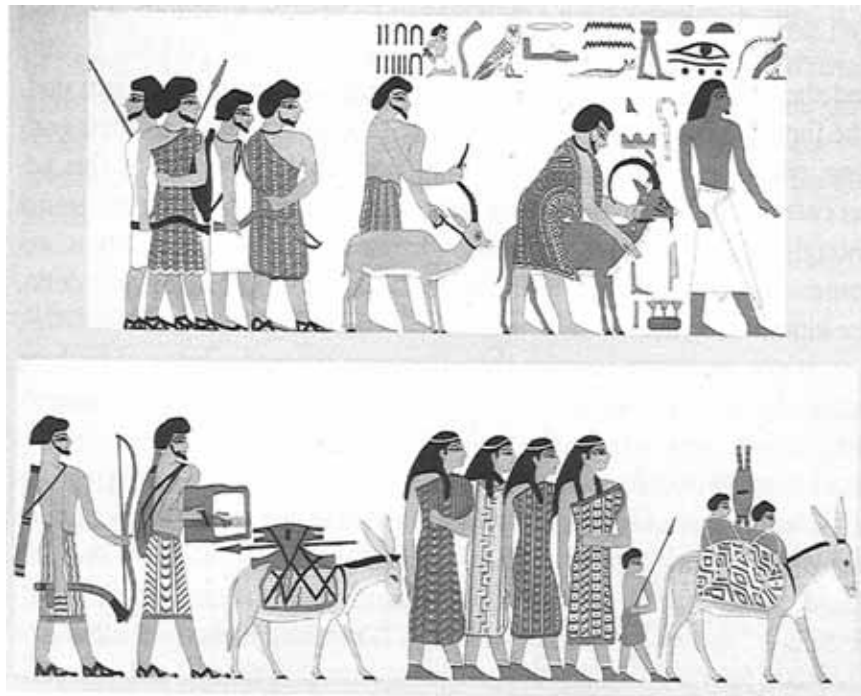


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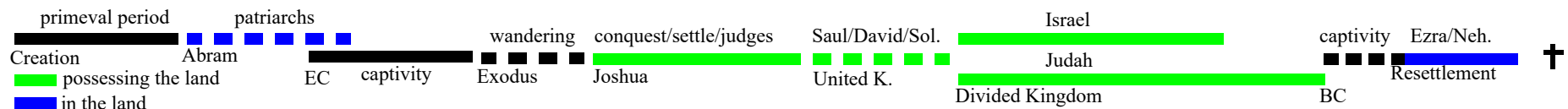
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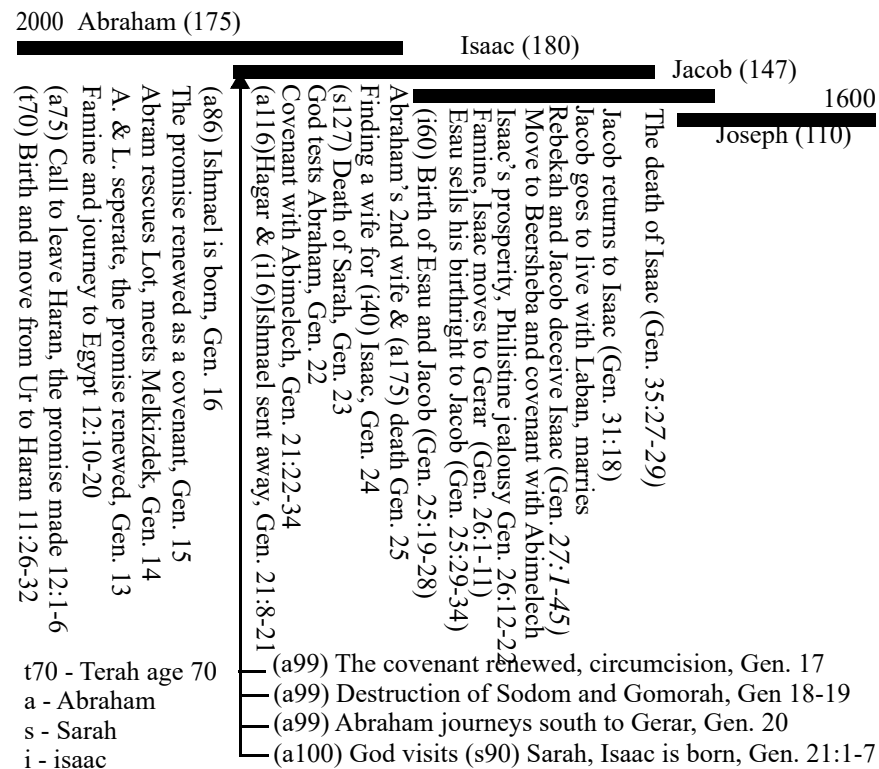
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Introduction To the Patriarchs

When we step into Genesis 12 it is like time suddenly comes to a stand still. We've been racing across 2000 years in the last 12 weeks in our study, all covered in only 11 chapters of Scripture. Now we stop and spend 38 chapters on four generations of one family, spanning approximately 400 years. The major events of the patriarchs' lives are shown in the figure below.

Patriarchal Period - Genesis 12-50 - ca. 2000 - 1600



Abraham - Genesis 11:26 - 25:7 - History

This period of history is of major significance because God calls Abraham as He begins to execute His plan to more fully reveal Himself to humanity and to bring deliverance from sin and evil. Prior to the calling of Abraham we have no clear indication of how God intends to restore the

earth and crush the serpent's head. The primeval account ended with mankind joined together building a city and a tower to make a name for themselves. God stymied their efforts by another universal and lasting judgement - the confusion of languages at Babel. Is there any hope for mankind as we see them scattered over the face of the earth by this second universal judgement? The history of the Patriarchs answers this question with a "yes" at it shows us *God's initiative* in revealing His plan to ultimately bring blessing to all the now scattered nations of the earth.

We will begin by familiarizing ourselves with the history of the life of Abraham and then consider what God is doing when we look at the theology and typology of Genesis chapters 12-25.

Abram's birth and birthplace (Gen. 11:25-32)

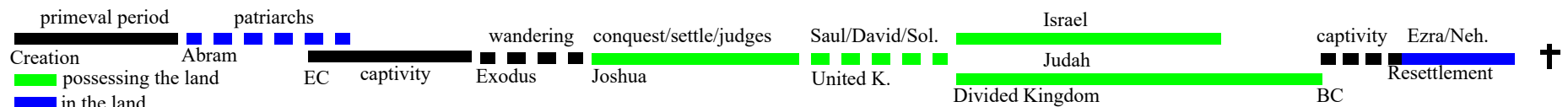
Abram was born to Terah when Terah was living in Ur of the Chaldeans (11:26, 31). Abram was a descendant of Shem (Noah's son), nine generations from Shem (Shem > Arphaxad > Salah > Eber > Peleg > Reu > Serug > Nahor > Terah > Abram, Nahor, Haran).

By the time of Abram's birth the city of Ur in southern Mesopotamia had already had a long and impressive past. In the center of the city was a ziggurat whose base was 200 X 150 feet and reached a height of 120 feet. It was dedicated to Nanna, the moon god of Mesopotamia¹, the chief god of the city. A typical house in Ur, constructed with sun-dried bricks, was two stories with a courtyard in middle into which rooms opened. Some "expensive" residences may have had running water. Terah and his family were not nomads living in tents under trees.

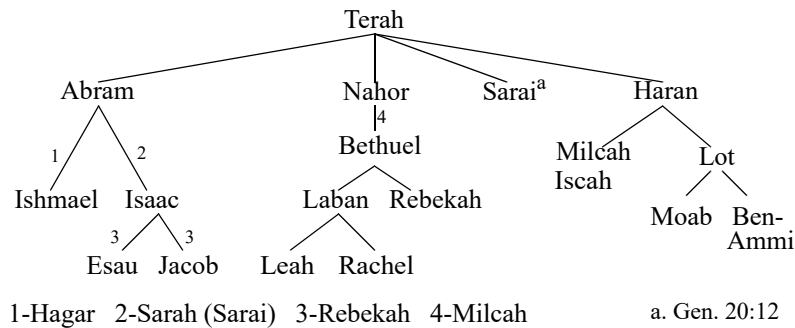
Regarding the religion of Mesopotamia Hoerth writes, "by 3000 the Mesopotamians had invented some four thousand deities. Hundreds of them might be worshiped in a given city, but each city had one chief god."²

Terah's family (Gen. 11:27-30)

Terah's four children (Abram, Nahor, Haran, Sarai) and grandson Lot were are born in Ur. Abraham and Sarai were married for some time before Terah moved his family to Haran (see below). Isaac's wife Rebekah and Jacob's wives, Leah and Rachel, come from later generations of Terah's family through his son Nahor. Terah's son, Haran



died before his father while they were still living in Ur. See genealogical chart below



It is clear from Joshua 24:2-3 that Abram, Nahor and Sarai “grew up” worshipping “Mesopotamian” gods of the early second millennium.

Terah moves his family to Haran (Gen. 11:31-32)

Abram was an adult and married but still likely subject to his father when the family moved. From Genesis 11 and 12 we may get the impression that God did not call Abram until he was in Haran. However Genesis 15:7 and Acts 7:2-3 make it clear that the call came while the family was still in Ur. Notice also that 11:31 shows that Terah’s intent upon leaving Ur was to go the Canaan, although they settled in Haran (see map below, 1>2). At the time of this move the city of Ur was in a stage of rebuilding from a destruction that occurred in 2004.³ The “culture” at Haran would have been quite similar to that at Ur and Haran’s chief deity was the same as that of Ur, Nanna, the moon god. The journey from Ur to Haran was approximately 600 miles using the major trade routes near the Euphrates and Tigris rivers.

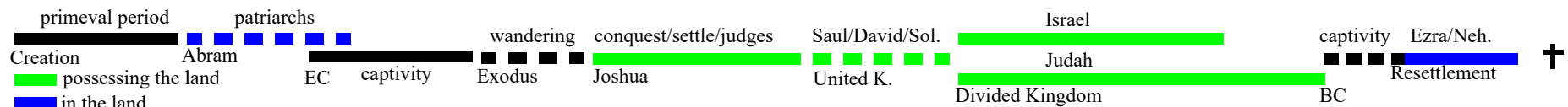
God calls Abram to leave Haran and go to Canaan (12:1-6)

God called Abram to separate from his country, family and relatives (12:1). During the second millennium any significant distance *would* result in a substantial and for all practical purpose a permanent separation. God made great promises to him which we will discuss below. We do not know the state of Abram’s (or Sarai’s) faith at this point but we are told he *departed as the LORD had spoken to him* (12:4).

Abram’s household by this time included numerous servants, live-

stock and possessions. For reasons not explained his nephew, Lot, went with him. We do not know how old Lot was when he lost his father (Haran). Terah, Lot’s grandfather, took him to Haran and now he goes with his uncle and aunt and leaves his grandfather.

They *passed through the land* and came to Shechem (see map). It is not without significance that the text states, *And the Canaanites were then in the land* (12:6). God promised to give Abram and his descendants the land but as they *passed through the land* they couldn’t help



but notice it was already occupied.



Abraham's Journeys

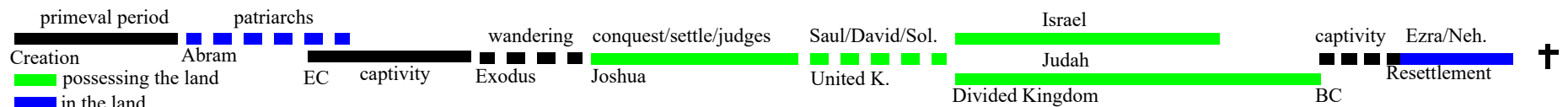
God also appeared to Abram at Shechem and repeated the promise, *to your descendants I will give this land (12:7)*. He built an altar to Yahweh at Shechem and then moved to nearby Bethel and dwelt at Bethel. *There he built an altar to the LORD and called on the name of the LORD (12:8)*. It is obvious that by this time he is not worshipping Mesopotamian or Canaanite deities.

After Bethel we are told simply that he journeyed *toward the south* (Heb. negev, a region in southern Canaan).

A severe famine caused Abram to move into Egypt. This likely was not a lack of faith to leave the land of Canaan at this time. However his fears of being harmed and having Sarah tell the Egyptians that she was his sister certainly was. God had promised to protect him when He said to him, *I will bless those who bless you, And I will curse him who curses you;* (Gen 12:3). We learn later from Genesis 20:13 that Abram feared for his life regarding this matter from the time he left Haran.

Sarai ends up in Pharaoh's house. He blesses Abram with *sheep and*

Famine and Sojourn in Egypt (Gen. 12:10-13:2)



cattle, male donkeys, male servants, female servants, female donkeys, and camels (Gen 12:16). This was likely a bride price though Pharaoh did not take her as a wife. However, the Lord puts an end to this situation by striking *Pharaoh and his house with great plagues* (12:17). Pharaoh figures out what’s going on and after a “chat” with Abram sends them out of Egypt.

At this time Genesis 13:2-3 tells us that he went *to the south* (i.e. the Negev, the southern district of the land of Canaan) and that *he was very rich in livestock, in silver, and in gold*.

This is likely the time that Hagar entered the family and became Sarai’s servant.

Return to Bethel, Abraham and Lot Separate (Gen. 13:3-18)

Abram returned to Bethel where he had previously built an altar and there again *he called on the name of the LORD* (Gen 13:4).

Lot had also acquired significant livestock and servants. So much so that conflicts arose between Abram’s herdsmen and Lot’s. Abram encourages them to separate and allows Lot to choose any portion of the land he pleases (13:8-9). Lot chose the fertile area of the plain of the Jordan river and dwelt near the cities of the plain and eventually ended up living in Sodom. However our Genesis author alerts us that trouble is coming with the statement, *But the men of Sodom were exceedingly wicked and sinful against the LORD*. (13:13)

After the separation the Lord encourages Abram to look in all directions and view the land and He repeats the promise that this land will be filled with Abram’s descendants who will number as much as the dust of the earth (13:14-17).

Abram then moved to Hebron, south of Bethel, dwelt there and built an altar there to the Lord.

War of the kings, Abram Rescues Lot, Melchizedek (Gen. 14)

Genesis 14 gives insight into the “kingdoms” in mesopotamia and Palestine around 2000 BC. The “kings” mentioned were rulers of “city-state” groups. One main city with other lesser cities under the control and protection of the king. Sometimes these kings formed alliances with others as is indicated in Genesis 14 where there is an alli-

ance of four Mesopotamian kings under Che-dor-la-o-mer and an alliance of five kings of Palestine (14:9). By circumstances of which we know little the kings of Palestine *served Chedorlaomer for 12 years and in the thirteenth year they rebelled* (14:4). The service likely involved supplying something of value to the Mesopotamians kings, perhaps metals (see map).

The Mesopotamian kings invaded Palestine, defeated the Palestinian alliance which included the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah and *they took all the goods of Sodom and Gomorrah, and all their provisions, and went their way* (14:11). As they headed north to return to Mesopotamia they also took captives including Lot who was now living in Sodom.

One who escaped informed Abram that Lot, Abram’s nephew, had been taken captive. Abram led 318 *trained men* and pursued the returning Mesopotamian army and overtook them at Dan (in the north). He attacked them by night and succeeded in bringing back to Sodom Lot, the goods and the women and the people (14:16).

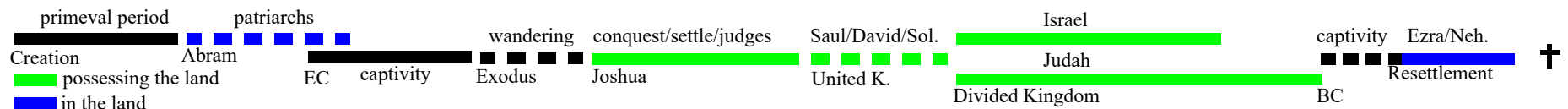
From this incident we get a perspective of how wealthy and numerous Abram’s “house” was. Although none of the members of this community were descendants of Abram and Sarai.

