

Study Guide for JESUS: THE WORD BECAME FLESH

Written by Stephen K. Ray

**BASED ON THE IGNATIUS BIBLE, RSV CATHOLIC EDITION AND
THE CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH, 2ND EDITION**

CHAPTER 1: IN THE FULLNESS OF TIME

God created Adam and Eve in a state of perfection. But sin separated man from God and brought about death. But God mounted a rescue mission, used prophets to prepare the way, and in the fullness of time sent his Son Jesus to redeem the world. The 2nd person of the Trinity took on human flesh—God became man—born of a virgin in Bethlehem. King Herod’s attempt to kill any rival sent the Holy Family fleeing to Egypt. Returning to Nazareth with his mother Mary and legal father Joseph, Jesus was a carpenter until the age of thirty. We know very little about these “30 silent years”, but Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature, and in favor with God and man, obedient to his parents and the Law of Moses.

Questions for further discussion and study:

1. Explain how the story of salvation began with a man, a woman and a serpent (Gen 3:1–24). How does the story of salvation end with a man, a woman and a serpent (Rev 12: 1–11; CCC 410–11)? Who or what was the serpent (Rev 12: 9; CCC 414, 2852)? Who was deceived by the serpent’s lies resulting in sin (Gen 3:6, 17; 2 Cor 11:3)?
2. What is the result of Adam’s disobedience (Gen 3:17–19; CCC 399–401; 1707)? How are all people affected by sin through Adam’s choice (Rom 5:12–19; 1 Cor 15:21, 56; CCC 402–406)? What is the sting of death (1 Cor 15:56)? Why was God the only one who could remedy the situation (CCC 616–617, 480)?
3. What is the first prophecy that God would set things right (Gen 3:15; CCC 70, 410–411, 489)? How was the coming of Christ foretold (Lk 24:27; Acts 3:18; CCC 522, 711–714)? When did “the fullness of time” arrive (Gal 4:4; CCC 422)?
4. Where was Jesus born (Mt 2:1)? Which prophet foretold the birthplace of the Messiah (Micah 5:1–2; Mt 2:6; Jn 7:

42)? Who else had lived in Bethlehem (Gen 35:19; Ruth 1:22; 1 Sam 17:12, 15)? From what “root” would the Messiah come (Is 11:1–2; Jer 23:5; Acts 13:22–23; CCC 712)? What Psalms might David have written under the starry sky in Bethlehem (Psa 19:1–6; 23:1–6)?

5. Explain how and why Jesus’ birth was unique and unusual (Mt 1:20–25; CCC 497). How was his birth explained to Mary (Lk 1:26–38)? Read the account of Jesus’ birth (Lk 2:1–20). Who was Jesus’ legal and earthly—though not biological—father (Mt 1:18–20; Lk 2:16; CCC 488, 532)? Notice Jesus’ genealogy (Mt 1:1–17; Lk 3:23–38; Jn 1:1). Who were the first to be notified of the savior’s birth (Lk 2:8–20)? Who visited the baby and honored him as a king (Mt 2:1–12)? Who was king of Judea when Jesus was born (Mt 2:1; CCC 423)? To which people did Jesus come and how did they receive him (Jn 1:11; Mt 27:25–26; CCC 594)? Would you have recognized Jesus and received him?
6. What did Isaiah prophesy about Christ (Is 7:14)? What does Immanuel mean (Mt 1:23)? Who had come to visit the world (Jn 1:1, 14; Phil 2:5–8; CCC 454)? What is the Incarnation (CCC 461)? How do we understand the two natures of Jesus Christ—for example, is he only God or only a man? Or, is he part God and part man (Col 1:19; 2:9; Jn 1:1, 14; CCC 464, 469, 479)? What is heresy (CCC 2089)? How did early heresies fail to understand and teach the truth (CCC 464–469)?
7. What happened to Jesus eight days after his birth (Lk 2:21–22; CCC 527)? What does the name Jesus mean (Mt 1:21; CCC 452)? What did Simeon and Anna say about the baby Jesus (Lk 2:21–38)?
8. Read the story of Herod and his slaughter of the innocents (Mt 2:1–19)? Why do you think King Herod was afraid of baby Jesus? What did Joseph do (Mt 2:13–15)? How was Our Lord’s salvation from slaughter similar to that of Moses (Ex 1:8–9, 22; 2:1–3; CCC 530)? How might this be a hint that Jesus is the new Moses?
9. What was quiet life in Nazareth like for Jesus (CCC 531)? How do his hidden years help us enter into fellowship with Jesus (CCC 533, 564)? What do we know about Jesus’ younger years (Lk 2:40, 51–52)? Did Jesus always know his eternal purpose, and that he was God incarnate, or did it just dawn on him one day (CCC 474)? Read the one recorded event we have from Jesus’ childhood (Lk 2:41–52; CCC 534)?

