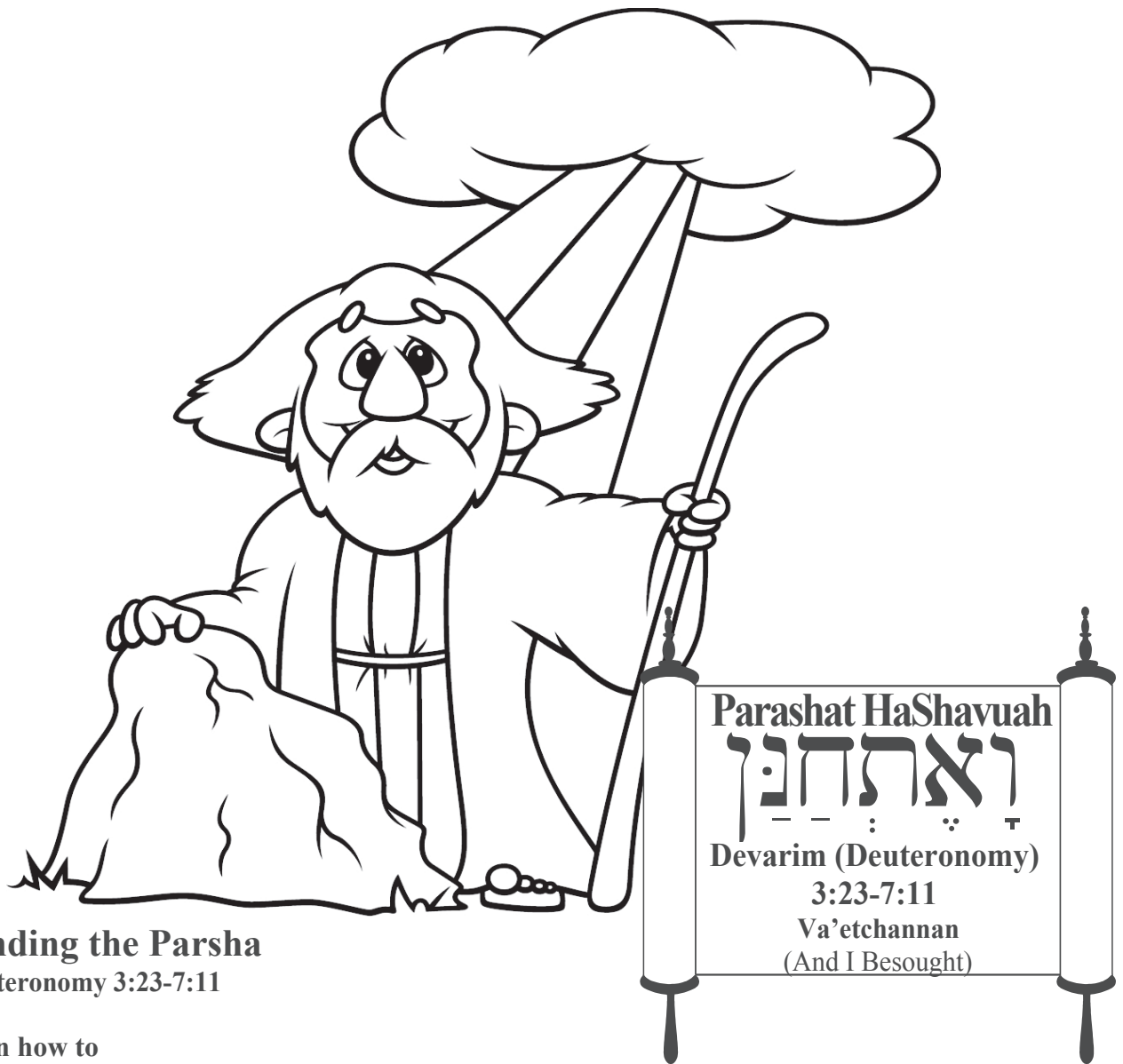




Understanding the Parsha

Devarim Deuteronomy 3:23-7:11

We will Learn how to

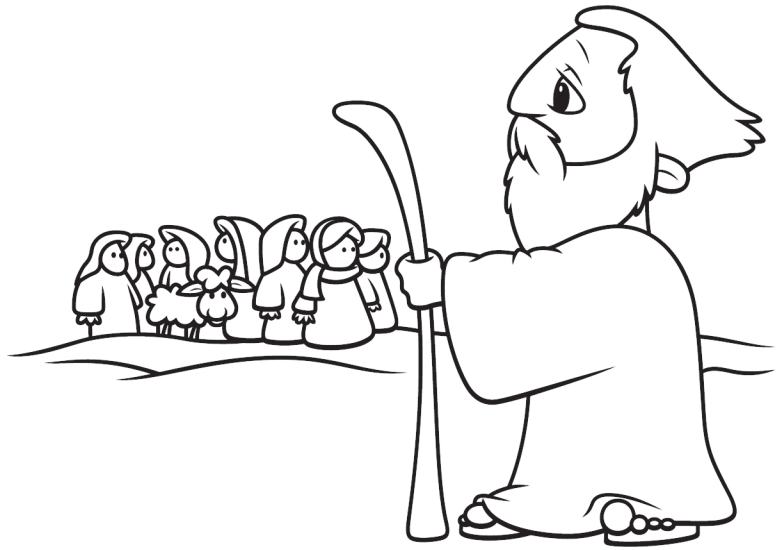
- 1) **interpret the main theme (subject) of a Parsha** (weekly reading from the Torah),
- 2) **make thematic connections to that Parsha** (study the Scriptures related by a common theme [subject], line upon line and precept upon precept)
- 3) **learn how to gain greater understanding of the Parsha we are looking at through its thematic connections to other portions of Scripture.**

Objective—Understand the literary structure of the book of Devarim. Note: Chapters and verses are according to the New King James Version.

Last week, we learned that the book of Devarim was a collection of four speeches Moses gave to Am Yisrael (the people of Israel) during the last five weeks of his life. The basic outline of the book goes like this:

Scripture Reference	Topic
Devarim 1-4	Introductory Speech
Devarim 5-26	Main Speech
Devarim 27-28	Tochacha (Admonition)
Devarim 29-30	Teshuvah (Repentance)

This week we will expand on what we learned last week. The first speech is found in Devarim 1:6-4:40. In Parashat (the weekly readings from the Torah) Devarim, we stopped in the middle of the speech, Devarim 3:22. This week's study will finish off the first speech and begin a small portion of the second speech, which will go up to Devarim 26! Because it is so long, the second speech is called the main speech.



