

## THE DECEPTION OF SCOTT HAHN

But evil men and seducers shall wax worse

By Randall Paquette

### Having itching ears

Many adherents of Catholicism continue to lean upon the *broken reed*<sup>1</sup> that is Scott Hahn. His defense of the Catholic faith, which is neither singular, nor definitive, affords them a sense of security that, unfortunately, in the last day shall be undone. Obsequious “Doctors” and “Divines” have attempted to buttress Rome’s untenable magisterium for centuries. Raising his standard upon their fallen and broken arguments, Hahn has stepped into the fray. Previously averse to Catholicism, Hahn claims that his exhaustive, and meticulous study of doctrine, led him to embrace Rome as the resolute repository of Christian truth.

...I began to discover all kinds of exciting truths, novel innovations, new discoveries that I thought were really undiscovered before. Then as I began to dig deeper into these libraries, I noticed that time and time again, Catholic scholars – I mean not just recently but going all the way back to the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> Centuries, in the Middle Ages – the saints and the Doctors of the Church were consistently coming up with all of my brand new discoveries and teaching them with a kind of ho-hum attitude like, “You all know such and such.”<sup>2</sup>

Convinced by this unassailable “evidence,” Hahn fled to the sheltering arms of the Mistress of the World. Consequently, to Rome’s Pontiff, he professes undying allegiance.

### Him ye will receive

What first drew Hahn to the Pope? What convinced him that here was one who stood in the place of Christ; that here indeed was “our sweet Christ on earth”? Did the Papal palace remind him of the One who had naught where to lay His head? Did Vatican City, the Papal nuncios, and the various concordats, call to mind One whose kingdom was not of this world? Did the papal throne, priceless artifacts, lavish decorations, costly vestments and adornments, the ostentatious displays, prompt him to think of One that was meek and lowly in heart? Did the veneration crowds, the political receptions, the processions and the “Pope mobile”, evoke thoughts of One who was despised and rejected of men? No, his was discernment of a different kind:

I was first drawn to Pope John Paul II in the early 1980s. ...He captured our attention because of his effective combat in the culture wars. ...many of us, Protestants and Catholics alike, came to admit that he was effective in the culture wars.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Isaiah 36:6

<sup>2</sup> Scott Hahn on the Papacy; Catholic-pages.com

<sup>3</sup> The Biblical Vision of Pope John Paul II by Scott Hahn (Some disagree - “...there remains the stark reality of the religious crisis throughout the Church, the persistent scandals and the tragic breakdown of morals, culture and civilization worldwide.”; Catholic Herald, 07/19/02)

Hahn engaged in the error typical of ecumenists; he esteemed “culture” above the truth. Liberal social justice is equated with the gospel. Human rights correspond with God’s plan for humanity. The Lord esteems ‘happiness’ of greater value than ‘holiness’.

Having made his decision to submit to the Pontiff, Hahn is constrained to defend both. All the aberrations of papal pronouncements and diplomacy must be defended, denied, or discounted. It is fortunate for Rome that most people do not possess long memories, and that history’s lessons are soon forgotten. It is advantageous for the Papacy, that at last there has arisen *another generation...which knew not the Lord, nor yet the works which He had done for Israel*<sup>4</sup>. Thus, in the face of contradictory evidence, Hahn contends:

The Church insists that no Popes have ever given new revelation. Revelation has been, once and for all deposited by Christ through His apostles and with the death of the last apostle came the close of all public revelation.<sup>5</sup>

The Roman church may “insist” with all the energy at its disposal, but this will never alter the facts. When speaking *ex cathedra* as “the Holy Father, the Pope, ...as the successor of Peter and the Vicar of Christ, ...the universal teacher from the Chair of Peter”<sup>6</sup>, popes have indeed pronounced ‘new’ revelations, such as the “Immaculate Conception” and the “Assumption” of Mary, without one shred of scriptural corroboration. Hahn might aver that oral tradition was the channel of *these* novel “revelations,” but the only assurance we have is the hearsay of Catholic tradition. Dr. Boettner’s commendable work on the Catholic Church, first printing 1962, contains this startling prophecy;

Following the *ex cathedra* pronouncements concerning the immaculate conception and the bodily assumption of Mary, there remains one major link to complete the process to which the Roman Church is committed in regard to Mary, that of her co-redeemership with Christ. This doctrine has been under discussion for several years. Some prominent churchmen have indicated that the next official pronouncement will declare that Mary, though technically not divine, is nevertheless associated with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in matters of salvation, and that she is the “Mediatrix of all Graces,” or “Co-redemptrix with Christ.” At the present rate *we eventually shall have in heaven no longer a Trinity but a Quartet!*<sup>7</sup>

Welcome to tomorrow!

