Jesus, the Israeli: Can Q&A find the Right Questions?

(A Primer on the Use of Quotations and Allusions in the New Testament)

Chapter Eight

Shabbat Readings – Can you use them?

It depends. Have you ever been on an archaeological dig? Now imagine working a dig in extreme heat? But archaeologists are smarter than that. Digging deep into the soil of a particular Shabbat Reading may seem like a lot of sweat for such little yield at first. Like a dig, it will take patient work to get below the surface, sometimes in the heat of the day.

How to use the Shabbat Readings

Step One

Find a Torah Reading

Have you ever used a Concordance? For English bible readers there were two published books affectionately called *Strong's* and *Young's*. Some of you may remember the mnemonic saying: "Young's for the young and Strong's for the strong." Reading them was like reading a phone book – also an antiquated art. At the heart of online bible searches and bible software is a dataset drawn from the numbering system utilized in Strong's Concordance. Those numbers can search the Greek and Hebrew words used in the respective original texts.

In the old phone book, the method of finding the right person, address, and phone number was to find the last name, then first name in a row of last names. There may be many entries with the same name, so another piece of information must be supplied to find the right person. So out of all the entries for *Smith, George* only one is listed on 42 Alhambra St. Bingo! There is his phone number. In like manner the first step of using the Shabbat Readings is to find a NT reference that is within the range of verses in either the Torah portion or the Haftarah portion. Remember the *Torah* is the Pentateuch or Five Books of Moses, and the *Haftarah* is the Prophets section of the *Hebrew Bible*, not the Christian Bible[1]. Let's look up a NT quotation and see what Shabbat reading it is found in. Often included in the Christmas story is the quotation found in Luke 2.24. The OT reference for the quotation is in Leviticus 12.8. Imagine many rows with a list of readings and coming down the list you see these rows:

Shemini	Lev 9.1-11.47
Tazria	*Lev 12.1-13.59*
Metzora	Lev 14.1-15.33

Which of these three is the NT quotation found? That's right, the row in italics. This means the quotation is drawn from the reading called *Tazria*. Congratulations you have looked up your first NT reference that is found in one of the Shabbat Readings. Now please note that the full listing includes the Haftarah Reading from the Prophets. Shown like this:

Shemini	Lev 9.1-11.47	2 Sam 6.1-7.17
Tazria	*Lev 12.1-13.59*	2 Kgs 4.42-5.19
Metzora	Lev 14.1-15.33	2 Kgs 7.3-202 Kgs 7.3-20

When you observe the column on the right some of the references don't look like prophetic book references, but only if you are thinking of the classification of books found in the Christian bible. These are usually labeled as historical books, but in the Hebrew bible they are part of the Prophets section. Our example here in *Tazria* is 2Kgs 4.42-5.19. All references in the Haftarah list are always taken from the *Prophets* part of the Hebrew bible.

[1] There is a different book order and in some places the verse numbering is a bit off. This feels a bit confusing at first, but it will not take long to get used to it.

Alternate Step One

Find a Haftarah Reading

Let's now find a NT quotation that will be found in the *Haftarah* portion of the Shabbat Readings. This time we will use a listing that orders the rows according to the books in the Prophets section (Haftarah) of the Hebrew bible. This listing is the Haftarah Indexed References found in Appendix 12. Paul in Romans 9.13 uses a quotation taken from Malachi, which is Mal 1.2-3:

Mic 5.6(7)-6.8	Balak	Num 22.2-25.9
Zech 2.14(10)-4.7	BehaAlotcha	Num 8.1-12.16
Mal 1.1-2.7	Toledot	Gen 25.19-28.8

His quotation is found in the reading called *Toledot.* Remember the readings are named after the Torah portion, even the Haftarah readings are associated with this naming scheme. This naming manner can be summed up by the simple rule: Haftarah is responding to or dialoging with the Torah portion. These two readings are functional witnesses. Notice in the right column above that there is no chronological ordering of the Pentateuch (Torah portion) books associated with the readings. The rows are organized by the books in the Prophets section in ascending order (left column), running from Joshua to Malachi of the Hebrew bible.

Step Two

Read the texts according to the Formula: T or H = B

You found the quotation (or it could be an allusion) in one of the Shabbat readings. Your Q/A is either in a Torah portion or in a Haftarah portion. Now what? Remember this formula:

A NT reference found in either means read both.

