

3-Year
Torah Cycle
Parashat #100
בְּמִדְבָּר
Bamidbar
Numbers 4:17-20
1 Sam 6:10-16
Hebrews 9:24-28

I) Reading the Torah Portion

Now it’s time to read the Torah portion. You will get the most out of the Torah portion if you have a disciplined plan for approaching it each week. I suggest the following (although you may want to develop your own plan of attack). Prepare by having a pen and paper ready to take notes or by having your computer ready. Read the Torah portion quickly just to get a bird’s-eye view of it and to gain a general understanding of its contents. Then read it again slowly and more contemplatively. As you read it, you should keep track of 1) changes in the main storyline (plots and subplots) of the text, 2) the introduction of new major themes you have not encountered heretofore and 3) connections to the main themes developed in the Torah portion. Keeping track of the major themes will provide you with thoughts to help you outline the passage later on. Recording changes in the storyline (subplots) will 1) help you more accurately interpret Scripture and 2) see connections to themes that may be repeated in the Haftarah and Apostolic readings.

I strongly recommend that when you study these lessons you have the following tools available. 1) A Bible [all references are based on the NKJV], 2) a printed copy of this lesson, 3) pen and paper [notebook preferred] where you can either write extra notes or complete answers to questions where the lines in this lesson are not enough space to write on, 4) an on-line version of the Bible. I suggest BibleGateway (<https://www.biblegateway.com/>). There are many instances where I will ask you to make a connection to some other passage. The BibleGateway app has an awesome SEARCH feature to find Bible passages. Also, once you find a passage you can use Control-F or Command-F (MAC users) to *find* words, numbers or phrases in the text on display. Lastly, as often as possible ... have a partner studying with you!

II) Outlining the Torah Portion

The Torah portion is too short for an outline.

III) Torah Portion Discussion Questions

I have given you a number of questions to stimulate your thought about the Torah portion reading. My goal is two-fold. First, I want to ask you questions about what the Spirit has shown me are important lessons to learn from the Torah reading. Secondly, I want to help you develop the art of making thematic connections. This skill will develop as you practice, practice, practice.

This week’s Torah lesson is the shortest of the 3-year cycle portions:

17 Then the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying: 18 “Do not cut off the tribe of the families of the Kohathites from among the Levites; 19 but do this in regard to them, that they may live and not die when they approach the most holy things: Aaron and his sons shall go in and appoint each of them to his service and his task. 20 But they shall not go in to watch while the holy things are being covered, lest they die.”
(Numbers 4:17-20)

Due to its shortness, I had decided it would not be worth trying to outline it. But then I decided, to give it a try anyway. To my surprise, although it’s too short to outline, I did see a lovely pattern embedded within it, and it reminded me of how often the Bible uses rhetorical structures to structure the text. Simply amazing! And as I’ve noted before, one never knows if the rhetorical arrangement of a passage will hold some hidden wisdom or not. Sometimes the thematic arrangement of a passage is simply aesthetic and other times the arrangement contains hidden wisdom. So, let’s dive in!

1. Look very closely at Num 4:17-20 and see if you can see distinct themes, patterns or repetitions. Write down any repetitions or similar themes that you can find within this passage.

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2. Now, I'm going to prompt you through what I saw. Do you see a thematic connection between Numbers 4:17-18 and 4:20?
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3. Now, do you see two similar themes in Numbers 4:19?
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4. Lastly, we're left with Numbers 4:19b, sitting all alone. Now, do you have any idea what's going on concerning this pattern?
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The chiasm looks like this:

A) ¹⁷ Then the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying: ¹⁸ ***Do not cut off the tribe of the families of the Kohathites from among the Levites***;

B) ¹⁹ ***but do this in regard to them,***

X) ***that they may live and not die when they approach the most holy things:***

B') ***Aaron and his sons shall go in and appoint each of them to his service and his task.***

A') ²⁰ ***But they shall not go in to watch while the holy things are being covered, lest they die.***

In typical chiastic fashion, notice how the themes in the first half (A and B), repeat in the second half (A' and B'). Furthermore, the central axis (X) contains the center of the structure. Chiasms are analyzed by comparing the opposing themes on each side of the structure. So, we compare A to A' and B to B'.

5. What do we learn by comparing A to A' and B to B'?
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IV) Messiah in the Parsha

In Luke 24:25-27 and 46-47 Yeshua stated that Moses, the Prophets and the Writings all prophesied of His death, burial and resurrection in three days. Therefore, we should expect to see teachings about Yeshua and His role in redemption throughout the Torah. In this section I will ask you questions that will hopefully help you "see" Messiah Yeshua in the Torah portion and sometimes the Haftarah reading as well.

