

Mishpachah Beit Midrash

An Introduction to the Parashat HaShavuah
(Weekly Torah Portion)

Understanding the Torah From a Thematic Perspective

Vayechi
(And He Lived)



By Tony Robinson

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

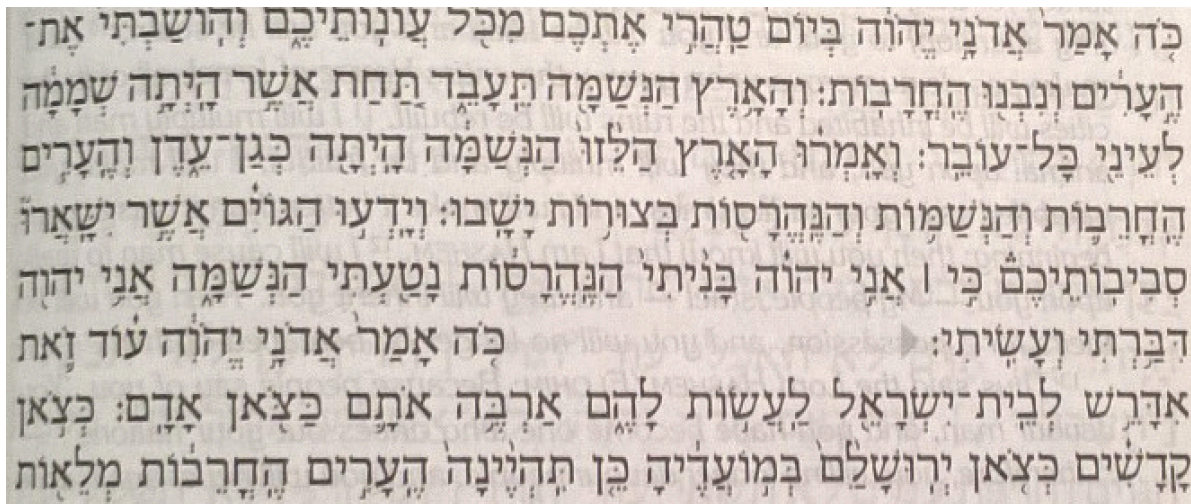
Welcome to Mishpachah Beit Midrash, the Family House of Study. Each Shabbat¹ we gather in our home and study the Scriptures, specifically the Torah.² It's a fun time of receiving revelation from the Ruach HaKodesh³. Everyone joins in—adults and children—as we follow the Parashat HaShavuah⁴ schedule.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

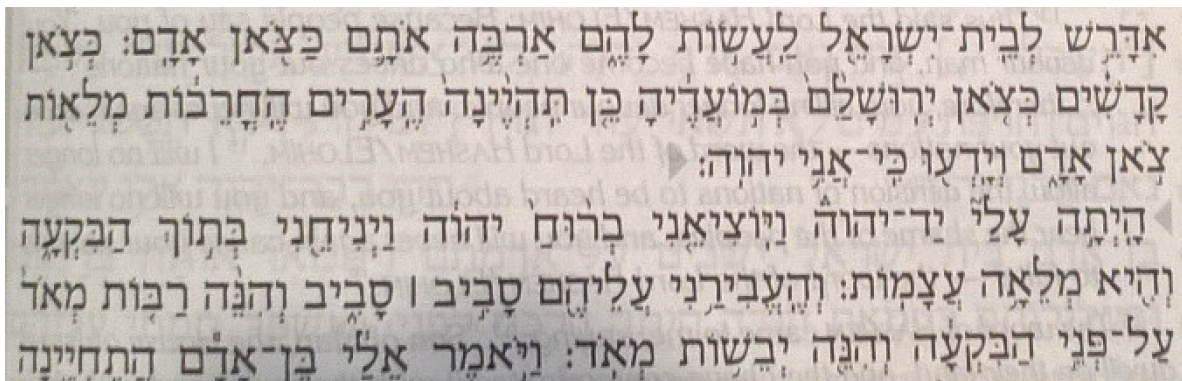
Thematic analysis of Scripture is based on the following premises. 1) Moses wrote the Torah as five *separate* books as the Ruach HaKodesh inspired him. 2) Since Adonai had him separate those words into five separate books, we surmise that each book has a unique message or theme. 3) Within each book,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

וַיַּחְיֶי

Vayechi

(And He Lived)

Bereishit 47:28-50:26

(Genesis 47:28-50:26)

This Week's Parshiot

- Genesis 47:28-31 פ
- Genesis 48:1-22 פ
- Genesis 49:1-4 פ
- Genesis 49:5-7 פ
- Genesis 49:8-12 פ
- Genesis 49:13 פ
- Genesis 49:14-15 ו
- Genesis 49:16-17 ו
- Genesis 49:18 ו
- Genesis 49:19 ו
- Genesis 49:20 ו
- Genesis 49:21 ו
- Genesis 49:22-26 פ
- Genesis 49:27-50:26 פ

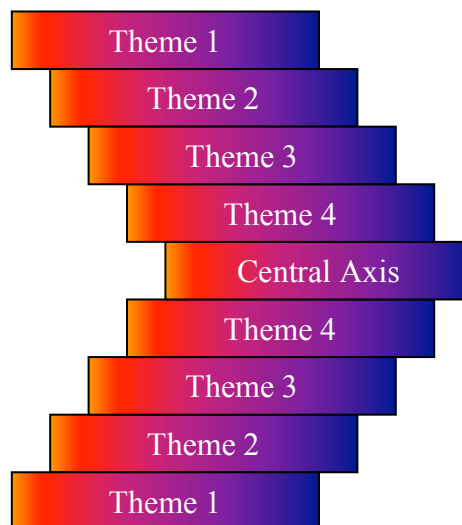
Understanding the Last Four Torah Portions of Bereishit (Genesis) at the Pashat Level

[Genesis 47:28-50:26](#)

Objective—Learn how to 1) interpret the main theme of a Parsha, 2) make thematic connections to that Parsha and 3) learn how to gain greater understanding of the Parsha under consideration through its thematic connections to other portions of scripture.