On Abram’s return the king of Sodom and the king of Salem met Abram. Melchizedek, king of Salem, is described as *the priest of God Most High*. Melchizedek *brought out bread and wine ... and blessed Abram* (14:18-20). Abram gave a tithe (10%) of all the goods he had recovered.

The king of Sodom offered Abram the goods he recovered and requested that the persons be returned to him. Abram staunchly refused to receive anything lest the king of Sodom should say, *lest you should say, 'I have made Abram rich'* (14:23).

The promise renewed and formalized in a covenant (Gen. 15)

As God told Abram that He was Abram’s shield and great reward Abram expressed that God had given him no offspring and his servant was his heir according to common custom (15:1-4). Nevertheless the Lord showed him the stars of the sky and said to him *so shall your descendants be*. (15:5). It is at this point in time that the text says,



And he believed in the LORD, and He accounted it to him for righteousness. (15:6)

Also, at this time Abram asked, “*Lord GOD, how shall I know that I will inherit it?*” (15:8). The Lord had Abram perform a covenant ritual, the cutting of the animals in two and the Lord passing between the animals (in the form of a burning oven) and promising to give the land to Abram’s descendants. (15:17-18)

At this time the Lord also told Abram that his descendants would be enslaved in Egypt for 400 years.

Sarai gives her servant to Abram to raise up children (Gen. 16)

More time passes and Sarai does not conceive so she recommends to Abram that she give Hagar, her maid servant to him, to conceive children by her (16:2). Abram agreed. This was not God’s will or way.

However, what they did was common ancient near eastern practice as is attested in many marital contracts.

Hagar conceived and jealousy breaks out between the women. Sarai complains to Abram and he tells her to do as she pleases with Hagar. Sarai deals harshly with Hagar and she flees (16:5-6).

God speaks to Hagar, tells her to return and submit to Sarai, and promises to bless her and multiply her descendants through her son (16:9-12). Ishmael is born when Abram is 86 years old (16:15).

The promise renewed and the sign of the covenant (Gen. 17)

Thirteen years after the birth of Ishmael the Lord appears again to Abram when he is 99 years old and renews the promise.

The Lord changes Abram’s name to Abraham, that is “exalted father” to “father of many nations”. God changed his name *before* Isaac was born. Genesis 17:2-14 contains the fullest expression of the promises thus far *including* the changing of Sarai’s name to Sarah, i.e. princess. God also said to Abram He would give him a son by Sarah and that she would be a mother of nations and that kings of peoples shall be from her (17:16).

In response to all that the Lord had said Abraham fell on his face and laughed! He responded to God saying, “*Oh, that Ishmael might live before You!*” (17:18). God reproved Him saying: *No, Sarah your wife*

shall bear you a son, and you shall call his name Isaac; I will establish My covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, and with his descendants after him (17:19). The name Isaac means laughter.

At this time Abram and all males either bought or born into Abram’s household were circumcised.

Promise to Sarah, destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah (18-19)

Within a short time, weeks or months, the Lord and two angels? appeared to Abraham again at Mamre. During the meal, without Sarai present but listening from the tent, the Lord told Abraham that Sarah his wife will bear him a son. To this Sarah laughed within herself. She denies laughing but the Lord reproves her saying, “*No, but you did laugh!*” (18:15)

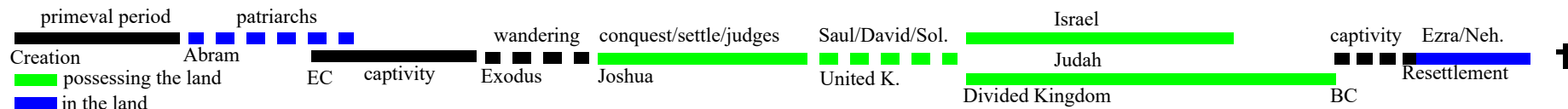
The Lord reveals to Abraham that He is going to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah. Abraham knows that Lot is living in Sodom and intercedes on his behalf. The two angels deliver Lot, his wife and two daughters from Sodom before they destroy the cities. Lot’s son-in-laws think he is joking when he warns them to leave with them. Lot and those leaving with him are sternly warned not to look back as they flee but Lot’s wife does and becomes a pillar of salt.

Lot ends up living in the mountains in a cave with his two daughters. His daughters see that they have no prospect of having children and so engage in incest with their father as they get him drunk so as to not know what is being done. They both conceive and from their sons come the Moabites and the Ammonites.

Though Lot was distinguished from the average resident of Sodom the Genesis record leaves us with a pretty dim view of Him such that we are surprised when we read of him being a righteous man in 2 Peter 2:7-8.

Journey to the Negev (south), Sarah and Abimelech (Gen. 20)

At this time Abraham again says *of Sarah his wife, “She is my sister”* (20:2). And once again a ruler, this time Abimelech of the Philistines, takes Sarah. God intervenes again and tells Abimelech in a dream that he is a dead man! Abimelech has a few words with Abraham and



Abraham “justifies” his actions by telling Abimelech that Sarah was indeed his half sister (20:12-13). In this account Abimelech comes out looking more righteous than Abraham and the record even quotes God saying to Abimelech, *Yes, I know that you did this in the integrity of your heart* (20:6). As was the case earlier with Pharaoh so now with Abimelech, he gives Abraham *sheep, oxen, and male and female servants*, and gave Abraham 1000 pieces of silver to vindicate himself (or clear Sarah) (20:12-16). We learn at the end of this account that God had *closed up all the wombs of the house of Abimelech because of Sarah*.

Sarah conceives and Isaac is born (Gen. 21:1-8)

When Abraham was 100 *the LORD visited Sarah as He had said, and the LORD did for Sarah as He had spoken. For Sarah conceived and bore Abraham a son in his old age, at the set time of which God had spoken to him* (21:1-2).

Abraham circumcised his son when he was eight days old and named him Isaac (laughter). *And Sarah said, “God has made me laugh, and all who hear will laugh with me.” She also said, “Who would have said to Abraham that Sarah would nurse children? For I have borne him a son in his old age.”* 21:6-7

The events of Genesis 17 through 21:6 appear to be highly compressed in time since Genesis 17:1 tells us that Abram was 99 years old when God appeared to him and in Genesis 21:5 we are told he was 100 when Isaac was born (see time line above). This gives us a maximum of two years for these events including the journey to Gerah (20:1). Further complicating the matter is that the women in Abimelech’s household are said to have had their wombs closed and were only restored after Abraham prayed for them, *then they bore* (20:17). This last difficulty might be solved by translating the last part of verse 17 as *then they were able to have children* (NET, NIV), of which there are much briefer indications.

Hagar and Ishmael sent away (Gen. 21:8-21)

When Isaac was weaned Abraham had a great feast and Sarah noticed that Ishmael, now about 16 years old?, mocking. At this point Sarah demanded that Abraham send away Hagar and Ishmael and insisted

that Ishmael would not be an heir along with Isaac. The matter very distressing to Abraham (21:10-11). Although 16 years earlier God had told Hagar to return and be under Sarah’s authority this time He tells Abraham to do as Sarah has requested (21:12) because in Isaac his seed would be called. However God still promised to make a nation from Ishmael *because he is your [Abraham’s] seed* (21:13).

Abraham sent Hagar and Ishmael away with bread and a skin of water and they wandered in the wilderness of Beersheba until the water was consumed. Ishmael was near death and as she was weeping God heard the voice of the lad. He points out a supply of water to Hagar and promises that Ishmael will be made into a great nation (20:17-19). The record of Hagar and Ishmael ends with the words, *So God was with the lad; and he grew and dwelt in the wilderness, and became an archer. He dwelt in the Wilderness of Paran; and his mother took a wife for him from the land of Egypt* (21:20-21). Ishmael’s genealogy is given in Genesis 25.

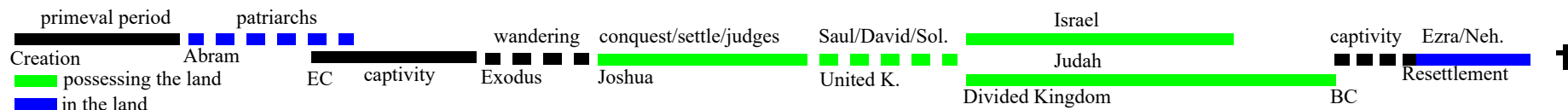
Abimelech initiates a covenant with Abraham (Gen. 21:22-34)

Abraham was dwelling in the land of the Philistines under Abimelech who had told him he could dwell anywhere he chose (20:15). His “household” had grown to such a stature that Abimelech wanted assurances that Abraham would not rise up against him (21:22-23). At that time they entered into a covenant (*peace treaty*) and resolved a dispute over a well. At this point the record tells us that *Abraham stayed in the land of the Philistines many days* (21:34).

God tests Abraham (Gen. 22)

Some years later, we don’t know how many, God commands Abraham to *take now your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you* (22:2). The only hints we have regarding Isaac’s age are that he is referred to as a lad or boy (Heb. nahar) in verse 12 and that he was able to carry the wood for the sacrifice on the last leg of the journey. Hebrew nahar can refer to little children as well as young men (vss. 3, 5).

Abraham obeyed God and was willing to do as God commanded, to the point of raising a knife over Isaac who was bound on an altar. At



this moment the Angel of the Lord told him to stop. The Lord was convinced that he would have gone through with the offering. He then noticed a ram caught in the thicket and sacrificed the ram. Abraham named the location Yahweh Yireh meaning “the Lord will provide”. In response to Abraham’s obedience the Lord repeated the promises of descendants and land.

At this time Abraham receives word that his brother Nahor has had children by Milcah, Haran’s daughter, Abraham’s niece (22:20). Milcah’s granddaughter Rebekah, through her son Bethuel, would become Isaac’s wife (see genealogy diagram above).

The death of Sarah (Gen. 23)

Sarah died at the age of 127 at which time Isaac was 37. The sons of Heth referred to Abraham as a mighty prince among them (23:6) offered him any of their burial places he would choose. After some interesting bartering he purchased a piece of property from them as a burial site for his family. Sarah was buried in a cave in Hebron, in southern Canaan. Abraham now has an heir but he does not possess the land - thus he had to purchase it.

Finding a wife for Isaac (Gen. 24)

After the death of Sarah Abraham has his eldest servant take an oath that he would not take a wife for Isaac from the daughters of the Canaanites. Instead that he would return to Haran to find a wife from Abraham’s own family for Isaac. It was 62 years earlier that he, Sarah and Lot had left Haran. Abraham’s servant is concerned that the woman may not follow him to Canaan and Isaac may need to be brought to Haran. Abraham is adamantly opposed to Isaac being taken to Haran and is confident that the Lord’s angel will direct his servant to the woman. So much so that if she refuses to come the servant is released from his oath (24:5-8).

The Servant makes his journey back to northern Mesopotamia and runs into a young lady who gives him a drink from the well and then also offers to water his ten camels also. As the servant silently looks on in amazement he is wondering *if the Lord had made his journey prosperous or not* (24:21). Upon asking her who’s daughter she was he discovers that she is Rebekah, Bethuel’s daughter, the son of

Nahor and Milcah (see genealogy chart above). The servant meets the rest of the family and Bethuel and Laban (Rebekah’s brother) say, *the thing comes from the LORD; we cannot speak to you either bad or good. Here is Rebekah before you; take her and go, and let her be your master's son's wife, as the LORD has spoken* (24:50-51). They bless and she departs for Canaan with her maids and camels. When she reaches Canaan Rebekah becomes Isaac’s wife.

Isaac was 40 years old when he married Rebekah (25:20). This was approximately three years after Sarah’s death.

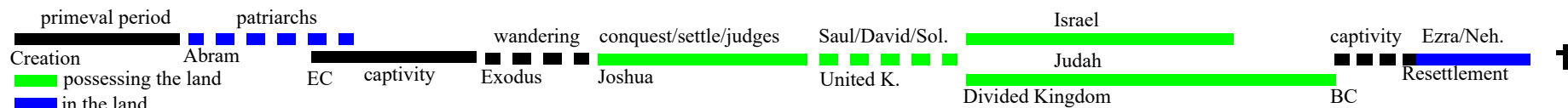
Genesis chapter 24 is one of the longest chapters in the Bible and full of details.

Abraham’s second wife and death

The account regarding Abraham ends with a brief mention of Abraham’s second wife, Keturah. Keturah bore at least seven children. However Genesis 25:5-6 makes it clear that his inheritance was reserved for Isaac and it appears he was concerned that these latter sons would somehow “compete”.

Abraham dies at age 175 and Isaac and Ishmael buried him in the cave in which Sarah was buried (25:7-10).

Abraham would have seen his grandchildren from Isaac, Esau and Jacob, to the age of 15. Isaac was 40 when he married Rebekah and 60 when she bore the twins thus Abraham was 160 at that time. He would have also noticed that another season of barrenness, 20 years, seemed to once again threaten God’s promise of a multitude of descendants.



Abraham - Genesis 11:26 - 25:7 - Theology

God’s blessing of Abraham and Sarah is a seed bed out of which the entire plan of salvation for mankind grows. On the one hand the account is very individualistic - one man, one wife, one child. On the other hand through this means God sets into motion His plan to bless all the nations of the earth. We will consider both ends of this spectrum.

God’s plan of salvation understood historically

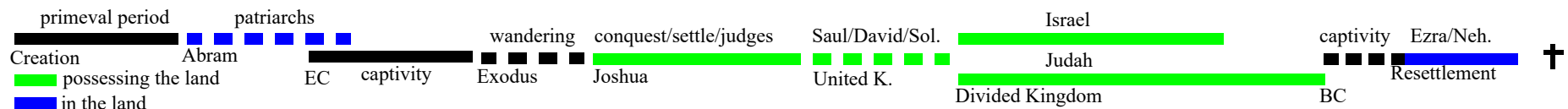
The word salvation is nowhere used in the patriarchal accounts so when we use it we show that we know the end of which the patriarchal accounts are the beginning. The term used repeatedly in these accounts is *blessing*. This should be set in contrast to the “curses” and judgements associated with the fall (Gen. 3), the flood (Gen. 6-9) and the tower of Babel (Gen. 11). In the Abraham account blessing is referred to ten times. Through the promises and covenant that God makes with Abraham we see His intention to bless all the families (clans) and nations of the earth. This does not mean every individual of every nation, rather it means some individuals from every nation.

The way this blessing will be brought *historically* is through one man and a nation descended from him based on the promises God made to him. Genesis 12-25 presents the solution to mankind’s bleak previous 2000 year history. There were glimpses of grace (and gracious persons) during that long period but the scene was often the spread of sin leading to judgement. Beginning in Genesis 12 this pattern is reversed, we now have the spread of blessing, hindered by sin and obstacles, but always overcome!

If we understand promised blessing to be good news we can see why Paul said in Galatians 3:8 that *the Scripture... preached the gospel to Abraham beforehand, saying, “In you all the nations shall be blessed.*

God intended to do much more through Abraham and Sarah than He revealed to them. Through their descendants and the nation of Israel comes both the word of God (Rom. 3:1-2) and the Son of God (Rom. 9:5). Furthermore their history and the religious practices given to them create an entire context for properly understanding Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

Three spheres of blessing across ages (Gen. 12:1-3)



The promises God made in Genesis 12 relate to three spheres and traverse all of history from Abraham forward.

The program of blessing begins with God blessing Abraham in 2000BC, then a nation is formed from his descendants and blessed in 1400BC (at the time of the exodus) and then finally all families of the earth are being blessed in our day.

God initiates the blessing and covenant

Having considered the historical context of Mesopotamian polytheism and idolatry it is clear that God initiated the relationship with Abram when He called him. We know only that *the LORD had said to Abram: “Get out of your country, From your family And from your father's house, To a land that I will show you* (Gen 12:1).

God also initiated the covenant expressed in chapters 15:7, 17-21 and 17:1-2. This was not a contract or a treaty where two parties may negotiate and agree. The covenants are expressions of God’s initiating to commit Himself to mankind to bless man in particular ways.

The four promises of the Abrahamic Covenant⁴

Abram, at that time childless, would have a Son by Sarah and his descendants would become a great nation outnumbering the stars of the sky (15:5, 17:2-4, 22:17). And that the promises of the covenant would be extended through successive generations (17:19).

