



# Purgatory



Apologetics

December 3, 2018



# Guilt vs. Punishment

Does God forgive the guilt of sin and still require punishment (reparation, atonement, expiation)?

2 Samuel 12:13-14 - David said to Nathan, “I have sinned against the Lord.” And Nathan said to David, “The Lord has **put away your sin**; you shall not die. Nevertheless, because by this deed you have utterly scorned the Lord, **the child that is born to you shall die.**”

God forgave the guilt of David’s sin, but He still required reparation in the form of suffering.



# Indulgences - What is it?

**1471** The doctrine and practice of indulgences in the Church are closely linked to the effects of the sacrament of Penance.

"An indulgence is a **remission before God of the temporal punishment due to sins whose guilt has already been forgiven**, which the faithful Christian who is duly disposed gains under certain prescribed conditions through the action of the Church which, as the minister of redemption, dispenses and applies with authority the treasury of the satisfactions of Christ and the saints."

"An indulgence is partial or plenary according as it removes either part or all of the temporal punishment due to sin." **The faithful can gain indulgences for themselves or apply them to the dead.**



# Indulgences - Punishment of Sin

**1472** To understand this doctrine and practice of the Church, it is necessary to understand that **sin has a double consequence**. Grave sin deprives us of communion with God and therefore makes us incapable of eternal life, the privation of which is called the "**eternal punishment**" of sin. On the other hand every sin, even venial, entails an unhealthy attachment to creatures, which must be purified either here on earth, or after death in the state called Purgatory. This purification frees one from what is called the "**temporal punishment**" of sin. These two punishments must not be conceived of as a kind of vengeance inflicted by God from without, but as following from the very nature of sin. A conversion which proceeds from a fervent charity can attain the complete purification of the sinner in such a way that no punishment would remain.

**1473** The forgiveness of sin and restoration of communion with God entail the remission of the eternal punishment of sin, but temporal punishment of sin remains. While patiently bearing sufferings and trials of all kinds and, when the day comes, serenely facing death, the Christian must strive to accept this temporal punishment of sin as a grace. He should strive by works of mercy and charity, as well as by prayer and the various practices of penance, **to put off completely the "old man" and to put on the "new man."**



# Indulgences

*Obtaining from God through the Church*

**1478** An indulgence is obtained through the Church who, **by virtue of the power of binding and loosing granted her by Christ Jesus**, intervenes in favor of individual Christians and opens for them the treasury of the merits of Christ and the saints to obtain from the Father of mercies the remission of the temporal punishments due for their sins. Thus the Church does not want simply to come to the aid of these Christians, but also **to spur them to works of devotion, penance, and charity.**

**1479** Since the faithful departed now being purified are also members of the same communion of saints, one way **we can help them is to obtain indulgences for them**, so that the temporal punishments due for their sins may be remitted.



# Indulgences

A *plenary indulgence* can be gained only *once a day*. In order to obtain it, the faithful must, in addition to being in the state of grace:

- have the interior disposition of *complete detachment* from sin, even venial sin;
- have sacramentally confessed* their sins;
- receive the Holy Eucharist* (it is certainly better to receive it while participating in Holy Mass, but for the indulgence only Holy Communion is required);
- pray for the intentions of the Supreme Pontiff*.

The requirement is *not* freedom from *all* sin. Rather, it is *freedom from attachment to sin; that is, that there is no sin which the soul is unwilling to renounce.*



# Venial vs. Mortal

Where does Scripture distinguish between mortal and venial sin?

1 John 5:16-17 - If any one sees his brother committing what is not a mortal sin, he will ask, and God will give him life for those whose sin is not mortal. There is sin which is mortal; I do not say that one is pray for that. All wrongdoing is sin, but there is sin which is not mortal.

Proves there are degrees of sin, distinguishes between deadly sin and sin that is not deadly

