

How Not To Read The Bible

DISCUSSION GUIDE | May 3, 2026

BIG IDEA

The greatest miracles in the Old Testament are the messages they convey.

Message title: *The Miracle Is The Message*

Scripture reading: Jonah 1:1-4:2 NIV

If you grew up in church, you probably loved the incredible stories in the Old Testament. But at some point, you may have started to wonder if they really happened that way. Interestingly, Jewish readers have typically been far less concerned with proving the historicity of these stories than many Christians are today. Their focus has been on the message the stories were meant to deliver.

- 1. What was your experience growing up learning how to read the Bible? Were you encouraged to read it more literally, devotionally, historically, or contextually?*
- 2. Have you ever struggled with a Bible story that felt impossible or confusing? How might reading it literarily before literally change your approach?*
- 3. The sermon suggests that “the miracle is the message.” What message about God stands out most clearly to you in the story of Jonah?*
- 4. Where do you most naturally drift toward Jonah’s attitude, “Compassion for me. Justice for them?”*
- 5. What would it look like for you personally to stop “running” from something God may be inviting you into right now?*

THIS WEEK’S CHALLENGE

Read one Old Testament story this week using a literary-first lens. Ask yourself, “Why would Israel keep telling this story?” and “How does this story point forward to Jesus?”

Suggested starting passages: Genesis 22 (Abraham and Isaac), Exodus 14 (Red Sea), Joshua 10 (sun standing still), Judges 6–7 (Gideon)