

Beginning Apologetics – The End Times

Purgatory I

October 25, 2009

“Learn to explain our faith *clearly*, to defend it *charitably*, and to share it *confidently*.”

1 Peter 3:15: “Always be ready to give an explanation to anyone who asks you for a reason for your hope.”

I. Introduction

A. Misconceptions about Purgatory abound!

1. Temporary Hell
2. Isn't taught in the Bible
3. NOT a doctrine of the Catholic Church (!?!)

B. Protestants REALLY get hung up about Purgatory

1. Cannot be defended from Sacred Scripture/Not Biblical
2. We screw it up by NOT TRYING

C. What will we cover in this section?

1. Who goes to Purgatory
2. How to defend Purgatory
3. How to explain the nature of Purgatory
4. How to AVOID Purgatory
5. How to explain and defend Indulgences

II. What do we believe about Purgatory?

A. CCC1030 – 1032:

1. The existence of Purgatory is a DOCTRINE of the Church

2. Purgatory is a place of purification for those who die imperfectly purified/who need further purification after death

a) *Guilt of venial sin*

b) *Remaining punishment for venial and mortal sin*

3. The purification of Purgatory is ENTIRELY DIFFERENT from the punishment of hell.

4. We can help souls in Purgatory by prayer /offering Mass for them.

B. Distinguishing between GUILT and PUNISHMENT

1. Example of King David: 2 Samuel 12:13-14 – What was David's sin, and what did Samuel tell him?

2. What were the temporal punishments David suffered?

a) *Child of Bathsheba dies*

b) *David's son Absalom turns on him*

c) *Absalom takes David's concubines*

d) *Absalom is killed*

3. David sinned; God required reparation in the form of suffering.

4. This is similar to a vandal breaking a window and being forgiven, but still being required to pay for the repair.

C. Distinguishing between VENIAL and MORTAL SIN (Scripturally)

1. 1 John 5:16-17: “¹⁶ If anyone sees his brother sinning, if the sin is not deadly, he should pray to God and he will give him life. This is only for those whose sin is not deadly. There is such a thing as deadly sin, about which I do not say that you should pray. ¹⁷ All wrongdoing is sin, but there is sin that is not deadly.”

2. John proves *degrees of sin*, distinguishing between sin which is *deadly* and that which is *not*.

3. James 1:14-15: “¹⁴ Rather, each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. ¹⁵ Then desire conceives and brings forth sin, and when sin reaches maturity it gives birth to death.

4. James distinguishes among *desire* from sin, *beginning* sin, and *mature* sin.

5. Sin that kills the life of grace in the soul is *mortal* sin. Sin that only wounds/disfigures the soul is *venial*.

D. What if you die with only VENIAL sins?

1. We know what happens to people who die with MORTAL sin on their souls: HELL.

2. WE know what happens to those who die with NO sin or reparation due to sin, entirely in the state of grace: Heaven.

3. What happens to those who die in the middle state, in grace, but with venial sin or unpaid reparation due to sin?

a) *They do not merit hell*

b) *They are not pure enough for heaven, where “nothing unclean will enter”.*

E. Is Purgatory Reasonable?

1. Samuel Johnson Quote:

Why, Sir, it is a very harmless doctrine. They are of the opinion that the generality of mankind are neither so obstinately wicked as to deserve everlasting punishment, nor so good as to merit being admitted into the society of the blessed spirits; and therefore that God is graciously pleased to allow a middle state, where they may be purified by certain degrees of suffering. You see, sir, there is nothing unreasonable in this.

2. C.S. Lewis quote: “Our souls *demand* Purgatory, don’t they? Would it not break the heart if God said to us, “It is true, my son, that your breath smells and your rags drip with mud and slime, but we are charitable up here and no one will upbraid you with these things, nor draw them away from you. Enter into the joy”? Should we not say in reply, “With submission, sir, and if there is no objection, I’d *rather* be cleaned first.” “It may hurt, you know.” – “Even so, sir.”

F. What does the BIBLE say about this?

1. God is perfect holiness:

a) *Isaiah 6:3: "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts!" they cried one to the other. "All the earth is filled with his glory!"*

b) *The tripartite glory demonstrates perfection (3 = number of perfection)*

2. We are called to the same holiness

- a) *Matt 5:48 – “So be perfect, just as your heavenly Father is perfect.”*
- b) *1 Peter 1:15-16 – ¹⁵ but, as he who called you is holy, be holy yourselves in every aspect of your conduct, ¹⁶ for it is written, "Be holy because I (am) holy."*

3. Without perfect holiness, we cannot see God in heaven

- a) *Hebrews 12:14 - Strive for peace with everyone, and for that holiness without which no one will see the Lord.*
- b) *Rev 21:27 -- but nothing unclean will enter it, nor any (one) who does abominable things or tells lies.*

4. So.....what happens to those who die without perfect holiness, or with not-deadly sin?

- a) **PURGATORY**
- b) *Break down the word: Root verb is “to purge”, meaning, “to purify or cleanse”.*
- c) *This purification must be kept in mind as we explain Purgatory.*

G. Catholic doctrine regarding Purgatory

1. Purgatory is a temporary state of purification for the imperfect saints

- a) *Purgatory fully cleanses souls which have died in a state of grace, but with remaining venial sins or reparations due, so that they may enter Heaven*
- b) *All remaining reparations for sin are made in purgatory*
- c) *All remaining self-love or selfishness is purified until only the love of God remains*

2. REMEMBER:

- a) *Only the imperfect saints in the state of grace enter Purgatory. NOT a 2nd chance for those with mortal sin*
- b) *Purgatory purposes: Purification and Reparation. The *effects* of sin are purged. The *punishments* due to sin are paid*

c) *Purgatory is only temporary. Once a soul is purified, it will enter heaven. EVERYONE in Purgatory will go to heaven. Purgatory ceases to exist at The Second Coming; only heaven and hell are eternal.*