

Job 28:1

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Surely there is a vein for the silver, and a place for gold where they fine it.

Analysis

Job's wisdom poem opens: "Surely there is a vein for the silver, and a place for gold where they fine it." The Hebrew *motsa* (מוֹצֵא, "vein") means a going out or source. The verb *zaqaq* (זָקַק, "fine") means to refine or purify. Job describes human ingenuity in mining precious metals—humanity can locate hidden resources and extract them through technological skill. This establishes a contrast: if humans can find physical treasures through diligent search, why is wisdom so elusive (verse 12)? The poem's structure moves from accessible earthly treasures to inaccessible heavenly wisdom. Reformed epistemology distinguishes between natural revelation (truths about creation accessible through observation) and special revelation (truths about God requiring divine disclosure). Job's poem demonstrates that while common grace enables technological advancement, saving wisdom requires divine revelation. This anticipates Paul's teaching that "the world by wisdom knew not God" (1 Corinthians 1:21).

Historical Context

Ancient mining was technologically sophisticated—Egyptians mined gold and turquoise in Sinai, Mesopotamians extracted copper and tin. Solomon's wealth partly derived from mining operations (1 Kings 9:28). Job's audience would recognize mining as representing human achievement at its pinnacle. Yet the poem subverts this: human brilliance in earthly pursuits doesn't translate to spiritual insight. True wisdom remains hidden until God reveals it.

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. How does the distinction between finding earthly treasures and finding wisdom challenge modern confidence in human reason as the path to truth?
2. What does Job's poem teach about the limits of natural revelation and the necessity of special revelation?
3. How should Christians engage in scientific and technological pursuits while recognizing wisdom's true source?

Interlinear Text

יְֹכֵן	שׁוֹכֵן	לִפְנֵי	מִצֵּי	וּמְקוֹם	בְּ	לִפְנֵי	יִשְׁכְּנוּ
H3588	Surely	for the silver	there is a vein	and a place	for gold	where they fine	
	H3426	H3701	H4161	H4725	H2091	H2212	

Additional Cross-References

1 Peter 1:7 (Parallel theme): That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ:

Isaiah 48:10 (Parallel theme): Behold, I have refined thee, but not with silver; I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction.

Proverbs 17:3 (Parallel theme): The fining pot is for silver, and the furnace for gold: but the LORD trieth the hearts.