

THE CRUCIFIED RABBI

JUDAISM AND THE ORIGINS
OF CATHOLIC CHRISTIANITY

TAYLOR MARSHALL

ORIGINS OF CATHOLIC CHRISTIANITY TRILOGY
VOLUME ONE



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To His Excellency
the Most Reverend Kevin Vann
Bishop of Fort Worth

who received my family into full communion with
the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church
of our Lord Jesus Christ

נביא מקרבוך מאחיך
כמני יקים לך יהוה
אלהיך אליו תשמעון:

- Deuteronomy 18:15

εἰ γὰρ ἐπιστεύετε Μωϋσεῖ, ἐπιστεύετε ἂν ἐμοί περὶ
γὰρ ἐμοῦ ἐκεῖνος ἔγραψεν. εἰ δὲ τοῖς ἐκείνου
γράμμασιν οὐ πιστεύετε, πῶς τοῖς ἐμοῖς ῥήμασιν
πιστεύσετε;

- John 5:46-47

Notus in Judæa Deus : in Israël magnum nomen eius.

- Psalm 75:1-2 *Vulgata*

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*Many women have done excellently,
but you surpass them all (Prov 31:29).*

Her influence and advice are present on every page of this book.

With profound humility, I present this book to our **Lord Jesus Christ** and pray that every bit of chaff be disregarded and that anything of worth be attributed to His divine mercy.

HOW I DISCOVERED THE JEWISH ORIGINS OF CATHOLICISM

A priest and a rabbi walked into a hospital...

This is not the beginning of a joke, but the beginning of my journey to the Catholic Faith. I discovered the Jewish origins of Catholicism while I was still a Protestant clergyman, an Episcopalian priest to be exact. God quickened the process of my conversion to the Catholic Faith with an insight that I gained from a Jewish rabbi. Without his knowing it, this rabbi opened my eyes to a connection between biblical Judaism and Catholicism. As I pursued the matter, I began to see that Jesus Christ fulfilled the Old Testament by instituting the Holy Catholic Church. As a minister in the tradition stemming from King Henry VIII's break from the Catholic Church (the Church of England), I realized that I had no other choice—I renounced my ministry and sought reception into the Catholic Church.

This journey began one morning as I sat at my desk in a black suit and white clerical collar. I had been ordained as an Episcopalian priest only a few weeks. The pastor of the parish came into my office with a smile on his face. "Taylor, someone has requested a hospital visit."

This was my first official hospital visit as a clergyman. The pastor continued, "Now when you get to the hospital, be sure to introduce yourself at the administration office. Tell them that you are a new minister and that you need clerical tags for your car so that you can park in the 'reserved for clergy' parking

spaces. This will save you time and you won't have to pay for parking."

"Great. I'm on my way."

"One more thing. Always wash your hands before going into a hospital room, and be sure to also wash your hands when you leave the hospital. Make sure that you always wash. Washing protects you and it protects the patients."

"Got it. Anything else?"

"Oh, and when you talk to people in their hospital beds, always be sure to stand at their feet so that they can see your face and hear your voice. Don't make the mistake of sitting next to the person's head, otherwise the poor soul must stretch his aching body to look you in the eye."

"Get parking tags. Wash my hands. Stand at the end of the bed. I'll be sure to do that. Anything else?"

"Make sure you bring a prayer book. Sometimes a medical situation can become tense and you may not know how to pray. It's good to have a few standard prayers to which you can turn in a time of confusion."

"Alright. I've got it. Let me get my stole and I'll be on my way."

"You'll do fine. I'll say a prayer for you," said the pastor. "Do you have any questions?"

"Just one," I replied.

"What's that?"

"Who am I going to see?"

The pastor told me the name of a woman who would be receiving a surgery at 1:00 pm. I wrote down her name, and then grabbed my prayer book, stole, and holy oil.

When I arrived at the hospital I obtained my "clergy parking" tags, washed my hands, and went upstairs to surgery. The waiting room was packed with people waiting for their loved ones to return from

surgery. I went to the desk, smiled at the receptionist, and said, "My name is Father Taylor Marshall and I'm here to see someone before she enters surgery." I reported the woman's name.

Her fingernails stopped clicking on the keyboard. "Great. You can just go on back there and see her."

I turned around and saw two swinging medical doors at the end of the waiting room.

"Through there?"

"Yes, Father. Just go on in. She is already with the anesthesiologist."

It was clear that she believed that I had done this before, but it was my first time. As I came to the doors, I pushed the button and the automatic doors swung open. I walked forward and they closed behind me. Everyone beyond those doors seemed to be scrubbed and masked. I was amazed that no one stopped me. I expected someone to say, "What are you doing here?" or "How did you get back here?" The white collar around my neck opened door after door as I navigated my way toward the room where patients prepared for surgery. Finally, I came into a large room with eight beds. A nurse smiled at me.

"Pardon me. Can I help you?"

I reported the woman's name and asked if I could pray with her.

"She's over there in Bed Number One." She pointed to the bed. "The anesthesiologist has already been here. She's probably already asleep."

"That's okay," I said. "I'd still like to pray for her."

The nurse had no problems with this and left me alone in the room.

I walked over to Bed Number One and saw a woman already fast asleep in her hospital gown. I

opened my copy of the *Book of Common Prayer* where a gold ribbon marked the section entitled, *The Order for the Visitation of the Sick*. I then gently laid my right hand on the arm of the sleeping woman.

Her eyes flung open with an expression of fright. "Who are you!" The anesthesia had not yet begun its work.

I was as startled as she. I pulled my hand away from her arm. "Excuse me. My name is Father Taylor. I'm here to pray with you before you go into surgery."

She took one look at my clerical collar and said, "But I'm Jewish!"

"Oh, I'm sorry. I must have the wrong bed. I was looking for someone named Joanna."

"That's me. I am Joanna." She obviously had no idea why a Christian minister stood over her bed with a prayer book in his hand.

I paused and thought to myself: *Is this some sort of joke that older priests play on new priests? The pastor sends me off on my first hospital call with all sorts of sound advice, but neglects to tell me that the lady is Jewish!* I collected myself.

"Wait, I recognize you," the lady said. "I was at St. Andrew's with my husband a few weeks ago." She yawned. "You preached a sermon on the creation of Adam from the dirt—how people are supposed to have humility because we come from the earthly *humus* of the ground. I liked that."

I remembered the sermon. I had compared Adam's creation from the earth to Christ's resurrection from his earthen tomb. I knew why she found the portion about Adam particularly interesting, and not necessarily the part about Christ. Nevertheless, my confidence returned with the compliment.

"Well, would you like me to pray for you before you go into surgery?" I asked.

"Oh, I would love that. Thank you so much."

I placed my right hand once again on her arm and began with a petition from the *Book of Common Prayer*:

O GOD of heavenly powers, who, by the might of thy command, drivest away from men's bodies all sickness and all infirmity. Be present in thy goodness with this thy servant, that her weakness may be banished and her strength recalled; that her health being thereupon restored, she may bless...

The prayer ended with, "thy holy Name; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen." Secretly in my heart, I prayed that last line, but I didn't know whether it would be appropriate to invoke the name of Christ given the circumstances. Thinking fast, I continued instead with the words:

...that she may bless the holy Name of the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Amen.

She responded with a heartfelt "Amen," likely amazed that this young priest had brought with him a prayer book containing Jewish prayers recalling the memory of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. I shared some words of comfort, but already her eyes were growing heavy with sleep. I left the room by the way I entered.

As I came back into the waiting room, I saw a bearded rabbi enter the reception area. So the priest (me) walked up to the rabbi (him) and said, "Are you here to see Joanna?"

The rabbi answered, "Yes. As a matter of fact I am."

"Go through those doors and follow the hallway to the left. Bed Number One. She's already asleep."

Looking into the perplexed eyes of the rabbi, I could see what he was thinking: “Why does this priest know all of this about Joanna?” He thanked me and disappeared behind the automated doors with a push of a button. He had obviously done this before.

Just after that, I recognized someone in the waiting room. It was Mr. Smith from St. Andrew’s. Now I understood why I had been called upon to pray with a Jewish woman—she was married to an Episcopalian. Up until now, I had not known that his wife was Jewish. He was nervous about her surgery and we talked for a while until the rabbi returned to the waiting room. Mr. Smith formally introduced me to the rabbi, and we shared an interesting conversation about how some Jews bend their knees and raise up on their toes when they pray.

Then the rabbi asked Mr. Smith a very unusual question. “What is the Hebrew name of Joanna’s mother?”

The husband thought about it for a moment. “Gee, I don’t know. Why do you ask?”

“Well, I was going to ask Joanna the name of her mother, but she was already asleep by the time I found her.”

“Why would you need to know her mother’s name?” asked her husband.

The rabbi explained, “We Jews believe that if someone is suffering and you invoke the name of his or her mother in prayer, God will be more merciful in granting your prayer for that person.”

My first reaction was to dismiss the rabbi’s explanation as superstitious. However, as I ruminated on the rabbi’s answer, I realized the profundity of it. This rabbi believed that God was especially merciful when a mother was invoked for the sake of her child. As a “high-church” Episcopalian priest I already had a

budding devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary. It was then that I realized the implication of the rabbi's words. I believed that Mary was important, because she was truly the Mother of our Lord Jesus Christ and therefore the Mother of God (Lk 1:43). God had chosen this human woman to be the pure virginal vessel of His Incarnate Son. If Jews believed that invoking the mother of someone caused God to be more gracious in answering an intercession, then wouldn't the name of Mary be worth invoking? Even more, Mary wasn't just any ordinary mother. She was the only person ever created who could speak to God about *our* Son. That's when it hit me. Catholic devotion to Mary is not merely based on sound Christological arguments. Veneration for the Blessed Mother is not just only in the writings of the early Church. Reaching back even further, the Church reveres and invokes the Blessed Mother because it inherited the Jewish custom of showing profound reverence for the spiritual role of the mother in a family. The rabbi's answer was a surprising confirmation that Catholic customs are rooted in a Jewish understanding of reality.

This experience opened up an entirely new way of appreciating Christianity, that is to say Catholic Christianity. I soon learned that Orthodox Jews pray for the dead—as do Catholics. Jews have a special ark in their synagogues to house the Word of God. Catholics have a special tabernacle in their churches to house the Word of God made flesh in the Eucharist. All of the fascinating elements of the Old Testament—the liturgies, the holy days, the vestments, the lamps, the vows, the rituals—all of these were preserved or transformed in the sacramental economy of the Catholic Church. I later discovered that the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* had this to say about the connection between the Jewish People and the Catholic Church:

The relationship of the Church with the Jewish People. When she delves into her own mystery, the Church, the People of God in the New Covenant, discovers her link with the Jewish People, “the first to hear the Word of God.” The Jewish faith, unlike other non-Christian religions, is already a response to God’s revelation in the Old Covenant. To the Jews “belong the sonship, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship, and the promises; to them belong the patriarchs, and of their race, according to the flesh, is the Christ,” “for the gifts and the call of God are irrevocable” (no. 839).

The following year I renounced the ordination that I had received in the Episcopal Church after a considerable amount of prayer, study, and counsel. The Episcopal Church possessed many ancient elements and practices, but I came to see that the Anglican schism of the sixteenth century, and the Protestant Reformation in general, did not reflect the original trajectory of the New Testament. I came to believe that the Church is the Body of Christ and the Temple of the People of God. In the Old Testament, the People of Israel were not free to create a “new Israel” or to form a new denomination of “Protestant Israelites.” No matter how corrupt the priests, the high priests, and the kings of Judah became, the covenant of God remained in effect. As I reflected on this, I perceived that the Protestant Reformation rejected the scriptural belief in a united, visible Church—a notion taken for granted in the Book of Acts and the epistles of Saint Paul.

My wife and I entered into full communion with the Catholic Church on May 23, 2006, along with our four children. I became a Catholic Christian because I

realized that the Catholic Church alone could trace her doctrine, liturgy, customs, and morality back to those Jewish beginnings when a rabbi named Jesus roamed the Holy Land with a band of Jewish disciples. As a Catholic Christian, I am linked not only to the early Church, but also to the ancient tradition of the Old Testament. I can now say with the Apostle Paul (who was once Rabbi Saul):

I share the faith of Abraham, for he is the father of us all.

- Romans 4:16

INTRODUCTION

Does the Pope Wear a Yarmulke?

IN DOING RESEARCH FOR this book, I found that one of the most common questions that Jews have concerning the Catholic Church is: “Why does your Pope wear a yarmulke?” They are referring, of course, to the small, white “beanie” that the Pope wears in public and in the liturgy. To be accurate, the Pope does not actually wear a yarmulke, but a *zucchetto*, which is Italian for “little gourd,” as in the vegetable we call the zucchini. The *zucchetto* is a round cap of eight triangular panels that have been sewn together. The cap somewhat resembles half of a small pumpkin, hence the name “little gourd” or *zucchetto*.

The official Latin name for this little skullcap worn by Catholic clergy is *pileolus*. It is also called the *solus deo* (Latin for “to God alone”) because it is a sign that a man is wholly dedicated to the Lord. Zucchettos are color-coded to denote rank in the Catholic Church: the Pope wears a white zucchetto, cardinals wear red zucchettos, bishops wear purple zucchettos, and priests wear black zucchettos, though priests nowadays rarely wear them.

We know that the Israelite priests of the Temple wore special turbans when they ministered in the presence of the Lord. Covering the head in the presence of God was a sign of humility. This act of humility was

also observed in ancient Rome—slaves were required to cover their heads while freemen remained bareheaded.

Although, Moses never commanded Jewish laymen to cover their heads with yarmulkes, it seems that Jewish men began to observe the custom for two reasons. The first was to imitate the Jewish priests who covered their heads when they served in the Temple. After all, even laymen should live as though they were in the presence of Almighty God. Secondly, the act of covering the head symbolized that a man was not a freeman, but a spiritual servant of God. Rabbi Honah ben Joshua once said that he never walked more than four steps with his head uncovered, “because the Divine Presence is always over my head.”¹

It was obviously very difficult to take a turban on and off throughout the day. As a result, the small round skullcap became the simplest and most convenient way of covering the head. While Jews may wear any kind of hat, the most common hat is the skullcap known as the *kippah* meaning “dome” in Hebrew. It is commonly designated by the Yiddish word for the skullcap—*yarmulke*. The word “yarmulke” seems to derive from the Polish word for cap—*jarmulke*. However, there is another Jewish tradition that the name comes from the Aramaic phrase *Yari Mulka*, meaning, “Fear the King” since God is the King of Israel.

Whether one calls this religious skullcap a *zucchetto*, *pileolus*, *soli Deo*, *kippah*, or *yarmulke*, the idea is the same. It designates that a man is a servant of the Most High, ever standing in the presence of God. Every Catholic bishop dons the zucchetto whenever he exercises his apostolic ministry in communion with the Catholic Church. There is one important exception. All Catholic bishops, including the cardinals and the Pope, must remove the zucchetto when they stand at the altar

and recite the Eucharistic Prayer. When the bishop consecrates the Body and Blood of Christ, he acts *in persona Christi* (“in the person of Christ”). The bishop therefore removes the zucchetto during this time since he “loans” his voice and body to Christ so that the true High Priest might transform the bread and wine into His very own Body and Blood.²

Throughout this book, the reader will discover that many similarities between biblical Judaism and Catholicism are incidental, as in the case of the yarmulke. In other cases, elements of the Catholic Faith derive directly from Jewish origins. Sometimes the connection between Judaism and Catholicism is direct (as in the connection between the Passover and the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass)—at other times a certain element of Catholicism does not possess an organic link to biblical Judaism. In these cases, the link is accounted for by the common religious presuppositions of Judaism and Catholicism. An example of this would be the use of vestments by Catholic priests. The vestments worn by Catholic priests do not derive directly from the Old Covenant vestments, but the idea of priests wearing ceremonial garments during acts of sacrifice is a presupposition that Catholicism received from the Old Testament rather matter-of-factly. The Church eventually saw its own vesture as hearkening back to the priestly vesture of the Old Covenant Temple, but the Old Testament custom is not (as we shall see) directly tied to the Catholic custom.

Is Catholicism Anti-Semitic or Philo-Semitic?

The presence of a what might appear to be a yarmulke on the head of the Pope does not necessarily mean that Catholics have always honored the Jewish people as “beloved,” as described by Saint Paul in Rom 11:29.

Some Jews suspect that the Catholic Church is inherently anti-Semitic. Sadly, some Catholic Christians have committed injustices against the Jewish people throughout the centuries.

Before addressing the issue, we must first define the term “anti-Semitic.” The word Semitic refers to those who derive their genealogy from Shem—one of the just and noble sons of Noah. Noah had three sons and according to tradition his son Japheth is the father of those who lived beyond Mount Caucasus north of the Holy Land (hence the term Caucasian). Noah’s son Ham was the father of the Egyptians, Babylonians, and Africans. Noah’s son Shem was the father of the Syrians, Persians, Arabs, and Jews. Hence, Shemites or Semites are those people deriving from Shem. In English, to be anti-Semitic usually refers to being anti-Jewish; however, to be anti-Arab or even anti-Syrian would also qualify as being anti-Semitic, strictly speaking.

Regretfully, the term anti-Semitic is thrown about irresponsibly today. For example, if one were to state that Jews, like all human persons, require the Lord Jesus Christ as their Savior in order to enter Heaven—as Saint Peter proclaimed to Jewish priests in Acts 4:12—this assertion might be labeled as anti-Semitic or racist. That Christ is the only Savior of mankind is a religious belief pertaining to the core of Christianity—it is not something directed specifically against Jews and their descendents. Sometimes, one is wrongly labeled anti-Semitic for opposing the political ideology of the contemporary state of Israel. To disagree with Zionism or Israeli politics is *not* anti-Semitism. Anti-Semitism, rightly defined, is a hatred for the Jewish people—not the hatred of Jewish theories, actions, or policies. One can be opposed to the Jewish Talmud, Zionism, Israeli

politics, and even the Jewish religion without hating Jews or seeking their extermination.

Despite the recent overtures made by the Catholic Church to ethnic and religious Jews, there is a growing body of secular literature claiming that Catholicism is anti-Semitic by its very nature. The accusations are made to varying degrees. Some understand Catholicism as inherently anti-Semitic because it claims that Jesus is the Jewish Messiah and exclusive Savior of mankind (Jn 14:6). Others accuse the New Testament itself of anti-Semitism because Christ's enemies are sometimes referred to collectively as "the Jews."³ Others cite Catholic history and point to Catholic-led persecutions against Jewish victims. More recently, some authors and journalists have accused Pope Pius XII of having been "Hitler's Pope," even suggesting that Pius XII assisted with the Nazi holocaust. Recent secular and Jewish scholarship however, has shown that this claim is false and inspired by anti-Catholic bigotry.⁴

We must be fair and confess that there are numerous examples of violence against Jews in Christian history. However, history also shows that Catholicism as a religion has not shown hatred for Jews. Few are aware that the fifth Pope of Catholic Church, Pope Evaristus, was an ethnic Jew. Pope Saint Gregory the Great (AD 590-604) was the first Pope to take a protective position toward the Jews. Saint Gregory's correspondence reveals that he believed that Jews should not be destroyed nor forced to receive Baptism.

Nevertheless, after Pope Urban II authorized the First Crusade in 1095, there was the unfortunate event in 1096 when the Crusaders attacked the Jewish community of Worms, Germany. It should be noted that it was not Pope Urban's intention that the Crusaders should murder Jews. The aim of the First

Crusade was to liberate the Holy Land from the Muslims who had conquered it. Nevertheless, it was baptized Catholics who committed these crimes. The Jews of Worms were offered sanctuary *only* if they received baptism. Most of the Jews refused and eight hundred were slaughtered. Frequently, the local bishops and laity attempted to protect the Jews, but they were not often successful. When the Crusaders captured Jerusalem in 1099, they rounded up the Jewish population of the city into a synagogue and burned them alive.

In response to these crimes, Pope Calixtus II in about AD 1120 issued a bull to protect Jews who had suffered during the First Crusade. The name of the bull *Sicut Judaeis* (“and thus to the Jews”) is a reference to a phrase originally employed by Pope Saint Gregory the Great in a letter addressed to the Bishop of Naples. In continuity with the teaching of Pope Saint Gregory the Great, Pope Calixtus II instructs that Christians should neither kill nor force Jews to receive Baptism.

The bull was reaffirmed by Popes Alexander III, Celestine III (1191-1198), Innocent III (1199), Honorius III (1216), Gregory IX (1235), Innocent IV (1246), Alexander IV (1255), Urban IV (1262), Gregory X (1272 & 1274), Nicholas III, Martin IV (1281), Honorius IV (1285-1287), Nicholas IV (1288-92), Clement VI (1348), Urban V (1365), Boniface IX (1389), Martin V (1422), and Nicholas V (1447). The bull reads as follows:

They ought to suffer no prejudice. We, out of the meekness of Christian piety, and in keeping in the footprints of Our predecessors of happy memory, the Roman Pontiffs Calixtus, Eugene, Alexander, Clement, admit their petition, and We grant them the buckler of Our protection.

For We make the law that no Christian compel them, unwilling or refusing, by violence to come to baptism. But, if any one of them should spontaneously, and for the sake of the faith, fly to the Christians, once his choice has become evident, let him be made a Christian without any calumny. Indeed, he is not considered to possess the true faith of Christianity who is not recognized to have come to Christian baptism, not spontaneously, but unwillingly.

Also, no Christian ought to presume...to injure their persons, or with violence to take their property, or to change the good customs which they have had until now in whatever region they inhabit.

Besides, in the celebration of their own festivities, no one ought disturb them in any way, with clubs or stones, nor ought any one try to require from them or to extort from them services they do not owe, except for those they have been accustomed from times past to perform.

We decree...that no one ought to dare mutilate or diminish a Jewish cemetery, nor, in order to get money, to exhume bodies once they have been buried.

If anyone, however, shall attempt, the tenor of this decree once known, to go against it...let him be punished by the vengeance of excommunication, unless he correct his presumption by making equivalent satisfaction.

So then, while crimes were no doubt committed against Jews, the papal magisterial decrees officially taught that Christians should not harm Jews. Moreover, the Supreme Pontiffs even threatened excommunication against those Christians who harmed them. Modern-day writers seeking to label the medieval Popes as inhumane toward the Jews often neglect this important tradition of the Church.

Another frequently cited example of anti-Semitism is the decree of the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215, the Council Fathers decreed: "Jews and Saracens of both sexes in every Christian province and at all times shall be marked off in the eyes of the public from other peoples through the character of their dress."⁵⁵ However, if we read the entire canon from 1215, we discover that this measure was not so much discriminatory as it was preventative. There was a growing problem of Christians marrying (or committing fornication) with Jews and Saracens (Muslims) without knowing that they were not Christians. This entailed canonical problems and the risk of offspring being born from mixed marriages.

The thirteenth century witnessed the first of several Jewish expulsions. England was the first kingdom to expel its Jewish population formally. King Edward I ordered the Jewish expulsion in 1290. It is believed that he and the nobility greatly benefited by this act, whereby they received the assets of the Jewish population of England. The English Jews were ordered to leave on the ninth day of the Jewish month of Av (July 18 of that year)—a Jewish day of mourning that commemorates the destruction of the First Temple by the Babylonians (586 B.C.) and the Second Temple by the Romans (A.D. 70).

France expelled its Jewish population between 1306 and 1394. In response to these persecutions and in defense of the Jews, Pope Martin V issued his *Declaration on the Protection of the Jews* in 1419 that stated:

Whereas the Jews are made in the image of God, and a remnant of them will one day be saved, and whereas they have sought our protection, following in the footsteps of our predecessors: We command that they be not bothered in their synagogues; that their laws, rights and customs be not assailed; that they be not baptized by force, constrained to observe Christian festivals, nor to wear new badges, and that they be not hindered in their business relations with Christians.

Nevertheless, Austria expelled their Jewish population in 1421. Spain did the same in 1492—the year Columbus discovered America. Spain in particular was concerned about the *conversos*—those Jews who pretended to be Christian and even received baptism, but did in fact continue to believe and practice as Jews. These so-called *conversos* converted primarily for political or monetary gain and not from a true change in heart. Portugal followed Spain in 1497 by expelling all Jews. Jews were not permitted in Orthodox Russia from the fifteenth century until 1772. In nearly every case, Jewish persecutions were sparked by secular politics, but we cannot deny that it was baptized Christians who committed these acts of injustice.

We have already quoted the bull *Sicut Judeis*, reissued by over fifteen Popes, and Pope Martin V's *Declaration on the Protection of the Jews* of 1419. Another important institutional teaching came in 1566, when the *Catechism of the Council of Trent* did not blame all Jews exclusively for the crime of Deicide—killing God on the

cross. Rather, the *Catechism* lays the fault chiefly on Catholics who know Christ and yet continue to sin, and by doing so “lay violent hands on Him.”

In this guilt are involved all those who fall frequently into sin; for, as our sins consigned Christ the Lord to the death of the cross, most certainly those who wallow in sin and iniquity crucify to themselves again the Son of God, as far as in them lies, and make a mockery of Him. This guilt seems more enormous in us than in the Jews, since according to the testimony of the same Apostle: If they had known it, they would never have crucified the Lord of glory; while we, on the contrary, professing to know Him, yet denying Him by our actions, seem in some sort to lay violent hands on Him.⁶

Papal condemnations of violence against Jews were reiterated in the twentieth century under Pope Pius XI. In response to the rise of Nazism and Hitler’s “final solution,” Pope Pius XI issued the 1937 encyclical *Mit Brennender Sorge* condemning the Nazi ideology of racism and totalitarianism, as well as Nazi violations of the concordat. Copies of the encyclical were smuggled into Germany and then were read from every pulpit.

In 1938, in an address to Belgian pilgrims, Pius XI described true Catholics as “Spiritual Semites.”

Mark well that in the Catholic Mass, Abraham is our Patriarch and Forefather. Anti-Semitism is incompatible with the lofty thought, which that fact expresses. It is a movement with which we Christians can have nothing to do. No, no, I say to you it is impossible for a Christian to take part in anti-Semitism. It is inadmissible. Through Christ and in Christ we are the spiritual

progeny of Abraham. Spiritually, we [Christians] are all Semites.⁷

The identity of Catholic Christians as “spiritual Semites” goes back to the prophets, Saint John the Baptist, Christ our Lord and Saint Paul.

Saint John the Baptist warned the Jews of his day that their carnal genealogy connected them to Abraham would not attain their salvation:

And think not to say within yourselves: We have Abraham for our father. For I tell you that God is able of these stones to raise up children to Abraham. For now the axe is laid to the root of the trees. Every tree therefore that doth not yield good fruit, shall be cut down, and cast into the fire (Mt 3:9–10).

The Jews of that time boasted in their biological descent from Abraham. They assumed that their ethnicity deriving from Abraham somehow commended them to God’s favor. However, it is by supernatural grace that a man is saved. This is the Gospel proclaimed Saint John the Baptist and Christ our Lord. Christ also confronted this false doctrine of carnal Judaism. When the Jews of His day challenged His Messianic proclamation and mission, Christ rebukes them sternly, even telling them that Satan, not Abraham, is their spiritual father.

They answered and said to him: Abraham is our father.

Jesus saith them: If you be the children of Abraham, do the works of Abraham. But now you seek to kill me, a man who have spoken the truth to you, which I have heard of God. This

Abraham did not. You do the works of your father.

They said therefore to him: We are not born of fornication: we have one Father, even God. Jesus therefore said to them: If God were your Father, you would indeed love me. For from God I proceeded and came. For I came not of myself: but he sent me. Why do you not know my speech? Because you cannot hear my word.

You are of your father the devil: and the desires of your father you will do. He was a murderer from the beginning: and he stood not in the truth, because truth is not in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father thereof (Jn 8:39–44).

Christ our God confronts the poor theology of those Jewish scribes and Pharisees making accusations against Him. Salvation consists in the remission of sins and the inner renewal of the soul.

Saint Paul made this teaching of being a “spiritual Israelite” explicit in the ninth chapter of Romans. He begins by distinguishing children of Israel according to the flesh and those according to the promise of God. Are they the carnal descendents of Abraham with an unbroken pedigree the children of God by virtue of the flesh? No, the true Israelites are those who have true faith in God the Father and His Son Jesus Christ.

Who are Israelites, to whom belongeth the adoption as of children and the glory and the testament and the giving of the law and the service of God and the promises: Whose are the

fathers and of whom is Christ, according to the flesh, who is over all things, God blessed for ever. Amen. Not as though the word of God hath miscarried.

For all are not Israelites that are of Israel. Neither are all they that are the seed of Abraham, children: but in Isaac shall thy seed be called. That is to say, not they that are the children of the flesh are the children of God: but they that are the children of the promise are accounted for the seed (Rom 9:4–8).

So then, salvation is not found in natural generation but in supernatural regeneration. This is why Pope Pius XI called Catholics “spiritual Semites.” We may not be natural descendents of Abraham, yet in Christ we are children of Abraham through faith.

The Catholic Church rightfully condemns historical acts of anti-Semitism. When John Paul II visited Jerusalem on March 27, 2000 he paused by the Western Wailing Wall, bowed his head in prayer, and placed a written prayer in the wall. As the Holy Father turned to leave the historic site, he paused once more and turned back to the wall for another moment of silent prayer. The printed prayer that John Paul II inserted into the wall read as follows:

God of our fathers, you chose Abraham and his descendants to bring your Name to the Nations. We are deeply saddened by the behavior of those who in the course of history have caused these children of yours to suffer, and asking your forgiveness we wish to commit ourselves to genuine brotherhood with the people of the covenant.

Pope John Paul II's actions and words demonstrate that authentic Catholicism leads not to *anti-Semitism*, but instead leads us in the opposite direction toward *philo-Semitism*, a love for people of Israel, whom John Paul II calls the *people of the covenant*. Here, John Paul II does not mean that Jews are saved by a covenant other than the new and eternal covenant inaugurated by the Precious Blood of Christ at the cross. John Paul II's phrase "people of the covenant" should be read in continuity with the teaching of Pope Pius XI before him.

On October 17th 1925, Pope Pius XI consecrated the entire human race to the Sacred Heart on the feast of Christ the King. In this solemn consecration, His Holiness specifically consecrated the Jewish people with the words:

Turn Thine eyes of mercy toward the children of that race, once thy chosen people. Of old they called down upon themselves the Blood of the Saviour; may it now descend upon them as a laver of redemption and of life.

This entire prayer (which includes the section cited above) was later indulgenced for recitation by the lay faithful. It became a plenary indulgence when meeting the usual conditions and recited daily for a month.⁸

So then, the language of the Sovereign Pontiffs reveals that the children of Israel are not utterly cast off from God, but that they are not longer the chosen people since their rejection of Christ renders them without redemption and eternal life. Salvation is possible for the Jew just as it is possible for the Gentile through repentance and faith and Jesus Christ. There is a vast difference between the biblical Judaism of Moses and the Talmudic Judaism of the rabbis in the centuries after Christ. The Old Testament faith of Moses rightly finds its fulfillment in Christ. The faith of the Jewish

rabbis after Christ is *not* that of the Patriarchs and Moses, as Christ Himself teaches:

Think not that I will accuse you to the Father. There is one that accuses you, Moses, in whom you trust. For if you did believe Moses, you would perhaps believe me also: for he wrote of me. But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe my words? (Jn 5:44-47)

Moreover, Saint Peter exhorted all the Jews at the Feast of Pentecost to “Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of your sins. And you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit” (Acts 2:38). The supernatural grace of Christ saves. It is the feast day of Pentecost that demarcates the promulgation of the New Covenant. Jewish pilgrims traveling to Jerusalem in AD 33 for the Jewish feast of Pentecost were in good faith and presumably in a state of grace. However, once they arrived and heard the words of Saint Peter, they were required to make an additional act of faith. At that first Pentecost Sunday, Peter proclaimed to the Jewish populace in Jerusalem:

Therefore let all the house of Israel know most certainly that God hath made both Lord and Christ, this same Jesus, whom you have crucified.

Now when they had heard these things, they had compunction in their heart and said to Peter and to the rest of the apostles: What shall we do, men and brethren?

But Peter said to them: Do penance: and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of your sins. And you

shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is to you and to your children and to all that are far off, whomsoever the Lord our God shall call. And with very many other words did he testify and exhort them, saying: Save yourselves from this perverse generation (Acts 2:36–40).

While the Old Covenant was consummated and perfectly fulfilled at the death and resurrection of Christ, the New Law of the Gospel was not promulgated until Pentecost.⁹ It was on Pentecost that the New Testament and the need for baptism became absolutely binding and necessary. Pre-Pentecostal Judaism in expectation of the Messiah was the true religion instituted by God through Abraham. Post-Pentecostal Judaism is a dead letter—a religion unknown to the pages of Sacred Scripture.¹⁰

In summary, Jewish ethnicity in itself does not save. The Old Covenant is no longer salvific. Nevertheless, the Jewish people continue as a sign to the Gentiles, and Gentiles should revere the Jewish people as kinsmen of Christ. After all, is it not the case that Catholics worship a Jewish Rabbi as the very Son of God and identify Him as the Jewish Messiah? The faith and flesh of Israel are integral to the humanity of the Redeemer. Catholics also show great veneration for the Jewish maiden, Mary the Mother of the Messiah and extol her as the Queen of Heaven.

The original Apostles, from which every Catholic bishop succeeds, were Jewish. Jewish authors wrote every book of the Catholic Bible, with the exception of the Gospel of Saint Luke and the Book of Acts. The liturgy of the Mass derives from the prayers of the Jewish synagogue and temple. We teach our children the Hebrew stories about Noah, Abraham, Joseph, Moses, David, Esther, and Daniel. We employ

Hebrew words in our liturgy: “Amen” and “Alleluia.” The vestments, incense, candles, processions, jubilees, and many of the priestly customs likewise derive from Jewish practice. Many Jews who visit a Catholic Mass often comment that it all seems so very Jewish. The reason for this is that the Catholic Church grew out of the Judaism of its original Rabbi and High Priest, Jesus the Messiah.

