

Mishpachah Beit Midrash

An Introduction to the Parashat HaShavuah
(Weekly Torah Portion)

Understanding the Torah From a Thematic Perspective

Shemot (Exodus)



By Tony Robinson

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

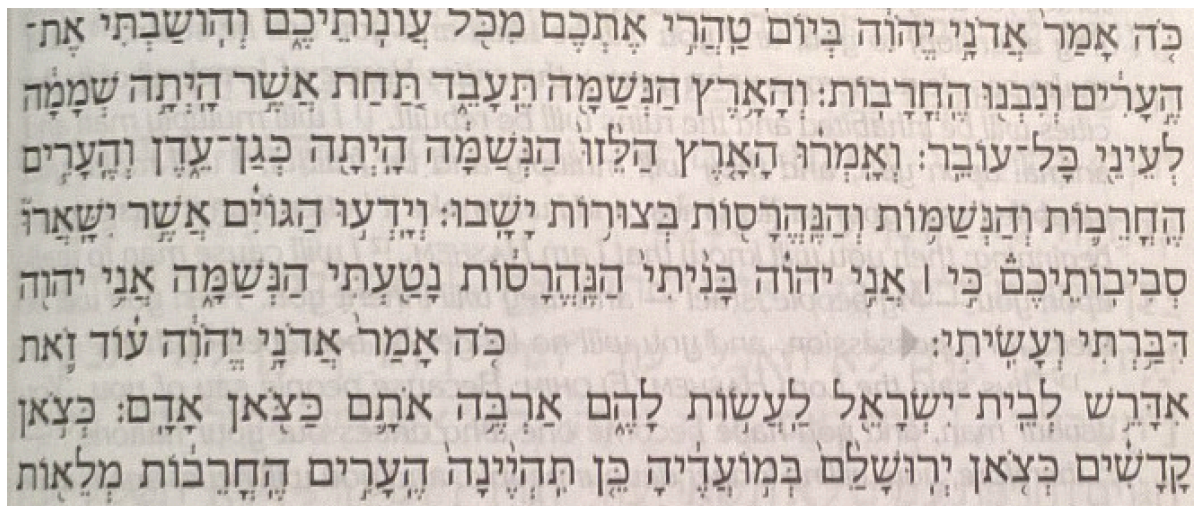
Welcome to Mishpachah Beit Midrash, the Family House of Study. Each Shabbat¹ we gather in our home and study the Scriptures, specifically the Torah.² It's a fun time of receiving revelation from the Ruach HaKodesh³. Everyone joins in—adults and children—as we follow the Parashat HaShavuah⁴ schedule.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

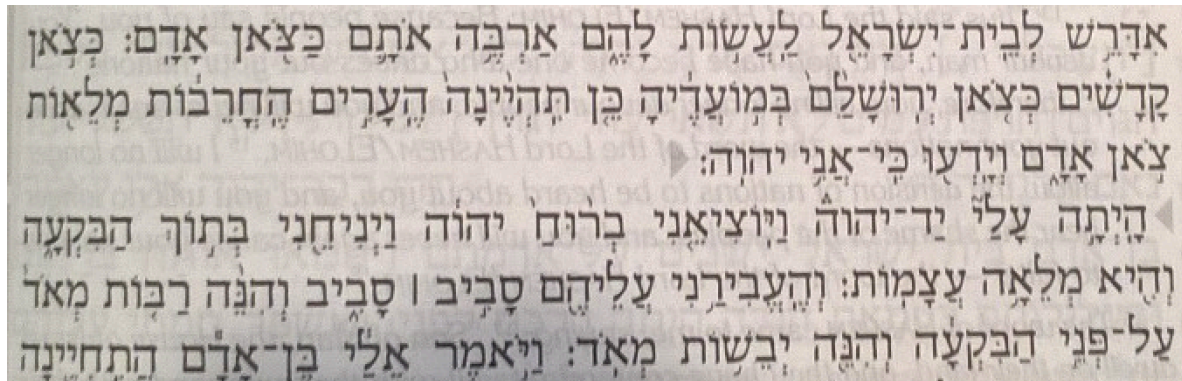
Thematic analysis of Scripture is based on the following premises. 1) Moses wrote the Torah as five *separate* books as the Ruach HaKodesh inspired him. 2) Since Adonai had him separate those words into five separate books, we surmise that each book has a unique message or theme. 3) Within each book,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

