



Research Paper

A Review of Biblical Holiness (Qadosh): Not Wholly Holy, Holiness in the Prophet, and in Person

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ABSTRACT: This article is about Roman Catholic teachings on holiness (*Qadosh*) as rooted in the Scriptures. It provides a review of a twelve-part presentation titled "Holy is His Name," authored by a Catholic theologian Scott Hahn in 2023, as part of his annual Lenten series for Virtual Catholic Conference. "Holy is His Name" unpacks the concept of holiness throughout the Scriptures, spanning from the Old Testament to the New Testament. This review is structured into four articles, each containing three lessons. This is the second article which comprising the summary from Lessons 4-6.

KEYWORDS: Holy, Kadosh, Qadosh, Holiness.

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I. INTRODUCTION

As part of the annual Virtual Catholic Conference (VCC), Scott Hahn unpacks the concept of holiness, referred to as *Qadosh*, in his 2023 Lenten series titled, "Holy Is His Name." In twelve beautifully produced lessons, Hahn [1] takes us through his quest to define holiness (*Qadosh*) as it is found in the Scriptures [2–4] to help Catholics, religious study scholars, and anyone interested, better understand our relationship with holiness. The term *Qadosh* (*Kadosh*), in ancient biblical Hebrew, means holy, set apart, or sacred. Hahn [1] unpacks his biblical lessons into the following twelve lessons:

- 1) The Genesis of Holiness
- 2) The Holiness Explosion
- 3) Holiness in the Kingdom
- 4) Not Wholly Holy
- 5) Holiness in the Prophet
- 6) Holiness in Person
- 7) Becoming Holy, Becoming "Gods"
- 8) The Body of Holiness
- 9) His Type of Holiness
- 10) Holiness and Priesthood
- 11) Holiness in Hebrews
- 12) Holiness Today

This article is organized as follows. Section 1 is the introduction. The next three sections are the reviews on Lessons 4–6. The last section is the conclusion.

II. LESSON 4 – NOT WHOLLY HOLY

As we traced the biblical idea of the holiness of God through salvation history, we ended last time [5] on a sort of high note. With the construction of the Temple, God’s covenant relationship with his people arrived at a new stage. His presence was central in every way – culturally and geographically – and radiated holiness throughout the whole Promised Land. The monarchy had made this possible by unifying the tribes and reordering those territories. Israel’s newfound prestige, moreover, drew the attention of other peoples to Israel and of their Temple and of their God.

In Jerusalem, the people would gather three times a year to renew their covenant during the major pilgrim feasts: Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles. It was the *covenant* that made them a holy people. So, they

experienced the liturgy as sanctifying. The king had a central role to play as covenant mediator, like Moses had at the Exodus. David was a man after God's own heart. Solomon's name became forever synonymous with divine wisdom. In the historical book of the Old Testament (OT), both men appear as heroic figures. In one of the coronation Psalms, the king is given the unprecedented title of son of God! God says to him: "You are my son, today I have begotten you. Ask of me, and I will make the nations your heritage, and the ends of the earth your possession (Psalm 2:7-8)."

And even though the king comes from the tribe of Judah, and not the priestly tribe of Levi, yet the Lord tells him: "You are a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek (Psalm 110:4)." Israel monarchy was an extraordinary office. Like the Temple, it was unique upon all the earth. The Davidic king could be called many things. He could be called "Christ" – that is, 'The Anointed One' – or even 'The Son of God.' But one thing he was never called, was holy. In our discussion of the Book of Exodus, we saw that many things can be called holy. Above all, the word applies to God in his deepest mystery. But it also describes a wide range of items that serve God or denote his presence. The ground is holy before the burning bush (Exodus 3:5, holy ground); the altar (Exodus 29:37, holy altar); the liturgical vessels (Exodus 37:16, holy vessels); the Ark (Exodus 25:21, Holy Ark); and the Tabernacle (Exodus 40:34, Holy Tabernacle). The Sabbath is holy, as is anything offered to God (Exodus 16:23, Holy Sabbath): fruits (Exodus 34:26, holy fruits), grains (Exodus 40:29, holy grains), animals (Exodus 12:21, holy animals), and even money (Exodus 30:16, holy money).

In the time of the kingdom, the Temple is also called holy, as is the holy city surrounding it. The people collectively, are holy. The nation is holy. But individuals are not described this way – not in Exodus, nor in the histories of the kings, nor in all the OT. The great heroes and covenant mediators – Noah, Abraham, Moses, David – are praised for their righteousness, faithfulness, and piety, but not their 'holiness.' They are described and depicted as brave and wise. And yet they are never called *Qadosh* (*Kadosh*). To readers of Hebrew, this is as striking and surprising an anomaly as the absence of the word 'holiness' from the Book of Genesis. Why should the word 'holy' be conferred upon a patch of dirt but not upon an individual person? Why should the people as a whole be named by a word that may never describe any one of them individually? Yet so it is. Rabbi Joshua Berman, a friend of the Catholic Theologian Scott Hahn, notes that the Book of Psalms, "May be seen as a record of the righteous individual's relationship with God. Its protagonists are called by many names. They are righteous, pious, straight in the path of God, a lover of the Torah. But none are called *kadosh*." It would seem, he concludes, that "the term *kadosh* cannot be used to describe an individual's character, no matter how 'holy' he may be."

