

A Summary of Hail Holy Queen By Scott Hahn



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Summary by Vanessa Shepherd written exclusively for The Goldhead Group, Ltd

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About the Author

Scott Hahn is a Catholic Theologian and Apologist, with a substantial amount of experience as a Protestant minister before his conversion. He acquired his M.Div. from Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, after originally graduating from Grove City College, Pennsylvania. After becoming Catholic, Hahn went back to school to get his PhD in systematic theology from Marquette University.

Currently, Hahn is a theology professor at Franciscan University of Steubenville and Saint Vincent College. He has been a host of his own show on EWTN, and is a notable author of many books including, *The Lord's Supper*, *Rome Sweet Home*, *Catholic for a Reason*, *Lord, Have Mercy*, and many more.

General Overview

As a convert to the Catholic faith, Hahn recognizes the importance of spreading the knowledge of Mary throughout the world. Her message is a powerful example as how to follow God's will, and she is also a powerful mediatrix and counselor.

Since God has given us an infinite amount of grace and love to be part of His family, we try our best to honor that family – and what family is complete without its honorable mother? Hahn emphasizes the correlation that earthly mothers share with Mary, and furthermore, why we should give her honor and respect.

However, the main idea of the book is that Mary continually points to her son and takes nothing for herself. Mary is also an insider as to what we know about Christ Himself because what we know about Christ's mother also tells us a lot about Christ. She is important to study and revere, but Hahn makes certain that it is always God that is being worshipped, not Mary.

Hahn takes the reader through a journey getting to know their mother in Heaven. He uses philosophy, history, Theology, Tradition, and Scripture to identify who she is and her role as the New Eve, woman in Revelation, Mother of God, and Queen of Heaven.

Introduction

Hahn begins his book with an introduction to himself as well as an introduction as to why everyone should have a closer relationship with their mother in Heaven, Mary. For a personal introduction, Hahn recounts his conversion from juvenile delinquency to accepting Jesus as his Savior when he was fifteen years old. His parents were not devout Protestants, but were happy to see him out of trouble. He then describes a time in high school when he was in the nurse's office sick with a stomach bug waiting for his mother to come and take him home. Upon her arrival, so he would not later be called a "mama's boy," he asked her to walk out ahead of him. She followed his request and then mothered him from that point on. Everything seemed to be going well until Hahn's father suggested that Scott better live his new found faith and be more considerate of people's feelings, including his mother's, who had been very hurt by his request.

After the flashback, Hahn switches gears to explain that since we are brothers and sisters of Christ (cf. Heb 2:12), we too, as Jesus did on the cross, need to embrace our mother, Mary. Many Catholic priests today take a stance away from Mary or even discussing Mary as a mediator in our salvation in their homilies. The anti-Catholic notion of praying for her intercession as idolatry has leaked its way into the Catholic Church. Hahn openly remembers feelings such as these before he converted to Catholicism later in his life. He remembers ripping apart his Grandmother's rosary beads that were given to him after her death because he felt that that Marian devotion was an obstacle blocking his Grandmother from knowing Jesus Christ as her Savior. A few years later, Hahn tells us that he picked up the beads that he once destroyed and began to pray them fervently

for a personal petition. After months of praying the Rosary, Hahn realized that his petition had been granted – and that Mary was his mother.

Ending the introduction, Hahn invites the reader to prayerfully and open-mindedly join him in a journey to rediscovering Mary, our mother. Since Mary has been in Scripture from the beginning of the Gospels to the end book of Revelation, it is evident that Mary was in God’s plan all along. However, there are far less research materials on maternity than paternity, and why? Hahn claims that because we are so close to our mothers we do not ever seem distance ourselves from them.

Finally, Hahn remarks that the book will be a journey through the pages of the Bible to discover the many roles of Mary, as a powerful intercessor to Queen Mother in Heaven

My Type of Mother

Hahn opens in chapter one by trying to define the term “mother.” However, considering both nature and definition, one is only a mother in relationship to her children. Nature begins life by keeping a child close to its mother, both inside the womb and at the breast after birth. Women are more physically and emotionally designed to focus all of their attention on their children, and because of this maternal focus, a woman will devote her body and soul to the child, therefore, pointing to something beyond herself, the child. So Mary, as a perfect mother, will naturally be more elusive to her children and be able to give more of herself. Mary recognizes her material giving as a gift from God since she is only doing what He asks of her. Therefore, Mary points to Jesus, her son, her child, because she takes none of her glories as her own.

