

# Job 17

## Job 17:1–22

## Job continues with his answer to Eliphaz

**Introduction:** Job 17 is a continuation of Job 16, and there was really no reason for these chapters to be separated. Barnes comments rather vehemently: *This is connected with the previous chapter, and should not have been separated from it. There was no necessity of making a new chapter here, and we have one of those unfortunate breaks in the middle of a paragraph, and almost of a sentence, which are too common in the Scriptures.*<sup>1</sup> Job speaks more of his pain and his expected death in this chapter. Also continued is the parallel between what Job said and our Lord's crucifixion and the events leading up to the crucifixion. However, there are several verses whose original meaning is difficult to ascertain (e.g., vv. 3, 5, 12), and whose parallels may seem *iffy*. Some of the other parallels must be carefully examined; e.g., the washing of the hands in v. 9 does not refer to Pilate, which he did prior to handing Jesus over to the Jewish mob) and the darkness and the day references of v. 12 do not appear to parallel the day of the crucifixion when the daytime was turned into a thick darkness.

A brief rundown of the chapter: Job says that he has been beaten down and his life is at its end (v. 1), and his friends stand in opposition to him rather than comfort him in his last days (v. 2). V. 3 is quite difficult, but it appears as though Job asks who could guarantee what he has said is true, and in the next verse, he points out that this could not be his three associates, as God has obviously blinded their minds from simply understanding his situation. In v. 5, when someone informs against a friend for a share of his inheritance (although it is not clear as to what the share is of), Job says that person's children's eyes will languish (which is not completely clear, either; although a lack of understanding would be a reasonable interpretation). Job says that his own eyes are dim because of grief, and appears to say that he has become quite weak (v. 7). Job says that those who are righteous would be appalled at his situation (v. 8), and then puts himself in the category of the righteous, saying that the one with clean hands will grow stronger and stronger (v. 9). Job appears to be provoking them to continue their arguments in the next verse, adding that there is not a wise man among them. At the end of the chapter, Job simply speaks of his days being past, his plans being torn apart, and his going down to Sheol as his home. He says that he will be on intimate terms with the grave and the worm of the ground.

Now, much of this chapter continues to parallel the last few hours of the life of our Lord as well, although there are times where the parallel is not completely clear. Jesus was surrounded by those who mocked Him, and in almost every direction that He looked, He saw those who were antagonistic toward Him (v. 2). V. 3 remains difficult as a parallel verse as it does when simply understood. Jesus is our Guarantor, but this does not appear to be the meaning of v. 4. In the next verse, it says "You have kept their minds from understanding"; which would be easily applicable to the religious Jews who persecuted our Lord as well as to the Romans who crucified Him. It was our Lord Who was exalted and not them (still v. 4). Judas informed on his friend, Jesus, for money; which decision he greatly regretted. The eyes of his children will languish might be applied to the eyes of Judas' spiritual children—that is, those who are close to the truth, but do not perceive the truth.

Job continues speaking in v. 6, saying that "[He has made me a byword \[i.e., a proverb of derision\] of the people and I am one upon whom men spit.](#)" This describes our Lord the night prior to His crucifixion, as well as that morning prior to His crucifixion. He was derided, falsely accused and ridiculed. The Romans spit on Him while holding Him in custody. When Jesus was continually beaten, His face became marred more than any man (Isa. 52:14); His strength became so dissipated that another man had to be pressed into service to carry His cross (John 19:16–17 compared with Luke 23:26). This squares well with "[My eye has grown dim because of grief and all my members are as a shadow \[i.e., He has lost all of his strength\].](#)" (v. 7). There were the righteous who observed our Lord on the cross and were appalled by the circumstances (v. 8); and they held to their faith in Him. [And he who has clean hands will grow stronger and stronger](#) (v. 9) refers both to our Lord in resurrection, as well as to His followers. At the end of this chapter, Job says that he does not find a wise man among his friends (v. 10), which would be pertinent to our Lord and those who humiliated and crucified Him. Job then spends the last six verses of this

<sup>1</sup> *Barnes' Notes; Job, Volume 1*; F. C. Cook, editor; reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; p. 297.

chapter speaking of his imminent death, all of which reasonably parallel our Lord when, at His death, descended down into Sheol.

When I first began to exegete various portions of God's Word, I more or less began at Genesis, but then I began to jump around quite a bit, and worked even a bit in the New Testament. However, as my studies became more and more thorough, I found that there was a great deal of information and a great many parallels in the Old Testament which are generally ignored by the Church today. Now, please don't think that I am about to urge you to rest on the Sabbath (Saturday) or to start offering the animals on your uncle's farm as sacrifices. I was lucky enough to have outstanding teachers as a young believer (R. B. Thieme by tape and J. Vernon McGee on the radio) who both set me straight on God's dispensational approach to history; therefore, when studying the Old Testament, I do recognize that I am dealing with a different household or a different dispensation than the one in which I reside. However, this does not mean that we ought to toss out the first three-quarters of our Bibles. That the cross is found in the Old Testament is undeniable. We find our Lord's sacrifice on our behalf more carefully delineated in Gen. 22, Psalm 22, Isa. 53 and here in Job 16–17 than we do in the New Testament. The details and the theology can be found just as readily in the Old Testament as in the New. Therefore, at the end of this chapter, I will also direct you to a chart which compares the last 12–16 hours of our Lord's life on this earth prior to and during the crucifixion, and the passages in the Old Testament which refer to this time period. If you never realized how complete and cohesive our Bible is, then this chart is an outstanding beginning of such an appreciation.

#### Outline of Chapter 17:

- vv. 1–2 **Job finds himself in a hopeless situation**
- vv. 3–5 **Who will give a pledge to Job? His friends betray him**
- vv. 6–10 **Job has been beaten down—an affront to the righteous**
- vv. 11–16 **Job's time has come; his great expectation is death**

#### Charts:

- v. 13 **Râphad**

### Job Finds Himself in a Hopeless Situation

Literally:

**My spirit has been laid waste;  
my days are extinguished;  
graves for me.**

Smoother English rendering:

**My spirit has been laid waste [my breath has  
become corrupted];  
my days have been put out [as a lamp];**

Job 17:1

**My spirit has been broken,  
my days have come to an end,  
the grave awaits me.**

Because this is Job and because this is poetry, we will look at several different renderings first:

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||My spirit|| is broken, ||My days|| are extinguished, <Graves> are left me.

"My spirit is broken. My days have been snuffed out. The cemetery [is waiting] for me.

JPS (Tanakh)

And I shall go the way of no return. My spirit is crushed, my days run out; The graveyard waits for me.

Keil and Delitzsch  
NASB

My breath is corrupt, My days are extinct, The graves are ready for me.

"My spirit is broken, my days are extinguished, The grave [lit., *graves*] is *ready* for me."

The Septuagint

I perish, carried away by the wind, and I seek for burial, and do not obtain [it].

*Young's Lit. Translation* My spirit hath been destroyed, My days extinguished—graves *are* for me.

The first word, of course, is *rûwach* (רוּחַ) [pronounced *ROO-ahkh*], which means *wind, breath, spirit, apparition*. Strong's #7307 BDB #924. Then we have the 3<sup>rd</sup> person feminine singular, Pual perfect of *châ<sup>b</sup>val* (חָבַל) [pronounced *kha<sup>b</sup>-VAHL*], which means *to act ruinously, to act corruptly*. In the Piel, this means *to corrupt, to spoil, to destroy, to lay waste*. The Pual is the passive of the Piel, so this means that the *spirit* (or, *breath*) of Job has been *laid waste, corrupted*. This is one of the few true homonyms (the other means *to bind with a cord, to tighten a cord, to bind someone with a pledge*). Strong's #2254 BDB #287. This being poetry, we do have a double meaning here. Job's actual breath had become corrupted or destroyed. The cancer which was eating through his body had caused his breath to degenerate. However, more importantly than this, the pain exacted on him had destroyed his spirit—he had no strength and no reason to continue living.

Our Lord on the cross also, in bearing our sins, had His own human spirit laid waste.

In the second line, we have *my days* followed by the 3<sup>rd</sup> person plural, Niphal perfect of *zâ<sup>ʿ</sup>ak<sup>e</sup>* (זָעַק) [pronounced *zaw-ğahk<sup>e</sup>*], which means *to extinguish*. Since this word is only found here, and since three other manuscripts have a slightly different word, it is believed that this is a corruption. Strong's #2193 BDB #276. The word which is found in those other manuscripts is *dâ<sup>ʿ</sup>ak<sup>e</sup>* (דָּעַק) [pronounced *daw-ğahk*], and it means *to go out, to be extinguished* when speaking of a lamp; *to be made extinct, to dry up* when used of a torrent. Strong's #1846 BDB #200.

In the third line, we have the masculine plural of *qe<sup>b</sup>ver* (קְבֻרָה) [pronounced *KEH<sup>b</sup>-VEHR*], which means *grave, sepulcher*. Strong's #6913 BDB #868. I do not know why it is in the plural. Perhaps it refers to a cemetery? Barnes was also nonplused by the plural, although he points out that *grave* is in the singular in both the Latin and Greek. What follows is *to me* or *for me*. There is no verb. This is called sarcasm. His friends have promised him long life if he repents of his evil; Job tells them that the grave awaits him.

Barnes sums up this verse: *[Job's]...vital powers were nearly extinct; his breath failed; his power was weakened, and he was ready to die.*<sup>2</sup>

This continues to parallel our Lord, who, in the night before the cross, knew that His days were about to dry up, as a torrent in the summer, and that the grave awaited Him.

**If not mockeries [are] with me  
and in their provocation spends the night my  
eye.**

Job  
17:2

**Certainly, mockery [is all] around me  
and my eye rests against their opposition.**

**Every way I turn, I am mocked;  
every direction I look in manifests their opposition.**

On first glance at Owen, I don't have a clue as to what's up with this verse, so the translations:

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JPS (Tanakh)*

Verily there are mockers with me! And <on their insults> mine eye doth rest.  
Certainly mockers are around me. My eyes are focused on their opposition.  
Surely mocking men keep me company, And with their provocations I close my eyes.

Keil and Delitzsch (revised)  
NASB  
Owen's Translation  
The Septuagint  
*Young's Lit. Translation*

Truly mockery surrounds me, And my eye shall loiter over their disputings.  
"Surely mockers are with me, And my eye gazes [lit., lodges] on their provocation.  
Surely mockery about me and on their provocation dwells my eye.  
Weary, I entreat; and what have I done? And strangers have stolen my goods.  
If not—mockeries are with me. And in their provocations mine eye lodgeth.

<sup>2</sup> Barnes' Notes; Job, Volume 1; F. C. Cook, editor; reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; p. 297.

We begin with the hypothetical particle and the negative, and these together, literally, are *if not*, which obviously makes little sense. Together, however, they form a strong affirmation.<sup>3</sup> ִׁמ (אִם) [pronounced *eem*] = Strong's #518 BDB #49 and the negative particle לֹא (לֹא) [pronounced *low*] = Strong's #3808 BDB #518.

