

KEY

Archer = A Survey of Old Testament Introduction (Gleason Archer). Chicago: Moody Press, 2007.

Ash = Job: The Wisdom of the Cross (Christopher Ash). Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2014.

BBC = The IVP Bible Background Commentary: Old Testament. Edited by John H. Walton, Victor H. Matthews and Mark W. Chavalas. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000.

Frame = John Frame, Systematic Theology, P&R Publishing, 2013.

Grudem = Wayne Grudem, Systematic Theology, Zondervan, 1994.

Harrison = Introduction to the Old Testament (R.K. Harrison). Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1969.

K&D = Keil, C.F. and Delitzsch, F. in the Keil and Delitzsch Commentary on the Old Testament, Vol 2. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1989.

Swindoll = A Man of Heroic Endurance: Job (Charles Swindoll). Nashville, TN. W Publishing Group, 2004.

Talbert = *Beyond Suffering: Discovering the Message of Job* (Layton Talbert). Bob Jones University Press, 2007.

TWOT = The Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament (R. Laird Harris; Gleason L. Archer, Jr.; Bruce Waltke). Chicago: Moody Press, 1980. Two Volumes.

Walton = Old Testament Today. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2004.

Basic English Diagram / Structure

- 1 “Surely there is a mine for **silver**
 And a place where they refine **gold**.
- 2 “**Iron** is taken from the dust,
 And **copper** is smelted from rock.
- 3 “Man puts an end to darkness,
 And to the farthest limit he searches out
 The rock in gloom and deep shadow.
- 4 “He sinks a shaft far from habitation,
 Forgotten by the foot;
 {{They hang and swing to and fro far from men.}}
- 5 “The **earth**,
 from **it** comes food,
 And **underneath** it is turned up as fire.
- 6 “Its **rocks** are the source of sapphires, And its dust contains gold.
- 7 “The path no **bird of prey** knows,
 Nor has the **falcon**’s eye caught sight of it.
- 8 “The **proud beasts** have not trodden it,
 Nor has the **fierce lion** passed over it.
- 9 “He puts his hand on the flint;
 He overturns the mountains at the base.
- 10 “He hews out channels through the rocks,
 And his eye sees anything precious.
- 11 “He dams up the streams from flowing,
 And what is hidden he brings out to the light.
- 12 ** *“But where can wisdom be found? And where is the place of understanding?”* **
- 13 “**Man** does not know its **value**, Nor is it found in the land of the living.
- 14 “**The deep** says, ‘It is not in me’; And **the sea** says, ‘It is not with me.’
- 15 “Pure gold cannot be given in exchange for it, Nor can silver be weighed as its price.
- 16 “It cannot be valued
 in the gold of Ophir,
 In precious onyx, or sapphire.
- 17 “Gold or glass cannot equal it,
 Nor can it be exchanged for articles of fine gold.
- 18 “Coral and crystal are not to be mentioned;
 And the acquisition of wisdom is above that of pearls.
- 19 “The topaz of Ethiopia cannot equal it,
 Nor can it be valued in pure gold.

20 **“Where then does wisdom come from?**

And where is the place of understanding?

21 “Thus it is hidden from the eyes of all living

And concealed from the birds of the sky.

22 “Abaddon and Death say, ‘With our ears we have heard a report of it.’

23 **“God understands** its way, And He knows its place.

24 “For **He** looks to the ends of the earth And sees everything under the heavens.

25 “When **He** imparted weight to the wind And meted out the waters by measure,

26 When **He** set a limit for the rain And a course for the thunderbolt,

27 Then **He** saw it and declared it; He established it and also searched it out.

28 “And to man **He** said, ‘**Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom;
And to depart from evil is understanding.**’ ”

TRANSLATION, OUTLINE AND CENTRAL PROPOSITION

ENGLISH TRANSLATION (NASB95):

Job 28 1 “Surely there is a mine for silver And a place where they refine gold. 2 “Iron is taken from the dust, And copper is smelted from rock. 3 “Man puts an end to darkness, And to the farthest limit he searches out The rock in gloom and deep shadow. 4 “He sinks a shaft far from habitation, Forgotten by the foot; They hang and swing to and fro far from men. 5 “The earth, from it comes food, And underneath it is turned up as fire. 6 “Its rocks are the source of sapphires, And its dust contains gold. 7 “The path no bird of prey knows, Nor has the falcon’s eye caught sight of it. 8 “The proud beasts have not trodden it, Nor has the fierce lion passed over it. 9 “He puts his hand on the flint; He overturns the mountains at the base. 10 “He hews out channels through the rocks, And his eye sees anything precious. 11 “He dams up the streams from flowing, And what is hidden he brings out to the light. 12 “But where can wisdom be found? And where is the place of understanding? 13 “Man does not know its value, Nor is it found in the land of the living. 14 “The deep says, ‘It is not in me’; And the sea says, ‘It is not with me.’ 15 “Pure gold cannot be given in exchange for it, Nor can silver be weighed as its price. 16 “It cannot be valued in the gold of Ophir, In precious onyx, or sapphire. 17 “Gold or glass cannot equal it, Nor can it be exchanged for articles of fine gold. 18 “Coral and crystal are not to be mentioned; And the acquisition of wisdom is above that of pearls. 19 “The topaz of Ethiopia cannot equal it, Nor can it be valued in pure gold. 20 “Where then does wisdom come from? And where is the place of understanding? 21 “Thus it is hidden from the eyes of all living And concealed from the birds of the sky. 22 “Abaddon and Death say, ‘With our ears we have heard a report of it.’ 23 “God understands its way, And He knows its place. 24 “For He looks to the ends of the earth And sees everything under the heavens. 25 “When He imparted weight to the wind And meted out the waters by measure, 26 When He set a limit for the rain And a course for the thunderbolt, 27 Then He saw it and declared it; He established it and also searched it out. 28 “And to man He said, ‘Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; And to depart from evil is understanding.’”

