

# The Bible Toolkit

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

## Author's Purpose Tool

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

## Context Tool

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

## Structure Tool

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

## Linking Words Tool

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

## Parallels Tool

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

## Narrator's Comment Tool

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

## Vocabulary Tool

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

## Translations Tool

Read the passage in more than one translation (or read the New Testament Greek) just in case there is a nuance one version has missed.

## Tone and Feel Tool

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

## Repetition Tool

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

## Quotation/Allusion Tool

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

## Genre Tool

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

## Copycat Tool

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

## Bible Timeline Tool

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

## 'Who am I?' Tool

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

## 'So What?!' Tool

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

# Haggai

## A sermon preached on 29<sup>th</sup> August 520BC

<sup>1</sup> In the second year of Darius the king, in the sixth month, on the first day of the month, the word of the LORD came by the hand of Haggai the prophet to Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest: <sup>2</sup> "Thus says the LORD of hosts: These people say the time has not yet come to rebuild the house of the LORD." <sup>3</sup> Then the word of the LORD came by the hand of Haggai the prophet, <sup>4</sup> "Is it a time for you yourselves to dwell in your paneled houses, while this house lies in ruins?" <sup>5</sup> Now, therefore, thus says the LORD of hosts: Consider your ways. <sup>6</sup> You have sown much, and harvested little. You eat, but you never have enough; you drink, but you never have your fill. You clothe yourselves, but no one is warm. And he who earns wages does so to put them into a bag with holes.

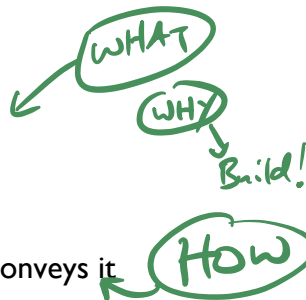
<sup>7</sup> "Thus says the LORD of hosts: Consider your ways." <sup>8</sup> Go up to the hills and bring wood and build the house, that I may take pleasure in it and that I may be glorified, says the LORD. <sup>9</sup> You looked for much, and behold, it came to little. And when you brought it home, I blew it away. Why? declares the

LORD of hosts, "because you have said, 'My house that lies in ruins, while each of you busies himself with his own house.' Therefore the heavens above you have withheld the dew, and the earth has withheld its produce. <sup>11</sup> And I have called for a drought on the land and the hills, on the grain, the new wine, the oil, on what the ground brings forth, on man and beast, and on all their labors."

<sup>12</sup> Then Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest, with all the remnant of the people, obeyed the voice of the LORD their God, and the words of Haggai the prophet, as the LORD their God had sent him. And the people feared the LORD. <sup>13</sup> Then Haggai, the messenger of the LORD, spoke to the people with the LORD's message, "I am with you, declares the LORD." <sup>14</sup> And the LORD stirred up the spirit of Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and the spirit of Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest, and the spirit of all the remnant of the people. And they came and worked on the house of the LORD of hosts, their God, <sup>15</sup> on the twenty-fourth day of the month, in the sixth month.

### The message of v1-11

Posh houses; no temple; blighted life; Consider  
Get priorities right and rebuild my house  
The LORD says, "Blessings withheld; rebuild temple"  
Reverse your fortunes by prioritising my house  
Prioritise God's house for pleasing glorious harvest

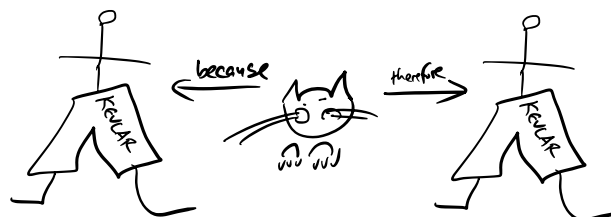


### The message of v1-11 as Haggai conveys it

#### STRUCTURE TOOL

#### REPETITION TOOL

#### LINKING WORDS TOOL



### The encouragement of vv12-15a

## BIBLE TIMELINE TOOL

What was the house of the LORD for them?

What is the house of the LORD for us?

- Jesus? (e.g. John 2:21)
- the body of a Christian? (e.g. 1 Corinthians 6:19)
- the church? (e.g. 1 Peter 2:5; Ephesians 2:19-22)
- God's honour more generally?

