

# 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

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**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

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**1 John 4:8** — God is love

**1 Corinthians 13:4** — Characteristics of love

## Study Questions

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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

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וַיִּצַו	וְהַמֶּלֶךְ	אֶת	חִלְקִיָּהוּ	כֹהֲנֵי י	הַגָּד וּלְ	וְאֶת
commanded	And the king	H853	Hilki'ah	and the priests	the high	H853
H6680	H4428		H2518	H3548	H1419	
כֹהֲנֵי י	הַמִּשְׁנָה	וְאֶת	שֹׁמְרֵי י	הַסֶּף		
and the priests	of the second order	H853	and the keepers	of the door		
H3548	H4932		H8104	H5592		
לְהוֹצִיא	מִהֵיכַל ל	יְהוָה ה	אֵת	כָּל	הַכֵּל יִם	
to bring forth	out of the temple	of the LORD	H853	H3605	all the vessels	
H3318	H1964	H3068			H3627	
הָעֲשׂוּיִם	לְבַ עַל	וְלְאֲשֶׁכָּה	וּלְכָל ל	אֶבֶר א		
that were made	for Baal	and for the grove	H3605	and for all the host		
H6213	H1168	H842		H6635		
הַשָּׁמַיִם	וַיִּשְׂרֹף	מִחוּ וַי	לִירוּשָׁלַיִם	בְּשָׂדֵם וְ	קִדְרוֹן וְ	
of heaven	and he burned	them without	Jerusalem	in the fields	of Kidron	
H8064	H8313	H2351	H3389	H7709	H6939	
וַיִּנָּשֵׂא	אֶת	בֵּית עֲפֹכָה	אֵלַי:			
and carried	H853	the ashes	H0	of them unto Bethel		
H5375		H6083		H1008		

## Additional Cross-References

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**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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