

2 Kings 23:4

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And the king commanded Hilkiah the high priest, and the priests of the second order, and the keepers of the door, to bring forth out of the temple of the LORD all the vessels that were made for Baal, and for the grove, and for all the host of heaven: and he burned them without Jerusalem in the fields of Kidron, and carried the ashes of them unto Beth-el.

Analysis

And the king commanded Hilkiah the high priest, and the priests of the second order, and the keepers of the door, to bring forth out of the temple of the LORD all the vessels that were made for Baal, and for the grove, and for all the host of heaven: and he burned them without Jerusalem in the fields of Kidron, and carried the ashes of them unto Beth-el.

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. 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

1 John 4:8 — God is love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

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

וְאֵת בְּנֵד וְלִכְדֹּן יְצַקֵּן	וְאֵת בְּנֵד וְלִכְדֹּן יְצַקֵּן	וְאֵת בְּנֵד וְלִכְדֹּן יְצַקֵּן	וְאֵת בְּנֵד וְלִכְדֹּן יְצַקֵּן	וְאֵת בְּנֵד וְלִכְדֹּן יְצַקֵּן
commanded And the king	commanded And the king	H853	Hilkiah and the priests	the high
H6680 H4428			H2518 H3548	H1419
וְאֵת בְּנֵד וְלִכְדֹּן יְצַקֵּן	וְאֵת בְּנֵד וְלִכְדֹּן יְצַקֵּן	וְאֵת בְּנֵד וְלִכְדֹּן יְצַקֵּן	וְאֵת בְּנֵד וְלִכְדֹּן יְצַקֵּן	וְאֵת בְּנֵד וְלִכְדֹּן יְצַקֵּן
and the priests of the second order	of the second order	H853	and the keepers of the door	
H3548 H4932			H8104	H5592
וְאֵת בְּנֵד וְלִכְדֹּן יְצַקֵּן	וְאֵת בְּנֵד וְלִכְדֹּן יְצַקֵּן	וְאֵת בְּנֵד וְלִכְדֹּן יְצַקֵּן	וְאֵת בְּנֵד וְלִכְדֹּן יְצַקֵּן	וְאֵת בְּנֵד וְלִכְדֹּן יְצַקֵּן
to bring forth out of the temple of the LORD	out of the temple of the LORD	H853	כָּל יִם	all the vessels
H3318 H1964			H3605	H3627
וְאֵת בְּנֵד וְלִכְדֹּן יְצַקֵּן	וְאֵת בְּנֵד וְלִכְדֹּן יְצַקֵּן	וְאֵת בְּנֵד וְלִכְדֹּן יְצַקֵּן	וְאֵת בְּנֵד וְלִכְדֹּן יְצַקֵּן	וְאֵת בְּנֵד וְלִכְדֹּן יְצַקֵּן
that were made for Baal and for the grove	for Baal and for the grove	H853	אֶבֶן אֶבֶן	and for all the host
H6213 H1168			H3605	H6635
וְאֵת בְּנֵד וְלִכְדֹּן יְצַקֵּן	וְאֵת בְּנֵד וְלִכְדֹּן יְצַקֵּן	וְאֵת בְּנֵד וְלִכְדֹּן יְצַקֵּן	וְאֵת בְּנֵד וְלִכְדֹּן יְצַקֵּן	וְאֵת בְּנֵד וְלִכְדֹּן יְצַקֵּן
of heaven and he burned them without	and he burned them without	H853	בְּשֵׂדֶם וְתַלְמִידִים	of Kidron
H8064 H8313			H3389	H6939
וְאֵת בְּנֵד וְלִכְדֹּן יְצַקֵּן	וְאֵת בְּנֵד וְלִכְדֹּן יְצַקֵּן	וְאֵת בְּנֵד וְלִכְדֹּן יְצַקֵּן	וְאֵת בְּנֵד וְלִכְדֹּן יְצַקֵּן	וְאֵת בְּנֵד וְלִכְדֹּן יְצַקֵּן
and carried the ashes	the ashes	H853	אֶל בֵּית עֲפָנִים מִבְּנֵי אֶלְעָמֵן	
H5375 H6083			H1008	

Additional Cross-References

2 Kings 21:7 (Creation): And he set a graven image of the grove that he had made in the house, of which the LORD said to David, and to Solomon his son, In this house, and in Jerusalem, which I have chosen out of all tribes of Israel, will I put my name for ever:

2 Kings 21:3 (Kingdom): For he built up again the high places which Hezekiah his father had destroyed; and he reared up altars for Baal, and made a grove, as did Ahab king of Israel; and worshipped all the host of heaven, and served them.

2 Kings 25:18 (Parallel theme): And the captain of the guard took Seraiah the chief priest, and Zephaniah the second priest, and the three keepers of the door:

2 Chronicles 33:3 (Creation): For he built again the high places which Hezekiah his father had broken down, and he reared up altars for Baalim, and made groves, and worshipped all the host of heaven, and served them.

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