Let's say this again in a fuller way: *A NT reference found in either the **T**orah or **H**aftarah means read **B**oth portions*.

How about a standout, mathematical style of expression using the fuller sentence above? Use bold first letters:

T or H = B

Using this formula means a lot of reading. Not all, maybe not most of the reading in either portion will be germane to the NT author's context and argument. But something in each or in one reading may surprise you. Imagine the task of reading the entire Old Testament in hopes of finding more in the NT author's use of a quote or an allusion? Sometimes the old concordance or a computer search or commentary can find something relevant in aiding your quest for the author's meaning by searching through the entire OT. Did you notice a tendency here? In a traditional approach to studying the NT use of a quote, we simply re-read the verse or verses in the OT. But we soon recognize that repetition – one in the OT and repeated in the NT, even for the purpose of textual witness, seems to ask for more – something that will contribute to the author's context.

Step Three

Place the Shabbat reading in a hierarchy of exegesis

Less can be more in *exegesis*, the method of letting the text speak for itself. Think of the process of discovery in a textual hierarchy. Through a NT reference we enter the OT with a quote from a verse, in the case of an allusion – an idea or phrase or even part of a phrase. Again, the *traditional approach* to this point of entry, the NT author's OT reference, is to start with a hierarchy like this:

- Read the reference cited – e.g. Psalm 95.7-11
- Read the immediate context of the reference in the OT – e.g. Psalm 95
- Search the OT for common words or ideas – e.g. "Today" or "40 years" or "harden not your heart"

You will notice that the volume of texts increases as you go down the list. Going from a few verses in this example to a whole Psalm is relatively easy. But then there is the whole OT to conduct a search. The task is too big. There are aids to ease finding exegetical material in the whole OT. But the NT author's needle can get quickly lost in the large haystack of so many OT verses. So, we rely on standard lists of cross references to narrow the scope. *Treasury of Scripture Knowledge* is a tool to quickly find additional relevant texts. But what if we added the Shabbat Readings to this traditional approach to getting the NT author's meaning? If they are to be used as another aid, where should they be placed in this hierarchy? Probably during or after reading the immediate context of the cited OT reference. Looking like this:

- Read the reference cited
- Read the immediate context

- *Read the Shabbat Readings*
- Search the OT

Notice that the *lesser* volume of texts in the Shabbat readings can be *more* than the larger textual amount of the entire Old Testament. Less can be more. Let's imagine that out of all the verses in the OT that only 1% contribute to the NT author's use of a Q/A. Let's say that a Shabbat Reading also contributes 1%; the ratio and impact is much larger. But notice that the Shabbat Readings exhibit an anomaly. Many non-relevant verses (to a NT author's argument) in the Shabbat readings are included within the scope of communal consensus. Yet the NT author could count on the familiarity of the entire Shabbat reading in the lives of the recipients because it was an established practice *as a weekly communal rhythm*. This community participation was uniform in synagogues all over the world where Jews lived. Now notice what typically happens when the Shabbat Readings are absent from the hierarchy. A search in the larger volume of the OT usually becomes reduced to a few verses, and the results are often scattered across the OT (atomized from several contexts). It is a search for additional texts in the larger body of the OT to find relevant pieces to the NT author's meaning. One method reduces the huge volume by searching, while the other method enlarges meaning by a consensus within a smaller container of verses. Hence, less is more.

This tendency of trying to make sense of non-relevant verses in a Shabbat Reading is difficult to get used to at first, but continued interaction with the Shabbat readings can help clear up what the NT author was getting at. Try reading the Shabbat Reading, then do the larger OT search. Consensus and greater familiarity with weekly repetition every year as an established practice does matter. For example, there are certain texts such as Exodus 12 which is the Passover chapter that is read on one Shabbat and read again on two separate holidays every year. That is a portion that is repeated three times a year and not as personal devotion but as community involvement. In an era of individualism, the sense and obligation of community participation can be easily missed as a vehicle that imparts meaning to the text.

