

mishpacha beit midrash

Part Four of Five Introductory Articles

From

Mishpachah Beit Midrash

(The Family House of Study)

These five articles were written to prepare you to study the Torah—the first five books of the Scriptures. The Torah study of Mishpachah Beit Midrash is based on the following premise. The Torah, given by Adonai to Moses, is the foundation for all subsequent revelation from the prophets. Therefore, it is our goal to understand the Torah’s prophetic message. Through understanding the Torah, we build the proper foundation for understanding the rest of the Tanakh, and the New Covenant Scriptures. Furthermore, our Torah foundation will lead us to...

The Goal of the Torah...

The Revelation of Yeshua HaMashiach

I invite you to study the Parashat HaShavuah (Weekly Torah Portion) with Mishpachah Beit Midrash as we use Thematic Analysis to understand the Torah, its prophetic message for all ages and the revelation of Yeshua the Messiah.

The complete set of introductory articles **and** the Parashat HaShavuah Studies can be found at...

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torahteacher@restorationoftorah.org

Part Four of Five Introductory Articles

PaRDeS

The Four Levels of Scripture Interpretation

One must understand the four levels of Scripture interpretation in order glean the most from the Torah. In the book of Romans, Paul stated that one of the chief benefits of being Jewish, was that the oracles of God were committed unto them. Part of this commitment by Adonai to the Jewish people involves proper hermeneutics (interpretation of Scripture). In His wisdom, He has shown the Jewish people how to interpret His Words. Most non-Jewish people are totally unaware of the proper methods of Scripture interpretation developed by the Jewish sages over the centuries. However, as more and more non-Jews discover their Hebraic roots, they have begun to learn and appreciate the wisdom of the sages of Israel.

In this lesson, we will learn the four levels of Scripture interpretation. They are pashat, remez, drash and sod. These four words form the acronym PaRDeS.

PASHAT (simple)—The literal meaning of the text. In pashat, one seeks to understand the simple, literal, plain meaning of the text. Pashat is the "easiest" level of interpretation. The following are examples of interpretation at the pashat level.

- Genesis 3:6—⁶So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate.—*The woman actually ate a piece of fruit from a real tree.*
- Genesis 28:14— And I will make your descendants multiply as the stars of heaven; I will give to your descendants all these lands; and in your **seed** all the nations of the earth shall be blessed;—*Abram will go to a literal land. Adonai will make a nation from his physical descendants. All families of the earth will be blessed through Isaac's physical descendants.*
- Genesis 3:15—¹⁵And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel."—*The seed of the woman will be in warfare against the seed of the serpent.*
- Numbers 22:30— The donkey said to Balaam, "Am I not your donkey on which you have ridden all your life to this day? Have I ever been accustomed to do so to you?" And he said, "No."—*A donkey talked.*
- Hosea 11:1—¹ "When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called My son.—*This verse refers to Adonai bringing the literal children of Israel out of the land of Egypt.*

- II Timothy 3:15-14-17—¹⁴But you must continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned them,¹⁵ and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. ¹⁶***All Scripture*** is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness,¹⁷ that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work—*Since the “All Scripture” Paul is referring to pertains to that which Timothy had known “from childhood,” the pashat interpretation is that the “All Scripture” can only refer to the TaNaKh (Old Testament). Furthermore, according to pashat, this verse does not in any way pertain to the New Covenant Scriptures. Remember, we’re only dealing with pashat, so, according to verse 15, it’s impossible that Paul was referring to the New Covenant Scriptures, since they hadn’t been written.*

REMEZ (hint)—Remez, the second level, is an implied meaning of the text. With remez, the Scriptures may “hint” at a deeper meaning without stating so explicitly. The following are examples of interpretation at the level of remez.

- Genesis 3:21—²¹Also for Adam and his wife the LORD God made tunics of skin, and clothed them—*Through remez, we may infer that the tunics of skin were from an animal that had been slain.*
- II Timothy 3:15-14-17—¹⁴But you must continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned them,¹⁵ and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. ¹⁶***All Scripture*** is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness,¹⁷ that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work—*Through remez we may conclude that the New Covenant writings are Scripture also (but not through pashat).*

DRASH (search)—Drash is the third level of interpretation. In this method of interpretation, the text is given an allegorical, typological or homiletic meaning, which is not readily apparent from the pashat reading. This is done by noting similarities between the themes associated with the Scripture under consideration and the typological, allegorical or homiletic application. The following are examples of interpretation at the level of drash (midrash).

