An Introduction to the Parashat HaShavuah
(Weekly Torah Portion)
Understanding the Torah From a Thematic Perspective

Behar
(On Mount [Sinai])

By Tony Robinson
Welcome to Mishpachah Beit Midrash, the Family House of Study. Each Shabbat we gather in our home and study the Scriptures, specifically the Torah. It’s a fun time of receiving revelation from the Ruach HaKodesh. Everyone joins in—adults and children—as we follow the Parashat HaShavuah schedule. We devote ourselves to studying the Torah because the Torah is the foundation for all of Scripture. Therefore, a thorough understanding of the Torah will help us more fully understand the rest of the Tanakh and the Brit Chadasha. Furthermore, as Yeshua stated Himself, the Torah teaches about Him. So we study the Torah in order to be drawn closer to Yeshua, the goal of the Torah.

As believers in the Messiah we have discovered the richness of the wisdom of the sages of Israel. These men, who devoted themselves to the study of the Torah, have left us a rich heritage. Part of that heritage is a unique method of learning and interpreting the Scriptures. It’s called thematic analysis. In thematic analysis we search for the underlying theme/topic of each passage of Scripture. By studying Scriptures related by a common theme, line upon line and precept upon precept, the Scriptures open up to us in a unique manner that is clearly inspired by the Ruach HaKodesh. Passages that seemed obscure begin to make sense, and numerous levels of wisdom and understanding unfold before us.

Thematic analysis of Scripture is based on the following premises. 1) Moses wrote the Torah as five separate books as the Ruach HaKodesh inspired him. 2) Since Adonai had him separate those words into five separate books, we surmise that each book has a unique message or theme. 3) Within each book, the words are written with two paragraph-like divisions interrupting the flow of the words. 4) Since Adonai commanded Moshe to separate the individual books into smaller paragraph-like sections or Parshiot, we surmise that each Parsha was written as a separate unit because each of those Parshiot is trying to convey a unique thought, theme, concept or understanding. Therefore, since Adonai inspired these divisions, we think they are VERY important. We use these God-breathed divisions as the basis of our thematic analysis of Scripture. Once you begin to interpret the Scriptures thematically, you will immediately SEE that Adonai wrote His words in a manner consistent with the intent that they be interpreted thematically.

Here is an example of what the Parsha divisions look like …
--- Parsha Stumah (plural, stumot) --- A paragraph-like break inspired by the Ruach HaKodesh, still preserved on kosher Torah Scrolls, where there are at least nine blank spaces between a word and the next word, all on the same line of text.

--- Parsha P'tuchah (plural, p'tuchot) --- A paragraph-like break inspired by the Ruach HaKodesh, still preserved on kosher Torah Scrolls, where there are blank spaces extending to the end of a line of text and the subsequent text does not begin until the next line. (Hebrew is read from right to left)
Objective—Instead of looking at one Parsha, we will examine the entire sidra (Torah portion) as one unit. We will learn how to 1) follow the themes in a sidra [Torah portion], 2) make thematic connections to other sidras 3) learn how to see patterns by relating passages with similar themes and 4) understand what is meant by a chiastic structure.

Chiastic Structures Within the Torah

1. Back in Parashat Mishpatim, we saw an example of a chiastic structure in the Torah. A chiastic structure is essentially a thematic method of organizing the narratives of the Torah. As I’ve stated before, many Bible critics think the Scriptures are simply a hodge-podge of stories hooked together; however, they couldn’t be further from the truth. The Scriptures (and the Torah in particular) are a highly organized and structured document. In fact, they are so well-organized, once you understand how to uncover their organizational principles you will definitely fall on your knees and give glory to Adonai, knowing that only an all-
knowing, all-powerful Elohim (God) could have developed such highly-structured strategies. In this lesson, we will uncover another chiastic structure woven through the narratives found in the books of Exodus and Leviticus.

A. If you are new to Mishpacha Beit Midrash or if you still aren’t convinced that thematic analysis is THE primary method/paradigm we should be using to understand and interpret the Scriptures, then this week's lesson will surely be useful in convincing you. Adonai intended for us to study the Scriptures thematically. This will become increasingly evident to you because the themes will naturally lead you to profound truths and patterns found in the Torah that would otherwise remain hidden!

B. This week's lesson is inspired from a study by Rav Menachem Liehtag, a faculty member at Har Etzion Yeshiva, a military Yeshiva (Hesder) in Eretz Yisrael (the land of Israel), and founder of the Tanach Study Center website.

