



Lesson 4: Demise of the Kingdom of Israel

Theme: People are ruined when they refuse to repent.

Golden Text:

"Therefore the LORD was very angry with Israel, and removed them out of his sight: there was none left but the tribe of Judah only." — **2 Kings 17:18 (KJV)**

Study at a Glance: The 5 W's

KEY AREA	DETAILS AND SUMMARY
WHO (Author & Audience)	King Hoshea (Israel's last king, who conspired with Egypt), Shalmaneser V (king of Assyria, who besieged Samaria), the LORD God of Israel (who had delivered them from Egypt and warned them through prophets), the nations resettled in Samaria (Babylonians, Cuthites, Avvites, Hamathites, Sepharvites), the unnamed priest sent back to Bethel — and the people of Israel, whose centuries of unrepentant idolatry led to their exile.
WHAT (Core Message)	The fall of the northern kingdom of Israel — how Hoshea's political conspiracy triggered Assyrian conquest, how Israel's centuries of idolatry provoked God's judgment, and how the land was repopulated with foreign nations who continued the same idolatry — a three-part portrait of national ruin that traces the consequences of refusing to repent.

WHEN (Timing)	Spanning roughly 732 B.C. (Hoshea's reign begins) through about 722 B.C. (the fall of Samaria and the resettlement of foreign nations) — the final decades of the northern kingdom compressed into a single chapter of judgment.
WHERE (Location)	The northern kingdom of Israel: Samaria (the capital city besieged and captured by Assyria); Halah and Habor (cities of the Gozan River where Israelites were exiled); The cities of the Medes (where the ten tribes were scattered); The land repopulated by nations from Babylon, Cuthah, Ava, Hamath, and Sepharvaim.
WHY (Rationale)	<i>(Rationale)</i> Because Israel refused to repent. God sent prophets, gave the law, performed miracles, and waited patiently for over two centuries — but Israel "would not hear" (2 Kgs. 17:14). They feared other gods, served idols, sacrificed their children, and provoked the LORD to anger until His patience was exhausted. The exile was not a random political event; it was the inevitable consequence of a nation that refused to turn back to God.

Introduction

Imagine a patient who goes to the doctor and receives a devastating diagnosis. The disease is serious but treatable if caught in time. The doctor prescribes a simple course of treatment and warns: *"If you ignore this, the disease will become terminal."* But the patient refuses. *"I feel fine,"* he says. *"The symptoms aren't that bad."* He goes home, throws away the prescription, and continues living as if nothing is wrong. The doctor sends follow-up letters, calls, even visits — but the patient refuses every attempt at intervention. Months pass. The disease spreads. By the time the patient finally collapses and is rushed to the hospital, it is too late. The doctor did everything right. The patient is ruined — not by the disease, but by the refusal to be treated.

The northern kingdom of Israel was that patient. For over two hundred years, God sent prophet after prophet — Elijah, Elisha, Amos, Hosea — each one diagnosing the same disease: idolatry. Each one prescribing the same treatment: repent. *"Turn ye from your evil ways,"* God pleaded through His servants (2 Kgs. 17:13). But Israel refused the treatment. They felt fine. The harvests were good, the

borders were secure, the temples were full. They did not want to hear that their worship was wrong, that their idols were poison, that their nation was dying from the inside. So they ignored every warning, silenced every prophet, and continued in their sin until the day Assyria came, and the disease became terminal.

This lesson follows Israel's final days — from the conspiracy of their last king, to the diagnosis of why they fell, to the eerie aftermath in which foreign nations settled the land and repeated the same sins. It asks the question every patient must answer: **when God says "repent," do we listen or do we throw away the prescription?**

Key Terms Defined & The Word Search Technique

Before we open the text, let's learn a simple tool for studying any passage: a **"word search"** (word study). Here is the method in its simplest form, using the word *"carried away"* in 2 Kings 17:6 as our example.

1. **Select the word.** Pick a word in the verse that seems important. Here: *"the king of Assyria carried Israel away into Assyria"* (2 Kgs. 17:6). Why carried away?
2. **Find the original word.** Use a concordance or Bible app to find the Hebrew (or Greek) word and its reference number. *"Carried away"* = the Hebrew *galah* (Strong's H1540), meaning to uncover, remove, go into captivity, to strip bare.
3. **Read the immediate context.** What is happening here? Assyria has besieged Samaria for three years (v. 5). Hoshea, Israel's last king, conspired against Assyria by seeking alliance with Egypt (v. 4). The conspiracy failed. Samaria fell. The entire northern kingdom was deported — ten tribes scattered across the Assyrian empire. The word *"carried away"* is not a gentle relocation; it is a violent stripping away of everything familiar: land, temple, king, identity.
4. **Trace the word through Scripture.** See how God uses the same word elsewhere. *Galah* appears in 2 Kings 17:18, where the narrator says the LORD *"removed them out of his sight"* — the same word, showing that Assyria's conquest was not a political accident but a divine act. It appears in 1 Samuel 4:21, where the child is named Ichabod because *"the glory is departed from Israel"* — the same word, linking the loss of the ark to the loss of the nation. The prophet Amos used it when he warned, *"I will cause you to go into captivity beyond Damascus"* (Amos 5:27) — a prophetic prediction fulfilled exactly in 2 Kings 17.
5. **Compare and apply.** *Galah* means to uncover what was hidden, to strip away what was protected. Israel hid their idolatry behind religious formality — temples, feasts, priests — but God pulled back the cover. What am I hiding behind? What religious performance am I using to cover a heart that has drifted from God? The same God who uncovered Israel's sin still uncovers ours — not to destroy, but to invite repentance before it is too late.