PASSAGE OUTLINE:

Bible Knowledge Commentary

- I. JOB'S THIRD REPLY TO BILDAD (CHAPS. 26–31)
 - A. Job's description of God's majesty in nature (chap. 26)
 - B. Job's description of the fate of the wicked (chap. 27)
 - C. Job's discussion of God's wisdom (chap. 28)
 - 1. Getting valuable metals from the earth (Job 28:1–2)
 - 2. Going underground (v. 3)
 - 3. Remoteness of the mines (unseen) seen by people, v. 4)
 - a'. Getting valuable metals and gems from the earth (vv. 5–6)
 - c'. Remoteness of the mines (unseen by birds and animals, vv. 7–8)
 - b'. Going underground (v. 9)
 - a''. Getting valuable metals from the earth (vv. 10–11)
 - a. Inaccessibility of wisdom (vv. 12–14)
 - b. Wisdom's value beyond [gold, silver jewels (vv. 15–19)
 - a'. Inaccessibility of wisdom (vv. 20–22)
 - b'. Wisdom's value known by God (vv. 23–27)
- D. Job's concluding soliloquy (chaps. 29–31)
 - 1. Job's past glory (chap. 29)
 - 2. Job's present gloom (chap. 30)

UBS Handbook Series

- I. A POEM ABOUT WISDOM 28:1–28
 - A. A Poem By Someone Not Named Job 28:1–28
 - 1. The Places Where Precious Metals Are Mined Job 28:1–6
 - 2. Birds and Wild Animals Do Not Know the Way Job 28:7–8
 - 3. How Men Mine in the Earth Job 28:9–11
 - 4. The Source of Wisdom is Not Known Job 28:12–14
 - 5. Wisdom is More Valuable Than Precious Stones Job 28:15–19
 - 6. The Source of Wisdom is Not Known Job 28:20–22
 - 7. God Alone Knows the Way to Wisdom Job 28:23–28

The Outline Bible

- I. Job's Defense (26:1-31:40)
 - A. How Have You Helped Anyone? (26:1-4)
 - B. Creation is But a Minor Work of God (26:5-14)
 - C. A Two-Fold Vow (27:1-6)
 - D. The Godless Have No Hope (27:7-23)
 - E. Finding Valuable Things (28:1-11)
 - F. Wisdom Cannot be Found or Bought (28:12-21)

- G. God Knows Where Wisdom is Found (28:22-28)
- H. Once Respected for Who I Was (29:1-11)
- I. Once Respected for What I Did (29:12-25)
- J. Now Despised by the Despicable (30:1-14)
- K. Unending Pain and Unanswered Prayers (30:15-21)
- L. Have I Lusted? (31:1-12)
- M. Have I Mistreated Others? (31:13-23)
- N. Have I Worshipped Money or Idols? (31:24-28)
- O. Have I Concealed Any Other Sin? (31:29-40)

The New American Commentary: Job (Robert L. Alden)

- IV. THE WISDOM CHAPTER (28:1–28)
 - A. Wisdom Cannot Be Mined (28:1–11)
 - B. Wisdom Cannot Be Bought (28:12–19)
 - C. Wisdom Cannot Be Found (28:20–22)
 - D. Wisdom Is with God (28:23–28)

Be Patient: Job (Warren W. Wiersbe)

- I. Job seeks God's wisdom (Job 28)
 - A. You cannot mine wisdom (Job 28:1–11)
 - B. You cannot buy wisdom (Job 28:12–19)
 - C. Wisdom comes only from God (Job 28:20–28).

BASIC OUTLINE: N/A

SERMON OUTLINE:

* Introduction to Wisdom . . . What is it?

- Proverbs 8
- Job 28 is a pivotal chapter

I. Wisdom Cannot be Found by Great Effort (1–11)

A. The Hard Work of Miners to Gain Earthly Treasure (1-11)

II. Wisdom Cannot be Found in the Created Order (12-14, 20-22)

A. Key Question: Where Can Wisdom and Understanding be Found? (12, 20)

B. Wisdom Cannot be Found in the Land of the Living (13b-14, 21)

C. Wisdom Cannot be Found in the Land of the Dead (22)

III. Wisdom Cannot be Found by Great Wealth (28:15–19)

IV. Wisdom Can Only be Found in a Great God (28:23–28)

A. God’s Omniscience and Omnipresence (23-24)

B. God’s Creative Power in verse 25

C. God’s Providence in verse 26

D. The Key Question Answered in verse 28

1. Wisdom (Chokmah) & Understanding (Binah)

2. Fear of the Lord . . .

Conclusion: What Do You Value?

PASSAGE SUBJECT/THEME (what is the passage talking about): Wisdom

PASSAGE COMPLEMENT/THRUST (what is the passage saying about what it’s talking about): cannot be found through great effort and is of greater value than anything else on earth.

PASSAGE MAIN IDEA (central proposition of the text): Wisdom is a Treasure Worth Finding.

CENTRAL PROPOSITION (OR IDEA) OF THE SERMON: Wisdom is the Greatest Treasure You Can Find.

SERMONIC IDEA/TITLE: “An Interlude on Wisdom”

HISTORICAL/CULTURAL/GRAMMATICAL CONTEXT

Chapter 28 differs significantly from the other chapters of Job. There are no accusations, complaints, or responses to previous comments by earlier speakers. Many scholars consider it an intrusion, a chapter which does not seem to fit the overall design of the book. As it stands Job may be implied as the speaker, and some see in it Job giving up his case in despair. Others views are: that it was inserted later to express a judgment on the previous speeches; that it is a bridge between the speeches in chapters 4–27 and the closing speech of Job in chapters 29–31; that it resolves Job’s problem and therefore makes Yahweh’s speeches unnecessary; that it summarizes Job’s case and forms the introduction to Yahweh’s speeches.

