

[sexydeadanimal](#) has made a comment on [Child's-Eye View of Disgusting Abortion Pictures](#):
Go up, you baldhead! Go up, you baldhead! In response, Elisha called down evil upon them in the name of Yahweh. Then two she-bears came out from the woods and went tearing to pieces forty-two children of their number. Yahweh called evil on the children. Yahweh is evil.

[sexydeadanimal](#) has replied to your comment on [Child's-Eye View of Disgusting Abortion Pictures](#): Every Bible I've read refers to them as children but even if they were young men, only a sick, evil skunk would send a bear to tear them up for being disrespectful. Only a sick, evil, filthy skunk like Yahweh would dole out a punishment that is far worse than what those kids did. Yahweh is the sickest, most evil deity men worship. Even satan is never mentioned as having done the evil deeds that that sick, evil skunk Yahweh did.

My reply:

Elisha sees Elijah go up in a chariot of fire. He comes to Bethel to a school of Prophets who are dehumanized by worshipers of the Golden Calf in town.

A mob surrounded Elisha, jeering, "Go up with your buddy Elijah! We'll give you a push!" Hundreds must have mobbed him, for two bears to maul 42 of them while they fled. We don't know if any died. But death is not terrible. It is what we do with life that can create terror. More: www.Saltshaker.US -> Bible Studies -> Elisha's Bears.

Context in the Bible:

2Ki 2:9 And it came to pass, when they were gone over, that Elijah said unto Elisha, Ask what I shall do for thee, before I be taken away from thee. And Elisha said, I pray thee, let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me.

2Ki 2:10 And he said, Thou hast asked a hard thing: *nevertheless*, if thou see me *when I am* taken from thee, it shall be so unto thee; but if not, it shall not be *so*.

2Ki 2:11 And it came to pass, as they still went on, and talked, that, behold, *there appeared* a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven.

2Ki 2:12 And Elisha saw *it*, and he cried, My father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof. And he saw him no more: and he took hold of his own clothes, and rent them in two pieces.

2Ki 2:13 He took up also the mantle of Elijah that fell from him, and went back, and stood by the bank of Jordan;

2Ki 2:14 And he took the mantle of Elijah that fell from him, and smote the waters, and said, Where *is* the LORD God of Elijah? and when he also had smitten the waters, they parted hither and thither: and Elisha went over.

2Ki 2:15 And when the sons of the prophets which *were* to view at Jericho saw him, they said, The spirit of Elijah doth rest on Elisha. And they came to meet him, and bowed themselves to the ground before him.

2Ki 2:16 And they said unto him, Behold now, there be with thy servants fifty strong men; let them go, we pray thee, and seek thy master: lest peradventure the Spirit of the LORD hath taken him up, and cast him upon some mountain, or into some valley. And he said, Ye shall not send.

2Ki 2:17 And when they urged him till he was ashamed, he said, Send. They sent therefore fifty men; and they sought three days, but found him not.

2Ki 2:18 And when they came again to him, (for he tarried at Jericho,) he said unto them, Did I not say unto you, Go not?

2Ki 2:19 And the men of the city said unto Elisha, Behold, I pray thee, the situation of this city *is*

pleasant, as my lord seeth: but the water *is* naught, and the ground barren.

2Ki 2:20 And he said, Bring me a new cruse, and put salt therein. And they brought *it* to him.

2Ki 2:21 And he went forth unto the spring of the waters, and cast the salt in there, and said, Thus saith the LORD, I have healed these waters; there shall not be from thence any more death or barren *land*.

2Ki 2:22 So the waters were healed unto this day, according to the saying of Elisha which he spake.

2Ki 2:23 And he went up from thence unto Bethel: and as 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.

2Ki 2:24 And he turned back, and looked on them, and cursed them in the name of the LORD. And there came forth two she bears out of the wood, and tare forty and two children of them.

2Ki 2:25 And he went from thence to mount Carmel, and from thence he returned to Samaria.

Commentaries:

Verses 23–25 have puzzled some people. Keep in mind that these were young men, not children, and therefore responsible for their deeds. Bethel was a headquarters for idolatry (1 Kings 12:28–33); this sacred place had been desecrated and the young men were actually ridiculing God’s Word and God’s servants. The fact that forty-two of them met together suggests an organized plan. Calling the prophet “baldhead” was one of the lowest forms of insults, and the words “go up” point to their ridicule of Elijah’s rapture to heaven. The bears mauled them, but we do not know if any of the young men were killed. It was a divine rebuke to the flippant attitude of wicked men who should have known better.

