

Job 15

Author's Note: I put the book of Job down for several years, inasmuch as it was an exhausting book to exegete. Since then, my relevant library has almost doubled, and my knowledge of Hebrew has improved significantly. The result is that there is probably a great more detail to be found in these subsequent chapters. When I first took a run at this book, I was averaging perhaps somewhat more than a page per verse on translation, interpretation and application. With this chapter, I expected to spend two pages per verse, but, surprising only myself, I am still spending about the same amount of time and space on each verse as I did several years ago. A real change, however, is that when I first began the book of Job, I was less enthusiastic about appealing to other translators, and, whenever possible, did not list several other translations (in fact, I often grimaced to myself every time that I had to look at them). However, this time around, I have happily resigned myself to the fact that this Hebrew is difficult, and I will use all the help I can get. For that reason, I will offer the translation of others for most of the verses in this and the subsequent chapters.

Job 15:1–35

Eliphaz Speaks a Second Time

Outline of Chapter 15:

- vv. 1–6 “Should I waste my time replying to you? Your own words condemn you.”
- vv. 7–10 “There are men in my family who are as wise as you.”
- vv. 11–13 “Dude, what’s wrong with you?”
- vv. 14–16 All men are corrupt
- vv. 17–19 “This is what I have learned...”
- vv. 20–35 “This is what happens to the wicked.”

Charts:

- v. 12 Ancient Translations of Job 15:12b
- v. 12 Job 15:11–12 in the Hebrew and Greek
- v. 15 Should Job 15:15 Read *Holy One* or *Holy Ones*?
- v. 20 Eliphaz Reasons from Experience in Order to Distort Truth

Introduction: Job has spoken for three chapters and Eliphaz now speaks for the second time in Job 15. In fact, Eliphaz kicks off the second set of speeches, which will extend all of the way to Job 21. Now you may recall what Eliphaz said originally to Job—in Job 4, Eliphaz recognized the good that Job had done, but then quickly asked if anyone has suffered pain and torment without reason? Then Eliphaz relates to Job and the other two an experience which he had wherein he saw or felt some apparition, which then asked him, “Is anyone just before God?” This time, however, Eliphaz does not rely upon a personal experience, but upon what he has learned from the wisdom of his country (or, at least, that is the implication—Eliphaz nowhere states directly that what he relays herein is the teaching of his elders to him).

Also, with this second round of speeches, the mood shifts. Kelly: *The atmosphere becomes darker, the speeches of the friends more acrimonious, and the situation more tense. The theme now is the ultimate fate of the wicked. The friends are represented as following through their suspicion that Job is not an exception to the general rule but is in fact an illustration of its inflexible working, an example of the fact that the wicked are always visited with punitive suffering.*¹

Keil and Delitzsch: *In this second round of the friends’ speeches, we meet with no new thoughts whatever; only “in the second circle of the dispute everything is more fiery than in the first (Oetinger): the only new thing is the harsher and more decided tone of their maintenance of the doctrine of punishment, with which they confront Job. They cannot go beyond the narrow limits of their dogma of retribution, and confine themselves now to even half of the*

¹ *The Layman's Bible Commentary*, Vol. 8, Balmer H. Kelly, John Knox Press, ©1962, p. 91.

narrowness; for since Job contemns the consolations of God with which they have hitherto closed their speeches, they now exclusively bring forward the terrible and gloomy phase of their dogma in opposition to him. After Eliphaz has again given prominence to the universal sinfulness of mankind, which Job does not at all deny, he sketches from his own experience and the tradition of his ancestors, which demands respect by reason of their freedom from all foreign influence, with brilliant lines, a picture of the evil-doer, who, being tortured by the horrors of any evil conscience, is overwhelmed by the wrath of God in the midst of his prosperity; and his possessions, children, and whole household are involved in his ruin. The picture is so drawn, that in it, as in a mirror, Job shall behold himself and his fate, both what he has already endured and what yet awaits him...the final word of the admonitory conclusion of his speech: Job is to know that that which satisfies his inward nature is a fearful lie.²

In this second message, although Eliphaz has a significant introduction, he no longer praises anything which Job has ever done. Basically, Eliphaz feels that Job, first off, has talked way too long, and he believes that he, Eliphaz, has some significant things to say. Job insulted their wisdom, so Eliphaz will do the same—he will insult Job’s wisdom. Not only that, but Eliphaz will accuse Job of turning his own spirit against God. Now, Eliphaz will make some good points; it is correct that man is corrupt before God. However, his tie in is that man is corrupt before God, therefore, Job is corrupt before God and deserves the punishment that he is getting. Eliphaz does not follow this out to its logical conclusion, which would be that he and his other two friends should also be on the receiving end of God’s judgement. Finally, Eliphaz describes the evil which will befall the man who is against God. Again, he does not think this through—Job is suffering much greater pain than Eliphaz describes.

Eliphaz begins his speech with a lot of introduction. He can’t believe that Job had answers for his friends and himself—he just can’t believe that he is even arguing with Job about what appears to be so obvious. He will point out that Job’s words are a waste of time (v. 3) and that Job should recognize he condemns himself with what he has said (vv. 5–6). Eliphaz snidely asks Job if he is the only man who has any real wisdom, and then points out that he is just as knowledgeable as Job is, and that his tribe is as good a source of wisdom as Job’s (vv. 9–10). He then focuses on Job’s emotional state, and claims that what Job has said indicates that Job has turned his spirit against God (vv. 12–13). Eliphaz then gives Job an out, and states that which is true: man is corrupt before God; however, after making a valid observation, then Eliphaz will follow it up with an incorrect assumption—that God places no trust in His holy ones—i.e., His angels. Then Eliphaz finally launches into what he has to say, roughly half way through this chapter. He speaks of the wicked man in the third person. He is obviously speaking about Job. That Job has sinned is obvious to Eliphaz and the two others. The very proof of this is the suffering to which Job is subjected. However, Eliphaz couches his observations and assumptions in such a way as to not directly accuse Job of anything. However, at any time, you expect him to say, “And Job, thou art the man!” Pretty much all he says is that when a man is evil, he suffers greatly in this life. His years are numbered, and filled with pain (v. 20); he is destined for the sword (i.e., he is destined for a violent, painful death—v. 22); he wanders about looking for food and distress and anguish come upon him (vv. 23–24); because he has attacked God, God attacks him (vv. 25–26); his wealth will not endure (v. 29); he will not escape this horrible life (v. 30); emptiness will be his reward (v. 31); and he will die before his time, leaving no one to carry on his name (vv. 32–34). “Oh, yeah,” adds Eliphaz, “During all of this, he continually prepares deception.” (v. 35, which Eliphaz adds in anticipation of Job’s reply).

[<<Return to Chapter Outline>>](#)

[<<Return to the Chart Index>>](#)

“Should I Waste My Time Replying to You? Your Own Words Condemn You.”

Literally:

Smoother English rendering:

And so answered Eliphaz the Temanite, and said,

Job
15:1

Then Eliphaz the Temanite answered [Job] and said,

Then Eliphaz the Temanite jumped in to answer Job:

² Keil & Delitzsch’s *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. 4, pp. 394–395.

In I Chron. 1:35, we have an Eliphaz mentioned who may be equivalent to this man. He is the son of Esau, which would place the book of Job into a reasonable time frame (before the Age of the nation Israel—in fact, before the Law of God—yet after the flood). Esau lived over in Edom, and Teman appears to have either been a town or a people of Edom. The sons of Eliphaz included Teman. We discussed this earlier in Job 4, and went into great detail in I Chron. 1:35.

The bulk of the book of Job is the discussion between Job and his three friends (Job 3–31). There are three sets of speeches. Each of Job's three friends speak, and Job answers each one. Chapter 15 is the second round of speeches.

Of Job's three friends, Eliphaz seemed to be the most sympathetic and understanding. In Job 4–5, Eliphaz does not make any particular accusations. He does point out that men don't perish if they are innocent (implying that they perish in pain and suffering). He suggests that Job go to God and plead his case before Him. In his second speech to Job, Eliphaz is not as patient or easy on Job. The explanation for this is fairly easy. Eliphaz was the first to speak. They were all there to comfort their friend Job and offer whatever words of consolation that they could. However, in the back of their minds, they knew something had to have occurred. Job was not suffering for no reason. Certainly, each one wondered what Job's sin or sins were. If that could be determined, there was a possibility that they could rescue Job from his pain. Therefore, Eliphaz, as the first one to speak, would breach these topics gently. However, after listening to his other two friends and Job repeatedly assure them of his innocence, Eliphaz began to become a bit perturbed. This is why his second speech is more harsh than the first.

“Should a wise man answer knowledge of wind and fill east wind his belly.

Job
15:2³

“Should a wise man give an answer to windy [or, *spiritual*] knowledge and fill his belly [with] the east wind?

**“Should a wise man give an answer to such vapid knowledge?
Should a wise man, rather, just fill his belly with the east wind?**

Like much of the book of Job, it is a good idea to see what others have done:

CEV Job, if you had any sense, you would stop spreading all of this hot air.
NASB “Should a wise man answer with windy knowledge, And fill himself [lit., his belly] with the east wind?”
Young's Lit. Translation Doth a wise man answer with vain knowledge? And fill with an east wind his belly?

This verse begins with an untranslated interrogative particle and the masculine singular adjective *châkâm* (חָכָם) [pronounced *khah-KAWM*], which means *wise*. Here, it is used as a substantive for *wise man*. Strong's #2450 BDB #314. This refers to Eliphaz himself. Does he, as a wise man, need to give an answer to the worthless information which Job has just spewed? Is answering Job really worth his time?

Then we have the Qal imperfect of *ʿânâh* (אָנָה) [pronounced *gaw-NAWH*], which means *to answer, to respond*. Strong's #6030 BDB #772. Then we have the feminine singular construct of *da'ath* (דַּאֲת) [pronounced *DAH-gahth*] means *knowledge*. Strong's #1847 BDB #395. What follows is the feminine singular noun *rûwach* (רוּחַ) [pronounced *ROO-ahkh*], which means *wind, breath, spirit, apparition*. Strong's #7307 BDB #924. This gives us: **Should a wise man answer knowledge of wind [or, of spirit]?** My thinking is that this could be taken in two ways: *rûwach* could refer to *spiritual knowledge* or it could refer to *windy knowledge*. Context should guide us. When first spoken, I believe that the listener could take it either way.

With the second line, Eliphaz reveals the way in which he meant it—that what Job had to say was like the wind, *unsubstantial, vain, and changing*.⁴ I don't really see a way to reasonably translate this sarcasm and irony. Eliphaz

³ Rather than carry quotation marks all the way through, I will simply indicate who is speaking by the color of font.

⁴ *Barnes' Notes; Job, Volume 1*; F. C. Cook, editor; reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; p. 277.

continues this question with *and fill his belly with the east wind?* Job has already claimed to be wise (which he actually was—Job 12:3 13:2, 6). The point is that Job has been going on and on, and all he has produced is wind. Should Eliphaz, a wise man, actually bother to answer such wind? Should he not just as well fill his belly with the east wind? A modern and similar colloquialism would be, *you don't think I swallow all that crap, do you?* The image given in the second line is that what Job was passing off as knowledge was as unsubstantial as the east wind would be in filling a person with nourishment. Furthermore, *the east wind was not only tempestuous and vehement, but sultry and destructive to vegetation. It passed over vast deserts, and was characterized by great dryness and heat. It is used here to denote a manner of discourse that had in it nothing profitable.*⁵

After the first speech of Eliphaz, one of the things that Job said was, “Do you intend to reprove my words, when the words of one in despair belong to the wind?” (Job 6:26). Eliphaz answers that in this verse: *Should a wise man give an answer to windy [or, spiritual] knowledge and fill his belly [with] the east wind?*

Barnes: *The argument of Eliphaz here is, that the sentiments which Job had advanced were a sufficient refutation of his pretensions to wisdom. A wise man would not be guilty of mere talk, or of using language that conveyed no ideas.*⁶

**A refutation in a word will not profit
and words will he not benefit in them.**

Job 15:3 **[Will] a refutation with a word not profit [him]?
[With] speeches—will he not benefit in them?**

**Will it be unprofitable to refute with a word;
won't the words be beneficial in themselves?**

McGee: *My, they are really slugging it out with words in this intellectual foray. He [Eliphaz] says, “My goodness, Job, you certainly are windy. You're just doing empty talking.” Again you can see that he is not helping Job. Actually, he is attacking Job to try and break him down and make him confess. That is not the way to treat a man in trouble like Job is.*⁷

Let's look at our basic translations:

CEV	[they skipped this verse]
<i>The Emphasized Bible</i>	Disputing with discourse that doth no good, Or with speech, wherein is no profit?
KJV	Should he reason with unprofitable talk, or with speeches with which he can do no good?
NASB	“Should he argue with useless talk, Or with words which are not profitable?
NIV	Would he argue with useless words, with speeches that have no value?
Owen	An arguing in talk which will not profit or words with which he can do no good.
The Septuagint	...Reasoning with improper sayings and with words wherein is no profit?
<i>Young's Lit. Translation</i>	To reason with a word not useful? And speeches—no profit in them?

Now, you will note that the translators of CEV appear to be reading different manuscripts altogether than do the other translators. We begin this verse with the Hiphil infinitive absolute of *yâkach* (נָצַח) [pronounced *yaw-KAHK*], which means *to decide, to adjudge, to prove, to render a decision, to rebuke, to reprove, to correct, to refute*. Strong's #3198 (and #3197) BDB #406. Then we have *in a word*, followed by the negative and the 3rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect of *çâkan* (צָקַן) [pronounced *saw-KAHN*], which means *to be profitable, to be beneficial, to be of use, to be of service, to benefit*. This is actually a very difficult word, as Gesenius and BDB give such divergent meanings. However, in the Qal, *to be beneficial, to be profitable, to be of service*, and meanings which will work in every context where this word is found. Strong's #5532 BDB #698. One view is that Eliphaz

⁵ Barnes' Notes; *Job, Volume 1*; F. C. Cook, editor; reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; p. 277.

⁶ Barnes' Notes; *Job, Volume 1*; F. C. Cook, editor; reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; p. 277.

⁷ J. Vernon McGee; *Job*; Thru the Bible Books; ©El Camino Press, 1977; p. 90.

is asking whether his refutation will be of any benefit, given Job's long-winded response. Another view, which makes more sense, is that these two verbs refer back to the *wise man* of v. 2, which is a sarcastic referral to Job.

In the second line, we have the wâw conjunction and the feminine plural noun *millâh* (מִלָּהּ) [pronounced *mil-LAW*], which means *speech, utterance, that which was said*. It is in the plural here, meaning that *speeches, sayings or words* would be good one-word renderings. Strong's #4405 BDB #576. Then we have the negative and the 3rd person masculine singular, Hiphil imperfect of *yâ'al* (יָאֵל) [pronounced *yaw-GAHL*], which means *to profit, to avail, to benefit*. Strong's #3276 BDB #418. Then we have the *bêyth* preposition and the 3rd person masculine plural suffix. Because the verb is in the 3rd person masculine singular and the noun *millâh* is in the feminine plural, this means that the verb *must* refer back to the *wise man* of the previous verse (or to *word* in this verse). *In them* (or, *with them*) could not refer back to *millâh* (*speeches*) or to a *refutation* in a *dâ'vâr* (*word*), but it could refer back to both of them together. Putting this in the interrogative form takes us back to v. 2, where we actually have interrogatives.

Eliphaz is asking Job directly whether he, as a wise man, will benefit by his words and speeches. *It does not become a man professing to be wise to make use of words that are nothing to the purpose. The sense is, that what Job said amounted to just nothing.*⁸

Furthermore, you make void [reverential] fear and you diminish meditation to faces of God.	Job 15:4	Furthermore, you—you frustrate reverence and you diminish communication before God.
-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-------------	------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

**And you—you frustrate reverential fears
and you diminish communication with God.**

Our translations read:

CEV <i>The Emphasized Bible</i>	Your words are enough to make others turn from God and lead them to doubt. But thou wouldst take away reverence, And wouldst attain unto meditation before God.
NASB <i>The Septuagint</i>	“Indeed, you do away with reverence [lit., fear], And hinder mediation before God. Have you not, moreover, cast off fear, and accomplished such words before the Lord?
<i>Young's Lit. Translation</i>	Yeah, thou dost make reverence voice, And dost diminish meditation before God.

Eliphaz begins this next sentence with the conjunction *aph* (אֲפֹ) [pronounced *ahf*] and it means *in fact, furthermore, also, yea, even, indeed*. Strong's #637 BDB #64. Then Eliphaz takes off the gloves for just a moment; he uses the 2nd person masculine personal pronoun, which is the verbal equivalent of grabbing Job by the collar and saying, *listen up!* Then he uses the 2nd person masculine singular, Hiphil imperfect of *pârar* (פָּרַר) [pronounced *paw-RAHR*], which means *to break, to break into pieces, to make void, to make of no effect, to declare void, to bring to nothing, to take away, to avert, to violate (a covenant), to frustrate* in the Hiphil. Strong's #6331 and 6565 BDB #830.

What Job does is violates or frustrates or makes void reverential fear by his attitude and position. Barnes: *Job had not maintained a proper veneration or respect for his Maker in his argument. He had defended principles and made assertions which implied great disrespect for the Deity. If those doctrines were true; if he was right in his views about God, then he was not a being who could be revered. No confidence could be placed in his government; no worship of such a being could be maintained. Eliphaz does not refer here so much to what was personal with Job, as to his principles. He does not mean so much to affirm that he himself had lost all reverence for God, as that his arguments led to that. Job had maintained that God did not in this life reward and punish men strictly*

⁸ Barnes' Notes; *Job*, Volume 1; F. C. Cook, editor; reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; p. 277.

according to their deserts. If this was so, Eliphaz says, then it would be impossible to honour him, and religion and worship would be at an end.⁹

The next thing that Job does is the Qal imperfect of *gâra* (גָּרָה) [pronounced *gaw-RAHG*], which means *to diminish, to restrain, to withdraw*. It actually means *to shave off* [a beard], and therefore *to cut off, to take away, to detract, to withhold*. Strong's #1639 BDB #175. What Job is diminishing is the feminine singular of *sîychâh* (סִיחָה) [pronounced *see-KHAW*], which is said to mean *meditation, prayer, complaint, communication*. This word is only found here and in Psalm 119:97, 99. In Psalm 119, there is no way that this means *complaint* or *prayer*. Its verbal cognate means *to communicate*, therefore, some form of communication is involved. However, the psalmist calls God's Law and His testimonies his *sîychâh* all day long—therefore, it would be reasonable for this to mean *meditation, study, Bible study*—it is God's communication to man. Strong's #7881 BDB #967. This is followed, in the Hebrew, by *for faces of God*, a common expression which means *before God*.¹⁰

By Job's continual complaints and long-winded speeches, he voids reverence toward God and cuts off his personal meditation and Bible study before God. Job's position is that we are not always rewarded and punished as per our behavior here on earth—Eliphaz claims that this voids all meditation upon God and God's Word (whatever existed at that time which would have been considered Scriptural). In other words, the position that Eliphaz takes is much more crass than we might expect from the flowery language of the KJV. If there are not immediate rewards and punishments associated with a relationship with God, then a relationship with God makes no sense. This is how Job has voided reverence and meditation—what he says makes no sense. Why would anyone have a relationship with God if they were not rewarded for doing so?

