

*The Northern Patriarchs*

*No resident people ever made a myth of themselves as coming from outside. After the rural Canaanites came two pastoral peoples, one entering peacefully from the north, the other, more warlike, from the south. This section is about the northerners. Efforts were later made by the southerners to take over what the northerners thought was a gift of the land to them: the Promise Narrative. That tension is clearly visible in what survives about the northern patriarchs.*

(11) Abram / Abraham. Abram and his nephew Lot divide the grazing land between them. Renamed as Abraham, he is now seen as a patriarch.

(12) Isaac. Parts of his story seems to have roots elsewhere, but he does inherit the Promise of the Land which was given to his father Abraham.

(13) Jacob / Israel. With him, the Promise of the Land to Abram is rewritten to support instead the Promise Narrative of the Yahweh party.

(14) The Dinah Affair. This late addition to the Jacob story preserves an early detail: it remembers two of the original four sons of Jacob.

(15) The Twelve Tribes. An expansion of the four original sons of Jacob. They play a major part in the Conquest myth, but disappear in later centuries.

(16) The Joseph Story. It tells how the family of Jacob went to Egypt and prospered there. It is the key link in the Yahweh Promise Narrative.



*The next part of the Bible Story is taken up in Exodus, where we meet the enigmatic leader Moses. We meet Aaron, nominally his brother, but also his rival, eventually regarded as the ancestor of all priests. And we meet Yahweh, the god of the Hebrews, with his ritual center at Midian.*

*Moses too is linked to Midian. Which of these Midian links is the earlier?*

*That is the kind of question which this book consistently asks. Not that it can always be answered, and many of the details are surely gone beyond recovery. But even partial answers can lead to a better understanding of what remains.*

*Our present Bible rests at most points on something that really happened. Artistic invention, ancient or modern, often has its roots in memory.*