

PURGATORY

*"Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean . . .
... let the bones which thou hast broken rejoice."
-Psalm 51:7-8*



Photo of gold being refined by fire

MALACHI 3:2-3 2 But who can endure the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appears? "For **he is like a refiner's fire** and like fullers' soap; 3 **he will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he will purify** the sons of Levi and **refine them like gold and silver**, till they present right offerings to the LORD.

Come, Holy Spirit Prayer (The Veni Sancte Spiritus Prayer)

**Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of Your faithful;
And enkindle in them the fire of Your love.
Send forth Your Spirit and they shall be created.
And You shall renew the face of the earth.**

LET US PRAY . . .

**O God, Who by the light of the Holy Spirit
did instruct the hearts of the faithful,
grant by the gift of the same Spirit
we may always be truly wise and ever rejoice in His consolation,
through Christ Our Lord. Amen.**

Introduction

In this study we will begin by defining what Purgatory is. We will then go into some basic catechesis concerning Purgatory. Remember, Purgatory is out of the realm of time and space.

We will also look at what Purgatory ISN'T (because there are common misconceptions that have been put forth about Purgatory over time). This will help you recognize catechetical mistakes others might assume or make when you are having discussions with them about Purgatory.

We will briefly look at the "Biblical objections" attempted against the doctrine of Purgatory just for our awareness, and later in the study, see these so-called "Biblical" objections do not stand-up to scrutiny.

We will see that "Nothing unclean" can enter Heaven.

We will review that once we who are **in a state of grace or friendship with God** die, we can go immediately into Heaven. But if we have some sins that we did not pay a temporal account for in our earthly life, we will need to be "showered-up" in Purgatory on our way to Heaven, our assured Heavenly destination. This "cleaning" is necessary because nothing "unclean" can enter into Heaven.

This will be the time we remind ourselves:

If someone is in Heaven, no prayers or fasting for their "deliverance" are needed!

If someone is in Hell, no prayers or fasting for their "deliverance" can help.

We will look at several more quotes from the Ancient Church Fathers via a Table.

We will see Tables cited concerning "prayers for the dead" at every Mass.

We will take a quick look at Matthew 12:36-37 and remind ourselves that we must "pay an account" for even "every wrong word" we utter. And this applies to the justified AND the unjustified. Sin brings with it, "an account". We will differ temporal from eternal accounts.

We will review 1st Corinthians 3 and it's teachings about Purgatory.

Then we will look at Old Testament teachings suggesting the Hebrews were aware of after-life purgation from sin, focusing on Biblical fasting for the dead in Samuel and 2nd Maccabees.

We will also go back in history and reference praying for the dead, in ancient Hebrew times (via a Table for you to look at on your own).

To conclude the study, we will look at some other Biblical passages but not unpack them to the extent I would like, because of time constraints.

Then we will close with any final comments or prayers, knowing there are many other things (i.e. "Indulgences") that we won't get a chance to cover in a study like this.

Purgatory Definition

As we begin, let's start by defining "Purgatory" and what the word itself means.

Purgatory definition¹ – The place or condition in which the souls of the just are purified after death and before they can enter heaven. . . . Purgatory will not continue after the general judgment . . . (My addition: "General Judgment" = judgment at the end of time.)

From the root "purgo". We use the word "purge" in our English language to mean the same thing as "purgo". Microsoft Book Dictionary defines "Purge" as:

Purge (pûrj) *verb*

purged, purg-ing, purg-es *verb, transitive*

1. a. **To free from impurities; purify.**
b. **To remove** (impurities and other elements) by or as if **by cleansing**.
2. **To rid of sin, guilt, or defilement.** . . .

Purgatory Catechesis

There are many places in the CCC which allude to Purgatory either explicitly or implicitly². Here below we will just look at a summary . . .

CCC 1030 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.

CCC 1031a The Church gives the name *Purgatory* to this final purification of the elect, which is entirely different from the punishment of the damned.⁶⁰⁶ . . .

What Purgatory Is NOT

Purgatory is the work of Christ. People in Purgatory are ALL on their way to Heaven.

- Purgatory is NOT an alternate route to the Father.
- Purgatory is NOT a second chance for someone in a state of unrepentant mortal sin at the time of death.
- Purgatory is NOT something to make up for the "unfinished work of Christ" (because it IS finished).
- Purgatory is NOT a "holy holding tank" while God "tries to decide" if we go to Heaven or Hell.

¹ Modern Catholic Dictionary. John A. Hardon, S.J. Published by Eternal Life Bardstown KY 1999. Page 452.

² There are other Catechetical Statements directly or indirectly alluding to Purgatory.

Some teachings of the Catechism of the Catholic Church that in some way relate to Purgatory include **CCC paragraph numbers 954, 958, 962, 1030-1032, 1054-1055, 1371, 1414, 1472-1473, 1498, and 2487**. You may look these up on your own for further review if you are so inclined. Some of them of course are presented here in this study as well.

“Biblical” Objections Against Purgatory

One thing I’ve learned over years of discussing Purgatory with people is, people opposing Purgatory almost always have a poor understanding of the concept of what the Catholic Church teaches regarding Purgatory. Sadly this is true even in my discussions with many Catholics.

As we study Purgatory keep in mind that this is in the spiritual domain. Purgatory is out of the earthly realm so if we discuss a “place” of purgation, earthly terminology will always fall short.

When someone raises an objection against the concept of Purgatory, the first question I almost always ask is: **“What do you think Catholics teach about Purgatory?”**

This inevitably reveals a warped understanding. Once you are able to catechize them, don’t expect them to immediately “accept it” as unlearning years of false Catholic teaching and sometimes anti-Catholicism takes time and grace. But since grace builds on nature, if you are well-catechized, please share these truths. People will benefit greatly from knowing truth.

HEBREWS 9:12 12 he entered once for all into the Holy Place, taking not the blood of goats and calves but his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption.

Objection: Jesus secured an “eternal redemption” for us!

Answer: Purification is part of JESUS’ WORK in us making us fit for Heaven. Catholics don’t teach they can purify themselves either on earth or in the afterlife apart from Christ.

1st PETER 3:18a 18 For Christ also died for sins once for all

Objection: Christ also died for sins once for all³! We don’t need any ADDITION to His work!

Answer: Purification is PART of Jesus’ work that He won for us with His “once for all” Sacrifice.

Objection: But the word “Purgatory” isn’t in the Bible!

Answer: The word “Bible” isn’t in the Bible. The word “Incarnation” isn’t in the Bible. The word “Trinity” isn’t in the Bible. But the DOCTRINES ARE there.

Remember. Purgatory is for those needing to pay a temporal account for their sins that they neglected to pay for in their earthly life. You CAN go STRAIGHT to Heaven. There are many things you can do in this life to “pay” that account right here, right now.

If there was no temporal account to be paid at ALL for anyone, then we wouldn’t have to die would we? But notice we all still have at least some “wage” or “account” to pay because of sin, even with “eternal life”.

ROMANS 6:23 23 For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

³ See also Romans 6:10. (“The death he died he died to sin, once for all, but the life he lives he lives to God.”). And Colossians 1:24 (“I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I complete what is lacking in Christ’s afflictions for the sake of the body, that is, the church”). Christ paid the eternal aspect. We AND Christ pay the temporal.

Nothing Unclean Can Enter Heaven

Nothing impure or unclean can enter Heaven. If it could, it wouldn't be Heaven anymore.

Let's go to the Book of Revelation, where its author, St. John, is discussing "that Holy City" the "New Jerusalem" or Heaven.

REVELATION 21:25-27 25 and its gates shall never be shut by day, and there shall be no night there; 26 they shall bring into it the glory and the honor of the nations. 27 But **nothing unclean shall enter it**, nor anyone who practices abomination or falsehood, but only those who are written in the Lamb's book of life.

