

KEY

Archer = A Survey of Old Testament Introduction (Gleason Archer). Chicago: Moody Press, 2007.

Ash = Job: The Wisdom of the Cross (Christopher Ash). Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2014.

BBC = The IVP Bible Background Commentary: Old Testament. Edited by John H. Walton, Victor H. Matthews and Mark W. Chavalas. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000.

Bush = Bush, Frederick. Ruth/Esther in the Word Biblical Commentary, Vol 9. Edited by David H. Hubbard and Glenn W. Barker. Dallas: Word Books, 1996.

Frame = John Frame, Systematic Theology, P&R Publishing, 2013.

Grudem = Wayne Grudem, Systematic Theology, Zondervan, 1994.

Harrison = Introduction to the Old Testament (R.K. Harrison). Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1969.

K&D = Keil, C.F. and Delitzsch, F. in the Keil and Delitzsch Commentary on the Old Testament, Vol 2. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1989.

Swindoll = A Man of Heroic Endurance: Job (Charles Swindoll). Nashville, TN. W Publishing Group, 2004.

Talbert = *Beyond Suffering: Discovering the Message of Job* (Layton Talbert). Bob Jones University Press, 2007.

TWOT = The Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament (R. Laird Harris; Gleason L. Archer, Jr.; Bruce Waltke). Chicago: Moody Press, 1980. Two Volumes.

Walton = Old Testament Today. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2004.

Basic English Diagram / Structure

A. Job's disgust (16:1–5)

1 Then Job answered, 2 “I have heard many such things; Sorry comforters are you all. 3 “Is there no limit to windy words? Or what plagues you that you answer? 4 “I too could speak like you, If I were in your place. I could compose words against you And shake my head at you. 5 “I could strengthen you with my mouth, And the solace of my lips could lessen your pain.

B. Job's distress (16:6–17)

6 “If I speak, my pain is not lessened, And if I hold back, what has left me? 7 “But now He has exhausted me; You have laid waste all my company. 8 “You have shriveled me up, It has become a witness; And my leanness rises up against me, It testifies to my face. 9 “His anger has torn me and hunted me down, He has gnashed at me with His teeth; My adversary glares at me. 10 “They have gaped at me with their mouth, They have slapped me on the cheek with contempt; They have massed themselves against me. 11 “God hands me over to ruffians And tosses me into the hands of the wicked. 12 “I was at ease, but He shattered me, And He has grasped me by the neck and shaken me to pieces; He has also set me up as His target. 13 “His arrows surround me. Without mercy He splits my kidneys open; He pours out my gall on the ground. 14 “He breaks through me with breach after breach; He runs at me like a warrior. 15 “I have sewed sackcloth over my skin And thrust my horn in the dust. 16 “My face is flushed from weeping, And deep darkness is on my eyelids, 17 Although there is no violence in my hands, And my prayer is pure.

C. Job's desire (16:18–17:5)

16:18 “O earth, do not cover my blood, And let there be no resting place for my cry. 19 “Even now, behold, my witness is in heaven, And my advocate is on high. 20 “My friends are my scoffers; My eye weeps to God. 21 “O that a man might plead with God As a man with his neighbor! 22 “For when a few years are past, I shall go the way of no return. 17:1 “My spirit is broken, my days are extinguished, The grave is ready for me. 2 “Surely mockers are with me, And my eye gazes on their provocation. 3 “Lay down, now, a pledge for me with Yourself; Who is there that will be my guarantor? 4 “For You have kept their heart from understanding, Therefore You will not exalt them. 5 “He who informs against friends for a share of the spoil, The eyes of his children also will languish.

D. Job's dilemma (17:6–16)

6 “But He has made me a byword of the people, And I am one at whom men spit. 7 “My eye has also grown dim because of grief, And all my members are as a shadow. 8 “The upright will be appalled at this, And the innocent will stir up himself against the godless. 9 “Nevertheless the righteous will hold to his way, And he who has clean hands will grow stronger and stronger. 10 “But come again all of you now, For I do not find a wise man among you. 11 “My days are past, my plans are torn apart, Even the wishes of my heart. 12 “They make night into day, saying, ‘The light is near,’ in the presence of darkness. 13 “If I look for Sheol as my home, I make my bed in the darkness; 14 If I call to the pit, ‘You are my father’; To the worm, ‘my mother and my sister’;

15 Where now is my hope? And who regards my hope? 16 “Will it go down with me to Sheol?
Shall we together go down into the dust?”

TRANSLATION, OUTLINE AND CENTRAL PROPOSITION

ENGLISH TRANSLATION (NASB95):

Job 16:1-22 1 Then Job answered, 2 “I have heard many such things; Sorry comforters are you all. 3 “Is there no limit to windy words? Or what plagues you that you answer? 4 “I too could speak like you, If I were in your place. I could compose words against you And shake my head at you. 5 “I could strengthen you with my mouth, And the solace of my lips could lessen your pain. 6 “If I speak, my pain is not lessened, And if I hold back, what has left me? 7 “But now He has exhausted me; You have laid waste all my company. 8 “You have shriveled me up, It has become a witness; And my leanness rises up against me, It testifies to my face. 9 “His anger has torn me and hunted me down, He has gnashed at me with His teeth; My adversary glares at me. 10 “They have gaped at me with their mouth, They have slapped me on the cheek with contempt; They have massed themselves against me. 11 “God hands me over to ruffians And tosses me into the hands of the wicked. 12 “I was at ease, but He shattered me, And He has grasped me by the neck and shaken me to pieces; He has also set me up as His target. 13 “His arrows surround me. Without mercy He splits my kidneys open; He pours out my gall on the ground. 14 “He breaks through me with breach after breach; He runs at me like a warrior. 15 “I have sewed sackcloth over my skin And thrust my horn in the dust. 16 “My face is flushed from weeping, And deep darkness is on my eyelids, 17 Although there is no violence in my hands, And my prayer is pure. 18 “O earth, do not cover my blood, And let there be no resting place for my cry. 19 “Even now, behold, my witness is in heaven, And my advocate is on high. 20 “My friends are my scoffers; My eye weeps to God. 21 “O that a man might plead with God As a man with his neighbor! 22 “For when a few years are past, I shall go the way of no return.

