

Job 16

Job 16:1–22

Job's Answer to Eliphaz Part One

Outline of Chapter 16:

- vv. 1–5 **Job says his friends are lame comforters**
- vv. 6–17 **Job's suffering parallels the suffering of Jesus prior to the cross**
- vv. 18–22 **Job's witness is in heaven and Job's end is near**

Charts:

- v. 3 **Mârats**
- v. 22 **Job 16:19–22 as Translated by God's Word™**

Introduction: As we go through this book of Job, one of the things that may have occurred to you is *why does Job have so much to say?* The next thing that should occur to you is, *why is a book with so much human viewpoint a part of the Word of God?* We know up front that Job does not really understand what has happened to him and can only speculate. His three friends know even less of the reasons for what has happened to Job. So why do we have a book with so much confusion and human viewpoint? (1) Job, in his time period, was a spiritual Atlas. His great spirituality and interest in all things good was so great that God touted Job as an example of human righteousness to Satan. Now, I don't know about you, but I doubt that there are many times when God holds me up as this example of spiritual greatness before Satan. Therefore, although Job does not know why he has been struck down as he has been, he still, for the most part expresses divine viewpoint. (2) There are times when Job speaks that he will transcend his time period and speak of things to come—this chapter is a great illustration of that. (3) It is important for us to see that there are instances of human viewpoint which may seem right, superficially, but break down under careful examination. That is the purpose of examining the statements of Job's three friends. By simple application, you don't get to point to some believer who is under tremendous pressure and think to yourself, *It looks like divine discipline—I wonder what he did to piss God off?* 99% of the time, we don't really know; 1% of the time is debatable.

For whatever reason, Job 16 is only half of Job's answer to Eliphaz. The second portion of his answer is in chapter 17. Together, we have only a total of 38 verses, so why these chapters were not joined into one is hard to explain.¹ If you will recall, in the first speech of Eliphaz, he showed tenderness toward Job and his situation. However, in his second speech, in the previous chapter, Eliphaz spoke of Job in the 3rd person. He described the wicked man and what he should expect, thinly veiling the fact that he was speaking of Job. Job's vileness was assumed to be a fact by Eliphaz when he spoke this second time. Job follows suit and does not address Eliphaz directly, but the three of them in general. At first, he says if the tables were turned, he could speak against them, or he could comfort them in their pain, and that he would give them comfort.

Then, superficially, it does not appear as though Job directly answers any of what Eliphaz had to say. However, what he does is use many of the same words that Eliphaz used, so that, even though few of Eliphaz's specific questions are answered, still, it indicates that Job listened to what he said. But, bear in mind, the gist of what most of the speeches of Job's friends are, Job is suffering greatly; therefore, Job obviously must have sinned. Job does say that someone runs at him like a warrior (recall the mention of the shield in the previous chapter), but we will be able to ascertain that Job is placing the responsibility for his pain and suffering on Satan. He acknowledges his painful position before God and is confused as to why God would allow any of this to happen.

Then Job begins to speak of how God has struck him down in pain. Then suddenly, we find ourselves at the night of the crucifixion of our Lord. **"But now, He has exhausted Me—You have laid waste all my company...My adversary glares at Me; they have gaped at Me with their mouth; they have slapped Me on the cheek with contempt; they have**

¹ Barnes also claims that this was a mistake; *Barnes' Notes; Job, Volume 1*; F. C. Cook, editor; reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; p. 289.

massed themselves against Me. God hands Me over to ruffians, and He tosses Me into the hands of the wicked.” (Job 16:7, 9b–11). One of the fascinating aspects of the Bible is that we find certain aspects of the crucifixion of Christ better described in the Old Testament than in the New (see also, for instance, Psalm 22 Isa. 53). One of the common threads of Scripture is the substitutionary sacrifice of our Lord on our behalf, the Just for the unjust, the unblemished for the fallen. We find allusions to this as early as the book of Job or Gen. 22, both written 2000 years before the incarnation of Jesus. The entire sacrificial system of offerings points to our Lord, as does the furniture in the Tent of Meeting (and later the Temple). Anyone can find minor items of disagreement or alleged contradictions in Scripture, most or all of which have been dealt with already, but what stands out is Scripture’s unity and centrality of the coming of the Messiah and His crucifixion. It is passages like these which give us true appreciation for the recording of the life of Job, and which gives us greater insight into the reason for Job’s suffering (he was the just suffering before the unjust, whose suffering they did not comprehend).

Now, one of the many problems which I have with the chapters and verses in the Bible is that they are always cut up weirdly. One example, which we will come across is Job 16:12 and 13; the end of v. 12 is tied directly to v. 13a. Another problem is the split between Job 16 and Job 17. Personally, I would have, from a superficial standpoint, joined these two chapters, as all of this is Job speaking. Why not put it in the same chapter? These chapters were separated because for the lion’s share of Job 16, beginning at v. 7, we will be standing at the foot of the cross of Jesus. This is continued into Job 17. This is one of the most amazing passages in the Word of God—over 2000 years before the cross, we have Job describing the scene, describing the individual events, the judgment to take place, and even the theology of that central event of history. You have never seen it exegeted in that way because there have been a few problems here or there in the Hebrew which were never, to the best of my knowledge, properly dealt with (v. 13a is a prime example—there are no archers in that verse; there are no arrows). What you will see as we examine these great chapters is an unfolding of the cross, as detailed as that found in Isa. 53 and as detailed as anything found in the gospels even as recorded by an eyewitness.²

Keil and Delitzsch make the observation of these second set of arguments: *As from the first speech of Eliphaz, so also from this first speech of Job, it may be seen that the controversy takes a fresh turn, which brings it nearer to the maturity of decision. From Eliphaz’ speech Job has seen that no assertion of his innocence can avail to convince the friends, and that the more strongly he maintains his innocence, even before God, he only confirms them in the opinion that he is suffering the punishment of his godlessness, which now comes to light, like a wrong that has bene hitherto concealed. Job thus perceives that he is incapable of convincing the friends; for whatever he may say only tends to confirm them in the false judgment, which they first of all inferred from their false premises, but now from his own words and conduct. He is accounted by them as one who is punished of God, whom they address as the preachers of repentance; now, however, they address him so that the chief point of their sermon is no longer bright promises descriptive of the glorious future of the penitent, but fearful descriptions of the desolating judgment which comes upon the impenitent sinner. This zealous solicitude for his welfare seems to be clever and to the point, according to their view; it is, however, only a vexatious method of treating their friend’s case; it is only roughly and superficially moulded according to the order of redemption, but without an insight into the spiritual experience and condition of him with whom they have here to do. Their prudential pastoral is carnal and legal; they know nothing of a righteousness which avails before God, and nothing of a state of grace which frees from the divine vengeance; they know not how to deal with one who is passing through the fierce conflict of temptation, and understand not the mystery of the cross. Can we wonder, then, that Job is compelled to regard their words as nothing more than דברי רר [words of wind], as they regarded his? In the words of Job they miss their certainly compact dogma, in which they believe they possess the philosopher’s stone, by means of which all earthly suffering is to be changed into earthly prosperity. Job, however, can find nothing in their words that reminds him of anything he ought to know in his present position, or that teaches him anything respecting it. He is compelled to regard them as [sorry comforters]... who make the burden of his suffering only more grievous, instead of lightening it for him. For their consolation rests upon an unjust judgment of himself, against which his moral consciousness rebels, and upon a one-sided notion of God, which is contradicted by his experience. Their speeches exhibit skill as to their form, but the sympathy of the heart is wanting. Instead of plunging with Job into th profound mystery of God’s providence, which appoints such a hard lot for the righteous man to endure, they shake their heads, and think: What a great sinner Job must be, that God should visit him with so sever a*

² The Apostle John.

*punishment! It is the same shaking of the head...which the incomparably righteous One experience from those who passed by His cross.*³

What will jump out at you more than anything else in this chapter is how closely this parallels the sufferings of our Lord on the cross and prior to the cross—in almost any translation, vv. 10–11 stand out. As we cover each verse, I will give you many of the parallels; however, in the introduction to the book of Job, I have placed a chart which is almost a complete listing of the parallels between this chapter and passages which delineate our Lord's suffering. If that is not enough, then at the end of Job 17, I will allude to a chart where I have listed almost every Old and New Testament parallel concerning our Blessed Hope. By themselves, passages such as Gen. 22 Job 16–17 Psalm 22 Isa. 53 Micah 5 offer some interesting parallels. However, when taken altogether, along with the gospels and the epistles, it is absolutely amazing how much God told the Jews about the Messiah prior to His coming.

At the very end of this chapter, Job again pleads to speak to God, to reason with Him as a man with his neighbor. Then Job makes a rather obtuse reference to his Advocate being on high; to his Witness being in heaven. We know that this is Jesus Christ, Who makes it possible for us to approach and to plead with God. My point here is that the book and sufferings of Job are more than a debate between God and Satan—throughout this book, we have glimpses of our Advocate to come.

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

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

Job Says His Friends Are Lame Comforters

Literally:

Smoother English rendering:

And so answered Job, and so he said,

Job 16:1 **And so Job answered and said,**

And so Job answered Eliphaz,

Job will now answer Eliphaz, but speak very little directly to what Eliphaz has said. What we have instead is a similarity of vocabulary, rather than a point by point refutation. McGee: *Eliphaz has just played the same old record over again. He is the dreamer. He has had a vision. He is a spiritualist. He claims to have some inside information that no one else has but he didn't get any advance information after his first speech. He just comes up with the same old thing.*⁴

**“I have heard like these [things] many;
comforters of trouble, all of you!**

Job
16:2

**“I have listened [to] these many such [things];
all of you [are] comforters of exhaustion!**

**“I have heard things such as these before!
You completely tire and exhaust me with your feigned comforting.**

This is fairly straightforward, particularly for the book of Job, but we will see what others have done first:

*The Emphasized Bible
God's Word™
Keil and Delitzsch*

I have heard many such things, <Wearisome comforters> are ye all!
“I have heard many things like this before. You are all pathetic at comforting me.
I have now heard such things in abundance, Troublesome comforters are ye all!

³ Keil & Delitzsch's *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. 4, pp. 411–412. Surprisingly enough, no other commentator that I read pointed out the parallels between these two chapters of Job and the cross—the exception was Keil and Delitzsch, who mention this in passing, after this particular quote, saying that the similarity between this chapter and Psalm 109 (which speaks of the cross) *is not merely accidental*. They also, at the end of their commentary of these chapters, note the comparisons, which are quite obvious.

⁴ J. Vernon McGee; *Job*; Thru the Bible Books; ©El Camino Press, 1977; p. 93.

NASB "I have heard many such things; Sorry comforters [lit., *comforters of trouble*] are you all."

Young's Lit. Translation I have heard many such things, Miserable comforters are ye all.

We begin this verse with the wâw consecutive and the Qal perfect of *shâma* (שָׁמָע) [pronounced *shaw-MAHG*], which means *to listen, listen intently, to listen and obey, to listen and act upon, to listen and give heed to, to hearken to, to be attentive to, listen and take heed to, listen and take note of*. Strong's #8085 BDB #1033. This is followed by the kaph preposition (*like, as*), which combination is not mentioned in BDB or in Gesenius. However, kaph is also used in several different ways, although not near as veritably as *bêyth*. The best explanation that I could come up with comes from BDB: *sometimes כ is used...to compare an object with the class to which it belongs, and express its correspondence with the idea which it ought to realize*. This is followed by the demonstrative particle *ʿelleh* (הֵלֵךְ) [pronounced *EEHL-leh*], which means *these, these things*. Strong's #428 BDB #41. It is followed by the feminine plural adjective *raḅv* (רַבָּ) [pronounced *rahḅv*], which means *many, much, great*. Strong's #7227 BDB #912. Together, these three are generally rendered *many such things*. The sense is that Job has already heard these things which they are telling him. They are not revealing some new, phenomenal thoughts. They are not presenting any spiritual breakthroughs. He has heard things such as these that they are presenting, mostly from them already.

In the second line we have the masculine plural Piel participial construct of *nâcham* (נָחַם) [pronounced *naw-KHAHM*] and it means *to be sorry, to be moved to pity, to have compassion, to be sorry, to suffer grief*. In the masculine plural Piel, this would mean *comforters*. Strong's #5162 BDB #636. This is followed and modified by the masculine singular noun *ʿâmâl* (עָמַל) [pronounced *aw-MAWL*], which means *intense labor, exhausting toil, exhaustion, miserable work, work and toil so tiring, you just want to cry*. Strong's #5999 (and #5998) BDB #765. This is followed by *all of you*. This is our first hint that this passage will relate to Jesus and the cross. We have a similar passage in Psalm 69:20b–21: *And I looked for sympathy, but there was none. And for comforters, but I found none. They also gave me gall for my food and for my thirst, they gave me vinegar to drink*. The rejection and humiliation found in Psalm 69 was experienced by David, but paralleled by our Lord in His incarnation. *Gall* will be mentioned in v. 13 of this chapter of Job, when we are clearly deep into a Messianic passage.

Job has already heard what they are selling. He calls them exhausting comforters. In Job 13:4, he called them worthless physicians. He can barely listen to them, they exhaust him so much with their continual, meaningless platitudes. Barnes: *[Job's three friends] had come professedly to condole with him. Now all that they said was adapted only to irritate, and to deepen his distress. He was disappointed; and he was deeply wounded and grieved.*⁵ Job will receive comfort, but it will not be until the end of this book, in Job 42:11.

An end to words of wind?

Or what strengthens you vehemence that you answer?

Job
16:3

[Is] there an end to [your] windy words?

Or, what caused you to answer with [such] strong vehemence?

Is there an end in sight with regards to your overblown speeches?

Just what caused you to answer me with such vehemence?

This verse is a tad bit more difficult than the previous two:

<i>The Emphasized Bible</i>	Is there to be an end to wind words? Or what so strongly exciteth thee that thou must respond?
<i>God's Word™</i>	Will [your] long-winded speeches never end? What disturbs you that you keep on answering [me]?
JPS (Tanakh)	Have windy words no limit? What afflicts you that yo speak on?
Keil and Delitzsch (revised)	Are [your] windy words now at an end, Or what goads [or, brings out; or, incites] you that you answer?

⁵ Barnes' Notes; Job, Volume 1; F. C. Cook, editor; reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; p. 289.

NASB “Is there *no* limit to windy words? Or what plagues you that you answer?
 TEV Are you going to keep on talking forever? Do you always have to have the last word?
 Young's Lit. Translation Is there an end to words of wind? Or what doth embolden thee that thou answerest?

We begin this verse with the interrogative particle and the word *end*. Then we have, literally, *to words of wind*. At first, a superficial reading makes it appear as though Job did not listen at all to what his detractors had to say. However, he occasionally gets in digs like this. The latter word is *rûwach* (רוּחַ) [pronounced *ROO-ahkh*], which means *wind, breath, spirit, apparition*. Strong's #7307 BDB #924. Eliphaz accused him of speaking with windy knowledge (Job 15:2), and here, Job returns the insult.

McGee makes application here: *Job is saying, “I would have thought you would have been ashamed to speak as you have. They are vain words, empty words. They do not meet the need.” Unfortunately, a great many sermons are like that. Some of them are not even Bible-centered and cannot be used by the Spirit of God. Unless the Spirit of God can use a sermon, it will come to naught. It will be a vain, empty thing. There is a lot of preaching in the world today that is absolutely meaningless as far as worship of God and expounding His Word is concerned. The same can be said for a lot of the singing—and the entire service—in some of our churches. The fault may lie with the preacher, but it doesn't always rest there; sometimes the congregation, the listeners, can be responsible for the breakdown that takes place.*⁶

Then we have the conjunction ׀ (או) [pronounced *oh*], which means *or, or rather*. Strong's #176 BDB #14. This is followed by the interrogative *what* and the 3rd person masculine singular, Hiphil imperfect, 2nd person masculine singular suffix of *mârats* (מָרַט) [pronounced *maw-RAHTS*], which BDB gives the meaning as *to be sick, to be made sick, to cause to be sick*. However, Gesenius tells us that this word's meaning has been well-discussed and that he regards the primary meaning *to be strong, to be forceful*. Keil and Delitzsch say that the Jewish interpreters give it the meaning *to be strong*, but without any justification. The KJV is not much help, rendering the three occurrences of this word in the Niphal in three different ways (*forcible, grievous, sore*) and its one occurrence (here) in the Hiphil as *emboldeneth [thee]*. Keil and Delitzsch claim the primary meaning is *to pierce, to penetrate*; and, in the Hiphil, *to goad, to bring out, to incite*. Personally, I will go with *to be vehement*. Strong's #4834 BDB #599. This gives us: *Or what causes you vehemence that you answer?* Clearly, Job cannot believe that Eliphaz, probably the one closest to him of the three, jumped all over him in the previous chapter.

