



PEOPLE OF THE LAND

A Biblical Exploration

EVERY SUNDAY

With Conversation
Circles every Tuesdsy

Week 1: Origin Story

Week 2: From Slavery to Wilderness

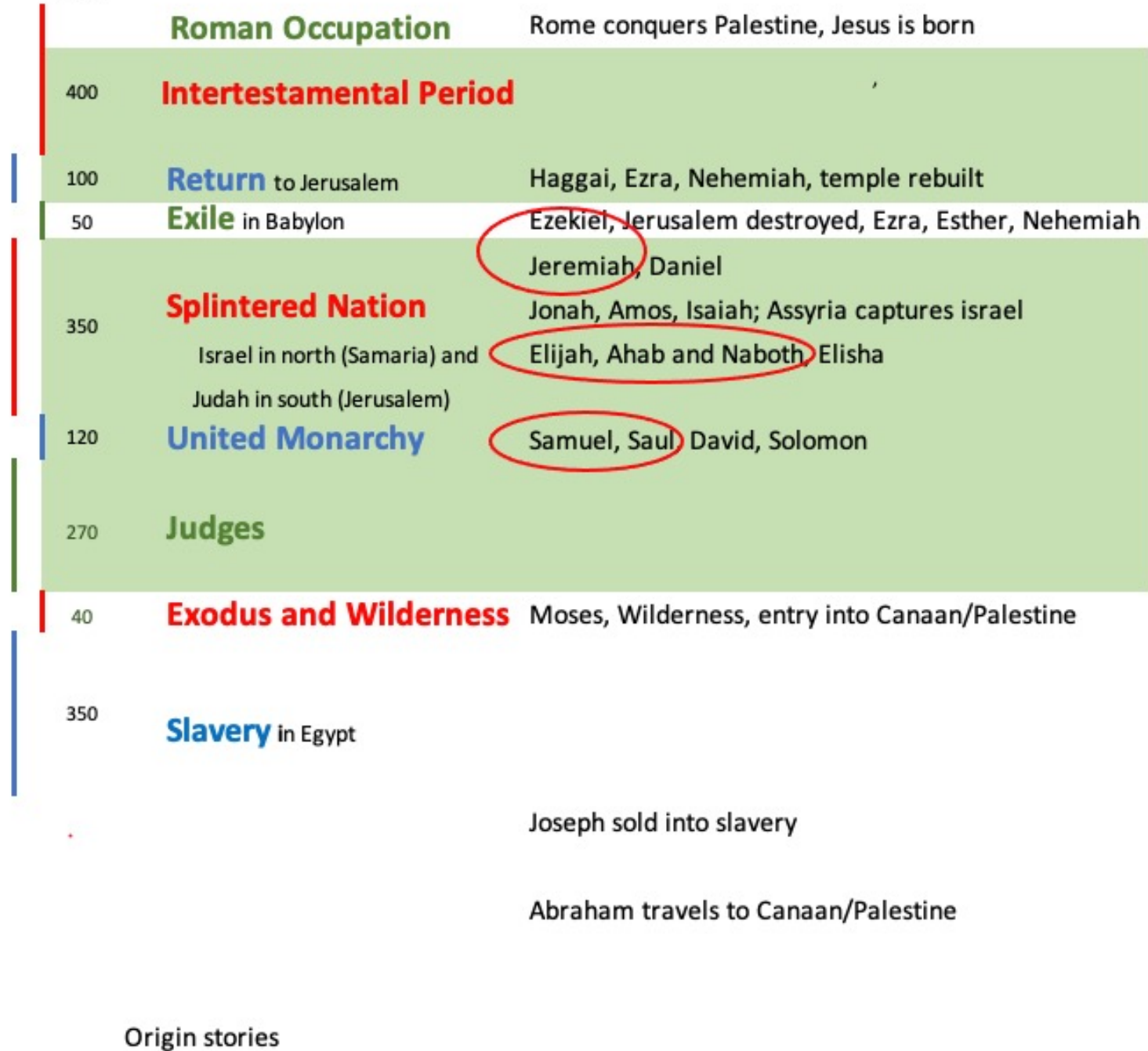
Week 3: From Exile to New Land

Old Testament Timeline

CENTURIES BEFORE CHRIST

- 1
- 2
- 3
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- 21
- ...

