

# Job 18:1

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Then answered Bildad the Shuhite, and said,

## Analysis

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**Then answered Bildad the Shuhite, and said**—This formal introduction marks Bildad's second speech (his first was Job 8). His name possibly means 'Bel has loved' (from Babylonian god Bel), suggesting eastern origin. 'Shuhite' identifies him as descendant of Shuah, Abraham's son by Keturah (Genesis 25:2), establishing ancient lineage and wisdom credentials. The narrative formula 'answered and said' signals formal disputation in wisdom dialogue.

Bildad's second speech (18:2-21) intensifies his retribution theology from chapter 8. Whereas his first speech offered hope if Job would repent (8:5-7), this discourse relentlessly describes the wicked person's fate with no pastoral grace. His argument: Job's suffering proves wickedness, and protesting innocence only compounds guilt. Bildad represents orthodox theology without love—correct doctrine devoid of mercy. His portrait of the wicked person's doom (vv.5-21) is theologically accurate for the finally impenitent but pastorally catastrophic when applied to the suffering righteous. Jesus later warned against this judgmental approach (Luke 13:1-5, John 9:1-3).

## Historical Context

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Wisdom literature debates in the ancient Near East followed formal conventions: speakers were identified by lineage, speeches addressed previous arguments, and disputants cited tradition. Bildad consistently appeals to ancestral wisdom (8:8-10) rather than personal experience (unlike Eliphaz's vision) or reason (unlike Zophar).

His second speech comes after Job's anguished cry for vindication (chapters 16-17), which Bildad interprets as arrogant rebellion against divine justice.

## Related Passages

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**1 Corinthians 13:4** — Characteristics of love

**1 John 4:8** — God is love

**Matthew 25:31** — Final judgment

**Romans 2:1** — Judging others

## Study Questions

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1. How can theologically correct doctrine become pastorally destructive when applied without discernment or mercy?
2. In what ways do you resemble Bildad when you judge others' suffering as evidence of hidden sin?
3. How does Jesus's approach to suffering (John 9:1-3) differ from Bildad's retribution theology?

## Interlinear Text

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וַיַּעַן	בִּלְדָּד ד	הַשֻּׁחִי י	וַיֹּאמֶר:
<b>Then answered</b>	<b>Bildad</b>	<b>the Shuhite</b>	<b>and said</b>
H6030	H1085	H7747	H559

## Additional Cross-References

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**Job 8:1** (Parallel theme): Then answered Bildad the Shuhite, and said,

**Job 2:11** (Parallel theme): Now when Job's three friends heard of all this evil that was come upon him, they came every one from his own place; Eliphaz the Temanite, and Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite: for they had made an appointment together to come to mourn with him and to comfort him.

