

# The Last Days of Abraham

חַיֵּי שָׂרָה

Chayei Sarah

“The Life of Sarah”

Genesis 23:1 – 25:18

# Torah – Genesis 23:1

וַיְהִי־זֶיַעַי־שָׂרָה מֵאָה שָׁנָה וְעֶשְׂרִים שָׁנָה וְשִׁבְעַ שָׁנִים  
שְׁנֵי זֵיַי־שָׂרָה:

Va-Yih-Yu Cha-Yei Sa-Ra Me-A Sha-Na Ve-Es-Rim Sha-Na Ve-She-Va Sha-Nim  
She-Nei Cha-Yei Sa-Ra

Now Sarah lived one hundred and twenty-seven years;  
*these were* the years of the life of Sarah.

## Genesis 24:1-4

- 1 And Abraham was old, advanced in years. And YHVH had blessed Abraham in every way.
- 2 And Abraham said to the oldest servant of his house, who ruled over all that he had, “Please, put your hand under my thigh,
- 3 so that I make you swear by YHVH, the Elohim of the heavens and the Elohim of the earth, that you do not take a wife for my son from the daughters of the Kena’anites, among whom I dwell,
- 4 but to go to my land and to my relatives, and take a wife for my son Yitshaq.”

## Genesis 24:5-7

- 5 And the servant said to him, “What if the woman refuses to follow me to this land? Do I then take your son back to the land from which you came?”
- 6 And Abraham said to him, “Beware lest you take my son back there!
- 7 “YHVH, Elohim of the heavens, who took me from my father’s house and from the land of my relatives, and who spoke to me and swore to me, saying, ‘To your seed I give this land,’ He sends His messenger before you, and you shall take a wife for my son from there.

## Genesis 24:8-9

- 8 “And if the woman refuses to follow you, then you shall be released from this oath; only, do not take my son back there.”
- 9 Then the servant put his hand under the thigh of Abraham his master, and swore to him concerning this matter.

# Genesis 24:1

- 1 And Abraham was old, advanced in years. And YHVH had blessed Abraham in every way.
  - The Hittites called him a “Prince of God”
  - At least 318 warriors born in his house
  - Was given much wealth by 2 “kings”
  - Sent 10 camels loaded with gifts
  - Servant said he was blessed by YHVH, “great” in flocks, herds, silver, gold, servants, maids, camels and donkeys
  - Leaving “all he has” to Isaac
  - Sounds like he’s getting ready to die (140), but OK with that
  - Blessed in *every* way (riches, winning wars, faithful men, sons)

# Genesis 24:2

- 2 And Abraham said to the oldest servant of his house, who ruled over all that he had, “Please, put your hand under my thigh,
  - The **oldest** servant
  - respected by entire household
  - Given rule over ALL that he had (not Isaac, yet)
  - most trustworthy, a close friend
  - THIS was a very special request, for a sworn promise, requiring a solemn ceremony of some sort...
  - “put your hand under my thigh”

# Hand under the thigh?

- We don't know. Theories are divided.
- Theory A. The "thigh" also meaning "*loins*," or, specifically "*organ*"
  - Like swearing with hand on Bible, but no Bible so hand on "the sign of the covenant" (circumcision)
  - Hand on the parts with the same word root as "**testify**" or "**testimony**," or witness
  - Representing a promise to the future generations (seed)



