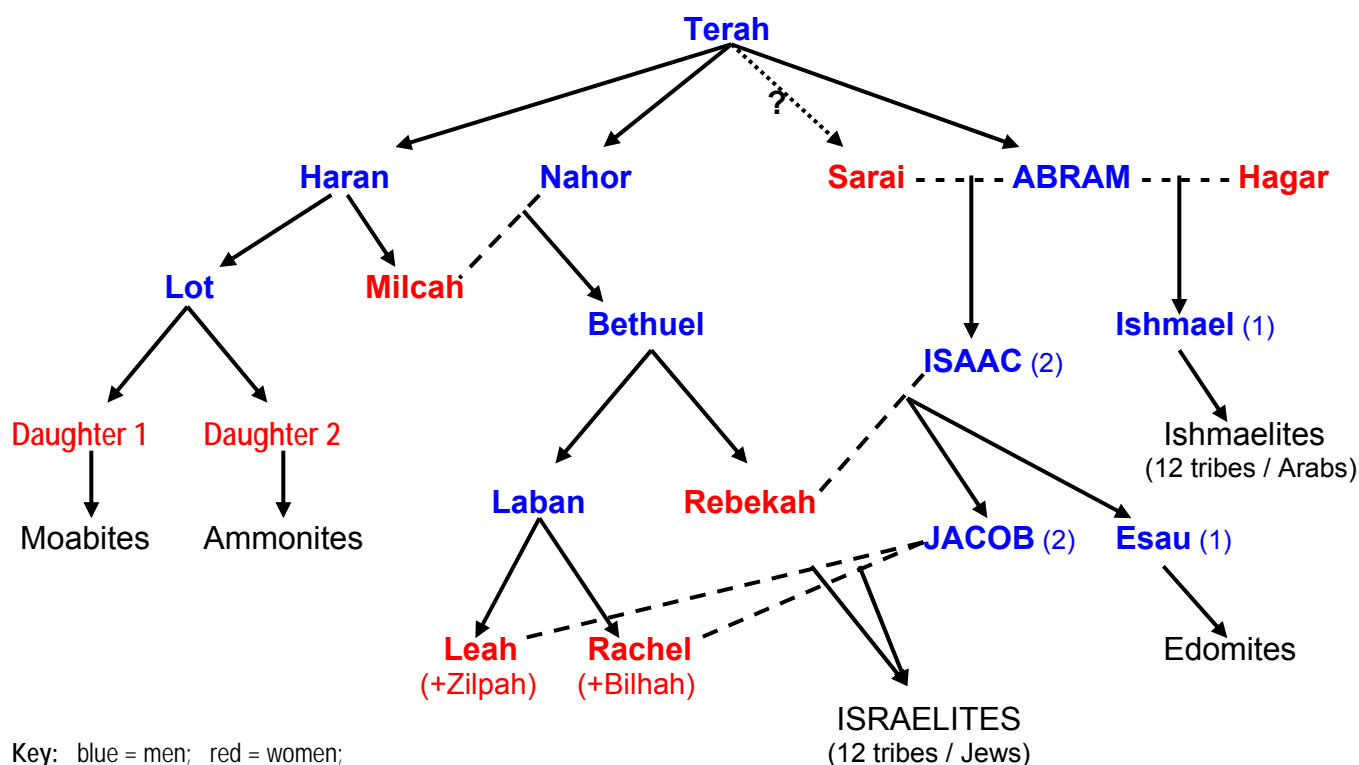


## Family of Abraham



**Terah:** from Ur of the Chaldeans; has 3 sons; wife not named (Gen 11:26-32; cf. Luke 3:34).

**Haran:** dies in Ur before his father dies; wife not named; son Lot, daughters Milcah & Iscah (11:27-28).

**Nahor:** marries **Milcah**, daughter of his brother Haran (11:29); have 8 sons, incl. Bethuel (22:20-24).

**Abram:** main character of Gen 12–25; recipient of God’s promises; name changed to **ABRAHAM** (17:5); sons Ishmael (by Hagar) and Isaac (by Sarah); after Sarah’s death, takes another wife, **Keturah**, who has 6 sons (25:1-4), including Midian, ancestor of the **Midianites** (37:28-36).

**Lot:** son of Haran, thus nephew of Abram, who takes care of him (11:27–14:16; 18:17–19:29); wife and two daughters never named; widowed daughters sleep with their father and bear sons, who become ancestors of the **Moabites** and **Ammonites** (19:30-38).

