

## 2 Kings 2:23-25

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[ 0 : 0 0 ]     2 Kings chapter 2, we'll read the last three verses starting at verse 23. Remember this is right after he's healed some of the waters in Jericho that were barren.

And it says in 23rd verse, 2 Kings chapter 2 says, And he went up from thence unto Bethel, and 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, and he turned back, and looked on them, and cursed them in the name of the Lord.

And there came forth two she-berries out of the wood, and tear forty and two children of them, and he went from thence to Mount Carmel, and from thence he returned to Samaria.

And some odd scripture here within the Bible, some odd scripture in God's word. But we have to understand some things about the scripture in order to understand exactly why this took place here. None of us like the thought of anyone looking at little children as the scripture puts it. Now folks, this could have been anyone from a five-year-old up onto a twenty-year-old that it could have been. I ain't saying that they were all tiny kids. I'm not saying that they weren't. The scripture isn't really plain in that, but they were young people that came out of the city, out of what city? It says that he was on his way up to Bethel, and when he approached Bethel, when he came up unto Bethel, it says there came little children out of the city, and they were mocking Alasha. They said, go up thou bald head, go up thou bald head. I don't know if he was just naturally balding. I don't know if he had shaved his head for some reason. I don't know why they were saying this particular thing in the scripture does not anywhere tell us why they were saying this, but they were insulting the man of God as he was going up unto Bethel. Folks, why was he going unto Bethel? That's the way that he was led to go. What's significant about Bethel? The place of Bethel was a place that had God's very name placed upon it. If you go over to the book of Genesis and you read the account of Jacob, when Isaac and Rebecca sent him unto Peter and Abraham, Jacob, the very first place that he rested was a place called Bethel. It's a place that he named Bethel. This is the place where he had the vision of what we call Jacob's ladder, when he laid his head down to rest upon a stone, and he had the vision, had the dream of the angels ascending and descending under earth from the heavens. This is where this happened, and when he arose, he said, surely God must be in this place. I will call this place Bethel, Bethel, meaning the house of God. He was going,

Alasha here was going to Bethel, a place that had been called the house of God, a place that was meant to be a place of God, a place of worship, a place where God's people could go and worship the one true and living Jehovah God. Here's Alasha going up to this city that's called the house of God, the house of God. Now, what had happened to this city? What had happened to this city? You read, you read over in this same chapter, you read one of the places that Alasha and Alasha went to visit the sons of the prophets was a city called Jericho. We'll get into that a little bit more tonight, Lord willing, but that was a city called Jericho. Jericho, when it failed, Joshua placed a curse on that city, or actually not on the city, let me take that back. He placed a curse on the man that would rebuild that city. You turn over to Joshua chapter six, and you'll read that curse right after the walls came in, and right after they went in and they spoiled it and they killed people, and they done everything that they were supposed to do in their conquest of the promised land. Right at the end of chapter six, right towards the end of it, Joshua pronounces the curse. He says the man that lays the foundation of this city will do it at the cost of his firstborn son, and the man that hangs the gates of this city will do it at the cost of his youngest son, and you turn back over into 1st Kings chapter 16, you'll see a man that was named Heal, he was a Bethelite, and he came, and he's the one that laid the foundations of Jericho, he's the one that hung the gates of Jericho, and he done it at the cost of his own children, of his oldest and his youngest child. Here we see in this same chapter, chapter two of 2nd Kings, we see a town called Jericho that never should have been there, both the people of God were falling away from God, the people in Bethel had fallen away from Bethel, it was a man named Jeroboam's fault that that was going on when Jeroboam took over the northern kingdom, he had a golden calf set in den, and he had one set in a town called

[ 5 : 37 ] Bethel, they had fallen away, they were apostate from the things of God, they didn't care about God, these little children that the scripture here describes, they came out the day, I don't think, if they were little children as the scripture says, they would have simply been repeating what they heard their parents say, what they heard their parents whisper, why were they saying, go up down the mountain, go up, hey do you not think that the word had traveled what had happened to Elijah, that he had been called up into the heavens, these people did not want Elijah there, they didn't want the man of God there, they didn't want the word of God preached in their town.

