

Church of God Sunday School

ELISHA AND THE TWO BEARS

2 Kings 2:19-25

After Elijah was taken to Heaven in a whirlwind, Elisha traveled to the city of Jericho. There he visited the school of the prophets and told them exactly what had happened to Elijah.

While Elisha was staying in Jericho, "the men of the city" came to him. They told Elisha that although the city was a pleasant place, the water was very bad. It was not good for man or animal, and it did not help the crops to grow.

Elisha asked the men to bring him a "new cruse" (a pot to hold liquids). He also told them to put salt in the cruse. The men did as Elisha asked.

Elisha went to "the spring of the waters," the source of the water. He poured the salt into the spring and said, "Thus saith the LORD, I have healed these waters; there shall not be from thence any more death or barren land." It was not the salt that healed the water, but it was healed by the power of God. After that, the water was good to drink, and it was good for the land too.

When Elisha left the city of Jericho, he traveled to Bethel (*Beth-EL*), where there was another school for the prophets. (In doing so, Elisha was continuing the work of the Prophet Elijah.)

Although a school for God's prophets was in Bethel, the people of Bethel were idol worshippers. They worshiped Baal and one of the golden calves, which King Jeroboam had set up many years before (1 Kings 12:25-30). This idol worship included many wicked practices.

These idol worshippers did not worship the true God, nor did they teach their children to worship Him. There was a great lack of reverence and respect for God and His



prophets. Thus, generations of ungodly, disrespectful children were being raised.

As Elisha was nearing the city of Bethel, a large group of "little children" came out of the city. (According to Bible commentators, a more accurate translation is "younger men." These were young men, up to 30 years of age. The same Hebrew word is used to describe Isaac at the age of 28 and Joseph at the age of 39; Genesis 22:5 and Genesis 41:12. Also, see 1 Kings 11:14, 17-19.)

When the young men saw Elisha, they knew who he was. (Commentators say Elisha lived 50-60 years after this, making him

about 25-30 years old at this time.) Instead of greeting him with respect, these young men gathered around Elisha and began to mock him.

The youths shouted, "Go up, thou bald head; go up, thou bald head." Because of Elisha's age and the custom of Bible times (men wore head coverings), it is unlikely that Elisha was actually bald. A clearer translation says, "Ascend, thou empty skull, to Heaven, as it is pretended thy master did!" In other words, they were saying, "Go up to Heaven, brainless one, as you say Elijah did!" These young men did not believe Elijah or anyone else could go to Heaven that way. They were actually mocking God!

Elisha might have felt threatened by this large group of men, close to his own age, yelling and taunting him. But we do not read of Elisha running away or trying to fight. Elisha did what might seem to be strange to us today.

Elisha "turned back, and looked on them." Then he "cursed them in the name of



the LORD." He did not "curse" as we might think of cursing. But he called down God's judgment upon them. He realized that these young men were not speaking against him, but they were speaking against God.

How did God answer Elisha? "And there came forth two she bears out of the wood, and tare [ripped up] forty and two children of them." How badly they were hurt we do not know; but God chose the judgment against these youths, and it was terrible!

Many years before God had warned His people: "If ye walk contrary unto me, and will not hearken unto me . . . I will also send wild beasts among you, which shall rob you of your children" (Leviticus 26:21-22). These were once God's people, but they had turned their backs on Him.

Did the people of Israel learn from this, repent, and turn back to God? If they had, no doubt, God would have shown mercy. But they didn't! They continued to mock "the messengers of God, and despised his words, and misused his prophets, until the wrath of the LORD arose against his people, till there was no remedy"

(2 Chronicles 36:16). God's judgment came against Israel through the destroying hands of the Assyrians.

We, too, should be careful of what we say to and about God's chosen leader of the congregation the pastor. He is not just another man. He has been specially chosen by the Lord to lead the congregation, and we should treat him with respect.

