

Job 14

Job 14:1–28

Outline of Chapter 14:

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- v. 2 **Job 14:1–4**
- v. 6 **Man, being born of a woman—short of days and full of great agitation**

Introduction: In Job 14, Job speaks directly to God, but his thoughts have the feel of a soliloquy. He is searching in his prayer to God for some kind of an answer or an explanation for his situation. In fact, I have this feeling that he is trying to understand his situation through rationalism—he builds truth upon truth, and I don't know that even Job knows where he is going with these thoughts. Keil and Delitzsch: *Ready to prove his innocence, [Job] challenges God to trial; but since God does not appear, his confidence gives place to despondency, and his defiant tone to a tone of lamentation, which is continued in the third part of the speech.*¹

Barnes: *The argument of Job is closed in chapter xiv, by a description of the shortness of human life, of exquisite beauty. This is a part of his address to God, and is the expression of the deep feelings of his soul. It is full of mingled emotions of fear, and hope, and despondency, exhibiting doubts respecting the future state, with occasionally a slight hope of it, until his mind sinks into utter despondency, and he wishes that he were in the grave. Allow me to paraphrase Barnes from hereon out: In vv. 1–2, Job states that man is born into trouble and will be cut down. Vv. 3–6: Since this is the lot of man, Job asks why should God afflict him? Why not allow man to live his short life in peace, apart from the additional pains brought on by God Himself? Vv. 7–12: Job observes that when a tree is cut down, it can grow again, but when man dies—like a flower that is cut down—that permanently ends his life on earth. If man could be so cut down and live again, perhaps he could bear these occasional afflictions. It is at this point that Job is thinking of himself entirely. Job saw this suffering as the end of his life. But he was cut down, and never again while the heavens endured would he be allowed to revisit the earth. What a way to permanently leave this earth, in pain and misery, leaving no family behind. Vv. 13–22: God watched him, and as waters wash away stones, and even the mountain is wasted away, so man must waste away under long-continued trials. With this language of mingled complaint, remonstrance, despondency and doubt, Job closes the first series of the controversy. He is evidently in deep perplexity. He knows not what to do, or what to think; but on the whole his language is that of one who felt that God and man were alike against him, and that he had no comforter.*²

Throughout this chapter, Job will ask *how can God execute such strict judgment upon man, whose life is so short and full of care, and who, because he belongs to a sinful race, cannot possibly be pure from sin, without allowing him the comparative rest of a hireling? How can He thus harshly visit man, to whose life He has set an appointed bound, and who, when he once dies, returns to life no more for ever?*³

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¹ Keil & Delitzsch's *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. IV, p. 376.

² Quoted and paraphrased from *Barnes' Notes, Job, Volume 1*; Baker Books, ©1996; pp. 243–244.

³ Keil & Delitzsch's *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. IV, p. 376.

The Shortness of a Man's Life

Literally:

**“Man, being born of a woman;
short of days and full of great agitation.**

Smoother English rendering:

Job 14:1 **“A man, who is born of a woman,
has a limited number of days which are filled
with stress and strife.**

This verse begins as it is found in most translations: *Man, being born of a woman*. This is legitimately rendered *woman-born*. There are two ways this can be examined. One is as a simple expression—all men are born from a woman; it is simply a universal designation for mankind. However, there are implications which are hard to ignore. It was the woman who was first deceived in the fall and the woman who fell first. *To the woman, God said, “I will greatly multiply your pain in childbirth. In pain you will bring forth sons, yet your desire will be for your husband.”* (Gen. 3:16). The implication here is that in speaking of man as having been born of a woman, Job is speaking of man in his fallen state. However, conversely, it is through the woman that we have hope. *“Therefore, Y^ehowah Himself will give you a sign: Observe, a virgin will be with child and bear a son, and she will call His name Immanuel [God with us].”* (Isa. 7:14). *For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; and the government will rest upon His shoulders; and His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace. There will be no end to the increase of His government or of peace on the throne of David and over his kingdom; to establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness from then on and forevermore. The zeal of Y^ehowah of the armies will accomplish this* (Isa. 9:6–7). Barnes has a different, but reasonable take on this first line: *The object of Job in these verses, is to show the frailty and feebleness of man. He, therefore, dwells on many circumstances adapted to this, and this is one of the most stirring and beautiful. He alludes to the delicacy and feebleness of the female sex, and says that the offspring of one so frail must himself be frail.*⁴

The second line begins with the masculine singular adjective construct of *qâtsêr* (קֹצֵר) [pronounced *kaw-TSAIR*] is one of those adjectives with almost as many meanings as occurrences in the Old Testament. However, all of the meanings are related. The official meaning given by BDB is *short*, but this does not appear to work well with the five passages wherein this word is found (II Kings 19:26 Job 14:1 Prov. 14:17, 29 Isa. 37:27). *Short of hand* is used to represent a lack of military power in II Kings and Isaiah. *Short of nostrils* represents one who is quickly and easily angered. *Short of days* does not refer here to the end of daylight savings time, but rather to the relatively few of days that we spend here on this earth. Strong's #7116 BDB #894. A person in their teens cannot grasp that. They feel as though they will live forever. However, even though I am in good health as I write this, I think of finishing the entire Bible in this way prior to my death and there just aren't enough hours left in my life. There are not enough days in this life to do everything that you want to do. You cannot fit it all in.

The second adjective construct is *sâ^bvêa^c* (שָׂבְעָה) [pronounced *saw^b-VAY-ahg*], which means *sated, satisfied, surfeited, filled, full of*. Strong's #7649 BDB #960. What life is filled with is not *trouble*, per se, but with *rogez* (רֹגֵז) [pronounced *ROH-gez*] and it means *vibrating or trembling in fear, rage*. It is a person who has almost completely given into their old sin nature—their primal rage, if you will—and are on the verge of acting without any self-control or limits. It also means *great agitation*. In Job 3:26, I don't think that we are dealing with a word which is equivalent to emotional instability, but to physical shaking and tremors instead. It is the verbal cognate which gives us the more precise understanding of this word. Strong's #7267 BDB #919. McGee: *There is nothing truer than that; trouble [agitation] is the common denominator of mankind. All of us have had trouble.*⁵ **“For just as sparks fly upward, so man is born for trouble.”** (Job 5:7). **Because all his days his task is painful and grievous; even at night his mind does not rest. This too is vanity** (Eccl. 2:23). Barnes: *Who cannot bear witness to this? How expressive a description is it of life! And even too where life seems most happy; where the sun of prosperity seems to shine on our way, and where blessings like drops of dew seem to descend on us, how true is it still that life is full of trouble, and that the way of man is a wary way! Despite all that he can do—all his care, and skill, and learning and wealth, life is a weary pilgrimage, and is burdened with many woes. “Few and evil have the days of the years of my pilgrimage been,” said the patriarch Jacob, and they who have advanced near the same number of years with him*

⁴ Barnes' Notes, Job, Volume 1; Baker Books, ©1996; p. 265.

⁵ J. Vernon McGee, Job, ©1977 by Thru the Bible Books; p. 86.

can utter with deep emotion the same beautiful language.⁶ As for the days of our life, they contain seventy years, or, if one is strong, eighty years; yet their pride is labor and sorrow for soon it is gone and we fly away (Psalm 90:10).

**“Like a flower, he comes forth and is
[continually] cut back
and then he flees like the shadow and does
not endure.**

Job 14:2

**“Like a flower, he blossoms but is
continually cut back;
his life is fleeting, like a shadow; it doesn’t
endure.**

This verse begins with *like a flower* and is followed by the 3rd person masculine singular, Qal perfect of *yâtsâ’* (אָצַח) [pronounced *yaw-TZAWH*], which means *to go out, to come out, to come forth*. Strong’s #3318 BDB #422. The second verb is the 3rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect of *mâlal* (לָלַח) [pronounced *maw-LAHL*], which appears to be homonym in the Hebrew, meaning three different things. It is used five times to mean *utter, speak* (Gen. 21:7 Job 8:2 33:3 Psalm 106:2 Prov. 6:13*). BDB allows for the passage in Prov. 6:13 to mean *scrape, rub*. Strong’s #4448 BDB #576. Job 8:2. And BDB gives a third meaning *languish, wither, fade; but cut off, cut back* seem to be better renderings (Gen. 17:11 Job 14:2 18:16 24:24 Prov. 37:2*). BDB lists the latter spelling as the same; the New Englishman’s Concordance and Strong spell it as *nâmal* (לָמַל) [pronounced *naw-MAHL*]. Strong’s #5243 BDB #576.⁷

This first line gives us a good differentiation between the perfect and the imperfect tense. Man sprouts forth, all at once, just as a flower suddenly blooms. However, the flower is continually cut back, or cut off. Man is born but once, hence the perfect (completed tense), but is *cut back* many times throughout his life, hence the imperfect tense.

The analogy between man’s life and a flower is one found often in the Bible. *You have swept them away like a flood; they fall asleep. In the morning they are like grass which sprouts anew. In the morning it flourishes, and sprouts anew; towards the evening it fades and withers away...For all our days have declined in Your fury; we have finished our years like a sigh* (Psalm 90:5–6, 9; see also Psalm 37:2 102:11 103:15). *For all flesh is like grass and all its glory like the flower of grass. The grass withers and the flowers falls off but the word of Yehowah abides forever* (1 Peter 1:24–25a Isa. 40:6). And let the rich man glory in his humiliation, because like flowering grass he will pass away. *For the sun rises with a scorching wind, and withers the grass; and its flower falls off and the beauty of its appearance is destroyed; so too the rich man in the midst of his pursuits will fade away* (James 1:10–11). Most philosophies and religions glorify man in some way or another—people who lead such short lives foolishly ignore all the violence and hatred around them and think that man is making some kind of progress on this earth (and, in the realm of technology, we are making a kind of progress). Almost all religions place man in a position where man is impressing God by his actions; i.e., man does these great works—he is kind and giving—and God just can’t help but take him into heaven. There are even some religions where man becomes God or becomes like God; still succumbing to the lie that Satan told Eve. However, our life on this earth, in reality, is short; our impact, in most cases, is minimal. Our righteousnesses before God are as filthy menstrual rags. *For who knows what is good for a man during his lifetime—during the few years of his futile life? He will spend them like a shadow. For who can tell a man what will be after him under the sun? (Eccl. 6:12). The grass withers, the flower fades, when the breath of Yehowah blows upon it. The people are all as grass. The grass withers and the flower fades, but the Word of Yehowah stands forever* (Isa. 40:7–8). Those who have an attitude of arrogance should pray with the psalmist: *“Yehowah, make me to know my end and what is the extent of my days. Let me know how transient I am. Observe, You have made my days as handbreadths and my lifetime as nothing in Your sight; surely, every man at his best is but a mere breath.”* (Psalm 39:4–5).

Because of his days being filled with trembling and agitation, and because man is continually cut back, he flees this trouble and vexation, as a shadow. The last verb is preceded by a negative and is the Qal imperfect of *ʿâmad* (עָמַד)

⁶ Barnes’ Notes, Job, Volume 1; Baker Books, ©1996; p. 266.

⁷ There is even a much complete discussion of the correct verb and correct meaning found here in Keil & Delitzsch’s *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. IV, p. 366.

[pronounced *gaw-MAHD*] and it means *to take a stand, to stand, to remain, to endure*. Strong's #5975 BDB #763. Obviously, Job is being rather autobiographical here. He has sprouted forth as a flower, and God has continually cut him back (or, so he feels in his present state of mind). He flees this trouble and agitation as a shadow flees, but cannot endure his pain and sorrow. Was it Thurber who said *men lead lives of quiet desperation*? *Man is like a mere breath; his days are like a passing shadow* (Psalm 144:4). Even Bildad agrees here: "*For we are only of yesterday and we know nothing because our days on earth are as a shadow.*" (Job 8:9). McGee: *Job says that death is inevitable and that we must depart from this world. Life is like a shadow. When the sun goes down, what happens to the shadow? It is gone.*⁸

Allow me to quote even a little Shakespear: *This is the state of man; today he puts forth the tender leaves of hope, tomorrow blossoms. And bears his blushing honours thick upon him; the third day comes like a frost, a killing frost. And—when he thinks, good easy man, full surely his greatness is a ripening—nips his root, and then he falls.*⁹

Barnes: *There is no substance, nothing that is permanent. A shadow moves on gently and silently, and is soon gone. It leaves no trace of its being, and returns no more. They who have watched the beautiful shadow of a cloud on a landscape, and have seen how rapidly it passes over the meadows and fields of grain, and rolls up the mountain side and disappears, will have a vivid conception of this figure. How gently yet how rapidly it moves. How soon it is gone. How void of impression is its course. Who can track its way; who can reach it? So man moves on. Soon he is gone; he leaves no trace of his being, and returns no more.*¹⁰

You will recall in the previous chapter, I mentioned how the final verse seems to be misplaced? We go from Job addressing God in the 2nd person masculine singular to suddenly using the 3rd person masculine singular. This is where we should properly insert Job 13:28. Before we cover the exegesis, allow me to give you the before and after version:

Job 14:1–4	
As found in most English and Hebrew Bibles:	As the passage should read:
<p>“For you document against me bitter things and You cause me to inherit the iniquities of my youth. And you place in the stocks my feet and you watch all my paths— against the roots of my feet you cut [a rut path]. And he, like a rotten thing, wastes away; like a garment a moth eats it. Man, being born of a woman; short of days and full of great agitation. Like a flower, he comes forth and is cut back and then he flees like the shadow and does not endure. In fact, on such a one You have opened your eyes And You cause me to be brought into judgment with You? Who can make a clean thing out of an unclean? Not one.”</p>	<p>“For you document against me bitter things and You cause me to inherit the iniquities of my youth. And you place in the stocks my feet and you watch all my paths— against the roots of my feet you cut [a rut path]. Man, being born of a woman; short of days and full of great agitation. Like a flower, he comes forth and is cut back and then he flees like the shadow and does not endure. And he, like a rotten thing, wastes away; like a garment a moth eats it. In fact, on such a one You have opened your eyes And You cause me to be brought into judgment with You? Who can make a clean thing out of an unclean? Not one.”</p>

⁸ J. Vernon McGee, *Job*, ©1977 by Thru the Bible Books; p. 86.

⁹ Henry viii. Act iii. Scene. 2; I've quoted this from *Barnes' Notes, Job, Volume 1*; Baker Books, ©1996; p. 266.