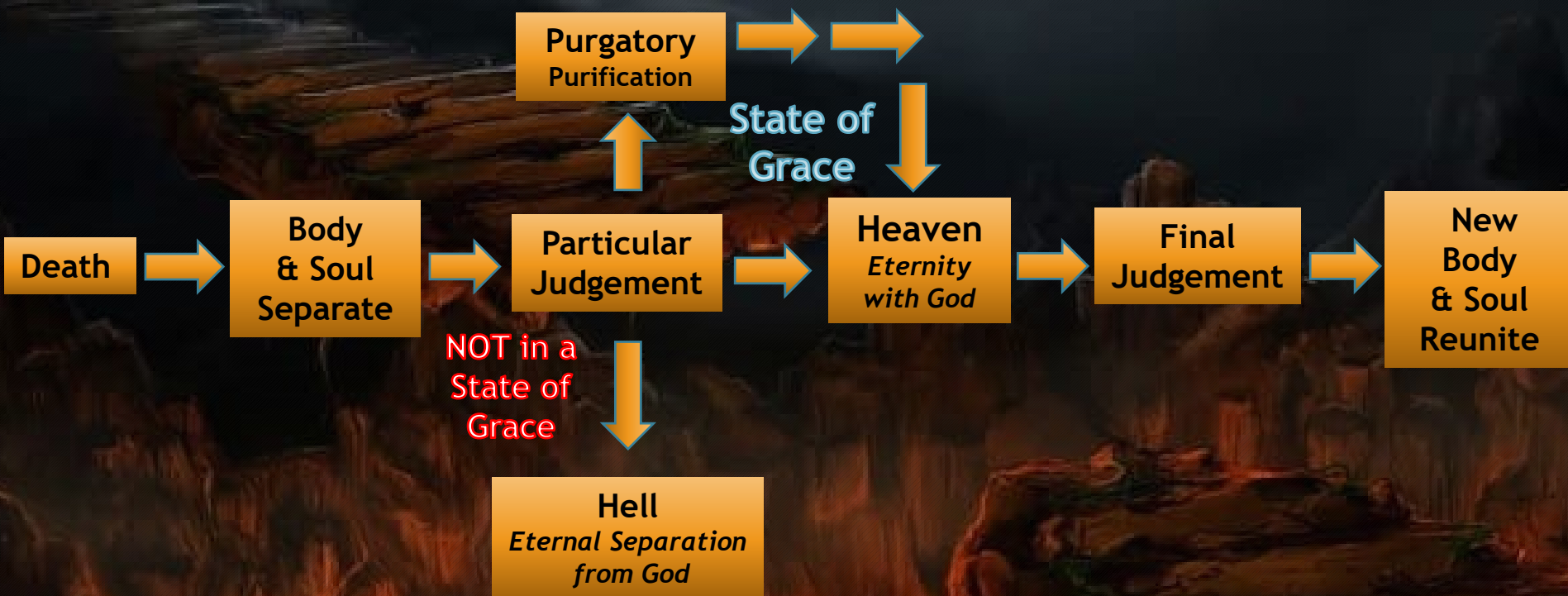
James 1:14-15 - ...each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his won desire. Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin; and sin when it is full grown brings forth death. God forgave the guilt of David's sin, but He still required reparation in the form of suffering.

Distinguishes desire from sin ... beginning sin from mature sin

Sin which brings death to the soul is mortal

Sin which only wounds and disfigures the soul is venial

# After Death





# Holiness

***God is perfect holiness*** - **Is 6:3** - Ane one (seraphim) called to another and said: “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts”

***We are called to the same holiness*** - **Matthew 5:48** - You, therefore, must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect. **1 Peter 1:15-16** - ... as he who called you is holy, be holy yourselves in all your conduct; since it is written, “You shall be holy, for I am holy”.

***Without perfect holiness, we cannot see God in heaven*** - **Heb 12:14** - Strive for peace with all men, and for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord. - **Rev 21:27** - nothing unclean shall enter it (heaven).



# Definition of Purgatory

- Purgatory (Latin, "purgare", to make clean, to purify) in accordance with Catholic teaching 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. ("Purgatory." The Catholic Encyclopedia. Vol.12. New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1911.)
- “All who die in God's grace and friendship, 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.”
- “The Church gives the name Purgatory to this final purification of the elect, which is entirely different from the punishment of the damned. The Church formulated her doctrine of faith on Purgatory especially at the Councils of Florence and Trent.” (CCC 1030-1031)



# Scriptural Basis for Purgatory

*...the word “purgatory” is not found  
...but neither is “Trinity” or “Incarnation”*

- “And whoever speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven; but whoever speaks against the holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come.” (Matthew 12:32)
  - “Implies that some sins will be forgiven in the world to come” (Augustine 9.13)
  - Sins cannot be forgiven in Hell and there is no sin in Heaven - therefore, next world can only occur in Purgatory
- “According to the grace of God given to me, like a skilled master builder I laid a foundation, and another man is building upon it. Let each man take care how he builds upon it. For no other foundation can any one lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any one builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw--each man's work will become manifest; for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done. If the work which any man has built on the foundation survives, he will receive a reward (**Heaven**). If any man's work is burned up, he will suffer loss, though he himself will be saved, but only as through fire (**Purgatory**). Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you? If any one destroys God's temple, God will destroy him (**Hell**). For God's temple is holy, and that temple you are.” (1 Corinthians 3:10-17, RSV)