Rabbi Israel Eugenio Zolli - The Catholic Rabbi

The intimate relationship between biblical Judaism and Catholicism is beautifully expressed in the life of Rabbi Israel Zolli. Rabbi Zolli was born in 1881 and became the Chief Rabbi of Rome beginning in 1939. When the Nazis occupied Rome, they commanded Rabbi Zolli to pay them tribute of fifteen kilograms of gold. Failure to comply would result in the deportation of the Jewish population of Rome. Unable to produce the required gold, Rabbi Zolli called upon Pope Pius XII for help. Pius XII graciously gave the needed gold to Rabbi Zolli, and the Jews of Rome were spared.

Not long after this episode, Rabbi Zolli saw a vision of Rabbi Jesus as he celebrated Judaism’s most solemn holy day—*Yom Kippur*. Jesus said to Rabbi Zolli, “You are here for the last time. From now on you will follow Me.” Later that evening, his wife confided to him that she too had seen a vision during the *Yom Kippur* liturgy: “Today while you were before the Ark of the Torah, it seemed to me as if the white figure of Jesus put His hands on your head as if to bless you.” His daughter Miriam also confided to her father that Jesus Christ had visited her in a dream.

The following year on February 13, 1945, Rabbi Zolli received baptism and became a Catholic Christian. In gratitude to Pope Pius XII who had dutifully protected the Roman Jews, Rabbi Zolli took as his Christian name “Eugenio,” the Christian name of Pius XII before he had been elected Pope. Zolli later explained:

I can accept only that Church which was preached to all creatures by my own forefathers, the Twelve Apostles, who, like me, issued from the Synagogue.

Rabbi Zolli and his family experienced what Saint Paul and the Apostles had experienced—the Rabbi named Jesus was the fulfillment of their faith in the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. It was not a new religion, but the climax of the covenant that God had established with Abraham. The Old Covenant awaited the New.

Then Jesus said to them, “These are my words which I spoke to you, while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.”

Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, and said to them, “Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, and that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be preached in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem” (Lk 24:44-47).

This rabbi named Jesus was crucified and He rose from the dead. This changed everything for those first Jewish disciples. Christ’s resurrection and His gift of the Holy

Spirit ushered in that which we now know as Catholic Christianity.

NOTES

¹ *Babylonian Talmud*, Kiddushin 31a.

² Catholic bishops and priests [“priest” is an Anglicized version of the Greek *presbyteros*] wear liturgical “headgear” as an eschatological sign. The liturgy depicted in the Book of Revelation describes twenty-four presbyters/elders wearing liturgical robes, standing around the altar of the Lamb, and wearing crowns (Rev 5:6 ff). In the Eucharistic liturgy, the priests represent this celestial and eschatological reality. They are dressed accordingly. This depiction in Revelation of “presbyters” is a New Testament account and so the earthly presbyters follow suit (quite literally).

The exception, as stated above, is that clergy do not wear anything on their heads when uttering the words of consecration because they minister and speak *in persona Christi* or “in the person of Christ.” It would be inappropriate for a layman to wear a hat at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, in accordance with Paul’s prohibition against laymen having “covered heads” (cf. 1 Cor 11).

³ See for example John 7:1, “the Jews sought to kill Him.” Clearly, “Jews” in general were not hateful and inimical since Christ, His mother, the Twelve Apostles, the women who followed Him, and the authors of the New Testament were Jews (except for Luke).

NOTES CONTINUED

⁴ John Cornwell's polemical *Hitler's Pope* (1999) was recently answered by Rabbi David G. Dalin's book *The Myth of Hitler's Pope: How Pope Pius XII Rescued Jews from the Nazis* (2005). Rabbi Dalin presents archival evidence demonstrating that Pope Pius XII rescued thousands of Jews during World War II. Rabbi Dalin even suggests that Pius XII be canonized by *Yad Vashem* (Holocaust Martyrs and Heroes Remembrance Authority) as a "Righteous Gentile" for his heroic work on behalf of the Jewish people. Rabbi Dalin also notes that the primary polemicists against Pius XII are either ex-seminarians (Gary Wills and John Cornwell) or ex-priests (James Carroll). The rabbi expresses his frustration toward these lapsed Catholics who have manipulated the tragedy of the holocaust to grind an axe with the papacy and the Catholic Church.

⁵ Fourth Lateran Council, Canon 68. "We decree that such Jews and Saracens of both sexes in every Christian province and at all times shall be marked off in the eyes of the public from other peoples through the character of their dress. Particularly, since it may be read in the writings of Moses that this very law has been enjoined upon them" (Num 15:37-41).

⁶ *Catechism of the Council of Trent*, The Creed, Article 4.

⁷ Pope Pius XI's public address in the Vatican to Belgian pilgrims in 1938.

⁸ His Holiness Pope Pius XI, Act of Consecration to the Sacred Heart. Indulgenced July 16, 1926; Feb 15, 1927.

⁹ See Saint Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* III, q. 66 a. 2. "But the obligation of receiving this sacrament was

NOTES CONTINUED

proclaimed to mankind after the Passion and Resurrection. First, because Christ's Passion put an end to the figurative sacraments, which were supplanted by Baptism and the other sacraments of the New Law. Secondly, because by Baptism man is "made conformable" to Christ's Passion and Resurrection, in so far as he dies to sin and begins to live anew unto righteousness."

¹⁰ I must credit Albert Doskey for suggesting the terms Pre-Pentecostal Judaism and Post-Pentecostal Judaism. However, he prefers the term Ante-Pentecostal rather than Pre-Pentecostal. I employ Pre-Pentecostal since it is simpler for the reader to discern.

1. JEWISH MESSIAH, CATHOLIC CHRIST

People! I tell you, Tzeitel, if God lived on earth, people would break his windows!

- Joseph Stein's *Fiddler on the Roof*

EVERY ANCIENT CULTURE HAS legends about super-humans who settle the score by triumphing over evil. Just as Clark Kent rips away his business suit and reveals that he is Superman, so everyone hopes that there is someone, somewhere with a little something extra—someone who is able to rip off the clothing of ordinary life and oppose the forces of evil. Every child is waiting for a Messiah. Every tragedy calls for one.

Most people are aware that the concept of the Messiah is Jewish in origin. The word “Messiah” is an anglicized version of the Hebrew word *Masbiach* or *Moshiach* meaning “anointed one.” The title *Christ* is a Greek translation of the word *Masbiach* or “anointed.” In the Old Testament, a prophet or priest anointed the king of Judah in order to signify that the king had been anointed by God and belonged to the royal dynasty of David. Hence, the Old Testament king was God’s “Anointed” or “Messiah.”

God originally chose King Saul to be his anointed king, but Saul forfeited his kingship through disobedience. God then chose a young shepherd named David as the anointed king of Israel, because he was “a man after God’s own heart” (1 Sam 13:13-14; Acts

13:22). The Davidic kingdom came to an end in 586 B.C. when the Babylonians sacked Jerusalem and destroyed the Temple. Since that time, the Judeans (i.e. Jews) lived either in exile or under the foreign rulers of Palestine. The only time of political reprieve was the short era of national independence established by the Maccabean revolt in the second century before Christ lasting until the Roman intervention of 64 B.C. The Jewish festival of Hanukkah commemorates this successful Maccabean era of political independence.

Even those Jews living in the Holy Land considered themselves to be “in exile” because the Holy Land did not yet belong to them. They were simply a vassal state to the pagan powers of the day. The Jewish people eagerly awaited the coming of a new monarch in the royal lineage of King David. This new king would free Israel from bondage, bring them out of exile, and inaugurate the glorious Kingdom of God. These expectations were based on the Old Testament prophecies foretelling the coming of a Messianic king who would reestablish God’s kingdom and covenant on earth. The prophecies are appropriately called *Messianic prophecies*.

What is Messianic Prophecy?

Messianic prophecy is any prophecy that foretells the coming of the expected Messiah. There are literally hundreds of such prophecies in the Old Testament (this book’s APPENDIX contains a rather exhaustive list of Messianic prophecies). Some are clear. Some are obscure. The prophecies were written by different authors ranging from Moses to Malachi and are recorded over a period of about one thousand years. The discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls further substantiates that these prophecies were written down

long before the birth of Christ and were not altered afterward in order to “fit” the life of Jesus of Nazareth.

The Old Covenant “Proto-Gospel”

Jesus fulfills not merely the individual Old Testament references and prophecies concerning the coming Messiah, *He fulfills the Old Testament itself.*

Jesus said to them, “This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms” (Lk 24:44).

Jesus fulfills the entire story of humanity. The historical account from the time of creation to the last of the Jewish prophets is a story told in expectation of Him. When Adam and Eve sinned in the Garden of Eden, we read that God spoke the following words to Satan:

I will put enmity between you and the woman,
and between your seed and her seed.
he shall bruise your head,
and you shall bruise his heel (Gen 3:15).

An alternative translation from the Hebrew, as captured in the Latin Vulgate and an ancient tradition, foretells that “the woman” will crush the head of the serpent:

I will put enmities between thee and the woman,
and thy seed and her seed:
she shall crush thy head,
and thou shalt lie in wait for *her* heel (Gen 3:15).

Christian theologians refer to this passage as the *protoevangelium* or “First Gospel” because it foretells a day when “the woman” will bear an heir that will

“bruise the head” of Satan. Historically, there has been a debate over how to translate this verse and render it from the Hebrew original. The debate centers on whether God says “he” shall crush Satan’s head or whether “she” shall crush Satan’s head.

Now both readings are orthodox and true. The seed, who is Christ, crushes the head of Satan absolutely, and the mother of that seed, who is Mary, crushes the head of Satan by virtue of her role as the Mother of God and New Eve.

For Catholics, the “she” reading is the traditional reading of the Latin Vulgate and it is important because it highlights the importance of “the woman” (Mary) in human salvation. The translation “she shall crush” supports the Catholic argument that Mary’s role as Mother of God reveals her Mediatrix and her role as New Eve reveals her Coredemptrix.

The obvious solution to this problem would be simply to look at the original Hebrew. But that is where the problem begins. Most medieval Hebrew Masoretic manuscripts read “he shall crush.” There are, however, two Hebrew manuscripts that read “she shall crush.”¹¹ Yet there is good reason to doubt the majority Hebrew reading of “he shall crush.”

Our three best Jewish witnesses to Gen 3:15 interpret the passage as “she shall crush.” These are Philo Judaeus, Josephus the Roman historian, and Moses Maimonides, the great medieval Jewish Rabbi and philosopher. Philo argues that the Hebrew parallel poetry of Gen 3:15 demands the reading of “she shall crush.” Josephus, also writing in Greek, describes the passage for us as reading “she shall crush,” when he wrote “the woman should inflict wounds on his head.”¹² Then last of all, Maimonides also states that Gen 3:15 teaches that the woman shall crush the head of the serpent.¹³

So then, these three great Jewish scholars testify to the traditional Catholic reading of the Latin Vulgate. Why are the Hebrew manuscripts that we have today different from these ancient Jewish witnesses? The answer is that the Masoretic manuscript tradition has been corrupted—something claimed by the both the Eastern and Western Fathers throughout the centuries.

In *Ineffabilis Deus* decreed in A.D. 1854, Pope Pius IX cited the struggle of the serpent with the woman and her seed foretold in Genesis 3:15 as a prophecy of the purity of both the Blessed Mother and her divine Son Jesus Christ:

These ecclesiastical writers in quoting the words by which at the beginning of the world God announced His merciful remedies prepared for the regeneration of mankind—words by which He crushed the audacity of the deceitful serpent and wondrously raised up the hope of our race, saying, “I will put enmities between you and the woman, between your seed and her seed”—taught that by this divine prophecy the merciful Redeemer of mankind, Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, was clearly foretold: That His most Blessed Mother, the Virgin Mary, was prophetically indicated; and, at the same time, the very enmity of both against the evil one was significantly expressed.

Pope Pius XII reaffirmed the interpretive importance of the *protoevangelium* of Genesis in his apostolic constitution *Munificentissimus Deus* in A.D. 1950 stating:

We must remember especially that, since the second century, the Virgin Mary has been presented by the holy fathers as the New Eve, who, although subject to the New Adam, was

most closely associated with Him in that struggle against the infernal enemy which, as foretold in the *Protoevangelium* (Genesis 3:15), was to result in that most complete victory over sin and death.

Not only Popes Pius IX and Pius XII, but the Fathers of the Second Vatican Council also highlighted the prophetic place of this *protoevangelium* in the Catholic tradition. *Dei Verbum*, the Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation of the Second Vatican Council, cites this verse as the original scriptural promise of divine redemption: “After the fall, He buoyed them up with the hope of salvation by promising redemption.”¹⁴ This verse in Genesis also indicates that the child of “the woman” will suffer a “bruised heel” as he seeks to trample down the head of the primordial serpent. Satan shall be utterly defeated by the Savior who Himself will be wounded.¹⁵

Genesis 3:15 is the first Messianic prophecy of the Bible and it created an expectation that a woman would one day give birth to a hero who will save us from death, sin, pain, toil, and sorrow. The Old Testament is the story of God choosing the particular people of Israel who in turn set the stage for this great redeemer. The stories of death, miracles, exile, return, prophets, priests, kings, and sacrifice ultimately point forward to the birth of this triumphant savior, born of a woman.

The Old Testament is the divinely guided story of that expectation: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile (Rom 1:16). The expectation of a redeemer became concrete in the life of Abraham and the promise was passed down through his descendents—the children of Israel. God made a covenant with Abraham saying, “And by you and your *seed* shall all the families of

the earth bless themselves” (Gen 28:14). We see here that “the promise of the seed” mentioned in the *protoevangelium* of Genesis 3:15 concerning the “seed of the woman” now comes to rest on the person of Abraham. A thousand years after the time of Abraham, “the promise of the seed” focuses again on the person of King David when God makes a covenant with him:

When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your *seed* after you, who shall come forth from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever (2 Sam 7:12-13).

We see here that the expected “seed of the woman” will be a descendent of Abraham and also a descendent of David. This is why the New Testament begins with what has bored most readers of the New Testament for centuries: a genealogy. Yet, this genealogy is pivotal if we understand that the promised savior would be both a descendent of Abraham and David. The Gospel of Matthew begins with the words: “The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham” (Mt 1:1). The genealogy that follows this verse is an abbreviated list of ancestors consisting in three sets of fourteen generations, beginning with Abraham, passing through David, and ending with Jesus Christ. This threefold arrangement highlights the two covenantal ancestors pertaining the prophecy of the anointed seed in Genesis 3:15—Abraham and David. The final heir is the promised seed of Eve—the Lord Jesus Christ. The genealogy may seem boring to us, but to a Jew living at the time of Christ, this genealogy would have been one of the most exciting passages in the Matthew’s Gospel. In the words of this genealogy is the fulfillment of the prophecy given to Adam and Eve.

Specific Messianic Prophecies Fulfilled by Christ

Jesus of Nazareth fulfills at least *three hundred* specific prophecies concerning the coming Messiah. Statistically speaking, Jesus *must* be the Messiah foretold in the Hebrew Scriptures. The only reasonable explanation is that God predestined this marvelous story of redemption. Several volumes could be dedicated to a detailed examination of the hundreds of prophecies fulfilled by Jesus Christ. For our purposes, I have selected twelve notable Old Testament prophecies that were clearly fulfilled by Jesus of Nazareth:

1. The Messiah Would be Born in Bethlehem

But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times (Mic 5:2).

The New Testament records that Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king (Mt 2:1). This Old Testament passage is noteworthy because it indicates the eternal preexistence of the Messiah. We find a rare awareness of this truth in the medieval Jewish tradition: “You find that at the very beginning of the creation of the world, the king Messiah had already come into being, for he existed in God’s thought even before the world was created.”¹⁶

2. The Messiah Would Come from the Tribe of Judah

The scepter will not depart from Judah, nor the ruler’s staff from between his feet, until he

comes to whom it belongs and the obedience of the nations is his (Gen 49:10).

This passage stipulates that the Messiah will come from the tribe of Judah, one whose rule will be all-powerful. The New Testament (Lk 3:23-34; Mt 1:1-16) relates that the ancestors of Jesus go back to Judah, who was one of the twelve sons of Jacob. Jacob's twelve sons were the fathers of the Twelve Tribes of Israel.

3. A Prophet in the Desert Would Precede the Messiah

A voice of one crying in the desert, "Prepare the way for the Lord; make straight in the wilderness a highway for our God" (Isa 40:3).

Saint Matthew records how John the Baptist fulfilled this prophecy:

In those days John the Baptist came, preaching in the Desert of Judea, and saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near" (Mt 3:1-2).¹⁷

4. The Messiah Would Enter Jerusalem Riding on a Colt

Rejoice greatly, O Daughter of Zion! Shout, Daughter of Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you, righteous and having salvation, gentle and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey (Zech 9:9).

Saint Luke graphically describes the fulfillment of Zechariah's prophecy:

They brought it to Jesus, threw their cloaks on the colt and put Jesus on it. As he went along, people spread their cloaks on the road. When he came near the place where the road goes down the Mount of Olives, the whole crowd of disciples began joyfully to praise God in loud voices for all the miracles they had seen (Lk 19:35-37).

5. The Messiah Would be Betrayed by a Friend during Supper

Even my close friend, whom I trusted, he who shared my bread, has lifted up his heel against me (Ps 41:9).

Saint Mark records the fulfillment of the prophecy through the workings of Judas Iscariot:

And as they were eating at table, Jesus said, "Truly, I say to you, one of you will betray me, one who is eating with me."

They began to be sorrowful, and to say to him one after another, "Is it I?"

He said to them, "It is one of the Twelve, one who is dipping bread into the dish with me. For the Son of man goes as it is written of him, but woe to that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! It would have been better for that man if he had not been born" (Mk 14:18-21).

6. The Messiah Would be Betrayed for Thirty Pieces of Silver

I told them, “If you think it best, give me my pay; but if not, keep it.” So they paid me thirty pieces of silver (Zech 11:12).

Matthew’s Gospel associates the thirty pieces of silver with price of the Messiah’s betrayal:

Then one of the twelve, who was called Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests and said, “What will you give me if I deliver him to you?” And they paid him thirty pieces of silver. And from that moment he sought an opportunity to betray him (Mt 26:14-15).

7. The Messiah Would Remain Silent before His Accusers

He was smitten and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth (Isa 53:7).

The Gospels record the amazement of Pilate as Christ remained silent before his accusers:

When he was accused by the chief priests and the elders, he gave no answer. Then Pilate asked him, “Don’t you hear the testimony they are bringing against you?” But Jesus made no reply, not even to a single charge – to the great amazement of the governor (Mt 27:12-14).

8. The Messiah Would be Spit upon and Beaten

I offered my back to those who beat me, my cheeks to those who pulled out my beard. I did not hide my face from mocking and spitting (Isa 50:6).

Matthew gives an account of how Christ was cruelly abused in this way:

Then they spit in his face and struck him with their fists. Others slapped him and said, “Prophecy to us, Christ. Who hit you?” (Mt 26:67-68)

9. The Messiah’s Betrayal Money Would be Used to Purchase a Potter’s Field

Then the Lord said to me, “Cast it into the potter”—the lordly price at which I was paid off by them. So I took the thirty pieces of silver and threw them into the house of the Lord to the potter (Zech 11:13).

New Testament explains how the ransom price was likewise cast by Judas into the temple and later used to buy the potter’s field:

So Judas threw the money into the temple and left. Then he went away and hanged himself. The chief priests picked up the coins and said, “It is against the law to put this into the treasury, since it is blood money.” So they decided to use the money to buy the potter’s field as a burial place for foreigners (Mt 27:5-7).

10. The Messiah Would be Crucified and Pierced through His Hands and Feet

Dogs have surrounded me; a band of evil men has encircled me, *they have pierced my hands and my feet* (Ps 22:16).

and again:

And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of compassion and supplication, so that, when they look on him whom *they have pierced*, they shall mourn for him, as one mourns for an only child, and weep bitterly over him, as one weeps over a firstborn (Zech 12:10).

and again:

But he was *pierced for our transgressions*, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed (Isa 53:5).

Saint John confirms that the Messiah suffered death by being nailed to a cross, pierced through his hands and in his feet:

But he said to them, “Unless I see in his hands the print of the nails, and place my finger in the mark of the nails, and place my hand in his side, I will not believe” (Jn 20:25).

11. The Messiah Would Be Killed with Transgressors

Therefore, I will give him a portion among the great, and he will divide the spoils with the strong, because he poured out his life unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors.

For he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors (Isa 53:12).

The Sacred Scriptures recounts how Christ was “numbered with the transgressors” by being crucified between two robbers (Mt 27:38). Moreover, in Christ’s hour of death, He made “intercession for the transgressors” by praying, “Father forgive them, for they know not what they do” (Lk 23:34).

12. The Messiah Would Rise from the Dead on the Third Day

For thou dost not give me up to the grave,
or let thy holy one see the pit (Ps 16:10).

and again:

O LORD, thou hast brought up my soul from
the grave, restored me to life from among those
gone down to the pit (Ps 30:3).

and regarding the Messiah’s resurrection on the third day:

On the third day he will raise us up, that we may
live before him (Hos 6:2).

The four Gospels, the Acts of the Apostles, and Saint Paul recount that Jesus rose from the dead on the third day after His death. Jesus Himself foretold it:

From that time Jesus began to show his disciples
that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many
things from the elders and chief priests and
scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be
raised (Mt 16:21).

Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, and said to them, “Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead” (Lk 24:45-46).

The Apostles also testified to the historical fact that Jesus rose again on the third day:

God raised Him on the third day and made him manifest (Acts 10:40).

Christ was buried, that He was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures (1 Cor 15:4).

If Jesus of Nazareth fulfills these and hundreds of other Jewish prophecies, why didn't the Jewish people of the first century recognize Him as their Messiah? This question has puzzled readers of the Bible for two thousand years. The Apostle Paul addressed this perplexing state of affairs: “I ask, then, has God rejected his people?” (Rom 11:1). His answer is simple: “By no means! I myself am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, a member of the tribe of Benjamin...I want you to understand this mystery, brethren: a hardening has come upon part of Israel, until the full number of the Gentiles come in” (Rom 11:2, 25). Saint Paul implies that the partial Jewish rejection of Jesus allows for the inclusion of all Gentile (non-Jewish) nations.

As we shall see in the next chapter, many Israelites did and do recognize Jesus as the Messiah. The traditional Jewish objections to the Messianic status of Jesus focus on His apparent failure to bring about the Messianic Kingdom of God. The next chapter examines over twenty rabbinical conditions that allegedly disprove

the Messianic status of Jesus and explains how Catholic Christians answer each objection. This brings us to nature of the Kingdom of God as it relates to the Church.

NOTES

¹¹ Cornelius a Lapide adds that even in his day there were two Hebrew codices in the Vatican library that read “she” (Kennicott numbers 227 and 239), and another in the Bernard de Rossi library. Also in the same library was an Onkelosi Codex (translating from the Hebrew into Aramaic) which read “she.”

¹² Josephus, *Antiquities*, Book 1, Chap. 1.

¹³ Moses Maimonides writes, which is indeed amazing, ‘But what must be admired most of all, is that the serpent is joined with Eve, that is, its seed with her seed, its head with her heel; that she (Eve) should conquer it (the serpent) in the head, and that it should conquer her in the heel (*More Nebochim*, Part II, chap. 30).

¹⁴ *Dei Verbum* §3, *Vatican Council II: The Basic Sixteen Documents*, Austen Flannery, ed. (Northport, New York: Costello Publishing Company, 1996), 98.

¹⁵ Pope John Paul II expands the importance of the *protoevangelium* in his *Redemptoris Mater* by associating the title “woman” found in Gen 3:15 with Christ’s use of the word “woman” at the Wedding at Cana and at the foot of the Cross, as well as in John’s vision of “the woman” in Revelation Chapter Twelve.

¹⁶ *Pesikta Rabbati* 152b. *Pesikta Rabbati* is a collection of medieval Jewish sermons dating to about A.D. 850.

NOTES CONTINUED

The Jewish belief that the Messiah “existed in God’s thought even before the world was created” corresponds nicely to the words of Saint John: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God” (Jn 1:1-2).

¹⁷ Mark Drogin, Cofounder of the Catholic apostolate Remnant of Israel with Fr. Arthur Klyber, C.Ss.R., has noted how all four Gospels explicitly identify John the Baptist with Isa 40:3. He believes that this is an essential feature of the earliest apostolic message because it formally associates the life of Jesus with the Suffering Servant prophecies of Isaiah. John the Baptist literally and explicitly points to the Suffering Servant of Isaiah 53.

2. JEWISH KINGDOM, CATHOLIC CHURCH

The basic question is actually about the relationship between the Kingdom of God and Christ. It is on this that our understanding of the Church will depend.

- Pope Benedict XVI

AS WE HAVE SEEN, the concept of the Messiah derives from the Jewish hope that God will be faithful to his covenant with David, the archetype for the Messiah. The primary Jewish criticism against Jesus' status as the Messiah derives from His apparent failure to institute the Messianic Kingdom on earth. Before delving into this controversy, let us first examine the nature of the kingdom of Israel and the Jewish paradigm for Messianic kingship in the person of King David.

The promise of the Davidic kingdom to the “anointed” Messianic kings derives from the covenant that God made with David in 2 Samuel 7:9-16. This covenant involved three promises to David:

1. David's son shall build a house for God's name, i.e. a Temple (7:13).
2. God will establish the throne of his kingdom forever (7:13, 16).
3. God will be his father, and he shall be His son (7:14).

The Davidic Covenant involved an exchange between David and God. The genealogical House of David shall build a literal House for God. This turns out to be the Temple that David's son Solomon built for God. In exchange, God promises to establish the "house" or dynasty of David as an eternal monarchy. This promise is based on God's relationship to David as his Father: "I will be his father, and he shall be my son" (7:14). This divine covenant with David anticipates that the ultimate Davidic Messiah will truly be the eternally begotten Son of God.¹⁸ Jesus can call God "Father" because Jesus of Nazareth is not only fully human and fully Davidic, but also fully divine.

Mary as the Queen Mother of Jerusalem

When most non-Catholic Christians look at the Catholic Church, they often question the authoritative role of the Pope and what appears to them as "Mary worship." Many Christians misunderstand the significance of the Pope and the Blessed Virgin Mary precisely because these Christians are not familiar with the way in which the Davidic Covenant structured the Messianic kingdom. In other words, non-Catholics are not aware of the profoundly Jewish significance of the papacy and the Virgin Mary.

The royal and messianic Kingdom of David held its capital in Jerusalem, beginning with King David ca. 1004 B.C. and was eclipsed in 586 B.C. with the capture of King Zedekiah and the forced exile of those Jews who were still alive. Prior to the tragic Babylonian exile, the true King of Judah and heir of David sat enthroned in Jerusalem. Moreover, there were two other important political figures alongside the Davidic king in the messianic court of Jerusalem. Next to the king, the

second most important person in the Kingdom of Judah was the *Gebirah*. This Hebrew title translates literally “Mighty Woman” and refers to the mother of the Jewish king. Most translators render *Gebirah* as “Queen Mother.”¹⁹

This Jewish *Gebirah* possessed a powerful influence over the kingdom. This power and authority flowed from her status as the mother of the Davidic king, not from her own personal importance. Rightly understood, the Queen Mother held a political office and signified the legitimate genealogy of the king. King Solomon the Wise instituted the formal place of the Queen Mother when he ascended to the throne of his father King David. One of the first things King Solomon did after his enthronement was to place a throne at his right hand and enthrone his mother as the *Gebirah*:

So Solomon sat upon the throne of David his father; and his kingdom was firmly established ...So [his mother] Bathsheba went to King Solomon, to speak to him on behalf of Adonijah. And the king rose to meet her, and bowed down to her; then he sat on his throne, and had a seat brought for the king’s mother; and she sat on his right (1 Kings 2:12-19).

King Solomon rose to greet his mother and bowed down before her—not because he worshipped her as a goddess, but rather because he as King understood the honor due to Queen Mother. Her presence in the court signified that Solomon was the legitimate heir of King David because she literally served as the flesh and blood link between father and son. Given the importance of genealogical dynasties, the office and role of the Queen Mother existed in many other cultures, as well. A similar office of a *Gebirah* was also honored in the northern

kingdom of Israel. “We are going down to visit the princes and the family of the queen mother” (2 Kings 10:13).

Jeremiah highlighted the place of preeminence held by the Queen Mother by the end of the Davidic Kingdom when he wrote: “Say to the king and to the queen mother: Come down from your throne” (Jer 13:18). The end of the Davidic reign from Jerusalem is signaled by the dethronement of the Davidic king *and his mother*. The Queen Mother was so important that the end of the kingdom meant that she must also be deposed.

We see here that it is quite natural for Catholic Christians to honor the Blessed Virgin Mary. Her son is the true Davidic King and she is rightly enthroned at his right hand as the *Gebirah* and Queen Mother of the Kingdom of God. The position of Solomon’s mother at his right hand is the reason why Mary is nearly always depicted in religious artwork as seated in heaven at the right hand of Christ. The exalted place of the Virgin Mary in Catholicism did not arise from medieval superstition but from a Jewish understanding of kingship. Just as Bathsheba served as the flesh and blood link between her son Solomon and King David, so also the Blessed Virgin Mary is the flesh and blood link uniting Jesus to the Messianic privileges of the Davidic Kingdom. Christians honor and revere the Blessed Virgin Mary because her lineage confirms that Jesus is the rightful heir of God’s promises. Mary is the final link in a thousand-year-old chain of Messianic prophecy.

The Pope as the King’s Royal Steward

The next highest office under the Messianic King of Jerusalem was that of the Royal Steward or Prime

Minister. As in nearly every monarchical society, there is a royal steward, prime minister, vizier, or chamberlain who oversees the day-to-day business of the kingdom. We learn that King Solomon instituted the office of Royal Steward in 1 Kings 4:6 when he appointed Ahishar as the one in charge of the royal household. Isaiah 22:15-25 provides a vivid description of the office of Royal Steward when he records the transfer of office from one Royal Steward to another—from the old steward named Shebna to the new steward named Eliakim. The Royal Steward of Jerusalem is described as:

- Being over the household of Judah (22:15)
- Holding an “office” and “station” (22:19)
- Clothed in a robe and cincture (22:21)
- Holding authority (22:21)
- A *father* to the inhabitants of Jerusalem and the house of Judah (22:21)
- Bearing the key of the house of David with which “he shall open, and none shall shut; and he shall shut, and none shall open” (22:22).

The Royal Steward was not the Davidic King and yet by appointment he bore the authority and government of the Davidic King. His role as the Royal Steward is further highlighted by the fact that “he shall be a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem and the house of Judah” and that he bears “the key of the House of David.”

We should therefore not be surprised to find that Christ as the Davidic Messiah appointed one of His

Apostles as His Royal Steward using the image of the key as a sign of authority:

And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it. I will give you the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven (Mt 16:18-19).

The Catholic Church holds that Peter and all of his successors are the Royal Stewards of the Christ's Kingdom. The presence of a "prime minister" in the Church is simply presupposed by what we know of God's plan in the Old Testament. Each successor is called "Pope" from the Latin word *papa* meaning "daddy" because the Royal Steward in the Davidic monarchy was "a *father* to the inhabitants of Jerusalem and the house of Judah" (Isa 22:21). This is also why the Pope is addressed as "Holy Father."

Just as the Catholic Church looks to the Blessed Virgin Mary as the Queen Mother of the Church, so also the Catholic Church sees the Pope as the Royal Steward of Christ's Kingdom. The authority of the Pope (and even the idea that the Pope wears special vesture) derives from the Messianic office of the Royal Steward. Peter himself seemed to pick up on what Christ had intended in Luke 12:41-43:

Peter said, "Lord, are you telling this parable for us or for all?"

And the Lord said, "Who then is the faithful and wise *steward*, whom his master will set over his household, to give them their portion of food at the proper time? Blessed is that servant

whom his master when he comes will find so doing” (Lk 12:41-43).

The papacy is this line of stewards that “his master will set over his household.” Most Popes have administered their duties well. Sadly, some have not. In either case, the Catholic Church recognizes these Royal Stewards—these Popes—as representatives of Christ.

Were Jewish Expectations Left Unfulfilled?

As we asked in the previous chapter, if Christ established a Kingdom that remains to this day, and if He fulfilled so many Old Testament prophecies, why haven’t the Jewish people come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah? Before answering this question, we must note that it is not correct or fair to speak of “the Jews” as corporately rejecting Christ. The early Church was almost entirely Jewish. All the Apostles were Jewish and Saint Paul himself was a Jewish Rabbi. The Blessed Virgin Mary was Jewish. Moreover, Saint Peter’s first sermon on the day of Pentecost led to the mass conversion of some three thousand Jews in a single day.

Jesus of Nazareth did not fulfill all the Messianic prophecies at His first coming. The world is not yet a place of perfect peace, and the lion has yet to lie down with the lamb. Jews look around and say, “If Jesus was the Messiah, why isn’t the world a better place?” This discrepancy is accounted for by the Apostles in their teaching that there are two separate comings of the Messiah—the first advent included His birth, life, passion, death, and resurrection; and the second advent will include His judgment of the living and the dead when He finally and perfectly establishes His Kingdom forever. The liturgical season of Advent commemorates

both the first and second comings of Christ as mysteriously linked to one another.

