

Zahakiel: Dear Father in Heaven, We give you thanks for the opportunity to assemble in your name, to glorify you with our unity, and to be strengthened by the time we spend in your divine presence. May your Sabbath blessing rest upon us during these sacred hours, for we ask it in Yahshua's name. Amen.

Elyna1: Amen.

Barb: Amen

Lucan: Amen

Ruthline: Amen

Kim: Amen

Gloria: Amen.

Marie-kadeth: Amen

Zahakiel: Happy Sabbath to everyone. Tonight's study is called "The Black Obelisk." I recently saw a documentary that discussed the historical context of the Bible, and during a section that dealt with the ancient Kingdom of Israel, it was stated that most of what we know about Israel prior to relatively recent times comes from the Bible itself. For the Christian, this is not a problem; however, for secular archaeologists and historians, who do not accept the Scriptures as authoritative, they prefer to have supporting evidence from other sources before making definitive statements.

Even for believers, it is nice – of course – when traditional methods of studying the past confirm the inspired record, if for no other reason than the impression it makes on those with whom we are sharing the blessings of those writings.

One of the most powerful arguments in favor of the divine nature of the Bible comes from the Book of Daniel, which predicted, with unmistakable clarity, the rise and fall of Babylon, Media-Persia, Greece, and Rome. So direct was the prophetic account that critics of the Bible could not dispute the identification; instead, they made the argument that the Book was not written by Daniel at all, but some later scribe in the era of Rome, simply pretending to be writing from the standpoint of the distant past. These arguments fell apart, however, when portions of Daniel, including the interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's prophetic dream, were found among the Dead Sea Scrolls, which are known to pre-date the Roman Empire.

As the documentary continued, it noted that the first non-Biblical evidence of the Kings of Israel was discovered in the 1840s. It is a large, limestone sculpture that dates back to Assyria about the year 825 BC. Because of the color of the limestone, the artifact is known as the Black Obelisk of Shalmaneser III, who was the king under whose reign it was created. The obelisk is now on display in the British Museum in London, and it is covered with various inscriptions, engraved with scenes representing significant events in Shalmaneser's time of power.

Several of these scenes involve the king's meetings with the rulers of other countries in the region, such as Syria, and areas now known as Iran, Turkey and Egypt. Included among them was a king that the obelisk names "Jehu of the House of Omri," which was the Assyrian term for Israel.

We know from the Bible that Omri was indeed the king over Northern Israel some years after the separation of the North from the Southern Kingdom of Judah, (1Kings 16:23) and that he was a predecessor of Jehu. Omri was succeeded by Ahab (who came into conflict with the prophet Elijah), who was succeeded by Ahaziah, who was succeeded by Jehoram, who was NOT the father of Jehu. In fact, Jehu was not a descendant of Omri at all, but was prophesied (by a prophet who was also named Jehu – 1 Kings 16) to become the ruler of Israel. The turnover of Israel's rulers after Ahab's wicked reign was rapid. In fact, Ahab's infamous wife Jezebel was still alive when Jehu went forth to take power.

While the history of this period is fascinating, and considered worthy of several chapters of the Bible, tonight I would like to focus on the character of this ruler. It's an interesting one, and perhaps the inconsistent nature of this individual might best be illustrated by these passages:

"So Jehu slew all that remained of the house of Ahab in Jezreel, and all his great men, and his kinsfolks, and his priests, until he left him none remaining." (2 Kings 10:11)

"And he said, 'Come with me, and see my zeal for Yahweh.' So they made him ride in his chariot." (2Kings 10:16)

"And Jehu gathered all the people together, and said unto them, 'Ahab served Ba'al a little; but Jehu shall serve him much. Now therefore call unto me all the prophets of Ba'al, all his servants, and all his priests; let none be wanting, for I have a great sacrifice to do to Baal. Whosoever shall be wanting, he shall not live.' But Jehu did it in subtilty, to the intent that he might destroy the worshippers of Baal. And it came to pass, as soon as he had made an end of offering the burnt offering, that Jehu said to the guard and to the captains, 'Go in, and slay them; let none come forth.' And they smote them with the edge of the sword, and the guard and the captains cast them out, and went to the city of the house of Ba'al. And they brought forth the images out of the house of Ba'al, and burned them. And they brake down the image of Ba'al, and brake down the house of Ba'al, and made it a draught house unto this day. Thus, Jehu destroyed Ba'al out of Israel." (2Kings 10:18, 19, 25-28) Let me know when you've read this so far.

Pastor Chick: F

Lucan: F

Gloria: F

Barb: F

Ruthline: F

Kim: F

Elyna1: F

Zahakiel: So we find that Jehu was an agent of Yah's will against Omri's rebellious dynasty. On the other hand...