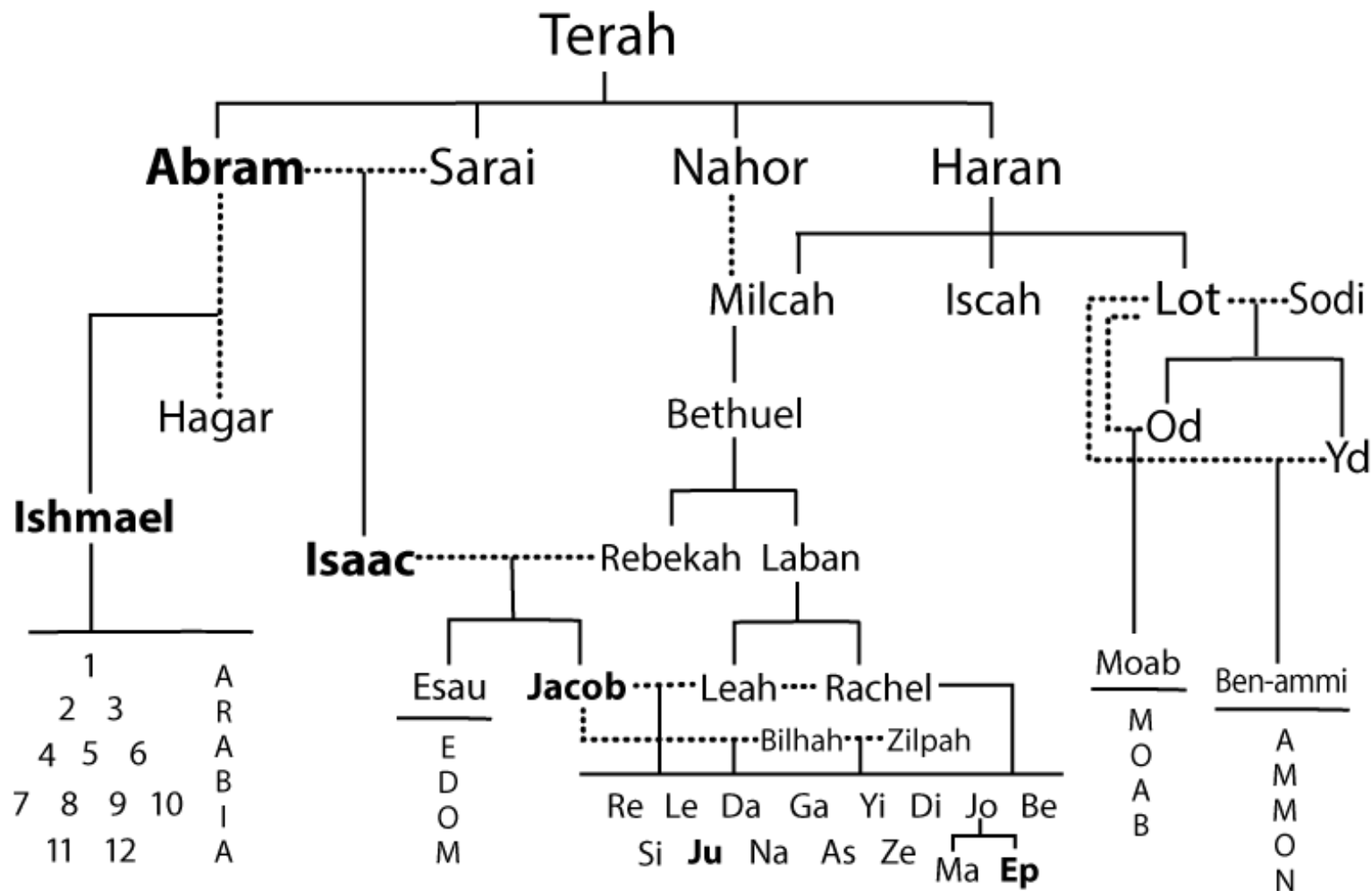
# Hand under the thigh?

- We don't know. Theories are divided.
- B. Just what it says: "under the (clothed) thigh"
  - **Under** the thigh, indicates being seated
  - Only one other place, with Jacob and Joseph
  - Both when a patriarch thought he was soon to die
  - Regarding a request and a promise to be carried out after his death
  - A symbol of respectful submission?
  - A symbol of "resting on the hand (action) of the one swearing"
  - One of the sages said "B" is still in practice in India at the time
  - "A" would be totally counter-culture in the mid east
  - "A" seemingly against the respect for nakedness elsewhere in Torah
    - Adam being clothed, Noah's sons walking backward, commands to not "uncover nakedness," a ramp instead of stairs, priest's undergarments to be long boxers

## Genesis 24:3-4

- 3 so that I make you swear by יהוה, the Elohim of the heavens and the Elohim of the earth, that you do not take a wife for my son from the daughters of **the Kena'anites**, among whom I dwell,
- 4 but to go to my land and to **my relatives**, and take a wife for my son Yitshaq.”
  - Abraham knew the Canaanite women.
  - Abraham knew that the covenant could not be blessed with a Canaanite wife.
  - Abraham knew that he could not trust Isaac to make this decision.
  - Knew that his relatives shared at least *some* decency in common

# Abraham's Family Tree



# Genesis 24:5-6

- 5 And the servant said to him, “What if the woman refuses to follow me to this land? Do I then take your son back to the land from which you came?”
  - Servant very careful to think through all the “ifs” and not to overcommit
- 6 And Abraham said to him, “Beware lest you take my son back there!”
  - Whoa!
  - Not!
  - *There!*
  - Protecting Isaac from negative influences

# Genesis 24:7

- 7 “YHVH, Elohim of the heavens, who took me from my father’s house and from the land of my relatives, and who spoke to me and swore to me, saying, ‘To your seed I give **this land**,’ He sends His messenger before you, and you **shall** take a wife for my son from there.
  - Abraham knew YHVH’s WORD
  - Abraham knew His WILL
  - Abraham knew that His messenger (a carrier of His Spirit) would lead the servant and bring this about.
  - This was almost as miraculous as the 100-yr-old pregnancy, and the ram in the thicket.

