

WATER AS A BLESSING AND A TRANSIENT RESOURCE: A CALL TO RE-DEFINE MODERN ATTITUDES TOWARDS WATER IN LIGHT OF JOB 14:7–12

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ABSTRACT

This article explores the ecological potential in Job 14:7–12. The metaphor in Job 14 praises the life-giving potential of water to revive a dead tree before presenting its transient character, similar to human life. The article investigates the question of why the author of Job finds it appropriate to use water and water-related images to contrast the potential of water to revive a dead tree with the transient mortals who disappear at death like great bodies of water in times of drought. Using elements of historical, critical, and literary approaches, as well as metaphor theory, and applying the Earth Bible Principle of intrinsic worth, this article argues that water should not be viewed as a limitlessly renewable resource, but a precious gift requiring responsible management.

INTRODUCTION

Water features in the opening verses of the Bible (Gen 1:2), in keeping with the finding of science that all life owes its origins to water. The closing text of the Bible (Rev 22:1–2) shows how the water of life flows from the throne of God through the city, sustaining evergreen trees for the healing of the nations. These and other passages in the Bible show how the Israelites were aware of the preciousness of this gift of life in their arid land (Bradley 2012:5).

However, today the sustainability and renewability of this precious resource is a matter of debate. The increase in global warming, climate change, pollution, and overexploitation is affecting the quality and extent of water resources. There is a growing awareness that a vulnerable water supply could be at the core of conflicts during the twenty-first century (Maliva and Missimer 2012:3). It is argued that by

2025 there will be a serious shortage of water; this gift of life is steadily vanishing (Pennington and Cech 2010:14).

Job 14:7–12 presents water as an agent of life and yet acknowledges its transient character as a vanishing resource, compared to humans who disappear at death. The text praises the value of water in terms of reviving a dead tree, before presenting its transient character, like humans who disappear at death. Although the primary focus of Job 14:7–14 is not on water, its figurative use of aspects of water to highlight the fate of humans is ecologically insightful. The question is why the author finds it appropriate to use water and water-related images to contrast the potential of water to revive a dead tree with the ephemeral character of mortals, who die like waters that disappear forever. Can the insights of Job 14:7–12 into water shed light on contemporary reconsiderations of ideas and attitudes towards water?

The answer to this question draws on the views Job 14 might express about the *value* or the *intrinsic worth* of water in the arid land of Canaan. The images of water as an agent of revival and life (vv. 7–9), and drought as a metaphor for the permanence of death (vv. 11–12), offer a means of understanding the writer’s view of water as a blessing but also a resource that can disappear forever (v. 12). The prevailing water scarcity explains why the Old Testament overflows with thoughts and metaphors on using, conserving, and cherishing water.

The aim of this article is to redefine, in light of this ancient text, the way of viewing this resource. Water was not a limitless resource in Israel. That is why in the Old Testament water was variously used to “convey a sense of permanence and unending nature, as well as extreme impermanence” (Ben Zvi 2014:27). The contribution of the Old Testament as Ancient Israelite literature is to remind modern people, especially those in parts of the world where water is assumed to be a permanent resource, that it cannot be taken for granted. Management of water is as crucial an issue for us today as it was for peoples living in ancient times (Tsumura 2010:165).

BRIEF OVERVIEW OF APPROACHES TO JOB 14:7–12

To my knowledge, there has been no study to date on the ecological significance of water images in Job 14:7–12. Commentaries are understandably interested in the fate of humans, which is the central theme of the text. Clines (1989:328), Newsom (2003:135), and later Chase (2013:88) are interested in the significance of human hopelessness as reflected in the text and overlook the vehicle (water) used to express it. In other words, Job 14 “encapsulates the tension between the desperate human [Job] yearning for hope and the reality of a world where hope is eroded to nothingness” (Seow 2010:497).

These anthropocentric interpretations often fail to recognise that the water images on the surface of Job 14:7–12 are what the author chose to show us first and most clearly. In this sense, Fox advises:

Rather than thinking of the imagery as an expendable outer garb, we should compare it to the visible surface of a painting. The imagery is the painting. We can discuss the painting’s symbolism, emotive overtones, ideological message, and so on, but only as projections of the surface imagery, not as substitutes for it. To understand the poem [metaphor] we must first look carefully at the surface the author shows us. (Fox 1988:57)

In the light of Fox’s insight, this article is interested in the significance of the water metaphor in Job 14:7–12. Contrary to previous studies, this article is entirely devoted to the ecological significance of water and related phenomena in this passage.

