

Job 28:13

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Man knoweth not the price thereof; neither is it found in the land of the living.

Analysis

Man knoweth not the price thereof—after describing mining's achievements (verses 1-11), Job pivots: "But where shall wisdom be found?" (verse 12). Verse 13 continues: humanity doesn't know wisdom's *erek* (עֶרֶךְ, "price"), meaning value, worth, or proper estimation. **Neither is it found in the land of the living** uses *erets chayim* (אֶרֶץ חַיִּים), literally "land of the living," meaning the realm of mortal existence. Wisdom cannot be located through earthly search or purchased with earthly currency.

This establishes wisdom's transcendence: it exists beyond creation's boundaries, inaccessible to natural discovery. Verses 15-19 will elaborate that no amount of gold, silver, or precious stones can purchase wisdom—it's categorically different from material treasure. Reformed theology recognizes this as the doctrine of transcendence: God and His wisdom exist beyond creation, accessible only through divine condescension in revelation. Proverbs 8:11 confirms: "wisdom is better than rubies; and all the things that may be desired are not to be compared to it." Solomon, despite unprecedented wealth and wisdom, acknowledged wisdom's supreme value and divine source (1 Kings 3:9-12).

Historical Context

Ancient Near Eastern wisdom literature (Egyptian, Mesopotamian, Edomite) emphasized human reason's capacity to discover truth through observation and reflection. Job's poem radically counters this: wisdom cannot be found through

human search or purchased with accumulated wealth. This theological precision distinguished Israelite faith from surrounding cultures that equated wisdom with human achievement. The passage influenced later Jewish and Christian epistemology, establishing that revelation precedes discovery.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Study Questions

1. How does modern culture assign 'price' to education and credentials while missing wisdom's true value and source?
2. What does it mean practically that wisdom 'is not found in the land of the living'—that earthly life alone cannot produce it?
3. How should recognizing wisdom's transcendent source humble our intellectual pride and drive us to Scripture and prayer?

Interlinear Text

לֹא	יָדַע	אִם וְשׁ	עֶרְכָּהּ	וְלֹא	תִּמְצָא
H3808	knoweth	Man	not the price	H3808	thereof neither is it found
	H3045	H582	H6187		H4672
בְּאֶרֶץ	חַיִּים:				
in the land	of the living				
H776	H2416				
