

Most take Bible stories literally: An ABC News poll

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Most Americans have a literal understanding of biblical stories such as Moses parting the Red Sea, says an ABC News poll that also showed the vast majority do not blame Jews for the death of Jesus.

The ABC News PrimeTime poll found that six in ten Americans surveyed consider biblical accounts such as those about Noah's Ark and God's creation of the world in six days to be true, "word for word." Some 30 percent agreed with the statement that the stories are not true "word for word" but are meant "as a lesson, not to be taken literally." Fewer than one in ten said Jews as a whole are responsible for the death of Jesus, a question surrounding the controversial film *The Passion of the Christ*.

Church attendance was one key to responses. Evangelical Protestants were most likely to hold literal beliefs, and more so if they said they attend church every week. Evangelicals were also most likely to blame Jews for the crucifixion of Jesus, with 12 percent doing so. About half of the Catholics surveyed said Bible stories are literally true. Of those who attend mass weekly, 60 to 70 percent consider them literally true. Only 6 percent of Catholics blame Jews for Jesus' execution.

About 80 percent of adults in America identify themselves as Christian. The survey by telephone February 6-10 polled 1,011 adults nationwide. -*Religion News Service*