What did Jesus do for the next eighteen years (Mt 13:55; CCC 423)? The word carpenter is “tekton” in Greek, which means one who works with hard materials like wood, stone or metal.

CHAPTER 2: PROCLAIMING THE KINGDOM

At the Jordan River, John the Baptist announced the coming Messiah. As Jesus was baptized, the heavens opened, the Father spoke, and the Holy Spirit descended. In the wilderness Jesus fasted 40 days and was tempted by the devil. Afterwards, Jesus chose 12 disciples and began proclaiming the kingdom of God throughout Israel. For three years Jesus taught the crowds, often in parables, and performed many signs and miracles. He healed the sick, cast out demons, forgave sins, and even raised the dead. Jesus was the “New Moses” who reinterpreted the Law, and even provided miraculous bread in the wilderness. To prove his power, Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead after corruption had set in.

Questions for further discussion and study:

1. How old was Jesus when he began his earthly ministry (Lk 3: 23)? Who was preaching in the Judean Wilderness (Mk 1: 4; Lk 3:2–4; Jn 1:6–8)? Explain John’s miraculous birth (Lk 1: 5–20, 57–66)? How was John the Baptist dressed and what did he eat (Mt. 3:4; Mk 1:6)? What was special about John (Mt 11: 7–15; CCC 717–720)? What was he doing and saying (Lk 3:1–20)? What happened to John in the end (Mt 14:1–12)?
2. Read the accounts of Jesus’ baptism in the Jordan River (Mt 3: 13–17; Mk 1:9–11; Lk 3:21–22; CCC 535). What is the meaning of his baptism (CCC 438, 536, 1427)? How is the Trinity manifested in this event (Hint: CCC 701)?
3. What is required to enter the Kingdom of God (Mk 16:16; Jn 3:3–5; CCC 1215, 1225)? How did Jesus demonstrate the meaning of “water and the Spirit” (Mt 3:13–17; Jn 1:31–32)? Is baptism necessary for salvation (1 Pet 3:21; CCC 1257)? What does baptism accomplish (Acts 2:38; 22:16; Tit 3:5; Rom 6:3–5; CCC 1262, 1265)? How is one born again the biblical way (Jn 3:5; CCC 720, 1215)?
4. After his baptism, where did Jesus go (Mt 4:1–13; Lk 4:1–13; CCC 538)? What was the meaning of the temptation in the wilderness (Heb 2:18; CCC 539–540)?

5. How did Jesus begin his ministry and how did his hometown respond (Lk 4:14–30)? What did Jesus proclaim by reading from Isaiah 61:1–2? Why did the villagers become so angry? How did Jesus respond (Lk 4:24)? How did he handle the rejection, where did he go, and what did he do (Lk 4:31–37)?
6. Where did Peter live (Lk 4:31, 38)? Where was Our Lord's home base while proclaiming the kingdom of God in the Galilee area (Mt 4:12–13; Mk 2:1)? What prophecy was fulfilled—who or what was the "great light" (Mt 4:14–17)? Read how Jesus chose his disciples (Mt 4:18–22; Mk 1:16–20; Lk 5:2–11, 27–29; Jn 1:35–51)? How many disciples did Jesus choose and what were their names (Lk 6:13–16)? How did they respond to his first miracle (Jn 2:11)? What did the Jewish leaders think of the disciples (Acts 4:13)?
7. What were the three main offices in ancient Israel and how does Jesus Christ fill them (CCC 436)? Who was anointed and established as holder of these three offices (CCC 783)? In a general way, how do all of the baptized share in these three offices (CCC 784–786)? What did Jesus entrust in a special way to the apostles and their successors (CCC 873; 1581)?
8. Which of Jesus' miracles are recorded in all four gospels (Mt 14:13–21; Mk 6:33–44; Lk 9:12–17; Jn 6:4–14)? How does John 6 portray Jesus as the new Moses (e.g., Jesus crossing water, going up a mountain, teaching, performing signs, providing miraculous bread in the wilderness and the peoples' proclamation that Jesus is "the Prophet" foretold by Moses (Deut 18:15, 18). Moses is a type or prefiguring of Christ—Jesus is the antitype or the fulfillment. What is typology and how does it help us understand Jesus (CCC 128–129, 1094)? How might the feeding of the multitudes instruct us about the Eucharist (CCC 1335)?
9. What did Jesus do on the water (Jn 6:19; Mt 14:25–6)? What did the people want to do with Jesus (Jn 6:15)? How do you think Herod would have responded to such rumblings? Did Jesus desire earthly kingship (Jn 18:36; CCC 439, 559)? Of what kingdom are the Christian faithful citizens (Phil 3:20; CCC 1003, 2796)? What loyalty did the Jewish leaders later claim (Jn 19:12, 15)?
10. One of Jesus' most famous sermons was delivered in the synagogue in Capernaum. What did he proclaim there (Jn 6:41–58; CCC 1338)? The people were shocked; what did they do (Jn 6:66; CCC 1336)? How did the twelve disciples

