

Lesson Three: Salvation part three – Final Destiny

Intro:

1 John 2.24-25 Therefore let that abide in you which you heard from the beginning. If what you heard from the beginning abides in you, you also will abide in the Son and in the Father. 25 And this is the promise that He has promised us—eternal life.

Once again for newcomers: we are letting the Catholic Church speak for itself. Sources of Catholic Doctrine. The primary Document which quotes many others is: *The Catechism of the Catholic Church* Edited by Joseph Ratzinger [Also known as Pope Benedict XVI (1994)]

Two books helpful in this study are:

- Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma – Ludwig Ott¹
- The Gospel According to Rome - ²

Tonight we will finish up the section on Salvation.

Eternal destiny

Heb 9:27 And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment.

Everyone dies. We are all facing death so we had better get the facts and prepare for it.

- There is physical death which is the death of which most conversation refers. Physical death is the separation of the **spirit** from the earthly **body**.
- There is spiritual death which is what resulted from sin in the Garden of Eden. Spiritual death is the separation of man from God because of **sin**.
- There is eternal death. Eternal death is the separation of soul and body from God in Hell **forever**. Quite drastic.

So what does Catholicism teach about avoiding eternal death and about the assurance of your salvation leading to heaven?

¹ Ott, Ludwig. *Fundamentals of catholic dogma*. S.I: Tan Books & Pub, 1992.

² McCarthy, James G. *The Gospel according to Rome*. Eugene, Or: Harvest House, 1995.

Final Perseverance and particular Judgement [1021-1022, 1051, 1274]

For a Catholic Salvation is a long journey that begins at Baptism, continues with a long line of sacraments and good works and finishes at death with the outcome still **uncertain**. Death is the moment of truth. At death the body decays and the soul goes to meet God. At that point at his *particular judgment* he will learn if he has **attained** eternal life or not [1005, 1013, 1022, 1051]. If the person has died in the state of grace or *sanctifying grace* he said to have achieved *final perseverance*: He has preserved grace in his soul till the end [161, 1026, 2016]. If a person is without sanctifying grace at the moment of death, God will banish him to eternal **punishment** [1022, 1033-1037, 1056-1057].

“The souls of those who depart this life in actual mortal sin, or in original sin alone, go down straightway to hell to be punished, but with unequal pains” - Council of Florence – session 6 .

No living Catholic can say he is **saved**.

Purgatory [954, 958, 1030-1032, 1054, 1472]

Catholicism teaches that if a person dies in a state of grace then his ultimate salvation is ensured [1030]. However he must make **atonement** for his sins and failures; his shortcomings and lack of good works before he can enter heaven.

“The truth has been revealed that sins are followed by punishments. God’s holiness and justice inflict them. Sins must be expiated. This may be done on this earth through the sorrows, miseries and trials of this life and, above all through death. Otherwise the expiation must be made in the next life through fire and torments or purifying punishments.” – Second Vatican Council – Revision of Indulgences chapter 2.

Baptized infants go straight to heaven they are free of **guilt**. Some people who have worked extremely hard or suffered tremendously and were canonized as saints go straight to heaven. Ordinary people and even most Popes must go to the intermediate place called **purgatory** to burn away their sin that was not worked off on earth.

“People who have committed many sins even if they are only venial sins, but who have never done penance by themselves and never tried to gain

any indulgences, have a heavy load of punishment to **atone** for. God, however, is not only merciful, but also supremely just. If this punishment is not atoned for on earth, then He demands that satisfaction be made after death, 'Down to the last farthing (Mt. 5.26). For 'nothing unclean can enter into heaven' (Rev 21.27). Experience, too, can teach us that most men, at the time of their death, are not good enough for heaven and still not bad enough for eternal damnation. Reason alone, without the aid of **revelation** (scripture), leads us to expect that there must be some means of purifying the punishment due to sin after death. This concept is what we express in the word 'purgatory'. Scripture and Tradition both clearly teach that purgatory does **exist**. – Dogmatic theology for the laity pg 434.

Catholic theologians are not in agreement about the nature of purgatory's suffering but Thomas Aquinas taught it is the same excruciating pain of hell but with a time limit on it [1031]. Catholics still living can help a deceased person in purgatory by saying prayers, giving alms, and performing good works. The most effective way to shorten a loved ones time in purgatory is the sacrifice of the **mass**. For an amount of money the weekly mass as well as additional masses can be held for the benefit of the person believed to still be in purgatory.

Indulgences [1471,-1479, 1498]

Another way to decrease the time of suffering in purgatory is through *indulgences*. The church has the power to dispense indulgences from the vast reservoir of **merit** call the treasury of the church. *In this treasury are the merits of Christ and they can be tapped into for the sins of people alive or dead. The treasury also includes the "truly immense and unmeasurable and pristine merits of the Blessed Virgin Mary the mother of Jesus." As well all the prayers and good works of dead saints are stored so that the church has at its disposal unlimited resources to grant indulgences* [summarized from Second Vatican Council – Revision of Indulgences no.5].