In modern usage, the word 'holy' is treated as practically synonymous for 'religious' or 'morally upright.' However, in ancient Israel, it was not that way. Holiness was something that belonged to properly to God – and only to God. Other items in creation might borrow the term because of their close association with God. Israel was a holy nation because the people, collectively, were in a covenant with God. But again, in the words of Rabbi Berman, the Hebrew Bible does not characterize a righteous individual as *kadosh*. That would begin to change near the end of the OT period, as we will see.

So, in the *deuterocanonical books*, we begin to see individuals – in particular, martyrs – described as 'saints.' For most of the OT history, holiness would remain Israel's collective vocation, and this common calling would serve to bind the people together with one another, as the covenant bound them all to God. Holiness (*Kadosh*), in the people, would not be like holiness in a vessel or even an altar. In animate objects cannot reject or ignore the demands of their divine calling. To Israel, God communicated a different expectation. In almost every single instance when he spoke to them of their calling to holiness, this divine vocation, he also reminded them of their need to keep the commandments. And so, we read in Leviticus 19, the Lord said to Moses: "Say to all the congregation of the sons of Israel, you shall be holy; for I the Lord your God am holy. Every one of you shall revere his father and his mother, and you shall keep my sabbaths: I am the Lord your God. You shall not steal, nor deal falsely, nor lie to one another. And you shall not swear by my name falsely and so profane the name of your God: I am the Lord."

The people of Israel would be required to achieve a moral goodness that was commensurate with their mission. The burden would fall, first of all, upon the shoulders of the priests, but also upon the kings. David and Solomon, it would seem, reigned as priest-kings. And these were holy offices. Their holiness came not from the character of individual officeholders, but from the divine services they performed. Nevertheless, they were expected to maintain a high standard of moral behavior. Consider the qualifications as proposed by King David himself: "O Lord, who shall sojourn in your tent? Who shall dwell on your holy mountains? He who walks blamelessly, and does what is right, and speaks the truth from his heart; who does not slander with his tongue, and does no evil to his friends, nor takes up a reproach against his neighbor; in whose eyes a reprobate is despised, but who honors those who fear the Lord; who swears to his own hurt and does not change; who does not put out his money at interest, and does not take a bribe against the innocent. He who does these things shall never be moved (Psalms 15:1-5)." It is a tall order, in fact, it proved too tall for both David and Solomon. Both men became as famous for their sins as for their righteous qualities. David committed adultery with Bathsheba

and then covered up that crime with another crime, having her husband murdered. Later in life, he chose not to punish his own son Amnon who raped his half-sister; the incident drove another one of his sons, Absalom, to rebel against David in order to avenge his sister's rape. Still later, David ignored the advice of his godly counselors and ordered a national census for his own aggrandizement. Solomon followed his father's example. Though he was wise, he was also acquisitive. He lived in opulence that clearly violated the law of God and then led to moral decadence. He owns forty thousand stalls of horses. He accumulated seven hundred wives and three hundred concubines. And many of his wives were foreign-born and idolaters, and they turned his heart away from the God of Israel. Solomon's forays into idol worship were as ambitious as any of his other ventures in life. The same skills he had once employed to construct a Temple in honor of the Lord, God, he now used to build shrines for false gods. We read (1 Kings 11:4-8): "For when Solomon was old, his wives turned away his heart after other gods; and his heart was not wholly true to the Lord his God, as was the heart of David his father. For Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians, and after Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites. So, Solomon did what was evil in the sight of the Lord, and did not wholly follow the Lord, as David his father had done. Then Solomon built a high place for Chemosh the abomination of Moab, and for Molech the abomination of the Ammonites, on the mountain east of Jerusalem. And so, he did for all his foreign wives, who burned incense and sacrificed to their gods." In 1 Kings 11, we read this sordid list.

Since as kings David and Solomon were their people's mediators and representatives, their sins had disastrous consequences for the entire nation. War followed, first with their neighbors and then within their own borders. During the reign of Solomon's sons, Rehoboam, the kingdom was split in two: the Northern Kingdom of Israel and the Southern Kingdom of Judah, which included Jerusalem. If the kings had followed the law, they would have held their kingdom together in the holiness of God. In the divided kingdom, however, the tribes of the north were cut off from worship in the Jerusalem Temple. They fell into all kinds of degraded forms of religion – and their morals fared even worse. Even in Jerusalem, the priests grew corrupt and scorned the holiness of their office.

