
Job 11

Job 11:1–20

Introduction: Job 11 begins with Zophar's take on this situation. McGee: *Zophar is a legalist. He assumed...that God works according to measure, according to law. He pretends to know what God will do in a given circumstance...He is I-have-all-the-answers-type. He is the voice of legalism. He holds that god is bound by laws and never operates beyond the circumference of His own laws...He is different from Bildad who was the traditionalist. Bildad said you can go back and look at what has happened in the past and learn from it.*¹ Kelly: *Zophar speaks in more direct and unambiguous terms than the other two, and does not hesitate to make the specific charges of Job's sinfulness...He regards [Job's] speech as "babble" and, worse, a mockery of God.*² I found Zophar, described by others as the know-it-all legalist, to be rather irritating. Most commentators characterize Zophar as being the brashest, least considerate and most judgmental of Job's friends. Keil and Delitzsch call him the most impetuous of Job's friends. However, I must side with Barnes in observing *he [does not appear to be]...more rude and severe than Eliphaz or Bildad. Like them, he takes it for granted that Job had sinned, and assures him that if he would return to God, he should have prosperity and happiness again.* This is the general tenor of all three men. *All are severe in their remarks, and it may be admitted that Zophar is much less argumentative than Eliphaz, and that his speeches are in fact little more than a repetition of what his friends had before said.*³ Zophar just does not appear to be as bright as his two friends, and that does not make him more vicious; he is just less able to couch his language in graceful innuendo. He deals with the cry of Job quickly and superficially. He is not a man who is a deep thinker, but he might fancy himself as such. He will take up after Bildad, chiding Job for speaking too much, and then launch into some meaningless dissertations. I personally became more irritated at Zophar more than any of the three of Job's friends. I guess that part of it is that my sympathies are with Job—he is in such great pain—and Zophar seems to be oblivious to that. He is more concerned with being more righteous than Job and more right than Job, than he is in providing any sort of comfort and friendship. *It cannot be denied that there was much that was unkind in this speech and much that Job would feel keenly. To assume that a man is wicked; that he is a hypocrite and abandoned by God, and then to exhort him as if it were so, and as if it did not admit a moment's debate or excite a doubt in the mind of the speaker, is a mode of address that will find its way to the heart of any man. Job felt it, as if who would not? Yet this was the error of all the friends of Job.*⁴

Zophar's vocabulary seems to be more limited than that of the four, and I had expected to spend less time in the examination of the Hebrew in this chapter. However, particularly in the latter half of this chapter, we will spend as much time dealing with the Hebrew as in previous chapters. My intention is to first determine exactly what the speaker had to say and then to determine its meaning and relationship to the truth. One of the things interesting about Zophar's vocabulary and speech patterns is that he begins almost every verse with a conjunction or a particle, be it hypothetical or interrogative. Whereas beginning a sentence with particles is not unusual—in fact, it is almost the norm, Job will do that 50–65% of the time, Zophar does it 80–90% of the time. What this indicates is that Zophar's speech pattern is more fixed than Job's, and this generally indicates lower intelligence. Zophar, unlike his compatriots, is a relatively simple man with actually very little to say. Rather than quote from the ancients of the philosophers of his day, he might quote the lyrics of a country and western song. His vocabulary is generally simple, straightforward, and often off the mark when it comes to being accurate. A person does not have to be a genius, or even relatively intelligent, to understand Bible doctrine. However, one must have an interest in the truth and Zophar is going to go along with majority rule and he will have little or nothing to say which will back this up. A contradictory train of thought which we find in this chapter is that Zophar will first tell Job that God is too complex

¹ J. Vernon McGee, *Job*, p. 73. It is surprising how we make our own judgments. McGee sees Zophar as the oldest of the group, as he speaks with a *dogmatic finality*. I personally (and correctly) place him as the youngest, (1) because he does speak with such dogmatic finality, and (2) he is the last to speak. However, this is probably the only area where McGee has ever been wrong.

² *The Layman's Bible Commentary*, Vol. 8, Balmer H. Kelly, John Knox Press, ©1962, p. 82.

³ *Barnes' Notes, Job, Volume 1*; Baker Books, ©1996; p. 234.

⁴ *Barnes' Notes, Job, Volume 1*; Baker Books, ©1996; p. 234.

for Job to understand Him; then, immediately, Zophar tells Job what he must do in order to receive God's blessing. On the plus side, when it comes to exegesis, this will not be such a difficult, word-by-word battle (although we will certainly venture into the Hebrew as necessary); on the negative side, Zophar will have little to offer us in the way of truth.

Barnes splits up this chapter quite differently from me, so let me pass on his chapter division: *I. He accuses Job of garrulity, of arrogance, and of impiety, in maintaining his own innocence in the circumstances in which he then was...ver. 1-4 II. He says that he wishes that god would speak to Job and acquaint him with his estimate of what he was. He affirms that god exacted of him less than his iniquity deserved; and then goes into a sublime description of God, as vast, and as unfathomable in his counsels and plans. He declares not only that God is great, but that he knows the heart of man, and knows exactly what he deserves...Zophar does not attempt to explain the equity of the divine dealings, but he dwells on the greatness and the sovereignty of God, and on the duty of man to submit with humility, ver. 5-22. III. He assures Job that if he would repent and turn to god, he should be prospered again. He would forget his misery; his age would be clear as noon day; he would lie down in safety, and would again become an honoured and respected man. If he persevered in his wickedness, however, he must expect to be destroyed for that was the lot of all the wicked, ver. 13-20.*⁵

Outline of Chapter 11:

- Vv. 1-6 "It's too bad we can't hear God's side of this."
- Vv. 7-12 "Job, you can't presume to know that much about God."
- Vv. 13-20 "This is all you have to do in order to make everything alright again."

"It's Too Bad We Can't Hear God's Side of this."

Literally:

So then answered Zophar, the Naamathite; so he said,

Job 11:1

Smoother English rendering:

Then Zophar, the Naamathite, answered and said to Job:

This is the first time that we have heard from Zophar. We will find that his vocabulary is more limited except for the fact that he probably uses more colloquialisms than his three associates. The solution that he offers to Job is simplistic and repetitive. What he says at the end of this chapter to encourage Job to a life of morality is nothing more than a rehash of what Bildad has already said. Now, an interesting point is how did they know that Job had done wrong? That is, we are in a period prior to the Law of Moses; we have no revealed information which outlines in any great detail what is right and what is wrong. So how can Zophar and company even have a concept of right and wrong? Paul deals with this question several millennia later: **For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness because that which is known about God is evident within them, for god made it evident to them. For since creation of the world, His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse. For even though they knew god, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks when they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened (Rom. 1:18-21). For when the Gentiles, who do not have the Law, do instinctively the things of the Law, these, not having the Law, are a law to themselves in that they show the work of the Law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness and their thoughts alternately accusing or else defending them (Rom. 2:14-15).**

Zophar's name means *chatterer* or *rough*. According to Keil and Delitzsch, it means *the yellow one*. Naamathite is the Hebrew word *na'âmâthîy* (נְאֻמָּתִי) [pronounced *nah-guh-maw-THEE* or *nah-uh-maw-THEE*] and this word is found only in the book of Job (Job 2:11 11:1 20:1 42:9).^{*} The closest word that we have to this is Naamah, found in Gen. 4:17 5:32 (a descendant of Cain); found also as a wife of Solomon (I Kings 14:21, 31); and also found as a city as part of Judah's inheritance. However, there is no indication that any of these uses has anything to do

⁵ Barnes' Notes, Job, Volume 1; Baker Books, ©1996; p. 234.

with Zophar. The latter city might be named after Zophar or one of his descendants. Keil and Delitzsch claim that na ʿâmâthîy means *pleasantness*. Strong's #5282 BDB #654.

**“[Should] a multitude of words not be answered?
And [should] a man of [two] lips be justified?”**

Job 11:2

**"Isn't about time someone answered your diatribe?
Just because you can speak volumes, that in and of itself does not vindicate you."**

This verse begins with the interrogative particle rather than a verb; however, it is reasonable to render this as *should*. The second line continues with a wâw conjunction and a hypothetical particle, which can also act as an interrogative particle. The verb in the second line is the Qal imperfect of tsâdaq (קָ טַדַּץ) [pronounced *tsaw-DAHK*], which means *to be righteous, to be just, to be justified*. Strong's #6663 BDB #842.

Zophar is not an original man; he picked up on what Bildad said in Job 8:2 and almost repeated it. Bildad had said: **"How long will you say these things and also words of your mouth be a mighty wind?"** (Job 8:2). Zophar is saying, **"Isn't it about time someone else said something and answered all of that nonsense that you are spouting. Just because you can talk, it doesn't mean that is enough to vindicate you."** McGee: *Zophar...says that Job is trying to talk his way out of his situation. It is true that there are men who are able to talk their way out of a situation and who are clever at manipulation by words. That is the way some lawyers win cases in court. It is reall not a matter of justice being done but rather the cleverness of the lawyer and his manipulation. This was not true of Job.*⁶

A man of lips...is evidently a Hebraism, to denote a great talker—a man of mere lips, or empty sound. Zophar asks whether such a man could be justified or vindicated. It will be recollected that taciturnity was with the Orientals a much greater virtue than with us, and that it was regarded as one of the proofs of wisdom. The wise man with them was he who sat down at the feet of age, and desired to learn; who carefully collected the maxims of former times; who diligently observed the course of events; and who deliberated with care on what others had to say.⁷ Therefore, Solomon says, **"When there are many words, a transgression is unavoidable; but he who restrains his lips is wise."** (Prov. 10:19). Or James wrote: **Know this, my beloved brothers, that every one be quick to hear, slow to speak and slow to anger** (James 1:19). *It was supposed that a man who said much would say some foolish or improper things, and hence it was regarded as a proof of prudence to be distinguished for silence. In Oriental countries, and it may be added also, in all countries that we regard as uncivilized, it is unusual and disrespectful to be hasty in offering counsel, to be forward to speak, or to be confident and bold in opinion.*⁸ *Zophar's failure to put himself in Job's place before condemning him shows a lack of compassion. Nor is entirely correct in his condemnation: Job has sincerely challenged what he perceived to be God's unjust actions.*⁹

Keil and Delitzsch explained that Zophar was calling Job is *prater*, which I must admit got me reaching for my dictionary. This is a person who talks excessively and pointlessly. This is a person whom Zophar sees as not being in the right and as someone who should not have the last word.¹⁰ The commentary of Keil and Delitzsch at this point ws marvelous: *Zophar regards the speeches of Job, which are the involuntary expression of the severity of his conflict, as a torrent of words, he shows that from the haughty elevation of his narrow dogma [that] he does not understand this form of experience; and when he reproaches Job by saying, Whoever can babble so much shows that he is not in the right, he makes use of a maxim which is true enough in itself, but its application to Job precedes from the most uncharitable misconstruction of his suffering friend.*¹¹

⁶ J. Vernon McGee, *Job*, pp. 73–74.

⁷ *Barnes' Notes, Job, Volume 1*; Baker Books, ©1996; p. 234.

⁸ *Barnes' Notes, Job, Volume 1*; Baker Books, ©1996; p. 234.

⁹ *The NIV Study Bible*; ©1995; p. 737.

¹⁰ Keil & Delitzsch's *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. IV, p. 342.

¹¹ Keil & Delitzsch's *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. IV, p. 348.

**“Your idle talk men should cause to be silenced;
then you ridicule and none humiliating.**

Job 11:3

**“Men should cause your idle talk to be silenced;
furthermore, when you ridicule God should no one humiliate you?”**

The first word is the masculine plural of *bad* (בַּד) [pronounced *bahd*] and it is a homonym; it can mean *separation, by itself, alone* (Gen. 2:18 21:28 Zech. 12:12–14; Strong’s #905 BDB #94); *white linen for priestly garments* (I Sam. 2:18 22:18 II Sam. 6:14; Strong’s #906 BDB #94); and, in the plural, *empty, idle talk* (Job 11:3 Isa. 16:6 Jer. 48:30; Strong’s #907 BDB #95). Barnes explains and I have paraphrased: the primary focus of this word is separation—it can mean separation from the truth, separation from prudence, separation from wisdom and propriety. This can refer to both lying and to vain, empty talk.¹²

The verb is the Hiphil imperfect of *chârash* (חָרַשׁ) [pronounced *chaw-RAHSH*], which means *to be silent, to exhibit silence*. As mentioned in Job 6:26, this is the poetic use of this word; in prose it means *to cut in, to engrave, to plough*. Strong’s #2790 BDB #361. The subject of the verb is *math* (מַת) [pronounced *math*], which means *male, man, male offspring*; there is no emphasis upon sex or gender. Strong’s #4962 BDB #607.

