

Mishpachah Beit Midrash

An Introduction to the Parashat HaShavuah (Weekly Torah Portion)

Understanding the Torah From a Thematic Perspective

Pinchas



BY TONY ROBINSON

—The Family House of Study— Examining the Parashat HaShavuah by Thematic Analysis

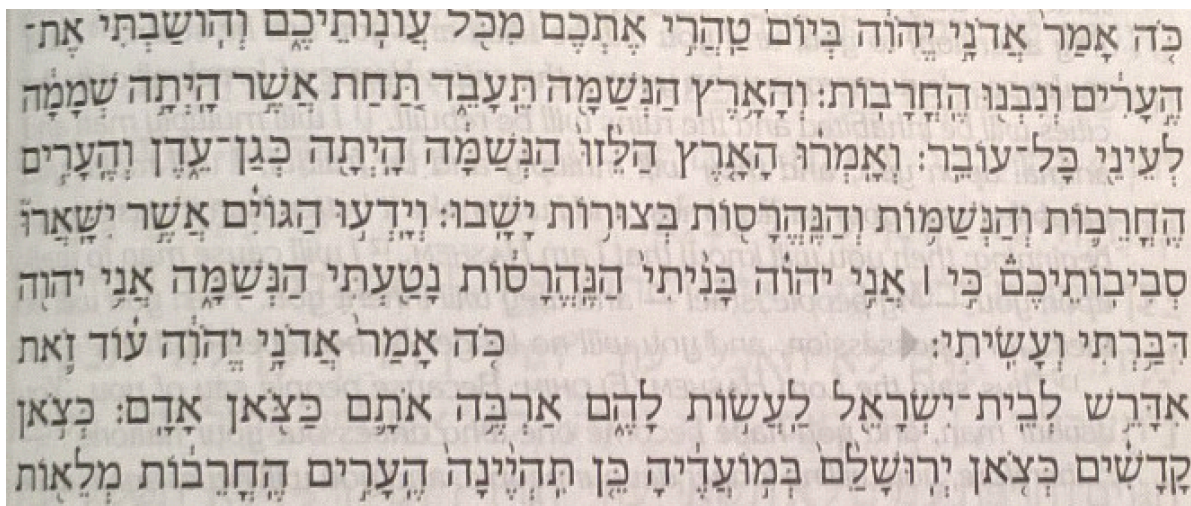
Welcome to Mishpachah Beit Midrash, the Family House of Study. Each Shabbat¹ we gather in our home and study the Scriptures, specifically the Torah.² It's a fun time of receiving revelation from the Ruach HaKodesh³. Everyone joins in—adults and children—as we follow the Parashat HaShavuah⁴ schedule. 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 Tanakh⁵ and the Brit Chadasha.⁶ 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.

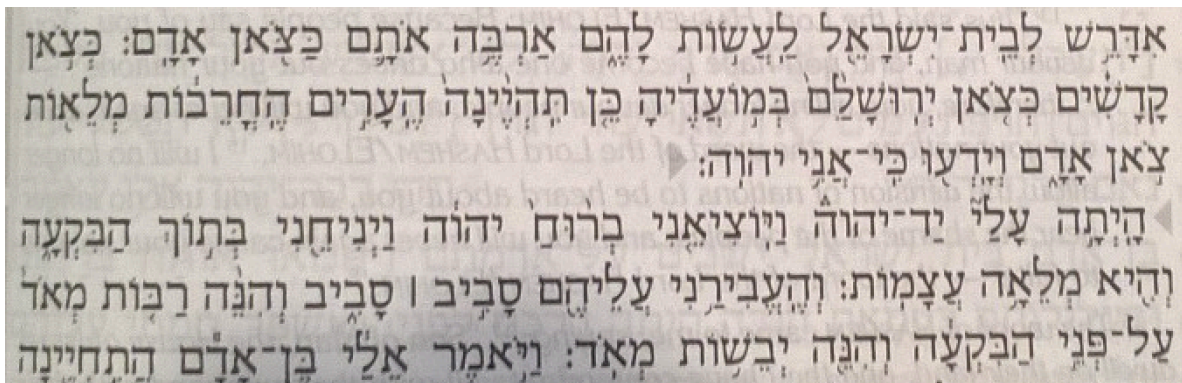
Thematic analysis of Scripture is based on the following premises. 1) Moses wrote the Torah as five *separate* books as the Ruach HaKodesh inspired him. 2) Since Adonai had him separate those words into five separate books, we surmise that each book has a unique message or theme. 3) Within each book, the words are written with two paragraph-like divisions⁷ 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 ...

ס—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.