Job 17:1-16 1 “My spirit is broken, my days are extinguished, The grave is ready for me. 2 “Surely mockers are with me, And my eye gazes on their provocation. 3 “Lay down, now, a pledge for me with Yourself; Who is there that will be my guarantor? 4 “For You have kept their heart from understanding, Therefore You will not exalt them. 5 “He who informs against friends for a share of the spoil, The eyes of his children also will languish. 6 “But He has made me a byword of the people, And I am one at whom men spit. 7 “My eye has also grown dim because of grief, And all my members are as a shadow. 8 “The upright will be appalled at this, And the innocent will stir up himself against the godless. 9 “Nevertheless the righteous will hold to his way, And he who has clean hands will grow stronger and stronger. 10 “But come again all of you now, For I do not find a wise man among you. 11 “My days are past, my plans are torn apart, Even the wishes of my heart. 12 “They make night into day, saying, ‘The light is near,’ in the presence of darkness. 13 “If I look for Sheol as my home, I make my bed in the darkness; 14 If I call to the pit, ‘You are my father’; To the worm, ‘my mother and my sister’; 15 Where now is my hope? And who regards my hope? 16 “Will it go down with me to Sheol? Shall we together go down into the dust?”

PASSAGE OUTLINE:

Bible Knowledge Commentary

- I. JOB'S SECOND REPLY TO ELIPHAZ (CHAPS. 16–17)
 - A. Job's disgust (16:1–5)
 - B. Job's distress (16:6–17)
 - C. Job's desire (16:18–17:5)
 - D. Job's dilemma (17:6–16)

UBS Handbook Series

- I. Job Accuses Eliphaz of Substituting Words for Comfort (16:1–5)
- II. Job Accuses God of Treating Him with Violence (16:6–17)
- IV. Job Hopes Someone in Heaven Will Witness for Him (16:18–17:2)
- V. Job Asks God to Be His Guarantor (17:3–5)
- VI. Job Complains That People Think He is Godless (17:6–10)
- VII. Job's Only Hope is to Die (17:11–16)

The Outline Bible

- I. Job's Defense (16:1-17:16)
 - A. What Miserable Comforters! (16:1-4)
 - 1. Job accuses his friends of an endless flow of foolish and critical words
 - B. I Would Help You (16:5)
 - 1. Job says that he would help his friends if they were suffering
 - C. Betrayed by God and People (16:6-18)
 - 1. Job says that both God and others have turned against him
 - D. An Advocate in Heaven (16:19-22)
 - 1. Job trusts that someone is presenting his case before God
 - E. Defend My Innocence (17:1-9)
 - 1. Job calls upon God to defend him because Job has become a mockery to those around him
 - F. My Hopes Have Disappeared (17:10-16)
 - 1. Job despairs and resigns himself to death as he looks upon his seemingly hopeless situation

Biblical Studies: Job (Sam Storms)

Job's Fourth Speech (Job 16–17)

- A. Job's disgust with his friends—16:1–6
- B. Job's distress under God's sovereignty—16:7–17
- C. Job's desire for a heavenly intercessor—16:18–22
- D. Job's despair in his condition—17:1–16

The New American Commentary: Job (Robert L. Alden)

- I. Job Reproaches His Pitiless Friends and Prays for Relief (16:1–17:16)
 - A. Criticism of Friends (16:1–5)
 - B. Complaint to God (16:6–14)
 - C. Plea of Innocence (16:15–17)
 - D. Hope for Vindication (16:18–21)
 - E. Prospect of a Near and Unhappy Death (16:22–17:2)
 - F. Address to God (17:3–5)
 - G. More Complaint (17:6–8)
 - H. Innocence and Hope in Death (17:9)
 - I. More Despair (17:10–16)
 - 1. THE WORTHLESSNESS OF THE FRIENDS (17:10–12)
 - 2. HOPE ONLY IN DEATH (17:13–16)

Be Patient: Job (Warren W. Wiersbe)

- I. Job: Three Requests (Job 16–17)
 - A. A plea for sympathy (Job 16:1–14)
 - B. A plea for justice (Job 16:15–22).
 - C. A plea for death (Job 17:1–16)

BASIC OUTLINE:

- I. Job's Second Reply to Eliphaz: Despair Over Divine Destruction (16:1 - 17:16)
 - A. Job's Disgust with His Friends (16:1–6; 17:2,5,10)
 - 1. They are Sorry Comforters (16:1-3)
 - a. Job Could Do Better (16:4-6)
 - 2. They are Mockers (16:20; 17:2)
 - 3. They are Betrayers (17:5)
 - 4. They are Unwise (17:10)
 - B. Job's Disillusion with God (16:7-14; 17:4)
 - 1. God has Exhausted Job and Decimated His Family (16:7)
 - 2. God has Emaciated Job (16:8)
 - 3. God Hunts Job Down Like a Defenseless Animal (16:9)
 - 4. God Has Made Job His Target (16:12b-13)
 - 5. God Hands Job Over to Mockers (16:10-11)
 - 6. God Shakes Job Out of a Peaceful Existence (16:12a)
 - 7. God Has Conquered Job Like a Defenseless Army (16:14)
 - 8. God has Blinded Job's Friends (17:4)
 - C. Job's Distress Over His Plight (16:15-17; 17:1a,6-8,11-16)
 - 1. Deplorable Job (16:15-17; 17:7-8)
 - 2. Dreams Shattered (17:1a,11-12)
 - 3. Derided by Others (17:6)
 - 4. Death Welcome (17:1b,13-16)
 - D. Job's Desire for Hope (16:19-22; 17:3,9)

1. Job's Protector (16:19)
2. Job's Plea (16:21)
3. Job's Pledge (17:3)
4. Job's Perseverance (17:9)

SERMON OUTLINE:

I. Job's Second Reply to Eliphaz: Despair Over Divine Destruction (16:1 - 17:16)

A. Job's Disgust with His Friends (16:1–6; 17:2,5,10)

1. They are Sorry Comforters (16:1-3)
 - a. Job Could Do Better (16:4-6)
2. They are Mockers (16:20; 17:2)
3. They are Betrayers (17:5)
4. They are Unwise (17:10)