The people in purgatory are on their way to and guaranteed to go to Heaven. This cleansing work of Purgatory is the work of Christ.

Our Purification IS The Work Of Christ! **Purgation Of Our Sin On Earth And In The Afterlife (Purgatory) Is ALL** **The Work Of Christ**

Some will say, Purgatory "detracts" from the work of Christ. But that is false. All of our purification whether here on earth or in the afterlife IS the work of Christ.⁴

PHILIPPIANS 1:6, 10b-11 6 And I am sure that He who **began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ**. . . 10b and may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, 11 filled with the fruits of righteousness which come through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.

An Eternal Account AND A Temporal Account Must Be Paid

Since God is not only perfectly merciful, but ALSO perfectly just, God's perfect justice demands an account for every single sin.

MATTHEW 12:36-37 36 I tell you, **on the day of judgment men will render account for every** careless word they utter; 37 for by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned."

There is an eternal aspect to our "account", an **eternal account** that we could **never pay** because we transgress against God who is infinite! That's WHY Jesus' work is necessary and we must be supernaturally bound to Him to be saved.

But God DOES require us to make restitution in a non-eternal sense. A "**temporal account**". Even after forgiveness, we often still have restitution to make or an "account" to pay don't we?

⁴ Also see: **1st THESSALONIANS 5:23-24** 23 May the God of peace himself sanctify you wholly; and may your spirit and soul and body be kept sound and **blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ**. 24 He who calls you is faithful, and he will do it.

You Can Be Forgiven, And Yet Still Have Accountability Remaining

Sometimes people falsely accuse others of being “unforgiving” if they demand a reasonable “account” to be paid because of sin. This is false reasoning.

For example: If I **forgave** someone allegedly sorry for pickpocketing a dollar against me that I caught, I would STILL demand my dollar back even after my **forgiveness**.

Forgiveness and accountability are not mutually exclusive. You can have BOTH.

Even After Forgiveness, An “Account” May Remain (“Accountability”)

Just because someone is “forgiven”, does not mean that there is no remaining “account” for the sin that they committed.

One example is Moses striking the rock twice instead of once as he was told. He was “forgiven”, but he still had “accountability” despite being forgiven. Moses was told because of this; he will die and not be able to enter the Promised Land.

DEUTERONOMY 32:51-52 51 because you broke faith with me in the midst of the people of Israel at the waters of Meri-bath-adesh, in the wilderness of Zin; because you did not revere me as holy in the midst of the people of Israel. 52 For you shall see the land before you; **but you shall not go there**, into the land which I give to the people of Israel."

King David is another example of someone forgiven from sins that still had an account to pay. King David committed adultery, then murder to try to cover it up. God castigated David through the Prophet Nathan telling David

2nd SAMUEL 12:13-15, 18a 13 David said to Nathan, "I have sinned against the LORD." And Nathan said to David, "**The LORD also has put away your sin**; you shall not die. 14 Nevertheless, because by this deed you have utterly scorned the LORD, the child that is born to you shall die." 15 Then Nathan went to his house. And the LORD struck the child that Uriah's wife bore to David, and it became sick. . . .
. . . 18 **On the seventh day the child died.**

Even the tax collector Zacchaeus understood the need to make restitution for his sins.

LUKE 19:8 8 And Zacchaeus stood and said to the Lord, "Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have defrauded any one of anything, I restore it fourfold."

We already saw another obvious example of an **account remaining** even **AFTER someone is FORGIVEN** with the “wages of sin” being “death”.

These are all tangible examples of temporal punishment as accountability.

Please also see John Salza’s comments on this in Table 1 for more depth on this principle.

Forgiveness can even be REVOKED! Please see Table 2 for a Scriptural example of this.

Forgiveness of sin involves the remission of the eternal aspect.
But even with that, the temporal dimension of punishment remains.

The Catechism teaches us . . .

CCC 1473a 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**. . .

CCC 2487a Every offense committed against justice and truth entails the *duty of reparation*, **even if its author has been forgiven**. . .

Warning! Pay Your Account Now While Still On Earth!

The mystics tell us, it is a lot easier to “pay” our “temporal account” in this earthly life now than in the after-life in Purgatory. Let’s consider heeding their words. Offer prayers, fasting, almsgiving, and evangelization to cover a multitude of sins in THIS life now while you can.

JAMES 5:19-20 19 My brethren, if any one among you wanders from the truth and some one brings him back, 20 let him know that whoever brings back a sinner from the error of his way will save his soul from death **and will cover a multitude of sins**.

1st PETER 4:8 8 Above all hold unfailing your love for one another, since **love covers a multitude of sins**.

There are other Biblical examples of this principle of covering sins in this life too.⁵

Sometimes people call the “**sin-covering**” works here on earth (such as fasting, prayer, almsgiving, evangelizing, and acts of love and obedience so you don’t have to “pay” an account later) your “**Purgatory on earth**”.

You CAN pay your temporal account here on earth and when you die go straight to Heaven! The Church also has “helps” for these “accounts” too (such as “Indulgences”).

5

PROVERBS 10:12 12 Hatred stirs up strife, but **love covers all offenses**.

TOBIT 12:8-10 8 Prayer is good when accompanied by **fasting, almsgiving, and righteousness**. A little with righteousness is better than much with wrongdoing. It is better to give alms than to treasure up gold. 9 **For almsgiving delivers from death, and it will purge away every sin. Those who perform deeds of charity and of righteousness will have fulness of life;** 10 but those who commit sin are the enemies of their own lives.

LUKE 11:39-42 39 And the Lord said to him, "Now you Pharisees cleanse the outside of the cup and of the dish, but inside you are full of extortion and wickedness. 40 You fools! Did not he who made the outside make the inside also? 41 But **give for alms those things which are within; and behold, everything is clean for you.** 42 "But woe to you Pharisees! for you tithe mint and rue and every herb, and neglect justice and the love of God; these you ought to have done, **without neglecting the others**.

You do NOT NEED to go to Heaven via Purgatory. **You CAN go straight to Heaven!**

Proportionality—Accounts “For Every Wrong Word We Utter”

We saw In Matthew 12:36 that “**on the day of judgment men will render account for every careless word they utter**”. In the afterlife, we must account in **exact** proportion to our unaccounted-for sin.

For the guy who dies in a state of grace in Purgatory:

More unaccounted-for sin = Tougher Purgatory.

Less unaccounted for sin = An easier Purgatory. (See Luke 12:42-48 on your own to see an example of this with people’s gifts and expectations factored in —“a heavy beating” vrs. “a light beating” after Jesus—“The Master”—comes.)

The same goes for those in Heaven. More merit in this life = more treasures in Heaven” (see Matthew 6:19-20 on your own) and more enjoyment of Heaven in the next life.

Merit and Heavenly gifts are ALSO exactly proportional to our good works done IN GRACE!

And even the same proportionality exists for those who choose to go to Hell too. Yikes!

More sin plus “die OUT of a state of grace” = Deeper in Hell etc.

The Catechism puts this proportionality concept this way . . .

CCC 1039a In the presence of Christ, who is Truth itself, the truth of each man's relationship with God will be laid bare.⁶²⁶ **The Last Judgment will reveal even to its furthest consequences the good each person has done or failed to do during his earthly life . . .**

CCC 682 When he comes at the end of time to judge the living and the dead, the glorious Christ will reveal the secret disposition of hearts and **will render to each man according to his works, and according to his acceptance or refusal of grace.**

Sacred Scripture teaches this concept of proportionality too . . .