פ—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)



—Parashat HaShavuah—

פִּינְחָס

Pinchas

B'midbar 25:10-30:1
(Numbers 25:10-30:1)

This Week's Parshiot

- 1 Numbers 25:10-15 פ
- 2 Numbers 25:16-26:1 פ⁸
- 3 Numbers 26:1- 11 ס
- 4 Numbers 26:12-14 ס
- 5 Numbers 26:15-18 ס
- 6 Numbers 26:19-22 ס
- 7 Numbers 26:23-25 ס
- 8 Numbers 26:26-27 ס
- 9 Numbers 26:28-34 ס
- 10 Numbers 26:35-37 ס
- 11 Numbers 26:38-41 ס
- 12 Numbers 26:42-43 ס
- 13 Numbers 26:44-47 ס
- 14 Numbers 26:48-51 פ
- 15 Numbers 26:52-56 ס
- 16 Numbers 26:57-65 ס
- 17 Numbers 27:1-5 פ
- 18 Numbers 27:5-11 פ
- 19 Numbers 27:12-14 ס
- 20 Numbers 27:15-23 פ
- 21 Numbers 28:1-8 פ
- 22 Numbers 28:9-10 פ
- 23 Numbers 28:11-15 ס
- 24 Numbers 28:16-25 ס
- 25 Numbers 28:26-31 פ
- 26 Numbers 29:1-6 ס

- 27 Numbers 29:7-11 ☐
- 28 Numbers 29:12-16 ☐
- 29 Numbers 29:17-19 ☐
- 30 Numbers 29:20-22 ☐
- 31 Numbers 29:23-25 ☐
- 32 Numbers 29:26-28 ☐
- 33 Numbers 29:29-31 ☐
- 34 Numbers 29:32-34 ☐
- 35 Numbers 29:35-30:1 ☐

Searching the Parshiot

Numbers 25:10-30:1

Objectives—1) *Learn why the Torah does not always place its narratives in chronological order.*
 2) *Learn how to determine why narratives are not placed in chronological order. Learn how to*
 3) *uncover the theme of a passage, 4) relate it to other passages and 5) gain new insight on how*
 to interpret the original passage based on its thematic connection to those other passages.

Thematic Versus Chronological Order

- I. If you've studied with Mishpachah Beit Midrash (MBM) you know that from time to time, we have a discussion on thematic versus chronological order. For the most part, the Torah places its stories in chronological order. However, sometimes the Torah abandons that format in favor of thematic considerations. It's pretty easy to determine when this happens if you pay attention to the text. For example, this week's sidra (Torah portion) begins by discussing the need for Am Yisrael (the people of Israel) to make war against Midian ([Numbers 25:16-18](#)). Continuing in Numbers 26:1, the Holy One instructs Moses to number Am Yisrael, ostensibly for military purposes. Note the phrase, "*all who are able to go to war in Israel*," in Numbers 26:2. However, if you continue reading, you will notice that 1) the purpose of the census was **not** to determine who was eligible to go to war against Midian and 2) the Torah discusses numerous subjects totally unrelated to the impending war with Midian! So, what about the command to go to war against Midian? Well, if you keep reading, the war with Midian finally occurs in Numbers 31:1-12! Did you see that? The Holy One gave the commandment to go to war with Midian in Numbers 25:16-18; however, the account of the war doesn't actually occur until Numbers 31:1-12! What about all of the text between those verses? Wouldn't it have made more "chronological" sense to place the narrative of the war (Numbers 31:1-12) right after the commandment (Numbers 25:16-18)? You have just witnessed an example of how the Torah will sometimes substitute thematic order for chronological order. There is a thematic reason why the stories of Numbers 26:1-30:17 are inserted between the command to go to war and the actual war itself. Even though those passages don't seem to have anything to do with the war against Midian, we know

from past experience that they are thematically related to it. Furthermore, we know the Holy One has a reason for ordering the narratives in this peculiar manner. Our job is to determine the reason.

One of the main ways the Torah teaches us its lessons is by placing seemingly unrelated stories next to each other. Many times the Torah will interrupt the logical flow of a narrative to introduce a passage that seems terribly out of place. This is usually done to emphasize a specific thematic connection between the two apparently unrelated texts. For example, Leviticus 10 records the tragic deaths of Nadav and Avihu. Then, Leviticus 11-15 records numerous subjects including clean and unclean animals, childbirth, sexual emissions, a woman's monthly cycle and lepers. Then, amazingly, Leviticus 16:1 begins with the phrase, "And YHVH spoke to Moses *after the death of the two sons of Aaron . . .*" What? Their deaths occurred back in Leviticus 10. Why were chapters 11-15 inserted between the actual event of their deaths and the Holy One's statements to Moses concerning their deaths? Well, in Leviticus 16, Moses describes Adonai's rules pertaining to *how* and *when* the High Priest could *draw near to Him*. It just so happens that Leviticus 11-15 has a common theme, which is similar to the theme of Leviticus 16—*who can and cannot draw near to Him*. Those chapters were placed between Leviticus 10 and 16 to teach this important lesson so that others would not suffer the same fate as Aaron's sons by trying to draw near to Adonai at an inappropriate time or in an inappropriate manner. Let's spend the rest of this section trying to determine why the Torah inserts Numbers 26:1-30:17 between the command to go to war and the actual war itself.

- II. ***Charting the Flow***—Let's go through the Parshiot and create a general outline of the sidra.

Table I

Passage	Theme/Subject
Numbers 25:16-18	The Command to Attack Midyan
Numbers 26	The Census
Numbers 27:1-11	The Grievance of the Daughters of Zelophechad
Numbers 27:12-23	A Successor for Moses
Numbers 28-29	The Mussaf Offerings
Numbers 30	Instructions on Vows and Oaths
Numbers 31	The Victory Over Midyan

Remember, our goal is to determine why Numbers 26-30 was placed between the command to attack Midyan and its actual fulfillment. We will do this by searching for a common theme between the section (Numbers 26:1-30:17) that was "inserted" and the war with Midyan (Numbers 25:16-18 and Numbers 31:1-12).

