



Research Paper

Understanding Holiness (Qadosh): Becoming Holy, The Body of Holiness, and His Type of Holiness

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Abstract: This paper is about Roman Catholic teachings on holiness (*Qadosh*) grounded in biblical foundations. It summarizes a twelve-part presentation titled "Holy Is His Name," developed by a Catholic theologian Scott Hahn in 2023, as an annual Lenten series for the Virtual Catholic Conference. "Holy Is His Name" delves into the concept of holiness throughout the Bible, covering both the Old Testament to the New Testament. This review is organized into four papers, each comprising three lessons. This third paper summarizes Lessons 7–9.

Keywords: Holy, Kadosh, Qadosh, Holiness.

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I. INTRODUCTION

The 2023 Lenten program of the annual Virtual Catholic Conference (VCC) features “*Holy Is His Name*,” in which Scott Hahn [1] delves into the concept of holiness, referred to as *Qadosh*. Across twelve carefully produced lessons, Hahn [1] traces his effort to define holiness (*Qadosh*) as it appears in the Bible [2–4] helping Catholics, religious studies scholars, and others deepen their understanding of humanity’s relationship with the holiness. The term *Qadosh* (also spelled *Kadosh*), in ancient biblical Hebrew, means “holy,” “set apart,” or “sacred.” Hahn organizes his biblical reflections 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 paper is organized as follows. Section 1 is the introduction. The next three sections are the reviews on Lessons 7–9. The last section is the conclusion.

II. LESSON 7 – BECOMING HOLY, BECOMING “GODS”

As we ended previously [5–6], this lesson is to unfold how in the NT God’s calling Christians to be his holy saints. Covenant is the word used for this unique relationship with God since the beginning of time. By observing sabbath God spoke and renewed this covenant with series of mediators with Noah, Abraham, Moses, and David. But then came the strings of oracle through the Prophet Isaiah who uttered twice, “I have given you as a Covenant” (Isaiah 42:6 and 49:8). Sounds odd, but a simple identification of a Person with a Covenant, and vice versa. It’s without precedence. We will never say that Moses or David were covenant. They were to serve as Covenant mediators. So, Isaiah was setting us to expect something different. Something with a continuity in

the past, because it is a covenant. But at the same time, something that is astonishingly new. The oracle was fulfilled in Jesus Christ, in the sense Christ is a Covenant Mediator, recognizably continuous with Noah, Abraham, Moses, and David, yet He is much more. Jesus is something that none of the earlier mediators could ever be. He is the Covenant towards all which the former covenant was tending. In Christ, God appear as the Savior of all men, for He desires all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of the Truth [Jesus]. Thus, Paul states in Ephesians 2, It is Jesus' Blood that makes possible this reconciliation [with God]. Blood shed upon the Cross, Blood shared in the Eucharist, which He established explicitly as His Covenant Meal, at the "*Last Supper*", He told us through the apostles, about this meal (1 Corinthians 11:25). Through the Eucharist, He has established and able to sustain the communion with His Saints. St Paul asked a rhetorical question, "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ?" (1 Corinthians 10:16). Of course, "Participation and Communion" for the single reality that dominates Paul's letters. It is implicit in the single short proposition. Paul describes everywhere in his letters, Christ as dwelling within the Church but also within Individual Christians. Paul said, "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me" (Galatians 2:20). God became man so that He can make his dwelling among us. It is marvelous that Christ lives within believers and the believers dwell in Him. It is in Christ that Christians have been made holy, sanctified, made saints. In Christ that they will be made alive as surely as they died in Adam. Christians must consider themselves "...dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus" (Romans 6:11) and "For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus" (Romans 6:23). When Paul speaks, he speaks in Christ, having the same mindset as Christ. These are extraordinary privilege, enjoyed through the New Covenant (which is the believers live in Christ and Christ live in them). This recapitulate the early stages that God dealt with men (on the Creation or Genesis, then the Exodus) for "If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation" (2 Corinthians 5:17) as Christ is "our Paschal Lamb" (1 Corinthians 5:7). In Christ, we have been sanctified so that we may inherit the Kingdom, not merely of David, but of God. In the Old Order, God's covenant people came to dwell in an earthly land of promised. However, in the New Order, believers would "sits with [God] in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus" (Ephesians 2:6). The New Covenant brought it to the closest family bond, between God and men. Scripture compared it to the bond of marriage and a bond between a parent and a child but in fact, it is closer than that, it is a mutual indwelling. It is a relationship previously known only to God.

