



# Let's Cook!

This is not your ordinary cookbook

*LEARN TO INTERPRET THE BIBLE*

**CZ ALIVE.**

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***LEARN TO INTERPRET THE BIBLE***  
**CZ ALIVE.**

2nd Edition  
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“And he humbled you and let you hunger and fed you with manna, which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, that he might make you know that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord.”

*Deuteronomy 8:3 (ESV)*

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# How to journey through this workbook?



Dear Reader,

This is not your typical book; it is a workbook that, if applied to your daily Bible reading and Bible studies, will transform you for the rest of your life. We are this confident since it changed our lives in the first place.

In this workbook, you will be taken on a cooking journey. Not the one that teaches you how to make your own bread, but the one that helps you receive your daily Bread. If you want to grow in your relationship with Jesus Christ, you need to read His word, meditate on it and apply it to your life. But where to start—and how to do this appropriately?

This workbook will guide you through the basics of Bible interpretation. Along the way, you will learn different tools that you can apply in your everyday reading. As a result, not only will your Bible reading change, but your life will radically transform into the image of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

To make it absolutely clear, we will not give you our opinions or interpretations on specific Biblical topics or passages. But we will teach you, with the use of a solid foundation and multiple tools, to interpret the Bible correctly. If you follow the steps correctly, the chances that you will end up with a completely out-of-context interpretation will be limited to a minimum. And even if so, along the journey, we will give you some resources, so that you can check and verify the interpretation you found with the interpretation of people who are probably smarter than you and us combined in the field of Bible interpretation.

Like the word ‘workbook’ says, you have to put in some work. On the next page, we will explain to you how to get the maximum value out of the book and how you can navigate through it.

To make it easier for you, we structured the workbook as follows:

- **Video**

Most of the chapters start with a cover page. On this cover page, you will find the tool that we are discussing and a QR code to a YouTube video. In this YouTube video, you will meet the authors of this workbook, get your daily dose of comedy, a brief explanation of the tool, and an additional illustration on the tool.



- **Explanation**

The explanation in the video is very brief and compact. To serve you all the information that is necessary to understand the tool, we start each chapter with an explanation. If something is unclear, do not hesitate to reach out.



- **Illustration**

In the workbook, you will find a Biblical illustration. We hope that this illustration sheds light on the tool we just explained, and that it will give you an idea of how to use the tool yourself.



- **Assignment**

The most crucial part of the workbook is the assignments. If you are planning to skip the assignments, delete the file you just downloaded, return the book you just received to the person who gave it to you, or place it on your shelf until you are ready to complete these assignments, because this workbook will be useless without completing them. To properly learn and apply the tools, you need to get acquainted with them. And therefore, you have to cook for yourself. If you get stuck on one of the assignments, again, do not hesitate to reach out. It would be an honour to equip you in the Word of God.



- **Answers**

You can download the answers to the assignments at [www.czalive.com/resources/letscook-answers/](http://www.czalive.com/resources/letscook-answers/)



Ready? Let's Cook!

# Practice What You Preach

This workbook is written by Robbert Sinon (Missionary in the Czech Republic) and Menno Kasbergen (Youth Ministry Leader in the Netherlands), passionate and radical followers of Jesus Christ. Our lives changed by learning how to interpret the Bible, and we pray that this workbook may similarly change your life.

The first time we were introduced to Bible interpretation, it changed our lives. While at Bible College, I, Robbert, started with a course titled *Introduction to Hermeneutics*. Hermeneutics is a fancy word used for the interpretation of a text. As such, it was applied to the Bible. After finishing this course, I came to the realisation that I knew nothing about the Bible. To give you some context, for me, hearing stories about Moses, Noah, Peter, or Paul was second nature, being in church pretty much my whole life. I thought I knew it all—boy, was I wrong. A whole new world opened up, just because of the realisation that with a few guidelines, I was able to see far more meaning in the text than I had ever heard or read before. Not only that, but my relationship with Jesus also drastically changed. Going deeper into the Bible meant going deeper into my relationship with Him. Leading to a radical hunger for His Word like never before.

“  
**Leading to a  
radical hunger  
for His word like  
never before.**

For me, Menno, this experience was quite similar. I also grew up as part of the furniture in the church. I went to the teenage camps, was part of youth groups, and was actively participating in small groups in the church. However, outside of this “church world”, I still had one foot in the world. Because of the consequences of COVID, my life was put on hold. However, my relationship with Jesus came alive, and with that, my appetite for the Bible. But how do I read this thing? That is when I met Robbert. A couple of concrete questions and guidelines, given to me in the precursor to this workbook, helped me to get more out of the Word of God. Not only understanding what is on the surface level, but also gaining a deeper understanding and application in my own life. This is what really changed my life, and still is to this date.

Together, we wrote this workbook so that your life may be changed similarly. Our prayer for you is that the application from this workbook will lead to a radical transformation into the image of Jesus Christ.

# INTRODUCTION

Let us introduce you to the theme of this workbook. Both of us love a good meal, and we hope you do too. However, before we eat, the meal needs to be prepared. To prepare a meal, we can either throw some ingredients into a pan and hope for the best or go to a local fast-food restaurant. We all know that, in the long term, this will be an unhealthy way of living. We would do much better if we learned the basic skills of cooking and prepared our own healthy meals.

This workbook is written with exactly this in mind—to teach you some of the basic skills so that you can cook a tasty and healthy meal. However, this is not your average cookbook, for everything you are about to read is based upon one recipe that will guide you through the entire cooking—or in other words, interpretation—process.

Before we start with the recipe, let's first lay a foundation. All good cooking starts, of course, with clean hands, so make sure to wash them properly. In other words, spend some time in prayer before you do anything else. Let's continue by explaining some vocabulary so we are all on the same page. In the introduction, we mentioned the term *hermeneutics*. Hermeneutics comes from the Greek word *hermēneuō*, which means “to interpret.” The meaning of the word interpret, according to the Oxford dictionary, means as much as “the action of explaining the meaning of something.” In this sense, hermeneutics is the field that deals with the explanation or interpretation of a written text. In a Biblical sense, this equates to: How we interpret the Bible. Hermeneutics is not only used for Biblical interpretation but for all historical literature.

In the *Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible*, A. Berkeley Mickelsen says the following when talking about Biblical interpretation: “Over the years, devoted scholars trained in the discipline called *hermeneutics* (from Greek for “interpretation”) have worked out canons, or rules, for translating and interpreting Scripture. Bible students have access to their work through exegetical commentaries—*exegesis* (from Greek for “explanation”) being yet another word for interpretation. The work of interpretation is never completed, partly because new data from archaeology continues to shed new light on difficult passages of Scripture,

and partly because new questions are asked as human understanding changes. Errors of interpretation from reading into Scripture a meaning not really there—a process called *eisegesis* are thus discovered and corrected.”<sup>11</sup> This brings us to the difference between exegesis and hermeneutics. If both deal with the interpretation of the text, what separates one from the other?

## Exegesis & Hermeneutics

The distinction between exegesis and hermeneutics is a thin line. Exegesis is the factual, objective interpretation of the Bible by extracting the meaning from the Biblical text. In other words, it answers the question: *What does it mean?*

Hermeneutics, on the other hand, is how we interpret the Bible. It not only involves facts but also cultural and historical lenses through which one might view the text. Instead of focusing on what it means, we now focus on how it is meant to be understood. Simply put, it answers the question: *How is it meant to be understood?*

To put things in perspective, we'll give you an example. When you receive a letter from a very good friend who tells you about their latest Christmas season, you know pretty well what he or she is talking about. You are well acquainted with their cultural and sociological habits, and therefore, you understand, almost exactly, what your friend is talking about.

Now imagine this time it is not you who writes or receives the letter, but you find an ancient letter written to someone you don't know, in a language that you do not speak. This time, you need to decipher the language and grammar, you need to find out who wrote it and to whom it was written. And lastly, you quite likely have no real understanding of what issues might be discussed in the letter. To interpret the letter correctly, you need to study the historical and cultural background, translate the letter into English, and see how much you can find out about the original author and audience. In doing so, you are now entering the field of hermeneutics.

Going even deeper and looking for what a precise sentence means in that exact wording, you are drawing the meaning out of the text, which is called *exegesis*.



## Exegesis & Eisegesis

As mentioned above in the quote from A. Berkeley Mickelsen, in addition to *exegesis*, there is also something called *eisegesis*. Exegesis is the objective extraction of the meaning from the text. Eisegesis is subjectively putting the meaning into the text. In other words, you are now putting a pre-established meaning into a text, of which you think it means just that. In doing so, we are not interpreting anything, we are placing our “interpretation” on something that could mean something completely different. In short, exegesis is objectively seeking the meaning versus eisegesis, which is subjectively putting in a meaning. For example, telling a non-believer that Jesus is standing at the door of his heart and knocks, referring to Revelation 3:20, is blatantly putting a meaning into the text. Why, you might ask? Well, because Jesus is saying this to people who already believe. Don't believe us? Look it up for yourself. In this course, we will not focus on exegesis, but solely on hermeneutics. The two fields have a lot in common. However, one cannot do proper exegesis without knowing hermeneutics. On the other hand, one can use hermeneutics without doing an exegesis. Gordon Fee says in his book, *New Testament Exegesis: A Handbook for Students and Pastors*: “Historically, the broader term for the science of interpretation, which included exegesis, was hermeneutics.”<sup>2</sup> Taking hermeneutics as a basis will set you up for a deep dive into Scripture as you've never done before.

“**Deep dive into Scripture like you've never done before**”

## Why is this so important?

2 Timothy 2:15–16 says:

**“Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth. But avoid irreverent babble, for it will lead people into more and more ungodliness.” (ESV)**

We should do the best we can in understanding what the Scriptures tell us. Especially when Paul tells Timothy that he ought to rightly divide the word of truth. Or, as mentioned in the New Living Translation, correctly explain the word of truth. For us to do the same, it means that we must first understand what the text is talking about and how we should interpret it.

## The Bible interprets itself

Let's continue with a very strong statement: If our interpretation of the Bible contradicts the Bible itself, then we are wrong! The Bible is God's authoritative word. Without giving it due credit, we already start off on the wrong foot. Take a look at what Peter and Paul tell us; [2 Peter 1:20](#) *"knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation. (ESV)"*

***"All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness," (ESV)***

*2 Timothy 3:16*

Scripture never came from our own understanding; it is divinely inspired (Greek: Theopneustos, which the NIV translates as 'God breathed') by the Holy Spirit. Therefore, Scripture is inerrant as well as infallible, which means it is without error or fault in all its teachings. So we must conclude that when our interpretation contradicts the Scriptures, we are the ones who misinterpret them. By now, you understand what hermeneutics is and why it is important. If we say that we give ourselves to the Lord and give Him our all, then this comes with consequences. One of them means that we can understand and share His words given to us for correction, instruction, reproof, and doctrine. Putting it simply, one might say: you must know what you are talking about to avoid idle babbling. We know that this workbook will help you greatly in gaining a greater depth into the Word of God. Please remember that, although we need knowledge for understanding, this is not all we need. Most of all, it is the Holy Spirit who will reveal the Living Word in all its fullness to us, which will transform us.

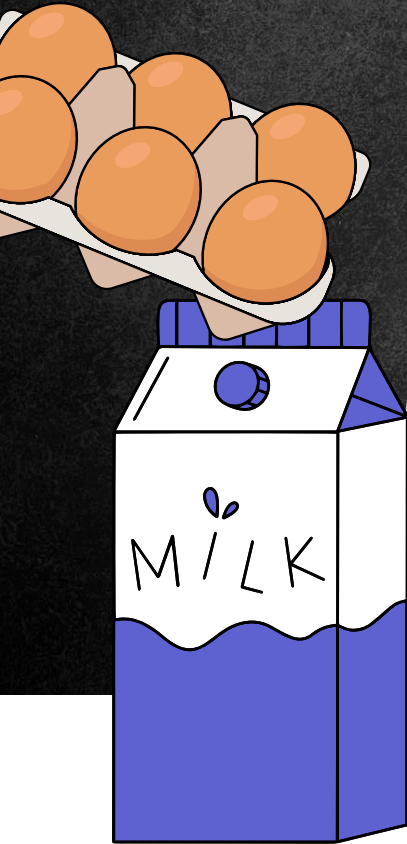
## Ready to Cook?

Are you ready to cook? Here are some final remarks before we start. In this workbook, we made use of different Bible translations. However, the assignments in the workbook are based on either the New King James Version (NKJV) or the English Standard Version (ESV). For this reason, we highly recommend that you use either the ESV or the NKJV for the assignments. Using other translations is certainly possible, but it might make things more challenging. Answers to the assignments can be downloaded for free from [www.czalive.com](http://www.czalive.com). Much thanks must be given to Nigel Beyon and Andrew Sach, authors of *Dig Deeper, tools to unearth the Bible's treasure*.<sup>3</sup> We highly recommend that the user of this workbook purchase *Dig Deeper* for further reference and deeper insight into the material. This workbook is structured upon their tools and work.