Understanding the War

- I. Since we are searching for a theme between Numbers 26:1-30:17 and the war with Midyan, it makes sense to look at each section *thematically*. We will start with Numbers 25:1-9 even though it was part of last week's sidra, because this passage contains the events necessitating the war against Midyan. Our goal is to glean as much as we can from these passages. Then,

we will study Numbers 26:1-30:17 thematically in order to find the connections between the two. Read [Numbers 25:1-9](#), a Parsha P'tuchah.

- A. What is the general theme of Numbers 25:1-3?⁹ What term in Numbers 25:1 is used to describe their sin?¹⁰ What is the sin of harlotry? The essence of harlotry is this; one who is married has sexual relations with someone other than their spouse. We know that Am Yisrael is married to the Holy One; therefore, Am Yisrael had broken her **marriage vows**. What specific sins were committed when Israel committed harlotry with Moab?¹¹ Thematically, what is the significance of mentioning that the people ate with the Moabites—is that so bad?¹²
 - B. What is the general theme of Numbers 25:4-9?¹³ Who participated in the sins of harlotry?¹⁴ Considering *those who* participated in the sin of harlotry, has the judgment been equally and properly meted out and why (verse nine)?¹⁵
 - C. What event stopped the plague?¹⁶ In this example, we see that the Holy One's wrath was appeased when representatives from both sinning groups were executed. Explain how this hints that we should expect judgment against the Moabites/Midianites.¹⁷
 - D. What general theme would you say summarizes this Parsha?¹⁸
- II. Read [Numbers 25:10-13](#). What is the most general theme you can think of for this passage?¹⁹ This passage explains how Pinchas was given a reward for his righteous behavior. See the picture? The previous Parsha was characterized by sin and judgment. The first portion of this Parsha is characterized by righteousness and blessing/reward. It is the opposite theme from our previous passage.
- A. Now read [Numbers 25:14-15](#). Again, the theme is judgment. Its placement in the same Parsha with the reward/blessing for righteousness helps to strengthen the contrast the Torah is trying to illustrate.
 - B. Now read [Numbers 25:16-18](#). The theme again is judgment. This time though, the judgment pertains to Midyan. This helps balance the discrepancy we noted above where it seemed as though the Midianites weren't going to be judged.
- III. At this point, we would expect to read something about the war with Midyan. Instead, the Torah "inserts" other Parshiot that are totally unrelated to war with Midyan. Let's skip to Numbers 31 to finish our analysis of the war with Midyan.
- A. Read [Numbers 31:1-12](#). Once again, the theme is judgment. This Parsha deals with the judgment against the Midianite sinners who conspired against Am Yisrael. Until this point, only one Midianite had suffered vengeance (Cozbi). Now, judgment is complete, having been poured out on Am Yisrael and Midyan.
 - B. Even though Am Yisrael was carried out the attack, whose vengeance is being appeased, Am Yisrael's or the Holy One's?²⁰ This is an interesting concept. The battle against Midyan occurred to inflict Adonai's vengeance on Midyan. In other words, Am Yisrael was used as His instrument of vengeance against another nation.

In summary, we have analyzed the three Parshiot pertaining to the battle with Midyan. All of them refer in some manner to 1) sin and judgment and 2) righteousness and reward/blessing. Now let's analyze the "inserted" section—Numbers 26:1-30:17.

Understanding the "Digression" (Numbers 26:1-30:17)

- I. We will analyze each section listed in Table I.
 - A. **The Census**—Read [Numbers 26](#). This is the section immediately following the command to attack Midyan. This section contains the new census. What is the apparent purpose of the census?²¹ Many may think this census was taken in order to count the number of men able to go to war against Midyan. This would make chronological sense. Let's see if this is true.
 - B. Compare and contrast this census with the census of [Numbers 1:1-44](#). What is the major difference between these two censuses?²² That's right! Do you know why this difference exists—hint, read [Numbers 26:52-56](#)?²³ You see that? This census has nothing to do with counting those eligible for the pending war with Midyan, as one might expect. Everyone in this census is counted to determine who will get a land inheritance in Canaan.
 - C. How many people actually fought in the battle against Midyan (Numbers 31:1-12)?²⁴ Does this support or conflict with our conclusion that the census had nothing to do with counting those able to war against Midyan?²⁵
 - D. Let's look at the significance of [Numbers 26:9-11](#). Now that we know the purpose of this census is to determine who will inherit the Land, what is the hidden significance of mentioning Dathan, Abiram and Korach—hint, remember the purpose for the census?²⁶ That's right. Now, how is this related to the theme we've discovered concerning Numbers 25:10-13?²⁷ Once again, we see the theme of 1) sin and judgment and 2) righteousness and blessing/reward, even in a “mundane” census.
- II. **The Grievance of the Daughters of Zelophechad**—Read [Numbers 27:1-11](#). How are these verses thematically related to Numbers 26?²⁸ This is more proof that the purpose of the census was to determine who would inherit land. This story flows directly from the theme established in Numbers 26.
- III. **A Successor for Moses**—Read [Numbers 27:12-23](#). Pertaining to Moses, are these verses thematically related to 1) sin and judgment, and 2) righteousness and reward/blessing, and if so, how?²⁹
 - A. Pertaining to Joshua, are these verses thematically related to 1) sin and judgment, and 2) righteousness and reward/blessing, and if so, how?³⁰ Once again we can see the theme of 1) sin and judgment and 2) righteousness and reward/blessing.
- IV. **The Mussaf Offerings**—This section outlines instructions for what are known as the mussaf offerings. These are the extra offerings offered on these Holy Days in *addition* to the regular daily offerings. Can you pick out a common theme presented throughout the entirety of this section—hint, look for a word or phrase that is repeated in almost every Parsha?³¹ As you can see, the continual burnt offering is related to every one of the major Parshiot. At this point I'd like to review the purpose for sacrifices and the importance of the continual burnt offering.
 - A. We learned in Parashat Vayikra that the book of Leviticus focused on how Israel—each individual—can develop relationship with the Holy One through the service of the Mishkan (Tabernacle). We mustn't lose sight of the core issue, which is *how sinful man is able to draw near to a Holy God*. Again, THE CORE ISSUE taught by Leviticus is how one may *draw near to Adonai*. We already know that Israel HAD TO APPROACH