APPROX. YEARS



Major transitions in this part of biblical history:

- From **wilderness to settlement** in Canaan/Palestine
(led first by judges, then by a united monarchy, then as 2 separate monarchies)

Story: Israel demands a king

Story: King Ahab and Naboth's Vineyard

- From **settled life to exile** in Babylon

Story: Jeremiah's prophecies

- From **exile to resettlement** in Canaan/Palestine

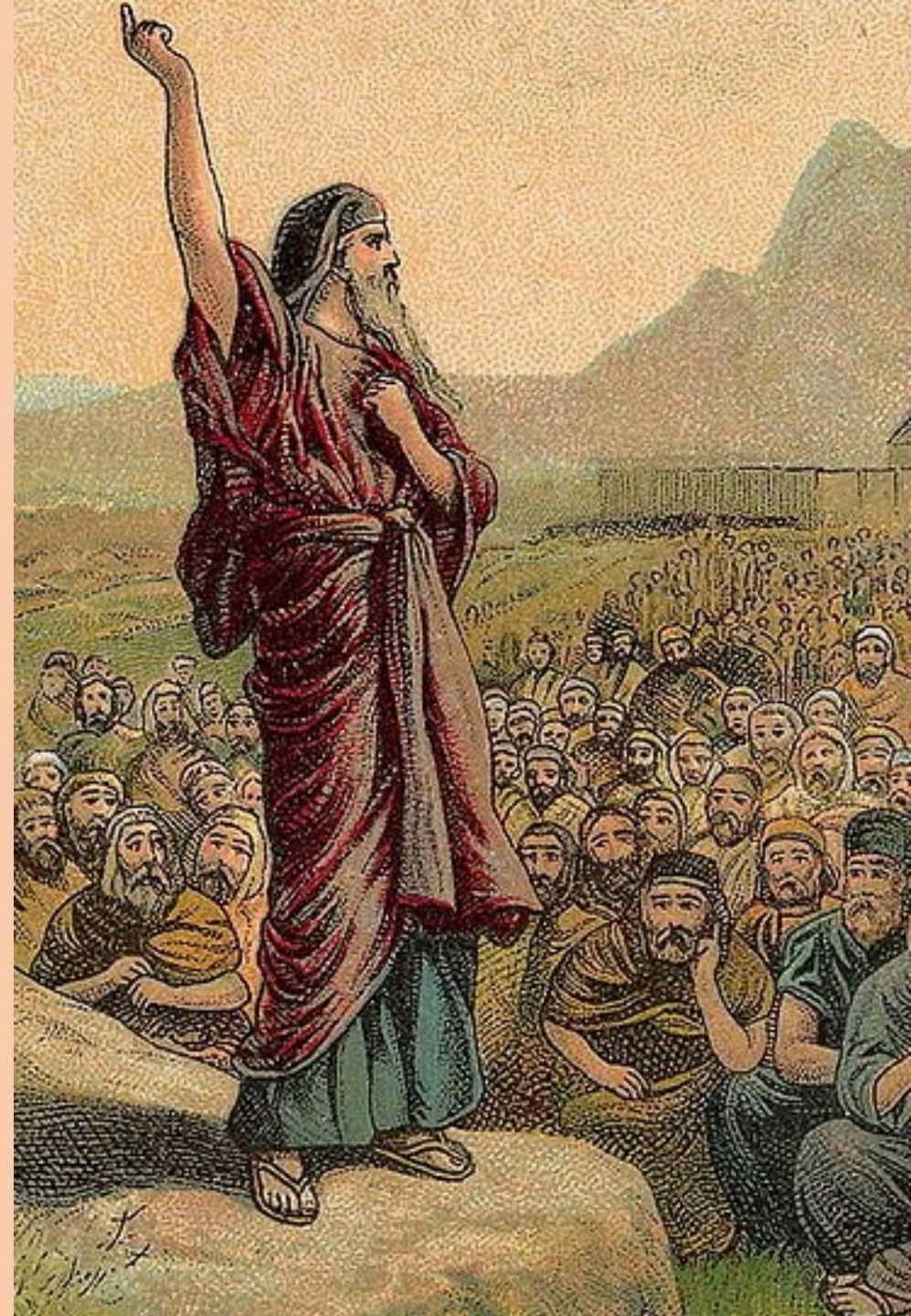
Story: Ezekiel's Prophecies

- From **independence to occupied nation**

Israel demands a King (1)

1 Samuel 8: 4-9 NRSV

⁴ Then all the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel at Ramah, ⁵ and said to him, “You are old and your sons do not follow in your ways; appoint for us, then, a king to govern us, like other nations.” ⁶ But the thing displeased Samuel when they said, “Give us a king to govern us.” Samuel prayed to the Lord. ⁷ and the Lord said to Samuel, “Listen to the voice of the people in all that they say to you; for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected me from being king over them. ⁸ Just as they have done to me, from the day I brought them up out of Egypt to this day, forsaking me and serving other gods, so also they are doing to you. ⁹ Now then, listen to their voice; only—you shall solemnly warn them, and show them the ways of the king who shall reign over them.”



