WELCOME

to the 6th and Meredith church of Christ

Thanks for being with us, let us honor God with hearts desiring to worship in "Spirit" and "Truth."
"IF God exists, then this is a perfect example of the fact that God is not actually omnibenevolent and I would assert, simply as evil as he is good and thus not worthy of worship. Or he does not exist and this story is just an example of God being made in man's image, i.e.: an image of wrath and a wishfully vulgar display of power to make people worship them out of fear.

Either way, the story is simply absurdly immoral and the punishment, over the top."

- DebateACatholic, Reddit
I Kings 19:19-21 We first see Elisha, when he becomes Elijah’s servant.

II Kings 2:1-3 We next hear of Elisha, when he and Elijah are in Gilgal. From there they go to Bethel.

II Kings 2:4-12 Next they go to Jericho and cross the Jordan, where Elijah is caught up into Heaven in a whirlwind.

II Kings 2:13-22 Elisha again crosses the Jordan, and comes to Jericho.

II Kings 2:23-24 Here we pick up our STORY ...
And he went up from thence unto Bethel:

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.
BETHEL From the book "Holy Land" photographed by Daniel B. Shepp., in 1894.
BETHEL from nearly the same spot 125 Years later.
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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.
This is a story of Judgment and stands in sharp contrast to the other miracles of Elisha.

Obviously the severity of the judgment seen in this story has made it a Stumbling-Block to many.

The story leaves a Painful Impression on all who hear it.

But the painful aspect of this story should NOT be made greater than it is, nor should it be overlooked, because the punishment was Necessary.

Look closer at the seriousness of Youthful Sin ...
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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.
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These may not be Innocent Little Children, as a casual reading might lead us to think ...
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Consider ...

1 These may not be Innocent Little Children, as a casual reading might lead us to think ...
- The word "Little" (qatan) can mean "young"; and "children" (na`ar) can mean, "baby, boy, child, damsel, lad, servant, young (man)." - Strong’s
- Both Solomon ... (I Kings 3:7) and Jeremiah ... (Jeremiah 1:6-7) are called (na`ar) CHILDREN.

2 It’s just as reasonable to think these were Young People, who had come to a Responsible Age ...
II Kings 2:23

23 "... some youths came from the city and mocked him" - NKJV
23 "... there came forth young lads out of the city, and mocked him" - ASV
23 "... young lads came out from the city and mocked him and said to him" - NASV
23 "... some boys came out of the town and jeered at him" - NIV
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.

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.

It is also interesting to notice Where these youth's came from ...
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Bethel lay just inside the boundary of the Northern Kingdom and once a sanctuary of the Patriarchs.

Sense the time of the Divided Kingdom (I Kings 12), Bethel was a city focused on Idolatry and Ungodliness...
Then Jeroboam built Shechem in the mountains of Ephraim, and dwelt there. Also he went out from there and built Penuel.

And Jeroboam said in his heart, "Now the kingdom may return to the house of David:

"If these people go up to offer sacrifices in the house of the LORD at Jerusalem, then the heart of this people will turn back to their lord, Rehoboam king of Judah, and they will kill me and go back to Rehoboam king of Judah."

Therefore the king asked advice, made two calves of gold, and said to the people, "It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem. Here are your gods, O Israel, which brought you up from the land of Egypt!"

And he set up one in Bethel, and the other he put in Dan.
30 Now this thing became a sin, for the people went to worship before the one as far as Dan.
31 He made shrines on the high places, and made priests from every class of people, who were not of the sons of Levi.
32 Jeroboam ordained a feast on the fifteenth day of the eighth month, like the feast that was in Judah, and offered sacrifices on the altar. So he did at Bethel, sacrificing to the calves that he had made. And at Bethel he installed the priests of the high places which he had made.
33 So he made offerings on the altar which he had made at Bethel on the fifteenth day of the eighth month, in the month which he had devised in his own heart. And he ordained a feast for the children of Israel, and offered sacrifices on the altar and burned incense.
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.

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.

These youth Mocked Elisha, for his Baldness:
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.

