



Learning to Read Midrash

Simi Peters

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Presenting a systematic approach to the study of midrash, each of the readings featured in this book attempts to reconstruct the reasoning behind midrashic commentary on biblical narrative. The study begins by defining what midrash is, discussing why it can be so difficult to understand, and explaining how the Jewish sages used midrash to interpret biblical text. It then explores two genres of midrash—the parable and the midrashic story—and utilizes detailed readings to demonstrate how to “translate” the language of the sages into contemporary terminology. Among the texts analyzed in the book are some of the most fascinating and complex biblical stories, including the binding of Isaac, the sin of David and Bathsheba, the book of Jonah, and Moses and the burning bush. This study conveys a sensitivity to the language and meanings of the Hebrew Bible and helps readers develop an appreciation for the language and teachings of the Jewish sages.

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