Israel demands a King (2)

1 Samuel 8:10-18 NRSV

¹⁰ So Samuel reported all the words of the Lord to the people who were asking him for a king. ¹¹ He said, “These will be the ways of the king who will reign over you: he will take your sons and appoint them to his chariots and to be his horsemen, and to run before his chariots; ¹² and he will appoint for himself commanders of thousands and commanders of fifties, and some to plow his ground and to reap his harvest, and to make his implements of war and the equipment of his chariots. ¹³ He will take your daughters to be perfumers and cooks and bakers. ¹⁴ He will take the best of your fields and vineyards and olive orchards and give them to his courtiers. ¹⁵ He will take one-tenth of your grain and of your vineyards and give it to his officers and his courtiers. ¹⁶ He will take your male and female slaves, and the best of your cattle and donkeys, and put them to his work. ¹⁷ He will take one-tenth of your flocks, and you shall be his slaves. ¹⁸ And in that day you will cry out because of your king, whom you have chosen for yourselves; but the Lord will not answer you in that day.”

Brainstorm:

What does this story tell us?

For Samuel

What is their understanding of:

- God's **character**?
- how should they live ("**social order**")?
- how should they **relate to the land** (environment/nature)?

For the Children of Israel

What is their understanding of:

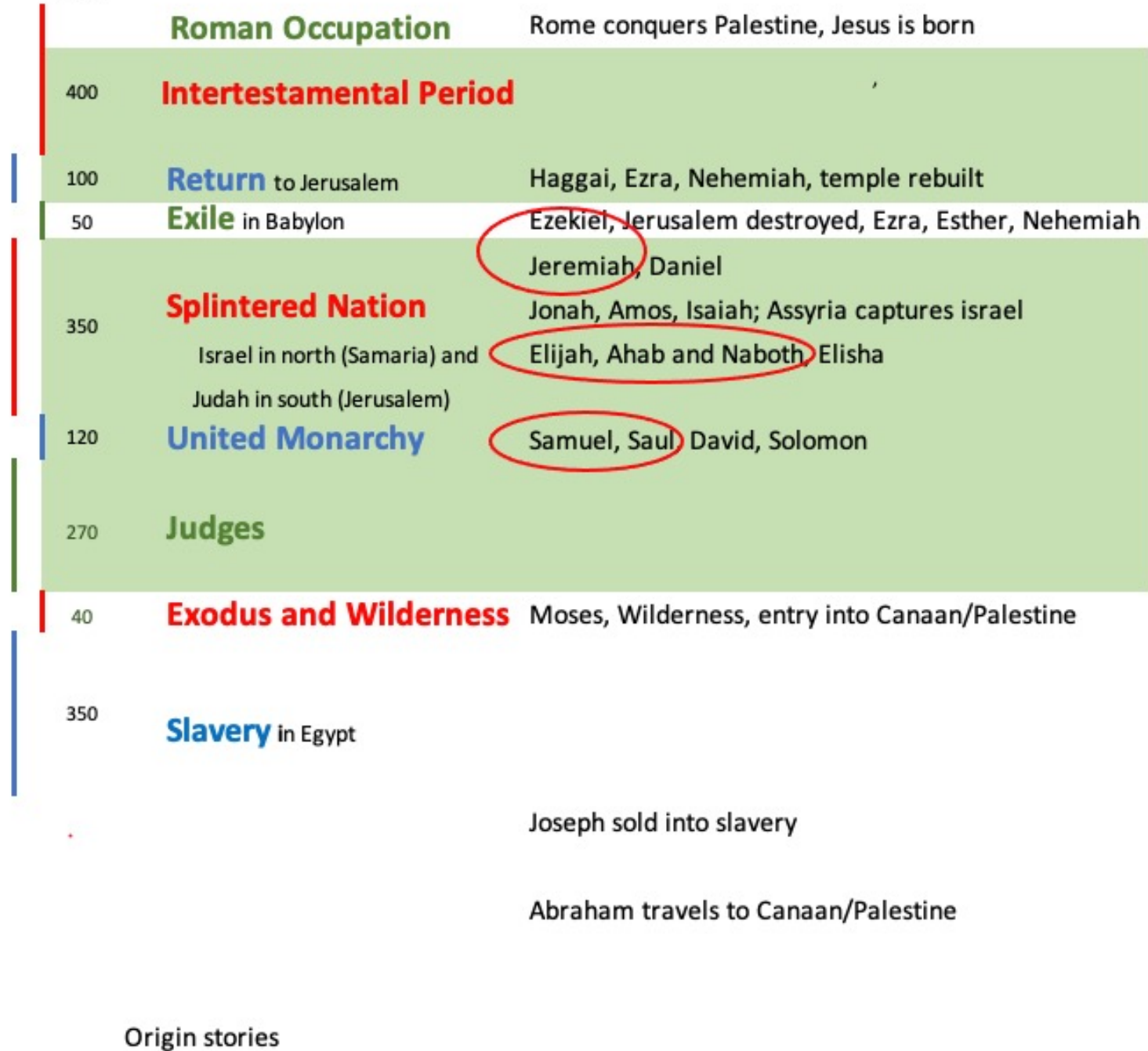
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APPROX.
YEARS



