

Job 28:8

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

The lion's whelps have not trodden it, nor the fierce lion passed by it.

Analysis

The lion's whelps have not trodden it, nor the fierce lion passed by it—even the most powerful and wide-ranging beasts haven't discovered the miner's hidden path. Hebrew *shachal* (לִנְשׁ, "lion's whelps") refers to young lions, while *layish* (לַיִשׁ, "fierce lion") denotes a mature, powerful lion. The verb *darak* (דָּרַךְ, "trodden") means to walk or march, suggesting these territorial predators patrol vast ranges yet never encounter mining operations.

Job builds his argument: neither keen-sighted birds (verse 7) nor powerful ranging beasts know the secret path. If all creation—from sharpest eyes to strongest bodies—cannot find the miner's way, how can humanity find wisdom's location? The parallelism emphasizes human achievement: miners work where creation's most gifted members never go. Yet this triumph over nature means nothing regarding wisdom, which remains "hid from the eyes of all living" (verse 21). This establishes that wisdom isn't found through natural means—not observation, not strength, not experience.

Historical Context

Lions roamed ancient Palestine and the Near East (extinct in the region by the 13th century AD). Their strength and territorial range made them symbols of power and dominion. Job's audience would immediately recognize the irony: humans through technology access places even apex predators cannot reach, yet

this doesn't grant access to wisdom. The passage subverts pride in human achievement by showing its irrelevance to the ultimate quest.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. How does human technological advancement (accessing places creation cannot) create false confidence that we can discover ultimate truth independently?
2. What does it mean that strength and natural dominance (symbolized by lions) are irrelevant to obtaining wisdom?
3. How should Christians respond to our culture's equation of knowledge accumulation with wisdom?

Interlinear Text

לֹא	הַדְרִיכָהוּ	בְּנִי	שֶׁחַץ	לֹא	עָדָה	עָלָיו
H3808	have not trodden	whelps	The lion's	H3808	passed	H5921
	H1869	H1121	H7830		H5710	
שְׁחָלָה:						
it nor the fierce lion						
H7826						