

Where Do I Find the Answers to the Questions?

Knowing the Scriptures Bible Study is written from within the mind and heart of the teaching apostolic Church.

While it is true that the Holy Spirit guides, instructs, and corrects us in the truths of our faith whenever we ponder the Word of God in humble faith, hope and love, we cannot rely *absolutely* upon our own personal understanding of divine Revelation, knowing that we often understand the things of God imperfectly, in spite of our desire to possess full knowledge of Him and His will for us. St. Peter tells all Christians: “we have confirmation of the words of the prophets; and you will be right to pay attention to it as to a lamp for lighting a way through the dark, until the dawn comes and the morning star rises in your minds. At the same time, we must recognize that the interpretation of scriptural prophecy is never a matter for the individual. For no prophecy ever came from human initiative. When people spoke for God it was the Holy Spirit that moved them” (2 Pt 1:19-21).

Christ’s promise that He would not leave us orphans (cf. Jn 14:18) is guaranteed *by* and *in* His Spirit. As the Church explains: “since Sacred Scripture is inspired,” we must not forget a very “important principle of interpretation, without which Scripture would remain a dead letter. ‘Sacred Scripture must be read and interpreted in the light of the same Spirit by whom it was written’” (CCC 111, quoting DV).

The living teaching apostles of each age—i.e., the bishops of the Church in apostolic succession—to whom Christ has entrusted the proclamation of the Good News, have received the guarantee of Christ’s will in this regard. As Jesus declares in the presence of His apostles: “He who hears you, hears me” (Lk 10:16). Indeed, the bishops of every age well understand the grave obligation given them, namely, “[t]he task of giving an authentic interpretation of the Word of God, whether in its written form or in the form of Tradition . . . Yet this Magisterium is not superior to the Word of God, but is its servant. It teaches only what has been handed on to it. At the divine command and with the help of the Holy Spirit, it listens to this devotedly, guards it with dedication,

and expounds it faithfully. All that it proposes for belief as being divinely revealed is drawn from this single deposit of faith” (CCC 85-86, quoting DV).

Therefore, **we must strive to align our understanding of the Scriptures with the understanding of the Church**, who thinks with the Mind and Heart of Jesus Christ, and who clearly understands her own position: that she can never alter or dilute in any way the mysteries entrusted to her and formed in her by Christ Himself; but rather, the Church is under grave obligation to guard and transmit to every generation “all that she herself is [and] all that she believes” (CCC 98, quoting DV). What a great blessing the teaching Church is to us in every age!

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In light of these truths concerning our understanding the mysteries of our faith, **Sacred Heart Productions provides answers to the questions in the lessons in three different formats:**

- 1. through the secondary readings listed in the lessons***
- 2. through recorded lectures available in video and audio formats**
- 3. through study guides containing summarized answers to all the questions**

Sacred Heart Productions is keenly aware that “it is Christ alone who teaches—anyone else teaches to the extent that he is Christ’s spokesman, enabling Christ to teach with his lips” (CCC 427, quoting *Catechesi tradendae*). Therefore, throughout this Bible Study program, “Christ, the Incarnate Word and Son of God . . . is taught . . . everything else is taught with reference to him” (CCC 427, quoting CT).

*** AN IMPORTANT NOTE on the SECONDARY READINGS:**

The secondary readings taken from throughout **Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition will guide you in answering the questions.** Cross-referencing the Old

and New Testaments within the whole of our Sacred Tradition is an invaluable exercise in pondering the mysteries of our Christian faith.

In explaining how the Word of God must be read and interpreted in the light of the same Spirit by Whom it was written, the Church reminds us that there are **3 criteria for interpreting Holy Scripture in accordance with the Spirit Who inspired It.** We must strive, therefore, to . . .

1. **Be especially attentive to the content and unity of the whole Scripture.** As the Church explains to us: “Different as the books which comprise it may be, Scripture is a unity by reason of the unity of God’s plan, of which Christ Jesus is the center and heart, open since his Passover” (CCC 112).
2. **Read Scripture within the living Tradition of the whole Church.** As the Church also explains to us: “According to a saying of the Fathers, Sacred Scripture is written principally in the Church’s heart rather than in documents and records, for the Church carries in her Tradition the living memorial of God’s Word, and it is the Holy Spirit who gives her the spiritual interpretation of the Scripture (‘according to the spiritual meaning which the Spirit grants the Church’)” (CCC 113, quoting Origen).
3. **Be attentive to the analogy of faith.** As the Church tells us: “By ‘analogy of faith’ we mean the coherence of the truths of faith among themselves and within the whole plan of Revelation” (CCC 114).

The secondary readings chosen for the lessons are designed to assist you in interpreting Scripture according to the above criteria.