

The destruction of the kingdom of Israel (722 BCE)

The revival of Assyria during the reign of Tiglath-Pileser III and the subsequent kings of the Sargonid period heralded a time in the history of Israel and Judah when they regularly succumbed to the influence of Assyria. Israel particularly experienced the effects of the Assyrian policy of deportation, and the kingdom of Israel was finally destroyed by Assyria in 722 BCE.

Table 21.4 Assyria's destruction of Israel

Political events	Historical explanation	Biblical explanation
Invasion of Tiglath-Pileser III who extracted tribute from Israel.	Israel's power declined after the death of Jeroboam II. Manasseh was made to pay tribute. Tiglath-Pileser III annexed Hamath, Philistia, Galilee, Gilead and Aram (Damascus) during reign of Pekah.	2 Kings 17:7 'All this took place because the Israelites had sinned against Yahweh their God.'
Tiglath-Pileser III conducted the first Assyrian deportation of people from Israel.	Israel weakened by pro- and anti-Assyrian factions, multiple assassinations, political instability and conspiracy.	The people had provoked Yahweh to anger because of their idolatry. They had rejected Yahweh's messages through the prophets and imitated the pagan religious practices of the surrounding nations. (2 Kings 17:7–18)
Shalmaneser V laid siege to Samaria.	Hoshea was a traitor by appealing to Egypt for support and refusing to pay tribute to Assyria.	2 Kings 17:20 'He inflicted them and gave them into the hands of plunderers.'
Fall of Samaria to Sargon II. Captives taken and resettled in areas of Assyrian empire.	Sargon II came to the Assyrian throne near the end of the siege and claimed to have carried away 27 290 inhabitants of the city as booty.	2 Kings 17:24–40
Other inhabitants from the empire are resettled in Samaria.	Assyrian policy was to repopulate and control areas in the empire.	2 Kings 17:23 'So the people of Israel were taken from their homeland and into exile in Assyria.'
Some deportees returned to instruct new settlers on religious practices.	Assyrian acceptance of gods of assimilated nations.	
Attacks by lions were attributed to punishment by gods of the land.	Depopulated areas had begun to revert to natural state, leading to conflict with wild animals when people returned.	2 Kings 17:26 'The people ... do not know what the god ... requires. He has sent lions among them, which are killing them off.'