MATTHEW 16:27 27 For the Son of man is to come with his angels in the glory of his Father, and then **he will repay every man for what he has done.**

ROMANS 2:6 6 For he will render to every man **according to his works:**

2nd CORINTHIANS 5:10 10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, **so that each one may receive good or evil, according to what he has done in the body.**

St. Thomas Aquinas in the 1200’s A.D. asserts proportionality as well . . .

ST. THOMAS AQUINAS I answer that, **punishment is proportionate to sin.** . . .

All in Heaven will be totally happy. But not all will enjoy Heaven to the same degree.

This “position” in Heaven will be based upon what we did or did not do in this life.

ST. TERESA OF JESUS (St. Teresa of Avila) 'I would willingly endure alone all the sufferings of this world to be raised a degree higher in Heaven and to possess the smallest increase of the knowledge of God's greatness.'

For more on proportionality, please see Table 3.

After Death, You Are “Out Of The Realm Of Time” Thus You Depend Upon Others To Pray And Fast For You (To Cleanse You)

If you die in a state of grace but with some of your “account” remaining, you will be dependent upon others to offer “helps” (prayers, fasting, alms, etc.) for your soul except for your suffering. (By the way, you will also be dependent on someone invoking YOUR prayers in Heaven or in Purgatory to pray for them too.)

And don’t worry about praying and fasting for your loved-one who may be already in Heaven. No prayers and fasting carried out in grace will go to waste. God will apply these graces to someone.

Let’s listen to St. John Chrysostom from the 300’s A.D.

ST. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM “Let us **help** and commemorate them (those who have died). 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.”

- John Chrysostom, *Homilies on 1 Corinthians* 41:5, AD 392

Tertullian here below is probably alluding to good women not only praying, but also having Masses said (“she offers the sacrifice”) for their husbands that have passed away.

TERTULLIAN “A woman, after the death of her husband . . . **prays for his soul** and asks that he may, while waiting, find rest; and that he may share in the first resurrection. **And** each year, on the anniversary of his death, **she offers the sacrifice.**”

- Tertullian, *Monogamy* 10:1-2, **A.D. 216**

Remember, if the woman’s dead husband is in **Heaven**, his soul **doesn’t need** prayers. If the dead husband’s soul is in **Hell** (Gehenna), **no prayers will help**.

St. Cyril of Jerusalem in the 300’s A.D. is almost certainly referring to offering **the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass (“most solemn sacrifice”)** here below as well. And he’s writing this in the 300’s A.D. And St. Cyril says it is of “VERY GREAT BENEFIT” to the souls who it is offered for!

ST. CYRIL OF JERUSALEM “Then we make mention also of those who have already fallen asleep . . .
. . . for we believe that it will be of **very great benefit to the souls** of those for whom the petition is carried up, while **this holy and most solemn sacrifice** is laid out.”

- St. Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catechetical Lectures* 23:5:9, AD 350

For several more ancient Church statements concerning Purgatory, see Table 4 on your own.

Speaking Of Having Masses Said . . .

Speaking of the topic of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass and those in Purgatory, remember to this very day we still offer prayers for the dead at all Mass Liturgies.

So we pray for the dead in Mass even today to alleviate their suffering and help their “account”.

It is much easier for us to offer sacrifice for them in this life on someone’s behalf, then it is for them to atone for their sins by suffering in the next.

If these people were in Heaven, they don’t need our prayers.

If these people are in Hell, no amount of prayers will help them anymore.

Therefore the Church in Her solicitude remembers these suffering souls in Her Liturgical prayers even to this day

Listen to this except from Eucharistic Prayer number one . . .

Eucharistic Prayer Number One - Latin Rite of the Mass . . . Remember, Lord, those who have died and have gone before us marked with the sign of faith, especially those for whom we now pray, {names deceased loved ones whom the celebrant or parishioner wishes to offer before God}. May these, and all who sleep in Christ, find in your presence light, happiness, and peace. [Through Christ our Lord. Amen.] . . .

For more examples of us praying for the dead at every Mass, please see Table 5.

But how can a spirit without a body suffer? We don’t know. This is a mystery. But this mystery is explicitly mentioned in 1st Corinthians 3 which we will now examine. . . .

1st Corinthians 3:11-15 Shows The Teaching Of Purgatory

In 1st Corinthians 3:11-15, we can see Purgatory laid out doctrinally in a very developed manner.

But before we go there think of what happens when “wood, hay, or stubble” is exposed to “fire”. . . . **It gets burned up.**

Now think of what happens when “gold, silver, or precious stones” are exposed to “fire”. In the case of gold and silver . . . **It gets “refined”**. In the case of diamonds, etc, any “dross” on the stones gets destroyed. . . . **They are purified.**

The Prophet Malachi in the context of “The Lord” (Malachi 3:1) says . . .

MALACHI 3:2-3 2 But who can endure the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appears? “For he is like a **refiners fire** and like fuller's soap;
3 he will sit as a refiner and **purifier** of **silver**, and
he will purify the sons of Levi and refine them like gold and silver,

till they present right offerings to the LORD.

And if you read on, the Prophet Malachi in verse 5 also tells us about **some people** who did not fear the Lord. They had no silver and thus could not be refined. They were condemned in a “swift judgment.”

Let’s look explicitly at 1st Corinthians 3:11-15 to see what happens on the day of the Lord when we are judged . . .

1st CORINTHIANS 3:11-15 11 For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

12 Now if **anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble-** 13 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.**

14 If the work which any man has built on the foundation survives, he will receive a **reward**.

15 If any man's work is burned up, **he will suffer loss**, though **he himself will be saved**, but **only as through fire**.

Can you think of a “Fire” that tests and reveals works AND can consume the dross or proverbial wood, hay, and stubble on a person’s soul? Can you think of a “Fire” that while revealing works and consuming dross, will at the same time purify that person’s soul?

Fortunately, the Prophet Malachi tells us the “Fire” is “The Lord” (again Malachi 3:1) and the Book of Hebrews repeats that answer for us.

HEBREWS 12:29 29 for our God is a consuming fire.

Objection: I don’t know if I can believe that some people suffer in the process and context of their judgment.

Answer: I am not called to make you believe 1st Corinthians 3:15, but I did want to present the truth to you so you at least know it. Then it’s between you and God what you do with the truth.

The Ancient Biblical Practice Of Fasting And Praying For The Dead

Remember. If someone is in Heaven, no prayers or fasting are needed for them. St. Augustine in the 400’s A.D. reminds us of this concept. Authentic martyrs go straight to Heaven because **greater love has no man** for God.⁶

⁶ A given martyr may have had their final “purification” in the act of their martyrdom. Or they may have been purified during their years of holiness long before their martyrdom.

JOHN 15:13 13 Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.

So we do not pray for the martyrs, because they are believed to already be in the presence of God. But we OUGHT to be invoking THEIR PRAYERS for us!

ST. AUGUSTINE “There is an ecclesiastical (Church) discipline, as the faithful know, when the names of the martyrs are read aloud in that place at the altar of God, where prayer is not offered for them. Prayer, however, **is offered for other dead** who are remembered. **It is wrong to pray for a martyr, to whose prayers we ought ourselves be commended.”**

- Augustine, *Sermons* 159:1, AD 411

But let’s go back even further. Let’s go back to the Old Testament and look at how the people intervened for those thought to be on their way to Heaven.⁷

First let’s look at fasting for the dead. David was fasting on behalf of his dead friend Jonathan and the King, Saul.

2nd SAMUEL 1:11-12 11 Then David took hold of his clothes, and rent them; and so did all the men who were with him; 12 and they mourned and wept and **fasted** until evening **for Saul and for Jonathan his son** and for the people of the LORD and for the house of Israel, **because they had fallen by the sword.**

If they are in Heaven (in the Old Testament, “on their way to Heaven), no fasting is needed. If they are in Hell, no fasting will benefit them.