1. How is Leviticus 10:3 (And Moses said to Aaron, "This is what the LORD spoke, saying: ***'By those who come near Me I must be regarded as holy;*** And before all the people I must be glorified.' " So Aaron held his peace.) thematically connected to the Torah portion?
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2. How is Leviticus 10:8-9 (Then the LORD spoke to Aaron, saying: ⁹ "Do not drink wine or intoxicating drink, you, nor your sons with you, when you go into the tabernacle of meeting, lest you die. *It shall be* a statute forever throughout your generations) thematically connected to the Torah portion?
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3. How is Leviticus 10:3 (And Moses said to Aaron, "This is what the LORD spoke, saying: '***By those who come near Me*** I must be regarded as holy; And before all the people I must be glorified.' " So Aaron held his peace.) thematically connected to the Torah portion?

4. What does the story of Nadab and Abihu and the verses in the Torah portion teach us about God?

5. How is Hebrews 10:19-22 (Therefore, brethren, having boldness ***to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus***,²⁰ by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh,²¹ and *having* a High Priest over the house of God,²² ***let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith***, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.) thematically connected to the Torah portion?

V) Making the Connection to the Haftarah Reading

I have listed a number of passages from the Haftarah reading that have thematic connections to the Torah portion. Your job is to find the thematic connections in the Torah portion. Although I may quote an entire verse or two from the Haftarah reading, you should focus most of your attention on the text that is bold and italicized. The bold and *italicized* text will contain the main theme or words that I want you to connect to the Torah portion. Once you have found a connection to the Haftarah verses, record the chapter and verse of the Torah text connection and write a brief sentence describing how the two passages are thematically connected.

1. How is 1 Samuel 6:15 (The Levites took down ***the ark of the LORD*** and the chest that *was* with it, in which *were* the articles of gold, and put *them* on the large stone. Then the men of Beth Shemesh offered burnt offerings and made sacrifices the same day to the LORD.) thematically connected to the Torah portion?

2. How is 1 Samuel 6:16 (So when the five lords of ***the Philistines had seen it***, they returned to Ekron the same day.) thematically connected to the Torah portion?

3. How is 1 Samuel 6:15 (***The Levites*** took down the ark of the LORD and the chest that *was* with it, in which *were* the articles of gold, and put *them* on the large stone. Then the men of Beth Shemesh offered burnt offerings and made sacrifices the same day to the LORD.) thematically connected to the Torah portion?

VI) Making the Connection to the Apostolic Writings

I have listed a number of passages from the Apostolic reading that have thematic connections to the Torah portion. Your job is to find the thematic connections to the Torah portion. Although I may quote an entire verse or two from the Apostolic reading, you should focus most of your attention on the text that is bold and italicized. The bold and *italicized* text will contain the main theme or words that I want you to connect to the Torah portion. Once you have found a connection to the Apostolic verses, record the chapter and verse of the Torah text connection and write a brief sentence describing how the two passages are thematically connected.

1. How is Hebrews 9:24 (For Christ has not entered ***the holy places made with hands***, which are copies of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us) thematically connected to the Torah portion?

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2. How is Hebrews 9:24 (For ***Christ has not entered the holy places made with hands, which are*** copies of the true, ***but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us***) thematically connected to the Torah portion?

3. How is Hebrews 9:25 (not that He should offer Himself often, as ***the high priest enters the Most Holy Place*** every year with blood of another—) thematically connected to the Torah portion?

4. How is Hebrews 9:27 (And as it is appointed ***for men to die once***, but after this the judgment) thematically connected to the Torah portion?

VII) Practical Application

Let's get practical. The study of the Word is not complete until we are encouraged to think, speak and act differently. Our study of the Word should always involve personal application of the text to our lives. As I've heard it said before, Adonai's Word needs to go from our head to our hearts and then to our hands. Our lifelong journey is to become like our master, Yeshua, and this is only accomplished as we faithfully apply His Word to every aspect of our lives.

Discipling Our Children

What have you learned from this week's Torah study that you can teach your children?