→ e.g. Matthew 6:33  
in the same context of anxiety about food & clothing

What was covenantal curse for them?

Is there covenantal curse for us?

- Galatians 3:13; Romans 8:1
- Hebrews 12:5-11; 1 Corinthians 11:30

DISCONTINUITY BETWEEN COVENANTS  
CONTINUITY BETWEEN COVENANTS  
we need both

## A sermon preached on 17<sup>th</sup> October 520BC

In the second year of Darius the king <sup>1</sup> in the seventh month, on the twenty-first day of the month, the word of the LORD came by the hand of Haggai the prophet: <sup>2</sup> "Speak now to Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest, and to all the remnant of the people, and say, <sup>3</sup> 'Who is left among you who saw this house in its former glory? How do you see it now? Is it not as nothing in your eyes?' <sup>4</sup> Yet now be strong, O Zerubbabel, declares the LORD. Be strong, O Joshua, son of Jehozadak, the high priest. Be strong, all you people of the land, declares the LORD. Work, for I am with you, declares

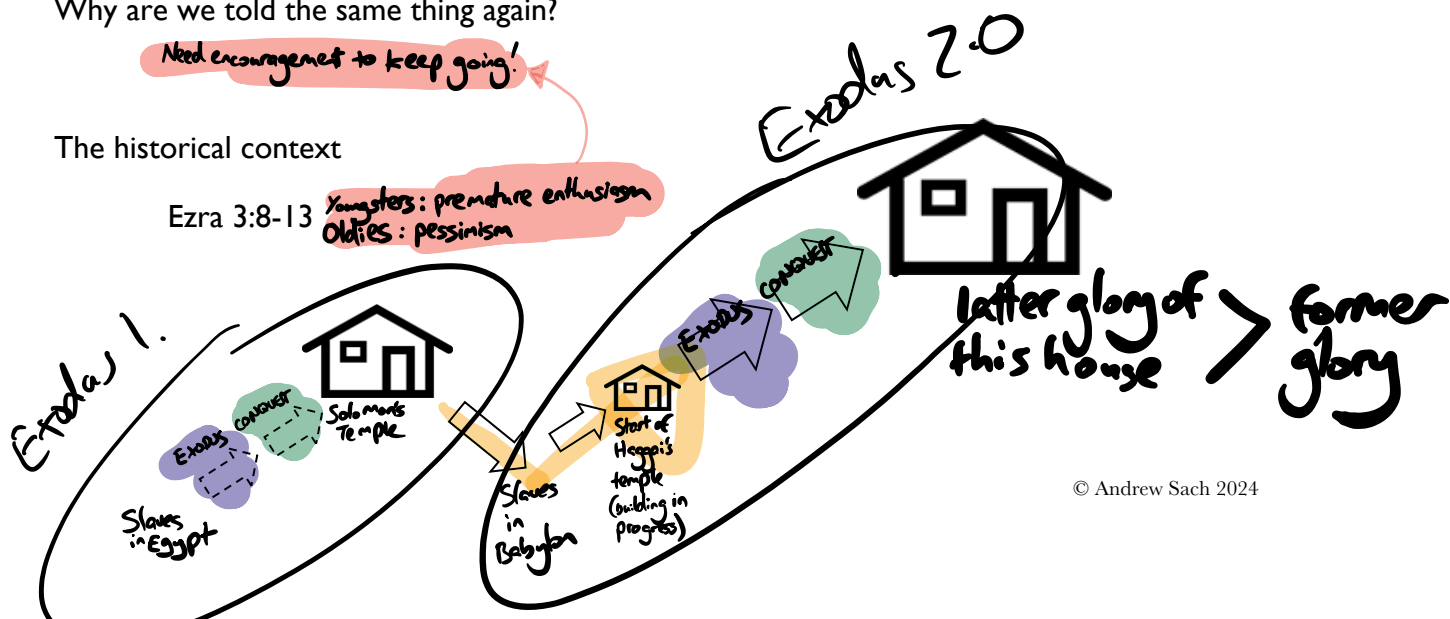
the LORD of hosts, <sup>5</sup> according to the covenant that I made with you when you came out of Egypt. My Spirit remains in your midst. Fear not. <sup>6</sup> For thus says the LORD of hosts: Yet once more, in a little while, I will shake the heavens and the earth and the sea and the dry land. <sup>7</sup> And I will shake all nations, so that the treasures of all nations shall come in, and I will fill this house with glory, says the LORD of hosts. <sup>8</sup> The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, declares the LORD of hosts. <sup>9</sup> The latter glory of this house shall be greater than the former, says the LORD of hosts. And in this place I will give peace, declares the LORD of hosts.'"