In Devarim 1:6-3:29, Moses reminds Am Yisrael WHY they spent forty years in the wilderness and he urges them— through many different illustrations— to fulfill their calling of possessing the Promised Land. His main purpose was to show them that there was no reason they could not and should not be able to take the land. If they were willing to follow the Holy One's Torah, they would be able to do what their forefathers could not. Now, in Devarim 4:1, Moses begins to introduce us to the topic of the main speech.

Why the Book of Devarim is Critical to Understanding The Purpose and Scope of the Torah

Devarim 1:5 says that “Moses began explaining this Torah (Law) saying.” The reason why the book of Devarim is so important to understanding the purpose and scope of the Torah is because Moses clearly said that he would explain it. In other words, he's going to help us understand it. He will tell us the Who, What, When, Where, Why and How of the Torah. Because of this, we should expect Devarim to be a gold mine of treasures connected to the Torah. First, let's look at the meaning some terms.

There are some very important words used throughout Devarim that you must be able to follow. First, let's define the word Torah. The Hebrew word Torah, תּוֹרָה, has different meanings, depending on the context.

1. Torah literally means teaching, instructions or doctrine. This is its meaning in Devarim 1:5 and 4:44.
2. The Torah may mean the Law, as in the first five books of Moses.
3. The Torah may also mean the entirety of the Tanakh [What we know as the Old Testament. We get the word Scriptures from the word Tanakh. In Hebrew, the consonants in the word Tanakh actually form an acronym. The Tanakh is divided into what is called the Torah, Prophets (Nevi'im), and Writings (Khetuvim).].
4. Sometimes Torah means procedure. For example, in Leviticus 6:9, Torah means procedure, as in “This is the procedure (Torah) of the burnt offering.”

Read Devarim 4:1.

