

# The Myth of Osiris and Isis

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Ancient Egyptians were very interesting people. They believed in many gods and myths that were made to explain the world and its wonders. One of the most famous families of gods is the children of Geb and Nut, who are; Osiris, Isis, Seth (also known as Set), and Nephthys. People probably know of these gods more than others because of the famous myth of Isis and Osiris. I will talk of this myth in this essay. Now I will begin my essay on this family of gods.

Geb and Nut are the son and daughter of Shu and Tefnut. Geb was the Earth and Nut was the sky. It was believed that every night Nut swallowed the sun. Then in the morning, Nut would give birth to it like a child.

Geb and Nut had two daughters and two sons. Isis and Nephthys were their daughters, and Set and Osiris were their sons. When they grew up, Nephthys married Set and Isis married Osiris.



Osiris was given the fruit, plants, seeds, and rich soil. He later became the god of the underworld, being the first to have lived after death. Osiris was often shown as a bull or looking somewhat like a mummy.

Set was given the desert and sands, where nothing could grow. He caused the sandstorms and swirling sand in the desert. He liked the darkness at night and the salt in the sea. He could take the form of a crocodile, an ass, or a hippopotamus.

Nephthys and Isis were very close. They were so close they were like the same person. Nephthys liked the darkness and the dark moon, whilst Isis liked the light and the full and new moon. Isis could be a cow, star or tree. She controlled the dew, rain, and moisture. Nephthys was the goddess of the underworld. She was also the mother of Anubis with Set or Osiris, depending on the version of the story. Isis was the mother of Horus with Osiris. Anubis is often shown as a jackal, and Horus is shown as a hawk.

**The myth of Osiris and Isis** is a very long one, but I will tell it as simply as I can.

Set was very jealous of Osiris because he was more important than him. He decided to make an evil plan to kill him. He threw a party. At the party, there was a beautiful chest there. Set promised that whoever fit into the chest perfectly would get to keep it. Nobody knew that he had secretly made it the perfect size for Osiris. Everyone tried it but would not fit. When Osiris tried it, Set slammed it closed and nailed it shut. He threw it into the Nile to be swept away. Isis was heartbroken and immediately set off to find him.

Meanwhile, the casket had been swept onto shore. A tree had grown up around it, enclosing it in its trunk. Then the tree had been cut down and was used as a pillar for the palace of King Byblos. Isis found this out and came there in disguise. Byblos saw her and begged her to take care of his child. Isis grew quite fond of the child and decided to make him immortal. So every night she would throw him onto magical fires to burn away all that was mortal about him. Then Isis would turn herself into a swallow and fly around the pillar weeping for her spouse. Unexpectedly one day Byblos came home and saw his child in the fires and blew them out. Isis became angry and told him that now his

son could never become immortal. He apologized and asked what he could do to make it up to her. Isis asked for the pillar and he let her have it. She removed the casket and wept upon it. Then she brought it home and when no one was looking, she opened it up. She turned into a bird called a kite and flapped her mighty wings. The wind her beating wings created gave him the Breath of Life for one day. During this time, she conceived her son Horus from him. Then she concealed the casket among long reeds. She went away to secretly give birth to her son.

Unfortunately, one night Set was hunting and he saw the familiar chest. He was furious and tore up the body into fourteen pieces. Then he scattered the pieces all over Egypt so no one could restore them.

Isis was inconsolable. She immediately began searching for the pieces in hopes of putting them back together. Nephthys also helped her. Nephthys felt sorry for her and infuriated with Set for doing such an awful thing. Anubis, Nephthys's son, also helped. He was like a jackal and was good at finding things. Eventually, they found all the parts but one, which they made a model of. They put all the parts together and Osiris looked as he had before.

Isis then performed rituals and, with the help of Anubis, she brought him back to life. Osiris was sent to rule the underworld, being the only person to live after death. He ruled it as he had once ruled the Earth. The sun, Ra, would wake him up every night after everyone had gone asleep.

Isis then went back to raise her son. He grew up in secrecy hidden in the reeds. Then, when he was old enough, Horus often took the form of a hawk. Horus decided to take revenge on Set for the murder of his father.

He fought him for three days and three nights until Thoth came between them. He knew the difference between right and wrong and took them both to the Court of Law. They listened to Horus's side of the story. Then they listened to Set's side of the story but no one believed him. Then the verdict was given. Set was guilty and sentenced to carrying the boat that held the sun across the sky. He had to overcome the serpent of darkness that tried to eat the sun.

Then Horus got the privilege of taking his father's place ruling the Earth as Osiris had once done. The story does not end here, but this is the main part of the story that is most known and most important.

That is the tale of the family of Nut and Geb. They played a very important part in Ancient Egyptian mythology. This is a wonderful story and I hope that you enjoyed it and learned a lot.

### **Bibliography**

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