

Water A Vital Symbol In The Lives Of The Israelite People

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Throughout the assigned Jewish scriptural texts of Genesis and Exodus, the scope of water's symbolism encompasses the powers of destruction, deliverance, and promise. Its character is dually displayed as it manifests itself to be both a life taker and a life giver, a life force sustainer and a life force destroyer. As a life taker, water becomes the destructive force that obliterates the wicked people of Noah's day, and punishes the people and land of Egypt during Pharaoh's unyielding reign. In contrast, as a symbol of salvation, water provides deliverance to [Moses](#) and the [Israelites](#). Equally important, scenes of water surround events involving covenants, such as with Noah,

Hagar, and [Abraham](#). Water becomes the tool by which God dispenses his judgment, whether it be a blessing or a curse.

To begin with, water is portrayed as a destroyer when God wields it as an instrument of devastation to deliverer his condemning judgment throughout Genesis. Depicting water as a life taker, God sends a flood to destroy the unrighteous generation of mankind (Genesis 7:1). Only Noah and his family escape the waters of the flood (Genesis 7:7). Not only did the flood waters obliterate nearly all humankind, but also virtually all forms of animal life excluding the mated animal companions sheltered within the refuge of the ark (Genesis 7:21-23). Employed as a tool to dispense God's judgment, water becomes the medium by which God transforms from a creator of life to an eliminator of life.

Once again, when God delivers punishment to a disobedient people, water is found to play a significant role. As God releases plagues upon Egypt because of Pharaoh's refusal to let God's people go, the plagues source of origin...

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... promised to make a great nation of, can satiate their thirst (Exodus 21:18-19). To continue Abraham's promised lineage through his son Isaac, God reveals Isaac's intended to Abraham's servant at the well of Nahor (Exodus 24:10-20).

Essential to the carrying out of numerous promises, the presence or lack of water is required to seal the pledges made by God.

In conclusion, the role of water plays an amazingly complex and vital role in the lives of the Israelite people within the first two books of the Old Testament. Serving a two fold purpose, God manipulates water to terminate life or to prolong it, to avert

disaster or to inflict it. Representing devastation, salvation, and assurance, God brandishes water's powers to deliver glorious rewards or terrible penalties amongst his creation .

Works Cited

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Exodus

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