

Paean to Wisdom (Job 28)

M: Surely there is a mine for silver. W: *And a place where gold is refined.*
M: Iron is taken from the earth. W: *And copper is smelted from ore.*
M: Man puts an end to darkness, and searches every recess for ore.
W: *In the darkness and the shadow of death.*
M: He breaks open a shaft away from people in places forgotten by feet.
W: *They hang far away from men; they swing to and fro.*
M: As for the earth, from it comes bread. W: *But underneath it is turned up as by fire.*
M: Its stones are the source of sapphires. W: *And it contains gold dust.*
M: That path no bird knows. W: *Nor has the falcon's eye seen it.*
M: The proud lions have not trodden it. W: *Nor has the fierce lion passed over it.*
M: He puts his hand on the flint. W: *He overturns the mountains at the roots.*
M: He cuts out channels in the rocks. W: *And his eye sees every precious thing.*
M: He dams up the streams from trickling. W: *What is hidden he brings forth to light.*
(pause)
M: ***But where can wisdom be found?*** W: ***And where is the place of understanding?***
(pause)
M: Man does not know its value. W: *Nor is it found in the land of the living.*
M: The deep says, "It is not in me". W: *And the sea says, "It is not with me."*
M: It cannot be purchased for gold. W: *Nor can silver be weighed for its price.*
M: It cannot be valued in the gold of Ophir. W: *In precious onyx or sapphire.*
M: Neither gold nor crystal can equal it. W: *Nor can it be exchanged for jewelry of fine gold.*
M: No mention shall be made of coral or quartz. W: *For the price of wisdom is above rubies.*
M: The topaz of Ethiopia cannot equal it. W: *Nor can it be valued in pure gold.*
(pause)
M: ***From where then does wisdom come?*** W: ***And where is the place of understanding?***
(pause)
M: It is hidden from the eyes of all living. W: *And concealed from the birds of the air.*
M: Destruction and Death say, "We have heard a report about it with our ears."
W: *God understands its way, and He knows its place.*
M: For He looks to the ends of the earth W: *And sees under the whole heavens.*
M: To establish a weight for the wind. W: *And apportion the waters by measure.*
M: When He made a law for the rain. W: *And a path for the thunderbolt.*
M: Then He saw wisdom and declared it. W: *He prepared it, indeed, He searched it out.*

M: And to man He said:

Both: ***Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom! (pause) And to depart from evil is understanding.***