However, if we change the subject of the verb, the sentence changes dramatically:

<i>The Emphasized Bible</i>	Shall thy prattings cause men to hold their peace?
Keil and Delitzsch	"Shall thy vain talking silence the people?"
NASB	"Shall your boasts silence men?"
NIV	"Will your idle talk reduce men to silence?"
Owen's Translation	Your babble (idle words) men should silence...
Rosenmüller	Should men bear thy boastings with silence?
TEV	Job, do you think we can't answer you?
<i>Young's Lit. Translation</i>	Thy devices make men keep silent,...

As a question, it would make *your words* the likely subject; however, there is no continuative *wâw* conjunction or consecutive; there are no particles which indicate that this is a question;¹³ therefore, I am going to go with *men* as the proper subject. In *Young's Translation*, you will notice that it just doesn't sound right without this being expressed as a question.

The second line begins with the *wâw* consecutive and it is not a question either. Zophar doesn't strike me as being a very subtle person; therefore, I don't see him as beginning with clever and subtle questions. The second line begins with the *wâw* consecutive and the 2nd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect of *lâ'ag* (אָגַע) [pronounced *law-ĠAHG*], which means *to mock, to stammer, to deride, to ridicule*. Strong’s #3932 BDB #541. Zophar is afraid to even say just exactly Whom he believes that Job is ridiculing—he believes that with what Job has said, that Job has ridiculed God and Job has also scoffed at his friends' advice. Job will later turn this around on them. **"Certainly mockers are with me and my eye gazes on their provocation."** (Job 17:2).

This is followed by the *wâw* conjunction, a negative construct and the masculine singular, Hiphil participle of *kâlam* (כָּלַם) [pronounced *kaw-LAHM*], which means *to humiliate, to disgrace, to mortify, to shame, to disgrace*. The original Qal meaning of this verb was *to wound* (i.e., *to pierce, to cut*); however, we do not find this in the Qal form. In the Hiphil, it means *to reproach, to hurt some one, to treat shamefully, to injure, to put someone to shame*. We had a similar association of words when I was in high school—to *cut low* meant *to humiliate*. Another similar relationship in a colloquialism would be *to cut one down to size*. This is a very strong word for *humiliation*; the result is wounding. In the participle, this would mean *a humiliating, humbling, chastening, mortifying*. Strong's #3637

¹² Barnes' Notes, *Job, Volume 1*; Baker Books, ©1996; p. 235.

¹³ I should mention that Keil and Delitzsch claim that this is a question, not because of the words used, *but is only known by the accent* (Keil & Delitzsch's *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. IV, p. 342).

BDB #483. To render this second line literally, *then you ridicule and none humiliating*, is unwieldy in the English. For some smoother renderings:

<i>The Emphasized Bible</i>	When thou hast mocked shall there be none to put thee to shame?
Keil and Delitzsch	So that thou mockest without any one putting thee to shame,...
NJB	Will you jeer with no one to refute you?
NIV	Will no one rebuke you when you mock?
NRSV	And when you mock, shall no one shame you?
REB	When you speak irreverently, is there no one to take you to task?
<i>Young's Lit. Translation</i>	Thou scornest, and none is causing blushing!

The ridicule is twofold, in the opinion of Zophar: Job has ridiculed his friends in that they have come to help him, it is obvious to everyone that he is under severe discipline from God, and he insults their intelligence by saying that he has committed no sin worthy of the misery that he is suffering. Secondly, when he asks to speak to God or asks for a Mediator, he mocks God. Zophar will go off on this lecture about how intelligent God is—and that God does not make mistakes and he doesn't misjudge. Job might be able to hide his iniquity from his friends, but he can't hide it from God. He mocks both God and his friends by maintaining his innocence. Zophar tells Job, *will no one make you ashamed?* And so, what Zophar proposes to do is to bring to Job's mind a sense of shame for his idle talk and his mocking of God and friends.

**“Then you say, 'Pure [is] my doctrine;
I am clean in Your¹⁴ [two] eyes.'"**

Job 11:4

**“Furthermore, you say, 'My doctrine is
accurate
and I am clean in Your eyes.'"**

Job had said, “According to Your knowledge, I am indeed not guilty; ye there is no deliverance from Your hand.” (Job 10:7). He has said, “Teach me, and I will be silent. Show me how I have erred. Honest words are not painful, but what does your argument prove? Do you intend to reprove my words when the words of one in despair belong to the wind?...Is there injustice on my tongue? Can't my palate discern words?” (Job 6:24–26a, 30). That was too much for Zophar. He doesn't like that Job has claimed to be moral and right. Although Job is not claiming sinless perfection, knowing that God could call him on his past sins. However, to Job, that is past and, apparently, minor. It is obvious to Zophar that this is not the case, not with the way that Job is suffering. *Doctrine* is the masculine singular of *leqach* (לֵקַח) [pronounced *le-KAHKH*], which properly means *something received* or *appropriated*; by application, it is *learning, teaching, doctrine, instruction*. Strong's #3948 BDB #544.

The adjective describing Job's doctrine is *zak*^e (זָק) [pronounced *zakh*^e], which means *to be unmixed, free from foreign substances*; and therefore, *pure, uncorrupted*. Strong's #2134 BDB #269. The position which Job has taken in this matter is pure and uncorrupted—in Job's eyes. This statement indicates that their disagreements are matters of principles and doctrines concerning God and their place on this earth. Zophar portrays Job's position as unassailable in Job's own eyes.

In the second line, we begin with the masculine singular adjective *bar* (בָּר) [pronounced *bahr*], and it means *pure, clean*. This is a word found rarely in the Bible and only in poetry (Job 11:4 Psalm 19:8 24:4 73:1 Prov. 14:4 SOS 6:9, 10*). Strong's #1249 BDB #141. This is followed by the absolute status quo verb *to be*, in the 1st person masculine singular. When Zophar said that Job said he was *pure in Your eyes*, he was referring to the eyes of God. Barnes and the NIV Study Bible both made a big deal out of Zophar's statement being absolutely false; however, I think that they both overstated Zophar's allegation against Job. He is doing nothing more than paraphrasing what Job has already said.

¹⁴ The Septuagint has *His* eyes instead; in either case, the reference is to *God's* eyes.

**“And indeed, O that God would give a
declaration
and He would open His [two] lips with you;**

Job 11:5

**“And I indeed wish that God would give you
a declaration
and that He would open His [two] lips to
you...**

The interpretation of this verse is rather simple. The grammatical construction is rather interesting, however. This verse begins with the wâw conjunction and the adverb ʿûlâm (אֲלַמַּם) [pronounced oo-LAWM], which means *but, but indeed, yet*; it is a very strong adversative. Strong's #199 BDB #19. This is followed by an interrogative particle mîy (מִי) [pronounced mee], which is generally translated *who*. It can also be used to express a wish (Ex. 16:3), e.g., *O that, would that some one would, would that there were*. Strong's #4310 BDB #566.

This is followed by the verb nâthan (נָתַן) [pronounced naw-THAHN], which means *give, grant, place, put, set*. Strong's #5414 BDB #678. This is followed by the noun for God, ʿêlôhah (אֱלֹהִים) [pronounced el-OH-hah], a word for God or deity found primarily in the book of Job (e.g., Job 3:4, 23 4:9, 17 5:17 6:4, 8, 9) and found scattered throughout the Bible in fewer than a dozen other places. Strong's #433 BDB #43. We basically have two ways that we could translate this so far: *O that God would grant [or give]*; and *Who would give God...* The first is the most reasonable.

What follows is the Piel infinitive construct of dâ^bvar (דַּבַּר) [pronounced daw^b-VAHR], which means *to speak, to declare, to proclaim, to announce*. In the Piel, it is stronger and it can be translated *to promise*. Strong's #1696 BDB #180. A construct generally acts as a genitive of relation and we often place between it and the following substantive the word *of* to indicate that. However, the infinitive construct *can serve in any nominal capacity: subject, predicate, object of a preposition*.¹⁵ We will therefore render this as *a declaration*.

This desire for God to speak is a result of Job talking and talking and talking—Zophar now wants to hear God's thoughts on the matter. Such a desire would also deal with Job's doctrine, or thinking, which Job has presented as uncorrupted; and his life, which Job has presented as clean. Such an argument from Zophar is meaningless. In their experience, they have never had God suddenly come down and join them in a conversation, so indicating that he knows what God would say is meaningless. It just isn't going to happen.

In this verse, we see the great poetic genius that is Zophar. He finishes by saying, **"and He would open His [two] lips with you."** This pithy little remark stands in apposition to what Zophar said in v. 2: **"And [should] a man of [two] lips be justified?"** This is the level of Zophar's sarcasm and word play. *Not too impressive*, is what you should be thinking. Zophar just isn't that impressive in the realm of verbal bantering. Also, I should point out that Job has asked to speak to God and Zophar desires that God would speak to them. How petty is the god of Zophar? Zophar wants God to speak to all of them—to say what? To expose Job's sin or sins to Job's friends—as if this were a part of the majesty of God—as if God were some gossipy woman who knew the scoop and wanted to share it with anyone who would listen. Could Zophar's vision of God be any smaller? Certainly, Job's view of Who and What God is, is much more accurate: **"Oh that I know where I might find Him and that I might come to His seat. I would present my case before Him and fill my mouth with arguments. I would learn the words He would answer and I would perceive what He would say to me. Would He contend with me by the greatness of His power? No, certainly He would pay attention to me. There the upright would reason with Him and I would be delivered forever from my Judge."** (Job 23:3–7). God will have His mediator, Elihu, speak to Job and his friends. Then God will speak to Job directly. God will have a word for Job's three friends, which He will say to Eliphaz: **And it came to pass after Y^ehowah said to Eliphaz the Temanite, "My wrath is kindled against you and against your two friends, because you have not spoken of Me what is right as My servant Job has."** (Job 42:7).

And, as McGee so eloquently put it: *Since God wasn't speaking, Zophar speaks for Him*.¹⁶

¹⁵ *The Complete Word Study Old Testament*; Dr. S. Zodhiates; ©1994; p 2277.

¹⁶ J. Vernon McGee, *Job*, p. 74.

“And would he tell you secrets of wisdom—for double in regards to [or, because two sides to] sound wisdom [or, in the application of wisdom to experience]; and know that God has been caused to lend to you out from your punishment [for wrongdoing].

Job 11:6

“And He would reveal hidden wisdom to you—for He is twice as smart as you! [or, there are two sides to wisdom]. And you should know that God has backed off on fully punishing you for your wrongdoing.

“And He would tell you secrets of wisdom—for double in regards to [or, because two sides to] sound wisdom [or in the application of wisdom to experience]; and know that God has been caused to forget with regards to you out from your punishment [or guilt] [for wrongdoing].

Job 11:6
alternative

“And He would reveal hidden wisdom to you—for He is twice as smart as you! [or, there are two sides to wisdom]. And you should know that God has forgotten all that He should punish you for.

“And He would tell you secrets of wisdom—because two sides to sound wisdom;
and know that God has been caused to forget with regards to you out from your punishment.

Job 11:6
shortened

“And He would reveal hidden wisdom to you—there are two sides to wisdom. And you should know that God has forgotten all that He should punish you for.

As you can see, I have presented three different renderings for Job 11:6. This is the first time we have something spoken by Zophar which is a difficult to translate. Let me give you a few other translations first:

Albert Barnes	And would declare to thee the secrets of wisdom, For they are double what we can understand! Then shouldst thou know that God had left unnoticed a part of thine iniquities.
<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	And that He would show you the secrets of wisdom! For He is manifold in understanding! Know therefore that God exacts of you less than your guilt and <i>iniquity</i> [deserve].
<i>The Emphasized Bible</i>	That we would declare to thee the secrets of wisdom For they are double to that which actually is [or, double in sound wisdom (beyond what Job imagines)],—Know then that God could bring into forgetfulness for thee a portion of thine iniquity.
Keil and Delitzsch	...and make know to thee the secrets of wisdom, That she is twofold in her nature— Know then that Eloah forgetteth much of thy guilt.
NASB	"And show you the secret of wisdom! For sound wisdom has two sides. Know then that God forgets a part of you iniquity.
NJB	...show you the secrets of wisdom which put all cleverness to shame? Then you would realise that God is calling you to account for you sin.
NIV	...and disclose to you the secrets of wisdom, for true wisdom has two sides. Know this: God has even forgotten some of your sin.
NRSV	...and that he would tell you the secrets of wisdom! For wisdom is many-sided. Know then that God exacts of you less than your guilt deserves.
The Septuagint	Then He will declare to you the power of wisdom; for it is double of that which is with you and then you will know that a just recompense of your sins has come to you from the Lord.
<i>Young's Lit. Translation</i>	And declare to thee secrets of wisdom, For counsel hath foldings. And know thou that God forgetteth for thee, <i>Some</i> of thine iniquity.