Why are we told the same thing again?

Need encouragement to keep going!

The historical context

Ezra 3:8-13  
Youngsters: premature enthusiasm  
Oldies: pessimism



## QUOTATION/ALLUSION TOOL

Joshua 1:9

① Be strong be courageous x3 ② The Lord is with you ③ I am not afraid

Exodus 19:18

According to the covenant I made with you when you came out of Egypt (cf Exodus 20)  
Treasure of nations (cf. plundering Egyptians of Ex 12)  
Glorious dwelling (cf glory in tabernacle Exodus 40; cf 1 Ki 8)  
Shaking (cf Exodus 19)

## BIBLE TIMELINE TOOL

Hebrews 12:25-29

## A sermon preached on 18<sup>th</sup> December 520BC

10 On the twenty-fourth day of the ninth month, in the second year of Darius, the word of the LORD came by Haggai the prophet, 11 "Thus says the LORD of hosts: Ask the priests about the law: 12 'If someone carries holy meat in the fold of his garment and touches with his fold bread or stew or wine or oil or any kind of food, does it become holy?'" The priests answered and said, "No." 13 Then Haggai said, "If someone who is unclean by contact with a dead body touches any of these, does it become unclean?" The priests answered and said, "It does become unclean." 14 Then Haggai answered and said, "So is it with this people, and with this nation before me, declares the LORD, and so with every work of their hands. And what they offer there is unclean. 15 Now then, consider from this

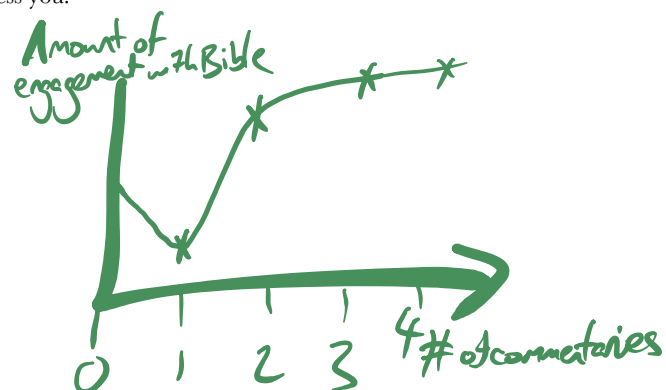
day onward. Before stone was placed upon stone in the temple of the LORD, 16 how did you fare? When one came to a heap of twenty measures, there were but ten. When one came to the wine vat to draw fifty measures, there were but twenty. 17 I struck you and all the products of your toil with blight and with mildew and with hail, yet you did not turn to me, declares the LORD. 18 Consider from this day onward, from the twenty-fourth day of the ninth month. Since the day that the foundation of the LORD's temple was laid, consider: 19 Is the seed yet in the barn? Indeed, the vine, the fig tree, the pomegranate, and the olive tree have yielded nothing. But from this day on I will bless you."

Uncleanness is infectious

2:14 – what they offer "there" (CONTEXT TOOL)

2:15-19a – "consider" again (CONTEXT TOOL)

The shock of grace (v19b)



Wolff

## BIBLE TIMELINE TOOL

Some truths are timeless: God is the same and human nature is the same

## QUOTATION/ALLUSION TOOL?

A contrasting echo - Mark 1:40-42

Jesus, like the altar,  
the place of sacrifice, is

MOST HOLY  
eg. Exodus 29:37

## A second sermon preached on 18<sup>th</sup> December 520BC

*Destruction of Kingdoms*

<sup>20</sup> The word of the LORD came a second time to Haggai on the twenty-fourth day of the month, <sup>21</sup> "Speak to Zerubbabel, governor of Judah, saying, I am about to shake the heavens and the earth, <sup>22</sup> and to overthrow the throne of kingdoms. I am about to destroy the strength of the kingdoms of the nations, and overthrow the chariots and their riders. And the horses and their riders shall go down, every one by the sword of his brother. <sup>23</sup> On that day,

declares the LORD of hosts, I will take you, O Zerubbabel my servant, the son of Shealtiel, declares the LORD, and make you like a signet ring, for I have chosen you, declares the LORD of hosts."