The "Problems" With the Sidra

I. Read Leviticus 25:1. What seems "strange" about this verse? If you remember, most of the instructions in the last half of the book of Exodus (beginning in Exodus 19) were given "from Mount Sinai." So why does the Torah wait until now to present these instructions in this sidra? This is a question many Jewish commentators have entertained. Notice this is the first clue to help us realize that instructions in this sidra are thematically related to instructions we've already seen in the book of Exodus. But hold on, there's more!

A. Read Leviticus 26:1-2. Don't these verses seem out of place? Most of Leviticus 25 pertains to the instructions of Shemittah (the seven-year Sabbath rest for the land) and the Yovel (fifty-year Jubilee celebration). Then, in Leviticus 26:1-2, we have these seemingly unrelated instructions.

B. A similar "strange" insertion occurred in last week's study. I didn't draw your attention to it at the time. Leviticus 21-22 gave instructions for holiness/sanctification among the priests. Leviticus 23 was the chapter detailing the sanctification of time—the Mo'edim. Then, seemingly out of context, Leviticus 24:1-4 mentions the lighting of the Menorah! Where have we seen a verse similar to this passage? Notice, it's almost an exact repeat! Furthermore, instructions for the Showbread were suddenly mentioned in Leviticus 24:5-9. This command was also given in Exodus 25:30.

C. Last week we saw how the story of the blasphemer (Leviticus 24:10-23) was seemingly out of context. However, through thematic, analysis we determined that it was thematically related to desecration of the Name of Adonai, YHVH. We also noted that the passage was very closely related to Exodus 21:12, 23-35 in Parashat Mishpatim. This passage also contained instructions concerning the relationships between men.

D. In this week's sidra, the Torah presents us the instructions of Shemittah. Do you remember where these instructions were first given? Now we must ask why. Why has the Torah presented the instructions of Shemittah twice? We will examine this question in depth later.

E. Now look at Leviticus 26:1-2. Where have we seen these commandments before?

II. Have you noticed how many commandments in the last two sidras were first mentioned in the book of Exodus? Let's see if we can find any other parallels.

A. Leviticus 26:3-46 describes blessing and curses depending on whether or not Am Yisrael (the people of Israel) obey or disobey Adonai's instructions. However, this is
thematically related to Exodus 19:5-6 where Adonai makes certain promises based on whether or not Am Yisrael obey his commandments!

B. Leviticus 23 detailed the instructions for the Mo'edim. Do you remember the strong emphasis this chapter placed on the Shabbat? Not only did the Torah mention a day of rest with all of the Mo'edim, it specifically mentioned Shabbat at the beginning of Leviticus 23. Therefore, we can thematically relate all of Leviticus 23 to the Sabbath—Leviticus 23 is thematically linked to Exodus 31:12-17 and 35:2-3.

C. Leviticus 22:17-33 concerns the types of animals that may be offered on the altar. What other section in Leviticus is thematically related to this passage?13 That's right!

D. Read Leviticus 21-22:16, which details instructions for the priests. What phrase is repeated many times concerning the priests and the offerings?14 Therefore, we see that this section of the Torah is primarily concerned with ensuring that the priests maintain the proper holiness, thus enabling them to properly handle the sacrifices. What other passage in Leviticus is thematically related to the priests handling the sacrifices?15 That's right. Remember, Parashat Vayikra (Leviticus 1-5) gave instructions concerning which offerings an Israelite could make, whereas Parashat Tzav (Leviticus 6-7) detailed HOW the priests were to handle the offerings (the food of their God).

III. So what have we done? We've seen that most of the commandments have been repeated two times beginning in Parashat Yitro (Exodus 18) until the end of Leviticus chapter 26! Now this may not sound exciting, but wait until we order the topics. Here are the rules. First, we will begin by listing the theme of each section of Scripture beginning in Leviticus 26 working backwards! Second, we will give each theme a letter designation.

A. Blessing and Curse for Obedience or Disobedience—Leviticus 26:3-35.
D. The Blasphemer (Instructions between man and his fellow man)—Leviticus 24:10-23.
F. The Mo'edim—Leviticus 23.
G. Animals Fit to Offer—Leviticus 22.
H. Holiness Among the Priests—Leviticus 21.