That's why they were saying, go up, go up, you go up like Elijah did, we don't want you here, go up, they weren't saying go on up into the town, they weren't saying that at all, they were saying go up like Elijah did, we don't want you here, we don't want your prophecies, we don't want your help, we don't want the word, and we don't want your God, that's what the people in this town of Bethel were saying, you turn over to Hosea chapter 5, you'll see where Bethel was called Bethaven, you know what Bethaven is, that's the town of idols, that's the town of idols, and it's the same place, the house of the Lord had turned into the house of idols, that's why they were screaming this, they were content with what they had, they were content with their many gods, with their many gods that they had absorbed in through the beliefs of those pagans that lived around them, they were content with those things, they were perfectly happy and they didn't want the things of God, and you can't continue reading, it says, and he turned back and looked on them and cursed them, not only did he curse them, he cursed them in the name of the Lord, in the name of the Lord, Alasha, God's man cursed these little children that came out, and two she-bears came out of the wood and killed 42 of these little children that came out of the town of Bethel, people say, my God, that's cruel, my goodness, what was God thinking, my goodness, what kind of God would allow that, I'll tell you what kind of God would allow that, the same kind of God that'll flood an entire world and kill every one but eight people in it, the same God that will bring fire and brimstone from the heavens and destroy the cities of the plain, the same God that will open up the ground to swallow up the tribe of Korah, the same God that did those things, is the same God that will send two bears out of the wood to kill children of Bethel, and we have no right to question it, we have no right whatsoever to question it, God is just in everything that he does, God is just and he is righteous in everything that he does, it says that Alasha looked back on these little children that came out of the town of Bethel and he cursed them in the name of the Lord, post if he had cursed them of himself, nothing would have ever come of it, you know what else though, if these children had been out playing out of the monster town, on the outskirts of the town, if they'd just been out there having their selves evolved and two bears had come out of the woods and ripped 40 and two of them in twain, it would have been seen as a travesty, it would have been seen as a horrific thing, but this was a man of God that cursed them in the name of God, in the name of the Lord, this was done as judgment on the people at Bethel that they might know who the God of Alasha was, that's why it was done, why do we get sick, why is there death, why is there problems, why are there things to go on, Roger told about it, this morning in Sunday school, why do we have these things, because of sin, it's because of sin that we have these things, I ain't saying that I've got the disease that I do, that I've got the eye problems that I do, that I've got the heart problems that I do, because of particular sins that I have in my life, God don't punish like that, sin is sin is sin, when sin stepped in the garden, that's when sickness came in, that's when heartache came in, that's when sadness came in, that's when everything else that is bad came into this world, God created a world that was absolutely perfect, at the end

of the sixth day the Bible says that God looked down on everything that he had created and he saw that everything was good, if there had been anything bad here God couldn't have said that, God couldn't have said everything is good, everything was perfect, including Adam, including Eve, including the garden, including the climate, including everything, but sin crept in and that's why we have these people at Bethlehem, it had been slowly coming and slowly coming, I said you turn over to first kings, you'll read about a king, there was actually the first king that the northern kingdom had after the split of the two of Israel and of the northern and the southern kingdoms, but you read about a man named Jeroboam, he didn't want his people, the people under his rule, he didn't want them going to Jerusalem to worship, why was that, you read about it in first kings, he didn't want them going there because they would fall over to that king over to Jeroboam, they would go over to him and he said my people will kill me because they're going to Jerusalem, he says they'll be turned against me, they'll fall in love with this other king, so what's he do, he sets up idols, he sets up one in Dan and he sets up one in Bethlehem and he sets up golden calves as idols, he says now my people can go somewhere and worship and they don't have to go to the southern kingdom, they don't have to go to Jerusalem, they don't have to even pass through that land, they can and they'll be in close quarters, no matter where they're at in my kingdom, they'll be in close quarters for a place to go and worship and the people loved it, shame on those people, shame on those folks for not having any more understanding of the Word of

