

Purgatory

The Roman Catholic Church teaches that those who are perfect at death are admitted to heaven. Those who are not perfectly cleansed and are still tainted with the guilt of venial sins, however, do not go to heaven but rather go to purgatory where they allegedly go through a process of cleansing. (Latin "purgare" - to cleanse).

The American Heritage Dictionary says this about Purgatory:

"A state in which the soul of those who have died in grace must expiate their sins. A place of expiation, suffering, or remorse."

Roman Catholics say that purgatory is a place for the dead who were neither very bad nor very good. Those who die with unforgiven *mortal* (serious) sin go to hell, while those who live as "saints" got to heaven. Most Catholics supposedly end up in purgatory. Such souls are oppressed with a sense of deprivation and suffer certain pain. How long they stay in purgatory - and how much suffering they undergo while there - depends upon their particular state of sin. Their belief is that temporary suffering in purgatory's fires purges souls of guilt for their *venial* (not so serious) sins.

Roman Catholics also teach that a person's time in purgatory may be shortened, and his pains alleviated, by the faithful prayers, alms, fasting, indulgences, and masses conducted on their behalf of those still alive. The sacrifice of the Mass is viewed as especially important in this regard. Catholics also believe that by doing good deeds can reduce the amount of suffering that one does in purgatory.

Catholics find support for this doctrine in the apocryphal book 2 Maccabees 12:42-45. Purgatory will end with the Last Judgment at the close of the world.

Roman Catholic dogmas of purgatory were defined at the councils of Lyon (1274) and Ferrara-Florence (1438-1445) and reaffirmed at the Council of Trent (1545-1563).

These dogmas were rejected by Luther (95 thesis), Calvin, and other leaders of the Reformation, who asserted that Christians freed from sin through faith in Jesus Christ go directly to heaven.

Purgatory is a false doctrine and is easy to prove from the Scriptures. When Jesus died on the cross, He said: "*It is finished.*" (John 19:30). Jesus completed the work of redemption at the cross. In His high priestly prayer to the Father, Jesus said: "*I have brought you glory on earth by completing the work you gave me to do.*" (John 17:4). Hebrews 10:14 emphatically declares, "*By one sacrifice he has made perfect for ever those who are being made holy.*" Those who believe in Christ are "made perfect" forever; no further "purging" is necessary. 1 John 1:7 says, "*The blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.*" Roman 8:1 says, "*Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.*"

Jesus took care of “purging” our sins by His work of salvation at the cross. Hebrews 1:3 affirms, “*After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven.*” Jesus provided full purification for our sins.

The Scriptures knows of no in-between place for those who are neither very evil nor very good. According to the Word of God, there is no second chance after death; rather, at death a person’s destiny is sealed for torment or bliss – eternally. Listen to what the writer of the Hebrew Letter says:

Hebrews 9:27

“And as it is appointed unto men **once** to die, but **after this the judgment.**”

In the Gospel of Matthew, the writer tells us that not many will find the straight path that will lead to eternal life.

Matthew 7:13-14

“Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and **many enter through it.** [14] But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life and **only a few find it.**”

God’s Word speaks of only 2 alternatives that occur at death or when Jesus comes: a person is lost or saved; a person goes to torment or rest. There is no purgatory to go through before going to heaven or an in-between state to “purge” your sins.

The following conclusion from McClintock and Strong, Vol. 4, P.622; bear evidence of the fact that the doctrine of purgatory is neither scriptural nor reasonable.

- * *It destroys all motives for man living a penitent life on earth.*
- * *It ignores and defies the appointment of death (Eccles. 11:3; Rev. 22:11; Heb. 9:27)*
- * *It spans the great gulf which Christ declared to be fixed and impassable (Luke 16:26)*
- * *It gives a man a second chance*
- * *It places within the hands of mere mortal man, calling themselves priests, the keys to Hades.*
- * *Catholic authorities admit they have perverted the Holy Scriptures in order to manufacture purgatory.*
- * *It forms no part of the teaching of Christ, His apostles, or any inspired writer of the New Testament.*