- Write down what you learned that can and/or should be discussed with your children? Perhaps they need to know some of the facts covered in the crossword puzzle?
 - _____
 - _____
 - _____
- Write down anything you learned that revealed bad habits or thought patterns in your children's lives?
 - _____
 - _____
 - _____
- Write down anything you learned that revealed good habits or thought patterns that your children need to be encouraged or strengthened in and grow in obedience to?
 - _____
 - _____
 - _____
- Write down anything you learned that can be a topic of prayer for you and your children this week or permanently?
 - _____
 - _____
 - _____

Discipling One Another

Think about what you've studied in this week's lesson.

- Write down anything you learned that impacted you the most?
 - _____
 - _____
 - _____
- Write down anything you learned that revealed bad habits or thought patterns you need to stop?
 - _____
 - _____
 - _____
- Write down anything you learned that revealed good habits or thought patterns you need to be encouraged or strengthened in and grow in obedience to?
 - _____
 - _____
 - _____
- Write down anything you learned that can be a topic of prayer for yourself, your family, your worship community, your neighborhood, the world or Adonai's people at large?
 - _____
 - _____
 - _____

Just focus on one thing and talk to an accountability partner about it. Determine what you can DO over the next week (or more) in order to put what you've learned into practice. Make a commitment to someone else that you are going to seek to put some aspect of this week's lesson into practice.

ANSWER KEY

The Torah Portion

1. I will not put my answer here yet. I just want you to see what you can discern.
2. Yes, the phrase, "cut off the tribe of the families of the Kohathites" is thematically connected to "lest they die." The connection is that both passages make reference to the Kohathites potentially dying. We can add some of the surrounding words to show the full connection as follows:
 - ¹⁸ "Do not ***cut off the tribe of the families of the Kohathites*** from among the Levites;
 - ²⁰ But they shall not go in to watch while the holy things are being covered, ***lest they die.***"

As you can plainly see, both passages pertain to potential death of the Kohathites.

3. Yes! In Numbers 4:19a Adonai said, "but do this in regard to them." So the question is, "Do what?" Well, Numbers 4:19c provides the answer of what is to be done in regard to the Kohathites: "Aaron and his sons shall go in and appoint each of them to his service and his task." In other words, Adonai gave a command in Numbers 4:19a, and it is fulfilled in Numbers 4:19c. It looks like this.
 - but ***do this*** in regard to them,
 - Aaron and his sons shall ***go in and appoint each of them to his service and his task.***
4. Yes! These three verses are arranged chiastically!
5. In my estimation? I don't see any big revelations as we sometimes find. We simply learn that the word of God is beautifully arranged. It is beautiful.

Messiah in the Parsha Answers

1. The Kohathites were chosen to carry the most sacred parts of the tabernacle—the place where Adonai literally dwelt. This comes with great responsibility, as Nadab and Abihu learned.
2. In Leviticus 10:9, the phrase, “**lest you die**” is also used in Numbers 4:20—“But they shall not go in to watch while the holy things are being covered, **lest they die.**”
3. Numbers 4:19—but do this in regard to them, that they may live and not die **when they approach the most holy things**: Aaron and his sons shall go in and appoint each of them to his service and his task. The connection pertains to drawing near or approaching that which is **HOLY!**
4. They teach us that Adonai is Holy, and in order to be in His presence, certain conditions must be met, or else the penalty is death.
5. Notice how it is Yeshua’s blood that allows us to draw near to God in assurance rather than in fear of death. It is through His blood that our sins are covered so that we can stand before a holy God without being consumed like Nadab and Abihu.

Haftarah Connection Answers

1. Numbers 4:19—but do this in regard to them, that they may live and not die when they approach **the most holy things**: Aaron and his sons shall go in and appoint each of them to his service and his task.
2. Numbers 4:20—“But **they shall not go in to watch** while the holy things are being covered, lest they die.”
3. Numbers 4:18—“Do not cut off the tribe of the families of the Kohathites from among **the Levites**”

Apostolic Reading Answers

1. Numbers 4:19—but do this in regard to them, that they may live and not die when they approach **the most holy things**: Aaron and his sons shall go in and appoint each of them to his service and his task.
2. Numbers 4:19-20—but do this in regard to them, that they may live and not die when they approach the most holy things: **Aaron and his sons shall go in and appoint each of them** to his service and his task.²⁰ But they shall not go in to watch while the holy things are being covered, lest they die.
3. Numbers 4:19—but do this in regard to them, that they may live and not die when they approach the most holy things: **Aaron** and his sons **shall go in** and appoint each of them to his service and his task.
4. Numbers 4:19—but do this in regard to them, **that they may live and not die** when they approach the most holy things: Aaron and his sons shall go in and appoint each of them to his service and his task.