In the gospel of John, Jesus repeatedly exhorted, to live in Him, "Abide in Me and I in you... as the branch cannot bears fruits by itself...neither can you, unless you abide in Me" (John 15:5). He used the metaphor of branch and vines, to illustrate the principal of mutual indwelling. Jesus more often favored another analogy, to compare His communion with believers, to His communion with the Father. He also made it clear, "He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him" (John 6:56). Jesus reiterates, "If a man does not abide in Me, he is cast forth as a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire and burned" (John 15:6). In Christ, God offered salvation to the whole humanity. However, what is salvation? The definition came from Scripture; Jesus came to save his people from sins. It is true but not the whole truth. Salvation is not merely from something. It is for something. God delivers his people from sins so that they may become his sons and daughters. He brought about redemption for the sake of adoption. To redeem those who were under the law so that we might receive adoptions as sons. Salvation from sins is a prerequisite. But adoption to become his children is the deepest meaning of salvation. It presupposes the redemption, justification, and all other metaphor proposed by Paul, John, and the other NT authors. In baptism, we received a washing. But the washing is for the sake of the new beginning. "But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, He saved us, not because of deeds done by us in righteousness, but in virtue of His own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal in the Holy Spirit, which he poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that we might be justified by His grace and become heirs in hope of eternal life" (Titus 3:4-7).

But it's not just any new beginning. It's a new beginning in holiness, that St Paul wrote to the Corinthians – You were washed, sanctified, and justified. Some non-Catholics interpreters would have a stop short of this reality. They put their focus instead of on justification. They interpret justice by the standard of the court room. But in doing so, they ignore the cultural and religious context of St Paul and many uses of his metaphor. Supremely important to Paul, as first centuries Jews, was the idea of covenant. *Covenant* created a *sacred* kinship of a family. And with Jesus as the New Covenant, that family kinship was made immeasurably stronger and closer. Baptism identifies ordinary human beings with Jesus. It makes them to be children of God. In the Eternal Son of God, in baptism, they become partaker of the Divine Nature. St Paul knew that God was not content to merely be our Judge. God long to be our Father and that remains the very essence of Salvation in Christ, "For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the spirit of sonship. When we cry. 'Abba! Father!' it is the Spirit

himself bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ” (Romans 8:14-17).

For the first century Christians, to be saved was to be made sons of God. Their works for the process convey their astonishment. They dare to say, “*Theosis*” and “*Theopoiesis*” (deification or divinization). Literally, they described “God making”. Why would these Christians shy-away from such language if Jesus used it himself? Recalled that a group of opponents said, “We stone you for no good work but for blasphemy; because you being a man, make yourself God” (John 10:33). Jesus replied, “Is it not written in your law, ‘I said, you are gods?’” (John 10:34). Jesus was quoting Psalm 82, but only partially. The sentence that was most read, “You are gods, sons of the ‘Most High’, all of you” (Psalm 82:6). It seems to be his view of humanity, as he looked at the crowns and challenge them “to be perfect as your Heavenly Father is perfect”. He could even lay the challenge upon an individual, “If you would be perfect”. What is implicit in John, became explicit in Paul who speaks of the ‘saved’ in exalted of the divine terms: Christians are children-of-God, heirs-of-God, glorified with Christ, because of their radical association with Christ, they are given gifts that properly of God’s alone. For all things are yours and you are Christ’s and Christ is God’s.

In the eleventh century, St Anselm of Canterbury asked question, “*Cur Dus Homo?*” (Why did God become man?) St John already anticipated the question and provided an answer, “God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whoever believe in Him should not perish but have eternal life, for God sent His Son into the world not to condemn the world but that the world might be saved through Him” (John 3:16-17).

Again, when we speak of eternal life, we are talking about something that by nature, only belong to God. Eternal life is not the same as Everlasting life. Hence, Jesus is not promising simply a salvation from sins and its wages. Eternal life is life that transcend time. It is the life that belongs exclusively, to God. Yet it becomes ours, when we know Jesus Christ. We have the Savior’s own words on it, “And this is eternal life, that they know you, the only True God, and Jesus Christ to be your Son” (John 17:3). This is why God became man, to save us from our sins, so that we could be holy, with His Holiness, “For our sake He made Him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God” (2 Corinthians 5:21). Christians Tradition has said it the ‘Marvelous Exchange’, “For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that through He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor, so that by His poverty you might become rich” (1 Corinthians 8:9). We receive the life of God, His nature with our baptism. We renew it in the other sacraments (Figure 1), especially the Eucharist.



Fig 1. Illustrations for Sacraments

We correspond to it, gradually, for the course of lifetime, and with unveiled faces, according to the glory of the Lord, being changed into his likeness, from one degree of glory into another. This was the common understanding of the earliest Christians. This is how they understood salvation and it is evidenced in the great works of the Church Fathers; writing around AD 150, as St Justin the Martyr put together all these strands of St Paul’s doctrines, “[man and woman] were made like God, free from suffering and death...deemed worthy of becoming gods and having power to become sons of the Most High.”

Then just few years later, St Irenaeus of Lyons spoke of Jesus as, “the Word of God...who did, through his transcendent love, become what we are, that he might bring us to be even what he is.” Next, a few years after Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria spoke, “the Word of God became man, that you may learn from man how man may become God.” Those are just few examples to show what the Christians’ belief, when the faith was new. They are representatives but not exhausted. And all from the second century. The later fathers, especially from the East, spoke even more explicitly – with the Church taught today, it is still clearly as today. Consider what the Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC) teaches about salvation, the ‘*Word became Flesh*’ to make us partakers of the divine nature, “For this is why the *Word* became man, and the *Son of God* became the *Son of man*: so that man, by entering into communion with the *Word* and thus receiving divine sonship, might become a son of God. For the Son of God became man so that we might become God. The only-begotten ‘*Son of God*’ [Jesus] wanting to make us sharers in His divinity, assumed our nature, so that He, made man, might make men gods” (CCC, 460).

