



BASED ON 2 KINGS 2:23-25

# THE BEARS OF BETHEL



A ELISHA  
CHOOSE YOUR OWN ADVENTURE  
FOR AGES 11-14

# How to Use This Book

---

Welcome to an adventure where YOU step into one of the Bible's strangest and most shocking stories.

## **How it works:**

- Start at Section 1.
- Read each section carefully.
- At the end of each section, choose what YOU would do.
- Follow the directions to the next section number.
- Keep going until you reach an ending.

Some paths lead to mockery and tragedy, some to respect and wisdom, and some to second chances you almost didn't get.

## **Tips:**

- You can read this alone or as a group (vote on choices together).
- Try different paths to see how the story changes.
- Pay attention to what happens when you choose mockery vs. respect, peer pressure vs. courage, words that tear down vs. words that build up.
- Keep a Bible open to 2 Kings 2:23–25 as you read.

**Warning:**

This story is intense. It involves disrespect, consequences, and judgment. It's meant to make you think about how seriously God takes His messengers—and how much power your words have

**Remember:** A group of young people mocked God's prophet Elisha, and two bears came out of the woods and mauled forty-two of them. This really happened. And it's in the Bible for a reason.

# The Road to Bethel

---

## Section 1

You are a young person—maybe 13 or 14 years old—living in Bethel, a town in Israel. Bethel used to be a holy place, but now it's known for idol worship. There's a golden calf shrine here that leads people away from the true God.

Today, you and a large group of other young people—maybe 40 or 50 of you—are hanging out near the edge of town. You're bored. You're looking for something to do.

Suddenly, someone shouts, "*Hey! Look who's coming!*"

You turn and see an old man walking up the road toward Bethel. He's bald. His head gleams in the sun. He's wearing a rough prophet's cloak and carrying a wooden staff.

"*It's Elisha!*" someone says. "*The prophet guy.*"

You've heard of him. He's the one who took over from Elijah, the famous prophet. People say he's been doing miracles—healing water, multiplying oil, even raising a dead kid back to life.

But here in Bethel, people don't like prophets. Prophets tell you the golden calf is fake. Prophets say you're worshiping wrong.

Someone in your group starts laughing. "*Look at that bald head! Hey, baldy! Go on up, you baldhead! Go on up!*"

The phrase "go on up" is a mocking reference to Elijah being taken up to heaven in a whirlwind. It's like saying, "Why don't you disappear like your master did? Nobody wants you here."

The whole group starts laughing. The mockery spreads. More and more voices join in: "*Go on up, baldhead! Go on up!*"

Elisha stops walking. He turns and looks at the crowd. His face is serious, not angry—just deeply sad.

### **What do you do?**

- If you join in the mockery, laughing and shouting with everyone else, go to **Section 2**.
- If you stay quiet, uncomfortable but not willing to stand out, go to **Section 3**.
- If you step forward and say, "*Stop. This isn't right,*" go to **Section 4**.

# Joining the Mob

---

## Section 2

You don't want to be left out. Everyone's laughing. It feels powerful to be part of the group, all yelling together. You cup your hands around your mouth and shout, "*Go on up, baldhead!*"

Your friends laugh and high-five you. The mockery gets louder. People start making fun of Elisha's clothes, his staff, his whole appearance. It's like a feeding frenzy of disrespect.

Elisha stands there, looking at all of you. Then he does something that makes your stomach drop.

He raises his hands and speaks. You can't hear the exact words, but you know he's pronouncing a curse in the name of the Lord.

Suddenly, the forest behind you rustles. You hear a low growl.

Two massive bears burst out of the trees.

Chaos erupts. People scream and scatter. The bears are fast—faster than you thought possible.

They tear into the crowd. You try to run, but the path is blocked by panicking bodies.

One of the bears turns toward you.

### **END 1 – "The Mockery That Turned to Terror"**

- You joined the mob, and the mob faced judgment; words that tear down God's messengers carry consequences you never imagined.

# Silent Complicity

---

## Section 3

You don't join in, but you don't stop it either. You stand there, uncomfortable, watching as your friends mock the prophet. Part of you knows it's wrong. Part of you is afraid to speak up.

The mockery grows louder. Elisha looks directly at the crowd—and for a moment, his eyes seem to land on you. You look away.

He raises his hands and speaks a curse in the name of the Lord. Then the bears come.

You turn to run, but in the chaos, someone shoves you. You fall. By the time you scramble to your feet, one of the bears is already too close.

You weren't the one shouting. But you were there. You were part of the crowd. And silence, in the face of mockery, is its own kind of agreement.

### **END 2 – "The Bystander Who Didn't Speak"**

- You didn't mock, but you didn't stop it either; sometimes silence is complicity, and complicity shares the consequences.