"Yahweh said unto Jehu, 'Because thou hast done well in executing that which is right in mine eyes, and hast done unto the house of Ahab according to all that was in mine heart, thy children of the fourth generation shall sit on the throne of Israel.' But Jehu took no heed to walk in the Law of Yahweh, God of Israel with all his heart, for he departed not from the sins of Jeroboam, which made Israel to sin." (2Kings 10:30-31)

Often, when a King of Israel falls short of obedience to Yah's Law, the Bible compares him to "Jeroboam, which made Israel to sin." What was it that was so bad about Jeroboam that, among all the great and evil kings of Israel, his name should stand out?

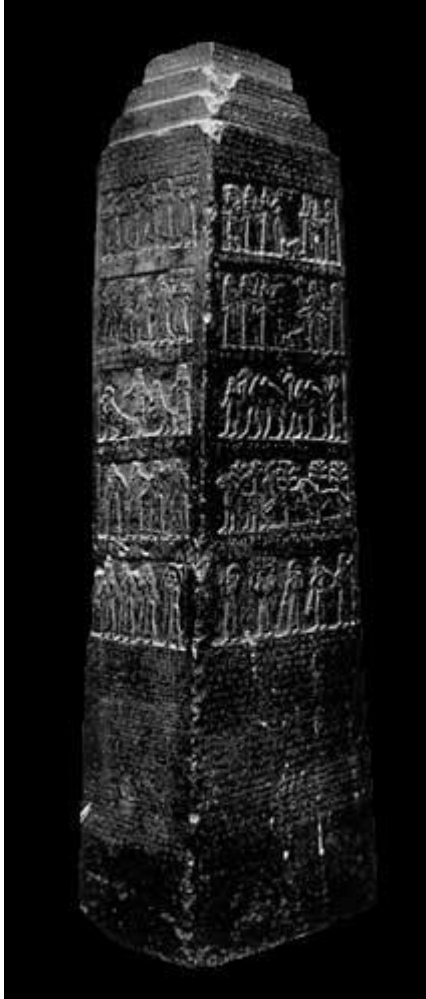
Briefly told, "And Jeroboam said in his heart, 'Now shall the kingdom return to the house of David. If this people go up to do sacrifice in the house of Yahweh at Jerusalem, then shall the heart of this people turn again unto their lord, even unto Rehoboam king of Judah, and they shall kill me, and go again to Rehoboam king of Judah. Whereupon the king took counsel, and made two calves of gold, and said unto them, 'It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem. Behold thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.' And he set the one in Bethel, and the other put he in Dan. And this thing became a sin, for the people went to worship before the one, even unto Dan." (1Kings 12:26-30)

Because he was afraid that Yahweh would not fulfill His word and protect Jeroboam and the Northern Kingdom, Jeroboam turned away from the true worship of the Almighty, and instead set up his own standard of worship, with its own temples and priesthood. As in so many cases before and since, fear had destroyed faith, and ironically led to turning away from the Source of true security, and to the worship of those things which have no power to save.

In following Jeroboam's example, Jehu is actually similar to Solomon in a number of important ways. He was greatly blessed by Yahweh for the purpose of ruling His people; Solomon was gifted with wisdom and Jehu with victory in battle. Instead of giving glory to the Father, however, Jehu – like Solomon – bowed down before idols, and let the worship of created things corrupt his understanding. Because of this, history has recorded him in a very significant way... and significant for more than one reason.

Now, I've spent some time speaking about the history, nature and character of Jehu, but I've named this study "The Black Obelisk," not after the King himself, but after the artifact that first mentions him in secular history. Why have I done this? It is because, when I saw that documentary, and saw the image of the obelisk that was shown, tears came to my eyes.

If you are curious about what this historical object looks like, you can find an image of it here: <https://www.bible-history.com/black-obel...>



It may be difficult, from that image, to see the portion that impacted me, so here is an expanded view of one of its scenes: <https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection...>



In this image you see several figures standing around. One is clearly in a position of authority, as he is being served by others, and receiving tribute from a delegation. As for Jehu...he's the one in the middle on his hands and knees.

I am not an Israelite after the flesh, but the spirit. The events that unfolded in that ancient Kingdom have an impact on me only through the Scriptures, and the lessons that I gain from the inspiration of Yahweh while reading through them. Despite this, the carving on this artifact struck me at the heart. Here is the first non-Biblical depiction of one who has been called to serve the Almighty... and he is prostrate before a heathen king. Here is one who should be receiving tribute from other kingdoms, as Solomon did, and yet he is submitting silver to one greater in power than he.