The Final Days of Jacob and Joseph

- I. Read [Genesis 47:28-50:26](#). Compare the first four verses of this passage to the last three verses. Do you see the connection between these two passages? If so, then 1) how are they related and 2) what does the fact that they appear at the beginning and ending of this week's sidra suggest to you?⁸ That's right. Remember, a chiasmic structure is a pattern organized as follows. Generally, a story is divided into two halves. The themes of the first half of the literary unit are repeated in the second half of the unit in reverse order. Furthermore, the first and second halves of the story usually point us to the most important part of the story, the central axis.



I am convinced that chiasmic structures are one of the main thematic tools used to help us understand the thematic flow of the Scriptures. In fact, most of the stories of the Tanakh move from one chiasmic structure to another. Furthermore, many smaller chiasmic structures are “nested” within larger ones that span over two, three or more books! This week, we will rely upon the following chiasmic structure to guide us in our analysis. You may want to try your hand at this. See if you can decipher the chiasmic structure found in this week's sidra.

- A) Genesis 47:28-31—Before dying, Jacob requested that his bones be taken up from Egypt
 - B) Genesis 48:1-6—Perceived Jacob was ill; Joseph and his sons appeared before Jacob; Jacob commanded his sons
 - C) Genesis 48:7—Rachel was buried on the road to Ephrath
 - D) Genesis 48:8-20—Jacob "saw" Ephraim and Manasseh; the eulogy concerning Joseph; Manasseh and Ephraim to become a multitude
 - E) Genesis 48:21-22—Jacob about to die; talked of securing land of the Amorites
 - F) Genesis 49:1-2—Prophecy of the future
 - G) Genesis 49:3-4—Reuven
 - H) Genesis 49:5-7—Simeon and Levi to be dispersed/separated/scattered among his brothers (within Israel)
 - I) Genesis 49:8-12—Blessings of leadership to Judah
 - J) Genesis 49:13—Zebulun
 - K) Genesis 49:14-15—Issachar, impoverished
 - L) Genesis 49:16-17—Dan described in warfare (causing the rider to fall backwards)
 - M) Genesis 49:18—I have waited for Thy Salvation O YHVH!***
 - L') Genesis 49:19—Gad described in warfare (at first overcome, but later, he overcomes his enemy)
 - K') Genesis 49:20—Asher, abundance
 - J') Genesis 49:21—Naphtali
 - I') Genesis 49:22-25—Blessings of fruitfulness to Joseph
 - H') Genesis 49:26—Joseph was exiled/separated from his brothers
 - G') Genesis 49:27—Benjamin
 - F') Genesis 49:28—Prophetic blessing
 - E') Genesis 49:29-33—Jacob was about to die; talked of securing the land (cave of Machpelah)
 - D') Genesis 50:1-11—Canaanites saw their mourning; Jacob was eulogized; It was an imposing company (large multitude)
 - C') Genesis 50:12-14—Jacob was buried in Machpelah
 - B') Genesis 50:15-21—Perceived Jacob was dead; Jacob's other son's appeared before Joseph with "command" from Jacob
 - A') Genesis 50:22-26— Before dying, Joseph requested that his bones be taken up from Egypt
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- A. Do you know how points G – K are thematically related?⁹ Do you know how points L – J' are thematically related?¹⁰ Finally, do you see how points I' – G' are thematically related?¹¹ As you can see, this is a highly structured text. It is not haphazard in the least!
- B. Note how almost every theme in the first half of the structure is thematically connected to the identical theme in the second half of the structure! There were a couple of themes I could not decipher, so I just listed the tribe. But be assured, they are there. I just couldn't see the connection this time.
- C. Note how points A – E (Genesis 47:28-48:22) and E' – A' (Genesis 49:29-50:26) both deal with the last words of the dying and their burial.

II. Read [Genesis 47:28-31](#). What passage can you think of that is strongly thematically connected to this?¹² Read [Genesis 24:1-4 and 12](#), a passage from Chayei Sarah. How many thematic connections can you make?

- Both passages speak of a *Patriarch* who was *old* and advanced in years.
- In both passages, a Patriarch asked someone to *swear* by placing their *hand under his thigh*.
- Both passages use the phrase, "*kindness and truth*."
- In both passages, the subject involved someone's *location*.
- In both passages, the Patriarch is concerned that someone is taken from a city of the world to Eretz Yisrael.

A. As you can see, these passages are DEFINITELY thematically related. In what ways are they different?

- In Genesis 24:1-4, the Patriarch is concerned about the location of the spouse of his heir. In Genesis 49:28-31, the Patriarch is concerned about the location of his bones.
- In Genesis 24:1-4, the Patriarch sent his servant. In Genesis 49:28-31, the Patriarch sent his son.
- In Genesis 24:1-4, the Patriarch asked that someone be taken *from* their family. In Genesis 49:28-31, the Patriarch asked that someone be taken *to* their family.
- Genesis 24:1-4 concerned life (securing a bride for the heir to make descendants, thereby birthing a nation). Genesis 49:28-31 concerned death.

The key to thematic analysis is to compare and contrast scriptures. This process will lead you to the Torah's wisdom. For example, through our contrasts, we see that the wife who is to be transported to Eretz Yisrael is associated with life, whereas the bones that are to be transported to Eretz Yisrael are associated with death. Where else in the Torah do we see a wife thematically connected to life?¹³ This analysis also hints at the creation of Chava (Eve) for Adam, because he was caused to sleep (a picture of death) so that Adonai could bring his wife to life—she was fashioned from his side (rib=*bone*).

III. **The Blessing**—I want you to read the following chronologically-selected passages, with the goal of making a thematic connection to a previous story in Genesis. Please read the following in order: [Genesis 48:1-2, 10, 13-19; and 50:12-18](#).