These youth Mocked Elisha, for his Baldness:

- MOCK is to, "disparage, ridicule, scoff, scorn." - Strong's
- The BALD are always made fun of ... "In 458 BC Aeschylus, an ancient Greek Tragedian, was killed by a tortoise dropped by an eagle that had mistaken his bald head for a rock suitable for shattering its shell." - Maso

Their Mockery may have originated with their parents and kings, which reflected their hatred for the pure religion of God and His prophets ...
I Kings 16:30-34

30 Now Ahab the son of Omri did evil in the sight of the LORD, more than all who were before him.

31 And it came to pass, as though it had been a trivial thing for him to walk in the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, that he took as wife Jezebel the daughter of Ethbaal, king of the Sidonians; and he went and served Baal and worshiped him.

32 Then he set up an altar for Baal in the temple of Baal, which he had built in Samaria.

33 And Ahab made a wooden image. Ahab did more to provoke the LORD God of Israel to anger than all the kings of Israel who were before him.

34 In his days Hiel of Bethel built Jericho. He laid its foundation with Abiram his firstborn, and with his youngest son Segub he set up its gates, according to the word of the LORD, which He had spoken through Joshua the son of Nun.
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.

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Their Dishonor of God’s Prophet had emanated from a Sacred Place...
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Their Dishonor of God’s Prophet had emanated from a Sacred Place ...

Bethel meaning, "House of God" was one of the places where God had recorded His NAME ...
Genesis 28:10-19

10 Now Jacob went out from Beersheba and went toward Haran.

11 So he came to a certain place and stayed there all night, because the sun had set. And he took one of the stones of that place and put it at his head, and he lay down in that place to sleep.

12 Then he dreamed, and behold, a ladder was set up on the earth, and its top reached to heaven; and there the angels of God were ascending and descending on it.

13 And behold, the LORD stood above it and said: "I am the LORD God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac; the land on which you lie I will give to you and your descendants.

14 "Also your descendants shall be as the dust of the earth; you shall spread abroad to the west and the east, to the north and the south; and in you and in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed."
Genesis 28:10-19

15 "Behold, I am with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land; for I will not leave you until I have done what I have spoken to you."
16 Then Jacob awoke from his sleep and said, "Surely the LORD is in this place, and I did not know it."
17 And he was afraid and said, "How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven!"
18 Then Jacob rose early in the morning, and took the stone that he had put at his head, set it up as a pillar, and poured oil on top of it.
19 And he called the name of that place Bethel; but the name of that city had been Luz previously.
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.

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.

Consider ...

1. Their Dishonor of God’s Prophet had emanated from a Sacred Place ...

2. Bethel meaning, "House of God" was one of the places where God had recorded His NAME ...

3. Bethel was now "Beth-Aven", meaning "House of Vanity", and the mocking reflected the idolatry that was leading to its own DESTRUCTION ...
Hosea 10:1-8

1 Israel empties his vine; He brings forth fruit for himself. According to the multitude of his fruit He has increased the altars; According to the bounty of his land They have embellished his sacred pillars.

2 Their heart is divided; Now they are held guilty. He will break down their altars; He will ruin their sacred pillars.

3 For now they say, "We have no king, Because we did not fear the LORD. And as for a king, what would he do for us?"

4 They have spoken words, Swearing falsely in making a covenant. Thus judgment springs up like hemlock in the furrows of the field.

5 The inhabitants of Samaria fear Because of the calf of Beth Aven. For its people mourn for it, And its priests shriek for it - Because its glory has departed from it.
Hosea 10:1-8

6 The idol also shall be carried to Assyria As a present for King Jareb. Ephraim shall receive shame, And Israel shall be ashamed of his own counsel.

7 As for Samaria, her king is cut off Like a twig on the water.

8 Also the high places of Aven, the sin of Israel, shall be destroyed. The thorn and thistle shall grow on their altars; They shall say to the mountains, "Cover us!" And to the hills, "Fall on us!"
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.

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.