שְׁמוֹת

Shemot

Shemot 1:1 - 6:1

(Exodus 1:1 - 6:1)

This Week's Parshiot

- Shemot 1:1 - 1:7 פ
- Shemot 1:8 - 1:22 פ
- Shemot 2:1 - 2:22 פ
- Shemot 2:23 - 2:25 כ
- Shemot 3:1 - 4:17 פ
- Shemot 4:18 - 6:1 פ

Understanding the Parsha

Shemot 2:1 - 2:22

In this section we will analyze one parsha to discover its primary theme and how that theme relates to the rest of the Torah.

Objective—*Learn how to interpret the main theme of a Parsha. Find other Scriptures thematically connected with the Parsha under examination. Understand how the thematic connections help you to interpret the significance of the Parsha under examination.*

- I. In order to determine the overall theme of a passage, it's good to outline it and study the topics of the outline first. Read the passage and establish a general outline of the flow of events.
 - A. 2:1-10—Moses escaped death
 - B. 2:11-15—Moses in conflict
 - C. 2:16-22—Moses' life in exile
- II. Moses Escaped Death
 - A. Can you think of any Scriptures thematically related to verses 1-4?⁸
 - B. Based on the thematic connection above, what do you think is the main theme of verses 1-4?⁹
 - C. In this instance, note how we used a thematic connection *to another Parsha* to help us interpret the events.
- III. Moses in Conflict
 - A. How is the story of verses 11-12 thematically related to verses 13-14?¹⁰
 - B. Based on the thematic connection above, what do you think is the main theme of verses 11-15?¹¹
 - C. In this instance, note how we used a thematic connection *within* the Parsha to help us interpret the events.
- IV. Moses' Life in Exile
 - A. How is the story of verses 16-22 thematically related to the theme of verses 11-15?¹²
 - B. What is the significance of this connection?¹³
 - C. What other Scriptures from Genesis are thematically related to verses 15b and 21? Note the well!¹⁴
- V. Moses the Leader
 - A. Read the following verses (Exodus 2:11-22; 3:10; and 4:18) and think of a thematic connection between another character in the Torah! Here's some help.
 1. In Exodus 2:13-14 Moses is in conflict with one of his "brothers".
 2. In Exodus 2:13-14 Moses is rejected by one of his "brothers," who states, "who made you judge and ruler over us."
 3. Exodus 2:15 and 22 show that Moses flees and lives in exile (Midian) from His brothers.
 4. Exodus 2:16 and 21 show that Moses married the daughter of a priest.
 5. Exodus 2:11 and 4:18 show that Moses went to see how his brothers were doing.
 6. In Exodus 4:29-31 Moses is re-united with his brethren who now accept his leadership.
 - B. In case you didn't get the thematic connections, here they are.
 1. Was not Joseph in conflict with his brothers?

2. Wasn't Joseph rejected (first time he was with them) by his brothers?
 3. Wasn't Joseph sent in exile, away from his brothers when he was taken to Egypt?
 4. Didn't Joseph marry the daughter of the *priest of On*?
 5. Wasn't Joseph sent to see how his brothers were doing in Shechem?
 6. Wasn't Joseph accepted by his brothers when they were reunited and didn't they also accept his leadership the second time?
- C. Now, I ask you, why are these thematic connections so numerous and so specific?¹⁵

VI. The Theme of This Parsha

- A. First, through thematic analysis, note the numerous thematic connections to the character of Moses and his call to lead Israel.
 - B. Then, note his two foiled attempts to act in that leadership role.
 - C. The end result was exile for 40 years.
 - D. Using my original outline I would summarize the Parsha as follows.
 1. Moses Escaped Death—This section focuses on the preservation of Moses [remember circumstances related to his birth] in order to lead Israel.
 2. Moses in Conflict—This section focuses on his sense of inner calling to lead Israel [remember incidents of conflict in Egypt]
 3. Moses Life in Exile—This section focuses on the exile of the would-be leader.
- Thus, although Moses is clearly designated to lead Israel out of bondage, it seems that for some reason, his timing may not have been correct. A short phrase that may capture these three concepts, may be ***Moses' False Start at Leadership?*** Can you think of another? My analysis isn't necessarily the best.