This is followed by the masculine plural noun chāthûlîym (חַתּוּלִיִּם) [pronounced *huh-thool-LEEM*], which means *mockery*. This word is found only here, but we have a verbal cognate to help substantiate its meaning. Although some translations render this as *mockers*, that is only by way of interpretation. Job was surrounded by who spoke both deceptively and with mockery, although his reference was merely to what was being said around him. Strong's #2049 BDB #251. We have no verb—only the preposition ִׁמ (אִם) [pronounced *geem*], which means *with, at, by near*. Strong's #5973 BDB #767. The suffix *me* is affixed to this preposition, giving us: [Certainly, mockery \[is all\] around me.](#)

Again, the application to our Lord is right on target. He was surrounded by mockery. **Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the Praetorium and gathered the Roman battalion around Him. And they stripped Him, and they put a scarlet robe on Him. And after weaving a crown of thorns, they put it on His head, and a reed in His right hand; and they kneeled down before Him and mocked Him, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!" And they spat on Him, and they took the reed and beat Him on the head. And after they had mocked Him, they took His robe off and put His garments on Him and led Him away to crucify (Matt. 27:27–31).** While on the cross, the Jewish unbelievers mocked Him: **In the same way, the chief priests, along with the scribes and elders, were mocking Him, and saying, "He saved others; He cannot save Himself." "He is the King of Israel; let Him now come down from the cross, and we will believe in Him." "He trusts in God; let Him deliver Him now, if He takes pleasure in Him, for He said, 'I am the Son of God.'**" The criminals who were being crucified with Him were also casting the same insults at Him (Matt. 27:41–44 Psalm 22:8).

The second line is a bit more difficult. We begin with the wāw conjunction, the bêyth preposition and the Hiphil infinitive construct, 3<sup>rd</sup> person masculine plural suffix, of mārâh (מָרָה) [pronounced *maw-RAWH*], which means *to rebel, to rebel against, to oppose, to resist, to be contentious*. It also means *to provoke, to oppose*. Strong's #4784 BDB #598. This gives us: *in their provocation; against their opposition; with their provoking*. This is followed by the feminine singular, Qal imperfect of lûn (לוּן) [pronounced *loon*], which means *to lodge, to pass the night, to spend the night, to lodge for the night*. Strong's #3885 BDB #533. The subject of the verb is *my eyes*. We might render this: [My eyes rest against their opposition](#). Job is tired, exhausted, sickly; he cannot sleep, but it is painful for him to be awake. What he would like is to rest. His only rest is his eyes against the opposition of his associates. This is a situation which he views as temporary (not his illness and impending death, but his looking at his associates). Job's eyes resting against the opposition of his friends tells us (1) that he has not blown them off; i.e., he has actually listened to what they had to say; (2) however, his notice of them and their comments, although for a reasonable amount of time, is not where Job will remain. Barnes: *It was not a mere glance, a passing notice, but was such a view as resulted from a careful observation. It was not such a view as a traveler would obtain by passing hastily by, but it was such as one would obtain who had encamped for a time, and had an opportunity of looking around him with care, and seeing things as they were...The simple meaning is, that Job had a calm view of their wickedness, and that he could not be deceived.*<sup>4</sup>

McGee: *Here Job is dying and his friends stand around and mock him. What a picture this is! These men who had come to comfort him are actually debating with him and condemning him. My friend, it is possible to be a hard-boiled Christian and not be very helpful to the poor sinners in this world. We need to recognize that there are times for harsh words. God will be very harsh with Job, but He is also going to comfort him. God is going to help him and God is going to restore him. Oh, that you and I might see that God is a God of judgment, but that He is also the God of mercy and the God of grace.*<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> I've covered this in great detail in Joshua 14:9.

<sup>4</sup> Barnes' Notes; Job, Volume 1; F. C. Cook, editor; reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; p. 297.

<sup>5</sup> J. Vernon McGee; Job; Thru the Bible Books; ©El Camino Press, 1977; p. 99.

## Who Will Give a Pledge to Job? His Friends Betray Him

Place, please, give me [as a guarantee] with  
Yourself;  
who [is] He for my hand [who] will strike  
himself [acting as a surety]?

Job  
17:3

Give [me], please; grant me [a pledge or  
guarantee] from Yourself;  
Who is He Who will strike my hand [thus acting  
as a surety].

Give me a pledge from Yourself [concerning my innocence];  
who else is there to guarantee this,

Like the previous verse, at first glance, this will be difficult to unravel.

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	Give me a pledge with Yourself [acknowledge my innocence before my death]; who is there that will give security for me?
Barnes (revised)	Lay down [O God, a pledge], Give security for me [in the controversy] with You; Who is he that will strike hands with me?
CEV	If you, LORD, don't help, who will pay the price for my release?
<i>The Emphasized Bible</i>	Appoint it, I pray thee, —be thou surety for me with thyself, Who is' there that, on my side, can pledge himself?
<i>God's Word™</i>	Please guarantee my bail yourself. Who else will guarantee it with a handshake?
JPS (Tanakh)	Come now, stand surety for me! Who will give his hand on my behalf?
Keil and Delitzsch	Lay down now, be bondsman for me with Thyself; Who else should furnish surety to me?
NASB	"Lay down, now, a pledge for me with Thyself; Who is there that will be my guarantor?"
NIV	"Give me, O God, the pledge you demand. Who else will put up security for me?"
NJB	So you must go bail for me to yourself, for which of them cares to clap his hand on mine?
NLT	You must defend my innocence, O God, since no one else will stand up for me.
Owen's Translation	Lay down (give i.e., a pledge) go surety for me with yourself. Who is there for me who will strike himself (i.e., pledge himself)?
The Septuagint	Who is this? Let him join hands with me.
TEV	I am being honest, God. Accept my word. There is no one else to support what I say.
<i>Young's Lit. Translation</i>	Place, I pray Thee, my pledge with Thee; Who is he that striketh hand with me?

When it comes to translations, the most accurate, word-for-word translations are *Young's Literal Translation*, *The Emphasized Bible*, the NKJV, the KJV, the NASB, the NRSV, and *The Amplified Bible*. As you have no doubt noticed, the least accurate—and I am saying this even with regards to be a *thought-for-thought* translation, are the CEV, NLT and TEV. Generally speaking, the better thought-for-thought translations are the NIV, the NAB and the NJB.

First word is the 2<sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperative (with a voluntative hê) of sîym (סִיַם) [pronounced *seem*] which means *to put, to place, to set*. Strong's #7760 BDB #962. This is followed by the particle of entreaty, which means *I pray thee* or, *please*. Barnes: *[This] means, lay down a pledge, or something of that kind; and may have referred to some ancient custom of giving security on going to trial, that no advantage would be taken, or that the parties would abide by the decision in the case.*<sup>6</sup>

Then, immediately following, we have another Qal imperative (2<sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular, 1<sup>st</sup> person suffix) of ʿâra<sup>b</sup>v (עָרַב) [pronounced *aw-RAH<sup>B</sup>V*], which is listed in BDB as having three different Strong's #'s and three different meanings. As Strong's #6147, it is said to mean *to mix*; but it is not given a reference (it is listed, no doubt, because of the noun cognate which follows (Strong's #6154). The second meaning (Strong's #6148) is given as

<sup>6</sup> Barnes' Notes; *Job*, Volume 1; F. C. Cook, editor; reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; pp. 297–298.

to take on a pledge, to give in pledge, to exchange. The third meanings is *to be sweet, to be pleasing* (Strong's #6149). *The New Englishman's Hebrew Concordance* does not give the first Strong number and combines the second two. The renderings in the KJV are as follows: *to be sweet* (Psalm 104:34 Prov. 3:24 13:19 Jer. 6:20), *be a surety* (Gen. 43:9 II Kings 18:23 Job 17:3 Psalm 119:122 Prov. 6:1 11:15 17:18 20:16 22:26 Isa. 36:8), *engaged* (Jer. 30:21), *has taken pleasure* (Ezek. 16:37), *to be pleasant (or pleasing)* (Hosea 9:4 Mal. 3:4), *to take a pledge* (II Kings 18:23 Isa. 36:8), *occupy* (Ezek. 27:9, 27), *to undertake* (Isa. 38:14), *to mingle* (Ezra 9:2 Psalm 106:35), *intermeddle* (Prov. 14:10), *meddle* (Prov. 20:19 24:21), *pleasing* (Hos. 9:4), *to mortgage* (Neh. 5:3). Obviously, this word is a total mess. Gesenius helps us somewhat at this point (what follows is taken, in part, from his work). This word properly means *to mix*. Hence, the use of it to mean *to mingle, to intermingle*. When two people are involved, sometimes an item of value is exchanged or given as a guarantee or as a surety; this item is mingled, you might say; hence, the meaning *given as a guarantee*. The tougher meaning for this word is *sweetness*; Gesenius suggests that this is derived from the notion of a dog-fly sucking blood, but I don't quite see that. Strong's #6148 & 6149 (& 6147) BDB #786–787. Barnes: *Here the idea seems to be, that Job wished the Deity to give him some pledge or security that Justice would be done, or that he would not take advantage of his power and majesty to overawe him. Or, as has been remarked, it may refer to some custom of furnishing security on a voluntary trial or arbitration, that the award of the referees would be observed...The controversy here was to be voluntary. In a voluntary trial, or an arbitration, there is a necessity of some security by the parties that the decision shall be submitted to—a pledge to each other that they will abide by it. Such a pledge Job desired in this case. All this is language taken from courts, and should not be pressed to much, nor should Job be hastily charged with irreverence.*<sup>7</sup>

Then we have the propositional phrase *with yourself*. The preposition is *ʿîm* (עִם) [pronounced *geem*], which generally means *with*. When used in terms of nearness and vicinity, it would be rendered *at, by, near*. BDB allows for the generally concept of fellowship and coupling to be extended to a relationship of equality or resemblance, therefore allowing for the rendering *like, as* in the passages Job 9:26 37:18 40:15 Psalm 28:1 88:3 143:7. Authorship and origin might also be concepts conveyed by this preposition. Strong's #5973 BDB #767. So far, this gives us: *Place, please; give me [as a guarantee] with yourself...* Because of the latter concept or origin or authorship, I might render this *from yourself*. My thinking is that Job is looking for anyone to guarantee his word and to vouch for his character.

The next line begins with the interrogative particle *mîy* (מִי) [pronounced *mee*], which is generally translated *who*. Strong's #4310 BDB #566. This is followed by the 3<sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, personal pronoun *hûwʿ* (הוּא) [pronounced *hoo*], which means *he, it*. Strong's #1931 BDB #214. Literally, together, they mean *who he?* However, we may understand them to mean *who [is] he*. This is followed by *to my hand* or *for my hand*. Then we have the 3<sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Niphal imperfect of *tâqaʿ* (טָקַעַ) [pronounced *taw-KAHG*], which means *to fasten, to thrust, to clap, to give a blow, to give a blast*. It is used a number of different ways in the Bible. Strong's #8628 BDB #1075. The way this is explained by some sources, is this refers to a *striking together of hands*, which denotes becoming a *surety*. Unfamiliar as I was with *surety*, I went to Webster's and got: *security against loss or damage or for the fulfillment of an obligation; one who has made himself responsible for another [as a sponsor, godparent, bondsman]; one who is legally responsible for the debt, default or delinquency of another.* What Job said is: *"Who [is] he [who] strikes [or, claps] to my hand [thus proclaiming himself responsible]."* Although I am not completely confident here, Job is asking who is responsible. Barnes, instead, suggests: *Striking hands then, as now, seems to have been one mode of confirming an agreement, or ratifying a compact.*<sup>8</sup>

Now what may help is we have a similar use of the language in Prov. 17:18: *A man lacking in sense pledges and becomes surety in the presence of his neighbor.* Prov. 11:15: *He who is a surety [or, cosigner] for a stranger will certainly suffer for it. But he who hates a surety [possibly, cosigning] is safe.* Prov. 22:26–27: *Do not be among those who give pledges [lit., strike hands]. Among those who become sureties for debts. If you have nothing with which to pay, why should he take your bed from under you?*

<sup>7</sup> Barnes' Notes; Job, Volume 1; F. C. Cook, editor; reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; p. 298.

<sup>8</sup> Barnes' Notes; Job, Volume 1; F. C. Cook, editor; reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; p. 298.