**Let your yea be yea. . .**

To attempt to shield the papacy further, Hahn makes this incredible statement:

[T]he Church has never insisted upon the fact that the Pope will always say the best thing at the right time. Rather, the teaching of the Church *would allow for the Pope perhaps to*

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<sup>4</sup> Judges 2:10

<sup>5</sup> Scott Hahn on the Papacy; Catholic-pages.com

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.; (These arrogated arrogant titles are used to prop pseudo claims of primacy over all Christianity)

<sup>7</sup> Roman Catholicism; Loraine Boettner; The Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co.1982; p.164

*postpone out of cowardice, a right thing. Or when he says the truth, when he teaches the truth, he might do so in a way that included an ambiguity.*<sup>8</sup>

This seems consistent with the teachings of Scripture. A little ambiguity about sin never caused anybody harm. Let others be *instant in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine*; deferment, . . .er, I mean discretion, is the better part of vacillation...ah, valor. I assume that Pope John Paul II's "watchword", *Be not afraid*,<sup>9</sup> was spoken in a way "that included an ambiguity", or at least, it provided for the privilege of pusillanimous papal postponement. In the fine tradition of the Jesuits – "the end justifies the means."

### **Let not him that girdeth on his harness . . .**

Hahn presents his supporting evidence by implying that his "ever-finer distinctions in thought"<sup>10</sup> are flawless. This may provide balm for him, and for those who embrace his doctrine, but it is far from the truth. To defend the primacy of Rome's Pontifex Maximus, he refers his audience to Matthew 16:17&18:

*And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.*

This portion, from which popes have claimed the divine right of demigods, has been ably contested by "Protestant" scholars for centuries, and papal pretences have been undone. Regardless Hahn declares that his meticulous study of this text, has caused him to reject the "Protestant" positions, and to embrace the Catholic interpretation.

Now the closer I studied the more I realized that those positions were untenable, simply untenable. And I'm going to share in a few minutes the fact that most conservative anti-Catholic Protestant scholars today will admit that readily and candidly.<sup>11</sup>

In the defense of those poor apprehensive "conservative anti-Catholic Protestant scholars" that he references, perhaps they are merely postponing "out of cowardice, a right thing," and in time, will come to accept Romanism also. The declaration that "most" side with Hahn, is either a blatant lie, or the result of subjective, and selective, discrimination; i.e., Hahn's definition of these terms, and of those who qualify. Doubtless, his Lutheran professor at Seminary was such,

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<sup>8</sup> Scott Hahn on the Papacy; Catholic-pages.com; I know, I could not believe it either! The italics in this quote are mine.

<sup>9</sup> The Biblical Vision of Pope John Paul II; Scott Hahn; "He began with 'Be not afraid,' the exhortation of prophets and angels – and God himself – uttered whenever history had taken a momentous turn.... This phrase became a watchword of his pontificate..."

<sup>10</sup> Ibid; I borrowed praise that Hahn dotes upon previous popes

<sup>11</sup> Scott Hahn on the Papacy; Catholic-pages.com

...he said, "I think your paper is flawless. ...I'm just grateful that I don't think Matthew is historically reliable, so I don't have to follow the conclusions."

### **He cut it with a penknife, and cast it into the fire**

Hahn dismisses the crucial point that two different words are employed in the Greek. However, since every jot and tittle of the law shall stand, and every idle word which men shall speak they shall give account thereof, Hahn is a fool to lightly consider the weight of two small words which the Holy Spirit chose.

The more I dug, the more I found that the evidence pointed to the fact that Jesus was speaking of Peter. Peter is the Rock. Peter just said, "You are the Christos," so Jesus says, "You are the<sup>12</sup> Petros," There is a little parallelism there. "You are the Son of the Living God" and "You are the son of Jonah, Simon Bar-Jonah; you are the Petros." Now people could say, "Wait a second. There is a distinction in the Greek language between petros, Peter's name and petra. Petros can mean stone, whereas petra can often mean "big rock." The problem with that is two-fold. First of all, Jesus probably didn't speak Greek when He was with the disciples. I mean that is held by 99.9 percent of all scholars. It's overwhelmingly unlikely that Jesus in His normal conversations spoke Greek. What's almost certain is that He spoke Aramaic: there is only one word that could possibly be used and Kouman and other scholars have pointed to the fact that if Jesus spoke Aramaic, He only could have said, "You are Cephus, and on this Cephus I build my Church." So given our knowledge of the Aramaic language, there is no possibility for Jesus to have made the distinction between "little stone" and "big rock." The Aramaic language doesn't allow it.<sup>13</sup>