2nd MACCABEES 12:40-46

In 2nd Maccabees we have the historical story of the PURIFICATION of the Temple (remember our bodies, which also get purified to an extent in this life, are Temples to the Lord).

This is commonly called Chanukah (pronounced Hanukkah), or “the Feast of Dedication” or “the Feast of Lights”. Jesus went up to Jerusalem at the time of this feast and Hanukkah was almost certainly celebrated by our Lord Jesus (see John 10:22-23). I won’t get into the reasons why here as it is beyond the scope of this study.

The Temple had been taken over and defiled by the Hellenists (Greeks) and Judas Maccabeus was commissioned by God to take the Temple back.

⁷ Remember. The Gates of Heaven were not opened until Jesus opened the Gates of Heaven at His Ascension. Elijah went off to “the sky” in Hebrew. Not “Heaven” as many translations have (the Hebrew can mean either, but theologically it could only be Jesus who opens the gates of Heaven to mankind). Many believe Elijah will almost certainly be back toward the end of time-Revelation 11 and Jewish tradition—See Revelation 11 on your own.

EPHESIANS 4:8-9 8 Therefore it is said, “When he ascended on high **he led a host of captives**, and he gave gifts to men.” ⁹ (In saying, “He ascended,” what does it mean but that he had also descended into the lower parts of the earth?

¹⁰ He who descended is he who also ascended far above all the heavens, that **he might fill all things.**)

In 2nd Maccabees, the Jewish military leader Judas Maccabeus and his soldiers were battling the soldiers of the wicked Hellenistic (Greek) King Antiochus Epiphanes (king until 164 B.C.).

This military action succeeded against overwhelming odds. Many thought they would all die.

But before the battle, Judas Maccabeus was told by God that NONE of his soldiers would die in battle IF they kept God's laws!

Judas Maccabeus and his men eventually defeated the Hellenist (Greek) soldiers.

But Judas Maccabeus was confused as he looked out in the battlefield in the aftermath.

Why? Because some of his soldiers actually died in battle!

Judas wondered WHY God would let them die in battle after God told him they would not die (if they remained in faithful obedience).

As we study these verses, we will see Judas Maccabeus in verse 40 see that all of the soldiers who died in battle had good luck charms on them—pagan “charms” or “idols of Jamnia”.

This of course answered Judas Maccabeus’ question as to WHY these soldiers would die, when God promised to deliver all of his soldiers who kept themselves pure (these guys didn’t keep themselves pure).

These charms may be the ancient-day equivalent of a soldier today using a rabbits’ foot for “good luck” or someone utilizing “the horoscope” today in the newspaper.

The slain soldiers were using these charms “just to be sure” as some Christians wrongfully occasionally do in these more modern times.

Depending on how they are used, these things can be an occasion for mortal sin. They can also be venial sin. But these superstitious charms, idols, etc. used in this way are ALWAYS sinful.

Judas hoped that these men who wore these idols were merely in a state of venial sin.

We know this because he is going to have sacrifices made at the soon to be re-dedicated Temple on the behalf of these men.

If these men were in Heaven, no prayers would be needed.

If these men were in Hell (Gehenna), no prayers would be sufficient.

Since 2nd Maccabees is one of seven books that were removed from the Bible by Protestants at the time of the Protestant revolt, we will use a Catholic Bible translation here (2nd Maccabees WAS included in the original Protestant King James Version Bibles. It wasn’t until the 1800s that the Deuterocanonical books [including 2nd Maccabees] were removed completely by the Protestants—this can still be seen in antique and museum copies of the King James Bibles).

Back to 2nd Maccabees and the military battle that led up to Hanukkah.

The soldiers that did **NOT** wear this proverbial “rabbits foot”, these good luck “charms”, these idols of Jamnia, ALL LIVED!

In v. 41-42 the soldiers left alive who didn't utilize these charms were awestruck but were also moved with pity for their fellow soldiers who had died.

They died because God knew all of these soldiers with good luck charms. The soldiers left alive felt concern for the souls of their fellow soldiers.

2nd MACCABEES 12:40-42 (DRV⁸) 40 And they found under the coats of the slain some of the **donaries of the idols of Jamnia**, which **the law forbiddeth to the Jews**: so that all plainly saw, that **for this cause they were slain**.
41 Then they all **blessed the just judgment of the Lord**, who had discovered the things that were hidden. 42 And so betaking themselves to prayers, they besought him, that **the sin which had been committed might be forgotten**. But the most valiant Judas exhorted the people to keep themselves from sin, forasmuch as they saw before their eyes what had happened, because of the sins of those that were slain.

The most valiant Judas Maccabeus uses this Divine judgment that God brought upon them, to exhort the people to keep themselves from sin.

In Vs. 42-44, they offer sacrifice to God on behalf of their **dead brothers** to expiate (pay an account) for sin.

2nd MACCABEES 12:43 (DRV) 43 And making a gathering, he sent twelve thousand drachmas of silver to Jerusalem for a **sacrifice to be offered for the sins of the dead**, thinking well and religiously concerning the resurrection, . . .

But Judas Maccabeus felt that these soldiers, who fell bodily, **may** have still had a relationship with God that was not completely broken, a relationship that was not completely severed.

Judas Maccabeus thought that these soldiers **may** have died in a state of **venial sin** instead of mortal or deadly sin.

Judas Maccabeus **hoped** that these soldiers would rise again.
He hoped they died in godliness.

⁸ We will use the Douay-Rheims Bible (DRV) for these verses. The RSVCE does not include verse 46 but does have it in its footnotes. I am not sure why. And the footnotes don't explain it either but since this is the case, I included the DRV here so the passage can be seen in its entirety.

2nd MACCABEES 12:44-46 (DRV) 44 For if he had not **hoped** that they that were slain should rise again,
it would have seemed superfluous and vain to pray for the dead,
45 And because he considered that they who had fallen asleep with godliness, had great grace laid up **for them**.
46 It is therefore a **holy** and wholesome thought **to pray for the dead that they may be loosed from sins**.

Why offer sacrifice for these soldiers at the temple if they are in Heaven?
If they are in Heaven, they don't need sacrifice to be "loosed from (their) sins".
They would already be loosed!

Why offer sacrifice for these soldiers at the temple if they are in Hell?
If they are in Hell, sacrifice in the temple isn't going to help them!

Protestants don't believe that Maccabees is inspired, but they do hold it in high esteem historically. King James forbade printing of the King James Bible in England without the inclusion of the deuterocanonical Old Testament Books (often wrongly called by Protestants "The Apocrypha") which included 2nd Maccabees.

But even if we look at 2nd Maccabees as **a mere historic document**, we can still at least see what the ancient Jews thought, regarding their passed-on brothers and sisters!

But ancient Jews offered prayers and fasting on behalf of the dead as well.

Ancient Hebrew Tradition

In Ancient Hebrew Tradition there were prayers for the dead too.
The **Yizkor** (yiz-core) and the **el Molai Rahamim** (Molai ra-ha-meme) prayers are such.

The Kaddish is a prayer of praise to Yahweh, but it is ON BEHALF of the deceased and offers them benefit this way.

From ancient Jewish commentary on "The Kaddish" prayers:

"As soon as the boy did this (prayed the Kaddish on behalf of his deceased father)⁹, the father's soul was delivered from judgment and permitted its eternal rest". . .

- **Yizkor**
- **el Molai Rahamim**
- **Kaddish**

⁹ Parenthetical addition here mine for context.

For further details on this ancient Jewish practice, please see Table 6.

In Summary . . .

In this study we defined what Purgatory is as well as reviewed some basic catechesis.

We will also looked at what Purgatory ISN'T because there are so many misunderstandings "out there".