¹⁰ *Barnes' Notes, Job, Volume 1*; Baker Books, ©1996; p. 266.

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One of the things that you will notice is that the man-made division between Job 13 and 14 makes more sense when that one verse is moved. Now, let's exegete v. 28:

**“And he, like a rotten thing, wastes away [or,
is used up];
like a garment a moth eats it.** Job 13:28

**“And he, like a rotted thing, just wastes
away;
just like a garment that a moth eats.”**

Suddenly Job goes to the 3rd person masculine singular pronoun—and *he*. What follows is a rare word used of *rotteness* and *decay*; it is used of the decay of bones and the decay caused by worms. Strong's #7538 BDB #955. What follows is the Qal imperfect of *bâlâh* (בָּלָה) [pronounced *baw-LAW*], which means *to become completely and fully used up*. Strong's #1086 BDB #115. The remainder of the verse reads: *like a garment a moth eats it*. It is a masculine singular, meaning it could refer to the garment or to the pronoun *he*. Recall Job's physical condition: [Then Satan went out from the presence of Y^howah and struck Job with sore boils from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head \(Job 2:7\)](#).

This change of person is difficult, and, at first, it appears to be a transitional verse from v. 27 to 14:1. In the next chapter, Job will expound on his observations of the state of man. Job has been speaking directly to God and about his own relationship to God. Everything in these final few verses of Job 13 have been in the 2nd masculine singular (*You*) or in the 1st person (*I*). Now, the better explanation is that this verse has been misplaced here and belongs in Job 14 after v. 2 or 3. This explanation, held to by the REB and the NAB, help to explain the sudden use of the 3rd person personal pronoun here. When Job uses *he*, he is speaking of himself, but also of all mankind, also caught in a rut path with very few choices. At the end of man's life, we just wastes away back into the chemicals of the earth.

The imagery found in this verse with the body of man wasting away is found throughout the Bible referring to many things in this life. [Of old You founded the earth and the heavens are the work of Your hands. Even they will perish, but You endure. And all of them will wear out like a garment; like clothing, You will change them, and they will be changed \(Psalm 102:25–26\)](#). [Your riches have rotted and your garments have become moth-eaten. Your gold and your silver have rusted; and their rust will be a witness against you and will consume your flesh like fire \(James 5:2–3a\)](#).

Barnes: *The design seems to be, to represent himself as an object not worthy of such constant surveillance on the part of God. God set his mark upon him; watched him with a close vigilance and a steady eye—and yet he was watching one who was turning fast to corruption, and who would soon be gone. He regarded it as unworthy of God, to be so attentive in watching over so worthless an object. This is closely connected with the following chapter, and there should have been no interruption here. The allusion to himself as feeble and decaying, leads him into the beautiful description in the following chapter of the state of man in general.*¹¹ When we move into the next chapter, we will string these verses together into a contiguous whole.

**“In fact, on this, You have opened Your
[two] eyes
And You cause me to be brought into
judgment with You?”** Job 14:3

**“In fact, You have opened Your eyes on
such a one
And then You cause me to be brought into
judgment with You?”**

The first conjunction is given several different renderings: *also* (NASB, Young), *and* (KJV, Rotherham), *yea* (Owen), *moreover* (Keil and Delitzsch); and ignored (NIV). This is the word *ʾaph* (אֲפִי) [pronounced *ahf*], which means *also, yea, even, indeed*. It appears to have two functions: (1) A surprise is then mentioned or the unexpected is said. (2) A reference is made to a preceding sentence and it is expanded or emphasized and we would translate this

¹¹ Barnes' Notes, Job, Volume 1; Baker Books, ©1996; p. 265.

word *yea*, à *fortiori*, *the more so*, *how much more* (following an affirmative clause), *how much less* (following a negative clause), *furthermore*, *in fact*. Strong's #637 BDB #64. Job has obviously been speaking about himself. He is not bringing out some great surprise; the conjunction is used to give emphasis to his plight.

This is followed by the preposition *upon*, *on*, *against*; and the demonstrative adjective *zeh* (זֶה) [pronounced *zeh*], which means *here*, *this*. In this case, we could get away with rendering this *on such a one*. Strong's #2063, 2088, 2090 BDB #260. Job is obviously speaking of himself. He had been speaking of mankind in general at the beginning of this verse, and then suddenly says, *and this mankind of whom I am speaking is me*; or, *I'm the guy*. Also, there is apparently a discrepancy in the manuscripts, and the word *eye* is found in both the singular and the dual in the Masoretic text. I don't see this as affecting the meaning of the verse.

The second line begins with the 2nd person masculine singular, 1st person suffix,¹² Hiphil imperfect of with the very common Hebrew verb *bô'* (בּוֹא) [pronounced *boh*], which means *to come in*, *to come*, *to go in*, *to go*. It means *to bring something*, *to carry* when found in the Hiphil. Strong's #935 BDB #97. This is followed by the prepositional phrase *with You*.

So Job has pointed out the kind of life that we live here on earth and then tells God, *as such a person, you have called me into judgment with You*. It is as if life is bad enough beginning with the womb; and beyond this, God judges us and brings discipline upon us. *“What is man that You magnify him and that You are concerned about him, that You examine him every morning and try him every moment?”* (Job 7:17–18). *And do not enter into judgment with Your servant, for in Your sight no man living is righteous* (Psalm 143:2). David takes a slightly different tact when addressing God in this regard. *What is man that You even think of him? And the son of man that You care for him?* (Psalm 8:4).

Paraphrasing Barnes: Why would One as great and as infinite as God continue to place such a constant vigilance upon one so weak, frail and short-lived? Does God need a trial to prove the unrighteousness of one so frail and feeble. *This is language taken from courts of justice, and the meaning is, that the parties were wholly unequal, and that it was unworthy of God to maintain a controversy in this manner with feeble man. This is a favourite idea with Job, that there was no equality between him and God, and that the whole controversy was, therefore, conducted on his part with great disadvantage.*¹³

Keil and Delitzsch: *Even if he yields to the restraint whic his suffering imposes on him, to regard himself as a sinner undergoing punishment, he is not able to satisfy himself by thus persuading himself to this view of God's conduct towards him. How can God pass so strict a judgment on a man, whose life is so short and full of sorrow, and which cannot possibly be pure from sin?*¹⁴

“Who can make a clean thing out of an unclean? Not one.

Job 14:4

“There is no one who can make that which is unclean, clean.

Before we delve into this verse, Barnes points out that it seems somewhat out of place. The replacement of v. 28 prior to v. 3 and then the question prior to this connect it to its place in Job's thinking. Recall that Job, despite being a brilliant man, is also in great pain and suffering, and his focus is going to be primarily upon himself as he speaks. He knows on the one hands that he is justified before God and he also knows that he is unclean. His problem is reconciling these two things along with the severe treatment God has placed him under. His friends have pronounced him guilty and he is; although his recent life has been led in relative righteousness, and he has done nothing extraordinarily wrong, his has already intimated that his life as a young person was less than holy. And now he asks this question—can you make that which is unclean clean? Barnes: *He could not but admit that he had faults. But he asks, how could it be expected to be otherwise? He belonged to a race that was sinful and depraved.*

¹² The Septuagint, Syriac and Vulgate render this with a 3rd person singular suffix; i.e., *“And would you bring him into judgment with you?”*

¹³ *Barnes' Notes, Job, Volume 1*; Baker Books, ©1996; p. 267.

¹⁴ Keil & Delitzsch's *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. IV, p. 365.

Connected with such a race, how could it be otherwise than that he should be prone to evil? Why then did God follow him with so much severity, and hold him with a rasp so close and so unrelenting. Why did he treat him as if he ought to be expected to be perfectly pure, as if it were reasonable to suppose he would be otherwise than unholy? This passage is of great value as showing the early opinion of the world in regard to the native character of man. The sentiment was undoubtedly common—so common as to have passed into a proverb—that man was a sinner; and that it could not be expected that any one of the race should be pure and holy. The sentiment is as true as it is obvious—like will beget like all over the world...the offspring of the lion is not a lamb, but a young lion; of a wolf is not a kid, but a young wolf, so the offspring of man is not an angel, but is a man with the same nature, the same moral character, the same proneness to evil with the parent...As a historical record, this passage proves that the doctrine of original sin was early held in the world. Still it is true that the same great law prevails, that the offspring of woman is a sinner—no matter where he may be born, or in what circumstances he may be placed. No art, no philosophy, no system of religion can prevent the operation of this great law under which we live and by which we die.¹⁵

This verse begins with the interrogative and the Qal imperfect of *nāthan* (נָתַן) [pronounced *naw-THAHN*], which means *give, grant, place, put, set*; context should guide us. This can also mean *to make* (Gen. 17:5 Lev. 19:28 24:20 Lam 1:13). With the interrogative *mîy* (מִי) [pronounced *mee*], 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*. (*Mîy* = Strong's #4310 BDB #566). In Job 13:5, this is how the various translators have dealt with these two words: *oh that* (NASB, Owen, Rotherham, Young). Together these two words are a common phrase, which means, literally, *who will give?* BDB allows for it to be rendered *oh that there were*. However, here, since Job answers this question, it should be rendered is a question. Strong's #5414 BDB #678.

Then we have the masculine singular adjective *ṭāhōr* (טָהוֹר) [pronounced *taw-WHORE*], which means *clean, pure*; it refers to something which is ceremonially clean or that which is physically pure, like gold. Strong's #2889 #2890 BDB #373. Here, it is used as a substantive. This is followed by the *mîn* preposition, which means *from, out of*; and, by application, it can refer to the material *out of* which something is made. Strong's #4480 BDB #577. What the *clean* is being made *out of* is the masculine singular adjective (again used as a substantive) *ṭāmê'* (טָמֵא) [pronounced *taw-MAY*], which means *unclean*. Strong's #2931 BDB #379.

Man is born unclean; man is born with an old sin nature. Job asks one of the great questions: *Who can make that which is clean from that which is unclean?* And, then he incorrectly answers, *no one*. Recall that this is Job speaking and God will correct him later, in private. One of the aspects of this book that is difficult is that we are dealing with four men speaking and, for the bulk of this book, have to interpret what is accurate and what is not. Throughout the rest of the Bible, this is not quite as difficult to do. Prior to the completion of the canon of Scripture, we are in a time of progressive revelation. When you are first saved, the amount of divine viewpoint that you have is severely limited. It takes a long time and a lot of teaching to grasp some of the finer points of theology. Some people never catch on. It is like going to school for 12+ years and coming out unable to read or do basic arithmetic. It happens, and, in the Christian life, it occurs more often than not. The correct answer to Job's question, "*Who can make the clean thing out of the unclean?*" is Jesus Christ, the God of the Universe, the God-man, our Savior. "*Come now, and let us reason together,*" says Y^ehowah. "*Though your sins are as scarlet, they will be as white as snow. Though they are red like crimson, they will be like wool.*" (Isa. 1:18). *If we walk in the light as He Himself is the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, His son, cleanses us from all sin* (1 John 1:7).

Now let me hasten to add that man in the Old Testament was saved just as we are saved today—by placing our reliance and our faith upon Jesus Christ (or, upon Y^ehowah God). What man did not fully grasp was the process by which he was cleansed. Job offered animal sacrifices; we saw that back in Job 1:5. And Job offered them on behalf of his sons and daughters—a substitutionary offering. In the Old Testament, they had all the pieces of the puzzle, but they were unable to put it together completely in order to articulate it. God allowed for a person to be saved without knowing the full realm of soteriology, just as He allows today. In fact, even today most Christians have little or no grasp of soteriology even after having been saved for years and years. This does not affect out

¹⁵ Barnes' Notes, Job, Volume 1; Baker Books, ©1996; p. 267.

salvation—not knowing soteriology affects our life on earth, our grace orientation, our understanding of God and our ability to witness to others—however, our salvation remains intact. So it was in the time of Job, with one important distinction. Today, we can understand and articulate the entire realm of soteriology; in the time prior to our Lord's incarnation, man could, at best, understand bits and pieces of salvation—enough to be saved—but he could not articulate from beginning to end its ramifications. The reason for this is that the exact means of our salvation was concealed from Satan. It was Satan who fangled things so that Jesus Christ would go to the cross. He saw to it that one of the disciples would betray our Lord and that the two greatest systems of jurisprudence would fail and convict our Lord. Satan orchestrated all the details with the explicit desire to inflict the greatest amount of physical pain that he could upon our Lord. He was able to (1) show how much he hated God and all that God is; (2) he was able to demonstrate how negative the majority of the Jews and Romans were, from the least to the greatest; (3) he thought that he could remove our Lord from this earth through physical death; (4) he looked upon the cross as being the most shameful and terrible death that he could inflict upon Jesus Christ. (5) Satan just thought that in orchestrating the crucifixion that he was being so incredibly intelligent and crafty. He had no clue that our Lord could take the greatest injustice ever perpetrated in this life and transform that into our salvation. (6) Old Testament prophecies present, on the one hand, the Lord's return as ruler over this earth. Satan was very familiar with these prophecies and he had assumed that in killing our Lord, that he would resume his control over the earth. (7) In viewing our Lord's ministry on this earth, Satan saw a struggle between our Lord's meekness and kindness and Satan's viciousness and hatred. He assumed that by killing our Lord's physical body, that this would be a victory of his hatred over our Lord's kindness. (8) Satan assumed that in this crucifixion, our Lord would become so disgusted with the people of the earth that He would walk away from it and leave us under Satanic control. One of the religions devised by Satan is based upon this very principle: God created the heavens and the earth, and then walked away from it all and no longer participates in our day-in and day-out activities (this is called Deism, popular, in fact, with some of our founding fathers).