THE APPROACHES IN THIS ARTICLE

This article applies elements of historical-critical and literary approaches. It points to clues from the hydrological, geographical, cultural, and agricultural contexts that might have informed the use of water images in Job 14:7–12. Literary aspects of the texts are also appraised.

In addition, the analysis considers insights from metaphor theory. Grünfeld (1992:83) points out that people use metaphor when the means of literal language are

not enough to express crucial insights about what is expected to be conveyed. In this sense, Ben Zvi (2014:27) argues that it is because of its multifaceted nature that water turned into a central metaphor through which Israel could convey, formulate, reformulate, and communicate in comprehensible ways concepts that would have been difficult for them to say differently.

Finally, this article applies one of the six eco-justice principles associated with the Earth Bible Project, namely the principle of intrinsic worth. The principle states: “The universe, Earth and all its components have intrinsic worth/value” (Habel 2008:2).

THE MASORETIC TEXT OF JOB 14:7–12

The reason that it is important to reproduce the Hebrew text here is that some of its words are translated differently in current English translations, which often overlook the ecological dimensions of certain key words. The analyses will show that the Hebrew text enables readers to engage in fascinating ways with the ecological potential of the text. Interestingly, the text does not pose textual problems. The translation of the text is therefore based on the researcher’s understanding of the Hebrew text.

- 7 כִּי יֵשׁ לְעֵץ תְּקוּנָה אִם־יִכָּרֵת וְעוֹד יִחְלִיף וַיִּנְקָתוּ לֹא תִחַדָּל:
- 8 אִם־יִזְקִין בְּאָרְצָא שְׂרָשׁוֹ וּבְעֶפְרָא יָמוּת גִּזְעוֹ:
- 9 מְרִיט מַיִם יִפְרֹחַ וְעֵשָׂה קִצְיִר כְּמוֹ־גִטֵּעַ:
- 10 וַגְּבַר יָמוּת וַיִּחַלֵּשׁ וַיִּגְוַע אֲדָם וְאִיּוֹ:
- 11 אֲזֻלִּים־מַיִם מִנִּי־יָם וַנְּהָר יִתְרַב וַיִּבֶשׁ:
- 12 וְאִישׁ שָׁכַב וְלֹא־יָקוּם עַד־בִּלְתִּי שָׁמוּם לֹא יִקְיִצוּ וְלֹא־יִלְעָרוּ מִשְׁנֵנָתָם:

TRANSLATION

The passage from Job 14:7–12 does not present critical problems for its translation. The translation below is drawn from Longman (2006:197), but adjusted on the basis of my understanding of the Hebrew text. These changes have been necessitated by the way Longman has rendered both the syntax of Job 14:9–12 and some key words of the Hebrew text (such as מָוֶה and נִקְרָה), which have implications for an ecological reading of this metaphor.

Job 14:7–12

⁷ For a tree, there is hope that if cut down,
it will sprout again, that its shoots will continue to grow.

⁸ Though its roots grow old in the earth
and its stump dies in the ground,

⁹ yet at the scent of water it will sprout
and put forth branches like a young plant.

¹⁰ But mortals die and dwindle away;
humans expire and are no more.

¹¹ Water disappears from the sea,
and rivers dry up and wither away.

¹² so people lie down and do not arise;
until the heavens are no more, they do not awake,
they are not roused from their sleep.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS

Delimitation of the text

Job 14 as a whole belongs to Job's third speech framed in Job 12–14. Habel (1985:239) discerns two major units in Job 14: verses 1–6, focusing on the brevity of human life, and verses 7–22, exploring the issue of hope. There are three sub-units in verses 7–22, namely, Job 14:7–12; Job 14:13–17; and Job 14:18–22 (Wilson 2015:86).

The chapter as a whole deals with Job's allegations that human life is short and full of troubles (v. 1). Human life is unlike the tree, which can revive (vv. 7–9), but more like dried rivers that vanish forever (vv. 10–12).

The water metaphor plays a central role in this text, highlighting the contrast between the hope of new life for a tree and the destruction of such hope for humankind (Boorer 1998:110). For the tree water is a (life-giving) blessing (v. 9), but for humans, who are like water that dries up (drought) (v. 11), the (life-threatening) absence of water depicts God's destruction of human hope at death. The idea of water as both a blessing and a transient resource can be discerned in the following structure.