Along with the first promise they would be given the land of Canaan as a dwelling place *from the river of Egypt to the great river, the River Euphrates* (12:7, 15:18, 17:18, see map and Josh. 15:4).

The third promise in *relational*, which becomes the central promise of the covenant, *I will be their God* (17:8). God has chosen this man and his descendants to belong to Him in a way that others do not. God promising to be *their God* implies that they are to forsake all other gods and worship and trust in Yahweh only.

The first three promises became of great significance for the people of Israel and formed the basis of their relationship with God and their attitude toward the land.

The fourth promise shows that the scope of the covenant is beyond what might be seen as a purely nationalistic context and promises uni-

versal blessings: *all people on earth will be blessed through you* (12:3, 22:18). Abraham and the nation that will come from him will become the means by which God’s blessing will extend to the entire world.

It is not an overstatement to say that the rest of the Bible from Genesis 25 forward shows how God is fulfilling these four promises; raising up the nation of Israel, settling them in the land of promise, then through Christ having the blessing spread to all nations, and finally God’s covenant people dwelling with him in a new heavens and earth (land). *Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God* (Rev 21:3).

Faith and its relationship to God’s word

The Bible’s “theology of faith” is significantly illustrated in God’s dealings with Abraham and Sarai. At it’s core it is very simple: God speaks and He expects to be believed. He makes promises to Abraham and there is nothing that Abraham can see or experience with his “natural” senses that would indicate he will have a son. This reminds us of the definition of faith given in Hebrews 11:1, *Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.*

Faith is always a response to God speaking. He calls Abram and speaks to him. Abram *has a word from God.* He is to believe it and act upon it. Leave Haran, Sarah will bear your heir, offer Isaac as a sacrifice.

See Psalm 106:12, 24. During the patriarchal period God spoke directly to them. But from the exodus forward, when the number of God’s people was greatly multiplied, Moses, as a prophet, became the primary means of God giving His word to his people. They ultimately transitioned to God’s word being written. The first notable example of this is the ten commandments. But by the end of the life of Moses God has Moses write “the law” which contains His promises and commands to Israel. The words addressed to them and us in God’s law are just as real as those spoken to the patriarchs. We can hear them and trust God accordingly just as Abraham and Sarai did.

Faith and obedience and their relationship

When God tested Abraham by commanding him to offer Isaac as a sacrifice (22:1-18), Abraham’s obedience is commended. However that obedience is the evidence of his faith¹. He believed God’s command and acted upon it. Not only is the thought of sacrificing one’s son overwhelming but in this case this son was promised to be Abraham’s heir leading to a multitude of descendants. How could God not be breaking His promise, *in Isaac your seed shall be called* (21:12)? Such questions must have been on Abraham’s mind. But by faith Abraham proceeded to carry out God’s command. Hebrews 11:17-19 explains what Abraham must have concluded.

Faith and righteousness and their relationship

Genesis 15:6 contains the first occurrence of “believed” or “faith” in the Bible. This of course doesn’t mean that there were not believing individuals prior to Abraham, we know there were. God tells Abraham to look at the stars and try to count them, indicating that his descendants will number as the stars. At this point the record tells us that, *And he believed in the LORD, and He [the Lord] accounted it to him for righteousness* (15:6).

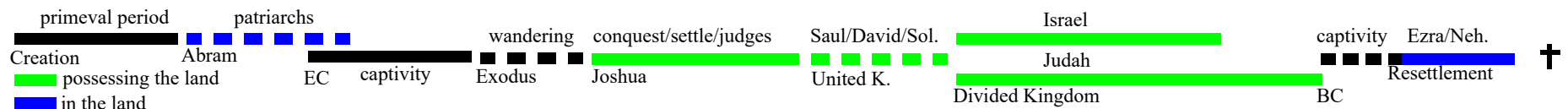
Although the law has not yet been given the meaning of righteousness can be understood from Deuteronomy 6:25. The Lord accounted Abraham’s faith as though he had kept the law, it was accounted to him for righteousness. The full understanding of this does not appear to us until we see its relationship to Abraham’s Seed, Christ. Christ’s life and sacrifice forms the basis for God’s accounting his “believing in Christ” people as righteous (Rom. 3-4).

For the meaning of the term “accounted” see also Lev. 7:18, 17:4, 1 Sam. 22:15, 19:19, Psa. 32:2.

Faith and doubt

Even though Abraham’s faith is celebrated in both testaments the record is faithful in reporting that some of his actions clearly reveal doubt and struggles with unbelief, or at least “redefining” God’s promise in a way that he can conceive of it coming to pass (which of

1. This is Jame’s (chapter 2) perspective of Abraham’s justification by works, that is, Abraham’s faith is shown to be real by his actions.



course is a form of unbelief). As in the case of going along with Sarai’s plan to have children by Hagar and 13 years later laughing in his heart and responding to God’s promise with, *Oh may Ishmael live before You*. Calling Sarah his sister also evidences Abraham struggling with some form of lack of trust. But after Isaac was born they both learned that they could have, should have, believed *in what God has spoken*, promised, to them in the first place.

The Righteous Judge of all the earth

The record of Abraham’s interactions with God regarding the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah reveal to us both Abraham’s understanding of God and God’s character.

Abraham’s *Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?* shows us that his “theology” has far exceeded that of his fathers. Yahweh is not a local deity. He is the judge of all the earth. He also always does right, He will not destroy the righteous with the wicked. But it is righteous for God to, without further warning, destroy the wicked from the face of the earth. The judgement of Sodom and Gomorrah reminds us of the early flood judgement, unexpected and final.

It is likely that the account of the judgement of Sodom and Gomorrah is in the biblical record more because of what it tells us about Abraham and God’s relation to him than God’s judgement. God reveals to Abraham what He is about to do, Abraham intercedes with God for any righteous who might be in the city, and Genesis 19:29 says that *God remembered Abraham, and sent Lot out of the midst of the overthrow, when He overthrew the cities in which Lot had dwelt*.

Patriarchal altars

Abraham built altars at Moreh, Bethel, Mamre. It is significant that though there were plenty of altars and places of “worship” throughout the land the patriarchs always built their own altars. This is indicative that they understood that Yahweh was not to be worshiped as one of the Canaanite deities.

At two of these places we are told *and there Abram called on the name of the LORD*. We are not told that sacrifices were offered but it is likely that they were.

Abraham - Genesis 11:26 - 25:7 - Typology

During this period of history three significant typologies are begun. The Priestly ministry of Melchizedek, the land, and God asking Abraham to sacrifice his son.

Melchizedek a type of Christ (Gen. 14:18-20)

The appearance of Melchizedek, greeting Abraham on his way back from the war of the kings, seems to raise more questions than it answers. He was *the priest of God most high*. He blesses Abraham and blesses God who gave Abraham the victory over his enemies.

Melchizedek was king of Salem, most likely the city that at a much later time would become Jerusalem. He was a king *and* priest. We have no idea of what sort of true worship was transpiring at Salem and there is no indication that the patriarchs associated with this worship at Salem.

Abraham paid a tithe of all the spoils he had obtained from the victory that God had granted him and Melchizedek blessed him, indicating that Melchizedek was the “greater” personage - or at least represented a greater personage.

It takes the prophetic word of Psalm 110:1-4 to see further the significance of Melchizedek. The kingly Messiah will not only be a king, but he will also be a priest, not according to the order of Levi/Aaron, but according to the order of Melchizedek.

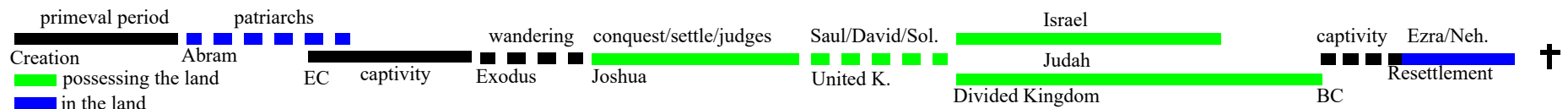
The bringing together the offices of priest and king is also foretold in a Zechariah prophecy, 6:12-13.

We do not learn of the full significance of all of this until the coming of Christ and the fuller explanation given in New Testament Scripture in Hebrews 5:6 and chapter 7.

The Scriptures leave us in no doubt regarding what is important about Melchizedek, his typological role.

The land

God *dwelling with His people* Israel, *in the land*, and giving them *rest* from all their enemies brings together the four large biblical themes indicated in the italicized words.



Prophetic passages such as Isaiah 54:2-3 indicate that Israel will be so numerous in the future that the original land space will not contain them but they will spread to the right and to the left and possess the nations.

Isaiah 60:18-22, 65:17, 22 and indicate that there is a “future” for the land that greatly exceeds the original settlement in Canaan, even what was achieved during the days of David and Solomon.

Romans 4:13 speaks that the promise to Abraham was that he would be *heir of the world* and Jesus speaks about His people *inheriting the earth* (Matt. 5:5) and that the eschatological kingdom encompasses the world and God’s people will inherit it (Matt. 25:34).

The land type finds its fulfillment in Revelation 21. “In Revelation 21:1, John sees a new heaven, a new earth, and the holy city -- New Jerusalem -- coming down out of heaven from God (Revelation 21:2). This is the ultimate object of Abraham’s hope, even Adam’s hope, -- the Eternal State. The new earth will not only fulfill the limited boundaries of the Lord’s promise to Israel, but it will expand to include the whole earth where God will dwell, he will be with all his people, and he will be the God of all his people (Revelation 21:3). All that mankind lost in Adam, Christ will have regained, resurrected, and settled forever.”⁷

It helps to see the major flow given in the Bible regarding the land throughout redemptive history which is summarized in the chart below.

As with all “types”, considering the land a type does not mean that it did not have a physical and historical reality. It certainly did, but that physical, historical instance pointed to something much greater.

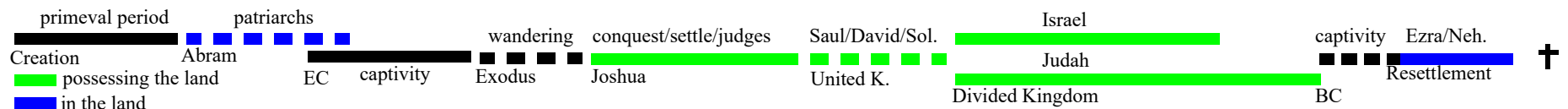
Abraham Offering Isaac, God providing the ram

Was the incident of God commanding Abraham to offer his only son and then providing a ram in his place a type of God the Father offering His Son? Of course at the time no one knew just how God would crush the serpents head and deliver His people from sin. And what are we to think of the name given to God at this juncture in history, *the Lord will Provide*, applied specifically here to Him providing the sacrifice? And what of the expression, used three times in Genesis 22, *your only son*? Is Isaac a type of Christ? An only son, miraculously born, then offered to God?

The reason we may be slow to say Isaac was a type of Christ is because there does not appear to be any NT Scripture that brings this out. But, could it be that it is so obvious that such is not needed? The question is: Did God intend that we think about Him offering His Son when we read of this account, orchestrated by God, in Abraham’s life?

We may be able to justify Isaac being a type when we remember that the ram provided by God was certainly a type of Christ. Perhaps we could think this through this way: God does require of me rightly the most precious, valuable, etc., etc. that I have - but instead of Him making me do this most costly thing - He has done it for me.

Creation	Fall	Abrahamic Covenant	Exile	Through the Messiah
Man in Eden in the Garden enjoying a perfect land with God’s presence.	Man driven out of the Garden and the land is cursed.	God promises a piece of the land and promises to dwell with His people in the land.	Man (Israel) is again driven out of the land. he loses possession of the special place.	Man will regain the land, this time forever. The land will be re-stored to eden like conditions.



Isaac - Genesis 25:11- 35:29 - History

The patriarchal history continues with Isaac and Rebekah and their two sons Jacob and Esau. The amount of detail we are given regarding Isaac is minimal in comparison to Abraham and Jacob.

Ishmael's Genealogy and descendants (Gen. 25:12-18)

Before the account focuses on Isaac, the genealogy of Abraham's first son, Ishmael is given, then we have the "genealogy" or "history" of Isaac.

Ishmael had 12 sons, six of these names are mentioned in ancient Assyrian and North Arabian inscriptions.⁵ Note the twelve "princes" - Gen. 17:20 and 25:16. These "nations", better translated as tribes or clans, spread out over a large territory to the north and east.⁶

God surely fulfilled His promise to Hagar (21:18) and Abraham (17:20) regarding Ishmael.

Rebekah's barrenness, birth of Esau and Jacob (25:19-28)

Isaac married Rebekah, the daughter of Bethuel (see family tree above), when he was 40 years old. However, for the first twenty years of their marriage they had no children. While Ishmael is having many children the child of promise is not bearing. The Lord often works in ways that for extended seasons all we can "see" is the promise.

Furthermore, God fulfilling his promise through prayer seems to be integral to how He works, Genesis 25:21.

Rebekah conceives and during her pregnancy she is alarmed at the commotion going on in her womb. *She said, "If all is well, why am I like this?" So she went to inquire of the LORD.* (Gen 25:22-23). The Lord informs her that she is carrying twins! And the struggle in her womb is "prophetic" of the conflict that will arise between two nations that will descend from her boys. Though there will be a struggle the victor will be the younger, and *the older shall serve the younger.*

The boy who came out first was red and hairy, so they named him Esau, which means hairy. Then came his brother, grasping Esau's heal, so they named him, Jacob, meaning supplanter.

The boys were very different, *Esau was a skillful hunter, a man of the field; but Jacob was a mild man, dwelling in tents.* (Gen 25:27). The record also tells us *that Isaac loved Esau because he ate of his game, but Rebekah loved Jacob* (25:28).

Esau sells his birthright to Jacob (Gen. 25:29-34)

When they were young men Jacob encouraged Esau to sell his birthright to him for a meal of bread and lentils. Jacob went so far as to have Esau swear to him regarding the sale of his birthright. Esau did and thus he despised his birthright.

Famine, move to Gerar, deception regarding Rebekah (26:1-11)

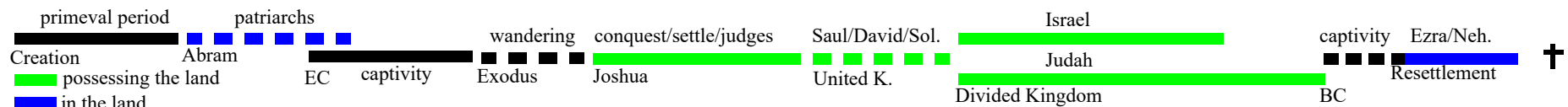
As in the days of Abraham so also during the life of Isaac there was a severe famine in the land that caused people to migrate, especially toward Egypt as Abraham had done. Isaac first moved to Gerar, a Philistine city. There God told him not to go to Egypt, but to remain in the land of Canaan. At this time God repeated the promise of Abraham to Isaac (26:2-6).

While in Gerar when the locals ask Isaac about Rebekah he fears for his life and tells them that she is his sister. This is after God had promised to Isaac to *be with you and bless you.* Abimelech oversees Isaac and Rebekah exchanging affection and concludes that Isaac has lied to him and put his people (the Philistines) in much danger (26:11). Abimelech issued a degree to his people not to touch this man (Isaac) or his wife, or be punished with death.

Isaac's prosperity, Philistine's jealousy, move (26:12-22)

God blessed Isaac greatly and he prospered in the land. So much so that the Philistines began to envy him and his success. They became belligerent and stopped up all the wells which Abraham had made when he dwelt in this area. Finally Abimelech, fearing Isaac's "clan's" strength, sent him away saying, *Go away from us, for you are much mightier than we* (26:16).

Isaac does not return to his "homeland" but moves only to the valley of Gerar. Here he locates other wells which were made by Abraham and were also stopped up by the Philistines after Abraham's death. His servants re-open these wells and dig two new wells. The Philistines quarrel with him over these new wells and claim ownership of



Chapter 2

them. Finally they dig a third well over which they do not quarrel with the Philistines.