God and to do those things for not having any more understanding of Exodus chapter 20 and the very first commandment of their love to Lord, that God with all their heart, all their mind, all their soul and all their strength and the second commandment not to make any graven images, these people should have known that, but no a king led them astray, a king led them astray, turn to Micah chapter one sometime, you'll see judgment for now, it's against Jerusalem and against Samaria and against the capital cities of the two kingdoms, not the kings themselves and not the not the kingdoms themselves, but the capital cities of those why because that's where the commands came from, that's where the influence came from and the capital cities is where the head honchos of those lands lived at, that's where they dwell, that's where their laws were made, that's where laws were given, that's where rules were made, that's where rules were broken, that's where the people got most of their influence from was the capital cities and judgment was pronounced on those capital cities and on the kings and on the princes and on those people who should have known better, those people that did know better that they knew they were supposed to lead the people of God in the right direction on the street and the narrow way, but they chose not to, judgment was pronounced on them, judgment was pronounced on Bethel for the exact same thing because they had allowed adultery in, they had allowed this plain, this impollution of the house of the Lord.

That's why this happened, not because God got amusement out of it, not because Elijah wanted it, that we're making fun of Elijah. Now listen, I've heard the scripture here used in the pulpit, basically in a striking manner toward the congregation, you leave the man and God alone, or God not sending two she-bears after you. I've heard it used that way, that ain't the lesson here at all, there are no lessons even close to that in this, this is a lesson for apostasy, this is a lesson, like I said the people in Bethel, that they had fallen away from God and God was using this as judgment folks, this is judgment against the folks of Bethel, it was judgment not only against these children, it was judgment against their parents and their parents before them, it was judgment from the inhabitants of the town and it was a proclamation of Almighty God, you need to come back to me, you need to turn back towards my way, you need to seek out the old past and when you find them, you need to walk their head, this was God screaming at Bethel, this was God pleading with Bethel, come back to your maker, that's what this was, it wasn't something just violent in the middle of the pages of scriptures, one violent book read it and read judges, that's a violent book, but it had purpose too, this wasn't to turn people's stomachs, this wasn't to turn people against God, this was to bring people back to God, how in the world could that bring somebody to God, knowing that God, hey listen, Alashah didn't have that power in an obvious sense, it had to have been God that sent those two bears out of the wood and it had to be

[ 15 : 49 ] God and the thing is we don't know how many children might have escaped, it might have killed all 42 if that's all there was out there, it might have made, if that's all there was there, it made every single one of them, there might have been 200 of them, they'll escape if there was 242, we don't know, but I guarantee you that if there were some that escaped, there were some that ran back to the town, they went under Bethel, they went to their parents, they went to their grandparents, their aunts and their uncles, they went to everybody, they said the man of God Alashah, he was walking along the way and me and my buddies were out there and we started making fun of him, he turned around and cursed us in the name of the Lord and the Lord, since she bears out of the wood and it killed our friends, it killed our buddies, it killed brothers, sisters, whomever, God did this as judgment, don't you think that if there wasn't someone that survived, that wasn't the story that they told, how bad do you think those bellies of those parents would have dropped, how bad do you think or how far up into their throat do you think their heart came, when they hurt those words, know what idolaters they were, know that they had fallen right along with Jeroboam, right on through the other kings, right, they had fallen right along with worshiping not only a golden calf some years before, but of worshiping other idols as they were now, folks, it was a horrible situation that God had to bring attention to and it wasn't to necessarily to punish, it was to bring people back to him, it was to bring people to him, why do you think sometimes some guys you've been praying for for 20 or 30 years, some guys you know getting well has lost them without God, why do you think they wind up in the hospital, why do they have freak accidents, why do these things happen to them, hey it might just be God's last opportunity for them to seek righteousness and to seek happiness and to seek salvation that they can only have in him, it's a plea, it's a plea from God to do these things every time, every time, not to mention folks, this was prophecy being fulfilled, there's prophecy over in the book of Leviticus that talks about this, in Leviticus numbers both, it talks about the people when they walk from the ways of God, God will send the wild beasts upon their families and upon their children specifically, this was prophecy being fulfilled, 100 years before this ever happened, it was spoken that it would happen, but it was only if the people strayed, the people had strayed and God instead of picking them up and kicking them to the curb,

God said I need to bring you back and if it's at the cost of some of your children, so be it, if it's at the cost of sons and daughters, so be it, folks that sounds cruel and it sounds inhumane, but we're talking about lost souls here, we're talking about people, we're talking about souls, we're talking about persons that we know that are on their way to a literal hell and they will literally burn there forever, there is no cost too great to get the gospel out there, there is no cost too great to get a soul saved, there is no cost too great to do these things, in hallelujah, the cost of the greatest part, the cost has done been paid, through Jesus Christ, it's already been paid, God gave rules over in the Old Testament, do these things and you'll be blessed, don't do these things and you'll be cursed, you don't find that next to this 20, you find a lot of it over in