Keil and Delitzsch comment: *Eliphaz does not censure Job for arguing, but for defending himself by such useless and purposeless utterances of his feeling. But still more than that: his speeches are not only unsatisfactor and unbecoming...they are moreover irreligious, since by doubting the justice of God, they deprive religion of its fundamental assumption, and diminish the reverence due to God...[Job's] speeches are mostly direct towards God; but they are violent and reproachful, therefore irreverent in form and substance.*¹¹

Barnes: *If God treated the righteous and the wicked alike, the one would have nothing to hope and the other nothing to fear. There could be no ground of encouragement to pray to him. How could the righteous pray to him, unless there was evidence that he was the friend of virtue? How could they hope for his special blessing, if he were disposed to treat the good and the bad alike? Why was it not just as well to live in sin as to be holy? And how could such a being be the object of confidence or prayer? Eliphaz mistook the meaning of Job, and pressed his positions farther than he intended; and Job was not entirely able to vindicate his position, or to show how the consequences stated by Eliphaz could be avoided. They both wanted the complete and full view of the future state of retribution revealed in the gospel, and that would have removed the whole difficulty.*¹²

**For teaches your iniquity, your mouth
and you choose a tongue of the crafty ones.**

Job
15:5

**For your iniquity teaches your mouth,
and you choose the words [lit., tongue] of the
devious ones.**

**Your personal guilt in this matter is telling you what to say;
so you choose the words of the devious.**

Some translations of v. 5:

⁹ Barnes' Notes; Job, Volume 1; F. C. Cook, editor; reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; p. 277.

¹⁰ Rotherham says this should be *unto God*, as per the Septuagint, but my version reads *before the Lord*. The Greek word found is *énanti* (ἐναντί) [pronounced *EN-an-tee*], which means *before, in front of, in the presence of, in the sight of, in the judgment of*. Strong's #1725.

¹¹ Keil & Delitzsch's *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. 4, pp. 380–381.

¹² Barnes' Notes; Job, Volume 1; F. C. Cook, editor; reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; p. 278.

CEV And your sinful, scheming mind is the source of all you say.
The Emphasized Bible For thine own mouth would teach thine iniquity, And thou woulst choose the tongue of the crafty.
 NASB "For your guilt teaches your mouth, And you choose the language of the crafty
Young's Lit. Translation For thy mouth teacheth thine iniquity, And thou chooseth the tongue of the subtle

We begin this verse with *kîy*, which Keil and Delitzsch explain is not affirmative, but confirmatory and explicative. The idea here is that Job's iniquity is the basis of his ideas—he is basing his theology upon his own iniquity and his mouth is saying whatever is necessary for personal vindication. He therefore chooses to speak like a crafty person. Our verb is the 3rd person masculine singular, Piel imperfect of *ʿâlah* (אָלַח) [pronounced *aw-LAHF*], which has several different meanings: it means ❶ *to accustom oneself, to become accustomed to, to familiarize oneself with something*; ❷ *to become tame* (use of animals who have become accustomed to man); ❸ *to learn* (from the idea of becoming accustomed to something); ❹ *to join together, to associate*. In the Piel, this means *to teach*. It is found in that latter use here and in Job 33:33. Strong's #502 BDB #48.

Then we have the difficulty of determining which is the subject, which may have been the intent of the speaker. What follows is *your guilt* (or, *iniquity*) and then *your mouth*. The first word is the masculine singular noun *ʿâvôn* (אָוֹן) [pronounced *gaw-VONE*], which means *iniquity, crime, offense, transgression, depraved action, guilt, punishment from wrongdoing*. Strong's #5771 BDB #730. In the Hebrew, there is no way to determine the subject of the sentence by position. This reads *for teaches your iniquity [or, guilt], your mouth*. Often, the subject and the verb agree in gender and number—however, both nouns so agree with the verb. Often, the sign of the direct object accompanies the direct object or we have a preposition in front of that which is not the verb—not so here. However, it makes little sense to read *Your mouth teaches your iniquity [or, guilt]*. God makes it clear who is guilty by His actions toward that one: *"He frustrates the plotting of the shrewd so that their hands cannot attain success. He captures the wise by their own shrewdness and the advice of the cunning is quickly thwarted."* (Job 5:12–13).

Keil and Delitzsch explain Eliphaz's reasoning: *[Job] pretends to be able to prove his innocence before God; and convinced that he is in the right, assumes the offensive...against those who exhort him to humble himself. Thus by his evil words, he become his own judge...and accuser...The knot of the controversy becomes constantly more entangled since Job strengthens the friends more and more in their false view by his speeches, which certainly are [false]...in some parts (as ch. 9:22).*¹³

In the opinion of Eliphaz, Job should be listening to his own guilt for whatever it was that he did. Instead, Job is choosing the words of the devious and crafty to make his self-justifying arguments. *"Not what enters into the mouth defiles the man, but what proceeds out of the mouth—this defiles the man...Don't you understand that everything that goes into the mouth passes into the stomach and is eliminated? But the things which proceed out of the mouth come from the heart, and those things defile the man. For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witnesses and slanders—these things defile man."* (Matt. 15:11, 17–19a).

Job's guilt, in the opinion of Eliphaz, should be teaching his mouth what to say. However, what is happening is his mouth is attempting to teach his guilt. To Eliphaz, and Job's other two friends, Job's guilt is clear and obvious. There are just no two ways about it. He is a wrong guy; Job is flat out guilty. Insofar as Eliphaz is concerned, Job keeps running at the mouth, trying to teach his guilt that he is not guilty. However, what should be happening is that Job's guilt should make it perfectly clear what he should say.

Job's very arguments argue in favor of his guilt before God (according to Eliphaz). What he says is the result of his guilt and iniquity. Job is demonstrating with each word that he is guilty before God for some sin or some series of sins. *A man can take a position or put forth certain arguments which belie the fact that he is destitute of true religion and that the life that he leads is an abandoned life. His opinions dishonor God just as much as his hidden life dishonors God.*¹⁴

¹³ Keil & Delitzsch's *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. 4, p. 381.

¹⁴ Paraphrased from *Barnes' Notes; Job, Volume 1*; F. C. Cook, editor; reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; p. 278.

Then Eliphaz tells Job what he does instead. We then have the 2nd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect of bâchar (בָּחַר) [pronounced *baw-KHAHR*] means *to choose*. Strong's #977 BDB #103. What Job chooses instead is the *tongue of* and then we have the masculine plural adjective ʿârûm (עָרוּם) [pronounced *aw-ROOM* or *gaw-ROOM*], which is rendered, in the KJV, *subtle* (Gen. 3:1), *crafty* (Job 5:12 15:5) and *prudent* (Prov. 12:16, 23 13:16 14:8, 15, 18 22:3 27:12). It means *forethoughtful, precognitive, anticipatory, farsighted, sagacious, prepared*. This adjective can be taken in the positive sense or in a negative sense, in which case it might better be defined as *shrewd, insidious* or *devious*. The antithesis of this word would be a person who would act on impulse (like Peter in the New Testament). Strong's #6175 (& 6191?) BDB #791. Job, instead of pursuing the arguments of a righteous man, has taken the position of a man steeped in guilt. “*You have not shown a disposition to ascertain and defend the truth, but you have relied on the art and evasions of subtle rhetoric.*” *His whole discourse, according to Eliphaz, was a work of mere art, designed to blind his hearers and to deceive them with a favorable opinion of his piety, and to give some plausible, but delusive and self-serving view of the government of God.*¹⁵

Eliphaz will be even stronger in his later condemnation of Job in Job 22:5: “*Isn't your wickedness great and your iniquities without end?*” He begins as the most sympathetic of Job's friends and eventually becomes Job's greatest detractor.

**Condemns you [as guilty], your mouth and not
I;
and your lips testify against you.**

Job
15:6

**Your [own] mouth condemns you [as
guilty]—not I;
your [own] lips testify against you.**

**You stand condemned by your own mouth, not by mine;
your own lips testify against you.**

Then Eliphaz uses the 3rd person masculine singular, Hiphil imperfect of the very interesting word, râshaʿ (רָשָׁע) [pronounced *raw-SHAH*], which means, in the Qal, *to be wicked, to act wickedly, to be guilty of acting wickedly*. A more modern rendering, albeit wordy, would be *behave in a reprehensible manner, to act in malevolence, to commit corrupt acts, to be guilty of same*. However, in the Hiphil, this word has a judicial edge to it, which helps to define the other use: it means, in the context of rendering judicial decision, *to condemn as guilty* (Ex. 22:9). Strong's #7561 BDB #957. What Job has done, according to Eliphaz, is condemn himself with his own words. Job accuses himself with every word that he speaks.

The second verb used is the Qal imperfect of ʿânâh (עָנָה) [pronounced *gaw-NAWH*], which means *to answer, to respond*. Here, it is used as a legal term, and means *to give testimony, to act as a witness, to stand witness against someone in a trial*. Strong's #6030 BDB #772. Eliphaz has been listening carefully to Job and will turn his own words against him.

Keil and Delitzsch: *Job suffers, therefore he is a sinner who has to make atonement for his sin; on the other hand, instead of being disconcerted by an unconditioned acceptance of this maxim, they are strengthened in it. For while at the beginning the conclusion was urged upon them only by premises raised above any proof, so that they take for granted sins of Job which were not otherwise known to them; now, as they think, Job has himself furnished them with proof that he is a sinner who has merited such severe suffering. For whoever can speak so thoughtlessly and passionately, so vexatiously and irreverently, as Job has done, is, in their opinion, his own accuser and judge. It remains unperceived by them that Job's mind has lost its balance by reason of the fierceness of his temptation, and that in its nature and grace have fallen into a wild, confused conflict. In those speeches they see the true state of Job's spirit revealed. What, before his affliction, was the determining principle of his inner life, seems to them now to be brought to light in the words of the sufferer. Job is a godless one; and if he does affirm his innocence so solemnly and strongly, and challenges the decision of God, this assurance is only hypocritical, and put on against his better knowledge and conscience, in order to disconcert his accusers, and to evade their admonitions to repentance.*¹⁶

¹⁵ Quoted and paraphrased from *Barnes' Notes; Job, Volume 1*; F. C. Cook, editor; reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; p. 278.

¹⁶ Keil & Delitzsch's *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. 4, p. 394.

[<<Return to Chapter Outline>>](#)[<<Return to Chart Index>>](#)**“There Are Men in My Family Who Are as Wise as You.”**

**Are [you the] first man born?
And to faces of heights, you were brought
forth?**

Job
15:7

**Were [you the] first man born?
Were you brought forth before the hills?**

**So, were you the first man born?
Were you brought forth from a difficult labor even before the hills?**

Wisdom is generally associated with age, and Eliphaz asks Job if he is simply the oldest man alive, given all that he is said, being the font of knowledge he demonstrates himself to be. As we have seen in previous verses, the interrogative is used only with the first question, but the second line is implied to be a question.

The second verb is the Polal¹⁷ perfect of *chûwl* (חול) [pronounced *khood*], which means, in general, *to turn, to turn around, to be twisted*. However, this word can describe the *writhing and travailing of giving birth* (Isa. 26:17 45:10 51:2). The short version for this meaning is *brought forth, born*. Strong's #2342 BDB #296. The Polal appears to be equivalent in usage to the Pual, which is the passive of the Piel (intensive) stem. So Job would receive the action of the intensified verb. Eliphaz uses this verb as a dig. Given how difficult Job is being now, this would indicate that he was probably a very difficult infant to give birth to.

Eliphaz asks if Job were the first man to be born, in sarcasm, given all that Job appears to know (or *thinks* he knows). Only a man who has observed life from the very beginning—who was created directly by the hand of God—could be as wise as Job is. Schlottman recalls a similar expression of the Hindus: *Yea, indeed, he is the first man; no wonder that he is so wise*.¹⁸ Interestingly enough, God will also ask Job a similar question. **“Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth?”** (Job 38:4a). What Job questioned, ultimately, was God’s wisdom in this matter, and God’s plan, with respect to its specifics, is more complex than we could ever hope to grasp. Eliphaz asks this question simply to point out that Job is not necessarily more wise than he is. God points this out for almost the same reason. The chief difference is that Job was wiser and more intelligent than Eliphaz, but far inferior to God.

Let me venture from the context somewhat by what we find here in the second line: **“Were you brought forth before the hills?”** This is a line which I have read several dozen times and never really given it much thought. We have a similar line in Psalm 90:1–2: **Y^ehowah, You have been our dwelling place in all generations, before the mountains were born or before You gave birth to the earth and the world—from everlasting to everlasting, You are God.** Like a thousand people before me, I had always read these two verses and simply placed the creation of the earth and the creation of the mountains as simultaneous. I have also, without giving much thought to it, considered the creation of hills¹⁹ and mountains to be the same event. This is not the case, however. When God caused dry land to appear above the depths of the ocean, that was the time that hills were created (we don’t know about the landscape known to the civilization of angels who probably occupied the earth prior to man). However, *hills* are not equivalent to *mountains*, nor are their creation dates identical. Mountains were created with the flood. During the flood, there was an unprecedented geological upheaval, that resulted in incredible volcanic activity as well as earthquakes, all of which resulted in the landscape that we have today, with the much higher mountains than the antediluvian civilization could have ever imagined. All of this will be covered in greater detail in Psalm 90.

¹⁷ Called the Pual by the New Englishman’s Hebrew Concordance.

¹⁸ Keil & Delitzsch’s *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. 4, p. 381. Keil and Delitzsch took it from Roberts, *Oriental Illustrations*; p. 276.

¹⁹ *Hills*, by the way, are lower than mountains (*The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon*; Hendrickson Publishers; ©1996; p. 148).

In a counsel of God have you listened?
And do you withdraw unto yourself wisdom?

Job
15:8

Have you listened to the private counsel of
God?
Do you take [all His] wisdom to yourself?

How you sat in on the private council of God?
Is God's wisdom limited to your alone?

Let's first see what others have done here:

CEV	Have you ever been present when God's council meets? Do you alone have wisdom?
<i>The Emphasized Bible</i>	In the secret counsel of God hast thou been wont to hearken? Or canst thou attain for thyself unto wisdom?
Keil and Delitzsch	Didst thou attend in the secret council of Eloah, and didst then acquire for thyself wisdom?
NASB	"Do you hear the secret counsel of God, And limit wisdom to yourself?"
The Septuagint	Or have you heard the ordinance of the Lord? Or has God used you as [His] counselor? And has wisdom come to you [only]?
<i>Young's Lit. Translation</i>	Of the secret counsel of God dost thou hear? And withdrawest thou unto thee wisdom?

I include the CEV because, you can actually look at the English and the Hebrew and see some sort of a relationship (which has not generally been true this chapter). We begin this verse with an interrogative and the masculine singular construct of *çôwd* (דָּוָד) [pronounced *sohd*], which properly means *a couch, a cushion*. In general, it is used to mean *a council, counsel*, because it refers to people sitting around in a group for conversation (Jer. 6:11 15:17). More specifically, its meanings are ❶ *a sitting together, an assembly [of friends, judges, of the wicked, of the Godhead]*; ❷ *A deliberation, a counsel*; ❸ *familiar conversation, familiar acquaintance* (Job 19:19 Prov. 55:15); ❹ *a secret* (Prov. 11:13 20:19 25:9 Amos 3:7). I mention all of these meanings, so that you can see where the translations above came from. Strong's #5475 BDB #691. The word for *God* here is *elôhah* (אֱלֹהִים) [pronounced *el-OH-hah*], a word for God or deity found primarily in Job (e.g., Job 3:4, 23 4:9, 17 5:17 6:4, 8, 9) and found scattered throughout the Bible in fewer than a dozen other places. Strong's #433 BDB #43. Barnes: *Here God is represented...as seated in a divan, or council of state; there is deliberation about the concerns of his government; important questions are agitated and decided; and Eliphaz asks of Job whether he had been admitted to that council, and had heard those deliberations; and whether, if he had not, [how] he was qualified to pronounce as he had done, on the plans and purposes of the Almighty.*²⁰ We know, as per the first two chapters of the book of Job, that there is an official counsel of God which meets. Eliphaz asks if Job sits in on these counsel meetings or if God meets with him alone and imparts to him wisdom. It is interesting that in the book of Job we have so many references to these meetings of God—as you will recall, the first and second chapters both had mention of a meeting between God and His angels (including the fallen ones, which was the basis for the remainder of the book of Job).

In the second line, Rotherham, based upon the Septuagint, offers an alternative reading to this. In the second line, the Greek verb is actually found 14 times in the Septuagint as a translation for 7 different Hebrew words. It is *aphiknéomai* (ἀφικνέομαι) [pronounced *awf-ik-NEH-oh-my*], which means *to come to, to arrive at*. Strong's #864. In the Hebrew, the verb is the 2nd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect of *gâra* (גָּרַע) [pronounced *gaw-RAHĠ*], which means *to diminish, to restrain, to withdraw*. When followed by the preposition *el* (אֶל), it means *to take in, to lay up, to put in store for oneself*. Keil and Delitzsch compare it to an Arabic word, which means *to suck in*. Strong's #1639 BDB #175. This is followed by *unto you* and the feminine singular noun *châk^emâh* (חַכְמָה) [pronounced *khawk^e-MAW*], which means *wisdom*. Strong's #2451 BDB #315. In the second line, the interrogative is continued and applied. This gives us: **Do you withdraw unto yourself wisdom [only]?** Given the rendering of the Septuagint here and the cumbersomeness of this translation, suggests that there might have been a different verb here originally, although that is not my personal position. The intent is fairly clear, in any case, and the NASB offers

²⁰ Barnes' Notes; Job, Volume 1; F. C. Cook, editor; reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; p. 279.

a reasonable interpretation *to limit*.²¹ Eliphaz is either asking Job (1) if he took to himself God's wisdom from these secret counsel meetings with Him) or, (2) if there is some special reason that wisdom belongs to him alone. The former is more in keeping with the Hebrew verb found here. Eliphaz's point is that Job is not the only person who has spiritual wisdom and understanding. What Rotherham offers doesn't make a great deal of sense, whereas the Hebrew verb does.

**What do you know and we do not know?
[What] do you understand and not to us him?**

Job
15:9

**What do you know that we do not know?
[What] do you understand and it [is] not to us?**

**What do you know that we don't?
What do you understand that we lack?**

The first part of this verse is fairly easy; the second line is a bit more difficult:

CEV	Do you know and understand something we don't?
<i>The Emphasized Bible</i>	What knowest thou, that we know not? [What] understandest thou, and the same is not with us?
NASB	"What do you know that we do not know? <i>What</i> do you understand that we do not?"
<i>Young's Lit. Translation</i>	What hast thou known, and we know not? Understandest thou—and it is not with us?

