

The Bethel Boys

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[0 : 00] Well tonight let's turn together to the passage read, 2 Kings chapter 2, and reading from verse 23.

2 Kings chapter 2, the final part of the chapter from verse 23. He, Elisha, went up from there to Bethel, and while he was going up on the way, some small boys came out of the city and jeered at him, saying, Go up, you bald head, go up, you bald head.

And he turned round, and when he saw them, he cursed them in the name of the Lord. And two she-bears came out of the woods and tore forty-two of the boys. From there he went on to Mount Carmel, and from there he returned to Samaria.

Well, the boys of Bethel, or the Bethel boys really is what the passage is about, although the main figurine, of course, is Elisha.

Sounds rather like the name of a gang, and as we'll see in many respects, that's actually what they were. And they're not like what appears there on the surface in the translations that we have here, and previous ones as well, it doesn't really bring out the way in which this is set in the context of these chapters as a really serious business.

[1 : 25] You can just imagine the headlines today of this had happened just recently in our own time. Headlines would be something like, Forty-two boys mauled by bears.

Man of God to blame. Something like that would be the headlines in presenting this event as it happened, because that's really essentially what happened.

There were forty-two of these people, of this gang, mauled by the bears. We're not told that they were killed. We're not told that any of them died.

Some may have, some may have not. But we're not told. But they were certainly mauled by the bears. They were injured to some extent. They were torn, not to say wounded.

But there's nothing to indicate that any of them actually did die. And of course, most people would see that today as one of the evidences in the Bible for its rejection.

[2 : 23] One of the things you find in Scripture that's totally unacceptable to minds today. And therefore, it shows really that this Bible that we value and revere as the Word of God is really something that we should simply jettison and turn away from and do away with.

That is no longer relevant for the understanding that we have in our day today as to what is acceptable and isn't it. And people would say, well, just look at what's happened there. And these are boys that came out and were just playing a joke, really.

This is what people would tend to say. Just playing a joke about Elisha's appearance and saying, go up, you bald head. Go up, you bald head. And what does he do? He overreacts.

He curses them in the name of the Lord. And then these bears come out and maul 42 of this number, however many there were to begin with. In the whole gang, we don't know, but 42 of them were injured.

And you can imagine that's how it would be presented today, that this is just quite unacceptable behavior on the part of Elisha. Therefore, it proves that the Bible is something that's absolutely no longer acceptable.

[3 : 36] Now, how should we see this passage? Why is it here? What's it doing in this context? What does it actually say? Who were these boys?

And what were they doing in jeering this man, Elisha, who had just taken over from Elijah with these words, go up, bald head, go up, you bald head? Why did Elisha respond in such a way as to pronounce a curse on them in the name of the Lord, which led in its own way to these bears coming out to curse them?

Not that Elisha actually called upon the Lord to send these bears. It just so happened. This was the way the Lord himself responded to Elisha's statement or Elisha's cursing of these boys.

Well, let's look at the Bethel boys, first of all. Who were they? What is this about? Their age, for a start. You get the impression reading the description here in this translation that they were quite young boys, perhaps not even yet in their teens.

But that's not actually the words that are used here. They're used throughout the Old Testament to describe young men and men even as old as 30 years of age in some contexts.

[4 : 59] Quite a number of times these words are used in the Old Testament and is far from being always about very young boys or children. They were not children.

For example, Joseph in the book of Genesis, when he was 17, a fully grown young man, this is the word that's used to describe him.

He was a small boy. In other words, the small is indicative of the age that he had reached compared to, let's say, 50 or 60. He hasn't reached that stretch of age or years, but he's by no means a child. He's a full grown adult. And that's really what you have in this passage as well. These were responsible adults. They knew what they were doing. They were very deliberate in calling out against Elisha.

These words, this taunt that they were using against him. And as we'll see, actually, that was really against the Lord as much as, if not more than it was against Elisha.

[6 : 00] Now, that doesn't make this passage all that easy to deal with because of what happened. It is obviously serious what happened. These 42 young men, let's say, where they were in late teens on into their 20s, something like that.

But they were certainly grown, responsible adults. And what's the context? What is the passage about? Why is it telling us this?

We've established that they were not by any means juniors, that they were seriously grown, mature in terms of being young men.