Move to Beersheba, covenant with Abimelech (26:23-33)

Later Isaac moves to Beersheba and God repeats the promise of blessing and descendants to him there. During this period Abimelech came from Gerar with the commander of his army to make a covenant or treaty with Isaac. An earlier Abimelech had made such a treaty with Abraham. The prosperity of Isaac seemed to cause the Philistines to fear that he would seek to plunder them or rule over them. The record makes it clear that Abimelech ascribed Isaac's prosperity to Isaac's God, Yahweh. Isaac hosts a festive meal and the next day they swear an oath and Abimelech returns to Gerar.

Esau's wives (Gen. 26:34-35)

When Isaac was 100 and Esau 40, Esau took two Hittite wives and they were *a grief of mind to Isaac and Rebekah* (26:35). Domestic relations did not go well with Esau's wives.

Rebekah and Jacob deceive Isaac (27:1-45).

We do not know precisely when this event occurred in Isaac's life. He is represented as being near the end of his life. However, what follows this incident, seems to indicate that he lived at least 60 or more years after this. Perhaps he experienced a long term illness during this time from which he recovered?

Isaac thinks his time is short and he wants to give his patriarchal blessing to Esau. He asks Esau to hunt some wild game and prepare him his favorite meal and then he will bless him. Rebekah overhears this conversation and immediately launches an elaborate scheme to result in Jacob receiving the blessing instead of Esau.

While Esau is out hunting for game, Jacob follows his mother's plan, dresses as Esau, and due to Isaac's blindness, receives the blessing. Esau returns and discovers what has been done and is threatening to kill Jacob but not until Isaac passes away.

Jacob flees to Laban, finding a wife (27:46-28-22)

Rebekah realizes how angry Esau is and fears for Jacob's life and sends him to spend some time with her brother Laban's family. We will consider this journey below when considering the life of Jacob.

The Patriarchs

Also, near to this time, or at the same time, Rebekah expresses to Isaac that her life will not be worth living if Jacob marries one of the daughters of heth (27:43). Isaac commands Jacob not to take a wife from the daughters of Canaan but to go to Rebekah's father's house and take a wife from the daughters of Laban.

Jacob goes to Padan Aram, to the house of Bethuel (Gen 28:2) and ends up being there for 20 years. He then, with wives and children, returns to Isaac & Canaan (Gen. 31:18).

The death of Isaac (Gen. 35:27-29)

If we understand the record correctly decades transpire between the events of Gen. 27 (Jacob receiving Isaac's blessing) and the death of Isaac. We know almost nothing of Isaac and Rebekah's life during this period. The single reference we have is to the death of Rebekah's nurse (35:8) who went with Isaac and Rebekah when they were married (24:59). There is no record of Rebekah's death however in Jacob's final words he refers to his mother's burial in the same cave in which Abraham, Sarah, and Isaac were buried (49:31).

Isaac - Genesis 25:11- 35:29 - Theology and Typology

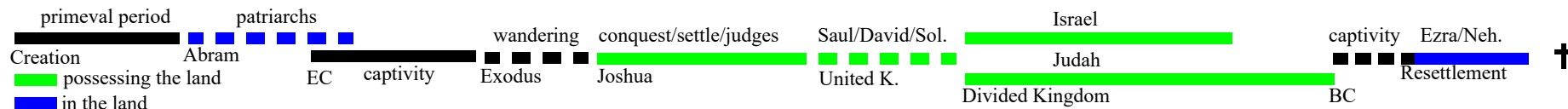
At least two "theological" matters stand out as we consider God's dealing with Isaac and Rebekah and we will discuss circumcision here.

God's unconditional election demonstrated

The case of Jacob receiving not only the promise and blessing, but also having faith that leads to justification demonstrates God's free choice, not on the basis of works, but on grace. Before the twins were born God told Rebekah that the older would serve the younger (25:23). Romans 9:10-11 makes it clear that this decision on God's part was not based upon the fact that Jacob would display some superior traits over Esau. Paul discussed this whole situation in Israel's history to prove that not all ethnic Israel would be saved and that this situation was not an indication that God's promises to Abraham had failed (Rom. 9:6).

The Sovereignty of God in brining about His choice.

As the history unfolds regarding Esau and Jacob we see Jacob obtaining the birthright by deceptive and sinful means (wrong), Esau despising his birthright (wrong), Isaac trying to bless Esau (wrong,



see below) and Rebekah deceiving Isaac into blessing Jacob (wrong, but what God intended).

The fact that Isaac was intending to give his dying patriarchal blessing without the family present indicates that he was aware that serious questions existed regarding Esau’s worthiness to receive it. Notice that when Jacob pronounces the blessing he gathers the whole family and he doesn’t give the firstborn blessing to Ruben, his firstborn, but to Judah, because Ruben had forfeited it by his sexual immorality.

Considering all of this might lead us to exonerate Rebekah since she knew God had said the older will serve the younger and she likely knew that Esau had despised his birthright. Does she enter as the one who “saves the day”, ensuring that the younger does rule over the older? Not likely. We cannot do evil that good may come. We are left seeing the sovereignty of God working through and allowing the sinful actions of many, yet bringing about God’s original intention.

Contrast this situation with that of David becoming king. There are instructive parallels. David is anointed very young to succeed Saul. And many times Saul tries to kill him and David has opportunities to eliminate Saul. Surely it’s ok for him to do so. Wrong. David knows it’s wrong to harm the Lord’s anointed, Saul in this case. So, he trusts God and ultimately Saul is removed and David becomes king.

Circumcision as the sign of belonging to the covenant.

Circumcision was an intrinsic part of the Abrahamic covenant. So much so that if it were refused one would be cut off from the covenant (17:14). Circumcision was a mark of belonging to God and being in a special relationship with Him. He had chosen Abraham and his descendants to be His people. The sign reminded them of their relationship to Yahweh. They were to respond to this blessing by trusting in Yahweh and obeying Him. The outward sign was to be a mark of inward consecration. Some did trust in God and obey Him, but many did not (Deut. 10:15).

Furthermore, the association of the sign of the covenant and procreation indicates that the raising up of a people is at the heart of God’s covenant with Abraham. God promised Abraham many descendants. The sign would remind them that the blessing of Children is from the

Lord.⁸

Circumcision a type of Christ and the Holy Spirit’s work

Circumcision functioned as more than a sign of belonging to the covenant and a reminder of the promise of many descendants. It was also a type of the work of Christ and the Holy Spirit that all members of the New Covenant (inaugurated by Christ) would receive.

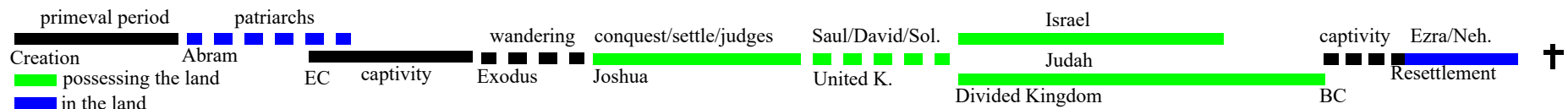
In the Abrahamic and Mosaic covenants the *externals* are prominent while the internal reality of what the external represents may or may not be present. In the New Covenant the *internals* are prominent and all the people of God, the members of the covenant, possess the *internals*.

That this *external to internal* change was coming can be seen by considering the following OT texts regarding circumcision; Lev. 26:40-43, Deut. 10:15, 30:6, Jer. 4:4, 6:10, 9:25-26.

That the internal change *has come in Christ* can be seen by considering the following NT texts regarding circumcision; Rom. 2:25-29, Col. 2:11, 1 Cor. 7:18, Philp. 3:3.

The “mark” of belonging to God now that Christ has come and the Holy Spirit has been poured out is *having the Spirit* (Philip 3:3, Rom. 8:9, 7:6, 2:25-26)

One’s circumcision becoming uncircumcision if you failed to keep the law (Rom. 2:25, Gal. 5:3) indicates that during the OT period circumcision was to remind the Jew to trust and obey Yahweh. They were to respond with faith and be grateful that Yahweh had chosen them to be His people. But few did. Only by the Holy Spirit circumcising *the heart* do we, can we, begin to love God. In Israel’s case, notice Isa. 44:3-5.



Jacob & Joseph - Genesis 27:42 - 50:13 - History

In contrast to Isaac a major portion of Genesis is devoted to the life of Jacob and his first son by Rachel, Joseph. This history is complex, involving many places, people and events.

Journeys to Laban, God appears to him (27:46-28:22)

We last left Jacob leaving his father's household fleeing from his brother Esau and heading for Haran where Laban, his uncle, lived (27:42). He is also going to Haran to find a wife from among Laban's daughters per Isaac's direction.

This was a journey of approximately five hundred miles. The only detail we are given is that near the beginning of this journey God appeared to him in a vision of a ladder extending from heaven to earth. The Lord stood above (or beside) the ladder and repeated the promises He had made to Abraham to Jacob (28:10-15). This was the first time God spoke personally to Jacob. He was at least a few years over 40 at this time.

Jacob made an interesting vow at this time which we will discuss during the theology section (28:20-21).

Meets Rachel, agrees to serve Laban seven years (29:1-20)

When Jacob arrives in the *land of the people of the east* (29:1) he meets some locals by a well. These locals are from Haran and he inquires if they know Laban the son of Nahor - they do - and look - Laban's daughter, who is a shepherdess, was approaching with a flock to be watered. Jacob removes the stone from the well, kisses Rachel (on the cheek - an affectionate greeting), he waters the sheep, Laban greets Jacob, emotions run high as Rebekah's brother meets his nephew for the first time (?).

After Jacob stays a month working for Laban, Laban says that he should be paid for his labors and asks Jacob what his wages should be. By this time Jacob has his heart firmly set on Rachel and replies, *I will serve you seven years for Rachel your younger daughter*. Laban replies, *It is better that I give her to you than that I should give her to another man. Stay with me.*(29:18-19).

Laban deceives Jacob (Gen. 29:21-30)

The Patriarchs

Seven years zip by and seem like only a few days to Jacob because he loved Rachel. At the end of the seven years (Jacob is at least in his late forties), he asks Laban for Rachel to be his wife, Laban agrees and plans a week of celebrations. But, on the evening the celebrations begin he gives Leah, Rachel's older sister, to Jacob. Jacob doesn't realize what has been done until the next morning! Leah is now his wife. Jacob who had deceived his brother twice now himself is on the receiving end of being deceived. Laban's excuse spoken to Jacob, *It must not be done so in our country, to give the younger before the firstborn* (29:26).

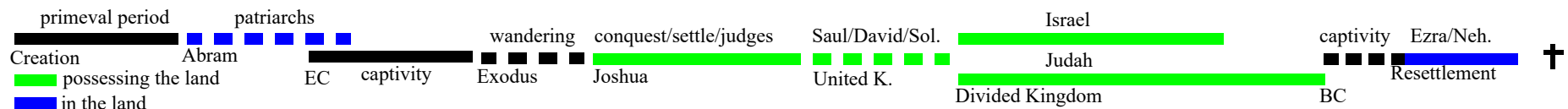
Laban asks Jacob to honor Leah during the week's festivities and after the week is completed he promises to give him Rachel *if he agrees to serve him another seven years!* Jacob agrees and he now has two wives and is obligated to serve Laban for another seven years.

Children by Leah, Rachel is barren, sisters compete (29:31-30:24)

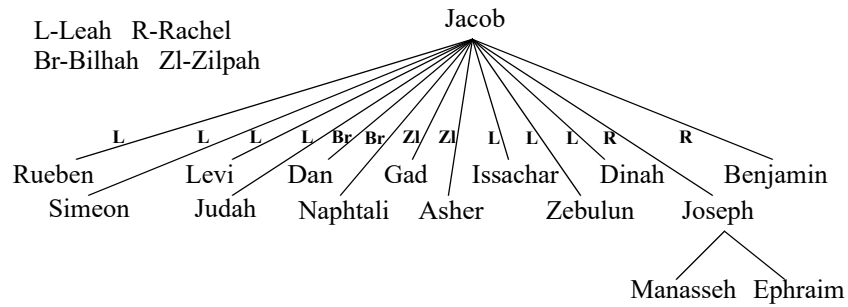
Leah begins bearing children but Rachel cannot conceive. Rachel's barrenness and Leah's fruitfulness is due to God noticing that Leah was unloved (29:31). A fierce rivalry develops between the sisters in regard to bearing children.

After Leah has four sons, Rachel, out of desperation gives her maid, Bilhah (like Sarah), to Jacob to bear children for her (30:1-3). Bilhah bears two sons and Leah notices that she has stopped being able to conceive, and is still unloved. So she gives her maid, Zilpah, to Jacob to bear children. The competition goes on in Haran until 12 children, 11 sons and one daughter, are born. Rachel ultimately conceives and bears Joseph. Leah won by a large margin. Including the children born by their maids, Leah had 9 and Rachel 3 while in Haran. Rachel would bear one more son after they left Haran. Leah bore no more children after they left Haran. These 12 were born during a 13 year period by four women.

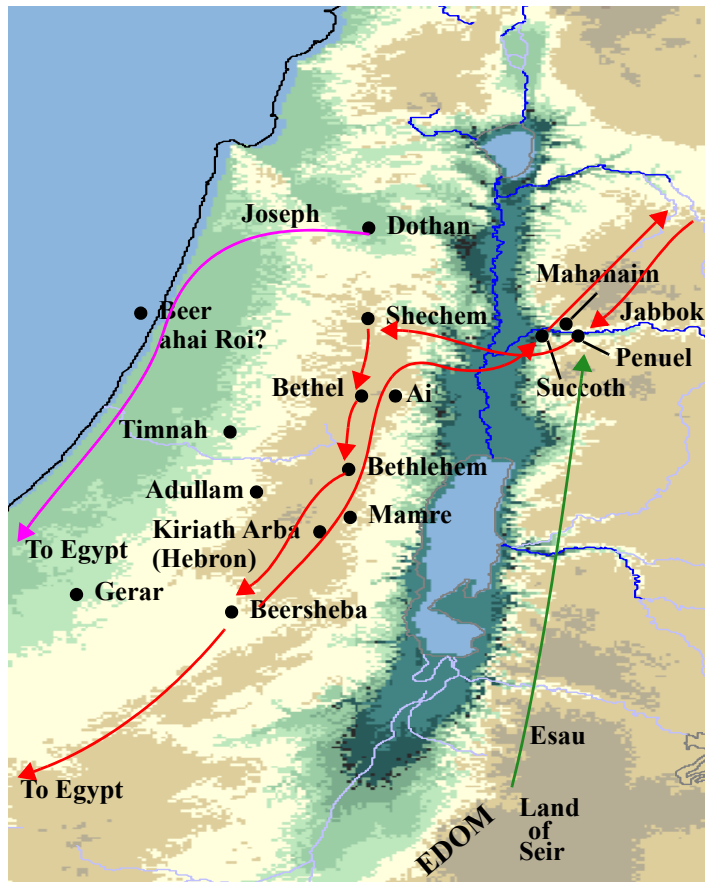
The mother's named their offspring and the names of the 11 sons born in Haran tell the story of the sister's struggles (29:31-30:24).



