

## ~BEN-HADAD 2 (615)

(Ben-ha'dad) [Son of Hadad]

- The next mention of a Syrian king named **Ben-hadad** occurs during the reign of King Ahab of Israel circa **940-920 B.C.E.** About the fifth year before Ahab's death, **Ben-hadad** the king of Syria led the combined forces of 32 kings, evidently vassals, against Samaria, besieging the city and calling on King Ahab to surrender unconditionally.
- As for **Ben-hadad** the king of Syria, he collected all his military forces together and also thirty-two kings with him and horses and chariots, and he proceeded to go up and lay siege to Samaria and fight against it. (**1 Kings 20:1**)
- Then he sent messengers to Ahab the king of Israel at the city. And he went on to say to him; This is what **Ben-hadad** has said; (**1 Kings 20:2**)
- Your silver and your gold are mine, and your wives and your sons, the best looking, are mine. (**1 Kings 20:3**)
- To this the king of Israel answered and said; According to your word, my lord the king, yours I am with all that belongs to me. (**1 Kings 20:4**)
- Later the messengers came back and said; This is what Ben-hadad has said; I sent to you, saying; Your silver and your gold and your wives and your sons you will give me. (**1 Kings 20:5**)
- But about this time tomorrow I shall send my servants to you, and they must carefully search your house and the houses of your servants, and it must occur that everything desirable to your eyes they will put in their hand, and they must take it away. (**1 Kings 20:6**)
- Ahab called a council of the older men of the land, who advised him to resist. Then, while the Syrian forces were preparing for an assault on the city and while **Ben-hadad** and the other kings were drinking themselves drunk in the booths they had erected, Ahab, following divine counsel, used strategy to initiate a surprise attack on the Syrian camp, and he successfully routed them.

- At that the king of Israel called all the older men of the land and said; Take note, please, and see that it is calamity that this one is seeking, for he sent to me for my wives and my sons and my silver and my gold, and I did not hold them back from him. (**1 Kings 20:7**)
- Then all the older men and all the people said to him; Do not obey, and you should not consent. (**1 Kings 20:8**)
- So he said to the messengers of **Ben-hadad**; Say to my lord the king; All that you sent to your servant at first I shall do, but this thing I am not able to do. With that the messengers went off and brought word back to him. (**1 Kings 20:9**)
- **Ben-hadad** now sent to him and said; So may the gods do to me, and so may they add to it, if the dust of Samaria will be sufficient for handfuls for all the people that follow me! (**1 Kings 20:10**)
- In turn the king of Israel answered and said; You men, speak to him; Do not let one girding on boast about himself like one unfastening. (**1 Kings 20:11**)
- And it came about that as soon as he heard this word, while he himself and the kings were drinking in the booths, he immediately said to his servants; Get set! And they began to get set against the city. (**1 Kings 20:12**)
- And, look! A certain prophet approached Ahab the king of Israel and then said; This is what Yehowah has said; Have you seen all this great crowd? Here I am giving it into your hand today, and you will certainly know that I am Yehowah. (**1 Kings 20:13**)
- Then Ahab said; By whom? To which he said; This is what Yehowah has said; By the young men of the princes of the jurisdictional districts. Finally he said; Who will open the battle engagement? To which he said, You! (**1 Kings 20:14**)
- And he proceeded to take the count of the young men of the princes of the jurisdictional districts, and they came to be two hundred and thirty-two, and after them he took the count of all the people, all the sons of Israel, seven thousand. (**1 Kings 20:15**)