But what is the context? Well, you need to go back, really, to 1 Kings and know the history of what happened. And 1 Kings chapter 12 is really where you begin to get the whole scope of the teaching that leads us to this event.

I'm not going to read through it at all, but you recall yourselves the history that Rehoboam, the son of Solomon, foolishly sought to apply measures that really exceeded those of his father in terms of, well, cruelty, you would say.

[7 : 11] Solomon himself wasn't exactly the best of people and actually employed many people in virtual slavery for his building projects. And when Rehoboam came to succeed his father, he took counsel with the old men.

In verse 6 of chapter 12 of 1 Kings, he took counsel with the old men who had stood before his father while he was yet alive. And he's saying, how do you advise me to answer this people? People had said to him, your father made our yoke heavy. Now, therefore, lighten the hard service of your father and his yoke upon us.

So, in verse 7, they said to him, if you will be a servant to this people and serve them and speak good words to them when you answer them, then they will be your servants forever. But he abandoned the counsel that the old men gave him and took counsel with the young men who had grown up with him and stood before him.

And he said, what do you advise that we answer this people? And then you see the young men in verse 10 said, you shall speak to this people who said to you, your father made our yoke heavy.

[8 : 20] And you shall say, in verse 11, now whereas my father laid on you a heavy yoke, I will add to your yoke. My father disciplined you with whips, but I will discipline you with scorpions.

In other words, he went to make himself more vigorously authoritarian than his father had been. And that led to the splitting of the kingdom. And a man called Jeroboam, who was Jeroboam I, took a number of tribes with him and they formed the northern kingdom of Israel. And it left the remainder as the southern kingdom of Judah. And from there on onwards, until the conquering of Israel by Assyria and then later conquering of Judah by the Babylonians, that's how it remained.

Two separate kingdoms, often at war. But that's the beginning of it. That's where it began in the foolishness of Rehoboam. Now, when Jeroboam went out to set up his kingdom, you can see that what we're at here is about a hundred years later than that.

But Jeroboam set out to actually have a rival place of worship to that which was at Jerusalem, which is where God had himself ordained that his worship would be set once the people had come into and settled to the land of Canaan.

[9 : 50] And when you find the context there, again in chapter 12, where you see the record there of Jeroboam setting up his own kingdom, of which he, of course, became king.

And then you find later on in that chapter, where you see that in verse 28, 1 Kings chapter 12, verse 28, The king took counsel and made two calves of gold.

And he said to the people, You have gone up to Jerusalem long enough. Behold your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt. Where did you last hear that?

You heard that on Mount Sinai, where Aaron had cast the golden jewelry into the fire and fashioned a golden calf while Moses was up in the mountain.

And Aaron had said, These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you out of the land of Egypt. This was, in fact, fashioning something after the same kind of imagery as they knew of in Egypt, with the bull cult or the bull form of worship as one of the many types.

[11 : 00] That's what Jeroboam is here doing, going back to that, reestablishing that. It's a rival to the true worship of God. It's a degenerate way of setting up worship.

And he set up these two gods, one in Bethel, the other in Dan. These two idols, these two golden calves. And he made temples on high places, appointed priests from among the people, and so on. All the way down there, you see, what he did as a rival to Jerusalem. Something that was designed to draw the people to himself, preventing them from going to Jerusalem, which is really the center that God had appointed.

So it's an apostasy. It's a turning away from the worship of God completely. Even though it was still pretending and in name the worship of God, they had added all of that to it that had belonged to Canaanite and Egyptian worship.

It's a syncretism. It's a putting together, like you see, sadly in our day as well, of elements from either the world or other religions, putting it alongside the Christian religion, and still imagine you've got Christianity, and that you're still faithful to God.

[12 : 14] Well, the Bible has this all the way throughout it, and tells us that's not the case. When you add so much to the worship of God, and it becomes idolatry, you don't have the worship of God.

You've left that behind. You've departed from that. Now you have to remember as well that, coming back to our passage for this evening, that Elisha, just like Elijah before him, was a God-appointed prophet.

And a God-appointed prophet, all the way through the days of the Old Testament, was God's spokesperson, God's mouthpiece.

A prophet was not just somebody who sometimes spoke about future events. That was the case as God gave them that insight. But all the way through, you'll find the prophets again and again and again saying, Thus says the Lord.