B. Job's Disillusion with God (16:7-14; 17:4)

1. God has Exhausted Job and Decimated His Family (16:7)
2. God has Emaciated Job (16:8)
3. God Hunts Job Down Like a Defenseless Animal (16:9)
4. God Has Made Job His Target (16:12b-13)
5. God Hands Job Over to Mockers (16:10-11)
6. God Shakes Job Out of a Peaceful Existence (16:12a)
7. God Has Conquered Job Like a Defenseless Army (16:14)
8. God has Blinded Job's Friends (17:4)

C. Job's Distress Over His Plight (16:15-17; 17:1,7-8,15-)

1. Deplorable Job (16:15-17; 17:7-8)
2. Dreams Shattered (17:1a,11-12)
3. Derided by Others (17:6)
4. Death Welcome (17:1b,13-16)

D. Job's Desire for Hope (16:19-22; 17:3,9)

1. Job's Protector (16:19)
2. Job's Plea (16:21-22)
3. Job's Pledge (17:3)
4. Job's Perseverance (17:9)

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1. Job was Mocked, as was Jesus (16:10,20, 17:2; Cf. Matt. 27:27ff.)
 2. Job was Spit Upon, as was Jesus (17:6; Cf. Isa. 50:6; Matt. 26:67, 27:30)
 3. Job was Slapped as was Jesus (16:10; Cf. Mark 14:65; Matt. 26:67)
 4. Job was Handed over to the Wicked, as was Jesus (Job 16:11; Cf. Luke 24:7; Acts 2:23)
 5. Job was Betrayed, as was Jesus (17:5; Cf. Matt. 26:21, 27:9; Mark 14:10)
 6. Job was Disfigured, as was Jesus (16:8, 17:7; Cf. Isa. 52:14, 53:3; Psalm 22:17)
 7. Job was Crushed by God, as was Jesus (16:12b-14; Cf. Isa. 53:4-5; 2 Cor. 5:21)
 8. Job Faced Sheol (Grave), as did Jesus (17:13-16; Cf. Psalm 16:10; Acts 2:24ff.)

PASSAGE SUBJECT/THEME (what is the passage talking about): Job's Distress

PASSAGE COMPLEMENT/THRUST (what is the passage saying about what it's talking about): Is demonstrated in his disgust with his friends and his disillusionment with his God.

PASSAGE MAIN IDEA (central proposition of the text): Job's distress is demonstrated in his disgust with his friends and disillusionment with his God.

CENTRAL PROPOSITION (OR IDEA) OF THE SERMON: Job's distress demonstrated in his disgust with his friends and disillusionment with his God.

SERMONIC IDEA/TITLE: Job's Second Reply to Eliphaz: Despair Over Divine Destruction

HISTORICAL/CULTURAL/GRAMMATICAL CONTEXT

Job's second reply to Eliphaz.

8. Job Reproaches His Pitiless Friends and Prays for Relief (16:1–17:16)

One could grow weary of Job's litany of criticism, complaint, and despair if it were not for the rich vocabulary and fascinating word pictures he used to present his position. The same could be said for the friends. Another feature of Job's speeches that the others never express brightens the otherwise dreary landscape: his occasional exhibition of hope. Such traces of trust appear in this speech at 16:19–21 and 17:9.

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As in chaps. 12 and 13, Job began this speech with a reminder to his friends that they had presented nothing that was not common knowledge. Furthermore, he charged them with a lack of sympathy. [Robert L. Alden, *Job*, vol. 11, *The New American Commentary* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1993), 181–182.]

This is the most disjointed of Job's speeches so far. His previous speeches had built to a climax in chs. 12–14, and from that point onwards he has nothing really novel to say. In this speech we hear again several themes we have already met with: he addresses the friends with criticism of their speeches (16:2–6); he then speaks in soliloquy, lamenting the attacks of God (16:7–17); he imagines his possible vindication (16:18–22); he makes a lament about the friends (17:1–10); and laments that he will probably die without being vindicated (17:11–16). Unlike chs. 12–14, the subject here is always Job himself, and not humanity in general. [David J. A. Clines, "Job," in *New Bible Commentary: 21st Century Edition*, ed. D. A. Carson et al., 4th ed. (Leicester, England; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1994), 471]

VERSES 16:1-5

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NASB95]:

1 Then Job answered, 2 “I have heard many such things; Sorry comforters are you all. 3 “Is there no limit to windy words? Or what plagues you that you answer? 4 “I too could speak like you, If I were in your place. I could compose words against you And shake my head at you. 5 “I could strengthen you with my mouth, And the solace of my lips could lessen your pain.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [ESV]:

1 Then Job answered and said: 2 “I have heard many such things; miserable comforters are you all. 3 Shall windy words have an end? Or what provokes you that you answer? 4 I also could speak as you do, if you were in my place; I could join words together against you and shake my head at you. 5 I could strengthen you with my mouth, and the solace of my lips would assuage your pain.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [HCSB]:

1 Then Job answered: 2 I have heard many things like these. You are all miserable comforters. 3 Is there no end to your empty words? What provokes you that you continue testifying? 4 If you were in my place I could also talk like you. I could string words together against you and shake my head at you. 5 Instead, I would encourage you with my mouth, and the consolation from my lips would bring relief.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NIV]:

1 Then Job replied: 2 “I have heard many things like these; you are miserable comforters, all of you! 3 Will your long-winded speeches never end? What ails you that you keep on arguing? 4 I also could speak like you, if you were in my place; I could make fine speeches against you and shake my head at you. 5 But my mouth would encourage you; comfort from my lips would bring you relief.

CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:

1 Then Job answered, 2 “I have heard many such things; Sorry comforters are you all.

. . . they were miserable comforters (lit., “comforters of trouble,” *‘āmāl*, the same word Eliphaz had just used, 15:35). They compounded rather than eased his trouble. [Roy B. Zuck, “Job,” in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 1 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 738.]

Cf. 13:4 where Job calls his friends “worthless physicians.”

Job complains that he has *heard many such things* as the comforters speak. But in his present plight such pious platitudes serve only to increase his sorrow. Therefore, he

accuses his friends of being *miserable comforters*. . . . The byword *miserable comforters* is a pungent oxymoron; i.e., the more words they speak to comfort, the more pain they inflict. This interchange boldly marks the difference between Job's perspective and Eliphaz's. Whereas Eliphaz believes that the speeches of the friends are the very consolations of God (15:11), Job considers them to be harbingers of misery. And whereas Eliphaz concludes his speech with the aphorism "conceiving mischief . . . bearing iniquity" (15:35a), Job retorts that it is their theologizing that conceives mischief to produce misery in him.