In the centuries that followed, the prophets of Israel raged against these circumstances. In the oracles of the Prophet Isaiah, God famously denounced the entire religious establishment. As we read in Isaiah 28:7, "These also reel with wine and stagger with strong drink; the priest and the prophet reel with strong drink, they are confused with wine, they stagger with strong drink; they err in vision." All the king's horses and all the king's men could not put Israel back together again, because both the monarchs and the clergy were depraved and unworthy of their holy offices. Thus, the kingdom of David failed, and thus the people failed to fulfill God's commandment to "*Be holy*." They had been set apart by God for his service. They were called to be like God – different, other, holy. Repeatedly, however, they chose to be like the nations that surrounded them. They chose to worship idols and flout the moral law. Their leaders were most egregious in this misbehavior.

When the kingdom failed, it fell. Divided in two, Israel was weak and relatively defenseless against its powerful neighbors. The Assyrians invaded the North in the 721 (eighth century) BC. In the sixth century, the Babylonians took the Southern kingdom – including Jerusalem and its holy mountain, Zion. Foreigners pillaged the Temple and took its holy vessels. The Ark of the Covenant vanished from history. Though the Temple would be partially restored, and later rebuilt, the Holy of Holies would remain empty, signifying a real absence – a dereliction of vocation on the part of the kings, the priests, as well as the people. What was Israel to make, then, the extravagant promises that God had made to David? Promises like: "I will establish his line forever and his throne as the days of the heavens...I will not violate my covenant or alter the word that went forth from my lips. Once for all I have sworn by my holiness; I will not lie to David. His line shall endure forever, his throne as long as the sun before me. Like the moon it shall be established for ever; it shall stand firm while the skies endure (Psalms 89:29, 34-37)."

The combined reigns of David and Solomon lasted 80 years. It was a glorious moment and would be remembered as a golden age. David's progeny continued to rule in the South for nearly 500 years, which is a long time, but far short of the 'forever' that God had promised. The sun continued to rise and set on a Jerusalem what was occupied by people who were not "holy" in the sense that Israel was holy. The Babylonians had not been '*set apart*' for service of the one true God. Yet there they were, occupying the holy city in the place of King David. Eventually, the inhabitants of Judah would find themselves exiled to unholy places and subject to the laws of unholy kings. These they would serve voluntarily, even many years later, when they were free to return to their homeland. The Book of Esther, so enigmatic, portrays the conditions suffered by the Jews in Persia – yet in the Hebrew version of the Book of Esther, it never mentions God, not even in passing. Once again, Rabbi Berman observes that the book shows the Chosen People's preoccupation with the service of earthly kings, imperfect kings, even to the complete neglect of the God who had created them and called them to share his own holiness. Rabbi Joshua Bergman said, "When God's name is entirely omitted, it is not merely because his guiding hand is hidden in the unfolding drama. It is because God himself has been hidden by those who would serve him."

The exiles had turned their attention away from heaven and toward an earthly throne. The pagan monarch they served in Persia, Ahasuerus, lived in a palace suggestive of the design of the Jerusalem Temple, and like Belshazzar in the Book of Daniel – he even served his banquet guests with vessels confiscated from the Jerusalem Temple. Thus, the people of God were exiles not merely because of their banishment to another country. They were exiles because of the fickleness of their hearts. Ill-served by their kings and priests, they were left vulnerable to conquest – and the conquests were devastating, spiritually as well as materially. Such neglect of God was unbecoming, to say the least, for men and women of a ‘*holy nation*.’

But the sinners seem oblivious to the implications of their own actions. The center of their lives – collectively and individually – had become not Mount Zion and the presence of the living God, but rather the transitory locus of secular power. First Assyria, then Babylon, then Persia. In a sense, this should not be surprising, given God’s dire warnings at the beginning of Israel’s monarchy. In another sense, however, it is shocking, given God’s promises for the everlasting dynasty of the House of David. As we saw in previous episodes, God had created the world with a measure of incompleteness, which would be fulfilled in the Exodus. Then God had accomplished the Exodus with a degree of incompleteness, which would be fulfilled in the kingdom. Even repeated human failure could not frustrate God’s plan for sharing his holiness with all the world. He has made promises and he will remain faithful to them.

So, the kingdom itself was incomplete and pointed beyond itself, to a greater fulfillment – a king and covenant mediator who was as son of David but had no share in David’s sins – a king who was unfailingly holy in himself, and not merely because of the office he occupied – a king most true to the title ‘*Son of God*.’ We will get a clear sense of that promised fulfillment next time when we examine Holiness in the Prophets.