There is no doubt that chapter 28 continues the imagery of earlier speeches. For example, in verse 9 “overturn mountains” recalls 9:5; “the thing that is hid he brings forth to light” in verse 11 echoes 11:6 and 12:22; the overall theme of chapter 28 is similar to that in chapter 11, namely, that divine wisdom cannot be attained by human beings unless God reveals it. [William David Reyburn, *A Handbook on the Book of Job*, UBS Handbook Series (New York: United Bible Societies, 1992), 497]

Structure of verses 1-11

- a. Getting valuable metals from the earth (Job 28:1–2)
- b. Going underground (v. 3)
- c. Remoteness of the mines (unseen by people, v. 4)
- a’. Getting valuable metals and gems from the earth (vv. 5–6)
- c’. Remoteness of the mines (unseen by birds and animals, vv. 7–8)
- b’. Going underground (v. 9)
- a”. Getting valuable metals from the earth (vv. 10–11).

[Roy B. Zuck, “Job,” in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 1 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 751]

UBS Handbook adds: “This outline agrees generally with “Patterns of Inclusion in Job: Their form and functional significance,” an unpublished paper by Ernst R. Wendland. For a somewhat different approach to the outline of chapter 28, see Habel.”

- A (1–6) Men mine the earth for precious metals and stones
- B (7–8) The way to the mines is not known
- A (9–11) How men mine for precious stones
- B (12–14) The source of wisdom is not known
- A (15–19) Wisdom is more valuable than precious stones
- B (20–22) The source of wisdom is not known
- C (23–28) God alone knows the way to wisdom

Habel sees the basic structure of chapter 28, based as it is on the search for what is rare and precious, consisting of three recurring elements: the place or source of the precious item, the way or means of getting that item, and the process of discovering. Logically it may seem better for the last two to be interchanged, but the logic of the poem is determined by the flow of the poet's ordering of the items. Verses 1–2 list the places: “mine,” “place,” “earth,” and the metals “silver,” “gold,” “copper.” Verses 3–4 depict the difficult means for obtaining these. Verses 5–6 begin again with the place: “earth,” “underneath it,” and the precious objects “sapphire” and “gold.” [William David Reayburn, *A Handbook on the Book of Job*, UBS Handbook Series (New York: United Bible Societies, 1992), 498]

The Handbook views chapter 28 as an interlude or bridge between chapters 4–27 and chapters 29–42:6. Before chapter 28 Job is engaged in a dispute with three friends. After chapter 28 Job is confronted by Elihu and God. [William David Reayburn, *A Handbook on the Book of Job*, UBS Handbook Series (New York: United Bible Societies, 1992), 497]

Many critical scholars, such as Cline, deny that Job was the speaker in chapter 28 (for the same unfortunate reasons why “critical scholarship” so often errs in its “criticism”):

As the book of Job stands, this chapter forms the second part of the speech assigned to Job in chaps. 27–28. But we have seen good evidence for doubting that chap. 27 as a whole is Job's, and have assigned vv 7–23 (with the exception of vv 11–12) to Zophar as his final speech (see Comment on 27:7–13). Likewise, chap. 28 is almost universally denied to Job (though Budde, Janzen, and van der Lugt dissent, and Good suggests that it should be treated as Job's even if it was not originally intended as such), mainly because there is no conceivable reason why Job should suddenly launch into a didactic speech about wisdom. The consensus of scholarly opinion is that chap. 28 is an independent poem, not set in the mouth of any of the speakers of the book of Job. [David J. A. Clines, *Job 21–37*, vol. 18a, *Word Biblical Commentary* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2006), 908]

This is the only depiction of mining in the Hebrew Bible, and much of the language is obscure. [David J. A. Clines]

Note “critical theory” as related to race and law today.

The wisdom chapter is distinct from anything in the Book of Job. Commentators discuss whether these are Job's words or those of the author/ editor(s) of the book or some combination of those. As with the rest of the book, it seems best to credit the substance of the speeches to the speakers named but believe that the Holy Spirit worked through an inspired author to turn the whole into the magnificent literary masterpiece that has come down to us. [Robert L. Alden]

This chapter is abbreviated in the LXX. Missing are vv. 3b, c, 4a, 5–9a, 14–19, 21b, 22a, 26b, 27a.

“But where shall wisdom be found?” (Job 28:12) “Where then does wisdom come from? Where does understanding dwell?” (v. 20, NIV) Job asked these questions because he was weary of the cliches and platitudes that his three friends were giving him in the name of “wisdom.” His friends were sure that their words were pure gold, but Job concluded they were tinsel and trash. The three men had knowledge, but they lacked wisdom.

“Wisdom is the right use of knowledge,” said Charles Spurgeon. “To know is not to be wise. Many men know a great deal, and are all the greater fools for it. There is no fool so great a fool as the knowing fool. But to know how to use knowledge is to have wisdom.”