Maybe I am wrong, but I will chalk up the difficulties of this verse to either anachronism or to idiom rather than to clever reasoning on the part of Zophar. This is so that you can see my prejudices going into this verse. First off, this verse is a part of v. 5, where Zophar tells Job "O that God would give a declaration and that He would open His [two] lips with you..." Zophar continues with the 3rd person masculine singular, Hiphil imperfect apocopated voluntative of *nâgad* (נָגַד) [pronounced *naw-GAHD*], which means *to make conspicuous, to make known, to expound, to declare, to inform, to make it pitifully obvious that*. Strong's #5046 BDB #616. This is followed by the phrase *secrets of wisdom*; which is a reference to truth and doctrine which had not been yet revealed to man. Obviously, God being Who He is will certainly know more than He reveals to us (as if our brains could hold a fraction of His wisdom). This gives us the continuation: "...so that He might make it pitifully obvious [to you] secrets of wisdom..." Not everything that Zophar states is incorrect; it, just like his friends, has been misapplied and misunderstood. The promise to the believer today is: **But just as it stands written: Things which eye has not seen and ear has not heard, and which have not entered the heart of man—all that God has prepared for those who love Him; for to us God has revealed [His preparations for us] through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God** (I Cor. 2:9–10).¹⁷

Barnes: *The reference here is to the wisdom of God himself. The sense is this, "you now think yourself pure and holy. You have confidence in your own wisdom and integrity. But this apprehension is based on a short-sighted view of God, and on ignorance of him. If he would speak and show you his wisdom; if he would express his sense of what purity is, you would at once see how for you have come from perfection, and would be overwhelmed with a sense of your comparative vileness and sin."*¹⁸

Zophar adds to this an independent phrase: for double in sound wisdom. That is the preposition *kîy* (כִּי) [pronounced *kee*] which means *when, that, for, because*. Strong's #3588 BDB #471. What follows is the dual masculine substantive *kephel* (כֶּפֶל) [pronounced *KEH-fell*], a word which means *double* and is found only in Job 11:6 41:13 Isa. 40:2.* The NRSV lists this meaning as being uncertain. It is possible that the NIV has given the proper understanding of this word, giving us the rendering: "...because [there are] two sides in true wisdom." Strong's #3718 BDB #495. What follows is the prefixed *lâmed* preposition (*to, for*) and the feminine singular of *tûshîyâh* (תוֹשִׁיָּה) [pronounced *too-shee-YAW*] which means *sound, efficient, wisdom, abiding success, wisdom, or the application of wisdom to experience*. Strong's #8454 BDB #444. My first reaction to this portion of the verse was: *you can perceive how puny the god of Zophar is—his knowledge is fully twice that of what Job knows. How incredibly wimpified*. However, I must admit to some prejudice and dislike of Zophar in general. It is probably more correct to understand this as *there are two sides to every story* or *there are two sides to wisdom*. Zophar's point is that all that he has heard so far is Job's estimation of the circumstances; the other side is God's, and that would place a new light on the situation. Let me see if I can explain this: Zophar has probably quoted a common saying of that day: "There are two sides to wisdom." One of the striking aspects of the book of Proverbs is the repetition of ideas in two ways or the clarification of a doctrine by presenting two contrasting views. Barnes adds: *...the wisdom of God is double-fold; that is, complicated, inexplicable, or manifold. It is not spread out and plain, but is infolded, so that it requires to be unrolled to be understood*. This is likely the most intelligent thing that Zophar will say, and for that reason, I think it is a quote—a popular maxim of that day. What Zophar is thinking and saying by implication is, that there are two sides to this story. Perhaps that is a little deep for Zophar, but he is in inspiring company.

Zophar finishes this verse with an admonition to Job: "And know that..." are the first three words. This is followed by the 3rd person masculine singular, Hiphil imperfect of *nâshâh*, which has two very different meanings. It means *to lend, to become a creditor*; (Ex. 22:25 Deut. 15:2 24:10–11 II Kings 4:1 Neh. 5:7, 10–11 Psalm 109:11 Isa. 24:2 50:1 Jer. 15:10*). Strong's #5383 BDB #674; and it means *to forget*. (Gen. 41:51 Job 11:6 39:17 Isa. 44:21 Jer. 23:39 Lam. 3:17*); Strong's #5382 BDB #674. Then we have the *lâmed* preposition with the 2nd person suffix; the subject *God*; and the prepositional phrase: "...out from [or, away from] your guilt [or, punishment] [from acts of depravity]." That final word is: *âvôn* (אָוֹן) [pronounced *gaw-VONE*], a word which is pretty

¹⁷ I should qualify this reference; Paul is saying that the Holy Spirit has revealed to him the depths of God. We also receive that, through the Holy Spirit and through Bible doctrine. This does not mean that the typical believer can just pick up the Bible and start reading it for himself or that the typical believer can just sit there and divine knowledge will be pumped into him.

¹⁸ Barnes' Notes, Job, Volume 1; Baker Books, ©1996; p. 236.

consistently rendered *iniquity* in the KJV. If *iniquity* is too old of a term for you, then *tresspass*, *offense*, *transgression*, *wrongdoing*, or *guilt* would be reasonable translation. However that rendering appears to be too tame for Gesenius, who uses *depraved action* or *crime* as the correct translation. It generally came to mean the *guilt for this depraved act*. The least used meaning is *punishment for wrongdoing*. Strong's #5771 BDB #730.

What this gives us is: “And know that God has been caused to forget with regards to you out from your guilt [or, the punishment] [from wrongdoing].” The other possible rendering is: “And know that God has been caused to lend to you out from your punishment [from wrongdoing].” The latter rendering would be difficult to interpret. My first thought is that Zophar knows that Job has a great many sins from the past and God has even been caused to run a line or credit for Job all of this time based upon the punishment due Job from his acts of depraved iniquity. According to Bullinger,¹⁹ this is the actual sense of the word: “He is constantly lending to you” or “He is continually crediting you as a lenient creditor.” Certainly, Zophar has not observed any of Job's sins nor does he even suspect what they are, but it is obvious to him that Job was certainly guilty of same.

Also a reasonable and very similar understanding is that God has been caused to forget the totality of Job's sins against Him. Barnes: *...he has treated you as if he had caused a part of your sins to be out of mind, or as if they were not remembered. Instead of treating you, as you complain, with severity, he has by no means inflicted on you the calamities which you deserve. The ground of this unfeeling assertion is the abstract proposition that God is infinitely wiser than men; that he has a deeper insight into human guilt than men can have; and that if he should disclose to us all that he sees of the heart, we should be amazed at the revelations of our own sins.*²⁰ McGee: *What he says to Job is really a blow and not a comfort. He tells Job that he is not even getting half of what he really has coming out of him. Now that is a pretty hard statement. He says that the fact Job is suffering as much as he is shows that Job is a lot worse than his friends even dreamed he was...remember that all this time Job is a sick man and is in desperate pain. He actually thinks he may expire at any moment and at times he hopes that he will die.*²¹ Keil and Delitzsch express much the same thinking: *[Zophar] wishes that God would grant Job some revelation of His infinite wisdom, since he refuses to humble himself. Then he would confess his folly, and see that God not only does not punish him unjustly, but even allows much of his guilt to go unpunished. Job is therefore to turn penitently to God, and to put away that evil which is the cause of his suffering, in order that he may be heard. Then shall his condition become bright with hope.*²²

Now, to deal with the issue of getting punished less than we deserve—that has been God's *modus operandi* since the beginning of time. We deserve eternal separation for Him yet, “And after all that has come upon us for our evil deeds and our great guilt, since You our God has requited less from us than our iniquities demand, and You have given to us an escaped remnant as this.” (Job 9:13). We have been given great forbearance and mercy from God; the discipline that we receive is nothing compared to the punishment that we deserve. What we receive is the discipline that a father gives to his child; not that which the law demands of a criminal. Back to what Zophar has said: Zophar is not as deep of a theological thinker as all of this implies. Zophar, in this verse, quoted a maxim of the day, that wisdom is two-fold, which he uses to mean, in this situation, that there are two sides to every story and they have not heard God's yet. In the second line, he is not making a statement concerning the forbearance of God. He is simply stating that God probably is not punishing Job for everything that Job has actually done; if that were the case, Job would be in even worse shape than he is. To comment on that, let me remind you that Satan has been given full power of Job to torment him in any way possible, apart from taking his life from him. Knowing the character of Satan, this would mean that Job is under the worst pain and suffering that he could possibly be under. Job could not feel more pain than he is feeling right at this time. Satan lets up just enough pressure so that Job is able to talk to his friends; this way, Satan can inflict psychological pain through the lack of human compassion and understanding that Job's associates demonstrate.

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¹⁹ *Figures of Speech Used in the Bible*; E. W. Bullinger; ©originally 1898; reprinted 1968 Baker Books; p 886.

²⁰ *Barnes' Notes, Job, Volume 1*; Baker Books, ©1996; p. 236.

²¹ J. Vernon McGee, *Job*, p. 75.

²² Keil & Delitzsch's *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. IV, p. 348.

“Job, You Can’t Presume to Know That Much about God.”

“Can you attain to [or, just happen upon] a careful investigation of [the nature of] God? Or to the completion of the Almighty can you attain [or, happen upon]?”

Job 11:7

“Do you think that you have the ability to perform a careful investigation of the nature of God?

Or do you have the ability to perform a careful investigation of the complete character of the Almighty?”

I must admit that Zophar has taken it up a notch and we will have to examine some other translations:

Albert Barnes	Canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty to perfection?
<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	Can you find out the deep things of God, or can you by searching find out the limit of the Almighty [explore His depths, ascend to His heights, extend to His breadths, and comprehend His infinite] perfection?
<i>The Emphasized Bible</i>	The hidden depth of God canst thou discover? Or unto the furthest limit of the Almighty canst thou attain?
Keil and Delitzsch	Canst thou find out the nature of Eloah, And penetrate to the foundation of the existence of the Almighty?
The Septuagint	Can you find out the traces of the Lord? Or hast thou come to the end which the Almighty has made?
<i>Young's Lit. Translation</i>	By searching dost thou find out God? Unto perfection find out the Mighty One?

V. 7 begins with the interrogative particle and the word *chêqer* (חֶקֶר) [pronounced *KHAY-ker*], which means a *searching out* or a *searching for, an investigation*. What is implied in this word is digging into the earth, which lies outside of man's ordinary observation. Unfortunately, there does not appear to be a simple, one-word modern translation, although we are probably close with the renderings *research, investigation, inquisition, study, examination, survey*. This should even be qualified and rendered a *careful investigation*. A point which Keil and Delitzsch make concerning this word is that this word purposes to uncover that which is hidden or unseen, and therefore that which is immaterial or unknown. In this context, the desire is to know the nature, thoughts or plans of God. When this word is translated *the hidden depths* or *the deep things*, we get the feeling that Zophar is referring to exotic and exceptionally confusing doctrines and divine truths. Quite the contrary—we are only speaking here of knowing that which they do not know and do not have any written revelation concerning. Strong's #2714 BDB #350.

The main verb is the 2nd person masculine singular (referring to Job, of course), Qal imperfect of *mâtsâ'* (מָצָא) [pronounced *maw-TSAW*] and it means *to attain to, to find, to detect, to happen upon, to come upon, to find unexpectedly, to discover*. Strong's #4672 BDB #592.

Now, here is the problem: an examination of the *chêqer* in the few times it occurs, it appears to not mean *what is being searched for* for the *act of searching* itself. However, this is in the construct, followed by God—it means a *searching of God, a careful examination (or, investigation) of God*. We are used to placing our verb prior to the direct object, so we would first say, "Can you attain to [or, come upon unexpectedly]..." and then we have not *the deep things of God*, but, rather, a *searching of God, an investigation of God*. We have no preposition to slip in there and God cannot be separated from *chêqer*. So this gives us: "Can you attain to [or, come upon unexpectedly] a careful investigation of God?" Or, "Can you happen upon a searching of God?" McGee: *That is a great statement. It is a marvelous statement. But who doesn't know that? Job will tell him later that everyone knows that. No man can discover God; God is revealed. The only way you can know about God is what He is pleased to reveal of Himself to us. I have come to the conclusion that He has revealed very little of Himself to us. In fact, the little that He has revealed to us has some of us so awestruck and some so confused that we can see why He hasn't revealed more of Himself to us. You cannot find God by starting out like a Columbus in search of Him. Nor can you find God by going into space in a sputnik. I recall that the Russians r=ublished in their paper the fact that*

they hadn't discovered god in the early days of space exploration, and so they assumed He was not there. We can put little gadgets out in space, but they won't find God. That is absurd! Man cannot look through a microscope or out into the heavens through the telescope and discover God. God must reveal Himself to man. This is a profound statement that Zophar makes, but it was nothing new to Job.²³

I believe that what is being questioned is, can Job, a mere man, expect to attain to or to come upon is or happen upon a searching of God? Is man even capable of such a search? Had this been a context of reassurance and concern for Job, the idea presented would be, "You can't determine why you are under this pressure. God has made it impossible for you to understand why you have been subjected to all of this pain." However, the thought of Zophar is more that Job is obviously under pain because of his sins and all of his falderal about talking to God and questioning God is nonsense—man cannot just happen upon a search for God. Man is unable to even attain to a search of God. The period of time that Job takes places is crucial. We have no revealed Scripture, so determining God's motives and reasons were far beyond what man could do. Job will push for an answer from God as to why he had to endure what he was enduring and Elihu, who is a mediator between Job and God, will say, "Listen—let me tell you that you are not right in this, for God is greater than man. Why do you complain against Him, that He does not give an account of all His doings?" (Job 33:12–13). He has made everything appropriate in its time. He has also set eternity in their heart, yet so that man will not find out the work which God has done from the beginning even to the end (Eccl. 3:11). However, even with much of the canon of Scripture complete, even Paul wrote: Oh, the inexhaustability of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God! How inscrutable are His decrees and untracible His ways! For who has known the mind of the Lord or who became His counselor? (Rom. 11:33–34 Isa. 40:13). Unwittingly, Zophar anticipates the Lord's discourses in 38:1–42:6.²⁴

Throughout the book of Job, we often have a continued set up for questions: a question begins with the interrogative particle *ha* (ה) [pronounced *hah*] (Strong's #none BDB #209) and the second question begins with the hypothetical particle *ʾim* (אם) [pronounced *eem*] (Strong's #518 BDB #50), 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*. The simple rendering here is *or* followed by a question.