respond (Jn 6:67–69)? John makes it obvious that Jesus is referring to the Eucharist (for more on this, see St. John's Gospel, Steve Ray (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2002). Explain this speech in light of the Eucharist.

11. Opponents of Catholic teaching often quote John 6:63 to refute the Real Presence of the Eucharist. What does Jesus say about "the flesh" in this passage? If "the flesh" refers to Jesus' flesh (which it doesn't), then Jesus' comment would deny the crucial importance of the Incarnation and bodily resurrection (cf. Jn 1:1, 14; Eph 2:15–16; 1 Pet 2:24)? How many times does Jesus use the phrase "my flesh" in John 6 (cf. Jn 6:51, 53, 54, 55, 56)? How does the distinction between "the flesh" and "my flesh" help us understand the meaning of verse 63 (see Jn 1:14; 8:15)? The NIV translates John 8:15 as "You judge by human standards"; the NAB translates it "You judge by appearances"; other translations render it literally as "You people judge according to the flesh". Many deny the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist because to the human senses the elements appear to be merely bread and wine. How did Jesus criticize such reasoning (Jn 6:60–63; 7:24)? His words must be understood by faith through his Spirit. "In saying then that the flesh profiteth nothing, [Jesus] does not speak of His own flesh, but that of the carnal hearer of His word" (St. Thomas Aquinas, Homily on John 47, 3).
12. How did the Jews try to trick Jesus (Lk 20:19–26)? What prop did Jesus use to make his point? How would Jesus have been trapped if he had answered either yes or no? The coin belongs to Caesar because he made it and his image is impressed on the coin—whose image and likeness is stamped on every man and woman (Gn 1:27)? How does Jesus escape the trap and use the situation to instruct and challenge the people to give themselves in obedience to God?
13. Our Lord's longest recorded sermon was given on the shore of the Sea of Galilee. It is called the Sermon on the Mount (Mt 5:1—7:29) and begins with the Beatitudes (Mt 5:3–12). How is Jesus portrayed as the new Moses (CCC 581)? Notice Jesus ascended a mountain, sat and reinterpreted the Law (Mt 5:1, 17–22). How does this fulfill Moses' prophecy (Deut 18:15, 18)? What did Moses tell us to do when "the prophet" arrived (Deut 18:15)? In the presence of the first Moses, what does God command concerning Jesus, the new Moses (Lk 9:35)? Did Jesus come to abolish the Law, or did he raise the level of obedience and love even higher?