# The Recipe





# THE RECIPE

To unravel the true meaning of Biblical texts, it can be useful to work with a blueprint. You can compare this blueprint to a cooking recipe. In order to prepare a tasty meal, it is important that all the steps in the recipe are followed correctly. However, simply performing each step of the recipe is still not a guarantee of a tasty meal. You need to follow the steps of the recipe in the correct and prescribed order. It does not make sense to put an empty baking tray in the oven and then continue cutting your vegetables. You will end up with a hot baking tray and raw vegetables. Order matters, also in discovering Biblical truths. The following steps will guide you through your Biblical interpretation. Deviating from the given order can lead to misinterpretation and errors later in the process. Therefore, we stick to the recipe, which is as follows:

- **Step 1.** What is the original message to the original audience?
- **Step 2.** What is the original message to us?
- **Step 3.** How does a New Testament perspective provide an extra dimension/connection with Jesus?
  - 3a.** I connect all passages to Jesus.
  - 3b.** I use Old Testament passages to illustrate teachings about Jesus.
  - 3c.** I only connect the passage with Jesus if the New Testament writer has done so as well.
- **Step 4.** Direct message to me (possibly out of context).

This is the recipe that will help you create your own tasty meal. What follows is an explanation of each of the four steps:

## Step 1. What is the original message to the original audience?

For good reason, this is the first step. To start from the right perspective, we need to look for the original author, who wrote to an original audience. Knowing this will greatly help us understand what the original message was and any principles that derive from that message. Only after taking the first step can we continue to the next.



## Step 2. What is the original message to us?

Understanding the original message to the original audience gives us the possibility to interpret that message in our own lives. Knowing the message—and perhaps principles discovered in step one—makes it possible to see if and how this message, or these principles, can be implemented in our lives. However, this is not always possible due to historical or cultural differences. Regardless of the outcome of step two, we always continue with step three.

## Step 3. How does a New Testament perspective provide an extra dimension or connection with Jesus?

This step is divided into three sub-steps. It is up to you whether you choose a, b, or c. We suggest you go through all of them when starting with your Bible interpretation. As you progress, you'll find that your theology and view of the Scriptures will influence whether or not you go with option a, b, or c. We believe that, according to Scripture (John 5:39, Luke 24:27), the whole Bible is about Jesus and that all passages can be connected to Him. These are the following sub-steps:

- **3a. I will connect all passages with Jesus.**  
Everything you read in Scripture, you can connect with Jesus, no matter the text.
- **3b. I will use Old Testament passages to illustrate teachings about Jesus.**  
You can illustrate Jesus' teachings in the New Testament with Old Testament passages.
- **3c. I will only connect the passage with Jesus when the New Testament writer does this.**  
Self-explanatory step in which you follow the writer of the text.

Only when we have completed steps one to three can we continue to the final step.

## Step 4. Direct message to me (might be out of context).

More often than you might think, this step is taken first. People read a verse or a portion of Scripture and immediately try to find a message that applies to them. In doing so, they forget that the text was not written to them directly. There was an original author who wrote to an original audience, in a specific time frame, with a specific message. To help you answer steps 2, 3, and 4, we make use of something called the *Ladder of Abstraction*.

## Ladder of abstraction

More often than not, when we speak about life principles, we are talking about principles derived from the Bible. Using hermeneutics to interpret the text helps us identify these principles. The goal in the end is to grow in sanctification and Christ-likeness. However, at times, we come across principles that are simply not applicable to our daily lives. Think of sacrificing an animal or consecrating a priest, as mentioned in Leviticus 14:14. To come to an application that we can use, we then have to make use of the so-called Ladder of Abstraction.

Below you will find an excerpt and illustration of The Ladder of Abstraction<sup>4</sup>. In this example, we use the Scripture [Leviticus 23:22](#):

***“When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not wholly reap the corners of your field when you reap, nor shall you gather any gleaning from your harvest. You shall leave them for the poor and for the stranger: I am the Lord your God.”***

Moving up on the ladder, towards a more abstract implementation of the same text, it leads us to the teaching of Jesus in [Matthew 22:37-40](#):

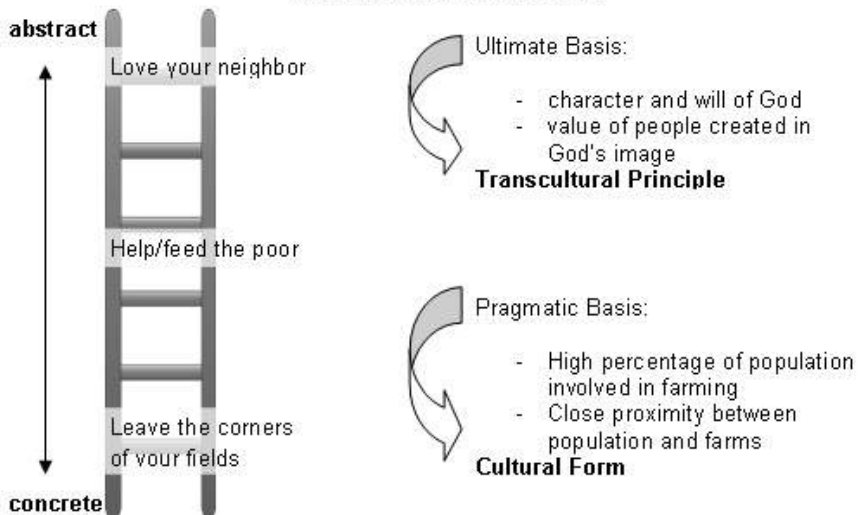
***“Jesus said to him, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.”***

Since most of us don't have access to a field on which we grow crops, we cannot apply Leviticus 23:22 to ourselves. However, coming to a more abstract form of the command that was given, we now see, through a New Testament perspective, that loving our neighbour as ourselves is something we can apply.

Next to the ladder, you see the differences in pragmatic and ultimate basis, which cohere with trans-cultural principles (i.e. transcending cultural principles) and cultural forms (i.e. according to the culture that the text was written in). When we are moving up the ladder of abstraction, we go from a pragmatic basis towards an ultimate basis. We do not need to go further on the ladder of abstraction if the application of the principle becomes a pragmatic basis.



## The Ladder of Abstraction



Taken from William J. Webb, *Slaves, Women and Homosexual: Exploring the Hermeneutics of Cultural Analysis*, p. 210.



## The cheerful giver

In this illustration, we take a closer look at what Paul writes in [2 Corinthians 9:7](#):

***“Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.” (ESV)***

We will try to interpret this verse correctly by following the four steps in combination with the ladder of abstraction, culminating in an application.

### Original Message to the original audience

We find the apostle Paul writing to the church in Corinth (2 Cor. 1:1). The church he had started during his second missionary journey. A place he became familiar with after staying there for over a year and a half (Acts 18:1-11). According to the 2 Corinthians introductory pages in the *ESV Study Bible*, 2 Corinthians 8 and 9 have a focus “on the present responsibility of the repentant.”<sup>5</sup> Speaking of the people of the Corinthian church, whom Paul addressed, after they questioned his legitimacy as an apostle. For them, those who repented and acknowledged Paul as an apostle, the option arose to live out their repentance in the form of a collection for the churches of Macedonia (2 Cor. 8:1-15). It is this collection that is addressed in our passage. A collection that will be a willing gift, not one to receive something in return for (2 Cor. 9:5).

Paul addresses the Corinthians first in verse 6 with a truth that is also found in Proverbs 11:24<sup>6</sup>. He follows with our key passage, encouraging the Corinthians not to give “reluctantly or under compulsion.”<sup>6</sup> Simply stating that the Corinthians must only give from a “cheerful” heart, not from reluctance or under compulsion, is to oversimplify what Paul writes. Reading the verses around the text shows that if they give, they should do so bountifully to reap bountifully. This shows that those who repented in the Corinthian church are encouraged, by Paul, to give generously. Not to prove their repentance or because of others who give. Nor to receive something in return, but from a heart that is moved by the need in the Macedonian churches.



## Original message to us

Applying the original message to us would mean that our collection is for the Macedonian church. Together with the fact that Paul wrote to the Corinthian church, of which we are not literally part, we can only apply an abstract form of the message to ourselves. This means that when we hold a collection, we are encouraged to give generously, from a heart that is moved by the need for the collection. This does not mean that when we are not moved, or when we have no “heart for the matter”, we should not give at all. The trans-cultural principle of what we sow, so shall we reap, is as applicable to us as it was to them. Therefore, we can say that those who call themselves Christians, those who repented, are called to give generously, from a heart that is moved by the needs of others. Knowing that God will provide what is needed, leading to sufficiency “in all things at all times “ (2 Cor. 9:8).

## New Testament perspective

For this essay, we have chosen to go with option 3a in step 3 of the handout mentioned in the introduction. Therefore, we shall connect the focus text with Jesus. We have chosen this option since Scripture tells us that He gave Himself fully (Phil. 2:7-9) and did so with joy set before Him (Heb. 12:2-3). It is Jesus who gives us the ultimate example of a cheerful giver, giving himself generously towards all. We are all in need of the gift that only he could provide (Rom. 3:23-24). It is Jesus who gave us the ultimate example by giving himself as a ransom for many (Mark 10:45). It is this example, Jesus himself, who shows us both a practical and abstract fulfilment of the message conveyed by Paul in 2 Corinthians 9:7.

## Direct message to us

Taking the verse for face value, one might say that we give what we “feel” is right, and that, in doing so, God will love us when we give with a cheerful heart. However, looking at all we have seen so far, this severely undermines what Paul was conveying. The direct message to us does not need to be taken out of context, despite the necessity to use an abstract form. This leads us to a message of giving generously to a need that moves our hearts. Calling yourself a Christian would make any need of your neighbour sufficient to give towards. Not because we think we gain something by it (i.e. God's love or a higher honour) but simply because the passage shows us that God indeed loves a person who gives because he wants to give. It is this that we see Jesus doing, and it is this that we can take as a direct message to our own lives.

## Application

Taking into consideration all that is mentioned above, we conclude that, although Paul was talking about the giving of finances, one could also give time, resources, knowledge, or even his own life. Giving knowledge to someone who needs information is an abstract form of obedience towards 2 Corinthians 9:7. In a similar passion, one might want to give resources in the form of groceries, a vehicle, or even a house.

If we generously give towards the needs of others, from a place of sincere empathy and not out of religiosity or to gain something, we fulfill the message that Paul is conveying. That is what he taught the Corinthian Church so many years ago after having seen Jesus setting the example for all, including us. It is the message of giving our all to Christ, that forms the ultimate abstract trans-cultural interpretation of

2 Corinthians 9:7 “Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.”



***Generously give towards the needs of others, from a place of sincere empathy***



## Give you a future and a hope

Read [Jeremiah 29:11](#), undoubtedly one of the most quoted Bible verses out there.

***“For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope.”***

(ESV)

Mostly used to encourage one another, but is this what the text actually means? In this assignment, you will use the recipe and the ladder of abstraction to interpret the text correctly. We will begin with the original message to the original audience. To start on the right foot, you will first read the entire 29th chapter of the book of Jeremiah.

1. Read Jeremiah 29:1-3 and fill in the blanks:

A letter was sent by \_\_\_\_\_

to \_\_\_\_\_

by the hand of \_\_\_\_\_.

Now we know that God sent His word to the Israelites living in Babylon; it becomes interesting to find out why they are in Babylon in the first place.

2. Read Jeremiah 25:1-14 and fill in the blanks:

Reading Jeremiah 25, verse \_\_ shows us that the Israelites did not listen to the words of the prophet. Verse \_\_ shows us that they also did not repent.

Instead, they provoked God with the works of their hands.

All this leads up to verses 8-11 in which God proclaims His punishment for their unwillingness to listen and unrepentant behaviour.

3. Summarize Jeremiah 25:8-11 in your own words:

By now, we have read that the captivity will last 70 years (Jer. 25:11-12). This brings us to the question: What will happen after these 70 years? In Jeremiah 29:13-14, we see the tip of the iceberg. However, we can find additional context of the period after the 70 years of exile in Jeremiah 30. In verses 18 to 24, we read about the restoration of the people of Israel and their relationship with God.

4. What is the connection between Jeremiah 30 and the main text we are studying?

Understanding the broader context in which Jeremiah 29:11 is written will help us to answer the question:

### 5. What is the original message to the original audience?

Now that we have the original message to the original audience, it becomes rather easy to see the original message to us. Looking at the two verses that follow Jeremiah 29:11, we see the conditions that have to precede the promise, namely, seeking God and calling upon Him. These aspects still stand today and transcend any cultural and historical principle. For this reason, we can apply the original message of God having plans for our lives and a promise of hope, also to us. Understanding that for this to become reality, we first have to meet the conditions set in the preceding verses. **This is the original message to us.** However, to say that God has a promise of hope can mean many different things for different people. To come to a proper interpretation of this *hope*, we need a New Testament perspective. For this, we will use step 3a of the recipe, where we connect this passage to Jesus.