This second question begins with the preposition *ʿad* (עד) [pronounced *gad*] which means *as far as, even to, up to, until, while*. Strong's #5704 BDB #723. This is followed by the feminine singular construct of *tak^el^eiyth* (תכלית) [pronounced *tahk^e-LEETH*], and its meaning in BDB is given as *end, completion; the KJV renders is as end, perfection, perfect; and Gesenius renders this perfection, completion, extremity, end conclusion*. It is only found in five passages: Neh. 3:21 Job 11:7 26:10 28:3 Psalm 139:22. The meaning which seems to be able to stand in all five passages is *completion*. Strong's #8503 BDB #479. The main verb in the second line is exactly the same as the one in the first line. Those who would occasionally resort to using the same verb twice in parallel questions would be doing it for emphasis; however, in this case, I would imagine the situation is that Zophar has just a very limited vocabulary. The verb does leave us some question. The idea of just happening upon God and His perfection is quite different than attaining to or being able to reach to God's perfection. In either case, it does not seem as though this is something that we as mortals can actually do.

What Job and Zophar could know of God was limited. Today, even though you often wouldn't know it, our ability to access a great deal of information about God has been improved because: (1) we all have access to the power of the Holy Spirit through simple rebound; and, (2) we all have access to God's completed Word. **But just as it is written: "Things which eye has not seen and ear has not heard and which has not entered into the heart of man—all that God has prepared for those who love Him." For to us, God has revealed these things through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God** (I Cor. 2:9–10).

The book, *When Critics Ask*, had some interesting comments concerning this verse. The problem, as they stated it, is *can God be known by humans?* Actually, the key question is really, how can God be known? The simple

²³ J. Vernon McGee, *Job*, pp. 75–76.

²⁴ *The NIV Study Bible*; ©1995; p. 737.

facts of the matter are that God cannot be known directly from life nor can He ever be fully known. In fact, our minds, even in heaven, will be unable to fully comprehend and grasp all that God is. Paul wrote: **For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then [after death] face to face; now I know in part, but then I will know fully just as I also have been fully known** (I Cor. 13:12). The contrast between what we know now and what we will know will be amazing, however, being creatures, we will not have an intelligence equivalent to God's. In this life, however, our knowledge of God is limited and our means to understand God are limited. Man, sitting in a dark room and meditating, cannot know God. There is no indication anywhere that God will reveal Himself to a man in that way. The reason is simple enough: our minds are powerful and misleading—whatever we think we know of God after a groping meditation—how much of that is knowledge of the divine and how much is our own imagination? How much of God's character do we grasp and how much of God's character have we implanted because of our own previous upbringing and prejudices? That is, how much of God have we made in our own image? We cannot look at God and see Him; however, we can see His handiwork and know of His existence through His creation. Some hard-hearted scientists try to convince us that suddenly the universe appeared out of nowhere and that non-life, after billions of years, somehow became life, and that became incredibly more complex and diversified until we have the world which we see today, but that thinking is simply a result of being negative toward God. We believers know that we can look into the more tiny portion of our world and still see God's incredibly complex handiwork; and that we can look out in the farthest reaches of space and never come to an end of His handiwork. The function of a single celled animal is so much more complex than Darwin could have ever imagined. The basic structure of our universe, down to the very atoms, are far more complex than scientists of fifty years could have ever imagined. An anthropologist, for instance, can recognize the most primitive of tools as man-made, yet look at the very dirt in which this tool was found—this soil being so complex to a point where an encyclopedia would not hold every bit of information on a handful of same—and this anthropologist can identify man's most simple tools and yet simultaneously refuse to recognize God's handiwork. God has revealed Himself in the complexity of this universe. He reveals Himself to us within our hearts. He is revealed to us when someone tells us about God. However, in these three instances, our knowledge of God is limited to *God-consciousness*; that is, a realization that God exists. We can even perceive, to a limited degree, some of what God is through our own souls—that is, we all have some capacity for love, both a desire for love and a desire to be loved. We all have some sense of justice, of right and wrong. We have a conception of how things ought to be; we know that there is something terribly wrong in this world and we all have within ourselves this idea of perfection—of a better world. Again, our knowledge of God from our own souls is limited and ill-defined. However, God has revealed Himself to us. He did not leave us in the lurch. Once we recognize that God exists or that it is likely that God exists, God has provided for us a more detailed explanation of His character and of our relationship to Him. **God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many times and in many ways; in these last days, He has spoken to us in [His] Son, Whom He appointed heir of all things, through Whom He made the ages. And He—God the Son—is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power** (Heb. 1:1–3a). God first revealed Himself directly to Adam and to the woman. After the fall, God spoke to man through various means of revelation, including directly speaking to man, speaking to man through dreams, but primarily speaking to man through His prophets. However, we find that God revealed Himself most fully through His Son. Even those religions which are in opposition to God are unable to fault our Living Lord. Even those men who had the authority with respect to the crucifixion, admitted that Jesus was without fault. Even his accusers had to lie in order to malign our Lord. Only the most hardened of unbelievers will ever speak ill of Jesus Christ, including those who do not even believe in God. If God were a man, Who would He be? He is Jesus Christ. When we come to a point of God consciousness, we can deny it or we can have a desire to know Who God is. When we have the desire to know Who God is, He reveals Himself to us, through the ministry of God the Holy Spirit, at times through His Word, but usually through someone telling us about Him or someone who points us toward His Word. And it is in His Word that we find out Who Jesus really is. After personally going to church for two decades and even after being regenerated, it was not until later when I realized that Jesus is God come in the flesh. Jesus was not just a good man; He was not just a messenger from God; He was not just a prophet—He is God incarnate. God the Son took upon Himself a body and walked among us that we might know Who He is. He is at once fully God and fully man that I might be able to apprehend He Who created me. How will Job and his friends know about God and understand what Job is going through? God will reveal Himself first through a mediator, Elihu, and then directly to Job. If you desire to know God, there is one way—Jesus Christ. God has revealed Himself through one man at

one time, the centerpiece of all human history. God's seven days of creation and rest have been immortalized by the seven-day that man observes; and His incarnation is immortalized by the dividing of history into AD and BC.²⁵

Now, I have certain prejudices against Zophar, which I have previously stated. My belief is that he is not a particularly intelligent person—at least, not compared to his three compatriots—and that the few intelligent things which he says, e.g., this verse, are quotations from that day and time. Barnes: *Zophar introduces here this sublime description of God—a description which seems to have the form and force of a proverb.*²⁶ My thinking is that Zophar is merely quoting a bit of common, accepted wisdom of his day, a proverb which still stands true today.

**“Heights of heavens how can you
construct?
Deeper than Sheol how can you know?”**

Job 11:8

**“How can you construct the heights of
heavens? You can't!
How can you know that which is deeper than
Sheol? You don't!**

As a man, you can only go so high and you can only go so low. The verb in the first line is the 2nd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect of pā'al (לַעֲשֶׂה) [pronounced *paw-AHL*], the poetical equivalent of 'āsāh (see Strong's # 6213 BDB# 793), and it means *to do, to make, to construct, to fabricate, to prepare*. Strong's #6466 BDB #821. This verb is preceded by the pronominal interrogative mâh (מַה) [pronounced *maw*], which means *what, how*. Mâh can also be used as an interrogatory adverb *how* to express that which is impossible, as in **“How shall we justify ourselves?”** (Gen. 44:16b). Strong's #4100 BDB #552. These statements of Zophar are so meaningless. **“How can you construct the heights of heavens?”** Job has expressed his pain and confusion and Zophar acts as though Job has made himself equal to God. In so many words, Zophar has explained that Job is not equal to God—he cannot construct the heights of heavens; he cannot understand the depths of the grave. These things are far out of reach for Job.

The second line begins with the feminine singular adjective 'âmôq (אֲמֹק) [pronounced *aw-MOHK* or *gaw-MOHK*] and it means *deep, unsearchable*. Strong's #6013 BDB #771. This is followed by the mîn preposition (מִן) [pronounced *min*], a preposition which generally denotes separation but used here in its comparative sense. Strong's #4480 BDB #577. In both of these sentences, the interrogative is used to express an impossibility.

Zophar is one of those people without a lot to say. He is sitting around listening to his friends speak great things and he really doesn't have a whole lot to add. He reminds me of this roommate that I had, who was a nice guy except that he just wasn't particularly bright. He pretty well could describe anything that he had ever seen, thought about or heard of with the three adjectives *good, bad, and interesting*; the first two meaning that he had formed an opinion about the thing, the latter meaning that he hadn't and perhaps it was really out of his depth to do so anyway. So another roommate and I began playing the game *name an animal indigenous only to Australia*. Don, listening to this high powered, intellectual game really didn't have a lot to offer after *kangaroo* (which, of course, he had been beaten to the punch with), but he did want to make an intellectual contribution, so, out of nowhere he asked, “Do you think that *supercallafragilisticexpialidocious* is a real word or a word that they made up for the movie?”²⁷ Zophar is not too unlike my old roommate Don, except that he's not as kind.

Zophar has simply described how far above and below the knowledge of God is from all of us. It is higher than heaven and lower than the depths of Sheol. Again, my thinking is that, although this is a true statement, it was probably a proverb of that day. However, what he says does have some merit. God spoke to Isaiah, saying, **“For My thoughts are not your thoughts, and neither are your ways My ways,” declares Y^howah, “For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways and My thoughts than your thoughts.”** (Isa. 55:8–9). Barnes: *The idea is, that man is incompetent to examine, with accuracy, an object that is as far off as the heavens; and that as the knowledge of God must be of that character, it is vain for him to attempt to investigate it fully. There*

²⁵ This paragraph was not a paraphrase of what is found in *When Critics Ask*; Geisler and Howe, ©1992, Victor Books, p. 228; but it was inspired by their question and answer.

²⁶ Barnes' Notes, *Job, Volume 1*; Baker Books, ©1996; pp. 236–237.

²⁷ The correct answer is *yes*, it is a real word that they made up for the movie.

is an energy in the Hebrew which is lost in our common translation. The Hebrew is abrupt and very emphatic: “The heights of the heavens!” It is the language of one looking up with astonishment at the high heavens, and overpowered with the thought, that the knowledge of God must be higher even than those distant skies. Who can hope to understand it? Who can be qualified to make the investigation?...[furthermore], it would be impossible for man to investigate a subject that was as profound as Sheol was deep. The idea is not that God was in Sheol, but that the subject was as profound as the abode of departed spirits was deep and remote.²⁸ However, Zophar is not offering this insight to Job in such a way to let Job off the hook. He is not saying that what God has done is inscrutable, and therefore, even though what is occurring to Job is terrible and out of proportion to what Job has done; he is just saying that understanding God is outside of Job’s realm. There is no comfort being offered here.

Finally, Barnes offers the distinct possibility that maybe the Psalmist had been studying this portion of Job when he wrote: **If I ascend into heaven, You are there; if I make my bed in Sheol, observe, You are there** (Psalm 139:8).

**“Longer than earth, its measure;
and broader than sea.**

Job 11:9

**“Longer than length of the land;
and broader than the sea.**

In this verse, Zophar has describes further the greatness of the knowledge of God. Just in case *the heights of heaven and the depths of hell* don’t communicate, he offers language of accomodation. “Look that direction over the land—see how far that is? God’s knowledge is even further from us than that! Look in that direction across the sea—do you see how far that goes? God’s knowledge is even further.” Thank you, Zophar. Again, the poetry of these two verses leads me to believe that Zophar is quoting this.