Now, O Israel, listen to the statutes and the judgments which I teach you to observe, that you may live, and go in and possess the land which the LORD God of your fathers is giving you (Devarim 4:1, NKJV).

Pay close attention to the words statutes and judgments. Although we glance over these words in English as if their meanings are the same, they have very precise and different meanings in Hebrew. The word statutes, is translated from the Hebrew word, **chukim** (חֻקִּים)—the singular is **chok**. Some versions of the Bible translate this word as statutes, or decrees. This study will always refer to **chukim as statutes**. What are chukim? Chukim are laws from the Holy One that are constant and never change.

Read Jeremiah 31:35-36. The word ordinances is actually derived from the Hebrew word **chok**. These verses capture the true essence of chukim. Chukim are statutes that will never pass away. They are constant and as predictable as the laws of nature governing the movement of the heavenly bodies. Did you know that the Holy Days— Mo'edim— are referred to as chukim in Leviticus 23? Now that you know the Scriptural definition of a **chok**, if someone said to you, "**The Biblical Holy Days were only valid until the death and resurrection of Yeshua,**" what should your response be?

That is n not true. The M Mo'edim are instructions defined in the Torah as C Chukim, which are S statutes that will n never pass away. They are constant and as predictable as the laws of nature governing the movement of heavenly bodies.

The Mo'edim could not have passed away with the death and resurrection of Y Yeshua.

The word judgments is translated from the Hebrew word, **mishpatim** (משפטים). Some versions of the Bible translate this word as judgments, ordinances or laws. This study will always refer to mishpatim as judgments. What are judgments (mishpatim)? A judgment (mishpat) is a decision/judgment that must be made between two claims.

Do you know where judgments (mishpatim) were first introduced in the Torah?

In Parashat M Mishpatim—Exodus 21:1-24:18. We will return to these later.

The word commandments, is translated from the Hebrew word, **mitzvot** (מצוות)— the singular is **mitzvah** (מצוה).



One of the most common tools of thematic analysis is the use of repetition with words and phrases. As you read this sidra (Torah portion), did you notice three words that were mentioned numerous times?

The words S statutes (C chukim),
j judgments (m mishpatim) and
C commandments (m mitzvot).

These are the most important words in the book. Let's see why. Let's begin to walk through the rest of the sidra (Torah portion), pay close attention to these words.

Read Devarim 4:1. What is Moses warning the people to listen to?

The S statutes (C chukim) and
j judgments (m mishpatim) he is about to give them.

What are the two reasons why the people need to listen to the statutes (chukim) and judgments (mishpatim)?

So that they will have L and possess the land.
LIFE land

Read Devarim 4:5. What did Moses say he had already taught them?

S (C) and m
Statutes chukim judgments
(m).
mishpatim

Where did Moses say the people were to perform the commandments (mitzvot) he had already taught them?

In E Y (the Land of Israel).
Eretz Yisrael

Now let's ask the obvious question. If, according to Devarim 4:5, Moses has already taught Am Yisrael statutes (chukim) and judgments (mishpatim), then why, according to Devarim 4:1, does he tell them to listen to them again? And, when did he teach them these statutes (chukim) and judgments (mishpatim) the first time? Let's keep reading and see if he tells us when he taught Am Yisrael statutes (chukim) and judgments (mishpatim) the first time.



Read Devarim 4:10-14. At this point Moses retells, the Matan Torah (the giving of the Torah), when the Holy One spoke His words to the people. Notice in Devarim 4:14 how Moses says that Adonai commanded him at that time (i.e., the giving of the Torah) to teach Am Yisrael statutes (chukim) and judgments (mishpatim)! Also notice how Moses says to them that they were to be performed in the Land, just as he said in Devarim 4:1 that he was about to give them statutes (chukim) and judgments (mishpatim) to perform in the Land. So, we should come to the conclusion that the statutes (chukim) and judgments (mishpatim) Moses wants Am Yisrael to listen to— Devarim 4:1—are the same ones He originally gave them back in Exodus at Matan Torah (the giving of the Torah)! Let's see if we can continue to build on this line of thinking.