### 6. Read 1 Tim 1:1 and 1 John 3:1-3. How do these scriptures **give extra dimension** to Jeremiah 29:11?

Applying the text directly to ourselves, without looking at the context, would imply that we do the same for similar texts, such as Jeremiah 4:22 *“For My people are foolish, They have not known Me. They are silly children, And they have no understanding. They are wise to do evil, But to do good they have no knowledge.”* or the first part of Jeremiah 44:27 *“Behold, I will watch over them for adversity and not for good.”* It becomes clear that we cannot simply apply these texts to ourselves. As you have seen by now, context matters. The context of Jeremiah 29:11 shows us that it is written for the Israelites who were in exile in Babylon, waiting for their return to Israel. It is this cultural and historical context that we must take into consideration before we can answer the last step in the recipe. To do so, we use the ladder of abstraction.

As we have seen in the previous question, Jesus is our hope and future. It is only through Christ that we are able to return to God. We hope that you have made that decision already and can say that the Lord is your Father. However, we can still apply this concept of waiting for restoration in our lives today. This is also referred to as the Maranatha cry. This is based on Paul’s writing in 1 Corinthians 16:22, where he calls for the final coming of Jesus Christ. Maranatha means either “Our Lord, come!” or “Our Lord has come.” It is this Maranatha cry that gives hope in our day and age.

**7.** Give at least two references that show this Maranatha promise.

8. Formulate a summary of step 4 **Direct message to me (might be out of context)** of the recipe.

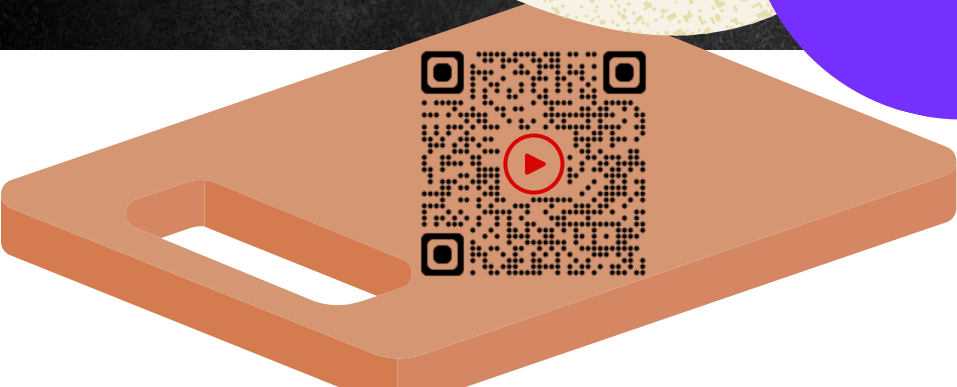
We close this assignment with an application you have drawn from the four steps in the recipe.

**9.** Write a brief summary (synopsis) in which an application is formulated, drawn from the four steps in the recipe.

Answers to the assignments can be downloaded for free from [www.czalive.com/resources/letscook-answers/](http://www.czalive.com/resources/letscook-answers/)



# Author's Purpose





# AUTHOR'S PURPOSE

A chef with a recipe is nothing without his kitchen tools. Just like the chef, we need tools that will help us make a delicious meal; i.e., interpreting the Bible. In this lesson, we will make a start by explaining one of these tools. In the following lessons, we will continue to do so until we have a kitchen full of tools at our disposal. I have never seen anyone cook with only a knife or a spoon. It requires a variety of tools to cook even the simplest of meals. Let alone the high-quality meal that is not just beautiful to see, but also delicious to taste. Likewise, when interpreting Scripture, we need multiple tools. We encourage you not to pick just one or two tools when interpreting. Try to use them all. You will find out soon enough that cutting your vegetables with a spoon is not the easiest way to do it, and so you will go ahead and try another. Examples of tools used for hermeneutics are context, translations, tone and feel, genre, Biblical timeline, and structure. These are just a few among many.

The **author's purpose** tool is like the chef's knife. The chef's knife is used during every cooking session. It is even useful when opening the package of your microwave lasagne. This tool is probably the most useful, since it gives an answer to the reason why the author has written the passage. In other words, the 'why' question is answered. Sometimes the writer tells us directly through a "**This is why I write**" statement (for example, Luke 1:1-4 or 1 John 5:13). If we are told why someone writes, it will guide us through the rest of the letter or book. If it is not explicitly stated, it is best to read the entire book from beginning to end, preferably a few times. Of course, this is feasible for books like Philemon or 2- or 3 John, but for a book like Genesis, it is a whole different story. In such cases, help is needed in understanding the **author's purpose**. For this, we can look for answers to the following questions:

- Who is the author, and to whom is it written?
- What is the situation of the author and/or the readers?
- Is there a problem being presented that needs to be addressed?
- Are there recurring themes or just a single idea that ties everything together?



## The disciple on Crete

For this illustration, we will use Titus. Written approximately 62 A.D., around the same time as the first letter to Timothy. Titus was a travel companion and close friend of Paul (Gal 2:1-3), who went on multiple missionary journeys with him. Paul left Titus in Crete when it was time for him to continue his travels (Titus 1:5). As we read the letter to Titus, we will not find a literal "this is why I write" statement. For this reason, we have to look for particular situations, problems, or recurring themes that Paul addresses.

Paul opens his letter with a greeting and introduction (Titus 1:1-5). He then instructs Titus to stand against false teaching and sets the bar for faithful elders (Titus 1:6-16). Furthermore, he gives pastoral insight into the conduct towards each other in the church, as well as how Titus must model this for the church (Titus 2:1-15). Towards the end of the letter, Paul instructs how to behave amongst unbelievers and authorities (Titus 3:1-8). This is followed by a short instruction on how to handle unrepentant behaviour (Titus 3:9-11). He closes the letter with his final greetings (Titus 3:12-15).

Now that we have an overview of the entire letter, it becomes easier to see any repetitive or recurring themes. Let's take a look at the four questions addressed in the explanation.

### **Who is the author, and to whom is it written?**

Paul writes to Titus, his disciple, left on the island of Crete to put what remained in order and appoint elders in every town (Titus 1:5).

### **What is the situation of the author and/or the readers?**

The author is Paul, who possibly was in Macedonia (2 Cor 2:13) or Ephesus when writing the letter. Titus, the recipient of the letter, was in Crete, leading the church.

### **Is there a problem being presented that needs to be addressed?**

Things that are lacking, such as elders and sound doctrine, are causing false teaching and stirring up division.

## Are there recurring themes or a single idea that ties everything together?

The themes that are addressed are service, character, church relationships, and belonging. There are, however, no recurring themes. Looking at the separate themes addressed, we do, however, see a single idea that comes forth: discipleship. It is Paul who continues his discipleship of Titus in a pastoral manner that encourages him to serve, build character, act rightly toward church relationships and be an heir in God's family, through Jesus Christ.

***Be an heir in  
God's family,  
through Jesus  
Christ***

For these reasons, we conclude that the purpose of Paul's writing to Titus is disciplining him in church governance and leadership. This is done in a pastoral manner in which Paul gives outlines and encouragement.



## Why is the book of Jonah written?

The assignments in this course, from now on, will be based on the book of **Jonah**. Read the book of Jonah a couple of times. Done? Now we will continue to the questions for this lesson!

The book of Jonah does not contain a “**This is why I write**” statement, so we have to look at the four questions mentioned earlier to get a clear picture of why the book of Jonah is written. The first two of those questions cannot be answered. Many Jewish and Christian traditions identify Jonah as the author; however, the text itself does not say so. It is even unclear to whom the book of Jonah is written. Therefore, we need to analyse a potential problem or need that is being addressed, and or if there are recurring themes in the book of Jonah.

The book of Jonah starts with the word of the Lord coming to Jonah. The message is quite clear: go to Nineveh and cry out against it. Jonah arose—not to go to Nineveh, but to flee from the presence of the Lord. This is one example of disobedience in the book. In fact, obedience and disobedience are major themes throughout the book of Jonah.

**10.** Give the references speaking of this theme of disobedience and obedience:

- Jonah 1:1-3
- Jonah 1:
- Jonah 1:
- Jonah 2:
- Jonah 3:
- Jonah 3:

**11.** In the book of Jonah, obedience is a major theme as seen above. Take a few minutes to reflect and meditate on this theme and your own obedience towards the LORD. Write your reflections down in a few words.

Another major theme in the book of Jonah can be found in Jonah 1:14-16, 2:1-9, 3:5-10.

**12.** Name the other major theme in the book of Jonah

**13.** Can you find other 'smaller' themes in the book of Jonah?

14. Fill in the blanks with the themes: **obedience**, **disobedience** and **repentance**.

God has a message for the people of Nineveh. To bring His word to those people, He wants to use Jonah. However, Jonah's \_\_\_\_\_ towards God leads him to a ship sailing from Joppa. God uses His creation to intervene. It is the wind and sea that show \_\_\_\_\_ toward God, becoming a mighty storm. The sailors are \_\_\_\_\_ towards Jonah's request to throw him into the sea. This shows the Gentiles being \_\_\_\_\_ to the prophet of God, even to the point of fear of the LORD (Jonah 1:16). Jonah is swallowed by a large fish and shows \_\_\_\_\_ in the belly. Again, creation is used by the hand of the LORD. Showing the fish being \_\_\_\_\_ to God. After his time in the fish, Jonah shows \_\_\_\_\_, resulting in \_\_\_\_\_ of the Gentiles in Nineveh. God relented from the disaster that He had said He would bring upon them, and He did not do it.

Zooming out from all the larger and smaller themes we found in the book of Jonah, we now focus on the reaction of God. His response to Jonah, the sailors, and the Ninevites leads us to the main point that the author is trying to communicate. It is this main point, overarching all the major and minor themes, that gives us the purpose of writing.

15. Write down the **author's purpose**.

Answers to the assignments can be downloaded for free from [www.czalive.com/resources/letscook-answers/](http://www.czalive.com/resources/letscook-answers/)

# Context



**TOOL  
#2**





# CONTEXT

The chef's knife illustrated the author's purpose as a tool most used in the kitchen. Without a chef's knife, we are basically nowhere. The second tool that we will use is the tool of context. Think of it this way. You are hosting an Italian-style dinner party, and someone shows up with tacos, or you prepare fries and a burger for your family's Christmas dinner. We think you get the picture, context matters! This tool is of equal importance compared to the author's purpose when reading Scripture.

There are different levels of context: a sentence is within the context of a paragraph, a paragraph within the context of a chapter, a chapter within the context of a whole book, and the book within the context of the entire Bible. This is also related to the Biblical Timeline tool; more on this, later.

You can let the Bible tell you whatever you like it to say. For proper interpretation, it is essential not to read verses selectively. Read passages of text that you know belong together. Context often provides an understanding of what, when, where, who, which, whose, why, and how—all questions that will help clarify the text we read. This will help us find answers to the author's purpose, but also help us to gain an understanding of the tools that will be explained here.

**Context often provides an understanding of what, when, where, who, which, whose, why, and how**

Take a look at John 14:14. In most Bible translations, this is often the end of a paragraph. However, the original text continues. Therefore, it changes the way we interpret John 14:14 drastically. The verses that follow (John 14:15-31) shed light on the prerequisite that belongs to verse 14. Furthermore, we see in the verses before verse 14, starting in chapter 13:31, a clear, continual construct of Jesus' teaching. Just mentioning that we can ask anything and that Jesus will make it happen for us, like some sort of "genie in a bottle", is missing the proverbial interpretive mark big time. However, more often than not, this verse is used to tell people that 'Jesus will give you what you want' just because they only read the one verse selectively.

There is a difference between literary context and historical and cultural context. Both of these contexts are of vital importance when interpreting Scripture.

History, archaeology, topography, and culture are examples of research areas that shed light on historical and cultural context. On a small side note, we have to say that these areas have affected and will affect our interpretation of the text continually, as more and more information becomes available in the research areas. This information cannot always be found in a regular Bible. Therefore, you will need resources, which we will provide after the following illustration.



## I can do all things!

Philippians 4:13 says:

***“I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.”***

Without proper context, this text could be interpreted in a way that we transform into some kind of superman through Christ, or that we will be immune to life’s challenges, or even that we could manifest things if we just believe that they will happen. This might sound strange, but it happens more often than you think. This is not even close to what this text is trying to communicate to the original audience. The direct context already sheds some light on the text. Philippians 4:11-12 shows us that Paul, who wrote this letter to the church in Philippi, is content in all situations, whether he had abundance or need. It is only after this that we read that he can do all things through Christ, who strengthens him.

Looking at the broader context, we see that Paul is imprisoned (Phil. 1:7). This shows us he is not writing from a place of abundance from which it is easy to state such a thing. It is actually in a time of need, a low moment, a moment of hardship, in which he shows the hope that is set before him in Christ. It is this hope that brings light and life to the situation. It even makes him able to write such a wonderful letter to the church in Philippi because of his focus on Christ, through which he can do all things—being content with where God called him, who he is, and what he has.

This same strength is available to us, whether we serve in another country or help our neighbour or family member. Christ’s power can enable us to stand firm on His promises, endure the most difficult challenges, and be content with Christ in the situation.



