



Does The Bible Support The Doctrine of Purgatory? By Karen Sue Nyquist

1. **Should we follow man's traditions and doctrines or the Bible, God's Word? What did Jesus say about this?** - First, Jesus quoted scripture, "And in vain they worship Me, Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men." Then "He said to them (*the Jewish religious leaders*), 'All too well you reject the commandment of God, that you may keep your tradition ... making the word of God of no effect through your tradition which you have handed down. And many such things you do'" (Mark 7:9,13).

2. **So, does the Bible support the doctrine and traditions of purgatory?** We'll compare quotes from the Catholic Church Catechism (CCC) with quotes from the Bible.

"The Final Purification, or Purgatory:"

a) "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." - **But the Bible says**, "... and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin ... If we confess our sins, He (*God*) is faithful and just, and will forgive our sins and cleanse (*purify*) us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:7,9). Since God forgives our sins when we confess to Him, then He cleanses us from all unrighteousness, God did not provide a purgatory for our future purging after death. Jesus died to save us from hell fire, would God send us to purgatory fire? Which Bible verses say that?

b) "1031 The Church gives the name Purgatory to this final purification of the elect, which is entirely different from the punishment of the damned. The Church **formulated her doctrine of faith on Purgatory** especially at the Councils of Florence (1431-1449 AD) and Trent (1545-1563 AD). The tradition of the Church, by reference to certain texts of Scripture, speaks of a cleansing fire." Which texts? - **The Bible says: 1) Our works will be tested. "the fire will test each one's work** ... If anyone's work which he has built on *it* endures, he will receive a reward (Rev. 22:12). If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire" (1 Corinthians 3:11-13). **2) Our faith will be tested.** "In this you greatly rejoice, though **now** (*while still living*) for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire may be found to praise" (1 Peter 1:6-7). Paul says our works and our faith are being tested now by "fire," not that we will be purged in the future in Purgatory by fire. This doctrine of Purgatory was officially formulated 13,000 and 14,000 years after the Bible was written. As time passes, it is easier for men to develop man's doctrines.

b) **CCC cont.:** "As for certain lesser faults, we must believe that, before the Final Judgment, there is a purifying fire." Which Bible verses say that? - **The Bible says:** that when we confess our sins, God "will cleanse (*purify*) us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9), that would include "certain lesser faults."

b) **CCC cont.:** "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 (Matthew 12:31-32). (From this sentence we understand that certain offenses can be forgiven in this age, but certain others in the age to come.)" - **But by comparing this Bible passage with its corresponding one in Mark:** we see Jesus is really saying we will never be forgiven for this sin. "Assuredly, I say to you, all sins will be forgiven the sons of men, and whatever blasphemies they may utter; but he who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit **never has forgiveness, but is subject to eternal condemnation**" (Mark 3:28-29).

c) "1032 This teaching is also based on the practice of **prayer for the dead**, already mentioned in Sacred Scripture: * **Therefore Judas Maccabees** made atonement for the dead, that they might be delivered from their sin.' 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. The Church also **commends almsgiving, indulgences, and works of penance undertaken on behalf of the dead**. 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." - **But the Bible does not say:** that Job's sacrifices purified his sons. Also, Job was doing this and praying for them while they were still alive, not after they had died (Job 1:1-12). Both James (Acts 12:2-5) and Stephen (Acts 7:59-60) were killed, but there's no record that the Christians prayed for them after they died, nor is prayer for the dead recorded anywhere in the New Testament. (Paul does refer to "baptism for the dead," an unbiblical practice he did not support, that was done by the Corinthian church ((1 Corinthians 15:29-32)), which was filled with at least 10 other erroneous practices. * See paragraphs on the scriptural status of the 2 Maccabees books.



3. * **Let's look at the story of Judas Maccabees** (2 Maccabees 12:39-46). It says God killed some Jewish soldiers who were involved in idolatry. Judas found their bodies and prayed that "the sinful deed might be fully blotted out" (v.42). He even collected money and sent it to Jerusalem, as an "expiatory sacrifice" (v.43) and tried to make "atonement for the dead that they might be absolved from their sin" (v.46).

This story makes no biblical sense! 1st - The story says that they "had gone to rest in godliness" (v. 45). No, they were not in godliness, they were involved in idolatry, it says that's why God killed them, therefore they did not go to heaven. - **The Bible says:** "Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, ... will inherit the kingdom of God" (1 Corin. 6:9-10).