Mârats					
Passage	Morphology	Modified rendering from Young			
		KJV	NASB	Rotherham	Young's
I Kings 2:8	Niphal participle	“And look, with you is Shimei ben Gera, the Benjamite of Bahurim, and he reviled me—a <i>mârats-ing</i> reviling—in the day I went to Mahanaim; and he came down to meet me at the Jordan, and I swore to him by Jehovah, saying, ‘I will not put you to death by the sword.’”			
		grievous	violent (or, grievous)	grievous	grievous
Job 6:25*	Niphal perfect	“How <i>mârats</i> have been upright sayings, and what reproof reproves from you?”			
		forcible	not painful	pleasant	powerful
Job 16:3	Hiphil imperfect	“Is there an end to [your] words of wind? Or, what [is it that] <i>mârats</i> you to answer?”			

⁶ J. Vernon McGee; *Job*; Thru the Bible Books; ©El Camino Press, 1977; pp. 93–94.

Mârats					
Passage	Morphology	Modified rendering from Young			
		KJV	NASB	Rotherham	Young's
		emblideneth	plagues	so strongly exciteth	embolden
Micah 2:10	Niphal participle	Rise and go, for this [is] not the rest, because of uncleanness, it corrupts, and corruption is mârats-ing .			
		sore	painful	ruthless	powerful
<p>Conclusions: I think that it is clear that the BDB meaning <i>to be sick, to be made sick</i> is simply not applicable in any of these passages, and therefore should be discarded. I think that it should also be clear how strong an influence is the KJV (which was also influenced by previous translations). I think that a reasonable rendering of this word would be <i>to be strong, to be made strong, to be vehement, to be strongly vehement</i>; which is the traditional Jewish rendering of this word. This would give us a fairly consistent rendering throughout Scripture (as Young has).</p>					
*This reading is disputed.					

Understand that Job is there, weakly and sickly before them, and they are pouring out these platitudes of condemnation upon him. He asks them, almost tongue-in-cheek, from where do they get the strength and vehemence to answer him in his weakened, puny state.

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

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

For Job, the personal suffering is horrible enough—but then to have these three former friends self-righteously harass him and verbally beat him down further—it is just more than he can bear. Of, as Keil and Delitzsch more eloquently stated it: *By such unjust an uncharitable treatment from the friends, Job's sufferings stand forth before him in increased magnitude. He exceeds himself in the most terrible figures, in order to depict the sudden change which the divine dispensation of suffering has brought upon him. The figures are so terrible, for Job sees behind his sufferings a hostile hideous God as their author; they are the outburst of His anger, His quivering looks, His piercing darts, His shattering missiles. His sufferings are a witness de facto against him, the sufferer; but they are this not merely in themselves, but also in the eyes of the people around him. To the sufferings which he has directly to endure in body and soul there is added, as it were, as their other equally painful part, misconception and scorn, which he has to suffer from without. Not only does he experience the wrath of God contrary to the testimony to his righteousness which is consciousness gives him, but also the scoff of the ungodly, who now deridingly triumph over him. Therefore, he clothes himself in mourning, and lies with his former majesty in the dust; his face is red with weeping, and his eyes are become almost blind, although there is no wrong in his hand, and his prayer is free from hypocrisy.*⁷

In the next two verses, Job asks what if the tables were turned? What if he could speak against them as they have spoken against him? Job answers his own question in v. 5 by saying that he would give them comfort, not criticism.

⁷ Keil & Delitzsch's *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. 4, p. 412.

**Also I as you [all]—I could speak
if it [was] your soul instead of my soul;
I could join together against you with words
and I could shake against you with my head.**

Job
16:4

**Furthermore, [if] I [was] as you, I could speak;
if it [were] your souls [here] instead of my
soul;
[then] I could string together words against
you
and I could shake my head against you.**

**If our places were switched,
certainly it would be easy for me to string together various proverbs and maxims against you
and I could hold you in derision.**

Certainly, we should examine what others have done before us:

<i>The Emphasized Bible</i>	I also <like you> could speak,— <If your soul were in the place of my soul> I could string together words against you, And could therewith shake over you my head.
<i>God's Word™</i>	I, too, could speak like you if we could trade places. I could string words together against you and shake my head at you.
Keil and Delitzsch	I also would speak like you, If only your soul were in my soul's stead. I would weave words against you, and shake my head at you;
The Latin Vulgate NASB	...then I would console you with words, and move my head over you. ⁸ "I too could speak like you, if I were in your place. I could compose words against you, And shake my head at you."
TEV	If you were in my place and I in yours, I could say everything you are saying. I could shake my head wisely and drown you with a flood of words.
<i>Young's Lit. Translation</i>	I also, like you, might speak, If your soul were in my soul's stead. I might join against you with words, And nod at you with my head.

This verse begins easily enough. It begins with the very common adverb gam (גַּם) [pronounced *gahm*], which means *also, furthermore, in addition to, even, moreover*. Strong's #1571 BDB #168. This is followed by the emphatic use of the personal pronoun *I*. This is followed by the kaph preposition (כַּ, *as, like*), which has a 2nd person masculine plural suffix (*ya'll*) and the 1st person singular, Piel imperfect cohortative of *to speak*, which gives us: **Also I, like you [all]—I could speak...**

Then we have the conjunction lû (לִּי) [pronounced *lue*] and it means *O that, would that, if only, if*. Strong's #3863 (and #3808?) BDB #530. Then we have the substantive yêsh (יֵשׁ) [pronounced *yaysh*], which means *being, substance, existence*. It often acts as a substantive plus the absolute status quo verb *to be*; e.g., *[if] there be* (1 Sam. 20:8), *there is* (Esther 3:8), *there shall be* (Jer. 31:6). However, this acts not as a mere copula [pronounced *KOP-ye-la*], but existence is emphasized. We often render this *there is*, even though *there is* no actual verb. Strong's #3426 BDB #441. Then we have the feminine singular noun nephesh (נֶפֶשׁ) [pronounced *NEH-fesh*], which means *soul, life, living being, desire*. Strong's #5315 BDB #659. With this is the 2nd person masculine plural. Then we have the preposition tachath (תַּחַת) [pronounced *TAH-khath*], which means *underneath, below, under beneath, instead of*. Strong's #8478 BDB #1065. And then we have *my soul*, giving us: **If there [was] your soul instead of my soul**. The difference between Job and his friends is that Job is under great pain and suffering and his friends are not. What they are assuming and saying is easy—they are not in the pain that he is in.

Given an exchange of places, Job then uses the 1st person, Hiphil imperfect cohortative of châ'var (חָבַר) [pronounced *khawb-VAHR*] which generally means *to join, to unite*. Strong's #2266 BDB #287. Barnes: *The idea is not that of heaping up, or accumulating; it is that of tying together, or uniting; and refers here to stringing together old maxims, sayings, and proverbs, in the form of a set argument or discourse. The idea of Job is, that their discourses were nothing but ancient proverbs, thrown together, or strung along without regard to order, pertinency,*

⁸ I include this merely by way of interest. The shaking of the head is not a sign of comforting, but one of derision, which we will justify shortly.

or force. The Hebrew word used here (הבר) means to bind, to bind together, to associate, to be confederate. It may be applied to friends,—united in friendship; to nations—united in alliance, &c. Gesenius supposes that it means here that he “would make a league with words against them;” but the above seems to be the more probable interpretation.⁹ This is followed by *upon you* or *against you*, the bēyth preposition and the feminine plural of millâh (מִלָּה) [pronounced *mil-LAW*] and it 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. This was again a word used a couple of times by Eliphaz in the previous chapter. Job is saying that if they traded places, he also could string words together against Eliphaz and company (*you* is plural). When someone is suffering, it is easy to come up with philosophies and platitudes which blame that person for his own suffering. *There is no difficulty in finding arguments to overwhelm the afflicted—a truth which most persons who have been unfortunate, have had opportunity to experience...Job...could as easily have expressed contempt, reproach, and scorn, as they did [if their situations were reversed]. It required no uncommon talent to do it, and he felt that he would have been fully sufficient for the task.*¹⁰ In other words, what they did required little or no talent or intelligence.

Paul even makes a suggestion for someone caught in a fault by others: **Brothers, even if a man is taken unawares in any misstep, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; looking to yourself, so that you are not tested** (Gal. 6:1). McGee adds: *Don’t go to debate with such a person. Don’t go to preach at him. Restore him in the spirit of meekness, which was illustrated by our Lord when He washed the feet of those who were His own. He is still doing that today. When you and I confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness (I John 1:9). He still washes feet; that is, He still cleanses His own. But He also set us an example. If you are going to wash someone’s feet, you can’t put yourself above him, look down upon him, point your finger, and begin to preach at him. You will need to kneel down and take the place of a servant to wash feet. That is quite a bit different than arguing with the person.*¹¹

The final line is: **And I could shake against you...** Then we have the preposition b^omôw (בְּמוֹ) [pronounced *b^oMOW*], which is equivalent to the bēyth preposition, but used primarily in poetry. Strong’s #1119 BDB #91. This is followed by *my head*. *Shaking the head* was a physical sign of derision. We find it mentioned several times throughout Scripture (II Kings 19:21 Psalm 22:7 109:25 Isa. 37:22 Jer. 48:27 Lam. 2:15 Zeph. 2:15 Matt. 27:39). Its use here does two things: first, it simply indicates the attitudes of Job’s friends, and how easy, if the situations were reversed, it would be for Job to do the same; however, secondly, this little phrase telegraphs what is coming—a parallel to our Lord prior to and on the cross. Psalm 22 is a psalm which speaks of our Lord on the cross (compare Psalm 22:7 with Matt. 27:39, where it is quoted).

**I will strengthen you with my mouth
and a quivering of my lips would refrain [from
negative comments].**

Job
16:5

**I would have strengthen you with my mouth
and the solace of my lips would refrain [from
negative comments] [or, would retrain
themselves].**

**However, instead, I would have given you verbal support
and I would have refrained from these verbal assaults.**

First, the other translations:

The Emphasized Bible

I could make you determined by my mouth, And then my lip-solace should restrain you. Alternate reading: The motion of my lips (in expressing sympathy) would I not restrain.

Dr. Good

With my own mouth will I overpower you, Till the quivering of my lips shall fail.¹²

⁹ Barnes’ Notes; Job, Volume 1; F. C. Cook, editor; reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; p. 290.

¹⁰ Barnes’ Notes; Job, Volume 1; F. C. Cook, editor; reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; p. 290.

¹¹ J. Vernon McGee; Job; Thru the Bible Books; ©El Camino Press, 1977; p. 94.

¹² I don’t know who Dr. Good is, either. He is some old guy quoted by Barnes, although not necessarily someone that Barnes agrees with.

JPS (Tanakh)	I would encourage you with words, My moving lips would bring relief.
Keil and Delitzsch	I would encourage you with my mouth, And the solace of my lips should soothe you.
NASB	"I could strengthen you with my mouth And the solace of my lips could lessen <i>your</i> pain."
The Septuagint	And would there be strength in my mouth, and I would not spare the movement of my lips. ¹³
<i>Young's Lit. Translation</i>	I might harden you with my mouth, And the moving of my lips might be sparing.

We begin this verse with the 1st person, Piel imperfect, 2nd person masculine plural suffix of *ʾâmêtz* (אָמַעַץ) [pronounced *aw-MATES*], and this word means *to be strong, firm, stout, bold, alert*. In the Piel, this means *to strengthen, to make firm, to assure, to secure [for one's self], to harden, to make obstinate*. Strong's #553 BDB #54. This is followed by *with my mouth*. This means *I would strengthen you with my mouth*. Job has already suggested what if their places were reversed and they were the ones suffering. With his mouth, he would strengthen them, he would build them up, he would help to firm them in their misery.

The second line is more difficult. It begins with the masculine singular construct of a noun found only here that means *quivering motion*. Strong's #5205 BDB #627. Because of its similar spelling, it is probably the cognate of the verb *nûwd* (נָוַד) [pronounced *nood*], which means *to mourn, to commiserate, to show sympathy* Strong's #5110 BDB #626.

This quivering (or, more updated *solace*) of the lips is the subject of the 3rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect of *châsak* (חָשַׁק) [pronounced *khaw-SAHK*], which means *to hold in, to restrain, to preserve, to keep safely from something, to withhold, to refrain*. Strong's #2820 BDB #362. In the Greek, there is also a negative. The meaning in the Hebrew appears that Job would have restrained himself from making negative comments. In the Greek, the idea would be that he would not have restrained himself from sympathetic comments and gestures. Which is the correct understanding is impossible to call.

Job simply tells his friends that, had their positions been reversed, he would have refrained from verbally assaulting them. Again, this telegraphs to us that we are about to enter into a Messianic passage. Our Lord was insulted and verbally assaulted, but He answered them not a word (Matt. 27:31a, 39–44 Mark 15:5, 29–32 Luke 23:35–43).

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

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

Job's Suffering Parallels the Suffering of Jesus Prior to the Cross

**If I speak, not restrained my pain
and [if] I should cease, what, from me he
departs?**

Job
16:6

**If I speak, my pain is not withheld;
and [if] I cease [speaking], what? It [the pain]
departs from me?**

**If I speak, my pain is not diminished;
if I do not speak, will His wrath depart from me?**

At this juncture, we have something amazing. What Job says suddenly begins to parallel the cross and the events leading up to the cross. I am blessed with have access to some of the greatest commentaries ever written, and quite surprised that none of them recognized this parallel (v. 13, everywhere mistranslated, pretty much throws everyone off the scent). In vv. 4–5, there are hints that this might refer to our Lord; however, with this verse and continuing throughout the rest of the chapter, it will become clear that Job is now referring to the crucifixion in shadow form. Now, does Job know of the crucifixion? Probably not. Recall that what Job is saying is, in part, inspired by the Holy Spirit (as this would be committed to writing at some point in time). Job may not have known what was in the future, but God the Holy Spirit certainly knew. It is important to recognize that Job himself, is a type

¹³ This is actually two verses in the Septuagint; therefore the Septuagint differs from the Massoretic text by one verse throughout the remainder of this chapter.

of Christ, approved by God (Job 1:8), tested by Satan (Job 1:13–22), yet, **through all this, Job did not sin nor did he blame God** (Job 1:22). His great suffering was heaped upon him, the innocent, while those around him derided him. The book of Job itself parallels the cross; however, this next portion of Job 16 will in particular foreshadow the cross.

The other translations:

<i>The Emphasized Bible</i>	<Though I do speak> unassuaged is my stinging pain,— And <if I forbear> of what am I relieved?
JPS (Tanakh)	If I speak, my pain will not be relieved, And if I do not—what have I lost?
Keil and Delitzsch	If I speak, my pain is not soothed; And if I forbear, what alleviation do I experience?
NASB	“If I speak, my pain is not lessened, And if I hold back, what has left me?”
The Septuagint	For if I speak, I will not feel the pain of my wound; and if I am silent, how will I be wounded the less?
<i>Young’s Lit. Translation</i>	If I speak, my pain is not restrained, And I cease—what goeth from me?

We begin this verse with the hypothetical particle and the 1st person Piel cohortative of *to speak*. What follows is the negative and the 3rd person masculine singular, Niphal imperfect of *châsak*^e again; (חַשַׁק) [pronounced *khaw-SAHK*^e], which again means *to hold in, to restrain, to preserve, to keep safely from something, to withhold, to refrain*. Strong’s #2820 BDB #362. This is obviously a play on words to use this verb twice. The Niphal is the passive, meaning that the subject receives the action of the verb. Then we have the masculine singular noun *k^eê^bv* (כְּעֵבֹב) [pronounced *k^eAY^eV*], which means *pain*. Strong’s #3511 BDB #456. **If I speak [boldly], my pain will not be restrained.**

Second line: We have the *wâw* conjunction and the 1st person singular, Qal imperfect cohortative of *châdal* (חָדַל) [pronounced *khaw-DAHL*], which means *to cease and desist, to leave off, to cease, to leave, to forsake*. This is a word given many different renderings in the KJV: *ceased, left, forbear, were unoccupied, leave, forsake, left off, have failed*. Strong’s #2308 BDB #292. Job asks here, *what if I cease?* In context, it means, *what if I cease speaking?*

Then we have the interrogative *mâh* (מַה) [pronounced *maw*], which means *what, how*. Strong’s #4100 BDB #552. In the second translation, I chose to let it stand merely as an untranslated interrogative. Then we have *from me*. Then we have the 3rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect of *hâlak*^e (הָלַךְ) [pronounced *haw-LAHK*^e], which means *to go, to come, to depart, to walk*. Strong’s #1980 (and #3212) BDB #229. Literally, this is *what from me departs?* The reference is back to the *pain* in line one.¹⁴

Job’s friends have essentially said that Job needs to shut up, so Job asks them, is his pain relieved if he speaks; or, if he ceases to speak, will God and His pain depart from him? Job’s pain and life have gotten to such a point that neither Job nor his friends see any hope for him.