Keil and Delitzsch explain: *[This]...signifies alone the laying down of a pledge. Treated by the friends as a criminal justly undergoing punishment, he seeks his refuge in God, who has set the mark of a horrible disease upon him contrary to his desert, as though he were guilty, and implores Him to confirm the reality of his innocence in some way or other by laying down a pledge for him.*<sup>9</sup> You will note that God is seen as the One Who has caused Job all of this pain (or, at least has allowed Satan to attack Job); yet, at the same time, Job looks to God to represent him—to stand as a Sponsor or Bondsman. *God is conceived of as two persons, on the one side as a judge who treats Job as one deserving of punishment, on the other side as a bondsman who pledges himself for the innocence of the sufferer before the judge, and stands as it were as surety against the future...this is therefore the meaning of the question: who else..., if not God himself, should strike (his hand) to my hand, i.e., should furnish to me a pledge (viz., of my innocence) by joining hands? There is none but God alone who can intercede for him, as a guarantee of his innocence before himself and others. This negative answer: None but Thou alone.*<sup>10</sup>

God appears to be Job's accuser, so who else is there to offer assurance of Job's innocence? In truth, we also stand condemned before God—God is our Accuser—we do not measure up to His standards. Our souls also cry out from someone who will be our Guarantee. This, of course, is our Lord Christ Jesus. Jesus Christ made Himself responsible for our debt; He stands before God as our Sponsor, taking responsibility for our wrongdoing, taking upon Himself the penalty for our sins. **He made Him Who knew no sin, sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him** (II Cor. 5:21).

Now, I am not completely comfortable with my exegesis and explanation of this verse—I basically feel that if I read the corrected translation a week from now, I would be hard-pressed to give an explanation of it from the top of my head. Barnes gives a good summary of this verse: *The whole passage here is obscure, because we are in a great measure ignorant of the ancient practices in courts of law, and of the ancient forms of trial. The general sense seems to be, that Job desires the Deity to enter into a judicial investigation, and to give him a pledge—or, as we should say, a bond, or security—that he would not avail himself of his almighty power, but would place him on an equality in the trial, and allow him to plead his cause on equal terms.*<sup>11</sup>

**For their heart You closed from  
understanding;  
therefore, You will not exalt [them].**

Job  
17:4

**For You have closed their heart to  
understanding;  
therefore, You will not exalt [them].**

**(because You closed their heart to understanding)?  
You will not hold them up [as my guarantors].**

Let's see what others have done:

<i>The Emphasized Bible</i>	For <their heart> hast thou kept back from understanding, <On this account> thou wilt not exalt them.
JPS (Tanakh)	You have hidden understanding from their minds; Therefore You must not exalt [them].
Keil and Delitzsch	For Thou hast closed their heart from understanding, Therefore wilt Thou not give authority to them.
NASB	"For Thou hast kept their heart from understanding; Therefore Thou wilt not exalt them."
Owen's Translation	Since their minds You have closed to understanding; therefore, You will not let them triumph.
The Septuagint	For you have hidden their heart from wisdom; therefore, You will not exalt them.

<sup>9</sup> Keil & Delitzsch's *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. 4, p. 405.

<sup>10</sup> Keil & Delitzsch's *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. 4, p. 405. One of the great mysteries of the Old Testament is how God could be conceived of as One (Deut. 6:4), yet several in person (Gen. 1:26 Job 17:3 Isa. 48:16).

<sup>11</sup> *Barnes' Notes; Job, Volume 1*; F. C. Cook, editor; reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; p. 297.

*Young's Lit. Translation* For their heart Thou hast hidden From understanding, Therefore Thou dost not exalt them.

This verse begins: **For [or, since] their heart...** and then we have the 2<sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal perfect of tsâphan (תָּפַח) [pronounced *tsaw-FAHN*], and it means *to hide, to conceal, to lay up (in storage), to store (as treasure), to treasure up*. Strong's #6845 BDB #860. Recall that Eliphaz used this verb at the end of Job 15:20 (Job continues to use words from the speech of Eliphaz). Then we have the preposition mîn (מִן) [pronounced *SAY-ke*], which means *understanding, intelligence, prudence, insight*. Strong's #7922 BDB #968.

This verse is tied to the previous verse. There is no one who can clear Job apart from God. God has closed the hearts of his associates to understanding, therefore, they will not speak for Job or stand up for Job. Keil and Delitzsch: *God...has fixed a curtain, a wall of partition, between their hearts and the right understanding of the matter; He has smitten them with blindness, therefore He will not (since they are suffering from a want of perception which He has ordained, and which is consequently known to Him) allow them to be exalted, i.e., to conquer and triumph. "The exaltation of the friends," observes Hirzel rightly, "would be, that God should openly justify their assertion of Job's guilt."*<sup>12</sup>

Because of the pausal, we know that the next line begins with the preposition ʿal (עַל) [pronounced *ah*], which means, among other things, *in the matter of, concerning, as regards to*. Strong's #5920 & #5921 BDB #752. This is followed by the adverb kên (כֵּן) [pronounced *kane*] is generally rendered *so*. Together, ʿal and kên take on a meaning of their own. They mean *upon the ground of such conditions, therefore, on this account, on account*. It is an idiom used in conversation replying to an objection, which states the ground upon which the answer is made. Strong's #3651 BDB #485. Then we have the negative and the 2<sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular, Polel imperfect of rūm (רָוַם) [pronounced *room*] and it means *to exalt, to raise, to lift up* and even *to offer up*. In the Polel, this means *to exalt, to raise up*; it can, in more specific instances, mean *to bestow honors upon someone of low estate, to exalt as a victor, to exalt with praises*. Strong's #7311 BDB #926. Because the minds of his associates have been closed, they will not be exalted. The same applies to unbelievers: **And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving, that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, Who is the image of God** (II Cor. 4:3–4).

And, quite obviously, God will not honor or exalt those whose minds lack wisdom. In fact, quite the opposite: **My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. Because you have rejected knowledge, I will also reject you from being My priest. Since you have forgotten the law of your God, I will also forget your children** (Hosea 4:6).

**For a portion, he makes conspicuous  
associates  
and eyes of his sons waste away.**

Job  
17:5

**For a share, he informs [against] associates,  
and eyes of his sons waste away.**

**For a share of his property, one informs against his associates  
while the eyes of his sons grow dim.**

V. 5, as others have translated it:

<i>The Emphasized Bible</i>	<He that   for a share   denounceth friends> Even   the eyes of his children   shall be dim.
JPS (Tanakh)	He informs on his friends for a share [of their property], And his children's eyes pine away.
Keil and Delitzsch	He who giveth his friends for spoil, The eyes of his children shall languish.
NASB	"He who informs against friends for a share of the spoil, The eyes of his children also shall languish."

<sup>12</sup> Keil & Delitzsch's *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. 4, p. 405.



Noyes	He that delivers up his friend as a prey, the eyes of his children shall fail.
Owen's Translation	For a share, he informs against friends and the eyes of his children will fail.
The Septuagint	He will promise mischief to companions; but eyes have failed for children.
Young's Lit. Translation	For a portion, he sheweth friendship, And the eyes of his sons are consumed.

We begin with the lamed preposition and the masculine singular noun *chêleq* (חֵלֶק) [pronounced *KHAY-lek*], which means *portion, tract, territory, share, allotment*. Although this generally refers to a *land* allotment, particularly in the book of Joshua, this is not always the case (see, for instance, II Sam. 20:1 Job 20:29 27:13 31:2). Strong's #2506 (and #2511) BDB #324. This is followed by the 3<sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Hiphil imperfect of *nâgad* (נָגַד) [pronounced *naw-GAHD*], which means *to make conspicuous, to make known, to expound, to explain, to declare, to inform, to confess, to make it pitifully obvious that*. This verb is found only in the Hiphil and the Hophal. Strong's #5046 BDB #616. This is followed by the plural noun *associates, companions, friends*. The idea is perhaps that Job's friends act as a neighbor who gives information on a neighbor's residence to a thief, that the thief might come and steal from his neighbor. Job's associates did not defend Job, as would friends, but they betrayed him—they became part of the plot against Job.<sup>13</sup>

This first half of the verse calls to mind Judas informing against our Lord. One of the very unusual things in our Lord's ministry is that there were some who could not recognize Him; who could not pick Him out from His disciples. He taught often in the various synagogues, yet the very ones who listened to him and were incensed by His teachings were unable to pick Him out from a crowd, and therefore hired Judas Iscariot to inform against His friends. **Then one of the twelve, named Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests, and said, "What are you willing to give me to deliver Him to you?" And they weighed out to him thirty silver shekels. And from then on, he began looking for a good opportunity to betray Him (Matt. 26:14–16). And immediately, while He was still speaking, Judas, one of the twelve, came up with a multitude with swords and clubs, from the chief priests and the scribes and the elders (Mark. 14:43). Judas had to distinguish Jesus from the rest of the disciples. And immediately, he came to Jesus and said, "Hail, Rabbi!" and kissed Him. And Jesus said to him, "Friend, do what you have come for." Then they came and laid hands on Jesus and seized Him (Matt. 26:49–50).**

In the second line, we have the wâw conjunction, *eyes of his sons* and the 3<sup>rd</sup> person feminine singular, Qal imperfect of *kâlâh* (כָּלָה) [pronounced *kaw-LAWH*], which means *to complete, to finish, to accomplish, to be fulfilled*. In relation to time, *kâlâh* means *to be past, to go by*. A third group of meanings are *to be consumed, to be spent, to be wasted, to be destroyed, to perish, to waste away*. The latter set of meanings appear to be applicable when the subject is *soul, spirit, eyes* or *reins*. Strong's #3615 BDB #477.

Because Job's associates have a wall or a partition between their heart and true understanding, God will not approve of their position, which is that Job has sinned greatly and is deserving of the pain and suffering which he has endured. They give away Job as spoil, because of their lack of understanding, and therefore, their children will also lack understanding and wisdom (i.e., **their eyes will languish**). This is not a curse pronounced upon his associates by Job, but rather a natural progression. Having dealt with children and parents for a long period of time, you can see the parent in the child. When the child is short-sighted and his goals are moderate, the parent will often take a similar approach to the child's future. I have had parents focus on a child passing a course, even if it meant giving the child a grade he did not earn, just so the kid could move on. The relationship between a high school course and college was often passed over ("He will worry about college when he gets to college" was a comment which I heard several times during the last few years). Shortsighted, unenlightened parents raise up shortsighted, unenlightened children.

Now, how does this apply to our Lord? Judas betrayed Jesus—he informed on his friend for a share (which was 30 pieces of silver). Judas did this because he did not rightly understand Who Jesus was. Similarly, those who are Judas' children—his spiritual children—those who are so close to the truth but never apprehend it—their judgment will also be clouded (i.e., **their eyes will languish**).

<sup>13</sup> Paraphrased from *Barnes' Notes; Job, Volume 1*; F. C. Cook, editor; reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; p. 299.

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## Job Has Been Beaten Down—an Affront to the Righteous

And He has set me for a byword of peoples  
and a spitting to faces I am.

Job  
17:6

And He has established me [as] a proverb [or,  
song] [of derision] of the peoples;  
and a spitting in the face I have become.

God has established me as the butt of a joke;  
I exist so people can spit in my face.

Other renderings of this verse:

JPS (Tanakh)	He made me a byword among people; I have become like Topher [who consumed children] of old.
Keil and Delitzsch (revised)	And He has made me a proverb to the world, And I became as one in whose face they spit.
NASB	"But He has made me a byword of the people, And I am one at whom men spit."
The Septuagint	But You have made me a byword among the nations, and I have become a scorn to them.
<i>Young's Lit. Translation</i>	And he set me up for a proverb of the peoples, And a wonder before them I am.

We begin with the wâw conjunction and the 3<sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Hiphil perfect (1<sup>st</sup> person singular suffix) of yâtsag (אָטַע) [pronounced *yaw-TSAHG*], which means *to make to stand, to set, to station, to place, to establish, to leave, to let stay*. It appears to be only found in the Hiphil. Strong's #3322 BDB #426.