**Resource I. Study Bible** If you already have a Study Bible on your shelf, it is a powerful resource. Study Bibles will help you with the application of the text and give additional comments on many verses you will read. A Study Bible will also be of great help in getting a better understanding of the context. In your Study Bible, you will find book introductions on the first page of each of the 66 books in the Bible. This so-called book introduction will give you information on the timeline of the book, facts about the book, an overview, an outline, and major themes in the book. All this will help you get a broader view of the context in which the book is written. A Study Bible is an essential resource when you want to dig deeper into God's Word. If you do not want to buy or cannot afford a Study Bible, you can download and access the *Faithlife Study Bible* for free in the App Store or in the Play Store. Although a Study Bible is a great first step, it is merely a first step. More resources will follow, and we highly recommend you try them all.





## Fleeing from the presence of the Lord

In this assignment, we, again, will look at the context of the book of Jonah. We will use the [Faithlife Study Bible](#) to get a better understanding of the context. Read the [Introduction to Jonah](#) and [Interpreting Jonah](#) in the Faithlife Study Bible before we start. As you read the introductory pages, you will encounter jargon that you might not be acquainted with. Don't be frightened by this—just keep reading. The further you progress, the more familiar you will become with it.

**16.** Who was the writer, and when was the book of Jonah written?

Read the study notes in the [Faithlife Study Bible](#) on Nineveh mentioned in the reference 2 Kings 19:36.

**17.** Where is Nineveh located in modern times?

Take a brief look at the notes in the Faithlife Study Bible on the book of Jonah, or use the search icon to find the other locations of the cities in the story of Jonah.

**18.** How long would it roughly take to travel from Joppa to Nineveh? And how long from Joppa to Tarshish?

To help you gain a better insight into the atrocities that the Assyrians did to their enemies, we give you two excerpts from both the *Bible Knowledge Commentary*<sup>7</sup> and the *Central and Eastern European Bible Commentary*<sup>8</sup>. Read them and answer the following questions.

“Nineveh was well known in the ancient Near East for the brutal atrocities it inflicted on its war captives. (For more on Nineveh’s brutalities, see the Introduction to Nahum.) This city was also known for its idolatry; it had temples dedicated to the gods Nabu, Asshur, and Adad; the Ninevites also worshipped Ishtar, a goddess of love and war.”<sup>7</sup>

“In this case, the guilty people are the Assyrians. Their empire dominated the Middle East for three hundred years (900–612 BC) and was characterised by brutality and cruelty. Micah (Mic 5:4) depicts Assyria as a symbol of the enemy of God’s people. The annals of successive Assyrian kings record how they burned, skinned alive and decapitated their enemies. Carvings show how some of them even burned alive the children of defeated cities. The Assyrians also introduced the practice of the wholesale deportation of conquered populations as a means of keeping them under control. Even the well-educated King Ashurbanipal acted with coarse brutality. A rebellious Arabian leader named Uaite was tied up like a beast and housed in a kennel with dogs to guard the gates of Nineveh. The terror the Assyrians inflicted was key to their success in expansion and uncontested rule in the region for over three hundred years.”<sup>8</sup>

**19.** How does this give additional insight into why Jonah would flee to Tarshish?

Imagine you were sent to modern-day Mosul, occupied by ISIS, to tell them they need to repent of their sins and need to cry out to our God.

**20.** What would your response be? How would you feel?

Answers to the assignments can be downloaded for free from [www.czalive.com/resources/letscook-answers/](http://www.czalive.com/resources/letscook-answers/)

# Introduction to structure

In the previous lessons, we learned that context matters. Therefore, when studying isolated verses, we must look at them in light of their own paragraph. But where to begin? A good place to start is to divide the passage into smaller sections while at the same time keeping track of the big picture. In most Bible translations, these sections or paragraphs are made for us. We, however, must understand that the original writers did not necessarily put the paragraphs in the locations where they are today. Also, the chapter divisions and verses were added to the text hundreds of years later. Using the paragraphs in your Bible is not a bad thing per se, however, this does not automatically guarantee they are spot on. We would do well if we read carefully and intentionally, focusing on where a paragraph starts and ends.

We can also create paragraphs using the text as a guide, trying to stay as close to the original intent of the writer. To do this, we follow these two questions:

- **How did the writer break down the material into sections?**
- **How do these sections fit together?**

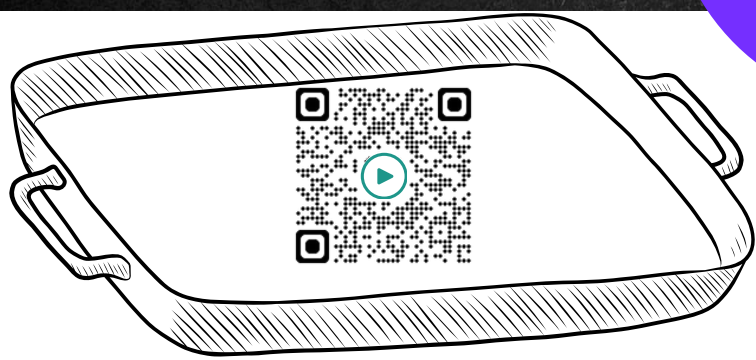
We can do this at different levels. Let's take, for example, the book of Isaiah. The whole book can be broken up into three sections (Isaiah 1-39, 40-55, 56-66). Each section can be broken down into chapters and chapters into their own sections or paragraphs (Isaiah 40:1-2, 3-5, 6-8, 9-11). Typically, between two and five sections is ideal. This can also involve examining chapters and verse numbers, which, again, are human-made divisions, so keep that in mind when reading. For instance, consider John 1:19-51; this happens over four days. John uses the phrase "the next day" (verses 29, 35, and 43) to indicate the start of a new segment.



# Inclusio



TOOL  
#3





# INCLUSIO

In the next four lessons, we will take a deep-dive into literary structure. This might seem like a lot at first, but soon you will find that interpreting Scripture becomes a lot easier once you find how the original writer structured his work. We will give you four tools that will help you unravel the structure of the text. Let's begin with the inclusio tool. An important structural technique used in the Bible is the inclusio, in which the same phrase is put at the beginning and end of a section, including everything in between as one section or paragraph. Like a beef patty between two buns—it forms a burger. For example, the book of Romans begins and ends like this:

***“through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith for the sake of his name among all the nations,”***

Romans 1:5 (ESV)

***“but has now been disclosed and through the prophetic writings has been made known to all nations, according to the command of the eternal God, to bring about the obedience of faith.”***

Romans 16:26 (ESV)



## It is written...

To illustrate this tool, we will look at the Gospel of Luke. Luke 4:1-14 to be precise. Starting our read in [Luke 4:1](#), we see the following:

***“And Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness”.***

After this follows the exposition of Jesus' forty-day fast and His temptation by the devil in the desert. This will lead us to [Luke 4:14](#), where we read:

***“And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit to Galilee, and a report about him went out through all the surrounding country.”***

At first glance, you might not think much of this. When we look closely, we notice repetition in the phrasing. Namely: "Jesus being filled with the Holy Spirit returned from the Jordan" and "Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit to Galilee". In both phrases, it is clear that the Holy Spirit is the one empowering Jesus to return. Once from the Jordan and once to Galilee. This repetition is squeezing all in between as one section. In other words, everything between these sentences belongs together and therefore makes a paragraph.

Inclusios are bringing clear structure to the text, making it easier for us, the readers, to interpret what belongs within the paragraph. This helps greatly help prevent eisegesis or simply taking Scripture out of context.



## For great is your reward in heaven

As mentioned, we will use the Sermon on the Mount as the assignment for this tool. Let's begin reading in Matthew 5. The pericope heading in the NKJV states: "The Beatitudes". In other words, it shows what our attitude should be. This piece of teaching is, structurally, incredibly beautiful. Read Matthew 5:1-12 and answer the following questions:

**21.** Which four repetitions do you see in the text?

- 
- 
- 
- 

**22.** Which three phrases are placed at the beginning and the end of possible sections?

- 
- 
- 

An inclusio must not be confused with a repetition of words. Repetition is a different tool; more on this later. As you have seen by now in the text, you will find multiple repetitions of both the words blessed and persecuted. Although these words shine light on the structure and help greatly in interpreting the text, they do not mark the beginning and end of a paragraph.

**23.** Which phrase is used in this text for the inclusio?

- 

Knowing where the paragraph begins and ends sheds light on how to interpret the text.

**24.** What does the phrase from question 23 say about those who act on Jesus' words?

Knowing this, we can continue interpreting the text. Jesus placed these behavioural forms in a specific order to communicate a message. A message of repentance. After all, we can only enter the Kingdom of Heaven once repentance has become part of our attitude.

It begins with being poor in spirit, i.e., acknowledging that I cannot do it on my own and am dependent on God. This will lead me to mourn my behaviour away from God, i.e., a sinful life where I thought I could do it all on my own. Continuing to the next verse, we enter into an attitude of meekness or humility, i.e., accepting the position I am in—the position of a servant.

**25.** Follow the verses through to verse 10 and reflect on each attitude towards full repentance. Write down what it means to hunger and thirst for righteousness, to be merciful, pure in heart, a peacemaker and persecuted.

**26.** Can you give an example of these attitudes being applied in your own life?

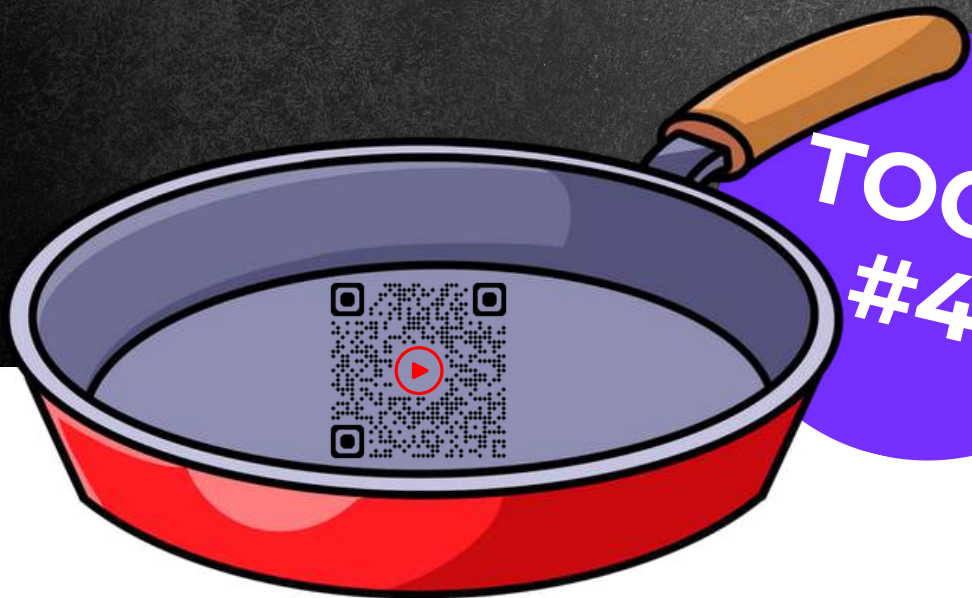
Finally, we look at the promises the Lord made in each verse in the paragraph.

**27.** Follow the same approach as in question **25.** to interpret these promises.

Answers to the assignments can be downloaded for free from [www.czalive.com/resources/letscook-answers/](http://www.czalive.com/resources/letscook-answers/)



# Chiasm



TOOL  
#4



# CHIASM

In most movies, it takes at least well over two-thirds of the movie for the plot to unravel. It might even happen in the last ten to twenty minutes of the movie. How we respond to this, let's say revelation, often depends on how well we have been paying attention during the rest of the movie. It is for this reason that our experience of the movie can differ between people. Some see the plot coming, whilst for others it might feel like a big surprise.

In the Bible, it is common to place the punchline in the middle of the story. The other sections of the account are then arranged in pairs, forming a symmetrical pattern around that centre. Those symmetrical patterns do not necessarily need to be identical to each other. They can also be contradictions, questions and answers, or even opposing ideas. We call such a structure a **chiasm**. Simply said, a chiastic structure brings us to the main focus point of the text.

“  
***In the Bible, it is common to place the punchline in the middle of the story.***  
”





## The great power of God

Here is one illustration from the book of [Acts 8:6-13](#)

A. And the multitudes with one accord heeded the things spoken by Philip, hearing and [seeing the miracles](#) which he did...

B. But there was a certain man called Simon, who previously practiced sorcery in the city and [astonished](#) the people of Samaria, claiming that he was someone great,

C. to whom they all gave [heed](#), from the least to the greatest, saying,

D. **“This man is the great power of God.”**

C. And they [heeded](#) him

B. because he had [astonished](#) them with his sorceries for a long time...

A. Then Simon himself also believed; and when he was baptized he continued with Philip, and was amazed, [seeing the miracles](#) and signs which were done.

Having identified the chiasm, we see that the central statement is ‘This man is the great power of God.’ The writer uses this structure to highlight that the people in Samaria placed Simon the Sorcerer in the place of God and he was living from this position. It sets the stage and focus for what follows in verses 14 through 25—namely, that he is not who people call him to be, and he acknowledges it by saying “Give me this power also” (Acts 8:19). Therefore, the chiasmic structure gives us clear guidance for interpreting this text.