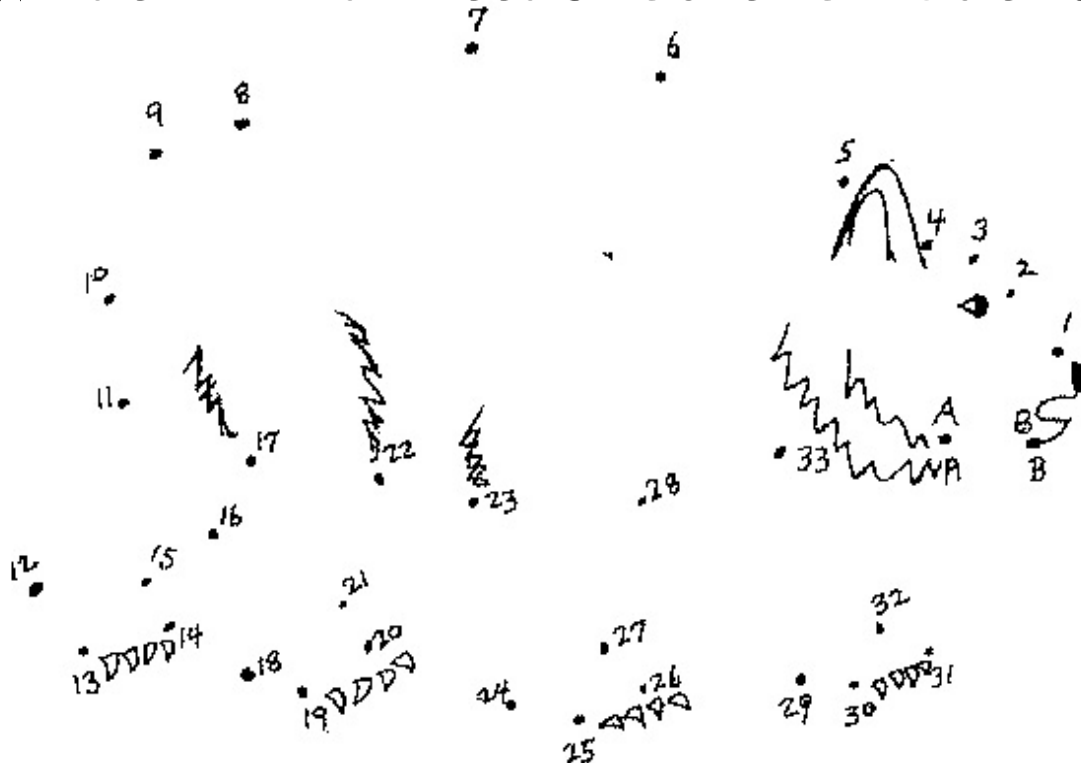
God's man (the pastor) is responsible for the soul of each person in his congregation. He has to give an account of each one at the Judgment. Hebrews 13:17 says, "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you." You should live in such a way that your pastor can give a good report of you to the Lord.