ADONAI THROUGH BLOOD OFFERINGS/SACRIFICE. The Hebrew word for offering is corban (קָרְבַּן).³² The root for the word offering/corban is קָרַב, which means *coming near*! That's right. Normally when we think of an offering, we think of the word sacrifice. Sacrifice has the connotation of giving up something of value. But this IS NOT the primary theme of an offering as presented in the Scriptures. As its root denotes, an offering is not about giving up something of value. In summary,

***An offering is the vehicle through which
one can draw nigh to Adonai!***

B. Now, let's review the purpose of the continual burnt offering. The continual burnt offering is what the Torah defines as a whole burnt offering. The whole burnt offering is called an olah (עֹלָה), and is one of the primary offerings listed in Leviticus 1-6. In previous studies, we saw that the olah, or whole burnt offering, was a picture of a worshiper in covenant relationship with Adonai, *dedicating* his entire *life* (hence, the total consumption of the offering) to Adonai in complete service and *submission to His commandments*. The olah is what Paul had in mind in [Romans 12:1-2](#). The concept of a person offering himself as an olah by submitting himself to the commandments of Adonai is also captured in the following Psalms:

- ²Let my prayer be set before You as incense, *the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice* [olah] (Psalm 141:2, emphasis mine).
- ⁶Sacrifice and offering You did not desire; My ears You have opened. *Burnt offering [olah]* and sin offering You did not require. ⁷Then I said, "Behold, I come; In the scroll of the book it is written of me. ⁸***I delight to do Your will, O my God, And Your law is within my heart*** (Psalm 40:6-8, emphasis mine)."

Therefore, the continual burnt offering, which was offered twice per day, represented the nation of Israel dedicating itself to the Holy One in submission to His commandments. Now we can understand the importance of the continual burnt offering within the context of the mussaf offerings. *The mussaf offerings or additional offerings of the Holy Days mean nothing apart from the dedication of the nation to the commandments of the Holy One.* Hence, the continual burnt offering was always offered.

In summary, this section teaches us that Am Yisrael must draw near and dedicate themselves to Adonai within the context of the feasts.

- V. ***Instructions on Vows and Oaths***—This passage pertains to vows and oaths. What particular group of people does this Parsha seem to focus on?³³ It seems as if this passage focuses on vows and oaths and the necessity of those vows and oaths to be performed within the context of a woman remaining under the authority of her husband or father.

Making the Connection

- I. For your information, ***both*** Midyan and Moab participated in this deception. The difference is that it was *the Midianites who specifically targeted the leaders of Am Yisrael* by sending daughters of their leaders to cohabit with the leaders of Am Yisrael. So don't get confused when I use Moab in some of the examples. Although it may seem that the five sections above are totally unrelated to the incident with Midyan/Moab, in fact, they are closely related as follows:
- A. Numbers 25:1 states that Am Yisrael committed "harlotry" with the daughters of Moab (and Midyan). Wasn't Am Yisrael married to Adonai? Didn't they make a vow (hint) to the Holy One in [Exodus 19:7-8](#), when they were betrothed to Adonai? Yes, they did. They broke their marriage vow/oath by committing harlotry. This thematically connects the incident with Midyan to the section on vows (Numbers 30).
 - B. Numbers 25:2 states that the Moabites *invited* Am Yisrael to the *feasts* of their gods. In Parashat Emor, we learned about the "feasts of the LORD" as they are called in most translations. It should be translated as the "*appointed/fixed times of the LORD.*" The Hebrew word for *appointed times* is מועדים, pronounced Mo'edim. Moedim comes from the Hebrew root ועד, meaning to meet. We've seen this term before in the words, *Tent of Meeting*, which in Hebrew is 'ohel Mo'ed, אהל מועד. Note the letters מועד, which are the same letters used in the word for appointed times. In other words, just as the Tent of Meeting was a place where one could draw nigh to Adonai to *meet* with Him, so likewise, the Holy days are set apart times when one can *meet* with Him. So, as you can see, when Moab invited Am Yisrael to their feasts, Am Yisrael had an "appointed time" with other gods! This is clearly thematically connected to Numbers 28-29 and the Mo'edim.
 - C. Numbers 25:3 states that Am Yisrael *attached* themselves to Baal Peor. How could they attach themselves to Baal Peor except they first *draw near* to Baal Peor? Furthermore, Numbers 25:2 states that Am Yisrael prostrated themselves to Baal Peor. This is equivalent to dedicating themselves to Baal Peor. This is thematically related to the continual burnt offering of Numbers 28-29, which pertains to drawing near to Adonai and *attaching* themselves to Him!
 - D. The daughters of Moab were prominent players in the harlotry with Am Yisrael. They obviously forsook the covering of their fathers. To counter this, the daughters of Zelophechad remain under the covering of their father (Numbers 27:1-11).

