



# Fathers and Daughters in the Hebrew Bible

*Johanna Stiebert*

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The father-daughter dyad features in the Hebrew Bible in all of narratives, laws, myths and metaphors. In previous explorations of this relationship, the tendency has been to focus on discrete stories - notable among them, Judges 11 (the story of Jephthah's human sacrifice of his daughter) and Genesis 19 (the dark tale of Lot's daughters' seduction of their father). By taking the full spectrum into account, however, the daughter emerges prominently as (not only) expendable and exploitable (as an emphasis on daughter sacrifice or incest has suggested) but as cherished and protected by her father. Depictions of daughters are multifarious and there is a balance of very positive and very negative images.

While not uncritical of earlier feminist investigations, this book makes a contribution to feminist biblical criticism and utilizes methods drawn from the social sciences and psychoanalysis. Alongside careful textual analysis, Johanna Stiebert offers a critical evaluation of the heuristic usefulness of the ethnographic honour-shame model, of parallels with Roman family studies, and of the application and meaning of 'patriarchy'.

Following semantic analysis of the primary Hebrew terms for 'father' (אב) and 'daughter' (בת), as well as careful examination of inter-family dynamics and the daughter's role vis-a-vis the son's, alongside thorough investigation of both Judges 11 and Genesis 19, and also of the metaphor of God-the-father of daughters Eve, Wisdom and Zion, Stiebert provides the fullest exploration of daughters in the Hebrew Bible to date.

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