- Homiletic on Genesis 3:6—⁶So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate.
 - Now compare Gen 3:6 to I John 2:15-16—¹⁵ Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. ¹⁶For all that is in the world--***the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life***--is not of the Father but is of the world.
 - *It appears that John may have used the account of the temptation of Chava (Eve) to make a homiletic midrash concerning the various lusts that war against us. In this homiletic, the following thematic connections are readily apparent:*

- saw that the tree was *good for food = the lust of the flesh*
 - that it was *pleasant to the eyes = the lust of the eyes*
 - and a tree *desirable to make one wise = the pride of life*
- Type/Fore-shadow on Genesis 28:14— And I will make your descendants multiply as the stars of heaven; I will give to your descendants all these lands; and in your **seed** all the nations of the earth shall be blessed.
 - Now compare Gen 28:14 with Gal 3:16—¹⁶Now to Abraham and his Seed were the promises made. He does not say, "And to seeds," as of many, but as of one, "And to your Seed," who is Christ.
 - *Here, we see that the promise of a physical heir to Isaac had a midrashic fulfillment in Yeshua. Paul is not denying the promise given to Isaac of a literal, physical heir to inherit the Abrahamic covenant blessings. He is simply using that promise to show how Adonai had another more significant fulfillment in mind. In this example, we see that the promise given to the Patriarch was also a promise concerning the Messiah.*
- Type/Fore-shadow on Genesis 3:15—¹⁵And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel."
 - Now compare Gen 3:15 with Romans 16:20 (The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet...) & Revelation 12:17 (And the dragon was enraged with the woman, and he went to make war with the rest of her offspring [seed], who keep the commandments of God and have the **testimony** of Jesus Christ.)
 - *Here, we see that one midrashic interpretation of the prophecy in Gen 3:15 concerns the end-time battle between the body of Messiah and hasatan and his hordes. Note the thematic connections. Both involved warfare between the seed of the woman and hasatan (and his seed). Note that the body of Messiah will crush hasatan's head under their foot (and be bruised on their heel in the process). Although most people think that the prophecy in Genesis 3:15 is prophetic of Yeshua's victory over hasatan **on the execution stake**, we see that Scripture gives even stronger evidence that it pertains to the body of Messiah (He is the Head, we are the body) defeating hasatan at the end of the age.*
- Type/Fore-shadow on Hosea 11:1—¹ "When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called My son.
 - Now compare this with Matthew 2:13-14—¹³ Now when they had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, saying, "Arise, take the young Child and His mother, flee to Egypt, and stay there until I bring you word; for Herod will seek the young Child to destroy Him." ¹⁴When he arose, he took the young Child and His mother by night and departed for Egypt, ¹⁵and was

there until the death of Herod, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying, "Out of Egypt I called My Son."

- *Although Hosea made reference to the physical nation of Egypt coming out of Egypt in Hosea 11:1, Matthew uses a drash interpretation to show that the prophecy also concerned calling the Messiah out of Egypt.*

SOD (hidden)—The fourth and deepest level of interpretation is sod. This level usually requires knowledge of Hebrew and an understanding of the gematria (numbers of the letters) of words. This is the most mysterious/secret level of interpretation.

- Through the midrash, it can be shown that the children of Israel's deliverance from Egyptian bondage—in order to inherit the promised land—is a prophetic picture of all believers (especially the last generation) being delivered from the bondage of sin in order to inherit the millennial kingdom. Therefore, it should not surprise us that Pharaoh would be a type of anti-Messiah. In Hebrew, the word Pharaoh is a contraction of two words, literally meaning *bad-mouth*. If you were to perform a study on passages describing the anti-messiah found in the book of Daniel and in the New Covenant books, you would immediately notice that most of the passages describing the character of the anti-messiah convey how he *constantly boasts against and blasphemes Adonai and anything sacred*. In fact, the anti-messiah's "*bad mouth*" is a major theme that is repeated throughout the passages that relate to him.

Throughout our study of the Parashat HaShavuah, we will use these different levels of interpretation (especially pashat and midrash) to gain an appreciation for the depth and richness of the Torah. These same tools will allow us to see the Yeshua the Messiah as never before.

Now, let me quote from Dr. James Scott Trimm concerning the proper balance between pashat and midrash.

"The PASHAT is the keystone of Scripture understanding. If we discard the PASHAT we lose any real chance of an accurate understanding. We are left with a no-holds-barred game of pure imagination in which we are no longer objectively deriving meaning from the Scriptures (exogesis), but subjectively reading meaning into the scriptures (eisogesis) (see 2Pt. 1:20-21; 1Tim. 4:3-4). Thus the Talmud twice warns us: "No passage loses its PASHAT" (b.Shab. 63a; b.Yeb. 24a)... A drash understanding cannot be used to strip a passage of its PASHAT meaning, nor may any such understanding contradict any PASHAT meaning of any other Scripture passage. As the Talmud states "No passage loses its PASHAT." (b. Shab. 63a; b.Yeb. 24a)."