



Letter and Spirit: From Written Text to Living Word in the Liturgy

Scott Hahn , Jeremy Driscoll (Foreword)

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The bestselling author of *The Lamb's Supper* continues his thoughtful exploration of the complex relationship between the Bible and the Catholic liturgy in a revelatory work that will appeal to all readers.

Scott Hahn has inspired millions of readers with his perceptive and unique view of Catholic theology and worship, becoming one of the most looked-to contemporary authorities in these areas. In *Letter and Spirit*, Hahn extends the message he began in *The Lamb's Supper*, offering far-reaching and profound insights into what the Bible teaches us about living the spiritual life.

For both Christians and Jews, the texts of the Bible are not simply records of historical events. They are intended, through public recitations in churches and synagogues, to bring listeners and readers into the sweeping story of redemption as it unfolds in the Bible. Focusing on the Catholic Mass, Hahn describes how God's Word is meant to open our eyes to the life-giving power of the sacraments, and how the liturgy brings about the "actualization" of the saving truths of Scripture.

Letter and Spirit is a stunningly original contribution to the field of biblical studies and will help Hahn's many loyal and enthusiastic readers understand the relationship between the Bible and the Mass in a deeper way.

Letter and Spirit: From Written Text to Living Word in the Liturgy Details

Date : Published November 8th 2005 by Image (first published 2005)

ISBN : 9780385509336

Author : Scott Hahn , Jeremy Driscoll (Foreword)

Format : Hardcover 256 pages

Genre : Christianity, Catholic, Religion, Spirituality, Christian, Nonfiction

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From Reader Review Letter and Spirit: From Written Text to Living Word in the Liturgy for online ebook

TheRose says

Scott Hahn does it again! Excellent argument for the direct connections between the Bible and liturgy. This book is a bit of a departure from his usual "theology for dummies" type of approach. It's a bit more scholarly, so beginners should avoid this book until they're more familiar with Hahn's style and some of the concepts he presupposes. Awesome for those who have already read some of his books and are hungry for more!

Brett's Books says

Enjoyed this book immensely, although I must admit that Mr. Hahn is operating at a much higher level than myself and I had difficulty following the book at times. The bottom line take away is that scripture never existed as an end to itself; instead, scripture has historically existed to be used in a liturgical manner and this interplay word and liturgy is what shapes belief. How we pray, in the liturgy, is what we believe and what we pray is the scriptures. Very interesting and if nothing else this one idea has changed the way I think about both liturgy and scripture.

Kevin de Ataíde says

Memory and identity. That's what the liturgy is for the Church in this book by Scott Hahn. And the key to it all, as usual, is covenant. Contracts are binding between persons with regard to material possessions, while covenants bind persons themselves together. As in the marital union, God's union with man in the holy Eucharist is a covenant with rules. Break the rules and the covenant is broken, and here then is the long history of a small nation that was embraced by God.

Dr. Hahn begins with three themes which act as a backbone for the book's understanding of scripture: economy (the swing of salvation history, beginning in Genesis and continuing today with the liturgy), typology (history repeats itself, often with earlier events being understood as types of later events) and mystagogy (understanding of liturgy).

Scripture is primarily written for liturgy, to be proclaimed in assembly, although private study is well and good, and even has an ancient tradition. Scripture tells the story of liturgy all the way from Abel's God-pleasing sacrifice. Scripture also forms the liturgy even while liturgy forms scripture.

When we think of scripture forming liturgy, we may also observe that liturgy 'actualises' history, making past events present in its own way, so that 'the present is one with the past and looks forward to the future.' In this

aspect, Jewish and Christian liturgy are identical.

An interesting idea I have found here is that the term 'parousia' in the New Testament, often used in recent exegesis as the second coming of Christ, often understood literally as Christ returning on a cloud to pick a select few for his kingdom, may have a different meaning. Paul's understanding of the word 'parousia' was apparently a presence which is insensible but nonetheless real. Dr. Hahn makes the immediate observation that the early Christians used this term in reference to what the Roman Church now calls the Real Presence.

Anamnesis is a description of memory which is far deeper than our current understanding of it. Liturgical memory has been mentioned as a sort of reliving of one-time historical events. Scripture is an aide to this process and liturgy is the place where this memory lives. Hence, 'liturgy is the locus of what the Church calls tradition.' For this is how tradition, again a word with far deeper a meaning than the contemporary understanding of a body of rules and customs.

Just for the new parousia idea, the discourse on anamnesis and the renewed understanding of the Mass I have received from this book, I give it 4.5 stars. Excellent. And I am hereafter a fan of Scott Hahn.

