

Job 28:3

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

He setteth an end to darkness, and searcheth out all perfection: the stones of darkness, and the shadow of death.

Analysis

He setteth an end to darkness—(קְצַ שָׁם לְחֹשֶׁךְ)—The verb sam (sets, appoints) with qets (end, boundary) shows human determination conquering natural obstacles. Choshek (darkness) represents the earth's underground depths where light never reaches. Miners bring artificial light into absolute darkness, extending human dominion into realms naturally hostile to life. This demonstrates humanity's God-given mandate to subdue creation (Genesis 1:28).

And searcheth out all perfection—(וְלִכְלִית תְּכִלִּת הָאָזְקָרָה)—The participle choqer (searching, investigating) depicts thorough examination. Takhlit denotes completeness, perfection, or the farthest extent. Miners pursue ore veins to their ultimate end, leaving nothing unexamined. **The stones of darkness, and the shadow of death**—(אָבִן אַפְלָ וְצַלְמָנִית)—Ophel (gloom) and tsalmaveth (death-shadow) emphasize the danger and mystery of deep mining. Ancient miners risked cave-ins, suffocation, and getting lost in labyrinthine tunnels. Yet for precious metals, humans braved death itself. Job's rhetorical strategy: if people risk death to mine gold, how much more should they pursue wisdom? But wisdom isn't found in death's darkness—it comes from the God who created light (28:23-27).

Historical Context

Ancient mining was extraordinarily dangerous. Miners descended into narrow shafts by rope, worked by lamplight, faced toxic gases, and risked collapse. Despite these hazards, major mining operations existed throughout the ancient

Near East for copper, silver, gold, and iron. Archaeological evidence from Timna (Sinai) and other sites confirms sophisticated mining from the third millennium BC. Job's description reflects firsthand knowledge of these operations, making his metaphor more powerful—humans will brave death for earthly treasure but often neglect the pursuit of heavenly wisdom.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. What extreme efforts do people undertake for earthly gain while neglecting the pursuit of divine wisdom?
2. How does your investment of time and energy reveal what you truly treasure —earthly wealth or heavenly wisdom?
3. What 'darkness' are you willing to penetrate in pursuit of wisdom and knowledge of God?

Interlinear Text

חַזְקָה רְאֵת כָּלִילָה תְּמִימָה לְכָל שְׁמָךְ לְזִיאָה
an end He setteth to darkness all perfection and searcheth out
H7093 H7760 H2822 H3605 H8503 H1931 H2713

אֶלְמִימָה אֶלְפָל אֶל בָּאֵת
the stones of darkness and the shadow of death
H68 H652 H6757

Additional Cross-References

Ecclesiastes 1:13 (Parallel theme): And I gave my heart to seek and search out by wisdom concerning all things that are done under heaven: this sore travail hath God given to the sons of man to be exercised therewith.

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