talking to myself, I speak in the bitterness of my soul.

The subject of this first sentence is *my soul*. The verb is either the Niphal perfect of $qû\text{ṭ}$ (קִוֵּט) [pronounced *kooṭ*] and it means *to loath, to nauseate, to be disgusted with*. However, it is also given as the Qal perfect of $nâqa\text{ṭ}$ (נָקַחַט) [pronounced *naw-KAHT*], in which case this is the only place that we find this verb (if that is the case, there are several cognates and the meaning generally given is *cut off*. Gesenius lists the meaning *to loathe*, and points out that only the Qal perfect of this word is found here and all of the rest of the roots are found in $qû\text{ṭ}$. (Strong's #5354 BDB #876). Rather than find a new meaning, let's just go with *to loathe*. Strong's #6962 BDB #876. What is loathed is always found on the other side of the *bêyth* preposition, and that is the words *my life*.

The second line begins with the 1st person singular, Qal imperfect voluntative of $\text{ʿ}âza^b\text{v}$ (אֲזַבֵּב) [pronounced *aw-ZA^{BV}*] properly means *to loosen bands, to let go* [a beast from its bonds]; and therefore *to leave, to forsake* in the Qal. Gesenius explains that it is used metaphorically here, as in "I will let loose my complaint" as if it were on reins; I will no longer restrain it. Strong's #5800 BDB #736. This is followed by the preposition $\text{ʿ}al$ (עַל) [pronounced *al*], which means, primarily, *upon, against, above, on the ground of (or upon the basis)* something is done. Strong's #5920, 5921 BDB #752. With the preposition is the 1st person singular subject. This is followed by *my complaint*. Literally, this is: **I must loosen above myself my complaint**. Job has kept his complaint to himself and to his friends, and now he wants to give free reign to it to God. He has kept his complaint restrained and now he will cut loose with it. He will speak without restraints before God.

The third line verb is also in the voluntative: **I must speak in the bitterness of my soul**. As we have seen, the Bible lists several instances when believers spoke to God of their unhappiness with their lot in life: Moses (Num. 11:15), Elijah (I Kings 19:4), Job (Job 7:11, 16) and Jonah (Jonah 4:4), to name three.

in the previous chapter, Job has spoken to his friends of his pain and sadness. He has spoken to his friends about God, asking that a Mediator remove God's rod from him. However, what Job has not done yet is go directly to God with his complaint and bitterness. From hereon in, he will speak directly to God. For one who is reverent, this is quite a step to go to God in complaint.

McGee: *Because Job has no mediator, no man to represent him before God [see Job 9:32–33], he will just speak in the bitterness of his soul. He is weary of life and his is going to say exactly how he feels. He is plain and honest about his sad plight and his wretched condition.*³

**"I must say to God,
'Do not condemn me [as guilty].
Cause me to know why You contend
[against] me [or, why you fault me].**

Job 10:2

**"I must say, even to God,
'Do not cause me to be condemned.
Let me know why You find fault with me.**

In this verse, we no longer have to dispute who Job is speaking to. In the first line, he tells us. He is speaking directly to God. What follows is essentially a public prayer from Job, inquiring of God concerning his pain. Although this is certainly not the first time which Job has gone to God, it is the first direct communication to which we are privy. God will not give Job an immediate response and Job later conveys his desire to speak to God and to argue with Him (Job 13:3), as Job becomes increasingly bold. God will finally answer Job directly in Job 38–41, although God's real answer to Job comes through Elihu in Job 32–37.

³ Job; J. Vernon McGee, ©1977, p. 69.

In the second line, the first verb is the 2nd person masculine singular, Hiphil imperfect with a 1st person suffix of *râsha* (רָשָׁה) [pronounced, *raw-SHAHG*], which should generally be translated *to behave in a reprehensible manner, to act in malevolence, to commit corrupt acts, to be guilty of same*. In the Hiphil, this word has a judicial edge to it, which helps to define the other use: it means, in the context of rendering judicial decision, *to condemn as guilty* (Ex. 22:9). Strong's #7561 BDB #957. With it, we have the negative. 'Do not condemn me [as guilty].'

In the third line we have the Hiphil imperative of *yâda'* (יָדָה) [pronounced *yaw-DAHG*], which means *to know*. Strong's #3045 BDB #393. Here, it should be rendered: 'Cause me to know.' It is followed by a preposition and an interrogative particle that together mean *why*. The next verb in this line is the Qal imperfect of *rîy* (רִי) [pronounced *ree^bv*], which means *debate, contend, dispute*. This also has a legal meaning, which would be apropos in Job: *to conduct a case or suit against someone; to make a complaint against one; and, in the abstract, to find fault with someone*. Strong's #7378 BDB #936.

Job's friends have partially convinced Job that God sees him as guilty of something. Job hasn't a clue as to what that is, so he here goes to God. His friends have concluded that Job is guilty, so Job asks God not to condemn him as such. Barnes: *The sense is, "Do not simply hold me to be wicked, and treat me as such, without showing me the reasons why I am so regarded." This was the ground of Job's complaint, that God by mere sovereignty and power held him to be a wicked man, and that he did not see the reasons why he was so considered and treated. He now desired to know in what he had offended, and to be made acquainted with the cause of his sufferings. The idea is, that it was unjust to treat one as guilty who had no opportunity of knowing the nature of the offence with which he was charged, or the reason why he was condemned.*⁴

Now and again, we need to step back and take in the big picture. In the next ten or so verses, Job asks three questions and then answers them. In tearing this passage apart, almost word-by-word, we often miss the gist of a passage. Only one commentary, Keil and Delitzsch, alluded to this, and part of the reason is that these are not nice simple questions with quick, concise answers. You may not find his answers directly on point or satisfying. What we have is a man in severe physical pain and under great emotional stress going directly to God with his pain. Job has no clear picture whatsoever as to why God has subject him to the pain and suffering that he is under. The things he says as possibilities, Job knows almost from the moment that he says them that they do not explain what has happened to him. Job will ask: (1) Does it make sense for God to despise the work of His hands and then for Him to rain grace upon the corrupt? (2) Are God's eyes fleshly; can He only see what Job's friends see? And, (3) Is God confined to time as man is? Are his years as a man's years?

Job will answer those questions in reverse order. It is not that he ties all this together in a neat, well-thought out package. He is in pain, he is speaking directly to God, and he explores some options. We would say that Job is thinking out loud. Job answers his third question immediately: "As the days of a fallen man, are Your days? Or, are Your years as days of a man that You seek for my iniquity and for my sin You inquire? Definitely not!" (Job 10:5–6). That is, are You so petty and vindictive like man, that You search out each and every sin that I have committed? Is Your life so short, that You must deal with it all immediately? And Job knows that this is false and construct that sentence to require a negative response. The second question, whether God can only see what man sees, Job disposes of in v. 7—"You know I am not guilty [of a sin requiring this kind of penalty], but still, knowing that, I cannot find deliverance from Your hand." [heavily paraphrased]. Then, Job explores his first question with greater detail. From v. 8 through v. 12, Job talks about the time and effort which God had put into Job, showing that it would be incongruous for God to spend that kind of time and effort and then to just destroy the work of His hands. So Job concludes in vv. 12–13: "You have fashioned life and grace with me and my spirit has guarded that which You have entrusted to me. And these things You have stored up in Your heart; I know that this spirit has its origins from You [or, possibly, I know that this knowledge is with You]." God clearly knows what He has done in the life of Job and the time that He has put into Job's spiritual growth; Job does not have to come right out and say it, but it is incongruous for God to put that kind of time and exertion into Job's life and then to destroy Job as He would destroy some corrupt, malevolent soul.

⁴ Barnes' Notes, Job, Volume 1; Baker Books, ©1996; p. 226.

**“ [Is it] good to You that you oppress,
that you despise a work of your hands,
and upon the purpose of malevolent [or,
corrupt] ones You shine?**

Job 10:3

**“ Is it right to You to oppress,
to despise a work of your hands?
And, is it right that You seem to favor the
purpose of the malevolent and corrupt?**

Job, as a believer, is a work of God's hands. Job asks God is it right to despise your own work? *“Your hands have fashioned me and constructed me together round about, then you engulf me.”* (Job 10:8). *Your grace, O Y^howah, is everlasting; do not forsake the works of Your hands* (Psalm 138:8b). God is perfect and his plan is perfect—is it right for Him to despise Job, a work of God's own hands? One of the great foreshadowing themes of Job is the suffering of the innocent before the guilty—as Christ, the Innocent, would suffer before man, the guilty. *“They have gaped at me with their mouth, they have slapped me on the cheek with contempt; they have grouped themselves against me. God hands me over to ruffians and tosses me into the hands of the wicked.”* (Job 16:10–11). *“Know then that God has wronged me and closed His net around me.”* (Job 19:6). *“They break up my path. The profit from my destruction. No one restrains them...You have become cruel to me; with the might of Your hand, You persecute me.”* (Job 30:13, 21).

There is no verb in the first line; it is the adjective *ṭôḇ* (טוֹב) [pronounced *toe^bv*], and it means *pleasant, pleasing, agreeable, good*. It has several applications, but here it refers to that which is *pleasing, agreeable, or good* to someone (in this case, to God). Strong's #2896 BDB #373.

In the second line, Job refers to himself is a labor or a work of God's hands. We were created by God and believers have been redeemed by God. We know that the gospel in the Old Testament was less clear to believers then as opposed to now. However, Job knew that, apart from just being a created human being, as a believer, he was a work of God's hands. How could God so casually dismiss him, sending him severe pain and suffering, after spending a lifetime of molding and shaping Job? Job is God's work—how can God treat him as though he has no value? What Job does not grasp is that God is treating Job as if he has great value. There are damn few believers that God would have chosen to endure such a painful object lesson as Job had (for which, perhaps, we are all a little thankful).

The third line has the 2nd person singular, Hiphil perfect of *yâpha'* (פָּאֵר) [pronounced *yaw-FAHG*], and it means *to shine out, to shine forth, to be caused to shine, to send out beams*. It is only found in the Hiphil. Strong's #3313 BDB #422.

What God is causing to shine forth is the feminine singular of construct *'êtsâh* (הַצָּח) [pronounced *gay-TZAW*], which means *counsel, purpose*. Strong's #6098 BDB #420. This was preceded by the preposition *'al* (אֲלֵ) [pronounced *al*], which means, primarily, *upon, against, above, on the ground of (or upon the basis)* something is done. Strong's #5920, 5921 BDB #752. Here, this should be taken with the verb *to shine* and it means *to shine upon* (even though the preposition precedes the verb in the Hebrew). The *counsel* or *purpose* belongs to masculine plural adjective (acting as a substantive) of the word *râshâ'* (רָשָׁע) [pronounced *raw-SHAWĠ*], which means *malevolent ones, lawless ones, criminals, the corrupt*. Strong's #7563 BDB #957. Those who are corrupt enjoy some measure of health and prosperity, which Job has observed. Why does God's glorious light shine upon them while He conversely curses Job—shouldn't it be the other way around?

The meaning of this verse in general is quite simple—Job considers that he is a work of God's hands. He does not say this out of great pride, but he states the simple fact that he knows that he belongs to God. Then he plaintively asks, what has happened to him or what has he done which makes him feel that God has rejected him and instead favors those who are malevolent and lawless? You see that he almost takes the side of his friends. His friends have assumed that Job has committed some great sin. Job asks of God, what is this sin? He is not doing this in order to seem confused before his friends—this is not a show for them—he understands that God is sovereign, that all of his troubles could not have come upon him apart from the hand of God; and he simply asks God Why this is occurring. Barnes: *It could not be with God a matter of personal gratification to inflict pain wantonly. There must be a reason why he did it. This was clear to Job, and he was anxious, therefore, to know the reason why he was treated in this matter...The state of his mind appears to be this: he is conscious to himself that he is*

a sincere friend of God, and he is unwilling to believe that God can wantonly inflict pain—and yet he has no other way of accounting for it. He is in a sort driven to this painful conclusion—and he asks with deep feeling, whether it can be so? ⁵

**“ [Are] eyes of flesh to you?
Or as a seeing of [fallen] man, do you see?
[no!] ”** Job 10:4

**“ ‘Do You have eyes of flesh?
Or, do you see as fallen man sees? That
can’t be true! ”**

Let’s see what others have done with this verse:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	Have You eyes of flesh? Do You see as a man sees?
<i>The Emphasized Bible</i>	Eyes of flesh hast thou? Or as a mortal seeth seest thou?
NIV	Do you have eyes of flesh? Do you see as a mortal sees?
The Septuagint	Or do You see as a mortal sees? Or will You look as a man sees?
TEV	Do you see things as we do?
<i>Young’s Lit. Translation</i>	Eyes of flesh hast Thou? As man seeth—seest Thou?

