

2 Kings 23:2

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And the king went up into the house of the LORD, and all the men of Judah and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem with him, and the priests, and the prophets, and all the people, both small and great: and he read in their ears all the words of the book of the covenant which was found in the house of the LORD.

Analysis

And the king went up into the house of the LORD, and all the men of Judah and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem with him, and the priests, and the prophets, and all the people, both small and great: and he read in their ears all the words of the book of the covenant which was found in the house of the LORD.

This verse contributes to the overall theme of chapter 23: Comprehensive reformation cannot avert certain judgment. The divine name emphasizes Yahweh's covenant relationship with Israel and His sovereign control over historical events. The reference to kingship reminds readers that all human authority is subordinate to God's ultimate kingship. The prophetic ministry served as God's primary means of covenant enforcement, calling both kings and people to faithfulness. In Judah's later history, we see both genuine reforms and deep-rooted corruption, revealing that external religious activity cannot substitute for heart transformation.

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

Historical Context

Historical Setting: 2 Kings 23 takes place during the final century of Judah's existence, 7th century BCE, including Manasseh and Josiah's reigns. The chapter's theme (Josiah's Thorough Reforms) reflects the historical reality of the worst apostasy under Manasseh followed by the most thorough reforms under Josiah, demonstrating that external righteousness cannot reverse God's determined judgment. 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

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. How does this verse contribute to understanding the theological message of 2 Kings 23 regarding comprehensive reformation cannot avert certain judgment?
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

וַיַּעֲלֵה יְהוָה בְּבֵית הַלְּוָדָה וְכֹל אֲשֶׁר
went up And the king in the house of the LORD H3605 and all the men of Judah
H5927 H4428 H1004 H3068 H3605 H376 H3063

וְכֹל יְהוּדָה וְשָׁבֵב אֶת יְרוּשָׁלָם וְכֹל
and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem with him and the priests
H3605 H3427 H3389 H854 H3548

וְכֹל וּבְגִבְעָה יְמִינָה וְכֹל בָּעֵם וְכֹל
and the prophets and all the people both small and great
H5030 H3605 H5971 H6996 H5704 H1419

וְכֹל אֲתָה בְּאֶזְנֵיָה מִלְּקָדְשׁוֹ וְכֹל דְּבָרֵי
and he read in their ears all the words of the book of the covenant
H7121 H241 H853 H3605 H1697 H5612 H1285

וְכֹל בְּבֵית יְהוָה בְּבֵית שָׁפָחָה אֲשֶׁר
which was found in the house of the LORD
H4672 H1004 H3068

Additional Cross-References

2 Kings 22:8 (Word): And Hilkiah the high priest said unto Shaphan the scribe, I have found the book of the law in the house of the LORD. And Hilkiah gave the book to Shaphan, and he read it.

Revelation 20:12 (Parallel theme): And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.