

# Teaching on Hell

## In Sacred Scripture

OT [Wis 4:18–5:5](#), [Jdt 16:17](#), [Da 12:2](#), [Dt 32:41–42](#), [Is 66:24](#), [Dt 32:22–24](#), [Is 25:10–12](#), [Eze 31:16–18](#), [Wis 3:10](#), [Job 19:7–11](#), [Ps 58:8–9](#), [Pr 1:26–30](#), [Je 7:15–16](#), [La 3:6–7](#), [Sir 10:12–13](#), [Eze 33:11](#), [Dt 32:20](#), [32–35](#), [39](#), [Job 21:33](#), [22:17–20](#), [25:5–6](#), [Ps 9:17](#), [11:6](#), [13:title–2](#), [18:5](#), [41](#), [21:9](#), [22:2](#), [55:15](#), [59:6](#), [75:8](#), [86:13](#), [88:4](#), [6](#), [11–12](#), [112:10](#), [Pr 7:27](#), [9:18](#), [15:24](#), [Wis 5:7–9](#), [12:23](#), [25](#), [Sir 21:9–11](#), [Is 1:15](#), [5:14](#), [24:21–22](#), [29:16](#), [30:32–33](#), [33:14](#), [34:2–3](#), [7–9](#), [46:3](#), [47:1](#), [51:19](#), [Je 25:15–16](#), [La 3:9](#), [11](#), [Eze 23:32–34](#), [32:21](#), [27](#), [39:23–24](#), [Mic 3:4](#), [Na 3:5–6](#)

NT [Mt 25:30–46](#), [Mk 9:43–48](#), [Re 20:9–10](#), [Mt 13:41–42](#), [3:12](#), [Jud 6–7](#), [Lk 13:27–28](#), [2 Th 1:9](#), [Mt 13:50](#), [1 Jn 3:14–15](#), [Mt 10:28](#), [5:22](#), [29](#), [8:12](#), [18:8–9](#), [Re 21:8](#), [Mt 22:13](#), [25:12–13](#), [23:15](#), [33](#), [24:51](#), [Lk 20:47](#), [Ro 2:6–9](#), [Heb 10:26–31](#), [2 Pe 2:4](#), [6](#), [Re 22:15](#), [2 Pe 3:9](#), [Re 18:7–8](#), [Mt 7:13–14](#), [Mk 16:16](#), [Ro 9:22](#), [12:19](#), [Lk 10:15](#), [16:23–24](#), [2 Ti 1:9](#), [2 Pe 2:9](#), [Re 1:17–18](#), [14:11](#), [16:10](#), [19:3](#), [20:15](#)

## In Church Teaching

Catechism [CCC 1033–1037](#), [1861](#); Glossary “Hell”, “Punishment, Eternal”; Index “Hell”

Denzinger [DS 411](#), [76](#), [1575](#), [1002](#), [780](#), [801](#), [858](#), [926](#), [1306](#), [1351](#), [2626\\*](#), [621](#), [1567](#)

Roman Catechism [RC 1.6.3](#), [8.9](#)

Vatican II [LG 48](#)

## In Ecclesiastical Writers

Apostolic Fathers [IEph 16.2](#), [MPoly 2.3](#), [11.2](#)

St Justin Martyr [1 Apol. 28](#), [18](#), [21](#), [2 Apol. 9](#)

St Irenaeus [Adv. Haer. 4.28.2](#), [40.1–2](#)

Tertullian [De paen. 12](#)

Origen [De princ. 2.10.4](#)

St Gregory Nazianzen [Orat. 40.23](#)

St Augustine [Enchir. 112](#), [De civ. Dei 21.9–12](#), [23](#), [Enchir. 93](#)

St Gregory the Great [Mor. 34.19.38](#)

St Bonaventure [Brev. 7.6](#)

St Thomas Aquinas [SCG 4.89–90](#), [STh.](#), [Supplementum q.98–q.99](#), [I-II q.85 a.2 ad 3](#), [Supplementum q.70 a.3](#), [q.74 a.9](#), [q.71 a.5](#)

See also: Condemnation

## Hell (or similar) in Scripture

**2 Kings 23:10**

<sup>10</sup>He defiled the Topheth which is in the Valley of Ben-Hinnom, [to prevent] anyone causing his sons or his daughters to pass through the fire for Molech.