This verse begins with the interrogative particle followed by, literally, *eyes of flesh to you*. When we have two sentences, the first introduced by the disjunctive particle *ha* (הַ) [pronounced *hah*] (Strong’s #none BDB #209) and the second by the hypothetical particle *ʾim* (אִם) [pronounced *eem*] (Strong’s #518 BDB #49), this is a disjunctive question. A disjunctive question may express a real alternative or the same thought may be repeated in a different form as two parallel clauses. In the latter case, the answer *no* is expected. We can express this negative in several ways—*this can’t be true; that makes no sense; this isn’t right; untrue; incorrect; wrong*. This is why many translations have the word *or* in the second clause. Although I can’t find this in Gesenius or in BDB, it seems like the first interrogative combined with the phrase *to you* would be reasonably rendered *have you...? or do you have?*

The second phrase has the preposition *as, like* and the Qal infinitive construct of the word *see*. The other half of the construct is the word for *fallen* or *mortal* man. This verse ends with the 2nd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect of *to see*. We so translate this verb as part of the question. The doubling of the question puts great emphasis upon this question. Job has three very short-sighted friends who can see only his despair and misery and assume that he is being disciplined because of it. Can God be as short-sighted as they? Certainly not. **“For God does not see as a man sees, for man looks at the outward appearance; however, God looks at the heart.”** (1 Sam. 16:7b). **“For He looks to the ends of the earth and He sees everything under the heavens.”** (Job 28:24).

McGee: *Here is another reason God became a man down here: now I have the assurance that there is a Man in the glory who understands me. Because He was a Man like I am, He knows exactly how I feel. There is not a pulsation that ever entered the human breast that Jesus Christ did not feel when He was here on this earth. My friend, He knows how I feel. He knows how you feel.*⁶

**“ ‘As days of a [fallen] man, Your days?
Or, Your years as days of a man? ”** Job 10:5

**“ ‘Are Your days as the days of mortal man?
Or are Your years are the days of a man? ”**

Again, we have parallel questions expressed as a disjunction with a negative answer expected. This negative will not be inserted until the end of the next verse, where the question is properly ended. Paraphrasing Barnes: *“Do You expect to die soon, that you pursue me in this manner, searching out my sins and afflicting me as if there were no tomorrow; as if you had no time to lose?” His strokes were unintermitted, as if it were necessary that the work should be done soon, and as if no respite could be given for a full and fair development of the real character of the sufferer.* The whole tenor of this passage (vv. 4–7) is that God cannot resemble man in any way. *Man was short lived, fickle, blind; he was incapable, from the brevity of his existence, and from his imperfections, of judging*

⁵ Barnes’ Notes, Job, Volume 1; Baker Books, ©1996; p. 226.

⁶ Job; J. Vernon McGee, ©1977, p. 70.

correctly of the character of others. But it could not be so with God. He was eternal. He knew the heart. He saw every thing as it was. Why, then, Job asks with deep feeling, did he deal with him as if he were influenced by the methods of judgment which were inseparable from the condition of imperfect and dying man? ⁷ Observe, you have made my days as handbreadths and my lifetime as nothing in Your sight. Certainly every man is at most a mere breath (Psalm 39:5). For a thousand years in Your sight are like yesterday when it passes by or as a watch in the night (Psalm 90:4). But do not allow this one fact to escape your notice, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years and a thousand years as one day (I Peter 3:8).

**“ ‘That You seek for my iniquity
and for my sin You inquire? [no!]**

Job 10:6

**“ ‘That You keep seeking for my iniquity
and You continue to inquire about my sin?
Certainly not!**

This verse begins the conjunction kîy (כִּי) [pronounced *kee*] which means *when, that, for, because*. This conjunction often continues a question and the force of an interrogative from a previous sentence (Gen. 20:9 I Sam. 22:8 Isa. 22:1 Micah 4:9). Strong's #5771 BDB #730.

The second phrase contains the Qal imperfect of the verb dâraš (דָּרַשׁ) [pronounced *dah-RAWSH*], which means *to seek, to make inquiries concerning, to consult, to investigate, to study, to follow, to inquire*. Strong's #1875 BDB #205. The negative response demanded in the previous verse is inserted at the end of this verse.

Paraphrasing Barnes: *Are you governed by human passions and prejudices, that You seem to search out each and every little obliquity and error? Job here evidently refers to the conduct of man in strictly marking faults, and in being unwilling to forgive; and he asks whether it is possible that God could be governed by such feelings as these.*⁸

**“ ‘[It is] according to Your knowledge that I
have not acted malevolently;
and none out of Your hand delivering.**

Job 10:7

**“ ‘According to revealed truth, I am not guilty
of acting with malevolence;
and [according to revealed truth], none can
rescue me out of Your hand.**

This verse looks like trouble, so let's see some other renderings:

Albert Barnes	With thy knowledge that I am not a wicked man, And that none can deliver out of thy hand?
<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	Although You know that I am not wicked or guilty, and there is none who can deliver me out of Your hand?
<i>The Emphasized Bible</i>	Though it is within thine own knowledge that I would not be lawless, And none out of thy hand can deliver?
Keil and Delitzsch	Although You know that I am not a wicked man, And there is none that can deliver out of Thy hand.
NASB	“According to Thy knowledge I am indeed not guilty; Yet there is no deliverance from Thy hand.”
NJB	...you know very well that I am innocent, and that no one can rescue me from your grasp.
NIV	“Though you know that I am not guilty and that no one can rescue me from your hand?
Owen's Translation	In spite of your knowing that I am not guilty and there is non out of your hand to deliver.
The Septuagint	For You know that I have no committed iniquity but who is he that can deliver out of Your hands?

⁷ Barnes' Notes, Job, Volume 1; Baker Books, ©1996; p. 227.

⁸ Barnes' Notes, Job, Volume 1; Baker Books, ©1996; p. 227.

Young's Lit. Translation For Thou knowest that I am not wicked, And there is no deliverer from Thy hand.

God behaves as though He is searching for some horrible sin of Job's, even though He realizes that Job is not guilty of committing any such sin; and furthermore, God knows that Job cannot escape from God's grasp.

This verse begins with the preposition ʿal (לַע) [pronounced *gal*] which means, primarily, *upon, against, above, on the ground of, according to, on account of, on behalf of, concerning, besides, in addition to, together with, beyond, above, over, by on to, towards, to, against*. Gesenius says that ʿal, followed by an infinitive, means *although*; however, he only quotes this passage and there is no infinitive. Furthermore, when rendering the meaning of this preposition, we cannot just grab any one of these meanings and run with it. Our minds should first focus on the relationship of the words in this context and the concept of *upon*. What follows is *your knowledge*; therefore, it is reasonable to render this, *according to*, and understand that Job is simply referring to revealed divine truth. Strong's #5920, 5921 BDB #752. This gives us: *according to Your knowledge...* Today, we might say, *according to God's Word*; or, *according to correct theology*. Job knows what is right and what is wrong; he is a believer that God referred Satan to, knowing, in fact, from eternity past, even prior to the creation of Satan, that Satan would ask to abusively waste Job. Job's life was one of righteousness, based first and foremost upon the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Barnes, paraphrased: "*Why do You in this way afflict me, when You know that I am not wicked? Why am I treated as if I were the worst of men? Why is occasion thus furnished for my friends to construct an argument as if I were a man of singular depravity?*"⁹

What follows is the conjunction for *that, for, when* and the 1st person, Qal imperfect of *rasha'* (רָשָׁע) [pronounced *raw-SHAH*], which means *to behave in a reprehensible manner, to act in malevolence, to commit corrupt acts, to be guilty of same*. Strong's #7561 BDB #957. The negative particle precedes this verb. Therefore, Job is saying, according to what has been revealed to him through whatever divine revelation at that time, he, Job, is not guilty of committing any act of malevolence or corruption. Now, I need to clarify this slightly. Job has maintained his innocence all along: "*I am guiltless.*" (Job 9:21). I believe in giving Job the benefit of the doubt. I do not believe that Job is maintaining that he is absolutely innocent of all sin; I do not believe that he is a person who is suggesting that he has led a life of sinless perfection—or, at least from point A, he began a life of sinless perfection. Job is saying that he has committed no act of malevolence which warrants the kind of discipline from God which he has seemingly received. Furthermore, Job realizes that God is omniscient. He knows that there is no sin that he could conceal from God. Job could utter with the psalmist: *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 thought from a great distance* (Psalm 139:1–2). Barnes agrees: [*You—God—know*] *that I am not a hypocrite, or an impenitent sinner. Job did not claim perfection,....but he maintained through all this argument that he was not a wicked man, in the sense in which his friends regarded him as such, and for the truth of this he could boldly appeal to God.*¹⁰ "*Have I sinned? What have I don't to You, O watcher of men? Why have You set me as Your target so that I am a burden even to myself? Why then don't You pardon my transgression and remove my iniquity?*" (Job 7:20–21a). I need to qualify these remarks. As Job continues to protest his treatment by God and his lack of sin, he will turn a blind eye himself to his own innate corruption to the point of placing his righteousness on a level with God's; if not above. Job will later list all the ways in which he is innocent, and God's Word will continue with: *The words of Job are ended. Then these three men ceased answering Job, because he was righteous in his own eyes. But the anger of Elihu ben Barachel...burned against Job...because he justified himself more than God* (Job 31:40b–32:1–2a, 2c).

Job finishes this verse by saying, "*None can rescue me out of Your hand.*" Furthermore, throughout this book, Job fully understands God's sovereignty and power. He knows that he is not going to escape God's notice or God's power. "*If He were to take away, who could restrain Him? Who could say to Him, 'Just what are you doing?'*" (Job 9:12). "*And what His soul desires, that He does.*" (Job 23:13b). Barnes: "*I have no power to release myself.*" *Job felt that God had almighty power; and he seems to have felt that his sufferings were rather the simple exertion of power, that the exercise of justice.*¹¹

⁹ Barnes' Notes, Job, Volume 1; Baker Books, ©1996; p. 227.

¹⁰ Barnes' Notes, Job, Volume 1; Baker Books, ©1996; p. 227.

¹¹ Barnes' Notes, Job, Volume 1; Baker Books, ©1996; p. 227.

The previous verses tend to lose their meaning apart from their context, so I want to look at these verses together:

Job 10:2–7	
Literally:	Less literally:
<p style="text-align: center;">“I must say to God, ‘Do not condemn me [as guilty]. Cause me to know why You contend [against] me [or, why you fault me]. [Is it] good to You that you oppress, that you despise a work of your hands, and upon the purpose of malevolent [or, corrupt] ones You shine? [Are] eyes of flesh to you? Or as a seeing of [fallen] man, do you see? [no!] As days of a [fallen] man, Your days? Or, Your years as days of a man that You seek for my iniquity and for my sin You inquire? [no!] According to Your knowledge that I have not acted malevolently; and none out of Your hand delivering.’ “</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">“I must say, even to God, ‘Do not cause me to be condemned. Let me know why You find fault with me. Do You have eyes of flesh? Or, do you see as fallen man sees? That can’t be true! Are Your days as the days of mortal man? Or are Your years are the days of a man that You keep seeking for my iniquity and You continue to inquire about my sin? Certainly not! According to revealed truth, I am not guilty of acting with malevolence; and [according to revealed truth], none can rescue me out of Your hand.’ “</p>

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McGee: *Job was a man who needed a little humility, and God is going to give him that humility. Have you ever noticed that humbleness and patience are qualities that God doesn't hand over to you on a silver platter with a silver spoon for you to lap it up? You don't become humble that way. Patience and humility are a fruit of the Holy Spirit produced in your life through trying experiences. God is going to produce both humility and patience in the man Job.. In the New Testament, we hear about the patience of Job. James writes, "You have heard of the patience of Job," but...It wasn't that Job was naturally a patient man...We have seen that his patience broke down and he is crying out to God in impatience...But when we see...the outcome of the Lord's dealing with him, then we see that God was making him patient, and God was giving him humility. It is God who does this, you see.¹² I quote this with a certain amount of trepidation. I have had times in my life where I have faced a smattering of adversity, perhaps a tenth of 1% of what Job faced, and that got my goat. That Job had not committed suicide and that he did not raise his fist and curse God, I am in awe of that—I know that I become discouraged with so little less adversity.*

The next line seems to pick up the beginning of the first line; that is, the idea is that *according to revealed truth*, Job knows that he cannot be delivered out of God's hand.