When the prophet spoke in those terms, the people were hearing the words of God, spoken through the prophet, though they were human words, because God was actually using the prophet to convey his message, his words.

[13 : 24] They were God's words with God's authority, and God's image stamped on them, if you like. That's why it was such a serious issue to actually find fault with, or to go away from the words of the prophets of God.

It's really tantamount to rejecting God himself, and to putting something else in the place of God, and what God has appointed. And that's in fact what you find described in this remarkable event of Elisha's going up into heaven in the same chapter.

When the event happened, you find it there that Elisha then said, when Elijah had departed, he said, My father, my father, the chariots, the horses and chariots of Israel.

And that's what you find the description there in verses 13, in verse 12 of this chapter, where Elisha exclaims, My father, my father, the chariots of Israel and its horsemen.

Now he's not talking there simply about the way that these chariots of fire and horses of fire came and separated between. This is actually something used later on of Elisha himself.

[14 : 46] So it's actually a description of the person of Elijah, and who he was, and what he was standing for, and what God had made him. God had set him as his person in Israel and conveyed

his truth through him.

So we have to remember all of that. And that's why you find when Elisha follows him that what Elisha does in taking Elijah's cloak and striking the waters of the Jordan, where is the Lord God of Elijah?

Same thing happened as when Elijah did it. And then you find Elisha miraculously turning the waters of Jericho into waters that were usable, because they hadn't been up to then.

What's happening there is that Elisha is proved by all of these things to be the successor of Elijah. He is being endorsed as God's man, as God's mouthpiece, as God's own prophet.

So to actually rebel against Elisha, to want to do harm to Elisha, to contradict the teaching of Elisha, is really effectively challenging God himself.

[16:02] That's the context. We've seen the age of these young men, and now think of Elisha, and what he is as God's person, and how important that is, and what authority he carries, and what it is from God's standpoint, as God has appointed him.

So come back to what happened. What is the aim of this taunting? Go up, you bald head! Go up, you bald head! This is not a group of teenagers just having a bit of a joke, having fun at the expense of this prophet.

Whether he was bald, literally, or not, we're not able to say for sure. It seems he was. But in any case, what they're saying to him really is, do what your predecessor did.

He's out of the way. He's no longer here. He's gone up. So we're told. That's what they would mean. We're told that he'd gone up into heaven. Well, do likewise. Just go. And in fact, it's really saying, you have no business here.

We don't want you here. Just go up, you bald head. There's a challenge to him, and in that, it's a challenge of God as well. Now, some scholars think, quite persuasively, that these young adults, these young men, were actually representatives of the Bethel religion.

[17:31] This is about 100 years or so after, at least 100 years after, Jeroboam had set up this rival center in Bethel. And it's quite feasible that these were actually representatives.

When they heard Elisha coming and knew that Elisha had succeeded Elijah, they hated Elijah throughout Israel. Ahab, the king, and his successors, hated Elijah because he represented God. And he told them the truth. And he wouldn't stand for anything less. And now that he's got a successor, they've got to do something about this. They thought when Elijah was gone, that would be it.

They could take over. Life would be easier. But here's Elisha. And he's almost a clone of Elijah. He has the same authority. He speaks for the same vehemence for God. God is speaking through him. God does miracles through him. So it's a continuation, this ended up God amongst them in the person of this prophet. And so they're saying, this really looks like it was what you would call an organized protest.

[18:38] They came out to meet Elisha specifically. They challenged Elisha in a way that recognized who he was and what he was about, but wanted just to get rid of him.

Go up, you bald head. Just do what your predecessor did so that they would not have his challenge anymore.

And you know, that fits with what you find at the beginning of the chapter of the second book of Kings as well. Where you find King Ahaziah there, having fallen through the lattice in his chamber in Samaria, where he was sick and he said, go and inquire of Baalzebub, the god of Ekron.

You see what's happened? By this stage, things have become so bad in Israel and Samaria.

Instead of calling out to God, he's sending messengers to one of the pagan shrines, to the god of Ekron, Baalzebub, one of the Baals.

But the angel of the Lord said to Elijah, arise and go to meet the messengers of the king of Samaria and say to them, is it because there is no god in Israel that you're going to inquire of Baalzebub?

[19:55] And as you read down through what happened there, the messengers returned to the king. They told him they'd met this person who spoke to them in this way. The king asked, what did he look like?

