

# Job 29:17

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And I brake the jaws of the wicked, and plucked the spoil out of his teeth.

## Analysis

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**And I brake the jaws of the wicked** (malt'ot rasha מַלְתוֹת רָשָׁע, jaws/fangs of the wicked; shavar שָׁבַר, to break, shatter)—Job violently intervened against oppressors. Malt'ot refers to jaw-teeth or fangs, depicting the wicked as predatory beasts devouring victims. Shavar implies decisive, forceful breaking—not gentle persuasion but aggressive justice. **And plucked the spoil out of his teeth** (shalak teref שָׁלַךְ טֶרֶף, to cast out prey/spoil; shen שֵׁן, tooth)—Job rescued victims from oppressors' very mouths, recovering what was seized unjustly.

This vivid animal imagery appears throughout Scripture depicting wicked oppressors: lions tearing prey (Psalm 7:2, 22:13), bears robbing (Proverbs 17:12), wolves ravaging (Ezekiel 22:27). Job's intervention fulfills the righteous ruler's mandate to 'deliver the spoiled out of the hand of the oppressor' (Jeremiah 21:12). The verse balances Job's gentleness toward the vulnerable (vv. 12-16) with fierce opposition to exploiters—biblical compassion always includes justice against wickedness. This anticipates Christ who showed tender mercy to repentant sinners while pronouncing withering condemnation on hypocritical oppressors (Matthew 23). Job's dual character—nurturing father to the poor, jaw-breaking destroyer of oppressors—reflects God's own nature as both merciful and just.

## Historical Context

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Ancient Near Eastern legal systems often favored the powerful, allowing the wealthy to exploit the poor through predatory lending, unjust seizure of property,

or manipulation of courts. The 'spoil' Job recovered likely included unjustly seized property, extorted payments, or persons sold into debt slavery. Job's willingness to confront powerful wrongdoers at personal risk demonstrates exceptional courage—such interventions could create dangerous enemies. His dual role as advocate for victims and aggressive opponent of oppressors established just governance in his region, fulfilling the righteous judge's calling.

## Related Passages

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**John 3:16** — God's love and salvation

**Ephesians 2:8** — Salvation by grace through faith

**Colossians 1:16** — All things created through Christ

**Genesis 1:1** — Creation of heavens and earth

## Study Questions

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1. Does your pursuit of justice include active confrontation of oppression, or only passive sympathy for victims?
2. How do you balance Christ-like gentleness toward the weak with righteous anger toward those who exploit them?
3. What 'spoil' might you need to help recover from the 'teeth' of modern oppressors—unjust systems, exploitative practices, or predatory relationships?

## Interlinear Text

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וְאֶשְׁכְּרָה	מִתְּלַע	זֹת	עַל	וּמִשְׁנֵי יוֹ	אֶשֶׁל יוֹ	טָרַף:
And I brake	the jaws		of the wicked	out of his teeth	and plucked	the spoil
H7665	H4973		H5767	H8127	H7993	H2964

## Additional Cross-References

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**Psalms 3:7** (Parallel theme): Arise, O LORD; save me, O my God: for thou hast smitten all mine enemies upon the cheek bone; thou hast broken the teeth of the ungodly.

**Proverbs 30:14** (Parallel theme): There is a generation, whose teeth are as swords, and their jaw teeth as knives, to devour the poor from off the earth, and the needy from among men.

**Psalms 124:6** (Parallel theme): Blessed be the LORD, who hath not given us as a prey to their teeth.

**Psalms 58:8** (Parallel theme): As a snail which melteth, let every one of them pass away: like the untimely birth of a woman, that they may not see the sun.

**1 Samuel 17:35** (Parallel theme): And I went out after him, and smote him, and delivered it out of his mouth: and when he arose against me, I caught him by his beard, and smote him, and slew him.