

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

וַיַּעַל	וְהַמֶּלֶךְ	בֵּית יְהוָה:	וְכָל	אֵשׁ	יְהוּדָה
went up	And the king	in the house	of the LORD	and all the men	of Judah
H5927	H4428	H1004	H3068	H3605 H376	H3063
וְכָל	יֹשְׁבֵי יְרוּשָׁלַם	אֵת וְ	וְהַכֹּהֲנִים		
H3605	and all the inhabitants	of Jerusalem	with him and the priests		
	H3427	H3389	H854 H3548		
וְהַנְּבִיאִים	וְכָל	הָעָם	לְמִקְטָן	וְעַד	גָּד וּלְ
and the prophets	H3605	and all the people	both small	H5704	and great
H5030		H5971	H6996		H1419
וַיִּקְרָא	בְּאָזְנוֹתֵיהֶם	אֵת כָּל	דְּבָרֵי	סֵפֶר	הַבְּרִית
and he read	in their ears	H853	H3605	all the words	of the book
H7121	H241		H1697	H5612	H1285
וְהָיָה	בֵּית יְהוָה:				
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.