In this poem about wisdom, Job gives three answers to his question, “Where shall wisdom be found?” [Warren W. Wiersbe, *Be Patient*, “Be” Commentary Series (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1996), 106]

In the eleventh verse of the preceding chapter, Job had said, “I will teach you by the hand of God: that which is with the Almighty will I not conceal,” which was an introduction to what he intended to speak on two things. First, the dreadful nature of sin, and the misery of the wicked, of this he spoke in that chapter, v. 12 to the end. Secondly, the preciousness of wisdom or true godliness, he proceeds to treat of this in this chapter. [Jonathan Edwards, *The “Blank Bible”*: Part 1 & Part 2, ed. Stephen J. Stein and Harry S. Stout, vol. 24, *The Works of Jonathan Edwards* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2006), 454]

Note the earlier words of Zophar:

11:5–6 5 “But would that God might speak, And open His lips against you, 6 And show you the secrets of wisdom! For sound wisdom has two sides. Know then that God forgets a part of your iniquity.

This section, chapter 28 (wisdom), is an interlude that will bring us into chapters 29-31. Those three chapters: 1) Job reflects on his life before tragedy struck (29), Job reflects on his present miseries (30), Job again proclaims his innocence. Chapter 31 concludes with, “The words of Job are ended.”

Job ends as he began, in monologue. In chapters 29-31 he turns entirely inward, assessing his own past and present and then placing both past and present within the solemn seal of a second extended oath. In these three chapters there is no explicit search for wisdom, though in the light of the approach taken in chapter 28 one may suggest that chapters 29-31 present to the reader one form of wisdom’s enactment. [Jansen, 188]

See Talbert (152 ff.) for reasons why this should not be construed as the narrator or someone else other than Job.

VERSES 28:1-6

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NASB95]:

1 “Surely there is a mine for silver And a place where they refine gold. 2 “Iron is taken from the dust, And copper is smelted from rock. 3 “Man puts an end to darkness, And to the farthest limit he searches out The rock in gloom and deep shadow. 4 “He sinks a shaft far from habitation, Forgotten by the foot; They hang and swing to and fro far from men. 5 “The earth, from it comes food, And underneath it is turned up as fire. 6 “Its rocks are the source of sapphires, And its dust contains gold.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [ESV]:

1 “Surely there is a mine for silver, and a place for gold that they refine. 2 Iron is taken out of the earth, and copper is smelted from the ore. 3 Man puts an end to darkness and searches out to the farthest limit the ore in gloom and deep darkness. 4 He opens shafts in a valley away from where anyone lives; they are forgotten by travelers; they hang in the air, far away from mankind; they swing to and fro. 5 As for the earth, out of it comes bread, but underneath it is turned up as by fire. 6 Its stones are the place of sapphires, and it has dust of gold.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [HCSB]:

1 Surely there is a mine for silver and a place where gold is refined. 2 Iron is taken from the ground, and copper is smelted from ore. 3 A miner puts an end to the darkness; he probes the deepest recesses for ore in the gloomy darkness. 4 He cuts a shaft far from human habitation, in places unknown to those who walk above ground. Suspended far away from people, the miners swing back and forth. 5 Food may come from the earth, but below the surface the earth is transformed as by fire. 6 Its rocks are a source of sapphire, containing flecks of gold.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NIV]:

1 There is a mine for silver and a place where gold is refined. 2 Iron is taken from the earth, and copper is smelted from ore. 3 Mortals put an end to the darkness; they search out the farthest recesses for ore in the blackest darkness. 4 Far from human dwellings they cut a shaft, in places untouched by human feet; far from other people they dangle and sway. 5 The earth, from which food comes, is transformed below as by fire; 6 lapis lazuli comes from its rocks, and its dust contains nuggets of gold.

CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:

1 “Surely there is a mine for silver And a place where they refine gold. 2 “Iron is taken from the dust, And copper is smelted from rock.

“Surely” = emphatic. “Certainly.” “Place” cf. same word used in 27:21,23.

Silver; Gold; Iron; Copper.

Refine refers to the process of heating gold to a liquid and then removing the impurities that float to the surface.

Though the Iron Age began ca. 1200 B.C., when tools were commonly manufactured from iron, iron was known long before that; cf., e.g., Gen. 4:22. [Roy B. Zuck, "Job," in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 1 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 750]

And copper is smelted from the ore: copper is said to have been plentiful in the Middle East, and it was mined and smelted in Cyprus, Edom, and the Sinai Peninsula. Smelted translates a verb meaning "to melt." Dhorme, however, takes it as an adjective meaning "hard" and translates "and a hard stone becomes copper." It seems best, however, to follow RSV. Ore translates Hebrew "stones." TEV "melt copper out of the stones" may give the wrong impression that the copper remains in liquid form. Smelted refers to the process of heating the ore in order to extract the copper from it. The copper hardens as it cools. In these verses "refine" (verse 1) and smelt have similar meanings. [William David Reyburn, *A Handbook on the Book of Job*, UBS Handbook Series (New York: United Bible Societies, 1992), 500]

In Jeremiah 10:9 and Ezekiel 27:12, silver is said to be imported from Tarshish, possibly Tartessus in Spain.

Iron is taken out of the earth: in verse 2 iron and copper continue the list of valuable metals. In Deuteronomy 8:9 the promised land is described as "a land ... in which you will lack nothing, a land whose stones are iron, and out of whose hills you can dig copper." The verb translated is taken is in the passive. However, the parallel verb in line b is active. RSV shifts both verbs to the passive, and TEV has both as active. In translation either is possible and should follow the regular rules of style of the translator's language. Earth translates the Hebrew for "dust," but the meaning in this context is as in RSV and TEV. In languages which lack words for iron and copper, the same procedure suggested in verse 1a should be followed.