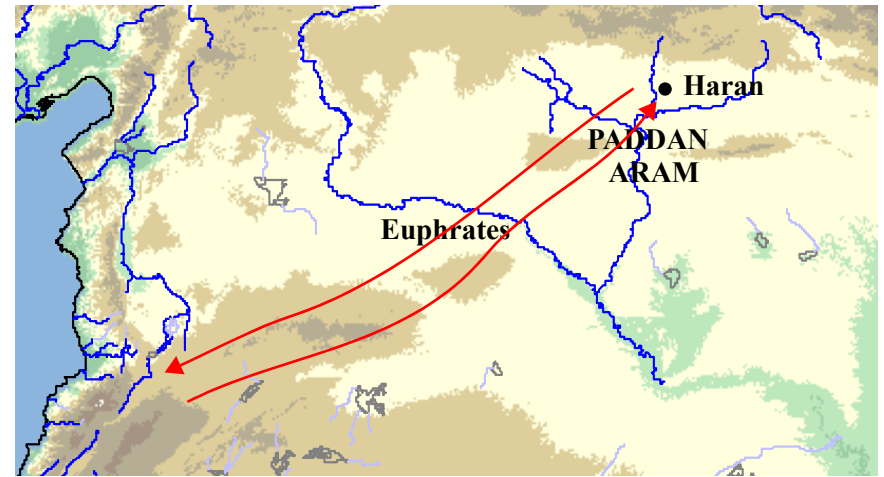
Jacob's Family



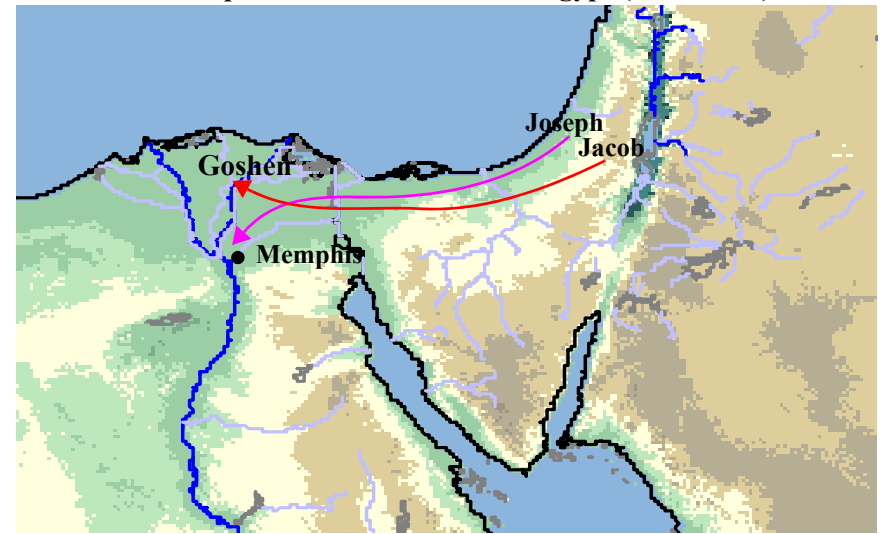
Jacob's Migrations



Jacob's Travel to Laban (Haran, north east)

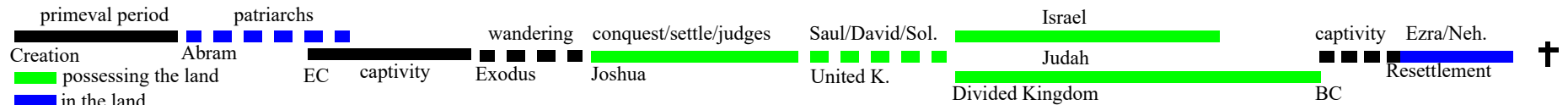


Joseph and Jacob's Travel to Egypt (south west)



Attempts to leave Laban, remains another six years (30:25-43)

After Joseph is born Jacob is ready to return to Canaan but Laban talks him out of it and they enter into another "contract". Jacob will continue to tend Laban's flocks and be paid by retaining all the specked, spotted and brown sheep and goats for his own flocks.



Laban quickly removed all speckled and spotted animals from his flocks and gave them to his sons to tend three miles away from Jacob! Thus the flocks Jacob began with under this new arrangement were all monochrome and we know (due to a modern understanding of genetics) that likely 25% of the animals still carried the recessive trait for “spottedness”, etc. Laban thought removing the spotted animals would ensure that Jacob would receive only a few sheep and goats. Jacob does two things - his famous stripped sticks which he places in front of the animals when the mate (30:37-39) - and other techniques which we today would call selective breeding (30:41-42). Just what Jacob believed regarding the sticks we may never know. Did he consider this a form of magic? Did he believe that the animal’s offspring would be influenced by what they saw while conceiving? Was he playing a mind game with Laban? Within some years Jacob became extremely prosperous, so much so that Laban’s sons believe he has taken their father’s wealth. Jacob recognized that Laban’s countenance *was not favorable toward him as before*. At this time *the LORD said to Jacob, “Return to the land of your fathers and to your family, and I will be with you.”* (31:2-3).

Flees Laban and Laban overtakes Jacob (Gen. 31).

Jacob had been with Laban for 20 years. He has had Leah and Rachel as wives for 13 of those years. Rueben is around 14 years old and Joseph 6. Jacob discuss his desire to leave with Leah and Rachel. He mentions that God gave him a vision and that God caused so many of the heard to bear spotted sheep and that he should now return to the land of his family. They agree and tell Jacob, *All the wealth that God has taken away from our father belongs to us and to our children. Now then, whatever God has said to you, do* (31:16).

They plan to leave stealthily and when Laban is gone for three days of sheering sheep they leave. Laban returns and discovers them gone. He pursues them and after seven days overtakes them.

Laban is very upset (31:26-28) but God warned him not to harm of speak evil against Jacob. The men exchange some “colorful” discourse regarding the situation. Certainly Jacob has displayed much greater integrity during the 20 years than Laban. During the confrontation Laban accuses Jacob of not only leaving without allowing him

to say farewell to his daughters and grandchildren but of stealing his gods! To this Jacob responds with indignation and makes a foolish oath, *With whomever you find your gods, do not let him live. In the presence of our brethren, identify what I have of yours and take it with you*. He did not know that Rachel had taken the gods! Laban searches everyone’s tents and saddle bags and finally comes to Rachel who is still mounted on her camel. She asks to be excepted from dismounting for reasons of discretion. Laban consents and doesn’t search her bags.

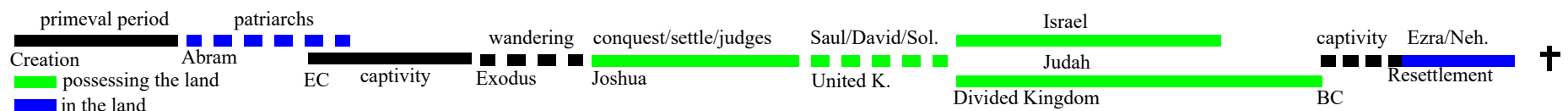
Laban and Jacob draw up a “covenant” between them not to seek each other’s harm and they part the next morning. After 20 years Jacob is returning to Canaan and Isaac. Twenty years ago he left with the shirt on his back. Now he’s returning with four wives, 12 children, servants and much livestock.

Jacob prepares to meet Esau, wrestles with God (Gen. 32-33:4)

Though Jacob must have been relieved to have made a break from Laban he has a “pit in his stomach” because he knows he must now face Esau, who twenty years earlier, desired to kill him for deceiving him and stealing his birthright and blessing.

As he heads south *the angels of God met him* and he said *this is God’s camp. And he called the name of that place Mahanaim* (32:1-2). He sends messengers to tell Esau that he is returning with live stock and servants saying, *and I have sent to tell my lord, that I may find favor in your sight* (32:5). The servants return and tell Jacob that Esau is also *coming to meet you, and four hundred men are with him* (32:6)! With this news Jacob becomes *greatly afraid and distressed*.

He takes defensive measures and divides his company of wives, children and servants into two companies so that if the first is attacked the others may flee before Esau discovers there are more (32:7-8). He now prays what is likely the most humble and fervent prayer of his life thus far (32:9-12). His third element of strategy is to appease Esau with gifts. He sends 550 animals, 450 of which are females, to Esau in three separated groups. He instructs his servants to reply to Esau when he asks who they are, *They are your servant Jacob’s. It is a present sent to my lord Esau; and behold, he also is behind us* (Gen 32:18).



The night before Esau reaches them the company crosses over the river Jabbok but Jacob stays behind by himself and a “Man” meets him and wrestles with him until the break of day (32:26-30). Jacob realizes this “Man” is able to give a blessing so Jacob refuses to let him go saying, *I will not let You go unless You bless me!*. Finally the “Man” injures Jacob’s hip, renames him to Israel (meaning God prevails, or fights), blesses him and says, *you have struggled with God and with men, and have prevailed*. Jacob names the place Penuel (face of God) saying, *I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved*.

When the Sun rises Jacob limps across the Jabbok and he can see Esau and his company of 400 men coming. He arranges his family in a manner that foretells of problems to come (33:1-2). Jacob approached Esau first bowing seven times as he approached him. Esau came running and hugged and kissed him and they both wept!

What is difficult to understand in this account is why didn’t the servants who first met Esau know that he would be favorable to Jacob? Or did Esau have some change of heart suddenly when he was in route to meet Jacob? That seems unlikely. It’s also obvious that Esau has prospered greatly materially during the last 20 years.

Reconciles with Esau, settles in Succoth, moves to Shechem (33)

Esau meets Jacob’s family and initially refuses to receive the gifts of livestock but finally Jacob persuades him. He offers to travel with Jacob or at least leave some of his men with them to assist them. He appears genuinely concerned about his brothers welfare and is assuming Jacob will, or at least trying to encourage him, to settle near him. Jacob graciously turns down all of Esau’s offers. However, he did say that he would travel slowly *until I come to my lord in Seir* (33:14). But from the record it appears he had no intention of settling near Esau and he is misleading his brother once again.

As you read the “brotherly” interchange Esau appears to be much more “comfortable” with Jacob, than Jacob is with him. Nothing regarding the past is discussed. The men are now both in their sixties. Both are materially prosperous and have started significant families. Through Ishmael, Jacob, and Esau the Lord is giving Abraham many descendants.

They part and it is likely that they never see each other again until Isaac’s death - there’s nothing in the record to indicated that they did.

Jacob travels only a short distance from Penuel (8 miles) and settles in Succoth, just east of the Jordan river, for some years. For reasons that are not given he later crosses the Jordan, traveling west another twenty miles and settles just outside of Shechem. He is now in the land of promise but not possessing it. He buys a piece of property from the children of Hamor who dwelt in Shechem and there builds an altar and called it *El Elohe Israel*, meaning, El is the God of Israel, using his new name (33:20).

He is approximately 75 miles north of his father who is living at Beer-sheba. At this time Jacob is likely anticipating a lengthy and peaceful stay on property owned by him with an altar to his God. However, that was not to be the case and little did he know just how much still lay ahead.

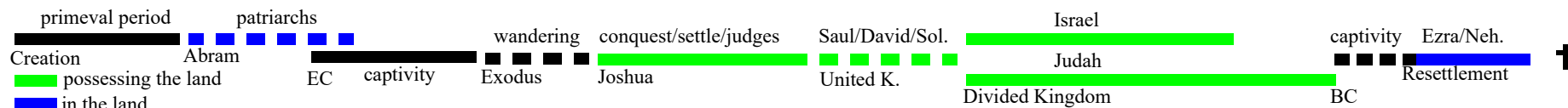
Dinah is defiled, Levi and Simeon destroy Shechem (Gen. 34)

While dwelling in Shechem Dinah (Leah’s daughter and last child) meets the women of Shechem. “King” Hamor’s son, Shechem, seduces her (this was likely not a rape, vs. 3). Her brothers, especially Simeon and Levi, are enraged.

Hamor and Shechem ask Jacob to give Dinah to be Shechem’s wife and for the two “clans” to enter into an agreement to dwell together, share the land, and give their sons and daughters to each other in marriage (vss. 8-18). Somehow Jacob “drops out” of these “negotiations” and Simeon and Levi deceive Hamor into agreeing to having all their males circumcised and then they would intermarry with them.

Hamor must have accepted that Simeon and Levi accurately represented Jacob. Hamor and Shechem “sell” this offer to their towns people, they all agree and all their males are circumcised. Three days later, while the men are at their weakest, Simeon and Levi kill all the males of the city and remove Dinah from Shechem’s house. It is not clear if she was there willingly or being held as part of the “negotiation”. The other brothers pillage the city and take their livestock, wives and children.

Jacob finds out about all of this after the fact. He reproves Simeon



and Levi and now fears that he will be killed along with his whole household (vss 29-31). Their only response to their father is, *Should he treat our sister like a harlot* (34:31)? To this Jacob does not reply. In the eyes of Jacob’s sons, Jacob appears weak and to have little care for his daughter. Notice that they say, “our sister”, not “your daughter”.

Jacob had feared destruction by Esau, now he fears destruction by the people of the cities near Shechem.

This narrative is among those that critics raise to discredit the Bible. It describes the barbaric behavior of Simeon and Levi yet the narrator does not openly condemn them, and may side with them? Though he also represents the Hamorites as acting in good faith which aggravates the guilt of Simeon and Levi. Also Jacob’s silence in response to Simeon and Levi’s question (vs. 31) may indicate that he reluctantly agrees, but he is now distressed, fearing for his own life. Jacob and his sons do not look good - to say the least - in this whole matter. Thus critics seize on passages like this, saying the Bible is corrupt since it speaks so highly of Jacob in other places. The Bible is not a polished book - it shows the best, and the worst, of its “heros”.

Move to Bethel, purges household of foreign gods (35:1-15)

God tells Jacob to move to Bethel, approximately 20 miles south, leaving behind the land he owned in Shechem, and commands him to build an altar there. Jacob now returns to the place where God first appeared to him when he fled from Esau 30-40? years ago.

Jacob, on his own initiative, tells all in his household to *put away the foreign gods that are among you, purify yourselves, and change your garments* (35:2). They complied and gave Jacob their gods and removed their ear rings - which they obviously associated with their gods. Rachel must have turned over Laban’s teraphim at this time. Jacob buries them under a tree.

As they journeyed *the terror of God was upon the cities that were all around them, and they did not pursue the sons of Jacob* (35:5).

While dwelling in Bethel, Deborah, Rebekah’s (Jacob’s mother) nurse (24:58-59) died and was buried outside of Bethel. Why she is in Jacob’s household at this time we do not know. And this is likely an

indication that Rebekah is no longer living. If this is true then Rebekah never saw Jacob after he fled to Laban’s and she never saw any of her grandchildren.

After Deborah’s death God appears to Jacob, reiterates his name change to Israel which He had made at Peniel and renews the promises of the Abrahamic covenant to Jacob (35:9-13).

Move to Eder, Benjamin, Rachel dies, Rueben’s sin (35:16-26)

For reasons not given in the narrative, sometime after the death of Deborah and God appearing to Jacob, he moves again further south to Eder (somewhere between Bethlehem and Hebron). However during the move prior to reaching Ephrath Rachel gives birth to Benjamin, but dies as a result. She was still a relatively young woman. Why they were traveling while she was pregnant we do not know. She had asked for and expected another son (30:24) but lost her life in the process. Jacob has recently buried Rebekah’s nurse and now he is confronted with another great grief though he receives his twelfth son, and a second son from Rachel. Rachel is buried somewhere on the way to Ephrath (35:19).

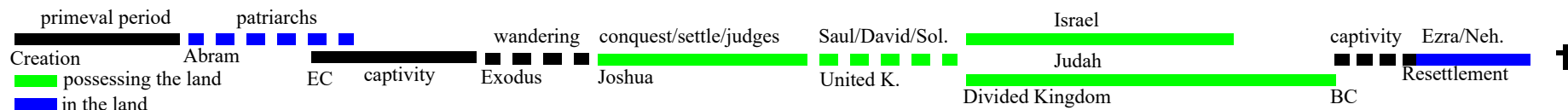
Jacob continued their journey to Migdal-Eder. While settled there for sometime Rueben fornicates with Bilhah (deceased Rachel’s maid) and the record simply says, *and Israel heard about it* (35:22). What is going on here may be more than two people engaged in sexual immorality, which of course they were. It may be Rueben’s attempt, as the first-born, to take control of the family, or at least make such a statement (see the cases of Abner with Saul’s concubine Rizpah, Absalom taking David’s ten concubines, and how Solomon interpreted Adonijah’s request regarding Abishag).

Dwells in Mamre (Hebron) and Isaac dies, (Gen. 35:27-29)

Finally Jacob returns to Mamre where Isaac dwelt. How long he was here before Isaac dies we do not know. Isaac had time with his grandsons and granddaughter. When Isaac dies Esau appears back on the scene and he and Jacob bury their father in the plot of land that Abraham had originally purchased for Sarah’s burial.

Genealogy of Esau, Seir, and kings of Edom (Gen. 36)

-46- With the history of Isaac formally completed the Genesis record now



gives an extensive genealogy of Esau (vss. 1-19) through three generations showing the proliferation of the Edomites. Verses 6-7 tell of a time when Esau and Jacob separated due to the size of their flocks and the land not being able to sustain them. Where this event fits in with the history of Jacob is unclear.