We briefly looked at some of the "Biblical objections" (there are more). Almost always those objections are based upon misunderstandings of what these people who are critical of Purgatory, wrongly think we teach. They are opposing something other than the Churches teaching.

We saw in the Book of Revelation that "Nothing unclean" enters Heaven (which just makes sense too).

Therefore if NOTHING impure can enter Heaven, and we die in a state of friendship with God, but not entirely "purified", God in HIS WORK and mercy provides a way to "shower-up", be totally "clean" and enter heaven.

We frequently reminded ourselves of the principle . . .

If someone is in Heaven, no prayers or fasting for their "deliverance" are needed!

If someone is in Hell, no prayers or fasting for their "deliverance" can help.

We saw cited Tables concerning "prayers for the dead" at every Mass.

We reviewed Matthew 12:36-37 and reminded ourselves of Jesus' words that we MUST pay an account for every word we utter. That makes sense too because God has perfect mercy but also perfect justice.

We differed eternal accounts from temporal accounts.

We looked at 1st Corinthians 3:11-15 and it's doctrinal teachings about Purgatory.

We also looked at Old Testament teachings suggesting the Hebrews were aware of after-life need for purgation from sin, focusing on Biblical fasting for the dead in Samuel and 2nd Maccabees. In addition via a table we could go and see the evidence of ancient Hebrews praying for the dead, in ancient Hebrew times.

And for those who want more, there is a few other related intriguing verses in Table 7—other Biblical passages but not unpacked to the extent I would like, because of time constraints.

Now we will close with any final comments and a prayer, knowing that there are many other things that we won't get a chance to cover in a study like this.

Table 1

John Salza Does A Fine Job Of Differentiating Eternal from Temporal Punishments

The souls in Purgatory are in a situation where either they . . .

- Need someone else to offer temporal atonement and render account for them on their behalf.
OR . . .
- They personally must endure an exact amount of suffering to “render account” for every wrong word they utter as Jesus says on their own (punishment that is temporal, not eternal, yet a penalty that is exactly proportional to their unremitted sins).

But suffering on someone else’s behalf? Yes.

As John Salza states in his book *The Biblical Basis For Purgatory* states:

It is true that the sacrifice of Jesus Christ was more than sufficient to atone for all punishment (temporal and eternal) due to sin. . . . However although Christ alone has made satisfaction for the eternal punishment for sin, He specifically requires us to participate in making satisfaction for the temporal punishments for our sin. . . . We participate with Christ by enduring the trials and sufferings of this life, as well as through acts of penance. This is why Paul says, “I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I complete what is lacking in Christ’s afflictions for the sake of the body, that is, the church” (Col 1:24). If Christ made complete atonement for our sins, then how can Paul say there is something “lacking” in His sufferings? There cannot be, insofar as the remission of the eternal punishment is concerned. Only a being with eternal power could atone for eternal punishment, and that is exactly what Christ did for us. It necessarily follows, then, that what is “lacking in Christ’s afflictions” refers to the debt of temporal punishment that we must suffer, in justice for our sins. According to Paul, we are able to “complete” or satisfy this punishment that God imposes when our own sufferings are joined to those of Christ.¹

Salza goes on

. . . Although God requires from the members of the Body satisfaction for their sins, He doesn’t necessarily require it from the member who owes it. God is so merciful that He accepts satisfaction for sin from any member He chooses. As we have seen, this is why Paul can say, “I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I complete what is lacking in Christ’s afflictions for the sake of the body, that is, the church” (Col 1:24)²

1 *The Biblical Basis For Purgatory*, John Salza, p. 17-18

2 *The Biblical Basis For Purgatory*, John Salza, p. 22

It is important that we understand this concept of being able to freely offer restitution for sin—in union with Christ to be sure—on another person’s behalf.

For example the paralytic in St. Mark’s Gospel was healed on behalf of the intervention of his friends (specifically stated in Mark 2:5). In Matthew 8:5-13 we see a servant is healed by Jesus based upon the faith of . . . the servant? No! The servant is healed on behalf of the faith of the centurion! In Mark 9:14-27 we see a concerned father going to Jesus on behalf of his demon-possessed son. And Jesus heals the boy based on this intervention from someone else—his father.

Table 2

Forgiveness Can Be Revoked

(Taken from my in-depth version of the “Once Saved Always Saved” Bible Study)

What if we . . . are a faithful and wise servant of the master Jesus?
Then is our salvation guaranteed?

Let’s see what Jesus says.

KING Jesus is going to tell us **about the Kingdom of heaven** so we can’t really say . . .
“Well this doesn’t have anything to do with salvation.”
Salvation is precisely what Jesus is talking about here.

MATTHEW 18:23 23 Therefore, the **kingdom of heaven** is like **a king** who wanted to settle accounts with his servants.

Jesus goes on to tell us about **a servant of the master** who could never repay his debt. The master takes pity, cancels the servant’s debt, and let him go.

Jesus is our Lord and Master in this parable. We who have Jesus as our Lord and Master are his servants.

We owe Jesus a debt we cannot pay! As has been said . . .
. . . “Jesus paid a debt He didn’t owe, so we could pay a debt we couldn’t pay.”

Jesus cancels OUR debt, and releases us. But we’ve got to forgive other people too when they sin against us.

Jesus goes on to tell us about **a servant of the master** who could **never repay his debt**. The **master** takes pity, **cancels the servant’s debt**, and **let him go**.

There is no condemnation for those who are In-Jesus. Their debt is cancelled and that person is let go.

MATTHEW 18:24-27 24 As he began the settlement, a man who owed him ten thousand talents¹⁰ was brought to him. 25 Since **he was not able to pay**, the master ordered that he and his wife and his children and all that he had be sold to repay the debt. 26 “The servant fell on his knees before him. ‘Be patient with me,’ he begged, ‘and I will pay back everything.’ 27 The servant’s master took pity on him, **canceled the debt** and **let him go**.

Now the free servant who just had his debt canceled and was “released” does what?

He goes free. Then some guy who owes him a small pittance (a hundred denarii) comes to him and asks him for debt forgiveness and mercy. And what does this guy do?

MATTHEW 18:28a 28 “But when that servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii¹¹. . .

¹⁰ A “Talent” incidentally is 70 pounds of silver or the worth of that. Ten thousand talents would be 700,000 pounds of silver (about 25 million dollars by today’s standards assuming silver at \$35.00 an ounce).

¹¹ A denarius incidentally, is sometimes called the “penny of the New Testament”. According to “The Bible Dictionary” by Boyd (Barbour Publishing), it’s “a Roman coin worth about 15 cents”.

This servant who already had his debt cancelled, had one of his fellow servants who owed him some money. And how did this newly freed and released servant react?

MATTHEW 18:27-28a 27 The servant's master took pity on him, **canceled the debt** and **let him go**. 28 "But when that servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii..."

This servant who already had his debt cancelled (past action), failed to show the same mercy to someone who owed HIM a debt.

MATTHEW 18:28-31 28 "But when that servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii. He grabbed him and began to choke him. 'Pay back what you owe me!' he demanded. 29 "His fellow servant fell to his knees and begged him, 'Be patient with me, and I will pay you back.' 30 But he refused. Instead, he went off and had the man thrown into prison until he could pay the debt. 31 When the other servants saw what had happened, they were greatly distressed and went and told their master everything that had happened.

This servant who **already had his debt cancelled**, failed to show the same mercy to someone who owed HIM a debt. And how does the king react when He hears about the servant's unforgiveness that the Master himself had just forgiven?

Is THIS what happens (???)

Phantom verse 18:32?-33? 32 "Then the master called the servant in. 'You wicked servant,' he said, 'I canceled all that debt of yours because you begged me to. 33 But you accepted me into your heart and I cancelled your debt and released you so I guess you'll be forgiven anyway, but this was a rotten thing you did. But I can't revoke the forgiveness I've already given you though.