Hahn's explanation of a parallelism is intentionally wanting. The logic of the analogous lines would be: [Christ // Simon]; [Son of God // Son of Jonah]; [Petra // petros]. Three parallel lines; not merely two equidistant lines, and a convergent one. And, contrary to Hahn's rationalizing:

The emphasis is not on 'Thou art Peter' over against 'Thou are the Christ,' but on *Kago*: 'The Father hath revealed to thee one truth, and I also tell you another' (McNeile).<sup>14</sup>

His appeal to the Aramaic language is spurious. First, it is only fruitless speculation that Christ said these words in Aramaic. It could easily, and more logically be suggested that a Jewish Rabbi<sup>15</sup> when in private conversation with his Jewish disciples, spoke these words in Hebrew<sup>16</sup>. Hebrew is not so restrictive, allowing a correlation in the Greek. Second, John's gospel has some Aramaic words intermingled with the Greek, thus if God had intended the Aramaic word for "stone," it would be found in Matthew. Matthew, being previously a tax collector, would have been as cosmopolitan, if not more so, as the Galilean fisherman, John. Peter, acknowledged himself as *Petros* (1 Peter 1:1), and called Christ *Petra* (1 Peter 2:8). In Galatians, Paul

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<sup>12</sup> The reader should know that there is no definite article in front of 'petros', in the Greek. This is misleading.

<sup>13</sup> Scott Hahn on the Papacy; Catholic-pages.com

<sup>14</sup> Word Pictures in the New Testament; A.T. Robertson; Broadman Press; Vol.1, page 131

<sup>15</sup> Matthew 23:8; John 13:13

<sup>16</sup> Acts 26:14; Paul's testimony before Agrippa and Festus, "I heard a voice speaking unto me and saying in the Hebrew tongue..." From Acts 9:5 we know that it was Jesus who spoke.

designates Peter as *Petros* and *Cephas*, but not *Petra*. Indeed, in 1 Corinthians, he employs only Simon's Aramaic name *Cephas*, and calls Christ, *Petra* (1 Corinthians 10:4). Third, a theoretical Aramaic conversation is not authoritative, even if all the world believes that it had occurred. Scripture is inspired of God! Hahn's vivid imagination *is not*, and hence, neither is it *profitable for ...correction*. That the Sovereign God chose to transmit the New Testament to us in Greek **is a fact**, and it is not Hahn's prerogative to discount it. Is Hahn wiser than God? *Who hath directed the Spirit of the Lord, or being His counselor, hath taught Him?*<sup>17</sup>

The authority of the New Testament Greek is evident in Matthew 1:23 – *Behold a virgin shall conceive and bring forth a son*. Liberals argue that in Isaiah 7:14, which Mathew is quoting, the Hebrew word is *alma*, which is not the specific word for 'virgin' but merely refers to a 'young maid'. Yet, however one might argue the original Hebrew, the Greek of Matthew qualifies, and specifies what is meant. Nevertheless, convinced by a "*probably*", "*unlikely*", "*almost certain*", and "*if*" of a conjectural conversation; and constrained within the must-needs-be of Roman dogma; and confident of his own specious arguments, Hahn emphatically states: "...there is no possibility for Jesus to have made the distinction between 'little stone' and 'big rock'." Possibly Hahn has forgotten the pronouncements of 'The Pontifical Commission': "*the text* retains its role of privileged guide not open to manipulation".<sup>18</sup>

Indifferent to folly, Hahn continues to direct the Spirit of the Lord, and to teach Him. If Hahn's 'Aramaic evidence' was conclusive, he need have gone no further, but...