The idea of “two comings” is not foreign to Jewish thought. After studying the twelfth chapter of Zechariah, some rabbis concluded that there would be two different Messiahs. The first they call *Messiah ben Joseph* (“Messiah son of Joseph”).²⁰ According to the rabbis, this Messiah would be a suffering, humiliated Messiah who would prepare the way for the second Messiah:

It is well with him who explains that the cause is the slaying of Messiah the son of Joseph, since that well agrees with the Scriptural verse: “And they shall look upon me because they have thrust him through, and they shall mourn for him as one mourns for his only son.”²¹

The rabbis refer to the second Messiah as *Messiah ben David* (“Messiah son of David”). The Messiah ben David is an apocalyptic Messiah who will reunite the children of Israel around him, march into Jerusalem, vanquish God’s enemies, and reestablish the Kingdom of God on earth. When a Jewish person refers to the *Mashiach* or Messiah in an unqualified manner, he typically refers to Messiah ben David, the one who is a descendant of King David, who is expected to reassemble the lost children of Israel, and deliver Israel from all its enemies.

For the Christian on the other hand, there are not two Messiahs, but *one* Messiah who comes to earth *twice*. The Catholic Church grants that these rabbis are correct about there being two messianic stages in history. However, the Church would simply correct their misunderstanding by explaining that these two stages do not describe two different men, but one unique man—the Lord Jesus Christ. The first advent of

Jesus was an advent of humility and suffering, but His bodily resurrection and ascension were a pledge that He would return with glory to bring about the final victory for God's people at the end of time.

The double advent of Christ is for a specific reason. Christ did not immediately establish the Kingdom of God in its fullness on earth because the Gospel of the Kingdom must first extend to all those who are not Jewish, that is to say, to all the Gentiles. God desires to save not only Israel but also all people from every nation (1 Tim 2:4). Hence, the end of the world is delayed until the "fullness of the Gentiles come in" (Rom 11:25).

Other rabbis have specified several other prophecies that the Messiah must also fulfill. The conditions of these rabbis are listed in the left hand column. The Catholic interpretation of each prophecy is found in the right hand column.

Rabbinic Conditions	Catholic Interpretation
1. The magisterial Sanhedrin will be re-established (Isa 1:26). ²²	1. Christ established the magisterium headed by the Pope (Mt 18:18).
2. Once he is King, leaders of other nations will look to him for guidance (Isa 2:4).	2. The nations do look to Christ for guidance as His Vicar the Pope binds and looses in His name (Mt 16:19).
3. The whole world will worship the One God of Israel (Isa 2:17).	3. The Church is <i>catholic</i> meaning that it is universal (Rev 5:9).

4. He will be descended from King David (Isa 11:1) via King Solomon (1 Chr 22:8-10).
5. The Messiah will be a man of this world, an observant Jew with “fear of God” (Isa 11:2).
6. Evil and tyranny will not be able to stand before his leadership (Isa 11:4).
7. Knowledge of God will fill the world (Isa 11:9).
8. He will include and attract people from all cultures and nations (Isa 11:10).
9. Israelites will return to their homeland (Isa 11:12).
4. The New Testament genealogy testifies that Christ is a descendent of David and Solomon (Mt 1).
5. The Messiah was a man, born of Mary and remained an observant Jew until the day of His crucifixion (Lk 2:52).
6. This shall be fulfilled when Christ returns to judge the nations (Acts 10:42).
7. Knowledge of the Hebrew Scriptures has spread through Christian missionary efforts.
8. Jesus the Messiah has gathered together people from every tribe, tongue, and nation in the Catholic Church (Rev 5:9).
9. In our own day it seems that Jews are being allowed to return to the Holy Land; however, this

may be interpreted as referring to the saints and the Promised Land of Heaven.

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| <p>10. Death will be swallowed up forever (Isa 25:8).</p> | <p>10. When Christ rose from the dead he showed us that death no longer has dominion over us (1 Cor 15:54-57).</p> |
| <p>11. There will be no more hunger or illness, and death will cease (Isa 25:8).</p> | <p>11. Hunger, illness, and death have not yet ceased but they will when Jesus returns at the end of time.</p> |
| <p>12. All of the dead will rise again (Isa 26:19).</p> | <p>12. The Catholic Church believes in the resurrection of the dead at the end of time (1 Cor 15).</p> |
| <p>13. The Jewish people will experience eternal joy and gladness (Isa 51:11).</p> | <p>13. The Catholic Church teaches that the Jewish people will experience an end times corporate conversion to Christ (<i>Catechism of the Catholic Church</i>, nos. 673-674).</p> |
| <p>14. The Messiah will be a messenger of peace (Isa 52:7).</p> | <p>14. Christ said, "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you" (Jn 14:27).</p> |

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| 15. Nations will recognize the wrongs they did Israel (Isa 52:13-53:5). | 15. The Judgment of Christ of the nations will bring about the justice of God |
| 16. The Messiah will establish God's House as a house of prayer for all nations (Isa 56:3-7). | 16. Christ quoted this verse when He cleansed the Temple in Jerusalem (cf. Mk 11:17). |
| 17. The ruined cities of Israel will be restored (Ezek 16:55). | 17. This will occur at the end of time. |
| 18. Weapons of war will be destroyed (Ezek 39:9). | 18. This we await at the end of time as described by the Apostle John (Rev 20-21). |
| 19. The Temple will be rebuilt, resuming many of the suspended ceremonial commandments of Moses (Ezek 40). ²³ | 19. The Catholic Church does not desire to rebuild a physical Temple because the Church herself is a holy Temple in which the sacrifice of the Mass is constantly offered to the glory of God (1 Pet 2:5). |
| 20. He will then perfect the entire world to serve God together | 20. The world will be perfected at the second coming of |

(Zeph 3:9).

Christ (Rev 21:4).

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| <p>21. Jews will know the Torah without study (Jer 31:33).</p> | <p>21. This refers to the presence of the Holy Spirit in the Christian believer (1 Jn 3:24).</p> |
| <p>22. The Messiah will give you all the desires of your heart (Ps 37:4).</p> | <p>22. This occurs when we pray in the name of Christ (Jn 16:24).</p> |
| <p>23. The Messiah will take the barren land and make it abundant and fruitful (Isa 51:3, Amos 9:13-15, Ezek 36:29-30, Is 11:6-9).</p> | <p>23. This is described in the Book of Revelation as occurring at the end of time (Rev 22).</p> |

Messianic Judaism

An interesting phenomenon began during the second half of the twentieth century. Many Jews began to identify the historical Jesus of Nazareth as the Messiah of Israel; however, they desired to maintain their Jewish identity and customs. Therefore, rather than calling themselves *Christians*, they identified themselves as *Messianic Jews*. Before 1967, there were only a few thousand Messianic Jews in America. By the mid 1970s, Time Magazine reported that there were some 50,000 Messianic Jews in America.²⁴ The number grew to 160,000 by 1993. It is believed that there are currently about 350,000 Jewish converts to Christianity worldwide. Indeed, there are now about 5,000 Jewish converts to Christianity in the state of Israel alone.

Nonetheless, the Catholic Church has shown reticence in accepting Messianic Judaism since it is a

Protestant movement that rejects certain magisterial teachings of the Church (such as the structure of the New Covenant and the nature and role of the Church). However, the 1970s experienced the birth of two “Hebrew Catholic” apostolates. Jewish convert Mark Drogin and Father Arthur Klyber, a Redemptorist priest who had been raised as an Orthodox Jew, founded *Remnant of Israel* in 1976. Father Elias Friedman, a Carmelite friar who was also a convert from Judaism, founded the *Association of Hebrew Catholics* in 1979. The *Association of Hebrew Catholics* received a papal blessing from John Paul II in 1998. Each of these two Jewish Catholic apostolates seeks to preserve Jewish identity and promote a general awareness of the heritage of Judaism within the Catholic Church.

What about the Accusation of Supersessionism?

As we have seen, the role of the Church in relation to Judaism has always been a difficult question for Christians. To complicate matters, the relationship of contemporary Judaism with Christianity is one of the most difficult and misunderstood topics of our time. Many often ask what is the proper way for articulating this relationship. In particular, what about the term “supersessionism.” Did the Catholic Church supercede the Jewish people at Pentecost in AD 33?

The original printing of this book spoke of supersessionism as an “erroneous teaching” but feedback over the past several years has led to a revision in this regard. Supersessionism often means different things to different people. Some, if not most people, believe that supersessionism refers to a belief God has rejected the Jewish people permanently and that the Jews no longer have any part in the plans of God. This version of supersessionism would fall into conflict with

the teaching of the Church Fathers and Saint Thomas Aquinas that holds that carnal Israel just prior to the Second Coming of Christ will convert to the Catholic Faith in anticipation to the final conflict between the Church and Antichrist.

Supersessionism can also mean that the covenantal seal of baptism has replaced that of circumcision. In other words, the people of God are marked and gathered through the sacraments of the New Law and not through the rites of the Old Law. Hence, the people of God, or the New Israel, is the Catholic Church. Saint James refers to the universal Church of Christ as “the twelve tribes, which are scattered abroad” (Jas 1:1).

In a similar way, Saint Paul refers to the Church of Christ as the reconstituted “Israel of God” in his Epistle to the Galatians: “For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision: but a new creature. And whosoever shall follow this rule, peace on them and mercy: and upon the Israel of God” (Gal 6:16). Paul’s blessing falls on the Israel of God who are new creations in Christ—the baptized faithful.

Regarding Saint Paul’s words, Saint John Chrysostom writes:

For they who pursue these things shall enjoy peace and amity, and may properly be called by the name of “Israel.” While they who hold contrary sentiments, although they be descended from Israel and bear his appellation, have yet fallen away from all these things, both the relationship and the name itself. But it is in their power to be true Israelites, who keep this rule, who desist from the old ways, and follow after grace.²⁵

So then, for Saint Paul and the early Church, the Catholic Church was the New Israel. The salvific covenant of God and the sacramental demarcation for the people of God was no longer carnal Israel.

What then is the right way of describing this transition? Supersessionism, like so many other “isms,” has a negative connotation. In puzzling over this term and speaking to theologians and priests about it, I have considered other options. One is to use the language of the Latin Vulgate’s version of Romans 11:24:

For if thou were cut out of the wild olive tree, which is natural to thee; and, contrary to nature, wert grafted {*insertus*} into the good olive tree: how much more shall they that are the natural branches be grafted {*inserentur*} into their own olive tree?

Saint Paul explains that Jews were “broken off” and then replaced by Gentiles that were “grafted in.” The language of engrafting or insertion is certainly biblical and traditional. One then might think of the transition from the Old Testament to the New Testament as *insertionism*. I, however, find this language somewhat artificial.

In my opinion, the best term for describing the transition from the Old Testament to the New Testament is *substitution*. This conviction is based on the language employed by Saint Thomas Aquinas. Saint Thomas uses the Latin *substituendus* to describe the relationship between the Jews that rejected Christ and the Gentiles that received Christ:

Jacob’s assertion that he was Esau, Isaac’s first-born, was spoken in a mystical sense, because, to wit, the latter’s birthright was due to him by right: and he made use of this mode of speech

being moved by the spirit of prophecy, in order to signify a mystery, namely, that the younger people, that is the Gentiles, should be substituted {*substituendus erat*} for the first-born, that is the Jews.²⁶

The language of substitution includes replacement, but not permanent replacement. Saint Paul teaches that the unbelieving Jews were broken off and replaced by Gentiles who were grafted in. This does not represent a permanent arrangement. In fact, Saint Paul uses this illustration to warn Gentile Christians not too become proud: “But thou standest by faith. Be not highminded, but fear. For if God hath not spared the natural branches, fear lest perhaps also he spare not thee” (Rom 11:19–21). Jews, who through infidelity were replaced by Gentiles, could very well be reinserted by faith in Christ. Unlike terms such as “replacement theology” and even “supersessionism,” Saint Thomas Aquinas’ term “substitution” preserves the nuance that the races of Gentiles have permanently replaced the race of Israel. Rather, that faith in Christ is primary and that both Gentiles and Jews can be substituted for one another on the criterion of faithfulness to Christ our Lord.

Regardless of the terms used, Saint Paul the Apostle explained that although not every single Jewish person has believed that Jesus is the Messiah, the Jewish people as a whole “are beloved for the sake of their forefathers. For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable” (Rom 11:28-29).

Saint Thomas Aquinas also teaches that Israel will be incorporated into the Church in his *Commentary on Epistle to the Romans*:

And this is in accord with what the Apostle says below about the salvation of the Jews, namely, that after the fullness of the nations have

entered, “all Israel will be saved,” not individually as at present, but universally.

This means that the people of Israel continue to be a perpetual eschatological sign of God’s love.²⁷ They are a reminder that the “gifts and calling of God is irrevocable” (Rom 11:29). The persevering presence of Israel on earth is perhaps that best proof that God exists and that His covenant extends “to a thousand generations” (Deut 7:9).

We began this chapter with an examination of the covenant that God made with King David. David’s kingship began with his promise to build God a house – “a house of prayer for all nations.” David’s great-grandmother Ruth was a Gentile. Moreover, David modeled his kingship on the pattern of the pre-Abrahamic priesthood of Melchizedek (Ps 110:4). These facts show that David was already aware that God’s plan of salvation included both Jews and Gentiles. In the next chapter, we will examine the Jewish significance of baptism and Christ’s teaching on how both Jews and Gentiles can enter into the Kingdom of Heaven through “water and the Holy Spirit” (Jn 3:5).

NOTES

¹⁸ For an excellent treatment of the Davidic covenant, see Scott W. Hahn’s work *Kinship by Covenant* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009).

¹⁹ Regarding the *Gebirah*, see Niels-Erik Andreasen’s “The Role of the Queen Mother in Israelite Society,” *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 45 (1983): 179–194; and Zafrira

NOTES CONTINUED

Ben-Barak's "The Status and Right of the Gebirah," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 110 (1991): 23–34.

²⁰ The tradition of the Messiah ben Joseph derives from Rabbi Dosa (*Babylonian Talmud*, Sukkah 52a). For an interesting discussion about this earliest Jewish reference to the Messiah ben Joseph and later rabbinical tradition, see David C. Mitchell's "Rabbi Dosa and the Rabbis Differ: Messiah ben Joseph in the Babylonian Talmud," *Review of Rabbinic Judaism* 8 (2005): 77-90.

²¹ *Babylonian Talmud*, Sukkah 52a.

²² The Sanhedrin was established in Num 11:16 where God commanded Moses: "Assemble for me seventy men of the elders of Israel." Jesus established a new Sanhedrin of seventy elders in Lk 10:1-17.

²³ This prophecy was also fulfilled historically when the Temple was rebuilt after the time of Ezekiel—the same Temple that Jesus visited as the Messiah.

²⁴ "Yeshua is the Messiah," *Time Magazine*, July 4, 1977.

²⁵ Saint John Chrysostom, *Homilies on Galatians*, 6:16.

²⁶ Saint Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* II-II, q. 110, a. 3, ad 3.

²⁷ Perhaps one of the best treatments of Saint Paul's phrase "all Israel" in Romans 9-11 is Michael Barber's Epilogue to his book *Singing in the Reign: The Psalms and the Liturgy of God's Kingdom*. Steubenville, Ohio: Emmaus Road Publishing, 2001.

3. JEWISH TEVILAH, CATHOLIC BAPTISM

In Christ you were circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of flesh in the circumcision of Christ. You were buried with Him in baptism, in which you were also raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead.

- Apostle Paul
Col 2:11-12

DID YOU KNOW THAT Judaism has its own form of baptism? They call it a *tevilah*, which is Hebrew for “immersion” and the word refers to the various ceremonial washings or ablutions prescribed by the Law of Moses. A *tevilah* is usually performed within a *mikvah* or a dedicated pool prepared for purification rites. The Hebrew word *mikvah* recalls the “gathered waters” of creation:

God called the dry land earth, and the waters that were gathered together (*mikvah*) he called seas (Gen 1:10).

The *mikvah* is an essential part of Orthodox Judaism—so necessary that the rabbis teach that a *mikvah* must be made ready before a synagogue is built. In the Law of Moses, God commanded the construction of a large brazen pool to be placed outside the Temple for similar ritual washings. Washing in this *mikvah* was necessary

for the High Priest before he celebrated the service on the Day of Atonement and before the priests participated in the Temple liturgies. A Jewish tradition dating to about A.D. 200 claims that the Ezra taught that every male Israelite should immerse himself before praying or studying.²⁸

It is important to note that the *tevilah* washing is not merely a bath to remove dirt or odor. The *tevilah* signifies an inward spiritual cleansing and renewal. We see this theme in the biblical story of Noah and the Flood. God could have killed the evil inhabitants of the world with disease, fire, or any other means. Instead, he chose the element of water. The biblical flood was not simply a punishment; the flood was also a rite of purification. The story of Noah explains how God transformed the entire earth into a *mikvah* pool. The world reemerges from the flood renewed and purified, just as a person rises renewed and purified from a *mikvah*. The connection of the *tevilah* with the story of Noah and the Flood is one that the Apostles used to describe ceremonial cleanliness accomplished through the Christian sacrament of baptism.

Centuries after Noah, God revealed the laws concerning ritual purity to Moses. Any contact with disease, blood, or death caused an Israelite to be unclean. Ritual impurity is understood not as being “dirty” but as probation for having come into contact with the forces of life (semen, blood, childbirth) and death (disease, corpses). Ritual impurity was a visible symbol of judgment as it pertained to life and death occasions. The prescribed *tevilah* restored the impure person to purity.

Orthodox Jews perform ceremonial washings for various occasions:

1. The hands are washed when waking from sleep.
2. The hands are washed prior to eating any bread with a meal.
3. The fingertips are washed after eating a meal.
4. The hands are washed after touching something impure (e.g. one's genitals, leather shoes, an insect, an impure animal, or a grave).
5. A *kohen* ("priest") has his hands washed by the Levites before pronouncing priestly blessings on Jewish holy days in the synagogue.
6. A woman undergoes a *tevilah* or immersion in a *mikvah* after she concludes her menstrual period.
7. The ritual of immersing in a *mikvah* is required in Orthodox Judaism on the eve of *Yom Kippur* ("Day of Atonement").
8. During the Passover Seder the participants wash their hands twice as part of the meal. (Once without a blessing in order to eat some vegetables in "purity," and once with a blessing prior to the eating of bread).
9. Prior to burial, the body receives a ritual washing and immersion into a *mikvah*. This is called *tabara* or "purification."

In every case, the washing indicates a spiritual renewal and an intention to live (and die) with purity.

John the Baptist and the Tevilah

The miraculous birth of John the Baptist is recorded in the first chapter of Luke's Gospel where we learn that

he is the cousin of Jesus and nephew of the Blessed Virgin Mary. We also learn that John's father was a priest of the Old Covenant, which would also mean that John the Baptist was a priest since the priesthood was passed from father to son. We learn that John the Baptist was filled with the Holy Spirit while still in his mother's womb, and that he was chosen to prepare the way for the Messiah in the manner of Elijah the prophet.

We may find it perplexing that Christ began his public ministry with a ceremonial washing administered by John the Baptist. Even though Christ was without sin, he still received this *tevilah* "to fulfill all righteousness" (Mt 3:15). Saint Ignatius of Antioch (writing before A.D. 108) said that Christ was baptized not so that the water should purify Him, but rather "that He might purify the water," so that others might be saved through baptism.²⁹ It is also at this moment that God the Father announces his love for His Son, and the Holy Spirit descends upon Jesus to confirm that He is the anointed Messiah. This is the first depiction of the Christian doctrine of the Holy Trinity, and this is why Catholics are baptized "in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." The image of the Holy Spirit descending on Jesus echoes the account in Genesis where the Spirit of God was "moved over the face of the waters" (Gen 1:2). At the baptism of Jesus, the Holy Spirit once again hovered over the waters as God inaugurated a New Creation.

According to the Catholic Church, the baptism of John the Baptist was *not* the sacrament of baptism, but a Jewish *tevilah* preparing the Jewish people for the advent of the Messiah. John the Baptist did not administer the Christian sacrament of baptism because he did not baptize in the Trinitarian name. Moreover, the Apostles re-baptized those who had received "only

the baptism of John” (cf. Acts 19:1-4). Saint Augustine wrote, “Those who were baptized with John’s baptism needed to be baptized with the baptism of our Lord.”³⁰

The Christian sacrament of baptism is an incorporation of a person into the death and resurrection of Christ for the remission of sins (Rom 6:4-6). Christ instituted the sacrament of baptism when John baptized Him in the Jordan River. Nevertheless, the full significance of being baptized into Christ’s *death and resurrection* was not revealed until He actually died and rose again.³¹ The twelve Apostles first administered the sacrament of baptism on the day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit descended upon them and enabled them to proclaim the Gospel to the Jewish pilgrims of Jerusalem (Acts 2:1-41).

Baptism, the Tevilah of Conversion

The Jewish rabbis also use the *tevilah* washing as a sign of conversion. Thus, Orthodox Jews require that a convert to Judaism:

- be instructed about how to live as a Jew
- undergo *kabbalat ol mitzvot* (“receiving the charge to obey the commandments”)
- receive *mila* (“circumcision”)
- undergo a *tevilah* (“immersion” in a *mikvah*)

A court of three witnesses must also supervise the conversion. Women converts cannot be circumcised for obvious reasons and so they receive only the *tevilah* immersion in a *mikvah* pool.

In light of the established Jewish customs for conversion, the debates in the early Church over whether Christian converts were obligated to receive both baptism (*tevilah*) and circumcision can be better

understood. The Apostles decided at the Council of Jerusalem (Acts 15) that converts to Christianity need *not* be circumcised. The Apostle Paul, who was present at this council, later explained why Christians do not require the rite of circumcision:

In Christ, *you were circumcised with a circumcision* made without hands, by putting off the body of flesh in the circumcision of Christ. *You were buried with him in baptism*, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the working of God, who raised him from the dead (Col 2:11).

Baptism as the sacramental *tevilah* of the Church is sufficient to incorporate a believer into the Kingdom of God (Jn 3:3-5). The Christian has already received “spiritual circumcision” by virtue of his being incorporated into the circumcised body of Christ. The circumcision of Christ applies to the baptized Christian because the believer is united to Christ’s person and enjoys all the blessings of Christ’s sonship. In a similar manner, Christians are counted as having fulfilled the Mosaic Law because Christ perfectly fulfilled the Law of Moses.

Therefore, Catholics baptize infants for the same reason that Jews circumcise infants. The children of believers are accounted as “holy” (1 Cor 7:14) and are entitled to the covenantal blessings received by being incorporated into the communal life of the Church. For this reason, Saint Peter said that the promise of baptism “is to you and to your children” (Acts 2:39). A Jewish man or woman at the time of the Apostles would not have been able to comprehend the modern Evangelical claim that babies and young children cannot and do not belong to the ritual life of the community.

Is Baptism a Ceremonial Washing?

The Hebrew word *tevilah* was translated by the Greek word *baptisma*. They both mean *wash* or *immerse*. The idea of plunging into water is associated with Christ plunging into death and rising again in newness of life (Rom 6:4-6). Baptism unites us to the mystery of Christ's death and resurrection and it is therefore associated with regeneration, recreation, the forgiveness of sins, life everlasting, and the final resurrection of the body. Christ spoke of his death as a "baptism" when he asked John and James, "Are you able to be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized?" (Mk 10:38)

As we can see then, Christ brings all the ceremonial washings of the Old Testament to fulfillment in His own body and ministry. The Old Covenant water rites find their fulfillment in His institution of New Covenant baptism:

All the Old Covenant rites find their fulfillment in Christ Jesus. He begins His public life after having himself baptized by St. John the Baptist in the Jordan. After His resurrection Christ gives this mission to His Apostles: "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you" (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 1223).

The Spirit over the waters at creation, the Great Flood and deliverance of Noah, the passing through the Red Sea with Moses, the crossing of the Jordan River, the customary ceremonial washings—all these events point toward Christ and find their fulfillment in the sacrament of baptism.

Saint Paul teaches that we enter into Christ's death and resurrection by "putting on Christ" (Gal 3:27) and being regenerated through the Holy Spirit (Titus 3:5). Baptism formally identifies us with Christ's death (for the forgiveness of sins) and his resurrection (for our resurrection and eternal life).

Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life (Rom 6:4-6).

Baptism also plants in us the "incorruptible seed" of God's Word (1 Pet 1:23) so that we might grow to full maturity in Christ.

Catholic Baptism as the Tevilah for Original Sin

Ultimately, the root of all impurity is the stain of original sin. The ceremonial washings of the Old Covenant were simply that—ceremonial. They did not remove the stain of original sin. They pointed forward to Christ's remedy for sin, but such washings could not wash away the spiritual impurity inherited from our first parents. Baptism washes away not only original sin but also all previous personal sins, both mortal and venial. This is not because baptism is magical, but because baptism is intimately bound to the once and for all sacrifice of Christ and His victory over sin and death. For this reason, there is only "one baptism" (Eph. 4:5), and baptism can never be repeated.

Incorporated into Christ by Baptism, the person baptized is configured to Christ. Baptism seals

the Christian with the indelible spiritual mark (*character*) of his belonging to Christ. No sin can erase this mark, even if sin prevents Baptism from bearing the fruits of salvation. Given once for all, Baptism cannot be repeated (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 1272).

The unrepeatable nature of Catholic baptism speaks to its effectiveness. Baptism is not something “we do for God.” Rather it is something “God does for us.” To seek re-baptism is to claim, “God didn’t baptize me. It is something that I must do for Him.” This attitude undermines the Gospel message that salvation is initiated and accomplished by God on our behalf. Baptism is something we receive, not something that we perform. Unlike the sacraments of the Eucharist or Penance, we receive baptism passively. Baptism does not merely wash our bodies or symbolize a new life. It begins a new life by washing away the stain of original sin. Saint Peter describes baptism in this way:

Baptism, which corresponds to this [the Flood of Noah], now saves you, not as a removal of dirt from the body but as an appeal to God for a clear conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ (1 Pet 3:21).

Baptism is “an appeal to God for a clear conscience.” The Old Covenant ceremonial immersions had to be repeated because they never washed away the ultimate source of our spiritual impurity—original sin. Catholic baptism is not repeated because it reaches down to the root of the matter.

The unique claim of Catholicism is that our sacramental *tevilah* is “once for all.” The unrepeatable property of baptism speaks to the power of the Messiah to overcome all sinful impurities of the human

condition. Infants and adults alike receive baptism because all possess the stain of human sin. Hence, the tradition of baptism is not unique to the New Covenant, but finds its origins in the redemptive history of mankind through the Jewish people. As we shall see, baptism is not the only Catholic sacrament with origins in the Old Testament.

NOTES

²⁸ *Babylonian Talmud*, Bava Kamma 82a. The Bava Kamma is part of the Jewish *Mishnah*, a compilation of oral tradition and opinion compiled around A.D. 200. Statements in the *Mishnah* are brief and record the legal rulings of rabbis and anonymous precedents. The rabbis featured in the *Mishnah* are called *Tannaim*.

²⁹ Saint Ignatius of Antioch, *Epistle to the Ephesians*, 18.

³⁰ Saint Augustine, *Homilies on John*, Tract 5. For a thorough explanation of this issue, see also Thomas Aquinas' *Summa theologiae* III, q. 38, a. 6.

³¹ According to Saint Augustine (*Append. Serm.* 185) and Saint Thomas Aquinas (*STh* III, q. 66, a. 2), Christ instituted the sacrament of baptism when He was baptized in the Jordan River. According to Aquinas, Christ instituted sacramental baptism at the Jordan, but only made baptism obligatory after He died and rose again (*STh* III, q. 66, a. 2, ad. 2).

4. JEWISH PASSOVER, CATHOLIC MASS

And when your children shall say to you: What is the meaning of this service?

You shall say to them: It is the victim of the passage of the Lord, when he passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt, striking the Egyptians, and saving our houses. And the people bowing themselves, adored.

- Exodus 12:26–27

IF THE SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM is the entryway into the Kingdom of God, then the Catholic Mass is the earthly manifestation of that Kingdom. It could also be said that the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass is the fulfillment of the entire Old Covenant. It fulfills the Passover, the exodus, the temple, the sacrifices, the priesthood, and the Messianic expectation for the Kingdom of God, because the Eucharist is in fact the Messiah present with us as *Emmanuel*—God with us (Mt 1:23).

For our purposes, we are primarily concerned with how the Holy Mass fulfills the ancient Jewish rite of the Passover sacrifice and meal. The Israelites had lived in the land of Egypt for centuries. At first, they received prime real estate in the region of Goshen by order of a special grant from the Pharaoh. The Israelites originally migrated to Egypt because of an unbearable famine in the Holy Land. The Israelites enjoyed their life in Egypt where the Egyptians held them in favor until an unfriendly Pharaoh assumed the throne.

This new Pharaoh commanded the murder of every infant male Israelite. Eventually, Israelite daughters would have no other option but to marry Egyptian men. These marriages would lead to the eventual re-inheritance of Israelite land back to the Egyptians. As time passed, the Pharaoh subjugated the Israelite people to slavery. However, they remembered their God and called out to Him in prayer. In response to their prayers, God sent Moses. "Let my people go!" Yet Pharaoh was unwilling. Ten plagues followed and reached their climax in the death of Egypt's firstborn sons. The children of Israel were protected from this plague by celebrating the Passover meal (Ex 12:21-27).

The Passover Meal

The word *passover*, then, signifies that the curse of death "passed over" the Israelite houses and struck down the first born of the Egyptians (Ex 11:5). In order to be spared from this curse, Israelite families sacrificed a perfect lamb and spread its blood upon the doorposts of their homes. Next, they were to prepare and eat the lamb in haste. By doing so, the final plague of death would not come upon their home. On the night of the fourteenth day of the Jewish month of *Nisan*, the plague took the life of Pharaoh's firstborn son and all the firstborn sons of Egypt. At last, the Pharaoh relented and allowed the Israelites to make their exodus from Egypt under the leadership of Moses. As a result, God commanded the Israelites to commemorate this Passover meal every year as a memorial of their deliverance from Egyptian slavery.

The Hebrew word for Passover is *Pesach*. The corresponding Greek and Latin word for Passover is related to the Hebrew word and is pronounced: *Pascha*. This is where the Catholic Church derives the word

Paschal, as in the Paschal Vigil, the Paschal candle, and Paschal mystery.

The Paschal mystery of Christ's cross and resurrection stands at the center of the Good News that the apostles, and the Church following them, are to proclaim to the world. God's saving plan was accomplished once for all by the redemptive death of His Son Jesus Christ (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 571).

Next to their status as children of Abraham, the most important identity borne by Israelites is their corporate memory that God redeemed them out of Egypt. The Passover meal was a ritual sacrament recalling that deliverance from slavery.

During the time of Christ, Jews were likely puzzled by something said by John the Baptist. Before he baptized Jesus, he cried out:

Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! (Jn 1:29)

John's announcement revealed that God was about to bring about the final exodus of His people. Egypt was a type of the slavery common to all mankind—the slavery of sin and death. Theologically speaking, a type is any person, place, or thing in the Old Testament that prefigures a future reality in the New Testament. The white and innocent Passover lamb sacrificed for Israel's redemption is a type of Christ crucified. Christ came to be the Messianic Passover Lamb that would redeem mankind not from the bondage of Egypt, but from the bondage of sin.

By His sacrifice, Christ brought us out of the slavery of sin into a new freedom of

righteousness. But thanks be to God, that you who were once slaves of sin have become obedient from the heart to the standard of teaching to which you were committed, and, having been set free from sin, have become slaves of righteousness (Rom 6:17-18).

But Why the Mass?

Non-Catholic Christians rightfully believe Christ is the Passover Lamb and that He shed His blood to redeem us from the bondage of sin and death. However, one element of the Passover is missing from their theology—that the Passover is a meal. The climax of the Passover involved a supper in which the recipients consumed the flesh of the sacrificial lamb. God did not leave it at slaying the Passover lamb and shedding its blood. God also asked the Israelites to eat and consume the lamb.

Why was it necessary to eat the lamb? Eating the sacrifice signified that the recipient actually partook of the redemption that God had provided through the blood of the Passover lamb. The redemption was not merely external, but it became internal through eating the sacrifice. The recipient “became one” with the sacrifice. There was, as we would say, a *communion* with the sacrifice that God provided.

The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, then, is the fulfillment of the Passover meal. We actually do come forward and partake of the true Passover Lamb who is Jesus Christ. He was slain two thousand years ago in Jerusalem, yet that same sacrifice is re-presented to us in the Holy Mass. We are allowed to partake in His sacrifice. In other words, we have *communion* with Christ and His redemptive act on the cross.

We know that Christ intended this because He died in the context of the Jewish Passover. Moreover, on the evening before Christ died on the cross, He instituted a sacramental meal that involved eating His flesh and drinking His blood. When we share in the Paschal Mystery of the Holy Mass, we share not only in Christ's sufferings, but we unite our own sufferings to His sufferings. We become united to His sacrifice in a way that is both real and intimate.

So we can say with Saint Paul in the New Testament, "Christ our Paschal Lamb, has been sacrificed. Let us, therefore, celebrate the feast" (1 Cor 5:7-8).

What is Manna?

After God led Israel out of Egypt through the Red Sea, the people became hungry and grumbled against God, Moses, and Aaron. Their complaint amounted to this: "Sure, we were slaves in Egypt. We toiled under Pharaoh and made bricks, but at least we had something to eat. At least our children didn't go hungry. We now have our freedom but we don't have any food! Did you lead us out of Egypt so that we could starve to death in the wilderness?"

This is often the kind of gratitude that we return God after He has delivered us from great peril. We forget the miracles. We don't recall all the graceful provisions that God has given us in the past, and we say, "God, why are you leaving us here to die?"

However, the Lord, because He is good and loving toward His people, had mercy on Israel. Even though the children of Israel grumbled against Him, God provided a wonderful miracle: "I will rain down bread from heaven for you" (Ex 16:4). When the children of Israel saw the miraculous bread they said to

one another, “What is it?” because they did not know what it was (Ex 16:15). The word *manna* is Hebrew for “What is it?” and this question became the name associated with this new kind of daily bread.

Manna was small, white, flat, round, and tasted like “wafers made with honey” or “bread tempered with oil” (Ex 16:31; Num 11:7-8). It resembled the host Catholics receive in the Holy Eucharist. The Israelites gathered the manna every day for forty years. If they attempted to save extra manna for the next day it would rot and become useless. The only exception was on Fridays when God provided two day’s worth of manna so that the Israelites would not need to gather food on the Sabbath.