In the previous section we’ve listed the passages that were thematically related to the eight topics listed above. Now, let's put all of this information in a table. The right column in the table will list the information above (points A-H). The left column will list the Torah portions (with Scripture references) of the points in A-H.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Torah Portion of Points A-H</th>
<th>Themes From Points A-H</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bechukkotai—Lev. 26-27:34</td>
<td>Blessing and Curse for Obedience or Disobedience—Leviticus 26:3-35.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Notice the direction of the flow of topics. We are working our way backwards through the sidras! Next, let's make a similar chart; however, let's list the ordering of the passages thematically linked to points A-H (by their Parashat HaShavuah name and references).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes From Points A-H and Scripture References to the Passages Thematically related to the Themes of A-H</th>
<th>Torah Portions of Thematic Connections to Points A-H</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Animals Fit to Offer—Leviticus 1-5.</td>
<td>Vayikra—Leviticus 1:1-5:26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holiness Among the Priests—Leviticus 6-8.</td>
<td>Tzav—Leviticus 6:1-8:36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Compare the second column of this table with the actual order of the sidras. Do you see a pattern? Okay, here's the punch line. The Scriptures from Exodus 19 to Leviticus 27 form what's called a chiastic structure. If we label each theme and its corresponding thematic connection, you will see the structure. But before we do that, notice that Parashat Sh'mini through K'doshim seem to be missing. Well, they aren't. Parashat Sh'mini through Metzora are thematically related to the great event that occurred in those chapters—the resting of the Shekhinah on the Mishkan and the necessity of holiness to be able to enter the Mishkan. Usually, a chiastic structure points to a middle "axis". This middle "axis" is the most important point to which the chiastic structure points. Let's have a look.

A) Blessing and Curse—Bechukkotai
B) First Three of Ten Commandments—Behar
C) Shemittah and Yovel—Behar
D) Blasphemer/Instructions between Man and His Fellow Man—Emor
E) The Menorah and Showbread—Emor
F) The Mo'edim/Shabbat—Emor
G) Animals Fit to Offer—Emor
H) Holiness Among the Priests—Emor

I) The Shekhinah and Requirements of Holiness

J) Holiness Among the Priests—Tzav
G) Animals Fit to Offer—Vayikra
F) The Mo'edim/Shabbat—Ki Tissa/Vayakhel
E) The Menorah and Showbread—Terumah and Tetzaveh
D) Blasphemer/Instructions between Man and His Fellow Man—Mishpatim
IV. I'd like to make the following observations concerning this chiastic structure.
   A. As you can see, this structure is highly developed.
   B. This highly developed structure is clearly not an accident.
   C. The central axis concerns the presence of the Shekhinah or presence/glory of Adonai and
   the requirements of Holiness upon all who would approach! Remember, in past lessons
   I've emphasized how Adonai was in the process of revealing Himself as YHVH. This
   process began in Exodus 3 when Moses approached the burning bush and has continued
to this point. One of the main aspects of Adonai's character that He wants to reveal to us,
through His Name YHVH, is His Holiness. This chiastic structure is yet one more proof
of this assertion. Our Elohim (God) is a Holy, Holy God. This chiastic structure teaches
us this by pointing us to the central axis!
   D. This lesson is a good example of why, as non-Jewish believers in the God of Abraham,
   Isaac and Jacob, owe respect and honor to Jewish sages of Israel. They have given us a
great gift in thematic analysis. I hope that many more will come to appreciate this
Scripture-study paradigm!
   E. Last but not least, do you see how this pattern would be totally missed apart from
   thematic analysis? I hope so. I presented this information from Rav Liebtag's lesson to
show you how awesome is our Elohim. Only He could inspire His glory in this manner.

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Searching the Parshiot

**Objective**—Learn how to 1) uncover the theme of a passage, 2) relate it to other passages and 3)
gain new insight on how to interpret the original passage based on its thematic connection to
those other passages.

**Why Present Information Twice?**

I. In the previous section we saw that the double presentation of certain thematic subjects
enabled us to uncover a chiastic structure. This chiastic structure pointed to a central axis,
which was the central message. In other words, the chiastic structure teaches us the
following:
   A. Exodus 19 through Leviticus 27 are to be viewed as one complete unit!
   B. The central message of this unit is that Adonai is holy and therefore man must maintain a
certain level of holiness in order to draw near to Him!

   Let us now take a look at another *double play.*

II. Read **Leviticus 25.** What are some of the main topics in the passage? Please remember,
these are just my answers. Yours may be just as valid. Do not think that your answers need
to be the same as mine. We're looking for the general theme or topic.
A. Can you think of another section of Scripture that is thematically related to Leviticus 25?  

