

# Job 20

## Job 20:1–29

## Zophar's Second Dissertation

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**Introduction:** First, I want you to recall what Job said in the previous chapter. He spoke of his pain and distress (Job 19:7–12, 20); he spoke of his fallen status among those with whom he associated (Job 19:13–19); and he implored his friends for their pity and sympathy, begging them to back off from their attack upon him (Job 19:21–22). Then Job suddenly pierces through the darkness, declaring that his Redeemer is alive (Job 19:25), and he solemnly warns his friends about the wrath to come (Job 19:28–29). So, how does Zophar reply to this? First of all, with regards to Job's sudden burst of faith in his Redeemer, Zophar says nothing (and, surprisingly enough, neither does Job again).<sup>1</sup> Zophar begins his second (and last) speech in Job 20, and, like the other two *friends*, he approaches Job from a stance of anger as well. What Job said, although it was stirring to us, was insulting to Zophar. Job pleaded for compassion; Zophar will tell Job of God's vengeance. Zophar will make clear to Job (and those who are his audience) that the triumphs of the wicked are short and that they will soon perish, just like their refuse. And that will be one of the nicer things that Zophar says to Job. Zophar will speak directly to some of the things which Job said, but not from the previous chapter. Job has said in many ways that his life has become enshrouded in darkness, and Zophar suggests that is because Job is wicked and that's what the wicked should expect. Keil and Delitzsch: *Thus mercilessly does Zophar seek to stifle the new trust which Job conceives towards God, to extinguish the faith which burst upwards from beneath the ashes of the conflict. Zophar's method of treatment is soul-destroying; he seeks to slay that life which germinates from the feeling of death, instead of strengthening it. He does not, however, succeed; for so long as Job does not become doubtful of his innocence, the uncharitableness of the friends must be to him the thread by which he finds his way through the labyrinth of his sufferings to the God who loves him, although He seems to be angry with him.*<sup>2</sup> A precursory glance of this chapter does not seem to indicate that Zophar has anything important or earthshaking to say.

In many ways, Zophar's speech is nothing new. It primarily deals with the fate of the morally corrupt person, which is fairly familiar ground, as we have already seen it presented by Bildad (Job 8:11–19 18:5–21) and by Eliphaz (Job 15:20–35). There is, however, one change in Zophar's approach—he does not pester Job to find out what secret sin it is that Job had committed to bring all of this upon himself. He has actually come to a conclusion that Job has accumulated all of his wealth and property through dishonest business practices and that he is now paying the price for gathering this wealth in an immoral way. Therefore, rather than ask Job what it was that he did, Zophar will assert that Job has oppressed and forsaken the poor, and, for that reason, cannot enjoy that which he has seized (Job 20:18–19).

<sup>1</sup> Barnes finds it *remarkable* that neither Job nor Zophar ever refer back to that which Job stated concerning his Messiah; his Redeemer. However, my thinking is this: when a person is not ready for the gospel or rejects the gospel, then the message of the gospel leaves his mind—and sometimes, rather quickly. Quiz an unbeliever as to what should he do in order to gain salvation, if you know this believer has been exposed to the true gospel, and you might be very surprised as to how little he recalls.

<sup>2</sup> Keil & Delitzsch's *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. 4, p. 458.

Although Zophar is not as compact a speaker as is Bildad (whose problem is, is that he has very little to say); but Zophar has a limited vocabulary. This does not mean, necessarily, that Zophar is stupid. Zophar is a Naamathite, and we don't know exactly from where he comes, although ZPEB suggests northwestern Arabia. It is possible that he had a similar, but different native language than did Job, limiting his vocabulary when speaking with Job. He will, throughout this chapter, use the same words several times, as well as draw from Job's vocabulary from previous chapters. Once and awhile, his sentence structure will be very difficult, as in vv. 23 or 26, which could also indicate that he has a different native tongue than Job does (we actually do not know if Job spoke Hebrew or whether this was originally recorded in a different language and translated into Hebrew).

Zophar begins by first expressing the fact that he is forced by his conscience (or, perhaps by emotions to respond to what Job has said. He first states that the triumphing of the godless is a temporary circumstance, and that they will all die without a reputation or heritage to leave behind. Like his two companions, Zophar does not have a clue as to what Job has done that was wrong, but he implies that it was related to questionable business practices which contributed to Job's great wealth (see v. 10). In v. 12, Zophar begins this analogy which states that Job has taken a taste of evil and that he really likes it, but that its sweet taste masks the fact that it is poison to his soul. While proceeding with this analogy, Zophar again turns his attention to the accumulation of Job's wealth (vv. 18–19), suggesting that Job became wealthy by exploiting the poor. Finally, Zophar spends the last several verses telling Job how God would train His fierce anger on Job and discipline him for all that he has done wrong. Again, like his two companions, Zophar couches all of what he says as a reference to a *man of iniquity*, never once referring to Job directly. However, it is clear that Job is the focal point of his accusations. To this, Barnes comments: *All this he doubtless intended should be applied to Job, and the application was so obvious to the circumstances of the case, that it could not fail to be made. The speech is remarkable for severity, and remarkable because it does not notice the solemn profession of confidence in God which Job had made in the previous chapter, (ver. 25–27) father than that it is implied all along in this speech that his belief was, that the wicked, once cast down, would not be restored.*<sup>3</sup>

Now, the big picture is this: at the end of the previous chapter, Job said that there would fall a judgment upon all, and that judgment, he implied, would clear him and condemn them. This assertion riled Zophar greatly, making it difficult for him to sit quietly, so he speaks out. This is actually Zophar's excuse for not responding to Job's call for compassion. Job warned Zophar and the other two of impending judgment, and that pissed Zophar off. He agrees that God will judge, just as Job suggested, but that Job was already getting a taste of God's justice for his iniquity.

The short, easy-to-dance-to, teenage version of this chapter is given by *The Open Bible: Zophar responds to Job's accusations that his friends have failed him. He makes a long speech about the certainty of the evil that comes to every unrighteous person.*<sup>4</sup>

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## Zophar Can Hardly Wait to Give His Opinion

Literally:

**And so answered Zophar the Naamathite and so he said,**

Job 20:1

Smoother English rendering:

**Then Zophar the Naamathite answered and said,**

**Then Zophar the Naamathite replied:**

Zophar, if you will recall, appears to the be least intelligent of the men (which does not mean that he is unintelligent), and the most simplistic and legalistic. He last spoke in Job 11, calling first for God to come out and speak against

<sup>3</sup> Barnes' Notes; Job, Volume 1; F. C. Cook, editor; reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; p. 335.

<sup>4</sup> The Open Bible; the New Living Translation; Thomas Nelson Publishers, Nashville, TN; ©1996, p. 693.

Job, to shed some light on this matter (*this* was not going to happen, at least that is what Zophar thought). Then in chapter 11, Zophar made some remarks about how difficult God was to understand (this was some really holy-sounding language). Finally, he told Job that all he needed to do was to turn toward God and everything would be alright. A bit simplistic throughout.

Although Zophar is accused of being the most caustic of the three (a reputation which he deserves from this chapter and not from Job 11), it is more likely that he simply lacks the vocabulary (and possibly the wisdom) to carefully couch his language so as to not attack Job directly. Also, he is the third to speak. His friends have already spoken and Job has reacted in such a way as to indicate that Job isn't buying what they are selling. Therefore, Zophar is a bit stronger in his approach.

<p><b>“For so my agitated thoughts bring me back and because of my hastening in me.</b></p>	<p>Job 20:2</p>	<p><b>“That being so, my agitated thoughts cause me to reconsider and because of my feelings of urgency within me.</b></p>
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**Irregardless of what you have to say, my thinking causes me to reconsider  
and I am caused to reconsider because of feelings of urgency within me.**

Let's first see how others have rendered this verse:

<p><i>The Emphasized Bible</i> JPS (Tanakh)</p>	<p>  Not so   do my thoughts answer me, And to this end, is my haste within me: In truth, my thoughts urge me to answer (It is because of my feelings when I hear a reproof that insults me); [this is vv. 2–3a]</p>
<p>Keil and Delitzsch (revised)</p>	<p>Therefore do my thoughts furnish me with a reply, And indeed by reason of my reeling within me.</p>
<p>NASB</p>	<p>“Therefore my disquieting thoughts make me respond [lit., <i>return</i>], Even because of my inward agitation [lit., <i>haste within me</i>].</p>
<p>NEB</p>	<p>My distress of mind forces me to reply, and this is why I hasten to speak: [the footnote points out that the Hebrew behind <i>this is why</i> is obscure]</p>
<p>The Septuagint</p>	<p>I did not suppose that you would answer in this way; neither do you understand more than I.</p>
<p>Vulgate (as per Barnes)</p>	<p>Therefore my various thoughts follow in succession, and the mind is distracted.</p>
<p><i>Young's Literal Translation</i></p>	<p>Therefore my thoughts cause me to answer, And because of my sensations in me.</p>

The first two words are the prefixed lâmed preposition and the adverb kên (כֵּן) [pronounced *kane*]; together, they mean *according to such conditions, that being so, therefore*. Although Barnes suggests *therefore*, he adds that perhaps this compound simply means *certainly, truly*. L<sup>e</sup> = Strong's #none BDB #510. Kên = Strong's #3651 BDB #485. Zophar pretty much blew off all that Job had said, taking them on with a *that being so*; which is like saying, *irregardless* or even *whatever, dude*.<sup>5</sup>

The next word is s<sup>er</sup>iphîym (סִרְיָיִם) [pronounced *s<sup>er</sup>gip-PEEM*], which means *disquieting thoughts, thoughts, agitated thoughts*. These are not the thoughts which are the reflections of a cool, calm and collected thinking process, but thoughts which divide and distract the mind. These are thoughts which are disturbing and disconcerting.<sup>6</sup> Strong's #5587 BDB #972. What his agitated thoughts do is the 3<sup>rd</sup> person masculine plural, Hiphil imperfect (with a 1<sup>st</sup> person suffix) of shûw<sup>b</sup>v (שׁוּבָם) [pronounced *shoo<sup>b</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*. In the Hiphil (the causative) stem, it can mean *to be caused to return* (II Sam. 19:11 II Chron. 6:25), *to*

<sup>5</sup> As you notice, Rotherham throws in a negative, basing it upon the Septuagint. However, I don't really see how a negative helps with the understanding of this verse. Also, it is rather surprising how few times the term *dude* is used in the Old Testament.

<sup>6</sup> Paraphrased from *Barnes' Notes; Job, Volume 1*; F. C. Cook, editor; reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; p. 335.

bring (Gen. 14:16 28:15), to be caused to turn back mentally, reminisce (Deut. 30:1) to return something, to restore, to bring back, to regain, to recover, to make restitution (Neh. 5:11 Prov. 24:12 Lam. 3:64), reconsider, think again (Job 6:29), or to be caused to return (Psalm 78:38). Strong's #7725 BDB #996. This gives us: **That being so, my agitated thoughts cause me to reconsider...** Zophar has listened for too long to Job and he has become impatient with him.

The second line begins with a wāw conjunction and baḡāḇvûwr (בַּעֲבוּר) [pronounced *bah-ḡu<sup>b</sup>-VOOR*], which means *because of, that, while, for the sake of, on account of, in order that*. Strong's #5668 BDB #721. This is followed by the Qal infinitive construct (with a 1<sup>st</sup> person suffix of chûsh (חֹשׁ) [pronounced *khoosh*], which means *to make haste, to move swiftly, to act quickly*. It has a secondary meaning of *strong feelings of emotion, internal feelings of urgency*. Strong's #2363 (& #2439) BDB #301. This is followed by *in me*. This gives us: **...and because my hastening in me**. Together, we have, **That being so** [a reference to all that Job said], **my agitated thoughts cause me to reconsider and because of feelings of urgency in me**. Zophar is admitting that he is not simply disagreeing about a point here or there with Job, but that what Job had to say was agitating and irritating and Zophar cannot help but reply to him. He couldn't simply sit still and let what Job had to say go by without speaking his mind.

You will note the rendering of the Septuagint conveys a much different thought: "I did not think that you would disagree with these things, and you don't know more than I do." The Septuagint is often an uneven translation which occasionally gives more of a thought-for-thought translation. In other words, we don't really know if this is the gist of what Zophar was saying, or whether that is how the translator read the meaning of the verse.<sup>7</sup> You will note that the Vulgate is more in line with the Hebrew.

What is going on is that Zophar has become impatient and has something to say. He essentially blew off all that Job had to say because of his own personal feelings of urgency on these matters. Barnes: *His heart was full, and he hastened to give vent to his feelings in impassioned and earnest language*.<sup>8</sup>

**A correction of my shame I hear  
and a spirit from my understanding he answers  
me.**

Job  
20:3

**I hear a correction of my dishonor  
and the spirit of my understanding [causes]  
me to answer.**

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First, what others have done:

<i>The Emphasized Bible</i>	<The correction meant to confound me> I must hear, But    the spirit out of my understanding    will give a reply.
JPS (Tanakh)	(It is because of my feelings When I hear reproof that insults me); A spirit out of my understanding makes me reply;... (vv. 2b–3)
Keil and Delitzsch (revised)	The correction of my reproach I must bear, Nevertheless the spirit of my understanding informs me.
NASB	"I listened to the proof which insults me, And the spirit of my understanding makes me answer."
NKJV	I have heard the rebuke that reproaches me, And the spirit of my understanding causes me to answer.
Owen's updated Translation	The correction of (which leads to) my insult I hear; and a spirit out of my understanding answers me.
The Septuagint	I will hear my shameful reproach; and the spirit of my understanding answers me.
<i>Young's Literal Translation</i>	The chastisement of my shame I hear, And the spirit of mine understanding Doth cause me to answer:

<sup>7</sup> Barnes remarks, in fact, *How this was ever made from the Hebrew...is impossible to say*. (Barnes' Notes; Job, Volume 1; F. C. Cook, editor; reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; p. 335).

<sup>8</sup> Barnes' Notes; Job, Volume 1; F. C. Cook, editor; reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; p. 336.

We begin with the masculine singular construct of *mûwçâr* (מוֹצָר) [pronounced *moo-SAWR*], which means *discipline [of the moral nature], chastening, correction*. Strong's #4148 BDB #415. This is followed by the feminine singular of *k'limmâh* (כְּלִמָּה) [pronounced *klim-MAW*], which means *shame, dishonor, insult, reproach, ignominy, criticism*. Strong's #3639 BDB #484. This is followed by the 1<sup>st</sup> person singular, Qal imperfect of the verb *to hear*. This gives us: *I hear a correction of my shame [or, criticism]*. The verb is in the pausal form and it is followed by the *wâw* conjunction; because of these two things, you will note that JPS connects this first half of v. 3 with the latter half of v. 2, giving us something along the lines of: *(And because of my feelings of urgency within me [and] a correction of my criticism)*.

In the second line, we have the *wâw* conjunction, the feminine singular word for *spirit* (or, *breath*), the *mîn* preposition, the 1<sup>st</sup> person singular suffix and the feminine singular noun *bîynâh* (בִּינָה) [pronounced *bee-NAW*], which means *understanding*. Strong's #998 BDB #108. *And a spirit from my understanding*. Then we have the 3<sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect, with a 1<sup>st</sup> person singular suffix, of *ʿânâh* (עָנָה) [pronounced *gaw-NAWH*], which means *to answer, to respond*. Strong's #6030 BDB #772. Both nouns are in the feminine gender, which does not match the verb. This gives us: *And he answers me [with] a spirit from my understanding*. However, many of the translators ignore the fact that the verb does not match either noun, and treats *spirit* as the noun: *And a spirit answers me from my understanding*. The NASB suggests that the verb is in a causal (Hiphil) form. There are several places in this chapter where the gender of the subject does not match the gender of the verb (or, what is often proposed as the subject is not the subject). This could indicate that Zophar is speaking in a language which is not his native tongue.

#### The Less than Literal Translations and Job 20:3:

When the Hebrew does not match as one would like, we occasionally turn to the less-than-literal versions of the Old Testament to sort this out:

Barnes	"You have accused me of that which is ignominious and shameful, and under the impetuosity feelings caused by such a charge, I cannot refrain from replying."
CEV	You have accused and insulted me, and reason requires a reply.
God's Word™	I have heard criticism that makes me ashamed, but a spirit beyond my understanding gives me answers.
NAB	So now my thoughts provide me with an answer, and from my understanding a spirit gives me a reply.
NJB	I have put up with prating that outrages me and now my mind inspires me with an answer.
NLT	I have had to endure your insults, but now my spirit prompts me to reply.
REB	I have heard arguments that are an outrage to me, but a spirit beyond my understanding gives me the answers.
TEV	What you said is an insult, but I know how to reply to you.

My impression, which does not match the Hebrew exactly, is that, Zophar has heard the correction of his criticism and his own understanding appears to be directing him to answer Job.

The NIV Study Bible makes an apt observation concerning these past two verses: *Zophar takes Job's words, especially his closing words in 19:28–29, as a personal affront. Job has dared to assert that on Zophar's theory of retribution, Zophar himself is due for punishment.*<sup>9</sup> Zophar is no doubt smarting from Job's sarcastic answer to him earlier: *"Surely, you are people with whom wisdom will die!"* (Job 12:2). To Zophar, it is obvious that Job has committed horrible wrongs—just look at what God has done to Job. To lump himself in a boat with those whom God would judge raises Zophar's ire. Bear in mind, as you ponder Zophar's heated response, that Job was equally insulted by his *friends*: *"These ten times you have insulted me. You are not ashamed to wrong me."* (Job 19:3).