Bildad will ask a similar question: "How then can a man be just with God? Or how can he be clean who is born of a woman?" (Job 25:4). Eliphaz has already asked the same question: "Can mankind be just before God? Can a man be pure before his Maker?" (Job 4:17). As has been mentioned, the basis for our salvation was taught only in shadow form. The Israelites saw innocent, unblemished animals sacrificed on behalf of their sins and God the Holy Spirit revealed to them as much as they needed to know at that time in order to be saved. That God would take on the body of a man and walk among us was not something clearly revealed in Scripture. After the fact, the many prophecies made more sense. And that He would give Himself on our behalf—that He would endure the pain and suffering that we deserve—that was not fully understood either until after the cross. So what Job asked and answered for a man of his day was reasonable. Even Satan, the greatest theological genius in the field of error, did not grasp what was going on and led our Lord to the cross. But insofar as Job and his friends were concerned, what could any man do to be justified before God? There is nothing that we can do. **There is no man who does not sin** (1 Kings 8:46b). **Indeed, there is not a righteous man on earth who continually does good and who never sins** (Eccl. 7:20). **Observe, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin my mother conceived me** (Psalm 51:5). The Israelites and their converts had no other choice but to place their faith in God and hope in Him. They had no other way of being saved. **And when the disciples heard this, they were astonished and they said, "Who then can be saved?" And looking upon them, Jesus said, "With men, this is impossible, but with God, all things are possible."** (Matt. 19:25–26). Now, if the disciples, who spent most every day of three years speaking directly to God, did not grasp the basis of their salvation, then it is not unreasonable that Job did not grasp this point either. We cannot fault him for not knowing what no one in the Old Testament fully understood. The Old Testament saints could ask but one thing: **Be gracious, O God, according to Your grace and according to the greatness of Your compassion, blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity and cleanse me from my sins. For my transgressions and my sin is always before me. Against You and You only have I sinned, and I have done what is evil in Your sight...Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew an upright spirit within me** (Psalm 51:1–4a, 10). **For we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature, children of wrath, even as the rest. But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loves us, even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved)** (Eph. 2:3–5).

**“If determined [are] his days;
[the] number of his months [are] with You;
his decreed boundaries You have made
and he cannot pass over.**

Job 14:5

**“[No one can make the unclean, clean], if the
number of his days and months are already
predetermined by You;
and since You have set specific boundaries
over which he cannot pass.**

V. 5 begins with the hypothetical particle and the masculine plural, Qal passive participle of *chârats* (חָרַץ) [pronounced *khaw-RATS*], which means *to cut, to cut into*; it is figuratively used to mean *to decide, to determine, to decree*. Barnes gives the meaning as *fixed, settled*. I believe the connection is that when something is cut into stone, it is permanently decreed. Strong's #2782 BDB #358. This is followed by the phrase *his days* (actually, one word in the Hebrew with a suffix).

The second line begins with the masculine singular construct of *miç°phâr* (מִסְפָּר) [pronounced *mis°-FAWR*] means *number, counted, numerical total*. Strong's #4557 BDB #708. What we are looking at here is the *number of his months*, the latter word referring to lunar or calendar months. *My times are in Your hand; deliver me from the hand of my enemies, and from those who persecute me* (Psalm 31:15). *You eyes have seen my unformed substance, and in Your book they were all written the days that were ordained for me when as yet there was not one of them* (Psalm 139:16). *"And He made from one every nation of man to live on all the face of the earth, giving determined their appointed times and the boundaries of their occupation."* (Acts 17:26). *Therefore teach us to number our days, that we may present to You a heart of wisdom* (Psalm 90:12). McGee: *From the very minute of birth when we start out in life we are walking through a canyon where the shadow of death is on us and we keep going until it gets narrower and narrower and finally leads to death. We are always walking in the shadow of death! Someone put it like this: "The moment that gives us life begins to take it away from us."*¹⁶

In the third line, we begin with the masculine plural noun of *chôq* (חֹק) [pronounced *khoke*] is the masculine noun whose meanings are given as *something prescribed, a statute, due*; (BDB) and is translated also *portion* (Gen. 47:22), *law* (Gen. 47:26), *task* (Ex. 5:14), *ordinance* (Ex. 12:24), *statute* (Ex. 15:25)—those were just the first six occurrences in Scripture. From thereon in, it is almost consistently translated *statutes* with an occasional rendering of *decree, law, ordinance, custom, commandment* and even *ordinary* (Ezek. 16:27) and *measure* (Isa. 5:14). There is also the feminine form of this noun, *chuqqâh* (חֻקָּה) [pronounced *khook-KAWH*]. BDB gives its meanings as *something prescribed, enactment, statute*. The KJV gives the renderings *statutes, ordinances, manners* (Lev. 20:23). With rare exceptions (like Gen. 47:22 Ezek. 46:14), both words are generally found in the plural. My instinct is to translate the masculine by the words *decrees, that which is decreed* and the femine as the softer *ordinances*. Gesenius tends to be quite organized in this regard, so let me give you his renderings: (1) *an appointed portion of labor, a task* (Ex. 5:14 Prov. 31:15); or *of food* (Prov. 30:8); (2) *a defined limit, a bound* (Job 26:10 Prov. 8:29 Isa. 5:14); (3) *an appointed time* (Job 14:13 38:26); (4) *an appointed law, a statute, an ordinance* (Gen. 47:26 Ex. 12:24). I will go with *decreed boundaries*. Strong's #2706 BDB #349.

Barnes: *Thou hast fixed a limit, or hast determined the time which he is to live, and he cannot go beyond it. There is no elixir of life that can prolong our days beyond that period. Soon we shall come to that outer limit of life, and then we MUST DIE. When that is we know not, and it is not desirable to know. It is better that it should be concealed. If we knew that it was near, it would fill us with gloom, and deter us from the efforts and the plans of life altogether. If it were remote, we should be careless and secure, and should think there was time enough yet to prepare to die. As it is, we know that the period is not very far distant; we know not but what it may be very near at hand and we would be always ready.*¹⁷

It is interesting to listen to men discuss philosophy. I have heard everything from *we have no free will*, by someone who argued that point out of sincerity, to *anything is possible*. It is simple and the Bible makes this simple: we have free will and we have boundaries. Free will does not mean that we can sprout wings and fly. Part of our free will is applied when we find that we have no control over this situation or that. We take for granted the importance of

¹⁶ J. Vernon McGee, *Job*, ©1977 by Thru the Bible Books; p. 87.

¹⁷ *Barnes' Notes, Job, Volume 1*; Baker Books, ©1996; p. 268.

our free will decisions; particularly those which are not witnessed by many people. But we have free will. Ask any man who has ever been incarcerated whether or not he has free will. Now, the fact that we have limits in which we subsist and boundaries, does not negate having free will; and the fact that God knows in advance what we will choose does not negate having free will either. But the boundaries are clear. **It is appointed for men once to die and after this comes the judgment** (Heb. 9:27). We can sport any philosophy there is, from reincarnation to the theory that there is nothing after death; in any case, death holds a special fear for all men. And no matter what we believe, death is the end of our chance of redemption. The free will choice for Jesus Christ must be made prior to death.

This is followed by the 2nd person masculine singular, Qal perfect of *ʿâsâh* (עָשָׂה) [pronounced *gaw-SAWH*] which means *to do, to make, to construct, to fashion, to form*. Strong's #6213 BDB #793.

In the final line, we have the *wâw* conjunction, the negative, and the 3rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect of *ʿâḅar* (עָבַר) [pronounced *aw-BAHR*], which means *to pass over, to pass through, to pass, to go over*. Strong's #5674 BDB #716.

You will recall in a previous verse, Job spoke of our feet being caught in a rut path—a rut cut into the earth by the wheels of a cart; Job continues in this same vein. God has already determined that we will have just so many days in our life and that there are certain boundaries that we will not be able to cross over. There is a certain amount of predestination in the thinking of Job.

**“Look away from upon him and he will cease
[from work]; until he enjoy, like a hired
laborer, his day.**

Job 14:6

**“O Lord, look away from him that he may
cease from his labors and so that he may
enjoy, as a hired laborer, the rest of his day.**

We know that Job is still talking to God, as he speaks to Him in the 2nd person masculine singular, Qal imperative of *shâʿâh* (שָׂא) [pronounced *shaw-GAW*], which means *to gaze at [steadily, with interest]*; when followed by the *mîn* preposition, it means *to look away from, to turn the eyes from, to avert the eyes from anything* (Job 7:19 14:6 22:4). Strong's #8159 BDB #1043. This is followed by the compound preposition *mêʿal* (מֵעַל) [pronounced *may-GAHL*], from the preposition *min* (מִן) [pronounced *min*] denotes separation (*away from, out from, out of from*) [Strong's #4480 BDB #577]; and the preposition is the preposition *ʿal* (עַל) [pronounced *gahl*] which means, primarily, *upon, against, above*. Strong's #5920, 5921 BDB #752. Together, they mean *from upon, from over, from by*. Keep in mind that as Job speaks of all mankind, he is mostly speaking of himself. This is not God's loving gaze which Job is speaking of, but a harsh examination of our every flaw (just as a taskmaster stands over his slaves, looking for any weakness and any sloughing off).¹⁸ Recall that Job made this direct request from God earlier: **“Will You not turn Your gaze away from me; or let me alone until I swallow my spittle?”** (Job 7:19). Barnes: *Since man is so frail, and so short-lived, let him alone, that he may pass his little time with some degree of comfort and then die.*¹⁹ Job: **“Leave me alone, for my days are but a breath.”** (Job :16b). **“Turn Your gaze away from me, that I may smile again, before I depart and am no more.”** (Psalm 39:13). Keil and Delitzsch: *Would that perfect sinlessness were possible to man; ut since (to use a New Testament expression) that which is born of the flesh is flesh, ther eis not a single one pure.*²⁰

The second verb is the 3rd person²¹ masculine singular, Qal imperfect of one of Job's favorite words, *châdal* (חָדַל) [pronounced *khaw-DAHL*], which means *to leave off, to cease, to desist*; as well as *to forsake, to leave*. The idea is someone who has left off from their work, or has ceased from their work; the idea that something may be left unfinished or undone is also a part of this verb. Strong's #2308 BDB #292. Here, Job is likening God's steady

¹⁸ Barnes mistakenly sees Job as asking God to cease afflicting him here; but the first verb is in the 2nd person singular (Job is speaking to God), and the second is in the 3rd person singular, speaking of the man *ceasing*.

¹⁹ Barnes' Notes, Job, Volume 1; Baker Books, ©1996; p. 267.

²⁰ Keil & Delitzsch's *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. IV, p. 366.

²¹ According to the REB, there is apparently one manuscript where this is in the 2nd person masculine singular. Their footnoteread: 14:6 **and leave him**: so one MS; *others* that he may cease.

gaze to the taskmaster standing over the slave; once the taskmaster leaves, the worker can cease from his work. “Is not man forced to labor on earth and are not his days like the days of a hired man?” (Job 7:1).

This next line is difficult; it is difficult to separate and difficult to translate, so let’s see what others have done:

Albert Barnes <i>The Emphasized Bible</i> Keil and Delitzsch	O turn from him, and leave him, That he may enjoy his day, as [that of] a hireling. Look away from him, that he may rest, Till he shall pay off, as a hireling, his day. Look away from him then, and let him rest, Until he shall accomplish as a hireling his day.
NASB	“Turn your gaze from him that he may rest [lit., cease], Until he fulfills [lit., makes acceptable] his day like a hired man.”
NIV	turn your eyes from him, leave him alone, like a hired labourer, to finish his day in peace.
REB	Look away fro him therefore and leave him to count off the hours like a hired labourer.

Young's Lit. Translation Look away from off him that he may cease, Till he enjoy as an hirely his day.

In the second line, we have the preposition ʿad (אד) [pronounced *gahd*], which can function as a preposition (*as far as, even to, up to, until, while*) (Strong’s #5704 BDB #723) or as a conjunction (*until, until that, to the point that, so that even*) (Strong’s #5704 BDB #724). The verb is the 3rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect of *râtsâh* (רצח) [pronounced *raw-TSAWH*] means *to be acceptable, to be pleased with, to enjoy*. Owens indicates that it literally means *to be satisfied with a payment*; however, that does not appear to be the way it is used in the Bible. *To be pleased with* seems to be the primary meaning, as found in Gen. 33:10 Deut. 33:11 Job 34:9 Prov. 16:7. Strong’s #7521 BDB #953. The rest of the verse reads: *as a hired laborer his day*. This gives us: “Look away from upon him and he will cease [from work]; until he enjoy, like a hired laborer, his day.”

God’s expectations are so great and demanding, that no one can survive under His continued intense gaze and supervision. Keil and Delitzsch: *Job asks that God would at least permit man the rest of a hireling, who, though he be vexed with heavy toil, cheerfully reconciles himself to it in prospect of hte reward he hopes to obtain at evening time. Job does not claim for man the toil which the hireling gladly undergoes in expectation of complete rest, but having still greater toil to undergo...Man’s life...is compared to a hireling’s day, which is sorrowful enough—is not to be overburdened with still more and extraordinary suffering.*²²

The NIV presents these early verses of Job 14 as a poem, where certain verses correspond (I’ve made a few changes):

Man, being born of a woman—short of days and full of great agitation

Like a flower, he comes forth and is cut back and then he flees like the shadow and does not endure.
And he, like a rotten thing, wastes away; like a garment a moth eats.

(In fact, on such a one You have opened your eyes and You cause me to be brought into judgment with You?)

Who can make a clean thing out of an unclean? No one.

If his days are determined; the number of his months are with You; his decreed boundaries You have made
and he cannot pass over.

Then look away from him and he will cease from work; until he enjoy, like a hired laborer, his day.

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²² Keil & Delitzsch’s *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. IV, p. 367.

Even a Tree Which Has Been Cut down Has More Hope than a Man Cut down by God

“For there [is] to the tree hope;
if it is cut down and again it may be caused
to sprout up and its shoot does not cease. Job 14:7 “Though there is for the tree hope;
for even if it is cut down it may still sprout up
a new trunk.

The idea behind this verse is simple; even when a tree is cut down, that does not necessarily kill the tree. When left to its own devices, it may send up root shoots. The application requires the rest of the context, as this verse cannot be taken out of context. My first thought was that when God cuts a man down, he can grow again. However, Job is not setting up an analogy, but a contrast. He states how things are for the tree (vv. 7–9) and then contrasts that with man (vv. 10–12). I want to include a couple of other translations here:

The Emphasized Bible Though there is—for a tree—hope,—If it should be cut down that again it will grow,
And the tender branch thereof will not cease;
Keil and Delitzsch For there is hope for a tree: If it is hewn down, it sprouts again, And its shoot ceaseth
not.
Young's Lit. Translation For there is of a tree hope, if it be cut down, That again it doth change,
That its tender branch doth not cease.