14. Where was Simon renamed “Peter”—the Rock (Mt 16: 13–19)? Describe the significance of the location with its rock face and cave. How did Simon’s name change signify a new office of oversight in the Church (CCC 552–53, 869, 880–82)? Built on this foundation of rock, what did Jesus promise concerning his Church and her future (Mt 16:18; CCC 552)? What do the “keys of the kingdom” represent? What is the Old Testament “key” to understand the keys of the kingdom and their meaning (Is 22:15–23, esp. v. 22)? How many churches did Jesus establish (Mt. 16:18; 18:17; Eph 4:4–5; 1 Tim 3:15; CCC 173, 813, 866)? Are there to be divisions or denominations within the Church (Jn 17: 21–23; 1 Cor 1:11–13; CCC 817, 820)? What is a schism within the Church (CCC 2089)?
15. Read the story of Our Lord’s Transfiguration (Lk 9:28–36; cp. Mt 17:1–8; Mk 9:2–8; 2 Pet 1:16–18). In the Old Testament, whose face shone with light and when did a cloud descend on a mountain (Ex 34:29–35; 19:16)? What had God prophesied through Moses (Deut 18:15, 18)? How might these parallels between Mount Sinai and the Transfiguration on Mount Tabor reveal Jesus as the new Moses? What other parallels can you find?
16. Read the story of the blind man in Jerusalem (Jn 9:1–12). How did Jesus cure him (v. 6–7)? How did Jesus use physical elements as signs (CCC 1151)? What can we learn about the sacraments from this miracle (CCC 1504)? What are the sacraments (CCC 1116)? How does this sign—this healing—demonstrate Our Lord’s willingness to use physical things for spiritual purposes? How might it be a picture of baptism (CCC 1216)? God originally made a whole man from dust (Gen 2:7); how does Our Lord now make a man whole using dust? How does this give us a foretaste of the new creation in Christ?
17. Where did Jesus often stay when visiting Jerusalem (Lk 10: 38; Jn 11:1–5)? How far was Bethany from Jerusalem (Jn 11:18)? Who lived in Bethany and why did they send for Jesus (Jn 11:1–5)? What did Jesus do when he heard of his friend Lazarus’ sickness and what eventually happened to the sick man (Jn 11:6–14)? Why do you think Jesus waited two days, which allowed Lazarus to die? What is the shortest verse in the Bible (Jn 11:35)? How long was Lazarus dead by the time Jesus arrived (Jn 11:17)? What does Jesus say of himself (Jn 11:25–26; CCC 994)? What did Jesus do and what happened to Lazarus (Jn 11:38–44)? This was Our Lord’s seventh sign in St. John’s gospel—how should the

people have responded? How did many of them respond to this miracle (Jn 11:45, 53)? How should this miracle have prepared the disciples for the Passion of Jesus soon to take place?

CHAPTER 3: TO PAY THE PRICE

The Jewish leaders opposed Jesus, but he entered Jerusalem triumphantly on a donkey, and at the Last Supper he transformed the Passover meal into the Eucharistic celebration and instituted the priesthood, after which he stepped out into the night. The fall of Adam had taken place in a garden. Jesus, the last Adam, entered another garden—Gethsemane—to confront the enemy and redeem the world. Betrayed by Judas, Jesus was arrested, falsely accused, and tried before Pontius Pilate who condemned him to death. He was imprisoned, mocked, and flogged, and he led out to Golgotha where he was crucified. A spiritual battle raged as Christ who knew no sin, as St. Paul puts it, became sin in our place. Through his cross he destroyed the power of Satan and broke the bonds of sin and death. He died and was buried in a tomb. A stone was rolled over the door and soldiers guarded the sealed tomb.

Questions for further discussion and study:

1. After Jesus spent approximately three years of ministering throughout Israel, what was about to begin (CCC 557)? How did it begin and how did the village of Bethphage gain fame (Mt 21:1–7)? Where was Bethphage (Lk 19:29)? How did the people receive Jesus (Mt 21:8–11; Jn 12:12–19; CCC 559)? What was carried in the procession and what did people throw to the ground (Mt 21:8; Jn 12:13)? What did the people chant and where did these words come from (Jn 12:13; Psa 118:26)? How was this event a fulfillment of prophecy (Mt 21:4–5; Zech 9:9)?
2. What did Jesus gaze upon while riding the donkey from Bethphage through the Kidron Valley to the gates of Jerusalem (Lk 19:41)? What did he say about the city (Lk 13:34–35; 19:41–44; CCC 558)? By his words, who and what did Jesus claim to be?
3. Where did the first Passover meal take place (Ex 12:1–13)? What had to be killed (Ex 12:5–6)? What happened to the blood and the meat (Ex 12:7–8)? How does this prefigure the death of Christ and the Eucharist (CCC 1334)? How does Jesus fulfill Old Testament imagery here (1 Cor 5:7)? Where was the Eucharist prefigured in the Old Testament (Ex 16:4,

31; cp. Jn 6:48–51)? Where was the Sacrifice of the Mass prophesied in the Old Testament (Mal 1:11)?