Searching the Parshiot

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

- I. Read Exodus 3:1-6.
 - A. How is the fact that Adonai spoke from a "burning bush" thematically connected to his revelation to Abraham?¹⁶
 - B. How is Adonai's revelation to Moses different than how He revealed Himself to our Fathers?¹⁷
 1. When we contrast how Adonai is beginning to reveal Himself to Israel now, with how He revealed Himself in the past, we will begin to see some big differences. We will follow this emerging theme of *approachability to Adonai* closely, as it will become a primary topic throughout the rest of the Torah. This is it's one of the first clear instances of this theme.

- II. Miscellaneous Thematic Connections Throughout the Scriptures—Here are some thematic connections for your perusal. These suggested by my wife and children. I am listing them so that you can get a flavor for how to see them. After going through this list, see if you can come up with any on your own.
- A. Moses led the children of Israel out of slavery || Yeshua leads us out of slavery to sin.
 - B. Moses trained forty years in the desert || The children of Israel were tested forty years in the wilderness || Yeshua, the Good Shepherd, was tested forty days in the wilderness.
 - C. Joseph took Yeshua down to Egypt until those seeking His life had passed away || Moses was in Midian until those seeking his life had passed away.
 - D. In Exodus 4:8, Adonai gave Moses signs/miracles to perform so that if the children of Israel don't believe his message, they'll believe because of the signs/miracles || Yeshua told people that they should believe Him because of the miracles He did.
 - E. Moses demonstrated that he had power over leprosy || Yeshua also had power over leprosy, which was known to be a sign of the Messiah.
- III. We saw two examples of a flight to Egypt by someone destined to lead others. After the death of those who sought their lives, the future leader returned to begin their leadership role. This theme is not unique to types of the Messiah.
- A. Read [I Kings 11:14-22](#). After reading this story, determine how this story is thematically connected to the story of Joseph (son of Jacob), Yeshua and Moses' flight to Egypt. After coming up with some connections examine the following:
 - 1. In all three stories, all of the male children were killed!
 - 2. In all three stories, someone who was destined to be ruler of their people had to flee to Egypt in order to spare their lives!
 - 3. In the story of Hadad the Edomite and Moses, they were both raised in Pharaoh's court!
 - 4. Although Joseph was sold into slavery (as opposed to fleeing there), Joseph is still thematically connected to the story of Hadad as follows. Both of them were given a wife who was part of the ruling class of Egypt.¹⁸
 - 5. Both Hadad and Joseph found favor in Pharaoh's eyes!
 - 6. Hadad's son, Genubath, was weaned in Pharaoh's house, just as Moses, the adopted son of Pharaoh's daughter, was reared in Pharaoh's house!
 - 7. Moses, Hadad and Yeshua all returned to their homeland after the deaths of those who had persecuted them!
 - B. Now read [I Kings 11:39-40](#). Does this story look familiar? Of course it does. So what's going on here? I've mentioned these connections because I want to impress upon you the importance of understanding how to read the Scriptures thematically. After reading the examples above, it should be extremely obvious that the Holy One recorded these stories, with their connections, on purpose. They help teach us the general principal that sometimes, those destined for leadership are molded in the crucible of persecution. Each of these future leaders spent time fleeing for their lives. Someone wanted to kill them to prevent their rule; however, by fleeing to Egypt, their lives were spared. These examples also

show us the role that Egypt plays. Egypt is a picture of the world. At this point, I don't fully understand the full meaning of the connections above; however, I know that they are intentional and important. Might you have more understanding concerning the meaning of these connections? If not, don't worry, in time, Adonai will show us all things.

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. What theme in verses 1:4-5 is thematically connected with a theme of the Torah reading?¹⁹
- II. What theme in verse 1:6 is thematically connected with a theme of the Torah reading?²⁰
- III. What theme in verse 2:1-3 is thematically connected with a theme of the Torah reading?²¹

If you would like to explore more information about connections between the Torah portion and the Haftarah reading, then go to the *Haftarah Connections* link on our website under *The Weekly Torah Portion*. You will be able to download a document that will show you numerous Scriptures from the Haftarah reading so that you can determine how they are thematically connected to the Torah portion. The answers are provided as endnotes. This is an excellent exercise to help you begin thinking thematically.

