

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. What do we believe about Purgatory (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. 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.*

C. 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.*

II. How do we defend Purgatory?

A. First: Is It Scriptural?

1. In the strict sense, the WORD “Purgatory” is not found in the Bible.
2. The WORDS “Trinity”, and “Incarnation” aren’t EITHER; that’s not the point. The DOCTRINES are.
3. Scripture CLEARLY teaches an intermediate state of purification.

B. “Where’s That In The Bible?”

1. Well...Matt 12:32

a) *“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.”*

b) *Jesus implies that some sins can be forgiven in the next world (the age to come). Since heaven has NO sin, and hell has NO forgiveness...there has to be a third place!*

2. 1 Corinthians 3:15:

a) *“But if someone’s work is burned up, that one will suffer loss; the person will be saved, but only as through fire.”*

b) *CAN’T refer to hell; NO ONE is saved from there. CAN’T refer to heaven; there is NO SUFFERING there. Therefore, it must refer to a MIDDLE state (suffering temporary loss to gain heaven). THAT’S PURGATORY.*

3. 1 Peter 3:18-20/1 Peter 4:6:

a) *1 Peter 3:18-20 - ¹⁸ For Christ also suffered for sins once, the righteous for the sake of the unrighteous, that he might lead you to God. Put to death in the flesh, he was brought to life in the spirit. ¹⁹ In it he also went to preach to the spirits in prison, ²⁰ who had once been disobedient while God patiently waited in the days of Noah during the building of the ark, in which a few persons, eight in all, were saved through water.*

b) *1 Peter 4:6 – “For this is why the gospel was preached even to the dead ² that, though condemned in the flesh in human estimation, they might live in the spirit in the estimation of God.”*

c) *“Disobedient spirits”...who were saved when Jesus Preached to them, CAN’T be in hell (no salvation!), and CAN’T be with the *righteous* (like David and Abraham – they weren’t disobedient!).*

d) *At MINIMUM, these verses show a THIRD place existing between heaven and hell.*

e) *At BEST, they prove the Catholic doctrine of Purgatory.*

4. **The BEST Scripture reference comes from the Septuagint.**

a) ***Question from first class: What’s the Septuagint?***

(1) The Septuagint is the version of the Old Testament that would have been in use in the time of Christ.

(2) The term comes from the number of Jewish scholars who participated in the Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible in the third century BC. (70 or 72 scholars = Septuagint)

(3) Quoted over 90% of the time in the New Testament (340 vs. 33) over the Hebrew canon.

(4) The Councils of Hippo (AD 393) and Carthage (AD 397) officially determined which books would comprise the Bible; They chose the Septuagint!

b) ***2 Maccabees 12:42-46 (read it out loud)***

(1) Background of Maccabees:

(a) *Recounts Jewish history from c. 180 BC to 161 BC.*

(b) *Abridges a much longer work which has been lost to antiquity (by Jason of Cyrene)*

(c) *Supplements 1 Macc*

(d) *Teaches on the resurrection of the just on the Last Day; intercession of saints in heaven for people on earth; and the power of the living to offer prayers and sacrifices for the dead.*

(2) Text: “⁴² Turning to supplication, they prayed that the sinful deed might be fully blotted out. The noble Judas warned the soldiers 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 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 of the dead in view; ⁴⁴ for if he were not expecting the fallen to rise again, it would have been useless and foolish to pray for them in death. ⁴⁵ 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. ⁴⁶ Thus he made atonement for the dead that they might be freed from this sin.

(3) First, it *proves a distinction between venial and mortal sin*. The men sinned by wearing amulets of foreign gods, but they *died in godliness*. Therefore their sins had to be *venial*.

(4) Second, it proves the existence of a *middle state* where venial sins can be forgiven. Souls in heaven *need no aid*; souls in hell *have no hope*. Praying for the dead assumes a *middle state between the two*.

(5) All of this makes 2 Macc 12:42-46 a **proof text** for Purgatory.

c) *So...how do we know what books really belong in the Bible? And by whose authority do we trust that the books are inspired?*

(1) Luther threw 1 and 2 Macc out of the Bible; he also wanted to throw out James, Esther, and Revelation, and he added a word to Romans 3:28 (“alone”) – Read it! So do we trust him...

(2) OR do we trust the Church, who Jesus promised to protect from error, which authoritatively determined around AD 400 which books were divinely inspired?

d) *Even if ya reject 1/2 Macc as inspired...they still accurately reflect the religious character of 2d Century BC Jews. ~ One hundred years Before Christ’s birth, Jews prayed for their dead (and still do today).*

e) *Earliest Christian liturgies include prayers for the dead (our Eucharistic Prayers are modeled on them). Tertullian wrote (AD 211) about prayers for the dead on their birthdays*

5. What about New Testament references for prayers/practices for the benefit of the deceased?

a) 2 Tim 1:16-18:

(1) “¹⁶ May the Lord grant mercy to the family of Onesiphorus because he often gave me new heart and was not ashamed of my chains. ¹⁷ But when he came to Rome, he promptly searched for me and found me. ¹⁸ May the Lord grant him to find mercy from the Lord on that day. And you know very well the services he rendered in Ephesus.”

(2) Only makes sense of praying for the dead helps.

b) 1 Cor 15:29:

(1) ²⁹ Otherwise, what will people accomplish by having themselves baptized for the dead? If the dead are not raised at all, then why are they having themselves baptized for them?

(2) In arguing for bodily resurrection, Paul mentions being baptized for the dead. Evinces a belief in an intermediate state between heaven and hell in which one can be helped!