That compact paragraph is made up almost entirely of quotations from Scripture, St Iraneus, St Athanasius, and St Thomas Aquinas. The Christian's teaching on divinization and deification is constant and classic. Indeed, it is the defining feature of what we called *Classic Christianity*. Holiness is the quality that sets God apart from everything else. It is His Utterness. His Transcendent. His Eternity. Earthly objects are holy only because their proximity to God. In the Hebrew Scripture, individual person was not described as holy. In the *Incarnation*, however, God closed that gap, becoming what we are so that we might become what He is. He shares His nature, His life, His flesh and His blood with all those who are being saved. We are each to become holy, to become saint. However, we do not do so by ourselves. Next time, we take a closer look at the Holiness of the Church.

III. LESSON 8 – THE BODY OF HOLINESS

This lesson is to share how the [Catholic] Church as a whole is holy. Salvation is to share the life of 'Son of God' [Jesus]. And so, to know the love of the Eternal Father. To be saved is to live as God as "sons in the Son". Christians can call God, the Father, because of their sacramental communion with Jesus, their mutual indwelling. To say that Christians are divinized are not to say that they are gods, the way that Jesus is God. Jesus is Eternal, we are temporal. Jesus is Almighty, and we are weak except for His [Jesus'] strength. Jesus is also, all knowing; even the most intelligent person barely knowing, in comparison. And yet through baptism, God grants Christians and creates His created shares in His uncreated glory. Through baptism and the Eucharist, Christians shares in the holiness of God's own life. Back in Leviticus, the Lord commanded what seemingly impossible, "*Be Holy, for I am Holy*" (Leviticus 11:44) because by definition, God's holiness is His Utterness, but in incarnation He cross the divine; and by His Blood, He brought His saints near to Him. St Peter then using the Leviticus, emphasizing the moral dimension (1 Peter 1:15), "*Be holy yourself, in all your conducts*, because it is written '*Be Holy, for I am Holy*' ". Thus, we come to exemplary behaviors to associate with those who are remembered as saints or holy ones. But the NT used the term in a more inclusive way; for St Paul, '*The Saints*' is an exclusive term for '*The Church*'. The Church is the same as those sanctified with Christ Jesus who are called to be saints together. The Greek word for Church is '*Ekklesia*', literally assembly and logically those who are called out of. Entomology is interesting because it implies a calling into otherness. Those inside the church are no longer men, women, and children they are before baptism. They are set apart for God's service; they are saints; they are holy. Nevertheless, they are called together. The biblical notation of salvation is not individualistic; it is not just me and Jesus. To be saved is not merely a personal relationship but also a communal relationship with God. As in the OT and NT, those who are saved are belong to God by belonging to *People of God*. To be holy is to be in communion with God and also with God's fellow saints. St Paul used many metaphors to describe this collective corporate holiness of saints. He compared to a building to a temple to a crew of labor. His favorite of metaphor, by far however, was the '*Body of Christ*' (1 Cor 12:27; Rom 12:4-5). The Church is where the indwelling of Christ takes place. The Church is invisibly *One*, as St Paul told the Ephesians. There is *One Body* and *One Spirit*. You are called to *One Hope* that belong to your call. Unity is essential. The whole body joins in it with every joint it supplied. When each part is working properly, makes the body grow and build itself in love. The saints are responsible for its neighbor, their fellow saints. Their ministry must be for building up the *Body of Christ*. This Body, this Church, is Catholic. It is universal (Catholic means '*Universal*'). Salvation is from the Jews but it is for the whole world. St Paul makes it clear when he said, "The Gentiles are fellow heirs, members of the same body, and partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel" (Ephesians 3:6).



Fig 2. The Eucharist (Left Panel);
and Jesus the High Priest instituted the Eucharist (Right Panel).

It is the Eucharist that effect the *Unity* and *Catholicity*. The Eucharist makes the Church [recalled Jesus institute the Eucharist], as depicted in Figure 2. Again, to the Corinth, St Paul stated "Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the *One Bread*" (1 Cor 10:17). The Eucharist is the