Deuteronomy, why was that Deuteronomy was for the second generation, the first generation died off in the wilderness because God told them in the book of Numbers that would happen, he said you're not getting in, folks that was judgment, that was the same type of judgment that we're reading about here, it was judgment of a holy and a just and a righteous God, when those people murmured and they complained when Joshua and Caleb and the other can went over into the promised land and they spied out the land and they came back and Joshua and Caleb were like we can do this, we can take this land because the Lord is on our side but the other did it, we said oh no those sons there are too great for us, we'll never be able to take it, the people listen to the majority and it got everyone in Israel in trouble except for Joshua and Caleb because they were the only ones that believed, they were the only ones that believed, God is with us, God has promised this to us, God promised this to Abraham and it has descended unto us, this is our land that God has said we will take and Joshua and Caleb were the only ones that made it into the promised land of the original tribe of Judah, everyone else 20 years and older perished in the wilderness, God told them he said your carcasses were wrought in this wilderness, that was judgment, it was judgment because of their unbelief, it was judgment because of their apostasy, it was judgment because just like so many other times we read throughout the scriptures that would follow God, things would go wrong, that would stray from God, things will continue wrong, they would cry to God, God would hear in His mercy and His compassion and God would come back and deliver them, it is a sick, it is a symbol, it is a cycle all the way through the scriptures, amen. Folks we've got to be careful, judgment's coming on this world, judgment's already here to an extent but it is coming on this world, the trumpet's sounding, the trumpet's been sounding for 2,000 years now, judgment is coming, in the Old Testament you read about the end of the world judgments but those people did not understand that that was the end of the time, they didn't understand the Messiah, they didn't understand that there would be a time or a span after the Messiah, they didn't understand any of these things but the Bible we have it as completeness and we have it in its infallibility and the Bible explains that it'll come in a day, in a time, in an hour that we do not expect the

Son of Man will step out on their clouds to receive His people up unto Himself and then the times of tribulation will begin. And that's just a taste of the judgment that's coming, judgment's coming folks, it's all throughout the scripture, David and Bathsheba had an affair, we all know that instigated by David, God judged that Bathsheba got pregnant, she had a baby, what happened? The baby died, that baby died was judgment but what did it cause, what did it cause?

Hey David, hey he mourned for that baby, he fasted for that baby, they knew it was sick, they knew those chances were slim than them and when the baby died and the servants told David what did it cause David to do? Yes he mourned for a little while but it caused him to rise up, get himself dressed and go up unto the house of God to worship, it was done to bring David back to God. God took a child to bring David, bring his own, bring the one that the Bible says was a man after God's own heart, that was done, he took a child of David to bring him back to him, to bring him back to God, what will God do in our lives, what will he do if you go astray, what will he take? I've said many times be careful what you put above God, be careful what you put above your worship, be careful putting your children above him, God can remove those excuses out of the way, God can and will take those excuses where you are left with nothing to say besides God, I'm sorry, you're left with a penitent attitude like David had, God had to take one of his children to bring him back to him but it worked and he done that because David was his,

[ 24 : 25 ] David was often the wrong direction, David understood that after the prophet Nathan come to him and he told him of these things, David understood it all but God still had to get to David, he still had to bring David unto himself and he took a child to do it. Don't let yourself get in that kind of shape, don't let yourself get in an apostate condition like the people of Bethel were, like David was, you flip on over to the New Testament, that's judgment given there too, you read over in the book of Acts there was a piece of property sold by Adam and I and Sapphira, there was a piece of property sold by them and they kept part of the proceeds back for themselves, what happened? They both died, they both died, the husband died as they were carrying him or they carried him out and then the wife came in they said hey even as your husband was it's going to be the same way unto you and she died there at the door hey folks they carried her out and buried her well as well that was the judgment of a holy and a righteous God coming down on people for lying to the Spirit. We got to be careful, be careful what excuses we use, folks these people in