Barnes gives us a long, free-flowing rendering of this verse: *“But for me, it makes now no difference whether I speak or am silent. My sufferings continue. If I attempt to vindicate myself before men, I am reproached; and equally so if I am silent. If I maintain my cause before God, it avails me nothing, for my sufferings continue. If I am silent, and submit without a murmur, they are the same. Neither silence, nor argument, nor entreaty, avail me before God or man. I am doomed to suffering.”*¹⁵

I want you to be able to connect this verse with the previous passage. Job has already told his friends that if the positions were reversed, he would not berate them, he would have comforted them. In this verse, Job makes it clear that he is unable to comfort himself. It does not matter if he speaks or if he does not.

¹⁴ I originally thought this referred to God; however, one must first look for the nearest matching noun as the first likely subject; if that noun works without upsetting the flow of the speaker (or writer), then that is how the speaker meant it.

¹⁵ *Barnes’ Notes; Job, Volume 1*; F. C. Cook, editor; reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; p. 290.

It is at this point that we begin with a very long dissertation by Job about the cross, the events leading up to the cross, the mood of the day, the people involved, the things which were said, and the theology of Soteriology (salvation). Job says here if he speaks, his pain will not be reduced; if he chooses not to speak, the pain will not depart from him. In the events leading to the cross, there were times when our Lord spoke and times when He did not. When the Sanhedrin assembled at daybreak, and Jesus stood before the high priest, Caiaphas, there were witnesses brought against Him and Jesus did not respond to their false accusations. **And the high priest stood up and said to Him, "Do You make no answer? What is it that these men are testifying against You?" But Jesus kept silent** (Matt. 26:62–63a). Then he asked Jesus straight out: **"If You are the Messiah, tell us."** But he replied, **"If I tell you, you will not believe; and if I ask a question, you will not answer. But from now on, the Son of Man will be seated at the right hand of the power of God."** And they all said, **"Are You the Son of God, then?"** And He said to them, **"Yes, I am."** (Luke 22:67–70 Psalm 110:1). They asked Jesus a direct question and He gave them a direct and complete answer.

When Herod first found himself with Jesus, he was actually happy to be in the presence of this magician (as he so thought of Jesus). **He questioned Him at length, but He answered him nothing, while the chief priests and the scribes were also standing there, accusing Him vehemently** (Luke 23:9–10). Jesus was also silent before Pilate. **Pilate therefore said to Him, "You do not speak to me? Do You not know that I have authority to release You and I have the authority to crucify You?"** Jesus answered, **"You would have no authority over Me, unless it had been given to you from above; for this reason, he who delivered Me up to you has the greater sin."** (John 19:10–11). Can you imagine standing before the Son of God and telling Him that you have the power over His life? **And Christ, while being berated, He did not berate in return; while suffering, He uttered no threats, but kept entrusting Himself to God, Who judges righteously** (1 Peter 2:23).

Prior to the crucifixion, it did not matter whether our Lord spoke or not. The crucifixion was imminent. The pain that He was to face was inescapable. It was God the Father's design that He go to the cross to pay for the sins of the world. It did not matter if He spoke or if He stood silent. His pain began as great apprehension the evening before (Matt. 26:37), and was continued with great physical pain which was heaped upon our Lord prior to the crucifixion. Whether He spoke or not would not change the events which were to transpire.

**Certainly now He causes me to be weary;
You appalled all my company.**

Job
16:7

**Certainly, at this time, He causes me to be
fatigued;
You have caused my assembly to be appalled.**

**He has exhausted me at this time;
You have caused those around me to be appalled and desolate.**

The other translations:

*The Emphasized Bible
God's Word™*

Keil and Delitzsch (revised)

NASB

NEB

The Septuagint

Young's Lit. Translation

But **||now||** hath he wearied me, Thou hast destroyed all my family;

Now He has truly worn me out; You have destroyed my whole community.

Nevertheless, now He has exhausted me; You have desolated all my household,...

"But now He has exhausted me; Thou hast laid waste all my company.

Meanwhile, my friend wearies me with false sympathy; they tear me to pieces [other manuscripts: they seize me], he and his [probably reading; Hebrew *my*] fellows.

But now he has made me weary, and a worn-out fool; and you have laid a hold of me.

Only, now, it hath wearied me; Thou hast desolated all my company.

We begin this verse with the adverb ʾak^e (אָךְ) [pronounced *ahk^e*], and it means *surely, certainly, no doubt, only, only this once*. Strong's #389 BDB #36. Then we have the adverb *now*. This is followed by the 3rd person masculine singular, Hiphil perfect, 1st person singular suffix of lā^{h} (לָאֵךְ) [pronounced *law-AW*], which means *to be weary, to be impatient*. In the Hiphil, it means *to weary, to fatigue, to wear down one's patience*. Strong's #3811 BDB #521. This might be rendered: **Certainly now He has wearied me**. God had completely exhausted his

strength. Keil and Delitzsch: *God has placed him in a condition in which all his strength is exhausted. He is absolutely incapable of offering nay resistance to his pain, and care has also been taken that no solacing word shall come to him from any quarter: Thou hast made all my society desolate.*¹⁶ That is, those around him offer him nothing by way of comfort.

At the cross, we all recall our Lord's complete exhaustion when He was required to bear His own cross, and although He was one of the strongest men in the world, He could not even bear its weight due to the suffering that He had been put through. His great strength had been completely exhausted.

In the second line, we have the 2nd person masculine singular, Hiphil perfect of *shâmêm* (שָׁמַם) [pronounced *shaw-MAIM*] has two distinct meanings: *to be desolate* and *to be appalled*. These meanings are not confined to particular stems, but can be found in all stems. I don't know where the NEB gets *tear me to pieces*. Strong's #8074 BDB #1030. Job is speaking directly to God here (obviously not to his three associates) and he tells God, "You have caused to make appalled all of my..." and then we have the *ʿêdâh* (עֵדָה) [pronounced *ġā-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. Here, it refers to Job's three associates. God has devastated Job so much that He caused Job's friends to be appalled at his condition. This is similar to what Job had already said in Job 10:17: "You renew You witnesses against me, and You increase Your anger toward me; hardship after hardship is with me."

Our Lord had two sets of associates, you might say. There was Israel, along with the religious types, who had made themselves appalling with their self-righteousness and salvation by works. And there were also His disciples, who had all scattered to the four winds (all except John). Both sets of associates were made desolate. His disciples separated from one another and from our Lord. **And they all left Him and fled** (Mark 14:50). And the religious Israel rejected their Savior and Messiah, leaving them with an empty shell of a religion.¹⁷

And so You seized me; for a witness—he is and so He has risen up against me (my deception against my faces testifies).	Job 16:8	And You have seized me, [that seizing] is for a witness and He stands against me, my deceptive [physicality] testifies to my face.
---	-------------	---

**And you have seized me, that seizing a witness against me;
and it stands as a witness against me, my frail physicality belying my own testimony.**

So far, most of what we have seen in this chapter has been fairly straightforward. This verse is a tad bit more difficult to unravel, one key being the reasonable division of lines.

Barnes	For thou hast compressed me, and this is a witness against me; And my leanness rises up against me, and accuses me to my face.
<i>The Emphasized Bible</i>	And <having captured me> it hath served as a witness ; And so my wasting away hath risen up against me, <In my face> it answereth.
<i>God's Word™</i>	You have shriveled me up, which itself is a witness [against me]. My frail body rises up and testifies against me.
JPS (Tanakh)	You have shriveled me; My gauntness serves as a witness; And testifies against me.
Keil and Delitzsch (revised)	And You fill me with wrinkles—for a witness was it, And my leanness rose up against me Complaining to my face.

¹⁶ Keil & Delitzsch's *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. 4, p. 398.

¹⁷ The Jewish leaders asked him straight out, on the morning after His betrayal, if He was the Messiah, the Son of God, and Jesus answered that He was. They took this to be blasphemy, revealing their complete and total rejection of Him (Luke 22:66–71).

KJV	And thou hast filled me with wrinkles, <i>which</i> is a witness <i>against me</i> ; and my leanness rising up in me beareth witness to my face.
The Latin Vulgate	My wrinkles bear witness against me...
NASB	"And Thou has shriveled me up, It has become a witness; And my leanness rises up against me, It testifies to my face."
NEB	The liar testifies against me to my face, in his wrath he wears me down, his hatred is plain to see;
Dr. Noyes	And thou hast seized hold of me, which is a witness against me...
Owen's Translation	And you have seized me for a witness, it is; and has risen up against me my leanness to my face, it testifies.
The Septuagint	...and You have laid a hold of me. My lie has become a testimony, and has risen up against me; it has confronted me to my face. (In the Greek, this is actually vv. 8b–9).
TEV	You have seized me; you are my enemy. I am skin and bones, and people take that as proof of my guilt.
Wemyss	Since thou hast bound me with chains, witnesses come forward...
<i>Young's Lit. Translation</i>	And Thou dost loathe me, For a witness it hath been, And rise up against me doth my failure, In my face it testifieth.

As you notice, the more literal the translation,¹⁸ the less decipherable the meaning. We begin with the wâw consecutive and the 2nd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect, 1st person singular suffix of qâmaṭ (וַאֲנִי) [pronounced *kaw-MAHT*], which means *to seize, to snatch, to grasp, to seize firmly with the hands*. This word is found only in Job 16:8 22:16. The reason this meaning was settled upon was there are three similar words, but not cognates, which have to do with the hand, or grasping with the hand. It also seems to be related to an Arabic word which means *to bind*. Obviously, by the variety of translations, there is no complete agreement on this. In any case, this meaning is compatible with both passages. Strong's #7059 BDB #888. This gives us: **You have seized me [firmly]**.

Barnes spends no less than a full page on this one word and concludes that it is related to a word in the Arabic which means *to bind together the feet of a sheep* in order to kill it. The same word apparently means *to collect camels into a group or herd; to bind an infant in swaddling clothes [before placing him in a cradle]*. His conclusion is that this word means *to compress* and offers the explanation *The meaning is that of drawing together—as the feet of a sheep when tied, or twisting—as a rope; and the idea here is, that Job was drawn up, compressed, bound by his afflictions—and that this was a witness against him...[Job speaking] “The fact that God has thus compressed, and fettered, and fastened me; that he has bound me as with a cord—as if I were tied for the slaughter, is an argument on which my friends insist, and to which they appeal, as a proof of my guilt. I cannot answer it. They refer to it constantly. It is the burden of their demonstration, and how can I reply to it?”*¹⁹ The intense suffering which Job was enduring was considered to be proof positive of a life estranged from God.

In the next line, we have *for a witness* and the 3rd person masculine singular, Qal perfect of *to be*. Literally, this is rendered *he is*. However, the Hebrew does not have a neuter, so we would render this *it is* or *it has come to pass*. What appears to be the case is that the seizing of Job by God stands as a witness before Job's friends (and there is the possibility that we have lost a word here as well).

In the third line, we have the wâw consecutive and the 3rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect of qûwm (וַיָּקֹמ) [pronounced *koom*], which means *to stand, to rise up*. Strong's #6965 BDB #877. We have the bêyth preposition and the 1st person singular suffix, which means *against me*. My thinking is that the subject is God and that God stands up against Job.

¹⁸ Generally speaking, from least literal to most literal (of the literal translations) is, NASB, KJV, *The Emphasized Bible*, and *Young's Literal Translation*. In most cases, the NASB and the KJV are very close when it comes to absolute literality

¹⁹ *Barnes' Notes; Job, Volume 1*; F. C. Cook, editor; reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; pp. 291–292.

Then we have the probably subject of this verb, the masculine singular noun *kachash* (כַּחַשׁ) [pronounced *kah-KHAHSH*], which means *fraud, deception, falsehood, lying, leanness*.²⁰ It appears that the only place where this supposedly means *leanness* is this particular passage in Job.²¹ I think that it might be better understood and his physical appearance *belies* his spiritual personage. Strong's #3585 BDB #471. In the Latin, this word is *liar*, at least according to the NEB.²²

This is followed by *in my faces*, which is *b^epānay* (בְּפָנַי) [pronounced *b^epaw-NAY*], which literally means *in [the] faces, against [the] faces*. Its meaning is to stand before someone in opposition or to stand up to someone. We could simply render this *against me*. פָּנַי = Strong's #none BDB #88. אָנַח = Strong's #6440 BDB #815. The final verb in this verse is the 3rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect of *ānāh* (אָנַח) [pronounced *gaw-NAWH*], which means *to answer, to respond*. It can be used as a legal term, meaning *to give testimony, to act as a witness, to stand witness against someone in a trial* (Deut. 31:21 Ruth 1:21 II Sam. 1:16 Job 15:6). The key in this usage seems to be context. Strong's #6030 BDB #772. Therefore, not only does God appear to stand against Job, but his own frail physicality testifies against him. Barnes concurs with: *The idea seems to have been, that a person whose flesh had wasted away by sickness, as it were, belied himself; or it was a false testimony about himself; it did not give a fair representation of him. That could be obtained only when he was in sound health...the word...used here [denotes]...the false appearance of Job—his present aspect—which was no proper representation of himself; that is, his emaciated and ulcerated form. This, he says, was a “witness” against him. It was one of the proofs to which they appealed, and he did not know how to answer it. It was usually an evidence of divine displeasure, and he now solemnly and tenderly addresses God, and says, that he had furnished this testimony against him—and he was overwhelmed.*²³ Barnes explanation helps to explain why so many translators spoke of Job's leanness in this verse. The NLT note: *The marks of illness of Job's body provided conclusive evidence to others that he had sinned. No matter how strongly his conscience asserted his innocence, his body was proof against him.*²⁴

Similarly, the crucifixion of Jesus, as well as the events leading up to, belied His relationship to God. His being beaten and then crucified caused others to mock Him. **In the same way, the chief priests along with the scribes were also mocking Him among themselves, saying, “He saved others; He cannot save Himself.” “Let this Messiah, the King of Israel, now come down from the cross, so that we may see and believe!” And those who were crucified with Him were casting the same insults at Him** (Mark 15:31–32). That Jesus' physical appearance on the cross would cause many to feel justified in rejecting Him as their Messiah and to treat Him too casually and/or with contempt is revealed in Psalm 22:17–18: **I can count all my bones. They look, they stare at me; they divide my garments among them, and for my clothing, they cast lots.**

**His nostril has torn
and so he lays traps [for] me.
He has gnashed against me with his teeth;
my adversary sharpens his eyes for me.**

Job
16:9

**His anger has torn [me to pieces]
and he is hostile [towards] me.
He gnashes at me with his teeth;
my adversary narrows his eyes at me.**

**He has set traps for me and his anger has torn me to pieces;
He attacks me as a mad dog;
He looks at me with disapproval and hatred.**

This verse won't be quite as difficult as the previous one. Here's what others have done:

²⁰ The Latin renders this *liar*, not due to a better manuscript, but I believe that Jerome thought it to be just more understandable that way.

²¹ And Job had certainly lost a great deal of weight—Job 17:7 19:20.

²² *New English Bible*; Oxford University Press, © 1970, p. 691. I need to get a Latin Vulgate; after that, I need to learn how to read Latin.

²³ *Barnes' Notes; Job, Volume 1*; F. C. Cook, editor; reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; p. 292.

²⁴ *The Open Bible*; the New Living Translation; Thomas Nelson Publishers, Nashville, TN; ©1996, p. 691.

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	[My adversary Satan] has torn [me] in his wrath, and hated <i>and</i> persecuted me; he has gnashed upon me with his teeth; my adversary sharpens his eyes against me.
<i>The Emphasized Bible</i>	His anger hath torn and persecuted me. He hath gnashed upon me with his teeth, Mine adversary hath sharpened his eyes for me.
JPS (Tanakh)	In His anger He tears and persecutes me; He gnashes His teeth at me; My foe stabs me with his eyes.
Keil and Delitzsch (revised)	His wrath tore me, and made war upon me; He has gnashed upon me with His teeth, As my enemy, He sharpened His eyes against Me.
NASB	“His anger has torn me and hunted me down [lit., <i>borne a grudge against me</i>], He has gnashed at me with His teeth; My adversary glares [lit., <i>sharpens his eyes</i>] at me.”
The Septuagint	In His anger, He has cast me down; he has gnashed His teeth upon me; the weapons of His robbers have fallen upon me. He has attacked me with the keen glances of His eyes.
<i>Young's Lit. Translation</i>	His anger hath torn, and he hateth me, He hath gnashed at me with his teeth, My adversary sharpeneth his eyes for me.