III. LESSON 5 – HOLINESS IN THE PROPHET

In the transforming power of God’s holiness, so far, we have looked into holiness in salvation history, from Genesis and the patriarch to Moses, and the Exodus, up to the era of the first Kings and the building of the Jerusalem Temple. Now, we want to look into the Prophets of Ancient Israel. If God is by nature holy, He transcends all of creation. He completely utters of all things that are visible and invisible. Nothing and no one in the world can comprehend the Almighty, his plan, his mind, his will. Throughout the biblical records however, the Lord made himself known, by calling certain men and women apart to become his inspired messengers. Such were his prophets. Now the Hebrew word for prophet, ‘*Nabi*’, means, literally: one who is inspired by God. The prophets received special revelations not so much for their own sake as for the sake of the people of God. Their task was not just to receive the divine message, but to pass it on – whether or not the intended audience even wanted to hear it. Prophets appear early in the biblical record. Abraham is called a prophet in Genesis. So are Aaron and Miriam at the time of the Exodus.

But Moses appears as a prophet in a category all by himself, though he was said to foreshadow a prophet ‘*likened*’ to him, who would arrive at some undisclosed time in the future. In the era of the Judges, there arose Deborah, who was a *prophetess*. To the prophets, the Lord would breach the wall of otherness and reveal himself “in a vision” or “in a dream.” Moses expressed the wish “that all of the Lord’s people were prophets, that the Lord would put his spirit upon them!” But that was not to be the case in Israel. The prophets in the biblical record were outliers.

Yet there came a time when prophecy flourished as a movement, and that roughly coincided with the years of Israel’s monarchy and exile. It was the Prophet Samuel who interceded with God for the blessing of the kings. It was Samuel who anointed the first two men to occupy the throne. The names that followed would be familiar to anyone who is even slightly acquainted with the great stories from Scripture: Nathan, Elijah, Elisha, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel. The prophets are granted visions or dreams of the “divine other.” Inspired supernaturally, they come to know holiness in ways that would be impossible in the merely natural order. Thus, their oracles are supremely important to us in this study.

God prepares the prophet to traffic in holiness, to hear mysteries inaccessible to everyone else, and then to speak the divine in human words. Isaiah received his vocation in a most memorable way, “In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up...and his train filled the temple. Above him stood the Seraphim; each had six wings: with two he covered his face, with two he covered his feet and with two he flew. And one called to another and said: Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of Hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory. And the foundations of the thresholds shook at the voice of him who called, and the house was filled with smoke. And I said, Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts! Then flew one of his Seraphim to me, having in his hand a burning coal which he had taken with tongs from the altar. And he touched my mouth and said: Behold, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away, and your sin forgiven. And I heard the voice of the Lord saying, whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then I said, here I am, send me. (Isaiah 6:1-8).”

Now, what most striking to us is the threefold chant of the seraphim in the Temple, “*Holy, holy, holy!*” To Catholics, it is familiar as a fixture in the Mass. It declares God’s holiness explicitly. Meanwhile, Isaiah responds in the ways that we have come to expect of a man confronted by divine holiness. He is filled with dread and cries out a confession of his own unworthiness. And then purified by the burning coal from the altar of incense, he is ready and eager for any task that God gives him. Much in the scene is reminiscent of Moses’ encounter at the Burning Bush. Scripture often associates holiness with imagery of fire. Moses was fascinated by the fire that burned, but did not consume it. Isaiah was purified by the heat from the fire of the altar of the heavenly temple. The scene also evokes the manifestation of God upon Mount Sinai which was wrapped in smoke because the Lord descended upon it in fire; and the smoke of it went up like the smoke of a kiln, and the whole mountain quaked greatly. Now the appearance of the glory of the Lord was like a devouring fire on top of the mountain in the sight of the sons of Israel. The prophets, Moses and Isaiah, experienced the holiness of God as a purifying fire. The Lord appears as a consuming blaze, and both men feel an elemental fear in his presence. But like the bush at Mount Horeb, they are not consumed. They are empowered, in fact, for long years of service. Isaiah ministry would extend over more than five decades. The key to his ministry, however, is this beginning. Hahn [1] believe there is, in this brief passage, an extraordinary revelation of God’s holiness. The Thrice-Holy hymn calls attention to it and invites us to a closer examination of the words of Isaiah. What is the significance, for example, of the opening phrase, which situates the moment of revelation rather precisely in Israelite history? Isaiah receives the visions “*in the year that King Uzziah died.*” Now, that could be a simple statement of fact, but it could be much more. Uzziah ruled over Judah for more than 40 years in the eighth century BC (at 16 years of age). His reign was a time of economic prosperity and military triumph. He built up a mighty army and reconquered lands that his ancestors had lost. He fortified Jerusalem so that it would be nearly impregnable to attack. The crops were abundant, and tribute flowed in from the cities he had subjected. National confidence ran high. Uzziah himself was flushed with that confidence. Since he had excelled in so many worldly endeavors, he took it upon himself to do the work of the Temple priests. Here is the account that we read in the Second Book of Chronicles, “But when [Uzziah] was strong he grew proud, to his destruction. For he was false to the Lord his God, and entered the temple of the Lord to burn incense on the altar of incense. But Azariah the priest went in after him, with eighty priests of the Lord who were men of valor; and they withstood King Uzziah, and said to him: It is not for you, Uzziah, to burn incense to the Lord, but for the priests the sons of Aaron, who are consecrated to burn incense. Go out of the sanctuary; for you have done wrong, and it will bring you no honor from the Lord God (2 Chronicles 26:16-21).” Uzziah was forcibly and permanently expelled from the Temple. He was also immediately stricken with leprosy, and driven from his own house and city. His son assumed the throne in his place, and Uzziah died soon afterward. Uzziah’s punishment is reminiscent of the scene in Second Samuel, in which the similarly named Uzzah, was struck down because he rushed forward to support the tottering Ark of the Covenant. Both episodes record terrifying manifestations of God’s holiness and power. Those who choose to treat the presence of God casually, end up suffering the most severe consequences. The death of King Uzziah was unforgettable, and its causes were certainly relevant to the story that Isaiah has to tell. As he relates the event, Isaiah portrays himself as a man of lukewarm devotion and morals. He was a man, as he says, of ‘*unclean lips.*’ And yet he found himself suddenly in the place that had been arrogantly seized, quite recently, by King Uzziah. Isaiah knew the punishment he deserved, and so he confessed his sin. He called out for mercy, and so he was not punished, but rather healed, and that in a dramatic way. The same holiness that had made a leper of prideful Uzziah, made a prophet of repentant Isaiah. It was no arbitrary choice for Isaiah to situate his story in the year of King Uzziah’s death. He was framing it for comparison, for contrast, and hard contemplation. He was framing it as a story of justice and mercy. He was emphasizing the reality of God’s holiness which would be the source of his personal authority and power throughout his many years of prophetic ministry.

