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What happens when you die?

Part 4 Purgatory

Catholic Encyclopaedia, Purgatory is *“a place or condition of temporal punishment for those who, departing this life in God's grace, are not entirely free from venial faults, or have not fully paid the satisfaction due to their transgressions.”*

To summarize, in Catholic theology Purgatory is a place that a Christian's soul goes to after death to be cleansed of the sins that had not been fully satisfied during life.

The doctrine of Purgatory is in the Bible?

Absolutely not!

How the Purgatory theology did come into existence?

1 Corinthians 3:15, *If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.*

This is the primary Scriptural passage Catholics point to for evidence of Purgatory.

But to understand this scripture better we need to look at the above in context.

1 Corinthians 3:12-15, ¹² *Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw,* ¹³ *each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is.* ¹⁴ *If anyone's work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward.* ¹⁵ *If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.*

We can see clearly the above passage is talks about as an illustration of things going such as gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay and straw, through fire of believers' work being judged.

If the works of believers is of poor quality they will be consumed by fire, wood, hay and straw. Then they will have no reward.

The passage does not say that believers pass through the fire, but rather that a believer's works pass through the fire.

Also the verse the Purgatory defenders use 1 Corinthians 3:15 it says that “escaping through the flames,” not “being cleansed by the flames.”

1. Christ sacrifice isn't enough

Secondly the Purgatory defenders, mainly the Catholics, use this since they fail to understand the nature of Christ Sacrifice.

Hebrews 7:27, *who does not need daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for His own sins and then for the people's, for this He did once for all when He offered up Himself.*

Catholics view the Mass / Eucharist as a re-presentation of Christ's sacrifice because they fail to understand that Jesus' once-for-all sacrifice was absolutely and perfectly sufficient.

Our Salvation Is Based On Jesus: Paid it in Full

Salvation of ours is purely based on Jesus' work on the cross (His blood) purifies us from *all* sin. For this reason, there isn't a lingering sin problem requiring the existence of a place like purgatory.

Isaiah 53:5, *But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement for our peace was upon Him, And by His stripes we are healed.*

Titus 2:13-14, *looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ,¹⁴ who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works.*

1 John 1:7 & 9,

But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.

⁹ *If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*

1 John 2:2, *And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world.*

Hebrews 10:14, *For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified.*

2. Additional contribution to the Salvation.

Catholics view meritorious works as contributing to salvation due to a failure to recognize that Jesus' sacrificial payment has no need of additional "contribution".

Our Salvation Isn't Based On Our Good Works

Biblical doctrine of Salvation, forgiveness is not based on the good works of the believer. For this reason, deeds or works performed for those in purgatory are both unnecessary and ineffectual.

Romans 3:21-24 & 27-28,

²¹ But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, ²² even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe. For there is no difference; ²³ for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, ²⁴ being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus,

²⁷ Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? Of works? No, but by the law of faith. ²⁸ Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith apart from the deeds of the law.

Romans 8:1-2, *There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. ²For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death.*

Ephesians 2:8-9, ⁸ *For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, ⁹not of works, lest anyone should boast.*

Our Salvation Has Already Been Guaranteed

Jesus has already purified and eliminated believers of sin based on our faith in Him. For this reason, there is no need for a place like Purgatory where additional purging must be performed:

1 Corinthians 6:11, *But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.*

Hebrews 1:3, *Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.*

Salvation clearly eliminates the need for purgatory. In addition to this, the Biblical doctrine of Heaven eliminates the *possibility* of purgatory.

3. We need to suffer for our sins and to be cleansed

Purgatory and the doctrines that are often attached to it (prayer for the dead, indulgences, meritorious works on behalf of the dead, etc.) all fail to recognize that Jesus' death was sufficient to pay the penalty for ALL of our sins.

Jesus, who was God incarnate (John 1:1&14), paid an infinite price for our sin. Jesus died for our sins (1 Corinthians 15:3).

Jesus is the atoning sacrifice for our sins. Thus we are free from wrath of God.

Being with God is free from wrath

When we understand about Heaven as believers in Christ, we know we are not subjected to the continuing wrath of God. Believers are justified in spite of their sinfulness.

Romans 5:9, *Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him!*

John 5:24, *"I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life".*

4. Need cleansing before getting to Heaven

Purgatory is understood by Catholics as a place of cleansing in preparation for heaven because they do not recognize that because of Jesus' sacrifice; we are already cleansed, declared righteous, forgiven, redeemed, reconciled, and sanctified.

We being together with God are Immediate:

As believers in Christ we are united with God in Paradise the moment we die. Hence the existence of purgatory is simply inconsistent with the nature of Heaven as it is described in the Bible.

2 Corinthians 5:6-8, *Therefore we are always confident and know that as long as we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord. We live by faith, not by sight.*

We are confident, I say, and would prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord.

Philippians 1:20-23, *I eagerly expect and hope that I will in no way be ashamed, but will have sufficient courage so that now as always Christ will be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death. For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain. If I am to go on living in the body, this will mean fruitful labour for me. Yet what shall I choose? I do not know! I am torn between the two: I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far.*

Luke 23:39-43, *One of the criminals who hung there hurled insults at him: "Aren't you the Christ? Save yourself and us!" But the other criminal rebuked him. "Don't you fear God," he said, "since you are under the same sentence? We are punished justly, for we are getting what our deeds deserve. But this man has done nothing wrong." Then he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom." Jesus answered him, "I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in paradise."*

Conclusion:

To limit Jesus' sacrifice to atoning for original sin, or sins committed before salvation, is an attack on the Person and Work of Jesus Christ. If we must in any sense pay for, atone for, or suffer because of our sins – that indicates Jesus' death was not a perfect, complete, and sufficient sacrifice.

The Bible tells us with certainty we cannot earn our salvation with good works because Jesus' death on the cross paid for all our sin.

Jesus purged us from our impurity, and He doesn't need any additional help from us.

When we are united with God, we will not suffer God's wrath if we have accepted the free gift of Salvation through Christ; we will join God the moment we die, and the finishing work of Jesus will be more than sufficient to guarantee our place at the table.