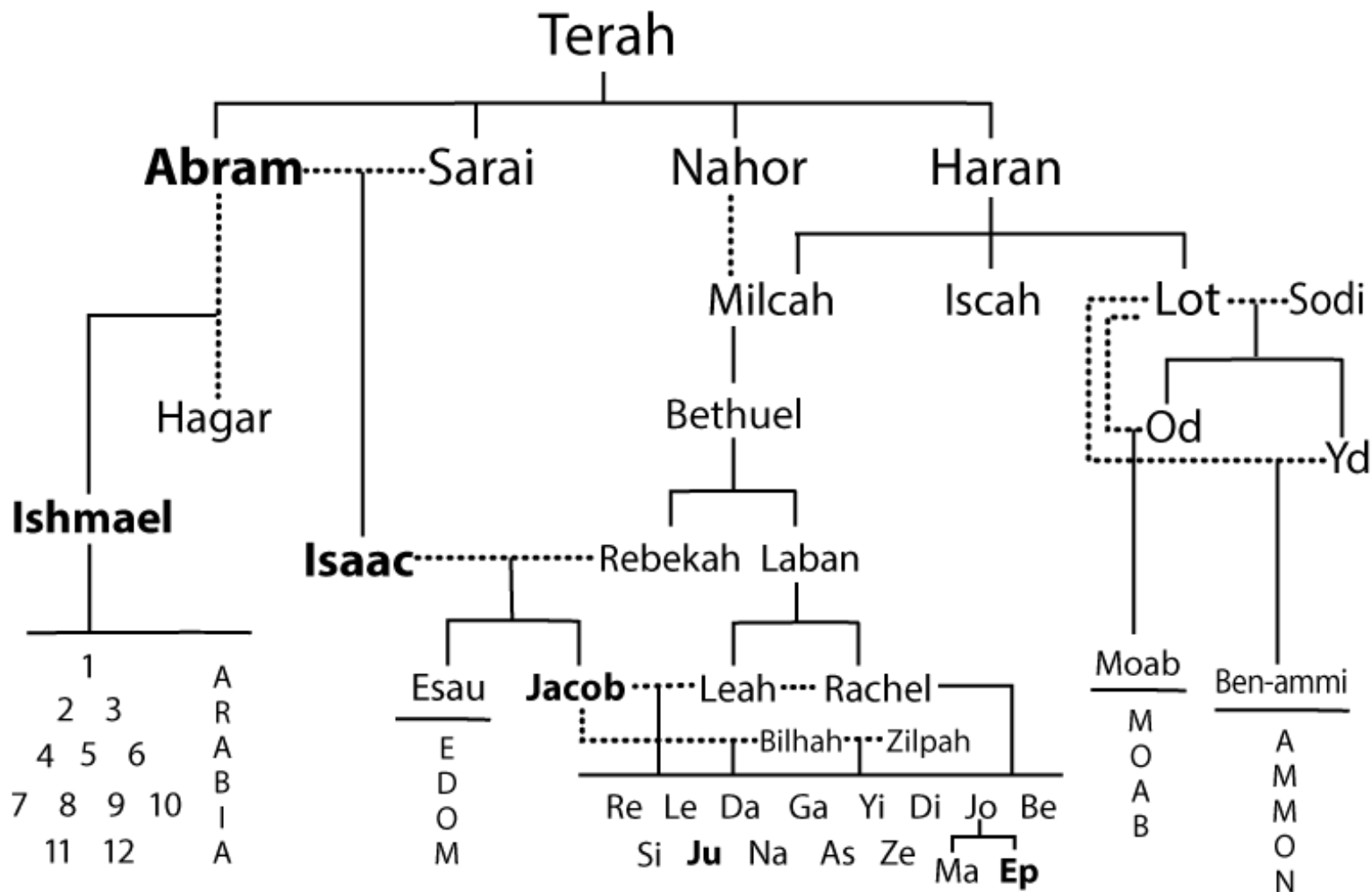
## Fast Forward...

- The servant takes 10 camels loaded with riches and supplies, as well as a company of men
- Miraculously finds Rebekkah, “the one,” and brings her back to Isaac, who “is comforted after the death of Sarah.”
- But what about Abraham?
- *Did* he die?