B. How many ways are these passages thematically related?  

III. Whenever you see two passages that are very similar, you should automatically remember the following: 1) The passages are thematically related for a reason, and 2) each passage has a unique teaching associated with it.  

A. Read **Leviticus 25:1-5**. What seems to be the reason WHY Am Yisrael should observe the instructions of Shemittah?  

Now read **Exodus 23:10-11**. What seems to be the reason WHY Am Yisrael should observe the instructions of Shemittah?  

Is there any mention of the rationale concerning the land needing rest? This is a classic example of two passages, thematically connected, that teach a different lesson. How is Exodus 23:12, which deals with Shabbat, thematically linked to Exodus 23:10-11? In summary, we see that the Shemittah is listed within the context of social justice for one’s fellow man, especially the poor. This aspect (regard for the poor) is completely lacking in the passage in Parashat Behar! In fact, one would think the only reason for observation of Shabbat and Shemittah was to benefit the poor and animals were it not for other passages such as Leviticus 25:1-5.  

B. Read **Leviticus 25:8-13**. How is this passage about the Yovel thematically related to Leviticus 25:1-7, concerning the Shemittah?  

So, we see that Yovel and Shemittah are thematically connected because **both involve giving rest to the land**. According to Leviticus 25:23-28, what important event, connected with the land, occurs during the Yovel?  

Why must the land revert to its original owners each Yovel and not remain the property of whomever bought it before the Yovel?  

According to Leviticus 25:39-43, what other event happens in the Yovel?  

Now we see a connection between the land and a Hebrew slave since both may be redeemed at the Yovel. We've seen that the land can be redeemed and returned to its original owners because the land belongs to Adonai. What is the basis for redemption of a Hebrew slave?  

Putting these facts together, we see that land and Hebrew slaves can be redeemed at the Yovel because they both belong to Adonai.  

C. In Exodus, the reason for the Shemittah seemed to be for the benefit of the less fortunate. Thematically, what seems to be the reason for the Shemittah in Leviticus 25? Use the thematic information we've uncovered so far to answer the question. Your answer?  

As you can see, the reason for Shemittah in Leviticus 25 is different than the reason given in Exodus 23! What seems to be the focus for the reason for Shemittah in Leviticus 25?  

IV. Putting it All Together—Although the reason for celebrating Shemittah given in Exodus 23 seems to be focused on man (serving the poor), the reason for celebrating Shemittah given in Leviticus 25 seems to be focused on Adonai (acknowledging his authority over and ownership of the land)! In Exodus, the command for Shemittah was sandwiched between numerous commands regulating the relationships between man and his fellow man, whereas the same command in Leviticus 25 was sandwiched between numerous commands regulating the relationship between Adonai and mankind. This is not uncommon in the Torah. One command may have numerous reasons **WHY** we should obey it. The important point here is this. Sometimes the Torah will repeat a command. When you see this phenomenon, don't just think, "oh I've seen this before...there's nothing new here." The thematic context within which the command appears will require you to see a new aspect of the command.
Making the Connection Between the Parashat HaShavuah and the Haftarah

Objective—Learn how to relate Scriptures thematically, thereby learning how to think Hebraically. Become rooted in the importance of thematic analysis by seeing it in action as you relate the Torah portion to the Haftarah portion.

The Haftarah reading is found in Jeremiah 32:6-27.

I. The Context of the Haftarah Reading—This prophecy was given to Jeremiah during the siege on Jerusalem by the Babylonians. Furthermore, Jeremiah was in prison.

A. Read Jeremiah 32:6-7. How is this passage thematically related to the Torah portion?

B. Read Jeremiah 32:8-12. What phrase is repeated a few times in this passage concerning the transaction? It seems that Jeremiah was very careful to ensure that many witnesses saw the transaction. Can you think of another land transaction from the book of Genesis that is thematically related to this one through the phrase "in the/their eyes"? Note how many times the Torah makes reference to the fact that Abraham's transactions were "in the hearing/view of the children of Chet/the council." In both of these passages, Adonai wanted to emphasize there were many witnesses to these land sales.

C. Jeremiah was then commanded to put the deeds into an earthenware vessel so that they would last many days. I'm sure you understand what many days means in Adonai's eyes. He probably meant for hundreds and hundreds of years.

D. Read Jeremiah 32:16-27. How is Jeremiah 32:22 related to the Torah portion? Why is Jeremiah questioning Adonai about buying the land?