**Sarai:** Abram’s wife, thus Terah’s daughter-in-law (11:29-31); Abram also calls her his “sister,” which seems deceptive in one story (12:10-20); but in another story Abram insists she really is his half-sister (his father’s daughter by another wife; 20:1-18); originally childless, but in old age has a son, Isaac (16:1–21:7); name changed to **SARAH** (17:15); dies and is buried in Hebron (23:1-20).

**Hagar:** Sarah’s Egyptian slave-girl; mother of Abram’s first son, Ishmael; much conflict with Sarah after his birth; even more after the birth of Sarah’s son, Isaac (16:1–21:21).

**Ishmael:** first-born son of Abraham, by Hagar (16:1–17:27); wife or wives never named, but has 12 sons (25:12-16), the ancestors of 12 tribes of **Ishmaelites** (37:25-28).

**Isaac:** second son of Abraham, by wife Sarah, despite her old age (17:15-21; 21:1–35:29); marries Rebekah, who has twin sons, Esau & Jacob.

**Bethuel:** youngest son of Nahor & Milcah; wife unnamed; father of Rebekah (22:23) and Laban (24:29).

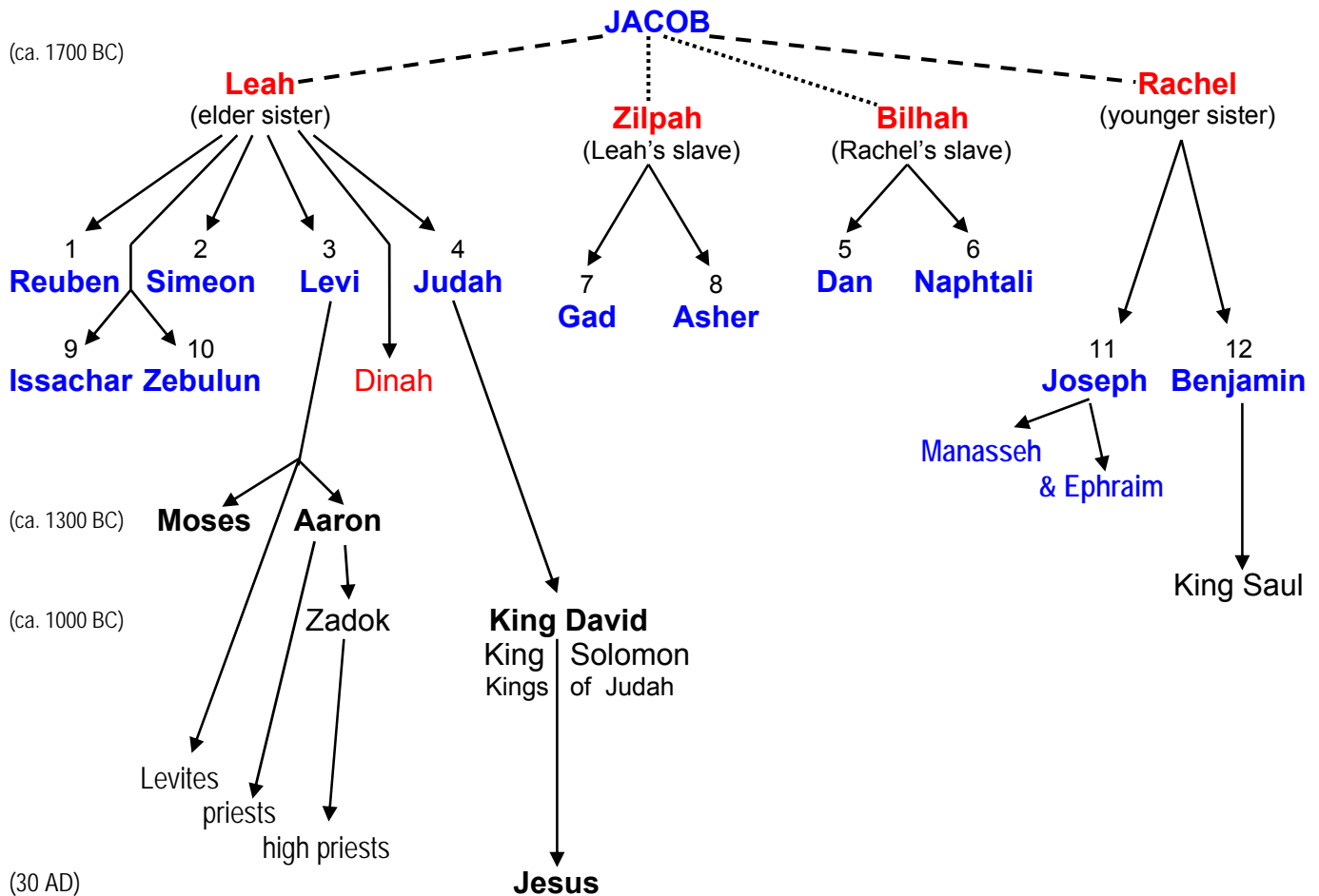
**Rebekah:** daughter of Bethuel (22:23); becomes wife of Isaac (24:15–25:20); favors their younger son.