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“Why Are You Destroying a Work of Your Hands?”

“ **Your hands have fashioned me and
constructed me together round about,
then you engulf me.**

Job 10:8

“ **Your hands have fashioned me and
constructed me together round about,
but then you engulf me.**

Although we pick up a new direction in what Job is saying, he connects the two sets of thoughts with God's hands, an anthropomorphism. God, as we know, does not have hands. His hands refers to his involvement in our lives—in

¹² *Job*; J. Vernon McGee, ©1977, pp. 70–71.

this case, in the life of Job. In v. 7, there was no escaping the hand of God; in this verse, we look at God's hands as those which fashioned and made Job.

This is the second time in this chapter that Job has referred to himself as the work of God's hands. The first verb in this verse is the Piel perfect of $\text{ʿātsā}^{\text{b}}\text{v}$ (אֲצָא) [pronounced *gaw-TSAH^bV*] and it is given eight different meanings in 17 different passages. In the KJV, it is rendered *grieve, displease, hurt, made, vexed, wrest, and worship*. Unfortunately, we cannot separate these verbs simply by their stems. However, their noun cognates are quite helpful. $\text{ʿĀtsā}^{\text{b}}\text{v}$ (אֲצָא) [pronounced *gaw-TSAW^bV*] means *images, idols*; it is always found in the plural (I Sam. 31:9 II Sam. 5:21 Psalm 106:36, 38) (Strong's #6091 BDB #781). $\text{ʿĒtse}^{\text{b}}\text{v}$ (עֲצָא) [pronounced *GEH-tsay^bv*] can mean *heavy, toilsome labor* (Psalm 127:2 Prov. 5:10 10:22) or *earthen vessel* (Jer. 22:28) (Strong's #6089 BDB #780). There are several other cognates which help to support the fact that $\text{ʿātsā}^{\text{b}}\text{v}$ is a verb with several meanings. It originally meant *to carve*, and it later came to be used *to fabricate, to fashion* (Job 10:8), on the one hand; and *to inflict pain, to grieve* (Gen. 6:6 34:7 I Kings 1:6 Neh. 8:10), on the other. It can also mean *to toil, to labor, to serve* (Jer. 44:19). Since we also have in this verse, the verb ʿāsāh (אָשָׂא) [pronounced *gaw-SAWH*] which means *to do, to make, to construct, to fashion, to form*; (Strong's #6213 BDB #793) we can conclude that the operative meaning of $\text{ʿātsā}^{\text{b}}\text{v}$ is *to carve, to fashion, to fabricate*. Strong's #6087 BDB #780 & 781. You will notice that the two words sound very much alike and they have an alliterative affect in this verse. This emphasizes the amount of time which God has put into the constructing and building of Job.

Following ʿāsāh , we have the adverb *yachad* (יָחַד) [pronounced *YAH-khahd*] means *together, alike, all together*. Strong's #3162 BDB #403. This is followed by the substantive used as an adverb $\text{çā}^{\text{b}}\text{vī}^{\text{b}}\text{v}$ (צָבֹוֹ) [pronounced *saw^b-VEE^bV*], which means *circuit, round about, encircle*. Strong's #5439 BDB #686. Job is saying that God has constructed every facet of Job's being. Now, even though Keil and Delitzsch translate these couple words as *altogether round about*, they still say that *yachad* refers to the members of the body collectively and $\text{çā}^{\text{b}}\text{vī}^{\text{b}}\text{v}$ refers to the whole form.¹³

God's hand is in our lives constructing us in several ways. He built us in Adam and the woman, building Adam out of the elements of the earth and then constructing the woman out of the rib of Adam (the first clone with some genetic engineering operation in the record of medicine). *Then Y^ehowah God formed man out from the dust from the ground and He breathed into his nostrils the breath of lives and man became a living soul...then Y^ehowah God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; then He took one of his ribs and closed up the flesh at that place. Then Y^ehowah God built the rib into a woman, which He had taken from the man, and He brought her to the man* (Gen. 2:7, 21–22). And in the man and the woman, He set up the reproductive and genetic processes, dormant at first, which set into motion the thousands of generations of the human race. God then gives the breath of lives to every person born, imparting soul life and a dormant human spirit into every person. And then in the lives of believers and unbelievers, God acts in such a way as to make Himself available to them, so that they may call upon Him and He will answer them. And, finally, God acts on a day-to-day basis in the live of every believer. So God is involved in every step of the way with the fashioning and construction of our physical, soulish and spiritual lives. *Your hands have made me and fashioned me. Give me understanding that I may learn Your commandments* (Psalm 119:73).

The last line begins with the *wāw* consecutive; after God took all of that time to fashion and to construct Job, then God did the Piel imperfect of bāla (בָּלָא) [pronounced *baw-LAHG*] to Job. Bāla means *to engulf, to swallow up, to swallow down*. Strong's #1104 BDB #118. The feeling here is that Job is totally engulfed by his problems and physical ailments. There is also a poetic parallelism here. God fashioned Job *all-around*—that is, every aspect of his being; and now Job has been engulfed, swallowed down, surrounded all around by calamity—and both at the hand of God.

Paraphrasing Barnes: Job now proceeds to state that he had been made by God and that God had shown great skill and pains in his formation. Job argues that it would seem capricious to take such pains and to exercise such amazing wisdom and care in forming him, and then, suddenly without cause, dash His own work to pieces. Who

¹³ Keil & Delitzsch's *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. IV, p. 335.

makes a beautiful vase only to destroy it? Who sculpts a marble statute only to break it into pieces? Who builds an expensive home only to raze it at its completion?¹⁴

What follows is quite interesting. We are examining the oldest book still extant (the first few chapters of Genesis notwithstanding), and throughout this book we have quite an inordinate number of comments which are related directly to very ancient man's concept of science. What is amazing is that the precepts herein dealt with are accurate perceptions of science, rather than the conclusions of primitive fables and myths. In this verse and the next few, we have a very accurate description of the body being formed within the womb. In this verse, one aspect of Job's argument deals with the human body being constructed all around by God—reasonably referring to the innumerable biological processes which take place in the womb.

“ ‘Remember, please, that like [or, possibly, from] clay You constructed me and into dust You will cause me to return. ” Job 10:9

“ ‘Recall, if You would, that from clay You shaped and molded me and into dust You will cause me to return. ”

One has to be careful with Job's argument here. Man has used time and time again God as an excuse for his depraved behavior. “You made me this way!” he contends, after committing some deplorable act of degeneracy. This is not Job's stance. God has made of Job a work. God has toiled over Job and has spent time fashioning Job for good. This is grace and this is fully appreciated by Job. Furthermore, Job understands that he will return to the dust from whence he came. Job is bewildered as to why God would spend all of this time constructing him and then toss him aside as unimportant and insignificant. Here is one of the times when we realize that Job was fully aware of how man was created, thus having some knowledge of the contents of the first and second chapters of Genesis. This was also accepted by Elihu, a person to be introduced later, who said, “**Observe, I belong to God like you; I took have been cut out of the clay.**” (Job 33:6). Eliphaz implied that this was his take on biology as well: “**How much more those [mankind] who dwell in houses of clay and whose foundation is in the dust.**” (Job 4:19a). This has certainly not been a contention of science throughout all of human history. Even though the Bible states from the outset, in Gen. 2, that we were formed from the elements of the ground, you know that this was not always the opinion of science. It has only been of recent in the progression of science where our chemical composition has been recognized as coming from the same elements as those found in the earth.

As a side note, we have two very similar looking prefixed prepositions: מ and ע ; the former means *from* and the latter means *as*. I wonder if the original preposition was *from*? These are very similar looking prepositions in the Hebrew and could, in a degenerated manuscript, be mistaken for one another.

Barnes: *God, out of clay, had formed the noble structure, man, and [Job asks]...whether it was his intention to reduce that structure again to its former worthless condition—to destroy its beauty, and to efface the remembrance of his workmanship. Was it becoming God thus to blot out every memorial of his own power and skill in moulding the human frame?*¹⁵ Keil and Delitzsch: *The perfecting as clay implies three things: the earthiness of the substance, the origin of man without his knowledge and co-operation, and the moulding of the shapeless substance by divine power and wisdom.*¹⁶

“ ‘Not as milk are You pouring me out? and like the cheese, You curdle me? ” Job 10:10

“ ‘You are not pouring me out as milk, are You? Curdle me like the cheese, instead. ”

I am not 100% comfortable with any of the four basic interpretation of this verse. (1) One possibility is that Job sees God as having rejected him, pouring him out as spoiled milk or causing him to curdle like cheese. (2) A second possibility refers to Job beginning in somewhat of a liquid state (perhaps *pliable* might be the better word), which

¹⁴ Barnes' Notes, Job, Volume 1; Baker Books, ©1996; p. 227.

¹⁵ Barnes' Notes, Job, Volume 1; Baker Books, ©1996; p. 228.

¹⁶ Keil & Delitzsch's Commentary on the Old Testament; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. IV, p. 335.

God begins, in the womb, to take shape and to be formed into something related, yet different. Now, Dr. Good even goes into great detail about this verse referring to the importance of milk, how, for the infant, it circulates throughout his system and remains fluid as milk or becomes solid as milk in its cheese-state.¹⁷ My problem with the latter two explanations is that they do not take into consideration the fact that this is a question and a negative is attached to the question. (3) Contextually, these questions seem to follow the last question of v. 9 quite handily. One could make a case that the first question deals with rejection and the second one presents the alternative. Rather than pour out the milk when it gets older, why not curdle it into cheese? Instead of simply rejecting Job, is God not molding him instead? Or could not God mold him instead? That still appears as though we are forcing a meaning where it does not exist. (4) The last interpretation, which comes from Keil and Delitzsch, says that the milk is the male's sperm and that the mother's egg is the cheese and the curdling is the forming of Job in the womb.¹⁸ I wish that I could give you the definitive interpretation of this verse, although I lean toward the 3rd interpretation the most, I am not married to any one of the four.