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<sup>9</sup> *The NIV Study Bible*; ©1995 by The Zondervan Corporation; p. 747.



## What We Know Theologically about Man

What [is] this you know from old since a  
placing of man [or, Adam] upon earth?

Job  
20:4

Do you know this [that is to follow] [which has  
been true] from antiquity  
since the placing of Adam on [this] earth?

Surely, you know the following,  
which has been true from the beginning of time—since man was placed on this earth:

From this verse till the end of the chapter, we will have Zophar's presentation of what everyone should know to be true: *that is had been the settled course of events from the beginning of the world that the triumphing of the wicked would be short, and then proceeds to show this by striking images and examples. The point of his remarks is, that it was no matter how high a wicked man was exalted, he would be suddenly brought low; no matter what comforts he drew around him, they would be suddenly stripped away; no matter how much he obtained by oppression and fraud, he would not be permitted to enjoy it; and no matter how much he endeavoured to conceal his guilt, the heavens would reveal it, and would show his true character to the world.*<sup>10</sup>

First the other translations:

<i>The Emphasized Bible</i> JPS (Tanakh)	Knowest thou   this   from antiquity, From the placing of man upon earth:— Do you not know this, that from time immemorial, Since man was set on earth, The joy of the wicked has been brief, The happiness of the impious fleeting? (The rendering of the JPS requires vv. 4–5 together)
Keil and Delitzsch (revised)	Have you known this which is from everlasting, Since man was placed upon the earth; that the triumphing of the evil-doer is not long, And the joy of the godless is but for a moment? (what Zophar says requires both vv. 4–5 in Keil and Delitzsch's translation)
NASB	"Do you know this from of old, From the establishment of man on earth,..."
The Septuagint	Have you [not] known these things of old, from the time that man was set upon the earth?
<i>Young's Literal Translation</i>	This hast thou know from antiquity Since the placing of man on earth?

This verse begins with an interrogative and then the feminine singular demonstrative adjective (*this*) and the 2<sup>nd</sup> person singular, Qal perfect of *to know*. Literally, it is: *What this you know...?* This is equivalent to: *Certainly you know this* or *You know this, don't you?* It is a strong affirmation stated in the form of a question. We would often accomplish the same thing by using the negative: *Don't you know this?* What Job should know is not stated previously, but is to come in the subsequent verses.

There does not appear to be any reason to split this verse into two lines. We have the preposition minnîy, which appears to be a poetic form of min (p) [pronounced *min*], which means *from, away from, from off*. Strong's #4480 BDB #577. What follows is the masculine singular noun ʿad (טו) [pronounced *gahd*], which means *perpetuity, eternity*. Strong's #5703 BDB #723. With what remains, we have: *This you know from perpetuity, from [the] placing of man [or, Adam] upon [the] earth,...?* *Man* in this verse is ʾādām (אדם) [pronounced *aw-DAWM*], which means *a man, a human being, mankind, Adam*. Strong's #120 BDB #9.

Zophar sounds as though he is asking Job that what he said was what he knew from origin of man on this earth; however, what he will state is what they all *surely know* about man from the earliest past. This is at least the third time the wisdom of the elders is called upon (see Job 8:8 15:10).

Barnes gives the sense as: *Don't you know that this is has always happened from the beginning of the world, or that this is the invariable course of events. His purpose is to show that it was the settled arrangement of Providence that the wicked would be overtaken with signal calamity. It was so settled that Job ought not to be surprised that*

<sup>10</sup> Barnes' Notes; Job, Volume 1; F. C. Cook, editor; reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; p. 335.

it had occurred in his case. Zophar will go on to show that though a wicked man might rise high in honour, and obtain great wealth, yet that the fall would certainly come, and he would sink to a depth of degradation corresponding to the former prosperity....this has been known since creation—it has always been so.<sup>11</sup>

**That the exulting of the wicked [ones] from a  
near  
and a joy of [the] profane as far as a moment.**

Job  
20:5

**That the shouting [for joy] of the wicked [is]  
for a brief time  
and that the joy of the godless is for a moment.**

**That the celebrating of the wicked only lasts for a short time;  
the joy of the godless is but for a moment.**

Now Zophar states what he believes to be obvious, something which he assumes that Job has agreed with, something which has been true since the dawn of man:

<i>The Emphasized Bible</i>	That   the joy shout of the lawless   is short, and   the rejoicing of the impious   for a moment?
JPS (Tanakh)	The joy of the wicked has been brief, The happiness of the impious, fleeting?
Keil and Delitzsch (revised)	That the triumphing of the evil-doer is not long, And the joy of the godless is but for a moment?
NASB	That the triumphing of the wicked is short, And the joy of the godless momentary?
The Septuagint	But the mirth of the ungodly is a signal downfall, and the joy of transgressors is destruction;
<i>Young's Literal Translation</i>	That the singing of the wicked is short, And the joy of the profane for a moment,...

This verse appears to be a continuation of the previous. Zophar told Job that he has known something to be true from eternity past, and he gives Job the skinny on what he knows. He begins this verse with the explanatory preposition (*that, for*), followed by the feminine singular construct of *rânâh* (רָנָה) [pronounced *r<sup>h</sup>naw-NAW*], which means *joyful singing, shouting for joy, exultation*. It is the kind of shouting that men do after a victory or the close of a harvest. Strong's #7445 BDB #943. This is followed by the masculine plural adjective *râshâ'î* (רָשָׁעִים) [pronounced *raw-SHAWG*], which means *malevolent ones, lawless ones, criminals, the corrupt*. Strong's #7563 BDB #957. This is followed by the *mîn* preposition and the masculine singular adjective *qârôv* (קָרֵב) [pronounced *kaw-RO<sup>B</sup>V*], which means *near, contiguous, imminent, near in relation*. In relationship to time, this generally means *near* (see Job 17:12, where the *min* preposition is also used); however, in this context and this context only, it means *brief, short*. Strong's #7138 BDB #898. **The shouting for joy of the wicked ones [is] brief.** The meaning is clear—the wicked may enjoy moments of exultation and personal gratification, but such jubilation is brief and transitory.

The second line begins with *wâw* conjunction and the feminine singular of *sim<sup>h</sup>châh* (מְחָה) [pronounced *sim<sup>h</sup>-KHAU*], which means *joy, gladness, mirth*. Strong's #8057 BDB #970. Who this joy belongs to is the masculine singular of the adjective *chânêph* (חָנֵף) [pronounced *khaw-NAYF*], which means *profane, irreligious, godless, heathen, apostate*. Here, it stands in for a noun. Strong's #2611 BDB #338. This is followed by the preposition *'ad* (עַד) [pronounced *gahd*] which means *as far as, even to, up to, until*. This preposition is spelled somewhat differently in the Hebrew. Strong's #5704 BDB #723. This is followed by the masculine singular noun *rega'î* (רֵגַע) [pronounced *REH-gahg*], and it means *moment*. Strong's #7281 BDB #921. This gives us: **And [the] joy of the profane [is] until a moment.** The general idea presented by Zophar is that corrupt men may have a happiness based upon the possession of health, life, property, possessions, friends, occupation, power and reputation. However, this happiness for the wicked is transitory at best, and that God would give them what they deserved here on earth. In a short time, God would remove these things and leave such a man to his sorrow.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Partially paraphrased from *Barnes' Notes; Job, Volume 1*; F. C. Cook, editor; reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; p. 336.

<sup>12</sup> Paraphrased from *Barnes' Notes; Job, Volume 1*; F. C. Cook, editor; reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; p. 336.

All of Job's associates are well aware of how successful Job has been in the past. He had a large and prosperous family with a great many servants. They are counting all of this as a temporary situation which has since been corrected by God.

Now, that the prosperity of the corrupt is a temporary state of affairs is certainly true and is clearly supported in God's Word. *When I came to the sanctuary of God, I perceived their end. Certainly You have set them in slippery places; You then cast them down to destruction. How they are destroyed in a moment. They are utterly swept away by sudden terrors!* (Psalm 73:17–19). *I have seen a violent, wicked man spreading himself like a luxuriant tree in its native soil. Then he passed away, and lo, he was no more; I sought for him, but he could not be found* (Psalm 37:35–36). Bildad certainly agrees with this: *"So are the paths of all who forget God. The hope of the godless will perish."* (Job 8:3). And Eliphaz as well: *"For the company of the godless is barren and fire consumes the tents of the corrupt."* (Job 15:34). Even Job is in partial agreement with this: *"This also will be my salvation, for a godless man may not come before His presence."* (Job 13:16). However, the key is *when*: *How long will the wicked, O Jehovah, how long will the wicked exult? They pour forth words and they speak arrogantly. All who do wickedness vaunt themselves* (Psalm 94:3–4). God will deal with the godless at their deaths, as well as at the final judgement: *"For what is the hope of the godless when he is cut off—when God requires his life? Will God hear his cry when distress comes upon him? Will he take delight in the Almighty?"* (Job 27:8–10a).

<p><b>If [or <i>though</i>] ascends to the heavens his height and his head to the clouds reaches [out and touches].</b></p>	<p>Job 20:6</p>	<p><b>Though his height ascends to the heavens and his head touches the rain clouds.</b></p>
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**Even though his achievements go as high as the heavens  
and his reputation is in the clouds,**

This verse modifies the previous verse. It does not matter how successful Job has been in the past, even if his wealth and fame and person were exalted to the heavens. Also with this verse, it becomes clear that Zophar can be over-expressive and grandiose in his speeches. He speaks of the grandeur of the corrupt man reaching the heavens, although (v. 7), that man will perish and before forgotten, just like his own dung. If Zophar were an actor, this would be called *over-acting*. He is often *over-the-top* in his approach.

Other translations of this verse are as follows:

<p><i>The Emphasized Bible</i></p>	<p>&lt;Though his elevation mouth up to the heavens, and   his head   &lt;to the clouds&gt; doth reach&gt;</p>
<p>JPS (Tanakh)</p>	<p>Though he grows as high as the sky, His head reaching the clouds,...</p>
<p>Keil and Delitzsch (revised)</p>	<p>If his aspiration rises to the heavens, And he causes his head to touch the clouds:</p>
<p>NASB</p>	<p>"Though his loftiness reaches [lit., goes up to] the heavens, And his head touches the clouds,...</p>
<p>Owen's Translation</p>	<p>Though...mount up to the heavens his height and his head to the clouds reach.</p>
<p>The Septuagint</p>	<p>...although his gifts should go up to heaven, and his sacrifice reach the clouds.</p>

The first word is the hypothetical particle ʾîm (אִם) [pronounced *eem*], which means *if*. It can also be used as a conditional particle, and be properly rendered *if, though*. Strong's #518 BDB #49. Then we have the 3<sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect of ʿâlâh (עָלָה) [pronounced *gaw-LAWH*], which means *to go up, to ascend, to rise*. Strong's #5927 BDB #748. This is followed by the prepositional phrase *to the heavens*, and then the masculine singular noun sîy' (סִי'וֹ) [pronounced *see*], which means *elevation, height, loftiness*. It is found only here, but there are enough cognates to insure that this meaning is accurate. Although Keil and Delitzsch render this *aspiration*, the emphasis here is more upon *achievement*. Strong's #7863 BDB #673. With it is a 3<sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix. This gives us: *If [or, though] his height [or, achievement] ascends to the heavens,...*



The second line begins with a wâw conjunction and the subject *his head* followed by *to the [rain] clouds*. Then we have the 3<sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Hiphil imperfect of *nâgaʿ* (נָגַע) [pronounced *naw-GAHG*], which means *to touch, to reach out and touch*. Strong's #5060 BDB #619. The second line is: **And his head touches the rain clouds.**

It is not completely clear whether this belongs with the previous verse or with the next. Translators have taken it both ways. What Zophar is doing is negating all that Job has accomplished in his life or has been given in his life. He points to these things and says, *Even though you were a great man...* Zophar believes that Job's current state is a testimony to his true character and relationship with God.

There are times when it is unclear what exactly is the question or comment of Job's that Zophar is answering. Back in Job 14:10, Job asks the question, **"When a man dies and lies prostrate—when man expires, where is he?"** This was a small part of his long response to Zophar. In the next several verses, Zophar deals with that question of Job's. Zophar, in the following verses, tells us what happens to the evil man, which is the only important question to his own mind. Context (vv. 5–6), tell us that Zophar is referring to the man of iniquity—and in the following verses, he tells us that such a man will disappear from the face of the earth.

An interesting parallel passage, pointed out by various translations, is Isa. 14:13–14, which speaks of Satan's fall: **"But you said in your heart, 'I will ascend to the heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God, and I will sit on the mount of the assembly in the recesses of the north. I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.'"** Even though Zophar was referring to Job, and misapplying a false principle, one can't help but note the similarities between these two passages.

<b>Like his excrement, forever he will perish; those seeing him will say, Where [is] he?</b>	Job 20:7	<b>He will forever perish, like his excrement. Those seeing him will say, "Where [is] he?"</b>
<b>He will perish forever, just like his own excrement; and those who knew him will ask, "Where is he?"</b>		

Zophar now focuses in on Job's current state of affairs. The other translations read:

<i>The Emphasized Bible</i>	<Like his own stubble> shall he utterly perish,   They who had seen him   shall say, Where is he?
NASB	He perishes forever like his refuse; Those who have seen him will say, 'Where is he?'
The Septuagint	For when he seems to be now established, then will he utterly perish; and they that knew him will say, 'Where is he?'

There are not a lot of reasons for listing many of the translations for this verse. We begin with *like* or *as* and then we have *his gēl* (גֵּל) [pronounced *gayl*], which means *excrement, fecal matter, feces, dung*. My apologies to you if your name is *Gayle*. References to fecal matter in Scripture emphasize its temporality, worthlessness, filth and offensiveness. Strong's #1561 BDB #165. *Forever* is the lâmed preposition (*to, for*) and the masculine singular noun *nêtsach* (נֶצַח) [pronounced *NAY-tsahkh*], which means *eminence, enduring, everlastingness, perpetuity*; and it is generally rendered *forever*. Strong's #5331 BDB #664. The first verb is the 3<sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect of *ʾâḇad* (אַבַּד) [pronounced *awḇ-VAHD*], which means *to perish*. Strong's #6 BDB #1. This gives us: **Like his excrement, forever he will perish.** Civilized society has always done a lot in order to separate us from our fecal matter. Five minutes after defecation, it is as though it does not exist. Zophar is telling Job that he will go the way of his own fecal matter. He is politely telling Job that he is a pile of crap—which, given Job's health and physical appearance, is not far from an accurate, if not unsparing, description.

Keil and Delitzsch give us way too much information about how ancient man dealt with cow dung; however, if that sort of thing interests you, check out Keil & Delitzsch's *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson

Publishers, Inc.; Vol. 4, pp. 449–450. Although the information is really interesting shit, it is not exactly pertinent to this context.

We then have the masculine plural, Qal active participle of *to see* with the 3<sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix, which would be rendered *those seeing him*. Then we have, *they will say* followed by the content of what they will say. That is the interrogative ʾêy (׳י) [pronounced *āy*], which means *where*. Strong's #335 BDB #32. With this is the masculine singular suffix; it means, *where [is] he?* Our second line is: *And those seeing him will say, "Where [is] he?"* This is somewhat of a play on words.

Throughout these attacks upon Job, his three companions acknowledge his former state of prosperity, and several times speak of falling from where he was or being removed from his place of wealth. Bildad said, *"He is removed from his place."* (Job 8:18a). Zophar makes the same point here.

**Like a dream, he will fly away and they will not  
find him.  
And he will be chased away like a vision of  
night.**

Job  
20:8

**Like a dream, he will fly away and they will not  
find him;  
he will be chased away as a vision of the night.**

**He will disappear, as if he were a dream  
chased away like some vision of the night.**

The other translations for v. 8:

Keil and Delitzsch (revised)	Like a dream he flies away, and they cannot find him; And he is scared away as a vision of the night.
NASB	"He flies away like a dream, and they cannot find him; Even like a vision of the night he is chased away."
The Septuagint	Like a dream that has fled away, he will not be found; and he has fled like a vision of the night.
Young's Literal Translation	As a dream he fleeth, and they find him not, And he is driven away as a vision of the night.