Genesis 36 is unique in that a portion of it (vss. 20-30) relates the history of the land of Edom *before* Esau settled there by giving the genealogy of Seir the Horite (vs. 20). According to Deuteronomy 2:12 Esau’s descendants displaced Seir’s just as Israel did the Canaanites.

In verses 31-39 we have a list of *the kings who reigned in the land of Edom before any king reigned over the children of Israel* which covers eight generations of Edom’s history. This would be the time period before Saul (the first king over Israel), possibly contemporaneous with the period of the Judges and earlier. This list must have been inserted into Genesis long after Moses wrote the book since it refers to Israel’s rule by kings, i.e. post Saul. It’s likely added here because this is the place where the history of Seir and Esau are to be found.

What is striking about this “king” list is that it is the only list of kings from the Ancient Near East which is not dynastic, i.e. succession to the throne based on heredity. How succession did occur is not clear. If the eight generations go back from Saul then there is some similarity with the “judges” in Israel who were not chosen based on heredity.⁹

Chapter 36 ends with a list of *the names of the chiefs [or clans?] of Esau, according to their families and their places, by their names(36:40-43)*. Just how this list of names (places?) relates to Esau’s genealogy in verses 1-19, and especially to the “chiefs or clans” of verses 15-19 is not clear. 7 of the 11 names appear only here, and nowhere in the earlier genealogy (vss. 1-19).

This is also the last we hear of Esau and the focus of the rest of Genesis (except for chapter 38, see below) is on Jacob and Joseph.

Joseph hated by his brothers, sold as a slave (Gen. 37)

Jacob favored Joseph since he was the firstborn son of Rachel. This caused his brothers to deeply resent him. Matters were not helped by the fact that Joseph, while tending sheep with his older brothers, brought a bad report to Jacob regarding them. Jacob went so far as to

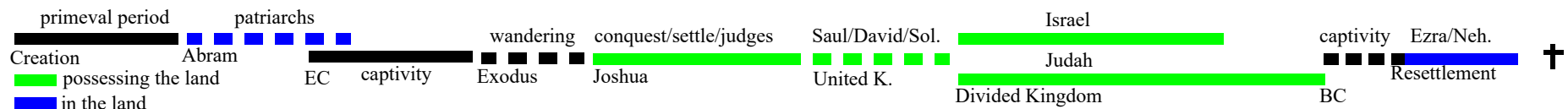
make a special colored tunic for Joseph. Of course Joseph wore it. We are told that *when his brothers saw that their father loved him more than all his brothers, they hated him and could not speak peaceably to him (37:4)*.

Joseph also has two dreams that represent his family, including his father and mother, bowing down to him. He shares these dreams with his brothers and Jacob (37:5-11). The brothers are indignant and Jacob reproves him but makes a mental note of the matter since he too had dreamed a dream in which God had revealed Himself to him.

While Joseph’s brothers were feeding the flock in Dothan, approximately 60 miles north, Israel decides to send Joseph to *go and see if it is well with your brothers and well with the flocks, and bring back word to me (37:14)*. Israel seems not to realize how deeply Joseph’s brothers hate him. He has no idea the danger he put Joseph in. Joseph went, wearing the colored tunic of course, and his brothers recognize him from afar off. Before Joseph comes near they plot to kill him. Rueben intervenes and urges them not to shed blood but to throw him into a pit. His intention being to return later and retrieve him. They agree, strip him of his cloak, put him in a pit with no water and sit down and eat (37:17-25).

Judah sees Ishmaelite-Midianite¹⁰ traders approaching and decides they really ought not to let him die but sell him as a slave to the traders. For reasons not explained Rueben was gone while his brothers sold Joseph to the traders for 20 shekels of silver. He later returns to the pit and is dismayed that Joseph is gone. They kill a goat, stain Joseph’s infamous tunic with its blood and present the cloak to their father saying, *We have found this. Do you know whether it is your son’s tunic or not? (37:32)*. Jacob draws the conclusion that the brothers intended, *It is my son’s tunic. A wild beast has devoured him. Without doubt Joseph is torn to pieces (37:33)*. He mourns for many days, *And all his sons and all his daughters arose to comfort him; but he refused to be comforted, and he said, ‘For I shall go down into the grave to my son in mourning’ (37:35)*.

Another elaborate deception executed. Meanwhile the traders sell Joseph in Egypt to Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh and captain of the guard (37:36). Joseph was 17 at this time.



Judah and Tamar (Gen. 38)

The author interrupts his history of Joseph to describe the events taking place with Judah while Joseph is in Egypt. Judah moves some distance from his brothers befriends Hirah and through him meets a Canaanite girl and marries her. She bear him three sons, Er, Onan and Shelah. Judah finds a wife for Er, Tamar. Without any explanation before Er and Tamar have any children we are told, *But Er, Judah's firstborn, was wicked in the sight of the LORD, and the LORD killed him (38:7).*

Judah commands Onan to perform the duty of a brother-in-law for Tamar on behalf of his deceased brother Er, that is, enable her to bear a son (38:8). He does not tell Er to marry her. Judah is not really concerned about Tamar, he's concerned that Er, his firstborn, died without a son.

Onan behaves deceitfully, as if he is fulfilling his duty, but he is not, and Tamar does not conceive. He does not want Tamar or his deceased brother to have a legitimate heir. If Tamar bore a son in this situation he would be in the position of Er's first born. Onan does not want to father a son that would prevent him from receiving his father's inheritance.

This practice common in the cultures concurrent with the patriarchal period is called levirate marriage. The Hebrew language has a specific verb, *yabam* (relating to the term for brother-in-law) for what the brother-in-law is to do. English has the term *levirate*. Onan was to levirate her. Levir is latin for brother-in-law. Most English translations use the phrase *perform the duty of a husband's brother to her* to translate *yabam* (Deut. 25:5-10). Though this was a cultural practice at the time of the patriarchs we can see from Deut. 25:5-10 how seriously God took this situation.

Onan behaved as if he were performing this duty but he was not (another deception) *and the thing which he did displeased the LORD; therefore He killed him also (38:10).*

Judah tells Tamar that she should return to her father's house until Shelah is of age and that he would give her to Shelah, but he has no intention of doing this *for he said [to himself!] "Lest he also die like*

his brothers" (38:11). He obviously does not understand why God killed his two sons.

Judah's wife dies, Judah still has not given Tamar to Shelah and she realizes he has no intention of doing so. Someone tells her that Judah is traveling to the place where his sheep are being sheared and she disguises herself as a prostitute along the road. She baits him and he goes along and she conceives. In the exchange she obtains his signet cord and staff.

A few months later Judah receives a report that Tamar has played the harlot and *is with child by harlotry (38:24)*. Judah responds saying, *"Bring her out and let her be burned!" (38:24)*. However, *When she was brought out, she sent to her father-in-law, saying, "By the man to whom these belong, I am with child." And she said, "Please determine whose these are-- the signet and cord, and staff" (38:25)*. Does not her last statement sound strikingly like what Judah said to Jacob regarding Joseph's tunic?! Judah who deceived his father has now been deceived by his daughter-in-law.

Judah responded, *She has been more righteous than I, because I did not give her to Shelah my son (38:26)*. We are told that he never again had relations with her.

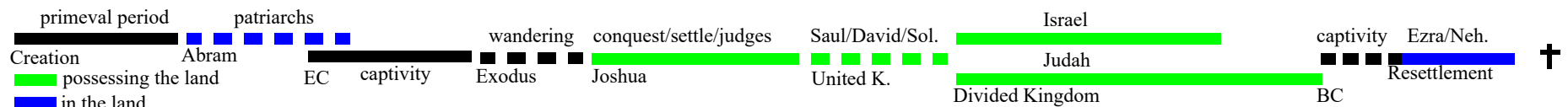
Tamar has twins whom the midwife names Zerah and Perez. David and Christ descend from Perez.

Joseph prospers in Egypt until ... (Gen. 39)

Returning to the account of Joseph we find him as a servant (slave) in Potiphar's house. *The LORD was with Joseph, and he was a successful man; (39:2)*. So successful that Potiphar put him in charge of virtually everything in his household. God also blessed Potiphar's house because of Joseph and Potiphar realized this (39:1-6).

After some years Potiphar's wife tries to seduce Joseph. He resists and replies to her and we discover that Joseph has become a godly man (39:8-9). She is persists, *so it was, as she spoke to Joseph day by day, that he did not heed her, to lie with her or to be with her (39:10)*.

Finally one day, when they are alone in the house, she lays hands on him. In this situation he wisely runs out of the house. However, she held onto his garment such that it was torn from him - he must have



struggled to get free from her. She ends up with his garment. She calls to other men and launches another deception, that Joseph tried to rape her (39:13-15). She shows Joseph’s garment to Potiphar when he gets home and repeats the same story. He is angry and puts Joseph into the king’s prison. He most likely could of had Joseph executed. Did he not because he had some doubts about his wife’s story?

Joseph prospers in prison, the baker and butler (39:21-40:23)

While in prison God gave Joseph favor in the sight of the keeper of the prison and he ends up being in charge of the prison.

After some time two new inmates arrive, Pharaoh’s chief baker and chief butler. Pharaoh had been angry with them. One night they both have dreams and are distressed because they cannot determine the significance of their dreams. God gave Joseph the ability to interpret their dreams. Good news for the chief butler - in three days he will be restored to his position and Pharaoh’s favor. Bad news for the chief Baker - in three days he will be hanged. Joseph, knowing the butler will return to Pharaoh asks him to *remember me when it is well with you, and please show kindness to me; make mention of me to Pharaoh, and get me out of this house. For indeed I was stolen away from the land of the Hebrews; and also I have done nothing here that they should put me into the dungeon* (40:14-15). The butler is restored as Joseph predicted but he forgets about Joseph.

Joseph spends two more years in prison (41:1 - 41:45)

Two more years pass and Pharaoh has two dreams. In the first he sees seven fat and fine looking cows feeding in a meadow and then seven ugly and gaunt cows arise and eat up the fat ones, yet they remain as ugly and gaunt. In the second dream he sees seven plump heads of grain grow up and then seven thin and blighted heads grow up and devour the plump ones. Pharaoh asks his magicians and wise men to interpret the dreams but none of them are able to explain the dreams. This situation causes the butler to remember Joseph and he tells Pharaoh of *a young Hebrew man, a servant of the captain of the guard, that had interpreted his dream.*

Pharaoh calls for Joseph, tells him his dreams, and Joseph explains that the dreams refer to seven years of great plenty followed by seven

years of severe famine. Joseph advises Pharaoh to put someone in charge to store up large amounts of grain during the seven fat years which can be sold during the seven years of famine. Pharaoh recognized that God is with Joseph and appoints him to the position (41:38-45). To formalize Joseph’s position in Egypt Pharaoh renames him with an Egyptian name and gives him an Egyptian wife. Asenath, Joseph’s new bride, is the daughter of Poti-Pherah, priest of On. On is “Heliopolis” (sun city) located on the Nile river in lower Egypt. Joseph was thirty years old at this time.

Preparations for the famine, sons born to Joseph (41:46-52)

Joseph spends the next seven years creating grain storage facilities in every city. A massive amount was accumulated, so much so that they *stopped counting, for it was immeasurable* (41:49). During this time Joseph has two sons. He named them Manasseh, meaning “making forgetful” and Ephraim, meaning “fruitfulness” (41:52).

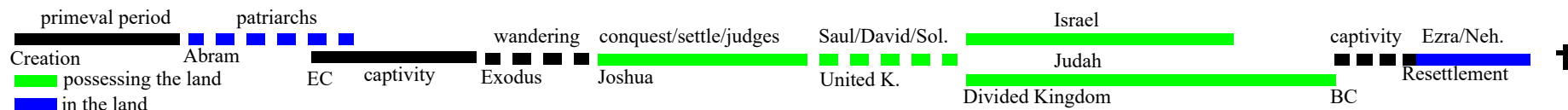
The famine begins (Gen .41:53-57)

The famine was severe throughout all of Egypt and under Joseph’s authority Pharaoh sold grain to the people. The surrounding countries, not having received a “Divine revelation” regarding the coming famine, were not prepared. Hearing that there was grain in Egypt, people began to go to Egypt to buy grain.

Jacob sends his sons to Egypt to buy grain (Gen. 42)

Abraham and Isaac lived through famines which caused them to migrate and now it is Jacob’s turn. *When Jacob saw that there was grain in Egypt, Jacob said to his sons, “Why do you look at one another?” And he said, “Indeed I have heard that there is grain in Egypt; go down to that place and buy for us there, that we may live and not die”* (42:1-2). Jacob sent the ten brothers, but he did not send Benjamin saying, *“Lest some calamity befall him”* (42:4). It’s been about 21 years since Joseph’s “death”.

This was a trip of 250 to 300 miles. The ten arrive in Egypt and as foreigners are brought before Joseph and bow down before him and request to buy grain. Joseph’s dreams are being fulfilled. Joseph recognizes them but they do not recognize him! It’s been about 21 years since the brothers sold Joseph to the Midianite traders. He is now in



39 or 40. He acted as a stranger to them and spoke roughly to them. After questioning them he accused them of being spies (42:7). During the questioning they tell Joseph that they have a younger brother. Joseph says they will be tested by bringing their younger brother before Joseph. He then put them in prison for three days, after this he insists that one of them be held in Egypt while they take grain to their father's house and they must return with Benjamin if they desire their other brother to be released. It is now payback time and they know it. Simeon is left behind and Joseph has him bound in their presence (read 42:7-24).

Joseph sells them the grain and they return to Canaan and to Jacob without Simeon! They tell Jacob all that had happened and when they open the sacks of grain their money, which they paid to Joseph for the grain, is in their sacks! They are all afraid and Jacob exclaims, "You have bereaved me: Joseph is no more, Simeon is no more, and you want to take Benjamin. All these things are against me" (42:36). Did Jacob at this time suspect that they were somehow responsible for Joseph's "death"?

Ruben swears to Jacob that he can kill his two sons if he doesn't return Benjamin and asks Jacob to put Benjamin in his hands. But Jacob refuses to allow him to take Benjamin to Egypt to secure Simeon's release (42:37-38). Simeon is now in prison in Egypt for an extended period of time.

The brothers go to Egypt a second time (43:1-15)

After some time their grain supply is exhausted and Israel tells his sons to go again to Egypt and buy some food. Judah "reminds" his father that they cannot return and see "the man" (i.e. Joseph) unless they bring Benjamin. Judah, speaking for all of them says to Jacob, *If you send our brother with us, we will go down and buy you food. But if you will not send him, we will not go down* (43:4-5). After more heated interaction and Judah pledging to be surety for Benjamin Israel agrees out of desperation and says, *Take your brother also, and arise, go back to the man. And may God Almighty give you mercy before the man, that he may release your other brother and Benjamin. If I am bereaved, I am bereaved!* (43:13-14).

When they arrive in Egypt Joseph prepares a lavish banquet for them,

speaks graciously to them, and returns Simeon to them. They feast and Benjamin is given five times the portions of his brothers. Joseph inquires if the "old man", their father of whom they spoke, was still living. They assure him that he is and he is still in good health (43:15-34).

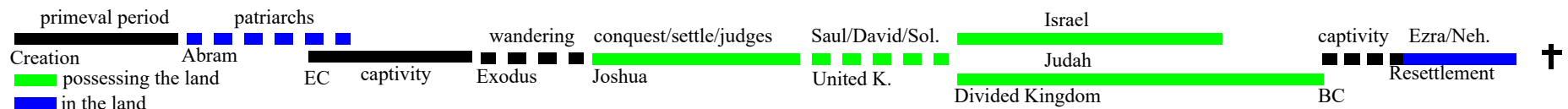
Joseph now engages in his own type of deception with his brothers. He has all their sacks filled with grain, places their money back in their sacks, and has his personal, special silver cup, placed in Benjamin's sack. After they all depart he sends his steward to overtake them and accuses them of repaying evil for good and of stealing his special cup. The brothers defend themselves to the steward saying that they brought the money for the first trip back and also paid for the second supply of grain, and say, *How then could we steal silver or gold from your lord's house? With whomever of your servants it is found, let him die, and we also will be my lord's slaves* (44:8-9). The steward agrees with profession. They open the bags and Benjamin has the cup!

