A fresh look at familiar stories, by a master Bible teacher  In this ground-breaking book, Judy Klitsner presides over a conversation between pairs, or sequences, of biblical narratives. Paying close attention to the nuances of biblical language, she expertly maps the way in which passages echo and subvert one another. Her alert ear and vigorous writing style reveal new intertextual structures, within which later narratives reconsider earlier ones, revising and often redeeming them ... A moral and religious passion animates this innovative study. Avivah Zornberg, Torah scholar and author (including the JPS classic Genesis: The Beginning of Desire).  Ms. Klitsner is an excellent teacher whose insights into biblical narrative will deepen the readers engagement and understanding. - Rabbi David Silber, Founder and Dean of the Drisha Institute for Jewish Education  Judy Klitsner pairs biblical stories to show how a later text will often comment on, or even subvert, an earlier one. The author draws on her fluent command of Hebrew commentary and her broad reading of ancient and modern exegesis, and creates a rare dialogue between feminist and traditional Bible commentary. Using the method of parshanut (interpretation) and her own unique approach to biblical texts, Klitsner draws bold, surprising parallels between biblical passages, revealing previously unexcavated layers of meaning. The result is a series of fresh and original readings of familiar narratives, accessible to both novice and experienced readers of the Bible. With her fresh, original readings of familiar narratives, Klitsner illustrates the dynamic nature of biblical attitudes regarding issues of ongoing relevance, such as the self, gender relations, and relations between Jews and non-Jews.

My Personal Review:
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.

I won't spoil the adventure of discovering with Klitsner the intricate inversion of theme and language that creates this theological dialogue between the stories. Yet, the whole treatment is greater than the sum of its parts. The author picks up on the way in which the Jonah story redeems the Noah story and with it the chance for human triumph with its stubborn hopeful "perhaps?" over the gravity and despair of our presumed fate.

What links the various essays in the book is the tight literary analysis and its striking methodology of reading texts as "intertextually" related. Stories are seen as sequels that mine and undermine prior tales. No longer seen as ancient statements of monolithic messages, these stories echo into other stories and eventually resound beyond the pages of the Bible. The result is a highly relevant approach to Bible reading that ultimately invites the reader into an ongoing moral and theological symposium.

Most of the book is dedicated to a rereading of various women's narratives in the Bible - from Eve and Sarah, and Rebecca and Rachel of Genesis to Deborah and Hannah, and Mrs. Manoach. Here too, to the satisfaction of traditionalists and feminists alike, the stories are read with a respect for the original stories together with a mindfulness of the ways in which later stories subvert and elevate the status of Biblical women in an ongoing conversation about biblical woman's relationship to self, to man, and to God. Be prepared for a ride. Very highly recommended.