Like the previous verse, the Hebrew is fairly simple and straightforward. You may wonder why I exegete at a time like this. We have run into verses which before were grossly mistranslated by almost every translator (Job 16:13 is an excellent example), and such a mistranslation threw a wrench into the interpretation of the passage. We begin with *like a dream* and then we have the 3<sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect of *to fly away*. Then we have the negative and the 3<sup>rd</sup> person masculine plural, Qal imperfect, 3<sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix of *mâtsâʾ* (מַצֵּא) [pronounced *maw-TSAW*] which does not mean *to find* as much as it means *to attain to, to detect, to happen upon, to come upon, to find unexpectedly, to discover*. *To find* is an acceptable rendering. Strong's #4672 BDB #592. *Like a dream, he will fly away, and they will not come upon him*. The idea is, the corrupt man will, at some point, be removed from this life, and all his influence will disappear as well, just as the various figures in a dream vanish. Some memory of them is retained for a short time, but often within five or ten minutes of waking, even all memory of them is gone. *In our dreams we seem to see objects, and when we awake, they vanish.*<sup>13</sup>

In the next line we have the *wâw* conjunction and the 3<sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Hophal imperfect of *nâdad* (נָדַד) [pronounced *naw-DAHD*], which means *to retreat, to flee, to depart, to stray, to wander, to flutter*. The Hophal is the passive of the Hiphil (causative stem) and is one of the rarest of the verb stems. There is never a hint of reflexive in this stem and the agent of the verb is often not given in the immediate context. Zodhiates writes: *The Hophal stem conveys at once both an active and passive sense, active with respect to the action being done, passive with respect to the object being made to do so.*<sup>14</sup> Most grammar books call it simply the causative passive

<sup>13</sup> Barnes' Notes; Job, Volume 1; F. C. Cook, editor; reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; p. 338.

<sup>14</sup> The Complete Word Study Old Testament; Dr. S. Zodhiates; p 2276.

stem. Nâdad, in the Hophal, means *to be cast out, to flee away, to be driven away*. Although I do not buy the meaning *to flee away*, the other two I believe are reasonably accurate (this verb is found in the Hophal only here and in II Sam. 23:6. Strong's #5074 BDB #622. Then we have *like a* and the masculine singular construct of *chizzâyôwn* (חִזַּיֹּון) [pronounced *khiz-zaw-YOHN*], which means *vision, revelation*. This does not *have* to have anything to do with divine revelation. Strong's #2384 BDB #303. This is followed by *of a night*, giving us: **And he is driven away like a vision of [the] night**. You wake up from a bad dream, and, in order to get back to sleep, you put the vision or the thoughts out of your mind. This is where Job is, says Zophar.

<p><b>An eye sees him and will not see him and not again will an eye behold him his place.</b></p>	<p>Job 20:9</p>	<p><b>And eye will see him, [then] it will not see him; in fact, the eye will never again behold his place.</b></p>
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**Those who formerly would see him, see him no more;  
in fact, no one will ever again see him in his usual places.**

This is a bit more difficult than the previous two verses; let's see what others have done with it:

<p><i>The Emphasized Bible</i></p>	<p>  The eye that hath scanned him   shall not do it again, Neither  any more  shall his place behold him;...</p>
<p>JPS (Tanakh)</p>	<p>Eyes that glimpsed him do so no more; They cannot see him in his place any longer.</p>
<p>Keil and Delitzsch (revised)</p>	<p>The eye has seen him, and never again, And his place beholds him no more.</p>
<p>NASB</p>	<p>"The eye which saw him sees him no more, And his place no longer beholds him."</p>
<p>Owen's Translation</p>	<p>An eye which saw him will see him no more; nor any more will (an eye) behold him his place.</p>
<p>The Septuagint</p>	<p>The eye has looked upon him, but will not [see him] again; and his place will no longer perceive him.</p>
<p><i>Young's Literal Translation</i></p>	<p>The eye hath seen him, and addeth not. And not again doth his place behold him.</p>

We begin this verse with *eye* followed by 3<sup>rd</sup> person feminine singular, Qal perfect, 3<sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix of *shâzaph* (שָׁזַף) [pronounced *shaw-ZAHFF*], which means *to catch sight of, to look on*. It is a rare verb found only twice in Job and once in Song of Solomon. Strong's #7805 BDB #1004. This is followed by the *wâw* conjunction, the negative particle and the 3<sup>rd</sup> person feminine singular, Hiphil imperfect of *yâçaph* (יָצַף) [pronounced *yaw-SAHPH*], which means *to add, to augment, to continue to do a thing*. There appears to be no difference between the Qal and the Hiphil meanings. Strong's #3254 BDB #414. This gives us: **An eye has seen him and does not continue [to see him]**. Zophar is going with his theme that the corrupt man has a place in this world, but he soon loses that place. We see this man for awhile, and then he suddenly disappears. Actually, here, Zophar as said little more than what Job had already said: **"The eye of him who sees me will behold me no more; your eyes will be on me, but I will no longer be here."** (Job 7:8).

The next line begins with the *wâw* conjunction, the negative and the adverb *ôwd* (עוֹד) [pronounced *gohd*], which means *still, yet, again, besides, in addition to, even yet*. Strong's #5750 BDB #728. This means *and not again, and not anymore, and no longer or and not yet*. This is followed by the 3<sup>rd</sup> person feminine singular, Qal imperfect, 3<sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix of *shûr* (שׁוּר) [pronounced *shour*], which means *to behold, to regard, to observe, to watch*. Strong's #7789 BDB #1003. What follows is *his place*. *Place* is the masculine singular noun *mâqôwm* (מָקוֹם) [pronounced *maw-ROHM*]. It means *place*. Strong's #4725 BDB #879. *Place* is not the subject of the verb (as per Keil and Delitzsch, the NASB, *The Emphasized Bible*), as *place* is a masculine singular and the verb is feminine singular. Also, *they* cannot be the subject. However, we do have a subject nearby—*eye*—and that subject makes sense. This gives us: **And no longer will [the eye] behold his place.**

The idea here is that people at one time observed this wicked man, but no more. They do not even observe where he lived. Recall the famous *Kilroy was here* from World War II? It is just the opposite—it is as though Kilroy was never there. For us, as all of mankind, we cannot imagine all of a sudden everything coming to a halt; that there is a complete cessation of everything. Young teens express this in their death-defying actions; men often tempt

fate in their driving. Rarely do they consider the consequences; and none really think that there will be an end to their existence. This is because God has placed eternity in our hearts—whether we are believers or unbelievers, agnostic or proudly atheistic—we do not conceive of an absolute finality. Regardless of what we say, our actions often belie that which is in our hearts. God put eternity in our souls and coming to the personal end of all things is inconceivable. Zophar, in this verse, has revealed an incredible short-sightedness for a man who ostensibly believes in God.

**His sons conciliate poor ones  
and his hands return his wealth.**

Job 20:10 **His sons reconcile [themselves with] the poor;  
and his hands return [to them] his substance.**

**His sons reconcile themselves with those he exploited  
and through them, he returns his wealth to its rightful owners.**

On the surface, this appears fairly straightforward; here's what we have:

<i>The Emphasized Bible</i>	His children   shall seek the favour of the poor, And   his own hand   shall give back his wealth.
JPS (Tanakh)	His sons ingratiate themselves with the poor; His own hands must give back his wealth.
Keil and Delitzsch (revised)	His children must appease the poor, And his hands give up his wealth.
NASB	"His sons favor [or, seek the favor of] the poor, And his hands give back his wealth."
REB	His sons will curry favour with the poor; his children will give back his wealth.
The Septuagint	Let his inferiors destroy his children, and let his hands kindle the fire of sorrow.
<i>Young's Literal Translation</i>	His sons do the poor oppress, And his hands give back his wealth.

The translations are fairly consistent. This begins with *his sons* and then we have the only portion of the verse which is moderately difficult: the 3<sup>rd</sup> person masculine plural, Piel imperfect of *râtsâh* (רָצָה) [pronounced *raw-TSAWH*] means *to be acceptable, to be pleased with, to enjoy*. This appears to be the only place where this is found in the Piel stem, and Gesenius gives the meaning as *to make anyone well pleased, to ask or to seek someone's favor, to conciliate or reconciles oneself to someone else*. The context here appears to indicate that he appropriated their wealth from those whom he made poor and his sons return that wealth to the poor. Strong's #7521 BDB #953. Those conciliated are the masculine plural of the adjective *dal* (דָּל) [pronounced *dahl*], and it means *weak, low, think, poor, frail, needy, helpless*. Strong's #1800 BDB #195. Here, it is used as a substantive. **His sons reconcile [with] the poor.**<sup>15</sup>

Now, one thing that might run through your head is that *Job doesn't have any sons*. This is a reference to any descendants or relatives of any kind. Whoever disposes of Job's property will be faced with returning the wealth to the rightful owners (in the eyes of Zophar. His use of the word *sons* here is simply by convention; recall that throughout his dissertation, he is referring to Job in the 3<sup>rd</sup> person.

The second line is interesting because it does not read *their hands* but *his hands*; so the wicked person of whom Zophar speaks, returns the wealth himself. The verb is the 3<sup>rd</sup> person feminine plural (to morphologically match the word *hands*)<sup>16</sup>, Hiphil imperfect of *shûb* (שׁוּב) [pronounced *shoo<sup>b</sup>*]; which means *to return, to turn, to turn back, to reminisce, to restore something, to bring back something, to revive, to recover something, to make restitution*. Strong's #7725 BDB #996. What he hands back or what he returns is the *ʾoh* (אוֹן) [pronounced *ohn*], which means *strength, power, vigor, substance, wealth*. Strong's #202 BDB #20. It refers to all that they have gathered. The wicked certainly appropriates his wealth from the sweat of the poor, and, in the end, to make amends, he

<sup>15</sup> This could also read *the poor reconcile with his sons*; however, that would make less sense and be difficult to interpret.

<sup>16</sup> You will note that the REB suggests *children* here, rather than *hands*. They simply call it the *probable reading* without giving us any more information. However, there is no reason to take their reading over *his hands*; and the verb is in agreement with *his hands*, whereas it would not be with *his children*.

attempts to return this ill-gotten gain.<sup>17</sup> Job acknowledges that such things occur (see Job 24:2–4), but he does not take the blame for any of this. He does not acknowledge that he gained any wealth through illegal or immoral means.

**His bones are full of his youthful vigors  
and with him upon dust she lies down.**

Job  
20:11

**His bones were full of his youthful vigor;  
but [now] it lies down with him in the dust.**

**At one time, his bones were filled with youthful vigor;  
but now it lies down with him in the dust.**

Others have rendered this verse thus:

NASB

“His bones are full of his youthful vigor, But it lies down with him in the dust.”

*Young's Literal Translation*

His bones have been full of his youth, And with him on the dust it liveth down.

Of the five or six translations which I quote from, they were almost in word-for word agreement on this verse, including the NKJV. However, the KJV reads: *His bones are full of the sin of his youth, which shall lie down with him in the dust.* Note that what we find in italics in the KJV is not really there. Because of the difficulty in interpreting this verse, many older translations and exegetes follow the lead of the KJV.<sup>18</sup> We begin with the subject *his bones* followed by the 3<sup>rd</sup> person plural, Qal perfect of *mālê* (מָלֵא) [pronounced *maw-LAY*], which means *to fill, to make full, to be full*. Strong's #4390 BDB #569. What they are filled with is the masculine plural noun *ʿălûwmîym* (עֲלֻמִּים) [pronounced *uh-loo-MEEM*], which means *youth, youthful, vigor*. Strong's #5934 BDB #761. This has with it a 3<sup>rd</sup> person masculine suffix. *His bones are full of his youth*; or, *His bones have been filled with his youth*. Although the translations are in synch, the interpretation of this is more difficult. There is no need to attribute some sin or bad behavior to what we find here, as that is by interpretation of the King James' translators. The idea is that, at one time, the person of whom Zophar is speaking, was once youthful and vigorous; however, now things have changed.

The second line begins with the *wâw* conjunction followed by *with him*; followed by *upon the dust*; followed by the 3<sup>rd</sup> person feminine singular (or, possibly the 2<sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular), Qal imperfect of *shâka*<sup>b</sup>v (שָׁכַב) [pronounced *shaw-KAH<sup>b</sup>V*], which means *to lie down*. Strong's #7901 BDB #1011. None of the nouns of this verse are feminine singular's. The second line is: *And with him, upon dust, she [it] [or, you] lies down*. Although this is a very simplistic way of putting it, a perfect tense followed by an imperfect generally means a past tense followed by a present or future tense. It is an accomplished act followed by something whose completion is not in view. The wicked man was once youthful, strong and vigorous; now all of that exuberance lies with him in the dust. The statement appears to be referring first to the grave; however, Zophar is no doubt referring directly to Job as he sits before them in the dust. Just *to whom* the 3<sup>rd</sup> person feminine singular refers to is unclear, as the person referred to is continually in the 3<sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular and the two nouns from this first line are plural (*bones* is feminine plural and *youthful vigors* is masculine plural). The most reasonable subject of the verb would be the *body* of the corrupt person. Another explanation is that throughout this chapter, we have a mismatching of gender and number, which could indicate that Zophar is not fluent in the language that he is speaking in, causing him to make several blunders throughout. This should not greatly affect our interpretation of this verse, which simply refers to a man whose body was once youthful and strong, but now has fallen into disrepair. That there is an implication of sin which had a hand in his downfall is not unreasonable, even though it is not specifically named in this verse (it is certainly found throughout the rest of what Zophar has to say).

<sup>17</sup> Barnes puts a different kind of a spin on this—he treats this as though Job's descendants must turn to the poor for their sustenance. However, the poor is plural in the first line and his (of his hands) is singular. We would expect their hands instead, if the poor are supplying Job's descendants with their means of existence. Finally, the word to return, to restore, to make restitution is not suited to the poor providing for Job's descendants, but better suited for Job's descendants returned Job's wealth to the poor from whom it was allegedly taken.

<sup>18</sup> This would include Dr. Good, the Vulgate and even Barnes leans toward this referring to the secret sins of youth which wear down the body of the adult. See *Barnes' Notes; Job, Volume 1*; F. C. Cook, editor; reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; p. 339.



### My Translation vs. the REB (Job 20:4–11)

Both the NEB and the REB transpose vv. 10–11 so that this passage flows more evenly. I have quoted from my translation and from the REB translation below:

My Translation	The REB
<p>Do you know this [that is to follow] [which has been true] from antiquity since the placing of man on earth? That the shouting [for joy] of the wicked [is] for a brief time and that the joy of the godless is for a moment. Though his height ascends to the heavens and his head touches the rain clouds, he will forever perish, like his excrement. Those seeing him will say, "Where [is] he?" Like a dream, he will fly away and they will not find him; he will be chased away as a vision of the night; and eye will see him, [and then] it will not see him; in fact, the eye will never again behold his place. His sons reconcile [themselves with] the poor; and his hands return [to them] his substance. His bones were full of youthful vigor; but [now] it lies down with him in the dust.</p>	<p>Surely you know that since time began, since mortals were first set on the earth, this has been true: the triumph of a wicked person is short-lived, the glee of one who is godless lasts but a moment! Though in his pride he stands high as the heavens, and his head touches the clouds, he will be swept utterly away like his own dung, and those used to seeing him will say, 'Where is he?' He will fly away like a dream and be found no more, gone like a vision of the night; eyes which glimpsed him will do so no more and never again will they see him in his place. The youthful vigour which filled his bones will lie with him in the earth. His sons will curry favour with the poor; his children will give back their wealth.</p>

Now, we don't have any evidence that the original was differently ordered as we find in the REB. However, their ordering does appeal more to our western sensibilities. Since our minds tend toward chronology, we expect to see the end of the corrupt man, and then we expect to see his children return his wealth. However, in the Hebrew, v. 11 seems to be a conclusion to what had come previously. I include the REB version because it is an interesting take on this passage and most will find its ordering to be more compelling.

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### Zophar's Eating Evil Analogy

If is sweet in his mouth, evil,  
he hides her under his tongue.

Job  
20:12

Though evil is sweet in his mouth,  
he hides it under his tongue.

He finds evil to be sweet to his taste,  
although he keeps it hidden under his tongue.

With this verse, Zophar launches into what he thinks to be a rather cleaver analogy or parable which runs, more or less, all the way to v. 18, and is alluded to up to v. 23. In this passage, Job is *likened to an epicure; he keeps hold of wickedness as long as possible, like a delicate morsel that is retained in the mouth...and seeks to enjoy it to the very last.*<sup>19</sup> Zophar begins with Job getting the taste of evil, and then just enjoying the hell out of that evil taste. However, what comes with this taste are the various consequences of the enjoyment of evil. He may have even gotten the idea from Eliphaz, who said, "[Man drinks iniquity like water.](#)" (Job 15:16b).

Let's first begin with this verse; the other translations first:

<sup>19</sup> Keil & Delitzsch's *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. 4, p. 451.

<i>The Emphasized Bible</i>	<Though   a sweet taste in his mouth   be given by vice, Though he hide it under his tongue;...>
JPS (Tanakh)	Though evil is sweet to his taste, And he conceals it under his tongue;...
Keil and Delitzsch (revised)	If wickedness tasted sweet in his mouth, He hid it under his tongue.
NASB	Though evil is sweet in his mouth, And he hides it under his tongue.
<i>Young's Literal Translation</i>	Though he doth sweeten evil in his mouth, Doth hide it under his tongue.