Bethel and a land that Jacob their father, of course Jacob descended from Isaac, Isaac descended from Abraham I understand all that but the twelve tribes descended from Jacob, the twelve original tribes, their father had named that very land and he named it Bethel because he said this is the house of the Lord and God changes the name of it, you flip over just just several books over to Hosea chapter 5 and the name was changed to Bethel the house of idols, the house of idols and that's why God was so upset with Israel that's why he was upset with them in Hosea that's why he was upset with them in Micah and all these other books that we read about God was upset with his people but praise God even though he gets upset with us you know why it's because we're his children and we know how we should act we know how we should do we know how we should pray and everything else and we don't do it that's why God gets upset because we know better we know better and we still don't do it you're even Ezekiel 16 I know I preached on it here a long time ago Ezekiel 16 is one of the greatest pictures of Israel's state but it's also a good picture of the church's state God found

Israel found her over in the weeds tossed like a child that somebody didn't want a newborn baby he said when I what I walked upon thee and when I found thee that was polluted in thine own blood and I said unto thee live I said unto thee live and he done that for for Israel he done that for his people his chosen people the apple of his eye he picked her up he cleaned her off he said I adorned you with the garments that you needed I decked you out you was looking pretty you smell better you look better and what did you do just a few verses after that he compares Israel to an imperious harsh woman because Israel didn't appreciate what he did how much does the church appreciate what he's done I don't mind our little assembly here I'm talking about the church as a whole how much do we appreciate salvation how much do we appreciate that Jesus crossed Hamlon across for six hours for your sin and for mine he took what you deserve he took what I deserve he took what we deserve he took the beating he took the mockery he took it all on your behalf why don't we appreciate it like we should shame on us shame on me shame on me when the bible plainly says all we like sheep have gone astray yeah all we like sheep have gone astray that's why he came because we had gone astray and he had to wrestle us back in he had to bring us to the fold and he had to make a doorway into that fold folks the door was shut there was no door before Jesus Christ came there was no way into salvation yes there was a paradise and yes there was belief that could get us right with God there was faith that could get us right with God but there was no door to eternal salvation before Jesus Christ he made that door the fold was completely enclosed and when he came in there was a door made that's why he said anybody that tries to get in any other way is a thief in a robber they will not get in that way God will boot them out judgments come there's another parable spoken in the New Testament Jesus speaks of the the 10 virgins we probably all pretty familiar with that one five of them had oil in their lands which were trimmed and were ready to go and five of them didn't he says they took their lives with them but their vessels had no oil had no oil and when the cry came out they went to meet the bridegroom and those that were without the oil they asked the ones with the oil and that it trimmed their lamps and made their cells ready they said let us borrow your oil they said we can't do that unless there not be enough for ourselves and for you go instead to those that sail go out and while they were gone what happened the bridegroom came the bridegroom came while they were unaware the bridegroom came while they were preoccupied with something else the bridegroom came while they had whatever it was above God in front of them instead of Almighty God himself and when the when the bridegroom came he took the five that were ready the five that had the oil in their lamps and their which trim they went inside when the marriage was to take place the door was shut and those that weren't already they showed up and they said Lord let us in they knocked on the door and they pleaded and the Lord said I know you not that's horrible words folks that's horrible words now you keep in mind there were 10 virgins there were 10 clean 10 pure 10 10 virgins never never laid with a man they were pure all 10 of them hope there's gonna be a lot of people hear those words come judgment day there's gonna be a lot of people say Lord Lord did I not cast out devils in your name Lord Lord



