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JEHU, HAZAEL, AND ASSYRIA (Chronologies and Kings IX)

(This issue of *Biblical Chronology* concludes a discussion of the Biblical and Assyrian chronologies, begun in January. If you do not have a copy of the January and/or February 1992 issues, you can obtain them from the publisher.)

Did Shalmaneser Know Jehu?

Allis writes: "The Black Obelisk of Shalmaneser contains, in addition to brief accounts of the first 32 years of his reign, 'twenty small reliefs, with annotations, depicting the payment of the tribute of five conquered regions.' One of these annotations, which is placed over a relief picturing a prostrate king paying abject homage to Shalmaneser, contains the words 'Tribute of la-u-a eon of Hu-um-ri.' No date is given; and laua is nowhere mentioned on the obelisk, though he is elsewhere mentioned on a fragment of an annalistic list. It has been widely assumed that this refers to Jehu of Israel, although as in the case of the baffle of Qarqar there is no mention of this event in the Old Testament. Such being the case it will be well to examine these 'annotations' carefully. The first is headed 'Tribute of Sua, the Gilzanite.' The only mention of such a tribute in the text of the inscription is in the record of the 30th year (a very recent event); and there we read, 'The tribute of Upu the Gilzanite, . . . 1 received.' Has Sua succeeded Upu in the course of a year? The fifth relief is described as 'The tribute of Karparunda of Hattina.' Yet the record of the 25th year (also comparatively recent) tells us that Shalmaneser made Sasi, son of the Uzzite, king over them and they sent him presents Without measure.' How is this to be explained?"

Allis's argument here is that there seem to be major contradictions on the Black Obelisk itself between the accounts and the annotations, which may indicate that the two were composed at considerably different times, and certainly calls into question any assumption that it accurately reflects the reign of Shalmaneser in all respects.

Allis continues: "Turning back to the mention of laua, we note that he is called 'the son of Humri.' This shows the inaccuracy of Shalmaneser's information. If laua is Jehu, then Jehu is called the son of Omri, whose grandson Jehoram was slain by Jehu. Jehu was not of royal descent; he was a usurper, what Shalmaneser called Hazael, 'a son of nobody.'"

Allis now turns to a second inscription of Shalmaneser, dating from his 18th year, in which he says he received tribute from *l-a-ua mar Hu-um-ri-I* (Jehu Omri).

certain. Tiglath-pileser calls Ahaz *laua-hazi*, which indicates that he knew of Ahaz as Jehoahaz. So laua might be shortened from Jehoahaz or from Jehoash, just as the name Hadad (1 Kings 11:14) given to an Edomite prince of the time of Solomon is shortened, perhaps, from the familiar Ben-hadad or Hadad-ezer. If Shalmaneser knew so little about Jehu as to call him the son of Omri, he might easily have confused him with Jehoahaz or Jehoash. This would make the 18th year of Shalmaneser (S40 B.C.) correspond to an event in the end of the reign of Jehoahaz or the beginning of that of Jehoash of Israel, according to Ussher's chronology. The biblical narrative makes no mention of Assyria, in describing the career of Jehu. Hazael of Damascus was Jehu's chief enemy (2 Kings 10:32), and this might not have been the case if Hazael was seriously threatened by Assyria at this time.

"There is then good warrant for Smith's statement regarding Jehu:

Without advancing any theory for the identification of the monarch mentioned in the Assyrian inscriptions, I would urge that the identity of the Jehu of the Bible with the Jehu of the inscriptions is not proved, and that these notices are not enough to force us to alter all our Biblical dates. (Smith, p. 190.)"

Allis adds in a note that one reason for the general acceptance of the identification of laua with Jehu "is that many Bible students have seen in it a welcome confirmation of the biblical record by contemporary sources and consequently have paid little or no attention to the serious consequences of these and other identifications, to the havoc which they have wrought with the generally accepted biblical chronology. The picture of Jehu son of Omri prostrating himself before Shalmaneser will be found in nearly every illustrated Bible or reference book. But the reader is not told of the obstacles in the way of this identification" (p. 455).

Returning to the main body of Allis's book, we find Allis suggesting an event in the reign of Jehoahaz that might better fit the Black Obelisk statement about laua, in mind that the Black Obelisk might not have an Israelite in view at all: "The statement that 'the Lord gave Israel a savior' (2 Kings 13:5) in response to the prayer of Jehoahaz (856-839) may refer to an invasion of the West by Shalmaneser III which 'broke the power of that monarch for a time, and so gave a breathing time to the Israelites' (Smith, p. 191). And we would again remind the

re Shalman-esser's annals, if these kings of Israel really figured in them, the silence of the biblical records regarding them must be regarded as (Allis, pp. 417-419.)

