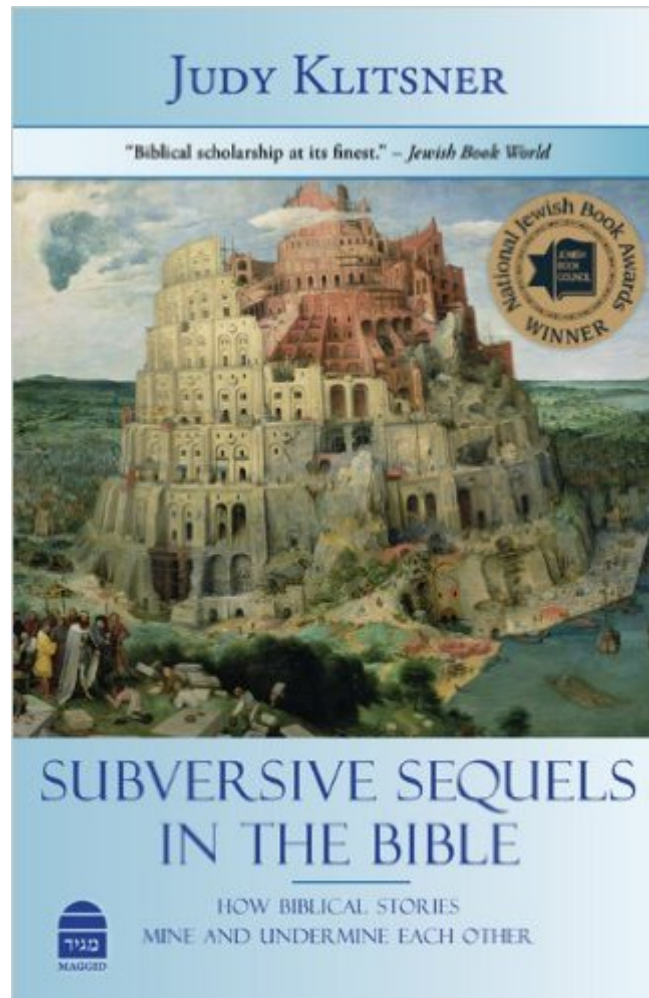


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Subversive Sequels In The Bible



Synopsis

In *Subversive Sequels in the Bible*, master Bible teacher Judy Klitsner takes us on a thrilling voyage of discovery through familiar biblical narratives. Deeply faithful to the texts, but daring in her interpretive approach, she draws stunning parallels between biblical passages to reveal previously overlooked layers of meaning. With a unique combination of scholarship, creativity and passion, Klitsner illustrates the dynamic nature of biblical attitudes toward timeless issues of self, gender and universalism. The result is a collection of provocative, original readings that will transform your understanding of the Bible. Winner of The National Jewish Book Award.

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Customer Reviews

While I do not share some of Klitsner's presuppositions, her book qualifies immediately in the most important virtue of a book on Biblical interpretation: she helps readers see the text in new ways. Occasionally her exposition is strained but for every non-sequitur there are dozens of insightful connections in inner Biblical interpretation. The first chapter draws attention to connections between the Jonah story and the earlier Noah story: (1) Noah sent a dove (Hebrew, yonah) to see if the flood was ended; Jonah is, of course Yonah. (2) God flooded the world because of hamas (violence, injustice); in Jonah, the Ninevites repented of their hamas and turned away from it. (3) Noah and Jonah's stories both involve boats, sea journeys, and water-induced catastrophe (even though Nineveh is nowhere near the sea). (4) The Noah story is about judgment without mercy; the Jonah

story is about mercy over judgment.(5) Noah ends his career in self-induced slumber and drunken self-destruction; Jonah begins his quest sleeping in the hold of the ship, then asking to be drowned in the sea, and at the end praying for God to take his life.(6) Noah is ambivalent about the destruction of the world while God is unrelenting; in Jonah, God wants to save the wicked, but Jonah is unwilling. Klitsner is more willing than I to question God's motives in the story, as she apparently views the Biblical narratives as human writings about God. Thus, it is possible, in her view, that the Noah story represents an earlier and inferior view of Divine judgment and mercy. My own theology differs a bit from hers, not being as willing to find fault with God in the Flood account.

Submitted by Prof. Henri Zukier
In *Subversive Sequels in the Bible*, Judy Klitsner explores the complex relationship between various familiar Biblical tales in a manner that is at once both surprising and convincing. What is convincing is the degree to which these narratives interact with common theme and language. What is surprising is that the results of such an examination yield a subversive yet stubbornly reverent approach to Bible study. Klitsner is a masterful guide on a thrilling voyage of discovery of hidden meanings and dynamics in the classical texts. Klitsner shakes up our old certainties about our most ancient and seemingly familiar biblical narratives, with counterintuitive, but ultimately compelling insights. She casts this familiar universe in a very different, bright light. Written with a minimum of academic jargon, this work is accessible, enjoyable and valuable to scholar and layperson alike and may be one of a very few examples of literary close readings of Hebrew texts that brings the sophistication of ancient Hebrew literature to the English speaking public. An easily summarized example is Klitsner's first chapter comparing the narrative of Noah and his ark to that of Jonah (Hebrew for "dove"). Under Klitsner's lens, these two stories are in dialogue about the dynamic nature of both human transcendence and Divine compassion. Whereas Noah is the surviving prophet in a drowning world - Jonah is the drowning prophet in a world redeemed. One story (Noah) ends with the sending of a dove and begins with the saving of many animals. The other begins with the sending of a "dove" (Jonah) and ends with a verse about saving many animals.

Judy Klitsner introduces readers to a new, eye-opening, and interesting way of understanding biblical narratives in her book, which won the National Jewish Book Award. She reads the stories as one reads good literature. She shows that different biblical tales frequently and purposely use similar language, often the same word, to draw readers' attention to the connection between the tales. The basic part of this technique is well-known and used by many people to help them

understand and appreciate the depths of biblical narratives. However, Klitsner moves a step further and makes a profound contribution to the understanding of the Bible. She proves, with dozens of demonstrations, that the subsequent stories subvert - radically reexamine, develop, and change - the idea or ideas that are in the prior tale. For example, three of her six chapters examine the changes in the Bible's portrayal of women. The first narrative, in Genesis chapter 1, depicts the first humans as "full and equal partners in their capacity to create and subdue." However, in chapter 2, "the equality between man and woman is lost." The man patronizingly "views her as a unique and irreplaceable gift, and as one who gives him as sense of completion as a human being." Thus, chapter 1's equality of the sexes is lost. The woman becomes subservient to man, a source of pleasure. The woman is frustrated with this demeaning secondary status. At the end of chapter 2, we discover another subversion. She seeks independence, meaning, and satisfaction. She speaks with the serpent in the Garden of Eden. The serpent, says the Talmud, Baba Bathra 16a, is her "evil Inclination," her inner urge. She expresses her feelings by violating the man's command, which he says is from God, by eating the forbidden fruit.

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