An illustration depicting King Ahab on the left, wearing a golden crown and a green robe, looking towards Naboth on the right. Naboth is dressed in a blue and white striped tunic and a white turban, holding a staff. The background shows a landscape with a city and a vineyard. The title text is overlaid in the center.

King Ahab and Naboth's Vineyard

1 Kings 21, 1- 4, 7 -16 NRSV

Brainstorm:

What does this story tell us?

For Elijah

What is their understanding of:

- God's **character**?
- how should they live ("**social order**")?
- how should they **relate to the land** (environment/nature)?

For Ahab and Jezebel?

What is their understanding of:

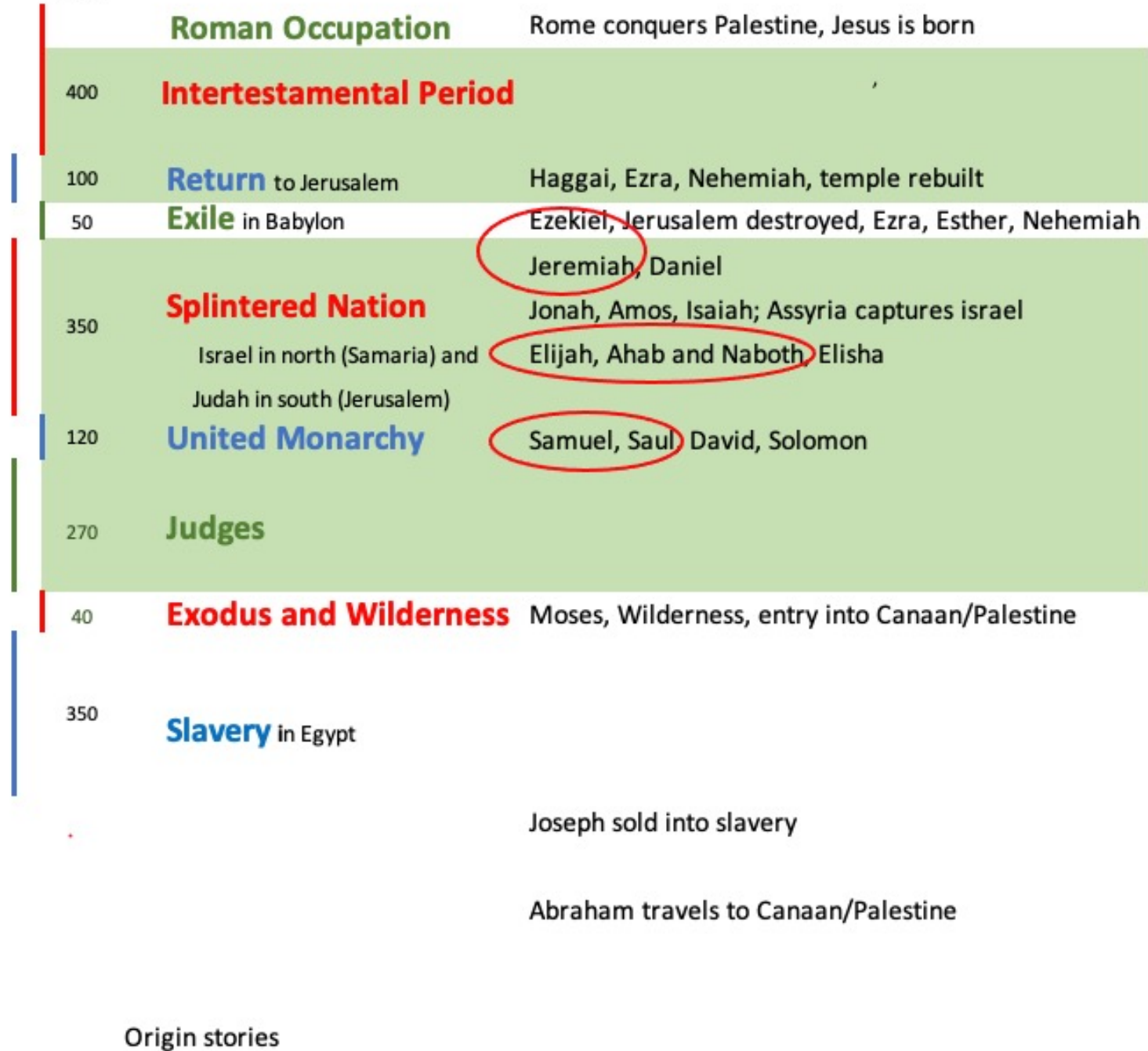
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APPROX. YEARS