**Laban:** son of Bethuel, brother of Rebekah; has extensive interactions with Jacob (24:29–31:55).

**Esau:** elder twin son of Isaac & Rebekah (25:25); names of wives differ in two traditions (26:34 & 28:9 vs. 36:2-3); one is a daughter of Ishmael; his sons are ancestors of the **Edomites** (36:1-43).

**Jacob:** younger twin son of Isaac & Rebekah (25:26); conflicts with Esau (25:27–27:46); marries Leah and Rachel, daughters of his uncle Laban (27:43–29:30); name changed to **ISRAEL** (32:28); has 12 sons (w/ 2 wives + 2 slave-girls), ancestors of the **Israelites** or “12 Tribes of Israel” (29:31–49:33).

## Sons of Jacob / Tribes of Israel



In the **Hebrew Bible**, the **Israelites** are described as descendants of the *twelve sons of Jacob* (whose name was changed to *Israel* in Gen 32:28), the *son of Isaac*, the *son of Abraham*. The phrase "Twelve Tribes of Israel" (or simply "Twelve Tribes") sometimes occurs in the Bible (OT & NT) without any individual names being listed (Gen 49:28; Exod 24:4; 28:21; 39:14; Ezek 47:13; Matt 19:28; Luke 22:30; Acts 26:7; and Rev 21:12; cf. also "Twelve Tribes of the Dispersion" in James 1:1).

The Bible also contains two dozen listings of the twelve sons of Jacob and/or tribes of Israel (Gen 29:31–30:24; 35:22–26; 46:8–27; 49:1–27; Exod 1:1–5; Num 1:5–15; 1:20–54; 2:3–29; 7:1–88; 10:11–28; 13:4–15; 26:5–50; 34:19–28; Deut 27:12–13; 33:1–29; Josh 13–19; 21:4–8; 1 Chr 2:1–2; 2–7; 12:24–38; 27:16–22; Ezek 48:1–29; 48:30–34; cf. Rev 7:5–8). Some are very brief lists, while others are spread out over several paragraphs or chapters that discuss the distribution of the land or name representatives of each tribe. Surprisingly, each listing is slightly different from all the others, either in the order of the names mentioned or even in the specific names used (e.g., the two sons of Joseph are sometimes listed along with or instead of their father; and sometimes a name is omitted for various reasons). A few texts actually have more than 12 names! Close analysis shows several principles for the ordering and various reasons for the omission or substitution of some names, as explained on <http://www.catholic-resources.org/Bible/History-12Tribes.htm>.

**Jacob's twelve sons** are first mentioned in the order of their births, in Genesis 29:31–30:24 & 35:16–20.

- **Leah** (elder wife): 1) **Reuben**, 2) **Simeon**, 3) **Levi**, 4) **Judah**; later also 9) **Issachar**, 10) **Zebulun**
- **Bilhah** (Rachel's slave): 5) **Dan**, 6) **Naphtali**
- **Zilpah** (Leah's slave): 7) **Gad**, 8) **Asher**
- **Rachel** (younger wife): 11) **Joseph**, 12) **Benjamin**

**Manasseh & Ephraim** – sons of Joseph, whose descendants figure prominently in the later history of Israel

**Moses and Aaron** – leaders of the Israelites at the time of their migration out of Egypt and wandering in the Sinai desert

**Kings David & Solomon** – the two greatest rulers of the united Kingdom of Israel, from about 1100 to 930 BCE

**Tribe of Levi** – becomes known as the "priestly tribe," since all cultic & temple officials had to belong to this tribe

**Tribe of Judah** – becomes known as the "royal tribe," since all later Kings of Judah were descendants of King David