

Did You Know?

*The Kingdom of Israel was
Repopulated by Foreigners*

“The king of Assyria brought people from Babylon, Kuthah, Avva, Hamath and Sepharvaim and settled them in the towns of Samaria to replace the Israelites. They took over Samaria and lived in its towns.”

2 Kings 17:24 (NIV)

The full account is found in 2 Kings 17:24-34

But what actually happened?

In 740BC the Northern Kingdom of Israel was conquered by the Assyrian monarchs, Tiglath-Pileser **III** (Pul) and Shalmaneser **V**. Later Assyrian rulers, Sargon **II** and his son and successor, Sennacherib, were responsible for finishing the twenty-year demise of Israel's northern ten-tribe kingdom.

In 722BC, ten to twenty years after the initial deportations, the capitol city of the Northern Kingdom of Israel, Samaria, was finally taken by Sargon **II** after a three-year siege which had been started by Shalmaneser **V**.

King Sargon II took away a body of people to the town of Kišessim 1,300 km away to the east. They were replaced in Samaria with inhabitants from Hamath, 350 km in the north.

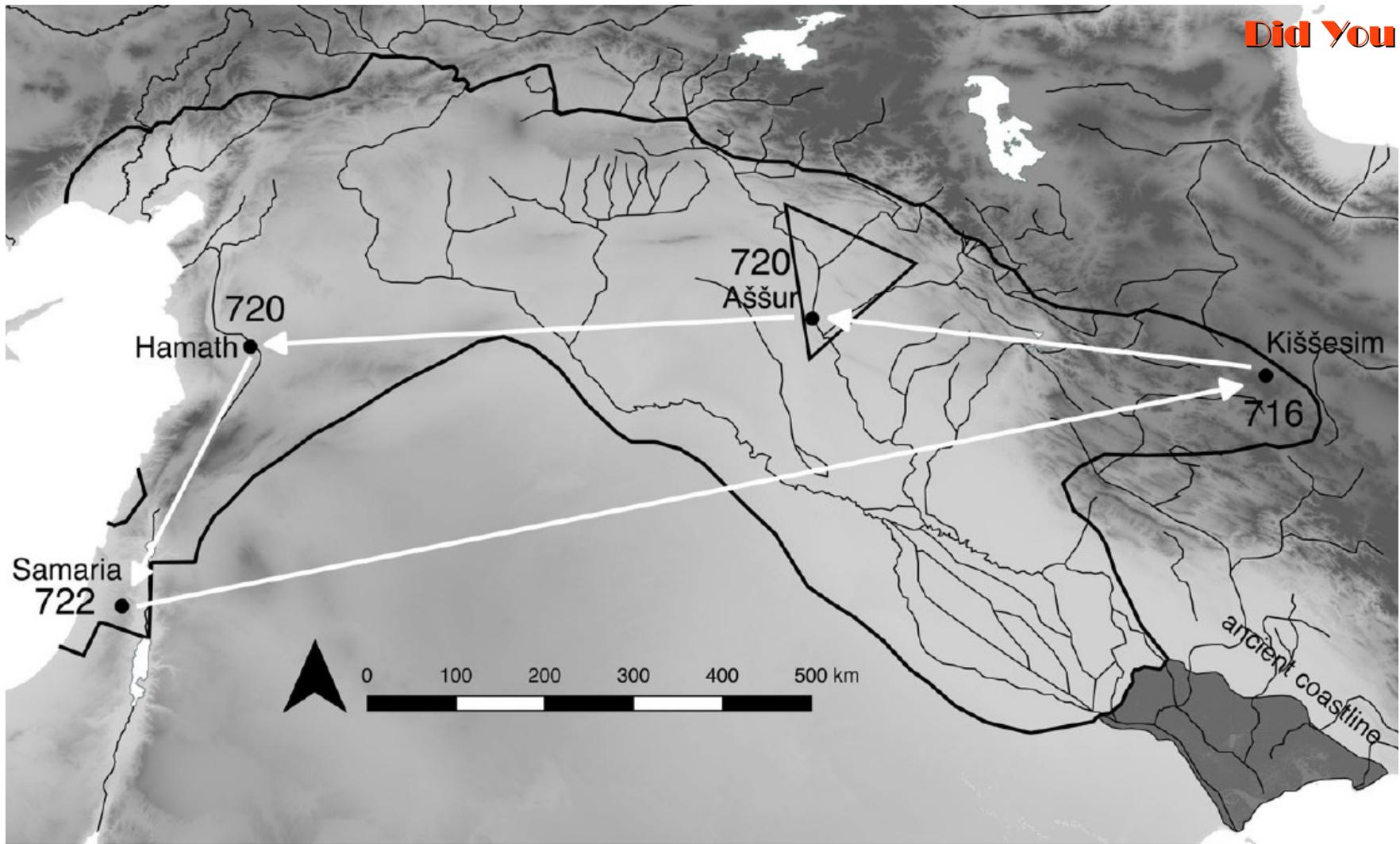
In this relocation 27,280 people were deported from the city and 200 of their charioteers were assimilated into the king's royal contingent.