Reflections at the Boundaries

- “In the years just after expulsion from the land, there is a flood of new literature trying to talk about new history .. To utter the unexpected and unutterable newness, that Yahweh begins a new history with exiles.”

The Land p. 106

- “God ... always provides his people an alternative reading of land and landlessness. The dying ones will be the bearers of life. ... there is a discounting of everything which landed history values – wisdom, might, riches, glory. This other One practices kindness, mercy, righteousness in the land. ... The ones who always lose are the wave of Yahweh’s future”

The Land p. 124

Walter Brueggemann, “The Land”

From settled life to exile in Babylon, to resettlement

Jeremiah's prophecies

Before exile ...

¹³ The word of the LORD came to me a second time, saying, "What do you see?"
And I said, "I see a boiling pot, tilted away from the north."

¹⁴ Then the LORD said to me: "Out of the north disaster shall break out on all the inhabitants of the land."

Jeremiah 1: 13-16 NRSV

During exile ...

¹³ When you search for me, you will find me; if you seek me with all your heart,
¹⁴ I will let you find me, says the Lord, and I will restore your fortunes and gather you from all the nations and all the places where I have driven you, says the Lord, and I will bring you back to the place from which I sent you into exile.

Jeremiah 29: 13-14 NRSV

Ezekiel's prophecies

¹⁹ I will give them one heart, and put a new spirit within them; I will remove the heart of stone from their flesh and give them a heart of flesh, ²⁰ so that they may follow my statutes and keep my ordinances and obey them. Then they shall be my people, and I will be their God.

Ezekiel 11: 19-20 NRSV

Ezekiel's story of the valley of dry bones ...

¹⁰ I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood on their feet, a vast multitude. ¹¹ Then he said to me, "Mortal, these bones are the whole house of Israel. They say, 'Our bones are dried up, and our hope is lost; we are cut off completely.' ¹² Therefore prophesy, and say to them, Thus says the Lord God: I am going to open your graves, and bring you up from your graves, O my people; and I will bring you back to the land of Israel. ¹³ And you shall know that I am the Lord, when I open your graves, and bring you up from your graves, O my people. ¹⁴ I will put my spirit within you, and you shall live, and I will place you on your own soil; then you shall know that I, the Lord, have spoken and will act," says the Lord.

Ezekiel 37: 10-14 NRSV

Reflections at the Boundaries

If the Genesis story sets the stage by giving us a sacred vision of the past, and if the Exodus story situates us in the sacred present on a pilgrimage toward external and internal liberation, then the story of the peace-making kingdom ignites our faith with a sacred vision of hope, a vision of love. It represents a new creation, and a new exodus – a new promised land that isn't one patch of ground held by one elite group, but that encompasses the whole earth. ... this hope is the very word of the Lord, the firm promise of the living God.

For reflection: Who is Yahweh For?

For a thousand years before Jesus, two radically different worldviews and social orders battled for the hearts and minds of God's people ... two diametrically opposed ways of being the people of the same God.

These two ways fought during the monarchy: kings and their elite companions on the one side, the prophets and the oppressed poor and excluded on the other. ... the urban elite associating God with the wisdom of empires; the voices of the emerging [... *prophetic*] tradition crying out for an egalitarian social and economic order in that same God's name.

Jesus was born into this ancient and ongoing struggle. ... He knew clearly which side God was on. He went forth from his baptism proclaiming one of these traditions to be the true "word" and "way" of God, and the other a diabolic counterfeit.