I cannot imagine what the world would have been like, had Israel remained faithful to Moses' instructions. Whenever I see or hear of an incident like this, however, I am reminded of how far-reaching even relatively minor actions may become. The Father's glory was not revealed to Shalmaneser III of Assyria because, to him, Israel was just another country he had subdued.

In my recent studies, I have reached out to those who hear the words of testimony from the Children of Yah, from those secure within His Covenant, and yet have not reached out

to embrace it for themselves. I have encouraged the Brethren to make it a priority to recover such souls for the Kingdom in words and in prayer.

What I would like to press upon those who hear this study, both those within and without the Covenant is that this is what idolatry looks like. The angels of Heaven and the King of Heaven alike sorrow when those who are called to glorify the Creator on the earth submit to the powers of the world, whether it is mistrust of divinely-provided promises, fear of a human king or captivation by calves of gold. Those who make anything a priority above the Almighty haven taken on the spirit of Jehu, especially those who – like Jehu – have been called to a higher spiritual plane.

Whether one is in a Church that was once faithful to the Gospel, or has left organized religion for the path of solitary worship, Yahweh has called you to glorify His name. Yahweh has called you to be a king and a priest among His people, and that involves victory over sin, purity of faith and doctrine, and unity with your fellow pilgrims. That involves, in this generation, hearing and obeying the message of the Three Gospel Angels, and the Father has required nobody to walk the Narrow Path alone.

The last thing John said to those who read his letter was, "Keep yourselves from idols." (1 John 5:21) This was the conclusion and main theme of all he said before, whether he was discussing the Gnostic idea of salvation in sin, or the power of prayer. Had Jehu kept himself from idols, Yah would have maintained his kingdom as long as it was necessary for the North and South of Israel to be separated, and then He would have integrated the tribes peacefully, bringing honor to all who had served Him faithfully during the division. Jehu, fearing the loss of his power, and thinking that obedience to the true faith would return the hearts of his citizens to the descendants of David before its due time, perverted the religion of Israel, and as a consequence found himself prone before a powerful Pagan king, the image of his submission preserved for all history on an artifact of stone.

We know this, that the records of Heaven are even more enduring. We know that while stone crumbles and parchment fades, the eternal record stands as an everlasting witness against those who regard the things and people of the world as greater than He who made them all.

The scriptures say "Stand fast." We are called to persevere, to endure...and also to stand upright in the sight of the Almighty. We are called to glorify the names of the Father and Son through the Spirit with which they have blessed us, which reveals itself in the Faith of Yahshua, and perfect righteousness by that faith. We are called to speak with one voice, with one judgment, on matters of the salvation of souls, stripping away the excuses of those who love darkness rather than light, and leading all the willing to the Sheep Gate, who is Christ, through which they may unite with the little flock.

It is a high calling that we have received, all who have heard this Gospel... and it is my prayer that all who hear will believe, and all who believe will step into the truth, so that the everlasting record in Heaven, more enduring than any obelisk of stone, will reveal a

brighter image, a more joyful scene, of those of us who are Yah's blessed children and heirs.

Are there any comments or questions about the study tonight?

Adriel7777: Amen

Lucan: C

Zahakiel: Go ahead.

Lucan: I would consider Jehu's words, "Come and see my zeal for Yahweh," to be the ones he is most known for.... And, ANY who name the name of Christ in any capacity say, essentially, "Come and see my life for Yahweh..." I am disheartened that all human history has been provided a stone record with which to see Jehu's zeal for Yahweh. And, I appreciate the admonition that our lives for Yahweh bear a record for all eternity. <End.>

Adriel7777: Amen

Zahakiel: Thank you for sharing that, yes... That is the very thought that caused me sadness upon seeing the object. It is a solemn thought that every action we take echoes through history... and I am persuaded good things of the People of Yah, that in this generation we will cause many to shine as the lights in Heaven.

Are there any others? Then, I will ask Bro. Luke to offer a closing prayer.

Lucan: Dear heavenly Father. You have provided us with many examples in your Word, both to follow and to avoid. You have provided us with the Spirit that guides us in the paths we ought to take, and away from those we ought to avoid. You have provided us with the fellowship of your saints, the ministry of your angels, and the very life of your Son. We know that soon, the whole of the universe will bow the knee, and confess that nothing more could be done than was done. We are blessed to confess this early, to accept our responsibility, and to turn from that which has no excuse. May your people always bear their responsibilities and accountability cheerfully. For we have seen the eternal results of those who do not, and will have nothing of it. May your Spirit continue with us through the Sabbath hours and into eternity. In Yahshua's name we pray, amen.

Zahakiel: Amen.

Elyna1: Amen.

daphna: Amen

Adriel7777: Amen

Pastor Chick: Amen.

Barb: Amen

Ruthline: Amen

Gloria: Amen

Peter Jr 18: Amen.

Kim: Amen