- And they began to go out at noon while **Ben-hadad** was drinking himself drunk in the booths, he together with the kings, the thirty-two kings that were helping him. (1 Kings 20:16)
- When the young men of the princes of the jurisdictional districts came out first, **Ben-hadad** at once sent out, and they came telling him, saying; There are men that have come out from Samaria. (1 Kings 20:17)
- At that he said; Whether it is for peace that they have come out, you should seize them alive, or whether it is for battle that they have come out, alive is how you should seize them. (1 Kings 20:18)
- And these were the ones that came out from the city, the young men of the princes of the jurisdictional districts and the military forces that were behind them. (1 Kings 20:19)
- And they began to strike down each one his man, and the Syrians took to flight, and Israel went in pursuit of them, but **Ben-hadad** the king of Syria got to escape upon a horse together with the horsemen. (1 Kings 20:20)
- But the king of Israel went out and kept striking down the horses and the chariots, and he struck down the Syrians with a great slaughter. (1 Kings 20:21)
- Accepting his counselors theory that Yehowah was a God of mountains and that therefore the Israelites could be defeated on level land, the following year **Ben-hadad** led his army to Aphek, a town apparently located East of the Sea of Galilee.
- The Syrian forces had been reorganized, the 32 kings having been replaced by governor's as heads of the troops, evidently because it was thought that the governor's would fight more unitedly and obediently and perhaps would also have stronger incentive for winning promotion to higher rank than the more independent kings.
- **Ben-hadad's** religious and military theories, however, proved worthless against the Israelite forces who, though vastly outnumbered, were forewarned by a prophet of the attack and had the backing of the King of the universe, Yehowah God.

- The Syrian forces were cut to pieces, and Ben-hadad fled into Aphek. Ahab, however, let this dangerous enemy go free, with this promise from **Ben-hadad**; The cities that my father took from your father I shall return, and streets you will assign to yourself in Damascus the same as my father assigned in Samaria.
- Later the prophet approached the king of Israel and said to him, Go, strengthen yourself and take note and see what you are going to do, for at the return of the year the king of Syria is coming up against you. (**1 Kings 20:22**)
- As for the servants of the king of Syria, they said to him; Their God is a God of mountains. That is why they proved stronger than we were. So, on the other hand, let us fight against them on the level land and see whether we shall not prove stronger than they are. (**1 Kings 20:23**)
- And do this thing; Remove the kings each one from his place and put in governor's instead of them. (**1 Kings 20:24**)
- As for you, you should number a military force for yourself equal to the military force that fell from your side, with horse for horse and chariot for chariot, and let us fight against them on the level land and see whether we shall not prove stronger than they are. Accordingly he listened to their voice and did just that way. (**1 Kings 20:25**)
- And it came about at the return of the year that **Ben-hadad** proceeded to muster the Syrians and to go up to Aphek for battle against Israel. (**1 Kings 20:26**)
- As for the sons of Israel, they were mustered and supplied and began to go out to meet them, and the sons of Israel went into camp in front of them like two tiny flocks of goats, while the Syrians, for their part, filled the earth. (**1 Kings 20:27**)
- Then the man of the true God approached and said to the king of Israel, yes, he went on to say; This is what Yehowah has said; For the reason that the Syrians have said; Yehowah is a God of mountains, and he is not a God of low plains, I shall have to give all this great crowd into your hand, and you men will certainly know that I am Yehowah. (**1 Kings 20:28**)
- And they continued encamped for seven days, these in front of

- those. And it came about on the seventh day that the engagement in battle began, and the sons of Israel went striking down the Syrians, a hundred thousand men on foot in one day. (**1 Kings 20:29**)
- And those that were left went fleeing to Aphek, to the city, and the wall came falling down upon twenty-seven thousand men that were left. As for **Ben-hadad**, he fled and finally came into the city into the innermost chamber. (**1 Kings 20:30**)
  - So his servants said to him, Here, now, we have heard that the kings of the house of Israel are kings of loving-kindness. Please, let us carry sackcloth upon our loins and ropes upon our heads, and let us go out to the king of Israel. Perhaps he will preserve your soul alive. (**1 Kings 20:31**)
  - Accordingly they girded sackcloth about their loins, with ropes upon their heads, and came in to the king of Israel and said; Your servant **Ben-hadad** has said; Please, let my soul live. To this he said; Is he still alive? He is my brother. (**1 Kings 20:32**)
  - So the men themselves took it as an omen and quickly took it as a decision of his own accord, and they went on to say; **Ben-hadad** is your brother. At that he said; Come, fetch him. Then **Ben-hadad** went out to him, and he at once had him get up into the chariot. (**1 Kings 20:33**)
  - **Ben-hadad** now said to him; The cities that my father took from your father I shall return, and streets you will assign to yourself in Damascus the same as my father assigned in Samaria. And as for me, in a covenant I shall send you away. With that he concluded a covenant with him and sent him away. (**1 Kings 20:34**)