For the prophets, God crosses that divide that makes him fully ‘*other.*’ In visions and dreams they see and hear him and are moved to awe, to wonder, and fear. The books of the prophets, as we might expect, are filled with such accounts. Isaiah hears the cry of the seraphim: “*Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts*” (Isaiah 6:3). In Hebrew, adjectives are intensified by repetition. So, “*holy, holy*” would be like saying “*holier,*” and “*holy, holy, holy*” means “*holiest.*” The prophet portrays God at the furthest remove from creation, and yet suddenly very close. It is the only time in the OT we find that threefold repetition of a quality of God. We never see “*mercy, mercy, mercy*” for example, though God’s mercy is very important. Nor do we see “*love, love, love*” or “*justice, justice, justice.*” Still, Isaiah speaks consistently as a prophet of love and mercy. God manifest his holiness, Isaiah explains, for the sake of mercy: “The Lord waits to be gracious to you; therefore, he exalts himself to show mercy to you.” Such an experience of God’s holiness, however, also renders the prophets very sensitive to their own sins and the sinfulness of the people. They expressed outrage with the behavior of the priests, who go about their ceremonial business in distracted or even deceptive ways. They go impatient with worshippers who make the obligatory sacrifices, but habitually flout the moral law. The prophets plead for a righteousness in keeping with the Chosen People’s status as a “*holy nation.*” In the word of Isaiah, “the Lord of

hosts is exalted in justice, and the Holy God shows himself holy in righteousness (Isaiah 5:16).” The Chosen People, in fact, were summoned to be “a light to the nations.” Throughout Isaiah, God specified that this was the very reason for the covenant: that the holy nation should lead all other nations to God’s righteousness and to his holiness: “That my salvation may reach to the end of the earth.” Nevertheless, as we noted in the last section, Isaiah and the other prophets are careful to apply the term ‘holy,’ only to the people and never to a person. Holiness was something granted to the collective because of their proximity to God in the covenant. In Israel’s family, they were quarantined for holiness – and righteousness, too, if they obey the Law. Separated from Israel, they were lost, exiled, outside the covenant and thus profaned and unholy.

With the Prophet Daniel, however, a strange thing happens. Without remarking on it, he begins to speak of holiness in a different way, as a mark of personal character for certain individuals, and not simply the collective status of a nation. The Book of Daniel tells the story of a young man of Judah exiled to Babylon in the sixth century BC. And there, in a pagan land, Daniel strives heroically to keep the laws of his ancestors. He serves the Babylonian king, Nebuchadnezzar, at Royal court, but refuses to comply when commanded to bow down before the idols of Babylon. He refuses even to eat food from the king’s table, because it might have been offered in sacrifice to the gods of Babylon. To strengthen Daniel and to guide him, God grants him a series of visions. Daniel is enabled to see the future from God’s eternal perspective, and he describes it unfolding in a series of ages, each dominated by a distinctive empire of the Gentiles. At the conclusion of the fourth age, salvation history would reach a climax and God’s holiness would triumph through the leadership of: “One like a son of man,” Who would rule not only Israel, but: “All peoples, nations, and languages.” His reign, moreover, would be: “An everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom would be one that shall not be destroyed.” Passages like that clearly echo the promises that were made long before, to King David and to King Solomon. But the royal line of David had ended horrifically with the conquest of Judah by Babylon. The Babylonians took King Zedekiah captive with all his royal household. And on their way to their exile, Zedekiah was forced to watch while all of his sons were murdered. And then his captors put out his eyes, so that the last thing he saw would be the end of his dynasty, the end of the line of King David.