What Job is established as is the masculine singular construct of m<sup>e</sup>shôl (שׁוֹל) [pronounced *m<sup>e</sup>SHOWL*], which means (according to BDB) *a by-word*. Gesenius says that this is simply the infinitive of the verb mâshal, and means *a song of derision*. Barnes suggests that this is *a term of reproach, ridicule or scorn*.<sup>14</sup> Because it is only found in Job 17:6, we cannot do much better than this. Strong's #4914 BDB #605. Rather than afford Job any sympathy for his pain, they establish him simply as a derisive proverb or song. This is followed by *of [the] peoples*.

Then we have the wâw conjunction and the feminine singular tôpheth (תֹּפֶת) [pronounced *TOH-feth*], which means *the act of spitting*.<sup>15</sup> The KJV simply transliterates this word. Strong's #8611 BDB #1064. This is followed by *for faces* or *to faces*. Then we have *I am*, giving us: **And He has established me [as] a proverb [or, song] [of derision] of the peoples; and a spitting in the face I have become.** Job is simply saying that he was *treated as the most loathsome and execrable object*.<sup>16</sup>

This obviously applies to our Lord as well immediately prior to the crucifixion and during the crucifixion. **And some began to spit at Him and to blindfold Him, and to beat Him with their fists, and to say to Him, "Prophecy!" And the officers received Him with slapping (Mark 14:65). And after weaving a crown of thorns, the Roman soldiers put it on His head and a reed in His right hand, and they kneeled down before Him and mocked Him, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews." And they spit on Him and too the reed and beat Him on the head (Matt. 27:29–30).**

<sup>14</sup> Barnes' Notes; Job, Volume 1; F. C. Cook, editor; reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; p. 299.

<sup>15</sup> For those with an interest, that this is the correct meaning is covered in great detail by Barnes in Barnes' Notes; Job, Volume 1; F. C. Cook, editor; reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; p. 299. He spends almost an entire column on it.

<sup>16</sup> Barnes' Notes; Job, Volume 1; F. C. Cook, editor; reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; p. 299.

And so has grown dim from [provoked] anger  
my eye  
and my body parts [are] like a shadow—all of  
them.

Job  
17:7

My eye has grown dim from provoked grief;  
and all the parts of my body [are] like a  
shadow.

I can barely see due to my provoked grief;  
all the parts of my body are a shadow of what they once were.

Some other renderings first:

JPS (Tanakh)	My eyes fail from vexation; All shapes seem to me like shadows.
Keil and Delitzsch (revised)	Then my eye became dim with grief, And all my members were like a shadow.
NASB	“My eye has also grown dim because of grief, And all my members are as a shadow.”
The Septuagint	For my eyes are dimmed through pain; I have been grievously beset by all.
<i>Young’s Lit. Translation</i>	And dim from sorrow is mine eye, And my members as a shadow all of them.

This verse begins with the wâw consecutive and the 3<sup>rd</sup> person feminine singular, Qal imperfect of kâhâh (הָהָה) [pronounced *kaw-HAWH*], which is used of the eyes which are growing old and having a difficult time seeing. Sometimes it is rendered as the eyes becoming *faint, darkened, dimmed*. The idea here is that one is having a harder time distinguishing objects from one another and shapes and colors; everything is blending and it is difficult to discern precise colors and objects. Strong’s #3543 BDB #462. This is followed by mîn and the masculine singular noun ka’as (אָס) [pronounced *KAH-áhahs*], which means *provoked anger, highly emotional state which has been provoked*. Strong’s #3708 BDB #495. Job’s friends have not comforted him, they have provoked him. We have a similar modern phrase: *I was so mad, I couldn’t see straight*. For Job, he is so upset and hurt by the treatment of his so-called friends that he cannot see straight.

Then we have the wâw conjunction y<sup>e</sup>tsûrîym (יֵצְרִימ) [pronounced *y<sup>e</sup>tzoo-REEM*], which means *body parts, forms, members*. Found only in Job 17:7. Strong’s #3338 BDB #428. You may not realize it, but it is tough to call the meaning of a word which is found only in one passage, and that is the case right here. Y<sup>e</sup>tsûrîym comes from the masculine noun yêtsér (יֵצֵר) [pronounced *YAY-tser*], which is generally translated *imagination* in the KJV. It refers substantively to pottery shaped and formed by a potter. Physically it means *body, body frame, form*; ethereally, it means *purpose*. Strong’s #3336 BDB #428. I think that we could reasonably conclude that this refers to Job’s entire body. In the Hebrew, they do not refer to the *face* (singular), but to the *faces* (plural), as the face is a combination of different things. Similarly, the *body* is a combination of various characteristics and parts, so it is spoken of, in the Hebrew, as a plural.

We do not have a verb; we have the preposition phrase *like a tsêl*; tsêl (צֵל) [pronounced *tzale*] means *shadow*. Strong’s #6738 (and #6751) BDB #853. Job’s physical body was only a shadow of what it was before—poetically, his eyes are only able to make out shadows because he is suffering from so much anger and pressure and grief. Keil and Delitzsch summarize: *To the sufferings which he had directly to endure in body and soul there is added, as it were, as their other equally painful part, misconstruction 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.*<sup>17</sup> Barnes, paraphrasing Job: *“I am a mere skeleton, I am exhausted and emaciated by my sufferings.”*<sup>18</sup>

Although our Lord’s vision while being beaten prior to the cross is never mentioned, that does not mean that this verse does not correspond to Him at that time. We do know this about our Lord: [Many were astonished by Him](#)

<sup>17</sup> Keil & Delitzsch’s *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. 4, p. 412.

<sup>18</sup> *Barnes’ Notes; Job, Volume 1*; F. C. Cook, editor; reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; p. 300.

[and how He looked]; so marred from the form of man was he; and his appearance was marred more than any son of man (Isa. 52:14). We know that the religious Hebrews and the Roman soldiers beat him and slapped Him repeatedly (Matt. 26:67 27:26, 30 Mark 14:65 15:19). Therefore, it would be reasonable to assume that His vision was impaired, as was His strength. We do know that Jesus, one of the strongest men who ever lived (his body was not corrupted with an old sin nature), was physically unable to carry His cross, so that the Romans required another man, Simon of Cyrene, to carry Jesus' cross (Matt. 27:32). Therefore, this passage—"My eye has grown dim from provoked grief; and all the parts of my body [are] like a shadow"—corresponds perfectly with our Lord prior to the cross.

**Are appalled [morally] upright [ones]  
concerning this  
and an innocent against a godless [one] stirs  
himself up.**

Job  
17:8

**The morally upright [men] are appalled at this;  
the innocent [man] incites himself against the  
profane.**

**The morally unambiguous is appalled at my situation;  
just as the innocent man would incite himself against the profane.**

Let's first see what others have done:

Albert Barnes	The upright shall be amazed at this; And the innocent will rouse himself against the wicked.
JPS (Tanakh)	The upright are amazed at this; The pure are aroused against the impious.
Keil and Delitzsch	The upright were astonished at it; And the innocent is stirred up over the godless.
KJV (Scofield)	Upright <i>men</i> shall be astounded at this, and the innocent shall stir up himself against the hypocrite.
NASB	"He upright shall be appalled at this, And the innocent shall stirred up himself against the godless."
The Septuagint	Wonder has seized true men upon this; and let the just rise up against this transgressor.
<i>Young's Lit. Translation</i>	Astonished are the upright at this, And the innocent against the profane Stirreth himself up.

The first word in this verse is the 3<sup>rd</sup> person masculine plural, Qal imperfect of *shâmêm* (שָׁמַם) [pronounced *shaw-MAIM*], which means *to be appalled*. Strong's #8074 BDB #1030. This is followed by the masculine plural adjective (used as a substantive) *yâshâr* (יָשָׁר) [pronounced *yaw-SHAWR*], which means *right, correct, accurate, lacking in contradictions, upright, straight, uniform, having internal integrity, even*. As a substantive, it refers to a man with morality, personal integrity and accurate thinking; *upright* simply does not convey enough; nor does *morally right, morally upright*, but I don't see many one or two-word options here. Strong's #3477 BDB #449. Then we have the preposition *ʿal* (עַל) [pronounced *gahl*], which means *upon, beyond, on, against, above, over, by, beside*. When not referring to the relationship between two physical objects, it can be 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, in the matter of, concerning, as regards to*. Strong's #5920, #5921 BDB #752. This is followed by the demonstrative particle, which is rendered *this*. Men who have a true understanding of right and wrong are completely appalled by what has happened to Job (obviously, not a reference to his three associates).

Then we have the *wâw* conjunction (which, essentially, tells us that we are looking at the second line of this verse) and the masculine singular adjective The adjective for this verb is *nâqîy* (נָקִי) [pronounced *naw-KEE*] and it means *acquitted, clean, cleared, free from, unpunished, innocent*. Strong's #5355 BDB #667. We have the preposition *ʿal* again, which here means *against*. What the innocent man is against is not the *hypocrite* (as we find in the KJV) but against the masculine singular adjective *chânêph* (חַנְּפִי) [pronounced *khaw-NAYF*], which means *profane, irreligious, godless, heathen, apostate*. Strong's #2611 BDB #338. We found this word used back in chapter 15 by Eliphaz. Then we have the verb, the 3<sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Hithpoel imperfect of *ʿûwr* (עוּר) [pronounced *góor*], and it means *to rouse oneself, to awake*. The Niphal is the passive, so it means *to be awakened*,

to be roused from sleep. The Hithpoel is the reflexive of the Piel (the intensive), and therefore, this means *to rouse oneself up, to stir oneself up, to cause oneself to be incited; to cause oneself to be stirred up* is a reasonable rendering. Strong's #5782 BDB #734. This gives us: **Are appalled [morally] upright [ones] concerning this and an innocent against a godless [one] stirs himself up;** or **The morally upright [men] are appalled at this; the innocent [man] incites himself against the profane.**

Barnes: *They [the upright men] will be amazed that God has suffered a holy man to be plunged into such calamities, and to be treated in this manner by his friends. The fact at which he supposes they would be so much astonished was, that the good were afflicted in this manner, and that no relief was furnished...[furthermore] they [the friends of Job] had uttered sentiments inconsistent with any right views of him. He now says, that that could not go unnoticed. The world would be aroused at so remarkable a state of things, and a just public indignation would be the result.*<sup>19</sup> A person of character, a person who is moral, would be absolutely shocked by what happened to Job; and Job, the innocent party, is stirred up against the profane, which refers to his associates. Their position is anti-divine viewpoint; they have taken a position not based upon what they have observed in Job but based upon what they have assumed about Job, given his degraded state.

One of the things remarkable about the crucifixion of our Lord is that several testified that He was completely innocent of any wrongdoing. Pontius Pilate, the governor over Judæa realized that Jesus was innocent of all charges, and simply turned Him over to be crucified as a matter of expediency, washing his own hands in front of the crowd to proclaim his own innocence in the matter (Matt. 27:16–26 Mark 15:12–14 Luke 23:13–25), saying, **"I find no guilt in this Man."** (Luke 23:4). He also saw to it that a sign that proclaimed Jesus as *King of the Jews* was placed on the cross (Matt. 27:37 John 19:19). Some Roman soldiers also, at the death of our Lord, said that He was the Son of God, a righteous man (Matt. 27:54). One of the thieves on the cross said to the other that Jesus was innocent of any charges (Luke 23:39–41). These are the *morally upright* who are appalled by the situation; these are the innocent who stir themselves up against the profane.