With a biting rhetorical questions Job charges Eliphaz with uttering *windy words* . . . i.e., eloquent speech devoid of content. He is directly countering Eliphaz's reproach that his knowledge is empty wind (15:2) and Bildad's retort that his worlds are a mighty wind (8:2). Next Job asks Eliphaz *what irritates* . . . him so much that he feels compelled to *keep answering*. Job cannot fathom why Eliphaz is so upset with him. [John E. Hartley, *The Book of Job* (NICOT), 1988. 257. Cited in Swindoll, *A Man of Heroic Endurance*, 135]

Job had previously referred to their advice as a disgusting diet (6:5-6) and compared them to a dry stream that disappoints thirsty travelers (6:14-23).

3 **"Is there no limit to windy words? Or what plagues you that you answer?"**

Furthermore they babbled with long-winded speeches and arguments (cf. "blustering wind," 8:2; and "hot east wind," 15:2), unlike good counselors who console and listen. Apparently Job was surprised that Eliphaz came back at him a second time as if something ails him (you in 16:4-5 is pl., but in v. 3b it is sing). [Bible Knowledge Commentary]

"What flew up your nose?"

They knew nothing of the thoughts uttered by Paul in the N.T.:

2 Corinthians 1:4 [It is God] who comforts us in all our affliction so that we will be able to comfort those who are in any affliction with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.

4 **"I too could speak like you, If I were in your place. I could compose words against you And shake my head at you. 5 "I could strengthen you with my mouth, And the solace of my lips could lessen your pain.**

Verse 5 = sarcasm.

If they could change places, Job could fire verbal bullets at them and deride them (to shake one's head was to mock; cf. 2 Kings 19:21; Ps. 22:7). But he would not do that. Instead he would give encouragement and comfort (as he had done in the past for others; Job 4:4; 29:21-23) . . . [Bible Knowledge Commentary]

VERSES 16:6-17

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NASB95]:

6 “If I speak, my pain is not lessened, And if I hold back, what has left me? 7 “But now He has exhausted me; You have laid waste all my company. 8 “You have shriveled me up, It has become a witness; And my leanness rises up against me, It testifies to my face. 9 “His anger has torn me and hunted me down, He has gnashed at me with His teeth; My adversary glares at me. 10 “They have gaped at me with their mouth, They have slapped me on the cheek with contempt; They have massed themselves against me. 11 “God hands me over to ruffians And tosses me into the hands of the wicked. 12 “I was at ease, but He shattered me, And He has grasped me by the neck and shaken me to pieces; He has also set me up as His target. 13 “His arrows surround me. Without mercy He splits my kidneys open; He pours out my gall on the ground. 14 “He breaks through me with breach after breach; He runs at me like a warrior. 15 “I have sewed sackcloth over my skin And thrust my horn in the dust. 16 “My face is flushed from weeping, And deep darkness is on my eyelids, 17 Although there is no violence in my hands, And my prayer is pure.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [ESV]:

6 “If I speak, my pain is not assuaged, and if I forbear, how much of it leaves me? 7 Surely now God has worn me out; he has made desolate all my company. 8 And he has shriveled me up, which is a witness against me, and my leanness has risen up against me; it testifies to my face. 9 He has torn me in his wrath and hated me; he has gnashed his teeth at me; my adversary sharpens his eyes against me. 10 Men have gaped at me with their mouth; they have struck me insolently on the cheek; they mass themselves together against me. 11 God gives me up to the ungodly and casts me into the hands of the wicked. 12 I was at ease, and he broke me apart; he seized me by the neck and dashed me to pieces; he set me up as his target; 13 his archers surround me. He slashes open my kidneys and does not spare; he pours out my gall on the ground. 14 He breaks me with breach upon breach; he runs upon me like a warrior. 15 I have sewed sackcloth upon my skin and have laid my strength in the dust. 16 My face is red with weeping, and on my eyelids is deep darkness, 17 although there is no violence in my hands, and my prayer is pure.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [HCSB]:

6 Even if I speak, my suffering is not relieved, and if I hold back, what have I lost? 7 Surely He has now exhausted me. You have devastated my entire family. 8 You have shriveled me up—it has become a witness; My frailty rises up against me and testifies to my face. 9 His anger tears at me, and He harasses me. He gnashes His teeth at me. My enemy pierces me with His eyes. 10 They open their mouths against me and strike my cheeks with contempt; they join themselves together against me. 11 God hands me over to unjust men; He throws me into the hands of the wicked. 12 I was at ease, but He shattered me; He seized me by the scruff of the neck and smashed me to pieces. He set me up as His target; 13 His archers surround me. He pierces my kidneys without mercy and pours my bile on the ground. 14 He breaks through my defenses again and again; He charges at me like a warrior. 15 I have sewn sackcloth over my skin; I have buried my strength in the dust. 16 My face has grown red with weeping, and darkness covers my eyes, 17 although my hands are free from violence and my prayer is pure.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NIV]:

6 “Yet if I speak, my pain is not relieved; and if I refrain, it does not go away. 7 Surely, God, you have worn me out; you have devastated my entire household. 8 You have shriveled me up—and it has become a witness; my gauntness rises up and testifies against me. 9 God assails me and tears me in his anger and gnashes his teeth at me; my opponent fastens on me his piercing eyes. 10 People open their mouths to jeer at me; they strike my cheek in scorn and unite together against me. 11 God has turned me over to the ungodly and thrown me into the clutches of the wicked. 12 All was well with me, but he shattered me; he seized me by the neck and crushed me. He has made me his target; 13 his archers surround me. Without pity, he pierces my kidneys and spills my gall on the ground. 14 Again and again he bursts upon me; he rushes at me like a warrior. 15 “I have sewed sackcloth over my skin and buried my brow in the dust. 16 My face is red with weeping, dark shadows ring my eyes; 17 yet my hands have been free of violence and my prayer is pure.

CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:

6 “If I speak, my pain is not lessened, And if I hold back, what has left me?

If I speak or remain silent, all remains the same.

7 “But now He has exhausted me; You have laid waste all my company. 8 “You have shriveled me up, It has become a witness; And my leanness rises up against me, It testifies to my face.

