

Elijah and Elisha

Ready to Go - October 2018

The Bible Toolkit

Here is a quick recap of the tools introduced in *Dig Deeper!: Tools to unearth the Bible's treasure* (IVP, 2005).

Author's Purpose Tool

The biggest question we can ever ask of a passage in the Bible is simply, 'Why did the author write this?'

Context Tool

Words come within sentences, sentences in paragraphs, paragraphs in chapters, chapters in sections... If you take a text out of context you're left with a con!

Structure Tool

How has the author broken down his material into sections? How do these sections fit together?

Linking Words Tool

Whenever you see a 'therefore' ask what it's there for! And the same goes for words like 'because', 'so that', 'for' etc.

Parallels Tool

Bible poetry doesn't tend to rhyme. Instead, it says the same thing twice in different words (and so you get two chances at understanding it): 'Twinkle, twinkle little star; Shiny, shiny, tiny nebular'.

Narrator's Comment Tool

Sometimes the author breaks into his narrative to explain what's going on (a kind of 'Pssst, reader, make sure you understand this...').

Vocabulary Tool

Bible words have Bible meanings. Be alert in case the author is using a familiar word in an unusual way.

Translations Tool

Read the passage in more than one translation, just in case there is a nuance one version has missed.

Tone and Feel Tool

Pay attention to how the point is being made. Is it happy? Tragic? Comforting? Frightening? How does the author want you to feel about what he is saying?

Repetition Tool

Sometimes the author says something more than once to make sure we don't miss it. Sometimes the author says something more than once to make sure we don't miss it.

Quotation/Allusion Tool

When the author quotes or alludes to another part of the Bible, we should turn there to see what ideas he is picking up on.

Genre Tool

There are many genres in the Bible – e.g. song, historical narrative, genealogy, law. Identifying the genre is important to how we interpret a passage.

Copypat Tool

Is the author holding up one of his characters as someone we should imitate or whose likeness we should avoid?

Bible Timeline Tool

Where is this passage on the Bible timeline? Where am I on the Bible timeline? How do I read this in the light of what has happened in between (e.g. the other side of Jesus)?

The 'Who am I?' Tool

Whose shoes in the passage are we supposed to step into? If any!

'So What' Tool

What implications does this have for me? For my church? For an unbeliever?

The Rain Competition and the Barbecue Competition

1) Ahab worships a storm god

“... he took for his wife Jezebel the daughter of Eth-*Baal* king of the Sidonians, and went and served *Baal* and worshipped him. He erected an altar for *Baal* in the house of *Baal*, which he built in Samaria.” (16:31-32 REPETITION TOOL)

2) So Yahweh announces a drought

Notice that judgement is *announced* (17:1) before it is *experienced*

But we can be sure what God says will happen

1 Kings 16:34	<i>Joshua laid an oath on them at that time, saying,</i>
In his days Hiel of Bethel built Jericho.	“Cursed before the Lord be the man who rises up and rebuilds this city, Jericho.
He laid its foundations at the cost of Abiram his firstborn,	At the cost of his firstborn shall he lay its foundation,
and set up its gates at the cost of his youngest son, Segub,	and at the cost of his youngest son shall he set up its gates.”
<i>according to the word of the LORD, which he spoke by Joshua the son of Nun</i>	Joshua 6:26

And so the drought comes (17:7, 12; 18:5)

3) Yahweh wins the barbecue competition

Baal 0 - 1 Yahweh
(v25-29) (v30-38)

4) Yahweh wins the rain competition

Baal 0 - 2 Yahweh
(v2, 5-6) (vv41-4)

SO WHAT'S THE AUTHOR'S PURPOSE?

Yahweh can beat Baal?

Yahweh can turn the hearts of his people back?