# Scriptural Basis for Purgatory

- For Christ also died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit; in which he went and **preached to the spirits in prison (purgatory)**, **who formerly did not obey** when God's patience waited in the days of Noah, during the building of the ark, in which a few, that is eight persons, were saved through water. (1 Peter 3:18-20)
- For this is why the gospel was preached **even to the dead**, that though judged in the flesh like me, **they might live** in the spirit like God. (1 Peter 4:6)



# Scriptural Basis for Purgatory

“Turning to supplication, they prayed that the sinful deed might be fully blotted out. The noble Judas exhorted the people to keep themselves free from sin, for they had seen with their own eyes what had happened because of the sin of those who had fallen. He 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. 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 12:42-46)

Sins can be redeemed after death

Prayers of living can effectively accomplish this

Also reflects character of 2<sup>nd</sup> Century BC Jews who prayed for their dead (and still do!)

Early Christian liturgies included prayers for the dead

Tomb inscriptions contain an appeal to pray for the dead



# Scriptural Basis for Purgatory

- “Then I said, ‘Woe is me, I am doomed! For I am a man of unclean lips, living among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts!’ Then one of the seraphim flew to me, holding an ember which he had taken with tongs from the altar. He touched my mouth with it. “See,” he said, “now that this has touched your lips, your wickedness is removed, your sin purged.” (Isaiah 6:5-7)
  - The ember is analogous to the fire to be used in purification
- “In this you rejoice, although now for a little while you may have to suffer through various trials, so that the genuineness of your faith, more precious than gold that is perishable even though tested by fire, may prove to be for praise, glory, and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.” (1 Peter 1:6-7)
  - Once again speaks to fire as a means of making us more perfect





# Scriptural Basis for Purgatory

*New Testament Passages that refer to prayers and practices performed for the benefit of the deceased*

- May the Lord grant mercy to the household of Onesiphorus, for he often refreshed me; he was not ashamed of my chains ... may the Lord grant him to find mercy from the Lord on that Day (2 Timothy 1:16-18)
  - St. Paul praying for his departed friend - only makes sense if he can be helped by prayer
  - Bottomline, if the Jews, St. Paul and early Christians prayed for the dead, we should have no fear of praying for the dead - praying for the dead presumes an intermediate state of purification - purgatory!



# Historical Development & Background of Purgatory - Early Judaism

- Talmud (Central Book of Judaism) (Osei-Bonsu 288)
  - Contains Mishnah (200 AD)
    - Indicates accumulated merits of righteous are transferred to posterity
    - Similar to Catholic doctrine of treasure of merits
    - Says suffering has a purifying effect
- Early Judaism states “merits are always rewarded with prosperity, and guilt with suffering, whether in this world or in the next” (Cairus 30)



# Historical Development & Background of Purgatory - Fathers of the Church

- Origen (Alexandria 185-254)
  - First to allude to idea of purification by fire (Osei-Bonsu 290)
- Tertullian (Rome 160 - 220)
  - First to write about praying for departed as custom of church
  - Mentions anniversary masses for dead which suggest a belief in purgatory (Osei-Bonsu 290)
- Cyprian (Carthage 200-258)
  - “It is one thing, tortured by long suffering for sins, to be cleansed and long purged by fire; another to have purged all sins by suffering. It is one thing, in fine, to be in suspense till the sentence of God at the day of judgment; another to be at once crowned by the Lord” (Letters 51)



# Historical Development & Background of Purgatory - Fathers of the Church

- Ambrose (Tier 340-397)
  - Clearly stated that the prayers of the living could help to relieve the suffering of the dead, that suffrages could be of use in mitigating the penalties meted out in the other world (Ambrose on the Emperor Theodosius)
- Augustine (Numidia 354-430)
  - Considered main developer of doctrine of purgatory
  - In *Enchiridion* he talks about a period between death and final resurrection (Augustine 21:13)
- Basil (Caesarea 329-379)
  - "I think that the noble athletes of God, who have wrestled all their lives with the invisible enemies, after they have escaped all of their persecutions and have come to the end of life, are examined by the prince of this world; and if they are found to have any wounds from their wrestling, any stains or effects of sin, they are detained. If, however they are found un wounded and without stain, they are, as unconquered, brought by Christ into their rest." (Homilies on the Psalms 7:2)