Were There Two Hazael's?

There is one more problem between the Bible and Shalman-esser's inscriptions. Allis writes: "In the Bible Hazael is mentioned first in the command given to Elijah at Horeb to anoint him to be king over Syria (1 Kings 19:15). The wording of the command seems to imply that Hazael was then already a prominent figure at the court of Ben-hadad II. For some reason which is not stated, the commission was not carried out until about a dozen years later in the announcement made to Hazael by - that he was to be king of Syria, which was followed immediately by Hazael's murder of Ben-hadad II and seizure of the throne (2 & 8:7-15). This took place apparently shortly before the revolt of Jehu (884 B.C.), at which time Hazael was already established on the throne (8:28). It was in fighting against Hazael that Joram of Israel was wounded, an event Which was speedily followed by the slaying of both Joram and Ahaziah by Jehu (884 B.C.). As a punishment for Jehu's disobedience, Israel was oppressed by Hazael all the days of Jehoahaz (10:3f., 13:3), a warfare which was Continued by Hazael until his death, sometime in the reign of Joash of Israel (c. 838 B.C. or somewhat later, 13, 24f.). According to these data Hazael has been assigned a reign of more than forty years, which would not be extraordinary.

"Here again the inscriptions of Shalman-esser raise serious problems in connection with the biblical dates. The canon gives Shalman-esser a reign of 34 years and his Annals state that he fought with a confederation of Western kings, among whom Adad-idri of Damascus is listed, in his 8th, 10th, 11th, and 14th years (853-844). we havenoted that no mention is made of any of these campaigns in the Bible. In his 18th year (840), Shalman-esser's opponent was Hazael of Damascus. Two important facts emerge from this data: Adad-esser [= Adad-idri - JBU] reigned in Damascus for at least nine years, and Hazael was on the throne in 840, perhaps somewhat earlier" (Allis, p. 419).

Here is the problem: The Bible says that Hazael succeeded Ben-hadad II just before Jehu came to the throne. The Shalman-esser inscriptions imply that Hazael succeeded Adad-idri between the 14th and 18th years of Shalman-esser. Adad-idri is almost certainly the same name as Ben-hadad. According to the Objective Theory, these "two events took place over 40 years apart. Thus, the Objective Theory must posit that it happened twice. The first Hazael succeeded Ben-hadad II just before Jehu came to the throne. The second Hazael succeeded Adad-idri 40 years later, during the reigns of Jehoahaz of Israel and Jehoash of Judah and just before the 18th year of Shalman-esser.

How likely is such a reconstruction? As Allis points out, it is far more likely than the alternative, which throws the later reigns of Israel and Judah into a chaos of co-regencies. There is, however, an even better reconstruction than the two-Hazael approach, but for now, let us see what the two-Hazael theory would entail.

Hazael usurped the throne of Syria shortly before Jehu became king. We can place the event in the year A.M. 3118. Jehoahaz came to the throne of Israel in 3148, after Jehu's 28-year reign, which began in 3120.2 Kings 13:3 says that during the reign of Jehoahaz, "the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel, and He gave them continually into the hand of Hazael king of Syria, and into the

Jehoahaz's reign, but died soon thereafter leaving it to his son Ben-hadad III. Let us put the death of Hazael in 3150 A.M., giving him a reign of 32 years.

Ben-hadad III (called by the Assyrians Adad-idri) thus came to the throne of Syria in 3150 A.M. The year 3151 is the 6th year of Shalman-esser, and it is recorded that he fought Adad-idri in that year. Now we can take note of a suggestion by Allis, namely that 2 Kings 13:5 refers to a war between Syria and Assyria, which granted breathing room to Israel. Notice that 2 Kings 13:3 says that God gave Israel into the hands of Hazael and then into the hands of Ben-hadad III. The next verse says that Jehoahaz prayed to the Lord, indicating that this happened after Hazael was gone and Ben-hadad III was threatening Israel. Verse 5 says that "the Lord gave Israel a savior, so that they escaped from under the hand of the Syrians." This would refer to one of the wars between Ben-hadad III (Adad-idri) and Shalman-esser, which occurred in the 8th, 10th, 11th, and 14th years of Shalman-esser.