**2 Chronicles 28:3**

<sup>3</sup>And he himself burned incense in the valley of Ben-Hinnom and burned his sons in the fire, according to the detestable *practices* of the nations whom Yahweh drove out before the Israelites.

**2 Chronicles 33:6**

<sup>6</sup>And he himself burned his sons in the fire in the Valley of Ben-Hinnom. And he practiced sorcery and divination, and he engaged in witchcraft and dealt with mediums and spiritists. And he did much evil in the eyes of Yahweh, to provoke him to anger.

**Psalms 9:17**

<sup>17</sup>The wicked shall turn back to Sheol, all *the* nations forgetting God,

**Psalms 16:10**

<sup>10</sup>for you will not abandon my soul to Sheol; you will not give your faithful one to see *the* grave.

**Isaiah 38:18**

<sup>18</sup>For Sheol cannot praise you; death *cannot* praise you.

Those who go down *to the* pit cannot hope for your faithfulness.

**Isaiah 66:24**

<sup>24</sup>“And they shall go out and look at the corpses of the people [who have rebelled] against me,

for their worm shall not die,  
and their fire shall not be quenched,  
and they shall be an abhorrence to all flesh.”

**Jeremiah 7:31–32**

<sup>31</sup>And they built the high place of Topheth, which is in *the* Valley of Ben Hinnom, to burn their sons and their daughters in the fire, which I have not commanded, and it did not come into my mind.

<sup>32</sup>Therefore look, days *are* about to come,” [declares] Yahweh, “and it will no longer be called Topheth or *the* Valley of Ben Hinnom, but the Valley of the Slaughter, and they will bury in Topheth [until there is no more place].

**Matthew 3:12**

<sup>12</sup>His winnowing shovel *is* in his hand, and he will clean out his threshing floor and will gather his wheat into the storehouse, but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.”

**Matthew 5:22**

<sup>22</sup>But I say to you that everyone who is angry at his brother will be subject to judgment, and whoever says to his brother, ‘Stupid fool!’ will be subject to the council, and whoever says, ‘Obstinate fool!’ will be subject to fiery hell.

**Matthew 5:29–30**

<sup>29</sup>And if your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw *it* from you! For it is better for you that one of your members be destroyed than your whole body be thrown into hell. <sup>30</sup>And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw *it* from you! For it is better for you that one of your limbs be destroyed than your whole body go into hell.

**Matthew 8:11–12**

<sup>11</sup>But I say to you that many will come from east and west and *be seated at the banquet,* with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. <sup>12</sup>But the sons of the kingdom will be thrown out into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth!”

**Matthew 10:28**

<sup>28</sup>And do not be afraid of those who kill the body but are not able to kill the soul, but instead be afraid of the one who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.

**Matthew 11:22–24**

<sup>22</sup>Nevertheless I tell you, it will be more bearable for Tyre and for Sidon on the day of judgment than for you! <sup>23</sup>And you, Capernaum, will you be exalted to heaven? No, you will be brought down to Hades! For if the miracles done in you had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until today. <sup>24</sup>Nevertheless I tell you that it will be more bearable for the region of Sodom on the day of judgment than for you!”

**Matthew 13:42**

<sup>42</sup>and throw them into the fiery furnace. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth!

**Matthew 13:50**

<sup>50</sup>and throw them into the fiery furnace. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth!

**Matthew 16:17–18**

<sup>17</sup>And Jesus answered *and* said to him, “Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, because flesh and blood did not reveal *this* to you, but my Father *who is* in heaven. <sup>18</sup>And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overpower it!

**Matthew 18:8–9**

<sup>8</sup>And if your hand or your foot causes you to sin, cut it off and throw *it* from you! It is better for you to enter into life crippled or lame than, having two hands or two feet, to be thrown into the eternal fire! <sup>9</sup>And if your eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw *it* from you! It is better for you to enter into life one-eyed than, having two eyes, to be thrown into fiery hell!

**Matthew 22:13**

<sup>13</sup>Then the king said to the servants, ‘Tie him up *hand and foot,* and throw him into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth!’

**Matthew 23:15**

<sup>15</sup>“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees—hypocrites!—because you travel around the sea and the dry *land* to make one convert, and when he becomes *one*, you make him twice as much a son of hell *as you are!*”

**Matthew 23:33**

<sup>33</sup>Serpents! Offspring of vipers! How will you escape from the condemnation to hell?

