

UNIT ONE - Abraham to the First Exile:
The Jewish People's Historical Connection to the Land of Israel (Part 1)



LESSON PLAN 16 Vanished Voices: The Fall of the Northern Kingdom
and the Lost Tribes of Israel

OBJECTIVES:

- 1) Students will describe the Assyrian strategy of exile and how it led to the disappearance of the Ten Tribes.
- 2) Students will identify the key Assyrian kings involved in the conquest of northern Israel.
- 3) Students will analyze the biblical and historical reasons for the exile, including the role of idolatry and disobedience.
- 4) Students will explore the legacy of the Ten Lost Tribes in Jewish memory and modern culture.
- 5) Students will reflect on the connection between spiritual identity and national survival.

MATERIALS NEEDED:

[Source 24](#)

ACTIVITIES:

1) Introduction and Warm-Up Activity (5 minutes)

Activity: "Lost and Found: Where Did They Go?"

Ask: Have you ever heard of the Ten Lost Tribes of Israel? Where do you think they might be today?

On the board, write: "The Lost Tribes ended up in..."

Have students quickly shout or write guesses on sticky notes and place them on a world map or board.

Transition: Today we'll explore the story behind their disappearance and what it teaches us about spiritual survival, identity, and memory.

2) Chavruta/Partner Text Study (10 minutes)

Source Focus: 2 Kings 17:6–18 & Historical Summary

Divide students into pairs. Each pair reads the selected biblical verses and key excerpts from the historical narrative.

Guiding Questions:

- a. What spiritual reasons does the Tanakh give for the exile?
- b. What military or political strategies did Assyria use?
- c. How did the people respond to prophetic warnings?

Pairs annotate or highlight keywords and write 2–3 bullet points summarizing the cause-and-effect dynamic between sin and exile.

3) Class Discussion and Analysis of Texts (7 minutes)

Write on the board:

Spiritual Decline → Political Collapse

Facilitate a class conversation using these prompts:

- a. Why did the northern kingdom fall while the southern kingdom remained?
- b. What was the Assyrian strategy of exile, and why was it so effective?
- c. How do the ideas of memory, identity, and faith play into national survival?
- d. Do you think the spiritual reason (idolatry) or the political reason (military weakness) mattered more? Or were they connected?

4) Active Engagement Activity 1: (7 minutes)

"Cause & Effect Speed Match"

Set-Up:

On the board or a slide, list four spiritual behaviors and four political/military outcomes, not in matching order.

Spiritual Causes:

1. Ignored the prophets
2. Worshiped idols
3. Adopted foreign customs
4. Refused to repent

Political Effects:

- A. The northern kingdom collapsed
- B. Tribes were exiled by Assyria
- C. New populations (Samaritans) moved in
- D. The Ten Tribes disappeared

Instructions:

In pairs or small groups, draw lines on your paper to match each spiritual cause with the political effect you think it led to.

Choose one match and write a 1-sentence explanation of how the cause led to the effect. After 5 minutes, we'll take a minute to hear a few of your match-ups and reasons.

Optional Board Debrief:

Call on 2–3 groups to explain one pairing.

As students respond, draw the correct connections on the board.

5) Active Engagement Activity 2: (10 minutes)

“Lost Tribes Tracker ” - Myth, Memory, and Modern Claims

Set-Up:

Provide students with short blurbs or display a slide with 4 modern groups that claim descent from the Ten Lost Tribes (e.g., Pashtuns, Beta Israel, Bnei Menashe, Pathans).

1. Beta Israel (Ethiopian Jews)

For centuries, the Beta Israel community lived in northern Ethiopia, practicing a unique form of Judaism. Many believe they are descended from the Tribe of Dan—one of the Ten Lost Tribes. Their customs include observing Shabbat, kashrut, and biblical holidays. In the 20th century, Israel recognized them as Jews, and many were brought to Israel in daring rescue missions like Operation Moses and Operation Solomon.

Claim Basis: Longstanding Jewish practices + oral tradition linking them to Dan.

2. Bnei Menashe (India)

The Bnei Menashe are a group from northeast India who claim descent from the Tribe of Menashe. Their oral tradition tells of exile, wandering through Persia, China, and eventually arriving in India. Over generations, they preserved customs resembling ancient Israelite practices, including ritual purity laws and belief in one God. In recent decades, many have formally converted and made aliyah to Israel.

Claim Basis: Oral history + cultural practices + tribal name link.

3. Pashtuns (Afghanistan and Pakistan)

The Pashtun people of Afghanistan and Pakistan have tribal names (like Yusufzai = “sons of Joseph”) and traditions that some say resemble ancient Israelite customs, such as levirate marriage and hospitality laws. Some Islamic texts refer to them as “Bani Israel” (Children of Israel), and some Pashtuns believe they are descendants of the Ten Lost Tribes.

Claim Basis: Tribal names, customs, and Islamic references to Bani Israel.

4. Igbo Jews (Nigeria)

Some Igbo communities in Nigeria claim descent from ancient Israelites, particularly the Tribe of Gad. They observe circumcision on the 8th day, dietary restrictions, and Shabbat rest. Scholars debate the origins of these practices, but many Igbo Jews today identify as part of the global Jewish people and are seeking formal recognition.

Claim Basis: Shared religious practices + tribal origin stories.

Instructions:

Students work in pairs and pick one group to quickly research (or read the blurb).

They answer:

- a. What's the basis for their claim?
- b. Do you think these stories matter? Why or why not?

Wrap up with a few student thoughts: *Is the idea of "lost" Jewish identity still relevant today?*

6) Reflection and Teacher Wrap-Up (3 minutes)**Teacher Summary:**

The fall of the northern kingdom wasn't just a military defeat—it was a spiritual collapse. The Assyrians may have scattered the people, but it was the Israelites' spiritual choices that made them vulnerable. Today, we remember the Ten Lost Tribes not just as a historical mystery, but as a powerful warning: identity and faith are the anchors of survival. If they are forgotten, so too may we be.

Exit Reflection Prompt:

What is one lesson the story of the Ten Lost Tribes teaches us about identity, memory, or faith?

Students write short responses on exit tickets.

Further Learning: UED videos and educational resources

1. [Exile and the Lost Tribes of Israel](#)
2. [The Judean Expulsion to Babylonia](#)
3. [The Secret History of Ethiopian Jews](#)
4. [The Lost Tribe of Menashe in India](#)
5. [Unpacking the Igbo Jews of Nigeria](#)