# Genesis 25:1-2

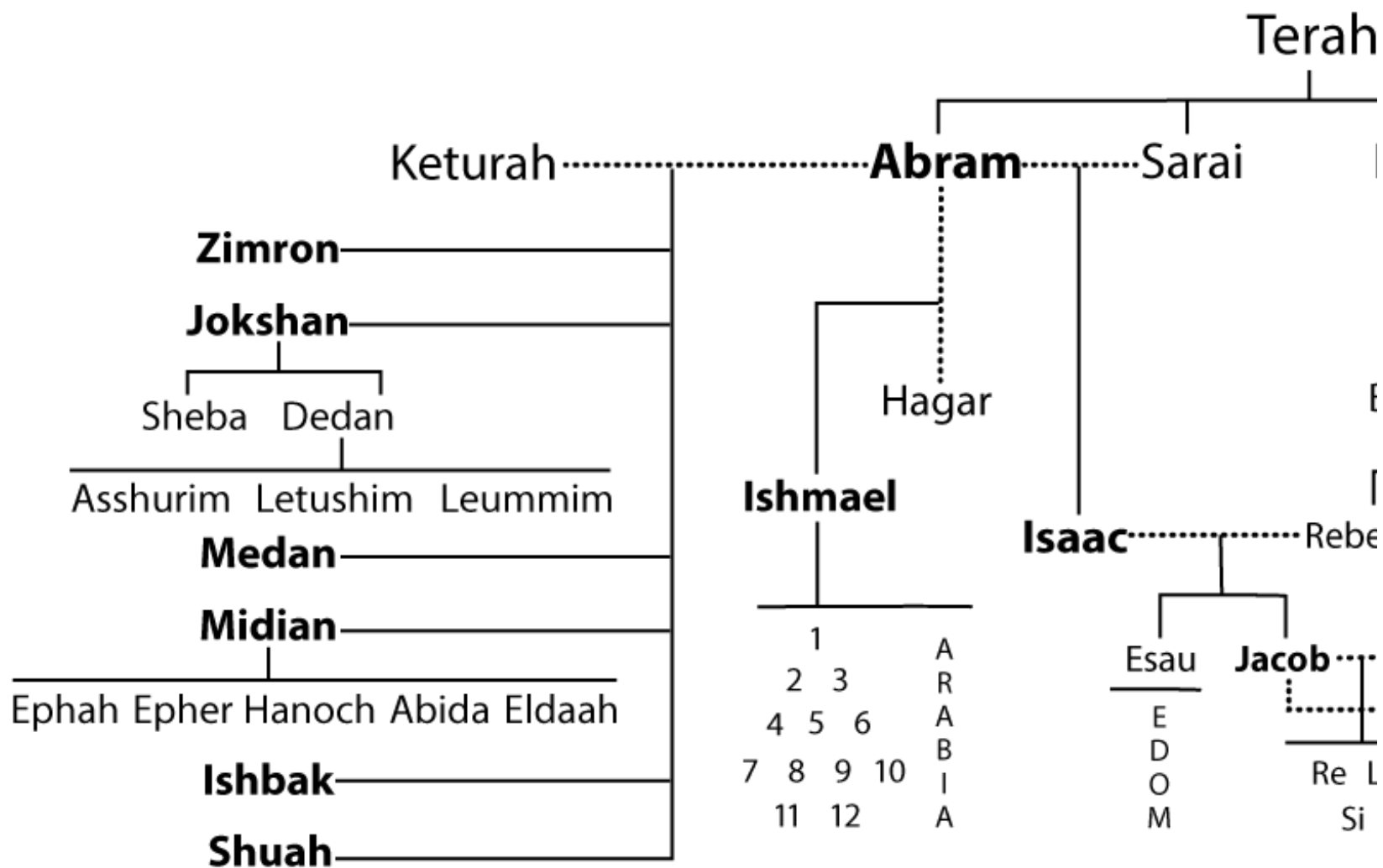
- 1 And Abraham took another wife, whose name was Qeturah.
- 2 And she bore him Zimran, and Yoqshan, and Medan, and Midyan, and Yishbaq, and Shuwaḥ.