To those in the ancient world, the boundaries of the earth seemed farther than the boundaries of the stars. Barnes: *The general belief seems to have been, that is was a vast plain, surrounded by water—but how supported, and what were its limits, were evidently matters to them unknown. The earliest knowledge which we have of geography, as understood by the Arabs, represents the earth as wholly encompassed by an ocean, like a zone. This was usually characterized as a “Sea of Darkness;” an appellation usually given to the Atlantic... What was the idea of the breadth of the sea, which was supposed to surround the earth, it is now wholly impossible to determine. Probably there were no ideas on the subject that could be regarded as settled and definite. The ancients had no means of ascertaining this, and they perhaps supposed that the ocean extended to an unlimited extent—, or perhaps, to the far-distant place where the sky and the water appeared to meet. At all events, it was an illustration then, as it is now, of a vast distance, and is not inappropriately used here to denote the impossibility of fully understanding God. This illustration would be far more striking then than now...[the ancients...kept close to the shore. They seldom ventured out of sight of land. The enterprise of exploring and crossing the vast ocean, which they supposed encompassed the globe, was regarded by them as wholly impractical—and equally so they correctly supposed it was to find out God.*²⁹

Now, taken out of its context, this passage certainly is a grand truth. Paul wrote: **[I pray that God] would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith by means of love, that you may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled up to all the fulness of God** (Eph. 3:16–19). The chief difference is that Paul is praying that we be filled with the knowledge of Jesus Christ at the time at which divine revelation had been completed for the Old Testament and was beginning for the New. Our minds are unable to comprehend all that is divine; we cannot even apprehend a fraction of it; however, God has given us enough that we can gasp what it is that we need to know for our lives here on earth. Keil and Delitzsch expressed this with grander poetry than did Zophar: *The wisdom of God is in its height altogether inaccessible, in its depth fathomless and beyond research, in its length unbounded, in its breadth incomprehensible, stretching out far beyond all human thought.*³⁰

²⁸ Barnes’ Notes, Job, Volume 1; Baker Books, ©1996; p. 237.

²⁹ Barnes’ Notes, Job, Volume 1; Baker Books, ©1996; p. 238.

³⁰ Keil & Delitzsch’s *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. IV, p. 344.

“If He [quickly] passes through and He delivers over and He assembles; and who can cause Him to reconsider?”

Job 11:10

“If God passes through and He delivers one to prison or if He assembles a group, who can cause Him to reconsider?”

This verse can be confusing, depending upon the translation which you use.

<i>The Emphasized Bible</i>	If he sweep on or shut up or call together Who then shall hinder him?
KJV	If he cut off, and shut up, or gather together, then who can hinder him?
NJB	If he intervenes to close or convoke the assembly, who is to prevent him?
NRSV	If he passes through, and imprisons, and assembles for judgment, who can hinder him?
TEV	If God arrests you and brings you to trial, who is there to stop him?
<i>Young's Lit. Translation</i>	If He pass on, and shut up, and assemble, Who then dost reverse it?

Now Job has already said something similar to this back in Job 9:12: **“Were He to snatch away, who could restrain Him? Who could say to Him, ‘What are you doing?’”** Our Lord Himself described Himself in a similar fashion: **“And to the messenger of the church in Philadelphia, write: ‘He Who is holy, Who is true, Who has the key of David, Who opens and no one will shut, and Who shuts and no one opens, says this...’”** (Rev. 3:7).

The first verb is the Qal imperfect of *châlah* (חָלַח) [pronounced *chaw-LAHF*], which means *to [quickly] glide by, to slide on through, to quickly pass through*. Barnes: *The idea is...that of making a rush upon a man, for the purpose of arresting him and bringing him to trial. There are frequent references to such trials in the book of Job.*³¹ Strong's #2498 BDB #322.

The second verb is the Hiphil imperfect of *çâgar* (çָגַר) [pronounced *saw-GAHR*] which means *shut up, to close up*; however, in the Piel and the Hiphil, it means *to deliver over*. This possibly might mean *to deliver over in order to imprison*. Strong's #5462 BDB #688. Barnes: *That is, imprison or detain with a view to trial. Some such detention is always practised of necessity before trial.*³²

The third verb is the Hiphil imperfect of *qâhal* (קָהַל) [pronounced *kaw-HAHL*] and it means *to assemble*. Strong's #6950 BDB #674. Barnes: *Gather together the parties for trial; or rather call the individual into court for trial. The word קָהַל means properly to call together, to convoke, as a people; and is used to denote the custom of assembling the people for a trial—or, as we would say, to “call the court,” which is now the office of a crier.*³³ The final verb is the Hiphil imperfect of *shûb* (שׁוּב) [pronounced *shoo^b*]; it means *to return, to return something, to restore, to bring back, to regain, to recover, to make restitution, to reconsider, think again*. Strong's #7725 BDB #996. Barnes: *He has all the power, and no one can resist him. No power, and no one can resist him. No one can deliver the criminal from his hands.*³⁴

Barnes: *The whole image here is probably that of arresting a criminal and bringing him to trial, and the language is taken from the mode of conducting a prosecution...the sentiment seems to be proverbial. The idea here is, that if God should call a man into judgment, and hold him guilty, he could neither answer nor resist him. God is so great; he so intimately knows the human heart; he has so thorough an acquaintance with all our past sins, that we cannot hope to answer him or escape. Zophar argues on this principle: “God holds you to be guilty. He is punishing you accordingly. You do not feel it so, or suppose that you deserve all this. But he sees your heart, and knows all your life. He if holds you to be guilty, it is so. You cannot answer him, and you should so regard it, and submit.”*³⁵ Again, I believe that Zophar is quoting a popular phrase of the day, or paraphrasing it; but the sense is, God has already found Job guilty. For all intents and purposes, God has hauled Job into court and convicted him and it

³¹ Barnes' Notes, Job, Volume 1; Baker Books, ©1996; p. 238.

³² Barnes' Notes, Job, Volume 1; Baker Books, ©1996; p. 238.

³³ Barnes' Notes, Job, Volume 1; Baker Books, ©1996; p. 238.

³⁴ Barnes' Notes, Job, Volume 1; Baker Books, ©1996; p. 238.

³⁵ Barnes' Notes, Job, Volume 1; Baker Books, ©1996; pp. 238–239.

doesn't matter if Job could speak directly to God or not—the trial's over, God is always right, and Job's protests are a waste of time.

Paraphrasing Keil and Delitzsch: if God should meet with one who is guilty and seize him and bring him into judgment, who then will turn Him back or who could restrain Him? Taking this one more step, there is one. We all belong under divine judgment. We all are born into sin, we all carry an old sin nature within us and we have all committed personal sins against God. He God met with us and seized us and brought us into His righteous judgment, who could restrain God? Who could turn Him back? Now we know that we are protected in Jesus Christ; we are safe in the Beloved. Jesus Christ can turn Him back. Jesus Christ can restrain the wrath which is due us.

**“For He has known men of worthlessness
then He sees misfortune [resulting from
iniquity] and He will not consider it.**

Job 11:11

**“For God has known worthless men
and He sees their misfortune resulting from
their iniquity and He will not reconsider his
sentence.**

The noun which describes these men is *shâv*^e (אִשָּׁוּ) [pronounced *shaww*^f] means *vain, emptiness, worthlessness*. Strong's #7723 BDB #996.

The second line begins with the *wâw* consecutive, the verb for *see* and the noun *ʾâwen* (אָוֵן) [pronounced *AW-wen*], which means *pain, misfortune, iniquity, misfortune resulting from iniquity*. Strong's #205 BDB #19. Insofar as Zophar is concerned, Job has committed a group of horrible sins, every one knows it, that is completely obvious and now he is in serious pain and suffering because of it. He made his own bed, Zophar is saying, so let him lay in it. Now, Zophar is kind enough not to name Job directly; but, what he is saying, and we say it too—when someone commits, say, criminal acts and they are punished, there is no reason to feel sorry for them. They got what they deserved. **“Therefore, He knows their works; and He overthrows them in the night and they are crushed.”** (Job 37:25).

The final verb is the Hithpoel (Hithpael) imperfect of *bîyn* (בִּיַן) [pronounced *bean*] and it means *discern, perceive, consider, understand*. Owens and The New Englishman's Hebrew Concordance both list this as the Hithpoel and Zodhiates as the Hithpael; this is the reflexive of the Piel (intensive) stem. This is why some translators give this the rendering *reconsider; think it over carefully* would be a reasonable rendering. Everyone when they think, think to themselves, so adding a reflexive intensive means that God is giving this serious reflection. The negative negates all of that, meaning that even under the most serious reflection, God is not going to relent on His actions because someone is suffering from great misfortune as the result of their own bad decisions. Strong's #995 BDB #106. God knows exactly what has happened in Job's life—Job has made his own bed and now has to lie in it. Job has committed the infraction and now he is suffering from the related discipline. God will not go back and reverse the verdict because Job has a few sniveling words to say.

Now, Barnes has a completely different take on this word: *By some it is supposed to me, “He seeth iniquity, where they do not observe it;” that is, he perceives it, where men do not themselves. This would express a thought which would accord well with the connection, but it is doubtful whether the Hebrew will bear this construction. By another explanation it is supposed to mean, as in our common version, “Will not God observe it, and bring it to trial? Will he suffer it to pass unnoticed?” This makes good sense, and the Hebrew will admit of this interpretation. But there is another view still, which is preferable to either. According to this it means, that God perceives the iniquity in man, though he does not seem to notice it...He appears to pass over a part of it, but he sees it notwithstanding, and is intimately acquainted with all the depravity of the heart. The main reference here is to Job, and the object is to show him that he was guilty, though he had asserted his innocence in so decided a manner. Though he seemed to himself to be innocent, yet Zophar labours to show him that he must be guilty, and that he had seen but a small part of his sins.*³⁶ I think this explanation gives a little too much credit to Zophar and his expressing a complex idea in a few words. Although Zophar believes that God is taking into account all of Job's sins that have deserved

³⁶ Barnes' Notes, Job, Volume 1; Baker Books, ©1996; p. 239.

punishment for some time, that is not what he is expressing here. He is simply telling Job that no matter what Job has to say to God, God is not going to reconsider and then reverse His decision.

“And a hollowed-out man will get a heart and a colt of a wild ass will be born a man.

Job 11:12

“An empty-headed man will get a clue when a man is born from a wild ass.

When I first examined Owens' translation,³⁷ I didn't have a clue as to what Zophar was saying here. Let's look at some other renderings, which will help to clear this up.

Albert Barnes	For deceitful man would seem to have a heart, Though man be born like the colt of a wild ass.
<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	But a stupid man will get wisdom [only] when a wild donkey's colt is born a man [like which he thinks himself free because he is lifted up in pride].
<i>The Emphasized Bible</i>	But an empty person will get sense [or, a heart], when a wild ass's colt is born a man!
Keil and Delitzsch	But before an empty head gaineth understanding, A wild ass would become a man.
NAB	Will empty man then gain understanding, and the wild jackass be made docile?
NASB	“An idiot [lit., a hollow man] will become intelligent When the foal [lit., donkey] wild donkey is born a man.”
NJB	Hence empty-headed people would do will to study sense and people who behave like wild donkeys to let themselves be tamed. ³⁸
NIV	But a witless man can no more become wise than a wild donkey's colt can be born a man [alternate reading: a wild donkey can be born tame].
NRSV	But a stupid person will get understanding, when wild ass is born human.
Owen's Translation	But a hollow-minded man shall get a mind when a colt of a wild ass a man is born.
The Septuagint	But man vainly buoys himself up with words; and a mortal born of woman is like an ass of the desert.
<i>Young's Lit. Translation</i>	And empty man is bold, And the colt of a wild ass man is born.

Let me give you some of the incorrect ways of understanding this verse: man at birth receives an empty and undiscerning heart, just as just like the colt of a wild ass, which is born stupid and obstinate. An empty man is as as likely to be endowed with sense, as a wild ass should ever be born again and become a man; a man who barks like a dog (i.e., rages shamelessly) is just as likely to become sensible as a wild ass is to be born again as a man; i.e., sensible, gentle and civilized.³⁹ Here, Barnes allows that Zophar is saying that man by birth is untamed, lawless, and rebellious and that the image of the wild ass infers this image. I think this is crediting Zophar with too much doctrine. These things are patently true of man in general, but Zophar (and his friends) do not see themselves as being in the same boat as Job—which is obvious to them, because he is under intense suffering and they are not.⁴⁰ An examination of the NAB and the NJB, above, yield even two more interpretations of this verse.

In any case, the allusion to the wild ass was clear to ancients readers, as they were known to be stupid, dull, obstinate and immobile at times. It is obvious that we are dealing with an idiom of that day, or perhaps an idiom of Zophar's. The second word of this sentence is *man* followed by a descriptive Qal passive particle of nâ^bva^bv (נָבַב) [pronounced *naw^b-VAH^BV* or *naw-VAHV*], which means *hollow*; and it is only found in Ex. 27:8 38:7

³⁷ However, in reading the bizarre interpretations found in Keil and Delitzsch, I can see that I was not the only person to be troubled by this verse.

³⁸ I included the NAB and the NJB, not because they help, but for entertainment value only.