**Matthew 25:30**

<sup>30</sup>And throw the worthless slave into the outer darkness—in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth!’

**Matthew 25:41**

<sup>41</sup>Then he will also say to those on *his* left, ‘Depart from me, *you* accursed ones, into the eternal fire that has been prepared for the devil and his angels!’

**Matthew 25:46**

<sup>46</sup>And these will depart into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.”

**Mark 9:42–49**

**Temptations to Sin**

<sup>42</sup>“And whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it is better for him if instead *a large millstone* is placed around his neck and he is thrown into the sea. <sup>43</sup>And if your hand causes you to sin, cut it off! It is better *for*

you to enter into life crippled than, having two hands, to go into hell—into the unquenchable fire! <sup>45</sup>And if your foot causes you to sin, cut it off! It is better *for* you to enter into life lame than, having two feet, to be thrown into hell! <sup>47</sup>And if your eye causes you to sin, tear it out! It is better *for* you to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye than, having two eyes, to be thrown into hell, <sup>48</sup>‘where their worm does not die and the fire is not extinguished.’ <sup>49</sup>For everyone will be salted with fire.

#### Luke 10:15

<sup>15</sup>And you, Capernaum, will you be exalted to heaven? No! You will be brought down to Hades!

#### Luke 12:4–5

##### **Fear God Rather Than People**

<sup>4</sup>‘And I tell you, my friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body, and after these *things* do not have anything more to do. <sup>5</sup>But I will show you whom you should fear: fear the one who has authority, after the killing, to throw *you* into hell! Yes, I tell you, fear this one!

#### Luke 16:23–24

<sup>23</sup>And in Hades he lifted up his eyes *as he* was in torment *and* saw Abraham from a distance, and Lazarus [at his side]. <sup>24</sup>And he called out *and* said, ‘Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus so that he could dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, because I am suffering pain in this flame!’

#### Acts 2:27

<sup>27</sup>because you will not abandon my soul in Hades,  
nor will you permit your Holy One to experience decay.

#### Acts 2:31

<sup>31</sup>*by* having foreseen *this*, he spoke about the resurrection of the Christ, that neither was he abandoned in Hades nor did his flesh experience decay.

#### 2 Thessalonians 1:8–9

<sup>8</sup>with burning flame giving punishment to those who do not know God and who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus, <sup>9</sup>who will pay the penalty *of* eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his strength,

#### James 3:6

<sup>6</sup>And the tongue *is* a fire! The world of unrighteousness, the tongue, is set among our

members, defiling the whole body and setting on fire [the course of human existence], being set on fire by hell.

#### 2 Peter 2:4

<sup>4</sup>For if God did not spare the angels who sinned, but held *them* captive in Tartarus with chains of darkness *and* handed *them* over to be kept for judgment,

#### Jude 6–7

<sup>6</sup>And *the* angels who did not keep to their own domain but deserted their proper dwelling place, he has kept in eternal bonds under deep gloom for the judgment of the great day, <sup>7</sup>as Sodom and Gomorrah and the towns around them indulged in sexual immorality and [pursued unnatural desire] *in* the same way as these, are exhibited as an example *by* undergoing the punishment of eternal fire.

#### Revelation 1:18

<sup>18</sup>and the one who lives, and I was dead, and behold, I am living [forever and ever], and I hold the keys of death and of Hades.

#### Revelation 14:9–11

<sup>9</sup>And another third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, ‘If anyone worships the beast and his image and receives a mark on his forehead or on his hand, <sup>10</sup>he himself also will drink of the wine of the anger of God that has been mixed full strength in the cup of his wrath, and will be tortured with fire and sulphur in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. <sup>11</sup>And the smoke of their torture went up [forever and ever], and those who worshiped the beast and his image did not have rest day and night, [along with anyone who received] the mark of his name.

#### Revelation 19:20

<sup>20</sup>And the beast was seized, and with him the false prophet who performed the signs before him, by which he deceived those who received the mark of the beast and those who had worshiped his image. The two were thrown alive into the lake of fire that burns with sulphur.

#### Revelation 20:10–15

<sup>10</sup>And the devil who deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and sulphur, where the beast and the false prophet also *are*, and they will be tormented day and night [forever and ever].