They told him and he said, it's Elijah. Elijah. And so what does he do? He actually then, in verse 9, sent a captain of 50 men with his 50.

He went up to Elijah, sitting on the top of a hill, and said, O man of God, the king says, come down. But Elijah answered the captain of 50, if I am a man of God, let fire come down from heaven and

consume you.

And you're 50. Then fire came down from heaven and consumed him. And it's 50. Now that again seems really extreme, doesn't it? But let's just imagine what's happening there. Let's just think about what's happening.

Why did the king send this company of soldiers to look for Elijah and to say this to Elijah? Because he wanted to take him captive. He wanted to actually end his ministry.

[20 : 54] He wanted him no longer to be a troublemaker as he had been to Ahab before him. Elijah knew that. That's why he spoke in this way to him.

And that's something that fits in with this incident in the boys of Bethel. So when Elisha pronounces this curse, he cursed him in the name of the Lord.

What Elisha is actually doing is conveying for the people who would know about this event, of course, as well as the group of people themselves, all of the people who belong to Bethel would hear about this and know about this.

And essentially, it's really God using Elisha to say, look, if you continue on this path of outright rebellion and apostasy and challenging God, this is really what's going to happen.

The curse of God is going to come upon you. And ultimately, of course, that is what happened.

That's what happened to them as a people.

[22 : 00] They didn't listen. They didn't take stock of the lessons that God was sending them through the likes of this event. I'm not saying that that makes this easy to understand.

It hopefully makes it a bit easier and clearer as to what this passage is about, as to why there are such things in it as Elijah turning round and cursing them in the name of the Lord.

Remember that the Lord himself had specifically mentioned all the way back in Moses' time that for prolonged rebellion against him, they were liable to or placing in themselves at risk of the curse of the covenant being applied by God.

The curse of the covenant is death. That's essentially what you find here. God is not going to put up with antagonism and apostasy forever.

There comes a point where he shows that he's a God of wrath and judgment as well as a God of grace and patience. And that's true all the way through to our own day.

[23 : 11] So that's the Bethel boys. They were these young men, possibly representatives of the shrine at Bethel, possibly protectors of the shrine at Bethel.

A gang of young men who were actually in the business of protecting the interests of the apostate worship, so-called, of Bethel.

And so anything that challenged that, they would actually see to it that that was stopped and that it could go no further. And that's what they attempted to do with Elisha until God used Elisha to pronounce this curse and this judgment came upon them.

they were mauled by these bears. Well, what's in that for us? Well, three or four things just very briefly. First of all, there is in it the evil of idolatry.

I've chosen these words deliberately, the evil of idolatry. You see, we become so used to hearing about alternatives to Christ, alternatives to God, alternatives to Christian faith, that we don't really take on board as much as we should, myself included, that all idolatry is offensive to God, that all idolatry, including the idolatry of our worldliness and all the kinds of idols that we serve in our modern age, are themselves alternatives to God, alternatives to Jesus, deliberately fashioned by human beings in the place of God.

[24 : 47] Putting God aside, saying that he doesn't exist, that the Bible is a fantasy or a figment, let's do away with that, let's put something else there. What else do you put there?

Well, a God of your own making, something that we can worship and have created ourselves.

That's what you find in the world, that's what's always been there. John Calvin, in one of his many famous statements, said that the heart of man is a factory of idols.

A factory of idols. That's exactly right. That's what my heart is in itself. That's what my heart is without the grace of God coming to take over my thinking and my actions and my conclusions and my aims and my aspirations and my desires and my motives.

All I have is a factory of idols. I will keep on producing idols until God shows me the alternative until God's grace saves me from that. And that factory of idols is very busy in the world.

Every generation has alternatives to God. It doesn't matter what form they take, what name they go under, that's what's happening. And, let's be sure that we know that God still views idolatry because

it's really substituting things for himself.

[26 : 14] He does not share his glory with any other as he puts it elsewhere. And let's be sure that we know that God still views idolatry with the same vehemence with which he viewed it in the days of Elisha and Elijah.

That's why we need to pray so urgently and so vehemently for those who are still worshipping idols, whether it's in a religious form or in a worldly form.

Idolatry is always offensive to God. Secondly, we emphasize the grace of the gospel. The grace of the gospel because contrary to what some people might think from this passage alone, Elisha's ministry was about grace and about mercy and about kindness and about goodness.

