

# Job 13:2

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

What ye know, the same do I know also: I am not inferior unto you.

## Analysis

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**What ye know, the same do I know also: I am not inferior unto you.** Job challenges his friends' intellectual and spiritual superiority. The Hebrew phrase לא-נִפְלֵא אַנְכִּי מִכֶּם (lo-nofel anoki mikkem) literally means "I am not fallen from you" or "I do not fall short of you." The verb naphal (נִפְלָא, "to fall") suggests Job stands on equal ground—he hasn't fallen below his friends in knowledge or understanding.

This verse opens Job's response to Zophar (chapters 12-14), who has just accused Job of ignorance and sin (11:6). Job's friends claim superior wisdom—they know the formula: righteousness brings blessing, sin brings suffering. Therefore Job's suffering proves secret sin. Job rejects this syllogism: "What ye know, the same do I know also." He understands retribution theology as well as they do; he simply recognizes its inadequacy to explain his situation.

The phrase reveals Job's frustration with his friends' condescension. They speak down to him as though he's ignorant of basic theological truths. Job asserts intellectual parity—his disagreement with them stems not from ignorance but from his lived experience contradicting their simplistic theology. This tension between inherited theological systems and lived reality drives the book's central conflict. Job's friends defend God through traditional formulas; Job seeks to understand God through honest wrestling with incomprehensible providence.

Theologically, this verse addresses how we engage with suffering people. Job's

friends offer correct theology wrongly applied, causing additional pain. The New Testament emphasizes weeping with those who weep rather than defending God through arguments (Romans 12:15; James 5:13-16).

## Historical Context

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Job 13 appears in the dialogue section where Job responds to his three friends—Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar. These friends represent conventional Ancient Near Eastern wisdom theology: divine justice operates through immediate retribution, rewarding righteousness and punishing wickedness. This theology, rooted in truth (Deuteronomy 28; Proverbs), becomes destructive when applied mechanically without accounting for divine mystery, satanic opposition, or redemptive suffering.

Ancient wisdom literature throughout the Near East addressed the problem of innocent suffering. The Babylonian "Ludlul Bel Nemeqi" (I Will Praise the Lord of Wisdom) and the "Babylonian Theodicy" explore similar themes. However, Job's response differs from these pagan texts—he refuses to accept either that he deserves suffering or that the gods are capricious. Instead, Job insists on both his innocence and God's justice while acknowledging he cannot understand how both can be true simultaneously.

The social dynamic is crucial: Job's friends held positions of respect in their communities (2:11-13), and their seven-day silence showed initial compassion. But once they speak, they defend their theological system rather than empathize with Job's agony. Job's assertion of equality challenges the social convention that suffering indicates divine disfavor and thus lower status. The book as a whole vindicates Job—God rebukes the friends for not speaking rightly of Him (42:7-8).

## Related Passages

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**1 John 4:8** — God is love

**1 Corinthians 13:4** — Characteristics of love

**Psalm 19:1** — Heavens declare God's glory

## Study Questions

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1. How do we balance defending sound doctrine with showing compassion to those whose suffering doesn't fit neat theological categories?
2. When have you experienced well-meaning Christians offering "right" answers that felt crushing rather than comforting?

## Interlinear Text

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נִפְלָא	לֹא	אָנֹכִי	גַּם	תֵּדַעַתָּכָם	כִּי
What ye know	the same do I know		H1571	H589	H3808
H1847	H3045				also I am not inferior
					H5307

  

אָנֹכִי	מִכֶּם:
H595	H4480

## Additional Cross-References

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**Job 12:3** (Parallel theme): But I have understanding as well as you; I am not inferior to you: yea, who knoweth not such things as these?

**2 Corinthians 12:11** (Parallel theme): I am become a fool in glorying; ye have compelled me: for I ought to have been commended of you: for in nothing am I behind the very chiefest apostles, though I be nothing.