

~HAZAEEL (396)

(Haz'a-el) [God Beheld]

.. Hazael Oppresses Israel

.. In Ancient Inscriptions

- A notable king of Syria, **Hazael** apparently began to rule during the reign of King Jehoram of Israel, circa **917-905 B.C.E.**
- 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)
- And in the fifth year of Jehoram the son of Ahab the king of Israel, while Jehoshaphat was king of Judah, Jehoram the son of Jehoshaphat the king of Judah became king. (2 Kings 8:16)
- He died during the reign of King Jehoash of Israel, circa 859-845 B.C.E.
- Finally Hazael the king of Syria died, and Ben-hadad his son began to reign in place of him. (2 Kings 13:24)
- And Jehoash the son of Jehoahaz proceeded to take back again from the hand of Ben-hadad the son of Hazael the cities that he had taken from the hand of Jehoahaz his father in war. Three times Jehoash struck him down, and he got to recover the cities of Israel. (2 Kings 13:25)
- Hazael was not of royal lineage but had merely been a high officer in the service of his predecessor, King Ben-hadad II of Syria.
- 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)

- Years prior to **Hazael's** reign, Yehowah had instructed Elijah to, anoint Hazael as king over Syria. The reason for the appointment was that Israel had sinned against God and Hazael was to execute punishment upon the nation.
- 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**)
- And Jehu the grandson of Nimshi you should anoint as king over Israel, and Elisha the son of Shaphat from Abel-meholah you should anoint as prophet in place of you. (**1 Kings 19:16**)
- And it must occur that the one escaping from **Hazael's** sword, Jehu will put to death, and the one escaping from Jehu's sword, Elisha will put to death. (**1 Kings 19:17**)
- And I have let seven thousand remain in Israel, all the knees that have not bent down to Baal, and every mouth that has not kissed him. (**1 Kings 19:18**)
- **Hazael** was never literally anointed with oil, but the commission given to Elijah was nevertheless fulfilled by his successor Elisha the prophet. This occurred when Syrian King Ben-hadad II fell sick and sent **Hazael** to Syria's principal city Damascus.
- **Hazael** was to take a gift and to inquire of Elisha whether or not Ben-hadad would survive his sickness. Elisha said to **Hazael**; Go, say to Ben-hadad, You will positively revive, but the prophet continued, saying; And Yehowah has shown me that he will positively die.
- He further said to **Hazael**; Yehowah has shown me you as king over Syria. On **Hazael's** return, in reply to the king's question as to Elisha's answer, **Hazael** said; He said to me; You will positively revive. But then, on the next day, Hazael suffocated the king with a wet coverlet and began to rule in his place.
- 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**)
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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)

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- 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)
- The words of Elisha to **Hazael** have been the subject of considerable conjecture. According to the margin of the **Masoretic** text, as well as the **Greek Septuagint**, the **Latin Vulgate**, the **Syriac Peshitta**, and 18 Hebrew manuscripts, the text reads; Say to him, You will. Whereas the main body of the **Masoretic** text says: Say, You will not.

- If the reading is taken that **Hazael** was told to tell Ben-hadad, You will positively revive, Elisha's answer to Ben-hadad's inquiry may have been in the form of a riddle, meaning that Ben-hadad's sickness itself would not kill him but that he would nevertheless die, as he did, by the hand of Hazael.
- At any rate, Hazael verbally gave the king the first part of Elisha's answer; You will positively revive, but the rest of the answer Hazael carried out in violent action.
- 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)

