

THE PURGING OF SIN

By Dr. Gary M. Gulan 1978 (Rev. 83,86,92)

INTRO: Roman Catholicism describes purgatory as "a place or state in which are detained the souls of those who die in grace, in friendship with God, but with the blemish of venial sin or with temporal debt for sin unpaid. Here the soul is purged, cleansed, readied for eternal union with God in heaven" (Catholicism, George Brantl, ed., New York: Braziller, 1962, p. 232).

	Roman Catholic View of Purging	Biblical Christian View of Purging
Authority Behind the Purging	2 Maccabees 12:43-45 and Tradition (dogma 1438a.d.)	Hebrews 1:3 (9:13-15, 22) (2 Peter 1:9)
Application of Purging	The individual not good enough for heaven, but not bad enough for hell	Everyone that believes on Christ
Appointed Person Who Does the Purging	The Individual	Jesus Christ
Appointed Time of Purging	Future: after death	Past: at Christ's death
Activity of Purging	Suffering of Individual by fire	Blood of Christ on the cross
Area Where Purging Takes Place	In purgatory (hell)	At the cross
Accomplishment of Purging	Takes an unknown time	Complete
Association with Purging	Fear/false works	Peace/confidence

CONCLUSION: "The suffering in purgatory is necessary from the Roman Catholic view point because the person has not made complete satisfaction for sins and is not ready to see God due to imperfection. Therefore, for the Roman Catholic the suffering in purgatory is twofold: physical pain and separation from God. The length of suffering in purgatory is determined by the person's degree of sinfulness. The time of suffering can be shortened through the prayers and good works of living adherents." (The Moody Handbook of Theology, Paul Enns, Chicago: Moody, 1989, p. 533).

"And when he had made a gathering throughout the company to the sum of two thousand drachms of silver, he sent it to Jerusalem to offer a sin offering, doing therein very well and honestly, in that he was mindful of the resurrection. For if he had not hoped that they that were slain should have risen again, it had been superfluous and vain to pray for the dead. And also in that he perceived that there was great favor laid up for those that died godly, it was an holy and good thought. Whereupon he made a reconciliation for the dead, that they might be delivered from sin."

2 Maccabees 12:43-45

"The Catholic Church, instructed by the Holy Ghost, has the sacred Scriptures and the ancient traditions of the Fathers taught in Sacred Councils, and very recently in this Ecumenical Synod, that there is a purgatory, and that the souls therein detained are helped by the suffrages of the faithful, but principally by the acceptable sacrifice of the altar."

(Council of Trent, 1548ad Sen. 26)

"Purgatory is the state in which those suffer for a time who die guilty of venial sins, or without having satisfied for the punishment due to their sins."

(Baltimore Catechism)

According to Roman teaching a person can commit two kinds of sins against God: mortal and venial. By mortal sin is meant a grave offense against the law of God or of the church. It is called mortal because it kills the soul by depriving it entirely of sanctifying grace. Venial sin is a small and pardonable offense against God and the laws of the church. Two kinds of punishment are due to mortal sin: eternal (in hell forever), and temporal (in purgatory). Eternal punishment is canceled by the sacraments of baptism and extreme unction, or by an act of perfect contrition with promise of confession. Temporal punishment, is not canceled by these sacraments, but by works of penance, by almsgiving, by paying a priest to say mass, by indulgences, etc., which reduced the temporal punishment for mortal sins that would have to be suffered in purgatory. Thus, even if all the mortal sins of a Roman Catholic are forgiven in confession by a priest, and he does not perform enough of these good works he will go to purgatory and remain there in torture till his soul is completely purified.

(Secrets of Romanism, by Joseph Zacchello, p. 87)

"In the writings of Augustine (died 430ad) the doctrine of purgatory was first given definite form, however, he himself expressed doubt about some phases of it. It was, however, not until the sixth century that it received formal shape at the hands of Gregory the Great, who held the papal office from 590 to 604 ad. The doctrine was proclaimed in an article of faith in 1493, by the Council of Florence and later confirmed by the Council of Trent in 1548ad."

(Roman Catholicism, Loraine Boettner, p. 229)