Chiasms are not only applied to individual phrases or paragraphs but can also be applied on chapter level in books. Beynon and Sach, give the following example out of Daniel 2-7 in their book *Dig Deeper*:

A. Daniel 2: Prophecy of four great kingdoms to come, culminating in God's eternal kingdom

B. Daniel 3: God saves His people from death (fiery furnace)

C. Daniel 4: God is sovereign and deposes kings at will (Nebuchadnezzar)

C. Daniel 5: God is sovereign and deposes kings at will (Belshazzar)

B. Daniel 6: God saves His people from death (lions)

A. Daniel 7: Prophecy of four great kingdoms to come, culminating in God's eternal kingdom."<sup>3</sup>

As you can see, this is a very helpful tool to gain quick insight into major points in a book or in specific paragraphs. It structures the text for us and helps us considerably in the interpretive process. For those who are interested in teaching, preaching or giving Bible studies, the chiastic tool can be of great help for the outline of the study.



## I fear the Lord, the God of heaven

In Jonah 1:4-15 we find a four point chiasm (A B C D). For the first chiasm, we will help you through the process. We have stated the opposing verses below:

A. But the Lord sent out a great wind on the sea, and there was a mighty tempest on the sea, so that the ship was about to be broken up...

B. So the captain came to him, and said to him, "What do you mean, sleeper? Arise, call on your God; perhaps your God will consider us, so that we may not perish."...

C. Then they said to him, "Please tell us! For whose cause is this trouble upon us? What is your occupation? And where do you come from? What is your country? And of what people are you?"

D. So he said to them, "I am a Hebrew; and I fear the Lord, the God of heaven, who made the sea and the dry land."

D. Then the men were exceedingly afraid, and said to him, "Why have you done this?" For the men knew that he fled from the presence of the Lord, because he had told them.

C. Then they said to him, "What shall we do to you that the sea may be calm for us? - for the sea was growing more tempestuous..."

B. Therefore they cried out to the Lord and said, "We pray, O Lord, please do not let us perish for this man's life, and do not charge us with innocent blood; for You, O Lord, have done as it pleased You."

A. So they picked up Jonah and threw him into the sea, and the sea ceased from its raging.

**28.** Find the words or phrases that repeat each other.

A: \_\_\_\_\_ vs. \_\_\_\_\_

B: \_\_\_\_\_ vs. \_\_\_\_\_

C: \_\_\_\_\_ vs. \_\_\_\_\_

D: \_\_\_\_\_ vs. \_\_\_\_\_

Now we know the centre of the story lies in verses 9-10a, our focus is put on the *fear* and *being afraid*. Jonah says he has the fear of the LORD, however, the sailors show a clearer understanding of the consequences of Jonah's actions. Chapter one ends with the remark that the men feared the LORD greatly. A repetition of the key point found in the chiasm. It shows how beautifully written the book of Jonah is.

Let's shift our focus to another chiasm in the Old Testament. Take a look at the story of the Tower of Babel in [Genesis 11:1-9](#) and answer the following questions.

**29.** Give the five matching references that belong together:

- 1. Gen 11:1, 9b (whole earth, all the earth)
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

**30.** What is the centre point of the chiasm?

**31.** How does this influence our understanding of the Tower of Babel?

These were two examples from the Old Testament. Let's shift to the New Testament for a final practice run. Look at [Luke 24:13-33](#).

**32.** Give the four matching references that belong together:

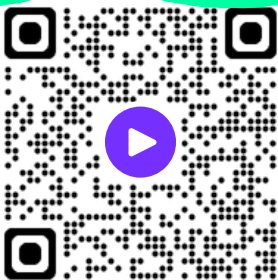
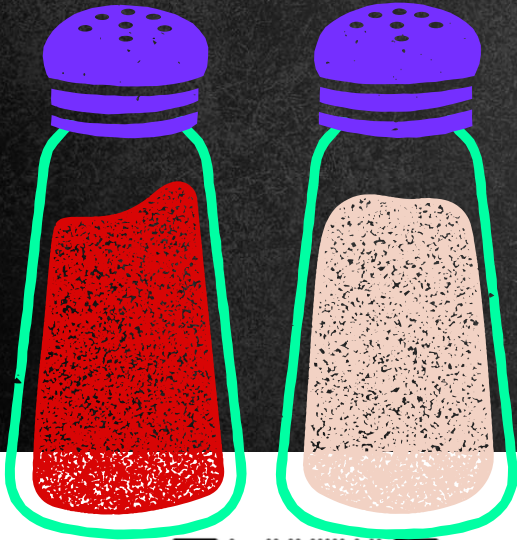
- 1.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- 2.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- 3.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- 4.

**33.** What is the centre point of the chiasm?

34. How does this influence our understanding of the story titled 'The Road To Emmaus'?

Answers to the assignments can be downloaded for free from [www.czalive.com/resources/letscook-answers/](http://www.czalive.com/resources/letscook-answers/)

# Parallelism





# PARALLELISM

Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall, Humpty Dumpty had a great fall. All the king's horses and all the king's men couldn't put Humpty together again. Just one of the many rhymes out there. Today, most poetry and songs rely on rhyming words or phrases. The Bible is also full of poetry, however, it does not use rhyme as we know it. Poetry in the Bible is found in the following manner as we read in [Psalm 24:1-2](#):

***"The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it,  
the world, and all who live in it;  
for he founded it on the seas  
and established it on the waters." (NIV)***

This is called a **synonymous parallelism**. As you can see, the two halves synonymously parallel each other. The 'earth' parallels the 'world', 'everything' matches 'all', 'founded' is similar to 'established', and 'seas' links with 'waters'. These parallels are the Hebrew and sometimes Greek way of creating poetry.

Although a parallel is a great way of revealing poetry, it does not mean that every parallel is poetry by definition. Take, for example, [Mark 2:27](#):

***"And he said to them, "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath."***

Although this is clearly a parallel, it is also clear that Jesus is not making poetry. Instead, He is pointing to man as being the focal point of what he is saying. In addition to this synonymous parallel form, we will explore two more variants.

## Antithetical parallelism

Antithetic parallels are found when the second half of the verse gives the opposite perspective to the first half by way of contrast. We can find a nice example of such a parallel in [Proverbs 29:11](#):

***“Fools vent their anger, but the wise quietly hold it back” (NLT)***

Here, the 'fool' can be matched with the 'wise man', and 'anger' is paralleled by 'self-control' of the wise man.

## Chiastic parallelism

Chiastic parallels are found when the second half of the verse says the same as the first half but flips the word order around, as seen in the text "the sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath." (Mark 2:27). A poetic chiastic parallel can be found in [Psalm 124:4-5](#):

***“Then the flood would have swept us away, the torrent would  
have gone over us;  
then over us would have gone the raging waters.” (ESV)***



## He remains faithful

We have all heard it said before, "Yes, but that is your interpretation." This is not the slightest uncommon saying in church circles or during Bible studies. [2 Timothy 2:13](#) is a great example of a verse that can lead to heated debates. It says:

***"If we are faithless, He remains faithful".***

How to interpret this? It either says that, no matter our faith, God will remain faithful. Or it says if we are faithless, He will hand us over to ourselves, for He has to remain faithful to Himself. For both options, we have Scriptural support. God will forgive us even when we sin (1 John 1:9), but He also rejects those who reject Him (Luke 9:26). So, which of the two would it be? We will use the parallel tool to figure this out. Let's look at the surrounding text:

*"This is a faithful saying:  
For if we died with Him,  
    We shall also live with Him.  
If we endure,  
    We shall also reign with Him.  
If we deny Him,  
    He also will deny us.  
If we are faithless,  
    He remains faithful;  
He cannot deny Himself."*

The first four lines parallel each other. If we die/endure, we will live/reign with Him. Therefore, the chances that the following four lines are parallel to each other increase. Let's look at them. If we deny Him/be faithless, He will deny us, for He cannot deny Himself. If we deny Jesus, He will also deny us, for we are rejecting the One who paid it all. This is supported by the context of the parallel. We have to conclude from this that if we are faithless, He will hand us over to ourselves, for He has to remain faithful to Himself. Maybe not the interpretation we are hoping for or feel like; it is, however, the correct interpretation of this text.



## Then Jonah prayed

We will continue reading the book of Jonah and apply the parallel tool to chapter two. Read the entire chapter and focus on possible parallels. We recommend you use the NKJV for the following questions.

In Jonah 2:2, we find the name Sheol. In the [Faithlife Study Bible](#), we can find the meaning of this word. Go to the study notes belonging to Jonah 2:2, and research the word.

**35.** Is Jonah 2:2 a synonymous, antithetic or chiasmic parallel?

**36.** Out of which two parts does this parallel consists?

1. \_\_\_\_\_ vs. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_ vs. \_\_\_\_\_

If we structure the parallel in Jonah 2:2, we can say that it is structured in an ABAB fashion.

**37.** In what fashion is the parallel in Jonah 2:3 structured?

We continue in [Jonah 2:5](#) and read the following:

***“The waters surrounded me, even to my soul; The deep closed around me; Weeds were wrapped around my head.” (NKJV)***

In the [Faithlife Study Bible](#), we see a comment on this verse. The word ‘my soul’ can also be rendered as ‘my neck’.

**38.** What type of parallel is Jonah 2:5, and how is it structured?

As you can see, the entire prayer of Jonah consists of parallels. We can therefore say that Jonah 2 is most likely written as poetry. We cannot, therefore, automatically interpret everything we read as literal. Neither can we do the opposite and say that all of it is figurative. We have to consider this while reading and interpreting the text. For example, a definite conclusion on whether or not Jonah died in the fish is undetermined.

**39.** What kind of action is Jonah portraying in his prayer, leading to the Lord speaking to the fish?

Answers to the assignments can be downloaded for free from [www.czalive.com/resources/letscook-answers/](http://www.czalive.com/resources/letscook-answers/)



# Linking words



TOOL  
#6



# LINKING WORDS

We started this course with an analogy from the kitchen. To introduce the following tool, we will go back to the kitchen. We are preparing a sauce for our lasagne. Unfortunately, our sauce turned out too thin, and needs to be thickened with some flour that will serve as a binder. In Scripture, we also make use of binders, words that bind individual pieces of text together. These words we call linking words. We can find them all across the Bible, especially the letters Paul wrote are full of linking words. You can make four main categories of linking words: *Therefore*, *For*, *If* and *So That*, we will illustrate these below.

“  
**Words that bind  
individual pieces  
of text together**



## But first seek the kingdom of God

### Therefore

*Therefore* is used as a linking word which points to the result or consequence of something that is said before. With other words, it points from reason to consequence.

**Reason** → **Consequence**

To illustrate the linking words tool we will use, again, a passage of the Sermon on the Mount. This time, we will look at the words that Jesus spoke in Matthew 6:19-34. We will point out different pieces of this text for some of the linking words we are discussing.

#### Matthew 6:19–34:

“The lamp of the body is the eye. If **therefore** your eye is good, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If **therefore** the light that is in you is darkness, how great is that darkness! “No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon. “**Therefore** I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing?... Now if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will He not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? “**Therefore** do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. **Therefore** do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.”

Jesus first mentions that the eye is the lamp of the body. If *'the eye is good'* (reason), then *'your whole body will be full of light'* (consequence). Continuing, Jesus' instruction not to worry because God will care for us (consequence), is not something that He tells us out of the blue. The first, *therefore*, points towards the statement Jesus made before, that we cannot serve both God and money (reason). He repeats the statement that we, therefore, should not worry, which points towards the comparison with

the birds and flowers. And He ends with a final teaching that we should not worry (consequence), because all these things shall be added to us (reason). Other linking words that share the same nature as *therefore* are: *consequently*, *for this reason*, and *thus*.

## For

This linking word works similarly, but in the opposite order. We will first read the consequence, and then the reason why. Linking words that share the same nature as *for* are: *because*, *since* and *so*.

**Reason ← Consequence**

### Matthew 6:19–34:

“Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. **For** where your treasure is, there your heart will be also....

“No one can serve two masters; **for** either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon....

Which of you, by worrying can add one cubit to his stature? “**So** why do you worry about clothing?...

“Therefore do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ **For** after all these things the Gentiles seek....

Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, **for** tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.”

When you flip the statement and replace *for* with *therefore* it still means exactly the same thing, for example: Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. Therefore, do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth.

## If

If you were to give a dinner party tomorrow, you would probably go shopping today to bring all the necessities. The linking word *if* tells you that a certain action is recommended in a certain situation, or it signifies a condition to be met. When this condition is met, you will probably need to follow through on the action.

Matthew 6:19–34:

"The lamp of the body is the eye. **if** therefore your eye is good, your whole body will be full of light. But **if** your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. **if** therefore the light that is in you is darkness, how great is that darkness!...

Now **if** God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will He not much more clothe you, O you of little faith?"

The first three *ifs* are indeed conditional. If my eye is good, my whole body is good. And if my eye is bad, my body is full of darkness. But the last *if* is not conditional. It is not up for debate if God clothes the grass of the field; there is no doubt, He is in control of the whole creation. Instead, the writer is using the *if* to communicate something close to an English 'because'. Jesus states that God has a good track record of clothing the grass; likewise, He will care for us as well.