The miracle of the manna is the longest performed miracle in the Old Testament. God provided manna for almost forty years as Israel wandered in the wilderness. When the Israelites arrived at Gilgal on the day of the Passover, they began to eat the grain grown in the region and the miracle of the manna ceased. Notably, the miracle of manna ceased in conjunction with the Passover feast. Here we observe the connection between the Passover and the miracle of the manna. This connection between the “bread from heaven” and the Passover lamb will reach its culmination in the sacrifice of Christ’s Holy Eucharist, because the Eucharist is both the true Bread from Heaven and Christ’s sacrifice on the cross, as we shall examine in detail below.

Details surrounding the Ark of the Covenant also confirm the relationship between the manna and Christ’s Eucharist as the true Bread from Heaven. The Israelites preserved a vessel filled with manna and stored it within the Ark of the Covenant, along with Aaron’s staff that had budded, and the Ten Commandments (Heb 9:4). The Ark of the Covenant was in turn kept in

the innermost sanctuary of the Tabernacle, the Holy of Holies. This inner sanctum was where the High Priest would encounter the presence of God on the Day of Atonement in a cloud of incense.

The Ark of the Covenant contained these three items as three types of Jesus Christ. As described above, a type is a person, place, or thing that foreshadows a future reality. A type is a theological sign that foreshadows a greater reality called an *antitype*. For example, the flood of Noah is a *type* of baptism, and thus baptism is the *antitype* or fulfillment of Noah's flood. The best way to summarize it is to say that the Old Testament contains types and the New Testament contains antitypes, because the Old Testament finds fulfillment in the New Testament.

Therefore, the three objects in the Ark of the Covenant are three *types* of Jesus Christ. First, the vessel containing the manna pointed toward Christ as the supersubstantial Bread that came down from Heaven. Second, the priestly rod of Aaron pointed toward Christ as the High Priest. Third, the stone tablets of the Ten Commandments pointed toward Christ as the Word of God, not in stone, but made flesh.

The fact that the Ark of the Covenant *contained* these symbols of Christ is one reason why the Blessed Virgin Mary is often referred to as the *Ark of the Covenant*, because she *contained* Christ inside her womb. The Ark of the Covenant was thus a *type* of the Blessed Mother. The fact that the Blessed Virgin gave birth to Christ at Bethlehem is even more revealing since *Bethlehem* means "House of Bread" in Hebrew.

The Bread of Life, the Eucharist

Christ explains the significance of the Old Testament manna in the sixth chapter of John's Gospel. The

chapter begins with two of the seven miracles in John's Gospel: the multiplication of the seven barley loaves and two fish (Jn 6:1-14), and Jesus walking on water (Jn 6:18-21). Each miracle reveals that Jesus Christ possesses miraculous power over the realm of nature. He can transform the properties of bread (by multiplying it) and he can transform the properties of water (by walking upon it). In each case, the Apostle John prepares his readers for Christ's greatest miracle—the ability to transform natural elements into His Body and Blood in the miracle of the Holy Eucharist as “the true bread from heaven.”

The people were so amazed by the multiplication of the bread that they wanted to proclaim Jesus as the Messianic King right then and there, but He withdrew to a mountain (Jn 6:15). When they found Him they asked for a sign similar to Moses' miracle of the manna. Jesus responded by telling them that it was the Father, not Moses, who gave them the bread from heaven. So they said to Jesus, “Lord, give us this bread always” (Jn 6:30-34). While standing in a synagogue, Christ responded to their request with these telling words:

And Jesus said to them: I am the bread of life. He that cometh to me shall not hunger: and he that believeth in me shall never thirst. But I said unto you that you also have seen me, and you believe not. All that the Father giveth to me shall come to me: and him that cometh to me, I will not cast out...

The Jews therefore murmured at him, because he had said: I am the living bread which came down from heaven. And they said: Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How then saith he: I came

down from heaven? Jesus therefore answered and said to them: Murmur not among yourselves. No man can come to me, except the Father, who hath sent me, draw him. And I will raise him up in the last day. It is written in the prophets: And they shall all be taught of God. Every one that hath heard of the Father and hath learned cometh forth me. Not that any man hath seen the Father: but he who is of God, he hath seen the Father. Amen, amen, I say unto you: He that believeth in me hath everlasting life. I am the bread of life. Your fathers did eat manna in the desert: and are dead. This is the bread which cometh down from heaven: that if any man eat of it, he may not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, for the life of the world.

The Jews therefore strove among themselves, saying: How can this man give us his flesh to eat?

Then Jesus said to them: Amen, amen, I say unto you: except you eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood, you shall not have life in you. He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath everlasting life: and I will raise him up in the last day. For my flesh is meat indeed: and my blood is drink indeed. He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood abideth in me: and I in him. As the living Father hath sent me and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, the same also shall live by me. This is the bread that came down from heaven. Not as your fathers did eat manna and are dead. He that eateth this

bread shall live for ever. These things he said, teaching in the synagogue, in Capharnaum. (John 6:35-60)

Jesus mentions His *flesh* seven times in this passage in order to stress that His Body and Blood are “true food and true drink.” It proved to be an unpopular teaching. Many of his disciples complained. It was a hard saying indeed.

“Who can listen to it?”

When Israel first learned of the miracle of the manna, they asked a question: “What is it?” When Christ’s disciples first heard of the miracle of the Eucharist, they also asked a question: “Who can listen to it?” These first disciples were not strangers to Christ. These were Christ’s friends and companions. They had seen the miracles. They had heard his preaching. Yet, the Scriptures record: “After this, many of his disciples went back and walked no more with Him” (Jn 6:67).

I’m not aware of any other passage where the Scriptures describe a certain doctrine as a hard teaching. How can this Rabbi become our Manna? How can Jesus of Nazareth become our daily bread? How can we eat him? Yet, Jesus repeats “you must eat my flesh” six times. Christ did not provide any other way to understand this saying. It was quite literal. At that point, many disciples no longer followed Jesus.

Jesus said to the twelve, “Do you also wish to go away?”

Simon Peter answered him, “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.

We have believed and have come to know that you are the Holy One of God.”

Jesus answered them, “Did I not choose you, the twelve, and one of you is a devil?” He spoke of Judas the son of Simon Iscariot, for he being one of the twelve was to betray Him (Jn 6:67-71).

John draws our attention to two details. First, even though the Apostles did not understand, Peter stood up and stated, “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. We have believed and have come to know that you are the Holy One of God.” Peter believed the difficult teaching even though he did not understand. Peter speaks for the Apostles by testifying to their steadfast commitment to Christ’s teachings. Despite the subsequent failures of Peter and the Popes after him, the papacy has successfully protected this misunderstood doctrine for two thousand years.

The second interesting aspect of this passage is that this episode is the first time that we learn about Judas’ betrayal of Christ. Jesus says, “One of you is the devil,” not “One of you *will become* a devil.” Judas is already diabolical when Christ speaks these words. The present tense suggests that at this stage in Christ’s ministry, Judas had already turned away from Christ in his heart. Christ reveals Judas as His betrayer amidst the confusion over how one must “eat His flesh.” Perhaps Judas’ inability to believe in the “edibility” of Christ is the point at which Judas lost faith in Him.

It is also interesting that Judas left early at the Last Supper (the first Mass) in order to betray Christ. Scripture connects Judas’ betrayal to Christ’s teaching on the Eucharist (Jn 6), and it also connects Judas to the Last Supper when he leaves early in order to betray Christ to His enemies. In both accounts, Christ is

teaching His disciples that they must eat His Body and drink His Blood. Therefore, it seems that the apostasy of Judas is intimately connected to Christ's teaching on the Eucharist.

Unlike Judas, Catholic Christians rejoice in the mystery of the Manna. The Bread of Life given for the life of the world is present on our altars and in our tabernacles as a willing prisoner of His own love for us. It is a great mystery. Let us not grumble like the Israelites of old. God has given us the perfect provision as we wander through the wilderness of this life: the true Flesh and Blood of His very own Son. We should expect the world to ask, "Manna? Manna?—What is it? What is it?"

The answer: "It is Our Lord Jesus Christ."

And if they should then say, "This is a hard saying. Who can listen to it?"

We should answer with Peter: "To whom else shall we go? We have believed and have come to know that He is the Holy One of God."

5. JEWISH KOHENIM, CATHOLIC PRIESTS

And they shall bring all your brethren out of all nations for a gift to the Lord...And I will take of them to be priests, and Levites, saith the Lord.

- Isaiah 66:20-21

SACRIFICE REQUIRES A PRIEST. Since the Eucharist is a sacrifice, as we observed in the previous chapter, we would rightly expect the New Covenant to have priests as well. The Hebrew word for “priest” is *kohen*, meaning one who offers sacrifice. If you have ever had a Jewish friend with the last name of Kohen, Kohan, Cohn, Kahn, Kohn, Coen, or Cahn, it is likely that your Jewish friend possesses a priestly ancestry. *Kohenim* (plural of *kohen*) were the priests of the Old Covenant. These priests exercised their sacred ministry through a divinely established hierarchy. In our democratic and egalitarian society, we often resist notions of hierarchy. However, hierarchy is built into the very nature of creation:

The hierarchy of creatures is expressed by the order of the “six days” from the less perfect to the more perfect (*Catechism of the Catholic Church* no. 342).

The natural order of creation is hierarchical because nature is oriented toward efficiency, and efficiency is accomplished through a chain of command. This is why mankind possesses a natural tendency toward

hierarchical structures. Whenever victory, survival, or success becomes necessary, mankind invariably conforms to a hierarchical structure. Football teams, the military, and the Catholic Church organize themselves into clear hierarchies, not because hierarchy is contrary to nature, but because hierarchy appropriately conforms to nature.

Any military unit would undoubtedly be defeated in war if it were to function under democratic principles. If a football team were to vote as to which play to run, there would be chaos leading to defeat. For this reason, hierarchy also proves to be efficient in the most important of human tasks: the salvation of souls.

Christians may wish to ignore the natural principle of hierarchy, but both the nation of Israel and the Church of Jesus Christ are monarchical and hierarchical. Neither Israel nor the Church existed as democratic republics. Christ was not elected—the Father enthroned Him as King of Kings. Beginning with creation, we see that Adam was placed as both lord and priest over creation. By virtue of the incarnation, Christ was made “a little lower than the angels” (Ps 8:5) to become the perfect mediator between God and creation. Although Christ is a Divine Person, He nevertheless assumed a human nature and united this human nature to his divinity (without blending or confusing the two).³² The divine hierarchy of redemption flows from the incarnation of Christ since all of creation is submitted to Him.

The Firstborn Priesthood before the Law of Moses

Before God gave the Law to Moses at Mount Sinai, the father of the family exercised the office of priest. The father handed on his priesthood to his firstborn son by way of a blessing. Saint Thomas Aquinas regards this

“primogeniture priesthood” of the firstborn sons as an institution established in natural law.³³ Thomas wrote that natural law guided men to understand this “fatherly” notion of priesthood. The father of the family received a natural charge to teach his family and provide atonement for the sins of his wife and children. The firstborn son naturally became the primary heir and religious head of the extended family. He took his father’s place as the mediator and judge for his family’s religious and legal customs.

We see several examples of this paternal priesthood in the book of Genesis. Noah offered blood sacrifices (Gen 8:20) on behalf of his family. Likewise, Abraham and Jacob offered blood sacrifices (Gen 15:9; 22:1-13; 31:54). Isaac offered his own body in sacrifice (Gen 22). The story about Jacob outwitting his brother for their father’s dying blessing is a story of how Jacob received the covenantal blessings and paternal “ordination” from his father Isaac (cf. Gen 27). The most striking example of paternal priesthood is found in the narrative about Job:

Job would send and sanctify them [his family], and he would rise early in the morning and offer burnt offerings according to the number of them all; for Job said, “It may be that my sons have sinned, and cursed God in their hearts.” Thus Job did continually (Job 1:5).

Job’s fatherhood is intimately bound to his priesthood. The father bore the spiritual authority of his family. The Catholic custom of calling priests “Father,” then, derives from this ancient and natural association between priestly mediation and natural fatherhood.

The Levitical Priesthood in the Law of Moses

When God brought Israel out of Egypt, he denoted the people as “my firstborn son” (Ex 4:22, 36:12) among the nations. Just as the firstborn son mediated the inheritance of his father to his siblings, so Israel mediated the inheritance of God to the nations. This is why God says of them: “You shall be a kingdom of priests” (Ex 19:5-6).

Shortly after the people of Israel received this priestly status, they abandoned their divine vocation by worshipping the golden calf. Moses shattered the tablets inscribed with the Ten Commandments, and the Levites punished the idolaters in an act of zeal for God. In return, God rewarded the steadfast devotion of the tribe of Levi by displacing the priesthood of the firstborn sons in favor of that of the Levites. Moses formally oversaw this depressing change of the guard. The Israelites forfeited their status as priests, and the Levites became the only recognized priests for the people of God. Hence, the fatherly priesthood of the firstborn sons of Israel was transferred to the Levites alone (Num 3:5-51; 8:15-19). This begins the Levitical priesthood that characterizes the rest of the Old Testament until the death of Christ.

The clerical hierarchy of the Levites was threefold. At the top was the high priest, the first of which was Aaron. Below the high priest were the descendents of Aaron—the priests. Third, were all the Levites who were not descended from Aaron. The Levites in general served as assistants to the priests.

The first *Kohen Gadol* (“High Priest”) was Aaron, the brother of Moses; however, he is rarely referred to as the high priest. Scriptures simply described him as *Ha-Kohen* (“the priest” Num 3:6). The high priest is also called the:

- great priest (Lev 21:10)
- head priest (2 Kings 25:18)
- anointed priest (Lev 4:3)
- high priest consistently in the New Testament³⁴

God instructed Moses to consecrate Aaron and his sons as priests with Aaron serving as their leader:

Then bring near to you Aaron your brother, and his sons with him, from among the people of Israel, to serve me as priests – Aaron and Aaron’s sons, Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar. And you shall make holy garments for Aaron your brother, for glory and for beauty (Ex 28:1-2).

The consecration of the high priest consisted in his being anointed with oil (Lev 8:12). Psalm 133 describes the anointing of Aaron as fragrant oil running down from his hair, down his beard, and onto his vestments, all the way to the hem at his ankles. This aromatic holy oil consisted of myrrh, cinnamon, calamus, cassia, and olive oil (Ex 30:23-25).³⁵

The office of high priest was passed down from Aaron to his firstborn son and so on—so that it remained within the family of Aaron (Lev 6:22). If the high priest did not have a son, then the office passed to the next oldest brother.³⁶

The high priest was the only priest allowed into the Holy of Holies, and this only once a year on the *Yom Kippur* (“Day of Atonement”). It was the most glorious and tremendous function of the high priest. It was also his most dangerous duty. In fact, the other priests would

tie a rope around his ankle so that if he should die in the presence of God, he could be tugged out of the Holy of Holies without another going into the sacred place to fetch his body. These priests knew that only the high priest could look upon the Ark of the Covenant while he made atonement for the sins of all Israel.

After the Babylonian captivity in the sixth century B.C. the office of the high priesthood became a pawn in the political maneuverings of civil authorities. The high priest typically received his “appointment” from a Gentile magistrate—a far cry from what God had intended.

Old Testament priests were consecrated in the same way as Aaron’s sons (Ex 40:12-14; Levi 8:1-36). Men were not called to the priesthood, they were born into the priesthood. Priests were simply “the seed of Aaron the priest” (Lev 21:21). It did not matter whether a descendent of Aaron were pious or not—he would be a priest by birthright. The priesthood was strictly hereditary.

An Aaronite male entered duty as a priest at the age twenty and was “decommissioned” at the age of fifty (2 Chr 31:17) On entering into office, a priest took a *tevilah* bath of purification (Ex 29:4; 40:12), was anointed with oil (Ex 29:21; Lev 8:30), and put on the sacred vestments. The obvious parallel between Old Covenant ordination and the Catholic rite of baptism should be obvious. Both include a washing, an anointing, and clothing in white vesture. If the Aaronite male possessed any bodily defects, he was barred from the priesthood. The following ten conditions were physical impediments to the priesthood (Lev 21:18-20):

- Blindness or cataracts
- Lameness

- Mutilated face
- Disproportionate limbs
- Defective feet or hands
- Hunched back or being a dwarf
- Leprosy
- Crushed or missing testicles

The law also required that an Aaronite priest marry a Jewish virgin—he could not marry a divorced woman or a Gentile (Lev 21:7). The Aaronite priests did not serve the Temple full-time, but only at appointed times during the year. Aaron had twenty-four grandchildren and the Aaronite priesthood fell into twenty-four corresponding divisions (1 Chr 24:1-19). The twenty-four priestly divisions ministered at the Temple on a weekly cycle. This means that each division would minister at the Temple for at least two weeks every year. All twenty-four divisions would be present for major holidays. We see an example of this system at work in Luke's account of the conception and birth of John the Baptist. Zechariah the priest serves in the Temple according to his priestly division:

In the days of Herod, king of Judea, there was a priest named Zechariah, *of the division of Abijah*. Now while he was *serving as priest before God when his division was on duty*, according to the custom of the priesthood, it fell to him by lot to enter the temple of the Lord and burn incense (Luke 1:5, 8-9).

While on duty, the Aaronite priests were not allowed to have sexual intercourse with their wives, nor were they allowed to drink alcohol. Moreover, any ceremonial

impurity rendered any Levite, Priest, or High Priest unable to function at the Temple. God required absolute purity from his priests because they held up the standard of holiness for all of God's people. The biblical list of their sacred duties reveal that priests were engaged in both religious and practical matters:

1. Offer the daily sacrifices and incense (Ex 29:38, Ex 30:7)
2. Examine lepers as to whether they are clean or unclean (Lev 13-14; Deut 24:8; cf. Mt 8:4)
3. Preserve the fire on the altar for burnt sacrifices (Lev 6:9)
4. Teach the Law of Moses to the people (Lev 10:11; Deut 33:10)
5. Replace the Bread of the Presence on the golden table (Lev 24:9)
6. Renew the oil in the golden menorah (Lev 24:1)
7. Appraise all gifts vowed to the tabernacle (Lev 27)
8. Prepare the cursed water for wives suspected of adultery (Num 5:12-31)
9. Offer sacrifice for those who broke the law of the Nazirites (Num 6:1-21; see CHAPTER NINE regarding Jewish Nazirites)
10. Blow the trumpets on holy days (Num 10:1)
11. Arbitrate lawsuits (Deut 17:8; 19:17; 21:5)
12. Preserve the Book of the Law (Deut 17:18)

The High Priest oversaw the ministries of the Aaronite priests and functioned like the Bishop of all Israel. The

Aaronite priests were also assisted by the Levites, who functioned like Deacons.

The Levites, Priests, and High Priest received their income from the tithes and the first fruits. They also had rights to the remaining meat from the sacrifices, as well as the hides of the animals (Lev 27; Num 8:14). They were the best-educated class in Israel and were held in honor by the people. The prophets often rebuked them for abandoning their call to holiness (cf. Jer 5:31; Ezek 22:26; Hos 6:9; Micah 3:11; Mal 1:7).

The Levites and priests ceased functioning when the Romans destroyed the Temple in Jerusalem in A.D. 70, an event predicted by Jesus Christ in the twenty-fourth chapter of Matthew:

You see all these, do you not? Truly, I say to you, there will not be left here one stone upon another, that will not be thrown down...Truly, I say to you, this generation will not pass away till all these things take place (Mt 24:2; 34).

It is worth noting that “rabbis” are not priests in the Old Testament sense of the word. They are simply scholars of the Law. In contemporary Judaism, rabbis function in a pastoral role, but they are not priestly.

Christ the High Priest

On the night before He was betrayed, Christ instituted a new rite in the context of the Passover—the sacrament of His Body and Blood. By doing so, He commissioned or ordained the Apostles who sat at table with Him saying: *Do this in memory of me*. The following morning He was tried before Pilate, scourged, and crucified. He transformed the wood of the cross into an altar and

there He offered the perfect sacrifice of obedience, the oblation of His own flesh and blood.

According to the book of Hebrews, Christ performed this sacrifice as the High Priest of the New Covenant. He did not make atonement for Israel alone, but for the whole world—Jews and Gentiles. The offering was not the blood of bulls and goats, but the blood of His sacred humanity that He gained from the womb of the Blessed Virgin Mary. At the moment of His death, the veil in the Temple was torn in half from top to bottom. This event signifies that the High Priesthood of Christ surpasses and fulfills the High Priesthood of the Old Covenant. Christ ever lives to make intercession for those that belong to Him through faith. At every Holy Mass, Christ is the true celebrant who re-presents the memorial of His death and passion.

The Order of Melchizedek

Despite the similarities between the threefold hierarchy of the Old Covenant and the threefold hierarchy of the Catholic priesthood, the Church finds its model of priesthood in the priesthood of Melchizedek. The person of Melchizedek is a mysterious figure of the Old Testament who was both a priest and a king. He is remembered for his alliance with Abraham against the four kings who had captured Abraham's nephew Lot. After the victorious battle, "Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine. He was priest of God Most High" (Gen 14:18). Melchizedek then blessed Abraham. Abraham responded by giving Melchizedek a tenth of his spoils, thus initiating the tradition of the tithe (Gen 14:18-20).

The book of Hebrews teaches that Christ was not a priest according to the order of Aaron, but "a priest in the order of Melchizedek," quoting Psalm

110:4. This indicates that Christ is not only a priest, but also a king. According to the author of Hebrews, Melchizedek is superior to Abraham because Abraham received a blessing from Melchizedek—not the other way around. “It is beyond dispute that the inferior is blessed by the superior” (Heb 7:7). If Melchizedek is in fact Shem, the firstborn son of Noah, as many rabbis and Church Fathers taught,³⁷ then we can understand the priesthood of Christ as a reversion to the original priesthood of the firstborn. Christ’s priesthood is superior to that of the Levites because Christ’s priesthood is based on His status as the “firstborn son of God” (Heb 1:6).

The author of Hebrews makes his case that Christ is in the “order of Melchizedek,” because Christ is both a king and a priest. Moreover, Melchizedek offered a sacrifice of “bread and wine,” not an animal sacrifice. In this way, Melchizedek foreshadows the priesthood of Christ. After the time of David, the messianic monarchy was irrevocably assigned to the tribe of Judah. Previously, the Old Covenant priesthood was given to the tribe of Levi. Within this arrangement, there was a perfect separation of Church and State. The priests were from one tribe (Levi); the kings were from another tribe (Judah). Unlike ancient pagan kings, the king of Jerusalem could not pretend to be a pontiff who served as both king and priest. The Jewish king was not and could never be the Jewish high priest. However, there are hints in the Old Covenant that David was “priestly” in a certain sense. David truly loved God. David brought the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem. David wore an ephod, the garment of a priest. David decreed the construction of God’s Temple. David even ate the Bread of Presence reserved in the Temple for the priests alone. David typified the kind of priest that God originally desired—priests that acted as loving sons

in the presence of the divine Father. After all, God said of David, “I will be his father, and he shall be my son” (2 Sam 7:14). David, then, seems to have been a kind of “priest-king” based on his covenantal status as an adopted son of God, but this tension was not fully resolved until the Jesus revealed Himself as the true Son of God—a priest in the order of Melchizedek.

Jesus the Messiah is not only the Davidic king, He is also the High Priest of the New Covenant. Christ is not a Levite and He is not a descendent of Aaron, and so He cannot be a priest according to the Levitical laws of Moses. Instead, the New Covenant sees in Christ the fulfillment of Melchizedek as both king and priest. Jesus is the descendent of king David and so He is the rightful messianic king of all Israel. The priesthood of Christ is a royal priesthood based on his status as the “firstborn Son” of the Father (Heb 1:6) not on any pretence of being Aaronite.

We have seen all along that the Levitical priesthood was an inferior substitute to the priesthood of the firstborn that God desired for Israel. After all, the original familial model of priesthood reflected the divine life of God who is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Priesthood is founded on the Divine Fatherhood and Sonship. We come to learn this through the incarnation of the Son of God and His perfect sacrificial offering to God the Father.

The love of Christ for the Father and His obedience unto death, even death on a cross (Phil 2:8), reveals that Christ is truly the High Priest of a royal priesthood. Christ as a priestly king recalls Melchizedek, and so Christ ordained His Apostles to be priests like Melchizedek. This is why He took bread and wine and commanded them to “Do this in memory of me” (Lk 22:19). Christ transforms the primitive bread and wine

offering of Melchizedek into the sacrifice of the Holy Eucharist.

Remember that Melchizedek was not a child of Abraham and therefore not technically an Israelite. Nevertheless, Melchizedek enables Abraham to bless God and receive the divine covenant. The rabbinical tradition identifies Melchizedek with Shem and linked him to Shem's identity as the father of the Hebrew people.³⁸ We do not know who Melchizedek was for certain, but the tradition of identifying him as Shem would link Noah to Abraham. Noah is the father of Shem and Shem blesses Abraham, hence providing perfect continuity from Noah to Abraham.

The ministerial priesthood of Christ does however resemble the Aaronite priesthood in a number of ways. Both priesthoods are hierarchical. Both Old Covenant priests and New Covenant priests were charged with instructing the people in the Sacred Scriptures. Both offer sacrifice, but the Catholic priest offers the unbloody sacrifice of Calvary, not the blood of bulls and goats. The one sacrifice of Christ is effective and applies the grace of the universal redemption to believers. This sacrifice is offered through the transubstantiation of bread and wine into Christ's body and blood.

The Catholic Priesthood of the New Covenant

The New Covenant Catholic hierarchy, like the Old Covenant hierarchy, is arranged in a threefold manner: Deacon, Priest, and Bishop—just like the Old Covenant hierarchy of Levite, Priest, and High Priest. The deacons assist the priests as they offer the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. The bishop is also a priest and serves as the chief priest or pastor of the local community. In the Old Covenant, there was only one Jewish high priest who

oversaw one geographic location. In the New Covenant, there are thousands of bishops who oversee thousands of geographic regions. This transition from one high priest to a plurality of bishops entailed the ordination of non-Jewish priests since every nation on earth would require local priests. The prophet Isaiah foresaw a day when God would transform the Levitical structure and choose Gentiles to serve as His Levites and Priests:

And I will also take some of them [i.e. Gentiles] as priests and as Levites, says the Lord (Isa 66:21).

The Catholic priesthood is also the fulfillment of the prophecy that God's name would be great among the nations and that Gentiles would offer a priestly "pure offering" to the Lord (Mal 1:11).

Martin Luther objected to a ministerial priesthood in the New Covenant by claiming that Christ alone is the High Priest, and that the Church has no need for ministerial priests on earth. Luther also cited Saint Peter, who wrote that all baptized Christians belong to "the holy priesthood" (1 Pet 2:5). In fact, Saint Thomas Aquinas anticipated this objection by stating:

Only Christ is the true priest, the others being only his ministers.³⁹

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* echoes this statement:

The redemptive sacrifice of Christ is unique, accomplished once for all; yet it is made present in the Eucharistic sacrifice of the Church. The same is true of the one priesthood of Christ; it is made present through the ministerial priesthood without diminishing the uniqueness of Christ's

priesthood: “Only Christ is the true priest, the others being only his ministers” (no. 1545).

In other words, Christ is the only true priest, because He is the only firstborn Son of God (Heb 1:6). Christians participate in Christ’s priesthood in two ways: the baptismal priesthood and the ministerial priesthood. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* explains that the baptismal priesthood is conferred “through the sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation” (no. 1546). Through baptism, we are born again and share in Christ’s priestly Sonship. God becomes our Father and we become His priestly children.

On the other hand, the ministerial priesthood is conferred by the sacrament of Holy Orders. This ministerial or hierarchical priesthood is at the service of the common priesthood. It is directed at the “unfolding of the baptismal grace of all Christians” (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 1547). Regarding the ministerial priesthood, Saint Paul uses priestly language when he describes himself as:

a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles in the *priestly service* of the Gospel of God, so that the offering of the Gentiles may be acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit (Rom 15:16).

Consequently, the ministerial priesthood does not compete with the true priesthood of Christ, but it participates in the priesthood of Christ in a deeper manner.

Priestly Celibacy

The ministerial priesthood of the Catholic Church differs from the Old Covenant priesthood in the

manner by which a man enters into ministerial service. The Old Covenant priests received their priesthood through natural generation, but New Covenant priests do so by a supernatural vocation. Old Covenant priests married in order to produce more priests, since only their sons could become priests. Thus, an Old Covenant priest “produced vocations” to the priesthood by rearing boys who would be priests by birthright. New Covenant priests, on the other hand, are typically characterized by celibacy (as in the Latin Rite of the Catholic Church) because of their supernatural vocation. Catholic priests do not receive their vocation to the priesthood because they were born into it, but because the Holy Spirit called them to accept this great vocation of self-sacrifice on behalf of the Church. Catholic priests foster future vocations to the priesthood not by having biological sons, but by nurturing spiritual sons through Christian discipleship.

Many non-Catholic Christians are confused by the Catholic discipline of clerical celibacy. It should be noted that celibacy and continence are not requirements unique to the New Covenant. Temporary sexual abstinence was required of all Old Covenant priests while they ministered in the Temple. Elijah and Elisha lived lives of celibacy. Likewise, Jeremiah the prophet was celibate in obedience to the direct command of God: “You shall not take a wife, nor shall you have sons or daughters in this place” (Jer 16:2). Hence, celibacy has its origins in Judaism.

Now, it should be said that the discipline of celibacy in the Catholic Church does not imply that marriage or human sexuality is evil or unclean. A good analogy is that of fasting from food. The value of fasting from food is not derived from a belief that food is evil. Rather, fasting from food is commendable and spiritual because it is the sacrifice of something good for an even

greater good. God often asks us to sacrifice our best. For example, God asked the Israelites to sacrifice only the strongest and healthiest animals—not the worst. When a man sacrifices the prospect of marriage and a family, he is not rejecting sex as something evil or vile. Instead, he is making a substantial sacrifice. This is why Catholicism honors the vocation of celibacy. It is a sign of self-sacrifice in conformity to the self-sacrifice of Jesus Christ the true High Priest—who also lived as a celibate man.

Is the Pope a High Priest?

If Christ is the High Priest according to the royal priesthood of Melchizedek, and all Christians participate in this priesthood through baptism (and some more deeply through ordination), can it rightly be said that the Pope is somehow also a High Priest? Yes and no.

We have already seen how Christ is the only *true* priest and that all others are His ministers. How then can the Pope be called the *Vicar of Christ*? The Latin word *vicarius* denotes that the Pope stands *in the place* of Christ.⁴⁰ The word *vice* as in Vice President comes from this same Latin word. The Vice President of the United States stands in for the President when the President is not physically present. As the Vicar of Christ, the Pope is, you might say, the “Vice High Priest.” The Pope therefore functions on earth as the High Priest—not in place of Christ, but as a guarantee of Christ’s universal priesthood as exercised in heaven.

Christ built His Church on Saint Peter to whom He gave the keys of the kingdom of heaven. These Messianic keys extend Peter’s jurisdiction over the entire earth: “Whatever you bind *on earth* is bound in heaven” (Mt 16:19). The Catholic Church in no way diminishes the High Priesthood of Christ when she describes the

Pope as *Supreme Pontiff*. The Pope himself and all the faithful know that ultimately Christ is the true High Priest at every Mass. The Pope is only the servant and steward of the true Head of the Church, the Lord Jesus Christ who ministers and reigns from the right hand of the Father.

In summary, the Catholic priesthood (either exercised by the local parish priest or the Pope himself) is nothing less than the ministerial work of Christ on earth. Catholic priests do not compete with Christ's High Priesthood. Rather, they participate in His priesthood as stewards of God's kingdom (1 Cor 4:1). Although the Catholic hierarchy does correspond to the threefold structure of Levites, priests and high priests in the Old Covenant, the Catholic priesthood conforms to Christ's heavenly priesthood, which is able to perfect the faithful by Christ's one sacrifice on the cross (Heb 10:14). Since this priesthood is not restricted to Israel, it is administered universally. The next two chapters examine this cosmic dimension of Christ's priesthood as it relates to priestly vestments and church architecture. We will discover how God prescribed strict rules for liturgical symbolism—a custom preserved in the tradition of Catholic Christianity.

NOTES

³² Ecumenical Council of Chalcedon (A.D. 451).

³³ Saint Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* II-II, q. 87, a. 1, ad 3.

³⁴ The New Testament usage derives from the Greek terminology found in the Greek translation of the Old

NOTES CONTINUED

Testament (the Septuagint): *archiereus*, *hiereus bo protos*, and *hiereus bo megas* (Lev 4:3).

³⁵ Josephus, *Antiquities* 3, 8.

³⁶ In the time of Eli, however, the high priesthood passed to the collateral family branch of Ithamar (1 Sam 2:23). Nevertheless, King Solomon deposed Abiathar and appointed Zadok, a descendant of Eleazar, in his stead (1 Kings 2:35; 1 Chr 24:2-3).

³⁷ The mysterious priest named Melchizedek (“King of Righteousness”) is acknowledged by many Church Fathers and Jewish Rabbis to be none other than Shem, the firstborn son of Noah who received the sacred blessing of his father after the flood (Gen 9:26). Saint Jerome, *Questiones* 14, 18; Saint Ephraim the Syrian I, 61 E and 79D; Epiphanius, *Panarion* 55, 6. See also M. D. Johnson’s *The Purpose of Biblical Genealogies* (New York: Cambridge, 1969), 270-271 for a discussion on the Jewish tradition of Shem as Melchizedek.

³⁸ The rabbis based this theory on the blessing Shem received from Noah (Gen 9:26), and on the fact that the biblical genealogies present Shem and Abraham as contemporaries. In fact, the numbers suggest that Shem outlived Abraham by thirty-five years! (Gen 25:7)

³⁹ Saint Thomas Aquinas, *Commentary on Hebrews* 8:4.