# Historical Development & Background of Purgatory - Fathers of the Church

- Gregory of Nazianzus (Cappadocia 329-389)
  - "If a man distinguish in himself what is peculiarly human from that which is irrational, and if he be on the watch for a life of greater urbanity for himself, in this present life he will purify himself of any evil contracted, overcoming the irrational by reason. If he has inclined to the irrational pressure of the passions, using for the passions the cooperating hide of things irrational, he may afterward in a quite different manner be very much interested in what is better, when, after his departure out of the body, he gains knowledge of the difference between virtue and vice and finds **that he is not able to partake of divinity until he has been purged of the filthy contagion in his soul by the purifying fire**" (*Sermon on the Dead*).
- John Chrysostom (Antioch 349-407)
  - "Let us help and commemorate them. If Job's sons were purified by their father's sacrifice [Job 1:5], why would we doubt **that our offerings for the dead bring them some consolation?** Let us not hesitate to help those who have died and to offer our prayers for them" (*Homilies on First Corinthians* 41:5).
  - "Weep for those who die in their wealth and who with all their wealth prepared no consolation for their own souls, who had the power to wash away their sins and did not will to do it. Let us weep for them, let us assist them to the extent of our ability, let us think of some assistance for them, small as it may be, yet let us somehow assist them. But how, and in what way? By praying for them and by entreating others to pray for them, by constantly giving alms to the poor on their behalf. Not in vain was it decreed by the apostles that in the awesome mysteries remembrance should be made of the departed. They knew that here there was much gain for them, much benefit. When the entire people stands with hands uplifted, a priestly assembly, and that awesome sacrificial Victim is laid out, how, when we are calling upon God, should we not succeed in their defense? But this is done for those who have departed in the faith, while even the catechumens are not reckoned as worthy of this consolation, but are deprived of every means of assistance except one. And what is that? We may give alms to the poor on their behalf" (*Homilies on Philippians* 3:9-10).



# Historical Development & Background of Purgatory - Fathers of the Church

- Gregory the Great (Rome 540-604)
  - Made statement that before final judgment there would be a purgatorial fire to deal with minor sins (Similar to Matthew 12:32) (Ombres 31)
  - Believed in efficacy of Eucharist for releasing souls from purgatory (Schwarz 168)
- Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274)
  - Talks about Purgatory in *Summa Theologica*
  - Through penal suffering we are cleansed after death
  - States to deny purgatory is to speak against divine justice (Osei-Bonsu 290)



# Historical Development & Background of Purgatory - Magisterium of the Church

- St. Bonaventure at the Council of Lyons I & II (1274)
  - “We believe...that those truly penitent die in charity before they have done sufficient penance for their sins of omission and commission, their souls are cleansed after death in purgatorial or cleaning punishments” (Osei-Bonsu 290)
- Benedict XII, *Benedictus Deus* (1336)
  - “According to the general disposition of God, the souls of all the saints who departed from this world before the passion of our Lord Jesus Christ and also of the holy apostles, martyrs, confessors, virgins and other faithful who died after receiving the holy baptism of Christ—provided they were not in need of any purification when they died, or will not be in need of any when they die in the future, or else, if they then needed or will need some purification, after they have been purified after death—and again the souls of children who have been reborn by the same baptism of Christ or will be when baptism is conferred on them, if they die before attaining the use of free will: all these souls, immediately (*mox*) after death and, in the case of those in need of purification, after the purification mentioned above, since the ascension of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ into heaven, already before they take up their bodies again and before the general judgment, have been, are and will be with Christ in heaven, in the heavenly kingdom and paradise, joined to the company of the holy angels”



# Historical Development & Background of Purgatory - Magisterium of the Church

- Council of Florence (1438)
  - Reaffirmed dead are cleansed through purgatorial pains and they benefit from the suffering of the living faithful (Osei-Bonsu 291)
- Council of Trent (1545-1563)
  - Formalized doctrine of purgatory
  - Stated that purgatory be taught in conformity with bible and ancient tradition of Fathers
  - Confirmed that living can assist souls being purged through the Mass (Osei-Bonsu 291)



# Limbo - *No Official Position*

The term is associated in common parlance to mean some in-between state of being. It is often associated, in a religious context, with some state of being in neither heaven nor hell, therefore on the fringe of either. It has been used to refer to the abode for the dead who were neither capable of committing deadly sin (1 Jn 5:16) which excluded the soul from hell nor were baptized in water and the Holy Spirit (Jn 3:5) which excluded the soul from heaven.

## *Catechism of the Catholic Church, Section 1261*

As regards *children who have died without Baptism*, the Church can only entrust them to the mercy of God, as she does in her funeral rites for them. Indeed, the great mercy of God who desires that all men should be saved, and Jesus' tenderness toward children which caused him to say: "Let the children come to me, do not hinder them," allow us to hope that there is a way of salvation for children who have died without Baptism. All the more urgent is the Church's call not to prevent little children coming to Christ through the gift of holy Baptism.



# Questions?