Don says

via ewtn.com

Grace says

Letter and Spirit, a sequel to *The Lamb's Supper: The Mass as Heaven on Earth*, is a bit more scholarly in nature than the first book in Hahn's trilogy, but it is accessible to lay readers if they're reasonably well read or well catechized in the Catholic faith. Unlike *The Lamb's Supper*, *Letter and Spirit* doesn't have the punny section titles or casual first and second-person narrative style. It, however, does continue Hahn's work in the first book of explaining how Scripture only reveals its full meaning in the liturgy (e.g. Mass). Scripture's birthplace and natural home is the liturgy, and the liturgy, of course, is filled to the brim with Scripture. Hahn focuses on how the words of Scripture are actualized in the liturgy. The words become the Word made flesh, and substantial, eternal changes are wrought in the earthly participants.

For first-time or casual Hahn readers, I recommend reading *The Lamb's Supper* first. That book will change how you understand and participate in the Mass. If you're burning to learn more after that, *Letter and Spirit* will be right for you.

Annie says

I love Scott Hahn...I actually cheated a little...I didn't read this, I listened to it on CD but it was not Scott Hahn who narrated. The gentleman they had narrating was excellent and easy to listen to. Scott Hahn's stuff is really deep and a lot of times it goes way over my head so I listened to the CDs several times each. There were five total. I highly recommend it to anyone who wants to deepen their faith.

Richard R., Martin says

In the introduction Dr. Hahn said that this book was not written in the style of his popular books like the Lamb's Supper, nor was written as an academic book but that he was trying to write it for both audiences. In my mind the book is much more for the academic rather than the lay. He defines some important terms and gives some great examples of them but at least for me this book was still mostly head and not heart. He has an important thesis but I think one needs at least a college degree to follow his thoughts.

Amicizia says

Perhaps the weightiest of Scott Hahn's popular books, this little tome explores the connection between the Bible and the liturgy. Hahn argues that Scripture and liturgy are really inseparable from one another - the Biblical books were written for liturgical proclamation, and the texts of the liturgy in turn are drawn from and inspired by the Bible. A valuable resource for Biblical and liturgical study.

Frank says

What is the relationship between the bible and the liturgy of the Catholic Church? Scott Hahn has a way to make things easy to understand and having been a Protestant Minister before joining the Catholic Church he has a way to touch those issues that need to be explained; to remove a lot of misunderstanding. This is a good book to learn from.

Thomas Stama says

Excellent work about Holy Scripture and liturgical origins. Nice introduction into a deeper level of study. Recommend to someone who would want to go beyond a superficiality in bible study.

Carrie Thrift says

Very tough for me to read as an ordinary lay person. I enjoy Scott Hahn because he is such a great teacher but this was a little over my head. I had to look up words that were very foreign to me. But I did learn a lot.

Kathleen Androlewicz says

Dr. Hahn pulls together scripture and liturgy. The Bible, while records of historical events is also meant to be recited in churches and synagogues. Dr. Hahn opens our eyes to power of the Word. I love his insightfulness. I am never disappointed with his books.

Kirsten says

This book is a comprehensive look at how the written text is found in the living word of the liturgy. 'It offers an introduction to the history, theology, and present liturgical practice of the Christian reading of the Scriptures in the Eucharist'. It continues with the "...revitalisation of the liturgical renewal begin by Vatican II". Hahn represents the Bible as a living, breathing text given to us from God. It is a document that shows us the way forward as to how we can live a spiritual life. In this way Hahn focuses on "...God's Word which is meant to open our eyes to the life-giving power of the sacraments." There are a number of concepts encapsulated in certain words. Half the reading of the book is trying to understand those new words and how they relate to the material. I wish there was a glossary for this text as that would make understanding the concepts much easier. We would have somewhere to refer to for a definition. Although this text covers complex concepts Hahn writes in a very user friendly way so you don't need to be a theological student to come to terms with his meaning. This book is for all those that want to find a closer connection between the Bible and liturgy and how that affects the way we live our lives.

Santeri Marjokorpi says

Kirja käsittelee hienosti liturgian ja Raamatun suhdetta. Se avaa paljon uusia näkökulmia siihen ja liturgian merkitykseen ylipäätään. Raamattu on täynnä liturgiaa ja liturgia on täysin raamatullista. Alusta alkaen kristillinen kirkko on elänyt liturgiasta, joka on välittänyt sen opetusta eteenpäin. Korkeakirkollinen suositus.

Stephen Fahrig says

Perhaps the "weightiest" of Scott Hahn's popular books, this little tome explores the connection between the Bible and the liturgy. Hahn argues that Scripture and liturgy are really inseparable from one another - the Biblical books were written for liturgical proclamation, and the texts of the liturgy in turn are drawn from and inspired by the Bible. A valuable resource for Biblical and liturgical study.