These first four thematic connections seem to be instructions offered by Adonai to counter the sins committed with the daughters of Moab and Midyan! For each sin, there is a corresponding section outlining the proper behavior for Am Yisrael. We saw this same phenomenon in Parashat Korach. Remember, Numbers 16-17 narrated the rebellion of Korach. Then, the Torah gave a number of commandments regarding the priesthood, which were seemingly unrelated to the rebellion of Korach. However, through thematic analysis, we saw that those commandments (found in Numbers 18) were definitely connected to the rebellion of Korach. Numbers 16-17 represented an

aberration. It was a time in the lives of Am Yisrael when they had rejected the mediation of the High Priesthood of Aaron. The result was death! Numbers 18 essentially put things back in order. It did this by reminding Am Yisrael that they must approach Adonai through the mediation efforts of Aaron and the Levites, not self-appointedees like Korach. Numbers 18 essentially re-established the priesthood as belonging to Aaron. In other words, the instructions in Numbers 18 were written to correct the mistakes of the rebellion in Numbers 16-17. So likewise, a large portion of Numbers 26:1-30:17 was written to correct the mistakes that occurred when Am Yisrael attached themselves to Ba'al Peor. That's why we see such good thematic connections between the two.

- E. Numbers 31:1 states that Moses will be gathered to his people *after* he leads Am Yisrael in one last battle against Midyan. This is clearly thematically related to Numbers 27:12-23 where leadership is transferred from Moses to Joshua.
- F. Numbers 26 gives the details of a census. As we noted, the purpose of the census was to determine who would get a land inheritance. The Torah leaves us with the impression that those who were to receive a land inheritance had received a reward for following Adonai. Read [Numbers 26:9-11 and 63-65](#). These verses lead one to believe that those who were not faithful did not deserve the land inheritance. First, it states how Korach and his followers didn't survive (so as to inherit land). Then it states that the generation that left Egypt was denied a land inheritance. They weren't receiving the inheritance because they were unfaithful. All of this is related to the passage above (Numbers 27:12-23) where Joshua is allowed to lead Am Yisrael into the Land ***because he was faithful***.

These last two sections are related to the incident with Moab/Midyan because they echo the theme of reward for righteousness. Remember Phinchas?

- G. In summary, now we know ***HOW*** the "inserted section" thematically relates to the incident with Moab/Midyan.
 - It stands as a correction to Am Yisrael's behavior in the incident with Moab/Midyan.
 - It shows that righteous behavior will be rewarded.
 - It shows that unrighteous behavior will be judged.

Understanding the Connection Between the Plague and the Census

- I. Read [Numbers 26:1-2](#). If you have a Chumash, you will notice that Numbers 26:1 contains three words (translated—it was after the plague), followed by a long break similar to a Parsha P'tuchah. Then the verse continues on the next line. This is one of those rare instances in the Torah where a single verse is interrupted by a break! It just so happens that this is exactly the point where the "digression" occurs. Therefore, we conclude that the Torah wants us to see a connection between the plague and the census! This is the Torah's manner of pointing this out to us. So what is the connection?
 - A. What was the purpose for the census?³⁴ We've seen that those who received an apportionment of the Land received it as a *reward* for their faithfulness. Therefore, the Torah is trying to get us to see a connection between the last plague and the rewarded land apportionment. The Parsha break in the middle of Numbers 26:1 is a picture of the

interruption of the narrative by the passages I've termed, the "digression". Did you realize that the incident of Baal Peor was the last story of sinful behavior before Am Yisrael entered the Land? That's right. It is the survivors of this last plague who go on to inherit the Land! The Parsha break after the statement concerning the plague may demonstrate one or more of the following.

1. It's as if the Holy One is saying, "Okay, the plague has destroyed the last group of rebels. Only now is it appropriate for me to reward those of you who remain by giving you an inheritance in the Land." Thus, it may indicate that all of the tragic events of the journey through the wilderness are finally over.
 2. It could also be an indicator of the infinite grace, mercy and forgiveness of the Holy One. The incident with Baal Peor was a serious offense. How serious? We can determine this by looking at the thematic connections existing between it and a previous event. Read [Exodus 32:1-10](#), the account of the incident with the golden calf. How many thematic connections do you see?³⁵ The multitude of thematic connections teaches us that these two events are definitely connected. The connections teach us that the sin with Baal Peor was a very grievous sin. What was the result of the sin of the golden calf? Adonai literally removed His presence from within the Israelite camp. Were it not for Moses' intercession, Adonai would have consumed them all. Yet, "it was after the plague"—which would have consumed them all were it not for the action of atonement by Pinchas—that the Holy One established the census, the basis for the *reward* of a land inheritance!
- B. I've tried to show you how the lives of the Patriarchs are prophetic shadows of future events. Let me share with you an AMAZING foreshadowing of the phenomenon we are currently discussing. Read [Genesis 35:22-26](#). If you have access to a Chumash, look at these verses in the Hebrew. Now, how many thematic connections exist between the passage in Genesis and our current sidra?³⁶ Absolutely amazing. The story of Reuben laying with Jacob's concubine is exactly the situation here, where Am Yisrael had just committed harlotry with the daughters of Moab! Note the structure of Genesis 35:22. First the sin is recounted. Then, a Parsha break occurs in the middle of the verse. Next, there is a "census" naming the twelve sons of Jacob. In fact, another parallel exists. If you skip past the section on the descendants of Esau (Genesis 36) and pick up the story of Jacob and his family again, you will notice that Genesis 37:1 begins by stating that Jacob went in to settle the land of his father's sojourning! Thematically, this matches perfectly with our current sidra where the purpose of the census is to determine how Am Yisrael will apportion the Land for settlement! Note how the Targum Yerushalmi interprets the Parsha break:

