

2 Kings 2:23

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And he went up from thence unto Beth-el: and as he was going up by the way, there came forth little children out of the city, and mocked him, and said unto him, Go up, thou bald head; go up, thou bald head.

Analysis

And he went up from thence unto Beth-el: and as he was going up by the way, there came forth little children out of the city, and mocked him, and said unto him, Go up, thou bald head; go up, thou bald head.

This verse contributes to the overall theme of chapter 2: Prophetic succession and confirmation of divine calling. The prophetic ministry served as God's primary means of covenant enforcement, calling both kings and people to faithfulness. During this period, Israel and Judah struggled with persistent idolatry, particularly Baal worship introduced under Ahab and Jezebel.

The narrative demonstrates God's justice in judging covenant unfaithfulness while maintaining His ultimate purposes for redemption.

Historical Context

Historical Setting: 2 Kings 2 takes place during the mid-9th century BCE, around 850 BCE, during the transition from Elijah to Elisha. The chapter's theme (Elijah's Translation and Elisha's Beginning) reflects the historical reality of prophetic succession and divine affirmation of Elisha's ministry following Elijah's remarkable translation. Archaeological evidence from this period includes royal inscriptions,

administrative documents, and material culture that corroborate the biblical account while providing additional context for understanding the political and social dynamics at work.

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Study Questions

1. How does this verse contribute to understanding the theological message of 2 Kings 2 regarding prophetic succession and confirmation of divine calling?
2. What does this passage reveal about God's character, particularly His justice, mercy, and faithfulness to covenant promises?
3. In what practical ways should this text shape contemporary Christian thinking about faithfulness, worship, and obedience to God?

Interlinear Text

עָלָה	בֵּית מֶשֶׁךְ	אֵל	וְהָיָא	עָלָה
And he went up	H8033	H0	H1931	And he went up
H5927		from thence unto Bethel	H1008	H5927
בְּדֶרֶךְ	וּנְעָרִים	יָצְאוּ	מִן	הָעִיר
by the way	children	there came forth	H4480	out of the city
H1870	H5288	H3318		H5892
וַיִּתְקַלְסוּ	בּוֹ	וַיֹּאמְרוּ	לֹ	עָלָה
and mocked	H0	him and said	H0	And he went up
H7046		H559		H5927
				קָרְחָה
				H7142
עָלָה	קָרְחָה			
And he went up	thou bald head			
H5927	H7142			

Additional Cross-References

2 Chronicles 36:16 (Parallel theme): But they mocked the messengers of God, and despised his words, and misused his prophets, until the wrath of the LORD arose against his people, till there was no remedy.

Job 19:18 (Parallel theme): Yea, young children despised me; I arose, and they spake against me.

Job 30:1 (Parallel theme): But now they that are younger than I have me in derision, whose fathers I would have disdained to have set with the dogs of my flock.

Psalms 31:18 (Parallel theme): Let the lying lips be put to silence; which speak grievous things proudly and contemptuously against the righteous.

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