'Body of Christ', and that make the Church is the *Body of Christ*. The saints become what they consumed. The Body is the Church. That is indisputable. Jesus Christ is the Head of the Body, the Church. The Church is made up of those whom Jesus made up to present as holy, blameless, and irreproachable. He wants them to be like Him. St Paul made it clear that Jesus is not merely covering over our sins, He is empowering our conversions. By His dwelling in us and by our dwelling in Him, we are able to live his life not only in heaven, but already here on earth. St Paul made it clear, "Now I rejoice in what I am suffering for you, and I fill-up in my flesh what is still lacking in regard to Christ's afflictions, for the sake of his body, which is the church" (Colossians 1:24). What a mysterious statement, for what can be *lacking* in the *perfect sacrifice* of Christ; and what can be missing in once for all offering of our one mediator? What is lacking is Christ's will to be lacking for our sake, so that as member of the Body, we *would suffer* in Him, as He suffers in us. Also, we will suffer as He did for the sake of the Church which is His Body. Christ foresaw the day that when the Church would be as His Body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all. He foresaw the day when Paul and all Christians would co-redeem with Him, by *uniting* their *sufferings* to *His*. This is the purpose of the Church, as His Body. The share is not only in the fruit of atonement but also in the work of atonement as God's fellow workers. To live this way is Christ, said St Paul. And in this way, all Christians are meant to live. It is not a solitary way. To live with other, in Christ Body, the Church.



Fig 3. Jerusalem was destroyed by the Babylonian in 586 BC

An NT scholar, N.T. Wright, sees the sweep of the entire story over the course of the entire canon of sacred scripture. The Divine Presence has vacated the Temple when Jerusalem was destroyed by the Babylonian in 586 BC (Figure 3). The Ark of Covenant was gone. There was no glory cloud. Even when the Temple was rebuilt in the time of Nehemiah, the 'Holy of Holy' remained empty and the supernatural phenomena did not return, even though the prophets foretold a full restoration. N.T. Wright asserts, "If you had asked a Jew of the first century whether the promises of Isaiah 40 and 52, or of Ezekiel, Zechariah, and Malachi had been fulfilled, the answer would have been obvious. Of course, Yahweh had not come back."

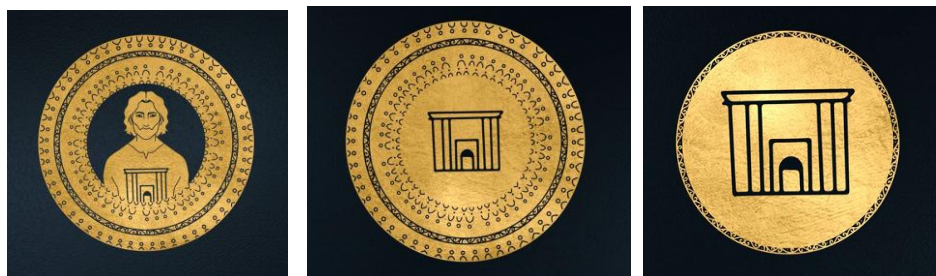


Fig 4. Jesus as the New Temple (Left Panel); the Church (Middle Panel) and the Temple (Right Panel).

Nevertheless, the prophesy had been fulfilled because Jesus is the New Temple (Figure 4, left panel) and His Body is identical to the New Church. Again, according to N.T. Wright, "The resurrection of the body will be the fulfilment of the promise to rebuild the temple (Figure 4, right panel) – and it will take place because your bodies are already the renewed temple. The divine glory has returned, both in Jesus and in the Spirit."

From this view, it is easy to see why St Paul vision of the Church (Figure 4, middle panel). It is as it is. Paul speaks God's Temple as the Church (1 Cor 3 and 2 Cor 6). This is not a random image plucked from the sky (Figure 4, middle panel). It belongs to the overall glory that in Jesus and in the Spirit that the Israel's God has returned in Person to redeem His people and to dwell in their midst and now in the Church itself (Figure 4). The point (of God's dwelling in the Church) is the holiness of His people.

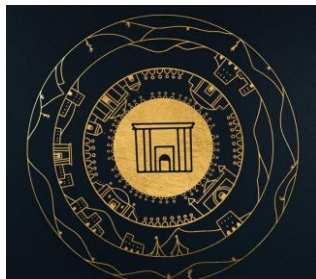


Fig 5. The Tabernacle in the Temple

This is the reality towards which the Tabernacle then the Jerusalem Temple (Figure 5), have been pointed all along the age of God's promise towards God's people, is at last to be fulfilled in them, and by the Spirit. To be baptized is to be incorporated into the Body of Christ. It is to be divinized, adopted as a child of God. But as theologian, David Fagerberg said, "Baptism does not pickle us in holy water until Judgement Day." We have our ups and downs in this new life. We grow or we backslide. God even gives us freedom to end his life in us by *deliberate mortal sins*. Our share in the divine life is a *grace*. But it is a grace freely received and freely kept for we shared, if only we hold our first *covenant* firm, to the end. *Complacency* is destructive to salvation. St Augustine put it very well, "*On earth, we are wayfarers, always on the go.*" This means that we have to keep on moving forward; if you are pleased of what you are, you have stopped already. If you said you are enough, you are lost. Keep on walking, moving forward, triumph for the goal. Don't try to stop on the way or to go back or to deviate from it. Some people refuse to accept that; we have such freedom. They believe that salvation is a condition that is permanent, automatic, and cannot be altered or ended, even by serious [mortal] sins. However, St Paul repeatedly stated the opposite, "*Note then the kindness and severity of God. Severity toward those who had fallen but God's kindness to you provided you to continue in His kindness; otherwise, you too will be cut off*" (Roman 11:12). That's a rather solemn warning. But the words to the Galatians are even more stark and scary, "*You are severed from Christ...; you have fallen away from grace.*" (Galatians 5:4) – and Paul has spoken to the Christians who have accepted the gospel but later seize to live by life demands; believers who once had faith in Christ but later fail to abide in Him. In 1 Timothy, Paul even named names; Paul spoke of Hymenaeus and Alexander, who have made *shipwreck* of their faith. St Peter also spoke of Christians who had fallen into heresy (2 Peter 1). Such backsliders live apart in Rome, Galatia, and Corinth. In other words, they are everywhere. Those who received the grace of faith, but do not hold it fast, had believed in vain – said the Apostle. St Paul even said it could happen to him, "I myself should be disqualified to believe in vain, to fall from grace and be severed from Christ" (1 Corinthians 9:27). This is shocking language, but it is consistent and clear. Paul is speaking of those who have been saved but fail to live in communion with the Body of Christ but later chose to be separated from it, by sinning gravely [mortally]. People who do not believe that salvation can be aggravated and sometimes pointed to St Paul's verse, "For I am sure that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 8:38-39).