Indulgences are **earned** by acts of piety such as praying the Rosary [1478] doing good works or making a specific donation to the church.

Merit and General Judgment [678-679, 682, 2006-2011, 2025-2027]

We already talked about merit be gained by good works and behavior. Merits are the awards earned during a lifetime. Merits can be totally lost through mortal sin but through repentance, confession and penance the merits lost can be regained [108]. There three forms or types of merit according to Rome.

1) **Increase** of grace. This increasing grace gains merits in heaven and *increases and preserves justification* as we already studied.

2) **Eternal** life – Upon a person's particular judgment [1021-1022] the person can go straight to heaven if he has gained enough merit. Listen carefully. *"Those who work well right to the end and keep their trust in God, eternal life should be held out, both as a grace promised in his mercy through Jesus Christ to the children of God, and as a reward to be faithfully bestowed, on the promise of God himself, for their good works and merits."* - Council of Trent chapter 16. What does that say? It says you work your way to heaven. Also, *"Since we know neither the day or the hour, we should follow the advice of the Lord and watch constantly so that, when the single course of our earthly life is completed, we may merit to enter with him into the marriage feast and be numbered among the blessed..."* Second Vatican council no. 48 What does that say? It's going to heaven is based on the merit system.

3) Increase of **glory** in heaven [1038-1041], 1053]. This is a little difficult. A person does not receive the benefits of his good works when he dies. That will only be awarded at the **universal** or *general judgment*. "Mt 25:31 *"When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory. 32 All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats.* The idea is that rewards are not based on a fixed scale but rather in comparison to what everyone else has done. God grades on a scale they teach.

Bible response:

Eternal life is a **free gift**.

We could quote Bible passages for the rest of the evening. Here are two.

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

- Jn 10:27 My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. 28 And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand.

The Catholic Church teaches the **exact** opposite. Grace is earned; Heaven is gained by **merit**. When the Catholic Councils say that the Catholics truly merit eternal life they mean there is equality between the work performed and the reward received. We believe that good stewards are rewarded for their works in heaven but we denounce that a steward is rewarded **with heaven** as his reward. Listen to Rome on this thought. *"It is a universally accepted dogma of the Catholic Church that man, in union with the grace of the Holy Spirit must merit heaven by his good works... we can actually merit heaven as our reward... Heaven must be fought for; we have to earn heaven."*— Dogmatic theology for the Laity pg 262.

Biblical Salvation is **completely secure**.

Catholics obtain justification at baptism but they may lose it and regain it hundreds of times and still die without it. A person simply cannot know his fate until his *particular judgement*. But once again the Bible is clear.

Matt 10:28 And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand. 29 My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of My Father's hand.

Ro 8:30 Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.

1 Peter 1.3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, 5 who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

Salvation is not dependent on us or our performance. Yet Catholicism objects: *"If they fail to respond in thought, word and deed to that grace, not only shall they not be saved, but they shall be the more severely judged."*— Vatican II
"Dogmatic Constitution on the Church no. 14

But God speaks of salvation and eternal life as the present possession and future destiny of the genuine believer.

1 Jn 5:11 And this is the testimony: that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. 12 He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life. 13 These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may continue to believe in the name of the Son of God.

Our sin payment (atonement) is not something we can do; it is what Jesus **alone** did on the **Cross**.

The idea of purgatory is a **fabrication**. It is an invention and a very clever one at that. Purgatory hasn't a whisper of biblical support. As I read earlier, even the Catholic scholars say reason, tradition and experience are the basis for purgatory. "There must be a third place where those not bad enough for hell and not good enough for heaven go to expiate their sins." There is no purgatory, hence prayers for the dead, indulgences, mass, lighting candles and giving offerings will have no effect on those who have died.

There is no Biblical basis for purgatory but there is a strong philosophical need that makes purgatory essential for Catholicism. The Catholic Church still believes in and needs purgatory (in spite of comments to the contrary from attenders) [1031]. Salvation is never guaranteed so from baptism through the sacraments and through death into purgatory the Catholic is still in the salvation process. The Bible says we are declared righteous by the act of God will by faith in His name (2 Corinthians 5.21).

The Biblical Verdict

Is the way of salvation according to Roman Catholicism the same as what is taught in the scripture? No, it is the diametric **opposite**. The similarities are there. We believe in many of the same truths about God and we share a lot of common terminology. Yet on the question of salvation we could not be more different. Is there a subject as important for Christianity as, "What must I do to be saved?"

The Catholic Church has fallen in with the movement of the Judaizers of Galatians. They are teaching that the sacrifice of Jesus is **insufficient** to save a

person. As I stated at the beginning of the study they were preaching another gospel; not another of the same kind but another of a **different kind**. (Gal 1.6-9). The message of the Judaizers was not Christianity at all! Note that the false teachers in Galatia were not rejecting Christ, faith, grace as necessary for salvation. They just said it wasn't enough; a person had to add to the faith good works and performance.