What we begin with, literally, is *His nostril*. The word is the masculine singular noun ʿaph (אֶפֶס) [pronounced *ahf*], which means *nose, nostril*. However, often in the Hebrew, a part of the body can stand for a particular emotion, and ʿaph seems to correlate well with the substantive *anger* or *wrath* (Gen. 27:45 30:2 39:19 44:18). The idea is then when a person was angry with you, the tilt of his head revealed his nostril or nose as being the most prominent feature. Strong's #639 BDB #60. The verb is the 3rd person masculine singular, Qal perfect of ʿāpaph (אָפַף) [pronounced *taw-RAHF*], which means *to tear, to rend, to pluck*. This means *to tear into pieces like a wild animal*. Strong's #2963 BDB #382. We would expect the 1st person suffix to this verb, but we do not find that until the next verb, which means, essentially, that these two lines are linked together.

In this next line, we have the wāw consecutive (which continues the thought rather than indicating a new thought here) and the 3rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect of sâʿam (סָאָם) [pronounced *saw-TAHM*], which means *to bear a grudge, to cherish animosity, to be against*. Gesenius offers, instead, *to lay snares [for someone], to lay a trap, to follow with hostility*. Strong's #7852 BDB #966. You will note that the verbs tenses—the perfect is followed by the imperfect. The perfect tense refers to an accomplished state and the imperfect tense generally refers to ongoing action. God—either directly or indirectly—has torn and ravaged the flesh of Job; and He continues to lay traps for Job—and He has done that either mediately or immediately. The Greek has a different verb here, but I cannot find it listed in any of my lexicons or even in my *Concordance to the Septuagint*. According to Brenton, it means *to cast down*.

In the third line, we have *He has gnashed against me His teeth*. This parallels the first line where Job's flesh is said to be torn apart. It is in the Qal perfect and it is what a vicious dog would do—show his teeth to an enemy. This is an image found throughout Scripture, and often refers to a display of animosity of one to another (Psalm 35:16 37:12 Lam. 2:16 Acts 7:54).²⁵

In the final line of this verse, we have the masculine singular noun tsar (צָר) [pronounced *tsahr*], which means *adversary, foe*. Strong's #6862 BDB #865. Affixed to it is the 1st person suffix. What Job's adversary does is the Qal imperfect of lāʿash (לָאָשׁ) [pronounced *law-TAHSH*], which means *to hammer, to sharpen, to whet*. Strong's #3913 BDB #538. What Job's adversary is doing is, sharpening or narrowing His eyes to Job—an expression of intense animosity. Using the animal analogy, it is like an animal who has focused on his prey, whose intense concentration is seen in his eyes—the same visual concentration that you may see with a cat and its prey or a dog and its perceived enemy.

Now, the interpretation—it is difficult, at first, to determine if Job is asserting that God is his adversary and that God is doing this directly to him, or whether he is attacked by Satan. In previous passages, both Job and his friends had

²⁵ There is also the gnashing of the teeth of the wicked, which indicates a terrific self-hatred for decisions made and tremendous frustration and sadness over his place (Psalm 112:10).

assigned this attack to God. “And should I lift up my head, You would hunt me as a lion. And again, You would show Your power against me. You renew Your witnesses against me and You increase Your anger toward me.” (Job 10:16–17a). “Why do You hide Your face and consider me Your enemy?” (Job 13:24). In our present passage, I believe that Job is intentionally vague at this point, not wanting, on the one hand, to directly accuse God, but, on the other, allowing that God could simply be *allowing* this attack upon him. Whoever it is has torn his flesh (recall that Job’s skin was eaten up with some form of skin cancer); Job has had traps set for him, as if he were an animal, and he has been caught in these traps (Job is not taking responsibility for what has happened to him; he was trapped as an animal—and, always realize that Job was given as an example by God to Satan of righteousness on this earth). The gnashing of the teeth at Job calls to mind the image of a wild dog; the narrowing of the eyes in hatred perpetuates that same image. Concerning whom Job is referring to, there have apparently been theories that Job is speaking of God, Eliphaz or Satan. In point of fact, Job is speaking of Satan, which is reasonably clear by Job using the verb *sâṭam* and referring to *his adversary*. That God allowed this—in fact, actually handed him over, is also clear in v. 11.²⁶ Finally, Job will appeal to his Witness in heaven when we get to v. 19 of this chapter. It would be illogical to assert that God is both his adversary and attacker as well as his Witness in heaven. Therefore, Job recognizes his assailant as Satan and not God. Now, you may think, *well, duh!* But recognize, you have read Job 1–2 and studied it. You probably had some inkling about what the book of Job was about in the first place. For Job, all of this has suddenly hit him, in the space of perhaps a couple weeks, and he is reeling in confusion and pain. Although he reveals a great presence of mind, this does not mean that he understands all that is occurring to him—and his friends, who are not under the conflict of pain, are even more in the dark than he is concerning this situation.

Now, for those of you who know what is to come (for instance, Job 19:6, where Job says, “God has wronged me.”), realize that Job has these moments of intense clarity and he has generally a mind clouded by pain, suffering and disease. I think we can rest assured that Job, at least for this moment, realizes that he is under Satanic attack; however, he will not hold onto that thought throughout these debates.

The parallel to the cross, I would hope, would be obvious. Satan, after entering into Judas and then leaving him, no doubt followed Jesus through his trials. Although it is never stated outright, Satan reasonably inspired some of the hatred directed toward our Lord at the cross and he may have even entered into others besides Judas to participate in the physical expressions of hatred against God. **Then they spit in His face and they beat Him with their fists; and others slapped Him** (Matt. 26:67). **And they spat on Him and they took the reed and beat Him on the head** (Matt. 27:30).

**They have opened because of me with their mouth;
in taunting, they have struck to my cheeks;
together unto me, they have filled themselves.**

Job
16:10

**They have opened their mouths wide [in derision] because of Me;
in taunting, they have struck my cheeks.
Together, with reference to me, they have filled themselves [with taunting, derision, and hatred].**

**They have opened their mouths against Me in derision;
in contempt, they have slapped My cheeks.
Together, they have filled themselves up with hatred and contempt against Me.**

In this verse, Job continues to speak about the crucifixion of our Lord and that which led up to it. First let’s see how others have rendered it:

²⁶ As I exegeted this verse, this question occurred to me (*Of whom is Job speaking?*); however, it was the footnote in *The Amplified Bible*, The Lockman Foundation; ©1965 by Zondervan Publishing House; p. 590, which helped to clarify my thinking here. Barnes takes the position that this is a reference to Eliphaz; however, the viciousness and pure physicality of the attack seems to exclude Job’s friends, who, although they were vicious, did not physically attack Job. Furthermore, the viciousness of the attack in v. 9 is just too strong to be applied to Eliphaz.

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	[The forces of evil] have gaped at me with their mouth; they have struck me upon the cheek insolently; they massed themselves together <i>and</i> conspired unanimously against me.
<i>The Emphasized Bible</i>	They have gaped upon me with their mouth, With reproach> have they smitten my cheek, Together, against me, they have closed their ranks [or, ...they have fully equipped themselves—Fuerst].
<i>God's Word™</i>	People gaped at me with wide-open mouths. In scorn, they slapped my cheeks. They united against me.
JPS (Tanakh)	They open wide their mouths at me; Reviling me, they strike my cheeks; They inflame themselves against me.
Keil and Delitzsch	They have gaped against me with their mouth, In contempt, they smite my cheeks; They conspire together against me.
NASB	"They have gaped at me with their mouth. They have slapped me on the cheek with contempt; They have massed themselves against me."
The Septuagint	With His sharp [spear], he has struck me down upon my knees and they have run upon me with one accord,... [v. 11b]
TEV	People sneer at me; they crowd around me and slap my face.
<i>Young's Lit. Translation</i>	They have gaped on me with their mouth, In reproach they have smitten my cheeks. Together against me they set themselves.

In this verse, we begin with the 3rd person plural, Qal perfect of *phâ'ar* (פָּאַר) [pronounced *faw-GAHR*], which means *to open wide*. Strong's #6473 BDB #822. What they open wide is *their mouth*; we open our mouths wide in amazement or in astonishment. They opened their mouths wide in derision. The literal rendering of the first line is: *They have opened because of me their mouth*. Note here that we are no longer dealing with God's allowed attack upon Job, but to Job's friends and those around Job who have verbally attacked Job. However, in a parallel reality, God is giving us a glimpse into the events leading up to the cross. We find in the Messianic psalm of David similar verbiage: *They open wide their mouth at Me, as a starving, roaring lion* (Psalm 22:13).

In the second line, we have the *bêyth* preposition and the feminine singular noun *cher'pâh* (חֶרֶפָּה) [pronounced *kher-PAW*], which means *a reproach, a taunt, scorn, shame, disgrace*. Strong's #2781 BDB #357. Job has already complained, "I am a joke to my friends. The one who called upon God and He answered him—the just, blameless man is a joke." (Job 12:4). "Even young children despise me; I rise up and they speak against me. All my associates abhor me and those I love have turned against me." (Job 19:18–19; see also Job 21:3 30:1, 9). This mocking parallels the treatment of our Lord prior to the cross and while He was on the cross: *And the men who were holding Jesus in custody were mocking Him and beating Him* (Luke 22:63). *And the people stood by, looking on [while Jesus was being crucified]. Even the rulers were sneering at Him...and the soldiers also mocked Him...and one of the criminals who was hanged there was hurling abuse at Him* (Luke 23:35a, 36a, 39a).

Then we have the 3rd person plural, Hiphil imperfect of *nâkâh* (נָכַח) [pronounced *naw-KAWH*] which means *smite, assault, hit, strike*. It is not found in the Qal, so the Hiphil does not necessarily carry with it causative action. Strong #5221 BDB #645. This is followed by the *lâmed* prefixed preposition and *my [two] cheeks*.

And Herod and his soldiers treated Him with contempt and mocked Him (Luke 23:11a). *Then they spit in His face and they beat Him with their fists; and others slapped Him* (Matt. 26:67). *And the men who were holding Jesus in custody were mocking Him and beating Him* (Luke 22:63). We find this in Isaiah as well: *I gave My back to those who strike Me and My cheeks to those who pluck out the beard; I did not cover My face from humiliation and spitting* (Isa. 50:6). *Just as many were astonished at you, so His visage was marred more than any man and his form more than the sons of man* (Isa. 52:14).

Then we have the adverb *yachad* (יַחַד) [pronounced *YAH-khahd*], which means *together, alike, all together*. Strong's #3162 BDB #403. This is followed by *unto me or in the direction of me*. Then we have the 3rd person masculine plural, Hithpael imperfect of *mâlê'* (מָלֵא) [pronounced *maw-LAY*], which means *to fill, to make full, to be full*. This is the only place where this is found in the Hithpael, which is simply the reflexive of the Piel. (I have examined this word in several passages, and I went into a great deal of detail in Ex. 39:10). Strong's #4390

BDB #569. My point in this is that they are not gathering themselves together or amassing themselves against Job (although such a meaning would work here—it is simply not what we actually find here). So most translations render this as though they have amassed themselves against Job (or, in parallel, against our Lord), it is really that they have filled themselves with hatred, animosity and contempt. **Together, with reference to me, they have filled themselves [with taunting, derision, and hatred].** Job, of course, speaks of his *friends* and whoever else is around them (there will be reason later on to assume a small crowd had gathered). Get this in the context: Job is empty, beaten, without an appetite, and wasting away. Before him are his associates who have been able to fill themselves while being around him.

And of course, this parallels our Lord and the reaction of many of those around Him the day He was crucified. I have already quoted several passages already from the gospels where those around Jesus prior to His crucifixion and during His crucifixion were filled with mental attitude sins and heaped abuse on Him. **He was despised and forsaken of men. A man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, and like the one from whom men hide their face. He was despised and we did not esteem Him** (Isa. 53:3).

**Delivers me over, God, unto the unjust
and into hands of [the] malevolent ones He
throws me [or, he wrings me out]!**

Job
16:11

**God delivers me over to the unjust
and He throws me [headlong] into the hands
of the malevolent.**

**God continues to deliver me over to the unjust
and He has thrown me into the hands of the malevolent.**

Others have rendered this verse thus:

The Amplified Bible

God has delivered me to the ungodly [to the evil one] and cast me [headlong] into the hands of the wicked [Satan's host].

JPS (Tanakh)

God hands me over to an evil man, Thrusts me into the clutches of the wicked.

Keil and Delitzsch

God left me to the mercy of the ungodly, And case me into the hands of the evil-doer.

NASB

“God hands me over to ruffians, And tosses me into the hands of the wicked.”

The Septuagint

But the Lord has delivered me into the hands of unrighteous men and He has thrown me upon the ungodly.

Young's Lit. Translation God shutteth me up unto the perverse, And to the hands of the wicked turneth me over,...

This is one of the easier verses for us to deal with. The first verb is the 3rd person masculine singular, Hiphil imperfect, 1st person suffix of *çâgar* (גָּרַם) [pronounced *saw-GAHR*] which means *shut up, to close up*; however, in the Hiphil, it means *to deliver over*, when followed by *ʿel* (which is what we have here). Strong's #5462 BDB #688. You may recall the Eliphaz, back in Job 15:13, had somewhat of a play on words, using the words *unto God* together (*ʿel ʿêl*). In this verse, Job reverses these words by way of answering Eliphaz..

Who God delivers Job over to is the masculine singular noun *ʿāvīl* (אָוִיל) [pronounced *guh-VEEL*], which means *unjust, unrighteous*. Used in this way only in Job 16:11 (and possibly 19:19). I will spend a little more time with this word when we get to Job 19:19. Strong's #5760 BDB #732. Again, Job takes the words used by Eliphaz in the previous chapter and uses them himself, although he does not necessarily directly deal with the point of view of Eliphaz point by point (Eliphaz used a very similar word in Job 15:16).²⁷

Then we have *and upon hands of...* This is followed by the masculine plural adjective *râshâʿ* (רָשָׁע) [pronounced *raw-SHAWG*], which means *malevolent ones, lawless ones, criminals, the corrupt*. Strong's #7563 BDB #957. The verb is the 3rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect, 1st person suffix of *râṭâh* (רָטַח) [pronounced *raw-TAW*], *to wring out*. Its usage here is suggested to be dubious (and it is found only here). Strong's #3399

²⁷ It is suggested that there is actually a different, but very similar word here: *ʿawâl* (אָוַל) [pronounced *gahv-VAWL*], which means *unjust, unrighteous one*. Strong's #5767 BDB #732.

BDB #936. It is suggested that this is actually the verb *yâraṭ* (יָרַח) [pronounced *yaw-RAHT*], which means *to throw someone headlong, to cast down, to be precipitate, to precipitate*. Strong's #3399 BDB #437.

Throughout much of Scripture, we have a double interpretation of many of these verses. Job, of course, is applying this to himself—God has thrown him first into the hands of Satan, and then into the hands of his *friends*, whom he classifies as *unjust* and *malevolent*. God threw Job's possessions into the hands of the Sabeans, who stole his cattle and the Chaldeans, who stole all of Job's camels (Job 1:14–15, 17). Now God throws Job's soul to his three former friends, who devour it like mad dogs.

With respect to his own friends, J. Vernon McGee said: *They were supposed to be friends to Job, but they treat him like an enemy. And do you know that there are Christians today who can be meaner to you than many of the unsaved people? There is nothing meaner than a Christian when he is mean. So Job classifies his friends as ungodly. You see, they think they are defending God, but in doing so, they are unfair and even brutal in their accusations against Job.*²⁸

Keil and Delitzsch pretty much wait until the conclusions that they draw about Job 16–17 before they point out all the similarities between Job and Jehovah's Suffering Servant: on p. 412, write: *Who does not there think of the servant of Jehovah, of who Isaiah, ch. 53:9 (in similar words to those which Job uses of himself, ch. 16:16), says, that he is buried among the godless...All that Job says here of the scorn that he has to endure by being regarded as one who is punished of God and tormented, agrees exactly with the description of the sufferings of the servant of Jehovah in the Psalms and the second part of Isaiah. Job says: they gave at me with their mouths; and in Psalm 22:8 (comp. 35:21) it is: all they that see me laugh me to scorn, they open wide the lips, they shake the head. Job says they smite my cheeks in contempt; and the servant of Jehovah, Isa. 50:6, is compelled to confess: I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that pluck off the hair; I hid not my face from shame and spitting. Like Job, the servant of Jehovah in the Psalms and in Isaiah II. is delivered over into the hands of the unrighteous, and reckoned among evil-doers, although he is the servant of Jehovah, and knows himself to be Jehovah's servant. The same hope that he expresses in Isa. 50:8f. in the words: he is near who justifieth me, who will condemn me!—the same hope in Job breaks through the night of conflict, with which his direct and indirect suffering has surrounded him.*²⁹

This passage also refers to our Lord, Who was also given over into the hands of the unjust and malevolent for the crucifixion. He was first seized by the religious hierarchy, having been betrayed by Judas, and they gave Him into the hands of the Romans, as the Jews could not execute anyone apart from Roman authority. **For He was teaching His disciples and telling them, "The Son of Man is to be delivered up into the hands of men, and they will kill Him and when He has been killed, He will rise up again three days later."** (Mark. 9:31). **Then Pilate released Barabbas to them, but Jesus, he scourged and delivered over to be crucified (Matt. 27:26). "Men of Israel, listen to these words: Jesus the Nazarene, a man attested to you by God with miracles and wonders and signs which God performed through Him in your midst, just as you yourselves know—this Man delivered up by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put Him to death."** (Acts 2:22–23).