# Abraham's Family Tree





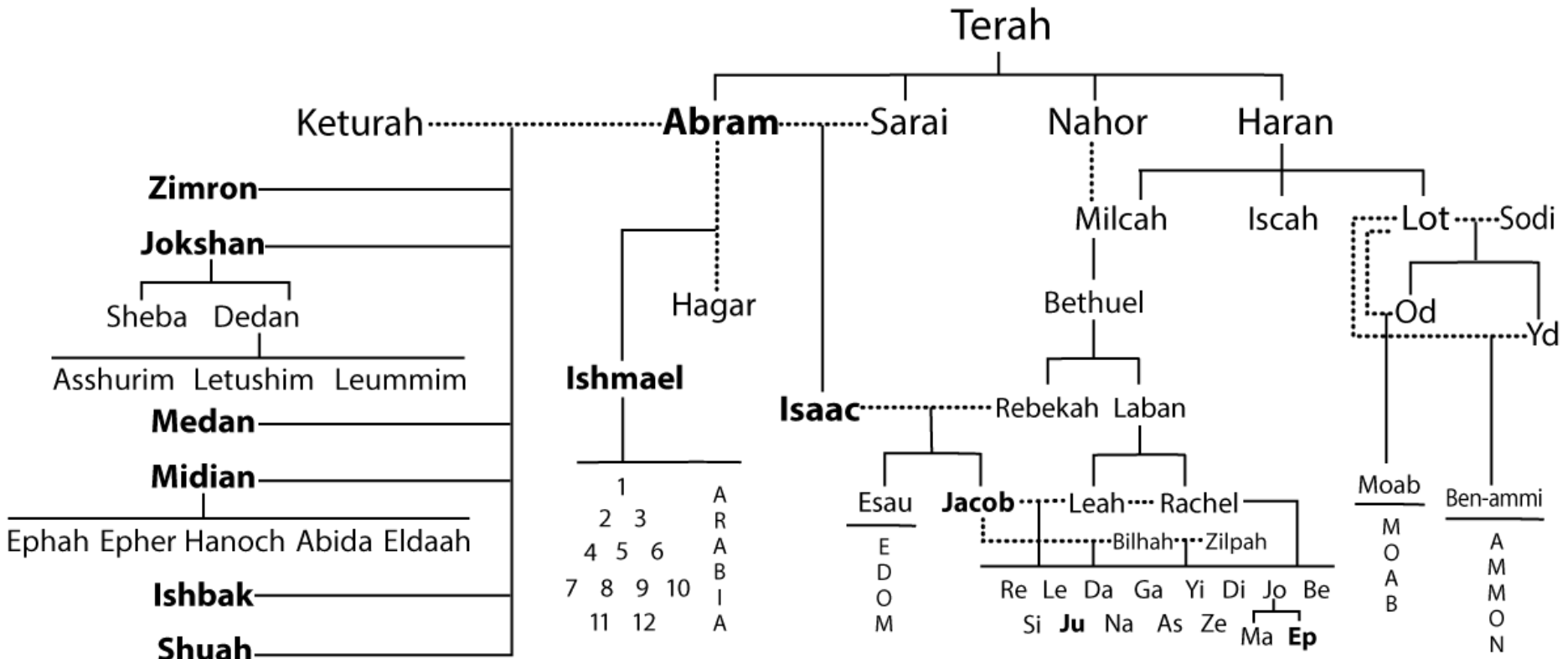
# Abraham's Family Tree



# Genesis 25:5-8

- 5 Now Abraham gave all that he had to Yitshaq,
- 6 but to the sons of the concubines whom Abraham had, Abraham gave gifts while he was still living, and sent them away from his son Yitshaq, eastward, to the land of the east.
  - We know Ishmael became Arabia
  - The other six sons... Southeast Asia? *India?*
- 7 And these are all the years of Abraham's life which he lived: one hundred and seventy-five years.
- 8 And Abraham breathed his last and died in a good old age, aged and **satisfied**, and was gathered to his people.
  - Satisfied, with family the most important thing to him
  - There was nothing else to be done or to have sworn to him
  - Gathered to his people... not in the grave, but apparently an afterlife

# Abraham's Family Tree



# Takeaways

- The hand-under-the-thigh thing, not *sensuous*
  - We need to avoid sensationalism.
- Abraham thought he was going to die, so he got things in order.
- Isaac's wife was pre-arranged for him.
- It matters who Isaac married (not a Canaanite).
- The servant was “all about” his master, an example to us
  - About his master's success and blessing
  - Isn't even named
  - Prayed on his behalf in the name of YHVH
  - Careful not to overcommit, and reports events accurately
  - Would not even eat, priorities
- A glimpse of what an excellent trainer, manager, military general, head of the family, father/leader/king/priest that Abraham was.
- They knew there was an afterlife, even then.

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