Paul pointed out that sufferings is not separate us from Christ. *Sufferings conform us to Christ*. Only *sins* can separate us. The Apostle said not saints nor angels and so on can separate us from God; but he did not say the same about adultery, murder, theft, of fornication – he could not say that because mortal sins is incompatible with the divine life! *Sins cannot coexist with God's Holiness* which we are sharing through our salvations. Paul's meaning is very clear, nothing outside ourselves can force an end to our relationship with Lord Jesus; only we ourselves have the power to do that. It is sobering that we have been commanded to be perfect and be holy, even though all have sinned and fall short the Glory of God. This is the doctrine on the salvation from Jesus Christ, as it was first understood by his first followers. The oldest document outside the NT, the *Didache*, ends with an exhortation to the vigilant, "*Watch for your life's sake. Let not your lamps be quenched, nor your loins unloosed; but be ready, for you know not the hour in which our Lord comes. But often shall you come together, seeking the things which are befitting your souls; for the whole time of your faith will not profit you if you be not made perfect in the last time.*"

Like Hebrew 3:14 that so much we have found of the letter of St Paul that the *Didache*, urges the first generations of believers, to *strive for holiness* and *nothing less*. It is a *grace*, but a grace that *must* be accepted.

St Paul assumed that growth in holiness is a normal part of Christian life, and it requires our active engagement, our consent, our cooperation. St Paul said to the Corinthians, what we pray for is your improvements, mend your ways. Conversion is not once-in-a-lifetime event. It is not a one-time done. It is a way of life. To be saved is glorious but it is not the final possession of glory. God intends for us to press on from glory to glory. Paul taught new Christians in elementary way. But he expected them to move on from there to grow up. He clearly told the Corinthians, “I fed you with milk, not solid food; for you were not ready for it” (1 Corinthians 3:2). The implication is that one day, they should be ready. He said to the member of the Romans Church, who was presumably were baptized, “Salvation is near to us now than when we first believed” (Romans 13:11). Paul ends his saying it seems that they had made progress towards their ultimate salvations. They were still growing in Christ, as members of His Body. The apostle speaks up ‘building up the Body of Christ’. What this means is that Christians must cultivate His holiness and His righteousness and in their companions. They must grow, pray, study, encourage, correct, witness, love, obey (Figure 6).



Fig 6. Christians must cultivate God’s Holiness

Their striving should never cease until death because they know that this is the will of God: your sanctification. Their model of all of these is Jesus Christ, the pioneer and perfecter of our faith. God became man and lived a holy human life so that we see what holiness look like in every human circumstance. Christians also, since the first generations, have looked into the life of saints. St Paul dared to tell Christians, “*Be imitator of me, as I am of Christ*” (1 Corinthians 11:1). That was not arrogance. It was a lively awareness of his authority in the Church. In fact, he said it twice, in just one letter. The saints are those who strive and live-up for their obligations to build up *Christ’s Body*, the *Church*. First, by tending their own souls, and then the souls of their neighbors, their brothers and sisters. Paul’s exhortation in building up Christ’ Body may seem puzzling, as puzzling as it claims “*make-up* for what is *lacking* in the *sufferings* of Christ”. What can be lacking in Christ’s body or in His atoning action? Again, only what He wills to be lack, so that we might work with Him and work in Him, even as He works in us. To live in Christ then, is to live in the Church. To grow spiritually, is to build up the Church. The Church as God’s covenant people. It is a society, a communion, yet no one loses its individuality in this collective. In fact, we became more perfect ourselves as we grow in holiness.

Now that we have seen the fulfillment of the promise of holiness, in *Christ* and *His Holy Church*, we are able to go back to understand more clearly and completely much of what was still absurd in the OT, that’s what we do in communion as a Church.

IV. LESSON 9 – HIS TYPE OF HOLINESS

This ninth lesson will survey all that has been previously reviewed and analyze it through a typological reading of Scripture. The Old Testament oracles and visions will take on a whole new meaning in light of Christ.