• Hazael Oppresses Israel

- Shortly after becoming king, **Hazael** engaged in a war with the kings of Israel and Judah at Ramoth-gilead. At that time, King Jehoram of Israel was wounded at Ramah, but the outcome of the battle itself is not stated in the account.
- In the twelfth year of Jehoram the son of Ahab the king of Israel, Ahaziah the son of Jehoram the king of Judah became king. (2 Kings 8:25)
- Twenty-two years old was Ahaziah when he began to reign, and for one year he reigned in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Athaliah the granddaughter of Omri the king of Israel. (2 Kings 8:26)
- And he went walking in the way of the house of Ahab and kept doing what was bad in Yehowah's eyes, like the house of Ahab, for he was a relative of the house of Ahab by marriage. (2 Kings 8:27)
- Accordingly he went with Jehoram the son of Ahab to the war against **Hazael** the king of Syria at Ramoth-gilead, but the Syrians struck down Jehoram. (2 Kings 8:28)
- So Jehoram the king returned to get healed at Jezreel from the wounds that the Syrians got to inflict upon him at Ramah when he fought **Hazael** the king of Syria. As for Ahaziah the son of Jehoram the king of Judah, he went down to see Jehoram the son of Ahab in Jezreel, for he was sick. (2 Kings 8:29)

- Then the inhabitants of Jerusalem made Ahaziah his youngest son king in place of him, for the marauder band that came with the Arabs to the camp had killed all the older ones, and Ahaziah the son of Jehoram began to reign as king of Judah. (2 Chronicles 22:1)
- Twenty-two years old was Ahaziah when he began to reign, and for one year he reigned in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Athaliah the granddaughter of Omri. (2 Chronicles 22:2)
- He himself also walked in the ways of the house of Ahab, for his mother herself became his counselor in doing wickedly. (2 Chronicles 22:3)
- And he went on doing what was bad in Yehowah's eyes, the same as the house of Ahab, for they themselves became counselors to him after the death of his father, to his ruination. (2 Chronicles 22:4)
- It was also in their counsel that he walked, so that he went with Jehoram the son of Ahab the king of Israel to the war against Hazael the king of Syria at Ramoth-gilead, at which the shooters got to strike Jehoram. (2 Chronicles 22:5)
- Hence he returned to get healed at Jezreel from the wounds that they had inflicted upon him at Ramah when he fought Hazael the king of Syria. As for Azariah the son of Jehoram the king of Judah, he went down to see Jehoram the son of Ahab in Jezreel, for he was sick. (2 Chronicles 22:6)
- In the days of Jehoram's successor King Jehu of Israel, Hazael began to take Israel's land piece by piece, capturing Gilead and Bashan, East of the Jordan.
- In those days Yehowah started to cut off Israel piece by piece, and Hazael kept striking them in all the territory of Israel. (2 Kings 10:32)
- From the Jordan toward the rising of the sun, all the land of Gilead, the Gadites and the Reubenites and the Manassites, from Aroer, which is by the torrent valley of Arnon, even Gilead and Bashan. (2 Kings 10:33)

- This apparently opened the way for his later invasion of the kingdom of Judah. **Hazael** took the city of Gath in Philistia and then set his face to go up against Jerusalem. King Jehoash of Judah, however, bought **Hazael** off by giving him valuable things from the temple and palace so that **Hazael** withdrew, sparing Jerusalem.
- Then it was that **Hazael** the king of Syria proceeded to go up and fight against Gath and capture it, after which Hazael set his face to go up against Jerusalem. (2 Kings 12:17)
- At that Jehoash the king of Judah took all the holy offerings that Jehoshaphat and Jehoram and Ahaziah his forefathers, the kings of Judah, had sanctified and his own holy offerings and all the gold to be found in the treasures of the house of Yehowah and the house of the king and sent them to **Hazael** the king of Syria. So he withdrew from against Jerusalem. (2 Kings 12:18)
- Particularly during the reign of Jehu's son Jehoahaz of Israel, **Hazael** became a great oppressor of Israel, fulfilling what the prophet Elisha had foreseen that **Hazael** would consign Israel's fortified places to the fire, kill their choice men with the sword, dash to pieces their children, and rip up their pregnant women.
- And Yehowah's anger became hot against Israel, so that he gave them into the hand of **Hazael** the king of Syria and into the hand of Ben-hadad the son of Hazael all their days. (2 Kings 13:3)
- As for **Hazael** the king of Syria, he oppressed Israel all the days of Jehoahaz. (2 Kings 13:22)
- 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)
- Yet, God did not allow Syria to crush Israel completely.
- In time Jehoahaz softened the face of Yehowah, so that Yehowah listened to him, for he had seen the oppression upon Israel, because the king of Syria had oppressed them. (2 Kings 13:4)
- Consequently Yehowah gave Israel a savior, so that they came

out from under the hand of Syria, and the sons of Israel continued to dwell in their homes as formerly. (2 Kings 13:5)