⁴⁰ The first recorded use of the term *Vicarius Christi* or “Vicar of Christ” as a title for the Pope goes back to Pope Gelasius I (A.D. 492-496).

6. JEWISH VESTMENTS, CATHOLIC VESTMENTS

Now such was the raiment of the high priest, for both it and its parts have a meaning that must not be passed over in silence. For the whole vestment is in fact a representation and copy of the cosmos, and the parts are representations of its several portions.

- Philo Judæus of Alexandria

WHEN A COUPLE MAKES reservations to dine at an elegant restaurant, they expect four things. First, they expect that an exceptional dining experience will cost more than what they typically pay at other restaurants. Second, they expect superior cuisine and exceptional wine. Third, they expect an attractive and formal environment: white tablecloths, dim lights, sophisticated artwork, appropriate music, and candlelight. Last but not least, they expect prompt and respectful service.

The prompt and respectful service depends entirely on the waiter. In part, the waiter communicates his ability to serve his guests by his *attire*. If a couple is willing to spend \$500.00 on one dinner and a bottle of wine, they would be rightly offended if their waiter arrived at the table in jeans and a t-shirt. This is because *attire matters*.

A survey of important human landmarks reveal that what we wear communicates our respect for an occasion: the vesture of a bride and groom on their

wedding day—the clothing we wear for a funeral—the robes we wear at graduation—the attire we wear for a job interview or a first date. Whenever the occasion calls for it, we dress appropriately. A waiter at a fine restaurant wears a tuxedo for the same practical reason that a priest wears certain vestments for the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. In each case, the clothes of the server communicate the fact that he knows the importance of the occasion, and how best to fulfill his duties. If a fine dinner presumes proper attire, how much more so the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass by which God becomes present?

There is also a theological reason why Catholic priests wear vestments. We must remember that mankind was originally created naked. The first symptom of human sin was an awareness of nakedness:

She also gave some to her husband, and he ate. Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. They sewed fig leaves together and made themselves aprons (Gen 3:6-7).

Before the Lord expelled Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden, “He made for Adam and for his wife garments of skins, and clothed them” (Gen 3:21). God clothed Adam and Eve as a sign of His fatherly love for them. The clothes we wear bear a theological reference to our sinfulness.

Everyone wears clothes for certain events. Therefore, it is fitting that when a man represents God, as in the case of a priest, he wears clothing to reveal this mystery. The priests of the Old Covenant were commanded by God to wear special garments when they served in the presence of the Lord. These vestments were signs to denote the sacred calling of the priest, but even more, the vestments reminded the priest

that he stood in the presence of the thrice-holy God. The Old Covenant vestments were prescribed by direct revelation and pertained to the Old Covenant hierarchy of the High Priest, the Priests, and the Levites.

Cosmic Clothing

According to the Wisdom of Solomon, “the whole universe was upon Aaron’s garment” (Wis 18:24). In a similar manner, Philo of Alexandria described the high priest’s vestments as a *copy of the cosmos*:

Now such was the raiment of the high priest for both it and its parts have a meaning that must not be passed over in silence. For the whole vestment is in fact a representation and copy of the cosmos, and the parts are representations of its several portions.⁴¹

The predominant color of the priestly vestments was blue, because blue is the color of the heavens and of the sea. The Psalms describe the heavens as a garment: “The heavens will all wear out like a garment. You change them like clothing, and they pass away” (Ps 102:25-27). Psalm 104 also describes God as wearing a “garment of light” (Ps 104:2). Following this biblical theme, the Jewish historian Flavius Josephus understood the colors of the Jewish vestments as cosmic symbols depicting the heavens, the earth, and the seas:

The tunic of the high priest signifies the earth since it is made of linen, and the blue color signifies the vault of heaven...And I believe that the ephod represents the nature of the universe, which God thought good to make of four

components; it was woven with gold signifying sunlight which beams upon all things. And he arranged the breastplate in the midst of the ephod after the manner of the earth, for it also has the most central place. And he surrounded it with a girdle, thereby signifying the ocean, for this too comprehends everything.⁴²

According to Jewish tradition, water represents both the frightful depths of unseen chaos and the wellsprings of life. Water is correspondingly a sign of death and life. According to the Psalms, only the Messiah would be able to tame the waters of the world:

I will set his hand on the sea and his right hand on the rivers, and he shall cry “You are my Father” (Ps 89:25).

The Fathers of the Church interpreted “his hand on the sea and rivers” as an allusion to the sacrament of baptism. As the Son of God, Jesus tamed the chaotic waters by transforming them into an instrument of salvation. The Old Testament often personifies these chaotic waters as the mythical Leviathan that God conquers in the sea (Ps 74:14; Is 27:1). Josephus identified the High Priest’s girdle as the conquered serpent of the seas:

The girdle was loosely woven so that you would think it was the skin of a snake...and the girdle, which was around the high priest, represented the ocean.⁴³

Philo explains that ultimately the High Priest bore on his body the universe whenever he wore the sacred vestments:

In this way the high priest is adorned and sent forth for his holy task, so that whenever he enters offering the ancestral prayers and sacrifices the whole universe may enter with him by means of those copies which he bears upon himself.⁴⁴

The incarnational images of Jesus “putting on the body” and “putting on Adam” are intended to show that humanity might once again be clothed in divine glory through the resurrection of the body. For this reason, the newly baptized Catholic Christian is clothed in a white robe. This white robe, or alb, also corresponds to the first garment that a Catholic priest puts on before vesting for Mass.

Old Covenant Vestments

For the Jews, the High Priest was the supreme mediator between God and the People of the Covenant, and the spiritual head of every synagogue in the world. As we saw above, the High Priest’s vestments symbolized the redeemed universe. The Torah stipulates that the High Priest should wear eight vestments, while all the other priests should wear four vestments. God did not prescribe any particular vestments for the Levites; however, in the time of David and Solomon, the Levites wore simple garments of linen (1 Chr 15:27; 2 Chr 5:12). The four priestly vestments common to all Old Covenant priests were as follows:

1. Breeches: This linen garment (Ex 28:42) covered the loins of the priest since the altar stood elevated above the heads of others (20:26).

2. Tunic: This linen garment was like a shirt reaching to the ankles. Apparently, it had a checked design (Ex 28:39).
3. Girdle: This was a linen belt or sash that held the tunic close to the body.
4. Turban: Also made of linen, the turban wrapped around the head in a conical shape.

In addition to these four vestments, the High Priest wore four additional vestments:

5. Robe of the Ephod: This was the blue outer garment of the High Priest (Ex 28:31-34). The lower hem of this robe was fringed with woven pomegranates and golden bells. Pomegranates symbolized fertility since they contain many seeds. The bells jingled as he walked, and this was necessary because of the extreme danger of his office: should the bells stop jingling in the Holy of Holies, the other priests would know that the high priest had died, and pull him out by the rope around his leg
6. Ephod: In the Old Testament the ephod was the most important vestment worn by the High Priest. It was a linen apron woven with gold and colored yarn. It covered the back and chest, and fell to the knees (Ex 28:6-12). Two black onyx stones were set into the shoulder straps. Into these onyx stones were engraved the names of the twelve tribes of Israel.
7. Breastplate: Attached to the ephod was a breastplate also bearing the names of the twelve tribes engraved on precious stones (Ex 28:6).

Gold chains secured the breastplate to the chest. The breastplate contained the mysterious Urim and Thummim. This breastplate signified to Israel that righteousness originates with God. For this reason the breastplate is sometimes called the “breastplate of judgment.”

8. Gold Crown: The High Priest also wore a special golden plate attached to his turban (Ex 28:36-38). The words “Holy to the Lord” were engraved on this golden plate. The Hebrew word for this golden plate is *tsits*, meaning, “flower.” This indicates that the High Priest wore a budding “golden flower” on his head. This same word is used for the priestly staff of Aaron as a rod “flowering with flowers” (Num 17:8).

These priestly vestments were prescribed for use only during the liturgical rites of Moses. When not in use, they were stored in a receptacle and guarded.⁴⁵ As nothing is said of shoes or sandals, the priests likely performed the services barefooted as Jewish tradition indicates.

New Covenant Vestments

Christian vestments did not originate in the tradition of priestly dress of the Old Testament. Rather Catholic vestments developed from the secular dress of the Greco-Roman world. There are two historical exceptions to this claim. The first is the account of Polycrates, the second century bishop of Ephesus. Polycrates claims that John the Apostle wore a gold plate upon his turban, just like the one worn by the

Jewish High Priest. This indicates that the early Church saw John as a kind of high priest.

The other early testimony of an Apostle wearing Jewish vestments relates to Saint James of Jerusalem. Saint Jerome writes that Saint James lived as a consecrated Nazirite (see CHAPTER NINE). James was so respected by the Jews in Jerusalem that he “alone had the privilege of entering the Holy of Holies, since indeed he did not use woolen vestments but linen and went alone into the Temple and prayed on behalf of the people, insomuch that his knees were reputed to have acquired the hardness of camels’ knees.”⁴⁶ It is unlikely that an early Christian leader would have been allowed to enter the Holy of Holies, but there really is a tradition that Saint James was widely revered by the Jews of Jerusalem. Regardless, it may indeed be true that Saint James wore linen robes similar to those worn by the priests. He may have even been an Old Covenant priest for that matter. For the most part, early Christian bishops and presbyters celebrated the liturgy in the clothes of the Roman world, woven from linen and kept scrupulously white.

The *Canons of Hippolytus* read: “As often as the bishop would partake of the Mysteries, the presbyters and deacons shall gather round him clad in white, quite particularly clean clothes, more beautiful than those of the rest of the people.” Jerome in his commentary on Ezekiel 44:19 explains, “We, too, ought not to enter the Holy of Holies in our everyday garments...when they have become defiled from the use of ordinary life, but let us hold in our hands the Sacrament of the Lord with a clean conscience, and in clean garments.”

By the fourth century, the garments worn at liturgical functions had been separated from those in ordinary use, though still identical in form. After Constantine’s legalization of the Church, the bishops in

the East began to wear the garment known in the West as the *pallium*. About this time, the *orarium* (“stole”) also became a regular liturgical vestment. Christian vestments continued to develop until about the ninth and tenth centuries when the style became fixed in the West. For simplicity’s sake, we will only examine the vestments worn in the contemporary Roman rite.

Description of Catholic Vestments

The basic vesture of any Catholic cleric is the alb. The alb is a simple white (traditionally linen) robe with sleeves and an opening for the head. It is traditionally put on over the cassock. Before the *usus recentior*, all clerics wore an amice around their neck to cover their collar and protect the vestments from sweat and oils from the skin.

Over the alb, the deacon wears a stole across his chest in a diagonal direction from his left shoulder to his right hip. Over this he wears a dalmatic that matches the color of the liturgical season. The dalmatic is a decorated robe with sleeves. Prior to the post-conciliar revision, the deacon, priest, and bishop wore a maniple on their left arm as a symbol of service—similar to the napkin that a waiter wears over his arm.

The priest likewise wears an alb and places a stole over his neck that he secures with his cincture or girdle. Over this he places the chasuble, which is a decorated vestment with an opening for his head.

The Catholic bishop wears everything the Catholic priest wears with the addition of the mitre. This pointed hat somewhat resembles a flame, recalling the tongues of fire that rested on the heads of the Apostles on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:3). The bishop also wears a pectoral cross, traditionally worn beneath the chasuble. Before the reforms of the Second Vatican

Council, a bishop sometimes wore the tunic of the subdeacon and the dalmatic of the deacon under his chasuble to denote that he bore the fullness of the sacrament of Holy Orders. Bishops now rarely wear an extra tunic and dalmatic. The bishop also previously wore gloves, buskins (silk stockings), and pontifical sandals. These garments amplify the point made at the beginning of this chapter—clothing must be appropriate to the situation. The more meaning a situation bears, arguably, the more complex its accompanying vesture should be. For example, a four-star general dresses differently than a private. Likewise, the bishop's vesture is different from that of an altar boy.

The symbolism of these priestly garments overflowed into the prayers of those who wore them. These “vesting prayers” were a final opportunity for the priest to prepare himself before going to the altar. The bishop and priest traditionally prayed the following petitions as they clothed themselves with each vestment:

Amice: Place upon me, O Lord, the helmet of salvation, that I may overcome the assaults of the devil.

Alb: Purify me, O Lord, and cleanse my heart; that, being made white in the Blood of the Lamb, I may come to eternal joy.

Cincture: Gird me, O Lord, with the girdle of purity, and extinguish in me all evil desires that the virtue of chastity may abide in me.

Maniple: Grant, O Lord, that I may so bear the maniple of weeping and sorrow, that I may receive the reward for my labors with rejoicing.⁴⁷

Stole: Restore unto me, O Lord, the stole of immortality, which was lost through the guilt of our first parents: and, although I am unworthy to approach Your sacred Mysteries, nevertheless grant unto me eternal joy.

Chasuble: O Lord, Who said: My yoke is easy and My burden light: grant that I may bear it well and follow after You with thanksgiving. Amen.

Each vestment symbolizes different dispositions that the priest must carry with him as he prepares to celebrate the Sacrifice of the Mass. Again, the clothing symbolizes the cosmic dimension of the ministerial task.

In addition to the normal vestments of a bishop, an archbishop will also wear the pallium if he has previously received it from the Pope. The pallium is a white woolen garment worn on the shoulders to symbolize the archbishop's unity with the Holy See. Pope Benedict XVI has chosen to distinguish the papal pallium from the metropolitan pallium by wearing an ancient form of the pallium that is wider and longer than the version received by today's archbishops.

Catholic Choir Dress

When not celebrating Mass, Catholic clergy wear "choir dress" for liturgical occasions. Choir dress consists of the cassock, biretta, and surplice (or rochet). The Pope wears a white cassock, cardinals wear red, bishops wear purple, and priests and deacons wear black. The biretta is a stiff hat with wings that matches the color of the cassock. The surplice is a white "mini-alb" that reaches to various lengths and sometimes consists of lace for decoration. The Pope, the cardinals, and the bishops

also wear a matching shoulder cape called a mozzetta over their rochet and their pectoral cross. The Pope's mozzetta does not match his cassock—rather it is red.

As discussed at the beginning of this book, the Pope, cardinals, and bishops of the Catholic Church wear a small cap resembling the Jewish yarmulke. As stated in the Introduction, this cap is the zucchetto and it symbolizes a bishop's humble acknowledgment of Christ as the true Head of the Church. All Catholic bishops, including the cardinals and the Pope, must remove the zucchetto when they stand at the altar and recite the Eucharistic Prayer. When a bishop or the Pope consecrates the Body and Blood of Christ, he acts *in persona Christi* ("in the person of Christ"). The bishop therefore removes the zucchetto during this time since the bishop "loans" his voice and body to Christ so that the true High Priest might transform the bread and wine into His very own Body and Blood.

This mystical connection between the priest and Christ recalls the words of Philo of Alexandria regarding priestly vestments, that the vestment is "a representation and copy of the cosmos." The celebrated Archbishop Fulton Sheen aptly related the cosmic dimension of priesthood to the ministry and vesture of priests:

Localized at one point in space and one moment in time, Calvary is now universalized in space and time. The priest takes the cross of Calvary with Christ still hanging on it and plants it in New York, Paris, Cairo, and Tokyo, and in the poorest mission in the world. We are not alone at the altar; we are in horizontal relations with Africa, Asia, our own parish, our city—everyone.

Clinging to the chasuble of every priest are six

hundred million souls in China who as yet know not Christ...the stole is the sling in which the priest carries on his shoulder living stones, the burden of the churches, the missions of the entire world.⁴⁸

Priestly vestments, then, reveal the Church's rich symbolism. The priest does not simply wear starched and pressed garments like a waiter in a tuxedo. Rather, the Catholic priest clothes himself in the Messiah and in the world for which the Messiah died.

NOTES

⁴¹ Philo, *Life of Moses* 2, 117.

⁴² Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities* 3, 184.

⁴³ Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities* 3, 185.

⁴⁴ Philo, *Life of Moses* 2, 133.

⁴⁵ For detailed information concerning the priestly vestments see Josephus *Antiquities* 3, 7.

⁴⁶ Saint Jerome, "Epistle to Abundius, Bishop of Como."

⁴⁷ The maniple was suppressed as a liturgical vestment, though this is sometimes contested.

⁴⁸ Fulton J. Sheen, *A Priest is Not His Own* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2004), 43-44.

7. JEWISH TEMPLE, CATHOLIC CATHEDRAL

He looks around, around

He sees angels in the architecture

Spinning in infinity

He says Amen! and Hallelujah!

- Paul Simon

THE CONCEPT OF CONSECRATED space goes back to creation, just as clothing hearkens back to God's provision of garments for Adam and Eve. Both concepts relate to the created cosmos. We read in the second chapter of Genesis that God placed Adam and Eve in the verdant Garden of Eden.

And the LORD God planted a garden in Eden to the east. There He put the man whom He had formed. The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it (Gen 2:8, 15).

The Garden of Eden was a beautiful place where the Lord God "walked in the cool of the day" (Gen 3:8). The garden was the place of God's fellowship with mankind. God was present in this sacred precinct. The Garden of Eden was also the exclusive location of the "Tree of Life" that bore fruit enabling its recipients to have eternal life and the "Tree of Knowledge of Good

and Evil” that bore the divinely prohibited fruit (Gen 2:9).

Adam received a vocation from God “to till and keep” the Garden of Eden. Adam failed at this task when he and his wife fell into sin. God’s response was to clothe them with animals’ skins (Gen 3:21) and cast them out of the Garden of Eden.

Therefore, the LORD God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from which he was taken. He drove out the man; and at the east of the Garden of Eden he placed the cherubim, and a flaming sword that turned every way, to guard the way to the Tree of Life (Gen 3:23-24).

The sinfulness of Adam and Eve meant that they could no longer remain in the sacred presence of God. After God exiled Adam and Eve from Eden, he placed cherubim (not fat babies, but beast-like angels!) at Eden’s eastern portal “to guard the way to the Tree of Life.”

This means that the Garden of Eden was the original sanctuary, shrine, tabernacle, or temple of God’s presence that Adam and Eve forfeited through sin. At the time of Moses, God commanded the Israelites to create a mock-up version of the Garden of Eden—the Tabernacle.

The Garden of Eden as Archetype

The Old Covenant Tabernacle or Temple was a miniature version of the Garden of Eden. For example, the door of the Tabernacle faced to the east, just as the gate of the Garden of Eden faced to the east (Gen 3:24; Ezek 40:6). Moreover, images of cherubim were woven

into the tabernacle veil to symbolize that they were guarding God's presence, just as God posted cherubim to guard the gateway to the Garden of Eden (Gen 3:24; Ezek 28:14). The great golden menorah inside the Temple was molded to resemble a burning Tree of Life (Ex 25:31-36).⁴⁹

The decor of the Temple consisted of garden imagery like that found in the Garden of Eden (1 Kings 6-7). The Garden of Eden is said to be the source of the world's watercourses and so a huge water basin was placed at the door of the Temple (Gen 2:10; Ezek 47:1-12; Rev 21:1-2). The Bible describes the Garden of Eden as elevated on a mountain, and the Temple itself was situated on a mountain (Ezek 28:14, 16; 40:2; 43:12). Most importantly, the Temple and the Garden of Eden were the places where God dwelt in the midst of His people (Gen 3:8; Lev 26:11-12; Deut 23:14; 2 Sam 7:6-7).

Another interesting parallel is the linguistic similarity between the description of Adam's original vocation in the Garden of Eden and the description of the vocation of the priests in the Temple. Adam is called to "work" (Hebrew: *abad*) and "keep" (Hebrew: *shamar*) the Garden of Eden. Those two Hebrew words are used to describe the work of the Levites in the Temple. The Levites "keep" (*shemari*) the tabernacle (Num 8:26)—the same word used to describe Adam's custodial work. The priestly service of offering sacrifice is referred to as *abad* (Num 8:26; Josh 22:27; Is 19:21)—the same Hebrew word used to describe Adam's labor.

Temple Cosmology—Creation and Worship

Judaism in particular understands that God's creation of the universe was essentially the creation of a cosmic temple. Judaism asserts that creation is inherently good

because its Creator is good. Creation was made as a place for man to worship God and have fellowship with Him. This mystery is made clear when the Lord answers Job “out of the whirlwind,” concerning the creation of the universe as His own sacred building (Job 38). God first laid the foundation (v. 4); determined its measurements and stretched out a line upon it (v. 5); sunk the bases and established its cornerstone (v. 6). Meanwhile the “morning stars” and “sons of God” (i.e. angels) sing in adoration (v. 7). These singing choirs within this sacred building recall how David commissioned the Levites to sing in the tabernacle (1 Chr 15:16). God then installs the “doors” (v. 8), and secures the structure so that water may not enter (vs. 9-11). Lastly, God established the clouds (v. 9) that recall the glory-cloud of God’s presence over the Temple (1 Kings 8:11). We read in Genesis that God blessed creation when it was complete (Gen 2:2-4). Moses likewise blesses the tabernacle when it is complete (Ex 31:12-17; 39:43; 40:9).

Blueprints of the Old Covenant Tabernacle

The worship of the Old Covenant centered on the Tabernacle. The Tabernacle was a portable tent constructed by Israel under Moses. It consisted of three courts. The outer court was walled off by curtains and contained the altar of holocaust (Ex 27:1-8), the bronze pool (Ex 30:18-21), and the tabernacle proper.

Just inside the actual Tabernacle was the second court. It was called “the Holy Place” and it contained the altar of incense, the golden Tree of Life menorah, and the table for the Bread of Presence. Beyond the curtain interwoven with cherubim was “the Holy of Holies.” It contained only the Ark of the Covenant with

the statues of two gold cherubim on either side “to guard” the Ark of the Covenant.

The Tabernacle was thirty cubits long, ten cubits wide, and ten cubits high (30 x 10 x 10). The Holy of Holies occupied one third of the Tabernacle and measured ten cubits long, ten cubits wide, and ten cubits high (10 x 10 x 10). The Holy of Holies was a perfect cube. Incidentally, this is why the Book of Revelation represents the New Jerusalem as being a perfect cube (Rev 21:16).

The Tabernacle Becomes the Temple

King David conquered Jerusalem in approximately 1004 B.C. and established it as the capital city of his kingdom. With great pomp, David transported the portable fabric Tabernacle into the city of Jerusalem. King David then received a vision from God telling him to design a permanent Temple for the Ark of the Covenant in Jerusalem. It would be his son Solomon, not David, who would complete this task.

The Temple was built on a much larger scale than the Tabernacle of Moses. It was twice the size. It was sixty cubits long, twenty cubits wide, and thirty cubits high (60 x 20 x 30). The floor was elevated inside by ten (10) cubits and once again, the Holy of Holies was a perfect cube: twenty cubits in length, breadth, and height (20 x 20 x 20).

The Holy of Holies was floored and paneled with the cedar wood of Lebanon (1 Kings 6:16-30), and its walls and floor were overlaid with gold. It contained two wooden statues of the guardian cherubim, each ten cubits high. The wings of each angel spread out ten cubits each from tip to tip, so that the wings touched the wall on either side and met in the center of the room. A blue, purple, and red veil separated the Holy of

Holies from the Holy Place (2 Chr 3:14). The room contained no light (1 Kings 8:12).

The walls of the Holy Place just outside the Holy of Holies were also paneled with cedar, and carved with figures of cherubim, palm trees, and open flowers, all of which were overlaid with gold. Golden chains further marked it off from the Holy of Holies. The floor of the Temple was paneled with fir wood overlaid with gold. The door was carved from olivewood. Golden depictions of cherubim, palm trees, and flowers were also carved into the doors (1 Kings 6:15-18). The outer courtyard around the Temple contained the altar of holocaust and the bronze pool. To all of this, chambers were also added for storage purposes.

The Babylonians destroyed this original Temple in 586 B.C. The returning Jews under the direction of Ezra and Nehemiah rebuilt a second Temple, which never contained the lost Ark of the Covenant. Centuries later, Herod the Great further amplified the architectural glory of the Temple during the time of Christ. This Second Temple was destroyed in A.D. 70 in fulfillment of the prophecy of Christ (Mt 24:2, 34).

The New Covenant and the End of the Temple

The Temple was the only place of sacrifice in the Old Covenant. Burnt offerings were made only at the Temple and the three great religious feasts (Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles) were celebrated chiefly in Jerusalem. Not every Israelite could travel to the Temple so they built synagogues that functioned as meeting places for prayer. These buildings were not temples in the proper sense.

When Christ died, "the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom" (Mk 15:38). This miracle signaled that humanity would no longer be

exiled from God's presence. After all, the veil guarding the presence of God in the Holy of Holies had symbolized that Adam and all his descendants were locked out from God's presence. Christ reunited God and mankind through His propitiatory death on the cross—and the veil fell away.

After the death and resurrection of Christ, there was no longer any need for the Old Covenant Temple. Christ announced once and for all: "It is finished" (Jn 19:30). The Temple has been replaced with the Body of Christ. Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up" (Jn 2:19). First, there was the Temple of Solomon. Second, there was the Temple that was beatified by Herod the Great. Finally, there is the *Third Temple*—the temple of Christ's Body. The incarnation of Christ is the ultimate sign of God's presence in creation. When John 1:14 says, "The Word was made flesh and dwelled among us," the Greek actually suggests that the Word "pitched his tent among us." When Christ assumed human nature in the womb of the Blessed Virgin, He established a new and lasting tabernacle in our midst. Catholic churches are not tabernacles or temples in the strict sense. They are only referred to as tabernacles or temples because they contain the true Temple—the Blessed Sacrament of Christ's body.

Birth of the Catholic Cathedral

For the first three hundred years of Christianity, the Church continued to celebrate the Sacrifice of Christ on her altars in the liturgy of the Holy Eucharist. These Christians were being persecuted and did not typically construct temples or religious buildings for public worship. It was not until the era of Constantine that

Christians began to build structures dedicated for the sole purpose of liturgical worship.

When the Catholic Church began to build church buildings, particularly cathedrals, they typically oriented them to face toward the east. This is the *opposite* direction of the orientation of the Old Covenant temple. The Old Covenant had the Ark of the Covenant situated to the west and the door to the east. The typical Cathedral has its altar to the east and its door to the west. Why did the Church flip the architectural orientation?

The reason is that Christians no longer felt that they lived in exile from God's presence. In other words, the Catholic Church redefined for us what it means to be cosmically well-positioned—it means that we would be truly “oriented” to God, from the Latin word *oriens*, meaning “east.” We no longer live outside the Temple to the “east of Eden.” Christians worship in God's presence and so we face Him as we face the sun rising in the east. Christ explains that He shall come again from the east: “For as lightning cometh out of the east and appeareth even into the west: so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be” (Mt 24:27). Hence, the early Christians prayed facing toward the east and also received baptism while facing to the east.

There are a few other important connections between the Temple and the Cathedral. The Temple had a Holy Place that took up the front two-thirds of the structure and a Holy of Holies that took up the back third of the Temple. The Cathedral and most churches consist of a “nave” that typically takes up the back two-thirds of the building and the “sanctuary” that takes up the front third of the building.

The Cathedral is also the mother church of the diocese because it is the official church of the bishop. The word cathedral refers to the *cathedra*—a Greek word

for “chair” as in the bishop’s chair. The Old Covenant Temple was a kind of mother “church” for all the synagogues. Just as Mary is to other Christian mothers, so also the cathedral is the mother of all local churches in a given geographic location.

However, there is one major difference between the Temple and Catholic cathedrals with which I would like to end. In the New Testament, the term “temple” refers not to a building but to the people of God. The Holy Spirit indwells every Christian (1 Cor 6:19) and the Church is built up into a “spiritual temple” (Eph 2:20-22). Since we are the Body of Christ, we are also the Temple of God’s presence in the world.

NOTES

⁴⁹ Josephus, *Antiquities* 3, 145.

8. JEWISH SYNAGOGUE, CATHOLIC PARISH

I can accept only that Church which was preached to all creatures by my own forefathers, the Twelve Apostles, who, like me, issued from the Synagogue.

- Rabbi Israel Eugenio Zolli

MARY AND JOSEPH DUTIFULLY brought Jesus to the synagogue where He learned the Scriptures, prayed, and conversed with experts in the law. The synagogue was the context in which Jesus became known as a rabbi. A synagogue is simply a house of assembly or worship. The word *synagogue* derives from a Greek word meaning “a coming together.” In Hebrew the synagogue building is referred to as *beit kneset* meaning “house of assembly” or as a *beit tefila* meaning “house of prayer.”

The idea of the synagogue does not belong to the earliest years of Israel’s history. It is likely that neither Moses nor David had ever heard of a formal building dedicated to Jewish worship other than that of the tabernacle or temple. During the time of Moses, worship centered around the sacrificial work of the priests at the tabernacle and later at the Temple in Jerusalem. However, there is some evidence that the early Hebrews met together in assemblies that were distinct from the centralized worship at the Temple. Jewish tradition finds the origin of the synagogue tradition in the advice Moses received from his father-

in-law (cf. Ex 28:14-27). Here we read that the people should be divided and governed by local experts of the Law. Judaism sees in this passage the creation of specific assemblies (synagogues) governed by scholars of the Law (rabbis).

As described above, the Babylonians destroyed Solomon's Temple in 586 B.C., and the Jews were dispersed during what has been called the Babylonian Captivity. With the Temple destroyed and the Jews trapped in exile, the local synagogue took on an unprecedented importance. It was during this time that Jews began to dedicate special houses of worship where they could pray, sing, and study the Sacred Scriptures. These meeting places became the ancient forerunners of what we now know as synagogues.

Even after the Temple was rebuilt, the tradition of synagogues remained wherever Jews lived. The synagogue allowed Jews to have a place of prayer anywhere they lived. The Temple in Jerusalem was of course the divinely instituted place of sacrifice and could not be rebuilt elsewhere. For this reason, Jews do not practice animal sacrifice at the synagogue.

The synagogue does not require the presence of a Levitical priest. Instead of priests, rabbis hold the place of honor as scholars of the law. A rabbi is simply a "master" of the Jewish tradition. They are not priests and do not correspond to the office instituted for the priestly descendants of Aaron. They are simply scholars who also absorb the pastoral work of a local community. Jesus Himself was not an Aaronite priest but was recognized as a rabbi by His followers and even by his enemies. It seems that Jesus never held a rabbinical position at a synagogue though He did frequent the synagogue and was often asked to give the homily (Luke 7:5).

Jews are expected to gather at the synagogue on the Sabbath and on holy days. Orthodox synagogues maintain a daily schedule of prayers. The synagogue also functions as the site for officiating the *bar mitzva* and Hebrew school.

Structure of the Synagogue

Modern day synagogues tend to be built on a plan resembling the special features of the Temple in the following ways:

Orientation: Synagogues usually face Jerusalem so that those assembled have their faces positioned toward the geographic site of where the Temple once stood.

Decoration: Orthodox synagogues are decorated with beautiful artwork, but three-dimensional sculptures are not allowed for fear of idolatry. Traditional synagogue windows are square at the bottom and round at the top to symbolize the shape of the Tables of the Law – the Ten Commandments that Moses received from God. Some synagogues feature twelve symbolic windows that stand for the twelve tribes of Israel.

Aron Ha-Kodesh: The holy ark that houses the Sacred Scriptures. It harkens back to the Ark of the Covenant, which contained the stone version of the Ten Commandments. The holy ark is reckoned as the holiest place in a synagogue. The holy ark is typically veiled with an ornate curtain called the *parokhet* (what Catholics might call a ‘tabernacle veil’).

Ner Tamid: The eternal lamp that burns before the holy ark. It signified the large menorah that stood in the Holy Place of the Temple outside the Holy of Holies.

Bimah: The platform where the Scriptures are read publicly.

Amud: The pulpit used by the rabbi and cantor for prayers and chanting.

Structure of the Catholic Parish

The Catholic Church sprouted from the Jewish synagogue. The Book of Acts chronicles the manner by which the Apostle Paul evangelized the world. First, he went to the synagogue and preached the Gospel. His initial converts were usually Jews who then formed the nucleus of the local Christian community. The New Testament Epistle of James matter-of-factly refers to the early Christian meeting-place as a *synagogue*:

For if a man with gold rings and in fine clothing comes into your *synagogue*, and a poor man in shabby clothing also comes in and you pay attention to the one who wears the fine clothing and say, "Have a seat here, please," while you say to the poor man, "Stand there," or, "Sit at my feet," have you not made distinctions among yourselves, and become judges with evil thoughts? (James 2:2-4).

The Christian bishops who succeeded the Apostles at the beginning of the second century explain that the early Christians only celebrated the Eucharist in communion with their bishop. Early bishops such as Saint Ignatius of Antioch († A.D. 108) and Saint

Polycarp of Smyrna († A.D. 155) indicate that the bishop was the primary celebrant of the Holy Eucharist.

As the early Church grew, it was no longer possible for every Christian to join the bishop for worship. There arose small, local assemblies of worshippers that remained in union with the bishop. The Church recognized the place where the bishop presided and the other satellite locations where his presbyters or priests would celebrate the Holy Eucharist. This gave rise to the distinction between the *cathedral* church of the bishop and the *parish* churches of his priests. The primary difference between the parish and the synagogue is that the Catholic parish maintained priests and sacrificial worship, whereas Jewish synagogues did not continue a rite that corresponded to the priestly sacrifices at the Temple. Jewish synagogues celebrate only the liturgy of the word.

In spite of this critical difference in practice between synagogues and parishes, the two retain a number of important connections. For instance, the architectural features of a synagogue reveal the connection that it shares with the Catholic parish. Every Catholic parish has a holy ark that we call the tabernacle. The tabernacle houses not simply the Word of God, but the *Word made flesh*—the very Body of Christ. The tabernacle is also the holiest place in a church, not because it tells us about God (as in the Torah), but because it contains God Himself. It is worth noting that Jews would not think of situating the holy ark anywhere but at the center of the synagogue—something that modern Catholic architects would do well to observe. In the synagogue, the holy ark receives the most prominent architectural position.