So then, how are we to study a woman who redirects all attention from herself to her son? Well, since Mary’s roles are relational to God, it is important to begin all Mariology with a firm understanding of God. However, understanding God is far beyond our human capability because “the ultimate truth about God cannot be dependent on anything other than God” (18). God is not dependent on creation; therefore, He must be something that can be defined outside of where creation lies. The titles that we give him do not define him, but rather describe what God does in terms humans can understand.

God did, however, reveal to us His name – which in ancient Israel is equivalent to an identity. His name was given to us at the end of the Gospel of Matthew as the Blessed Trinity: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. These are not three titles given, it is one name. Although it may seem that these titles are relational to human familial relationships, it is in fact the opposite. Our terms of father and son are metaphors that express something divine because God is, in essence, a perfect family.

Yet observing God’s creation gives us hints about the creator, and vice versa. Humans have the ability to learn more about creation and redemption by studying the deepest mystery God has shared with us – the Holy Trinity. In this mystery, all other mysteries may come to light. Both the mysteries of creation and the mysteries of God can only be understood in relation to the other. We come to know God through His works, and we come to understand His works through knowing God.

Scripture gives us many glimpses to understanding the Trinity, beginning with traces in the Old Testament to a fuller understanding and completion in the New Testament. The entire Bible tells “the story of God’s preparation for, and completion of, His greatest work: His definitive self-revelation in Jesus Christ” (21). The Bible then, with both human and divine authors, was given to us for the sake of our salvation, just like Jesus Christ. So we then read the Bible on two levels: the literal level by the human author and the spiritual level authored by the Divine.

By reading the Bible this way, many Old Testament figures appear as “types” of New Testament figures. Hahn describes “type” as “a real person, place, thing, or event in the Old Testament that foreshadows something

greater in the New Testament” (23). Such “types” are accurate historical details that affirm God’s plan and may be implicit or explicit. Marian types are also found in the Old Testament in Eve, Sarah, the queen mother of Israel, Hannah, Ester, et al.

The new covenant born through Mary in the New Testament marks just as every covenant does, a decisive encounter between God and man. Covenants in the ancient near East were established to bring “someone into a family relationship with a person or tribe” (26). Therefore, when we enter into a covenant with God, we are entering into a relationship with God. Yet since man has fallen to sin, our covenants fail, although God remains consistently faithful to them. So for man to be able to enter into a successful covenant with God, God became man in Jesus Christ so that we could become part of the family, that which is God. In the covenant, man then takes on the name of God, because if man becomes part of the family of God, man becomes part of the name of God since God’s name is a family.

The only thing missing in this heavenly family is the mother – whom Christ chose for Himself and therefore, for the whole covenant body. Protestant churches tend to overlook the importance of Mary as mother in the heavenly family. “Yet all the scriptures, all the types, all creation, and our deepest human needs to tell us that no family should be” without a loving mother (28). The early church recognized the importance of Mary’s role as Mother of God and portrayed her as a typical mother who continually points to her child and brings us closer to Him.

Christmas’ Eve

The early Fathers of the Church had a strong devotion to Mary and kept her theology primarily Scriptural, “for Mary’s role makes no sense apart from its context in salvation history; yet it is not incidental to God’s plan. God chose to make His redemptive act inconceivable without her” (31). Mary was chosen to help redeem the world beginning with the fall of Adam and Eve.

Saint John’s Gospel best emphasizes the notion of Christ and Mary as the new Adam and Eve. The first hint towards the parallel is at the beginning of the books; both Genesis and the Gospel of John commence with the phrase “in the beginning.” The next parallel deals with God creating light in Genesis, and the description of the Word’s “life was the light of men” in John’s Gospel.

Both Genesis and the Gospel of John also parallel in the structure that they both list the days after creation until the seventh day. In Genesis, God forms all of creation in six days and rests on the seventh. In the Gospel of John, The Word was made flesh on the first day, the second day Jesus meets with John the Baptist, the day after that Jesus calls His disciples, and on the fourth day Jesus calls two more disciples. Then John leaves us three days after the fourth day, or the seventh day, at the feast in Cana. Since God rested on the seventh day of creation and thus the Sabbath was created, it is no doubt that the event on John’s day would too mark a point of great importance.