A. Of what do these collective verses remind you?¹⁴ That's right! Note the following thematic connections to Parashat Toldot, Genesis 27:18-45:

- Isaac and Jacob were both old.
- Two sons approached both of them to receive a blessing.
- Both Isaac and Jacob could not see well.
- Both Isaac and Jacob asked who it was that had approached them.
- In both passages, the Patriarch kissed the lad to be blessed.
- In both blessings, the younger son was placed before the older.
- In both passages, the younger was prophesied to be greater than the older.
- In both passages, someone feared retribution from the other.

- Genesis 27:41 states that Esau “*harbored* hatred” against Jacob. So likewise, in Genesis 50:15, the brothers think that Joseph will “*harbor* hatred” against them. The words for *harbored* and *harbor* have the same Hebrew root!

Wow! Are these just a coincidence? I think not. The Holy One has many lessons to teach us. Let's see if we can just glean just one more deeper insight from these connections.

- B. In our analogy, who is thematically connected to Jacob—this is trickier than you may think?¹⁵ If you said Ephraim was a picture of Jacob, thinking also that Manasseh was a picture of Esau, I understand your reasoning. However, I don't think the scriptures are making the connection between Jacob and Esau as forerunners of Ephraim and Manasseh. I think the real issue is between Joseph and his brothers for the following reasons:

- The two tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh actually represent the singular Joseph. The reason why Jacob blessed them is because *he wanted to give Joseph the double portion of the birthright*. He did this by adopting Joseph's two sons and blessing them, thereby giving Joseph a double blessing through them.
- Both Ephraim and Manasseh are blessed with the same blessing. It's just that Ephraim will be physically larger. Remember, Israel will bless "like Ephraim AND Manasseh." Therefore, Manasseh is not really a picture of Esau who missed out on the blessing.

At this point in our comparison, I think Jacob is thematically related to Ephraim and Manasseh—who really are just substitutes for Joseph—because they (he) received the blessing, while the brothers are thematically related to Esau, who didn't get the special blessing that Jacob just doled out.

- C. So far, our picture looks great until we carry our analogy through to Genesis 50:12-18. At the end of the story, it's the brothers who thought Joseph wanted to kill them just as Jacob knew Esau wanted to kill him. According to Genesis 50:12-18, who represents Esau and who represents Jacob and why?¹⁶ Sounds off doesn't it? Well, let's really consider what the Torah is trying to show us.
- D. How does Joseph respond to his brothers' plan to save their own necks by making up a story ostensibly from their father? It states that he cried. Now why did he cry? Consider the following before you answer. Joseph had provided for their every need for the past seventeen years, yet his brothers did not think him genuine! Now that their father is dead, we see their true hearts. They don't believe Joseph has really forgiven them. They think he will strike them in vengeance. As Rav Chanoch Waxman has put it:

As emphasized above, Joseph cries in response to his brothers sending a message containing a fabricated deathbed command (mitzvah) by Yaakov [Jacob] to forgive his brothers and refrain from vengeance (50:16-17). Apparently, he does not send any message in return nor respond to his brothers. In response to the absence of any return message, and obviously fearing the worst, the brothers come personally before Joseph (50:18).¹⁷

So why did Joseph cry? I think it's because of what our thematic analysis has shown us. The brothers really thought Joseph wanted vengeance! Well, did Joseph want vengeance? Of course not! His heart was sincere. He had truly forgiven them. But

guess what? They didn't believe it! They completely misjudged and mischaracterized him, just as our thematic analysis has shown. Our analysis equates Joseph with Esau, which we know is not true. So likewise, the brothers have equated Joseph with Esau in that they think Joseph wants to harm them. This also is not true. The brothers' false view of Joseph is clearly seen in the thematic connection between Joseph and Esau. It is a poignant picture of the false views of the brothers despite the love, grace, mercy and forgiveness that Joseph had showered upon them.

III. ***The Issue of the Firstborn***—Read [Genesis 49:3-4](#). Note how Jacob refers to Reuben as his firstborn. What is the significance of the phrase, “you cannot be foremost?”¹⁸ This text teaches us that Reuben lost his firstborn status because of his sin with Jacob’s concubine, Bilhah.

- A. The firstborn was generally entitled to the following privileges:
1. The firstborn received a double portion of the inheritance.
 2. The firstborn functioned as the family priest.
 3. The firstborn inherited the leadership role.

Therefore, we should pay close attention as we follow the blessings to see how these privileges are divided amongst the sons.

IV. ***Simeon and Levi***—Earlier, we noted that the theme of sin and punishment was a major theme of the book of Genesis. We saw a common theme connecting many of the punishments—the theme of scattering. We know that Genesis 49:5-7 refers to the time when Simeon and Levi killed the inhabitants of Shechem. Their punishment? Both of their tribes would be *scattered* within Eretz Yisrael. Neither Simeon nor Levi had their own land inheritance. There were certain cities scattered throughout Israel for the Levites. Furthermore, Simeon inherited a number of cities scattered throughout the land inheritance of Judah (see Joshua 19:1).

- A. Note how the theme of scattering or separation is connected to Genesis 49:26, which speaks of Joseph being separated from his brothers. The word translated “*separate, set apart or exiled* from your brothers,” is the Hebrew word nezir, נָזִיר, which is taken from the same root as the word for Nazirite (nazir), נָזִיר. A Nazirite was someone who had taken a special vow of separation unto the Holy One.
- B. Read [Numbers 6:1-21](#). Later, in Parashat Nasso, you will learn that the Nazirite vow enabled the average Israelite to *attain a degree of holiness equivalent to the High Priest’s*. The purpose was so that the individual could draw closer to Adonai during a period of separation. By calling Joseph a nezir, the Torah has obviously connected him to the Nazirite, who took a vow of separation. Well, did you know that the Torah refers to Joseph as a “Nazirite” two times? Also read [Deuteronomy 33:16](#).