#### The Judgment at the Great White Throne

<sup>11</sup>And I saw a great white throne and the one who was seated on it, from whose presence earth and heaven fled, and a place was not found for them. <sup>12</sup>And I saw the dead—the great and the small—standing before the throne, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the *book* of life, and the dead were judged by what was written in the books, according to their deeds. <sup>13</sup>And the sea gave up the dead *who were* in it, and Death and Hades gave up the dead *who were* in them, and each one was judged according to their deeds. <sup>14</sup>And Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death—the lake of fire. <sup>15</sup>And if anyone was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.

**Revelation 21:8**

<sup>8</sup>But *as* for the cowards and unbelievers and detestable persons and murderers and sexually immoral people and sorcerers and idolaters and all liars, their share *is* in the lake that burns with fire and sulphur, which is the second death. <sup>1</sup>

Hell – Gehenna



**γέεννα GE/ENNA | 12 of 12**

- Mt 5:22 But I say to you that everyone who is angry at his brother will be subject to judgment, and whoever says to his brot "Stupid fool!" will be subject to the council, and whoever says, "Obstinate fool!" will be subject to fiery hell.
- Mt 5:29 And if your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it from you! For it is better for you that one of your members be destroyed than your whole body be thrown into hell.
- Mt 5:30 And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it from you! For it is better for you that one of your limbs be destroyed than your whole body go into hell.
- Mt 10:28 And do not be afraid of those who kill the body but are not able to kill the soul, but instead be afraid of the one who able to destroy both soul and body in hell.
- Mt 18:9 And if your eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it from you! It is better for you to enter into life one-eyed than having two eyes, to be thrown into fiery hell.
- Mt 23:15 "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees— hypocrites!— because you travel around the sea and the dry land to make or convert, and when he becomes one, you make him twice as much a son of hell as you are!
- Mt 23:33 Serpents! Offspring of vipers! How will you escape from the condemnation to hell?
- Mk 9:43 And if your hand causes you to sin, cut it off! It is better for you to enter into life crippled than, having two hands, to enter into hell— into the unquenchable fire!
- Mk 9:45 And if your foot causes you to sin, cut it off! It is better for you to enter into life lame than, having two feet, to be thrown into hell!
- Mk 9:47 And if your eye causes you to sin, tear it out! It is better for you to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye than, having two eyes, to be thrown into hell.
- Lk 12:5 But I will show you whom you should fear: fear the one who has authority, after the killing, to throw you into hell! I tell you, fear this one!
- Jas 3:6 And the tongue is a fire! The world of unrighteousness, the tongue, is set among our members, defiling the whole and setting on fire the course of human existence, being set on fire by hell.

<sup>1</sup> Harris, W. H., III, Ritzema, E., Brannan, R., Mangum, D., Dunham, J., Reimer, J. A., & Wierenga, M. (Eds.). (2012). *The Lexham English Bible* (2 Ki 23:10–Re 21:8). Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

<sup>612</sup> 1 Jn 3:14–15.

<sup>613</sup> Cf. Mt 25:31–46.

In the Catechism

IV. HELL

**1033** We cannot be united with God unless we freely choose to love him. But we cannot love God if we sin gravely against him, against our neighbor or against ourselves: "He who does not love remains in death. Anyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him."<sup>612</sup> Our Lord warns us that we shall be separated from him if we fail to meet the serious needs of the poor and the little ones who are his brethren.<sup>613</sup> To die in mortal sin without repenting and accepting God's merciful love means remaining separated from him for ever by our own free choice. This state of definitive self-exclusion from communion with God and the blessed is called "hell." (1861; 393; 633)

**1034** Jesus often speaks of "Gehenna," of "the unquenchable fire" reserved for those who to the end of their lives refuse to believe and be converted, where both soul and body can be lost.<sup>614</sup> Jesus solemnly proclaims that he "will send his angels, and they will gather ... all evil doers, and throw them into the furnace of fire,"<sup>615</sup> and that he will pronounce the condemnation: "Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire!"<sup>616</sup>

**1035** The teaching of the Church affirms the existence of hell and its eternity. Immediately after death the souls of those who die in a state of mortal sin descend into hell, where they suffer the punishments of hell, "eternal fire."<sup>617</sup> The chief punishment of hell is eternal separation from God, in whom alone man can possess the life and happiness for which he was created and for which he longs. (393)

**1036** The affirmations of Sacred Scripture and the teachings of the Church on the subject of hell are a *call to the responsibility* incumbent upon man to make use of his freedom in view of his eternal destiny. They are at the same time an urgent *call to conversion*: "Enter by the narrow gate; for the

<sup>614</sup> Cf. Mt 5:22, 29; 10:28; 13:42, 50; Mk 9:43–48.