Well, somebody could say, "The Holy Spirit inspired Matthew to use two different words. Well, that's true, because "petra" is the word in Greek that is normally used for "Large rock," but – I should say petra is the Greek word that means "large rock" but it's in the feminine form. In other words, the gender of this Greek word, petra, large rock, is feminine. You do not apply a feminine form of a word in order to name a male. You adopt it by giving the masculine form. In other words what Matthew was doing, guided by the Holy Spirit, is something that was rather obvious and practically necessary. That was to take the Greek from Jesus' saying and start by saying, "I will build my Church on this massive stone, this "petra" in the feminine but then to show that Peter gets the name, "Rock" in its proper masculine form."<sup>19</sup>

It is not difficult to disagree with Hahn. Matthew did not "start by saying, 'I will build my Church on this massive stone, this petra'", rather, he first designated Simon, by the masculine, *petros*, and then made the distinction between him, and the foundation, by employing the feminine, *petra*. If, as Hahn insists, you "do not apply a feminine form of a word in order to name a male", *petra* cannot be designating Simon. In other words, it confirms a contrast, and not an identity, in the clauses. Furthermore:

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<sup>17</sup> Isaiah 14:13

<sup>18</sup> The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church by The Pontifical Commission; IV,A., 1; (I quote this also in my article, [The Desire of Scott Hahn](#); as noted there, and as Hahn clearly demonstrates, Rome's verbal submission to the authority of Scripture is only meaningless posturing.)

<sup>19</sup> Scott Hahn on the Papacy; Catholic-pages.com

This interpretation is confirmed by a careful consideration of the Greek grammar. The grammar provides much evidence that a contrast was in mind rather than the Catholic view of common identity. For example, the first noun (“petros”) is without the definite article (“the” in the Greek) while the second (“petra”) is with it. The first noun is masculine gender while the second is feminine. The first noun implies a smaller rock than the second noun. The first noun is modified by a second person pronoun while the next noun is modified by a third person demonstrative pronoun. The change from the second person singular to the third person makes no sense if Matthew intends the readers to understand the foundation rock to be Peter.

Roman Catholic exegetes clearly see the potential of such a contrast and vigorously attempt to explain away all historical and grammatical contrasts. However, any interpretation that depends upon explaining away the obvious is a weaker interpretation than one which incorporates the obvious. The most obvious contrast that Roman Scholars vigorously attempt to explain away is the historical distinction between ‘petros’ and ‘petra’.<sup>20</sup>

*Petros* refers to “thou”, of *blessed art thou Simon Barjona*; and *Petra* is the “it”, of *flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father in heaven*. Grammatically, this is the nearest antecedent. And...

What Hahn completely misses is the fact that if you want to call someone a “stone you have to use a masculine form for only the masculine form means a “stone.” But, if you want to call someone a cliff of rock (a large ledge of rock indicating a firmness and immovability) you have to use the feminine form. If you interchange the nouns to make them agree with a referent, then you change the definition. It was clearly the intention of Jesus to make this play-on-words between the word for “stone” and the word for “a cliff or ledge of rock” Hahn applies a principle of Greek grammar that applies to adjectives but not to nouns. The principle is that adjectives agree with the nouns they modify in case, gender and number. When a noun is feminine in form, it can refer to a masculine subject. For example, take 1 John 4:16 which reads in part, *God is love*. The word for *love* is feminine but the word for *God* is masculine. In other words you do not, as Hahn claims, have something that goes against normal Greek grammar to use a feminine noun to refer to a masculine subject.<sup>21</sup>

Simply put, if Jesus had meant that Simon was the “petra,” he would have called him the “petra.” There are too many flaws in Hahn’s “flawless” argument for conservative Protestants who “think Matthew is historically reliable.” Hahn merely reached into the tattered sack of Catholic sophistry, dusted off its tawdry contents, and presented them to the unwary as incontrovertible.

### **But if ye will not hear these words**

Since Hahn graciously quoted “Protestant” scholars whom he designated by his cryptonym “conservative”, I will reciprocate with an authoritative Catholic scholar;

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<sup>20</sup> Pastor Mark Fenison ; Victory Baptist Church; from his paper – The Baptist Interpretation

<sup>21</sup> My sincere thanks to Bill Doorman for this critique

Moved by the grace of the Holy Spirit and drawn by the Father, we believe in Jesus and confess: “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” On the rock of this faith confessed by St. Peter, Christ built his Church.<sup>22</sup>

Hahn lauds his exhaustive study of the writings of “the saints and Doctors of the Church” from the 1<sup>st</sup> century unto the Middle Ages, as confirming his novel discoveries of papal primacy. Perhaps he conveniently overlooked some damning contrary evidence.

