

Foundations of Faith (A Catechism for Today)

Lesson 23 – June 4

Question 66: How do we interpret the Bible?

Both Old and New Testaments were written within and accepted as scripture by communities of faith. Those who seek to understand the Bible need to stand within the church and listen to its teaching. The Bible is understood in the light of the revelation of God's work in Christ. We interpret scripture properly as we compare passages, seeing the two Testaments in light of each other, and listening to commentators past and present. Relying on the Holy Spirit, we seek the application of God's word for our time.

Jn 5:39 "You search the scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that testify on my behalf."

Acts 16:14 A certain woman named Lydia, a worshiper of God, was listening to us; she was from the city of Thyatira and a dealer in purple cloth. The Lord opened her heart to listen eagerly to what was said by Paul...She and her household were baptized.

Ps 82:6 I say, 'You are gods; you are all children of the Most High.

Jn 10:34-36 Jesus replied, "It is written in your own Scriptures that God said to certain leaders of the people, 'I say, you are gods!' 35 And you know that the Scriptures cannot be altered. So if those people who received God's message were called 'gods,' 36 why do you call it blasphemy when I say, 'I am the Son of God'? After all, the Father set me apart and sent me into the world.

Question 67: Should Christians read the Bible?

Yes. The regular reading and study of scripture, together with the hearing of the word in public worship, are some of the richest joys of Christian commitment.

Eph 6:17 Take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

Heb 2:12 Indeed, the word of God is living and active, sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing until it divides soul from spirit, joints from marrow; it is able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

Ps 119:105 Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.

Isa 55:11 So shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and succeed in the thing for which I sent it.

Ps 19

1 The heavens proclaim the glory of God. The skies display his craftsmanship. 2 Day after day they continue to speak; night after night they make him known. 3 They speak without a sound or word; their voice is never heard. 4 Yet their message has gone throughout the earth, and their words to all the world. God has made a home in the heavens for the sun. 5 It bursts forth like a radiant bridegroom after his wedding. It rejoices like a great athlete eager to run the race. 6 The sun rises at one end of the heavens and follows its course to the other end. Nothing can hide from its heat. 7 The instructions of

the LORD are perfect, reviving the soul. The decrees of the LORD are trustworthy, making wise the simple. 8 The commandments of the LORD are right, bringing joy to the heart. The commands of the LORD are clear, giving insight for living. 9 Reverence for the LORD is pure, lasting forever. The laws of the LORD are true; each one is fair. 10 They are more desirable than gold, even the finest gold. They are sweeter than honey, even honey dripping from the comb. 11 They are a warning to your servant, a great reward for those who obey them. 12 How can I know all the sins lurking in my heart? Cleanse me from these hidden faults. 13 Keep your servant from deliberate sins! Don't let them control me. Then I will be free of guilt and innocent of great sin. 14 May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be pleasing to you, O LORD, my rock and my redeemer.

Jn 6:63, 68

63 The Spirit alone gives eternal life. Human effort accomplishes nothing. And the very words I have spoken to you are spirit and life.

68 Simon Peter replied, "Lord, to whom would we go? You have the words that give eternal life.

Acts 2:42 All the believers devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching, and to fellowship, and to sharing in meals (including the Lord's Supper), and to prayer.

Rev 1:3 God blesses the one who reads the words of this prophecy to the church, and he blesses all who listen to its message and obey what it says, for the time is near.