NO! That is not what happens! That's what happens in Calvinist theology, but not in Biblical parlance.

The master **revokes** the debt forgiveness **he already gave** to the first servant, and then turns the servant over to the jailers to be tortured.

MATTHEW 18:32-34 32 "Then the master called the servant in. 'You wicked servant,' he said, 'I canceled all that debt of yours because you begged me to. 33 Shouldn't you have had mercy on your fellow servant **just as I had on you?**' 34 In anger his master turned him over to the jailers to be tortured, until he should pay back all he owed.

But this just applies to him and not me right?

Wrong! It applies to **"each of you!"**

MATTHEW 18:35 35 "This is how my heavenly Father will treat **each of you** unless you forgive your brother from your heart."

You must forgive people when they trespass against you. Jesus says so explicitly.

Matthew 18:23-35 does not teach or suggest OSAS (nor does any verse). Matthew 18:23-35 specifically refutes the false doctrine of OSAS.

Table 3

More Concerning Proportionality

Father Altier once told me: "The Blessed Virgin has the highest rank in Heaven among mere people. Then it may be St. Joseph or St. John the Baptist. But after that is anyone's guess and I want you to be aiming for these kind of heights."

So we want to go to Heaven to be sure. But we ALSO want a HIGH place in Heaven.

But this "high place" isn't reduced down to a mere "rank". It has to do with how much we CAN enjoy Heaven. You are totally happy in Heaven—Yes. But all will not enjoy Heaven to the same degree. And these "treasures" last FOREVER (or are lost forever).

St. Therese of Lisieux puts it this way . . .

ST. THERESE OF LISIEUX To this dearly loved sister I confided my most intimate thoughts; she cleared up all my doubts. One day I expressed surprise that God does not give an equal amount of glory to all the elect in Heaven—I was afraid that they would not all be quite happy. She sent me to fetch Papa's big tumbler, and put it beside my tiny thimble, then, filling both with water, she asked me which seemed the fuller. I replied that one was as full as the other—it was impossible to pour more water into either of them, for they could not hold it. In this way Pauline made it clear to me that in Heaven the least of the Blessed does not envy the happiness of the greatest; and so, by bringing the highest mysteries down to the level of my understanding, she gave my soul the food it needed. —St. Thérèse of Lisieux, *The Story of a Soul*¹².

St. Pope John the 23rd states this teaching in this manner . . .

SAINT POPE JOHN XXIII Everyone who has joined the ranks of Christ must be a glowing point of light in the world, a nucleus of love, a leaven of the whole mass. **He will be so in proportion to his degree of spiritual union with God.** Pacem in Terris (1963)

CCC 1039a In the presence of Christ, who is Truth itself, the truth of each man's relationship with God will be laid bare.⁶²⁶ **The Last Judgment will reveal even to its furthest consequences the good each person has done or failed to do during his earthly life . . .**

MATTHEW 16:27 27 For the Son of man is to come with his angels in the glory of his Father, and then **he will repay every man for what he has done.**

PROVERBS 24:12b 12 . . . does not he who weighs the heart perceive it? Does not he who keeps watch over your soul know it, and **will he not requite man according to his work?**

HEBREWS 10:28-29 28 A man who has violated the law of Moses dies without mercy at the testimony of two or three witnesses. 29 **How much worse punishment** do you think will be deserved by the man who has spurned the Son of God, and profaned the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and outraged the Spirit of grace?

MATTHEW 11:21a, 22-24 21 "Woe to you, Chorazin! woe to you, Bethsaida! . . . 22 But I tell you, it shall be **more tolerable** on the day of judgment for Tyre and Sidon than for you. 23 And you, Caperna-um, will you be exalted to heaven? You shall be brought down to Hades. For if the mighty works done in you had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. 24 But I tell you that it shall be **more tolerable on the day of judgment** for the land of Sodom than for you."

¹² <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/16772/16772-8.txt>

CCC 679 a, c Christ is Lord of eternal life. . . . By rejecting grace in this life, one already judges oneself, **receives according to one's works**, and can even condemn oneself for all eternity by rejecting the Spirit of love.⁵⁸⁹

“Life Eternal” is Jesus Christ. Let’s listen to St. Augustine . . .

ST. AUGUSTINE¹³ Because that **life eternal shall be equal to all the saints**, a denarius is given to all; but forasmuch as in that life eternal **the light of merits shall shine diversely**, there are with the Father many mansions; so that under **this same denarius bestowed unequally** one shall not live longer than another, but in the many mansions one shall shine with more splendor than another.

Someone is sure to ask: “Doesn’t Matthew 20 say ALL the workers get **the same wage** (a denarius)? How can we have **“proportional glory in Heaven”** when we ALL receive the **same wage**?”

The answer is this parable concerns God’s Kingdom on earth, not in Heaven.

MATTHEW 20:1-16 1 "For the kingdom of heaven is like a householder who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard. 2 After **agreeing with the laborers** for a denarius a day, he sent them into **his vineyard**. 3 And going out about the third hour he saw others standing idle in the **market place**; 4 and to them he said, 'You go into the vineyard too, and whatever is right I will give you.' So they went. 5 Going out again about the sixth hour and the ninth hour, he did the same. 6 And about the eleventh hour he went out and found others standing; and he said to them, 'Why do you **stand here idle all day?**' 7 They said to him, 'Because no one has hired us.' He said to them, '**You go into the vineyard too.**' 8 And when evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his steward, 'Call the laborers and pay them their wages, beginning with the last, up to the first.' 9 And when those hired about the eleventh hour came, each of them received a denarius. 10 Now when the first came, they thought they would receive more; but each of them also received a denarius. 11 And on receiving it **they grumbled at the householder**, 12 saying, 'These last worked only one hour, and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the day and **the scorching heat.**' 13 But he replied to one of them, 'Friend, I am doing you no wrong; did you not agree with me for a denarius? 14 Take what belongs to you, and go; I choose to give to this last as I give to you. 15 Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me? Or do you begrudge my generosity?' 16 So the last **will be** first, and the first last."

Answer: Our equal and INFINITE reward that we receive is Christ. ALL receive Jesus. But HOW we respond is ALSO involved in the Heavenly aspect of this equation.

In Matthew 20 here, Jesus is almost certainly talking about “the kingdom of Heaven” on earth not IN Heaven.

Why? Because Jesus is referring to the Jews who have “labored” much longer than the Gentiles throughout the Covenants. Yet both get the same infinite reward—Jesus. And the Jews “grumble” over it. The “agreeing with the laborers” are the Old Covenants. We don’t bargain with God in Heaven. In Heaven the Saints are not “standing idle all day”. As Saints in Heaven we are not “toiling”. Saints in Heaven are not loitering or “standing around” either. Saints in Heaven are not “grumbling” against the Master (although the Saints in Heaven DO ask Jesus “How long?” in the Book of Revelation). There is not “scorching heat” in Heaven.

Jesus talks about His “vineyard”. We know the harvest in His Vineyard is rich but the laborers are few.

We ALL receive Christ, but in the verses that discuss proportionality we have our **response** to Christ figured into the whole equation too!

¹³ From Catena Aurea

Table 4

Quotes From The Mass Concerning Purgatory (And a Vignette Concerning Vatican II)

The Church in Her solicitude for souls remembers these suffering souls in Her Liturgical prayers even to this day. Earlier in the study we already saw the relevant excerpt from Eucharistic Prayer Number 1.

Let's also look at Eucharistic Prayer number two, three, and four and see the same thing. . . .

Eucharistic Prayer Number Two - Latin Rite of the Mass . . . Remember our brothers and sisters who have gone to their rest in the hope of rising again; bring them and all the departed into the light of your presence. Have mercy on us all; make us worthy to share eternal life with Mary, the virgin Mother of God, with the apostles, and with all the saints who have done your will throughout the ages. . . .