**And holds a righteous one his way  
and a clean of two hands adds strength.**

Job  
17:9

**The Righteous [one] takes a hold of His  
course,  
and the clean of hands continues in  
assurance.**

**The Righteous One take a hold of His course  
and the clean of hands continues in strength.**

Others have rendered this verse:

Albert Barnes	The righteous will hold on his way, And he that hath clean hands will become stronger and stronger.
<i>The Emphasized Bible</i>	That the righteous may hold on his way, And   the clean of hands   increase in strength.
NASB	"Nevertheless the righteous shall hold to his way, And he who has clean hands shall grow stronger and stronger."
The Septuagint	But let the faithful hold on his own way, and let him that is pure of hands take courage.
<i>Young's Lit. Translation</i>	And the righteous layeth hold on his way, And the clean of hands addeth strength, And—dumb are they all.

We begin this verse with the conjunction and the 3<sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect of *âchaz* (אָחַז) [pronounced *aw-KHAHZ*]; and it means *to grasp, to take hold of, to take possession of*. Strong's #270 BDB #28. The one taking a hold of something is the masculine singular adjective *tsaddîyq* (צַדִּיק) [pronounced *tsahd-DEEK*], which means *just, righteous, justified*. Strong's #6662 BDB #843. What the righteous will take a hold of is the

<sup>19</sup> *Barnes' Notes; Job, Volume 1*; F. C. Cook, editor; reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; p. 300.

masculine singular noun derek<sup>e</sup> (דֶּרֶךְ) [pronounced *DEH-rek<sup>e</sup>*] and it means *way, distance, road, journey, manner, course*. Strong's #1870 BDB #202. **The righteous one will take a hold of his way.** Or, **The Righteous One will take a hold of His way.**

As applied to Job, he is the righteous one who must stick to his guns; regardless of the arguments and the odds (three against one), Job must hold on to what he knows to be true: that he did not commit some secret sin or group of sins which brought on this calamitous condition. Keil and Delitzsch explain: *...the righteous holds firm...without allowing himself to be disconcerted by this anomalous condition of things, though impenetrably mysterious...on the way.*<sup>20</sup>

The application to our Lord is even greater and more dramatic: our Lord stood in direct opposition to the teachings and traditions of Judaism in His day. He held to the Scriptures as the inspired, authoritative Word of God by which right and wrong was to be determined. He Himself was the fulfillment of God's Word, and He so presented Himself. Jesus endured incredible opposition from the religious establishment, yet *held to His way* [or, *path*]. He was maligned and harassed, yet He stood for that which was true and right. At the very end, when Jesus could have walked away—when He could have summoned a million angels and destroyed the Roman army and the Jewish religious crowd, He did not. Everything that is wrong with man and man's establishments—religious hypocrisy, political expedience, personal jealousy and envy, hatred, power lust, monetary lust—our very sins—placed Him on that cross. Never in the Lord's walk on this earth was any single act more important than His staying on His path, fulfilling God's will for His human life, and going to the cross and giving Himself for us.

In the second line, we have (after the wâw conjunction) the masculine singular construct of *ṭâhôr* (טָהוֹר) [pronounced *taw-WHORE*], which means *clean, pure*; it can refer to something which is ceremonially clean or that which is physically pure, like gold. Strong's #2889 #2890 BDB #373. This is followed by the feminine dual of *hands*. Then we have the 3<sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Hiphil imperfect of the verb *yâçaph* (יָצַח) [pronounced *yaw-SAHPH*], which means *to add, to augment, to continue to do a thing*. The Hiphil (causative) stem can even assume a reflexive sense. Strong's #3254 BDB #414. What they add or augment is masculine singular noun *ômetz* (יָצַח) [pronounced *OH-metz*] and this word is found only here. Its verbal cognate means *to be strong, to be bold, to assure, to secure*; therefore, it would mean something along the lines of *strength, boldness, assurance*. Strong's #555 BDB #55. This give us: **The pure [or, clean] of hands will continue in assurance.** That is, the righteous continues in their way and continues in assurance. For Job, this means to hold to his stance. He has not committed any grievous sins—he knows this—and he is not going to cave into his self-righteous acquaintances, despite his wearied and beaten condition.

In looking at our Lord, this appears to say that He has, in His purity of purpose, chosen His way and that He will retain the strength to go on. However, personally, I think at this time we have a great deal of problems with the text, and that this passage is not at all what it was originally. I would not be surprised if this originally spoke of Pontius Pilate washing his hands. Or, allow to me admit that I would have liked for this passage to point down the corridors of time to Pontius Pilate and the washing of his hands. However, that there is a problem with the text is pure conjecture on my part; I have no proof that the text is weak apart from the difficulty of rendering it into English (which is certainly not reason enough to declare text corrupt).

Barnes remarks: *...this verse...refers to Job himself, and is a declaration that he, a righteous man, who had been so grievously calumniated, would hold on his way, and become stronger and stronger, while they would sink in the public esteem, and be compelled to abandon their position. It is the expression of a confident assurance that he would be more and more confirmed in his integrity, and would become stronger and stronger in God. Though Job intended, probably, that this should be applied to himself, yet he has expressed it in a general manner, and indeed the whole passage has a proverbial cast; and it shows that even then it was the settled belief that the righteous would persevere.*<sup>21</sup> Barnes then adds, speaking of man in general: *The man of pure and blameless life shall become more and more established in virtue; more confirmed in his principles; more convinced of the value of the truth of religion. Piety, like everything else, becomes stronger by exercise. The man who speaks the truth only,*

<sup>20</sup> Keil & Delitzsch's *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. 4, p. 407.

<sup>21</sup> *Barnes' Notes; Job, Volume 1*; F. C. Cook, editor; reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; p. 300.

*becomes more and more attached to truth; the principle of benevolence is strengthened by being practised; honesty, the more it is exhibited, become more the settled rule of the life; and he who prays, delights more and more in his approaches to God.*<sup>22</sup>

Given the text that we have, the more reasonable parallel is twofold: (1) Jesus, the Righteous One, would hold to His way; and He, the one with clean hands, would grow stronger (i.e., He would be resurrected). (2) This also applies to His followers—they would hold to their Savior, even in His darkest moments of His humiliation and crucifixion and they with clean hands would grow stronger and stronger (which is what happened with the followers of Jesus).

It appears as though our parallel to the crucifixion of our Lord appears to be suspended in vv. 10–11. I would like to say that this portion of Scripture is not Scripture, that this was added later, but I have no proof of that or reason to say so, apart from (1) there is a suffixal problem, and, (2) it upsets the parallel which has been already established.

**But all of you [or, them], you will return and  
come again, please,  
and I will not find in you a wise [one].**

Job  
17:10

**But return and come again, all of you, please,  
but I will not find a wise [man or thought]  
among you.**

**Come back and try again, if you would like,  
but I will not find a wise man [or, thought] among you.**

As Job continues, his meaning becomes more and more abstruse; here is what others have done with this verse.

<i>The Emphasized Bible</i>	But indeed, <as for them all> will ye bethink yourselves and enter into it, I pray you? Or shall I not find, among you, one who is wise?
<i>God's Word™</i>	"But now, all of you, come and try again! I won't find one wise man among you."
<i>JPS (Tanakh)</i>	But all of you, come back now, I shall not find a wise man among you.
<i>Keil and Delitzsch</i>	But only come again all of you! I shall not find a wise man among you.—
<i>NASB</i>	"But come again all of you [some manuscripts: them] now, For I do not find a wise man among you."
<i>NIV</i>	But come on, all of you, try again! I will not find a wise man among you.
<i>NJB</i>	Come on then, all of you, back to the attack! I shall not find one wise man among you!
<i>The Septuagint</i>	Howbeit, do [you] strengthen [yourselves]? And come now, for I do not find truth in you.
<i>TEV</i>	But if all of them came and stood before me, I would not find even one of them wise.
<i>Young's Lit. Translation</i>	Return and come in, I pray you, And I find not among you a wise man.

This is one of the more daunting verses, both in the Hebrew and the resultant English. We begin with the waw conjunction and the adverb ʿûwlām (אֲוַלַּאִם) [pronounced oo-LAWM], which means *but, but indeed, yet, however*; it is a very strong adversative. Strong's #199 BDB #19. Then, in the Hebrew, we have the phrase *all of them* (which is hard to reconcile with the upcoming verb). What we have is the masculine singular noun kôl (כֹּל) [pronounced kohl], which means *the whole, all of, the entirety of, all, every*. Strong's #3605 BDB #481. It has a simple ׀ – suffix, which is a legitimate variant of the 3<sup>rd</sup> person masculine plural suffix ׀ – ending. The 2<sup>nd</sup> person masculine plural suffix is ׀ –, which, according to Owen, this is an alternate reading in the Hebrew. Rotherham tells us that the 2<sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular is how this reads in the Septuagint and in the Vulgate.

The reason that I made a big deal out of the suffix on the previous noun is that we move directly to the 2<sup>nd</sup> person masculine plural, Qal imperfect of shûw<sup>h</sup>v (שׁוּב) [pronounced shoo<sup>h</sup>v]; which means *to return, to turn, to turn back, to reminisce, to restore something, to bring back something, to revive, to recover something, to make restitution*.

<sup>22</sup> *Barnes' Notes; Job, Volume 1*; F. C. Cook, editor; reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; p. 301.

Strong's #7725 BDB #996. This is immediately followed by the 2<sup>nd</sup> person masculine plural, Qal imperative of *bôw'* (בּוֹא) [pronounced *boh*], which means *to come in, to come, to go in, to go, to enter*. Strong's #935 BDB #97. Therefore, we would expect the suffix above to be a 2<sup>nd</sup> person masculine plural, because a 2<sup>nd</sup> person singular suffix does not completely coincide with this verb; and a 3<sup>rd</sup> person masculine plural makes no sense. Then we have the particle of entreaty. Literally, this gives us: **But, all of them [or, you], you will return and you come in, please.** Although it is a minor stretch, it appears as though Job is inviting his friends to verbally attack him again (this is the sense that God's Word™ give it).

Barnes suggests that Job is either urging his associates to return to the debate (which doesn't really make a lot of sense, as there is no reason to think that they have left the debate); or, that this means for them to return from their unjust and uncharitable opinions about Job. The problem is that this kind of says the former, but not exactly; and it does not really convey Barnes' second opinion. Two older translators (Tindal and Dr. Good) render this as *get the hell outta here* (or, words to that effect).<sup>23</sup> This is not a bad idea, but it does not really match the Hebrew text.

In contrast, the second half of this verse makes perfect sense. It begins with the conjunction, the negative and the 1<sup>st</sup> person singular, Qal imperfect of *mâtsâ'* (אֵץ) [pronounced *maw-TSAW*] and it means *to attain to, to find, to detect, to happen upon, to come upon, to find unexpectedly, to discover*. Strong's #4672 BDB #592. This is followed by *in you* and then the masculine singular adjective *châkâm* (חָכָם) [pronounced *khah-KAWM*], which means *wise*. Here, it is used as a substantive for *wise man*, although it could refer to *a wise saying* or *a wise thought*. Strong's #2450 BDB #314. This simply gives us: **And I will not find among you a wise [man].** It appears as though Job is inviting his companions to skewer him again, but warns them in advance that he will not find among them a wise man (or, a wise saying).

The interpretation of Keil and Delitzsch: *The truly righteous man, even if in the midst of his affliction he should see destruction before him, does not however forsake God. But (nevertheless) you—he exclaims to the friends, who promise him a long and prosperous life if he will only humble himself as a sinner who is receiving punishment—repeat again and again your hortatory words on penitence! A wise man who might be able to see into my real condition, I shall not find among you. He means they deceive themselves concerning the actual state of the case before them; for in reality he is meeting death without being deceived, or allowing himself to be deceived, about the matter. His appeal is similar to ch. 6:29. Carey translates correctly: **Attack me again with another round of arguments, etc...there is no wise man among them who might be able to give him efficient solace by a right estimate of the magnitude and undeservedness of his suffering.**<sup>24</sup>*

With respect to the second half of this verse, when it came to the religious groups who attacked Jesus and the Roman soldiers who beat Him, He could not find a wise man among them. As I have mentioned, the parallel between this passage and the cross appears to be set aside for a couple verses.

