

Job 28:6

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

The stones of it are the place of sapphires: and it hath dust of gold.

Analysis

The stones of it are the place of sapphires—the Hebrew sappir (סַפִּיר) likely refers to lapis lazuli, highly prized in antiquity, not modern sapphire. **And it hath dust of gold** (aphar zahav, אֶפְרַח זָהָב)—even common earth in certain locations contains gold particles. Job describes geological treasure: precious stones and gold dust extracted from the earth's depths through human ingenuity.

Yet this marvel of human achievement serves to highlight wisdom's inaccessibility. If miners can penetrate earth's deepest recesses to extract lapis and gold, why can't they find wisdom (verse 12)? The poem's logic moves from easier to harder: humans master physical extraction but remain bankrupt regarding spiritual insight. This Reformed emphasis on noetic effects of sin appears here—the fall corrupted human reason, making divine truth inaccessible apart from revelation. Paul echoes this in 1 Corinthians 2:14: "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God."

Historical Context

Lapis lazuli, mined in Afghanistan, was traded throughout the ancient Near East for jewelry and decoration. Gold dust was panned from riverbeds or extracted from quartz veins. Job's description demonstrates knowledge of sophisticated mining and metallurgy. The passage emphasizes human technological achievement while ultimately subordinating it to the greater quest for wisdom, which no amount of mining can uncover.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. How does recognizing the noetic effects of sin—that human reason alone cannot discover God—humble our intellectual pride?
2. What does it mean that spiritual treasures require different 'mining techniques' than earthly ones?
3. How should Christians value scientific and technological achievement while recognizing wisdom's supernatural source?

Interlinear Text

מִקּוֹם	סַפֵּי יָר	אֲבָנֵי יָהּ	וְעֹפָר ת	זָה ב	לֹא:
of it are the place	of sapphires	The stones	and it hath dust	of gold	H0
H4725	H5601	H68	H6083	H2091	

Additional Cross-References

Job 28:16 (Parallel theme): It cannot be valued with the gold of Ophir, with the precious onyx, or the sapphire.

Exodus 24:10 (Parallel theme): And they saw the God of Israel: and there was under his feet as it were a paved work of a sapphire stone, and as it were the body of heaven in his clearness.

Revelation 21:19 (Parallel theme): And the foundations of the wall of the city were garnished with all manner of precious stones. The first foundation was jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, a chalcedony; the fourth, an emerald;

Isaiah 54:11 (Parallel theme): O thou afflicted, tossed with tempest, and not comforted, behold, I will lay thy stones with fair colours, and lay thy foundations with sapphires.

Song of Solomon 5:14: His hands are as gold rings set with the beryl: his belly is as bright ivory overlaid with sapphires.

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