All my company probably does not refer to all of Job’s other friends but is more specifically his own closest kin, and so TEV “family.” NIV has “You have devastated my entire household,” which would include family and servants. Line b may also be rendered, for example, “You, God, have killed my entire family” or “God has destroyed my family.” FRCL says “all those around me.” [William David Reybourn, *A Handbook on the Book of Job*, UBS Handbook Series (New York: United Bible Societies, 1992), 311]

NIV has for v. 7b: . . . you have devastated my entire household.

Cf. 17:7 “My eye has also grown dim because of grief, And all my members are as a shadow.

Note Jesus, whose closest friends abandoned Him during His time of greatest need; Jesus who endured beatings and hung crucified, a disfigured pathetic figure of a man—not just any man—but the Son of God (cf. Isaiah 52:14; 53:3). His skin was shriveled (Psa. 22:17). Acts 4:27-28.

9 “His anger has torn me and hunted me down, He has gnashed at me with His teeth; My adversary glares at me.

10 “They have gaped at me with their mouth, They have slapped me on the cheek with contempt; They have massed themselves against me.

Men have gaped at me with their mouth: men translates an indefinite “they,” which TEV renders “people.” Gaped at me means they “stared at me with open mouths.” It implies that the person whose mouth is open is in a state of wonder, dumbfounded by what he sees. [UBS Handbook]

Cf. 30:1, 9-10 1 “But now those younger than I mock me, Whose fathers I disdained to put with the dogs of my flock. 9 “And now I have become their taunt, I have even become a byword to them. 10 “They abhor me and stand aloof from me, And they do not refrain from spitting at my face.

To be slapped on the cheek was an insult. Cf. Psalm 3:7; Matt. 5:39 (“right cheek” = backhanded slap for most who would be right handed). Jesus mocked (Matt. 27:27-31).

This verse is reminiscent of some of the passages that the Evangelists used to describe the crucifixion (e.g., Ps 22:13–16; Isa 50:6; 53:3–4b, 7). Though no New Testament passage ever cited him as a type of Christ, Job nevertheless belonged to that company of righteous sufferers who anticipated the one who was perfect righteousness and who suffered even death on a cross. [Robert L. Alden, Job, vol. 11, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1993), 184]

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

Ungodly [NASB “ruffians”] translates a Hebrew noun meaning “child” and is used with that sense in 19:18; 21:11. However, “child” does not fit the context, and so most interpreters accept a change of vowels to give a similar sounding noun meaning “unrighteous,” as in 27:7. [UBS Handbook]

“The evil men” and “the wicked” to whom God turned Job over might have been the Sabeans and Chaldeans of 1:14, 17, but I believe Job used these strong words to describe the three friends, who came to console but ended up opposing him. [Robert L. Alden, Job, vol. 11, The New American Commentary]

12 “**I was at ease, but He shattered me, And He has grasped me by the neck and shaken me to pieces; He has also set me up as His target.** 13 “**His arrows surround me. Without mercy He splits my kidneys open; He pours out my gall on the ground.** 14 “**He breaks through me with breach after breach; He runs at me like a warrior.**”

Note “at ease” (cf. Eliphaz in 15:21b: “while at peace the destroyer comes upon him”).

The word translated ease is better expressed by TEV “living in peace.” Broke me asunder means “smashed to pieces,” in which the person thinks of himself as a breakable object like a clay pot. [UBS Handbook]

“Kidneys” = seat of the emotions? Emotional anguish? The attack moves from that of a hunter (v. 9) to a betrayer (v. 10-11) to a mauler (v. 12a) to a target for arrows (v. 12b-13) to a relentless army (v. 14).

Cf. the following:

9:17 “For He bruises me with a tempest And multiplies my wounds without cause.

6:4 “For the arrows of the Almighty are within me, Their poison my spirit drinks; The terrors of God are arrayed against me.

7:20 “Have I sinned? What have I done to You, O watcher of men? Why have You set me as Your target, So that I am a burden to myself?

Job was wrong in attributing hostility to God. Yet he could see no other explanation.

Job’s perception of God’s posture toward him is as graphic as it is sad. ‘Only [a] literal translation can do justice to the savagery of Job’s description of God’s vicious attack.’ God has ‘shriveled up’ Job with a disfiguring disease (16:8), torn him in pieces like a beast bent on revenge, and gnashed on him with His teeth, His eyes shooting daggers at him (16:9). Others have joined in the abuse (16:10) as God turned him over to be victimized by the wicked (16:11). Job was at ease, but now he is a shattered man. Lion-like, God has taken him by the back of the neck and shaken him (16:12). Then God set him up for His archery practice (16:12c-14). Job’s is a pathetic case, all the more pathetic being undeserved (16:15-22).” [Layton Talbert, 116-17]

15 “I have sewed sackcloth over my skin And thrust my horn in the dust.

I have sewed sackcloth upon my skin: sackcloth refers to a coarse dark material made of goat or camel hair. It is a sign of mourning and was worn next to the skin (2 Kgs 6:30). Job’s sackcloth is sewed ... upon my skin, and this may suggest that he will wear it permanently, or that he wears it next to his skin. TEV “I wear clothes made of sackcloth” suggests neither the one nor the other. GECL, however, translates “The mourning clothes are my second skin,” which implies that Job will wear them all the time. [UBS Handbook]

Sackcloth as a symbol of grief (cf. Gen. 37:34; 2 Kings 19:1; Neh. 9:1; Es. 4:1; Lam. 2:10; Dan. 9:3; Joel 1:8, 13).

“Thrust my horn” (thrust his brow (lit., “animal horn”), in the dust, the figure of a defeated animal). Cf. “buried my strength in the dust” used in other translations. Picture of a defeated bull in a bullfight. Or it could be: a Hebrew idiom for “strength/pride. [So Robert Alden]

16 “My face is flushed from weeping, And deep darkness is on my eyelids,

Cf. my three years of weeping.

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

What about the total depravity of 15:14-16?

Isaiah 1:15 “So when you spread out your hands in prayer, I will hide My eyes from you; Yes, even though you multiply prayers, I will not listen. Your hands are covered with blood.