³⁹ All of these came from Keil & Delitzsch's *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. IV, p. 345. The *barking* is based upon what appears to be a disagreement of the Hebrew; *hollowed out* and *empty* appear to be the more favored meanings.

⁴⁰ I have paraphrased and included Barnes' interpretation, not because I agree with it, but because I am not completely satisfied with my own interpretation.

Job 11:12 Jer. 52:21.* My thinking is that this is a man who is *empty-headed* rather than a person who has been struck with *ennui* (that is, feels empty inside due to boredom or tedium). Barnes points out that the Herew means *hollowed out, empty*; so the metaphorical meaning would be *empty, foolish, insincere, hypocritical*. Strong's #5014 BDB #612. The participle acts as a descriptor of the noun *man*.

The verb is the Niphal imperfect of $\text{לָבַב}^{\text{b}}\text{וָבַב}^{\text{v}}$ (לָבַב) [pronounced *law^b-VAH^bV* or *law-VAHV*] and the meaning of this word is questionable. We are obviously dealing with a play on words. However, the meaning is rather difficult. $\text{לָבַב}^{\text{b}}\text{וָבַב}^{\text{v}}$ is found in this passage and in SOS 4:9 (twice) II Sam. 13:6, 8.* In SOS, it is rendered *ravished or wounded one's heart, taken away one's heart*. Because the word for heart, $\text{לֵב}^{\text{b}}\text{וָבַב}^{\text{v}}$ (לֵב) [pronounced *lay^bv*] is so similar, we are fairly certain that the meanings are related. In II Samuel, it means *to make cakes* (there is a noun cognate which does mean *cakes*). In this passage, Gesenius claims this means *to be void of a heart, to be deprived of heart*; however, BDB gives the meaning as *get a heart*. The Niphal is generally the passive and the Piel is generally the intensive, and verb meanings will vary as to their stem—however, not this much. Strong says that the unused root from which this word is taken probably means *to enclose* (as if with fat). The resultant meanings would be *to unheart*; that is *to transport* (with love)—that's the good sense; or *to stultify* (that's the bad sense). I am going to go with BDB, not because I am convinced of their rendering, but because I do not have a better rendering to offer. Strong's #3823 BDB #525.

Barnes has this take: *Zophar refers to a hollow-hearted an, who, though he was in fact like a wild ass's colt, attempted to appear mild and gentle, and to have a heart. The meaning is, that man by nature has a spirit untamed and unsubdued, and that with this, he assumes the appearance of gentleness and tenderness, and attempts to appear as if he was worthy of love and affection. God, seeing this hollow-heartedness, treats him accordingly. The reference here is to men like Job, and Zophar undoubtedly meant to say that he was hollow-hearted and insincere, and yet that he wished to appear to be a man having a heart, or, having true piety...the most simple and obvious [interpretation] seems to be the true one, though I have not seen it noticed by any of the commentators. The word...[means] heart, and the sense here...is, "vain, hollow, and insincere, man would wish to seem to have a heart," that is, would desire to appear sincere, or pious. Destitute of that truly, and false and hollow, they would nevertheless wish to appear different, and would put on the aspect of sincerity and religion. This is the most simple exposition, and this accords with the drift of the passage exactly, and expresses a sentiment which is unquestionably true.*⁴¹

This is followed by a conjunction, and the construct of the word for *male donkey* (one which is young and vigorous). The modifying word is the substantive for *wild ass* (used as a description of Ishmael in Gen. 16:12). Following this we have the word for *man*; but not the same one as above. The first word emphasized the gender (as being not a female) and the second word can refer to *man* as in *mankind, a human being, a person*. The verb is the 3rd person masculine singular (so it can correspond to either *man* or *donkey*), Niphal imperfect of יָלַד^{d} (יָלַד) [pronounced *yaw-LAHD*], which means *to bear, to be born, to bear, to bring forth, to beget*. The Niphal is the passive. Strong's #3205 BDB #408. Because the first word for *mule* could possibly means *colt*, the idea is that the colt of a wild donkey could be born as a man. It seems that there was a similar expression in the early 90's—and *monkeys might fly out of my butt*. There are country and western songs which have a clever lyric or two—a nice turn of the phrase, which for a few weeks, are adopted and spouted by people as a substitute for having an original thought. My guess is that Zophar was quoting a popular country and western song of that day. Whereas, if you will recall, Bildad quoted the philosophies of his predecessors to bolster his position, Zophar quotes a clever line from his contemporaries. Today, Bildad might quote Kierkegaard or Spinoza or Immanuel Kant; Zophar would be quoting Garth Brooks or the latest catch-phrase of his generation..⁴²

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⁴¹ Barnes' Notes, Job, Volume 1; Baker Books, ©1996; pp. 239–240.

⁴² Much of this paragraph has been paraphrased from Barnes' Notes, Job, Volume 1; Baker Books, ©1996; p. 240. Although I don't agree with his evaluation of this verse, I am not married to mine either.

“This Is All You Have to Do in Order to Make Everything Alright Again.”

**“If you, [even] you, establish your heart
and you display your hand unto Him;**

Job 11:13

**“Job, if you establish your heart
and if you show your hand to Him;**

Suddenly, Zophar is going to burst into a thought which will run all the way to v. 19, offering the alternative in v. 20. He is going to tell Job what Job must do in order to take care of his problems. Vv. 13–14 will be the protasis and vv. 15–19 will be the apodosis, possibly the longest thought and sentence that Zophar has ever come up with. But note how he precludes it with v. 12. I recall times when I suddenly came up with a solution and was excited about it. Zophar is the same way; he thinks that he has the key to Job’s suffering. It is obvious that he does not have a clue.

He has first told Job that an empty-headed person is no more likely to suddenly get some sense than it a man would be born from a wild donkey. However, he’ll still be kind enough to point out to Job what could be, if Job had a lick of sense. Again, we have no originality of thought here, as Bildad has already told Job what he needed to do in order to be right with God: **“If you would seek God and implore the compassion of the Almighty. If you are pure and upright, surely now He would rouse Himself on your behalf and restore to you your righteous estate.”** (Job 8:5–6). What I immediately think of is certain charlatan evangelists and healers who promise the unbeliever that everything will be alright once they turn to Jesus. Whereas, it is absolutely true that in eternity, everything will be alright when one turns to our Lord for salvation; in time, sometimes that opens up a whole box of troubles for the person believing in Christ. The unbeliever gets little notice from Satan, but the believer, particularly one who is out of fellowship or a bit confused, receives a lot more demonic attention. Furthermore, the person who becomes a believer now becomes God’s son in Jesus Christ, and therefore subject to discipline. When the new believer now does things which he did before as an unbeliever, he suddenly finds himself disciplined for the same. There are healers out there who make it sound as though when a person is righteous with God, that he will not have to endure physical pain or discomfort or any sickness; therefore, he must turn toward God and be healed. And if he is not, it is his own damn fault. If you recognize someone who takes that tact, realize that they are the Bildad or the Zophar in your life, and God will upbraid them in Job 43:7. If you somehow think that the presence of pain and sickness in your life indicates that you are out of fellowship and that you do not have enough faith in God, then you have missed much of the book of Job. Job is more righteous, more mature and more intelligent than his three associates, yet his suffering is by far the greatest.

There are times when a suggestion like Zophar’s would be meaningful. **Then Samuel spoke to all the house of Israel, saying, “If you return to Y^ehowah with all your heart, remove the foreign gods and the Ashtaroth⁴³ from among you and direct your hearts to Y^ehowah and serve Him alone; and He will deliver you from the hand of the Philistines.”** (1 Sam. 7:3). In this case, it was clear what the Israelites were doing and Samuel was a prophet directly from God. In the case of Zophar, there was no reason, beyond Job’s suffering, to think that Job had committed any wrong whatsoever; and Zophar had not been sent to Job by God.

We know that this is a big thought for Zophar because he uses the 2nd person personal pronoun which is unnecessary when there is a verb to follow which is also in the 2nd person. However, it is used for emphasis here. The verb is the Hiphil perfect of *kûwn* (כּוּן) [pronounced *koon*], which means *to erect (to stand up perpendicular)* and by application, *to establish, to prepare, to be stabilized, to set up*. Strong’s #3559 BDB #465. This is followed by the word(s) *your heart*. We might render this, **“If you, Job, would establish your heart...”**

The second line begins with a conjunction and the 2nd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect of *pâras* (פָּרַשׁ) [pronounced *paw-RAHS*], which means *to spread out, to spread, to display*; it is used *to spread out a garment*; and it is used *to display*, insofar as you spread something out so that it can be seen. This is not the same verb used in the phrase *to stretch out your hands*. Strong’s #6566 BDB #831. This is followed by the phrase *unto Him your hand*. Zophar is not asking Job to lift up his heart and stretch out his hand to God; he is telling Job to straighten out his heart and to hold open his hand to God so that God can see he is now clean. This correct interpretation is borne

⁴³ Coincidentally, I am writing this Easter morning, 1998.

out by the next verse, which reads: “If iniquity is in your hand, put it far away and do not allow wickedness to dwell in your tents.” (Job 11:14). Bildad told Job to seek God, but Zophar here warns him to first clean up his act. We have a similar phrasing in Ex. 9:29: *And Moses said to him, “As soon as I go out of the city, I will spread out my hand to Y^ehowah. The thunder will cease and there will be hail no longer, that you may know that the earth is Y^ehowah’s.”* We also have a similar phrasing in the penitent psalm of David: *Hear my prayer, O Y^ehowah, give ear to my supplications. Answer me in Your faithfulness, in Your righteousness, and do not enter into judgment with Your servant, for in Your sight, no man living is righteous...I remember the days of old; I meditate on al Your doings; I must on the work of Your hands. I spread open my hands to You. My soul longs for You, as a parched land.”* (Psalm 143:1, 5–6; see also Isa. 1:15 25:11 65:2 Lam 1:17 Jer. 4:31 Zech. 2:6).

Barnes: *Zophar now proceeds to state that if Job even yet would return to God, he might hope for acceptance. Thou he had sinned, and though he was now, as he supposed, a hollow-hearted and an insincere man, yet, if he would repent, he might expect the divine favour. In this he accords with the sentiment of Eliphaz.*⁴⁴

**“If iniquity in your hand, put it far away
and don’t allow injustice to dwell in your
tent.”⁴⁵**

Job 11:14

**“If you have iniquity in your hand, then put it
far from you
and do not allow injustice to dwell in your
tent.”**

Now if Job is going to hold open his hand to God, then he had better let go of whatever evil is in it. As we have seen, *iniquity* can refer to a lifestyle of wrongdoing, the guilt from those acts or to the resultant misfortune and punishment. In this case, it refers to the actual acts of wrongdoing. Strong’s #205 BDB #19.

Zophar’s suggestion: the 2nd person masculine plural, 3rd person masculine singular suffix, Hiphil imperative of *râchaq* (רָחַק) [pronounced *raw-KHAKH*], and, in the Hiphil, it means *to put at a distance, to remove, to place far away from oneself*. Strong’s #7368 BDB #934. To connect this to the previous verse, Job is to open up his hand before God and Zophar suggests that if there is iniquity therein, to remove it before opening the hand to God. Now, I have been hard on Zophar; for the believer, when you approach God and have iniquity in your hand, certainly, you put that iniquity far from you. The way we do that is through rebound, the naming of our sins to God.

What Zophar tells Job not to allow to dwell in his tents is *‘âvel* (or *‘âwel*) (אָוֵל) [pronounced *AW-vel* or *AW-wel*] and it means *unrighteousness, injustice, unjust*. Strong’s #5766 & 5765 BDB #732. Eliphaz will give the same suggestion later: *“If you return to the Almighty, you will be restored—if you remove unrighteousness far from your tent* (Job 22:23). Barnes: *If you have in your possession anything that has been unjustly obtained. If you have oppressed the poor and the fatherless, and have what properly belongs to them, let it be restored.*⁴⁶ I don’t know that this is what Zophar was thinking, but it does make sense. Job’s three associates may believe that he came upon his wealth unrighteously through defrauding the poor and that his present misery was a result of divine discipline for committing such acts.

**“So that at that time, you will lift up your
faces apart from blemish
and you will be cast [or, poured into a mold]
and you will not fear.”**

Job 11:15

**“So that at that time, you will lift up your face
apart from blemish
and you will be cast [or, poured into a mold]
and you will not fear.”**

This verse begins with the conjunction *kîy* (כִּי) [pronounced *kee*] which I have mentioned many times. Generally, it is translated *when, that, for, because*. However, this conjunction can be used also for consecution and effect, allowing it to be rendered *so that*. Strong’s #3588 BDB #471. The reason we know this is that this is followed by

⁴⁴ Barnes’ Notes, Job, Volume 1; Baker Books, ©1996; pp. 240–241.

⁴⁵ *Tent* is in the plural in the Massoretic text; however, it is singular in an early printed edition, and in the Aramaic, Septuagint, Syriac and Vulgate codices.

