

WEEK 4: “How can you take the Bible literally?”



[WARM-UP]

[DISCUSS] How do we typically use the word “literally”?

[READ] σπλάγχνον (*splagchnon*): “spleen/guts”

Literal or Figurative?

Philippians 1:8

Philemon 1:12

Acts 1:18

John 10:1-7

(Non-literal parts of the Bible do not explain away their underlying hard truths.)

[EXPLORE]

Is **Job** a literal or figurative person?

Internal assessment: Job 1:1-7

External assessment: 1 Samuel 1:1; James 5:10-11; Ezekiel 14:14

Is **Adam** a literal or figurative person?

Internal assessment: Genesis 1-3; Genesis 5:1ff

External assessment: *(How might we explore this?)*

Jude 1:14; Luke 3:38; 1 Corinthians 15:21-22; Romans 5:12-14

Literal or figurative:

Satan?

Jesus?

The resurrection?

The creation days of Genesis 1?

[THINK]

Q: What might indicate whether or not a thing is intended to be taken literally?

Q: What is the difference between “literal” and “true”?

Q: How do we listen for what a writer/speaker *intends* to say?



TAKEAWAYS:

- The goal of communication is not always *literal* meanings but *intended* meanings.
- Christians hold the Bible as totally true—and some parts are figurative, not literal.
- Give opponents the respect of trying to listen for their *intended* meanings.

Next week: “Doesn’t religion cause violence?” (Chapter 5)