**At ease I was and so He shattered me
and He seized in my neck and so He dashed
me to pieces.**

Job
16:12a

**I was at ease [in prosperity] and then He
shattered me.
Then He grabbed my neck and broke me [into
pieces].**

**I was in prosperity, and suddenly, He shattered my life;
He grabbed me by the neck and broke me into pieces.**

Because vv. 12b and 13a appear to go together, I have so connected them. Others have rendered v. 12a as:

²⁸ J. Vernon McGee; *Job*; Thru the Bible Books; ©El Camino Press, 1977; p. 95.

²⁹ Keil & Delitzsch's *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. 4, pp. 412–413.

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	I was living at ease, but [Satan] crushed me <i>and</i> broke me apart; yea, he seized me by the neck and dashed me in pieces, then set me up for his target.
<i>The Emphasized Bible</i>	At ease <was > when he shattered me. Yea he seized me by my neck and dashed me in pieces.
<i>God's Word™</i>	I as at ease, and he shattered me. He grabbed me by the back of the neck and smashed [my skull].
JPS (Tanakh)	I had been untroubled, and He broke me in pieces, He took me by the scruff and shattered me,...
Keil and Delitzsch (revised)	I was at ease, but He has broken me in pieces; And He has taken me by the neck and shaken me to pieces,...
NASB	"I was at ease, but He shattered me, And He has grasped me by the neck and shaken me to pieces;"
The Septuagint	When I was at peace, He distracted me; He took me by the hair of the head and plucked it out;
<i>Young's Lit. Translation</i>	At ease I have been, and he breaketh me, And he hath laid hold on my neck, And he breaketh me in pieces,...

In v. 12a, we begin with the masculine singular adjective *shâlêv* (שָׁלֵב) [pronounced *shaw-LAYV*], which means *quiet, at ease, prosperous*. Strong's #7961 BDB #1017. This is followed by the 1st person, Qal perfect of the absolute status quo verb *to be*.

In the next line, we have the 3rd person masculine singular, Pilpel imperfect, 1st person singular suffix 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*. The Pilpel stem is equivalent in meaning to the Piel, but there is a different pattern. Therefore, this would mean *to break into pieces, to shatter, to crush, to crumble into pieces*. Strong's #6565 BDB #830. Job had a life of relative prosperity and happiness and God (or, Satan) suddenly seized and shattered this life. It was obvious that Job's life had been shattered, and he makes allusion to this several times: "**For He bruises me with a tempest, And multiplies my wounds without cause.**" (Job 9:17).

In the third line, we have the *wâw* conjunction and the 3rd person masculine singular, Qal perfect of *âchaz* (אָחַז) [pronounced *aw-KHAHZ*]; and it means *to grasp, to take hold of, to take possession of*. Strong's #270 BDB #28. This is followed by *in* or *by the neck*. Then God (or, Satan) smashed Job's life into pieces. Job is still vague on this point. We know what has happened, but Job does not. He originally blamed God, but he now appears to be blaming Satan.

With regard to the metaphor, McGee: *Many times when I was a boy and would go hunting, I would see the dog catch a rabbit. He would grab the rabbit by the nape of the neck and shake it—oh, how he would shake it! Apparently Job had seen that too. Job said that was how God was shaking him. God sometimes does that, friends.*³⁰

Our Lord also was grabbed up by the religious hierarchy of His time, as prey would be snatched by a wild dog. And, as previous verses have testified, He was repeatedly violated, being slapped, hit, and mocked.

**And so he set me up for himself for a target;
surround against me his many [soldiers].
He pierces my kidneys
and he does not spare;
he pours out to the earth my gall.**

Job
16:12b–13

**For himself, he has set me up as a target;
his many [soldiers] surround me.
He pierces my kidneys
and he does not have compassion [for me];
he pours out my bile upon the earth.**

³⁰ J. Vernon McGee; *Job*; Thru the Bible Books; ©El Camino Press, 1977; p. 96.

**He has set me up as his target while his soldiers surround me;
he pierces my kidneys without any hint of compassion
spilling the contents of my liver upon the ground.**

I am going to quote a number of different translations here, because there is an important portion of this passage which is mistranslated by almost every translator. Vv. 12b–13:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	[He]...then set me up for his target. [Satan’s] arrows whiz around me; he slashes open my vitals, and does not spare; he pours out my gall on the ground.
CEV	God set me up as the target for his arrows, and without showing mercy, he slashed my stomach open, spilling out my insides.
The Complete Jewish Bible	He set me up as his target— his archers surrounded me. He slashes my innards and shows no mercy, he pours my gall on the ground.
<i>The Emphasized Bible</i>	Then set me up for himself as a mark: His archers came round against me. He clave asunder my reins and spared not, He poured out on the earth, my gall:
<i>God’s Word™</i>	He set me up as his target, and his archers surrounded me. He slashes open my kidneys without mercy and spills my blood [or, <i>bile</i>] on the ground.
JPS (Tanakh)	He set me up as His target; His bowmen surrounded me; He pierced my kidneys; He showed no mercy; He spilled my bile onto the ground.
Keil and Delitzsch	...And set me up for a mark for himself. His arrows whistled about me; He pierced my reins without sparing; He poured out my gall upon the ground.
NAB	He has set me up for a target; his arrows strike me from all directions, He pierces my sides without mercy, he pours out my gall upon the ground.
NASB	“He has also set me up as His target. His arrows surround me. Without mercy He splits my kidneys open; He pours out my gall on the ground.”
NIV	He has made me his target; his archers surround me. Without pity, he pierces my kidneys and spills my gall on the ground.
NJB	He has set me up as his target; he shoots his arrows at me from all sides, pitilessly pierces my loins, and pours my gall out on the ground.
NKJV	He has set me up for His target, His archers surround me. He pierces my heart [lit., <i>kidneys</i>] and does not pity; He pours out my gall on the ground.
NLT	Then he set me up as his target. His archers surrounded me, and his arrows pierced me without mercy. The ground is wet with my blood.
NRSV	...he set me up as his target; his archers surround me. He slashes open my kidneys, and shows not mercy; he pours out my gall on the ground.
REB	He set me up as his target; his arrows rained on me from every side; pitiless, he pierced deep into my vitals, he spilt my gall on the ground.
The Septuagint	He set me up as a mark. They surrounded me with spears, aiming at my reins; without sparing me, they poured out my gall upon the ground.
TEV	God uses me for target practice and shoots arrows at me from every side—arrows that pierce and wound me; and even then he shows no pity.
<i>Young’s Lit. Translation</i>	And he raiseth me to him for a mark. Go round against me do his archers. He splitteth my reins, and spareth not, He poureth out to the earth my gall.

Okay, I left out Owen, Moffatt, the KJV, the NEB and the Modern Reader’s Bible. The reason I did this is that there is a glaring mistranslation in this verse which is found in every single English translation. The only place where this mistranslation is missing is in the Septuagint.

You will note that vv. 12b and 13a naturally hang together in *God’s Word™*, but not necessarily in *The Emphasized Bible*. I therefore placed those two halves of a verse together.

V. 12b begins with *And so He set me up for Himself* and this is followed by the lamed prefixed preposition and the feminine singular noun *maṭṭārâh* (מַטָּאֲרָה) [pronounced *maht-taw-RAW*], which means *a guard, ward, prison; a*

target, a mark. It appears as though Jeremiah and Nehemiah used this noun consistently for *prison* or *prison gate* while it is found twice used as a *target* in Job and I Samuel. Strong's #4307 BDB #643. Job had complained of that, referring to God previously: "Have I sinned? What have I done to You, O Watcher of men? Why have You set me as Your target, so that I am a burden to myself?" (Job 7:20a).

In the second line, we begin with the 3rd person masculine plural, Qal imperfect of *çâ^bva^bv* (בּוֹבֵוּ) [pronounced *saw^b-VAH^bV*], which means *to turn oneself, to go around, to surround, to encompass*. Strong's #5437 BDB #685. Keil and Delitzsch: *On all sides, whichever way he might turn himself, the arrows of God flew about him, mercilessly piercing his reins, so that his gall-bladder became empty.*³¹

Now let's talk about those *arrows*. The subject of this verb is at the end of this line. That is the masculine plural (with a 3rd person masculine suffix) of *ra^bv* (רַב) [pronounced *rah^bv*], which is generally translated **in this passage** *arrows* or *archer*. This word actually has a couple of different meanings, the primary one being *many* (it is an adjective). In fact, in Scripture, we have this particular word rendered *many* or *the many* or words to that effect nearly 500 times. How many times is this rendered *archer* or *arrows*? Twice—here and in Jer. 50:29.³² Therefore, it is reasonable to render this as *His many*, understanding it to refer to a group of men or even to a band of soldiers. That the verbal cognate for this means *to shoot* is debatable. Now, you may wonder why I sometimes beat this Hebrew to death like this. I want you to understand what is really here. The main reason to suppose that Job is talking about being surrounded by archers is tradition.³³ The common meaning for this Hebrew word is *many*, and nothing is lost by taking it in that way and understanding it to refer to *archers, those bearing swords or spears* or to *soldiers* in general. I beat this Hebrew to death here so that you know what is actually in this passage. It does not matter that your translation of the Bible reads *arrows* and it does not matter that pretty much every other translation reads *arrows* or *archers*. That is a **gross mistranslation** based upon tradition. Furthermore, there is no reason to even assume that we are speaking of soldiers of any sort here. Job is surrounded by the legions of Satan, and they have attacked him. *They* are the *many*. And, again, Job is intentionally unclear as to *who* this *he* is. Strong's #7228 BDB #914. In between the verb and its subject is the phrase *concerning me, upon me or against me*. We could read this as God has set His soldiers upon Job; or that Satan has set his legions of demons upon Job. We simply don't know for certain how Job meant it (and I think that he did not know himself, which accounts for his vagueness on this point).³⁴

I have been telling you that this passage refers to Jesus Christ on the cross, and then suddenly, out of nowhere, in most translations, Job starts talking about *archers*, which is incongruous with the cross. However, there are no *archers* in this verse. There are, in this verse, *his many*, which can be taken to refer to the Roman soldiers who surrounded Jesus and who look upon him as a target or to the religious zealots who hauled him before the Romans for prosecution. When we take this exactly as it was originally written, this conforms even closer to our Lord and His crucifixion.

Then we have the 3rd person masculine singular, Piel imperfect of *pâlach* (פָּלַח) [pronounced *paw-LAHKH*], which means *to cleave, to cleave open, to pierce, to cause to cleave open*. In the Piel, it means *to pierce, to cut up*. Strong's #6398 BDB #812. What is *pieced open* is Job's *kil^eyâh* (כִּלְעָיָהּ) [pronounced *kil^e-YAWH*], which means *kidneys*. Strong's #3629 BDB #480. Job has a double meaning going on here. The soldier's have pierced his kidneys; God has drained him of his emotions.

³¹ Keil & Delitzsch's *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. 4, p. 400.

³² You may wonder about Job 6:4, Prov. 7:23 or Lam. 3:12, where we have the word *arrows*—it's a completely different word: *chêts* (חֵט) [pronounced *khayts*]. Strong's #2671 BDB #346.

³³ Barnes: *The word here used* (רַב) *means properly "much, large, great;" and is applied to that which is powerful or mighty. It is nowhere else used in the sense of "archers," and might be rendered "his man;" i.e., "his bands, hosts, or armies." But as all the ancient versions render it "arrows," or "archers," probably that sense is to be retained. Barnes' Notes; Job, Volume 1; F. C. Cook, editor; reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; p. 293 (emphasis mine). So, as you see, even though Barnes goes along with the rendering *archer* or *arrows*, his argument—tradition—is less than compelling.*

³⁴ I would reject the interpretation that this is a reference to his friends, as, although they are irritants to Job, they have not pierced his kidneys and poured his gall upon the ground.

Again, all of this parallels the cross. The soldiers set Jesus up as their target, humiliating Him and physically abusing Him. In the end, one even pierces Jesus in His side with a sword. It would not be much of a stretch to assume that the soldier pierced one of the kidneys of Jesus from that angle.

Then we have the wâw conjunction, the negative, and the 3rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect of châmal (לָמַח) [pronounced *khaw-MAHL*] means *to spare, to have compassion*. Strong's #2550 BDB #328.

In the final line of this verse, we have the 3rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect of shâphak^e (שָׁפַק) [pronounced *shaw-FAHK^e*], which means *to pour, to pour out, to shed*. We find this word used in another Messianic passage as well (Zech. 12:10). Strong's #8210 BDB #1049. The Greek word here is ekchéō (ἐκξέω) [pronounced *ek-KHEH-oh*], which means *to pour out*. Strong's #1632. We find this same Greek word in Luke 22:20, when our Lord was instituting the first Passover: **And in the same way, He took the cup after they had eaten, saying, "This cup, which is poured out for you is the new covenant by means of My blood."**³⁵

God pours out *to the earth*. What is poured out is the feminine singular of m^erêrâh (מֵרַח) [pronounced *m^eray-RAW*], which means *gall*. However, this word is found only in this passage. Strong's #4845 BDB #601. We also have an almost identical word, which is m^erôrâh (מֵרוֹחַ) [pronounced *m^eroh-RAW*], which means *bitter thing, gall, poison*. This is the bitter, yellowish-green fluid which the liver secretes. This is not the word translated *gall* in Deut. 29:18 32:32 Jer. 8:14 9:15 23:15 Lam. 3:5, 19, although the Septuagint translates them with the same Greek word (cholê or χολή—Strong's #5521), they are different words in the Hebrew. Strong's #4846 BDB #601. You will note that the only difference between these two words is a vowel pointing, one which would have been added 2000 years after the original manuscript had been written. Therefore, these words are probably equivalent. Keil and Delitzsch: *The emptying of the gall takes place if the gall-bladder or any of its ducts are torn; but how the gall itself (without assuming some morbid condition) can flow outwardly, even with a severe wound, is a difficult question, with which only those who have no appreciation of the standpoint of imagery and poetry will distress themselves.* Keil and Delitzsch add that the *spilling of the gall* or the *bursting of the ball-bladder*, in the Arabic is a depiction of violent and painful emotions.³⁶

Now, let me see if I can explain what is going on here, as you would be apt to read this in 4 seconds and then move on. The gall bladder in man and animals is a small pouch which stores bile. When an animal has been killed, this bile must be removed prior to cooking (along with the blood, urine, etc.), otherwise this bile can permeate the flavor of the meat and make it taste bitter, if not disgusting. The bitterness here, as Job thinks, is simply the bitterness of his life's sudden downturn (which, again, is beyond what we could imagine). However, in relationship to the cross, the bitterness has a two-fold meaning. God cannot come into contact with sin; He cannot condone it, He cannot accept it; sin is vile and bitter to Him. It is akin to us eating meat whose flavor has been altered by permeated bile.³⁷ When our Lord came into contact with sin, this was an experience of absolute bitterness beyond anything that we could imagine. Secondly, when God the Father judged God the Son, by pouring out upon Him the sins of man, the experience was one of great bitterness for both members of the Godhead.³⁸ My point in all of this is, we have not strayed one whit from the cross. Job may be speaking of his own feelings and experiences, but there is a complete parallel running throughout this passage to God the Son's death on the cross on our behalf. Then, when our Lord had died for our sins on our behalf, and breathed out His last, a soldier later came by and pierced His side with a spear, and out came blood and bile (that is, the various liquids which would have poured out of our Lord's body when His side had been pierced). This is the gall of our Lord being poured to the earth. **One of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately there came out blood and water** (John 19:34).³⁹

³⁵ Certainly the Greek and Hebrew words are not found exclusively in Messianic and soteriological passages.

³⁶ Keil & Delitzsch's *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. 4, p. 400.