⁴⁶ Barnes’ Notes, Job, Volume 1; Baker Books, ©1996; p. 241.

the adverb of time, ʾâz (אָז) [pronounced awz], which means *then, at that time*. Strong's #227 BDB #23. Together, I have rendered them so *that at that time*; other simpler offerings are *for then, so then, so at that time*; I don't think that I can hang with *surely then*, suggested by some (Rotherham and Owens). *Faces*, as we have noted in the past, is in the plural as that is how the Hebrews perceived the face. Barnes: *Your face shall be bright, clear, and cheerful. Thus we speak of a bright and happy countenance. Zophar undoubtedly designs to show what his appearance would be, contrasted with what is then was. Now his countenance was dejected and sad. It was disfigured by tears, and terror, and long continued anguish. But if he would put away iniquity, and return to God, his face would be cheerful again, and he would be a happy man.*⁴⁷

Now, although we absolutely must rebound before coming to God, this in and of itself does not give us spiritual maturity. We can firmly and unwaveringly stand before God, as we are not standing on our own righteousness, but upon the saving work of Jesus Christ. After the absolute status quo verb *to be* (in the Qal perfect), we have the very interesting word *yâtsaq* (יָצַק) [pronounced yaw-TSAHK], which means *to pour, to cast, to flow*. It is used for the simple pouring out of oil when anointing with oil (Gen. 28:18 35:14) to the casting of metal (Ex. 25:12 26:17). In this verse, *yâtsaq* is in the Hophal participle. The Hophal is the passive of the Hiphil (causative stem) and it is the rarest of the seven stems. Some of the renderings: *firm* (Young), *secure (firmly established)* (Owens), *established* (Rotherham). I will try to stay as close to the original meaning as possible, so I have rendered it *cast*. Strong's #3332 BDB #427. Barnes (taking from Gesenius): *[This word]...means to pour, to pour out, and is applied to liquids, or to metals which are fused and poured into a mould, and wick then become hard. Hence, it is used in the sense of firm, solid, intrepid.*⁴⁸

Zophar reassures Job that all he needs to do is the throw his iniquity far from himself, and when he comes to God, he will be without blemish. He will be poured into God's mold and he will have not fear. Eliphaz will continue his suggestion to Job, almost quoting Zophar: **"For then you will delight in the Almighty and you will lift up your face to God."** (Job 22:26).

<p>"For you, misery, you will forget; as waters they pass by, you will remember.</p>	<p>Job 11:16</p>	<p>"For you will forget your misery; you will remember it as waters that have passed by.</p>
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Surprisingly enough, Zophar waxes poetic in this verse. He is the first of Job's friends to actually speak of Job's misery; unfortunately, like the other two, he still puts a legalistic twist to it. Job has sinned greatly before God and that must be dealt with before Job can go to God. However, once Job does this, his misery will drift away as waters pass away. The last verb is the Qal perfect ʿâvar (עָבַר) [pronounced aw-BAHR], which means *to pass over, to pass through, to pass, to go over*. From this meanings, we can extrapolate the meanings *to die, to depart, to go away*. The subject of this verb can be man, wind, water, and even tears. Keil and Delitzsch were pretty adamant that this mean *pass by* rather than *pass over*.⁴⁹ Strong's #5674 BDB #716.

This verse sounds very much like what God will say through Isaiah: **"Because he who is blessed in the earth will be blessed by the God of truth and he who swears in the earth will swear by the God of truth, because the former troubles are forgotten and because they are hidden from My sight."** (Isa. 65:16). Even Barnes was impressed and inspired by this imagery: *As calamity that has completely gone by, or that has rolled on and will return no more. The comparison is beautiful. The water of the river is borne by us, and returns no more. The rough, the swollen, the turbid stream, we remember as it foamed and dashed along, threatening to sweep every thing away; but it went swiftly by, and will never come back. So with afflictions. They are soon gone. The most intense pain soon subsides. The days of sorrow pass quickly away. There is an outer limit of suffering, and even ingenuity cannot prolong it far. The man disgraced, and whose life is a burden, will soon die...When we look back upon our sorrows, it is like thinking of the stream that was so much swollen, and was so impetuous. Its waters rolled on, and they come not back again; and there is a kind of pleasure in thinking of that time of danger, of that flood that was then*

⁴⁷ Barnes' Notes, Job, Volume 1; Baker Books, ©1996; p. 241.

⁴⁸ Barnes' Notes, Job, Volume 1; Baker Books, ©1996; p. 241.

⁴⁹ Keil & Delitzsch's Commentary on the Old Testament; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. IV, p. 346.

so fearful, and that has now swept on to come back no more. So there is kind of peaceful joy in thinking of the days of sorrow that are now fled for ever; in the assurance that those said times will never, never recur again.⁵⁰

However, Zophar's poetic soul belies how little understanding that he has for Job's plight. "You straighten up your act and you'll forget all of this pain and misery that you are suffering from." Personally, even knowing that God will restore to Job all that he had and much more, I would still be hesitant to tell Job that everything is going to be find tomorrow and that he would forget all of his misery. I don't know that any of us can even comprehend what Job has just experienced.

**“And from [or, more than] noonday, your
[mortal] life will rise up;
darkness like the morning will be.**

Job 11:17

**“And more than noonday, your mortal life will
rise up;
darkness like the morning will be.**

I have accused Zophar of quoting country and western songs. However, apparently he knew a few schmaltzy pop songs and quotes them as well. In these past five verses, Zophar has sustained a complete thought and has danced around it rather poetically. I obviously have a rather negative opinion of Zophar and don't see him as having said these things himself; however, I could be absolutely wrong in my judgment and he could have a rather poetic soul. In any case, we need to carefully examine this verse, particularly since Young and Rotherham seem to be translating different verses:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	And <i>your</i> life shall be clearer than the noonday, <i>and</i> rise above it; though there be darkness, it shall be as the morning.
<i>The Emphasized Bible</i> Keil and Delitzsch	Above high noon shall rise life's continuance, Darkness like a morning shall appear,... And thy path of life shall be brighter than mid-day; If it be dark, it shall become as morning.
NKJV	And <i>your</i> life would be brighter than noonday. <i>Though</i> you were dark, you would be like the morning.
NJB	Then begins an existence more radiant than noon, and the very darkness will be bright as morning.
NIV	Life will be brighter than noonday, and darkness will become like morning.
REB	Life will be lasting, radiant as noon, and darkness will be turned to morning.
The Septuagint	And your prayer [will be] as the morning star, and life will arise to you from noonday.
<i>Young's Lit. Translation</i>	And above the noon doth age rise, Thou fliest—as the morning thou art.

The general idea of the verse is fairly easy to grasp: if one follows Zophar's advice, everything will be hunky dory. However, I would like to render a reasonably correct translation of this verse before we move on. You will notice a big difference between the NKJV and the others; there as a disagreement as to what is the subject of each verb.

This verse begins with the wāw conjunction (surprisingly left out by the normally very literal Rotherham). Then we have the comparative use of the preposition mīn (מִן) [pronounced *min*], a which can mean *above, beyond, more than*. However, it is possible that the meaning is *out from, away from*. Strong's #4480 BDB #577. What follows is the masculine plural of *midday, noon, noonday*. This word is only found in the plural. Strong's #6672 BDB #843. We find this same word in Psalm 37:6: **And He will bring forth your righteousness as the dawn and your justice as the noonday**. Bullinger explains: *...your prosperity will be brighter and clearer than noon*.⁵¹

The verb which follows is the 3rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect of qūwm (קוּם) [pronounced *koom*]. In the Qal stem, it means *to stand, to rise up*. Strong's #6965 BDB #877. The subject of the sentence is next; this is undisputable, as the noun is in the masculine singular (*noon* is in the masculine plural). It is the word cheled (חֵלֶד) [pronounced *KHEH-led*] and this is translated in the KJV as *age* (Job 11:16 Psalm 39:5), *of the world* (Psalm 17:14

⁵⁰ *Barnes' Notes, Job, Volume 1*; Baker Books, ©1996; pp. 241–242.

⁵¹ *Figures of Speech Used in the Bible*; E.W. Bullinger; ©originally 1898; reprinted 1968 by Baker Books; p 593 (I paraphrased his old English)..

49:1), *transitory* (Psalm 89:47*). BDB gives its meanings as *duration, world*. I wonder if *this mortal life* might not be most accurate. Strong's #2465 BDB #317.

The next word is a problem. Owen's lists it as the feminine singular of tâ'ûphâh (תַּעֲפֹחַ) [pronounced *taw-uh-FAW* or *taw-guh-FAW*] and he renders it *darkness*. BDB lists it as the feminine of Strong's #4588 BDB #734, and renders it *gloom*. In Gesenius, Strong's #4588 has the meaning *darkness*, and in Strong's, there is the same given meaning; however, neither of them refer to this passage (Strong's #4588 is only found in Isa. 8:22, according to Strong's and to *The New Englishman's Hebrew Concordance*). Furthermore, according to BDB, it is in the feminine in Job 11:17 and in the masculine in Isa. 8:22. According to Zodhiates, this is the 2nd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect of Strong's #5774, which means, according to BDB *to be dark*; however, that is the meaning given only for this passage; elsewhere, in 30 other passages, it means *to fly*. *The New Englishman's Hebrew Concordance* also so identifies it. My thinking, in looking at the variety of ways of rendering this verse, is that a verb is a rather complex thing to throw in right here, as the next phrase is *like the morning* (masculine singular) *will be* (3rd person feminine singular, Qal imperfect). Literally, that would be rendered, *you will fly like the morning it [she] will be*; or, if you want to give this word its very own meaning, in opposition to the other thirty times it is rendered *to fly*; then you could literally translate this *you will cover with darkness like the morning it will be*; or you could go with Gesenius, and render it *[although now] covered with darkness [soon] shalt thou be as the morning*; which not only adds several words, but takes liberties with the final verb. There are three manuscripts, according to Gesenius, where this word is t'ê'ûphâh (תַּעֲפֹחַ) [pronounced *t'ê-oo-FAW* or *t'ê-goo-FAW*] and means *darkness*. It is close enough in form to one of the words that Job used for darkness at the end of what he said. Recall that was the word 'êyphâh (עֵיפָה) [pronounced *ây-FAW* or *gay-FAW*] (Strong's #5890 BDB #734). Now there is probably a relationship between these words. That is, the flying is related to wings, which, when they cover something over, that thing is in darkness. Given the way that others have translated this word and the notes by Barnes, this is likely the case.⁵² I am going to give this the rendering *darkness*, and assume that it occurs here and here only, either as a real Hebrew word or even one coined by Zophar, and it is a collective singular, gathering together all the categories of darkness mentioned by Job in the previous verse. This gives us a subject for the absolute status quo verb hâyâh (הָיָה) [pronounced *haw-YAW*], and it gives us a thought which makes sense: *"...darkness will be like the morning."* My only reservations here are that I would have expected to see *"...and your darkness will be like the morning."* Barnes: *The sense of the Hebrew is plain...[according to Zophar, Job] was then in darkness. Clouds and calamities were round about him, but if he would return to God, he would be permitted to enjoy a bright day of prosperity. Such a day would return to him like the morning after a long and gloomy night.*⁵³ If Job straightens up his act, everything will be coming up roses. *But the path of the righteous is like the light of dawn that shines brighter and brighter until the full day. The way of the wicked is like darkness; they do not know over what they stumble* (Prov. 4:18–19). *"Then your light will break out like the dawn, and your recovery will speedily spring forth and your righteousness will go before you. The glory of Y^howah will be your rear guard. Then you will call, and Y^howah will answer. You will cry, and He will say, 'Here I am.' If you remove the yoke from your midst, the pointing of the finger, and the speaking wickedness, and if you give yourself to the hungry and satisfy the desire of the afflicted, then your light will rise in darkness and your gloom will become like midday."* (Isa. 58:8–10). And let's allow Isaiah to warn Zophar: *Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; who substitute darkness for light and light for darkness; who substitute bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter. Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes and clever in their own sight* (Isa. 5:20–21). And let us allow our Lord to tell of the true light: *"I am the light of the world; he who follows Me will not walk in the darkness, but will have the light of life."* (John 8:12).

**"And you will have confidence because
there [is] hope
and you will search diligently for safety you
will lie down.**

Job 11:18

**"And you will have complete confidence
because now there is hope
and you will carefully search for safety
allowing you to sleep blissfully.**

⁵² Barnes wrote: *The word here used...is from...[the word meaning] to cover—as with wings, to fly, to cover with darkness...the Chaldee and Syriac read the word as a noun and render the passage, "and thy darkness shall be as the aurora."* (Barnes' Notes, Job, Volume 1; Baker Books, ©1996; p. 242.)

⁵³ Barnes' Notes, Job, Volume 1; Baker Books, ©1996; p. 242.