Wiersbe, W. W. (1993). *Wiersbe's expository outlines on the Old Testament* (2 Ki 1:1). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

John Gill: **2Ki 2:24 And he turned back, and looked on them,....** With a stern countenance, thereby reproving them, and in order to intimidate them, and make them ashamed, and cause them to leave off, but to no purpose; they repeated their mockeries with great vehemence:

and cursed them in the name of the Lord; moved thereunto, not from passion and a spirit of revenge, but by an impulse of the Spirit of God:

and there came forth two she bears out of the wood; which are fiercest, and especially when bereaved of their whelps, as these might be; the wood seems to be near to Bethel, perhaps in the wilderness of Bethel, of which see [Jos 8:15](#), and Reland (y) thinks it is the same with the wood of Ephraim, [2Sa 18:6](#), though the Jews, to increase the miracle, say (z) there was no wood at all, and, if there was, that there were no bears in it; but though those creatures are mostly in northern countries, yet there were of them in Judea, see [1Sa 17:34](#).

and tare forty and two children of them; it seems there were more than these; but such a number of them they tore to pieces and destroyed; which was very extraordinary, and was an awful punishment for their wickedness, which they knowingly and willingly committed, and of their parents in them, who had trained them up in such impiety, and put them upon it, and sent them out to do it.

(y) Palestin. Illustrat. p. 378. (z) T. Bab. Sotah, fol. 47. 1.

K&D: Keil & Delitzsch Commentary on the Old Testament, Johann (C.F.) Keil (1807-1888) &

Franz Delitzsch (1813-1890)

2Ki 2:23-25

The judgment of God upon the loose fellows at Bethel. Elisha proceeded from Jericho to Bethel, the chief seat of the idolatrous calf-worship, where there was also a school of the prophets (2Ki_2:3). On the way thither there came small boys out of the city to meet him, who ridiculed him by calling out, "Come up, bald-head, come," etc. בָּלְדָּה, bald-head (with a bald place at the back of the head), was used as a term of scorn (cf. Isa_3:17, Isa_3:24); but hardly from a suspicion of leprosy (Winer, Thenius). It was rather as a natural defect, for Elisha, who lived for fifty years after this (2Ki_13:14), could not have been bald from age at that time.

2Ki_2:24

The prophet then turned round and cursed the scoffers in the name of the Lord, and there came two bears out of the wood, and tore forty-two boys of them in pieces. The supposed "immorality of cursing," which Thenius still adduces as a disproof of the historical truth of this miracle, even if it were established, would not affect Elisha only, but would fall back upon the Lord God, who executed the curse of His servant in such a manner upon these worthless boys. And there is no need, in order to justify the judicial miracle, to assume that there was a preconcerted plan which had been devised by the chief rulers of the city out of enmity to the prophet of the Lord, so that the children had merely been put forward (O. v. Gerlach). All that is necessary is to admit that the worthless spirit which prevailed in Bethel was openly manifested in the ridicule of the children, and that these boys knew Elisha, and in his person insulted the prophet of the Lord. If this was the case, then Elisha cursed the boys for the purpose of avenging the honour of the Lord, which had been injured in his person; and the Lord caused this curse to be fulfilled, to punish in the children the sins of the parents, and to inspire the whole city with a salutary dread of His holy majesty.

(Note: Augustine, or the author of the Sermo 204 de Tempore (or Sermo 41 de Elisaeo in t. v. of the Opp. August., ed. J. P. Migne, p. 1826), which is attributed to him, gives a similar explanation. "The insolent boys," he says, "are to be supposed to have done this at the instigation of their parents; for they would not have called out if it had displeased their parents." And with regard to the object of the judicial punishment, he says it was inflicted "that the elders might receive a lesson through the smiting of the little ones, and the death of the sons might be a lesson to the parents; and that they might learn to fear the prophet, whom they would not love, notwithstanding the wonders which he performed.")

2Ki_2:25

Elisha went from Bethel to Carmel (see at 1Ki_18:19), probably to strengthen himself in solitude for the continuation of his master's work. He returned thence to Samaria, where, according to 2Ki_6:32, he possessed a house.