VERSES 16:18-17:5

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NASB95]:

16:18 “O earth, do not cover my blood, And let there be no resting place for my cry. 19 “Even now, behold, my witness is in heaven, And my advocate is on high. 20 “My friends are my scoffers; My eye weeps to God. 21 “O that a man might plead with God As a man with his neighbor! 22 “For when a few years are past, I shall go the way of no return. 17:1 “My spirit is broken, my days are extinguished, The grave is ready for me. 2 “Surely mockers are with me, And my eye gazes on their provocation. 3 “Lay down, now, a pledge for me with Yourself; Who is there that will be my guarantor? 4 “For You have kept their heart from understanding, Therefore You will not exalt them. 5 “He who informs against friends for a share of the spoil, The eyes of his children also will languish.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [ESV]:

16:18 “O earth, cover not my blood, and let my cry find no resting place. 19 Even now, behold, my witness is in heaven, and he who testifies for me is on high. 20 My friends scorn me; my eye pours out tears to God, 21 that he would argue the case of a man with God, as a son of man does with his neighbor. 22 For when a few years have come I shall go the way from which I shall not return. 17:1 “My spirit is broken; my days are extinct; the graveyard is ready for me. 2 Surely there are mockers about me, and my eye dwells on their provocation. 3 “Lay down a pledge for me with you; who is there who will put up security for me? 4 Since you have closed their hearts to understanding, therefore you will not let them triumph. 5 He who informs against his friends to get a share of their property— the eyes of his children will fail.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [HCSB]:

16:18 Earth, do not cover my blood; may my cry for help find no resting place. 19 Even now my witness is in heaven, and my advocate is in the heights! 20 My friends scoff at me as I weep before God. 21 I wish that someone might arbitrate between a man and God just as a man pleads for his friend. 22 For only a few years will pass before I go the way of no return. 17:1 My spirit is broken. My days are extinguished. A graveyard awaits me. 2 Surely mockers surround me and my eyes must gaze at their rebellion. 3 Make arrangements! Put up security for me. Who else will be my sponsor? 4 You have closed their minds to understanding, therefore You will not honor them. 5 If a man informs on his friends for a price, the eyes of his children will fail.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NIV]:

16:18 “Earth, do not cover my blood; may my cry never be laid to rest! 19 Even now my witness is in heaven; my advocate is on high. 20 My intercessor is my friend as my eyes pour out tears to God; 21 on behalf of a man he pleads with God as one pleads for a friend. 22 “Only a few years will pass before I take the path of no return. 17:1 My spirit is broken, my days are cut short, the grave awaits me. 2 Surely mockers surround me; my eyes must dwell on their hostility. 3 “Give me, O God, the pledge you demand. Who else will put up security for me? 4 You have closed

their minds to understanding; therefore you will not let them triumph. 5 If anyone denounces their friends for reward, the eyes of their children will fail.

CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:

16:18 “O earth, do not cover my blood, And let there be no resting place for my cry.

Job pleaded with the earth that it not cover his blood, that is, that his injustice be vindicated (cf. Gen. 4:10) and that his cry for justice not be buried and forgotten. [Bible Knowledge Commentary]

O earth, cover not my blood: Job is convinced that death is about to cut him off, and he calls on the earth to allow his blood to cry out to God for vindication. A similar thought is in Genesis 4:10, “Your brother’s blood is crying out to me from the ground . . .” (TEV). As long as the blood is not covered over and hidden, it can cry out (Ezek 24:7). This verse can be compared with Isaiah 26:21b, “And the earth will disclose the blood shed upon her and will no more cover her slain.” . . . Job sees himself as a murder victim whose blood is on the ground.” [UBS Handbook]

Isaiah looks forward to the day when . . . the earth will reveal her bloodshed And will no longer cover her slain.” [Isaiah 26:21b]

19 “Even now, behold, my witness is in heaven, And my advocate is on high.

Turning from earth to heaven Job was confident that there he had a witness, or an advocate (*śāhēd*, an Aram. word, used only here in the OT), one who is an intercessor (*mēlîš*, “an interpreter or ambassador”; cf. Job 33:23, “mediator”; Gen. 42:23, “interpreter”; Isa. 43:27, “spokesman”). This friend, Job hoped, would plead (*yākaḥ*, “argue, debate in court”) with God on his behalf. [Bible Knowledge Commentary]

Pope does not think my witness can refer to God, who is already seen by Job as accuser, judge, and executioner. Gordis sees no problem in Job’s oriental logic, in which God can be seen as both judge and witness at the same time. The idea is that, while God has caused Job’s suffering, Job still retains trust in the God of righteousness and love. [UBS Handbook]

Note 5:18 “For He inflicts pain, and gives relief; He wounds, and His hands also heal.

19:25 “As for me, I know that my Redeemer lives, And at the last He will take His stand on the earth.

In the midst of this, Job’s fifth speech, there shines another ray of hope. Admittedly Job was inconsistent. Those who demand consistency even of a man in the throes of grief and disease explain away these positive passages that hint at resolution, divine provision, and life after death. But people can be forgiven for being more or less optimistic and even for

vacillating between doubt and faith, all the more so when they are experiencing the emotional trauma of losing ten children in one catastrophe and being afflicted with a gruesome, offensive, painful, physical affliction. Let us rejoice with Job when his spirit soared, and let us weep with him when he wept. [Robert L. Alden, Job, vol. 11, The New American Commentary]

20 “My friends are my scoffers; My eye weeps to God. 21 “O that a man might plead with God As a man with his neighbor!

[I]n 9:33 Job complained “There is no umpire between us” (RSV). Job’s desire is that his witness be an “arbiter, umpire, mediator” between man (himself) and God. [UBS Handbook]

In vv. 19–20 are four terms describing the one Job hoped would come to his defense: “witness,” “advocate,” “intercessor,” and “friend.” All these terms can and do apply to human beings elsewhere in the Old Testament, but the prepositional phrases “in heaven” and “on high” push the interpreter to think in terms of a divine redeemer. . . . “Intercessor” is one who passes messages between those who cannot meet or understand each other. It is the “interpreter” in Gen 42:23, the “envoys” in 2 Chr 32:31, and the (angelic) “mediator” in Job 33:23.[Robert L. Alden, Job, vol. 11, The New American Commentary]

This verse [21] defines what the “intercessor/advocate” does. He argues the case of his friend before the bar of divine justice.³⁸ His task is similar to that of the Messiah in Isa 2:4; 11:4, where the same verb appears (cf. Rom 8:34; Heb 7:25). [Robert L. Alden, Job, vol. 11, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1993), 187]

The Christian believer has this heavenly Advocate in Jesus Christ (1 John 2:1–2). As our interceding High Priest, Christ gives us the conquering grace we need when we are tempted and tested (Heb. 2:17–18; 4:14–16). If we fail, then He is our Advocate to forgive us and restore us when we confess our sins to Him (1 John 1:5–2:2).