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**MEMORY VERSE:**

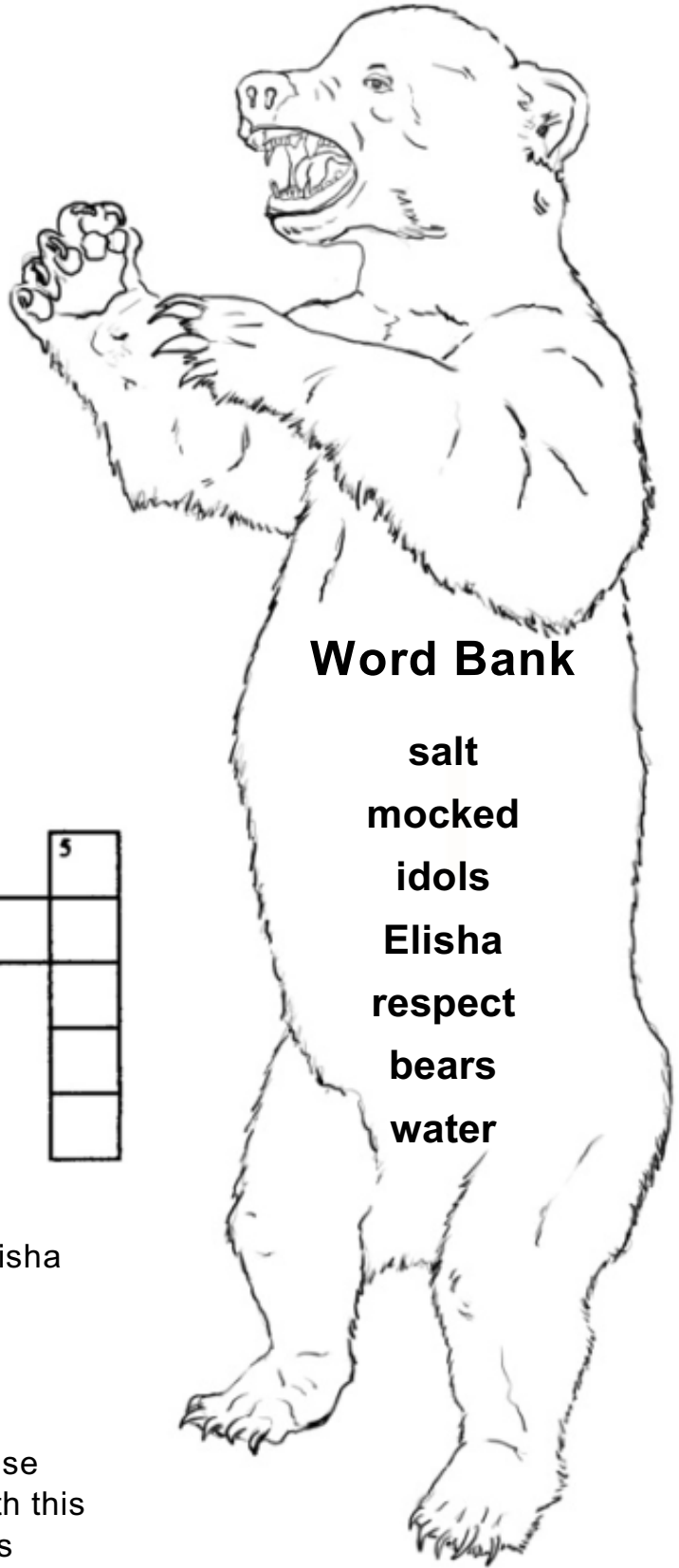
*"Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."  
—Galatians 6:7*

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Connect the Dots to See What Animal Attacked the Youths