The first line is rather straightforward. In the second, we continue with the interrogative and the 2nd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect of *bîyn* (יָבֵן) [pronounced *bean*], which means *to discern, to perceive, to consider, to understand*. Strong's #995 BDB #106. This is followed by the *wâw* conjunction, the negative, the phrase *to us* and the 3rd person, personal pronoun, *him*. It actually should be rendered *it*, referring to knowledge or wisdom. Eliphaz is simply asking Job, what is it that he understands that they do not. Job has twice said that his knowledge is not inferior to theirs (Job 12:3 13:2); now Eliphaz asks what does Job know that they do not. This is easy sport, to kick a friend when he is down—to engage in an intellectual foray, when the other participant is sickly and in great pain. There is no comfort offered Job by Eliphaz—only self-justification for his own viewpoint. I don't know that anyone in this life realizes the great pain and suffering that Job was enduring.

**Both graying-haired and aged in us,
greater than your father [in] days.**

Job
15:10

**Both the gray-haired and aged [are] among us,
[who are] greater than your father [in] age.**

**There are men in my country who are wise due to their age;
they are, in fact, older than your own father.**

We find *gam* used twice in this verse, which means *both...and...* Then we have the Qal active participle of *sîy^{bv}* (שֵׂיִבָּ) [pronounced *see^{bv}*], which means *to be hoary, to be old, to grow a lot of white hair*. Strong's #7867 BDB #966. Here it is used to describe those who are among the people of Teman. The *aged* is added as a synonym. Those who were older, in an oriental world, were thought to be much wiser. The prepositional phrase, *bêyth us*, means *in us* or *among us*. Eliphaz says that there are those in Teman who are older than Job's father, the implication being that Teman is teaming with more wisdom than is Job's country of Uz. Therefore, Eliphaz has just as much right to make statements of truth as does Job. McGee takes it as though this is a reference to Bildad and Zophar—however, it doesn't make sense for Job's closest friends to be older than his father. Keil and Delitzsch: *Most modern expositors think that Eliphaz, "in modestly concealed language" (Ewald), refers to himself. But the reference would be obvious enough; and wherefore this modest concealing, which is so little suited to the character of Eliphaz? Moreover, v. 10a does not sound as if speaking merely of one, and in v. 10b Eliphaz would make himself older than he appears to be, for it is nowhere implied that Job is a young man in comparison with him...[Eliphaz is simply appealing] to the source of reliable tradition, since they have even among their races and*

²¹ I don't know if this is a valid meaning for *gâra* or whether there was originally another verb here.

districts mature old men, and since, indeed, according to Job's own admission (ch. 12:12), there is "wisdom among the ancient ones."²²

Bildad also made an appeal to Job to listen to what past generations have said. Please inquire of past generations, and consider the things searched out by their fathers. For we are of yesterday and we know nothing, because our days on this earth are but a shadow. Will they not teach you and tell you and bring forth the words from their minds?" (Job 8:8–10). Job also made an allusion to the wisdom of the aged: "Wisdom is with the aged and with long life comes understanding." (Job 12:12). And in this verse, Eliphaz claims that there are elders in his country who are also wise, whose wisdom, he implies, has been imparted to him. Interestingly enough, divine viewpoint will be presented by Elihu, a young man who is younger than them all, but in whom is divine wisdom (Job 32:1–7). He puts forth the correct viewpoint that wisdom is with the person in whom God has placed wisdom. In fact, Elihu says that wisdom cannot be equated with age (Job 32:8–9).

The Chaldee targum claims that the ones among them who are older than Job's father, who are the real aged, and who have wisdom, are Eliphaz and Bildad. It gives us interpretation along with the translation: *Truly Eliphaz, who is hoary-headed, and Bildad, the long-lived, are with us, and Zophar, who is older than thy father.*²³ Barnes does not agree, suggesting that this had become a public forum by this time—perhaps that, as they spoke, people walked by and politely listened, and then sat down in their presence to hear what else was said. This is reasonable for several reasons: (1) someone had to record what was said and the arguments which had been proposed. (2) Out of nowhere, Elihu, a younger man, speaks—and he indicates that he has been listening for awhile before speaking (Job 32:2, 6). What Eliphaz is suggesting, according to Barnes, is that among them, while they are speaking, are men who are older than Job's father, sitting around them, listening to their arguments. My own thinking is that, although there is a small crowd of men around them, that Eliphaz is referring to contacts which they have all had with older men and how they have all benefitted from the wisdom of these older men.

[<<Return to Chapter Outline>>](#)

[<<Return to Chart Index>>](#)

"Dude, What's Wrong with You?"

Small from you consolations of God
and a word gently with you?

Job
15:11

[Are] the consolations of God insignificant to
you
even a word [spoken] gently to you?

Are the consolations of God insignificant to you?
Is even a gentle word spoken to you unimportant?

At first read, I didn't know what to make of this, so...

The Amplified Bible

Are God's consolations [as we have interpreted them to you] too trivial for you? Is there any secret thing [any bosom sin] which you have not given up? Or were we too gentle [in our first speech] toward you to be effective?

CEV

And you have been offered comforting words from God. Isn't this enough?

The Emphasized Bible

Too small for thee are the consolations of God? Or a word spoken gently with thee?

KJV

Are the consolations of God small with thee? Is there any secret thing with thee?

NASB

"Are the consolations of God too small for you, Even the word spoken gently with you?"

Owen's Translation

Too small for you the consolations of God or a word gently with you?

The Septuagint

You have been chastised less than your sins deserve; you have spoken proudly beyond measure.

Young's Lit. Translation

Too few for thee are the comforts of God? And a gentle word is with thee,...

²² Keil & Delitzsch's *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. 4, p. 382.

²³ Taken from *Barnes' Notes; Job, Volume 1*; F. C. Cook, editor; reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; pp. 279–280.

We begin this verse with the interrogative particle and the adverb/adjective $m^{\epsilon}a\dot{t}$ (מַעַט) [pronounced m^{ϵ} -GAHT], which means *a little, fewness, few*. Strong's #4592 BDB #589. Most of the translators seem to be in agreement that we, in this context, would understand this as *too little or too small...?* The *mîn* preposition (*from, away from, out of, more than*) appears to be out of place here. Even the most literal of translators rendered this as a *lâmed* (*to, for*). Then we have the masculine plural construct of $tan^{\epsilon}chûwmôwth$ (תַּנְחִימוֹת) [pronounced tan^{ϵ} -khoo-MOHTH], which means *comforts, consolations*. Strong's #8575 BDB #637. This is affixed to *God*. It is obvious that the Septuagint reads much differently here. However, even certain versions of the Bible, e.g., *The Emphasized Bible* or the NEB, went with the Hebrew rather than the Greek in this verse. These *consolations of God*, were, insofar as Eliphaz was concerned, the words that he and his two friends were saying to Job. Number 1, they were doing a pretty crappy job of consoling Job; number 2, there are situations where even, *there, there, it will be alright* is meaningless—Job's situation was more horrible than anyone could imagine. Still, Eliphaz asks if these consolations are too small for Job—i.e., beneath his dignity and unworthy of his notice?²⁴

The next line is, literally, *even a word to gently with you*. After *a word* we have the *lâmed* prefixed preposition (*to, for*) and the adverb af (אֶף) [pronounced *af*], which means *softly, gently*. According to Barnes, the verbal cognate (if this is taken as one word) means *to wrap around, to muffle, to cover, to conceal*, and, therefore, *to make secret*. In every occurrence but one (I Kings 21:27), this has a prefixed *lâmed*, suggesting, possibly, that it may be properly spelled that way.²⁵ There are a couple of words which are spelled very similarly to this one and are possibly equivalent (see Gen. 33:14 Isa. 19:3). However, as combined with a *lâmed* preposition, this can mean *a gentle sound, a murmur, a whisper*. In I Kings 21:27, it refers to water gently flowing, so what we probably have here is the gentle flow of consoling words and words of divine wisdom from Eliphaz and company to Job. Strong's #328 BDB #31. The verb *spoken* appears to be implied here; it is possible that it dropped out of the original text.

What Eliphaz is saying here, and in the next couple of verses, is that he and his two friends have shown up to comfort Job and to offer words of consolation, as well as some divine viewpoint. What Job has done in response, is to answer them with rage and anger. *Eliphaz asks whether Job could despise or undervalue the words spoken so gently and kindly towards him...[even though there has only been] a singular illustration...of kindness, but still showing how the friends of Job estimated their own remarks.*²⁶ In reality, there have been few words of comfort offered to Job (see Job 4:1–6). Now, despite the poor job of comforting done by Eliphaz and company, that does not mean that we have a God Who does not comfort us. **Blessed by the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, Who comforts us in all our affliction so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God** (II Cor. 1:3–4). God's Word is important to our very fibre: **"I have treasured the words of His mouth more than my necessary food."** (Job 36:6b).

**How takes you [away] your heart
and how carries you away your eyes?**

Job
15:12

**How your heart carried you away!
And how your eyes flash [or, roll]...**

**You have been carried away by your own thinking,
and your eyes tell us...**

It is in this verse where we see how Job has responded to the *comforting words* of Eliphaz and company. However, first we will see what others have done:

The Amplified Bible

Why does your heart carry you away [why allow yourself to be controlled by feeling]?
And why do your eyes flash [in anger or contempt],

CEV

Your emotions are out of control, making you look fierce;...

The Emphasized Bible

How doth thine own heart carry thee away, And how thine eyes do roll!

NASB

"Why does your heart carry you away? And why do your eyes flash,..."

²⁴ Paraphrased from Keil & Delitzsch's *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. 4, p. 383.

²⁵ Barnes also treats this as a single word, rather than a word preceded by the *lâmed* preposition.

²⁶ *Barnes' Notes; Job, Volume 1*; F. C. Cook, editor; reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; p. 280.

Owen's Translation Why does your heart carry you away and why do your eyes flash?
 The Septuagint What has your heart dared? Or why do your eyes flash?
 Young's Lit. Translation What—doth thine heart take thee away? And what—are thine eyes high?

We begin with an interrogative/exclamatory particle *mâh* (מַה) [pronounced *maw*], which means *what, how*. (1) *Mâh* can also be used as an exclamatory adverb *how*; as in “[How incredible is this place!](#)” (Gen. 28:17b). (2) *Mâh* can also be used as an interrogatory adverb *how* to express that which is impossible, as in “[How shall we justify ourselves?](#)” (Gen. 44:16b). These two uses are often followed by an adjective or verb. (3) *Mâh* can also be used as an adverb of interrogation, meaning *why, wherefore*. Strong’s #4100 BDB #552. Then, the first verb is the very common 3rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect of *lâqach* (לָקַח) [pronounced *law-KAHKH*] which means *to take, to take from, to take in marriage, to seize*. Strong’s #3947 BDB #542.

In the second line, we have a minor problem. The verb is only found here: *râzam* (רָצַם) [pronounced *raw-ZAHM*], which means *to wink, to flash*. Because this verb is only found here, we can only guess at its meaning. Strong’s #9335 BDB #931. What the Septuagint offers is *epênegkan* (ἐπήνεγκαν) [pronounced *eh-PAY-neg-kahn*], and I could not find this with any of my reference books (I have several Greek lexicons and a Greek concordance specifically for the Septuagint, with a Hebrew-Greek equivalency index in the back). So I must go with the suggestions of others, which are *to flash, to roll*; and I think these definitions were taken simply because of the subject eyes. If you check out several translations at this point, you will note that we have no real consensus on the verb for this second half of the verse. Job’s eyes indicate to Eliphaz, that he is proud and arrogant. You know what an incorrigible kid does with his eyes when you explain to him that he has done wrong and there will be consequences—this is how Job appeared to Eliphaz. Eliphaz feels that Job has been caught red-handed—they don’t know what he did, but they know he obviously did it, and what he is going through is clear proof of that. When they call Job to task, he responds with the cultural equivalent of our rolling of the eyes (Keil and Delitzsch suggest a vibration of the eyelashes and/or eyebrows).

Ancient Translations of Job 15:12b

In Barnes, he gives us several older translations of the second half of this verse, which may be helpful to us.²⁷

The Vulgate	Why, as though meditating great things, do you have eyes of astonishment?
The Septuagint	Why are your eyes elevated?
Schultens	Why do thine eyes roll fury?
Luther	Why art thou so proud?

[<<Return to Chapter Outline>>](#)

[<<Return to the Chart Index>>](#)

Now let’s place the MT next to the LXX:

Job	Massoretic Text (Hebrew)	Greek Septuagint	Comments
15:11	[Are] the consolations of God insignificant to you; even a word [spoken] gently to you?	You have been scourged for few of your sins; you have spoken proudly and extravagantly.	There is really no reason to question the Hebrew here. It is obvious that the translator of the Greek was dealing with a different manuscript.

²⁷ Taken from *Barnes’ Notes; Job, Volume 1*; F. C. Cook, editor; reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; p. 281.

Job	Massoretic Text (Hebrew)	Greek Septuagint	Comments
15:12	How your heart carried you away! And how your eyes flash!	What has your heart dared? Or why do your eyes flash?	It is unclear whether the beginning particle is exclamatory or interrogative in the Hebrew. Note the difference in the verbs! The verb in v. 12b in the Hebrew is suspect.

Eliphaz presents Job as one who is wholly under the influence of his personal passion, instead of looking calmly and coolly at things as they are, and listening carefully to the experience and observations made by Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar.²⁸

**That you turn unto God your spirit
and you cause to go out from your mouth
[derisive] words.**

Job
15:13

**that you have turned your spirit against God,
causing [a plethora] of [derisive] words to go
out from your mouth.**

**that you have turned against God in your thinking,
causing a torrent of words to exit your mouth.**

Not only do Job's eyes reveal his arrogance and impertinence (in the opinion of Eliphaz, of course), but what he has to say does not speak well of his disposition either. We being this verse with the preposition *kîy* (כִּי) [pronounced *kee*], which means *when, that, for, because*. Strong's #3588 BDB #471. This continues the thought from the previous verse, and generally serves as the inspiration for the translation of the final verb of that verse.

The next verb and its subsequent preposition need to be examined:

The Emphasized Bible For thy spirit replieth against GOD, And thou bringest forth—out of thy mouth—words!

NASB That you should turn your spirit against God; And allow *such* words to go out of your mouth.

NLT ...that you turn against God and say all these evil things?

Young's Lit. Translation For thou turnest against God thy spirit? And hast brought out words from thy mouth;

The verb is the 2nd person masculine singular, Hiphil imperfect of *shûw* (שׁוּב) [pronounced *shoo*^b]; which means *to return, to turn, to turn back, to reminisce, to restore something, to bring back something, to revive, to recover something, to make restitution*. In the Hiphil stem, it means *to be caused to return, to bring, to be caused to turn back mentally, reminisce, to return something, to restore, to bring back, to regain, to recover, to make restitution, reconsider, think again, or to be caused to return*. Strong's #7725 BDB #996. What follows is not what we would expect. We would expect, from the many English translations, the *bêyth* preposition, which means *against*. What we have instead is a play on words. We have the preposition *el* (ל) [pronounced *el*], which denotes direction and means *in, into, toward, unto, to, regarding*. There is also a sense that this preposition is used which indications turning toward someone in hostility, allowing us the rendering *against*. We find this preposition first used this way in Gen. 4:8, when Cain rises up *against* Abel. Strong's #413 BDB #39. Given the verb and the preposition, this means *to turn toward, to turn unto, to turn to*. Then what follows is the noun *el* (אֵל) [pronounced *ALE*], and it means *god, God, mighty one*. Strong's #410 BDB #42. What Job is turning toward God is *his spirit*, but it is in opposition to God.

In the second line, we have the *wâw* conjunction and the 2nd person masculine singular, Hiphil perfect of *yâtsâ* (יָצָא) [pronounced *yaw-TZAWH*], which means *to go out, to come out, to come forth*. However, in this context it

²⁸ Paraphrased from *Barnes' Notes; Job, Volume 1*; F. C. Cook, editor; reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; p. 280.

occasionally means *to revert*. It is found well over a thousand times in the Bible. In the Hiphil, it means *to cause to go out, to lead out, to bring out*. Strong's #3318 BDB #422. This is followed by *from your mouth words*. The latter is the feminine plural of *millâh* (מִלָּה) [pronounced *mil-LAW*] and it means *speech, utterance, that which was said*; in the plural, *sayings, words*. This word is most frequently found in poetry, and it can figuratively mean *the object of discourse*, (particularly when used in derision). Strong's #4405 BDB #576.

What Eliphaz accuses Job of doing is, while sitting before them, turning his spirit towards God and then causing to come out of his mouth a ton of words which can only be taken as derisive toward God. Now, I am loathe to criticize Job. One of the things that always concerned me after learning something about the book of Job was that God could do the same to me (perhaps this is a secret fear held by all believers). I don't have to wonder much how I would fair—my thinking is that I would have none of Job's strength and character. That being said, I do criticize Job in theory only, not as one who would have done better. **A fool always loses his temper, but a wise man holds it back** (Prov. 29:11). However, there appears to be a reasonable anger, often referred to in Christian circles as *righteous indignation*, which is allowed. **And Elihu's anger...burned against Job, because he had justified himself, and his anger burned against Job's three friends because they had found no answer, yet they had condemned Job** (Job 32:2a, 2c–3).

In the past two verses, Eliphaz is simply asking Job, *where do you get off talking like this? How on earth do you allow yourself to go off like this?* In other words, Eliphaz is completely oblivious to Job's suffering. It was a real fact to him when he first arrived, but now his mind is so engaged, that he has completely forgotten about how Job's tremendous suffering could be, in part, the reason that he has said what he has, and the reason that he, when provoked by his friends, did not respond as one would when corrected.

[<<Return to Chapter Outline>>](#)

[<<Return to Chart Index>>](#)

All Men Are Corrupt

With this verse, we begin a lengthy exposition as to what the wicked man can expect. Eliphaz speaks of this man in the third person, although he is referring, certainly, to Job. Barnes suggests that Eliphaz is quoting a string of apothegms or that this is a portion of an ancient poem which Eliphaz is quoting at length.²⁹ Such a possibility is reasonable, as Eliphaz has just made mention of the wisdom of his tribe. Why not quote from this wisdom?

**What [is] man that he is clean
and that he is righteous, being born of a
woman?**

Job
15:14

**What [is] man that he is clean
or that he is righteous, having been born of a
woman?**

How can a man be clean before God or righteous, seeing that he has been born of a woman?