John Wesley: **2Ki 2:24** Cursed them - Nor was this punishment too great for the offence, if it be considered, that their mocking proceeded from a great malignity of mind against God; that they mocked not only a man, and an ancient man, whose very age commanded reverence; and a prophet; but even God himself, and that glorious work of God, the assumption of Elijah into heaven; that they might be guilty of many other heinous crimes, which God and the prophet knew; and were guilty of idolatry, which by God's law deserved death; that the idolatrous parents were punished in their children; and that, if any of these children were more innocent, God might have mercy upon their souls, and then this death was not a misery, but a real blessing to them, that they were taken away from that education which was most likely to expose them not only to temporal, but eternal destruction. In the name - Not from any revengeful passion, but by the motion of God's Spirit, and by God's command and commission. God did this, partly, for the terror and caution of all other idolaters and prophane persons who abounded in that place; partly, to vindicate the honour, and maintain the authority of his prophets; and particularly, of Elisha, now especially, in the beginning of his sacred ministry. Children - This Hebrew word signifies not only young children, but also those who are grown up to maturity, as

[Gen_32:22](#), [Gen_34:4](#), [Gen_37:30](#); [Rth_1:5](#).

II. Here is a curse upon the children of Bethel, which was effectual to destroy them; for it was not a curse causeless. At Bethel there was another school of prophets. Thither Elisha went next, in this his primary visitation, and the scholars there no doubt welcomed him with all possible respect, but the townsmen were abusive to him. One of Jeroboam's calves was at Bethel; this they were proud of, and fond of, and hated those that reprov'd them. The law did not empower them to suppress this pious academy, but we may suppose it was their usual practice to jeer the prophets as they went along the streets, to call them by some nickname or other, that they might expose them to contempt, prejudice their youth against them, and, if possible, drive them out of their town. Had the abuse done to Elisha been the first offence of that kind, it is probable that it would not have been so severely punished. But *mocking the messengers of the Lord*, and *misusing the prophets*, was one of the *crying sins of Israel*, as we find, 2 Chr. 36:16. Now here we have, 1. An instance of that sin. The little *children of Bethel*, the boys and girls that were playing in the streets (notice, it is likely, having come to the town of his approach), went out to meet him, not with their hosannas, as they ought to have done, but with their scoffs; they gathered about him and mocked him, as if he had been a fool, or one fit to make sport with. Among other things that they used to jeer the prophets with, they had this particular taunt for him, *Go up, thou bald head, go up, thou bald head*. It is a wicked thing to reproach persons for their natural infirmities or deformities; it is adding affliction to the afflicted; and, **if they are as God made them, the reproach reflects upon him. But this was such a thing as scarcely deserved to be called a blemish, and would never have been turned to his reproach if they had had any thing else to reproach him with. It was his character as a prophet that they designed to abuse.** The honour God had crowned him with should have been sufficient to cover his bald head and protect him from their scoffs. **They bade him go up, perhaps reflecting on the assumption of Elijah: "Thy master," they say, "has gone up; why dost not thou go up after him? Where is the fiery chariot? When shall we be rid of thee too?"** These children said as they were taught; they had learned of their idolatrous parents to call foul names and give bad language, especially to prophets. These young cocks, as we say, crow'd after the old ones. **Perhaps their parents did at this time send them out and set them on, that, if possible, they might keep the prophet out of their town.** 2. A specimen of that ruin which came down upon Israel at last, for misusing God's prophets, and of which this was intended to give them fair warning. Elisha heard their taunts, a good while, with patience; but at length the fire of holy zeal for God was kindled in his breast by the continued provocation, and he *turned and looked upon them*, to try if a grave and severe look would put them out of countenance and oblige them to retire, to see if he could discern in their faces any marks of ingenuousness; but they *were not ashamed, neither could they blush*; and therefore he *cursed them in the name of the Lord*, both imprecated and denounced the following judgment, not in personal revenge for the indignity done to himself, but as the mouth of divine justice to punish the dishonour done to God. His summons was immediately obeyed. two she-bears (bears perhaps robbed of their whelps) came out of an adjacent wood, and presently killed forty-two children, v. 24. Now in this, (1.) The prophet must be justified, for he did it by divine impulse. Had the curse come from any bad principle God would not have said *Amen* to it. We may think it would have been better to have called for two rods for the correction of these children than two bears for the destruction of them. But Elisha knew, by the Spirit, the bad character of these children. He knew what a generation of vipers those were, and what mischievous enemies they would be to God's prophets if they should live to be men, who began so early to be abusive to them. He intended hereby to punish the parents and to make them afraid of God's judgments. (2.) God must be glorified as a righteous God, that hates sin, and will reckon for it, even in little children. Let the wicked wretched brood make our flesh tremble for fear of God. Let little children be afraid of speaking wicked words, for God notices what they say. Let them not mock any for their defects in mind or body, but pity them rather; especially let them know that it is at their peril if