Rotherham (*The Emphasized Bible*), begins this section with *though*, as that is the thought involved in the overall context. Job is setting up a contrast. The conjunction is *kîy* (כִּי) [pronounced *kee*], which means *when, that, for, because*. Strong's #3588 BDB #471. Rotherham, looking ahead to the general context, gives the overall force of this conjunction, which I will use in the less literal rendering. This is followed by the substantive *yêsh* (ישׁ) [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*. Strong's #3426 BDB #441. This is followed by the lamed prefixed preposition (*to, for*) and *the tree*. What there is for the tree is the feminine substantive *tîq^evâh* (תִּקְוָה) [pronounced *tik^e-VAW*], which means *hope, expectation, that which is waited for, that which is expectantly looked for*. Strong's #8615 BDB #876.

The next line begins with the hypothetical particle and the 3rd person masculine singular, Niphal imperfect of *kârath* (כָּרַת) [pronounced *kaw-RAHTH*], which means *to cut off, to cut down*. (Gen. 17:14 Lev. 17:10 Deut. 19:5 Judges 6:28, 30). Strong's #3772 BDB #503. “The practice of cutting down the trees in order to obtain a new and increased use from them is an important part of husbandry in the country east of the Jordan. It is, however, now almost confined to the region round Damascus, in consequence of the devastation of the country...when the vine, after bearing from sixty to eighty years, loses its fruitfulness and begins to decay, it is cut down close to the ground in...January. The first year it bears little or nothing, but throws out new branches and roots; and afterwards it bears plentifully, for the vine-stock has renewed its youth. The fig-tree and the pomegranate, when old and decayed, are cut down in like manner. Their shoots are very numerous, and in the following winter, as many as ten young plants may be taken from the pomegranate. Those that are left on the old stem bear fruit in the fourth year. The walnut-tree ceases to bear much after 100 years, and become hollow and decayed. It is then cut down to within two or three yards from the ground. If the trees are well watered, the new shoots spring up in a year in uncommon luxuriance, and bear fruit in the second year.”²³ I mention this because this indicates that the same agricultural practice would have been observed by Job and his friends over the course of their lifetimes.

This is followed by the *wâw* conjunction and the adverb *still, yet, again* (Strong's #5750 BDB #728). The next verb is the Hiphil imperfect of *châlah* (חָלַה) [pronounced *chaw-LAHF*], which means *to sprout up* (among other things). Strong's #2498 BDB #322.

²³ This is most of a quote from a letter of Consul Wetzstein derived by personal observation. It was quoted by Carey, *The Book of Job*, p. 447, which I found quoted in a footnote in Keil & Delitzsch's *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. IV, p. 377.

We have the wâw conjunction again, holding together some closely related concepts. What follows is the feminine singular substantive of *yôneqeth* (יֹנֶקֶת) [pronounced *yoh-NEH-keth*], which means *a shoot, a tender branch, a sucker*; and perhaps a *young plant*. I thought that *sucker* was more of a modern slangish term, but its Hebrew verb cognate means *to suck*. Strong's #3127 BDB #413. The final verb is the 3rd person feminine singular, Qal imperfect of *cease*; and with it we have a negative. Job's life was more akin to that of a tree which had been uprooted. "He breaks me down on every side and I am gone; and He has uprooted my hope like a tree." (Job 1:10). Ultimately, such a thing is promised to the wicked: *But God will break you down forever. He will snatch you up and tear you away from your tent and uproot you from the land of the living* (Psalm 52:5).

Barnes: *The passage is important as expressing the prevalent sentiment of the time in which Job lived about the future condition of man, and is one that deserves a close examination. The great question is, whether Job believed in the future state, or in the resurrection of the dead? On this question one or two things are clear at the outset. (1) He did not believe that man would spring up from the grave in any sense similar to the mode in which the sprout or germ of a tree grows up when the tree is cut down. (2.) He did not believe in the doctrine of...transmigration of souls; a doctrine that was so common among the ancients. In this respect the patriarchal religion stood aloof from the systems of heathenism, and there is not to be found, that I know of, any expression that would lead us to suppose that they had ever embraced it, or had even heard of it. The general sentiment here is, that if a tree is cut down, it may be expected to shoot up again, and another tree will be found in its place—as in the case with the chestnut, the willow, the oak. But Job says that there was nothing like this to happen to man. There was no root, no germ, no seminal principle from which he would be made to live again on the earth. He was to be finally cut off from all his pleasures and his friends here, and to go away to return no more. Still, that Job believed in his continued existence beyond the grave as evidenced in v. 13 and Job 10:20–21...The feeling of Job here is, that when man was removed from the earth, he was removed finally; that there was no hope of his revisiting it again, and that he could not be employed in the dark abode of departed spirits in the cheerful and happy manner in which he might be in this world of light.*²⁴

Job will continue with this analogy:

"If its root grows old in the earth and in the dry ground, its stump dies.

Job 14:8

"(Now if its root grows old in ground in dry ground, then the stump dies)

We have two *synonyms* used together here in this verse and they might be worth looking at in order to see the difference between them. The word not found here is *ʾādâmâh* (אֲדָמָה) [pronounced *uh-daw-MAWH*], which means *ground, soil, tillable earth, land, surface of the earth*. Strong's #127 BDB #9. The first word found here is *ʾerets* (אֶרֶץ) [pronounced *EH-rets*], a feminine singular substantive which means (1) *planet earth* (Gen. 18:18, 25 22:18 Job 37:12); (2) *a specific portion of the earth*, such as a *country, region, or territory* (Gen. 11:28, 31 21:21 Psalm 78:12—you will note that in these instances, *ʾerets* is in the construct and generally translated *the land of*); (3) *the ground, the soil* (Gen. 1:11–12, 30 18:2 33:3 Lev. 19:9). Strong's #776 BDB #75. The second word found here is *ʾāphâr* (אֶפְרַח) [pronounced *gaw-FAWR*], which means *dry earth, dust*. Strong's #6083 BDB #779. Job adds that without water, of course, the stump will die. However, that is not his point. His point is that a tree stump can be old, it can be cut down, and it will still spring up again as though it were new—all it needs is the smallest amount of water, and a tree will bud as though it is a new tree.

"From from a scent of water it will be caused to bud and it will form branches like a young plant.

Job 14:9

"Almost from just the scent of water will the tree be caused to bud; it will form branches as if it were a young plant.

Let's see what others have done:

²⁴ Quoted and paraphrased from *Barnes' Notes, Job, Volume 1*; Baker Books, ©1996; pp. 268–269.

Albert Barnes	From the vapour of water it will spring up again, And put forth boughs as a young plant.
<i>The Emphasized Bible</i>	Through the scent of water it may break forth, And produce branches like a sapling
Keil and Delitzsch	At the scent of water it buddeth, And bringeth forth branches like a young plant.
NIV	...yet at the scent of water, it will bud and put forth shoots like a plant.
NJB	...but let it scent the water, and it bud, and puts out branches like a plant newly set.
<i>Young's Lit. Translation</i>	From the fragrance of water it doth flourish, And hath made a crop as a plant.

The first preposition is *mîn*, which means *from, away from, on account of*. The first word is *rêyach* (רֵיַח) [pronounced *RAY-akh*], and it means *scent, odor*; this is the only time we find this word in Job, but it is found throughout the Bible, particularly in the Torah and in Song of Solomon. Strong's #7381 BDB #926. The *scent* or *odor* is of water, which is a play on word in a way; water has no odor and no scent, and a plant cannot grow from just the *scent* of water; however, Job's point is that it requires very little water to cause a tree or plant whose top has been cut off to begin a cycle of regrowth. There are some trees that you can cut off a branch, stick the branch in the ground, and it will grow into a tree (I recall planted a dozen cottonwood trees out in my front yard that way). What the tree will be caused to do is the Hiphil imperfect of *pârach* (פָּרַח) [pronounced *paw-rahkh*], which means *to bud, to sprout*. This is obviously not a thing that the plant does consciously—it is *caused to bud* or *caused to sprout*. Strong's #6524 BDB #827.

The next line begins with a *wâw* conjunction and the 3rd person masculine singular, Qal perfect of *ʿâsâh* (עָשָׂה) [pronounced *gaw-SAWH*] which means *to do, to make, to construct, to fashion, to form*. Strong's #6213 BDB #793. What it forms is the collective plural of *boughs* or *branches*. Strong's #7105 BDB #894. This is followed by the preposition *kēmô* (כִּמּוֹ) [pronounced *k^emoe*], and it appears to be equivalent to the prefixed preposition *kaph*. It means *like, as, when*. Strong's #3644 BDB #455. What it is like is *a plant*. Strong's #5194 BDB #642. Job is setting up a contrast between the behavior of plants and man. You cut down a plant and it will grow again; you cut down a man and that essentially ends his life.

Barnes: *The idea is very delicate and poetic. It is designed to denote a gentle and pleasant contact—not a rush of water—by which the tree is made to live. It inhales, so to speak, the vital influence from the water from the water.*²⁵

**“And a man dies and then he is prostrate
and then man breathes his last [or, expires]; Job 14:10
and where is he?”**

**“And when a man dies, having lain prostrate
and breathing his last, where is he?”**

the first and last phrase begin with *wâw* conjunctions and the middle two lines begin with *wâw* consecutives. The weakest aspect of the Lexicon of Gesenius is the explanation of the *wâw* conjunction and consecutive. At one time, linguists were all messtup over this. This is reflected in Gesenius, in Mansoor's *Biblical Hebrew*, and in Kelley's *Biblical Hebrew*. Zodhiates explanation of the difference is anemic and only BDB and Gibson's *Davidson's Introductory Hebrew Grammar~Syntax* get it right. The *wâw* conjunction is generally a simple copulative (although, in reality, it is more difficult and complex than that). And, generally speaking, I have rendered the *wâw* consecutive as *then* or *and then*; but that does not fully explain it. When it connects two verbs, particularly imperfects, then the first indicates the general character of the action and the second clarifies the first; or the action receives a closer definition in the second. Here we find three imperfects strung together by two *wâw* consecutives, but the action is not progressive and directional, but clarifying. There is no confusion as to what Job is referring to here. The first imperfect is the Qal of the common word for *dying*; the second verb is the Qal imperfect of *châlash* (חָלַשׁ) [pronounced *khaw-LAHSH*], which means *to be weak, prostrate*. Strong's #2522 BDB #325. Job is not describing being hit by a car; he is describing his own death, which involves the weakening and giving out of the body. Barnes: *The idea is, he entirely vanishes. He leaves nothing to sprout up again. There is no germ; no shoot; no living root; no seminal principle. Of course, this refers wholly to his living again on the earth, and not to the question about his*

²⁵ Barnes' Notes, Job, Volume 1; Baker Books, ©1996; p. 270.

future existence.²⁶ The third verb is the Qal imperfect of gâva' (גַּוַּא') [pronounced *gaw-VAH* or *gaw-VAHG*], which means *to expire, to perish, to die*. Strong's #1478 BDB #157.

Then Job asks the question *where is he?* Even today, whereas science proports to know our origins, it has no clue as to our destination after death. This is why some doctors, politicians and liberals fight for life at any price. They cannot deal with death; death frustrates, confuses and frightens them. It is seen as the final end. Job's question gives us an idea about revealed truth in relationship to progressive revelation. At this point in time, God had not revealed much concerning the afterlife. Job had spoken of the afterlife before as he conceived it from his position of pain: "Before I go—and I will not return—to the land of darkness and deep shadow; the land of complete darkness upon darkness, of deep shadow without order, and which shines as darkness." (Job 10:21–22). Lest there be any confusion, Job does not have the last word on death. At first he spoke of death longingly as a place that he would share with previous kings and leaders. "For now I would have lain down and been quiet; I would have slept then, I would have been at rest." (Job 3:13). My point being is that we cannot go to the book of Job to find the definitive explanation of what occurs after death—at least, not from Job or any of his three friends.²⁷ This is the Bible and it is the Word of God; this does not mean that each and every word and each and every thought reflects divine viewpoint. Here we have four men discussing their views of Job's present condition and the afterlife and the judgment of God and there is disagreement and none of them can point to this source or that and say *thus saith the Lord*. In fact, this is one of the great truths taught by implication in the book of Job which is ignored by most (or all?) commentators; specifically, man needs divine revelation, particularly in times of stress and pain and when he is facing death. We can find great truths in this book, but we must not point to each and everything said by Job or his friends and call that truth.

McGee: *A man may have made a tremendous success down here, been a famous person, and then he is gone. Where is he? There may be a few monuments around for him. Maybe a street or wo are named after him. What good is that? What does that amount to?*²⁸

Barnes: *This comparison of man with the vegetable world, must have early occurred to mankind, and hence led to the inquiry whether he would not live in a future state. Other things that are cut down, spring up again and live. But man is cut down, and does not spring up again. Will he not be likely, therefore, to have an existence in some future state, and to spring up and flourish there?*²⁹ You will recall that Paul, speaking authoritatively, does use the example of our bodies at death being placed in the ground as a seed for our resurrection bodies. **But some will say, "How are the dead reaised? And with what kind of body do they come?" You fool! That which you sow does not come to life unless it dies; and that which you sow, you do not sow the body which is to be, but a bare grain, perhaps of wheat or of something else. But God gives it a body just as He wished, and to each of the seeds a body of its own** (I Cor. 15:35–38).

**"Waters have gone away from a sea
and a river wastes away and dries up.**

Job 14:11

**"The water evaporate from the sea
and the river wastes away and dries up.**

The ideas expressed in this verse in the various translations are similar, but let's fine tweak the translation by first seeing what others have done:

<i>The Emphasized Bible</i>	Waters have failed from the sea, And a river may waste and dry up;
Keil and Delitzsch	The waters flow away from the sea, And a stream decayeth and dryeth up.
Owen's Translation	Waters fail from a lake and a river wastes away and dries up.
<i>Young's Lit. Translation</i>	Waters have gone away from a sea, And a river becometh waste and dry.

²⁶ Barnes' Notes, *Job, Volume 1*; Baker Books, ©1996; p. 270.

²⁷ As noted in the previous quote by Barnes, he does not see this verse as dealing with death after life in the *eternal* sense; however, as noted in other quotes by Job, it is clear that Job does not deliver to us the definative explanation of life after death.

²⁸ J. Vernon McGee, *Job*, ©1977 by Thru the Bible Books; p. 87.

²⁹ Barnes' Notes, *Job, Volume 1*; Baker Books, ©1996; p. 270.