Now, Eliphaz makes a good point. We begin with the interrogative *mâh* (מַה) [pronounced *maw*], which means *what, how*. Strong's #4100 BDB #552. Then we have *man* and the 3rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect of *zâkak*^e (צָקַק) [pronounced *zaw-KAHK*^e], which means *to be bright, clean, pure* in the Qal, and *to cleanse* in the Hiphil. Strong's #2141 BDB #269. Job also asks if man can be considered righteous, using the 3rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect of *tsâdaq* (צָדַק) [pronounced *tsaw-DAHK*], and it means *to be righteous, to be just, to be justified*. Strong's #6663 BDB #842. The implication is that man is not clean and he is not righteous, the reason being stated with the masculine singular construct, Qal passive participle of *to bear*; the passive voice means that man receive the action of the verb. This is followed by *woman*. Eliphaz is echoing the words of Job from 14:1, where Job says, **“Man, who is born of woman, lives for a limited amount of time and in a life of turmoil.”** Eliphaz is almost repeated what he said back in Job 4:17–19 (however, there will be an important difference).

When we are born on this earth, we are born in sin. Eliphaz is not speaking in strict theological terms; or, more likely, he does not completely grasp the fact that a man born only of a woman would be born without an old sin

²⁹ *Barnes' Notes, Volume 3*, F. C. Cook, editor; reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; p. 276.

nature; a man born of a woman and a man will automatically have the old sin nature genetically transmitted to him at birth. This should not be surprising, as very few theologians know this and it is a mystery to 95% of those in the pews. However, what he is saying, and accurately so, is that man is corrupt before God. **How then can a man be just with God? Or how can he be clean who is born of a woman?** (Job 25:4). **Who can say, "I have cleansed my heart, and I am pure from my sin"?** (Prov. 20:9). **Indeed, there is not a righteous man on earth who does good and who never sins** (Eccles. 7:20). **If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us...if we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us** (I John 1:8, 10). That man is not righteous before God is evident to anyone who gives it some thought. However, this in no way explains why Job is in such incredible pain. However, my thinking is that this is not what Eliphaz is saying—let me be more precise, stating a true theological principle is not the purpose of what Eliphaz has said—he is coaxing Job to confess his hidden sin or sins. It is obvious to Eliphaz and his two friends that Job is under great discipline from God. In stating this, he hopes to loosen Job up a bit, indicating that they are all members of the same club, and now it is time to 'fess up. Recall, Eliphaz also has said, **"Remember, who has perished, being innocent? Have the upright been destroyed?"** (Job 4:7). So Eliphaz only buys into this **all have sinned and come short of the glory of God** just so far. Once he gets a confession out of Job, then he will turn around and say, "That's why you have been struck down by God!"

**Behold, in His holy ones He does not trust
and heavens [are] not pure in His sight.**

Job
15:15

**Look, He does not trust His Holy One
and the heavens [are] not pure in His sight.**

Listen, He does not trust His own angels nor are even the heavens uncorrupt in His sight.

Holy ones is the 3rd person masculine singular of the adjective *qâdôwsh* (קָדוֹשׁ) [pronounced *kaw-DOWSH*], which means *sacred, holy, set apart, sacrosanct*. When this adjective stands by itself, it functions as a substantive and should be rendered *saints, holy ones, set-apart ones, sacred ones, consecrated ones, those set apart to God*. Although here, this refers to God's angels, it also can refer to believers (Deut. 33:3 Psalm 106:16). Strong's #6918 BDB #872. Eliphaz is making the false statement that God places no trust in His angels.³⁰ He is telling Job that even the angels are not worthy of God's trust, so Job should not be upset about being filthy in God's sight. Now, this might sound familiar. Eliphaz, during his first discourse, made a similar statement; he had already said, **"He [God] puts not trust in his servants and against His angels, he charges error."** (Job 4:18). Now, it is possible that Eliphaz is *not* simply repeating himself, but saying something different.

Should Job 15:15 Read *Holy One* or *Holy Ones*?

For those who follow along in Rotherham's *Emphasized Bible*, you may read that this is written *holy one* but read *holy ones*. I am assuming that this means that in the manuscripts, this is in the singular, but long-standing tradition has this read aloud as a plural. When I read this, I thought to myself that Rotherham is wrong, because it says right in Owen's *Analytical Key to the Old Testament* that this is a masculine plural. Then I looked closer—even though Owen calls this a 3rd person masculine plural, it is actually a masculine singular noun (with a 3rd person masculine suffix, it is missing the *yodh*; plurals in Hebrew have an *-im* ending or an *-iym* ending; the *mem* is dropped when there is a suffix). In other words, what Rotherham has said in his footnote is true, and the Owen either made a mistake (and there are a number of them in his work), or he simply followed what was traditional, even though that is not what was in the text. This opens up an interesting train of thought, which also gives way to a different interpretation as to what Eliphaz is saying.

First of all, why would tradition have *holy one* as a plural, but written as a singular (by the way, it is in the plural in the Greek text, in case you were wondering)? The popular notion is that this should have been a plural all along, and that is how it was written in the original. However, somehow, during the subsequent transmissions of the text, the *yodh* was dropped out and later copyists refused to restore it, even if that is the way it was read in the synagogues—their refusal would be based upon it not being found that way in the text which they copied. Let me offer you another reason: what Eliphaz is saying is clearly blasphemous. If this is the singular, then he

³⁰ This might be interpreted as *believers*, of course; the principle is the same.

Should Job 15:15 Read *Holy One* or *Holy Ones*?

is saying that God does not trust even His Messiah. In a synagogue, in God's holy presence, this is so blasphemous that those reading His Word would not want to read this as it stands, so they added the pronunciation of the *yodh*, so that blasphemy would not come from their mouths in the presence of God. This is not a farfetched idea, by the way. Recall that God's proper name, Y^ohowah, was not spoken, even though it was in the text, due to its holy nature, and therefore, its pronunciation has been lost to history.

Therefore, what Eliphaz is saying is much stronger than we can imagine. He is not saying that God does not place His trust in His saints or in His angels—Eliphaz claims that God does not even place His trust in His Messiah, the Seed of the Woman, and therefore, Job should not be coy about his own corrupt nature. Such an assertion is clearly blasphemous. Eliphaz is not correct with all that he says, and this is a glaring example of where he is inaccurate. However, when you make a false argument, you need one or two false premises upon which to base the argument. To give you a modern example, the false premise of evolution is given for many of the anthropologic behaviors which we observe. For instance, that the male is the hunter-gatherer and the female is the mother-nurturer is supposedly based upon our pre-human ancestors. That we have some real future hope in human nature and human civilization is also based upon evolution, despite all the empirical evidence to the contrary.

[<<Return to Chapter Outline>>](#)

[<<Return to the Chart Index>>](#)

He makes a similar statement about the heavens, saying that they are not *zak*^e (זַק) [pronounced *zakh*^e], which means *to be unmixed, free from foreign substances; and therefore, pure, uncorrupted*. Strong's #2134 BDB #269. This is more or less a true statement, and Eliphaz, like many of those who intentionally lead others astray, mix a little of what is true with that which is false. We know that on the earth, we have a fallen earth; that somehow in original sin, the earth became corrupted as well. I assume that the heavens also suffer decay. However, this is sort of meaningless. Furthermore, all Eliphaz is doing is trying to get Job to confess to some secret wrong of his.

When I read this verse, I think of the show *Law and Order* and Lenny is grilling some perp at the station, and he is saying, "You know, if you committed that crime, but there were these extenuating circumstances, most people would have done the same thing." He gives his suspects an out—this is normal human behavior to feel that way. Eliphaz is doing this to Job; he has already said, "Even the angels are not pure before God and even His heavens are not clean in His sight." And now he is saying, "Not even God's Holy One is trustworthy, so, Job, you might as well confess what it is that you've done—nothing is pure before God." Recognize this statement is simply being an example of manipulation on the part of Eliphaz.

**In fact, that a corrupted one and a [morally]
tainted one;
a man drinking like the waters iniquity?**

Job
15:16

**How much less [someone who is] corrupted
and tainted;
man drinks iniquity as [he drinks] water.**

**Furthermore, how much less is a man who is corrupt and tainted;
a man who drinks iniquity like he drinks water.**

Then Eliphaz uses the conjunction *ʾaph* (אֲפ) [pronounced *ahf*] and it means *also, yea, even, indeed*. It is often found in prose and poetry in reference to a previous sentence and then should be translated *furthermore, in fact, yea, à fortiori, the more so, how much more*. It is possible that *then* would be appropriate here, but used in a very emphatic way. Strong's #637 BDB #64. Eliphaz follows this with another conjunction, *kîy* (כִּי) [pronounced *kee*], which means *when, that, for, because*. Strong's #3588 BDB #471. Now, together, they mean something entirely different; they mean *in fact, more than; but also; but even; much more; how much more* [when an affirmation precedes]; *how much less* [when a negation precedes].³¹

³¹ H.W.F. Gesenius, *Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon to the Old Testament*; ©1979 by Baker Books; p. 69.

Then Eliphaz refers to Job as a man who is corrupt, calling him first by the masculine singular, Niphal participle of $\text{tâ}^{\text{b}} \text{a}^{\text{v}}$ (תַּעֲבֹב) [pronounced *taw-ḤAH^bV*], which means *to be abhorred, to be corrupt, to regard as an abomination*. As a masculine singular participle, it means *abhorred one, corrupted one, abominable one*. Strong's #8581 BDB #1073. He also uses the masculine singular, Niphal participle of $\text{ʿ} \text{â} \text{lach}$ (נִלְאָח) [pronounced *aw-LAHKH*], which means *to become sour [like milk]*. It is only found in poetry and in the Niphal, where it means *corrupted [morally], to be tainted*. Strong's #444 BDB #47.

Eliphaz is laying it on thick. He accuses Job of drinking iniquity like a man drinks water. What he is said to be drinking is the feminine singular noun the feminine singular substantive $\text{ʿ} \text{av}^{\text{e}} \text{lâh}$ (עֲוֵלָה) [pronounced *ḡahv^e-LAW*], which means *injustice, iniquity, wickedness*. If I used the translation *injustice*, one might get the wrong impression as to what Eliphaz is saying. Strong's #5766 BDB #732. You might also catch the poetic nuance, where Eliphaz first calls Job soured, like milk, and then tells Job that he drinks up iniquity like water (of course, all of this is couched in the 3rd person). Barnes: *He loves sin, and is as greedy of it as a thirsty man is of water. He practises it as if it were his very nature—as much so as it is to drink.*³²

This is stronger than what Eliphaz said before—in Job 4:19, he said, “How much more those who dwell in houses of clay, whose foundation is in the dust, who are crushed before the moth.” The kind way of saying this is, man has feet of clay. Now Eliphaz steps it up several notches, saying we drink iniquity as we drink water. The psalmist agrees: *They are corrupt, they have committed abdominal deeds; there is no one who does good....They have all turned aside, together they have become corrupted. There is no one who does good, not even one* (Psalm 14:1b, 3). *Every one of them has turned aside; together they have become corrupt; there is no one who does good, not even one* (Psalm 53:3).

[<<Return to Chapter Outline>>](#)

[<<Return to Chart Index>>](#)

“This Is What I Have Learned...”

The NIV Study Bible quite handily summarizes the next ten verses: *Eliphaz now bolsters his earlier advice with traditional wisdom: The wicked man (a caricature of Job) can never escape the suffering he deserves.*³³

**I will show you;
listen to me and this I have seen and I will
recount**

Job
15:17

**I will declare [to] you;
listen to me and I will recall to you that [which]
I have seen**

**Listen to me, and I will tell you what I know;
and recount that which I have seen**

Although this is not difficult to get the general meaning, we will look at the Hebrew and some other renderings:

God's Word™

“I'll tell you; listen to me! I'll relate what I have seen.

NASB

“I will tell you, listen to me; And what I have seen I will also declare;

Young's Lit. Translation

I shew thee—hearken to me— And this I have seen and declare:

The first verb is the Piel imperfect of $\text{ch} \text{â} \text{vah}$ (חָוָה) [pronounced *khaw-VAH*], which means *to breathe out* and therefore, *to tell, to declare, to show*. Strong's #2331 BDB #296.

The final verb is the Piel imperfect of $\text{ç} \text{â} \text{phar}$ (סָפַר) [pronounced *saw-FAHR*], which means, in the Qal, *to number*. In the Piel, it means *to recall, to recount, to declare* (Ex. 9:16 Judges 6:13 Job 15:17). Strong's #5608 BDB #707.

³² Barnes' Notes; Job, Volume 1; F. C. Cook, editor; reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; p. 282.

³³ The NIV Study Bible; ©1995 by The Zondervan Corporation; p. 741..

We finally get into the meat of what Eliphaz has to say. Prior to this, he was simply ragging on Job, and then trying to set Job up to admit that he was corrupt. Finally, he is going to reveal this great knowledge which he presumably received from his forefathers. You will recall that he approached what he knew this same way in Job 4—about half way through, he announces this great vision or experience which had come upon him, and the great wisdom that he gained from it (which was, simply, that man is corrupt—big hoo hah). This time, the information which Eliphaz shares is that, when man acts against God, God makes his life kind of crappy. This postulate in place allows Eliphaz to clearly prove that Job is corrupt.

**what wise man have made known
and have not hidden from their fathers;** Job **[as well as] what wise men have made known
and have not hidden from their fathers;**
15:18

**As well as what wise men have made known
and have revealed to their fathers;**

This verse appears to be a continuation of the previous one; it was difficult to break up the previous verse, and the length of what Eliphaz has to say in this three verses, given its content, its almost unwieldy. Some translators render the verse as follows:

Keil and Delitzsch	Things wih wise men declare Without concealment from their fathers—
NASB	What wise men have told, And have not concealed from their fathers,
Dr. G.R. Noyes	Which wise men have related, And which [having received it] of their ancestors they have not concealed,
Owen's Translation	What wise men have told and have not hidden from their fathers...
The Septuagint	...things wise men say, and their fathers have not hidden.
Young's Lit. Translation	Which the wise declare—And have not hid—from their fathers.

We begin this verse with the relative pronoun and the masculine plural adjective *châkâm* (חַכָּאִם) [pronounced *khah-KAWM*], which means *wise*. Strong's #2450 BDB #314. You will note that Eliphaz repeats many of the words that he has used before. This could indicate a limited vocabulary. What wise men have done is the Hiphil imperfect of *nâgad* (נָגַד) [pronounced *naw-GAHD*], which means *to make conspicuous, to make known, to expound, to explain, to declare, to inform, to confess, to make it pitifully obvious that*. This verb is found only in the Hiphil and the Hophal. Strong's #5046 BDB #616.

As you will recall, Eliphaz has made a big deal out of how Teman is filled with wise men, older and wiser than Job, and now he will make it clear to Job what he has learned from these wise men. This is often the plea of the Oriental world. Bildad said, “Please inquire of past generations, and consider the things searched out by their fathers, as we are only of yesterday and know nothing, for our days on earth are as a shadow.” (Job 8:8–9). Zophar will ring the same bell in Job 20:4: “Do you know this from of old, from the establishment of man on earth, that the triumphing of the wicked is short and the joy of the godless momentary?”

Eliphaz is about to spend the remainder of this chapter explaining the fate of the wicked to Job. He introduces this solemn declaration with the fact that this is not a new or foreign doctrine, but this *is the truth of the past which has been handed down in pure form from the time of the fathers*. No “stranger” has formed it—a gratuitous intimation that Job’s views are not only unorthodox, they are positively alien.³⁴

**(to them for their alone was given the land
and did not pass through a stranger in them).** Job **(to them alone the land was given
and no alien passed through their midst).**
15:19

(To them alone was the land given; their thinking has remained uncorrupted by aliens).

This verse appears to be a continuation of the previous verse. Let’s look at this from other perspectives first:

³⁴ Quoted and paraphrased from *The Layman’s Bible Commentary, Vol. 8*, Balmer H. Kelly, John Knox Press, ©1962, p. 92.

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	Unto whom alone the land was given, and no stranger intruded or passed among them [corrupting the truth]
NASB	To whom alone the land was given, And no alien passed among them.
The Septuagint	To them alone the earth was given, and no stranger came upon them.
<i>Young's Lit. Translation</i>	To them alone was the land given, And a stranger passed not over into their midst;

This verse begins with *to them* and appears to continue from the previous verse. Then we have the lamed again and the masculine singular noun *bad* (בַּד) [pronounced *bahd*], which means *separation, by itself, alone*. Most translators ignore the lamed preposition, as it is difficult to translate into something which makes sense in the English. Strong's #905 BDB #94. Affixed to this is the masculine plural suffix. Altogether, this is literally, *to them for their alone*, which makes little sense; *to them alone* is a reasonable rendering. What was given to them was the *land*—and here we may confidently assume that Eliphaz is speaking of *Teman* (it would make less sense, in context, for him to be referring to the entire earth, as his exclusive hold on knowledge along with his special ancestors is no longer an issue when speaking of the entire earth).

It is *The Amplified Bible* that helps us with interpreting the last line of this verse. Eliphaz is somewhat of a purist. His ancestors have remained pure and uncompromised by the outside world. That is, savages (i.e., anyone who looks and thinks differently than the Temanite) have not corrupted the pure thought, reason and philosophy of Eliphaz and his ancestors. As you will recall, God gave to Esau a particular land and it remained in the hands of the Edomites.

Keil and Delitzsch: *These fathers to whom this doctrine respecting the fate of evil-doers is referred, lived, as Eliphaz says in v. 19, in the land of their birth and did not mingle themselves with strangers, consequently their manner of viewing things, and their opinions, have in their favour the advantage of independence, of being derived from their own experience, and also of a healthy development undisturbed by any foreign influences, and their teaching may be accounted pure and unalloyed...Purity of race was, from the earliest times, considered by "the sons of the East" as a sign of highest nobility, and hence Eliphaz traces back his teaching to a time when his race could boast of the greatest freedom from intermixture with any other.*³⁵ There is a further implication here that Job's own land was less free from foreign influences, perhaps resulting in the impurity of Job's doctrine.

[<<Return to Chapter Outline>>](#)

[<<Return to Chart Index>>](#)

“This Is What Happens to the Wicked.”

For the next 16 verses, Eliphaz goes on and on about what the corrupt man should expect. To break this down, so that we have an idea what is coming, Eliphaz first generally speaks of the pain and terror that such a one would experience (**vv. 20–24**). The corrupt is actually at war with God, which is part of the reason for his suffering (**vv. 25–27**). His own life will be desolate—he will not be rich (or, he will lose his riches) and he cannot escape (**vv. 28–30**). He will have no posterity to carry on after him—he will conceive pain and bring forth the guilt of his iniquity (**vv. 31–35**).³⁶ It appears as though this is a poem which Eliphaz has memorized which speaks of what would happen to the wicked.

The NIV Study Bible also divides up the next several verses quite handily: A poem on the fate of the wicked...Eliphaz's caricature continues with a variety of figures; a belligerent sinner who attacks God (**vv. 24–26**); a fat, rich wicked man who finally gets what he deserves (**vv. 27–32**); a grapevine stripped before the fruit is ripe (**v. 33a**); an olive tree shedding its blossoms (**v. 33b**).³⁷ **Vv. 20–23** apparently introduce us, in general, to these whom we are about to study.