Literary structure

A	there is hope for a dead tree	vv.7–8
B	by a scent of <i>water</i> it will revive	v.9
A'	but mortals die forever lifeless	v.10
B'	they are like inland <i>waters</i> that vanish forever	vv.11–12

Job 14:7–12 makes a vivid contrast between water entities and human fate: the rebirth of a dead tree by water versus the ephemerality of mortals, who are like inland waters that vanish forever. Ecological insights are embedded in the literary clues of the text.

Literary analysis of Job 14:7–12

This poem is constructed in the form of what biblical scholars call 'an alternating parallelism' of ABA'B' (Willis 1987:50). As printed in the Masoretic text, A (vv. 7–8) and A' (v. 10) depict the compared/parallel subjects (the tree and mortals), while B (v. 9) and B' (vv. 11–12) contain aspects of water. The verb מָוָה (to die) occurs in both postulates A and A', conveying the basic principle of the similarity of the natural fate (death) of both plant and human kingdoms. However, only plants experience the life-giving and reviving power of water, while human death is likened to the loss of water from the sea or the drying up of a river that disappears forever.

Two aspects of water contrast the destiny of a tree and that of humans in BB': first, there is the scent of water reviving a dead tree (B), while drought is likened to human

death (B'). Job concludes that humans disappear at death like the permanent vanishing of a river. The word *שָׁלַף* (v. 10) describes human loss of power after death as contrasted with the tree's renewal by the scent of water after it is cut down (vv. 7–9). The alternating poetical pattern tends here to underline the life-giving power of water (vv. 7–9), while Job's lament about the death of humans likens it to the irreversible vanishing of great entities (rivers or seas) of water (vv. 10–12).

Job 14:7–12 links up with a number of images of water from Job 4–27, where water and water-related phenomena provide metaphors for the attitudes and actions of Job and his friends. Job compares his friends to a wadi that dries up in summer (6:15–17); Bildad replies by likening the wicked man (Job) to a papyrus that withers because of a lack of water (8:11–13). In Job 5:26, Eliphaz advises Job that once he repents, he will come out of his grave just like a shock of grain comes up to threshing floor in season. In Job 7:9, Job compares those who die (who go to Sheol) to the fading and vanishing clouds. All these texts relate to the root metaphor, which is informed by certain aspects of water.

ECO-THEOLOGICAL RETRIEVAL OF JOB 14:7–12

Water and tree in the Old Testament

The image of water and tree as testimony to fertility is dominant in the Old Testament. Psalms 1:3, for instance, likens the righteous to healthy trees, provided with abundant water and bearing fruit at the right time. The emphasis is not on whether the passive *נִטְעַל* in verse 3 can be read as “planted” or “transplanted”, but on a tree that grows where there is permanent and plentiful water, streams of water (Bratcher and Reyburn 1991:19). The expression “it prospers in everything” (Ps 1:3) implies that in all weather conditions this kind of tree will flourish, because its roots are sunk deep into the life-giving soil of a river bed (DeClaissé-Walford, Jacobson and Tanner 2014:62). Water is the defining aspect here of the vivid contrast between the righteous and the wicked, in that the first are vital and stable, and the others are lifeless, frail, and sterile.

That is why the restored Jerusalem in Ezekiel 47:1–12 is depicted in terms of a fresh stream of water flowing eastwards towards the Dead Sea bringing abundant fertility to the arid land of Israel (Terblanche 2004:126). This regeneration results in evergreen trees growing all along the stream, which produce a permanent supply of fresh fruit providing food and healing in the neighbourhood. The woman of Song of Songs 4:12–15 is also depicted as a “locked garden” with flowing springs sourced from Lebanon that irrigate and fertilise her exotic plants (Exum 2005:180).

Water and the flora kingdom in Job 14:7–9 (verses 7–9)

In Job 14:7–9, water is clearly viewed as a life-giving source that allows a plant to sprout again. The Qal imperfect תִּהְדָּל (literally: will not cease or will sprout again) recalls that of verse 6 implying that Job (humans) will cease to be (v. 6a), but a tree with its branches will flourish (Michel 1987:322). The section clearly contrasts the hope of new life for a tree with the lack of such hope for humans.