When the wine for the wedding feast ran out early, Mary asked her Son to help, and He replied, “What have you to do with Me?” Many may consider this a reproach to Mary a disrespect by Jesus; however, had that been the case, Jesus would not have complied with her request in the end. Also, the phrase “what have you to do with me?” is a reoccurring sign of respect and deference in the Bible, not a comment of disrespect.

Another commonly thought insult is in Jesus’ address to His mother as “woman.” But because Jesus was obedient to the law, he would never dishonor His mother. Christ also addresses His mother as “woman” when He is dying on the cross, surely not a time of disrespect to His mother. Yet above all, Christ calls Mary “woman” because “woman” was the name Adam gave to Eve – not as an insult, but as a name or title. Therefore, Christ is symbolizing the new Adam and Mary as the new Eve.

Mary will again parallel Eve when Jesus gives Mary to His disciple, John, as His mother and mother for disciples throughout time. Eve was the “mother of all the living,” and Mary correspondingly became mother to all the baptized in Christ. Henceforth, the institution of Mary as the New Eve at Cana marks the reversal of the fatal decision by Eve in the Garden of Eden. This is why in the Book Revelation, a serpent attacks the New Eve – the serpent knows Mary will reverse the work he had done.

Hahn now offers insight to skeptics who feel these parallels between John’s Gospel and Genesis are read too much into. Hahn suggests a look back at the early Church Fathers who studied scripture. Saint Justin Martyr, for instance, lived about one generation after the death of Saint John, and Tradition claims that both men lived in the same city – Ephesus. Both Saints share the same doctrine of the New Eve, which suggests that the teaching originated by the Bishop of Ephesus.

Saint Irenaeus of Lyons, whose discipleship also traces back to Saint John, also discusses Mary as the New Eve. He considers the New Eve very important to his idea of creation’s recapitulation Christ. In other words, because of Christ’s recapitulation into the history of man, man may, through Christ, gain what was lost by Adam. But for this action to occur, Mary had to undo the disobedience of Eve by obeying God’s request to bear His son. Since death came about by means of a virgin, so too was life restored through a virgin.

After looking at the Mariology of the early Church Fathers, one can conclude that the idea of Mary as a New Eve is not a medieval or modern approach. It is rather a sacred tradition that has been handed down from Saint John himself, someone very close to Mary. And all teachers down the lineage say that the message of the New Eve is to “Obey God, Who is her Son, her Spouse, [and] her Father. Do whatever He tells you” (45).

Venerators of the Lost Ark

John’s Book of Revelation depicts Mary as the bride at the wedding feast of the Lamb, Jesus. However, John does not come out and say Mary is the bride. The angel first takes John and shows him a New Jerusalem coming from sky. Yet the New Jerusalem appears nothing like the old Jerusalem or any city for that matter, but it does contain the Ark of the Covenant, which has been missing for nearly six centuries. Seeing the Ark of the Covenant would be monumental, a miracle, for John’s readers. Then, as John prepares his readers for the description of the ark, tension mounts to the vision of a “woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars.” This means that the ark of the New Covenant is a woman.

Who is this woman that represents the covenant then? Since Scripture tends not to use allegories, and John’s style does not use personification, the woman must be a real historical person. We know that the male child symbolizes Jesus, the beast symbolizes Satan, and the beast with seven heads represents the Herod dynasty. Therefore, the covenant must be a person; it must be a “woman,” the title which Jesus gives to his mother, Mary. John also claims that this woman is not only mother to the “male child” but also “mother of all the living” – and so it is that Mary is the mother of Jesus and all of us in God’s family. John then further depicts this “woman” as referencing the prophecies after the fall in Genesis and the promises of Mary bearing the New Covenant.

John also depicts the Ark of the New Covenant as being more glorious than the last, so it must contain something much greater – and Mary does. Where the old ark contained the word of God on stones, the new ark, Mary contains the Word enfleshed; where the old ark contained manna from the desert, Mary bore the bread from Heaven; and where the old ark contained the rod of an ancestral priest, Mary bore the eternal priest.