When Israel heard [of Reuben's sin] he was ashamed, for [Israel] thought, "Woe is me; perhaps there has issued from me a disqualified son, just as Yishmael issued from Avraham and Esav issued from Father." The Spirit of God answered him and said, "Do not desist; for all are righteous and there is not a disqualified one among them," or after the birth of Binyamin, the sons of Ya'akov were twelve.³⁷

You may remember from our studies in Genesis, there was a time when not all of the seed of the Patriarchs were chosen to inherit the promises. Ishmael and Esau were examples. Although they were blood descendants of the Patriarchs, they were not chosen (bechira). The Patriarchs did not know when this process of rejecting (dechiya) some of

the seed would end. Therefore, the Targum interprets the “silence” of the Parsha break as referring to Jacob wondering if Reuben would be part of the chosen sons despite his grievous sin. As you read, the “census” reassured Jacob that since “the sons of Jacob were twelve in number,” indeed, Reuben was still a chosen one. This dovetails well with my suggestion that the Parsha break could be a picture of Adonai’s grace, mercy and forgiveness. For it was after Am Yisrael’s sin with the Moabites and Midianites that Adonai apportioned the Land to them on the basis of the census.

- II. Now, let's see **WHY** Numbers 26:1-30:17 was inserted between the command to attack Midyan and its actual fulfillment. It appears that the Holy One desires for us to understand a certain message pertaining to judgment for sin and reward for righteousness. As of Numbers 26:1, Israel has received its judgment (the plague); however, Midyan hasn't. Since Midyan doesn't get judged until Numbers 31, we surmise that the events of Numbers 26:1-30:17 had to take place before Am Yisrael were allowed to inflict judgment on them. Here's why.
- A. Read [Numbers 31:3](#). Who's vengeance will be served upon Midyan?³⁸ This is the important point. The impending war against Midyan is not a war between Midyan and Israel. It's a war between Midyan and the Holy One!!! When Midyan sent the daughters of their leaders to seduce the leaders of Am Yisrael, they declared war against Him, not just Am Yisrael. The vengeance to be served upon Midyan is His vengeance, although He will use Am Yisrael as His instrument of wrath. Remember, one of the major themes of Numbers 26:1-30:17 is that it is a correction to Am Yisrael's behavior in the incident with Moab/Midyan. In other words, the judgment of Am Yisrael (the plague) and correction (Numbers 26:1-30:17) needed to occur before He was able to use them as instruments of His righteous indignation. How could He use a sinful Israel to judge the heathen.
- B. It had always been Adonai's plan to judge the nations of Canaan because of their sin. This is clearly taught in [Genesis 15:13-16](#). What was not revealed previously was that Am Yisrael would be the instruments of His wrath. Considering Adonai is judging the nations of Canaan because of their multitude of sins, would it be appropriate for Him to judge them with Israel if Israel is just as sinful? Of course not. Therefore, the judgment against Midyan will not occur until Adonai first cleans up Israel. The first generation of rebels have already perished in the wilderness and the last group of rebels perished in the plague after the incident with Moab and Midyan. The last order of business was for the Holy One to correct the behavior exhibited in the incident with Moab and Midyan. Afterwards, Israel will be a fit vessel to execute His righteous judgment. Thematically, this may be the reason why Numbers 26:1-30:17 was inserted between the command to attack Midyan and its actual fulfillment.

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 1:1-2:3](#). I will list some verses from the Haftarah reading. Your job will be to relate them thematically to the Parashat HaShavuah reading.

- I. How is [Jeremiah 1:9-10](#) thematically related to the Torah portion?³⁹ Do you see how this passage in the Haftarah matches perfectly with our final thematic conclusion that Am Yisrael was chosen as an instrument to inflict Adonai's vengeance upon the heathen?
- II. How is [Jeremiah 2:3](#) thematically related to the Torah portion?⁴⁰

Messiah in the Parsha

Objective—Learn how the Torah teaches about the life and ministry of Yeshua HaMashiach. Yeshua said that Moses wrote about Him⁴¹. 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.

More Allusions to the Book of Revelation

- I. While many view the Torah as past history, thematic analysis has taught me to view the Torah as a blueprint for life *now*! Does the Torah present a prophetic message for all generations? I think so. In particular, I think the Torah has its greatest message for the last generation! In Parashat Bemidbar, we noted more than twelve direct correlations between the story of the Exodus and the book of Revelation! Let's suppose that we are the last generation. If so, then let's see what the Torah has to say specifically for us, ***the Last Generation***.
 - A. Read [1 Corinthians 10:1-13](#). According to verse eleven, to whom do the stories of the Torah have their greatest significance?⁴² Notice how Paul specifically states that *the stories of the Torah were written **FOR** the benefit of the generation upon whom the end of the ages had come!*
 - B. Of all the people on the earth who have ever lived or who will ever live, to whom do you think the book of Revelation will be most relevant?⁴³ I would have to say to the generation who will experience the events. After all, the reason for writing the book was so that the last generation would understand the signs of the times and have hope.
 - C. Notice that we have just thematically linked the stories of the Torah to the book of Revelation just by noting to whom both writings are most relevant—the Last Generation!