³⁵ Keil & Delitzsch's *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. 4, pp. 384–385. We have seen the result of the mixture of cultures with regard to truth—Romanism incorporated several pagan traditions into their doctrines, the result being Easter, with its eggs and references to fertility rites, and Christmas.

³⁶ Taken from *Barnes' Notes; Job, Volume 1*; F. C. Cook, editor; reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; p. 277 and modified.

³⁷ *The NIV Study Bible*; ©1995 by The Zondervan Corporation; pp. 741–742.

<p>All [the] days of [the] malevolent—he is writhing in [self-inflicted] pain; and a number of years are stored up for the ruthless.</p>	<p>Job 15:20</p>	<p>The days of the corrupt—he writhes in [self-inflicted] pain; and [there are only a specific] number of years for the ruthless.</p>
-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	----------------------	----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

All the days of the corrupt and malevolent are spent in self-inflicted torture; and God has set aside only a limited number of years for His enemies.

It is now that Eliphaz actually launches into what he has to say. He has spent no fewer than 18 verses setting Job up to introduce all that Eliphaz has learned from his ancestors (it is possible he took such a long time setting this up, as he really didn't learn too much). Other translators render this:

<p><i>The Amplified Bible</i></p>	<p>The wicked man suffers with (self-inflicted) torment all his days, through all the years that are numbered <i>and</i> laid up for him, the oppressor.</p>
<p><i>God's Word™</i></p>	<p>"The wicked person is tortured all his days. Only a few years are reserved for the ruthless person."</p>
<p>NASB</p>	<p>"The wicked man writhes in pain all <i>his</i> days, And numbered are the years [lit., the number of years are] stored up for the ruthless."</p>
<p>The Septuagint</p>	<p>All the life of the ungodly <i>is spent</i> in care, and the years granted to the oppressor are numbered.</p>
<p><i>Young's Lit. Translation</i></p>	<p>'All days of the wicked he is paining himself, And few years have been laid up for the terrible one.</p>

After *all days of* we have the masculine singular adjective *râshâ' (רָשָׁע)* [pronounced *raw-SHAWG*], and it is usually translated *wicked, wicked one*; however, a more up-to-date rendering would be *malevolent one, lawless one, criminal, the corrupt*. *Râshâ'* can also refer to *the wicked* in terms of a collective whole—a singular noun which stands for a group of people. A good modern rendering would be *the corrupt*. We see this usage in several places: Gen. 18:23, 25 Num. 16:26 Psalm 1:5. Strong's #7563 BDB #957. Eliphaz is definitely referring to Job, here, but it appears as though part of a group, and he is doing so without accusing him directly. Eliphaz then uses the 3rd person masculine singular pronoun, which is unnecessary, but it helps to distance his accusations from Job directly. The verb is the masculine singular, Hithpoel participle of *chûwl (חָוַל)* [pronounced *khool*], which means, in general, *to turn, to turn around, to be twisted*. More specifically, it can be used *to writhe, to writhe in pain* (often in giving birth). The Hithpoel is the reflexive of the Piel (or, intensive) stem. So, the wicket are writhing in intense pain, but it is self inflicted (which accounts for the rendering of *to the Amplified Bible*). Strong's #2342 BDB #296.

Barnes comments: *It seems difficult to see how they could have ever formed this universal maxim. It is certainly not literally true now; nor was it ever. But in order to convey the doctrine that the wicked would be punished in as pointed and striking a manner as possible, it was made to assume this universal form—meaning that the life of the wicked would be miserable. There is some reason to think that this and what follows to the close of the chapter, is an ancient fragment which Eliphaz rehearses as containing the sentiments of a purer age of the world.*³⁸

Now, this specified amount of time does not refer to the time that the infidel is allowed to live on this earth—it refers to the time he is allowed to live, relatively pain-free, on this earth. In other words, God has appointed him a certain number of days where he is essentially undisturbed, and then God grabs him with the vice grips.

Realize what Eliphaz has said and how this does not support his argument that Job has done something to deserve his life. Job has not suffered all his life—only for the past several weeks (or months, at most). Generally speaking, Job was prospered greatly. Furthermore, at this time, Job has lived to a reasonable age—he is not old by their standards, but dying would not be entirely premature. These facts notwithstanding, evil people do go for long periods of time without God intervening and kicking their butts. In fact, unbelievers are generally not dealt with by God for the evil that they do. God disciplines His own—He does not discipline those who are children of the devil

³⁸ *Barnes' Notes; Job, Volume 1; F. C. Cook, editor; reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; p. 283.*

(unbelievers). In other words, you should not watch particular unbelievers in hopes of catching them writhing in pain for what they have done wrong—it just isn't going to happen. Some unbelievers actually live reasonably pain-free (as much as anyone else) and prosperous lives.

We have to be careful in our examination of the book of Job. His friends are going to chime in with information which is both true and false. Eliphaz is arguing from experience. Note what I mean here. He is not really making the argument that he has carefully observed mankind for hundreds of years and that there is a one-to-one relationship between personal wickedness and intense suffering—that is, of course, his assertion, backed up as being the wisdom of the aged. But what he is really saying is that Job's suffering is so great and so intense that there is no other explanation than divine judgement. He passes off this great knowledge as the observations of wise men over the centuries, but he is really making his observation based only upon what he observes in Job. Let's just take this in points:

Eliphaz Reasons from Experience in Order to Distort Truth

1. Eliphaz has not personally observed mankind for years and come to the conclusion that every time a man suffers greatly, that man has obviously sinned greatly to bring upon his sufferings. We know that is not true and any person who has carefully observed man knows that this is not true.
2. Eliphaz, nevertheless, passes this maxim down as the observation of the aged and wise.
3. Eliphaz applies this viewpoint to Job, not as a matter of personal observation, but **because Job is suffering greatly.**
4. Eliphaz has taken experience and has, after distorting the situation somewhat, molded his truth around the facts.
5. This is exactly the way that the tongues crowd interprets Scripture. They have an experience and they mold the Scriptures around their experience, thus distorting the truth of Scripture (admittedly, the early charismatics—the founders—first misinterpreted Scripture and then prayed for this misinterpretation to be applied to them).
6. What Eliphaz is saying here is patently untrue. There are certainly unbelievers who have died before their time and in great suffering (Frank Zappa and Madalyn Murray O'Hair immediately come to mind). There are other modern infidels who have led relatively long and prosperous lives (Hugh Hefner comes to mind, here).
7. Eliphaz only purports to quote from the pure doctrines of his ancestors, but that is merely a ruse. It is only because of the pain that Job is enduring that Eliphaz applies the particular wisdom of his fathers that he does.

Most importantly, as a post script, we must realize that throughout the book of Job, there are things which are said that are true, things which are somewhat true, and many things which are altogether false. This is one of the reasons the book of Job is such a difficult book to interpret. There will be times that Eliphaz will make statements that we can take as absolute truth (e.g., Job 5:17–26) and times when we must realize that he is simply blowing hot air (our immediate context). Balmer: *Here, Eliphaz...[declares] the absolute truth of principles that are plainly contradicted by life. This is another place where the words of the Book of Job are not to be taken as literally or universally true. Even the most superficial acquaintance with life affords illustrations of the fact that the wicked man does not write "in pain all his days" (vs. 20).*¹

On the other hand, despite the fact that much of what Eliphaz is saying is wrong, this does not mean that we ought to behave in whatever manner we feel, as there is not a one-to-one relationship between behavior and suffering. Therefore, we should also note:

1. There are consequences to our actions. There is truth to the fact that we reap what we sow.
2. There are natural consequences. An immoral life often results in natural consequences and resultant suffering—the criminal who is put in prison, the Lothario who is stricken with a deadly disease.
3. There are consequences for the believer. When we sin, we must realize that God is our Father and He will discipline us. This is not true of the unbeliever, as God is not the Father of any unbeliever.
4. Therefore, as a general rule, the believer, when he sins, can look to suffer pain from two sources (1) natural consequences and (2) God.

Eliphaz Reasons from Experience in Order to Distort Truth

5. The unbeliever, in general, can look to receive pain from natural consequences.
6. There are exceptions, of course, to both of these, although more often to the unbeliever.
7. Conversely, we cannot look at the believer or the unbeliever in great suffering and conclude that God has laid a heap of suffering at his door for horrible behavior. Although it is possible that is true, we must always recall that Job is a great believer, and he probably suffered more in this life than any other man, believer or unbeliever (this is, of course, apart from our Lord).
8. Now, most importantly of all to any unbeliever: the suffering which you have on earth is nothing compared to the constant and continual suffering you will endure in eternity. You have no clue as to the pain, fear, emptiness and loneliness that you will feel forever. It only takes about 5 seconds to fix this—you simply believe in Christ—you trust completely in Him for your eternal deliverance. There is no program that you must begin, no set of doctrines that you must adhere to, no promises of improved behavior that you must make and/or keep. Your salvation depends 100% upon the finished work of Christ on the cross, which you appropriate in one way and one way only—by simple faith in Him.

[<<Return to Chapter Outline>>](#)

[<<Return to the Chart Index>>](#)

In the second line, we begin with the masculine singular construct of *miç^ophâr* (מִסְפָּהָר) [pronounced *mis^o-FAWR*] means *number, counted, numerical total, a recounting*. Strong's #4557 BDB #708. This is followed by the feminine plural of *shânâh* (שָׁנָה) [pronounced *shaw-NAW*], which means *year*. More specifically, this refers to the course of the sun over the period of a year and the change of the four seasons. Strong's #8141 BDB #1040. Then we have the 3rd person plural, Niphal participle of *tsâphan* (צָפָה) [pronounced *tsaw-FAHN*], and it means *to hide, to conceal, to lay up (in storage), to store (as treasure), to treasure up*. The Niphal is simply the passive voice. Strong's #6845 BDB #860. These years are stored up for the masculine singular adjective *ârîyts* (אַרְיֵץ) [pronounced *aw-REETS* or *gaw-REETS*] and it means *awe-inspiring, terror striking* in terms of one's oppressors. *Ârîyts* also means *violent, fierce, ruthless* and is used that way primarily in poetry. Strong's #6184 BDB #792. The second line is simply, **And a number of years are stored up for the ruthless**. It is God Who sets these years aside for those whom He considers His enemies. The implication of Eliphaz to Job is, *your time is up, dude!*

Barnes offers this explanation of the second line: *To one who is an oppressor or tyrant, the number of his years is hidden. He has no security of life. He cannot calculate with any certainty on its continuance. The end is hid. A righteous man may make some calculation, and can see the probable end of his days. He may expect to see an honoured old age. But tyrants are so often cut down suddenly; they so frequently perish by assassination, and robbers are so often unexpectedly overcome, that there is no calculation which can be formed in respect to the termination of their course. Their end is hid. They die suddenly and disappear. This suits the connection; and the sentiment is, in the main, in accordance with facts as they occur.*³⁹ The next verse testifies to the unexpected and sudden terror of death coming upon the malfeasant. Of course, bear in mind that this represents the wisdom of Eliphaz's antecedents, and not necessarily reality.

**A sound of terrors in his ears;
in the prosperity a destroyer will come upon
him.**

Job
15:21

**[There is] a sound of terror in his ears,
[while] in prosperity, the destroyer will come
upon him.**

**There is a sudden sound of terror in his ears,
when, in peace and prosperity, the destroyer comes upon him.**

Most of the translations are fairly close here:

³⁹ *Barnes' Notes; Job, Volume 1; F. C. Cook, editor; reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; p. 283.*

NASB “Sounds of terror [lit., a sound of terrors] are in his ears, While at peace the destroyer comes upon him.”

Owen's Translation Sound of dread (terror) in his ears; in prosperity, a destroyer will come upon him.

Young's Lit. Translation A fearful voice is in his ears, In peace doth a destroyer come to him.

The first word of this verse is the masculine singular construct of qôwl (קוֹל) [pronounced *kohl*], which means *sound, voice*. Strong's #6963 BDB #876. What follows is the masculine plural of pachad (פַּחַד) [pronounced *PAH-khahd*] means *fear, dread, terror a thing which is feared, that which is feared*. Strong's #6343 BDB #808. What these three friends of Job's do is pick some convenient philosophy and make it fit to the facts of Job's experience. They know Job and they know of his prosperous life. Therefore, they have come up with sayings and philosophies which indicate that terror will come upon one suddenly. Eliphaz says this here; Bildad in Job 18:11; and Zophar in Job 20:25. Even Job recognizes that terror has come upon him in Job 24:17 27:20.

Then Eliphaz describes when this will first hit. We have the bêyth preposition, which here is used temporally; and the masculine singular noun shâlôwm (שָׁלוֹם) [pronounced *shaw-LOHM*], which means *completeness, soundness, welfare, peace, safe, secure, tranquil, undisturbed, unagitated*. Thieme often rendered this *prosperous* or *prosperity*. Strong's #7965 BDB #1022. Now Eliphaz begins to get personal—when a person is in a place where he thinks everything is okay—where his life is prosperous and tranquil—then God strikes him down. What we have next is the Qal active participle of shâdad (שָׁדַד) [pronounced *shaw-DAHD*], which means *to be strong, to be powerful*; but it is used in the Old Testament only in the negative sense; therefore, it means *to oppress, to destroy, to lay waste, to deal violently with, to ruin, to despoil, to devastate*. The Qal passive participle means *devastator, destroyer, devastated*. Strong's #7703 BDB #994. This is not too different from the noun *Shadday*, which refers to God as the *Almighty*.

Now Eliphaz begins to take the gloves off. He is still speaking of Job in the third person, but he makes it clear that, while Job is in prosperity, as he was, then suddenly, terror comes upon him—which is, of course, exactly what happened to Job. Job was enjoying great prosperity, and so did his children; however, suddenly, without warning, all of this pain, suffering and discipline came upon Job. Zophar will echo this sentiment: “**Nothing of what he devours remains; therefore, his prosperity will not endure.**” (Job 20:21). Interestingly enough, at the end of the Church Age and into the Tribulation, unbelievers will, as a whole, face this exact same thing. **For you yourselves know full well that the day of the Lord will come just like a thief in the night. While they are saying “Peace and safety!” then sudden destruction will come upon them like birth pangs upon a woman with children, and they will not escape** (I Thess. 5:2–3).

Now, there is some truth to what Eliphaz is saying. What the rich but evil enjoy on this earth is temporary and can be suddenly removed from them. **I have seen a violent, wicked man, spreading himself like a luxuriant tree in its native soil. Then he passed away, and lo, he was no more; I sought for him, but he could not be found** (Psalm 37:35–36). **Surely, You set them in slippery places, and You cast them down to destruction. How they are destroyed in a moment! They are utterly swept away by sudden terrors! Like a dream, when one awakes, O Lord, when aroused, You will despise their form** (Psalm 73:18–20).

**He does not believe a return from darkness
and watched he [is] regarding a sword.**

Job
15:22

**He does not believe [that he will be] restored
from darkness
and he is observed against a sword.**

**He does not expect to be restored from the darkness which enshrouds him,
as a sword hangs over him.**

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

The Emphasized Bible

He hath no confidence to come back out of darkness, ||he|| being destined to the power of the sword...

NASB	“He does not believe that he will return from darkness, And he is destined for the sword.”
Owen's Translation	He does not believe (that he will) return out of darkness and destined (spired out) he is for the sword.
The Septuagint	Let him not trust that he will return from darkness, for he has been already made over to the power of the sword.
<i>Young's Lit. Translation</i>	He believeth not to return from darkness And watched is he for the sword.

We begin with a negative and the very well-known verb, the Hiphil imperfect of *ʾâman* (אָמַן) [pronounced *aw-MAHN*], which means, in the Hiphil, *to stand firm, to believe, to trust*. In the Hiphil, the causal stem, *ʾâman* means *to lean upon, to build upon, to trust, to confide in, to believe, to stand firm*. Strong's #539 BDB #52. Then we have the Qal infinitive construct of *shûb* (שׁוּב) [pronounced *shoo^bv*]; which means *to return, to turn, to turn back, to reminisce, to restore something, to bring back something, to revive, to recover something, to make restitution*. Strong's #7725 BDB #996. He does not believe he will *return* or *be restored* from the masculine singular noun *chôshek*^e (חֹשֶׁק) [pronounced *KHOH-shek^e*], which means *darkness, obscurity, extraordinary darkness*. Strong's #2822 BDB #365. This darkness, of course, refers to the kind of life that Job is living and not to death. *Darkness* is an image used throughout Job. Eliphaz says that, in the day, darkness meets those who are wise on a human plane (Job 5:13–14). Job himself refers to his own life being enshrouded in darkness (Job 10:21–22).⁴⁰ He also refers to those who hide from the light, and operate in darkness (Job 24:16–17). When God speaks to Job, he speaks of withholding light from the wicked (Job 38:15). Faith in God delivers one from darkness (as well as from several other things—Psalm 91:5–6).

Barnes: *Darkness is used in the Bible, as elsewhere, to denote calamity; and the meaning here is, that the wicked man has not confidence, that he will return safely from impending danger. He is in constant dread of assassination, or of some fearful evil. He is never secure; his mind is never calm; he lives in constant fear, and never feels any security that he is safe.*⁴¹

The third verb is the Qal passive participle of *tsâphâh* (צָפַח) [pronounced *tsaw-FAW*], which means *to look out, to view, to look about, to spy, to keep watch*. Strong's #6822 BDB #859. This is followed by the 3rd person, personal pronoun, which refers to Job, and then the preposition *ʿel*⁴² (עַל) [pronounced *e/*], which denotes direction and means *in, into, toward, unto, to, regarding, against*. Strong's #413 BDB #39. The final word is *sword*. Job is being watched for the purpose of getting the sword, which would be his death. In the Greek, we have the additional word *power*. However, again, this is something which is unnecessary in the Hebrew, so we therefore have no reason to prefer the Greek over the Hebrew. And, again, Eliphaz couches all of this in the 3rd person, so that he thinly veils the fact that he is speaking about Job.

Wandering, he, for bread—where? he knows that being prepared, in his hand, a day of darkness.	Job 15:23	He wanders about, [looking] for bread—where [is it]? [or, He is set out as food for vultures]; he knows that [he] is being prepared—at [or, by] his hand, a day of darkness.
--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	--------------	-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

**He wanders about, in search of basic sustenance, but cannot find it;
he is prepared by his own hand for the day of darkness.**

Apparently, the Greek and the English vary significantly on this verse (Owen provides no fewer than five Greek words as alternates):

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	He wanders abroad looking for food saying, Where is it? He knows that the day of darkness <i>and</i> destruction is already close upon him.
----------------------------	---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

⁴⁰ In fact, several of the Hebrew words for darkness are found in this passage.

⁴¹ *Barnes' Notes; Job, Volume 1*; F. C. Cook, editor; reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; p. 284.