Step Four
Getting Familiar with the Utility of the Shabbat Readings

Whatever way you plan to make use of the *Shabbat Reading* dataset, whether displayed on a computer screen as a PDF file or printed on paper, the most important take away is found in understanding the columns. There are two columns with nested columns below them. The two major columns are indexed differently. The major column on the left side is ordered by the *name* of the Shabbat reading that corresponds to the portions found in the Pentateuch, the Torah Portion. It is a consecutive bible reading plan running from Genesis to Deuteronomy. So, the major column on the left of the gray bar is labelled *Torah Index* and orders the Torah readings, which is shown in a truncated version of the SHABBAT READINGS Table below:

SHABBAT READINGS					
Torah Index			**Haftarah Index**		
Name	*Torah*	*Haftarah*	*Haftarah*	*Name*	*Torah*
Bereshit	Gen 1-6	Isa 42-43	Josh 2	Shelach	Num 13-15
Noach	Gen 6-11	Isa 54-55	Jdg 4-5	Beshelach	Ex 13-17
Lech Lecha	Gen 12-17	Isa 40-41	Jdg 11	Chukat	Num 19-22
Vayeira	Gen 18-22	2Kgs 4	Jdg 13	**Naso**	Num 4-7
Chayei Sarah	Gen 23-25	1Kgs 1	1Sam 11	Korach	Num 16-18

It is important to note that the name of the reading is featured in both major columns. For example, if **Naso** (in the Haftarah Index above) is mentioned at any time say, for instance, in a Jewish source outside the bible, then both the Torah portion and the Haftarah portion are meant. The *name of the reading* will be a fast, convenient way to suggest possible input to a NT exegesis. To give you an exegetical discussion sample: "If Luke is relying on *Naso* in Luke 24.50-53 to emphasize a connection to the Aaronic Blessing in Numbers 6:24-26, then....." As the sample of the exegetical discussion continues: "Just as the angel ascended before Manoah and his wife, but did not eat in Judges 13, so the Resurrected Christ also ascended in the presence of His disciples but did eat. This may indicate that the blessing, which is not spelled out in Luke 24.50, is like an Aaronic Blessing, because of two similar ascensions in Luke 24.51 and Judges 13.20. Luke may be suggesting that Jesus, who is not a High Priest after the order of Aaron, nevertheless is blessing with authority of the heavenly High Priest, while still on earth as the ascension is unfolding in the presence of His disciples."

Now, notice the right major column labelled *Haftarah Index*, because the bible references are ordered according to the *Prophets* section of the Hebrew bible. If you refer to the full version of the SHABBAT READINGS in Appendix 12, then you will notice that the Hebrew or English order of books is not a hindrance as you can still navigate effectively. The goal is to find the quotation or allusion reference in the *Prophets* or *Haftarah* section easily.

It is also important to notice that the Haftarah readings are not consecutive like the readings in the Torah Index. They jump around. This is because the Haftarah readings are following the Torah readings in some way. It is not always clear what their shared relationship is. You can see an example of jumping around by looking at the table above. The Genesis readings for the first three Shabbats (weeks) have Haftarah portions all from Isaiah but are neither chronological nor consecutive.

Step Five

Navigating an Additional Source of Readings – Jewish Holidays

There is an additional schedule of bible readings that are read according to the holiday calendar. Every holiday has a reading from the Haftarah portion that is usually different from the Haftarah readings for any Shabbat. Some of the feasts have a Torah portion as well. Note that the Calendar readings are important for *additional readings* found in the Prophets or Haftarah section of the Hebrew bible. There are two datasets to aid in finding where a quotation or an allusion is referenced in the Haftarah reading. One orders the readings by the Haftarah, and the other orders the readings by the holiday or calendar. As in the Shabbat Readings, the *name of the reading* is important. The *Holiday Readings* are named after the Jewish holidays. In the Table below is a sample of the **Haftarah Indexed Readings**, which are portions ordered by the books of the bible in the Haftarah column.

HOLIDAY READINGS

Haftarah Indexed Readings				
Haftarah	*Calendar*	*Torah*	*Stone Chumash*	*Etz Hayim*
Josh 1	Simchat Torah	Dt 33; Num 29	1246	1266
Josh 3, 5-6	Pesach 1	Ex 12; Num 28	1221	1299
1Sam 1-2	Rosh HaShannah 1	Gen 21; Num 29	1234	1224
1Sam 15	Zakhor	Dt 25	1214	1280

Because the readings are indexed by their order in the bible, you can easily find a NT Q/A that is within a Haftarah portion. Note that the two columns to the right are page references to two book sources for further exploration of the Holiday readings.[2] *Pesach 1* is the first day of Passover in this sample. See Appendix 14 for a listing of the Holidays and their meaning. *Pesach 1* is the first day of eight days of Passover week. Notice how the holiday draws from three chapters in Joshua.