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## Job's Time Has Come; His Great Expectation Is Death

**My days pass on;  
my [evil] plans have been torn away;  
[as are the] possessions of my heart.**

Job  
17:11

**My days pass on in [the] course [of life];  
the possessions [memories] of my heart have  
been torn away.**

**My days pass on in this course of life;  
the memories of my heart are torn away.**

<sup>23</sup> Tindal renders this *Get ye hence*; and Dr. Good, *Get ye hence, and begone, I pray*. From *Barnes' Notes; Job, Volume 1*; F. C. Cook, editor; reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; p. 301.

<sup>24</sup> Keil & Delitzsch's *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. 4, p. 408.



One of the problems with this verse is that you would expect three verbs to accompany the three nouns. The second problem is that, as I have mentioned, it is difficult to match vv. 10–11 up with the cross to come. The third problem is that the Greek differs somewhat from the Hebrew. Therefore, be expecting a rough ride in the examination of this verse. Here is what others have done:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	My days are past, my purposes <i>and</i> plans are frustrated; even the thoughts (desires and possessions) of my heart <i>are broken off</i> .
<i>The Emphasized Bible</i>	My days   are past,   my purposes   are broken off, The possessions of my heart!
<i>God's Word™</i>	My days are passing by. My plans are broken. My dreams [are shattered].
JPS (Tanakh)	My days are done, my tendons severed, The strings of my heart.
Keil and Delitzsch	My days are past, My purposes cut off, The cherished thoughts of my heart,—
NASB	“My days are past, my plans are torn apart, <i>Even</i> the wishes of my heart.”
The Septuagint	My days have passed in groaning, and my heart-strings are broken.
<i>Young's Lit. Translation</i>	My days have passed by, My devices have been broken off, The possessions of my heart!

We begin with *my days* and the 3<sup>rd</sup> person plural, Qal perfect of ʿāḇar (עָבַר) [pronounced *gaw<sup>b</sup>-VAHR*], which means *to pass over, to pass through, to pass, to go over*. It is found well over 500 times in the Bible. In Deut. 24:5, the verb, which is translated *charge, laid on, or passed over* is the 3<sup>rd</sup> person, Qal imperfect of ʿāḇar (עָבַר) [pronounced *gaw-BAHR* or *gaw<sup>b</sup>-VAR*] and it means *pass over, pass through, pass on*. Strong's #5674 BDB #716. This gives us: *My days pass on...*

In the second line (or, as the end of the first line), we begin with the feminine plural noun zimmâh (זִמְמָה) [pronounced *zim-MAWH*], which means *pre-meditated evil, well-thought out wickedness, pre-planned harm*. Generally, this word would refer to that which is *immoral, degenerate and absolutely wrong, but well-thought out or planned*. Strong's #2154 BDB #273. The Greek is somewhat different here. Instead of this being a second line, the Greek has en brómô (ἐν βρόμῳ) [pronounced *en BROH-moh*], which I cannot find, but my Septuagint reads *in groaning*. My Greek concordance to the Septuagint tells me that this is also found as drómô (δρόμῳ) [pronounced *DROH-moh*], which appears to be related to *the course [of one's life]*. This latter rendering appears to make the most sense. This would give us: *My days pass on, in a course [of life];...*

In the Greek, this is still analogous to our Lord prior to the cross and on the cross. When Judas betrayed Him, His days had passed on in His course of life; He had come to the culmination of His human life (this is, of course, apart from His resurrection).

In the Hebrew, again, this is a noun and the accompanying verb is the 3<sup>rd</sup> person plural, Niphal perfect of nâthaq (נָתַק) [pronounced *naw-THAHK*], which means *to pull, to draw, to tear away, to tear apart, to tear off*. In the Niphal, this means *to be torn away, to be broken, to be torn out, to be separated, to be drawn away from*. Strong's #5423 BDB #683. If the Hebrew is correct, then Job is being tongue-in-cheek here (or, as BDB says, this is the *only* place where zimmâh is used in a good sense). This gives us: *My days pass on; my [evil] plans have been torn down;...* Now, if the Hebrew is correct, it might be reasonable for Job to assert that not only his life is over, but the evil designs which he masterminded that brought upon him all this evil, those evil designs have also passed away (he obviously has nothing left by way of material resource). Obviously, the only way for this to be a reasonable rendering, is for Job to be saying this tongue-in-cheek. *His days have passed on, along with all the alleged evil things that he did*. Again, the Hebrew and Greek are quite different here, the Greek associating a different noun altogether with the previous verb, rather than with this second verb. This does not mean that the Greek is acceptable and the Hebrew is not. We really do not know which is preferable, if either. There is probably an equal possibility that there are words which are missing here.

The second to the last word is the masculine plural construct of mōwraḥ (מִוְרָחַשׁ) [pronounced *moh-RAWSH*], which means *a possession*. Here, it refers figuratively to *thoughts or memories*. Job 17:11 Isa. 14:23 Obad. 17.\* This word has been variously rendered as *treasures* (Noyes), *resolves* (Dr. Good), and *tenants* (Dr. Stock). Strong's #4180 BDB #440. This is followed by *of my heart*. You will note the difference in the Hebrew. In the

Hebrew, this seems to have no accompanying verb, or the previous verb applies to *possessions of my heart* as well. In the Greek, this goes along with the verb.

Barnes takes this word *môwrâsh* in a more general way, referring to Job's thoughts, plans and goals, writing: *The delights of his soul—the purposes which he had hoped to accomplish. All these were now to be broken on by death. This is to man one of the most trying things in death. All his plans must be arrested. His projects of ambition and gain, of pleasure and of fame, of professional eminence and of learning, all are arrested midway. The farmer is compelled to leave his plough in the furrow; the mechanic, his work unfinished;; the lawyer, his brief half prepared; the student, his books lying open; the man who is building a palace, leaves it incomplete; and he who is seeking a crown, is taken away when it seems just within his grasp. How many unfinished plans are caused by death every day! How many unfinished books, sermons, houses, does it make! How many schemes of wickedness and of benevolence, of fraud and of kindness, of gain and of mercy, are daily broken in upon by death! Soon, reader, all your plans and mine will be ended—mine, perhaps, before these lines meet your eye; yours soon afterwards. God grant our purposes of life may be such that we shall be willing to have them broken in upon—all so subordinate to the GREAT PLAN of being prepared for heaven, that we may cheerfully surrender them at any moment, at the call of the Master summoning us to his awful presence!*<sup>25</sup>

With this verse, Job's mood changes. In vv. 8–9, he says that the innocent and righteous would be appalled at his situation and at what his friends were doing. Now, there are some who teach that Christians are always laughing and having a good time. Not Job—and I will guaran-damn-tee you that Job was 20 times the believer that you are. The Holy Spirit does not turn you into some sort of clown with a goofy smile on your face at all times. Job is in personal distress here, and he has every right to be sad and beaten down. As Job speaks from this incredible pain and sorrow due to the circumstances of his life, he records in these chapters a perfect analogy to the crucifixion of our Lord. Here, Job, again, speaks of the end of his life, the passing on of his days; the loss of those things which were precious to him, and then the loss of his memories of those things.

Keil and Delitzsch: *[Job's] life is indeed run out; and the most cherished plans and hopes which he had hedged in and fostered for the future in his heart, he has utterly and long since given up.*<sup>26</sup>

<b>Night to day they place— light [is] near from faces of darkness.</b>	Job 17:12	<b>They place night for day; light is near because of the extreme darkness.</b>
<b>They place night right next to day; they allege the light is near because of the extreme darkness.</b>		

This verse begins literally with *night to day*. Then we have the masculine plural, Qal imperfect of *sîym* (סִיַּם) [pronounced *seem*] which means *to put, to place, to set*. Strong's #7760 BDB #962.

Then we have the masculine singular noun *ôr* (אֹר) [pronounced *ohr*], which means *light*. Strong's #216 BDB #21. Then we have the adjective *qârôb* (קָרֹב) [pronounced *kaw-RO<sup>B</sup>V*], which means *near, contiguous, imminent, near in relation*. Strong's #7138 BDB #898. Then we have *from faces of [extreme] darkness*. This can mean *because of [extreme] darkness*. It couldn't hurt to see what others did with this verse:

<i>The Emphasized Bible</i>	<Night for day> they appoint,   Light   is near, by reason of darkness!
JPS (Tanakh)	They say that night is day, That light is here—in the face of darkness.
Keil and Delitzsch (revised)	You explain night as day, Light is near when darkness sets in.
KJV	They change the night into day; the light is short because of darkness.
NASB	“They make night into day, saying, ‘The light is near,’ in the presence of darkness.”
NEB	Day is turned into night, and morning light is darkened before me.
The Septuagint	I have turned the night into day; the light is short because of darkness.

<sup>25</sup> Barnes' Notes; Job, Volume 1; F. C. Cook, editor; reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; pp. 301–302.

<sup>26</sup> Keil & Delitzsch's *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. 4, p. 408.

*Young's Lit. Translation* Night for day, they appoint, Light is near because of darkness.

Again, you will note great differences between the Greek and the Hebrew. Also, you will note that most translators wanted to insert *they say* or *they allege*. The general sense is that Job's friends have distorted that which is true or they have misinterpreted the facts.

In the Hebrew, it reads that the light is *near*; the NEB Bible suggests that the probable reading should be *the morning light*. Although poetic and appropriate to the context, they, unfortunately, do not give any more by way of reasons for this opinion.<sup>27</sup>

The Hebrew is fairly straightforward here, reading either: **Night to day they place—light [is] near from faces of darkness**; or, **They place night for day; light is near because of the extreme darkness**. What is unclear is who the *they* are. Are these Job's friends? Does *they* refer to his thoughts? Rosenmüller renders this *night is become day to me*; both Wemyss and Dr. Good, *night is assigned me for day*. All three appear to ignore the 3<sup>rd</sup> person masculine plural. You will note that the Septuagint is entirely different, making Job the subject of the verb.

In any case, Barnes suggests *that the night was to him as the day. He had no rest. The period when he had formerly sought repose, was now made like the day, and all was alike gloom and sadness. With reference to the second half of this verse—the light is near because of the extreme darkness, he writes: even the day has lost its usual brilliancy and cheerfulness, and has become gloomy and sad. It seems to be like night. Neither night nor day is natural to me; the one is restless and full of cares like the usual employments of day, and the other is gloomy, or almost night, where there is no comfort and peace. Day brings to me none of its usual enjoyments. It is short, bloomy, sad, and hastens away, and a distressing and restless night soon comes on.*<sup>28</sup>

On and prior to the cross, there was also a confusion of day and night. When Jesus was arrested, several of his trials occurred during the night, which was illegal. Roman and Jewish trials were to take place during the day. During the portion of the cross when He was judged for our sins, a thick darkness covered over Golgotha, as **God the Father caused to fall upon Him, God the Son, the iniquity of us all** (Isa. 53:6).

V. 13 cannot be taken by itself. It must be combined with vv. 14–15 to see the flow of Job's argument. V. 13a sets up and *if* statement and vv. 14–15 continue with what Job will do.

**If I eagerly look for Sheol, my house;  
in the darkness, I spread my couches.**

Job  
17:13

**If I eagerly await Sheol [as] my home;  
[and if] in the darkness, I spread out my bed.**

**If I eagerly anticipate Sheol as my home and spread out my bed in the darkness,**

We will certainly look at some translations here; I've kept vv. 14–15 in with v. 13 in order to keep the flow of Job's argument, although we will only take these one verse at a time.