³⁷ Which is a good name for a rock band.

³⁸ You may recall that many of the sacrifices were prepared with bitter herbs—this is the meaning of those bitter herbs.

³⁹ What came out of our Lord, when His side was pierced, is the subject of a long discussion.

**He breaks through me, a break upon faces of a
break
He runs upon me like a warrior.**

Job
16:14

**He breaks through me, a breach in addition to
breach;
He runs upon me like a soldier.**

**He breaks me down and everything around me;
He comes upon me like a fierce warrior.**

At first read, I don't know what exactly is being said here (my first read is in the Hebrew side-by-side Owen's English rendering; therefore, let's see what others have done first:

<i>The Emphasized Bible</i>	He made a breach in me, breach upon breach, He ran upon me, like a mighty man.
<i>God's Word™</i>	He inflicts wound after wound on me. He lunges at me like a warrior.
Keil and Delitzsch	He brake through me breach upon breach, He ran upon me like a mighty warrior.
NASB	"He breaks through me with breach after breach; He runs at me like a warrior."
The Septuagint	They overthrow me with fall upon fall; they ran upon me by means of might.
TEV	He wounds me again and again; he attacks like a soldier gone mad with hate.
<i>Young's Lit. Translation</i>	He breaketh me—breach upon breach, He runneth upon me as a mighty one.

We begin with 3rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect, 1st person suffix, of pârats (פָּרַט) [pronounced *paw-RATS*] and it means *to break through, to break over the limits, to break out*. This word is in the sense *to break down, to destroy* (for instance, a wall—Isa. 5:5 Psalm 80:13 Micah 2:13 Eccles. 3:3); it means *to break asunder*, and therefore, *to scatter, to disperse, to spread out* (e.g., hostile forces—II Sam. 5:20 Psalm 60:3); it is used to refer to an overflow of riches (Job 1:10 Gen. 30:43), to a rumor *spreading abroad* (II Chron. 31:5); to an increasing, spreading out or overflow of something else (Prov. 3:10); and *to break forth upon, to produce by breaking through, to break through the ground [as a mine]*; and it can be used in a good sense (*to break through in prayers, to be urgent in prayers*—I Sam. 28:23 II Sam. 13:25, 27) and in a bad sense, as in *to act violently towards* (Job 16:14 Hos. 4:2).. Strong's #6555 BDB #829.

This is followed by the masculine singular noun perets (פָּרַץ) [pronounced *PEH-rets*], which means *a bursting forth, a breach, a break, a rupture [in a wall]*. Obviously, this is the noun cognate of the previous verb. This word can be used for the *dispersal [of one's enemies], the slaughter of one's enemies* (Judges 21:15 Psalm 144:14), *an eruption, an invasion, violence* (Job 16:14); *a rupture, a breach [of a wall], a break [in a wall]* (I Kings 11:27 Isa. 30:13 Amos 4:3 Job 30:14); finally, it can refer to the place in battle which is the most dangerous, as in *standing in the breach* (Ezek. 22:30 Psalm 106:23). Strong's #6556 BDB #829. Job actually uses the word *perets* twice (along with the verb); he uses the word for its alliterative affect, indicating the hopelessness of his position. In between, he says, literally, *upon faces of*. What we have here is 'al (אֵל) [pronounced *ahl*], which means, primarily, *upon, against, above*. Strong's #5920, #5921 BDB #752. This is followed by the masculine plural construct of pânîym (פָּנִים) [pronounced *paw-NEEM*], which means *face*. This word is in the plural, referring to the several features of the face. With 'al, it means *facing, in front of, before* (as in *preference to*), *in addition to, overlooking*. Also, the idea of *surface* might be involved. Strong's #6440 BDB #815.

In the ancient world, there were often two walls which separated them from the outside world (sometimes there was the original wall and the inhabitants then would add another wall, perhaps further out). When under attack, the enemy would break through one wall and then through the next. The idea is that God (or Satan, at God's permission) has come upon Job and broken down every barrier between them and attacks Job without mercy. Again, the use of alliteration gives Job's feeling of absolute hopelessness. Keil and Delitzsch: [*Job*] *was a wall which was again and again broken through by the missiles or battering-rams of God, and against which He ran after the manner of besiegers when storming.*⁴⁰

In the second line, we have the 3rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect of rûts (רָץ) [pronounced *roots*], which means *to run*. Strong's #7323 BDB #930. Again, Job uses the same verb that Eliphaz used (Job 15:26), indicating

⁴⁰ Keil & Delitzsch's *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. 4, p. 400.

that he was paying attention. He agrees with Eliphaz that God (or someone) has *run upon him like a warrior*. God has broken down every barrier that Job had and then keeps coming at him like a fierce warrior. How can Job stand before God (or, Satan, for that matter) in the first place? And how can he stand before God when God attacks as He has (or, how can Job stand before Satan when Satan attacks him as he has)?

Jesus, when facing the cross, and while on the cross, had a legion of angels who would have decimated the earth at His command. He allowed, in His sovereignty, for the religious leaders and for the military leaders to break through every barrier to get to Him, to where He allowed them to slap and beat Him—and He faced this without any opposition, without any barriers between them.

**Sackcloth I have sewn upon my skin
and I have cut down in the dust my horn.**

Job
16:15

**I have sewn sackcloth over my skin
and I have cut down my strength and vigor [so
that it lies] in the dust.**

**I have sewn sackcloth as my clothing
and my strength and vigor lies in the dust, cut down.**

The next verse is easy, but let's see what others have done first:

God's Word™	"...and I have thrown my strength in the dust."
JPS (Tanakh)	I sewed sackcloth over my skin; I buried my glory in the dust.
Keil and Delitzsch	I sewed sackcloth upon m skin, And defiled my horn with dust.
NASB	"I have sewed sackcloth over my skin, And thrust my horn in the dust."
NKJV	...And laid my head in the dust.
NIV	I have sewed sackcloth over my skin and buried my brow in the dust.
REB	...and laid my forehead in the dust;
The Septuagint	They sewed sackcloth upon my skin, and my strength has been spent on the ground.
<i>Young's Lit. Translation</i>	Sackcloth I have sewed on my skin, And have rolled in the dust my horn.

When I began to go back to continue the book of Job (it totally wore me out several years ago), I resigned myself, but not unhappily, to looking at most every word in every verse. When I first began this book, in 1995, it was simply more work than what I was used to (my original work on Genesis through the first 2/3^{ds} of Deuteronomy was pretty weak; I was not used to digging into the original language as extensively as I do now). So, at the present time, I typically look at several translations even for verses where there appears to be a great deal of agreement and even where, on the surface, the translation appears as though it would be simple. The reason for this tact is that, in many cases, the resultant translation is not what it seems, v. 13a being a conspicuous example. You don't determine the translation of a passage by a popularity contest. It doesn't matter if 20 translators render a word a particular way. We must find evidence that is reasonable in the Hebrew, and, if the Hebrew does not support the popular rendering, then we must have good reason for offering another rendering. This, like the previous verse, has one word which is typically translated one way, but should not necessarily be translated that way. This is why we look carefully at each and every verse, and sometimes at each and every word. I do not claim to catch all of the errors or mistranslations in this book, but I hope to catch a reasonable number of them.

Sackcloth was a coarse, dark-colored cloth made from goat's hair and used for making grain sacks, and it was one of the physical signs of mourning to the ancients (see, for instance, Gen. 37:34 Psalm 69:11 Jonah 3:4–5). The *sewing* of the sackcloth around the body was a sign that this was not merely a temporary time of sorrow, but Job expected this to be a permanent state of misery, which would eventually lead to death. Therefore, the sackcloth was not going to be a temporary dress, but his permanent garb. Furthermore, Keil and Delitzsch suggest that the hideous deformity that Job's body had undergone made it impossible for him to even dress himself, but that the cloth had to be laid upon him and sewn in place.⁴¹

⁴¹ They suggest elephantiasis.

I almost skipped over the word *skin*, which is geled (גֵּלֵד) [pronounced *GEH-led*], which means *skin*. This is not the normal word for *skin* and it is found only here. It is very close to the idea of *to make naked* and probably refers to exposed skin from the peeling away of the epidermis. Keil and Delitzsch say that this signifies the scurfy scaly surface of the skin, as it is found in the Talmud with reference to the scab of a healing wound. Strong's #1539 BDB #162.

The *horn* is often used to refer to one's authority or position or strength; we might use the term *flag* in the same way. Job's horn is in the dust—his position in society has fallen far; his authority is nonexistent. The reason that this word is often rendered *forehead* or *brow* in this verse is because the *horn* more or less comes out of the forehead. It was an ornament or an emblem which was worn on the forehead of some females and some warriors, and for warriors, it undoubtedly referred to their *strength, authority, and/or power*. According to Barnes, some soldiers still wear such horns, e.g., the Druses of Lebanon, the Egyptian cavalry, Abyssinian chiefs in military reviews or on parade after a victory, and horns are also worn by some of the Russian soldiers near the border of Syria (Barnes wrote in the mid-1800's).⁴²

The verb here is the 1st person, Polel perfect of 'âlal (עָלַל) [pronounced *aw-LAHL* or *gaw-LAHL*], which means *to glean, to harvest*; and metaphorically *to mock, to cut down*. There are actually three homonyms found in BDB which match this verb. The first means *to cut down, to harvest*; the second means *to act capricious, mischievous, like a child*; and the third means *to insert, to thrust in*. The second use of this verb is not found in Scripture, but there are several cognates which would support its usage in this way. The third use is really found only here; and again, as we saw in the previous verse, that often is the result of tradition rather than careful scholarship. When it comes to the actual, previous translations of this verb, that is a whole other story. In the KJV, it is rendered *defiled, hast done, affecteth, glean, children, is done, have wrought, mocked, wrought wonderfully, abuse, to practice*. This verb is only found 20 times in the Bible, and yet given nearly ten different meanings! Since the concept of *gleaning, cutting down, harvesting* is so often found, and because such a rendering should not damage to where this word is elsewhere found, that is what we will go with. *Laid down* is not a bad rendering (it is what happens after something has been *cut*) and it certainly is the most popular. Strong's #5953 BDB #760. My only personal problem with the verb is that it is in the 1st person, and I would have expected it to be in the 3rd, referring to God (or to Satan).

**My faces are reddened from weeping
and upon my eyelids, a death shadow,**

Job
16:16

**My face has become reddened from weeping
and the death shadow [is] upon my eyelids,**

**My face is red with weeping
and upon my eyelids is the shadow of death,**

We'll look at a couple of other renderings first:

<i>The Emphasized Bible</i>	My face is reddened from weeping, And <upon my eyelashes> is the death-shade:—
<i>God's Word™</i>	My face is red from crying, and dark shadows encircle my eyes,...
JPS (Tanakh)	My face is red with weeping; Darkness covers my eyes
Keil and Delitzsch	My face is exceeding red with weeping, And on mine eyelids is the shadow of death,...
NASB	"My face is flushed from weeping, And deep darkness is on my eyelids,..."
The Septuagint	My belly has been parched with wailing, and darkness [or, shadow] is on my eyelids.
<i>Young's Lit. Translation</i>	My face is foul with weeping, And on mine eyelids is death-shade.

This verse begins with *my faces* (in the Hebrew, *face* is always in the plural). The verb is the Poalal perfect (which is, essentially, the Piel passive) of *châmar* (חָמַר) [pronounced *khaw-MAHR*]. This verb is given four separate listings in BDB, although it only appears six times in scripture (Ex. 2:3 Job 16:16 Psalm 46:3 75:8 Lam 1:20

⁴² Paraphrased from *Barnes' Notes; Job, Volume 1*; F. C. Cook, editor; reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; p. 294. Barnes also dealt with the woman's use of the horn in the ancient world, although I did not see that as pertinent.

2:11). The reason is, there are several related masculine noun cognates. However, those noun cognates are all fairly similar (*clay, mortar; heap, e.g., a heap of clay or mortar; an homer, a measure of a heap of stuff*), and we studied them back in Judges 15:16. In fact, the meanings of the various masculine noun homonyms are all similar enough that we can see one flow from the other. Since we do not have particularly divergent masculine noun cognates, then there is not a reason for the verbs to vary either. About the only difference that I can see in the verbs is there is a passive and active meaning. The active use means *to pitch, to cover or coat with mortar* (which is likely red); or *to rise up into a heap*; the passive meaning is *to be made red, to be reddened*. Strong's #2560 BDB #330. I realize that is a long way to go to get *is reddened*; but it is not an easy verb. The reason his face became red was from *weeping*. Crying is something found often in Scripture, and often in connection with men. David speaks of it in Psalm 6:6 and other psalmists mention it in Psalm 42:3 80:5 102:9. That Job would cry would be expected, his having endured greater suffering than we could ever imagine.

Here is one place where, at first, it seems that we diverge from the cross. Our Lord's face may have been red from having been slapped and beaten, but nothing is said about His weeping. However, we do have at least one passage which Jesus is said to have wept (this was at the grave of Lazarus—John 11:30–35). Now, although there is nothing said of Jesus' reaction to being beaten prior to the cross (other than He was generally silent)—it is not inconceivable that he cried and screamed in pain upon the cross (this is mentioned in the Psalms, but not in the gospels—Psalm 22:2 88:1). Given that the pain He suffered from taking upon Himself the sins of the world, even such a thing would not be unexpected.

In the second line, we have the wâw conjunction, the preposition ʿal (*upon*), and the masculine dual of *eyelids* (with a personal singular suffix). The final word in this verse is the masculine singular noun *tzal^mmâveth* (תַּלְמָוֶת) [pronounced *tzal-MAW-veth*], which means *deep darkness, death-shadow, deep shadow*. The KJV consistently renders this *shadow of death*, as it is a compound word made up of *shadow* and *death*. It can characterize extreme danger (Psalm 23:4 44:20 Jer. 2:6), distress (Psalm 107:10, 14 Jer. 13:16) and could perhaps signify the world of the dead (Job 10:11). Strong's #6757 BDB #853. Job also began to lose his vision when struck by these various diseases, and it is this loss of sight that makes one feel near to death. Therefore, Job naturally awaited was death. He expected to die, given all that had happened to him physically.

Again, this has a double meaning—this also applies to our Lord—at all of His beatings prior to the cross, He stood at death's door, the deep shadow of death upon His eyelids.

**upon no violence [is] in my hands
and my prayer is pure.**

Job
16:17

**even though [there is] no violence in my
hands
and my prayer is uncorrupted.**

**even though I have committed no violence
and my prayer is pure.**

Here is what others have done:

The Emphasized Bible
JPS (Tanakh)

Though no violence was in my hands, And ||my prayer|| was pure.
For no injustice on my part And for the purity of my prayer! [or, Though I did no
injustice, And my prayer was pure].

Keil and Delitzsch
NASB

Although there is no wrong in my hand, And my prayer is pure.
Although there is no violence in my hands, And my prayer is pure.

The Septuagint

Yet there was no injustice in my hands, and my prayer is pure.

Young's Lit. Translation

Not for violence in my hands, And my prayer is pure.

You will note that even the more literal of the translations begin with different prepositions. It begins with the preposition ʿal (אֲל) [pronounced *gahl*], which means *upon, beyond, on, against, above, over, by, beside*. It essentially means *upon*; it is upon this definition that all its other shades of meaning are discerned. It is variously rendered as *on the ground of, according to, on account of, on behalf of, concerning, besides, in addition to, together*

with, beyond, above, over, by on to, towards, to, against, in the matter of, concerning, as regards to. ʿAl is the most versatile prepositions in the Hebrew language. It is even given the renderings *although, notwithstanding, in spite of*, which is how we will understand it here. Strong’s #5920, #5921 BDB #752.

Then we have the negative and the masculine noun *châmâç* (חַמָּץ) [pronounced *khaw-MAWS*], which means *violence, wrong, cruelty*. This is the word that we find in Gen. 6 which prompts God to flood the earth. Strong’s #2555 BDB #329. The Greek uses the word *adikía* (ἀδικία) [pronounced *ad-ee-KEE-ah*], which means *unrighteousness, wrongdoing*. This is followed by *in my hands*. Job is testifying outright that he has done no violence and he has committed no acts which would precipitate these kinds of actions from God. As McGee said, Job’s main problem is that he seeks to justify himself rather than to justify God. *The minute a person begins to defend himself, he puts himself into the position which John very candidly stated. “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 and 10). That makes God a liar. It puts God in the place of being blamed. It takes God off the position of being the Judge and puts Him down as the One who is judged, the guilty one, the criminal. A person is then bringing a charge against God. There are actually many people who sit in judgment upon God. That is what Job is actually doing here. He is justifying himself by saying, “Not for any injustice in mine hands”—the minute he says that he is also saying that God is wrong in letting this happen to him.*⁴³

However, Job’s stance still parallels the experience of our Lord, to which Peter testified: **For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps, Who committed no sin, nor was any deceit found in His mouth** (I Peter 2:21–22 Isa. 53:9).