**“ ‘Skin and flesh You clothed me;
and with bones and sinews You have knitted
me together. Job 10:11**

**“ ‘You have clothed me with skin and flesh;
and You have knitted my bones and sinews
together.**

The final verb is a rather difficult one; it is the Poel imperfect of *çâkak*^e (ך צ ו) [pronounced *saw-KAHK*^e] (Strong's #5526 BDB #692, 696, 697), which is also found in BDB as *sâkak*^e (ך צ ץ) [pronounced *saw-KAHK*^e] (Strong's #7918¹⁹ BDB #968). I cannot even find this particular word listed in the New Englishman's Hebrew Concordance for Job 10:11. Zodhiates identifies it as Strong's #5526, BDB lists it with the *sîyn*'s on p. 968. We find this rendered *fence* (KJV, Young), *interweave* (Rotherham), *intertwine* (Keil and Delitzsch), *knit* (NIV, NKJV, NRSV, REB, NAB, NASB) and *weave* (NJB). The other meanings for these words found in other passages are quite dissimilar: *pacified*, *assuaged*, *appeased* (Strong's #7918) and *covered*, *hedged*, *protected* (Strong's #5526). Only under Strong's #5526, do we find some similar meaning in Isa. 9:11 and 19:2, where the meaning is given as *mingled*, *joined together*. We will go with *knit* in this passage. The psalmist had a similar thought: *I will give thanks to You for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are Your works and my soul knows it very well. My frame was not hidden from You when I was made in secret and skillfully wrought in the depths of the earth. Your eyes have seen my unformed substance and in Your book they were all written, the days that were ordained when as yet there was not one of them. How precious also are Your thoughts to me, O God. How vast is the sum of them!* (Psalm 139:14–17). Barnes: *This refers, undoubtedly, to the formation of man in his foetal existence, and is designed to denote that the whole organization of the human frame was to be traced to God. Grotius remarks that this is the order in which the infant is formed—that the skin appears first, then the flesh, then the harder parts of the frame.*²⁰

The idea behind the passage is rather simple. God has spent all of this time on Job—and now God is casting away Job as being worthless; it is incongruous and illogical. Barnes: *The sense is plain, God had formed him as he was, and to him he owed his life, and all that he had. Job asks with the deepest interest whether God would take down a frame formed in this manner, and reduce it again to dust? Would it not be more for his honour to preserve it still—at least to the common limit of human life?*²¹ We have to be careful not to over-emphasize the physical aspect of Job's argument. Job is not merely arguing that God spent all of this time making his body and now why is He destroying it? The body is only a portion of God's work. God also created Job's soul and God was also involved at the forming of Job's human spirit, which has been nurtured all of Job's life (v. 12).

¹⁷ Both of these came from *Barnes' Notes, Job, Volume 1*; Baker Books, ©1996; pp. 228–229, the former view being that of Albert Barnes.

¹⁸ Keil & Delitzsch's *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. IV, p. 335.

¹⁹ To make matters even more confusing, Strong's #7918 is actually found on BDB #1013 and given as *shâkak*^e (ך צ ץ) [pronounced *shaw-KAHK*^e].

²⁰ *Barnes' Notes, Job, Volume 1*; Baker Books, ©1996; p. 229.

²¹ *Barnes' Notes, Job, Volume 1*; Baker Books, ©1996; p. 229.

<p>“ You have fashioned lives and grace with me and your personal contact has preserved my spirit.</p>	<p>Job 10:12</p>	<p>“ You have fashioned life and grace with me and your personal contact has preserved my spirit.</p>
<p>“ You have fashioned lives and grace with me and my spirit has guarded Your charge.</p>	<p>Job 10:12 alternate</p>	<p>“ You have fashioned life and grace with me and my spirit has guarded that which You have entrusted to me.</p>

We don't need other translations to unravel this verse; I just want you to hear what others have done and perhaps you will see why I spend so much time with the vocabulary:

<p>Albert Barnes <i>The Emphasized Bible</i></p>	<p>Life and favour thou has granted me, And thy care hath preserved my spirit. Life and loving kindness thou didst bestow upon me,— And thy watchful care preserved my breath [or, spirit].</p>
<p>Keil and Delitzsch NAB NASB</p>	<p>Life and favour Thou hast shown me; And thy care hath guarded my spirit. Grace and favor you granted me, and your providence has preserved my spirit. “ ‘Thou hast granted me life and lovingkindness; and Thy care has preserved my spirit.’ ”</p>
<p>NJB NIV</p>	<p>In your love you gave me life, and in your care watch over my every breath. You gave me life and showed me kindness, and in your providence watched over my spirit.</p>
<p>TEV <i>Young's Lit. Translation</i></p>	<p>You have given me life and constant love, and your care has kept me alive. Life and kindness Thou has done with me. And Thy inspection hath preserved my spirit.</p>

The first verb does not mean *to bestow*, *to show*, *to grant*, or *to give*. It is the Qal perfect of our old friend ʿâsâh (אָשָׂה) [pronounced *gaw-SAWH*] which means *to do*, *to make*, *to construct*, *to fashion*, *to form*. Strong's #6213 BDB #793. Some translations have the rendering *given*, *granted* or something along those lines; however, the thrust of this passage is this is something that God had *done*; this is something that God had His spent time on. The preposition is ʿîm (עִם) [pronounced *geem*], which should be rendered *with*. Strong's #5973 BDB #767. There is a partnership here between God and Job which is lost in many translations. God did not just give Job lives and grace—God manufactured all of this with Job. There is a careful coalescence of body, soul and spirit. God formed the body of Job in the womb, carefully, over a period of 9 months, and then built into this, or built with this Job's lives and God's grace.

What God built or fashioned was the masculine plural of chayyîm (חַיִּים) [pronounced *khay-YEEM*], which means *being alive*, *being vigorous*, *having life*, *sustaining life*, *living prosperously*—it is life as opposed to death. It is the plural abstract emphatic word for *life*; although it is in the plural, we usually translate it in the singular in the English. However, in staying with the singular because it sounds better to our ears, we must be cognizant of the fact that we have both a physical life, a soulish life and a spiritual life; even the unbeliever has a physical and a soulish life. Our human spirit is our immaterial portion which can commune with God; our soulish life is the immaterial portion of ourselves which provides us with the ability to commune with other human beings. Strong's #2416 BDB #313. "The breath of God has made me and the breath of the Almighty gives me life." (Job 33:4). **Then God formed man of dust from the ground and He breathed into his nostrils the breath of lives, and man became a living soul** (Gen. 2:7). The word *grace* is in the singular. Job recognizes that he has been given great grace at birth and throughout his life on earth. He is not a man to fall into serious complaints for no reason. He knows that he has been graced out throughout his life but now he is confused by God's treatment of him.

The second line is where we have a problem, which you would have never noticed no matter how many different translations you read. We begin with the feminine singular of the substantive p^oquddâh (פְּקֻדָּה) [pronounced *p'kood-DAWH*] is the noun cognate for pâqad (פָּקַד) [pronounced *paw-KAHD*], which is translated *appoint*, *set*, *make*, *committed*, *laid up*, *authorize*, *delegate*, *designate*, *number* or *install*. We find p^oquddâh used to mean

visitation in Jer. 8:12 10:15 and it appears to be a time when God has particular contact with someone, whether it be a positive or a negative *visitation* (recall the verb is used *to visit and to punish* in Lev. 18:25 Isa. 13:11 26:14; but also it has been used *to visit and to bless or to take care of* in Gen. 50:24–25). What is implied here is direct or personal contact with God. This is reasonably rendered *case, providence, visitation, oversight*. This can also be rendered *charge, something entrusted to someone, commission, trust, responsibility*, as in Num. 4:16. This second *meaning* is quite important when it comes to properly rendering this verse. Strong's #6486 BDB #824.

The verb is the 3rd person feminine singular, Qal perfect of *shâmar* (שָׁמַר) [pronounced *shaw-MAR*], which means *to keep, to guard, to watch, to preserve, to take responsibility for*. Strong's #8104 BDB #1036.

The last word, or words, in this verse, is *my spirit* or *my breath*. This word is in the feminine singular as well. In the Hebrew, it is most common to list the direct object first, the verb second and the subject afterwards. When this is not done, we often are able to sort out which is which by number and gender. However, we cannot sort this out by number and gender since everything is in the feminine singular. Therefore, we go with the standard order of the Hebrew and render this as: **And my spirit has kept guard over Your charge (or, trust)**. You see, the problem is that those who translated this verse spoke English, and we typically put the subject, verb and then the direct object. So when a verse appears to be set up that way, we occasionally run with it. However, our default should be to go with the normal structure of the Hebrew, and deviate from that if a translation appears to make little or no sense. The reason other translators have deviated from this structure is that God has been the subject of almost every verb until now for the past several verses. This continues to keep God as the subject, in a manner of speaking. However, this can be seen as a transitional statement as well; the moving from what God has done to what Job has done (v. 12b), what God knows (v. 13a) and what Job knows (v. 13b). When *my spirit* is taken as the subject, Job is saying that he did take responsibility for what God gave him. God entrusted him with much and Job guarded over that. As you see, this slight change alters the meaning of this verse significantly.

In either case, what Job is saying is true: (1) God has guarded over and preserved Job's spirit and (2) Job has guarded over and preserved that which God has entrusted to him. Perhaps this was spoken in such a way for Job to allow both meanings to shine through.

**“ ‘And these things You have stored up in
Your heart;
I know that this [is] with [or, from] You.**

Job 10:13

**“ ‘And these things You have stored up in
Your heart;
I know that this spirit has its origins from
You.**

We have gone from a verse where the vocabulary was relatively easy to this one where the meaning is somewhat obscured—at least in the second line. Other translators have done the following:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	Yet these [the present evils] have You hid in Your heart [for me since my creation]; I know that this was with you in Your purpose and thought].
<i>The Emphasized Bible</i>	Yet these things thou didst hide in thy heart, I know that this hath been with thee!
Keil and Delitzsch	And such Thou hast hidden in Thy heart, I perceive that this was in Thy mind;
NAB	Yet these things you have hidden in your heart; I know that they are your purpose:
NJB	Yet all the while, you had a secret plan: I know that you were biding your time.
NIV	“But this is what you concealed in your heart, and I know that this was in your mind:
REB	Yet this was the secret purpose of your heart, and I know what was your intent.
The Septuagint	Having these things in You, I know that You can do all things, for nothing is impossible with You.
TEV	But now I know that all the time you were secretly planning to harm me.
<i>Young's Lit. Translation</i>	And these Thou hast laid up in Thy heart, I have known that this <i>is</i> with Thee.

These things can refer to what has preceded (Gen. 9:19 10:20, 31) or to what follows (Gen. 6:9 10:1). Strong's #428 (verb is #422) BDB #41. In this case, a careful perusal of the general passage would indicate that they refer to what Job has already said. The verb here is the Qal perfect of *tsâphan* (צָפַן) [pronounced *tsaw-*

FAHN], and it means *to hide, to conceal, to lay up (in storage), to store (as treasure), to treasure up*. This is generally used in a very positive sense, as in Prov. 2:7a: *He [God] stores up sound wisdom for the upright*. Psalm 31:19a: *How great is Your goodness, which You have stored up for those who revere You*. (see also SOS 7:13). The work which God has done in Job and the prosperity which God has laid upon Job has been stored up in God's heart—it is out of sight from his associates. Strong's #6845 BDB #860. Therefore, the first line is fairly simple: *And these things You have stored up in Your heart*. It is a simple vocabulary.

In reading Barnes, I was surprised that there was a disagreement on the interpretation of the first line. However, there is one school of thought that holds to the idea that what is in God's heart is all of the calamities which God has brought upon Job. This is the opinion of Rosenmuller, Good, Noyes and Scott, four theologians to whom Barnes refers a great deal. To me, it is simpler than that. Certainly God has in His mind all that would happen to Job—He knew that from eternity past. However, that is not what Job is referring to. Job is referring to all the time and preparation which God put into forming him; contextually, there is no other way to read this. We separate these chapters into bite-sized pieces, verses, for convenience sake. However, that is not how they were originally recorded. This was one train of thought, not a dozen thoughts arbitrarily thrown together. So if Job has spoken for five verses about God building him and fashioning his soul and spirit, it is contextually incorrect to suddenly begin speaking about calamities. *All his acts in the creation and preservation of man were a part of his secret counsel.*²²

The second line is more difficult. Literally, it reads: *I know that this [is] with you*. This is the feminine singular demonstrative adjective *zeh* (זֶה) [pronounced *zeh*] which means *here, this*. Strong's #2063, 2088, 2090 BDB #260. The nearest feminine singular is Job's *spirit*. The preposition *im* (אִמְ) [pronounced *geem*], is generally rendered *with*. However, it can also refer to *authorship* or *origination*, as in Gen. 41:32 | Kings 2:23 | Isa. 8:18. Therefore, we can go with *from* in some instances, as we will here. Strong's #5973 BDB #767. Barnes: *"I know that this is with thee." That all this is a part of thy purpose. It has its origin in thee, and is according to thy counsel.*²³

What I believe would help would be to put the last few verses together:

Job 10:8–13	
Literally:	Less literally:
<p style="text-align: center;">“ Your hands have fashioned me and constructed me together round about, then you engulf me. Remember, please, that like [or, possibly, from] clay, You constructed me and into dust You will cause me to return. Not as milk are You pouring me out? and like the cheese, You curdle me? Skin and flesh, You clothed me; and with bones and sinews, You have knitted me together. You have fashioned lives and grace with me and my spirit has guarded Your charge. And these things You have stored up in Your heart; I know that this [is] with [or, from] You.”</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">“ Your hands have fashioned me and constructed me together round about, but then you engulf me. Recall, if You would, that from clay You shaped and molded me and into dust You will cause me to return. You are not pouring me out as milk, are You? And like the cheese, You curdle me? You have clothed me with skin and flesh; and You have knitted my bones and sinews together. You have fashioned life and grace with me and my spirit has guarded that which You have entrusted to me. And these things You have stored up in Your heart; I know that this spirit has its origins from You [or, possibly, I know that this knowledge is with You].”</p>

All that Job has done and all that God has done in Job is in God's memory, stored away as the spirit of Job, that which God fellowships with, through which Job fellowships with God had its origin in the heart of God.