Often, at the climax of a mystery novel, comes the moment when the detective reveals the culprit. Once we have that knowledge, we see everything in the preceding chapters in a new way. There were clues everywhere, but we did not grasp their meaning. Understanding the motive makes sense of actions that were formerly inscrutable. Offhand comments by minor characters suddenly acquire great significance. Now we see a chain of events and cause where before we had seen only disparate, unrelated episodes.

Sacred Scripture as a whole works just that way. God is its principal author. He inspired all its texts, from the Genesis through Revelation, though he worked in every instance with human authors, as instrumental authors. Saint Paul tells us that the Scriptures as “God-breathed,” *theopneustos* (2 Timothy 3:16). For Jesus and his contemporaries, the Scriptures held a unique authority. They were “*living oracles*.” Scripture then, is a single book made up of many books (Figure 7).

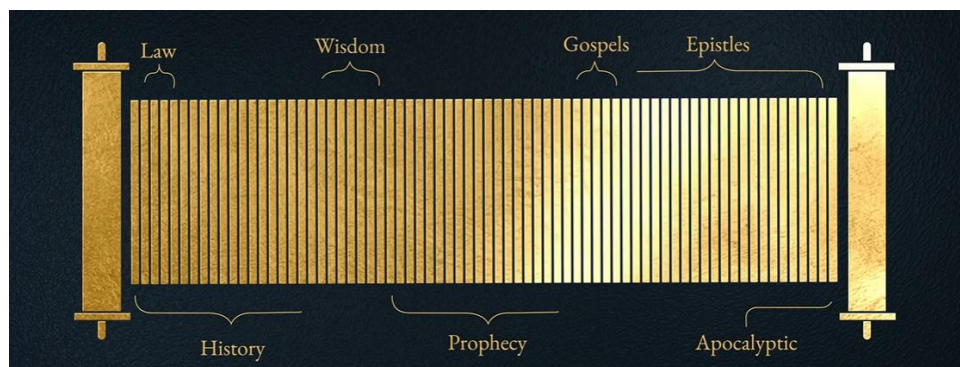


Fig 7. The Chronology of the Sacred Scripture

Over the centuries, and by means of many different literary genres, it tells a unified story. It has a plot that unfolds gradually. The divine author reveals some details and conceals others. What happens in the early pages anticipates resolution and fulfillment by the end of the book. Scripture is unique among books because it is the only book written by God the Holy Spirit. But it is still a book, and it has the qualities of other narrative literature.

For Christians, the plot of Sacred Scripture is very clear. The first part, what we call the Old Testament, presents the expectation of salvation and of a ‘Savior’. The second part announces the fulfillment of that expectation in Jesus Christ. The fulfillment arrives as a surprise, however. Many who had been reading the book in the first century expected a very different kind of ‘Savior’. They expected a king, a warrior, a high priest – a man who would arrive with power and status, a man who would conquer with his own power and might. Jesus arrived with meekness and conquered by dying. Yet his death and resurrection were the events that made sudden sense of many episodes and oracles that had come before him.

The OT Scriptures present “types” that anticipate fulfillment and what is called “antitypes.” The earlier texts foreshadow the salvation that would come with the advent of Jesus Christ. In the words of the CCC, “*Typology*” which “...discerns in God’s works of the Old Covenant prefiguration of what He accomplished in the fullness of time...” (CCC paragraph 128). Christians did not invent the typological reading of Scripture. Indeed, the pattern is established with the second book in the scriptural canon. The *Book of Exodus*, at many points, seems to depict the events of Israel’s exodus, as a reprise of the creation stories of *Genesis*. From the midst of the Red Sea, Israel emerged as a new nation, just as in *Genesis* the world emerged from the chaotic primeval waters. The making of the priestly vestments and the building of the tabernacle again, recall the creation narrative. In both, the work is done in *seven stages*. In *Genesis* these are marked as *seven days*. In *Exodus* each stage is punctuated by the phrase: “As the Lord commanded Moses.” In the end, Moses, like God, beholds his handiwork and blesses it. As God “finished his work” in creation, so Moses “finished the work” on the tabernacle.

Later in the biblical canon, the prophets read the *Torah*, the *Law of Moses*, typologically. They believed that ancient historical episodes had foreshadowed events in their own day or in the future still to come. They saw redemptive events as a new creation, a new exodus, and a new kingdom. Jesus grew up with this method of interpreting Scripture, and he practiced it in turn – though with a difference. He knew himself to be the fulfillment of every type and of every oracle. He discerned types of himself in the bronze snake lifted up by Moses in the wilderness, in the Jerusalem Temple, in Jonah’s “three nights in the belly of the great fish,” and many other details from the Old Testament Law and prophets. On Easter Sunday, walking on the *Road to Emmaus*, he taught these to his disciples “beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.”