4. According to Scripture, what posture was assumed by Jesus and the disciples while eating the Last Supper (Lk 24:30)? Read the accounts of the Last Supper in which Jesus transformed the Passover meal into the Eucharistic celebration (Mt 26:19–30; Mk 14:17–26; Lk 22:13–20; 1 Cor 11:23–26; CCC 1338)? When did Jesus institute the priesthood (CCC 1323, 1337)? What can we learn about the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass from this Passover meal (CCC 1362–1363)? When Jesus said, “This is my body,” (Lk 22:19; 1 Cor 11:24) what was he holding in his hands?
“Now will He speak openly of the same Sacrament [of the Eucharist], whereby He was carried in His Own Hands. ‘O taste and see that the Lord is good.’ . . . ‘Except a man eat My Flesh and drink My Blood, he shall have no life in him’” (St. Augustine, Psalms, 34, 11).
5. In the Sacrifice of the Mass, what happens at the consecration of the bread and wine (CCC 1376)? When did Jesus institute the sacrament of the Eucharist (CCC 1337)? What may result from partaking of this sacrament unworthily or without discerning it properly—that is, without understanding and respecting it for what it really is (1 Cor 11:27–30)? Why did many disciples walk away from Jesus (Jn 6:52–60, 66–68; CCC 1336) and how is the Eucharist still a stumbling block for many today?
6. Where did Jesus and his disciples go after the Last Supper (Mt 26:36; Jn 18:1)? What did Jesus do in the Garden of Gethsemane (Mt 26:36–46; CCC 612)? Who did Satan enter and how did he approach Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane (Lk 22:3–6; Jn 18:1–3)? How does St. Paul refer to Jesus (1 Cor 15:45; CCC 411, 504)? How did the serpent tempt the first Adam and Eve in a garden (Gen 3)? Discuss other parallels between the two “Adams” in the two gardens. What escaped the notice of Satan—the prince of this world (1 Cor 2:8; CCC 498)? What promise had God made to Adam and Eve after they sinned in the Garden of Eden (Gen 3:15; CCC 410)? How was Jesus fulfilling that promise?
7. At his trial before the Jewish leaders, what happened to Our Lord (Mt 26:57–68; Jn 18:12–24)? After being kept in prison overnight, what happened to Jesus at the Roman trial (Jn 18:28–19:16)? What was required of Passover lambs (Ex 12:

- 5)? What did Pilate conclude concerning Jesus—the Passover Lamb—at the very time the Passover lambs were being examined and sacrificed in Jerusalem (Jn 19:6)? What did Pilate do (Mt 27:24–26; Jn 19:16)? Did Rome allow the Jews to execute criminals (Jn 18:31)? How did the Roman soldiers treat Jesus (Mt 27:27–31)?
8. What did the Roman soldiers do after mocking Jesus (Mt 27:32–37)? What limit was placed upon the Israelites regarding the number of lashes with a whip (Deut 25:3)? Rome had no such limits, so what might we deduce from this fact? What did Isaiah say about the scourging Jesus took in our place (Is 43:5; cf. 1 Pet 2:24)? Where did the Roman soldiers take Jesus (Jn 19:16–18)? Who helped him carry the cross (Mk 15:21)? Why do Catholics pray the Stations or the Way of the Cross (CCC 2669)? Read the four gospel passages about Our Lord’s crucifixion (Mt 27:33–56; Mk 15:22–41; Lk 23:33–49; Jn 19:16–30). Did Jesus know in advance what he came to do on the cross (Mt 16:21; Lk 18:31–34; CCC 474, 607)? Was Jesus humiliated and crucified against his will—could he have delivered himself if he had chosen to (Mt 26:53; Jn 10:14–18; CCC 609; 1019)?
9. Read Isaiah 52:13–53:12 and discuss how the sacrifice of Christ was foretold about seven hundred years earlier. What would his death accomplish? Read Psalm 22 and consider the prophecies about the suffering of Our Lord. What had Zechariah prophesied over 500 years earlier (Zech 12:10; Jn 19:37)? Read John 19 and notice all the fulfilled prophecies.
10. Where was Jesus crucified (Mk 15:22)? In what kind of place were the cross and the tomb located (Jn 19:41)? How does the new, spiritual creation begin in a setting similar to the first, physical creation (Gen 2:8)? Consider the parallels that took place in the two gardens—between the tree of life that brought about death and the tree of death that brought about life. Who is the one and only mediator who can bring God and man back together again and why (1 Tim 2:5; Heb 9:15; CCC 480, 846)? What was Adam and Eve’s original state (Gen 2:5–7)? What happened after they sinned (Gen 3:7–11, 22)? What was Jesus’ state (Heb 4:15; CCC 540)? Adam was naked without shame but because of sin he became shamed and desired clothing (Gen 3:7–11, 22). Jesus was wrapped in swaddling clothes as an infant (Lk 2:7) but what happened when he took on our sin (Mk 15:24)?
11. Does the Church view the Passion as real history (CCC 571–573)? What did Jesus accomplish on the cross (Gal 3:

13; Eph 2:16; 1 Pet 1:18–19; 2:24; CCC 580, 624, 766, 1019; 1708)? How did the cross affect the devil and his kingdom (1 Jn 3:8; CCC 550)?