From Devarim 4:15-49, Moses temporarily changes the subject from the main story of Matan Torah. Notice how many times he refers to statutes (chukim) and judgments (mishpatim) during Devarim 4:14-49— Devarim 4:14, 40, and 44. But notice how he picks up the story of Matan Torah again in Devarim 5:1! Moses recounts to Am Yisrael about the giving of the Ten Commandments in Devarim 5:1-23.

Now read Devarim 5:24-31. Pay very close attention to Devarim 5:30-31. Why was Am Yisrael told to return to their tents in Devarim 5:30 while Adonai continued to give revelation to Moses?

Am Yisrael thought they would d if they heard any more words directly from the Holy One. So, they asked that Moses receive the remaining words of the covenant so that he could † them to Am Yisrael.
af †

To sum things up, there is a new plan now. Adonai was going to speak the entire covenant directly to the people; but, because of their **fear**, he will now tell Moses the remaining words of the covenant and Moses will relay them to Am Yisrael.

Read Devarim 5:31 and notice the special construction of the sentence using the words commandments (mitzvot), statutes (chukim), and judgments (mishpatim).

But as for you, stand here with Me and I shall speak to you the entire commandment, and the decrees [statutes], and the ordinances [judgments] that you shall teach them and they shall perform in the Land that I give them, to possess it. (Taken from the Artscroll Chumash (Devarim 5:28) because it follows the Hebrew better)

What is it that the Holy One is about to speak to Moses?

The C (singular), S (C) and j (m).

What is Moses supposed to do with these statutes (chukim) and judgments (mishpatim)?

T them to Am Yisrael.

Remember, if Am Yisrael hadn't become fearful, Adonai would have spoken these words directly to them.

When did Moses teach Am Yisrael the statutes (chukim) and judgments (mishpatim)?

· The judgments (mishpatim) were taught to Am Yisrael in **Parashat Mishpatim**— Exodus 21:1-24:18.

Exodus 21:1 says, "Now these are the judgments (mishpatim) which you shall set before them..."

· Many statutes (chukim) and judgments (mishpatim) were taught in **Parashat Acharei Mot, K'doshim and Emor**. Leviticus 18:5 says, "You shall observe My statutes (chukim) and My judgments (mishpatim), which man shall carry out and by which **he shall live**— I am YHVH." Leviticus 18:26 says, "But you shall safeguard My statutes (chukim) and My judgments (mishpatim) and not commit any of these abominations..." Leviticus 20:22 says, "You shall observe all My statutes (chukim) and all My judgments (mishpatim) and perform them..."

Now we see WHEN the statutes (chukim) and judgments (mishpatim) were originally given. **They were given directly to Moses after the Ten Commandments.** They were given at that time because had Am Yisrael not sinned (the golden calf), they would have marched straight to Canaan to possess the Land. Remember how often Moses stressed that these commandments (mitzvot) were supposed to be performed in the Land!

Thematically, Am Yisrael is at the same point they were forty years ago. They are ready to enter the Land; therefore, Moses is reviewing the statutes (chukim) and judgments (mishpatim) originally given at Mount Sinai they must perform in the Land. This explains WHY Moses told Am Yisrael to listen to statutes (chukim) and judgments (mishpatim, Devarim 4:1) that He had already given them (Devarim 4:5).

Continuing Our Outline of the Speeches

Moses' main speech begins in Devarim 5:1. We know this because Devarim 4:41-49 is in third person singular (narrative mode), and Devarim 5:1 is in first person singular ("speech" mode). Notice the familiar phrase in Devarim 6:1:



...the commandment, and the decrees (statutes), and the ordinances (judgments)...

Once again, Moses is zeroing in on his main topic for his speech. He wants to talk to them about three things:

- 1) the commandment [note that it is in the singular],
- 2) the statutes [chukim], and
- 3) the judgments [mishpatim].

Devarim 6:1 is like an introductory remark to his main topic. It's as if he's giving us the general outline of what he intends to say. This little introductory remark continues

until Devarim 6:3. Then he begins with his first main topic, which is a particular commandment—the Shema, Devarim 6:4!

The Outline For The Main Speech— Remember, Moses said that his main topic would be about three subjects: the commandment, and the decrees (statutes), and the ordinances (judgments). Let's see how these three subjects form the outline for this main speech.

What is the commandment?