- They shall be ***on the head*** of Joseph, And on the ***crown of the head*** of him who was ***separate*** from his brothers (Genesis 49:26).
- Let the blessing come ***on the head*** of Joseph, And on the ***crown of the head*** of him who was ***separate*** from his brothers (Deuteronomy 33:16).

Compare the words above (in bold/italics) to Numbers 6:7-8, which pertains to the Nazirite.

- He shall not make himself unclean even for his father or his mother, for his brother or his sister, when they die, because his ***separation to God is on his head***.⁸ All the days of his ***separation*** he shall be ***holy to the LORD*** (Numbers 6:7-8).

We can clearly see the connection through the usage of the words *on the head*, and the concept of *separation*.

In summary, Genesis 49:5-7 is thematically and chiastically related to Genesis 49:26. Both passages emphasize the theme of separation. The scriptures referenced above use the term separation with respect to Joseph's "Nazirite" status. Usually, when we think of the word separation within the context of the Nazirite vow, we think of separation from something (wine, grapes, dead bodies, etc.) unto Adonai. However, in the case of Joseph, the separation is said to be *from his brothers*!

- V. **Judah**—Read [Genesis 49:8-12](#). Earlier, we stated that the firstborn obtained the leadership role. We also saw that this function was not given to Reuben, the natural-born firstborn. Now we see that the leadership role has been given to Judah. Do you see the connection between this blessing of leadership and Judah's role in the reconciliation of the family?¹⁹
- A. Earlier, we saw that the double portion was given to Joseph through Ephraim and Manasseh. Remember, the double portion and leadership roles were normally given to the firstborn. We now see that these two blessings have been split between Judah and Joseph! Read [I Chronicles 5:1-2a](#). This passage confirms my assertion concerning the splitting of the blessings of the firstborn. As an aside, this is the basis of a major teaching concerning the splitting of the Two Houses of Israel into two kingdoms.
- B. How is Genesis 49:8-12 chiastically related and why?²⁰ Now we know why Joseph and Judah are chiastically connected—both of them were partakers of the blessings of the firstborn.
- C. Read [Genesis 49:22-26a](#). What are these verses describing?²¹ This is part of the blessing of the firstborn.
- D. Can you think of a passage that is thematically related to Genesis 49:25?²² Read [Genesis 27:28-29](#). This passage describes the blessing that Isaac ***intended on giving to Esau*** since Esau was ***the firstborn***. Therefore, we should expect this passage to help us understand what the firstborn was entitled to. What are the two main components of this blessing?²³ Now read the blessings given to Judah, then the blessings given to Joseph. Noting how each was blessed, explain what Jacob accomplished when he blessed Joseph and Judah?²⁴ Once again, we see excellent evidence to support the assertion that Jacob split the blessing of the firstborn between Joseph and Judah. You see? This is why Genesis 27:28-29 is so important. It describes the type of blessing given to the firstborn. Therefore, when we see blessings of fruitfulness (Genesis 27:28) given to Joseph, and blessings of leadership (Genesis 27:29) given to Judah, we know for sure that the blessing of the firstborn has been split between them. Normally, these two components of the one blessing would reside upon one individual.

In summary, once again we see the importance of the chiastic analysis. The chiastic structure is a literary technique that forces us to find the connection between Joseph and Judah. Thematic analysis helped us to understand why they were thematically connected in the chiastic structure. They both received a portion of the blessing of the firstborn!

- VI. Read [Genesis 49:16-17](#). What do these verses mean? They are difficult to understand, so let me quote the interpretation of the Artscroll Chumash:²⁵

“Jacob alluded prophetically to Dan’s descendant Samson, who single-handedly fought and defeated the Philistines and, in his time, brought unity to the people...*A serpent on the highway*. Rashi and Ramban apply the words to Samson, whose single-handed battle tactics corresponded closely to Jacob’s description. Like a serpent leaving its lair to attack travelers and then slithering back to its hiding place Samson waged a personal guerrilla-like war against the Philistines, catching them by surprise and going into hiding before they could counterattack...*So its rider falls*. The allusion is to Samson’s final victory, when—blind and in chains—he pulled down the pillars of the Philistine idol’s temple and caused it to collapse, killing himself and three thousand Philistines.”

- A. As you can see, the Rabbis make a connection to Samson (who was from the tribe of Dan) in this blessing. Now some of you may not agree with their interpretation; however, I think there is other evidence that helps support their assertion. What other thematic connection can you make to Samson based on the blessing given to Joseph?²⁶ That’s right. You may not think this is significant. If not, wait until the last section when we talk about Messiah Yeshua. ☺
- VII. Of course, we should always ask, “What is the central axis?”
- A. Read [Genesis 49:18](#)! Obviously, this verse has Messianic significance, because it is the Messiah who will bring the salvation of YHVH. Remember, these are blessings for the future. Specifically, Jacob said he would tell them of things that would happen to them in the latter days (Genesis 49:1). How is the fact that the blessings will find their ultimate fulfillment in the latter days thematically connected to the central axis?²⁷ You see, the latter days were a long way off when Jacob gave these prophecies/blessings. This is exactly the point exclaimed in the central axis—waiting (time element) for Your salvation. Therefore, although there may be an intermediate fulfillment of these prophecies, the ultimate fulfillment will not occur until the end of days.

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 [I Kings 2:1-12](#). 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 I Kings 2:1-2 thematically connected to the Torah portion?²⁸
- II. How is I Kings 2:5-9 thematically connected to the Torah portion?²⁹
- III. How is I Kings 2:11-12 a Messianic teaching?³⁰

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.

Understanding the Last Four Torah Portions of Bereishit (Genesis) at the Messianic Level

Objective—Learn how the Torah teaches about the life and ministry of Yeshua HaMashiach. Yeshua said that Moses wrote about Him³¹. 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.