- After **Hazael's** death, King Jehoash of Israel, in three victories, recaptured from Hazael's son Ben-hadad III the cities that **Hazael** had taken from King Jehoahaz, his father.
- However, Yehowah showed them favor and had mercy upon them and turned to them for the sake of his covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and he did not want to bring them to ruin, and he did not cast them away from before his face until now. (2 Kings 13:23)
- Finally **Hazael** the king of Syria died, and Ben-hadad his son began to reign in place of him. (2 Kings 13:24)
- And Jehoash the son of Jehoahaz proceeded to take back again from the hand of Ben-hadad the son of **Hazael** the cities that he had taken from the hand of Jehoahaz his father in war. Three times Jehoash struck him down, and he got to recover the cities of Israel. (2 Kings 13:25)
- Later King Jeroboam II of Israel restored Damascus and Hamath to Judah in Israel.
- As for the rest of the affairs of Jeroboam and all that he did and his mightiness, how he fought and how he restored Damascus and Hamath to Judah in Israel, are they not written in the book of the affairs of the days of the kings of Israel? (2 Kings 14:28)

• In Ancient Inscriptions

- **Hazael** is mentioned in a historical inscription found at a place now called Afis, about 40 kilometers (25 miles) Southwest of Aleppo. The inscription calls Hazael king of Aram. This inscription agrees with the Bible, that Hazael's son Ben-hadad III, here called Barhadad, succeeded him as king of Syria.
- The campaigns of Shalmaneser III against Syria are recorded in his annals, in which he recounts his victories over **Hazael**. In these annals, Hazael is called a commoner, literally, son of nobody, doubtless because he was not of royal descent but took the throne of Damascus by assassinating King Ben-hadad II.

- One of these inscriptions reads; In the eighteenth year of my rule I crossed the Euphrates for the sixteenth time. Hazael of Damascus, *Imerisu*, put his trust upon his numerous army and called up his troops in great number, making the mountain Senir or Sa-ni-ru, a mountain, facing the Lebanon, to his fortress.
- I fought with him and inflicted a defeat upon him, killing with the sword 16,000 of his experienced soldiers. I took away from him 1,121 chariots, 470 riding horses as well as his camp.
- He disappeared to save his life but I followed him and besieged him in Damascus, *Di-mas-qi*, his royal residence. There I cut down his gardens outside of the city, and departed.
- I marched as far as the mountains of Hauran, *sade matHa-u-ra-ni*, destroying, tearing down and burning innumerable towns, carrying booty away from them which was beyond counting. [Ancient Near Eastern Texts, edited by J. B. Pritchard, 1974, p. 280]
- However, Shalmaneser III evidently failed to take Damascus itself. This was apparently left for Tiglath-pileser III to accomplish, in the days of Syrian King Rezin. This fulfilled Yehowah's prophecy through Amos; I will send a fire onto the house of **Hazael**, and it must devour the dwelling towers of Ben-hadad. And I will break the bar of Damascus.
- And I will send a fire onto the house of **Hazael**, and it must devour the dwelling towers of Ben-hadad. (**Amos 1:4**)
- And I will break the bar of Damascus and cut off the inhabitant from Bikath-aven, and the holder of the scepter from Beth-eden, and the people of Syria will have to go as exiles to Kir, Yehowah has said. (**Amos 1:5**)
- At that the king of Assyria listened to him and the king of Assyria went up to Damascus and captured it and led its people into exile at Kir, and Rezin he put to death. (**2 Kings 16:9**)