The Method: Select → Find the original → Read the context → Trace it through Scripture → Apply. We will use this tool in each section.

Transition into Section 1: Every nation's fall begins with a last king and Israel's last king was Hoshea. He was not the worst king Israel ever had, but he was the last. In Section 1 we see how Hoshea's political conspiracy triggered the siege that ended the northern kingdom and how the refusal to repent that began with Jeroboam reached its terminus in the carrying away of an entire nation.

SECTION 1: Hoshea — Israel's Last King

(2 Kgs. 17:1–6)

- **Word Search for This Section:** *"carried away"* (*galah*, H1540)

In verse 6 we read that *"the king of Assyria carried Israel away into Assyria."* The Hebrew word is *galah* — to uncover, remove, go into captivity, to strip bare. It means to take away everything that was hidden and secure, to lay open what was covered. The same word appears in verse 18, where the narrator says *"the LORD removed them out of his sight"* — showing that Assyria's conquest was not a political accident but a divine act of judgment. It appears in 1 Samuel 4:21, where the child is named Ichabod because *"the glory is departed from Israel"* — the same word, linking the loss of the ark to the loss of the nation. The prophet Amos used the same word when he warned, *"I will cause you to go into captivity beyond Damascus"* (Amos 5:27) — a prediction fulfilled exactly in this chapter.

The lesson is sobering: what Israel refused to surrender to God, God stripped from them by force. They would not give up their idols; so God gave them up to exile. The carrying away (*galah*) was the uncovering of a nation that had hidden its sin behind religious formality and God pulled back the cover. What we refuse to fear (*yare'*) and surrender, God will eventually remove (*galah*) — not because He is cruel, but because unrepentant sin has a terminus.

Discussion Questions

Question 1 (Text/Exegesis)

2 Kings 17:1-6 describes Hoshea as Israel's last king. He "did evil in the sight of the LORD, but not as the kings of Israel that were before him" (v. 2). He became a vassal of Assyria, then conspired against Assyria by seeking an alliance with Egypt (vv. 3-4). Assyria besieged Samaria for three years, captured it, and "carried Israel away into Assyria" (v. 6). What does Hoshea's reign reveal about the political and spiritual condition of Israel in its final days? Why did political maneuvering fail to save the nation?

Question 2 (Application)

Hoshea tried to save Israel through political alliance — turning to Egypt instead of turning to God. He stopped paying tribute to Assyria (v. 4), which seemed like an act of independence, but it actually triggered the siege that destroyed the nation. How do we try to solve spiritual problems with political, financial, or social solutions? Where have you seen someone try to fix a God-shaped problem with an Egypt-sized answer?

Transition to Section 2: Hoshea's conspiracy was the political trigger, but it was not the cause. The cause was deeper — centuries deeper. In Section 2 the narrator pauses to explain why Israel fell, tracing the disease from its first symptom to its terminal stage. The diagnosis is devastating: Israel did not fall because Assyria was too strong. Israel fell because they feared the wrong God.

SECTION 2: Why Israel Fell

(2 Kgs. 17:7–12, 17, 18)

- **Word Search for This Section:** *"feared"* (*yare'*, H3372)

In verse 7 we read that Israel *"had feared other gods."* The Hebrew word is *yare'* — to fear, revere, stand in awe of, to give one's deepest devotion. It is the same word God commanded at Sinai: *"Thou shalt fear the LORD thy God, and serve him"* (Deut. 6:13). God demanded Israel's fear — their reverence, their awe, their whole-hearted devotion. But Israel redirected that fear to "other gods," giving to idols the reverence that belonged to the LORD alone. The same word appears when Joshua charged the people: *"Now therefore fear the LORD, and serve him in sincerity and in truth"* (Josh. 24:14) and the people answered, *"We will serve the LORD"* (Josh. 24:21). But they did not. The same word appears in 2 Kings 17:25, where the new settlers in Samaria *"feared not the LORD"* — and God sent lions among them.

The lesson is devastating: what you fear determines what you serve. Israel feared other gods, so they served other gods, and the God they refused to fear removed them (*galah*) from the land He had given. To fear God is not terror; it is the reverent awe that produces obedience. Israel feared the wrong things, and it ruined them. A heart that fears (*yare'*) the wrong God will eventually serve (*'abad*) the wrong master.

Discussion Questions

Question 1 (Text/Exegesis)

2 Kings 17:7-12 catalogues Israel's sins: they "feared other gods" (v. 7), walked in the statutes of the nations (v. 8), secretly did wicked things (v. 9), set up images and groves (v. 10), burnt incense on high places (v. 11), and "served idols, whereof the LORD had said, Ye shall not do this thing" (v. 12). Verse 17 adds child sacrifice and divination, and says they "sold themselves to do evil." Verse 18 concludes: "Therefore the LORD was very angry with Israel, and removed them out of his sight." How does this passage answer the question "Why did Israel fall?" What is the relationship between Israel's idolatry and their exile?

