

Old Testament vs. Hellenic divine intervention

The Old Testament and Hellenic texts we have studied have numerous examples of divine intervention. The range and complexity in human affairs that these interventions occur have similar, yet different attributes. Both texts describe divine intervention as a way of explaining "why things happen(ed) and being "chosen" by God or gods to fulfill a destiny. Both also see divine intervention as something that can not be understood by humans; God or the gods have their reasons why people are "chosen" and why certain gifts, events, and catastrophes happen and we will never understand the reasoning. Differences in the texts stem from the reasons they are the same; why certain people are chosen, why events happen, etc.

The range and complexity in human affairs of divine intervention as described in the Hellenic texts and the Old Testament are similar because of the interference in human affairs, yet they are different because of why certain people are chosen to fulfill a destiny. For instance, in the Old Testament, God chooses Noah and his family to be the only survivors after the flood that wipes out the earth. His destiny was to build the ark and take a pair of every living creature to help repopulate the earth after everything is wiped out. This is similar to Oedipus at Colonus, in the Hellenic texts, because the gods choose Oedipus to save the city of Colonus from his own sons. They differ because God, in the Old Testament, chooses rather blindly. He does not choose people for any reason except that is who He wanted. If He does choose, it is based on goodness or loyalty to Him. The gods of Hellenic texts, like in Oedipus at Colonus, the gods choose Oedipus because of his wisdom and his family line. The Hellenic texts choose based on prestige, family, and honor. Another example of this is the story "Joseph" in the Old Testament. Joseph was chosen to be a powerful ruler in Egypt for no reason whatsoever, just because God wanted him to be. In The Illiad, this would never happen, Achilles is chosen to defeat Hector because of his prestige, honor, and family line. Achilles is not chosen because Zeus just wanted him to. Not just anybody could have killed Hector, it had to be someone famous.

In the Old Testament, divine intervention, especially in "Genesis," plays a very important part. For example, in "The Creation of the Universe," God wills everything into being. "God said, 'Let there be light,' (Genesis 1:5) "Then God said, 'Let the earth produce growing things,' (Genesis 1:11) "God said, 'Let the earth bring forward living creatures,' (Genesis 1:24). These things, and others, are a way to explain why we have light, plants, animals, etc. Also in "Genesis," in the story of "Adam and Eve," the punishment that mankind receives for Adam and Eve eating the forbidden fruit explains man's hardships. "To the woman he said: 'I shall give you great labour in childbearing..... You will desire your husband, but he will be your master,' (Genesis 3:16). "To the man he said: '.... the earth shall be cursed. You will get your food from it only by labour all the days of your life; it will yield thorns and thistles for you,' (Genesis 3:17- 18).

The Hellenic texts are different because certain events, good or bad, may only happen because of a god's fondness or dislike for a mortal, or just for the gods' own amusement. An instance of this occurs in The Illiad, when Paris and Menelaus are in combat in Book Three, Aphrodite saves Paris from defeat, and takes him away to his bedroom. She interfered because of her fondness of Paris for her own amusement. Also, in The Illiad, Zeus's fondness of Hector results in Hector's almost invincibility through most of the story. Zeus protects him in every way, except when the other "chosen one," Achilles, comes into battle, which results in Achilles killing Hector.

There are, however, several examples in which the Hellenic texts are similar to the Old Testament in respect to divine intervention. For instance, in Oedipus the King and Oedipus at Colonus, Oedipus is destined to become king of Thebes only to be exiled from Thebes to fulfill a greater destiny. "No sickness can destroy me, nothing can. I would never have been saved from death- I have been saved for something great and terrible, something strange. Well let my destiny come and take me on its way!" (Oedipus the King, p. 246 lines 1594-1598). "The gods are about to raise you to your feet- till now they were bent on your destruction." (Oedipus at Colonus, p. 306 lines 432-434).

The Old Testament and Hellenic texts' acts of divine intervention are similar because both texts rely greatly on these acts. They are included to explain the unexplainable. They are very different because of the ways God intervenes and the ways the gods intervene. God does not intervene because it is a "game" to Him, like the gods in Hellenic texts do. The gods choose honorable, wise, royalty, type of people to fulfill important destinies, while God chooses based on nothing, and if He does, it is based on loyalty and goodness. In these ways the Hellenic texts and the Old Testament compare a contrast.

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ry adam punishment mankind receives adam eating forbidden fruit explains hardships woman shall give great labour childbearing will desire your husband will your master shall cursed your food from only labour days life yield thorns thistles different events good only fondness dislike mortal amusement instance occurs illiad when paris menelaus combat book three aphrodite saves paris defeat takes away bedroom interfered fondness paris amusement also illiad zeus fondness hector results almost invincibility through most story zeus protects every except when other achilles comes into battle which results killing there however several examples which respect instance king destined become king thebes exiled thebes fulfill greater sickness destroy nothing would never been saved death been saved something great terrible something strange well come take king lines about raise feet till were bent destruction lines acts both rely greatly these acts included explain unexplainable very ways intervenes ways intervene does intervene game like honorable wise royalty type important destinies while chooses based nothing loyalty goodness ways compare contrast Essay, essays, term paper, term paper, term papers, term papers, book reports, study, college, thesis, dissertation, test answers, free research, book research, study help, download essay, download term papers