

# What about Purgatory and second chances after death?

## 1. What is Purgatory?

- According to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, purgatory is “a state of final purification after death and before entrance into heaven for those who died in God’s friendship, but were only imperfectly purified; a final cleansing of human imperfection before one is able to enter the joy of heaven.” A soul which has completely rejected God chooses for itself the punishment of hell. A soul which is purified completely of sin in this life, on the other hand, is brought immediately into eternal rest in heaven (and is therefore a saint, whether canonized or not!). But for the other souls—not damnable, but not yet perfected in grace—the Church recognizes a period of *purification*.
- Purgatory was defined at the Council of Trent in 1545–1563 AD: “Whereas the Catholic Church, instructed by the Holy Ghost, has from the Sacred Scriptures and the ancient tradition of the Fathers taught in Councils and very recently in this Ecumenical synod that there is a purgatory, and that the souls therein are helped by the suffrages of the faithful, but principally by the acceptable Sacrifice of the Altar.”
- There are only three essential components of the doctrine of Purgatory: (1) that a purification after death exists, (2) that it involves some kind of pain, and (3) that the purification can be assisted by the prayers and offerings by the living to God. Other ideas, such that purgatory is a particular “place” in the afterlife or that it takes time to accomplish, are speculations rather than doctrines.
- *Limbo*, which is not Purgatory, but is a related issue, is:

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## 2. What is the *purpose* of Purgatory?

- To *purify* us and in doing so, make us ready for heaven and being in God's presence. Purgatory is about burning away all remaining impurities and imperfections in our lives so make us worthy of heaven. Purgatory is *not* a second chance to accept or reject Christ, as all those in Purgatory will eventually reach heaven.
- Jesus took eternal consequences, we need to bear the temporary ones

## 3. Where does the idea of Purgatory come from?

*39 On the next day, as by that time it had become necessary, Judas and his men went to take up the bodies of the fallen and to bring them back to lie with their kinsmen in the sepulchres of their fathers. 40 Then under the tunic of every one of the dead they found sacred tokens of the idols of Jamnia, which the law forbids the Jews to wear. And it became clear to all that this was why these men had fallen. 41 So they all blessed the ways of the Lord, the righteous Judge, who reveals the things that are hidden; 42 and they turned to prayer, beseeching that the sin which had been committed might be wholly blotted out. And 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. 43 He also took up a collection, man by man, to the amount of two thousand drachmas of silver, and sent it to Jerusalem to provide for a sin offering. In doing this he acted very well and honorably, taking account of the resurrection. 44 For if he were not expecting that those who had fallen would rise again, it would have been superfluous and foolish to pray for the dead. 45 But if he was looking to the splendid reward that is laid up for those who fall asleep in godliness, it was a holy and pious thought. Therefore he made atonement for the dead, that they might be delivered from their sin.*

\_\_\_\_\_ (this book is found in the \_\_\_\_\_)

- From Protestant Bibles, the main passages cited to support the idea of Purgatory are: ○ [1 Corinthians 3:10–15](#); ○ [Matthew 12:32](#)

## 4. What do *Indulgences* have to do with Purgatory?

- An *indulgence* according to Pope Paul VI (1897–1978 AD) 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 defined conditions through the Church's help when, as a minister of redemption, she dispenses and applies with authority the treasury of the satisfactions won by Christ and the saints" (*Indulgentiarum Doctrina* 1).
  - This technical definition can be phrased more simply as, "An indulgence is what we receive when the Church lessens the temporal (lasting only for a short time) penalties to which we may be subject even though our sins have been forgiven."
  - An indulgence is partial or plenary according as it removes either part or all of the temporal punishment due to sin" (*Indulgentiarum doctrina*, Norm 2; cf. Norm 3). The faithful can gain indulgences for themselves or apply them to the dead (CIC, can. 994). (#1471)

**The Bible speaks clearly and plainly about both Heaven and Hell, but apart from these, the Bible gives no clear teaching or indication of any other such place.**

**5. Is there any biblical evidence of second chances to repent and believe *after* death?** ○ Hebrews 9:23–28

## NOTES

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