- II. This week's sidra was dominated by the story of the battle with Midyan and the themes of 1) sin and judgment and 2) righteousness and reward. In fact, the last three Torah portions have many themes in common with the book of Revelation. Let's see how these topics, as well as others, are thematically linked to events in the book of Revelation.
- A. **Balaam**—Isn't Balaam an interesting character? The Torah states that he was a prophet. Should we doubt that? Balaam stated that he only spoke the words Adonai put into his mouth. Was he therefore a good prophet? Obviously, not. How do we know for sure that Balaam exercised a certain amount of power and authority?⁴⁴ We know that he is the one who advised the Midianites on how to seduce Am Yisrael. Therefore, we can assume that he was really opposed to the Holy One's plans for Am Yisrael, right? Can you think of a character from the book of Revelation who 1) is said to be a prophet, 2) exercises a respectable amount of power and authority, and 3) opposes Adonai's plans?⁴⁵ Interesting? **Balaam**—How is Balaam's advice thematically connected to events in the book of Revelation?⁴⁶
- B. **Midyan**—How were the Midianites able to seduce Am Yisrael?⁴⁷ Can you think of a character from the book of Revelation who has tempted and conspired against the Holy One's people?⁴⁸ According to Numbers 25:1, how did the daughters of Moab (and Midyan—remember Cozbi) cause Am Yisrael to sin?⁴⁹ I believe the Torah uses the phrase, "commit harlotry". Can you think of how harlotry is thematically connected to the book of Revelation?⁵⁰ That's right. A large portion of Revelation is committed to passages pleading with Adonai's people to forsake the harlot of Revelation 17-18! How did Moses choose his army to fight against Midyan and how is that process related to the book of Revelation?⁵¹
- C. **The Day of Vengeance**—Remember how the Holy One stated that Am Yisrael were to inflict **His vengeance** upon Midyan? Well, what is one of the major themes of the Day of the LORD?⁵² Doesn't the book of Revelation describe the Day of the LORD? Yes, it does.
- D. **Reward and Judgment**—Read [Isaiah 40:10](#) and [Revelation 22:12](#). Note how the concepts of 1) sin and judgment and 2) righteousness and reward are thematically connected to the Torah portion. Isaiah 40:10 states that Adonai will come with reward (for righteousness) and recompense (for unrighteousness). The recompense comes **BEFORE** the reward! In the Torah portion, recompense (the plague) came before the reward (land inheritance). How does the fact that Am Yisrael received her judgment (the plague) before Midyan's relate to the B'rit Chadasha?⁵³
- III. All of the thematic connections above—plus the other twelve I noted in Parashat Bemidbar—teach us that the journey of Am Yisrael through the wilderness and their battles to conquer and enter the Promised Land are Torah Pictures of the last generation who will go through their own wilderness experience—called the great tribulation—and battles to enter their Promised Land—the Millennial Kingdom! These thematic connections between the events in the wilderness and the events in the book of Revelation should not surprise us, because Paul explicitly used the wilderness stories to prove that they were examples of things that will befall the saints of the Last Generation ([I Corinthians 10:1-12](#))! This connection is in harmony with the general axiom we've seen proven over and over again through our studies—Events in the lives of the Patriarchs are prophetic foreshadows of events that **WILL** occur in the lives of their descendants!

Am Yisrael, the Instrument of Adonai's Wrath Upon His Enemies

- I. A major theme developed in this week's sidra was that Am Yisrael was chosen as the instrument to mete out Adonai's wrath/vengeance upon His enemies. This is how the Torah teaches us that Messiah has chosen us to be His soldiers in His battle against hasatan! Why didn't Adonai supernaturally execute judgment on His enemies? Because, He wants to teach us that the battles between Am Yisrael and her enemies are pictures of our battles against hasatan. The Holy One has an enemy named hasatan and He has an army. Just as the Canaanites tried to hinder Am Yisrael from entering the Promised Land, so likewise, hasatan will try to keep us from entering into the Millennial Kingdom. He will use the dragon, the false prophet, the whore and all unbelievers to wage war against us. Let's see how the Torah teaches us that Adonai wants us to defeat hasatan.
- A. Read [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." Most people apply this prophecy to Yeshua. They say that this is a prophecy that He would defeat hasatan one day. I believe this too; however, there is a more profound truth being taught in this verse. Can you think of another verse in the B'rit Chadasha (New Covenant Scriptures) thematically related to this passage? I can think of two passages related to the prophecy of Genesis 3:15.

- 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 a midrashic interpretation of the prophecy in Genesis 3:15 ***concerns the end-time battle between the body of Messiah and hasatan and his hordes***. Note the thematic connections. Both involve warfare between the *seed of the woman* and hasatan (and his seed).

- Romans 16:20—The God of peace will soon ***crush Satan under your feet***...