We begin this first line with the hypothetical particle *if, though*. At the end of the first line, we find the subject of the sentence, *râ 'âh* (רָא'אֵה) [pronounced *raw-GAW*], which means *evil, misery, distress, disaster, injury, aberration, iniquity, that which is morally reprehensible*. Strong's #7451 BDB #949. The verb is the 3<sup>rd</sup> person feminine singular Hiphil imperfect of *mâthaq* (מָתַחַק) [pronounced *maw-THAHK*], which means *to become sweet, to be sweet, to be pleasant*. Strong's #4985 & #4988 BDB #608. This is followed by *in his mouth*, giving us: **Though [or, if] evil became sweet in his mouth,...**

The second line continues this thought, launching immediately into the verb (the 3<sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Hiphil imperfect, 3<sup>rd</sup> person feminine singular suffix) *kâchad* (כָּחַד) [pronounced *kaw-KHAHD*] means *to hide, to conceal, to efface*. Strong's #3582 BDB #470. This means *he [the wicked man of whom Zophar speaks] hides her [i.e., evil]*. This verse ends with *under his tongue*, giving us: **He hides it under his tongue**. The interpretation is easy enough: the wicked person that Zophar is speaking about—a 3<sup>rd</sup> person thinly hidden as Job—has tasted evil and quite likes it. However, he has hidden it under his tongue. It is obvious to the three companions that Job has tasted evil, that he likes it, and that whatever form of evil that it is, it remains hidden under his tongue.

Barnes: *The sense of this and the following verses is, that though a man may have pleasure in indulgence in sin, and may find happiness of a certain kind in it, yet that the consequences will be better—as if the food which he ate should become like gall, and he should cast it up with loathing. There are many sins which, from the laws of our nature, are attended with a kind of pleasure. Such, for illustration, are the sins of gluttony and of intemperance in drinking; the sins of ambition and vanity; the sins of amusement and of fashionable life. They give the result of temporary pleasure followed either by lust for more or revulsion for what has been taken in. None of these sins are attributed to Job—Zophar believes him to be guilty of exploiting the poor for his own financial benefit.*

We have a physical illustration of this. In Num. 11, when Moses was leading Israel through the desert to the Land of Promise prior to the 38½ *silent* years, they complained to Moses for the 87<sup>th</sup> time. This time, their complaint was that they had no meat to eat. God brought them quail, telling them, **"You will eat [for]...a whole month, until it comes out of your nostrils and becomes loathsome to you; because you have rejected Jehovah, Who is among you and you have wept before Him, saying, 'Why did we ever leave Egypt' "** (Num. 11:19a, 20). **The end result was that, While the meat was still between their teeth, before it was chewed, the anger of Jehovah was kindled against the people, and Jehovah struck the people with a very severe plague** (Num. 11:33).

**He has compassion over her and he does not  
let her go  
and he holds her in a midst of his palate.**

Job  
20:13

**He has compassion concerning it and he does  
not forsake it [evil];  
and he holds it in the midst of his mouth.**

**He savors evil and will not relinquish it;  
he retains it in his mouth.**

Let's first see what others have done with this verse:

<i>The Emphasized Bible</i>	Though he spare it, and will not let it go, But retain it in the midst of his mouth>
<i>God's Word™</i>	Though he savors it and won't let go of it and he holds it on the roof of his mouth,...
JPS (Tanakh)	Though he saves it, does not let it go, holds it inside his mouth,...
Keil and Delitzsch (revised)	He carefully cherished it and did not let it go, And retained it in his palate:
NASB	<i>Though he desires [lit., has compassion on] it and will not let it go, But holds it in his mouth [lit., palate].</i>

The Septuagint	...though he will not spare it, and will not leave it, but will keep it in the midst of his throat;...
Young's Literal Translation	Hath pity on it, an doth not forsake it, And keep it back in the midst of his palate,...

As you see, most of the translations took the *though* from the previous verse and added it in here as well. This verse actually begins with the 3<sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect of *châmal* (חָמַל) [pronounced *khaw-MAHL*] means *to spare, to have compassion*. Generally speaking, this is used when someone is about to be killed, but the person about to do the killing has compassion upon his victim and spares him. Here, we either have Zophar using this word in an unusual way or we have a most primitive use of this word; I reject the latter option, as this word is found four times in the book of Job (6:10 16:13 20:13 27:22). Strong's #2550 BDB #328. The idea is that Job has taken a taste of this evil, has begun to chew on it, likes it a great deal, and now does not want to give it up. He should spit it out and eschew it, but he cannot—he spares evil. This is followed by the preposition *upon, over, concerning* with the feminine singular suffix. **He has compassion concerning it [evil]...**

The second line is continued with a *wâw* conjunction and a negative and the 3<sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect, 3<sup>rd</sup> person feminine singular suffix of *ʿâzaḅ* (עָזַב) [pronounced *aw-ZAḅV*], which means *to leave, to forsake*. Strong's #5800 BDB #736. **And he will not leave [or, forsake] her [evil].**

The second line begins with the *wâw* conjunction and the 3<sup>rd</sup> person masculine, Qal imperfect, 3<sup>rd</sup> person feminine singular of *mânaʿ* (מָנַע) [pronounced *maw-NAHḠ*], which means *to keep back, to restrain, to withhold, to hold back*. Strong's #4513 BDB #586. This is followed by *in a midst of* and the masculine singular noun *chêk* (חֵךְ) [pronounced *khayk*], which means *palate or the interior of one's mouth*. The Jews had another word for mouth, which generally referred to the opening of the mouth or made reference to what was said. This refers to the interior of the mouth or to a portion of the interior of the mouth. Our word for *mouth* can stand for either *the opening to or the interior of the mouth*. Strong's #2441 BDB #335. This gives us: **And he holds her [i.e., evil] in the midst of his mouth's interior.** In this analogy of Zophar's, Job has gotten evil in his mouth and it is just too sweet to let go. He hides it under his tongue (1) so that Zophar and his associates do not realize that it is there; (2) so that Zophar and his associates do not know what it is; and (3) so that Job can enjoy this evil for as long as he desires to.

**His bread in his intestines is turned;  
gall of asps in him.**

Job  
20:14

**His food in his intestines has been changed  
[into] the gall of the asp within him.**

**This evil which he has taken in as food has been changed into the poison of the Egyptian cobra within him.**

Let's first see what others have done:

The Emphasized Bible	His food    in his stomach  is changed, The gall of adders within him.
JPS (Tanakh)	His food in his bowels turns Into asps' venom within him.
Keil and Delitzsch (revised)	His bread is now changed in his bowels, It is the gall of vipers within him.
NASB	Yet his food in his stomach is changed To the venom [lit., gall] of cobras within him.
The Septuagint	...yet he will not at all be able to help himself; the gall of an asp is in his stomach.
Young's Literal Translation	His food in his bowels is turned, The bitterness of asps is in his heart.

We begin this verse with *lechem* (לֶחֶם) [pronounced *LEH-khem*], which means *bread* literally. However, it often has the wider application of being translated *food*. Strong's #3899 BDB #536. This food is located in the masculine plural of *mê'iyim* (מַעֲיִים) [pronounced *may-GEEM*], which means *internal organs, inward parts, intestines, bowels*. Strong's #4578 BDB #588. The verb is the 3<sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Niphal perfect pausal of *hâphak* (הָפַךְ) [pronounced *haw-FAHK*], which means *to turn, to overturn*; in the Niphal, it means *to turn aside, to turn oneself, to change oneself, to turn against, to be overturned*. In this case, the food that Job had eaten and swallowed the evil—has been changed. Strong's #2015 BDB #245.

In the second line we have what the food was changed into. We begin with the feminine singular construct of *môrâh* (מֹרָה) [pronounced *m'roh-RAW*], which means *bitter thing, gall, poison*. This generally refers to the bitter, yellowish-green fluid which the liver secretes; however, here, it refers to the poison of the asp. Strong's #4846 BDB #601. In Job's previous answer to Zophar, he says, speaking to God, "[For You list bitter things against me and You cause me to inherit the iniquities of my youth.](#)" Zophar, ever since hearing this word that Job used, has been devising this great analogy to use. God lists these bitter things against Job—well, it is these bitter things which evil has turned into in Job's stomach. This is why Zophar did not use the word *poison* or *venom*. The noun to which this construct is affixed is *pethen* (פֶּתֶן) [pronounced *PEH-then*], which means *poisonous snakes, likely asps (Egyptian cobras)*. Strong's #6620 BDB #837. By way of historical context, the bite of the asp was deadly in the ancient world, and incurable. *The sight became immediately dim after the bite—a swelling took place, and pain was felt in the stomach, followed by stupor, convulsions, and death.*<sup>20</sup>

This is followed by *in his* and then we have the masculine singular noun *qereb* (קֶרֶב) [pronounced *KEH-reb*], which means *midst, inward part*. With the *bêyth* preposition, it often means *in the midst of, among, into the midst of* (after a verb of motion). Strong's #7130 BDB #899. This gives us: [His food in his intestines has been changed \[into the\] gall of asps in his midst.](#) God has not listed bitter things against Job—Job's love and consumption of evil, according to Zophar, has resulted in that evil turning into cobra venom in his own stomach.

Is the principle true? Certainly. Prov. 20:17 reads: [Bread obtained by falsehood is sweet to a man, but afterward his mouth will be filled with gravel.](#) Also see Rev. 10:9. And more generally: [Your ways and your deeds have brought these things to you. This is your evil. How bitter! How it has touched your heart!](#) (Jer. 4:18). It is an accurate thought—that sin might seem pleasurable to take part in, but it results in bitterness and destruction of the soul—but this is misapplied to Job.

**Wealth he swallows down and so he vomits it up;  
from his belly causes to dispossess it, God.**

Job  
20:15

**He swallows riches and then vomits them up;  
God dispossess them [i.e., these riches] from his belly.**

**He engulfs wealth and riches, but then vomits them up;  
God casts these things out from his digestive system.**

Zophar finds himself on a roll with the analogy and exploits it to the maximum. Here is how others have handled this particular verse:

JPS (Tanakh)	The riches he swallows he vomits; God empties it out of his stomach.
Keil and Delitzsch (revised)	He has swallowed down riches and now he spits them out; God will drive them out of his belly.
NASB	"He swallows riches, But will vomit them up; God will expel them from his belly.
The Septuagint	Wealth unjustly collected will be vomited up; a messenger will drag him out of his house.
Young's Literal Translation	Wealth he hath swallowed, and doth vomit it. From his belly God driveth it out.

The first word is the oft used word *chayil* (חַיִל) [pronounced *CHAH-yil*], which means *efficiency, army, strength, valour, power, might*; as well as that which is gotten through strength—i.e., *wealth, substance*. The implication here is not that Job was wealthy, but that he got his wealth through his power and might. Strong's #2428 BDB #298. This is followed by the 3<sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal perfect of *bâla'* (בָּלָא) [pronounced *baw-LAHG*], which means *to engulf, to swallow up, to swallow down, to gormandize*. You might have the most precious dog or cat, but put them down in front of some real meat and see how they react. They will eat with the eagerness and voracity of a wild beast. This is the idea behind this word. Strong's #1104 BDB #118. The picture is of a multi-national corporation which swallows up smaller organizations as if they were nothing. The picture that Zophar is painting

<sup>20</sup> Quoted and paraphrased from *Barnes' Notes; Job, Volume 1*; F. C. Cook, editor; reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; p. 340. He adds, by way of description, that the snake was about a foot long, two inches in circumference, and colored black and white.

is one of Job, as an unscrupulous business man, taking advantage of the poor and downtrodden in order to build up his own riches.

This is followed by a wâw consecutive and then the 3<sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect, 3<sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix of qôw' (קֹו') [pronounced *koh*], which means *to vomit*. Strong's #6958 (& #7006) BDB #883. For whatever reason, the New Englishman's Hebrew Concordance of the Old Testament lists this as a Hiphil imperfect. I don't know that the translation is any different.

Then we have the preposition *from, out from, out of* and feminine singular noun *beṭen* (בֶּטֶן) [pronounced *BEH-ten*], which should be rendered *belly, stomach* when in reference to a man. Strong's #990 BDB #105. Zophar, like the others, does not really respond directly to what Job has said (apart from the previous verse, where it becomes apparent what inspired this analogy); but he occasionally will refer back to a word which Job has used; that's what we have here. Job used this word back in Job 19:17 (which you will find in my exegesis; it is unlikely that you will find this word in your English Bible). The verb is the 3<sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Hiphil imperfect, 3<sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix of yârash (יָרַשׁ) [pronounced *yaw-RAHSH*], which means *to possess, to take possession of, to occupy [all] geographical area—by driving out the previous occupants, to inherit, to dispossess*. In the Hiphil, it means *to cause to possess, to cause to inherit, to cause to dispossess*. Strong's #3423 BDB #439. God is the last word in this verse, the subject of the sentence—*He swallows down wealth [implication is that it was ill-gotten through Job's strength] and he vomits it [i.e., his wealth] up; God causes his belly to dispossess it*. Zophar's analogy tells Job that now Job is paying the piper. He took in all these riches and property through illegitimate means (as Zophar supposes), and now God expects Job to pay for his evil. Job has vomited up these riches. *The idea is, that he shall lose that which he has acquired, and that it will be attended with loathing. All this is to a great extent true still, and may be applied to those who aim to accumulate wealth, and to lay up ill gotten gold. It will be ruinous to their peace; and the time will come when it will be looked on with inexpressible loathing. Zophar...applied this to Job, and inferred, that since it was a settled maxim, that such would be the result of the ill-gotten gain of a wicked man.* To Zophar, the present state of Job stood as irrefutable testimony to his wickedness and greed in business practices.<sup>21</sup>

**Poison of asps he will suck,  
will kill him a tongue of a viper.**

Job  
20:16

**He sucks in the poison of asps;  
the tongue of a viper will kill him.**

**He takes in the poison of the asp;  
and the striking of the viper kills him.**

Let's first see what others have done:

<i>The Emphasized Bible</i>	<The poison of adders> shall he suck, The tongue of the viper shall slay him;...
JPS (Tanakh)	He sucks the poison of asps; The tongue of the viper kills him.
Keil and Delitzsch (revised)	He sucked in the poison of vipers, The tongue of the adder slays him.
NASB	"He sucks the poison of cobras; The viper's tongue slays him."
The Septuagint	And let him suck the poison of serpents, and let the serpent's tongue slay him.
<i>Young's Literal Translation</i>	Gall of asps he sucketh, Slay him doth the tongue of a viper.

The first word of this verse was not the one from v. 14. It is the masculine singular construct of rô'sh (רֹאשׁ) [pronounced *rohsh*], which is translated *gall* in the KJV, and which Barnes claims is a bitter and poisonous herb—probably from a poppy. Here, and in Deut. 32:33, it is associated with a snake; therefore, we could generalize that this is an organic poison at best; but not necessarily exclusively from plants. Strong's #7219 BDB #912. The snake is the same as we had in v. 14—an asp or an Egyptian cobra. Then we have the verb—the 3<sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect pausal of yânaq (יָנַק) [pronounced *yaw-NAHK*], which means *to suck*. Strong's #3243 BDB #413. Zophar thinks that things are going really well. He has come up with this marvelous analogy and he is running full speed with it. In his mind, Job thinks that he has swallowed riches (v. 15), but in

<sup>21</sup> Quoted and paraphrased from *Barnes' Notes; Job, Volume 1*; F. C. Cook, editor; reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; p. 340.



reality, Job has sucked down the poison of an asp. Zophar does not quite grasp the concept of subtlety and nuance. **He sucks in the poison of asps.**

The second line begins with the verb—the 3<sup>rd</sup> person feminine singular, Qal imperfect, 3<sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix of *hârag* (אָרַג) [pronounced *haw-RAHG*] means *to kill, to slay*. Strong's #2026 BDB #246. What kills the recalcitrant is the feminine singular construct of *lâshôwn* (לָשׁוֹן) [pronounced *law-SHOHN*], which means *tongue*. Strong's #3956 BDB #546. What follows is a different word than we have had before: the masculine singular noun *ʿeph<sup>er</sup>eh* (אֶפְרַיִם) [pronounced *ef<sup>er</sup>-GEH*], which means *a kind of viper*. It is only found here and in Isa. 39:6 59:5.\* Barnes suggests that this is the most common and venomous of the serpents to be found in Northern Africa and South-western Asia. They are two feet long, about as thick around as a man's arm, had have quick and penetrating poison, known to cause death within 15 minutes. They are beautifully spotted with yellow and brown, and sprinkled over with blackish specks. They have a large mouth and will inhale a large quantity of air, which they eject, which makes a very loud sound.<sup>22</sup> Strong's #660 BDB #821. This gives us: **The tongue of a viper will kill him.** This does not mean that Zophar believed that the tongue of the viper was the deadly part of contact with the snake. As it is known today, the poison is ejected through the groove or orifice in one of the snake's teeth. The tooth lies flat on the roof of the snake's mouth, but is elevated when the snake bites, penetrating the flesh of its victim.<sup>23</sup> Whether Zophar knew this or not is immaterial—bear in mind that he was not inspired when he spoke.

Moses will use a similar analogy to Zophar's which he appropriately applies to gen X in his song: **"Their wine is the venom of serpents and the cruel poison of cobras."** (Deut. 32:33).

Zophar is no good with subtlety he has totally beat this analogy to death, and has really said very little in the meantime. Job thinks that he is gulping down riches, but all the time, it has been the poison of snakes which will now kill him.