But Daniel saw a day in a distance future [Daniel’s Prophecy], in 490 years – literally “*seventy weeks of years*” [Daniel’s Prayer] – when the holy city and the kingdom would be restored (Daniel 9:16). Jerusalem would be ruled by an anointed one, a “*Christ*” [Arrival of the Anointed One], who will reign forever (Daniel 9:25).

In the discussion of that future time, however, Daniel’s language took a rather curious term. He speaks of the subjects of the kingdom not only as, a “*holy people*,” but as “*saints*.” He foretells that, “the saints of the ‘*Most High*’ shall receive the kingdom, and possess the kingdom forever, forever and ever”. The term saints mean those who are ‘holy’ or ‘the holy ones.’ These are individuals who possess holiness not just the mass, as a collective, but each and every person in and of themselves. The difference may seem to be merely semantic, but it is actually seismic. And Daniel employs the term repeatedly. He said for example, that the fourth beast would “Make war with the saints until the Ancient of Days came, and judgement was given for the saints of the ‘*Most High*’, and the time came when the saints received the kingdom. And in the end, the Kingdom and the dominion and the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven shall be given to the people of the saints of the ‘*Most High*’; their kingdom shall be an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey them. (Daniel 7:22).” The kingdom would be restored and last forever. Its greatness would belong not just to the king but to those who possessed holiness, the saints.



Fig 1. Illustrations for the Israelites in Exile & Slavery (Left Panel); As One Holy Nation & Kingdom (Middle Panel); and as Individual Holy Saints (Right Panel).

Figure 1 illustrates the following. In exile, Israel was reduced to its lowest condition in centuries – almost reduced to slavery – and as before, they had brought the catastrophe upon themselves. Nevertheless, God would be faithful. Even in letting them have their way, he would end up having his way. The restoration would raise them to an even higher level than from whence they fell. Once they had been a clan; enslaved, they became

a nation. Once they had been a nation depraved, they became a kingdom. Once they had been a kingdom; one day in the future, they will live as individual saints. And the saints would possess a quality that belonged, by nature and by right, to God alone.

The original hearers of the prophets could not have known just how God would make good on promises such as these. It would be by the sending of his Son. In the next section, we will begin looking at the Holiness of Christ.

IV. LESSON 6 – HOLINESS IN PERSON

The OT tells the story of the human encounter with God's holiness, his transcendent and otherness. When God drew near, the prophets fell to the ground. They cover their faces. But many of the people whom God would make holy chose to flee from his holiness rather than face its demands. The Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC) observes in paragraph 2811: In spite of the holy Law that again and again their holy God gives them – “*You shall be holy, for I the Lord your God am holy*” – and although the Lord shows patience for the sake of his name, the people turn away from the Holy One of Israel and profane his name among the nations. For this reason, the just ones of the OT, the poor survivors returned from exile, and the prophets burned with passion for the Name.

The prophet Daniel, however, foretold that humans would share God's holiness and he even dared to put a date on it. “Daniel's vision anticipates the coming of Christ and even puts a date on it, ‘*one like a son of man,*’ who will make atonement for the people's sins and bring everlasting righteousness to them (Daniel 7:13).” Even this prediction, however, is troubling. “In time, the redeemer will be cut off, and his death would bring about the destruction of Jerusalem and the decisive end of worship in the Temple (Daniel 9:26-27).”