Like Jewish synagogues, Catholic churches also have a *Ner Tamid* or eternal lamp that burns before the tabernacle to announce to the world that Christ is

present among us. The Jewish *bimah* and *amud* correspond to our lectern or ambo where the Scriptures are read and where the priest proclaims the good news of Christ's eternal redemption.

Catholics also believe that their churches should be decorated with images. Since we believe that God became a three-dimensional human being, we believe that He and all the saints may be depicted in three-dimensional statues. As Saint John Damascene († A.D. 749) once explained, Christ's incarnation issued in a new economy of images for the New Covenant. Each Catholic parish pays tribute to this mystery with artwork proclaiming that God is truly among us. Artwork also symbolizes that "we are surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses" (Heb 12:1) when we come together around the Holy Eucharist. Whenever we gather for the Holy Eucharist, we come together with all the saints and with all the choirs of angels in Heaven. The Catholic parish is truly then a *synagogue* or "coming together" not only of the local assembly, but also with the entire assembly of Heaven.

9. JEWISH NAZIRITES, CATHOLIC MONASTICS

This is the law for the Nazirite who takes a vow. His offering to the LORD shall be according to his vow as a Nazirite, apart from what else he can afford. In accordance with the vow that he takes, so shall he do according to the law for his separation as a Nazirite.

- Numbers 6:21

THE BIBLE'S MOST FAMOUS Nazirite is Samson. We're all familiar with the story. So long as Samson's hair remained long, he was strong. When his hair was cut short through the trickery of Delilah, he lost his strength. The Philistines poked out his eyes and imprisoned him. Yet, in the darkness of his dungeon, Samson's hair began to grow—as did his supernatural strength. Finally, he used that strength to pull down the temple of Dagon and along with it, kill three thousand Philistines, “so the dead whom he slew at his death were more than those whom he had slain during his life” (Judg 16:30).

How is it that strength comes from hair? The story of Samson is not just a myth about the handsome locks of an ancient Israelite. To read the story in that way misses the point entirely. Rather, it is a story about the importance of the “Nazirite vow” which was symbolized by uncut hair. Ancient readers would have seen how God's power flowed through Samson to the extent that he conformed to the vows of a Nazirite. No hair, no power.

The Nazirite Vow

The Hebrew word for *Nazirite* means “consecrated” or “set apart.” It refers to any man or woman Israelite who submitted to certain regulations of piety (Num 6:1-21). The Nazirite vow could be made for a temporary amount of time, or it could be made for life. In the cases of Samson and John the Baptist, the Bible records that they were dedicated as Nazirites from their mothers’ wombs. Samson’s mother did not consume grapes or wine during her pregnancy in order to offer him to God as a Nazirite (Judg 13:7). Nazirites abstained from all alcohol and avoided all food products derived from grapes (including juice, wine, and raisins). They could not shave, nor could they cut the hair on their heads. Lastly, the Nazirite could not approach a corpse. If a Nazirite did approach a dead body, he was required to shave “the head of his consecration” and enter into an eight-day ritual of penance. On the eighth day he would offer two turtle doves or pigeons at the Temple—one as burnt offering, the other for sin. He also offered a young lamb. If the vow were a temporary one, the Nazirite would shave his head at the end of the stipulated period. This sacred hair would be burned as an offering.

The prophet and priest Samuel was also a perpetual Nazirite. His mother vowed: “I will give him to the Lord all the days of his life, and no razor shall come upon his head” (1 Sam 1:11). Samuel’s status as a prophet is likely related to this childhood consecration. The prophet Amos confirms that Nazirites received prophetic powers (Amos 2:11-12).

In the New Testament, we see that John the Baptist is a Nazirite. We also learn that Saint Paul and other early Christians underwent the Nazirite consecration (Acts 18:18; 21:23-26):

We have four men who are under a vow. Take these men and purify yourself along with them and pay their expenses, so that they may shave their heads. Thus, all will know that there is nothing in what they have been told about you but that you yourself live in observance of the law.

Then Paul took the men, and the next day he purified himself with them and went into the temple, to give notice when the days of purification would be fulfilled and the offering presented for every one of them (Acts 21:23-26).

As stated in a previous chapter, tradition also identifies Saint James of Jerusalem as a perpetual Nazirite.⁵⁰ Here we observe that the first generation of Christians had already adopted the Nazirite form of consecration. This practice of “consecrated life” eventually grew into the full-blown monastic tradition of the Catholic Church.

Christian Monasticism

The Hebrew idea that one might enter into an outward state of piety that was distinct from the hierarchical priesthood carried over into Christianity quite easily.

The state of life, which is constituted by the profession of the evangelical counsels, while not entering into the hierarchical structure of the Church, belongs undeniably to her life and holiness (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 914).

The early Christian hermits seeking a more rigorous life of prayer and fasting followed the Nazirite’s example of a “consecrated life”—especially as their monastic ideal centered on the example of John the Baptist, who

prepared the way of the Lord in the wilderness. The Baptist was indeed a Nazirite, but his way of life also included austerities that were not essential to the Nazirite life. For example, he was celibate. He was voluntarily poor. He wore distinctive clothing. He drank no alcohol and fasted. He stood out as a sign of contradiction and as a witness to God's holiness.

The fathers of the early monastic movement also looked to Saint Paul as one of the original Christians monastics. After Paul received his vision on the road to Damascus, he spent three years in the deserts of Arabia (Gal 1:17-18). Paul also consecrated himself as a Nazirite at least twice (Acts 18:18; 21:23-26).

The Christian monks took the consecrated life of a Nazirite to a higher level of commitment. The role of wine in the Eucharist made it impossible to perpetually avoid the fruit of the vine (though the Catholic could rightly argue that what is received in the chalice is no longer wine but the true substance of Christ's precious blood). Instead, personal consecration was associated with a life of penance and celibacy. Both John the Baptist and Paul were celibate and both wandered the countryside in poverty. Following John and Paul, Christian monks and nuns began to forsake the good estate of marriage for the sake of the Kingdom of Heaven. They found their inspiration for a life of celibacy and poverty in the words of Christ from Matthew's Gospel:

For there are eunuchs who have been so from birth, and there are eunuchs who have been made eunuchs by men, *and there are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven.* He who is able to receive this, let him receive it (Mt 19:12).

If you would be perfect, go, sell what you possess and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. And come, follow me (Mt 19:21).

The monastic traditions of Saint Benedict, Saint Basil, Saint Francis, and Saint Dominic strive to follow these difficult exhortations of Jesus Christ our Lord. The Carmelite order also looks back to the Old Testament figure of Elijah who lived a solitary life on Mount Carmel in the Holy Land. His life of penance and prophetic ministry inspired the Catholic monks who gathered on Mount Carmel in the late twelfth century.

Liturgy of the Hours and Jewish Prayer

The early Christian monks and nuns based their daily cycle of prayer on a Jewish custom that they found in the Hebrew Scriptures:

Daniel got down upon his knees three times a day and prayed and gave thanks before his God (Dan 6:10).

Evening and morning and at noon I utter my complaint and moan, and he will hear my voice (Ps 55:17).

Seven times a day I praise thee for thy righteous ordinances (Ps 119:164).

The first two passages above describe a three-fold pattern of daily prayer. The third passage indicates a sevenfold cycle of daily prayer. The custom of punctuating the day with prayer likely derived from the Jewish awareness that the priests in Jerusalem offered a morning and an evening sacrifice. Pious Jews would join their prayers to these two daily offerings, whether or not

they were present in Jerusalem (1 Chr 16:40, 2 Chr 2:4). Since the early Church was mostly Jewish, it also embraced this pattern of daily prayer. It seems that dedicated Jews followed the most rigorous pattern of prayer—the sevenfold round of daily prayer described in Psalm 119:163: “Seven times a day I praise thee.” This sevenfold pattern was built on three-hour intervals:

1. first hour (6:00 am)
2. third hour (9:00 am—linked to the morning sacrifice in Jerusalem)
3. sixth hour (12:00 pm)
4. ninth hour (3:00 pm)
5. twelfth hour (6:00 pm or sunset—linked to the evening sacrifice in Jerusalem)
6. fifteenth hour (9:00 pm)
7. midnight (12:00 am)

We learn from the New Testament that the twelve Apostles also observed this sevenfold Jewish pattern of prayer:

Now Peter and John were going up to the temple at the hour of prayer, the *ninth hour* (Acts 3:1).

Peter went up on the housetop to pray, about the *sixth hour* (Acts 10:9).

And Cornelius said, “Four days ago, about this hour, I was *keeping the ninth hour of prayer* in my house (Acts 10:30).

This meticulous pattern of prayer was not always kept by the lay faithful of the Church, but it was kept alive within monastic communities. Saint Benedict, the father of Western monasticism, cited the Old Covenant model

of sevenfold prayer as the basis for the liturgical life of his monks:

“Seven times in the day,” says the Prophet, “I have rendered praise to thee” (Ps. 119:164). Now that sacred number of seven will be fulfilled by us if we perform the Offices of our service at the time of the Matins, of Prime, of Terce, of Sext, of None, of Vespers and of Compline, since it was of these day Hours that he said, “Seven times in the day I have rendered praise to thee.”⁵¹

The Benedictine model endorsed the Jewish tradition of prayer and set the pattern for the Divine Office or Liturgy of the Hours that every Catholic priest and monastic recites daily. Saint Benedict retained the Jewish intervals of prayer, but the times of prayer received Latin names corresponding to the pertinent hour of the day with an eighth time of prayer added in the early morning:

1. Lauds & Prime – sunrise (6:00 am)
2. Terce – third hour (9:00 am)
3. Sext – sixth hour (12:00 pm)
4. None – ninth hour (3:00 pm)
5. Vespers – twelfth hour (6:00 pm)
6. Compline – fifteenth hour (9:00 pm)
7. Matins – midnight (12:00 am)⁵²

Since the reforms of the Second Vatican Council, many lay Catholics have begun to observe the ancient Jewish custom of daily prayer, if not seven times a day, at least a few times a day by reciting the prayers arranged on the sevenfold pattern in the Liturgy of the Hours. These Catholics have the Jewish tradition to thank for our rich cycle of daily prayer.

Was Jesus a Nazirite?

We might expect to learn that Jesus was a Nazirite. He may have been a temporary Nazirite. The Nazirite vow ended with a *tevilah* washing. Perhaps Christ's baptism by His Nazirite cousin John the Baptist was the completion of a Nazirite vow—Jesus says that the washing was necessary “to fulfill all righteousness” (Mt 3:15). However, we know from the Gospels that Jesus did *not* live as a Nazirite during his public ministry. We recall how Jesus not only drank wine (Mt 11:19), but also how He even turned water into wine (Jn 2:1-10). Jesus also touched the dead numerous times, only to bring them back to life.

Nevertheless, it seems that Jesus did in fact take on the identity of a Nazirite at the Last Supper when he said: “I shall not drink again of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom.” (Mt 26:29). In a Jewish context, a vow against drinking “the fruit of the vine” would invoke the concept of a Nazirite—one consecrated to God. The suffering of Christ and His ascetic resolve to offer Himself as the Lamb of God that takes away the sins of the world demonstrates that He is the ultimate “consecrated” Israelite—the definitive Nazirite.

If the Nazirite vow signified one thing, it demonstrated that death must be avoided because it is unclean. In light of this, Christ is the perfect Nazirite because “death could not hold Him” (Acts 2:24). Jesus is the only human whom death could not pollute. As Saint Paul wrote about Jesus' resurrection: “Death is swallowed up in victory” (1 Cor 15:54). All those who seek to conform their lives to Christ, especially monastics who seek to follow the evangelical counsels of poverty, chastity, and obedience, fulfill the spirit of the Jewish Nazirites who also sought to consecrate themselves to God.

NOTES CONTINUED

⁵⁰ Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 2, 23.

⁵¹ Saint Benedict *Lex* 41.

⁵² The breviary underwent certain changes after the Second Vatican Council. Most notably, *the Office of Readings* corresponding to the traditional hour of *Matins* can now be recited at any convenient time during the day.

10. JEWISH MARRIAGE, CATHOLIC MARRIAGE

My soul takes pleasure in three things, and they are beautiful in the sight of the Lord and of men:

agreement between brothers,

friendship between neighbors,

and a wife and a husband who live in harmony.

- Joshua Ben Sirach
Ecclesiasticus 25:1

ONE OF MY FAVORITE scenes in the *Fiddler on the Roof* is the festive depiction of the marriage between Motel and his bride Tzeitel. The bride and groom are dressed to the nines and surrounded by the entire community. They stand before the rabbi, recite their vows under the canopy and finally the groom smashes a glass under his foot to the cheers of “Mazal Tov!” Music and dancing follow with men whirling about with wine bottles on their heads. Unfortunately, their laughing turns to tears as the Russian Gentiles literally destroy their festival of joy.

The scene reflects the Jewish conviction that marriage is the ideal state of human life. Matrimony is the basic unit of communal life and the context through which God creates new men and women. “So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them” (Gen

1:27). There are very few examples of Old Covenant figures that remained celibate, because childrearing is the means by which God promised to bring about redemption in the Old Testament. God established His covenant with Abraham and revealed that it would be fulfilled through the multiplication of his descendents:

I will indeed bless you, and I will multiply your descendants as the stars of heaven and as the sand that is on the seashore (Gen 22:17).

For a Hebrew not to marry and have children was, in a sense, a violation of the covenant. The covenantal sign that God gave to Abraham, that of circumcision, was placed upon the male member of human generation. The Old Covenant perceived procreation as the means of blessing. However, this need to breed led to certain abuses. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob had multiple wives and concubines. In Jacob's case, this model allowed him to have twelve sons—the sons whose families would eventually become the twelve tribes of Israel. Contemporary Judaism maintains institutional monogamy and Jewish tradition has always held that monogamy was the original intention of God for mankind.

Polygamy is not the only Old Testament aberration from God's intended plan for marriage. Moses allowed the Israelites to divorce. A certificate of divorce was issued to the wife and both spouses were free to remarry. This practice was a concession to human sin and the lack of grace available through the Law of Moses. As Christ taught: "For your hardness of heart Moses allowed you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so" (Mt 19:8).

First Step: Betrothal

Traditional Jewish marriage occurs in two stages: betrothal and the marriage ceremony. Today, these two steps are combined in a single marriage ceremony. However, in centuries past, the betrothal was an independent rite by which a groom contracted a marriage with his bride. Catholic Christians might recall how Joseph was “betrothed” to the Blessed Virgin Mary (Mt 1:18, Lk 1:27). Jewish betrothal required a formal divorce in order to dissolve the union. Joseph considered this course of action before he received revelation that Mary’s child was of the Holy Spirit (Mt 1:19-20).

Jewish oral tradition describes three ways of contracting betrothal.

1. By a gift. A man presents a valuable gift to a woman (e.g. gold ring, sum of money). If the woman accepts the gift in the presence of two witness, the man and woman are betrothed.
2. By a legal written contract.
3. By sexual intercourse. This form of betrothal was strongly discouraged by the rabbis and was intended only for levirate marriages (that is, those sexual unions stipulated by Moses obliging a brother to marry the childless widow of his deceased brother (Deut 25:5-10; Mt 22:24). This union is known as a *yibbum*, and it can be dissolved by a provision known as *chalitza*.⁵³

Contemporary Jews contract betrothal with a ring—an engagement ring to be exact. In times past, marriages

were arranged through a *shadchan* (“matchmaker”) who received a brokerage fee for her efforts either from one or both of the families involved in the match.

Second Step: The Marriage Proper

Today, the betrothal ceremony is included within the marriage ceremony. As the groom gives the ring to his bride, he recites the following:

You are consecrated to me, through this ring,
according to the religion of Moses and Israel.

By accepting the ring on her finger and closing her hand, she silently signifies her acceptance of the proposal. Next, the rabbi reads aloud the marriage covenant known as the *ketuba* that delineates the groom’s obligations to his bride. The rabbi then pronounces seven marriage blessings that formalize the union.

The actual marriage ceremony of *nissuin* occurs under the familiar canopy called a *chuppah*. This canopy symbolizes that the man and woman are establishing a house. This “house” is not an edifice, but their union of persons and the children that shall be born to them. The house represents their future family. The canopy is sometimes an outstretched prayer shawl. Orthodox Judaism stipulates that the open sky should be above the canopy without obstruction. In fact, synagogues sometimes have openings in the ceiling in order to meet this requirement. The canopy (*chuppah*) also symbolizes the presence of God over the marriage, just as the yarmulke (*kippah*) on the head of a Jewish male is a sign of respect for God’s presence.

Finally, the bride and groom drink wine from a glass. The groom then steps on the glass and breaks it

(usually after it has been wrapped in a napkin). A folk tradition states that the number of broken pieces foretell the number of years the marriage will last. According to one Jewish tradition, the custom began at the wedding of Rav Ashi's son.⁵⁴ The wedding reception got out of hand and so Rav Ashi broke a crystal glass. The Talmud explains that this gesture signified that weddings should be celebrated with decorum. Others say that the broken glass represents the Jewish community's sorrow over the destruction of the Temple. The implication is that no celebration is complete without the Temple. Some say that the broken glass symbolizes that marriage vows are an irrevocable act. Still others say that the broken glass reminds us of the frailty of a marriage.⁵⁵ Perhaps, the sign includes all these meanings.

After the glass is broken, everyone shouts: "Mazal Tov!" literally meaning "Good Luck!" or "Congratulations." The bride and groom are then taken to a private chamber and locked alone for a brief period. This may harken back to a custom in antiquity where the union was immediately consummated. Today this time is not used to consummate the marriage, but it does symbolize that God has consecrated the man and woman as husband and wife. According to Jewish custom, an unmarried man and an unmarried woman are not allowed to be alone together in an inaccessible room. This time of togetherness and isolation symbolizes to the community that the man and woman are truly married.

It is worth noting that the customs of the ring, canopy, and outdoor wedding are not laid out in Sacred Scripture. They are based on Jewish tradition. The veiling of the bride does however seem to derive from the passage of Scripture where Rebecca veils herself before being married to Isaac (Genesis 24:65).

The Catholic Church believes that Christ the Lord raised marriage between the baptized to the dignity of a sacrament.

Sacred Scripture begins with the creation of man and woman in the image and likeness of God and concludes with a vision of “the wedding-feast of the Lamb.” Scripture speaks throughout of marriage and its “mystery,” its institution and the meaning God has given it, its origin and its end, its various realizations throughout the history of salvation, the difficulties arising from sin and its renewal “in the Lord” in the New Covenant of Christ and the Church (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 1602).

The Church also teaches that marriage “is to be numbered among the sacraments of the new law.”⁵⁶ As in the Jewish understanding, marriage is a covenant. A covenant is not a legal contract but an exchange of persons. As a sacrament, it is therefore indissoluble. “What God has joined together let no man put asunder” (Mk 10:9). A covenant establishes a family relationship that mirrors the eternal life of the Holy Trinity.

The clearest difference between marriage in the Old Testament and marriage in the New Covenant is the strict prohibition against divorce and polygamy:

Moral conscience concerning the unity and indissolubility of marriage developed under the pedagogy of the old law. In the Old Testament, the polygamy of patriarchs and kings is not yet explicitly rejected. Nevertheless, the law given to Moses aims at protecting the wife from arbitrary domination by the husband, even though according to the Lord’s words it still carries traces of man’s “hardness of heart” which was

the reason Moses permitted men to divorce their wives (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 1610).

The Catholic Church teaches what Jewish tradition has constantly affirmed: divorce and polygamy are aberrations from God's original plan for men and women. The difference is that the Catholic Church has established the original and ideal plan for marriage as an absolute and unalterable state.

Sacramental Marriages

According to the Catholic Church, a sacramental marriage must meet the following conditions:

1. Both the man and the woman must be baptized.
2. Both the man and woman must have intent to marry according to the norms of the Church.
3. Marriage vows must be freely and validly exchanged.
4. The canonical form of marriage must be followed.⁵⁷

A Catholic bishop can dispense with the canonical form of marriage. Moreover, lack of canonical form is not considered an impediment for baptized Protestant Christians who lack access to the proper canonical form of Catholic marriage. In other words, Protestants can and do have valid sacramental marriages where the other conditions are fully met.

A Brief Word on Annulments

The Catholic Church teaches that a man and woman are not married by a priest or by the Church but directly by God Himself. Valid Christian marriages receive divine ratification. There is, therefore, no room for divorce in a Catholic marriage. Yet, most people wrongly assume that an annulment is the Catholic version of divorce.

An annulment is a *declaration* that a valid sacramental union between two people never actually occurred. For example, if one party was compelled to marry or was simply too young to give an informed consent, he or she did not enter into a sacramental marriage. The tribunal of a bishop can study a marriage and rule on whether the marriage union was sacramental or not. If not, then the two parties are free to marry.

The Catholic Church is concerned with whether the marriage covenant on the day of its celebration was a valid or invalid act. If it was not a valid act, then the marriage is declared null and void. Neither party was ever married “in God’s sight,” and so each is free to marry again according to the valid form. There is much confusion on this topic. The bottom line is this: Catholic marriage is indissoluble and annulments are not “Catholic divorces,” but declarations that a sacramental marriage never actually existed.

As we have seen, the allowance for divorce by Moses was provisional as Jesus explained:

He said to them, “For your hardness of heart Moses allowed you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so. And I say to you: whoever divorces his wife, except for *porneia*, and marries another, commits adultery” (Mt 19:8-9).

Moses' commandment that a bill of divorce be given to the woman assumes the legitimacy of divorce during the Old Testament. Jesus revokes this arrangement because the New Covenant provides the grace for indissoluble marriages. In most New Testament passages, divorce is absolutely prohibited (Mk 10:11-12; Lk 16:18; Rom 7:2-3; 1 Cor 7:10-11). The crux of Jesus' teaching on divorce in Matthew's Gospel depends on His exception for *porneia*.

The Greek word *porneia* is sometimes translated as "unchastity" or "adultery." This is not quite correct since the Greek language has words for each of these sins. *Porneia* refers to an unlawful sexual relationship. In a Jewish context, this would refer to incest—a violation of the law prohibiting marriage between relatives (cf. Lev 18:6-18). In lieu of this, we witness Saint Paul condemning incestuous relations in the strongest terms (1 Cor 5:1).

Some Jewish rabbis allowed Gentile converts to Judaism to remain in incestuous marriages. However, the Apostles at the Council of Jerusalem (A.D. 49) specifically condemned *porneia* in their deliberations and decrees (Acts 15:20, 29). The Jewish context of this apostolic prohibition of *porneia* reveals that Jesus is not allowing divorce for a single case. Rather, Jesus is stating that incestuous "marriages" should be dissolved since they are already unlawful on account of *porneia*. In such case, the two parties must separate, a practice confirmed by Saint Paul (1 Cor 5:1).

Those who are civilly divorced have two options. First, they may honestly inquire into whether their previous marriages qualify as sacramental Catholic marriages. If a previous marriage is in fact invalid, then the person may seek a decree of annulment from the Church. Second, if the previous marriage was a sacramental Catholic marriage, then the parties must

refrain from the sacraments, separate from their new reputed spouse, or “live as brother and sister” since the current union is not a valid marriage (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 1650). For those in this painful and difficult situation, the Church offers the following words of comfort:

Toward Christians who live in this situation, and who often keep the faith and desire to bring up their children in a Christian manner, priests and the whole community must manifest an attentive solicitude, so that they do not consider themselves separated from the Church, in whose life they can and must participate as baptized persons.

They should be encouraged to listen to the Word of God, to attend the Sacrifice of the Mass, to persevere in prayer, to contribute to works of charity and to community efforts for justice, to bring up their children in the Christian faith, to cultivate the spirit and practice of penance and thus implore, day by day, God’s grace (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 1651).

Although these situations are difficult, the Catholic Church seeks to uphold the original plan of God for mankind with the Jewish belief that matrimony is God’s gift to humanity—it is the divinely appointed means for new human life. In fact, God’s first commandment to Adam and Eve regarded the importance of matrimony: “Be fruitful and multiply” (Gen 1: 28). The rabbis often interpreted the marriage of Adam and Eve as having taken place on the seventh day of creation—the sacred Sabbath day. The sanctity of special days and their relationship to divine covenants is important for Jewish

religion and it is a belief shared with Catholic Christianity. This brings us to our next topic: holy days.

NOTES

⁵³ Babylonian Talmud, Kiddushin 1.

⁵⁴ *Babylonian Talmud*, Berakhot 31a.

⁵⁵ Joseph Telushkin. *Jewish Literacy* (New York: William Morrow, 2002), 677.

⁵⁶ Council of Trent, Session 24.

⁵⁷ *Codex Iuris Canonici*, Cann. 1055-1062, 1095-1107. Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1983.

11. JEWISH HOLY DAYS, CATHOLIC HOLY DAYS

*May it be Your will, LORD our God and God of our ancestors,
that you renew for us a good and sweet year.*

- Prayer for the Eve of Rosh ha-Shanah

THE BIBLE BEGINS WITH the creation of a cosmic calendar. The creation account of Genesis establishes the cycle of the Jewish calendar. The universe is ordered on a seven-day schedule, climaxing in the seventh and last day. This day is the *Shabbat* or Sabbath day of rest. The week therefore is the primary unit of measuring Jewish time. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the Sabbath is like God's wedding gift to Adam and Eve.

In addition to the weekly schedule, God commanded the Israelites to observe sacred feasts that were calculated not by observing the orbit of the sun, but by observing the pattern of the moon. In other words, the Israelites employed a *lunar* calendar, lasting 354 days. This lunar calendar follows a nineteen-year cycle so that seven years out of the nineteen, an extra thirteenth month is added to ensure that months and holy days land in their appropriate seasons. If this adjustment were not made, then Passover would move forward eleven days every year.

Israel had two calendar cycles: a religious cycle and a civil cycle. The religious calendar began with the month of Nisan, because God delivered Israel from Egypt in the month of Nisan: "This month shall be to

you the beginning of months” (Ex 12:2). However, the official Jewish New Year corresponded to the first day of *Tisbri*, the seventh month, because it was believed that God created the universe on the first day of the month of *Tisbri*.

Modern Months	Hebrew Months	Holy Days
March-April	<i>Nisan</i>	14 th - Passover
April-May	<i>Iyar</i>	
May-June	<i>Sivan</i>	6 th - Pentecost
June-July	<i>Tammuz</i>	
July-Aug	<i>Av</i>	
Aug-Sept	<i>Elul</i>	
		1 st - Rosh ha-Shanah
Sept-Oct	<i>Tisbri</i>	10 th - Yom Kippur
		15-22 nd - Tabernacles
Oct-Nov	<i>Khesbvan</i> ⁵⁸	
Nov-Dec	<i>Kislev</i>	25 th - Hanukkah
Dec-Jan	<i>Tevet</i>	
Jan-Feb	<i>Sevat</i>	
Feb-March	<i>Adar</i>	14 th - Purim
Leap Year Month	<i>Second Adar</i>	

Five of the seven Jewish feasts listed above find their origin in Moses (Lev 23). *Hanukkah* and *Purim* were not instituted by Moses and came centuries later. According to the Law of Moses, the spring had two feasts and the fall had three feasts. Some Christians see the spring feasts as signifying the first coming of Christ and the fall feasts as symbolizing the second coming of Christ. Jesus fulfilled the Passover through His death and

resurrection, and He fulfilled Pentecost by sending the Holy Spirit. Christ's second coming would then correspond to the Jewish holy days of the fall season. The blasting of the final trump recalls the trumpet blasts of *Rosh ha-Shanah*, the theme of Judgment recalls *Yom Kippur*, and the final establishment of God's presence with us recalls the Feast of Tabernacles. Keeping this in mind, let us first examine the spring festivals and then move to the fall festivals.

Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread

Passover is the most well known feast of the Israelites. It occurs on the fourteenth day of the month of *Nisan*, and it commemorates the evening on which the angel of death killed the firstborn sons of Egypt, a miracle that convinced the Pharaoh to release the Israelites from slavery. We examined the details of the Passover and how they relate to the death of Christ and the Holy Eucharist.

The date for the feast of Passover is noteworthy because the Catholic Church's calculation for the date of Easter derives from the Jewish calculation for Passover. The formula for calculating the date of Easter is called the *computus*. According to the Roman *computus*, Easter is the first Sunday, after the fourteenth day of the lunar cycle beginning on or after March 21.

Got it? Don't worry if the *computus* gives you a headache. One of the earliest heresies began with a group of early Christians who argued, "If the fourteenth day of the Jewish month of Nisan were good enough for Jesus, then it's good enough for us." These Christians celebrated Easter on the fourteenth day of the Jewish month of Nisan regardless of whether it fell on a Sunday. These Christians were called the Quartodecimans ("the Fourteeners"). Moreover, the

Quartodecimans claimed that they learned their practice from the Apostle John.

The Christians in Rome and Egypt objected to this practice and believed that Easter should be celebrated only on a Sunday since Christ rose on a Sunday. Hence, they celebrated Easter on the Sunday *after* the fourteenth of Nisan. This all came to a head when Pope Victor I (ca. 189-199) excommunicated all the Quartodecimans at the end of the second century. Sainly bishops and martyrs of the Quartodeciman party who died before the excommunication were still considered saints, but from that point onward, Quartodecimans were branded as heretics—a peculiar heresy in the history of Christianity. The current *computus* was standardized at the first ecumenical Council of Nicea in A.D. 325. The Eastern Orthodox Church sometimes celebrates Easter on a different Sunday because they insist on calculating the date using the old Julian Calendar and not the current Gregorian Calendar used by the rest of the world.

The seven days after the Passover were the Festival of the Unleavened Bread. The Israelites did not consume any leavened bread during this time to remind them of their swift departure out of the bondage of Egypt. It was believed that the Israelites fled Egypt so hastily that they did not have time to allow their bread to rise. The leaven or yeast used to make bread rise became associated with sin, so that Saint Paul would later say, “For Christ, our paschal lamb, has been sacrificed. Let us, therefore, celebrate the festival, not with the old leaven, the leaven of malice and evil, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth” (1 Cor 5:7-8). For this reason, the Roman Catholic Church uses only unleavened bread in the Holy Eucharist. This flat bread recalls the Feast of the Unleavened Bread.

Feast of Pentecost

The feast of *Shavuot* (“Weeks”) occurred forty-nine days (seven weeks) after the Feast of Passover. Since it was the fiftieth day after Passover, it acquired the Greek name of *Pentecost*, meaning “fiftieth.” Pentecost marked the end of the grain harvest and designated a time of prosperity and joy. Moses stipulated that an offering of two loaves of bread be offered to God on this day as a sign of gratitude (Lev 23:15-21).

Just as Passover symbolized the liberty of the Israelites from Egyptian bondage, the Feast of Pentecost symbolized the presentation of the Law to Israel through the prophet Moses. This is paralleled in the Catholic Church by the Christian feast of Pentecost, which is exactly fifty days after Easter. This holy day recalls how Christ poured out the Holy Spirit on the Apostles and the Church (Acts 2). Just as the Law was given to Israel on the feast of Pentecost, so the Spirit was given to the Church on the feast of Pentecost. For Catholics, the Jewish harvest theme is an allegory of the harvest of souls gathered in by the twelve Apostles of Christ.

New Year's Day

The phrase *Rosh ha-Shanah* literally means “head of the year” (Ezek 40:1). It occurs in the autumn as a harvest festival—typically around October. Moses refers to the day as *Yom Terua* (“The Day of the Blowing”), a reference to the ceremonial blowing of the *shofar* (“ram’s horn”) for the thirty days preceding the feast. The sound of the horn is supposed to rouse the soul out of its slumber of sin. On the day of *Rosh ha-Shanah*, faithful Jews pray near running water as a symbol of spiritual cleansing. To this is added the practice of *tashlikh*—a ceremony of casting stones or bread into the water as a

symbol of casting off sin. It was derived from the scriptural words, "And God shall throw their sins into the depths of the sea" (Mic 7:19).

Rosh ha-Shanah is the first of the *Yamim Noraim* ("Days of Awe") that conclude with the feast of *Yom Kippur* ("Day of Atonement"). The entire month of Elul preceding *Rosh ha-Shanah* is a time of spiritual preparation and repentance. These thirty days give way to the ten "Days of Awe" and culminate in the "Day of Atonement." Hence, the Jewish people experience forty days of spiritual repentance before in the Day of the Atonement.

These forty days are a clear analogue to the Catholic practice of Lent—a forty-day preparation for the "Day of Atonement" of Good Friday and the joy of Easter Sunday. The rabbis believed that God judges the souls of men on *Rosh ha-Shanah*. In mind of this, *Rosh ha-Shanah* is sometimes called the "Day of Judgment."

Day of Atonement

Regarding the Day of Atonement, Moses commanded: "You shall afflict yourselves" (Lev 23:27). Orthodox Jews obey this injunction by keeping a twenty-five hour fast from all food, drink, and sexual relations. This is the only fast day mandated by the Law of Moses. It begins one hour before sundown and extends to sundown the following day. You might also see contemporary Jews wearing canvas tennis shoes on this day since it seems presumptuous to ask God for mercy when standing in the shoes made from a slaughtered animal.

The rabbis taught that the forty days of penance leading up to *Yom Kippur* ("Day of Atonement") corresponded to the forty days Moses lived on Mount Sinai before descending with the replacement set of the Ten Commandments. The original tablets of the Ten

Commandment were broken when Moses descended the mountain and saw the Israelites engaged in idolatry. The fact that God gave Moses another copy of the tablets after forty days was a sign that Moses had atoned for their sins.

Liturgically speaking, the Day of Atonement was the most solemn day of the year. By the end of the day, the High Priest would have changed his vestments five different times, immersed his body in the *mikvah* five times, and washed his hands and feet ten times! He would have sacrificed seven animals⁵⁹ and made three offerings of incense. He also entered the Holy of Holies three times and pronounced the sacred covenantal name of God.