**He will not look in rivers—  
divisions of torrents of honey and curds.**

Job  
20:17

**He will not look upon the rivers—  
the divisions of torrents of honey and butter.**

**He will not feast his eyes upon the rivers—  
the streams of honey and butter.**

With v. 17, Zophar will, more or less, leave his analogy to Job's eating evil, but not entirely. Even here, the *honey and curds* is related to food (obviously), and he will make mention throughout the next several verses to his analogy, returning to it, even though, quite frankly, it simply is not a good analogy to Job and what Job has allegedly done.

Others have translated this verse as follows:

Bullinger	He shall not see the flowing rivers, the flowing brooks of honey and butter.
<i>The Emphasized Bible</i>	Let him not see in the channels The flowings of torrents of honey and milk.
<i>God's Word™</i>	He won't be able to drink from the streams or from the rivers of honey and buttermilk.
JPS (Tanakh)	Let him not enjoy the streams, The rivers of honey, the brooks of cream.
Keil and Delitzsch (revised)	He will not delight himself in streams, Like to rivers and brooks of honey and cream.
KJV	He shall not see the rivers, the floods, the brooks of honey and butter.
NASB	"He does not look at the streams, The rivers flowing with honey and curds."
NKJV	He will not see the streams, The rivers flowing with honey and cream.
NLT	He will never again enjoy abundant streams of olive oil or rivers of milk and honey.
REB	Not for him to swill down rivers of cream or torrents of honey and curds;
The Septuagint	Let him not see the milking of the pastures nor the pastures of honey and butter.
TEV	He will not live to see rivers of olive oil or streams that flow with milk and honey.
<i>Young's Literal Translation</i>	He looketh not on rivulets, Flowing of brooks of honey and butter.

<sup>22</sup> Quoted and paraphrased from *Barnes' Notes; Job, Volume 1*; F. C. Cook, editor; reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; p. 341.

<sup>23</sup> From *Barnes' Notes; Job, Volume 1*; F. C. Cook, editor; reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; pp. 340–341.

With this verse, Zophar appears to leave the eating analogy and moves onto what Job will no longer do (however, he will revisit this analogy from time to time in subsequent verses). Like his two companions, Zophar continues to couch all of this in the 3<sup>rd</sup> person. This begins in the Hebrew with the 3<sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect apocopated verb *to see*, preceded by the negative. The apocopation means that the end of the verb has been cut off, and this signals that the volition of the speaker is involved. Often this is translated with a *may* or *let*. This is followed by the *bêyth* preposition, which usually means *in, into*. Then we have the feminine plural noun *p̄laggâh* (פִּלְגָה) [pronounced *p̄lahg-GAW*], *stream, division*. This word is found only in Judges 5:15–16 and here. There are some very similar Hebrew words which mean *streams, channels, canals* (see Strong's #6388); and there is a very similar word which varies only by a vowel point that means *division* (Strong's #6391). It is not unreasonable that this word is used in these two different ways—streams dividing up a country into smaller territories. Bullinger does not treat this as an additional noun, but as a modifying word. He renders it *flowing* and applies it to both of the nouns in this verse. However, its use in Judges 5 has nothing to do with water and everything to do with *divisions* of the tribe of Reuben. Strong's #6390 BDB #811. **Let him not look into streams.** There is something intensely pleasurable about standing on the bank of a river and watching the river flow. The idea is that Job has accumulated all of this wealth, but the end result is that he will not be able to look out over what he has accumulated and enjoy it.

Rather than this ending one line and beginning another, I would think that the em dash would be more appropriate. This is followed by the masculine plural construct of *nâhâr* (נָהָר) [pronounced *naw-HAWR*], which means *stream, river*. This is the most common word for *river* in the Hebrew; although the KJV also translates it *floods* as well. Strong's #5104 BDB #625. This is affixed to the masculine plural construct of *nachal* (נַחַל) [pronounced *NAHKH-al*], which means *brooks, torrents*. Strong's #5158 BDB #636. This is followed by the masculine singular noun *d<sup>eb</sup>vash* (דְּבַשׁ) [pronounced *d<sup>eb</sup>VAHSH*], which means *honey*. It is given this name because of its color. You may recall that the Land of Promise is often referred to as a land flowing with milk and *honey*? This is the word for *honey*. Barnes suggests that this word is also used for a grape product, wherein grapes are boiled down to the consistency of molasses and used as an article of food (I guess it is kind of like an unsweetened jam). At the time that he wrote, he said that 2/3<sup>rds</sup> of the grapes in Syria were used to make this food, which is called, by the Arabs *dibs*. This is not too different from the Hebrew word, which is *d<sup>eb</sup>vash* (דְּבַשׁ) [pronounced *d<sup>eb</sup>VAHSH*]; for all intents and purposes, they are equivalent words. Strong's #1706 BDB #185. We have the *wâw* conjunction and then the other item of food mentioned is the feminine singular noun *chem<sup>en</sup>âh* (חֶמֶן אֶה) [pronounced *kheh-MAW*], which refers to some sort of a milk product—probably butter, yogurt or cottage cheese (I believe that Thieme suggested ice cream back when it was found back in Judges 5:25, but that seems pretty doubtful to me). Many of the translations obviously suggest *butter*, which is also reasonable. Strong's #2529 BDB #326. The images introduced here by Zophar are images of prosperity and the good life, so to speak. The river or stream flowing with honey and butter, which speaks of the delicacies and perks of wealth. There are things that we take for granted today—spices, sweeteners, condiments, milk products—things which were great delicacies in the ancient world, primarily available to men of means. Zophar's intent here was to indicate that Job would not ever truly enjoy these things which he had accumulated, as he accumulated them by immoral means.

**Returning gain and he does not swallow down  
like [or, in] wealth of his compensation, and he  
will not enjoy.**

Job  
20:18

**He returns the toil [of his labors] and does not  
swallow [it] down.  
And he will not enjoy the gain of his trading.**

**He is unable to profit from the toil of his work and he returns it;  
he does not even enjoy the wealth accumulated through commerce.**

With this verse, we enter into some difficult territory again. Others have rendered this:

*The Emphasized Bible*

<In vain> he toiled, he shall not swallow, <Like wealth to be restored> in which he cannot exult.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>24</sup> Again, you will notice that Rotherham is following the lead of the Septuagint. What he is actually doing, however, is following the textual criticism of Dr. C. D. Ginsburg; which explains why Rotherham will choose one reading over another.

God's Word™	He will give back what he earned without enjoying it. He will get no joy from the profits of his business because he crushed and abandoned the poor.
JPS (Tanakh)	He will give back the goods unswallowed; The value of the riches, undigested.
Keil and Delitzsch (revised)	Giving back that for which he labored, he will not swallow it; He will not rejoice according to the riches he has gotten.
KJV	That which he labored for shall he restore, and shall not swallow <i>it</i> down; according to <i>his</i> substance <i>shall</i> the restitution <i>be</i> , and he shall not rejoice <i>in it</i> .
NASB	"He returns what he has attained And cannot swallow <i>it</i> ; As to the riches of his trading, He cannot even enjoy <i>them</i> ."
NKJV	He will restore that for which he labored, And will not swallow <i>it</i> down; From the proceeds of business He will get no enjoyment.
Owen's Translation	He will give back the fruit of his toil and will not swallow it down. From the profit of his trading, he will go no enjoyment.
The Septuagint	He has labored unprofitably and in vain, <i>for</i> wealth of which he will not taste; [it is] as a lean thing, unfit for food, which he cannot swallow.
Young's Literal Translation	He is giving back <i>what</i> he labored for, And doth not consume <i>it</i> ; As a bulwark is his exchange, and he exults not.

I included here the KJV and the NKJV, so that you may compare and contrast. Note that the ancient translators of the KJV added quite a number of words to this verse in order to make the translation palpable. The NKJV did not place the words in the same order as they are found in the Hebrew (something which the KJV attempted to do); and was therefore able to better convey the meaning of the verse without all the additional words.

This may take awhile to unravel. We begin with the masculine singular, Hiphil participle of *shûw* (שׁוּב) [pronounced *shoo<sup>b</sup>v*]; which appears to be Zophar's favorite verb. It means *to return, to turn, to turn back, to reminisce, to restore something, to bring back something, to revive, to recover something, to make restitution*. In the Hiphil (the causative) stem, it can mean *to be caused to return, to bring, to be caused to turn back mentally, reminisce, to return something, to restore, to bring back, to regain, to recover, to make restitution, reconsider, think again, to be caused to return*. Generally, to translate a participle into the English, we often simply add the *-ing* ending to it. Strong's #7725 BDB #996. What Job is said to be caused to return is the masculine singular noun *yâgâ* (יָגָא) [pronounced *yaw-GAWĠ*], which means *gain, the product of one's labor*. This noun is only found here, although there is a reasonable amount of cognatic support for its meaning. Strong's #3022 BDB #388. This simply means that Job would return all that he has gained by immoral means. *He returns [his] gain*.

This is followed by the 3<sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect, pausal form of *to swallow*, giving us: *Returning [his] gain and he did not swallow [it] down*. As you can see, even with the insertion of a couple of words, this is still rather stilted. Barnes interprets: *he shall give back the profit of his labour. He shall not be permitted to enjoy it or to consume it...[he] Shall not enjoy it; [he] shall not eat it. He shall be obliged to give it to others.*<sup>25</sup>

In the second line, we have the kaph preposition (*like, as*) and the masculine singular construct of *chayil* (חַיִל) [pronounced *CHAH-yil*] again. It means *efficiency, army, strength, valour, power, might*; as well as that which is gotten through strength—i.e., *wealth, substance*. Strong's #2428 BDB #298. The noun this is affixed to is the feminine singular with a 3<sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix of *t<sup>m</sup>mûwrâh* (תְּמוּרָה) [pronounced *t<sup>m</sup>moo-RAW*], which means *an exchange, barter, what is bartered, compensation, recompense*. Strong's #8545 BDB #558. This is followed by the wâw conjunction, the negative and the 3<sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect of *âlaç* (אָלַץ) [pronounced *gaw-LAHS*], which means *to rejoice*. This verb is only found in three places—Job 20:18 39:13 Psalm 7:18. We don't have a great deal of reason other than Gesenius or BDB to take on this meaning. There is no additional cognatic evidence in its support. There is a very similar word for rejoice (Strong's #5970), which could even be a different form of the same word. This would be reasonable. Strong's #5965 BDB #763. Gesenius suggests: *As a possession to be restored in which one rejoices not*. More literally, this gives us: *Like wealth of his compensation [or, trading], he does not rejoice*. This would suggest that perhaps the kaph preposition (כּ) should really be a bēyth preposition (בּ), which would then give us: *In [the] wealth of his trading, he does not rejoice*. We

<sup>25</sup> Barnes' Notes; Job, Volume 1; F. C. Cook, editor; reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; p. 342.

might more loosely render this: **He is unable to profit from the toil of his work and he returns it; he does not even enjoy the wealth accumulated through commerce.**

Barnes' interpretation: *The sense is, that all that he [Job] has is like property which a man has, which he feels not to be his own, but which belongs to another, and which is soon to be given up. In such property a man does not find that pleasure which he does in that which he feels to be his own. He cannot dispose of it, and he cannot look on it and feel that it is his. So Zophar says it is with the wicked man. He can look on his property only as that which he will soon be compelled to part with, and not having any security for retaining it, he cannot rejoice in it as if it were his own.*<sup>26</sup> The implication is that Job has stolen this property and will have to give it back. In fact, God will see to it that his wealth is returned to the rightful owners. Therefore, Job receives no happiness or pleasure from his wealth. Essentially, Zophar continues with the same theme as he had in v. 17. This particular verse is more clear in its statement than is v. 17, and perhaps he offered it so that Job would fully understand what he had to say. Job, over the years, accumulated great wealth and property, which, as we know, was the result of God's blessing. This is not how Zophar sees it. Zophar knows of Job's wealth, but, in seeing Job in this condition, he concludes that Job, because of the way that he amassed this wealth, cannot really enjoy it. There is no true profit to Job, because what good is wealth that you cannot enjoy?

**For he has crushed, he has abandoned [the]**

**poor ones;**

**a house he has seized and he did not build  
him.**

Job  
20:19

**For he has crushed [and] abandoned the poor;  
he seized a house and he did not build it.**

**For he has crushed and then abandoned the poor;  
he has seized and occupied a house which he did not build.**

Now Zophar begins to give us his take on the evil which Job has done. He becomes specific in his accusations and his conclusions which he has drawn. Here are how others rendered this verse:

<i>The Emphasized Bible</i>	For he hath oppressed—hath forsaken the poor, <A house> hath he seized, which he cannot rebuild.
JPS (Tanakh)	Because he crushed and tortured the poor, He will not build up the house he took by force.
Keil and Delitzsch (revised)	Because he cast down, let the destitute lie helpless; He will not, in case he has seized a house, finish building it.
NASB	"For he has oppressed <i>and</i> forsaken the poor; He has seized a house which he has not built."
The Septuagint	For he has broken down the house of many mighty [or, <i>powerless</i> ] men; and he has plundered a habitation, though he did not build [it].
<i>Young's Literal Translation</i>	For he oppressed—he forsook the poor, A house he hath taken violently away, And he doth not build it.

We begin with the explanatory conjunction *kîy* (*for, because, that*) and the 3<sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Piel perfect of *râtsats* (רָצַץ) [pronounced *raw-TSAHTS*], which means *to crush, to bruise, to oppress*. In the Piel, it means *to break in pieces, to treat with great violence, to oppress with great violence*. Strong's #7533 BDB #954. We launch immediately into the next verb, which gives great emphasis to both verbs. It is the 3<sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal perfect of *ʿâzaḇ* (עָזַב) [pronounced *aw-ZAḂV*], again (see v. 13), which means *to leave, to forsake*. Strong's #5800 BDB #736. Those whom Zophar says that Job has crushed and abandoned are the masculine plural of the adjective *dal* (דָּל) [pronounced *dahl*], again, and which means *weak, low, thin, poor, frail, needy, helpless*. Strong's #1800 BDB #195. You will note that Zophar's vocabulary seems to be limited, as he repeats many of these words throughout. This gives us: **For he has oppressed [with violence] he—has abandoned poor [and weak people]**. The implication is that Job has become quite successful over the years, but it is because he

<sup>26</sup> Barnes' Notes; Job, Volume 1; F. C. Cook, editor; reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; p. 342.

used and abused the poor around him. He took from the poor and gave to the rich (himself. Now, it is clear in Scripture that we are never to abuse those who are poor and destitute. **He who oppresses the poor reproaches his Maker, but he who is gracious to the needy honors Him** (Prov. 14:31; see also Amos 8:4–7). However, there is no indication that Job is guilty of such things. Zophar has simply drawn that conclusion.

The second line begins with *a house*, and then we have the 3<sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal perfect of *gāzal* (גָּזַל) [pronounced *gaw-ZAHL*], which means *to remove, to take away from*. Strong's #1497 BDB #159. Note all of these perfect tenses—these are the things which Job has done in the past which have garnered him all of the wealth that he had had, but, at the same time, built up the karma which he has built up (realize, of course, that I am giving this to you from Zophar's standpoint). This is followed by the *wāw* conjunction, the negative, and the 3<sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect, with a 3<sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix (referring to the house), of *bânâh* (בָּנָה) [pronounced *baw-NAWH*], which means *to build, to rebuild, to restore*. Strong's #1129 BDB #124. Job has taken this house from the poor and has not built it, rebuilt it or restored it. I think the main concept that Zophar is trying to relay is that Job did not build the house but he stole it from the poor through some sleazy real estate deal. This gives us: **A house he removed [from the poor]—and he did not [even] build it!** So, Zophar is telling Job that the very house where he lives was not one that he built, but one that he stole (probably through legal means) from the poor. Barnes comments: *...by overreaching and harsh dealings, he has come in possession of dwellings which he did not build, or purchase in any proper manner. It does not mean that he had done this by violence—for Zophar is not describing a robber, but he means that he took advantage of the wants of the poor and obtained their property. This is often done still. A rich an takes advantage of the wants of the poor, and obtains their little farm or house for much less than it is worth. He takes a mortgage, and then forecloses it, and buys the property himself for much less than its real value, and thus practices a species of the worst kind of robbery. Such a man, Zophar says, must expect punishment—and if there is any man who has occasion to dread the wrath of heaven, it is he.*<sup>27</sup> Zophar's only proof of this accusation is Job's former wealth contrasted with his present state of pain and suffering.

In the next several verses, Balmer points out that the characteristics of a wicked man's *misery are counted off: unenduring prosperity* (vs. 22), *God's unremitting anger* (vs. 23), *no hope of escape* (vs. 24), *terror of death* (vs. 25), *darkness and fire* (vs. 26), and *a flood of destruction* (vs. 28).<sup>28</sup> Even the earth will rise up against such a one (v. 27).