The first verb in this verse is the Qal perfect of *ʾâzal* (אָזַל) [pronounced *aw-ZAHL*], which means *to be gone, to be exhausted, to be used up, to go away*. Strong's #235 BDB #23. What these waters go away from is *yâm* (יָם) [pronounced *yawm*], and it is *a sea or a lake* (this word can be found in Gen. 14:3 Num. 34:11 Deut. 4:49 Zech. 14:8 referring to a lake and in Isa. 19:5 27:1 referring to a river; therefore, it can be applied to any good-sized body of water). *I see no reason to doubt, therefore, that it may be used here to denote the collections of water, which were made by torrents pouring down from mountains, and which would after a little while wholly evaporate.*³⁰ Strong's #3220 BDB #410. What the river does is the Qal imperfect of *chârêb* (חָרַב) [pronounced *chaw-RAY^bV*], and it means *to waste, to be desolate*. Strong's #2717 BDB #351. The final verb is the Qal perfect of *yâ^bvêsh* (יָבֵשׁ) [pronounced *yaw-^bVEYSH*], which means *to be dry, to dry up, to wither*. Strong's #3001 BDB #386.

Job and his friends have lived long enough to see periods of drought in their land. The analogy which is drawn in the sea and the river there is a great deal of water—where does it all go? The analogy is where does man go when he dies? Where does the water go when it evaporates?

**“And a man lies down and he does not rise;
so long as [the] heavens are not [caused to
be] awoken and not roused up from their
sleep.**

Job 14:12

**“And a man lies down and he does not rise;
just so long as the heavens are not awoken
nor aroused up from their sleep.**

In this verse, I definitely need some other translations to begin with:

<i>The Emphasized Bible</i>	So a man hath lain down and shall not arise,— Until there are no heavens they shall not awake, Nor be roused up out of their sleep.
Keil and Delitzsch	So man lieth down and riseth not again; Till the heavens pass away they awake not, And are not aroused from their sleep.
<i>Young's Lit. Translation</i>	And man hath lain down, and riseth not, Till the wearing out of the heavens they awake not, Nor are roused from their sleep.

What we need to straighten out are the verbs and nouns here and what goes with what. I like the way that Keil and Delitzsch have put this verse together, although that might be the toughest rendering to support. We begin with the simple *wâw* conjunction, the masculine singular noun *ʾîysh* (אִישׁ) [pronounced *eesh*], which means *man*. Interestingly enough, this word is found only three times in the plural (Psalm 141:4 Prov. 8:4 Isa. 53:3). Although this word in the singular is not used very often in the collective sense, it is found that way in Gen. 32:6 Ex. 11:7 Deut. 4:3. Strong's #376 BDB #35. The first verb is the 3rd person masculine singular, Qal perfect of *shâka^b* (שָׁכַח) [pronounced *shaw-KAH^bV*], which means *to lie down*, with several different connotations. It can mean *to lie down with the intention of lodging for the night* (Joshua 2:1 II Kings 4:11); *to have sexual relations* (Gen. 30:11, 14 Ex. 22:15); *to lie down in death* (Deut. 31:16 Isa. 14:8 Ezek. 31:18); and there is the figurative use *to relax* (Job 30:17 Eccles. 2:23). I believe that all of these are Qal meanings. Strong's #7901 BDB #1011. Here, a man is *lying down in death*. The next phrase is: *and he shall not rise*; or, *and he shall not stand up*. The vision is of a man either on his death bed or in the state of death.

This is followed by the preposition *ʿad* (אֲד) [pronounced *gahd*] which means *as far as, even to, up to, until, while*, and as a conjunction that means *until, until that, to the point that, so that even*. Strong's #5704 BDB #723. This is followed by the not the particle of negation (found with the verb *arise*), but the substantive of negation, although it is used as a particle of negation. The word is *bill^eʿîy* (בִּלְעִי) [pronounced *bill^e-TEE*], and it can be used as ❶ an adverb of negation (*not*); ❷ as a preposition meaning *without, besides except*; ❸ as a conjunction which means *besides that, unless that, unless*. With prepositions, it takes on a different meaning. With the preposition *ʿad*, it means *so long as* when followed by a noun; *until not* when followed by a verb in the perfect tense. Strong's #1115 BDB #116.

³⁰ Barnes' Notes, Job, Volume 1; Baker Books, ©1996; p. 271.

What follows is the dual of the word *heavens*; and the negative particle again with the 3rd masculine plural, Hiphil imperfect of—but first, allow me to ‘splane something. One of the reasons which I go into great detail about such nuances as the 3rd person plural, 2nd person singular is that this tells us what subject goes with which verb. We do not get to willy nilly assign whatever substantive that we want with whatever verb that we want. I have stated my preference. I like the idea of *man* being the subject for the final verbs in this verse. However, we have to go where the grammar sends us. *Man* takes on the 3rd person masculine singular subject, as it did with the first two verbs; therefore, *heavens* would be the most reasonable choice for a subject for this verb. Again, it is the 3rd person masculine plural, Hiphil imperfect of qîyts (qîy) [pronounced *keets*]³¹, which means *to be aroused out of sleep, to be aroused from the slumber of death, to be awakened*. This verb is found only in the Hiphil. Strong’s #6974 BDB #884. This gives us *so long as heavens are not aroused [out of their sleep]*.

This is followed by the wâw conjunction, another negative particle; which together should be rendered *nor*. Literally, they are *and not*. Then we have the 3rd person masculine plural, Niphal imperfect of ‘ûwr (‘wr) [pronounced *gûor*], and it means *to rouse oneself, to awake*. The Niphal is the passive, so it means *to be awakened, to be roused from sleep*. Strong’s #5782 BDB #734. These verbs are obviously synonyms. What follows is the prepositional phrase *out of their sleep* or *from their sleep*. This gives us: “**And a man lies down and he does not rise; so long as [the] heavens are not [caused to be] awaken and not roused up from their sleep.**” Now I have stated my original personal preference—when I first looked at this verse, I wanted the man to remain asleep in death until he was awakened, but the meaning here is that the man remains in a state of death until the heavens are awakened and aroused from their sleep. Most of you have had the experience of someone shaking you to arouse you from your sleep. “**For thus says Y^ehowah of the armies, ‘Once more in a while, I am going to shake the heavens and the earth, the sea also and the dry land.’**” (Haggai 2:6). **For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and the trumpet of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first** (I Thess. 4:16). **But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which he heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up** (II Peter 3:10). In Job’s day, there was some understanding of the end times, but it was quite limited. Most of it was smushed together. Just as throughout the Old Testament, the first and second advents of our Lord is smushed together. So Job knew there would be a time when the heavens would be shaken and in that same time period the men who had succumbed to death would also be awakened. We see those as two different events, but the Hebrews (and, apparently, early believers) originally saw them grouped together into the category of end time future events.³²

The *Encyclopedia of Biblical Prophecy* makes an important observation and distinction here: *In the mind of Job, these phrases [“Man lieth down and riseth not; till the heavens be no more, they shall not awake, nor be roused out of their sleep”] may have served simply as a pictorial way of saying that men do not rise from the death; but in their inspired wording they do correspond to God’s later revelation of the resurrection, once the heavens are no more.*³³

Keil and Delitzsch: *we inquire here: Can we say that the poet knew nothing of a resurrection and judgment after death? If we look to the psalms of the time of David and Solomon, we must reply in the negative...it may be assumed, and from the book of Job directly inferred, that the poet had a perception of the future world which went beyond the dim perception of the people, which was not yet lighted up by any revelation. For, on the one hand, he has reproduced for us a history of the patriarchal period, not merely according to its external, but also according to its internal working, with as strict historical faithfulness as delicate psychological tact; on the other, he was with a master hand described for us in the history of Job what was only possible from an advance standpoint of knowledge,—how the hope of a life beyond the present, where there is no express word of promise to guide it, struggles forth from the heart of man as an undefined desire and longing, so that the word of promise is the*

³¹ This is spelled differently in the *New Englishman’s Concordance* and by Gesenius; and it is spelled like this in Owens, BDB and by Langenscheidt.

³² This is a very rich topic, but this is just not the place to get into it. For further examination, see Psalm 102:25–26 Isa. 51:6 65:17 66:22 Acts 3:21 II Peter 3:7 Rev. 20:11 21:1. Barnes teaches that Job meant that man would never stand upon the earth again; i.e., the passing away of the heavens was a way of saying that it would never happen. It is reasonable that is what Job meant. It is also reasonable that Job had some inkling of the passing away of the heavens and the earth. Fro this passage alone, it is difficult to determine what Job actually believed with regards to the end times.

³³ *The Encyclopedia of Biblical Prophecy*; J. Barton Payne; ©1973; Baker Books; p. 254.

fulfillment and seal of this desire and yearning. For when Job gives expression to the wish that God would hide him in Sheôl until His anger turn, and then, at an appointed time, yearning after the work of His hands, raise him again from Sheôl, might be only his temporary hiding-place from the divine anger, instead of being his eternal abode. He wishes himself in Sheôl, so far as he would thereby be removed for a time from the wrath of God, in order that, after an appointed season, he might again become an object of the divine favour. He cheers himself with the delightful thought, *All the days of my warfare would I wait till my change should come, etc.*; for then the warfare of suffering would become easy to him, because favour, after wrath and deliverance from suffering and death, would be near at hand. We cannot say that Job here expresses the hope of a life after death; on the contrary, this hope is wanting to him, and all knowledge respecting the reasons that might warrant it. This hope exists only in imagination...without becoming a certainty, since it is only the idea, *How glorious it would be if it were so, that is followed up.* But, on the one side, the poet shows us by this touching utterance of Job how totally different would be his endurance of suffering if he but knew that there was really a release from Hades; on the other side, he shows us, in the wish of Job, the incipient tendency of the growing hope that it might be so, for what a devout mind desires has a spiritual power which presses forward from the subjective to the objective reality. The hope of eternal life is a flower, say some of the old commentators, which grows on the verge of the abyss. The writer of the book of Job supports this. In the midst of this abyss of the feeling of divine wrath in which Job is sunk, this flower springs up to cheer him. In its growth, however, it is not hope, but only at first a longing. And this longing cannot expand into hope, because no light of promise shines forth in that night, by which Job's feeling is controlled, and which makes the conflict darker than it is in itself. Scarcely has Job feasted for a short space upon the idea of that which he would gladly hope for, when the thought of the reality of that which he has to fear overwhelms him. He seems to himself to be an evil-doer who is reserved for the execution of the sentence of death.³⁴

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Questions and Observations about Death

**“Oh that in Sheol You would hide me;
[that] You would conceal me until the turning
of Your anger;
[that] You will set me upright [at] a set time
and [that] You will remember me.**

Job 14:13

**“I wish that you would hid me in the grave;
that I would be concealed until You had
finished with Your rage;
that You would then resurrect me at the
right time and that You would remember me.**

This is a long verse with several nuances, so we had better start with seeing what others have done with it:

<i>The Emphasized Bible</i>	Oh that in hades thou wouldst hide me! That thou wouldst keep me secret, until the turn of thine anger, That thou wouldst set for me a fixed time and remember me.
Keil and Delitzsch	Oh that Thou wouldst hide me in Sheôl, That Thou wouldst conceal me till Thine anger change, That Thou wouldst appoint me a time and then remember me!
NJB	Will no one hide me in Sheol, and shelter me there till your anger is past, fixing a certain day for calling me to mind—
<i>Young's Lit. Translation</i>	Oh that in Sheol Thou wouldst conceal me, Hide me till the turning of Thine anger, Set for me a limit, and remember me.

First thing to realize is that the four main verbs (there are six verbs in this verse) are in the 2nd person masculine singular. So Job is addressing God and God is the subject of all four main verbs. We begin with the interrogative and the 3rd person masculine singular of *nâthan*, which together mean, literally, *who will give*; however, this compound generally expresses a wish or a desire and is rendered *oh that*. I think that we could reasonable precede each of these four sentences with *oh that*, expressing what Job would like for God to do. This is followed by *in Sheol*, and then the Hiphil imperfect of *tsâphan* (יִפְּן) [pronounced *tsaw-FAHN*], which means *to hide, to conceal, to lay up (in storage)*. Strong's #6845 BDB #860. As found with two of the other main verbs, this is affixed to the 1st person suffix. “Oh that you would hide me in Sheol.” Although there will be some inconsistencies in Job's

³⁴ Keil & Delitzsch's *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. IV, pp. 378–379.

thinking along the way, this verse does not necessarily conflict with the previous verse. In v. 12, Job can simply refer to man rising up again on this earth as a man wakes up from a sleep. Insofar as we are concerned on earth, once someone dies, we will never see them again while in this life on this earth. Keil and Delitzsch expressed it this way: *What Sheôl summons away from the world, the world never sees again.*³⁵ That does not mean that there is not some sort of a life after death or some kind of existence after death. *Suppose there were something beyond Sheol! Suppose Sheol were for him a time of waiting, so that beyond its limits God would call him into renewed meeting. This possibility raises the fascinating question in verse 14.*³⁶ On of the points that I have made several times throughout this book is the lack of revealed truth; Job did not have a Bible to go to. *Layman's Bible Commentary* also makes this point: *It is evident that the only basis for the possibility [of a life after death] is Job's knowledge of God and the prior fellowship with God which he had enjoyed. Neither nature nor his own situation, nor even the word of God in times past, gave Job reason to believe. Here is a man who is thrown back entirely on God, but who, out of his knowledge of God, comes to the conclusion that it is possible that relationship with God is not to be ended by death.*³⁷

The second line begins with the Hiphil imperfect of *çâthar* (רָתַף) [pronounced *saw-THAHR*], which means *to hide, to conceal*. Strong's #5641 BDB #711. What follows is the preposition *until* and the Qal infinitive construct of *shûb* (שׁוּב) [pronounced *shoo^bv*]; which means *to turn back, to return, to turn around, to turn back mentally, reminisce*. In the Hiphil (the causative) stem, this means *to be caused to return, to bring, to return something, to restore, to bring back, to regain, to recover, to make restitution, reconsider, to be caused to return* Strong's #7725 BDB #996. Here, it means simply, *until the turning of...* What follows is the masculine substantive *`aph* (אָפ) [pronounced *ahf*], which means *nose, nostril* (Gen. 2:7 3:19 7:22 19:1 24:47). We have translated this *face, brow*, and several other things. However, as we sometimes find in the Hebrew, a part of the body can stand for a particular emotion, and *`aph* seems to correlate well with the substantive *anger* (Gen. 27:45 30:2 39:19 44:18). The idea is then when a person was angry with you, the tilt of his head revealed his nostril or nose as being the most prominent feature. Strong's #639 BDB #60. With this word is the 2nd person masculine singular suffix. This gives us: **"You would conceal me until the turning of your anger"** for the second line.