The author of the book of Hebrews explains that feast of *Yom Kippur* was symbolic of Christ's work of redemption as High Priest on the cross:

But into the second [i.e. Holy of Holies] only the high priest goes, and he but once a year, and not without taking blood which he offers for himself and for the errors of the people.

But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things that have come, then through the greater and more perfect tent (not made with hands, that is, not of this creation) he entered once for all into the Holy Place, taking not the blood of goats and calves but his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption (Heb 9:7, 11-12).

When Christ died, the veil of the Temple covering the Holy of Holies was torn in half. This signified that Christ had entered the heavenly Holy of Holies through His sacrifice on the cross and had made atonement for

all mankind. Consequently, Good Friday was the definitive “day of atonement.”

Feast of Tabernacles

The third feast of autumn was *Sukkot* (“Tabernacles”). The Hebrew word *sukkot* is usually translated as “tabernacles” or “booths,” and refers to the small huts that the Israelites lived in for the eight days of the festival. However, the Hebrew word *sukkah* literally means “covering.” *Sukkah* can refer to a physical shelter from the elements such as foliage, or a man-made hut (Gen 33:7; 1 Kings 20:12; 16; Job 27:18; Jon 4:5). However, the Hebrew word can also refer to exalted coverings: the clouds in the sky, or even the *shekinah* glory cloud of God’s presence over the Temple (2 Sam 22:12; Job 36:29; Ps 18:11; Is 4:5-6).

The tabernacles recalled Israel’s forty years of wandering in the deserts of Sinai. The feast of Tabernacles was also one of the three pilgrim festivals that obligated all adult males to journey to Jerusalem. The festival climaxed in an eighth day of rest, feasting, and solemn assembly.

It is worth noting that the Hebrew Scriptures never describe the Israelites as living in huts made of foliage while in the wilderness. Rather they lived in tents. The feast of Tabernacles likely commemorates the inauguration of God’s presence with the people of Israel after the Exodus. After they passed through the Red Sea, the Israelites dwelled “in Sukkot” (Ex 12:37-13:20). When they left Sukkot, the glory cloud of God’s presence went before them.

And they moved on from *Succoth*, and encamped at Etham, on the edge of the wilderness. And the LORD went before them by day in a pillar

of cloud to lead them along the way, and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, that they might travel by day and by night; the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night did not depart from before the people (Ex 13:20-22).

Perhaps the people dwelled in foliage huts at Sukkot, but the most important event that occurred at the physical location of *Sukkot* or *Sucoth* was that God took up his dwelling in a *sukkah* of cloud. Jews responded to the enduring presence of God in their midst by making “coverings” in which they could dwell for eight days.

The feast of Tabernacles is also believed to be the festival of the Gentiles. According to the prophet Zechariah, the Messiah would transform the holy day of Tabernacles into a universal festival for all the nations of the earth.

Then every one that survives of all the nations that have come against Jerusalem shall go up year after year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles. And if any of the families of the earth do not go up to Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, there will be no rain upon them (Zech 14:16-17).

King Solomon chose the festival of Tabernacles as the occasion for the dedication of the completed Temple. Liturgically, it was associated with the Temple, light, rain, and living waters, because it recalled the presence of God in the glory cloud.

And there shall be continuous day, as the LORD knows it. There shall not be day and night, for at evening time there shall be light.

Living waters shall flow out of Jerusalem on that day (Zech 14:7-8).

The glory cloud rested over the Tabernacle (the place of God's presence) and, its identification as a cloud associates it with rain. Not incidentally, then, Christ chose the Feast of Tabernacles to deliver his famous "living waters" sermon:

Now the Jewish feast of Tabernacles was at hand. Jesus stood up in the middle of the feast and went up into the Temple and taught. On the last day of the feast, the great day, Jesus stood up and proclaimed:

"If any one thirst, let him come to me and drink. He who believes in me, as the scripture has said, 'Out of his heart shall flow rivers of living water.'"

Now this he said about the Spirit, which those who believed in him were to receive. Now the Spirit had not yet been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified (Jn 7:2, 4, 37-39).

Thus, Christ deepened the meaning of the feast of Tabernacles. The true Temple or Tabernacle is not the stone shrine standing in Jerusalem but His own body. The living waters actually referred to the coming of the Holy Spirit—the living water that would flow from Christ and be applied through the Christian sacrament of Baptism.

Christ also seems to have mapped the symbolism of Tabernacles over the last week of His passion. Moses commands that on the feast of Tabernacles, "you shall take for yourself on the first day the fruit of goodly trees, branches of palm trees, and

boughs of thick trees, and willows of the brook” (Lev 23:40). The events of Palm Sunday and the account of Christ cursing the fig tree for its inability to bear fruit seem to point to the ceremonies involving fruit and palms on the feast of Tabernacles. The eight days of Holy Week ended with the resurrection of Christ’s body—a kind of dedication of the true Temple. “Jesus answered them, ‘Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.’ But he spoke of the temple of his body” (Jn 2:19, 21).

Palm Sunday is also related to the feast of Tabernacles in that the feast of Tabernacles was associated with the words of Psalm 118:25-26:

Save us, we beseech thee, O LORD!

O LORD, we beseech thee, give us success!

Blessed be he who comes in the name of the LORD!

You may remember that Christ came into Jerusalem with shouts of *Hosanna* meaning “Save us” and “Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord” (Jn 12:13). The eight days from Palm Sunday to Easter Sunday intentionally mirror the eight-day festival of Tabernacles.

Two Additional Holy Days – Purim and Hanukkah

Purim (Hebrew for “Lots”) is a festival kept by Jews, but one not instituted by Moses. It is observed on the fourteenth day of the month of *Adar*. In leap years, *Purim* is celebrated in the second *Adar*. It commemorates the deliverance of the Jews through the intervention of a Jewish princess named Esther, as recounted in the biblical book by the same name. On

this day, Orthodox Jews attend synagogue where the book of Esther is read. They send food gifts to friends, give alms to the poor, and celebrate with a festive meal. Jewish children often dress up in costumes that resemble the characters from the story of Esther. There is no Catholic equivalent of the Feast of *Purim*. The closest approximation would be the feasts of the Blessed Virgin Mary, where a woman is recognized for her great role in the salvation of mankind.

Christians are familiar with the eight-day festival of Hanukkah because of its proximity to Christmas. It is commemorated on the twenty-fifth day of *Kislev*, and falls sometime in late November or December. *Hanukkah*, like the feast of *Purim*, was instituted after Moses' time. It is the most recent festival, dating to the second century before Christ. The story of the first Hanukkah is quite interesting.

In 167 B.C., the Syro-Greek king Antiochus IV Epiphanes began to persecute the Jewish people. Antiochus IV forbade circumcision, burned Jewish Scriptures, forced Jews to eat unclean swine's flesh, and desecrated the Temple in Jerusalem by commanding an un-kosher sacrifice of swine on the Temple's altar.

Horrified by the sacrilege of Antiochus IV, an elderly priest Mattathias and his son Judah *Maccabaeus* ("the Hammer") formed a militia and waged a war of guerilla tactics against the occupying Greek forces: "Every man who has zeal for the Law and maintains the Covenant, let him follow me!" (1 Macc 2:27). The revolution succeeded and the Temple was rededicated in 164 B.C. on the twenty-fifth day of *Kislev*. The festival commemorating the event is called *Hanukkah*, meaning "Dedication."

The feast of Hanukkah lasts eight days because Judas Maccabaeus wanted to imitate King Solomon. After all, Solomon had dedicated the original temple

during the eight-day feast of Tabernacles. However, the feast of Tabernacles falls in the month of *Tishri*, not *Kislev*. Instead of waiting another ten months, Judas Maccabaeus decreed that a new eight-day festival be created in imitation of the festival of Tabernacles, beginning on the twenty-fifth day of the Jewish month of *Kislev*. The book of 2 Maccabees records that Judas Maccabaeus instituted the eight-day festival because, “Solomon also kept the eight days,” when the original Temple was dedicated (2 Macc 2:12).

The Jewish *Talmud* offers another tradition to explain the eight days of Hanukkah. When the Jews recaptured Jerusalem from the tyrannous Greeks, the Jewish priests did not have enough oil to keep the Temple’s menorah lit. There was only enough sacred oil to burn for one day and it would take at least a week to mix a fresh supply of holy oil. Yet, the one-day supply of holy oil lasted for eight days by a divine miracle. For this reason, faithful Jews light the menorah during the eight days of the festival.

Many Christians are unaware of these connections. As a result, they miss the important “Hanukkah message” of Christ in John’s Gospel. The presence of Christ at the Temple during Hanukkah is important because Hanukkah recalled how the Maccabees dedicated the Temple after the Greeks had defiled it. However, the presence of God’s glory did not manifest itself at that time and fill the Temple as it did in the days of King Solomon. Since the time of the Maccabees, God had not inhabited the Temple as He had before the Jews’ Babylonian exile. The presence of Christ in the Temple at Hanukkah shows that God’s presence had once again entered to the Temple.

It was the feast of the Dedication [i.e. Hanukkah] at Jerusalem. It was winter and Jesus

was walking in the Temple, in the portico of Solomon. So the Jews gathered round him and said to him, “How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Christ, tell us openly” (Jn 10:22-24).

It was during Hanukkah that Christ answered them by boldly proclaiming: “I and the Father are one” (Jn 10:30). Christ entered into the Temple on the feast of Hanukkah and presented himself as the God of Israel. His enemies immediately understood His claim in light of Hanukkah’s significance. We know this because they took up stones to stone him and said “we stone you for blasphemy, because you, being a man, make yourself to be God” (Jn 10:31-33). Hence, the festival of Hanukkah serves as a sign of Christ’s fulfillment of the Temple and the entire Old Covenant. Jesus was not only a gifted rabbi from Nazareth—He is the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. As it turns out, Jesus’ relationship with Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and all the righteous of the Old Testament sheds light on why Catholic Christians honor and revere the saints.

NOTES

⁵⁸ This month is also called *Bul* (1 Kings 6:38).

⁵⁹ Two lambs, one bull, two goats, and two rams.

12. JEWISH TZADDIKIM, CATHOLIC SAINTS

I know, I know. We are Your chosen people. But, once in a while, can't You choose someone else?

- Joseph Stein's *Fiddler on the Roof*

ACCORDING TO AN ANCIENT Jewish tradition, the universe is sustained by the presence of at least thirty-six *tzaddikim* or “righteous ones” in every generation.⁶⁰ However, no one knows the identity of these *tzaddikim*. They are humble souls who quietly pray and perform good deeds for the benefit of the world. It is believed that God does not judge the world on account of these saintly souls. For this reason, you may hear a Jewish person compliment someone else by saying, “You’re such a *tzaddik*.” This corresponds to the Catholic phrase, “Oh, he’s a real saint.”

The idea that God preserves a society on the account of the righteous ones present within it finds its origin in the Hebrew Scriptures. We read about how Abraham bartered with God over the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah not wanting God to destroy the cities because of the righteous inhabitants who might live there.

Then Abraham said, “Oh let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak again but this once. Suppose ten are found there.” God answered,

“For the sake of ten I will not destroy it” (Gen 18:32-33).

The Catholic Church also teaches that there have been exceptionally holy souls in every age who have prayed and suffered for the wellbeing of the world. They may have been public figures or hidden servants, but the Church holds them up as examples for the faithful to imitate. These are the “canonized” saints of the Catholic Church. The Greek word *canon* means “measuring rod.” These exemplar Christians have been measured and found exceptional, because their cooperation with grace brings glory to God and fulfills the petition of the *Our Father*—hallowed be thy name.

The practice of hallowing or sanctifying the name of God is called in Hebrew: *kiddush ha-Shem* or “sanctifying the Name.” Jews and Catholics are united in their belief that actions speak louder than words. “Little children, let us not love in word or speech but in deed and in truth” (1 Jn 3:18). We are not holy because of our words but because of the lives we live. Similarly, Jews and Christians believe that the ultimate act of fidelity is the act of martyrdom—facing death for the love of God.

The Maccabean Martyrs

The seventh chapter of the Second Book of Maccabees (a book belonging to the Catholic Bible, but not among the Hebrew collection of Scriptures) tells the story of seven faithful Jewish brothers who maintained their fidelity to the Law of God in the face of persecution during the tyranny of Antiochus IV in the second century B.C. The New Testament book of Hebrews commends these martyrs as exemplars of living faith (Heb 11:35). The horrific murder of these Maccabean

martyrs was so terrible and gruesome that we derived an English word from it—*macabre*.⁶¹

These seven Jewish brothers and their mother were arrested and ordered to eat the un-kosher flesh of a pig. One of the brothers spoke up and bravely pronounced, “What do you intend to ask and learn from us? For we are ready to die rather than transgress the laws of our fathers.”

The king became frenzied with rage against the man on account of his defiant words. So the king ordered that large iron pans and caldrons be heated to red-hot temperatures. The king then ordered that the man’s tongue be cut out, his scalp removed, and his hands and feet be amputated in the presence of his six brothers and mother. The body parts were then fried in the oversized pan. Next, the king had the brother cast into the pan. As the Jewish brother burned, the mother and brothers encouraged one another by saying, “The Lord God is watching over us and in truth has compassion on us, as Moses declared in his song which bore witness against the people to their faces, when he said, ‘And he will have compassion on his servants.’”

After the first brother had died in this way, they brought forward the second for their sport. They tore off the skin of his head with the hair, and asked him, “Will you eat rather than have your body punished limb by limb?”

He replied in the Hebrew language, “No.” Therefore he in turn underwent tortures as the first brother had done. And when he was at his last breath, he said, “You accursed wretch, you

dismiss us from this present life, but the King of the universe will raise us up to an everlasting renewal of life, because we have died for his laws.”

The Greeks continued to slaughter the third, fourth, fifth, and sixth brothers of this Jewish family in a most disgraceful way. Next, the Scriptural account turns its attention to their valiant mother who stood by watching.

The mother was especially admirable and worthy of honorable memory. Though she watched seven of her sons perish within a single day, she bore it with good courage because of her hope in the Lord. She encouraged each of them in the Hebrew language of their fathers. Filled with a noble spirit, she fired her woman’s reasoning with a man’s courage, and called out to them:

“I do not know how you came into being in my womb. It was not I who gave you life and breath, nor I who set in order the elements within each of you. Therefore the Creator of the world, who shaped the beginning of man and devised the origin of all things, will in His mercy give life and breath back to you again, since you now forget yourselves for the sake of His laws.”

Antiochus IV felt that he was being treated with contempt, and he was suspicious of her reproachful tone. The youngest brother being still alive, Antiochus not only appealed to him in words, but also promised with oaths that he would make him rich and enviable if he would turn from the ways of his fathers, and that he

would take him for his friend and entrust him with public affairs.

Since the young man would not listen to him at all, the king called the mother to him and urged her to advise the youth to save himself. After much urging on his part, she undertook to persuade her son. But, leaning close to him, she spoke in their native tongue as follows, deriding the cruel tyrant:

“My son, have pity on me. I carried you nine months in my womb, and nursed you for three years, and have reared you and brought you up to this point in your life, and have taken care of you. I beg you, my child, to look at the heaven and the earth and see everything that is in them, and recognize that God did not make them out of things that existed. Thus, also mankind comes into being. Do not fear this butcher, but prove worthy of your brothers. Accept death, so that in God’s mercy I may get you back again with your brothers.”

While she was still speaking, the young man said, “What are you waiting for? I will not obey the king’s command, but I obey the command of the law that was given to our fathers through Moses. But you, who have contrived all sorts of evil against the Hebrews, will certainly not escape the hands of God. For we are suffering because of our own sins. And if our living Lord is angry for a little while, to rebuke and discipline us, he will again be reconciled with his own servants. But you, unholy wretch, you most defiled of all men, do not be elated in vain and puffed up by uncertain hopes, when you raise

your hand against the children of heaven. You have not yet escaped the judgment of the almighty, all-seeing God. For our brothers after enduring a brief suffering have drunk of ever flowing life under God's covenant; but you, by the judgment of God, will receive just punishment for your arrogance. I, like my brothers, give up body and life for the laws of our fathers, appealing to God to show mercy soon to our nation and by afflictions and plagues to make you confess that He alone is God, and through me and my brothers to bring to an end the wrath of the Almighty which has justly fallen on our whole nation."

The king fell into a rage, and handled him worse than the others, being exasperated at his scorn. Last of all, the mother died, after her sons (2 Mac 7:1-41).

A Catholic Church in Rome was once dedicated to these holy Jewish martyrs. It is known today as *San Pietro in Vincoli* or "Saint Peter in Chains" because it houses the chains used by the pagan Roman authorities to arrest Saint Peter. However, in 1876 an archeologist found beneath the church what were once believed to be the tombs of the seven martyred brothers of the Maccabean story. This is providential since this Roman church is now known throughout the world for its famous statue of Michelangelo's Moses as the great giver of the Law. In this Catholic church, one can see the connection between the Law of Moses and those martyrs who died on account of that sacred Law. Even more, their memory is joined with the imprisonment and eventual martyrdom of the Church's first Pope—Saint Peter.

Heavenly Intercession of the Saints

The Catholic Church teaches that saints and martyrs are able to intercede for those still on earth. Catholics often ask the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Apostles, the Martyrs, and all the saints to intercede with Christ for our benefit. Most Jews, on the other hand, do not directly invoke departed souls because Judaism does not have a universal belief about the afterlife. However, Jews do believe that angels and departed *tzaddikim* (righteous ones) do in fact intercede for the faithful on earth.

Jews believe that the Archangel Michael protects and prays for the people of Israel (Dan 10:21, 12:1). Jewish literature also depicts angels as carrying Jewish prayers to God (Job 12:15) and the New Testament confirms this intercessory role of angels (Rev 8:2). In the second century before Christ, the deceased High Priest Onias was seen praying for “the whole body of the Jews with outstretched hands” (2 Mac 12:15). The deceased prophet Jeremiah also prayed for Jerusalem and strengthened Judas Maccabaeus for battle (2 Mac 15:14-16).

Jews also believe that the matriarch Rachel (the wife of Jacob/Israel) is a vigilant mother who protects and prays for the children of Israel: “Rachel is weeping for her children. She refuses to be comforted for her children, because they are no more” (Jer 31:15). For centuries, Jews have made pilgrimages to the Tomb of Rachel, considered the third holiest shrine of Judaism. Faithful Jews have come from all over the world, praying for everything from world peace to a suitable spouse. Barren women in particular come to this shrine to pray, knowing that God will answer prayers through the intercession of Mother Rachel, who herself had been barren for many years. In this way, Mother Rachel’s role is similar to that of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Catholicism.

A Hero of the Holocaust—Saint Maximilian Kolbe

Speaking of love for the Blessed Virgin Mary, Saint Maximilian Kolbe was a saint who was fully devoted to Jesus and Mary. While imprisoned in the Nazi concentration camp of Auschwitz, Father Kolbe volunteered to die in solidarity with those who suffered, both Jews and Gentiles. For Christians and Jews, he is a hero who brought light to the dark days of the holocaust.

Maximilian was a Polish Franciscan priest ordained on April 28th 1918. The following day he celebrated his first Mass in Rome in the Basilica of St Andrea delle Fratte at the “Altar of the Miracle.” This location for his first Mass was providential since the Blessed Virgin Mary had appeared in this chapel to the Jewish atheist Alphonse Ratisbonne on January 20th 1842. Ratisbonne immediately became a believer, received baptism, and was subsequently ordained as a Catholic priest.⁶² Thus, Saint Maximilian’s martyrdom at Auschwitz fittingly corresponded to his first Mass at the “Altar of the Miracle.” As a knight of the Immaculate Mary, he was mystically related to the Jewish people.

In 1919, he returned to the newly independent Poland, where he founded the monastery of Niepokalanów near Warsaw, a seminary, and a radio station. Between 1930 and 1936, he went on an evangelistic mission to Japan, where he founded another monastery, another seminary, and a newspaper.

World War II was already underway when Father Kolbe returned to Poland. At this time, Kolbe sheltered two thousand Jews in his monastery. He also denounced the Nazi party through radio broadcasts. This led to his imprisonment on February 17th 1941. Three months later, Kolbe was transferred to Auschwitz as prisoner #16670.

While at Auschwitz, a man from Kolbe's cell disappeared. In response to what appeared to be a successful escape, Nazi commander Karl Fritzsch chose ten men from the same bunker to suffer death by dehydration and starvation in order to deter further escape attempts. Incidentally, the alleged escapee was later found drowned in the camp latrine.

Of the ten men chosen to starve to death was one Franciszek Gajowniczek, who cried out: "My wife! My children! I will never see them again!" Deeply moved by the man's lament, Father Kolbe stepped forward and asked Fritzsch if he might take the place of the despairing father.

Surprised, the Nazi commander asked, "What does this Polish pig want?"

Father Kolbe pointed to the father and explained: "I am a Catholic priest. I would like to take his place, because he has a wife and children."

Father Kolbe's request was granted. After a lengthy period of dehydration and starvation, only Kolbe and three other men remained alive. Kolbe acted as a prison chaplain, leading these men in prayer and hymns. At last, Father Kolbe and these three men died on August 14th 1941 when the Nazis injected them with carbolic acid.

Saint Maximilian Kolbe is one of ten twentieth-century martyrs depicted over the Great West Door of Westminster Abbey, London. Pope John Paul II canonized Maximilian Kolbe on October 10th 1982 and called him a "martyr of charity," because he lived the Catholic Faith with sacrificial love for his neighbor:

Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends (Jn 15:13).

The Nun of Auschwitz—Saint Teresa Benedicta

Edith Stein was born on October 12th 1891 to an Orthodox Jewish family living in Germany's Prussian Province of Silesia. In 1916, she earned her doctorate of philosophy for the dissertation she wrote under the famous phenomenological philosopher Edmund Husserl, *On The Problem of Empathy*. Afterward, Edith joined the philosophical faculty in Freiburg.

During the summer of 1921, at the age of twenty-nine, Edith noticed a friend's copy of the spiritual autobiography of Saint Teresa of Avila, a mystic of the Carmelite Order. Edith was so enthralled that she read the book in one sitting. The next morning she purchased a Roman Missal and a Catholic catechism and set her philosophical mind to understanding the Catholic Faith. Edith felt that God had called her to embrace Jesus as the Messiah. She received the sacrament of baptism on January 1, 1922—appropriately enough on the Feast of the Circumcision of Christ. Twelve years later in 1934 she entered the Carmelite convent in Cologne, taking the religious name Teresa Benedicta of the Cross.

While she lived in the convent in Cologne, Teresa Benedicta returned to her academic studies. At this time, she composed a work about her own family entitled *The Life of a Jewish Family*. "I simply want to report what I experienced as part of Jewish humanity," she wrote. "We who grew up in Judaism have a duty to bear witness to the young generation who are brought up in racial hatred from early childhood."

As the Nazis gained power, Sister Teresa Benedicta's religious superiors feared that she might be in danger as an ethnic Jew. They promptly transferred her to another Carmelite convent in the Netherlands. In 1942, the Nazis declared that all ethnic Jews, even converts to Christianity, would be deported to

concentration camps. The Nazis arrested Edith Stein and her sister Rosa (also a convert to Catholicism) while they were at prayer in the Carmelite chapel. From this incident, we have Edith's last recorded words: "Come, we are going for our people."

A cattle train carried Edith and her sister to the concentration camp of Auschwitz. The conditions in the boxcars were so inhumane that many died or went insane on the four-day journey. After arriving at Auschwitz, Edith died in the gas chambers on August 9, 1942—almost one year after the death of Maximilian Kolbe.

Before Edith Stein was captured, she made the following comment about the Nazi atrocities being inflicted against her Jewish brothers and sisters.

"I never knew that people could be like this, neither did I know that my brothers and sisters would have to suffer like this. I pray for them every hour. Will God hear my prayers? He will certainly hear them in their distress."

Father Jan Nota, a friend of Edith Stein, wrote: "She is a witness to God's presence in a world where God is absent."

Pope John Paul II declared Edith Stein, or more properly Sister Teresa Benedicta of the Cross, a Catholic saint in 1998. This action proved controversial since the Pope also declared her a martyr of the Catholic Church. After all, said some, a Catholic martyr is one who dies for the Catholic faith, whereas Saint Teresa Benedicta of the Cross died for her Jewish ethnicity. However, Teresa Benedicta of the Cross would not have made that distinction. She believed that her identity with the Jewish victims of the holocaust was not in opposition to her Catholic faith, but rooted in the shared heritage of the children of Abraham. In the face of Nazi

persecution, we might imagine the brave words of the Maccabean martyrs in the mouth of Saint Teresa Benedicta of the Cross:

I, like my brothers, give up body and life for the laws of our fathers, appealing to God to show mercy soon to our nation and by afflictions and plagues to make you confess that He alone is God (2 Maccabees 7:37).

NOTES

⁶⁰ *Babylonian Talmud*, Sanhedrin 97b, Sukkah 45b.

⁶¹ From the Old French *danse Macabré* or so-called “dance of death” first attested to in 1376 from the Medieval Latin *Chorea Machabæorum* meaning “dance of the Maccabees.”

⁶² Alphonse Ratisbonne’s exact account: “I looked over towards this chapel whence so much light shone, and above the altar was a living figure, tall, majestic, beautiful and full of mercy. It was the most holy Virgin Mary, resembling her figure on the Miraculous Medal. At this sight, I fell on my knees right where I stood. Unable to look up because of the blinding light, I fixed my glance on her hands, and in them I could read the expression of mercy and pardon. In the presence of the Most Blessed Virgin, even though she did not speak a word to me, I understood the frightful situation I was in, my sins and the beauty of the Catholic Faith. I began to shout: ‘I have seen her! When can I receive baptism?’” Ratisbonne was subsequently ordained a Catholic priest in 1847.

13. JEWISH AFTERLIFE, CATHOLIC AFTERLIFE

All things are mortal but the Jew. All other forces pass, but he remains. What is the secret of his immortality?

- Mark Twain

TRADITIONAL JUDAISM DOES NOT believe that death is the end of human existence. Orthodox Jews continue to pray for the deceased, a sign that there is some sort of life after death. An Orthodox Jew is free to believe that the souls of the righteous dead go to a place similar to what Christians believe to be heaven, or that they simply “sleep” until the coming of the Messiah, when they will be resurrected. Some Orthodox Jews believe that the wicked are tormented and others believe that they simply cease to exist. Judaism does not have a Pope or a recognized body of rabbis so it is difficult to pin down the “official” beliefs of Judaism with regard to the afterlife.

The Old Testament indicates in several places that the righteous will be reunited with their loved ones after death, while the wicked will be excluded from this reunion. The Torah, for instance, speaks of the people’s being “gathered to their fathers.” The Bible speaks this way about the death of Abraham (Gen 25:8), Ishmael (Gen 25:17), Isaac (Gen 35:29), Jacob (Gen 49:33), and Moses (Deut 32:50). Certain sins were punished by the sinner’s being “cut off from his people” (Gen 17:14; Ex 31:14). This punishment is called *kareit* (“cutting off”), and some rabbis have interpreted it to mean that the

soul loses its portion in the *olam ha-ba* (“world to come”).

The Resurrection of the Body

Judaism is one of the few world religions to affirm that the created, physical universe is good. Most of the eastern religions believe that creation is somehow evil or illusionary and follow the Platonic image that the physical body is a “prison for the soul.” These philosophies and religions attempt to solve the problem of evil by saying that physical things are evil and that spiritual things are good.

Judaism rejects this understanding of the universe. Instead, Judaism recalls the opening lines of Genesis where God pronounced that creation was “good” and that the creation of physical human beings was “very good.” God did not give Adam an evil body so that he could spend the rest of his life trying to escape it. Rather, God gave Adam a body because it was “good.” For this reason, the Old Testament does not present an afterlife without also including the human body. This is why Judaism developed a robust doctrine of the bodily resurrection. Their thinking goes like this: “If God said that creation and our bodies are *good*, then eternal life must somehow include these *good* elements.”

For this reason, the Messianic world-to-come (*olam ha-ba*) is understood as a time of physical resurrection. The goal of salvation is not merely the soul’s repose in heaven. Rather the goal of human salvation is the reintegration of the human person in the image of God. This reintegration of the human person includes the body and the soul and thus entails the resurrection of both the body and the soul. Orthodox Jews acknowledge this truth when they recite the traditional *Shemoneh Esrei* (“Eighteen Blessings”) prayer

three times every day. This prayer contains numerous references to the *Tehiyat ha-Metim* (“resurrection of the dead”).⁶³ Moreover, the famous medieval rabbi Maimonides, in his commentary on the *Mishnah*, lists the *Shloshab-Asar Ikkarim* or “Thirteen Articles of Faith.” The last three of these thirteen articles define the traditional Jewish belief in the resurrection of the body and the afterlife:

11. The belief in divine reward and retribution.
12. The belief in the arrival of the Messiah and the messianic era.
13. The belief in the resurrection of the dead.

The Church received these doctrines from its Jewish heritage. Catholics affirm these three doctrines about the afterlife every time they recite the Apostles’ or Nicene Creed. “I believe in the resurrection of the body.” The ultimate goal of the Catholic Christian is not simply to “die and go to heaven,” but to be resurrected as Christ was resurrected in glory. “God raised the Lord and will also raise us up by His power” (1 Cor 6:14). Catholic Christians certainly do want to die and go to heaven, but that isn’t the end of the story. Our final hope is the resurrection of the body at the end of time.

Contemporary Jews are often puzzled by the Christian claim that Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah. “How could he be the Messiah, if he did not inaugurate the world to come and the resurrection of the dead?” This confusion stems from the Christian doctrine that the Messiah should have two advents: the First Coming and the Second Coming. Jesus as the Messiah died and rose again at his First Coming to confirm that he would once again return at the Second Coming for the general resurrection of all. Saint Paul explains the relationship

between the resurrection of Christ and the final resurrection at the end of time:

But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep. For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive. But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ. Then comes the end, when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power (1 Cor 15:20-24).

Post-Pentecostal Jews reject Jesus as the Messiah because he did not inaugurate the *world to come*. Christians, on the other hand, believe that Jesus did indeed inaugurate the world to come by His own resurrection. The fullness of the world to come has been delayed (if we can speak this way) so that the Gentiles of the world might be saved. Saint Paul explains: “I want you to understand this mystery, brethren: a hardening has come upon part of Israel, until the full number of the Gentiles come in” (Rom 11:25). As discussed above, Saint Thomas Aquinas, commenting on this verse in Romans, explains “that after the fullness of the nations have entered, ‘all Israel will be saved’, not individually as at present, but universally.”⁶⁴

Religion of Now or Later?

Some scholars of Judaism claim that belief in the afterlife is not an integral teaching of historic Judaism. Indeed, this claim has become popular wherever secular

interpretations of Judaism have held sway. Yet, this secular version of Judaism conforms neither to the Hebrew Scriptures nor the rabbinical tradition. One early rabbi shortly after the time of Jesus taught: "This world is like a lobby before the *olam ha-ba*. Prepare yourself in the lobby so that you may enter the banquet hall."⁶⁵ Clearly then, there is a life after this one. We're merely waiting in the lobby.

It is true that Judaism is not particularly a religion concerned with "how to get to heaven." Judaism is primarily concerned with living in the here and now. Orthodox Jews obey the Law because it is their sacred vocation and privilege to be chosen by God. That being said, Orthodox Jews do believe that there are gradations of honor in the *olam ha-ba*. They also believe in praying for the dead. While Orthodox Jews do not hold a formal doctrine of purgatory, they do believe that they have a duty to pray for departed souls as they prepare to enter into the world to come.

Judaism has various traditions as to whether the Gentiles will participate in the *olam ha-ba*. However, it is generally recognized that non-Jews can participate in the eternal blessings of God, so long as they were not cruel idolaters here below. Talmudic statements that seem to condemn all Gentiles universally are understandable, given that Gentiles have consistently persecuted Jews. Nevertheless, by the time of Rabbi Maimonides (d. A.D. 1204), Judaism recognized that the righteous members of any nation might also share in the *olam ha-ba*.

Heaven and Hell, Eden and Gehenna

Orthodox Jews sometimes speak of the *Gan Eden* ("Garden of Eden") as the place of spiritual reward. It seems that *Gan Eden* is not the historical location described in the Bible. The term is used to evoke the

beauty and peace that mankind experienced before sin. The rabbis describe Eden with the most beautiful imagery. The peace that one feels in Eden is sixty times deeper than the peace one feels on the Sabbath. It is more pleasurable than sexual intercourse and more pleasant than the warmth of the sun. A mortal man cannot begin to understand the glories of Eden. It is like trying to explain the concept of color to a blind man. Saint Paul uses similar language concerning the Christian understanding of Heaven: “What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man conceived, what God has prepared for those who love him” (1 Cor 2:9).

Only the truly righteous go straight to *Gan Eden*. All others go to the place of spiritual torment called *Gebinnom* or *Gebenna*. This is a place of punishment, but also a place of purification. It is sometimes called *Sheol*, meaning “the grave” or “the pit.”

The word *Gebinnom* is the name of a geographic location, the *Ge Hinnom* (“Valley of Hinnom”) located on the southern border of ancient Jerusalem. The valley stretches eastward from Mount Zion to the Kidron Valley. The Bible first mentions the location as a deep, narrow ravine at the foot of Jerusalem where refuse was burned (Josh 15:8). *Gebinnom* was also where unburied bodies were dumped. It was a cursed and unclean place. It is associated with hell because the pagan Canaanites once practiced child sacrifice at this location. The prophet Jeremiah refers to the location as the “Valley of Slaughter” (Jer 19:2-6).

Like *Gan Eden*, the cursed *Gebinnom* is not identical with its historical geographical location. *Gebinnom* is a spiritual state. Some believe *Gebinnom* is a place of eternal punishment, similar to the Christian hell of fire and brimstone. Others see it as a place of purification, like the Catholic doctrine of purgatory. A

common view is that this “purgatorial” version of *Gebinnom* lasts no longer than twelve months. After this one-year probationary period, the person ascends to his proper place in *olam ha-ba*. The twelve-month purification derives from rabbinical tradition and the liturgical prayers for the dead as found in the *Kaddish* and the *El male rachamim*.