E. This week's Haftarah passage is definitely relevant to the discussion concerning events in the Middle East today. As you know, world pressure is mounting on Israel to allow formation of a "Palestinian" state within Eretz Yisrael. Did you see the headlines a when Secretary of State Colin Powell was quoted as saying "...let's get on with it..." concerning the Palestinian statehood mantra? Knowing that Israel may allow the "Palestinians" to form a state within Eretz Yisrael, how is the Haftarah reading thematically related and relevant to today's events? Jeremiah's purchase of land was sealed in a container to last many days. I will not be surprised when, not if, this document surfaces one day. Adonai had Jeremiah purchase the field at a significant moment. When? When the land was about to be conquered by a foreign enemy and when Am Yisrael was going into exile. Why did He time the transaction thus? To demonstrate to us that even though Am Yisrael may go into exile, the Land Still Belongs to Am Yisrael!!! No matter how many years go by, Am Yisrael own the land of Israel because, in fact, it belongs to the creator of the universe. Therefore, no one else has a right to the land, whether "Palestinians" or anyone else, except Am Yisrael!
Messiah in the Parsha

Objective—Learn how the Torah teaches about the life and ministry of Yeshua HaMashiach. Yeshua said that Moses wrote about Him\(^{38}\). Since the Torah never even mentions the word Messiah, this section will help you see the Messiah in the Torah. This is primarily done using thematic analysis and midrash.

Shemittah, Shabbat and Yeshua's Teachings

I. I am convinced that the New Covenant Scriptures are simply a commentary on the Tanakh. Contrary to the conventional wisdom found within Christianity, the Torah (Law) was not done away with. People think it was abolished for various reasons, but the main two reasons are because 1) they don’t know what the Torah actually says since they don’t seriously study it [after all, it was done away with when Yeshua died—they say], and 2) they don’t understand how to study the Scriptures thematically. Thematic analysis is a must, otherwise you will think that the New Covenant Scriptures are different from the Torah. I’d like to continue to show you how the commandments in the Torah are actually the basis/foundation for all of the teachings in the New Covenant Scriptures concerning the Kingdom of God.

II. Shemittah and Giving to the Poor—Read Luke 6:38. Can you think of how this week’s sidra could have been the basis for this statement?

A. We said earlier that Shemittah was presented in Leviticus 25 and Exodus 23. In Exodus 23 the reason for allowing the land to rest was so that the poor (and animals) could eat from the crops. How is this fact thematically related to giving?\(^{39}\)

B. Now read Leviticus 25:19-22. What did Adonai promise (concerning the harvests) if Shemittah was obeyed?\(^{40}\) Therefore, we see a direct correlation with Yeshua's words. Give (obey Shemittah by allowing the poor to harvest in your fields) and it will be given to you, good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over (because of Adonai's blessing, you will eat the sixth year's harvest in the ninth year)!

C. How does the context of Luke 6:38 thematically support our connection of Yeshua's words in that passage with the instructions of Shemittah?\(^{41}\)

III. As you read the Torah, anytime you see 1) pictures of resurrection, 2) pictures of renewed life as a result of deliverance from impending death and 3) pictures of victory and renewed life as a result of death, we know the Torah is about to give us a teaching concerning the Messiah. I call these themes of The Resurrection and the Life, and they are especially strengthened when coupled in some manner with the number three. Taken together, the theme of The Resurrection and the Life and the number three constitute The Sign of the Messiah!

A. The first LIVING things (plants, grass, etc.) were created on day THREE! This is not strictly life from the dead; however, the principle of life coming from a state where there is no life is clear.

B. The Torah's picture of the RESURRECTION of the Messiah is found in the Holy Days. The Holy Day that is a shadow of Yeshua's RESURRECTION is the THIRD Holy Day, the Day of the Omer Wave Offering (Leviticus 23)! The offering of the barley sheaves on the day after the first Day of Unleavened Bread (the day after the Shabbat) is a prophetic picture of the resurrection of the Messiah.
C. Jonah, who was in the belly of a great fish, should have been *dead*. But on the *THIRD* day he came forth *ALIVE*! Truly, *death* was swallowed in victory!

D. The Akeida (binding of Isaac) found in Genesis 22—Abraham was supposed to offer Isaac as an olah (whole burnt offering). Although Adonai prevented him from actually sacrificing Isaac on the *THIRD* day, the manner in which the Torah relates the story hints that Isaac *died* and was *RESURRECTED*. That's why Hebrews 11:17-19 records that Abraham *received Isaac from the dead through RESURRECTION* figuratively!