<p><b>For he did not know rest in his belly in his desiring, he will not escape!</b></p>	<p>Job 20:20</p>	<p><b>For he does not know tranquility in his appetite; in his coveting, he does not escape [God's judgment].</b></p>
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**For he did not know any tranquility in his materialism lust  
so that in this continual coveting, he did not escape God's notice and judgment.**

Let's first see what others have done, as this is interpreted in many different ways:

<p>Complete Jewish Bible</p>	<p>["For he crushed and abandoned the poor, seizing houses he did not build,] because his appetite would not let him rest, in his greed he let nothing escape; [nothing is left that he did not devour; therefore his well-being will not last]. [vv. 19–21]</p>
<p>CEV</p>	<p>Greedy people want everything and are never satisfied.</p>
<p>The Emphasized Bible</p>	<p>Surely he hath known no peace in his inmost mind,— &lt;With his dearest thing&gt; shall he not get away;...</p>
<p>God's Word™</p>	<p>He will never know peace in his heart. He will never allow anything he desires to escape [his grasp].</p>
<p>JPS (Tanakh)</p>	<p>He will not see his children tranquil; He will not preserve one of his dear ones. [JPS footnotes: For this meaning of <i>beṭen</i> and <i>ḥamud</i>, see Hos. 9.16]</p>

<sup>27</sup> Barnes' Notes; Job, Volume 1; F. C. Cook, editor; reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; p. 342.

<sup>28</sup> The Layman's Bible Commentary, Vol. 8, Balmer H. Kelly, John Knox Press, ©1962, p. 104.



Keil and Delitzsch (revised)	Because he knew no rest in his craving, He will not be able to rescue himself with what he most loves.
NAB	Though he has known no quiet in his greed, his treasures shall not save him.
NASB	"Because he knew no quiet within [lit., <i>in his belly</i> ] He does not retain anything he desires."
NIV	Surely he will have no respite from his craving; he cannot save himself by his treasure.
NJB	[Since he once destroyed the huts of the poor, plundering houses instead of building them up,] since his avarice could never be satisfied, now all his hoarding will not save him; [since nothing could escape his greed, his prosperity will not last].
NKJV	Because he knows no quietness in his heart [lit., <i>belly</i> ], He will not save anything he desires.
NLT	He was always greedy but never satisfied. Of all the things he dreamed about, nothing remains.
The Septuagint	There is not security to is possessions; he will not be saved by his desire.
Young's Literal Translation	For he hath not known ease in his belly, With his desirable thing he delivereth not himself.

As you can see by the multifarious translations, the general idea is that Job's craving or desires were without complete satisfaction and therefore, without end; the end result being that he is unable to save himself (the conclusion is rather difficult and varied). Let's see how this lines up with the Hebrew.

We begin with the explanatory conjunction *kîy* again, the negative, and the 3<sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal perfect of *to know*, giving us *For he did not know...* Then we have the masculine singular adjective (used as a substantive) of *shâlêv* (שָׁלֵב) [pronounced *shaw-LAYV*], which means *safe, secure, living in tranquility and security, quiet, at ease*. It does have a negative connotation in Ezek. 23:42 of being so *at ease and secure* as to be *careless*. Strong's #7961 BDB #1017. This is followed by *in his belly*. The last word is the feminine singular noun *beṭen* (בֶּטֶן) [pronounced *BEH-ten*] primarily means *belly, stomach* (when in reference to a man). It is obvious with the various translations that it is here where a lot of interpretation takes place. Since this refers often to the stomach as the place where the food goes, it is rendered *appetite* (The Complete Jewish Bible) or *craving* (the NIV). This would give us: *For he does not know tranquility in his craving [or, appetite]*. This is a very reasonable interpretation, as the previous verses relay an insatiability of the appetite. Our only problem—and it is not a great one—is that we use fairly specific, specialized meanings of both *beṭen* and of *shâlêv*. However, we are not completely wrenching them apart from their basic meanings; we are simply putting an intentional spin on their meanings, one which is in keeping with the context. This use of *beṭen* is rare, but not unheard of (see Prov. 13:25 18:20). Furthermore, such a spin on these words fits into Zophar's analogy, which he began back in v. 12. As an addendum to the spin that JPS put on *beṭen*, Hos. 9:16 has other things going on in it to allow *beṭen* to refer to the *fruit* of the womb. Strong's #990 BDB #105. The Greek may have been more of an interpretation rather than a translation: *There is not to him salvation (i.e., security) in his possessions*. Their interpretation, unfortunately, is just not the correct one. Zophar's point is that Job has no rest or tranquility because of his appetite and cravings. Job originally was a very wealthy man with a great number of possessions; Zophar says this is because Job was never satisfied with what he had, so he had to continually seek out more. The concept is reasonably twofold: (1) Job will feel no sense of peace, regardless of the amount of wealth that he accumulates; and, (2) that, regardless of the increase of wealth, this wealth will not endure, nor does it recommend us to God. After all, since God is the source of our wealth, He is certainly not impressed that we have accumulated it. *Neither their silver nor their gold will be able to deliver them on the day of the wrath of Jehovah. And all the earth will be devoured in the fire of His jealousy, for He will make a complete end, indeed a terrifying one, of all the inhabitants of the earth* (Zeph. 1:18). *Riches do not profit in the day of wrath, but righteousness delivers from death* (Prov. 11:4). *And He said to them, "Beware and be on your guard against every form of greed; for not even when one has an abundance does his life consist of his possessions."* (Luke 12:15). Again, like much of what Zophar has said, this is an accurate thought, but misapplied to Job.

The second line begins with the preposition *in*, followed by the Qal passive participle, 3<sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix, of *châmad* (חָמַד) [pronounced *khaw-FAHD*], which means *to desire, to covet, to take pleasure in*. Strong's #2530 BDB #326. This would be rendered *in his coveting, in his desiring...*, which is in keeping with our

interpretation-translation of the previous line. This is followed by the negative and the 3<sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Piel imperfect of *mâlaṭ* (מָלַח) [pronounced *maw-LAH*T], which means *to slip away, to slip through, to slip past, to escape*. Strong's #4422 BDB #572. This gives us: **In his coveting, he does not escape [or, slip away] [from God's judgment?]**. He does not escape God's notice nor does he escape God's judgment. As Job accumulated wealth in his materialism lust, as Zophar has observed and concluded, God observed Job and eventually took steps to make Job pay for these sins of malicious capitalism. Now, this is not what happened, nor is Job guilty of great materialistic lust—however, these are the suppositions which Zophar is making to explain Job's terrible woes.

With regards to the second line, Barnes writes: *Literally, he will not escape with that which was an object of desire. He shall not be delivered from the evils which threaten him by obtaining that which he desires. All this will be taken from him.*<sup>29</sup> Zophar tells Job that he will not escape with his wealth nor will he escape God's judgment.

<p><b>Nothing of a survivor to his eating therefore, will not be strong his prosperity.</b></p>	<p>Job 20:21</p>	<p><b>There [is] nothing remaining for his devouring; therefore, his prosperity will not endure [or, remain].</b></p>
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**Nothing remains for him to devour;  
furthermore, his prosperity will not continue.**

This looks like it might be as tough as the previous verse, so let's see what others have done:

<p><i>The Emphasized Bible</i> JPS (Tanakh) Keil and Delitzsch (revised) KJV (Scofield) NASB NIV NKJV <i>Young's Literal Translation</i></p>	<p>Nothing escaped his devouring greed,— &lt;For this cause&gt; shall his prosperity not continue:.... With no survivor to enjoy it, His fortune will not prosper. Nothing escaped his covetousness, Therefore his prosperity shall not continue. Therefore shall none of his food be left; therefore shall no man look for his goods. “Nothing remains for him to devour [or, of what he devours], Therefore his prosperity does not endure.” Nothing is left for him to devour; his prosperity will not endure. Nothing is left for him to eat; Therefore his well-being will not last. There is not a remnant to his food, Therefore his good doth not stay.</p>
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We begin this verse with the substantive construct *`ayin* (אֵין) [pronounced *AH-yin*], which means *naught, nothing*; or it can be used as a particle of negation; *no, not*. The Hebrew construct is *`êyin* (אֵיִן) [pronounced *AYH-yin*]. It can mean *in the condition of being not = without*. We often supply a verb for this substantive and render it *there is no*. Strong's #369 BDB #34. This is followed by the masculine singular noun *sârîyd* (סָרִיד) [pronounced *saw-REED*], and it means *survivor, remain, remaining, left*. Strong's #8300 BDB #975. Then we have the *lâmed* preposition and the Qal infinitive construct, with a 3<sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix, of *`âkal* (אָכַל) [pronounced *aw-KAHL*], which means *to eat*. This word is found more often in a figurative sense, and should be rendered *to devour, to consume, to destroy*. Strong's #398 BDB #37. This gives us: **There [is] nothing remaining for his devouring...** Job has taken in, according to Zophar, all of the surrounding wealth until there was just nothing more left for him to take in.

In the second line, we have the preposition *‘al* (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, *‘al* 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 followed by the 3<sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect of *chûwl* (חָוַל) [pronounced *khool*], which means *to be firm, to be strong, to wait, to remain, to stay*. Strong's #2342 BDB #298. This is

<sup>29</sup> Barnes' Notes; Job, Volume 1; F. C. Cook, editor; reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; p. 343.

followed by the masculine singular noun (with a 3<sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix *tûw<sup>b</sup>v* (טוּב) [pronounced *too<sup>b</sup>v*], which means *good things, goodness, prosperity, well-being, beauty*. Strong's #2898 BDB #375. This gives us: **Therefore, his prosperity [and well-being] will not be strong [or, will not endure]**. The idea is that his prosperity, which has seemed to be strong and enduring, is no longer strong and enduring.

My problem, at first, was the relationship of these two sentences. However, Job has come to the end of his devouring or engulfing of those things around him and his life has suddenly taken a backwards turn. Not only does he no longer continue to increase his wealth, but it has become apparent that his wealth will not last.

**In fulness of his sufficiency He is oppressive  
to him  
every hand of a laborer will come [to] him.**

Job  
20:22

**When the fullness of his plenty [has come], He  
will oppress him.  
Every hand of a [suffering and exploited]  
laborer will come [upon] him.**

**Once his prosperity has come full circle, then God will oppress him  
and, suddenly, all the power of distress and misery will be upon him.**

We will note two peculiarities of Zophar's speech: (1) there are several times when the gender and/or number of his subject does not appear to match the gender and/or number of his verb. (2) Secondly, it appears as though he makes several references to God in this chapter, without referring to Him directly (vv. 22–23, 28). A problem that we will run into with this verse is that **no one** translates it correctly not even Young. Let's see what others have done with this verse and then go from there:

<i>The Emphasized Bible</i>	<When his abundance is gone> he shall be in straits,   All the power of distress    shall come upon him.
JPS (Tanakh)	When he has all he wants, trouble will come; Misfortunes of all kinds will batter him.
Keil and Delitzsch (revised)	In the fulness of his need it will be strait with him, Every hand of the needy will come upon him.
NASB	"In the fulness of his plenty, he will be cramped; The hand of everyone who suffers will come <i>against</i> him."
Owen's Translation	In the fulness of his sufficiency, he will be in straits. All the force of a sufferer will come upon him.
The Septuagint	But when he will seem to be just satisfied, he will be straightened, and all distress will come upon him.
<i>Young's Literal Translation</i>	In the fulness of his sufficiency he is straitened. Every perverse hand doth meet him.

We begin with the *bêyth* preposition and the Qal infinitive construct of *mâlê<sup>`</sup>* (מָלֵא) again. It is pronounced *maw-LAY*, and it means *to fill, to make full, to be full*. Strong's #4390 BDB #569. When combined with a *bêyth* preposition, the infinitive construct often takes on a temporal meaning and may be rendered *when [such and such happens]*. Then we have the masculine singular noun (with a 3<sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix) *çêpheq* (כֶּפֶה) [pronounced *SAY-fehk*], which means *sufficiency, plenty*. Although this word is only found here, it appears to have reasonable cognatic support. Strong's #5607 BDB #974. So far, we have: **When a fullness of his plenty [has come]...** Barnes: *When every thing seemed to be abundant, he should be reduced to want.*<sup>30</sup>

So, he, Job, has come to a point of reaching a completion of all that he desires and wants. He has become absolutely full with plenty—then we have the result: the 3<sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect of *tsârar* (צָר) [pronounced *tsaw-RAHR*], which means *to bind, to tie up, to be restricted, to be cramped, to lay hold of, to shut up*. There is a passive meaning although *tsârar* even though it is not found in the Niphal stem. There is also an intransitive sense: *to be pressed, so be straitened, to be distressed*. The second meaning is *to show hostility toward, to vex, to oppress, to persecute*. When the verb is used in this second way, we need to have some sort of an object—either an accusative or a dative. Strong's #6887 (and #3334) BDB #864. We do have *to him* or *for*

<sup>30</sup> Barnes' Notes; Job, Volume 1; F. C. Cook, editor; reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; p. 343.

him following the verb. This would give us: *When [the] fulness of his plenty [has been achieved], He will persecute him.* Although most translators go with the first meaning, the dative indicates that the second meaning should be applied to this verb. It is by interpretation that we capitalize the *He* in this verse and applying it to *God*. Our understanding is that once Job has reached a point in his life where he has enjoyed plenty and prosperity, God suddenly comes upon him and persecutes and oppresses him (and this is because of Job's alleged methods for accumulating this wealth). Unfortunately, I cannot find a single translation which properly renders this. There is no passive stem here; we have a subject and an object. When there is an object, you use the transitive translation of the verb, not the intransitive. When there is an object which appears to be different than the subject, then they should be clearly defined and separated. Therefore, the second part of this line should clearly be rendered: *He will persecute him; He will show hostility to him; He will oppress him.* In fact, this translation is a no-brainer. The interpretation may be subject to argument, but not the translation. Now, for the interpretation: Job's wealth has come to a full circle; it has come to an end; the prosperity which God had allowed him had been fulfilled—suddenly, and this fits right in with the context, God shows hostility to the corrupt man who was formerly in prosperity. Certainly, Job is *in straights* or Job is *in distress*—that is correct, but that is not exactly what this verse says. It says that someone is hostile toward Job, someone is oppressing Job (all of this is couched in the 3<sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, of course).

What I was hoping for was that at least some of the less literal translations would agree with me at this point, that Zophar was speaking of *God* persecuting Job; however, for those whose verse is recognizable, most render this first sentence in the Niphal (passive) sense.

The Freer Translations Interpret Job 20:22	
Complete Jewish Bible	With all needs satisfied, he will be in distress; the full force of misery will come over him.
CEV	Once they have everything, distress and despair will strike them down, [and God will make them swallow his blazing anger].
God's Word™	[Even] with all his wealth the full force of misery comes down on him.
NJB	When he has everything he needs, want will seize him, and misery will light on him with all its force.
NLT	"In the midst of plenty, he will run into trouble; and disasters will destroy him.
REB	With every need satisfied his troubles begin, and the full force of hardship strikes him.
TEV	At the height of his success all the weight of misery will crush him.
You will note that, in several of these translations, even the idea that there are two separate verbs and two separate, but related thoughts, is not clear. The other most basic nuances of the original language are almost completely lost (the notable exception is the Complete Jewish Bible, which is more of a literal translation than the others; however, it still is inaccurate with respect to the basic syntax of the second half of the first line).	

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In our second line, we begin with *All of a hand of* (or, *every hand of...*) and the masculine singular noun 'âmêl (אֵמֵל) [pronounced *gaw-MALE*], which means *laborer, worker*. It can refer to one who is miserable and tired due to his toil and labor and with just doing what it takes to get through life. It is used here as a substantive, so we could render this *miserable, one who is exhausted and/or miserable from labor, sufferer, labourer, workman, worn out, burnt out*. It is only found in Judges 5:26 Job 3:20 20:22 Prov. 16:26 Eccl. 2:18, 22 3:9 4:8 9:9.\* Apparently, the Septuagint and the Vulgate went with the meaning *distress* instead here. Strong's #6001 BDB #766. This is a reference to the men whom Job employed, but, in Zophar's mind must have been exploited. *Hand* is the subject and the verb is the 3<sup>rd</sup> person feminine singular, Qal imperfect, 3<sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix, of bôw' (בֹּא) [pronounced *boh*], which means *to come in, to come, to go in, to go, to enter*. Strong's #935 BDB #97. This gives us: *Every hand of a [suffering] laborer will come [upon] him.* Zophar thinks that the exploited workers that Job employed have come up against him. Or, he may be a bit more subtle than that, claiming that the misery and the

distress of the hard work that Job's laborers endured to bring him wealth—that all of that has come upon Job, as though he worked for all of his former wealth.

So that the correct translation is beat into your brain, let me repeat it: *When the fullness of his plenty [has come], He will oppress him [or, He will show hostility to him]. Every hand of a [suffering and exploited] laborer will come [upon] him.* Zophar is telling Job that he should expect two attacks—God attacks him because of his immorality and corrupt business practices and then, while in this debilitated state, those who once worked for him (and were exploited by him) also turn against him. Job has complained in Job 19:13–21 of his friends, family and servants turning against him; and he complains of God turned on him as well. Zophar merely explains that is what Job should expect. There is no reason for Job to think that things should be any different. Although Barnes does not get the translation right, his interpretation is on target: *All the poor, and all who had been oppressed and robbed by him, would suddenly come upon him to recover their own property, and would scatter all that he had. The general meaning is clear, that he would be involved in misery from every quarter, or on every hand.*<sup>31</sup>

**Let him be to fill his belly  
He sends in him a burning of his nostril  
and let Him rain upon him in his bowels.**

Job  
20:23

**Let him come to fill his belly  
He sends against him a burning of His anger  
and let Him rain [this anger] upon him against  
his flesh.**

**When he comes to fill his belly,  
He will send His fierce anger against him  
and let Him rain this fierce anger upon him.**

Like the previous ones, there is not a lot of agreement in the translation, and, on the surface, it appears difficult. Zophar has filled this verse with four verbs.