⁴² In the Hebrew, there is a yodh tacked onto the end; the Lexicons did not offer an alternate meaning for that.

<i>The Emphasized Bible</i>	A wanderer he , for bread, [saying] Where [is it]? He knoweth that <prepared by his own hand> is the day of darkness;
JPS (Tanakh)	He wanders about for bread—where is it? He knows that the day of darkness has been readied for him.
NAB NASB	A wanderer, food for the vultures, he knows that his destruction is imminent, “He wanders about for food, saying, ‘Where is it?’ He knows that a day of darkness is at hand [lit., <i>ready at his hand</i>].”
NIV	He wanders about—food for vultures [or, <i>about, looking for food</i>]; he knows the day of darkness is at hand.
Owen's Translation	He wanders for bread where he knows that is ready at his hand a day of darkness.
REB	He is flung out as food for vultures; he knows that his destruction is certain.
The Septuagint	And he has been appointed to be food for vultures; and he knows within himself that he is doomed to be a carcase; and a dark day will carry him away as with a whirlwind.
<i>Young's Lit. Translation</i>	He is wandering for bread—‘Where <i>is</i> it?’ He hath known that ready at his hand is a day of darkness.

It is obvious that we have two very divergent readings here—one from the Greek and one from the Hebrew. In the Hebrew, the man of whom Eliphaz speaks is wandering around, somewhat in a daze, searching for bread, saying, *Where is it?* In fact, he cannot even speak—he merely thinks, *where?* In the Greek, he is cast out or set out as food for vultures. Either reading will work for us, although I tend to favor the less melodramatic reading of the Hebrew here.⁴³ Psalm 59:15a has a similar reading: **They wander about to devour food.** These are those trapped in their own pride, in the psalm passage (see also Psalm 109:10, where the children of the wicked wander about and beg). Barnes: *The meaning of the Hebrew is...that he will be reduced to poverty, and will not know where to obtain a supply for his returning wants.*⁴⁴

In the second line, we begin with *he knows that*, followed by the masculine singular Niphal participle of *kûwn* (כּוּן) [pronounced *koon*], which means *to erect (to stand up perpendicular), to establish, to prepare, to be stabilized*. Strong's #3559 BDB #465. The Niphal is the passive stem, so he is *being prepared*. This is followed by, *at [or, by] his hand, a day of darkness*. In the Hebrew, he is being prepared by his own hand for a day of darkness. All of these choices that he made have led him to this point. Barnes: *He [the wicked man] is assured that the period of calamity is not far remote. It must come. He has no security that it will not come immediately. The whole design of this is to show that there is no calmness and security for a wicked man; that in the midst of apparent prosperity, his soul is in constant dread.*⁴⁵

**They will fall upon him [suddenly], affliction
and distress;
She overpowers him like a king prepared for
the onset [of battle];**

Job
15:24

**Affliction and distress will fall upon him
suddenly [terrifying him];
[distress] prevails over him as a king prepared
for the tumult [of war];**

**Affliction and distress will suddenly fall upon him, terrifying him;
distress prevails over him as a king who is prepared for the onset of battle;**

What goes with what is a bit confusing here, so we will turn to other translators first. It is worthless to evaluate and give meaning to a verse apart from knowing what that verse actually says.

The Emphasized Bible Distress and anguish shall startle him, It shall overpower him like a king ready for the onset:

⁴³ However, the association with vultures and corpses is found in Scripture; e.g., Matt. 24:28 Luke 17:37.

⁴⁴ Barnes' Notes; Job, Volume 1; F. C. Cook, editor; reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; p. 284.

⁴⁵ Barnes' Notes; Job, Volume 1; F. C. Cook, editor; reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; p. 284.

JPS (Tanakh)	Troubles terrify him, anxiety overpowers him, Like a king expecting a siege [Hebrew meaning unclear]
NASB	“Distress and anguish terrify him, They overpower him like a king ready for the attack.”
The Septuagint	Distress also and anguish shall come upon him; he will fall as a captain in the first rank.
<i>Young's Lit. Translation</i>	Terrify him do adversity and distress, They prevail over him, As a king ready for a boaster.

We begin this verse with the 3rd person masculine plural, 3rd person masculine singular suffix, Piel imperfect of bâ'ath (בָּאֵת) [pronounced *baw-GAHTH*] and it means *to fall upon, to fall upon suddenly* and therefore *to startle, to terrify* due to the surprise. Strong's #1204 BDB #129. What falls upon him suddenly are two nouns—first, the masculine singular of tsar (צָר) [pronounced *tsahr*], which means *an adversary, an enemy, distress, affliction*. Strong's #6862 BDB #865. We go with the meaning *distress* or *affliction* because of the noun which follows, which is the feminine singular of m'etsûwqâh (מְצוּקָה) [pronounced *m'etzoo-KAW*], which means *distress, straits, stress*. Strong's #4691 BDB #848. It appears that we need both of these nouns for the first verb, since the first verb is in the masculine plural.

In the second line, we have the 3rd person feminine singular, 3rd person masculine suffix, Qal imperfect of tâqêph (תָּקֵף) [pronounced *taw-KAIF*], and it means *to overpower, to prevail over*. Strong's #8630 BDB #1075. The closest feminine singular subject is m'etsûwqâh from the previous line.

Then we have *like a king* and the adjective 'âthîyd (אֲתִיב) [pronounced *aw-THEED*], which means *ready, prepared*. Strong's #6264 (& 6259) BDB #800. What he is ready for is the masculine singular noun kîydôwr (כִּידוֹר) [pronounced *kee-DOHR*], which means *onset, warlike disturbance, military tumult*. This word is said to be found only in Job 15:24, however its plural construct is found in Job 41:19 (it is given the Strong's #3590); there, it appears to mean *sparks*. Strong's #3593 BDB #461. Since their wars were not fought with artillery, it is difficult to somehow find a common word for both of those passages, unless it is in the realm of sound.

In any case, Eliphaz, still thinly disguising that he is speaking about Job directly, says that distress and anguish will come upon a man like Job suddenly and totally overpower him, just as a king ready to do battle. Barnes: *[In other words], fully prepared for a battle; whom it would be vain to attempt to resist. So mighty would be the combined forces of trouble and anguish against him, that it would be vain to attempt to oppose them.*⁴⁶

because he stretched forth unto God his hand and unto [the] Almighty he shows himself to be strong.	Job 15:25	because he stretched forth his hand against God and showed himself to be strong against the Almighty.
------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	--------------	--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Because he stretched out his hand against God and he held himself up as mighty against the Almighty.

Again, in this verse, we have 'el-'êl (אֱלֹהִים) in the Hebrew, which means *unto God*. We had the same thing back in v. 13. Again, when hostility is clearly indicated by the context, 'el can be rendered *against*. The verb which goes with this is the 3rd person masculine singular, Qal perfect of nâ'âh (נָאָה) [pronounced *naw-TAWH*], which means *to stretch out, to spread out, to bow, to extend*. This verb is often used of God stretching forth His Own hand against man (Isa. 23:11 Ezek. 6:14); however, it can also speak of knowledge stretching out its hand to man (Prov. 1:24). This can also be used in a neutral way (Isa. 43:12 Jer. 10:12). Strong's #5186 BDB #639. What we have here is one stretching his hand out in opposition to God, as in battle. Barnes: *It wields the spear or the sword against an enemy. The idea here is, that the wicked man makes God an adversary. He does not contend*

⁴⁶ Barnes' Notes; Job, Volume 1; F. C. Cook, editor; reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; p. 284.

with his fellow-man, with fate, with the elements, with evil angels, but with God. His opponent is an Almighty Being, and he cannot prevail against him.⁴⁷

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	Because he has stretched out his hand against God, and bids defiance <i>and</i> behaves himself proudly against the Almighty.
<i>The Emphasized Bible</i>	Because he had stretched out—against GOD— his hand, And against the Almighty had been wont to behave himself proudly;
NASB	Because he has stretched out his hand against God, And conducts himself arrogantly against the Almighty.
NIV	...because he shakes his fist at God and vaunts himself against the Almighty,...
The Septuagint	For he has lifted his hands against the Lord, and he has hardened his neck against the Almighty Lord.
<i>Young's Lit. Translation</i>	For he stretched out against God his hand, And against the Mighty he maketh himself mighty.

You will note that there are two *against*'s in this verse; the second *against* is, again, ׁel.

Also, you will note that in Young's Literal Translation, it appears as though t his was a play on words in the Hebrew. Actually, this is not the case. We have the Hithpael imperfect of gâ^bvar (גַּבַּר) [pronounced *gaw^b-VAHR*], which means *to be strong, to be mighty, to exhibit greater strength than, to be stronger than, to prevail over*. In the Hithpael, the reflexive of the Piel, it means *to show oneself mighty against someone else, to behave proudly, to hold oneself up as mighty*. Strong's #1396 BDB #149. We find ׁel here again, followed by the proper noun shadday (שַׁדַּי) [pronounced *shahd-DAH-ee*], which is generally translated *Almighty, the Almighty One, the many-breasted one*. Strong's #7706 BDB #994. Barnes: *The whole image here is taken from the practice of war; and the sense is, that a wicked man is really making war on the Almighty, and that in that war, he must be vanquished.*⁴⁸

That man sets himself up in opposition to God is found throughout Scripture. *They have set their mouth against the heavens, and their tongue parades through the earth* (Psalm 73:9). *“Woe to the one who quarrels with his Maker, as earthenware vessel among the vessels of earth. Will the clay say to the potter, ‘What are you doing?’ Or the thing you are making say, ‘He has no hands?’”* (Isa. 45:9). *The kings of the earth take their stand and the rulers take counsel together against Y^ehowah and His Anointed One* (Psalm 2:2).

He runs unto Him with a neck in thicknesses of curvatures of his shields,	Job 15:26	He runs to Him, [but] with a [stiff] neck; with the thickness of the curvature of his shield, [or] against the thickness of the curvature of His shield,
--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	--------------	---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

**He runs toward Him in headstrong opposition,
his thinking as unyielding as the thick portion of his shield,
[or] He runs toward Him in opposition,
his shield erect for battle.**

This is another difficult verse, as its meaning is hard to ascertain. Here are what others did:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	Running stubbornly against Him with a thickly ornamented shield;
<i>The Emphasized Bible</i>	He used to run against him with uplifted neck, With the stout bosses of his bucklers;
NASB	“He rushes headlong [lit., <i>with a stiff neck</i>] at Him With his massive shield [lit., <i>the thick-bossed shields</i>].

⁴⁷ Barnes' Notes; Job, Volume 1; F. C. Cook, editor; reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; p. 284.

⁴⁸ Barnes' Notes; Job, Volume 1; F. C. Cook, editor; reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; p. 284.

Owen's Translation Running against him stubbornly (with a neck) the thickness of bosses (i.e., the convex projection of the shield) his shields.

The Septuagint And he has run against him with insolence, on the thickness of the back of his shield.

Young's Lit. Translation He runneth unto Him with a neck With thick bosses of his shields.

The first verb is the Qal imperfect of *rûts* (רָרַץ) [pronounced *roots*], which means *to run*. Strong's #7323 BDB #930. Again, we have *unto* and not *against*. We have the *bêyth* preposition and the masculine singular noun *tsav`vâr* (צַוּבָר) [pronounced *tzahv-VAWR*], which means *neck, back of neck*. Strong's #6677 BDB #848. The *neck* is often used in Scripture to indicate stubbornness. Job, in all that he says and does, appears as though he is pursuing God; that he is asking God to vindicate him. Eliphaz runs with that notion, but says to Job that he is running toward God with a stiff neck; he appears to approach God, but it is with innate stubbornness. Job has his mind completely made up and his overtures and approach to God are completely self-serving and, in reality, against God. His thinking is as unyielding as the thick portion of his shield. Again, man's hostility and opposition to God is found throughout the Bible. "As for the message that you have spoken to us in the name of Jehovah, we are not going to listen to you!" (Jer. 44:16).

In the second line, we have the *bêyth* preposition again, which could mean *in, with* or *against*. Then we have the masculine plural construct of *ʿăbîy* (עֲבֵי) [pronounced *guh-VEE*], which means *thicknesses*. Strong's #5672 BDB #716. This is followed by the masculine plural construct of *ga^bv* (גַּבֻּ) [pronounced *gah^bv*], which means *structure [of a thing], backbone, convex portion [of a thing]*. Barnes explains that this is a knob, a protuberant ornament of silver, brass or ivory on a harness or a bridle. When applied to a shield, it means the convex part or the back of it—the part which was presented to an enemy, and which was made swelling and strong.⁴⁹ Strong's #1354 (also #1356) BDB #146. The boss of a shield is the thick portion of the shield—it refers to the external convex portion of the round shield, which is its thickest and strongest portion. Some shields in the ancient world were completely convex (shaped like a squat cone), coming out to a point in the center, which was the strongest portion of the shield. In addition to this, there were also convex ornaments which were placed on the outside of shields, which added strength as well as beauty to the shield.⁵⁰ This is followed by *his shields*, giving us *...in thicknesses of curvatures of his shields*. This either explains just how thick Job's neck is (meaning, how stubborn Job is—this is the use of *bêyth* as *in, with*); or, it explains the strong, impenetrable opposition of God (as though Job is running headlong into the thickest portion of the shield—*bêyth* would mean *against*). All three uses of *bêyth* are commonly found throughout Scripture.

We have two images being conveyed here. One is simply Job going into battle against God, his thick-shield in hand. The other is Job appealing to God, but doing so with his mind already made up, with his thinking and his mind as unyielding as his shield. Barnes expands on the first image: *The image here is taken from the mode in which men rushed into battle. It was with a violent concussion, and usually with a shout, that they might intimidate their foes, and overcome them at first, with the violence of the shock...the...erect neck...[is] that he ran in a firm, haughty, confident manner; with a head erect and firm, as the indication of self confidence, and a determined purpose to overcome his foe.*⁵¹ Turning the thick portion of a shield against someone simply means that Job *rushes upon God with his own shield. He puts himself in the attitude of a warrior. He turns the boss of his own shield against God and becomes his antagonist. He is his enemy.*⁵²

because he has covered his faces in his fat Job for he has covered his face with his fat
and so he builds fat upon his loin. 15:27 and he makes his bull-headedness abundant.

as he is oblivious to God's opposition inasmuch as he is fat with his previous prosperity.

⁴⁹ Barnes' Notes; Job, Volume 1; F. C. Cook, editor; reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; p. 285.

⁵⁰ This is quoted and paraphrased from *Manners and Customs of the Bible*; James M. Freeman; reprinted in 1972 by Logos International; p. 210.

⁵¹ Barnes' Notes; Job, Volume 1; F. C. Cook, editor; reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; pp. 284–285.

⁵² Barnes' Notes; Job, Volume 1; F. C. Cook, editor; reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; p. 285.

Now and again, Job's friends say things which I cannot imagine one person saying to another; v. 27 is one of those times. Let's hit the other translations first, just as much to interpret this verse as to determine its meaning.: I need to warn you that the translation which I will give this, along with the interpretation, will be somewhat different from most of that which you find below.

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	Because he has covered his face with his fat, adding layers of fat on his loins [giving himself up to animal pleasures];
CEV	¶"They may be rich and fat,..."
<i>God's Word™</i>	"His face is bloated with fat, and he is fat around the waist."
NAB	Because he has blinded himself with his crassness, padding his loins with fat,
NASB	"For he has covered his face with his fat, And made his thighs heavy with flesh.
NIV	"Though his face is covered with fat and his waist bulges with flesh.
NJB	His face had grown full and fat, and his thighs too heavy with flesh.
NLT	¶"These wicked people are fat and rich."
Owen's Translation	...because he has covered his face with his fat and gathered fat (superabundance) upon his loins.
The Septuagint	For he has covered his face with fat, and made layers of fat upon his thighs.
<i>Young's Lit. Translation</i>	For he hath covered his face with his fat, And maketh vigour over <i>his</i> confidence.

You will note that several translations began this verse as a new paragraph. It begins with the word *because*, *for*, *that*, which generally continues a previous thought. The first line reads: **Because he has covered his faces in his fat...** *Fat*, in Scripture, refers to wealth and abundance. Those who were fat in their old age were rich enough to indulge themselves with food, and did. We have a similar line in Psalm 119:70: **Their heart is covered with fat; I delight in Your Law.**

In this verse, we actually have two different words rendered *fat*. The first is the masculine singular noun *chêl*^{bv} (כֵּהַל) [pronounced *KHAY-le^{bv}*], which simply means *fat*. Strong's #2459 BDB #316. The second is the feminine singular noun *pîymâh* (פִּימָה) [pronounced *pee-MAW*], which means *fat, superabundance*. This word is only found in this verse, and the only reason we make the assumption as to what it means is (1) the context of this verse, and, (2) there is a verb, not found in Scripture, which appears to mean *to fill, to make wide, to become full* (as per its Arabic equivalent); Gesenius defines the verb as meaning *to have the mouth full, to swallow down*. Strong's #6371 BDB #810. The verb prior to this is the very common 3rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect of *âsâh* (אָסַח) [pronounced *âw-SAWH*] which means *to do, to make, to construct, to fashion, to form, to prepare*. Strong's #6213 BDB #793. The preposition is *al* (עַל) [pronounced *âhl*], which means *upon, beyond, on, against, above, over, by, beside*. Strong's #5920, #5921 BDB #752. For some reason, there is a yodh on the end of this preposition, although I could not find a reason for this. The final word in this verse is the masculine singular noun *keçel* (כֵּעַל) [pronounced *KEH-seh*], which means *loin, bull-headedness, dogmatism, stupidity, confidence*. Strong's #3689 BDB #492. Therefore, let me give you two very different, but possibly literal, renderings of the second line: **...and so he builds fat upon his loin**; or, **and he makes his bull-headedness abundant**. Although the latter reading gives us a good idea as to what Eliphaz is saying, it is more difficult to reconcile with the immediate context of *covering one's face in fat*. My thinking is that Eliphaz was saying that Job was bull-headed partially because of his wealth and abundance. Now, I realize that this is not really all that similar to the other renderings and their interpretations. I first make an attempt to get a real translation, literal as possible, and then interpret the verse based upon that translation. Based on that, what I came up with turned out to be quite different from what has been done before.

Barnes suggests something similar, that this unnamed third person has given himself over *to a life of luxury, gluttony and licentiousness; and therefore, these calamities must come upon him...[those] who live in sensual indulgence [often]...forget God.*⁵³

⁵³ *Barnes' Notes; Job, Volume 1*; F. C. Cook, editor; reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; p. 286.