Do you see the sign of the Messiah in *Leviticus 25:19-22*? That's right. The Messiah is the one who is associated with sustaining us with life in the face of circumstances that could produce death. The number three strengthens the connection! If you are new to MBM and do not understand the Sign of the Messiah, please read the study on *Parashat Metzora*.

IV. Have you noticed how many miracles Yeshua performed on the Shabbat? As a matter of fact, when you consider how many times the New Covenant Scriptures make mention of the Shabbat when Yeshua healed, one could easily surmise that He purposefully performed most of His miracles on the Shabbat! Why would this be the case?

A. When Adonai redeemed His people at the Red Sea, he told them to sit back and rest (Shabbat), while they watch His salvation, because he’s going to do it all! So likewise, we are to cease from our own works and rest in the finished work of the Messiah! He secured salvation for us. There was nothing we could do to save ourselves. Yeshua did it all, with an outstretched arm on the execution stake. The ultimate fulfillment of the Shabbat occurs when we rest in the finished work of the Messiah!

B. We've seen in previous studies that the Torah uses the sign of resurrection and deliverance from death unto life to signal to us that we are about to get a taste of the person and work of the Messiah. The Messiah has come to bring *LIFE*! Read *Shemot 15:22 - 15:26*—Where were the children of Israel traveling for three days? Of what is the wilderness a picture? What is water a picture of? Relate these themes to the fact that Moses threw a tree into the waters of Marah to make them drinkable. This story teaches the theme of life from death. The desert is a place of death. The waters (life) at Marah were bitter and couldn't be drunk (death). But, after traveling three days in a place of death, and after arriving at dead waters, the waters are made alive by casting a tree into them! Sounds like a…

**Tree of Life!**

Later in Exodus, the children of Israel complain because they don't have any food. But Adonai provides manna from heaven. This event also has Messianic significance. See *John 6:32, 34 and 49-51* and *1 Corinthians 10:3*. As we saw earlier, the Torah teaches that Shabbat is a rest we enter through the work of the Messiah. We rest in His finished work. What Messianic picture is the Torah trying to convey by having Adonai provide bread and water (LIFE) to the children of Israel? Therefore, we conclude that the provision of bread and water is a *work of the Messiah*. By providing daily bread for the Israelites six days out of the week and a double portion on the sixth day, which commandment was Adonai trying to teach Israel? As you can see, the Torah teaches there is a strong correlation between the Sabbath and LIFE! This then, is another teaching that thematically links the work of the Messiah to Shabbat! It is the work of the
Messiah to give us the bread and water of life. It is our responsibility to rest in His finished work. We must rest from our labors and allow Him to complete the good work He has begun. So likewise, Yeshua brought healing (LIFE) to many on the Shabbat! By healing on the Shabbat He was stating that He was the Messiah!

V. Read Matthew 22:39. How is the double presentation of the instructions for Shemittah thematically related to Yeshua's statements? As you can see, by analyzing the stories of the Torah thematically, many rich teachings open up to us.

VI. It has been said that Yeshua arrived fifty generations from Noah’s grandson! What is the thematic significance of the number fifty? Remember, redemption from slavery and redemption of land were major events that occurred during the Yovel. In other words, the Yovel was a time of freedom and redemption!

A. Read Luke 4:16-21. What phrase in this passage is most clearly related to the Yovel? We know that physical people (Israelites) were set free from slavery at the Yovel. Furthermore, we know that Yeshua came to deliver us from the bondage of slavery to sin! Tie everything in section IV together thematically to show how the Yovel is actually a teaching concerning the work of the Messiah!

B. Although the Torah speaks of physical redemption of physical slaves, we can now see that the deeper meaning of the Yovel is that the Messiah would come to redeem us spiritually from sin and the effects of sin—sickness!

VII. Here’s one for you to think about. We know that barley is a Messianic symbol—see Parashat Emor. Now we know that the Yovel has Messianic significance. Read the story of Ruth. Note how many times the Scriptures make mention of the barley harvest in Ruth 2-3. Also note how many times the Scriptures make mention of the Boaz as the kinsman (redeemer) in Ruth 1-4. These references to barley and the kinsman redeemer tell us that the story of the book of Ruth is Messianic in significance. Do you know how? Hint, in Ruth 1:16-17, Ruth (a Gentile), says to Naomi (an Israelite):

"Entreat me not to leave you, Or to turn back from following after you; For wherever you go, I will go; And wherever you lodge, I will lodge; Your people shall be my people, And your God, my God. Where you die, I will die, And there will I be buried. The LORD do so to me, and more also, If anything but death parts you and me (Ruth 1:16-17)."