<sup>615</sup> Mt 13:41–42.

<sup>616</sup> Mt 25:41.

<sup>617</sup> Cf. DS 76; 409; 411; 801; 858; 1002; 1351; 1575; Paul VI, CPG § 12.

gate is wide and the way is easy, that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. For the gate is narrow and the way is hard, that leads to life, and those who find it are few."<sup>618</sup> (1734; 1428)

Since we know neither the day nor 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, and not, like the wicked and slothful servants, be ordered to depart into the eternal fire, into the outer darkness where "men will weep and gnash their teeth."<sup>619</sup>

**1037** God predestines no one to go to hell;<sup>620</sup> for this, a willful turning away from God (a mortal sin) is necessary, and persistence in it until the end. In the Eucharistic liturgy and in the daily prayers of her faithful, the Church implores the mercy of God, who does not want "any to perish, but all to come to repentance":<sup>621</sup> (162; 1014, 1821; 678–679)

Father, accept this offering  
from your whole family.  
Grant us your peace in this life,  
save us from final damnation,  
and count us among those you have chosen.<sup>622</sup>

**1861** Mortal sin is a radical possibility of human freedom, as is love itself. It results in the loss of charity and the privation of sanctifying grace, that is, of the state of grace. If it is not redeemed by repentance and God's forgiveness, it causes exclusion from Christ's kingdom and the eternal death of hell, for our freedom has the power to make choices for ever, with no turning back. However, although we can judge that an act is in itself a grave offense, we must entrust judgment of persons to the justice and mercy of God. (1742; 1033)<sup>3</sup>

<sup>618</sup> Mt 7:13–14.

<sup>619</sup> LG 48 § 3; Mt 22:13; cf. Heb 9:27; Mt 25:13, 26, 30, 31–46.

<sup>620</sup> Cf. Council of Orange II (529): DS 397; Council of Trent (1547): 1567.

<sup>621</sup> 2 Pet 3:9.

<sup>622</sup> Roman Missal, EPI (Roman Canon) 88.

<sup>2</sup> Catholic Church. (2000). *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (2nd Ed., pp. 269–271). Washington, DC: United States Catholic Conference.

**HELL:** The state of definitive self-exclusion from communion with God and the blessed, reserved for those who refuse by their own free choice to believe and be converted from sin, even to the end of their lives (1033).<sup>4</sup>

## In Vatican II (Lumen Gentium 48)

48. The Church, to which we are all called in Christ Jesus, and in which we acquire sanctity through the grace of God, will attain its full perfection only in the glory of heaven, when there will come the time of the restoration of all things.<sup>237</sup> At that time the human race as well as the entire world, which is intimately related to man and attains to its end through him, will be perfectly re-established in Christ.<sup>238</sup>

Christ, having been lifted up from the earth has drawn all to Himself.<sup>239</sup> Rising from the dead<sup>240</sup> He sent His life-giving Spirit upon His disciples and through Him has established His Body which is the Church as the universal sacrament of salvation. Sitting at the right hand of the Father, He is continually active in the world that He might lead men to the Church and through it join them to Himself and that He might make them partakers of His glorious life by nourishing them with His own Body and Blood. Therefore the promised restoration which we are awaiting has already begun in Christ, is carried forward in the mission of the Holy Spirit and through Him continues in the Church in which we learn the meaning of our terrestrial life through our faith, while we perform with hope in the future the work committed to us in this world by the Father, and thus work out our salvation.<sup>241</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Catholic Church. (2000). *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (2nd Ed., p. 456). Washington, DC: United States Catholic Conference.

<sup>4</sup> Catholic Church. (2000). *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (2nd Ed., p. 881). Washington, DC: United States Catholic Conference.

<sup>237</sup> Acts 3:21.

<sup>238</sup> Cf. Eph. 1:10; Col. 1:20; 2 Pt.3:10–13.

<sup>239</sup> Cf. Jn. 12:32.