Messiah in the Parsha

Objective—Learn how the Torah teaches about the life and ministry of Yeshua HaMashiach. Yeshua said that Moses wrote about Him²². Even though the Torah never mentions the word Messiah, this section will help you see the Messiah in the Torah. This can primarily be done using thematic analysis and Midrash. As Yeshua walked with the two disciples along the road to Emmaus, could He have used some of the following analysis to show them **how** Moses [first five books only] taught about Him?

- I. In *Understanding the Parsha*, we thematically analyzed the Scripture from the level of pashat (literal interpretation). Now let's use the Midrash to see if we can find teaching

concerning the person and work of the Messiah, Yeshua. In section II of *Understanding the Parsha* we saw how Moses escaped death. Now let's see one of the most beautiful ways the Torah points us to the Messiah. As we learned in the book of B'reishit (Genesis), anytime we see 1) pictures of resurrection, 2) pictures of renewed life as a result of deliverance from impending death and 3) pictures of victory and 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.

II. The ***Resurrection and the Life*** in the Torah

- A. The first **LIVING** things (plants, grass, etc.) were created on day **THREE**!
- 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!
- C. Jonah, who was in the belly of a great fish, should have been dead. But on the **THIRD** day he came forth **ALIVE**!
- D. The akeida (binding of Isaac) found in Genesis 22—Abraham was supposed to offer Isaac as a 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 says that Abraham received Isaac from the dead through **RESURRECTION** figuratively!

III. Read Exodus 2:1-10 again.

- A. What was Pharaoh's decree concerning the birth of male babies?²³
- B. What was supposed to happen to Moses?²⁴
- C. How long did Moses' mother hide him?²⁵
- D. By taking Moses out of the Nile River, what did the daughter of Pharaoh do?²⁶
- E. So we see the Torah has painted a picture of a child, Moses, who was supposed to die. His mother hid him for **THREE** months, then she obeyed Pharaoh's command by casting him into the water (in the basket). But Pharaoh's death sentence was cancelled when his daughter took Moses out of the river, and he was given **LIFE**!
- F. What does this story tell us?²⁷
 1. Through this story the Torah is trying to teach us that Moses' life will be a picture of the Messiah! We will continue to comment on how Moses' life is a picture of the Messiah as we study future lessons.
 2. We also learned in Genesis that the events in the lives of our Fathers will be repeated in the lives of their descendants. How is this event in the life of Moses a prophecy of a future event relating to the Messiah?²⁸

IV. We saw in Genesis that Joseph's entire life is a prophecy of the work of the Messiah. We saw in section five of *Understanding the Parsha* that Moses' life is thematically connected with Joseph's. What is the Messianic significance of that thematic connection?²⁹

V. Moses, a Shadow of Messiah—As we read the beginning of Exodus we note that even though Moses is a Hebrew, his upbringing is totally different than that of his brethren. Is the Torah teaching us anything about the Messiah through this contrast?

- A. As a New Covenant believer, what do we know about the Torah's picture of the children of Israel in slavery to Egypt?³⁰

- B. In order for Moses to lead the children of Israel out of Egyptian bondage, what status change did he need to make?³¹
- C. What is the Torah trying to teach us about the Messiah through Moses as you consider points A & B above?
1. The fact that Moses did not participate in the Egyptian slavery is a picture of how Yeshua did not partake in our sin nature. The Hebrew slavery was a picture of man's slavery to sin. Yeshua did not participate in slavery to sin any more than Moses partook of the Hebrew slavery.
 2. The fact that Moses had to step down from his princely position and identify with his brethren, the Hebrews, is a picture of how Yeshua emptied Himself of His divinity so that He could identify with us and be obedient unto death. In other words, Moses is a picture of the Philippians 2:5-8 experience of Yeshua!

Through Torah pictures and midrash we can see clearly how the Torah teaches us, in ways we can understand, the deep mysteries concerning Yeshua our Messiah. Truly, Moses was the greatest prophet of the Messiah, even though he never once even mentioned the word Messiah!

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 These verses are thematically connected to the account of the flood. 1) Moses was placed into a basket just as Noah was placed into an ark. 2) In both cases the ones in the "ark" were preserved from death by water. 3) Both "arks" were smeared with pitch.