### See Also APHEK 5

- There is considerable difference of opinion as to whether this **Ben-hadad** is the same Syrian king of Baasha and Asa's day or whether he is instead a son or grandson of that king. For **Ben-hadad I**, of Asa's time, to be the **Ben-hadad** of Ahab's and even of Jehoram's time circa **917-905 B.C.E.**, would require a reign of some 45 years or more. This, of course, is not impossible.

- However, those who hold that the Syrian king of Ahab's day should be called **Ben-hadad II** point to the promise made by **Ben-hadad** to Ahab, quoted above.

- **Ben-hadad** now said to him, The cities that my father took from your father I shall return, and streets you will assign to yourself in Damascus the same as my father assigned in Samaria. And as for me, in a covenant I shall send you away. With that he concluded a covenant with him and sent him away. (**1 Kings 20:34**)

- On the face of it, this appears to say that **Ben-hadad's** father had taken cities from Omri, Ahab's father. But if the seizure referred to was that effected by **Ben-hadad I** during Baasha's rule, that would make **Ben-hadad I** the father, or perhaps simply the predecessor, of the **Ben-hadad II** of Ahab's reign. Likewise, Ahab's father could possibly refer to a royal predecessor on the throne even though not related by blood as a lineal ancestor.

#### See Also BELSHAZZAR

- Nevertheless, the fact that **Ben-hadad's** promise to Ahab made reference to Samaria would appear to limit the Syrian capture of the Israelite cities to the reign of Omri, since Samaria was built by him and thereafter made Israel's capital. The streets assigned apparently were for the establishment of bazaars, or markets, to promote commercial interests.

- Whatever the circumstances and time of the capture of the Israelite cities, the Scriptural evidence would seem to point to a different **Ben-hadad** as ruling by Ahab's time, and hence he may be referred to as **Ben-hadad II**.

- It appears that the promise of **Ben-hadad** to return the cities taken from Israel by his father was not completely fulfilled, for in Ahab's final year of rule this Israelite king formed an alliance with Jehoshaphat in a vain attempt to recover Ramoth-gilead, East of the Jordan, from the Syrians. **Ben-hadad II** is evidently the anonymous king of Syria who ordered his thirty-two chiefs of the chariots to concentrate their attack on Ahab in that battle.

- As for the king of Syria, he had commanded the thirty-two chiefs of the chariots that were his, saying; You must fight, neither with the small nor the great, but with the king of Israel alone. (**1**

### **Kings 22:31)**

- **And it came about that, as soon as the chiefs of the chariots saw Jehoshaphat, they, for their part, said to themselves; Surely it is the king of Israel. So they turned aside against him to fight, and Jehoshaphat began to cry for aid. (1 Kings 22:32)**
- **And it came about that, as soon as the chiefs of the chariots saw that it was not the king of Israel, they immediately came back from following him. (1 Kings 22:33)**
- **And there was a man that bent the bow in his innocence, but he got to strike the king of Israel between the appendages and the coat of mail, so that he said to his charioteer; Turn your hand around, and take me out from the camp, because I have been badly wounded. (1 Kings 22:34)**
- **And the battle kept rising in intensity on that day, and the king himself had to be kept in a standing position in the chariot facing the Syrians, and gradually he died in the evening, and the blood of the wound kept pouring out upon the interior of the war chariot. (1 Kings 22:35)**
- **And the ringing cry began to pass through the camp about the setting of the sun, saying; Everyone to his city, and everyone to his land! (1 Kings 22:36)**
- **Thus the king died. When he was brought to Samaria, then they buried the king in Samaria. (1 Kings 22:37)**
- **He must also be the king who sent his leprous army chief Naaman to be cured by Elisha during Jehoram's reign. The Syrian king worshiped the god Rimmon, whose name forms part of that of Tabrimmon, the father of Ben-hadad I.**
- **Now a certain Naaman, the chief of the army of the king of Syria, had become a great man before his lord and held in esteem, because it was by him that Yehowah had given salvation to Syria, and the man himself had proved to be a valiant, mighty man, though a leper. (2 Kings 5:1)**
- **And the Syrians, for their part, had gone out as marauder bands, and they got to take captive from the land of Israel a little girl, and she came to be before Naaman's wife. (2 Kings 5:2)**