Paul draws from Ezekiel 36.26 as an allusion in 2 Corinthians 3.3 where he discusses a new heart. Using Appendix 14 or the Holiday Readings, what Holiday is named? If you looked carefully in the **Haftarah Indexed Readings**, then you found Ezek 36.26 pointing to the Calendar column for the reading called *Parah*. Fishbane writes about the use of the holiday readings:

> This (*Parah*)... is the third of four special Torah passages added to the regular Shabbat portion in the weeks before Pesah (Passover). The theme of each reading is different, yet rabbinic tradition correlated each of the four readings with prophetic selections (Haftarah) that reinforce the main theme of purification." Earlier, Fishbane continues: "Ezekiel gives particular emphasis to issues of purification and spiritual renewal along with the theme of national redemption..... Part of the national transformation, unilaterally performed by God for His own sake, is a

[2] Nosson Scherman et al., eds., The Chumash: the Torah, Haftaros and Five Megillos = [Ḥamishah ḥumshe Torah: 'im TargumOnḳelos, pe. Rashi, Haftarot ṿe-Ḥamesh Megilot], 11th ed., ArtScroll series (Brooklyn, N.Y: Mesorah Publications, 2000). = Stone ChumashVolume.
David L. Lieber et al., Etz Hayim: Torah and Commentary, Unabridged edition. (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 2001).

revivification of heart and spirit. God will give the people a new heart to know Him and will put His spirit within them as a concrete act of inspiration.[3]

In the next sample below, the **Calendar Indexed Readings**, is an aid to help you find a source or even a reference from the bible that mentions one of the feast days or a holiday on the Jewish calendar. You will find that an index based on the calendar is important and convenient. A NT author's use of Q/A in an alignment with a feast day mentioned in scripture becomes a powerful exegetical cue. But sometimes a specific calendar reference **may not** be directly tied to its holiday event. Stephen's use of Isaiah 66.1-2 in Acts 7 was not intended by Luke to be occurring on the month (*Rosh Chodesh*) that commences the High Holy Days in preparation for national atonement. Yet his mention of a "temple made without hands" can be a hint about the nature of Yom Kippur.

Calendar Indexed Readings				
Calendar	*Haftarah*	*Torah*	*Stone Chumash*	*Etz Hayim*
LeMachar Chodesh	1Sam 20		1207	1215
Rosh Chodesh	Isa 66	Num 28	1208	1219
Rosh HaShannah 1	1Sam 1-2	Gen 21; Num 29	1234	1224
Rosh HaShannah 2	Jer 31	Gen 22	1236	1230

Step Six

Engage the Rules of Shabbat Readings/Holiday Readings – SR/HR Guidance

8.01 *Understand the Notation System*

This numbering notation means "Rule 8.01" and serves two ends. First, it establishes an order for the rules. Second, such notation can be found quickly and conveniently where clarity is needed in other parts of the book. For example, when the term "synagogue exegesis" is *first* mentioned in a discussion, then a simple notation (8.24) is added after the phrase. Like this: "synagogue exegesis (8.24)" - Appendix 12 is where the term is indexed in the *Glossary of Terms* and can be looked up as well.

8.02 *Start with UBS when doing Q/A*

A benchmark starting point for understanding what constitutes a Q/A is needed. Quotes are mostly determined and standardized. Allusions are the issue at hand, which should it be: too many or too little? We recommend UBS as a standard. It is well known and somewhat minimal. United Bible Societies or simply UBS published a standardized Greek NT, but an allusion reference apparatus exists only in editions 1 to 5. Included within this volume are two ways to denote quotes and allusions (Q/A). First, is the *in-text method* – quotes are in bold and OT references are listed at the bottom of the page. For allusions, only the references are listed at the bottom. Second, is the *appendix method* – the *Index of Quotations* appendix includes OT quote references indexed in both the OT and NT book orders. For allusions, the *Index of Allusions and Verbal Parallels* includes OT allusion references that are indexed only in OT book order but adds the Apocrypha and other writings. For non-Greek NT readers, the UBS is still accessible for using the two methods of Q/A referencing, just use the *Cross-Reference System* index listed in the Introduction. The goal of this starting point is to seek a minimal list of allusions.