# Standing Alone

---

## Section 4

You step forward. Your voice shakes, but you say it loud enough for people nearby to hear: *"Stop. This isn't right. He's a prophet of God. We shouldn't be mocking him."*

Your friends turn to stare at you. *"What's your problem?"* someone sneers. *"It's just a joke."*

*"It's not a joke,"* you say. "We're disrespecting a man of God. That's serious."

A few people look uncomfortable. One or two stop shouting. But most of the crowd ignores you and keeps mocking.

Elisha is still standing there, watching. Then he does something unexpected.

He raises his hand—not in a curse, but in a gesture of blessing toward you. Then he turns and pronounces judgment on the mockers.

The bears come out of the woods. People scream and scatter. But you—standing separate from the crowd—are not touched. The bears go after those who were actively mocking.

You watch in horror as the judgment unfolds. You couldn't stop it. But you stood apart. And God saw the difference.

### **END 3 – "The One Who Stood Apart"**

- You couldn't stop the crowd, but you refused to join them; God honors those who choose respect even when it costs them socially.

# A Second Chance

---

## Section 5

Imagine if, five minutes earlier, one of your friends had said, *"Hey, let's go mess with that prophet when he comes through town."*

And you'd said, *"Nah, I'm good. That's not cool."*

Your friend looks at you. *"What? You scared of some old bald guy?"*

*"No,"* you say. *"I'm scared of mocking someone God sent. You do what you want, but I'm out."*

You walk away. A few others follow you. The crowd that would have been 50 is now only 30.

You hear the mockery from a distance. You hear the screams. But you're not there.

When you hear what happened—the curse, the bears, the 42 young people mauled—you feel sick. That could have been you. But it wasn't, because you made a choice before the moment got heated.

## **END 4 – "The Wisdom to Walk Away Early"**

- Sometimes the best way to avoid disaster is to recognize a bad situation before you're in the middle of it; walking away early takes courage, but it saves lives.

# Asking Questions Instead of Mocking

---

## Section 6

You're in the crowd when the mockery starts. But instead of joining in, you step forward and call out, *"Wait—can I ask him something?"*

Your friends look at you like you're crazy. But curiosity gets the better of a few of them. They quiet down.

You walk closer to Elisha. *"Sir, are you really a prophet? Did Elijah really go up in a whirlwind?"*

Elisha looks at you. His face softens. "Yes," he says. "I saw it with my own eyes. The Lord took him up, and the spirit that was on him now rests on me."

*"Why are you here?"* you ask.

*"To call people back to God,"* he says quietly. *"Even in Bethel, where they've turned to idols, God still loves them. He still sends messengers."*

You nod. Behind you, the crowd has gone silent. A few people are listening now instead of mocking.

Elisha looks at the group. "*Choose today who you'll listen to—God's voice, or the voice of the crowd.*"

He walks into town. The moment passes. The bears never come. Because respect, even in the form of honest questions, changes everything.

### **END 5 – "The Question That Stopped the Mockery"**

- When you chose curiosity over cruelty, you changed the trajectory of the whole group; sometimes one voice of respect can silence a mob.

# Apologizing Before It's Too Late

---

## Section 7

You're in the crowd. The mockery starts. You even shout once or twice. But then you see Elisha's face—the sadness, the disappointment—and something breaks inside you.

You push through the crowd and run up to him. "Sir—wait. I'm sorry. We're sorry. We shouldn't have said that."

Elisha looks at you. "*Do you mean that?*"

"Yes," you say. Tears are streaming down your face now. "*Please don't curse us. We were being stupid. We didn't think—*"

Elisha places a hand on your shoulder. "Go home," he says quietly. "*Tell your friends to go home. And think carefully about what your words can do.*"

He walks past you into town. The crowd, shaken by your sudden apology, disperses. The bears never come.

Because repentance—real, immediate repentance—can stop judgment in its tracks.

## **END 6 – "The Apology That Changed Everything"**

- You caught yourself before it was too late, and your humility saved not just you but others; repentance has power when it's genuine and immediate.\*

# All the Endings

---

Check them off, then read the wisdom that goes with each one.

- **END 1 – "The Mockery That Turned to Terror"**
  - Words that mock God's messengers aren't "just jokes"—they're attacks on what God values, and they carry real consequences.
- **END 2 – "The Bystander Who Didn't Speak"**
  - Silence in the face of wrong is a form of agreement; sometimes not speaking up makes you part of the problem.
- **END 3 – "The One Who Stood Apart"**
  - God sees the difference between those who mock and those who stand for what's right, even when it's socially costly.
- **END 4 – "The Wisdom to Walk Away Early"**
  - The best way to avoid disaster is often to walk away before the moment gets heated; wisdom means seeing trouble coming and stepping aside.
- **END 5 – "The Question That Stopped the Mockery"**
  - Sometimes one voice of curiosity and respect can shift an entire crowd from cruelty to listening.