In the year 3183 A.M., the 18th year of Shalman-esser, the Assyrians fought the Syrians again, but this time Hazael is king of Syria. This must be a new Hazael, succeeding Ben-hadad III just before the war. Ben-hadad III had a short reign, but that is no surprise. Elijah was told on Mount Horeb to anoint Hazael king of Syria in A.M. 3101. Hazael would already have been important at the court of Syria at that time. If he was 30 at that time, he was 47 in A.M. 3118 when he usurped the throne and 79 when he died in 3150. His son Ben-hadad III would have been close to 60 when he took the throne in that year. If we assume he reigned 10 years, we can put his death at the age of 70 in A.M. 3180, which is the 15th year of Shalman-esser. At that point, his son Hazael II took the throne.

This Hazael II did not reign long either. He might have been 50 when he came to the throne, and if we put his death at the age of 80 in A.M. 3170, we are in the 8th year of Jehoash of Israel. 2 Kings 13:24-25 reads: "When Hazael king of Syria died, Ben-hadad (IV) his son became king in his place. Then Jehoash the son of Jehoahaz took again from the hand of Ben-hadad the son of Hazael (ii) the cities which he (Hazael) had taken in War from the hand of Jehoahaz his father. Three times Jehoash defeated him and recovered the cities of Israel."

This is not an unlikely construction of events, and provides the following scheme:

Ben-hadad II	Ahab
Hazael	Jehu and Jehoahaz
Ben-hadad III	Jehoahaz (and Shalman-esser years 8-14)
Hazael II	Jehoahaz (and Shalman-esser year 18) and Jehoash
Ben-hadad IV	Jehoash

Ben-Hadad Was Crown Prince, not King

There is a possible difficulty, however, because 2 Kings 13:22 says "now Hazael king of Syria had oppressed Israel all the days of Jehoahaz." This may mean no more than that Hazael and his son and grandson (another Hazael) oppressed Israel all the days of Jehoahaz. But let us assume that it means Hazael and only Hazael, as is much more likely. Is there another way to reconstruct the history and do full justice to all the data?

Yes there is. Assume this time that Hazael was unknown when God mentioned him to Elijah, and that Hazael was 30 when he usurped the throne of Syria in A.M. 3118. This would make him 74 in A.M. 3163, the 18th year of Shalman-esser. Why then would Shalman-esser say that he

pressed Israel during the reign of Jehoahaz? Because Ben-hadad was crown prince with his father Hazael. This is not at all unusual, and is indicated by the fact that 2 Kings 13:3 says that Hazael and his son Ben-hadad oppressed Israel in the days of Jehoahaz, while verse 22 says that Hazael oppressed Israel all the days of Jehoahaz. 2 Kings 13:3 does not say that Ben-hadad was king of Syria, only that Hazael was, so we do not need to posit a co-regency. We only need to realize that as crown prince, Ben-hadad was active as commander of the army.

So here is the second way to reconstruct events. Old Hazael stayed in Damascus and sent his son Ben-hadad, the crown prince, to fight Shalmaneser in the latter's 6th, 10th, 11th, and 14th years. He also sent Ben-hadad against Jehoahaz of Israel during these years. We notice that neither Shalmaneser nor the Bible calls Ben-hadad (Adad-idri) a king. In the 18th year of Shalmaneser, however, old Hazael decided in view of his son's four previous defeats, to go to war himself. Shortly thereafter he died, about the time Jehoahaz died and Jehoash became king, and Jehoash began reclaiming the cities of Israel which Ben-hadad had taken.

This is an even simpler scheme, and also accounts for all the facts, as follows:

Ben-hadad II	Ahab
Hazael I	Jehu
Hazael I & Ben-hadad	Jehoahaz (and Shalmaneser)
Ben-hadad III	Jehoash

Seth of these reconstructions fully account for the Shalmaneser inscription without forcing a reconstruction of Sibylli chronology. The Bible clearly tells us that a Hazael was on the scene during the reign of Jehoahaz, when Shalmaneser's wars with Damascus took place according to traditional chronology. This might have been a second Hazael, a son of a Ben-hadad who succeeded the first Hazael; or it might have been the first Hazael still presiding over Damascus but letting his son Ben-hadad fight most of the battles. Either way, there is no reason to change the traditional chronology because of the references to Ben-hadad (Adad-idri) and Hazael in the Shalmaneser inscriptions.

The first reconstruction (two Hazael's) was originally proposed by Smith and is generally followed by Allis (Allis, pp. 420ff.). The second reconstruction is my own, and I think it is much simpler and preferable. Shalmaneser's inscriptions say only that he fought Adad-idri of Damascus. They do not call him king (in fact they don't call Hazael king either). Thus, there is no reason to assume that the Adad-idri (Ben-hadad) who fought Shalmaneser in the father's 6th, 10th, 11th, and 14th years was a king. I propose that he was the crown prince, son of Hazael, who was active as commander of the armies during Jehoahaz's reign according to 2 Kings 13:3, and who logically would have led the fight against Shalmaneser. In the 18th year of Shalmaneser, Hazael himself led the fight. Shortly thereafter he died, and Ben-hadad his son became king in his place" (2 Kings 13:24).