- I. As I've stated before, the prophecies of the Torah (which are often hidden within the narratives) are only shadows of the realities. Therefore, they will be more "obscure" than the truth they point to. This is why you need to understand how to analyze the scriptures thematically. It is the theme of the prophecy that will help you see its Messianic significance. In other words, even though the Torah's shadows, pictures and allusions can be somewhat obscure and not as detailed, thematically, they will foreshadow the reality perfectly.
- II. Earlier, we noted that the central axis was obviously Messianic in scope. In fact, our chiastic structure contains many allusions that are clearly Messianic! Let us therefore examine the following portions of our chiastic structure—I, L, M and H'.

Chiastic Structure, Level I

- I. Level I mainly concerns the blessings given to Judah. Read [Genesis 49:8-12](#). We already know that Judah inherited the blessing of leadership, but the prophecy goes further.
 - A. Note the reference to warfare. What thematic connection to the Messiah can you make that shares the theme of warfare—hint, think of the earliest chapters of Genesis?³² Based on Genesis 3:14-15, we know that the salvation of the Messiah will involve warfare against hasatan in some manner. Could the references to Judah's hand being on his enemy's neck be an allusion to the Messiah's victory over His enemies? Let's dig further.
 - B. Note how Judah is referred to as an awesome lion, Genesis 49:9. How is this thematically connected to the Messiah?³³ So, who is the lion Jacob referred to in Genesis 49:9? It is obviously Yeshua. In other words, Jacob's prophecy pertained not only to Judah, not only to his descendants (the tribe of Judah), but to Messiah Yeshua Himself! He is the ultimate fulfillment of Jacob's prophecy. But wait, there's more!
 - C. Read [Genesis 49:10](#). This is a clear Messianic prophecy that the Messiah would be from the tribe of Judah—the scepter will not depart from Judah. And what is the meaning of the phrase, "until Shiloh comes?" Let me quote from the Artscroll Chumash:, page 279:

The Midrash explains that the word Shiloh is a composite of the words שִׁלּוֹ, [meaning] *a gift to him*, a reference to the King Messiah, to whom all nations will bring gifts.³⁴

Can you make a thematic connection to a New Covenant passage that captures the same thought?³⁵ That's right. In Matthew 2:1-12, we can read how the wise men *brought gifts* to Him who was born *King* of the Jews! Isn't that amazing! The fact that wise men from the nations brought gifts to the Messiah is taught prophetically in the word Shiloh. What's even more amazing is how the Rabbis' interpretation lines up exactly with the historical account of Yeshua's birth! I quoted from the Chumash because I wanted you to see how much wisdom the Rabbis are able to glean from just *one word*. The New Covenant Scriptures verify their understanding.

- D. Read [Genesis 49:11](#). Do you understand the Messianic significance of this verse? If you haven't guessed it, read [Zechariah 9:9](#) and [Isaiah 63:3](#). Have you guessed it now?³⁶ As you can see, the reference to the donkey in Genesis 49:11 is actually a prophecy of the first advent of the Messiah, who is from the tribe of Judah. He approached the city riding on a donkey. The reference to His garments being washed in blood is a prophecy of the day of judgment when Yeshua will return to render judgment upon His enemies. The thematic connections—from the writings of the prophets and the New Covenant Scriptures—to the words *donkey*, *garment*, *blood* and *wine*—used in the Torah portion—clearly demonstrate that Jacob's prophecy was Messianic in scope and not limited to Judah or his earthly descendants.

Chiastic Structure, Level L

- I. Earlier, we saw how the Rabbis interpreted the prophecy of Genesis 49:16-17 as referring to Samson. In the previous section, we saw that Messianic prophecy was clearly thematically connected to the theme of warfare. Now, here's a question. How is the prophecy of Dan thematically connected to the theme of warfare *and* the Messiah?³⁷ You see that? If we have made the correct connections, then we should expect to see some Messianic significance with respect to the tribe of Dan, possibly through Samson. Before looking to Samson, let's correctly define the Torah's foundational definition of salvation.
- II. When we, as Westerners, speak of salvation, we generally think of John 3:16. Furthermore, to the Western mind, salvation has the connotation of being saved from our sins so that we can go to heaven one day.³⁸ Our concept of salvation is more intangible, ethereal and other worldly. The Hebraic view (and the scriptural view) of salvation is totally at odds with our current Western mindset. I will quote to you from Marvin Wilson's book, *Our Father Abraham*:

The Hebrew verb *yasha* means "to save" or "to deliver," and the noun *yeshua'ah*, "salvation," derives from it. In the Hebrew Bible, this verb is not used in the sense of "escape to heaven." Rather, a careful study of its many occurrences reveals that the main idea is "to liberate," "to deliver from evil," or "to free from oppression."³⁹

In most instances, salvation was wrought when Father YHVH defeated Israel's enemies, either directly or through human agents. Here are two perfect examples from the book of I Samuel.

"And Jonathan spoke good of David unto Saul his father, and said unto him, Let not the king sin against his servant, against David; because he hath not sinned against thee, and because his works *have been* to thee-ward very good: For he did put his life in his hand, and slew the Philistine, **and the LORD wrought a great salvation for all Israel**: thou sawest *it*, and didst rejoice: wherefore then wilt thou sin against innocent blood, to slay David without a cause (I Samuel 19:4-5, emphasis mine)?"

And Hannah prayed, and said, My heart rejoiceth in the LORD, mine horn is exalted in the LORD: my mouth is enlarged over mine enemies; because **I rejoice in thy salvation** (I Samuel 2:1, emphasis mine).