2nd - Their money couldn't atone for someone else's sins. - **The Bible says:** Only Jesus made atonement for our sins (1 John 2:2). "None of *them (people)* can by any means redeem *his* brother, Nor give to God a ransom (*money*) for him" (Psalm 49:7). Unbiblical, good intentions don't work!

3rd - It was too late to pray for them, they were dead. - **The Bible says:** Our spiritual state remains the same after we die (Revelation 22:11). "And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment" (Hebrews 9:27). Jesus told the story of a rich man who went straight to hell after death. "The rich man also died and was buried. And being in torments in Hades..." (Luke 16:22-23). Jesus also told the repentant thief on the cross, "Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in Paradise" (Luke 23:43). Jesus knew **there is no purgatory and the thief would go straight to heaven. Our saved loved ones who have died are already in heaven**, so it is futile to try to "help and console" them after they have died. Also, our Jesus told us to partake in the Eucharist "in remembrance of Me," not to remember others (1 Corinthians 11:24-25).

* **This story in Maccabees** is just one of the examples of why the two books of the **Maccabees weren't accepted as "sacred scripture"** by the Jews, nor the early church. They contradict other books in the Bible. It was not until the Council of Trent (1543 -1563 AD), that Maccabees and the rest of the Deuterocanonicals (second canon) were added to the official canon. "What is the Apocrypha (those extra books in Catholic and Orthodox Bibles)?" 12/31/2020, <https://www.markdalebaptist.org> > what-is-the-apocrypha.

4. **What else does the Bible say about our sins?** - "but He (*Jesus*), having offered one sacrifice for sins **for all time** (*our sins - past, present and future*), sat down at the right hand of God ... **And their sins and their lawless deeds I (God) will remember no more** ... Now where there is forgiveness of these things, **there is no longer any offering for sin**" (Hebrews 10:12,17,18). Since God "remembers our sins no more," and since He has "forgiven us of our sins," we don't have to be purged from them by going to Purgatory. Jesus did say, "Repent!" (Mark 1:15).

5. **What did God tell Peter about those people whom He had cleansed?** - God told Peter, "What God has made clean, you must not call profane (*unclean*)" (Acts 10:15). "For by one offering **He has perfected forever** those who are being sanctified (*set apart*)" (Hebrews 10:13). We accept Jesus as Savior (Colossians 2:6), then repent and confess so God cleanses us (1 John 1:9). "Pursue peace ... and **holiness**, without which no one will see the Lord" (Hebrews 12:14).

6. **How can we be perfected and holy?** It's by God's loving grace that He counts us "worthy of the kingdom of God" (2 Thessalonians 1:3-5). We owed a debt of sin that we couldn't pay, so Jesus paid it for us. Now our debt is counted "paid in full" even though we didn't pay it ourselves. He counts us perfect and holy as long as we remain (abide) in Jesus (John 15:4-6).

7. **Does that mean that we can sin any time we want?** No! **The Bible says:** "but as He who called you *is* holy, you also **be holy in all your conduct**, because it is written, 'Be holy, for I am holy'" (1 Peter 1:15-16). "Therefore, having these promises, beloved, **let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness** in the fear of God" (2 Corinthians 7:1). Notice, we are to cleanse our conduct now. **What if we sin again?** "If we confess our sins, He (*God*) is faithful and just, and will forgive our sins and cleanse (*purify*) us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9).

8. **What's the conclusion?** - The Bible doesn't support the doctrine of, nor the traditions of: 1) being cleansed/purged in Purgatory, 2) offering prayers in suffrage, and the Eucharistic sacrifice for the dead, nor 3) almsgiving, indulgences, and works of penance undertaken on behalf of the dead. **The Bible says:** 1) repent (Mark 1:15), 2) receive Jesus as Lord and Savior, 3) be baptized (Acts 2:38), 4) confess our sins to God, and 5) depend on the Holy Spirit (1 John 4:4) and the Bible (Psalm 119:9-11), to help us live a clean, righteous, and holy life that's God pleasing.

9. **So, do we follow man's doctrines and traditions or the Bible?** If this is all new to you, you can pray: "Our Father, please, show me what is true. I trust You will lead me." You may also pray, "I receive Jesus as my Lord and Savior. In the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, amen." Name _____ Date _____

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NationTakers Ministries

856 Cabrillo St., San Francisco, CA 94118 - Mail P.O. Box 27475,

San Francisco, CA 94127

1(415) 337-7027

info@nationtakers.com

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