⁹ In the flood account Adonai 1) sends a judgment against the ungodly, 2) saves/preserves the righteous through the same judgment, 3) establishes a covenant with the one saved/preserved and 4) the ones saved/preserved go on to establish a new earth in hopes that mankind will walk according to Adonai's commandments. Since Adonai is about to 1) send judgment against the ungodly [Egyptians], 2) save/preserve the righteous [Israel] through the same judgment, 3) establish a covenant with the one saved/preserved [Israel] and 4) the ones saved/preserved [Israel] go(es) on to establish a new land in hopes that mankind will walk according to Adonai's commandments [Torah], could the Torah be hinting that the theme of these verses is that Adonai wants to use Moses in a role similar to Noah's?

¹⁰ In both stories Moses is trying to defend the cause of the weaker/oppressed person (the one who is at a disadvantage).

¹¹ Since both stories relate how Moses is standing up for the oppressed, I think these verses are trying to teach us about Moses' character. They teach that 1) Moses hated injustices, 2) he cared for the disadvantaged, 3) he could identify with the weak, and 4) he was a man of action willing to remedy the situation.

¹² Once again we see Moses coming to the rescue of a weaker/disadvantaged person (the women at the well vs. the male shepherds).

¹³ This is now the third story relating to Moses' character and sense of justice. Therefore, the Torah is making a great effort to get us to understand Moses' character and what motivates him.

¹⁴ These Scriptures show that Moses met his wife at a well. In Genesis 24 Abraham's servant meets Isaac's wife, Rebecca, at a well. In Genesis 29 Jacob met Rachael, his future wife at a well. Furthermore, in all three instances a significant event of kindness was demonstrated. Rebecca filled hoisted almost 250 gallons of water for the servant's camels. Jacob moved the huge rock from over the well mouth by himself. Moses defended the daughters of Jethro.

¹⁵ Because the Torah is trying to teach us (at the pashat [literal] level) that Moses is being called to fulfill a role similar to Joseph's. Moses will be instrumental in securing life for the Israelites just as Joseph preserved their lives during the seven years of famine! The Torah teaches this through the thematic connections.

¹⁶ In Genesis 15:9-17 Adonai appeared as a smoking furnace. These are two instances where Adonai's appearance is associated with fire. This will become a significant theme throughout Scripture. So let's keep an eye on it.

¹⁷ In this account there is an element of un-approachability between Adonai and Moses ("do not come closer"). This was not present throughout Genesis.

¹⁸ Joseph's wife was the daughter of one of the priests of Egypt.

¹⁹ Jeremiah is called to be a prophet just as Moses received his calling to be prophet and spokesman for Adonai.

²⁰ Jeremiah was reluctant to accept the calling just as Moses made excuses concerning his calling.

²¹ An allusion is made back to the time of the Exodus when Israel was Adonai's first born as it states in Exodus 4:22-23. Also, judgment was promised to those who would harm Israel just as judgment came to Egypt.

²² 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.

²³ All male babies were to be thrown to their death into the Nile river.

²⁴ He was supposed to die.

²⁵ Three months.

²⁶ She took one who was supposed to die and gave him LIFE.

²⁷ This story tells us that the events surrounding Moses' life relate in some manner to the Messiah! This powerful theme should be like a neon light pointing you to the Messiah.

²⁸ In Matthew 2:16 we read that King Herod slew all male babies two years of age and below in an attempt to destroy Yeshua the deliverer just as Pharaoh had tried to destroy Moses by slaughtering male infants.

²⁹ Since the Torah has linked Moses to Joseph thematically and since Joseph is such a powerful Messianic shadow, we should expect Moses to also be an important shadow of the Messiah. We will examine this theme more as we study.

³⁰ The Egyptian slavery of the children of Israel is a picture of the slavery of all mankind to sin! Just as the children of Israel could not deliver themselves from Egyptian bondage, neither can mankind deliver himself from the bondage of sin (Romans 6-8).

³¹ He was born and raised as a prince in Egypt. Acts 7:22-23 states that as an Egyptian, Moses was mighty in word and deed. However, before he became the leader of Israel, he had to leave his high princely Egyptian position and become like his brethren, a Hebrew. When he went before Pharaoh, he did so as a lowly Hebrew, not a prince of Egypt.