Eucharistic Prayer Number Three - Latin Rite of the Mass . . . Welcome into your kingdom our departed brothers and sisters, and all who have left this world in your friendship. We hope to enjoy for ever the vision of your glory, through Christ our Lord, from whom all good things come..

Eucharistic Prayer Number Four - Latin Rite of the Mass . . . Remember those who have died in the peace of Christ and all the dead whose faith is known to you alone. Father, in your mercy grant also to us, your children, to enter into our heavenly inheritance in the company of the Virgin Mary, the Mother of God, and your apostles and saints. . . .

Also by the way. Occasionally you hear an uninformed Catholic say something like:
"Vatican II did away with Purgatory."

This is wrong. Aside from the fact that the Church can never change her official *de fide* (doctrinally defined) teachings, the Church and Vatican II has not "done away with Purgatory", nor does the Church have the ability to do so.

Its authority given by Christ "safeguards" the teachings of Christ and has no authority to manufacture doctrine (see Lumen Gentium section 23)—the Church is in fact Divinely protected from doing so (officially inventing new doctrines).

Also obviously if we are praying for the dead at Masses right now, long after Vatican II, this "doing away with Purgatory" thesis of theirs MUST be wrong.

But let's look EXPLICITLY at Vatican II too here so you can read it directly from Vatican II

From the Vatican II Document: DOGMATIC CONSTITUTION ON THE CHURCH - LUMEN GENTIUM

50. In full consciousness of this communion of the whole Mystical Body of Jesus Christ, the Church in its pilgrim members, from the very earliest days of the Christian religion, has honoured with **great respect the memory of the dead**;^[6] and, "because it is a holy and a wholesome thought to **pray for the dead that they may be loosed from their sins**" (2 Mac. 12:46) **she offers her suffrages for them**. . . .

51. This sacred council accepts loyally the venerable faith of our ancestors in the living communion which exists between us and our brothers who are in the glory of heaven or **who are yet being purified after their death**- and it proposes again the decrees of the Second Council of Nicea,^[20] of the Council of Florence,^[21] and of the Council of Trent.^[22] At the same time, in keeping with its pastoral preoccupations, this council urges all concerned to remove or correct any abuses, excesses or defects which may have crept in here or there, and so restore all things that Christ and God be more fully praised. . . .

It is abundantly clear from reading the above, that Vatican II did NOT "Do away with Purgatory".

Table 5

Ancient Hebrew History

The Ancient Jewish Kaddish Prayer (“The Kaddish”)

The Kaddish is an ancient Jewish prayer that is on behalf of the dead.

It is not technically a prayer for the dead (Rabbi Donin states that there **are special prayers for the dead** such as the “**El Molai Rahamim**” and the “**Yizkor**” prayers).

The Kaddish is a prayer of **praise** to Yahweh which is **on behalf** of the deceased. But let’s look at it closer and see what it does entail including obtaining “merit” and “Divine grace” for the dead!

When somebody’s parent dies in the Jewish religion, a son is “duty-bound” to pray (the Kaddish) each day for eleven months (bold emphasis mine) on behalf of his dead parent.

This is done at a daily religious service and is even hired out by the family (to have someone else do it on their behalf).

The recitation requires a minimum of ten Jewish male adults.

Rabbi Donin “if in the midst of grief and personal loss, when the tendency to blame and reject God might arise, a person nevertheless rises publicly to express these words of faith and trust in God this is **an act of great merit to the soul of the deceased**, for the deceased is credited with having raised a child capable of such an act of faith. In this sense only can the Kaddish be regarded as an indirect prayer for the dead.” Its recitation **accrues to the merit of the soul in the judgment that takes place in the world to come** (bold emphasis mine).”

- Rabbi Hayim Halevy Donin from his book: *To Be A Jew*

Notice the parent has already died, but the son is still obtaining merit on their behalf!

Rabbi Donin goes on to state later:

Rabbi Donin “The most important way by which **Divine grace for deceased parents is earned** and by which honor is extended to their memory is in the manner of life followed by the children: by their living a life of righteousness, by their doing good deeds, and by their devotion to the ways of the Lord. In evaluating the life of a parent, consideration is given to the influence upon the children. The lives of children thus provide the ultimate test of the value of a parent's years on earth.” (bold emphasis mine)

- Rabbi Hayim Halevy Donin from his book: *To Be A Jew*

Notice the son is obtaining divine grace on behalf of someone deceased!

The Rabbi goes on to teach;

Rabbi Donin “As the Zohar¹⁴ says, “if the son walks in the crooked path, he brings dishonor and shame on his father. If he walks in the straight path and his deeds are upright, then **he confers honor on him** both in this world among men **and in the next world with God** (bold emphasis mine).”

¹⁴ **The Zohar is an ancient Jewish commentary on the Torah (The Five Books of Moses, also called the Pentateuch (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy)).**

Yes the Kaddish prayer is identified as ancient too. It is identified as “**one of the oldest prayers in the Jewish liturgy**”! Some people have said this prayer goes back to the time of Moses.



Let's see this same principle re-stated elsewhere. . . .

Jewish Commentary on Mourner's Kaddish: Praying for the Dead

“Akiva then asked the man for all the relevant details and promised to locate his child and teach him Torah so that he could stand in front of the congregation and say *Yitgadal* in praise of God. Akiva found the child and taught him Torah, the *Sh'ma*, the *Amidah*, and Grace After Meals and prepared him to stand before the congregation to recite *Yitgadal*. As soon as the boy did this, *the father's soul was delivered from judgment and permitted its eternal rest*. The man then appeared in a dream and thanked him: “May it be God's will that you rest in peace, *for you made it possible for me to be at peace*.” (Adapted from Netiv Binah I, pp. 367-68)¹⁵.

The above statements give us as parents and children of our own parents something extra to think about!

They are also very self-explanatory as to at least some of the ancient Jewish thought about the after-life!

Also of interesting aside note, we get the tradition of tombstones from the ancient Jews.

Table 6

¹⁵ [Rabbi Kerry M. Olitzky, Grief in Our Seasons - A Mourner's Kaddish Companion (Jewish Lights Publishing: Woodstock, Vermont, 1998) p. xvii-xviii]. (*italics added*). Quoted from Brother Marwil's website: <http://www.bromarwilnllasos.blogspot.com/search/label/Suffrages%20for%20the%20Dead>

Some More Historical Statements From The Early Church

Let's go to the Ancient Church Father Lactantius (pronounced lock-ton-see-oos) and see what he has to say about when God judges the justified or **the just**.

Lactantius contrasts just sinners who had a major repentance with very pure individuals. Both groups are just. Both groups are going to Heaven.

Yet the big-time sinners who by necessity had a big-time repentance will suffer much.

The pure individuals on the other hand, don't suffer when they are tested by fire or flame.

Lactantius discusses "**just individuals**" who are big time sinners (either by the gravity of their sins or the sheer number or frequency of sins, but have obviously had a repentance, and remember, they are just).

These big-time sinners are contrasted to people who presumably go either go **straight to Heaven** at their judgment, or have little to suffer because they have "**maturity of virtue**".

Here is Lactantius from the 300's A.D. talking about "THE JUST" and their judgments . . .

LACTANTIUS "But also, when God will judge **the just**,
it is likewise in fire that he will try them.

At that time,

they whose sins are uppermost, either because of their gravity or their number,
will be drawn together by the fire and will be burned.

Those, however, who have been imbued with **full justice** and maturity of virtue,
will not feel that fire;

for they have something of God in them which will repel
and turn back the strength of the flame."