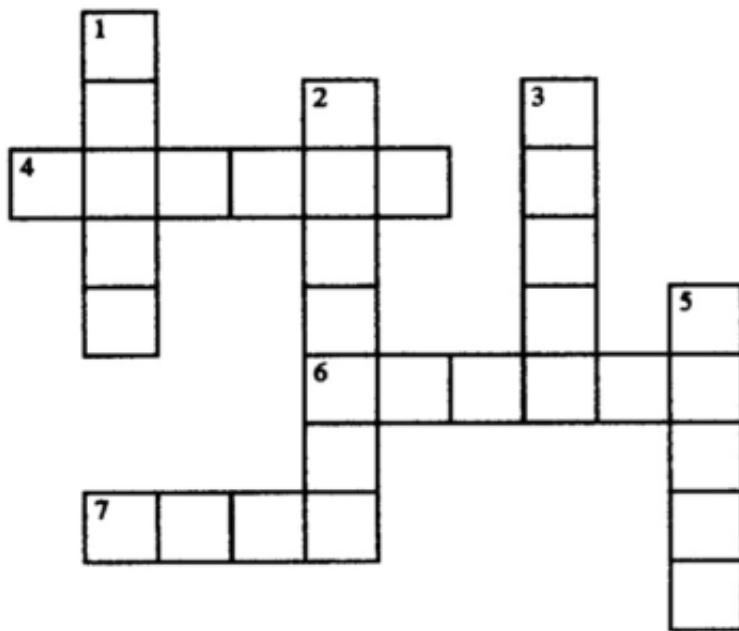


Elisha and the Two Bears



Word Bank

salt
mocked
idols
Elisha
respect
bears
water

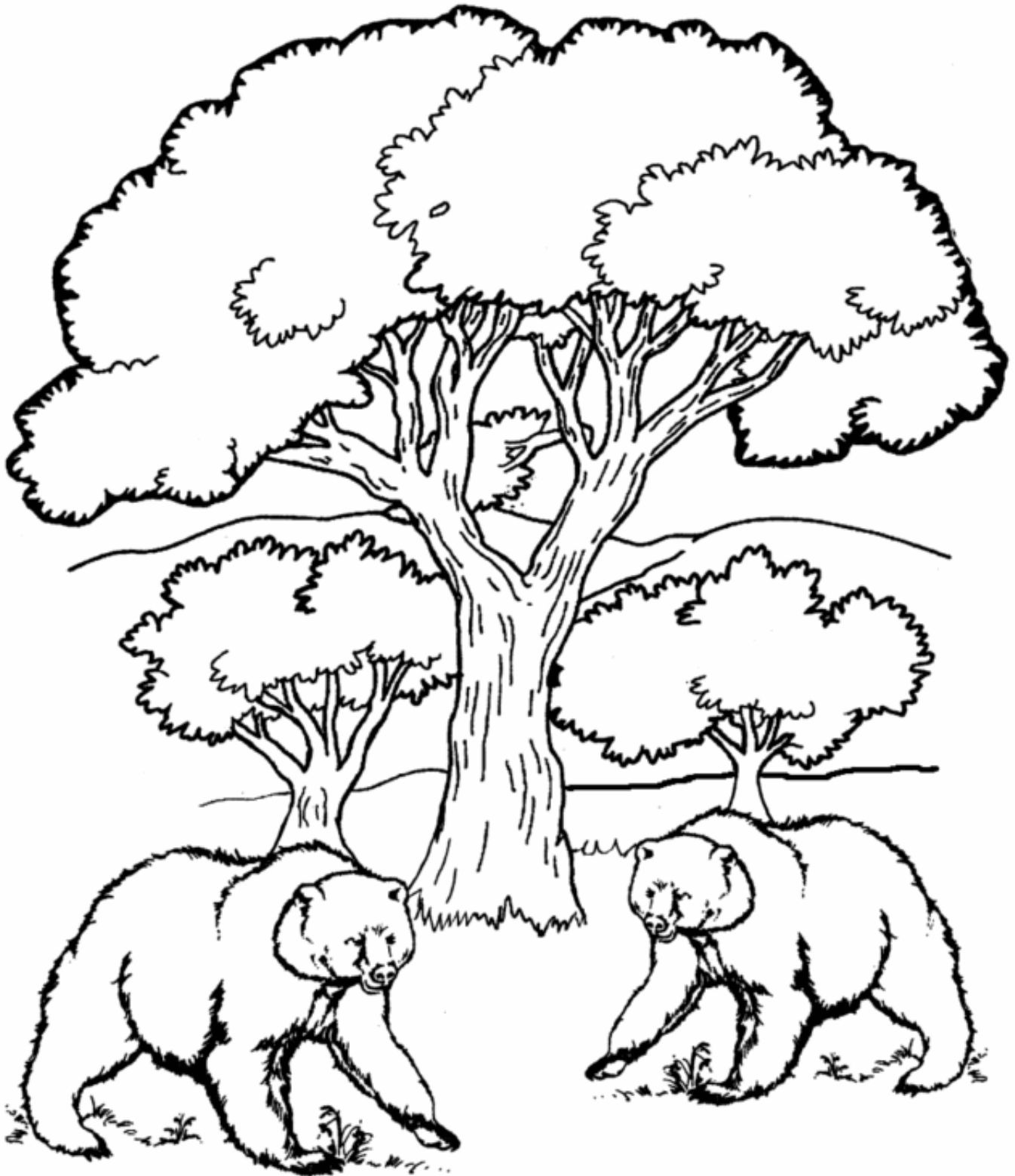


Across

- 4. The youth did this to the Prophet Elisha
- 6. God's chosen prophet after Elijah
- 7. This was poured into the spring

Down

- 1. The people of Bethel worshiped these
- 2. We should treat the man of God with this
- 3. Two of these came out of the woods
- 5. This was unusable in Jericho



Two She Bears Came Out of the Woods