Hahn once again addresses the skeptics’ questions by referring to the Church Fathers. For instance, skeptics believe that the birth pangs of the woman contradict the teaching that Mary experienced no birthing pains since she did not bear the stain of original sin. Yet Saint Paul acknowledges the fact that the pains may not be physical, but rather spiritual pains, or emotional pains. Another argument is the “other offspring” the woman

bears. Yet once again, these offspring may not be physical children, but members of the Church or those “who bear testimony to Jesus.”

John is not the only gospel author who claims Mary to be the Ark of the New Covenant. Luke, too, is a source of Marian doctrine. When Mary visits her cousin Elizabeth, Elizabeth exclaims, “Why is this granted me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?” (Lk 1:56). This parallels with 2 Samuel 6:9, “How can the ark of the Lord come to me?” Only one word was changed, ark was changed to mother, which again shows Mary as the new ark.

As a result, Mary must represent the woman in Revelation 12 – an ark of a new covenant that also bears many more from the same womb. So the Church’s mystery follows that of Mary’s because the Church births believers, just as Mary birthed Christ.

Power Behind the Throne

In chapter four, Hahn discusses Jesus’ lineage back to King David, as the Old Testament prophesized, and God fulfilled in the New Testament. This lineage then would also make Mary queen mother reigning with Jesus.

Matthew traces the lineage back in an unusual way – he lists four promiscuous pagan women: Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, and Bathsheba. By showing Jesus’ lineage in this way, skeptics cannot contend that Jesus was in fact of the Davidic lineage without denouncing King Solomon as part of the Davidic line as well (as he shares the same four women in his ancestry).

Throughout the Davidic line, the mother of the king was regarded as a country’s queen because she was the one who claimed the throne for her son. As the Old Testament exemplifies time and time again, the king always shows a special respect for his queen mother through gestures, granting her wishes, turning to her for counsel. So it is Mary who fulfills her role in the Davidic line as Jesus Christ’s queen mother. Her role is shown at the wedding feast at Cana, in the Book of Revelation, and completes her connection as the New Eve.

From Typing to Teaching

Since a dogma is the implicit or explicit interpretation of Scripture, all Marian dogmas come from Scripture. Furthermore, these dogmas help us to understand the person of Mary as a real historical figure and as our heavenly mother.

The Immaculate Conception, the dogma that Mary was conceived without original sin and continued to remain stainless throughout her life, is important to Mary’s role as New Eve and mother of Christ. Christ’s physical body came from the blood of His mother, so it was only proper and respectful that Christ would have been enfleshed from a sinless woman. The Immaculate Conception was not made a dogma until 1854; however, many Church fathers such as Saint Ephrem of Syria and Saint Augustine proclaimed it to be true in earlier centuries. The Immaculate Conception is also considered a unique preservation act of God, not Mary, as to not discount Mary’s humanity, and was granted to Mary through the merits of Her son, Jesus.

Another teaching of the Church is that Mary is the Mother of God, or *Theotokos*. One can deduce Mary’s title because Jesus is God, and Mary is the mother of Jesus, therefore, Mary is the Mother of God. In the fifth century, skepticism of the title “Mother of God” became hot under debate, but the end result was that Mary was indeed the Mother of God because mothers do not birth a nature (therefore, she could not have created God), rather, they birth a person. Mary birthed and mothered Jesus Christ, she did not originate Him.

The third Marian teaching Hahn discusses is Mary’s perpetual virginity. Hahn uses St. Thomas Aquinas’ words to first explain why Mary was a virgin when Jesus was conceived, “In order that Christ’s body might be

shown to be a real body, He was born of a woman. In order that His Godhead might be made clear, He was born of a virgin.” Also, Mary asked how it could be that she would have a child since she did not know man – so Mary herself claimed to be a virgin before the conception. Yet, after Jesus’ birth, Mary still remained a virgin although the Scripture mentions Jesus’ brothers and Jesus being Mary’s first-born. These two Scriptural allusions do have historical Hebrew context though. The word for ‘brother’ and ‘cousin’ in Hebrew are the same word because Hebrew has no word for the word ‘cousin.’ Jesus’ cousins would have been next of kin for Him, and therefore, considered more familial like brothers. The next term of question is ‘first-born.’ However, this term was merely a legal term for any child who “opened the womb,” regardless if the woman had more children or not.