In the first example, Biblical salvation was brought when David killed Goliath. In the second example, salvation was brought when Hannah was able to conceive. This enabled her to rise above Elchanah's other wife whom had been her constant antagonist, reminding her of her barrenness. My point? If we want to understand what is salvation, we need to look to the examples of salvation recorded in the Scriptures. If we want to understand how the Messiah has brought us salvation, shouldn't we look to the plethora of examples of salvation given throughout the Tanakh? Should it surprise us that the greatest pictures of the Messiah would be found in those stories depicting Am Yisrael's (the people of Israel) deliverance from earthly foes? Should we not look at the examples where people are delivered from death or harm so that we can get a clear picture of the Messiah, the greatest deliverer? Of course we should, if we understand the Scriptural definition of salvation—deliverance from your enemies! In fact, every judge in the book of Judges is a clear type of the Messiah. We can clearly see (through thematic analysis) pictures of the Messiah's first and second advent through the stories of the judges. With this understanding, let's see how the judge, Samson, will teach us about the work of the Messiah.

A. Read [Judges 13:2-7](#). Unless you have a Tanakh, you won't know that these verses are a Parsha P'tuchah. This means that this Parsha has its own unique theme. As you read the passage, did it seem as if you read certain facts twice? By now, you should know where I'm going. This time, instead of a chiastic structure, the themes of the first half of the Parsha are repeated in the second half in the same order as the first half. Furthermore, there is no central axis. It is simply a parallelism. However, just as in chiastic structures, we should compare and contrast the themes that are linked through the structure. It looks like this:

- A) Judges 13:2—The description of a barren woman
- B) [Judges 13:3a—Appearance of an angel](#)
- C) [Judges 13:3b—Promise of a son](#)
- D) [Judges 13:4-5a—Stipulations of the Nazirite vow](#)
- E) Judges 13:5b—He will save Israel
- A) Judges 13:6a—Description of a man and woman
- B) [Judges 13:6b—Appearance of an angel](#)
- C) [Judges 13:7a—Promise of a son](#)
- D) [Judges 13:7b—The Nazirite vow](#)
- E) Judges 13:7c—His death

Although chiastic structures and parallel structures may seem boring, they often pay huge dividends, as in this case. Did you notice how each theme of the structure was essentially

a mirror image of its counterpart...except in E)? And what is the message we are to glean by thematically connecting E to E'? How about this:

The promised son (whom we know to be Samson) will

Save Israel

through

His Death!!!

[illegible]

Do you realize the Messianic significance of this connection?⁴⁰ Absolutely amazing! Do you know how many people (including myself) have read these few verses and never realized their true message? This is the reason why we all must continue to grow in our thematic analysis skills, so that such gems will not go unnoticed. After all, the Holy One put them here for our benefit. This thematic teaching at the beginning of the story of Samson's life is a prophecy of how he would deliver Israel through his death. But it's much more. I invite you to see.

- B. Study these few verses carefully. Can you think of any other people in the scriptures thematically related to Samson through the unusual circumstances of their births?⁴¹ Did you realize that Samuel, Samson and John the Baptist were all Nazirites? Did you realize that the mothers of Samuel, Samson and John the Baptist were all barren? Now, how do they differ? Well, Samuel and John the Baptist were priests, but Samson wasn't. Let's look at this further.
- C. Since John the Baptist and Samuel are the more closely thematically related of the three, let's see what their connection teaches us. Why does the Torah thematically link Samuel and John the Baptist?
 - 1. Read [I Samuel 7:1-8](#). These verses record Samuel's first message to the people as a priest and prophet—his first sermon. ☺ Compare them to John the Baptist's first recorded message found in Matthew 3:1-12. How are they thematically related?⁴² See the connection?
 - 2. Now read [I Samuel 16:1-11](#) and compare it to Matthew 3:13-17 and John 1:29-34. How are these passages thematically related?⁴³
- D. Now we see how Samuel and John the Baptist are thematically related. They both identified the future king of Israel!!! You see? They were both sent to reveal the Messiah to us. Samuel revealed David, a type of Messiah, and John the Baptist revealed Yeshua the Messiah!
- E. Now the question is why is Samson thematically related to Samuel and John the Baptist? It is for the same reason, because Samson too is going to reveal the Messiah to us! Samuel revealed the picture of the Messiah by pointing us to David. John the Baptist revealed the Messiah to us by literally pointing Him out to us. However, Samson is

going to reveal the Messiah to us by using his life to sketch a picture of the Messiah. I do not have enough time to show you all of the ways Samson is a picture of the Messiah in this lesson, so I will concentrate on just a couple of revelations.

- III. What was one of the main ways Adonai **repeatedly** used Samson?⁴⁴ Thematically, Samson was used by Adonai as a warrior to defend Am Yisrael (the people of Israel) from their enemies. Let's go back to the garden. Remember the promise Adonai made to Adam and Chava (Eve) concerning her seed? In [Genesis 3:14-15](#) Adonai promised them that the seed of the woman would one day crush hasatan's head. Thus, we see that our redemption through Yeshua the Messiah will involve warfare against hasatan. In fact, we know that this aspect of warfare has been present throughout the covenants Adonai made with the Patriarchs and Am Yisrael. In [Genesis 22:17](#), Adonai promises to Abraham that his descendants will possess the gate of their enemies. We've already seen that the story of deliverance from Egyptian bondage under Pharaoh was actually a picture of the deliverance of the sinner from the bondage of sin under hasatan. Just as Am Yisrael were totally helpless to deliver themselves from Egypt, so to are we totally helpless to deliver ourselves from the bondage of sin! Just as Adonai sent a redeemer (Moses) to rescue Am Yisrael from Egyptian bondage, so too did He send Yeshua to deliver us from the bondage of sin (Romans 5-9)!
- A. With that as a background, read [Judges 16:23-31](#). What signs of the Messiah do you see? Remember our working definition—Anytime one 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* [or 30, 300, 3,000]. Do you see any?⁴⁵ In the most general terms, what is this story describing?⁴⁶ The most important phrase that thematically connects this episode of warfare to the Messiah is Judges 16:30b—“*So the dead that he killed at his **death** were more than he had killed in his **life**.*” How so? Read [Colossians 2:15](#). Here we see that Yeshua won his greatest battle against hasatan and his minions through His death! In fact, note how Judges 16:30b is emphatic that Samson killed more in his **death** than in his **life**!!! Chaverim, this is a picture of how Yeshua's greatest victory occurred through His death! Although Samson had destroyed many of Am Yisrael's enemies during his lifetime, his greatest victory came as a result of his death. So likewise, although Yeshua destroyed many of the works of hasatan (sickness, etc.) during His life, it was through His **DEATH** that He won the greatest victory over hasatan and secured eternal **LIFE** for us!!! The story of Samson's final battle is how the Holy One teaches us that Messiah Yeshua will obtain his greatest victory over the enemy of mankind through His death. This thematic connection is best pictured in the following verse.