You've got that even in the previous event where he turned these unusable waters of Jericho into water that was then going to be able to be used for all kinds of things right through to the day in which this book was written.

And all the way through the ministry of Elisha you find so many acts of goodness, so many appeals to God and appeals to the people for them to turn to God, so many appeals to God for blessing, to show them the way, to open their eyes.

[27 : 41] That's really what the ministry of Elisha is about, not about vengeance, not about actually God destroying people, but about God being revealed as the God of the covenant, the God who's calling people such as those apostate people of his day back into fellowship with himself if they will come and if they will heed his voice.

So all of that, the patience and the goodness and the appeals, and that's still true today. That's why we preach the gospel. That's why you witness to the gospel. That's why you witness to Christ because you know that God is patient and you know that the reason the world hasn't ended already is not because God does not view sin seriously, but because he is patient and kind and will have everyone if possible to repent and come to know the truth.

He's leaving a window of opportunity till the end of the world for the gospel to be proclaimed, for people to come to know him. That's what really empowers, that's what instills such urgency into our evangelistic work, our evangelistic endeavors, as well as the preaching of the gospel, we hope.

It's a very sad event yesterday to see that great cathedral of Notre Dame and Paris going up in flames, tragic event, who wouldn't actually say that it was such a sad spectacle, that masterpiece of architecture and all that has been associated with it for, what, 800 years since it was begun, and to see it going up in flames, what a sad and terribly dreadful spectacle that is, but you probably saw the photos in the news today even, of the part of it that was burnt towards one end of the cathedral, and there shining above the ruins of the ashes and the stuff that was burnt at the bottom, there shining was this wonderful golden cross, and a lot was made of that in news reports, at least to some extent, because very rightly, people saw it as an indicator that the cross of

Christ outlasts every fire that may be designed to extinguish it, that of course is true, and that's something that could say is born out in that image of that cross shining so brightly through the gloom of these ruins now as they are at that end of that cathedral, all the stuff that are toppled in, and that is true, the cross of Christ, and in Elisha's day you could say he represented the cross of Christ, he represented God, the truth of God, the salvation of God, and for all the attempts to extinguish it, to get it out of the way, to get rid of it, it didn't just survive, but it proved itself to be superior, and so it is in every generation, but there was one other thing that struck me, I'm not sure if this was conveyed or not, but it struck me looking at that cross, yes, fully agree with the fact that it's an image of the superiority and the lastingness of Christ's cross, Christ's salvation, but it did not also say, so many of the reports contained the fact this cathedral was just the pride of France, and the pride of the nation, and so much culture, and so much history, and all of that is set in this building, and of course that's true to an extent too, but that building was not primarily for the preservation of culture, or for the pride of France, it was built for the worship of God, that's what it's about, that's its primary purpose, however much that may have degenerated down through the years,

[31 : 36] I don't know exactly what sort of worship is held in Notre Dame Cathedral to this day, I presume it's Roman Catholic in its essence at least, but that building, and every building like it, all cathedrals initially, were to do with the worship of God, however different that form of worship might be from what we're used to, that's really the primary purpose of Notre Dame Cathedral, for the worship of God, and for me looking at that cross, it's a sign of hope amongst all the ashes that you might say represent the degeneracy that's crept into religion and into the Christian way of religion in

certain places, that I can describe it that way, it's still the case that God's purpose and God's salvation is intact, and it always will be, nothing will displace that, that will always keep shining, it will never lose its luster, it will outlive everything that's designed to kill it off, so remember the grace of the gospel, and how the grace of the gospel is really what