St. Cyril in his fourth book on the Trinity says, “I believe that by the Rock you must understand the unshaken faith of the apostles.” St. Hilary, Bishop of Poitiers, in his second work on the Trinity, says, “The Rock (petra) is the blessed and only Rock of the faith confessed by the mouth of St. Peter;” and in his Sixth book of the Trinity, he says, “It is on this rock of confession of faith that the Church is built.” “God,” says St. Jerome in his Sixth book on St. Matthew, “has founded His Church on this Rock, and it is from this Rock that the apostle Peter has been named.”

After him, St. Chrysostom says in his Fifty-third Homily on St. Matthew, “On this Rock, I will build My Church, that is, on the faith of the confession.” Now, what was the confession of the apostle? Here it is “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.”

Ambrose, the holy Archbishop of Milan, St. Basil of Seleucia, and the fathers of the Council of Chalcedon, teach exactly the same thing. ...St Augustine occupies one of the first places for knowledge and holiness. Listen then to what he writes in his Second Treatise on the First Epistle of St. John: “What do the words mean, I will build my Church on this Rock? On this faith, on that which said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.”<sup>23</sup>

And, so A. Lukyns Williams concurs:

Thus St. Chrysostom, “Upon this rock, that is, on the faith of his confession. Hereby he signifies that many were now on the point of believing, and raises his spirit, and makes him a shepherd.” To the same purport might be quoted Hilary, Ambrose, Jerome, Gregory Nyss, Cyril, and others. It is remarkable that in the Collect from the Gregorian Sacramentary and in the Roman Missal on the Vigil of St. Peter and St. Paul are found these words, “Grant that thou wouldst not suffer us, whom thou hast established on the rock of the apostolic confession (*quos in apostolicae confessionis petra solidasti*) to be shaken by any commotions.”<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Catechism of the Catholic Church; section 424 (cf, Matt.16:18, **St Leo the Great**– Sermo 4,3:pl 54, 150-152; 5,1; pl 54, 309b; 62,2: pl 54, 350-351; 83,3: pl 54, 431-432) [Perhaps this quote contains ambiguity? Or, are present popes postponing teaching this truth out of cowardice? – ed.]

<sup>23</sup> From speech given by R.C. Bishop Strossmayer during Vatican I, read whole speech at <http://s8int.com/strossmayer.html> 6/8/06 [It is remarkable that almost 1800 years after the apostle Peter had died, this Roman Church council decided that his “successor” was infallible. Since their fatuous decree was not unanimous, for this reason alone it was conceivably errant. So a fallible council of men made a fallible decision that the pope was infallible.]

<sup>24</sup> The Pulpit Commentary; edited by H.D.M. Spence & Joseph S. Exell; Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, Michigan; Vol. 15, pages 134-135

Dr. George Salmon, a “sincere, and, I think, also respectable as a scholar... an honest scholar,”<sup>25</sup> wrote;

I prefer to quote the Jesuit Maldonatus, whose Romanism is of the most thorough-going kind, and who I may add, on questions where his doctrinal prepossessions do not affect his judgment, is an interpreter of Scripture whose acuteness makes him worth consulting. He begins his commentary on this passage by saying, ‘There are among ancient authors some who interpret “on this rock,” that is, “on this faith,” or, “on this confession of faith in which thou hast called me the Son of the living God,” as Hilary, and Gregory Nyssen, and Chrysostom, and Cyril of Alexandria. St. Augustine going still further away from the true sense, interprets “on this rock,” that is, “on myself Christ,” because Christ was the rock. But Origen “on this rock,” that is to say, on all men who have the same faith.’<sup>26</sup>

Since Peter is not the “rock” upon which Christ built His church, claims of papal primacy and succession are vain lies. Having this text stricken from their pretensions, where in scripture shall they seek succor? Does Paul mention the office in Ephesians 4:11? Does he allude to “Pope Peter” in The Epistle to the Romans? Does Peter claim that throne for himself in his missives? Does the Lord smile upon their contention of primacy (Matthew 20:25&26)? Would the papacy flee to Mark 8:29, or Luke 9:20, to corroborate their ersatz entitlement? Is there any text other than Matthew 16:17&18, whence Rome can attempt to substantiate its claim? No! *For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, that is Jesus Christ*<sup>27</sup>. And as for *soi-disant* “theologian” Scott Hahn? *The man that wandereth out of the way of understanding shall remain in the congregation of the dead.*<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Borrowing Hahn’s appraisal of “Protestant” scholars who agree with Rome

<sup>26</sup> The Infallibility of the Church: A Refutation; George Salmon, D.D.; Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, Michigan; page 335

<sup>27</sup> 1 Corinthians 3:11

<sup>28</sup> Proverbs 21:16