Question 2 (Application)

The passage emphasizes that Israel's fall was not a political accident but a spiritual judgment. God had brought them out of Egypt (v. 7), given them the law, and warned them through prophets but they refused to repent. The specific sins listed (idolatry, child sacrifice, divination) all began with one root: "they feared other gods" (v. 7). How does fearing the wrong things lead to serving the wrong things? What "other gods" do people fear today — and how does that fear shape their choices?

Transition to Section 3: Israel was carried away, and the land sat empty. But the story does not end with exile — it ends with something eerier. In Section 3 the king of Assyria repopulates Samaria with people from five nations, and the new settlers do exactly what Israel did: they serve their own gods while claiming to fear the LORD. The disease of syncretism outlasted the patient — proving that idolatry is not just a people problem but a soil problem.

SECTION 3: Fallen Israel's Continued Idolatry

(2 Kgs. 17:24–34)

- **Word Search for This Section:** "served" ('abad, H5647)

In verse 33 we read that the new settlers in Samaria "*feared the LORD, and served their own gods.*" The Hebrew word is 'abad — to work, serve, labor, worship. It is the same word God used in the first commandment: "*Thou shalt have no other gods before me... Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them*" (Exod. 20:3, 5). God had redeemed Israel from Egypt so they could "serve him" (Exod. 4:23) — not as slaves, but as worshippers. But here, the nations who replaced Israel did the very thing God forbade: they served their own gods while claiming to fear the LORD. The same word appears in Joshua's challenge: "*choose you this day whom ye will serve*" (Josh. 24:15) — and the people answered, "*We will serve the LORD.*" But Israel broke that promise, and now the nations who replaced them repeated the same sin.

The lesson is piercing: you cannot serve two masters. The settlers "feared the LORD" — but they "served their own gods." Fear without service is not devotion; it is superstition. God does not want our fear alone; He wants our service — the wholehearted obedience that flows from reverence. The nations feared the LORD (*yare'*) as one god among many; God demands that He be the only God we serve ('abad). A heart that truly fears (*yare'*) God will not keep serving ('abad) His rivals.

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Discussion Questions

Question 1 (Text/Exegesis)

2 Kings 17:24-34 describes how the king of Assyria repopulated Samaria with people from five nations. When God sent lions among them because they "feared not the LORD" (v. 25), the king sent back an Israelite priest to teach them the law of God. But the result was syncretism: "They feared the LORD, and served their own gods" (v. 33). How does this passage show that the land's spiritual corruption outlasted Israel's exile? What does the mixing of true worship with idolatry reveal about the depth of the problem?

Question 2 (Application)

Verse 33 captures the essence of syncretism: "They feared the LORD, and served their own gods." They added God to their pantheon instead of surrendering their pantheon to God. This is not conversion; it is addition without subtraction. Where do we see this pattern today — adding Jesus to a life that still serves other gods (career, comfort, approval, control)? Where have you been tempted to fear the LORD while still serving something else?

Closing: Bringing It All Together

The northern kingdom of Israel did not fall in a day. It fell the way every fall happens — one refusal to repent at a time, over two centuries, until the cup of God's patience was full. Hoshea, the last king, tried politics instead of repentance. He stopped paying tribute to Assyria and sent for help to Egypt — the very nation God had rescued Israel from. But no alliance could save a nation that had abandoned its God. The nation was "carried away" (*galah*) into exile — not because Assyria was too strong, but because Israel was too stubborn to turn.

The passage explains why: they "feared" (*yare'*) other gods instead of the LORD. What began as redirected reverence became a lifetime of idolatrous service, ending in child sacrifice, sorcery, and the provocation of a holy God. And even after Israel was gone, the nations who replaced them "served" (*'abad*) their own gods while claiming to fear the LORD — proving that the disease of syncretism outlasts the patient. The whole tragedy is captured in three words: **a nation that was carried away because it feared the wrong God, and settlers who served their own gods while pretending to fear the LORD** — and a God who, through it all, showed that refusal to repent has a price.

One Word to take home: repent. Not a one-time act but a way of life. Israel's story is a warning written in exile: God is patient, but He is not indulgent. He sends prophets, He sends warnings, He sends circumstances designed to wake us up — but He will not force us to turn. The lions He sent to the settlers in Samaria were not cruelty; they were mercy — a wake-up call before it was too late. The question is whether we hear the roar. What do I fear more than God? What am I serving while claiming to fear Him? What Egypt am I turning to instead of turning to the LORD? Repent. Not because God is angry, but because He is gracious, and His warnings are invitations. The same God who "removed" Israel also promised restoration for those who return.

"If they shall confess their iniquity... if then their uncircumcised hearts be humbled, and they then accept of the punishment of their iniquity: then will I remember my covenant"
— Leviticus 26:40, 42

Repentance is not the end of the story. It is the beginning.