- In time she said to her mistress; If only my lord were before the prophet that is in Samaria! In that case he would recover him from his leprosy. (2 Kings 5:3)
- Subsequently someone came and reported to his lord, saying; It was like this and that that the girl spoke who is from the land of Israel. (2 Kings 5:4)
- Then the king of Syria said; Get going! Come, and let me send a letter to the king of Israel. So he proceeded to go and take in his hand ten talents of silver and six thousand pieces of gold and ten changes of garments. (2 Kings 5:5)
- And he came bringing the letter to the king of Israel, saying; And now at the same time that this letter comes to you, here I do send to you Naaman my servant, that you may recover him from his leprosy. (2 Kings 5:6)
- And it came about that as soon as the king of Israel read the letter, he immediately ripped his garments apart and said, Am I God, to put to death and to preserve alive? For this person is sending to me to recover a man from his leprosy, for just take note, please, you men, and see how he is seeking a quarrel with me. (2 Kings 5:7)
- And it came about that, as soon as Elisha the man of the true God heard that the king of Israel had ripped his garments apart, he at once sent to the king, saying; Why did you rip your garments apart? Let him come, please, to me that he may know that there exists a prophet in Israel. (2 Kings 5:8)
- So Naaman came with his horses and his war chariots and stood at the entrance of the house of Elisha. (2 Kings 5:9)
- However, Elisha sent a messenger to him, saying; Going there, you must bathe seven times in the Jordan that your flesh may come back to you, and be clean. (2 Kings 5:10)
- At this Naaman grew indignant and began to go away and say; Here I had said to myself; To me he will come out all the way and will certainly stand and call upon the name of Yehowah his God and move his hand to and fro over the place and actually give the leper recovery. (2 Kings 5:11)



- **Are not the Abanah and the Pharpar, the rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? Can I not bathe in them and certainly be clean? With that he turned and went away in a rage. (2 Kings 5:12)**
- **His servants now approached and spoke to him and said; My father, had it been a great thing that the prophet himself had spoken to you, would you not do it? How much more, then, since he said to you, Bathe and be clean? (2 Kings 5:13)**
- **At that he went down and began to plunge into the Jordan seven times according to the word of the man of the true God, after which his flesh came back like the flesh of a little boy and he became clean. (2 Kings 5:14)**
- **Then he went back to the man of the true God, he with all his camp, and came and stood before him and said; Here, now, I certainly know that there is no God anywhere in the earth but in Israel. And now accept, please, a blessing gift from your servant. (2 Kings 5:15)**
- **However, he said; As Yehowah before whom I do stand is living, I will not accept it. And he began to urge him to accept it, but he kept refusing. (2 Kings 5:16)**
- **Finally Naaman said; If not, please, let there be given to your servant some ground, the load of a pair of mules, because your servant will no more render up a burnt offering or a sacrifice to any other gods but to Yehowah. (2 Kings 5:17)**
- **In this thing may Yehowah forgive your servant. When my lord comes into the house of Rimmon to bow down there, and he is supporting himself upon my hand, and I have to bow down at the house of Rimmon, when I bow down at the house of Rimmon may Yehowah, please, forgive your servant in this respect. (2 Kings 5:18)**
- **At this he said to him; Go in peace. Accordingly he went away from him for a good stretch of the land. (2 Kings 5:19)**
- **Despite the healing service rendered his general, Ben-hadad maintained his animosity toward Israel and sent invading parties into Israel.**