This deportation of the population was part of Sargon's restructuring of the Empire, but it wasn't for slave labour as we might imagine. There were many contemporaneous circular interchanges of people that moved across the Empire at that time. This was to defuse rebellions, after each one had been crushed, and also to keep the economy of the Empire functioning.

“For the Assyrian Empire, such a procedure was routine. During the imperial period from the 9th to the 7th century BC, an extensive, centrally directed resettlement programme saw population groups from all corners of the enormous geographical area under Assyrian control being moved across great distances, to be settled within the provinces making up the “land of Aššur”. Populations within the boundaries of the Empire were relocated, replacing and being replaced by people who were themselves moved, in complex circular movements that were carefully planned and executed over the course of several years.”

What did the rotation of peoples look like when Israel was depopulated?

Details on the next slide



MAP: Prepared by Andrea Squitieri based on a draft by the author

Karen Radner (2019) "The "Lost Tribes of Israel" in the Context of the Resettlement Programme of the Assyrian Empire www.academia.edu/37712389/2018_The_Lost_Tribes_of_Israel_in_the_Context_of_the_Resettlement"

Sargon recorded in his annals of which only fragments remain:

“I resettled Samaria, making it more (populous) than before. I had people from (various) lands I had conquered enter into it. One of my eunuchs I installed over them as a provincial governor, and I counted them among the people of Assyria.”

“The resettlement of Samaria took, at the very least, eight years, and possibly even longer. One region from where population groups were taken to Samaria was affected by Assyrian military action only in 715 BC: Sargon’s Dur-Šarruken Annals mention the transplantation of members of different Arab tribes (namely Tamudi, Ibadidi, Marsimani and Hayapâ) to the city of Samaria in that year. This information highlights also that the data given in the Book of Kings is not exhaustive, as no mention is made there of Arabs being settled in Samaria. →

→ The territories from where these Arab population groups were taken were not incorporated into the Assyrian provincial system and as the Assyrian authorities only ever exchanged populations within the areas that they controlled directly, no one was dispatched to replace the people taken from the Arabian Peninsula.”

“Unlike the Kingdom of Judah, which was able to return from its Babylonian captivity, the ten tribes of the Northern Kingdom never had a foreign edict granting permission to return and rebuild their homeland.”

Many dislocated people groups were allowed to maintain their identity even though they were assimilated into the Assyrian empire.

Assyria was conquered by Babylon, and then by the Persians. They in turn were defeated by the Greeks and finally by the Roman Empire. Each empire completely replacing the former.

It's easy to see that the knowledge of the whereabouts of these Israelites was lost in the chaos of empire take-overs.

Eventually they became known to the Jews as the 'lost ten tribes'.

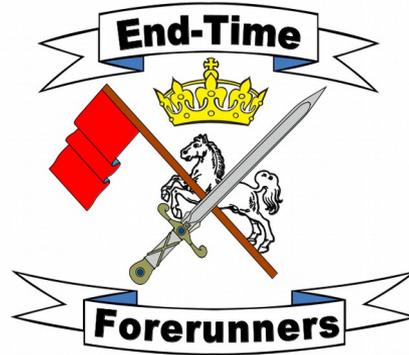
According to 2 Chronicles 30, some people of the Northern Kingdom of Israel were not exiled.

Also, the king of Judah may have annexed part of the northern district later on and allowed the relocation of Jews into that area.

This means that a some Jews inhabited northern Israel.

You should now be able to imagine what a hotch-potch of peoples inhabited the region of the Samaritans at the time Jesus was there.

Any wonder the Samaritan's worship of WHWH was quite different to their tribal relatives in Judea and Jerusalem at that time.



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