It is the S Shema ("Hear O, Yisrael..."), followed by the g greatest commandment to love the Holy One with all of your h heart.

Remember, the first subject is supposed to be The Commandment (singular). In Devarim 6:1, The Commandment is none other than the greatest commandment— **to love the Holy One with all of your heart!** This is an appropriate "Header" beginning "The Commandment" portion of Moses' speech.

What verse do you think would be an appropriate "Footer" which will close out this portion of his speech?

Devarim 1 II :22-25.

Can you pick out two clear thematic connections connecting Devarim 11:22 as the end of the first portion of Moses' speech dealing with The Commandment?

1) the words, this e entire commandment and 2) the idea of l loving Adonai.

That's right. This portion of Moses' speech began with The Commandment, which was none other than the commandment to love Father YHVH with all of our heart. Clearly, Devarim 11:22-25 is the "Footer," or end of the "The Commandment" section.

According to Moses' outline in Devarim 6:1, he should now talk about statutes (chukim) and judgments (mishpatim). Can you find an appropriate "Header" for the next section?

Yes! See Devarim 1 21 :1!

Sure enough, in Devarim 12:1, Moses begins talking about statutes (chukim) and judgments (mishpatim)! Now, can you find an appropriate "Footer" or passage that would serve as the conclusion to the statutes (chukim) and judgments (mishpatim) section?

Yes, see Devarim 2 97 :16-19!

As you can see, Devarim 26:16-19 is an appropriate ending statement for the second portion of Moses' speech involving the statutes (chukim) and judgments (mishpatim)! See how Devarim 27:1 goes back to third person singular, or telling the story. Devarim 26:19 is the official end of the second speech.



The Fundamental Function/Purpose of the Torah

In last week's study, I made the following statement:

The fundamental function/purpose of the Torah (at the Pashat level) is to secure/ ensure/ give physical LIFE to those who keep it! The commandment (singular), statutes (**chukim**) and judgments (**mishpatim**).

See also Devarim 4:1, 4 and 10, Devarim 5:33, Devarim 6:24, Devarim 8:1 and 3, Devarim 30:19, Leviticus 26:3-13, Ezekiel 20:10-11, and 13, and more!

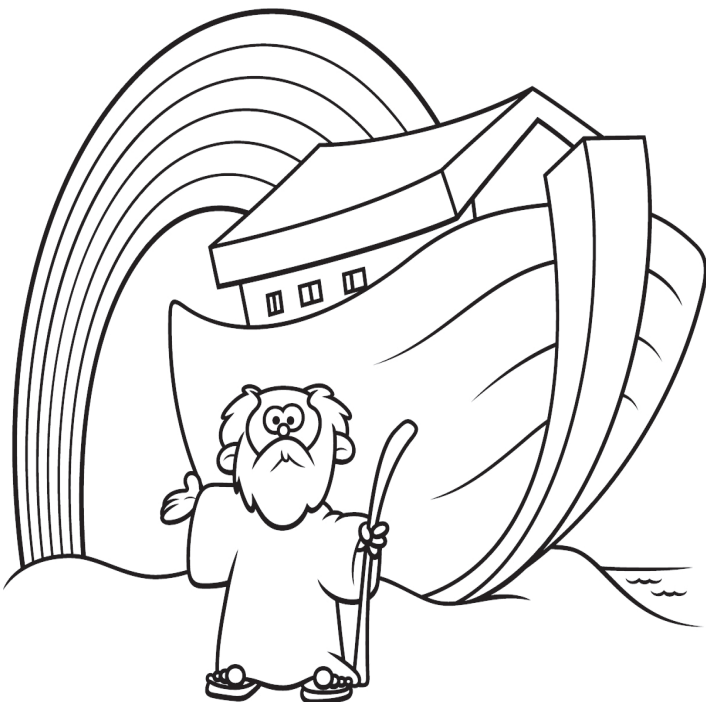
Throughout the remainder of this last book of the Torah, we are going to expand on this topic. Why? Because it is a fundamental issue of primary importance in these last days! Many voices have gone out over the centuries concerning the purpose of the Torah. Most of these voices are mistaken, and contain error in their views over and over. Then, just when you think you've heard it all, a new erroneous view of the Torah pops up. The reason so many non-Jewish believers don't understand the Torah is because they don't seriously study it! Most believers today think they understand the "Old Testament." They think they know why the "Law" was given. But in reality, they don't, because

- 1) they don't study it from the proper sources and
- 2) the information they are taught from their leaders is quite often wrong.