*Establishing King*

**STRUCTURE TOOL** – how would you subdivide the passage?

**REPETITION TOOL** – what is repeated and why? How does the repetition contribute to the tone.

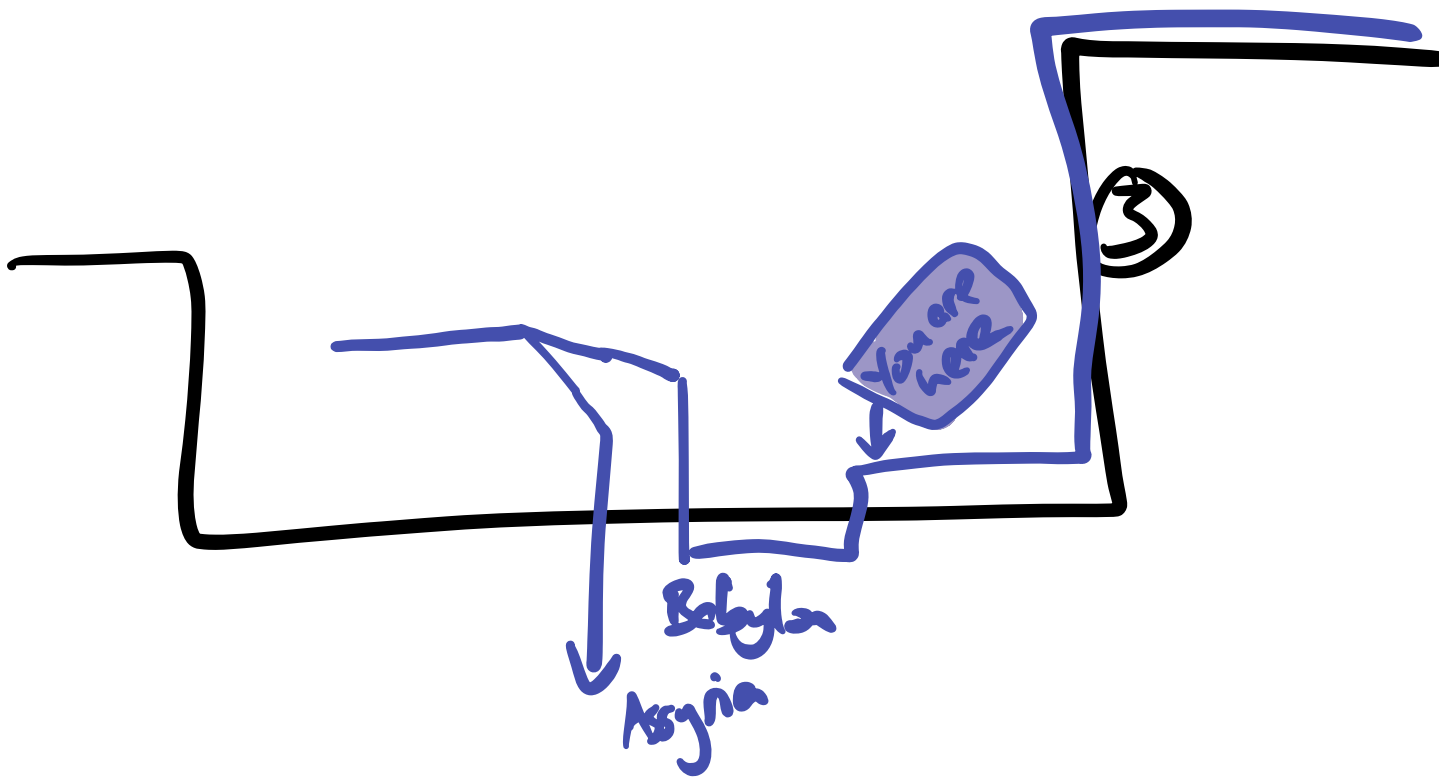
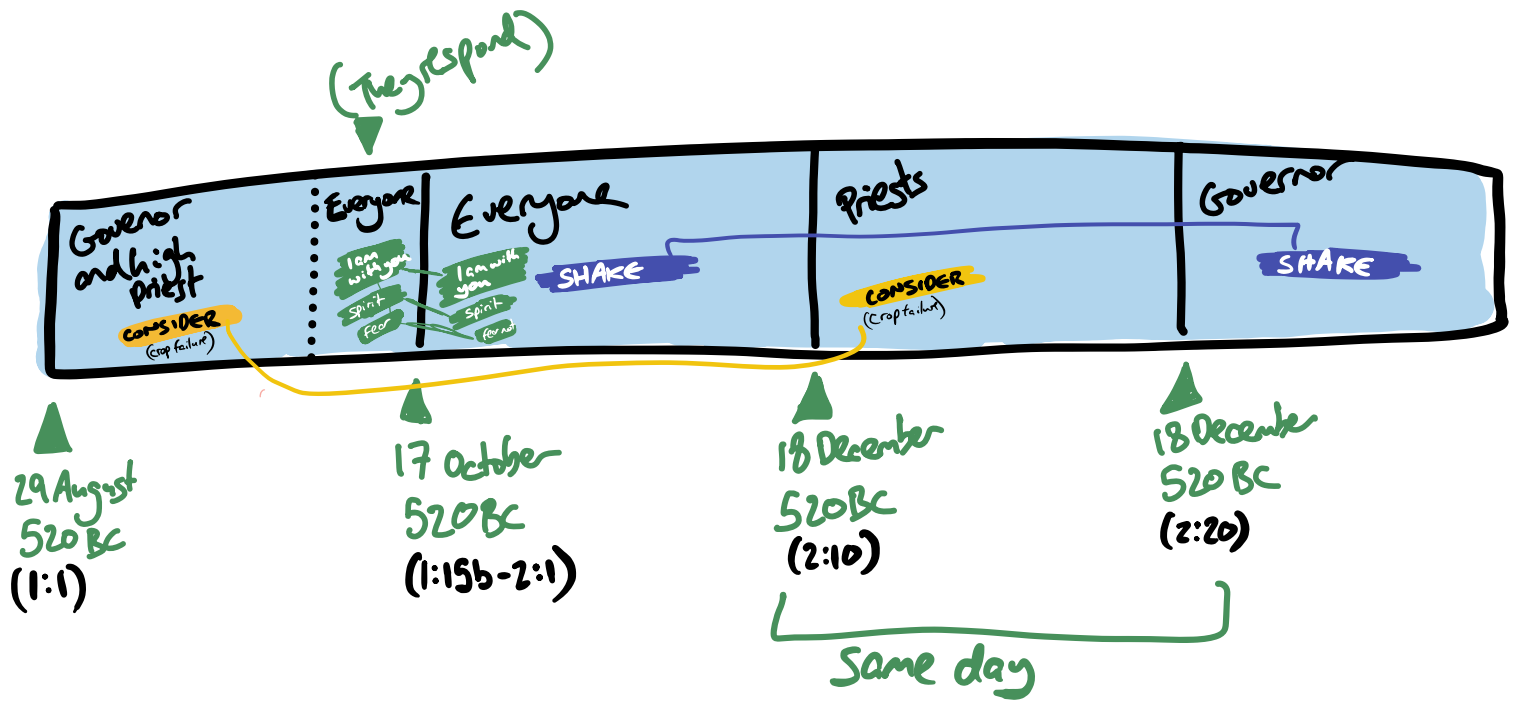
**QUOTATION/ALLUSION TOOL** – what's the significance of the allusion to Exodus 15?

**QUOTATION/ALLUSION TOOL** – what's the significance of the allusion to Jeremiah 22:24, from earlier in the bible story (this is a trickier one).

**'WHO AM I?' TOOL** – to whom is this final sermon addressed? How does that shape our application?

**BIBLE TIMELINE TOOL** – how does Matthew 1:1-17 (especially v12) help us understand the fulfilment of Haggai's words?

**'SO WHAT?!' TOOL** – how do Haggai's words strengthen you to keep going in the Lord's work?



Goodbye!