**And so he pitches a tent [in] cities destroyed;
houses they should not remain in them
which are destined for heaps.**

Job
15:28

**So he lives in cities gone to ruin—
houses [where] they should not live;
which are destined for heaps.**

**As a result, he must live in cities which have become desolate
and houses which have been abandoned, destined to become heaps of rubble.**

So let's check out the various translations first:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	And has lived in desolate [God-forsaken] cities, <i>and</i> in houses which no man should inhabit, which were destined to become heaps [or ruins];
JPS (Tanakh)	He dwells in cities doomed to ruin, In houses that shall not be lived in, That are destined to become heaps of rubble.
Keil and Delitzsch	And inhabited desolated cities, Houses which should not be inhabited, Which were appointed to be ruins.
NASB	"And he has lived in desolate cities, In houses no one would inhabit, Which are destined to become ruins [or, <i>heaps</i>]."
The Septuagint	And let him lodge in desolate cities, and enter into houses without inhabitant; and what they have prepared, others will carry away.
<i>Young's Lit. Translation</i>	And he inhabiteth cities cut off, houses not dwelt in, That have been ready to become heaps.

And first verb is the 3rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect of *shâkan* (שָׁכַן) [pronounced *shaw-KAHN*], which means *to tabernacle, to pitch a tent*. By application, it means *to dwell, to reside, to live in*. Strong's #7931 BDB #1014. The cities that he lives in are modified by the feminine plural, Niphal participle of the verb *kâchad* (כָּחַד) [pronounced *kaw-KHAHD*] means *to hide, to conceal, to efface*. In the Niphal participle, it means *hidden, destroyed, gone to ruin*. Strong's #3582 BDB #470. I mentioned the feminine plural, as it acts as a descriptor for *cities*.

Then we have the word *houses* followed by the negative particle and the 3rd person masculine plural, Qal imperfect of *yâsha*^{bv} (יָשָׁא) [pronounced *yaw-SHAH^{BV}*] and it means *to remain, to inhabit, to sit, to dwell*. Strong's #3427 BDB #442. This is followed by *in them*. Barnes: *As a consequence of his opposing God, and devoting himself to a life of sensuality and ease, he shall dwell in a desolate place. Instead of living in affluence and in a splendid city, he shall be compelled to take up his abode in places that have been deserted and abandoned. Such places—like Petra or Babylon now—became the temporary lodgings of caravans and travelers, or the abodes of outcasts and robbers. The meaning here is, that the proud and wicked man shall be ejected from his palace, and compelled to seek a refuge far away from the usual haunts of men.*⁵⁴

Then we have the relative pronoun and the 3rd person plural, Hithpael perfect of *âthad* (אָתַד) [pronounced *âw-THAHD*], which means, in the Piel, *to make ready*. In the Hithpael, it means *to be ready, to be destined to be something* (when followed by the lamed). Strong's #6257 BDB #800. What they are destined to be is the masculine plural noun *gal* (גַּל) [pronounced *gahl*], which means *a heap, a wave, a billow, spring*. Strong's #1530 BDB #164. Because Job is spiritually corrupt, all that is around him has become corrupted, including his great wealth and riches. Job himself lived near his children, and they all had wonderful houses which became abandoned and were destined to become heaps. This was Job's lot, to end up in lodging which has been abandoned and would eventually collapse from lack of maintenance. Although it appears, at first, as though Eliphaz is referring to cities which have become abandoned by others, he is actually referring to Job's possessions and property, which was destined for ruin.

It may help to understand what exactly is being referred to. We look at our houses as being buildings which will last, say, 100 years or so, with normal maintenance. In the ancient East, huts were made of stones or mud. For

⁵⁴ Barnes' Notes; Job, Volume 1; F. C. Cook, editor; reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; p. 286.

the roof, brushwood was laid across the ceiling beams and this was in turn covered with earth. Rain would eventually soak the earth, the weight settling on the brush and beams, which would eventually cave in if the occupant was not industrious about the upkeep of his roof (see Eccles. 10:18). Once the roof was compromised, the walls would soon follow in collapse *and the whole house soon becomes a heap of ruins*. Furthermore, this was not only true of the individual mud huts, but also of *the large edifices, temples and palaces, built of sun-dried brick, as the ruins of Babylon and Nineveh amply testify*.⁵⁵

Keil and Delitzsch offer a different, but compelling slant on this meaning of this verse: *The expression must therefore be understood more generally thus, that the powerful man settles down carelessly and indolently, without any fear of the judgments of God or respect for the manifestations of His judicial authority, in places in which the marks of a just divine retribution are still visible, and which are appointed to be perpetual monuments of the execution of divine judgments*.⁵⁶

**He will not be rich
and will not stand his strength
and will not stretch out to the land their
acquisition.**

Job
15:29

**He is not rich, nor will his power [and wealth]
endure;
and their acquisition will not stretch out with
respect to the land [or, he will not cast a
shadow on the land].**

**He is not rich and his power and wealth will not endure;
his influence and wealth will not extend over the land.**

Like most of Job, we are best off viewing a couple of renderings first.

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	He shall not be rich, neither shall his wealth last, neither shall his produce bend to the earth or his possessions be extended on the earth.
<i>The Emphasized Bible</i>	He shall not be rich nor shall his substance continue, Neither shall their shadow stretch along on the earth;
<i>God's Word™</i>	He won't get rich, and his wealth won't last. His possessions won't spread out over the land.
Luther	...And his fortune will not spread itself abroad in the land.
NASB	"He will not become rich, nor will his wealth endure; And his grain will not bend down to the ground."
Noyes	...And his possessions shall not be extended upon the earth.
The Septuagint	Neither will he at all grow rich, nor will his substance remain. Neither will he cast a shadow upon the earth.
The Vulgate	...Neither will he send his root in the earth.
Wemyss	...Nor shall he be master of his own desires.
<i>Young's Lit. Translation</i>	He is not rich, nor doth his wealth rise, Nor doth he stretch out on earth their continuance.

Obviously, from examining the various other translations, the first line is *he will not be rich*. Job was one of the richest people in the world; it was only recently that he had been reduced to poverty. Eliphaz occasionally reveals that he has no real grasp of the situation. His platitudes and generalizations do not apply. Now, in the imperfect, we are speaking of a condition which is continuing, rather than one which has been accomplished. So, it is actually proper for Eliphaz to speak of Job not being rich. That is, this can be just as reasonably rendered *he is not rich* as it can be *he will not become rich*. Barnes: *That is, he shall not continue rich; or he shall not again become rich. He shall be permanently poor*.⁵⁷

⁵⁵ Quoted and paraphrased from *Manners and Customs of the Bible*; James M. Freeman; reprinted in 1972 by Logos International; p. 210.

⁵⁶ Keil & Delitzsch's *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. 4, p. 389.

⁵⁷ *Barnes' Notes; Job, Volume 1*; F. C. Cook, editor; reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; p. 286.

In the second line, we have the conjunction, the negative particle and the 3rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect of qûwm (קוּם) [pronounced *koom*], which means *to stand, to rise up, to establish*. Strong's #6965 BDB #877. What will not stand is the masculine singular of chayil (חַיִל) [pronounced *CHAH-yil*] and it means *efficiency, army, strength, valour, power, might*; as well as that which is gotten through strength—i.e., *wealth, substance*. Strong's #2428 BDB #298. Here, Eliphaz allows for the person of whom he is speaking to have been wealthy at one time; however, that strength and wealth will not endure.

Zophar concurs, saying, “**The increase of his house will depart; his possession will flow away in the day of his anger.**” (Job 20:28). Even Job voices some agreement: “**Though he piles up silver like dust and prepares garments as clay, he will prepare it, but the just will wear it and the innocent will divide the silver.**” (Job 27:16–17).

It is the last line which causes us some difficulty. We have the wâw conjunction and the negative again, and the 3rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect of nâṭâh (נָטָה) [pronounced *naw-TAWH*], which means *to stretch out, to spread out, to bow, to extend*. Strong's #5186 BDB #639. The Greek verb is considerably different. It is bállō (βάλλω) [pronounced *BAWL-low*], which means *to throw, to cast, to place, to put, to lay, to bring*. Strong's #906. This is followed by *in the land* (or, *on the earth*). The subject which follows is, in the Hebrew, is a word which is thought to mean *gain, acquisition*. It is only found in this verse and several think that the text is hopelessly corrupt at this point. Strong's #4512 BDB #649. In the Greek, we have the noun skiá (σκιά) [pronounced *skee-AH*], which means *shade, shadow, foreshadowing*. Strong's #4639. So, in the Hebrew, we have that his substance and riches will not stretch out over the land; in the Greek, he will not cast a shadow over the earth (metaphorically speaking, we are not really that far apart in meaning here).

**He will not turn aside from darkness;
his shoot will dry up—a flame;
and will depart in a wind his mouth.**

Job
15:30

**He will not escape from darkness;
a flame will dry up his branch;
and his mouth is not turned aside by the Spirit
[or, his blossom will depart in the wind].**

**He will not escape from the darkness;
fire will dry up his branch
and his blossom will fall off in the wind.**

What others have done:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	He shall not depart out of darkness [and escape from calamity; the wrath of God] shall consume him as flame consumes a dry tree, and by the blast of His mouth he shall be swept away.
<i>The Emphasized Bible</i>	He shall not depart out of darkness. His young branch shall the flame dry up, And he shall depart by the breath of his own mouth!
<i>God's Word™</i>	“He won't escape the darkness. A flame will shrivel his branches. He will be blown away by his own breath.”
JPS (Tanakh)	He will never get away from the darkness; Flames will scar his shoots; He will pass away by the breath of His mouth.
Keil and Delitzsch	He escapeth not darkness; The flame withereth his shoots; And he perisheth in the breath of His mouth.
NASB	“He will not escape from darkness; The flame will wither his shoots, And by the breath of His mouth he will go away.
NJB	...(he will not escape the dark). A flame will scorch his young shoots, the wind will carry off his blossom.
REB	...scorching heat will shrivel his shoots, and his blossom will be shaken off by the wind.
The Septuagint	Neither will he in any way escape the darkness; let the wind blast his blossom, and let his flower fall off.

Young's Lit. Translation He turneth not aside from darkness, His tender branch doth a flame dry up, And he turneth aside as the breath of His mouth!

Even a superficial reading of these translations should indicate that there are distinct meanings given in the Greek and in the Hebrew, and that one translation might follow one, and another might follow the other.

The verb which kicks this off is the 3rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect of *çûwr* (סור) [pronounced *soor*], which means *to turn aside, to depart, to go away*. Followed by *mîn*, this could reasonably be rendered *escape*. Strong's #5493 (and #5494) BDB #693. This is followed by the *mîn* preposition (and again, there is a bonus *yodh* added to this preposition) and the masculine singular noun *chôshek*^e (חֹשֶׁק) [pronounced *KHOH-shek*^e], which means *darkness, obscurity, extraordinary darkness*. Strong's #2822 BDB #365.

In the second line, at the end, we have the subject of the sentence, which is the feminine singular noun *lehâ^bvâh* (לְהַבָּה) [pronounced *leh-haw-VAW*], which means *flame, lightning, point or head of spear, blade*. Strong's #3852 (& #3827) BDB #529. We know that this is the subject, because the verb is the 3rd person feminine singular, Piel imperfect of *yâ^bvêsh* (יָבֵשׁ) [pronounced *yaw-^BVEYSH*], which means *to be dry, to dry up, to wither*. Strong's #3001 BDB #386. What will be dried up is what actually comes first in this line (which is not atypical for Hebrew). That is the feminine singular noun *yôneqeth* (יֹנֶקֶת) [pronounced *yoh-NEH-keth*], which means *a shoot, a tender branch, a sucker; and perhaps a young plant*. Strong's #3127 BDB #413. What was important to the people of the ancient world was their posterity. God ordered man from the beginning to be fruitful and to fill the earth. Having a lot of children was important to ancient man, a theme which we see replayed from several angles throughout the Old Testament. The progeny to come from a man was often called *his branch*, not unlike the branch of a tree. For the branch to be dried up, obviously, is for a man's line to be cut off, which was a severe discipline. Recall that all of Job's children had died. Again, Eliphaz does not chide Job directly; he does it indirectly, by referring to what God would do to a person who is far from Him. Bildad also metaphorically speaks of the wicked's line being cut off. "His roots are dried below and his branch is cut off above. Memory of him perishes from the earth and he has no name abroad...He has no offspring or posterity among his people, nor any survivor where he lived." (Job 18:16–17, 19). The fact that Job's family has perished makes him an easy target. His friends simply claim that the wicked man has no posterity, which then obviously refers to Job.

Barnes: *As the fire consumes the green branches of a tree, so shall punishment do to him. This comparison is very forcible, and the idea is, that the man who has been prospered as a tree shall be consumed—as the fire consumes a tree when it passes through the branches. The comparison of a prosperous man with a tree is very common, and very beautiful. I have seen a violent, wicked man spreading himself like a luxuriant tree in its native soil* (Psalm 37:35). *The aged Skenandoah—a chief of the Oneida tribe of Indians, said, "I am an aged hemlock. The winds of an hundred winters have whistled through my branches. I am dead at the top. My branches are falling..."*⁵⁸

In the Hebrew, what comes next is *And his mouth will not depart [or escape] by a spirit [or, by a wind]*. Another rendering would be, *And his mouth will not be turned aside by Spirit*. Keil and Delitzsch suggest *And he perisheth in the breath of His mouth*. Although we are uncertain of what this verse originally said (and what we have in the Hebrew may be correct); Eliphaz is simply saying that even Job's mouth cannot be turned around or turned aside by the Spirit of God in all of this discipline. Keil and Delitzsch suggest that this infidel is finished off by the breath of God's mouth.

In the Greek text, which is much different (*Let the wind blast his blossom and let his flower fall off*), it is a continuation of the same theme of the second sentence; Eliphaz calls for the posterity of Job to be cut off. This appears to fit the immediate context better than the Hebrew text, and, as you will notice from the translations, many of the translators went with the Greek rather than the Hebrew.⁵⁹

⁵⁸ *Barnes' Notes; Job, Volume 1*; F. C. Cook, editor; reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; pp. 286–287.

⁵⁹ This is also a good litmus test, in order to determine which text your Bible translator(s) most closely followed.

**Let him not trust in emptiness, deceiving himself
for emptiness is his recompense.**

Job
15:31

Let him not trust in the emptiness [of his own words]—[he is] deceiving himself, for his recompense is emptiness.

**Do not trust in the emptiness of words, for you deceive yourself
and your recompense is that very emptiness.**

This particular verse is somewhat easier than the others, although we have a difference in the Greek. Still, let me give you some other renderings:

NASB	"Let him not trust in emptiness, deceiving himself; For emptiness will be his reward [lit., <i>exchange</i>]"
NIV	Let him not deceive himself by trusting what is worthless, for he will get nothing in return.
Owen's Translation	Let him not trust in emptiness, deceiving himself, for emptiness will be his recompense.
The Septuagint	Let him not think that he will endure, for his end will be vanity.

We begin this verse with the 3rd person masculine singular, Hiphil imperfect apocopated voluntative of ʾāman (אָמַן) [pronounced *aw-MAHN*], which means, in the Hiphil, *to stand firm, to believe, to trust*. Strong's #539 BDB #52. This is preceded by the negative particle. What Job is not to trust in is the masculine singular noun shâv^{e} (שָׁוְ) [pronounced *shawv*], which means *vanity, emptiness, unsubstantial, worthlessness*. It is that which furnishes no support, that which cannot uphold or sustain, and will give away when any trust is placed in it. Strong's #7723 BDB #996. That this noun is found twice in this verse, gives credence for the verb shûw^{b} to be found in the previous verse. It is a play on sounds and on words, and the repetition of implies the repetition of the other. Plus, Eliphaz is making the point that Job himself is being repetitive. Furthermore, these two words are antithetical. One involves taking a stand, or supporting oneself and the other is that which is unsubstantial and could not provide any sort of support. The emptiness upon which Job is depending is his own words, which are like great winds emanating from his mouth. The result of this is self-deception.

Then we have the preposition *for, because, that*, then *emptiness* again, the verb *to be* and the feminine singular noun $\text{t}^{\text{m}}\text{ûw}^{\text{r}}\text{âh}$ (תְּמוּרָה) [pronounced *t^{moo}-RAW*], which means *an exchange, barter, what is bartered, compensation, recompense*. Strong's #8545 BDB #558. This is all that Job gets out of the deal, according to Eliphaz, is his own words.

Again, what Eliphaz says is thinly veiled. He is simply telling Job that he prattles on and on and on, and the only thing that he will get from all of this is these empty words. Eliphaz tells Job that *you reap what you sow*. When you place your trust in that which is empty, all you get back is emptiness. Man should not place his trust in that which furnishes *no support*. *He should not rely on his wealth and rank; his houses and lands; his servants, his armies, or his power, if he is wicked, for all this is vain. He needs some better reliance, and that can be found only in a righteous life.*⁶⁰

**In not his day, she will be filled
and his branch [will] not [be] green.**

Job
15:32

**Before his day, it [his recompense] is fulfilled
[or, accomplished]
[or, His harvest will perish before its hour]
and his branch [is] not green.**

**He will receive his recompense before his day
[or, His harvest will perish before its time]
and his branch is not green.**

⁶⁰ Barnes' Notes; Job, Volume 1; F. C. Cook, editor; reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; p. 287.

This time, we need a little help from the other translators:

<i>The Emphasized Bible</i>	<Before his day> shall it be accomplished, With his palm top not covered with leaves;
<i>God's Word™</i>	It will happen before his time has come, and his branch will not become green.
JPS (Tanakh)	He will wither before his time, His boughs never having flourished.
NAB	His stalk shall wither before its time, and his branches shall be green no more.
NASB	"It will be accomplished before his time, And his palm branch will not be green."
NIV	Before his time he will be paid in full, and his branches will not flourish.
NKJV	It will be accomplished before his time, And his branch will not be green.
REB	His palm trees will wither unseasonably, and his branches will not be luxuriant;
The Septuagint	His harvest will perish before the time, and his branch will not flourish.
<i>Young's Lit. Translation</i>	Not in his day is it completed, And his bending branch is not green.

We begin with the bêyth preposition and the negative particle lô' (לֹא) [pronounced *low*]. Together, they literally means *in not*. However, in actual usage, they mean *with not*, without and, with respect to time, *in not*, *outside of*, *before*. Together, these two particles are found mostly in poetry. Bêyth = Strong's #none BDB #88. Lô' = Strong's #3808 BDB #518. Then we have the 3rd person feminine singular, Niphal imperfect of mâlê' (מָלֵא) [pronounced *maw-LAY*], which means *to fill*, *to make full*, *to be full*. The Niphal is the passive voice, meaning *filled*, *to be made full*, *to be filled up*. Strong's #4390 BDB #569. We might allow *it will be accomplished*, although that is a moderate stretch. The feminine singular refers back to *his recompense* from the previous verse (which is *emptiness*). The sense of the Hebrew is that he will receive his recompense—what he rightfully deserves, which is emptiness and nothingness, because that is what he has placed his trust in. Eliphaz makes a similar statement in Job 22:15–16: “Will you keep to the ancient path which wicked me have trod, who were snatched away before their time, whose foundations were washed away by a river?” The psalmist makes a similar statement in Psalm 55:23a: *But You, O God, will bring them down to the pit of destruction. Men of bloodshed and deceit will not live out half their days.* And finally, Prov. 10:27: *The fear of Jehovah prolongs life, but the years of the wicked will be shortened.*

In the Greek, we have phtheîrô (φθεῖρω) [pronounced *FTHĪH-row*], which means *to destroy to ruin*, *to corrupt*, *to spoil*. Strong's #5351. Brenton gives two options from the Septuagint: *his harvest will perish before the time* or *his bough lopped before its time shall perish*. This is Eliphaz again saying that Job will have no sons and no one to carry on his name. His line ends with him. This seems to make more sense in this context, although the two general meanings (of the verse, that is) are not too far apart. In the Greek, the harvest of the wicked man will perish before its time; in the Hebrew, the wicked man receives his recompense—emptiness—before his time.