Indeed, given the contemporary anthropogenic deforestation, ecologists do not normally think of flora as having hope. However, Job says there could be hope if the earth is still watered. In Job 14, the tree’s hope resides in its contact with water. The Hebrew words מַיִם מְרִיחַ (at the scent of water) in verse 9 hyperbolises the life-giving potential of water. The expression literally implies the revivifying effect of the *slightest contact* with water compared to the expression בִּהְרִיחוֹ אֵשׁ (when it touches/smells fire) in Judges 16:9. A tree may appear to be lifeless, but when it is in contact with just the mere scent of water it can sprout again (Wilson 2015:88).

The idea is not that the tree will be “exchanged for another” (see Ibn Ezra’s translation of the verb יִהְלִיף in verse 7), but the potential of the tree ‘to grow or live again’ (Gordis 1978:148). The tree is a renowned symbol of the gift of immortality in Ancient Near Eastern myths (Sandars 1972:106). In this sense, tree symbolism is used in the Old Testament to depict various concepts such as the Garden of Eden, the Tree of Life, the natural world, political leaders, luxuriant living, and even messianic prophecy (Osborne 2013:172).

However, wherever healthy trees are depicted it is very often in connection with a stream of water. Therefore, meteorological data suggest that the image of “water reviving a tree” in Job 14:7–9 draws on agricultural practices in the Transjordan, where dying fig and pomegranates trees were renewed by cutting off old branches close to the ground, so that in the next year new shoots would sprout from the stump (Balentine 2006:218). Water is viewed in Job 14:7–9 as having intrinsic value and playing a great role in the greening of the earth.

Job asks why this power of a tree to be reborn does not apply to humans.¹ According to Job, God is the one who prevents mortals from experiencing the same rejuvenating power of a tree. The idea is that both plants and humans naturally die (יָמוּתָה), but only plants can recover life and put forth fresh grass (v. 9). After death, humans vanish just as a dried river does. This is the major theme of Job 14:10–12.

Humans vanish as water disappears (verses 10–12)

Humans are “unlike” trees but “like” dried water

Humans are ironically depicted as גִּבּוֹר (hero, strong man) (v. 10), which would emphasise their strength and virility in contrast to the fragility and limitedness of עֵץ in Job 14:1. The irony implies that despite their strength, humans do not have the capacity for revival that plants have. Humans are like rivers that disappear forever after a drought. Humans are both “unlike” the tree that rejuvenates by means of water and “like” water/lake/streams that waste away and dry up (Bimson 2012:5). Interestingly, the text shifts from depicting the revival potential of water to portraying its fragility and potential to disappear. These verses compare water that evaporates or drains away with humans who vanish into the dust of the earth in death (Clines 1989:329).

In an ingenious thought, Job 14:10–12 likens the irreversible situation of the drying up of permanent water supplies (sea/streams) with the death of human beings

¹ Job 14’s image of water restoring a tree recalls a widespread idea in myths about death maintaining that “mortals could die and be rejuvenated either by shedding their skins like snakes, by growing forth from the ground as plants, or by similar process” (Habel 1985:238).

(Kavusa 2016:68). Just as there is no hope for a river/sea to refill during drought, so once humans die, they go forever (Longman 2006:213). The simile is inspiring in the land of Israel, which was:

Un pays où la présence – et l’absence – d’eau se font sentir davantage qu’ailleurs. S’il y a beaucoup d’eau, le pays devient un « pays de délice » (אֶרֶץ חֶפְזִי, MI 3:12). Mais d’ordinaire il n’y en a pas trop et le danger de la sécheresse est toujours présent (Reymond 1958:1–2)².

The particle *waw* (ו) *adaequātiōnis* in the expression וַיֵּשׁ וַיִּכָּב equalises water vanishing and human death (Job 14:11).³ The simile is more striking since the vanishing refers to great bodies of water that were considered as pre-existing and perennial⁴ (יָם, sea/ocean and נָהָר, river) contrary to other water-related entities, such as הַנֶּחַל (watering-place)⁵ or הַבְּרֵחַ (wadi)⁶ used for seasonal water courses. Wilson (2007:154) convincingly argues that Job 14 uses “river” (נָהָר) rather than “wadi” (בְּרֵחַ), because the second often dries up and then is replenished with rain or melting snow. However, Job 14:11 does not refer to a seasonal water disappearance, but a final failure, an irreversible vanishing, a drying up for good (Wilson 2015:88).