Christians afterward followed the model of the Master. Paul states plainly: “Adam...was a type of the one who was to come.” Using the Greek word *tupos*, where we get *typology*. He also portrayed Jesus as our “*Passover Lamb*,” and the rock that gave water to Israel in the wilderness. Peter saw baptism as an antitype of the flood of Noah. We should not be surprised, then, to learn that Jesus recognized himself in the OT type of holiness. He revealed that he was greater than the Sabbath in Matthew 12, which was the only thing declared “holy” in the entire Book of *Genesis*. He revealed that he was the fulfillment of the Law of Moses at the beginning of the ‘*Sermon on the Mount*’, which was the measure of holiness. He revealed that he was “greater than the Temple,” again in Matthew 12, which was the locus of holiness in the Kingdom of David. But the OT’s most spectacular and compressed revelation of holiness is in the vision reported by the Prophet Isaiah, which we discussed back in Lesson 5.

“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 one of his Seraphim flew 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).

It is often assumed that Isaiah beheld a vision that resembled the palace of the King of Judah. After all, he saw the Lord enthroned. So, we imagine a room decked in gold and jewels, with magnificent furniture and wall coverings. But Isaiah also evoked Solomon’s Temple – one of the architectural marvels of the ancient world. The children of Israel could supply the details from their memories of yearly pilgrimages: the massive columns studded with gemstones, the façade covered with plates of solid gold, the white walls gleaming in the sun, the woven images of flora and fauna and stars and planets, the tall gates that would open to welcome pilgrims while others were closed and forbidding. All such imaginings, however, would be wrong. The vision that Isaiah saw was not the Jerusalem Temple. The actions he witnessed corresponded to no earthly events. The Temple that he saw was in heaven, and the thrice-holy glory that he beheld was mysterious indeed. It would be opaque to us, in fact, if the Gospel had not removed its veil.

In Chapter 12 of Saint John’s Gospel, Jesus makes a startling proclamation. Foreseeing his imminent suffering and death, he says: “Now is the judgment of this world, now shall the ruler of this world be cast out; and I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself” (John 12:31-32). Immediately after reporting this prediction of Jesus, John thought it necessary to clarify the Lord’s meaning: “He said this to show by what death he was to die.” Otherwise, John’s readers might misunderstand “lifted up” to mean exalted, resurrected, ascended. Indeed, Jesus’ hearers failed to recognize that he was talking about his death. A suffering Christ did not fit their expectations, and so many rejected Jesus. And John notes their incredulity and explains it with two quotations from the Prophet Isaiah. The first is this: “Lord, who has believed our report, and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?” (John 12:38; see Isaiah 53:1). In other words, if Isaiah was not believed, why should we expect Jesus to be believed? John follows this immediately with another quotation – but this one from much earlier in the Book of Isaiah. In fact, this one comes from the passage following Isaiah’s vision of the heavenly Temple. “He has blinded their eyes and hardened their heart, lest they should see with their eyes and perceive with their heart, and turn for me to heal them” (John 12:40; see Isaiah 6:9-10). And just so we do not miss the point, John adds: “Isaiah said this because he saw his glory and spoke of him.”

The passage began with Jesus’ prediction that he would soon “*be lifted up*,” *hypsōthenai*, in Greek. In two other instances in John’s Gospel, that same term appears as a description of Jesus’ crucifixion. In John 3 and again in John 8. Isaiah employs that word himself, and curiously he does this near the conclusion of his book, as he reprises the glorious vision of the heavenly Temple. He says “Behold, my servant shall prosper, He shall be exalted and lifted up and shall be very high” (Isaiah 52:13). With those words, Isaiah’s chapter ends. But Isaiah did not divide his text into chapters. The text at the end of chapter 52 should be continuous with the verses at the beginning of chapter 53 – the verses that speak of the ‘*Suffering Servant*’ said, “He was despised and rejected by men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hide their faces, he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely, he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, struck down by God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that made us whole, and with his stripes we are healed (Isaiah 53:3-5).”

In the Gospel, Saint John seems to be saying that Isaiah’s glorious vision was a vision of Jesus. He saw the Lord, moreover, not merely in his pre-incarnate glory, but also at a specific moment in the far-off future. Some seven hundred years before the advent of the Savior, Isaiah foresaw the Lord “lifted up” on the cross. Jesus spoke to a crowd that came holding certain preconceptions of glory. They associated it with power, wealth, force, fame, and razzle-dazzle. Like Isaiah’s contemporaries, Jesus’ were spiritually blind and hard-hearted. And as Isaiah’s word was spurned by Israel, so Jesus would be spurned by his own fellow Jewish contemporaries. Recall that the prophet informs us that his vision occurred: “in the year that King Uzziah died.” He was not merely placing the event on a timeline for us. He was providing historical context. Uzziah, also known as Azariah, was a mighty king, beloved for his accomplishments. “He did what was right in the eyes of the Lord” (2 Chronicles 26:6). He extended the kingdom’s territory as far as it had ever gone. He also built a mighty army, feared by all of the neighboring peoples (2 Chronicles 26:9). “And his fame spread far (2 Chronicle 26:15),” the Chronicler tells us, “For he was marvelously helped, until he was strong.” But the story does not end there. It goes on: “But when he was strong, he grew proud, to his destruction” (2 Chronicles 26:16). Flush with his success, Uzziah considered all power to be his own. Not content with the role of king, he arrogated to himself the sacrificial activity that belonged only to the priests. He strode into the Jerusalem Temple intending to burn incense at the altar – an action that was forbidden by the Law of Moses. More than 80

