



Newscast 2. Jacob

Abraham faced the supreme test of his faith when asked by God to sacrifice his son, Isaac. Abraham's decision to obey unquestioningly was all the more poignant since God promised him a son in his old age from his barren wife, Sarah. Isaac's two sons were Jacob and Esau, who in turn fathered two powerful clans. Jacob – whose name was later changed to Israel – had twelve sons, the descendants of whom became the twelve tribes of Israel.

Jacob's son, Joseph, disappears mysteriously when his brothers – who are jealous of him – sell him as a slave to a caravan of Ishmaelites bound for Egypt. Our Crime Correspondent suspects foul play – but comes to the wrong conclusions.

The report on the Hyksos occupation of Egypt is relevant to the Joseph story. During this period (see time-chart) immigrants from Western Asia had infiltrated the Delta – often migrating because of famines – and had eventually seized power from the native Egyptian Pharaohs. These new rulers – called Hyksos (literally meaning 'Rulers of Foreign Lands') – were probably still in power when Joseph later became Viceroy, and this might explain Joseph's remarkable success as a foreigner and the eventual migration of his family to Egypt.

The main focus of Newscast 2, however, is on the eventful and often tragic life of Jacob – the third of Israel's great Patriarchs.

Biblical references: Genesis, Chapters 20-37