This time, we note that Paul uses the imagery of Genesis 3:15 to describe its fulfillment through the body of Messiah! Remember, He is the Head, but we are the feet. Note that the body of Messiah will crush hasatan's head under their feet (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 the writers of the B'rit Chadasha saw within it a prophecy of the body of Messiah. This week's sidra teaches the same lesson. Adonai will inflict His vengeance on His adversaries using His people!

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).

⁸ There is a Parsha P'tuchah type break after the first three words of verse one in Chapter 26.

⁹ Description of the people's sin.

¹⁰ It was harlotry.

¹¹ The people participated in feasts to the gods of Moab, they ate with the Moabites and they worshipped the Gods of the Moabites.

¹² This was a grievous sin, because we know that the Holy One required Am Yisrael to eat a kosher diet. It is highly unlikely that the Moabites were eating kosher. Therefore, the Torah hints (Remez) that the people have actually broken the dietary commandments by just stating that they ate with the Moabites.

¹³ Judgment against the sinners.

¹⁴ Some from Am Yisrael and some from Moab.

¹⁵ No it hasn't. So far thousands of Israelites have been punished, but only one Moabite has been punished.

¹⁶ The slaying of Zimri (an Israelite) and Cozbi (a Midianite).

¹⁷ We have seen that there were two groups of sinners, Am Yisrael and the pagans. So far, only thousands of Israelites have been judged. The appeasement of the Holy One's wrath through the slaying of an Israelite and a Midianite suggests that perfect judgment should involve sinners from both groups! Therefore, we should expect judgment to fall on a larger number of Moabites/Midianites.

¹⁸ Sin and judgment.

¹⁹ Reward for righteousness.

²⁰ The Holy One's.

²¹ Numbers 26:2 states that Am Yisrael was commanded to count the males 20 years and over who are able to go out to war.

²² The census in Numbers 26 is more extensive, counting even the number of the names of the families, whereas the census of Numbers 1 did not specify names of families.

²³ This census includes the names of families, because the purpose of this census is to count the people to determine ***how to divide the Land!***

²⁴ Only 1,000 per tribe, for a total of 12,000.

²⁵ It supports the conclusion, because it doesn't make sense to count all the men (down to the family) in preparation for a war with Midyan, if you only send 12,000. Adonai had only ordered 12,000 to be sent.

²⁶ They died and will not be able to inherit the Land.

²⁷ Both involve a reward/blessing for righteous behavior. Those who are still alive and didn't die because of rebellion against the Holy One would receive a land inheritance, just as Pinchas behaved righteously and received a covenant of peace.

²⁸ The subject is land inheritance, which was the purpose for the census of Numbers 26.

²⁹ Yes they are. They are more closely related to judgment. Moses missed out on the blessing of leading Am Yisrael because he "rebelled against" the Holy One's commandment.

³⁰ Yes they are. They are more closely related to reward/blessing. Joshua was allowed to enter the Land specifically because he remained faithful to the Holy One in the incident of the spies.

³¹ Yes, the continual burnt offering is mentioned in almost every Parsha.

³² This word, corban, is the Hebrew word for offering used extensively throughout Parashat Vayikra. For example, the word translated offering in Lev 1:2, 10; 3:1 (and many others) is the Hebrew word corban.

³³ Women.

³⁴ The purpose for the census was to provide a basis for the apportionment of the Land.

³⁵ In both events 1) the sin occurred after the people had grown impatient, 2) the people worship a false god, 3) the people make a festival or false Mo'edim to a false god, 4) they sacrificed to a false god, 5) they ate sacrifices to a false god, 6) they prostrated themselves to a false god and 6) Adonai's anger flared up.

³⁶ In both stories 1) a grievous sin of a sexual nature was committed, 2) a census was taken in both stories after the sin, and 3) both stories have a Parsha break in the middle of a verse!

³⁷ Lost reference.

³⁸ Adonai's vengeance.

³⁹ Just as Jeremiah was appointed to destroy other nations and kingdoms, so likewise, Am Yisrael was Adonai's instrument of judgment upon the nations of Canaan.

⁴⁰ The prophet stated that all [nations] who try to devour Am Yisrael will have to bear their guilt. This is what happened to Midyan in our sidra this week. Midyan opposed Am Yisrael and Midyan bore that guilt.

⁴¹ 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.

⁴² To those living in the last generation!

⁴³ To the Last Generation!

⁴⁴ Because of Balak's testimony that whoever Balaam blessed was blessed and whoever Balaam cursed was cursed.

⁴⁵ Yes, the false prophet.

⁴⁶ In Revelation 2:12-14, Yeshua stated that there were those in Pergamos who espoused the doctrine of Balaam!

⁴⁷ Numbers 25:17-18 states that Midyan 's plan was a conspiracy. It was a well-planned and thought out deception! They tempted Am Yisrael with allurements of the flesh.

⁴⁸ Yes, hasatan.

⁴⁹ By getting Am Yisrael to have sexual relations with them.

⁵⁰ Yes, Revelation 17-18 is all about a harlot who has seduced Adonai's people, just as the Moabites and Midianites did!

⁵¹ He chose 12,000 men, 1,000 from each tribe. In Revelation, Adonai chooses 12,000 from each tribe for His army!

⁵² It is also the day of His vengeance.

⁵³ The Scripture states that judgment begins in Adonai's house first. Then He deals with the sinners.