Shemittah/Yovel and the Millennium/Eternal State

I. Read II Peter 3:8. This passage establishes a Sod (hidden) level interpretive tool for us. Let us follow it through. Let's assume that 1,000 years is equivalent to one day and apply that reasoning to the instructions of Shemittah. In this analogy, I will account for the one day/1,000 year analogy and I will reword the instructions of Shemittah according to the generic theme presented. From Leviticus 25 we note the following:

A. 6,000 years you shall sow your field…
B. But in the 7,000th year there shall be a Shabbat rest for the land…
C. And the Shabbat produce of the 7,000th year shall be for the benefit of man and beast…

II. There have been approximately 6,000 years of human history since Adam and Chava (Eve). What period of time will commence when Messiah Yeshua returns? Let's put on our thematic analysis thinking caps and note the following connections between human history and the instructions of Shemittah.

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A. For six years the Israelites were allowed to work the fields in Eretz Yisrael as they saw fit. For 6,000 years man has "worked the fields" of the entire earth as he has seen fit.

B. In the seventh year, the Israelites and animals were to benefit from the Shemittah rest of the land. During the millennium, mankind and animals will benefit from the rule and reign of Messiah Yeshua, the Lord of the Sabbath. This is the thrust of Paul's message in Romans 8:18-24, which states that the renewing of the earth will occur at the same time as the resurrection, when we receive our glorified bodies. At this time (the 7,000th year), creation will be freed from the bondage of corruption, which entered when Adam and Chava sinned.

Therefore, it seems that the instructions for Shemittah actually contain a Messianic message of the coming 1,000-year millennial kingdom. Just as Shemittah allowed the Israelites to work the land for six years, to be followed by a year-long Sabbath rest, so likewise, Adonai has allowed man to do his own thing for the past 6,000 years, which will be followed by a 1,000-year millennial Shabbat!

III. The Yovel occurred after the seventh period of seven years. In other words, at some point there was a Shemittah cycle of seven years followed by an eighth year, which was the Yovel. So likewise, there are seven days of history (7,000 years) followed by an eighth day (the 8,000th year), which will begin eternity (after the millennium). The Yovel was marked by a return of the land to Am Yisrael and the redemption of all who had been brought into bondage. So likewise, when the eternal state begins on "the eighth day," Yeshua will return all things to the Father and we will be freed from ALL forms of bondage as we enter eternal union with Adonai.

IV. Final Note—These are just my musings of the Scripture. I am not dogmatic about many things. You may have differing opinions concerning the interpretation of the Torah. I'm welcome to differing opinions and I certainly don't think I've arrived. What I present in these Torah teachings reflects my current understanding of the Torah. As I'm sure you are well aware, we all continue to grow; however, I still try to limit my comments to things I'm pretty sure will stand the test of time. May Father YHVH continue to bless your Torah study!

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Fun For the Whole Family!

Okay, time to show what you’ve learned. Word searches and crossword puzzles are available for you to test your understanding. The word search for adults (and older children) consists of 20-30 words taken from this week’s sidra (portion). Some of the words may be common Hebrew words or English phrases. The crossword puzzle for adults (and older children) may also contain common Hebrew words or English phrases. There is also a word search for the little guys! And of course, the answer key is provided for the crossword puzzle.

Adult and children’s crossword puzzles and word searches are available on Restoration of Torah’s website: www.restorationoftorah.org. Click on the link entitled, The Weekly Torah Portion Crossword Puzzles and Word Searches.
Shabbat Shalom!

1 Shabbat is Hebrew for Sabbath.

2 In its most limited form, the Torah comprises the first five books of Moses.

3 Holy Spirit.

4 The Parashat HaShavuah, or weekly Parashat, are the weekly readings from the Torah. Each week, beginning on the Shabbat, we read specific selections from the Torah, such that we complete the entire Torah each year.

5 Tanakh is the entirety of what is commonly called the Old Testament. It is a Hebrew acronym taken from the three major divisions of the Tanakh: the Torah, Prophets (Neviim) and Writings (Khetuvim).

6 Brit Chadasha is commonly known as the New Testament Scriptures.

7 This paragraph-like division is called a Parsha (Parshiot, plural).


9 It states that the following instructions were given to Moses on Mount Sinai. This is strange, because most of the instructions given in Leviticus were spoken from the Mishkan.


