# Kingdoms Under Pressure

Trace how conquest changed leadership and life in Judea.

**AWH.C.5.4** "Examine the Assyrian and Babylonian conquests of Israel and Judah, the Babylonian Exile, the return to Israel, and the establishment of the Maccabean and Herodian dynasties."

NAME _____ DATE _____

## 1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

**YOUR JOB** Underline each conquest or transfer of power, then circle its effects on local rule or religious life.

### Who Ruled the Land?

1. In the eighth century BCE, Assyria expanded west. Its armies conquered the northern kingdom of Israel, whose capital, Samaria, fell around 722 BCE. Assyrian rulers deported many residents and moved other peoples into the area, weakening the kingdom's old political ties. The southern kingdom of Judah remained separate, but it paid tribute to Assyria. In 701 BCE, an Assyrian army seized many towns in Judah, although Jerusalem did not fall. Judah kept its king under heavy pressure from a stronger empire. These events show two different outcomes of Assyrian expansion: Israel lost its kingdom, while Judah retained limited local rule.

2. More than a century later, Babylon replaced Assyria as the leading power in the region. Babylonian forces took Jerusalem in 597 BCE and removed King Jehoiachin, placing another king on Judah's throne. After a later rebellion, they captured the city again in 586 BCE, destroyed the First Temple, and deported many Judeans to Babylonia. This Babylonian Exile disrupted worship and political life, though not every Judean left the land. In 539 BCE, Persia conquered Babylon. Cyrus, Persia's king, permitted exiles to return; some did, and they rebuilt the temple by about 516 BCE. Judah became a Persian province, not an independent kingdom.

3. Centuries later, Greek-speaking kingdoms competed for control of Judea, and the Seleucid king Antiochus IV restricted Jewish practices. A revolt led by Judas Maccabeus reclaimed Jerusalem and rededicated the temple in 164 BCE. His family's movement eventually established the Hasmonean, or Maccabean, dynasty, which gained independence from Seleucid rule in the second century BCE. Later, Roman power reshaped local leadership. Rome backed Herod the Great, who became king of Judea in 37 BCE and ruled with Roman support. His family formed the Herodian dynasty. Unlike the independent Hasmoneans, Herod and his successors held authority within a Roman-dominated region.

## 2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did Assyria's expansion affect political rule in Israel differently from political rule in Judah?

2. What changed between Babylon's capture of Jerusalem in 597 BCE and its capture in 586 BCE?

3. How did the Persian conquest change life for Judean exiles without restoring Judah's independence?

4. How did the Hasmonean and Herodian dynasties differ in their relationships with foreign powers?

## 3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a brief claim explaining whether foreign conquest always ended local rule in this history. Support it with three examples from different periods, including one dynasty, and explain how each example supports your claim.

ANSWER KEY

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HIGH SCHOOL · AWH.C.5.4

## PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline each conquest or transfer of power, then circle its effects on local rule or religious life. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

## PART 2 · ANSWERS

| # | QUESTION | ANSWER |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | How did Assyria's expansion affect political rule in Israel differently from political rule in Judah? | **Israel lost its kingdom after Assyria conquered it. Judah paid tribute and lost towns but kept its king.** |
| 2 | What changed between Babylon's capture of Jerusalem in 597 BCE and its capture in 586 BCE? | **In 597 BCE, Babylon removed Judah's king and installed another. In 586 BCE, it destroyed the First Temple and deported many Judeans.** |
| 3 | How did the Persian conquest change life for Judean exiles without restoring Judah's independence? | **Cyrus permitted exiles to return, and some returned and rebuilt the temple. Judah remained a Persian province.** |
| 4 | How did the Hasmonean and Herodian dynasties differ in their relationships with foreign powers? | **The Hasmonean dynasty grew from a revolt and gained independence from Seleucid rule. The Herodian dynasty began with a king backed by Rome and ruled under Roman power.** |

## PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Foreign conquest did not always end local rule, but it often limited it. Assyria seized towns in Judah in 701 BCE, yet Judah kept its king while paying tribute. After Persia conquered Babylon, Judeans could return and rebuild the temple, but Judah remained a Persian province rather than an independent kingdom. Rome later backed Herod the Great as king; his Herodian dynasty ruled with Roman support. These cases show that an outside empire could leave local leaders or institutions in place while controlling the larger political system.

Accept claims that distinguish local leadership or religious life from full political independence. Examples must come from three different periods and include either the Hasmonean or Herodian dynasty.