¹⁴*Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that **through death** He might **destroy** him who had the power of death, that is, **the devil**,*

¹⁵***and release** those [us] who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. (Hebrews 2:14-15, emphasis mine)*

This verse clearly shows two things. First, hasatan was defeated through Yeshua's death—just as Samson's greatest victory came through his death. Secondly it teaches that we were freed from fear through Yeshua's death, just as Am Yisrael were freed from fear of the Philistines through the death of Samson!

B. Lastly, note the following picture. When Samson pushed the two pillars, what motion did he make with his hands and what was the prophetic significance?⁴⁷

IV. Read [Judges 15:1-13](#). Notice the following facts:

- The Philistines are ruling over Israel.
- The men of Judah are concerned that Samson may cause the Philistines to attack them.
- The men of Judah arrest Samson.
- The men of Judah hand Samson over to the Philistines.

Knowing that Samson's life will teach us about Yeshua, we should immediately make the following thematic connections—listed to correspond to the bullets above.

- The Romans ruled over Israel during Yeshua's lifetime.
- According to the Pharisees, John 11:48 states the following; "If we let him thus alone, all men will believe on him: and the Romans shall come and take away both our place and nation.
- The men of Judah arrested Yeshua. Furthermore, his betrayer was named Judah!
- The men of Judah handed Yeshua over to the Romans.

Chaverim! The story of Samson's arrest and transfer to the Philistines is the story of Yeshua's arrest and transfer to the Romans by the Jewish nation. Is it a coincidence that it was the tribe of Judah that handed Samson over to the Philistines? Is it a coincidence that Joseph was handed over to the Egyptians by his brothers? Is it a coincidence that Moses fled for his life, fearing that one of his own brothers had informed the Egyptians concerning his deed? Is it a coincidence that David had to flee from his brothers and actually live with the Philistines for a period of time? What do Joseph, Moses and David have in common? They are all types of Messiah Yeshua. Then obviously, we must see that Samson is a type of the Messiah also. He was a judge, a deliverer who brought Scriptural salvation, thus teaching us about the ultimate deliverer, Yeshua, and His great work of salvation.

Chiastic Structure, Level M

Now that we know the correct definition of salvation, we can easily see that Jacob is prophetically calling out for the Salvation of YHVH. His Name is Yeshua (Salvation).

Chiastic Structure, Level H'

I. The theme of **Life and DEATH (Resurrection)** is the main theme the Torah uses to reveal to us the person and work of the Messiah. In order to see this, let's first understand the ministry roles Yeshua had to fulfill in order to bring about our great salvation.

A. What three leadership roles will the Messiah ultimately fulfill and when?⁴⁸ What role is Yeshua fulfilling now?⁴⁹ Read [Genesis 49:26](#). Knowing that Joseph is a type of Messiah

Yeshua, and based on how the Torah states that he was a "Nazirite," how is Yeshua a "Nazirite?"⁵⁰

- B. Prophetically, we know that the 20-year period of Joseph's separation from his brothers corresponds to the time period between his descent into Egypt as a slave (a picture of his death and Messiah's first advent when He was rejected) and his exaltation to the right hand of Pharaoh (a picture of Messiah's exaltation to the Father's right hand and the second advent). Therefore, Joseph's 20-year period of separation corresponds exactly to Yeshua's 2,000-year separation from Israel!
- C. Remember, the Nazirite vow enabled the average Israelite to *attain a degree of holiness equivalent to the High Priest's*. Thus, the Nazirite was thematically connected to the High Priest! The purpose of the vow was so that the individual could draw closer to Adonai during a period of separation. By calling Joseph a nezir, the Torah has obviously connected him to the Nazirite, who took a vow of separation. Furthermore, we can understand the Messianic significance of Joseph's nezir status. Joseph was a nezir during his 20-year separation from his brothers. Remember, the Nazirite was someone most closely thematically related to the High Priest. Therefore, Joseph's "Nazirite" or nezir status was a prophecy of the fact that Messiah Yeshua would be a High Priest during His period of separation from His brothers (the past 2,000 years)! The fact that 1) Joseph was referred to using the language of the Nazirite and 2) the Nazirite vow is used to teach us about the High Priestly ministry of the Messiah, shows us that His **separation from his brothers** was prophetic of the Messiah's **separation from His brothers** during His period of ministry as a High Priest!

II. Earlier, we clearly saw allusions to Messiah Yeshua through the prophecies/blessings given to the sons of Jacob. This is one form of prophecy. But remember the primary axiomatic truth we've learned from the Torah—the lives of the Patriarchs are prophetic shadows of future events that will occur in the lives of their descendants, especially the Messiah? We've seen how this worked with Samson. Can we find more? You bet!

- A. Read [I Kings 1:32-40](#), a story describing Solomon's anointing as king. Did you see it? There were two specific Messianic pictures/acts in this passage. Did you see them?
- B. Read [I Kings 1:38](#) and [Luke 19:30-38](#). As you can see, Solomon's trip on David's mule during his inauguration as the new king is a prophetic picture of how Messiah Yeshua would ride into the city on a donkey to cheers and exultation from the people. It is a prophetic act. It is clearly thematically connected to Yeshua.
- C. Read [I Kings 1:40](#) and [Luke 19:39-40](#). Did you see it? Yeshua's reference to the "rocks crying out" is a definite allusion to I Kings 1:40! Could it be any clearer? Yeshua is obviously alluding to Solomon's inauguration so that we can understand his Messiahship. He is King Messiah and He's pointing us to this truth in the Tanakh. It's as if He's saying, "If you want to see where the scriptures testify of my life, mission and ministry, then look to the story of the inauguration of King Solomon!"