CEV	[Once they have everything, distress and despair will strike them down,] and God will make them swallow his blazing anger.
<i>The Emphasized Bible</i>	It shall be that <to fill his belly> he will thrust at him the glow of his anger, And rain [it] upon him for his punishment.
JPS (Tanakh)	Let him fill his belly; Let Him loose His burning anger at him. And rain down His weapons upon him..
Keil and Delitzsch (revised)	It will come to pass: in order to fill his belly, He sendeth forth the glow of His anger into him, And he causes it to rain upon him into his flesh.
NASB	"When he fills his belly, God will send His fierce anger on him And will rain it on him while he is eating [or, as his food]."
NRSV	To fill their belly to the full God will send His fierce anger into them, and rain it upon them as their food [Heb. uncertain].
The Septuagint	If by any means he would fill his belly, let God send upon him the fury of wrath; let Him bring a torrent of pains upon him.
<i>Young's Literal Translation</i>	It cometh to pass, at the filling of his belly, He sendeth forth against him The fierceness of His anger, Yes He raineth on him in his eating.

We begin this verse with the 3<sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect, apocopated form of the verb *to be*. This is followed by the lamed preposition and the Piel infinitive construct of *to fill* (this is the third time Zophar has used this verb). I am surprised at Young's and Keil and Delitzsch's translations, because finding this second verb in the Piel infinitive really connects it to the first verb. In other words, there is no, *and it comes to pass*. Generally, the verb *to be* will be in a different gender than a main verb which follows, so that it is not confused as being action which is applied to the subject of the second verb. However, *Job* (as a 3<sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular) is the subject of the verb *to be*. Now, rendering this in the English is going to be quite difficult. *He is to fill...* is reasonable, but ignores the fact that the verb *to be* is in the apocopated form. *Let him fill...* is also reasonable, but leaves out the

<sup>31</sup> Barnes' Notes; *Job*, Volume 1; F. C. Cook, editor; reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; p. 343.



first verb. *Let him come to fill his belly...* is quite good, but renders *to be* as *let...come* (this is not out of the ordinary, however). This is followed by *his belly* (beṭen, which is used in this chapter for the third time). Its use to mean *lust* or *appetite* in v. 20 seems justified by its use here. We are not speaking of Job literally having a large meal, but this is more along the lines of him fully satiating his desires, which are along the lines of business more than anything else (that is, according to Zophar).

You will recall back in v. 20 how we inserted *God's judgment* to give some meaning to the final verb—well, we must, in this second line, interpret this in such a way to make *God* the subject of the first verb. We begin with the 3<sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Piel imperfect of *shâlach* (שָׁלַח) [pronounced *shaw-LAHKH*], which means *to send, to send forth, to send away, to dismiss, to deploy*. In the Piel it means *to send off, to send away, to dismiss, to give over, to cast out, to let go, to set free, to shoot forth [branches], to shoot [an arrow]*. Strong's #7971 BDB #1018. This is followed by *against him*, giving us: *He sends against him...* What is sent to him is the masculine singular construct of *chârôwn* (חָרוֹן) [pronounced *khaw-ROHN*], which means *a burning [of anger]*. Strong's #2740 BDB #354. This is followed by the masculine singular noun (with a masculine singular suffix *`aph* (ָא) [pronounced *ahf*], which means *nose, nostril*, but is also translated *face, brow, anger*. Strong's #639 BDB #60. This gives us: *He sends against him a burning of his nostril*. We more loosely might render this: *He sends against him a fierce, burning anger*. The picture is that Job was going to continue his gathering of property and wealth and suddenly God sends His fierce anger against Job. You will note that several translators suggest that *God* is the proper subject here.

Note how closely this parallels the quail-eating incident of gen X when Moses led them through the desert. *Before they had satisfied their desire, while their food was in their mouths, the anger of God rose against them and killed some of their stoutest ones* (Psalm 78:30–31).

The next line begins with a *wâw* conjunction and the 3<sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Hiphil imperfect, apocopated form of *mâṭar* (מָטַר) [pronounced *maw-TAHR*], which means *to rain*. Strong's #4305 BDB #565. Then we have *upon him* followed by the *bêyth* preposition and the masculine singular noun (with a masculine singular suffix *l'chûwm* (לְחִוּם) [pronounced *l'-KHOOM*], which means *intestines, bowels, the insides (of their body), flesh, food, body*. This word only occurs here and in Zeph. 1:17, and has no clear cognates. It is not far from the verb *to fight, to war*; and the only cognate for that verb is a much longer word (often the noun cognate differs only by a vowel point or two). Therefore, it could mean *defenses*. This is why there is no little disagreement concerning the meaning of this word. We have the following astonishing array of translations: *And rain [it] upon him for his punishment* (Rotherham); or *into his very bowels* (The Oxford Gesenius); *and rain it upon them as their food* (NRSV, Fuerst); *and rains on him cruel blows* (REB); *and rain down his missiles of war upon him* (NAB); *hurling against his flesh a hail of arrows* (NJB); *and shall rain it upon him while he is eating* (KJV). Strong's #3894 BDB #535. This gives us: *And let Him rain upon him against his flesh [or, defenses]*. Since we have been speaking about God's anger, this could be rendered: *And let Him rain [His anger] upon him—against his flesh [or, defenses]*.

These few lines also parallel Lam. 4:11: *Jehovah has accomplished His wrath—He has poured out His fierce anger and He has kindled a fire in Zion which has consumed its foundations*. Or Ezek. 5:13: *“Thus My anger will be spent and I will satisfy My wrath on them, and I will be appeased. Then they will know that I, Jehovah, have spoken in My zeal when I have spent My wrath upon them.”*

You will notice how closely vv. 22–23 are in sync with one another. Zophar, in many ways, is stating the same thing twice: *When the fullness of his plenty [has come], He will oppress him. Every hand of a [suffering and exploited] laborer will come [upon] him. Let him come to fill his belly; He sends against him the burning of His anger and let Him rain [this anger] upon him against his flesh*. Job has reached a plateau of riches and wealth, and now it is time for him to pay the piper; God swoops down upon him in hostility; the workers formerly employed by Job rebel against him. Job is caught in tremendous suffering in the middle of these two attacks.

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Now, I want you to observe that, although all translators fell apart when it came to translating v. 22, many of them agree with me in the interpretation of v. 23, insofar as they insert *God* into this verse, even though *He* is not found here in the Hebrew.

### The Proper Interpretation of Job 20:23

God's Word™	Let that misery fill his belly. [God] throws his burning anger at the godless person and makes his wrath come down on him like rain.
KJV	<i>When</i> he is about to fill his belly, <i>God</i> shall cast the fury of his wrath upon him, and shall rain <i>it</i> upon him while he is eating.
NAB	God shall send against him the fury of his wrath and rain down his missiles of war upon him.
NASB	"When he fills his belly, <i>God</i> will send His fierce anger on him And will rain <i>it</i> on him while he is eating [or, <i>as his food</i> ].
NJB	On him God looses all his burning wrath, hurling against his flesh a hail of arrows.
NKJV	<i>When</i> he is about to fill his stomach, <i>God</i> will cast on him the fury of His wrath, And will rain <i>it</i> on him while he is eating.
NLT	May God give him a bellyful of trouble. May God rain down his anger upon him.
NRSV	To fill their belly to the full God [lit., <i>he</i> ] will send his fierce anger into them, and rain it upon them as their food.
REB	Let that fill his belly! God vents his anger upon him and rains on him cruel blows.
TEV	Let him eat all he wants! God will punish him in fury and anger.

My purpose in giving all these additional translations is twofold: (1) This allows you to see that almost every translator interprets this passage in a similar way, placing *God* in this verse, even though *He* is not found there in the original Hebrew or in any of the other manuscripts. (2) Secondly, I want you to recognize the strength, impact and influence of the King James Version. In many areas of Scripture, whatever the Authorized Version states sets the pattern for many of the modern translations. The KJV interprets this verse by inserting *God* into it; and mis-translates the previous verse—and pretty much every translation follows suit in both cases. In my **Comparison of the English Translations**, I have a short commentary on the KJV, along with specific examples, of how it has influenced our English translations down to this very century.

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## What God Does to the Man of Iniquity

He flees from a weapon of iron;  
He will strike him through [with] a bow of  
bronze.

Job  
20:24

He flees from an iron weapon  
[yet] a bronze arrow passes through him.

Even though he may flee from the iron weapon,  
still he is struck through by a bronze arrow.

First, let's see what others have done:

JPS (Tanakh)	Fleeing from iron arrows, He is shot through from a bow of bronze.
Keil and Delitzsch (revised)	He must fleet from an iron weapon, Therefore a brazen bow pierces him through.
NASB	"He may fleet from the iron weapon, <i>But</i> the bronze bow will pierce him."
The Septuagint	And he will by no means will escape from the power of the sword; let the brazen bow wound him.
Young's Literal Translation	He fleeth from an iron weapon, Pass through him doth a bow of brass.

We begin this verse with the 3<sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect of *bārach* (בָּרַח) [pronounced *baw-RAHKH*], and it means *to go through, to flee*. Strong's #1272 BDB #137. Zophar chooses this word because it

will allow him some alliteration in this verse. Then we have *from a weapon* of the masculine singular noun *bar<sup>e</sup>zel* (בַּרְזֶל) [pronounced *bar<sup>e</sup>-ZELL*], and it means *iron*. Strong's #1270 BDB #137. Zophar chose this word because Job used it back in Job 19:24. Again, their common practice is to not exactly answer an argument point by point, but they use many of the words that the other person used to make it seem as though they are answering them. This gives us: **He flees from a weapon of iron.**

In line two, we have the 3<sup>rd</sup> person feminine singular, Qal imperfect, 3<sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix of *châlah* (חָלָה) [pronounced *chaw-LAHF*], which means *to strike through, to go forward, to pass through, to sprout up*. Strong's #2498 BDB #322. The subject of this verb follows—the feminine singular construct of *qesheth* (קֶשֶׁת) [pronounced *KEH-sheth*], which means *bow*. Strong's #7198 BDB #905. This is affixed to the feminine singular noun *n<sup>e</sup>chûwshâh* (נְחוֹשֶׁה) [pronounced *n<sup>e</sup>-khoo-SHAW*], which means *copper, bronze*. Strong's #5154 BDB #639. Why do so many of the translations render this word as *arrow*? It is a metonym for *arrow*—that is, it means *bow*, but it refers to the *arrow* sent out by the bow. The idea is that Job successfully eluded some weapon of iron, but he has been struck through by an arrow of bronze. God only allows someone to escape Him for so long. **A bow of bronze passes through him.**

The general idea behind this verse is fairly clear; Job has been given a lot of slack by God and suddenly God has attacked him. There is no way for Job to escape unharmed. He may run, but he can't hide from God. What is happening to Job is simply what would be expected. Again, this is Zophar's perception of the situation rather than the reality of it.

**He draws out and so he comes out from [his]  
back  
and lightning [i.e., a flashing arrow head] from  
out of his gall.  
It comes upon him, terrors.**

Job  
20:25

**He draws [it] out so it comes out from [his]  
back  
and lightning from out of his gall.  
Terrors come upon him.**

**He pulls the arrow out from his back, and it glistens as it exits with gall;  
terrors come upon him.**

This one is another difficult verse, and, given the differences of the Septuagint, might have been lost over these past several centuries. Here are what others have done:

<i>The Emphasized Bible</i>	He hath drawn it out, and it hath come forth out of his back,— Yeah the flashing arrow-head, out of his gall, There shall march on him—   terrors   :...
JPS (Tanakh)	Brandished and run through his body, The blade through his gall, Strikes terror into him.
Keil and Delitzsch (revised)	It tears [through, then it comes forth out of his body, And the steel out of his gall, The terrors of death come upon him.
NASB	"It is drawn forth and comes out of his back, Even the glittering point from his gall. Terrors come upon him."
The Septuagint	And let the arrow pierce through his body; and let the stars be against his dwelling-place. Let terrors come upon him.
<i>Young's Literal Translation</i>	One hath drawn, And it cometh out from the body, And a glittering weapon from his gall proceedeth. On him are terrors.

This verse begins with the 3<sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal perfect of *shâlah* (שָׁלַח) [pronounced *shaw-LAHF*], which means *to draw out, to draw off*. Strong's #8025 BDB #1025. What is being drawn out is the arrow (although we have no suffix with this verb). This is followed by the *wâw* consecutive and the 3<sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect of *yâtsâ'* (יָצַא) [pronounced *yaw-TZAWH*], which means *to go out, to come out, to come forth*. Strong's #3318 BDB #422. It appears as though the subject is not Job here, but the arrow head, which will be named later in conjunction with another verb. If the arrow goes through him, and Job begins to draw it out, then what will come out first will be the arrow head. We then have the preposition *from* and the feminine singular noun

gêvâh (גֵּוָה) [pronounced *gay-VAW*], which means *back*. This word is found only here, but there are two very similar words in the Hebrew which also mean *back*. Strong's #1465 BDB #156. Translation: **He draws [it] out and so it comes out from [the] back**. I see this as Job having already been struck by the arrow (v. 24), and that he is the one drawing the arrow

The second line begins with a *wâw* conjunction then we have the masculine singular noun bârâq (בָּרָק) [pronounced *baw-RAWK*], which means *lightning*. In this case, the reference is to the glistening of the sword, the sharp point of the arrow which pierced Job's body, and/or to the sharpness of the pain. Strong's #1300 BDB #140. Then we have *from his gall*, the latter word being the feminine singular noun m'ôrâh (מֵרֶחַ) [pronounced *m'roh-RAW*], which means *bitter thing, gall, poison*. This is the bitter, yellowish-green fluid which the liver secretes. Strong's #4846 BDB #601. This is a reference to the arrow (or sword) coming through the body and striking a vital organ, so that when the arrow is pulled out, not only is their bleeding, but other fluids as well, indicating a fatal and very painful wound. This gives us: **...and so lightning from his gall**.

Suddenly, we have the 3<sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect of hâlak<sup>e</sup> (הָלַךְ) [pronounced *haw-LAHK<sup>e</sup>*], which means *to go, to come, to depart, to walk*. Strong's #1980 (and #3212) BDB #229. The Septuagint and the Vulgate both have this as a feminine plural. This is followed by *upon him* and then the feminine plural noun 'êymâh (אֵימָה) [pronounced *ay-MAW*], which means *terror, dread, horror, fear*. Strong's #367 BDB #33. Going with the LXX and the Vulgate, this would be: **Terrors come upon him**.

What Zophar is saying is simply more of the same. Job is in severe pain and emotional distress and it is all due to his sinfulness. Like before, Zophar begins with an analogy and he cannot let go of it. In the previous verse, he had Job fleeing from the iron weapon, only to be struck down with an arrow. When the arrow is pulled out, it has left him with a painful and deadly wound.

**All [extraordinary] darkness, hidden, for his  
treasures;**

**will devour him, a fire he has not blow upon;  
let grieve the survivor in his tent.**

Job  
20:26

**Extraordinary darkness [is] hidden for his  
treasures;**

**a fire he has not blown upon will consume him;  
let the survivor grieve in his tent.**

**Darkness lies in wait for his personal treasures;  
a fire that he did not kindle for himself will consume him;  
let this survivor grieve in his tent.**

Again, this is a verse which does not make a lot of sense at first. So let's see what others have done:

<i>The Emphasized Bible</i>	Every misfortune   is laid up for his treasures,— There shall consume a fire   not blown up [but kindled from heaven]  ,— It shall destroy what remaineth in his tent:
JPS (Tanakh)	Utter darkness waits for his treasured ones; A fire fanned by no man will consume him; Who survives in his tent will be crushed.
Keil and Delitzsch (revised)	All darkness is reserved for his treasured thing, A fire that is not blown upon devours him; It feeds upon what is left in his tent.
NASB	Complete darkness is held in reserve for his treasures, And unfanned fire will devour him; It will consume the survivor in his tent.
NEB	Darkness unrelieved awaits him, a fire that needs no fanning will consume him. [Woe betide any survivor in his tent!]
Owen's Translation	Utter darkness is laid up (hidden) for his treasures. Will devour him, fire not blown upon. Will consume what is left in his tent.
REB	...darkness unrelieved awaits him [so Gk. Heb. <i>awaits his stored things</i> ]; a fire that needs no fanning will consume him. Woe betide any survivor in his tent!
The Septuagint	And let all darkness wait for him. A fire that does not burn out will consume him; and let a stranger plague his house.

*Young's Literal Translation*    And darkness is hid for his treasures, Consume him doth a fire not blown, Broken is the remnant in his tent.