This then is the error of Catholicism. They are teaching **faith** plus **works**. There are 24 major areas in which Catholicism contradicts the Bible. They are listed on your side sheet.

To say that Catholics and Bible believing Protestants are just different flavors of the same essence is to ignore what each says and the meaning of words. The hierarchy of Catholicism is truly the blind leading the blind and they are together headed toward disaster.

Ga 1:8 But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed. 9 As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed.

Salvation: Error Versus Truth

The Catholic Church Teaches	The Bible Teaches
1. Justification is a transformation of the soul in which original sin is removed and sanctifying grace infused [1987-1995]. ¹	Justification is an act of God in which He declares a sinner to be righteous in His sight, having forgiven his sins and imputed to him God's own righteousness (Romans 3:21-4:8).
2. Initial justification is by means of baptism [1262-1274].	Justification is by faith alone (Romans 3:28).
3. Adults must prepare for justification through faith and good works [1247-1249].	God justifies ungodly sinners who believe (Romans 4:5). Good works are the <i>result</i> of salvation, not the cause (Ephesians 2:8-10).
4. The justified are in themselves beautiful and holy in God's sight [1992, 1999-2000, 2024].	The justified are <i>in Christ</i> holy and blameless before God (Ephesians 1:1-14).
5. Justification is furthered by sacraments and good works [1212, 1392, 2010].	Justification is the imputation of the perfect righteousness of God (2 Corinthians 5:21). In Christ the believer has been made complete (Colossians 2:10).
6. Justification is lost through mortal sin [1033, 1855, 1874].	Justification cannot be lost. Those whom God justifies will be saved from the wrath of God (Romans 5:8,9).
7. Catholics guilty of mortal sin are justified again through the sacrament of penance [980, 1446].	There is no second justification. Those whom God justifies He also will glorify (Romans 8:30).
8. Salvation from the eternal consequences of sin is a lifelong process [161-162, 1254-1255].	Salvation from the eternal consequences of sin is an instantaneous and secure act of God coinciding with justification (Romans 5:9).
9. Salvation is attained by cooperating with grace through faith, good works, and participation in the sacraments [183, 1129, 1815, 2002].	Salvation is attained by grace through faith apart from works (Ephesians 2:8,9). Good works are the result, not the cause, of salvation (Ephesians 2:10).
10. Faith is belief in God and the firm acceptance of all that the Church proposes for belief [181-182, 1814].	Saving faith is the entrusting of oneself to Christ as Lord and Savior (Romans 10:8-17).
11. Sanctifying grace is a quality of the soul, a supernatural disposition that perfects the soul [1999-2000].	Grace is the undeserved favor of God (Ephesians 1:7,8).
12. The sacraments are necessary channels for the continual infusion of grace. They bestow grace in virtue of the rite performed [1127-1129].	The child of God is the constant object of the Father's grace (Romans 5: 1,2).
13. Grace is merited by good works [2010, 2027].	Grace is a free gift (Romans 11:6).
14. Venial sins do not incur eternal punishment [1855, 1863].	Every sin is punishable by eternal death (Romans 6:23).
15. Serious sins must be confessed to a priest [1456-1457].	Sin is to be confessed directly to God (Ezra 10:11).
16. The priest forgives sin as a judge [1442, 1461].	No one can forgive sin but God alone (Mark 2:7).
17. When the guilt of sin is forgiven, temporal punishment remains [1472-1473].	When God forgives sin, He completely forgives (Colossians 2: 13; Isaiah 43:25).

Salvation: Error Versus Truth

18. Acts of penance make satisfaction for the temporal punishment of sin [1434, 1459-1460].	Jesus made perfect satisfaction for all sins (1 John 2:1,2).
19. Indulgences dispensed by the Church for acts of piety release sinners from temporal punishment [1471-1473].	Jesus releases believers from their sins by His blood (Revelation 1:5).
20. Purgatory is necessary to atone for sin and cleanse the soul [1030-1031].	Purgatory does not exist. Jesus made purification for sins on the cross (Hebrews 1:3).
21. Poor souls suffering in purgatory can be helped by those alive on earth offering up prayers, good works, and the sacrifice of the Mass [1032, 1371, 1479].	Those who sleep in Christ need no help. To be absent from the body is to be at home with the Lord (2 Corinthians 5:8).
22. No one can know if he will attain to eternal life [1036, 2005].	The believer can know that he has eternal life by the Word of God (1 John 5:13).
23. Eternal life is a merited reward [1821, 2010].	Eternal life is the free gift of God (Romans 6:23).
24. The Roman Catholic Church is necessary for salvation [846].	There is salvation in no one but the Lord Jesus Christ, " <i>for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved</i> " (Acts 4:12).

¹ Bracketed numbers are indexed to the numbered paragraphs of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*.