### So that

One final linking phrase is *so that*. Sometimes it points to the purpose, for example, in 1 Thessalonians 3:11-13:

***"Now may our God and Father Himself, and our Lord Jesus Christ, direct our way to you. And may the Lord make you increase and abound in love to one another and to all, just as we do to you, so that He may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints."***

and sometimes to the result of something, for example, in Exodus 19:16:

***"Then it came to pass on the third day, in the morning, that there were thunderings and lightnings, and a thick cloud on the mountain; and the sound of the trumpet was very loud, so that all the people who were in the camp trembled."***

These are only a few of the many possible linking words, but by now you should get the picture. If a word is used to connect two phrases or paragraphs, we are most likely dealing with a linking word. Other possibilities might be: *however, but, also, yet, although, while, when, after, before, hence, likewise, rather, than*, and many more.



## Let every one turn from his evil way

Let's continue our research in the book of Jonah. We will apply the linking words tool to the entire book, in search of new insights that shed light on our interpretive process. Read Jonah 3 and pay attention to all linking words.

**40.** Name the five unique linking words mentioned in Jonah 3.

**41.** Which linking word is used in the exposition of the king of Nineveh that points to a possible result?

**42.** How did this result come to pass?

Being occupied with the linking words tool does not mean that we do not have to follow the recipe (the four-step method of the first lesson) anymore.

**43.** Follow the recipe and use the tools received until now to come to an application, based on Jonah 3:9-10.

Answers to the assignments can be downloaded for free from [www.czalive.com/resources/letscook-answers/](http://www.czalive.com/resources/letscook-answers/)

### **Concluding structure**

With this, we finish our four-part series on structure tools. Hopefully, you have seen how words, phrases, and paragraphs are set up in a way that gives structure to the text and helps us in the interpretative process. Remember, you can use this tool to give structure to your own paragraphs or limit the passage you are studying. If you do so, take at most 3 to 5 verses—no more. Just like context, one might say: ‘Structure matters!’ In itself, it will only bring us so far, but structuring the text and combining this with other tools will get you even further. To make things a little bit easier, we love to give you a free resource that will lay out chiasmic structures in the text.



## Resource II. Literary

**Structure** Most Study Bibles will not give you an in-depth overview of chiastic structures in the text. Despite this, it is a helpful tool that is widely used by preachers, pastors, theologians and scholars to help interpret Scripture. Even to this day, new chiastic structures are found and discussed. Hajime Murai, professor at Future University Hakodate, researches numerical analysis of religious texts (mainly the Bible). He released a publicly available resource, which can be found here:

[http://www.bible.literarystructure.info/bible/bible\\_e.html](http://www.bible.literarystructure.info/bible/bible_e.html)





# Translations





# TRANSLATIONS

One Author, with approximately 40 writers. Divinely inspired by the Holy Spirit to make one complete story. Pointing to One person in all 66 books. Who in His turn gave it all for us. Written in a timespan of over 1500 years, in three different languages. Despite all these aspects, which would be fuel for mistakes, it does not contradict itself and does not contain any errors. Originally written in Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek, it is now readable in over 3500<sup>9</sup> different languages, fully, or at least for a portion.

“  
***Despite all these aspects, which would be fuel for mistakes, it does not contradict itself and does not contain any errors.***

Yes, indeed, this all speaks of the number one selling book for all of history, the Bible. Originally, the Old Testament was written in Hebrew and Aramaic, and the New Testament in Koine Greek, the commonly spoken language at that time. This whole introduction is to show you why it was translated, so that you can read it, be inspired by it, let it transform you, guide you, correct you, and build you up in faith towards the one goal; becoming more and more like Him. The One to whom the whole book points, Jesus Christ. To start this wonderful journey with Him, it needed to be translated into the language that you speak.

Your modern-day translation is based upon one of two manuscripts. The so-called Byzantine and Alexandrian manuscripts. These manuscripts were derived from a combination of early, locally spread copies of the original text. The Byzantine and Alexandrian texts match about 96% and upwards to 99%. There are over 5,000 copies of Byzantine manuscripts, the oldest being from the 5th century. This manuscript is closest to where it happened. The Alexandrian text is closest to when it happened, however there are fewer than 200 copies of the Alexandrian text. They date back to the 2nd century. We don't have the entire Bible from either manuscript, but we have more of the Bible text in Byzantine form (roughly 95%) than Alexandrian form (roughly 75%).

- **Byzantine-based Bibles**

The Geneva Bible, King James, New King James Version, and Modern King James.

- **Alexandrian-based Bibles**

English Standard Version, New International Version, New American Standard Bible, New Living Translation, and most others.

Wallace writes in *The Lexham Bible Dictionary*, “The Alexandrian text was produced in Alexandria, Egypt, as well as other Egyptian sites. Significantly, Alexandria was already known for its great care in manuscript production long before Christianity was born. Christian scribes were probably influenced by this, producing what is considered by most scholars to be the most reliable text of the New Testament.”<sup>10</sup>

In the Qumran mountains, located in the Judean wilderness in Israel, scrolls were found by a shepherd boy in 1947, the so-called Dead Sea Scrolls or Qumran Scrolls. These scrolls turned out to be a thousand years older than the oldest available texts at that time. Compared to the Dead Sea Scrolls, the Alexandrian manuscript seems more accurate than the Byzantine. Do not be afraid, your NKJV is still reliable. However, be aware of certain differences. Now you know where they come from.

From these available manuscripts, many modern-day translations are derived. These translations can be divided into roughly three different kinds:

- **Formal Translations:** Also called word-for-word translations in which an attempt is made to stay as close to the source as possible. Often resulting in less smooth readability because it is literally translated.
- **Dynamic translations:** On the opposite of the “translation spectrum” we find the Dynamic translation. These translations are done in a way that conveys the meaning or idea of the text. In these translations, there is a lot of room for the interpretation and theology of the translators. Sometimes leading to very disappointing translations.
- **Everything in between translations:** They fall somewhere in between formal and dynamic translations. These translations try to stay close to the source material but, at the same time, try to make it as readable as possible.

Many languages have their own translations. With it, there is a wide variety of options to choose from. When it comes to choosing the 'right' translation, we suggest you never only use one translation, but always multiple. You might be tempted to skip translations as a whole and go straight for the source material. However, remind yourself that you probably do not speak Greek and most likely you don't speak Hebrew. Most certainly you don't speak both Greek, Hebrew, and Aramaic. If you do, then you're on the wrong course. When going to the source material, you will still depend on the translation of the original words. Interpreting these words requires an advanced study, often done in an exegesis together with a so-called literary analysis.

**“  
When it comes to  
choosing the  
'right' translation,  
we suggest you  
never only use  
one translation,  
but always  
multiple.”**

Some examples of English translations from Formal to Dynamic are: KJV, NASB/ESV, NKJV/NIV, NLT/The Living Bible, The Message. Note that in most translations, theology is also considered in the translation process. This can sometimes affect the hermeneutical process as well. Therefore, it is vital to always use multiple translations in hermeneutics or Bible study. This way, the chance of misinterpretation is much smaller.



## Go therefore and...

Let's look at these two sentences abstracted from the KJV (Byzantine) and the ESV (Alexandrian).

Matthew 28:19 KJV 1900

***Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:***

Matthew 28:19 ESV

***Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,***

Note the differences between the two translations, where the KJV speaks of 'teach all nations', the ESV renders it as 'make disciples of all nations'. A small difference with rather large consequences in application.

Another example can be found in the NLT, compared to the NKJV. In the gospel of John, chapter 7 ends with verse 53 in the NKJV. Where, in the NLT, it gives a footnote saying "The most ancient Greek manuscripts do not include John 7:53-8:11". Since the NLT is based upon the Alexandrian text, which is older than the Byzantine, it explains this with a footnote. Suggesting that, John 7:53-8:11, may not have been part of the original Gospel of John. This again influences the way we handle these verses in Bible study, preaching or teaching. This is another example that shows us the differences between translations.



### **Resource III. BibleGateway**

Most likely you have at least a couple of different Bible translations on your shelf. It is time to remove the dust and put them to work. In case you do not have access to multiple translations or want to save yourself a load of money, just go to <https://www.biblegateway.com/>. This gives immediate access to dozens of Bible translations for free. We highly recommend you to use this resource when studying the Bible, even if you have access to own physical translations.





## Salvation is of the Lord

In the prayer of Jonah, in Jonah 2:4, there is a sentence about the holy temple. Use [Biblegateway](#) to look up this verse in the following translations: NKJV, ESV, NET, and CEV.

**44.** Place the four translations under each other.

**NKJV**

**ESV**

**CEV**

**NET**

**45.** Which difference do you notice between the first two translations (NKJV, ESV) and the second two translations (CEV, NET) in the verse?

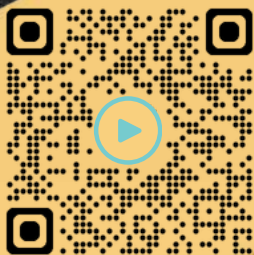
In the NKJV and ESV, we read that Jonah is hopeful because he will look again upon the holy temple. In the other two translations, we read that Jonah mourns for not having the opportunity to ever see the holy temple again. Place Jonah 2:4 in its context (Jonah 2:2-6a).

**46.** Which two translations are more likely to be correct, and why?

Answers to the assignments can be downloaded for free from [www.czalive.com/resources/letscook-answers/](http://www.czalive.com/resources/letscook-answers/)



# Genre



TOOL  
#8



# GENRE

If you ask a French and an Italian chef to prepare their specialty, you will end up with two delicious meals that are quite different. Most likely they look different, taste different, and even smell different. Put either of their meals on the McDonald's menu, and things will go south real fast. It just does not make sense in the context of the restaurant. The Bible, from this perspective, is no different. If you were to randomly open the Bible two consecutive times, the likelihood of ending up with two different "meals" is quite high. Of course, we are not speaking of meals here, but of literary genres. We find the following genres in the Bible:

- Narrative/historical accounts or stories (e.g. Genesis, Exodus, Joshua)
- Poetry (e.g. Psalms, Ecclesiastes)
- Law (e.g. Leviticus, Deuteronomy)
- Prophecy (e.g. Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Hosea, Joel, Amos)
- Wisdom literature (e.g. Proverbs, Song of Solomon)
- Letters (e.g. Romans, Corinthians, Ephesians)
- Gospel (e.g. Matthew, Mark, Luke, John)
- Apocalypse (e.g. Daniel, Revelation)

It is also possible to find a combination of the genres mentioned above within a single book. Two basic principles follow once we have identified the genre we are dealing with.

1. If we read a historical narrative, we must realise that what we read actually happened.
2. When dealing with parable, metaphor or imagery, we cannot, let's stretch this, we must not, interpret this literally.

Understanding the genre helps you avoid misinterpreting symbolic language as literal or vice versa. The late Dr. Michael S. Heiser used to say that we need to read the Bible as a detective novel, no matter the genre. He would follow up by explaining that, when we do this, our interest will be sparked by every little detail, which in turn helps interpret the text much better. Knowing which genre we are dealing with helps with the interpretation process. For example, Letters may benefit from a more straightforward, historical-grammatical approach, while prophecy may require attention to symbolism and intriguing literary principles. By now, it probably becomes clear that different genres require different interpretive principles.





## Look for the bare necessities

You might have heard about Elisha, but did you know he was capable of speaking the language of the bear? Don't believe us? Check out the story in 2 Kings 2:23-25. You will find Elisha calling for help from two bears. He is summoning them to help him deal with some pesky youths who are name-calling him because of his bald head. The bears that are said to have killed the youths are obviously not speaking about literally taking the lives of the 42 youths. This is mere hyperbolic language to communicate the fact that Elisha scared them enough so they would stop their bullying. I hope you see the utter nonsense of this. The story is a historic narrative that simply states what happened. As such, we should read it this way and remind ourselves that, yes, God can even use bears to take out 42 youths.

For a second illustration, we go to Luke 18:10-14 as a solemn historic narrative, since it is in the gospel of Luke, one might think that the text is of no use to modern-day readers. How so, you might ask, well, it speaks of a Pharisee and a tax-collector, since most likely you are neither of those, we can skip this part of Scripture and just continue on our way through the Bible. Unless we read Luke 18:9, in which Luke notes that it is a parable that Jesus spoke. In other words, he is using *imagery* to teach everybody a lesson in humility. So no matter what profession we have, it is our behaviour that is on display.

“  
**No matter what profession we have, it is our behaviour that is up for display.**

If we were to continue on the topic of imagery, we find one of the most vivid examples in Song of Solomon 5:7. This verse describes the internal anguish of the bride looking for her beloved. The writer uses the imagery of watchmen and a veil to symbolise exposure and vulnerability coming from guilt.

***The watchmen found me as they went about in the city;  
they beat me, they bruised me, they took away my veil, those  
watchmen of the walls.***



## Jonah, the prophet

Read the article '[Interpreting Jonah](#)' in the [Faithlife Study Bible](#) and answer the following questions.

**47.** Which of the three suggested genres do you find most likely; and why?

Continuing with the view that Jonah is written as a historical narrative, we have to take into consideration that Jonah is also a prophet. Therefore, his sayings might be poetic, as is common in many prophecies.

**48.** Which part(s) of Jonah can be read as poetic and, for this reason, could fall outside the historic narrative genre?