Jesus of Nazareth taught that *Gebinnom* was not a temporary place, but an eternal state:

And if your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out; it is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than with two eyes to be thrown into Gehenna, where their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched (Mk 9:47-48).

Gebenna is also found in the epistle of James, where he teaches that *Gebenna* ignites the tongue with hurtful words (Jam 3:6).

Most Christians understand Gehenna (i.e. Hell) to be a place of eternal punishment. On the other hand, annihilationists, such as Jehovah’s Witnesses, understand Gehenna to be a place where sinners are destroyed (like garbage in a burning dump), not tormented forever. The New Testament also refers to Hades as a destination of the dead (Mt 11:23). However, Hades is portrayed differently than Gehenna.

The Harrowing of Hell and the Hope of Heaven

The Catholic Church has a very precise understanding of the afterlife as it relates to the Old Testament patriarchs and the afterlife in the New Testament. The Old Testaments believers like Abraham, Moses, Ruth, David, and Esther remained in hell until the Messiah died on the cross and freed them from their sins.

By the expression ‘He descended into hell’, the Apostles’ Creed confesses that Jesus did really die and through his death for us conquered death and the devil ‘who has the power of death’ (Heb 2:14). In his human soul united to his divine person, the dead Christ went down to the realm of the dead. He opened heaven’s gates for the just who had gone before him (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, nos. 636-637).

The Latin word *inferum* corresponds to the Greek word *hades* and the Hebrew word *sheol*. Each term indicates the grave or the place of the dead. The abode of the dead is the “hell” into which Christ descended.

It is precisely these holy souls who awaited their Savior in Abraham’s bosom whom Christ the Lord delivered when he descended into hell (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 633).

Traditional Catholic teaching holds that Christ descended to “Abraham’s bosom” or the *Limbus Patrum*—the pleasant abode of the netherworld where the Old Testament faithful waited for the coming of the Messiah. They could not yet ascend to the heavens, because Christ had not yet died on the cross. Instead, the Old Testament saints waited for the time of their release. Latin speaking theologians referred to this “nice part of hell” as *limbus* or “limbo.” The Latin word *limbus* means “border” or “edge.” *Limbus* or limbo was the “border of hell,” and it was not a place of fiery torment. Christ also taught a distinction between a nice part of hell and a bad part of hell in the Gospel of Luke:

The poor man died and was carried by the angels to Abraham’s bosom. The rich man also died and was buried; and in Hades, being in

torment, he lifted up his eyes, and saw Abraham far off and Lazarus in his bosom.

And he called out, ‘Father Abraham, have mercy upon me, and send Lazarus to dip the end of his finger in water and cool my tongue—for I am in anguish in this flame.’

But Abraham said, ‘Son, remember that you in your lifetime received your good things, and Lazarus in like manner evil things, but now he is comforted here, and you are in anguish’ (Lk 16:22-25).

Here Abraham’s bosom and the fires of hell are close enough for Abraham and Lazarus to communicate with the rich man in torment. It is a place of comfort and cool water. Prior to the death of Christ, the righteous of the Old Testament joined Abraham here to await their future redemption when they might see God face to face.

The doctrine of the “Harrowing of Hell“ holds that Christ descended to this place and preached the Gospel to those waiting redemption. “For this reason, the gospel was preached even to the dead” (1 Pet 4:6). Christ freed the Old Testament faithful and “he led captives in his train and gave gifts to men” (Eph 4:8) when He brought the Old Testament saints to heaven.

Saint Thomas Aquinas taught that Christ did not descend into the “hell of the lost” and experience the punishment of damnation. According to Saint Thomas Aquinas, Christ descended into hell only by the effect of his death, through which “he put them to shame for their unbelief and wickedness. However, to them who were detained in purgatory he gave the hope of attaining to glory. While upon the holy fathers (e.g. Abraham and

Moses) detained in hell solely on account of original sin, he shed the light of glory everlasting.”⁶⁶

Catholic Heaven

This light that Aquinas wrote about, the light of glory everlasting, is a glimpse of what defines the reality of heaven. After all, the Catholic Church understands heaven primarily in terms of the beatific vision—the vision of God’s infinite essence in the light of His glory. The human soul finds its fulfillment in God. Moreover, at the Last Judgment of Christ, the holy soul will be mystically reunited with its resurrected and glorious body. The human body is thus conformed to the resurrected body of Christ—perfect, glorious, incorruptible, and no longer subject to death, pain, or sin.

The Catholic Church teaches that each soul passes through an initial judgment after physical death. Here the person is judged as to his eternal state. Popular legend places Saint Peter at the “pearly gates” to greet the new arrivals. This is not a dogmatic teaching but a quaint and pious tradition. At death, God judges whether the soul shall enter straight into heaven, go to heaven after purification in purgatory, or straight to hell. Once in heaven, the soul enjoys the beatific vision of God, prays for those still on earth, and awaits the consummation of Christ’s kingdom at the Second Coming.

Without holiness, no man shall see God (Heb 12:14). It is therefore necessary that the redeemed be “saved through fire” (1 Cor 3:15) so that their sinful attachments might be purged away before they enter the presence of God. The Church calls this state of purification “Purgatory,” and it is for this reason that Catholics, like Jews, pray to God on behalf of those

enduring this process of spiritual cleansing. This practice derives from the Old Testament account about Judas Maccabaeus:

For if he had not hoped that they that were slain should rise again, it would have seemed superfluous and vain to pray for the dead. And because he considered that they who had fallen asleep with godliness, had great grace laid up for them. It is therefore a holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead, that they may be loosed from sins (2 Macc 12:44-46).

Praying for the dead presumes that souls do not pass immediately to heaven. It is believed that the great majority of people who enter heaven first pass through purgatory. This is not a frightful prospect, however. After all, we would certainly bathe and brush our teeth before meeting the President of the United States or the Queen of England. Should we then be surprised if we must also be purified before meeting God Almighty? Saint Catherine of Genoa wrote that the pains of purgatory are actually pleasurable because our state in purgatory is accompanied by our certain hope that we shall soon see Christ face to face and be with Him forever. The Church does teach that it is painful (just as the effects of sin are painful), and so we pray for those who have gone before us. What could be more natural than sharing our love for those who have died? Unlike non-Catholic Christians, the Catholic Church finds continuity with our elder brethren the Jews—we both pray for the dead.

EL MALE RACHAMIM
Jewish Prayer for the Dead

GOD FULL OF MERCY who dwells on high,
grant perfect rest on the wings of Your Divine Presence
in the lofty heights of the holy and pure who shine as
the brightness of the heavens to the soul of [*insert name*]
who has gone to *his* eternal rest.

As, without making a formal vow,
I pledge to give alms in memory of *his* soul.
His resting place shall be in the Garden of Eden.

Therefore, the Master of Mercy will care for *him* under
the protection of His wings for all time,
and bind *his* soul in the bond of everlasting life.

God is *his* inheritance and *he* will rest in peace.

Let us say: Amen.

NOTES

⁶³ Reform Judaism (a modern liberal expression of Judaism) tends to reject this belief and has rewritten the second blessing to minimize the doctrine of the resurrection.

⁶⁴ Saint Thomas Aquinas, *Commentary on Romans*, 11.

⁶⁵ *Babylonian Talmud*, Pirkei Avot 4:21-22.

⁶⁶ Saint Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* III, q. 52, a. 2.

EPILOGUE:
PRAY FOR THE PEACE OF JERUSALEM

TOGETHER WE HAVE DISCOVERED how Jesus of Nazareth fulfilled the Messianic prophecies of the Hebrew Scriptures. Moreover, the concept of the Catholic Church allowed us to understand how the Messianic Kingdom is both “already and not yet.” The Kingdom of God is present through the Church as led by the Royal Steward of the Messiah (the Pope), but the Kingdom is not yet fully “on earth as it is in heaven.” We await the second coming of Jesus.

We also observed how the water rituals of the Old Testament found fulfillment in the sacrament of baptism as an entryway into the Kingdom of God. Jesus transformed the ancient Israelite Passover meal into the Messianic thanksgiving sacrifice and gives His flesh as the Bread from Heaven. This cosmic and universal aspect of the Messiah’s kingdom is signified through the Catholic priesthood, as well as in the vestments, architecture, and holy days of the Catholic tradition. We also celebrated the witness of the righteous believers of the Hebrew Scriptures and the saints of the Church. Last of all, we examined the differences and similarities between Jewish and Catholic notions of the afterlife. In short, we traced the Jewish origins of Catholic Christianity.

With the Pope we continue to pray for our elder brethren—the kinfolk of Jesus, Mary, Joseph, John the Baptist, Peter and the Apostles—that they may find the same joy and consolation that we have in Jesus, their

Messiah and ours. He is the Savior of all mankind—first for the Jew and then for the Gentile.

AMEN

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APPENDIX:

PROPHECIES FULFILLED BY JESUS CHRIST

The following is a list of over three hundred Messianic prophecies from the Old Testament fulfilled by Jesus of Nazareth – the true Messiah and very Son of God.

- Gen 3:15 - *Protoevangelium*.⁶⁷ Messiah will crush Satan's head - Heb 2:14, Rom 16:20, 1 Jn 3:8
- Gen 9:26-27 - The God of Shem will be the Son of Shem - Lk 3:36
- Gen 12:3 - Abraham's seed will bless all nations - Acts 3:25-26
- Gen 12:7 - The promise made to Abraham's Seed - Gal 3:16
- Gen 14:18 - A priest according to order of Melchizedek - Heb 6:20
- Gen 14:18 - As Melchizedek He offers bread & wine - Mt 26:26-29
- Gen 17:19 - Messiah will be the Seed of Isaac - Rom 9:7
- Gen 22:8 - The Lamb of God promised - Jn 1:29
- Gen 22:2 - Moriah is Jerusalem, the place of Messiah's sacrifice - 2 Chr 3:1, Rev 11:8
- Gen 22:18 - He is Isaac's seed, who will bless all nations - Gal 3:16
- Gen 26:2-5 - Isaac's Seed promised as the Redeemer - Heb.11:18
- Gen 49:10 - The time of His coming - Lk 2:1-7, Gal 4:4
- Gen 49:10 - The Seed of Judah - Lk 3:33
- Gen 49:10 - He is called Shiloh or "He Who is Sent" - Jn 17:3
- Gen 49:10 - Comes before Judah loses tribal identity - Jn 11:47-52
- Gen 49:10 - To Him shall the obedience of the people be - Jn 10:16
- Ex 3:13,14 - He is the Great "I Am" - Jn 4:26
- Ex 12:5 - A Lamb without blemish - 1 Pet 1:19
- Ex 12:13 - The blood of the Lamb saves from wrath - Rom 5:8
- Ex 12:21-27 - Christ is our Passover whom we eat - 1 Cor 5-7
- Ex 12:46 - Not a bone of the Lamb to be broken - Jn 19:31-36
- Ex 15:2 - His is Yeshua or ("the Lord saves") - Acts 7:55-56
- Ex 17:6 - The Spiritual Rock of Israel providing drink - 1 Cor 10:4
- Ex 33:19 - His Character—Merciful - Lk 1:72
- Lev 14:11 - A priest who cleanses lepers – Lk 5:12-14, Acts 6:7
- Lev 16:15-17 - Prefigures Christ's once-for-all death - Heb 9:7-14
- Lev 16:27 - Suffering outside the camp - Heb 13:11, 12

- Lev 17:11 - Blood is the life of the flesh - Mt 26:28, Mk 10:45
 Lev 17:11 - It is the blood that makes atonement - 1 Jn 3:14-18
 Lev 23:36-37 - drink offering "If any man thirst" - Jn 7:2,4,37-39
 Num 9:12 - Not a bone of Him broken - John 19:31-36
 Num 21:9 - The serpent on a pole is Christ lifted up - Jn 3:14-18
 Num 24:17 - "I shall see him, but not now" - Gal 4:4
 Deut 18:15 - He is a great prophet like Moses - Jn 6:14
 Deut 18:15-16 - "If you believed Moses, you would believe me" -
 Jn 5:45-47
 Deut 18:18 - Sent by the Father to speak His word - Jn 8:28, 29
 Deut 18:19 - Whoever will not hear must bear his sin - Jn 12:15
 Deut 21:23 - Cursed is he that hangs on a tree - Gal 3:10-13
 Ruth 4:4-9 - Christ, our kinsman, has redeemed us - Eph 1:3-7
 1 Sam 2:10 - Shall be an anointed King to the Lord - Jn 12:15
 2 Sam 7:12 - Messiah is the Seed of David - Mt 1:1
 2 Sam 7:14a - The Son of God - Lk 1:32
 2 Sam 7:16 - David's house established forever - Lk 3:31, Rev 22:16
 1 Kings 2:19 - He enthrones His mother as Queen - Rev 12:1-3
 2 Kings 2:11 - Example of bodily ascension to heaven - Lk 24:51
 1 Chr 17:12-13 - To reign on David's throne forever - Lk 1:32, 33
 1 Chr 17:13a - "I will be His Father, He will be my Son" - Heb 1:5
 Job 19:23-27 - Resurrection predicted - Jn 5:24-29
 Ps 2:1-3 - The enmity of kings foreordained - Acts 4:25-28
 Ps 2:2 - Bears the title Anointed/Messiah/Christ - Acts 2:36
 Ps 2:6 - His Character-Holiness - Jn 8:46, Rev 3:7
 Ps 2:6 - To own the title King - Mt 2:2
 Ps 2:7 - Declared the Beloved Son - Mt 3:17
 Ps 2:12 - Life comes through faith in Him - Jn 20:31
 Ps 8:2 - The mouths of babes perfect His praise - Mt 21:16
 Ps 8:5-6 - His humiliation and exaltation - Lk 24:50-53, 1 Cor 15:27
 Ps 16:10 - His body would not corrupt - Acts 2:31
 Ps 16:9-11 - Was to rise from the dead - Jn 20:9
 Ps 17:15 - The resurrection predicted - Lk 24:6
 Ps 22:1 - Forsaken because of sins of others - 2 Cor 5:21
 Ps 22:1 - "My God...forsaken me." Mk 15:34
 Ps 22:2 - Darkness at His death - Mt 27:45
 Ps 22:7 - They shoot out the lip and shake the head - Mt 27:39
 Ps 22:8 - "He trusted in God, let Him deliver Him" - Mt 27:43
 Ps 22:9 - Born the Savior - Lk 2:7
 Ps 22:14 - Water flows from Him in death - Jn 19:34
 Ps 22:14-15 - Suffered agony in death - Mk 15:34-37
 Ps 22:15 - He thirsted - Jn 19:28
 Ps 22:16 - His hands and His feet pierced - Jn 19:34-37, Jn 20:27
 Ps 22:17-18 - Stripped Him before men - Lk 23:34-35

- Ps 22:18 - They parted His garments - Jn 19:23-24
Ps 22:20-21 - He commended His death to God - Lk 23:46
Ps 22:22 - His Resurrection declared - Jn 20:17
Ps 22:27 - He shall be the governor of the nations - Col 1:16
Ps 22:31 - "It is finished" - Jn 19:30
Ps 23:1 - "I am the Good Shepherd" - Jn 10:11
Ps 24:3 - His ascension predicted - Acts 1:11, Phil 2:9
Ps 30:3 - His resurrection predicted - Acts 2:32
Ps 31:5 - "Into thy hands I commend my spirit" - Lk 23:46
Ps 31:11 - His acquaintances fled from Him - Mk 14:50
Ps 31:13 - They conspired to put Him to death - Jn 11:53
Ps 31:14-15 - "He trusted in God, let Him deliver him" - Mt 27:43
Ps 34:20 - Not a bone of Him broken - Jn 19:31-36
Ps 35:11 - False witnesses rose up against Him - Mt 26:59
Ps 35:19 - He was hated without a cause - Jn 15:25
Ps 38:11 - His friends stood afar off - Lk 23:49
Ps 40:2-5 - The joy of His resurrection predicted - Jn 20:20
Ps 40:6-8 - His delight—the will of the Father - Jn 4:34
Ps 40:9 - He was to preach the righteousness in Israel - Mt 4:17
Ps 40:14 - Confronted by enemies in the garden - Jn 18:4-6
Ps 41:9 - Betrayed by a close friend - Jn 13:18
Ps 45:2 - Words of Grace come from His lips - Lk 4:22
Ps 45:6 - He will be called God or Elohim - Heb 1:8
Ps 45:7 - A special anointing by the Holy Spirit - Mt 3:16, Heb.1:9
Ps 45:7-8 - Called the Christ (Messiah or Anointed) - Lk 2:11
Ps 55:12-14 - Betrayed by a friend, not an enemy - Jn 13:18
Ps 55:15 - Indecent death of His betrayer - Mt 27:3-5, Acts 1:16-19
Ps 68:18 - Will give spiritual gifts to men - Eph 4:7-16
Ps 68:18 - Will ascend into Heaven - Lk 24:51
Ps 69:4 - Hated without cause - Jn 15:25
Ps 69:8 - A stranger to own brethren - Lk 8:20-21
Ps 69:9 - Zealous for the Lord's House - Jn 2:17
Ps 69:14-20 - Messiah's anguish of soul in death - Mt 26:36-45
Ps 69:20 - "My soul is exceeding sorrowful" - Mt 26:38
Ps 69:21 - Received vinegar for drink - Mt 27:34
Ps 69:26 - The Messiah given and smitten by God - Jn 17:4, 18:11
Ps 72:10-11 - Great persons were to visit Him - Mt 2:1-11
Ps 72:16 - The grain of wheat to fall into the ground - Jn 12:24
Ps 72:17 - As Yinon, he will produce offspring - Jn 1:12,13
Ps 72:17 - All nations shall be blessed by Him - Acts 2:11,12,41
Ps 78:1-2 - He would teach in parables - Mt 13:34-35
Ps 78:2b - To speak the wisdom of God with authority - Mt 7:29
Ps 88:8 - They stood afar off and watched - Lk 23:49

- Ps 89:27 - Emmanuel to be higher than earthly kings - Lk 1:32,33
 Ps 89:35-37 - David's Seed and kingdom last for ever - Lk 1:32-33
 Ps 89:36-37 - He is Faithful - Rev 1:5
 Ps 90:2 - He is from everlasting - Jn 1:1
 Ps 97:9 - His exaltation predicted - Acts 1:11, Eph 1:20
 Ps 102:1-11 - The suffering and reproach of his death - Jn 21:16-30
 Ps 102:25-27 - Messiah is the eternal Son of God - Heb 1:10-12
 Ps 109:25 - Ridiculed buy his own people - Mt 27:39
 Ps 110:1 - Son of David - Mt 22:43
 Ps 110:1 - To ascend to the right hand of the Father - Mk 16:19
 Ps 110:1 - David's son called Lord - Mt 22:44,45
 Ps 110:4 - A priest after Melchizedek's order - Heb 6:20
 Ps 118:17-18 - Messiah's resurrection - Lk 24:5-7, 1 Cor 15:20
 Ps 118:22-23 - Rejected Messiah is chief cornerstone - Mt 21:42-43
 Ps 118:26a - The Blessed One presented to Israel - Mt 21:9
 Ps 118:26b - Messiah shall come while Temple standing (before
 A.D. 70) - Mt 21:12-15
 Ps 132:11 - The Seed of David - Lk 1:32
 Ps 138:1-6 - David's Seed will astonish kings - Mt 2:2-6
 Ps 147:3-6 - The earthly ministry of Christ described - Lk 4:18
 Ps 1:23 - He will send the Spirit of God - Jn 16:7
 Prov 8:22-23 - He would be from everlasting - Jn 17:5
 Prov 9:1 - His kingdom with 7 sacraments - Mt 28:19⁶⁸
 Prov 30:4 - He would ascend and descend from Heaven - Jn 3:13
 Song 5:16 - The altogether lovely One - Jn 1:17
 Wis 2:16 - He is killed for calling God His Father - Jn 8:54
 Isa 6:1 - Isaiah foresaw His glory - Jn 12:40-41
 Isa 6:9-10 - Parables fall on deaf ears of Israel - Mt 13:13-15
 Isa 6:9-12 - Blinded to Christ and deaf to His words - Acts 28:23-29
 Isa 7:14 - Born of the Virgin Mary - Lk 1:35
 Isa 7:14 - To be Emmanuel, "God with us" - Mt 1:18-23
 Isa 8:8 - Called Emmanuel - Mt 28:20
 Isa 8:14 - A stone of stumbling, a rock of offense - 1 Pet 2:8
 Isa 9:1-2 - His ministry to begin in Galilee - Mt 4:12-17
 Isa 9:6 - A human child - Lk 1:31
 Isa 9:6 - The Divine Son of God - Lk 1:32, Jn 1:14, 1 Tim 3:16
 Isa 9:6 - He is the Son of God with power - Rom 1:3-4
 Isa 9:6 - The Wonderful One, Peleh - Lk 4:22
 Isa 9:6 - The Counselor, Yaatz - Mt 13:54
 Isa 9:6 - The Mighty God, El Gibor - Mt 11:20
 Isa 9:6 - The Everlasting Father, Abi Adth - Jn 8:58
 Isa 9:6 - The Prince of Peace, Sar Shalom - Jn 16:33
 Isa 9:7 - To establish an everlasting kingdom - Lk 1:32-33
 Isa 9:7 - He is righteous - Jn 5:30

- Isa 9:7 - No end to his government, throne, and peace - Lk 1:32-33
Isa 11:1 - He shall be a Nazarene - Mt 2:23
Isa 11:1 - A rod out of Jesse, i.e. Son of Jesse - Lk 3:23,32
Isa 11:2 - Anointed by the Spirit - Mt 3:16-17
Isa 11:10 - The Gentiles shall seek Him - Jn 12:18-21
Isa 12:2 - Called Yeshua or Jesus ("Lord is salvation") - Mt 1:21
Isa 25:8 - Resurrection predicted - 1 Cor 15:54
Isa 26:19 - The power of Resurrection predicted - Jn 11:43,44
Isa 28:16 - The Messiah is the precious corner stone - Acts 4:11,12
Isa 29:13 - He indicated hypocritical obedience to Law - Mt 15:7-9
Isa 29:14 - The wise are confounded by His words - 1 Cor 1:18-31
Isa 32:2 - He shall be a hiding place - Mt 23:37
Isa 35:4 - He will come and save - Mt 1:21
Isa 35:5 - To have a ministry of miracles - Mt 11:4-6
Isa 40:3-4 - Preceded by forerunner John the Baptist - Jn 1:23
Isa 40:9 - "Behold your God" - Jn 1:36, 19:14
Isa 40:11 - A shepherd - Jn 10:10-18
Isa 42:1-4 - Suffering servant is a faithful redeemer - Mt 12:18-21
Isa 42:2 - Humble and lowly - Mt 11:28-30
Isa 42:3 - He brings hope for the hopeless - Jn 4
Isa 42:4 - The Gentiles shall receive His teachings - Jn 12:20-26
Isa 42:6 - He is the Light of the Gentiles - Lk 2:32
Isa 42:1-6 - His universal compassion - Mt 28:19-20
Isa 42:7 - Blind eyes opened - Jn 9:25-38
Isa 43:11 - He is the only Savior - Acts 4:12
Isa 44:3 - He will send the Spirit of God - Jn 16:7,13
Isa 45:23 - He will be the Judge - Jn 5:22, Rom 14:11
Isa 48:12 - The First and the Last - Jn 1:30, Rev 1:8,17
Isa 48:17 - He came as a Teacher - Jn 3:2
Isa 49:1 - Called from the womb - Mt 1:18
Isa 49:5 - A Servant from the womb - Lk 1:31, Phil 2:7
Isa 49:6 - He is Salvation for Israel - Lk 2:29-32
Isa 49:6 - He is the Light of the Gentiles - Acts 13:47
Isa 49:6 - He is Salvation unto the ends of the earth - Acts 15:7-18
Isa 49:7 - He is despised by the Israel - Jn 8:48-49
Isa 50:3 - The sky turns black at His humiliation - Lk 23:44-45
Isa 50:4 - He is a counselor for the weary - Mt 11:28,29
Isa 50:5 - Suffering servant bound willingly to obedience - Mt 26:39
Isa 50:6a - "I gave my back to the smiters" - Mt 27:26
Isa 50:6b - He was struck on the cheeks - Mt 26:67
Isa 50:6c - He was spat upon - Mt 27:30
Isa 52:7 - He preached good news of peace - Lk 4:14,15
Isa 52:13 - The servant exalted - Acts 1:8-11, Eph 1:19-22

- Isa 52:13 - Behold, My Servant - Mt 17:5, Phil 2:5-8
Isa 52:14 - Messiah scornfully abused - Lk 18:31-34, Mt 26:67-68
Isa 52:15 - Gentile nations respond to Servant - Rom 15:18-21
Isa 52:15 - His blood shed to make atonement for all - Rev 1:5
Isa 53:1 - His people would not believe Him - Jn 12:37-38
Isa 53:2a - He would grow up in a poor family - Lk 2:7
Isa 53:2b - Appeared as an ordinary man - Phil 2:7-8
Isa 53:3a - Despised - Lk 4:28-29
Isa 53:3b - Rejected by His people - Mt 27:21-23
Isa 53:3c - Great sorrow and grief - Lk 19:41-42
Isa 53:3d - Men deny association with Him - Mk 14:50-52
Isa 53:4a - He would have a healing ministry - Lk 6:17-19
Isa 53:4b - He would bear the sins of the world - 1 Pet 2:24
Isa 53:4c - Thought to be cursed by God - Mt 27:41-43
Isa 53:5a - Bears penalty for mankind's transgressions - Lk 23:33
Isa 53:5b - His sacrifice reconciles man to God - Col 1:20
Isa 53:5c - His back would be whipped - Mt 27:26
Isa 53:6a - He would be the sin-bearer for all mankind - Gal 1:4
Isa 53:6b - God's will that He bear sin for all mankind - 1 Jn 4:10
Isa 53:7a - Oppressed and afflicted - Mt 27:27-31
Isa 53:7b - Silent before his accusers - Mt 27:12-14
Isa 53:7c - Sacrificial lamb - Jn 1:29
Isa 53:8a - Confined and persecuted - Mt 26:47-27:31
Isa 53:8b - He would be judged - Jn 18:13-22
Isa 53:8c - Messiah would be murdered - Mt 27:35
Isa 53:8d - Dies for the sins of the world - 1 Jn 2:2
Isa 53:9a - Buried in a rich man's grave - Mt 27:57
Isa 53:9b - Innocent and had done no violence - Mk 15:3
Isa 53:9c - No deceit in His mouth - Jn 18:38
Isa 53:10a - God's will that He die for mankind - Jn 18:11
Isa 53:10b - An offering for sin - Mt 20:28
Isa 53:10c - Resurrected and live forever - Mk 16:16
Isa 53:10d - He would prosper - Jn 17:1-5
Isa 53:11a - God fully satisfied with His suffering - Jn 12:27
Isa 53:11b - God's servant - Rom 5:18-19
Isa 53:11c - He would justify man before God - Rom 5:8-9
Isa 53:11d - The sin-bearer for all mankind - Heb 9:28
Isa 53:12a - Exalted by God because of his sacrifice - Mt 28:18
Isa 53:12b - He would give up his life to save mankind - Lk 23:46
Isa 53:12c - Grouped with criminals - Lk 23:32
Isa 53:12d - Sin-bearer for all mankind - 2 Cor 5:21
Isa 53:12e - Intercede to God in behalf of mankind - Lk 23:34
Isa 55:3 - Resurrected by God - Acts 13:34
Isa 55:4 - A witness of God - Jn 18:37

- Isa 59:15-16a - He would come to provide salvation - Jn 6:40
Isa 59:15-16b - Intercessor between man and God - Mt 10:32
Isa 59:20 - He would come to Zion as their Redeemer - Lk 2:38
Isa 61:1-2a - The Spirit of God upon him - Mt 3:16-17
Isa 61:1-2b - The Messiah will preach the good news - Lk 4:17-21
Isa 61:1-2c - He frees men from sin and death - Jn 8:31-32
Isa 61:1-2 - Proclaim a period of grace - Jn 5:24
Jer 23:5-6a - Descendant of David - Lk 3:23-31
Jer 23:5-6b - The Messiah would be God - Jn 13:13
Jer 23:5-6c - The Messiah will be both God and man - 1 Tim 3:16
Jer 31:22 - Born of a virgin - Mt 1:18-20
Jer 31:31 - The Messiah would be the new covenant - Mt 26:28
Jer 33:14-15 - Descendant of David - Lk 3:23-31
Ezek 17:22-24 - Descendant of David - Lk 3:23-31
Ezek 34:23-24 - Descendant of David - Mt 1:1
Dan 7:13-14a - He would ascend into heaven - Acts 1:9-11
Dan 7:13-14b - Highly exalted - Eph 1:20-22
Dan 7:13-14c - His dominion would be everlasting - Lk 1:31-33
Dan 7:23 - Messiah born during rule of 4th Gentile kingdom (i.e. during Roman rule) - Lk 2:1
Dan 9:24a - He makes an end to sins - Gal 1:3-5
Dan 9:24b - He would be holy - Lk 1:35
Dan 9:25 - Announced to his people 483 years, to the exact day, after the decree to rebuild Jerusalem - Jn 12:12-13
Dan 9:26a - Messiah murdered - Mt 27:35
Dan 9:26b - Died for the sins of the world - Heb 2:9
Dan 9:26c - Killed before destruction of the Temple - Mt 27:50-51
Dan 10:5-6 - Messiah in a glorified state - Rev 1:13-16
Hos 13:14 - He would defeat death - 1 Cor 15:55-57
Joel 2:32 - Offer salvation to all mankind - Rom 10:12-13
Mic 5:2a - Born in Bethlehem - Mt 2:1-2
Mic 5:2b - God's servant - Jn 15:10
Mic 5:2c - He is eternally preexistent - Jn 8:58
Hag 2:6-9 - He would visit the second Temple - Lk 2:27-32
Hag 2:23 - Descendant of Zerubbabel - Lk 3:23-27
Zech 3:8 - God's servant - Jn 17:4
Zech 6:12-13 - Messiah is both Priest and King - Heb 8:1
Zech 9:9a - Greeted with rejoicing in Jerusalem - Mt 21:8-10
Zech 9:9b - Beheld as King - Jn 12:12-13
Zech 9:9c - The Messiah would be just - Jn 5:30
Zech 9:9d - The Messiah would bring salvation - Luke 19:10
Zech 9:9e - The Messiah would be humble - Mt 11:29
Zech 9:9f - Enters Jerusalem riding on a donkey - Mt 21:6-9

- Zech 10:4 - The cornerstone - Eph 2:20
 Zech 11:4-6a - Evil leaders in Israel when He comes - Mt 23:1-4
 Zech 11:4-6c - Rejected in favor of another king - Jn 19:13-15
 Zech 11:7 - Ministry to “poor” - Mt 9:35-36
 Zech 11:8a - Unbelief forces Messiah to reject them - Mt 23:33
 Zech 11:8b - Despised by the people - Mt 27:20
 Zech 11:9 - Rejects those who rejected Him - Mt 13:10-11
 Zech 11:10-11a - Rejection revokes protection - Lk 19:41-44
 Zech 11:10-11b - The Messiah would be God - Jn 14:7
 Zech 11:12-13a - Betrayed for thirty pieces of silver - Mt 26:14-15
 Zech 11:12-13b - Rejected by His people - Mt 26:14-15, 2 Tim 2:12
 Zech 11:12-13c - 30 pieces of silver cast into Temple - Mt 27:3-5
 Zech 11:12-13d - The Messiah would be God - Jn 12:45
 Zech 12:10a - The Messiah’s body would be pierced - Jn 19:34-37
 Zech 12:10b - Messiah both divine and human - Jn 10:30
 Zech 12:10c - The Messiah would be rejected - Jn 1:11
 Zech 13:7a - He died for humanity in obedience - Jn 18:11
 Zech 13:7b - A violent death - Mt 27:35
 Zech 13:7c - Both God and man - Jn 14:9
 Zech 13:7d - Israel scattered after rejecting Him - Mt 26:31-56
 Mal 3:1a - Messenger to prepare the way for Messiah - Mt 11:10
 Mal 3:1b - Sudden appearance at the Temple - Mk 11:15-16
 Mal 3:1c - Messenger of the New Covenant - Lk 4:43
 Mal 4:5 - Forerunner will have ministry of Elijah - Mt 3:1-2
 Mal 4:6 - Forerunner to turn many to righteousness - Lk 1:16-17
 2 Mac 2:5-8 - Mary’s pregnancy fulfills the lost ark prophecy - Rev
 11:19-12:1

NOTES

⁶⁷ For the full significance of the *protoevangelium* (“first gospel”) in Catholic theology, please see CHAPTER ONE.

⁶⁸ The Seven Sacraments: Baptism – Mt 28:19; Confirmation – Acts 8:14-17; Heb 6:2; Eucharist – Mt 26:26-29; Penance – John 20:21-23; Anointing of Sick – Mk 6:13; Holy Orders - Acts 6:3-6; Matrimony – Mt 19:10-11; Jn 2.

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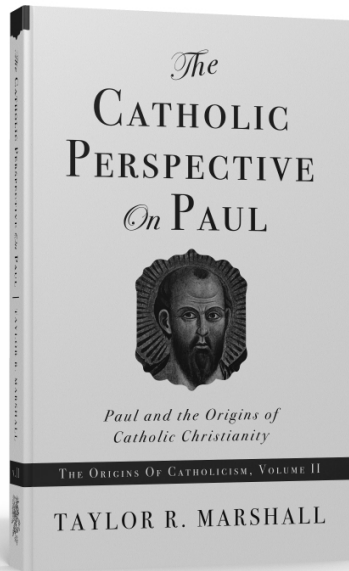
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