Barnes: *Sheol...does not mean here, I think, the grave. It means the region of departed spirits, the place of the dead, where he wished to be, until the tempest of the wrath of God should pass by. He wished to be shut up in some place where the fury of that tempest would not meet him, and where he would be safe...It is probably a wish for a safe retreat or a hiding-place—where he might be secure, as from a storm...whether Job means the grave, or the place of departed spirits...is not material. In the view of the ancients the one was not remote from the other. The entrance to Sheol was the grave; and either of them would furnish the protection sought.*³⁸

The third line is the Qal imperfect of *s hîyth* (שִׁית) [pronounced *sheeth*], which means ❶ *to set up* that which is supposed to be upright; ❷ *to place* or *to put* something where it properly belongs, ❸ *to put* in the sense of *directing* or *turning* in some direction. Strong's #7896 BDB #1011. What Job desires God to set up for him is a word we have just recently studied: *chôq* (חֹק) [pronounced *khoke*], which means *an appointed portion of labor, a defined limit, a bound, an appointed time, an appointed law, a statute, an ordinance*. Strong's #2706 BDB #349. I must admit to having some problems with putting this together. We have several ways this could be translated: *You would appoint [for] me an appointed time; You would stand me up [at] an appointed time; You would stand me up, a statute; You would turn me [at] an appointed time*. Once God's anger has turned from Job, Job expects God to stand him up, as he should have been; upright. This is probably the resurrection. I would like to be more fervent in this take, but there are just too many ways for this to be translated. The final line is: **"And you will remember me."** I do lean toward whichever translation lends itself to resurrection in the last days, however. Recall what the thief on the cross said to our Lord: **"Jesus, remember me when You come in Your kingdom!" And He said to him, "Truly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise."** (Luke 23:42b–43).

³⁵ Keil & Delitzsch's *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. IV, p. 369.

³⁶ *The Layman's Bible Commentary, Vol. 8*, Balmer H. Kelly, John Knox Press, ©1962, p. 89.

³⁷ *The Layman's Bible Commentary, Vol. 8*, Balmer H. Kelly, John Knox Press, ©1962, p. 89.

³⁸ *Barnes' Notes, Job, Volume 1*; Baker Books, ©1996; pp. 271–272.

Barnes: *There is an expectation that he would live again at some future period, and a desire to live after the present tokens of the wrath of God should pass by...There is the secret hope of some future life—though remote; and he is willing to be hid for any period of time until the wrath of God should pass by, if he might live again. Such is the lingering desire of life in the bosom of man in the severest trials, and the darkest hours; and so instinctively does man look on even to the most remote period with the hope of life.*³⁹

Now, the point that Job is making might seem confused—does he fear death or does he not? Does he want God to take him out of this life or to just back off? Does he believe that he will be resurrected or that the grave will be the end of his consciousness? He has already said, “When a cloud vanishes, it is gone; so he who goes down to Sheol [the grave] will not come up again.” (Job 7:9). He will say, “In my flesh, I will see God!” (Job 19:26b). Job is a man in serious hurt and he does not have God’s Word to stand upon. Some holy roller today might plead the blood and ask for divine visions but Job is a sensible man with enough doctrine not to do that. He does not see visions of God and he asks to face God and to question Him. What he needs is to know. He sounds confused because he is confused. He does not have a broad theological base upon which to hang his faith. As we have seen and as we will see, Job has some very good theological notions—and don’t misunderstand me; with all the doctrine in the world, I don’t know that I could withstand what Job has been through—but he desires some answers and an explanation for his pain and suffering. In this desire, he expresses his own confusion. Again, the book of Job is difficult to understand as Job does not have a clear revelation in his possession of truth and therefore, even though what he says shows a wisdom and understanding far greater than his friends (and of most believers today), it also belies his confusion and hurt. For your own comfort, recall that David wrote: *For His anger is but for a moment, His grace is for a lifetime; weeping may last for the night, but a shout of joy comes in the morning* (Psalm 30:5). “For a brief moment, I forsook you, but I will gather you with great compassion.” (Isa. 54:7).

“If a man dies, will he live?

All of [the] days of my warfare I will wait until [the] coming of my changing. Job 14:14

**“After a man dies, will he live again?
After all the days of my warfare and hard-
service, I await the coming of my final
change.**

The first line is typical of Hebrew phrasing—we begin with the hypothetical particle, then the Qal imperfect of the verb *to die*; and then the subject, *a man*. The sentence is continued with the interrogative particle and the Qal imperfect of *châyâh* (חַיָּה) [pronounced *khaw-YAW*], which means *to live, to have life, to remain, to survive, to exist*. Strong’s #2421 & 2425 BDB #310.

The next line is *all of days of* and it is followed by the masculine singular noun *tsâbâ’* (צָבָא) [pronounced *tsaw^b-VAW*], and it can mean *army, war, or warfare*. When found in Job, this word should be rendered *warfare*, and it is figuratively used for a wretched, miserable condition of life (see Job 7:1 10:17 Isa. 40:2 Dan. 10:1). Strong’s #6635 BDB #838. What follows this is the Piel imperfect of *yâchal* (יָחַל) [pronounced *yaw-KHAHL*], which means *await, to expect* in the Piel. Implicit in the meaning of this verb is the idea of *trust*; one waits because he has trust in the one he is waiting for. Job is waiting on God in trust. Strong’s #3176 BDB #403.

The sentence is continued with the preposition *until* and the Qal infinitive construct of the very common verb *bô’* (בּוֹא) [pronounced *boh*], which means *to come in, to come, to go in, to go*. Strong’s #935 BDB #97. Literally, this means *until a coming of*. The final word is the feminine singular substantive *châlîyphâh* (חַלְיָפָה) [pronounced *khă-lee-FAW*], which is generally used for *changes* of clothes (Gen. 45:22). It can also refer to a *changing* or *variation* of life. Strong’s #2487 BDB #322. In this context, I don’t believe that this is the resurrection but the change from life to death.

I have heard commentators—including myself—talk about Job’s questioning the afterlife, and here we have the essential question: “If a man dies, will he live again?” “Point of doctrine: he who hears My word and believes Him Who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment but has passed out of death into life.” (John 5:24). “For this is the will of My Father, that every one who beholds the Son, and believes in Him, may have eternal life;

³⁹ Barnes’ Notes, Job, Volume 1; Baker Books, ©1996; p. 272.

and I Myself will raise him up on the last day.” (John 6:40). For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout and with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God; and the dead in Christ will rise first (I Thess. 4:16).

Zodhiates: *Job thinks that his life is coming to an end and desires some hop with which to sustain himself. It is important to remember that at this time no portions of Scripture had been written down, so there was no way that Job could have known all that has been revealed to us about heaven. At the time of the patriarchs, very littl ehad been revealed about the resurrection of the body, so that they rested in the hope that their disembodied spirit would remain. Job’s usage of phrases like “the grave” and “keep me secret” reflect his desire for the time when his soul would be separated from his present affliction and would be vindicated by God from the accusations his friends were making. At this time, Job begins to trust in a physical resurrection of his body.*⁴⁰ Later, Job’s confidence will increase and he will cry out: “And as for me, I know that my Redeemer lives—and on the last day He will take His stand upon the earth. Even after my skin is destroyed, yet from my flesh I will see God.” (Job 9:25).

Paraphrased from Scofield: There are three great problems of man proposed in the book of Job, all of which are solved in Jesus Christ. (1) The problem of the invisible God: “Oh, that I knew where I might find Him!” (Job 23:3) is solved by the incarnation of Jesus Christ. (2) The problem of human sin. “How can a man be justified with God?” (Job 9:2 25:4) is solved by the death of Christ. And, (3) death and immortality: “If a man dies, will he live again?” (Job 14:14). This is answered in the resurrection of Jesus Christ.⁴¹

**“You will call and I [even] I will answer you
for a work of your hands You will long for.**

Job 14:15

**“You will call me and I will answer You;
You will call for the work of Your hands.**

This verse seemed easy until I came to the last verb, so let’s see what other translators have done with it:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	Then You would call and I would answer You; You would yearn for [me] the work of Your hands.
<i>The Emphasized Bible</i>	Thou shouldst call, and I would answer thee,—For the work of thine own hand thou shouldst long.
Keil and Delitzsch	Thou wouldst call and I would answer, Thou wouldst have a desire for the work of Thy hands—
NEB	Thou wouldst sumon me, and I would answer thee; thou wouldst long to see the creature thou hast made.
TEV	Then you will call, and I will answer, and you will be pleased with me, your creature.
<i>Young’s Lit. Translation</i>	Thou dost call, and I—I answer Thee; To the work of Thy hands Thou hast desire.

The first sentence is simple: *You will call and I—I will answer You.* As Job had said earlier: “Then call, and I will answer; or let me speak, then reply to me.” (Job 13:22). Barnes: *[This] expresses a desire to come at once to trial; to have th ematter adjusted before he should leave the world. He could not bear the idea of going out of the world under the imputations which were lying on him, and he asked for an opportunity to vindicate himself before his Maker.*⁴²

This is followed by the lâmed prefixed preposition (*to, for, concerning, with regards to*) and the phrase *a work of your hands*. This is followed by the Qal imperfect of kâçaph (ק ׀ צ) [pronounced *kaw-SAHF*], which means *to long [for]*. Strong’s #3700 BDB #493. This gives us: *You will long for [the] work of Your hands.* Job asked God before: “Is it right for You indeed to oppress and to reject the labor of Your ahnds...Your hands fashion and made me altogether and You would not destroy me? Remember now that You have made me as clay and would You turn me into dust again?” (Job 10:3a, 8–9). But the Psalmist wrote: *Let the glory of Y^ehowah endure forever; let Y^ehowah be glad in His works* (Psalm 104:31). And: *Y^ehowah will accomplish what concerns me; Your grace, O Y^ehowah, is*

⁴⁰ *The Complete Word Study Old Testament*; Dr. S. Zodhiates; ©1994 AMG Publishers; p. 1334.

⁴¹ *The New Scofield Reference Bible*; Dr. C.I. Scofield; ©1967 New York·Oxford University Press; p. 581.

⁴² *Barnes’ Notes, Job, Volume 1*; Baker Books, ©1996; p. 273.

everlasting. Do not forsake the works of Your hands. God had not rejected or forsaken the work of His hands. God was using Job as few men had been used, up until that point in human history.

**“For then my steps You will number;
You will not watch over my sin.**

Job 14:16

**“For then you will number my steps;
You will not pass over my sin.**

Let's examine a couple of other translations first:

Albert Barnes	For now thou dost number my steps; Dost thou not watch over my sins?
<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	But now You number each of my steps; and take note of my every sin.
<i>The Emphasized Bible</i>	For now my steps thou countest, Thou wilt not pass over my sin:
Keil and Delitzsch	For now thou numberest my steps, And does not restrain thyself over my sins.
NAB	Surely then you would count my steps, and not keep watch for sin in me.
NIV	Surely then you will count my steps but not keep track of my sin.
NJB	Whereas now you count every step I take, you would then stop spying on my sin;
NRSV	For then you would not ⁴³ number my steps, you would not keep watch over my sin;
Owen's Translation	For then my steps you would number; you would not keep watch my sin.
<i>Young's Lit. Translation</i>	But now, my steps Thou numberest, Thou dost not watch over my sin.

You will note how each different translation has just a slightly different nuance, a slightly different approach and interpretation; and some, the change in wording is quite significant. The first words are the conjunction *kîy* (Strong's #3588 BDB #471) and the adverb *ʿattâh* (Strong's #6258 BDB #773) (כִּעַתָּה) [pronounced *kee-gaht-TAWH*] together mean *for in this case, for then*; and after a protosis, *surely then* and possibly *indeed*. Keil and Delitzsch, naming Gesenius as their source, explain that these two words make up *the usual expression after hypothetical clauses* and that they would take the perfect tense if the preceding clause was a condition not existing in the past (Gen. 31:42 43:10 Num. 22:29, 33 I Sam. 14:30), and they would take the imperfect tense if the condition did not exist in the present (Job 6:3 8:6 13:19).⁴⁴ These are accompanied by the imperfect tense, so we render them *so then, for then*. The verb is the Qal imperfect of *çâphar* (פָּרַח) [pronounced *saw-FAHR*], which means, in the Qal, *to number* (Gen. 15:5 Lev. 15:13 23:16). Strong's #5608 BDB #707. What are numbered are Job's steps. *For then* refers to the future—Job's death—when God would call and Job would answer; when God desires to examine the work of His hands. At that time, God would number Job's steps.

Now this is not two lines; the remainder of this verse goes along with the preceding *for then*. There is no intervening conjunction; we first have the negative particle and the Qal imperfect of *shâmar* (שָׁמַר) [pronounced *shaw-MAR*] and it means *keep, guard, watch, preserve*. Strong's #8104 BDB #1036. This is followed by the preposition *upon, against, in accordance with, over* and the words *my sin*. This gives us: **“For then my steps You will number; You will not watch over my sin.”** I hesitate to interpret this. Part of the problem is that this is read one way in the Hebrew and written in another. The Greek of the Septuagint is slightly different from the Hebrew, which, in itself would mean nothing, but accompanied by the difference between what is written and what is read, could be significant. In some places we have the *not*, and in others we do not. There certainly could have been some dinking around with this verse, as it may have been found by others to be difficult to understand. Rather than to try to interpret it, they changed it. It is a difficult call in some disputed readings. Let me give the meaning as, in the future, God will be watching over Job's steps, but He will not take into consideration Job's old sin nature at that time (which will be eradicated from Job's body). In any case, Job is admitting that he has sinned and that he has an old sin nature. He has never misrepresented himself as being sinless perfection. The problem has always been that in relation to his sins, Job is receiving far too much discipline. Notice that I have given a completely different rendering to the less literal verse, going along with Rotherham. **“For then you will number my steps; You will not pass over my sin.**

Job has already asked: **“Do you have eyes of flesh? Do You see as a man sees? Should you seek my guilt and search after my sin? If I sin, You will take note of me and You will not acquit me of my guilt”** (Job 10:4, 6, 14). And

⁴³ The Syriac codex has the negative; the Hebrew Bible does not.