- And the king of Syria, for his part, became involved in war against Israel. Accordingly he took counsel with his servants, saying; At such and such a place you will encamp with me. ([2 Kings 6:8](#))
- Accordingly he spread a great feast for them, and they began to eat and drink, after which he sent them away and they went to their lord. And not once did the marauding bands of the Syrians come again into the land of Israel. ([2 Kings 6:23](#))
- However, Elisha consistently warned the king of Israel in advance as to the route of the invading parties so that **Ben-hadad** began to suspect the presence of a traitor among his own servants. Learning that Elisha was the one informing the king of Israel about the things that **Ben-hadad** spoke in his inner bedroom, the Syrian king sent a heavy military force to capture Elisha at Dothan.
- Elisha, however, caused the troops to be miraculously stricken with a form of blindness, and he led them right into the middle of the Israelite capital, Samaria. This experience, perhaps along with the merciful treatment and release granted the Syrians there, brought a halt to the marauding activity, though it did not eliminate Ben-hadad's aggressive attitude.
- Then the man of the true God sent to the king of Israel, saying, Guard yourself against passing by this place, because there is where the Syrians are coming down. ([2 Kings 6:9](#))
- So the king of Israel sent to the place that the man of the true God had said to him. And he warned him, and he kept away from there, not once or twice. ([2 Kings 6:10](#))
- Consequently the heart of the king of Syria became enraged over this matter, so that he called his servants and said to them; Will you not tell me who from those who belong to us is for the king of Israel? ([2 Kings 6:11](#))
- Then one of his servants said; None, my lord the king, but it is Elisha the prophet who is in Israel that tells the king of Israel the things that you speak in your inner bedroom. ([2 Kings 6:12](#))
- So he said; You men go and see where he is, that I may send and take him. Later the report was made to him, saying; There he is

**in Dothan. (2 Kings 6:13)**

- **Immediately he sent horses and war chariots and a heavy military force there, and they proceeded to come by night and close in upon the city. (2 Kings 6:14)**
- **When the minister of the man of the true God rose early to get up, and went out, why, there a military force was surrounding the city with horses and war chariots. At once his attendant said to him; Alas, my master! What shall we do? (2 Kings 6:15)**
- **But he said; Do not be afraid, for there are more who are with us than those who are with them. (2 Kings 6:16)**
- **And Elisha began to pray and say; O Yehowah, open his eyes, please, that he may see. Immediately Yehowah opened the attendants eyes, so that he saw, and, look! The mountainous region was full of horses and war chariots of fire all around Elisha. (2 Kings 6:17)**
- **When they began to come down to him, Elisha went on to pray to Yehowah and say; Please, strike this nation with blindness. So he struck them with blindness according to the word of Elisha. (2 Kings 6:18)**
- **Elisha now said to them; This is not the way, and this is not the city. Follow me, and let me conduct you to the man you look for. However, he conducted them to Samaria. (2 Kings 6:19)**
- **And it came about that as soon as they arrived at Samaria, Elisha then said; O Yehowah, open the eyes of these that they may see. Immediately Yehowah opened their eyes, and they got to see, and here they were in the middle of Samaria. (2 Kings 6:20)**
- **The king of Israel now said to Elisha as soon as he saw them: Shall I strike them down, shall I strike them down, my father? (2 Kings 6:21)**
- **But he said; You must not strike them down. Are those whom you have taken captive with your sword and with your bow the one's that you are striking down? Set bread and water before them that they may eat and drink and go to their lord. (2 Kings 6:22)**