In the second line, we have the *wâw* conjunction and the feminine singular noun (with a personal suffix) *t^ephillâh* (תְּפִלָּה) [pronounced *t^e-phil-LAWH*], which means *intercession, supplication for any one; prayer or supplication in general; a hymn or inspired song*. Strong’s #8605 BDB #813. We do not have a verb here, but this is followed by the adjective *zak^e* (זָקֵק) [pronounced *zakhk^e*], which means *to be unmixd, free from foreign substances; and therefore, pure, uncorrupted*. Strong’s #2134 BDB #269. Again, a word used by Eliphaz in the previous chapter and reused by Job in this. Job claims that his prayers to God were as they should have been. He had not prayed for anything untoward.

This again applies to our Lord, Who spoke to God with uncorrupted prayer. You will recall the night prior to His crucifixion—Jesus asking His disciples to join with Him in prayer. In fact, throughout His public ministry, we find Jesus praying uncorrupted prayers.

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

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

Job’s Witness Is in Heaven and Job’s End Is near

Job’s speeches often move from despair to stirring hope (e.g., from Job 14:1–6 to vv. 7–17 and from Job 19:2–22 to vv. 23–27).⁴⁴ We would expect him to be preoccupied with his pain, as would anyone in his position. However, it is remarkable that he will suddenly move beyond this into a soliloquy of great spiritual lucidity. This is what we have in this passage—for a moment he leaves his pain and goes on to demonstrate a faith in God, Whom he does not understand, but in Whom he trusts.

**Earth will not cover my blood
and [there] is no [resting] place for my cry.**

Job
16:18

**Earth, you will not cover my blood
and [there] is no [resting] place for my cry.**

⁴³ J. Vernon McGee; *Job*; Thru the Bible Books; ©El Camino Press, 1977; p. 97.

⁴⁴ We see Job move in the other direction as well, e.g., from Job 14:7–17 to w. 18–22 and from Job 23:10–12 to w. 13–17. This paragraph, by the way, was paraphrased from *The Layman’s Bible Commentary*, Vol. 8, Balmer H. Kelly, John Knox Press, ©1962, p. 94.

**O earth, do not cover over my blood,
for there is no final place for my outcry.**

The other translations:

JPS (Tanakh)	Earth, do not cover my blood; Let there be no resting place for my outcry!
NASB	"O earth, do not cover my blood, And let there be no <i>resting</i> place for my cry."
The Septuagint	Earth, cover not over the blood of my flesh, and let my cry have no place.
<i>Young's Lit. Translation</i>	O earth, do not thou cover my blood! And let there not be a place for my cry.

We begin with the feminine singular noun *erets* (אֶרֶץ) [pronounced *EH-rets*], which means *earth* (*all or a portion*), *land*. Strong's #776 BDB #75. Then we have the negative and the 2nd person feminine singular, Piel imperfect of *kâcâh* (כָּוַח) [pronounced *kaw-SAWH*] and it means *to cover, to clothe, to conceal*. The Piel meanings are *to cover, to clothe, to spread over, to overwhelm*. Strong's #3680 BDB #491. As you may recall, the 2nd person negative imperfect, in the Hebrew, is often used as an imperative. The Ten Commandments are primarily 2nd person, negative Qal imperatives; but we understand them as imperative. That is likely the sense here. What Job asks the earth not to cover was *my blood*. What is Job saying? A person who has done wrong and is punished for it, ideally speaking, would like the guilt from his crime (and his punishment) expunged from his life. A criminal, particularly a reformed criminal, does not want everyone to know his criminal record, the punishment he endured and the time he served. He would like that to be behind him; he would like that to be buried. Job is not guilty of a crime, in his own mind (he is certainly less sinful than you or I). What has happened to him, he does not want buried or hidden. It is Job who is violated here—he is the innocent blood, and he wants his blood to call out from the ground, just like Abel's (Gen. 4:10).⁴⁵ Job wants to know *why*.

Barnes: *Blood here seems to denote the wrong done to him. He compares his situation with that of one who had been murdered, and calls on the earth not to conceal the crime, and prays that his injuries may not be hidden, or pass unavenged...He speaks as a man about to die, but he says that he would die as an innocent and a much injured man, and he passionately prays that his death may not pass unavenged. God had crushed him, and his friends had wronged him, and he now earnestly implores that his character may yet be vindicated.*⁴⁶ Eichhorn suggests that, *according to a saying of the Arabs, the blood of one who was unjustly slain remained upon the earth without sinking into it until the avenger of blood came up. It was regarded as a proof of innocence.*⁴⁷

Keil and Delitzsch: *Job calls upon the earth not to suck in his blood as of one innocently slain, but to let it lie bare, thereby showing that it must be first of all avenged ere the earth can take it up; and for his cry, i.e., the cry...proceeding from his blood as from his poured-out soul, he desires that it may urge its way unhindered and unstillied towards heaven without finding a place of rest...Therefore...Job...hopes to find a witness of his innocence: He [God] will acknowledge his blood like that of Abel, to be the blood of an innocent man...Job believes that God will even finally avenge the blood which His wrath has shed, as blood that has been innocently shed.*⁴⁸

Keil and Delitzsch teach that Job believed God to be at once responsible for his pain, yet would still vindicate him in the end, a position not unlike that of our Lord, who took upon Himself the judgment of sins, and yet was vindicated in the end when God raised Him from the dead. As a parallel to our Lord, the blood of Jesus (not His literal blood, but His suffering our deserved punishment for our sins) is also not to be hidden. The most important fact of Christ coming to this earth was to die for our sins. He calls upon the earth not to cover His blood. **For when every commandment had been spoken by Moses to all the people according to the law, he [the High Priest] took the blood of the calves and goats, with water and scarlet wool and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book itself and all the people, saying, "This is the blood of the covenant which God commanded you."** And in the same way, he sprinkled

⁴⁵ The similarity here is remarkable. God said to Cain, "The voice of your brother's blood cries to Me from the ground." could indicate that Job actually knew this verse.

⁴⁶ *Barnes' Notes; Job, Volume 1*; F. C. Cook, editor; reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; p. 295.

⁴⁷ *Barnes' Notes; Job, Volume 1*; F. C. Cook, editor; reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; p. 295.

⁴⁸ Keil & Delitzsch's *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. 4, p. 402.

both the tabernacle and all the vessels of the ministry with the blood. And according to the Law, almost all things are cleansed with blood, and without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness (Heb. 9:19–22 Ex. 24:8).

In the second line, we have the wâw conjunction, the negative, and the 3rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect apocopated verb *to be*, followed by the masculine singular noun mâqôwm (מַקְוֹם) [pronounced *maw-KOHM*], which means *place*; it can refer to where a soldier *stationed*; it might be where the ark is *situated* or *placed*. Strong's #4725 BDB #879. Here, it simply refers to the final resting place of something. What there is no resting place for is *for my cry*. The noun is the feminine singular of z^e 'âqâh (זַעַקָה) [pronounced *z^egaw-KAW*], which means *cry, outrage, cry of distress, outcry*. Strong's #2201 BDB #277. Job is in pain to the point of his moaning and crying. Most of us will never experience such excruciating and continued pain. His body, inside and out, is filled with cancer. Due to the injustice that he feels has been placed upon him, he finds no place for his cry. David wrote: *In my distress, I called upon Jehovah, and I cried to my God for help. He heard my voice out of His temple, and my cry for help before Him came into His ears* (Psalm 18:6). David believed that God would hear his cry of distress. Another psalmist felt the same way: *Hear my prayer, O Jehovah! Let my cry for help come to You!* (Psalm 102:1; see also Psalm 66:18–19 119:169). Job at some point thought that God had attacked him, or allowed the attack; so God did not hear his cry of pain and distress—there was no place for Job's cry to go to. God, his Protector and Comforter, did not seem to be listening.

Keil and Delitzsch: *Job challenges the earth not to hide his blood; unceasingly without restraint shall the cry of his blood rise up. What he says in ch. 16:18 is to be taken not so much as the expression of a desire as of a demand, and better still as a command; for even in case he should succumb to his sufferings, and consequently in the eyes of men die the death of a sinner, his clear consciousness of innocence does not allow him to renounce his claim to a public declaration that he has died guiltless. But to whom shall the blood of the slain cry out? To whom else but God; and yet it is God who has slain him? He see distinctly here how Job's idea of God is lightened up by the prospect of a decisive trial of his cause. The God who abandons Job to death as guilty, and the God who cannot (and though it should be even after death) leave him unvindicated, come forth distinct and separate as darkness from light from the chaos of the conflict of temptation. Since, however, the thought of a vindication after death for Job, which knows only of a seeming life after death, according to the notion that rules him, and which is here not yet broken through, is only the extreme demanded by his moral consciousness, he is compelled to believe in a vindication in this world; and he expresses this faith...in these words: "Even now, behold, my Witness is in heaven, and One who acknowledgeth me is in the heights." He pours forth tears to this God that He would decide between God and him, between his friends and him. He longs for this decision now, for he will now soon be gone beyond return. Thus Job becomes here the prophet of the issue of his own course of suffering; and over his relation to Allah and to the friends, of whom the former abandons him to the sinner's death, and the latter declare him to be guilty, hovers the form of God of the future, which now breaks through the darkness, from whom Job believingly awaits and implores what the God of the present withholds from him.*⁴⁹

Although Barnes did not suggest the parallel of this passage to the cross, he sounded evangelical concerning Job's cry: *Job wished his solemn protestations of his innocence to go abroad. He desired that all might hear him. He called on the nations and heaven to hear. He appealed to the universe. He desired that the earth would not conceal the proof of his wrongs, and that his cry might not be confined or limited by any bounds, but that it might go abroad so that all worlds might hear.*⁵⁰

To the humanity of our Lord on the cross, it appeared as though He had been forsaken by God the Father and God the Holy Spirit. There was no one to whom His cry could go. Our Lord also, as we read in the Hebrew, cried out while on the cross—he roared (in the KJV); but he was really crying out from intense pain. *My God, my God, why have You forsaken me? Far from my deliverance are the words of my screaming. My God, I cry by day, but You do not answer; and by night, yet I have no rest* (Psalm 22:1–2).

⁴⁹ Keil & Delitzsch's *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. 4, p. 413.

⁵⁰ *Barnes' Notes; Job, Volume 1*; F. C. Cook, editor; reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; p. 296.

Also, now, behold in the [two] heavens my
Witness
and my Eyewitness in the heights.

Job
16:19

Furthermore, realize, my Witness [is] in
heaven,
and my Eyewitness [is] in the heights.

Moreover, my Witness is in heaven
and my Eyewitness is in the heights.

The translations:

JPS (Tanakh)	Surely now my witness is in heaven; He who can testify for me is on high.
Keil and Delitzsch (revised)	Even now behold in heaven is my Witness, And One who acknowledges me is in the heights!
NASB	“Even now, behold, my witness is in heaven. And my advocate [or, <i>witness</i>] is on high.”
The Septuagint	And now, behold, my witness is in heaven, and my advocate is on high.
<i>Young's Lit. Translation</i>	Also, now, lo, in the heavens <i>is</i> my witness, And my testifier in the high places.

We don't begin this verse with a conjunction, but with two adverbs: the first is *gam* (גַּם) [pronounced *gahm*], which means *also, furthermore, in addition to, even, moreover*. Strong's #1571 BDB #168. It is followed by the adverb *attâh* (אֵתָּהּ) [pronounced *gaht-TAWH*], which is an adverb of time meaning *now, at this time, already*. Strong's #6258 BDB #773. Then we have, *behold, in the [two] heavens, my witness*. The last word of this first line is the masculine singular noun *êd* (עֵד) [pronounced *gaide*], which means *witness*, although it is a word used outside the courtroom (Gen. 31:44 Ex. 22:13) as well as in (Deut. 17:6–7, 19:18). This can refer either to the person giving testimony or to the testimony itself. It is *a statement given as truth, a solemn testimony or something which stands as a testimony or memorial to a fact* (e.g., Gen. 31:48 Deut. 31:19). Strong's #5707 BDB #729. Balmer Kelly: *Witness...[is] not simply one who gives factual testimony, but one who stand for the accused in a trial, a kind of "advocate."*⁵¹ What is Job saying? He can tell his friends over and over that he has not committed some secret sin or group of sins, but his appearance seems to belie this. His witness—God, Who could confirm Job's testimony—is in heaven.

It is interesting the turn that Job takes here. Prior to this, he has been vague as to whom he blamed for his misery. He knew that he had not committed some horrendous sin or group of sins, that God was disciplining him. He intimates that perhaps it is Satan and not God who has attacked him; and here, in this verse, he appeals to God to vindicate him. Barnes: *Such is his real trust in God, that though he is betrayed at times into expressions of impatience and irreverence, yet he is sure to return to calmer views, and to show that he has true confidence in the Most High. The strength, the power, and the point of his expressions of passion and impatience are against his friends...But he still had permanent or abiding confidence in God.*⁵² This verse also helps us to confirm just who Job means when he speaks of his adversary in v. 9; it would be incongruous for him to be referring to God as his adversary and then plead to God to stand as his Witness. Therefore, although Job is unclear as to what has happened to him, and how exactly God figures into the picture, he recognizes that God will vindicate him and that God is not his adversary. The Open Bible: *Job's cry for vindication arouses hope, and he declares **my witness is in heaven**. In Christian redemption, we see the drama of God the Savior witnessing for the sinner before the bar of God the judge. Job trusts God in spite of how God appears to treat him.*⁵³

The second portion of this verse appears to be a poetic, parallel thought. It begins with the *wâw* conjunction and *sâhêd* (שָׂהֵד) [pronounced *saw-HAYD*], which means *a witness, record*. This word is found only here, which means we ought to look at this more closely. Strong's #7717 BDB #962. It comes from the unused verbal root *sâhad* (שָׁהַד) [pronounced *saw-HAHD*], which means *to bear witness, to be an eyewitness*. *Sâhad* is borrowed from the Arabic. It is listed in Gesenius, but not in BDB. Strong's #none BDB #none. Gesenius lists the equivalent or related

⁵¹ *The Layman's Bible Commentary, Vol. 8*, Balmer H. Kelly, John Knox Press, ©1962, p. 94.

⁵² *Barnes' Notes; Job, Volume 1*; F. C. Cook, editor; reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; p. 296.

⁵³ *The Open Bible; the New Living Translation*; Thomas Nelson Publishers, Nashville, TN; ©1996, p. 692.

Aramaic and Arabic verbs, the Arabic meaning *to be present*. There is a related word found in Gen. 31:47 that Laban uses, which means *a heap of witnesses*. Given the parallelism of the second part of each line, this is a reasonable translation. The second word is the masculine plural noun *mârôm* (מָרוֹם) [pronounced *maw-ROHM*], which means *heights, that which is high*. *Mârôm* is used chiefly in poetry. Strong's #4791 BDB #928. It is preceded by the *bêyth* preposition and the definite article. Job is referring to God the Father in the first line, and God the Son in the second (although he might think of them as God and the Messiah Who Is To Come). In any case, the Law demanded two or more witnesses, and this is what Job had.

Jesus Christ also had Two Who bore Him witness. The pharisees therefore said to Him, “You are bearing witness of Yourself. Your witness is not true.” Jesus answered and said to them, “Even if I bear witness of Myself, My witness is true, because I know where I came from, and where I am going; but you do not know where I come from, or where I am going. You people judge according to the flesh, I am not judging any one. But even if I do judge, My judgment is true, for I am not alone, but I and He Who sent Me. Even in your Law, it has been written that the testimony of two men is true. I am He who bears witness of Myself, and the Father who sent Me bears witness of Me.” (John 8:12–18).

**Interpreting [or, scorning] me my friends
[or, Let my supplication come face to face with
the Lord];
unto God pours out tears my eye.**

Job
16:20

**My friends [are] my [life's] interpreters
[or, Let my prayer come to the Lord];
my eye pours out tears to God.**

**Let my supplications come to the Lord;
my eye pours out tears to God.**

We definitely need to look over the various translations here:

<i>The Emphasized Bible God's Word™</i>	My friends are they who scorn me , <Unto God> hath mine eye shed tears:— ...the spokesman for my thoughts [or, <i>my friends mock me</i>]. My eyes drip [with tears] to God.
JPS (Tanakh)	O my advocates, my fellows, Before God my eyes shed tears;
Keil and Delitzsch (revised)	Though the mockers of me are my friends— To Eloah my eyes pour forth tears,...
NAB	My friends it is who wrong me; before God my eyes drop tears,...
NASB	“My friends are my scoffers; My eye weeps [or, <i>drips</i>] to God.
NJB	Interpreter of my thoughts there with God, before whom flow my tears,
NRSV	My friends scorn me; my eye pours out tears to God,...
Owen's Translation	Scorn me my friends; to God, pours out [drops in] tears my eye.
REB	My appeal will come before God, while my eyes turn anxiously to him.
The Septuagint	My appeal will come face to face with the Lord, and let mine eye weep before him.
<i>Young's Lit. Translation</i>	My interpreter is my friend, Unto God hath mine eye dropped.