- Lactantius, *Divine Institutes* 7:21:6, AD 307

As we saw earlier, the Church explicitly prays for the dead at every Mass in the Eucharistic Prayers we looked at.

Why have a Mass said for our loved ones if they are already in Heaven? They MAY already be in Heaven, but WE don't KNOW for sure they are in Heaven unless the Church uses Her authority and says so (i.e. a canonization process).

The prayers for your loved ones won't hurt anything. And if your loved one is already in Heaven, the prayers or Masses offered will go to someone else.

Tertullian (who died in the 200's A.D) who almost certainly is talking about having a Mass said for the dead goes on and states the following . . .

TERTULLIAN "**We offer sacrifices for the dead** on their birthday anniversaries."

- Tertullian, *The Crown* 3:3, AD 211

Keep in mind; if these dead people that the Christians are praying for (way back in the 200's AD) are in Heaven, they wouldn't NEED prayers (they are already in Heaven).

If these people are in Hell, no prayers will help (there is no second chance for those condemned to Hell).

WHY pray for the dead if there is no Purgatory? Prayer and sacrifice on behalf of the dead is a practice that presupposes purgatory.

St. Cyril of Jerusalem is virtually certainly referring to offering the Holy **Sacrifice** of the Mass here below as well. And he's writing this in the 300's A.D. And St. Cyril says it is of "VERY GREAT BENEFIT" to the souls who it is offered for!

ST. CYRIL OF JERUSALEM "Then we make mention also of those who have already fallen asleep . . .
. . . for we believe that it will be of very great benefit to the souls of those for whom the petition is carried up, while **this holy and most solemn sacrifice** is laid out."

- St. Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catechetical Lectures* 23:5:9, AD 350

St. Augustine who lived in the late 300's and early 400's A.D., tells us . . .

ST. AUGUSTINE "Temporal punishments are suffered by some in this life only, **by some after death**, by 'some both here and hereafter, but all of them before that last and strictest judgment. But **not all who suffer temporal punishments after death will come to eternal punishments**, which are to follow after that judgment."

- Augustine, *The City of God* 21:13, AD 419

ST. AUGUSTINE "That there should be some **fire** even **after this life** is not incredible, and it can be inquired into and either be discovered or left hidden whether some of the faithful may be saved, some more slowly and some more quickly in the greater or lesser degree in which they loved the good things that perish, **through a certain purgatorial fire.**"

- Augustine, *Handbook on Faith, Hope, and Charity* 18:69, AD 421

Here the Catechism quotes St. Augustine's mother, Saint Monica . . .

SAINT MONICA Put this body anywhere! Don't trouble yourselves about it! I simply ask you to remember me at the Lord's altar wherever you are. (St. Monica before her death, to her sons, St. Augustine and his brother. From St. Augustine's Confessions 9, 11, 27: PL 32, 775. And re-quoted in the CCC 1371 below.)

CCC 1371 The Eucharistic sacrifice is also offered for *the faithful departed* who "have died in Christ but are not yet wholly purified,"¹⁹³ so that they may be able to enter into the light and peace of Christ:

Put this body anywhere! Don't trouble yourselves about it! I simply ask you to remember me at the Lord's altar wherever you are.¹⁹⁴

Then, we pray [in the anaphora] for the holy fathers and bishops who have fallen asleep, and in general for all who have fallen asleep before us, in the belief that it is a great benefit to the souls on whose behalf the supplication is offered, while the holy and tremendous Victim is present. . . . By offering to God our supplications for those who have fallen asleep, if they have sinned, we . . . offer Christ sacrificed for the sins of all, and so render favorable, for them and for us, the God who loves man.¹⁹⁵

Table 7

A Few Other Verses

(Which We won't unpack due to time constraints)

LUKE 12:57-59 57 "And why do you not judge for yourselves what is right?
58 As you go with your accuser before the magistrate, make an effort to settle with him on the way, lest he drag you to the judge, and the judge hand you over to the officer, and the officer put you in prison. 59 I tell you, you will never **get out till** you have **paid** the very last copper."

And notice Luke 12:59 DOESN'T say . . .

?? LUKE 12:59?? (phantom verse) 59 I tell you, you will never **get out till Jesus has paid** the very last copper."

ROMANS 8:15b-17 When we cry, "Abba! Father!" 16 it is the Spirit himself bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God, 17 and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and fellow **heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.**

MATTHEW 27:50-53 50 And Jesus cried again with a loud voice and yielded up his spirit. 51 And behold, the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom; and the earth shook, and the rocks were split;
52 the tombs also were opened, and many **bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised**, 53 and coming out of the tombs after his resurrection they went into the holy city and appeared to many.

Objection: Well this doesn't prove Purgatory.

Answer: That's right it doesn't prove Purgatory.
But it DOES show us an example of at least a third place in the afterlife.

That is unless you are going to tell me Jesus plucked these guys out of Heaven.

I hope you're not going to suggest Jesus is pulling these guys out of Hell.
The very existence of a third state shows the fact that your afterlife beliefs need some filling out. You need to **believe more**.

Just a reminder from Colossians that nothing unclean can enter Heaven.

COLOSSIANS 1:22 22 he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death, **in order to present you holy and blameless and irreproachable before him,**

St. Paul apparently prayed for a man named Onesiphorus who evidently was not alive anymore in 2nd Timothy 1 (at least St. Paul's context suggests Onesiphorus was no longer alive).

2nd TIMOTHY 1:16-18 16 May the Lord grant mercy to the household of Onesiphorus, for he often refreshed me; he was not ashamed of my chains, 17 but when he arrived in Rome he searched for me eagerly and found me-- 18 may the Lord grant him to find mercy from the Lord on that Day--and you well know all the service he rendered at Ephesus.

1. Someone could argue that St. Paul was merely praying for Onesiphorus' **household** (who was still alive as 2nd Timothy 4:19 tells us) to the **exclusion** of a passed-on Onesiphorus per se.

2. Others might say Onesiphorus is still alive. But this isn't the way you'd likely talk about someone still alive.
3. But others would argue, and this seems most likely, that St. Paul was praying for Onesiphorus' living household with the inclusion of the passed-on Onesiphorus himself ("for he often refreshed me")!

If number three above is the appropriate interpretation (and I believe it probably is), St. Paul himself is giving us an example of praying for the dead here too in addition to praying for the living remaining household members of Onesiphorus.

This would be consistent with ancient Jewish (and Christian) practice. We don't know for sure but it is a thought-provoking verse and is certainly consistent with what the ancient Church did in regards to praying for the dead to help pay the account of these dead as we will soon see.

HEBREWS 12:22-24 22 But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, **the heavenly Jerusalem**, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering, 23 and to the assembly of the first-born who are enrolled in heaven, and to a judge who is God of all, and to **the spirits of just men made perfect**, 24 and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks more graciously than the blood of Abel.

The following provokes the question as to WHY Jesus would even say something like this if there wasn't an element of forgiveness (not of eternal debt but of temporal punishment) in the next life.

MATTHEW 12:32 32 And whoever says 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 (DRV) And whosoever shall speak a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but he that shall speak against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, **neither in this world, nor in the world to come**.

CCC 1031 The Church gives the name *Purgatory* to this final purification of the elect, which is entirely different from the punishment of the damned.⁶⁰⁶ The Church formulated her doctrine of faith on Purgatory especially at the Councils of Florence and Trent. The tradition of the Church, by reference to certain texts of Scripture, speaks of a cleansing fire:⁶⁰⁷

As for certain lesser faults, we must believe that, before the Final Judgment, there is a purifying fire. He who is truth says that whoever utters blasphemy against the Holy Spirit **will be pardoned neither in this age nor in the age to come**. From this sentence we understand that certain offenses can be forgiven in this age, but certain others in the age to come.⁶⁰⁸