And copper is smelted from the ore: copper is said to have been plentiful in the Middle East, and it was mined and smelted in Cyprus, Edom, and the Sinai Peninsula. Smelted translates a verb meaning "to melt." Dhorme, however, takes it as an adjective meaning "hard" and translates "and a hard stone becomes copper." It seems best, however, to follow RSV. Ore translates Hebrew "stones." TEV "melt copper out of the stones" may give the wrong impression that the copper remains in liquid form. Smelted refers to the process of heating the ore in order to extract the copper from it. The copper hardens as it cools. In these verses "refine" (verse 1) and smelt have similar meanings. [A Handbook on the Book of Job]

Though the land of Canaan was said to be rich in iron and copper (cf. Deut 8:9), the West Bank was relatively poor in minerals, and many were imported into Israel. Iron ore

existed in the plateau of Transjordan, and copper was mined in Edom. Asia Minor and Spain (cf. Jer 10:9; Ezek 27:12) were sources of silver, Nubia and South Arabia of gold. Copper is found in copper ore, here called “stone” (אבן is here not a piece of stone but stone as naturally occurring; see DCH, 1:110b). Such ore typically in the western Sinai and the Wadi Arabah contained about 10 percent, or in very rich seams as much as 40 percent, of copper and would be smelted in crucibles to extract the metal. With the addition of a small amount of tin, copper could be hardened to bronze. [David J. A. Clines]

Evidence for the mining of ores comes from Egypt as early as the First Dynasty (c. 3000 B.C.). The method of metallurgy described here in Job can be seen on a number of Egyptian funerary wall reliefs from the New Kingdom (c. 1550–1050 B.C.). The underground mining that is described here (commonly called pitting) begins about 2000 B.C. in the ancient Near East. It involved digging vertical shafts at intervals in order to reach the horizontal ore-bearing strata. In Egypt they preferred open cut mining and sometimes dug horizontal shafts into the sides of mountains or cliffs. By the middle of the second millennium they were doing more shaft mining. The copper and turquoise mines of Egypt in the Sinai have yielded much information of mining techniques and the profession. [Victor Harold Matthews, Mark W. Chavalas, and John H. Walton, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: Old Testament*, electronic ed. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), Job 28:1–5]

3 “Man puts an end to darkness, And to the farthest limit he searches out The rock in gloom and deep shadow.

The words “gloom” and “deep darkness” translates the same expression used in 10:21 where the expression referred to Sheol. Here, the darkness inside the mine.

There is a horizon whereby light turns into darkness.

4 “He sinks a shaft far from habitation, Forgotten by the foot; They hang and swing to and fro far from men.

Literally “they are forgotten by the foot.” [UBS Handbook] People who pass by above these mine tunnels are unaware they are there, or it may mean “people never pass by there” due to the extreme isolation of the locale [UBS]

Mine shafts give me pause—danger in parts of AZ. Story of a child then fell into a shaft in Buffalo in the early 70s.

Miners operate at the boundary between earth and underworld, between light and darkness, between life and death. The depths to which men will go to get metals . . . dangerous, dark, difficult. cf. to wisdom (v. 20).

According to the International Labour Organisation (ILO), while mining employs around 1% of the global labour force, it generates 8% of fatal accidents. . . . China has the world's largest mining industry, producing up to three billion tonnes of coal each year. But while the country accounts for 40% of global coal output, it is responsible for 80% of mining deaths around the world each year. [bbc.com/news/world-latin-america-11533349]

Slaves often used in antiquity . . .

5 **“The earth, from it comes food, And underneath it is turned up as fire.**

5b is difficult:

But underneath it is turned up as by fire: the meaning of this line is not certain. It may refer to the process of heating rocks in a fire and cooling them to split them open. Another suggestion is that the poet thinks of igneous rocks being formed in fire. [UBS Handbook]

Lacking explosives and pneumatic hammers, ancient miners would crack the rock by heating it with “fire.” Two other explanations are that this line refers to a volcanic eruption or to the miners’ torches. [Robert L. Alden]

In ancient mines rock was broken up by a process called fire-setting in which the rock was heated by large fires and then doused with cold water mixed with vinegar (believed to enhance the cold). [Victor Harold Matthews, Mark W. Chavalas, and John H. Walton, The IVP Bible Background Commentary: Old Testament, electronic ed. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), Job 28:1–5]

Contrast between the food (lit. “bread”) that comes from the surface of the earth and the mining activity below.

6 **“Its rocks are the source of sapphires, And its dust contains gold.**

Rowley says that sapphires were probably unknown before Roman imperial times, and that the stone discussed were probably lapis lazuli, as in the RSV footnote. Sapphires are bluish transparent gems. Lapis lazuli is deep blue and is not transparent. This line may be rendered, for example, “Men find sapphires in the rocks of the earth” or “Men find (blue) gems in the rocks in the earth.”

And it has dust of gold: lapis lazuli is speckled with yellow iron pyrites, which give the impression of being gold dust. NEB, which translates the word for sapphires as lapis lazuli, renders this line “dusted with flecks of gold.” Some believe that this is the preferred meaning, since the metal “gold” was mentioned earlier, in verse 1. Most modern translations, however, follow RSV and TEV. If lapis lazuli is known in the

language, NEB may serve as a good translation model. Otherwise it is better to follow TEV or to say, for example, “and they find gold in the dirt.” [William David Reyburn, *A Handbook on the Book of Job*, UBS Handbook Series (New York: United Bible Societies, 1992), 502–503]

VERSES 28:7-8

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NASB95]:

7 “The path no bird of prey knows, Nor has the falcon’s eye caught sight of it. 8 “The proud beasts have not trodden it, Nor has the fierce lion passed over it.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [ESV]:

7 “That path no bird of prey knows, and the falcon’s eye has not seen it. 8 The proud beasts have not trodden it; the lion has not passed over it.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [HCSB]:

7 No bird of prey knows that path; no falcon’s eye has seen it. 8 Proud beasts have never walked on it; no lion has ever prowled over it.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NIV]:

7 No bird of prey knows that hidden path, no falcon’s eye has seen it. 8 Proud beasts do not set foot on it, and no lion prowls there.

CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:

7 “The path no bird of prey knows, Nor has the falcon’s eye caught sight of it. 8 “The proud beasts have not trodden it, Nor has the fierce lion passed over it.

Verse 7 has “bird of prey” followed by “falcon,” while in verse 8 “proud beasts” is followed by “lion.”

Proud beasts translates the Hebrew “sons of pride” and is found in 41:34, which describes Leviathan or the crocodile. [UBS Handbook]

Falcons were known for their powerful eyesight.

VERSES 28:9-11

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NASB95]:

9 “He puts his hand on the flint; He overturns the mountains at the base. 10 “He hews out channels through the rocks, And his eye sees anything precious. 11 “He dams up the streams from flowing, And what is hidden he brings out to the light.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [ESV]:

9 “Man puts his hand to the flinty rock and overturns mountains by the roots. 10 He cuts out channels in the rocks, and his eye sees every precious thing. 11 He dams up the streams so that they do not trickle, and the thing that is hidden he brings out to light.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [HCSB]:

9 The miner strikes the flint and transforms the mountains at their foundations. 10 He cuts out channels in the rocks, and his eyes spot every treasure. 11 He dams up the streams from flowing so that he may bring to light what is hidden.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NIV]:

9 People assault the flinty rock with their hands and lay bare the roots of the mountains. 10 They tunnel through the rock; their eyes see all its treasures. 11 They search the sources of the rivers and bring hidden things to light.

CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:

9 “He puts his hand on the flint; He overturns the mountains at the base. 10 “He hews out channels through the rocks, And his eye sees anything precious. 11 “He dams up the streams from flowing, And what is hidden he brings out to the light.

puts his hand is used as in Genesis 37:22, in which Reuben advises his brothers not to harm Joseph. The expression carries the thought of “attack.” What someone attacks here is the flinty rock, which some render as “the granite rock.” [UBS Handbook]

This is not the use of explosives which were not yet invented.

“overturns mountains at the base:” overturns translates the same verb root used in verse 5, where it is rendered “turned up.” It is used of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah in Genesis 19:21–29.

“his eye sees anything precious:” this has an element of close attention, as if he is carefully watching for something as he works.

RSV follows the traditional rendering of the Hebrew, which has “from weeping,” and takes this to mean “he dams up rivers so they do not leak into the mines.” If this is followed, “weep” is understood figuratively. [UBS Handbook]

Some have thought that the “channels” were cut in the mine to carry off the excess water (cf. Driver-Gray, Rowley), or to dam up a flow of water that prevented access to the desired minerals (Gordis), but it is more likely that the reference is simply to the underground origins of springs and rivers. [David J. A. Clines]

It used to be said that the miners were defending themselves against the danger of a flooded mine (RSV “he binds up the streams so that they do not trickle”), but most now accept that the verb is “explore” (שׁבַח) rather than “bind” (שׁבַח) and that it is a matter of exploring “sources” (כַּבֵּם) of streams rather than preventing the mine “from weeping, trickling” (יִכַּבֵּם); see further Notes 11.b, c. The sources of rivers naturally lie underground, and while the miners have little interest in exploring them for their own sake, their subterranean activity inevitably leads them to such hidden phenomena. [David J. A. Clines]

VERSES 28:12-14

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NASB95]:

12 “But where can wisdom be found? And where is the place of understanding? 13 “Man does not know its value, Nor is it found in the land of the living. 14 “The deep says, ‘It is not in me’; And the sea says, ‘It is not with me.’

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [ESV]:

12 “But where shall wisdom be found? And where is the place of understanding? 13 Man does not know its worth, and it is not found in the land of the living. 14 The deep says, ‘It is not in me,’ and the sea says, ‘It is not with me.’

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [HCSB]:

12 But where can wisdom be found, and where is understanding located? 13 No man can know its value, since it cannot be found in the land of the living. 14 The ocean depths say, “It’s not in me,” while the sea declares, “I don’t have it.”

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NIV]:

12 But where can wisdom be found? Where does understanding dwell? 13 No mortal comprehends its worth; it cannot be found in the land of the living. 14 The deep says, “It is not in me”; the sea says, “It is not with me.”

CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:

Verses 12–14 reflect the thought of verses 7–8, in that the latter showed that birds and animals do not know the way to the mine, so also neither people nor the depths of the sea know the source of wisdom. [UBS Handbook]

12 “But where can wisdom be found? And where is the place of understanding? 13 “Man does not know its value, Nor is it found in the land of the living. 14 “The deep says, ‘It is not in me’; And the sea says, ‘It is not with me.’

Verse 12 = key transition. Essential verse to understanding the chapter. Note that the rank and file of men do not search for wisdom. That’s evident in our culture (no fear of God ==> don’t know what marriage is or what the creational diff. between men and women).

And where is the place of understanding? Here understanding is used in parallel with wisdom, just as in Proverbs 1:2; 4:5; 7:9; 16:16. Cf. v. 28.

Man doesn’t know—neither does the deep! Merism.

We underestimate the value of wisdom (v. 13).