They tear their clothes and return to the city to face "the man" for a third time. Judah says that God has found out the iniquity of your (Joseph's) servants and presents himself and his brothers as Joseph's slaves. But Joseph says that only the man who had the cup need be enslaved and encourages the rest of them to return to their father. Judah now speaks privately to Joseph, explains how Israel did not want to send Benjamin and that if they returned without him he would die. Judah then pleads that Joseph would keep him instead and allow Benjamin to return to Israel.

Finally, at this point, Joseph cannot restrain himself any longer, has everyone leave the room except his brothers and reveals himself to them and reassures them *not to be angry with themselves or grieved because God sent me before you to preserve life* (45:3-11). Since there are still five years of famine remaining he urges them to all come down to Egypt and he will provide them all they need to prosper and to dwell near him.

Preparations to migrate to Egypt (Gen. 45:16-28)

Those in Pharaoh's house heard that Joseph's brothers had come to Egypt and *it pleased Pharaoh and his servants well*. Pharaoh said to



Joseph *Bring your father and your households and come to me; I will give you the best of the land of Egypt, and you will eat the fat of the land* (45:18). He also commanded that the brothers take carts from Egypt so their father, wives and little ones can ride on carts for the journey from Canaan to Egypt. Joseph sent a huge amount of supplies to Israel loaded on twenty donkeys and the brothers returned to Israel. When they arrived back in Canaan they told Jacob, *Joseph is still alive, and he is governor over all the land of Egypt! And Jacob's heart stood still, because he did not believe them.* As Jacob listened to them and saw the supplies and carts he said, *"It is enough. Joseph my son is still alive. I will go and see him before I die."* (45:26-28).

Israel's migration to Egypt (Gen. 46:1-29)

Israel travels south to Beersheba and offers sacrifices to God there. God appears to him in a vision reassuring him not to fear to go down to Egypt for in Egypt God will make him into a great nation (46:2-4). Isaac was forbidden to go to Egypt but Jacob is encouraged to go. The time has come for that which God has spoken to Jacob's grandfather (15:13). They traveled to Egypt with Jacob, their wives and their little ones on the carts Pharaoh had supplied. This is a journey of 250-300 miles. Israel sends Judah ahead to Joseph *to point out before him the way to Goshen* (Gen. 46:28). When they arrived in Goshen *Joseph made ready his chariot and went up to Goshen to meet his father Israel* (Gen. 46:29).

Those who migrated to Egypt (Gen. 46:8-27)

There are a total of 71 names in the list of Jacob's descendants given in Genesis 46:8-27. It contains twelve sons, one daughter, fifty three grandsons, one granddaughter, and four great grandsons.

- Ruben > Hanoch, Pallu, Hezron, Carmi (5)
- Simeon > Jemuel, Jamin, Ohad, Jachin, Zohar, Shaul (7)
- Levi > Gershon, Kohath, Merari (4)
- Judah > Er, Onan, Shelah, Perez, Zerah (6)
 - > Hezron Hamul (2)
- Issachar > Tola, Puvah, Job, Shimron (5)
- Zebulun > Sered, Elon, Jahleel (4)
- Dinah (1)
- Gad > Ziphion, Haggi, Shuni, Ezbon, Eri, Arodi, Areli (8)

- Asher > Jimnah, Ishuah, Isui, Beriah, Serah (6)
 - > Heber, Malchiel (2)

- Joseph > Manasseh, Ephraim (3)
- Benjamin > Belah, Becher, Ashbel, Gera, Naaman, Ehi, Rosh, Muppim, Huppim, Ard (11)
- Dan > Hushim (2)
- Naphtali > Jahzeel, Guni, Jezer, Shillem (5)

Those who migrated from Canaan to Egypt were 66, not counting the wives of Jacob's sons (46:26). It is likely correct to assume Leah, Zilpah and Bilhah are no longer living. The final reference we have to Leah is in Genesis 49:31 when Jacob is dying and mentions that Leah is buried in the family burial site.

66 = 71- Er - Onan - Joseph - Ephraim - Manasseh

The total number of Jacob's family, excluding the wives of his sons, who settled in Egypt were 70 (46:27).

70 = 71 - Er - Onan + Jacob

The genealogy of Jacob appears three times in the OT. Here and also in Numbers 26:5ff and 1 Chronicles 2-8. There are differences in spelling which is not unusual regarding names in historical documents transmitted over many centuries. Other differences are significant such as Benjamin being given ten sons in Genesis 46 and only five in Numbers 26.¹¹

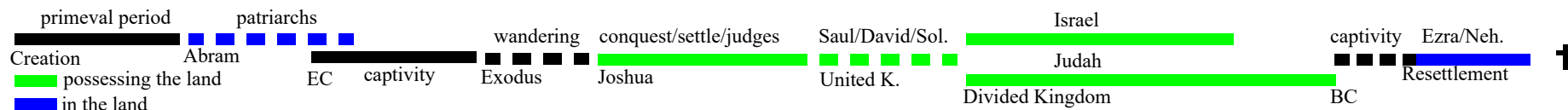
The reunion, preparations to meet Pharaoh (46:29-34)

The reunion is filled with emotion. It has been at least 22 years since Jacob has seen Joseph and for 21 of those years he believed he was dead. Israel now says, *"Now let me die, since I have seen your face, because you are still alive."* (46:30).

Joseph then "coaches" his brothers on how to speak to Pharaoh when he presents them to Pharaoh. He wants to be sure Pharaoh will grant them a residence in Egypt for at least five years, but likely a permanent residence (46:33-34).

Jacob and sons meet Pharaoh, they settle in Goshen (47:1-12)

-51- Joseph chose five of his brothers to meet Pharaoh and they present



themselves as Pharaoh servants, requesting that they may dwell in the land *because your servants have no pasture for their flocks, for the famine is severe in the land of Canaan* (47:4). Pharaoh responded graciously *“The land of Egypt is before you. Have your father and brothers dwell in the best of the land; let them dwell in the land of Goshen.”* (47:6).

Joseph next presents his father to Pharaoh. Jacob blesses Pharaoh and Pharaoh asks him, *How old are you?* Jacob gives his memorable response (see 47:9). Jacob again blessed Pharaoh and they depart from him. Joseph settles his extended family *in the best of the land, in the land of Rameses, as Pharaoh had commanded* (47:11). Joseph also sees to it that all his father's household is supplied with bread, according to the number in their families (47:12).

Joseph's management of the land during famine (Gen. 47:13-26)

There were to be five more years of famine in Egypt and the surrounding regions. Joseph first gathered up all the money by selling grain to Egyptians and foreigners. When their money ran out he sold them grain for their livestock. A year later people were coming to him again and saying (see 47:18-21).

A feudal type of system results since Pharaoh now owns all their lands and them as servants. Joseph supplies seed to plant and requires that they give 20% of all they produce back to Pharaoh. They seem grateful for this arrangement saying, *“You have saved our lives; let us find favor in the sight of my lord, and we will be Pharaoh's servants.”* (47:25).

Jacob has Joseph swear to bury him in Canaan (Gen. 47:27-31)

Jacob lived the last 17 years of his life in Egypt, outside of the land of promise. We are given no details regarding this period other than, *So Israel dwelt in the land of Egypt, in the country of Goshen; and they had possessions there and grew and multiplied exceedingly* (47:27).

Jacob calls for Joseph and has him swear that when he dies Joseph will carry him out of Egypt and bury him in the burial place which Abraham had purchased two generations prior (47:27-31).

Jacob blesses Manasseh and Ephraim (Gen. 48)

Joseph is informed that Israel's life is failing and he takes Manasseh and Ephraim and goes to Goshen to his father (48:1-2). Jacob reminds Joseph of the promise God Almighty made to him at Luz, *Behold, I will make you fruitful and multiply you, and I will make of you a multitude of people, and give this land to your descendants after you as an everlasting possession* (48:4).

Jacob then “makes” Joseph's sons his, just as Ruben and Simeon are his, that is, as his two “firstborns”. Ephraim and Manasseh may now claim Jacob as their father, and they are co-inheritors just as Jacob's first two sons.

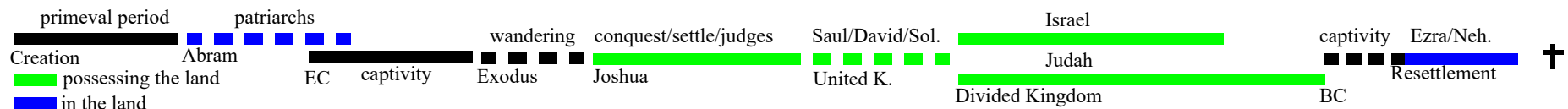
In the future the descendants of Joseph will hold two tribal allotments of the land of promise (48:5-7). This action of Israel must have been surprising to Joseph, but not as surprising as what he does next. However, there is a hint as to what is coming by the order in which Jacob refers to the sons in verse 5.

Israel's eyesight is “dim” and Joseph brings his sons near to him such that Israel's right hand would be placed on Manasseh and his left on Ephraim. Joseph assumes he is helping Jacob since Jacob's vision is impaired. However when Israel commences to give the blessing he crosses his arms! This displeased Joseph and he physically tried to move Israel's hands so that his right hand would be on Manasseh, his firstborn. But to this Israel objected and proceeded to bless Ephraim as the first born. The same words of blessing are given for each son but Ephraim will be the greater (48:17-20).

After blessing Joseph's sons Jacob tells Joseph that he is dying and that God will be with him and bring him back to the land of Canaan. He also tells Joseph that he has given him one portion above his brothers (48:21-22).

Jacob's final blessing on his sons (Gen. 49)

Shortly after Jacob blessed Manasseh and Ephraim he called together his twelve sons and pronounced a final blessing on them and a “prophecy” concerning the future of their descendants. The narrator calls all of these pronouncements blessings (49:28) but many of them appear to us as assessments, prophecies, and even “curses”.



Jacob's first four sons are addressed in birth order, there appears to be no pattern for the next six, but Joseph and Benjamin, Jacob's last two sons, conclude the list.¹² These are some of the most difficult expressions to interpret (and translate in some places) in the Old Testament and tracing their historical fulfillment, in some cases, seems to be beyond the historical data which is available to us.

Ruben (49:3-4) - Jacob is 147 which puts Ruben in his early sixties.¹³ The stark contrast between verses 3 and 4 regarding Ruben show what could have been his as a result of the privilege of being the first born. However, he fell from this privileged status because of his sexual immorality with Bilhah, Rachel's maid, whom she gave to Jacob as a concubine to raise up children. The words, *unstable as water, you shall not excel*, sting. The *you shall not excel* is not simply referring to Ruben individually, but what will occur with the tribe that descends from him.

Simeon and Levi (49:5-7) - As with Ruben so also with Simeon and Levi. Jacob recalls their darkest moment, when they killed all the men in Shechem because the king's son humiliated Dinah, their sister. There must have been other examples of their cruelty as it expressed itself in their treatment of animals. Jacob even says he desires to be dis-associated from them. *Let not my soul enter their council; Let not my honor be united to their assembly*. The future of their tribes has been impacted by their conduct.

Judah (49:8-11) - Judah receives the blessing indicating that his tribe will become a ruling tribe among all the tribes. This is indicated in the expressions that he will be praised (Judah means praise) by his brothers (49:8), his father's children shall bow down to him (49:8), the scepter, a symbol of ruling authority, shall not depart from Judah (49:10). There is no clear consensus on how verse 10b should be translated. However, it is clear, whether or not shiloh refers explicitly to a person, the phrase *and to Him shall be the obedience of the people* is referring to future leaders of Israel coming from Judah, most notably the Davidic line culminating in Jesus Christ.

Quite a few of the expressions in these "blessings" are very difficult to understand as is the case with verses 11-12. Verse 11 may be an expression of opulence, that his donkey may eat the vine and its fruit

and wine can be used to wash clothing. Some have tried to find allusions here to the Tamar incident but that seems unlikely. Even though Judah participated in selling Joseph and lost his two sons over the Tamar incident, there is no mention here of these failings.

Zebulun (49:13) - Zebulun is associated with sea travel and dwelling near the sea. There is some historical evidence that Zebulun along with Dan and Asher engaged in "maritime" activities.¹⁴ It is not clear whether the sea referenced is the Mediterranean or the inland sea of Galilee.

Issachar (49:14-15) - There is discussion if the labor referred to here is actually *forced* labor. If not then this "blessing" refers to Issachar's strength and willingness to labor. If it is a "curse" there is no reference to any reason for it as in the case of Ruben, Simeon and Levi.

Dan (49:16-18) - Dan shall in some way judge "his people". "Dan" means judge. The tribe being likened unto a snake that strikes at the heel of a horse and throws its rider may refer to the smallness of Dan and yet his significant influence? It is probably intended to be a compliment.

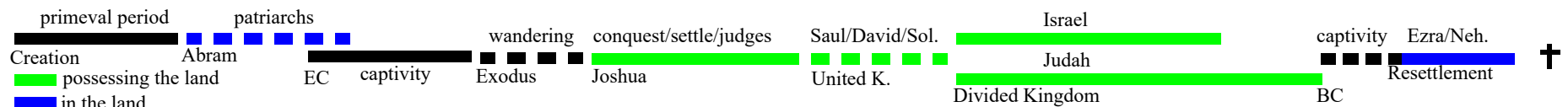
In the midst of giving the blessings Jacob utters an expression of trust, *I have waited for your salvation, O LORD!* (Gen. 49:18). Is this an expression of trust in the Lord as Jacob contemplates the varied difficulties of his descendants? And their need of Divine preservation and deliverance? Or is he thinking of his imminent death?

Gad (49:19) - "Gad" means troop. He will face difficulties but he will overcome them.

Asher (49:20) - Asher will produce an abundance of food and produce food fit for a king, that is, royal dainties.

Naphtali (49:21) - Some translations suggest *beautiful words* should be *beautiful fawns* in which case the imagery of the doe relates to both phrases. This appears to be a positive description of Naphtali.

Joseph (49:22-26) - Joseph receives the longest blessing (though only slightly longer than Judah). Joseph is very fruitful and remains strong in spite of those who sought to do him harm, i.e. his brothers in the past and perhaps enemies in the future. God made him strong and helped him and will continue to do so. In verse 26 Jacob prays or pro-



nounces that the blessings of the patriarchs would be upon Joseph.

Benjamin (49:27) - Benjamin is described as being very aggressive. He will have victories and divide the spoil.

After the pronouncement of these “blessings” Jacob charged his sons to bury him *in the cave that is in the field of Machpelah, which is before Mamre in the land of Canaan* (Gen. 49:30), the burial site purchased by Abraham when Sarah died. *Then he drew his feet up into the bed and breathed his last, and was gathered to his people* (49:33).

Jacob’s burial (Gen. 50:1-14)

Joseph had the Egyptian physicians embalm Jacob, a process which took forty days. They observed seventy days of mourning in Egypt. Then Joseph obtained permission to leave Egypt to bury his father in Canaan and indicated that he would return. Pharaoh granted permission and all of Pharaoh’s house and the elders of Egypt and Jacob’s house traveled to Canaan. Only the little ones and the flocks and herds remained in Egypt.

When they reached Atad beyond the Jordan they observed another seven days of mourning. The Canaanites, witnessing this, said, *this is a deep mourning of the Egyptians* (50:11). His sons then buried him in the cave of the field of Machpelah, before Mamre, (Gen. 50:13). It was 170 years earlier when Sarah was buried here. As far as we know Jacob is the last family member to be buried at this site. In Jacob’s last words he said, *there they buried Abraham and Sarah his wife, there they buried Isaac and Rebekah his wife, and there I buried Leah* (49:31). Rachel did not make it to the site as she died while they were journeying south from Bethel. After the burial they all returned to Egypt.