⁴⁴ *The New Brown-Driver-Briggs-Gesenius Hebrew-English Lexicon*; Hendrickson, ©1979, p. 473.

Job will ask: “Does He not see my ways and number all of my steps?” (Job 31:4; see also 34:21). The fact of God’s omniscience is found throughout Scripture: O Y^ehowah, You have searched me and You know me. You know when I sit down and when I rise up. You understand my thoughts from afar. You scrutinize my path and my sleeping. And You are intimately acquainted with all my ways. (Psalm 139:1–3). The ways of man are before the eyes of Y^ehowah and He watches over all his paths (Prov. 5:21). Y^ehowah of the armies is His name, Who is great in counsel and mighty in deed, Whose eyes are open to all the ways of the sons of men, giving to every one according to his ways and according to the fruit of his deeds” (Jer. 32:18b–19). “For My eyes are on all their ways; they are not hidden from My face nor is their iniquity conceal from My eyes.” (Jer. 16:17).

**“Sealed up in a bundle my transgression;
then You will plaster over my iniquity.**

Job 14:17

**“My mistakes have been sealed up together
and You will cover over my iniquity.**

V. 17 is a continuation of v. 16; we still have what God will do in the future. He will seal Job’s transgression in a bag. It can no longer be seen. Barnes: *It was common with the ancients to use a seal where we use a lock. Money was counted and put into a bag, and a seal was attached to it. Hence a seal might be put to a bag, as a sort of certificate of the amount, and to save the necessity of counting it again.*⁴⁵ What these are sealed up in is *ts’rōr* [pronounced *ts’ROHR*], which means *bundle, parcel, pouch, bag*. Strong’s #6872 BDB #865. In the ancient world, money would be counted, placed in a bag and sealed with the amount listed on the seal, so that it would not need to be counted again. Barnes: *the idea is, that they [Job’s sins] were counted and numbered like money and then sealed up and carefully put away. God had made an accurate estimate of their number, and he seemed carefully to guard and observe them—as a man does bags of gold—so that none might be lost. His sins seemed to have become a sort of valuable treasure to the Almighty, none of which he allowed now to escape his notion.*⁴⁶

Then, in the second line, we have the 2nd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect of *ṭāphal* (ṭָפַח) [pronounced *taw-FAHL*], which I first thought meant *to smear, to plaster*. When working with drywall, there are certain imperfections—that is, where the tape is originally laid down to cover the seams. In order to cover over this imperfection, plaster (drywall mud) is smoothed over it. I am certain that in the ancient world, there was an analogous situation and they had a similar compound to cover over the imperfections found on the walls of their homes. Job’s imperfection will also be covered over. I must admit having some misgivings at my first run at this word when reading Barnes, which caused me to investigate further in my word. This is found only in two other places: Job 13:4 and Psalm 119:69. We have seen those two passages rendered as *forgers* of lies (or, of a lie) in the KJV. So you know there is another interpretation of the meaning of this word, Gesenius says it can mean *to patch, to sew together, to weave together*. In the two other verses, the use *weaving together lies* suits the context of the passages fine. Gesenius adds the figurative meaning *to frame*. Strong’s #2950 BDB #381. What is covered over [or, what is weaved together or framed] is *ʿāvôn* (אָוֹן) [pronounced *gaw-VONE*], which means *trespass, offense, transgression, wrongdoing, or guilt* would be reasonable translations. Strong’s #5771 BDB #730. Here, I would go with the *guilt* associated with Job’s personal sins. Although God has observed Job’s every movement, and has accounted for all of Job’s sins, God has sealed these sins up and their imperfection has been covered over. However, the sins and the guilt is still there—it has just been covered over. There are two opposing views on this verse: (1) that Job’s sins and guilt were covered over, not to be seen again; or, (2) Job’s sins and guilt were bundled together and now being brought out to be used against him. The pessimism of the final verses seems to indicate that the latter interpretation is more accurate.

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⁴⁵ Barnes’ Notes, Job, Volume 1; Baker Books, ©1996; pp. 273–274.

⁴⁶ Barnes’ Notes, Job, Volume 1; Baker Books, ©1996; p. 274.

God's Constant Pressure upon Man Wears Him Down to Nothing

In these final verses of this chapter, Job's pessimism does not arise *from the skepticism about the possibility of resurrection from the dead, but rather from God's apparent unwillingness to do something immediately for a person like him, whose life has become a nightmare of pain and mourning.*⁴⁷

**“And yet a mountain falling drops down
[of, And yet a falling mountain languishes]
and a rock is moved from its place.** Job 14:18

**“And yet a falling mountain languishes
and a rock is moved from its proper place.**

What Job was saying before was fairly easy to understand and to interpret. Now he will get all metaphorical on us. We begin with a wâw conjunction and the adverb ʾûlâm (אֵלַם) [pronounced oo-LAWM], which means *but, but indeed, yet, however*; it is a very strong adversative. The wâw conjunction just moves the action along, so to speak. Strong's #199 BDB #19. The next phrase is *a mountain falling*; it is followed by the 3rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect of nâḇvêl (נָבַל) [pronounced naw-^BVAIL], which means *to sink down, to drop down, to languish, to wither and fall, to fade*. Being more specific, ❶ In relation to leaves and flowers, it means *to become withered, faded* (Psalm 1:3 Isa. 1:30 Ezek. 47:12); ❷ it is used figuratively of men—*to fall down, to faint, to lose strength* (Ex. 18:18 Psalm 18:46 Isa. 24:4); ❸ it means *to be foolish, to act foolishly*; that is, withering and decay are applied to folly and impiety, just as strength is applied to virtue and piety (Prov. 30:32). The Piel provides a couple more meanings. Strong's #5034 BDB #615.

We should examine that second line more carefully:

<i>The Emphasized Bible</i>	Or a rock moved out of its place;
Dr. Goode	And the rock is removed from its place.
Keil and Delitzsch	And a rock falleth from its place.
NASB	And the rock moves from its place.
<i>Young's Translation</i>	And a rock is removed from its place.

This line begins with the words *and a rock*; this is the same word used of Y^ehowah, the God of Israel (Psalm 31:3 Isa. 17:10). The main verb is the Qal imperfect of ʾâthaq (אָתַק) [pronounced ʾaw-THAHK], and it means *to move, to advance, to proceed*. Strong's #6275 BDB #801. We are used to placing the subject prior to a verb and rock occurs prior to ʾâthaq. However, the Hebrew language often places the direct object first, then the verb, and then the subject. A rock is the correct gender and number to be the subject, but the verb is not necessarily a passive verb—that is, is not in the Niphal stem. However, the action of the verb can be performed upon a direct object. What the rock is moved from is its mâqôwm (מְקוֹמָם) [pronounced maw-KOHM], which is its *place*; or where something is *situated* or *placed* or where something belongs. Strong's #4725 BDB #879. This gives us either: *...and a rock is moved from its place*; or, *...and He moves a rock from its place*. How do we know which to prefer? In the context of this passage, Job refers to God in the 2nd person masculine singular, throughout (v. 17 and v. 19); so if Job is referring to God moving the rock, then we would expect a 2nd person masculine singular here. However, that is not what we have; therefore, the first translation is the most accurate.

Barnes: *The sense of this is, that the hope of man in regard to living again, must certainly fail—as a mountain falls and does not rise again; as the rock is removed, and is not replaced; or as the waters wear away the stones, and they disappear. The hope of dying man was not like the tree that would spring up again; it was like the falling mountain, the wasting waters, the rock that was removed. The reference in the phrase before us is, probably, to a mountain that settles down and disappears—as is sometimes the case in violent convulsions of nature. It does not rise again, but is gone to re-appear no more. So Job says it was of man...[an] earthquake shakes [the rock]...and removes it from its foundation, and it is not replaced.*⁴⁸

⁴⁷ *The NIV Study Bible*; ©1995; p. 741.

⁴⁸ *Barnes' Notes, Job, Volume 1*; Baker Books, ©1996; p. 274.

**“Water wears away stones,
its outpourings wash away [dry] dust of earth
and You [cause to] destroy a hope of [fallen]
man.** Job 14:19

**“Water wears away even stones;
and a downpour washes away the soil of the
earth;
so You wear away at and destroy the hope of
fallen man.**

The first and third lines are fairly easy to work with; the middle line is the difficult one, as the text appears to be dubious at this point. Let's see what others have done with vv. 18–19:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	But as a mountain, if it falls, crumbles to nothing, and as the rock is removed out of its place; As waters wear away the stones, and as floods wash away the soil of the earth; so You, <i>O Lord</i> , destroy the hope of man.
<i>The Emphasized Bible</i>	But in very deed a mountain falling will lie prostrate, Or a rock moved out of its place: Stone ave been hollowed out by waters. The floods thereof was away the dust of the earth, And the hope of mortal man thou hast destroyed:
Keil and Delitzsch	But a falling mountain moveth indeed, And a rock falleth from its place. Water holloweth out stone, Its overflowings carry away the dust of the earth, And the hope of man—Thou destroyest.
NIV	“But as a mountain erodes and crumbles and as a rock is moved from its place, as water wears away stones and torrents wash away the soil, so you destroy man’s hope.
NJB	Alas! Just as, eventually, the mountain falls down, the rock moves from its place, water wears away the stones, the cloudburst erodes the soil; so you destroy whatever hope a person has.
NWT	However, a mountain itself, falling, will fade away, And even a rock will be moved away from its place. Water certainly rubs away even stones; Its outpouring washes off death’s dust. So you have destroyed the very hope of mortal man.
REB	Yet as a falling mountaside is swept away, and a rock is dislodged from its place, as water wears away stone, and a cloudburst scours the soil from the land, so you have wiped out the hope of frail man;
<i>Young’s Lit. Translation</i>	And yet, a falling mountain wasteth away, And a rock is removed from its place. Stones have waters worn away, Their outpourings wash away the dust of earth, And the hope of man, Thou hast destroyed.

The overall picture here is the natural erosion of things—things that we would view as permanent, but which are eroded by the elements—so God erodes the hope of man. The first line is set up in typical Hebrew fashion, and should read: *Waters wear away stones*. The second line is difficult because of the problems with agreement between subject and verb and because the reading is disputed. The verb is the 3rd person feminine singular, Qal imperfect of *shâṭaph* (שָׁטַף) [pronounced *shaw-TAHF*], which means *to overflow, to rinse off, to wash off*; its substantive cognate means *flood* (literally or metaphorically). Strong’s #7857 BDB #1009. Our problem is matching this up with a subject. Often when we don’t have a match up, we may substitute in the subject *it*; but this is not the case here. *Water* and *stones* were both in the masculine plural. What follows is the masculine plural substantive, with a feminine singular suffix, of *câphîyach* (כַּפִּיָּיִךְ) [pronounced *saw-FEE-ahkh*], which means *outpourings, growth from spilled kernels*. Strong’s #5599 BDB #705. Both Owen and BDB point out that the text is dubious here. This would give us *her outpourings*; however, it could not be the subject of the verb. This is followed by the phrase *[dry] dust* (masculine singular) *of earth* (feminine singular). We will take great liberties here and render this as *a downpour washes away the soil of the earth*. Barnes: *By their constant attrition they wear away even the hard rocks, and they disappear, and return no more. The sense is, that constant changes are going on in nature, and man resembles those objects which are removed to appear no more, and not the productions of the vegetable world that spring up again.*⁴⁹

⁴⁹ Barnes’ Notes, *Job, Volume 1*; Baker Books, ©1996; p. 274.

Finally, we have Job's point, which ties together what he has been saying. The third line begins with the feminine singular substantive construct of *tîq^êvâh* (תִּקְוָה) [pronounced *tik^e-VAW*] and it means *hope, expectation, that which is waited for, that which is expectantly looked for*. Strong's #8615 BDB #876. This is the *hope of* and we have the masculine singular of *ʿênôwsh* (אָנוּשׁ) [pronounced *en-OHSH*], which means *mortal, mortal man, mankind; and possibly, feeble man; man liable to disease and calamity, fallen man, depraved man*. Strong's #582 BDB #60. This gives us *[the] hope of [fallen] man*. This is the object of the verb. The verb is the 2nd person masculine singular, Hiphil perfect of *ʿâ^bvad* (אָבַד) [pronounced *aw^b-VAHD*] which means in, the Hiphil, *to cause to languish, to cause the destruction of, to put to death*. 24:19 Joshua 7:7). Strong's #6 BDB #1. Again, this pulls together the entire meaning of Job's metaphorical trip. Just as natural occurrences in nature cause the erosion of the earth, so God causes the destruction of the hope and expectation of man through His relentless pounding away. Keil and Delitzsch: *The figures represent the slow but inevitable destruction wrought by the elements on the greatest mountains, on rocks, and on the solid earth. And if he poet of man's lot, how many more appropriate illustrations, in which nature seems to come forth as with new life from the dead, were at his command!*⁵⁰

Keil and Delitzsch: . *If it is not possible in nature for mountains, rocks, stones, and the dust of the earth to resist the force of the elements, so is it an easy thing for God to destroy the hope of a mortal all at once. He forcibly thrust him hence from this life; and when he is descended to Hades, he knows nothing of the living, nothing remains to him but the senseless pain of his dead body, which is gnawed away, and the dull sorrow of his soul, which continues but a shadowy life in Sheôl.*⁵¹

This is obviously not something that Job would have said a year or two ago. In fact, he could not have imagined saying something like this while he was in prosperity. He has just been taken down so far that he sees the world in a totally different light now. *"My days are swifter than a weaver's shuttle, and come to an end without hope."* (Job 7:6). Barnes: *If Job had at times a hope of a future state, yet that hope seems at times, also, wholly to fail him, and he sinks down in utter despondency. At best, his views of the future world were dark and obscure. He seems to have had at no time clear conceptions of heaven—of the future holiness and blessedness of the righteous; but he anticipated, at best, only a residence in the world of disembodied spirits—dark, dreary, said;—a world to which the grave was the entrance, and where the light was as darkness. With such anticipations, we are not to wonder that his mind sank into despondency.*⁵² What Barnes does not give enough attention to, at least in this passage, is the pain and grief that Job is at present suffering, which has certainly colored his state of mind.

