

[PDF] Consuming The Word: The New Testament And The Eucharist In The Early Church

Scott Hahn - pdf download free book



Books Details:

Title: Consuming the Word: The New T
Author: Scott Hahn
Released: 2013-05-28
Language:
Pages: 176
ISBN: 030759081X
ISBN13: 978-0307590817
ASIN: 030759081X

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Description:

Q&A with Scott Hahn

Q. In the book you talk about the importance of reading Scripture as the human writers of

the Bible intended for it to be read. Any tips on how to do this?

A. We should receive the Bible the way it was meant to be received. The books of the Bible, both the Old and New Testaments, were written not to be read on a page, but to be proclaimed in the assembly. Through most of history perhaps, most of God's people could not read. Many were illiterate; some were blind; some had other handicaps. Very few could afford to buy books. But all could encounter Christ as he intended, because the Church proclaimed the inspired Word whenever the Holy Mass was celebrated..

The Mass presents the whole of the biblical story over the course of a three-year cycle of lectionary readings. Just by showing up on Sunday, Catholics will encounter readings from most of the books of the Bible. If you go to daily Mass, you'll hear most of the Bible proclaimed many times through your life. You'll also have it illuminated by preaching and by the other prayers of the Mass.

It's good to take up serious Bible study in addition to our liturgical encounter with the Lord. And for that we have many advantages over our ancestors in the faith. Not only can most of us read, we can even own a copy of the entire Bible. For the first millennium of Christianity, only the very rich could own the Scriptures. If we're feeling a holy ambition, we can take online classes to learn the fine points of Greek and Hebrew, and we can read the Scriptures in their original languages. The early Christians could only dream of such opportunities. We have them — but few people take advantage as they should. It's good to be serious about Bible study. But still: the Mass is where it rightly begins. The Church is the "pillar and bulwark of truth" (1 Timothy 3:15), and the Mass is the way the Church has always shared out the truth.

Q. You write that the Bible and the liturgy were made for each other and that consuming the Word of God makes us hunger for the words of God. What do you mean by this?

A. Read the documents, visit the churches, and look at the art of earliest Christianity. Everywhere you'll see expressions of a people deeply Eucharistic and deeply biblical. I'll say it again: They did not have the ability to study the Scriptures as you and I do; but they hungered for the Word, and they received the Word. Take a tour of the Roman catacombs, and what do you see? You see the familiar Bible stories: Noah, Jonah, Daniel in the Lion's den, Moses striking the rock. What else do you see? Everywhere you see images of people gathered together at an altar for the breaking of the bread. What did the Church look like in third-century Rome? Just like the Church in Acts 2:42. It was a Church consuming the Word — whether in Jerusalem or Rome, Antioch or Egypt, it always looked the same. True love seeks union. The Word-made-flesh is God's love seeking us out. That's the message of the New Testament. God is seeking communion with us — and his means are not merely verbal, not simply spiritual. The Word was made flesh so that they could be Eucharistic.

Q. Why is reading Scripture through the lens of the early Church necessary for evangelizing in a modern world?

A. We are a rootless people, transient as never before, mobile in our work and only intermittently in touch with our families. And yet we have the same old desire our ancestors had: to know where we came from and where we're going, who made us and why. Many religions propose answers to those questions. Christianity and Judaism differ from other religions because their answers take a verifiable historical form. They're not mythological. They're the true story of God's dealings with a particular people living in a specific land at an identifiable time. The Scriptures have all the grittiness of real-world life. Philosophers constantly tell us that one of the qualities that sets modern people apart from their ancestors is "historical consciousness." That's a debatable point. But if it's true, then Christian history lends our testimony a palpable authenticity. It scratches a modern itch. It feeds a real perennial hunger.

Q. How does your book tie-in with the message and goals of the New Evangelization?

A. Pope John Paul II asked Catholics to “base the New Evangelization on the Eucharist.” There is only one Christ, and we proclaim him as the Eucharistic Lord. This was the proclamation of the early Church. For several generations there was no book that could be called the “New Testament.” That phrase was used to describe the Mass.

Listen, evangelization is always an impossible task. Do you think the Apostles really stood a chance as they set out to convert the Greco-Roman world? All the might of Rome was arrayed against their project. They had to overcome the weight of pagan tradition, and the long-established habits of a cruel and pornographic culture.