Like v. 23, this verse is filled with verbs (five). We begin, however, with *all of* or *every* and the masculine singular noun *chôshek*<sup>e</sup> (חֹשֶׁק) [pronounced *KHOH-shek*], which means *darkness, obscurity, extraordinary darkness*. Strong's #2822 BDB #365. Like many of the words that Zophar uses, Job used this word in the previous chapter. This is followed by the Qal passive participle *tâman* (תָּמַן) [pronounced *taw-MAHN*], which means *to hide, to conceal*. In the Qal passive participle, this acts as a verbal adjective and should be rendered *hidden, hiding, concealed*. Strong's #2934 BDB #380. This is quite an interesting phrase: *All hidden darkness*. How exactly do you hide darkness? The idea here is that Job did not have any idea that extraordinary darkness awaited him as he stepped out of his prosperity into his utter misery and devastation. In this way, it was hidden from him.

Then we have the lâmed prefixed preposition (*for, to*) and the masculine plural, Qal passive participle, 3<sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix, of *tsâphan* (צָפַן) [pronounced *tsaw-FAHN*], and it means *to hide, to conceal, to lay up (in storage), to store (as treasure), to treasure up*. Here, this verb is used as a noun and means *his treasures, his items in storage, his things placed in storage, his things having been placed in storage*. Strong's #6845 BDB #860. So, essentially, in our first line, we have two verbs, neither of which is used as a verb. *All hidden darkness [is] for his things [which were placed into storage]*. It could read: *All darkness is hidden for his treasures*. The NIV renders this: *Total darkness lies in wait for his treasures*. The NKJV: *Total darkness is reserved for his treasures*. *The Amplified Bible*: *Every misfortune is laid up for his treasures;...* The idea is that Job was going through life without a care in the world, and suddenly, without warning, his life was turned to shambles. Hidden and waiting for him was extraordinary darkness, which would envelop him and his possessions. Job himself spoke of this extraordinary darkness at the end of Job 10. Zophar spoke after Job did in chapter 10, but later realized, "But I could have also said...." and then he got his chance.

The verb which follows is a feminine singular, which means it does not find its subject in the previous line. It is the Qal imperfect with a 3<sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix, of *`âkal* (אָכַל) [pronounced *aw-KAHL*], which means *to eat*. This word is found more often in a figurative sense, and should be rendered *to devour, to consume, to destroy*. Strong's #398 BDB #37. This is the second time Zophar uses this verb. What will *consume* or *devour* Job is *fire* (the next word), which is further described by the negative and the 3<sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Pual perfect, pausal form of *nâphach* (נָפַח) [pronounced *naw-FAHKH*], which means *to breath, to blow*. Strong's #5301 BDB #655. The Pual is the passive of the Piel. The pausal form indicates the end of this thought. This gives us: *Fire, he has not blown upon, will devour him*. This is not perfect, as the passive of the second verb is not taken into account. Most translations deal with the second verb as a verbal adjective: The NIV: *A fire unfanned will consume him...* The NKJV is almost identical. *The Amplified Bible*: *a fire not blown by man shall devour him;...* The NRSV: *a fire fanned by no one will devour them;...* The problem is that gender of the second verb (it is masculine), as we would expect it to modify the feminine singular noun *fire*. It is possible that the feminine indicator, the *hê* (ה) was dropped off the end of the word during transcription.<sup>32</sup> At this point, I don't know exactly what to say about fire which has not been blown upon. Ancient man used fire as a tool, and it was therefore nurtured and brought along to accomplish what man had chosen for it to do. However, this was a fire which Job had not prepared; he had not blown upon it. It was a fire which would destroy him. The fire is a result of the wrong that he has done (in Zophar's eyes), but it is not a fire which Job has carefully nursed along.

The third line begins with the 3<sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect, apocopated form of the verb *yâra'* (יָרָא) [pronounced *yaw-RAHG*], which is said to mean *to quiver, to tremble*. Barnes suggests that it means *to be evil, to suffer evil, to come off ill*. For some reason, Owen lists an entirely different word (BDB #944 when maybe he meant BDB #949?) and BDB has little or no information on the correct word here. Gesenius gives a reasonable background for this word, although neither list Job 20:26 as a passage where this word can be found (that is found

<sup>32</sup> Keil and Delitzsch give a convoluted explanation that the feminine was given in the first verb, but simply left off of that verb and the subsequent verbs. However, the following verbs do not have to be in the feminine gender to make sense. Keil and Delitzsch also point to some examples where we do not find gender agreement (I Kings 19:11 Isa. 33:9), but a handful of exceptions does not really prove anything (they could also be mistakes rather than some sort of an intentional grammatical anomaly). Keil & Delitzsch's *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. 4, p. 457.



in Strong's and in the New Englishman's Hebrew Concordance). However, in the NEHCOT, the KJV definitions are *grieve, displease, went ill with*. This may be why we have such diverse renderings as *broken, plague, consume, crushed* above. In looking through NEHCOT, I don not find any compelling reason to accept *to quiver* as the primary definition of this word (or even a secondary one). Therefore, I will go with *to grieve, to displease*, which seems to be in accordance with the passages where this word is found (Gen. 21:11–12 38:10 48:17 Deut. 15:10 28:54, 56 I Sam. 1:8 8:6 18:8 II Sam. 11:25, 27 20:6 I Chron. 21:7 Neh. 2:3, 10 13:8 Job 20:26 Psalm 106:32 Isa. 15:4 59:15 Jonah 4:1).<sup>\*</sup> Strong's #3415 BDB #438. Then we have the masculine singular noun *sârîyd* (סַרִייד) [pronounced *saw-REED*], and it means *survivor*. Strong's #8300 BDB #975. The last words of this verse are *in his tent*. This gives us: **Let [the] survivor grieve in his tent.** Job, and not his wife, is the survivor that Zophar refers to. He has nothing left to him but his grief.

**Will reveal, heavens, his iniquity  
and earth will rise up in him.**

Job  
20:27

**The heavens will reveal his iniquity  
and the earth will rise up against him.**

**The heavens will reveal his iniquity  
and the earth herself will rise up against him.**

This verse appears to be much simpler than the previous one. Others have rendered this:

JPS (Tanakh)

Heaven will expose his iniquity; Earth will rise up against him.

NASB

"The heavens will reveal his iniquity, And the earth will rise up against him."

Young's Literal Translation

Reveal do the heavens his iniquity, And earth is raising itself against him.

The main translations were essentially equivalent, so there was no need to list the rest of them. In double-checking through BDB, what we see is what it is. Zophar expresses the utmost confidence that Job's wrongdoing will be revealed, and that all of the earth will stand up against him because of his evil practices.

Barnes: *The meaning here is, that the whole creation would conspire against such a man. Heaven and earth would be arrayed against him. The course of events would be so ordered as to seem designed to bring his character out, and to show what he was. He would attempt to conceal his sin, but it would be in vain. He would hide it in his bosom, but it would be developed. He would put on an air of piety and innocence, but his secret sin would be known. This seems to be the general sense of the verse; and it is not necessary to attempt to show how it would be done—whether by lightning from heaven...or whether by some direct manifestation from the skies. Probably the meaning is, that the divine dispensations towards such a man—the overwhelming calamities which he would experience, would show what he was...the earth [itself] would rise up against him. Calamities from the earth. The course of events here. Want of success—sterility of soil—blight and mildew, would rise up against such a man and show what he was. His real character would in some way be brought out, and it would be seen that he was a wicked man.*<sup>33</sup> God would see to it that nature herself judged Job for the evil that he had done.

**Let Him carry away produce of his house—  
they will be poured out in a day of His nostril.**

Job  
20:28

**Let Him carry away the possessions of his  
home—  
they will be poured out in the day of His wrath.**

**He will carry away all the possessions of his home;  
they will be poured out in the day of His wrath.**

Let's see what others did with v. 28:

*The Emphasized Bible*

The increase of his house shall vanish, Melting away [so Fuerst. "Things which he had scraped together = "wealth"; Tregelles' Gesenius] in the day of his anger.

God's Word™

A flood will sweep away his house, A flash flood on the day of his anger.

<sup>33</sup> Barnes' Notes; Job, Volume 1; F. C. Cook, editor; reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; pp. 345–346.

JPS (Tanakh)	His household will be cast forth by a flood, Spilled out on the day of His wrath.
Keil and Delitzsch (revised)	The produce of his house must vanish, Flowing away in the day of God's wrath.
NASB	"The increase of his house will depart; <i>His possessions</i> will flow away in the day of His anger."
NIV	A flood will carry off his house, rushing waters on the day of God's wrath.
NRSV	The possessions of their house will be carried away, dragged off in the day of God's [Heb. <i>his</i> ] wrath.
Owen's Translation	Will be carried away the possessions of his house—dragged off in the day of his wrath.
The Septuagint	Let destruction bring his house to an end; let a day of wrath come upon him.
Young's Literal Translation	Remove doth the increase of his house, Poured forth in a day of His anger.

While not as straightforward as the previous verse, this one should be fairly easy to unravel. Zophar's emotion peaked with v. 26, making his speech a bit less clear and difficult to understand. He appears to be wrapping things up, calming down, and speaking more simply. We begin with the 3<sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect, apocopated jussive of *gālāh* (גָּלָה) [pronounced *gaw-LAWH*], which means *to depart, to uncover, to remove, to reveal*. Strong's #1540 BDB #162. In fact, Zophar is actually being cleaver here. In the previous verse, he used this same word in the Piel in the previous verse, where it means *to reveal*; and now he uses it in this verse, where it means *to remove*. The connection in the verb is that when something is picked up and removed, such as a covering of some sort, then what is under it has been revealed. Gesenius tells us that this word was particularly used of the face when taking away a veil (the veil is *taken away* while the face is *revealed* or *uncovered*). The subject is rather difficult to determine here. Recall back in v. 23 where we identified the unnamed subject of the last verb as *God*. This could be the case for this line. Following the verb we have the masculine singular construct of *yēbūṣ* (יָבוּשׁ) [pronounced *yēVOOL*], which means *produce* from the land. Strong's #2981 BDB #385. This is followed by *of his house*, which is somewhat in contrast with the end of v. 26, where it reads *in his tent*. Now, Job did not fill up his house with the produce of his land. He used the produce of his land to acquire other material possessions in commerce and trading. Therefore, *produce of his house* is a metonym for the *material possessions of his house*; i.e., those things which Job gained via the *produce of his fields*. Now, although the verb is a masculine singular, and *produce* is a masculine singular, it does not make sense for this to read: *The produce of his houses reveals...* and then we don't know what exactly it reveals. Nor would it make sense for this to read, *The produce of his house removes...* and then we don't know what is removed. This verb, no matter which way it is used, demands an object, so *produce [or, possessions of the house]* is the object of the verb. This gives us: *Let Him carry away the possessions of his home.*

Throughout the book of Job, there are things which are said which make you think of Moses and the Law. Here Zophar warns Job of God's coming and taking away all that is his. Moses warns Israel of essentially the same thing in Duet. 28:31. Given the time table of this book (which possibly predates Abraham or is coterminous with the time of Isaac), it would be reasonable to suppose that Moses was taught from this book back when he was living in Midian. He had a great relationship with his father-in-law (whose company he apparently enjoyed much more than his wife's), and it appears as though he grew spiritually while in Midian. The most reasonable explanation is that his father-in-law was a believer—possibly a mature one—from whom Moses learned and grew spiritually. Their Bible would have been a small portion of Genesis and the book of Job. You may wonder if that is realistic, that somehow, Moses had access to the only available Scripture—however, the key is that, when you are positive toward God's Word, God will provide it for you. Today, although there is a great deal of positive volition toward the gospel in the United States, there is very little interest in God's Word, except as it is used to justify theological stances. There are very few churches where God's Word is taught verse-by-verse (I'm not aware of any, but there must be some out there); and of the radio and television programs, I am only aware of two radio programs which carefully teach the Bible verse-by-verse (J. Vernon McGee's *Thru the Bible Radio* and R. B. Thieme's radio program<sup>34</sup>). However, for those who are positive toward God's Word, they are there. Speaking of which, back to the exegesis:

<sup>34</sup> If it is playing tapes from the 60's and 70's.

The verb in the next line is somewhat of a mystery. It is the feminine plural, Niphal participle of *nâgar* (נָגַר) [pronounced *naw-GAHR*], which means *to pour, to flow, to run*. In the Niphal, it means *to be poured out, to be spilled, to vanish*; the latter being a figurative use of the verb (i.e., when you pour water out on the ground, it vanishes rather quickly). As you note above, Rotherham offers a similar yet dissimilar rendering (*melting away*), yet footnotes it with a completely different rendering (noted above in the translation). Strong's #5064 BDB #620. This is followed by *in a day of his nostril [wrath]*. Again, we assume that *His* refers to God, even though God is not mentioned until the next verse. This is by way of interpretation. This is the same old 6's and 7's on the part of Zophar. Job has committed grievous, but unknown sins, and God is punishing him for these sins by removing his possessions from his home and pouring them out as though they were water onto the ground.

**This a portion of a man of lawlessness from  
God [Elohim]  
and [the] inheritance of his word from God."**

Job  
20:29

**This [is] the allotment of the corrupt man from  
Elohim  
and the heritage of his word from God.**

**This is the inheritance of the ungodly as portioned out by Elohim,  
and the inheritance of .**

Although Zophar has not mentioned God for several verses, but only alluded to Him; in this ending verse, he uses God's name twice in reference to what God will do to the man of iniquity (i.e., Job). Other translators have rendered v. 29 as follows:

<i>The Emphasized Bible</i>	This    is the portion of the lawless man   from God  , And the inheritance decreed from the Mighty One.
JPS (Tanakh)	This is the wicked man's portion from God, The lot God has ordained for him.
Keil and Delitzsch	This is the lot of the wicked man from Elohim, And the heritage decreed for him from God.
NASB	"This is the wicked man's portion from God, Even the heritage decreed to him by God."
NIV	Such is the fate God allots the wicked, the heritage appointed for them by God.
REB	Such is God's reward for the wicked, the God-ordained portion for the rebel [prob. rdg.; Heb. his word].
The Septuagint	This is the portion of an ungodly man from the Lord, and the possession of his goods appointed him by the All-Seeing.
<i>Young's Literal Translation</i>	This is the portion of a wicked man from God, And an inheritance appointed him by God.

We begin with the masculine singular, demonstrative adjective *this*, which often implies the verb *to be*. Then we have the masculine singular construct of *chêleq* (חֵלֶק) [pronounced *KHAY-lek*], which means *portion, tract, territory, share, allotment*. Strong's #2506 (and #2511) BDB #324. This is affixed to the masculine singular construct of *man* followed by the masculine singular adjective *râshâ' (רָשָׁע)* [pronounced *raw-SHAWG*], which means *malevolent, lawless, corrupt, criminal*. Strong's #7563 BDB #957. This is followed by *from Elohim*. This gives us: **This [is] the portion [or, allotment] of the corrupt man, from God [Elohim]**. Recall that constructs do not have definite articles, although this is the way we would speak in the English.

The second line begins with the *wâw* conjunction and the feminine singular construct of *nachlâh* (נַחֲלָה) [pronounced *nah-khuh-LAW*], which means *inheritance, possession, property, heritage*. Strong's #5159 BDB #635. Then we have the 3<sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix affixed to the masculine singular noun *`êmer* (אָמַר)<sup>35</sup> [pronounced *AY-mer*], which means *utterance, speech, word*. This word is mostly found in poetry. Strong's #561 & #562 BDB #56. Then we have the *mîn* preposition affixed to *`el*, which is אֶל [pronounced *ALE*], which means *god, God, mighty one, strong, hero*. Strong's #410 BDB #42. This gives us: **...and the heritage of his word from God**. *His word* is what Job has been given from God—it refers to God's revealed truth, but the *his*

<sup>35</sup> Actually, the spelling is much closer to the feminine form of this noun, except that it lacks the *hê* at the end.

properly belongs to Job, who received God's Word. What Zophar is saying is that God has revealed important information to Job and Job listened, and then stopped listening as he fell into corruption. When he fell into corruption, all of these things took place, which is [the inheritance of a corrupt man from God and the heritage of his word from God](#). In other words, Job did have some limited access to the revealed word of God, but went against it, and what he received is exactly what he should have received (of course, this is according to Zophar). Like the others before him, Zophar couches all of this in the impersonal 3<sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, so that he does not speak about Job directly, but only through implication. *If the sandal fits, wear it*, would be what Zophar (or any of the others) might say. You will note the similarity between his final words and those of Bildad, who said, ["Surely such are the dwelling of the wicked, and this is the place of him who does not know God."](#) (Job 18:21).<sup>36</sup> NIV Study Bible: *Zophar concludes his speech with a summary statement in which he claims that all he has said is in accord with God's plans for judging sinners.*<sup>37</sup>

As you have noticed, Zophar really brought very little new to the table except for this: he had come to his own conclusions why Job was suffering—that is, he had figured out the nature of Job's sins. He had determined that Job had acquired all of his wealth through unsavory business practices and that he was now paying the piper for this evil. He was wrong, but no less so than his two accomplices. Now, as for Zophar, this is the last time that we will hear from him. There will be a third round of speeches, but he will not participate in them.

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<sup>36</sup> Surprisingly enough, Job will almost quote Zophar verbatim in Job 27:13.

<sup>37</sup> *The NIV Study Bible*; ©1995 by The Zondervan Corporation; p. 747.