In the next three verses, we have a major problem in interpretation. Is Job speaking of the death of a man or is he speaking of man once God has beaten him down to nothing? What might be helpful is to list these three verses first, get a general idea of the context, and then take them verse by verse:

"You will overpower him forever so then he goes changing his faces and then you dismiss him.	Job 14:20	"You continue to overpower man so that he leaves this life with a changed countenance; and so you dismiss him contemptuously.
His sons are heavy [or, are honored] and he does not know; and they are small and he does not attend to them.	Job 14:21	He is not aware of when his sons are honored; and if they lead lives of little consequence, he cannot guide them.
Only his body over [or, upon] him is in pain and his soul over [or, upon] him mourns."	Job 14:22	Only his body which he wears is in pain and the soul within him cries."

⁵⁰ Keil & Delitzsch's *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. IV, p. 371.

⁵¹ Keil & Delitzsch's *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. IV, p. 379.

⁵² *Barnes' Notes, Job, Volume 1*; Baker Books, ©1996; p. 275.

V. 20 sounds as though it could refer to dying or just being worn down to nothing due to the constant pressures of God in life; v. 21 sounds as though either the man is dead and no longer able to watch over the lives of his sons; and v. 22 does not seem to go along with death. Now the last is my own personal prejudice. There is no pain or grief after death; however, that does not mean that Job realizes that. I think that the gist of the first two verses should lead us to reconciling the third verse with what we understand about death. In the pain and misery that Job is in, he sees death as just being a continuation of that pain and misery. Now let's take these verse by verse:

**“You will overpower him forever
so then he goes changing his faces
and then you dismiss him.**

Job 14:20

**“You continue to overpower man so that he
leaves this life with a changed countenance;
and so you dismiss him contemptuously.**

For much of the previous few chapters, Job has not been too difficult to grasp. However, the translation here becomes difficult. Therefore, we shall look at what has come before.

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	You prevail forever against him, and he passes on; You change his appearance [in death], and send him away [from the presence of the living].
<i>The Emphasized Bible</i>	Thou dost overpower him utterly and he departeth, Disfiguring his face so has thou sent him away.
Keil and Delitzsch	Thou seizest him for ever, then he passeth away; Thou changest his countenance and castest him forth.
NAB	“Thou dost forever overpower him and he departs; <i>Thou</i> dost change his appearance and send him away.
NJB	You crush him one for all, and he is gone; first you disfigure him, then you dismiss him.
REB	...finally you overpower him, and he is gone; with changed appearance he is banished from your sight.
TEV	You overpower a man and send him away forever; his face is twisted in death.
<i>Young's Lit. Translation</i>	Thou prevailed <i>over</i> him for ever, and he goeth, He is changing his countenance, And Thou sendest him away.

The first verb is the 2nd masculine singular, with a 3rd person masculine singular suffix, Qal imperfect of tâqêph (תקף) [pronounced *taw-KAIF*], and it means *to overpower, to prevail over*. Keil and Delitzsch make the argument that this means *seize*; however, the verses they quote (Job 15:24 Eccl. 4:12) do not justify that translation. Strong's #8630 BDB #1075. Quite simply, this would be translated *you overpower him*. *Him* refers to man from the previous verse. This is followed by the lâmed preposition and the word nêtsach (נצח) [pronounced *NAY-tsahkh*], which means *eminence, enduring, everlastingness, perpetuity*; and it is generally rendered *forever*. Strong's #5331 BDB #664. This overpowering by God refers to death, which is forever. Keil and Delitzsch: This verse does not refer to the many sufferings which God inflicts upon man during the course of his life, continually, without intermission. What this verse refers to is that *God gives him the death-stroke which puts an end to his life for ever*.⁵³

The second line begins with the wâw consecutive and the 2nd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect of hâlak^e (הלך) [pronounced *haw-LAHK^e*] means *to go, to come, to walk*. Strong's #1980 (and #3212) BDB #229. This is followed by the masculine singular, Piel participle of shânâh (שנה) [pronounced *shaw-NAW*], which means *to change*; BDB adds that it can mean the withering of a face, naming this passage in particular. Strong's #8138 BDB #1039. What follows is *his face*, giving us *You overpower him forever, and then he goes, changing his face*.⁵⁴

The third line begins with the wâw consecutive and the 2nd person masculine singular, with a 3rd person masculine singular suffix, Piel imperfect of shâlach (שלח) [pronounced *shaw-LAHKH*], which means *to send, to send forth, to send away, to dismiss*. Strong's #7971 BDB #1018.

⁵³ Partially quoted and partially paraphrased from Keil & Delitzsch's *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. IV, p. 373.

⁵⁴ As has been mentioned many times in the past, *face* in the Hebrew is always found in the plural, like our word *pants*.

For most healthy and happy babies, they come into this life, and after a little disputation with the entire process, smile and laugh and it takes but a happy face to make them smile as well. However, as life wears on a man; as God overpowers him and prevails over him, his countenance changes; he becomes hurt, sullen, unhappy, tired. The sadness can be seen in his face. And then God simply dismisses him. Job feels as though God has overpowered him and then has simply dismissed him without even a second thought. **“He will not return again to his house, nor will his place know him any more.”** (Job 7:10).

“His sons are heavy [or, are honored] and he does not know; and they are small and he does not attend to them.

Job 14:21

“He is not aware of when his sons are honored; and if they lead lives of little consequence, he cannot guide them.

V. 21 begins with a verb; the 3rd person masculine plural, Qal imperfect of *kâ^bvêd* (כָּבַד) [pronounced *kaw^b-VADE*], and this appears to be one of those word which is a true homonym. It has several different meanings: ❶ *to be heavy*, but this word is rarely used this way (Job 6:3 is probably the only occurrence with only this meaning and inference). Its use tends to be more figurative, e.g., ❷ *to be honored* (Job 14:21 Isa. 66:5 Ezek. 27:25); ❸ *to be great, vehement, plentiful, of enormity of wickedness* (Gen. 18:20 Judges 20:34 Neh. 5:18); ❹ (a) *to be troublesome, burdensome* when followed by *ʿal* (עַל) [pronounced *a*], e.g., *the wrath of God is heavy upon*. (II Sam. 13:25 Neh. 5:18 Isa. 24:30); (b) *heavier than, more burdensome than* when followed by *ʿal* (עַל) [pronounced *a*]; ❺ *indolence, dullness* and to any hindrance of the senses (Gen. 48:10 Isa. 59:1). And these are only the Qal meanings. That this word is undoubtedly used in a positive sense, is clear in Ex. 20:12 a Piel use (and Isa. 26:15, a Niphal use); and that it has a negative connotation is also unquestionable (Ex. 8:32 9:34, Hiphil uses). Strong's #3513 BDB #457.

The first line is a compound sentence and not two separate thoughts. The remainder reads: *and he does not know*—we have here the 3rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect of *yâdaʿ* (יָדָע) [pronounced *yaw-DAHG*], a verb which means *to know*. Strong's #3045 BDB #393. Eccl. 9:5 reads: **For the living know they will die; but the dead do not know anything, nor have they any longer a reward, for their memory is forgotten.** And Job 21:21: **“For what does he care for his household after him when the number of his months has been cut off?”** Keil and Delitzsch: *When he is descending into Hades he knows nothing more of the fortune of his children.*⁵⁵ Barnes: *He is unacquainted with what is passing on the earth. Even should that occur which is most gratifying to a parent's heart; should his children rise to stations of honour and influence, he would not be permitted to enjoy the happiness which every father feels when his sons do well. This is suggested as one of the evils of death.*⁵⁶

The next line begins with the *wâw* conjunction and the 3rd person masculine plural, Qal imperfect of *tsâʿar* (צָעַר) [pronounced *tsaw-GAHR*], which means *to be insignificant, to become insignificant, to be small, to be despicable*. Strong's #6819 BDB #858. In the second part of this line, we find the *wâw* conjunction, a negative, and the Qal imperfect of *bîyn* (בִּיַן) [pronounced *bean*], which means *to discern, perceive, consider, understand*. When followed by a preposition or an accusative, it means *to turn one's mind to, to attend to*. Strong's #995 BDB #106. This is followed by the *lâmed* preposition and the 3rd person masculine plural suffix. Our rendering: *And they become small and he does not attend to them*. Barnes: *He is not permitted to sympathize with them, or to sustain them in their trials. This is another of the evils of death. When his children need his counsel and advice, he is not permitted to give it. He is taken away from his family, and revisits them no more.*⁵⁷

When we look at each verse in depth, we sometimes miss the big picture. God puts so much pressure upon the average man that he even loses contact with his own flesh and blood. His sons, if they are honored or if they honor him—whichever, he does not know that. If they are insignificant or if they are brought low, man cannot attend to that either. He is under too much pressure and pain from God.

⁵⁵ Keil & Delitzsch's *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. IV, p. 373.

⁵⁶ Barnes' *Notes, Job, Volume 1*; Baker Books, ©1996; p. 275.

⁵⁷ Barnes' *Notes, Job, Volume 1*; Baker Books, ©1996; p. 276.

**“Only his body over [or, upon] him is in pain
and his soul over [or, upon] him mourns.”** Job 14:22

**“Only his body which he wears is in pain
and the soul within him cries.”**

Let's see how others rendered this last statement of Job:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	But his body [lamenting its decay in the grave] shall grieve over him, and his soul shall mourn [over the body of clay which it once enlivened].
<i>The Emphasized Bible</i> Keil and Delitzsch	But his flesh for himself is in pain, And his soul for himself doth mourn. Only on his own account his flesh suffereth pain, And on his own account is his soul conscious of grief.
NASB	“But his body pains him And he mourns only for himself.”
NIV	He feels but the pain of his own body and mourns only for himself.
NJB	He feels no pangs, except for his own body, makes no lament, except for his own self.
NWT	Only his own flesh while upon him will keep aching, And his own soul while within him will keep mourning.
Owen's Translation	Only his own body upon himself he feels the pain and he himself for himself mourns.
<i>Young's Lit. Translation</i>	Only—his flesh for him is pained, and his soul for him doth mourn.

This verse begins with the adverb ʾak^{e} (אָךְ) [pronounced *ahk^e*], which means *surely, certainly, no doubt, only, only this once*. It is often used in the restrictive sense, emphasizing what comes after over what comes before or restricting the action to what comes after as opposed to what comes before. Or, it simply acts as a restrictive adverb. Strong's #389 BDB #36. What follows is the words *his flesh* or *his body*. Then we have the preposition ʾal (אֲל) [pronounced *al*], which means, primarily, *upon, against, above, over*. Strong's #5920, 5921 BDB #752. The 3rd person masculine singular suffix is affixed to this preposition, giving us: *Only his body upon him...* I think that Job is using the preposition ʾal here in a very clever way. His body is over or *over-against* his soul; however, it is his body which is in pain *over (or, concerning) his own plight*. We find a repetition of that in the second line.

The main verb is the Qal imperfect of $\text{kā}^{\text{a}}\text{ʾa}^{\text{b}}\text{v}$ (כָּאֲבַו) [pronounced *kaw-AH^BV*], which means *to be in pain*. Strong's #3510 BDB #456. All he can concentrate upon is his body, which is in great pain. As we often find out, our bodies are subject to all kinds of vicious aches and pains. *For my loins are filled with burning and there is no soundness in my flesh* (Psalm 38:7). *For this reason my loins are full of anguish; pains have seized me like the pains of a woman in labor. I am so bewildered, I cannot hear, so terrified I cannot see* (Isa. 21:3). Much of Eccl. 12 describes the running down of the live body. However, this appears to refer to the pain of death while in the grave. As mentioned before, we do not suffer the kind of pain after the grave herein described. We are listening to Job coming to a crescendo spoken from a body and soul wracked with pain. It would appear to him that there might not be any relief from the suffering which he is under. Keil and Delitzsch: *The process of the decomposition of the obdy is a source of pain and sorrow to the departed spirit,—a conception which proceeds from the supposition, right in itself, that a connection between body and soul is still continued beyond the grave,—a connection which is assumed by the resurrection, but which, as Job viewed it, only made the future still more sorrowful.*⁵⁸ Barnes also interprets this as referring to pain while in the grave: *His body would be committed to the grave, and his spirit would go to the world of shades. The image in the mind seems to have been, that his flesh would suffer. It would be cold and chill, and would be devoured by worms. There seems to have been an impression that the soul would be conscious of this in its distant and silent abode, and the description is given of the grave as if the body were conscious there, and the turning back to dust were attended with pain. This thought is that which makes the grave so gloomy now. We think of ourselves in its darkness and chilliness. We insensibly suppose that we shall be conscious there. And hence we dread so much the lonely, a sad., and gloomy residence in the tomb.*⁵⁹

The next line begins with *and his soul*. Then we have a repeat of the prepositional phrase *over him*. Finally, we have the 3rd person feminine singular (to match with the subject *soul*), Qal imperfect of $\text{ʾā}^{\text{b}}\text{val}$ (אֲבַל) [pronounced *aw-^BVAHL*], which means *to mourn, lament*. Strong's #56 BDB #5.

⁵⁸ Keil & Delitzsch's *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. IV, pp. 373–374.

⁵⁹ *Barnes' Notes, Job, Volume 1*; Baker Books, ©1996; p. 276.

Keil and Delitzsch: *Thus the poet shows us, in the third part of Job's speech, a grand idea, which tries to force its way, but cannot. In the second part, Job desired to maintain his conviction of innocence before God: his confidence is repulsed by the idea of the God who is conceived of by him as an enemy and a capricious ruler, and changes to despair. In the third part, the desire for a life after death is maintained; but he is at once overwhelmed by the imagined inevitable and eternal darkness of Sheôl, but overwhelped soon to respecting a future life rises as a certain confidence over death and the grave; [his knowledge which comes forth from the conflict of his faith] anticipates that a better hope which in the New Testament is established and ratified by the act of redemption wrought by the Conqueror of Hades.*⁶⁰

To be honest, I was nonplussed as to how to end this chapter. Job has just spoken for three chapters and the last few verses seemed to be filled with such an inherent sadness and depression, that there seemed as though there could be nothing to say. However, Barnes adds: *What a flood of light and joy would have been poured on his soul by the Christian hope, and by the revelation of the truth that there is a world of perfect light and joy for the righteous—in heaven! And what thanks do we owe to the Great Author of our religion—to him who is “the Resurrection and the Life”—that we are permitted to look upon the grave with hearts full of peace and joy!*⁶¹

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⁶⁰ Keil & Delitzsch's *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. IV, p. 379.

⁶¹ *Barnes' Notes, Job, Volume 1*; Baker Books, ©1996; p. 276.