Of course, Job wanted a “lawyer” to plead his case before God and convince Him that he was innocent. Once Job had won his case, then God would vindicate him before his critical friends and restore Job’s honor. God’s people don’t need that kind of intercession because the Father and the Son are in perfect agreement in their love for us and their plan for our lives. The Lord Jesus ever lives to make intercession for His people (Rom. 8:31–39; Heb. 7:25) and to perfect them in the will of God (13:20–21). We come to a throne of grace, not a throne of judgment; and we have confidence that our loving Father will do that which is best for us. [Warren W. Wiersbe, Be Patient, “Be” Commentary Series (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1996), 62]

22 **“For when a few years are past, I shall go the way of no return.**

Cf. 10:21 Before I go—and I shall not return— To the land of darkness and deep shadow,

17:1 **“My spirit is broken, my days are extinguished, The grave is ready for me.**

“Broken spirit.” Cf. v. 11 “My days are past, my plans are torn apart, Even the wishes of my heart.

Short life:

10:20 “Would He not let my few days alone? Withdraw from me that I may have a little cheer

14:1–2 1 “Man, who is born of woman, Is short-lived and full of turmoil. 2 “Like a flower he comes forth and withers. He also flees like a shadow and does not remain.

2 **“Surely mockers are with me, And my eye gazes on their provocation.**

The three friends. Also cf. 16:10-11; 21:3.

Other servants of God who were surrounded by hostile mockers are mentioned elsewhere (e.g., Pss 22:7, 12; 119:51; Jer 20:7; Matt 27:29, 41). [Robert L. Alden]

3 **“Lay down, now, a pledge for me with Yourself; Who is there that will be my guarantor?”**

. . . only God could provide a pledge for him in court, a bond given to the defendant as a guarantee that no advantage would be taken against him. To put up security is literally, “to strike hands,” a practice by which an agreement was ratified (cf. Prov. 6:1; 11:15; 17:18; 22:26). [Bible Knowledge Commentary]

Lay down a pledge for me with thyself translates the Hebrew “lay down, pledge me.” The language is that of the law court. Job appears now to address God and ask him to act as his guarantor. A guarantor is a friend or relative who provides bail money to obtain a prisoner’s release and guarantee his good conduct. TEV does not keep the legal images. FRCL says “O God, bring me your own guarantee.” GECL translates “God, do you provide bail? Be my surety.” Other translation models are: “God, pay the price to have me released,” “God, provide the money to free me from prison,” or “Pay the price to set me free.” [UBS Handbook]

Only God could do this for Job.

4 **“For You have kept their heart from understanding, Therefore You will not exalt them.**

Since thou hast closed their minds to understanding: in this line Job seems to say that God has hidden the truth from the friends. Their minds, in Hebrew “their hearts,” does

not actually say that the minds are the minds of the friends. Nevertheless, in this context it is best to assume it. FRCL has “You have removed all reason from my friends.” They are not qualified to serve as Job’s guarantor. [UBS Handbook Series]

Job complained that the reason no one would stand by him is that God had “closed their minds to understanding.” So it was God’s fault. The verb in the second line is troublesome, so the NIV added “them” to provide an object for it; others make it passive, hence God “will not be exalted.” [Robert L. Alden, The New American Commentary]

5 “He who informs against friends for a share of the spoil, The eyes of his children also will languish.

Friends who betray friends will see their own children suffer.

Job quoted a proverb of unknown origin to bolster his point against his unsupportive friends. Like many proverbs, it is cryptic and open to several interpretations. The verse suggests that the sins of the father will harm his children.⁴⁴ This was a common thought in the ancient Near East, but the point of the verse seems to be that friends should not be sold for a price. Friends are a precious experience and should not be taken advantage of. [Robert L. Alden, The New American Commentary]

VERSES 17:6-16

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NASB95]:

6 “But He has made me a byword of the people, And I am one at whom men spit. 7 “My eye has also grown dim because of grief, And all my members are as a shadow. 8 “The upright will be appalled at this, And the innocent will stir up himself against the godless. 9 “Nevertheless the righteous will hold to his way, And he who has clean hands will grow stronger and stronger. 10 “But come again all of you now, For I do not find a wise man among you. 11 “My days are past, my plans are torn apart, Even the wishes of my heart. 12 “They make night into day, saying, ‘The light is near,’ in the presence of darkness. 13 “If I look for Sheol as my home, I make my bed in the darkness; 14 If I call to the pit, ‘You are my father’; To the worm, ‘my mother and my sister’; 15 Where now is my hope? And who regards my hope? 16 “Will it go down with me to Sheol? Shall we together go down into the dust?”

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [ESV]:

6 “He has made me a byword of the peoples, and I am one before whom men spit. 7 My eye has grown dim from vexation, and all my members are like a shadow. 8 The upright are appalled at this, and the innocent stirs himself up against the godless. 9 Yet the righteous holds to his way, and he who has clean hands grows stronger and stronger. 10 But you, come on again, all of you, and I shall not find a wise man among you. 11 My days are past; my plans are broken off, the desires of my heart. 12 They make night into day: ‘The light,’ they say, ‘is near to the darkness.’ 13 If I hope for Sheol as my house, if I make my bed in darkness, 14 if I say to the pit, ‘You are my father,’ and to the worm, ‘My mother,’ or ‘My sister,’ 15 where then is my hope? Who will see my hope? 16 Will it go down to the bars of Sheol? Shall we descend together into the dust?”

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [HCSB]:

6 He has made me an object of scorn to the people; I have become a man people spit at. 7 My eyes have grown dim from grief, and my whole body has become but a shadow. 8 The upright are appalled at this, and the innocent are roused against the godless. 9 Yet the righteous person will hold to his way, and the one whose hands are clean will grow stronger. 10 But come back and try again, all of you. I will not find a wise man among you. 11 My days have slipped by; my plans have been ruined, even the things dear to my heart. 12 They turned night into day and made light seem near in the face of darkness. 13 If I await Sheol as my home, spread out my bed in darkness, 14 and say to corruption: You are my father, and to the maggot: My mother or my sister, 15 where then is my hope? Who can see any hope for me? 16 Will it go down to the gates of Sheol, or will we descend together to the dust?