The last phrase is one of the easiest. A tree branch has some green in it when it is alive and thriving; when a branch (or the entire tree) dies, then there is no more green wood. This is Job's line—there is no more green wood. It has come to a dead halt. Barnes: *...[the] various illustrations drawn from the flower, the fruit, &c., [or the tree]...are designed to denote the same thing—that a wicked man will not be permanently prosperous; he will not live and flourish as he would if he were righteous. He will be like a tree that is cut down before its proper time, or that casts its flowers and fruits and brings nothing to perfection [or, completion]. The phrase here literally is, “It shall not be filled up in its time;” that is, a wicked man will be cut off before he has filled up the measure of his days, like a tree that decays and falls before its proper time...As a general fact, this is all true, and the observation of the ancient Idumeans was correct. The temperate live longer than the intemperate; the chaste longer than the licentious; he that controls and governs his passions longer than he who gives the reins to them; and he who leads a life of honesty and virtue longer than he who lives for crime. Pure religion makes a man temperate, sober, chaste, calm, dispassionate, and equable in his temper; saves from broils, contentions, and strifes; subdues the angry passions, and thus tends to lengthen out his life.*⁶¹

⁶¹ Barnes' Notes; Job, Volume 1; F. C. Cook, editor; reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; p. 287.

He will shake off like the vine his unripe grape
and He ought cast off like the olive his
blossom;

Job
15:33

He [God] will [violently] shake [him]—like the
vine—his unripe grapes
and He ought to cast off his blossom like an
olive tree;

God will violently shake him as He would shake a vine of its unripened grapes
and He casts off his blossom as does an olive tree;

The translations:

- The Emphasized Bible* He shall wrong—like an vine—his sour grapes, And shall cast off—as an olive-tree—his blossom [or, *his own flesh*].⁶²
- JPS (Tanakh) He will drop his unripe grapes like a vine; He will shed his blossoms like an olive tree.
- NASB “He will drop off his unripe grape like the vine, And will cast off his flower like the olive tree.”
- The Septuagint And let him be gathered as the unripe grape before the time, and let him fall as the blossom of the olive.
- Young's Lit. Translation* He shaketh off as a vine his unripe fruit, And casteth off as an olive his blossom.

The first verb is the 3rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect of *châmaq* (חָמַק) [pronounced *khaw-MAHSS*], which means *to treat violently, to wrong, to tear off from oneself, to tear away violently*. Strong's #2554 BDB #329. The first *He* is *God*—God will shake him violently, which is what Eliphaz maintains obviously happened to Job. This is followed by *as the vine*, and *vine* is a feminine singular noun. Then we have *his unripe grape*—*his* referring to *Job's* and not to the vine (which, again, is a feminine singular). God shook him like someone shaking a vine and all of his unripened grapes—i.e., his children—were shaken off. Keil and Delitzsch suggest that, in the ancient world, the unripened grapes had a variety of purposes. When they were not yet ripe and the size of the pea, the acid from them is used in housekeeping, to prepare several types of foods. Apparently the people developed a taste for sour fruit (as a youth, I also was particularly fond of fruit that was not quite yet ripe). Keil and Delitzsch also point out that during the summer months, six hundred horses and asses laden with unripened grapes came daily to the market of Damascus alone.⁶³

In the second line, we have the 3rd person masculine singular, Hiphil imperfect apocopated *shâlak* (שָׁלַק) [pronounced *shaw-LAHK*], which means *to throw, to cast, to fling*. It is found only in the Hiphil and the Hophal and, surprisingly enough, is consistently rendered in the KJV. Strong's #7993 BDB #1020. First off, *apocopated* means that the verb has been shortened. Generally, this means that the final *hê* (ה) and the vowel which precedes it are dropped. Apocopation is used when the verb functions as a jussive or when the verb is affixed to a *wâw* consecutive (here, it is affixed to a *wâw* conjunction). A jussive expresses the speaker's desire, wish or command. We often add into the translation *may* or *let*.⁶⁴ We then have the kaph preposition (*like, as*) and the masculine singular noun *zayith* (זַיִת) [pronounced *ZAH-yeeth*], which means *olive, olive tree*. Strong's #2132 BDB #268. What he will cast off is the feminine singular noun *natstsâh* (נִצְצָה) [pronounced *nitz-TZAW*], which means *blossom, flower*. Strong's #5328 BDB #665. This gives us: **Let Him cast off, like an olive tree, his blossom.** Again, this is a veiled reference to Job, calling for God to cast off Job's seed. Actually, it is unclear in the Hebrew whether Eliphaz is asking God to do this to Job or for Job to do it to himself. However, the interpretation is not difficult. Obviously, it makes more sense for God to blast Job as an olive tree or to shake him as a vine, removing his fruit and blossoms before they come to fruition.

⁶² Alternate reading based upon one early printed edition and the Syriac codex. I only mention the alternate reading—I don't see it as accurately reflecting the immediate context.

⁶³ Paraphrased from Keil & Delitzsch's *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. 4, p. 393. This information appeared to come from Wetzst. It appears as though this is a description of what occurred during the time of Keil and Delitzsch (or, Wetzst). Also, there are even different words in Arabic for ripened and unripened grapes.

⁶⁴ This is all taken from *Biblical Hebrew*; by Page Kelley; William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., ©1992, pp. 131, 292.

Now, what appears to be the case, is that an olive tree will bear fruit plentifully in the first, third and fifth years, but rests during the second, fourth and sixth years, casting off its blossoms during their even numbered years, allowing little if any fruit to form on its branches.⁶⁵ Horticulture being one of my weak disciplines, I do not know if this is true, despite the fact that I lived among olive orchards in my youth, or whether there were conditions of weather which brought on these results, but the principle of the early dropping of the blossoms is the same. In any case, most blossoming trees when they drop their blossoms appear as though surrounded by snowflakes.

Barnes: *The employment of a figure of this kind to illustrate an idea supposes that such a case was familiar to those who were addressed. It is well known that in the East the grape and the olive might be blasted while in blossom, or when the fruit was setting, as all fruit may be. The injury is usually done in the flower, or when the fruit is just forming...[there is a certain] beauty in this image. The plans and purposes of wicked men are immature. Nothing is carried to perfection. They are cut off, their plans are blasted, and all the results of their living are like the sour, hard, crabbed, and useless fruit that falls from the tree before it is ripe. The results of the life of the righteous, on the other hand, are like a tree loaded with ripe and mellow fruit—their plans are brought to maturity, and resemble the rich and heavy clusters of grapes, or the abundant fruits of the olive when ripe...The olive is a well-known tree that abounds in the East. The fruit is chiefly valuable for the oil which it produces...The olive is liable to be blasted while the fruit is setting, or while the tree is in blossom. In Greece, a north-east wind often proves destructive to the olive, and the same may be true of other places...Dr. Chandler, speaking of Greece, says, "The olive groves are now, as anciently, a principle source of the riches of Athens. The crops had failed five years successively when we arrived; the cause assigned was a northerly wind...which destroyed the flower. The fruit is set in about a fortnight, when the apprehension from this unpropitious quarter ceases. The bloom in the following year was unhurt, and we had the pleasure of leaving the Athenians happy in the prospect of a plentiful harvest." A wicked man is here elegantly compared with such a tree that casts its flowers and produces no fruit.*⁶⁶ Job does not disagree with this. He has already said, "Can the papyrus grow up without marsh? Can the rushes grow without water? While it is still green and not cut down, yet it withers before any other plant. So are the paths of all who forget God and the hope of the godless will perish." (Job 8:11–13). In fact, this basic thought is picked up by Eliphaz in the next verse.

**for company of profane [is] barren
and fire consumes tents of bribery,**

Job
15:34

**because the company of the profane is barren
[and desolate];
and fire consumes the tents of bribery,**

**for the company of the godless is barren and desolate,
and fire consumes their tents of bribery,**

What others have done:

<i>The Emphasized Bible</i>	For the family of the impious is unfruitful, And a fire hath devoured the tents of bribery;
JPS (Tanakh) NASB	For the company of the impious is desolate; Fire consumes the tents of the briber; "For the company of the godless is barren, And fire consumes the tents of the corrupt.
The Septuagint	For death is the witness of the impious, and fire will burn the houses of them that receive gifts.
<i>Young's Lit. Translation</i>	For the company of the profane is gloomy, And fire hath consumed tents of bribery.

After the kîy conjunction (*for, because*), we have the feminine singular construct of ʿêdâh (הַדָּוָה) [pronounced *gā-DAWH*], translated *company, congregation, assembly*. Although this is generally used for a religious gathering, it can refer to an assembly of any kind. Strong's #5712 BDB #417. This is the assembly of the masculine singular

⁶⁵ This is according to Keil & Delitzsch's *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. 4, pp. 392–393; the information originally came from Wetzst.

⁶⁶ *Barnes' Notes; Job, Volume 1*; F. C. Cook, editor; reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; pp. 287–288.

adjective *chânêph* (חַנְפֵּה) [pronounced *khaw-NAYF*], which means *profane, irreligious, godless*. Strong's #2611 BDB #338. Now Eliphaz extends this to all those who are around Job (excluding himself and his two self-righteous friends). This is Job's family and servants and those who once were enamored of him. What he says about them is the masculine singular adjective *gal'mûd* (גַּלְמוֹד) [pronounced *gahlê-MOOD*], and it should be rendered *barren, desolate*. Strong's #1565 BDB #166. Eliphaz is saying that Job's friends are barren as Job is (guilt by association). At one time, there was a great company of people around Job—family, friends and servants—now, all that remains are one nagging wife. Job is now surrounded by desolation. And Job does not disagree in theory with Eliphaz. He has already said, “Those who hate you will be clothed with shame and the tent of the wicked will be no more.” (Job 8:22). They are in agreement when it comes to the eventual discipline of the wicked by God. Job's point is that, what about the suffering of the innocent?

Now, the first sentence in the Greek is entirely different, and sounds more like a conclusion than does this verse. It reads: *For death is the witness of the profane [or, impious]*. Either the person or persons who originally translated this chapter of Job went rather free-form, dealt with poor manuscripts, or our Greek manuscripts of the Septuagint are weak. Although it is clear that some books of the Septuagint really suffered at the hands of the translators (I believe that Kings was one of these books, if memory serves), we do not really know about individual chapters and what people were assigned what responsibilities in this translation.

In the second line, there is even a hint as to what Eliphaz suspects that Job has done. He implies that perhaps the secret sin of Job involved bribery or some sort. Those who receive bribes are easily corruptible and have no true principles. In fact, any time that money becomes a factor in your determination of right and wrong, and what you should or shouldn't do, then you are corrupt and have no principles.

When Eliphaz speaks of *fire consuming tents*, he is speaking metaphorically of judgement, and not necessarily a raging fire coming in and burning down Job's home. Fire is the symbol for divine judgement throughout Scripture: *For if we continue sinning willfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth [i.e., we refuse to believe in Christ], there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a certain terrifying expectation of judgment, and the fury of a fire which will consume the adversaries*⁶⁷ (Heb. 10:26–27 Isa. 26:11).

**conceiving incredible exhaustion and bearing
misfortune
and their womb prepares deception.”**

Job
15:35

**conceiving misery and giving birth to
misfortune [due to iniquity]
and their insides prepare deception.”**

**conceiving misery and giving birth to misfortune because of their iniquity;
their insides prepare deception.”**

Let's check a couple of other translations first:

<i>The Emphasized Bible</i>	Conceiving mischief, and brining forth iniquity, Yea their inmost soul prepareth deceit.
NASB	“They conceive mischief [or, <i>pain</i>] and bring forth iniquity, And their mind [lit., <i>belly</i>] prepares deception.”
The Septuagint	And he will conceive sorrows, and his end will be vanity, and his belly will bear deceit.

Young's Lit. Translation To conceive misery, and to bear iniquity, Even their heart doth prepare deceit.

We begin this verse with the Qal infinitive absolute of *hârâh* (הָרָה) [pronounced *haw-RAW*], which means *conceive, to become pregnant, to be with child*. Strong's #2029 BDB #247. The infinitive absolute, when found alone, acts as an English gerund, so that we may add *ing* to the end of the verb. What is *conceived* is *âmal* (אֵמַל) [pronounced *aw-MAWL*], which means *wearisome labor, exhaustion, misery*. It can be rendered *wickedness, trouble, mischief, perverseness, sorrow, painful, grievousness, grievances*. Strong's #5999 (and #5998)

⁶⁷ This is obviously the last judgement, the Lake of Fire judgement for Satan and his angels and all unbelievers.

BDB #765. The use of these two words together means that Eliphaz is telling Job that he brought all of his own personal misery on himself.

The second verb is the Qal infinitive absolute of *yâlad* (יָלַד) [pronounced *yaw-LAHD*], which means *to bear, to be born, to bear, to bring forth, to beget*. Strong's #3205 BDB #408. What Job is bearing is the masculine singular noun *âwen* (אָוֵן) [pronounced *AW-wen*], which means, in the book of Job, *misfortune resulting from iniquity*. Strong's #205 BDB #19.

A similar image is used throughout Scripture. *Behold, he travails with wickedness, and he conceives emptiness and gives birth to lies* (Psalm 7:14). *They conceive mischief and they give birth to iniquity* (Isa. 59:4b). This is not far from, *whatever a man sows, this he will also reap* (Gal. 6:7b). *You have plowed wickedness and you will reap injustice* (Hosea 10:13a).

What Eliphaz is saying is that Job has worked extremely hard—to the point of exhaustion—but it is a person who has worked hard at doing that which is wrong. This is obvious, because what has happened to him is visible to all. Job's present state belies his inherent evil...so says Eliphaz.

After the *wâw* conjunction, we have the feminine singular noun (with a 3rd person masculine singular suffix) *beṭen* (בֶּטֶן) [pronounced *BEH-ten*] primarily means *womb*, and, so far in the Bible, has been used in no other way (Gen. 25:23–24 30:2 36:27 are all of the prior references).⁶⁸ *Beṭen* (בֶּטֶן) [pronounced *BEH-ten*], should be rendered *belly, stomach* when in reference to a man (Judges 3:21 Job 15:2 20:15, 20 32:19) or a woman who is not pregnant (Num. 5:21–22); and *womb* when it is in reference to a pregnant woman (Gen. 25:23–24 30:2 Deut. 28:4 Job 1:21). Strong's #990 BDB #105. Since Eliphaz is speaking metaphorically of Job giving birth to misery and pain, this is a good word to use, as it often refers to the womb of a woman.

What the *insides* of Job do is the Hiphil imperfect of *kûwn* (כּוּן) [pronounced *koon*], which means *to erect (to stand up perpendicular), to establish, to prepare, to be stabilized*. In the Hiphil, it means *to set up, to erect, to constitute* (when followed by a *lâmed*), *to appoint, to found, to direct, to prepare, to make ready*. Strong's #3559 BDB #465. What Job's *womb* is preparing is the feminine singular noun *mir^emâh* (מִרְמָה) [pronounced *mir^e-MAW*], which means *deceit, deception, duplicity, [evil] cunning, treachery*. Strong's #4820 BDB #941.

This diatribe by Eliphaz seems to end somewhat abruptly, which could indicate that Eliphaz is indeed reading a poem of wisdom to Job. Again, this is a final remark to Job, thinly disguised as referring to some third party group, saying that what Job's *womb* is preparing in his belly is nothing but deceit and deception. Barnes: *[The point of this verse is that wicked men] form and execute plans of evil. It is characteristic of such men that they form such plans and live to execute them, and they must abide the consequences. All this was evidently meant for Job; and few things could be more trying to a man's patience than to sit and hear those ancient apothegms, designed to describe the wicked, applied so unfeelingly to himself.*⁶⁹ Eliphaz looks at Job while he is speaking and realizes that Job is simply preparing a response. He then cuts off Job at the knees with his final remark—that the wicked men of whom Eliphaz is speaking simply prepares words of deception, the implication being that Job is preparing right at that moment a dialogue of misdirection.

Keil and Delitzsch: *With the speech of Eliphaz, the eldest among the friends, who gives tone to their speeches, the controversy enters upon a second stage. In his last speech, Job has turned from the friends and called upon them to be silent; he turned to God, and therein a sure confidence, but at the same time a challenging tone of irreverent defiance, is manifested. God does not enter into the controversy which Job desires; and the consequence is, that the flickering confidence is again extinguished, and the tone of defiance is changed into despair and complaint. Instead of listening to the voice of God, Job is obliged to content himself again with that of the friends, for they believe the continuance of the contest to be just as binding upon them as upon Job. They cannot consider themselves overcome, for their dogma has grown up in such inseparable connection with their idea of God, and therefore, is so much raised above human contradiction, that nothing but a divine fact can break*

⁶⁸ It is also found in Num. 5:22, 27 Deut. 7:13 28:4, 11, 18, 33 30:9; these are **all** the references to it in the Torah.

⁶⁹ Barnes' Notes; Job, Volume 1; F. C. Cook, editor; reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; p. 289.

through it. And they are too closely connected with Job by their friendship to leaven him to himself as a heretic; they regard Job as one who is self-deluded, and have really the good intention of converting their friend.⁷⁰

What we need to maintain in our own minds, despite the arguments of Eliphaz, is that Job, from the very beginning of this book, was held up by God as His servant—God held him up as an example to Satan of godliness and human spiritual maturity. Therefore, despite any of Job's missteps or failings, always recall that God has already made clear His evaluation of Job.

The NIV Study Bible sums up these opinions of Eliphaz quite handily: *As long as Eliphaz rejects Job's insistence that the wicked go on prospering, he does not have to wrestle with the disturbing corollary: the mystery of why the innocent sometimes suffer.*⁷¹

[<<Return to Outline>>](#)

[<<Return to the Chart Index>>](#)

[<<Site Map>>](#)

[<<Return to the Job Homepage>>](#)

[<<Return to Beginning of this Chapter>>](#)

1. *The Layman's Bible Commentary, Vol. 8*, Balmer H. Kelly, John Knox Press, ©1962, pp. 92–93.

⁷⁰ Keil & Delitzsch's *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. 4, pp. 393–394.

⁷¹ *The NIV Study Bible*; ©1995 by The Zondervan Corporation; p. 742.