Almost finished with this chapter, and suddenly in this verse, given the divergence of renderings, we can see that our work is cut out for us. We begin with the masculine plural,⁵⁴ Hiphil participle, 1st person suffix, of *lûwts* (לִּוְטִים) [pronounced *loots*], which means, properly, *to make mouths at*. It means *to scoff, to scorn, to turn aside*. This word is also used to mean *to interpret*, referring to the difficulty in enunciating another language. The former meanings appear to apply to the Qal (see Psalm 1:1 Prov. 1:22 3:34 9:7), and the latter with the Hiphil (see Job 33:23 Isa. 43:27). For whatever reason, Owen and BDB give this verb as *lîyts* (לִּיִּטִים) [pronounced *leets*]. Strong's #3887 & #3945 BDB #539. This could mean *my interpreters* or *my scorers*, taking the participle as a noun. Of course, it could be the verb. This is followed by the masculine plural noun *rêa* (רֵעִים) [pronounced *RAY-ahg*], which means *associate, neighbor, colleague, fellow, acquaintance*. It is a person with whom you come into

⁵⁴ I do not have any idea what happened to Young and his translation at this point, as what he has is in the singular. Unlike many translators, Young does not tell us why he veered from the Massoretic text at any given point, so I do not know why what he has is in the singular, when it should all be in the plural.

contact. Strong's #7453 BDB #945. This gives us several possible translations: *Scoffing me [are] my associates...; my associates are mocking me; my acquaintances [are] interpreters; my associates are interpreting.* This can be taken, if one does not look too carefully, that Job's acquaintances have chosen to interpret God's will and the situation as they have so chosen, in part because Job's witnesses are in heaven. However, it is more reasonable to understand this as Job's acquaintances mock him. Given the circumstances, it is not beyond Job to choose a word which is applicable in more than one way. Yet, recall there is the 1st person suffix affixed to *scorning* or *interpreting*. Certainly, Job's associates would be *scorners of him*; but they could also be *interpreters of him* (i.e., *interpreters of his life, of his misery, of what has happened to him*). Taking this to mean that Job's friends are *scorners of him* is the easy way out in this particular, individual verse, but then we have problems with this same verb in the Hiphil in other passages where *scorners* is not apropos. Personally, I would rather lean toward some sort of uniformity of translation rather than take whichever meaning is convenient. Another reason to reject *scorners* as a correct translation is that does not fit in with the immediate context. It would fit in the first five verses of this chapter, but Job has since moved on and has not really been speaking of the scorning of his friends. What has happened is that his associates have misinterpreted the circumstances and Job's Witness in heaven would set them straight.

One of the differences that you will notice in the translations is what is done with *unto God*. Some add this to the second line and some leave it with the first. What the Hebrews did, to indicate a break or a major juncture of a sentence, would be to take the last word of the first thought and alter it somewhat (e.g., changing an *a* vowel to a *long a* vowel). That's what we have with the word *acquaintances*—it is in its pausal form, meaning that ends the thought of that line.⁵⁵ Admittedly, some of these changes or indications would not have been committed to writing until the Massorites (over a half century after our Lord); however, we have to go with something, and that is the most reasonable. In order to get another take on this verse, one would have to ignore the 1st person suffix on the first verb and ignore the pausal form of the last noun of the first line. That the text might be corrupt—well, that could be true anywhere in the book of Job; however, when we have such a major difference between the Greek and Hebrew (as we do here), that would indicate that corruption of the text is even more likely. Therefore, I do not disparage those translators who rendered this *My friends are interpreters of God*. The thought is apropos to the soliloquy of Job, and not out of place in this context. However, I cannot stress enough that we have to make several changes to the accepted Massoretic text to arrive at that rendering.

Now, as for the Greek, the first line is completely different. It reads: *Let my supplication come face to face with the Lord*. There's no *friends* in the Greek, no *God*; and furthermore, it is contextually sound. Which to choose? I don't know what to tell you here. This is perhaps one reason we see such a variety of renderings of the first half of this verse.

The second line is a bit easier to work with. It begins with *unto God*. We have the 3rd person feminine singular, Qal perfect of the verb *dālah* (דָּלַח) [pronounced *daw-LAHF*], which means *to drop, to drip*. This verb is only found in Job 16:20 Psalm 119:28 and Eccles. 10:18. We can only infer *tears* here because of the verb and the word *eye* which follows. Strong's #1811 BDB #196. Interestingly enough, we do not have a dual, but we have the feminine singular noun *'ayin* (אֵינַי) [pronounced *GAH-yin*], which means *spring, literal eye(s), spiritual eyes*. Strong's #5869 (and #5871) BDB #744. What Job is saying, and it is very poetical, is that *his eye drips [with tears] as a spring*. However, it is not his literal eye, but his soul, pouring out tears to God.

This continues to parallel our Lord's suffering prior to the cross. His friends both deserted and denied Him, completely misinterpreting the situation. **Then all the disciples left Him and fled...and a little later, the bystanders came up and said to Peter, "Surely you too are one of them, for the way you talk makes you evident." Then he began to curse and swear, "I do not know the Man!" And immediately [as Jesus prophesied], a rooster crowed (Matt. 26:56b, 73–74). And Jesus, the night before His crucifixion, prayed earnestly to God the Father: And He began to be grieved and distressed...And He went a little further, and fell on His face and prayed, saying, "My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; yet not as I will, but as You will...My Father, if this cannot pass away unless I drink it, Your will be done."** (Matt. 26:37b, 39, 42b).

⁵⁵ For more information on pausal forms, see Choon-Leong Seow, *A Grammar for Biblical Hebrew (Revised Edition)*; Abingdon Press, Nashville; ©1995, p. 67–68. This is rapidly becoming my favorite Hebrew grammar book.

And He would decide to a man with God
and a son of man to his neighbor,

Job
16:21

And He [the Eyewitness] would make a cause
clear between a man and God
[as] a son of man with his associate,

And He, the Witness, would make my cause clear between a man and God,
as well as my cause with my associates,

Although what you have in your Bible may make perfect sense, what we have in the Hebrew is a tad bit more difficult. Therefore, we will examine several translations and then make a final determination:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	O that <i>there were</i> one <i>who</i> might plead for a man with God <i>and</i> that he would maintain his right with Him, as a son of man pleads with <i>or</i> for his neighbor!
Barnes Translation	Oh that it might be for a man to contend with God...
<i>The Emphasized Bible</i>	That one might plead for a man with God ,— Even a son of man, for his friend!
<i>God's Word™</i>	But my witness will plead for a human in front of God. The Son of Man will plead for his friend!
JPS (Tanakh)	Let Him arbitrate between a man and God As between a man and his fellow.
Keil and Delitzsch	That He may decide for man against Eloah, And for the son of an against his friend.
KJV	Oh, that one might plead for a man with God, as a man <i>pleadeth</i> for his neighbor!
NASB	"O that man might plead with God As a man with his neighbor!"
The Septuagint	Oh that a man might plead before the Lord, even as the son of man with his neighbor!
<i>Young's Lit. Translation</i>	And he reasoneth for a man with God, And a son of man for his friend.

Now, lest there be any confusion, I would personally prefer for this verse to be hammered out and end up just like the KJV. I like its translation. However, that will not be the final outcome of the Hebrew. We begin this verse with a wâw conjunction and the 3rd person masculine singular, Hiphil imperfect of yâkach (נָכַח) [pronounced yaw-KAHK], which means *to decide, to make a cause clear, to adjudge, to prove, to render a decision*. When there are parties involved in a dispute, it means *to hammer out a decision or an agreement to resolve a conflict, to render a decision*. When there is a direct object, then it means *to correct, to rebuke, to refute, to reprove*. Strong's #3198 (and #3197) BDB #406. This is followed, literally, with *to [or, for, or, with regards to] a man with God*. Because of the two prepositions, it does not appear as though *a man* or *God* are the subjects of this verb. I would think that the *Witness* of v. 19 (or the *Eyewitness*) is the person to Whom Job appeals in this verse, and Who is asked to make the decision. Job is asking for the Witness of v. 19, to Whom he has appealed, to make clear his cause before God. The two prepositions here are lâmed...îm (לִּי) [pronounced *geem*], literally mean *to...with; for...with*; however, the general concept here seems to be *between...and*. I could not locate justification for this in BDB or Gesenius. Lâmed = Strong's #none BDB #510. îm = Strong's #5973 BDB #767.

Job is not bold enough to cry out that he is right and God is wrong, but he would like his Eyewitness from heaven to arbitrate, to make a judgement, to resolve the conflict that he is having with God. We all find ourselves in Job's shoes in this regard. We stand against God by our very nature. What we need is for Someone to resolve the conflict between a Holy God and ourselves. This is for Whom Job calls.

This Witness is, of course, Christ Jesus, our true mediator between man and God. **For there is one God, and one mediator between man and God, the man Christ Jesus** (I Tim. 2:5). Recall that this is what Job had hoped for—a Mediator between God and man: "There is no mediator between us, Who may lay His hand upon us both." (Job 9:33). McGee: *Here is another of those cries of Job. How wonderful it is for believers to know that we have an Intercessor. We have an Advocate. We have an Attorney who represents us before God. Everything has been taken care of for us. We have One who pleads for us before God.*⁵⁶

⁵⁶ J. Vernon McGee; *Job*; Thru the Bible Books; ©El Camino Press, 1977; p. 98.

In the second line, we have, literally, *and a son of man to his neighbor [or, associate]*. I would like to have the preposition as right here, but that is simply not what we find. It sounds as though, in both the Greek and Hebrew, that Job is asking for this Mediator to also mediate between himself and his associates, rather than to act as a mediator would between a man and his neighbor.

**when years of a counting come
and a way I will not return, I will go.”**

Job
16:22 **when counted years come
and I go the way [from which] I will not return.”**

when my time is up, then I will go the path from which I will not return.

The other translations are:

<i>The Emphasized Bible</i>	<When a few years come> Then <by a path by which I shall not return> shall I depart.
<i>God's Word™</i>	[My eyes drip [with tears] to God because in a few short years I will take the path of no return. (God's Word™ places v. 22 with v. 20).
JPS (Tanakh)	For a few more years will pass, And I will go the way of no return.
Keil and Delitzsch	For the years that may be numbered are coming on, And I shall go a way without return.
NASB	“For when a few years are past, I shall go the way of no return.”
The Septuagint	But my years are numbered and come, and I will go by the way by which I will not return.
<i>Young's Lit. Translation</i>	When a few years <i>do</i> come, Then a path I return not do I go.

We begin this last verse (which is not the end of Job's soliloquy) with the kîy conjunction (*for, that, when*) and the feminine singular construct of shânâh (שָׁנָה) [pronounced *shaw-NAW*], which means *year*. Again, a word used by Eliphaz in the previous chapter. Strong's #8141 BDB #1040. What follows is the masculine singular noun miç^ophâr (מִסְפָּר) [pronounced *mis^e-FAWR*] means *number, counted, numerical total, a recounting*. Strong's #4557 BDB #708. This gives us *years of counting*. Eliphaz used the phrase *a counting of years*. The verb is the 3rd person masculine plural, Qal imperfect of 'âthâh (אָתָּה) [pronounced *aw-THAWH*], which means *to come*. Strong's #857 BDB #87. I must admit to being puzzled about the lack of agreement of gender.

There is a disagreement as to interpretation. Most interpret this as meaning that Job does not have long to live (in his own mind); the NIV Study Bible suggests that Job does not believe death to be imminent, as he still has a few years remaining. It would be reasonable to assume that Job sees death as imminent, but he is uncertain as to when.

The second line begins with the wâw conjunction and the masculine singular noun 'ôrach (אֹרֶחַ) [pronounced *OH-rahkh*], and it means *path, way, highway*. Strong's #734 BDB #73. This is followed by the negative and the 1st person singular, Qal imperfect of *to return* followed by the 1st person, Qal imperfect of hâlak^e (הָלַךְ) [pronounced *haw-LAHK^e*], which means *to go, to come, to depart, to walk*. Strong's #1980 (and #3212) BDB #229. This gives us: **When years of counting come and a way I will not return, I depart**. A bit looser rendering of this would be: **when my time is up, then I will go the path from which I will not return**. For Job, he is simply speaking of his life coming to a close, dying being the path along which he will go, from which he will not return. Job has used similar language before, almost longingly: **“Before I go—and I will not return—to the land of darkness and deep shadow.”** (Job 10:21).

Vv. 21 and 22 go together, as Job would like, in his end time, to be vindicated before God. He does not want to die in shame, everything thinking about them as they do. Barnes: *...he was overwhelmed with calamities and reproaches, and was about to die in this condition. He did not wish to die thus. He wished that the reproaches might be wiped off, and that his character might be cleared up and made fair. He believed assuredly that if he could be permitted to carry his cause directly before God, he might be able to vindicate his character, and to obtain the divine verdict in his favour; and if he obtained that, he was not unwilling to die. It is the expression of such a wish as every man has, that his sun may not go down under a cloud; that whatever aspersions may rest on his*

character may be wiped away; and that his name, if remembered at all when he is dead, may go untarnished down to future times, and be such that his friends may repeat it without a blush.⁵⁷

One of the more interesting of the *modern* translations is God's Word™. You may have noticed that with Job 15, I have begun to quote from it more and more often. Primarily, I choose to do so because God's Word™ tends to be readable, yet much less imaginative in its rendering of the original Greek or Hebrew than, say, the TEV, the NLT, or the CEV. That is, it is more accurate when compared to the original languages. No doubt you have done the experiment in school where a piece of gossip or information is whispered from one person to the next, until the final repetition of the story is far different from the original. Well, this is how the CEV, NLT and TEV appear at times. They are readable, they are easily understood—it is just that, far too often, they bear only a passing resemblance to the original text. On the other hand, God's Word™ remains relative true to the original text. Now, once and awhile, God's Word™ rearranges a verse, or reinterprets a passage. It is such a change in vv. 19–22, that I thought it would be better for you to see it as a unified whole, as opposed to cut up verses:

Job 16:19–22

Massoretic Text (Hebrew)	Greek Septuagint	God's Word™
<p>Furthermore, realize, my Witness [is] in heaven, and my Eyewitness [is] in the heights. My friends [are] my [life's] interpreters [or, Let my prayer come to the Lord]; my eye pours out tears to God. And He [the Eyewitness] would make a cause clear between a man and God [as] a son of man with his associate, when counted years come and I go the way [from which] I will not return."</p>	<p>And now, behold, my witness is in heaven, and my advocate is on high. My appeal will come face to face with the Lord, and let mine eye weep before him. Oh that a man might plead before the Lord, even as the son of man with his neighbor! But my years are numbered and come, and I will go by the way by which I will not return.</p>	<p>"Even now, look! My witness is in heaven, and the one who testifies for me is above, the spokesman for my thoughts [or, my friends mock me] My eyes drip [with tears] to God because in a few short years I will take the path of no return. But my witness will plead for a human in front of God. The Son of Man will plead for his friend!"</p>

You will note in the previous passage the reinterpretation of vv. 19b and 21, as well as the rearrangement of the verses, placing v. 22 before v. 21.

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

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

For our Lord, the years of counting refer to the perfect timing in the plan of God. When His time was fulfilled, He went to the cross, a path from which He would not return in a mortal body. **But when the fullness of time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under Law** (Gal. 4:4). One of the amazing things concerning the time of our Lord, is it brought together several things. It showed the hatefulness and despicability of Satan, who, without a cause, set in motion the crucifixion of Jesus, after having observed all that He was. Similarly, those from the Jews, who were ostensibly under the Law of God, and the Romans, who were under the most advanced system of Gentile law, also, having had a chance to observe Jesus, crucified Him. It is an indictment of our character, our rebellion against God. For those who, for whatever reason, blame the Jews exclusively, or Roman law exclusively, miss the point entirely. It was we who put our Lord on that cross. It was our sins and our actions and our rebellion against God. The fact that we live two millenniums later does not exonerate us in the least.

⁵⁷ Barnes' Notes; Job, Volume 1; F. C. Cook, editor; reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; pp. 296–297.

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

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

[<<Site Map>>](#)

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

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