11 Exodus 23:10-11.


13 Leviticus 1-5, which details the types of offerings that are acceptable to Adonai.

14 Statements containing the text, "the food of your God."

15 Parashat Tzav.

16 Yes. The topics in A-H are now listed chronologically according to the Parashat HaShavuah schedule!

17 Parashat Sh'mini - K'doshim.

18 1) The Shemittah or Sabbatical year, 2) the Yovel or Jubilee year, 3) redemption of the land, 4) prevention of poverty, and 5) Israelite slaves.

19 Yes, Exodus 23:9-18!

20 1) The Shemittah, 2) admonitions to obey Adonai's instructions, 3) a reference to their stay in Egypt as slaves, 4) Shabbat and 5) a prohibition against idolatry.

21 The reason is so that the land will be able to rest.
So that the poor and animals may get enough to eat.

No.

Both emphasize that the rest on the seventh day and in the seventh year is for the benefit of one’s fellow man who may be less fortunate than oneself (as well as the animals who work the fields).

Shemittah and Yovel are related because each involves a rest for the land—the seventh year versus the fiftieth year!

The land may be redeemed.

Because the land belongs to Adonai. He owns it.

A slave of Hebrew origins may be redeemed.

According to Leviticus 25:42-43, a Hebrew slave cannot remain a slave forever because he belongs to Adonai. He's Adonai's servant. In other words, Adonai owns him.

Just as Adonai can limit the slavery of a Hebrew slave since he is under His ownership, the reason for observance of the Shemittah in Leviticus 25 is because Adonai owns the land! It's His land, therefore, He has the final say on how often it can be plowed and who can own it.

The focus is on celebrating Shemittah because of our relationship with Adonai. He owns the land; therefore, Shemittah is seen as an acknowledgement of His ownership of the land and His authority.

Adonai wants Jeremiah to redeem land that belongs to one of his relatives. This is thematically related to the sidra, because every fifty years land could be redeemed by the original owners or their relatives.

"In the/their eyes."

Genesis 23, when Abraham buys the field of Machpelah to bury Sarah.

The Torah portion lists numerous commands Am Yisrael must keep BECAUSE Adonai owns the land!

He knows that the Babylonians are about to take the land; therefore, he wants to know what use there will be in buying land that is about to be given to another nation.

The fact is that Adonai owns Eretz Yisrael. No one has a right to sell any portion of it to heathens!

Yeshua said in John 5:46 that Moses spoke about him. Psalm 40:6-8, speaking of the Messiah said that the book is written about Him. Paul said that all of the feasts were prophetic shadows of Messiah Yeshua.

When you allowed your field to rest according to Shemittah, the poor would come and eat from your fields. This is giving! Something that is yours is now given to someone else.

Adonai answered the hypothetical question one would ask if they allowed the land to rest in the seventh year—"What will we eat in the seventh year?" He said if Am Yisrael would allow the land to rest, His blessing would be so great that they would still be eating the produce of the sixth year IN THE NINTH YEAR!

The context of Luke 6:38 pertains to the relationships between man and his fellow man! This is the exact context within which the instructions of Shemittah are presented in Exodus 23!
Yes. If you don't plant in the sixth year, you won't be able to plant until the eighth year. Then you won't be able to harvest until the ninth year! Normally, after THREE years without a significant harvest you may face starvation or death. But His blessing will ensure you have LIFE in those THREE years.

They traveled in a wilderness.

It is a picture of barrenness and death. Very few things can live in the wilderness because there's so little water. The wilderness is filled with scorpions and vipers. It is a place of death.

Water is a picture of life. Without water, nothing can live.

All ate the same spiritual food, and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ.

He is trying to teach them that the Messiah is the source of the bread and water of life.

He was trying to teach them about the Shabbat.

The presentation of Shemittah in Leviticus 25 focused on our duty to Adonai as the owner of the land. The presentation of Shemittah in Exodus 23 focused on our duty to our fellow man. Taken together, these two passages teach us to love Adonai by obeying His words and to love our fellow man (especially the poor) by treating him as we would want to be treated.

It is the year of Jubilee or Yovel.

"…to preach deliverance to the captives…"

The Yovel occurs every fifty years. If it is a fact that Yeshua came 50 generations after Noah's grandson, then this is a Sod (hidden) level teaching that the Messiah would come at a fifty generation (instead of years) Yovel! Just as the Yovel was a time of redemption and freedom, Yeshua came to set us free from our bondage to sin, sickness, disease and poverty.

A 1000-year period known as the Millennial Kingdom.