The previous verse was only difficult because of one particular word. In this verse, we have a substantive possibly used as an adverb, and a couple of verbs thrown in close proximity without wâw connectives. Seeing that I expected a wâw connective in the past verse, and expect one now, my thinking is that Zophar is rather ecstatic; he's just thought this through, he's given the simple solution and he is on this philosophic high (which, apparently doesn't take much), and lacking a connective where one would be expected indicates that he is now rushing through what he has to say excitedly, as though he has really come upon something. We will look at some other translations here:

Albert Barnes	And thou shalt be confident, for there will be hope; Now thou art suffused with shame—but then shalt lie down in safety.
<i>The Emphasized Bible</i>	And thou shalt be confident that there is hope, and when thou hast searched securely shalt though lie down;
Keil and Delitzsch	And thou shalt take courage, for now there is hope; And thou shalt search, thou shalt lie down in safety.
NIV	You will be secure, because there is hope; you will look about you and take your rest in safety.
REB	You will be confident, because there is hope; sure of protection, you will rest in confidence.
TEV	You will live securely and full of hope; God will protect you and give you rest.
<i>Young's Lit. Translation</i>	And thou has trusted because there is hope, And searched—in confidence thou liest down.

The first verb is the 2nd person masculine singular, Qal perfect of bâṭach (נִבְטַח) [pronounced *baw-TAHKH*], and it means *to trust, to rely upon, to have confidence in, to be secure in*. Strong's #982 BDB #105. Zophar says that Job can take all of his cares and place them upon God. Much as I hate to give him credit, this sentence, by itself, is absolutely true. However, combined with the premise, it is false.

What follows is the explanatory conjunction kîy (כִּי) [pronounced *kee*], which means *because*. Strong's #3588 BDB #471. This is followed by the pronominal substantive yêsh (יֵשׁ) [pronounced *yaysh*], which means *being, substance, existence*. It often acts as a substantive plus the absolute status quo verb *to be*; e.g., *there is, there will be*. Strong's #3426 BDB #441. The last word of that line is the feminine substantive tîq^evâh (תִּיקְוָה) [pronounced *tik^e-VAW*] and it means *hope, expectation*. Strong's #8615 BDB #876. This gives us: “*And you will have confidence because there [is] hope.*”

The next line begins with the wâw conjunction and the 2nd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect of châphar (חָפַר) [pronounced *chaw-FAHR*], and it means *to dig for, to search for, to search for that which is hidden, to search by digging*. BDB does list a third meaning as *to look around you*, but only allows that for this particular passage. Barnes, quoting Gesenius, gives the meaning as *to blush*, thus changing the rendering of this line considerably.⁵⁴ Strong's #2658 BDB #343.

What follows is the lâmed prefixed preposition and the masculine substantive beṭach (בְּטַח) [pronounced *BEH-tahkh*], which means *security, safety*. Strong's #983 BDB #105. This is followed by the Qal imperfect of a verb which means *to lie down*. The second line reads: “*And you will search diligently for safety [and security]—you will lie down.*” At this point, I need to point out that you and I would have said this differently, which would allow for, perhaps, a different means of châphar (*to carefully search for*). Our adverb is something that we would have attached to the last verb rather than to châphar and châphar is positioned between the verbs so that it could go either way. The problem is the lâmed preposition—it does not mean *in*; you might want to say, “*And you will look around and in safety you will sleep.*” However, that is not the phrasing which Zophar uses. He said, “*You will search diligently for [or, in regards to, with reference to] safety; you will lie down [having found out that you are*

⁵⁴ Barnes' Notes, Job, Volume 1; Baker Books, ©1996; p. 242. The problem with this other translation is the prefixed preposition for *safety*; it is the word *to, for, with reference to*; none of these meanings jive well with this alternate rendering of Barnes.

secure].” What we have to realize is that even though most of us would have said it differently, we have to go with the way Zophar actually said it in the literal translation.

Zophar is on a roll and he mentions how Job will find the hope and security that he has search for. The lying down means that he will find it and rest in peace and security. There is something to this sort of a promise. God gave this promise to Israel in Lev. 26:5–6: “In fact, your threshing will last for you until the grape gathering and grape gathering will last until sowing time. You will thus eat your food to the full and live securely in your land. I will also give you peace in the land, so that you may lie down with no one making you tremble. In addition, I will eliminate wild and dangerous animals from the land, and no sword will pass through your land.” Psalm 4:8: In peace I will both lie down and sleep, for You alone, O Y^ehowah, cause me to dwell in safety. Isa. 30:15a: For thus Y^ehowah God, the Holy One of Israel, “In a change of mind and in rest, you will be saved; in quietness and trust is your strength.” Barnes: *You will feel confident that your prosperity will be permanent, and you will be free from the distressing anxieties and fears which you now have...he would lie down in peace and safety if he would return to the Lord.*⁵⁵

“And you will lie down [and settle in] and none causing trembling [or, fear]; and many will seek the favor of your faces.

Job 11:19

“And you will lie down and settle in and none will cause trembling or fear; and many will seek the favor of your face.

The first verb of this verse is not the same as the last verb in the previous. This one is the Qal perfect *âbats* (יַבַּט) [pronounced *raw^b-VAHTS*], which means *to stretch oneself out, to lie down, to recline, to settle upon*. We first saw this verb in Gen. 4:7, when God told Cain that sin was laying at his door. This verb is mostly used for animals lying down and making their lair (Job 11:19 Isa. 13:21 17:2 Ezek. 19:2). I’ll render it here “and you will lie down [and settle in].” Strong’s #7257 BDB #918.

The verb in the next line is the Hiphil participle of *chârad* (חָרַד) [pronounced *chaw-rahd*], and it means *to tremble, to be terrified*. Strong’s #2729 BDB #353. Literally, what we have is “and none causing trembling [or, fear].” This is similar to the passage found in Zeph. 3:13: “The remnant of Israel will do no wrong and they will tell no lies, nor will a deceitful tongue be found in their mouths, for they will feed and lie down with no one to make them tremble.”

The next line is difficult because the subject and the object both match the verb. The verb is the 3rd person plural, Piel perfect of *châlâh* (חָלָה) [pronounced *chaw-LAW*], and it means *to mollify, to appease, to entreat the favor of*. It is because of the literal meaning of this verb, *to make the face [of anyone] sweet or pleasant* that we know which is the subject and which is the object. Also, this verb is always found in the Piel. Strong’s #2470 BDB #318. The subject of the verb is the masculine plural adjective *many* which acts as a substantive. The object of the verb is *your faces*.

The idea is that Job will be in perfect peace. When he rests, he will sleep easily, in comfort and security. Job is a sage of his time and many would seek him for friendship, advice, and grace. Zophar has everything tied up into a nice, neat package. All Job needs to do is to follow his advice, and life will be marvelous once again. Barnes: *Many shall come in a suppliant manner to ask counsel and advice. The meaning is, that the would be a man of distinction, to whom many would look for ounsel. This was evidently an honour highly valued in the East, and one on which Job had formerly prided himself.*⁵⁶ “When I went out to the gate of the city, when I took my seat in the square, the young men saw me and hid themselves, and the old men arose and stood. The princes stopped talking and put their hands on their mouths. The voice of the nobles was hushed and their tongue stuck to their palate.” (Job 29:7–10).

⁵⁵ Barnes’ Notes, Job, Volume 1; Baker Books, ©1996; p. 242.

⁵⁶ Barnes’ Notes, Job, Volume 1; Baker Books, ©1996; p. 242.

“And the eyes of malevolent ones will be spent and refuge will perish on account of them and their hope a breathing out of breath [or, soul].”

Job 11:20

"And the eyes of the corrupt will fail and they can no longer find refuge; and their only remaining hope is their last breath."

Let's see how others have dealt with this verse:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	But the eyes of the wicked shall look [for relief] in vain, and they shall not escape [the justice of God], and their hope shall be to give up the ghost.
<i>The Emphasized Bible</i>	But the eyes of the lawless shall fail,—And place of refuge shall have vanished from them, And their hope be a breathing out of life [or, soul].
Keil and Delitzsch	But the eyes of the wicked languish, And refuge vanisheth from them, And their hope is the breathing forth of the soul.
NAB	But the wicked, looking on, shall be consumed with envy. Escape shall be cut off from them, they shall wait to expire.
NJB	But as for the wicked, their eyes are weary, there is no refuge for them, their only hope is to breathe their last.
NIV	“But the eyes of the wicked will fail, and escape will elude them; their hope will become a dying gasp.”
NRSV	“But the eyes of the wicked will fail; all way of escape will be lost to them, and their hope is to breathe their last.”
REB	But blindness will fall on the wicked, to them the ways of escape are closed, and their only hope is death.
The Septuagint	But safety will fail them; for their hope is destruction, and the eyes of the ungodly will waste away.
TEV	But the wicked will look around in despair and find that there is no way to escape. Their one hope is that death will come.
<i>Young's Lit. Translation</i>	And the eyes of the wicked are consumed, And refuge hath perished from them, And their hope is a breathing out of soul!

The first verb is the feminine plural (to match the subject *eyes*), Qal imperfect of *kâlâh* (הָלַךְ) [pronounced *kaw-LAWH*], which means *to complete, to be finished, accomplished, spent*. Strong's #3615 BDB #477. In this case, it refers to the failing of the eyes of the recalcitrant. After a certain point in life, our eyes fail and in the ancient world, you became helpless at that point. The eyes had been used up, finished; they were spent. Barnes writes: *[The eyes] shall be wearied out by anxiously looking for relief from their miseries.*⁵⁷

The noun in the second line is *mânôwç* (מַנְוֶה) [pronounced *maw-NOHS*], and it means *fleeing, flight, a place of escape, refuge*. Strong's #4498 BDB #631. What happens to the refuge is the Qal perfect of *â'vad* (אָבַד) [pronounced *aw^b-VAHD*] which means *to perish*. Strong's #6 BDB #1.

The *mîn* preposition can mean a number of things—among them, *out from, away from, since, on account of*. Strong's #4480 BDB #577. This gives us, so far, “And eyes of malevolent ones will be finished [will be used up] and refuge will perish from them...” Less literally, “And the eyes of the corrupt will fail and they can no longer find refuge.”

The final line references their *hope* (found in v. 18), which is not tied to a verb, but to substantives, to give the end of Zophar's speech great emphasis. The first is the masculine singular construct of a word found only here: *mappâch* (מַפְאֵחַ) [pronounced *mahp-PAWKH*], which means *a breathing out* (or so we think). Strong's #4646 BDB #656. The last word in this verse is *soul, breath*. This gives us the phrase: “...and their hope a breathing out of soul [or, life].” That is, the most they can look forward to is their last breath. There is nothing in this life that

⁵⁷ Barnes' Notes, *Job, Volume 1*; Baker Books, ©1996; p. 242.

remains for them. “So are the paths of all who forget God; furthermore, the hope of the godless will perish.” (Job 8:13). Moses will promise the same for the recalcitrant Israelites: “And among those nations you will find no rest, and there will be no resting place for the sole of your foot; but there Yehowah will give you a trembling heart, a failing of eyes and a despair of soul. So your life will hang in doubt before you and you will be in dread night and day, and you will have no assurance of your life.” (Deut. 28:65–66). Barnes has a slightly different angle on this line: *Their hope shall leave them as the breath or life does the body. It is like death...whatever hope a wicked man has of future happiness and salvation, must fail. The time must come when it will cease to comfort and support him. The hope of the pious man lives until it is lost in fruition in heaven. It attends him in health; supports him in sickness; is with him at home, accompanies him abroad; cheers him in solitude; is his companion in society; is with him as he goes down into the shades of adversity, and it brightens as he travels along the valley of the shadow of death. It stands as a bright star over his grave—and is lost only in the glories of heaven, as the morning star is lost in the superior brightness of the rising sun. Not so the hypocrite and the sinner. His hope dies—and he leaves the world in despair. Sooner or later the last ray of his delusive hopes shall take its departure from the soul, and leave it to darkness. No matter how bright it may have been; no matter how long he has cherished it; no matter on what it is found—whether on his morals, his prayers, his accomplishments, his learning; if it be not based on true conversion, and the promised mercy of God through a Redeemer, it must soon cease to shine, and will leave the soul to the gloom of black despair.*⁵⁸

In this verse we see what Zophar really thinks about Job. He thinks that Job’s end will be this miserable state that Job is in right now, where his best future prospect is death. Barnes: *This assumption that he was a wicked man, must have been among the most trying things that Job had to endure. Indeed nothing could be more provoking than to have others take it for granted as a matter that did not admit of argument, that he was a hypocrite, and that God was dealing with him as an incorrigible sinner.*⁵⁹

This ends one of the shortest and least enlightening of the discourses of this book. We will now begin one of the longest discourses in the book of Job—Job’s answer to Zophar.

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⁵⁸ Barnes’ Notes, Job, Volume 1; Baker Books, ©1996; pp. 243–244.

⁵⁹ Barnes’ Notes, Job, Volume 1; Baker Books, ©1996; pp. 242–243.