

WHAT IS THE CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH?

A Biblical Study of The Catechism of the Catholic Church:

*Bible Answers to the Most Frequently Asked Questions
about Catholic Beliefs and Practices*

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Passages of *The Catechism of the Catholic Church* to Consider:

- **“essential and fundamental contents of Catholic doctrine” (CCC, 11)**
- **“I today order by virtue of my Apostolic Authority, is a statement of the Church’s faith and of catholic doctrine, attested to or illumined by Sacred Scripture, the Apostolic Tradition, and the Church’s Magisterium. I declare it to be a sure norm for teaching the faith and thus a valid and legitimate instrument for ecclesial communion.” (CCC, *Fidei Depositum*, Pope John Paul)**
- **“The presentation of doctrine must be biblical” (CCC, *Fidei Depositum*, Pope John Paul)**
- **“useful reading for all other Christian faithful” (CCC, 12)**
- **“For a deeper understanding of such passages, the reader should refer to the Scriptural texts themselves. Such Biblical references are a valuable working-tool in catechesis” (CCC, 19)**
- **“It must be sound doctrine” (CCC, *Fidei Depositum*, Pope John Paul)**
- **“I beseech the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of the Incarnate Word and Mother of the Church, to support with her powerful intercession the catechetical work of the entire Church on every level” (CCC, *Fidei Depositum*, Pope John Paul)**
- **“Catechesis is an education in the faith” (CCC, 4)**
- **“St. Cyril of Jerusalem and St. John Chrysostom, St. Ambrose and St. Augustine, and many other Fathers wrote catechetical works that remain models for us” (CCC, 8)**

Scriptures to Consider:

- Deuteronomy 4:1–2 “And now, O Israel, listen to the statutes and the rules that I am teaching you, and do them, that you may live, and go in and take possession of the land that the LORD, the God of your fathers, is giving you. **2 You shall not add to the word that I command you, nor take from it**, that you may keep the commandments of the LORD your God that I command you.” (ESV)
- Deuteronomy 18:20–22 “But the prophet who presumes to speak a word in my name that I have not commanded him to speak, or who speaks in the name of other gods, that same prophet shall die.’ [21] And if you say in your heart, ‘How may we know the word that the LORD has not spoken?’—[22] when a prophet speaks in the name of the LORD, if the word does not come to pass or come true, that is a word that the LORD has not spoken; the prophet has spoken it presumptuously. You need not be afraid of him.” (ESV)
- Proverbs 30:5–6 “Every word of God proves true; he is a shield to those who take refuge in him. Do not add to his words, lest he rebuke you and you be found a liar.” (ESV)
- 2 John 9 “Everyone who goes on ahead and does not abide in the teaching of Christ, does not have God. Whoever abides in the teaching has both the Father and the Son.” (ESV)
- Matthew 7:15–20 “Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves. [16] You will recognize them by their fruits. Are grapes gathered from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? [17] So, every healthy tree bears good fruit, but the diseased tree bears bad fruit. [18] A healthy tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a diseased tree bear good fruit.

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[19] Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. [20] Thus you will recognize them by their fruits.” (ESV)

- 2 Peter 2:1–3 “But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing upon themselves swift destruction. [2] And many will follow their sensuality, and because of them the way of truth will be blasphemed. [3] And in their greed they will exploit you with false words. Their condemnation from long ago is not idle, and their destruction is not asleep.” (ESV)
- Revelation 22:18–19 “I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book, [19] and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book.” (ESV)
- John 14:26 “But **the Helper, the Holy Spirit**, whom the Father will send in my name, **he will teach you all things** and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.” (ESV)

Questions to Consider:

- **Does the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* go beyond the teachings of Jesus? Is it biblical?**
- Why is there a need for tradition and the church authority in addition to the Bible?
- Why is there such a gap in time (350 years) between some of the early church writings that correspond to the claims of the catechism authority?
- Why are there so many internal inconsistencies in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*? (note: see chapter towards the end that specifically addresses this concern)
- Why do some doctrines of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (purgatory, indulgences, etc.) validated later on in church history and mostly by tradition with little Scripture?
- Does the Catechism reference Scriptures within their contextual meaning? Have you ever checked the footnote references in the Catechism to be sure?
- Why are the Catechisms and Tradition of the Catholic Church allowed to change or be added to?
- Why does the Pope pray to the dead (Mary) for her prayers for the work of the Catechism? Is not talking to the dead directly called “necromancy”? Is it biblical?
- **What does John 14:26 say about who we access directly and primarily for help in teaching?**