



## Understanding the Parsha

Devarim Deuteronomy 29:9-30 & 31:1-31:30

We will Learn how to

- 1) interpret the main theme (subject) of a Parsha (weekly reading from the Torah),
- 2) make thematic connections to that Parsha (study the Scriptures related by a common theme [subject], line upon line and precept upon precept)
- 3) learn how to gain greater understanding of the Parsha we are looking at through its thematic connections to other portions of Scripture.

## Why Read the Torah Every Seven Years?

Read Devarim 31:7-13. Moses commanded Am Yisrael to gather and listen to the Torah every seven years (the Shemittah cycle) during Succoth. Historically, the entire nation gathered at the Temple in Jerusalem to listen to the King read selected passages from the Torah. Why did Adonai command Am Yisrael to do this? In order to answer this question, we will use our proven thematic analysis tools. We will look words, phrases and themes that connect different passages together.

**Can you think of another event thematically linked to the concept of the entire nation of Israel gathering to hear the Torah?**

Yes, the giving of the Torah (Matan Torah) on   M     S   !  
Mount Sinai

That's right. In fact, there are other thematic connections between this Parsha and the giving of the Torah (Matan Torah). Did you notice the phrase, "Gather together the people" in Devarim 31:12.

### How is this thematically related to Matan Torah?

When the Torah was originally given, Moses was commanded by Adonai to "Gather the people to Me and I shall let them hear My W \_\_\_\_\_..."—Devarim 4:10.]

### What is the goal of gathering the people to hear the Torah every seven years?

According to Devarim 31:12-13, the purpose of gathering every seven years to h \_\_\_\_\_ the Torah is so that the people will l \_\_\_\_\_ and f \_\_\_\_\_ Adonai.

### Is this thematically related to Matan Torah?

Yes! According to Devarim 4:10, when the Torah was originally given, Adonai said that the people were to gather to h \_\_\_\_\_ His w \_\_\_\_\_ so that "they shall l \_\_\_\_\_ to f \_\_\_\_\_ me."

See the use of the words learn and fear in Devarim 4:10, the passage describing Matan Torah! Can you see the connection? Notice that Devarim 4:36 says that Adonai purposed to teach Am Yisrael by causing them to hear His words. This is thematically related to the reading of the Torah every seven years where Am Yisrael are to gather to learn (Devarim 31:12). Did you notice also, the thematic connection concerning gathering the children? — **read and compare Devarim 4:10 and 31:12**. So far, we can see that the reading of the Torah every seven years is thematically related to the experience of Matan Torah, the original giving of the Torah!

Now let's put on our thematic eyes and look at Parashat Vayeilekh as a whole and compare and contrast it to the giving of the Torah.

### Read Devarim 31:1-8. What event is about to happen which caused Moses to talk about the topics covered in these verses?

He is about to d \_\_\_\_\_.

### How is this thematically related to Matan Torah?

The people thought that Moses had d \_\_\_\_\_ died.

When the people realized that Moses was "dead," they made gods so that they could "go before them." How is this thematically related to Devarim 31:1-8?

Moses encouraged the people that A \_\_\_\_\_ would "go before them."

Do you think this connection exists on accident? **Yes** **No**

Look and compare these word parallels between Parashat Vayeilekh and Ki Tissa;

Read Exodus 32:6 — And they r \_\_\_\_\_ up to play.



Read Devarim 31:16 — And this nation will **r**<sub>ָרִיֵּשׁ</sub> up and stray after gods.

Read Exodus 32:7-8 — Your people...have become **C**<sub>ִּוְרָאֵם</sub>. They have quickly **S**<sub>ִּטְרָאוּ</sub>.

Read Devarim 31:29 — You will surely act **C**<sub>ִּוְרָאֵם</sub> and you will **S**<sub>ִּטְרָאוּ</sub> from the path.

Read Exodus 32:10 — Let my **A**<sub>ִּזְעִי</sub> burn against them.

Read Devarim 31:17 — My **A**<sub>ִּזְעִי</sub> will burn against them. In the account in Exodus, Adonai separates Himself from Am Yisrael. In Devarim, He said He would hide His face from them.

Once again, we see amazing word parallels connecting this week's sidra (Torah portion) to the events surrounding Matan Torah. As most of you may well know by now, this is not a coincidence. The Torah purposefully does this so that we will make the connections and learn from them.

To sum it up, Parashat Vayeilekh has many thematic connections to the original giving of the Torah. Most importantly, the reading of the Torah at each Shemittah (seven years) is thematically equal to Matan Torah. Why? The reading of the Torah every seven years is meant to enable every generation to experience the giving of the Torah even though they weren't there. Each generation **must experience hearing the Holy One's voice at the mountain**. This reading of the Torah each Shemittah facilitates this process. The people will gather, hear, learn and fear Adonai just as the original generation gathered, heard, learned and feared Adonai. This is also the reason why Adonai spoke to the second generation as if they had been at Mount Sinai! Each seven years Am Yisrael is given a chance to renew their dedication to the Torah as if they themselves were at Mount Sinai.

## Can you find the words from this Parsha?

A I N A T I H N S N U R  
M M T S I N A I T O A S  
Y A T R F A T T O E A H  
I T S S S E T T F S A O  
S A U R I T I D E S I M  
R N C Y E N M O H R S I  
A T C L H K E L E Y A V  
E O O O L Z H I A T E A  
L R T N E N S V R C M Z  
P A H A A G A T S I A T  
O H F E R I N G S T E I  
W O G E N E R A T I O N



NITZAVIM  
VAYELEKH  
MT SINAI  
MATAN TORAH  
SHEMITTAH  
GENERATION  
HEAR  
LEARN  
FEAR  
SUCCOTH  
AM YISRAEL