Hopefully, over the next few weeks, we will discover answers to the following questions:

- To who was the Torah given?
- What is the fundamental purpose/function of the Torah?
- When do we use the Torah as a way to express our faith and practice?
- Where does the Torah apply?

Let me help you understand how we will determine the fundamental function/purpose of the Torah (at the Pashat level). Suppose I gave you a series of commandments and each one helped you enjoy the beauty of a rainbow. For example, a few of the commandments may look like this:



Thou shalt stop working whenever it rains.
Thou shalt look out of thy window to see if the sun breaks through the clouds near the end of a period of rain.
Thou shalt search the skies, north, south, east and west looking for a rainbow.
Thou shalt enjoy the sight of the rainbow, etc.

Then, suppose I gave you this overall commandment. Obey all of my commandments so that you can enjoy the beauty of the rainbow. One of the easiest questions to answer is this, "Why should someone obey my commandments?"

So that you can enjoy the beauty of a rainbow.

That's right. It's so obvious anyone can understand. Now, if I were to ask you, "What is the fundamental purpose/function of my commandments," you would have to say, "The fundamental purpose/function of Tony's command-



ments is to help you see the beauty of a rainbow.” We will use the same strategy to figure out the fundamental purpose/function of the Torah. First, we will figure out why Am Yisrael was commanded to obey the Torah. Then we will simply come to the conclusion that the fundamental purpose/function of the Torah is the same reason WHY the Holy One commanded Am Yisrael to obey it. Why should there be any other primary function of the Torah other than the intended purpose understood by those who follow it? Let’s get start!

Read Devarim 4:1-4. Notice the familiar phrase, statutes and judgments. Why does Moses say he is giving them statutes and judgments— hint, notice the important phrase, so that you may?

SO THAT YOU MAY L LIVE AND POSSESS THE L LAND.

Here we see the fundamental purpose/function of the Torah. This verse tells us WHY Moses gave them the Torah— so that they may LIVE! Therefore, obedience to Torah is a matter of physical Life and Death! It is so important, Moses tells them in Devarim 4:2 that they are not to add or take away from the Torah.

Moses is now going to give them an object lesson in Devarim 4:3-4. An object lesson is given to teach the hearers something. Why does Moses give the example of Baal Peor, saying that those who clung to YHVH are ALIVE, and those who followed Baal Peor were DESTROYED?

To prove to them that those who O obey the Torah receive L LIFE.

Chaverim (friends), I don’t think it can get any simpler than this. First, Moses gives the fundamental purpose of the Torah— to provide LIFE to those who obey it. Then, because this is a very important matter, a matter of LIFE and DEATH, he says that the commandments of the Torah aren’t to be changed. Then he gives a real life example of how those who obeyed the Torah in a particular incident received LIFE, and those who disobeyed the Torah received DEATH.

Read Devarim 5:31. Moses said that he was giving Am Yisrael the entire commandment, statutes and judgments. Why were they given?

So that Am Yisrael could possess the L LAND.

Let me ask you a question. Can you possess the land if you are dead? Of course not. This is just another way of saying, “I’m giving you the Torah so that you will be able to POSSESS or LIVE on that piece of earth.”

Read Devarim 5:33. Why should Am Yisrael walk in the way of the Holy One’s commandments?

So that they will live I long and so that it will go W well with them.

Read Devarim 6:1-2. Moses is about to actually give them the commandment, the statutes and judgments. How is Devarim 6:1 thematically related to Devarim 1:5?

Devarim says, “Moses began explaining/teaching this T Torah...” In Devarim 6:1, Moses says that the Holy One commanded him to teach Am Yisrael the C commandment and the S statutes and the J judgments. The commandment, statutes and the judgments are the Torah Moses was commanded to

teach/explain.

In other words, Moses is now getting to the meat of what Adonai commanded Him to teach/explain— the commandment, the statutes and judgments.