12. What is the difference between the symbol of the cross and the symbol of the crucifix (see “Cross” in the Glossary of the Catechism)? Why do you think Catholics portray the babe in the manger and the body (corpus) of Christ on the crucifix? What do both images keep ever before us? How does the average crucifix fail to portray the historical reality?
13. What were Christ’s seven last words from the cross (CCC 2605)? Explain why his words were short? Did Jesus deserve to suffer; how did one of the thieves crucified with him evaluate the situation (Lk 23:39–43; see Jn 18:38)?
14. What did Jesus take upon himself—what did he become for us (2 Cor 5:21 Gal 3:13; CCC 602; 580)? Representing us, or “assuming us” and our place on the cross, what did Jesus exclaim (Mk 15:34) and what did it signify (CCC 603)? Meditate on the grief Our Lord suffered by taking upon himself all the vile sins of the world, suffering physically and at the same time waging spiritual and psychological warfare with all the powers of darkness.
15. What must a person do to be saved (Mt 24:13; Lk 12:8; 13:3; Jn 3:3–5, 16, 36; Acts 2:38; 16:30–31; Rom 10:9–10; Jas 2:24; 1 Pet 3:21; CCC 161, 1257, 1430–31, 846)?
16. Having seen something of the sufferings of Christ, what do you think Jesus meant by “take up your cross and follow me” (Mt 10:38; 16:24; CCC 618, 1506, 1816, 2014–2015)? Are you prepared to carry your cross to Golgotha with Christ and suffer with him? If we are not willing, what is the consequence (Lk 14:27; Mt 16:24–27)?
17. What did Jesus say right before he breathed his last (Jn 19:30)? What did the soldiers do (Jn 19:31–33)? Could the lamb slaughtered for the Passover meal have broken bones, even after its death (Ex 12:46)? How did this demonstrate that Jesus fulfilled prophecy on the Passover Lamb (Psa 34:20; Jn 19:36; CCC 608)? How did the soldiers prove that Jesus was really dead (Jn 19:34)? How did this fulfill prophecy (Zech 12:10; Jn 19:37)? What happens when we gaze upon him whom our sins have pierced (CCC 1432)? What is the profound meaning of the blood and water which flowed from Our Lord’s side (CCC 478; 1225)?

18. Was the death of Jesus a “real death” (CCC 627)? What happened after Our Lord’s death (Jn 19:38–42; Mt 27: 57–61)? How did Pilate assure that no one would steal Jesus’ body or tamper with the tomb (Mt 27:62–66)? What happened during the time Jesus was in the tomb (1 Pet 3: 18–19; CCC 632–633)?

CHAPTER 4: AND WE BEHELD HIS GLORY

On the third day Jesus rose from the dead. An angel rolled the stone from the mouth of the tomb and the soldiers were terrified. Jesus emerged alive. Skeptics have attempted to deny the bodily resurrection but all have failed. Upon seeing the wounds in Our Lord’s hands and side “Doubting” Thomas exclaimed “My Lord and my God!” For forty days Jesus instructed his apostles and appeared to many people, including over five hundred brethren at one time. He ascended into heaven and sat down at the right hand of the Father in glory. The Holy Spirit descended on Pentecost and the Church was born. The Church is the Mystical Body of Christ who through the sacraments and priesthood continues the work of Christ on earth. We await the 2nd coming of Christ, the resurrection of the dead, and his kingdom which will have no end.

Questions for further discussion and study:

1. How long had Jesus been in the tomb (Lk 18:32–33; 1 Cor 15:3–4; CCC 627)? What had he told his disciples before his death (Mt 16:21; CCC 554)? What Old Testament example had been used to predict the time in the tomb and the resurrection (Mt 12:39–41; CCC 994; see Jonah 1:17)? What happened on the morning of the third day (Mt 27:62–28: 9)? What kind of resurrection was it (Jn 20:27; Lk 24:1–9, 39–43; CCC 645)? Was it a concrete historical fact (CCC 643)?
2. Who came to visit the tomb of Jesus and what did they come to do (Mk 16:1–10; Lk 24:10; CCC 641)? Who was immediately notified of Christ’s resurrection (Mk 16:7; Lk 24: 8–12; Jn 20:1–8)? Who does St. Paul tell us saw the risen Christ early on—and then who was next (1 Cor 15:3–8)? How many others witnessed the fact that Jesus had risen from the dead (CCC 639, 642)? How did Jesus prove that he was not a ghost or a spirit (Lk 24:36–43; CCC 645)? What did the Roman and Jewish leaders conspire to do (Mt 28:11–15)?
3. Why was it so hard for people to believe Jesus had been raised from the dead? Consider how you might react if a

friend who was dead and buried for several days climbed out of his coffin? Why is it important to believe in the resurrection of the dead, and what is the alternative (1 Cor 15:12–19, 32)? Why did the eyewitness of the risen Christ, the Apostle John, write his gospel (Jn 20:30–31; CCC 514) and what did he say about it (Jn 21:24–25)?