The Deep and the Sea are, exceptionally for the Hebrew Bible, personified. The ocean deep (תהום) is synonymous with the sea (ים); but the first term is especially used of the primeval abyss (as in Gen 1:2; 7:11; 49:25). The parallelism of the two terms (in the reverse order) is found also at 38:16. In ancient mythology the sea is a divine power; it is even one of the oldest entities in the world order (Prov 8:24, 28). But yet, says the poet, it has no special knowledge about wisdom and its acquisition. See also C. Westermann, TDOT, 3:1410–14. [David J. A. Clines]

VERSES 28:15-19

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NASB95]:

15 “Pure gold cannot be given in exchange for it, Nor can silver be weighed as its price. 16 “It cannot be valued in the gold of Ophir, In precious onyx, or sapphire. 17 “Gold or glass cannot equal it, Nor can it be exchanged for articles of fine gold. 18 “Coral and crystal are not to be mentioned; And the acquisition of wisdom is above that of pearls. 19 “The topaz of Ethiopia cannot equal it, Nor can it be valued in pure gold.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [ESV]:

15 It cannot be bought for gold, and silver cannot be weighed as its price. 16 It cannot be valued in the gold of Ophir, in precious onyx or sapphire. 17 Gold and glass cannot equal it, nor can it be exchanged for jewels of fine gold. 18 No mention shall be made of coral or of crystal; the price of wisdom is above pearls. 19 The topaz of Ethiopia cannot equal it, nor can it be valued in pure gold.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [HCSB]:

15 Gold cannot be exchanged for it, and silver cannot be weighed out for its price. 16 Wisdom cannot be valued in the gold of Ophir, in precious onyx or sapphire. 17 Gold and glass do not compare with it, and articles of fine gold cannot be exchanged for it. 18 Coral and quartz are not worth mentioning. The price of wisdom is beyond pearls. 19 Topaz from Cush cannot compare with it, and it cannot be valued in pure gold.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NIV]:

15 It cannot be bought with the finest gold, nor can its price be weighed out in silver. 16 It cannot be bought with the gold of Ophir, with precious onyx or lapis lazuli. 17 Neither gold nor crystal can compare with it, nor can it be had for jewels of gold. 18 Coral and jasper are not worthy of mention; the price of wisdom is beyond rubies. 19 The topaz of Cush cannot compare with it; it cannot be bought with pure gold.

CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:

15 “Pure gold cannot be given in exchange for it, Nor can silver be weighed as its price. 16 “It cannot be valued in the gold of Ophir, In precious onyx, or sapphire. 17 “Gold or glass cannot equal it, Nor can it be exchanged for articles of fine gold. 18 “Coral and crystal are not to be mentioned; And the acquisition of wisdom is above that of pearls. 19 “The topaz of Ethiopia cannot equal it, Nor can it be valued in pure gold.

Key metal here is gold (mentioned 5x). 15a and 19b form an inclusio.

The value of wisdom far surpasses anything else on earth. The “gold of Ophir” = Ophir was used in 22:24 as the name of a place known for its gold.

Rather than mining, the poet now moves to purchasing/trading.

Glass (זכוכית), often colored, was in pre-Roman times a very expensive material, equivalent in value to precious stones and used as jewelry or for inlays, not as a container; it was perhaps manufactured in imitation of naturally occurring precious stones (de Wilde). On ancient glass, see especially R. J. Forbes, "Glass," in his *Studies in Ancient Technology* (Leiden: Brill, 1957) 5:110–231. [David J. A. Clines]

Glass translates a word found only here, but the meaning is quite certain from related languages. In the ancient world glass was rare and therefore highly prized. TEV says "fine glass" to give a higher value than the common value that glass has today. NEB and others accomplish the same thing with "crystal." [UBS Handbook]

The topaz of Ethiopia cannot compare with it: Ethiopia is known in Hebrew as "Cush." Here the place name probably designates the quality of the gem and not its place of origin. The word translated topaz also occurs in Exodus 28:17 and Ezekiel 28:13. It is a yellow stone found on the shores of the Red Sea. [UBS Handbook]

The train of thought now moves in another direction from the question of where wisdom may be found. To acquire wisdom is highly desirable, all agree. If we do not know where we may go to find it in its native habitat, may we then purchase it, as we can purchase other precious objects? A whole catalogue of valuable minerals (gold, silver), precious gemstones (cornelian, lapis lazuli, rubies, topaz), costly natural products (coral, rock crystal), and an expensive manufacture (glass) is reviewed, and every item, no matter how costly, is declared to be unequal to wisdom in value. Even though we cannot be sure that we have correctly identified all the items, the point of this encomium to wisdom (Fedrizzi) is not in doubt. [David J. A. Clines]

In these verses, Job mentions gold five times, silver once, and names seven different precious stones; yet none of these treasures individually, nor all of them collectively, can purchase the wisdom of God. [Warren W. Wiersbe]

VERSES 28:20-22

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NASB95]:

20 “Where then does wisdom come from? And where is the place of understanding? 21 “Thus it is hidden from the eyes of all living And concealed from the birds of the sky. 22 “Abaddon and Death say, ‘With our ears we have heard a report of it.’

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [ESV]:

20 “From where, then, does wisdom come? And where is the place of understanding? 21 It is hidden from the eyes of all living and concealed from the birds of the air. 22 Abaddon and Death say, ‘We have heard a rumor of it with our ears.’

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [HCSB]:

20 Where then does wisdom come from, and where is understanding located? 21 It is hidden from the eyes of every living thing and concealed from the birds of the sky. 22 Abaddon and Death say, “We have heard news of it with our ears.”

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NIV]:

20 Where then does wisdom come from? Where does understanding dwell? 21 It is hidden from the eyes of every living thing, concealed even from the birds in the sky. 22 Destruction and Death say, “Only a rumor of it has reached our ears.”

CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:

20 “Where then does wisdom come from? And where is the place of understanding? 21 “Thus it is hidden from the eyes of all living And concealed from the birds of the sky. 22 “Abaddon and Death say, ‘With our ears we have heard a report of it.’

