**The importance of water in the Bible**

**Tasks**

1. Create a word cloud with associations to the keyword water.
2. Work out the essentials of the individual sections of the text "The importance of water in the Bible" and formulate the core statement in one sentence for each of them.

In the conception of the First (Old) and Second (New) Testaments, water is an element that creates life, sustains life and threatens life.

**First (Old) Testament**

*Water as a life-giving element*

Water serves to sustain life and enables fertility and growth. It is understood as an expression of God's blessing, who provided the land with water from the sky (rain) and from the earth (springs). Especially regarding the climatic conditions in Palestine and the entire Middle East, which were characterised by frequent long dry periods and droughts, the availability of sufficient water was essential for survival. Water was so existentially important that no one, not even strangers or enemies, could be denied access to it. Water was also used for ritual and profane purification.

*Life Water as a threatening element*

Because of its destructive power, the flooding with water by God is seen as a punishment both against the people of Israel (Flood narrative) and against their enemies (sinking of the Egyptian army in the Sea of Reeds in the Exodus narrative). The threatening dimension of water was also associated with the seas and their waves and surges (Jonah narrative).

*Water symbolically*

In the imagery, the life-sustaining power of water is emphasised. God is called the "spring of living water" (Jer 2:13) or "fountain of life" (Ps 36:10). Transience and death are symbolised by the spilling or pouring of water (Ps 79:3). In the Creation narratives, the presence of sufficient water is used to describe the ideal life for people (Garden of Eden - 4 rivers). The image of sufficiently watered gardens and springs of water that do not fade is also used with regard to the future of the people of Israel (Isa 12:3). The temple, which was decisive for the history of Israel, is also associated with water. Many texts link the temple with a spring that originates there. This makes clear that the water is to be seen as a gift from God (Ez 47).

**Second (New) Testament**

*Water as a life-giving and life-threatening element*

The references to water are just as varied as in the First Testament. Water appears in its function as drinking water and as a cleansing agent (Lk 7:36-50; Mk 7:2ff). The story of the stilling of the storm (Mk 4:35ff par.) shows the threatening side of water.

*Water symbolically*

The washing of the hands "in innocence" by Pilate (Mt 27:24f) is to be understood symbolically, as he rejects all guilt for the death of Jesus with this sign. The Gospel according to John shows the healing and cleaning power of water. The connection between water and life is emphasised when "streams of living water flow from Jesus". What is particularly important in the New Testament is the connection between water and baptism, i.e. purification, a new beginning and incorporation into the body of Christ, into the community of believers.