They Dishonored God’s Prophet, a Sacred Person ...
23 And 

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Consider ...

1. They Dishonored God’s Prophet, a Sacred Person ...
   - Elisha was the living representative of God’s prophetic order.
   - Mocking Elisha was mocking God, His Servants, and the true Religion of God.

2. Elisha was known as the successor of Elijah, and probably it was for this reason he was singled out for this Abuse ...
"Also you shall anoint Jehu the son of Nimshi as king over Israel. And Elisha the son of Shaphat of Abel Meholah you shall anoint as prophet in your place."

Now when the sons of the prophets who were from Jericho saw him, they said, "The spirit of Elijah rests on Elisha." And they came to meet him, and bowed to the ground before him.
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.

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They had shown Dishonor, to a Sacred Event...
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.**

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They had shown Dishonor to a Sacred Event ...

Some see in the words, "Go up, thou bald head!" as an allusion to Elijah’s Translation ...
9 And so it was, when they had crossed over, that Elijah said to Elisha, "Ask! What may I do for you, before I am taken away from you?" Elisha said, "Please let a double portion of your spirit be upon me."

10 So he said, "You have asked a hard thing. Nevertheless, if you see me when I am taken from you, it shall be so for you; but if not, it shall not be so."

11 Then it happened, as they continued on and talked, that suddenly a chariot of fire appeared with horses of fire, and separated the two of them; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven.

12 And Elisha saw it, and he cried out, "My father, my father, the chariot of Israel and its horsemen!" So he saw him no more. And he took hold of his own clothes and tore them into two pieces.
Extent of Their Sin

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.

Consider ...

1. They had shown Dishonor, to a Sacred Event ...
2. Some see in the words, "Go up, thou bald head!" as an allusion to Elijah’s Translation ...
3. Sacred PLACES, PERSONS, THINGS, and EVENTS are all to be honored, and contempt poured on any of them, is an Insult done to God ...
34 "Therefore, indeed, I send you prophets, wise men, and scribes: some of them you will kill and crucify, and some of them you will scourge in your synagogues and persecute from city to city,
35 "that on you may come all the righteous blood shed on the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah, son of Berechiah, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar.
36 "Assuredly, I say to you, all these things will come upon this generation.
37 "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing!
38 "See! Your house is left to you desolate;
Revelation 3:7-9

7 "And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write, 'These things says He who is holy, He who is true, "He who has the key of David, He who opens and no one shuts, and shuts and no one opens":

8 "I know your works. See, I have set before you an open door, and no one can shut it; for you have a little strength, have kept My word, and have not denied My name.

9 "Indeed I will make those of the synagogue of Satan, who say they are Jews and are not, but lie - indeed I will make them come and worship before your feet, and to know that I have loved you.
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Consider ...

It could be that Elisha bore their RIDICULE for a Time before pronouncing the Curse ...
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And he turned back, and looked on them, ...

It could be that Elisha bore their RIDICULE for a Time before pronouncing the Curse ...

– Again, this may suggest THEY were of a RESPONSIBLE age, seeming to know what they were saying.
– Also, remember their mocking may have reflected the attitude of their PARENTS, or other LEADERS.

Mocking the messengers of the Lord, was one of the Crying Sins of Israel ...
Zedekiah was twenty-one years old when he became king, and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem. He did evil in the sight of the LORD his God, and did not humble himself before Jeremiah the prophet, who spoke from the mouth of the LORD.

And he also rebelled against King Nebuchadnezzar, who had made him swear an oath by God; but he stiffened his neck and hardened his heart against turning to the LORD God of Israel.

Moreover all the leaders of the priests and the people transgressed more and more, according to all the abominations of the nations, and defiled the house of the LORD which He had consecrated in Jerusalem.
II Chronicles 36:11-16

15 And the LORD God of their fathers sent warnings to them by His messengers, rising up early and sending them, because He had compassion on His people and on His dwelling place.

16 But they mocked the messengers of God, despised His words, and scoffed at His prophets, until the wrath of the LORD arose against His people, till there was no remedy.
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.