<sup>240</sup> Cf. Rom. 6:9.

<sup>241</sup> Cf. Phil. 2:12.

Already the final age of the world has come upon us<sup>242</sup> and the renovation of the world is irrevocably decreed and is already anticipated in some kind of a real way; for the Church already on this earth is signed with a sanctity which is real although imperfect. However, until there shall be new heavens and a new earth in which justice dwells,<sup>243</sup> the pilgrim Church in her sacraments and institutions, which pertain to this present time, has the appearance of this world which is passing and she herself dwells among creatures who groan and travail in pain until now and await the revelation of the sons of God.<sup>244</sup>

Joined with Christ in the Church and signed with the Holy Spirit “who is the pledge of our inheritance”,<sup>245</sup> truly we are called and we are sons of God<sup>246</sup> but we have not yet appeared with Christ in glory,<sup>247</sup> in which we shall be like to God, since we shall see Him as He is.<sup>248</sup> And therefore “while we are in the body, we are exiled from the Lord<sup>249</sup> and having the first-fruits of the Spirit we groan within ourselves<sup>250</sup> and we desire to be with Christ”.<sup>251</sup> By that same charity however, we are urged to live more for Him, who died for us and rose again.<sup>252</sup> We strive therefore to please God in all things<sup>253</sup> and we put on the armor of God, that we may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil and resist in the evil day.<sup>254</sup> Since however we know not the day nor the hour, on Our Lord’s advice we must be constantly vigilant so that, having finished the course of our earthly life,<sup>255</sup> we may merit to enter into the marriage feast with Him and to be numbered among the blessed<sup>256</sup> and that we may not be ordered to go into eternal fire<sup>257</sup> like the wicked and slothful servant,<sup>258</sup> into the exterior darkness where “there will be the weeping and the gnashing of teeth”.<sup>259</sup> For before we reign with

Christ in glory, all of us will be made manifest “before the tribunal of Christ, so that each one may receive what he has won through the body, according to his works, whether good or evil”<sup>260</sup> and at the end of the world “they who have done good shall come forth unto resurrection of life; but those who have done evil unto resurrection of judgment”.<sup>261</sup> Reckoning therefore that “the sufferings of the present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory to come that will be revealed in us”,<sup>262</sup> strong in faith we look for the “blessed hope and the glorious coming of our great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ”<sup>263</sup> “who will refashion the body of our lowliness, conforming it to the body of His glory<sup>264</sup>, and who will come “to be glorified in His saints and to be marveled at in all those who have believed”<sup>265</sup>.<sup>5</sup>

## Teaching on Purgatory

### Sacred Scripture

OT [2 Mac 12:42–45](#), [Job 1:5](#)

NT [1 Co 3:15](#), [1 Pe 1:7](#), [Mt 5:26](#), [12:32](#), [25:34](#), [41](#), [Lk 12:48](#), [1 Co 3:12](#), [Re 21:27](#), [2 Ti 1:18](#)

### Church Teaching

*Catechism* [CCC 1030–1032](#), [1472](#); Glossary “Purgatory”; Index “Purgatory”

*Denzinger* [DS 1304–1306](#), [854–859](#), [838](#), [1820](#), [1000–1001](#), [1487–1488](#)<sup>\*</sup>, [1580](#), [1867](#), [1447–1449](#), [2641–2642](#)<sup>\*</sup>, [1048](#)<sup>\*</sup>, [1712–1713](#), [2063](#)<sup>\*</sup>, [797](#), [1025](#), [1467](#)<sup>\*</sup>, [1472](#)<sup>\*</sup>, [1960](#)<sup>\*</sup>

### Ecclesiastical Writers

<sup>242</sup> Cf. 1 Cor. 10:11.

<sup>243</sup> Cf. 2. Pt. 3:13.

<sup>244</sup> Cf. Rom. 8:19–22.

<sup>245</sup> Eph. 1:14.

<sup>246</sup> Cf. 1 Jn. 3:1.

<sup>247</sup> Cf. Col. 3:4

<sup>248</sup> Cf. 1 Jn. 3:2

<sup>249</sup> 2 Cor. 5:6.

<sup>250</sup> Cf. Rom. 8:23.

<sup>251</sup> Cf. Phil. 1:23.

<sup>252</sup> Cf. 2 Cor 5:15.