What is the purpose for keeping the Torah in the land— hint, notice the phrase, so that?

The purpose for keeping the commandments in the land is so that Am Yisrael will p_{rolong} their days (i.e., LIVE A LONG LIFE) in Eretz Yisrael (the land of Israel). Should this surprise us? N_o.

Read Devarim 6:17-19. Why must Am Yisrael keep the commandments, statutes and judgments?

So that it will go W_{ell} with them (i.e., you'll have a good LIFE) and so that they'll possess the land.]

Read Devarim 6:24-25. What is the purpose of the Torah?

Through O_{bedience} to its commandments, Am Yisrael will have L_{IFE}!

Some may say that Devarim 6:25 teaches righteousness through the keeping of the Torah. This is not so. The Artscroll Chumash translates it as “it will be a merit for us...” (Merit = something deserving, reward, praise).

To sum things up, we have seen that Adonai told Am Yisrael the reason WHY they should obey the Torah. The primary reason was so that they would have LIFE and possess the land! Since the Holy One gave Am Yisrael the Torah we can come to the conclusion that its purpose/function was to be a source of LIFE for those who obeyed it. It was given as a gift from the Holy One to the people He chose and loved. It's as simple as that. The Torah's primary purpose/function is to be a source of blessing, life, reward, goodness, etc. Moses has been (and will continue to be) very direct and outspoken in explaining WHY Am Yisrael should obey the Torah. It has nothing to do with keeping them in right standing with the Holy One. At the literal or Pashat level of interpretation, it's a matter of physical LIFE and DEATH! It is a source of blessing. After studying these passages, can anyone honestly interpret that the Torah was given to Am Yisrael as a source of bondage? I think not. Did He ever say He gave them statutes and judgments to save them? Did He ever say He gave them statutes and judgments so that they would be in bondage? Did He ever say He gave them statutes and judgments so that they would see how utterly sinful they were? Did He ever say He gave them statutes and judgments so that they would see that they could never keep His “Laws”? No, no, no! He gave Am Yisrael the Torah so that they could experience physical LIFE, especially in Eretz Yisrael! As we continue through the book of Devarim, you will simply be shocked at how often Moses tries to get Am Yisrael to understand this fundamental purpose/function of the Torah. More importantly, you will be shocked that so many believers today don't understand this simple concept. Once you fully understand the fundamental function/purpose of the Torah, then you will realize why statements such as the following are in error:

- The Torah is bondage.
- The Torah was done away with after Yeshua's death and resurrection.
- The Torah was only for the Jews.
- The Jews were saved by keeping the Torah.
- The Torah is temporary.
- The Torah was given to the Jews to curse them.

- The Torah was abolished.
- The Torah was nailed to the “cross.”
- We only need to obey the spirit of the Torah.
- The letter of the Torah has been done away with.
- The Torah brought death to those who obeyed it.
- We are 1) free from, 2) dead to and 3) delivered from the Torah as a standard of right behavior.
- Obeying the Torah today is legalism.
- Yeshua fulfilled the Torah, therefore it’s no longer necessary to obey it... on and on and on and!

Also, you will be able to add your hearty amen to everything David said about the Torah in Psalm 119!



Can you find the words from this Parsha?

M	S	P	E	E	C	H	E	S	M	G	A
O	A	M	G	A	C	Y	H	S	O	K	M
S	G	T	I	A	A	M	H	N	A	N	Y
E	N	S	E	O	E	I	D	V	B	R	I
S	I	T	A	K	S	T	E	P	H	I	S
V	A	E	T	C	H	A	N	N	A	N	R
Y	E	B	O	H	S	P	N	E	R	E	A
E	E	E	V	U	N	H	E	N	O	E	E
G	L	F	Z	K	S	S	G	S	T	B	L
D	A	N	T	I	H	I	Y	U	H	I	R
U	N	S	I	M	M	M	S	E	F	I	L
J	D	W	M	D	O	C	T	R	I	N	E

MOSES
 VAETCHANNAN
 TORAH
 CHUKIM
 MISHPATIM
 MITZVOT
 AM YISRAEL
 YHVH
 TEACH
 LAND
 OBEY
 LIFE
 YHVH
 SPEECHES
 DOCTRINE