²² Barnes' Notes, Job, Volume 1; Baker Books, ©1996; p. 230.

²³ Barnes' Notes, Job, Volume 1; Baker Books, ©1996; p. 230.

[<<Return to Chapter Outline>>](#)[<<Return to the Chart Index>>](#)**“You Continue to Beat Me Down.”**

“If I have sinned and You preserve [or, guard] me and on account of my wrongdoing, You do not acquit me.

Job 10:14

“If I have sinned then You have preserved me however, on account of my wrongdoing, You do not acquit me.

The second verb is the 2nd person masculine singular, Qal perfect of *shâmar* (שָׁמַר) [pronounced *shaw-MAR*], which, again, means *to keep, to guard, to watch, to preserve, to take responsibility for*. Strong's #8104 BDB #1036.

The second line has the *mîn* preposition, which can mean *out from, since, on account of* (Strong's #4480 BDB #577). Then we have the masculine singular noun *ʿâvôn* (אָוֹן) [pronounced *gaw-VONE*], which means *iniquity, trespass, offense, transgression, wrongdoing, or guilt*. This is a word which can refer to the sin itself (which is its most prevalent use; Gen. 15:16 Ex. 34:7); to the guilt for having sinned (Lev. 5:1, 17); and to the punishment for the sin (Gen. 4:13). There are quite a number of passages in which the distinction between *iniquity* and the *guilt* for iniquity is moot (Gen. 19:15 Ex. 20:5). Strong's #5771 BDB #730. The final verb *acquit* is in the 2nd person masculine singular (referring to God), with a 1st person singular suffix (referring to Job), Piel imperfect with a negative. Strong #5352 BDB #667.

Barnes: *The object of this verse and the following is, evidently, to say that he was wholly perplexed. He did not know how to act. He could not understand the reason of the divine dealings, and he was wholly unable to explain them, and hence he did not know how to act in a proper manner. It is expressive of a state of mind where the individual wishes to think and feel right, but where he finds so much to perplex him, that he does not know what to do. Job was sure that his friends were not right in the position which they maintained—that he was a sinner of enormous character, and that his sufferings were proof of this, and yet he did not know how to answer their arguments. He desired to have confidence in god, and yet he knew not how to reconcile his dealings with his sense of right. He felt that he was a friend of God, and he did not know why he should visit one who had this consciousness in this distressing and painful manner. His mind was perplexed, vacillating, embarrassed, and he did not know what to do or say. The truth in this argument was, that he was more often right than his friends, but that he, in common with them, had embraced some principles which he was compelled to admit to be true, or which he could not demonstrate to be false, which gave them greatly the advantage in the argument, and which they pressed upon him now with overwhelming force.*²⁴ I don't know that this is the correct interpretation of this verse, but Barnes certainly gives the tenor of the state of mind of Job in this quotation.

What Job is saying in this verse is that if he sins, God still preserves him, but God has not completely forgiven him of what he has done which was wrong. There appears to be no absolute clearing of the slate. There is no wiping clean of the slate. The Septuagint reads: **And if I should sin, You watch me; and You have not cleared me from my iniquity.** It appears at first that God has forgiven Job, as Job sins and God preserves (or, guards or watches over) him; but Job is not completely forgiven. His faults and wrongdoing are not simply swept underneath the carpet. **"Have I sinned? What have I done to You, O watcher of men? Why have You set me as Your target so that I am a burden even to myself? Why then don't You pardon my transgression and remove my iniquity?"** (Job 7:20–21a). This is confusing to Job. He knows that he has sinned and he knows that God has, at some point in time, forgiven him. However, it now appears as though he is being punished for everything that he has ever done wrong. Barnes, paraphrased: *"Won't you pardon me?" Job did not understand why God would not do this. It was exceedingly perplexing to him that God held him to be guilty, and would not pardon him if he had sinned.*²⁵

²⁴ Barnes' Notes, Job, Volume 1; Baker Books, ©1996; p. 230.

²⁵ Barnes' Notes, Job, Volume 1; Baker Books, ©1996; p. 230.

In the Age of Israel, sins were simply covered—that was how it was expressed to the Israelites. **How blessed is he whose rebellion is forgiven and whose sin is covered!** (Psalm 32:!). We know that if God is just, no matter how trivial, our sins just cannot be ignored—they cannot simply be dismissed. When a person clearly guilty of murder is acquitted on some technicality—that is, some evidence which clearly implicates him is not presented because it was tainted—most of us feel as though a great wrong has occurred when a murderer is set free on a legal technicality. So Job realizes that in one sense, he has been forgiven, but in another, he has not. **"I am afraid of all my pains. I know that You will not acquit me."** (Job 9:28). Our forgiveness, which many believers today fully understand, was a more difficult concept prior to the cross. What understanding was necessary to the unbeliever in previous dispensations in order to be saved was imparted by means of the Holy Spirit. There has always been the understanding that the sin was put off on that which was innocent—from Adam's sin, where we find he and the woman later covered by animal skins, to the sins of Abel, which were covered over by means of animal sacrifices. God the Holy Spirit revealed what was necessary here, so that Satan would never grasp, until it was too late, the necessity of placing Jesus on the cross. **"[God] preserves grace for thousands and forgives iniquity, rebellion and sin; he will by no means leave [it] unpunished, visiting the iniquity of fathers on the children and on the grandchildren to the third and fourth generations."** (Ex. 34:7). This verse from Exodus has a double meaning, as is true of many Old Testament scriptures; if the people repented and turned toward God, God would forgive them. However, their actions never occurred in a vacuum, the effects often carrying on for several generations, culminating in the severe degeneracy of their children and grandchildren. However, this verse also means that sin and rebellion was covered over, but it was not forgotten nor would it remain unpunished. Many generations later, these sins would be atoned for by Jesus Christ.

**" 'If I am corrupt, woe to me!
And I am righteous, I cannot lift up my head,
full of disgrace and an appearance of [or
being drenched with] [humiliation and]
affliction.** Job 10:15

**" 'If I am actually corrupt, woe to me!
And though I am righteous, I cannot even lift
up my head, being full of disgrace and
appearing humiliated and afflicted [or, being
filled with humiliation and affliction].**

Obviously, this will not be easy to translate or to interpret, so let's examine the various translations:

Albert Barnes	If I am wicked, woe is unto me; And if I am righteous, I cannot lift up my head. I am full of confusion:— And see my affliction,...
<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	If I were wicked, woe unto me! And if I am righteous, yet must I not lift up my head, for I am filled with disgrace and the sight of my affliction.
<i>The Emphasized Bible</i>	If I have been lawless alas for me! Or if I am righteous I will not lift up my head, Surfeited with shame look thou then on my humiliation.
Keil and Delitzsch	If I should act wickedly, woe unto me! And were I righteous, I should not lift up my head, Being full of shame and conscious of my misery.
NJB	Woe to me, if I am guilty; even if I am upright, I dare not lift my head, so overwhelmed with shame and drunk with pain am I!
NIV	If I am guilty—woe to me! Even if I am innocent, I cannot lift my head, for I am full of shame and drowned in my affliction.
REB	If indeed I am wicked, all the worse for me! If I am upright, I cannot hold up my head, I am filled with shame and steeped in my affliction.
The Septuagint	Or if I should be ungodly, woe is me; and if I should be righteous, I cannot lift myself up, for I am full of dishonor.
TEV	As soon as I sin, I'm in trouble with you, but when I do right, I get no credit. I am miserable and covered with shame.
<i>Young's Lit. Translation</i>	If I have done wickedly—woe to me, And righteously—I left not up my head, Full of shame—then see my affliction.

The first statement by Job is *if he is corrupt*—that is, if he is entirely guilty, as his friends think, then *woe to me!* *Woe* is an onomatopoeic word in the Hebrew, related to the verb *to cry out, to wail*. This interjection is ^ˁal^ˁlay (אֵלַי) [pronounced *ah-^l-LAH-ee* (this is a slight departure from Strong's and from the New Englishman's Hebrew

Concordance] and is only found in this passage and Micah 7:1. Strong's #480 BDB #47. It appears as though Isaiah must have read this verse, as he later wrote: **Woe to the corrupt—badly! For the dealing of his hands will be done to him** (Isa. 3:11).

The second line begins with the wâw conjunction and the Qal perfect of *to be righteous*. It is followed by the negative and the verb *to lift, to bear, to carry*; which has the direct object *my head*. It does not matter whether Job is guilty or innocent of the great sin that his friends believe he is guilty of—in either case, he is still in great pain and misery. He cannot lift his head in fact even in righteous indignation. He has been beaten down too much for that. *God has treated Job as if he were wicked and his friends regarded him as such, and he was overwhelmed with the perplexities of his situation. He could not lift up his head with confidence, though he knew that he was not as guilty as his friends thought him to be; yet he was being treated by God as though he has committed some awful group of sins. He felt ashamed and confounded.*²⁶ The next word is the masculine singular adjective construct of *sâ^bvêa* (שׂוּבָה) [pronounced *saw^b-VAY-ahg*], which means *sated, satisfied, surfeited, filled, full of*. Strong's #7649 BDB #960.

What Job is full of is *qâlôn* (קָלוֹן) [pronounced *kaw-LOHN*], which is generally rendered *shame* in the KJV. I don't think that we are dealing with the idea of *shame* because of guilt here, but *shame* due to Job's financial and physical condition. It means *shame, disgrace*. Job is ashamed of how he appears to his friends. It appears as though God has just chosen to crush him. Let's see if I can illustrate that. If you were thrown in jail, unjustly, and endured all of the humiliation and suffering pertaining to your time in jail, you might feel shame to speak to those whom you love, despite being innocent, because you will appear guilty no matter what you do or what you say. Job is *filled* with *shame* before his friends. Strong's #7036 BDB #885. Without being the least bit guilty, Job is filled with shame due to his appearance before his friends.

This is followed by the wâw conjunction and, according to Owens, the masculine singular adjective construct from the verb *to see*; and therefore, means *seeing, appearing, an appearance of, an appearing of*. There is some disagreement here and it is thought that there might be a different word which belonged here. This word is found only here in the OT. Strong's #7202 BDB #909. Zodhiates claims that this verb is the imperative of *to see*, rendering this portion of God's Word as **"See my humiliating affliction."** Rosenmüller and Gesenius and others see this as the infinitive absolute of the verb, which is closer to the Chaldean and Syriac codices (according to Barnes). Although Bdb acknowledges the adjective here, they suggest that this should actually read *drenched with* or *sated with*.²⁷ What Job has the appearance of is the masculine substantive *'ôñîy* (אוֹנִי) [pronounced *gon-EE*], which means *affliction, poverty, humility*. Strong's #6040 BDB #777. It appears as though Job more than just appears to be afflicted and humiliated—he is drenched and sated with humiliation and affliction. This gives us the rendering: **If I am corrupt, woe to me! And I am righteous, I cannot lift up my head, full of disgrace and drenched with [humiliation and] affliction.** Job, even though he has committed no great deed of wickedness, he still is humbled before his friends, looking humiliated and appearing as though he is guilty. **"For if I were right, I still could not answer; I would have to implore the mercy of my judge."** (Job 9:15).