Barnes (revised)

Truly I look to Sheol as my home; My bed I spread in the place of darkness. To corruption I say, "You are my father;" To the worm, "My mother, and my sister." And where now is my hope? And who will see my hope fulfilled?

God's Word™

If I look for the grave as my home and make my bed in the darkness, if I say to the pit, 'You are my father,' and to the worm, 'You are my mother and sister,' then where is my hope? Can you see any hope left in me?

JPS (Tanakh)

If I must look forward to Sheol as my home, And make my bed in the dark place, Say to the Pit, "You are my father," To the maggots, "Mother," "Sister"— Where, then, is my hope? Who can see hope for me?

<sup>27</sup> Most Bible translations, when offering a different rendering, do not go into any detail as to why they have chosen to go one route rather than another with their translation. On the other hand, for most people, I probably go into far too much detail.

<sup>28</sup> *Barnes' Notes; Job, Volume 1*; F. C. Cook, editor; reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; p. 302.

- Keil and Delitzsch (revised) If I hope, it is for Sheôl as my house, in darkness I make my bed. I cry to corruption: You are my father!— To the worm: You are my mother and sister! Where now therefore is my hope? And my hope, who sees it?
- NASB “If I look for Sheol as my home, I make my bed in the darkness; if I call to the pit, ‘You are my father’; To the worm, ‘my mother and my sister’; Where now is my hope And who regards my hope?”
- Owen's Translation If I look for Sheol as my house; in darkness I spread my couch. To the pit, I say, “My father, you.” “My mother and my sister,” to the worm. And where then my hope; and my hope, who will see it?
- The Septuagint For if I remain, Hades is my habitation; and my bed has been made in darkness. I have called upon death to be my father, and corruption to be my mother and sister. Where then is yet my hope? Or will I see my good?.
- Young's Lit. Translation If I wait—Sheol is my house, In darkness I have spread out my couch. To corruption I have called:— ‘Thou art my father.’ ‘My mother’ and ‘my sister’—to the worm. And where is now my hope? Yea, my hope, who doth behold it?

We begin this verse with the hypothetical particle *if*. Now Barnes suggests that this can be used as an emphatic, which is true, but there are other conditions which are generally here to suggest such a thing, and they are not here. Then we have the 1<sup>st</sup> person Piel imperfect of qâvâh (הִוָּה) [pronounced *kaw-VAW*], which means *to wait for, to wait expectantly for, to look for*. In the Piel, this means *to eagerly look for, to wait for eagerly*. Strong's #6960 BDB #875. What Job eagerly looks for is the feminine singular, proper noun sh<sup>o</sup>l (אֵשׁ אוֹלַם or אֵשׁ אוֹלַם) [pronounced *sh<sup>o</sup>hl*], and this proper noun refers to the underworld, or the unseen world of souls which have passed away; it is the temporary way-station for both believers and unbelievers. It is transliterated *Sheol*. *Hades* is the Greek equivalent. Barnes allows for this to stand either for the region of departed spirits or the grave. Strong's #7585 BDB #982. This is followed by *my house*. V. 13a reads: *If I eagerly look for Sheol—my house;...* When in tremendous pain and suffering, there are those who eagerly await death—this is Job.

We begin the second line of this verse with *in the darkness*. This is followed by the 1<sup>st</sup> person singular, Piel perfect of râphad (רָפַד) [pronounced *raw-FAHD*], which means *to spread [something out for support or comfort]*. Strong's #7502 BDB #951. This is a tough word to deal with; we find it in three passages, which read:

Râphad		
Location	Morphology	Passage:
Job 17:13	Piel perfect	In darkness, I have <b>râphad'ed</b> my bed.
Job 41:30	Qal imperfect	Under him, sharp points of clay; He <b>râphad's</b> [like?] gold on the mire.
SOS 2:5	Piel imperative	Sustain me with grape cakes, <b>râphad</b> me with citrons, for I [am] sick.
SOS 3:10	Noun cognate	It's pillars made of silver, its <b>r<sup>o</sup>phîydâh</b> of gold, its seat of purple, its midst lined [in] love...

Râphad—selected translations						
	Greek	KJV	JPS	NASB	Rotherham	Young's
Job 17:13	has been made	have made	make	make [lit., <i>spread out</i> ]	have spread out	spread out
Job 41:30	under?	spreadeth	spreads	spreads out [or, <i>moves across</i> ]	spreadeth out	spreadeth
SOS 2:5	sustain	comfort	refresh	refresh	refresh	support

SOS 3:10	bottom	bottom	back	back [or, <i>support</i> ]	couch or couch covering	bottom
<p><b>Conclusion:</b> As you see, there is more agreement in each individual passage than there is by any particular translation (although Young was relatively consistent). What appears to be the case, is the verb refers to something which is spread out for support (e.g., a bed); and the noun refers to the larger piece of something at the bottom, which is a support. I am not thrilled with this conclusion and would have rather come up with something simpler and of a more widespread usage, but that is all I've got.</p>						

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What Job speaks of spreading out is the masculine plural of *yâtsûwa* (יַצֵּוּא) [pronounced *yaw-TSOO-ahg*], which means *couch, bed*. *Yâtsûwa*, like *faces*, is always found in the plural, as the bed is made of up several component parts. Strong's #3326 BDB #426. Apparently, in the ancient world, there was the sort of bed which was laid out or set out, and it was transportable (we are probably just speaking of a few covers here). Job apparently expected to die right where he sat in that ash heap before his friends—the same place where he made up his bed in the darkness.

Job eagerly looks forward to Sheol, the final resting place for those who have died, as his deliverance from this horrid life. No doubt our Lord, when bearing our sins, looked forward to the same rest for His humanity.

To the pit, I said, 'My father, you [are].'  
'My mother and my sister,' to the worm.

Job  
17:14

I said to the pit, 'You [are] my father!'  
To the worm, '[You are] my mother and my  
sister.'

and If I say to the pit, 'You are my father!' and to the worms, 'You are my mother and my sister.'

Some of the translations (I realize that I have stated most of these already):

Barnes (revised) <i>God's Word</i> <sup>TM</sup>	To corruption I say, "You are my father;" To the worm, "My mother, and my sister." ...if I say to the pit, 'You are my father,' and to the worm, 'You are my mother and sister,'...
JPS (Tanakh) Keil and Delitzsch (revised)	Say to the Pit, "You are my father," To the maggots, "Mother," "Sister"— I cry to corruption: Thou art my father!— To the worm: Thou art my mother and sister!
NASB Owen's Translation The Septuagint	"If I call to the pit, 'You are my father'; To the worm, 'my mother and my sister'; To the pit, I say, "My father, you." "My mother and my sister," to the worm. I have called upon death to be my father, and corruption to be my mother and sister.
<i>Young's Lit. Translation</i>	To corruption I have called:— 'Thou art my father.' 'My mother' and 'my sister'—to the worm.

This verse begins with *to the* and the feminine singular noun *shachath* (שַׁחַת) [pronounced *SHAH-kahth*], rendered *pit, corruption* and *grave* in the KJV. The Greek word used to translate this is *death*. This word literally means *pit* (it is used of the pit or the snare designed to capture animals—Psalm 7:15 9:15). It is used for a cistern, in which there is mud (Job 9:31), for an underground prison (Isa. 51:14); for *graves* or *sepulcher's* (Job 17:14 33:18, 30 Psalm 30:10); and it is used in the sense of *going down to the grave* (Job 33:24 Psalm 55:24). The Greek word used to translate this in Job 17:14 is *death*. Gesenius, apparently, said that this word did not have the connotation of *corruption*; however, Luke, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, gives this word the sense of meaning *corruption* (Acts 2:27 13:35). For this reason, perhaps, Barnes, Schultens and Rosenmüller take it in the sense of *corruption, putrefaction*. Strong's #7845 BDB #1001. Barnes prefers that this word be taken in the sense of *corruption*, as that nicely parallels the use of the word *worm*, which aides in the breaking down of the body, returning it to the dust from which it came. For our purposes, we can simply take this as meaning *to the grave*. The first half of this verse

literally reads: “To the grave, I said, ‘my father, you [are].’ ” We would read simply it as: “I said to the grave, ‘You are my father.’ ” Now, how did we know when v. 13 ended and that *you [are]* is the end of this line? At the end of each line, the final word is in the pausal form, which is the equivalent to our semicolon.

The second line is: “ ‘My mother and my sister,’ to the worm.” We can infer from the previous line: “I said to the worm, ‘You are my mother and my sister.’ ” this is simply poetic language for Job spending the rest of his existence, such as it is, in the grave. The grave and the worm of the ground are seen as his close relationships. McGee: *Corruption and decay are closer to him than his father or mother. They had brought him into the world but how he is closer to death than he is to them. His body which is so weary and so sick is ready to return back to the dust.*<sup>29</sup> Barnes writes: *The idea seems to be that of family likeness; and the object is to present the most striking and impressive view of his sad and sorrowful condition. He was so diseased, so wretched, so full of sores and of corruption...that he might be said to be the child of one mouldering in the grave, and was kindred to a family in the tomb!*<sup>30</sup>

The worm mentioned here is the worm, as well as a host of other small vermin, which infest, dessicate and consume the putrefying human body as it lay in the dirt. *Sister* is used here rather than *brother*, as the word *worm* is in the feminine—so says Barnes; however, bear in mind *grave* is a feminine noun as well. In any case, Barnes aptly notes: *So corrupt was his body, so afflicted and diseased, that he seemed to belong to the family of the putrifying, and of those covered with worms!* He then adds: *What an impressive description; and yet how true is it of all! The most vigorous frame, the most beautiful and graceful form, the most brilliant complexion, has a near relationship to the worm, and will soon belong to the mouldering family beneath the ground! Christian reader! such are you; such am I. Well, let it be so. Let us not repine. Be the grave our home; be the mouldering people there our parents, and brothers, and sisters. Be our alliance with the worms. There is a brighter scene beyond—a world where we shall be kindred with the angels, and ranked among the sons of God. In that world we shall be clothed with immortal you, and shall know corruption no more. Then our eyes will shine with undiminished brilliancy for ever; our cheeks glow with immortal health; our hearts beat with the pulsations of eternal life. Then our hands shall be feeble and our knees totter with disease or age no more; and then the current of health and joy shall flow on through our veins for ever and ever! Allied now to worms we are, but we are allied to the angels too; the grave is to be our home, but so also is heaven; the worm is our brother, but so also is the Son of God! Such is man; such are his prospects here, such his hopes and destiny in the world to come. He dies here, but he live in glory and honour hereafter for ever.*<sup>31</sup>

<b>And where then my hope [or, expectation] and my hope, who regards [or, observes] her?</b>	Job 17:15	<b>Where then [is] my hope? And who regards my hope?</b>
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**Where then is that which I expect?  
And who here even thinks about my hope?**

Some of the pertinent translations:

CEV	But what kind of hope is that?
God's Word™	...then where is my hope? Can you see any hope left in me?
JPS (Tanakh)	Where, then, is my hope? Who can see hope for me?
NAB	Where then is my hope, and my prosperity, who shall see?
NASB	Where now is my hope And who regards my hope?"
NJB	Where then is my hope? Who can see any happiness for me?
REB	where, then, will my hope be, and who will take account of my piety?
The Septuagint	Where then is yet my hope? Or will I see my good?
Young's Lit. Translation	And where is now my hope? Yea, my hope, who doth behold it?

<sup>29</sup> J. Vernon McGee; *Job*; Thru the Bible Books; ©El Camino Press, 1977; p. 100.

<sup>30</sup> *Barnes' Notes; Job, Volume 1*; F. C. Cook, editor; reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; p. 302.

<sup>31</sup> *Barnes' Notes; Job, Volume 1*; F. C. Cook, editor; reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; p. 303.