The Assumption of the Blessed Mary also comes from Scripture and Church Tradition. Scripture implies Mary’s assumption in the Book of Revelation when John tells us of a woman, Mary, coming down from Heaven. And traditionally, no relics were ever claimed of Mary’s body – only two cities claimed to house her emptied tomb. By the end of the sixth century, a feast day of her Assumption had even been declared. The ritual readings and psalms of the feast day also point to Mary’s assumption scripturally. Psalm 45 declares a grand queen at the hand of her son – so it is implied that Mary should, too, be at the hand of her Son in Heaven.

Finally, Hahn briefly touches upon the incorrect supposition that Catholics “worship” Mary. Hahn quickly denounces such a notion, even though he, too, at one time believed it was so. Yet, he now knows that Catholics venerate Mary as a Saint but hold worship for God alone. Plus, one cannot compare pagan religions to Christianity to deny facts, such as Mary as the Queen of Heaven because the Gospel is our source for the Truth.

What About the Children?

We are the children of God – and this is what the gospel shows through Mary being our Mother and God being our Father. This familial relationship may often scare or intimidate us because as sons and daughters of the Son, we, too, have a share in His divinity. God forgave our sins and adopted us into His heavenly family – the Trinity.

Baptism is the first way we become one in Christ, and therefore, share in His mission as priest, prophet, and king. And if we share in Christ’s kingship, we share Mary, our queen mother. This means that by our noble birth, we have the right to go to her for counsel. Because we are all her children.

The next step in our lives is working and suffering with Christ to build up His kingdom, and in this way, we are co-workers with Christ. In the same way, Mary helps her son as Mediatrix. She mediates on our behalf as queen mother and advocate, and sets the best example about how to follow God’s will in the gospel.

As Christians, we can have this strong relationship with God because it is a child-parent relationship that is based on love – not a servant-master relationship as in Judaism and Islam. We love God because we choose to; our servitude is not demanded by Him. And a primary reason Catholics rejoice in God’s love is through God’s covenant. A contract simply exchanges material goods, but a covenant exchanges persons – so we are God’s and He is ours.

So it is then, in this covenant, that God has distributed His glory to each of us equally beginning with Mary, His mother. Christ’s crucifixion did not gain Him or detract from any of His glory; rather, He decided to share His infinite glory with us, His heirs.

However, we often think of God’s grace as we do human economics: something we have to earn in order to receive. God gives us all our reward as His children, and by our acceptance of His grace, we are glorifying

God's creation. Moreover, since Jesus did not have to merit anything for Himself, He "merited our capacity to merit" (134). Mary has the unlimited capacity to merit because there is no gap between her wants and God's wants. Therefore, Mary is an example of the ideal becoming what is real in her "yes" to God. "Divine motherhood is the place where God wants Christians to meet Christ, their brother" since we are all from the same womb (135). And since God gave us His mother, it is evident that there is nothing He will withhold from us.

The Ultimate Church

Mary has a mystical relationship with the Church as they together mother God's children. However, the Church is only our mother by imitating and honoring Mary in an intimate union with her. The Church is also an instrument of God's will that maintains and honors the faith, just like Mary.

Yet, it is Mary as a heavenly archetype who fulfills the ultimate type, which is why the Book of Revelation is so prominent in the Bible. By assuming into Heaven, "Mary is now the fulfillment of the reality of which the Church itself is merely a type" (143-144).

But should we downplay our Marian devotions for the sake of uniting close to Protestants? Hahn believes this would be counterproductive because we would be discounting the centuries of Tradition and divine revelation through Christ. Theology is just like a science in that it, too, evolves over time. We should not deny Mary her role as Mother of God because then we would not be giving her the honor she deserves.

A Concluding Unapologetic Postscript

Hahn concludes his book the same way he begins it – with a personal story. He describes debating theological doctrine with a Protestant friend he was visiting, and was ill prepared to answer his questions about Mary's assumption. The next day, Hahn realized it was a holy day of obligation and found a chapel that had Mass at noon. After the Mass, he approached the priest, and discovered that his book about Mary's assumption had just been marked out of print; however, the priest has two copies left in which he was able to give to Hahn for his friend. Hahn wanted to point out that we should not be overzealous when it comes to defending our mother – she is there for us and will give us more than we need. "Know from the start that you don't have all the answers – but you Savior does, and He loves His mother" (162).