Conclusion

Virtually all modern scholars are in agreement that the Assyrian Eponym Canon together with various Assyrian inscriptions establish as fact that Ahab of Israel fought Shalmaneser at Qarqar, and that in the 18th year of Shalmaneser, the latter was victorious over Jehu of Israel and Hazael of Syria. The result of these identifications is that either the Assyrian Eponym Canon is in error, or else the chronology of the Old Testament kings is in need of reconstruction. Modern scholars are quick to challenge the Bible and slow to challenge anything else from the ancient world, with the result that all Bible dictionaries and encyclopedias take the Assyrian Eponym Canon as law and propose major revisions in the common sense understanding of the chronology of the kings of Israel and Judah.

In fact, though, there is no reason at all to think that Ahab was at Qarqar, and every reason to believe he would not have been. The assumption that the Ahabbu or Ahappu of Shalmaneser is the Ahab of the Bible is completely gratuitous.

Similarly, Shalmaneser's inscriptions demonstrate quite a bit of ignorance about the nations far away from him.

He rightly calls Hazael a usurper (son of nobody), but calls "Jehu" a son of Omri. Evidently, he or his scribe assumed that the kings of Omri-land were all descendants of Omri. Since "Jehu" was not a son of Omri, and since the Assyrians used the name *Iaua* for other Israelite kings, it may well be that the "*Iaua* son of Omri" referred to by Shalmaneser is actually Jehoahaz. If we leave both the chronologies of the Bible and of the Assyrian King List alone, we find indeed that Shalmaneser's reference to "*Iaua* son of Omri" fits exactly the time period of *Iaua*-ahaz (Jehoahaz). Given Assyrian ignorance about the faraway nations, we cannot ask that these inscriptions be perfectly accurate. "Jehu son of Omri" could be any number of people, and is most likely Jehoahaz.

Shalmaneser's reference to Hazael in the inscription of his 18th year is mostly likely to the Hazael of the Bible Who usurped the throne from Ben-hadad just before Jehu came to the throne. The interpreters have erred, however, in assuming that the Ben-hadad who fought Shalmaneser in his 6-14th years was a king. Shalmaneser does not say that he was, and the Bible indicates that Hazael's son was named Ben-hadad. This Ben-hadad, the Bible indicates, was not only crown prince but also commander of the armies. He raided Israel, and doubtless fed the armies against Shalmaneser. Only after several failures on his part did his father King Hazael take up leadership of the army to fight Shalmaneser in the latter's 18th year.

After defeating Hazael, Shalmaneser "marched as far as the mountains of Ba'il-ra'si which is a promontory and erected there a stela with my image as king. At that time I received the tribute of the inhabitants of Tyre, Sidon, and of *Iaua* (Jehoa-haz), son of Omri" (cited from James B. Pritchard, *The*

Anthology of Texts and Pictures, Vol. 1 [Princeton U. Press, abridged paperback edition, 1973], p. 191).

YEAR	JUDAH	ISRAEL	ASSYRIA	SYRIA	HISTORICAL DATA, TESTIMONY, EVIDENCE, OR PROOF
3147	Joash 22	Jehu 28	Shalmaneser 1	Hazael & Ben-Hadad	
3148	23	Jehoahaz 1	2		Hazael oppressed Israel all the days of Jehoahaz (2 Kings 13:22).
3149	24	2	3		Hazael and Ben-Hadad oppressed Israel all the days of Jehoahaz (1 Ki. 13:3)
3150	25	3	4		
3151	26	4	5		
3152	27	5	6		Ben-Hadad vs. Shalmaneser (1 Ki. 13:5?)
3153	28	6	7		
3154	29	7	8		
3155	30	8	9		
3156	31	9	10		Ben-Hadad vs. Shalmaneser (1 Ki. 13:5?) - -
3157	32	10	11		Ben-Hadad vs. Shalmaneser (1 Ki. 13:5?)
3158	33	11	12		
3159	34	12	13		
3160	35	13	14		Ben-Hadad vs. Shalmaneser (1 Ki. 13:5?)
3161	36	14	15		
3162	37	15	16		
3163	38	16	17		
3164	39	17	16		Hazael vs. Shalmaneser Shalmaneser received tribute from "Iuau eon of Omri" (Jehoahaz)
3165	40 Jehoash	1	19	Ben-Hadad	