We begin with *And where then [is]...* and then we have the feminine substantive (with the 1<sup>st</sup> person suffix) of *tîq<sup>v</sup>âh* (תִּקְוָה) [pronounced *tîk<sup>v</sup>-VAW*] and it means *hope, expectation, that which is waited for, that which is expectantly looked for*. It can mean *cord* (Joshua 2:18, 21), *an outcome hoped for* (Job 8:13 17:15 Prov. 10:28 Ezek. 19:5); or *the basis or ground for hope* (Job 4:6 Psalm 71:5). Strong's #8615 BDB #876. Job's *hope* was the end of his miserable existence. He certainly had no hopes of being restored to his former self. In fact, Job never had a clue as to what was coming in his life, which is important to note for all of us. We all face various trials and tribulations, some deserved, some not deserved—God knows the end from the beginning and He has a plan for our lives. As long as we pursue Him (and, I mean by that, pursue His Word), He will take care of everything else. **“For this reason, I say to you, do not be anxious for your life, as to what you will eat or what you will drink; nor for your body, as to what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air, that they do not sow, neither do they reap, nor do they gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not worth much more than they? And which of you by being anxious can add a cubit to his height? And why are you anxious about clothing? Observe how the lilies of the field grow; they do not toil nor do they spin. Yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory did not clothe himself like one of these. But if God so arrays the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the furnace, will He not much more do so for you, O men of a little faith? Do not be anxious, therefore, saying, ‘What will we eat?’ or ‘What will we drink?’ or ‘With what will be clothe ourselves?’ For all these things the Gentiles eagerly seek; for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. Consequently, seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be provided for.”** (Matt. 6:25–33).

The second line begins with *and my hope* in the Hebrew (it is *or my good* in the Greek). Then we have the interrogative followed by the 3<sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect with a 3<sup>rd</sup> person feminine singular suffix of *shûr* (שׁוּר) [pronounced *shour*], which means *to behold, to regard, to observe, to watch*. The idea is that someone is watching over carefully, from whence comes the meaning *to regard*. Strong's #7789 BDB #1003. Literally, this gives us: **And where then [is] my hope [or, expectation] and my hope—who regards [or observes] it?**

Keil and Delitzsch give us two interpretations to these final verses. The first is that most modern translations look upon v. 15 as the apodosis to the hypothetical antecedent of v. 13—i.e., **If I hope, it is for Sheôl as my house,...Where now therefore is my hope? And my hope, who sees it? There is no objection to this explanation so far as the syntax is concerned, but there will then be weighty thoughts which are also expressed in the form of fresh thoughts, for which independent clauses seem more appropriate.**<sup>32</sup> In other words, syntactically, there is no problem with the modern understanding of this passage, but it may be just too simplistic. They prefer to see v. 13 as an independent clause from which inference is drawn and a train of thought is simply continued.

Keil and Delitzsch continue: *No other hope, in Job's opinion, but speedy death is before him; no human eye is capable of seeing, i.e., of discovering...any other hope than just this.*<sup>33</sup>

<b>Bars of Sheol they go down; if together beside dust, a rest.”</b>	Job 17:16	<b>They go down [to] the bars [or, gates] of Sheol; oh that together [we go down] beside the dust—tranquility.</b>
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**They [hope and whatever] go down to the gates of death;  
oh that we go down together into the dust unto tranquility.**

Job ends this speech with his death being spoken of; however, this last line is difficult, so let's examine some other translations:

**CEV** **Will it keep me company in the world of the dead?**

<sup>32</sup> Quoted and paraphrased from Keil & Delitzsch's *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. 4, p. 409.

<sup>33</sup> Keil & Delitzsch's *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. 4, p. 410.

<i>The Emphasized Bible</i>	<With me to Hades> would they go down, If <wholly— into the dust > is the descent!
<i>God's Word™</i>	Will hope go down with me to the gates of the grave? Will my hope rest with me in the dust?"
JPS (Tanakh)	Will it descend to Sheol? Shall we go down together to the dust?
Keil and Delitzsch (revised)	To the bars of Sheol it descends; When at the same time there is rest in the dust.
NAB	Will they descend with me into the nether world? Shall we go down together into the dust?
NASB	"Will it go down with me to Sheol? Shall we together go down into the dust?"
NEB	I cannot take them down to Sheol with me, nor can they descend with me into the earth.
NIV	Will it go down to the gates of death [Sheol]? Will we descend together into the dust?" [or, <i>nothing he had remains</i> ]
NJB	unless they come down to Sheol with me, all of us sinking into the dust together?
NLT	No, my hope will go down with me to the grave. We will rest together in the dust!"
Owen's Translation	Bars of Sheol will it (they) go down together? Into dust, a rest (of death).
REB	I cannot take them with me down to Sheol, nor shall we descend together to the dust.
The Septuagint	Will they go down with me to Hades, or shall we go down together to the tomb?
<i>Young's Lit. Translation</i>	To the parts of Sheol ye go down, If together on the dust we may rest.

This verse begins with the masculine plural construct of *bad* (בַּד) [pronounced *bahd*], which has several diverse meanings. It can mean *separation, by itself, alone* (Gen. 2:18 21:28 Zech. 12:12–14; Strong's #905 BDB #94); *white linen for priestly garments* (I Sam. 2:18 22:18 II Sam. 6:14; Strong's #906 BDB #94); and, in the plural, *empty, idle talk* (Job 11:3 Isa. 16:6 Jer. 48:30; Strong's #907 BDB #95). However, in the plural, it can also refer to the *parts* of something, particularly those *parts which are an extension of that something*. Examples would be the *members* or *limbs* of a man (Job 18:13) or of a crocodile (Job 41:4); the *rods* or *shoots* of a vine (Ezek. 17:6 19:4); the *poles* used for carrying the ark (Ex. 25:13–15 35:12); as well as the *bars* or *gate* of a fortress (Job 17:16 Hosea 11:6). With the primary focus of this word being *separation*, but with an allowance for it to be an extension of something, what better word to describe either the *gates* or *bars* of Hades? Barnes suggests that the entrance or gates into Sheol refers simply to death and the grave. Strong's #905 BDB #94. This is followed by Sheol, the place of the dead. Then we have the 3<sup>rd</sup> person feminine plural, Qal imperfect of *yârad* (יָרַד) [pronounced *yaw-RAHD*], which means *to descend, to go down*. Strong's #3381 BDB #432. The problem, of course, is what is the subject of this verb? If it were the feminine singular, the subject would simply be *hope*. However, you will note that the Greek has, in the previous verse, two different nouns rather than using *hope* twice. One very reasonable implication is that there should have been two different feminine nouns in the Hebrew in the previous verse. So far, this gives us: **Bars [or, gates] of Sheol, they [hope and who or what else?] go down...** Barnes simply explains this as all of Job's *hopes*, which essentially is in agreement with what I have said.

The break between the last two lines is somewhat nebulous. We first have the hypothetical particle *ʾim* (אִם) [pronounced *eem*], which means *if*. Actually, it can be used as a demonstrative (*lo, behold*), an interrogative (usually expecting a negative response and often used with other particles and rhetorically), and as a conditional particle (*if, though*); an indication of a wish or desire (*oh that, if only*; this is a rare usage). Strong's #518 BDB #49. Then we have the adverb *yachad* (יָחַד) [pronounced *YAH-khahd*], which means *together, alike, all together*. Strong's #3162 BDB #403. This is followed by the preposition *ʿal* (עַל) [pronounced *gahl*], which means *upon, beyond, on, against, above, over, by, beside*. When *ʿal* is used in connection with something geographical, particularly *water*; it has the connotation of *contiguity* or *proximity*; so it can also mean *by* or *beside*. Strong's #5920, #5921 BDB #752. Then we have the masculine singular noun *ʿâphâr* (אֶפְרַח) [pronounced *gaw-FAWR*], which means *dry earth, dust*. Strong's #6083 BDB #779. And finally, this ends with the feminine singular noun *nachath* (נַחַת) [pronounced *NAH-khahth*], which means *tranquility, quietness, rest*. Strong's #5183 BDB #629. This gives us: **Oh that together beside [the] dust, tranquility.** *We* refers here to Job and his hopes. It is a strange contrast to the confidence that we have in the grave—Job's life was miserable, and even death was preferable. However, he did not see death as we do. There was no promise to him of the resurrection and of future glory. Paul wrote to the Corinthians: **Now if Christ is proclaimed, that He has been raised from the dead, how do**



some among you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there is no resurrection of the dead, not even Christ has been raised; and if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is empty and your faith is also empty. Moreover we are even found to be false witnesses of God, because we witnessed against God that He raised Christ, whom He did not raise, if in fact the dead are not raised. For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised; and if Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins. Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. If we have only hoped in Christ in this life, we are of all en most to be pitied. But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who are asleep. For since by a man came death, by a man also came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ will all be made alive. But each in his own order; Christ the first fruits, after that those who are Christ's at His coming (I Cor. 15:13–23). So you see, Christ had not come, and therefore, He had not yet risen from the dead. Therefore, there was no real hope for Old Testament saints. Given progressive revelation, there was no recorded hope whatsoever during the time of Job.

In general terms, we clearly understand that Job is speaking of going to the grave as a rest; his hope may not be death, per se, but the Blessed Hope, Christ Jesus—which is why he asks if Hope will go down with him to Sheol, to the dust, where there is tranquility. Trying to get specific and deal with each term and how they fit together is much more difficult, as there are too many questions. There appear to be two different feminine nouns in the previous verse, both of whom would go down into Sheol. In the second line, we might infer the verb of the first, but the morphology would be difficult to determine.

What appears to be the case is that man in the Old Testament did not have a hope or a confidence in death; recall that Job has already said, “Before I go—and I will not return—to the land of darkness and deep shadow, to the land of utter gloom as darkness, of deep shadow without order, and which shines in the darkness.” (Job 10:21–22). My point is that he did not have the same hope and confidence in what would transpire after his death as we do. Barnes: *To that dark world Job expected soon to descend; and though he did not regard that as properly a place of punishment, yet it was not a place of positive joy. It was a gloomy and wretched world—the land of darkness and of the shadow of death; and he looked to the certainty of going there not with joy, but with anguish and distress of heart. Had Job been favored with the clear and elevated views of heaven which we have in the Christian revelation, death to him would have lost its gloom. We wonder, often, that so good a man expressed such a dread of death, and that he did not look more calmly into the future world. But to do him justice, we should place ourselves in his situation. We should lay aside all that is cheerful and glad in the views of heaven which Christianity has given us. We should look upon the future world as the shadow of death; a land of gloom and specters; a place beneath the ground—dark, chilly, repulsive; and we shall cease to wonder at the expressions of even so good a man at the prospect of death. When we look at him, we should remember with thankfulness the different views which we have of the future world, and the source to which we owe them. To us, if we are pious in any measure as Job was, death is the avenue, not to a world of gloom, but to a world of light and glory. It opens into heaven. There is no gloom, no darkness, no sorrow. There all are happy; and there all that is mysterious in this life is made plain—all that is said is succeeded by eternal joy. These views we owe to that gospel which has brought life and immortality to light; and when we think of death and the future world, when from the midst of woes and sorrows we are compelled to look out on eternity, let us rejoice that we are not constrained to look forward with the sad forebodings of the Sage of Uz, but that we may think of the grave cheered by the strong consolations of Christian hope of the glorious resurrection.*<sup>34</sup>

The best way to conclude this chapter is with an expanded chart which I gave in the introduction to this book of Job. The original chart compares the book of Job to the crucifixion and sacrifice of Jesus for our sins. However, this has been expanded to a chart of **Jesus in the Old and New Testaments**, which should be examined next.

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<sup>34</sup> Barnes' Notes; Job, Volume 1; F. C. Cook, editor; reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; pp. 303–304.