

Exercise 3. Tools: Using Biblical Research Tools (in-class)

Context

The purpose of this assignment is to acquaint you with the basic tools of biblical scholarship: the concordance, the biblical apparatus, the commentary, the Bible dictionary and the TDNT (Theological Dictionary of the New Testament). The exercise will focus on the figure of Elijah in Mark's Gospel. We will do this exercise together in class.

General Directions (everyone read)

Each member of the group will have access on Camino to each of the scripture tools. However, you'll only use two: the NAB concordance page on Elijah, and a related excerpt from ONE of the other four tools. This exercise has three steps. (1) You will first all use the concordance to identify the parts of the Bible where Elijah is mentioned. (2) You will then review your specific tool to learn (a) about Elijah and his relevance for the Gospel of Mark, and (b) about your tool itself. (3) Finally, you will share what you discovered about Elijah and your tool with your teammates.



Step 1. Locate Elijah in the Bible (concordance)

Look up Elijah in the concordance. Write down the chapter:verses where his name comes up in Mark's gospel:

_____	_____
_____	_____

Note generally where Elijah appears in the OT. Do NOT write down every reference! Just write down any general patterns (where do the references cluster, for example?)

_____	_____
_____	_____

Step 2. Learn about Elijah using your tool

Each person in the group takes one of the remaining tools:

Tool	Group Member	Directions	Description
Biblical Apparatus	_____	89	44
Commentary	_____	89	45
Bible Dictionary	_____	90	46
TDNT	_____	90	46

You'll find a description of what your tool is in the Scripture Tools section of the workbook (pp. 44-47), and the directions for your specific tool on the following pages. Skip to your specific directions, look for references to Elijah in your tool, and jot your notes on the space provided to share with your teammates.

Biblical Apparatus Person

In *The Catholic Study Bible*, there are two apparatuses:

- The first apparatus is the running commentary, which helps to provide background information. A star in the biblical text indicates when there's a relevant commentary note below.
- The second apparatus is a list of biblical allusions or quotes. An italic letter superscripted before the verse alerts you to a reference below.

Using the concordance citations about Elijah in the Gospel of Mark, check both apparatuses at those verses. What does the first apparatus—the running commentary—tell you about Elijah?

From the second apparatus, list the OT biblical references to Elijah here:

How would you describe the sorts of information found in this tool, and how to navigate it?

Commentary Person

There are two types of commentary: the single-volume commentary on the entire Bible, and multi-volume series that dedicate a volume to each book of the Bible. You are reading from a single-volume commentary on the entire Bible, so the discussion of any one book is shorter but for that reason gives a nice, quick overview of the key issues. After introductory information, a commentary works through the text verse-by-verse, so it's easy to navigate to the verses you need.

Using the concordance citations about Elijah in the Gospel of Mark, skim your commentary to reach the discussion of those passages. What does the commentary tell you about Mark's references to Elijah?

How would you describe the sorts of information found in this tool, and how to navigate it?

Bible Dictionary Person

Bible dictionaries allow you to do a deep dive into a person, place or topic in scripture. You have an excerpt on Elijah from a six-volume dictionary, *The Anchor Bible Dictionary (ABD)*. There are also single-volume dictionaries, which naturally cover fewer topics and at shorter length.

Skim the material about the original prophet Elijah in the *ABD*. Read more closely the section near the end of the article, "Elijah in Christian Tradition." What insights can you share with your team?

How would you describe the sorts of information found in this tool, and how to navigate it?

Theological Dictionary of the New Testament (TDNT) Person

First published in Germany in 1933, this dictionary provides in-depth articles on key New Testament theological terms and topics, with the Greek terms are arranged alphabetically. For an introductory course like ours, it wouldn't be the first tool you would use; but if you're examining a theological term or issue closely in your final paper, this resource can help you explore the meaning of the original text. Just be cautious: given when these volumes were originally written and the Nazi sympathies of the lead editor, Gerhard Kittel, several of the articles have anti-Semitic biases (see the article in our related readings file on Camino: Maurice Casey, "Some Anti-Semitic Assumptions in the Theological Dictionary of the New Testament," *Novum Testamentum* 41:3 (1999) 280-91).

Share the chief insights from the article you read. Since yours is a relatively long article, you'll have to read efficiently: 1) begin by flipping through the article and noting the major sections into which it is divided; 2) read the intro and final paragraphs of each major section; 3) read details from any one(s) of those sections that seems pivotal to you.

How would you describe the sorts of information found in this tool, and how to navigate it?

Step 3. Share your results with each other

Take notes on your teammates' tools and how to use them on pp. 89-90.