4. Skeptics have attempted to debunk the bodily and historical resurrection of Jesus. Some have suggested Jesus did not really die but only “swooned” and then recovered in the cool tomb—but did the soldier who thrust his spear through Our Lord’s heart doubt Jesus was dead? Others have claimed the disciples stole the body—but did the guards protecting the tomb upon pain of death think the body had been stolen? Others have suggested the Romans or Jews might have hidden the body, but if so, why didn’t they produce the corpse when claims of resurrection began to spread—a dead body would have stopped the rumors. The skeptical theories fail miserably in the face of clear and consistent eyewitness accounts. The fact remains: the body was gone from the sealed tomb and Jesus was walking around in his body with the wounds of the Passion still evident.
5. Upon hearing that Jesus had risen from the dead, how did the disciple Thomas respond (Jn 20:24–25)? How do you think he got the nickname “Doubting Thomas”? How did Jesus challenge Thomas (Jn 20:26–27)? How did the skeptical Thomas respond (Jn 20:28; CCC 448)? Notice how the gospel of John begins (Jn 1:1, 14) and notice how it ends with Thomas’ exclamation (Jn 20:28). What was meant by this exclamation (CCC 449)? Why is Thomas’ exclamation significant and how does it demonstrate the purpose of St. John in writing his gospel (Jn 20:30–31)?
6. According to the CCC 639, what kind of event was the resurrection? What was observed on that Easter morning (CCC 640–641)? As explained by CCC 643, how are we to interpret the resurrection; why was it so hard for many to believe (Rom 6:1–14; 1 Cor 15:1–58; CCC 643ff.)? Who witnessed the resurrected Christ alive and walking about (CCC 642, 639)? Is the evidence of the resurrection physical and historical (CCC 643–644)? How did Jesus show that he was really alive (Acts 10:40–41; Lk 24:36–49; CCC 645)?
7. What kind of body does Jesus have now (CCC 645–46)? What will happen to us on the last day (Jn 5:28–29; CCC 1038)? What kind of body will we have at the resurrection on the last day (1 Cor 15:35–50; CCC 999; 1015–1017)?

8. How long was Jesus visible to his disciples on the earth after his resurrection (Acts 1:3; CCC 659)? Where else did Jesus meet with his disciples after his resurrection (Mt 28:8–10, 16–20; Lk 24:13–49; Jn 21:1–25; Acts 1:3–8)?
9. What did Jesus breathe upon his apostles (Jn 20:21–22)? What power did he bestow on them (Jn 20:23; see Mt 16:19, 18:18; CCC 553, 976, 1087, 1441–1444)? How does the sacrament of reconciliation affect our lives (CCC 981)?
10. What happened right before the apostles' eyes (Mk 16:19; Lk 24:50–51; Acts 1:9–11)? Where was Jesus standing as he ascended into heaven (Lk 24:50; Acts 1:12)? What does a cloud often represent in the Bible (CCC 659, 697)? What is the meaning of this historical event (CCC 659, 665–667)?
11. What else did Our Lord promise to his apostles (Jn 14: 16–18, 26; 15:26–27; 16:7, 13; Acts 1:8; CCC 729)? What happened immediately following Jesus' ascension into heaven (Acts 1:12–14)? What happened nine days after Our Lord's ascension (Acts 2:1–4, 14, 41; CCC 731, 767, 2623)? (Note: Novenas reflect the nine days of prayer in the Upper Room between the Ascension and Pentecost.)
12. Though no longer bodily on the earth, how is Jesus still present and active in the world (1 Cor 12:12; Eph 1: 22–23; CCC 669, 830)? How does Jesus' ministry now reach every corner of the globe (Acts 1:8; Mt 28:18–20; CCC 1084, 1116)? What are the sacraments (CCC 1131, 1116)? Discuss how the sacraments are the work of Our Lord today. How is Christ present—especially in the liturgical celebrations—in the priest (Lk 10:16; CCC 858, 1548), the Word of God (CCC 103, 1100), the people of God (1 Cor 12:27), the sacraments and especially in the Eucharist (CCC 77, 1374, 1378, 1380)? For a summary, see CCC 1088. How are the three main offices of the Old Testament fulfilled today (CCC 783, 873)?
13. What promise did Our Lord and the angels make (Jn 14: 1–4; Mt 16:27; Acts 1:9–11; Rev 22:20; CCC 673, 1403)? What will happen prior to the second coming of Christ (CCC 674–675)? Who will see Christ when he comes back again (Rev 1:7)?
14. What should our attitude be toward temporal kings and leaders (CCC 450)? What was King Herod Agrippa's end (Acts 12:21–23)? What is the glorious destiny of Jesus (Dan