<sup>253</sup> Cf. 2 Cor. 5:9.

<sup>254</sup> Cf. Eph. 6:11–13.

<sup>255</sup> Cf. Heb 9:27.

<sup>256</sup> Cf. Mt. 25:31–46.

<sup>257</sup> Cf. Mt. 25:41.

<sup>258</sup> Cf. Mt. 25:26.

<sup>259</sup> Mt. 22:13 and 25:30.

<sup>260</sup> 2 Cor. 5:10.

<sup>261</sup> Jn. 5:29; Cf. Mt. 25:46.

<sup>262</sup> Rom. 8:18; cf. 2 Tim. 2:11–12.

<sup>263</sup> Tit. 2:13.

<sup>264</sup> Phil. 3:21.

<sup>265</sup> 2 Thess. 1:10.

<sup>5</sup> Catholic Church. (2011). Dogmatic Constitution on the Church: Lumen Gentium. In *Vatican II Documents*. Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana.

Tertullian [De an. 58](#), [De cor. 3](#), [De exh. cast. 11](#), [De mon. 10](#)

St Cyprian [Cyprian, Ep. \(O\) 55.20](#), [Cyprian, Ep. \(O\) 1.2](#)

St Cyril of Jerusalem [Cyr. Hier., Cat. Lect. 23.9](#)

St John Chrysostom [Hom Phil. 3](#), [Hom. 1 Cor. 41.5](#)

St Augustine [De civ. Dei 21.13](#), [24.2](#), [Enarr. in Ps. 37](#), [Enchir. 110](#), [De civ. Dei 21.16](#), [Enchir. 69](#), [De cura pro mort. 4.6](#), [Conf. 9.11–13](#), [De cura pro mort. 1.3](#)

St Thomas Aquinas [SCG 4.91](#), [STh., II-II q.83 a.4 resp.](#), [a.11 resp.](#), [III q.46 a.2 ad 3](#), [Supplementum q.25 a.2](#), [q.71 a.10](#)

See also: Punishment, Temporal; Satisfaction for Sin; Penance

## In Scripture

**2 Mac 12:38–45** *Prayers for Those Killed in Battle*

<sup>38</sup> Then Judas assembled his army and went to the city of Adullam. As the seventh day was coming on, they purified themselves according to the custom, and kept the sabbath there.

<sup>39</sup> On the next day, as had now become necessary, Judas and his men went to take up the bodies of the fallen and to bring them back to lie with their kindred in the sepulchres of their ancestors. <sup>40</sup> Then under the tunic of each one of the dead they found sacred tokens of the idols of Jamnia, which the law forbids the Jews to wear. And it became clear to all that this was the reason these men had fallen. <sup>41</sup> So they all blessed the ways of the Lord, the righteous judge, who reveals the things that are hidden; <sup>42</sup> and they turned to supplication, praying that the sin that had been committed might be wholly blotted out. The noble Judas exhorted the people to keep themselves free from sin, for they had seen with their own eyes what had happened as the result of the sin of those who had fallen. <sup>43</sup> He also took up a collection, man by man, to the amount of two thousand drachmas of silver, and sent it to Jerusalem to provide for a sin offering. In doing this he acted very well and honorably, taking account of the resurrection. <sup>44</sup> For if he were not expecting that those who had fallen would rise again, it would have been superfluous and foolish to pray for the dead. <sup>45</sup> But if he was looking to the splendid reward that is laid up for

those who fall asleep in godliness, it was a holy and pious thought. Therefore he made atonement for the dead, so that they might be delivered from their sin. <sup>6</sup>

**Job 1:5**

<sup>5</sup> Then when the days of the feast had run their course, Job would send, and he would sanctify them. Thus he would arise early in the morning and offer burnt offerings *according to* the number of all of them, because Job thought, “Perhaps my children have sinned and cursed God in their heart.” This is what Job used to do all the time.

**Matthew 5:26**

<sup>26</sup> Truly I say to you, you will never come out of there until you have paid back the last penny!

**Matthew 12:32**

<sup>32</sup> And whoever speaks a word against the Son of Man, it will be forgiven him. But whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit, it will not be forgiven him either in this age or in the coming one!

**Matthew 25:34**

<sup>34</sup> Then the king will say to those on his right, ‘Come, *you* who are blessed by my Father. Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world!’