Yet they converted the world. How was that possible? They did it with the power of the New Testament, which is the grace of the Mass — which is the grace of salvation! The Mass reminds us that evangelization is a gift before it’s a task. It’s receiving before it’s doing. And we can’t share what we don’t first possess.

Review

"Scott Hahn has a well-earned reputation as a vivid guide to the Word of God. That skill is elegantly on display here. *Consuming the Word* is erudite and accessible, rich in content and lucid in style -- an engaging read for anyone who seeks to better understand the profound interplay of Scripture, Liturgy and the role of the Church in Christian life." Most Reverend Charles J. Chaput, O.F.M. Cap., Archbishop of Philadelphia

"With words that are both accessible and erudite, Dr. Scott Hahn introduces us anew to the Eternal Word of the New Testament, a word that is given to us, not simply as a text in a book, but as the living and real presence of the Lord Jesus himself." Very Reverend Robert Barron, author of *Catholicism: A Journey to the Heart of the Faith*

"In *Consuming the Word*, Scott Hahn brings his trilogy on the Bible and the Mass to a brilliant climax. In it, he serves up a veritable feast of insights into the real meaning of the “New Testament,” the ancient Christian Eucharist, the Sacraments, the Canon of Scripture, the Lectionary, the Truth of the Bible, the importance of Tradition, and much, much more. If you want to deepen your hunger for the Word of God in Scripture and Word made flesh in the Eucharist, then this is the book for you." - Brant Pitre, author of *Jesus and the Jewish Roots of the Eucharist*

"I have known about Scott Hahn since he, as an Evangelical minister, brought my brother into his community to express his concern about my becoming a Roman Catholic in 1978. His Romanization years later blessed my heart, as I saw a new generation of Catholic converts from the Evangelical world. Since then I have been most impressed by the scholarship and love of scripture he brought into his Catholic life and ministry. I am blessed to count him as a friend. This newest offering reflects the strong connection between the authority of the scriptures and the Church that confronts and challenges anyone on a similar journey into the Catholic Church." -- John Michael Talbot, author of *The World is My Cloister*

"Catholic scholars may debate certain details about how to understand Scripture, dogma, and liturgy, but all can agree that these three realities inseparably illuminate each other. Scott Hahn powerfully articulates these connections and their consequences for the love relationship into which

the God of Love calls us." -- Matthew Levering, Professor of Theology, University of Dayton

"This thoroughly enjoyable examination of the source and meaning of the New Testament is particularly needed today with the confusion brought about by the hyper-acceptance and over-application of higher-critical theories. The beauty of all of Scott's writings come from his unique ability to see the big picture, to bring together theology, history, philosophy, and biblical studies, and present it in a way that is amazingly readable and practical. In the work that we do, helping non-Catholic clergy discover the beauty and truth of the Church, this book will become an essential resource." - Marcus Grodi, host of EWTN's *The Journey Home*

"After reading *Consuming the Word*, I will never hear the phrase "New Testament" in the same way again. This book offers a soul-satisfying account of the organic connection between the liturgical life of the Church and Scripture, between the Incarnation in flesh and the Incarnation in words, between the sinlessness of Christ and the truthfulness of Scripture, which emphasizes the necessary priority of the former in each pair without in the least diminishing the indispensability of the latter. I say "soul-satisfying" because one leaves the book feeling that a spiritual need for coherence and clarity has been met." John C. Cavadini, Professor of Theology, Director of the Institute for Church Life, University of Notre Dame

"In his latest book, Scott Hahn takes lessons from the Early Church to reveal The New Testament in a whole new light. *Consuming the Word* is essential reading for Catholics who want to better understand how the sacred authors and apostles affect us today." --Matthew Kelly, author of *Rediscover Catholicism*

Consuming the Word will increase your appetite for God and draw you into divine intimacy. Dr. Hahn brings clarity to the term "New Testament" as he moves us from text to action, from page to passion. Disciples of Christ have been called not to a text but to a covenant. The invitation to anyone studying the bible is to go deeper, to go beyond study to worship, to go beyond the words to the Word made flesh. For those who grasp the message of this book, their understanding of the Eucharistic sacrifice will never be the same." -- Jeff Cavins, author of *My Life on the Rock*

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