7:13–14; Mt 26:64; Rev 1:4–7; CCC 668)? What two kingdoms seek our allegiance (Col 1:13; Eph 6:10–17; CCC 395, 414, 550, 671, 1086)? What is the most important choice you will ever make (Jn 3:16, 36; CCC 1013, 1036–1037)?

15. What awaits each of us at the end of our life and the end of time (Jn 5:28–29; Heb 9:27; Rev 20:11–15; CCC 1038–1041)? What will happen on the Last Day (1 Thess 4:13–17; 1 Cor 15:50–57)? What are the two possible eternal destinies (Lk 3:17; 2 Thess 1:6–10; Rev 21:8; Jn 14:1–4; Rev 21:22–27; CCC 1023, 1033)? What is hell and how does one get there (Heb 10:26–7; Rev 21:8; CCC 1034–1035, 1861)? How must we use our freedom—our free will—while we still have the opportunity (CCC 1036)? Following Joshua’s example, how must we be wise and what must we choose (Josh 24:15)?

The Catholic Challenge

We have viewed Jesus: the Word Became Flesh and, having gone through the study guide, you are now equipped to better understand Jesus and his singular role in salvation history from a Catholic, biblical, and historical perspective. You should also better understand the Trinity, the two natures of Christ, the Incarnation, and the salvation Christ obtained through his Passion. Be prepared to answer some questions about Jesus: Who he is, what he did, and how he saves us in The Catholic Challenge.

1. How did the prophets of the Old Testament prepare the world for the coming Savior? Give a few examples.
2. What happened to Mankind in the Garden of Eden and what did God do to save them?
3. Explain the difference between King Herod and Jesus and, more broadly, between Satan the king of this world and Jesus the King of the Universe (including this world).
4. Where was Jesus born? Was it foretold in advance and what was and is the significance of this location?
5. What was uniquely different about Jesus’ birth and what was his relationship to God the Father, and to Joseph and Mary?
6. What can we learn from Jesus’ childhood about how we should live in the world?

7. What does it mean to be born again (or, "from above") and how does the Bible use the phrase and explain it?
8. Explain how Jesus was one person with a divine and human nature.
9. Why was it necessary for Jesus to enter human history in human flesh and to suffer?
10. What did Jesus accomplish through his cross and resurrection?
11. What must we do to be saved and inherit eternal life; what are the various demands made upon us?
12. How can we take up our cross and follow Jesus?
13. How does the Mass wonderfully express and apply the work of Our Lord to us and how should we respond and participate?
14. Discuss why we can trust in the reliability of the gospels and the truth of Jesus' bodily resurrection.
15. What are the sacraments and how do they continue the ministry of Christ and the provision of grace?
16. What choices have you made regarding Christ and his kingdom?
17. Discuss how we can live out our choices on a day-to-day basis.
18. Have you chosen and committed to your eternal destiny, and if so, how?
19. Which Kingdom have you decided to serve?

For Further Reading

Ray, Stephen K. *St. John's Gospel: A Bible Study Guide and Commentary* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2002).

Sheed, Frank. *To Know Christ Jesus* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1980).

Guardini, Romano. *The Lord* (Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1964).

John Paul II. *The Trinity's Embrace* (Boston: Pauline Books & Media, 2002)

Jesus Christ, *Word of the Father*, trans. Adrian Walker (New York: Crossroad Publishing Company, 1997).

Sheen, Fulton J. *Life of Christ* (New York: Image Books, 1977).

Ricciotti, Giuseppe. *The Life of Christ* (Milwaukee: Bruce Publishing Company, 1947).

Glasson, T. F. *Moses in the Fourth Gospel* (Napierville, IL.: Alec R. Allenson, Inc., 1963).

Ricci, Giulio. *The Holy Shroud* (Rome: Centro Romano di Sindonologia).

Van Vorst, Robert. *Jesus Outside the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publ., 2000).

Fernandez, Andres, S. J. trans. Paul Barrett. *The Life of Christ* (Westminster, MD, 1959).