they jeer God's people or ministers, and scoff at any for well-doing. Let parents, that would have comfort in their children, train them up well, and do their utmost betimes to drive out the foolishness that is bound up in their hearts; for, as bishop Hall says, "In vain do we look for good from those children whose education we have neglected; and in vain do we grieve for those miscarriages which our care might have prevented." Elisha comes to Bethel and fears not the revenges of the bereaved parents; God, who bade him do what he did, he knew would bear him out. Thence he goes to Mount Carmel (v. 25), where it is probable there was a religious house fit for retirement and contemplation. Thence he returned to Samaria, where, being a public place, this father of the prophets might be most serviceable. Bishop Hall observes here, "That he can never be a profitable seer who is either always or never alone."

Henry, M. (1996, c1991). *Matthew Henry's commentary on the whole Bible : Complete and unabridged in one volume* (2 Ki 2:19). Peabody: Hendrickson.

There is enough logic in your challenge to encourage me that your interest in understanding may be sincere.

This certainly implies children, unless it should be translated as 'worthless' or 'unworthy' here. The fierceness of the judgment is best explained if Elisha was being mocked specifically as head of Yahweh's prophets. It is possible that the insult *baldhead* referred to some kind of tonsure which signified membership of the school of prophets.

Carson, D. A. (1994). *New Bible commentary : 21st century edition*. Rev. ed. of: The new Bible commentary. 3rd ed. / edited by D. Guthrie, J.A. Motyer. 1970. (4th ed.) (2 Ki 2:23). Leicester, England; Downers Grove, Ill., USA: Inter-Varsity Press.

The group of boys (2 Kings 2:23–24) were not children but young men who could be held morally accountable for their actions (cf. 1 Sam. 16:11; 1 Kings 3:7; Jer. 1:6–7). Not only were their words disrespectful, but they also constituted a challenge to Elisha's divinely appointed ministry. Their judgment was in keeping with the curses pronounced in the Mosaic law against those who were disobedient (Deut. 28:26).

Hughes, R. B., & Laney, J. C. (2001). *Tyndale concise Bible commentary*. Rev. ed. of: New Bible companion. 1990.; Includes index. The Tyndale reference library (138). Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House Publishers.

2:24. Elisha then **called down a curse on** the villains. This cursing stemmed not from Elisha's pride but from their disrespect for **the LORD** as reflected in their treatment of His spokesman (cf. 1:9–14). Again God used wild animals to execute His judgment (cf., e.g., 1 Kings 13:24). That **42** men were **mauled** by the **two bears** suggests that a mass demonstration had been organized against God and Elisha.

Walvoord, J. F., Zuck, R. B., & Dallas Theological Seminary. (1983-c1985). *The Bible knowledge commentary : An exposition of the scriptures* (1:542). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

2:23–25 *Never mock a bald-headed prophet!* As Elisha began his ministry, a group of youths mocked his baldness. Elisha pronounced a curse on them, and they were mauled by bears. Disrespect for the Lord's prophet is the same as disrespect for the Lord.

Willmington, H. L. (1997). *Willmington's Bible handbook* (210). Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House Publishers.

Forty-two youths (2:23). These were not boys or children, but young men. They did not so

much ridicule Elisha as the notion that God could catch a person up into heaven. Their immediate judgment teaches all Israel that grace is not weakness. The Lord and His prophet must be held in awe. Richards, L. O. (1991; Published in electronic form by Logos Research Systems, 1996). *The Bible readers companion* (electronic ed.) (244). Wheaton: Victor Books.

23, 24. there came forth little children out of the city—that is, the idolatrous, or infidel young men of the place, who affecting to disbelieve the report of his master's translation, sarcastically urged him to follow in the glorious career.

bald head—an epithet of contempt in the East, applied to a person even with a bushy head of hair. The appalling judgment that befell them was God's interference to uphold his newly invested prophet. Jamieson, R., Fausset, A. R., Fausset, A. R., Brown, D., & Brown, D. (1997). *A commentary, critical and explanatory, on the Old and New Testaments*. On spine: Critical and explanatory commentary. (2 Ki 2:23). Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

Albert Barnes: **2Ki 2:24**

On this occasion only do we find Elisha a minister of vengeance. Perhaps it was necessary to show, at the outset of his career as a prophet, that he too, so mild and peaceful could, like Elijah, wield the terrors of God's judgments ([1Ki 19:19](#) note). The persons really punished were, not so much the children, as the wicked parents [2Ki 2:23](#), whose mouth-pieces the children were, and who justly lost the gift of offspring of which they had shown themselves unworthy.