Barnes (paraphrased): *Whether I am wicked or righteous, I can find no comfort in either. No matter what my character is, I am in pain and devastating misery. Anguish and woe follow me if I am guilty of sin or if I am not—in either way, I am equally doomed to misery.*²⁸

One of the things which we do not see is that we have the kind of poetry in vv. 14–15 that we are used to; the last words rhyme. Each ends in a long "i" (that is, they all end in *îy*). So let me give this to you in such a way that each phrase ends with the *îy*:

Job 10:14–15

²⁶ A paraphrasing from *Barnes' Notes, Job, Volume 1*; Baker Books, ©1996; pp. 230–231.

²⁷ *The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew-English Lexicon*; Hendrickson, ©1996, p. 909.

²⁸ *Barnes' Notes, Job, Volume 1*; Baker Books, ©1996; p. 230.

Literally:	Less literally:
<p style="text-align: center;">“ If I have sinned and You preserve [or, guard] me and on account of my wrongdoing, You do not acquit me.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">If I am corrupt, woe to me! And I am righteous, I cannot lift up my head, full of disgrace and an appearance of [or being drenched with] [humiliation and] affliction.’ “</p>

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So we have nine lines which all rhyme as we would expect in poetry; something you would never suspect from the English. This occurs again in vv. 17–18.

**“ ‘And it lifts up; like the lion, You hunt me.
And You return; You cause extraordinary
things against me.**

Job 10:16

**“ ‘Should my head be lifted up, then You
would hunt me like a lion.
Repeatedly you show your wondrous power
against me.**

Job is still speaking to God, but he suddenly goes with a 3rd person masculine verb, so let’s examine some other translations:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	If I lift myself up, You hunt me like a lion, and again show Yourself [inflicting] marvelous [trials] upon me.
<i>The Emphasized Bible</i>	When it is lifted up like a howling lion thou dost hunt me, Then again thou dost shew thyself marvelous against me.
Keil and Delitzsch	And were I to raise it, Thou wouldst hunt me as a lion, And ever display on me Thy wondrous power.
NAB	Should it lift up, you hunt me like a lion; repeatedly you show your wondrous power against me.
NASB	‘And should <i>my head</i> be lifted up, Thou wouldst hunt me like a lion; And again Thou wouldst show Thy power against me.’
The Septuagint	For I am hunted like a lion for slaughter; for again You have changed and art terribly destroying me.
<i>Young’s Lit. Translation</i>	And it riseth—as a lion Thou huntest me. And Thou turnest back—Thou shewest Thyself wonderful in me.

We begin with the wâw conjunction and the 3rd person singular, Qal imperfect of gâ`âh (גָּאָה) [pronounced *gaw-AW*], which means *to rise up*. What is implied by this word is the idea of *pride, exaltation*. Interestingly enough, it is a different verb than in v. 15 for *raising up*. Strong’s #1342 BDB #144. What Job is referring to is his head. My thinking here is that he is unable to lift up his head, so crushed is he by degrading circumstances; but say he did lift his head for a moment,²⁹ then God would hunt him like a lion. Barnes: *The sense here is, that god hunted or followed him as a fierce lion pursued his prey.*³⁰ This analogy of God being likened to a lion is used many times

²⁹ Barnes gives a whole different, but incorrect, slant on this, going with the verb *increasing* instead, referring to the number of Job’s calamities. However, since the verb is in the 3rd person masculine singular and the nearest masculine singular noun is *head* and since this word does mean *to lift up* and not *to increase* (which Barnes acknowledges), my explanation is correct. In the alternative, Barnes offers Jerome’s take on this: “...and on account of pride, You seize me as a lioness.” The key is context and we should always go with context.

³⁰ *Barnes’ Notes, Job, Volume 1*; Baker Books, ©1996; p. 231.

in Scripture. Hezekiah, after recovering from the sin unto death, wrote: "Like a lion—so He breaks all of my bones; from day until night, You make an end of me." (Isa. 38:13b). Jeremiah, speaking as Israel in Lamentations, wrote: He is to me like a bear lying in wait, a lion in secret places. He has turned aside my ways and He has torn me to pieces. He has made me desolate (Lam. 3:10–11). And God warns Ephraim and Israel: "I will be like a lion to them; like a leopard I will lie in wait by the wayside. I will encounter them like a bear robbed of her cubs and I will tear open their chests. There I will also devour them like a lioness, as a wild beast would tear them." (Hosea 13:7–8; see also Hosea 5:14). God warned Israel through Jeremiah: "I will go to the great and I will speak to them. For they know the way of Y^howah and the ordinance of their God. But they too, with one accord, have broken the yoke and they have burst their bonds. Therefore, a lion from the forest will slay them; a wolf of the deserts will destroy them. A leopard is watching their cities. Every one who goes out of them will be torn in pieces, because their transgressions are many and their apostasies are numerous." (Jer. 5:5–6). In this context, God is the lion and Job is His prey.

The second line begins with a wâw conjunction and the 2nd person singular, Qal imperfect of *shûw^bv* (שׁוּב) [pronounced *shoo^bv*], which means *to turn back, to return, to turn around*. Strong's #7725 BDB #996. God has pretty much crushed Job in every way possible. There is not much else that God, right at this moment, could do to Job. If, however, Job were to just lift up his head, just for a moment, God would hunt him as if God were a lion; God would turn back around and attack Job once again. If the pain and suffering inflicted upon Job up until that point were not enough, if Job just lifted up his head again, God would return as a lion would return to injured prey and take him down again.

Now we have an interesting grammatical turn of events. Job launches right into a second verb without so much as a wâw conjunction. This is almost unprecedented. You might say that this grammatical construction leaps right out at you like a lion. We often will have two verbs strung together where the second one is the infinitive, but this second verb is the Hiphil imperfect of *pâlâ'* (פָּלַא) [pronounced *paw-LAW*], which means *to perform [a wonderful (difficult?)] thing, to do that which is extraordinary, to do that which is unusually difficult*. Here, the emphasis is upon God's omnipotence. God would not just hunt Job like a lion, He would return and cause His overpowering works to be done against Job. In some ways, Job is answering Eliphaz, who said: "But, if it were me, I would seek God and I would place my cause before God, who does great and unsearchable things and extraordinary things without number." (Job 5:8–9; see also Isa. 28:21 29:14). Strong's #6381 BDB #810. The final prepositional phrase is *against me*. Literally, what we have is: " 'And it lifts up; like the lion, You hunt me. And You return; You cause extraordinary things against me.' "

" 'You restore Your solemn testimonies [or, evidences] in the sight of me and You have caused to greatly increase your provoked anger with me; changes and warfare with me.

Job 10:17

" 'You continually bring forth fresh evidence before me and You multiply your vexation toward me with successive changes and continuous attack against me.

As we have seen, where Bildad was relatively straightforward and easy to understand, I find myself reaching for other translations to help me with what Job says.

Albert Barnes	Thou makest new thy proofs against me, and increasest thine anger against me:—The whole army of afflictions is upon me.
<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	You renew Your witnesses against me, and increase Your indignation toward me: I am as if attacked by a troop time after time.
<i>The Emphasized Bible</i>	Thou renewest thy witnesses before me, And does increase thy vexation with me, Relays—yea an army is with me.
Keil and Delitzsch	Thou wouldst ever bring fresh witnesses against me, And increase Thy wrath against me, I should be compelled to withstand continuously advancing troops and a host.
Albert Barnes	Thou makest new thy proofs against me, and increasest thine anger against me:—The whole army of afflictions is upon me.

NAB	You renew your attack upon me and multiply your harassment of me; in waves your troops come against me.
NASB	'Thou does renew Thy witnesses against me, And increase Thine anger toward me. Hardship after hardship is with me.
NJB	...attacking me against and again, your fury against me ever increasing, your troops assailing me, wave after wave.
REB	...you renew your onslaught on me, and with mounting anger against me bring fresh forces to the attack.
The Septuagint	...renewing against me my torture and You have dealt with me in great anger, and You have brought trials upon me.
TEV	You always have some witness against me; your anger toward me grows and grows; you always plan some new attack.
<i>Young's Lit. Translation</i>	Thou renewest Thy witnesses against me, And dost multiply Thine anger with me, Changes and warfare are with me.

Now and again I get lazy and I don't think to look up some of the words. In this verse, I had figured this was a slam dunk that it should be *You renew your witnesses against me*. However, that is not the case. The first verb in this sentence is the Piel imperfect of *châdash* (חָדַשׁ) [pronounced *khaw-DAHSH*] and it is used for the *cutting and polishing* of a sword; it brings back the gleam and the shine and the newness of the sword. In a similar fashion, it is used for the *repair and restoration* of buildings (II Chron. 15:8 24:4 Isa. 61:4). Therefore, this means *to renew*; it is only found in the Piel and the Hiphil. Strong's #2318 BDB #293. What god renews against Job is the masculine plural of *'êd* (עֵד) [pronounced *gáide*], which it is a word used outside the courtroom (Gen. 31:44 Ex. 22:13) as well as in (Deut. 17:6–7, 19:18). It is a *statement given as truth, a solemn testimony or something which stands as a testimony or memorial to a fact* (e.g., Gen. 31:48 Deut. 31:19). This can be rendered *witness, testimony, evidence*. In the plural, it may seem awkward in the English; however, in this verse, this should be rendered *evidences, solemn testimonies*. Strong's #5707 BDB #729.

The preposition which follows the verb is preposition *neged* (נֶגֶד) [pronounced *NEH-ged*], which means *what is conspicuous* when it is a substantive and, as a preposition, *in front of, in the sight of, opposite to*. With this in mind, this could be rendered *before me*. Strong's #5048 BDB #617. The idea here is that, Job's life being what it is, full of misery and physical pain, their continuance is a renewal of the evidence against Job and his dedication toward God. He is speaking to God, telling God that He has made Job appear as one who has committed great, unspeakable evils against God. With every hour that his friends spend with him, the evidence against Job in terms of personal distress and pain is damning. Job has gone through the most dramatic change that any of his friends or himself had ever witnessed and his life is as if God has declared war against him.

The next verb is the Hiphil imperfect of *râ'vâh* (רָבַח) [pronounced *raw^b-VAWH*] and it means *to become much, to become many, to multiply, to increase in population and in whatever else*. In the Hiphil, it means *to cause to become many, to make much, to multiply, to increase, to enlarge, to cause to greatly increase*. Strong's #7235 BDB #915. What God has caused to greatly increase is *ka'as* (כָּאָס) [pronounced *KAH-gahs*], which should be rendered *provoked anger* (this is a reference to God's anger; the personal possessive pronominal suffix means that this is the provoked anger against Job, as in Job 6:2). Strong's #3708 BDB #495. This is followed by the preposition *with*, which has the 1st person suffix attached.

The next noun is the feminine plural of the interesting *châlîyphâh* (חֲלִיפָה) [pronounced *khă-lee-FAW*], and it is generally used for *changes* of clothes (Gen. 45:22). It can also refer to a *changing or varying* of life (Psalm 55:20) for those whose continually commit evil acts. Strong's #2487 BDB #322. With this is the conjunction and the masculine singular of *tsâbâ'* (צָבָא) [pronounced *tsaw^b-VAW*], anemically translated *hosts* (or, *host*) in the KJV. It means *army, war, or warfare*. Strong's #6635 BDB #838.

The use of these two words is called an *hendiadys* [pronounced *hen-DIE-a-dees*], which is from the Greek words *ἓν* (one), *διὰ* (by) and *δίς* (two)—that is, *one by two*. Two words are used, but only one idea or thing is meant. The second intensifies the first. In this instance, the hendiadys is indicated grammatically, by the way these two words are strung together. Later, in v. 21, the hendiadys is based upon having two (and, actually, a whole host) of

synonyms. Bullinger writes: *The figure is truly oriental, and exceedingly picturesque. It is found in Latin as well as in Hebrew and Greek, and is very frequently used in both Old and New Testaments.*³¹ The sense is, "...changes—yes, and warlike ones as well, are against me." Or, a better concept of what is being communicated here is, *successive changes of attack or, changes, a host of changes.* The sense seems to be best expressed by, **successive changes of attack**. Keil and Delitzsch concur, saying that the literal *changes and hosts* should be rendered *hosts [armies] continually dispersing themselves, and always coming on afresh on the attack.*³² This verse ends with the prepositional phrase *with me*. These continued attacks are all of the sufferings and tragedies which Job has had to endure. Job did not just receive a few problems and then move on; he got wave after wave of adversity, and now he is certainly feeling a continual attack of physical pain. Or better, wave after wave of physical torment. What further emphasizes these waves of attack from God are Job again breaks into English poetry (no, he was not familiar with the Elizabethan poets). He ends each phrase with the *îy* [pronounced *ee*] sound, which is somewhat onomatopoeic for a moaning of pain. Keil and Delitzsch: *This repetition of the pronomial suffix gives intensity to the impression that these manifestations of the divine wrath have special reference to himself individually.*³³ For this, I can no way fault Job. I personally cannot even imagine the intense and continual pain to which he was subjected and am impressed that he has not turned against God because of this continual wave of suffering.