The consequences of the disappearance of such bodies of water, which were considered as sustaining life, or better, permanent sources of life, would have horrible effects on humans, plants and animals, and, by extension, on the Earth.

² The English translation: [Israel was] a country where the presence and the absence of water are felt more than elsewhere. When there is enough water, the land becomes a land of delight (אֶרֶץ חֶפְזִי, MI 3:12). However, very often, there is not too much water and the threat of drought is always present (the researcher’s own translation).

³ Thus, in the NRSV translation, Job 14:11–12 states: “As waters fail from a lake, and a river wastes away and dries up, so mortals lie down and do not rise again; until the heavens are no more, they will not awake or be roused out of their sleep.”

⁴ נָהָר literally refers to a permanent water course with a huge flow rate. In this sense, the word was usually used to refer primarily to the Nile, which was the river par excellence in Egypt (Ringgren, Snijders and Fabry 1998:261). In Genesis 2:10, the word is employed to depict the river that flows out of Eden to water the garden, and from there it divided into four branches to water the whole world.

⁵ הַנֶּחַל in Brown, Briggs and Driver (1968:624–625) refers to leading to a watering-place or station where one can rest during a journey.

⁶ See 1 Kings 17:7.

Job 14:10–12 and Isaiah 19:5–1

Intertextual insights suggest that Job 14:10–12 recall the tradition of the drying up of the Nile in Isaiah⁷ 19:5–10, an example of perennial bodies of waters totally vanishing (Clines 1989:329). The parallelism between Isaiah 19:5 (וְנִשְׁתַּדְּמָהּ מֵמַיִם וְנִהָרָה יְתָרְבַּת וְיִבְשׁ) and Job 14:11 (אֲזִלֵּי־מַיִם מִנִּיִּים וְנִהָרָה יְתָרְבַּת וְיִבְשׁ) is remarkable.

Isaiah 19:5–10 is an oracle against the Nile that would result in a total disaster paralysing the whole Egyptian society (Balogh 2011:242). That is why Egyptians valued the Nile River through the hymn to god Hapy, who was considered responsible for the Nile inundation, enabling land fertility and watering the cisterns for survival in Egypt (Currid 1997:240–245). People in the Ancient Near East, including Judah, knew that Egypt was dependent⁸ on the timely inundation of the Nile. This is why the flooding of the Nile was not viewed as a threat, but a generous event providing blessings and life-giving water to nurture Egypt and the Nile valley (Caleb 2007:70).

The drying up of irrigation canals (נְהָרוֹת) and the branches of the Nile (יְאֹזְרִים) portrays a total ecosystem disaster in Egypt as a result of the failing of the water of the Nile River (vv. 5–6). Distinctive plants such as papyrus and reeds, inseparably dependent on the Nile flooding, would wither⁹ (Wildberger 1997:246). The lands where agricultural plants grow (מְזֻרְעֵ) would become barren and be blown away (יִבְשׁ) once the essential Nile flooding fails (v. 7).

The drought would also cause massive fish death. There will be no fish in the rivers, thus leaving jobless Egypt's anglers (v. 8). Besides, the Egyptian textile

⁷ Van Hecke opposes this comparison with Isaiah 19:5 because in Job 14:11–12 the drying up is a natural fact, while in Isaiah the phenomenon occurs as a result of divine intervention (2011:207). One could critique this scholar's view by noting that many natural phenomena are attributed to God in the Bible not because they are not natural facts, but because biblical authors wanted to explain everything theocentrically, claiming the superiority of their God vis-à-vis other ancient eastern gods. This is the case in many texts and Psalms (104) with a creation background.

⁸ When the Assyrian king boasts of having conquered Egypt, he maintains that he dried up with his foot all the water channels of Egypt (Isa 37:25; 2 Kgs 19:24). In his prophecy on Egypt, possibly alluding to Isaiah 19, Ezekiel combines the defeat of Egypt by Nebuchadnezzar with the desiccation of the Nile (Ezek 30:10–12).