Just as in verses 7–8 the way to the mines is not known, in verses 20–22 the way that leads to wisdom is not known. This heading may also be worded, for example, “No one knows the way to wisdom,” “No one knows how (or, where) to find wisdom,” or “Wisdom cannot be found.” . . . Whence then comes wisdom? This line repeats the refrain in verse 12 with the exception that comes replaces “shall be found.” The answer to the question is in two parts: verses 21 and 22, which continue the theme that wisdom is hidden; and verses 23–27, which claim that God alone has the answer. [UBS Handbook]

Cf. the deep mines where no birds or beasts see and only a few men go. Wisdom is harder to find than treasures in deep, dark mines.

Abaddon (destruction) = another term for Sheol.

VERSES 28:23-28

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NASB95]:

23 “God understands its way, And He knows its place. 24 “For He looks to the ends of the earth And sees everything under the heavens. 25 “When He imparted weight to the wind And meted out the waters by measure, 26 When He set a limit for the rain And a course for the thunderbolt, 27 Then He saw it and declared it; He established it and also searched it out. 28 “And to man He said, ‘Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; And to depart from evil is understanding.’ ”

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [ESV]:

23 “God understands the way to it, and he knows its place. 24 For he looks to the ends of the earth and sees everything under the heavens. 25 When he gave to the wind its weight and apportioned the waters by measure, 26 when he made a decree for the rain and a way for the lightning of the thunder, 27 then he saw it and declared it; he established it, and searched it out. 28 And he said to man, ‘Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom, and to turn away from evil is understanding.’ ”

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [HCSB]:

23 But God understands the way to wisdom, and He knows its location. 24 For He looks to the ends of the earth and sees everything under the heavens. 25 When God fixed the weight of the wind and limited the water by measure, 26 when He established a limit for the rain and a path for the lightning, 27 He considered wisdom and evaluated it; He established it and examined it. 28 He said to mankind, “The fear of the Lord is this: wisdom. And to turn from evil is understanding.”

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NIV]:

23 God understands the way to it and he alone knows where it dwells, 24 for he views the ends of the earth and sees everything under the heavens. 25 When he established the force of the wind and measured out the waters, 26 when he made a decree for the rain and a path for the thunderstorm, 27 then he looked at wisdom and appraised it; he confirmed it and tested it. 28 And he said to the human race, “The fear of the Lord—that is wisdom, and to shun evil is understanding.”

CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:

23 “God understands its way, And He knows its place. 24 “For He looks to the ends of the earth And sees everything under the heavens. 25 “When He imparted weight to the wind And meted out the waters by measure, 26 When He set a limit for the rain And a course for the thunderbolt, 27 Then He saw it and declared it; He established it and also searched it out.

G. is t/source of all things, incl. wisdom. Could say wisdom is one of His communicable attributes.

The only One who knows is God, for He is omnipresent (He sees what animals, people, and birds are unable to see, 28:7, 21). In creating the universe, God determined the elements; the force (lit., “weight”) of the wind, the amount of water, the decree (i.e., limit) for the rain, and where each thunderstorm would occur. In His creative genius, He saw and valued wisdom (cf. Prov. 8:27–30), in contrast with man’s inability to do so (cf. Job 28:12–13). [Bible Knowledge Commentary]

Job 28:12–13 12 “But where can wisdom be found? And where is the place of understanding?
13 “Man does not know its value, Nor is it found in the land of the living.

Verse 27: Note the four verbs used . . .

28 “And to man He said, ‘Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; And to depart from evil is understanding.’ ”

Some scholars omit verse 28 on the basis that only here is the Hebrew ’aDonai “Lord” to be found in Job, or that this verse is inconsistent with the rest of the chapter. Neither of these reasons is convincing. The book of Job contains many words that are used only once. [UBS Handbook]

This was God’s description of Job (Job 1:8; 2:3); so, in spite of what his friends said about him, Job was a man of wisdom.

God told man (’ādām, “mankind”) that the essence of wisdom is to fear (“venerate and submit to”) the LORD, even when man cannot understand His ways, and to reject evil, living in accord with God’s standards of holiness. Honoring God (the positive) involves hating sin (the negative; Prov. 8:13). Job’s accusers had insisted that he was not fearing God or eschewing sin and that therefore he was not wise. In Job 28 he argued the opposite: he was fearing God and hating evil (as God Himself had already said of Job, 1:1, 8; 2:3), but they were not! Therefore wisdom and understanding were his, not theirs. [Bible Knowledge Commentary]

See my previous discourse and explanation of wisdom from Job (1:1).

Fear of the Lord and depart from evil are parallel expressions found in a similar form in 1:1, 8; 2:3; Proverbs 3:7; 14:16; 16:16. Fear of the Lord, which means “honor, respect, worship of the Lord,” is the same as being wise or having wisdom. In other words “respect for the Lord is wisdom” or “a person who worships the Lord is wise.” [UBS Handbook Series]

“Depart from evil” = repentance.

Generally: Wisdom is practical truth. Specifically fear of the LORD and repentance. Cf. Solomon who failed at part 2.

When you fear the Lord, you need not fear anyone else (Matt. 10:26–31).

So, the first step toward true wisdom is a reverent and respectful attitude toward God, which also involves a humble attitude toward ourselves. Personal pride is the greatest barrier to spiritual wisdom. “When pride comes, then comes shame; but with the humble is wisdom” (Prov. 11:2, NKJV). [Warren W. Wiersbe]

This fear and repentance isn't so easily attained and is, therefore, a gift of God's grace (cf. Jer. 31:31-33; Eph. 2:8; 2 Tim. 2:25). Faith is always a gift (Abraham in Romans 4).

Job doesn't understand his circumstances, but continues to fear God and depart from evil (as in how chapters 1-2 describe him; cf. 13:15-16, 23:10). Cf. James 1:5.

Proverbs 9:10 The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, And the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.