Barnes: *God sent upon him calamities which were regarded by his friends as proofs or witnesses that he was wicked, the public and solemn attestation of God, as they supposed, to the truth that he was eminently a bad man. New proofs of this kind were constantly occurring in this augmenting and protracted sorrows, and he could not answer the arguments which were brought from them by his friends...There were with him such reverses of condition as laid the foundation for the argument which they had urged with so much pertinacity and force that he was punished by God...Here [changes] is...employed in the sense of a succession of attacks made on him. One succeeds another, as if platoon after platoon...should come up against him. As soon as one had discharged its arrows, another succeeded in its place; or as soon as one became exhausted, it was followed by a fresh recruit. All this Job could not endure. The succession wearied him, and he could not bear it...afflictions succeeded each other as soldiers on a watch, or in a battle, relieve each other. When one set is exhausted on duty, it is succeeded by another. Or, when in battle one company has discharged its weapons, or is exhausted, it is succeeded by those who are brought fresh into the field. The word rendered "war"...means an army...Here it means that a whole host had rushed upon him. Not only had he been galled by the succession, the relief-guard of calamities, the attacks which had followed each other from an advanced guard, or from scouts sent out to skirmish, but the whole army was upon him. A whole host of calamities came rushing upon him alone, and he could not endure them.*³⁴ And, may I add, they stood as evidence against him.

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Job Speaks of Death and Asks God to Back off

**“ ‘And why out from a womb did You bring me out?
I die and an eye would not see me.**

Job 10:18

**“ ‘And why did You bring me out from the womb?
Had I died, then no one would have seen me like this.**

The first verb is the 3rd person masculine singular with a 1st person suffix, Hiphil perfect of *yâtsâ* ^ˁ (אָ יָ) [pronounced *yaw-TZAWH*], which means, in the Hiphil, *to cause to go out, to lead out, to bring out*. Strong's #3318 BDB #422. The perfect tense refers to a specific point in time.

³¹ *Figures of Speech Used in the Bible*; E. W. Bullinger; ©originally 1898; reprinted 1968 by Baker Books; p 657.

³² Keil & Delitzsch's *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. IV, p. 337.

³³ Keil & Delitzsch's *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. IV, p. 337.

³⁴ *Barnes' Notes, Job, Volume 1*; Baker Books, ©1996; p. 232.

The second line begins with the 1st person singular, Qal imperfect of *gâva* (גָּוָה) [pronounced *gaw-VAH* or *gaw-VAHG*], which means *to expire, to perish, to die*. Strong's #1478 BDB #157. The imperfect is interesting. I would have expected the perfect tense here, for a specific point in time, a past, completed event. The imperfect tense is more of a process; or it can be the limited view of just part of an event as opposed to the whole. The imperfect tense can also be used for repeated or contingent action. It can be used to convey capability or possibility. Perhaps this should be rendered *had I died*. Recall that when Job first spoke, he said: "[Why did I not die at birth—come forth out from the womb and expire? Why did the knees receive me and why did the breasts nourish me? For now I would have preferred to have lain down and been quiet; I would have slept then, I would have been at rest.](#)" (Job 3:11–13). This verse is more than a simple reiteration—this time Job blames God for bringing him out of the womb. [Yet You are He who brought me out from the womb. You made me rely upon my mother's breasts](#) (Psalm 22:9).

Job's concern in the second line is sometimes glossed over. His condition, his illness, his financial ruin are all an embarrassment to him. Even though he has done nothing wrong to deserve what he has gotten, he shows all the signs of being destroyed by God; it would have been preferable for him to have died in the womb or having come out from the womb so that no one would see him like this.³⁵

Now, I have seen this verse and other similar verses from the book of Job used by both sides of the abortion issue as a *proof text*. First off, I would be leery of using any of the words of Job or his associates as a proof text, even though the majority of what they have to say is correct and accurate. We have four men arguing philosophically over God's dealings with mankind. Even though this is God's Word, and even though it is God-breathed, inspiration only guarantees that this is what these four men actually said; it does not guarantee that every position taken by every man is correct. Furthermore, it puts us on even shakier ground to take a stand based upon the inference of this or any other verse in Job. We have inferences from this verse which could go to both sides of the abortion issue. Throughout Job, when the womb is spoken of, the preceding preposition is *mîn*, which means *out from* (Strong's #4480 BDB #577). This would tend to side with the pro-choice group; that is, Job is not thought of as a person until he exits the womb. However, this second line, where *no eye would see me*, seems to line up with those who are anti-abortion, as it is implied that Job has some sort of a soul inside the womb, as no one ever sees him (i.e., he dies as a result of a miscarriage). I personally would be leary about taking this verse to argue either side of the abortion issue. The next verse is equally abstruse when it comes to applying it to when life begins.

**“ ‘As one who I had not been, I was;
out from a womb to the grave I should be
[caused to be] borne aloft [in a funeral
procession].**

Job 10:19

**“ ‘As though I were one who who had not
been;
I should be carried in a funeral procession
from the womb to the grave.**

This verse has a tricky verb thrown in the beginning, so I want you to see the other renderings first before we take this apart.

Albert Barnes	I should have been as though I had not been; I should have been borne from the womb to the grave.
<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	I should have been as though I had not existed; I should have been carried from the womb to the grave.
<i>The Emphasized Bible</i>	As though I had not been, should I have become,— From the womb to the grave might I have been borne. ³⁶
Keil and Delitzsch	I should have been as though I had never been, Carried from the womb to the grave.
KJV	I should have been as tough I had not been; I should have been carried from the womb to the grave.

³⁵ There is the alternate interpretation that it is God's eye that Job wanted not to see him, as per Job 7:19. However, that is not the meaning here. It is simply that Job is embarrassed to appear so guilty and in such terrible ruin.

³⁶ Perhaps an unfortunate rendering for those who are listening to this instead of reading it.

NJB	[I should have perished then, unseen by any eye], a being that had never been, to be carried from womb to grave.
NIV	“If only I had never come into being, or had been carried straight from the womb to the grave!”
The Septuagint	[...and why did I not die, and no eye see me], and I become as if I had not been? For why was I not carried from the womb to the grave?
<i>Young's Lit. Translation</i>	As I had not been, I am, From the belly to the grave I am brought,...

As you have noticed, I quoted part of v. 18 in two of these renderings, as it appears that v. 19 could be a continuation of the previous verse. The first word is the relative pronoun *ʾăsher* (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced *ash-ER*], which I generally translate *which, when* or *who*. It is a particle of relation, a sign of relation or a connecting link. As a connective, *ʾăsher* can mean *that, in order that, because that, because, for, so that, in that, since, for that, inasmuch as, forasmuch* (Strong's #834 BDB #81). In this verse, it is preceded by the prefixed preposition *kaph* (כּ), which, by itself, means *like, as*. BDB classifies these two together as a separate word, *ka'ăsher* (כּ אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced *kah-uh-SHER*], and gives the meanings *according as, as, when*. Gesenius does likewise, giving the meanings *as as who, as one who, according to [that] which, according as, according to what manner, because, as if, as though, as, so as* (used of time). Gesenius gives only Job 10:19 and Zech. 10:6 as support for *as though, as if*, so I will go with *as one who* in Job 10:19. Strong's #834 BDB #455.

This is followed by the negative particle and the 1st person singular, Qal perfect of *hâyâh* (הָיָה) [pronounced *haw-YAW*], which means *to be*. Strong's #1961 BDB #224. Our problem is with being literal here. In the English, we would continue with a 3rd person masculine singular—*as one who is not*. In the Hebrew, it is: *as one who—I am not...* The solution to this is to render *ka'ăsher as though, as if: As though I am not*. However, it doesn't stop there. This is immediately followed by the 1st person singular, Qal imperfect of *hâyâh* (הָיָה) [pronounced *haw-YAW*] (again!). A very close but less than word-for-word rendering would be *as though I were one who was not*, or, *as though I was one who had not been*. This would carry the thought from v. 18 into v. 19, as I believe was Job's intention in speaking and our only serious grammatical loss is converting the 1st person *to be* to a 3rd person.

The remainder of this verse is relatively simple, by comparison. The main verb is the Hophal imperfect of *ya'val* (יָבַל) [pronounced *yah^b-VAWL*], which means *to carry along [often in a procession], to be borne along, to be led [often in a procession]*. This verb is used for God leading his people from captivity in Babylon (Isa. 55:12 Jer. 31:9). The Hophal is the passive of the Hiphil (causative stem). God is causing Job's body to be borne aloft, perhaps in a procession, from the womb to the tomb. Strong's #2966 BDB #384. Recall again what Job has already said in Job 3:11–13: “Why did I not die at birth; come forth from the womb and expire? Why did the knees receive me and why did the breasts receive me, that I should suck? For now I would have been lain down and been quiet; I would have slept then; I would have been at rest.”

“ **‘[Are] not few my days?
Cease [and desist]; turn away from me
and I [desire to] smile a little.**

Job 10:20

“ **‘Are not my days few?
Cease and desist; turn away from me
and I desire to smile a little.**

You thought the previous verse was difficult? We have two verbs in this verse which are going to be quite difficult to unravel. Job begins a verbal crescendo, with two back-to-back verbs, which will grab our attention as he did back in v. 16. He is coming to the end of what he has to say and, even though we cannot see the expression on his face or hear the intensity of his voice, his use of the language tells us that he is coming to an end, but it is not an end of running out of gas but one of great force to grab the attention of his associates. And this is only the beginning, he will reach out and grab them by the shirt collar and lift them up in the final verse. Because this is going to be difficult to unravel, let me quote other translators:

The Amplified Bible

Are not my days few? Cease then *and* let me along, that I may take a little comfort *and* cheer up.

The Emphasized Bible

Are not my days few?—then forbear, And set me aside that I may brighten up for a little;

Keil and Delitzsch Are not my days few? then cease And turn from me, that I may become a little cheerful,...

Young's Lit. Translation Are not my days few? Cease then, and put from me, And I brighten up a little.

This verse begins easily enough with the simple interrogative particle, a negative, the substantive *few*, and *my days*; the literal rendering being: *Not a few, my days?* Job, due to his illness, assumes that he has little time left in his life. The interrogative particle carries with it the *implication* of the verb *to be* and we generally translate it that way. Whereas, David wrote: "*Observe, You have made my days handbreadths, and my lifetime as nothing in Your sight. Certainly, ever man is a mere breath.*" (Psalm 39:5); that is not the point of what Job had to say. Job said what he did because he assumed that he had not much longer to live. "*I am wasting away; I will not live forever. Leave me alone, for my days are a breath.*" (Job 7:16).