8.03 *Both Shabbat Readings (SR) and Holiday Readings (HR) are calendar and community based*

Shabbat is a weekly event determined by the moon, while the Jewish holidays are a yearly sequence of events. This means there are variations in the verses and boundaries of certain SR readings. Keeping solar and lunar movements in sync as a calendar system requires periodic adjustments. So, some readings are substituted for others. What is usually an annual cycle for SR texts, also includes a three-year cycle to sustain a calendar sync. But the SR/HR boundaries and references exhibit another bit of change. There are minor differences in readings between the two majors, the Ashkenazi and the Sephardic communities There are also some smaller community variations as well.

8.04 *Use both Simplified Forms of Shabbat Readings/Holiday Readings*

[3] David L. Lieber et al., Etz Hayim: Torah and Commentary, Unabridged edition. (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 2001) 1286-7.

A simplified form of SR/HR is based on a simple annual cycle and a simplified community consensus. See 8.03 above. For reference volumes and commentary on the SR/HR readings, we recommend *Stone Chumash* and *Etz Hayim*.

8.05 *Read the NT author's Q/A texts according to the Formula: T or H = B*
This is a reminder of Step Two. Simply, remember to read both the Torah portion and the Haftarah portion.

8.06 *Remember the synagogue context of the SR/HR scrolls*
A curtained *Aron* or closet housed the Torah scroll. At an appropriate time in the liturgy the curtain is opened, and the Torah scroll is taken and laid down on the *Bema* (desk) for reading. An exposition or sermon called *Dvrei Torah* is delivered by the Rabbi. Nearby is the Seat of Moses where decisions of *Halacha* that clarify Jewish practice are rendered. Below the Bema is the floor of the synagogue where men of the synagogue and visiting men can participate in the Haftarah reading and offer an exegesis on the Shabbat Readings for that Shabbat. This can include texts outside either the Torah or Haftarah portion. The scrolls of the *Prophets* portion of the Hebrew bible were stored in a shelved closet along the synagogue wall adjacent to the Bema. An appointed man takes out the scroll for the Haftarah reading to hand to the invited reader/expositor of the text. Discussions and responses continue on the synagogue floor after the close of the service.

8.07 *NT authors may use an OT Quote/Allusion (Q/A) when employing their own Q/A.*
It may be the case that a NT author builds on top of a quote or an allusion (Q/A) used by an OT author. If so, then readings used by the OT author need to be within the scope of the NT Q/A. For example, the author of Hebrews quotes Psalm 95.7-11. The author of the Psalm in turn employs an allusion back to Israel's sojourn in the desert. The allusion is extensive. First, it was at the rebellion of Numbers 14, that the judgment will last for 40 years. Second, it was at the same event that the reason for the long sojourn was given: "because all these men who have seen My glory and the signs which I did in Egypt and in the wilderness and have put Me to the test now *these ten times* and have not heeded My voice" (Num 14.22). The Psalmist's allusion carries a hint that as the Egyptians rebelled during the Ten Plagues (Ex 7.13), so the First Generation of Israel were in danger of heart hardening, during the Ten Tests or Temptations. The writer of the Psalm picks out one of the Ten (Ps 95.8). In this verse, the summit of rebellion is focused on the complaints before the Rock soon after the Exodus: "So he called the name of the place Massah and Meribah, because of the contention of the children of Israel, and because they tempted the Lord, saying, Is the Lord among us or not" (Ex 17.7)? Note the "Rock of our salvation" at the beginning of the Psalm. Then he shows in verse 7: "Today, if you hear his voice," which was meant to bring the story of the Exodus into the context of the Psalm. From this context, Hebrews quotes the Psalm thus cascading the allusion of the Exodus into his own context (Heb 3.7-8, 15; 4.7). The recipients of Hebrews were likewise warned of similar danger as in the day of the Psalm and in the day of the Exodus.

Germaine to this case of cascading contexts is the argument in the next verse of Hebrews (Heb 4.8): "For if Joshua had given them rest..." Because Joshua, incidental at the Rock (Ex 17), was a good spy in Numbers 14, so later in the book of Joshua became the leader to bring Israel into rest. By the Shabbat Reading of *Shelach* (Torah portion: Num 13-15 & Haftarah portion: Josh 2) both roles of Joshua as spy and leader are considered together. As the Two Spies in Joshua chapter two faithfully reported to their leader, Joshua, so two of the Twelve Spies in Numbers 14, Joshua and Caleb, delivered a true report to their leader, Moses.