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.

It’s not necessary to think this Curse was done out of fit of RAGE...
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.

Consider ...

1. It’s not necessary to think this Curse was done out of fit of RAGE ...
   - Had the CURSE come from any bad principle, God would not have said Amen to it.
   - Also, this is the only occasion that we ever find Elisha as a minister of VENGEANCE.

2. Fact is, God had Warned His people about this VERY THING HAPPENING ...
14 'But if you do not obey Me, and do not observe all these commandments,
15 and if you despise My statutes, or if your soul abhors My judgments, so that you do not perform all My commandments, but break My covenant,
16 I also will do this to you: I will even appoint terror over you, wasting disease and fever which shall consume the eyes and cause sorrow of heart. And you shall sow your seed in vain, for your enemies shall eat it.
17 I will set My face against you, and you shall be defeated by your enemies. Those who hate you shall reign over you, and you shall flee when no one pursues you.
18 'And after all this, if you do not obey Me, then I will punish you seven times more for your sins.
19 I will break the pride of your power; I will make your heavens like iron and your earth like bronze.
And your strength shall be spent in vain; for your land shall not yield its produce, nor shall the trees of the land yield their fruit.

Then, if you walk contrary to Me, and are not willing to obey Me, I will bring on you seven times more plagues, according to your sins.

I will also send wild beasts among you, which shall rob you of your children, destroy your livestock, and make you few in number; and your highways shall be desolate.
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.

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.

Notice, God’s judgment was Immediate against these unruly youth...
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Notice, God’s judgment was Immediate against these unruly youth …
- Had these SHE BEARS come out of the woods without the word of Elisha, no one would have wondered at the attack.
- How many ESCAPED we are not told, neither are we told whether all these forty-two were KILLED.

Again, this was an unmistakable Warning, both to those who might have escaped and to the population of the city …
Leviticus 26:23-29

23 'And if by these things you are not reformed by Me, but walk contrary to Me,
24 then I also will walk contrary to you, and I will punish you yet seven times for your sins.
25 And I will bring a sword against you that will execute the vengeance of the covenant; when you are gathered together within your cities I will send pestilence among you; and you shall be delivered into the hand of the enemy.
26 When I have cut off your supply of bread, ten women shall bake your bread in one oven, and they shall bring back your bread by weight, and you shall eat and not be satisfied.
27 'And after all this, if you do not obey Me, but walk contrary to Me,
Leviticus 26:23-29

28 then I also will walk contrary to you in fury; and I, even I, will chastise you seven times for your sins.

29 You shall eat the flesh of your sons, and you shall eat the flesh of your daughters.
And it happened after this that Ben-Hadad king of Syria gathered all his army, and went up and besieged Samaria.

And there was a great famine in Samaria; and indeed they besieged it until a donkey's head was sold for eighty shekels of silver, and one-fourth of a kab of dove droppings for five shekels of silver.

Then, as the king of Israel was passing by on the wall, a woman cried out to him, saying, "Help, my lord, O king!"

And he said, "If the LORD does not help you, where can I find help for you? From the threshing floor or from the winepress?"
28 Then the king said to her, "What is troubling you?" And she answered, "This woman said to me, 'Give your son, that we may eat him today, and we will eat my son tomorrow.'

29 So we boiled my son, and ate him. And I said to her on the next day, 'Give your son, that we may eat him'; but she has hidden her son."
Concluding Thoughts

1. This story has been seen as a Great Calamity. But here, the hidden reason of this story comes to light and God's providence is connected with it.

2. The whole incident teaches in a very emphatic manner the Responsibility of Youth.

3. Specifically, that the faults of our youth, and those which are most natural to us at that age, are NOT considered by God as Unimportant.

4. Whether young or old, Be Responsible with the things of God ...
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The whole incident teaches in a very emphatic manner the Responsibility of Youth.

Specifically, that the faults of our youth, and those which are most natural to us at that age, are NOT considered by God as Unimportant.

Whether young or old, Be Responsible with the things of God ...

"Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord. Romans 12:19