**Matthew 25:41**

<sup>41</sup> Then he will also say to those on *his* left, ‘Depart from me, *you* accursed ones, into the eternal fire that has been prepared for the devil and his angels!’

**Luke 12:48**

<sup>48</sup> But the one who did not know and did *things* deserving blows (will be given a light beating). And from everyone to whom much has been given, much will be demanded, and from him to whom they entrusted much, they will ask him *for* even more.

**1 Corinthians 3:12**

<sup>12</sup> Now if anyone builds upon the foundation *with* gold, silver, precious stones, wood, grass, straw,

**1 Corinthians 3:15**

<sup>15</sup> If anyone’s work is burned up, he will suffer loss, but he himself will be saved, but so as through fire.

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<sup>6</sup> *The Holy Bible: New Revised Standard Version*. (1989). (2 Mac 12:38–45). Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers.

2 Timothy 1:18

<sup>18</sup> May the Lord grant him to find mercy from the Lord in that day! And how much he served *me* in Ephesus you know very well.

1 Peter 1:7

<sup>7</sup> so that the genuineness of your faith, more valuable than gold that is passing away, but is tested by fire, may be found to *result in* praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ,

Revelation 21:27

<sup>27</sup> And every unclean thing and one who practices detestable things and falsehood will never enter into it, except those who are written in the book of life of the Lamb. <sup>7</sup>

## In the Catechism

### III. THE FINAL PURIFICATION, OR PURGATORY

**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.

**1031** The Church gives the name *Purgatory* to this final purification of the elect, which is entirely different from the punishment of the damned.<sup>606</sup> 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:<sup>607</sup> (954, 1472)

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.<sup>608</sup>

**1032** This teaching is also based on the practice of prayer for the dead, already mentioned in Sacred Scripture: "Therefore [Judas Maccabeus] made atonement for the dead, that they might be delivered from their sin."<sup>609</sup> From the beginning the Church has honored the memory of the dead and offered prayers in suffrage for them, above all the Eucharistic sacrifice, so that, thus purified, they may attain the beatific vision of God.<sup>610</sup> The Church also commends almsgiving, indulgences, and works of penance undertaken on behalf of the dead: (958; 1371; 1479)

Let us help and commemorate them. If Job's sons were purified by their father's sacrifice, 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.<sup>611 8</sup>

**1472** To understand this doctrine and practice of the Church, it is necessary to understand that sin has a *double consequence*. Grave sin deprives us of communion with God and therefore makes us incapable of eternal life, the privation of which is called the "eternal punishment" of sin. On the other hand every sin, even venial, entails an unhealthy attachment to creatures, which must be purified either here on earth, or after death in the state called Purgatory. This purification frees one from what is called the "temporal punishment" of sin. These two punishments must not be conceived of as a kind of vengeance inflicted by God from without, but as following from the very nature of sin. A conversion which proceeds from a fervent charity can attain the complete purification of the sinner in such a way that no punishment would remain.<sup>84</sup> (1861; 1031)<sup>9</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Harris, W. H., III, Ritzema, E., Brannan, R., Mangum, D., Dunham, J., Reimer, J. A., & Wierenga, M. (Eds.). (2012). *The Lexham English Bible* (Job 1:5–Re 21:27). Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

<sup>606</sup> Cf. Council of Florence (1439): DS 1304; Council of Trent (1563): DS 1820; (1547): 1580; see also Benedict XII, *Benedictus Deus* (1336): DS 1000.

<sup>607</sup> Cf. 1 Cor 3:15; 1 Pet 1:7.

<sup>608</sup> St. Gregory the Great, *Dial.* 4, 39: PL 77, 396; cf. Mt 12:31.

<sup>609</sup> 2 Macc 12:46.

<sup>610</sup> Cf. Council of Lyons II (1274): DS 856.

<sup>611</sup> St. John Chrysostom, *Hom. in 1 Cor.* 41, 5: PG 61, 361; cf. Job 1:5.

<sup>8</sup> Catholic Church. (2000). *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (2nd Ed., pp. 268–269). Washington, DC: United States Catholic Conference.

<sup>84</sup> Cf. Council of Trent (1551): DS 1712–1713; (1563): 1820.

<sup>9</sup> Catholic Church. (2000). *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (2nd Ed., p. 370). Washington, DC: United States Catholic Conference.