Joseph’s brothers fear him after Jacob’s death (Gen. 50:15-21)

After Jacob’s death, 17 years after Joseph reconciled with his brothers, they become afraid that Joseph may now exact revenge for how they treated him nearly 40 years earlier in his youth. They tell Joseph that Joseph’s father, while living, commanded them to ask Joseph for forgiveness. When Joseph hears them he weeps and reassures them that he intends to do them no harm, rather, he will supply them and their children all that they need (50:15-21).

Remainder of Joseph’s life (Gen. 50:22-23)

Joseph lived for another fifty three years. At the time of Jacob’s death Manasseh and Ephraim were in their twenties. Though Joseph didn’t have children until he was in his thirties he saw his great grandchildren through Ephraim (Gen. 50:23). To see one’s grandchildren is a crowning joy of human life (Prov. 17:6), how much more so great grandchildren!

The expression that the sons of Machir *were also brought up on Joseph’s knees* (50:23) literally is, *born on Joseph’s knees*. It is idiomatic and means that he adopted them. We know nothing of the circumstances of this adoption of great-grandchildren but it reminds us of what Jacob did regarding Joseph’s sons - he made them his own (48:5).

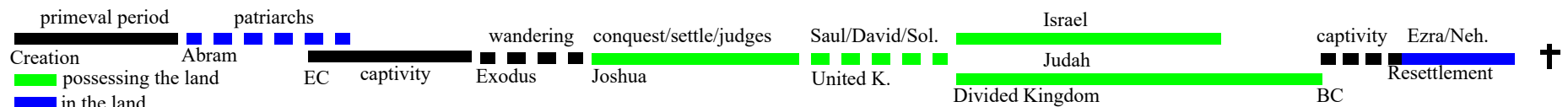
Joseph’s death and burial (Gen. 50:24-26)

Joseph was keenly aware of the patriarchal promise though he lived 93 years of his life in Egypt and not in Canaan. When he was near death he called for his brothers and said to them *“I am dying; but God will surely visit you, and bring you out of this land to the land of which He swore to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob.”* (50:24).

Though he is the second youngest brother some or all of his older brothers are still living.

Joseph had the children of Israel swear that when He brought them out of the land of Egypt that they would take his bones with them to Canaan. He was embalmed and placed in a coffin in Egypt. They Hebrew slave boy who became second only to Pharaoh.

We’ve come 360 years from the birth of Abraham to the death of Joseph.



Jacob & Joseph - Genesis 27:42 - 50:13 - Theology

Now that we are familiar with the history of this period we can reflect on what it reveals about God and mankind.

God's sovereign use of evil

The Bible uses the term *evil* in two senses, moral evil referring to violating God's commands and disasters which cause human suffering. The behavior of Joseph's brothers desiring to kill him and selling him as a slave is an example of moral evil. The seven year famine is an example of "disaster evil".

What is unmistakably clear from the Jacob-Joseph account is that God uses both types of evil to accomplish his purposes. Two generations prior to Jacob God told Abraham he would have a multitude of descendants and they would be enslaved for 400 years outside of the land he had promised them. The evil actions of Joseph's brothers and the calamity caused by the famine became the instruments used by God to fulfill his Word. Both in preserving and multiplying Abraham's descendants and placing them in Egypt.

God's use of evil does not make Him the author of evil nor relieve people of their responsibility for practicing evil. Joseph summarized the situation correctly when he comforted his brothers that he would not pursue revenge even though their father had now died (50:19-20).

God's behavior reflected upon

It is easy when we read an account like this to think about the behavior of all the individuals involved, especially their good and bad examples. But of even greater importance we should think about God's behavior through this whole situation. A few matters stand out.

God keeps His promises - That God keeps His promises is likely the major point the patriarchal histories in Genesis 12-50. We are given a record of *what* God has promised and His faithfulness in keeping His word.

God doesn't use many words - There can be no doubt that the Patriarchs were Divinely blessed in spite of their sinfulness and faltering faith at times. Nevertheless in these histories God appears as One of few words. In Jacob's 147 year life God spoke to him five times.

When he left Isaac and Rebekah, twenty years later when leaving Laban, then again shortly after leaving Laban on the evening before facing Esau, years later when they left Shechem because of the Dinah incident, and finally decades later during the famine when they must go to Egypt to survive.

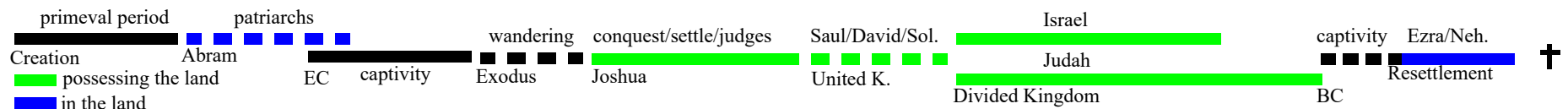
We are so accustomed to the unreliable of words of men that we often desire to hear a matter repeated many times. I'm not suggesting that God never repeats His promises, but, if He does it is surely because He knows our slowness to believe the words of others and that this affects how we think of Him.

In the case of Abraham it's obvious that God knows all things. He knew what Sarah and Abraham were doing with Hagar, nevertheless He remains silent until Abraham says to the Lord, "Oh may Ishmael live before you". At this time God "acts" as if He has just found out what they have been thinking and then corrects Abraham.

We should never think that the scarcity of God's speech is in any way an indication that God will not keep His promises or that He does not care for us.

God allows people great a measure of freedom - God appears to allow people, even His people, great amounts of freedom and that freedom often leads them into situations that are not good. Abraham and Isaac hand off their wives multiple times as their sisters. Sarah and Abraham "hatch" the "Hagar and Ishmael" plan, thinking this must be what God meant when He promised Abraham a multitude of descendants. Jacob and Rebekah engage in deceit, Jacob twice, so that he obtains the blessing even though it was God's intention from the beginning that the blessing would be on Jacob. Judah is allowed to come to all the wrong conclusions as to why his first two sons are dead and thinks Tamar has something to do with the evil that came upon them.

Jacob is literally scared to death regarding Esau, likely the workings of a guilty conscience, and goes to extreme measures, which were all unnecessary, to appease him. God allows all of this to unfold. He allows the Divinely unacceptable but cultural expedient practices of polygamy and forms of slavery to continue, though in future generations laws will be given to Israel to regulate these abuses. Many more



instances could be given.

In all of this He “appears” somewhat indifferent to what men and women are doing as He continues through these patriarchal generations to do His intentions; Bless Abraham with many descendants, allow them to be enslaved in Egypt, and give them the land. Ultimately *God has as much freedom to act or not act in any given situation*. He obviously chooses to do both and all the while He stays the course of carrying out His intentions.

Jacob and Joseph examples of sinners saved by grace

Knowing the rest of the Bible, we cannot but help using understanding gained from the future pages of Scripture, and realize that Jacob and Joseph are men saved by grace.

Although Esau doesn’t value the promises God made to His father and grandfather, Jacob does, but engages in manipulation and deceit to obtain them from his brother. Jacob’s comments at Bethel after God’s first speaking to him make us wonder if he is not more than a little tinged with polytheism, thinking of Yahweh as a “local deity”, i.e. of the land of Canaan, and One Whom can be bartered with (28:16-22). Later Jacob appears much better when in deep distress he contemplates meeting his brother after 20 years of separation on a very bad note (32:9).

Jacob’s wrestling with “a man” is enigmatic. In all of God’s other appearances to him (and the other patriarchs) He spoke freely and identified Himself. Not on this occasion. Many commentators say that this was when Jacob became a “changed” man. We are told that God blessed him there and Jacob was persistent to not let this man go unless he blessed him (32:24). Jacob left believing he saw the face of God and lived.

Jacob faces many major distresses after this time. The loss of Rachel, the Dinah incident and thus another a threat of being destroyed, his firstborn’s sexual immorality, family chaos to the point that his sons hate his favorite son and being deceived that he is dead, finally the family is almost decimated by starvation during famine. Not withstanding all of this God did fulfill his promise to him and he and his *large* family settle in Egypt and begin multiplying further.

Jacob setting up pillars and anointing them on more than one occasion and having his household purge foreign gods shows his devoted worship of Yahweh.¹⁶

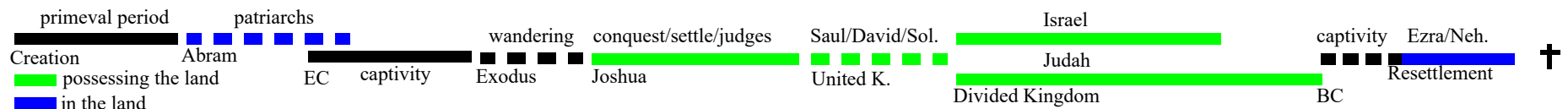
Joseph, who becomes the “saviour” of the family, appears to have become a godly man at a rather young age. This we see when he resists the advances of Potiphar’s wife with the final explanation, *How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?*” (Gen. 39:9). Joseph does not think of God as a local deity or absent from anyplace where he may find himself. Joseph’s forgiveness of his brothers remains to our day as an example and standard which we all try to reach in regard to learning to forgive those who sin against us.

God did not speak to Joseph in the “familiar” manner that He did with the patriarchs. That “familiar” method of speech seems to be declining after Jacob and we will see it again only with Moses. But He did speak to Joseph in visions and dreams which must have reassured Joseph that God’s presence was surely with him. Which leads us to our last theological consideration, but the most significant one.

The promise of God’s presence with His people

God’s promise to be Abraham’s and Isaac’s God surely implies His being *with them*. For God to be *with them* assures them of His *active presence*, guiding, protecting and blessing them wherever they may find themselves. He is not a mere passive bystander.

This aspect of the covenantal promises was first *explicitly* expressed to Isaac during the famine in his generation (26:3). The promise is repeated to Isaac when the Philistines urged him to move away from them (26:4). When Jacob flees to Laban’s he hears the reassuring promise, *Behold, I am with you and will keep you wherever you go* (28:15). When he leaves Laban’s 20 years later God reassures him saying, *Return to the land of your fathers and to your family, and I will be with you* (Gen. 31:3). When he and family migrate to Egypt God once again assures him that *I will go down with you to Egypt, and I will also surely bring you up again* (46:4). In regard to Joseph, when he is sold as a slave to Potiphar, we are told that *the LORD was with Joseph, and he was a successful man* (Gen. 39:2). And not surprisingly when he falls from his position of favor in Potiphar’s house and goes off to prison under false charges, we are told again, *but the LORD*



was with Joseph and showed him mercy (39:21).

In all seven of these cases, when the Patriarch is facing a *significant change in life involving an uncertain future*, they are reminded of the promise that God will be *with them*.

This covenantal promise is made to all of God’s people in the Old *and* New Covenants.

In future times in Israel’s history this promise will be expressed by God to all of His people. Those who trust in Him will cling to this promise, finding great strength and comfort in God’s presence to face whatever He calls them, as He did the Patriarchs, to face. For a few example see,

Isa. 41:8-10, 43:1-5, Haggi 1:12-13

In the New Covenant it is wonderfully expressed by Jesus to his disciples, who did not simply have a few occasional visits of the Angel of the Lord, but who were *with* the Lord for three years! They had grown accustomed to feeling secure because of *His presence*. We enjoy the same promises and the NT promises should be understood in the light of God’s covenant with His people to be their God begun with Abraham.

John 14:16-18, Matt 28:19-20, Heb. 13:5-6.

Jacob & Joseph - Genesis 27:42 - 50:13 - Typology

Jacob and Joseph’s lives there is only one new type of Christ introduced.

Jacob’s ladder - the vision at Bethel

The vision given to Jacob at Bethel of heaven opened, a ladder reaching from heaven to earth, and the angels ascending and descending on the ladder, is typological of Christ and His relationship to both heaven and earth, or, to God and man. One of the first Old Testament references Jesus made to himself was Jacob’s vision at Bethel (John 1:47-51). Jesus told Nathaniel that he would see greater things than Jesus’ omniscience (seeing him while he was under the fig tree), namely, *you shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man*.

In the Bethel vision the ladder made it possible for the angels to

ascend and descend. Christ refers to himself taking the place of the ladder. One thing is sure, Jesus is saying that He is the link between God in heaven and mankind on the earth. Determining the significance of the angles is more difficult. One role that angles have always fulfilled is that of being messengers between God and men. The term angel itself means messenger. God has used angels to “announce” the most significant events in redemptive history. The fact that they ascend and descend on the Son of man indicates that all this interaction between God and man (earth) is ultimately because of Christ.

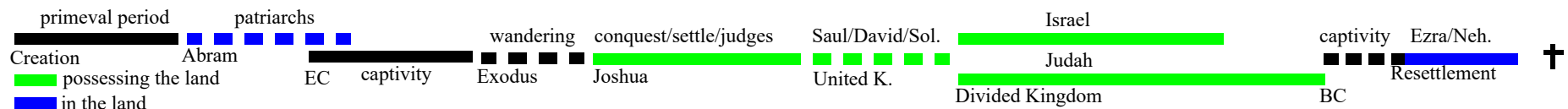
Even though when Jesus spoke this to Nathaniel and the other early disciples they had already called Jesus the Christ, the Son of God, they had hardly begun to realize how significant He actually was. They would see greater things, they would come to realize that Jesus is not only a king like David, but that Messiah would replace prophet, priest, sacrifice, altar, temple and more. All of the “apparatus” whereby God drew new and interacted with Israel would be replaced with something much better. The Son of God whom even David had called Lord. Christ Jesus, the one mediator between man and God.

And Jesus was of course implying that He was much greater and significant than Jacob. The “ladder” and angels ascending and descending upon it from heaven would in some manner communicate to Jacob how God would bless and care for him. The one making the blessing and caring possible is greater than the one receiving.

Joseph

Though the NT doesn’t explicitly refer to Joseph as a type of Christ many Bible teachers have pointed out the striking parallels of Joseph’s life in relation to his family, Israel, and Christ’s relationship to Israel, the covenant nation. Joseph is rejected by his own family (John 1:11) but it was God’s purpose from the start that Joseph would be the means of saving, at least in the temporal sense, his family, even those who had rejected them.

In addition to these matters consider that Joseph was the means of not only of “saving” Israel, his family, but many of the nations surrounding Egypt. Finally, in spite of his own family sinning grievously against him to the point of plotting to put him to death he forgave them.



Bibliography

See Chapter 1

Endnotes

1. A. J. Hoerth, pg. 53
2. ibid, pg. 66
3. Ibid, pg. 71
4. R. Routledge, pgs. 166-167
5. V. P. Hamilton, pg. 171
6. ibid, pgs. 170-172 for a detailed description.
7. J. Tock, pg. ??
8. See Routledge, pg. 169
9. V. P. Hamilton, pgs. 400-401
10. Ibid, pgs. 423-424, these are likely two names for the same group of traders.
11. Ibid, pg. 599 for a larger discussion.
12. However the first six addressed are all Leah's sons, but Zebulun (no. 6) is addressed before Issachar (no. 5).
13. If you accept that Jacob was 77 when he left for Laban's and 84 when he was married. If you assume he was 40 then there is a chronological problem of approximately 37 years. If you compute the ages backward from Jacob's statement to Pharaoh that he was 130 years old and you assume Jacob left for Laban around age 40 (when Esau married, instead of 37 years later) you arrive at Ruben in his 90's. This way of dating, although having a 40 year old Jacob marrying Leah and Rachel, creates other problems, the ages given for Joseph are far too young. If Joseph was born when Jacob was 54 (14 years after Jacob went to Laban's at age 40) then when Jacob meets Pharaoh Joseph must be 130-54, around 76. The Joseph record clearly puts his age around 40 at the time that Jacob migrates to Egypt. To fix this problem some assume there are 37 years between Esau taking
14. V. P. Hamilton, pgs. 663-664
15. Ibid, pg. 710-711
16. That the record has Jacob setting up pillars and anointing them points to an early date for the authoring of the book of Genesis. No Jewish writers attempting to "create" a history for Israel after the return from the Babylonian captivity would have their "hero" engaged in activities

which are clearly forbidden and condemned in the Mosaic law (Ex. 23:24, 34:13, Deut. 7:5, 12:3, 16:22, 1 Kings 14:23, 2 Kings 17:10, Lev. 26:1, Mic. 5:13).