Now we have two verbs thrown together, one right after the other. In the Hebrew, this just reaches out and grabs you. We begin with the 3rd person masculine singular—and I should stop right here and point out that in vv. 2–18, Job had addressed God in the 2nd person; now he has suddenly moved to the 3rd person, meaning that he is speaking directly to his friends. Anyway, the verb is the Qal imperfect jussive of *chādāl* (לָחַדַּל) [pronounced *khaw-DAHL*], and Gesenius renders this *to leave off, to cease, to desist*; as well as *to forsake, to leave*. The idea is someone who has left off from their work, or has ceased from their work; the idea that something may be left unfinished or undone is also a part of this verb. Strong's #2308 BDB #292. The jussive expresses volition in the third person and its ideas are dependent upon the relationship between the parties involved. When it is a superior to an underling, it may represent a command, instruction or the granting of permission. In the other direction, the jussive would be a request, a prayer or a request for permission. With the negative, the jussive expresses prohibition or denial. Here, this means: *Let Him cease [and desist]...*

Now, I mentioned that this is the 3rd person masculine singular, imperfect jussive. We have to be careful here, however. In the 3rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect jussive, the verb looks like this: *y^echādāl* (לָחַדַּלְי); however, the 2nd person masculine singular, Qal imperative looks like this: *wachādāl* (לָחַדַּלְי). Without the vowel points, which were not added until the Masoretes around 500 AD. In other words, these verbs, in the Hebrew, with just the consonants, look exactly the same with the exception of the first letters, which look very similar in the Hebrew. This would change this to: *Cease and [desist]...*

The second verb, which follows immediately is the 3rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect jussive of *shīyth* (שָׂיַת) [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). How this differs from the other Hebrew words which mean roughly the same thing, I don't know. Gesenius explains that *shīyth* 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 *lāmed* or *bēyth* prepositions; and (5) more rarely *to make, to prepare* (for someone) when followed by a dative and even *to give*. 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. This is a difficult call for this verse, which is why I gave you all the information on this word. We will render it *turn*. Strong's #7896 BDB #1011. This is followed by the *mīn* preposition and the personal pronoun suffix and should be rendered *from me, away from me*. Again, just like the last verb, the difference between the 3rd person Qal imperfect and the 2nd person Qal imperative is one letter; the Septuagint goes with the 2nd person Qal imperative and most translators do as well (some do because it is just easier to render as a 2nd person imperative).

The final verb is the 1st person singular, Hiphil imperfect cohortative of *bālag* (בָּלַג) [pronounced *baw-LAHG*], which means *gleam, to smile*. The corresponding Arabic word means *to be bright, to shine forth*, e.g. the dawn. We find this use in Joel 2:2. Strong's #1082 BDB #114. The cohortative expresses volition. In the English, we often render this with a *let*; in the plural, this can be *let us*. In the 1st person, it can express a wish or a desire or purpose or an intent. It is found in conditional statements. Barnes: *My life is short, and hastens to a close. Let not then my afflictions be continued to the last moment of life, but let thine hand be removed, that I may enjoy some rest before I go hence to return no more. This is an address to God, and the meaning is, that as life was necessarily so short,*

he asked to be permitted to enjoy some comfort before he should go to the land of darkness and of death.³⁷ Even David wrote: Turn Your gaze away from me, that I may smile before I depart and am no more (Psalm 39:13).

At first I was going to ignore the final word in this verse, as there is little or no difference of opinion. However, we would be missing something in what Job is saying if we let it pass. It is the substantive *m^eaṭ* (מֵאֶט) [pronounced *m^e-GAHT*], which means *a little, fewness, few*. Here it is used adverbally. Strong's #4592 BDB #589. The reason I mention it is that this word also began this verse (following the interrogative particle and a negative). Again, this linguistic move indicates that Job is coming to both a conclusion and crescendo.

**“ ‘Before I go—and I will not return—
to a land of obscurity and death shadow.**

Job 10:21

**“ ‘Before I go—not to return—
into a land of obscurity and deep darkness.**

Again, we will have to examine the other translations:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	Before I go whence I shall not return, even to the land of darkness and the shadow of death;
<i>The Emphasized Bible</i>	Before I go and not return, Unto a land of darkness and death-shade.
Keil and Delitzsch	Before I go to return no more Into the land of darkness and of the shadow of death,...
<i>Young's Lit. Translation</i>	Before I go, and return not, Unto a land of darkness and death-shade,...

The beginning of the verse is uncontested; however, let's pick up where we have the construct of *land*; this is followed by the substantive modifier *chôshek^e* (חֹשֶׁק) [pronounced *KHOH-shek^e*], which means *darkness, obscurity, extraordinary darkness, a darkness of perplexity and distress*. Strong's #2822 BDB #365. This is coupled with *tsalmâveth* (תַּלְמָוֶת) [pronounced *tzah-^e-MAW-veh*], which means *death-shadow, deep shadow*. Job is the first author in the Old Testament to use this word (Job 3:5) and he uses this more extensively in the Old Testament than any other author (ten times). This word properly refers to the abode of the dead. Strong's #6757 BDB #853. This is the same word which we find in that famous Psalm 23:4: *Although I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil because You are with me. Your rod and Your staff comfort me.*

Again, in this chapter, we have another hendiadys. These two words refer to one thing. This could be rendered: "Before I go—and I will not return—to the land of darkness, yes, and the darkness of death's shadow too."

You will note a contrast of Job's desire to be dead and yet where he expects to go—into a land of obscurity and deep darkness. If it were just these words, we might could look at death for him as simply the unknown, or partially unknown; however, Job has some concerns about his future existence. Truth through writing was revealed slowly, over a long period of time to mankind. Certainly from Adam through several generations, that which was true was passed on by word of mouth. In fact, it is possible that some great period of time passed by until anything was recorded. As I have mentioned before, the first four chapters of Genesis was probably information which had been handed down verbally. Very likely Noah, Shem or Japheth wrote the next few chapters. However, up the time of Job, there does not appear to be any reason for Job to take comfort in death, other than it is a release from the absolute misery that he is suffering through. Barnes: *This passage is important as furnishing as illustration of what was early understood about the regions of the dead. The essential idea here is, that it was a land of darkness, of total and absolute night. This idea Job presents in a great variety of forms and phrases. He amplifies it, and uses apparently all the epithets which he can command to represent the utter and entire darkness of the place. The place referred to is not the grave, but the region beyond, the abode of departed spirits, the Hades of the ancients; and the idea here is, that it is a place where not a clear ray of light every shines...There is nowhere to be found...a description which for intensity and emphasis of expression surpasses this of Job.*³⁸

³⁷ Barnes' Notes, Job, Volume 1; Baker Books, ©1996; p. 232.

³⁸ Barnes' Notes, Job, Volume 1; Baker Books, ©1996; pp. 232–233.

“ ‘A land of encircling darkness—like gloom; death shadow and no organizations; then You [cause to] shine forth like gloom [or, so that it *the land* causes to shine forth like gloom].’ “

Job 10:22

“ ‘A land of total obscurity and encircling darkness—of gloom; a death shadow and in complete disorder; then You cause gloom to shine forth [or, so that the land causes gloom to shine forth].’ “

We will definitely need to look at the other renderings before we proceed:

Albert Barnes	To the land of darkness like the blackness of the shadow of death; Where there is no order, and where its shining is like blackness.
<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	The land of sunless gloom as intense darkness; [the land] of the shadow of death, without any order, and where the light is as thick darkness.
Barnes	A land of shaded darkness, as the deep darkness of the shadow of death; without any order [or, in chaos]; and it shines forth as darkness [i.e., the very shining of the light there, if there is any, is like darkness].
<i>The Emphasized Bible</i>	A land of obscurity, like thick darkness, Of death shade and disorder, and which shineth like thick darkness.
Keil and Delitzsch	the land of deep darkness like to midnight, Of the shadow of death and of confusion, And which is bright like midnight.
NASB	“The land of utter gloom as darkness <i>itself</i> , Of deep shadow without order, And which shines as the darkness.”
NIV	“...to the land of deepest night, of deep shadow and disorder, where even the light is like darkness.”
<i>Young's Lit. Translation</i>	A land of obscurity as thick darkness, Death-shade—and no order, And the shining <i>is</i> as thick darkness.

As we have seen, on the one hand, Job desired for God to take him; and, better yet, to have taken him at birth. However, his view of death is rather dismal. Even if we had the entire book of Genesis by this time, I do not recall any passages of comfort concerning death. In fact, there is a long passage of time before God's Word deals with death in a positive, reassuring way.

Job goes through a long list of similar words in his description of death. Here, we know that his view of death was incorrect for the believer; however, for the unbeliever, this is a very apt description. Job reiterates the feminine singular construct of *land* and modifies it with the word *ʿēyphāh* (עִיפָהּ) [pronounced *ây-FAW* or *gay-FAW*], and we will go with *obscurity*, although BDB gives its meaning as *darkness*. Keil and Delitzsch call this *encircling darkness* but render it *deep darkness*. It is only found in Job 10:22 and Amos 4:13* with its verbal cognate found only in Job 17:11 (and there is some confusion here). Barnes says that this is from the word which means *to fly*, and it came to mean *to cover as with wings*; and finally to *that which is shaded or dark*. For this reason, I like *encircling darkness*. Strong's #5890 BDB #734. The next word is the adverb/conjunction *kēmô* (כִּמּוֹ) [pronounced *k^omoe*], and it appears to be equivalent to the prefixed preposition *kaph*. It means *like, as, when*. Strong's #3644 BDB #455. This is followed by the masculine substantive modifier *ʾôphel* (אֹפֶל) [pronounced *OH-fell*], which means *darkness, gloom*; it is usually rendered *darkness* in the KJV, with the singular exceptions of *privily* (Psalm 11:2) and *obscurity* (Isa. 29:18). We will go with *gloom*. Barnes says that this refers to a thick darkness, as when the sun has set. It is from the word which means *to go down, to set*. It is a poetic word used to refer to intense, deep darkness. Keil and Delitzsch call this *midnight darkness, the entire absence of sunlight*. Strong's #652 BDB #66.

Then Job repeats the noun from v. 21: *tsal^omāveth* (צַלְמוֹתַי) [pronounced *tzah-^oMAW-veth*], which means *death-shadow, deep shadow*. Strong's #6757 BDB #853. This is followed by a conjunction and the negative particle and the masculine plural *ṣ^odārīym* (סִדְרֵי) [pronounced *s^o-daw-REEM*], and it means *order, organization, arrangement*; with the negative, *disorder, confusion*. This word is found only here. Strong's #5468 BDB #690. Keil and

Delitzsch: *...everything is so encompassed by the shadow of death that it seems a chaos, without any visible or distinct outline.*³⁹

This is followed by the wâw consecutive and the Hiphil imperfect of yâpha' (יָפָה) [pronounced yaw-FAHÇ], and it means *to shine out, to shine forth, to be caused to shine, to send out beams*. Strong's #3313 BDB #422. There is disagreement whether this is in the 2nd person singular masculine or the third person feminine singular. As we have seen before, the difference is just one letter in the original text—it is either yôd (י) or wâw (ו). I will continue to go with the second person masculine. However, it is possible that here, the 3rd person feminine singular refers back to *the land*. Then Job repeats the word as *gloom* or *like gloom*. In using so many synonyms, Job brings what he has to say to a crescendo of sadness, with nothing to look forward to but a world of darkness and gloom. As Barnes said, *the very shining of the light there, if there is any, is like darkness.*⁴⁰ He doesn't peter out in this paragraph; he grabs his friends by their shirt collars and shakes them. He is leaving this miserable life for eternity in deep darkness and gloom—quite a different picture than what God has painted for us. God will, in fact, ask Job, ["Have the gates of death been revealed to you? Or have you seen the gates of deep darkness? Have you understood the expanse of the earth? Speak, if you know all of this."](#) (Job 38:17–18).

Barnes: *Such was the view of Job of the abodes of the dead—even of the pious dead. No wonder he shrank back from it, and wished to live. And how absolutely horrible his life must have been to have expressed a desire to die. Such is the prospect of the grave to man, till Christianity comes and reveals a brighter world beyond the grave—a world that is all light...had Job been favoured with...[this] view of heaven, he would not have thus feared to die!*⁴¹ [And the city has not need of the sun or of the moon to shine upon it, for the glory of God has illumined it, and its lamp is the Lamb...And there will no longer be night; and they will not have need of the light of a lamp nor the light of the sun, because the Lord God will illumine them; and they will reign forever and ever](#) (Rev. 21:23 22:5).

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³⁹ Keil & Delitzsch's *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. IV, p. 339.

⁴⁰ *Barnes' Notes, Job, Volume 1*; Baker Books, ©1996; p. 233.

⁴¹ *Barnes' Notes, Job, Volume 1*; Baker Books, ©1996; pp. 233–234.