priests tried to withstand him, and this infuriated the king. Then, in the midst of his rage, God struck Uzziah with leprosy, and he died soon afterward. It is at this point of time that Isaiah has his vision. In the sanctuary of the heavenly Temple, he sees not a disgraced king, like Uzziah, but the true, divine king enthroned; and the true king is also a priest. He is “lifted up,” offering himself as victim in a once-for-all sacrifice. “Isaiah saw his glory.” Indeed.

Since the time of the early church, that prophetic Book of Isaiah, has been called the “Fifth Gospel.” Why? Because hundreds of years before Christ, Isaiah foresaw that the “sign” of Jesus’ divinity would be a Virginal Conception and Birth (Isaiah 7). He also saw that the Redeemer of Israel would be a Suffering Servant, (Isaiah 52-53) “a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief...wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities.” Isaiah saw the glory of Jesus himself, and Jesus himself confirmed this. Seraphim proclaimed the Lord’s holiness, and yet the Lord they proclaimed was utterly devoid of “beauty” or “comeliness.” Until the incarnation – until the *Divine Word* became *flesh* – holiness had no face on earth. It was a quality associated with God’s invisible presence. But in the person of Jesus Christ holiness was now visible, and the Lord’s disciples “beheld his glory,” just as Isaiah had so long before. Despite the lowliness of the Lord’s appearance, Isaiah knew himself to be unworthy of the vision. He was a man of unclean lips. Yet God is merciful, and he gave to Isaiah all that he needed to withstand, to survive the vision, and thus to fulfill his mission as the prophet of the Lord. To Isaiah, God had come, glory had come, holiness had come and been revealed as God so often does in a distressing disguise.

There was precedent for this. Think of the Prophet Elijah, who waited for the Lord to come in power (1 Kings 19). A great strong wind came and tore the mountains, breaking boulders into bits; but the Lord was not in the wind. Then an earthquake came, and it did its usual damage; but the Lord was not in the earthquake. And after the earthquake a fire raged, but the Lord was not in the fire. So how does the Lord finally appear to Elijah? As we read, in a still, small voice – a tiny whispering sound. Moses, too, had experienced the Lord in power – through the plagues in Egypt, and then miracles in the desert, and finally in the unbearable manifestations on the top of Mount Sinai. But Moses’ great revelation came in his own self-offering. It came when he asked God to have mercy on Israel and visit their punishment on Moses himself instead. What Isaiah saw – the Cross of Jesus Christ – would prove to be the single most embarrassing thing about Christianity. It was foolishness to the Gentiles and an obstacle to the Jews, as Paul says in 1 Corinthians 1. It was so humiliating that the early Christians rarely depicted it in their works of art. To do so would be to invite mockery. And yet it was, and still, it is, the pinnacle of glory. It is the sense of all the oracles in the OT. It is the fulfillment of all the types – the kings, the priests, and the power. What is truly supreme in God, then, is not his capacity to dominate creatures but rather his life-giving love. The earthly image of God’s inner life is Jesus Christ “lifted up” upon the cross. This is the logic inherent in the Christ-hymn in Saint Paul’s Letter to the Philippians. Though the ‘Son’ was equal to God he “emptied himself, taking the form of a servant...and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross. Therefore, God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name which is above every name” (Philippians 2:6-11).

Jesus’ death is the image in time of the eternal life of the *Blessed Trinity*. On the cross as in heaven, the Son [Jesus] returned the Father’s gift of love, which was his very life. Nothing less than godlike love could have ever fulfilled the covenant. This truth moved Saint Augustine to marvel: “For the Lord has reigned from the wood...with His cross he has vanquished kings, and fixed upon their forehead, when vanquished, that very cross; and they glory in it, for in it is their salvation.”

V. CONCLUSION

This paper has reviewed Lessons 7–9 of Scott Hahn’s [1] 2023 Lenten series ‘*Holy Is His Name*,’ specifically: 7) Becoming Holy, Becoming “Gods”, 8) The Body of Holiness, and 9) His Type of Holiness.

These lessons delve into biblical holiness (Qadosh) and its fulfillment in the New Testament. Hahn [1] shows that holiness, once centered on the Temple and Old Covenant worship, reaches its completion in Jesus Christ, who reveals and embodies God’s sanctifying presence. Through Christ’s saving work, especially in the life of the Church and its sacramental worship, believers are invited to share in this holiness and become God’s holy people, united with Him.

The central message is that holiness is fulfilled in Jesus Christ, who both reveals God’s holiness and makes it accessible to believers. What was once external and ritual becomes an interior transformation through grace, as the faithful are sanctified and drawn into communion with God through Christ and His Church, ultimately pointing to eternal life with Him.

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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