- Accordingly he spread a great feast for them, and they began to eat and drink, after which he sent them away and they went to their lord. And not once did the marauding bands of the Syrians come again into the land of Israel. (2 Kings 6:23)
- Still bent on overthrowing the Israelite kingdom, **Ben-hadad** later massed his forces and besieged Samaria, provoking famine conditions of the gravest kind.
- And it came about afterward that **Ben-hadad** the king of Syria proceeded to collect all his camp together and to go up and besiege Samaria. (2 Kings 6:24)
- In time a great famine arose in Samaria, and, look! They were besieging it until an ass's head got to be worth eighty silver pieces, and the fourth of a cab measure of doves dung was worth five silver pieces. (2 Kings 6:25)
- And it came about as the king of Israel was passing along upon the wall that a certain woman cried out to him, saying, Do save, O my lord the king! (2 Kings 6:26)
- To this he said; If Yehowah does not save you, from what source shall I save you? Either from the threshing floor or from the wine or oil press? (2 Kings 6:27)
- And the king went on to say to her; What is the matter with you? So she said; This very woman said to me; Give your son that we may eat him today, and my own son we shall eat tomorrow. (2 Kings 6:28)
- Accordingly we boiled my son and ate him. Then I said to her on the next day, Give your son that we may eat him. But she hid her son. (2 Kings 6:29)
- Yet, when Yehowah one evening caused the Syrian camp to hear the sound of a large approaching army, they hastily concluded that Jehoram had hired the Hittites and Egyptians to rescue him, and thereupon they fled back to Syria in the darkness, leaving behind all their equipment and provisions.
- And Yehowah himself had caused the camp of the Syrians to hear the sound of war chariots, the sound of horses, the sound of a great military force, so that they said to one another; Look! The

king of Israel has hired against us the kings of the Hittites and the kings of Egypt to come against us! (2 Kings 7:6)

- Immediately they got up and went fleeing in the evening darkness and leaving their tents and their horses and their asses, the camp just as it was, and they kept fleeing for their soul. (2 Kings 7:7)
- **Ben-hadad II** was on his sickbed when Elisha traveled to Damascus carrying out the divine commission given to his predecessor Elijah.
- Yehowah now said to him; Go, return on your way to the wilderness of Damascus, and you must come in and anoint Hazael as king over Syria. (1 Kings 19:15)
- Sending 40 camel loads of gifts to the prophet, **Ben-hadad** inquired as to the possibilities of recovery from his illness. Elisha's answer, delivered to Hazael, showed that the king would die, with Hazael taking the kingship. The following day Hazael caused **Ben-hadad's** death by suffocation, and then Hazael took the throne as king.
- And Elisha proceeded to come to Damascus, and **Ben-hadad** the king of Syria was sick. Accordingly the report was made to him, saying, The man of the true God has come as far as here. (2 Kings 8:7)
- At that the king said to Hazael; Take a gift in your hand and go and meet the man of the true God, and you must inquire of Yehowah through him, saying; Shall I revive from this sickness? (2 Kings 8:8)
- So Hazael went to meet him and took a gift in his hand, even every sort of good thing of Damascus, the load of forty camels, and came and stood before him and said; Your son, **Ben-hadad**, the king of Syria, has sent me to you, saying; Shall I revive from this sickness? (2 Kings 8:9)
- Then Elisha said to him; Go, say to him; You will positively revive, and Yehowah has shown me that he will positively die. (2 Kings 8:10)
- And he kept a fixed look and kept it set to the point of embarrassment. Then the man of the true God gave way to

weeping. (2 Kings 8:11)

- At this Hazael said; Why is my lord weeping? To this he said, Because I well know what injury you will do to the sons of Israel. Their fortified places you will consign to the fire, and their choice men you will kill with the sword, and their children you will dash to pieces, and their pregnant women you will rip up. (2 Kings 8:12)
- Upon that Hazael said; What is your servant, who is a mere dog, that he could do this great thing? But Elisha said; Yehowah has shown me you as king over Syria. (2 Kings 8:13)
- After that he went from Elisha and came to his own lord, who then said to him; What did Elisha say to you? To this he said; He said to me, You will positively revive. (2 Kings 8:14)
- And it came about on the next day that he proceeded to take a coverlet and dip it in water and spread it out over his face, so that he died. And Hazael began to reign in place of him. (2 Kings 8:15)