"Jonah fits the definition of satire better than any of the other options. Satire is an exaggeration of reality that is still grounded in reality; it functions most effectively as a critique of real social and cultural practices. Since satire straddles the line between reality and hyperbole, reading Jonah as satire allows readers to acknowledge both that the story has a basis in reality and that some of the literary elements of the story could be intentionally exaggerated in order to teach a larger truth."<sup>11</sup>

**49.** Which larger truth, no matter the genre, applies to us all?

Answers to the assignments can be downloaded for free from [www.czalive.com/resources/letscook-answers/](http://www.czalive.com/resources/letscook-answers/)

# Vocabulary



TOOL  
#9



# VOCABULARY

Just as specific work fields have their own vocabulary, Christians have their own vocabulary too. This is sometimes referred to as "Christianese." Now you might wonder what Christianese sounds like. For this, we go to [Hebrews 10:19-20](#):

***"Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh," (ESV)***

Notice how strange this sounds if you do not have a clue about the meaning. Phrases such as: 'enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus', 'a living way opened through the curtain', and 'his flesh'. As Christians, we hopefully know what we are talking about. How about those who are not in the family of faith? To teach them as we should, we need to interpret those words correctly. For this, we will use another resource, an extra tool that can help us understand our own "language", namely a Biblical Dictionary.

***To teach them as we should, we need to interpret those words correctly.***



## Jehova is Saviour

Be careful with interpreting words based on what we think they mean. Words that are familiar to us, like "hope", may have a different meaning in the Bible. For example, [Titus 1:2](#)

***"in hope of eternal life, which God, who never lies, promised before the ages began." (ESV)***

Paul here does not mean that he hopes it will come to pass, but he is speaking about something he is absolutely certain of, it will happen. We know this when we read the rest of the verse, "God, who cannot lie, promised this before the ages began."

Secondly, names are always interesting in the Bible. When we come across a name, we should actually stop reading to first find out what the name means. For example, the meaning of the name 'Jesus' is 'Jehovah is Saviour'. If we look at the instructions the angel gives Joseph in [Matthew 1:21b](#)

***"you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." (NLT)***

We now see a beautiful emphasis on who Jesus actually is, Jehovah, God himself.

Another example is 'Adam', coming from the Hebrew word 'Adama', which in its turn means 'ground' or 'earth'. Take a look at Genesis 2:7 where man was created out of the 'dust of the ground'. Adam then named his wife 'Eve', meaning 'living', establishing her role as *"the mother of all the living"* (Genesis 3:20). We could go on and on with this. How beautiful and intriguing God's Word is. Unfortunately, we cannot build doctrine on the meaning of names in Scripture, but as you will find out, more often than not, the meaning of a specific name places the story in a different light and gives depth to the meaning of a story.



#### **Resource IV. BlueLetterBible**

You are probably not a native Greek or Hebrew speaker. This resource will help you to get at least some understanding of what the original words mean. Together with that, it will give you access to Biblical dictionaries, commentaries and much more. We highly recommend taking some time to check the site out and see what it offers. It is an incredible free resource, used all over the world by thousands of people, at the moment you read this. <https://www.blueletterbible.org/>





## The worm

For this assignment, you will make use of the resource [BlueLetterBible](#). In the 'outline of biblical usage' found in the interlinear within [BlueLetterBible](#), you find more information about the meaning of a certain name. Use this to answer the following questions;

**50.** What does the name Jonah mean?

**51.** What does the name Tarshish mean?

Often, additional information can be found together with the original meaning of the word. Research the word translated as 'worm' in Jonah 4:7 using the [BlueLetterBible](#) and fill in the blanks.

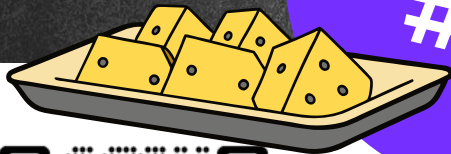
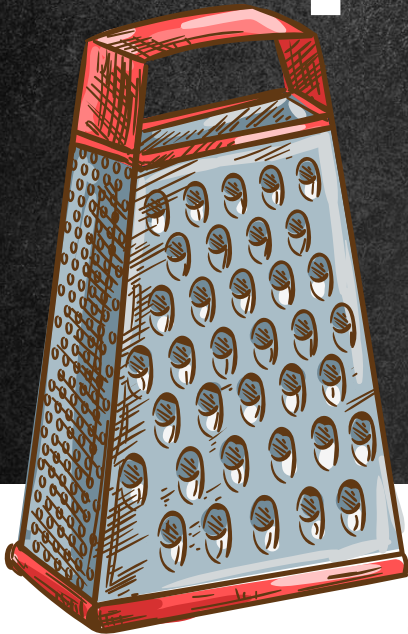
**52.** In \_\_\_\_\_, scarlet (red) dye was extracted from the dead bodies of female scarlet worms. This happened only after the scarlet worm attached herself permanently to \_\_\_\_\_, in order to hatch her larvae. A beautiful depiction of the \_\_\_\_\_ of Christ unto the \_\_\_\_\_ of many \_\_\_\_\_. As is written in Hebrews 2:10 "For it was fitting that he, for whom and by whom all things exist, in bringing many \_\_\_\_\_ to glory, should make the founder of their \_\_\_\_\_ perfect through \_\_\_\_\_."

When you click on Jonah 4:2 in the [BlueLetterBible](#), you can research the individual Hebrew words, or you can look up the meaning of the words in a dictionary. These dictionaries can be found in the dictionaries tab in each verse.

**53.** Where does God's pardoning mercy proceed from, according to the International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia?

Answers to the assignments can be downloaded for free from [www.czalive.com/resources/letscook-answers/](http://www.czalive.com/resources/letscook-answers/)

# Repetition





# REPETITION

When we love a certain dish, it most likely ends up on our table more often than others. Simply because we like the taste of it. In the Bible, we find a similar process, only not focused on what we think tastes good but on what the original writer found important for us to know. You can compare it to our use of bold or italic letters to emphasise a message or truth. Jesus saying:

## ***"Martha, Martha"***

in [Luke 10:41](#) shows us that he is calling her to attention. One might say that Jesus is saying, "Let there be no mistake, I am talking to Martha here".

Besides this, repetition can also be applied to an idea or principle. Take, for example, Hebrews 11, known as the Hall of Faith. It bears its name for the simple fact that the idea of faith is elaborated on 22 times, with 13 different people, all known for their great faith.

A similar idea we find in 2 Samuel 7, where the repeated idea of 'a house' is being communicated as the house of David, 'the house of God' i.e. the temple, and 'the house of David', speaking of his heirs.

Two or three repeated words do not automatically mean that they are the focus of the text. They can emphasise a certain point, or bring our attention to a possible literary structure. Even more so, it can add tone and feel to the text, later, more on this.



## The tongue as a little member

In James 3:1-12, we find one idea: the influence of controlling the tongue. This idea is repeated with three separate examples, telling us that something small can have a big influence. Let's take a look at the three repeated ideas in [James 3:3-5](#):

- ***“If we put bits into the mouths of horses so that they obey us, we guide their whole bodies as well.***
- ***Look at the ships also: though they are so large and are driven by strong winds, they are guided by a very small rudder wherever the will of the pilot directs.***
- ***How great a forest is set ablaze by such a small fire!”***

One idea is repeated in three different examples to clarify a truth that applies to us all. These types of repetition are probably more difficult to recognise than the ones mentioned earlier. Don't be discouraged by this but just simply remember that it is one of many tools of which its strength lies in the combining factor. The more tools we use while going through the recipe, the more likely we are to interpret the text correctly.



## True repentance

Read Jonah chapter 4 and mark all repeated words and ideas to get a good idea of what is being repeated.

**54.** Which ideas are repeated in Jonah chapter 4?

**55.** How do these ideas shed light on the overall thought behind chapter 4?

**56.** Did Jonah learn anything from his endeavours in chapters 1 or 3? (Considering your previous answer)

**57.** Can we speak of true repentance by Jonah; and why?

**58.** Reflect on your own life and obedience towards difficult questions asked by God. Do we always radically change our behaviour or even thinking patterns after a rebuke from the Lord?

Answers to the assignments can be downloaded for free from [www.czalive.com/resources/letscook-answers/](http://www.czalive.com/resources/letscook-answers/)



# Tone & Feel



TOOL  
#11



# tone & feel

When reading the Bible, we are doing so in a book that is alive and active according to Hebrews 4:12. This means that when we read, the Author is present. The Holy Spirit is the one who will speak through the pages into our hearts and give us revelation of what we read. This is not something that only happens when we read it. It also happened when it was written. The moment the writers put pen to paper and wrote the books now bundled in our Bible, the Holy Spirit was present and divinely inspired them. This was not some ecstatic once-in-a-lifetime moment, or something weird like that. They were humans, yielding to the influence of the Holy Spirit at the right time. Writing from their point of view, with what they knew, with their character and personality. In other words, they also wrote emotions into the text.

To unravel these emotions, we use the tool called Tone and Feel. Being alert to the writer's feelings and tone helps us get a better understanding of what is being conveyed. It appeals not only to our cognitive side but also to our emotional side.

When was the last time you shed tears while reading the Bible? There is absolutely nothing wrong with this; if anything, it brings us closer to what is being said.

“  
***They also wrote emotions into the text.***”



## Vanity of vanities

Let's look at [Psalm 103:1-2](#):

***Bless the Lord, O my soul,  
and all that is within me,  
bless his holy name!  
Bless the Lord, O my soul,  
and forget not all his benefits, (ESV)***

After reading this Psalm, there is no explanation needed to see that David wrote this with an uplifted heart and a posture of submissiveness to God. The psalm shows joy, humility, hope, thankfulness and submissiveness. None of these emotions is written in the text, even though we read them through the text. Commentators in the *Central and Eastern European Commentary* write: "Submission before God and the experience of his presence are the prerequisites of praise. The invocation bless the Lord, O my soul implies all these."<sup>12</sup> Showing quite clearly that for David to write such a statement of praise, he must have had such an experience with the Lord.

For our second illustration, we will go to [Ecclesiastes 1:1-4](#). Try reading this with the same tone and feel as you just did with the Psalm above.

***The words of the Preacher, the son of David, king in Jerusalem.  
Vanity of vanities, says the Preacher,  
vanity of vanities! All is vanity.  
What does man gain by all the toil  
at which he toils under the sun?  
A generation goes, and a generation comes,  
but the earth remains forever. (ESV)***

As you have noticed, this is impossible. It just does not make any sense. This is exactly the point of this illustration. For many people, this is one of the most difficult tools, since it does not require knowledge but feeling. Until now, we have been busy with cognitive stimulation; however, this tool requires less knowledge and much more emotion. To help you get around hard passages, translators often put punctuation marks in the text.

Dynamic translations might be of good help to those who find it hard to read tone and feel through the text. By adding tone and feel to the mixture, the text comes alive. Most of the time, it is the smallest details that have the biggest effect on our understanding of the story. They draw us into the text and, again, help us in the interpretive process.



## Resource V. New English Translation (NET)

You might start to wonder by now "How many Bible translations do I need?" or "Is this really necessary?" However, this translation is not your typical Bible translation. It is a translation with over 60,000 readily available notes that make the original languages far more accessible. Give it a try and see for yourself whether you want to use this resource or not. We do, however, highly recommend it and encourage you to, at least, take a look at it. <https://netbible.org/bible/>





## What do you mean, sleeper?

Read the entire book of Jonah once again and pay careful attention to the tone and feel of the book. Decide for yourself whether or not it changes your perspective on your understanding of the book.

Read [Jonah 1:6](#). The captain of the ship asks Jonah:

***"What do you mean, sleeper?"***

**59.** Which possible emotions speak through this question of the captain?

In the [NET Bible](#), you will find a note attached to this sentence with the number 41. Read the note and answer the following question:

**60.** Which two emotions are suggested by the NET Bible?

**61.** Which of those two do you think fits best within the context of the chapter; and why?

We will continue our reading in chapter 3. There we find the King declaring all men and beasts to a fast and sackcloth. In Jonah 3:8 we read that the king gives the assignment that the people should cry mightily. Read the note in the NET Bible that is attached to the word that corresponds with "mightily".

**62.** Fill in the blanks. The word earnestly is translated as:

\_\_\_\_\_ , \_\_\_\_\_ ,

\_\_\_\_\_ and, \_\_\_\_\_  
according to the NET Bible.

**63.** What do these different renderings have in common according to tone and feel?

Answers to the assignments can be downloaded for free from [www.czalive.com/resources/letscook-answers/](http://www.czalive.com/resources/letscook-answers/)



# Biblical Timeline



**TOOL  
#12**



# BIBLICAL TIMELINE

We have almost come to the end of this workbook, and with that, we arrive at one of the last tools that we will go through. There are many more, but we believe that with the tools we have explained, you are well equipped to start interpreting the Word of God.

In the recipe, we showed you that the third step sheds light on a New Testament perspective and how this perspective possibly changes our interpretation and application. In order to consider the New Testament perspective, we need to look at the Biblical timeline.

