

Job 28:2

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Iron is taken out of the earth, and brass is molten out of the stone.

Analysis

Iron is taken out of the earth (בְּרִזָּל מִטַּפָּח יִקָּח)—Job begins his great wisdom poem (chapter 28) by describing human mining technology. Barzel (iron) represents advanced metallurgy in the ancient world. The verb yuqqach (is taken) in passive voice suggests extraction requires effort—iron doesn't present itself but must be mined from aphar (dust/earth). This introduces the chapter's theme: humans skillfully extract earth's hidden resources, yet wisdom—more valuable than any metal—cannot be mined or purchased.

And brass is molten out of the stone (וְאֶבֶן יִצוֹק נְחֹשֶׁה)—Even (stone/rock) contains copper ore that becomes nechushah (bronze/brass) through yasug (pouring out, smelting). Ancient metallurgy required intense heat to separate metal from ore—a technological marvel. Job's point: humans penetrate earth's depths and transform raw materials through sophisticated processes, demonstrating remarkable ingenuity. Yet this same ingenuity cannot discover wisdom (28:12-13). The contrast is deliberate—if mining precious metals requires such effort and skill, how much more does obtaining wisdom? And if wisdom cannot be mined like metals, where is it found? The answer: 'The fear of the Lord, that is wisdom' (28:28).

Historical Context

By Job's era (patriarchal period, c. 2000 BC), humans had mastered bronze and iron metallurgy, representing technological advancement. Mining operations

existed in Sinai, Cyprus, and Anatolia. The smelting process—heating ore to 1200°C+ to extract pure metal—demonstrated sophisticated knowledge. Job 28 is one of the ancient world's most detailed descriptions of mining technology, showing the author's familiarity with these processes. This technological awareness makes the chapter's conclusion more powerful—human ingenuity masters earth's depths but cannot independently discover life's ultimate wisdom.

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. How does human technological advancement compare to the pursuit of divine wisdom in contemporary culture?
2. What does it mean that metals can be extracted through human effort but wisdom must be received from God?
3. In what ways do we mistakenly treat wisdom as something to be mined through human effort rather than received through the fear of the Lord?

Interlinear Text

בַּרְזֵל	מֵעַפְרָר	יִקָּח	אֶת־בְּרֵחַ	יָצַח	נְחוֹשֶׁת:
Iron	out of the earth	is taken	out of the stone	is molten	and brass
H1270	H6083	H3947	H68	H6694	H5154

Additional Cross-References

Deuteronomy 8:9 (Parallel theme): A land wherein thou shalt eat bread without scarceness, thou shalt not lack any thing in it; a land whose stones are iron, and out of whose hills thou mayest dig brass.

Genesis 4:22 (Parallel theme): And Zillah, she also bare Tubal-cain, an instructor of every artificer in brass and iron: and the sister of Tubal-cain was Naamah.

Numbers 31:22 (Parallel theme): Only the gold, and the silver, the brass, the iron, the tin, and the lead,

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