Daniel's date and details correspond in a fascinating way, to the advent of the Christ described in the New Testament (NT). In the gospels we find the ultimate resolution of the pattern that recurs throughout the OT. From the beginning of the sacred history, God made *covenant* with his chosen people who repeatedly broke the bond through sin. The results were always catastrophic. Yet God, each time, brought his people forward, upward by means of his mercy and forgiveness. “But when the time had fully come (Galatian 4), God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem of those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons.” The fullness of time arrived, as Daniel had predicted, with the coming of Christ. The NT comes to us in a new language. Whereas most of the OT was set down in Hebrew, the NT original language was Greek. With the new tongue, came a new vocabulary – and a new word for ‘holy.’ By this time, the OT has been faithfully rendered in Greek by Jews who were living in Alexandria, Egypt. Their translation is known as the Septuagint, which means “*seventy,*” because the work was, according to the legend, carried out by seventy translators. Wherever the Hebrew used the word *kadosh* or its related forms, the Septuagint consistently rendered it with the Greek word *hagios*. The NT, composed mostly by Greek-speaking Jews, employs the vocabulary of the Septuagint. Interestingly, it uses the language of holiness overwhelmingly to describe an individual: Jesus, the Messiah. Among the many items of evidence for Jesus's divinity in the Gospels is the use of the language of holiness to name him or to describe him. At the Annunciation, the angel tells Mary: “Therefore the child to be born will be called *holy*, the *Son of God* (Luke 1:35).” Likewise, at the conclusion of the Bread of Life Discourse, after Jesus had challenged his disciples to believe in his eucharistic presence, Peter responds with a bold confession of faith. He says Lord, to whom shall we go; You have the words of eternal life; and we have believed, and have come to know, that you are the ‘*Holy One of God*’ (John 6:68-69). Even the demons are forced to testify to the holiness of Jesus when he exorcises them, they cry out: What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are, the ‘*Holy One of God*’ (Mark 1:24 and Luke 4:34). Jesus is the ‘*Holy One of God*’. But recall that is a quality of title only proper to God. Yet also his uniqueness in possessing this quality by nature. He is the One. He is holy because he is divine. Jesus himself continues the OT practice of applying the language of holiness to the Lord God. For example, when he teaches his disciples to pray, he instructs them to say, ‘*Hallowed be Thy name,*’ a traditional Jewish form of addressing God. God's name is his identity, which is holy.

There is a striking development in the NT, however, as the word ‘holy’ is used to denote God's Spirit. This beautiful name, Holy Spirit, only appears three times in the Hebrew Scriptures. For example, in Psalm 51:11, in Isaiah 63:10, and Isaiah 63:11. In the NT, however, it appears more than 90 times. Moreover, it's used as the proper name of a divine person who is distinct from the one whom Jesus addresses as Father. Jesus speaks of the Father sending the Spirit, as we read in John 14:26. Jesus himself confers the Spirit on his disciples, in John 20:22. It is also clear that the Spirit's actions are distinct from those of the Father and Jesus, the Son. The Spirit teaches and reminds (Luke 12:12 and John 14:26). The Spirit, in other words, is not an impersonal force or energy – not a power, but a person. The holiness that the OT ascribes to God, the NT ascribes to Jesus and to the Holy Spirit. In holiness God reveals himself as a Trinity of divine persons. With the revelation of Jesus Christ, the thrice-holy hymn of Isaiah takes on a new and much deeper significance. It stands for the seraphim's adoration of the thrice-holy God in the heavenly Temple.

Isaiah's oracle spoke of an extraordinary vision of holiness in God. But Daniel's vision seemed to indicate something much more to indicate something much more. Daniel spoke of divine holiness shared with human beings – so thoroughly, they could bear it as their identity, as God did! Daniel spoke of human beings who would be called 'saints.' In Daniel, it is a prediction. In the NT, it is the fulfillment. At the moment of Jesus's death, we were told, Jerusalem witnessed several extraordinary phenomena, "Behold, the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom; and the earth shook, and the rocks were split; and the tombs also were opened, and many bodies of the saints [*hagioi*], who had fallen asleep were raised, and coming out of the tombs after his resurrection, they went into the holy city and appeared to many (Matthew 27:51-53)." It seems that the Jerusalem Temple, the reserve of God's holiness on earth, was decommissioned upon the Messiah's death, just as Daniel had predicted. The curtain that sealed off the holy place was sundered. Then, long-dead saints – literally, holy ones, *hagioi* – were seen wandering from their tombs after Jesus' resurrection. These were the prophets, the martyrs, and other of the faithful departed from the period of the OT. That's the first time we encounter the term in the sense of Daniel's prediction, but it is far from the last. The word 'saints' appears, afterwards, in the Acts of the Apostles, to describe those who have faith in Jesus Christ – those who are members of the Church. When God asks Ananias to instruct the newly converted Saul in the faith, Ananias protests, saying, "Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much evil he has done to your saints in Jerusalem." Later in the same chapter, the Christians in Lydda are twice referred to as 'saints.' Near the end of book of Acts, Paul confesses that he had, "shut up many of the saints in prison." Though the holy city had profaned itself at the death of the Christ, holiness did not vanish from the earth. No, it appears now in the Church; and more specifically, in the Church's holy members. These are expressions of sainthood explode in the letters of Saint Paul. In many of his letters, he addresses his recipients as saints, "To all God's beloved in Rome, who are called to be saints..." (Roman 1:7); "To the church of God which is at Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints..." (1 Corinthians 1:2); "To the church of God which is at Corinth, with all the saints who are in the whole of Achaia..." (1 Corinthians 1:1); "To the saints who are also faithful in Christ Jesus..." (Ephesians 1:1); "To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons..." (Philippians 1:1); "To the saints in..." (Colossians 1:2). The greetings themselves tell us much about the NT doctrine of sanctity, of holiness – and how it is developed from the OT types. For Paul, holiness is no longer a term reserved exclusively for God. Now it belongs to believers, too. Holiness, in fact, becomes synonymous with membership in the Church, the body of Christ. In Israel, the priesthood, as a collective, was holy. But in the Church, the word applies to everyone, not just the bishops and the deacons. All those who belong to the Church are 'called to be saints' and are 'sanctified.' Paul thus shows that holiness is something that comes to them. It is not their own doing. Someone else is calling them and someone else is sanctifying them. And that can only be God, who alone is holy. As we also hear in the NT (Revelation 15:4). As we moved beyond the greetings, we learn more about the qualities of those individuals whom Paul dares to call 'saints.' From Paul, we learned that "The Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God (Roman 8:27)." And we learned that when saints pray, they pray in the Holy Spirit, "Pray at all times in the Spirit...making supplication for all the saints (Ephesians 6:18)." Moreover, we learned that Christ dwell in the hearts of 'all the saints' (Ephesians 3:17-18).