BEFORE

The true prophets are cut off; Obadiah faithful but afraid (v3-16)

The people "limped" (v21 cf. v26b)

The people "did not answer" (v21 cf. v26, 29)

AFTER

The people know the score: "Yahweh, he is God; Yahweh, he is God" (v39)

The false prophets are cut off (v40)

DURING

The number 12 (v31, v33-35)

The 'horizontal' prayer (v36-37)

"Elijah was a man just like us" (James 5:17-18)

At first sight he doesn't seem very like us at all!
Take a text out of context and you're left with a con!
James 5:16-20!

The Still Small Voice?

1 Kings 19

A sentimental story about quietness?

Elijah is depressed (19:4)

God comforts him with quietness (19:12)

*Breathe through the heats of our desire
Thy coolness and Thy balm;
Let sense be dumb, let flesh retire;
Speak through the earthquake, wind, and fire,
O still, small voice of calm.*

The people have broken the covenant

Yahweh won the contest (18:39)

But the royal family won't repent (19:1-2)

"I have been very jealous for the Lord, the God of hosts. For the people of Israel have forsaken your covenant, thrown down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword, and I, even I only, am left, and they seek my life, to take it away." (v10, v14)

So Elijah goes to the Covenant Mountain

- 1) Clear allusions to Exodus (QUOTATION/ALLUSION TOOL)

1 Kings 19	Feature in Exodus	Significance in Exodus
God sends Elijah to Mount Horeb (v8) where there is wind, earthquake and fire (vv11-12)	The people of Israel go to Mount Sinai (another name for Mount Horeb, see 3:12) where there is an earthquake and fire (19:16-20)	God made his covenant with the people of Israel (19:5-6)
Elijah hides in a cave (v9) as God 'passed by' (v11)	Moses hid in a cleft of the rock as God 'passed by' (33:22)	God renewed the covenant with the people of Israel after their apostasy with the golden calf (34:10, 27)

- 2) A clear *contrast* to Exodus, readily detected using the REPETITION TOOL: 'the LORD was *not* in the wind...*not* in the earthquake.... *not* in the fire' (vv11-12).
- 3) The covenant is not renewed. No more second chances.

Which way is the surprise?

God sends the assassins (vv15-17)

God preserves a remnant (v18; compare Romans 11:2-6)

Luke 3:7-22 alludes to 1 Kings chapter 19 at every stage

Elijah is dismayed by the apostasy of Israel and calls for their repentance	John the Baptist is dismayed by the apostasy of Israel and calls for their repentance (vv7-14)
Elijah is told that his successor (Elisha) will bring judgment	John announces that his successor (Jesus) will come to 'burn with unquenchable fire' (v17)
Elijah is persecuted by Jezebel, wife of King Ahab	John is persecuted by Herodias, wife of King Herod (vv18-19)
Elijah anoints Elisha to begin his ministry, at the Jordan	John baptises Jesus to begin his ministry, at the Jordan (vv21-22)

And so Jesus is...

The inclusive exclusive salvation (2 Kings 5)

We are expecting judgment but...

- Salvation, by military victory, for the whole nation (3:1-27)
- Salvation for a faithful remnant, the 'sons of the prophets' (4:1-44)
- Salvation for a Gentile (5:1-27)
- Salvation for a faithful remnant, the 'sons of the prophets' (6:1-7)
- Salvation, by military victory, for the whole nation (6:8 – 7:20)

The faithful Israelite (vv1-5a)

Courageous

Compassionate

Inclusively-exclusive

Salvation is inclusive

Q: Who can be saved?

A: Anyone, even Syrians!

Yet it is exclusive

Q: How can Syrians be saved?

A: Only by the God of Israel (not by Syrian gods)

The rich Syrian who becomes like the faithful Israelite (vv5b-19a)

'Go and wash in the Jordan seven times, and your flesh shall be restored, and you shall be clean' (v10)

So he went down and dipped himself seven times in the Jordan, according to the word of the man of God, and his flesh was restored *like the flesh of a little child*, and he was clean. (v14)

The faithless Israelite who becomes like the rich Syrian (vv19b-27)