⁹ In this sense, Job 8:11 claims: "Can papyrus grow where there is no marsh? Can reeds flourish where there is no water?" (NRSV)

industries depended on the Nile's grace for the growing of the flax. Once the Nile dried up, Egypt's textile employees would lose their works (vv. 9–10). Briefly, the drying up of the Nile would be a disaster for the majority of Egyptian society, from the wealthiest (עשירי) to the lowest-ranking people (עשירי-שקר). Marlow considers the text of Isaiah 19:5–10 as depicting:

The progression of events from the drying of the watercourses, through the destruction of reed beds and farmland, to the devastation of the fishing and weaving industries based around the Nile ... when the mighty Nile ceases to flow, the whole of society grinds to a halt. (Marlow 2007:332)

For Isaiah 19:5–10, drought and its tragic impact on the social and cosmic order (*ma'at*¹⁰) are the results of the judgment of YHWH against Egypt (Isa 19:1–4 and 11–14). It is possible that the simile of Job 14:11–12, which was written later after the Proto-Isaiah (Isa 1–39), was informed by such traditions of the drying up of bodies of water (Kavusa 2016:70). Thus, Job 14:11–12 compares the irretrievable aspect of a drought to human death.

Eco-theological synthesis Job 14:7–12

Job 14:7–12 presumes awareness of the life-giving potential of water, stated either in its power to revive a dead plant (vv.7–9), or in comparing human death with the irreparable vanishing of this valuable resource (vv. 10–12). An eco-justice reading assumes that the author of this text lived in a context where every drop counts. Drought is a synonym of death.

Job 14:11–12 likens human beings with reservoirs of water, the symbol of life (v. 9); yet they may dry up (die) and never be refilled with life (v. 11). The same idea appears in Job 7:9 that, 'As the cloud fades and vanishes, so those who go down to Sheol do not come up'. For Habel (1985:241), the Hebrew verb *שָׁכַב* in Job 14:12a

¹⁰ The *ma'at* is the Egyptian concept for the principle of moral and cosmic order upon which the stability of the created order depends (Knight 1985:149).

should be translated as “laid to rest” in Sheol, as suggested in Job 14:13 and other verses in the book of Job (3:3; 7:21; 20:11 and 21:26).

Wisdom 2:1 depicts the supreme power of Sheol/death in that there is no one who has come back from Hades. That is why it is said in Job 12:12c that the skies would cease to exist before humans would wake up from death. Jonah 2:2–6 is more explicit about the terror that תהום and Sheol inflict on the world of mortals, and God must be more powerful to remove faithful people from their womb.

Therefore, the depiction of the drought in Isaiah 19:5–10 and its metaphorical resonance in Job 14:11–12 might have significant insights with regard to contemporary water issues. Israelite wisdom as expressed in Job 14:11 was aware of the vital relevance of a reliable water supply and of the effect of a drought on the social order. The supply of water was one of the merits of kings in Israel (see Nehemiah 3:15). That is why in Sirach 48:17, King Hezekiah is praised for having built a great tunnel that gave him absolute control of the water of Gihon to permanently supply the city and people of Jerusalem.

In this sense, Reymond made the statement that:

L'eau est donc considérée en Palestine avant tout comme quelque chose de bon, d'utile, mais aussi comme quelque chose dont on risqué facilement de manquer.¹¹ (Reymond 1958:2)

Yet the current problems regarding desertification may largely be attributed to human activity rather than to divine fiat. Job 14:11 virtually calls on modern inhabitants to become aware of this possibility of declining water reserves and the interconnected effects of that on the whole of society, and then to refrain from activities that can undermine water supplies. After showing the relevance of water for flora, the metaphor of Job 14:11–12 understands the drying up of a water supply as irretrievable and irreversible, like the death of mortals, since there is no hope for a possible remedy or reversal: it is like being in Sheol. There is no substitute for water, just as there is none for human death.

¹¹ English translation: Water is viewed in Palestine primarily as something good, useful, but also something that is likely to be missed (the researcher's own translation).

CONCLUSION

Job 14:7–12 is aware of both the potential of water as a blessing, and of its ephemerality. Water is the key resource in nurturing crops, plants, forest, ecosystems, and consequently regulating the earth's climate. Water is a precious resource without which life is impossible on earth. Today pollution and the overuse of water are progressively depleting this resource. Job 14:10–12 metaphorically implies the possibility of a total depletion of this natural gift of life. Without being the central focal point of the text, the call for water awareness and management is implied throughout the various uses of water imagery in Job 14:7–12.

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