did I not do marvelous works in thy name Lord Lord did I not do this Lord Lord did I not do that and those virgins that were leaning on the door saying Lord Lord let us in they were screaming the thing they were calling him Lord they were treating him as Lord they chased him as Lord but he said I know you not there's gonna be a lot of people hear that right and it's a scary thought it's a scary thought and the people are going to hear that that's not and yet y'all have heard me say it before he didn't say I knew you two years ago but now I don't I knew you 20 years ago when you first got saved but now I don't he said depart from me he's a working equity I never knew you I never knew you so we won't be able to throw up our good works into God's face if you think that's going to happen thank you again he turned and cursed them in the name of the Lord there came four two sheep bears out of the wood and tear 40 and two children you know listen he doesn't say it killed no says it terrible were they dead I don't know but I guarantee you there's something I had some marks on it right there they were something that had evidence that God had gotten a hold of them that these bears had gotten a hold of them that God had gotten a hold of them through these bears they had evidence so when the children were running back to the town and they were screaming hey guess what happened and then these others that may have survived that may have gotten torn come into the town they saw the evidence that God had been afoot they saw the evidence that God had had sent these bears and they heard the evidence that there was a prophet of God that spoke of cursal then in the name of the Lord I guarantee you everybody in that town had aerial ears yeah well they had they had they had spiritual radar on at that point because they knew God was in their presence they knew that God knew what they was doing they knew that God had seen every idol they had worshiped had seen every stone figurine every wooden figurine they had seen the incense burning on the false altars they had seen them burning in the high places and in the groves the places that God specifically told them not to worship him they knew that God had eyes on them for all that time the evidence was there hey folks the evidence is all around us not only in nature the evidence isn't you if you've been born again for all those around you that are lost if you've been born again you don't act like you once did you don't talk like you once did you don't dress like you once did you don't do anything like you once did because you are a new creature in Christ Jesus and the spirit will guide you in those things if the evidence ain't there ain't no one gonna plead either that or you're gonna drag them right into hell with you say well they're acting this way they're saved being saved ain't that bad I can go out and party I can drink

I can do dope because they are tell you what one of the saddest thoughts is is the amount of parents that are going to drag their children into hell with them because now listen I understand it's an individual choice I get that I do but what do children do what I say about these if they were little children they were mimicking what their parents had said they were repeating what their parents children do what their parents do and when parents ignore the house of God when parents ignore the word of God when parents ignore God in general when they have no influence like that those parents are leading those children down the road of destruction they will enter in through that wide through the wide gate which leads to destruction folks I said I know it's an individual choice but the more of laxness that we see and the more of laziness that we see the more of these things that we witness in our lives the less likely we are to be to be sensitive to the spirit when it comes our way the more anxious we will be to get out from underneath the preaching of God the more or the less conviction we will feel when we hear the preaching of the word of God if our parents never showed it to us yeah that's why I tell parents you raise a child in church yeah raise a child in church now another sad thing when we went to

[ 36 : 06 ] Bones Creek we used to do visiting once they were a couple of weeks I couldn't believe the houses that I went to and parents would say do you have a bus that runs do you have a van that runs I'd like for my children to go to church exactly what about you I'll be fine I just want to make sure my children know the Lord you know those people I thought that that I had that thought you know what they were thinking they'll get me a check mark next to my name in heaven now we have one God will look on that God will say well he carried off about his kids to get him in the church I'll let him in too they know God works folks God don't work like that God God won't mean getting those children into heaven on the merits of going to church no and he won't get me into heaven on the merits of going to church or on preaching or on singing or anything else I'll get in by the merits of Jesus Christ that he worked on across from me at Calvary and that is the only merit that I will ever enter heaven in these folks here I don't know what merits they were depending on I don't know what gods they were worshiping but they were not worshiping the truth and the living God that

Alasha worship that Alasha ministered for they were not worshiping the same God and God at this in judgment in order to prove himself to bring his own people right back to him folks be careful be careful what we put above God be careful what we put in front of God the sentence might come it might come it's coming to me it's coming to everybody in here at one point or another and we think my goodness what I would give for this sentence to be gone what I would give if my eyes wasn't in this kind of shape be careful God can take them eyes from you you start using it as an excuse to get out of church get out of worship and get out of reading God can take anything he wants to to make sure that his child is where they're supposed to be and when God does those those things it'll it'll only have one of two different outcomes it'll either draw you in closer to God or you depend on his on his health and his vision and his hearing and his leadership and everything else about him or it'll push you further away from God or you're not dependent on anything to do with God and then the chastisement of God gets that much tougher in your life hey folks I would rather have God bring me in and God humble me ask me to get so far out in the world that God had to put me flat on my back take my side my hearing and everything else about me just to bring me back to him that don't sound like much of a life to live though so if we stay we stay alive and the only way we can do that is through the Spirit you can't do it yourself you cannot do it yourself these people have gotten way out of line with God they're straight far from God and God pronounced judgment