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NIV]:

6 “God has made me a byword to everyone, a man in whose face people spit. 7 My eyes have grown dim with grief; my whole frame is but a shadow. 8 The upright are appalled at this; the innocent are aroused against the ungodly. 9 Nevertheless, the righteous will hold to their ways, and those with clean hands will grow stronger. 10 “But come on, all of you, try again! I will not

find a wise man among you. 11 My days have passed, my plans are shattered. Yet the desires of my heart 12 turn night into day; in the face of the darkness light is near. 13 If the only home I hope for is the grave, if I spread out my bed in the realm of darkness, 14 if I say to corruption, ‘You are my father,’ and to the worm, ‘My mother’ or ‘My sister,’ 15 where then is my hope—who can see any hope for me? 16 Will it go down to the gates of death? Will we descend together into the dust?”

CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:

6 “But He has made me a byword of the people, And I am one at whom men spit.

Byword translates a word meaning “proverb, parable, wise saying.” In Psalm 44:14 and elsewhere it has the meaning of “object of contempt” (TEV “a joke among the nations”), or “laughingstock.” In this line the reference is to Job as someone to be ridiculed, laughed at. [UBS Handbook Series]

30:9-10 9 “And now I have become their taunt, I have even become a byword to them.

10 “They abhor me and stand aloof from me, And they do not refrain from spitting at my face.

Spitting in the face is a serious insult (Deut 25:9; Isa 50:6; Mt 26:67).

Cf. Mark 14:65 Some began to spit at Him, and to blindfold Him, and to beat Him with their fists, and to say to Him, “Prophecy!” And the officers received Him with slaps in the face.

7 “My eye has also grown dim because of grief, And all my members are as a shadow.

6:2 “Oh that my grief were actually weighed And laid in the balances together with my calamity!

8 “The upright will be appalled at this, And the innocent will stir up himself against the godless.

Possible sarcasm: Job’s friends were not upright/righteous. Or that the upright, in seeing Job’s estate, would be appalled and come to his aid (8b). Job is but a “shadow” of his former self.

9 “Nevertheless the righteous will hold to his way, And he who has clean hands will grow stronger and stronger.

Perseverance in trial (cf. James 1:12).

Andersen said of v. 9, “There is hardly a place in the book of Job concerning which commentators are in wider disagreement than this statement.”⁵⁰ But F. Delitzsch said of it: “These words of Job are like a rocket which shoots above the tragic darkness of the book, lighting it up suddenly, although only for a short time.” [Robert L. Alden, Job, vol.

11, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1993), 191]

10 **“But come again all of you now, For I do not find a wise man among you.**

12:2 “Truly then you are the people, And with you wisdom will die!

11 **“My days are past, my plans are torn apart, Even the wishes of my heart.**

I really can identify with this verse . . . Great sympathy for Job’s plight of shattered dreams.

“We shall see a man who will be afflicted by the death of his father, or of his wife, or of his children, some injury will happen to him. Perhaps someone will bring him some moderate comfort, such as God has proposed. But if there is someone who is tormented in not only one matter, but he experiences that the hand of God persecutes him from all sides—when there will happen to him one evil, there will be the second and the third, and he will be afflicted not only in this body, in his person, in his good, and in his friends; but he may have (as we have seen from Job) spiritual temptations as if God wished to cast him into the abyss—then one must proceed in a more delicate manner. For when one wishes to molest a poor man who has his heart cast down, all one could bring to him will be of what use? It is much better to hold your tongue and let God work to supply what is lacking from man.” [John Calvin, Sermons from Job, 93-94]

12 **“They make night into day, saying, ‘The light is near,’ in the presence of darkness.**

They make night into day: translators differ greatly on who or what makes night into day. TEV assumes that Job refers here to his friends (“My friends say . . .”), and this is probably best. The idea is that the friends who pretend night is day would deceive Job into thinking in their confused manner. FRCL translates it well: “If I believe my friends, my night will be day.” [UBS Handbook]

Cf. Isaiah 5:20.

13 **“If I look for Sheol as my home, I make my bed in the darkness;**

14 **If I call to the pit, ‘You are my father’; To the worm, ‘my mother and my sister’;**

“Worm” cf. 21:26; 24:20.

And to the worm, ‘My mother’ or ‘My sister’: worm is singular, to be in parallel with pit; however, the thought is of a mass of worms that will eat Job’s remaining flesh in the grave, not the worms that are already eating him. He will be so familiar with them that he can address them as members of his family. [UBS Handbook Series]

Note that Job lost his family (his children and who knows about his wife?). He looks to a company of worms devouring his body in the grave as his future family.

15 **Where now is my hope? And who regards my hope?**

The first two questions that constitute the result clauses in this four-verse group are arranged chiasmically.

A Where then
 B my hope?
 B' My hope
A' who can see?

The point of both questions is that Job had no hope. [Robert L. Alden]

16 **“Will it go down with me to Sheol? Shall we together go down into the dust?”**

“Gates” is *bādīm*, literally “bars” (KJV, RSV). Most, emending it to *bēyadī* or the like, read “with me” (so AB, JB, NAB, NEB, NASB, AAT), which fits well with the second line. Thus Job and his hope “go down to the grave” and “descend together into the dust.” Like all the other responses so far (6:21b; 10:21–22; 14:20–22), Job ends with thoughts of death. But he has not yet heard from God. [Robert L. Alden, *Job*, vol. 11, *The New American Commentary* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1993), 193]

God did not answer Job’s plea for death because He had something far better planned for him. God looked beyond Job’s depression and bitterness and saw that he still had faith. When I was a young pastor, I heard an experienced saint say, “I have lived long enough to be thankful for unanswered prayer.” At the time, I was shocked by the statement; but now that I have lived a few more years myself, I know what she was talking about. In the darkness of despair and the prison of pain, we often say things that we later regret; but God understands all about it and lovingly turns a deaf ear to our words but a tender eye to our wounds. [Warren W. Wiersbe, *Be Patient*, “Be” Commentary Series (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1996), 64]