- **END 6 – "The Apology That Changed Everything"**
  - Real, immediate repentance has power; catching yourself before it's too late can save you and others from consequences.

# Five Truths You Can Carry

---

- **TRUTH 1: Words have real power—for life or for death.**
  - The young people's mockery wasn't harmless; it was an attack on God's messenger, and it carried deadly consequences. (Proverbs 18:21)
- **TRUTH 2: God takes disrespect of His messengers seriously.**
  - Elisha wasn't cursing out of personal offense—he was representing God's authority. Mocking God's prophets is mocking God Himself.
- **TRUTH 3: Peer pressure can lead you into situations you never intended.**
  - None of those 42 young people probably woke up thinking, "*Today I'll mock a prophet and get mauled by bears.*" But mob mentality is powerful.
- **TRUTH 4: Standing alone for what's right can save your life.**
  - The person who refuses to join the mockery, who walks away, who speaks up—that person is marked as different in God's eyes.
- **TRUTH 5: Repentance and respect can change everything.**
  - If even one person had apologized or asked a respectful question, the story might have ended differently. Your voice matters.

# Discussion Questions

---

**Use these questions after going through at least one path:**

1. Which ending did you get first? How did it make you feel?
2. This story is shocking. Why do you think God included it in the Bible? What is He trying to teach us?
3. "*Go on up, baldhead*" sounds like a silly insult. Why was it such a big deal? (Hint: It wasn't just about appearance—it was mocking Elijah's departure and rejecting God's messenger.)
4. When have you been in a group where everyone was mocking or tearing someone down? What did you do?
5. Is there a difference between joking around with friends and mockery? Where's the line?
6. Who are "God's messengers" today? (Pastors, parents, teachers, leaders.) How do we show respect even when we disagree?
7. Proverbs 18:21 says "*the tongue has the power of life and death.*" Give one example of how your words gave life this week, and one example of how they might have caused harm.
8. If you could go back and change one thing you said that hurt someone, what would it be?

# What Are YOUR "Mockery Moments"?

---

Think about places where disrespect shows up in your life:

1. **At school** (mocking teachers, laughing at kids who are different, tearing down authority):
2. **Online** (trolling, mean comments, mocking posts, cancel culture):
3. **At church** (making fun of worship, ignoring leaders, disrespecting teaching):
4. **At home** (eye rolls, sarcasm, disrespecting parents even when you disagree):
5. **With friends** (inside jokes that actually hurt, peer pressure to tear others down):

**Now ask:**

- Where am I using my words to tear down instead of build up?

# Prayer

---

Lord God,

Thank You for the hard stories in the Bible—the ones that make us uncomfortable and force us to think. Help me understand that words aren't just sounds—they're powerful. They can tear down or build up, mock or honor, kill or give life.

Forgive me for the times I've used my words to mock, to disrespect, to tear down people You value. Forgive me for joining in when the crowd was being cruel. Forgive me for staying silent when I should have spoken up.

Give me the courage to stand apart from the crowd when the crowd is doing wrong. Help me to respect Your messengers—pastors, parents, leaders, teachers—even when I don't understand or agree. Teach me to ask questions instead of mocking, to apologize quickly when I'm wrong, and to walk away from situations before they become disasters.

Let my words be words of life. Let my voice be one that honors You and builds others up. And when I fail, help me repent quickly and genuinely.

In Jesus' name, Amen.



# Contact

Shalom Philou Media Inc.  
[www.shalomphiloumedia.ca](http://www.shalomphiloumedia.ca)  
[info@shalomphiloumedia.ca](mailto:info@shalomphiloumedia.ca)



Step into one of the Bible's most shocking stories: a group of young people mock the prophet Elisha, and two bears come out of the woods. Along the way, you'll face choices between mockery and respect, peer pressure and courage, words that destroy and words that heal.

Inside, you'll:

- Step into one of Scripture's most intense and sobering stories about the power of words
- Explore six different endings showing how respect, silence, apology, or mockery change everything
- Discover five truths about words, authority, peer pressure, and repentance

**Scripture basis:**

2 Kings 2:23–25

**Recommended age:**

11–14

**“The tongue has the power of life and death, and those who love it will eat its fruit.”**

Proverbs 18:21

Shalom Philou Media Inc.  
[www.shalomphiloumedia.ca](http://www.shalomphiloumedia.ca)  
[info@shalomphiloumedia.ca](mailto:info@shalomphiloumedia.ca)