If we asked you to draw a timeline, you would likely just draw a line with a beginning and an end. But what if we told you that an ancient Hebrew would most likely draw a circle? Their frame of reference was not a linear view of time but a circular one. "The Hebrew calendar was structured around lunar cycles and annual agrarian seasons."<sup>13</sup> Meaning their calendar was based upon the phases of the moon and the times of sowing and reaping. You can see evidence of this circular time-thinking in phrases such as "*the return of the year*" (1 Kings 20:22, 2 Chronicles 36:10). We must note that this circular time-thinking is a complex concept, which consists of a combination of circular patterns in nature and daily life, linear progression in history, and divine vertical intervention. We will simply use a linear view of time.

This will leave us with the questions: Where do we stand in contrast to the original audience on the Biblical timeline? Secondary: Where is the original audience opposed to the work of Jesus on the cross? The answers to these questions hold important theological implications. The work of sacrifices in the Old Testament, for example, was a law installed by God. However, in our day and age, Jesus Christ is the fulfilment of that Law; He is our perfect sacrifice (Hebrews 10:10). Understanding our place on the Biblical timeline when reading Scripture helps shape our theological understanding, and as such, our interpretation.

There is only one exception to the principle of time: God. It is God who is unchangeable (Malachi 3:6). He was, is, and will remain the same. Therefore, He is not subject to any timeline.





## Shedding of blood

Without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins (Hebrews 9:22). However, in [Luke 7:48](#),

***"And he said to her, "Your sins are forgiven." (ESV)***

, we see that Jesus forgives the sinful woman while He is at a dinner party in the house of Simon the Pharisee. Looking at the Biblical timeline, we see that this was before Jesus was crucified. This explains the reaction of those who heard it in [Luke 7:49](#),

***"Then those who were at table with him began to say among themselves, "Who is this, who even forgives sins?" (ESV)***

How does this work? Jesus had not yet shed his blood, and yet he is in the position to forgive? The only solution to this remarkable situation is that, apparently, Jesus is not bound by the limitation of time. Meaning, He is in a similar position to God.

For us, this is nothing new and does not sound strange. However, do not forget that we need to look at this from their point of view, within their historical and cultural context. Therefore, Jesus is stating with this saying that he is either God or a blaspheming lunatic who deserved to be stoned. For them to respond in the way they did is then to be expected.



## Offer him there as a burnt offering

In Jonah 3, the people of Nineveh repented of their sins. Then we read the reaction of God in Jonah 3:10.

**64.** What would be the culturally normal route to receive forgiveness and grace in this time?

**65.** How does this give extra dimension to the reaction of Jonah in Jonah 4:2?

We know we promised to stick to the book of Jonah, but this passage in the Bible is too astonishing not to put in the workbook. Therefore, take your Bible and go with us to Genesis 22 and read the chapter a few times.

Are we really understanding what God is asking of Abraham? Read Genesis 15:1-6 for some context.

**66.** How does this context add weight to God asking Abraham to sacrifice his son?

Are there any bells ringing? If it was not clear to you already, this story has many parallels to the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. Below, we have pointed out some details of the crucifixion.

**67.** Give the references from the story of Abraham and Isaac that parallel these points.

<b>References to Jesus Christ</b>	<b>References to Genesis 22</b>
Jesus was God's only beloved Son (John 3:16)	Isaac was Abraham's only beloved son (Gen 22:2) <hr/> <hr/> (Gen 22:____) (2 Chr 3:1 might be of help)
Jesus was crucified close to Jerusalem (Matt 26:36-46)	<hr/> <hr/> (Gen 22:____)
Jesus travels to His final destination by donkey (Matt 21:1-11)	<hr/> <hr/> (Gen 22:____)
Jesus was in the grave for three days (Luke 24:7)	<hr/> <hr/> (Gen 22:____)
Jesus carried His own cross (John 19:16-18)	<hr/> <hr/> (Gen 22:____)
Jesus gave His life willingly (John 10:18)	<hr/> <hr/> (Gen 22:____)

**68.** Formulate a Biblically correct application for yourself from Abraham's point of view.

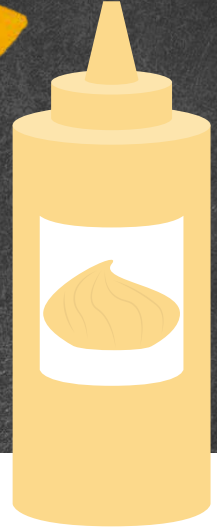
**69.** Formulate a Biblically correct application for yourself from Isaac's point of view.

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TOOL  
#13

I.D.





# I.D.

When the Biblical timeline addresses the "when," the I.D. tool focuses on the "who". Who are we, in contrast to whom we are reading about, and can we relate to their situation or experiences? Can we identify with a person or character—and if so, who?

As humans, we are egocentric creatures. We first care for ourselves, our families, and loved ones around us, before we look after our neighbours. We value the salary we earn, the house we live in, the car we drive, and the phone we use. As Christians, we want to reflect Christ and hopefully show similar behaviour. However, last time we checked, Christians are still human beings. When we read the Word of God, we are quick to place ourselves in the shoes of David, Elijah, or Paul. However, we are almost certain that you did not decapitate a three-meter giant, called fire from heaven, or was blind for three days. Point made, we are not the ones we read about.

Most of the time, the characters in the Bible shed light on one man, Jesus Christ. We should ask ourselves what the character says about Jesus, and what we can learn from them about Him. He is the One we are going after and whom we should compare ourselves with. Can we forget about the characters at all? No, we can learn lessons from their lives, observe their choices and apply them in our own lives. However, before we put ourselves in their shoes, we first must look at who they actually are, followed by the picture they paint of—or characteristics found in—Christ. And only then, at the last step, we can look at how their character traits, linked to Jesus, are examples for our own identity.



## The nightmare

Let's read Genesis 37:19–21:

***“They said to one another, “Here comes this dreamer. Come now, let us kill him and throw him into one of the pits. Then we will say that a fierce animal has devoured him, and we will see what will become of his dreams.” But when Reuben heard it, he rescued him out of their hands, saying, “Let us not take his life.” (ESV)***

As you probably know, this story is about Joseph being thrown into the pit to end up being sold into slavery. Perhaps your mind wandered during the reading of these three verses and saw yourself standing between the brothers. Or maybe you were walking next to Joseph towards the brothers, not aware of what was about to happen. Or you recognised yourself in Reuben, stepping up on behalf of some minority. Only to realise that we are neither one Neither of the brothers nor Joseph. Most likely, you have never been sold into slavery, been thrown into a pit by your brothers to be left for dead, and for sure, we did not live in ancient days.

“***Most likely, you have never been sold into slavery, been thrown into a pit by your brothers to be left for dead***”

The point has been made by now; we are not in this story. However, perhaps we can relate to some of the characters or some of their characteristics. When we identify ourselves with the ‘hero’ of the story, take Joseph, Moses, David, or Elijah, for example, we can often miss the mark. This hinders us in a true interpretation of the text, possibly misleading us by missing any negative traits or characteristics, or even worse, leading us to an application in which we think we need to act exactly as Moses or Elijah did.

More often than not, we are more likely to resemble one of the people in the crowd who are afraid. There is only one who can fit in the God-like characteristics of these heroes of faith, His name is Jesus. Often, these characters are foreshadowing Him, as you have seen in the previous assignment. Being aware of who we are, as opposed to who they are, is often enough to avoid any pitfall as mentioned above.



## Character traits

**70.** Name all ten characters in the book of Jonah

**71.** In which ways did Jonah predepict Jesus, name at least five? (Give appropriate Bible references.)

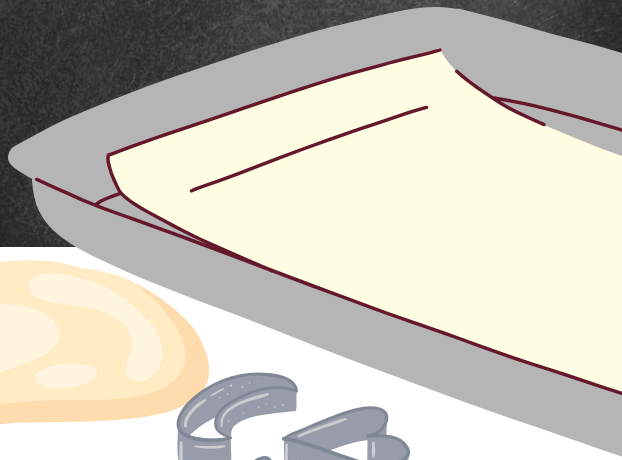
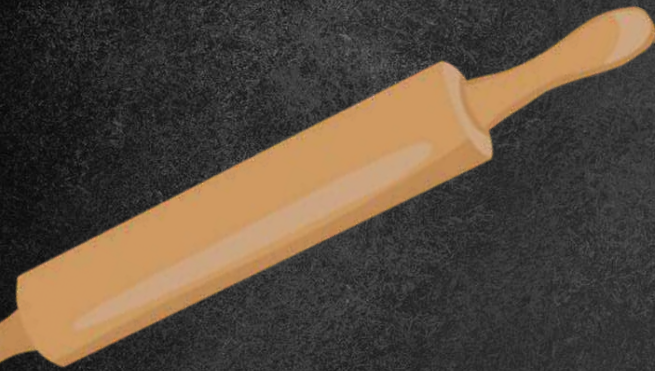
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# Application

=

# Transformation



# APPLICATION = TRANSFORMATION



Having dissected Scripture with a variety of tools, we now have a bunch of information to take into consideration. The text has taught us a lot. We know who has written to whom. We have a better understanding of their culture, way of living, thinking, and doing. We considered Jesus' work on the cross and how that possibly changes the meaning of what we read. All this would be in vain if we did not apply the following question: 'What can I do with this?' Or even better, how should I apply this in my own life?

This can sometimes lead to the painful conclusion that we need to change something in our lives. Act differently, behave differently, talk differently, or even think differently. Keep in mind that the desire to change our actions or behaviour alone is not enough. We also need to apply these principles in the correct way. All this we can find in the Word of God. We therefore not only pay attention to what it says, but also how it should be applied. We are shaped to become more like Christ and less like ourselves. After all, Jesus is Lord of our lives. Take a look at the meaning of the word *Christian*. We are His servants, and He determines our actions. Rest assured, in the application we will find transformation, becoming more and more Christ-like.

“  
**We therefore not only pay attention to what it says, but also how it should be applied.**”

So, what now? To become a Michelin chef, you need practice. Try to incorporate the tools you used in your daily Bible reading. At first, stick to the recipe; it prevents you from making massive mistakes. Along the way, you will get better at it. You find out which tools are more useful for different steps, and you can swap around some steps or even add your own flavor to the recipe.

There is, however, still one final step before we are finished. To check the quality of our meal, we let multiple Michelin chefs taste it. Use your Study Bible, Bible Commentaries, or other available resources to check the result you arrived at. If our interpretation matches the one in the Study Bible or Commentary, we are on the right path. If it differs from multiple resources, examine where your interpretation may have gone off track. If you need any help, or you want some recommendations, feel free to reach out!





## Wherever you go, I go

You now have enough tools in your kitchen to make a delicious meal yourself. Follow the recipe using all the tools you have received. So, get ready—it is time to start cooking! Read the book of *Ruth*, use all the tools available and follow the recipe. Make sure to write down all your notes—you will need them for the final task at hand.

**72.** Write an essay on a paragraph of your choice from the book of *Ruth*. Use the recipe as a guideline and keep the essay within 1300 words. You can use the illustration of chapter 1, 'The recipe', as an example for this essay. If you would like feedback on your work, feel free to send your essay to [info@czalive.com](mailto:info@czalive.com). We do kindly request that you not use any form of AI in the writing process, to keep your essay truly your own.

# Notes

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# Spreading The Living Fire

Congratulations! With this, you have finished the workbook: *Let's Cook!* We pray that it transformed your life, that the Bible came alive, and that it stirred up a hunger for more. For you to have finished this workbook means you either found an online copy or you received a physical one for free. You can partner with us to spread the living fire, so that He may transform many more into the image of Jesus Christ! *Let's Cook!* is written to disciple those who follow Jesus in His image. Work with us to spread the living fire in the Czech Republic and beyond, so that many more people will be transformed into the image of Jesus Christ!



To become a partner or give a one-time gift, visit [www.czalive.com](http://www.czalive.com) or scan the QR code.

Our work in the Czech Republic is completed when we may present everyone as mature in Christ. He is the only one worthy of our complete devotion. It must be Christ! No more, no less.

Ready to cook? Probably not the question you were expecting when it comes to Bible interpretation. But it is the start of a learning curve you will not regret. In this book, you will be taken on a cooking journey. Not the one that teaches you how to make your own bread, but the one that helps you receive your daily Bread. If you want to grow in your relationship with Jesus Christ, you need to read His word, meditate on it and apply it to your life. But where to start—and how to do this appropriately?

This workbook will guide you through the basics of Bible interpretation. Along the way, you will learn different tools that you can apply in your everyday reading. As a result, not only will your Bible reading change, but your life will radically transform into the image of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

Ready? Let's Cook!

***THIS IS NOT YOUR ORDINARY COOKBOOK***  
**CZ ALIVE.**