Elijah represents more than anything else, thirdly, the challenge facing gospel mission, and this is not just mission abroad, but mission here as well, it just happened as I was beginning to look at this this morning, and through the letterbox came a magazine from Latin Link, an organization that supports and promotes mission in Latin America especially, and that Latin Link magazine actually had an article on a town or city called Potosi in Bolivia, now it's a Roman Catholic area, very much the dominant religion there, but you see Potosi has besides a huge great mountain which over the years has been mined for its very valuable minerals, and it's now almost depleted, and where once Potosi was a very rich place, now it's filled with poverty and neglect and need, and miners are still engaged in mining the minerals from that mountain outside of Potosi. the thing is this, when many of these miners go in there, they still, even if they have a semblance of Christianity through Catholicism, they still have belief in what they call El Tio, El Tio means uncle, and El Tio is reckoned by them to live underground, God lives above ground, El Tio lives underground, he's the equivalent of the devil in the Christian religion, and it's through combination of El Tio and what they call La Pachamama, which is Mother Earth, as El Tio mates with La Pachamama, it produces the minerals, the result of it is the mineral deposits in the mountain, so anything that interferes with El Tio and makes them angry means that's going to affect the minerals and they're going to be depleted and miners will get killed, so they offer offerings to El Tio, animal sacrifices, sometimes even human fetuses, sounds horrible but it's a reality, why? Well, because that's how the devil holds people's minds in thrall, the fear of El Tio being angry, though he doesn't even exist as we know, but he exists in the mind of those who have that particular view of life and you imagine how difficult it is for the number of, the very few number of Christian miners that are there, they won't actually worship or take part in offerings to El Tio because they know it's an affront to God and so they get a hard time.

You imagine the difficulty for missionaries trying to present the gospel in that sort of situation but if you bring it closer to home you can see that that really essentially is what we're facing as well.

[36 : 09] The government in Bolivia does not regard that belief in El Tio and La Pachamama as religion, they just describe that as culture.

You see, when you describe it as culture what you really get is that because it's not religion it's not really offensive it's just part of what needs to be kept.

It's part of the culture of the people. Sadly, people fall for that even from a Christian perspective as well. And we're told, and the magazine at least told us that many times those who are Christian teachers in schools there are forced to present this as if it were truth.

There's teaching about El Tio and La Pachamama. That's just one example. In our own country we find the very same thing. Along with the Christian religion, syncretism, putting other elements from other religions with it, saying there's no real difference, and it's actually much richer if you put them all together.

You're left with a much broader spectrum of human thinking, and it's offensive to God. God. So that's the challenge facing gospel mission.

[37 : 24] And finally, let me just finish by saying, and it is an important thing, I'm not just hurrying over it, I'm hurrying over it, but I'm not doing it because it's not important. The other thing, the fourth thing is, along with the evil of idolatry, the grace of the gospel, the challenge facing gospel mission, is the nurture of our young people.

These were young adults. They were employed in the service of the devil. Satan likes to have people in their youth. It serves his purpose.

Hatred of God begins in our young days. And our young people face so many challenges. When I'm saying our young people, I'm not confining it to those who belong to us in the congregation.

I want to include all our young people, but especially our responsibility is to nurture the young people that we have already in the congregation. They're facing many challenges, two of them. Society says that the Bible and the gospel are irrelevant. They're no longer fit for purpose for this modern age. And you think of our young people facing that day after day as they're facing that through various social, not just in school, but through media, through the internet, all sorts of access they have to this philosophy.

[38 : 51] That society says the Bible and the gospel are irrelevant, therefore, that's what we have to believe. Secondly, science proves that the Bible and the gospel are irrational.

They don't make sense. They don't fit with human reason nowadays. We know better than they knew in the days when the Bible was put together. That's what they're facing, our young people. The idea that science proves that the Bible and the gospel are irrational. We have to nurture them so carefully in the truth of God, in the alternative to those ideas, in the philosophy, if I can say that, of the gospel itself, of the salvation that's in Christ, of the doctrine of God, and the worship of God. God because the Bethel boys still live and they still have the same aims as they had in Lishas day. May God bless these thoughts.

Let's conclude by singing Psalm 59, Psalm 59 on page 76. And we'll sing verses 1 to 5.

[40 : 08] Psalm 59 on page 76. From foes and all who threaten me, O God, be my defense. Save me from evildoers' hands and men of violence.

See how they lie in wait for me. Ferocious men combine against me, Lord, for no offense or sinful deed of mine. So, on to the end of verse 5, to God's praise.

verse 5, from foes and all who threaten me, O God, be my defense, save me from evil doers' times, and men of high all ends.

See how they lie in wait for me, ferocious men combine a kiss me, Lord, for low of hands or sinful deed of mine.

I have not done them any wrong, yet they prepare to fight, arise to help me in my need, take notice of my plight.

[42 : 24] Lord, God almighty, trust yourself, come, God of Israel, to judge the nation, and spare none, who wickedly repel.