The saints are thus somehow, mysteriously, sharing the life of the three divine persons of the Holy Trinity. In the First Epistle to the Corinthians, we learn from Paul that Christians, collectively, are the abode of holiness, the temple, and that the physical body of each individual Christian – even the Gentiles – is also a temple. In the practical realm, the saints provide mutual care for one another – and for Paul as their pastor. Why? Because saints practice hospitality. The saints are 'those who in every place call on the name of our Lord Jesus (1 Corinthians 1:2).' By their work of ministry, the saints are 'building up the body of Christ.' Their lives then are characterized by *virtuous acts* and by the *avoidance of vice*: 'Immorality and all impurity or covetousness must not even be named among you, as is fitting among saints (Ephesians 5:3).'

Thus, the hearts of saints may be, 'unblameable in holiness before our God and Father, as the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints (Thessalonians 3:13).' The saints are called to hope because they already know the riches of Christ's glorious inheritance. They are citizens of a heavenly city and members of the household of God. In that regard, Paul makes an important distinction. In the first chapter of his letter to the Colossians, he uses the term 'saints' four times. In the first instance, verse 2, Paul is directly addressing the members of the Church at Colossae, and he is addressing them as saints. The second time, in verse 4, he is speaking of Christians throughout the whole world. However, the third time, he has transcended his earthly dwelling and he is talking about 'the saints in light', in verse 12—that is, those Christians who have died and whose souls already reside in heaven. The fourth and final time, verse 26, Paul seems to be considering the saints on earth and in heaven together, as members of one all encompassing communion. In the lives of all the saints, Paul says: the mystery hidden for ages and generations is now made manifest. Christ will be glorified in his saints and marveled at in all who have believed. Because through the witness of the saints, the gospel was made credible in the world. Holiness was no longer the collective possession of one, single isolated people. It was no longer restricted to the bearers of one certain ethnicity or the inhabitants of a 'holy land.' In former days,

Paul explains, it had been so. As he says, the Gentiles had been ‘separated from Christ, and alienated from the commonwealth of Israel, and thus *strangers* to the *covenants of promise*, having no hope and without God in the world.’ But then came the critical turn in the salvation history, and now in Christ Jesus, you who once were far off, have been brought near in the blood of Christ. So much depend on that little preposition, ‘in’ which we will examine in the next article. As God, Jesus Christ is the only true ‘*Holy One*.’ Yet, through his ministry, he has come to repopulate the earth with ‘*holy ones*’ – with *saints*. And Paul is most emphatic about this. It is a doctrine that occupies a central place in his proclamation, announced at the beginning of his letters and spelled out in all of the pages that follow. The sudden and ubiquitous appearance of ‘saints’ in the NT implies a profound change in the life of God’s people on earth. God did not change between the OT and the NT. God is unchanging, immutable through all eternity. The difference seems to be in the fullness of his own self-disclosure to us: the revelation of his Trinitarian inner life. Yet his revelation was not simply the publication of new facts. It was the sharing of his life which constitutes the new covenant. What changed, and changed profoundly, was the relationship between God and humanity, between heaven and earth, time and eternity. It was the change in relations that made saints possible. But how did this happen? What did God’s people gain in the New Covenant that they had lacked in the Old? We will look at that in the next article.

V. CONCLUSION

In this article, we have reviewed and summarized the Lesson 4-6 of Hahn’s [1] 2023 Lenten series talk, titled, “Holy Is His Name”. Particularly, 4) Not Wholly Holy, 5) Holiness in the Prophet, and 6) Holiness in Person. The message of the story emphasizes that living in a manner aligned with holiness and participating in the divine life form the essence of the covenant between God and humanity. This covenant calls for a commitment to holiness in God, leads to the inheritance of eternal life. Understanding and embracing this message is crucial for individuals aspiring to become a holy person and community; and ultimately to benefit many souls aiming to heaven, in spreading the message.

DISCLAIMER STATEMENT

This research represents the author’s own work and opinion. It does not reflect any policy nor represent the official position of any U.S. Federal Agency.

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