

Job 8:1

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Then answered Bildad the Shuhite, and said,

Analysis

Bildad the Shuhite enters the dialogue as Job's second 'comforter.' The name Bildad may derive from Bel-adad ('Bel has loved') or bil-dad ('son of contention'). 'Shuhite' likely indicates descent from Shuah, Abraham's son by Keturah (Genesis 25:2), suggesting Bildad shares patriarchal heritage with Job. His response to Job's lament represents traditional retribution theology—suffering always indicates sin.

The phrase 'Then answered' (anah, אָנָה) appears throughout Job's dialogue cycles, structuring the literary debate. Bildad's speech (8:1-22) is shorter and more dogmatic than Eliphaz's (chapters 4-5), lacking Eliphaz's mystical appeal to vision and experience. Bildad appeals instead to tradition and the wisdom of the ancients (verses 8-10), assuming past generations' consensus settles theological questions.

Bildad represents conservative orthodoxy that correctly identifies divine justice but incorrectly applies it. The Reformed tradition affirms God's justice while recognizing its inscrutable application—sometimes the righteous suffer (1 Peter 3:14) and the wicked prosper (Psalm 73). Bildad's theology requires Job to confess non-existent sin, illustrating how even correct doctrine wrongly applied brings harm rather than help.

Historical Context

Bildad's Shuhite origin places him in northern Arabia, part of the broader patriarchal network extending east of Israel. The three friends represent different regions and perspectives but share common ancient Near Eastern assumptions

about divine justice and retribution—assumptions Scripture both affirms and complicates.

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Study Questions

1. How can correct theology be wrongly applied, bringing harm instead of comfort to sufferers?
2. What does Bildad's appeal to tradition teach about the relationship between orthodoxy and pastoral wisdom?
3. In what ways does Reformed theology's emphasis on God's sovereignty avoid the simplistic retribution theology Bildad represents?

Interlinear Text

וַיַּעַן	בִּלְדָּד ד	הַשׁוּחִי י	וַיֹּאמֶר:
Then answered	Bildad	the Shuhite	and said
H6030	H1085	H7747	H559

Additional Cross-References

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.