As we state at the end of each book of the Torah...

חֲזַק! חֲזַק! וְנִתְחַזֵּק!

Be Strong! Be Strong! And May We Be Strengthened!

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

⁴ ~~Holy Spirit~~ 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.

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 They both are related as follows. Towards the beginning, Jacob is about to die and requests that he be buried in Eretz Yisrael (the land of Israel). Towards the end, Joseph is about to die and requests to be buried in Eretz Yisrael.

The appearance of these two passages, which are clearly thematically related, suggests that this week's entire sidra may be a chiasmic structure!

⁹ Yes, all the sons mentioned from G-K are sons of Leah, Jacob's first wife.

¹⁰ Yes, these sons are all sons of Jacob's wives' handmaidens.

¹¹ Yes, these are the sons of Rachel, whom Jacob loved the most.

¹² This reminds me of when Abraham had Eliezer swear to find a wife for Isaac from his relatives in Charan.

¹³ Genesis 2-3, Chava (Eve), who was the mother of all living!

¹⁴ Wow! They remind me of how Isaac blessed Jacob instead of Esau!

¹⁵ Ephraim and Manasseh.

¹⁶ Joseph represents Esau because the brothers think that Joseph wants to kill them, just as Jacob thought that Esau wanted to kill him. Therefore, the brothers represent Jacob. Huhh???

¹⁷ Waxman, Rav Chanoch. *The Tears of Joseph*. The Israel Koschitzky Virtual Beit Midrash. Yeshivat Har Etzion. <http://etzion.org.il/en/tears-yosef>.

¹⁸ It means that he will not operate in the calling of the firstborn, even though he was the natural firstborn child of Jacob.

¹⁹ Yes, Judah is the one who offered himself on Benjamin's behalf, thereby earning the leadership role.

²⁰ The passage concerning Judah's leadership is chiasmically matched by Joseph's blessing of multiplicity and fruitfulness. The chiasmic pairing of these two tribes is more confirmation that the blessings of the firstborn were split between the two of them.

²¹ It is primarily describing the abundant blessing and fruitfulness that Joseph will experience.

²² Yes, Genesis 27:28-29.

²³ Genesis 27:28 pertains to blessings of fruitfulness. Genesis 27:29 pertains to leadership within the family and leadership over Israel's foes.

²⁴ It seems that the blessings of fruitfulness went to Joseph; however, the blessings of leadership went to Judah.

²⁵ Scherman, Rabbi Nosson. *The Chumash*. Stone Edition, The Artscroll Series. Brooklyn: Mesorah Publications, Ltd., 2000, p. 280.

²⁶ Remember, the Torah uses words normally associated with a Nazirite to describe Joseph in Genesis 49:26 (nezir and head). Samson was a Nazirite.

²⁷ They are connected through the theme of time.

²⁸ Both passages show a dying father giving instructions to the son who will lead the family in the next generation.

²⁹ Both passages have a section on blessings and reproofs given by the dying father.

³⁰ The passage states that David ruled from Jerusalem for 33 years. The number three always alludes to the Messiah because it is the number for resurrection. This passage is a picture of Yeshua as the son of Father YHVH. Just as Solomon was the son of David, so likewise, Yeshua is the son of the Most High.

³¹ 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.

³² Genesis 3:14-15.

³³ Revelation 5:5 refers to Yeshua as the *Lion of the Tribe of Judah*.

³⁴ Scherman, Rabbi Nosson. *The Chumash*. Stone Edition, The Artscroll Series. Brooklyn: Mesorah Publications, Ltd., 2000, p. 279.

³⁵ Matthew 2:1-12.

³⁶ According to Luke 19:30-40, Yeshua approached the city riding on a donkey. According to Revelation 19:12-15, Yeshua will destroy the ungodly by treading the winepress of the wrath of Almighty Elohim.

³⁷ The mentioning of a serpent biting a horse's heels immediately causes one to think about the prophecy of Genesis 3:14-15, which states that the Messiah would crush hasatan's head while having His heel bruised.

³⁸ The concept of going to heaven as if it were our reward is clearly Greek/Roman/Western in origin and totally foreign to Hebraic thought and the Bible. The righteous will inherit the earth, albeit a new heaven and a new earth, nevertheless, the earth, not heaven.

³⁹ Wilson, Marvin, *Our Father Abraham*. Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1989, p. 179.

⁴⁰ Of course, Messiah Yeshua will save Israel (and all who call upon His Name) through His death at the execution stake!

⁴¹ Yes, Samuel and John the Baptist!

⁴² Both of them preached a message of repentance as their first sermon!!! ☺

⁴³ In both passages, a Nazirite (from birth) was used to identify the king. In both passages the king is anointed.

⁴⁴ He repeatedly used Sampson as His instrument of wrath against the enemies of Am Yisrael (the people of Israel), specifically the Philistines.

⁴⁵ Yes, I see the number (3)000! I also see *victory* as a result of *death*!

⁴⁶ Warfare between Sampson and the Philistines.

⁴⁷ When he pushed the pillars, he stretched his hands out just like Yeshua stretched out His hands to be nailed to the execution stake!

⁴⁸ He came as a prophet at His first coming. He is now a High Priest after the order of Melchizedek. At His second coming, He will return as King.

⁴⁹ High Priest.

⁵⁰ Joseph was separated from his brothers for almost 20 years. The Torah called him a nezir because he was separated from his brothers. Yeshua is currently separated from His brothers (Israel); therefore He has the nezir status based on His *separation from His brothers*.