

You Believe *WHAT?*

Purgatory

“All who die in God’s grace, but still imperfectly purified, are indeed assured of their eternal salvation; but after death they undergo purification, so as to achieve the holiness necessary to enter the joy of heaven.”

(Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1030)



Quiz on Purgatory



- Purgatory exists because Jesus alone can't save you (T/F)
- Purgatory is like Hell (T/F)
- Purgatory is not Biblical (T/F)
- Purgatory was invented by Catholics (T/F)
- Purgatory is a second chance to be saved (T/F)
- Souls in Purgatory can still end up in Hell (T/F)
- Catholics don't need to believe in Purgatory anymore (T/F)

Purgatory: What It IS



- When you die you face the particular (individual) judgment---at this time you find out what your eternal destiny is: Heaven or Hell
 - Hebrews 9:27: "It is appointed to men to die once, and after that comes the judgment".
 - 1 Corinthians 3:8: "Each one will receive his pay, according to his works"
- Those who have done **all** their spiritual work of loving God, self, and neighbor and have been purified of sin go straight to **Heaven**
- Those who have freely rejected God and Love go to **Hell**, *which they have chosen for themselves*
- Those who die in God's friendship, but have not finished being purged of sin (and the consequences of their sin) go to a *temporary* state called **Purgatory** (from the Latin word for 'purifying')
 - This occurs between the Particular and Final Judgment (Parousia)
 - Expiation (make reparation) for your sins is done
 - Col. 1:24: "...make up for what is lacking in the sufferings of Christ."

Purgatory: What it is NOT



- A teaching that diminishes the importance of Jesus' saving work
 - One would not be in Purgatory EXCEPT by Jesus' saving work
 - Jesus saves (atones for the guilt of our sin), but the consequences of our sin must still be addressed
- Punishment
 - It is actually the opposite; the reality of Purgatory is merciful
- Physically painful
 - Each soul is aflame with the pain of being separated from the fullness of God and with the desire to be purified so it can be in the beatific vision. Each soul also feels joy knowing it will one day be with God.
- A place
 - Blessed John Paul II said in an Aug. 4, 1999 general audience that purgatory was a state of being: "The term does not indicate a place, but a condition of existence." Pope Benedict XVI said in a Jan. 12, 2011 general audience, "This is purgatory, an interior fire."
- Disconnected from souls on earth
 - The souls in Purgatory pray for those on Earth, and we can pray for them too!
- Eternal
 - When the last soul has finished being purified, Purgatory will cease to exist

The Case of Judas Maccabeus



- “He (Judas Maccabeus) then took up a collection among all his soldiers, amounting to two thousand silver drachmas, which he sent to Jerusalem to provide for an expiatory sacrifice for the dead soldiers. In doing this he acted in a very excellent and noble way, inasmuch as he had the resurrection in mind; for if he were not expecting the fallen to rise again, it would have been superfluous and foolish to pray for the dead. But if he did this with a view to the splendid reward that awaits those who had gone to rest in godliness, it was a holy and pious thought. Thus he made atonement for the dead that they might be absolved from their sin.” (2 Maccabees 12: 43-46)

Why is Purgatory Needed?



- “Nothing unclean shall enter [heaven]” (Rev. 21:27).
 - We cannot simply be declared clean (imputed righteousness)
 - Hebrews 12:14: “Pursue peace with all people, and the sanctification without which no one will see the Lord.”
 - Sanctification happens over time—as we journey toward Heaven
 - Jesus’ redemptive grace moves this process forward
- Through repentance and forgiveness one may have gained the grace needed for salvation, but righteousness asks more
- Purgatory is the final phase of Christ’s applying to us the purifying redemption that He accomplished for us by his death on the cross.

Support of Purgatory



- **From Scripture (selected)**
 - Matthew 12:32: “There is no forgiveness, either in this world or the world to come.”
 - 1 Corinthians 3:15: “If the work which any man has built on the foundation survives, he will receive a reward. If any mans work is burned up, he will suffer loss, though he himself will be saved, but only as through fire”
 - 1 Peter 3:19 "By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison”
- **From Judaism**
 - 2nd Maccabees 12: 43-45 (124 B.C.)
 - *Mourner’s Kaddish* still prayed today for the dead
- **From the Early Church (selected)**
 - Prayers for the dead were found on the walls of the catacombs from the first 300 years of the Church
 - The Apostle’s Creed (390): “He descended to the dead...” (1 Peter
 - 2nd century non-Canonical writings had prayers for the dead (e.g. *Acts of Paul and Thecla*)
 - “Temporary punishments are suffered by some in this life only, by others after death, by others both now and then.” -St. Augustine, *The City of God*
 - All the early Church Fathers wrote of Purgatory (Origen, Jerome, Augustine, Ambrose)
 - St Monica asked her son to pray for her soul at his Masses:
 - “Lay this body anywhere at all. The care of it must not trouble you. This only I ask of you, that you remember me at the altar of the Lord wherever you are.”
- **From Sacred Tradition (selected)**
 - Pope Innocent IV (1243-54), building upon the writings of the Fathers, expounded in detail upon the dogma
 - The Second Council of Lyons (1274) further explained
 - Council of Trent and Pope Leo X, in response to the “reformers”

Takeaways

- Purgatory exists by the mercy of God
- It is a temporary state
- It is part of Heaven—“the mudroom”
- It was believed from the beginning of the Church, and is supported in both Scripture and Tradition
- It in no way diminishes Jesus’ saving work on the Cross
- You can do your “purgatorial work” in this life (e.g. think of all the ways you suffer, and can use suffering to grow in virtue *and intimacy with God*)

